

Novato Northwest Neighborhood Study  
**Zoning Analysis Memo**

City of Novato, CA

March 3, 2015



## Analysis of Existing R10-4.5 Zone

The R10 (Medium Density Multi-Family Residential) Zoning District is “intended for areas appropriate for a variety of medium density dwelling units, including multi-family, two-family and single family residences, either attached or detached. The maximum allowable residential density ranges from 10.1 to 20 dwelling units per acre. The R10 zoning district is consistent with the Medium Density Multiple Family Residential land use designation of the General Plan.”

### Findings from Current Regulations

- Densities described in intent are not achievable. (4500 square feet/du = 9.7 du/acre)
- Does not address existing condition of deep lots.
- With current allowed density, little development is likely to occur.
- Most existing apartment buildings already have more units than the zone allows, discouraging any reinvestment.

- Code includes no form standards outside of building envelope, making results unpredictable.
- Given the low density limit on large lots, developers are encouraged to build larger units to make projects profitable.
- Code encourages 35 ft tall townhouses and/or high-end, large, non-affordable housing.
- 35-ft maximum height encourages 3-story, flat-roofed buildings.
- Code encourages garage doors or parking lots along streetscape.

### Existing Medium Density Multi-Family Residential District Regulations

Max. Number Dwelling Units	1 du/ 4,500 sf of site area	
Min. Lot Area	6,000 sf	
Min. Lot Dimensions	60' min. width	
	100' min. depth	
Max. Height	35 ft	<b>A</b>
Min. Front Setback	20 ft	<b>B</b>
Min. Side Street Setback	10 ft, or 20 feet (bldg. height >20 ft, or for garage using side street access)	<b>C</b>
Min. Side Setback	6 ft (bldg. height <20 ft), or 10 ft (bldg. height >20 ft)	<b>D</b>
Min. Rear Setback	15 ft, or 20 ft (if rear property line abuts a single family zone)	<b>E</b>
Max. Building Coverage	40%	
Floor Area Ratio	n/a	
Multifamily Parking Count	1.2sp/studio; 1.5sp/1 bdrm; 2 sp/2 bdrm; 2.2 sp/3 bdrm; 1sp/ every 3 units for guests	<b>F</b>
Single-Family Parking Count	2 sp/unit; 1 in garage; 3 max.	<b>F</b>
Min. Open Space/Unit	500 sf (250 sf must be private)	

#### Notes:

- Max. 50% paved surface area in front setback.
- Allowable density reduced by 20 percent for lots less than 7,500 square feet or width less than 60 feet.

#### Typical Assumptions for Build-out Examples on Following Pages:

- 10-ft side setbacks are used to take advantage of 35 ft height limit, which allows for 11-ft tall ground floor and 10-ft tall upper floors.

### According to the General Plan, for the Northwest

**Quadrant:** “... Allow multi-family housing only in cases where the City makes the following findings: (1) That the rezoning would not encourage the demolition of a sound dwelling... (2) That the rezoning would not lead to the intrusion of apartments into a predominantly single-family area.”



Photo credit: Google Maps

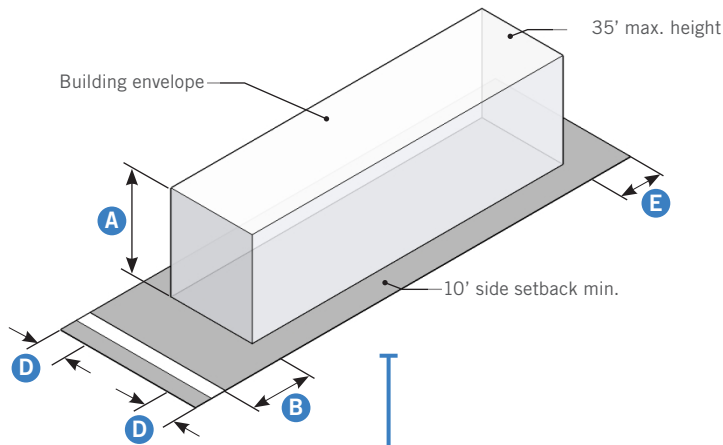
Photo showing neighborhood's existing random pattern of build-out



