

## What is Zoning?

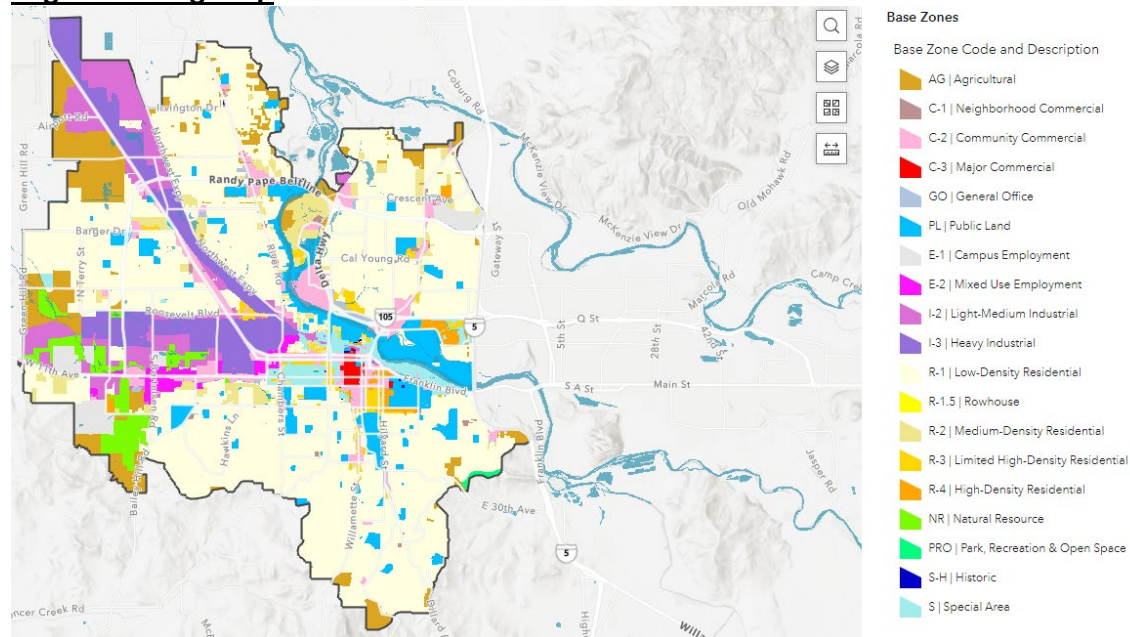
Have you ever noticed how certain types of development are grouped together around Eugene? Perhaps you've noticed that some neighborhoods have all single-story homes, while others have townhouses, or how grocery stores often have tax offices and small restaurants surrounding them. This is primarily the result of zoning.

As you may know, in Eugene our comprehensive plan was adopted in anticipation of how we will grow as a city. Included as part of the plan is the [Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan \(Metro Plan\)](#) Plan Diagram which can be thought of as the blueprint for our city's zoning. The diagram designates individual pieces of land for broad categories of use such as residential, commercial, and industrial based on our anticipated needs.

Zoning implements the broad designations by becoming more specific and setting standards for development to follow. For example, a piece of property designated by the Metro Plan diagram for commercial use could be zoned as Community Commercial (C-2) or Major Commercial (C-3) depending on the location of the property and written text of city plans. This zoning would then set specific standards for development to follow regulating things like use of the site, building heights, setbacks, and landscaping requirements.

To break it down, the Metro Plan Designations provide overarching guidance on land uses, while zoning implements these designations by providing specific allowed uses, rules, and standards. The result is observable, creating unique characteristics of neighborhoods and shopping areas that we can recognize.

## Eugene Zoning Map



## Zoning on the Ground

So, when folks own land and want to develop something on it, they look to the Land Use Code for what is allowed to be built and what rules that building will need to follow. A lot of times, the Land Use Code will include tables. The table below is representative of general zoning rules in our R-1 zone, the low density residential zone that covers most of Eugene:

