



## Planning Commission Meeting AGENDA

Thursday, May 15, 2025 6:00 p.m.

Municipal Hall Courtroom

1. Meeting called to order: 6:04 p.m.
2. Approval of April agenda
  - a. Motion to approve made by Jimmy Thompson, seconded by Josh Dilbeck, all approved
3. Old Business
  - a. None
4. New Business
  - a. Planning Commission Training and review of Zoning Ordinance
    - i. Jessie introduced GICH team to Planning Commission
    - ii. Jessie presented "How to leverage your zoning ordinance for smart growth"
    - iii. See attached presentation
5. Next Regular Board Meeting: **June 19, 2025** at the Municipal Complex Courtroom at 6 p.m.
6. Adjourn- Motion to adjourn made by Portia Burns, seconded by Josh Dilbeck, all approved.  
Adjournment at 7:32 p.m.

Present: Jason Lewallen, Jimmy Thompson, Gwendolyn Wiley, Josh Dilbeck, Portia Burns, Jessie Owensby

Guests: Amber Orr, Maria Queriapa, Michael Fisher, Mark Reed, Heath Barrett, Oaky Dover, Carrie Trotter, Kathy Papa

# Zoning That Sparks Downtown Growth



Issue	Goals	Strategies
Community Buy-In	Support & advocate Get public input Educate	Housing survey Town Hall Meetings Identify Advocate for each ward (Gwen Wiley, others) Code compliance education QR codes at businesses Unveil Housing Survey Report at Chamber Community Development Summit in August Tag onto another event (Carrie) Add GICH page to City website
Resources & partners	Identify new team members       Energize & educate team	Add Habitat Director, Brian Young (Ellie) Geoff Cook, Oaky Dover (James), Maria, Keller Williams Realtor Talk to D. Higgins, Housing Authority  Start HBA in Habersham Develop guidelines to court housing developers Communication strategy for elected officials Seek resources from Dr. Jermaine Durham for engaging diverse communities
Housing Revitalization	Apply for CHIP, January 2026     Consider creation of land bank	UGA Housing Assessment – May 2025 Fatback to create list of homes for team to review Begin development of criteria for application for CHIP assistance GALBA training & GMA training Apply for nonprofit status Research DDA & Land Bank partnership



# Strategic Focus Areas: BUCKETS!



Housing Needs Assessment

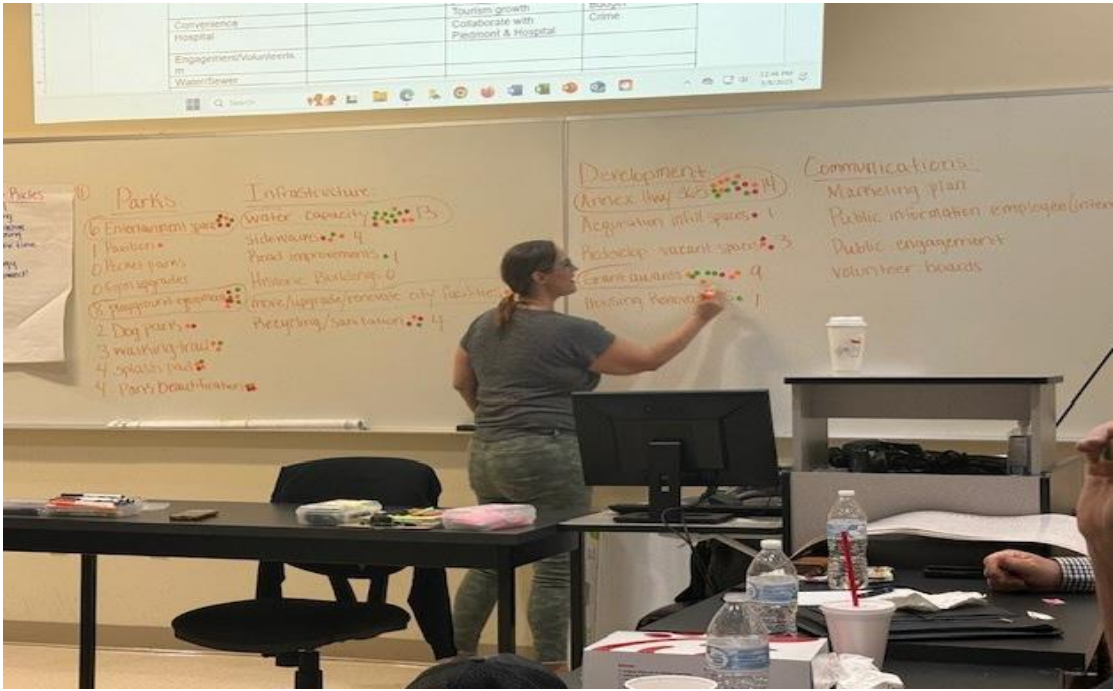


Land Banks



Ministry

Strategic Focus Areas: BUCKETS!



Education



Funding





# Educational Programs



## Community Input

- Scheduled three town hall meetings
- Education of different housing types available and what the current trends are
- Education to residents on how to recover vital records, government benefits, phone program, medical providers, etc.
- GICH logo

Monthly workshops with participant feedback indicating increased understanding of housing options and resources. These educational efforts not only prepare individuals for housing opportunities but also cultivate a more informed community dialogue around housing policies and development.



## ¡QUEREMOS ESCUCHAR DE USTED! REUNIÓN DEL AYUNTAMIENTO DE CORNELIA: EL FUTURO DE LA VIVIENDA

¿Cómo se ve el futuro de la vivienda en Cornelia? Únase a nosotros para una discusión comunitaria y comparta sus pensamientos sobre lo que le gustaría ver en los futuros vecindarios.



**¿Qué tipos de vivienda necesitamos?**  
Discutiremos opciones de vivienda para satisfacer las diversas necesidades de nuestra comunidad en crecimiento.



**¿Qué características hacen que un vecindario se sienta como un hogar?**  
Exploraremos los elementos que crean vecindarios acogedores donde todos puedan prosperar.



**¿Cómo podemos asegurar que los desarrollos futuros satisfagan las necesidades de nuestra comunidad?**  
Su participación es vital para crear viviendas que realmente reflejen las necesidades de Cornelia.

