

Proposed Code Modification to FBC 8th Edition (2023)

By: John Barrios, CBO, Hillsborough County

Revise Definition in the FBC-R 202 as follows

~~**[RB] TOWNHOUSE.** A single-family *dwelling unit* not exceeding three stories in height constructed in a group of two or more attached units with property lines separating such units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with a *yard* or public way on not less than two sides.~~

~~**[RB] TOWNHOUSE.** A building that contains three or more attached townhouse units.~~

~~**[RB] TOWNHOUSE UNIT.** A single-family *dwelling unit* in a townhouse that extends from foundation to roof and that has a *yard* or public way on not less than two sides.~~

Revise Definition in the FBC-B 202 as follows

~~**[A] TOWNHOUSE.** A single-family *dwelling unit* not exceeding three stories in height constructed in a group of two or more attached units with property lines separating such units in which each unit extends from foundation to roof and with a *yard* or public way on not less than two sides.~~

~~**[A] TOWNHOUSE.** A building that contains three or more attached townhouse units.~~

~~**[A] TOWNHOUSE UNIT.** A single-family *dwelling unit* in a townhouse that extends from foundation to roof and that has a *yard* or public way on not less than two sides.~~

Reason:

To update the FBC-R and FBC-B townhouse definition with the current IRC and IBC definition. The I-Codes have moved away from defining townhomes in relation to a property line and focused on establishment of a 2-hour fire barrier that totally separates dwelling units from the ground through the roof. The I-Codes recognize that ownership of the dwelling units is not relevant to building and fire safety in this instance.

This change will enable Homebuilders and Developers to build townhouse projects without requiring them to subdivide properties into individual lots which will save considerable time and money in the development process. Requiring Homebuilders and Developers to go through any local subdivision process is a complex time consuming process that ultimately does not afford any higher level of building or fire safety for the occupants of a townhome. The 2-hr fire barrier (party wall) that extends from the grade to the roof in the manner prescribed in the Code is what

provides the highest degree of occupant and property protection. For this reason, we believe the ICC Codes have eliminated the need for establishing property lines between townhomes.

There is a similar but different townhouse definition in FS 481.203, which supports the Architect's practice act, and some may contend this establishes a conflict with the proposed building code modification. We contend the language in FS 481 is meant to provide Architects with the authority to design townhomes and the definition used in the Statute is outdated language brought forward from a much older Building Code. We would profess that the 2 definitions are not technically in conflict since the FS481 version is intended to define what an Architect can design whereas the FBC proposed code definition is intended to define the building type for building code safety purposes in an effort to be consistent with the current editions of the IRC and the IBC.