



HOUSING POLICY DISCUSSION

Zoning Reform

Committee of the Whole

July 11, 2023

HOUSING NEED

- Quantified by the 2020 and 2023 Housing Needs Assessment.
- The need for zoning reform is well documented.



Where Permissive Zoning Codes Slowed Rent Growth

Recent analysis from the Pew Research Center identifies more support for zoning reform as a tool for maintaining the affordability of rental housing in U.S. cities.

1 Minute Read
May 15, 2023, 9:00 AM PDT
By James Brasuell @CasualBrasuell



Interior 3 zoning conceptual rendering. / Minneapolis 2040 Comprehensive Plan

Four U.S. jurisdictions—Minneapolis; New Rochelle, New York; Portland, Oregon; and Tysons, Virginia—helped slow rent growth by approving new zoning codes that

34,699

Total new units needed county-wide by 2027 to accommodate household growth and older home replacement.

14,106

Total new units needed in the City of Grand Rapids by 2027.



PLANNING MAGAZINE

What Is Zoning Reform and Why Do We Need It?

The case for change, why planners support it, and six zoning reform tactics that could help curb housing costs.

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



INNOVATIONS ZONING



WE AGREE

- We need housing – all types, all price points.
- All neighborhoods must allow for some change.
- Utilize vital streets plan to guide housing densities.
- Traffic will increase, but not beyond capacity of our streets.
- Significant parking reductions will be necessary.
- Infill development must align with good planning principles.
- We must continue to resource infill development of underutilized properties along major corridors (e.g. Alpine/28th/Plainfield). We cannot ignore those opportunities because they're challenging and expect the neighborhoods to solve the housing need.
- An incremental approach is best.
- Zoning reform will not independently solve the housing shortage.





2002 Master Plan

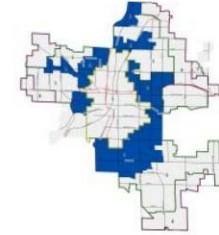
Chpt. 3. Great Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Patterns

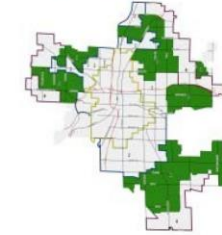
Turn of the Century Neighborhood



Early 20th Century Neighborhood



Post War Neighborhood



Late 20th Century Neighborhood



Turn of the Century neighborhoods and Early 20th Century neighborhoods

- Developed between 1850 and 1945.
- Most neighborhoods have a range of housing densities. Medium and high-density apartment buildings are often located at intersections on major streets, with medium density duplexes providing a transition to single-family homes on small lots.
- MP Density: 5 - 9.9 units per acre

Post War neighborhoods

- Developed after World War II, between 1945 and 1970.
- Reduced integration of residential and non-residential uses within neighborhood and/or on selected blocks. Some smaller scale multi-family continues to be integrated into single-family residential areas.
- MP Density: 1 - 4.9 units per acre

Late 20th Century neighborhoods

- Developed after 1970.
- Larger multi-family complexes are separated from single-family residential areas. Most developments are treated as segregated pods that are buffered by substantial building setbacks and attached to a major street.
- MP Density: 1 - 4.9 units per acre.

