

Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Housing

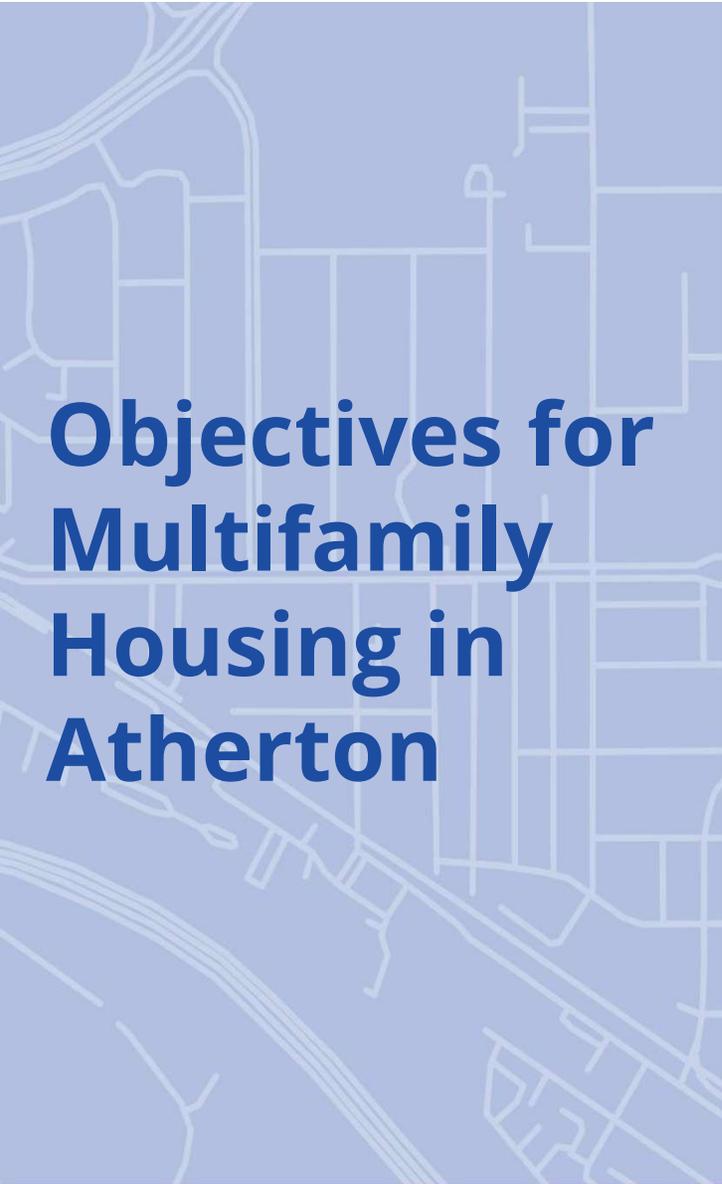
Study Session

Town of Atherton

November 1, 2023

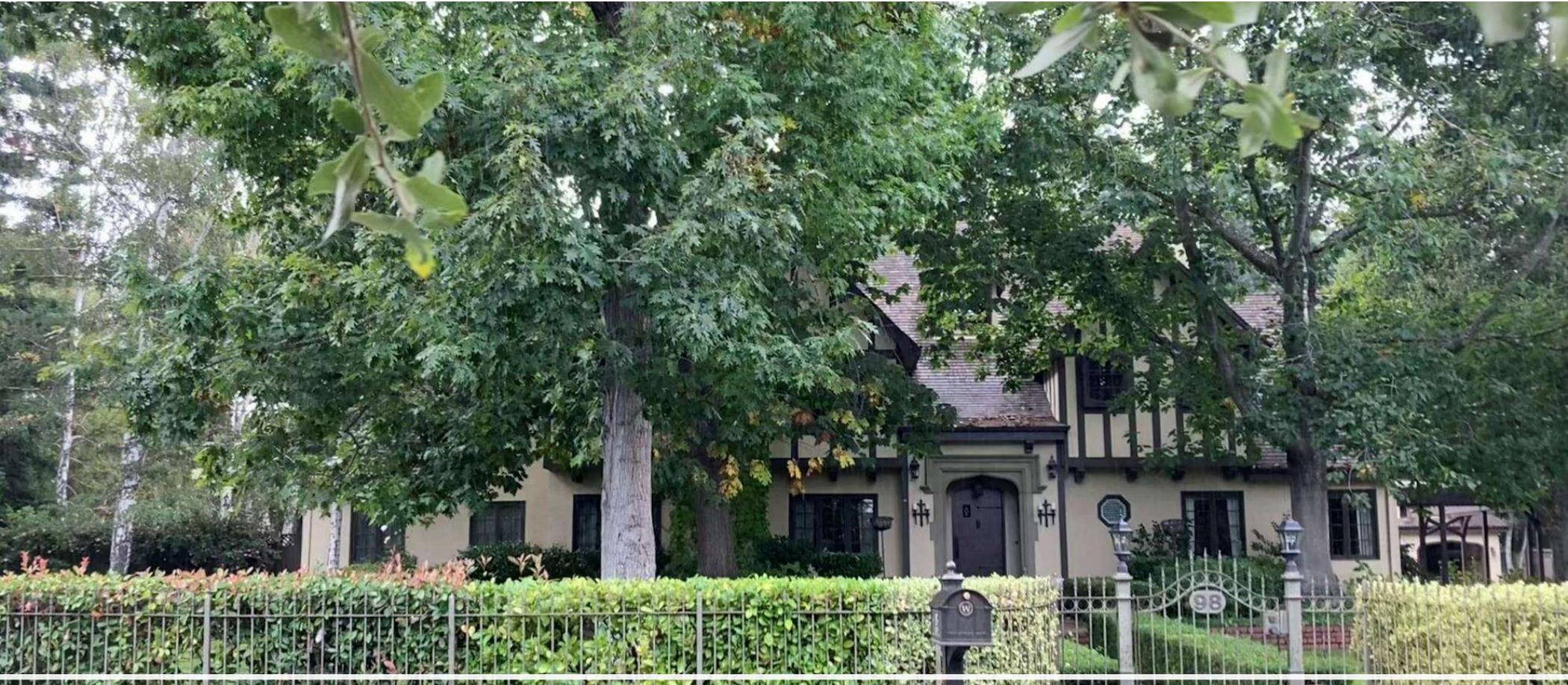
AGENDA

- Background
- Objective Design and Development Standards
- Large House Typology
- Community Feedback
- Density Bonus Law
- Sites and Standards & Potential Sites
- Discussion
- Next Steps

A light blue background featuring a white line-art map of a city street grid, likely Atherton, California. The map shows various street layouts, including a prominent diagonal road in the lower-left quadrant.

Objectives for Multifamily Housing in Atherton

- Respond to HCD and achieve certification of Housing Element
- Facilitate Multifamily housing that addresses AFFH
- Develop standards that align with unique character of Atherton



OBJECTIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT 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



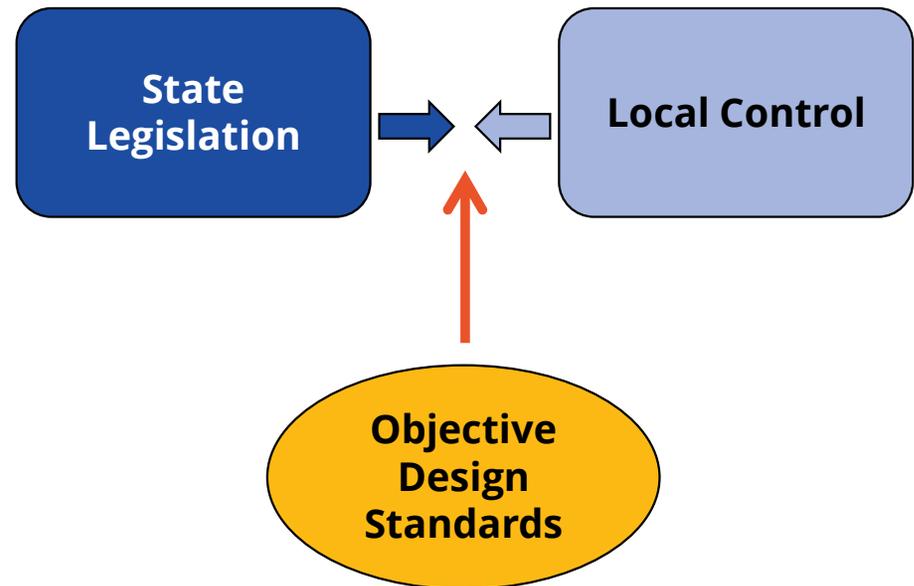
WHAT ARE OBJECTIVE DESIGN STANDARDS?

“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**

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.



