



Town of Bar Harbor
Planning & Code Department

Proposed Land Use Ordinance Amendments for June 2026 Ballot

Q&A



Five Proposed Amendments

**June 9, 2026
Ballot**

Holy Redeemer

Design Review

Campgrounds and Campsites

Lodging

Minimum Area Per Family



Procedural Timeline

March 17: Town Council public hearing & vote on placing amendments on ballot

March 30: ✨ Warrant Committee vote on recommendation to voters

April 1: ✨ Planning Board vote on recommendation to voters

Design Review

Repeals and replaces Article XIII – Design Review

Reorganizes standards and review process for clarity

Clarifies when Secretary of the Interior's Standards apply

No expansion of scope of review



QUESTIONS?

Campgrounds & Campsites

CAMPGROUNDS

Single definition of Campground

No change to districts where campgrounds are allowed



Campgrounds & Campsites

INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE CAMPSITES

Individual Private Campsites:

- Intentionally developed
- Recurring use
- Adequate sewage disposal required

Occasional overnight use by guests not regulated

Allowed in 13 districts outside Downtown

Allowed in 4 shoreland districts

Removed from 5 shoreland districts

No Downtown districts allow Individual Private Campsites



QUESTIONS?

Lodging

Purpose

- Clarify and standardize how lodging is defined and regulated
- Establish limits on lodging size and intensity
- Reduce the conversion of housing to lodging uses
- Apply consistent nonconformity standards across the ordinance.



Removal of L1 as an Allowed Use

L1 would no longer be an allowed use.

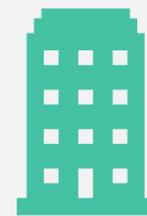
Existing L1 operations may continue as legally nonconforming uses.

Expansion of existing L1 operations would not be allowed.

Terminology & amendments to definitions for L2, L3, L6, L7



Replaces the term Guest Room with Guest Unit



New term: Guest Capacity



Amends the definitions of L2, L3, L6, L7

Definitions, what stays what changes

L2 & L3

- Sets a minimum of 3 Guest Units
- Keeps the maximum of 12 Guest Units
- Sets a maximum Guest Capacity of 48
- Deletes the single-family home with host requirement
- L2 keeps the requirement that meals are for guests only while L3 keeps the requirement that meals can be for guests & the public

L6 & L7

- Sets a minimum of 3 Guest Units
- Keeps the maximum of 48 Guest Units
- Sets a maximum Guest Capacity of 100
- Keeps the requirement that accessory facilities and services are for guest only
- L7 keeps the requirement that the establishment must be pre-June 10, 1986

How Lodging Scale Is Regulated – L2 Example



Capped at a maximum of 12 guest units and 48 guests.



This means that the hotel could not have more than 12 guest units.



It also means the hotel would need to provide at least 200 square feet of lodging space per guest. So, if you assume the full 48 guests, you are looking at a minimum of 9,600 square feet of space devoted to lodging.

Combination
of maximum
number of
guest and
GFA



Removal of Lodging Uses from Certain Districts

Removes L2, L3, L6, and L7 from districts where:

- **No lodging establishments currently exist, or**
- **Lodging is incompatible with district character or infrastructure.**

Two districts contain active lodging uses where removal is proposed:

- **Each district is limited to two existing establishments.**

Town Hill Business District:

- **Lodging established recently**
- **Not served by public water or sewer**

Village Residential District:

- **Lodging established for a long time**
- **No additional lodging uses have developed for 20 plus years**

All existing operations may continue as legally nonconforming uses, without expansion.



Nonconformity Standards

Removes the lodging expansion exception in the Nonconformity section of the LUO.

Current ordinance:

- **Allows nonconforming lodging uses to expand in size (but not guest rooms).**

Other nonconforming uses:

- **Are not allowed to expand.**

Removing the exception:

- **Applies the same nonconformity rules to lodging as other uses.**
- **Limits expansion of nonconforming lodging establishments.**

Addresses potential housing impacts caused by lodging expansion.

QUESTIONS?

Minimum Area Per Family

A Step Towards Community

Remove the minimum area per family requirement in certain districts to increase the potential for housing development.

Remove the minimum area per family dimensional requirement for lots in zoning districts served by public water and sewer and/or fall within a designated growth area.

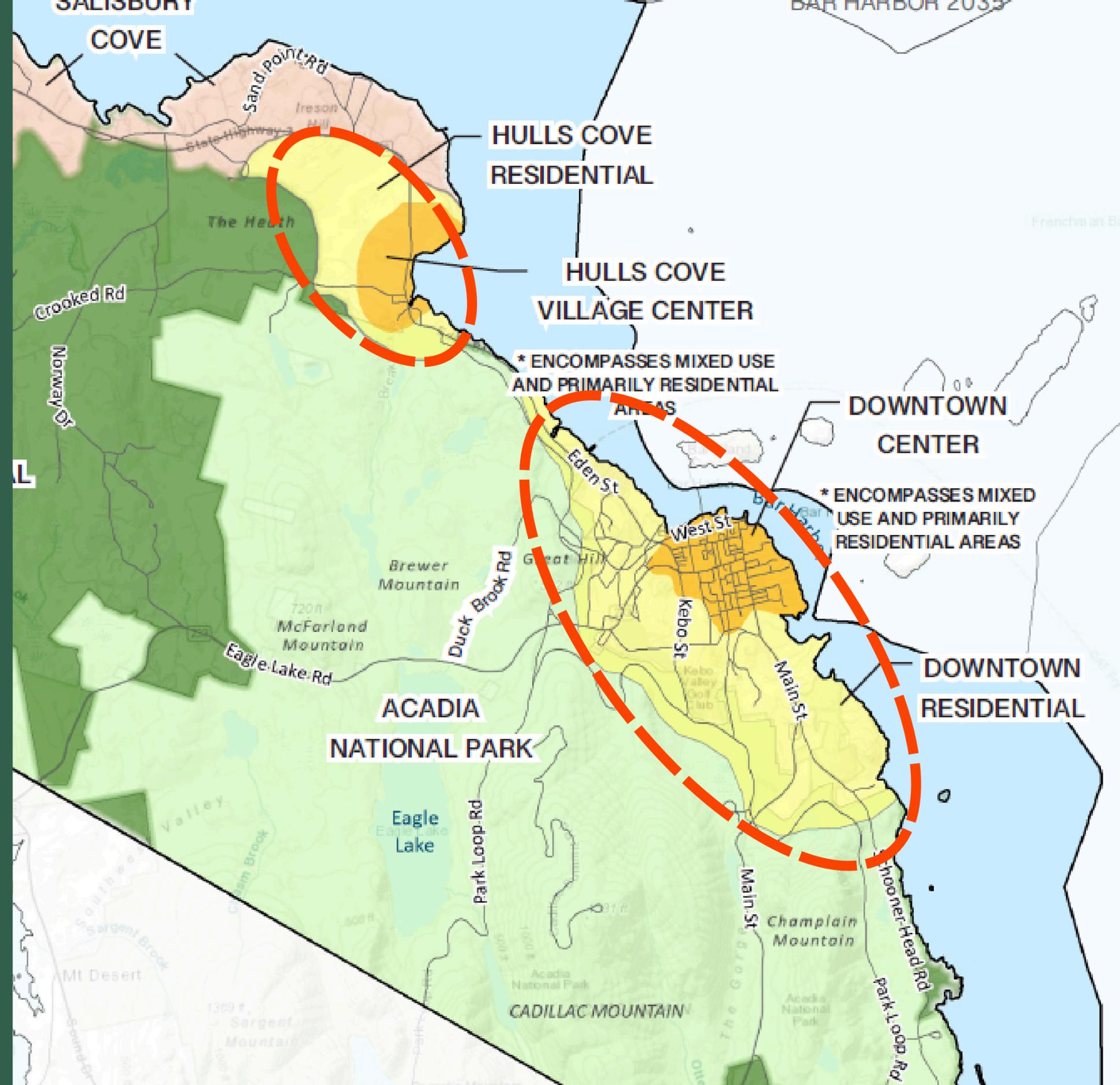


Designated Growth Areas

- Downtown Center
- Downtown Residential
- Hulls Cove Center
- Hulls Cove Residential

