



City of East Cleveland Zoning Updates

About Us | Project Staff



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AGENDA

- Introduction
- Overlays
- Zoning Map
- Powers & Duties
- Subdivision Regulations
- Design Guidelines

**Presentation to
East Cleveland**

May 6, 2026

About Us



- **OUR VISION**

- Inspiring all of our communities to thrive

- **OUR MISSION**

- To advance Cuyahoga County's social, economic, and environmental health through equitable community planning

- **OUR CORE VALUES**

- Inclusion, Collaboration, Communication, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS ZONING?

- Zoning is the primary regulatory mechanism for land use, and it guides the development of the City's built environment
- It includes regulations outlining what can and cannot be built on a site, how the lot can be shaped, where the building can be placed, and what structures should look like

WHY IS ZONING IMPORTANT?

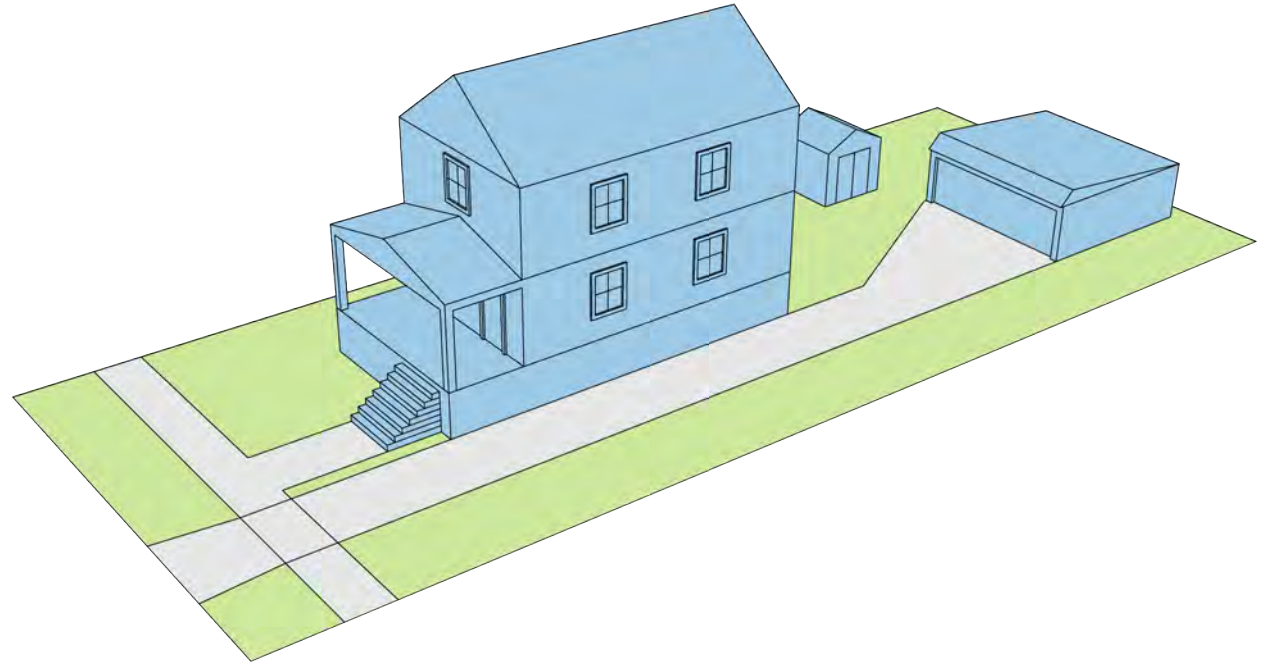
- Helps organize how land is used so homes, businesses, and industry operate safely
- Protects public health by separating incompatible or hazardous land uses
- Protects natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas
- Guides where growth should occur, helping cities use infrastructure more efficiently
- Helps shape the character and quality of neighborhoods through design guidelines
- Reflects the needs, desires, and development goals of the City and its current and future residents

WHAT IS IN A ZONING CODE?

- Approval processes
- Permitted, conditional, accessory uses
- Dimensional standards
- Open space, landscaping, and screening standards
- Parking, access, circulation, and connectivity standards
- Lighting standards
- Design guidelines

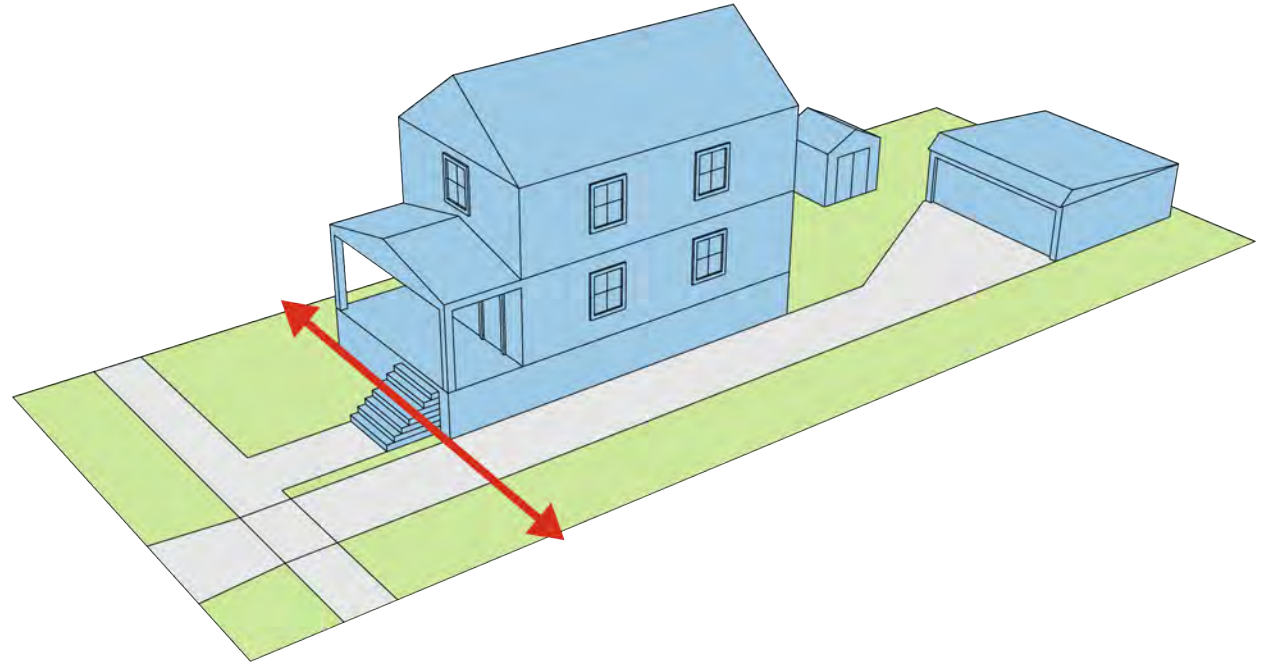
WHAT IS REGULATED BY ZONING?