**¡Su opinión importa! Formemos juntos el futuro de Cornelia.**

**Lunes, 31 de marzo 5:30 PM**

**Escuela Primaria Cornelia 375 Old Cleveland Rd. Cornelia**

Para más información, contacte a Jessie Owensby: [dmanager@cornelia.city](mailto:dmanager@cornelia.city)

**¡Corra la voz y traiga a un vecino!**



## Town Hall Meeting

### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

## CORNELIA TOWN HALL MEETING: THE FUTURE OF HOUSING



What does the future of housing in Cornelia look like? Join us for a community discussion about housing developments and share your thoughts on what you'd like to see in Cornelia's future neighborhoods.

- What types of housing do we need?
- What features make a neighborhood feel like home?
- How can we ensure future developments meet the needs of our community?

**Monday, March 31 5:30 PM**

**Cornelia Elementary School 375 Old Cleveland Rd. Cornelia**

**Your input matters! Let's shape the future of Cornelia together.**

**For more information, contact Jessie Owensby: [dmanager@cornelia.city](mailto:dmanager@cornelia.city)**  
**Spread the word & bring a neighbor!**

# Why Zoning Matters for Downtowns

## Unlocks Vibrancy

Smart zoning creates opportunities for businesses, housing, and public spaces.

## Blocks Progress

Outdated codes quietly undermine revitalization goals every day.

# Why Zoning Matters

## Before

Empty storefronts, excessive parking, and rigid use restrictions limit growth.

## After

Mixed-use buildings, outdoor dining, and pedestrian-friendly spaces create vibrancy.



# Problems with Typical Codes



## Outdated Use Categories

Rigid lists that don't accommodate modern businesses.



## Excessive Parking

Suburban standards applied to historic downtown lots.



## Rigid Standards

Inflexible setbacks and building requirements.

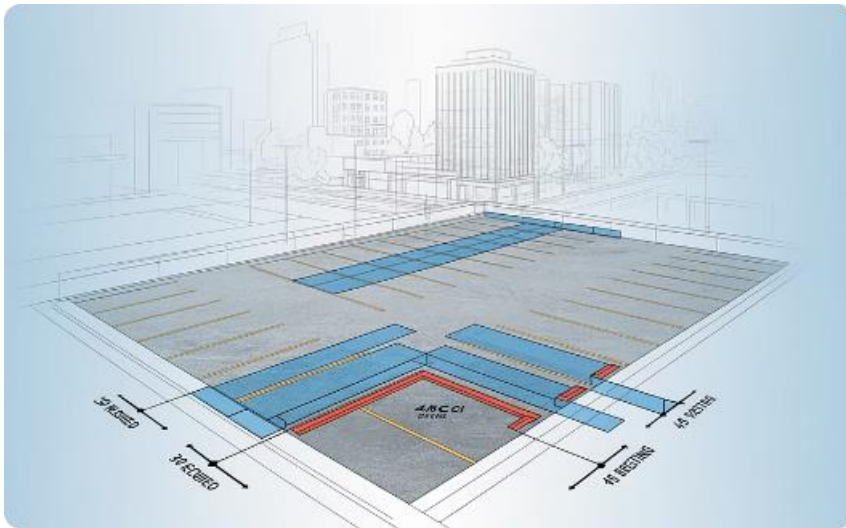


## Lack of Flexibility

Barriers to small businesses and creative solutions.



# How Zoning Quietly Blocks Investment



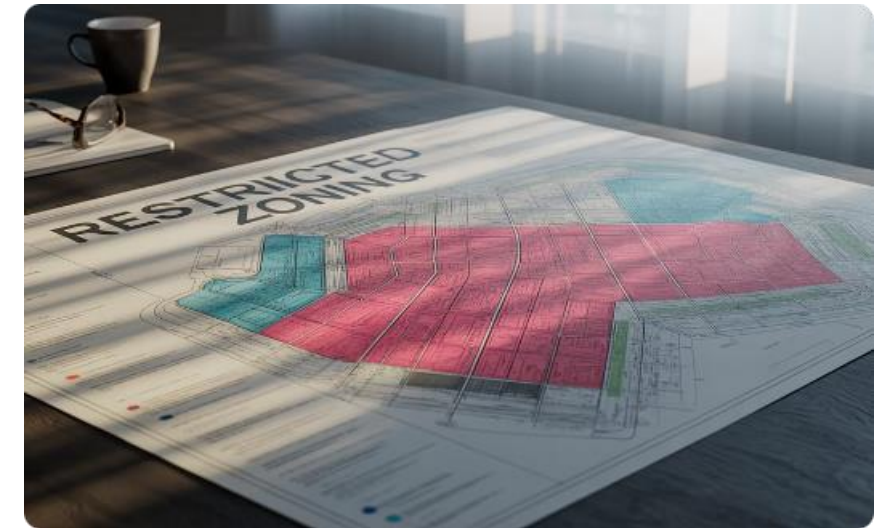
## Parking Requirements

Small lots can't meet suburban parking standards.



## Setback Issues

Rigid rules prevent street-friendly designs.



## Use Restrictions

Narrow categories block innovative businesses.



# How Zoning Quietly Blocks Investment



## Bad Site Plan

Excessive parking, single-use zoning, and large setbacks waste space.



## Vibrant Site Plan

Mixed uses, reduced parking, and street-facing buildings create activity.



# Smart Fix #1 - Flexible Use Categories

## Live/Work Spaces

Allow residential and commercial uses in the same building.

## Maker Spaces

Permit light manufacturing in commercial districts with retail.

## Artisan Shops

Create categories for small-scale production and retail.

## Pop-Ups

Simplify permits for temporary and seasonal businesses.

