



Farren Neighborhood Zoning & Design Guideline Project


Community Meeting

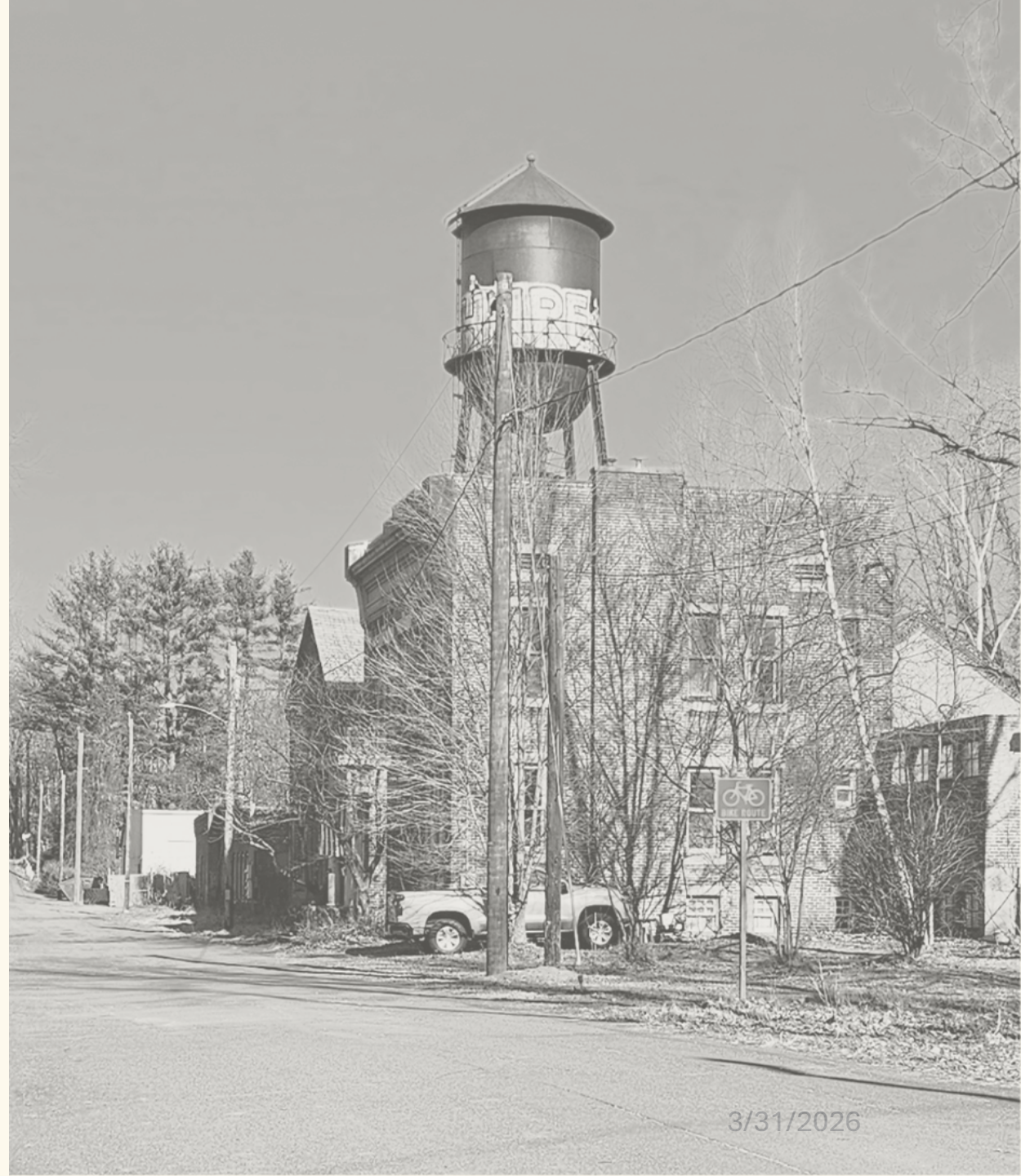
March 31, 2026





Agenda

- Project Introduction
- Project Schedule
- Present Conditions
 - ❖ Constraints and opportunities
- Design Guidelines
- **Activity time!** 
 - Feedback on the Land Use Vision
 - Dimensional Standards Surveys
 - Design Preferences



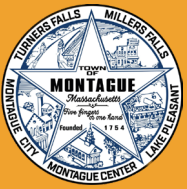


Project Introduction

Project Goals:

1. Create zoning to encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and encourage a gateway transition from the existing residential to the new village center.
2. Establish Design Guidelines that would apply to Montague City Village Center and the Rod Shop Road Area