- Key concepts in a zoning code



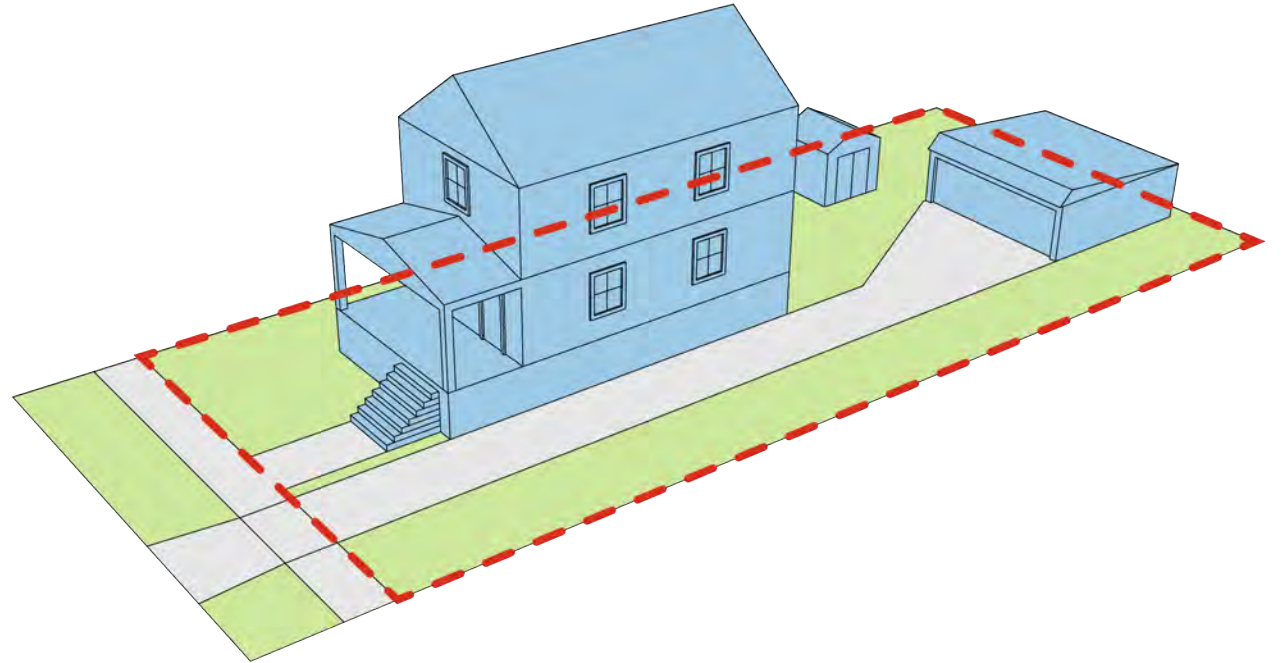
WHAT IS REGULATED BY ZONING?

- Key concepts in a zoning code
 - Lot Width
 - Lot Size



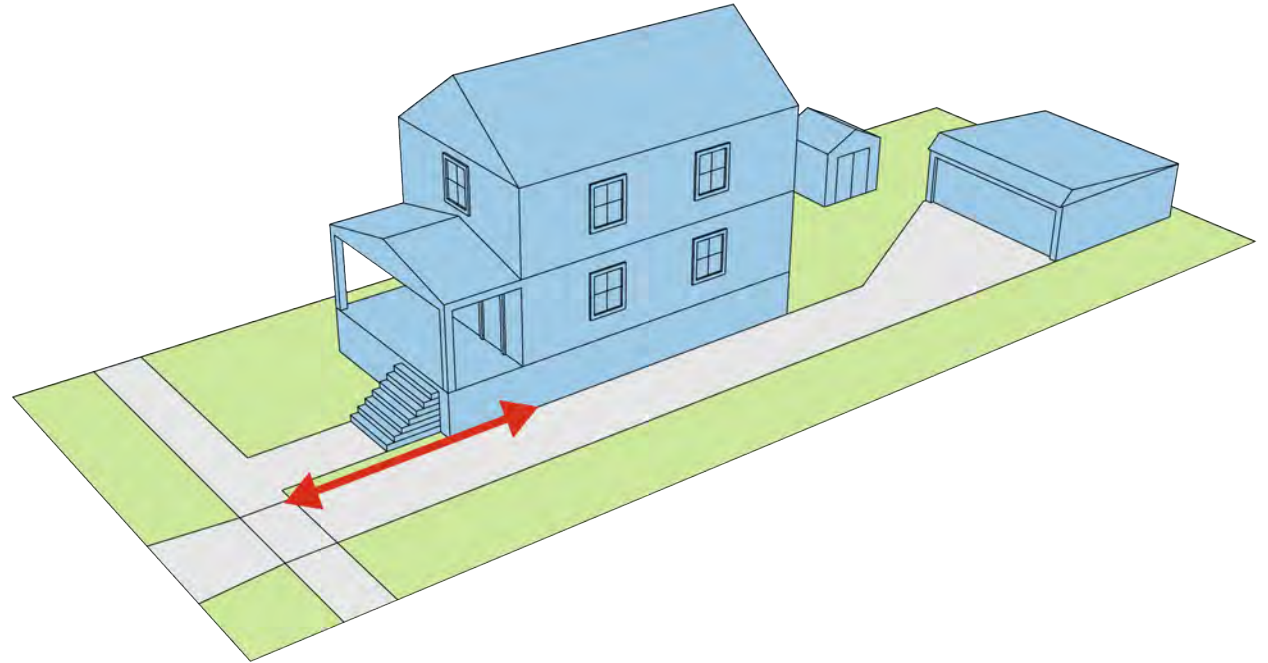
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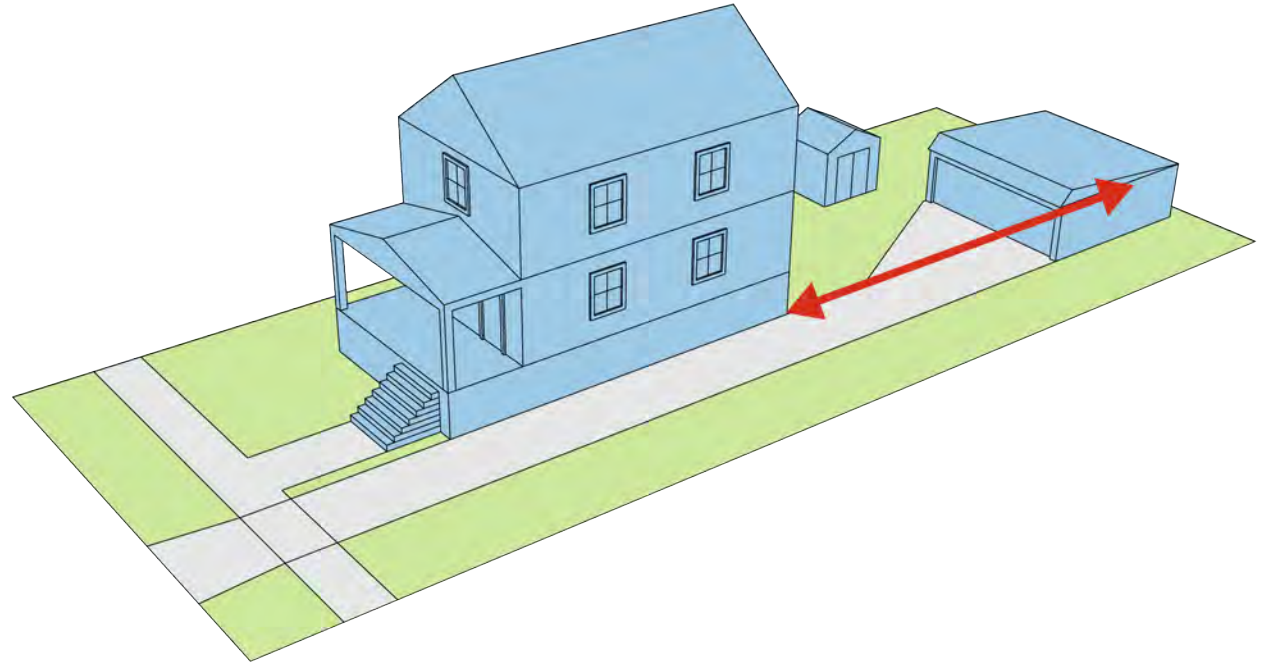
WHAT IS REGULATED BY ZONING?