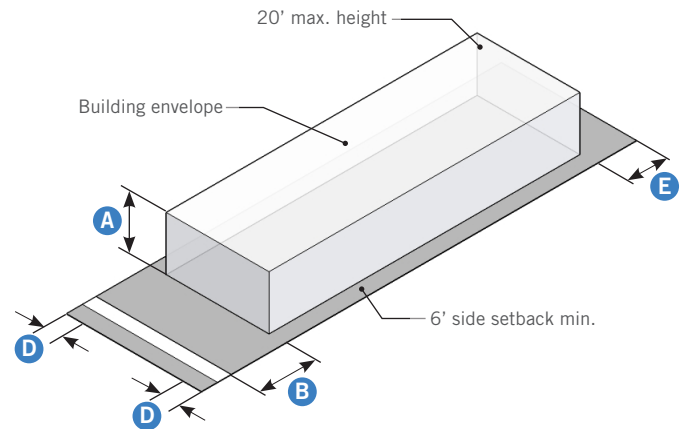
A large apartment building looming over a single-family home.

# Small Lot Example: 50 ft x 150 ft

## Allowable Building Envelope



## Alternate Allowable Building Envelope

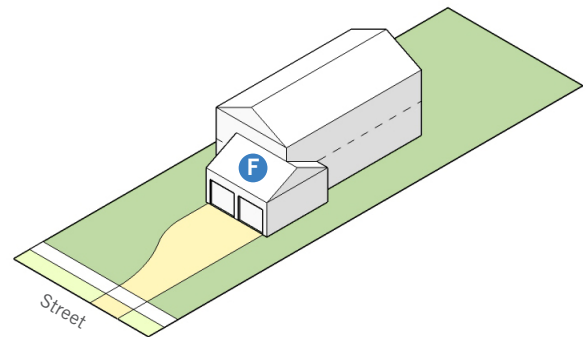
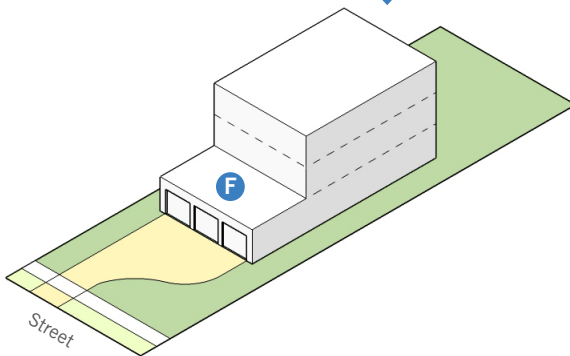


- A** Max. Height
- B** Front Setback
- C** Side St. Setback
- D** Side Setback
- E** Rear Setback
- F** Parking

### Limiting Factors

MIn. Lot Area / Dwelling Unit

Typical Build-out Encouraged by Zoning



### Scenario 1

- 1 large detached house
- 3 off-street parking spaces (all covered)

### Scenario 2

- 1 medium detached house
- 3 off-street parking spaces (two covered)

