

A nighttime photograph of the Grand Rapids, Michigan skyline. The city's lights are reflected in the water of the Grand River. A bridge spans the river in the middle ground. The sky is a deep blue, and the water is dark with bright reflections of the city lights.

Grand Rapids, Michigan Mayor Rosalynn Bliss

Identified Shared Understanding

- 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.



City of Grand Rapids

Zoning Reform Work

2008

- Comprehensive rewrite of the City's Zoning Ordinance. The new code was a hybrid model with form-based elements and eliminated exclusive single-family zoning

2016

- Implementation of the downtown master plan (GR Forward) including the expansion of the city center zone district boundaries and elimination of parking requirements for downtown

2018

- Modified zoning requirements following Housing Now! Changes include:
 - Height/density bonuses for the creation of affordable and accessible housing
 - Streamlined Accessory Dwelling Unit requirements
 - Exempted micro-units from density calculation
 - Permitted two-family dwellings on corner lots by-right
 - Reduce minimum dwelling unit width to 14 feet
 - Permit up to four attached single-family dwelling units by-right when located within 100' of a commercial zone district
 - Eliminate minimum lot area requirement for multiple-family developments

City of Grand Rapids

Zoning Reform Work

2020

- Modified traditional neighborhood business district requirements to allow ground floor residential uses
- Eliminated height bonus structure to allow 4-stories by-right
- Modified commercial zone district requirements to allow ground floor residential uses

2022

- Modified residential lot area and width requirements for single and two-family dwellings, encouraging the incremental infill of small-scale residential housing and infill of small vacant lots

2023

- Modified downtown height requirements, eliminating the height bonus structure and making it easier to build to the maximum permitted height
- Increased maximum permitted height for properties located along the Grand River, incentivizing public access easements to and along the river
- Expand city center zone district to include more properties on the west side of the Grand River (under consideration)

City of Grand Rapids Zoning Reform Work

2023

- Modify zoning requirements to support the incremental infill of small-scale housing. Proposed changes include:
 - Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Allow ADUs by-right
 - Allow ADUs in conjunction with duplexes
 - Eliminate owner occupancy requirement
 - Eliminate parking requirement
 - Unit Occupancy of un-related individuals
 - Increase allowance of unrelated occupants from four persons to six persons per dwelling unit
 - Group Living Uses
 - Permit small scale SRO's in residential zone districts
 - Permit small scale transitional / emergency shelters within residential zone districts
 - Small-Scale Residential Infill
 - Begin to connect land use requirements with transportation plan (Vital Streets Plan)
 - Permit up to 6 dwelling units by-right in Traditional Neighborhood residential zone districts when located on higher volume streets (Link Residential and Neighborhood Residential street typologies)
 - Eliminate minimum lot area and width requirements
 - Parking
 - Eliminate parking requirements for up to 6 dwelling units in Traditional Neighborhood residential zone districts when located on higher volume streets (Link Residential and Neighborhood Residential street typologies)