Affected Zoning Districts

- Bar Harbor Gateway
- Village Historic
- Mount Desert Street Corridor District
- Village Residential
- Downtown Village I
- Downtown Village II
- Downtown Residential
- Hulls Cove Business
- Hulls Cove Residential Corridor
- Hulls Cove Rural
- Shoreland General Development I
- Shoreland General Development II (Hulls Cove)
- Shoreland General Development III
- Educational Institution

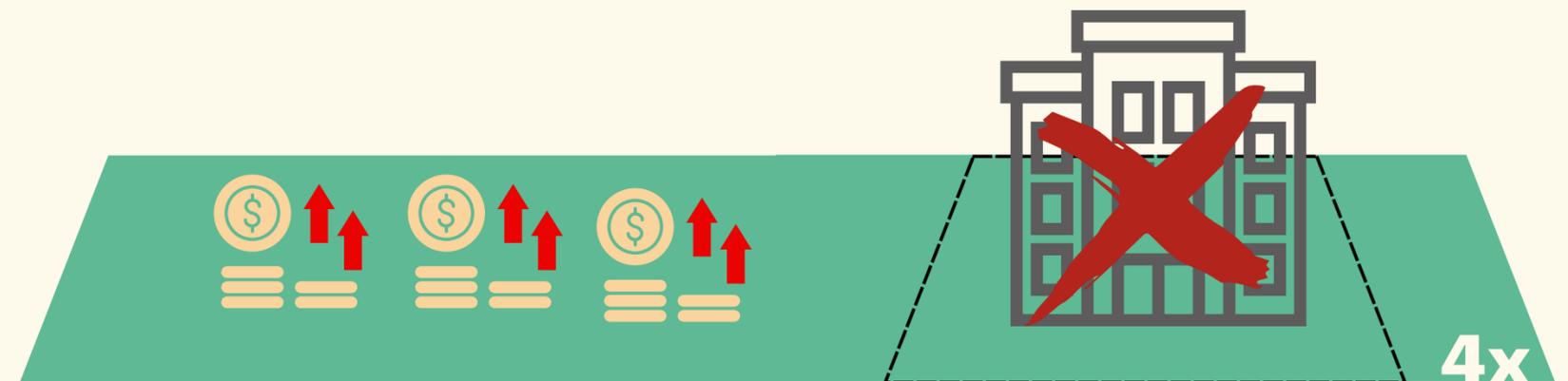


What Is Area Per Family?

- Requires a certain amount of land area per “family” or per housing unit (i.e. house or apartment unit)
- Village Residential District Example: 10,000 square feet per family

Why Is Area Per Family Exclusionary?

- Limits property owners from adding more housing on their property
- Prevents development of more affordable housing types: duplex, triplex, fourplex, and ADUs
- Pushes lower incomes out, and raises price tho where only the wealthy can afford to live here



To address the housing shortage and high costs, **we need to allow additional residential development on less land.**



By removing the Minimum Area Per Family, **more diverse attainable housing is possible.**



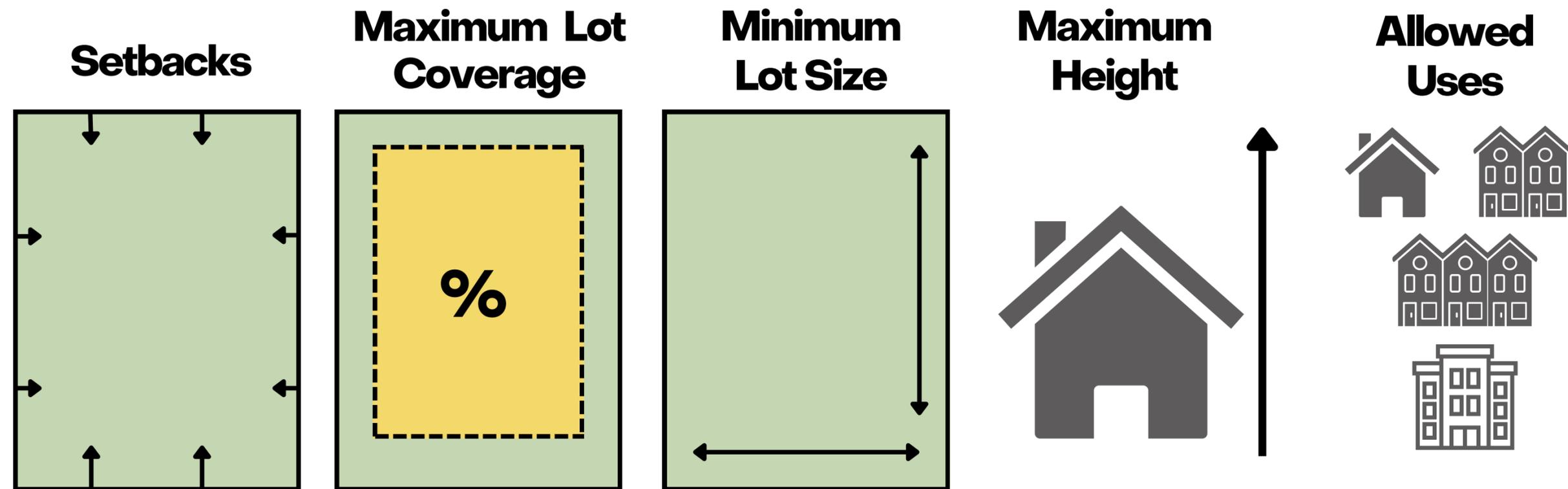
1 Solves the Housing Shortage One Meaningful Step At a Time.



**What would the Removal of
Area per Family Look Like for
lots on **Public Water & Sewer**
in the **Growth Areas**?**



Standards that determine the physical appearance of development are not changing.