### Development Scenario Statistics

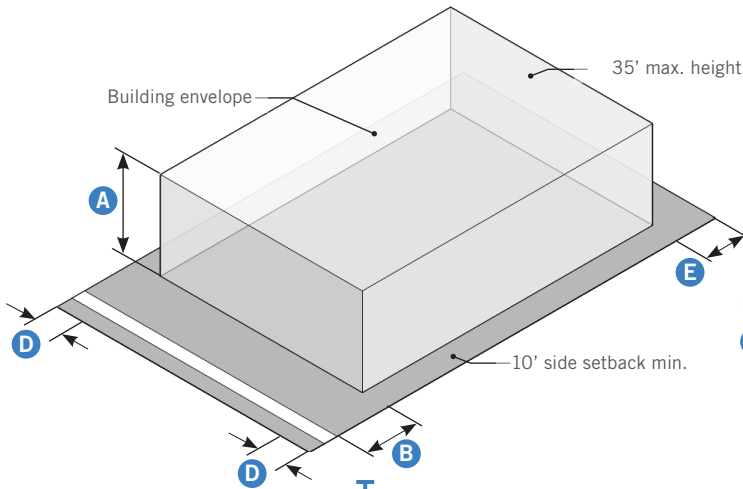
Lot Area	7,500 sq ft
Max. Number of Units	1 unit (Density= 5.88 du/acre)
Square Feet per Units Shown	4,500 sq ft/ 2,500 sq ft
Parking Required (and Shown)	3 spaces max. (1 in garage min.)
Building Height	35 ft/ 28 ft

### Conclusions:

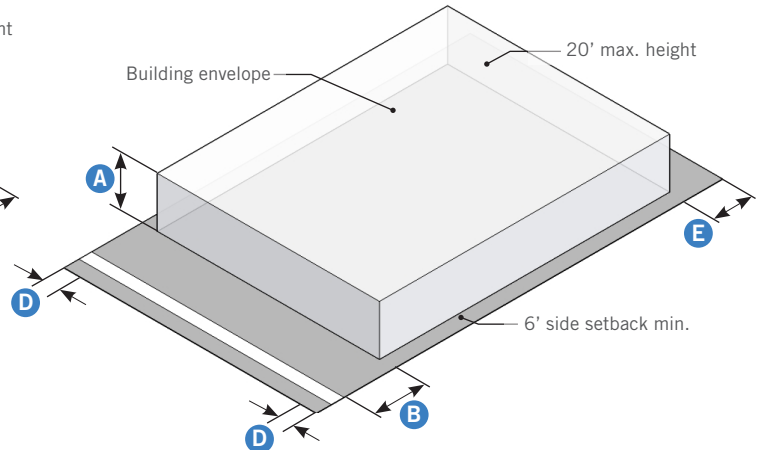
- Code encourages large homes on small lots. This will become an issue as value continues to grow.
- Code encourages large drives and garages along streetscape.

# Medium Lot Example: 100 ft x 150 ft

## Allowable Building Envelope



## Alternate Allowable Building Envelope

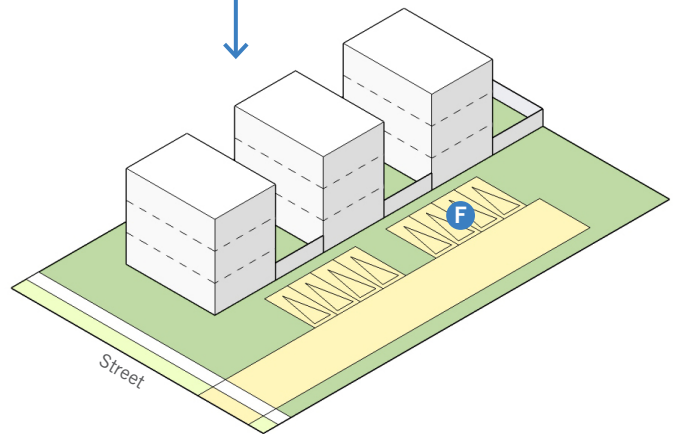
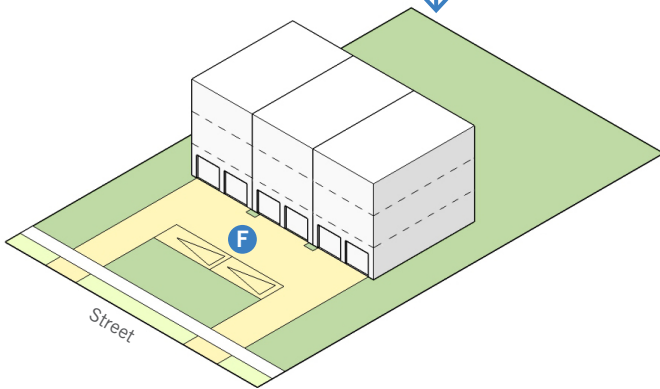