Current Zoning Policy

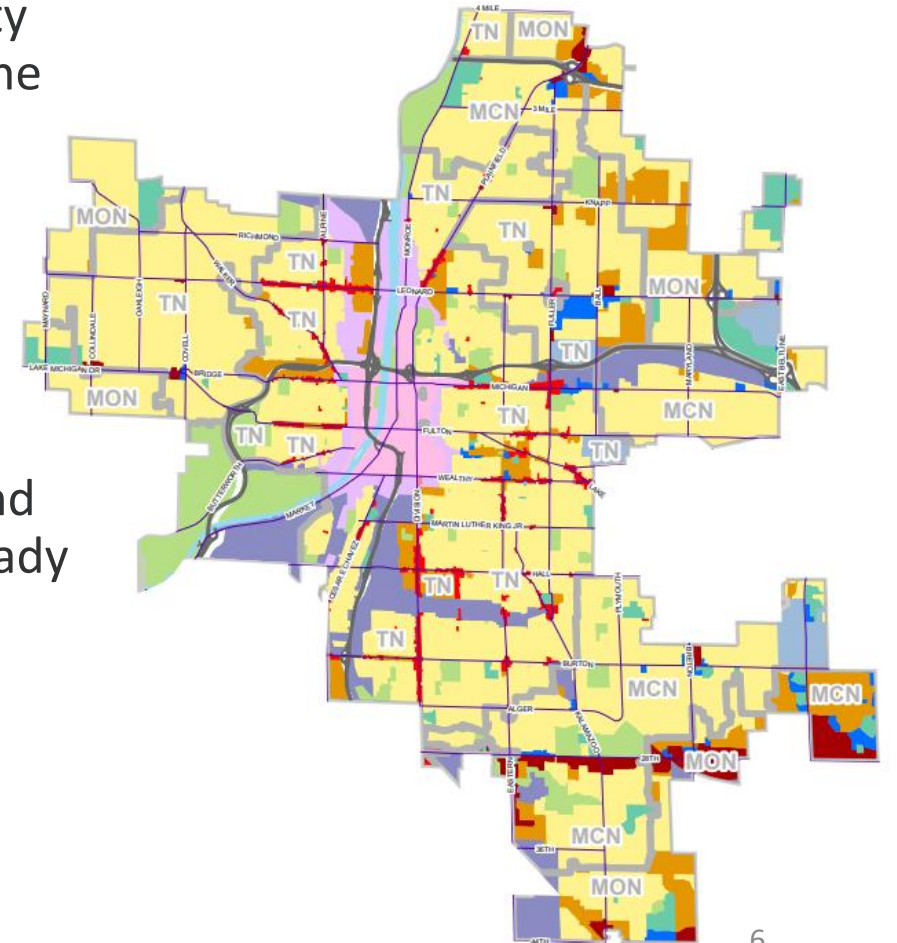
Residential Zone Districts are divided into Low-Density Residential (LDR) Districts and Mixed-Density Residential (MDR) Districts within the framework of the 3 Neighborhood Classifications.

The **LDR 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.

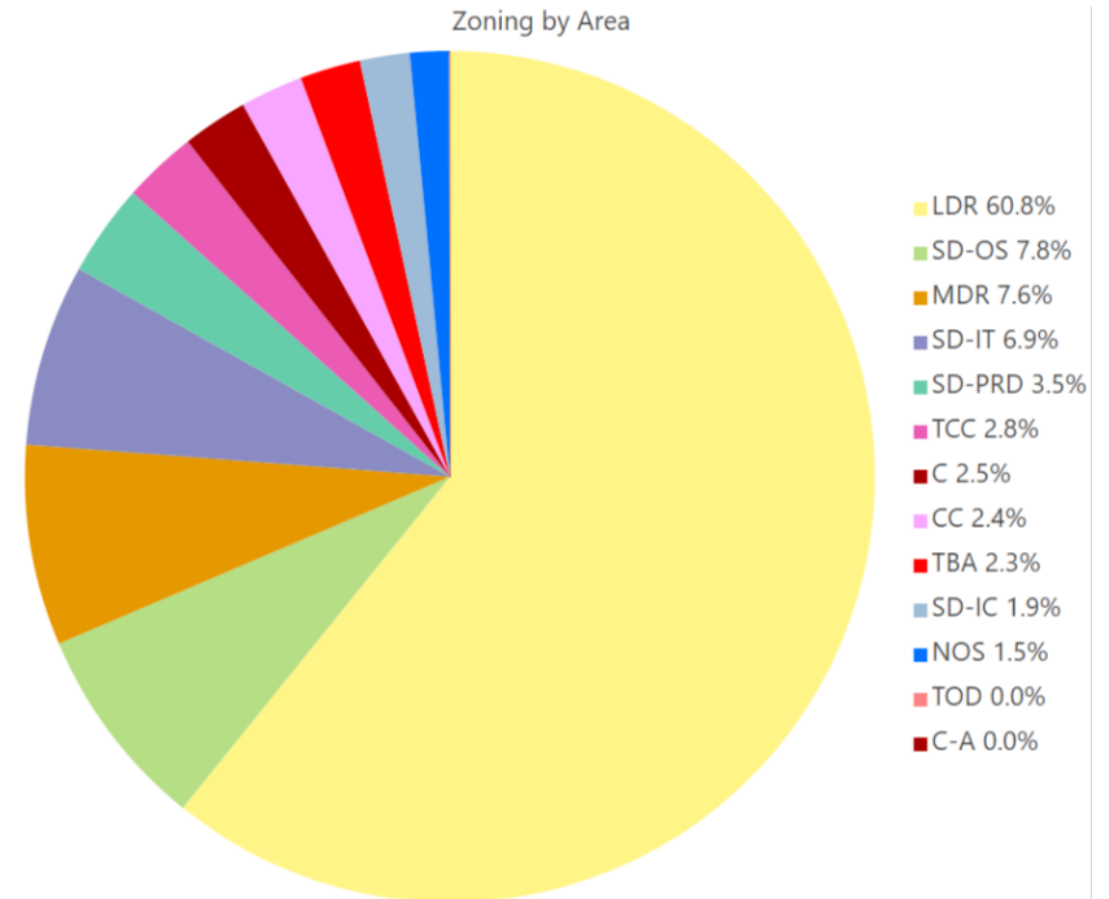
- TN Zoning Density: 17 - 53 units per acre
- MCN Zoning Density: 14 - 29 units per acre
- MON Zoning Density: 12 - 25 units per acre



