

# Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Housing

Community Workshop

Town of Atherton

October 23, 2023

# AGENDA

- Workshop Overview
- Purpose of Objective Standards
- Regulatory Tools
- Design Issues for Discussion
- Community Identified Issues
- Next Steps





# PURPOSE OF OBJECTIVE STANDARDS



# PURPOSE OF OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS

Facilitate streamlined and ministerial review process for residential development and:

- Comply with recent State legislation
- Achieve intent of existing policies
- Preserve community character
- Provide objective criteria
- Provide certainty to developers



## **SB 167 Housing Accountability Act**

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Local government may not deny, reduce density, or make infeasible housing projects *consistent with objective design standards*

## **SB 35**

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Requires approval of qualified housing projects based on *objective regulatory standards*

## **SB 330 Housing Crisis Act**

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Prohibits imposing or enforcing new design standards established on or after January 1, 2020, that *are not objective*

# WHAT ARE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS?

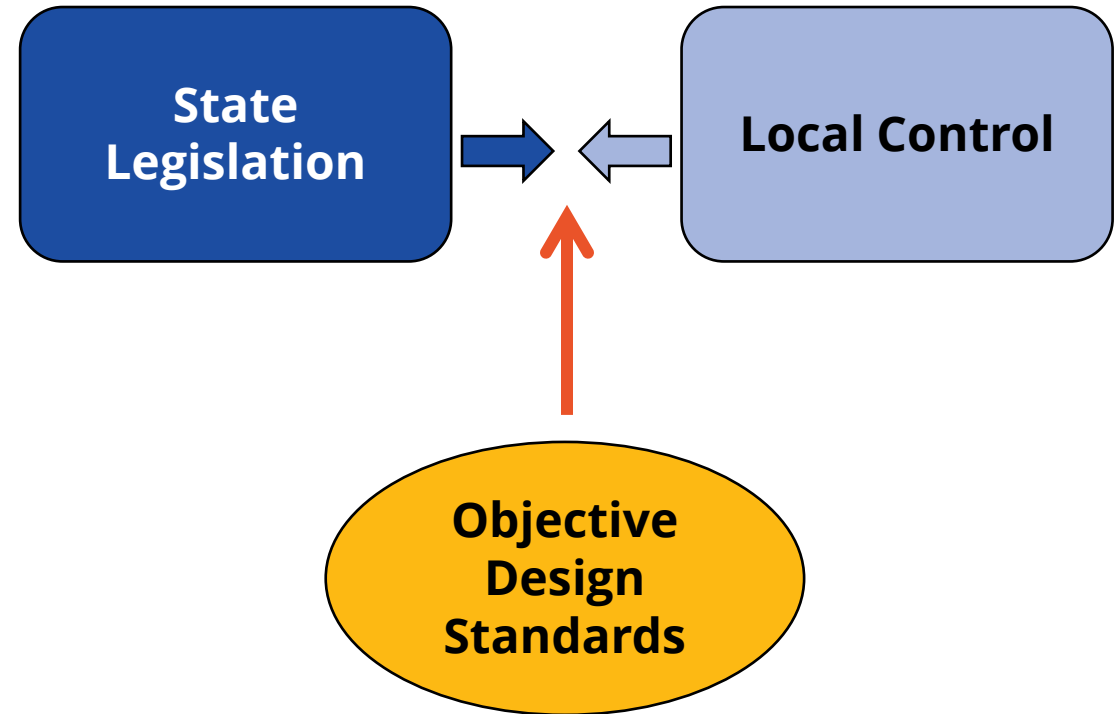
“standards that involve **no personal or subjective judgement** by a public official and are uniformly verifiable by reference to an external and uniform benchmark or criterion available and knowable by both the development applicant or proponent and the public official prior to submittal.”

(California Government Code, Section 65913.4)



# OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

- Objective standards are a powerful toolkit that allow communities to respond to State housing laws that are reducing local control over development
- Provide an opportunity to ensure that the appearance of new development is compatible with the Town's vision



# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Design Guidelines

- Subjective
- Recommendations (not enforceable)
- Unmeasurable and difficult to interpret

**negotiation and  
compromise**

## Objective Standards

- Supplement Design Guidelines
- Streamlined Review
- Measurable, quantifiable, easily defined, and enforceable

**no personal or  
subjective judgment**



# DISCRETIONARY VS. MINISTERIAL REVIEW

## Discretionary Review

- Project undergoes design review
- Qualitative judgement and review by jurisdiction staff and reviewing bodies
- Reviewing bodies determine the project's compliance with **design guidelines**

**negotiation and  
compromise**

## Ministerial Review

- Streamlined review by jurisdiction
- Removes personal or subjective judgement
- Consistency with **objective design standards** is primary tool for project review

**no personal or  
subjective judgment**

# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

“Pedestrian links **should** be provided between buildings, common open spaces, and parking areas”



**SUBJECTIVE**



**OBJECTIVE**

*Town of Los Gatos*  
*North 40 Specific Plan*



# DESIGN GUIDELINES VS. OBJECTIVE STANDARDS

## Potential Objective Standard to Address Subjective Guidance

All structures, entries, facilities, amenities, and parking areas **shall** be internally connected with pedestrian pathways.



Internally connected pedestrian paths

Source: <https://www.elevatetosequoia.com/apartments/ca/antioch/cross-pointe-apartment-homes/>

