

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group

Thursday, October 5, 2023

6:00 p.m.

Charles River Room

Public Services Administration Building, 500 Dedham Avenue

AND

Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Meeting ID:

834 7583 6726

(Instructions for accessing below)

To view and participate in this virtual meeting on your phone, download the “Zoom Cloud Meetings” app in any app store or at www.zoom.us. At the above date and time, click on “Join a Meeting” and enter the following Meeting ID: **834 7583 6726**

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Or to Listen by Telephone: Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 Then enter ID: **834 7583 6726**

Direct Link to meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83475836726>

- I. Welcome and Meeting Goals, Heidi Frail, Co-Chair
- II. Approval of Minutes from HONE Meeting of September 7, 2023
- III. Review of Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Compliance Modeling Results, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates*
- IV. Questions and Comments
- V. Next Steps

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group

Heidi Frail	Select Board (co-chair)
Natasha Espada	Planning Board (co-chair)
Kevin Keane	Select Board
Jeanne McKnight	Planning Board
Joshua Levy	Finance Committee
Ronald Ruth	Land Use Attorney
William Lovett	Real Estate Developer
Liz Kaponya	Renter
Michael Diener	Citizen at Large

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Housing Needham Advisory Group (HONE)
Meeting Minutes
September 7, 2023

Place: Hybrid Meeting, Charles River Room, PSAB, 500 Dedham Avenue, Needham
The Board will attend in person. The public may attend in person or via Zoom.

Present: Co-Chair, Heidi Frail; Co-Chair, Natasha Espada; Michael Diener; Liz Kaponya;
Kevin Keane; Joshua Levy; William Lovett; Jeanne McKnight; Ronald Ruth

Remote: Karen Sunnarborg, Community Housing Specialist

Absent: None.

Staff: Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development; Alexandra Clee, Asst.
Town Planner; Amy Haelsen, Director, Communications & Community Engagement

Guests: Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Call to Order

At 7:00 pm., H. Frail called the meeting to order disclosing the meeting is being video recorded.

- I. N. Espada welcomed everyone. Members and guests introduced themselves.
- II. H. Frail reviewed the HONE Advisory Group Purpose and Charge as stated in the enclosed Meeting Packet <https://www.needhamma.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/11949>

HONE has decided to comply with the MBTA Communities Act. The group's work is to make zoning compliance work for the Needham community. Members and the community were reminded to respect different views of one another, speak thoughtfully, civilly and with kindness.

III. Status of Housing in Needham

K. Sunnarborg, Community Housing Specialist presented the housing need included in the Meeting Packet on the Town web site. Her presentation was developed from the Town's Housing Plan which link is on the Planning and Community Development web page.

- Massachusetts is confronting a housing crisis shortage of 108,100 estimated units according to a 2022 national study, largely a result of decades of imbalance between supply and demand driving up prices and causing major problems for existing residents and those who would like to live in Needham. She discussed broader indicators of the housing need.
- Needham has surpassed the 10% affordability threshold under Chapter 40B, currently at 11.85%, and is no longer susceptible to zoning overrides.
- The recent Housing Plan documented a wide range of unmet housing needs.
- Many long-term residents could not afford to buy into today's housing market. Middle-income households are hard-pressed to afford existing housing prices. Rising interest rates and construction costs were exacerbated by the pandemic. People are suffering.
- A financially vulnerable population suggests the need for more subsidized housing.

- A list of some indicators of the housing need was shared with the HONE Advisory Group.
 - o About 21% of renter households had incomes less than \$25,000 in 2020.
 - o Median income almost doubled for homeowners in 2020 to \$203,690 while median income for renters stayed about the same at \$44,361.
 - o The median income renter household could afford maximum rent of \$930 which is impossible to find in the private sector market based on 30% of income for housing costs.
 - o A recent Chapter 40B lottery for 16 units attracted 500 applicants who either were Needham residents, employees in Needham.
 - o The Housing Authority has a waiting list of 143 households including elderly and disabled persons for 50 family units which rarely turn over.
- A growing aging population needs smaller units with accessibility and supportive services.
- Rising housing costs have widened affordability gaps to unprecedented levels. See Housing Plan.
 - o The private housing market has not been creating starter housing.
 - o The median single-family house price was \$1,325,000 in July 2023 requiring income of more than \$353,000 based on 80% financing.
 - o The Needham median income household earns \$182,813 affording a \$693,000 home.
 - o Figures were discussed for "cost-burdened" households.

The hope is that the rezoning will boost housing production leading to some greater housing diversity and affordability over time and address some community housing needs.

IV. Overview of MBTA Communities Act

Eric Halvorsen of RKG Associates presented an overview of the Act's Law and Compliance available in the Meeting Packet. E. Halvorsen and Emily Innes of Innes Associates worked with EOHLC (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities) formerly known as DHCD. They hope to help Needham figure out a compliance solution for the Needham community.

The goal is for members to understand what Chapter 40A, Section 3A is and is not and how to interpret the guidelines. Tests will measure how the community moves forward with compliance requirements. EOHLC determines guidelines, calculations and regulations for each community.

What is the MBTA Communities Act MGL c. 40A Section 3A?

The law established a requirement that each of the 177 designated MBTA Communities (MGL c. 161A Section 1) must have zoning that:

- Provide at least one reasonably sized district where multi-family housing is permitted as of right
- Cannot have age-restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children
- Must have a minimum gross density of 15 dwelling units per acre
- Part of the district must be located within 0.5 miles from a commuter rail, subway, ferry, or bus station, if applicable. Because Needham has multiple stations, the requirement is high.

What is the purpose behind the new law?

- Massachusetts has a housing shortage, and we need to produce more housing.

- The amount of housing that is financially attainable to most households is dwindling.
 - The Commonwealth is at a disadvantage to compete for businesses, jobs, and talent.
- Placing housing near transit is good policy for housing, economy, transportation, and climate.

What the MBTA Communities Act is NOT.

- It is a zoning mandate, not a building or construction mandate.
- It is NOT: A mandate to build housing. It is a unit target. It does not mean you have to produce the targeted number of units. It means you have to zone to allow for the targeted number of units.
- It is NOT: A housing production target.
- It is NOT: Restricted to only addressing affordable housing needs. It is about housing across the spectrum.
- It is NOT: A one-size fits all tool to address all housing needs in a community. This is meant to address zoning and, hopefully, eventually, production.
- It is NOT: Viewed as optional by the Commonwealth & Attorney General.

He discussed **who is required to comply with Section 3A**, when, and how communities are grouped.

Members were shown a map of the 177 MBTA communities. Needham's deadline to submit the compliance application to EOHLC is December 31, 2024 or earlier.

What are the implications if the Town does not comply?

Per Section 3A, it would make Needham ineligible for certain grant programs. In March 2023, the Attorney General's office put forth guidance that all MBTA communities comply with the law.

Regarding **Loss of Opportunity**, Alexandra Clee suggested we understand how this requirement can be tailored to address housing and economic development needs.

Members discussed where the funds would come from for Housing Authority projects.

- Local capital projects fund (unit needs)
 - HA is interested to tap into MassWorks for infrastructure around big redevelopments.
- HONE will not be commenting on funding for HA at this time.

MBTA Communities is a tool, it is not the tool.

The Continuum of Housing and Supportive Tools - Needham has a lot of tools available for those unsheltered, those extremely/low income, and those moderate income/workforce, market rate.

Zoning is not housing production. Additional factors guide production such as: market strength, financial feasibility to build, developable sites, sellers, available labor, community desirability.

E. Halvorsen detailed the Compliance Requirement process and how things are measured and modeled. The presentation is included in the Meeting Packet.

Compliance tests include land area, capacity, and zoning to be in line with the guidance. These tests are not iterative but depend on each other. The relationship between each test and measurement is key to creating compliant district(s) and zoning.

Test #1 - Land Area

Land area tests tell us if Needham's districts meet or exceed the minimum number of acres required and if the correct percentage of land area is located within the commuter rail station area.

Components of the land area tests we need to complete include:

- District location, district size, contiguity of the district

Contiguity was defined. Cautions with districts were discussed. Members discussed "excluded land" such as waterways and whether the zoning could include the library as excluded land to maintain a contiguous zone. Members discussed meeting the minimum Compliance Requirement versus community wants.

Zoning will drive the capacity component in the buildout and density measures. The model runs off a handful of key parameters. It is important to figure out the uses, what type of multi-family you want to encourage through zoning, lot size, dimensions (height is critical to the model); parking ratio is critical; open space ratios both of which take away buildable area, density restrictions you want in place (lot area per dwelling unit, FAR limitation, open space limitations, etc.). The more restrictions you put in, the more it affects the zoning.

Whatever you do with parking should be the model not the exception.

Members discussed street parking restrictions versus off-site parking for the building models.

Test #2 - Unit Capacity

Tests tell us if Needham's districts will allow enough multi-family housing to meet or exceed the minimum unit capacity, if the correct percentage of units are located within the commuter rail station area (0.5 mile radius), and if the density meets or exceeds 15 dwelling units per acre.

A common misconception about MBTA Communities is that the unit capacity is a housing production target. The Town does not have to produce units; it must adopt zoning that will allow for the required number of units.

How is multi-family housing defined under Section 3A?

It is defined as a building with three or more residential dwelling units or two or more buildings on the same lot with more than one residential dwelling unit in each building.

Members discussed present minimum square footage for lot size in business zoning versus MBTA Communities zoning. District gross density examples were used. Section 3A gross zoning was defined.

The unit capacity measurements must work in concert with the district land area metrics to ensure compliance with the density requirements.

The push and pull between district size, district location, excluded land, zoning regulations and unit capacity all impact the final density metrics.

E. Innes discussed **Zoning and Existing Units**.

- Why we cannot count existing developments
 - Why we cannot count projects we know are about to be developed.
- Unit capacity is a measure of possibility, not a count of existing project dwelling units. If zoning changes, a property owner has the option to do something different. Examples were cited. Members agreed the community needs to understand what is happening with MBTA Communities.

Members asked if Needham has zoning we think would comply with this law, could we submit it to EOHLC? Yes, but Needham knows the Town does not comply with MBTA Communities.

Zoning Guidelines and Requirements

In addition to the district and unit capacity tests, the MBTA Guidelines place additional restrictions on the zoning that can be applied to an MBTA District. These considerations were highlighted for members in the presentation available in the Meeting Packet.

Affordable Housing requirements cannot exceed 10% of the total units offered at no less than 80% of the area median income. If you want to go above 10% and/or below 80%, the Town must complete an Economic Feasibility Analysis to prove the requirement will not create a financial hardship for new development.

New mixed use guidelines (not mandatory mixed use) - We have a mixed use district here and our MBTA Communities district there. We can use a portion of the mixed use district here for a credit for the number of units we are zoned for over there. EOHLC will provide further calculation guidance. This is beneficial for some communities who want to preserve commercial or mixed use areas but were concerned that multi-families would take away from commercial areas. You can keep your mixed use district and get a bit of a credit.

Members discussed whether a district could be zoned with no standalone multi-families allowed; yes because it's not an MBTA Communities district.

You can incentivize mixed use in exchange for extra height or density. In addition to restrictions on zoning dictated by MBTA Guidelines, we have to determine how much housing could be built under current or proposed zoning for a given district. Zoning parameters are just some of the zoning components used to test the unit capacity of an MBTA district. The more restrictive the zoning, the fewer units produced. The more permissive the zoning, the more units produced.

You do have to be careful that the zoning for multi-families is not more restrictive than any other zone in the district. Examples were cited (retaining on-site stormwater, etc.).

V. Review of the Scope of Work and Finalize Timeline

Lee Newman, Dir., Planning & Community Dev.; Eric Halvorsen, RKG Assoc.; Emily Innes, Innes Assoc.

L. Newman described the scope of work and timeline in the Meeting Packet.

Scope of Work

- COMPLIANCE TESTING - Utilize the MBTA compliance model and GIS to test configurations of MBTA zoning districts. Determine which districts might comply with Needham's requirements.
- ZONING SCENARIOS - Develop 2-3 zoning scenarios based on the results of the modeling exercise and review with Town staff and the HONE Advisory for feedback.
- BUILD-OUT, FISCAL IMPACT, 3-D MODELING, FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY
 - o Conduct a build-out analysis of proposed MBTA districts
 - o Conduct a fiscal impact analysis of future housing development (tax revenue generation, municipal costs)
 - o Produce 3-D renderings of 3-5 locations across districts emblematic of development types
 - o Test financial feasibility implications of changes to Town's inclusionary zoning to ensure new regulations do not negatively impact ability to build in Needham.
- ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS - Develop a draft of the zoning bylaw. Design guidelines that will apply to MBTA districts. Review the Town Staff and HONE Advisory.
- REPORT - Provide a draft and final report detailing project components for Town Records which serves as formal submittal to EOHLC as part of compliance documentation.

Timeline

September 2023	HONE Kick-off
September/October	MBTA Modeling
October 2023	EFA Analysis
November 9, 2023	Public Meeting 1
November/December	Advanced Modeling
January 17, 2024	Public Meeting 2
February 15, 2024	Draft Zoning presentation to HONE Advisory
March 2024	Public Meeting 3
April 4, 2024	HONE Advisory meets to review final zoning and final report
April 2024	Close-out

K. King suggested HONE can submit to EOHLC in April 2024. We're buffering in April/May/June to give the State 90 days to tell us if we would comply before going to Town meeting. If we hear from the State by the end of June, we have July-September 2024. The Planning Board's formal process is to vet zoning that goes to Town Meeting. If the State tells HONE we would not comply, we have that Planning Board timeline to comply. We should be ready for October Town Meeting.

H. Frail suggested using time after HONE submits to EOHLC for community engagement and education. We can cross-examine experts and explain subjects of interest to the community.

VI. Review of Housing Plan Identified Compliance Strategies

N. Espada reviewed the **2022 Housing Plan - Preliminary MBTA Study** in the Meeting Packet.

The Housing Plan map was used to help members understand the corridor from Webster Street to the junction of the Chestnut Street corridor which is already dense with buildings. That area is designated by the zoning group to achieve some of the goals with modification.

- The Needham Heights district area is shown at the top of the map.
- The center of the map is the Central district which has now been included.
- The lower district is the Chestnut Street district.

She reviewed the four starting points recommended last year as stated in the Meeting Packet.

- Allow multi-family housing by right at existing Apartment A-1 dimensional limits.
- Location focused on areas along Highland Ave. to Chestnut St. corridor near transit and where higher density development already exists. Needham Center had been intentionally excluded given former State requirements but now things have changed.
- Rezoning identified existing Single Residence B (SRB) and General Residence (GR) districts to A-1 requirements by right.
- Changing to A-1 provisions in business areas that currently allow multi-family housing and others, including some industrial areas that do not. Minimum lot area would be 10,000 sq. ft. as opposed to 20,000 sq. ft.

See page 33 of the Housing Plan for updated information.

VII. Public Engagement Process - Amy Haelsen, Director, Communications & Community Engagement

Educate stakeholders on MBTA Communities Law. Avail them of opportunities to provide input.

- Stakeholders: homeowners, renters, commercial property owners, developers, businesses, employees, group subsets, seniors, Town Meeting members, persons with disabilities.
- Identify what the community wants and needs to know.
- Information will be shared in the following manner:

2 Postcard mailings	Boston Globe	Community meetings Nov/Jan/Mar
FAQs	Instructions to share input	Needham Channel
Hometown Weekly	Needham Local	Needham Observer
NotifyMe list	On-line Survey	Town Social Media page
Town web site	Weekly Newsletter	

- In-person engagement opportunities, community events, Harvest Fair 10/1/23, Farmer's Market
- Opportunities for home working groups to attend board/committee meetings, and civic groups

- Partners identified to spread the word: Board of Health, Commission on Disabilities, Council on Aging, Council of Economic Advisors, Town Boards, faith-based organizations, Interfaith Clergy Association, identity network groups such as the Indian Community of Needham, Chinese Firms of Needham, League of Women Voters
- Populations difficult to reach: renters in apartment buildings (place posters in the lobby); owners of complexes; ask the business community to inform their customer base
- A. Haelsen will reach out to school PTC heads to funnel information to their networks.

