

Land Development Code Dimensional Requirements

A review based on “Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods”

July 3, 2024 – Community Development Department



“Missing Middle” Housing

- Based on Vermont’s pre-1945 development pattern
- Types include:
 - accessory dwelling units (ADUs),
 - duplexes
 - small-scale multi-household buildings
 - neighborhood-scale mixed-use/live-work buildings
- common before local zoning codes began to separate different kinds of uses and building types.
- Many recent efforts to reverse this in recent years

7 NEW LOTS | >24 NEW UNITS | 1 NEW BUSINESS



Small Home: Barre, VT



Small Lot 4-plex: Winooski, VT



Mixed Use: Groton, VT



Mixed Use: Fairfax, VT



Reduced Setbacks: Williston, VT



Flag Lot: Barre, VT



Detached ADU: Burlington, VT



Attached ADU: Corinth, VT



Cottage Infill: S. Burlington, VT



Duplex: Shelburne, VT



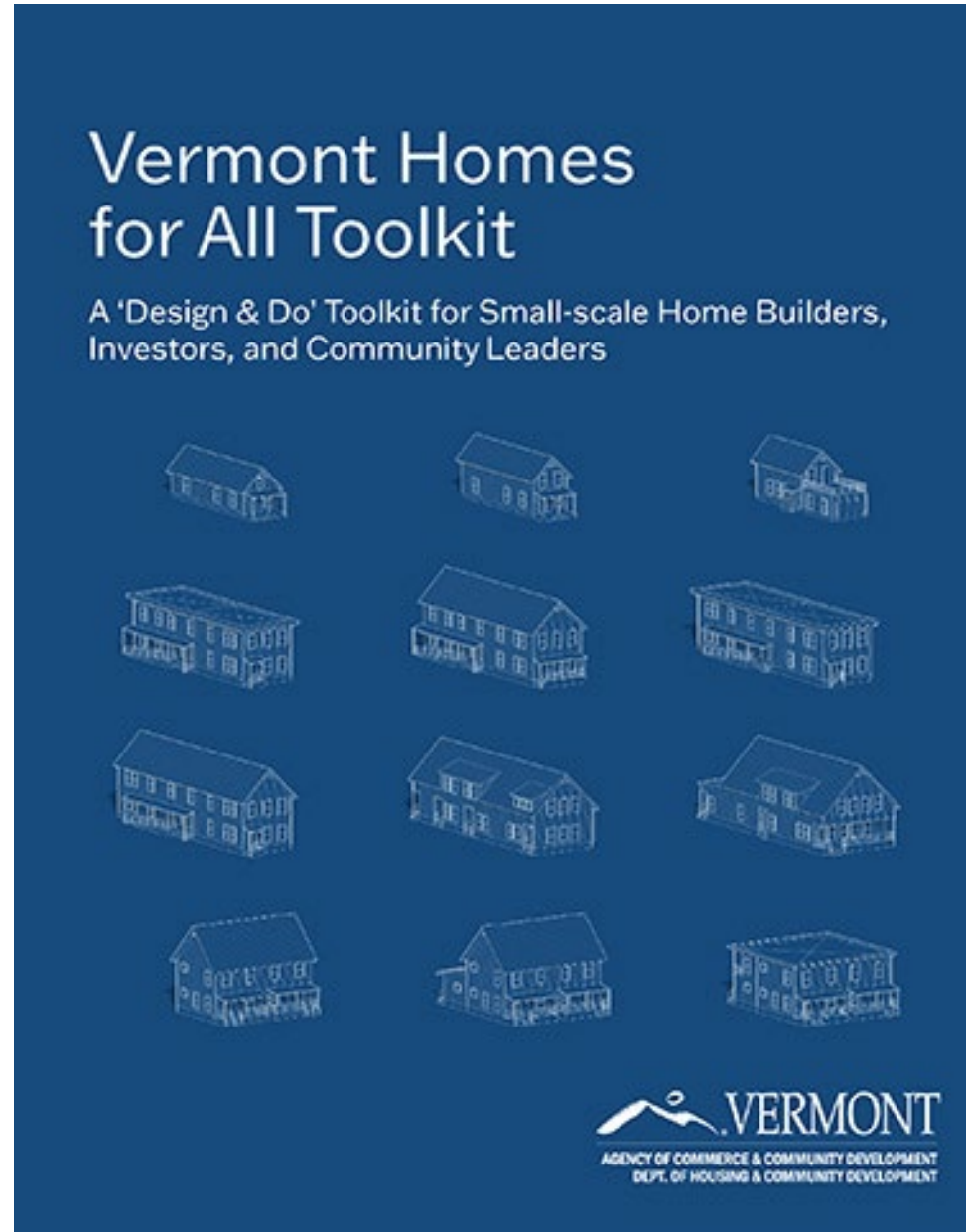
Adaptive Re-Use: Putney VT

“Missing Middle” Housing in Essex Junction

- 2023 LDC Amendments attempted to enable / encourage “Missing middle” infill in R1 and R2 districts
 - Triplexes by right (updated to Fourplexes due to 2023 HOME Act)
 - Special design consideration- max 30% of frontage may be parking
- Limited uptake so far

Vermont Homes for All Toolkit

- June 2023 Essex Junction applied to be a pilot community for this initiative
- Not selected, but still applicable



Missing Middle Homes Design Guide

Discovered Typologies

Starting with existing Vermont typologies observed during our initial site walks, we developed idealized versions.