SUBJECTIVE



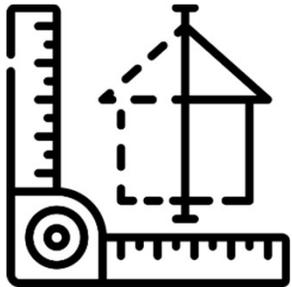
OBJECTIVE



Internally connected pedestrian paths

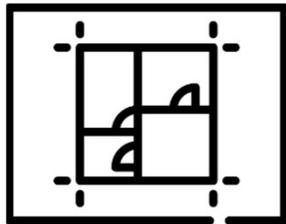
Source: <https://www.elevatosequoia.com/apartments/ca/antioch/cross-pointe-apartment-homes/>

TOOLS FOR OBJECTIVE STANDARDS



Counts and Measurements

- Height
- Distances
- Setbacks



1:100

Ratios

- Roof Pitch
- Step Back Ratio



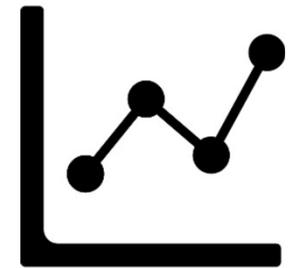
Checklists

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

STANDARDS FOR MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

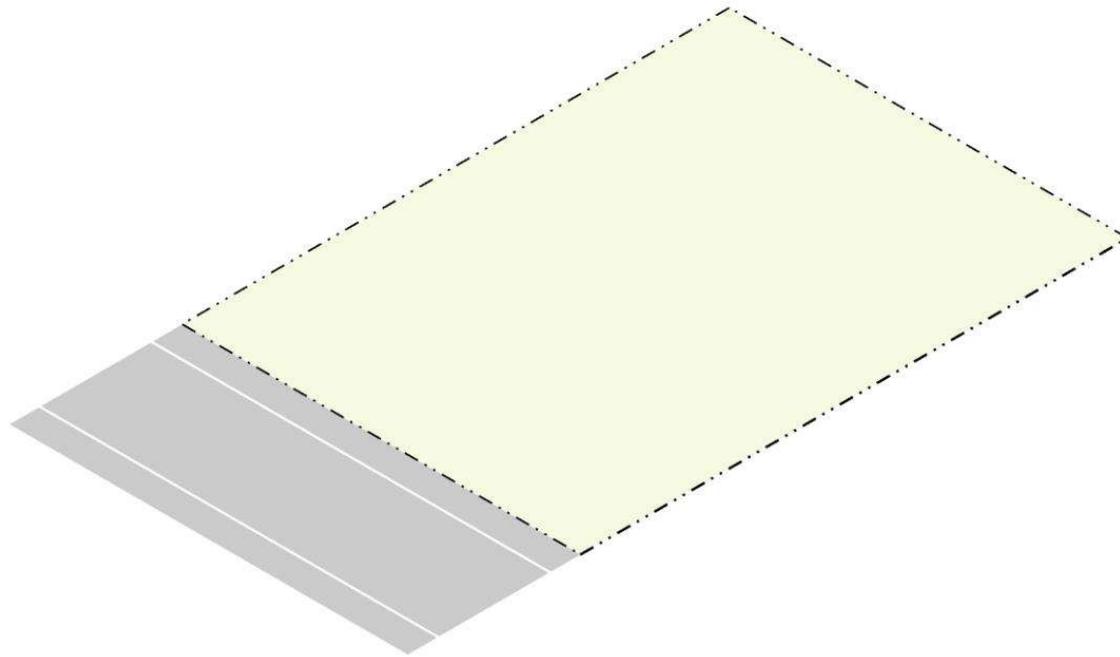
17.XX.040 RM-10 Development Standards

- A. Height
- B. Floor Area Ratio
- C. Front and Rear Yards
- D. Side Yards
- E. Upper Floor Setbacks
- F. Building Massing
- G. Façade Design
- H. Roof and Eave Details
- I. Porch and Entry Details
- J. Window Details
- K. Site Lighting