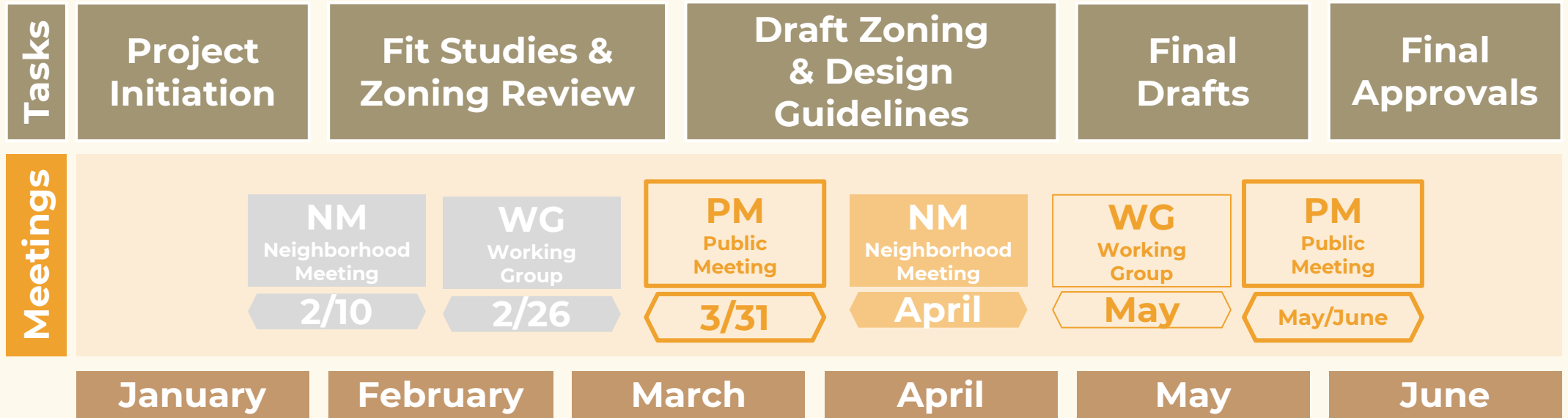
Project Introduction

Project Boundary:





Project Schedule





Present Conditions

Constraints and Opportunities



¹ The buffers are approximate.

CONSTRAINTS

- Zoning
- Wetlands
- Buildings' Current State

OPPORTUNITIES

- New Development
- Bus Line
- Bike Trail





Dimensional Standards

What are Dimensional Standards?

Dimensional standards are zoning requirements that regulate the maximum building envelope and the minimum conditions a lot must meet before it can be developed

Lot Size
Minimum

Frontage
Minimum

Front
Setback
Minimum

Height



Design Guidelines

What are design Guidelines?

Design Guidelines are a set of **advisory recommendations** with the goal of preserving or creating a cohesive, attractive, and functional environment that reflects community values and enhances quality of life.



Design Guidelines

What design Guidelines are **NOT**?

1. Property use or zoning.
2. Whether a building gets redeveloped or maintained.
3. Internal changes not visible from public eye.
4. Rent prices, affordability, ownership, tenancy, or type of businesses.
5. Public infrastructure like streets and utilities.
6. Architectural taste/ personal preferences beyond the scope of compatibility.





Design Guidelines

Their Purpose:

1. Communicate the Town's design expectations.
2. Fair and consistent application of design objectives.
3. Encourage development of projects appropriate to the Town's context.
4. Provide clarity and Predictability.
5. Facilitate safe, functional, and attractive development.
6. Foster a sense of community and encourage pride and stewardship.



Design Guidelines Structure

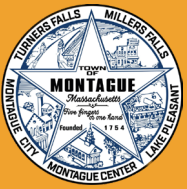
Guidelines are organized around three design approaches:

**The
Architecture
and Its Context**

**Neighborhood
Ground Floor**

**Healthy
Neighborhoods**

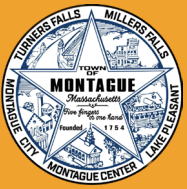




Design Guidelines Structure

The Architecture and Its Context:

- 1 Respecting their surroundings.
- 2 Coherent architectural idea.
- 3 The relation between architecture and uses.



Design Guidelines Structure

Neighborhood Ground Floor:

- 1 Pedestrian-oriented street fronts.
- 2 Active and vibrant neighborhood.
- 3 Intuitive and Human-scale design.