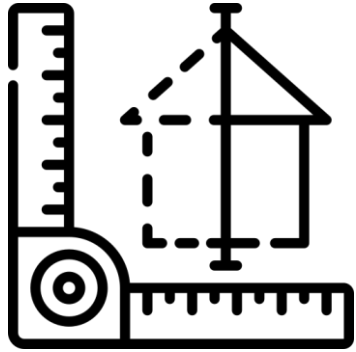


SUBJECTIVE



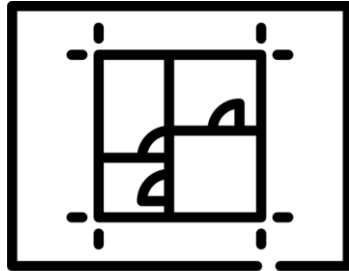
OBJECTIVE

# TOOLS FOR OBJECTIVE STANDARDS



## Counts and Measurements

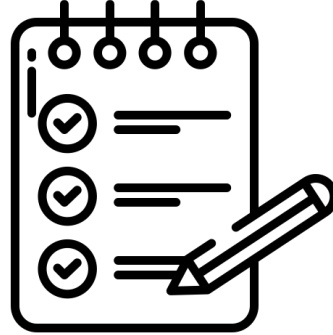
- Height
- Distances
- Setbacks



**1:100**

## Ratios

- Roof Pitch
- Step Back Ratio



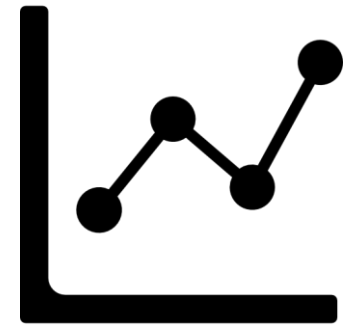
## Checklists

*Checklist of required architectural features*



## Scorecards

*Minimum total of combined scores for eligible design treatment*



## Performance Measures and Benchmarks

*Minimum amount of open space provided*

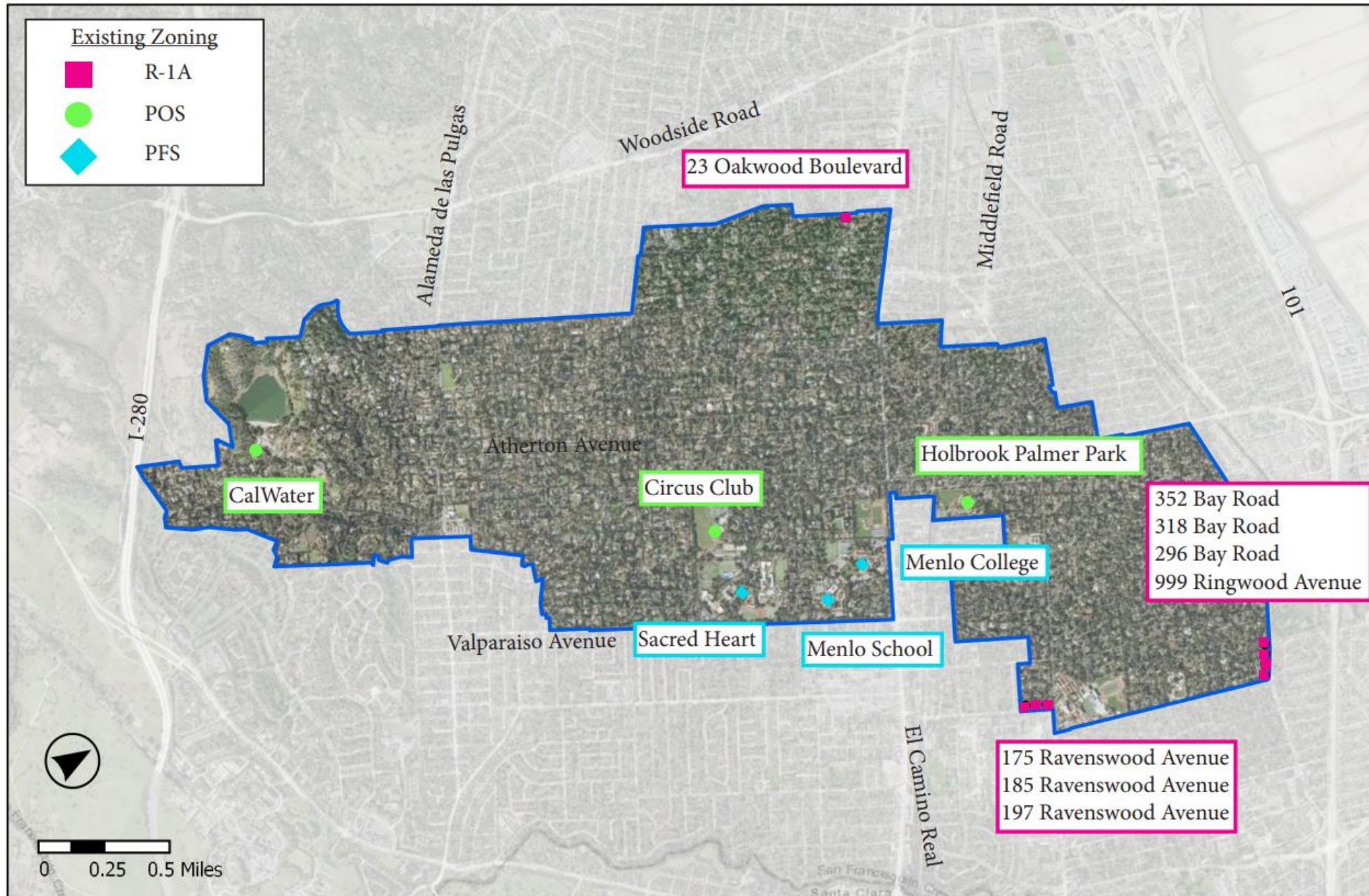




# REGULATORY TOOLS



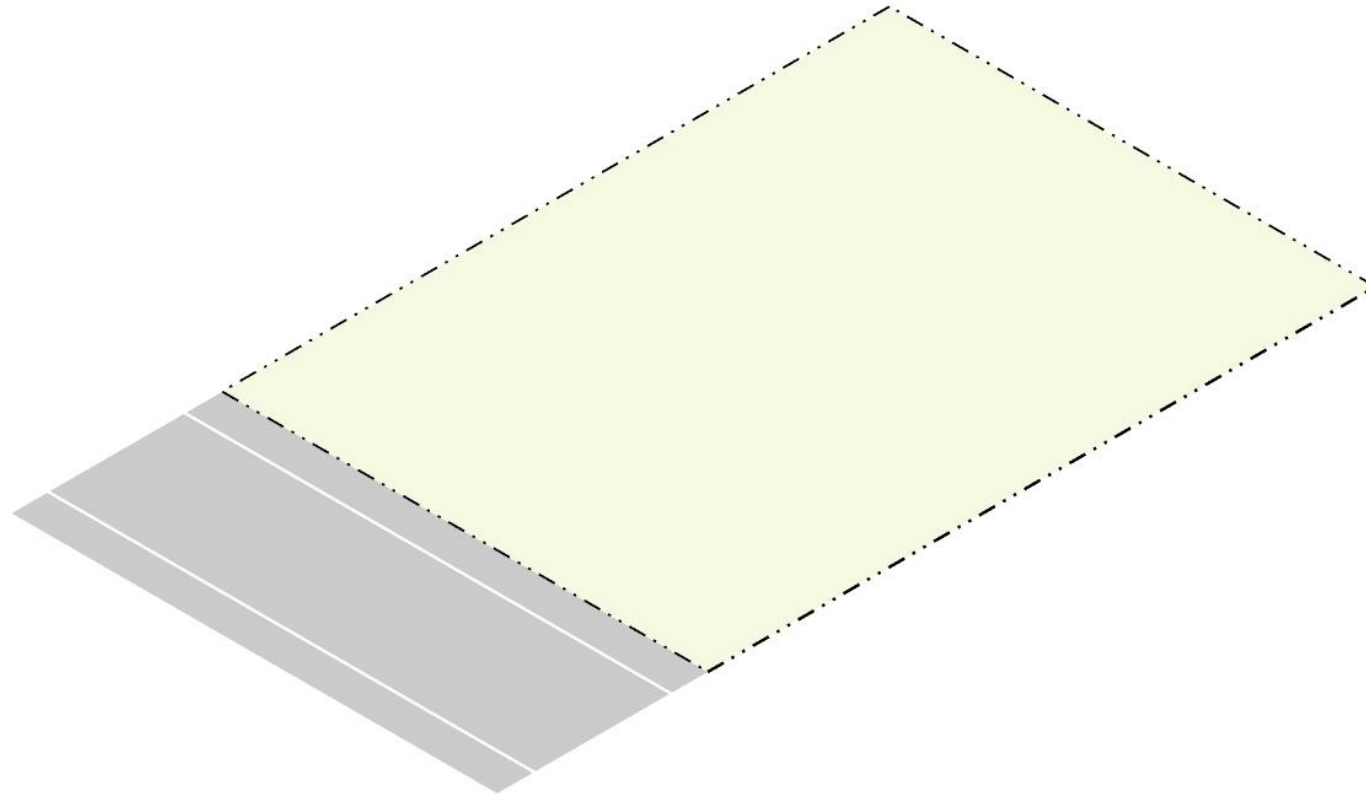
# IDENTIFIED HOUSING ELEMENT SITES



# SITE INFORMATION

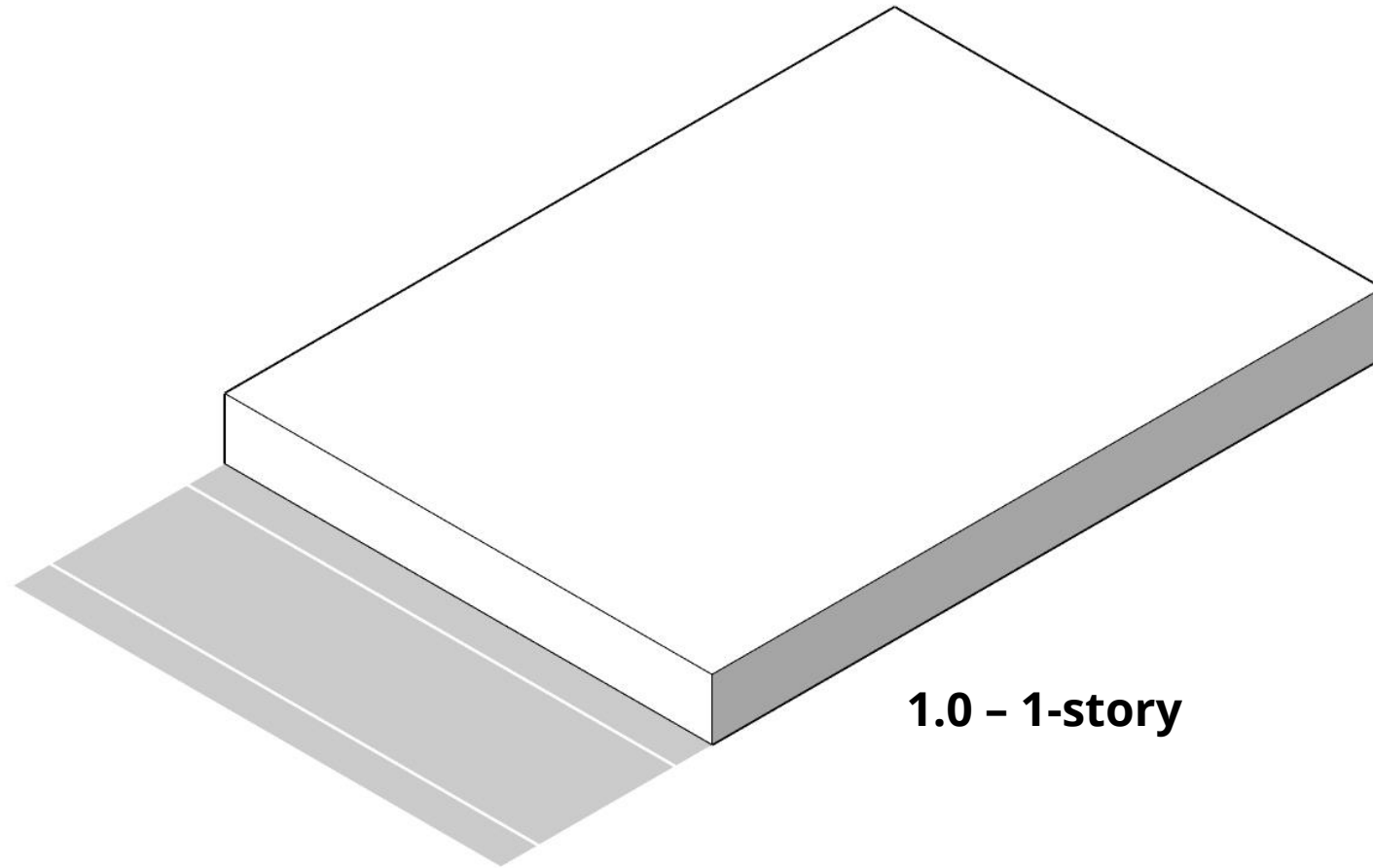
Existing Zoning District	Housing Element Sites	Proposed Zoning Overlay	Proposed Density
R-1A	999 Ringwood Avenue 352 Bay Road 318 Bay Road 296 Bay Road 175 Ravenswood Avenue 185 Ravenswood Avenue 197 Ravenswood Avenue 23 Oakwood Boulevard	R-10	10 Dwelling Units/Acre
POS	Gilmore House (Holbrook Park Palmer) Circus Club CalWater	R-10	10 Dwelling Units/Acre
PFS	Menlo College Sites Menlo School Sites Sacred Heart Site	R-20, R-40 (Menlo College O'Brien Lot and site near Admin Building)	20 Dwelling Units/Acre (R-20), 40 Dwelling Units/Acre (R-40)

