

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT



PREPARED AS A PART OF THE CITY OF GOLDEN ZONING CODE AUDIT AND REWRITE

**Draft for Zoning Rewrite Task Force
May 6, 2020**





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Introduction

Substance Process Navigation

This document summarizes the findings of a four-month long diagnostic study conducted by the project team which is comprised of the consultants and the core City staff. The primary objective of the diagnostic phase is to identify issues and challenges regarding the zoning code and the review processes. Once these issues and challenges are identified, a list of zoning code rewrite scope items will be developed together with the staff and the Zoning Rewrite Task Force (ZRTF). This list then will be presented to Planning Commission and City Council in a joint session. Identifying issues and challenges regarding the code and process is a prerequisite for crafting an accurate and reasonable scope for the rewrite. This is the reason why it makes sense to divide the *City of Golden Zoning Code Audit and Rewrite* effort into two phases: the diagnosis phase and the rewrite phase. In order to identify issues and challenges, the project team focused on three aspects of the code: substance (use, density, form regulations, and other standards and guidelines within the code), process (the way the review processes are structured and executed), and navigation (accessibility and user-friendliness of the code). Following this framework, the project team conducted three tasks: the team listened to the stakeholders, analyzed the code, and surveyed the physical environment.

Listening to the stakeholders

Listening to the stakeholders: The primary purpose of this task was to hear from those who use the code daily or those who have gone through the review process recently. To be able to reach and interview a fair representation of the community at large, an invitation to those who were interested in talking to the project team was posted on Guiding Golden. The project team interviewed residents, developers, architects, neighborhood groups and others, as well as Planning and Public Works staff, the City Attorney, Planning Commission, and City Council on January 14, 15, and 21, 2020. We heard about their experiences, their opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of particular parts of the code, and of the review process. Some sessions, such as the two sessions for the neighborhood representatives, were conducted by all five members of the project team. Others sessions, such as those with City Council and Planning Commission members, were conducted by one or two project

team members in two or three concurrent sessions. The summaries of these interviews, as well as the interview questions and schedules, are provided in Appendix A.

Analyzing the code

In addition to the interviews, a survey on Guiding Golden solicited comments from the wider community, and this input also factored in to the production of the Diagnostic Report. Finally, prior to entering the rewrite phase, public feedback will be gathered for the final Diagnostic Report via Guiding Golden, and then provided to City Council for review.

Surveying the physical environment

Analyzing the code: The project team read the code critically and assessed the substance of the code against the values and objectives outlined in policy documents such as the Golden Vision 2030, the Comprehensive Plan, and the neighborhood plans. The team also applied statistical analysis to the zone districts to test variables such as current lot size and building size.

Surveying the physical environment: In order to understand the character in various parts of the city, the project team identified seven context types with distinct street networks, block configurations, and building dispositions. The team also studied the history of urban development together with the history of code amendments to understand the formation of these seven context types. These types are mapped to identify patterns and create a mental image of Golden that is easy to share. The project team conducted further analysis in the R2, R3, and CMU zone districts to comprehend current lot and building sizes, as well as the potential future lot and building sizes as permitted by the code. The project team utilized non-conformity studies to identify dimensional standards within the code that are preventing the regeneration of desired and appreciated neighborhood character.

This document follows the substance, process, and navigation order. Chapter 1 focuses on community character and identifies substance related issues and challenges. The chapter begins with a general analysis of form and context types and provides a brief history of zoning and development in Golden. It identifies issues regarding the sections of the code that address development in the fringe areas. The chapter then focuses specifically on scale, bulk and size within R2, R3, and CMU zone districts. Chapter 2 addresses review processes. It describes challenges for reviewing and enforcing the Sustainability Menus. It also identifies issues regarding the Site Plan Review process, such as varying expectations and frustration by all parties. Chapter 3 covers navigation. It analyzes how Title 18 is organized and identifies scattered information as a primary navigational issue (one needs to visit several sections of the code to find information pertaining to a single property). Each of the three chapters identify a list of issues and challenges. These issues are repeated in the conclusion to provide a simple list to guide the crafting of the rewrite scope items.



Chapter 1

Community Character

It is a common tendency to interpret the term “community character” as if it only refers to the physical environment in a narrow sense. The way we use the term here is more inclusive. Community character refers to the uses, activities, and people as well; it refers to how they are distributed or configured in the urban landscape, and more importantly, how the proximities between them are arranged. As such, community character is a central concept when it comes to drafting codes.

When defined in this broader sense, community character also refers to, or addresses, many of the primary values, themes, and goals outlined within the Vision 2030 and the Comprehensive Plan. For example, the goal of creating accessible, walkable, clean, and safe neighborhoods with friendly neighbors and a strong sense of community, or the goals of enhancing local businesses, and creating a diverse downtown, are all related to community character. That is why focusing on community character is a good way to identify the mismatches between the regulations within the current code and the goals of the Vision 2030 and the Comprehensive Plan.

During our interviews, we heard of the frustration regarding the emerging community character. In order to understand the sources of this frustration, we reviewed how development evolved in Golden, and how the various versions of the code guided this development. This is why we will start with a brief history of urban development and zoning in Golden.

Brief history of urban development and zoning

Early days

Golden was the capital of the Colorado Territory before Colorado became a state in 1876, and a diverse and unique downtown was developed. Even today, we observe a vital downtown “main street” environment with a set of diverse and thriving businesses. Among the seven context types, which are outlined in the pages following, the project team has identified the *downtown “main street” context* (pages 6 and 7) as one of the earliest. The historic maps also show that even in

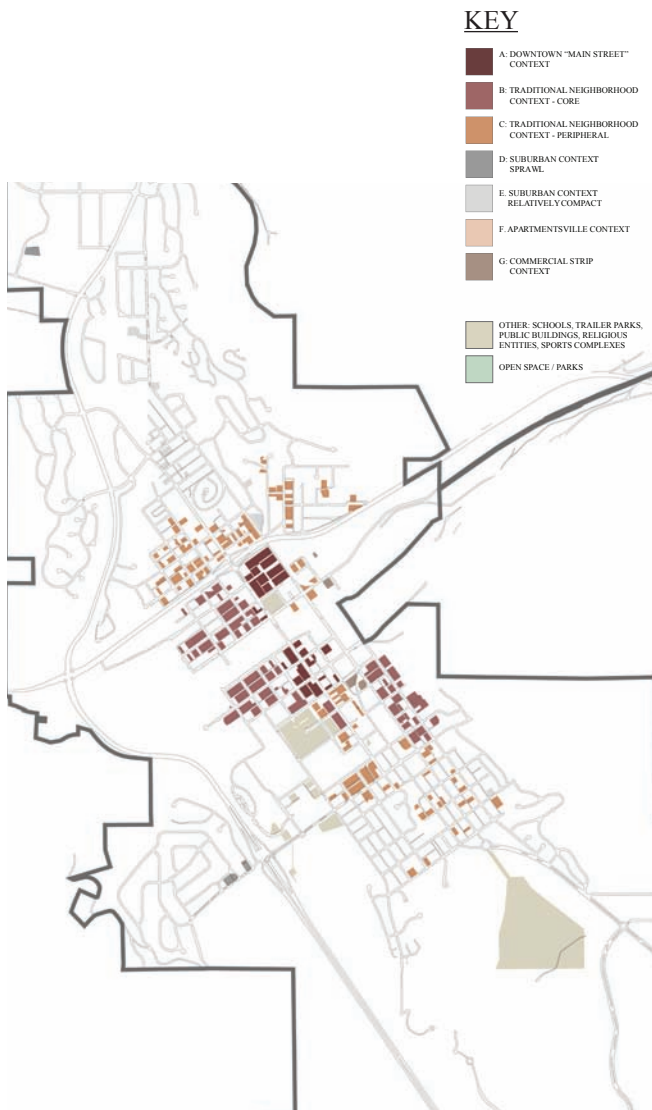


Figure 1.1: Parcels developed between 1850 and 1939. The colors indicate the context types presented on pages 6-19.

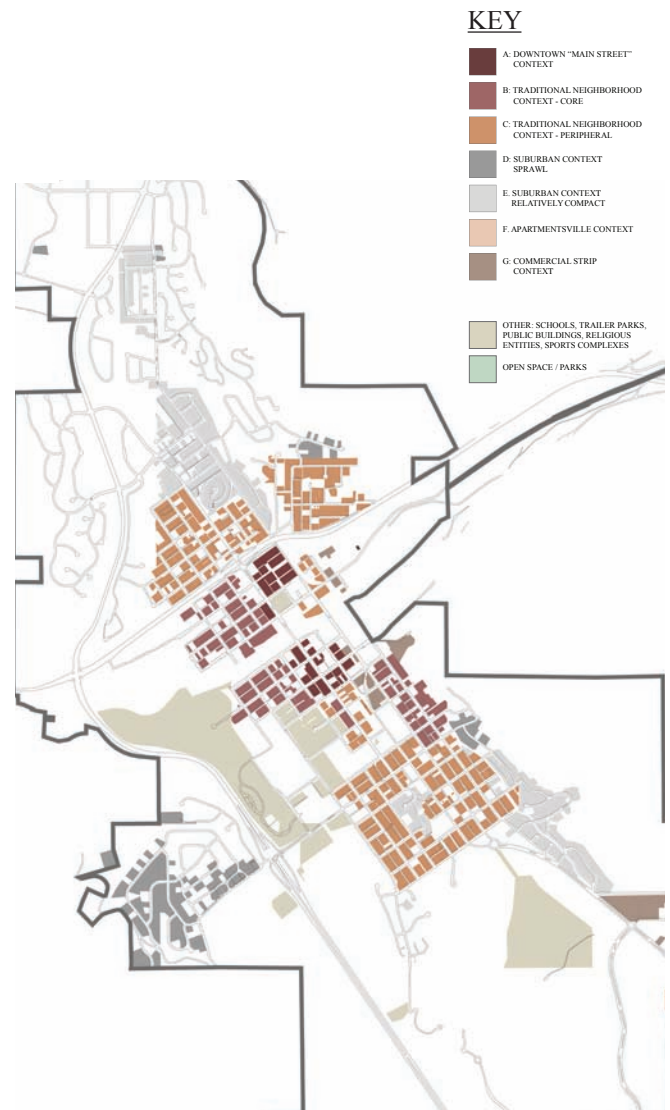


Figure 1.2: Parcels developed between 1850 and 1969. The colors indicate the context types presented on pages 6-19.

Up until the forties

the early days, Golden's Washington Avenue (Golden's "main street") was surrounded by vital neighborhoods that showed the characteristics of the *traditional neighborhood context* (pages 8 and 9). Until the Second World War, development followed the characteristics of these two context types which emerged prior to the first zoning ordinance in 1949. In the 50s and early 60s, the first generation of suburban development started to take place in the peripheral areas (figures 1.1 and 1.2). Since these districts were relatively compact, especially when compared with some of the recent suburban development, the project team called this context the *suburban context - relatively compact* (pages 14 and 15).

Most of the early development, up to the late 60s, happened contiguous to downtown with the exception of Beverly Heights. However after the 1970s, development leap frogged to the south and north. Most of this new development was in the form of the *suburban context- sprawl* (pages 12-13), *apartmentville* (pages 16-17), and *commercial strip* (text continues on page 22)

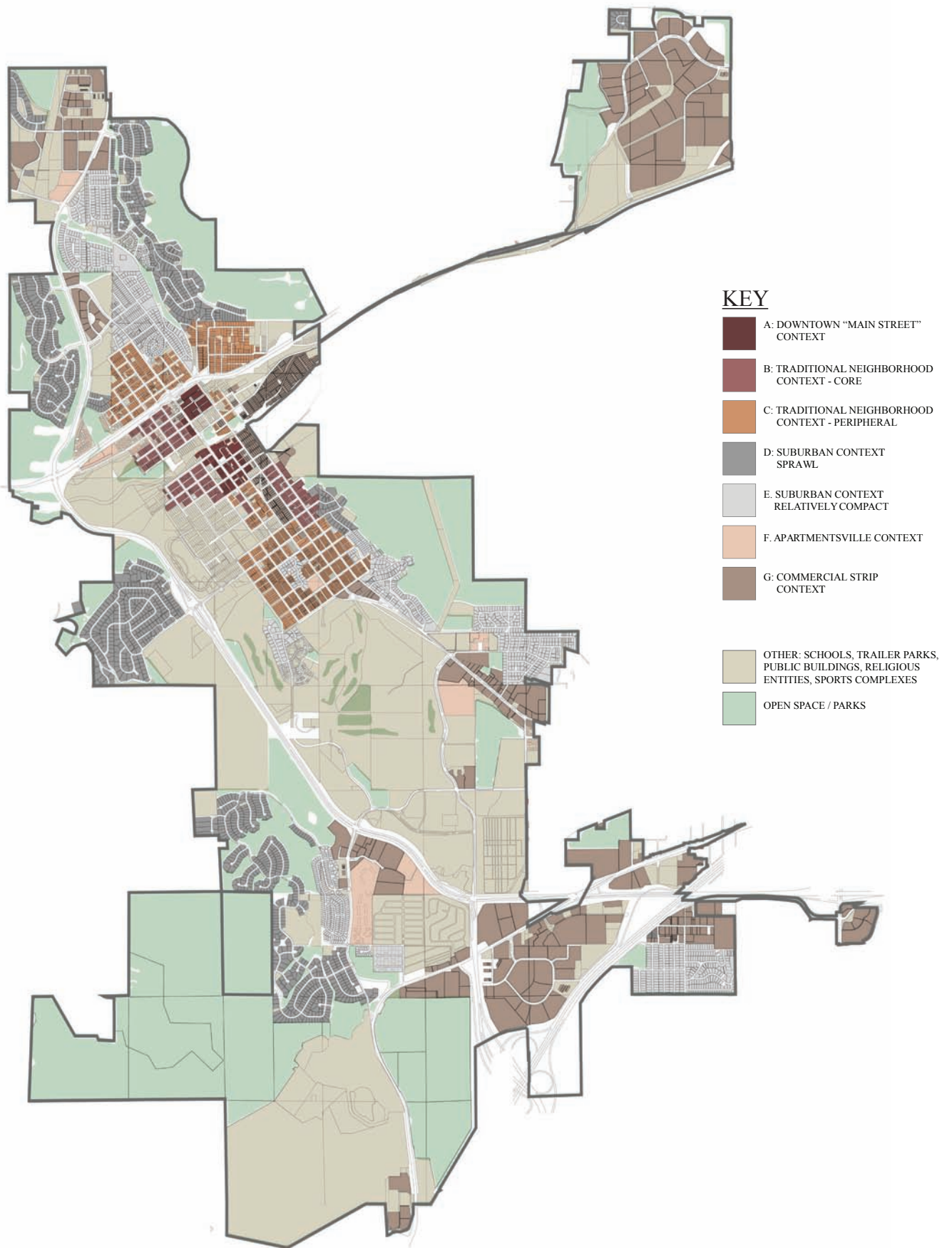


Figure 1.3: The colors indicate the context types presented on pages 6-19.

CONTEXT TYPE A: DOWNTOWN “MAIN STREET” CONTEXT



Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view
buildings located at the front property line form a strong building presence is the most identifying factor of this context.

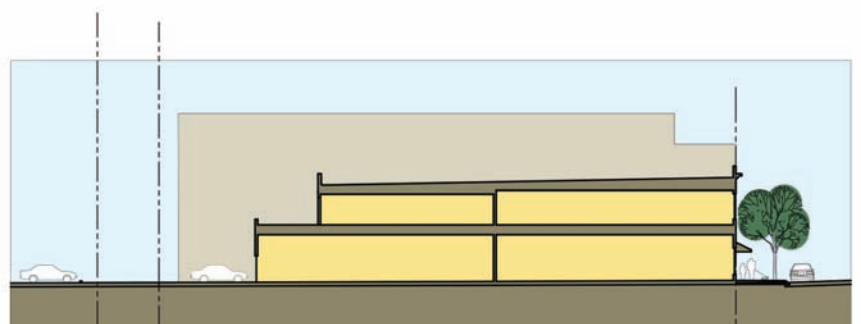


Street and block network figure ground plan
Ground floors are predominantly occupied by pedestrian-oriented businesses and uses. Arcades encroaching the street right-of-



Context in figure ground plan

Washington Avenue is one of the richest and most diverse “Main Street” examples in the Western U.S. Even though Washington Avenue, between 8th and 14th, can be considered as the core area that represents this context best, most of the characteristics of this context type can be observed at adjacent blocks, especially to the east. An orthogonal street grid with small blocks are typical. Most lots are accessed by alleys. Lots are deep and narrow with limited street frontages. Attached



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- Well-connected orthogonal grid with small blocks (300' x 300' is typical)
- Alleys are provided
- Street trees, detached sidewalks, on-street parking
- Occasional arcades over sidewalks (encroaching the street right-of-way)



Arcades over the sidewalk at Washington Avenue

way are a unique historic pattern that can be observed in Golden. The diversity of architectural expression and building form, especially variations in building height, create a unique character. Wide, uninterrupted sidewalks between building face and the curb and on-street parking are typical. Street trees are located in planters or in tree grates. Occasional raised planters with seats add to the richness of the streetscape. Even though many of the buildings are a century old (Golden was the capital of the Colorado Territory, before Colorado became a state in 1876), there are a significant amount recent mixed-use, infill projects. Even though some infill developments are larger in comparison to older buildings, generally they are well-articulated to fit into the context. Some of these new developments are five stories high with residential apartments, which provides some residential use and 24 hour “eyes on the street” presence in downtown Golden.



Diversity of building forms at Washington Avenue



New infill, mixed-use construction at Washington Avenue

CONTEXT TYPE B: TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT - CORE



Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view



Street and block network figure ground plan



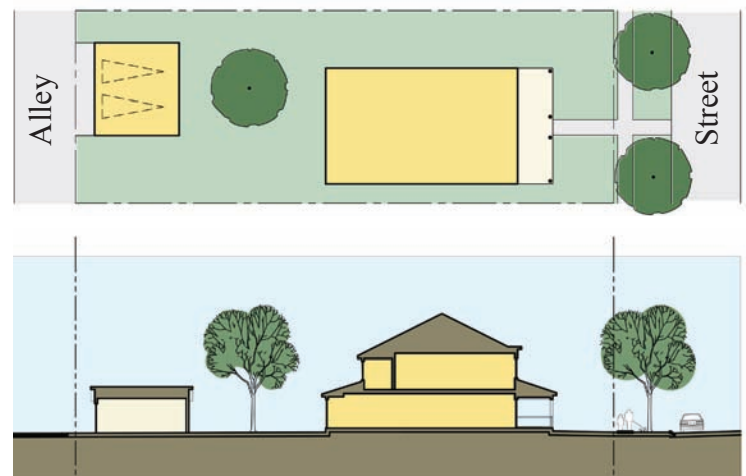
Context in figure ground plan

street trees located on tree lawns, and on-street parking are common. These three aspects together calm the traffic speed naturally. Even though most of the traditional neighborhoods were built in the early part of the 20th century (20's, 30's, and 40's), recently constructed infill buildings and additions are common in Golden's traditional neighborhood context. Ancillary units built above the garages at the alley are usually well-scaled and fit into the context. In terms of the building massing, architectural style, and roof forms, there is a high



Block scale configuration figure ground plan

The Traditional neighborhood is one of the most connected and walkable among Golden's context types. An orthogonal street grid with small blocks are typical. Most lots are accessed by alleys. Lots are deep and narrow with limited street frontages. This increases the frequency of buildings along the sidewalk. Smaller lots facing side streets are also common. Buildings with generously sized porches are usually placed relatively close to the sidewalk. Streets are sized for slow speeds. Detached sidewalks, regular



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- *Well-connected orthogonal grid with small blocks (300' x 300' is shown in the example)*
- *Alleys are provided*
- *Streets are sized for slow speeds*
- *Street trees, detached sidewalks, on-street parking*



12th Street

- *Deep lots with narrow street frontages (50' x 140' is typical as shown in the example)*
- *Side-street facing smaller lots are common*
- *Buildings with generously sized porches are located relatively close to the sidewalk*



9th Street

level of diversity in this context. It is nevertheless possible to observe some consistency in building size and disposition as perceived from the street. Some of the recent townhouse developments, however, provide exceptionally wide and unbroken walls along the street, which can be characterized as not fitting into this context, especially when the same townhouse street elevation is repeated many times. Even the well-articulated town houses (with setbacks and material changes) create a wall effect, when repeated many times.