CURRENT ZONING POLICY

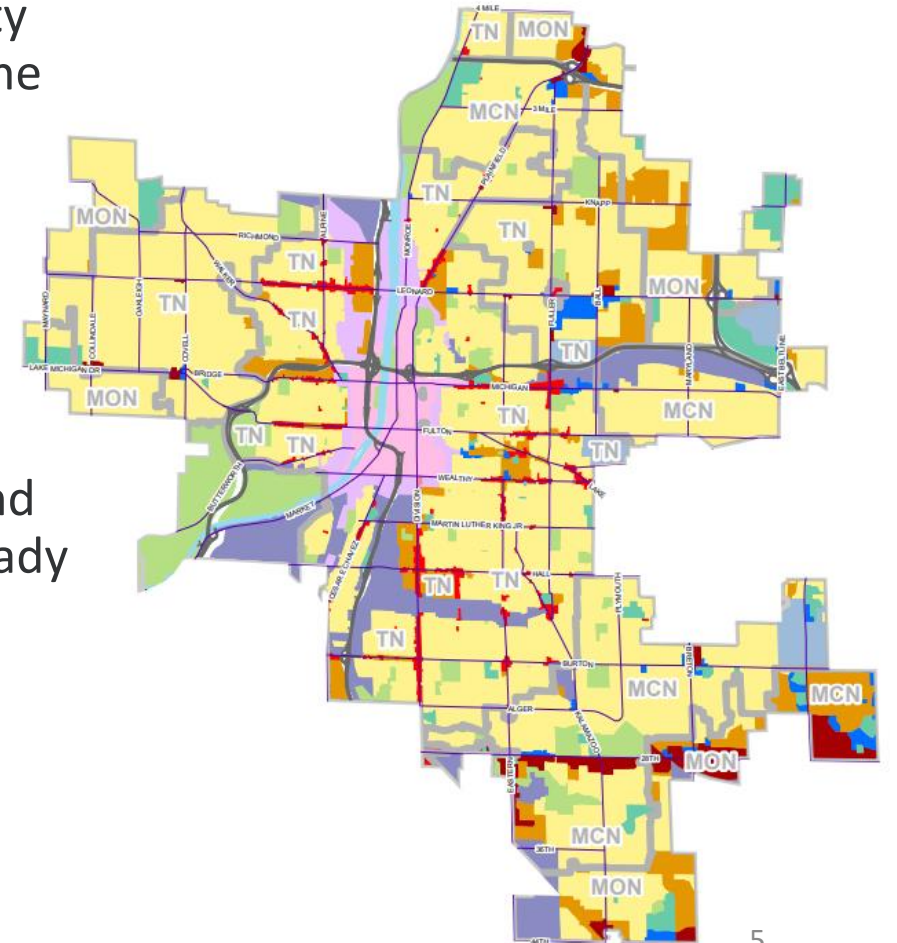
Residential Zone Districts are divided into Low-Density Residential (LDR) Districts and Mixed-Density Residential (MDR) Districts within the framework of the 3 Neighborhood Classifications.

The **LRD District** is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods.

- TN Zoning Density: 11-22 units per acre
- MCN Zoning Density: 9 - 17 units per acre
- MON Zoning Density: 6 - 16 units per acre

The **MDR District (show in orange)** is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing types in areas where development already exists or where it is desired in the future.

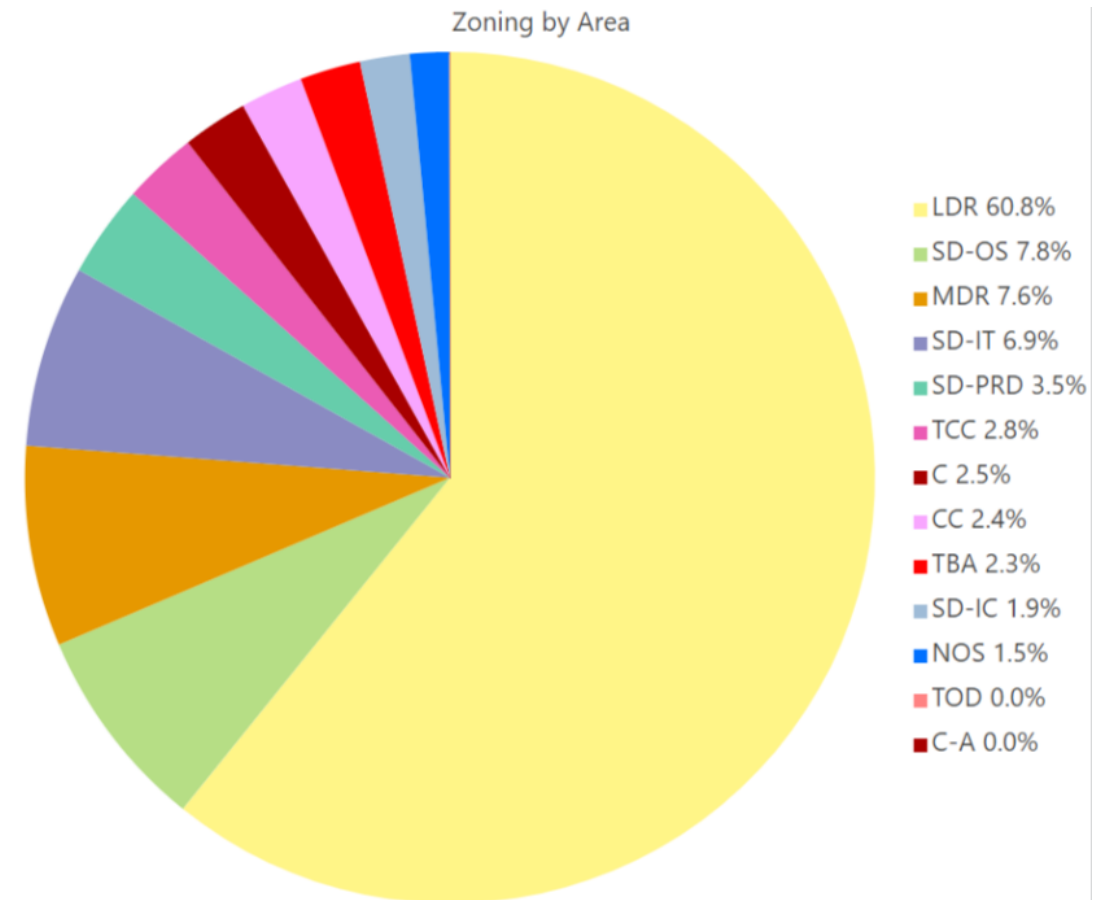
- TN Zoning Density: 17 - 53 units per acre
- MCN Zoning Density: 14 - 29 units per acre
- MON Zoning Density: 12 - 25 units per acre