Allow pop-up shops and temporary uses



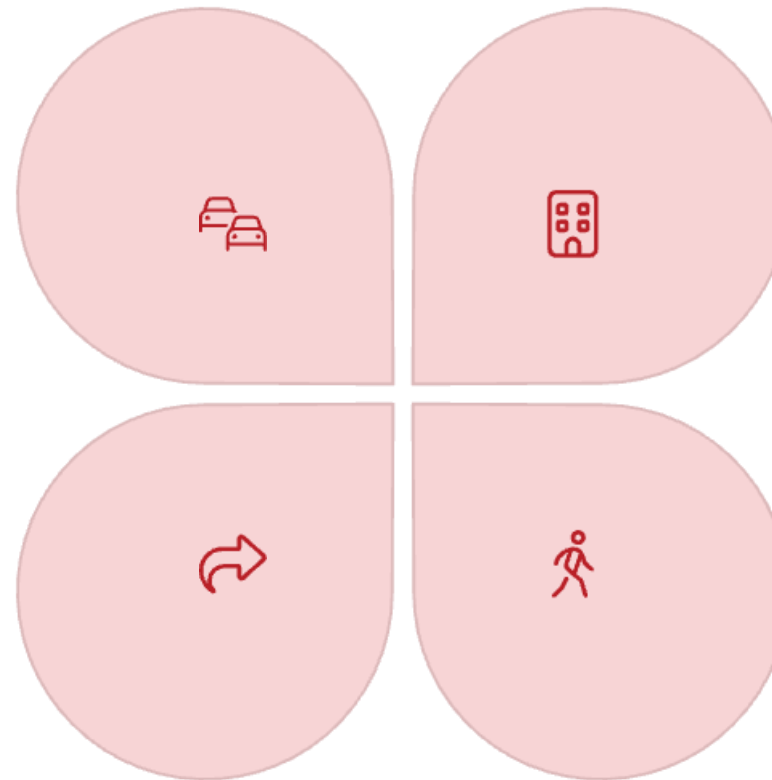
# Smart Fix #2 - Reduced Parking Minimums

## Suburban Standards

Typical codes require 1 space per 250 sq ft.

## Shared Parking

Allow businesses to share spaces across different peak times.



## Downtown Reality

Historic buildings can't accommodate these requirements.

## Walkable Solution

Reduce or eliminate minimums in core districts.

# Smart Fix #2: Reduced Parking Minimums

**0-1**

**Spaces Per Unit**

Lower requirements for downtown housing.

**50%**

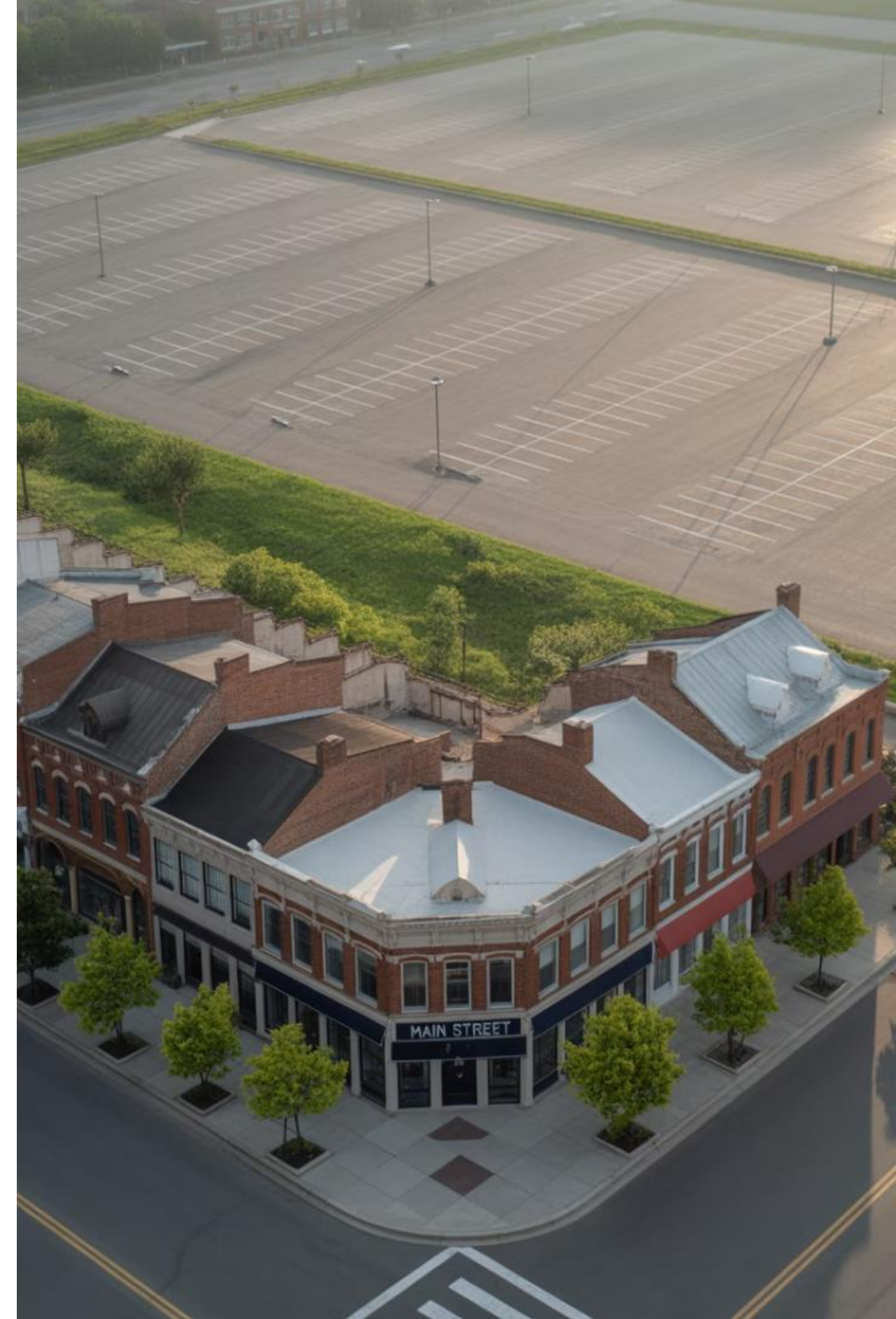
**Reduction**

Cut commercial parking requirements.

**100%**

**Waiver**

Eliminate minimums for historic buildings.





# Smart Fix #3 - Outdoor Dining & Activation



## Old Approach

Complex permits for any sidewalk or street use.  
Allow temporary structures and weather protection



## Streamlined Process

Simple, affordable permits for outdoor dining.