Existing Land Use

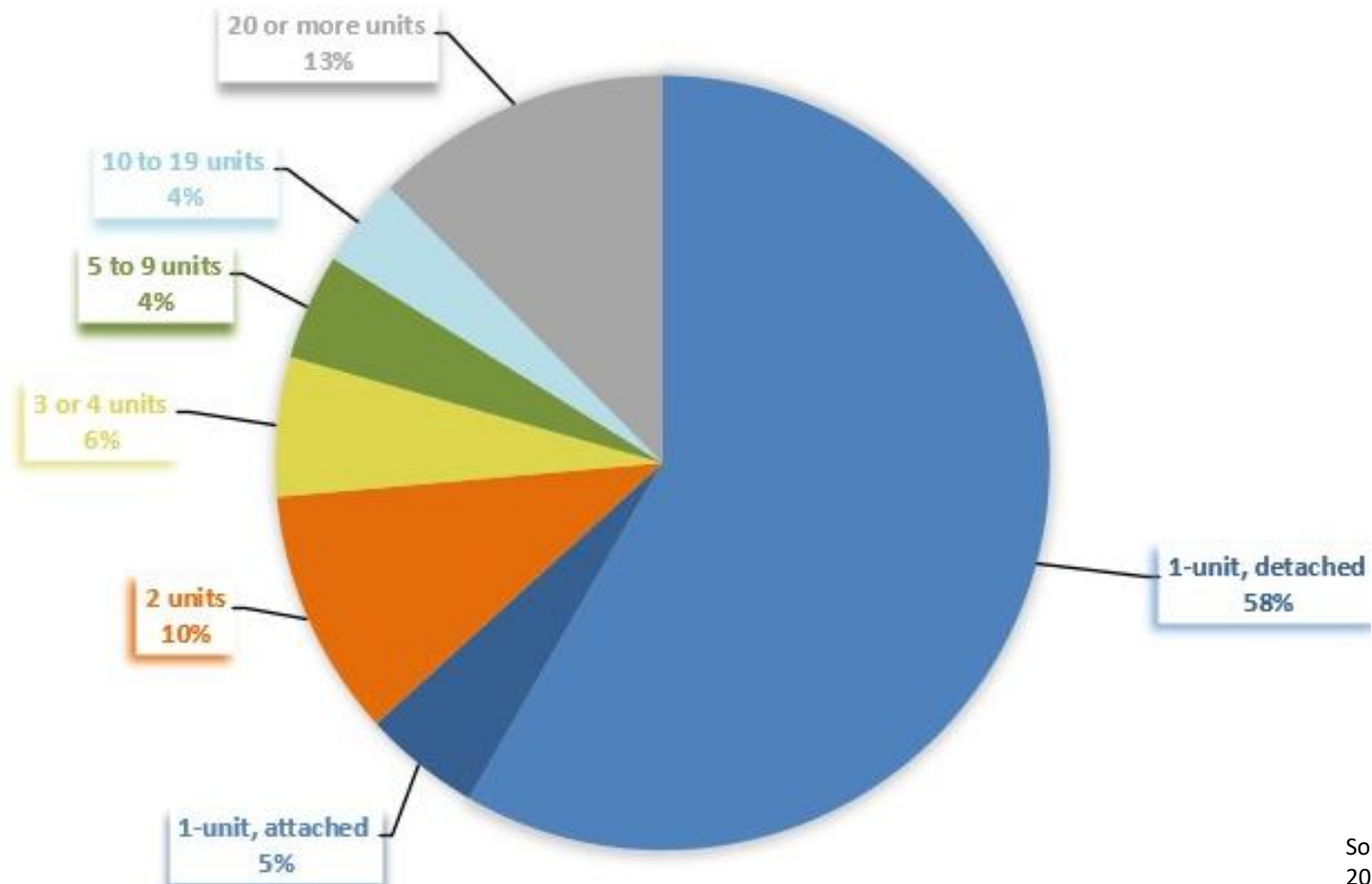
By Zone District

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



Grand Rapids' Housing Types

