

Cascade Township Zoning Ordinance

Planning Commission Public Hearing
August 18, 2025



Process Update

- **July 3:** Draft Available for Public Review
- **August 7:** Township Board Workshop and Revisions
- **Tonight:** Public Hearing
 - **For Consideration:** August 7 Draft, *including revisions made by Board*
 - **Hear from Public**
 - **Planning Commission Discussion of Revisions**
 - **Planning Commission Recommendation to Township Board**

Upcoming Steps (Tentative)

- **This Week:** PC-Recommended Version Made Available on Website
- **August 25:** Township Board Workshop
- **August 27:** Township Board First Reading
- **September 10:** Township Board Final Adoption Vote

Agenda

- Why update the Zoning Ordinance?
- What's changing for **homeowners**? *Not much.*
- What's changing for **large lot/agricultural** property owners?
- What's changing for **businesses**?
- What's changing for **developers**?

Why Update the Zoning Ordinance?

2022 Strategic Plan

Land Use and Economic Development

- Priority 2. Ensure that zoning processes are clear, efficient, and promote both economic development and Township planning goals.
- Priority 3. Amend the zoning ordinance to ensure it reflects Township priorities and market realities.
- Priority 4. Update the Master Plan and, subsequently, the Zoning Ordinance, to position to Township for the 2020s and 2030s.

2024 Master Plan



Greenspace Preservation

Utility Service Boundary

Thornapple Crescent Greenway

Old 28th Street

Hotels

Private Road Restrictions

HIGH PRIORITY: HOMEOWNERSHIP

Thornapple Center

Site Plan Review and Procedures

Cascade Village

Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Density Bonuses

Form-Based Code

Green Space Preservation Fund

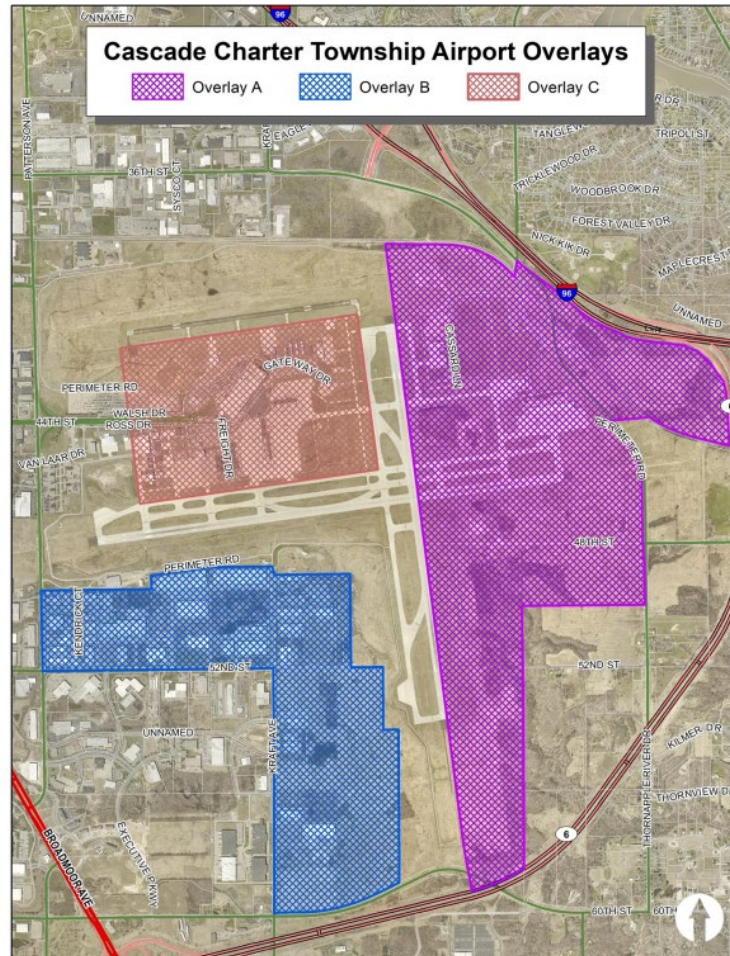
Guiding Philosophies

- Protect the **Single Family Neighborhoods**
- Preserve the **Rural Character** of the eastern part of the Township.
- Upgrade **28th Street** to meet Cascade's character and expectations
- Enhance the **Village's Unique Style**
- Make it **easy** to further the Township's goals – and **hard** to go against them.
- **Demand Quality**

What's Not Changing?