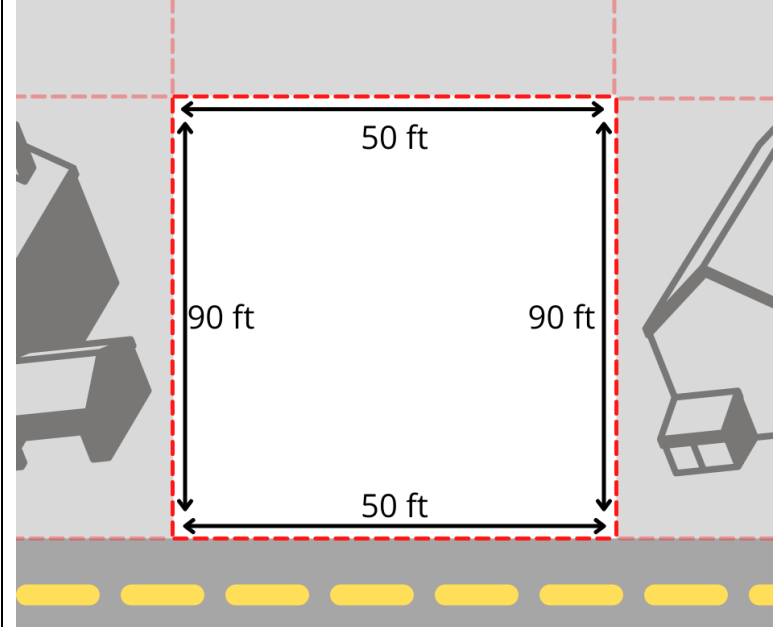
### Typical R-1 standards

Typical R-1 Standards*	
Minimum Lot Size	4,500 square feet
Minimum Lot Width	50 feet
Minimum Lot Frontage	50 Feet
Maximum Building Height	30 feet
Front Yard Setback	10 feet
Front Yard Setback (Garages)	18 feet
Interior Yard Setback	5 feet
Parking Minimum	1 per Dwelling
Lot Coverage	50%

Now, that table is hard to picture. What is a setback? What do these regulations do? The following exercise will walk through types of rules in the Land Use Code and how they affect where houses go and what they look like. *The definitions and explanations are high-level and meant to be used for instructive purposes, only.*

### Examples of Zoning Rules

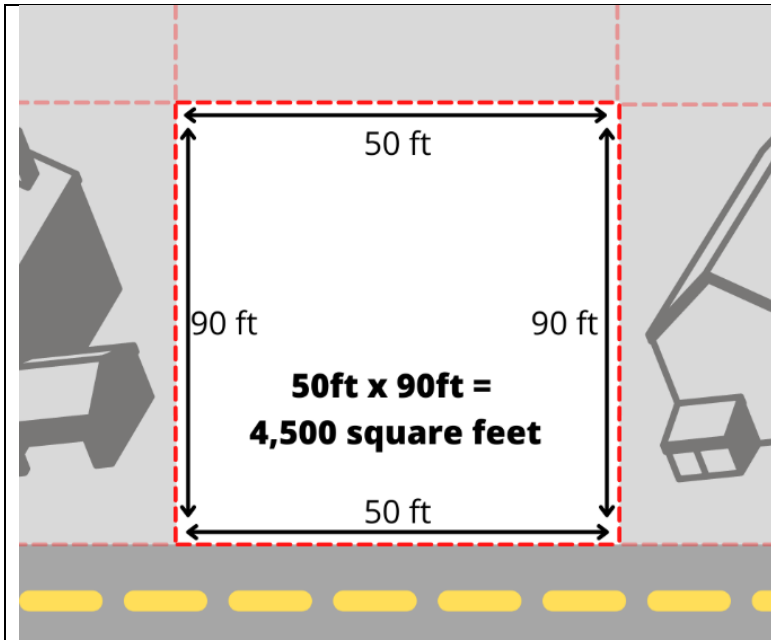
#### What You're Working With



The diagram shows a rectangular lot with a width of 50 feet and a depth of 90 feet. The lot is outlined with a dashed red line. A house is shown on the right side of the lot, with a setback of 10 feet from the front and 5 feet from the side. A road with a dashed yellow line is shown at the bottom of the lot. The background is a light gray color.