Units per structure



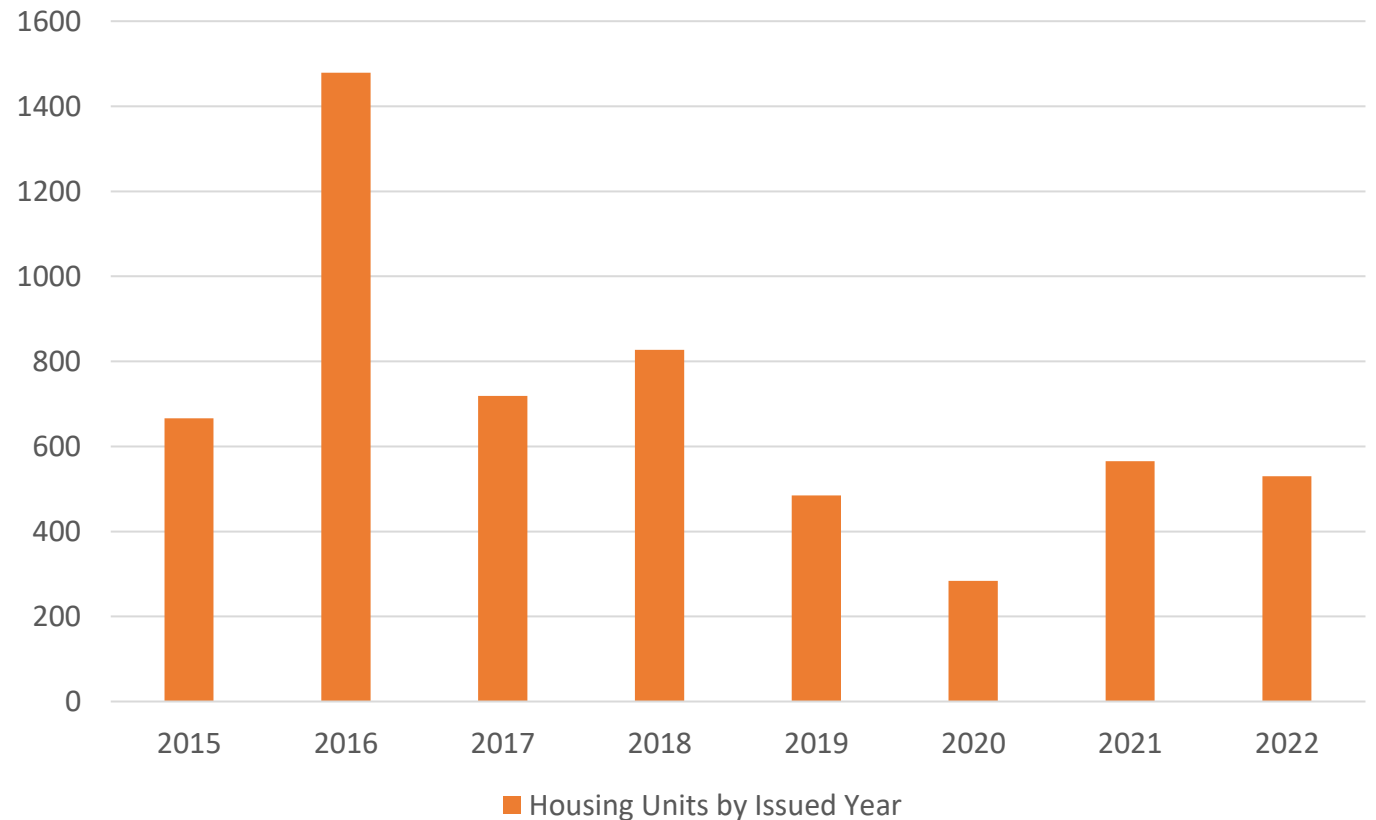
Source: US Census Bureau 2017 – 2021. 5-year American Community Survey, Table CP04