Ford Street

CONTEXT TYPE C: TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT - PERIPHERAL



Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view



Street and block network figure ground plan



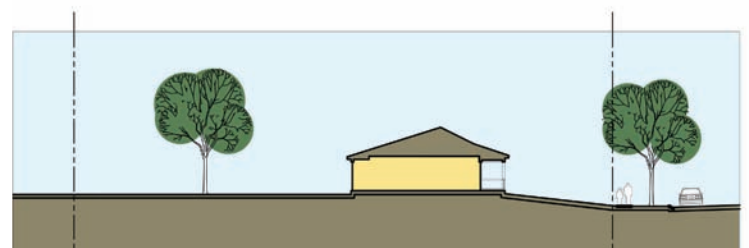
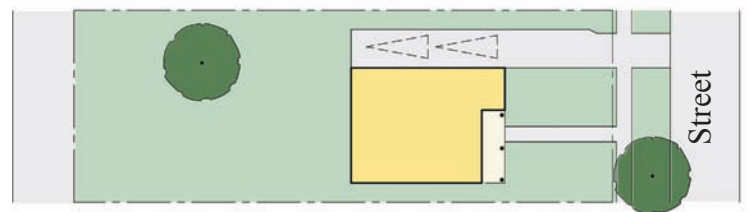
Context in figure ground plan

traditional neighborhood context. In general, this context exhibits high levels of walkability, some attached sidewalks exist together with detached. The most identifying characteristic of this context is the diversity of building types and orientation. It is the most diverse context in terms of building age and disposition; even though most lots are narrow and deep with narrow and deep buildings, there are cases where wide and shallow buildings are placed on lots with wider frontages. In this context



Block scale configuration figure ground plan

The traditional neighborhood blocks at the edge of districts, especially when adjacent to unique geographical features, depict more diversity in terms of block and lot configurations, as well as building types and orientation. In this context, there are examples of street loaded lots even when alleys are provided. There are also occasional blocks or half blocks with no alleys. These features provide enough reason for identifying this context as “peripheral” as distinguished from the “core”



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- *Well-connected orthogonal grid with occasional half blocks and large blocks*
- *Alleys are often provided, but there are also blocks with no alleys*
- *Streets are sized for slow speeds.*
- *Some blocks have detached sidewalks, some attached sidewalks*



Cheyenne Street

- *Deep and narrow buildings coexist with shallow and wide buildings even on the same block face*
- *There are a significant amount of lots with side drives*
- *Single-story and one-and-a-half story buildings coexist with taller buildings*
- *Porch sizes vary*



5th Street

architectural style is widely varied as well. Usually buildings constructed prior to the 1970s provide a block face with one or two-story buildings, where as recently constructed infill buildings can and usually reach up to three stories. Even though there is a diversity of heights and size in this context, there is a consistency in building disposition as perceived from the street. Front porches are typical.



Sunshine Parkway

CONTEXT TYPE D: SUBURBAN CONTEXT - SPRAWL



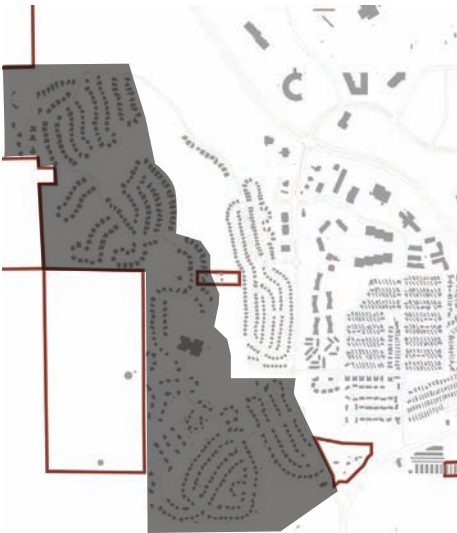
Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view



Street and block network figure ground plan



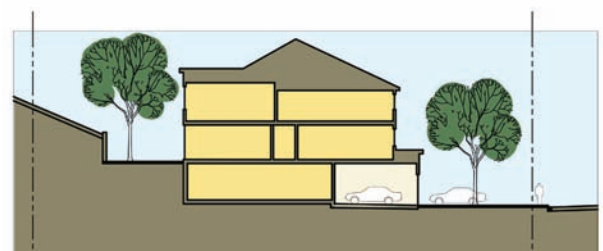
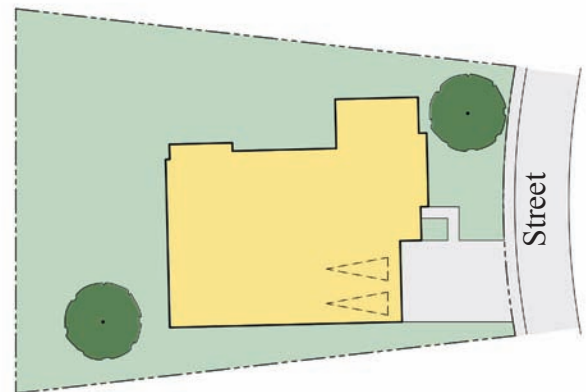
Context in figure ground plan

The kind of urban development that is (a) low density, (b) single use, (c) car dependent, and (d) isolated or distanced from other urban contexts, is called “sprawl” in urban planning literature. This kind of context is generic rather than place specific, that is, it is “anywhere U.S.A.” In this context the street network predominantly follows a street structure with many dead-ends and limited loops, which reduces connectivity and increases distances to any of the urban services and businesses located

within adjacent neighborhoods. Increased distances discourage walking, except walking for recreational purposes (if trails are provided) as distinguished from daily uses such as running errands. Driving a private car is the most common form of transportation in and out of the neighborhood. There are no alleys provided. The residential suburban context - sprawl, is formed predominantly (sometimes completely) by detached, single family houses with similar lot and building sizes. Lot sizes of 7,000 square feet or more are common. Buildings generally accommodate total floor areas of 2,800 square feet or higher (not including the basement floor area). Smaller buildings are rare in this context. Streets are sized for speeds higher than



Block scale configuration figure ground plan



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- *Street system follows a street structure with many dead-ends and limited loops*
- *No alleys are provided*
- *Streets are sized for speeds higher than the posted speed*
- *Garages face the street*
- *Attached sidewalks are common*



Canyons Point

- *Wide frontages are typical*
- *Deep front and rear setbacks are common*
- *Open space is usually located at the rear, abutting private outdoor space*
- *House sizes are consistently larger than the average.*



Table Drive

the posted speed limits, therefore they are wider than the average. Attached sidewalks are common. Garages face the street and are accessed by means of curb cuts. Wide frontages, deep front and rear setbacks are common. Open space is usually provided at the rear, abutting the private outdoor space of the house.



Mesa Drive

CONTEXT TYPE E: SUBURBAN CONTEXT - RELATIVELY COMPACT



Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view



Street and block network figure ground plan

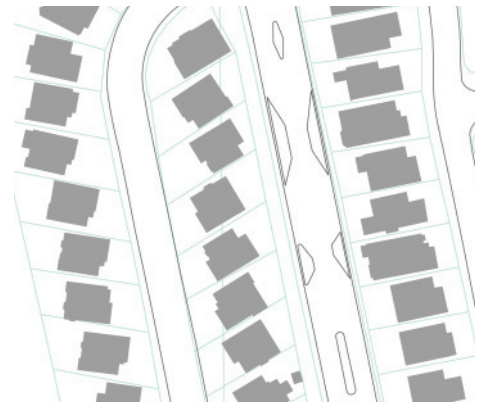


Context in figure ground plan

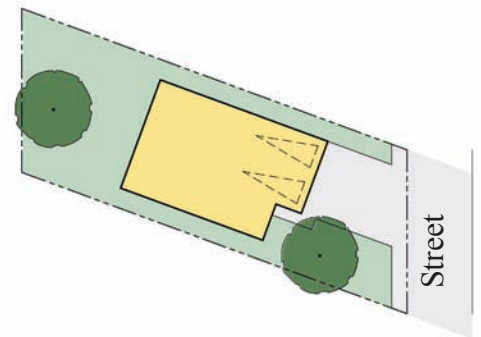
Even though this street network incorporates some loops and large blocks, and urban fabric is more compact than that of the sprawl context. Other characteristics of sprawl still exist, including single use, car dependent, and limited connectivity. Similar to the previous context type, this is a generic context, rather than place specific, that is, it is still “anywhere U.S.A.” Large blocks and blocks abutting open space are common. Cul-de-sacs are also part of the street network. Driving

a private car is the most common form of transportation for this context as well, especially for trips in and out of the neighborhood. There are no alleys provided. This context is predominantly formed (sometimes completely) by detached, single family houses with similar lot and building sizes. Lot and house sizes vary from area to area, but are usually similar or the same within each development. In other words, the block scale diversity is usually very low.

Streets are sized for speeds higher than the posted speed limits, therefore, they are wider than the average. Attached sidewalks are common. Garages face the street and are accessed by means of curb cuts. Deep front and rear setbacks are common. Open space is usually provided at the rear, abutting the private outdoor space of the house.



Block scale configuration figure ground plan



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- *Large blocks with some dead-ends are common*
- *No alleys are provided*
- *Streets are sized for speeds higher than the posted speed*
- *Garages face the street*
- *Attached sidewalks are common*



Somerset

- *Frontages size varies*
- *Deep front and rear setbacks are common*
- *Open space is usually located at the rear, abutting private outdoor space*
- *House sizes vary from area to area, but usually are similar within each development*



Wyoming Street



Poppy Street

CONTEXT TYPE F: APARTMENTSVILLE CONTEXT



Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view



Street and block network figure ground plan

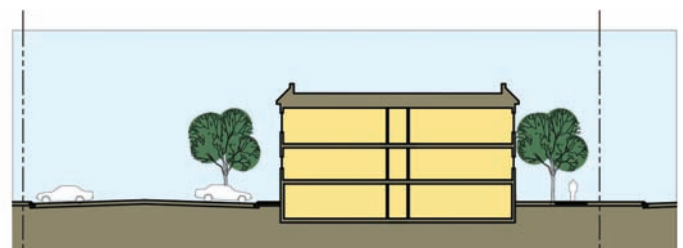
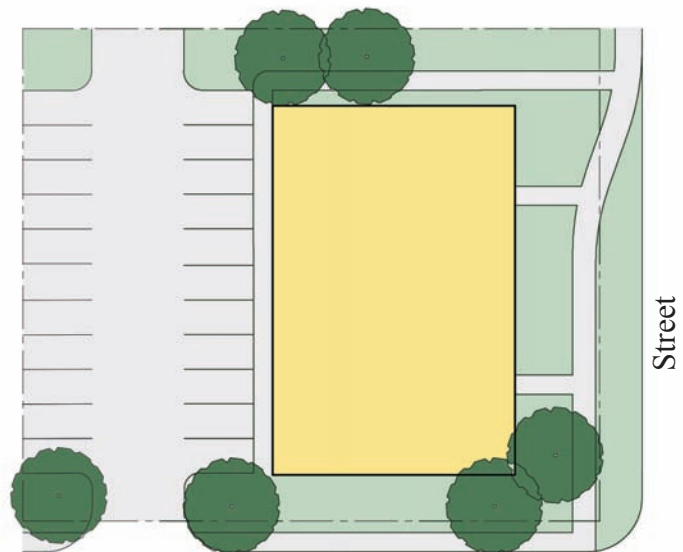


Context in figure ground plan

This context type refers to blocks that accommodate only, or predominantly, apartment buildings. That is, buildings with multiple residential units, occupied either as rental units or as condominiums, where units are owned individually and the land owned collectively. Large blocks with unique interior parking configurations are common. Limited traffic access with no through traffic is typical. Even though some recent examples accommodate limited street orientation, buildings usually do

not address the street with the same intensity we observe in traditional neighborhood or downtown “main street” contexts. Parcels as large as a block or a half-block are common.

Building sizes and footprints are among the largest when compared with other context types. Large buildings with one or two entrances from the sidewalk are typical.



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- *Large blocks with their own interior parking configuration are common*
- *Limited vehicular access with no through traffic is typical*
- *Block or half-block sized lots are common*
- *Large buildings are typical (block or half-block sized buildings)*
- *One or two entrances per block face is typical*

Buildings surrounded by surface parking are also common. Single use, residential units (similar size and configuration responding to similar life styles) are located within large buildings with limited massing diversity; this is one of the most identifying characteristics of this context, even though some complexes incorporate limited common facilities, such as rec rooms and common houses.



Fox Hill Apartments on West 16th Avenue



West 8th Apartments on 8th Street



Golden Apartments on South Golden Road at Utah Street

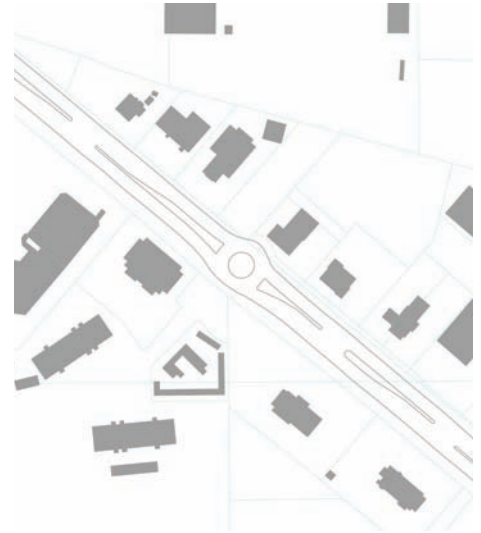
CONTEXT TYPE G: COMMERCIAL STRIP CONTEXT



Context in aerial view



Street and block network in aerial view in front of the buildings. Service roads at the rear for truck delivery are common. Landscape buffers between commercial properties

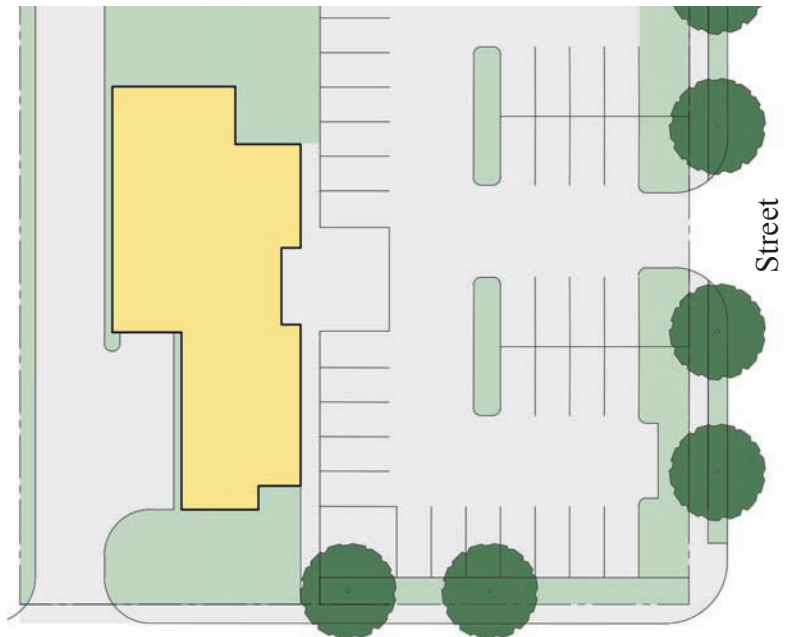


Street and block network figure ground plan and other uses, especially when the other uses abut the rear property line, are common. This configuration reduces the



Context in figure ground plan

If the residential, suburban only context is on one side of the coin called sprawl, the commercial strip is on the other side. As the name suggests, the commercial strip is a group of commercial buildings lined up along a thoroughfare. This kind of context is generic rather than place specific, that is, it is “anywhere U.S.A.” Long linear half-blocks that continue along the street with no street intersections for 1/4 or 1/3 of a mile are common. It is a car-oriented context with ample parking located



Lot Diagram (Plan and Section)

- Long linear half-blocks are common (they may reach 1/3 or 1/4 of a mile in length)
- Large surface parking lots are located at the front of buildings
- Low lot coverages (such as 0.2 or 0.3) are common
- Predominantly single-story buildings with occasional second stories
- Service roads at the rear for truck delivery are common



Ford Street

opportunity for pedestrian connections. There are almost no pedestrian connections from adjacent neighborhoods, except for the occasional cross street that creates a street intersection. Low lot coverages (total building footprint divided by the total area of the lot), such as 0.2 and 0.3 are common. Buildings are predominantly single-story with occasional second stories. Driving a private car is the most common form of transportation in and out of the strip.