Airport Commerce District/Airport Overlays

- Sections 2.7, 6.1, 6.6, and 6.7
- Moved due to new Organization
- **Text Unchanged**



Solar Ordinance

- Section 9.6.L
- **Text Unchanged from recently adopted Ordinance**

Most Provisions in Most Zoning Districts

- Permitted Land Uses
- Dimensional Requirements
- *Major changes concentrated in **Overlays, Form Based Code, and General Provisions***

What's Changing for Homeowners?



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Not Very Much.

- Most rules applying to Single Family Homes are **NOT** changing
 - Lot Sizes, Setbacks*, Building Heights
 - Boundaries of Single Family Districts

**Change from July 3 Draft – All single family setbacks reverted to current rules.*

Some things to be aware of:

- **Fences:** Can no longer ask for a taller fence by Special Use approval
 - **Allowable height:** 4 feet in front, 6 feet in side/rear (unchanged)
- **Shared Docks:** Up to **4** waterfront lots can share a dock, with Planning Commission approval. **Keyholing** is now highly restricted.

Accessory Buildings

- Every single family home can have a **garage**.
 - **Attached** or **Detached**
 - Up to **65 percent** of the area of the house.
 - Does **NOT** count towards the cap on the number of accessory buildings.

Accessory Buildings

- No limit on number of accessory buildings in **FP and AG Zoning Districts**
- In other Zoning Districts:

Lot Size	Maximum Number of Accessory Buildings
Less than 1 acre	1 Building or Structure
1 acre but less than 3 acres	2 Buildings or Structures
More than 3 acres	3 Buildings or Structures

Accessory Buildings

➤ Allowable Accessory Building Size:

Lot Size	Maximum Total Floor Area (total floor area of all accessory buildings and structures combined)
Less than 1 acre	1,000 square feet
1 acre but less than 3 acres	1,500 square feet
3 acres but less than 6 acres	2,000 square feet
6 acres or more	3,000 square feet

Accessory Buildings

➤ Setbacks:

Lot Size	Maximum Highest Point of Roof	Minimum Side Yard Setback (each)	Minimum Rear Yard Setback
Less than 1 acre	Up to 18 feet	10 feet	10 feet
	Up to 10 feet and less than 200 square feet in area	5 feet	5 feet
1 acre but less than 2 acres	Up to 22 feet	20 feet	20 feet
	Up to 10 feet and less than 200 square feet in area	5 feet	5 feet
3 acres but less than 6 acres	Up to 24 feet	40 feet	40 feet
	Up to 10 feet and less than 200 square feet in area	5 feet	5 feet
6 acres or more	Up to 28 feet	60 feet	60 feet
	Up to 10 feet and less than 200 square feet in area	5 feet	5 feet

Accessory Buildings

- Special rules for **waterfronts (Thornapple River, etc):**
 - **10 foot** setback from **Ordinary High Water Mark**
 - **Boathouses prohibited.**
 - Does not apply to docks, hoists, etc.
 - Does not apply to decks/patios.
 - Accessory buildings may be constructed in the **front yard** (between the home and the street)
 - *This is not otherwise allowed.*

Accessory Buildings

- Accessory Dwelling Units are **prohibited**.
- What is a **dwelling unit**?
 - Kitchen **and** a bathroom.

What's Changing for Large Lot/Agricultural?

Not Very Much.

- Most rules applying to Single Family Homes and/or Farms are **NOT** changing
 - Lot Sizes, Setbacks, Building Heights
 - Boundaries of Single Family Districts (including FP and RC)

Keeping of Animals

- **Pets** are not regulated by Zoning.
- **Agriculture** is protected by the Right to Farm Act, and may be exempt from Zoning rules.
- Animals that do not fall into one of those two categories **are** regulated by Zoning.