- Key concepts in a zoning code
 - Front Setbacks
 - Rear Setbacks
 - Side Setbacks



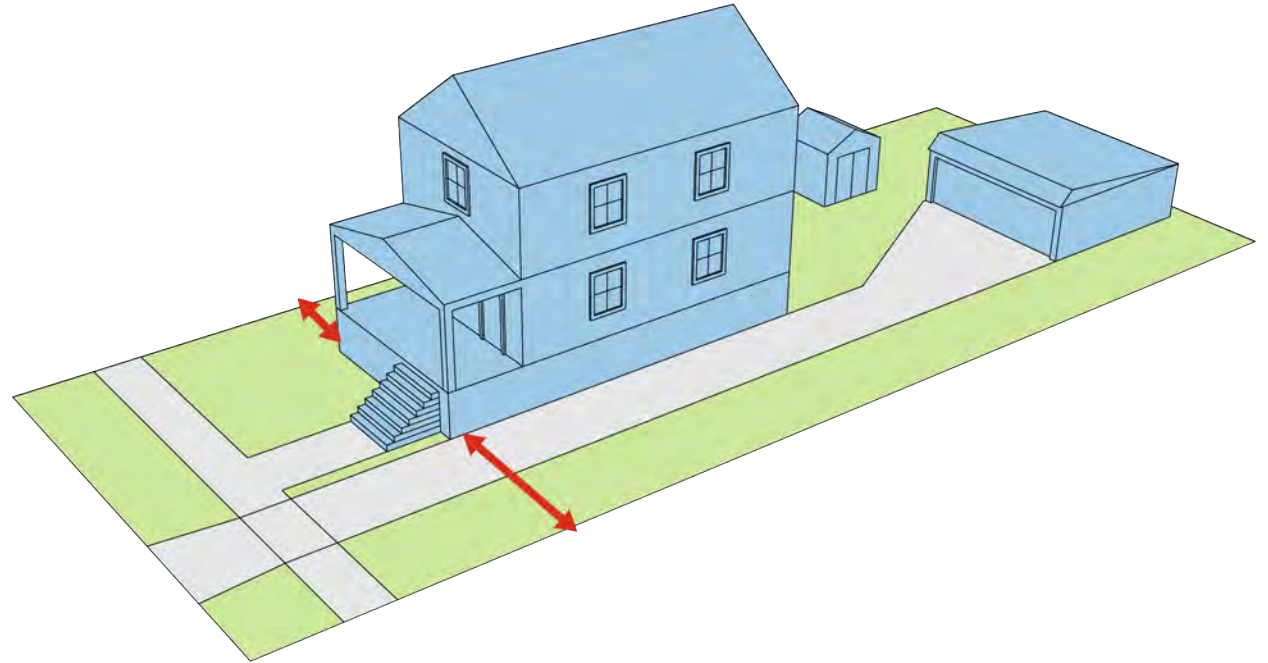
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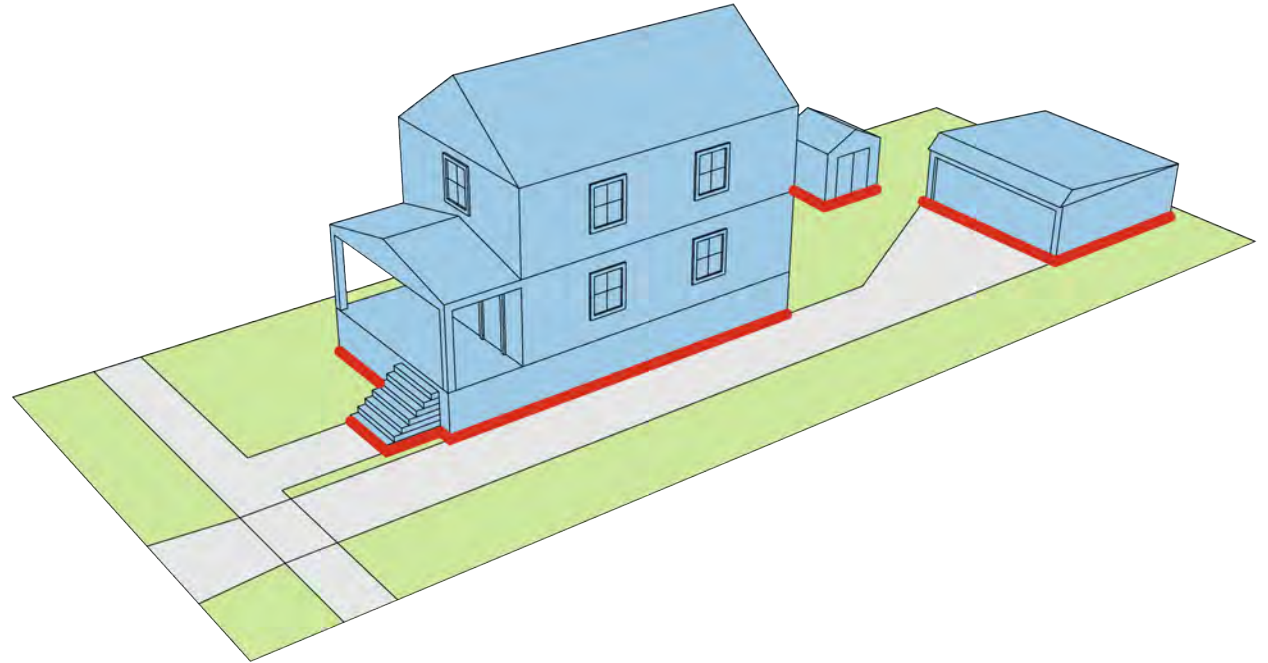
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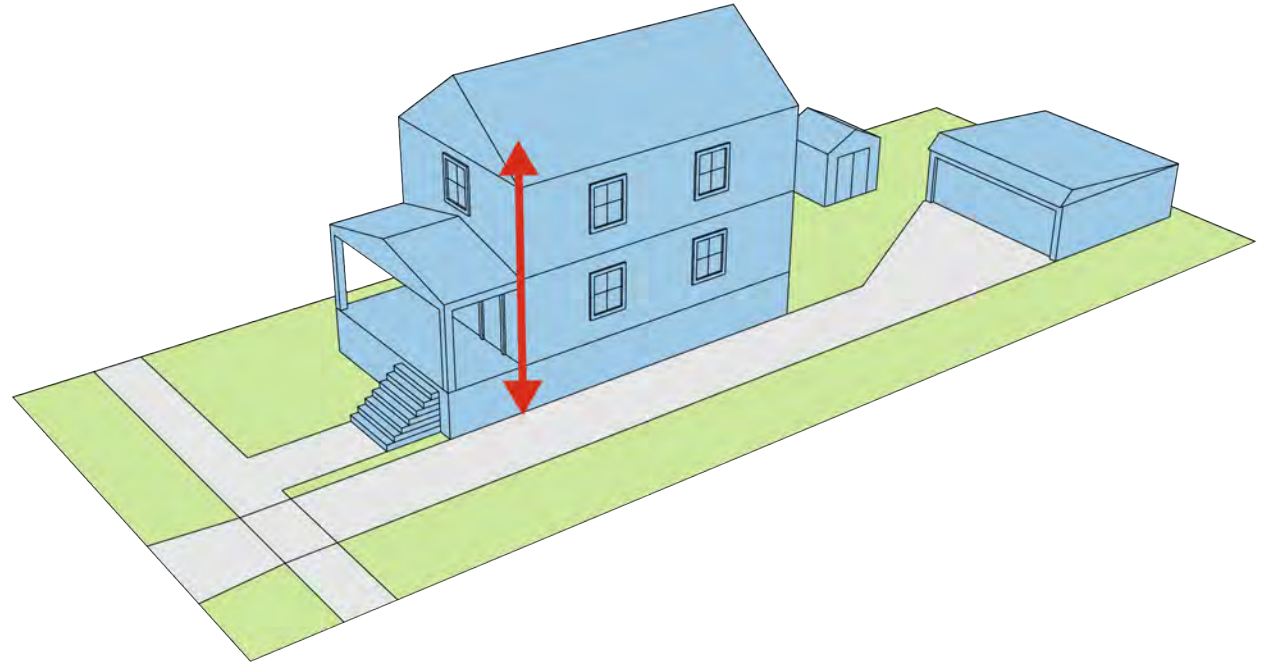
WHAT IS REGULATED BY ZONING?