# PARCEL



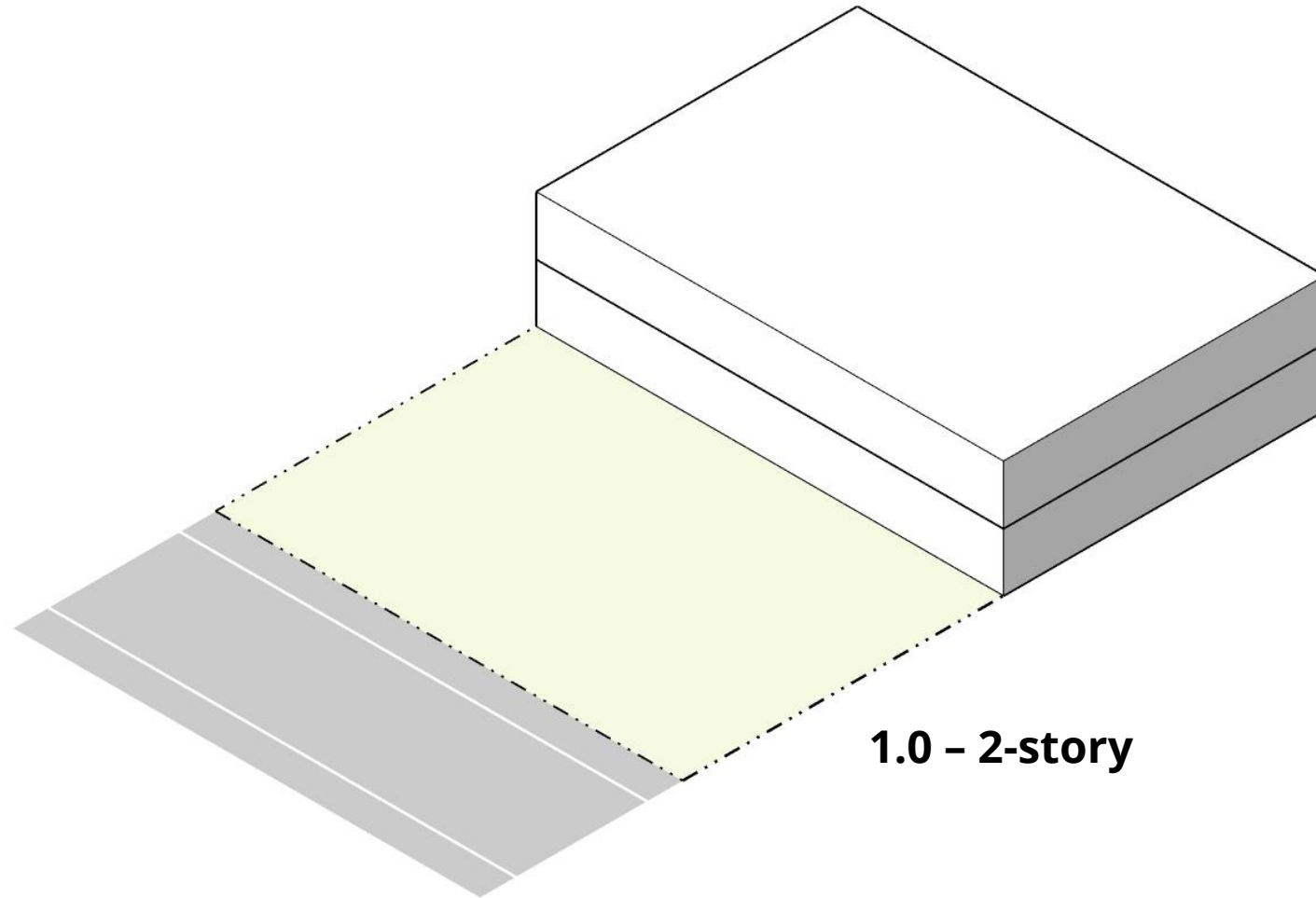


# FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

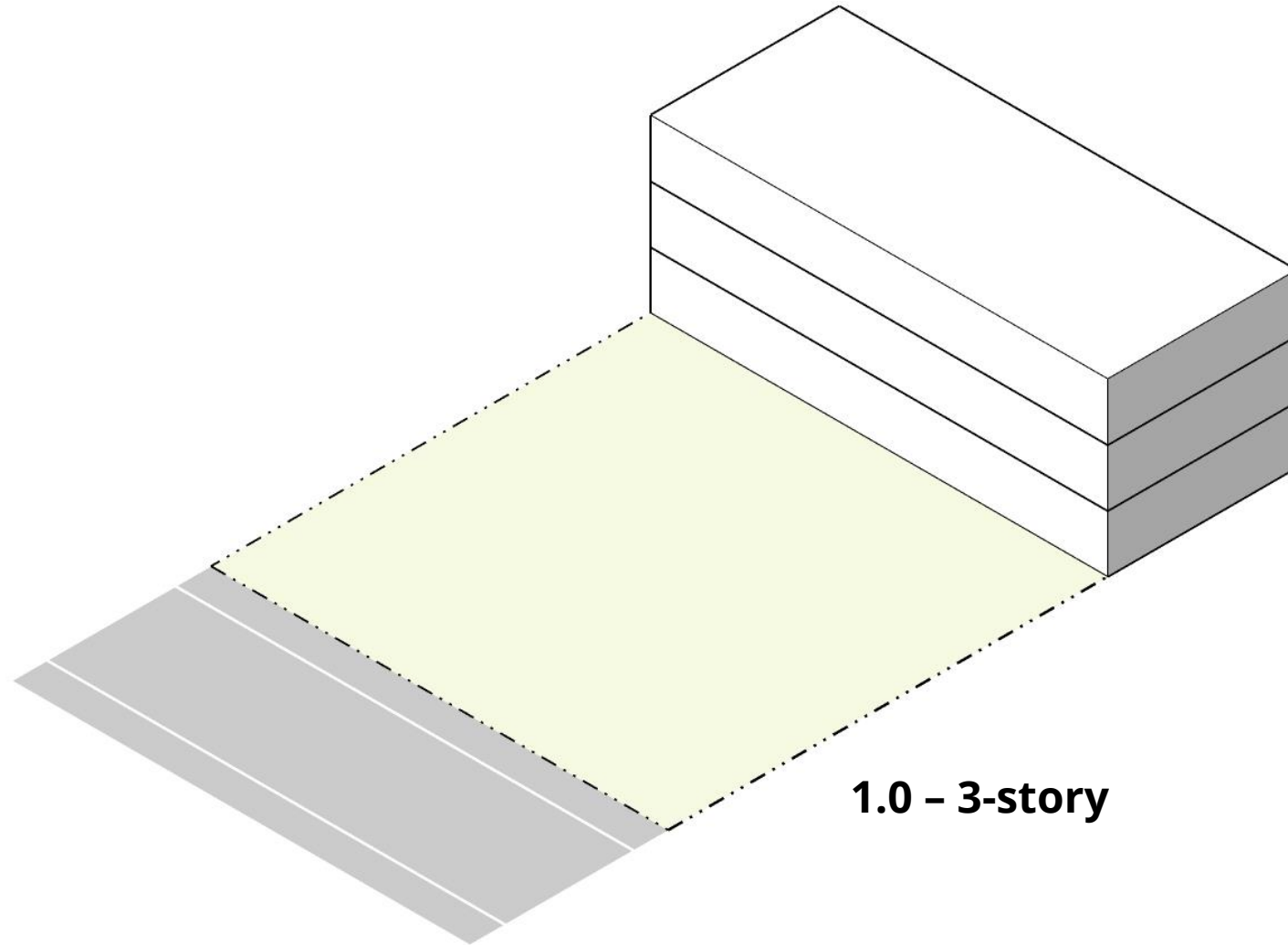


**1.0 – 1-story**

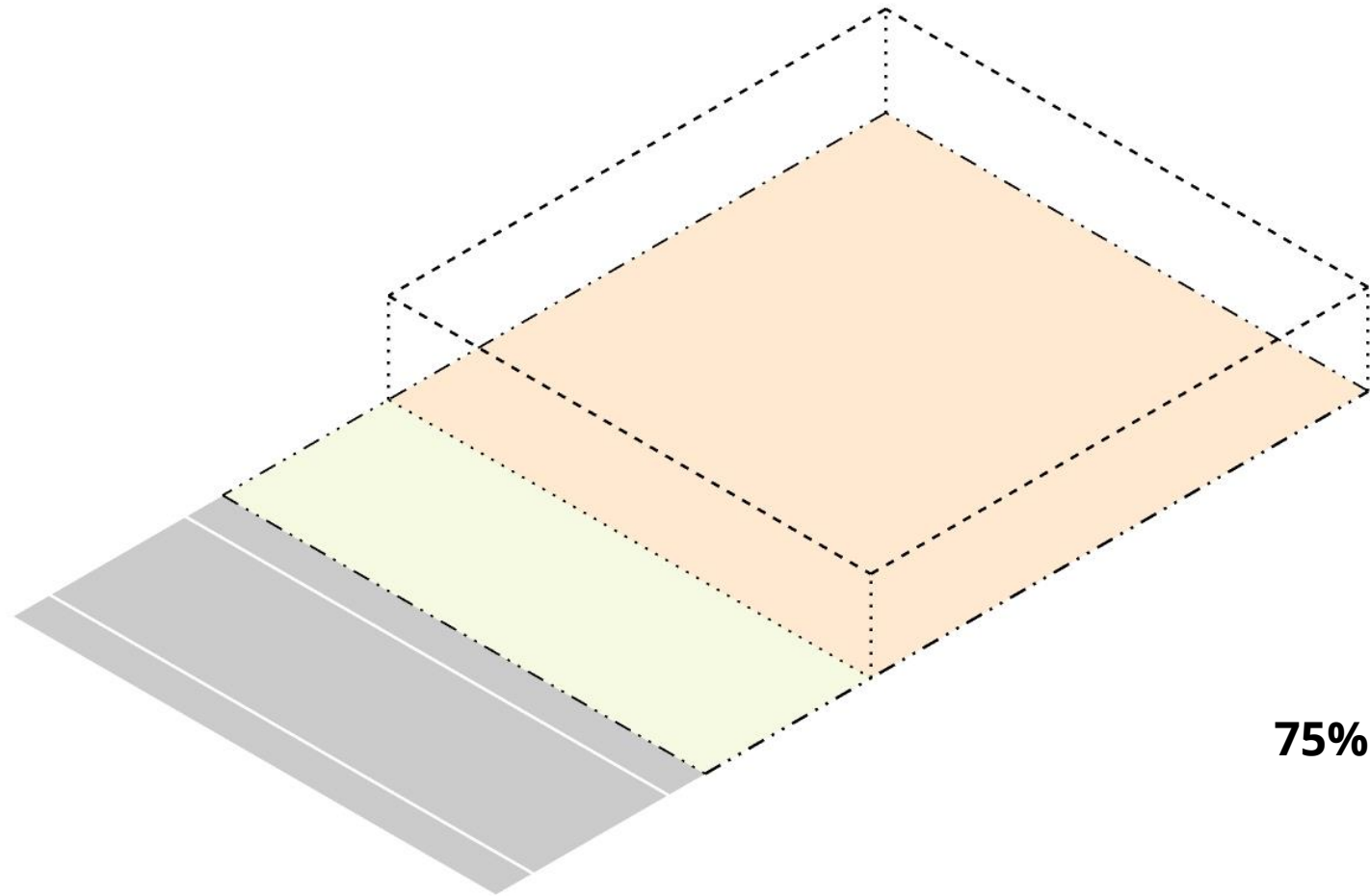
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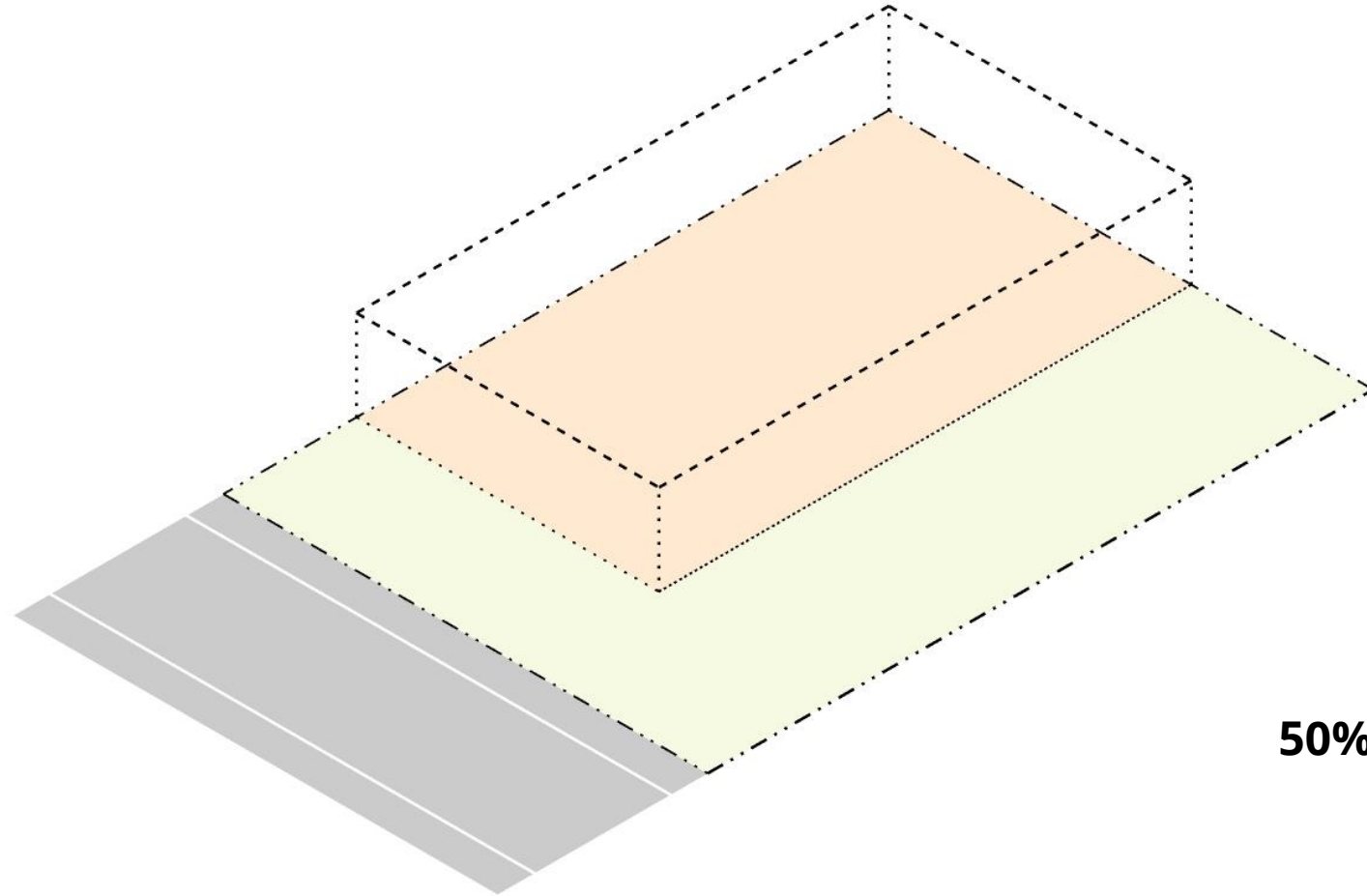