Age-In-Place

Narrow Lot

Village

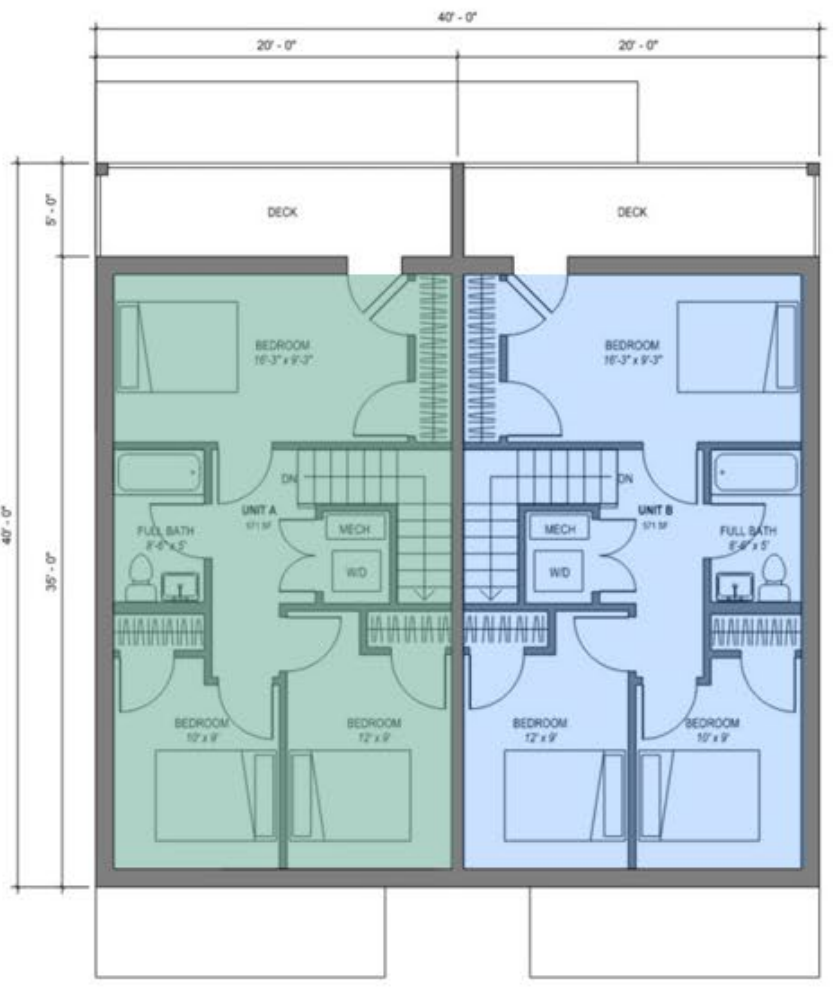
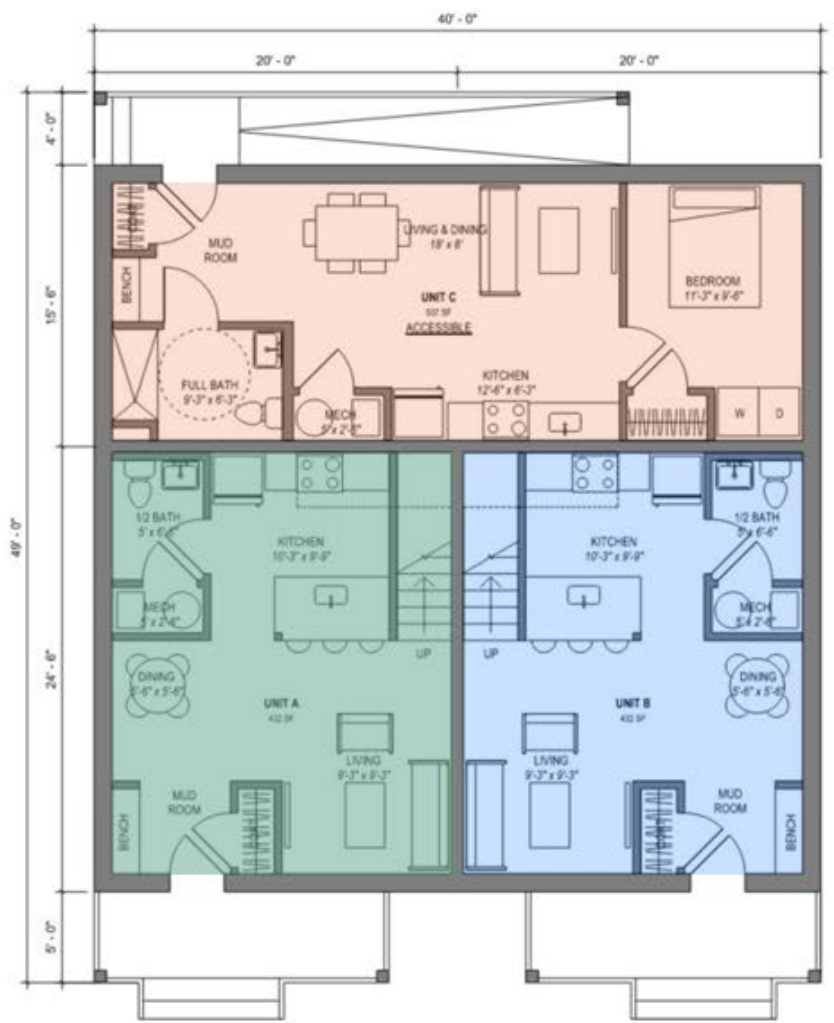
Side-by-Side

**“Telescoping Home”
Aggregation Pattern**



Example of Prototype Unit Design

Side-by-Side Plus One Plus Prototype



Neighborhood Infill Case Studies

Rutland City

Rutland City Case Study Parcel

Parcel Address: 104 South Street

Context & Goals
This vacant corner site is walking distance to Rutland's train station and bike path, shopping center, and downtown commercial center. This gridded neighborhood is highly walkable with many existing small multi-unit dwellings ranging from one to two unit and full stories. The owner of this site is already engaged in a gut rehab of a property a few blocks away and is interested in developing this site to maximize its potential as a rental property for one and two-bedroom units.