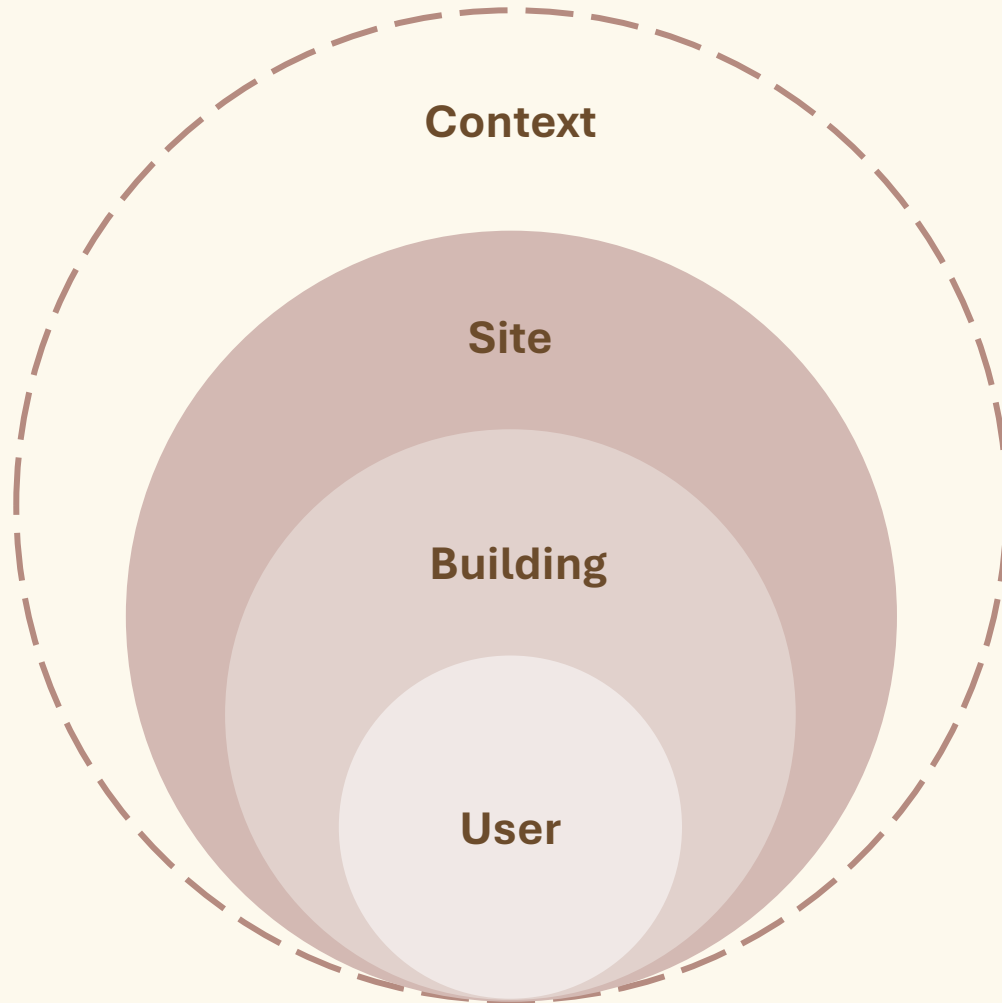
Design Guidelines Structure

Healthy Neighborhoods:

- 1 Preserve existing natural features located on site.
- 2 Strategies to reduce carbon emissions.
- 3 Implement resilient strategies:
 - Stormwater absorption.
 - Reduce the heat island effect.
 - Improve air, soil, and water quality.
- 4 Nature Inclusive Neighborhoods.



Design Guidelines Structure



The Architecture
and Its Context

Neighborhood
Ground Floor

Healthy
Neighborhoods





Activity time!



Three stations, each with a different activity:

Give your feedback on the Vision Map.

- Look at the map in your table and discuss with your team whether you agree with the uses and their locations. If not, what would you change?

Survey on Zoning: Dimensional Standards.

- Look at the Information provided on the Boards about Dimensional Standards and select the answer that better reflects your opinion.

Design Guidelines: Design Preference.

- Take a card and tell us what you like and what you don't like!



Activity time!



Give your feedback on the Vision Map.



1. Are the selected uses appropriate?
2. Do you agree with the comments?

Ligh industrial:

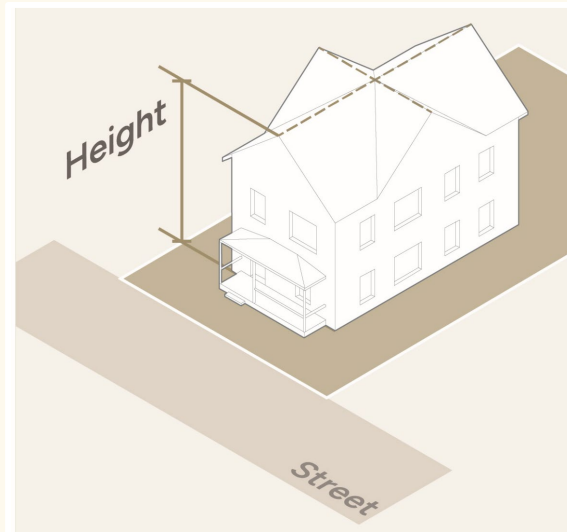
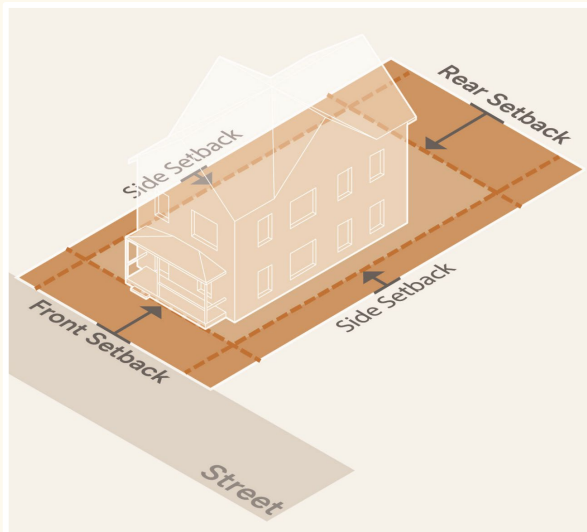
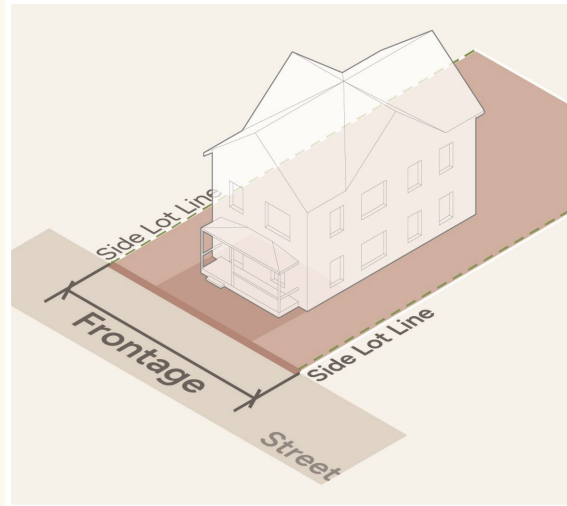
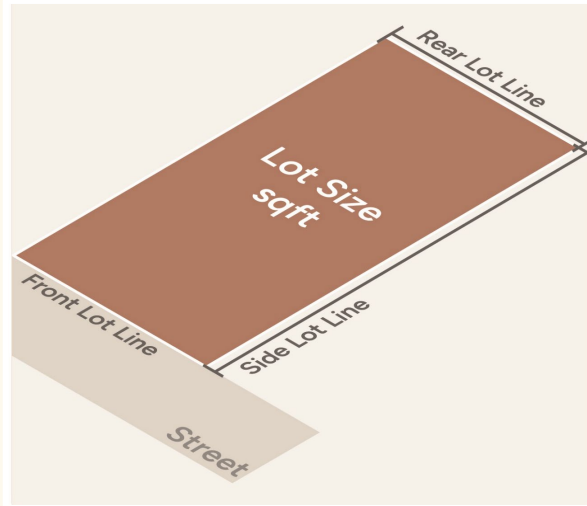
Fabrication, processing or assembly employing only electric or other substantially noiseless and inoffensive motive power, utilizing hand labor or quiet machinery and processes, and free from neighborhood disturbing agents, such as odors, gas fumes, smoke, cinders, flashing or excessively bright lights, refuse matter, electromagnetic radiation, heat or vibration.