- Key concepts in a zoning code
 - Lot coverage
 - Height
 - Accessory Structures



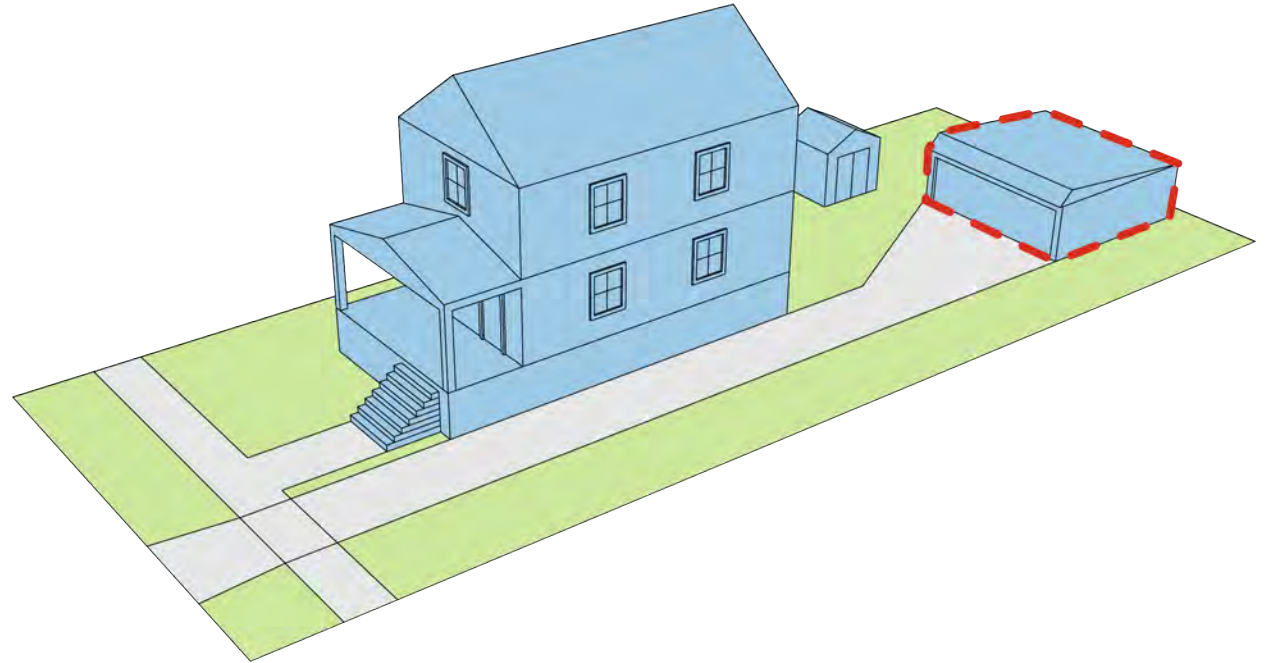
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WHY DOES IT NEED UPDATING?

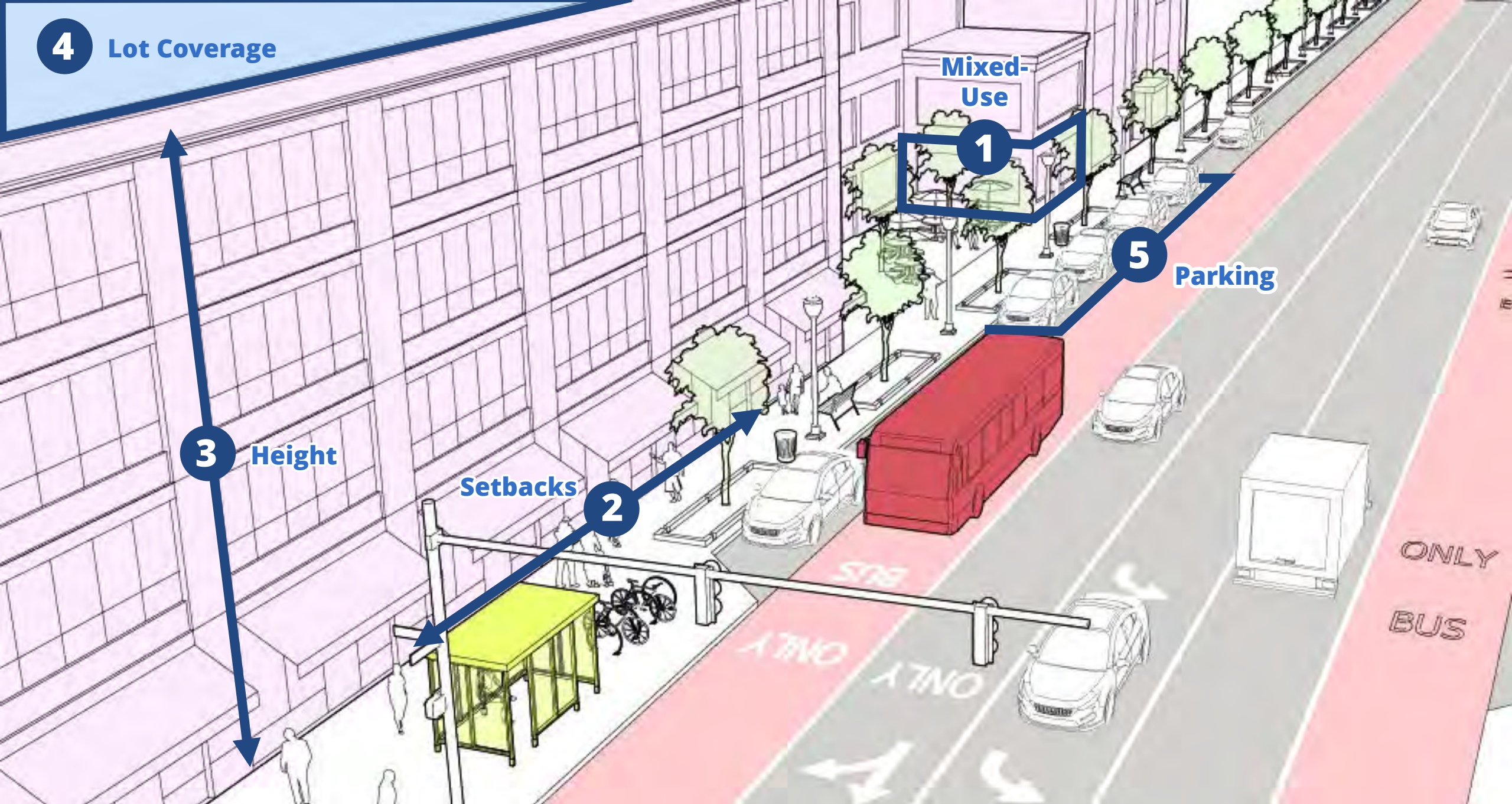
- The City's zoning code is more than 70 years old, with large sections passed in 1953
- A patchwork of updates have been completed over the past half century



WHY DOES IT NEED UPDATING?