Siting Considerations
The site is flat and relatively unobscured for a denser neighborhood like this one. South Street is the primary frontage and has an existing sidewalk and parking pad. Primary siting considerations are reinforcing and activating South Street as the primary frontage, preserving existing mature trees to the extent possible, and arranging the parking to allow for the preservation of some yard space while ensuring convenient and accessible access to the rear unit.

Home Typology Considerations
The Side by Side Plus One, with its square footprint and naturally defined exterior layout, was chosen for this site for three reasons:
 1. Its dimensions fit the developable lot area well.
 2. The unit types and sizes are a good fit for local housing need.
 3. It works well with a corner lot that can accommodate efficient side parking, preserving more usable open space.

Development Metrics

Number of Units	3 Units
Number of Bedrooms per Unit	1/1 Bedroom, 0/2 Bedroom
Unit Types (Accessible/Age-Friendly)	1/1 Accessible, 0/2 Conventional
Gross Square Footage per Unit	824 of 1,000 of 1,000 of
Building Footprint	40' x 40'

Infrastructure & Regulatory Constraints

Water Access	Municipal
Wastewater Access	Municipal
Max # of Dwelling Units Allowed	4 units
# Parking Spaces Per Unit	4/2 parking minimum
Setbacks (Front / Side / Rear)	20' / 10' / 20' - 50' (50% of lot depth)
Minimum Lot Size	0.21 ac / 9,347 sf

Site Plan
The site plan anticipates the building sitting close to the street to activate the South Street sidewalk and anchor the James Street corner in this walkable neighborhood. This position on the parcel also helps preserve an efficient side parking layout with an integrated ramp to the rear accessible unit and ample usable open space associated with each unit. Additionally, by siting the building to the northern side of the site we increase the chance of preserving south-facing kitchen garden opportunities.

Buildout Visualization
A pitched roof form has been selected to align with the masses of nearby forms. The typology could be further tailored to its context by adding deeper front porches to support a more social neighborhood front porch culture. This typology also allows for the integration of rear-facing second floor outdoor decks extending over the rear unit on the first floor if desired at a future point.

Disclaimer: In most cases, the 3D case study scenarios in this Toolkit would not be possible under the by-right zoning in their communities. However, the info for this type of development has been developed to match the zoning, development patterns and densities, as well as inputs, the kind of development that would be possible with sensible zoning reforms.

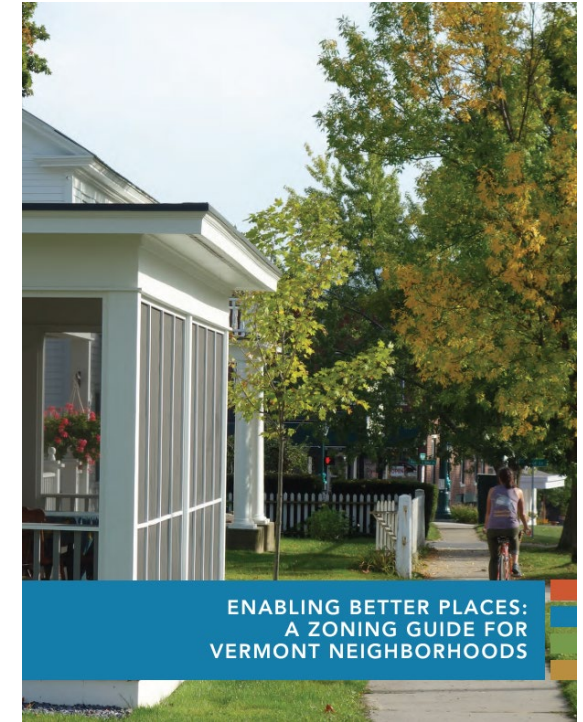


Site Plan & Buildout Visualization

- The building matches front setback norms along South Street
- Efficient side parking layout has an integrated ramp to the rear accessible unit and ample usable open space for each unit with potential for south-facing kitchen gardens.
- Other potential customizations: (1) deeper front porches to support a more social neighborhood front porch culture and/or (2) rear-facing second floor outdoor decks extending over the rear unit on the first floor.

Enabling Better Places (2020)

- ***Guide for municipalities to support local bylaw updates for homes in walkable places.***
- Recommends incremental changes to bylaws ; sample language
- Encourages updating zoning for wider range of housing types in walkable, compact communities



CNU Congress for the
New Urbanism

 **VERMONT**

AGENCY OF COMMERCE & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Short-term fixes

1. Match minimum lot size to local pattern

2. Regulate coverage percentages carefully

3. Remove density caps

TOPICS OF REFORM

Dimensional Standards

Bylaws establish dimensional standards that restrict the physical size and spacing of buildings. Sometimes these standards are overly restrictive—inadvertently blocking some of the most desirable types of new housing in walkable places such as the construction of new infill buildings, even in areas where water and sewer service are available. Minor changes to dimensional standards can enable additional housing opportunities without undermining existing or desired neighborhood character.