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



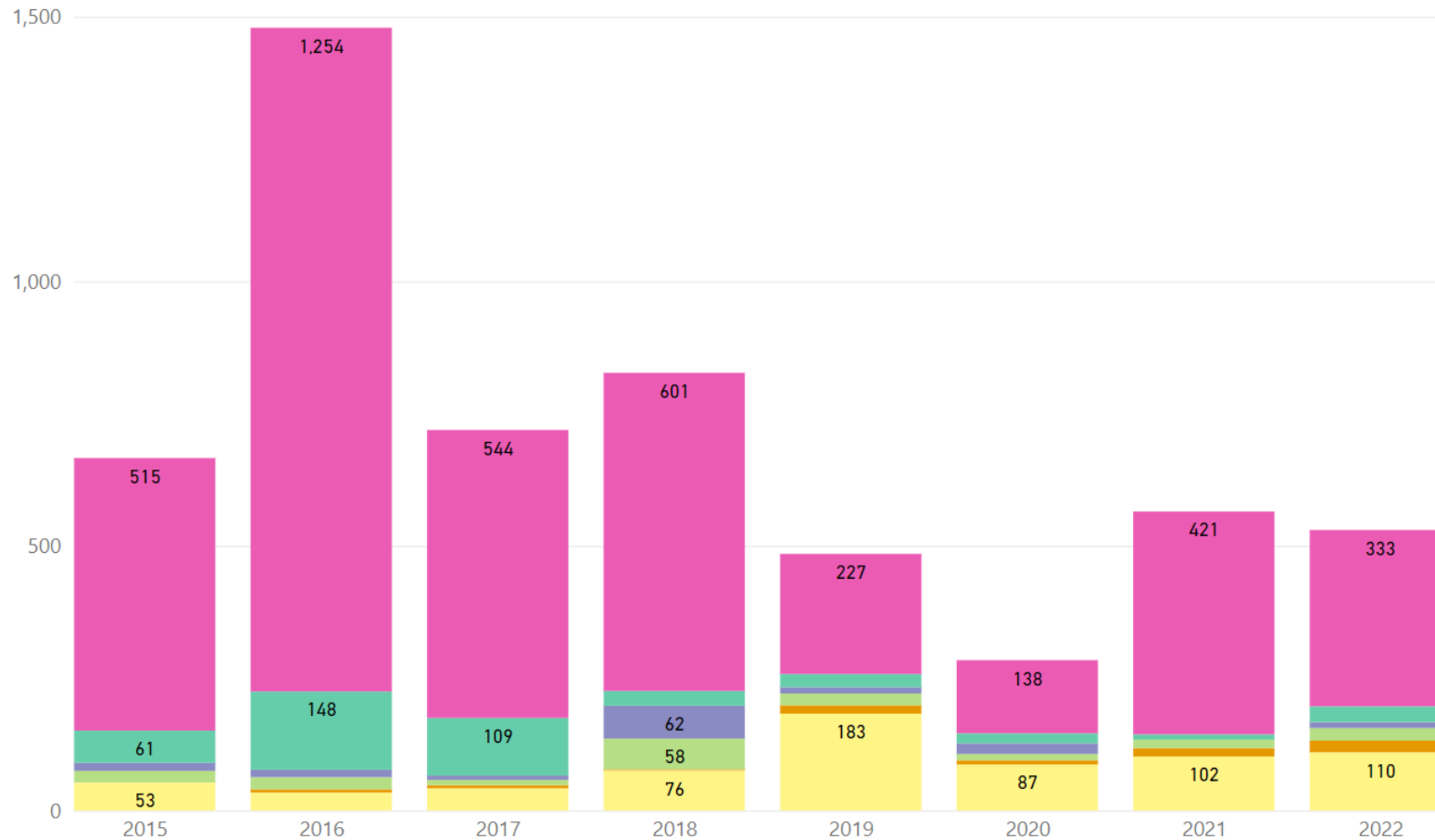
THE DATA

Housing Units Issued Year and Unit Category

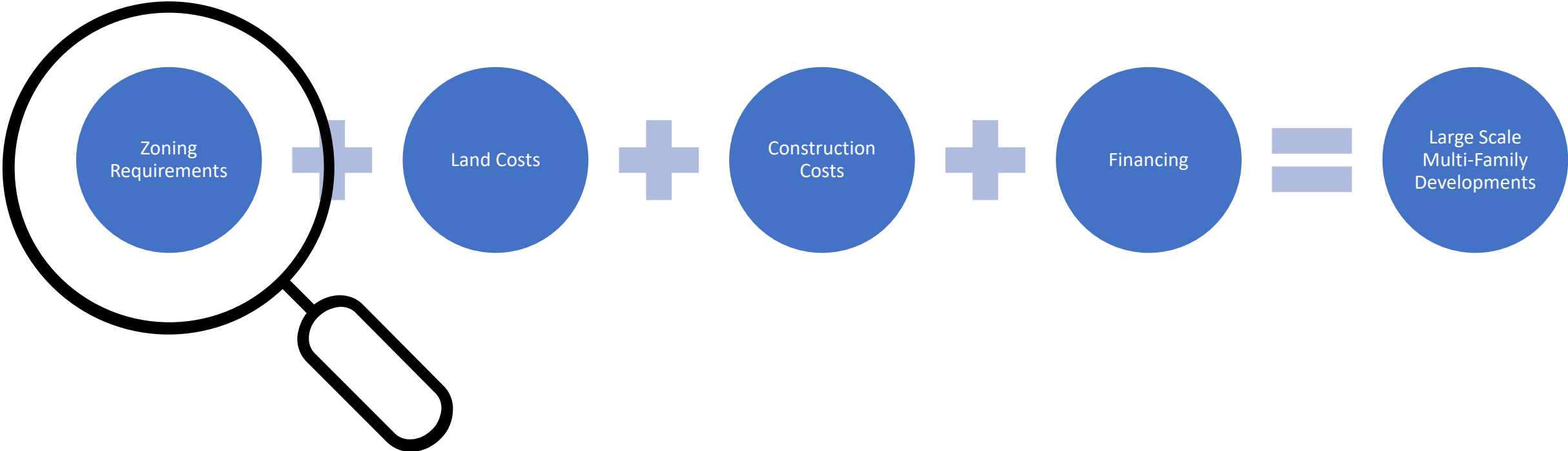
Housing Units by Issued Year and Unit Category

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



Current Priorities and Efforts

Increase housing supply

Diversify housing types

Increase housing affordability

Accessory Dwelling Units

- Streamline review process.
- Eliminate owner occupancy.

Unrelated Occupants

- Allow more than 4 unrelated individuals to occupy a dwelling unit.

Group Living Uses

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

