

# Village of Trumansburg Residential Zoning

## Revision Frequently Asked Questions

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# Executive Summary

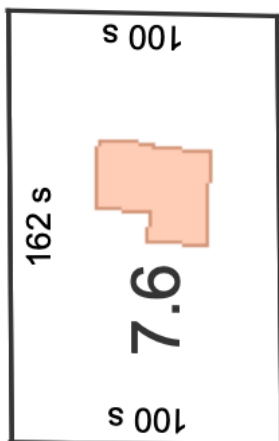
## Lot Dimension Requirements

In response to housing affordability concerns, the proposed zoning reduces lot dimension requirements for 1–4 units on a lot. To address stormwater concerns, the proposed zoning includes a 60% impervious surface maximum where previously there was none. Site plan review is still required for more than 2 units on a lot.

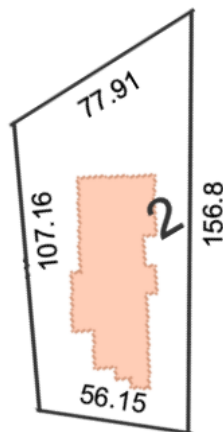
	Min Lot Size (current)	Min Lot Size (proposed)	Min Lot Width (current)	Min Lot Width (proposed)
<b>1-2 Dwelling Units</b>	1 du: 15,000 sq.ft. 2 du: 22,500 sq.ft.	7,500 sq.ft.	100 ft.	50 ft.
<b>3-4 Dwelling Units</b>	3 du: 27,500 sq.ft. 4 du: 32,500 sq.ft.	9,500 sq.ft.	100 ft.	50 ft.

## Example Existing Village Lots

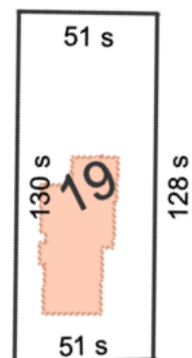
Minimal Lot Under  
Current Zoning  
*Pennsylvania Ave*



Minimal Lot Under  
Proposed Zoning  
*Old Main St*



Nonconforming Lot  
(insufficient lot size)  
*Whig St*



## Neighborhood Character

To address neighborhood character, the proposed zoning makes the following changes:

	<b>Max Building Stories</b>	<b>Max Units on a Lot</b>	<b>Building Setback from Street</b>	<b>Design Requirements</b>
<b>Current</b>	None	Unlimited	At least 50 ft.	None
<b>Proposed</b>	2.5 Stories	20	Generally matches the neighborhood	Exists

## Affordable Housing

To address subsidized affordable housing, the proposed zoning makes the following changes:

- Expands eligibility requirements to support even lower income households
- Strengthens approval and enforcement requirements
- Streamlines calculation for the sale and rental price of affordable units
- Allows “bonus units” based on the amount of affordable housing provided

## Manufactured Housing

In 2015, New York State severely restricted the regulation of manufactured homes. To comply with these new requirements, the proposal removes the current manufactured housing regulations. After removing the manufactured housing regulations, the two residential districts were identical and therefore were combined.

# Background

## What is the history of zoning in the village?

Zoning has existed in the village since at least 1956. 15 years later, in 1971, it was updated and then remained unchanged for over 40 years. In 2008, the Village completed its first Comprehensive Plan, which created a vision for the Village over the next 10–20 years. That vision was the basis for an updated zoning law in 2012 which expanded the 1971 zoning law to include items like affordable housing, care cottages, manufactured home parks, planned development areas, and stream and wetland overlay districts but left many of the existing regulations, such as lot dimensions, untouched.

## Why is the Village revising its zoning?

Zoning laws are meant to be living documents that adapt to changes in our community, as well as respond to real-life use. Recently, we have seen increased interest in Trumansburg as a place to live, raise a family, and retire. That interest is driving increased development and an increased interest in managing that development through zoning regulations. As a response, the Village began a Comprehensive Plan revision process in 2017 to update the Village's vision for the next 10–20 years. That process was completed in 2021 and that vision is now the basis for updating the Village's zoning law.