Stage 1: Short-term fixes

1. Match minimum lot size to local pattern.



Most Vermont municipalities have applied rural or suburban lot standards onto older neighborhoods that have different characteristics, or where walkability is a goal. This can significantly limit the rights of lot owners to improve or enlarge buildings or to make changes such as adding more housing.

Bylaws should be amended to either eliminate minimum lot sizes or to ensure that existing lot sizes in a zoning district become the basis for the minimum lot sizes for that district. This would not require land to be rezoned except where a single zoning district with rural or suburban standards has been applied to land with very different existing characteristics.

2. Regulate coverage percentages carefully.



Coverage requirements can be useful, or counterproductive if the built outcomes aren't carefully considered. "Building coverage" is the percentage of a lot that can be covered by a building (sometimes referred to as maximum building footprint). "Lot coverage" is similar, but adds the area covered

by other impervious surfaces such as driveways and parking spaces. The proper percentage to be used for these caps can be determined by measuring the existing buildings and lot sizes in the surrounding neighborhood and calibrating accordingly, or measure other neighborhoods with the character you want for new development and replicating the percentages.

3. Remove density caps.



The dimensional standards provided by zoning (setbacks, building height, and sometimes building coverage) can be important to ensure that new buildings aren't oversized or out of character. Density caps (such as maximum units per acre) may be appropriate on rural land but in a walkable

settlement, where dimensional standards can be used to limit the size of new buildings, a density cap unnecessarily limits opportunities for smaller homes that are needed and that

are most likely to be affordable to a broader segment of the population. The size of a new building is already constrained by the dimensional standards; an additional density cap can make it impossible for a new building to provide the smaller housing units that are needed. Whenever possible, eliminate artificial density caps from bylaws.

4. Align other dimensional standards with the existing or desired pattern.



Verify that other dimensional standards, such as minimum setbacks and maximum building heights, either match the existing built pattern or allow desirable evolution of that pattern. (See the [Resources Section](#) for instructions about how to conduct a Character Survey to determine revised dimensions.)

5. Remove requirements that forbid a second building on a lot.



Many bylaws allow only a single ("principal") building on a lot. Most lots are developed in this manner, but there are legitimate cases where more than one building might be placed on a single lot, for instance two single-family homes on an oversized lot, or two duplexes on a larger lot in a walkable neighborhood. Dimensional

standards and fire separation requirements (when used) already regulate the size and placement of buildings, so there is no need to arbitrarily limit each lot to one building.

6. Remove unnecessary architectural treatment requirements.



Some Vermont municipalities have design requirements aimed at creating architectural interest in new buildings. These requirements sometimes include mandatory vertical or horizontal changes in the facade (articulation), among other things, which are expensive to construct and often fail to

deliver the desired character; those requirements should be eliminated from most design requirements. Municipalities can prevent large, blank buildings by limiting the width of buildings and requiring a minimum percentage of glass on the facade.

Short-term fixes

4. Align other dimensional standards with the existing or desired patterns

5. Remove requirements that forbid a second building on a lot

6. Remove unnecessary architectural treatment requirements

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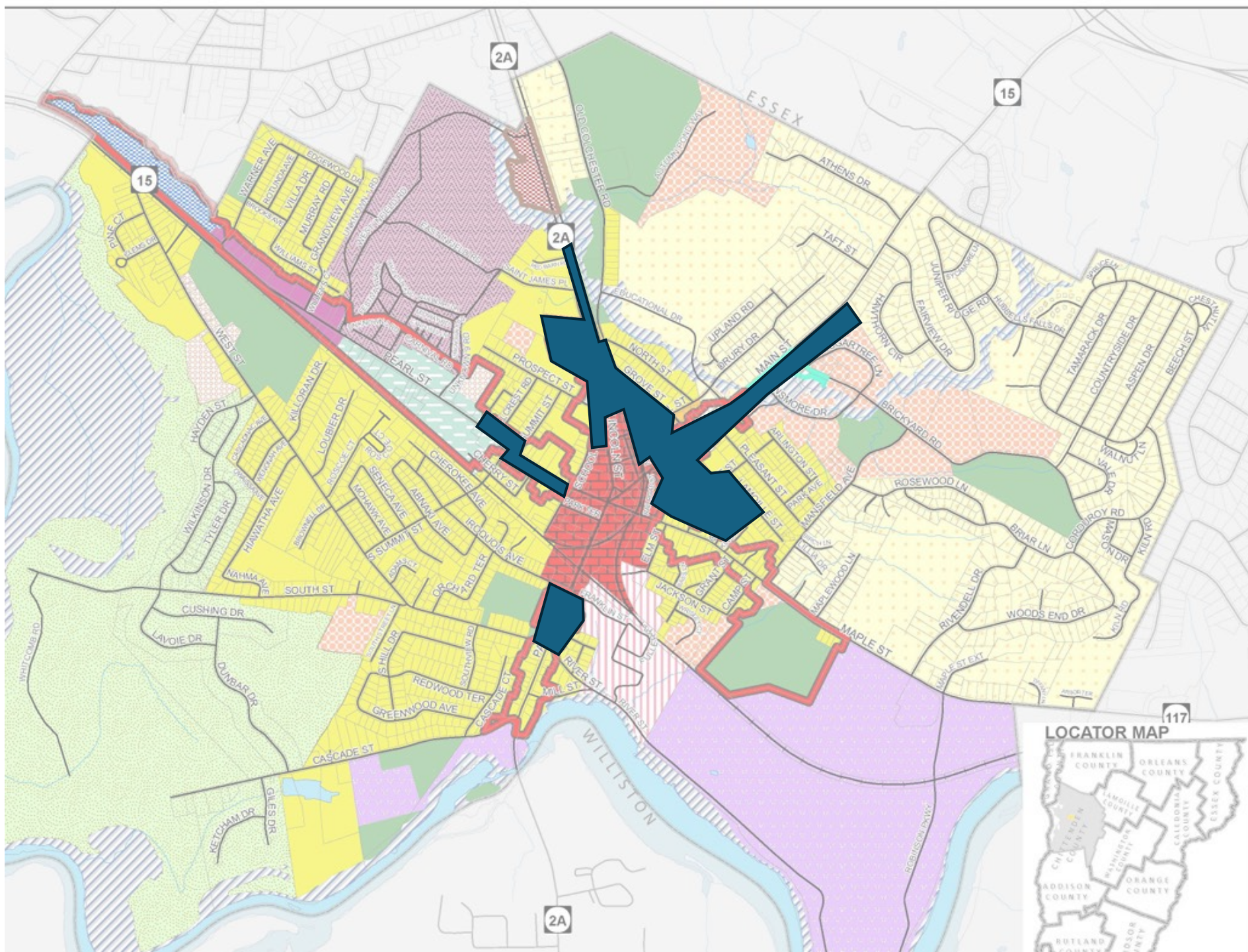
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City of Essex Junction Zoning Legend



