



## **Karen Parolek**

Co-Founder and Principal, Opticos Design, Inc.

### *Short Bio (85 words)*

Karen Parolek is co-founder and Principal at Opticos Design, an architecture and urban design firm specializing in healthy, walkable and equitable communities. She co-wrote the book “Form-Based Codes” and is a leading innovator and educator in zoning reform across the US and abroad. In addition, as the chief architects of the Missing Middle Housing movement, Karen and her firm advocate for Missing Middle Housing as both a critical element of walkable communities and an effective tool to address the needs for housing choice and affordability.

### *Medium Bio (175 words)*

Karen Parolek, co-founder and Principal at Opticos Design, is a passionate advocate for diverse, equitable, walkable and bikeable communities, user-centered design thinking and impact-driven business.

Karen’s efforts redesigning zoning codes for cities in the U.S. and abroad have helped revolutionize the way we regulate land development in our communities to reinforce more walkable, sustainable places and have led to her recognition as a national expert in Form-Based Coding and zoning reform. She is co-author of the book “[Form-Based Codes: A Guide for Planners, Urban Designers, Municipalities, and Developers](#)” (Wiley, 2008). In 2015, Karen spearheaded the initiative to create [MissingMiddleHousing.com](#) and is regularly invited to speak with organizations around the country about this effective housing affordability solution (especially in light of the housing crisis facing many U.S. cities) and critical element of walkable communities. Committed to developing better ways of running a business, Karen led Opticos to become a founding B Corporation in 2007 and a California Benefit Corporation in 2012—new types of impact-driven companies committed to a triple bottom line of social, environmental, and fiscal responsibility.



*Long Bio (290 words)*

Karen Parolek, co-founder and Principal at Opticos Design, is a passionate advocate for equitable communities, user-centered design thinking, and impact-driven business. She applies her expertise in communication, usability, and information design to her work at Opticos Design, a national leader in urban design for walkable communities. She contributes to cutting-edge initiatives to create smart and sustainable corporations. Her unique mix of skills in graphic design, information design, and architecture—combined with her aptitude for technology and systems thinking—give her an exceptional ability to make things easier to use, clearer to understand, and more accessible to everyone. Karen is a leading innovator whose efforts rethinking and redesigning zoning codes for cities in the United States and abroad have helped revolutionize the way we regulate land development in our communities to reinforce more walkable, sustainable places. She is recognized as an international expert in Form-Based Coding and zoning reform, and she is co-author of the book, "Form-Based Codes: A Guide for Planners, Urban Designers, Municipalities, and Developers" (Wiley, 2008).

Karen is currently focusing on the housing crisis facing many cities in the U.S. and championing the concept of "Missing Middle Housing." In 2015, Karen spearheaded the initiative to create MissingMiddleHousing.com, and she travels nationally and internationally to speak with organizations about this effective housing affordability solution.

Karen co-founded Opticos Design in 2000 and led the company to become a founding B Corporation in 2007 and a California Benefit Corporation in 2012 — new types of impact-driven companies committed to social, environmental, and fiscal responsibility. In her hometown of Berkeley, she is a transportation commissioner, where her effective work led to an invitation to join the steering committee for Vision 2050, a citizen-led initiative for sustainable and resilient infrastructure for the City.

For further questions, please contact [marketing@opticosdesign.com](mailto:marketing@opticosdesign.com).