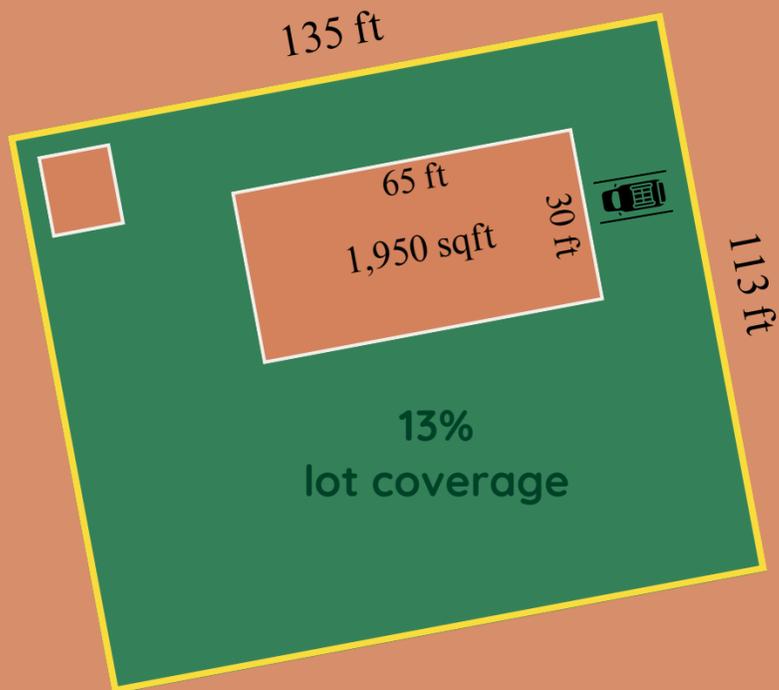


- Distance between buildings
- Amount of green space

- Size and height of buildings
- Types of residential structures

EXISTING RESIDENTIAL LOT

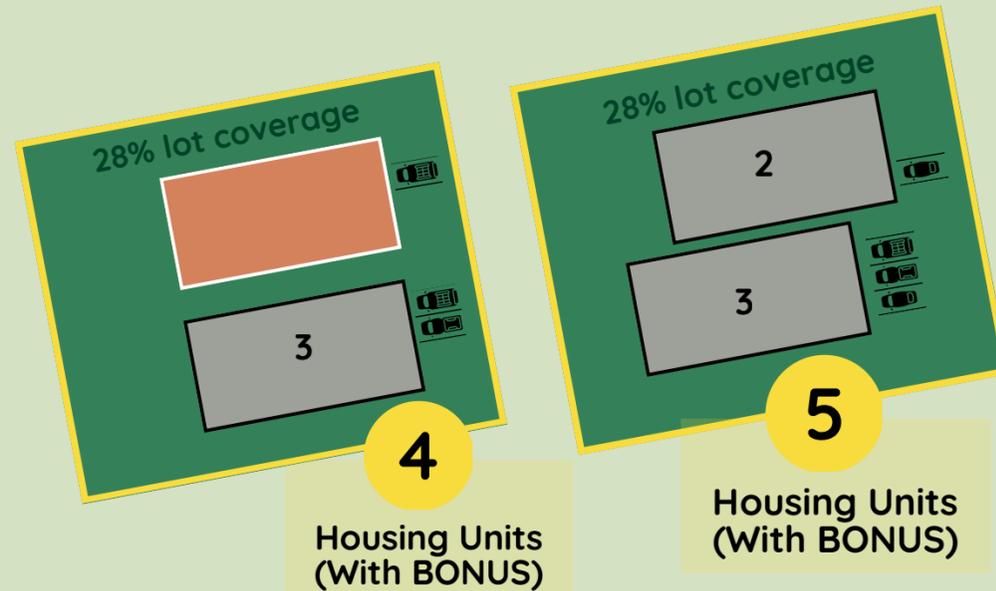
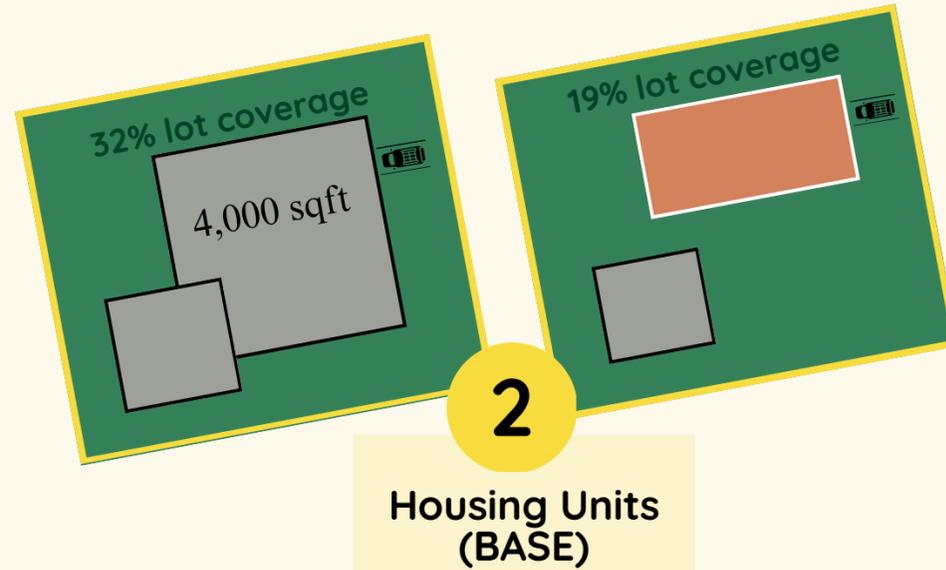
- The existing house is about 1,950 sqft
- On public water and sewer
- Village Residential zoning district:
- Maximum Lot coverage: 50%
- The lot is about 15,250 sqft
- Existing lot coverage = ~13% (~2,000 sqft)
- Allowed lot coverage = 50% (~7,625 sqft)



CURRENT

Housing Buildout Potential

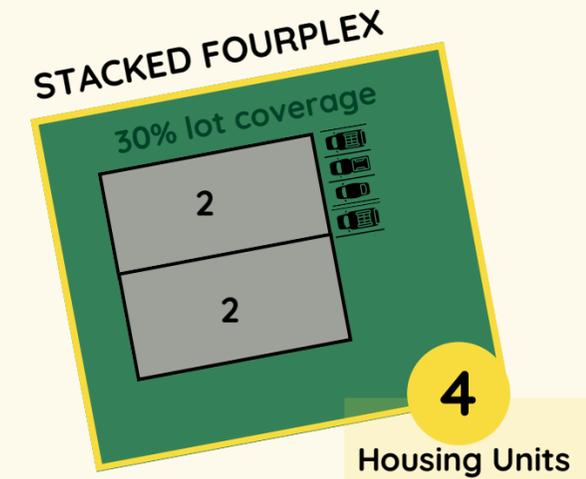
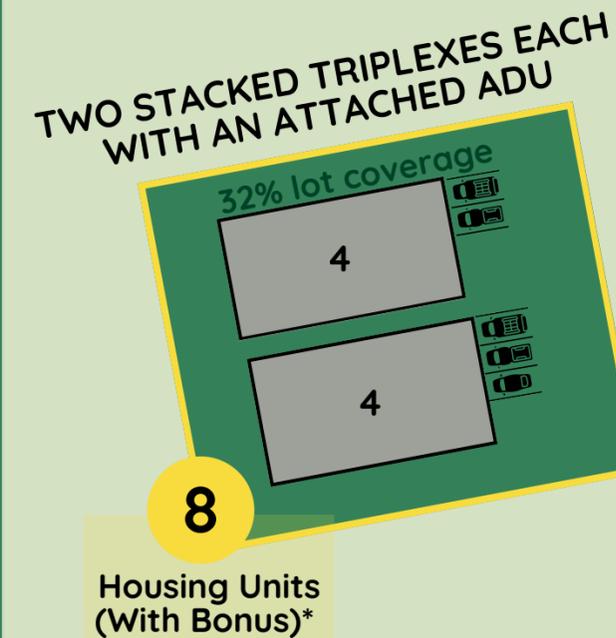
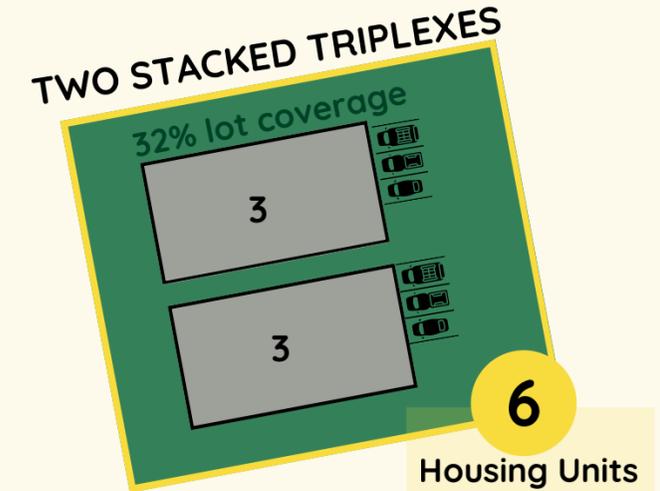
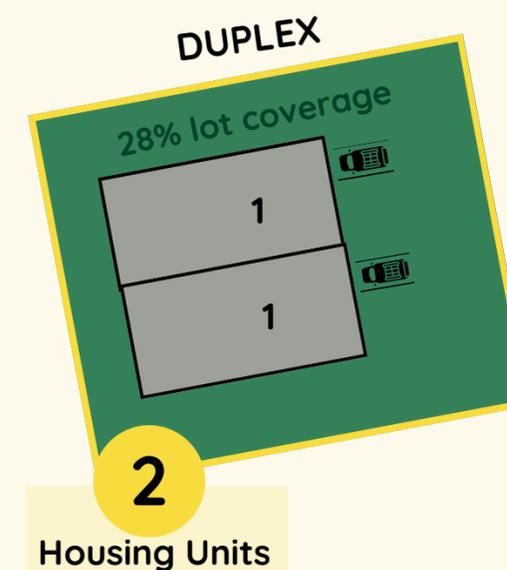
Allowed Under Existing Regulations