- Zoning District
- Residential 1
 - Residential 2
 - Multi-Family Residential 1
 - Multi-Family Residential 2
 - Multi-Family Residential 3
 - Multi-Family/Mixed Use 1
 - Multi-Family/Mixed Use 2
 - Village Center
 - Transit Oriented Development
 - Residential-Office
 - Mixed Commercial Use
 - Highway-Arterial
 - Light Industrial
 - Planned Exposition
 - Planned Agriculture
 - Open Space
 - Floodplain
 - Design Review & Historic Preservation Overlay
 - North Lincoln Overlay
 - Professional Office Overlay



Source:
 Zoning - CCRPC, updated 2022 with Overlay
 Parcels - 2021 updated through Vermont Parcel Program; Road
 Centerline - e911, 1/2019; Railroad - VTrans
 Map created by P. Brangan using ArcGIS Pro. All data is in State Plane
 Coordinate System, NAD 1983.

Disclaimer:
 The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources.
 Errors and omissions may exist. The Chittenden County Regional
 Planning Commission is not responsible for these. Questions of on-
 the-ground location can be resolved by site inspections and/or surveys

Model Zoning Bylaw- “Neighborhood” District

- Intent: The Neighborhood District encompasses the blended density of residential areas adjacent to village, town and city centers.
- Neighborhood districts are intended to permit one, two three and four household residences as well as neighborhood commercial uses while complementing and connecting to the adjacent centers

TABLE 3 - DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS FOR STRUCTURES AND LOTS

Lot Widths	50' min., 100' max.
Setbacks	
Front	8' min., 12' max.
Side	5' min.
Rear	3' min. with rear lanes or 12' min.
Parking setback from building front	20' min
Maximum building height	2.5 stories
Maximum building width	40' per building
Maximum building coverage	__% per site

*[Numbers in **green** must reflect the character of the local context. Use the Character Survey below to determine the appropriate dimensions.]*

- i. Ground floor stories exceeding 20 feet are considered two stories.
- ii. Mezzanines exceeding 30% of the ground floor area are counted as a story.
- iii. Upper stories exceeding 16 feet are counted as two stories, and an additional story for every multiple of 16 feet.

“Neighborhood” Zone Recommendations from Enabling Better Places

Setbacks	
Front	8' min., 12' max.
Side	5' min.
Rear	3' min. with rear lanes or 12' min.

Current setback requirements in Essex Junction:

	Transition			Neighborhood		
	MF-MU2	MF3	RO	R2	R1	PA
Front	20'	30'	20'	15'	20'	30'
Side	10'	10'	10'	8'	8'	10'
Back	10'	10'	10'	25' (principal) 15' (accessory)	25'	10'

Setbacks

Lot Coverage

Residential-Office (R-O) District

	R-O
Front	20'
Side	10'
Back	10'



Setbacks

Lot Coverage

208-066-15210

Residential-Office (R-O) District

	R-O
Front	20'
Side	10'
Back	10'

208-066-10906
RANCH

208-066-15624
RANCH

Iroquois Ave
Iroquois Ave

208-066-10004
COMMERCIAL

208-066-11262
CAPE

GIS SPAN: C-24400-0023
GL SPAN: 208-066-42405
CONDO

208-066-16075
APARTMENTS - 7 UNITS

208-066-11861
COLONIAL

208-066-11860
4 UNITS

Setbacks

Lot Coverage

Park St

Park St

Park St

Park St

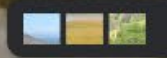
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Residential-Office (R-O) District

	R-O
Front	20'
Side	10'
Back	10'

Setbacks

Lot Coverage



Multi-Family Mixed-Use 2 (MF-MU2) District

	MF-MU2
Front	20'
Side	10'
Back	10'

208-066-11121
MOVING & STORAGE BUILDING

208-066-13047
BUILDING

208-066-16458
COMMERCIAL

208-066-11715
2 UNITS

208-066-14881
OLD STYLE

208-066-15032
OLD STYLE

Setbacks

Lot Coverage

Lincoln St

Lincoln St

Multi-Family Mixed-Use 2 (MF-MU2) District

	MF-MU2
Front	20'
Side	10'
Back	10'

Setbacks

Lot Coverage



Lincoln St

Google

Navigation controls including a compass, zoom in (+) and zoom out (-) buttons, a street view pegman icon, and a bottom status bar with a battery icon and a home indicator.