Keeping of Animals

➤ Animal Units

➤ Each lot gets **1 Animal Unit Per Acre**

Type of Animal	Permitted in Zone Districts	1 Unit = X Animals (Number Below Represents X)
Horse, Donkey, Mule, Cow/Bull, Bison, Llama	FP, RC	1
Pig, Goat, Sheep, Elk, Deer, Mini-Horse, Alpaca, or "Other"	FP, RC	2
Goats and Sheep	R-1, R-2	1
Chickens, Ducks, or other Livestock Birds	FP, RC	20
	R-1, R-2	Maximum of 5 per lot, regardless of parcel size*
Rabbit	FP, RC	20
	R-1, R-2	10
Bees	FP, RC, R-1, R-2	See Subsection D

**Change from July 3 Draft – Previous chart was unclear.*

Keeping of Animals

- **Example – 5 Acre Lot in RC District**
 - 2 horses = 2 animal units
 - 3 goats = 1.5 animal units
 - 10 chickens = 0.5 animal units
 - 5 rabbits = 0.25 animal units
 - **Total: 4.25 Animal Units = Permitted!**

Keeping of Animals

- **Important Note:** No permit required.
- Animal limits enforced on a **complaint basis.**

Developing Rural Property (Or Not...)

➤ **Purchase of Development Rights**

- Allows property owners to monetize their land without selling to developers
- Ordinance developed by Foster Swift.
- Included in proposed Zoning Ordinance as Section 6.7

Private Road Ban

- **Purpose:** Prevent the breaking up of farmland and woodlands
 - **Secondary Purpose:** Guarantee long-term maintenance of roadways
 - Incentivize **building homes along existing road frontages**

Private Road Ban



➤ Do This



➤ Not This

Exceptions

➤ **Exceptions:**

- Overlays and Form Based Code, which have rules for private road design instead.
- Roads that access four or fewer homes.

What's Changing for Businesses?

Demand Quality

- Promote **investment** in existing businesses
- Expect **high design standards**
- Limit **corporate architecture**

What are Mixed Use Overlays?

- A set of regulations that **supersede** underlying zoning
- Consistent rules for **28th Street Corridor** and other commercial areas
- Promote reinvestment in **aging office parks**
- **Absorb** development pressure
- **Demand Quality**

What are Mixed Use Overlays?

- How do they interact with **Planned Unit Developments?**
 - Do **NOT** Override PUDs.
 - **BUT** no new PUDs are allowed within Overlays
 - Any PUD that is amended must **be revised to comply with Overlay.**
 - Property owners may voluntarily **void their PUDs and use the Overlay instead.**

Existing Businesses in Mixed Use Overlays

- May **expand** and **invest**
- Can be unburdened from **out-of-date PUD** rules
- Will be held to **architectural, site design, and landscape standards**, and required to make upgrades as necessary

Mixed Use Overlays

➤ Much more to come for **developers...**

What is Form Based Code?

- **Not an Overlay – Four New Zoning Districts**
- Detailed standards for **architecture, site design, and road design (for new roads)**
- **Demand Quality**

Form Based Code

- How does interact with **Planned Unit Developments?**
 - Does **NOT** Override PUDs.
 - **BUT** no new PUDs are allowed within the Form Based Code Districts.
 - Any PUD that is amended must **be revised to comply with Form Based Code.**
 - Property owners may voluntarily **void their PUDs and use the Form Based Code instead.**

Existing Businesses in Form Based Code

- May **expand** and **invest**
- Can be unburdened from **out-of-date PUD** rules
- Will be held to **architectural, site design, and landscape standards**, and required to make upgrades as necessary
 - **Village Design Review Committee**
 - Must meet architectural standards **“to the extent determined practical by the Planning Commission.”**

Form Based Code

➤ Much more to come for **developers...**

What's Changing for Developers?



