



October 15, 2025

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING ZONING AND ROSLINDALE ANALYSIS

Roslindale Boston Centers for Youth and Families
6:00p-7:30p



MEET THE TEAM



Kathleen Onufer
Deputy Director of Zoning



Will Cohen (Presenter)
Senior Planner II



Jein Park (Presenter)
Planner I



Lorraine Kung
Urban Designer II



Yi Ming Wu
Urban Designer I



Kenya Beaman
Community Engagement Manager



Grey Black
Community Engagement Manager



Joshua McCorkle
Roslindale Neighborhood Liaison



Naoise McDonnell
Community Engagement Manager

AGENDA

1. What is Zoning?
2. Existing Conditions in Roslindale
3. Mattapan: What has happened since new zoning?
4. Q&A and Discussion

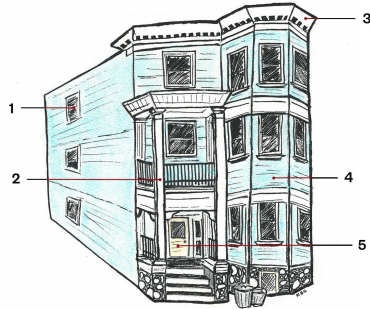


WHAT IS ZONING?



ZONING TELLS US HOW OUR CITY SHOULD LOOK.

Zoning is a set of local laws that guide how land and buildings can be used and shaped. In residential areas, zoning determines things like **how many homes or units** can be built on a lot, **how tall or large those homes can be**, and **how much open space and parking must be provided**. Some of what zoning regulates includes:



LAND USES

the types of activities allowed within a given area (ex: what types and how many homes are allowed)



BUILDING DIMENSIONS

how much space a building takes up, its height, and the open space around it



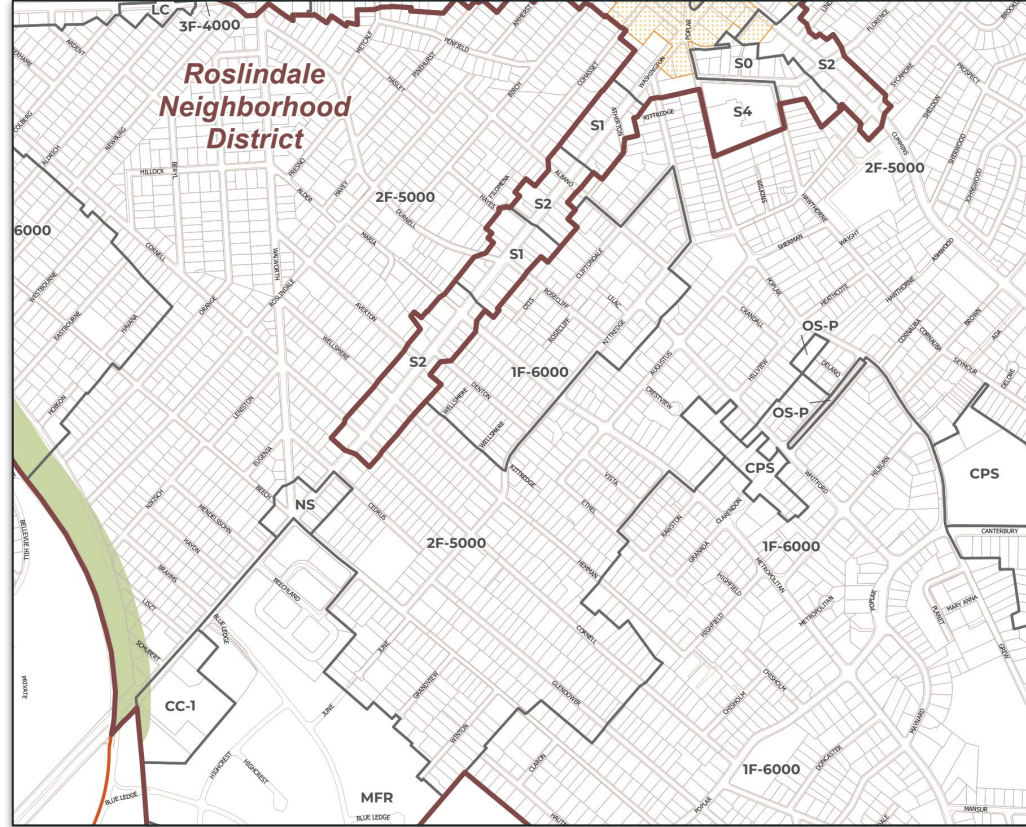
OTHER REGULATIONS

parking and driveway requirements, porches or decks, entrances, etc

Zoning doesn't build or demolish anything; it acts as guides and limits to what people can build.

ZONING DISTRICTS GET PLACED ON A MAP.

- Zoning maps divide and organize land in a city into zoning districts
- Zoning districts determine the **use** of land, **shape** of buildings on land, and **density** of buildings on land
- The same districts can be **used in similar areas throughout the city**. This makes updates to zoning easier and more equitable.



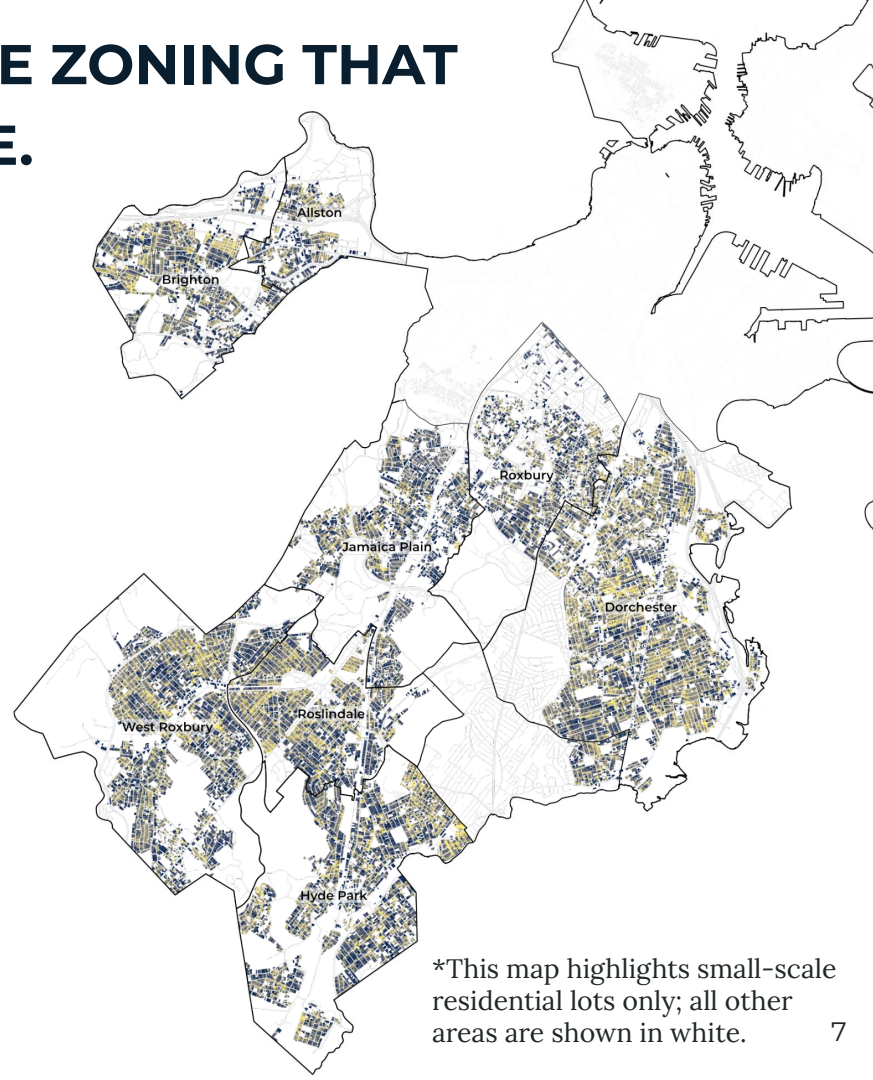
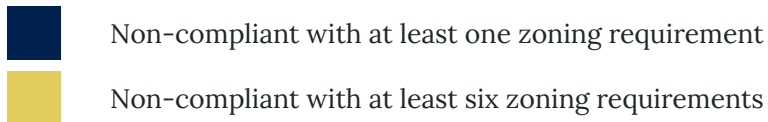
A snapshot of Roslindale's zoning districts that include portions of Squares + Streets as well as residential zoning.

99% OF RESIDENTIAL LOTS HAVE ZONING THAT FAILS TO MATCH WHAT'S THERE.

Without case-by-case zoning relief, the current zoning code effectively declares that **nothing should be built in Boston that looks like what is currently in Boston.**

This is true whether it is infill on a vacant lot, an ADU, or a simple change like adding a dormer or rebuilding a porch.