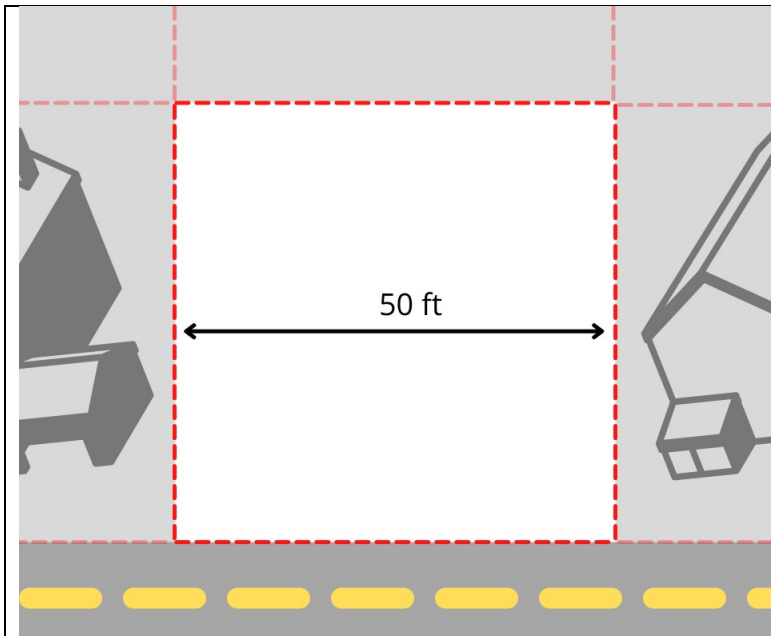
Let's say you purchased the empty piece of land in the **R-1** zone. This empty piece of land can be referred to as a "**lot**". Sometimes they are also referred to as a "**parcel**". So, if you'd like to build a house on this lot, you'd go to the Land Use Code to see what rules apply to your lot.

### Lot Size



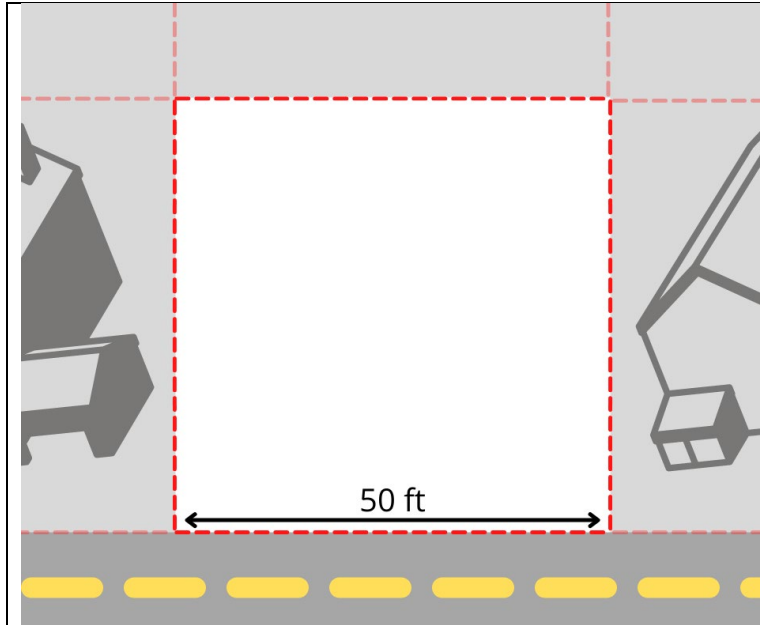
One of the first things you'd look for is the size of your lot. In our Land Use Code, the lot size is measured in square feet. Your lot is a simple rectangle 50 feet wide and 90 feet deep. When we multiply those numbers together, we get 4,500 square feet. Perfect! The **minimum lot size in the R-1 Zone**, the smallest your lot can be, is 4,500 square feet.