Multi-Family 3 (MF3) District

	MF3
Front	30'
Side	10'
Back	10'

Setbacks

Lot Coverage



Navigation icons: Home, Grid, XYZ, Search, Rotate, Info, Print, Share, Full Screen

Residential 2 (R2) District

	R2
Front	15'
Side	8'
Back	25' principal 15' accessory

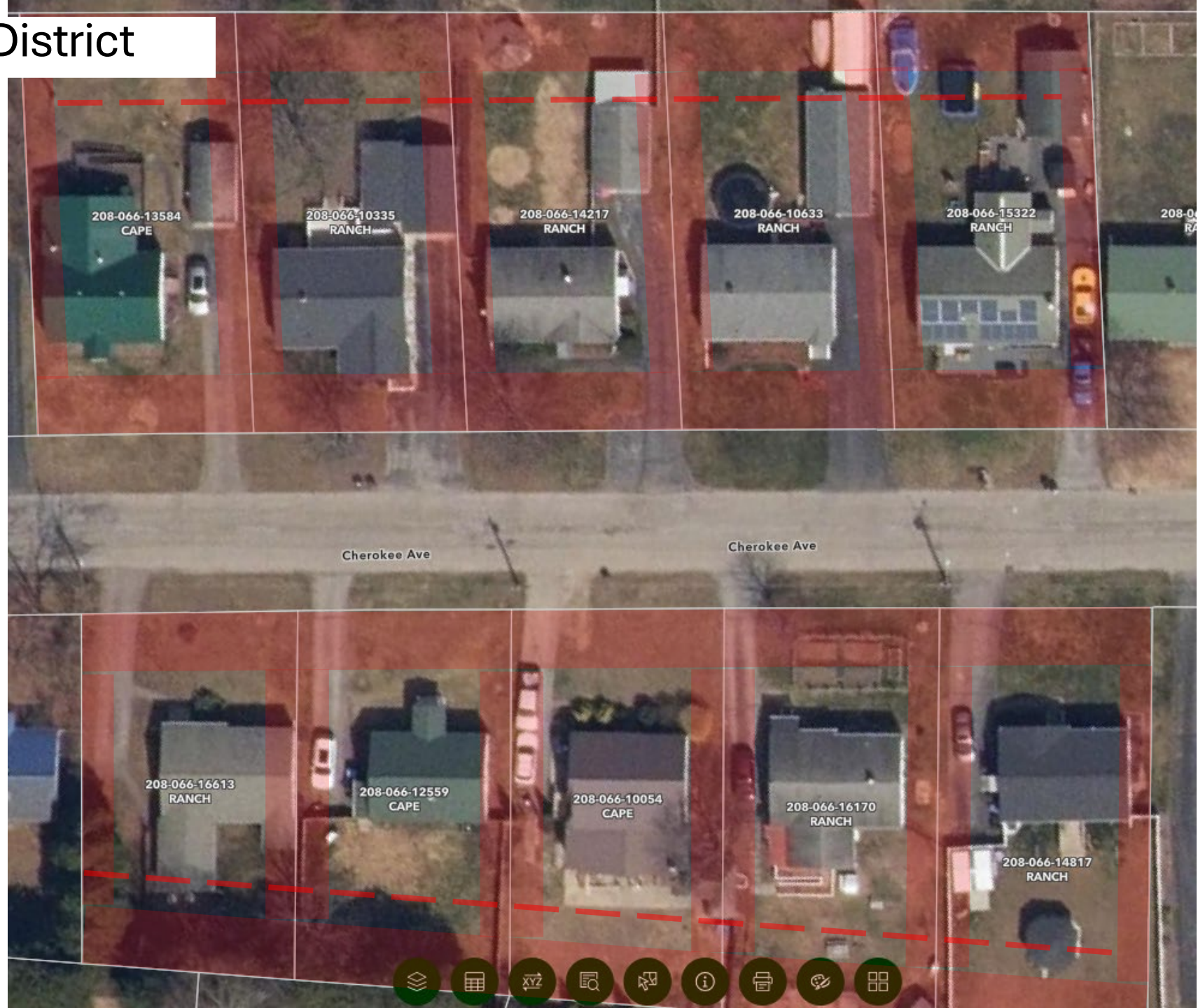
Setbacks

Lot Coverage



Residential 2 (R2) District

	R2
Front	15'
Side	8'
Back	25' principal 15' accessory



Setbacks

Lot Coverage

Discussion on setbacks

Current lot coverage limits in Essex Junction:

	Transition			Neighborhood		
	MF-MU2	MF3	RO	R2	R1	PA
Max Lot Coverage	65% (80% w/ waiver)	40%	40%	30% (buildings), 40% (total)	30% (buildings), 40% (total)	30%