South Golden Road - large parking lots front the street



Washington Avenue - rear of businesses face the street

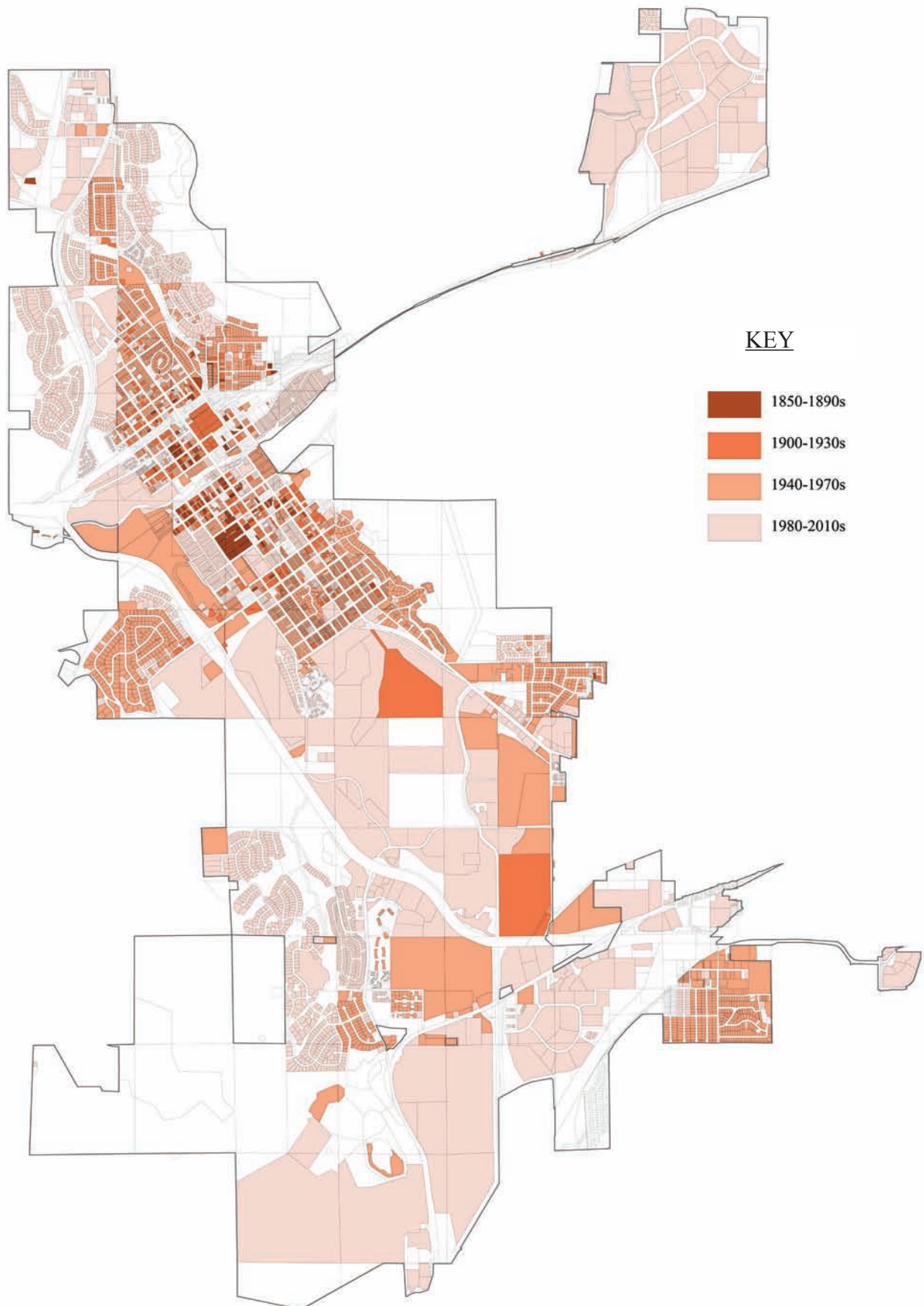


Figure 1.4: The development history of Golden by year

1949(Ord.256)	Five zoning districts established - land use, lot sizes, building height, setbacks
1953(Ord.355)	R1-A added - six zoning districts total
1956(Ord.391)	Residential minimum lot frontage (60 ft) and lot size (6000 sf) for subdivided lots
1960(Ord.456)	Eleven zone districts established - land use, density, lot sizes, building height, setbacks, floor areas
1973(Ord.662)	Official zoning map and districts amended
1973(Ord.682)	Zoning updates, PUD added
1993(Ord.1179)	Bulk standards, land use regulations, and zoning map overhauled. Current, graduated-zoning code adopted.
1995(Ord.1259)	Creation of duplex and townhome subdivisions
1996(Ord.1331)	Low power telecommunications sites regulations added as special uses to code. Eliminated in 2017 - Ord. 2064
1999(Ord.1460)	Vehicular drive thru uses added to code
2000(Ord.1480)	Animal restrictions and definitions for household pets
2000(Ord.1513)	Adult entertainment regulations
2001(Ord.1555)	Outdoor uses in M1 district now requires SUP - former use by right
2005(Ord.1699)	College & University bldgs added as SUP in R-3 district. Maximum building heights for campus buildings
2009(Ord.1847)	Definitions and regulations for pole-mounted windturbines added to code. Home occupation standards added.
2009(Ord.1849)	Temporary storage containers in residential zoning districts
2010(Ord.1874)	height of infill multifamily construction
2011(Ord.1882)	ADU regulations added to code
2011(Ord.1896)	Chickens permitted in RE and R1 districts
2012 (Ord.1914)	Solar Gardens, micro breweris, micro distillaries added to code. Minimum lot frongages in residential districts reduced by 10 feet. Setbacks in "C" and "M" districts reduced to 5 feet from 30 feet
2012(Ord.1919)	SUP for certain urban AG uses become administrative decisions
2013(Ord.1941)	Residential multifamily use comprising more than 75 percent building square footage created as special use. Enacts specific parking standards for downtown areas.
2013(Ord.1942)	Enacting Sec. 18.28.560 CMU Zoning
2014(Ord.1997)	Plannig Commission replaces City Council as the approval authority for variances when such request exceeds the planning director's authority. Maximum bldg height exceptions, lot coverage restrictions, front porches added.
2015(Ord.2017)	All uses permitted in the RC zone district, aside from residential uses, are only permitted in a mixed-use development. SUP procedures for animal uses updated. Vacations procedures updated
2017(Ord.2049)	Enacting Code Section 18.26 - urban agriculture regulations
2017(Ord.2064)	Enacting Code Section 18.90 - Telecommunication facilities. Previousy telecommunication language struck from the code.
2018(Ord.2068)	Reduced building setback and lot frontage updates for attached and commonwall structures, corner lots, front porches.
2018(Ord.2078)	Short term rental licensing and regulations
2018(Ord.2082)	CMU standards amended to add SUP standards and Streetscape Standards
2019(Ord.2110)	Variances appeal adds City Council as the last appeal body prior to court action, bulk plane restrictions for R2 and portions of R3, Lot coverage restriction for R2 and portions of R3, front porch requirements
2019(Ord.2114)	Subdivisions and lot edits for minor subdivisions, additional bulk standards in R2 and R3, 100% SUP in C1 and C2 shall follow R2 lot/bulk standards
1996(Ord.1315)	Created formal Site Development Regulations and procedures. Repealing the old 18.40 from 1973
2000(Ord.1517)	Edits to procedures
2003(Ord.1622)	Landscape standards added
2005(Ord.1716)	Created the modern Site Development Regulations present in code.
2010(Ord.1867)	Edits to grading and drainage, landscaping, open space, and requirement of Sustainability Menu submission form.
2012(Ord.1916)	Landscape plan requirements for commercial and multifamily properties
2014(Ord.1997)	Sustainability Menu Adopted
2017(Ord.2048)	Updates to sustainability menu
2018(Ord.2082)	Streetscape Standards added for CMU Districts
2019(Ord.2097)	Sustainability standards added for site plan approval of multifamily and commercial projects

Table 1.1: History of zoning ordinances and major revisions of the code from 1949 to present day.

Generic context types

(pages 18-19) context types (also see figures 1.3 and 1.4). All three context types are generic rather than specific to Golden. In other words, they can be characterized by the phrase “anywhere U.S.A.” These context types happened in similar ways in many parts of the country.

The reason why the *traditional neighborhood* and *downtown “main street”* contexts, which are identified as part of Golden’s unique character, did not continue to be employed in newer developments is complex and multi-dimensional. In addition to the dominant car-oriented, urban planning paradigm of the 50s and 60s, the first generation zoning, known as Euclidean Zoning, prioritized the protection of single family, detached residential neighborhoods and separated them from other uses. For our purposes, it is important to state that the *traditional neighborhood* and *downtown “main street”* contexts demonstrate many of the values listed in the Vision 2030, such as support for local businesses, history, walkability, neighborliness, convenience, amenities, family and kid friendliness, sense of community, belonging, and volunteerism, etc. It is also important to note that these early neighborhoods were developed prior to the first versions of the current zoning code (figure 1.4 and table 1.1, pages 20 and 21).

With the introduction of minimum lot size requirements in 1949 and lot frontage in 1956, as well as the creation of the PUD zone districts in 1973, we observe how the code shifted toward the creation of more generic context types.

Recent urban development

One conclusion we can reach by reviewing the recent development history, is that the zone districts, and related standards guiding development in peripheral districts, do not encourage or regenerate the historic, central areas of Golden.

Nonconformities

Inability of the code to regenerate the desired context types

In order to explore why the current code is not regenerating Golden’s small town character in peripheral areas, we selected four blocks of a *traditional neighborhood* context in central Golden to test the current urban fabric against the zone district regulations. These four blocks are bound by Cheyenne, Maple, 11th, and 13th Streets (figure 1.5). They are zoned R3 (Residential 3). In studying these blocks, we identified several non-conforming properties in terms of lot sizes (figure 1.5), front setbacks (figure 1.6), and bulk plane restrictions (figures 1.7, 1.8, 1.9). Since these four blocks were developed prior to the zoning ordinance that created the R3 zone district, these non-conformities are expected. However, this also tells us that the current standards listed under R3 are unable to regenerate the *traditional neighborhood* context in new developments. This is particularly important as these four blocks



Figure 1.5: A four block analysis of nonconformities: Red indicates properties with non-conforming lot sizes. The lots are non-conforming as they are smaller than the minimum lot size allowed per the zoning code. These four blocks are currently zoned as R3. Scale: 1"=200'.

were identified by interview participants as representative of Golden's unique, small town character. Considering that the minimum lot size, setbacks, and bulk plane requirements are more restrictive within R1 and R2 zone districts, we can conclude that they too are unable to regenerate the *traditional neighborhood* context. We need to introduce new tools in the zoning code to guide, encourage, and regenerate this context. Let us again emphasize that, beyond the character, the *traditional neighborhood* context represents many of the values outlined by the Vision 2030 and the Comprehensive Plan. These values include support for local businesses, history, walkability, neighborliness, convenience, amenities, family and kid friendliness, sense of community, belonging, and volunteerism.



Figure 1.6: A four block analysis of nonconformities: Red indicates properties with non-conforming front setbacks. These four blocks are currently zoned as R3. Scale: 1"=200'.



Figure 1.8: South facing block face on 12th street between Cheyenne and Illinois. The circles indicate parts of the buildings that encroach into the bulk plane. Note that Foursquare or Italianate Style buildings or buildings with side facing gables (which are common in traditional neighborhoods) tend to encroach into the bulk plane. Scale: 1"=50'



Figure 1.7: A four block analysis of nonconformities: Red indicate properties with non-conforming bulk planes. These four blocks are currently zoned as R3. Scale: 1"=200'.



Figure 1.9: North facing block face on 12th street between Illinois and Maple. The circles indicate parts of the buildings that encroach into the bulk plane. Note that buildings with dormers or gables parallel to the street (which are common in traditional neighborhoods) tend to encroach into the bulk plane. Scale: 1"=50'

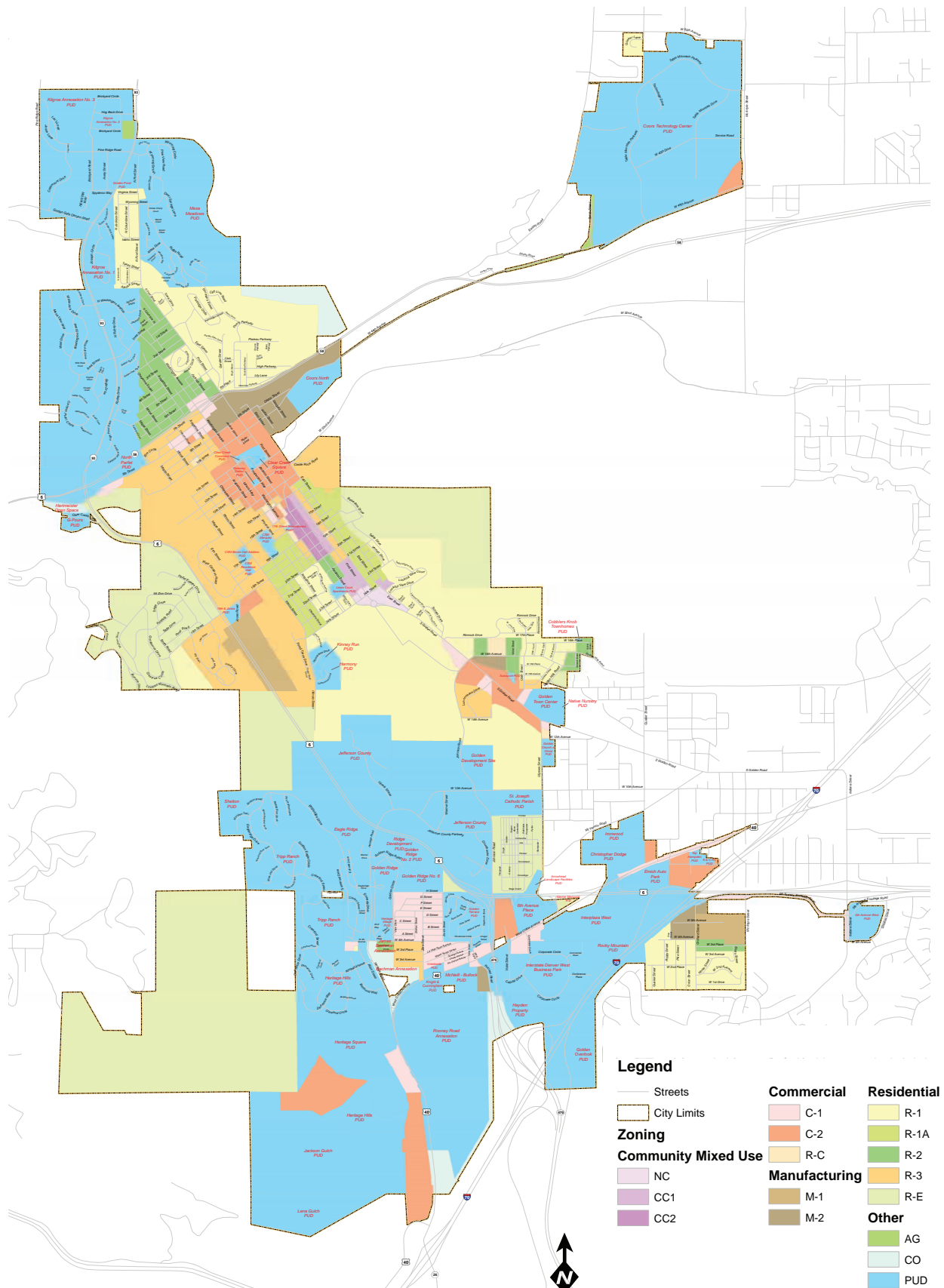


Figure 1.10: Current City of Golden zoning

Zone Code	Zone Description	Area in Acres	% of Total
AG	Agricultural	13.2	0.20%
C-1	Limited Commercial	135.3	2.20%
C-2	General Commercial	241.5	3.90%
CMU	Community Corridor and Neighborhood Center	44.9	0.70%
CO	Conservation	97.2	1.60%
M	Industrial	149.1	2.40%
PUD	Planned Unit Development	3050.3	49.00%
R-1	Residential Standard Lot	860.4	13.80%
R-1A	Modified Residential	84.9	1.40%
R-2	Low Density Multiple Household	127.5	2.00%
R-3	Multiple Household	418.0	6.70%
R-C	Limited Residential Commercial	11.7	0.20%
R-E	Residential Estate	991.6	15.90%
R-M	Mobile Home	0.0	0.00%

Table 1.2: Total areas and area percentages of the land covered by each zone district.

It is important to note that the PUD zone district covers the largest percentage of land area in Golden, (table 1.2 above) and as such, it is responsible for a majority of the recent and future urban developments. Undeveloped PUDs often come back to the City for revisions and adjustments. In reviewing and approving these revisions, the staff and leadership need strong guidance. It presents an opportunity to shape future developments toward desired outcomes. The project team believes that one of the potential rewrite scope items should address this issue.

Scale and size of new buildings

Again and again in our interviews, participants expressed that the scale, size and disposition of recently constructed buildings do not fit into their context and clash with Golden’s character. We were told that the zoning code currently permits structures that are not in line with the character of Golden as described in the policy documents. When we studied recent developments, we observed that this problem manifests itself mostly within (a) the interface areas between downtown and older neighborhoods, (b) older neighborhoods close to downtown, and (c) at the peripheral locations. These areas are currently zoned R2, R3, CMU, or PUD. The frustration was twofold: infill structures do not fit the surrounding character and new urban development in the peripheral areas do not reflect Golden’s character; they look like “anywhere U.S.A.” Having addressed peripheral development and the areas zoned as PUD, here we will elaborate on infill developments within R2, R3, and CMU zone districts.

Even though R2, R3, and CMU zones do not cover large areas of land (as per table 1.2), these zones occur in the most visible and critical locations. Thus, when infill projects don't fit into their context, they cause the most frustration.

An example within R2 zone district

In order to understand what the code permits, specifically for infill buildings, we studied large lots with small buildings within the R2 zone. We hypothesized that the Euclidean Zoning's *the larger the lot, the larger the building* rule was the root of the problem. Figure 1.11 shows two lots at Arapahoe and 5th, with 6,820 and 7,179 square feet of total lot area. Currently the buildings on the lots are 2,375 and 1,792 square feet of total floor area respectively (not including basements). Figure 1.11b (the image in the middle) depicts the two building envelopes permitted by the current code. As the image shows, if the owners were to redevelop these lots and maximize the size of their buildings, the outcome would be substantially larger than what exists today. Our rough calculation shows that a building of 6,000 square feet of total floor area (above grade) is permitted on the larger lot. Furthermore, if these two lots were consolidated, a larger duplex building would also be permitted. Figure 1.11c (the bottom image) shows the permitted envelope for a duplex building. Our rough calculation shows that a building with close to 10,000 square feet of total floor area (both units combined) could be built. It's important to note that the building size analysis for R2 (figure B.3 in Appendix B) shows that both a single family house of 6,000 square feet and a duplex of 10,000 square feet would be outliers and candidates for controversy among neighboring residents. As a matter of fact, there are no buildings close to these sizes in the surrounding area. The likelihood that new buildings would cause a negative reaction from the neighbors is higher for large lots with smaller existing buildings. Our lot size analysis (figure B.2 in Appendix B) indicates that there are many similar lots to these examples in size and in areas zoned as R2, as well as many larger. We conclude that the issues of incompatible scale and character are significant and should be addressed during the rewrite phase.

Incompatible scale and character

Non-conforming lot sizes

Another issue in the R2 zone district is non-conforming lot sizes. Figure B.2 in Appendix B (page 59) shows lots with non-conforming lot sizes. For the sake of this analysis, we mapped single family and duplex lots that are 6,800 square feet or smaller (duplex lots combined), instead of 7,000 square feet, which is the minimum required by the code. Our intent was not to focus on the lots that are slightly smaller, but show only the lots that are significantly smaller than the required minimum. The map shows that 110 single family lots out of the total 286 lots and 54 duplex lots out of 77 total duplex lots in R2 are smaller than 6,800 square feet. Figure B.5 on page 62 provides a similar analysis for the R3 zone district. 254 single family lots out of total 341 and 26 duplex lots out of 42 total lots in R3 are smaller than 6,800 square feet. This should not be surprising as a majority of the lots within the R2 and R3

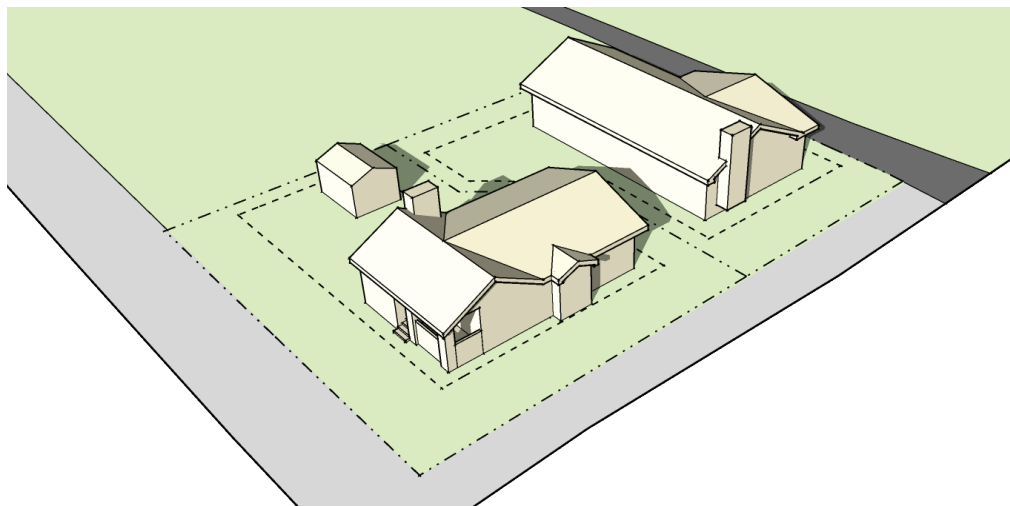


Figure 1.11a: Two lots zoned R2 at Arapahoe and 5th Avenue. This image shows the current buildings and lot lines.