# LOT COVERAGE

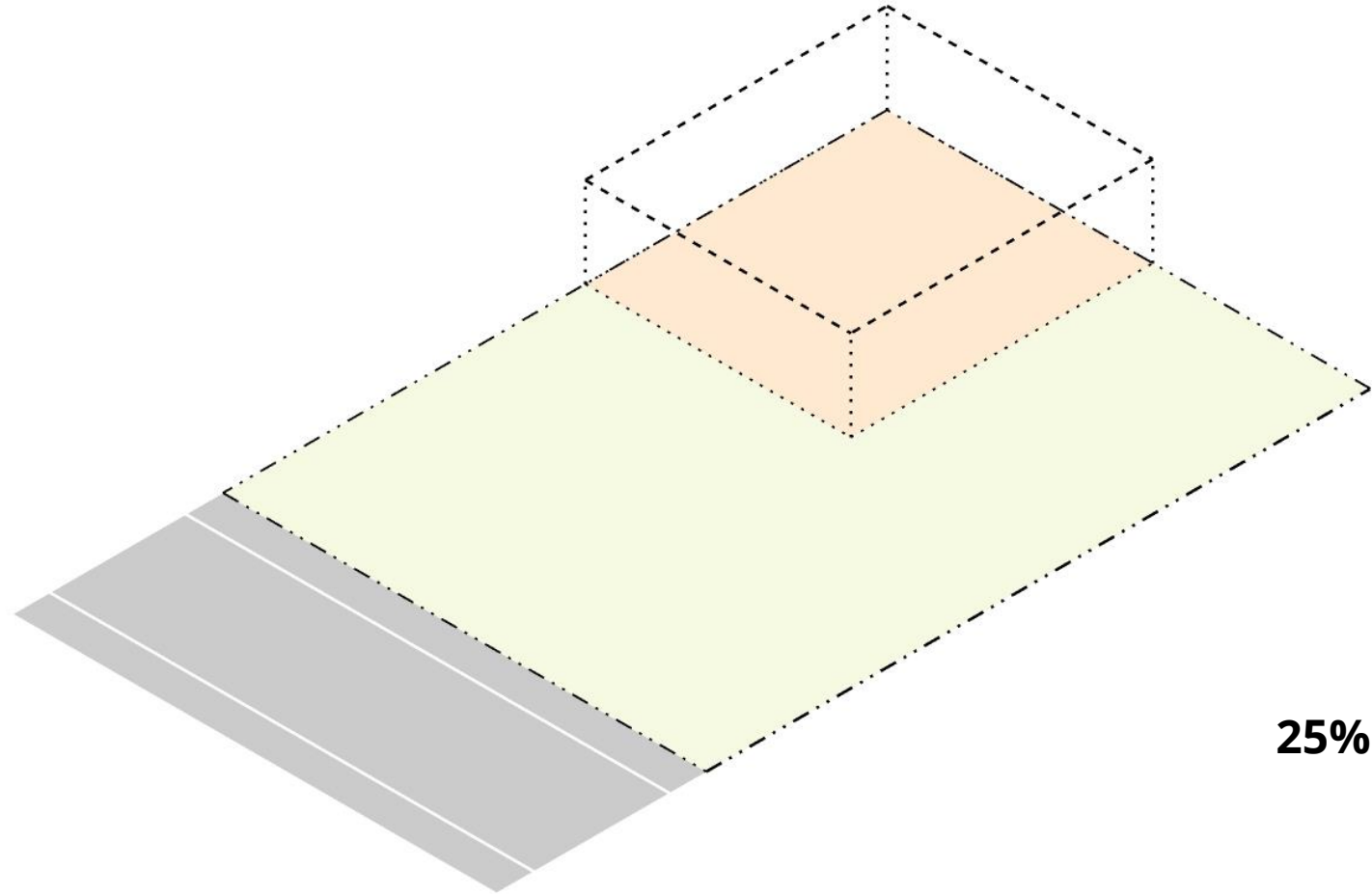




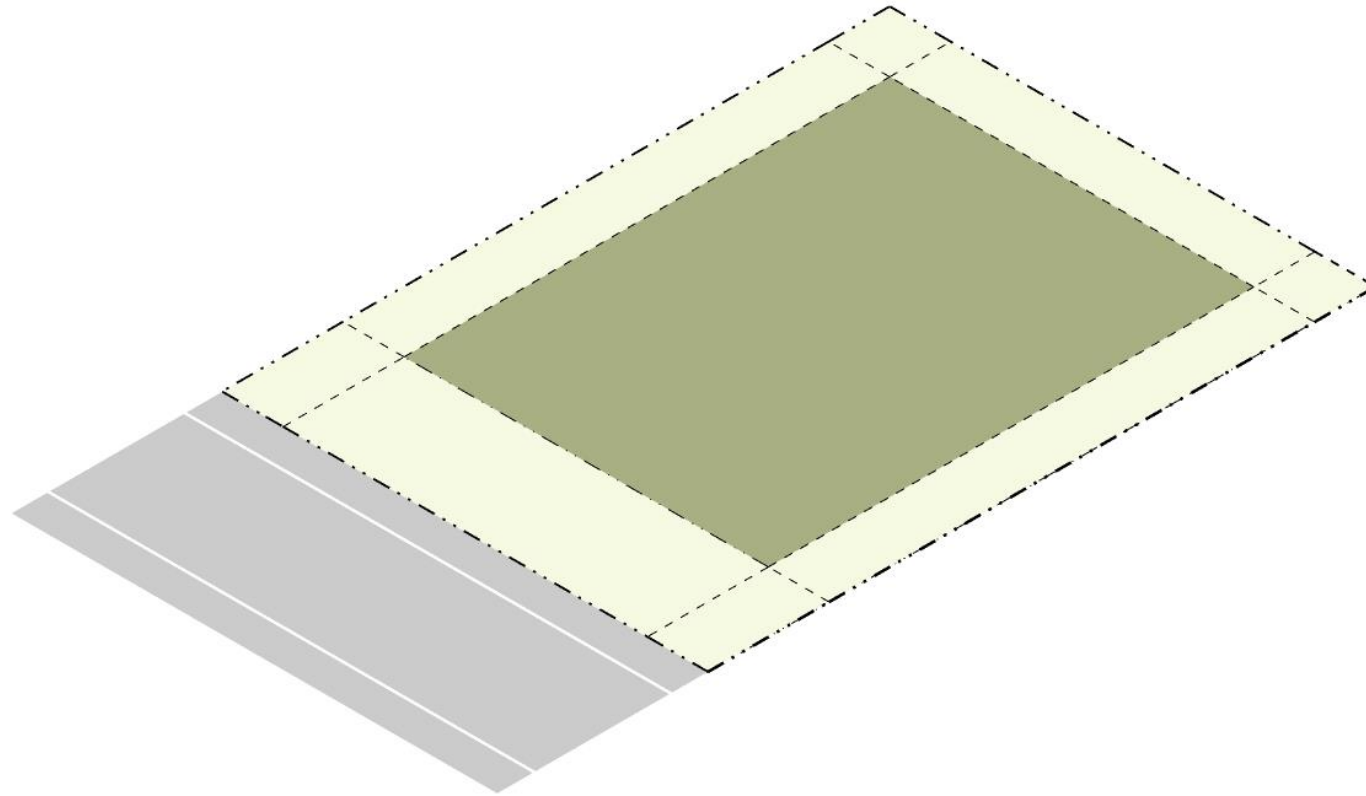
# LOT COVERAGE



# LOT COVERAGE



# SETBACKS







# DESIGN ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION



# LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES

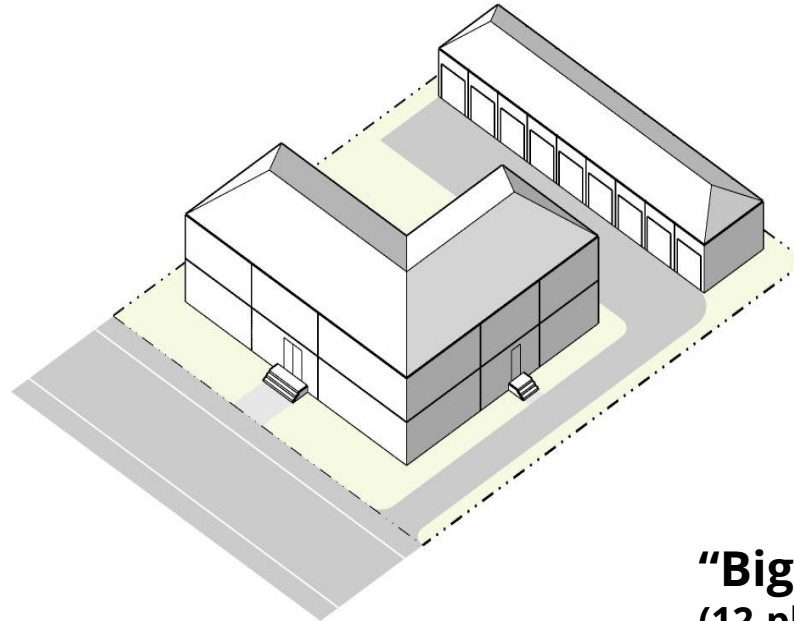




# SITE INFORMATION

Existing Zoning District	Housing Element Sites	Proposed Zoning Overlay	Proposed Density
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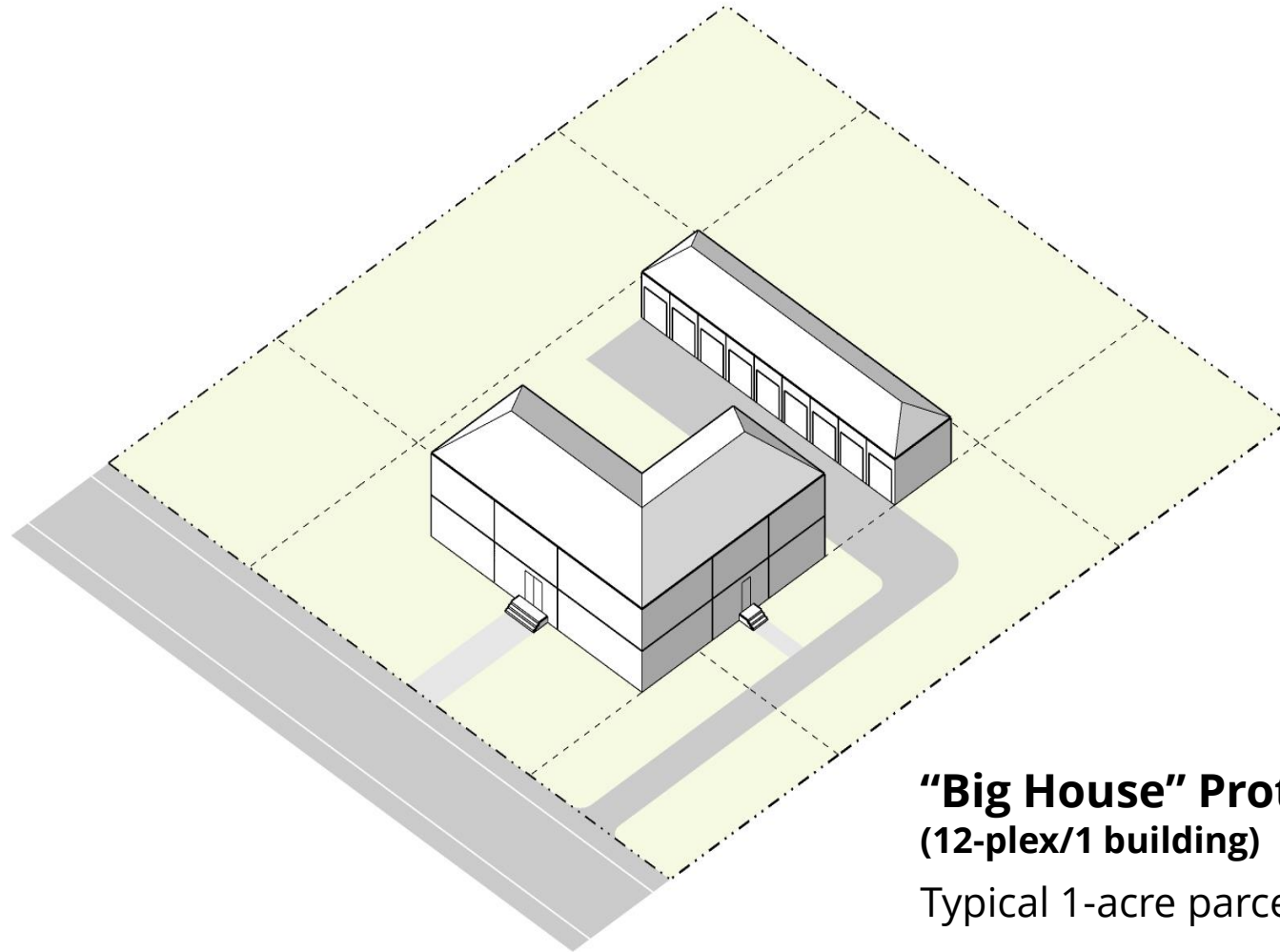
# LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



**“Big House” Prototype**  
(12-plex/1 building)

14,000 sq ft parcel

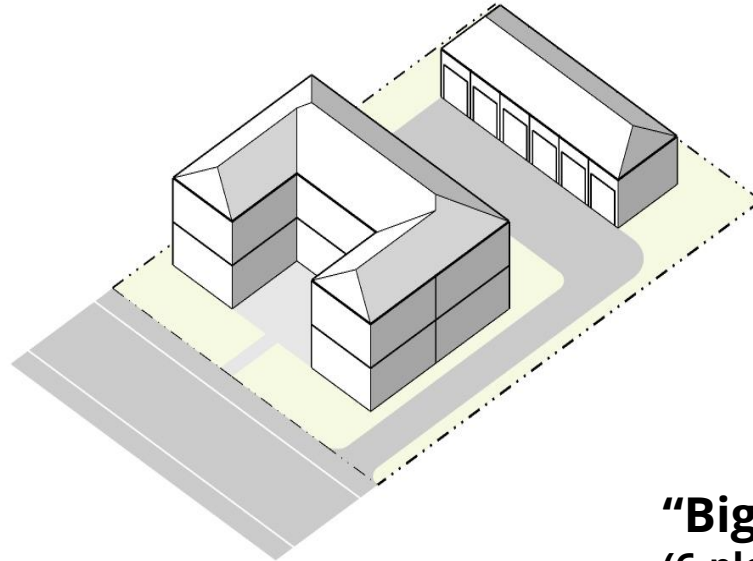
# LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