Setbacks

Lot Coverage

Residential-Office (R-O) District

	R-O
Max Lot Coverage	40%



23% (buildings)
57% (total)



20% (buildings)
58% (total)



29% (buildings)
60% (total)



42% (buildings)
58% (total)

38% (buildings)
50% (total)



Church St

Main St

Main St

Main St

Setbacks

Lot Coverage



Setbacks

Lot Coverage

SPEED
LIMIT
25

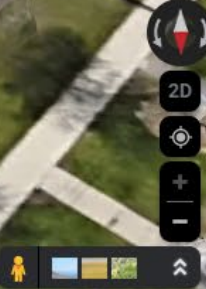
Main St

Google



Setbacks

Lot Coverage



208-066-15210

Residential-Office (R-O) District

	R-O
Max Lot Coverage	40%

12% (buildings)
21% (total)

17% (buildings)
44% (total)

208-066-10906 RANCH

208-066-15624 RANCH

South St

Iroquois Ave

208-066-11161 COLONIAL

208-066-16075 APARTMENTS - 7 UNITS

GIS SPAN: C-24400-0023
GL SPAN: 208-066-42405
CONDO

208-066-11262 CAPE

208-066-10004 COMMERCIAL

208-066-11860 4 UNITS

Setbacks

22% (buildings)
59% (total)

14% (buildings)
41% (total)

23% (buildings)
45% (total)

20% (buildings)
78% (total)

16% (buildings)
38% (total)

Lot Coverage

Park St

Park St

Park St

Park St

Fra

Multi-Family Mixed-Use 2 (MF-MU2) District

	MF-MU2
Max Lot Coverage	65% (80% w/waiver)

Setbacks

Lot Coverage

208-066-13047
BUILDING

208-066-16458
COMMERCIAL

208-066-11715
2 UNITS

208-066-14881
OLD STYLE

208-066-15032
OLD STYLE

208-066-11121
MOVING & STORAGE BUILDING

25% (buildings)
88% (total)

25% (buildings)
78% (total)

35% (buildings)
78% (total)

38% (buildings)
64% (total)

44% (buildings)
60% (total)