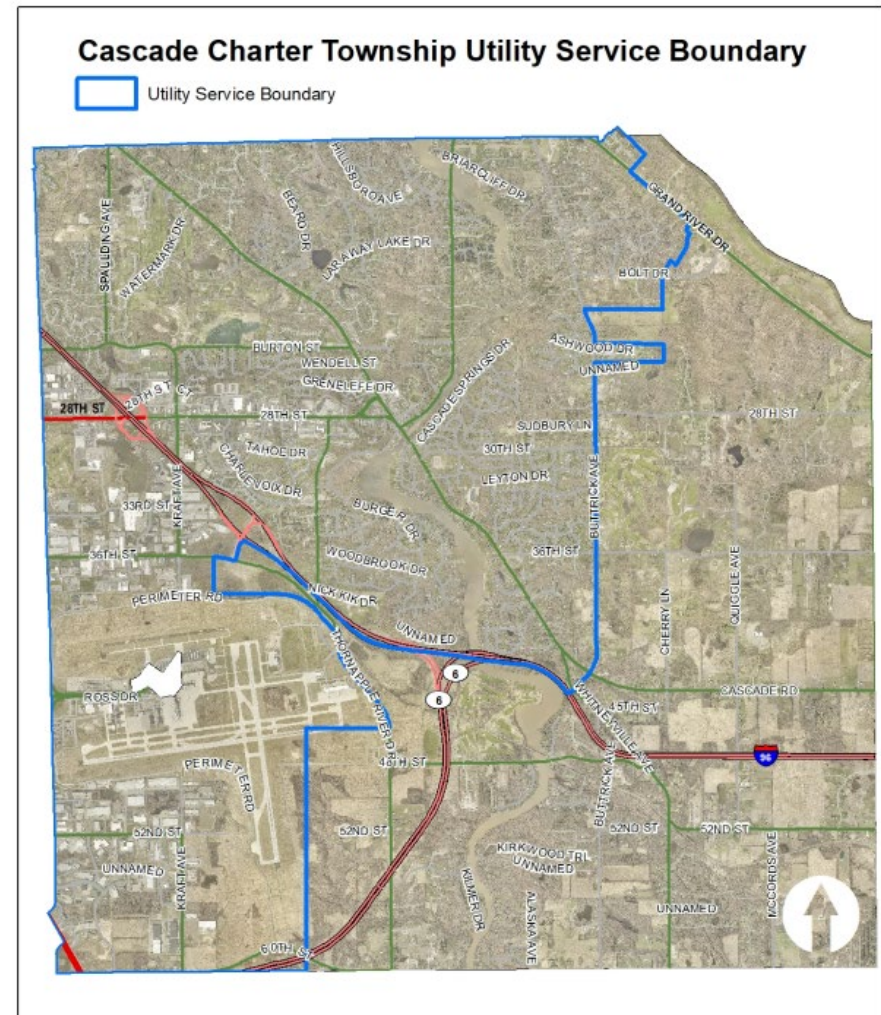
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A lot.

- Steer development to places that **have infrastructure** and are **NOT quiet, residential, or rural.**
- Allow **creativity**, but **within Cascade's vision** for itself.
- **Redevelop** eyesores and problem properties.
- **Demand Quality.**

Utility Service Boundary

Zone District as Designated on Zoning Map	Regulations without Public Water and Sewer
FP	FP
RC	RC
R-1	R-1
R-2	R-1
GB, ES, AC, TI, I, HI, O	RC
Mixed Use Overlay Districts	RC
Form Based Code Districts	RC



Demand Quality: Housing

- Site Condominiums held to the **same standards** as plats/subdivisions.
- All **dwelling units** must have:
 - At least **800 square feet** of living space (**multi-family**)
 - At least **1,100 square feet** of living space (**single family**)
 - **1,300** in R-1 and R-2
 - A functioning **kitchen**
 - A full **bathroom**