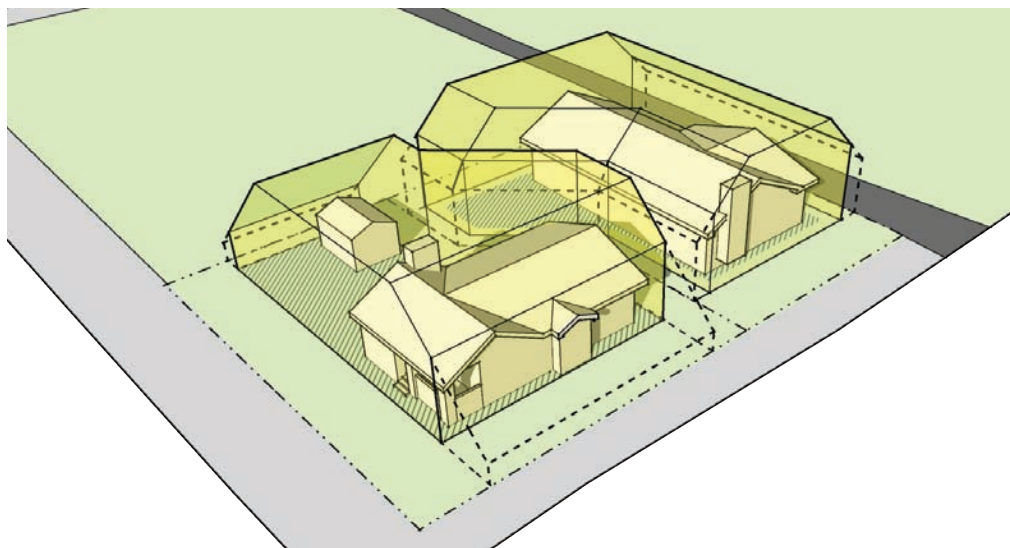
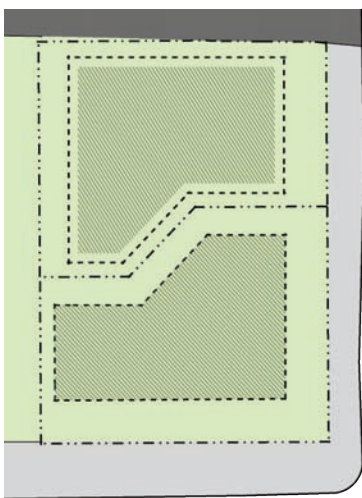


Figure 1.11b: The diagrammatic plan and the bird-eye view image show the permitted building envelopes for each lot. The hatched area indicates the buildable area after the 50% required open space is subtracted. Note that the required setbacks form most of the required open space.

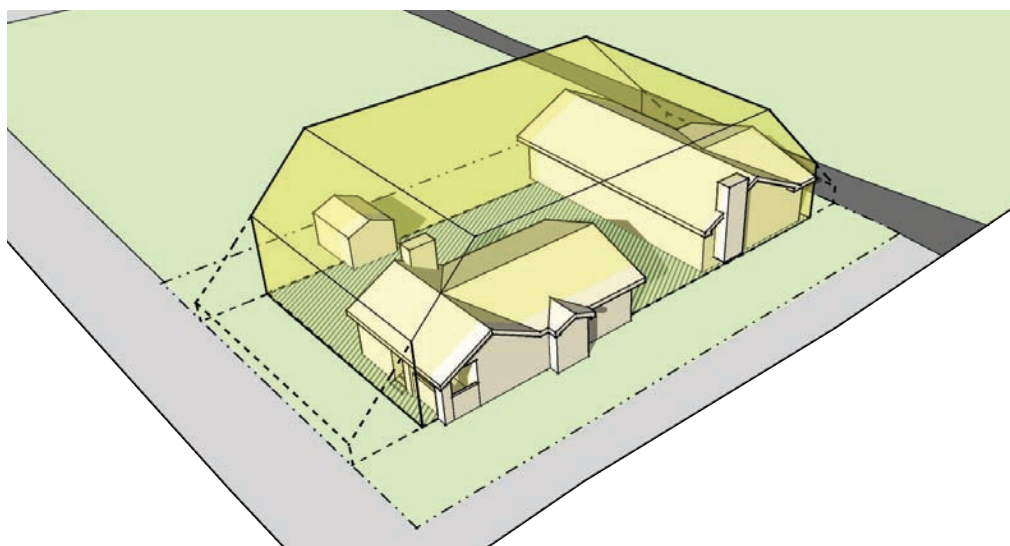
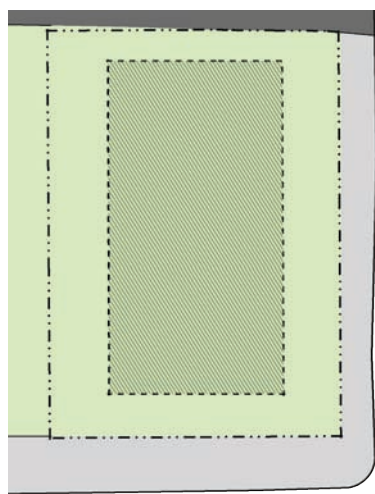


Figure 1.11c: The diagrammatic plan and the bird-eye view image that show the permitted envelope if the lots were to be consolidated for a duplex building. The hatched area indicates the buildable area after the 50% required open space is subtracted.

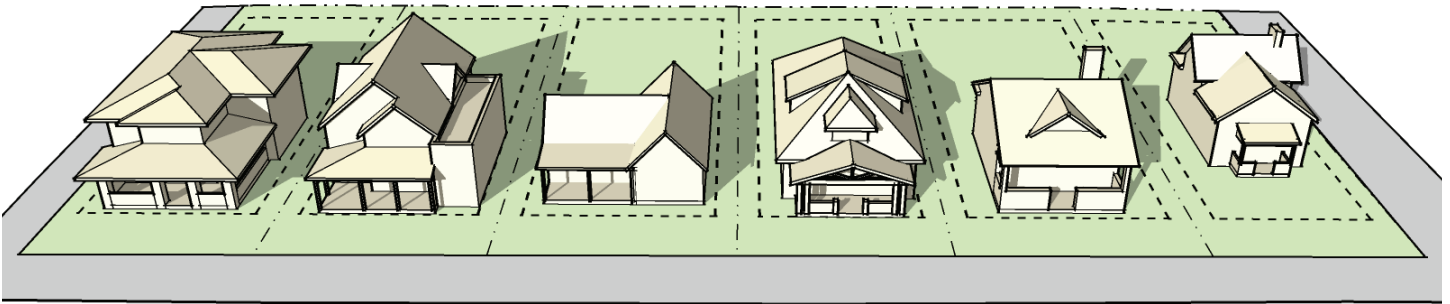


Figure 1.12a: A half block on 11th Street between Maple and Illinois, zoned as R3. This image shows the current buildings and lot lines.

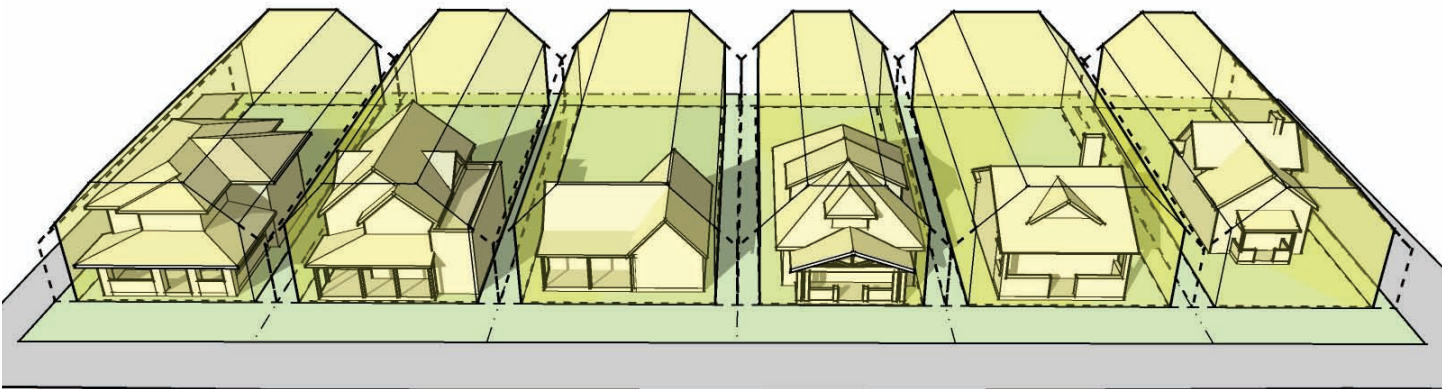


Figure 1.12b: A half block on 11th Street between Maple and Illinois, zoned as R3. This image shows the permitted building envelopes for each lot. Existing homes do not max out this envelope.



Figure 1.12c: A half block on 11th Street between Maple and Illinois, zoned as R3. This image shows the permitted envelope if three of the lots were to be consolidated for townhouses.

zone districts were developed before the minimum lot size restrictions. Golden's first zoning code in 1949, required 4,500 square feet minimum for single family lots. The 1956 ordinance increased that number to 6,000 square feet. Ordinance no. 454 of 1960 again raised that minimum to 7,000 square feet. As we mentioned before, the planning paradigm of the that time did not value the historic neighborhoods as assets worth preserving and assumed that by creating non-conformities, small lots would eventually be replaced by larger, consolidated lots. Not only are the smaller lots still present, but they also accommodate some of the most desired structures in terms of scale and disposition. We believe that both minimum lot size and frontage requirements should be calibrated according to the current fabric. This is needed not only to create a more consistent code, but also a code that encourages the regeneration of the desired scale in new neighborhoods.

An example within R3 zone district

Let us go back to our analysis of the building scale and disposition permitted by the code. Figure 1.12a (top image) shows current buildings on a half block of 11th Street between Maple and Illinois. Lots are around 7,000 square feet, and they are zoned R3. The current buildings have around 1,200 - 1,880 square feet of floor area (above grade) and none have a floor area higher than 2,000 square feet. If any of the owners decide to rebuild according to the maximums, the building envelope permitted by the current code (middle figure 1.12b) would permit a building with a floor area close to 4,000 square feet. More importantly, if some of the lots were to be consolidated to build townhouses, the code would permit a larger building envelope (figure 1.12c, the bottom image). If we are to assume that four townhouses are to be erected on a consolidated lot made up of three single family lots, each unit with 2,400 to 2,500 square feet of floor area, the resulting building mass would contain close to 10,000 square feet of floor area and would be more likely be an issue of controversy among the residents.

An example within CC1 zone district

Figure 1.13a shows a current east facing half block on Ford Street between 18th and 19th Streets, zoned as CMU - CC1. Similar to the previous example, the four single family lots are approximately 50' by 140' with small buildings that are of cottage scale. These one and one-and-a-half story buildings depict a traditional neighborhood character. The corner building on the south side (left hand side in the image, figure 1.13), however, was developed according the bulk requirements of the CC1 zoning district (prior to the newest revisions for 100% residential buildings). The current building envelop permitted by the CC1 regulations is shown in purple in figure 1.13b. The portion of the image that is highlighted in the teal color indicates the build-to zone, which means that the front face of new buildings are required to be within this zone. Beyond the contrast between the recent development and the older houses in terms of scale, disposition, and character, here we identify another issue regarding the use of the building. The building

Incompatible disposition and use

form enforced by the current build-to zone is appropriate for a “main street” formation, where the building comes close to the sidewalk with shop windows and activities that are of pedestrian interest. However, when a building with all ground floor residential use is placed on the front property line, the resulting relationship between sidewalk and the building is usually problematic and surely unprecedented in Golden’s context.

Special use review for CMU zone districts

Regarding the incompatible disposition and use, we were informed by the staff that the special use permitting process, as it is applied to CMU zones today, is problematic. In reviewing the code (section 18.28.560), we identified three issues: (a) the code section avoids the disposition and use mismatch mentioned above and leaves the resolution to the discretion of the reviewers via vague and nebulous language such as “compatible” and solutions “that demonstrate

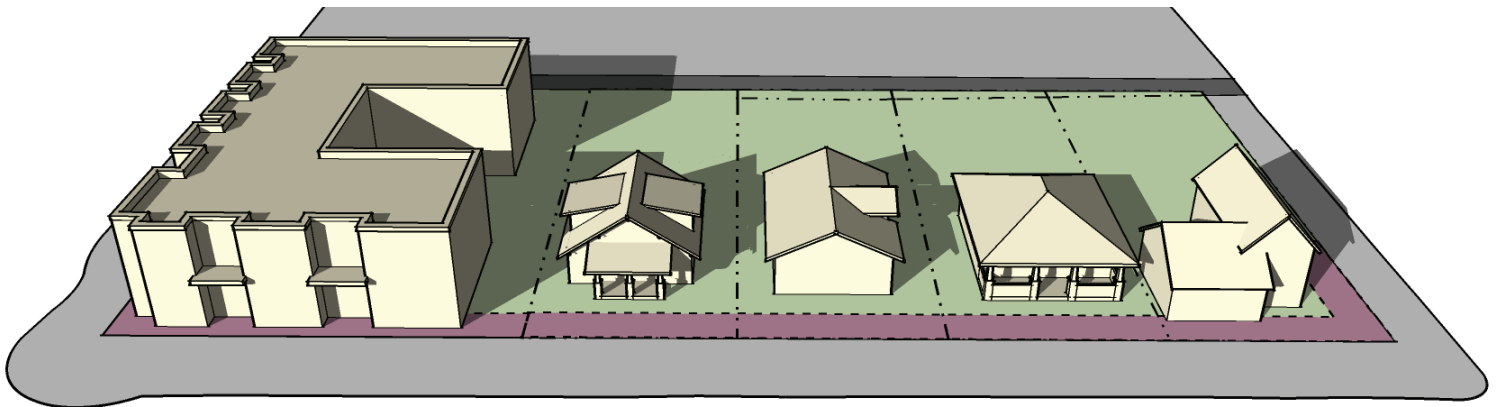


Figure 1.13a: An existing half block on Ford Street between 18th and 19th. On the left side of the image is a new, multi-family building developed under CC1 zoning. On the right are four existing single family homes built prior to CC1 zoning. The purple area represents the build-to line, thus three of the four homes are non-conforming under the new zoning regulations.

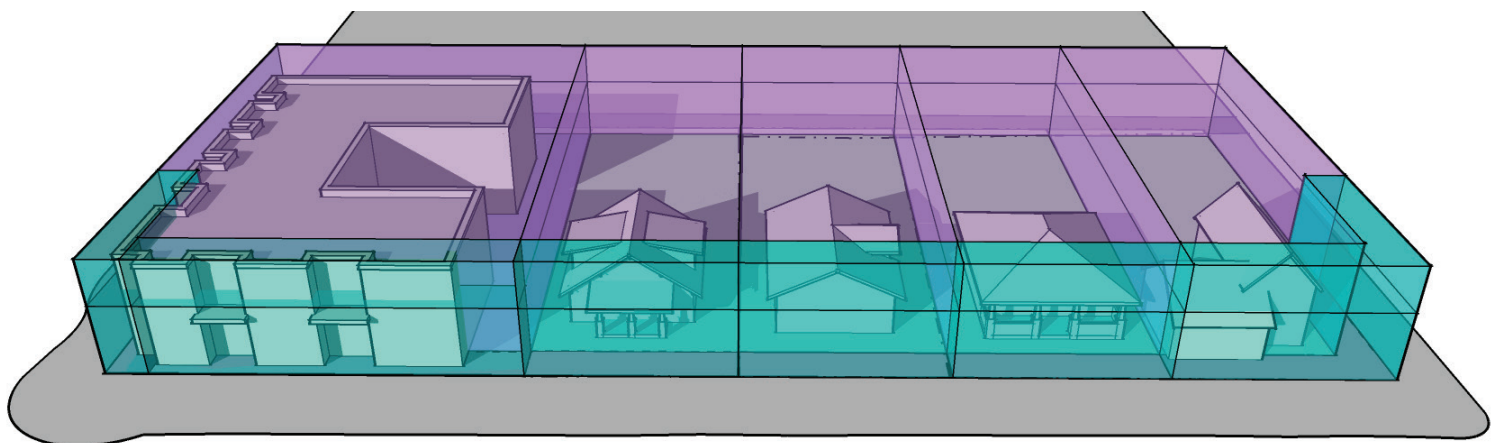


Figure 1.13b: An existing half block on Ford Street between 18th and 19th. This image shows the permitted building envelope under the new CC1 zoning. The teal area at the front represents the build-to zone, thus three of the four homes are non-conforming (their front facades are not within the build-to zone).

inspiration” (b) it applies the same street and side street build-to zone requirements for all buildings regardless of their use, and (c) it uses percentage criterion (percent of the residential use within a structure) to differentiate side setbacks. We believe that, even if there were some significant regulatory changes in the way the buildings were required to relate to the sidewalk, the percentage approach does not address the problem. Imagine a building with half residential use and half retail use. We assume that residential use would be upstairs, but for some reason the developer decides to put the retail and residential side by side on the ground floor. If we were to use percentage criterion, we would require the exact same disposition for both the retail and residential side, even though the uses are different.

Special use review for C1, C2 and CMU zone districts

The percentage criterion is also used for special use permits within the C1 and C2 zone district. Again, we see this as problematic because the bulk regulations that are crafted to guide the disposition of a building with a commercial ground floor should not be applied to a building with a residential ground floor. There are architectural solutions that exist to create a reasonable relationship between a residential ground floor and the sidewalk, even when the building comes very close to the sidewalk. However, these solutions are very urban, and we believe they would clash when applied to Golden’s neighborhood contexts, with the exception of the *downtown “main street”* context type.

To summarize, we identified issues regarding the permitted envelope sizes in R2 and R3 zones. The incompatibility is related to the size and scale of the buildings. The issue intensifies especially when lots are consolidated to accommodate duplexes (in R2 zones), and duplexes and townhouses (in R3 zones). In addition, we have observed incompatibility between the building disposition and use in CMU zones. Finally, we believe that the special use permit review, as it is applied to C1, C2, and CMU zone districts today, needs revisions.

Definitions, guidelines, and standards

The project team went back to the code to identify confusing definitions, standards, and guidelines after hearing concerns about these items during our listening sessions. Some of these terms were mentioned directly by the participants. Others also expressed a general state of confusion in using and understanding the code definitions and 18.40 Site Development Regulations, without referring to a specific item. With their concerns in mind, the project team reviewed the definitions, guidelines, and standards to identify further problematic items. The list provided in table 1.3 (on the next page) includes all of these items.