POTENTIAL FUTURE

Housing Buildout Potential

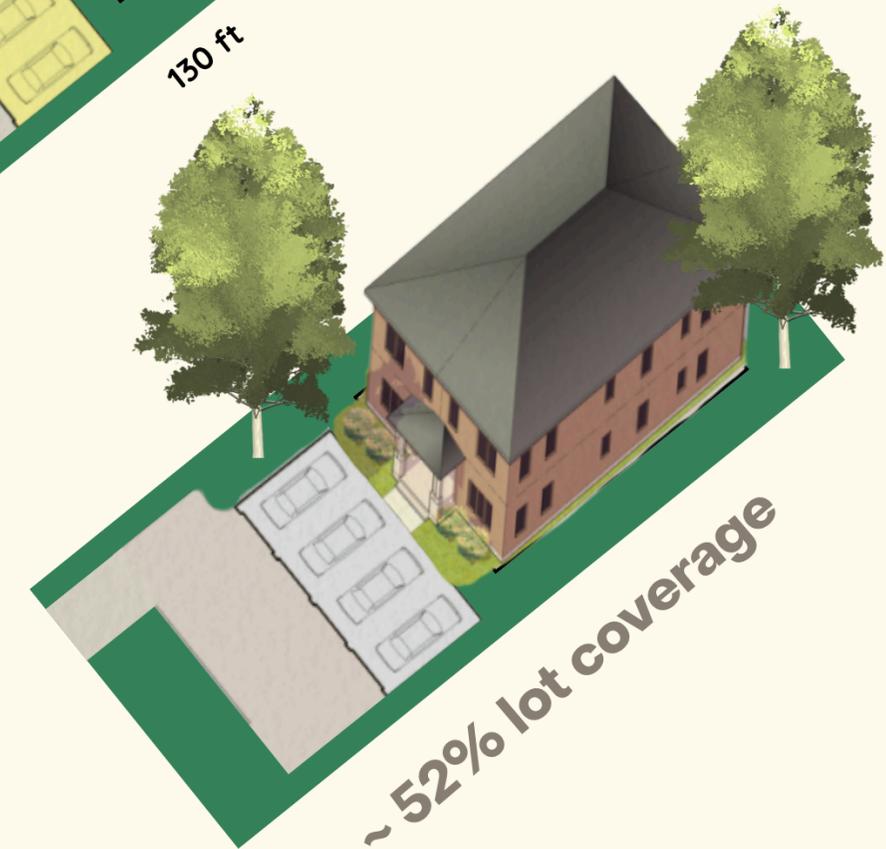
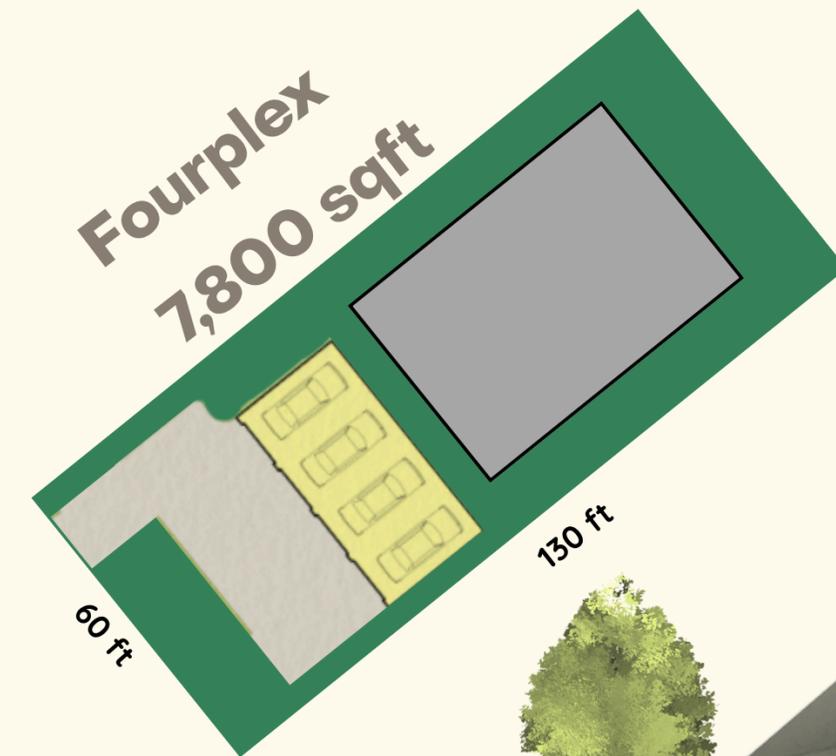
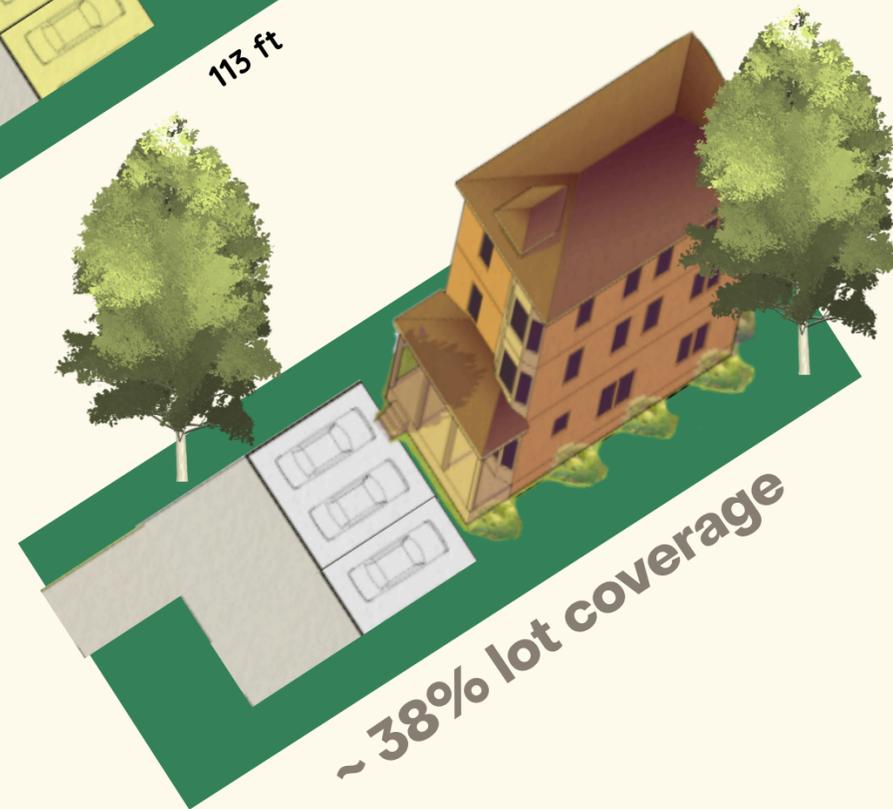
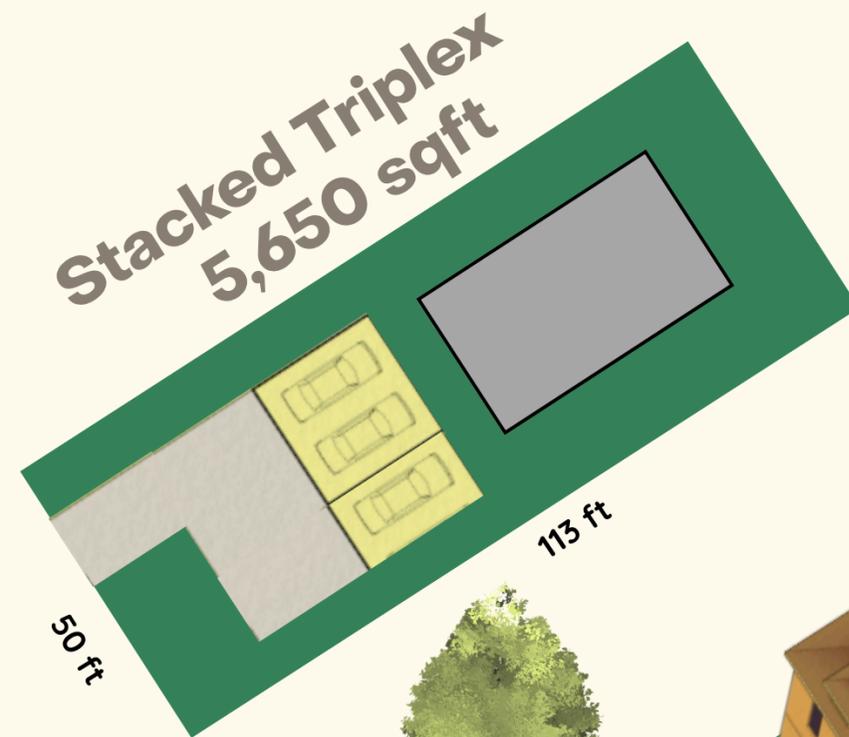
Allowed if there are no Area per Family Requirements for Areas on Public Water and Sewer



*Represents a buildout when the height bonus in state law is locally implemented (LD 1829).