## How is the zoning revision process structured?

Traditionally, zoning revisions are done in one pass, resulting in a giant set of changes across the entire zoning law. However, that approach repeatedly fails to garner meaningful community input and feedback. Massive changes are difficult to engage with, and it's unreasonable to expect the community to have the time necessary to review changes of that scale. Instead, the revision process has been broken into three milestones, with changes to the zoning law adopted at the end of each milestone. This document accompanies the draft of the first milestone, which focuses on residential zoning in the Village. The future milestones will focus on commercial and industrial zoning, followed by overlay districts and zoning administration. This phased approach will allow for easier and earlier feedback from the community.

## **What are the proposed revisions trying to encourage?**

The proposed revisions aim to encourage affordable housing, both subsidized and naturally occurring, which was identified as a community goal in the Comprehensive Plan. The intention is to create a more inclusive community, attract young families, and provide housing for seniors. Affordable housing is encouraged by reducing the dimensional requirements for smaller multi-unit housing. These changes allow for incremental growth in housing stock and population, which in turn helps support our local businesses and institutions through increased customers, school population, and tax base.

## **What are the proposed revisions trying to discourage?**

The proposed revisions aim to discourage large multi-unit housing developments, which have been a point of contention recently. This is accomplished by limiting the maximum number of dwelling units on a lot to 20, regardless of the size of the lot. Additionally, the proposed revisions aim to discourage infill development that is out of character with the surrounding housing. This is accomplished by the addition of design guidelines, lot coverage maximums, and front setbacks that respect the surrounding houses and help create a consistent visual character of individual neighborhoods.

# Proposal

## What are the major changes being proposed?

The major changes being proposed are explained below. For the full details, please refer to the draft proposal.

**Allowed Uses** - The updated proposal combines residential zones 1 and 2. The difference between the two zones in the current zoning is that manufactured homes and home parks are allowed in Zone 2 and not in Zone 1. Since NYS law now prohibits regulating manufactured homes differently from single-family dwellings (see below), these zones have been combined.

**Dimensional Requirements** - The proposed changes in this section address the desire for affordable housing in the village by allowing new housing construction consistent with existing housing in the village. The changes enable 1-4 unit homes on smaller lots based on an analysis of existing lots and homes in the village (see FAQ). The proposed changes also address the potential impacts of such development. Impervious surface is limited to address stormwater management concerns, the maximum height requirement is strengthened to exclude 3-story buildings explicitly, and no more than 20 units are allowed to be built on any lot.

	One to Two Dwelling Units	Three to Four Dwelling Units	Five to Twenty Dwelling Units	Non-residential
Min Lot Size (current)	1 du - 15,000 sq.ft. 2 du - 22,500 sq.ft.	3 du - 27,500 sq.ft. 4 du - 32,500 sq.ft.	5 du - 37,500 sq.ft. 5,000 sq.ft. for each additional unit	20,000 sq.ft.
Min Lot Size (proposed)	7,500 sq.ft.	9,500 sq.ft.	5 du - 37,500 sq.ft. 5,000 sq.ft. for each additional unit	9,500 sq.ft.
Min lot width (current)	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.
Min lot width (proposed)	50 ft.	50 ft.	100 ft.	50 ft.

	Front Yard Setback	Side Yard Setback	Rear Yard Setback	Max Impervious Surface	Max Height
<b>Current</b>	50 ft.	15 ft.	35 ft.	-	35 ft.
<b>Proposed</b>	40 ft.	15 ft.	30 ft.	60%	2.5 stories & 35 ft.

**Frontage Exceptions** - The proposed changes in this section address the desire to preserve neighborhood character. The current zoning allows for new homes in developed areas of the village to be set as far forward as their surrounding neighbors, but doesn't regulate how far back they can be set. The proposal strengthens that by requiring new homes in developed areas to be generally in line with the surrounding neighbors, not too far forward or too far back. The front yard setback is a critical aspect of the feel of a neighborhood (just think about Cayuga St vs Larchmont Dr). By requiring new homes to be generally in line with existing homes, the proposal requires a more uniform neighborhood feel that flexes to the variety of different development patterns in the village.