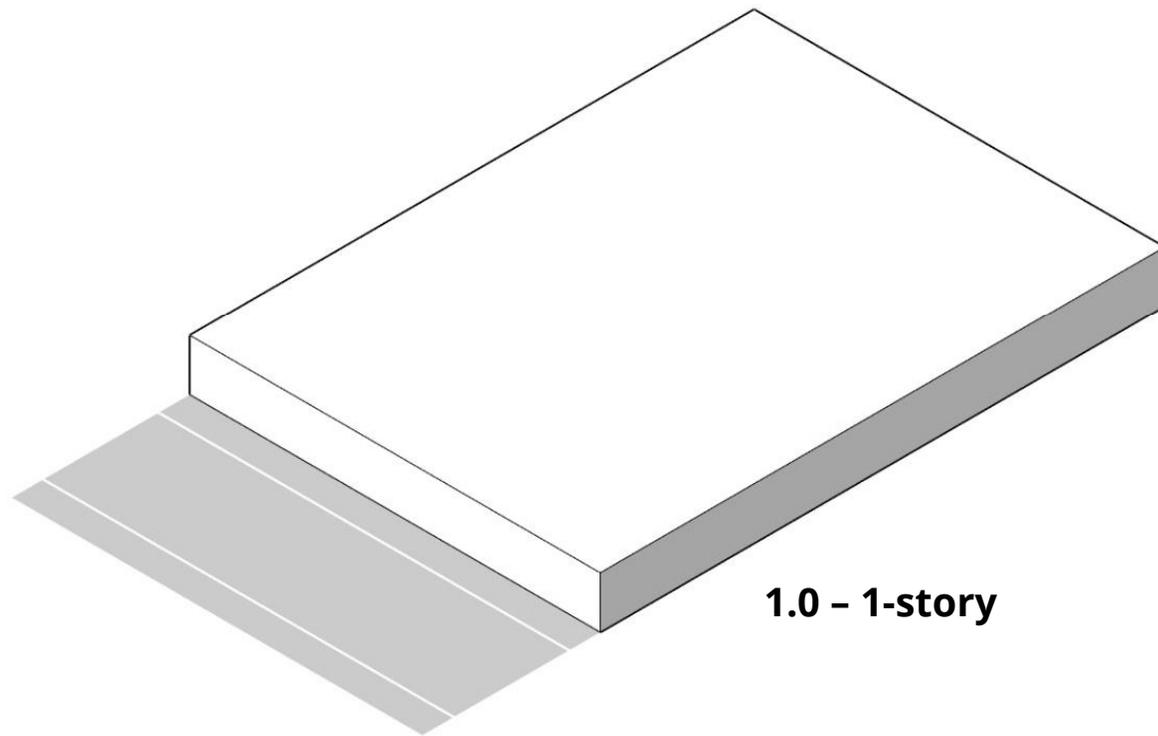


REGULATORY TOOLS

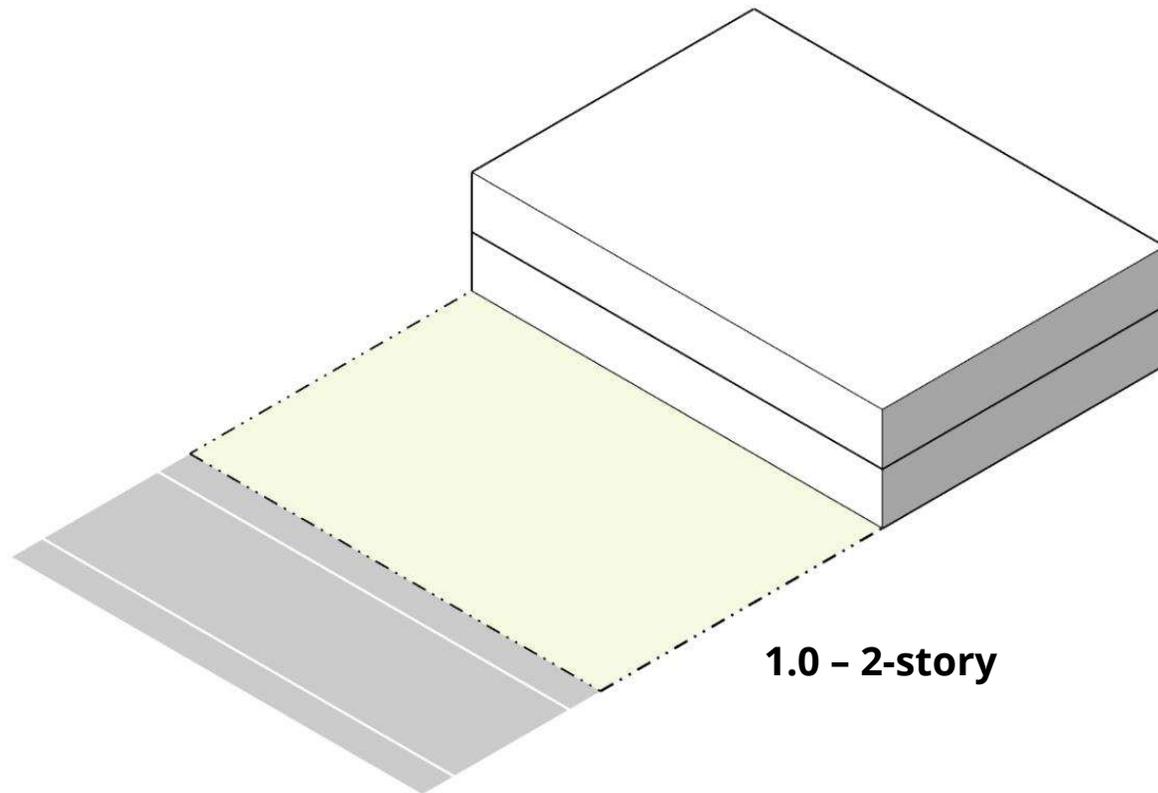
PARCEL



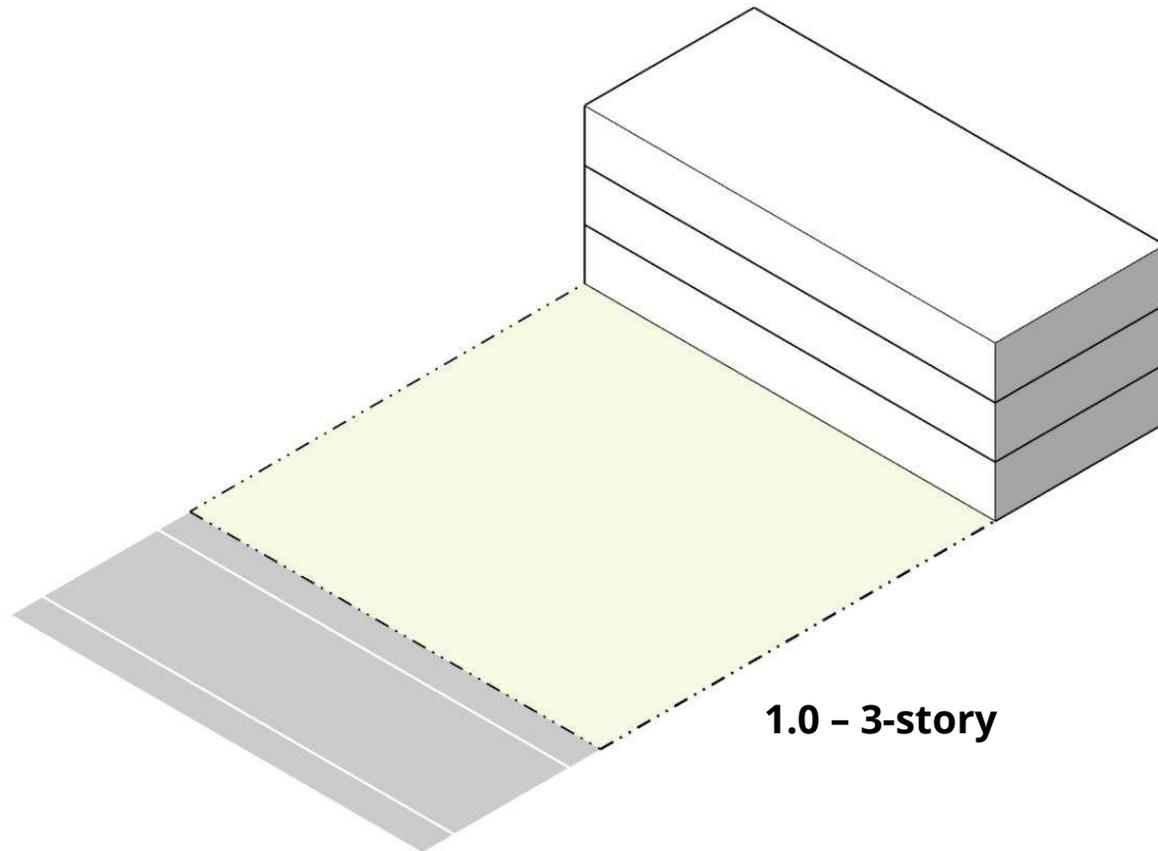
FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)



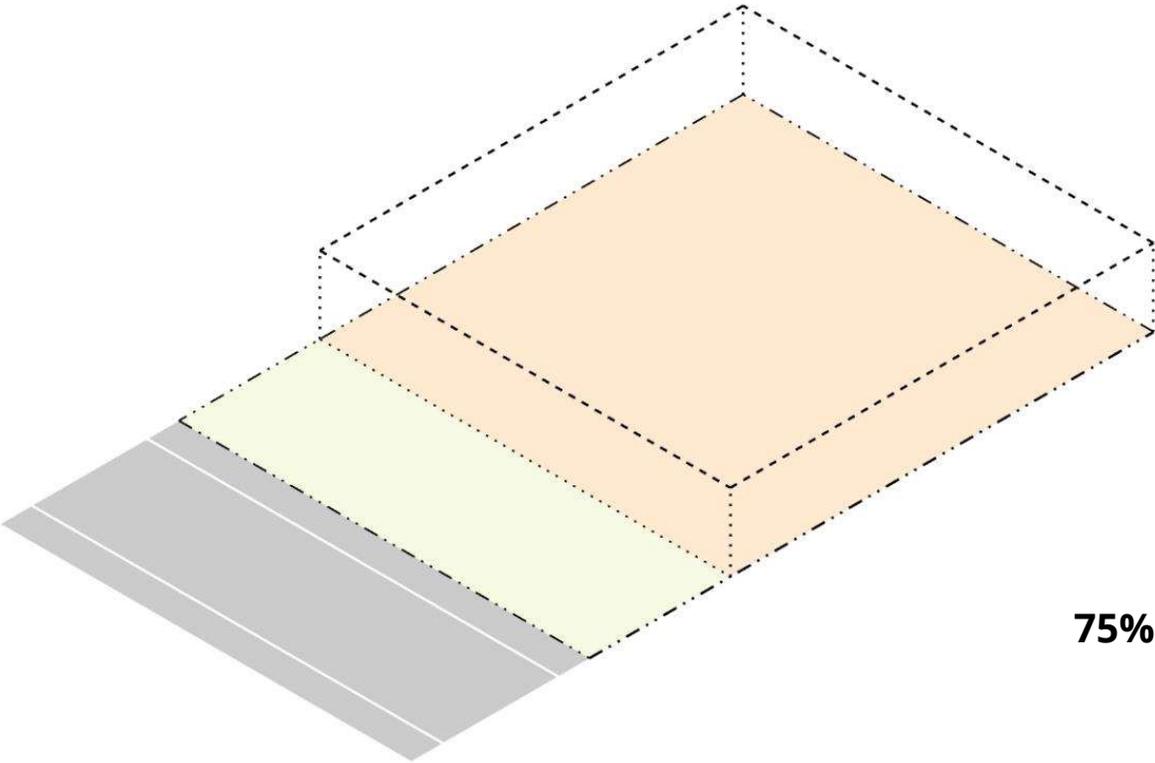
FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)



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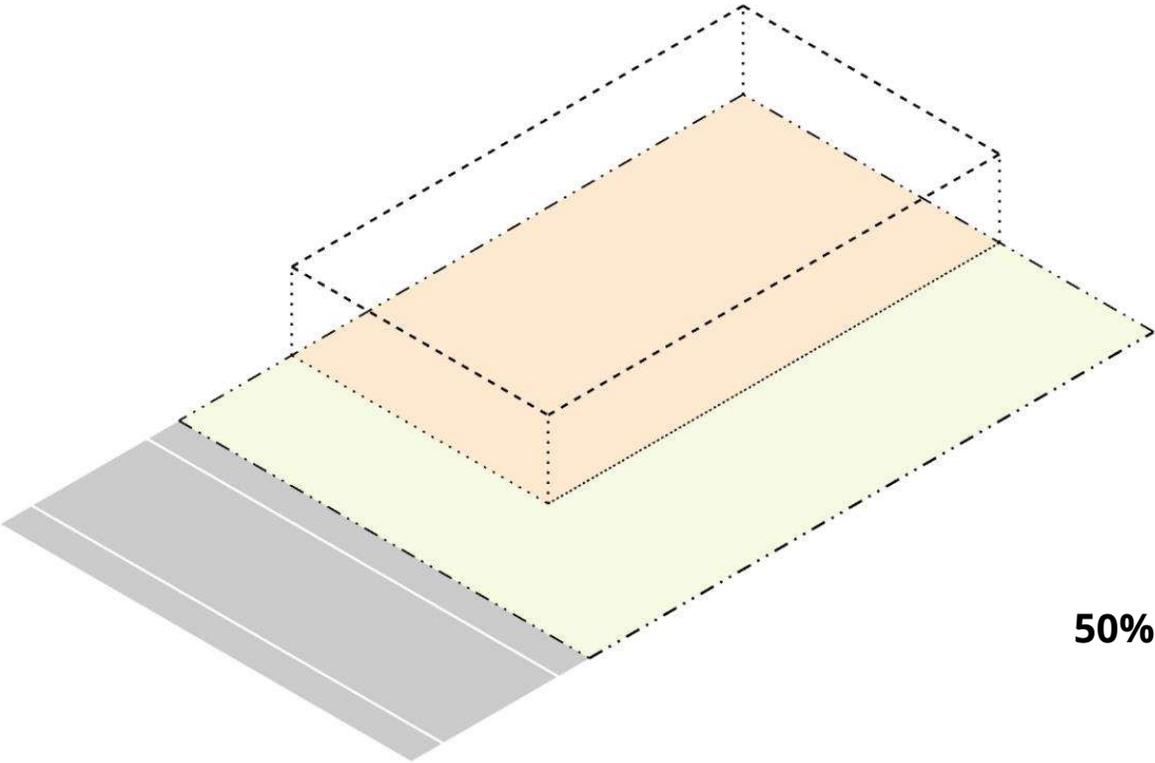