(99% of parcels fail to conform to unit count, lot size, floor area ratio, or yard requirements. This does not account for parking or any other zoning rules that cannot be measured citywide.)



*This map highlights small-scale residential lots only; all other areas are shown in white.

WHAT'S NOT WORKING WITH ROSLINDALE'S CURRENT RESIDENTIAL ZONING?

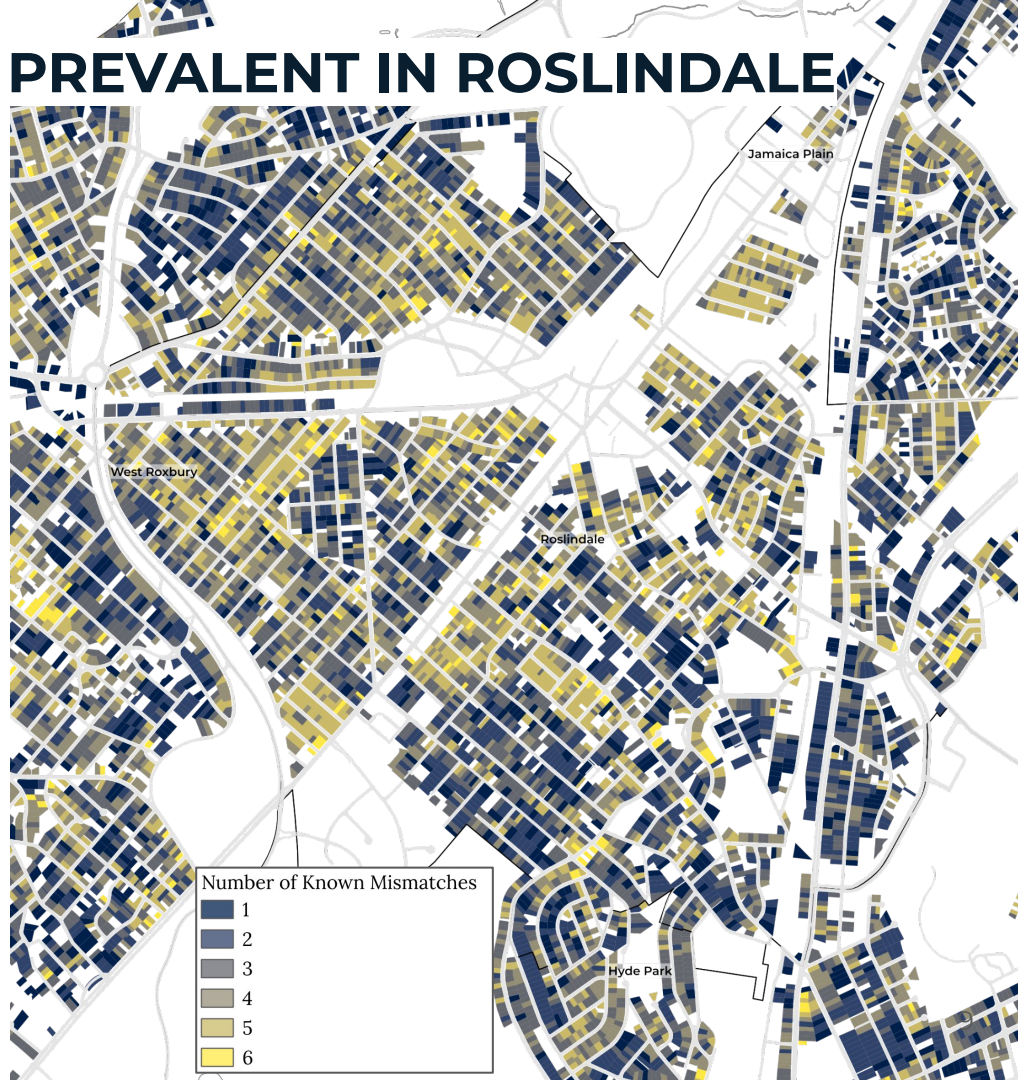


ZONING MISMATCHES ARE PREVALENT IN ROSLINDALE

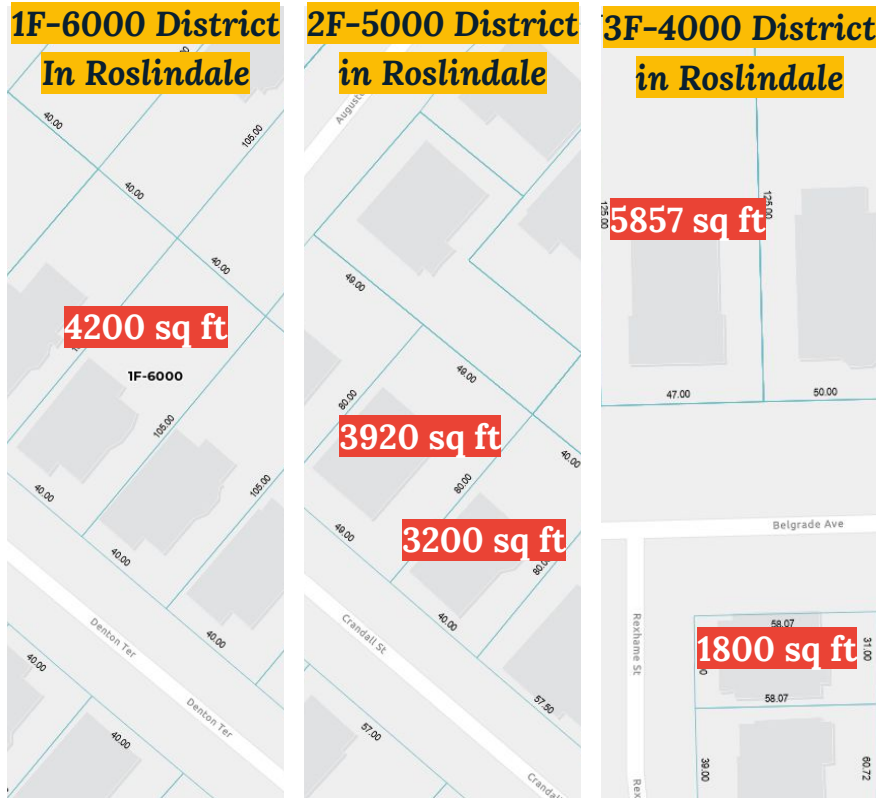
There are 5,958 total lots in Roslindale. Of those, **5,722 lots have small-scale residential zoning, representing 8,350 homes.**

From dark blue to yellow, this map shows **where residential zoning is smaller than what is already there**, based on 6 easy-to-measure metrics. Under just these 6 metrics, **at least 5,000 lots in Roslindale (99% of analyzed area) have poorly-suited zoning.**

- Minimum lot size
- FAR (floor area ratio: gross building area / lot size)
- Unit count
- Front yard
- Side yard
- Rear yard



ZONING RULES ARE TOO RESTRICTIVE FOR EXISTING LOTS.



49% of lots are smaller than the requirement minimum, yet these homes already exist.

Today's zoning rules don't match the historic neighborhood pattern.

Actual Lot Sizes:
25th percentile: 4300 sf
50th percentile: 5200 sf
75th percentile: 6300 sf

ROSLINDALE'S TYPICAL SIDE YARD IS 5 FT, BUT ZONING REQUIRES 10 FT.

Zoning requires a minimum side yard of 10'.

84% of lots have side yards **below** the required minimum in Roslindale.

Actual Side Yards:

25th percentile: 3 ft

50th percentile: 5 ft

75th percentile: 8 ft



162 Durnell Ave, Roslindale

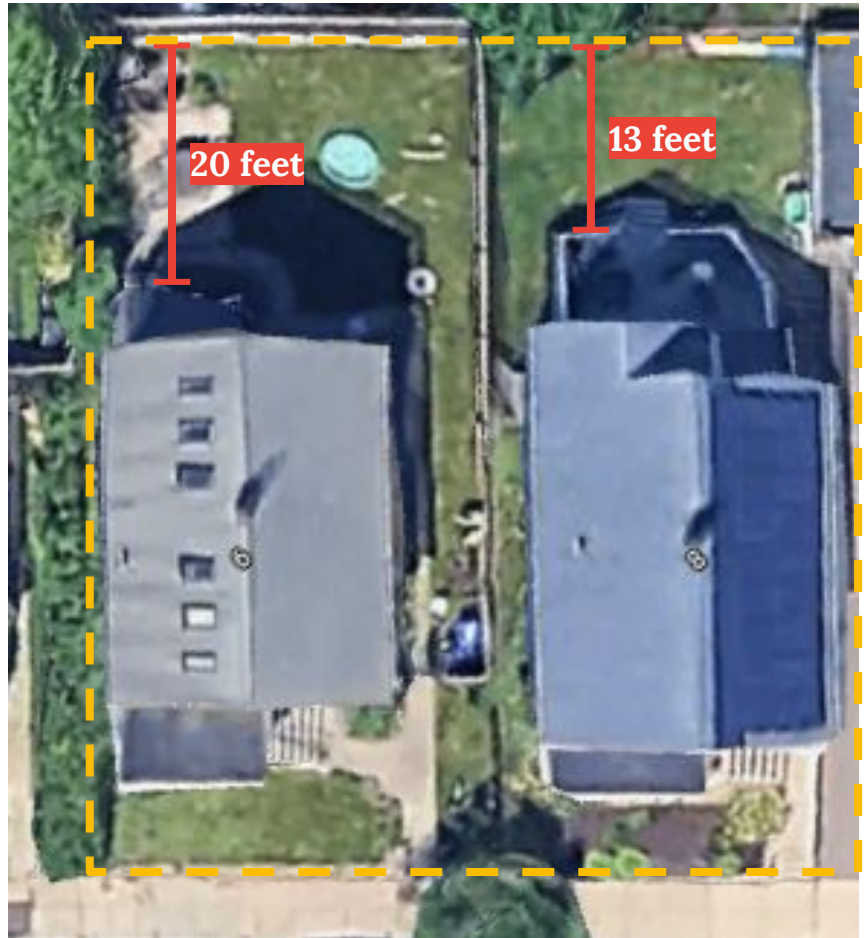
ROSLINDALE'S TYPICAL REAR YARD IS 37 FT, AND ZONING REQUIRES 40 FT.