K. King reiterated HONE is a community engagement visioning process. Information on MBTA Communities can be found on the Town web site **NeedhamMA.gov/** Search **MBTA Communities** or scroll down to **Hot Topics** then **MBTA Communities**. Sign up for the **NotifyMe** group so you receive emails only about this work. Email HONE until April at: **planning@needhamma.gov**

Within two weeks, HONE will announce this effort via Postcards making people aware of the first Community Meeting November 9 and how to contact and engage HONE.

VIII. Questions and Comments

What about infrastructure strengths (schools, fiscal, drainage)?

- Get results of the build-out, analysis and susceptibility to change. Ask department heads what are your primary concerns for infrastructure, traffic, police service, fire service, schools if this built-out over the next 15 years? That's the goal for the Assessment.

Does the Planning Board have the 2016 Economic Analysis prepared by John Connery?

- A fiscal analysis has not been done on what consultants think will be the build-out scenarios along this corridor as a function of this rezoning. That is part of the project scope.
- L. Newman will make available older fiscal impact analysis done for the Muzzy site, also for the Needham Center, and Chestnut St. corridor. The rezoning does mirror that analysis. A conversion from the special permit use to an as of right use would be comparable. It was suggested the industrial zoning done along Gould St. could be a good computational model. Members discussed cost factor conclusions of 60 cents for modest one bedrooms units.

In context of MBTA law, how many off-site impacts are permitted regulating a FEMA site?

- The consultant will add that to the list.

Help us come up with a Site Plan Review Bylaw for this kind of housing.

- The sample zoning which E. Innes worked on with EOHLC includes a Site Plan Review section which communities can adopt or modify; if they have their own, the consultant will use that.

A map of Needham commuter rail stops with the half circle is in the Housing Plan.

IX. Next Steps:

The HONE group will meet on October 5, 2023.

Focus on preparing for the October 5 HONE meeting. Have the final plan ready for the November 9 Community Meeting. Members were urged to be familiar with the Housing Plan.

Consultant work October-December:

- Work on fiscal impact, EFA, build-out, and 3-D renderings before January
- Present Scenarios 1 and 2 to department heads; weigh before HONE Advisory.

MOTION: K. Keane moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 am.

SECONDED: J. McKnight

VOTE: H. Frail, aye; N. Espada, aye; M. Diener, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; K. Keane, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Informational - The Meeting Packet is available at: <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

- HONE Agenda 9-7-23
- HONE Advisory Members, Purpose, Charge
- State of Housing in Needham - Indicators of Need
- MBTA Communities - Overview of Law and Compliance (RKG Associates, Innes Associates)
- MBTA Communities Act (RKG Associates, Innes Associates)
- Needham's Compliance Requirements (RKG Associates, Innes Associates)
- Intro to MBTA Communities Zoning (RKG Associates, Innes Associates)
- Needham MBTA Communities - Scope Elements, Timeline (RKG Associates, Innes Associates)
- Needham Housing Plan 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

Appendix 7

Zoning Maps

The following zoning maps provide the visual reference information that illustrate the zoning changes described in text in the Housing Plan. The maps are grouped to illustrate focus areas of Needham where zoning changes are proposed along the commercial spine including Chestnut Street and Highland Avenue that are addressing the MBTA Communities requirements related to three transit station neighborhoods. The final set of full Needham zoning maps show the proposed changes in the context of the entire Town zoning map and these include a few other areas with zoning changes highlighted as part of strategy IV.A.5, Consider Options for Promoting Development in Other Appropriate Locations.

- 7.1 Needham Zoning Maps with Proposed Zoning Changes
(Maps focused on MBTA Station Neighborhoods)**

- 7.2 MBTA District Concept Map of MBTA Station Neighborhoods
(Test fit of transit district acreage required in MBTA Guidelines)**

- 7.3 Needham Zoning Maps with Proposed Zoning Changes
(Full Town Maps of Needham)**

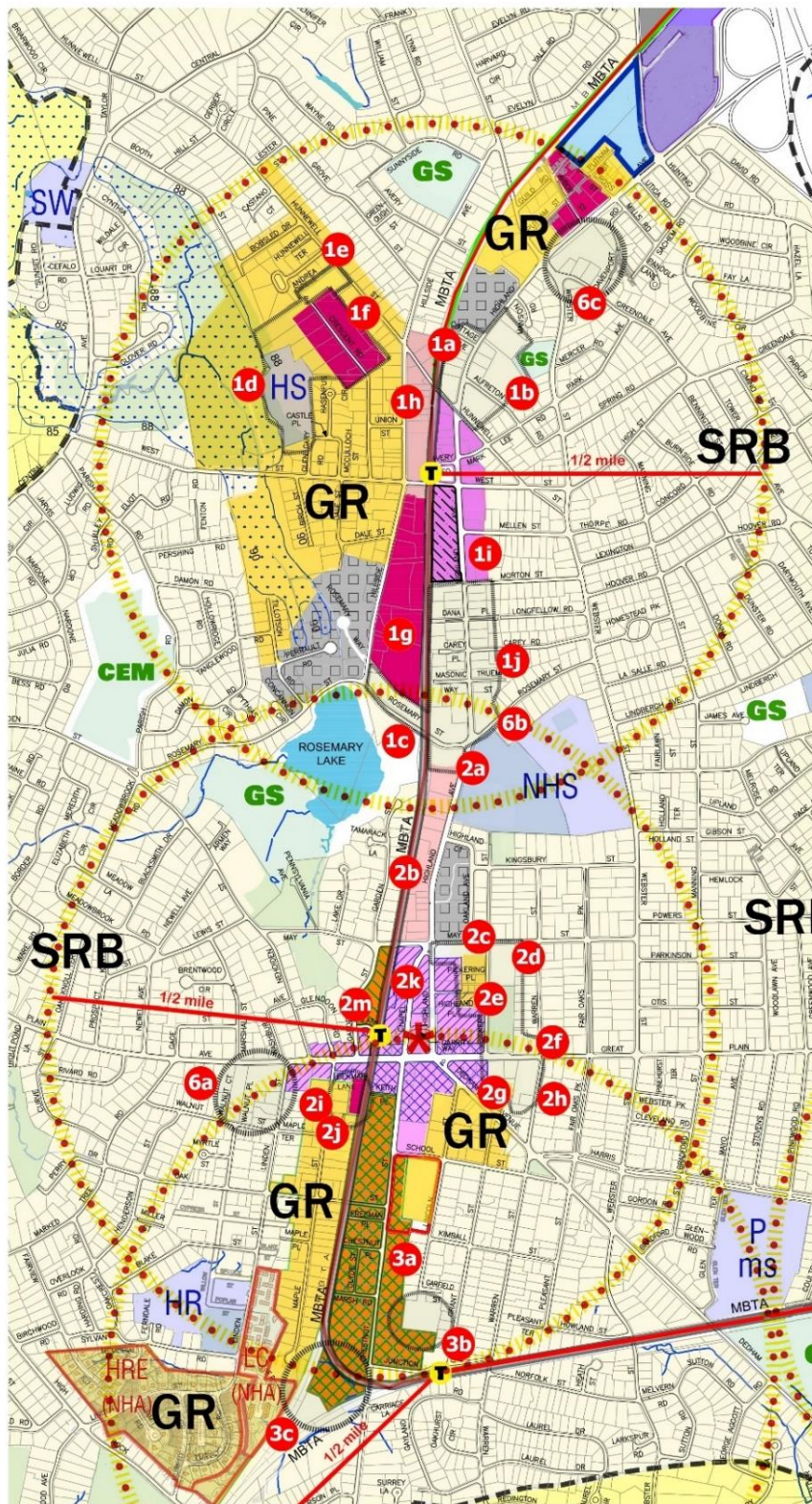
- 7.4 List of Proposed Zoning Changes
(Text descriptions of zoning changes for the transit neighborhoods and
the other areas designated for promoting development.)**

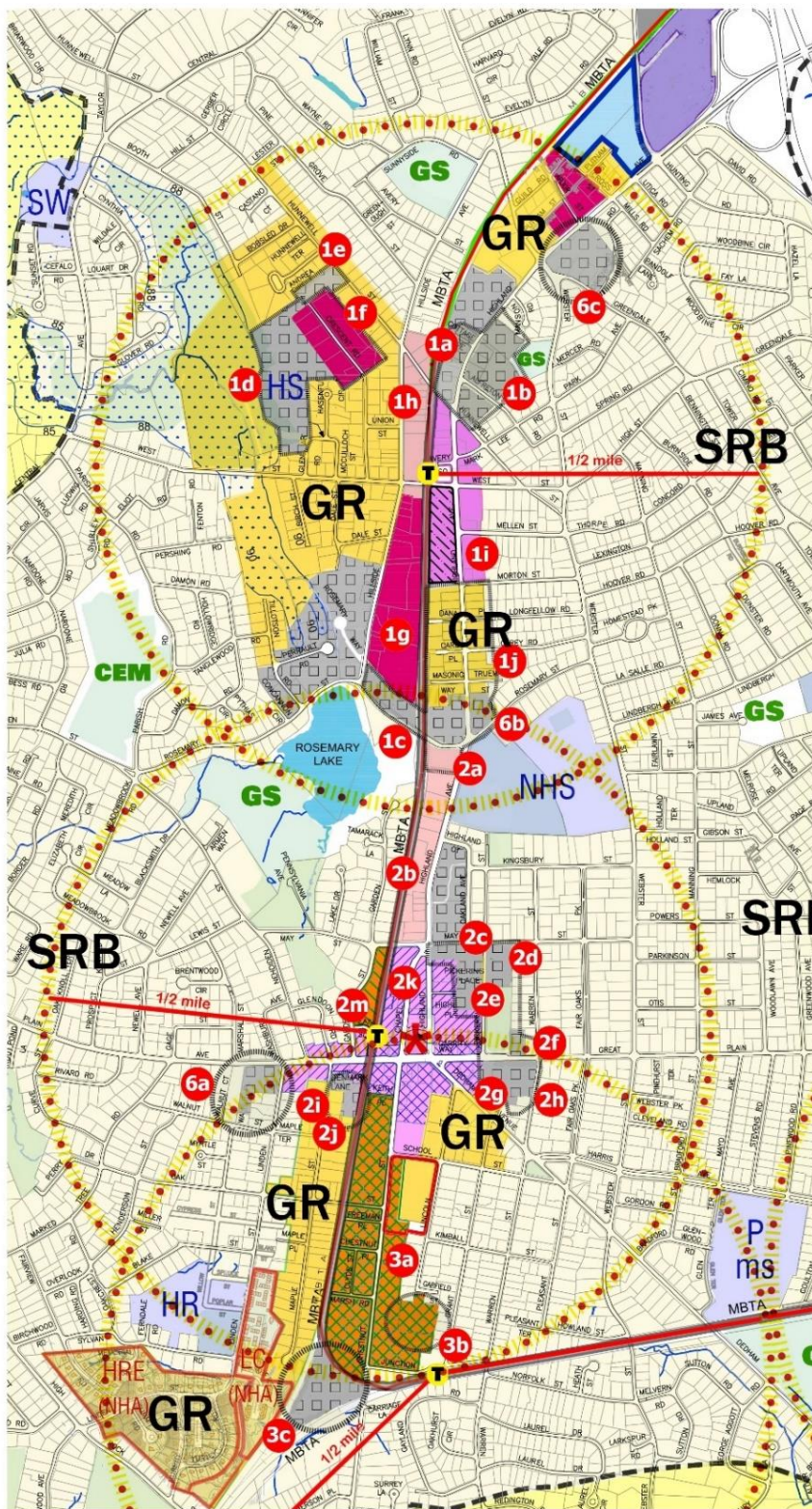
Appendix 7.1

Needham Zoning Maps with Proposed Zoning Changes

(Maps focused on MBTA Station Neighborhoods)

The following Needham Zoning maps have been created to graphically represent the proposed zoning map changes described in the zoning lists on pages 36-38 as part of complying with MBTA Communities Guidelines. The new maps show that the majority of the zoning reform is concentrated in the Needham neighborhoods geographically located near three of the MBTA transit stations that are part of the Chestnut Street / Highland Avenue north / south corridor. This zone, or “spine”, includes the more densely built parts of town with a mix of commercial, institutional, municipal and residential uses with a range of lower to higher density buildings types.



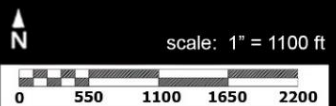


- USE DISTRICTS**
- SRA SINGLE RESIDENCE - A
 - SRB SINGLE RESIDENCE - B
 - GR GENERAL RESIDENCE
 - APARTMENTS A-1
 - APARTMENTS A-2
 - RR RURAL RESIDENCE - CONSERVATION
 - I INSTITUTIONAL
 - B BUSINESS
 - HC-1 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL - 1
 - IND INDUSTRIAL
 - IND-1 INDUSTRIAL - 1
 - ASB AVERY SQUARE BUSINESS
 - CB CENTER BUSINESS
 - CSB CHESTNUT STREET BUSINESS
 - HC-128 HIGHLAND COMMERCIAL - 128
 - HAS HILLSIDE AVENUE BUSINESS
 - MU-128 MIXED USE - 128
 - NB NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS
 - NEBC NEW ENGLAND BUSINESS CENTER
 - ESD ELDER SERVICES ZONING DISTRICT