- Modern uses are missing:
 - Mixed-use, townhouses, solar panels, breweries are missing
 - Blacksmiths, horsewagoning are included
- Some items are undefined, such as accessory structures
- Very few regulations to ensure quality development and design
 - Landscaping, parking lot regulations, design guidelines, trees, lighting
- Enforcement is challenging without updated code language
- Zoning map(s) are outdated and inaccessible
- Process for approving projects can be complicated
- Roles and responsibilities for boards are inconsistent

4 Lot Coverage



3 Height

2 Setbacks

Mixed-Use

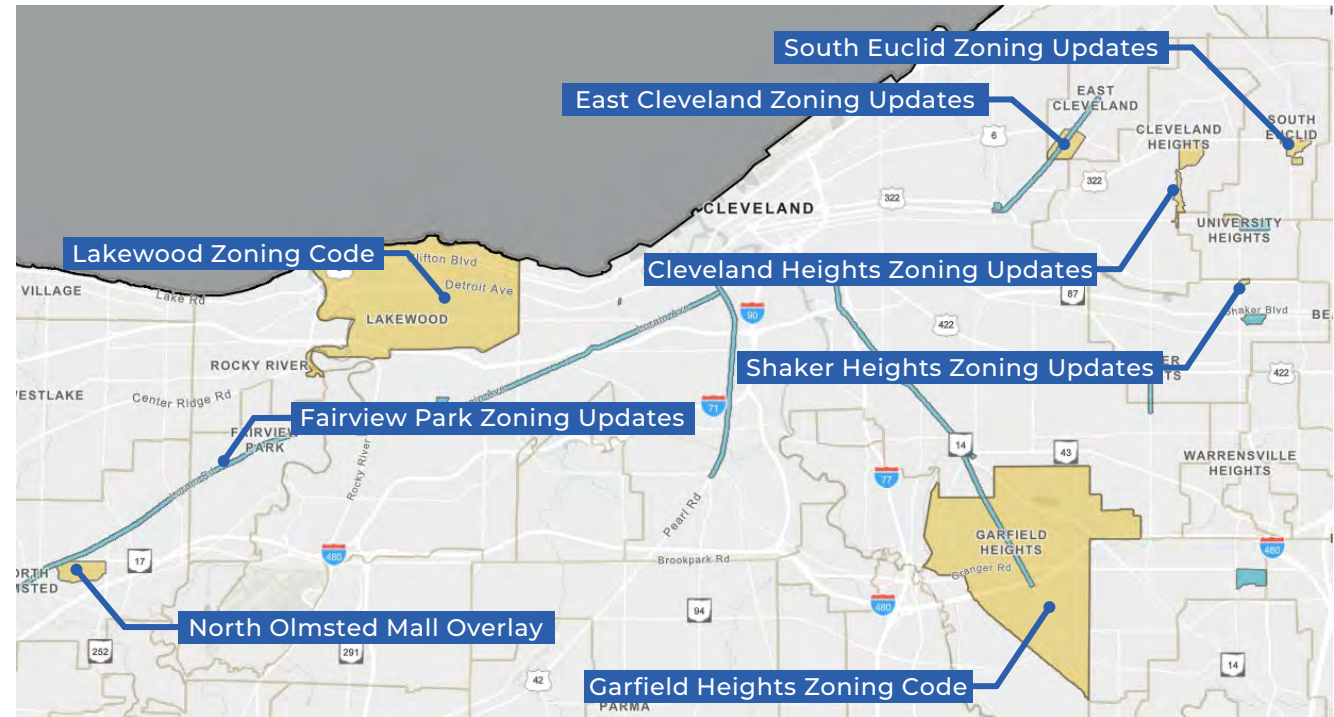
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Parking

REGIONAL EFFORTS TO UPDATE ZONING

- All 59 communities in Cuyahoga County control their own local zoning
- Multiple zoning updates are underway or recently passed





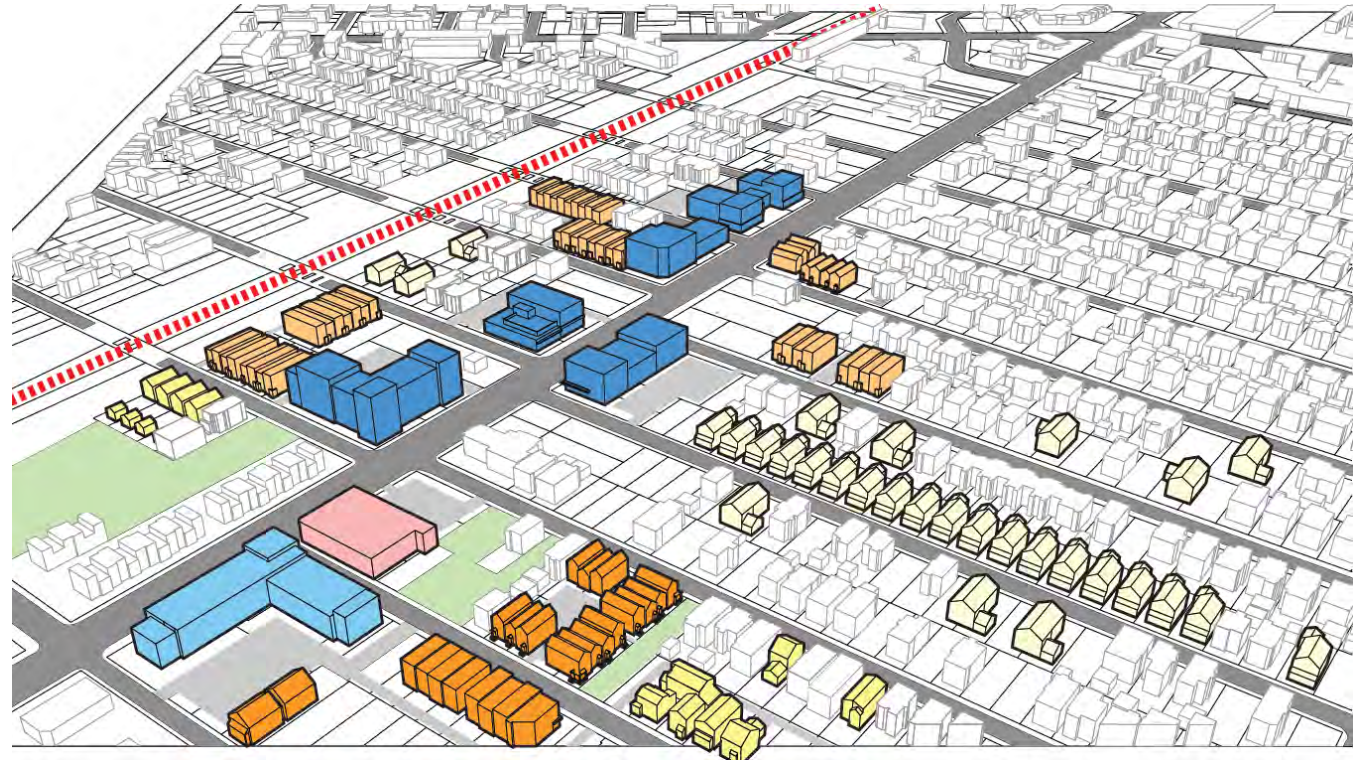
PROJECT BACKGROUND

PROJECT BACKGROUND

- City of East Cleveland requested our assistance in 2022
- Goal: To update the City's Zoning Code to better facilitate residential and commercial development in line with the City's Land Use Strategic Plan
- Core Inputs:
 - First Suburbs Consortium Single-Family Zoning Analysis
 - Transit-Oriented Development Zoning Study
- Project tailored specifically to East Cleveland

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

- Potential development throughout southwestern portion of East Cleveland
- Land Use Strategic Plan identifies development opportunities along Euclid Avenue
- HealthLine and Euclid Avenue improvements being considered



COST & FUTURE

- Comprehensive zoning code updates typically cost \$200,000 or more
- This update has been provided to East Cleveland at no cost to the City
- This is a targeted update to address immediate needs; a future comprehensive zoning code update is recommended

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Section	Location	Status
1. Overlays (Residential & Commercial)	Title 5	New
2. Zoning Map	Separate Document	Updated
3. Powers & Duties and Responsibilities	Chapters 1105, 1106, 1107, 1333, Various	Repeal & Replace, Updated
4. Subdivision Regulations	Title 7	New
5. Design Guidelines (Residential & Commercial)	Separate Documents	New