Definitions	Guidelines and standards (regarding 18.40 Site Development Regulations)
Accessory building	18.40.212 - Drainage / Grading standards
Accessory dwelling unit	18.40.222 - (2) Landscaping the street scape
Alley	18.40.232 - Open space standards
Boarding and rooming house	18.40.242 - Parking lot design and internal circulation standards
Building height	18.40.421 - Architectural features guidelines
Cluster development	18.40.422 - Architectural features standards
Dwelling	18.40.521 - Architectural features guidelines
Dwelling unit (all definitions)	18.40.522 - Architectural features standards
Grade	
Lot	
Occupied	
Planned Unit Development	
Setback	
Hardship	
Variance	
Exception	
Exemption	

Table 1.3: List of confusing, missing, or problematic definitions, guidelines, and standards identified after the listening sessions by the project team

Parking

The project team was directed by staff to review the parking regulations, especially for the downtown and CMU zone districts. After reviewing these regulations, the team identified a significant mismatch between parking requirements and the Comprehensive Plan's commitment to supporting local businesses and creating business diversity. Business diversity can be achieved when there are opportunities for large as well as small businesses. In many urban areas, excessive parking requirements push away small businesses and damage the vitality of central districts. They often prevent adaptive reuse, especially when a small business would like to re-purpose a historic, residential structure for a non-residential use. The current requirements encourage combining smaller lots to obtain a larger lot where parking solutions are feasible. As a result, we see smaller structures being replaced by larger buildings surrounded by surface parking lots, which is damaging to the integrity of the urban fabric.

When we reviewed the parking requirements of the current code (18.36), we see a similar trend. Applying the same off-street parking requirements for all commercial uses, regardless of their size, discourages, and sometimes prevents, small businesses. The

Eligibility for shared parking discount

parking needs for a small business are usually not significant, and even negligible. In particular, we see that the 50,000 square feet minimum size requirement for a shared parking discount is a measure that discourages small businesses. In reality, shared parking is the most successful within the fine fabric of small lots with various uses in urban neighborhoods. Sharing is maximized when one parks in one location and walks to several destinations, which is something that often happens in vital mixed-use neighborhoods with a fine texture of diverse businesses and services.





Chapter 2 Review Process

Many think that the rewrite effort is all about the code itself. However, the review process is as important as the code, especially in a jurisdiction like Golden where a majority of the applications go through discretionary review processes. It is important to understand that the regulatory system is a culture. As such, the interaction that happens within the discretionary process needs to be analyzed, and if there are known issues, they need to be identified and addressed to create a more satisfactory and successful regulatory system. This is the reason why during the interviews the project team asked several questions about participants' experiences with the review process.

Two major subjects of concern emerged during our interviews: (a) the way the Sustainability Menus and the Tier 2 Bonus System are managed and enforced and (b) the way the Site Plan Review is implemented. Below, we address these separately.

Tier 2 Bonus System and Sustainability Menus

Both the Tier 2 Bonus System and the Sustainability Menus are points of frustration within the review process. They are used in negotiations between the applicant, staff, the public, and Planning Commission which often creates distrust as it seemingly pits applicants and staff against the public and the Commission.

Tier 2 Bonus System

The Tier 2 Bonus System works as a trade system. The system allows for additional stories or partial stories, depending on the zone district, if the project demonstrates compliance with applicable sustainability standards. This includes items like providing public use areas, installing a landscape buffer, and exceeding minimum International Energy Conservation Code requirements. The project must also demonstrate support for adopted community goals by opting to either include affordable units or install on-site renewable energy.

Some interview participants suggested that certain items in the Sustainability Menus should be required. In other words, if the City

believes that certain menu items are important, they should not be swapped for a bonus, but should be required. The bonus system only works when the property is down-zoned. For instance, the third story bonus is possible only when the property is zoned for two stories. If the third story was acceptable, why is the property zoned for two stories in the first place? Why would an aspect of sustainability or affordability effect the bulk regulations? Questions like these can be frustrating for the general public and the applicants to understand and for the staff and the Commission to explain.

Sustainability Menus

The sustainability menus were a frequent topic of conversation throughout the interview process. Sustainability is a priority for the City, however, there are challenges with how the current menus are being reviewed and regulated. Additionally, the menu directs the applicants to the easiest and the least expensive solution as oppose to encouraging innovative ideas. The menus are currently characterized as “apples and oranges.” There are items referring to site configuration and amenities, items referring to public works, such as water management, and items falling under the building department such as heating and cooling systems, insulation, etc. Table 2.1 shows three different colors depicting which department each menu item pertains to. The issues surrounding the Sustainability Menus refer to both the substance of the code (the content of the list) as well as process (how the review of items by different departments are processed). Mixing these interdisciplinary items in one menu necessitates the buying in of the menu by all three departments, which is currently lacking. For instance, even if the applicant receives points for implementing permeable pavement per the menu, the Public Works Department still calculates the detention requirements without taking into account the pervious pavement area. Note that, even though there is only one infrastructure related item in the list, which is of water quality and drainage, this item was mentioned several times during the interviews.

We see the need for separating “apples and oranges” and placing each item in the right place within the collection of codes, not just within the zoning code. Yet, we also believe that there should be choices within each category, such as a certain number of shade trees, permeable pavement, or bike racks. Another option is to keep the menus intact, but make sure that all departments are on board with the menu items. That is, departments outside of the Planning Department must be willing to review and enforce items on the menu.

Site Plan Review

Many expressed frustration with Site Plan Review. This frustration is shared by all parties for different reasons. Some developers

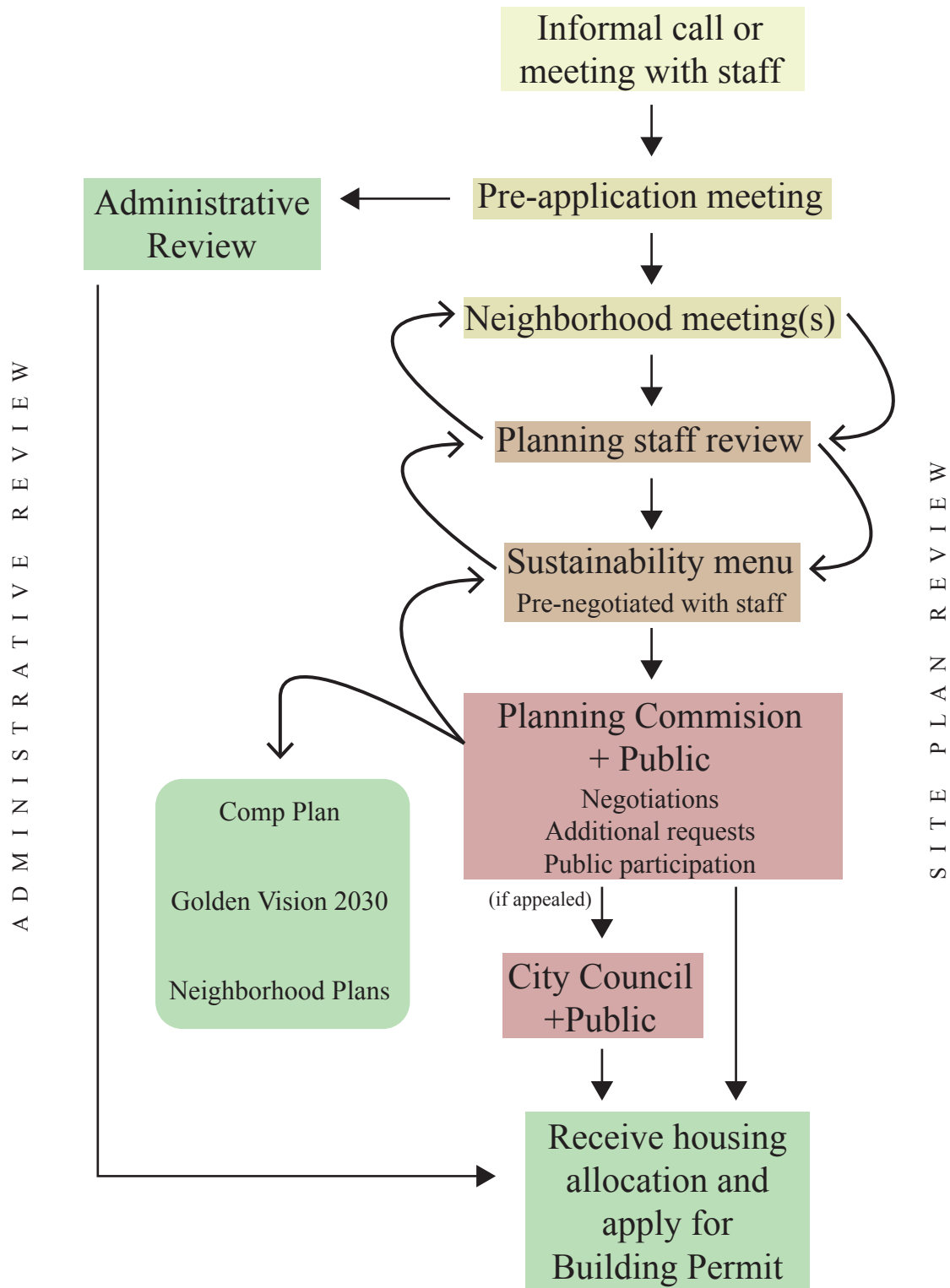


Figure 2.1: This simplified flow chart compares two distinct paths: (1) Administrative review, which provides a direct path to building permit and (2) Site Plan Review which goes through multiple steps. Curved arrows represent where a project may repeat steps throughout the negotiation process, which is something, we have heard, happens often.

SUSTAINABILITY MENUS

18.24.040

Plant xeric landscaping. 1 point per 20% of lot area, exclusive of paving or built areas, shall be landscaped with xeric materials.
A high-efficiency irrigation system - Drip or sub-surface system
A high-efficiency irrigation system - Rain sensor system
Porous surfaces: For driveway, sidewalk, or patio areas. Porous asphalt or cement, grass pavers. 3 points per category, maximum 10.
Install toilets or faucets certified by EPA Water Sense or dual flush toilets. 2 points per category.
Reduce Heat Islands – locate trees to provide shade for paved areas. 1 point per minimum 2 ½” caliper tree listed on Golden Recommended Tree List.
Reduce Heat Islands – install heat reflective roof materials. Metal, high albedo (light colored) or minimum 29 SRI (Solar Reflective Index) roofing materials qualify.
Achieve Energy Star certification for New Homes
Credit for existing home energy efficiency performance. 5 points to achieve minimum 85 HERS rating for existing structure. For every 10 point reduction thereafter, 1 point each.
Install efficient hot water system (e.g. tankless) or recirculating line. 1 point per system/household unit.
Install efficient heating system. Install furnace meeting 95% AFUE
Install efficient cooling system such as evaporative cooler or whole house fan.
Install heat-based geothermal system.
Enhanced Insulation. Exceeds R-value requirements of IECC by 5%. Points allowed for separate systems: walls, ceiling, & slab insulation. 1 point for each 5% increase, maximum 5.
Efficient Windows. Windows that meet no more than 80% of the code maximum u-value allowable.
Insulate ducts, seal ducts, or insulate pipes. Minimum R-6 for ducts, R-3 for pipes, minimum 25 linear feet. 1 point each, max 3.
Renewable Energy System. Install any renewable energy system allowed by zoning code. (e.g. solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, geothermal heat pump.)
Efficient framing techniques. (e.g. structurally insulated panels, greater than 16” on center spacing of stud, ceiling joist, use single top plates on non load-bearing walls.) 1 point per category.
Products certified as recycled content, reclaimed, regional, or rapidly renewable. 1 pt per category or per 5% of materials valuation, maximum 10 points.
Documented diversion rate of construction waste for recycling. 1 pt per 5% diverted to recycle center, maximum 10 points.
The Director may reward applicants for sustainable design elements not covered by this menu. Consideration will be given for scale, historic preservation, degree of difficulty, efficiency or innovation, and points will be awarded at the discretion of the Director.
Passive solar design. Design the structure to optimize the potential for passive solar gain, which includes orienting the primary building axis east-west, proper use of shade, landscaping to reduce cooling loads, careful window placement, enhanced insulation and thermal mass construction.

18.40.350

Water Conservation, Storm Water, and Water Quality
1. Employ storm water runoff reduction strategies to slow runoff and promote infiltration. One point is awarded for every 20% of impervious area routed through bioswales, biobuffers, rain gardens and/or permeable pavement designed in accordance with the City of Golden Stormwater Standards Manual.
2. Plant a vegetated roof for a portion of the roof area. Points awarded on a sliding scale, with 1 point for every 10% of vegetated roof area.
3. Exceed open space requirement by 25% or more. Includes both landscaped and xeriscaped areas, but excludes ground mounted solar array areas.
4. Use EPA Water Sense certified water conservation measures for fixtures including flush urinals, dual flush toilets, faucets and showerheads, drip irrigation with rain sensors and industrial conservation measures.
Transportation
1. Provide double the minimum of the required amount of bicycle parking on site for one point. One additional point available for providing a bike repair station, and one additional point for providing secure and enclosed parking (e.g. lockers, storage room) for at least 50% of the bike parking needed for double the minimum amount.
2. Provide number of shower units for a minimum of 2% of all full time equivalent employees.
3. Build development within ¼ mile of public bus stop or ½ mile of light rail stop, as measured using a pedestrian’s walking distance. Applicant shall also demonstrate enhanced walkability by establishing connections to transit and surrounding areas.
4. Provide, maintain and install a bus shelter if a stop is in or adjacent to the right-of-way.
5. Install additional level 2 or higher electric plug-in stations for hybrid and electric vehicles on-site over the minimum applicable standard set forth in Section 18.40.340 for 1-5 points, or additional conduit over the minimum applicable standard set forth in Section 18.40.340 for 1 point for each 15% of spaces.
6. Restrict parking on site to the minimum number of spaces allowed by code. Car share spaces shall reduce the required minimum spaces by a 1:1 ratio. Only standard aisles and spaces allowed unless under exclusive easement.
7. Add designated and signed car share space(s) to site.

	SITE REVIEW / PLANNING DEPARTMENT
	PUBLIC WORKS
	BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Table 2.1: Sustainability menus (both 18.24.040 and 18.40.350) color coded according to the subject matter and the proper department who would need to review the item.

18.40.350 continued

Energy Efficiency

1. Increase energy efficiency of structure over the energy efficiency standard set forth in Section 18.40.340. Points are awarded on a sliding scale with one point for every 2% increase in energy efficiency, up to 25 points. Points may be awarded for efficiency gains in specific systems, such as lighting or mechanical, but more points may be awarded for an integrated design approach.
2. Commission the building(s) for energy efficiency performance by a technician prior to c/o. Applicant shall be required to make all feasible improvements prior to Planning final inspection approval.
3. Install building automation system for advanced monitoring, which can include networked controls of multiple building systems, such as heating and cooling, ventilation, daylighting and lighting.
4. Offset traditional energy usage with renewable energy production on site beyond the solar requirement standard set forth in 18.40.340. There will be 1 point awarded for each 4% reduction in energy use, ending with 23 points for a net zero building that produces as much power as it consumes over the course of a calendar year.
5. Plant at least 20% additional trees than otherwise required to maximize shade over paved or covered areas in summer (deciduous east, west, south), provide a wind break in winter (evergreens to north) and reduce the urban heat island effect in parking areas and throughout the site.
6. Construct predominately residential buildings and/or roofs to be elongated on an east-west axis, with south facing windows that receive sunlight between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. (sun exposure) during the heating season. This shall be coupled with the use of awnings or other shade structures on the east and west facing windows, appropriate use of glazing, use of daylighting, and other passive solar design techniques to reduce energy demand, including building envelope design.
7. Install heat reflective roof materials. Minimum 29 SRI (Solar Reflective Index) materials qualify.
8. All residential fenestrations must achieve specific u-values: u0.25 to .20 = 3 points; u below 0.20 = 5 points.
9. Daylighting or passive lighting for internal spaces. Skylights, solar tubes and lumen sensors are examples. 1 point per device used, up to 5 points.
10. Energy or heat recovery ventilation (balanced ventilation). E/HRVs with 70% efficiency = 4 points; 80% efficiency = 6 points; 90% efficiency = 8 points).

Community Preservation and Revitalization

1. Preserve an existing structure when increasing square footage or creating additional structures. To receive points, all structures must also be brought into compliance with currently adopted IECC code. Points awarded on a sliding scale with 1 point for the first 1,000 sf and then 1 for every 1,000 sf thereafter, up to a maximum of 5 points.
2. If preserving a historically designated structure, applicant may be awarded two additional points for improving energy efficiency while maintaining both the character and structural integrity of the building.
3. Add affordable dwelling units (as defined in Chapter 18.04) to a project. Points awarded on a sliding scale, with 2 points awarded for every affordable dwelling unit created up to a maximum of 10 points.
4. Choose an infill site, which can be no greater than one half acre in size, and is defined here by having paved or developed lots adjacent, or across a right-of-way, on at least two sides of the property.
5. Choose a brownfield site, defined by the EPA as the "presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant,"
6. Provide community garden plots fruit trees, or other means of food production on site for a minimum of 15% of multifamily units to foster local food production. Plots must be a minimum of 20 square feet each.
7. Provide compost bin location on the property with contract for pick-up service.

Miscellaneous

1. Planning Commission may reward applicants for sustainable design elements not covered by this menu. Consideration will be given for scale, efficiency or innovation beyond standard business practices of the applicant, and points will be awarded at the discretion of the Planning Commission. Examples include participation in a bike share system and use of recycled materials. Special consideration given for proposals that integrate a number of different menu items in a coordinated effort toward sustainability.
--

	SITE REVIEW / PLANNING DEPARTMENT
	PUBLIC WORKS
	BUILDING DEPARTMENT

**Lack of agreement
on scope and purpose
of the review**

communicated that the process is unpredictable, arbitrary, and time consuming. The public expressed that they felt unheard and believe that planning staff favors the developers. More importantly, they are usually not satisfied with the outcome. The members of Planning Commission feel their hands are tied by the code's permissive regulations. We've also heard that items in review are often not clear. For instance, the public may comment on the use of the proposal when the use is permitted and not part of the review. We have also heard that negotiations go beyond the scope of the code, especially regarding building character. This contributes to a lack of trust among all parties, increases uncertainty, and opens the door to the potential for the inconsistent application of the code.

Interview participants also expressed the need for additional process to be granted a variance and an expanded notification radius for projects undergoing Site Plan Review. When there is frustration, there is usually a call for more process, and more process creates more frustration. This tells us that the code isn't working well. Project outcomes are producing mistrust and uncertainty.

We believe that many of these challenges are related to the way current code (a) encourages and guides generic context types, and (b) permits large and overwhelming infill structures as we have reviewed and identified in Chapter 1. It is reasonable to expect that the level of frustration within the Site Plan Review process will decrease once these substance issues are addressed. We still believe that the discretionary review process should be, and can be, applied to special cases where the outcome needs to be scrutinized. However, if via crafting regulations where all parties can agree that the outcome will be satisfactory, then we see no reason why it should not be by-right. For instance if there is a certain building size and disposition that is acceptable by all parties, and if that form can be identified and coded, it should be by-right. However, if the applicant would prefer a larger structure with a different disposition, a discretionary review should be required. We believe that the lack of by-right options in the code contributes to the lack of clarity in terms of purpose and scope during the discretionary review process.

To conclude, we can identify three sources of frustration in the Site Plan Review process: (a) the scope and the reason of the review is not always clear to all parties; (b) there is no consensus on the desired outcome by all parties (usually all parties agree that outcomes have not been desirable); and (c) there is a lack of acceptable by-right options.

Variance process

The variance process was also a topic of conversation during the interviews. The public often felt that administrative exceptions and the determination of a hardship are not clearly defined. To demonstrate “hardship,” the applicant must explain why the property conditions warrant relief, which is a common zoning practice. However, when the amount of variance requests are high, and if the outcomes create negative reactions, the public starts to question staff’s position and intention. This is, in our opinion, an example of how lack of clarity in the code creates mistrust among the parties.