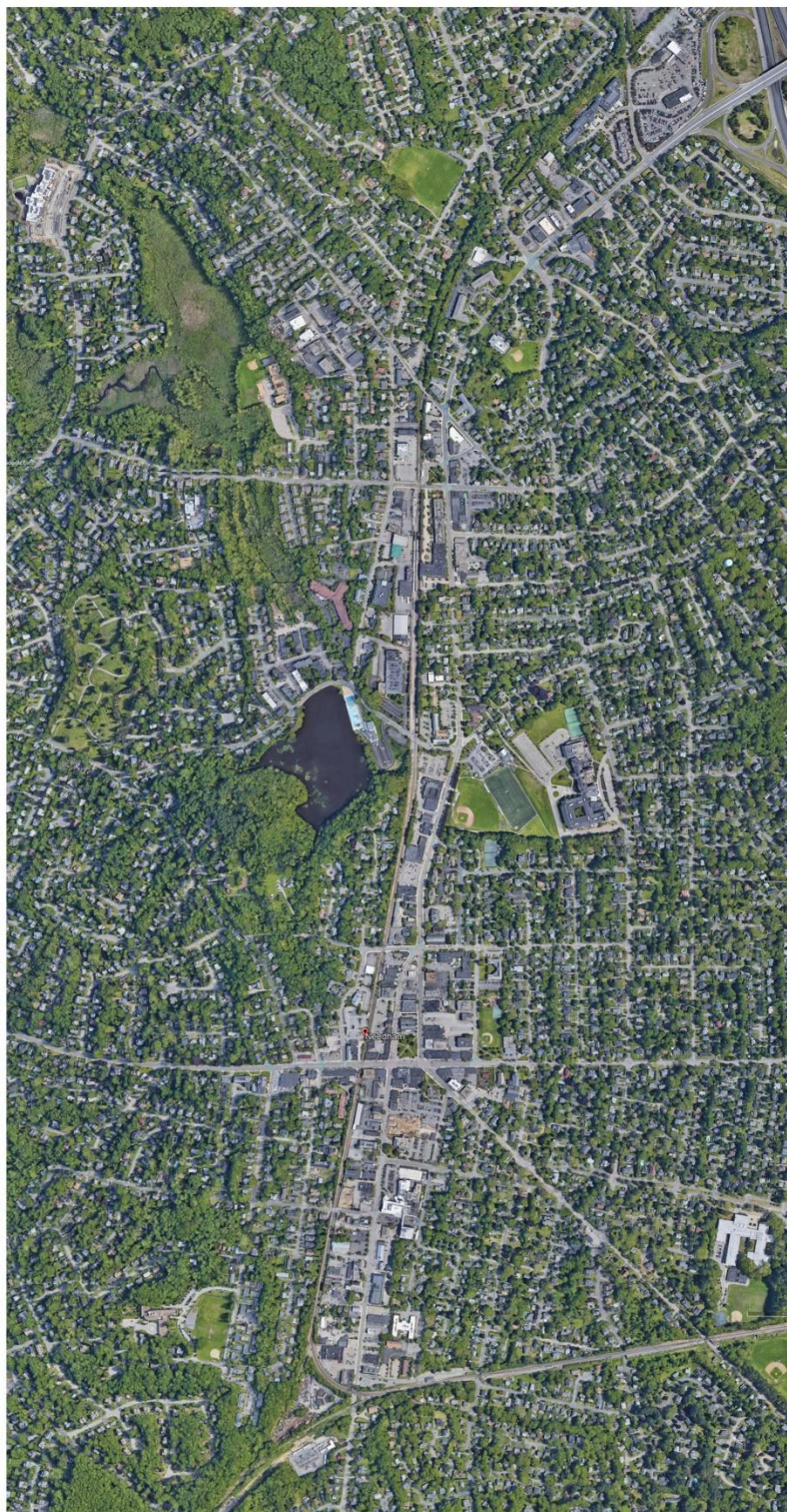
- OVERLAY DISTRICTS**
- WCO WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES TOWERS OVERLAY DISTRICTS
 - AUO ADULT USE OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - MO MEDICAL OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - APD AQUIFER PROTECTION DISTRICT
 - NCOA-1 NEEDHAM CENTER OVERLAY DISTRICT A
 - NCOA-2 NEEDHAM CENTER OVERLAY DISTRICT B
 - LCO LOWER CHESTNUT STREET OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - GSO GARDEN STREET OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - LSGP LARGE SCALE GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATION OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - TMO TEMPORARY METEOROLOGICAL TOWERS OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - MOU MIXED USE OVERLAY DISTRICT (MOUD)
 - ASO AVERY SQUARE OVERLAY DISTRICT
 - FPD July 17, 2012 - FLOOD PLAIN DISTRICT (ALL ELEVATIONS REFER TO U.S.G.S MEAN SEA LEVEL DATUM)

- GS GREEN SPACE (parks, fields etc)
- CEM GREEN SPACE (cemetery)
- TB TOWN BOUNDARY
- P PARCEL
- * TH TOWN HALL
- SS SCHOOL SITES
- NHA NHA SITES (Needham Housing Authority)

Town of Needham
Housing Plan Working Group 2022
December 2022

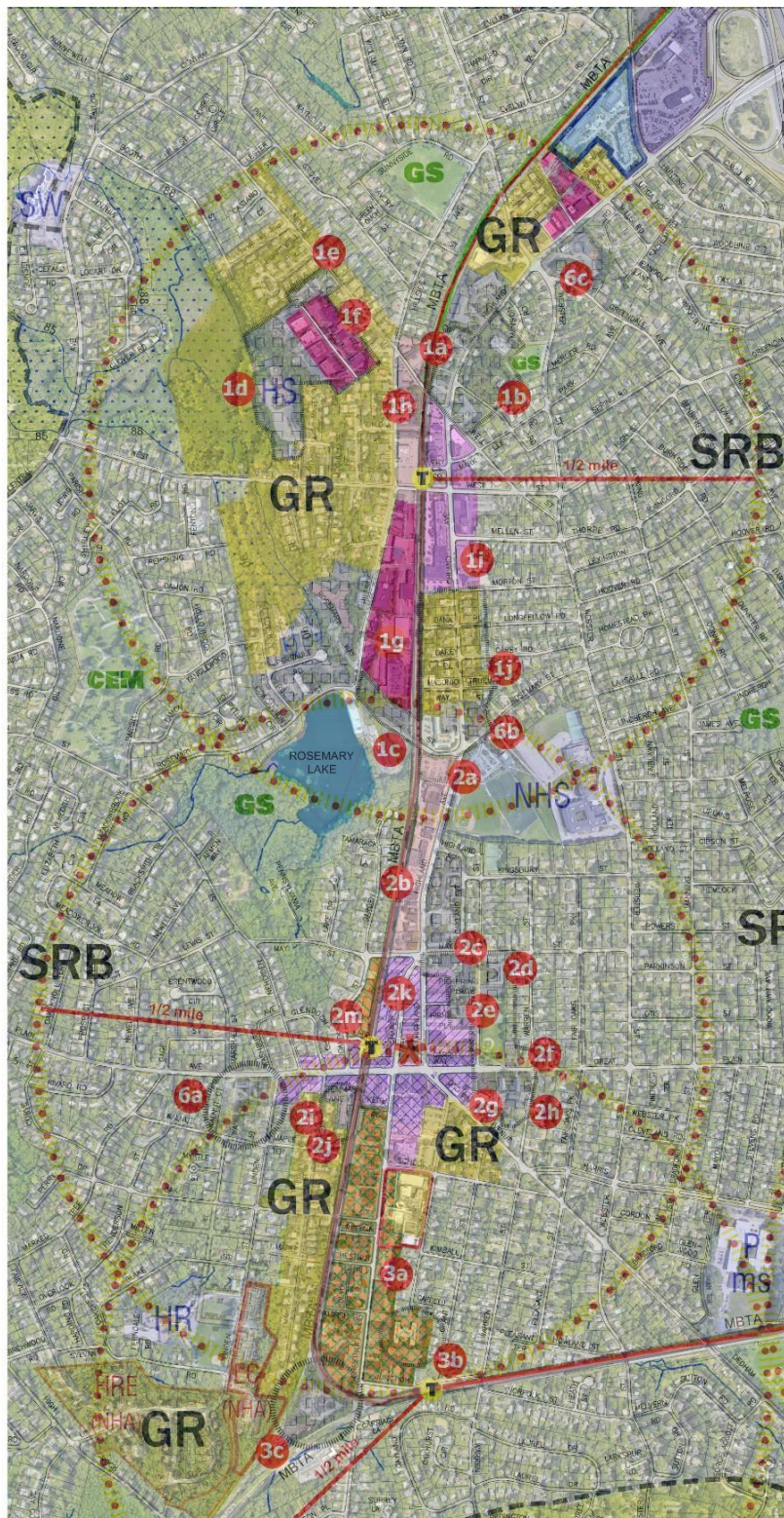


Proposed Zoning Map w/ Changes shown
(by TOD Neighborhood)



MBTA District study - existing aerial





MBTA District study - existing aerial
w zoning overlay



Appendix 7.2

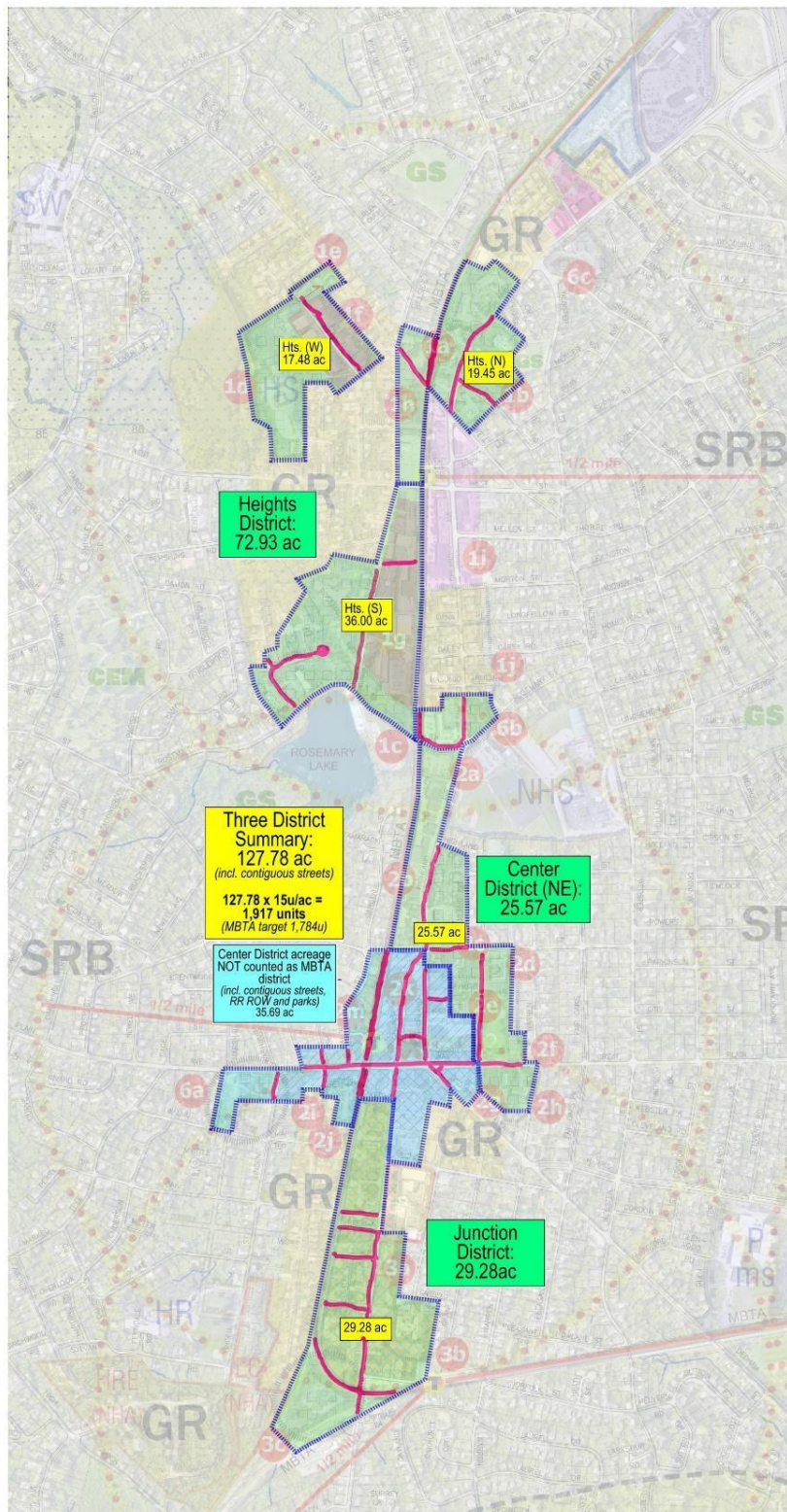
MBTA District Concept Map of MBTA Station Neighborhoods **(Test fit of transit district acreage required in MBTA Guidelines)**

The following map reflects a preliminary test fit analysis of possible “contiguous” land area assembly that could meet the criteria for an MBTA District to be created within ½ mile of three of the MBTA Stations along Needham’s existing higher density mixed-used “spine”, also referred to as the Chestnut Street / Highland Avenue corridor. The “green highlighted” areas illustrate three neighborhoods around the Needham Heights, Needham Center and Needham Junction stations that are closely related to the previous proposed zoning maps, and the zoning lists on pages 36-38, that are organized around the three MBTA stations as:

- **Group 1** (Needham Heights)
- **Group 2** (Needham Center)
- **Group 3** (Needham Junction)

A brief description of the MBTA criteria used in creating this test fit include the following requirements to define a compliant transit neighborhood (see MBTA criteria summarized on pages 33-35):

- Implement zoning reform across areas large enough to accommodate by-right housing capable of producing a total number of new multi-family housing units equal to 15% of the total housing units in Needham ($11,891u \times .15 = 1,784$ units)
- Acreage dedicated to MBTA district zoning must accommodate multi-family housing with a minimum density of 15 units per acre. This translates to approximately 120 acres ($1,784U / 15U \text{ per acre} = 118.9$ acres)
- Create multiple MBTA districts that combine to accommodate 90% of the required acreage, or approximately 107 of 120 acres, within ½ mile of a transit station
- Within these transit districts there is a minimum requirement of 25 contiguous acres for a minimum dedicated area of 50 acres. Since these districts are calculated at a density of 15 units per acre, Needham must have 120 acres zoned to meet the transit district requirements, of which 60 acres must be contiguous.



TOD Neighborhood study - MBTA Districts

Appendix 7.3

Needham Zoning Maps with Proposed Zoning Changes

(Full Town Maps of Needham)

The following Needham Zoning maps have been created to graphically represent the proposed zoning map changes (groups 1, 2 & 3) described in the zoning lists on pages 36-38, as part of the strategy to comply with MBTA Communities Guidelines. The following larger maps show the entire town to be able to include the additional areas listed as groups 4, 5 and all of group 6 on pages 46-47.

(they can be viewed with higher resolution by following these two links:

https://www.needhamma.gov/HPWG_ZoningMap_Proposed

https://www.needhamma.gov/HPWG_ZoningMap_ProposedNew)

The rest of the zoning maps are the same as the maps of the “spine” area along Highland Avenue and Chestnut Street already shown on the previous pages.

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Appendix 7.4

MBTA District Concept Map of MBTA Station Neighborhoods **(Text descriptions of zoning changes for the transit neighborhoods and** **the other areas designated for potential rezoning)**

Accompanying the full Needham maps above (in 7.3) is the list below of the proposed zoning including the three transit neighborhoods (groups 1, 2 and 3) and the proposed changes for the areas designated for potential rezoning under strategy IV.A.5 (groups 4, 5 and 6).

Zoning Recommendations by TOD Neighborhood

ZONING CHANGES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Recommendations for specific zoning by-law changes to be considered are listed below. Many of these proposed changes are related to the requirements for the new MBTA / MA G.L. c.40A, s.3A Guidelines and further study will be required to confirm that the final dimensional limits controlling district density will be able to deliver the gross density (units/acre) required by 3A Guidelines:

Needham Heights District (group 1):

Implement **Apartment A-1** zoning in certain areas now zoned Single Residence B (**SRB**), or General Residence (**GR**) Districts, including locations of non-conforming existing multi-family (MF) uses.

Apartment A-1 – rezone parcels within ½ mile of Needham Heights station, now zoned SRB:

- 1a.** From Hamilton Highlands (Apartment A-1) along Highland Avenue south to Hunnewell Street;
- 1b.** Avery Park Condominium and farther south along Highland Avenue to Hunnewell Street and including the Methodist Church at Hunnewell and Highland;
- 1c.** Extend existing Apartment A-1 zoning across Hillside Avenue and along the northerly side of Rosemary Street adjacent to the Industrial District and up to the MBTA right-of-way and beyond the ROW to Highland Avenue to include the Needham Public Library (see item 1g. below) and Christ Episcopal Church (see item 1j. and 6b. below);

Apartment A-1 – rezone parcels within ½ mile of Needham Heights station, now zoned GR:

- 1d.** Convert Hillside School and the rear portions of 5 lots of the Industrial district on Crescent Road that abut the Hillside School to Apartment A-1;
- 1e.** Convert Brookline Rug parcel to Apartment A-1, but the current use may remain as a prior non-conforming use. It has connection to both Hunnewell and Crescent Road and can be part of a consolidated MF district with the rest of new Apartment A-1 and the Industrial District that is to be rezoned to allow MF by-right as a use (see item 1f. below);

Amend current **Industrial** Districts within 1/2 mile of Needham Heights transit station to allow MF as an additional allowed use with Apartment A-1 dimensional limits with a minimum 10,000 sf lot size.