**“Big House” Prototype**  
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Typical 1-acre parcel

# LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES

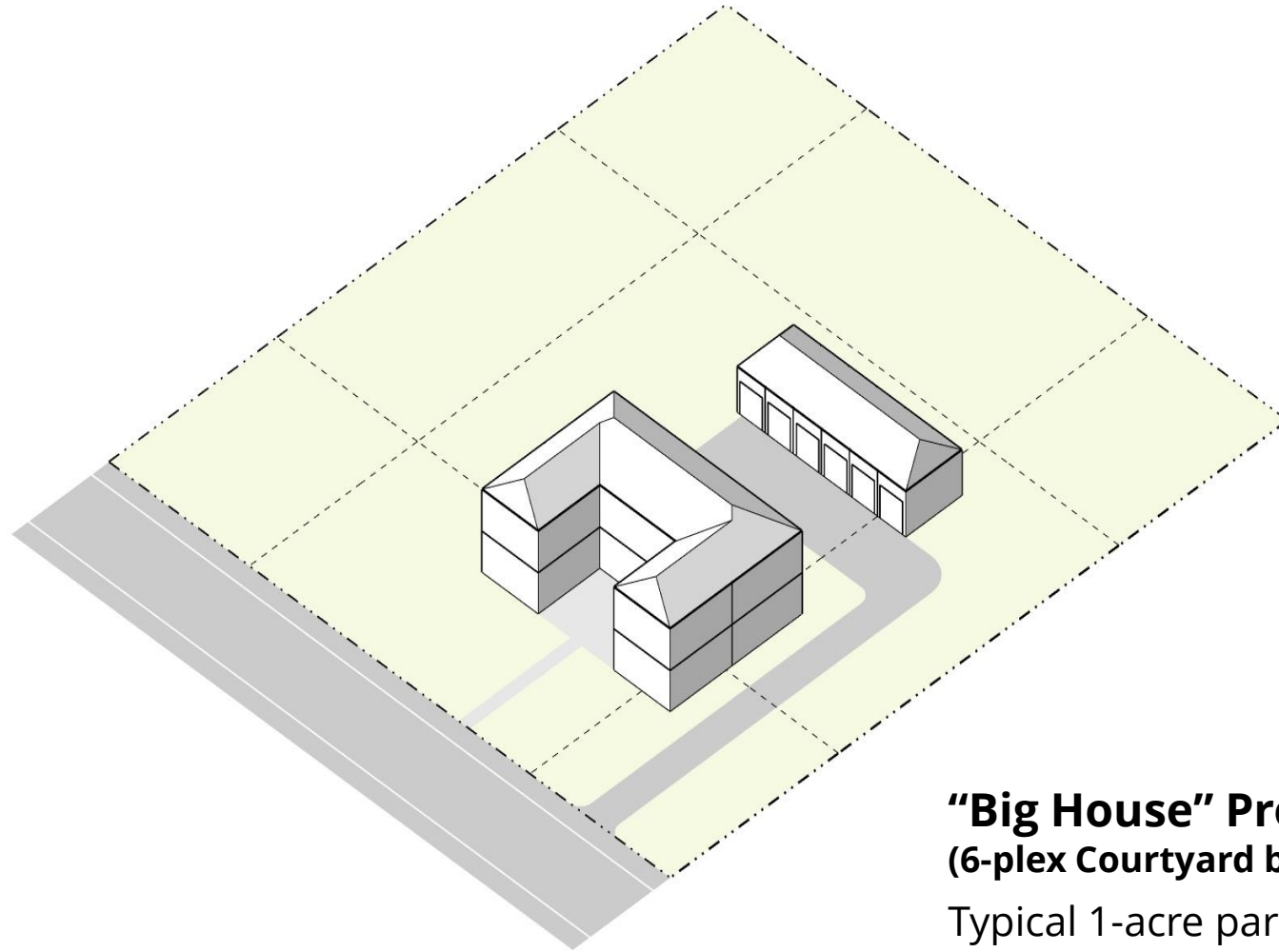


**“Big House” Prototype**  
**(6-plex Courtyard building)**

12,000 sq ft parcel



# LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



**“Big House” Prototype**  
(6-plex Courtyard building)

Typical 1-acre parcel



## DESIGN ISSUES FOR OBJECTIVE STANDARDS DISCUSSION

- Setbacks and Height
- Site Coverage
- Building Massing
- Site Design
- Screening and Walls
- Façade Articulation
- Parking
- Other Issues

## GOAL

*What is your desired outcome?*

## COMMENT

**how to potentially  
achieve that goal**

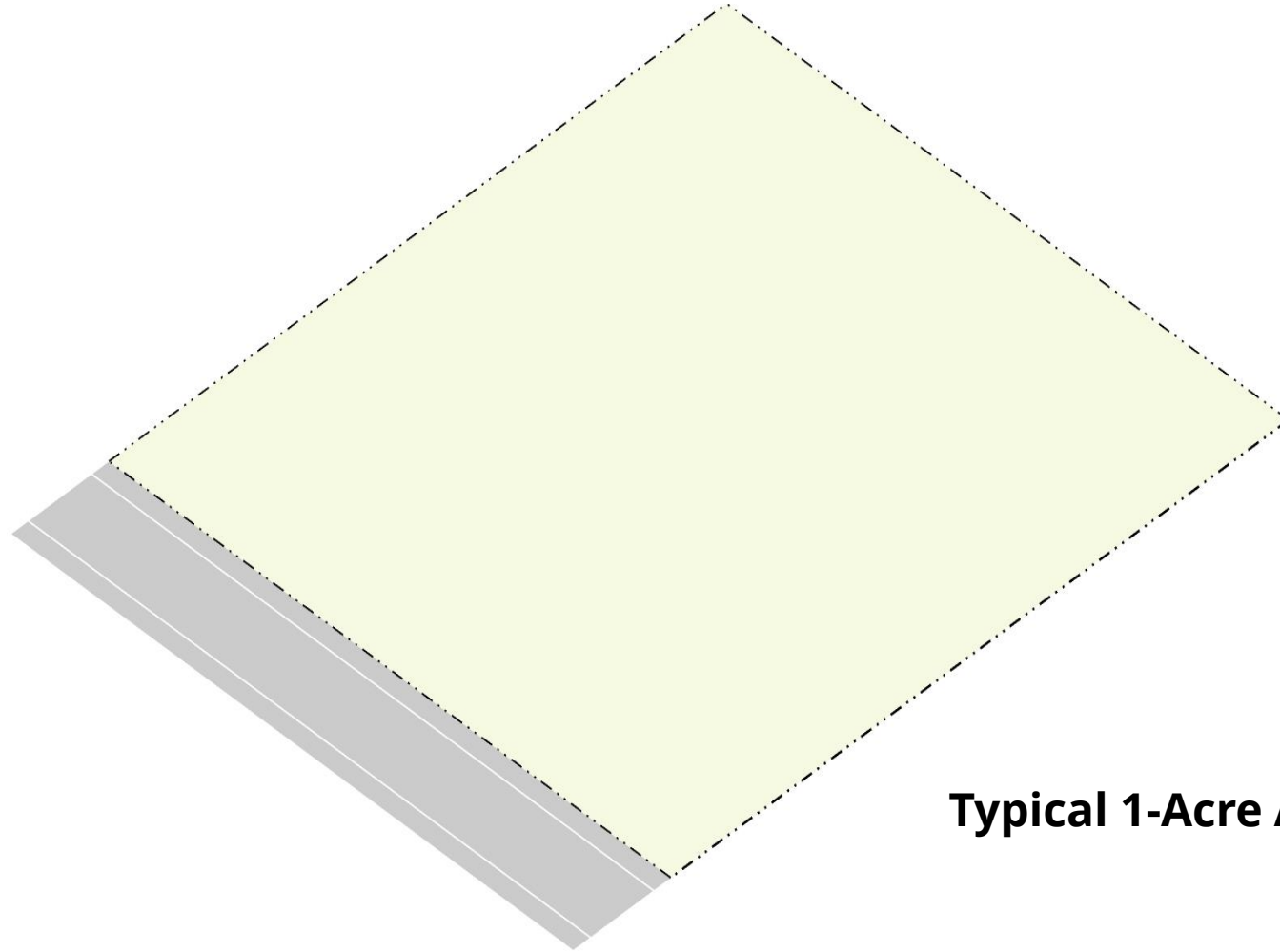
- Setbacks and Height
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- **Site Design**
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# SETBACKS AND HEIGHT