LOT COVERAGE



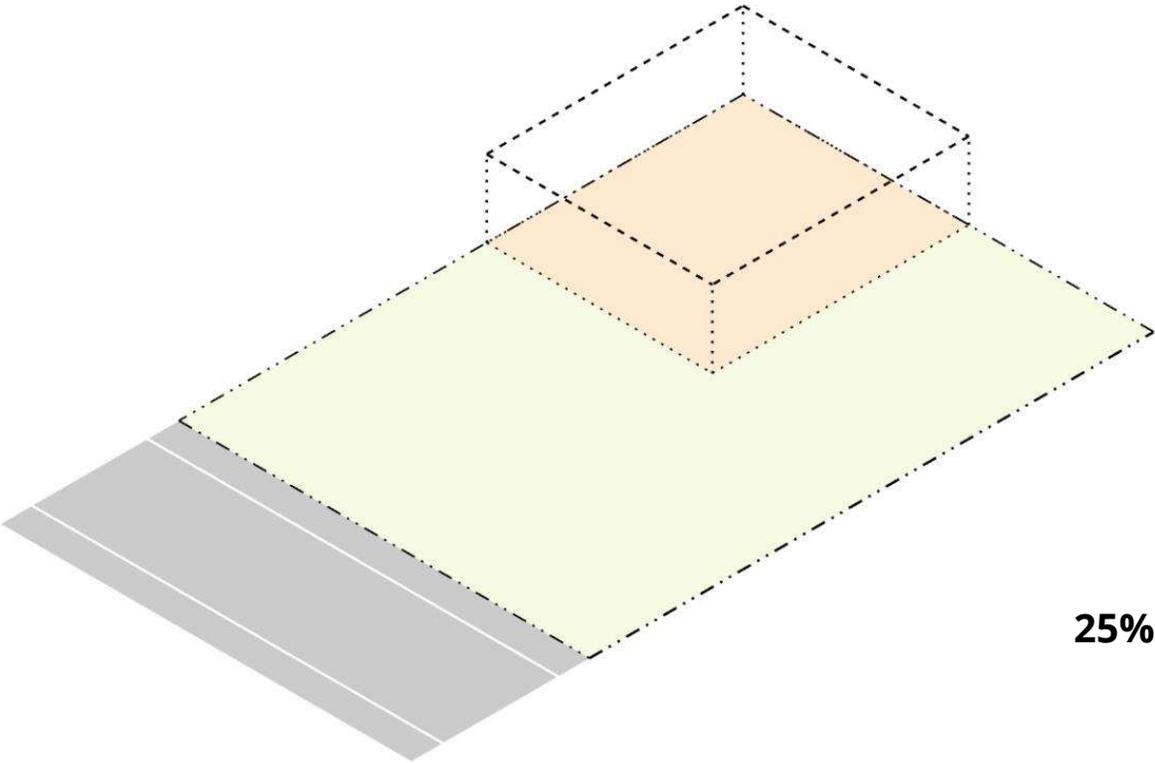
75%

LOT COVERAGE



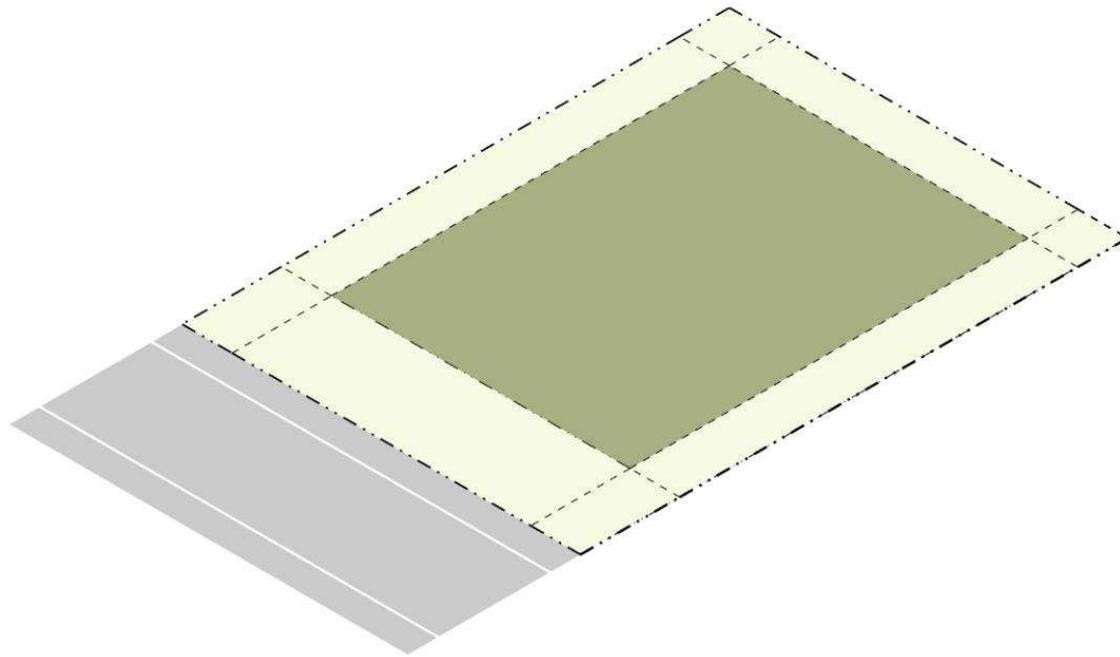
50%

LOT COVERAGE



25%

SETBACKS



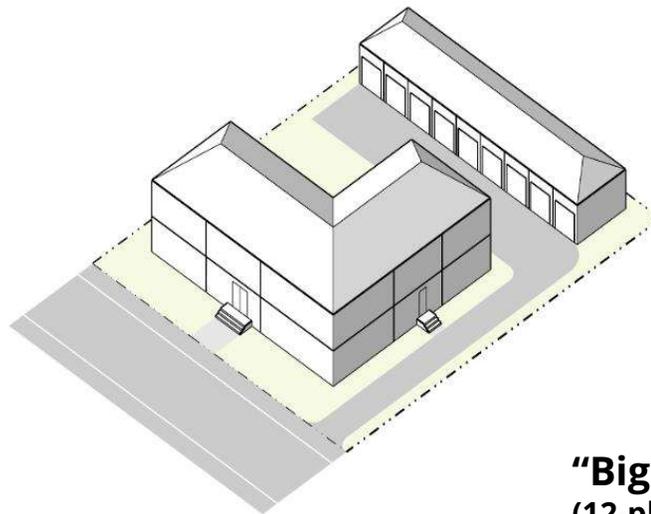


LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGY

LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



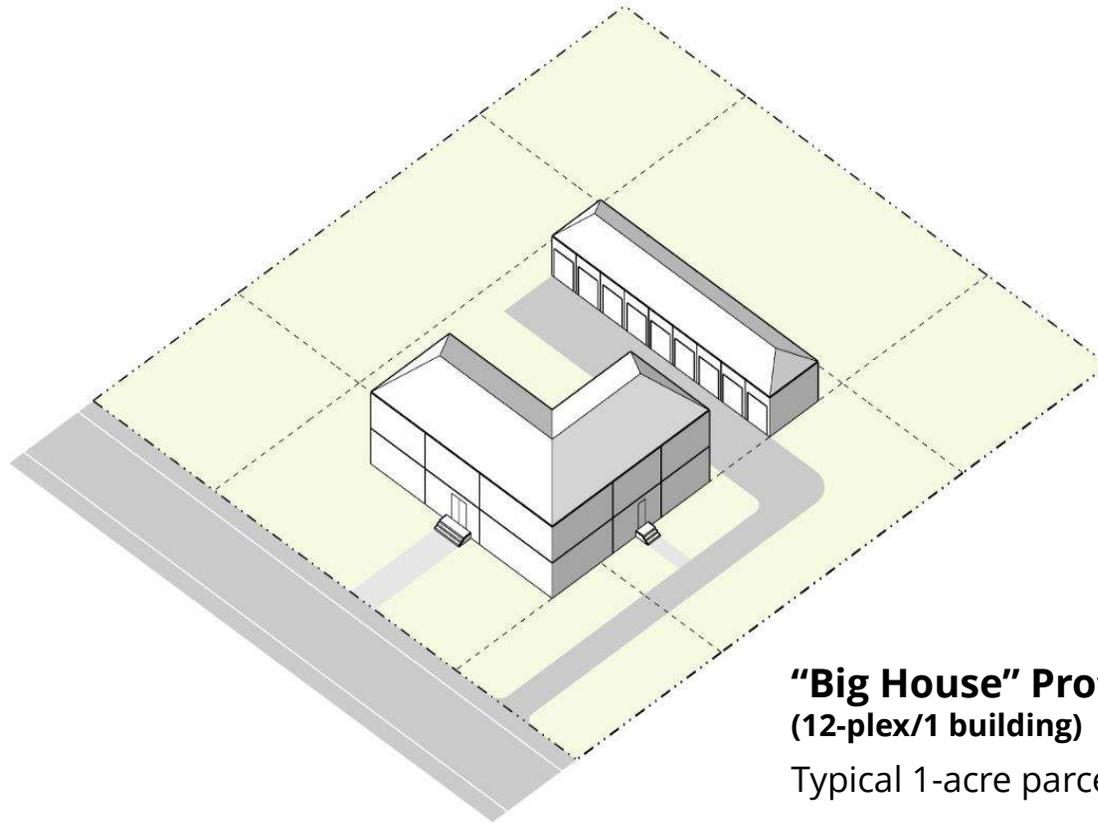
LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



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

14,000 sq ft parcel

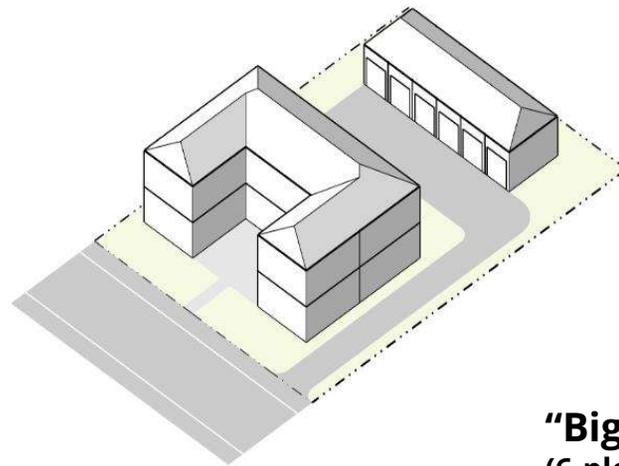
LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