Zoning requires a minimum rear yard of 40'.

56% of lots have rear yards **below** the required minimum in Roslindale.

These calculations deliberately look only at the main structure, ignoring all garages or sheds.

Actual Rear Yards:
25th percentile: 18 ft
50th percentile: 37 ft
75th percentile: 51 ft



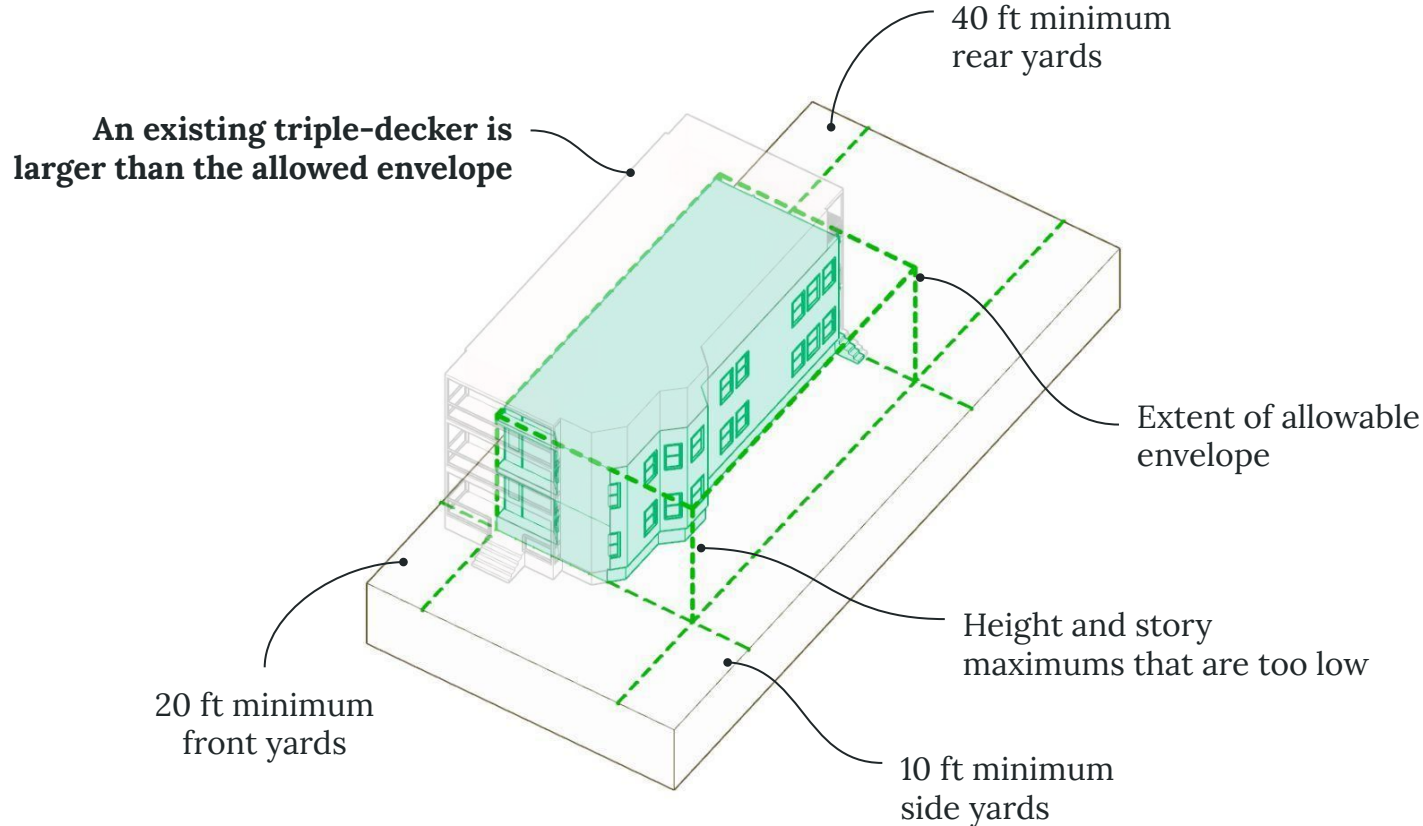
6 Ethel St and 8 Ethel St, Roslindale

TREES COMFORTABLY FIT WITH EXISTING SMALLER YARDS.