1f. Add Multi-family housing, at A-1 dimensions, to the uses allowed by right in the Industrial District along Crescent Road;

1g. Add Multi-family housing, at A-1 dimensions, to the uses allowed by right in the Industrial District between Hillside Avenue and the MBTA right-of-way and between West and Rosemary Streets;

Amend current **Hillside Avenue Business** District within 1/2 mile of Needham Heights transit station to allow MF by-right and use Apartment A-1 dimensional limits with a minimum 10,000 sf lot size. Allow mixed-use option by Special Permit.

1h. Hillside Avenue Business from both sides of the Hunnewell intersection south to the south side of West Street;

Amend current **Avery Square Business** District within 1/2 mile of Needham Heights transit station. Adjust / increase current height and story limits where noted. Changes to limits are to be appropriate to their immediate context within their district.

1i. Avery Square Business – increase height from 35 ft. to 38 ft. for mixed-use MF allowed by special permit;

Expand **General Residence** over **SRB** area along the Highland Avenue corridor to allow 2-family and SF conversions to 2-family.

1j. Both sides of Highland Avenue from Rosemary Street to Avery Square Business District (but see item 1c above and item 6b below as to consideration of Christ Episcopal Church at Highland Avenue and Rosemary Street for rezoning to Apartment A-1).

Needham Center District (group 2):

Amend and extend current **Business** District within 1/2 mile of transit to allow MF by-right and use Apartment A-1 dimensional limits with a minimum 10,000 sf lot size. Allow, by special permit, mixed-use MF to 48 ft. and 4 stories with 4th floor setback.

2a. Extend Business District north to Rosemary Street to include portion of Sudbury Farms parcel now zoned SRB;

2b. Business District along Highland Avenue from May Street northerly to Rosemary Street to include all of Sudbury Farms parcel;

Implement **Apartment A-1** zoning in certain areas now zoned **SRB**, **GR** or **Industrial**, including locations of non-conforming existing multi-family (MF) uses.

Apartment A-1 – rezone parcels within ½ mile of Needham Center station, now zoned SRB:

- 2c.** St. Joseph School strip along May Street;
- 2d.** Stephen Palmer former school leased by Town for multi-family housing;
- 2f.** YMCA site on Great Plain Avenue next to Greene’s Field;
- 2g.** 888 Great Plain Avenue (former nursery/garden center);
- 2h.** Baptist and Christian Science Church parcels on Great Plain Avenue, near corner of Warren Street;

Apartment A-1 – rezone parcels within ½ mile of Needham Center station, now zoned GR:

- 2e.** Lots on Pickering Place together with a portion of St. Joseph School parcel;
- 2i.** Consolidate a portion of the Denmark Lane MF housing south of the Needham Center Overlay District and currently zoned GR and combine it with the small Industrial district along the MBTA right-of-way proposed for rezoning to Apartment A-1 that is also part of the Denmark Lane MF project area (see item 2j. below);

Apartment A-1 – rezone parcels within ½ mile of Needham Center station, now zoned Industrial:

- 2j.** Convert the small Industrial district along the MBTA right-of-way to be combined with the front portion of the parcel being rezoned from GR (see item 2i. above) that is also part of the Denmark Lane housing project area.

Amend current **Center Business** and **Overlay District B** and **Garden Street Overlay** District within 1/2 mile of transit. Adjust / increase current height and story limits where noted. Changes to limits are to be appropriate to their immediate context within their district.

- 2k.** Increase height limits in Needham Center Overlay District B for mixed-use MF to 48 ft. and 4 stories with 4th floor setback. No stand-alone MF is allowed in the district;
- 2m.** Rezone Garden Street Overlay District by changing stand-alone MF to be allowed by right, rather than special permit, using the existing dimensional limits.

Note: No further zoning changes are proposed for the rest of the **Center Business** and **Overlay District A**. These areas are critical to Needham as our mixed-use downtown environment where active ground floors for commercial uses need upper levels for commercial and MF opportunities to provide activity and support for our downtown as a vibrant 24/7/365 community. Therefore, stand-alone MF residential is not allowed by-right, but mixed-use with MF may be allowed by special permit in some locations.

Needham Junction District (group 3):

Amend current **Chestnut Street Business** District and **Lower Chestnut Street Overlay** District within 1/2 mile of transit to allow stand-alone MF by-right, and mixed-use with MF by special permit. Adjust / increase current height and story limits where noted. Changes to limits are to be appropriate to their immediate context within their district.

- 3a.** Chestnut Street Business and Lower Chestnut Street Overlay District changed to allow stand-alone MF using Apartment A-1 dimensional limits with a minimum 10,000 sf lot size, and 4-story / 48 ft. limits allowed by special permit for mixed-use MF in the Lower Chestnut Street Overlay District;
- 3b.** Extend Chestnut Street Business and Lower Chestnut Street Overlay Districts to include Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) property on Lincoln Street;

Implement **Apartment A-1** zoning in certain areas now zoned **SRB**, or **Chestnut Street Business** Districts or in locations of non-conforming existing multi-family (MF) or other non single-family (SF) uses. Use Apartment A-1 dimensional limits.

Apartment A-1 – rezone parcels within ½ mile of Needham Junction station, now zoned **Chestnut Street Business**, **Lower Chestnut Street Overlay District** and **SRB**:

- 3c.** Rezone the Hartney Greymont site (now partly Chestnut Street Business/Lower Chestnut Street Overlay District and partly SRB) to be Apartment A-1 to allow MF without allowing mixed-use, with the current use allowed to remain as a prior non-conforming use.

Other Zoning changes not specific to Transit Station Districts noted above but included in strategy IV.A.5 regarding potential rezoning in other appropriate locations (groups 4, 5 & 6):

This Plan also recommends that the Town consider the following options to incentivize new development that is in alignment with the Guiding Principles that are a key component of this Plan.

Consider Rezoning designated residential areas currently zoned SRA to SRB. These specific SRA areas are adjacent to SRB and currently have parcel sizes that are closer to SRB 10,000 SF lots. This would allow for the use of dimensional controls for setbacks and coverages that are more appropriate for these smaller lots:

- 4a.** East side of Hunting Road on both sides of Kendrick Street down to Cheney Street;
- 4b.** East side of Greendale Avenue across from Meadow Road and Kenney Street;
- 4c.** Brookside Road near Wellesley town line;
- 4d.** Clarke Road / Rolling Lane / Forest Street neighborhood.

Amend two Neighborhood Business Districts – these districts are within 1/2 mile of transit, including 59 bus route, and are proposed to be amended to allow MF by-right using Apartment A-1 dimensional limits with a minimum 10,000 sf lot size. Allow mixed-use option by Special Permit.

5a. Neighborhood Business District along Reservoir Street and Central Avenue;

5b. Neighborhood Business District along Great Plain Avenue near the Hersey MBTA station.

Temples, churches and in general, houses of worship - these properties are located throughout Needham, often on prominent parcels at major intersections. Although most are vibrant and thriving communities, these sites may, someday in the future, be re-imagined, often as MF housing opportunities. With this proactive outlook, we are considering whether the town should propose to rezone these parcels as Apartment A-1, with those dimensional limits, or if they should remain as currently zoned in SRB or GR. Another approach for redevelopment could be through the Local Initiative Program (LIP), or “friendly 40B”, process. A sampling of sites are listed below:

6a. Congregational Church on Great Plain Avenue and Linden Street;

6b. Christ Episcopal Church at Rosemary Street and Highland Avenue (see item 1j. above);

6c. Temple Beth Shalom at Webster Street and Highland Avenue;

6d. Presbyterian Church at Central and Great Plain Avenues.

Rezone Needham Housing Authority properties – several NHA properties are in the planning and early design phases of a preservation and redevelopment campaign. Final recommendations for appropriate zoning changes for dimensional and density limits will be addressed when the design and planning goals are more defined. The Linden-Chambers and High Rock Homes developments are within a ½ mile of the Needham Junction transit station, and density of at least 15 units / acre is assumed. Though the projects may have age limits for occupancy, the zoning need not impose such limits. Seabeds Way and Captain Robert Cook Drive developments are beyond ½ mile from transit stations but could still be counted as part of the 10% of the area of multi-family districts that can be beyond the ½ mile limit.

Rezone East Militia Heights property – this property is currently in negotiation to be sold by the U.S. Army to Charles River Center, perhaps in partnership or lease arrangement with the Needham Housing Authority. As with NHA properties, it is not clear at this time what dimensional and density provisions will work for Militia Heights redevelopment.

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group Meeting

Town of Needham, Massachusetts

October 5, 2023



HOUSING NEEDHAM (HONE)

TOWN VISIONING FOR MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

Content

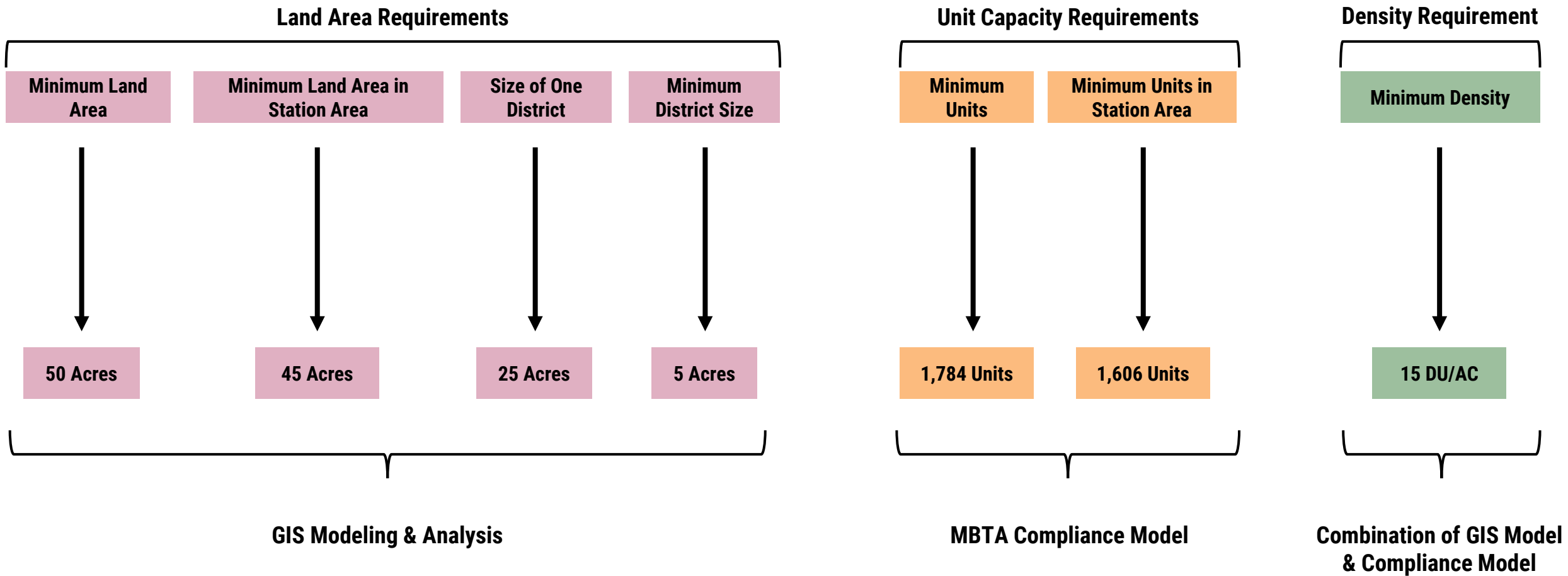
Scenario Overview

Modeling Results

Potential Pathways to Compliance

Scenario Overview

Recap of Minimum Requirements



Existing Zoning Districts

Question to Answer – What would happen if we modeled existing zoning districts and zoning parameters and had to make some changes zoning to allow multifamily housing as of right?

Housing Plan Proposal

Question to Answer – What would happen if we modeled the Housing Plan Proposal rezoning some parcels of land and making slight modifications to zoning parameters?

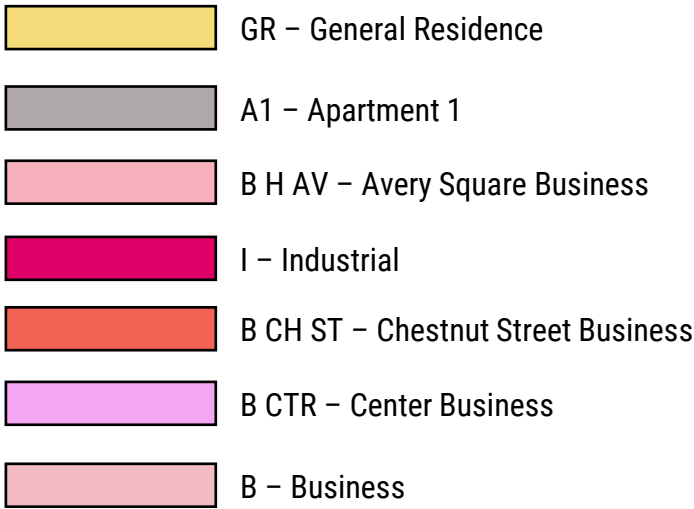
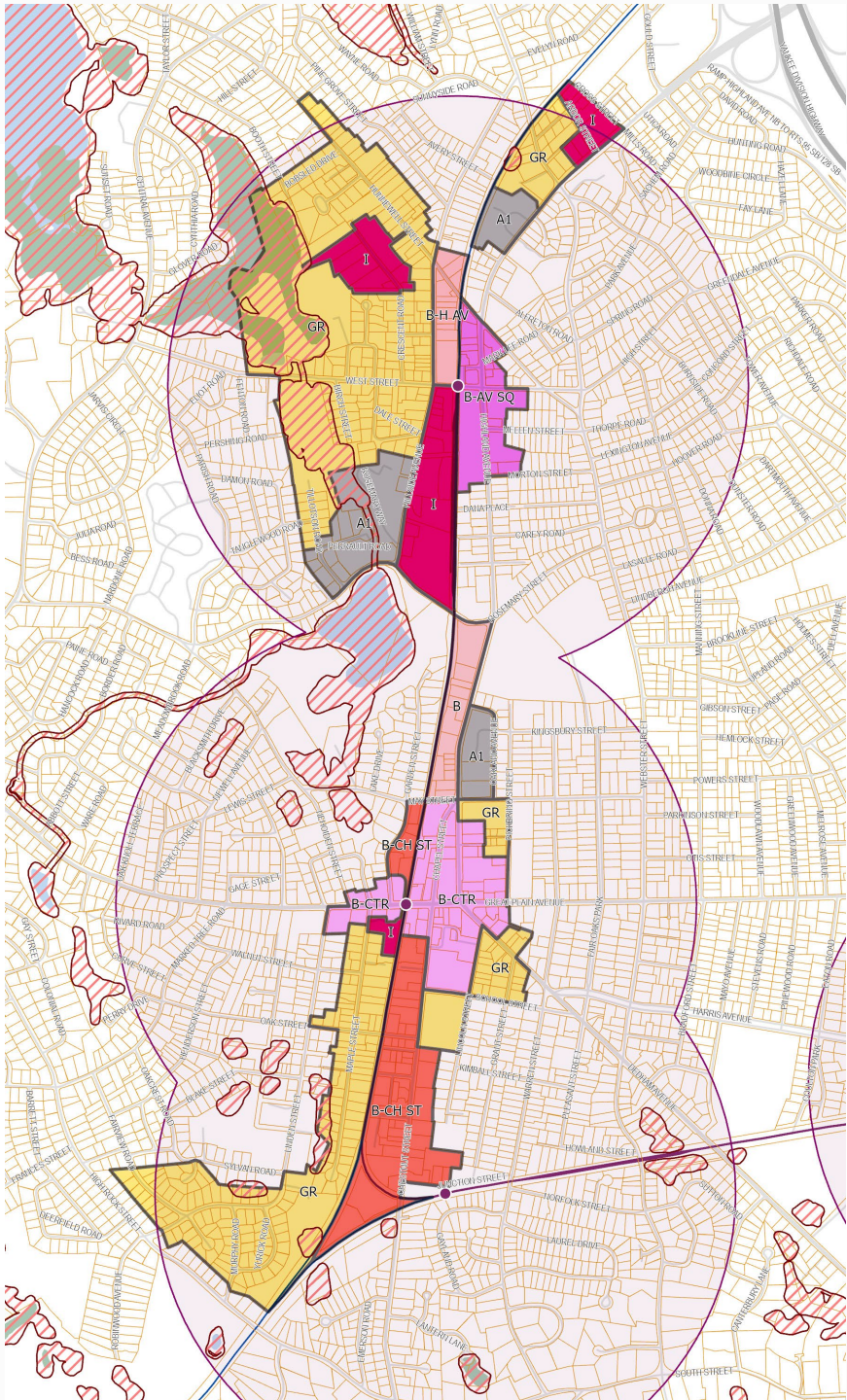
Scenarios for Modeling