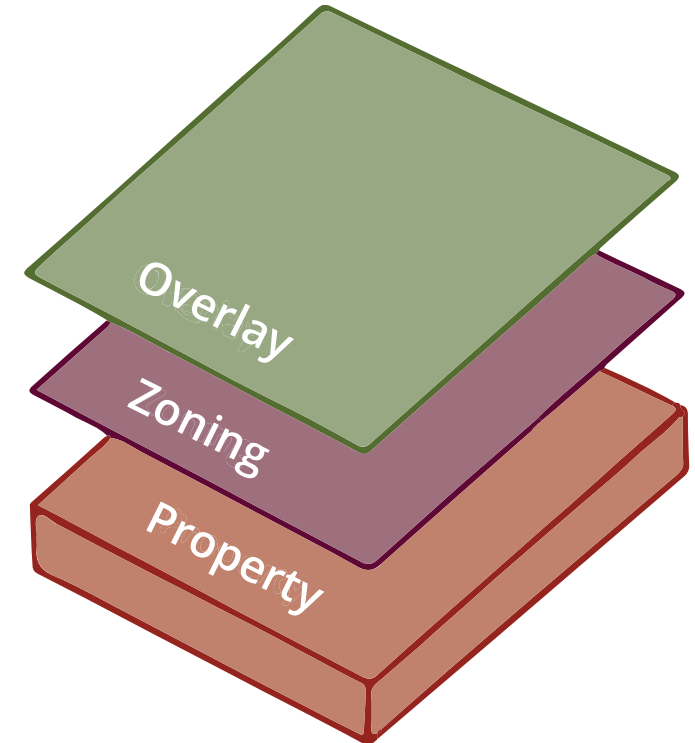
OVERLAYS

OVERLAYS

- Overview
 - Two new sections of zoning regulations for commercial and residential development with associated use standards
- Goal
 - Provide modern, flexible regulations to support infill housing in neighborhoods and mixed-use development along Euclid Avenue

OVERLAY DISTRICTS

- A Base Zoning District determines the types of uses permitted and the minimum dimensional requirements of lots and buildings
- An Overlay District is a special zone placed over an existing zoning district, part of a district, or a combination of districts. The overlay zone includes a set of regulations that are applied to property within the overlay zone in addition to or in place of the requirements of the underlying or base zoning district.



KEY CHANGES | Residential Overlay

- Streamlined regulations
- Updated Permitted & Conditional Uses to allow modern range of residential development such as townhouses
- Defined and regulated accessory structures and uses such as community gardens and live-work units
- Required consistency with design guidelines
- Reduced parking requirements, added bicycle parking and landscaping requirements

KEY CHANGES | Commercial Overlay

- Updated Permitted & Conditional Uses to allow a mix of uses, required an active first floor
- Reduced setbacks and allowed a slightly taller building
- Required walkability improvements and build-to lines, limited location of curb cuts and parking lots
- Required consistency with design guidelines
- Reduced parking requirements, added bicycle parking, landscaping, lighting, and access requirements



ZONING MAP

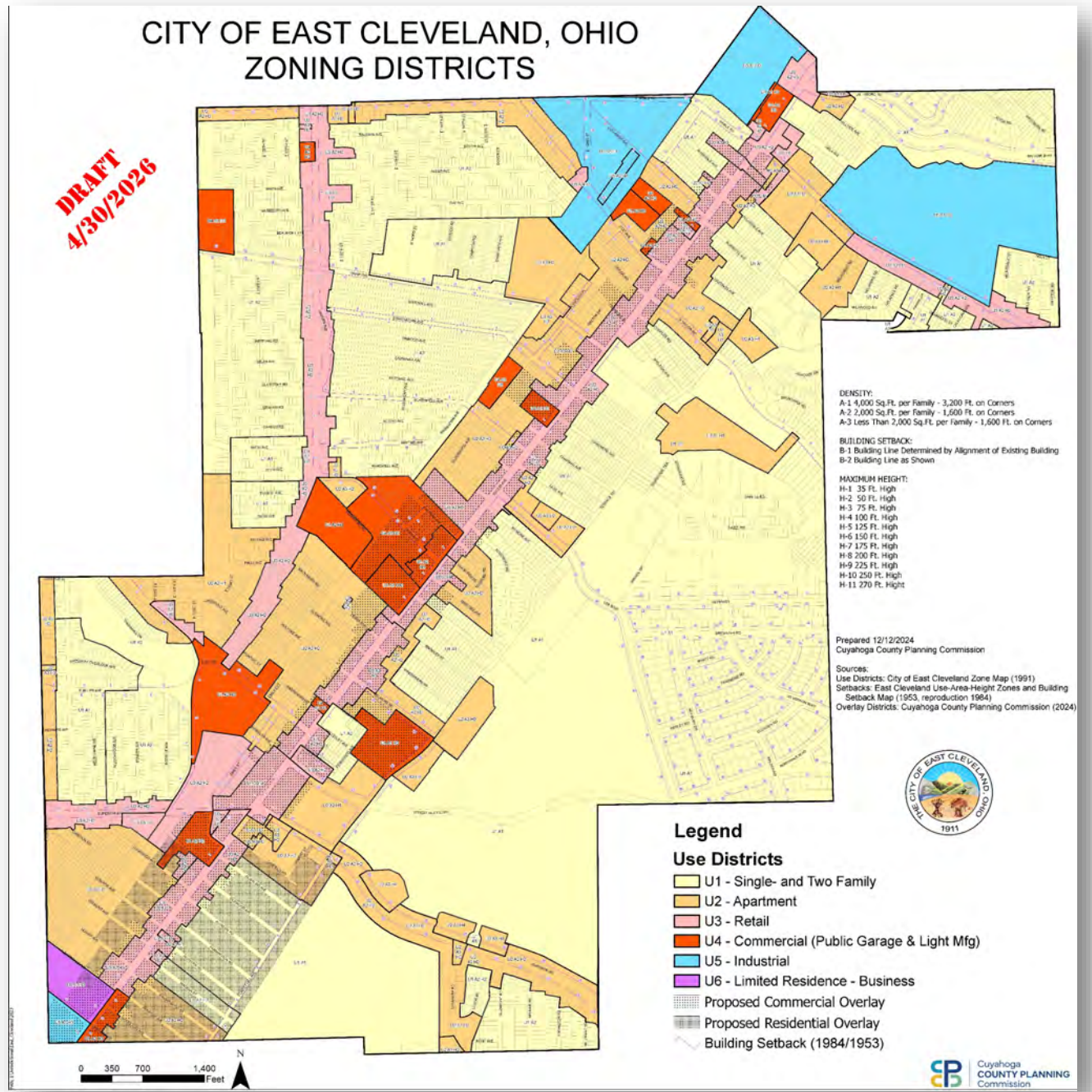
ZONING MAP

- Overview
 - Updated PDF, print, and online map of East Cleveland's existing zoning districts including past rezonings; include new overlay district designations
- Goal
 - Provide modern, accessible, and up-to-date zoning available to residents, developers, and the City of East Cleveland

ZONING MAP

Use Districts

-  U1 - Single- and Two Family
-  U2 - Apartment
-  U3 - Retail
-  U4 - Commercial (Public Garage & Light Mfg)
-  U5 - Industrial
-  U6 - Limited Residence - Business
-  Proposed Commercial Overlay
-  Proposed Residential Overlay
-  Building Setback (1984/1953)



The image shows the exterior of a brick building, identified as the East Cleveland Public Library. The building features a prominent glass-enclosed entrance on the left side. The text on the brick wall is oriented diagonally. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter.

East Cleveland Public Library
The Debra Ann November Learning Center

POWERS & DUTIES

POWERS & DUTIES

- Overview
 - Realigned land use boards and commission responsibilities by clarifying review processes, defining regulatory adoption steps, transferring appropriate duties from the Board of Zoning Appeals to the Planning Commission, and streamlining the powers and duties of the Architectural Board of Review.
- Goal
 - Ensure that the powers, duties, and responsibilities of each board and commission are aligned and efficient to streamline the adoption process for new regulations.

