

# MULTIFAMILY DWELLINGS

## Design Standards



### Why are MFR Design Standards Important?

Design standards for the City's multifamily zones facilitate the development of attractive multifamily housing that is both a "good neighbor" and a good place to live, and encourages new development that respects the existing development in the City's multifamily neighborhoods.

Our community is composed of many neighborhoods, and neighborhoods are composed of many buildings. Milwaukee has many areas zoned for multifamily residential development, but predominantly developed with single-family homes.

### Problems to Solve

- The City is unique in the region because it does not currently have any design standards for multifamily buildings (those with 3 or more dwelling units).
- Lack of design standards can result in multifamily developments that do not provide quality environments for those who live in them, and are not good neighbors to those who live near them.



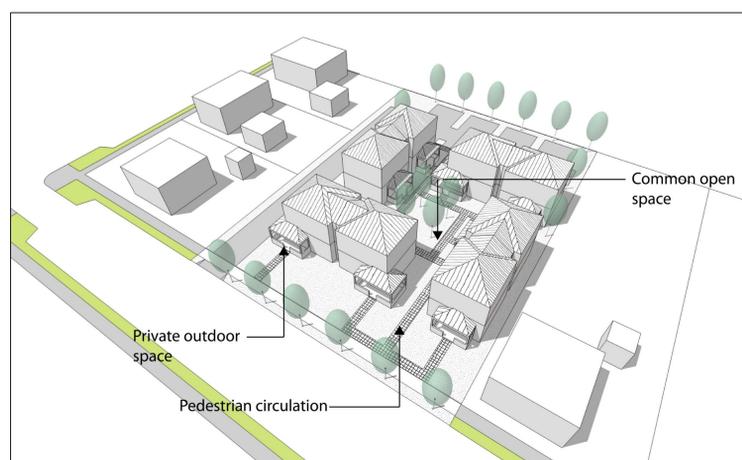
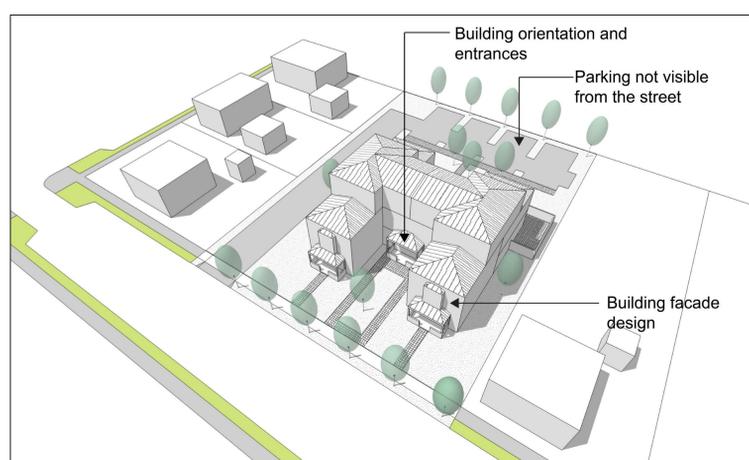
This apartment building is not a good neighbor.

### Tools We Can Use

- **Design Standards.** To ensure attention to detail and human-scale design.
- **Design Guidelines.** Allow for flexibility of design.
- **Review Type.** A choice between objective and discretionary land use review.

### Tools We Can't Use

- Rigid standards that effectively prevent multifamily developments from being built.
- Required discretionary design review. State law requires a clear and objective process for residential development.



**Multifamily development can take many different forms. Both of these buildings would comply with the proposed design standards.**

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### Key Recommendations

- **Design standards.** Require new development to incorporate design features that address livability, compatibility, safety, and sustainability.
- **Flexibility.** Allow developers to choose between an objective or discretionary review process. The objective review process would require a development to meet all design standards. The discretionary review process would allow for more flexibility but a higher level of review, and development would have to demonstrate compliance with design guidelines.
- **Reasonable requirements.** Support good design without being cost prohibitive.

### Anticipated Results

Recommendation	Example of a building that would be approvable	Example of a building that would NOT be approvable
Livability.	<p>Use of various materials; private outdoor space for each unit, entrance oriented toward the street, articulated façade.</p> 	<p>Entrance is not visible, few windows, minimally articulated façade.</p> 
Compatibility.	<p>This multifamily building "steps down," respecting its shorter neighbor to the left.</p> 	<p>This multifamily building is too close to its single-family neighbor.</p> 
Safety.	<p>This common open space is functional and visible from surrounding units.</p> 	<p>This common space is unappealing and effectively unsupervised.</p> 
Sustainability.	<p>Landscaping cools the site and captures rainwater; functional windows save energy.</p>  	<p>Fixed aluminum windows leak heat and don't allow occupants to control the temperature..</p> 