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

Typical 1-acre parcel

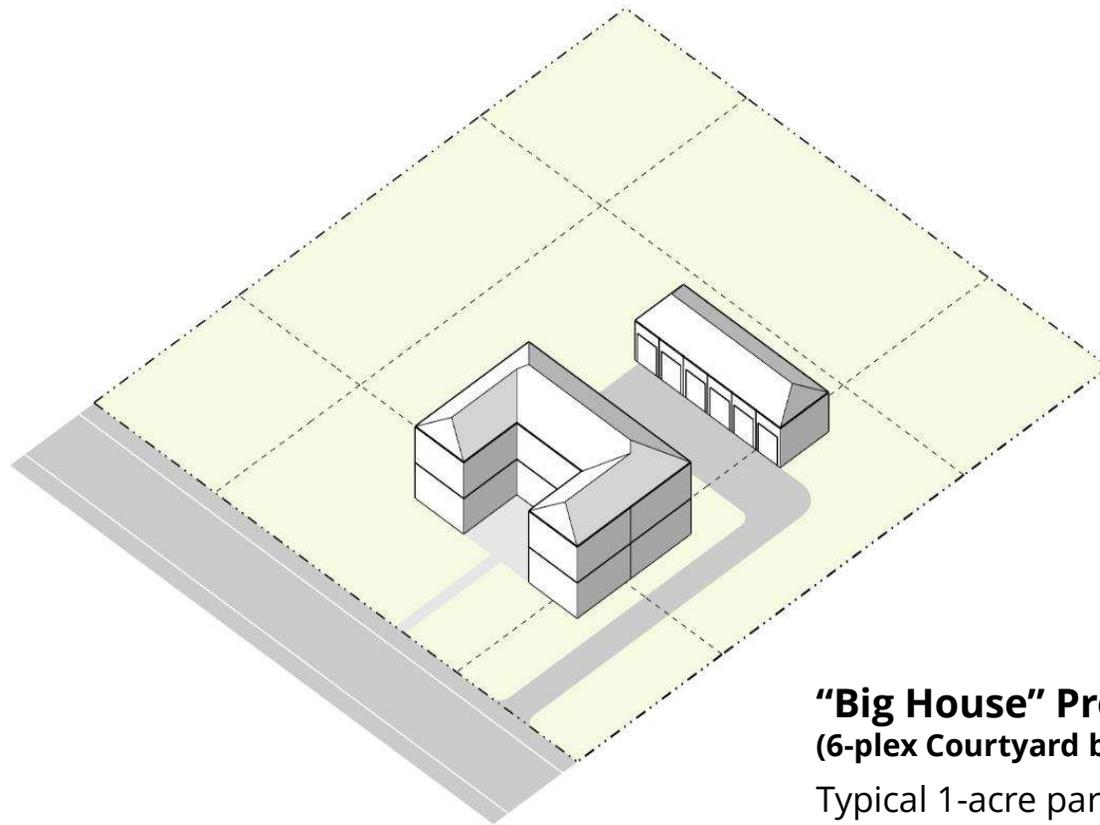
LARGE HOUSE TYPOLOGIES



“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



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

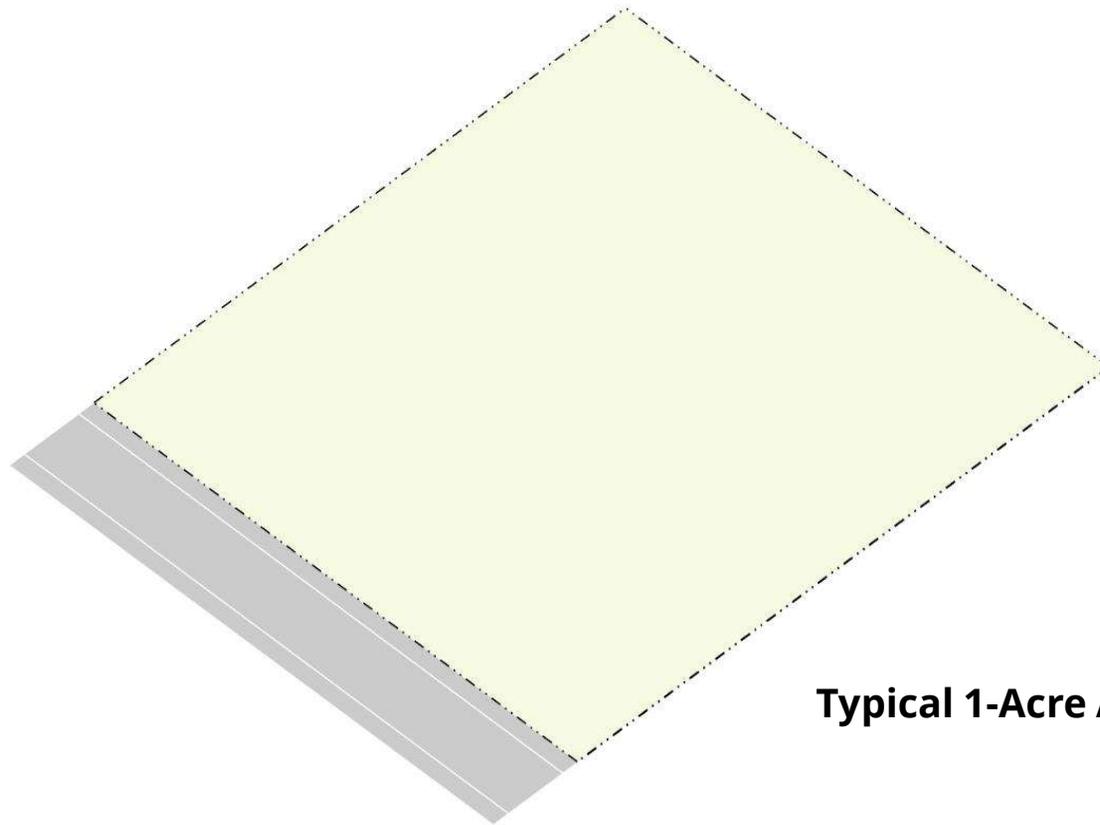
COMMENTS

- Development Standards
- Aesthetics
- Privacy, Noise and Screening
- Heritage Trees
- Traffic and Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety
- Parking
- Density Bonus Law

COMMENTS

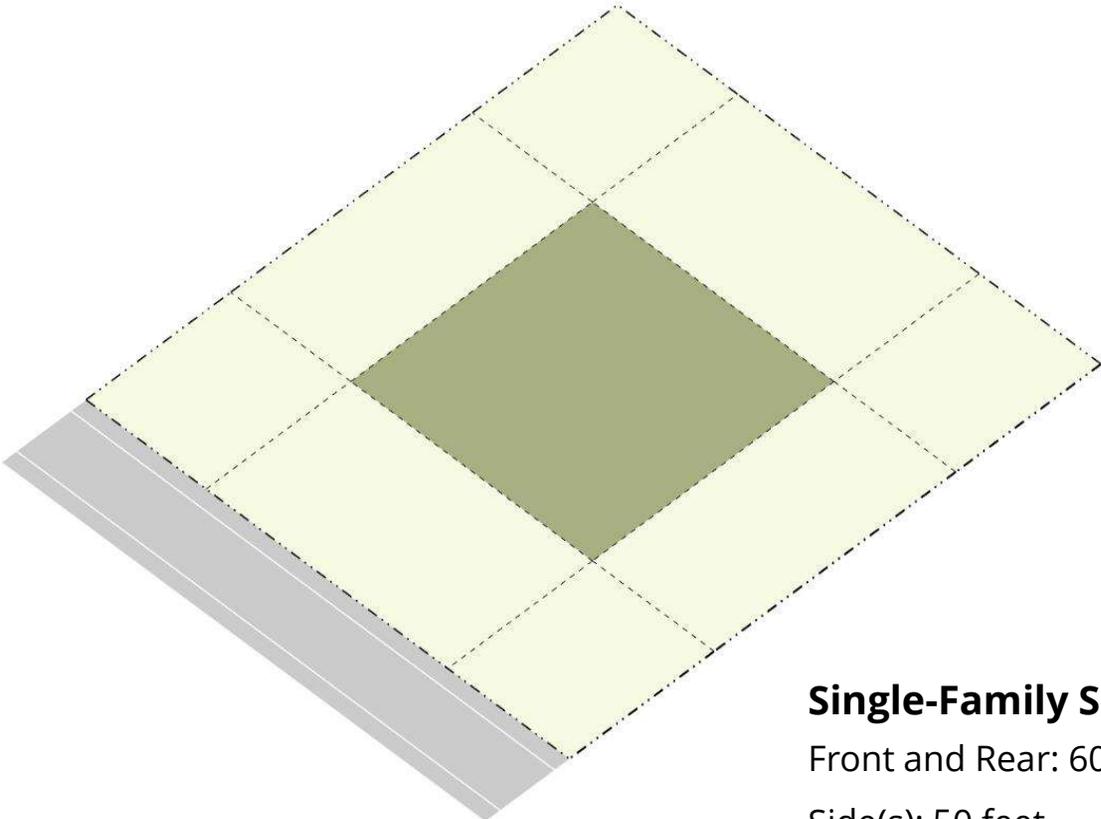
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DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS