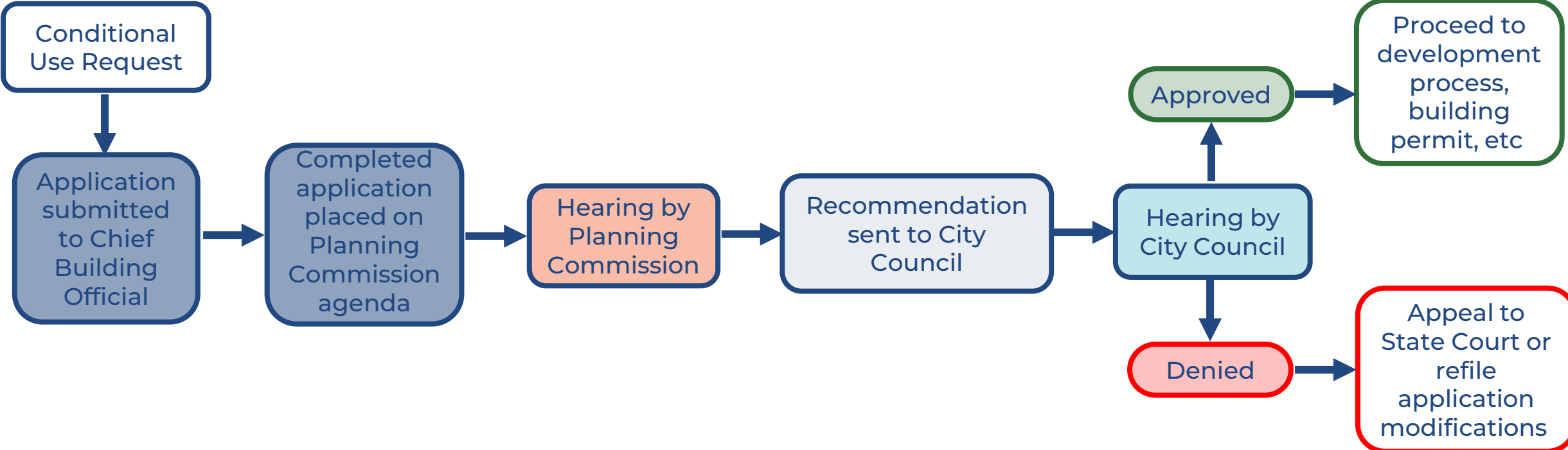
SECTIONS

Deliverable	Old Chapter & Section	New Chapter & Section	Action
Chapter 1105 Enforcement, Permits and Penalty	1105.1 Enforcement 1105.02 Conditional use permits 1105.03 Fee 1105.04 Penalty	1105.01 Enforcement 1105.02 Conditional use permits 1105.03 Fee 1105.99 Penalty	Repeal & Replace
Chapter 1106 Planning Commission		1106.01 Intent 1106.02 Planning Commission	New
Chapter 1107 Board of Zoning Appeals	1107.01 Establishment; members; procedures 1107.02 Appeals to Board and Council 1107.03 Recommendations referred to Council 1107.04 Power to grant variances; fee 1107.05 Time restriction on appeals 1107.06 Action upon recommendations	1107.01 Intent 1107.02 Board of Zoning Appeals	Repeal & Replace
Chapter 1333 Architectural Board of Review	1333.01 Membership 1333.02 Qualification of members 1333.03 Compensation 1333.04 Conflict of interest 1333.05 Purpose 1333.06 Powers and organization; annual report 1333.07 Order of review 1333.08 Refusal of building permit 1333.09 Appeals	1333.01 Intent 1333.02 Architectural Board of Review	Repeal & Replace

In various places throughout the ordinance, the relevant body was switched to better match that body's purpose

POWERS & DUTIES

- To align with the City’s Charter, evaluated and reassigned responsibilities by transferring duties more appropriate for the Planning Commission such as conditional use permit review from the Board of Zoning Appeals





SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

- Overview
 - One new section of Subdivision Regulations associated with buildable lot formation and plat approvals.
- Goal
 - Promote orderly and coordinated growth
 - Ensure adequate public services and infrastructure
 - Provide clear legal descriptions for new lots and public improvements.



SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

What are Subdivision Regulations?

- Rules that govern how land is divided into buildable lots.
- Establish standards for streets, utilities, drainage, and other infrastructure.
- Ensure new development is safe, functional, and well-planned.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

How the Process Works (Major Subdivisions)

1. Developer submits a Preliminary Plat (sometimes referred to as a preliminary plan).
2. Staff and/or planning commission reviews for zoning and subdivision compliance. The plat is then approved by the Planning Commission and Council.
3. The Improvement Plans are then submitted to the city engineer for approval and construction of the improvements outlined in the regulations may begin.
4. The Final Plat is approved by (Planning Commission and Council) and recorded once the improvements have been constructed.
5. Lots become eligible for sale and building permits may be pulled.

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Summary

- Subdivision regulations translate zoning and planning goals into the physical layout of new development. They ensure that land divisions, streets, and utilities serve both private development and the broader community.
- Considering and aligning other Capital Improvement Plans and Developer Agreements with zoning and subdivision controls helps with consistency and can ensure that development occurs in an orderly, economical manner that does not exceed public service capacity.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Overview
 - Two documents related to the design of commercial and residential development
- Goal
 - Inform ABR decisions to encourage consistency and predictability, while allowing for discretion based on feasibility and practicality
 - Provide guidance to property owners, developers, architects, and contractors
 - Encourage quality design, sustainable practices, and the incorporation of desired amenities



DESIGN GUIDELINES TOPICS

Commercial Design Guidelines	Both	Residential Design Guidelines
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design Components of a storefront, mixed-use building and street• Scale• Townhomes• Pedestrian Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Orientation• Massing & Scale• Architectural Elements• Fenestration• Parking• Solar Energy Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compatibility• Housing Types• Spacing

COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.1 COMPONENTS OF A STOREFRONT

A well-designed and activated storefront can help pedestrians feel comfortable and enliven the walking environment. This can engage pedestrians on the street, encouraging them to window shop and visit multiple locations within a single trip. The components of a well-designed storefront are listed below and shown in the diagram at the bottom of the page.

STOREFRONT COMPONENTS

- (A) **Signage/Sign Band:** Storefront signage should be clear, readable, and distinguishable from the street level, providing visual interest to draw in potential shoppers.
- (B) **Overhead weather protection:** Awnings, overhangs, and arcades are encouraged—and should clearly define building entries, coordinate with the architectural style of the building, and increase comfort to pedestrians, store-goers, and transit users.
- (C) **Storefront windows:** Storefronts should include large front facing windows to allow for the display of goods and services to pedestrians.
- (D) **Storefront Door:** Doors on storefronts should be mostly transparent and be oriented to front on the sidewalk to further engage the street.

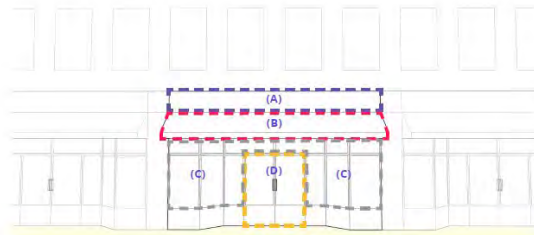


FIGURE 3 | COMPONENTS OF A STOREFRONT
Well-designed storefronts with ample transparent windows, like the example shown, can help engage pedestrians and allow for more interaction between the building and the street.

3.2 MASSING & SCALE

Massing and scale generally refer to the visual perception, form, and size of a structure. Massing and scale are directly affected through the footprint, lot coverage, and height of a building. The arrangement of different materials and parts of a building can also affect the perceived mass of a structure. Especially in the CO District, where there are few existing buildings, any new development will establish a pattern from which future development can take its cues. Because of this, matching what is existing becomes secondary to development standards outlined in the CO District and guidelines addressed in this section.