The variance process also requires the applicant to obtain their neighbors’ signatures to be considered for an administrative variance. However, this process creates more frustration, and it is interpreted by some as people voting for people. The second option available to the applicant is to go through variance review via Planning Commission. If the variance request goes to Planning Commission, after the applicant’s failed attempt to obtain their neighbors’ signatures, the review at the Planning Commission hearing may become contentious.

Even though it is reasonable to hope that once we address the substance issues and challenges listed in the previous chapter through a careful rewrite the number of variances will decrease, we believe that there needs to be a place within the process where straightforward variances may be granted via staff’s discretionary review.





Chapter 3 Navigation

During our interviews, we heard from those who interact with the code daily that the code is not user-friendly. It is easy to miss or not be aware of additional requirements and standards because information is scattered throughout the municipal code. Furthermore, concerns were raised regarding the lack of intention statements. In particular, Site Development standards and guidelines confuse the applicants as to what is being asked and why, and without intention statements, both the applicant and staff feel lost regarding code interpretation.

Scattered information

To explore the issue of scattered information, we looked at how many places an applicant needs to go to find information. Table 3.1 shows almost all of the places an applicant who is planning to build, for instance in a R3 zone, must look within Title 18. It is important to note that, depending on the location of the property, any of the sections listed in Table 3.1 may have crucial information. We should also mention that Table 3.1 lists only sections from Title 18. There are also supplemental information pamphlets provided to the applicant by the Building and Public Works Departments. Although most the information needed to understand redevelopment rights are listed in Title 18, there are also additional requirements and requests that are not included. This adds further complexity for all parties trying to gather information regarding a property.

Lack of intention statements

Stating the intentions of any rule can guide decision making in discretionary reviews. We believe that the confusion of scope during the negotiations -- an issue discussed in the previous chapter -- can have greater clarity if intentions are stated. For instance, open space requirements were brought up by the interview participants. There may be different reasons and purposes to require open space in different contexts. If an applicant is looking for a reduction in open space and willing to provide certain amenities, a clear statement of intention for the kind of open space and the amount of open space required, would be helpful in guiding the negotiation.

Lack of supporting visuals

Verbal descriptions and requirements are not always able to deliver what is intended or expected. Supporting visuals can not only make statement clear, but can also inspire and motivate the applicant toward successful outcomes. Well prepared, simple graphics can clarify what the text is trying to deliver and create a shared understanding of what is expected from the applicant. In particular, rules regarding site configuration, the form of the building, and architecture would benefit from visuals to clarify the rules. More importantly, visuals can create a shared understanding among the residents about what is permitted and what is to be expected from future developments. We believe that if the code is successful in doing this, a significant part of the frustration that arises during the discretionary review processes will be tempered.

Section	Information
18.20.010: establishment of districts	general information, such as <i>one building per lot</i>
18.20.040: minimum lot area and width	minimum lot area and width
18.22.080: short term rentals	restrictions about renting
18.24: residential sustainability standards	sustainability related requirements
18.28.030: uses permitted in all zone districts	list of some of the uses allowed
18.28.110: uses permitted by right in R3 district	multiple household dwellings are permitted
18.28.115: special uses permitted in R3 district	additional uses allowed by special use permit if desired
18.28.200: lot, bulk, setback regulations	all required setbacks, height and bulk plane restrictions
18.28.240: accessory dwelling unit, residential	ADU allowed if desired
18.32.040: residential signs	sign restrictions if sign is desired
18.34: community lighting standards	lighting restriction if exterior lighting is desired
18.36: parking and loading requirement	parking requirement
18.36.030: off-street parking, non-downtown	residential non-downtown parking requirements
18.38.010: fences permitted	fence regulations
18.40.212: drainage/grading standards	drainage and grading requirements
18.40.220: landscaping	landscaping requirements
18.40.230: open space	open space requirements
18.40.251: screening standards	requirements addressing screen of mechanical equipment
18.40.272: mitigation of highway noise standards	noise screening requirements to obtain permitted noise levels if the property is near the highway
18.40.280: lighting	additional lighting requirements
18.40.292: hillside standards	additional restrictions if the property is on a hillside
18.40.340: sustainability standards	additional sustainability related requirements
18.40.410: bldg placement, grading, site layout	additional bldg placement, grading and site layout
18.40.420: architectural features	additional building articulation requirement
18.40.430: open space	additional open space configuration requirements
18.40.440: parking lot design, internal circulation	parking lot design requirements
18.70: residential growth management	no more than 1% annual increase in number of dwellings

Table 3.1: The list of the sections and subsections an applicant who is interested to build row houses within R3 zone district to gather necessary information and the corresponding type of information that can be obtained in each section or subsection.

**Layout not
user-friendly**

There are also challenges with the municode layout. The code is not set up to be read or printed in a user-friendly way. Tables often span multiple pages which makes them difficult to understand, and pages are not numbered which hinders the usability of the code, especially in printed form.





Conclusion: Issues and challenges

As stated in the introduction, one of the primary objectives of this diagnostic report is to identify issues and challenges regarding the zoning code and the review process. Thus far, we have explored, discussed, and identified various issues. In summary, we would like to highlight these issues as a list organized by chapter.

Chapter 1: Community character

- The inability of the code to regenerate the “small town” character in new neighborhoods
- Nonconforming lot sizes, setbacks, and bulk standards, especially in areas developed before the current code was adopted
- Incompatible infill buildings because of their size and scale within the R2 and R3 zones
- Incompatible building disposition and use within CMU zones
- Special Use Permit for C1, C2, and CMU zone districts
- Problematic definitions, guidelines, and standards (see table 1.3)
- Parking requirements that discourage and prevent small businesses


Chapter 2: Review process

- Tier 2 bonus system allows the trading of sustainability items that should not be negotiated but required
- Tier 2 bonus system results in questionable outcomes, especially when building height and bulk are traded for amenities
- Sustainability menus mix items that are planning related with items related to the Building and Public Works Departments. This creates confusion in review authority (who reviews what?)
- Public Works and Building Departments are not on the same page with the Planning Department in terms of the significance of menu items.

- All parties express frustration regarding Site Plan Review. Three related issues are identified: (a) the scope and the reason of the review is not always clear to all parties; (b) there is no consensus about desired outcome by all parties; and (c) there is a lack of by-right options

Chapter 3: Navigation

- The information the applicant needs to navigate through is too scattered in the code
- Lack of intention statements
- Lack of supporting visuals
- The Municode format is not user-friendly



Appendix A

Interview schedule, protocol questions, and summary of interviews

The following pages include (a) the interview schedule, (b) the protocol questions, and (c) the summary of the interviews.

The protocol questions the team prepared for the interviews varied depending on the interview participants. The questions asked to legal counsel, for instance, differed somewhat from the questions asked to developers. The team followed these questions loosely; depending on the content of the conversation, new questions were asked spontaneously to keep the interviews informal and open-ended.

The summary does not quote any particular individual, rather, it provides comments anonymously and cumulatively. The purpose of the interviews was to hear directly from those who use the code daily or who have experience with review processes and understand the strengths and the weaknesses of the code.

We express our sincere gratitude to all participants. Their input is crucial and valuable.

Interviews schedule

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

9:00 am

Planning Staff: Stephanie Alexander, Robin Becker, Rick Murriby / by Korkut, Ronnie, Peter, Samantha, Melissa

10:30 am

Legal council: Keith Martin / by Korkut, Ronnie, Peter, Samantha, Melissa

12:30 pm

Professional services / developers

Session I: Peter Ewers / by Korkut, Samantha
Session II: Pat Foss, Scott Paling, Julie Stern / by Ronnie, Peter, Melissa

2:00 pm

Professional services / developers

Session I: Tony DiSimone, Brad Gassman, Amirah Shahid / by Korkut, Samantha
Session II: Ty Keefe, Brian Morrison, Kevin Sietman, / by Ronnie, Peter, Melissa

4:00 pm

City Council

Session I: Paul Haseman, Laura Weinberg, / by Peter, Melissa

Session II: Casey Brown, JJ Trout / by Korkut

Session III: Jim Dale, Rob Reed / by Ronnie, Samantha

5:30 pm

Neighbors: Ron Benioff, Steve Cummings, Jeremy Dobish, Bill Robie, Rob Schnotsch, Suzy Stusman, Henry Tiberi, Ken Tribby, Jen White / by Korkut, Ronnie, Peter, Samantha, Melissa

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

9:00 am

DRT

Session I: Joseph Lammers, Tracey Pond / by Korkut, Samantha

Session II: Steve Glueck, Scott Greer, Joe Puhr / by Ronnie, Peter, Melissa

4:00 pm

Planning Commission

Session I: Guthrie Alexander, Don Cameron / by Peter, Melissa

Session II: Fred Barta, Patricia Evans / by Korkut

Session III: Tod Collins, Blake Mayberry / by Ronnie, Samantha

5:30 pm

Neighbors: Bryan Kelley, M. L. Richardson, Jen Rutter, Barb Warren, Joe Wrona, Kristen Wrona / by Korkut, Ronnie, Peter, Samantha, Melissa

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

10:30 am

Legal counsel: David David Williamson / by Korkut

Protocol questions

Planning Staff / DRT

Golden Vision 2030 and the Comp Plan reference the “unique character” of Golden together with values such as walkability, neighborhood, family and kid friendly, small town character, etc.. In your opinion what neighborhood, area, block, or street best represent this? (1 minute max)

SUBSTANCE

Looking back through your recent experience with applicants, what rules in the code create the most misunderstanding or confusion? (10 minutes)

In your opinion what rules are difficult to interpret and to apply consistently? (Treating applicants the same) (10 minutes)

Follow up:

Are there standards that are unnecessary, redundant, or inefficient?

Have you found specific standards or requirements in the code that prohibited applicants from doing something that would’ve more closely aligned with community priorities, as defined in adopted city plans? (10 minutes)

PROCESS

What aspects of the code need to be modified to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy in the review process while maintaining the

code’s intention? (10 minutes)

What are the strengths and weakness regarding interdepartmental communication? ie planning dept and zoning, building dept, public works, fire dept, post office (10 minutes, process of rezoning v process of project approvals)

NAVIGATION

Can you easily find what you’re looking for in the code? (10 minutes)

How heavily do you rely on supplemental documents or staff to navigate the code? (10 minutes)

Legal Team

SUBSTANCE

Are there any rules in your opinion that are difficult to interpret and to apply consistently? (10 minutes)

What are the most misinterpreted or misunderstood pieces of the code in your opinion? (10 minutes)

What parts of the code do you believe need to be changed and why? (such as definitions, use and bulk regulations, etc.) (12 minutes)

PROCESS

Have there been any recent conflicts between applicants and the City? What were they? (15 minutes)

What are the strengths and weakness regarding interdepartmental communication? ie planning dept and zoning, building dept, public works, fire dept, post office (10 minutes)

NAVIGATION

Can you easily find what you’re looking for in the code? (10 minutes)

Possible discussion:

User friendly code (graphics, intention statements) vs. legal (enforceable code language)

Development Community

Golden Vision 2030 and the Comp Plan reference the “unique character” of Golden together with values such as walkability, neighborhood, family and kid friendly, small town character, etc.. In your opinion what neighborhood, area, block, or street best represent this? (1 minute max)

SUBSTANCE

What parts of the code encourage or contradict affordability? (10 minutes)

Have you found specific standards or requirements in the code that prohibited you from doing something that would’ve more closely aligned with community priorities, as defined in adopted city plans? (10 minutes)

Are there any parts of the code that contradict

one another? (10 Minutes - What did the City do to resolve it?)

PROCESS

What aspects of the code need to be modified to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy in the review process while maintaining the code's intention? (10 minutes)

What are the strengths and weakness regarding interdepartmental communication? ie planning dept and zoning, building dept, public works, fire dept, post office (10 minutes)

Looking back on your past experience with the City, were the demands clear? (in terms of process, such as submission requirements) (5 minutes)

Looking back on your past experience with the City, was there any discrepancy between what the code/staff/PC/neighbors expected from you? (5 minutes)

NAVIGATION

Can you easily find what you're looking for in the code? (5 minutes)

How heavily do you rely on supplemental documents or staff to navigate the code? (5 minutes)

City Council / Planning Commission

Golden Vision 2030 and the Comp Plan reference the "unique character" of Golden together with values such as walkability, neighborhood, family and kid friendly, small town character,

etc.. In your opinion what neighborhood, area, block, or street best represent this? (1 minute max)

SUBSTANCE

Are there parts of the code that contradict the Comp Plan/ Golden Vision 2030? If so, what are they? (10 minutes)

Have there been any cases where Council/ Commission approved a project that in your opinion seemed to be counter to the community priorities, as defined in adopted plans? (10 minutes)

Looking back through your recent experience with applicants, what rules in the code create the most misunderstanding, confusion or community opposition? (10 minutes)

What parts of the code encourage or contradict affordability? (10 minutes)

PROCESS

What are the strengths and weakness regarding interdepartmental communication? ie planning dept and zoning, building dept, public works, fire dept, post office (10 minutes)

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approval process? (10 minutes, Does the public understand the approval process and their role in the process?)

NAVIGATION

Can you easily find what you're looking for in the code? (10 minutes)

Neighbors

Golden Vision 2030 and the Comp Plan reference the "unique character" of Golden together with values such as walkability, neighborhood, family and kid friendly, small town character, etc.. In your opinion what neighborhood, area, block, or street best represent this? (1 minute max)

SUBSTANCE

Looking back through your experience with the City, what rules or parts of the code create the most misunderstanding or confusion? (12 minutes)

Which parts of the code contradict the Comp Plan/ Golden Vision 2030? (12 minutes)

PROCESS

Looking back on your past experience with the City, was there discrepancy between the code/ staff/PC/neighbors expectations? (12 minutes)

Do you think the current review process encourages and makes possible constructive input from neighbors? (12 minutes)

NAVIGATION

Can you easily find what you're looking for in the code? (12 minutes)

How heavily do you rely on supplemental documents or staff to navigate the code? (12 minutes)

Summary of the interviews

Small town character

Question: Golden Vision 2030 and the Comp Plan reference the "unique character" of Golden together with values such as walkability, neighborhood, family and kid friendly, small town character, etc.. In your opinion what neighborhood, area, block, or street best represent this?

Frequent answers:

Downtown Washington Avenue, traditional neighborhoods, especially around 12th Street and East Street, the creek corridor, views, and open space. People value walkability in these areas.

Peripheral neighborhoods, especially the commercial strips, look like anywhere USA; they don't reflect anything Golden-like.

Less frequent answers:

The eclectic and diverse character of the

central neighborhoods and the School of Mines campus.

Unique answers:

Some believe every area of Golden is important, and that Golden is a "patchwork quilt." Some mentioned early suburban neighborhoods like Beverly Heights.

Substance

Question: Are there parts of the code that contradict the Comp Plan/ Golden Vision 2030? If so, what are they? Have there been any cases where Council/Commission approved a project that in your opinion seemed to be counter to the community priorities, as defined in adopted plans? Have you found specific standards or requirements in the code that prohibited you/applicants from doing something that would've more closely aligned with community priorities, as defined in adopted city plans?

Summary of most common answers:

The code permits structures that are too big from the public's point of view. They don't fit the Golden character. The answers included examples from recent developments that are more intense in their scale, size and disposition. Reviewing these examples, we see that this problem manifests mostly within (a) the interface areas between downtown and older neighborhoods (b) within older neighborhoods close to downtown, or (c) at the peripheral locations.

Developers and applicants are afraid to "rock the boat". They often follow the rules exactly at the expense of good design to avoid a lengthy review process or the risk of a public hearing. Projects that may align with the character of Golden are not possible under current zoning standards. The standards are too specific and disallow creativity in meeting the intent of the standard.

Frequent answers:

- There are unintended consequences of standards. For example, the recent bulk plane regulations disallow gable dormers which are more consistent with the historic district.
- Lot frontage and lot size minimums do not allow for smaller structures and smaller lots
- Parking minimums are counter to a multi-modal vision
- C2 zoning on South Golden Road is too auto-oriented

Unique Answers:

- Architectural lighting: the standards do not allow lights to wash up wall, catenary lights create a ceiling and are not allowed
- Lighting standards seem open to interpretation
- “Can’t have all metal building” - too prescriptive, metal is the least expensive material
- Metal siding often does not work with a jogging façade if using prefab metal panels
- Zoning is like a bunch of “warts stuck together” - it grew and evolved over time
- Rules need more flexibility, do not want to be part of HOA with paint color regulations
- More thought should be put into growth allocation process, the process triggers a rush

Question: Looking back through your recent experience with applicants/the City, what rules in the code create the most misunderstanding or confusion? In your opinion what rules are difficult to interpret and to apply consistently? (Treating applicants the same) What are the most misinterpreted or misunderstood pieces of the code in your opinion?

Summary of most common answers:

There is a mismatch between the aspiration of the long-range documents and the current code. Architectural standards aren’t producing the friendly, pedestrian-oriented design that the community cares about. There is no mechanism in the code to reinforce “good design.” As such, it is often left up to interpretation.

Frequent answers:

- Guidelines and standards (18.40) are hard to interpret; the intentions need to be clear
- Parking requirements should be re-evaluated, especially in mixed-use and building re-use scenarios; some defended reduced standards, others expressed the need for more parking or greater parking regulation
- Use categories are dated. For example, the term “boarding house” is no longer used and new uses, like marijuana retail, are not captured.
- CMU zoning – challenges include setbacks, infill sites, preservation, scale, parking

- Height measurement, especially in relation to sloped lots
- The following terms need to be defined or defined more clearly: “downtown”, “hardship”, “exemption”, “exception”, “variance”, “waiver”, “structure”, and “encroachment”
- Sustainability menu – applicants feel there are too few options, DRT does not know how to enforce
- Open space requirements, the intent is not clear
- Variance procedure and variance criteria
- Mixed-use parking requirements are complicated to understand
- Parking downtown zone is unclear
- Jogging façade: Staff should be able to make exceptions if the applicant is meeting intention of standards; there should be exceptions and intention statements instead of requiring overly specific standards that don’t necessarily result in better outcome

Less frequent answers:

- There needs to be a better coordination between water quality standards and the zoning code including details, drainage, and stormwater in urban core. With the sustainability menu, for example, porous paving is an option. However porous paving and site drainage or detention are not monitored and calculated together.
- The tap fee structure is confusing; it can be interpreted in many ways. It additionally requires separate taps for smaller structures like ADUs
- Tier 2 bonuses should not be a reward for additional sustainability menu items

Question: What parts of the code encourage or contradict affordability?

Frequent answers:

- Lot frontage and lot size minimums do not allow for smaller lots. Smaller lots could allow for smaller structures providing potentially more affordable new construction
- Tap fees are too expensive
- Jogging façade requirements add cost to construction
- Fire sprinkler requirements add an expense that is a barrier to affordability
- Lengthy and unpredictable process when public meetings are required
- Sustainability menu requires expensive improvements
- Code is not flexible for Tiny Homes or ADUs
- Density maximums
- Flexibility to meet intent of guidelines
- There should be incentives to keep older housing stock. The older housing stock could naturally provide a more affordable housing option.

Process

Question: What aspects of the code need to be modified to increase efficiency and reduce redundancy in the review process while maintaining the code’s intention? Looking back on your past experience with the City, were the demands clear? (in terms of process, such as submission requirements) Looking back on your past experience with the City, was there any discrepancy between what the code/staff/PC/neighbors expected from you?