**Design Requirements** - The Village's current zoning law has no design requirements for the residential zone. This can result in poor development styles that are disconnected from the public street and the surrounding neighborhood and can diminish the visual cohesion of the neighborhood. Based on community feedback, the proposal now includes design requirements that ensure buildings are aligned with the public street and are connected to it via a defined entrance. For lots with more than 2 units on them, it explicitly states the list of development styles that are acceptable as part of the required site plan review.

**Affordable Housing Regulations** - The proposed changes in this section address the desire for subsidized affordable housing in the village. The current zoning law requires subsidized affordable housing in larger developments. However, when affordable housing requirements exist, they incentivize developers to build fewer units to avoid triggering the requirements. This is counterproductive for both affordable and market-rate housing. The proposal includes a variety of changes:

- Adjust regulations from requiring to incentivizing the inclusion of subsidized affordable housing. This keeps benefits for developers that choose to build subsidized affordable housing without limiting market-rate housing by developers that would have skirted the requirements.

- Adjust definitions to include households making less than 50% of the area's median family income and housing costs up to 35% of a household's income.
- Strengthen approval and enforcement language.
- Remove redundant price caps on the sale and rental prices, to reduce development complexity without reducing protections.
- Adjust incentive structure from reducing the required lot size to increasing the number of allowed units on the lot. These two approaches are equivalent if fewer than 12 affordable units are built. If 12 or more units are built, the approach allows for a limited amount of "bonus units", which can help eligibility for state and federal funding.

**Care Cottages** - Care cottages are temporary structures used for housing immediate family members. This seems like a wonderful idea, however, verifying the familial relationship combined with the requirement to remove the cottage once it was no longer needed, made this section very difficult if not impossible to use. This section has been entirely removed.

**Manufactured Home Parks** - The Village's current zoning law, adopted in 2012, includes a series of specific regulations relating to manufactured homes and home parks. In 2015, New York State passed a law placing limits on local government regulation of manufactured homes. As a result, the proposed zoning changes remove the specific regulations relating to manufactured homes and home parks. New York State Executive Law ([Article 21-B Title 2 §616](#)) now states "A manufactured home that is affixed to a permanent foundation and conforms with the identical development specification and standards, including general aesthetic and architectural standards, applicable to conventional, site-built single-family dwellings in the residential district in which the manufactured home is to be sited, shall be deemed to be a conforming single-family dwelling for purposes of the applicable local zoning law or ordinance."

## What were the major changes since the initial proposal?

**Dimensional Requirement** - The initial draft proposed reducing lot size and lot frontage requirements for lots with 1-20 dwelling units. Based on community feedback, the updated proposal restores the 2012 zoning dimensional requirements for lots with 5 or more dwelling units. Additionally, based on community feedback, the dimensional requirements for lots with 1-4 dwelling units have been increased from the initial proposal. Finally, a maximum impervious surface limit was added to address stormwater issues that come along with additional development.



**Accessory Dwelling Units** - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are smaller additional dwellings on a lot such as an attic apartment, a carriage house over a garage, or a backyard “in-law cottage”. The initial draft proposed the inclusion of ADUs on any lot in the village without additional lot size or parking requirements. Based on community feedback, the updated proposal removes this beneficial treatment. Instead, any additional dwellings would need to conform to the existing zoning requirements for multiple units on a lot.

**Design Requirements** - The Village’s current zoning law has no design requirements for the residential zone. This can result in poor development styles that are disconnected from the public street and the surrounding neighborhood and can diminish the visual cohesion of the neighborhood. Based on community feedback, the proposal now includes design requirements that ensure buildings are aligned with the public street and are connected to it via a defined entrance. For lots with more than 2 units on them, it explicitly states the list of development styles that are acceptable as part of the required site plan review.