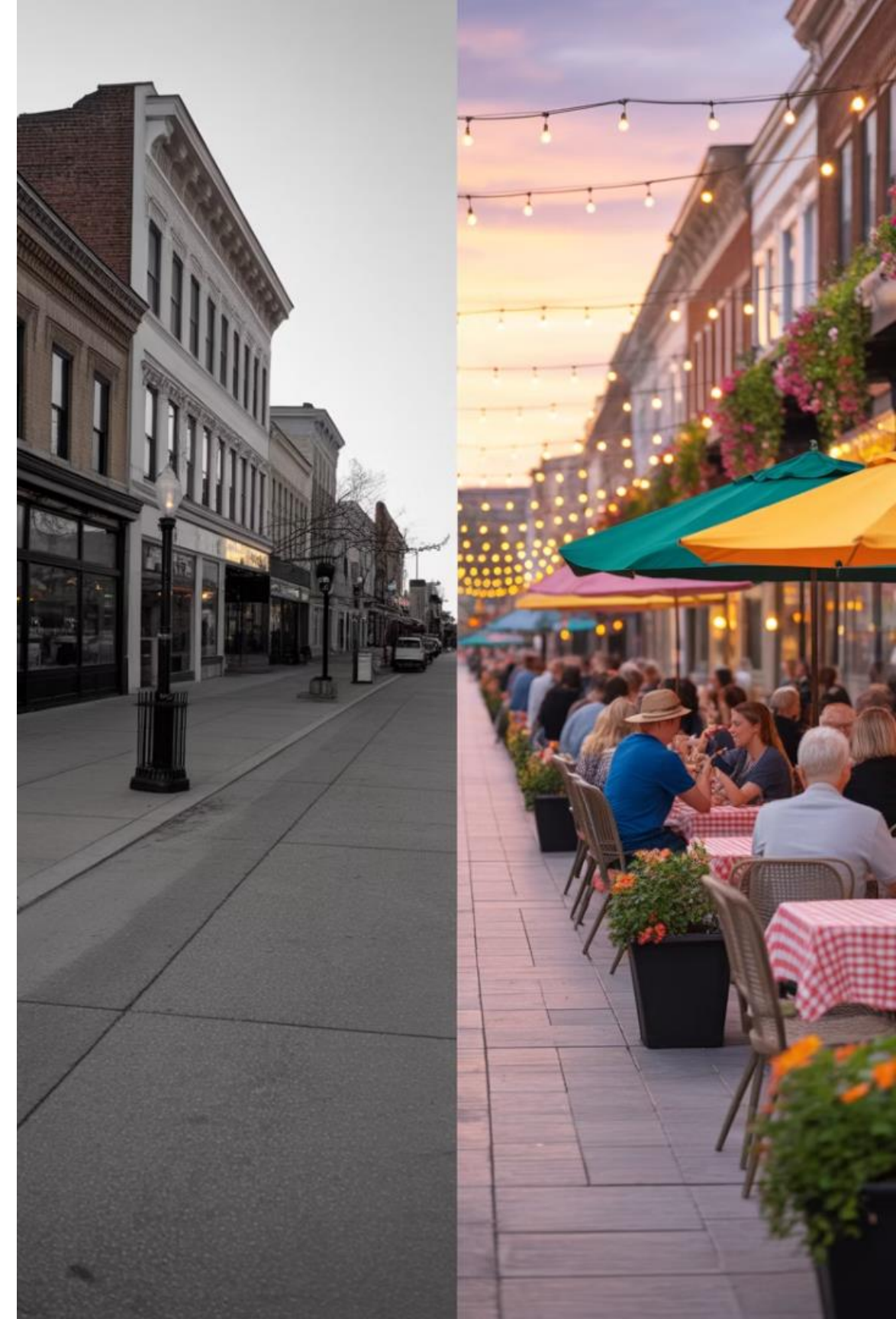
## By-Right Activation

Allow certain activities without special approval.



## Vibrant Result

Lively streets that attract visitors and spending.  
Use public space to Enable parklets and street activations





## Smart Fix #4 - Adaptive Reuse Made Easy



### Identify Historic Buildings

Create inventory of structures suitable for reuse.



### Flexible Standards

Relax modern requirements for historic structures.



### Expedited Review

Fast-track approvals for adaptive reuse projects.



### Incentives

Offer density bonuses or fee waivers for preservation.



### Simplified Approvals

Streamlined process for historic buildings



### Parking Exemptions

Waive requirements for existing structures



### Building Code Flexibility

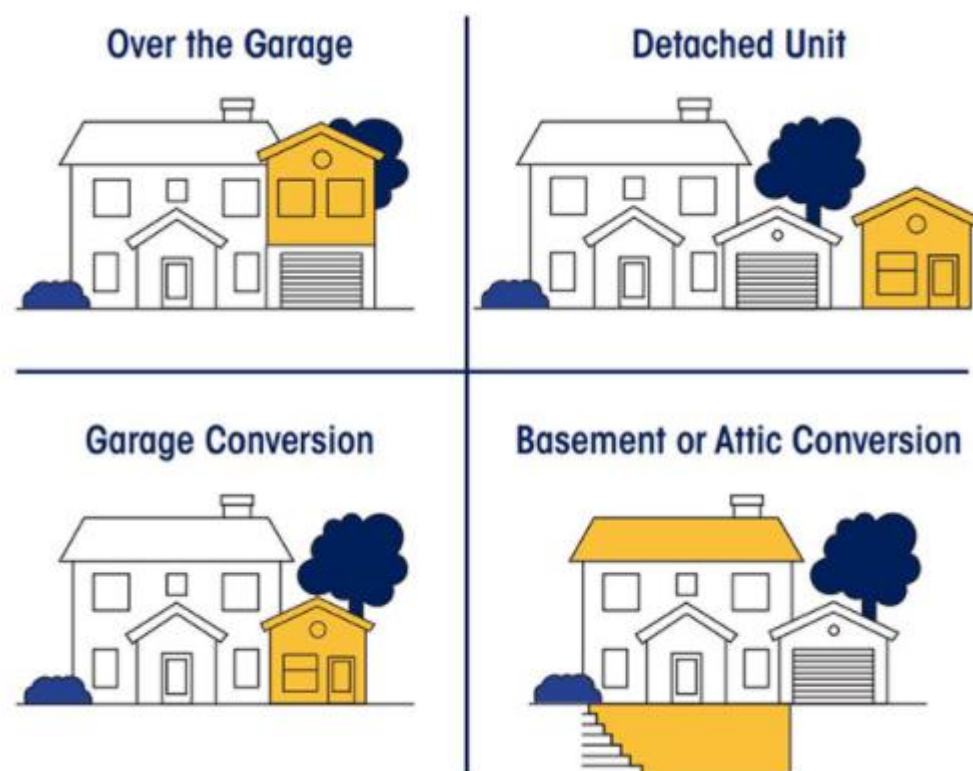
Alternative compliance paths for older buildings



# ADU Ordinance Progress

## Definition & Scope

Revisiting our ADU ordinance to model the one that we got from our friends at the City of Thomaston



## Zoning Updates

Modification of existing zoning codes to accommodate ADUs in appropriate residential districts while maintaining neighborhood character and addressing density concerns.