Examples for Downtown Residential District

- On water and sewer
- Front Setback = 15 feet
- Side Setback = 5 feet
- Rear Setback = 15 feet
- Allowed lot coverage = 75%



- Potential residential unit development alone would not be able to reach maximum lot coverage due to setback and parking requirements

72 Ledgelawn Avenue



47 Ledgelawn Avenue



50 Greeley Avenue



2

^ Three real example of Triplexes in Downtown Residential

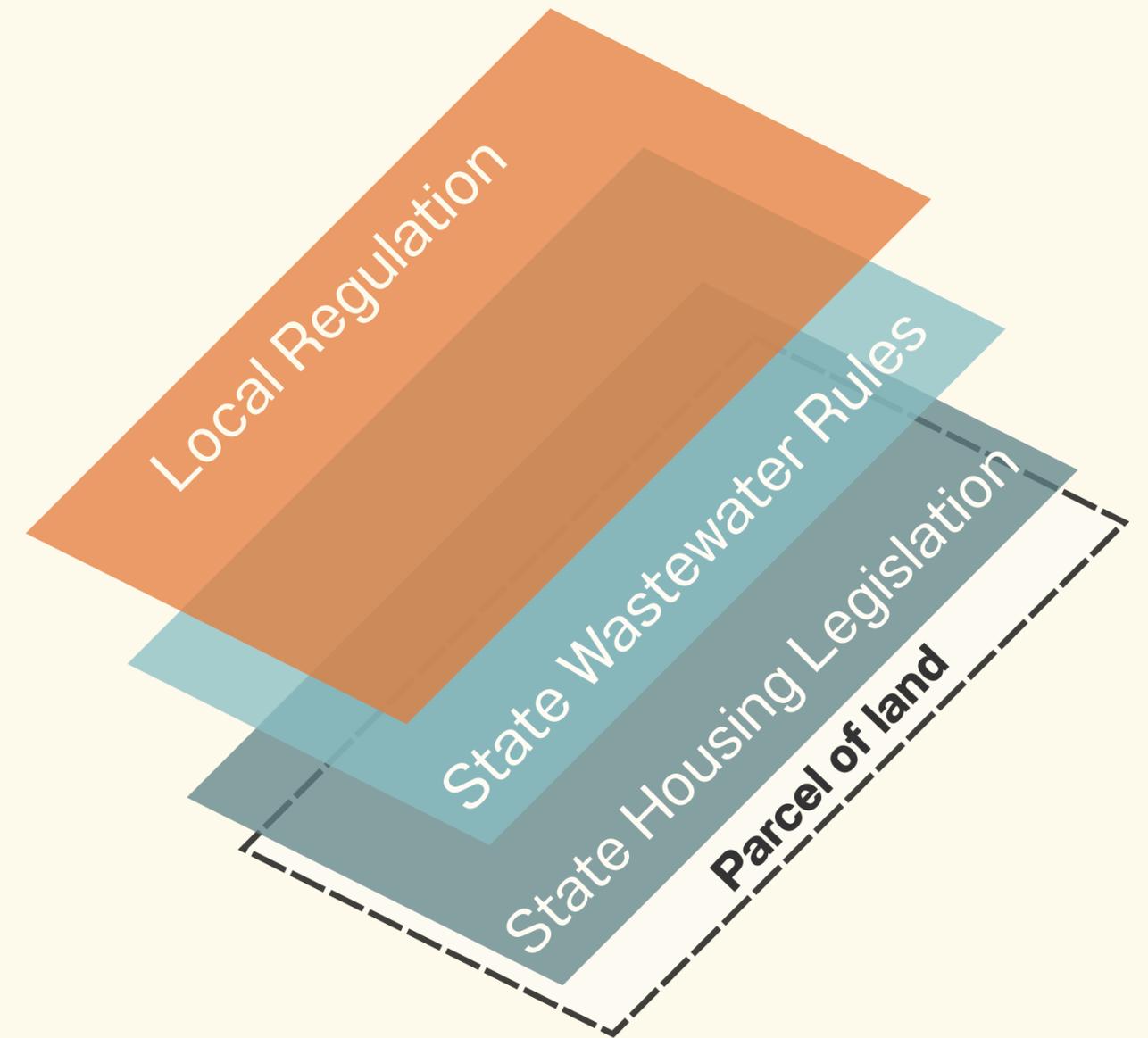
Allows for Modest Housing Growth, In Alignment with Existing Neighborhood Character.

**What would the Removal of
Area per Family Look Like on
Private Wells & Septic Systems
in the Growth Areas?**

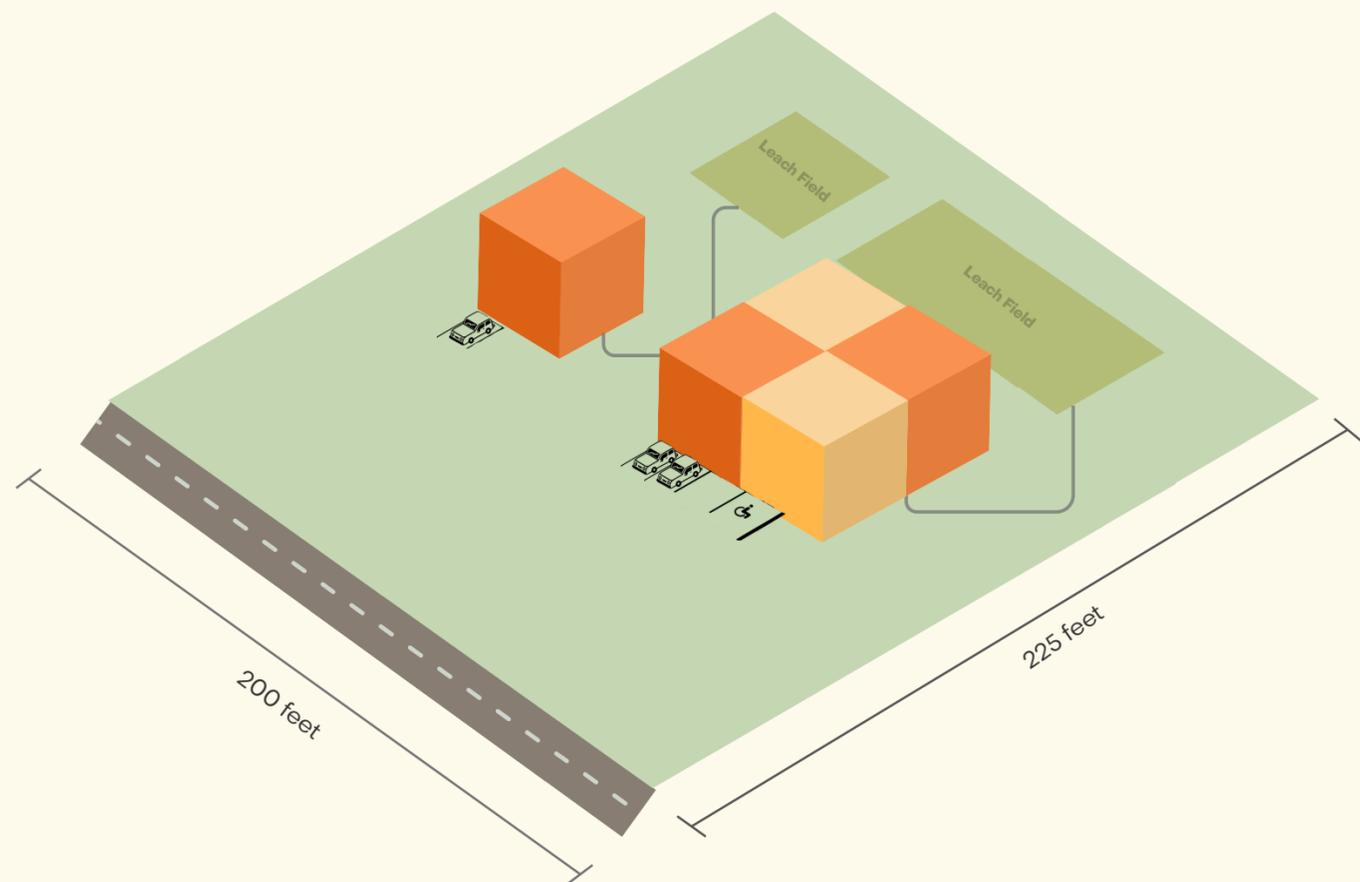


State Requirements for Septic Systems

- State requirements may not be explicitly stated in the Land Use Ordinance, but the standards still apply.
- **Chapter 423-A**, a State law by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), **would apply to areas in growth areas not on public water and sewer.**
- This law requires a certain amount of land per the total number of bedrooms.
- A proposal is required to meet all of the regulatory layers.