Existing Zoning Scenario

Map of the Zoning Districts and Overall MBTA District

Key District Statistics

- Gross Acreage – 307 acres
- Net Acreage – 273 acres
- Acres in Transit Area – 98% (300 AC)



Existing Zoning Scenario

Zoning Parameters Applied in the Model

Zoning Metrics	District Name						
	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street Business	Hillside Ave Business	General Resi	Industrial
Minimum Lot Size	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.0
FAR	0.50		0.70	0.70	0.70		
Max Lot Coverage		25%				30%	25%
FY Setback	25	10	10	20	20	20	20
Rear Setback	20					20	
Side Setback	20					14	
Parking per Unit	1.50		1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Maximum Dwelling Units per Acre	18		18	18	18	2	

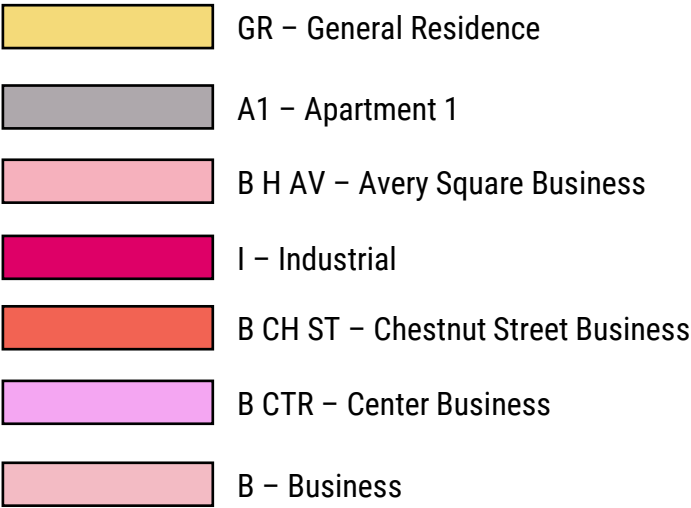
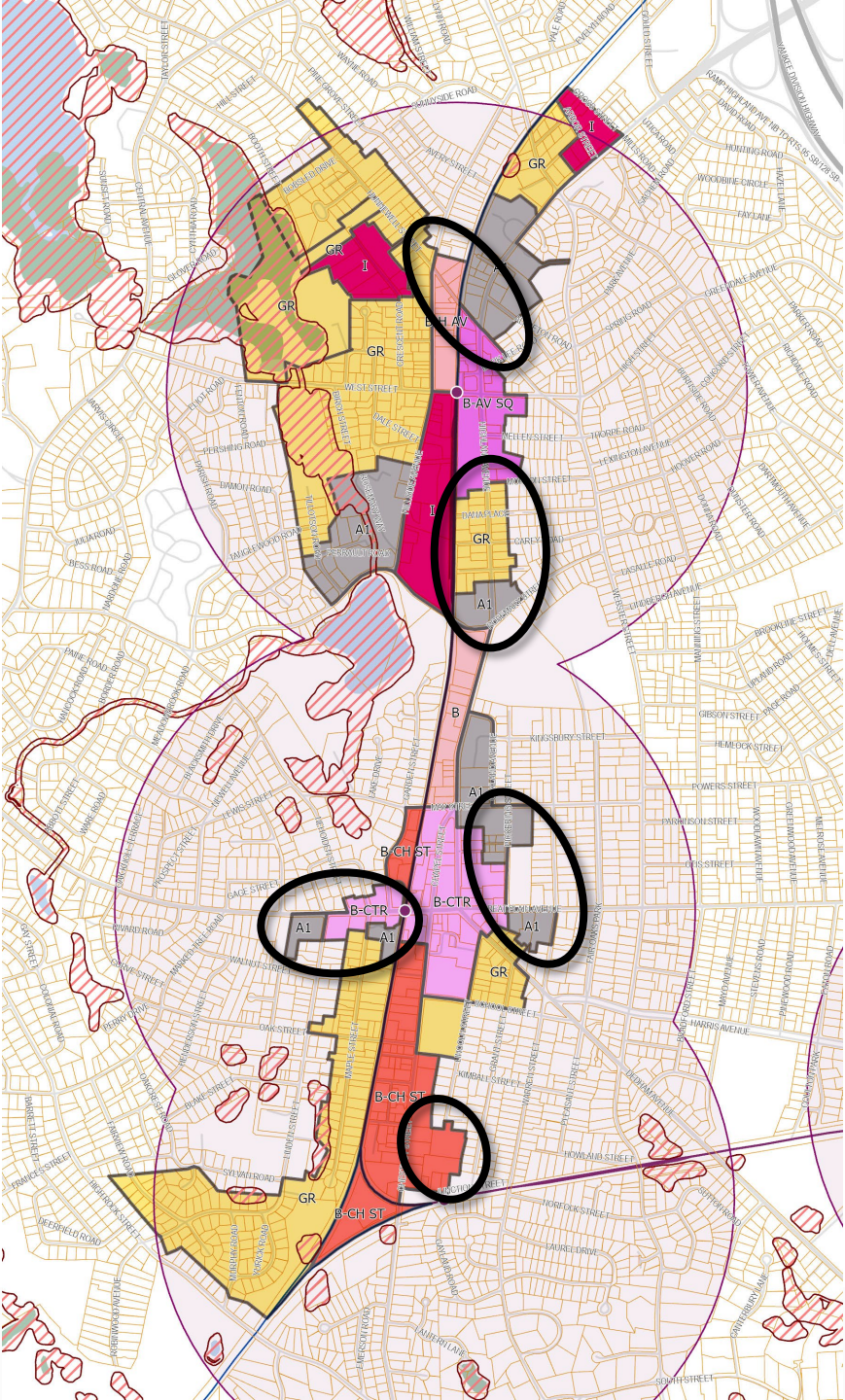
Scenarios for Modeling

Housing Plan Scenario

Map of the Zoning Districts and Overall MBTA District

Key District Statistics

- Gross Acreage – 341 acres
- Net Acreage – 307 acres
- Acres in Transit Area – 99.8% (340 AC)



Housing Plan Scenario

Zoning Parameters Applied in the Model

Zoning Metrics	District Name						
	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street Business	Hillside Ave Business	General Resi	Industrial
Minimum Lot Size	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0
FAR	0.50		0.70	0.50	0.50		0.50
Max Lot Coverage		25%				30%	
FY Setback	25	10	10	25	25	20	25
Rear Setback	20			20	20	20	20
Side Setback	20			20	20	14	20
Parking per Unit	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
Maximum Dwelling Units per Acre	18						

Indicates a change from existing zoning.

Modeling Results

Existing Zoning Scenario

Model Outputs	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street Business	Hillside Ave Business	General Resi	Industrial	Total
Gross Acreage	28.18	9.79	16.13	34.87	7.10	178.57	32.92	307.56
DDD Acreage	25.84	9.79	16.13	34.87	7.10	146.70	32.84	273.27
Unit Capacity	359	210	176	375	46	45	838	2,049
DU/AC	13.9	21.5	10.9	10.8	6.5	0.3	25.5	7.5

- Exceeds district size requirements
- Exceeds unit capacity
- Falls short of DU/AC requirement of 15 DU/AC
- Removing GR subdistrict appears to create compliance boosting DU/AC to 15.8.

Housing Plan Scenario

- Rezoned some SRB and GR to A-1.
- Rezoned small portion of SRB to GR.
- Allow multifamily housing as of right in all zoning subdistricts.

Model Outputs	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street Business	Hillside Ave Business	General Resi	Industrial	Total
Gross Acreage	81.81	9.79	16.13	36.74	7.10	158.45	31.23	341.25
DDD Acreage	62.19	9.79	16.13	36.74	7.10	143.88	31.14	306.97
Unit Capacity	701	210	307	491	56	2,890	528	5,183
DU/AC	11.3	21.4	19.0	13.4	7.9	20.1	17.0	16.9

- Exceeds district size requirements
- Exceeds unit capacity
- Exceeds DU/AC requirement of 15 DU/AC

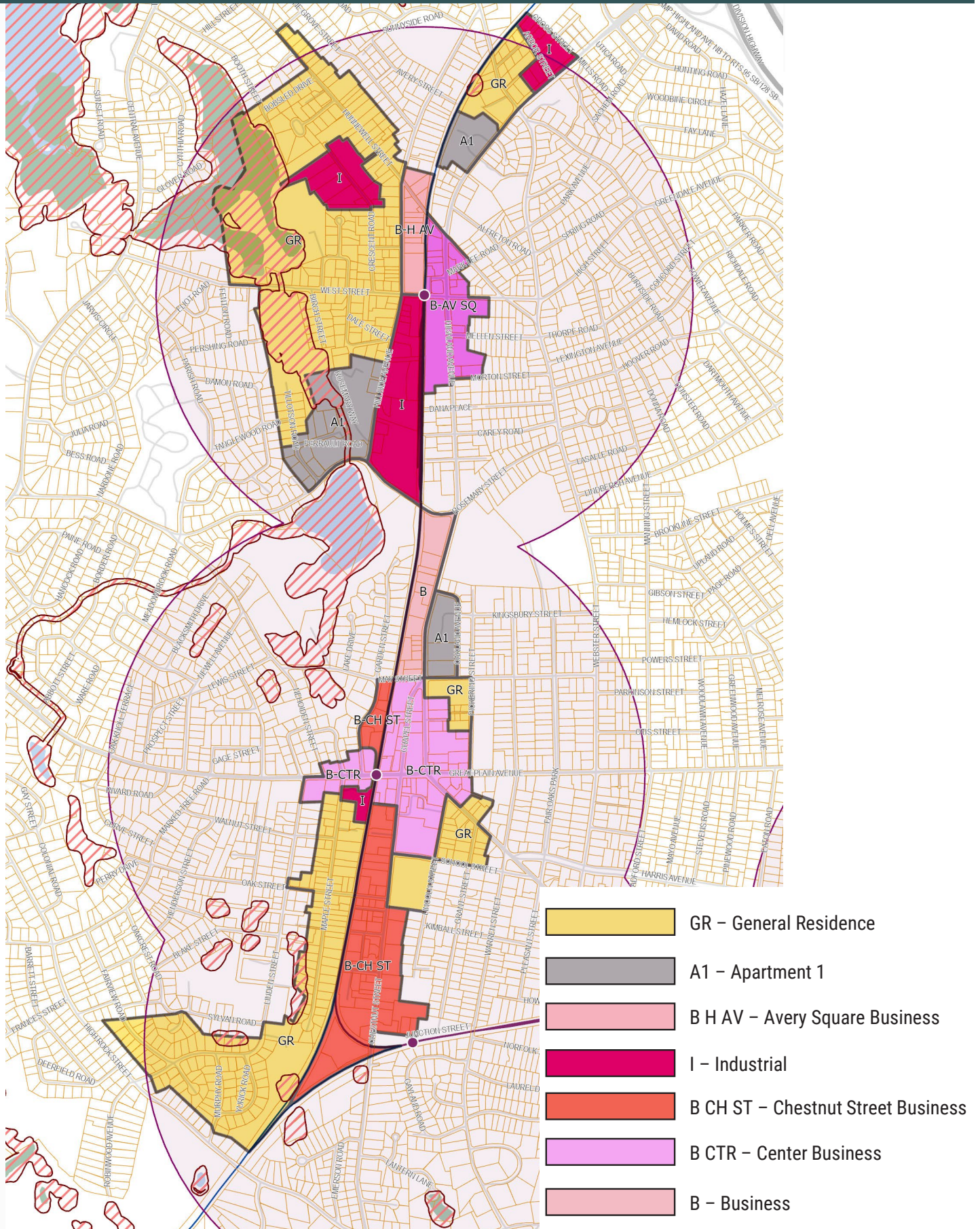
Pathways to Compliance

1. Use existing zoning
 - Choice - drop districts to lower unit capacity and acreage to increase density.
 - Choice – keep district as it is, increase density through more intensive zoning.
 - Choice – combination of the two.
2. Use housing plan
 - Choice - keep everything as it is.
 - Choice - drop districts to lower unit count and size of district.
 - Choice – modify zoning to decrease unit capacity and lower density.