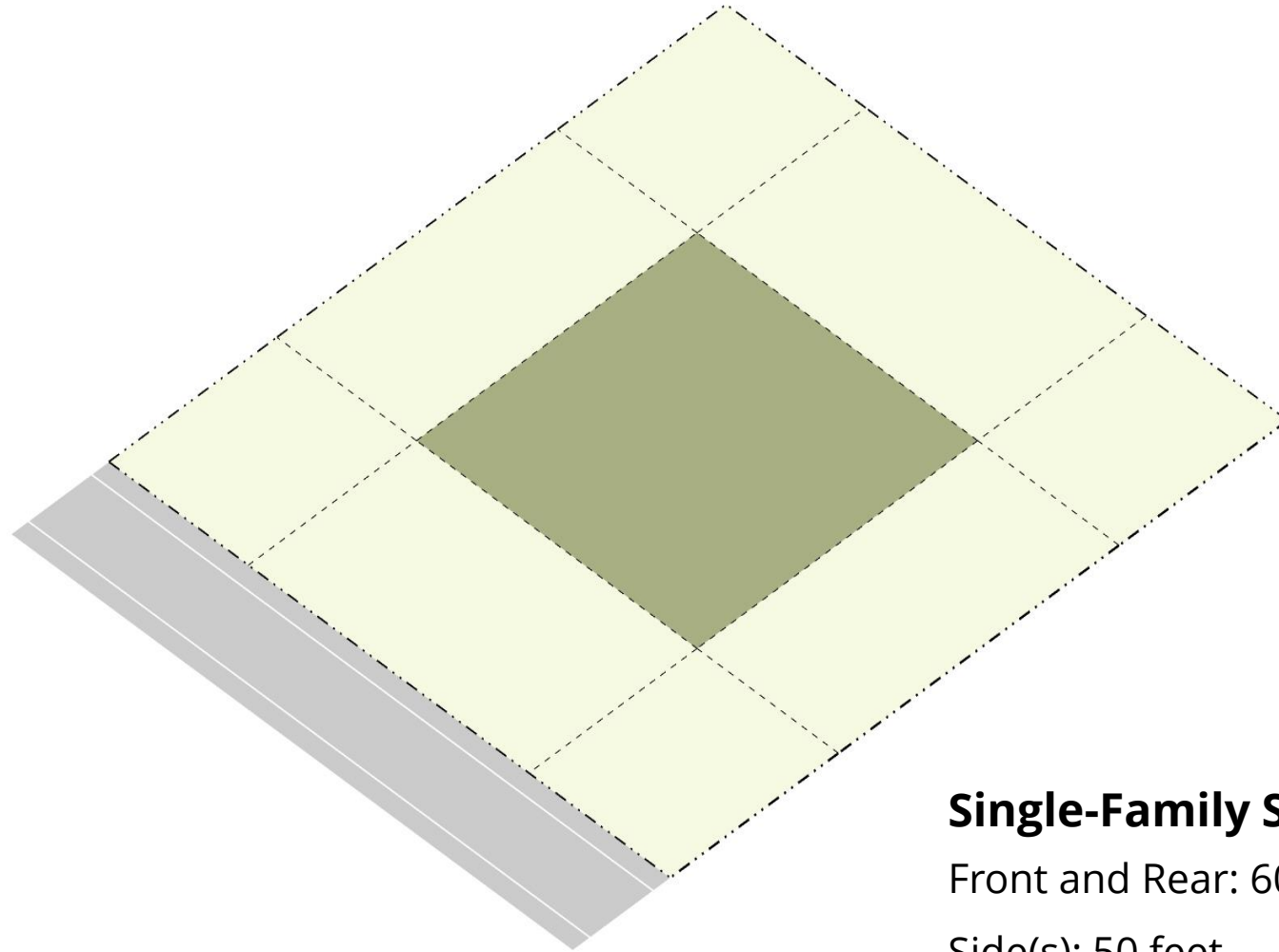


# SETBACKS AND HEIGHT



**Typical 1-Acre Atherton Parcel**

# SETBACKS AND HEIGHT



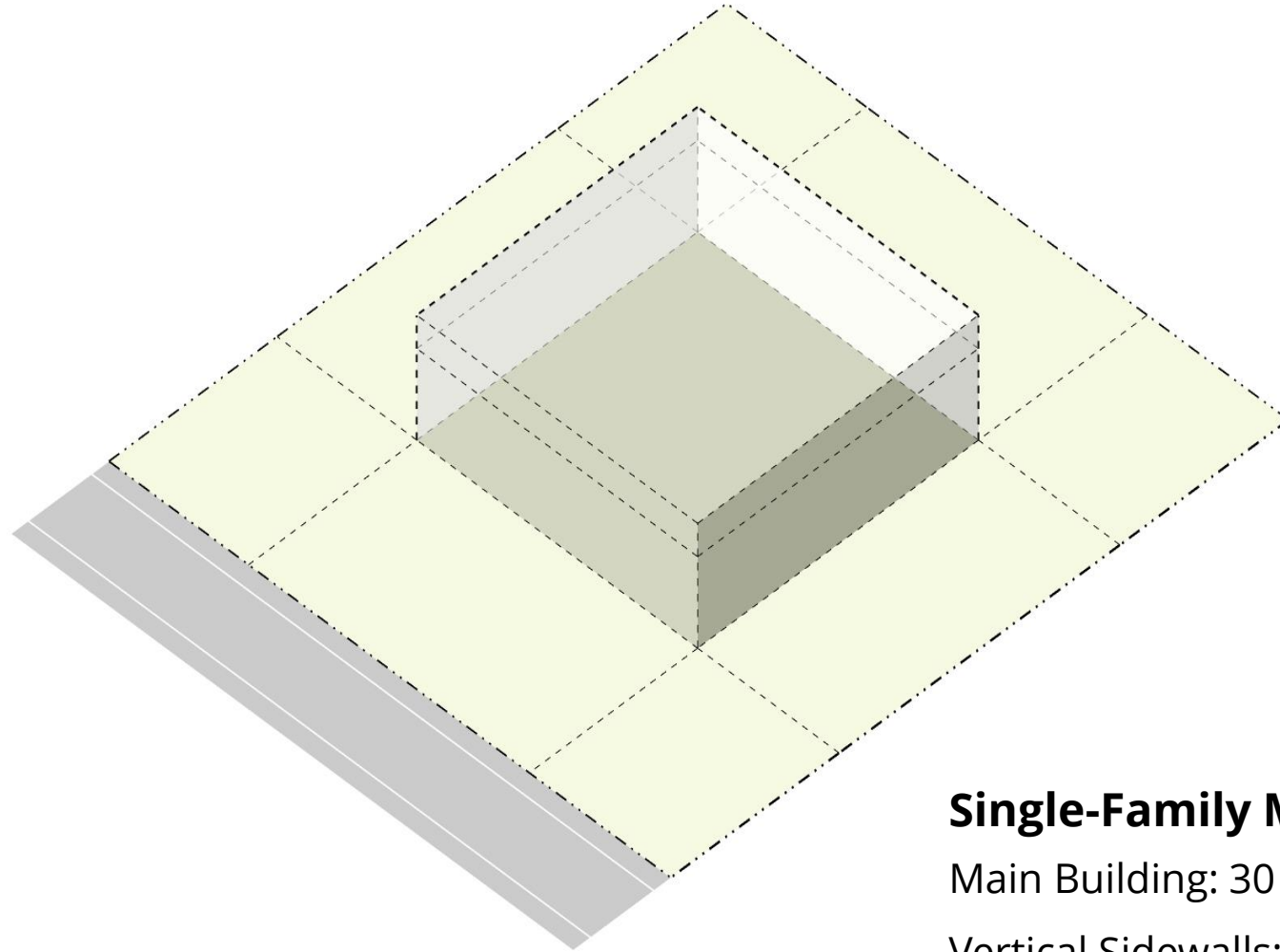
## **Single-Family Setbacks**

Front and Rear: 60 feet

Side(s): 50 feet

Buildable area: 10,000 sf

# SETBACKS AND HEIGHT

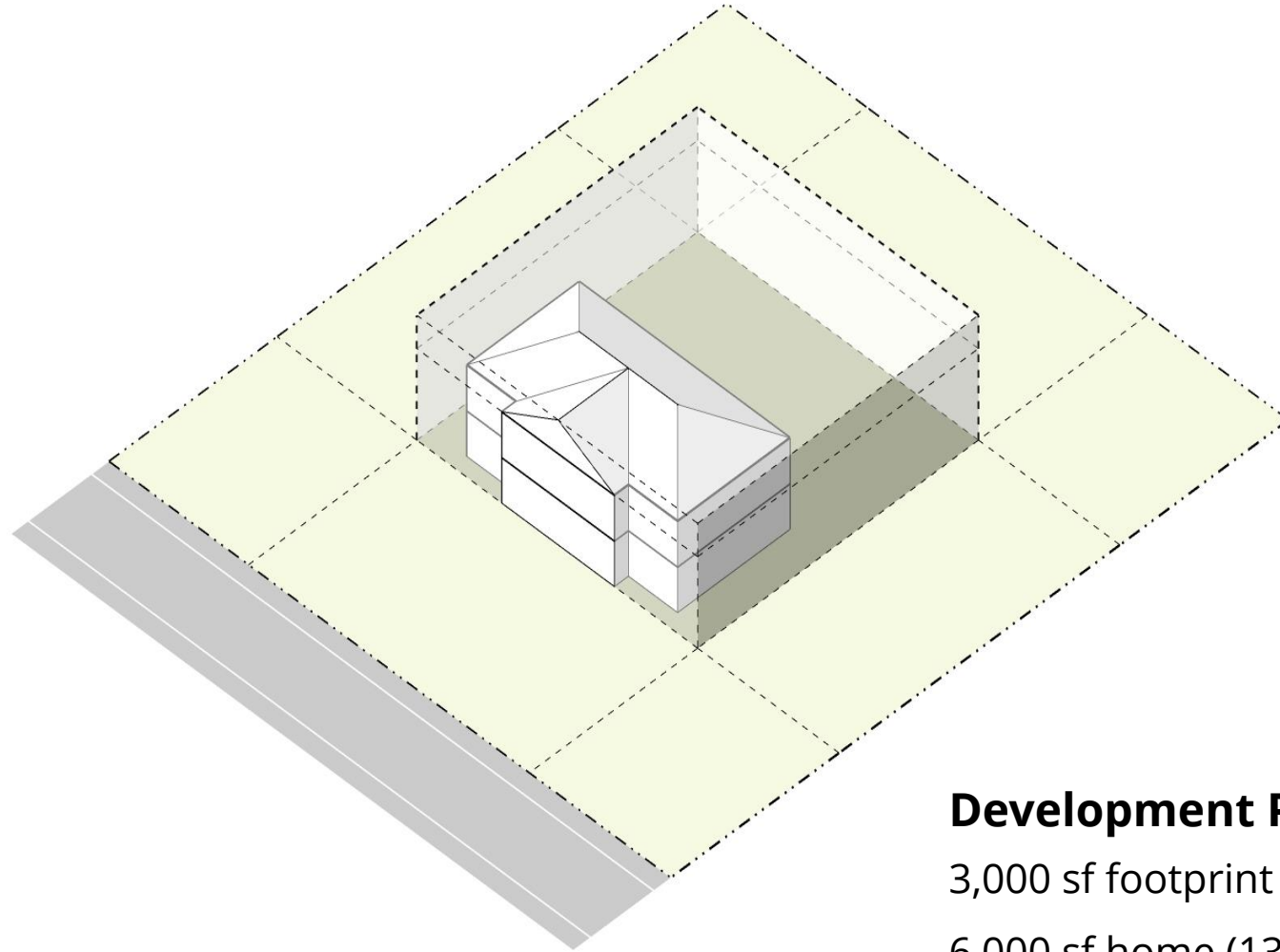


## **Single-Family Maximum Height**

Main Building: 30 feet

Vertical Sidewalls: 22 feet

# SETBACKS AND HEIGHT



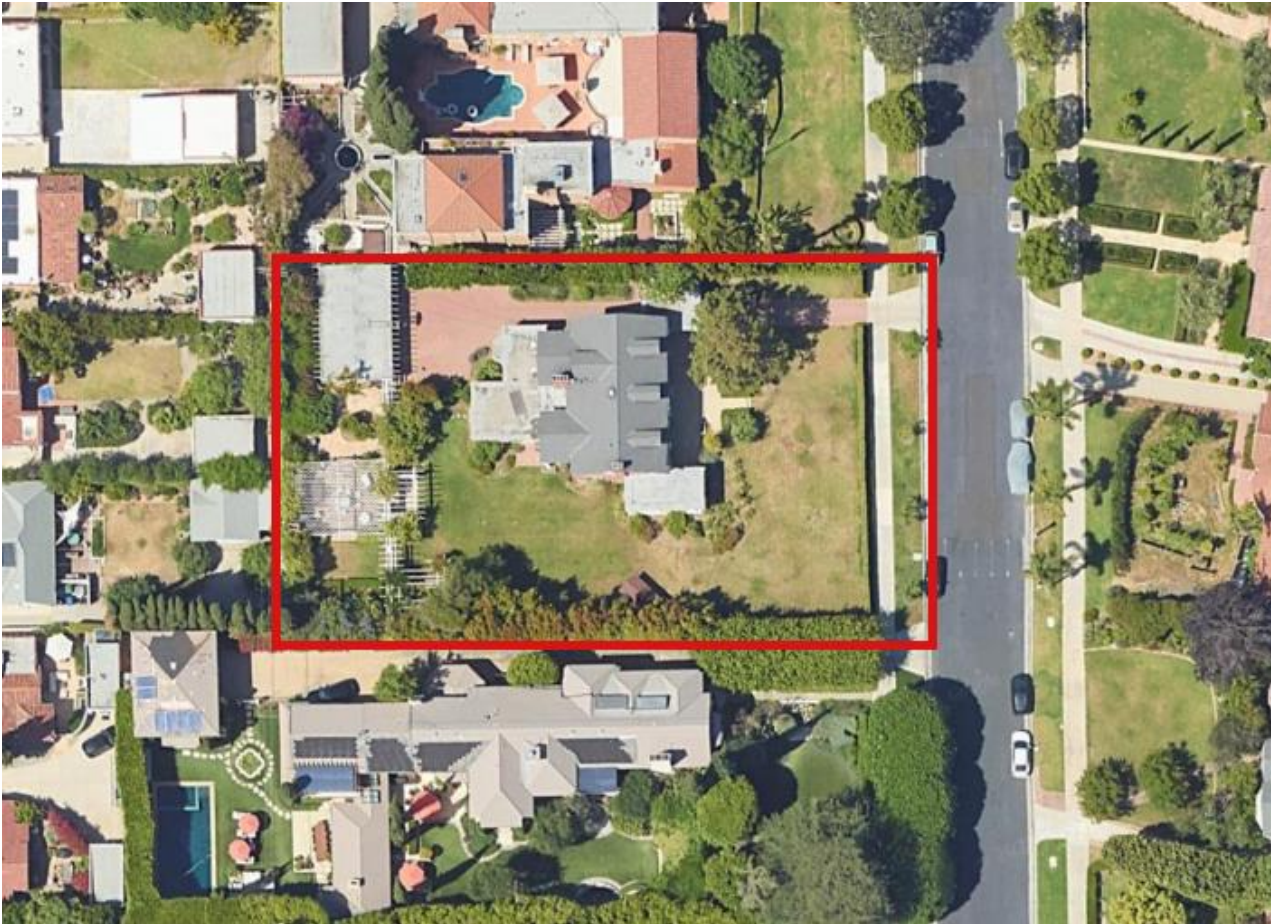
## Development Potential

3,000 sf footprint (lot coverage)

6,000 sf home (13.7% FAR)



# SITE COVERAGE



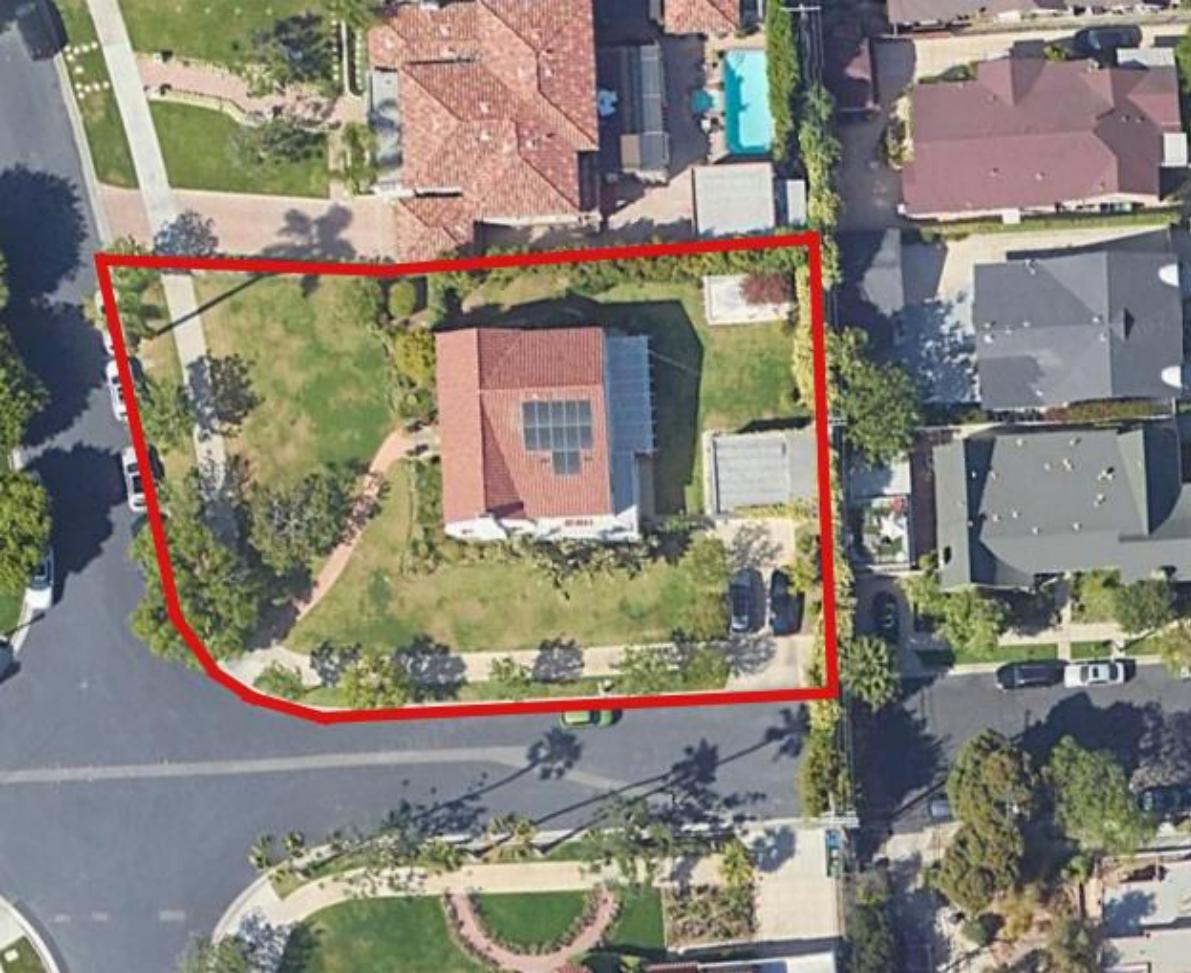
**Fourplex Surrounded by  
Single Family Homes**