- Re-wrote our zoning ordinance to
- include amendments of minimum home requirements, PUD, and ADUs

## Implementation Plan

Comprehensive strategy for rolling out the new ordinance, including public education, DDA and Planning Commission reviews, adoption, and compliance monitoring mechanisms.

- Educational workshops for homeowners



# Understanding Thomaston's Residential Building Standards



## Single Family Dwellings

Minimum dimension of 24 feet with roof pitches of at least 4:12. Approved exterior materials include brick, natural wood, and fiber cement siding.



## Accessory Buildings

Quantity limits based on lot size: one building for lots under 9,000 sq ft, two for lots 15,000 sq ft to one acre, and three for lots over one acre.



## Accessory Dwelling Units

Must be between 384-864 sq ft and reflect historic dwelling types. One ADU permitted per residential lot alongside the principal dwelling.



## Fence Regulations

Maximum height of 4 feet in front yards and 6 feet in side/rear yards. Certain fence materials are prohibited to maintain neighborhood aesthetics.

The ordinance also permits home occupations but limits them to 25% of floor area and requires they not alter the residential character of the property.

# Types of Accessory Units



## Family Accessory Dwelling Unit

Permitted in R-PUD and C-PUD zoning districts.



## Accessory Apartment

Can be detached or attached. Only one permitted per lot.



## Guest House

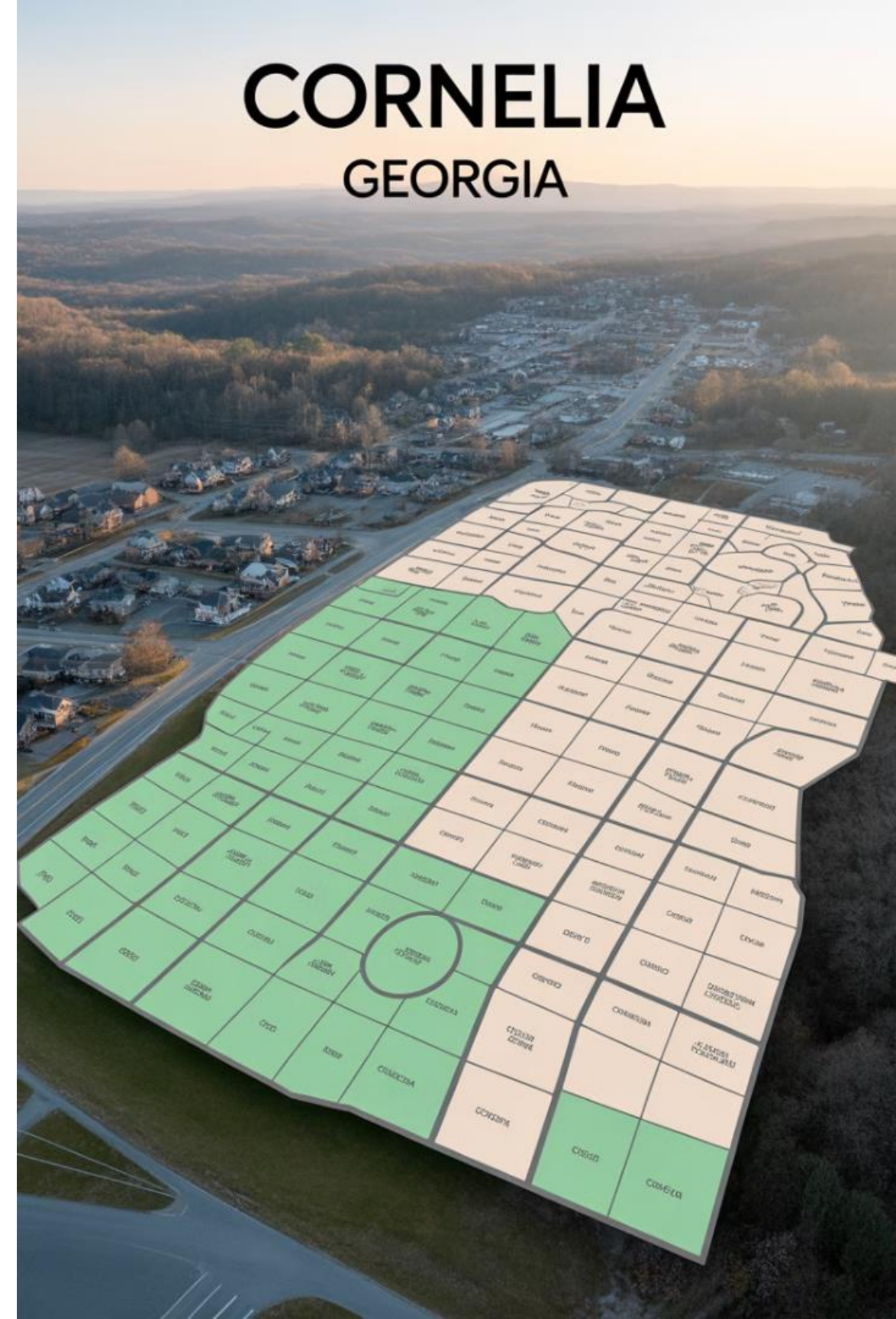
Must be accessory to an existing single-family detached dwelling.



## Caretaker Residence

Allowed within principal building or as accessory unit on commercial sites.