# Visualizations

## What properties would become conforming?

A meaningful number of lots in the village are currently “non-conforming”, meaning they wouldn’t be allowed to be built now under current zoning due to the lot size, setbacks, or other regulations. The proposed changes would make many of those lots “conforming”. Some examples of those lots are seen below.



**A single-family home on a lot that is smaller than the current zoning requires**



**A fourplex on a lot that is smaller than the current zoning requires**



**A single-family home on a lot that is narrower than the current zoning requires**

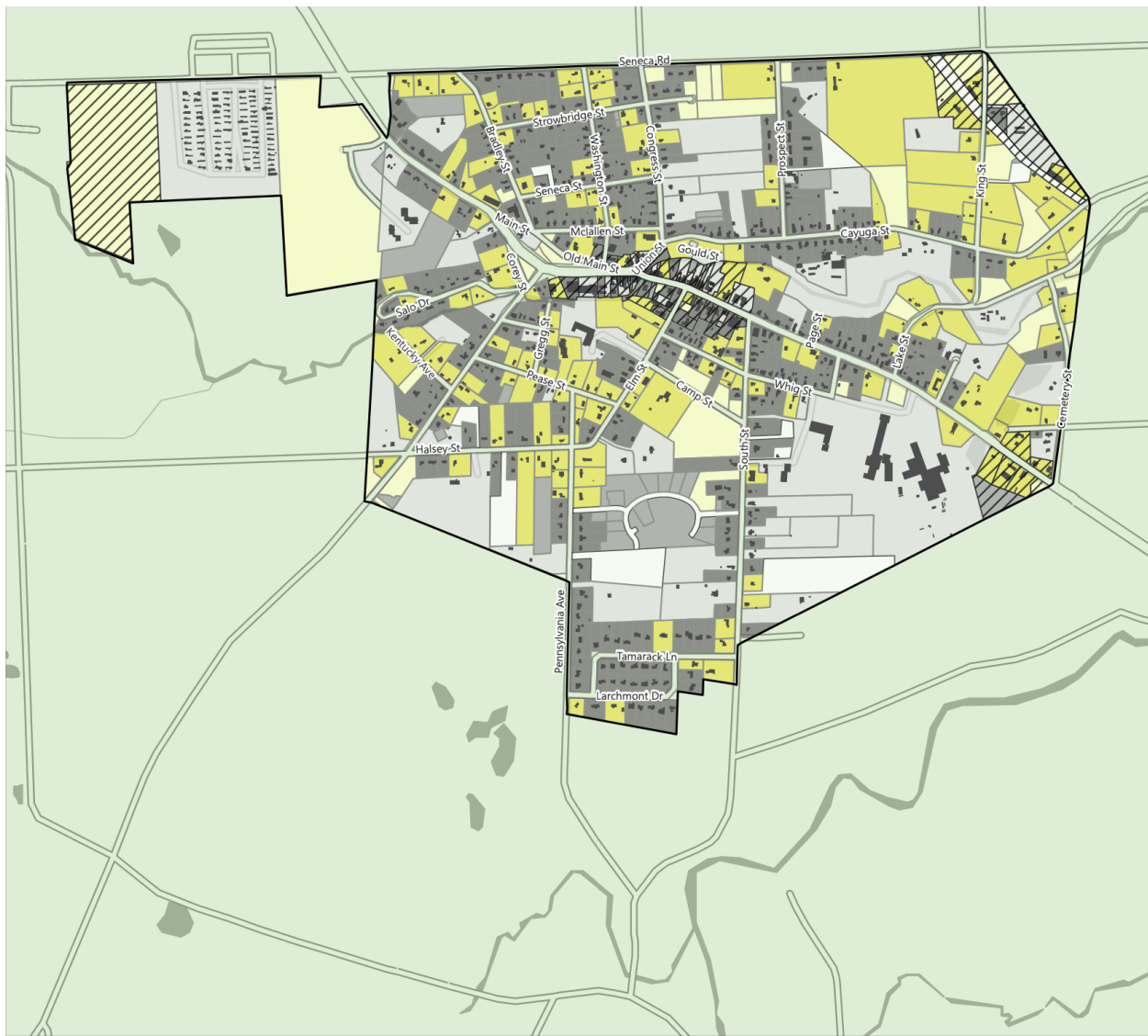




**A single-family home on a lot that is narrower than the current zoning requires**

## What lots could be subdivided?

The Village's Comprehensive Plan sets a goal to provide more affordable rental and for-sale housing. While new units on already-developed lots can address rental housing needs, new units on previously undeveloped lots are the only way to address for-sale housing needs. There are some undeveloped lots in the village, but the only way to create more is through lot subdivisions.