**Single Family Home  
in Atherton**



# SITE COVERAGE

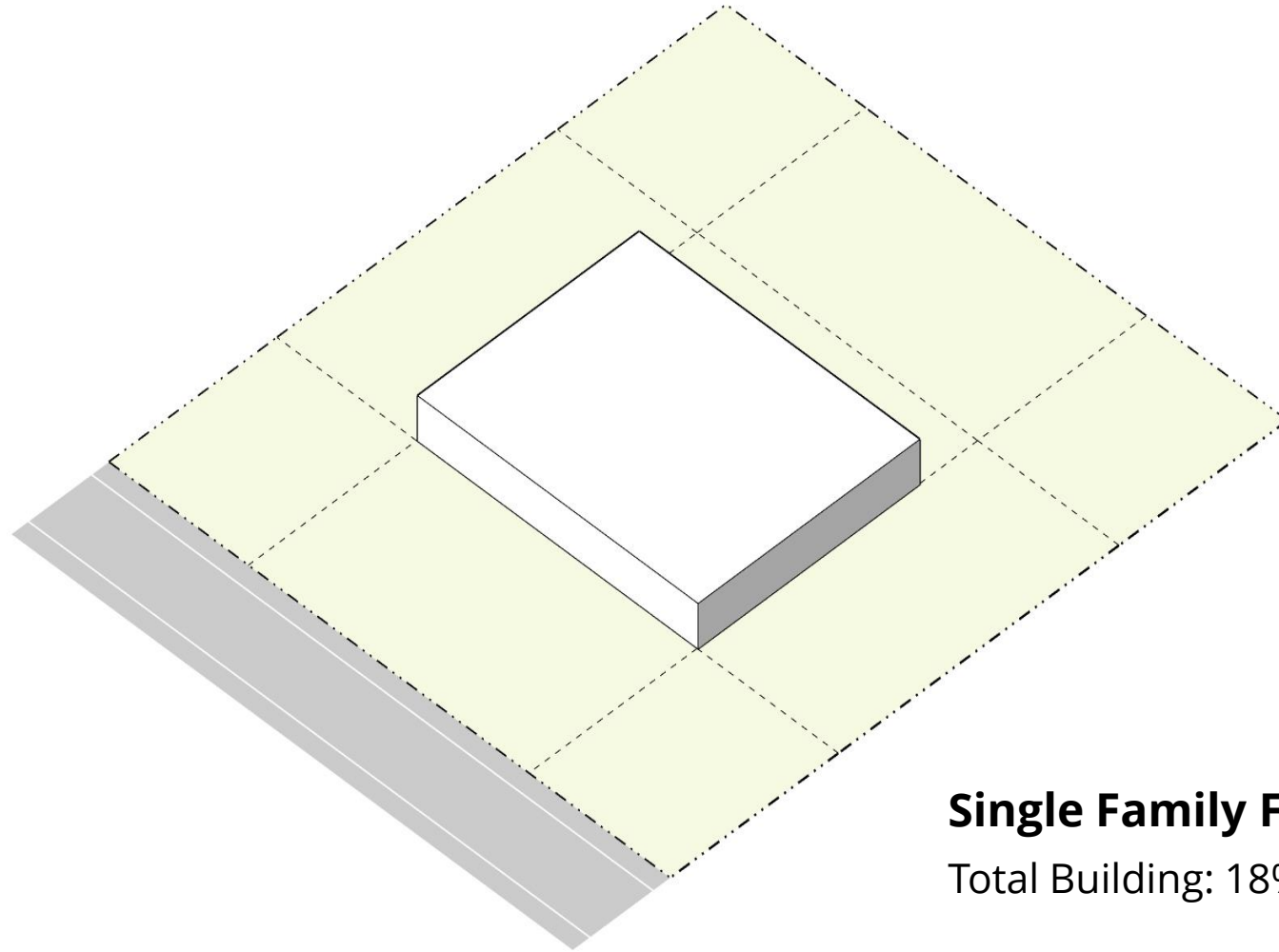


**Fourplex Surrounded by  
Single Family Homes**



**Single Family Home  
in Atherton**

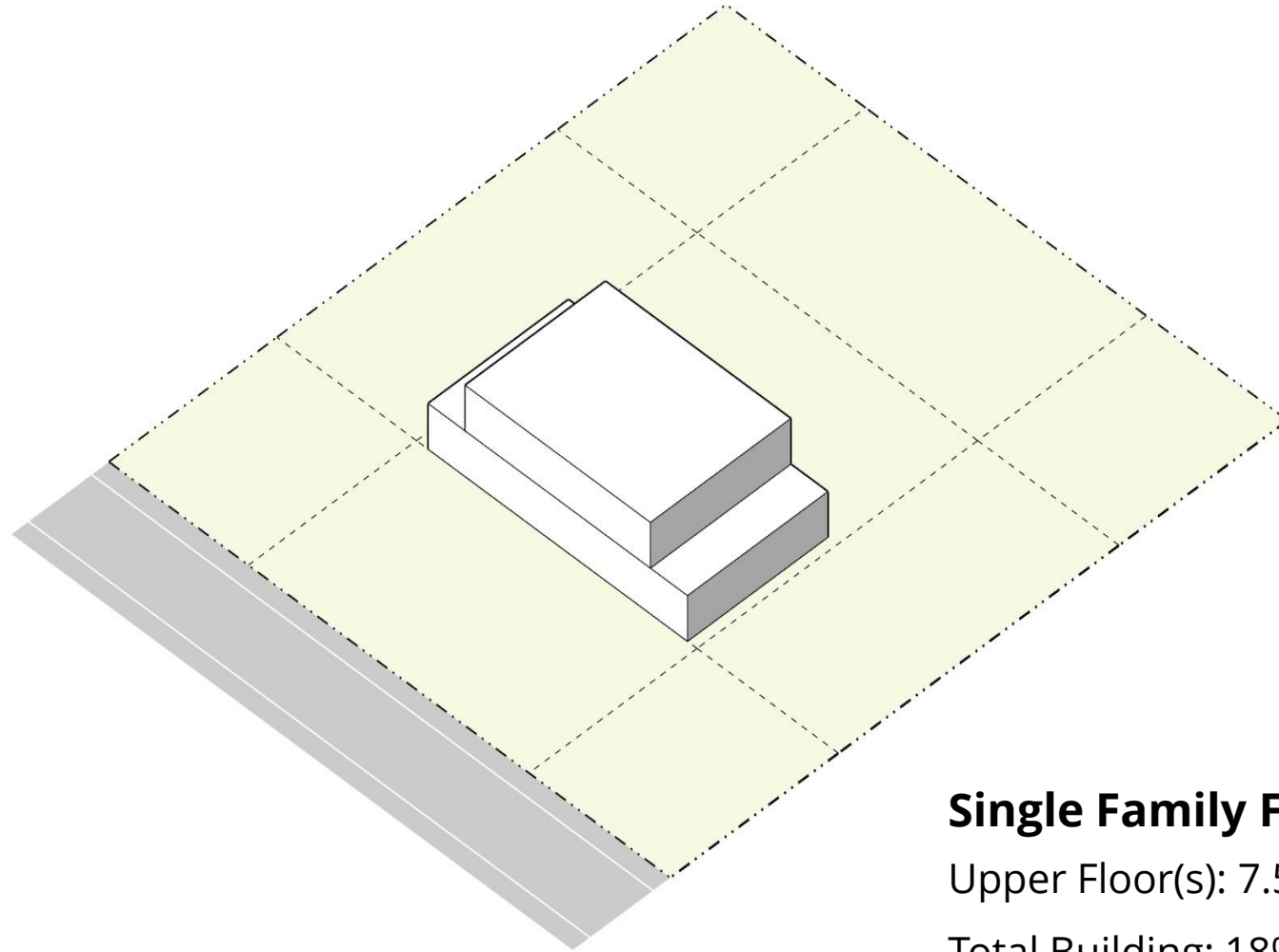
# FLOOR AREA RATIO



## Single Family FAR

Total Building: 18% Max. FAR

# FLOOR AREA RATIO



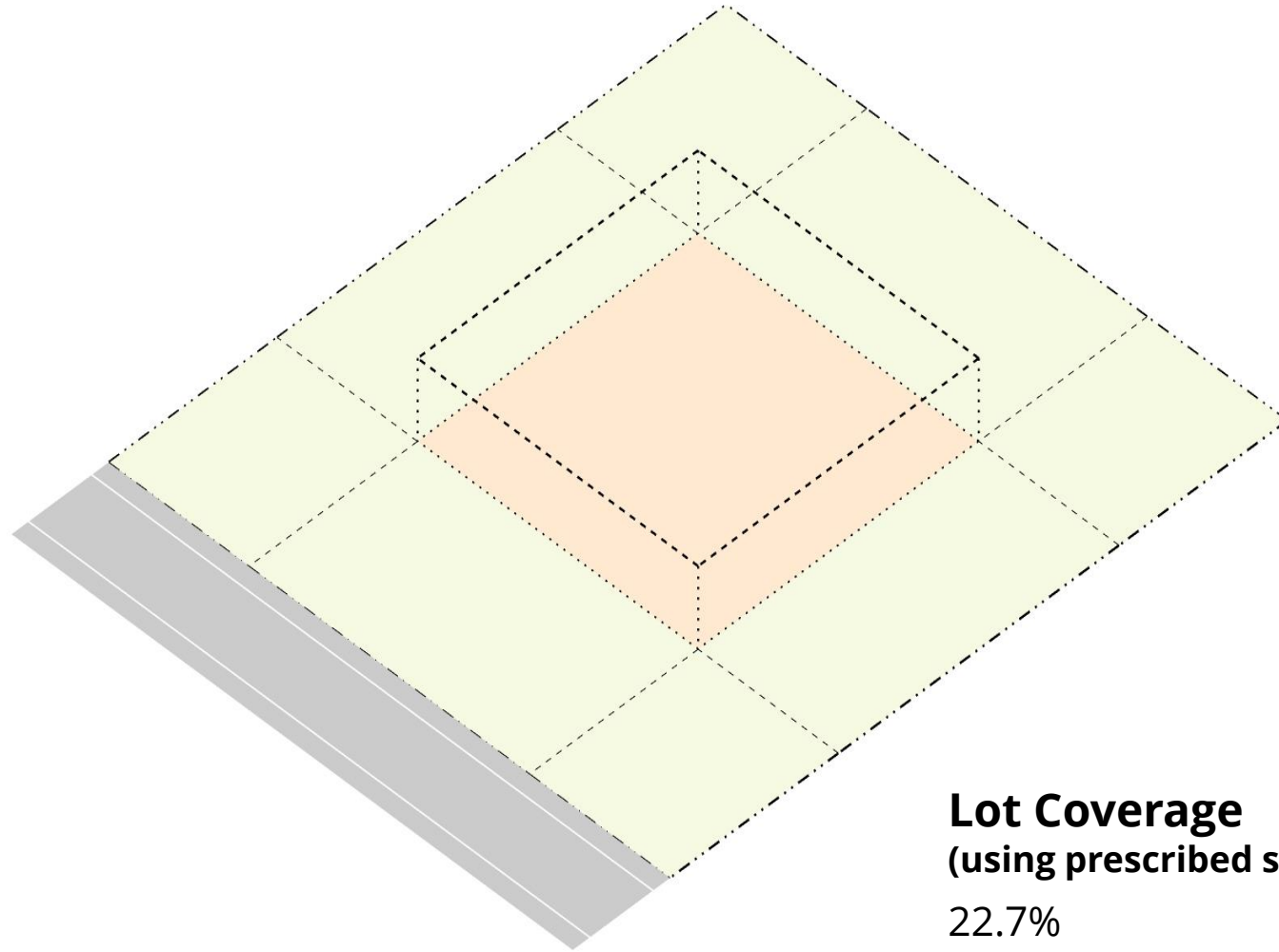
## **Single Family FAR**

Upper Floor(s): 7.5% Max. FAR

Total Building: 18% Max. FAR



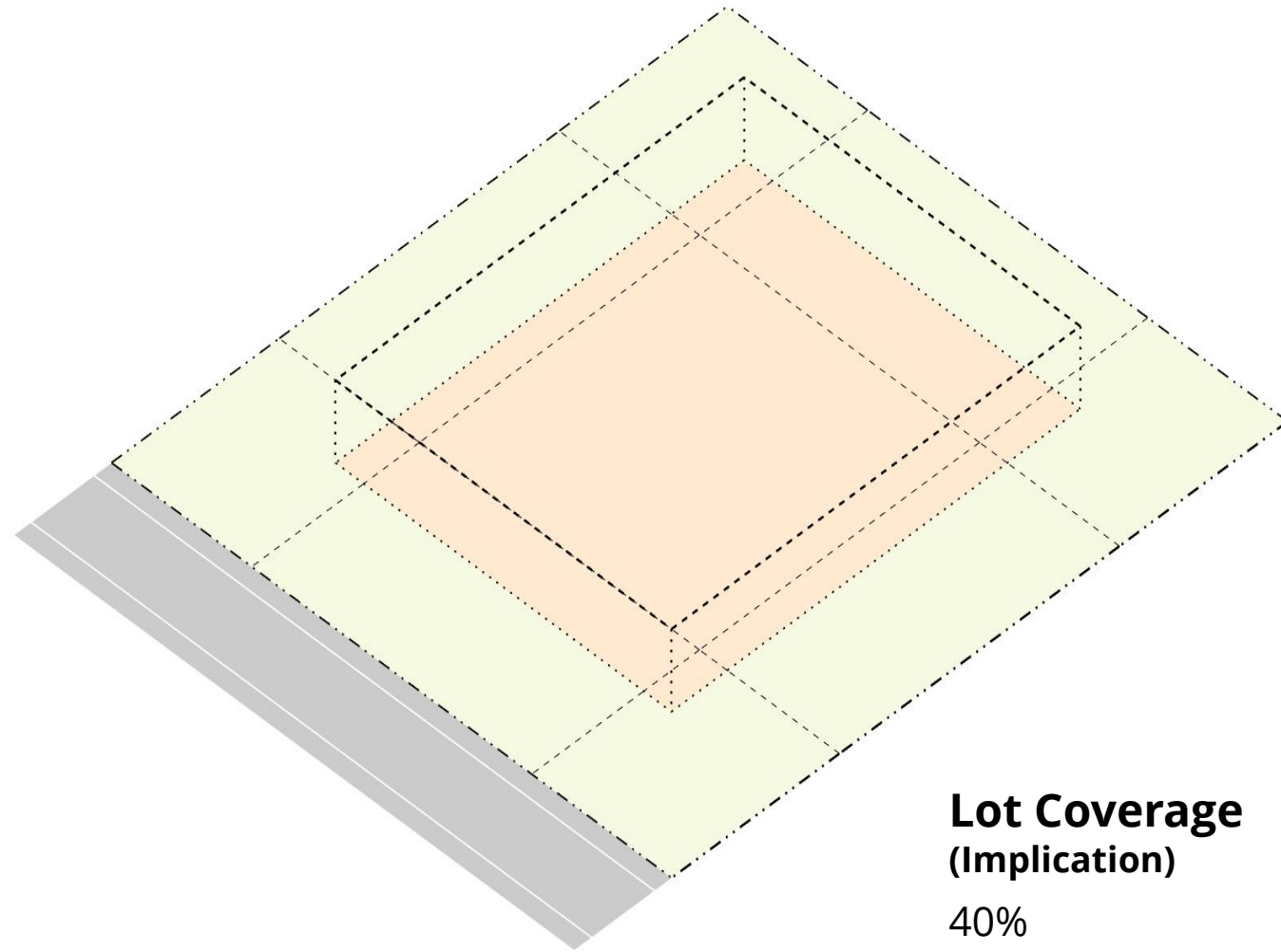
# SITE COVERAGE



**Lot Coverage**  
(using prescribed setbacks)  
22.7%



# SITE COVERAGE



## GOAL

*What is your desired outcome?*

## COMMENT

**how to potentially  
achieve that goal**

- Setbacks and Height
- Site Coverage
- Building Massing
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- Parking

# BUILDING MASSING



## FLOOR AREA RATIO



# BUILDING MASSING



## UPPER FLOOR SETBACKS



# BUILDING MASSING



**PRIVACY FROM UPPER-LEVEL DEVELOPMENT**



# BUILDING MASSING



**COURTYARDS (SHARED OPEN SPACE)**



# SITE DESIGN



**ENTRY GATES/ACCESS TO THE STREET**



# SITE DESIGN



**PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE STREET**



# SITE DESIGN



**SHARED AMENITIES (POOLS, SPORTS COURTS, SPAS)**



# SITE DESIGN



## SITE LIGHTING



# SITE DESIGN



## REFUSE/RECYCLING FACILITIES



# SCREENING AND WALLS



## FENCES AND WALLS



# SCREENING AND WALLS



## LANDSCAPING SCREENING AND BUFFERING

## GOAL

*What is your desired outcome?*