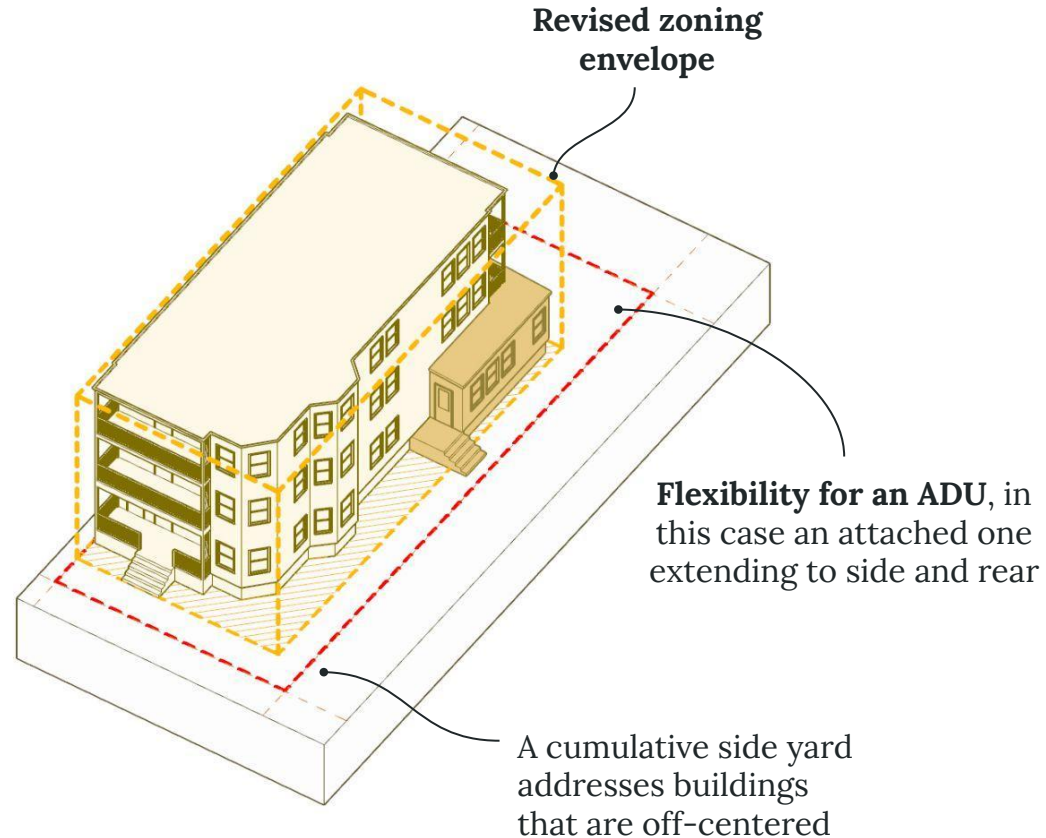


Between Stellman Rd and
Granfield Ave, Roslindale

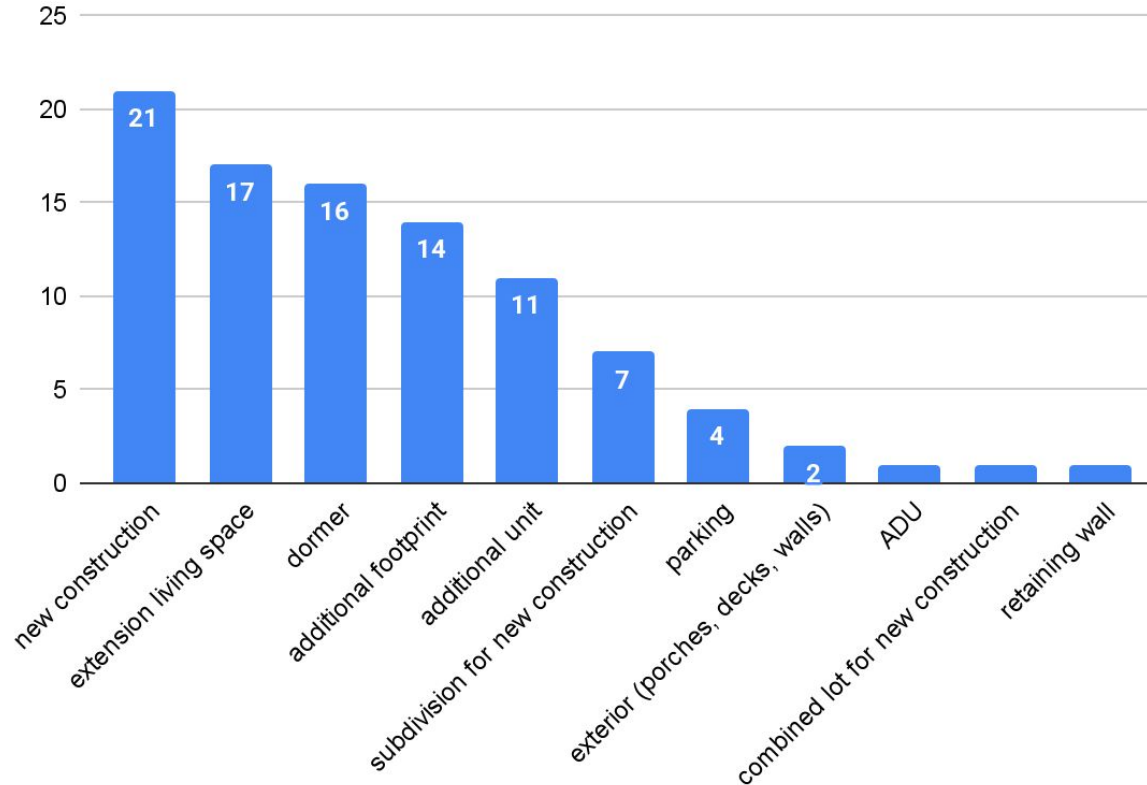
THESE RULES DISALLOW ALMOST EVERYTHING.



WE WANT TO UPDATE ZONING TO MATCH ROSLINDALE.



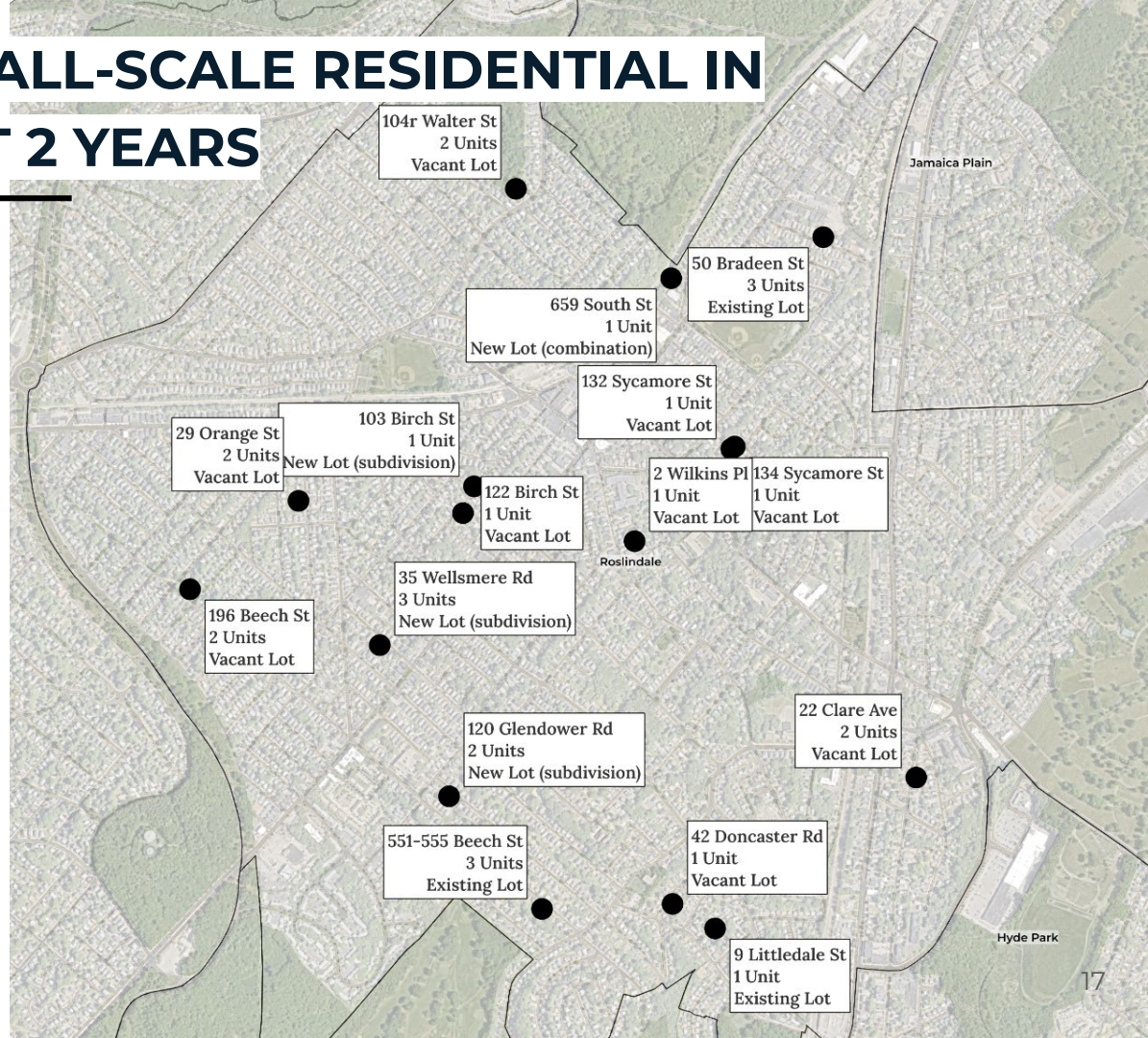
UPDATED ZONING COULD HAVE STREAMLINED 100+ CASES SINCE 2022 (50+ YEARS OF WAITING).



111 non-Article 80 projects have been approved by the ZBA since 2022 in Roslindale in residential subdistricts.

If residential zoning allowed for small renovations on existing buildings along with contextual infill development, the **vast majority of these would not have needed zoning relief.**

APPROVED NEW SMALL-SCALE RESIDENTIAL IN ROSLINDALE IN PAST 2 YEARS



NEW CONSTRUCTION CASE STUDY: 22 CLARE AVE

Project: build new two-unit residential structure on a vacant lot.

The proposed structure is similar in size, scale, and design to abutting properties.

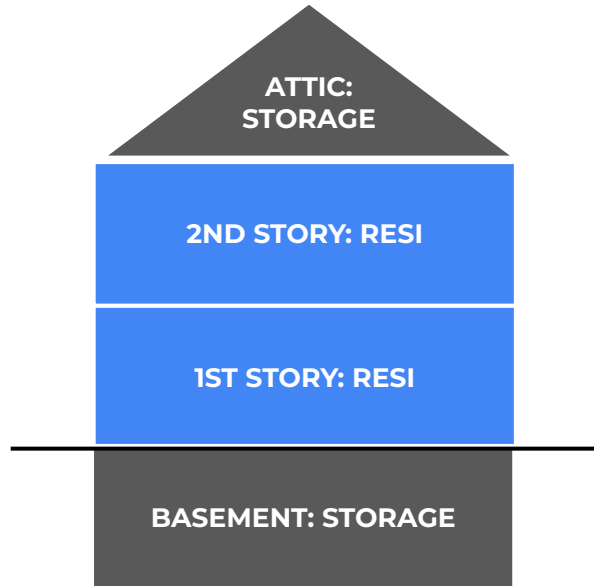


NEW CONSTRUCTION CASE STUDY: 22 CLARE AVE

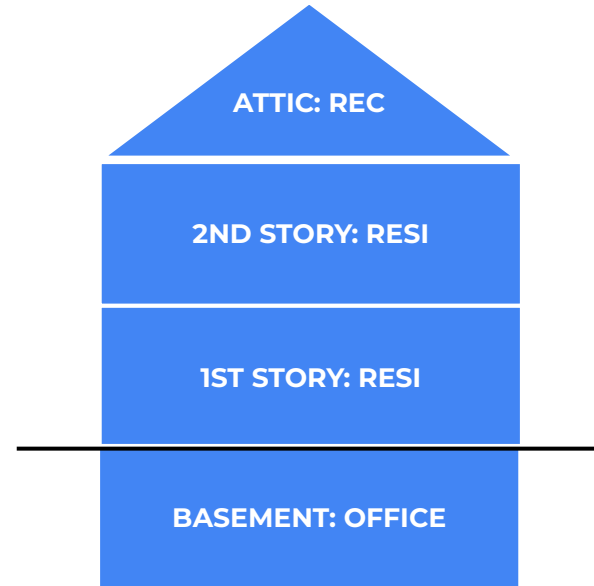


| 2F-5000 Zoning Mismatches | Required | Proposed | Surrounding Context |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------|------------------------|
| Off-Street Parking | 4 spots | 2 | 2 |
| Additional Lot Area | 8000 sq ft | 5,005 | ~5000 sq ft |
| FAR Excessive | 0.5 | 0.32 | 0.48-0.54+ |
| Height Excessive (stories) | 2.5 | 3 | 2.5 |
| Usable Open Space | 3,500 | 3,141 | varied and similar |
| Rear Yard | 40 | 24.5 | 20 ft, 12 ft |