EXISTING LAND USE

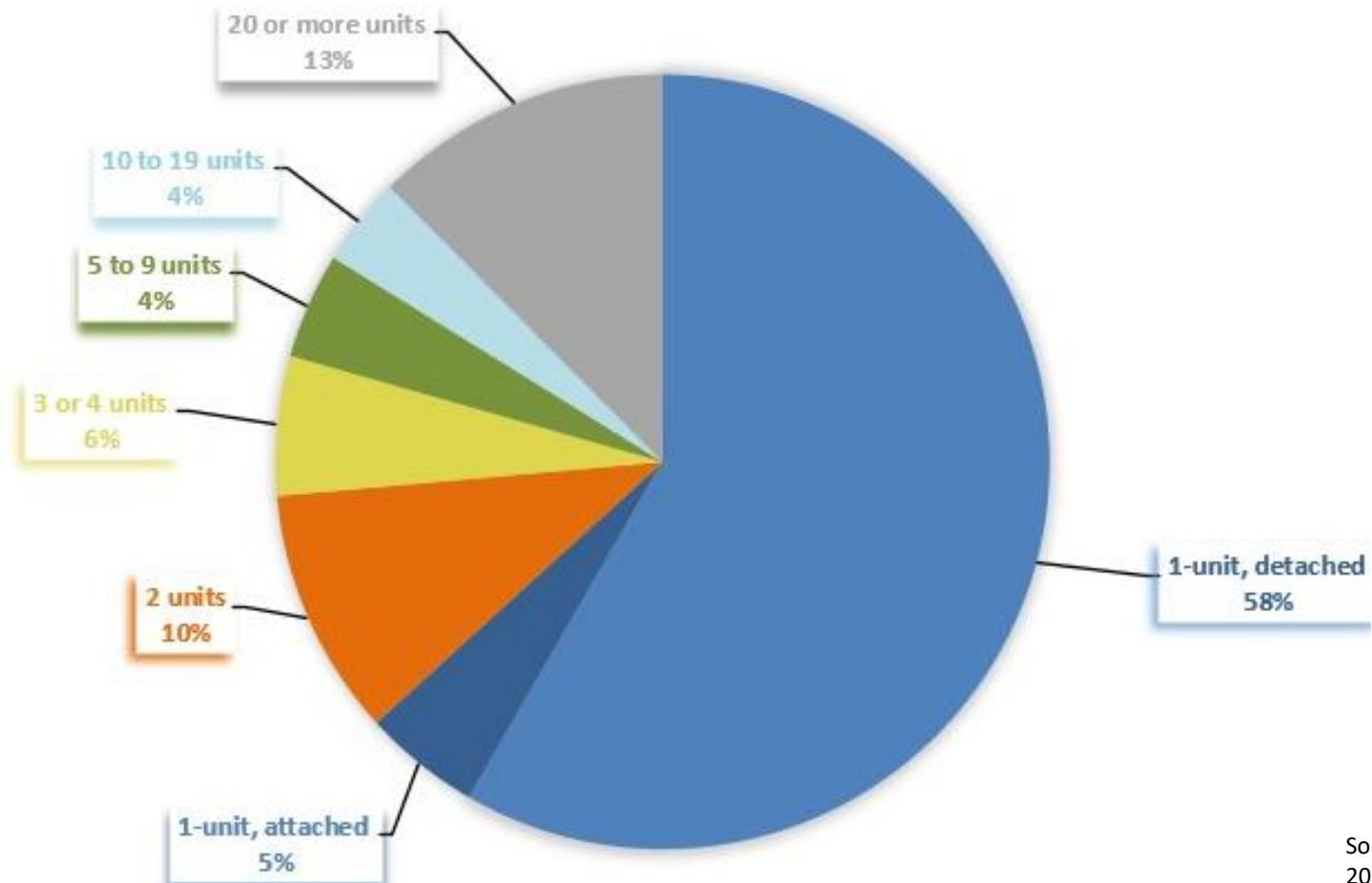
By Zone District

- 60.8% of land area is zoned LDR
 - Permitted by-right:
 - Single-family
 - Permitted with Special Land Use:
 - Two-family
 - Multi-family (3+ units)
- 7.6% of land area is zoned MDR