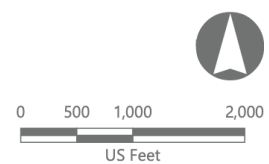


## Village of Trumansburg Parcel Analysis

Village of Trumansburg,  
Tompkins County, New York

EDR

- Building Footprints
- ▨ Outside Residential District
- Empty Undetermined Lots (14 parcels, 30.9 ac.)
- Built Undetermined Lots (70 parcels, 247.2 ac.)
- Unbuildable Empty Lots (39 parcels, 32.5 ac.)
- Non-Subdividable Infill Lots (397 parcels, 197.1 ac.)
- Subdividable Infill Lots (156 parcels, 193.4 ac.)
- Buildable Empty Lots (48 parcels, 113.7 ac.)



Prepared August 8, 2023  
Basemap: Esri "Human Geography" map service

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What community input has been collected so far?

In 2017, the Village embarked on a multi-year process to update its Comprehensive Plan. Through the Comprehensive Planning process, including a village-wide survey and multiple in-person information meetings, the Village collected community input on a variety of topics. Land use and zoning were frequent topics of discussion and those conversations, alongside the full Comprehensive Plan, have been the basis for the Village's zoning revisions. Zoning-related themes raised during the Comprehensive Plan revision process included pride in the charm and character of the village, as well as a need for incremental growth. In particular, a need for affordable housing was identified to create a more inclusive community, attract young families, and provide housing for seniors. Changes, such as reducing the barriers to accessory dwellings and multi-unit housing, were suggested to balance the need for incremental growth with pride in the current charm and character of the village.

## Why aren't multiple residential zones being proposed?

During the comprehensive plan revision process, there was strong community support for zoning that focused on "neighborhood-wide" rules rather than "village-wide" rules. One way to address this desire is to create multiple residential zones and have different rules for each zone. The zoning revision committee began work on this approach, but quickly realized its pitfalls. While it may be easy to point at different development styles between neighborhoods such as Whig Street and Larchmont Drive, it quickly becomes an arbitrary decision where, on the connecting road of South Street, one would draw a dividing line. Rather than drawing arbitrary lines, the committee decided to address this desire through infill zoning requirements that change based on the surrounding houses. The proposal requires front yard setbacks to reflect the setbacks of the surrounding housing to create a consistent visual character of individual neighborhoods.

## What data informed the dimensional changes?

The dimensional changes were driven by an analysis of existing lots and houses in the village. The lot area and number of units on the lot came from tax assessment data while the Village contracted with a planning firm (EDR) to capture lot frontage, building frontage, and side yard setbacks for every lot in the village. The proposal is based on being able to rebuild what

already exists in the village without going any further. The most extreme lots were removed and lot sizes and setbacks that allow the remaining buildings to be rebuilt were proposed. While that approach can still strike some as too extreme, the proposal is an attempt to retain our “small-town” atmosphere while still enabling the development of sufficient affordable housing.

Lot Sizes			
Units	2012 Zoning (sq. ft.)	Assessment Data (98%)	Proposal (sq. ft.)
1	15,000	7,770	7,500
2	22,500		
3	27,500	9,515	9,500
4	32,500		
5+	37,500 + 5,000 per additional dwelling		37,500 + 5000 per additional dwelling

Lot Setbacks			
Setback	2012 Zoning (ft.)	Assessment Data (98%)	Proposal
Front Yard	100	50	50
Side Yard	15	6	15