### Lot Width



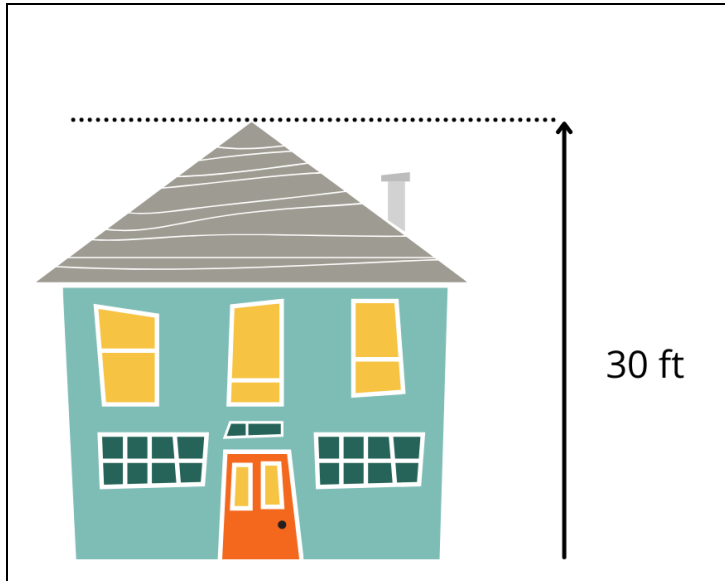
Now that you know your lot is large enough, it's time to see if it is wide enough. The lot width is the horizontal distance between the midpoints of the side property lines. Because your lot is a rectangle, its lot width at the midpoint is 50 feet.

### Lot Frontage



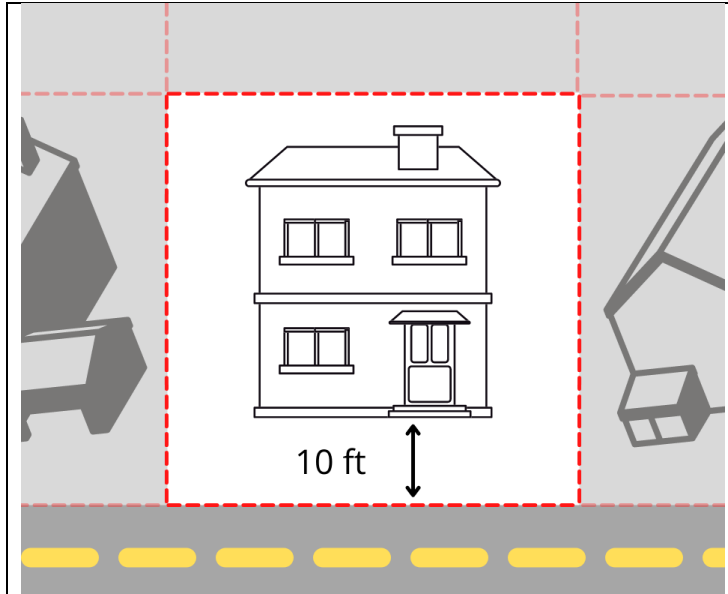
Lot frontage is the portion of a lot that faces the street. When the Land Use Code refers to “**minimum frontage**” it means the width of the lot at the point where the lot meets the street. In this case, because your lot is a rectangle, the lot frontage is 50 feet. Sometimes lots are not perfect rectangles and the frontage can be different than the lot width—meaning the frontage is wider or narrower than the lot width.

### Maximum Building Height



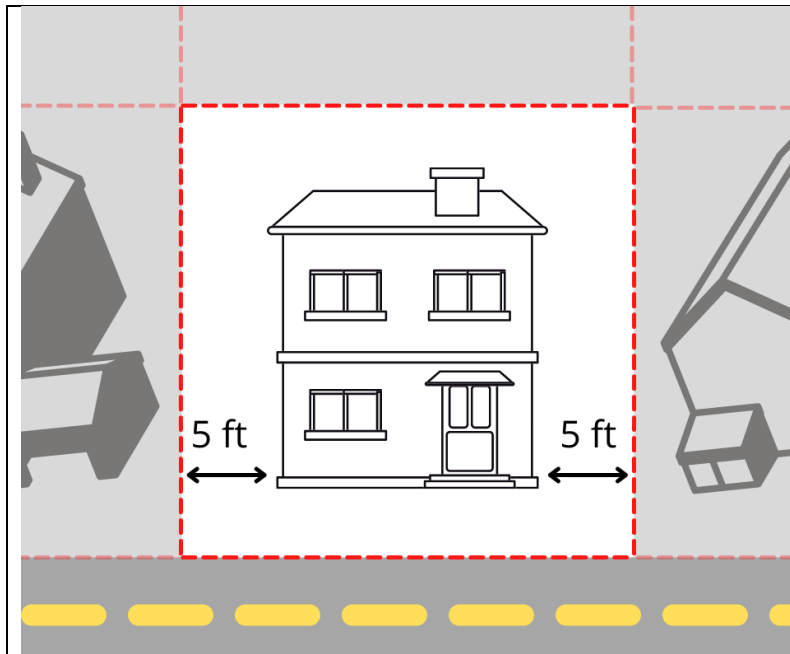
Now that we know your lot is big enough and has the right dimensions, it’s time to plan out where your house is going to go. Before you pay an architect, you have to see how tall the building can be. The building height is the vertical distance from the ground to the tallest point of your house. In this case it is 30 feet which is about 2 floors and an attic.