Typical 1-Acre Atherton Parcel

SETBACKS AND HEIGHT



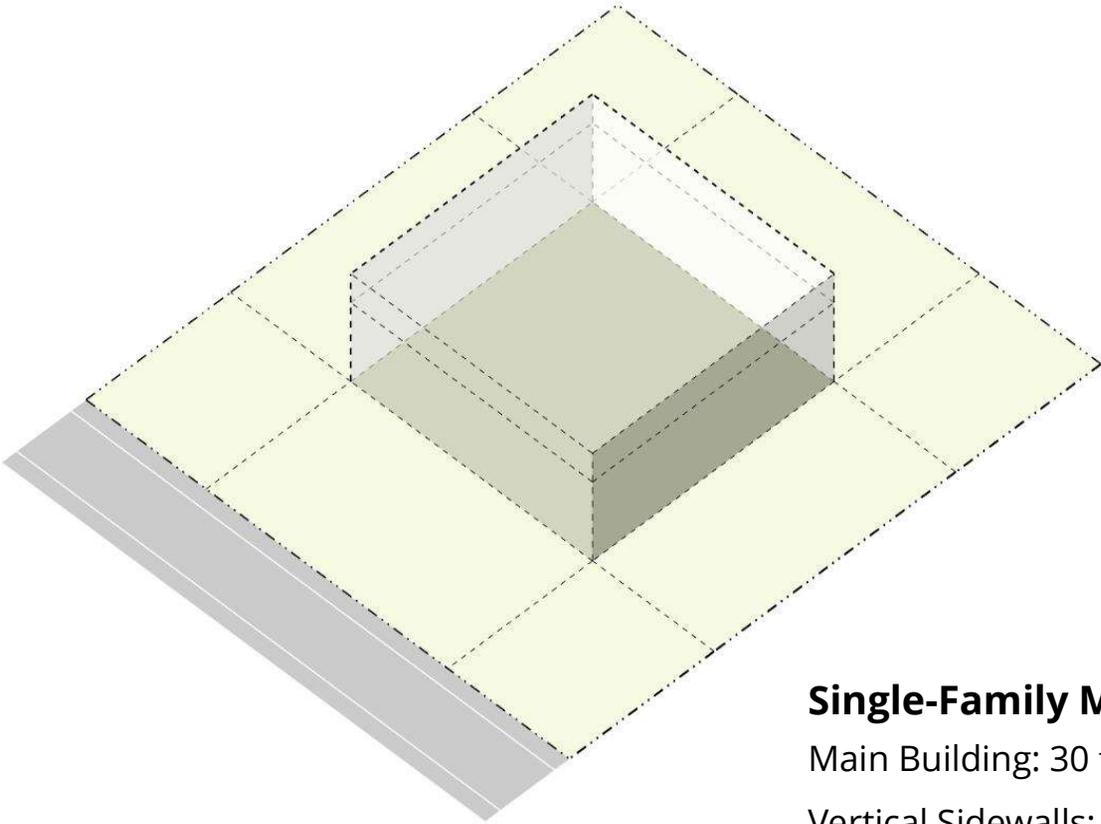
Single-Family Setbacks

Front and Rear: 60 feet

Side(s): 50 feet

Buildable area: 10,000 sf

SETBACKS AND HEIGHT

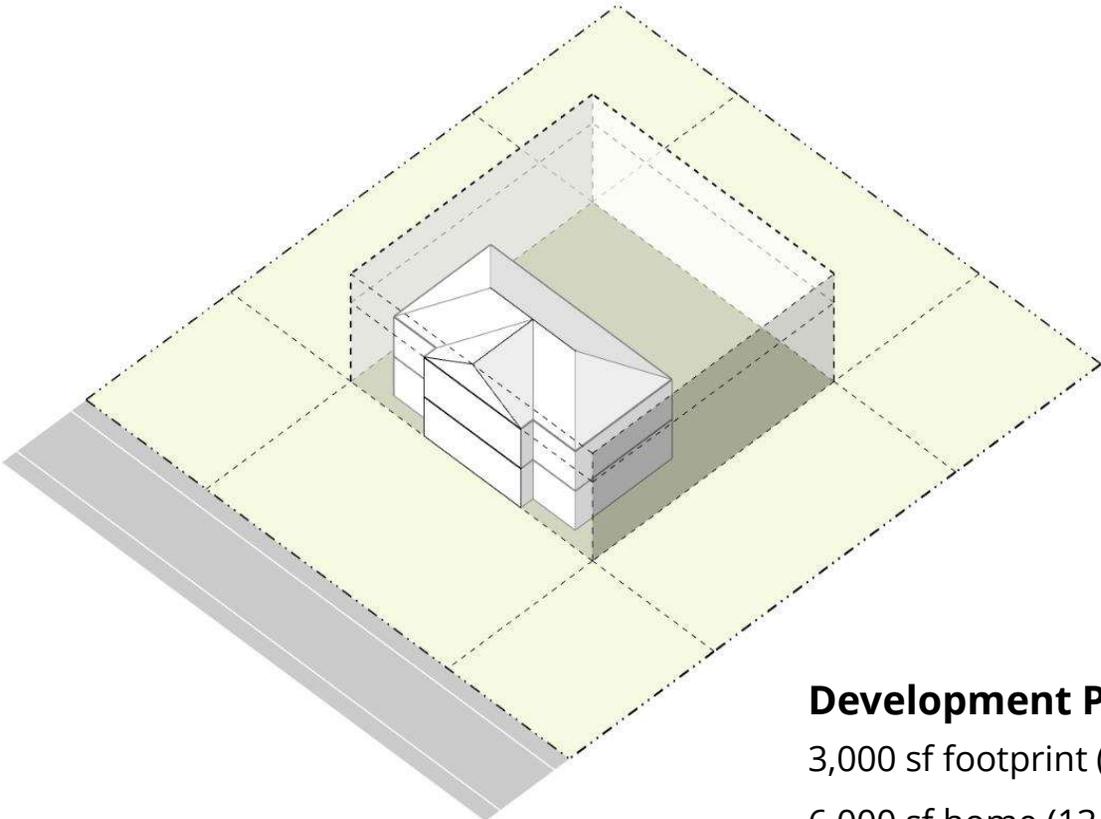


Single-Family Maximum Height

Main Building: 30 feet

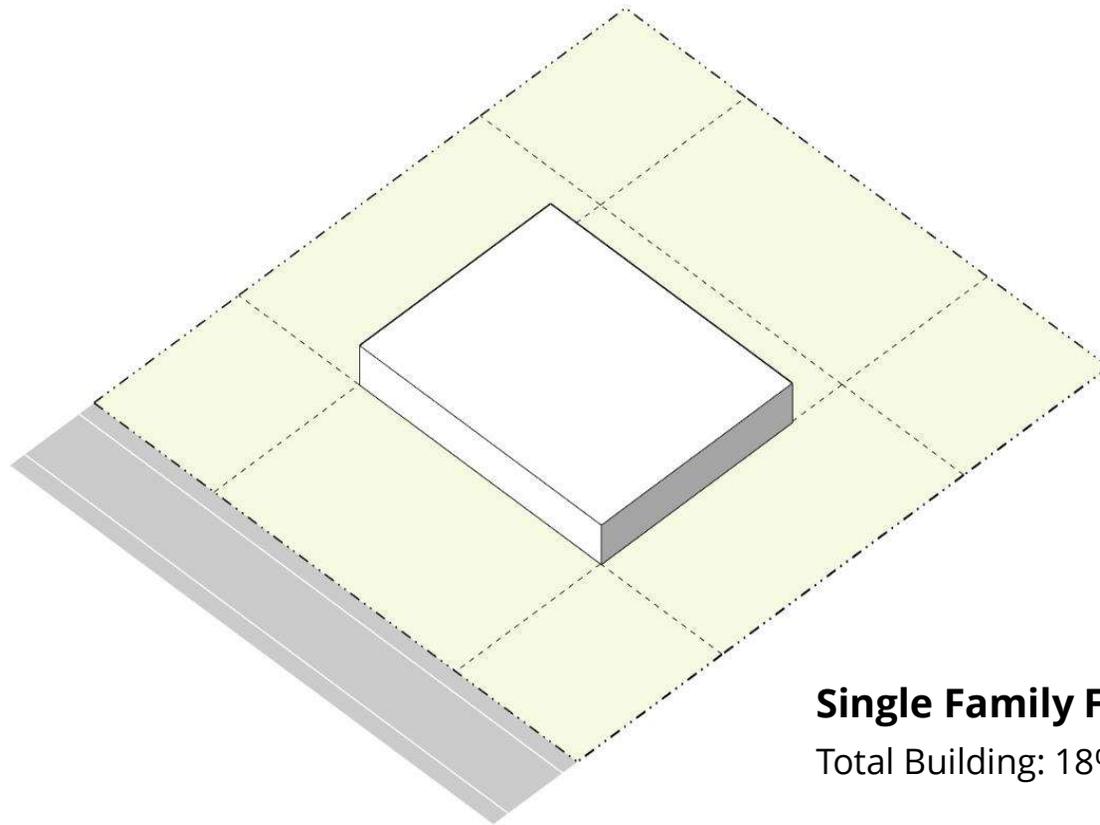
Vertical Sidewalls: 22 feet

SETBACKS AND HEIGHT



Development Potential
3,000 sf footprint (lot coverage)
6,000 sf home (13.7% FAR)