## COMMENT

how to potentially  
achieve that goal

- Setbacks and Height
- Site Coverage
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# FAÇADE ARTICULATION



## ROOF AND EAVE DETAILS



# FAÇADE ARTICULATION



## WINDOW ARTICULATION

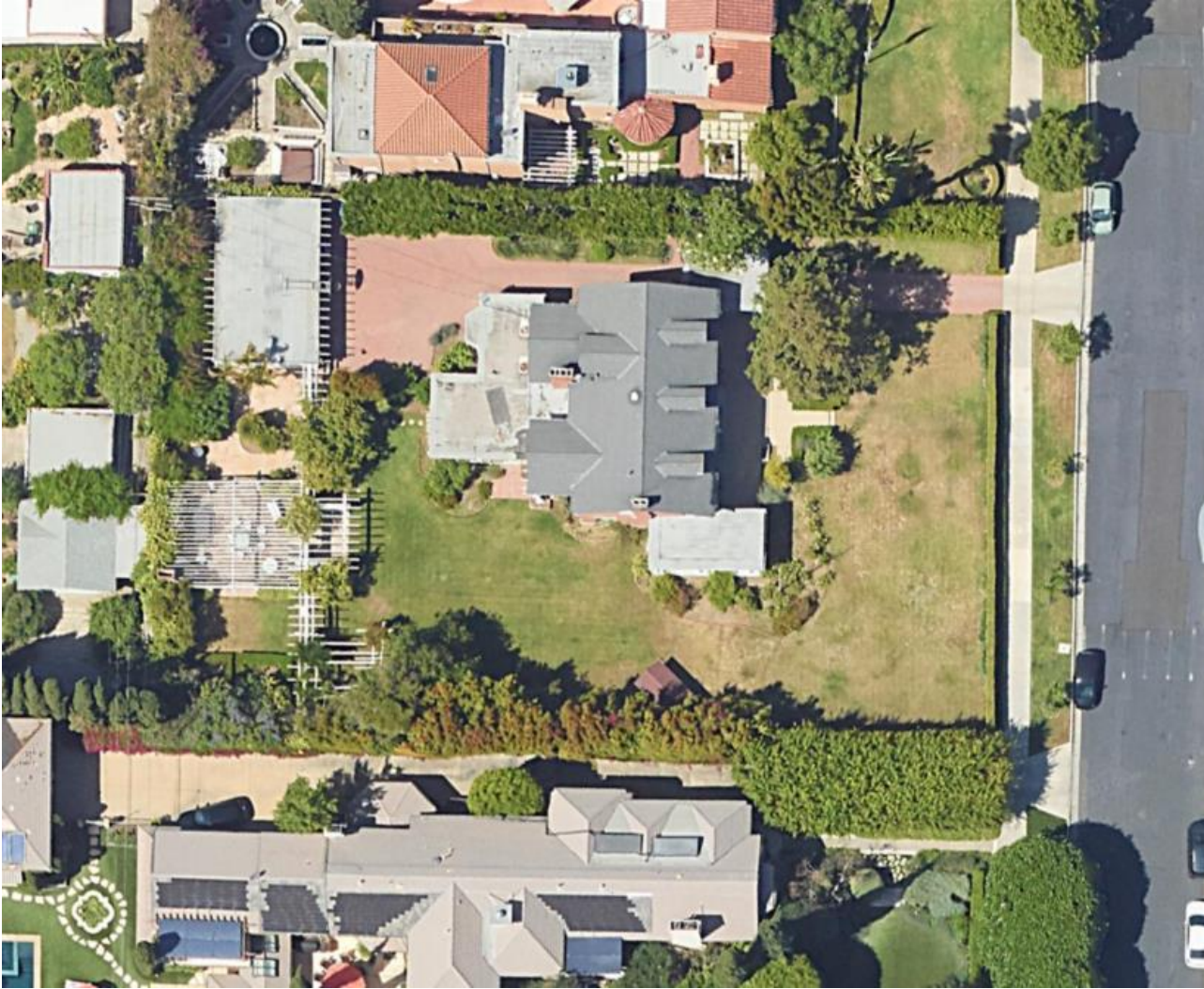
# FAÇADE ARTICULATION



## PORCH AND ENTRY DETAILS



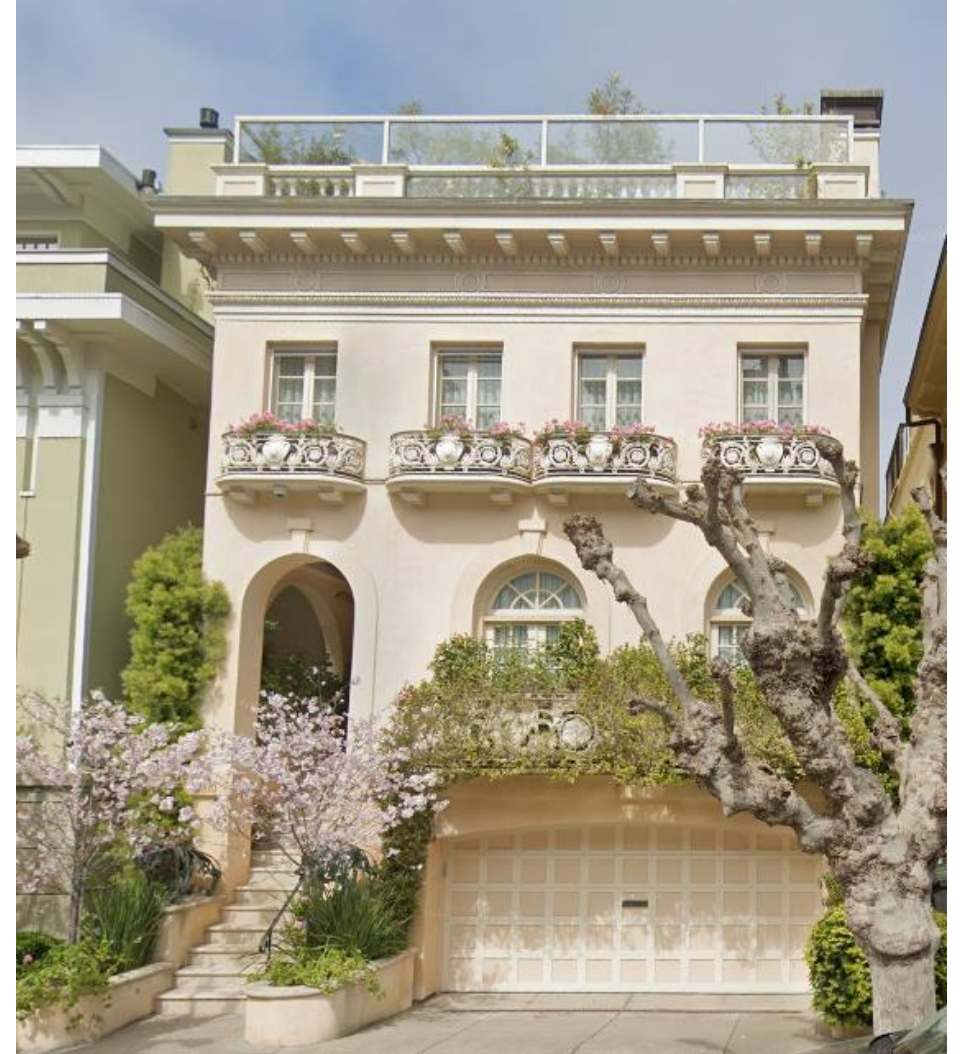
# PARKING



## PARKING LOCATION



# PARKING



## INTEGRATION OF STRUCTURED PARKING

## GOAL

*What is your desired outcome?*

## COMMENT

how to potentially  
achieve that goal

- Setbacks and Height
- Site Coverage
- Building Massing
- Site Design
- Screening and Walls
- Façade Articulation
- Parking





# COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED ISSUES



## GOAL

*What is your desired outcome?*

## COMMENT

**how to potentially  
achieve that goal**

- Setbacks and Height
- Site Coverage
- Building Massing
- Site Design
- Screening and Walls
- Façade Articulation
- Parking
- *What have we missed?*



# NEXT STEPS



## NEXT STEPS

- Joint Study Session – November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Workshop #2 – November 13<sup>th</sup>
- Planning Commission Meeting
- City Council Hearing

# Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Housing

Community Workshop

Town of Atherton

October 23, 2023