EXTENDING LIVING SPACE IN ONE'S HOME IS CAUGHT IN MORE PROCESSES THAN IT SHOULD BE.



COMPLIANT



NOT COMPLIANT:

*Even though the building floorplate did NOT change,
change of use affects GFA calculation*

ADDING ADDITIONAL UNIT CASE STUDY: 494 POPLAR ST

Project: This project seeks to renovate the existing attic space of the existing two-unit dwelling to add another dwelling unit to the building, so that the owner's son can take care of her and her special needs daughter.

1 RENDERING
VIEW FROM GLENCLIFF AVE



| 1F-6000 Zoning Mismatches | Required | Proposed | Surrounding Context |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------------|
| Off-Street Parking | 6 spots | 2 (existing) | 0-2 |
| Use | forbidden | 3 units | 1-3 units |
| FAR Excessive | 0.5 | 0.67 | 0.38-0.53+ |
| Height Excessive (stories) | 2.5 | 3 | 1-3 |
| Usable Open Space | 5,400 | - | - |
| Side Yard | 10 | 6 | 20 ft, 12 ft |

CASE STUDY: MATTAPAN REZONING



PLAN: MATTAPAN

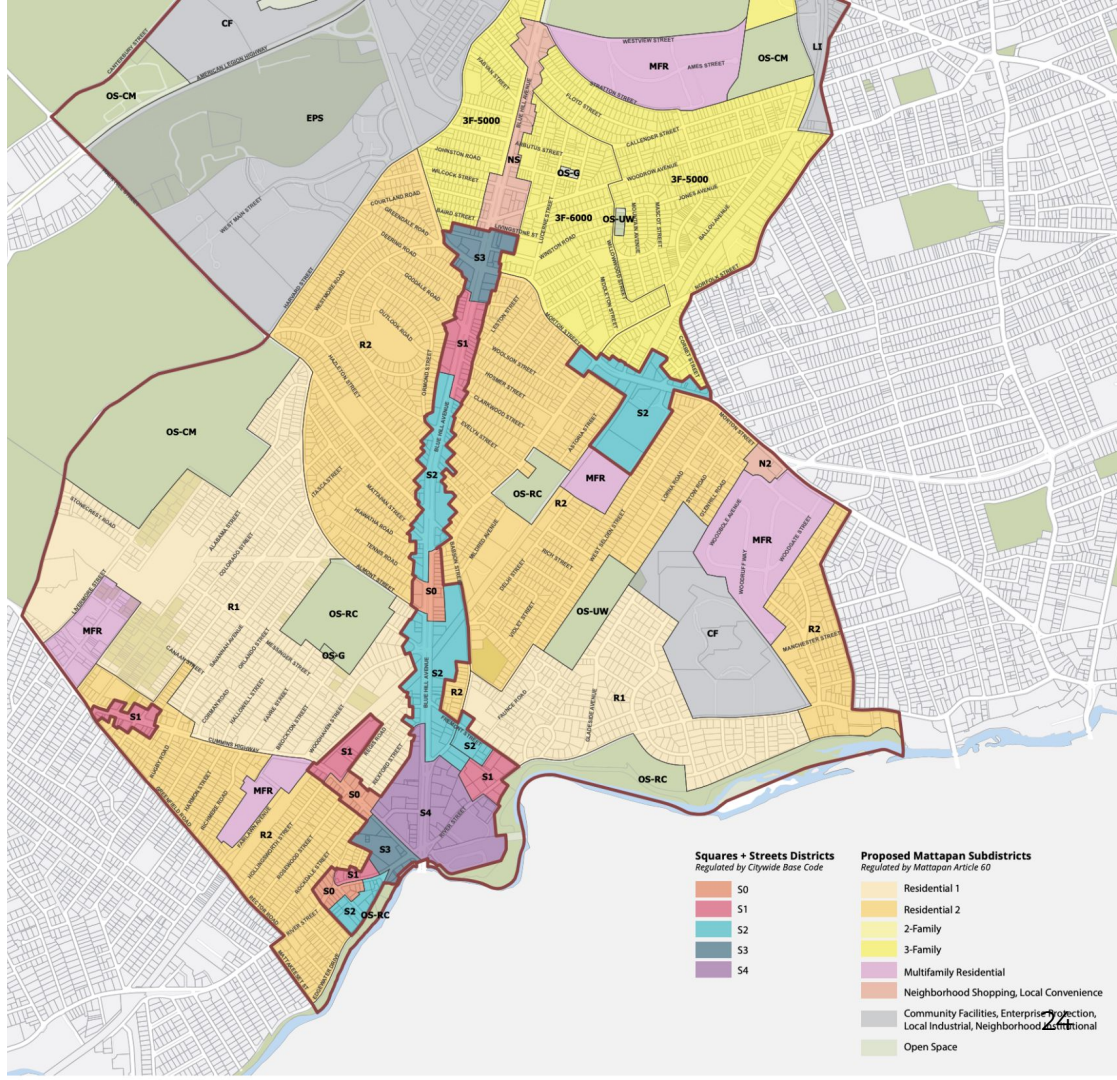
May 11, 2023 – PLAN: Mattapan adopted

February 7, 2024 – New residential zoning in Mattapan adopted

May 30, 2024 – Mattapan Squares + Streets Zoning adopted

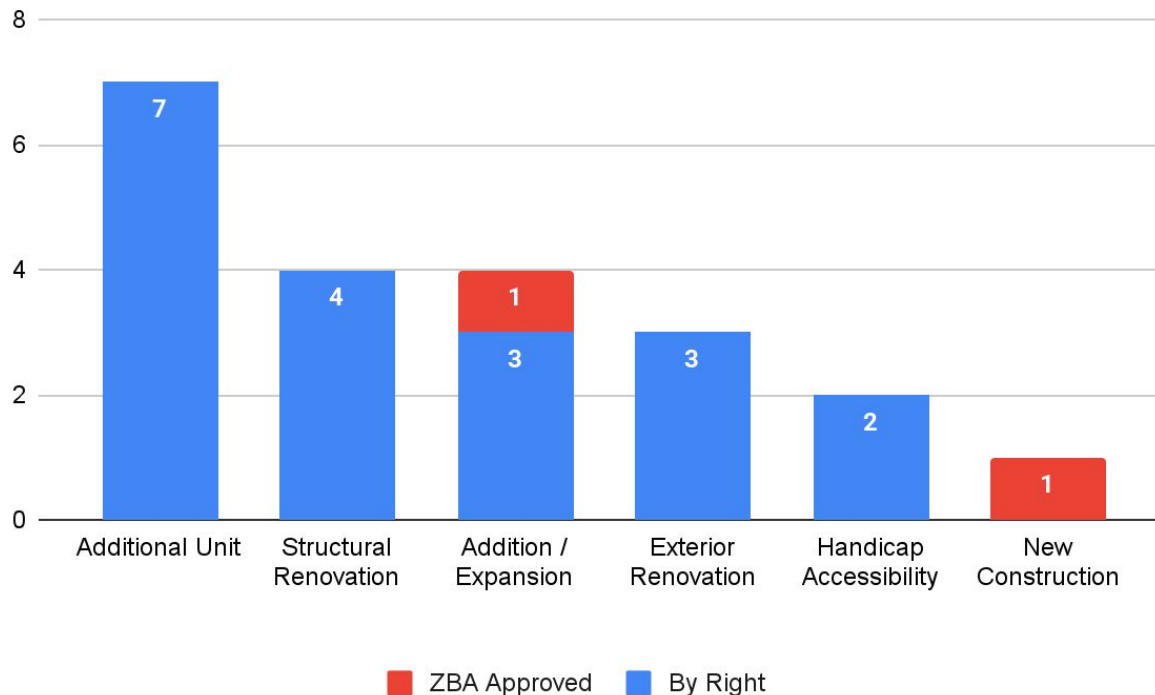
PLAN: Mattapan envisions a future where:

- Existing Mattapan residents are **stable in their homes** and new residents have **affordable housing options**
- Mattapan residents have **safe and reliable transit connections** to jobs, schools, and community spaces in Mattapan and throughout Boston
- Mattapan Square** and other neighborhood nodes are home to **vibrant, thriving local businesses and cultural spaces** that reflect the needs of residents and uphold neighborhood identity



AFTER REZONING, 90% OF SMALL SCALE RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS ARE ALLOWED, UP FROM 46% PRIOR TO REZONING.