Activity time!

Survey on Zoning: Dimensional Standards.



Dimensional Standards

Neighborhood Meeting 2/5/2026



Survey

We are looking for your feedback to help build the vision for your neighborhood. Please select the responses that best reflect your opinion. You may choose more than one answer, and feel free to add comments to better share your thoughts

1 Lot Size Minimum

- a) I don't think a minimum lot size standard is necessary in the Rod Shop Road Area and the Gateway zones
- b) I think a minimum lot size standard should reflect the building types of the neighborhood.
- c) Other (please explain) _____

2 Frontage Minimum

- a) I would like to see a street façade that encourages walkability.
- b) I would like to see smaller buildings so the street can support a greater variety of businesses and activities.
- c) Other (please explain) _____

3 Front Setback Minimum

- a) I want a front setback that will promote walkability and active streetscape.
- b) I want a front setback that supports an active or landscaped area connected to the building's program. I don't want parking in the front yard.
- c) Other (please explain) _____

4 Height

- a) Maximize the efficiency of the land, being respectful to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- b) Propose a height that relates to the heights of the existing buildings in the area.
- c) Other (please explain) _____



Farren Neighborhood Zoning & Design Guideline Project





Activity time!

Design Guidelines: Comment on each picture on what you like and what you dislike.

EXAMPLE



I like:

I don't like:



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How to study the image:

- The building envelope and how it fits to its context.
- The façade materials and colors.
- The space between the buildings.
- How the open space activates the space.
- The green areas its function and aesthetics.





Activity time!

Design Guidelines: Comment on each picture on what you like and what you dislike.

EXAMPLE



Sasaki
© Sasaki

I like:

I don't like:



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How to study the image:

- Comment on the type of open space.
- Do you think the street furniture is well designed and appropriate for the area?
- Do you like the vegetation that is used?
- Do you think the paving brings the design together?
- Materials: paving and furniture.





Next Steps

- Prepare a draft with zoning recommendations and design guidelines.
- Review the draft with the neighborhood, working group, and community, and address their comments in April through May.
- Provide a final zoning draft and design guidelines in June.