 - Permitted by-right:
 - Single-family, two-family and multi-family (3+ units)



GRAND RAPIDS' HOUSING TYPES

Units per structure



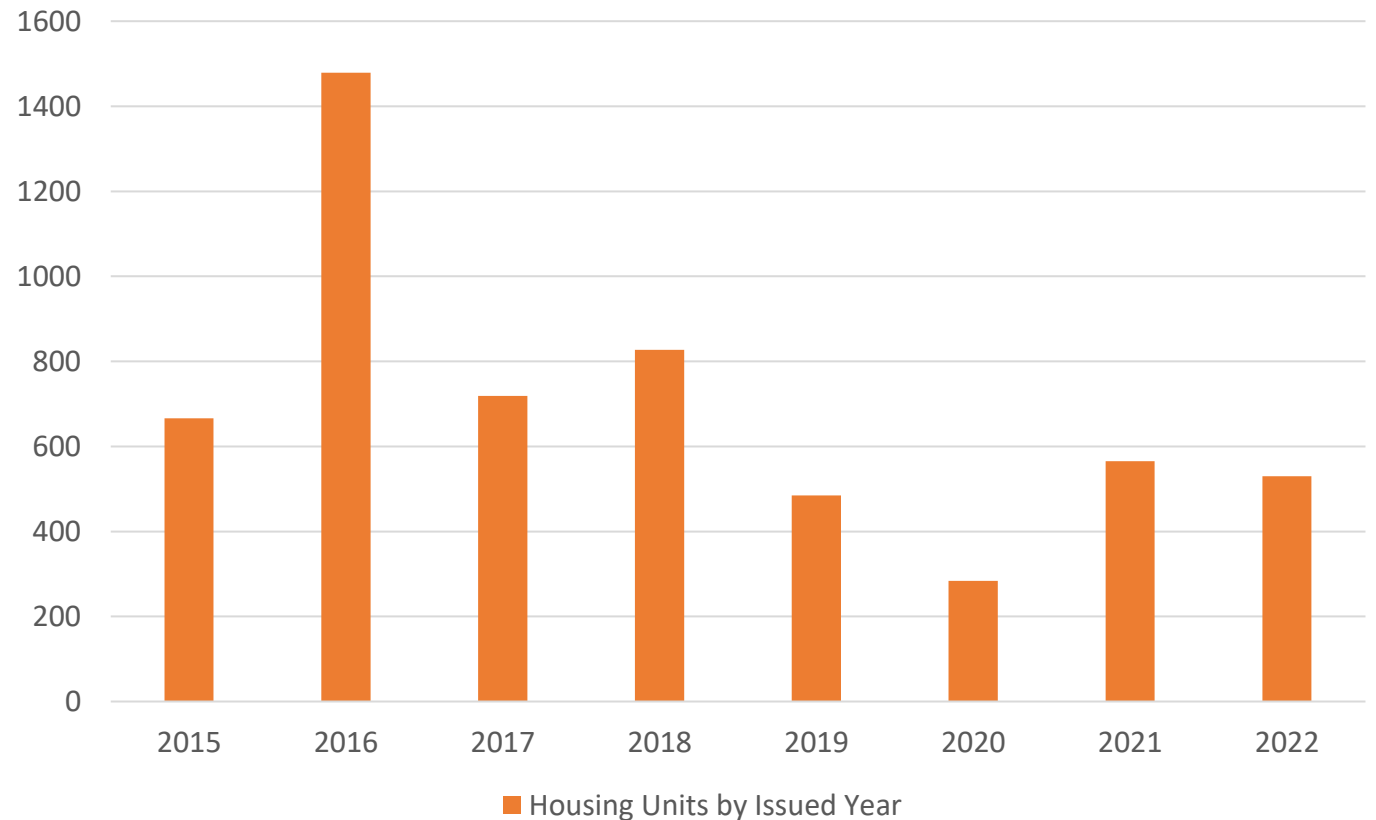
Source: US Census Bureau 2017 – 2021. 5-year American Community Survey, Table CP04

