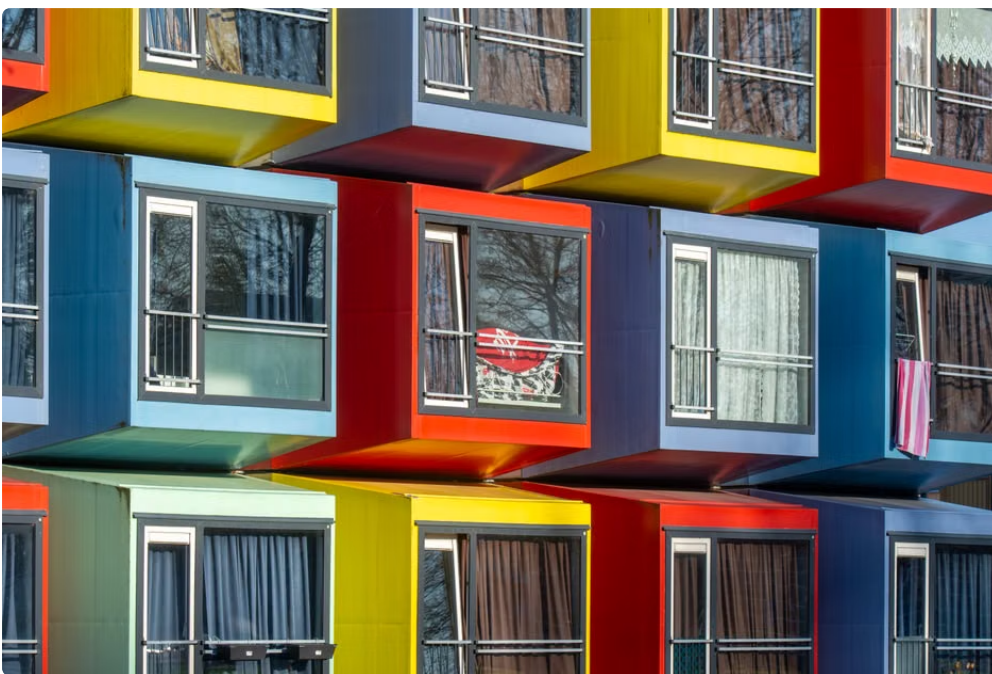


The housing crisis in many U.S. metropolitan areas is driving innovation not only in design but also in construction methods. Workforce housing—a critical component in economic vitality—is increasingly shaped by modular townhomes. These homes promise faster delivery, reduced costs, and high quality, making them a strategic option for builders and municipalities. But can modular townhomes be feasibly configured as duplexes, fourplexes, or row townhomes? And what are the nuances between manufactured and modular housing that impact this? In this article, we'll explore these questions and what they mean for developers, owners, and communities.

Workforce Housing: A Recruiting and Retention Constraint

Many industries in the U.S. West struggle to recruit and retain talent, hampered primarily by a lack of affordable housing near employment centers. Workforce housing—housing affordable to middle-income workers—is becoming an essential focus for developers and city planners alike. Workforce housing often favors multifamily typologies such as duplexes, fourplexes, and row townhomes to optimize land use and unit counts.



Modular townhomes offer a promising solution here. Companies like **Irontown Modular** and **The Other Side Village** specialize in modular multifamily housing that can be rapidly deployed to meet workforce demand. Their ability to tailor units into duplex or fourplex configurations helps maximize space and reduce per-unit costs. Meanwhile, custom outdoor spaces from firms like **My Cozy Outdoors** enhance livability, an important aspect when quality influences long-term resident retention.

Understanding Manufactured vs. Modular Housing: Definitions and Codes

When discussing modular townhomes, it is essential to distinguish between manufactured and modular housing, as they often get conflated.

- **Manufactured Housing:** Built entirely in a factory setting according to the HUD Code (Department of Housing and Urban Development). These units are typically transported whole and set on permanent or semi-permanent foundations. They often have limitations related to design flexibility and are classified differently in zoning and permitting processes.

- **Modular Housing:** Built in sections or modules in a factory environment but adhere to local, state, or regional building codes (such as the International Residential Code). Modules are delivered to the site and assembled on a permanent foundation, indistinguishable from site-built homes once complete.