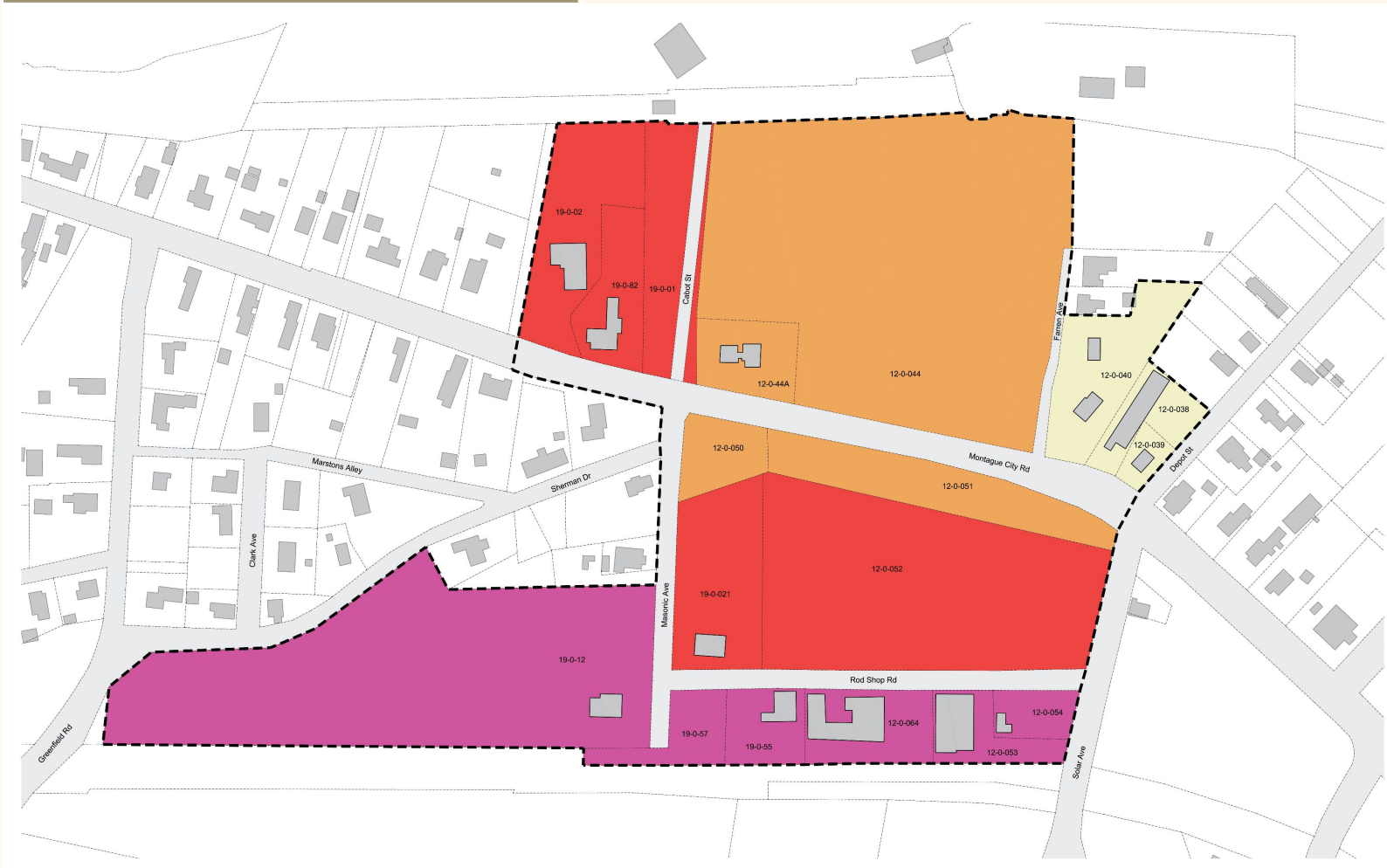
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





Present Conditions

Zoning Overview:



-  Village Center Mixed-use District (MU-VC)
-  Central Business (CB)
-  Historic Industrial (HI)
-  Neighborhood Business (NB)
-  Boundary





Present Conditions

Zoning Overview. Summary Table of Uses

- Permitted Use
- Special Permit
- Not permitted

		CB	HI	NB
Single and two-family dwellings		●	●	●
Multi-family dwelling		●	●	●
Mixed-use. Street level as commercial and Residential on upper floors	<= 4 dwellings	●	●	●
	> 4 dwellings	●	●	●
Bulk storage, warehousing, distribution		●	●	●
Business, professional, or medical office		●	●	● ¹
Craft workshop or light assembly shop		● ²	●	●
Hotel		●	●	●
Manufacturing, processing, or research		●	●	●
Retail sales and services without an accessory drive-through component	<5,000 SF	●	●	N/A
	>5,000 SF	●	●	N/A
	<1,000	●	●	●
Self-service storage facilities		●	●	●

¹ < 1,000 sq ft

² w/ retail

3/31/2026



Present Conditions

Village Center Mixed-use District (MU-VC)

Site Plan Review

- Two- or three-family; Multiplex; Rowhouse, Townhouse; Multi-unit Residential
- Mixed-use development; must include multi-family
- Bakeries, artisan food or beverage producers
- General or Personal Service
- Private educational use
- Health, gym, or fitness club
- Museum

Site Plan Review

- Boutique Hotel
with 20 or fewer guest rooms
- Offices 2,000 SF or less
- Restaurants and Cafés 2,000 SF or less; no drive-thru
- Retail stores 2,000 SF or less
- Craft workshops or Light assembly workshops 2,000 SF or less

Special Permit

- Boutique Hotel
with more than 20 and up to 40 guest rooms.
- Offices over 2,000 SF
- Restaurants and Cafés over 2,000 SF; no drive-thru
- Retail stores over 2,000 SF
- Craft workshops or Light assembly workshops over 2,000 SF
- Parking Garage