# CORNELIA GEORGIA





# Cornelia: Restrictions and Requirements



## Minimum Floor Area

All accessory dwelling units must meet the minimum floor area requirements specified for the zoning district they're located in.



## Density Limitations

In Planned Unit Development (PUD) zones, property owners must maintain a maximum density of 8 dwelling units per acre.



## Usage Limitations

Accessory apartments cannot be combined with home occupations or other detached accessory structures on the same property.

Family day care is allowed as an accessory use in single-family detached dwellings only.



# Zoning Districts Overview



## A-1: Agricultural District

Established to maintain areas where urbanization has not yet occurred, protecting lands for food production or other agricultural uses from encroachment by untimely development.



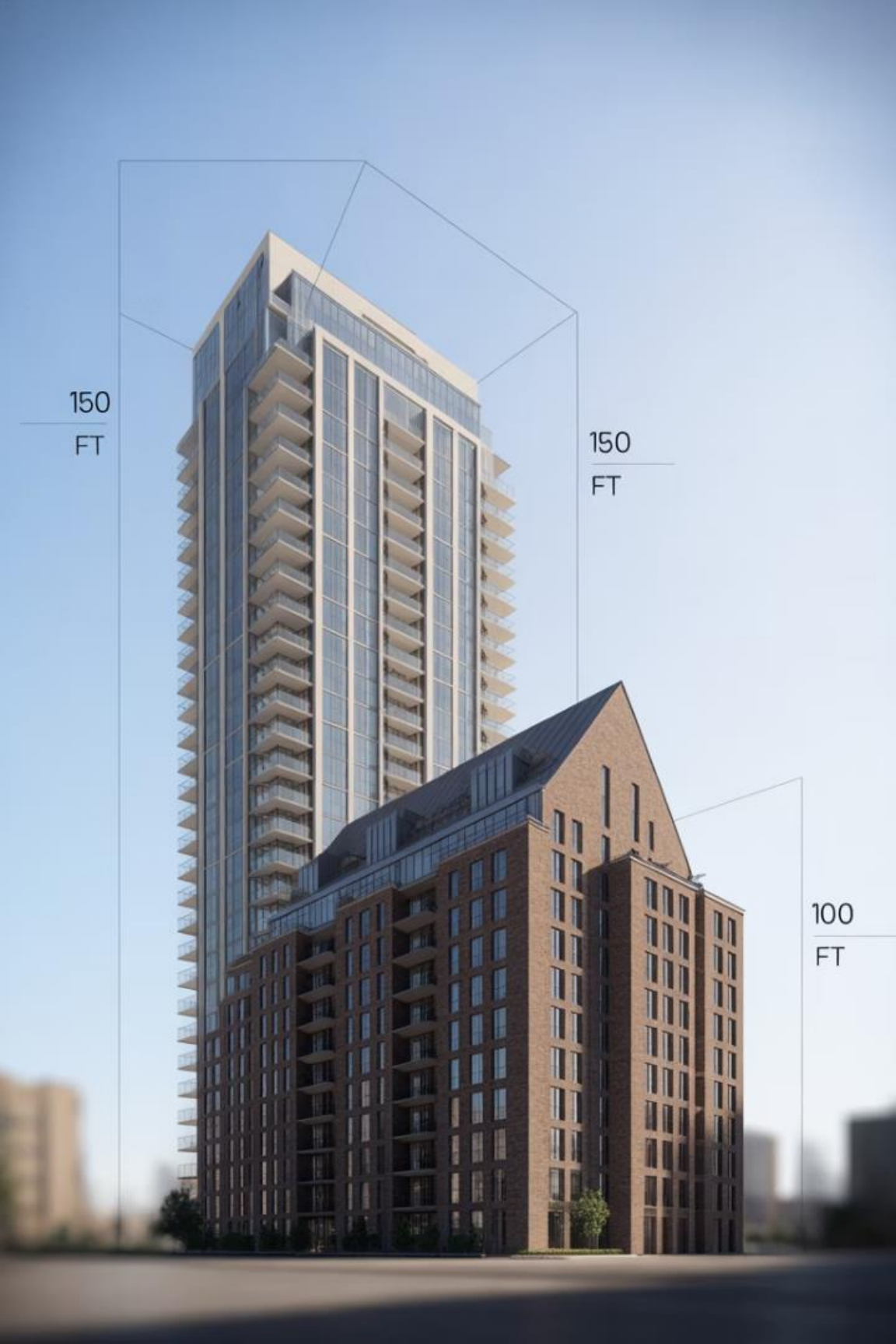
## R-1, R-1A, R-1B: Single-Family Districts

Preserve quiet, stable single-family residential neighborhoods at varying densities, from low (2.42 units/acre) to moderate (4.36 units/acre).