Projects that have been approved:

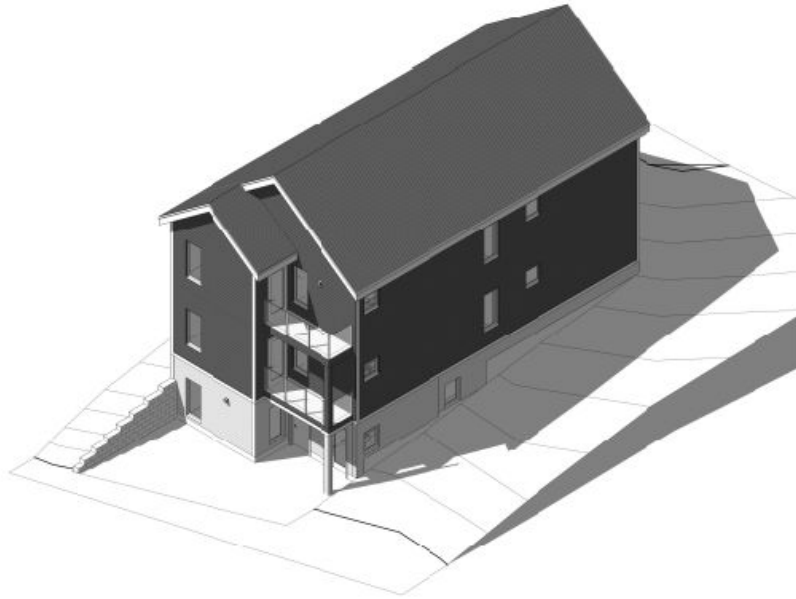


21 total small-scale residential projects with permits issued since 2/7/24

19 by right, 2 through ZBA

Does not include zoning exempt projects such as fire alarms, solar panels, as well as projects that do not physically alter the building such as subdivision of lots.

NEW CONSTRUCTION CASE STUDY: 9 RICHMERE RD (ZBA)



9 RICHMERE

9 RICHMERE RD
BOSTON, MA 02126

Project: New construction three-unit dwelling with 2 parking spaces and bike space.

This project went to the ZBA for having tandem parking spaces.



ADDITIONAL UNIT CASE STUDY:

43 GOODALE RD (ALLOWED)



EXISTING FRONT VIEW,
GOODALE ROAD

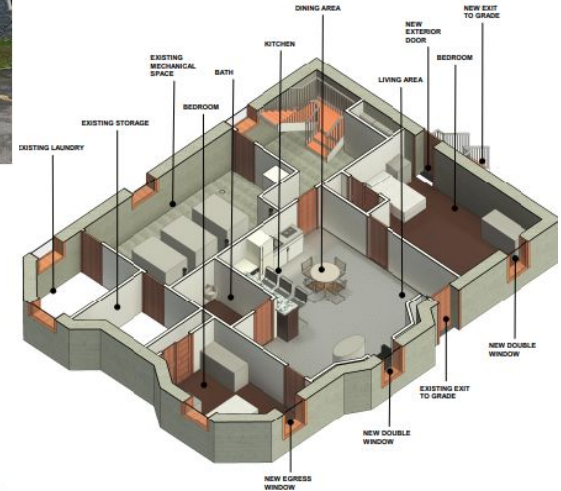


EXISTING FRONT / EAST VIEW



EXISTING REAR / EAST VIEW

This project adds a new unit in the basement to an existing three-unit home, becoming a four-unit home.



To be allowed, below-ground units still have to meet many requirements beyond zoning: building code (appropriate egress and floor heights), fire code, and being outside of a flood-prone area.

OTHER USES IN ROSLINDALE RESIDENTIAL AREAS



SCHOOL, K THROUGH 12

definition:

A facility in which a regular course of public or private educational instruction is given for grades including kindergarten through twelfth grades. For a School offering kindergarten and no higher grades, see Child Care Center.



**Sarah Roberts Elementary School
105 Cummins Highway (Roslindale)
2F-5000**

ACCESSORY HOME OCCUPATION

definition:

Subject to the provisions of Section 8-2.5 (Accessory Uses), an occupation for compensation customarily carried on in a dwelling unit by a person residing therein which involves receiving clients or customers. Such occupation shall require only equipment ordinarily incident to a dwelling unit, not involve the on-site employment of more than 3 persons not resident in a dwelling unit on the lot, and not involve trading in merchandise.

Home occupations include, but shall not be limited to piano lessons, tutoring, therapy, and similar uses which are clearly incidental to the dwelling for dwelling purposes and do not change the character thereof.



**Luxe Beauty K - Eyelash Salon
48 Granfield Ave (Roslindale)
3F-4000**

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**Amy's Own CBD Oils
5 Crandall Street (Roslindale)
2F-5000**

OFFICE - SMALL

definition:

A facility where one or more persons do professional, administrative, or similar work, including but not limited to coworking spaces and businesses which may meet with clients on an appointment basis, such as insurance brokers and real estate offices. Office does not include a medical office for a medical professional practicing under a medical license.



The Cabinet Studio - Interior Design
73 Mt Calvary Road (Roslindale)
1F-6000

RETAIL - SMALL

definition:

A store for sale of goods, commodities, or merchandise, including but not limited to food, clothing, art, homegoods, hardware, pharmaceuticals, alcohol, tobacco products, and tickets for events. Such use may also include consignment stores or pawnshops. Retail Store does not include Adult Entertainment, Grocery Store, or Retail Cannabis Establishment.

Small - Total square footage less than 2,500 square feet.



Budget Mart
229 Florence Street (Rosindale)
SO

NEXT STEPS

Fall 2025: Collect feedback from you around your priorities for small-scale residential areas

Winter 2026: Create first draft of new set of zoning districts, mapped across Roslindale, West Roxbury, and Hyde Park

Spring/Summer 2026: Edit, refine, and revise districts and mapping through public process



OCT/NOV OUTREACH

October 22, 2025, 6:00p-7:30p

Hyde Park Neighborhood Meeting

BCYF Hyde Park (Muni)

October 28, 2025, 11:00a-1:00p

Virtual Office Hours

(signup to be posted online)

October 30, 2025, 3:00p-5:00p

Virtual Office Hours

(signup to be posted online)

November 5, 2025, 6:00p-7:30p

West Roxbury Neighborhood Meeting

BCYF West Roxbury (Roche)

Additional virtual office hours to be scheduled shortly.



Q&A AND DISCUSSION

1. What is important to you as we rethink what zoning should be regulating in Roslindale?
2. What worries you about potential changes to residential areas?
3. How do you see Roslindale as similar to and different from your neighboring communities?



THANK YOU

We appreciate your time and hope you enjoyed this presentation.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Will Cohen

will.cohen@boston.gov

Jein Park

jein.park@boston.gov

Initiative Team

residentialzoning@boston.gov

OR VISIT:

bostonplans.org/neighborhood-housing



Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

OUTDATED ROSLINDALE RESIDENTIAL DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS (ARTICLE 67)

Looking at just the six factors in yellow, **99% of Roslindale's residential lots have zoning that doesn't match what is already there.**