THE DATA

Housing Units by Issued Year

- We need **14,106** housing units by 2027.
- This averages **2,821** new units per year.
- Since 2015, the City has averaged **538** new units per year.

Housing Units by Issued Year



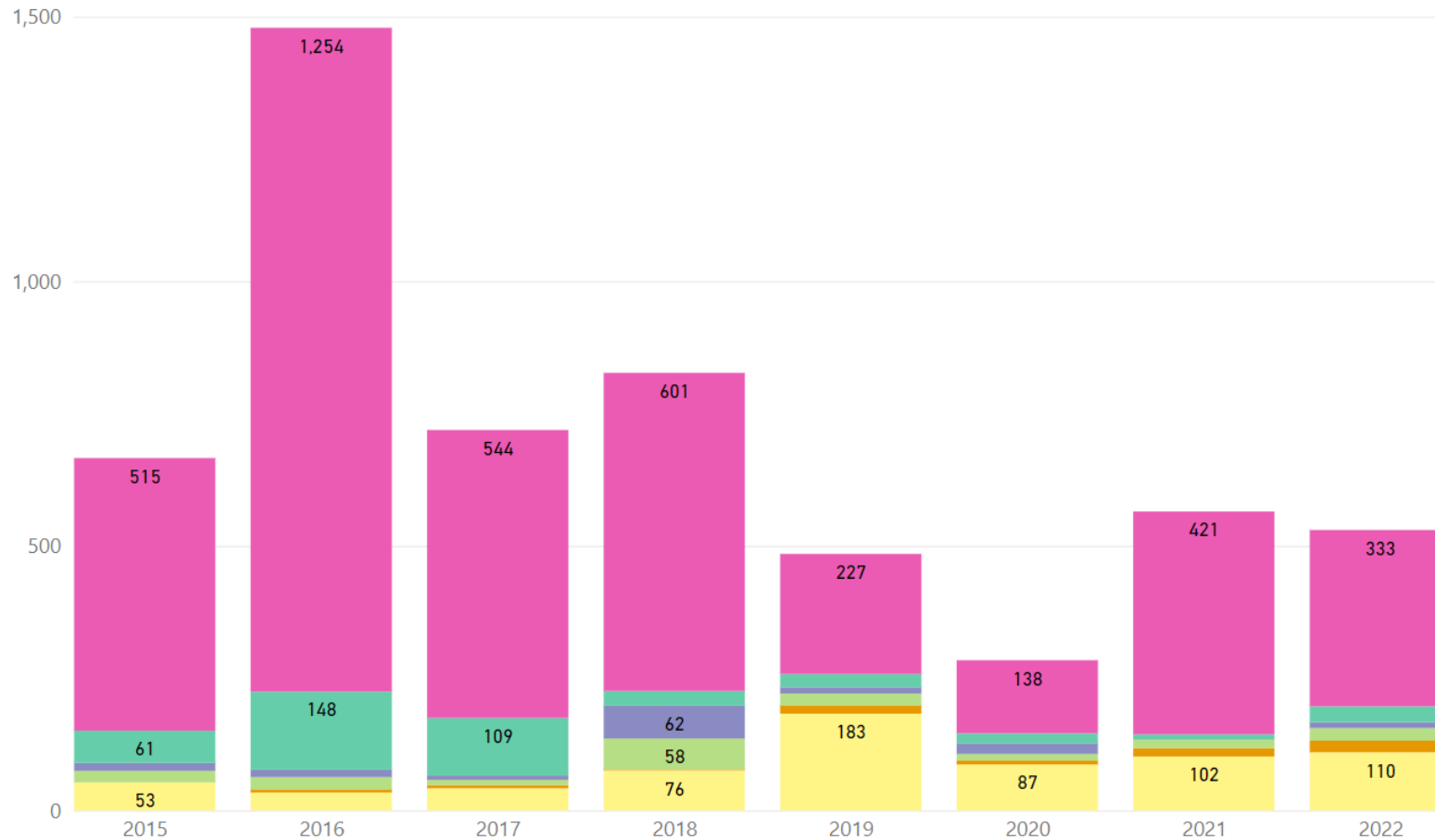
THE DATA

Housing Units Issued Year and Unit Category

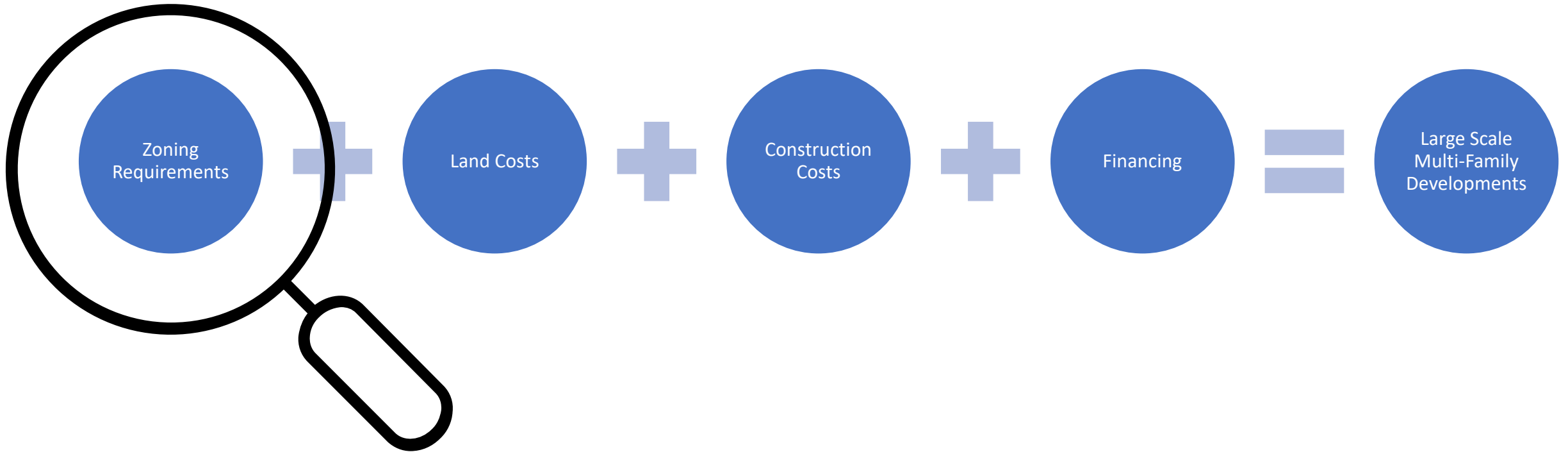
Housing Units by Issued Year and Unit Category

Unit Category

- a. 1 unit
- b. 2 units
- c. 3 to 4 units
- d. 5 to 9 units
- e. 10 to 19 units
- f. 20 or more units



ANALYSIS



WHERE WE START

Increase housing supply

Accessory Dwelling Units

- Streamline review process.
- Eliminate owner occupancy.

Diversify housing types

Unrelated Occupants

- Allow an increase in the number of unrelated persons that can live in a dwelling unit from 4.

Group Living Uses

- SROs, Rooming/Board Houses, Transitional Shelters.
- Allow small scale uses in residential districts.

Increase housing affordability

Small Scale Residential Infill

- Streamline review process for small scale multi-family buildings.
- Connect to Vital Streets Plan.
- Reduce lot width/area requirements.

Parking Requirements

- Reduce/eliminate parking requirements.