- A** Max. Height
- B** Front Setback
- C** Side St. Setback
- D** Side Setback
- E** Rear Setback
- F** Parking

### Limiting Factors

MIn. Lot Area / Dwelling Unit

Typical Build-out Encouraged by Zoning



**Scenario 1**

- 3 attached townhouses
- 8 off-street parking spaces (6 covered)

**Scenario 2**

- 3 detached townhouses
- 8 off-street parking spaces

### Development Scenario Statistics

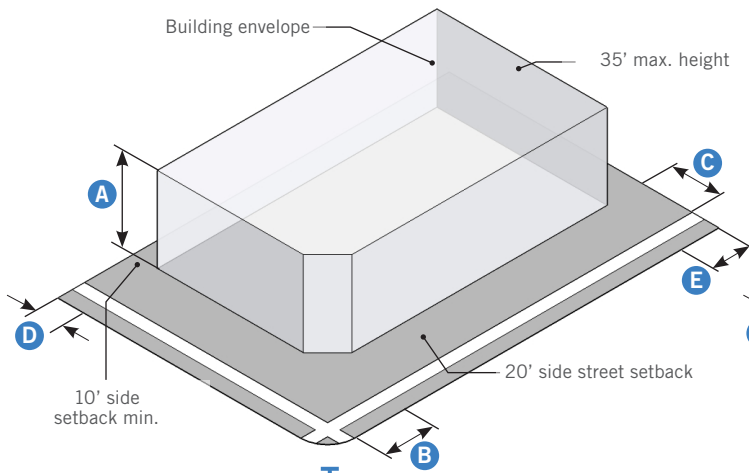
Lot Area	15,000 sq ft
Max. Number of Units	3 units (Density= 8.72 du/acre)
Square Feet per Units Shown	2,500 sq ft
Parking Required (and Shown)	8 spaces (2 guest)
Building Height	35 ft

### Conclusions:

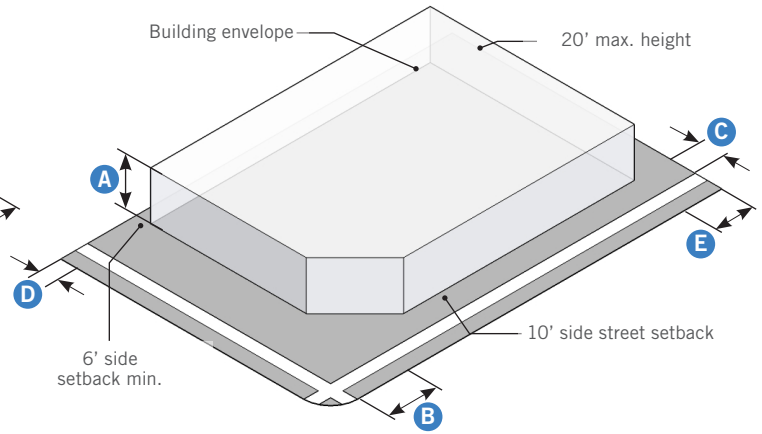
- Most likely build-out scenario is a set of 3-story, flat-roof, detached houses.
- Build-out of 3 units is very economically inefficient so not likely viable.