## R-2: Multiple-Family District

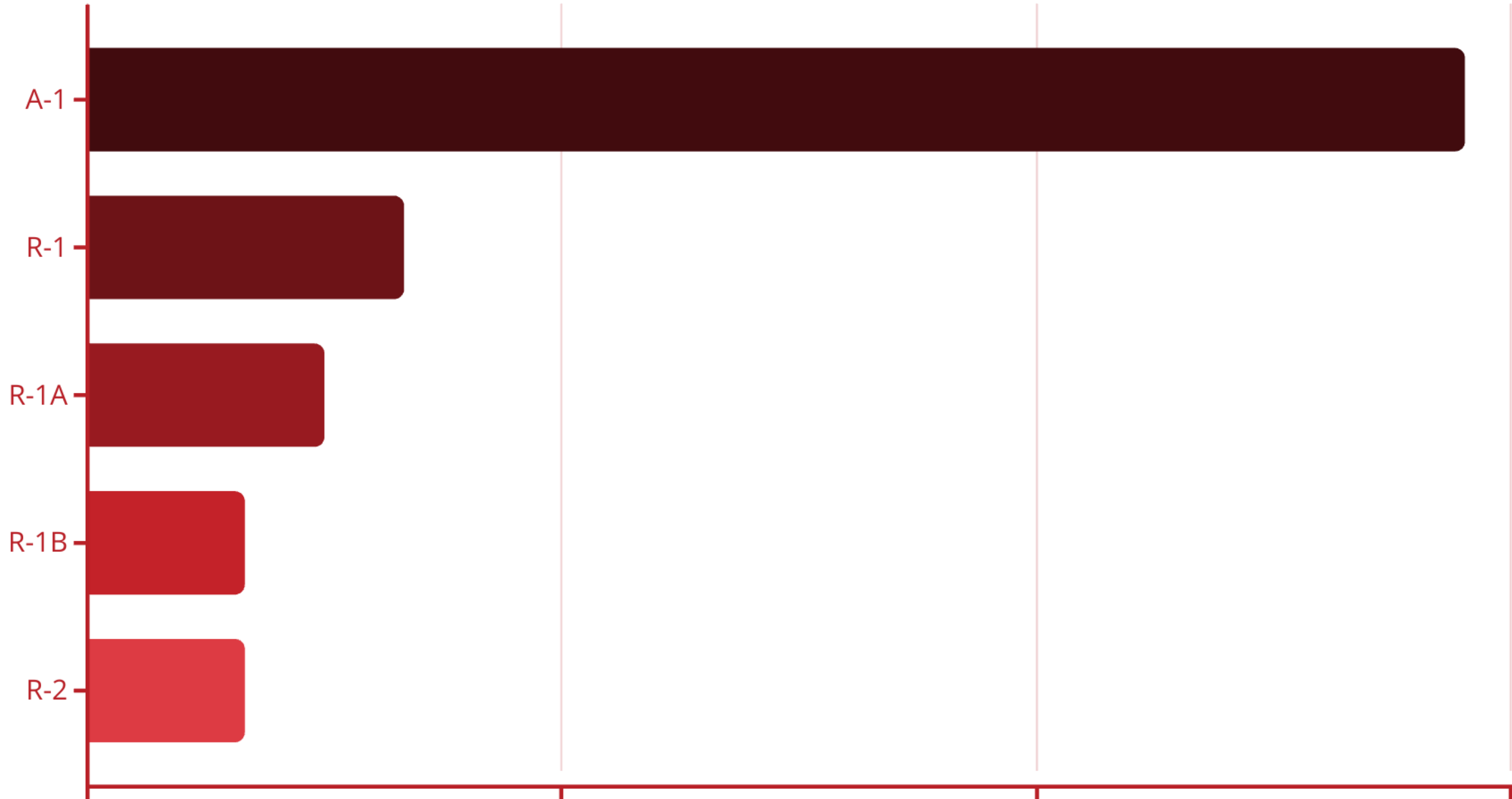
Provides for a variety of dwelling types at higher densities (up to 12 units per acre) in areas served by public water and sanitary sewer.



# Height and Story Limitations

Zoning District	Maximum Height (feet)	Maximum Stories
A-1 (Agricultural)	35	3
R-1 (Single-Family)	35	3
R-1A (Single-Family)	35	3
R-1B (Single-Family)	35	3
R-2 (Multiple-Family)	35	3

# Minimum Lot Size Requirements





# Minimum Heated Floor Area

**1,800**

## R-1 District

Square feet minimum for single-family homes

**1,440**

## R-1A District

Square feet minimum for single-family homes

**1,080**

## R-1B District

Square feet minimum for single-family homes

**550**

## R-2

Square feet minimum for dwelling units



# Setback Requirements

## Front Yard Setbacks

Most residential districts require a minimum front yard setback of 25 feet, with R-2 requiring 20 feet.

## Side Setbacks

Interior lot lines require 10-foot setbacks in most residential districts, with A-1 requiring 25 feet. Corner lots require larger setbacks (15 feet) in R-1, R-1A, R-1B, and R-2 districts to maintain visibility at intersections.

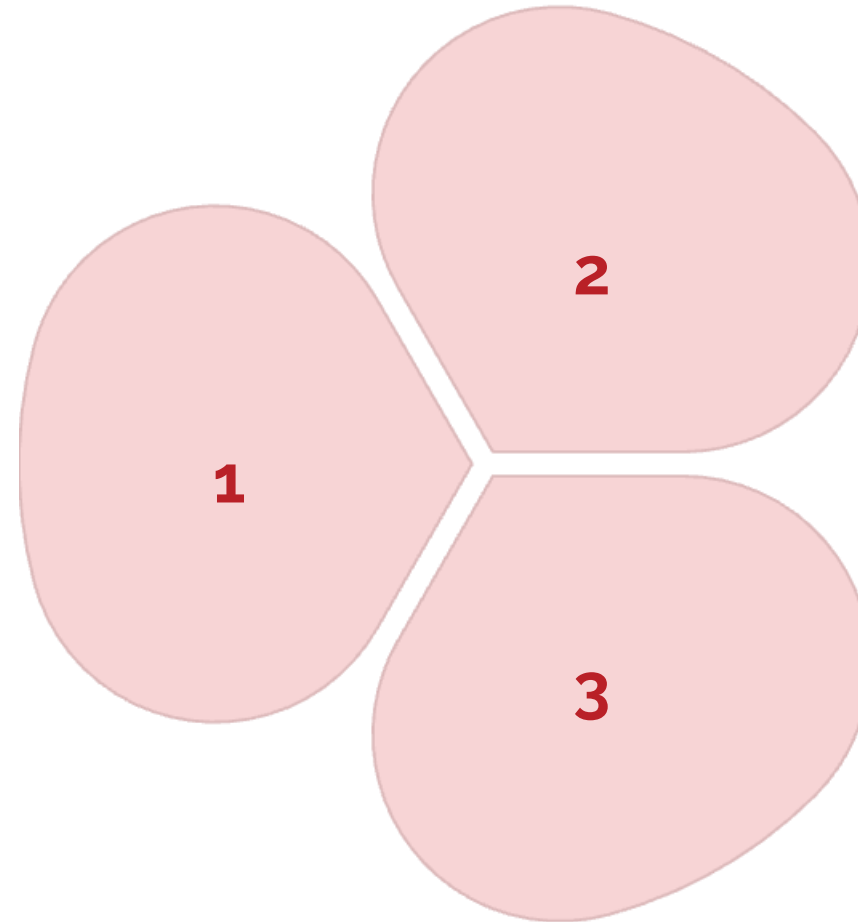
## Rear Setbacks

Rear setbacks range from 10 feet in R-2 districts to 25 feet in A-1 districts. These requirements ensure adequate space between properties and allow for private outdoor areas.