- (A) Buildings should be scaled in a way that frames the street and leads to a comfortable pedestrian experience. A ratio of 1 increment of building height at minimum to 3 of street width is preferable for buildings fronting a primary street, such as Euclid Avenue.
- (B) The height and bulk of proposed buildings and structures should be in scale and proportion with each other and not visually dominate the site or street.
- (C) For larger projects, multiple buildings within a single project or the appearance of multiple buildings are preferable to monolithic buildings that take up the full block.
- (D) The desired general development pattern in accordance with the East Cleveland Land Use Strategic Plan includes the following:
 - (1) Structures should be larger in scale and density to support transit-oriented development closer to primary commercial and transit corridors, such as Euclid Avenue.
 - (2) New construction should transition down in terms of size, massing, and scale as it gets farther into residential neighborhoods.
- (E) Different techniques can be used to visually transition between buildings of different scales, including:
 - (1) Stepping back upper stories or adjusting the roof pitch of larger massed buildings on the side where they are adjacent to smaller massed buildings.
 - (2) Including additional buffer space between larger massed buildings and smaller massed buildings.
 - (3) Including horizontal architectural details such as cornices and window frames on larger massed buildings that align with the roofline of the adjacent smaller massed buildings.
 - (4) Using trees and other greenery to soften hard edges between differently massed buildings.

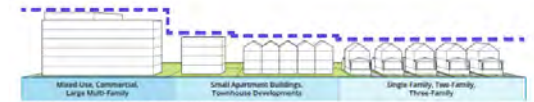


FIGURE 10 | DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
The development pattern shown above illustrates a pattern of stepping down in density and in height as buildings are located further from the primary street (to the left in the image).

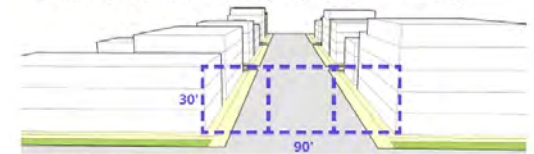


FIGURE 11 | HEIGHT-TO-WIDTH RATIO AND COMFORT
The height-to-width ratio can frame the pedestrian realm and greatly affect the perceived comfort of that space. Generally the minimum ratio of 1 increment of height to 3 of width is effective at creating a sense of enclosure leading to increased comfort. For example, if the right-of-way is 90 feet wide, the height of the front facade should be at minimum 30 feet.



FIGURE 12 | MULTIPLE BUILDINGS WITHIN A SINGLE PROJECT
Despite being a single building, Welton, located on the west side of Cleveland, is designed in a way that reduces its scale from street level by utilizing different materials and architectural breaks to create the appearance of multiple buildings.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

2.2 COMPATIBILITY

Maintaining compatibility entails considering nearby properties and the overall neighborhood to ensure new construction shares some characteristics of existing properties and continues overall patterns in buildings, structures, and natural features that positively contribute to neighborhood character. Along streets with a large share of vacant lots or dilapidated properties, it is important for new construction to enhance the quality of housing yet still be sensitive to the overall neighborhood character.

FOR ALL DEVELOPMENTS

- (A) While architectural style may differ, new construction should be visually compatible with existing nearby properties with respect to design elements such as height, scale, proportion, massing, and setbacks.
- (1) Refer to the other sections in these design guidelines to understand which context is most appropriate to consider for each design element.
- (B) Guidelines should not be used merely to prevent all forms of change in a neighborhood, nor should "compatibility" be used as an excuse to adhere to a lower standard of design or construction than is otherwise possible and appropriate.
- (C) To ensure new construction achieves an appropriate level of compatibility, design cues should be considered from the surrounding context of the lot using the Contextual Hierarchy.
- (1) The Contextual Hierarchy outlines four levels of context that should be considered, from most to least impactful: (1) First are the adjacent properties to the vacant lot, (2) then to those along the same street side, (3) along both sides of the street, and (4) lastly to the overall neighborhood. This is shown in the image below.
- (2) If the adjacent lots are vacant, refer to the next contextual level, and so on.

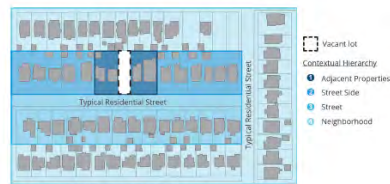


FIGURE 5 | CONTEXTUAL HIERARCHY

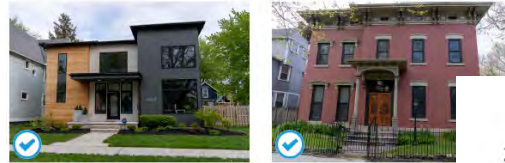


FIGURE 6 | COMPATIBILITY ACROSS STYLES
These two houses along Clinton Avenue in Cleveland show an example of compatibility: modern house (left image) and a historic house (right image) using similar rooflines, shared entryways.



FIGURE 7 | COMPATIBILITY WITHIN SIMILAR STYLES
The house in the center (left image) and the house on the right (right image) are example houses that take cues from existing styles, rooflines, setbacks, and formats in new construction.



FIGURE 8 | NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY
This image shows how compatibility can allow differences among structures while still feeling cohesive on a neighborhood level.

FIGURE 9 | INCOMPATIBILITY
The dramatic differences in building and first floor height make the new (right) out of sync with neighborhood.

2.6 FENESTRATION

Fenestration refers to a building's windows and doors. Fenestration is an important component of a building's facade as its style and placement can impact the building's perceived scale and its relationship to the street and to other buildings. Fenestration should be designed to be inviting while preserving some privacy to adjacent buildings.

FOR ALL DEVELOPMENTS

- (A) All windows and doors across a facade should be related in design, operating type, proportion, and trim. Windows and doors should be proportional and to scale with the rest of the building.
- (B) Fenestration should be used as architectural elements that add relief or visual interest to the facade and wall surface.
- (C) The main entrance door and windows on the front facade of a building should be inviting and face the street.
- (1) Where a main entrance door does not face the street, windows and other features, such as porches, should be designed to create an inviting entryway from the street.
- (D) On corner lots, a regular arrangement of fenestration should be included on all street-facing facades to avoid blank facades.

FOR TOWNHOUSE DEVELOPMENTS AND SMALL APARTMENT BUILDINGS

- (E) Windows and openings on the first floor of a townhouse or apartment building should be designed in a way that preserves privacy for residents.
- (F) Side-by-side townhouses that face the street shall incorporate pedestrian entrances to each unit on the front facade of the building where applicable.
- (1) Entrances to each unit shall open onto a pedestrian path that connects directly to a public sidewalk.
- (2) Fenestration and architectural detailing shall be included on the side of the building that directly faces the street.
- (3) The unit(s) closest to the street shall be oriented so that their front door directly faces and opens onto the street.

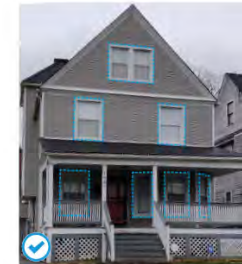


FIGURE 21 | FENESTRATION
This single-family house, located on Wadena Avenue in East Cleveland, features windows across its facade that have the same design, trim, and are sized proportionally to each other and to the size of the house.

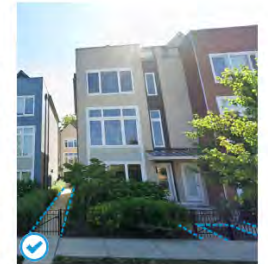


FIGURE 22 | PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
These townhomes have pedestrian access to all front entrances, as well as a pedestrian path that connects the public sidewalk to entrances in the rear unit.



FIGURE 23 | FENESTRATION ON A CORNER PROPERTY
On corner lots, fenestration should continue to the side of the house that faces the adjacent street.



SUMMARY OF CHANGES

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1. Overlays (Residential & Commercial)	Title 5	New
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4. Subdivision Regulations	Title 7	New
5. Design Guidelines (Residential & Commercial)	Separate Documents	New

THANK YOU!



Cuyahoga
COUNTY PLANNING
Commission