# Medium Corner Lot Example: 100 ft x 150 ft

## Allowable Building Envelope



## Alternate Allowable Building Envelope

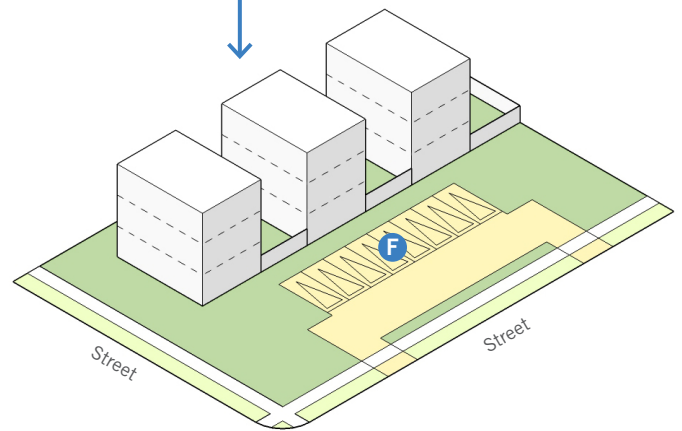
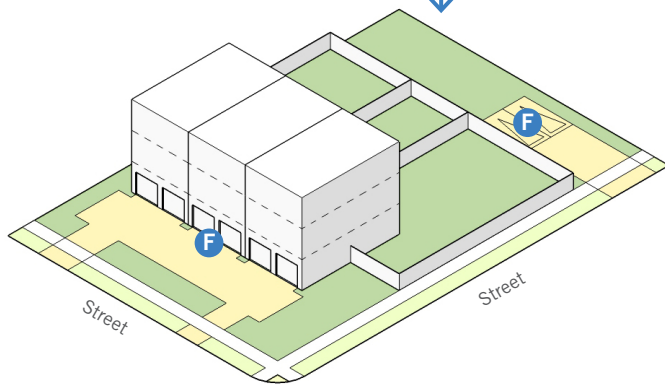


- A** Max. Height
- B** Front Setback
- C** Side St. Setback
- D** Side Setback
- E** Rear Setback
- F** Parking

### Limiting Factors

MIn. Lot Area / Dwelling Unit

### Typical Build-out Encouraged by Zoning



### Scenario 1

- 3 attached townhouses
- 8 off-street parking spaces (6 covered)

### Scenario 2

- 3 detached townhouses
- 8 off-street parking spaces

### Development Scenario Statistics

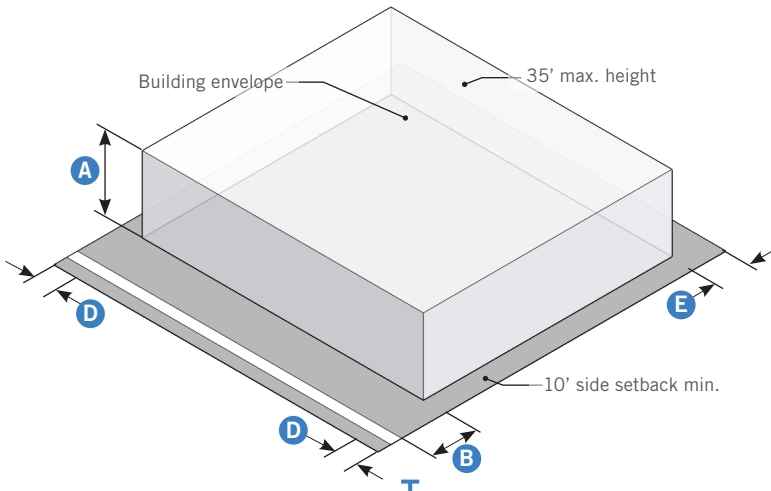
Lot Area	15,000 sq ft
Max. Number of Units	3 units (Density= 8.72 du/acre)
Square Feet per Units Shown	2,500 sq ft
Parking Required (and Shown)	8 spaces (2 guest)
Building Height	35 ft