DATA INFORMED DECISIONS

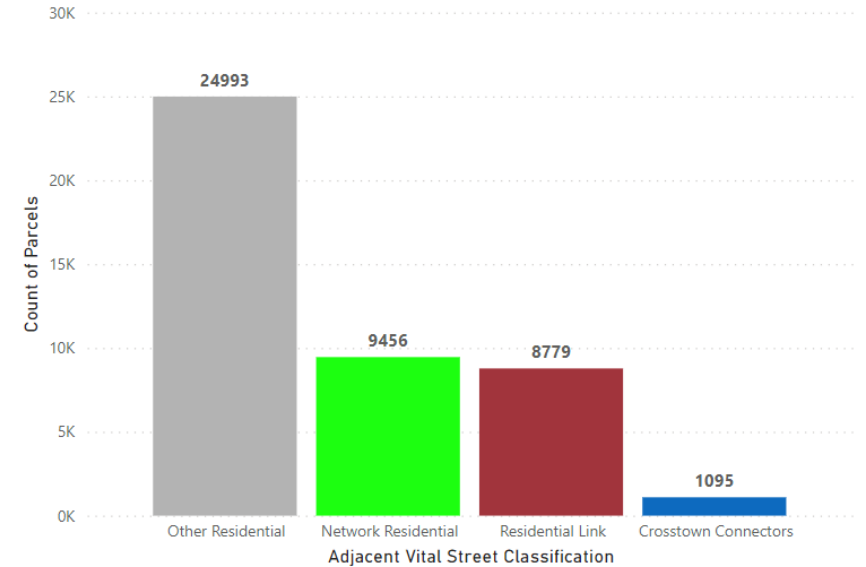
[Link to Dashboard](#)



FILTERS

In Historic District <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Neighborhood Type <input type="checkbox"/> MCN <input type="checkbox"/> MON <input type="checkbox"/> TN	Ward <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3												
Is Alley Adjacent <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Neighborhood All ▼	Zip Code All ▼												
Current Number of Units 0 656 	Parcel Area (Sq Ft) 151.73 3,809,163.31 	Parcel Street Frontage 9.07 2,167.38 												
Is a Corner Lot <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Zone (Hold ctrl to select multiple) <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>C</td> <td style="background-color: #333; color: white;">MDR</td> <td>SD-IT</td> <td>TBA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CC</td> <td>NOS</td> <td>SD-OS</td> <td>TCC</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #333; color: white;">LDR</td> <td>SD-IC</td> <td>SD-PRD</td> <td>TOD</td> </tr> </table>		C	MDR	SD-IT	TBA	CC	NOS	SD-OS	TCC	LDR	SD-IC	SD-PRD	TOD
C	MDR	SD-IT	TBA											
CC	NOS	SD-OS	TCC											
LDR	SD-IC	SD-PRD	TOD											
Is Transit Route Adjacent <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes														

Count of Parcels by Adjacent Vital Street Classification



44,323

Total Number of Parcels

85.6

Ave. Parcel Street Frontage

23,369

Ave. Parcel Size (Sq Ft)

SCENARIO BUILDING EXAMPLE

- There are **24,993** residentially zoned parcels in the City.
- Allowing Two-family Dwellings by-right on Link Residential and Neighborhood Residential Street Types in ALL residential zone districts results in a potential unit increase of **18,235**.
- Allowing Two-family Dwellings by-right on Link Residential and Neighborhood Residential Street Types in TN residential zone districts results in a potential unit increase of **13,950**.

■ TN ■ MCN ■ MON



NEXT STEPS



Communication Strategy

- Following the joint meeting, the Planning Department will send a letter to Neighborhood Associations, Corridor Improvement Authorities and known area housing providers to alert them to potential zoning changes and a preliminary timeline.
- All Planning Commission agendas and packet information are posted online.
- Input will be accepted for the Planning Commission's public hearing.
- Planning Staff will not be conducting any separate engagement sessions outside of the Planning Commission public hearing.

07/13/23 JOINT MEETING

City Commission & Planning Commission

Where: Commission Chambers

Details: A joint between the City Commission and Planning Commission is a recertification requirement of the MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Community Program

Objective: To create a workplan for the Planning Commission outlining a unified approach to increase housing supply and affordability.

Format: The Planning Director will facilitate a discussion on each of the stated topics, provide an overview of our current policy and seek input to help inform future policy recommendations

DISCUSSION

Increase housing supply

Accessory Dwelling Units

- Streamline review process.
- Eliminate owner occupancy.

Diversify housing types

Unrelated Occupants

- Allow an increase in the number of unrelated persons that can live in a dwelling unit from 4.

Group Living Uses

- SROs, Rooming/Board Houses, Transitional Shelters.
- Allow small scale uses in residential districts.

Increase housing affordability

Small Scale Residential Infill

- Streamline review process for small scale multi-family buildings.
- Connect to Vital Streets Plan.
- Reduce lot width/area requirements.

Parking Requirements

- Reduce/eliminate parking requirements.