Would a proposed fourplex be allowed on a 45,000 sqft lot where an existing single-family dwelling exists?



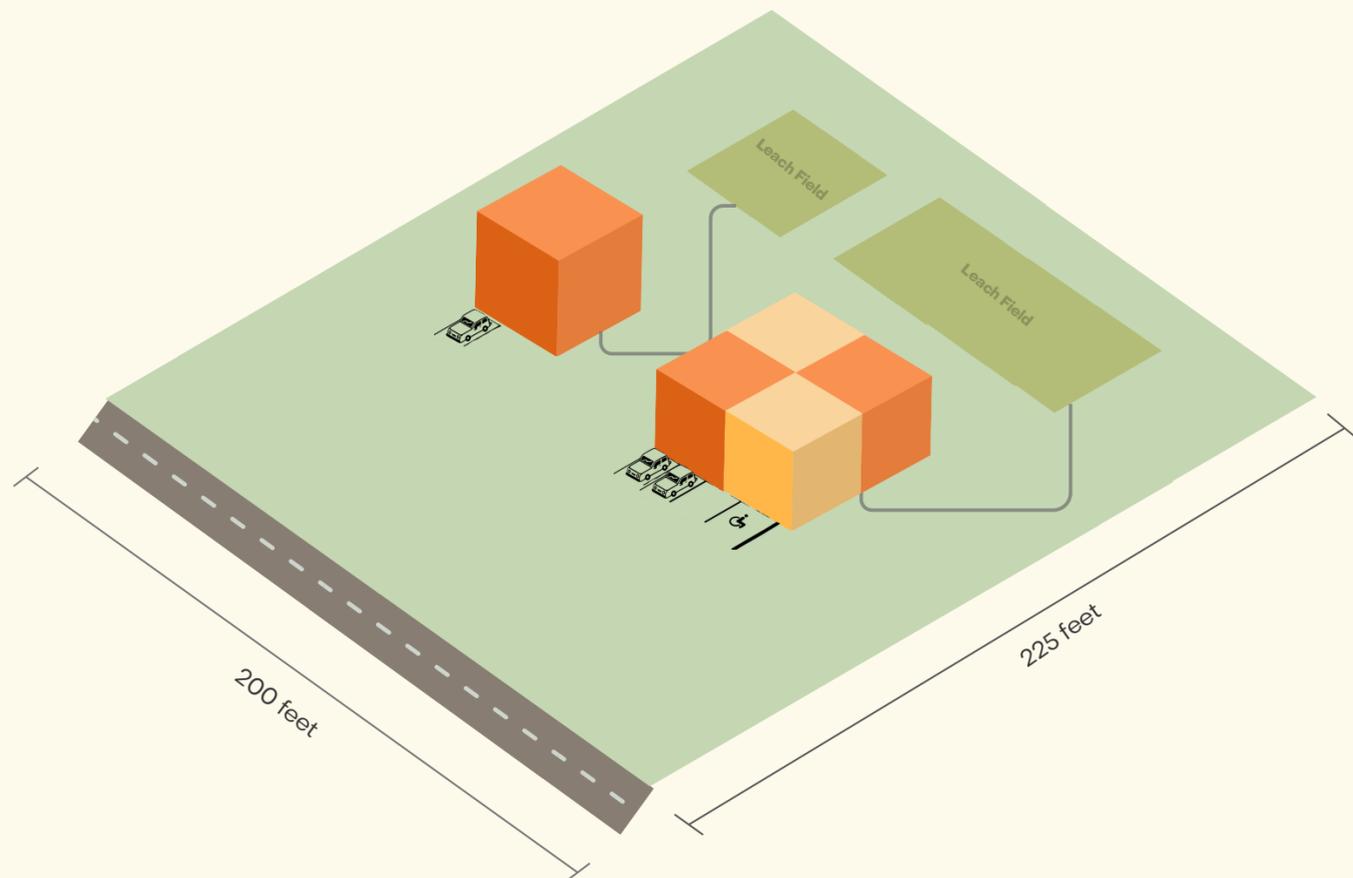
1) Does the proposal meet all local requirements?

2) Is the lot big enough based on the new proposed bedroom total?

Formula based on Ch. 423-A:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\# \text{ of Bedrooms} \times 120) \times 66.66 \\ & = \\ & \text{minimum lot area required} \end{aligned}$$

Would a proposed fourplex be allowed on a 45,000 sqft lot where an existing single-family dwelling exists?



1) Does the proposal meet all local requirements?

Village Residential District

- 7% lot coverage (maximum is 25%)
- 75 ft front setback
- 25 ft side & rear setback
- Fourplex is an allowed use

2) Is the lot big enough based for the proposed bedroom total?

MAYBE...

OPTION 1 - 5 Total Bedrooms

YES...If the single-family dwelling unit only has one bedroom **AND** if the fourplex only has one bedroom in each unit (required area = 40,000 sqft)

OPTION 2 - 10 Total Bedrooms

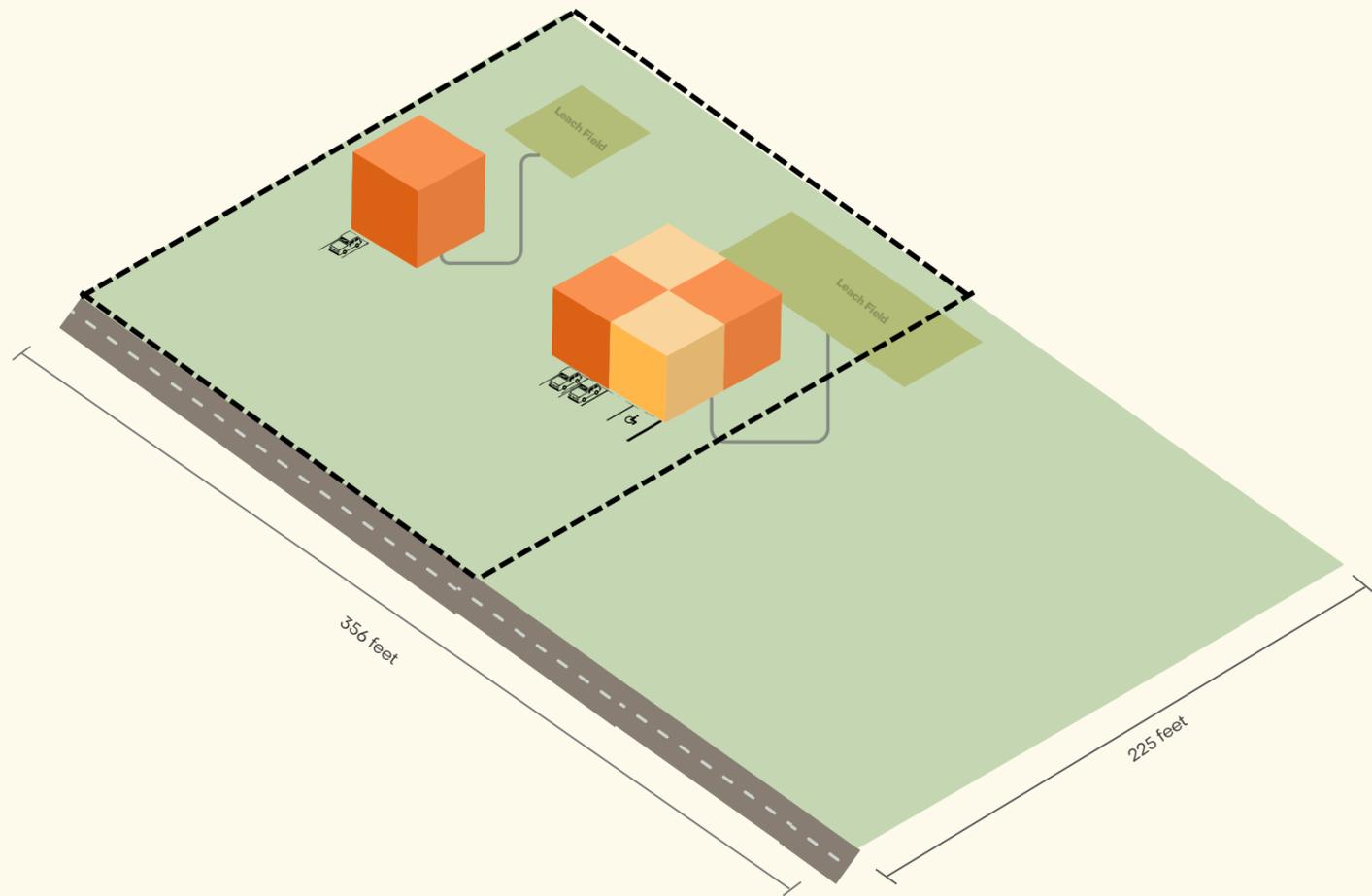
NO...If the single-family dwelling unit has two bedrooms **AND/OR** if the fourplex has 2 or more bedrooms per unit (required area = 80,000 sqft)



3) Are the soils adequate ?