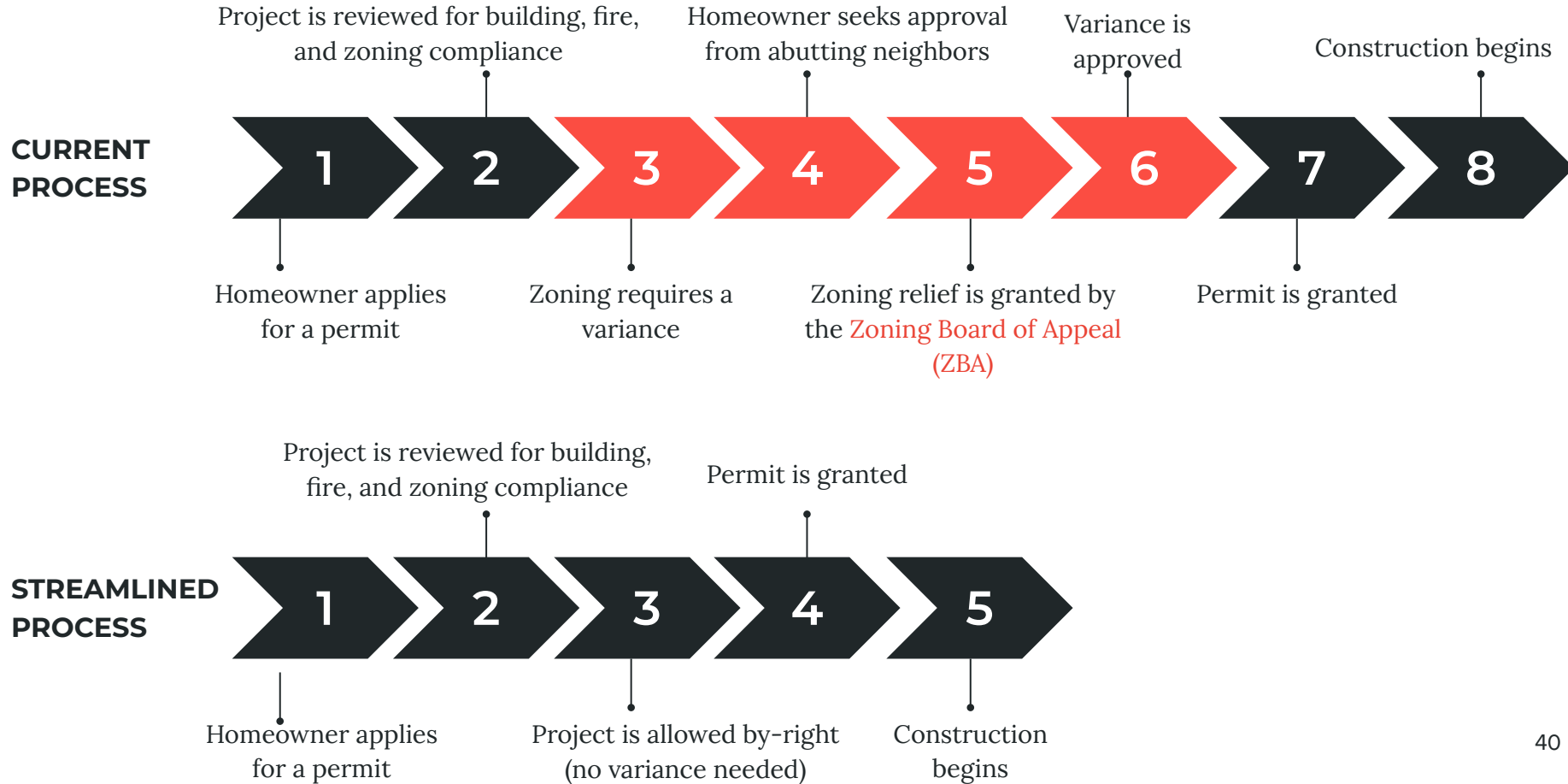
| | Lot area, Minimum for Dwell. Unit(s) Specified (Sq.Ft.) | Additional Lot Area for Ea. Addit'l Dwell. Unit (Sq.Ft.) | Lot Width Minimum (Feet) | Lot Frontage Minimum (Feet) | Floor Area Ratio Maximum | Building Height Maximum | | Usable Open Space Minimum Sq. Ft. Per Dwelling Unit | Front Yard Minimum Depth (Feet) | Side Yard Minimum Width (Feet) | Rear Yard Minimum Depth (Feet) | Rear Yard Maximum Occupancy by Accessory Buildings (Percent) | Max Unit Count |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|---|---|---|---|--|----------------------|
| | | | | | | Stories | Feet | | | | | | |
| 1F-6,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Family Detached | 6,000 | N/A | 60 | 60 | 0.5 | 2-½ | 35 | 1,800 | 25 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 1 |
| Other Use | 6,000 | N/A | 60 | 60 | 0.5 | 2-½ | 35 | 1,800 | 25 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 1 |
| 2F-5000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 Family Detached | 5,000 for 1 unit | 3,000 | 50 | 50 | 0.5 | 2-½ | 35 | 1,750 | 20 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 1 |
| Other Use | 8,000 | N/A | 50 | 50 | 0.5 | 2-½ | 35 | 1,750 | 20 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 1 |
| NONCONFORMITY ACROSS ROSLINDALE | 49% | | | | 68% | | | | 85% | 84% | 56% | | 12% |

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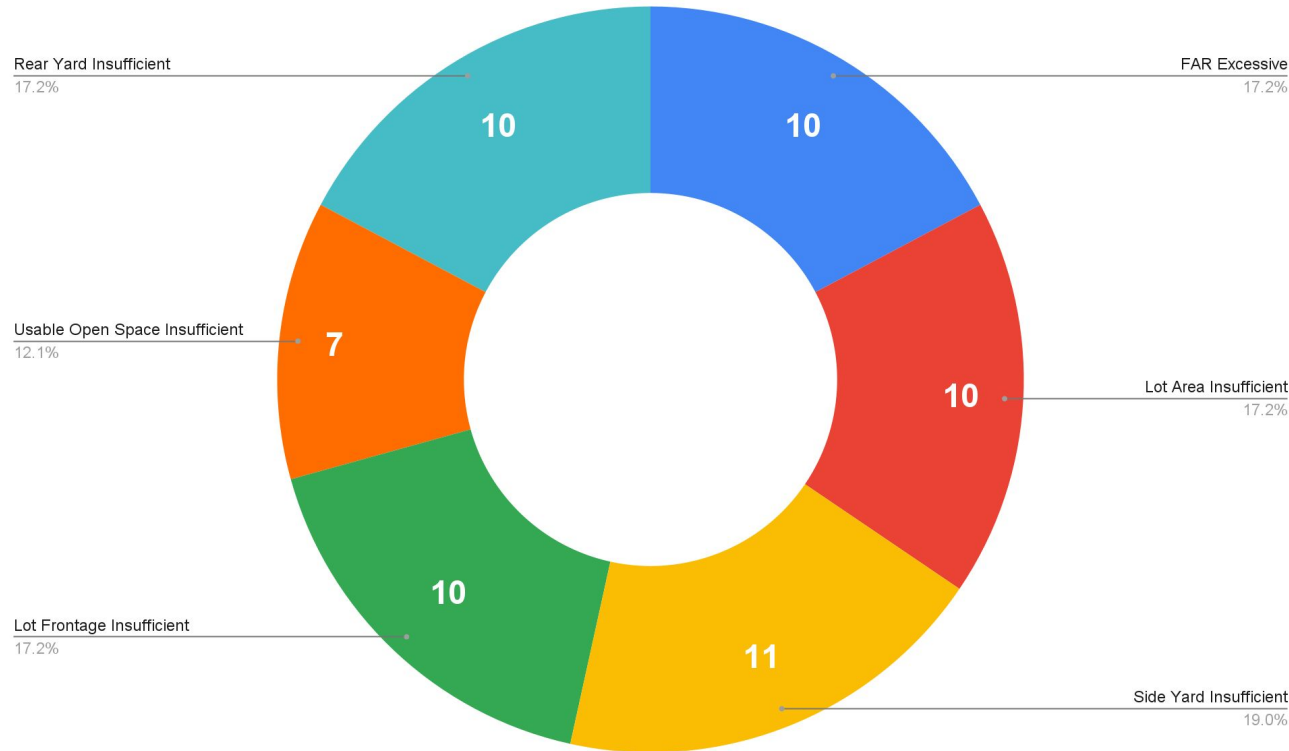
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|---|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------|---|---|---|---|--|----------------------|
| | | | | | | Stories | Feet | | | | | | |
| 3F-4000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Row House Building or Town House Building | 4,000 for 1 unit | 2,000 | 40 | 40 | 0.8 | 3 | 35 | 80 s.f. per | 20 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 3 |
| Semi-Attached or Detached Dwelling | 4,000 for 1 unit | 2,000 | 40 | 40 | 0.8 | 3 | 35 | 800 s.f. per | 20 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 3 |
| Any Other Use | 8,000 | N/A | 45 | 45 | 0.8 | 3 | 35 | 800 s.f. Per Lot | 20 | 10 | 40 | 25 | 3 |
| MFR (Multifamily Residential Subdistrict) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MFR | 5,000 | 1,000 | none | none | 1 | 3 | 35 | 400 s.f. Per Unit | 20 | 10 | 40 | 25 | - |
| NONCONFORMITY ACROSS ROSLINDALE | 49% | | | | 68% | | | | 85% | 84% | 56% | | 12% |