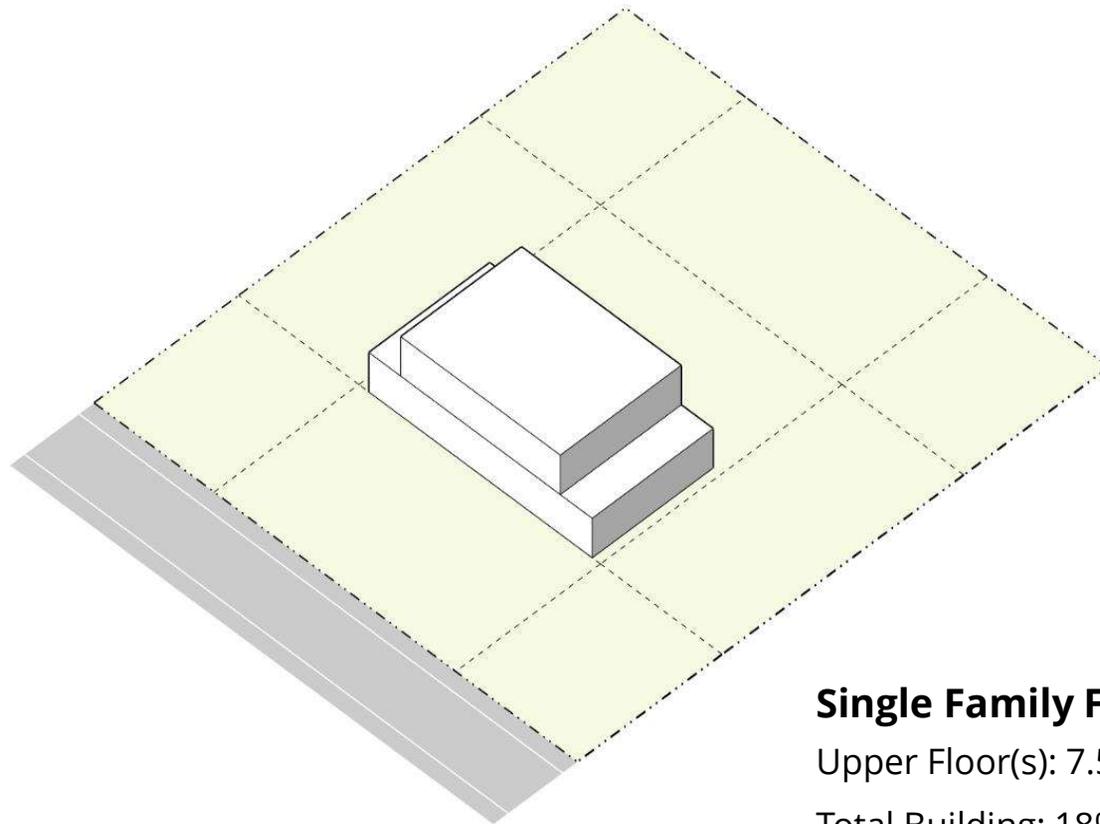
FLOOR AREA RATIO



Single Family FAR

Total Building: 18% Max. FAR

FLOOR AREA RATIO

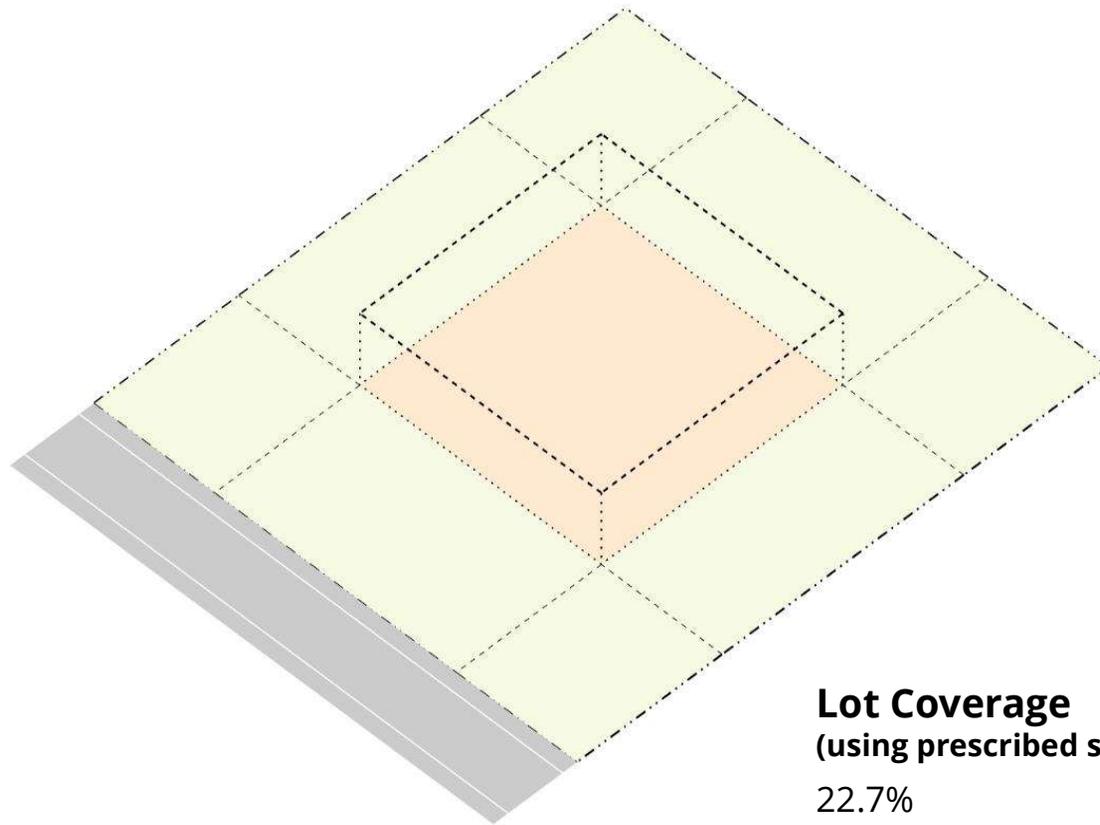


Single Family FAR

Upper Floor(s): 7.5% Max. FAR

Total Building: 18% Max. FAR

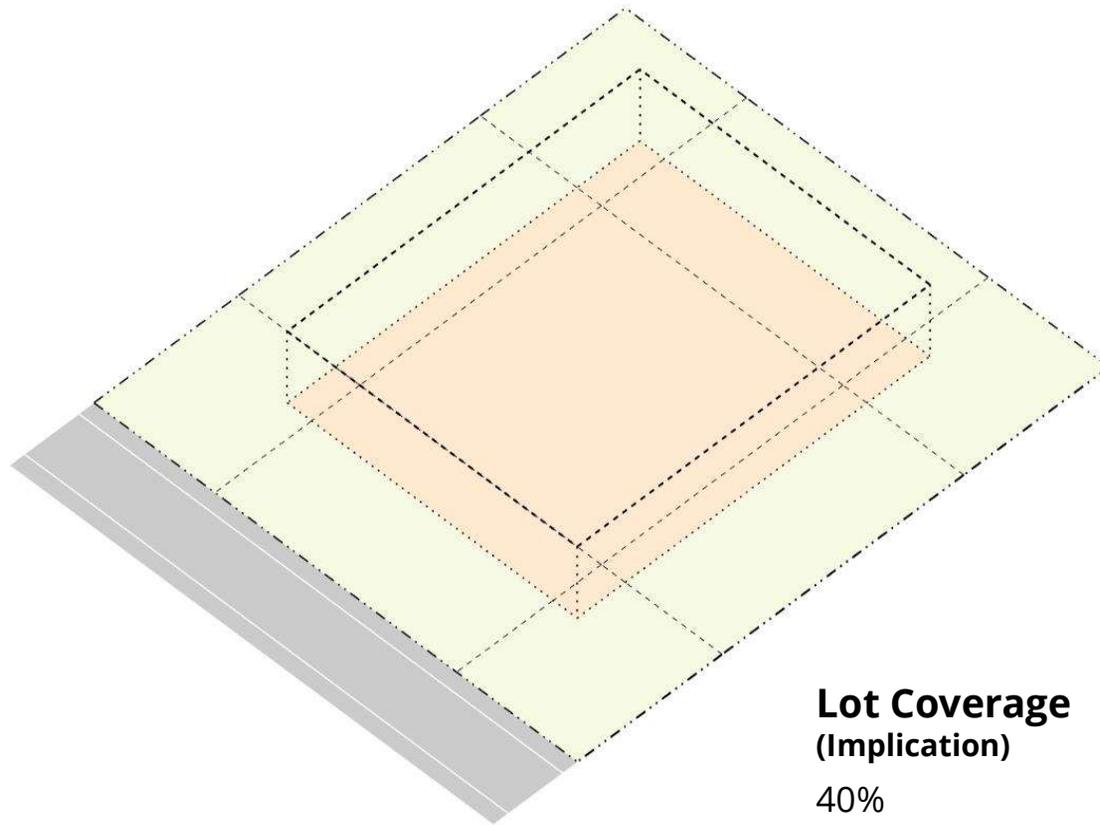
SITE COVERAGE



Lot Coverage
(using prescribed setbacks)

22.7%

SITE COVERAGE



**Lot Coverage
(Implication)**

40%

ATHERTON BUILDINGS



ATHERTON BUILDINGS



ATHERTON BUILDINGS



COMMENTS

- Development Standards
- **Aesthetics**
- Privacy, Noise and Screening
- Heritage Trees
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- Parking
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AESTHETICS