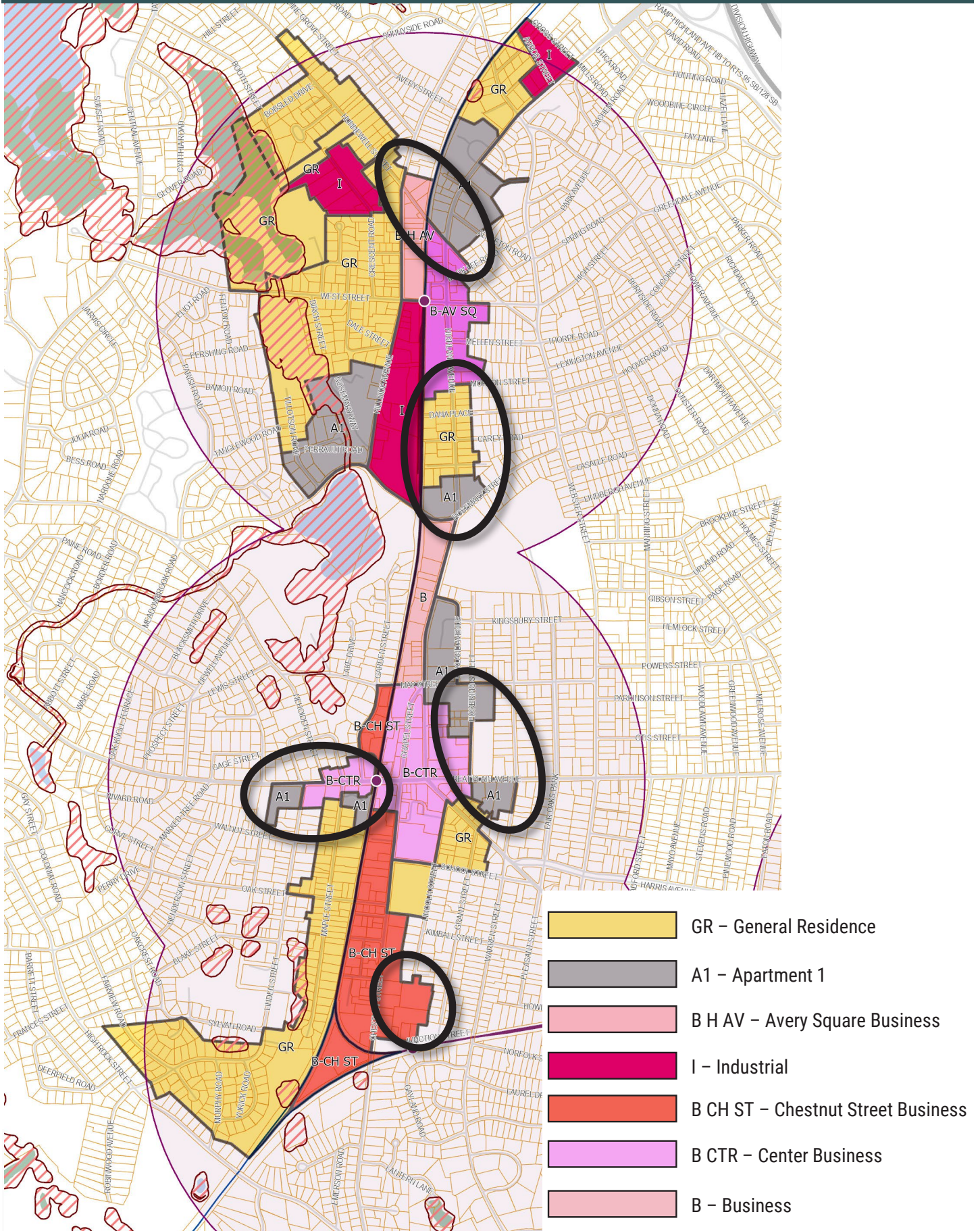
Scenario Summary Table

Model Outputs	Existing Zoning	Housing Plan
Gross Acreage	307.56	341.25
DDD Acreage	273.27	306.97
Unit Capacity	2,049	5,183
DU/AC	7.5	16.9

Map for Existing Zoning Scenario



Map for Housing Plan Scenario

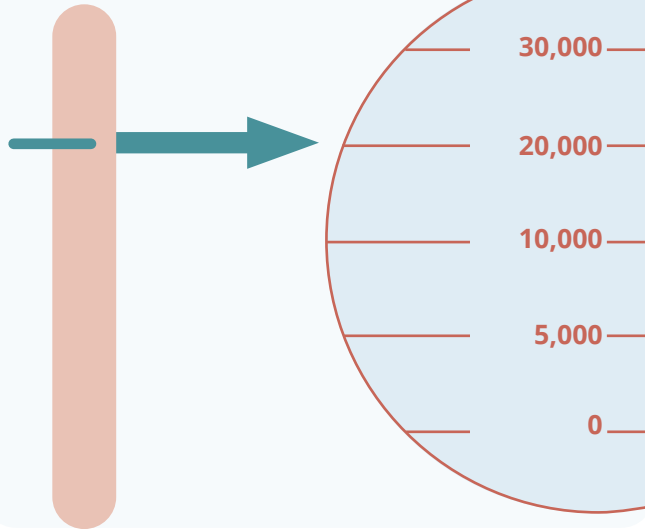


Apartment-1

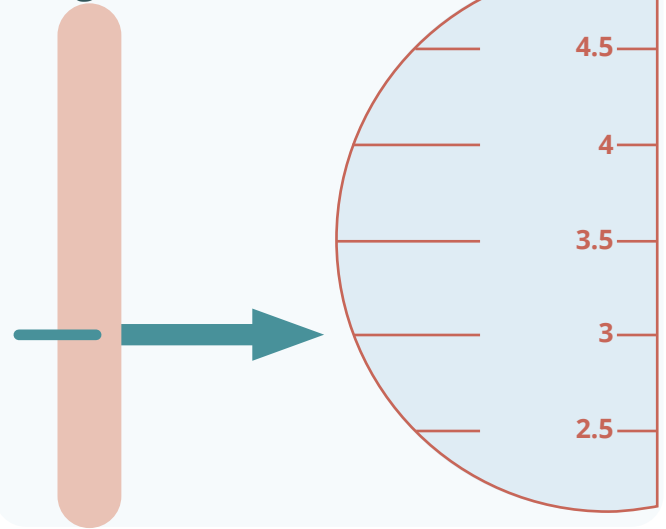
359 | 13.9 | 701 | 11.3

Existing Zoning: Unit Capacity | Density | Housing Plan: Unit Capacity | Density

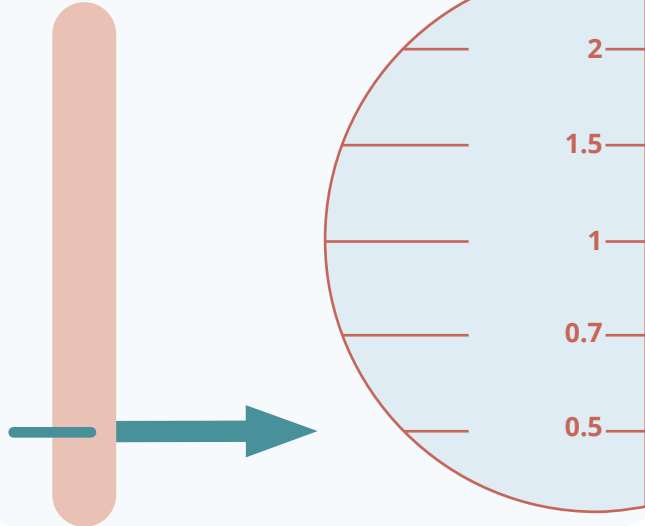
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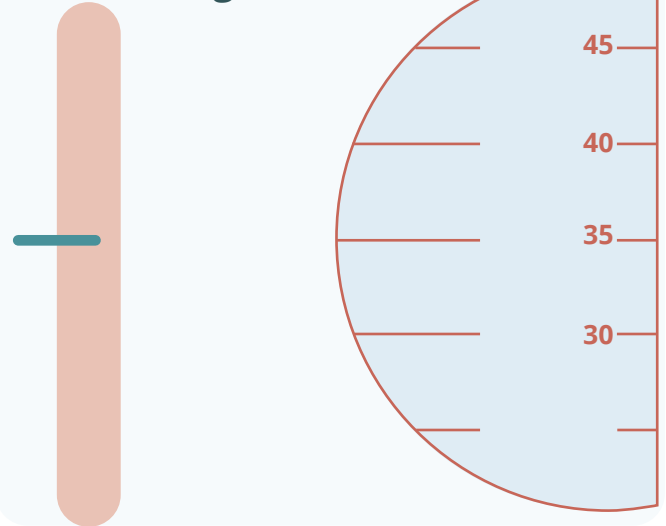
Height (Maximum, Stories)



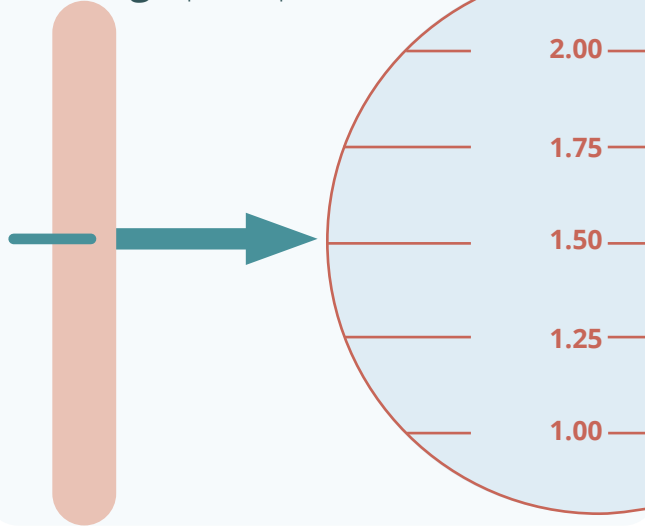
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



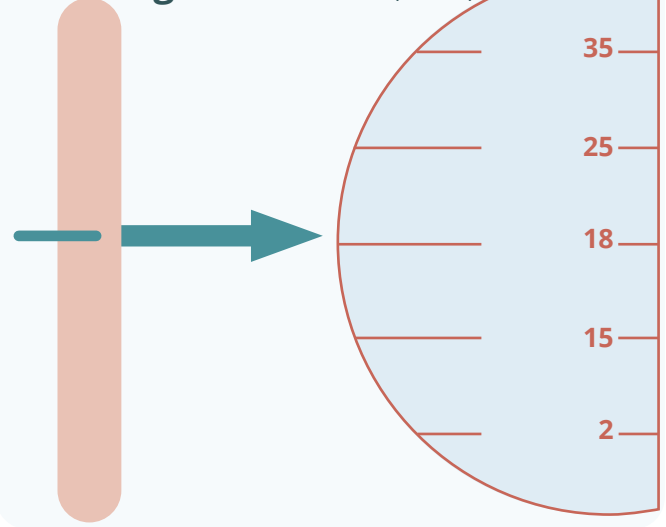
Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



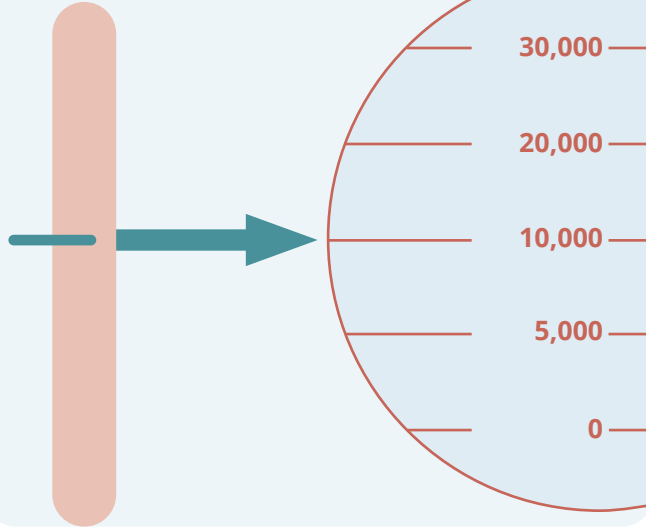
Parking (Spaces per Unit)



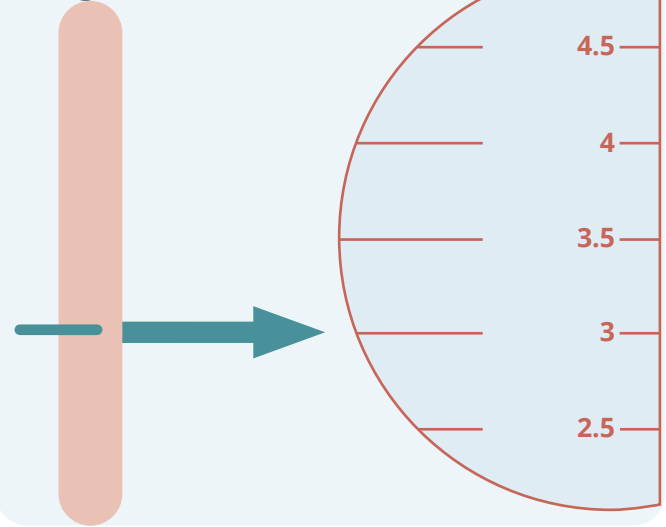
Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)



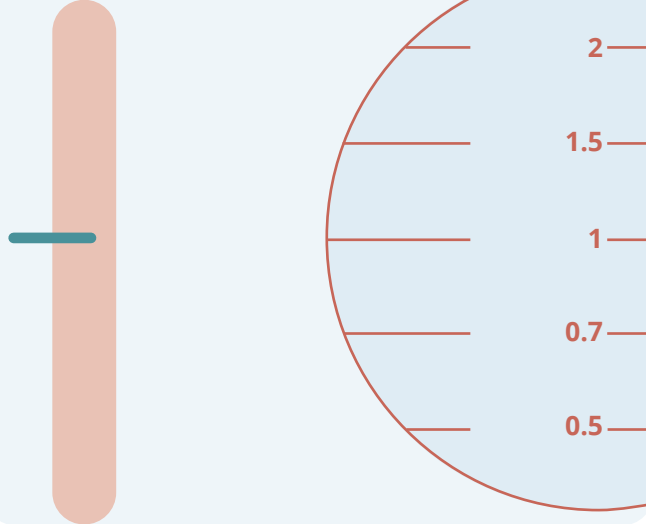
Lot Size (Minimum, SF)



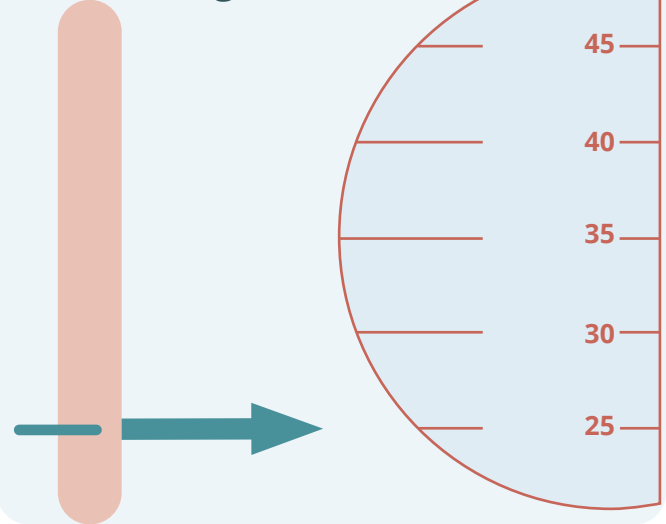
Height (Maximum, Stories)



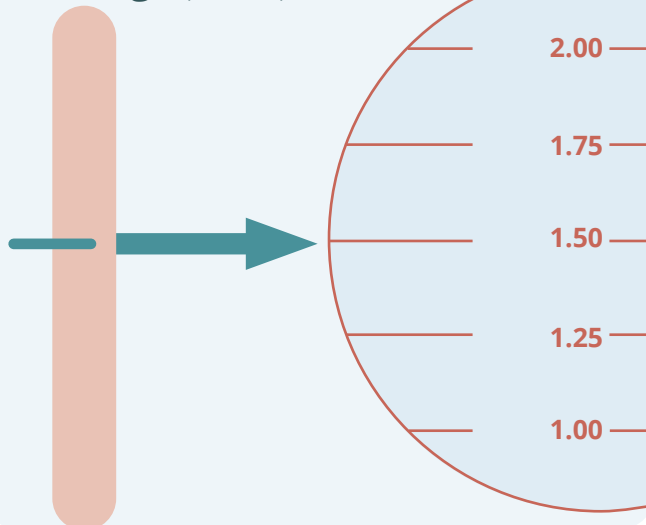
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



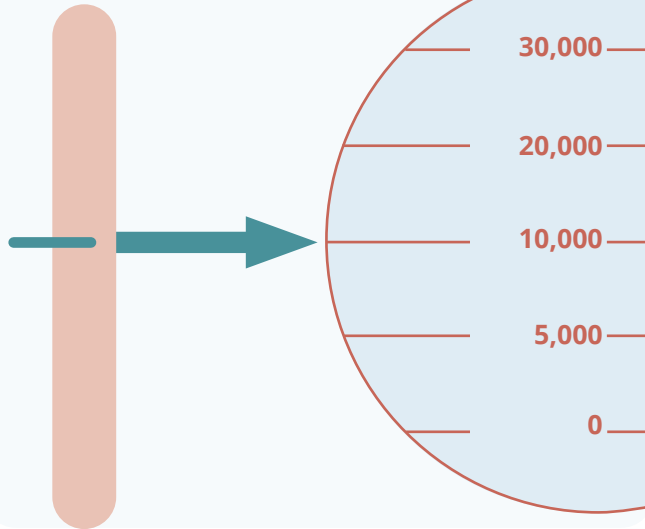
Parking (Spaces per Unit)