# Building Coverage and Open Space

## Maximum Building Coverage

A-1, R-1, R-1A, R-1B: 35% of lot



## R-2 District

45% maximum building coverage

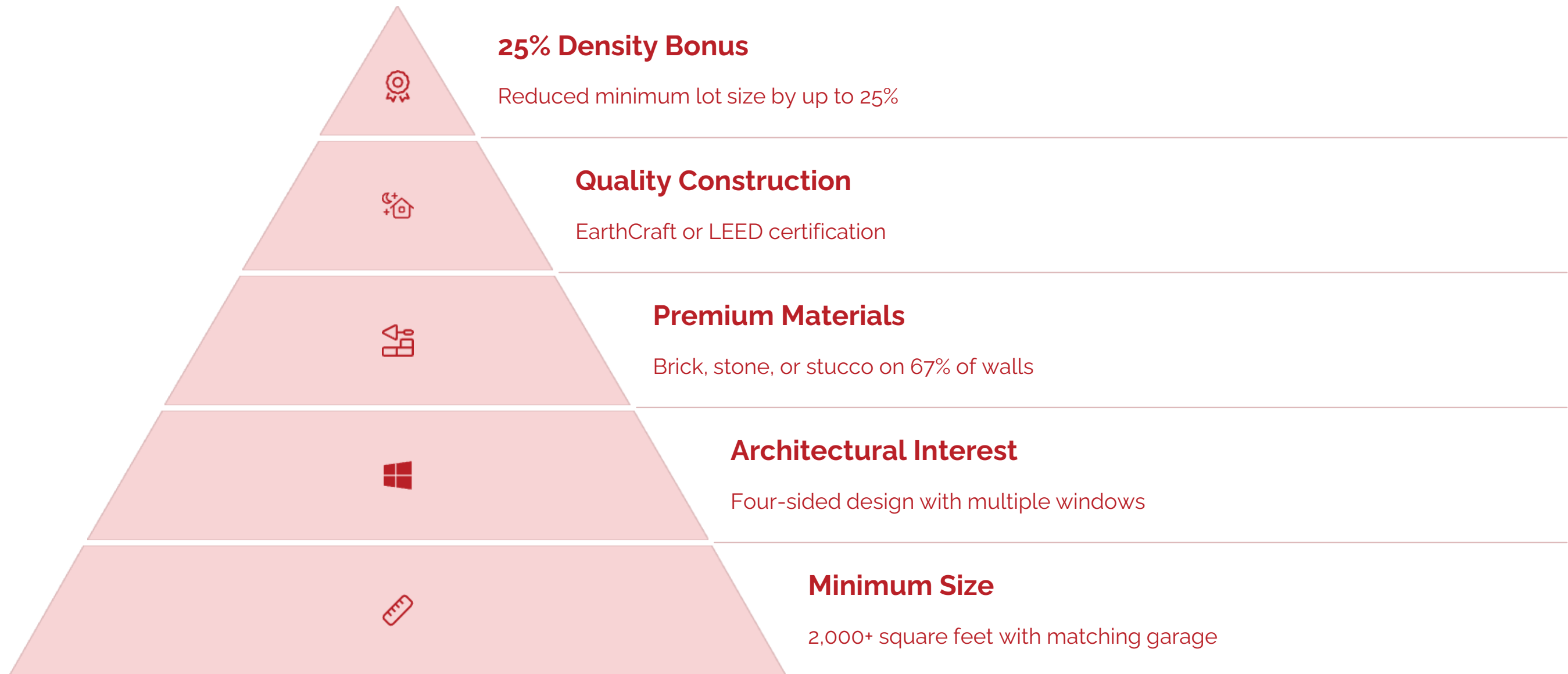
## Minimum Open Space

R-2: 20% landscaped open space

TND: 10% landscaped open space



# Optional Density Bonus



To encourage high-quality development, single-family residential projects in R-1, R-1A, and R-1B districts can qualify for a 25% density bonus by meeting all five criteria. This incentivizes sustainable, aesthetically pleasing construction with premium materials and thoughtful design.

# Permitted Dwelling Types by Zone

## Single-Family Detached

Permitted in all residential zones (A-1, R-1, R-1A, R-1B, R-2,). This is the most widely allowed dwelling type across all districts.

## Two-Family (Duplex)

Conditional use in R-1B; permitted in R-2 district. Not allowed in A-1, R-1, or R-1A zones.

## Townhouses

Conditional use in R-1A; permitted in R-2 districts. Not allowed in A-1, R-1, or R-1B zones.

## Multi-Family

Permitted in R-2. Conditional Use for Highway Business. Existing multi-family buildings are permitted uses in R-2 districts.



# Architectural & Subdivision Requirements



## Facade Materials

At least 25% of each home's facade must be brick, stone, or masonry for durability and aesthetics.



## Housing Variety

Subdivisions with more than 12 units must include at least four distinct housing models to prevent monotony.



## Garage Design

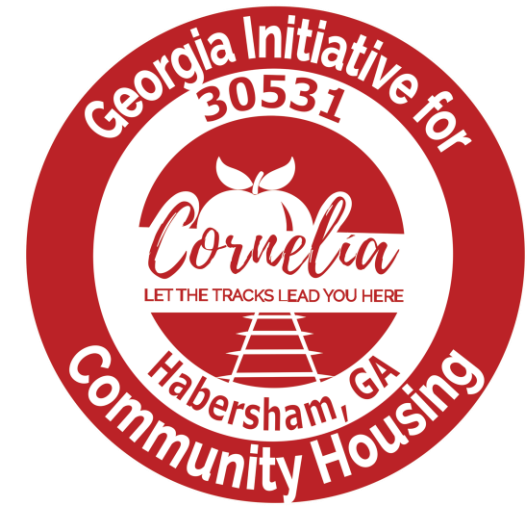
Garages must be recessed a minimum of five feet from the main facade to enhance curb appeal.



## Governance Requirements

All new subdivisions must establish either HOA or covenants to maintain community standards.





# Challenges?

**You mean complete and total train wrecks?**

- Input from Hispanic residents
- Trust from Historically Black neighborhood
- Nay-sayers from “influential” people
- Developers with disingenuous intentions
- NIMBYs