AESTHETICS



10 units
via MTC, 2022



AESTHETICS



4 dwelling units

<https://www.jka.cc/projects/multifamily-residential/fourplex/>

AESTHETICS



4 dwelling units

<http://nicholasdc.com/hp-modern-multi-family>

COMMENTS

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ATHERTON BUILDINGS



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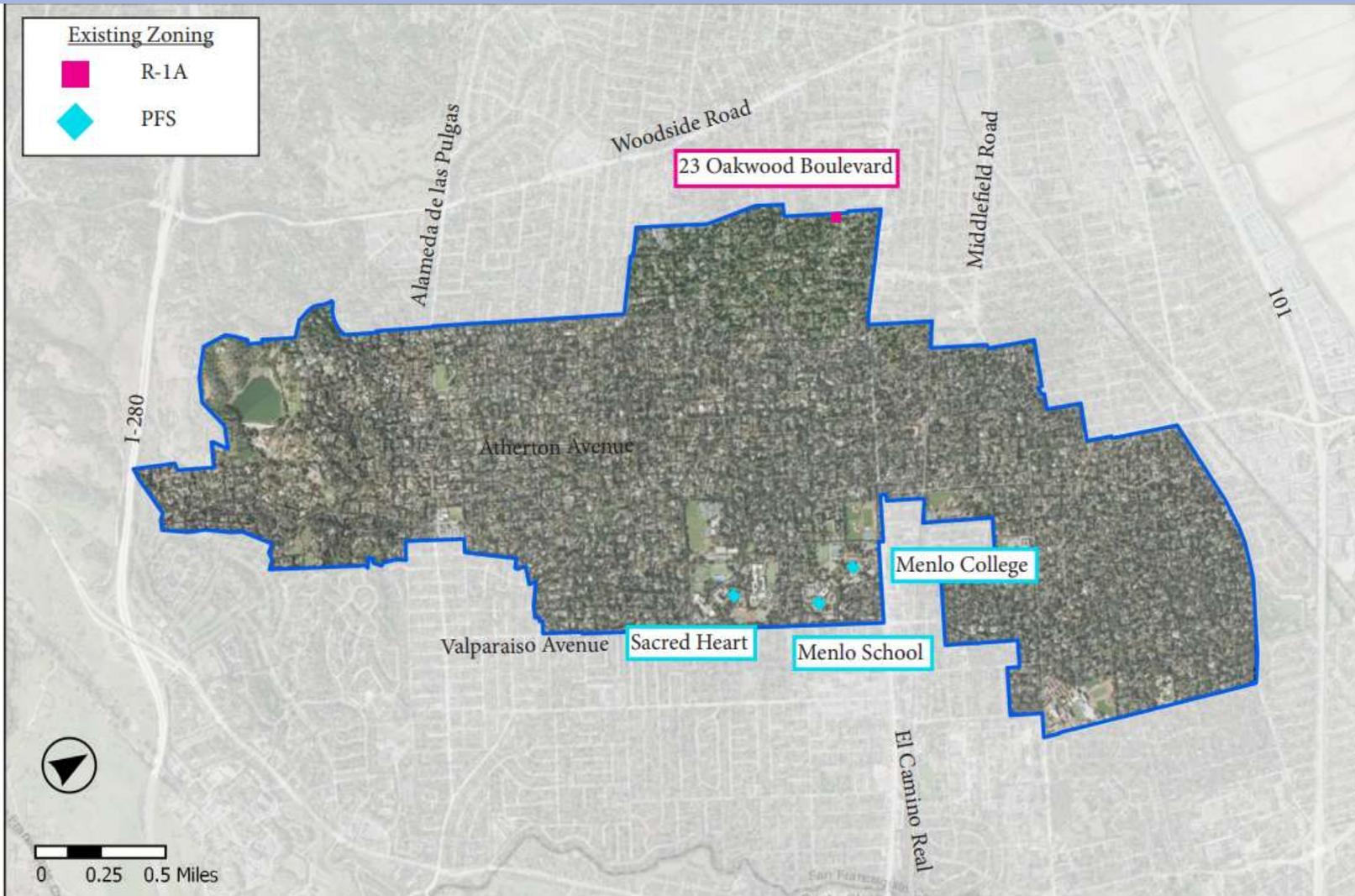
COMMENTS

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- Density Bonus Law

What is Density Bonus Law?

- State law that provides incentives to developers of affordable housing.
- Incentives can be waivers from 1-4 standards or height increase.
- Depends on depth of affordability and/or target population.
- May automatically apply depending on the Town's Inclusionary Housing Program.

IDENTIFIED & POTENTIAL HOUSING ELEMENT SITES



Standards Identified in the Housing Element

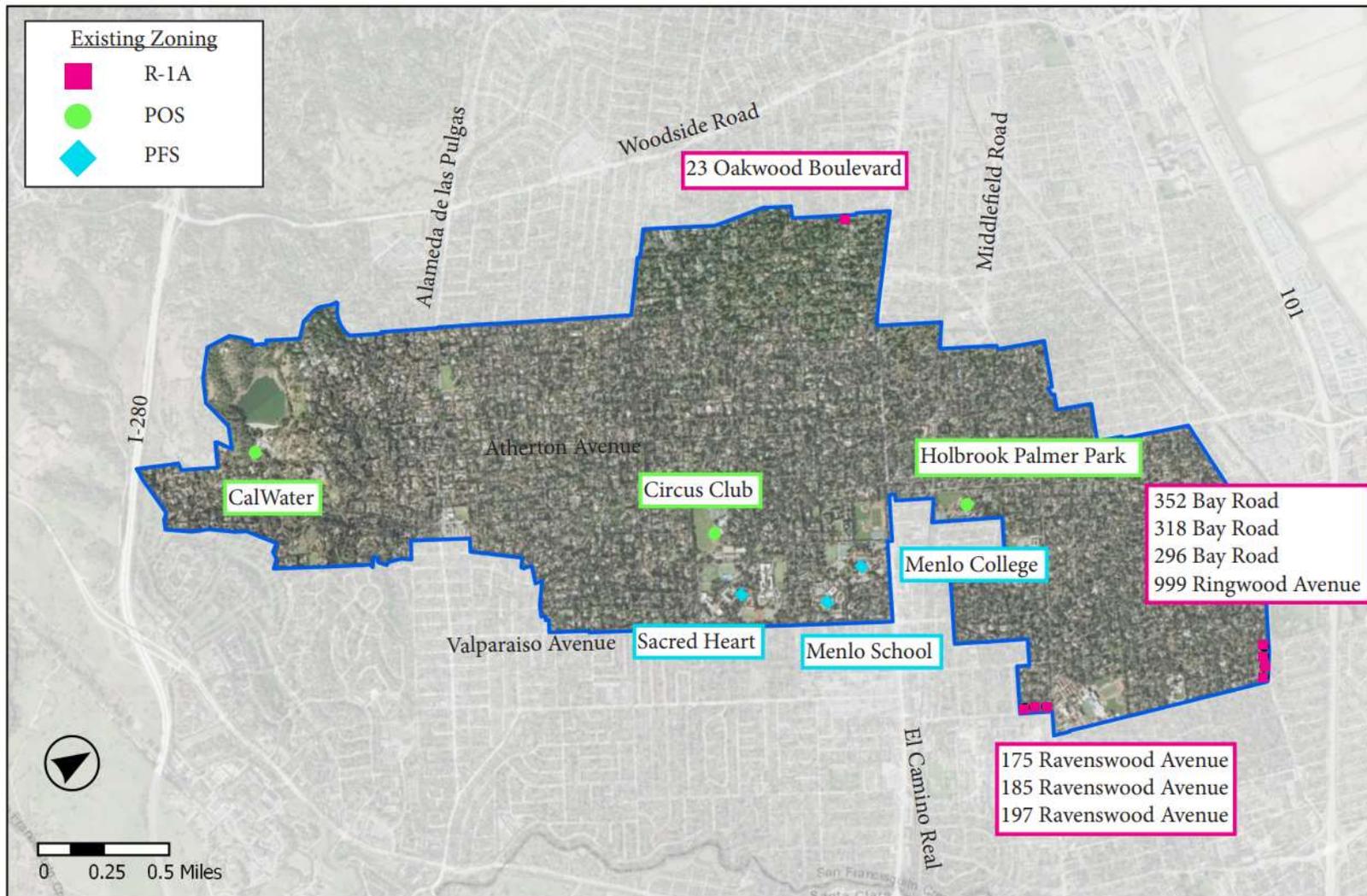
RM-10 (23 Oakwood)

- Heights up to 40 feet
- Adequate setbacks to reasonably accommodate maximum density

PFS Sites RM-20 & RM-40

- 4 stories/48 feet
- Front setback reduction to 30 feet on certain sites
- Potential parking reductions

IDENTIFIED & POTENTIAL 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	RM-10	10 Dwelling Units/Acre
POS	Gilmore House (Holbrook Park Palmer) Circus Club CalWater	RM-10	10 Dwelling Units/Acre
PFS	Menlo College Sites Menlo School Sites Sacred Heart Site	RM-20, RM-40 (Menlo College O'Brien Lot and site near Admin Building)	20 Dwelling Units/Acre (R-20), 40 Dwelling Units/Acre (R-40)

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Is there additional feedback regarding any specific standard? This could relate to exact language for controls or preferences for how a standard might be applied (i.e., a list vs. scorecard for front entry treatments).
2. Are there additional standards that staff should include that have not been identified?
3. Is there support for the direction of the “large home” approach for guiding building mass?
4. To what extent should the RM-10 standards identified in the Housing Element provide direction to staff?
5. Should the PFS standards identified in the Housing Element provide direction to staff and should the “large home” typology guide building massing and site design for these properties?
6. Council has previously discussed that multifamily development at POS should preserve existing open space and function as infill development. Should the “large home” typology guide building massing and site design for these properties?

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NEXT STEPS

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- Workshop #2 – November 13th
- Prior to January 31, 2024
 - Planning Commission Meeting
 - City Council Hearing

Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Housing

Study Session

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