Small Scale Residential Infill

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

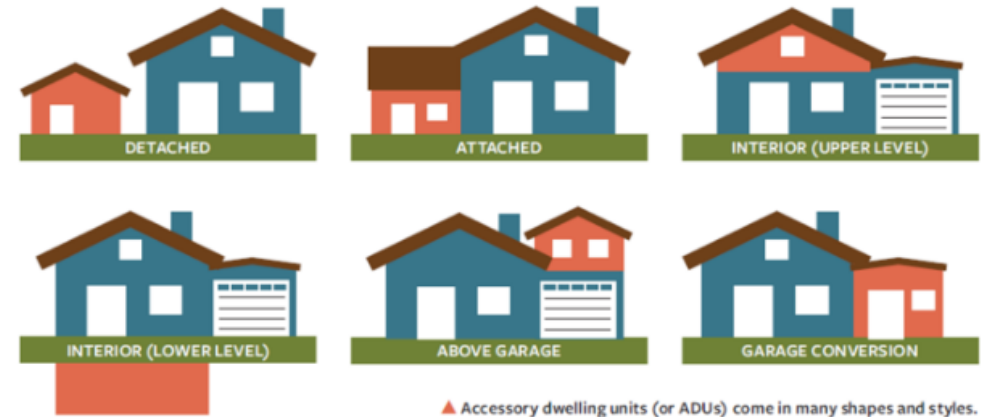
Parking Requirements

- Reduce/eliminate parking requirements.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Current State

- **Review Process:** ADUs are permitted as a Qualified Review, meaning the application will need Planning Commission consideration if a neighbor within 300 feet requests a hearing.
- **Requirements:**
 - One of the units must be owner occupied
 - Only permitted in conjunction with a single-family dwelling
 - One parking space



▲ Accessory dwelling units (or ADUs) come in many shapes and styles.