If the soil quality is poor, less dwelling units are possible

In order for Option 2 to be possible, this lot would need to be nearly **DOUBLE** the size.



1) Does the proposal meet all local requirements?

Village Residential District

- 7% lot coverage (maximum is 25%)
- 75 ft front setback
- 25 ft side & rear setback
- Fourplex is an allowed use

2) Is the lot big enough based for the proposed bedroom total?

MAYBE...

OPTION 1 - 5 Total Bedrooms

YES...If the single-family dwelling unit only has one bedroom **AND** if the fourplex only has one bedroom in each unit (required area = 40,000 sqft)



OPTION 2 - 10 Total Bedrooms

NO...If the single-family dwelling unit has two bedrooms **AND/OR** if the fourplex has 2 or more bedrooms per unit (required area = 80,000 sqft)

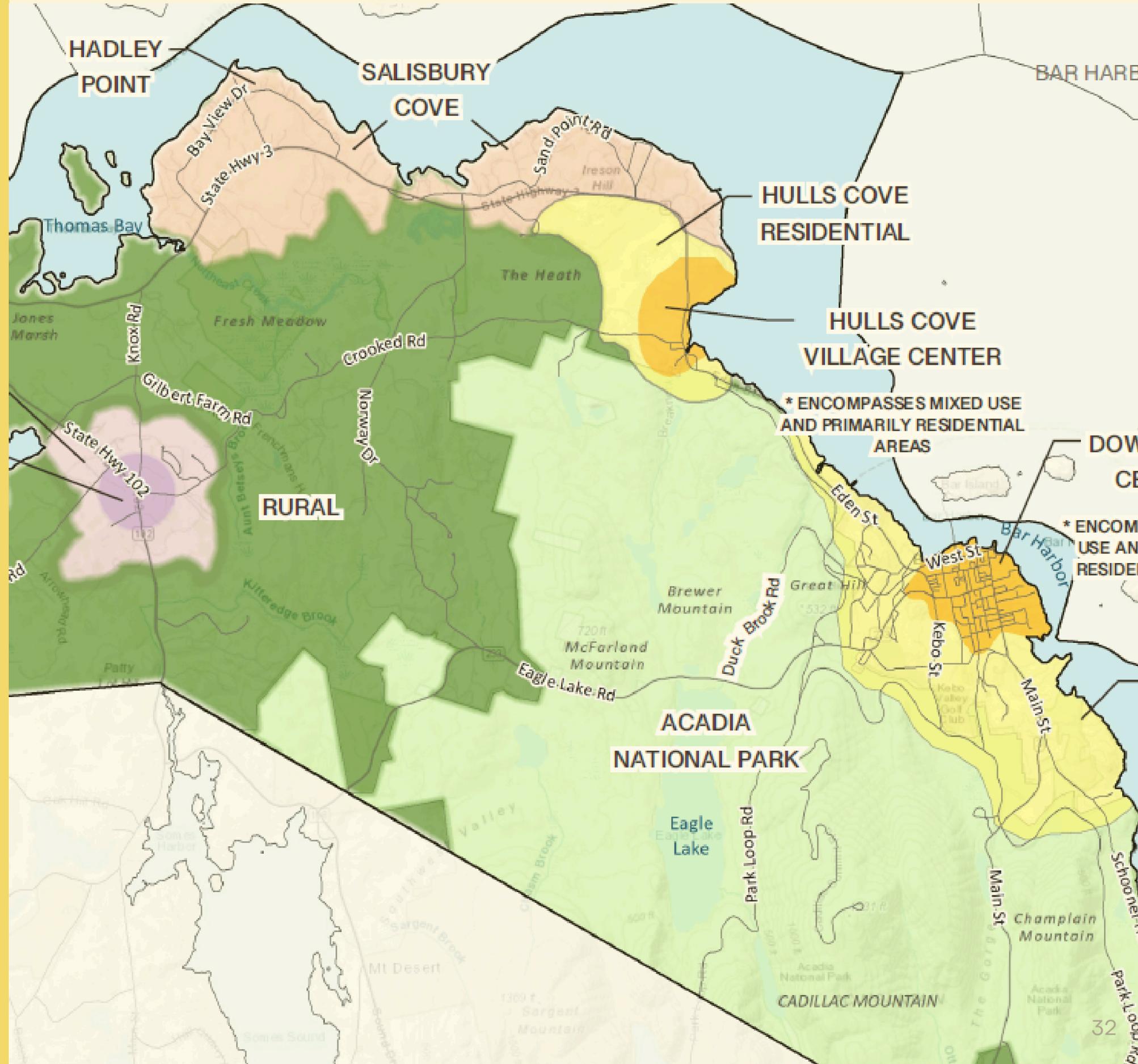


3) Are the soils adequate ?

If the soil quality is poor, less dwelling units are possible

3

**Smart Growth
Protects our
Environment &
Rural Areas.**



WHY REMOVE THE AREA PER FAMILY?

1

Solves the Housing Shortage One Meaningful Step At a Time.

2

Allows for Modest Housing Growth, In Alignment with Existing Neighborhood Character.

3

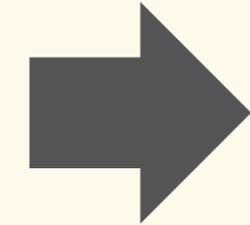
Smart Growth Protects our Environment & Rural Areas.

QUESTIONS



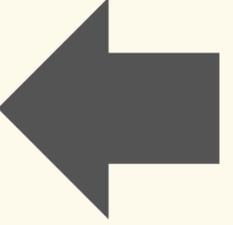
This seems like a big change.

Will this amendment change the look and feel of my neighborhood?