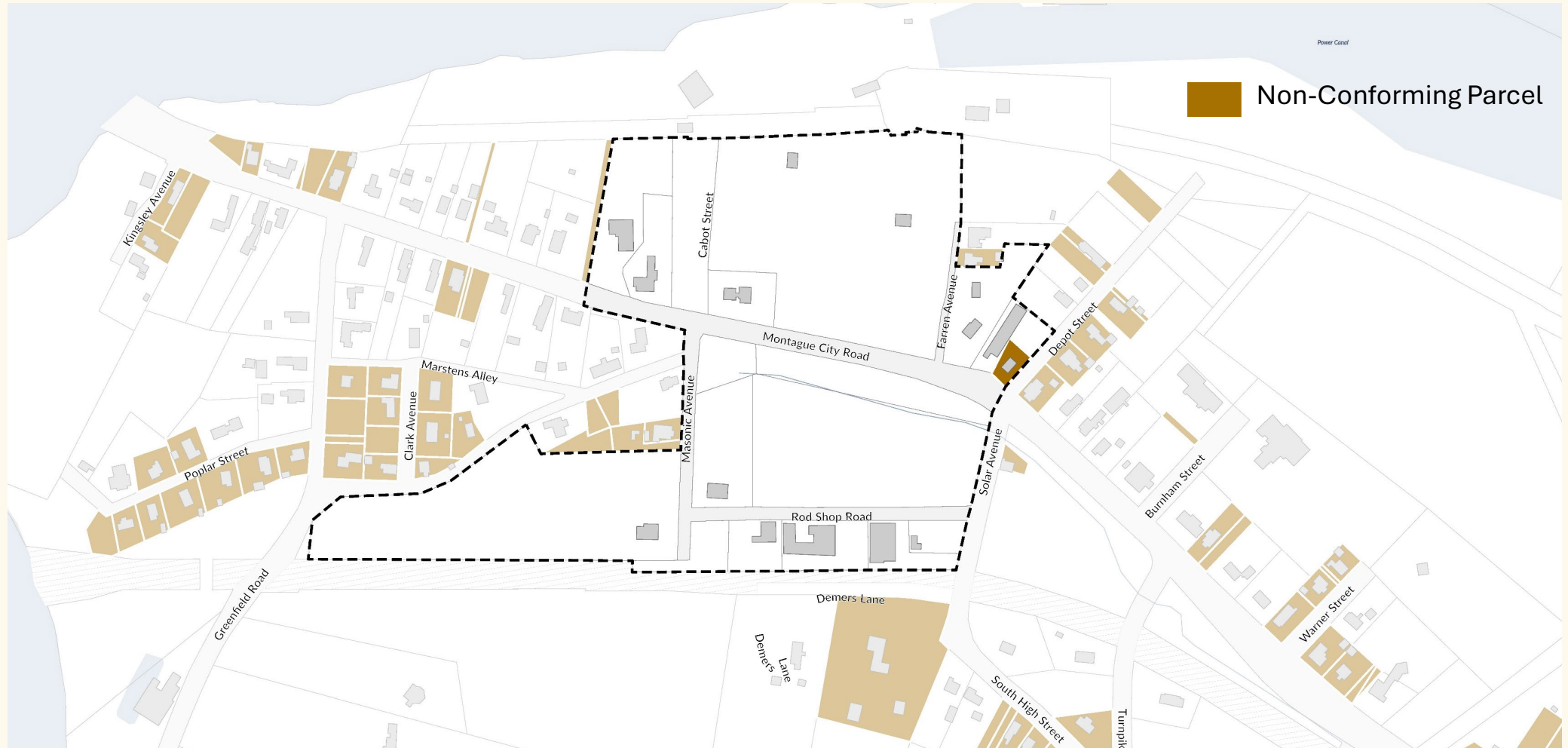




Present Conditions

Non-conforming analysis

DIMENSIONAL STANDARD: LOT SIZE MINIMUM

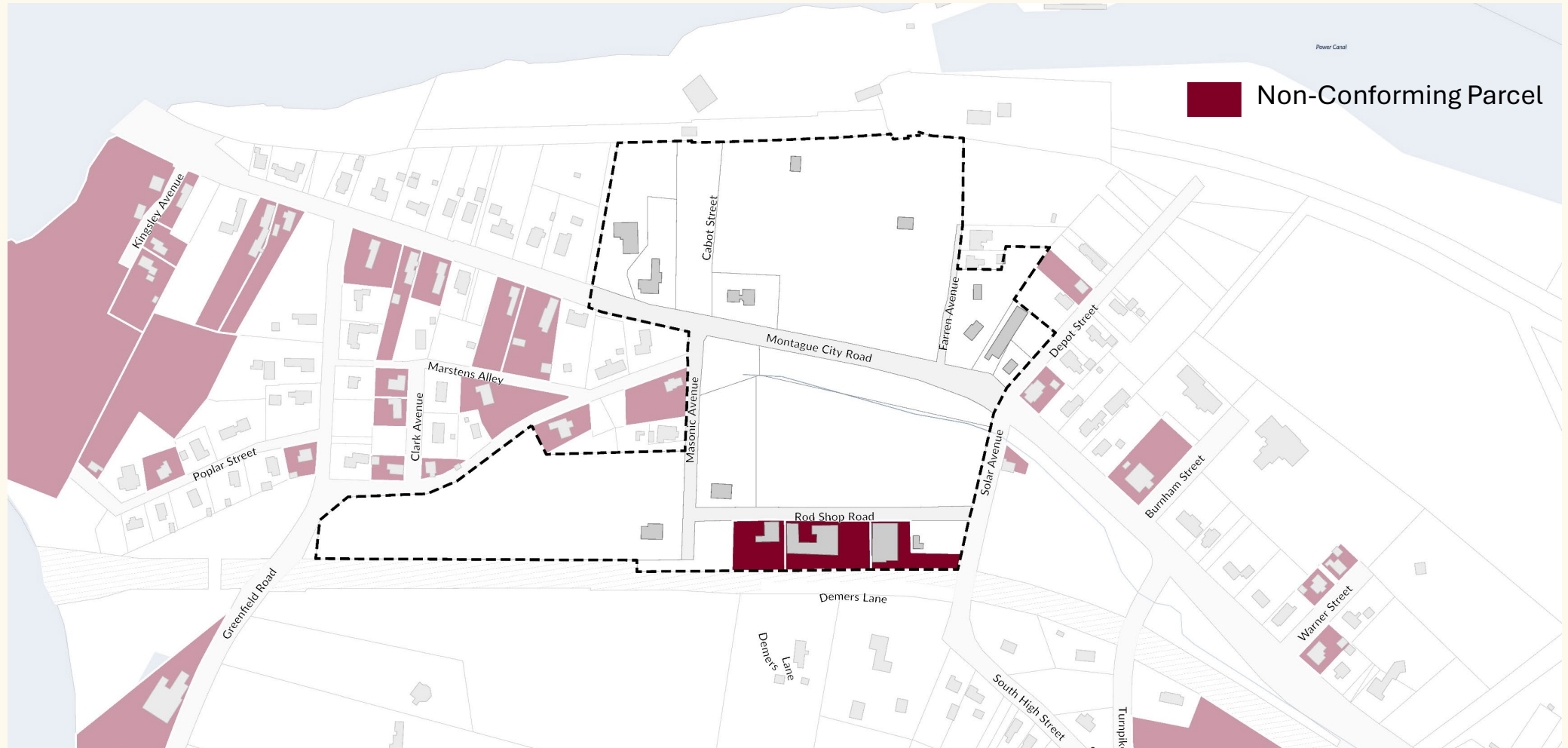




Present Conditions

Non-conforming analysis

DIMENSIONAL STANDARD: MINIMUM FRONT SETBACK





Dimensional Standards

Zoning Overview:

	Lot Size (min - sf)	Frontage (min - ft)	Front Yard* (min - ft)	Side Yard (min - ft)	Rear Yard (min - Ft)	Height (max - ft)
CB	None	None	Sidewalk or 10 ft MAX	10	15	36
HI	None	None	25	0, if access to rear of lot of min 12-ft drive	15	50
NB	10,000	75	15	0, if access to rear of lot of min 12-ft drive	30	28