### Conclusions:

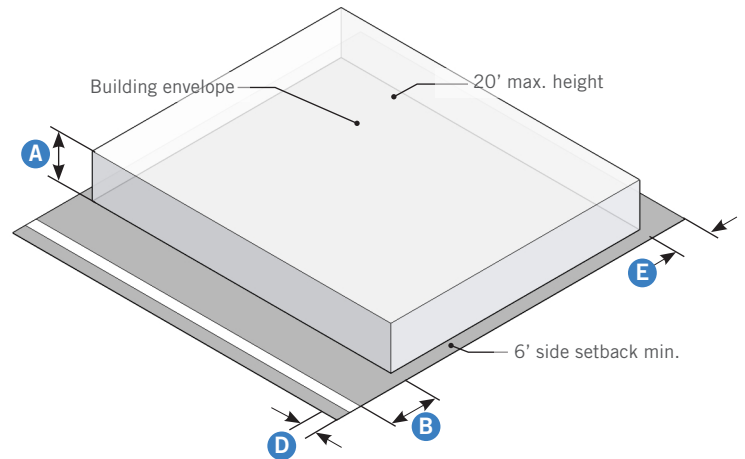
- Large parking area or garages likely along both streetscapes.
- Most likely build-out scenario is a set of 3-story, flat-roof, detached houses.
- Build-out of 3 units is very economically inefficient so not likely viable.

# Large Lot Example: 150 ft x 150 ft

## Allowable Building Envelope



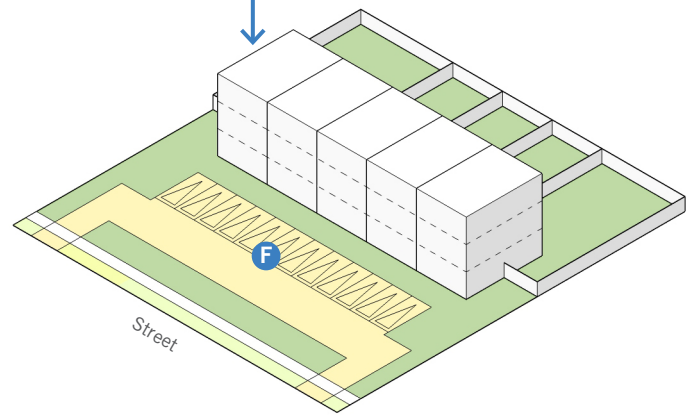
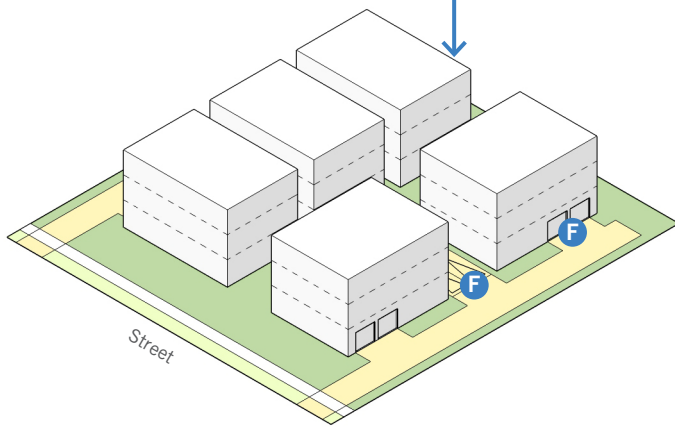
## Alternate Allowable Building Envelope



- A** Max. Height
- B** Front Setback
- C** Side St. Setback
- D** Side Setback
- E** Rear Setback
- F** Parking

**Limiting Factors**  
Min. Lot Area / Dwelling Unit

Typical Build-out Encouraged by Zoning



### Scenario 1

- 5 large detached houses
- 12 off-street parking spaces (10 covered)

### Scenario 2

- 5 attached townhouses
- 12 off-street parking spaces

Development Scenario Statistics	
Lot Area	22,500 sq ft
Max. Number of Units	5 units (Density= 9.67 du/acre)
Square Feet per Units Shown	3,500 sq ft/ 2,500 sq ft
Parking Required (and Shown)	12 spaces (2 guest)
Building Height	35 ft

### Conclusions:

- Most likely build-out would be 5 single-family detached units forced onto the site.
- Current regulations are not encouraging creative, well-designed infill solutions.