AARP

Accessory Dwelling Units

Changes to Consider

- Allow ADUs by-right
- Allow ADUs in conjunction with duplexes
- Eliminate owner occupancy requirement
- Eliminate parking requirement

Potential Implications

- Increase supply of affordable and diverse housing types
- Provides inter-generational housing
- Income generating
- Increased parking demand

Unit Occupancy

Current State

- **Requirement:** No more than 4 unrelated individuals can occupy a dwelling unit

Changes to Consider

- Allow 6 unrelated individuals to occupy a dwelling unit

Potential Implications

- Cost sharing benefits
- Increased demand on utilities
- Increased vehicle trips/day and number of vehicles parked in driveway or on-street

Group Living Requirements

Current State

- **Definition:** Residential occupancy of a dwelling unit by other than a household and providing communal facilities.
 - Includes Rooming/Boarding House, Single-Room Occupancy (SROs) and Transitional/Emergency Shelter.
- **Requirements:**
 - Only Rooming/Boarding Houses are permitted within the LDR district (as a Special Land Use)

Group Living Requirements

Changes to Consider

- Distinguish between small, medium and large-scale Group Living Uses
- Create tiered review process
- Allow within LDR districts
- Increase tenancy period

Potential Implications

- Residents of transitional shelters typically need support services
- Operation management plan is critical
- May be a good re-use of former institutional buildings (i.e., schools and churches)
- Provides a more residential setting for residents

Small Scale Residential Infill

Current State

- **Review Process:** Within the LDR district, duplexes require Planning Commission approval, unless located on corner lots. Multi-Family (3+ units) require Planning Commission approval.
- **Requirements:**
 - Minimum lot width is 90' for multi-family developments
 - Must be located on a “Major Street” (Plainfield, Michigan, Ann, Fulton, Division, Eastern etc.)
 - 1 – 1.5 parking spaces per unit

Changes to Consider

- Create two multi-family categories - 3-6 units (MF1) and 7+ units (MF2)
- Within the TN district:
 - Allow 6 or less units by-right on Link Residential and Network Residential streets
 - Eliminate lot width/area requirements for MF1
 - Reduce or eliminate parking requirements

DATA INFORMED DECISIONS

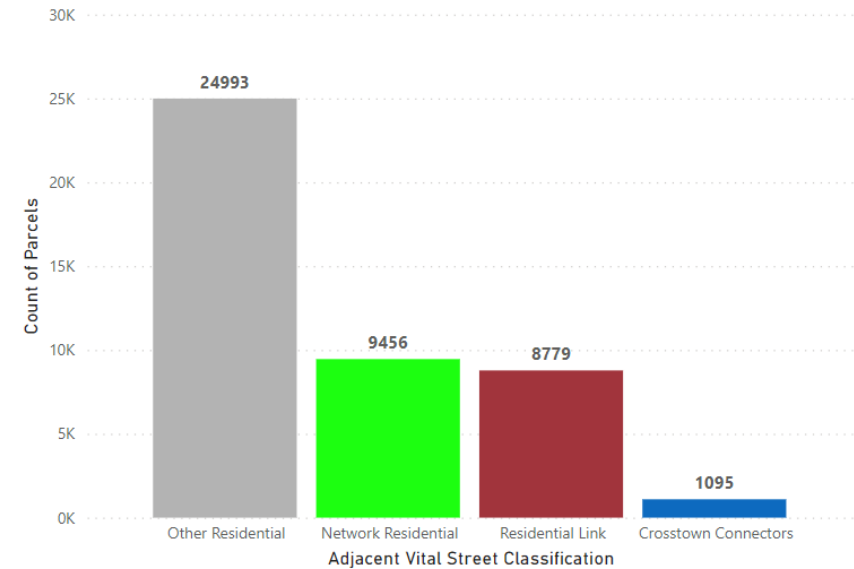
[Link to Dashboard](#)