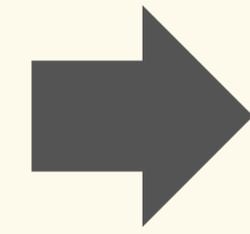


2 Shannon Rd in 2007

Triplex



2 Shannon Rd in 2024



37 Ledgelawn in 2007

Duplex



37 Ledgelawn in 2024



Duplex



7 Shannon Way
Fourplex



2 Cedar Avenue
Fourplex



6 Bloomfield Road
Fourplex



4 Edgewood
Fourplex



17 Bridge Street

Triplex



1 Davis Place

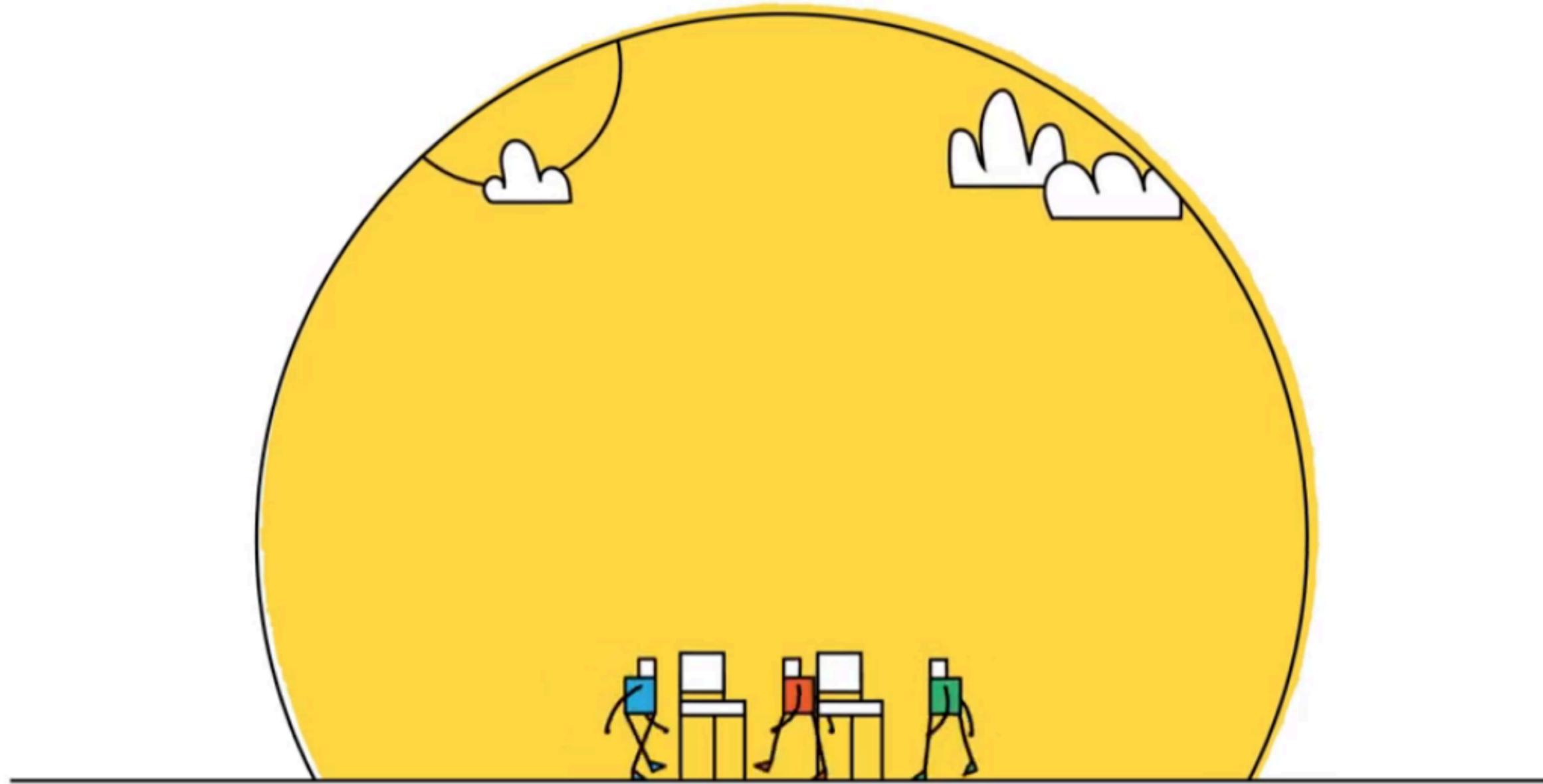
Triplex



We need housing for our local workforce.

Will this amendment help create housing for our community?

It is one less restriction to housing development



**We need to increase
the supply to help
moderate prices**

Rural Housing Shift
Vacation Area Home Prices Surge
Post-Pandemic

DECEMBER 2025 | ALEXANDER HERMANN AND PEYTON WHITNEY



Amenity Trap

How high-amenity communities can avoid being
loved to death



HEADWATERS
ECONOMICS

<https://headwaterseconomics.org> | May 2023



BAR HARBOR HOUSING ANALYSIS

December 28, 2022

RKG
ASSOCIATES INC



**BAR HARBOR 2035
IMPLEMENTATION**

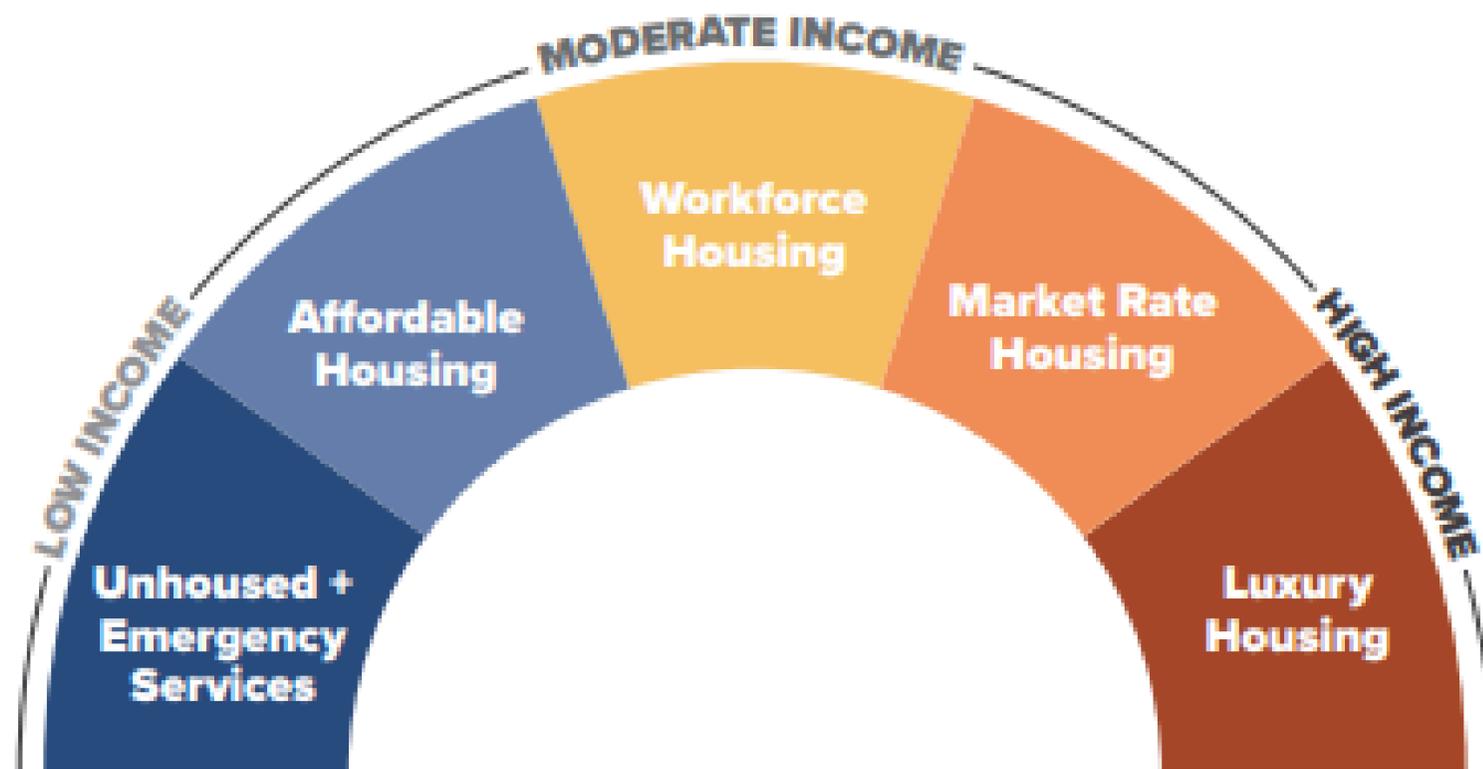
BAR HARBOR 2035



A Comprehensive Plan for the Future

Adopted June 10, 2025

Across all types of communities, the entire real estate market is connected, from the most- to the least-expensive, in what housing policy experts call a housing ladder or bridge. When the highest-priced housing gets even more expensive—as happens rapidly in hot markets like amenity destinations—some buyers will shift into the tier below. These buyers can out-bid people who were stretching to purchase homes in this tier, and they will shift into the tier below. This process will continue to the least expensive homes, and potential buyers of the least expensive homes will postpone homeownership and continue renting.



The housing bridge.
Housing at all price ranges are connected. Policies at any level will impact the entire housing bridge.

UPCOMING

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

Publish first round of FAQs

Common questions received so far

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

Publish second round of FAQs

Questions accepted up until Friday,
March 20 by 5:00 PM

Send questions to Michele Gagnon, at
mgagnon@barharbormaine.gov

All amendment related materials will be posted to the Land Use Changes webpage on the Town's website. <https://www.barharbormaine.gov/694/10372/Land-Use-Changes>