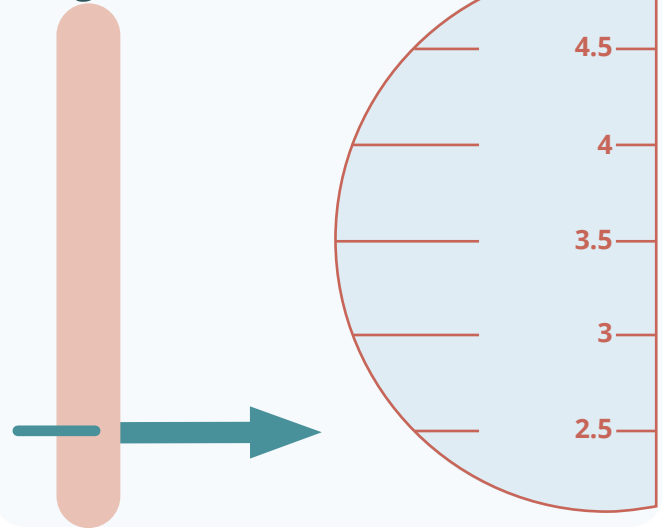
Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)



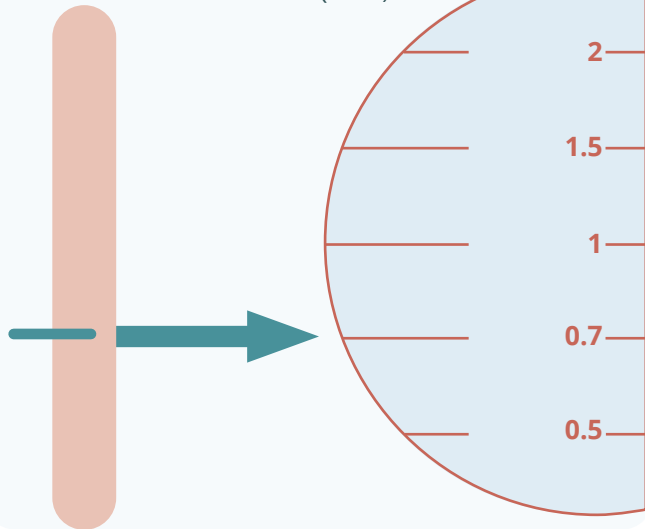
Lot Size (Minimum, SF)



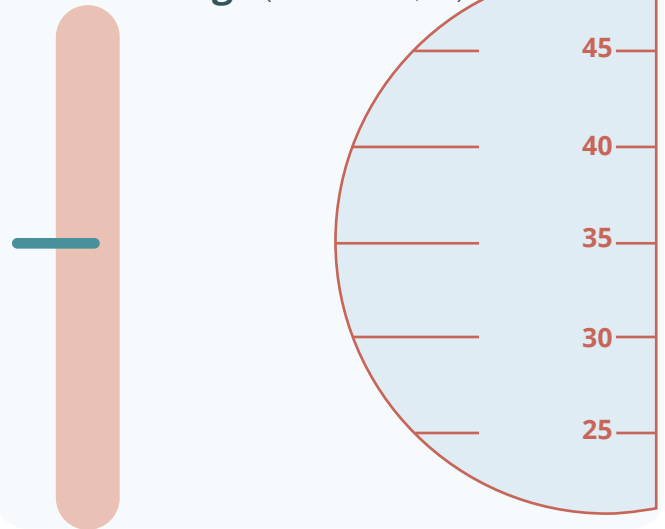
Height (Maximum, Stories)



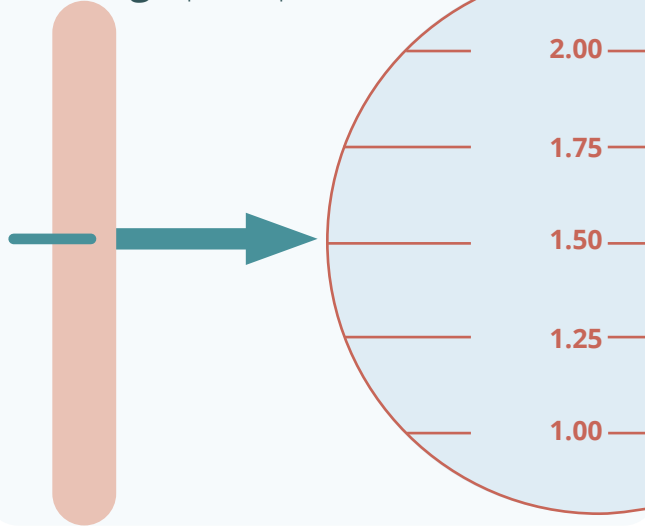
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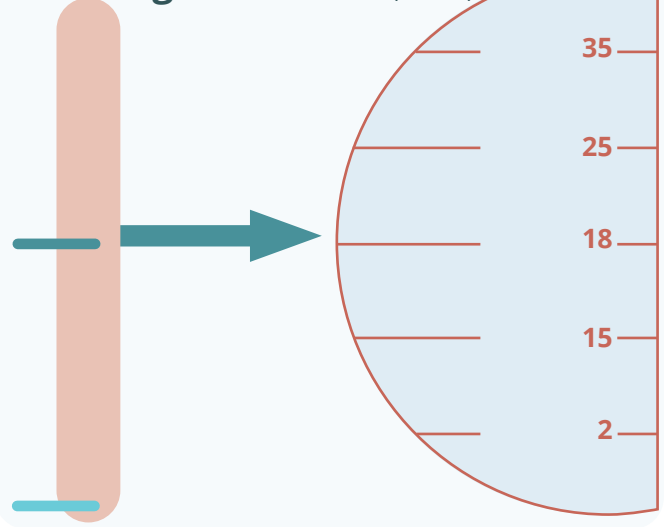
Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



Parking (Spaces per Unit)



Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)

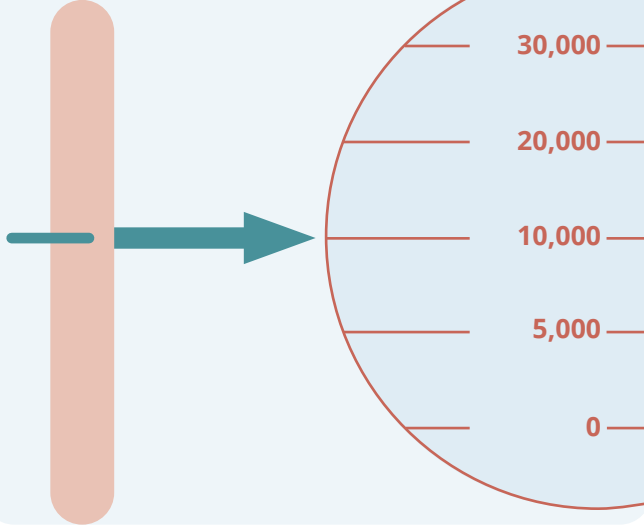


Chestnut Street Business

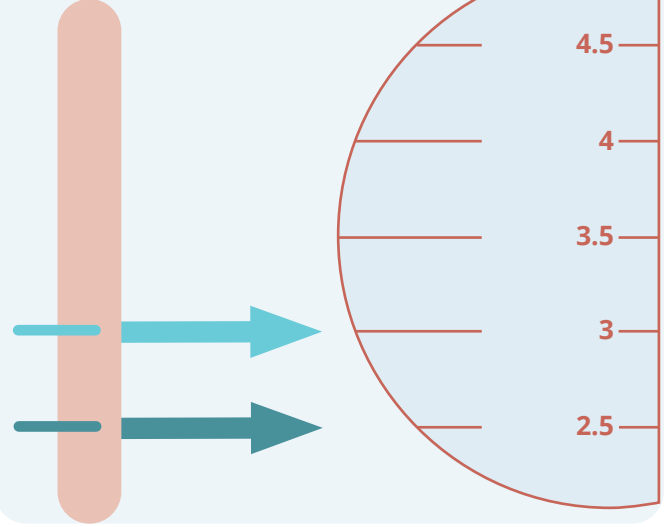
375 | 10.8 | 491 | 13.4

Existing Zoning: Unit Capacity | Density | Housing Plan: Unit Capacity | Density

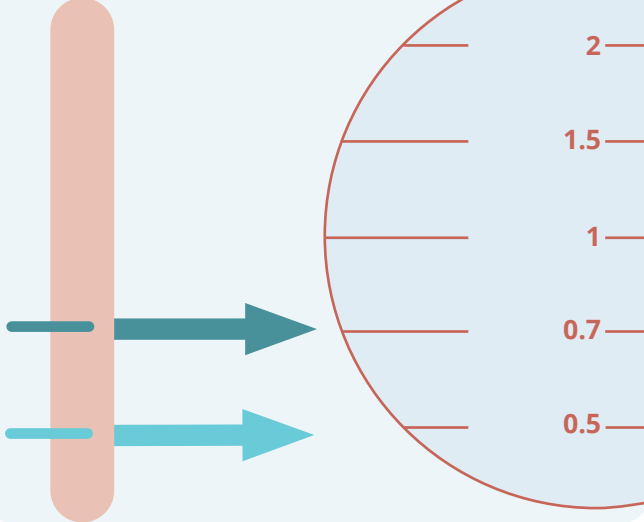
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Height (Maximum, Stories)



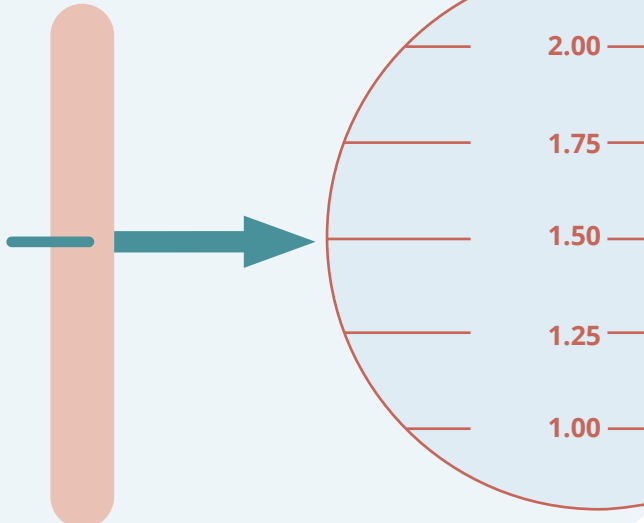
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



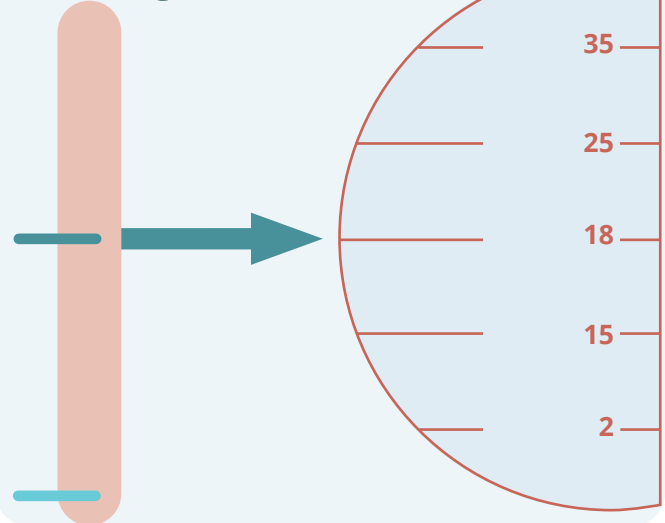
Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



Parking (Spaces per Unit)



Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)

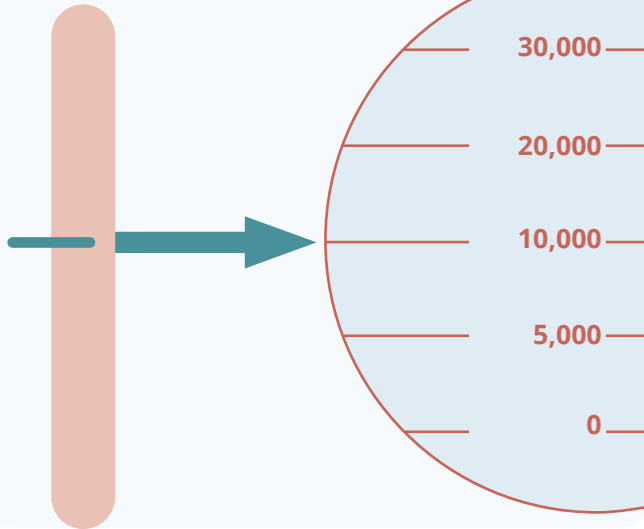


Hillside Avenue Business

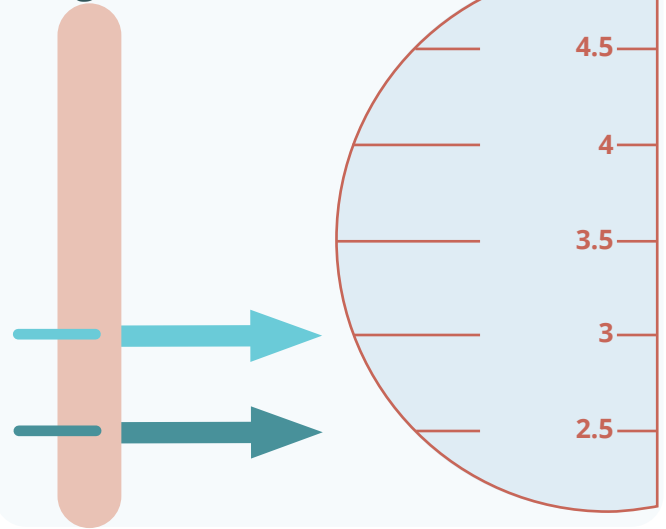
46 | 6.5 | 56 | 7.9

Existing Zoning: Unit Capacity | Density | Housing Plan: Unit Capacity | Density

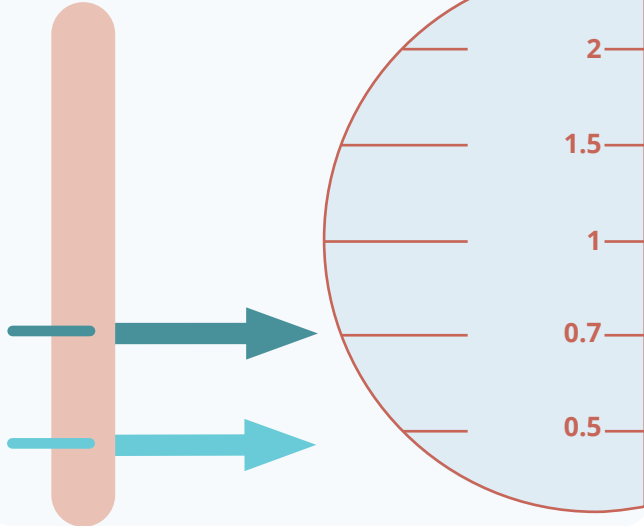
Lot Size (Minimum, SF)