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

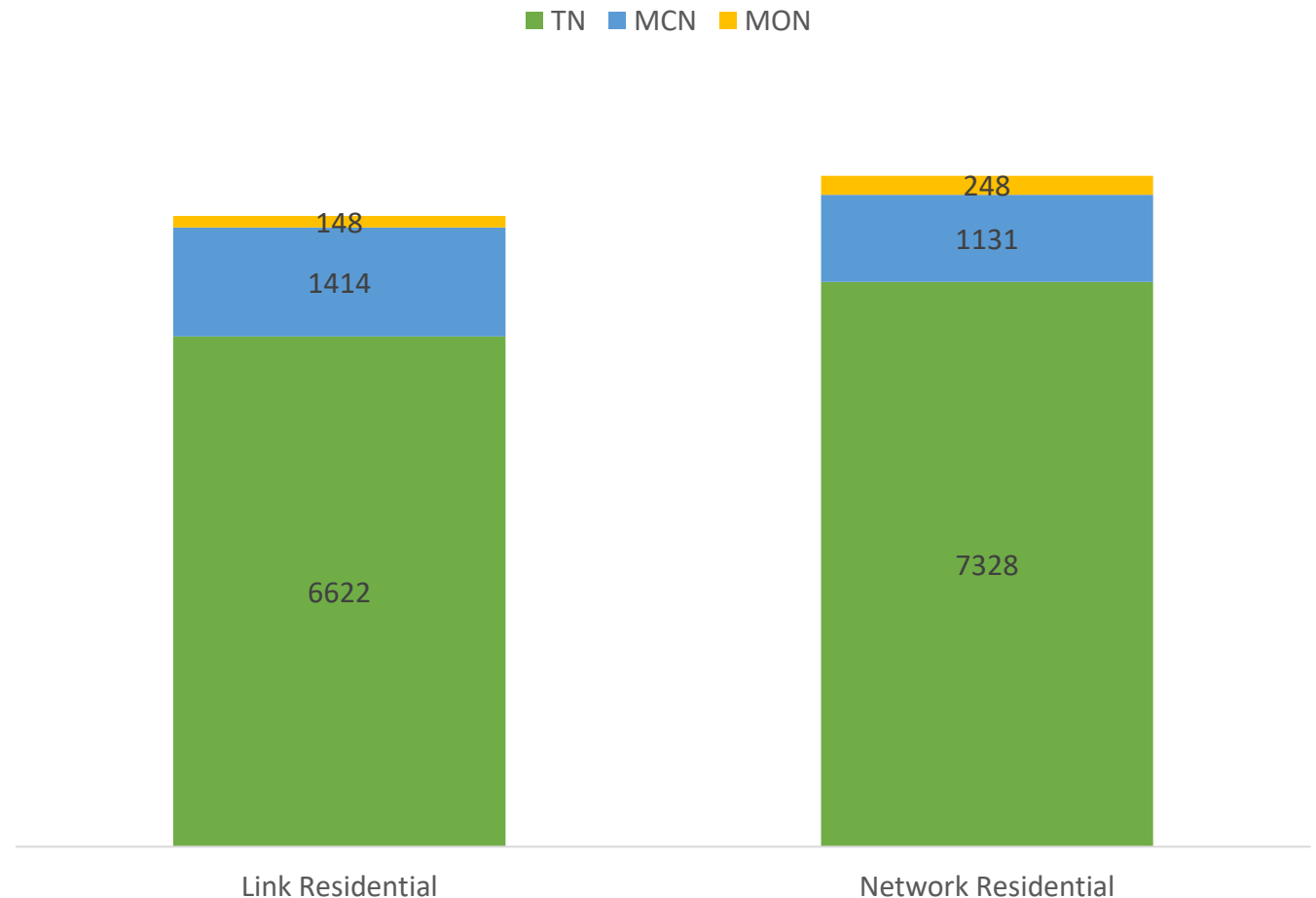
Ave. Parcel Street Frontage

23,369

Ave. Parcel Size (Sq Ft)

Scenario Building Example

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



Parking Reductions

Current State - parking requirements by use (in TN-LDR district)

- Single-Family: 2 spaces per unit
- Two-family: 1.5 spaces per unit
- Multi-family: 1.5 spaces per unit, plus .25 spaces per bedroom above 2 bedrooms

Parking Reductions

Changes to Consider

- Within the TN district, reduce or eliminate parking requirements for residential developments containing 6 or less units.
 - TN districts are walkable, largely serviced by transit, provide access to goods and services, good bike network infrastructure
 - Allowing increased density on reduced land area cannot also support current parking minimums.
 - Failure to reduce or eliminate parking will make negate the other proposed changes or necessitate acquisition of adjacent parcels and demolition of existing structures.
 - Increased population density will help support improved transit services
- Increase waiver distance for transit from 300 to ½ mile *BRT) and 100 to ¼ mile (regular stop)

Potential Implications

- Increased demand for on-street parking
- Increased requests for neighborhood parking permit program
- Increased transit ridership (coordination with Rapid is needed)
- Possible increase in nuisance complaints – must have capacity within Code Compliance