MU-VC	4,000	30	0	10	10	Any building whose principal façade is within 30 feet of the lot line contiguous with the public right-of-way for Cabot Street or Farren Avenue: three (3) stories, forty (40) feet. All other buildings: Up to four (4) stories, fifty (50) ft.





Dimensional Standards

Lot Size Minimum

Current Zoning

	Lot Size (min - sf)
CB	None
HI	None
NB	10,000
MU-VC	4,000

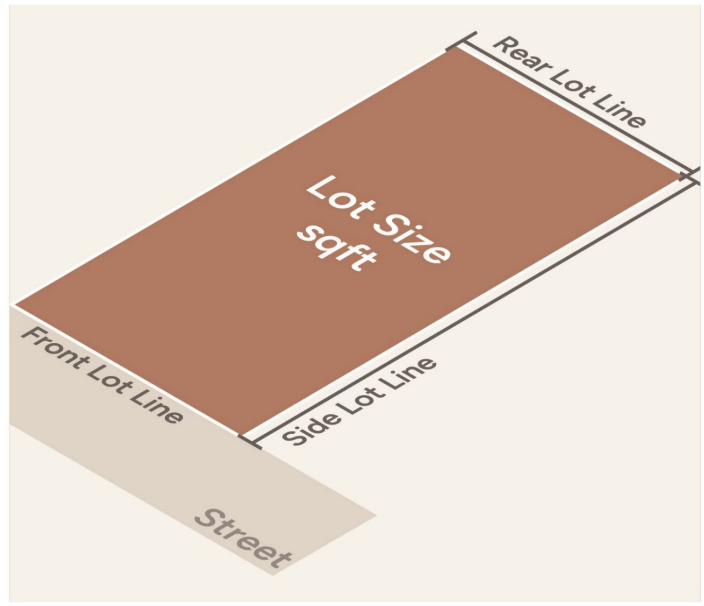
Impacts

Minimum lot sizes can encourage developers to consolidate parcels and construct larger buildings

Large minimum lot sizes can act as a barrier to development, particularly for multifamily residential projects.

Minimum lot sizes should be balanced to support viable development while avoiding barriers to new investments.