For developers looking to build row townhomes modular or multi-unit configurations like duplexes or fourplexes, modular housing tends to be the preferred approach due to code compliance, financing ease, and public-sector acceptance. For instance, **Irontown Modular** leverages modular code-compliant building systems designed to optimize production and finish quality, providing flexibility for duplex and fourplex configurations.

Can Modular Townhomes Be Configured as Duplexes, Fourplexes, or Row Townhomes?

The short answer: yes. Modular townhomes can be fabricated and combined into duplex, fourplex, and row formats, and many manufacturers are pioneering these configurations for urban and suburban infill developments.

Duplex Configuration

Duplexes are two-unit buildings sharing a common wall. Modular construction can efficiently produce these by manufacturing two adjacent modules or pairs of modules designed to attach side-by-side. Unlike traditional site-built duplexes that require sequential framing, modular units arrive ready to assemble, reducing site disturbances.

Fourplex Configuration

Fourplexes extend this logic, grouping four modules or clusters of modules into one building. This configuration demands greater coordination but also benefits more from factory precision and factory-built assembly systems. Companies like **The Other Side Village** have demonstrated expertise in delivering modular fourplexes that maximize interior space while meeting strict code requirements.

Row Townhomes Modular Style

Row townhomes, typically three or more units sharing walls, are achievable with modular techniques through repetition of standardized modules. This approach accelerates construction timelines due to repetition [re-thinkingthefuture.com](https://rethinkingthefuture.com) while allowing customization for facade treatments and unit sizes. Modular row townhomes benefit from consistent quality and scalability, ideal for workforce housing projects with tight deadlines.

Permitting Workflow and Inspections for Modular Projects

One of the critical factors influencing the adoption of modular townhomes in multifamily configurations is the permitting and inspection process. Since modular housing adheres to local building codes, jurisdictions require specific workflows that balance factory manufacturing with onsite inspections.

1. **Initial Plan Review:** Modular designs must be submitted to local building departments, often supplemented by factory QA and engineering certification documentation.
2. **Factory Inspections:** Modular units undergo inspections within the factory setting from third-party agencies or local inspectors authorized by the jurisdiction.
3. **Site Inspections:** After modules are delivered, inspections focus on foundation, utility hookups, unit assembly, and finishing details.
4. **Final Certification:** Once all inspections clear, certificates of occupancy can be issued, allowing tenants to move in.

This parallel workflow often compresses overall schedule, avoiding delays typical in traditional build sequences. **My Cozy Outdoors** works alongside many modular developers to ensure exterior amenities and landscaping align with permitting requirements and site inspections.

Schedule Compression Through Parallel Factory and Site Work

One of the most compelling advantages of modular townhomes, whether in duplex, fourplex, or row configurations, is schedule compression. Factory construction occurs simultaneously with site preparation.

Activity	Traditional Site-Built	Modular Construction
Site Clearing & Foundation	Starts before framing	Begins simultaneously with factory production
Framing & Building Envelope	Sequential on site	Constructed in factory
Interior Finishes	On site after framing	Mostly completed in factory
Assembly	N/A	Quick onsite module installation
Final Inspection & Finishing	Longer due to split trades	Streamlined inspections to finish

This workflow can reduce total project duration by 30-50%, which is pivotal in workforce housing projects where timing aligns with municipal policy or employer demand. Entities such as **Irontown Modular** coordinate closely with permitting authorities to ensure efficient project delivery without sacrificing code compliance or quality.

Conclusion

Modular townhomes are not just a futuristic concept; they are a practical solution for expanding workforce housing in challenging markets. The flexibility to configure modular units as duplexes, fourplexes, or row homes enables developers to optimize land use and meet density goals. Knowing the distinctions between manufactured and modular homes clarifies compliance paths and financial strategies. Additionally, navigating the permitting workflows—balancing factory inspections with on-site approvals—is crucial to project success.



Key industry players like **Irontown Modular**, **The Other Side Village**, and **My Cozy Outdoors** exemplify how modern modular townhome configurations can meet the pressing housing needs while delivering quality, speed, and affordability. For developers and municipalities, modular multifamily housing is a viable, scalable path toward resolving workforce housing constraints.

Additional Resources

- [Irontown Modular Official Website](#)
- [The Other Side Village](#)
- [My Cozy Outdoors](#)
- [HUD Manufactured Housing Program](#)
- [International Residential Code \(IRC\)](#)