

William Peduto
Mayor



Maura Kennedy
Director

**Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections
Code Bulletin – Interpretation**

Applicable Code Section(s): 2009 IRC R202, R302.2	Interpretation#: IRC-R202-2016.4.30
Subject: Definition of Townhouse	BCO: Erik Harless Date: April 30, 2016

Subject of Interpretation:

A Townhouse is defined under the IRC as: "A single-family *dwelling unit* constructed in a group of three or more attached units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with a *yard* or public way on at least two sides."

Question: Does the definition of townhouse require simultaneous construction of the 'group of three or more' single-family dwelling units? Is a new single-family dwelling unit constructed to be attached to previously existing units still considered a townhouse?

Interpretation:

The term 'townhouse' and definition are clearly referring to a unique type of single-family dwelling unit. The code identifies requirements for each building within its context. That is, the intent of the code is not to prescribe requirements for groups of buildings, but of each building independently. Under *IRC R302.2 Townhouses*, each townhouse is considered a separate building, and the requirements are per building.

The code further does not address phased construction of adjacent buildings in order to determine safety requirements. The unique hazards presented to a single-family dwelling unit attached to other buildings in a group is the condition driving the code requirements, regardless of when the adjacent buildings within the group are constructed.

When a single-family dwelling unit is constructed under the IRC, such that the resulting context is that it is in a group of three or more attached units, whether other units of the group are existing or proposed new, it will be deemed as a *townhouse*.