Summary of most common answers:

Nearly all parties are frustrated by Site Plan Review. Public input is invited but has little influence on the outcome. For example, during a public hearing, the community makes arguments about use, even though that is determined by the code and not up for discussion. They are confused as to why their voice isn’t being heard. There is ambiguity in what is asked of the public.

From the applicants’ point of view, the public hearing feels like a public negotiation. Developers and applicants often follow the rules exactly at the expense of good design to avoid a lengthy review process or the risk of a public hearing.

Greater transparency and consistency are desired in the public hearing process, such as providing consistent packets and materials.

Frequent Answers:

- Applicants would prefer enforceable standards over accommodations to neighbor complaints
- Too many personal opinions are on the table for discussion at public hearings
- The public and public representatives often feel staff is aligned with developers. This becomes a point of controversy in public hearings or with approval of undesirable projects.
- Applicants want to avoid Planning Commission. They believe that what the code permits should not be up for debate in a public setting.
- Others expressed the need for more scrutiny by Planning Commission and the public as they feel new construction does not align with policy documents
- There is ambiguity and misalignment between the zoning code and neighborhood plans
- Public hearings feel like a negotiation exercise

Unique answers:

- Projects are approved too quickly
- Have public meetings early on, public should be less involved as the project progresses

- Planning Commission does not have the teeth to say no
- There is no pro-growth voice in Golden
- If an applicant is asking for flexibility or relief, they must engage in a public process with unpredictable timelines
- Process adds hurdle/challenge for no to little utility; invites legal challenge

Question: What are the strengths and weakness regarding interdepartmental communication?

Summary of most common answers:
Site planning issues regarding public works are treated as an afterthought. There is no strong relationship between departments (in spite of the pre-app meetings). Water quality and flood plain issues are the most problematic for the developers.

Frequent answers:

- Fire is reasonable

- Staff is very accessible
- Sustainability menu – there is confusion on who is responsible for compliance
- Lack of a permit coordinator (single point of contact for project)
- Applicants find it hard to follow Public Works comments and track permits; each Public Works employee has a different answer
- Staff turnover makes it difficult to pass on correct procedure and processes
- No electronic track record for communication
- Process diagrams and flow charts would be helpful

Navigation

Question: Can you easily find what you're looking for in the code? How heavily do you rely on supplemental documents or staff to navigate the code

Summary of most common answers:

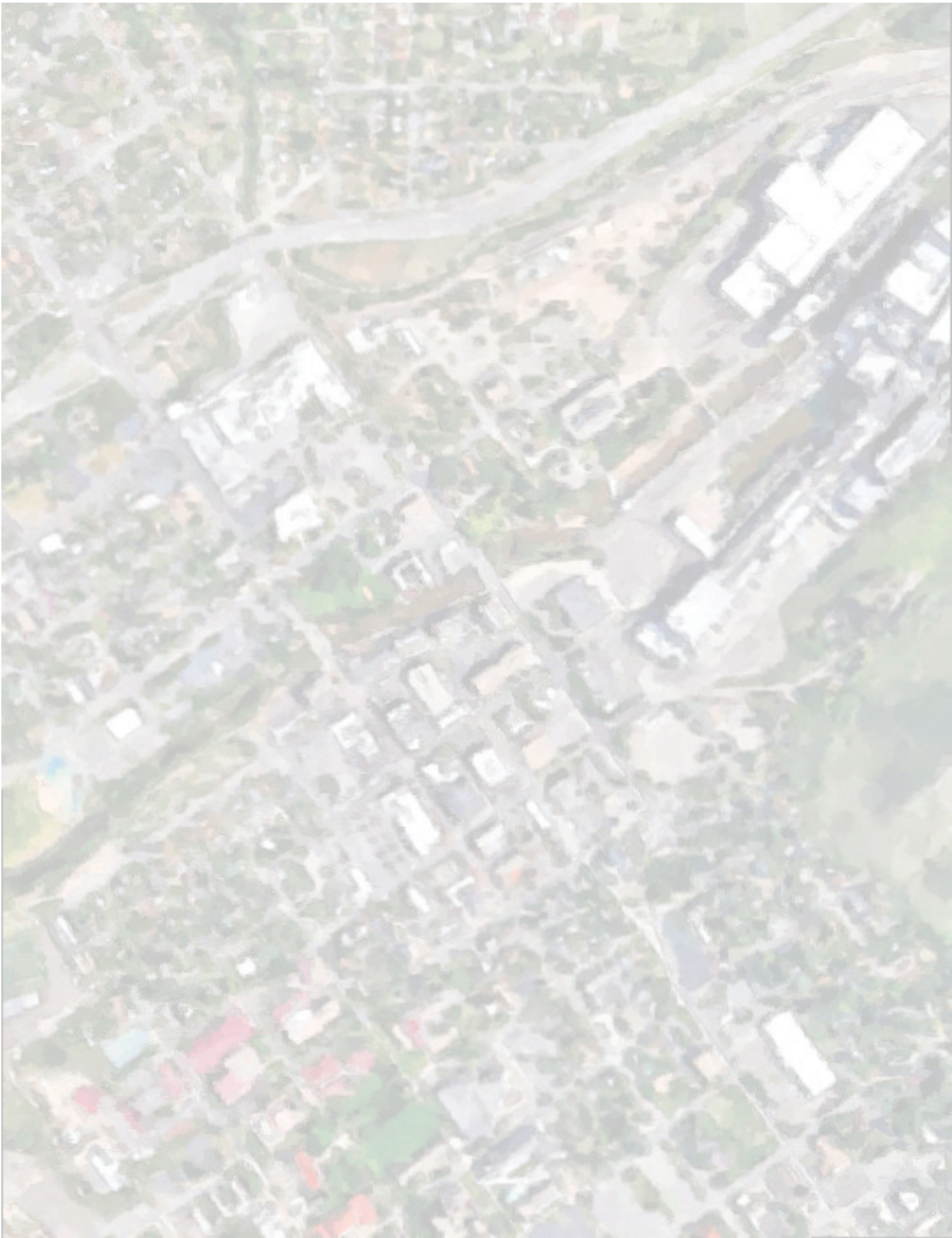
The code is not user-friendly. It is not always clear why certain regulations are there. Information is scattered.

Frequent Answers:

- Users of the code rely heavily on staff
- Illustrations and intent language should be added to bring greater clarity (even though some expressed reservations)

Unique Answers:

- Photos are not accurate or are rotated
- Having one downloadable document would be nice
- Requirements that change depending on location creates confusion
- No site triangle regulations
- Too many words and not enough pictures





Appendix B

Lot and building size analysis for R2, R3 and CMU zone districts

The following maps and analytical scales provide more insight and understanding of the current lot and building sizes within R2, R3 and CMU zones. Our hope is that these maps will demonstrate the discrepancy between the current conditions, the minimum lot size requirements, and the building sizes allowed by the permitted building envelope.

Since our purpose is to understand the diversity of building sizes and lots, we did not include outlots that are common areas owned by HOAs within the R3 and CMU zone districts in our analysis. These common areas do not accurately represent the development patterns that the survey is intended to capture, and if included, would skew the data that is presented.

R2 Lot Sizes

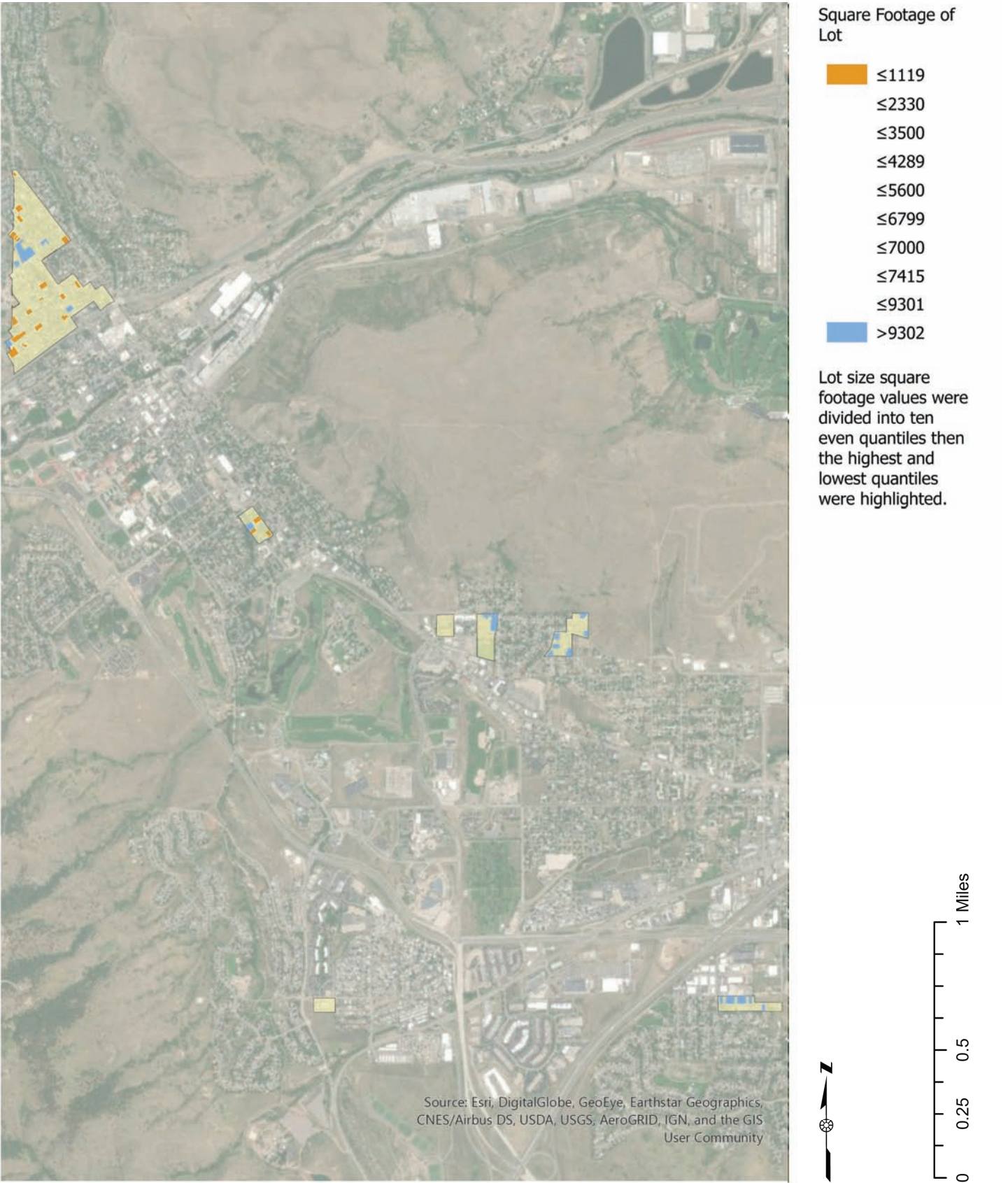


Figure B.1: This map highlights the smallest 10% of lots (in orange) and largest 10% of lots (in blue) within the R2 zone district. The column lists square footages in 10% increments. Note that three large church lots are not included in this analysis.

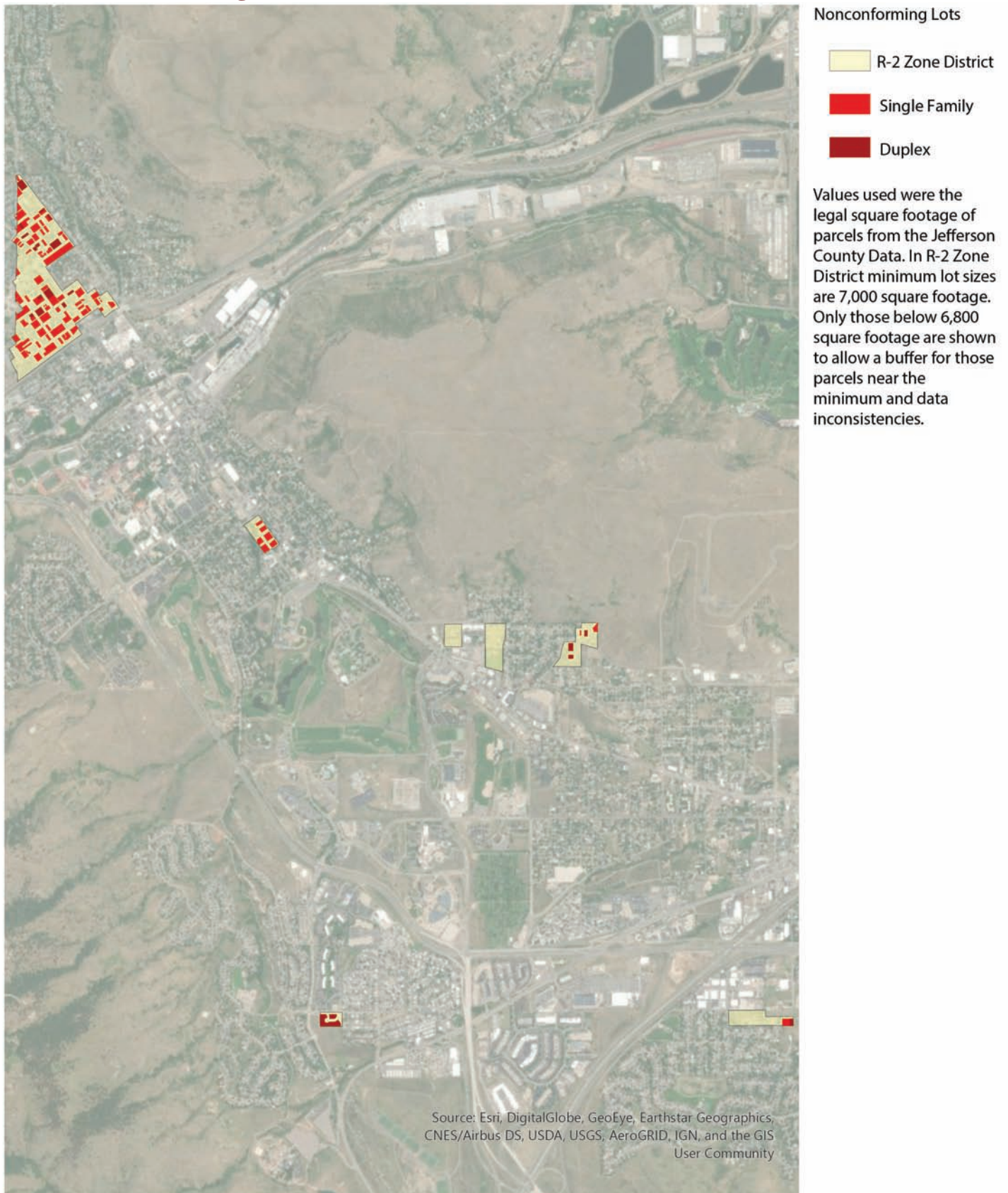
R2 Non-conforming lot sizes

Figure B.2: Lots indicated by light red are single family lots that are 6,800 s.f. or smaller (110 out of 286 lots); darker red indicates duplex lots that are 6,800 s.f. or smaller (combined) (54 out of 77 lots) in R2 zone district

R2 Building Sizes

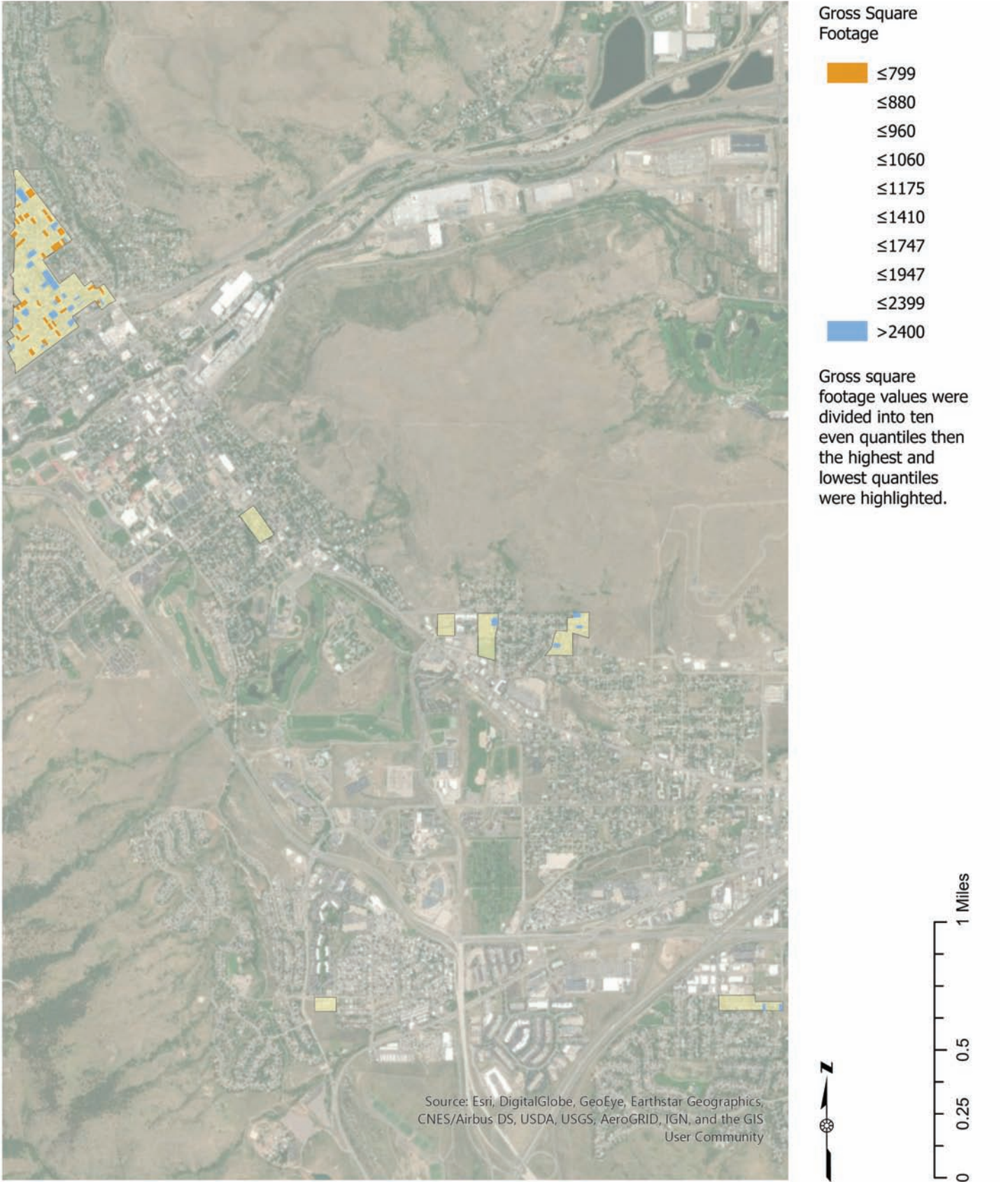


Figure B.3: This map highlights the lots with the smallest buildings (smallest 10% in orange) and largest buildings (largest 10% in blue) within the R2 zoning district. The column lists square footages in 10% increments. Note that three large church lots are not included in this analysis.