### Front Yard Setback



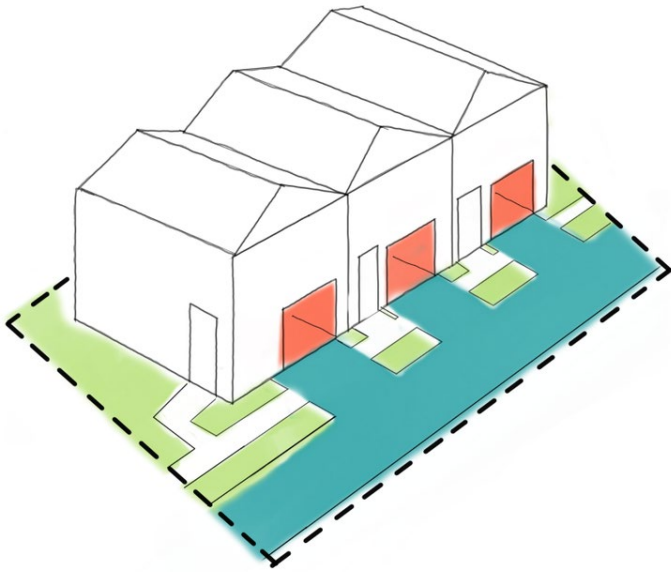
The Land Use Code then refers to a “front yard setback”. The front yard is the length between the street (your frontage) and your house. In this case, the Land Use Code says you need to have a minimum front yard setback of 10 feet—meaning your house can not be any closer to the street than 10 feet.

### Interior Yard Setback:

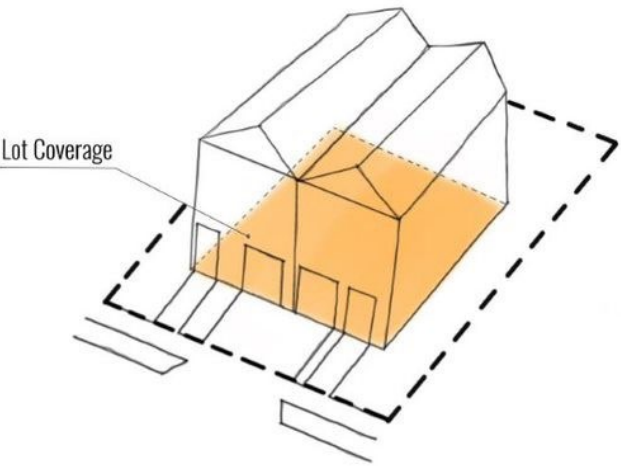


Then, the Land Use Code says you have to have “interior yard setbacks” meaning the distance between the property lines on the side of your house and your house. In this case, the Land Use Code says your house needs to be at least 5 feet from your interior property line. If your neighbor’s house is also 5 feet from their property line, your houses would be 10 feet apart from each other.

### Parking Minimum:

	<p>The Land Use Code also requires that you provide a certain amount of parking spaces. Parking spaces can be garages or paved spots for car storage on your lot. Right now, the Land Use Code says you need to have 1 spot per dwelling unit. Since you are building a single-family house, that is 1 dwelling unit and requires you provide minimum 1 parking spot. If you want more (and can fit more), nothing stops you from building more.</p>
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### Lot Coverage

	<p>Lot coverage is the amount of space your house can take up on your lot when seen from a bird's eye view. The lot coverage is calculated as a percentage. Right now, the Land Use Code says your house can't take up more than 50% of your lot. That means that you are required to leave a portion of the lot undeveloped. Usually this space is used for yards. Decks, driveways and uncovered porches don't count towards the lot coverage.</p>
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