Lincoln St

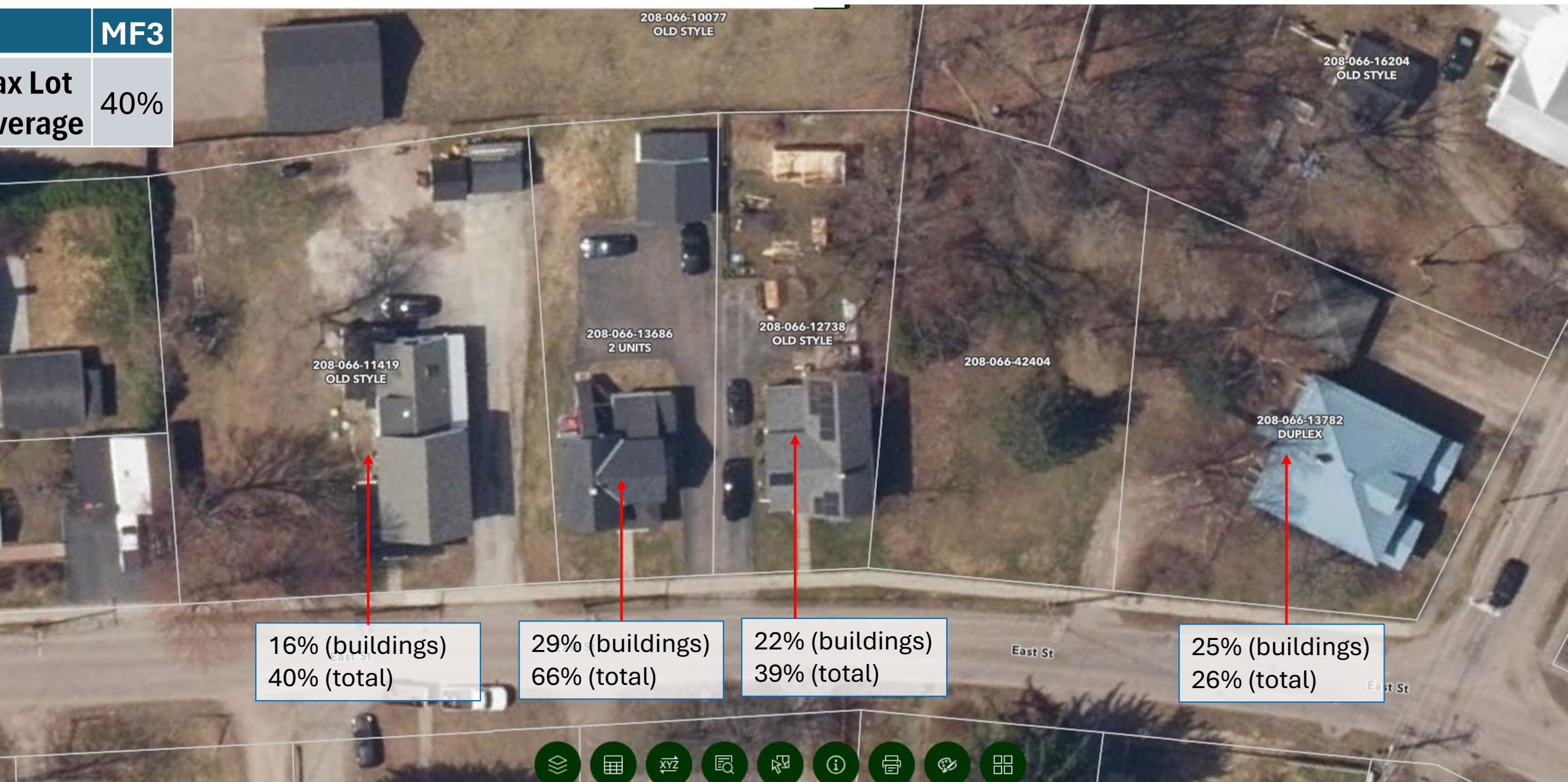
Lincoln St

Multi-Family 3 (MF3) District

	MF3
Max Lot Coverage	40%

Setbacks

Lot Coverage



16% (buildings)
40% (total)

29% (buildings)
66% (total)

22% (buildings)
39% (total)

25% (buildings)
26% (total)

Residential 2 (R2) District

	R2
Max Lot Coverage	30% (buildings), 40% (total)

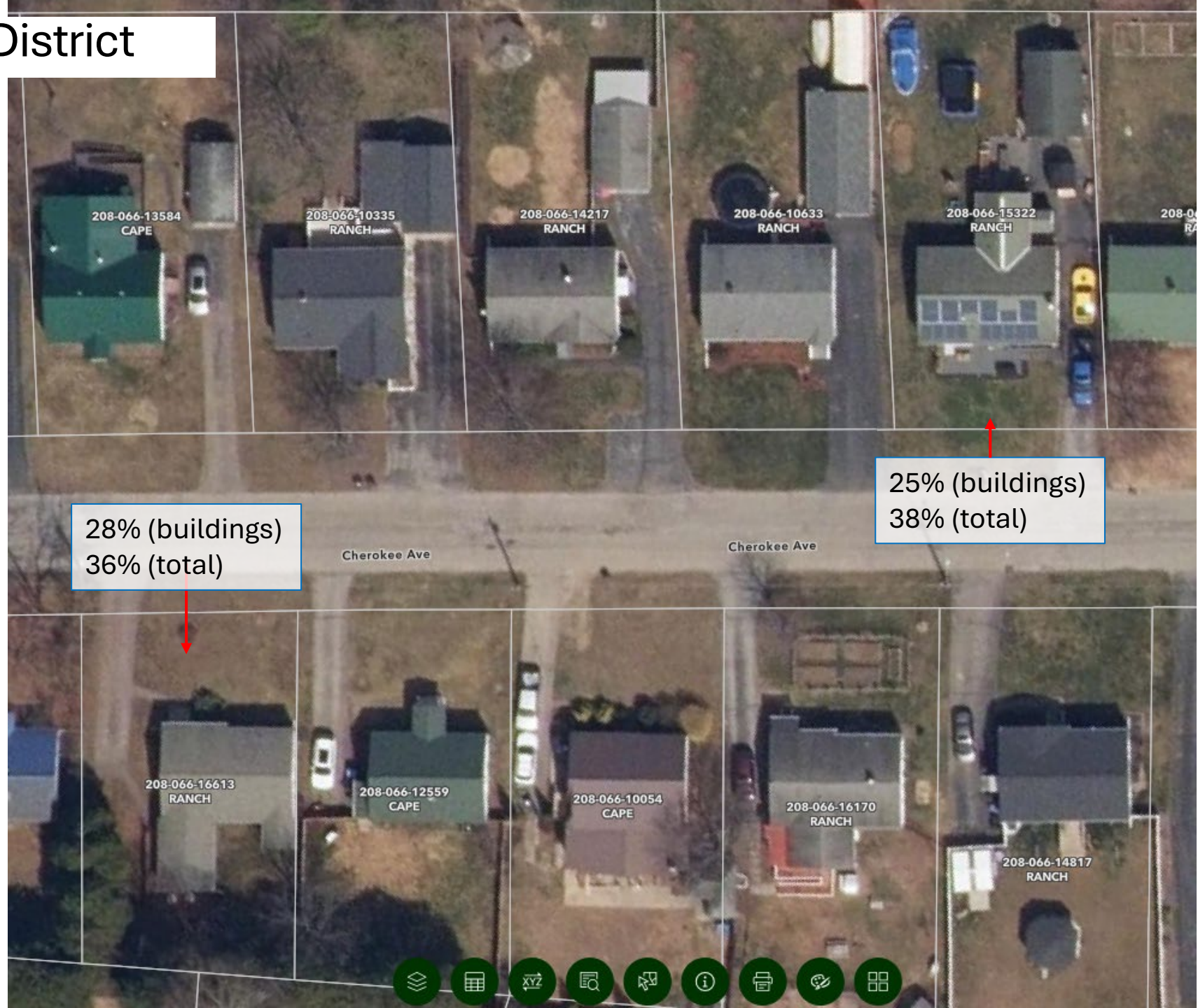
Setbacks

Lot Coverage



Residential 2 (R2) District

	R2
Max Lot Coverage	30% (buildings), 40% (total)



Setbacks

Lot Coverage

Options for updated setback and lot coverage requirements

1. Leave them as is
2. Match the existing built pattern in historic parts of the city
3. Exceed the existing built patterns a little bit* to further encourage housing production**

*Up to the recommendations of “Enabling Better Places”

**For lot coverage- consider sliding scale based on number of units