CURRENT VS. STREAMLINED PROCESS

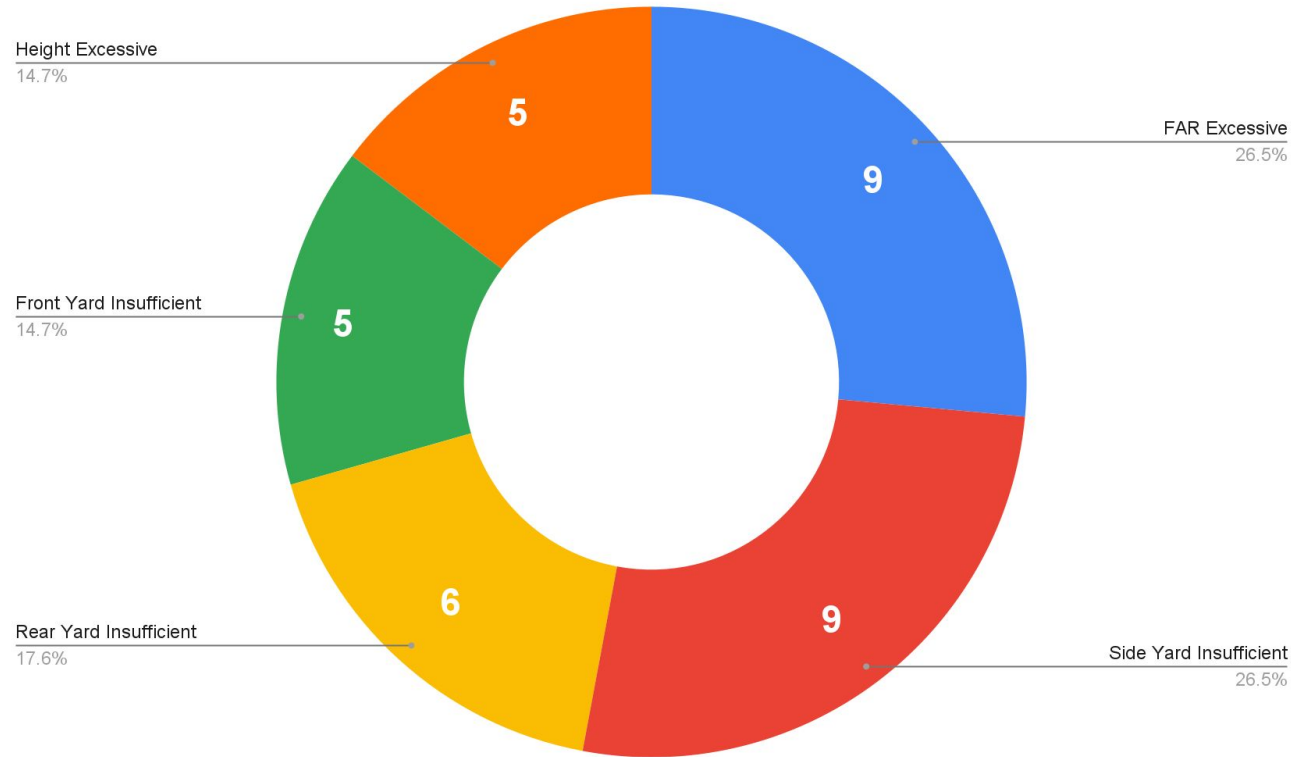


NEW CONSTRUCTION: MOST COMMON ZONING VIOLATIONS

32 ZBA cases regarding
new construction of
homes in Roslindale
between 2022-2025

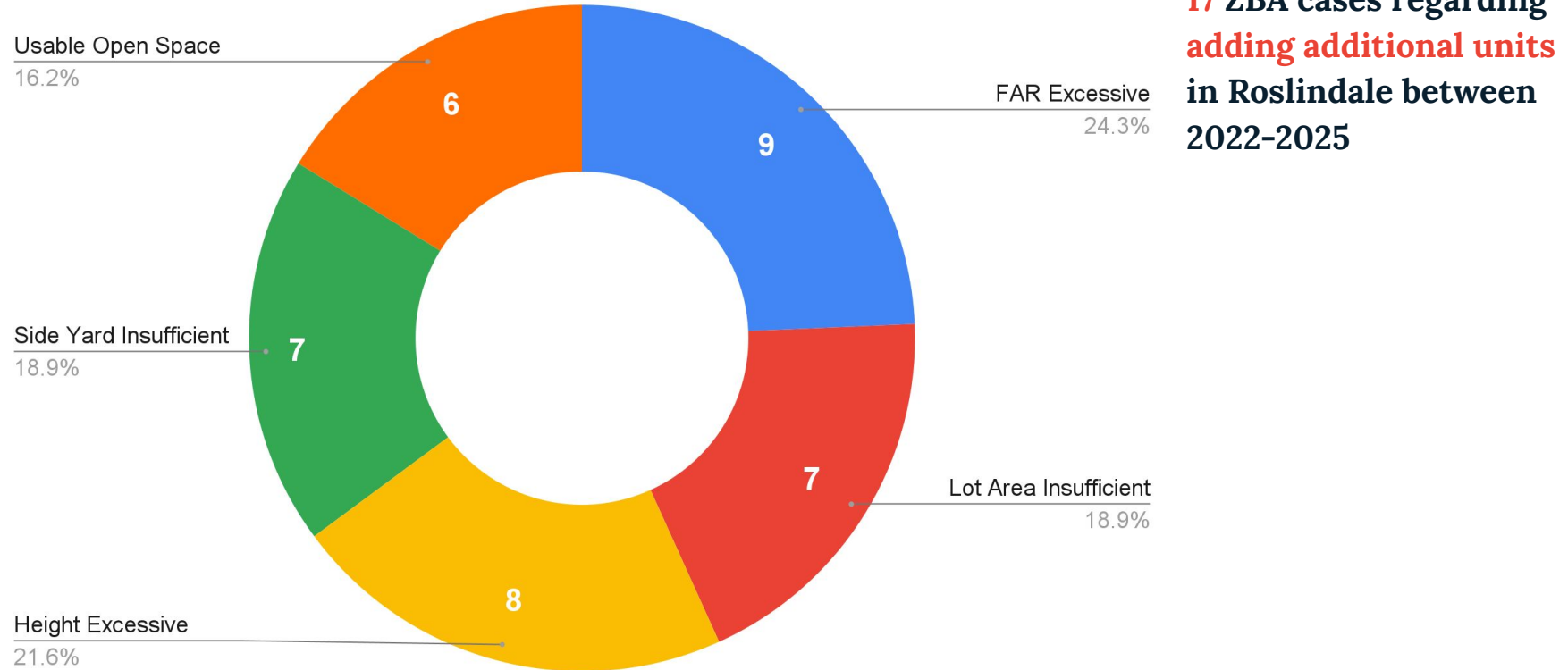


EXTENDING LIVING SPACE(S): MOST COMMON ZONING VIOLATIONS



18 ZBA cases regarding extending living space in existing homes in Roslindale between 2022-2025

ADDING ADDITIONAL UNIT(S): MOST COMMON ZONING VIOLATIONS



BUILDING DORMER(S): MOST COMMON ZONING VIOLATIONS

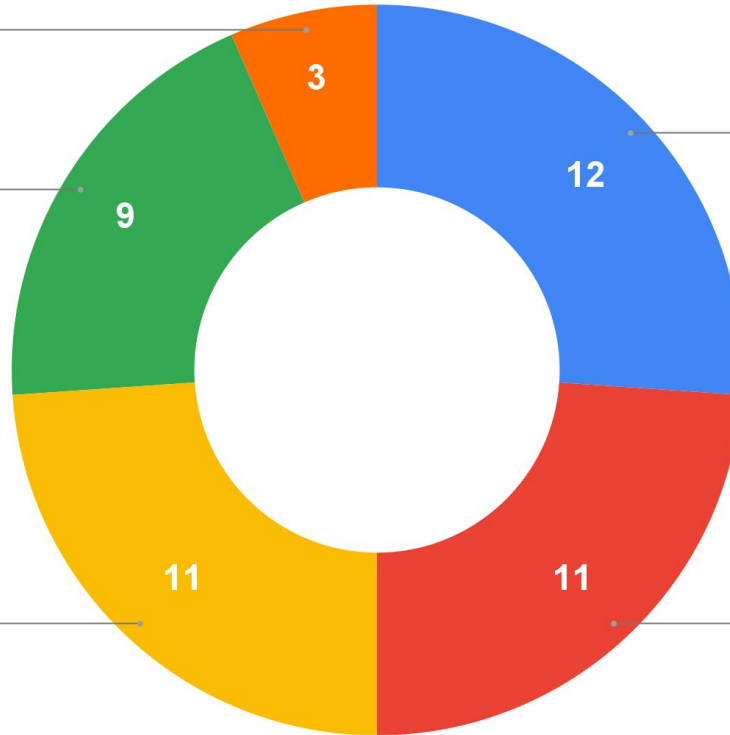
Rear Yard Insufficient
6.5%

Front Yard Insufficient
19.6%

Side Yard Insufficient
23.9%

Height Excessive
26.1%

FAR Excessive
23.9%



20 ZBA cases regarding building dormer(s) in Roslindale between 2022-2025