R3 Lot Sizes

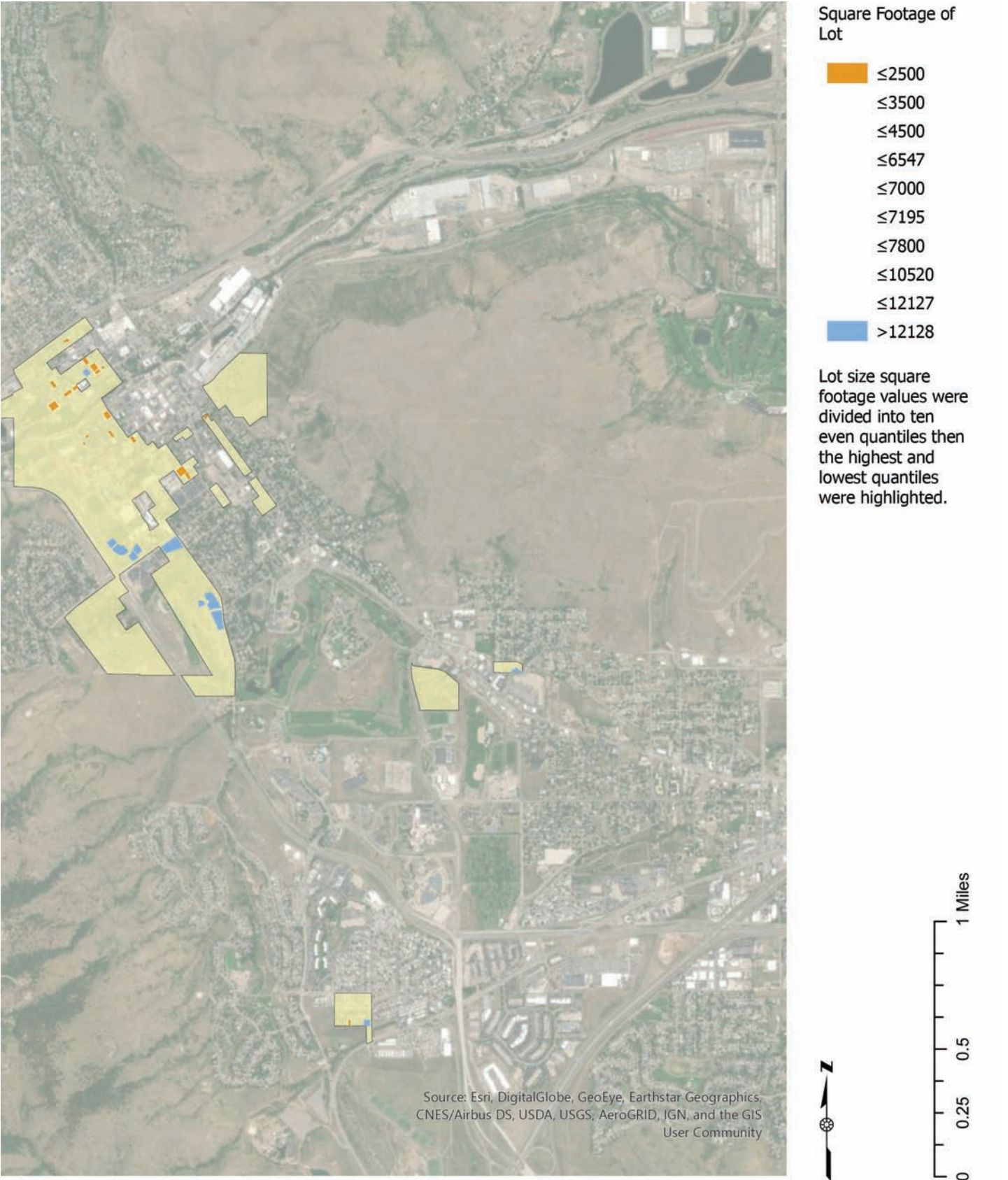


Figure B.4: This map highlights the smallest 10% of lots (in orange) and largest 10% of lots (in blue) within the R3 zoning district. The column lists square footages in 10% increments. Note that largest non-residential lots are not included in this analysis.

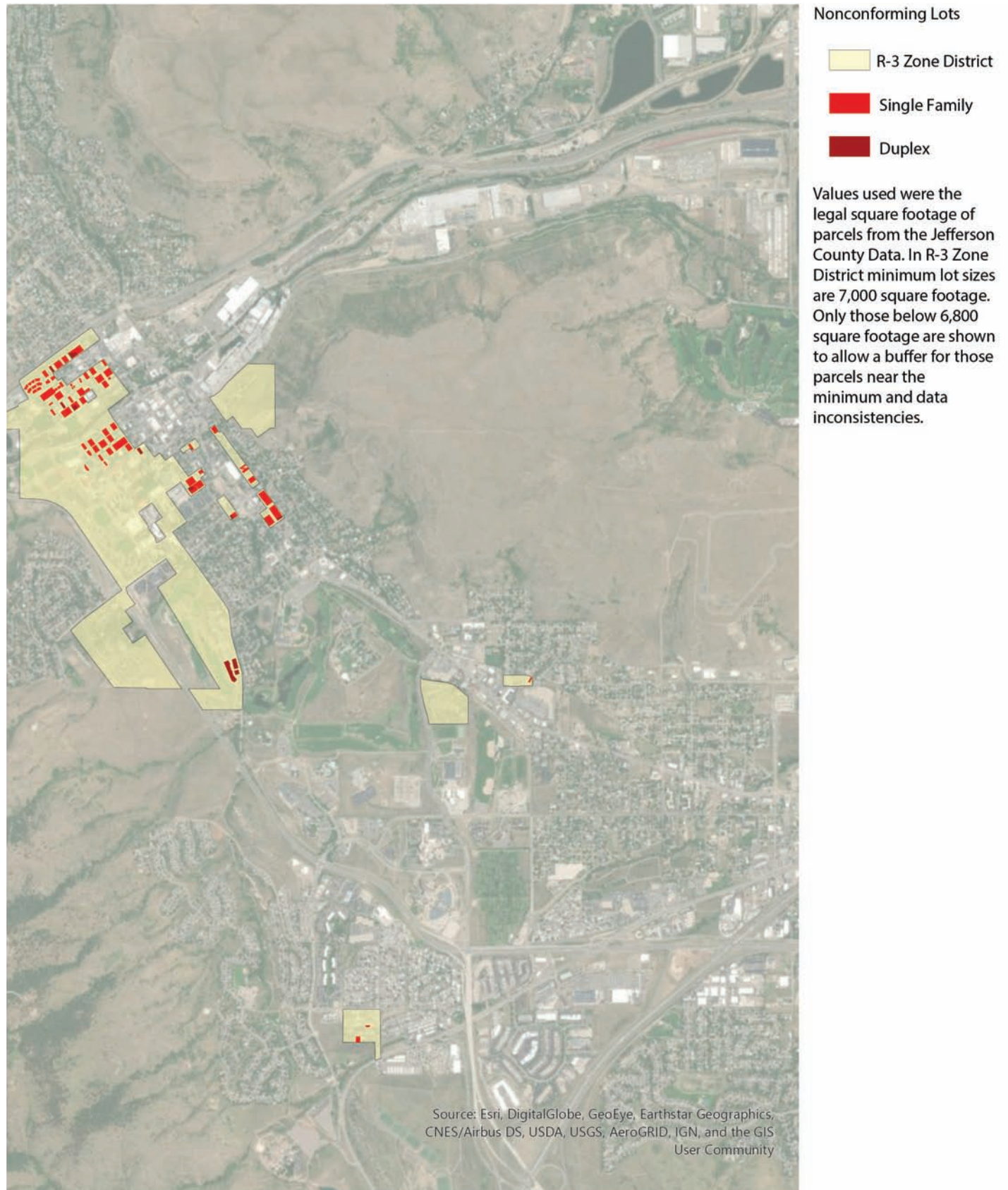
R3 Non-conforming lot sizes

Figure B.5: Lots indicated by light red are single family lots that are 6800 s.f. or smaller (254 out of 341 lots); darker red indicates duplex lots that are 6800 s.f. or smaller (combined) (26 out of 42 lots) in R3 zone district

R3 Building Sizes

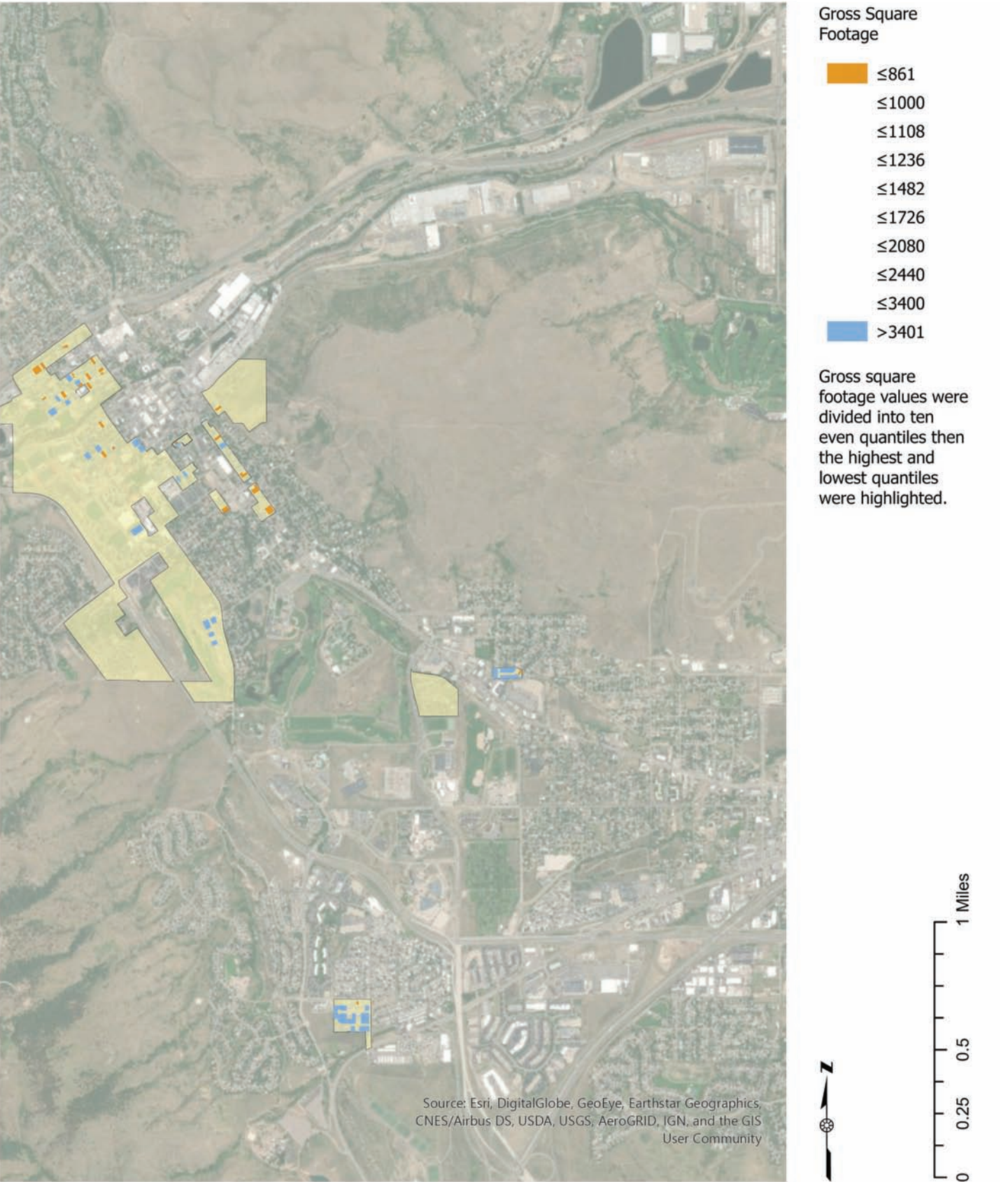


Figure B.6: This map highlights the lots with the smallest buildings (smallest 10% in orange) and largest buildings (largest 10% in blue) within the R3 zoning district. The column lists square footages in 10% increments. Note that the largest non-residential lots are not included in this analysis.

CMU Lot Sizes

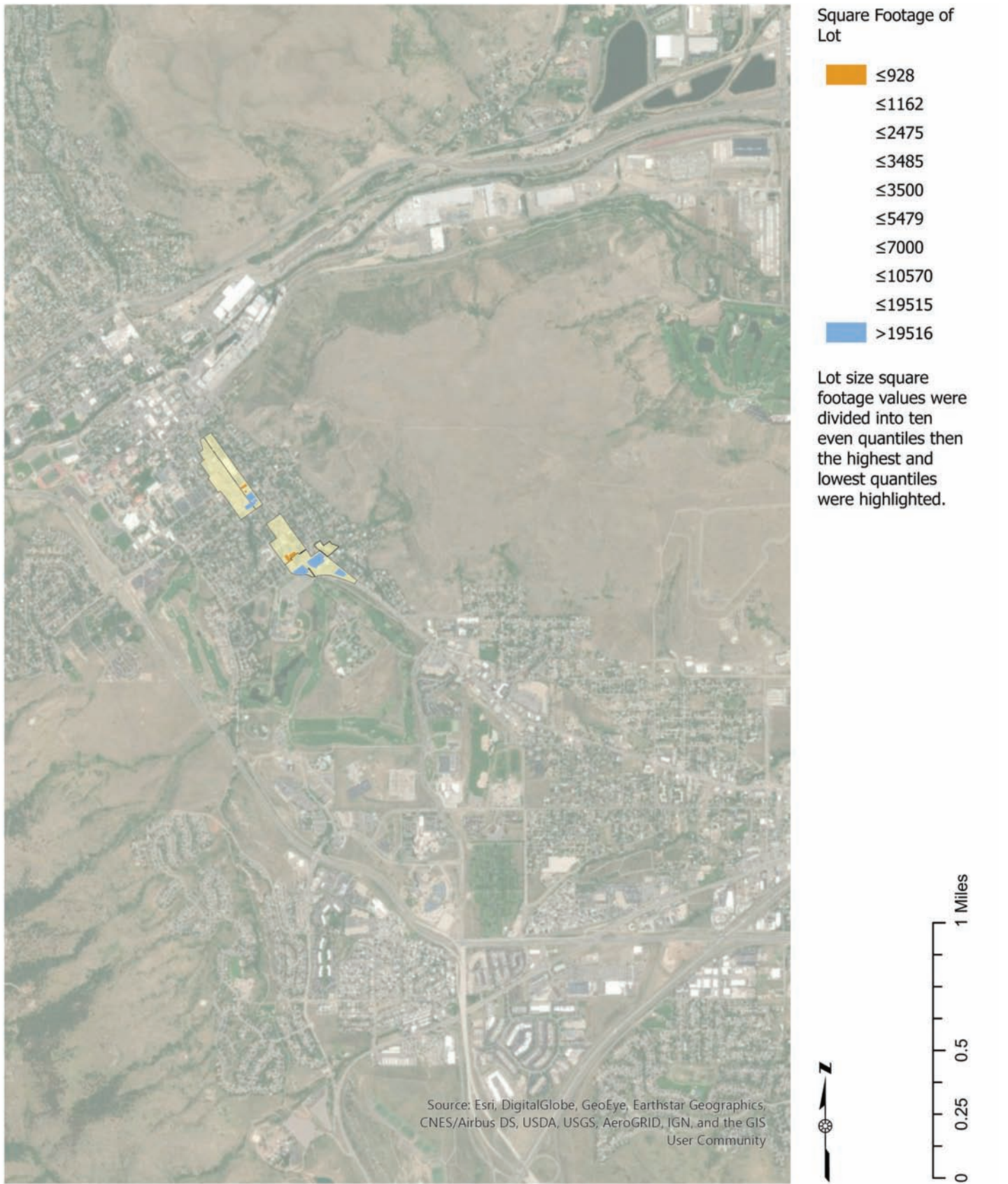


Figure B.7: This map highlights the largest 10% of lots (in blue) and smallest 10% of lots (in orange) within the CMU zoning districts. The column lists square footages in 10% increments.

CMU Building Sizes

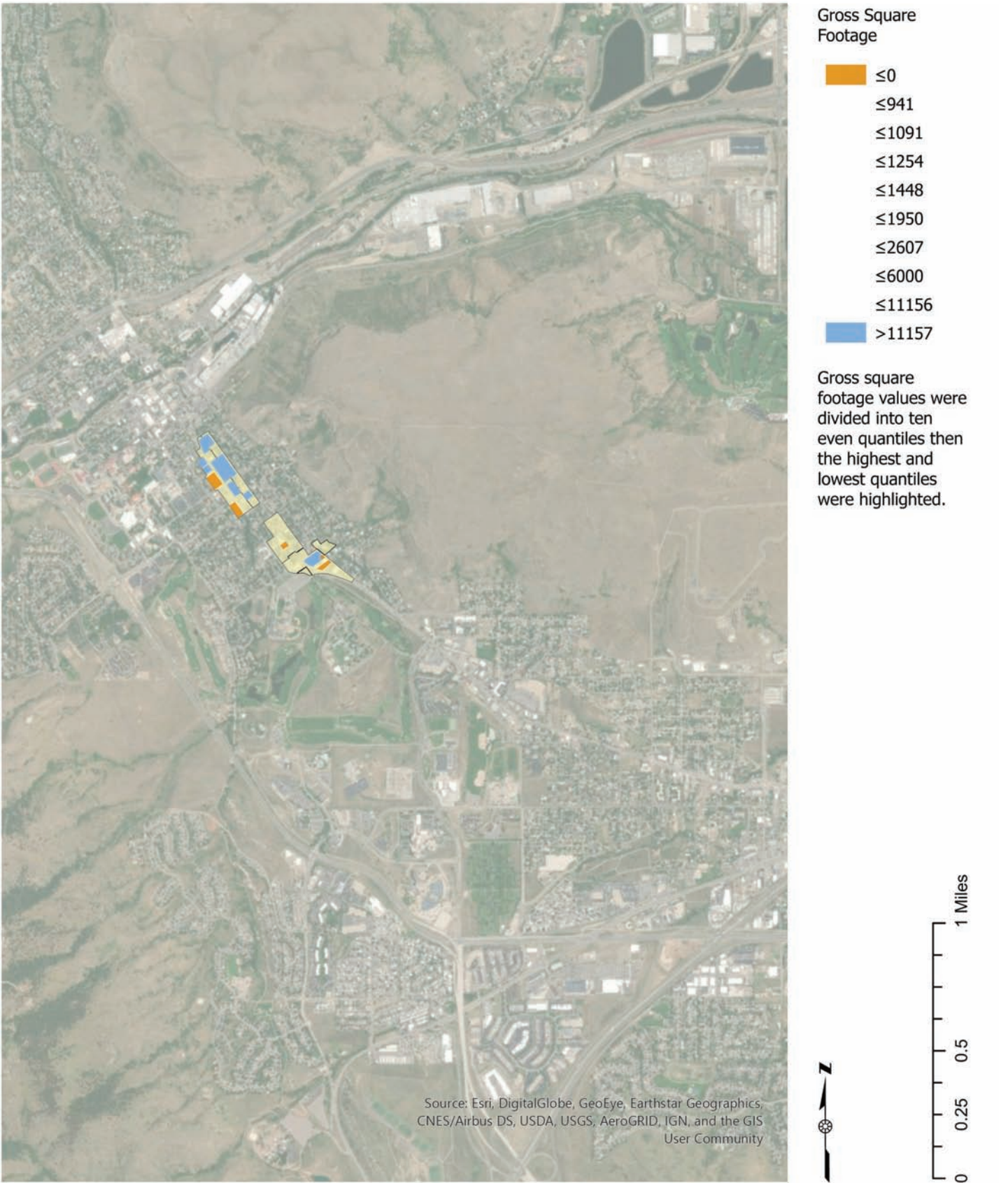


Figure B.8: This map highlights lots with the largest buildings (largest 10% in blue) and smallest buildings (smallest 10% in orange) within the CMU zoning districts. The column lists square footages in 10% increments.