Diagram





Dimensional Standards

Frontage
Minimum

Current Zoning

	Frontage (min - ft)
CB	None
HI	None
NB	75
MU-VC	30

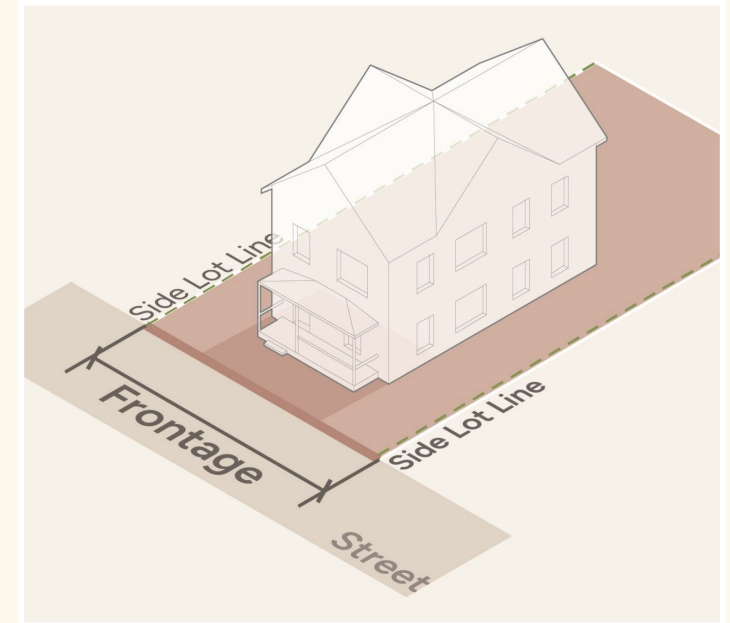
Impacts

Frontage is the lot line separating a lot from the street layout line.

Very short frontages could affect building accessibility and visibility.

The length of the frontage brings rhythm to the street façade. Very long facades with inactive uses discourage walking and activity along the street.

Diagram





Dimensional Standards

Front Setback Minimum

Current Zoning

	Front Yard* (min – ft)
CB	Sidewalk or 10 ft MAX
HI	25
NB	15
MU-VC	0

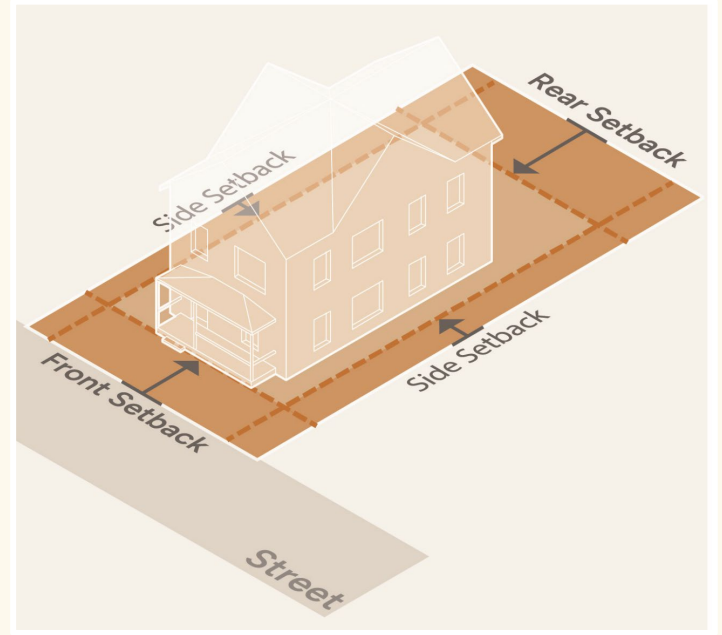
Impacts

Front setbacks play a crucial role in how we perceive public space and are essential for walkability.

Front yards that are too deep reduce visibility, losing the connection between the buildings and the street.

Front yards that are too shallow can create challenges when streets are narrow, sidewalks are insufficient or the buildings are very tall.

Diagram





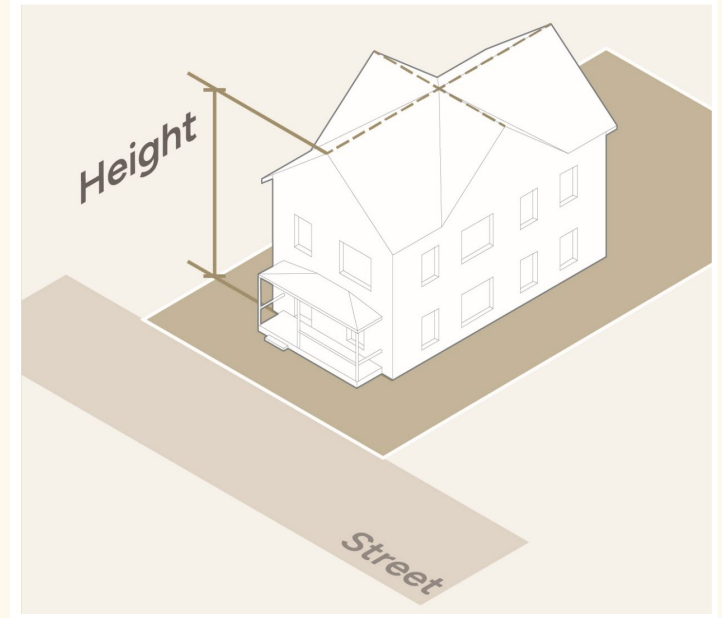
Dimensional Standards

Height

Current Zoning

	Height (max - ft)
CB	36
HI	50
NB	28
MU-VC	Along Cabot Street or Farren Avenue: 3 stories, 40 ft All other buildings: Up to four 4 stories, 50 ft.

Diagram



Impacts

One of the most important standards for determining the character of the neighborhood.

Height should respond to the surroundings.

Height can help use land more efficiently. Taller buildings support greater density, which normally reduces utilities and services, improving sustainability and increasing tax revenue for the town.