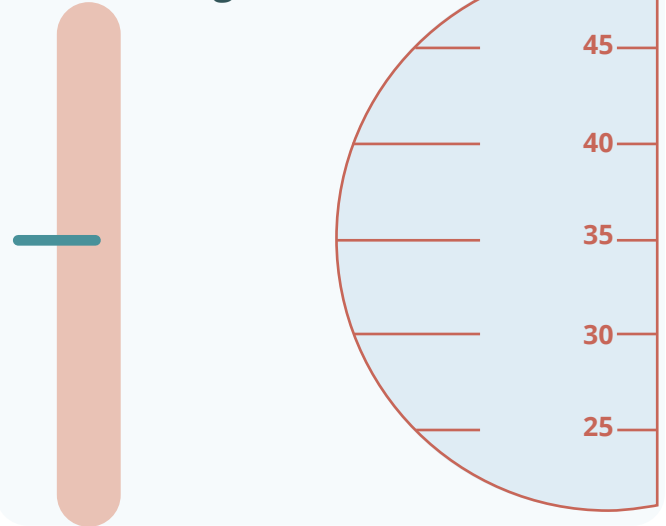
Height (Maximum, Stories)



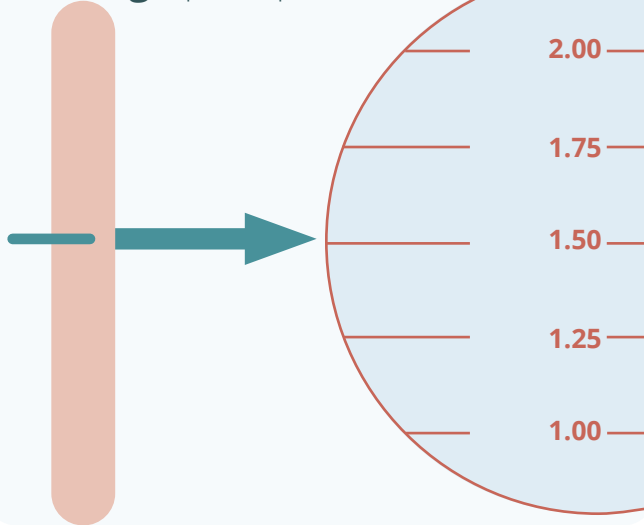
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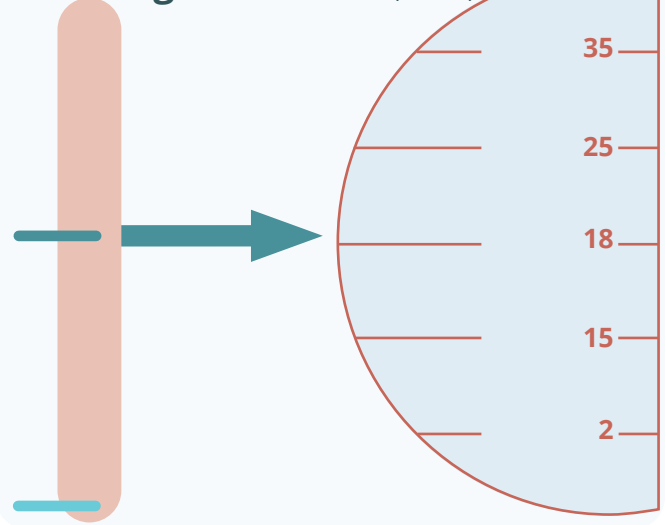
Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



Parking (Spaces per Unit)



Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)

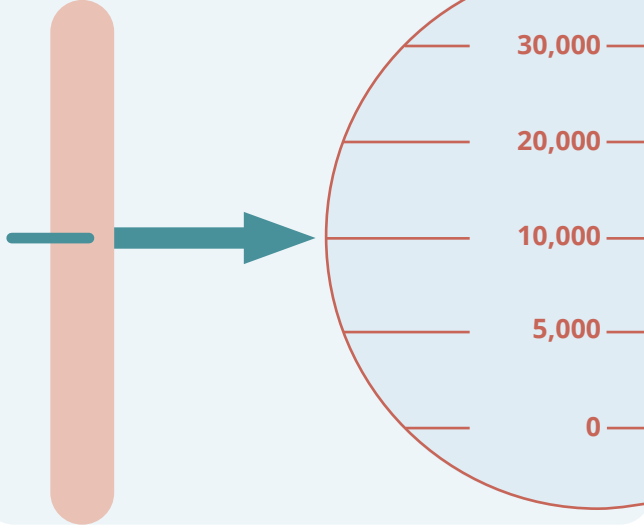


General Residential

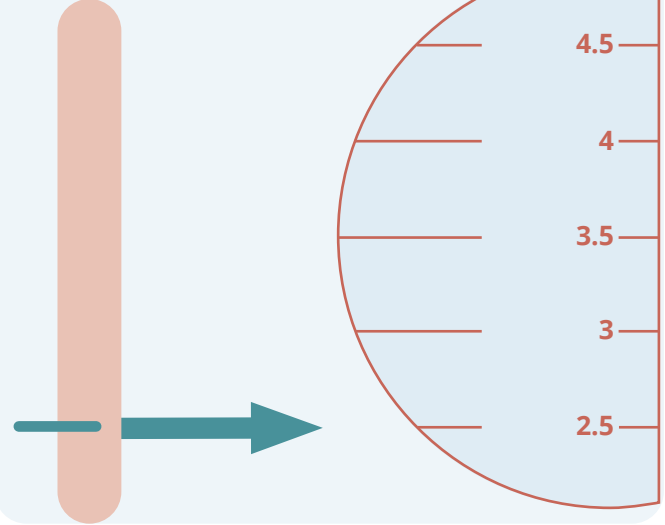
45 | 0.3 | 2,890 | 20.1

Existing Zoning: Unit Capacity | Density | Housing Plan: Unit Capacity | Density

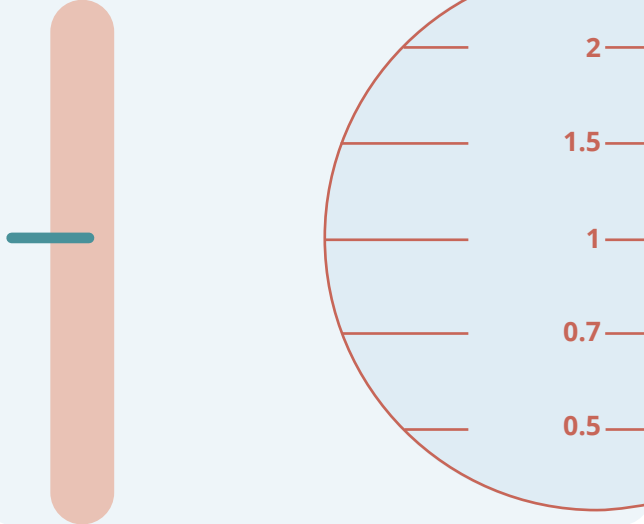
Lot Size (Minimum, SF)



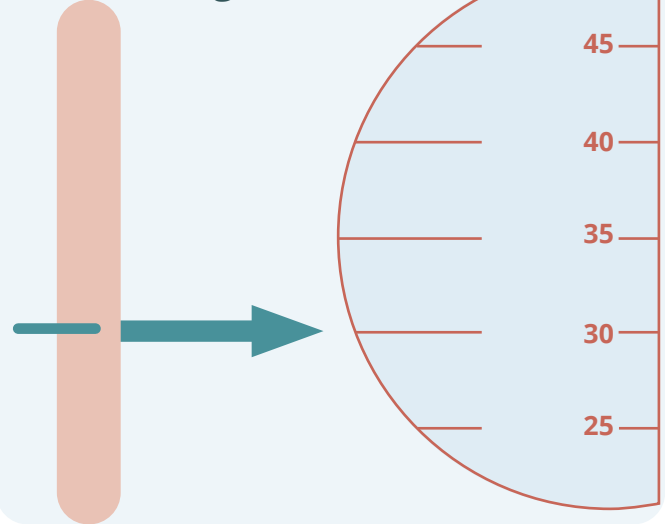
Height (Maximum, Stories)



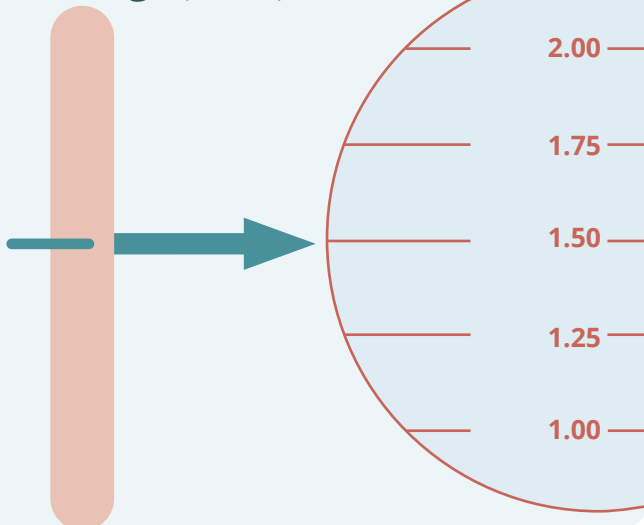
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



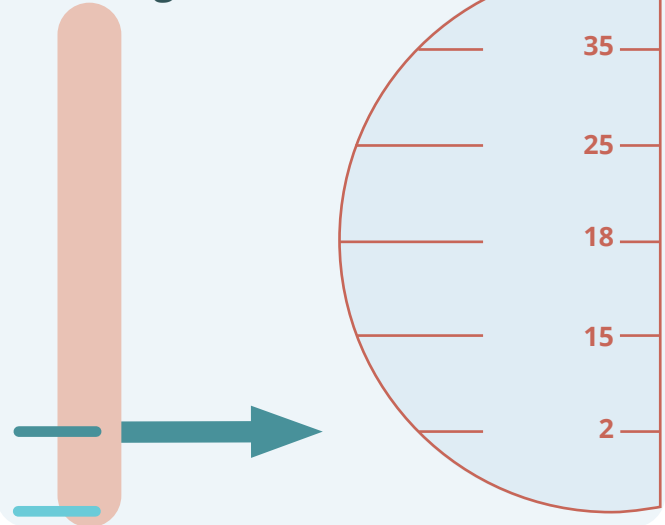
Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



Parking (Spaces per Unit)



Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)

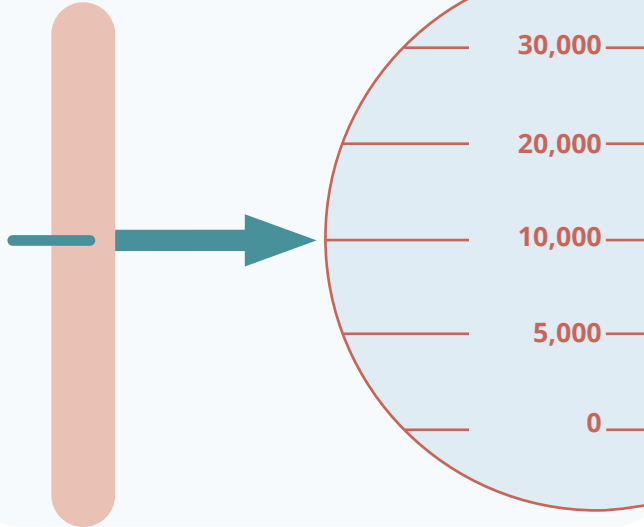


Industrial

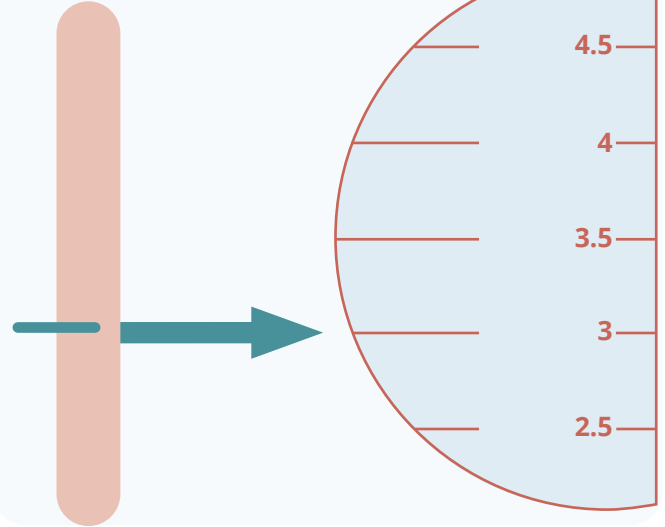
838 | 25.5 | 528 | 17.0

Existing Zoning: Unit Capacity | Density | Housing Plan: Unit Capacity | Density

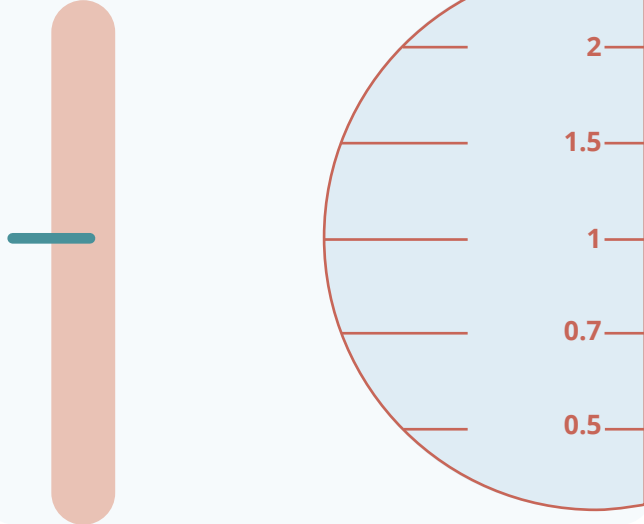
Lot Size (Minimum, SF)



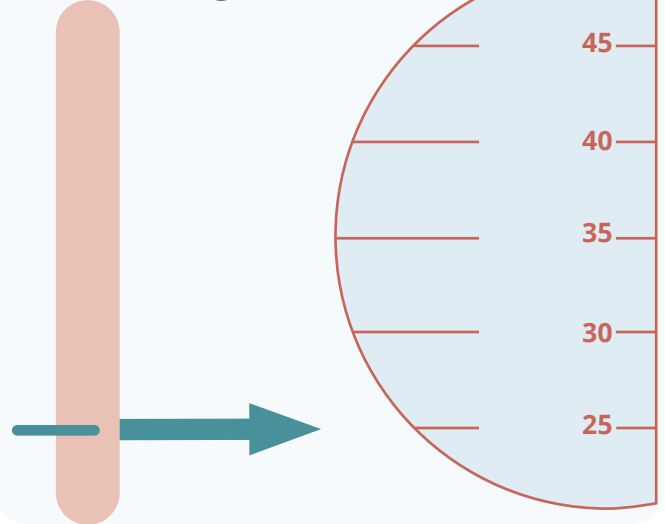
Height (Maximum, Stories)



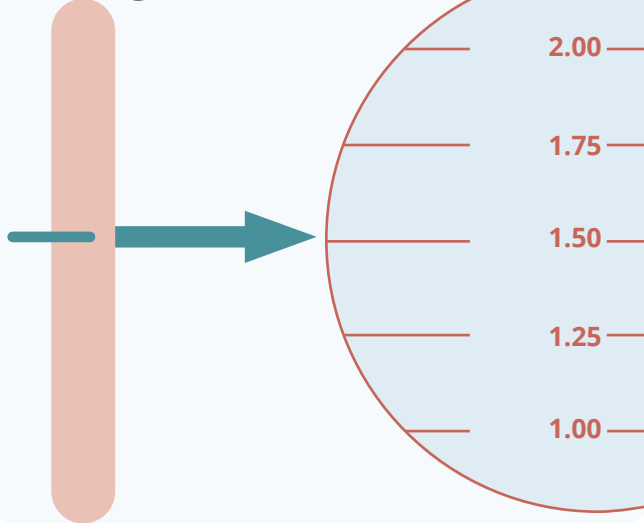
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



Parking (Spaces per Unit)



Dwelling Units/Acre (Max.)