Demand Quality: Housing

➤ **Not permitted:**

➤ Tiny Homes

➤ Micro Units

➤ Renting out hotel rooms as permanent dwellings

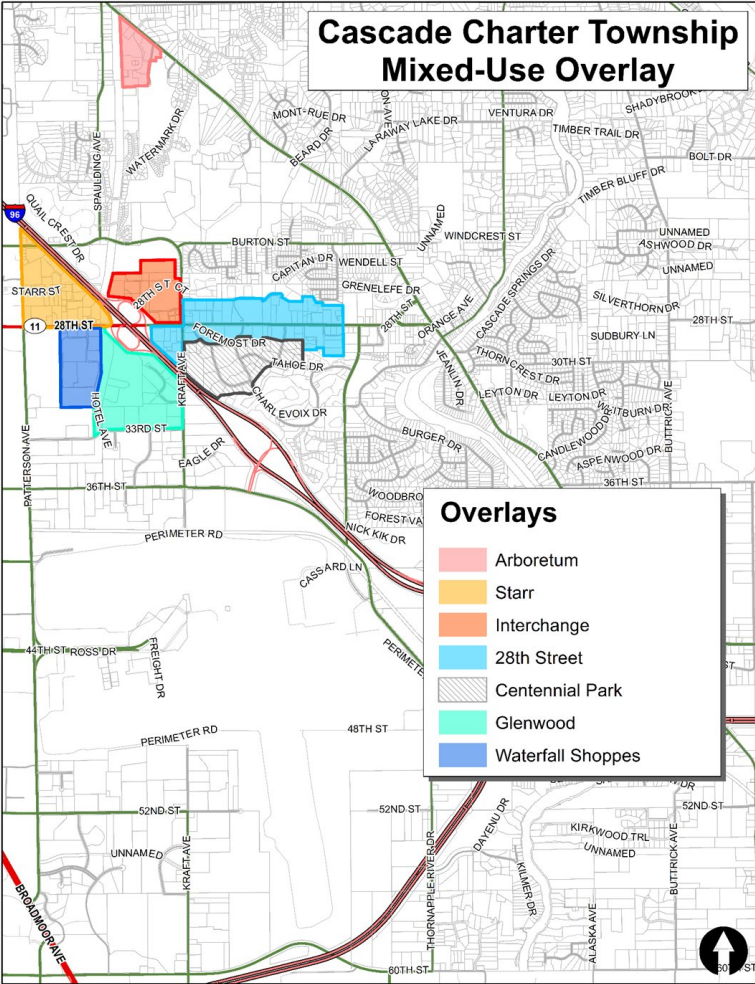
Demand Quality: Roadways

- **Private Road Ban**, exception in Overlays and Form Based Code *IF*:
 - **Sidewalks** on both sides of new streets
 - Could also be a **bike path**
 - **Curbs**
 - **Street Trees**

Mixed Use Overlays

	Arboretum	Starr	Interchange	Centennial	28 th Street	Glenwood	Waterfall Shoppes
Allows Multi-Family Housing without Commercial?	No*	Special Use	No*	Special Use	No*	Special Use	No*
Allows Mixed Use buildings, including Residential?	No*	Yes	No*	Yes	No*	Yes	No*
Allows Hotels?	No	No	Special Use	No	No	No	No
Maximum Building Height	35 feet	60 feet	60 feet	48 feet	60 feet	60 feet	48 feet

**Changes from July 3 Draft –
Residential not permitted except for Starr, Centennial and Glenwood
“Southwest” Overlay (Broadmoor and 60th) Eliminated*



Mixed Use Overlays - Housing

- **Centennial: Up to 6 units per acre***
 - Can earn **bonus units** up to a maximum of **10 total units per acre***
- **Starr and Glenwood: Up to 8 units per acre**
 - Can earn **bonus units** up to a maximum of **15 total units per acre**

**Change from July 3 Draft – Centennial density reduced. Previously the same as Starr and Glenwood.*

Mixed Use Overlays – Housing Bonuses*

Donations to the Green Space Preservation Fund	Preserving On-Site Green Space	Homeownership	Mixed Use	Pathways	Stormwater
To be set by Township Board	0.1 units/acre per 1% of land preserved	50% Owner-Occupied: 1 unit/acre 80% Owner-Occupied: 2 units/acre	0.1 units/acre per 1,000 sf of commercial space	1: 0.25 units/acre 2: 0.5 units per acre 3: 1 unit per acre 4: 2 units per acre	1 unit per acre if less water runs off the site than under the previous design.

*Change from July 3 Draft – LEED Certification no longer earns a bonus.

Mixed Use Overlays – Example

Example: A hypothetical aging hotel on a 4 acre lot in the Starr Overlay will be demolished and replaced by a new Mixed-Use residential-commercial development featuring 10,000 square feet of commercial space, a half acre green space for the residents, a connection to one of the Township's pathways, and a guarantee that 50% of the units will not be rented for a period of five years.

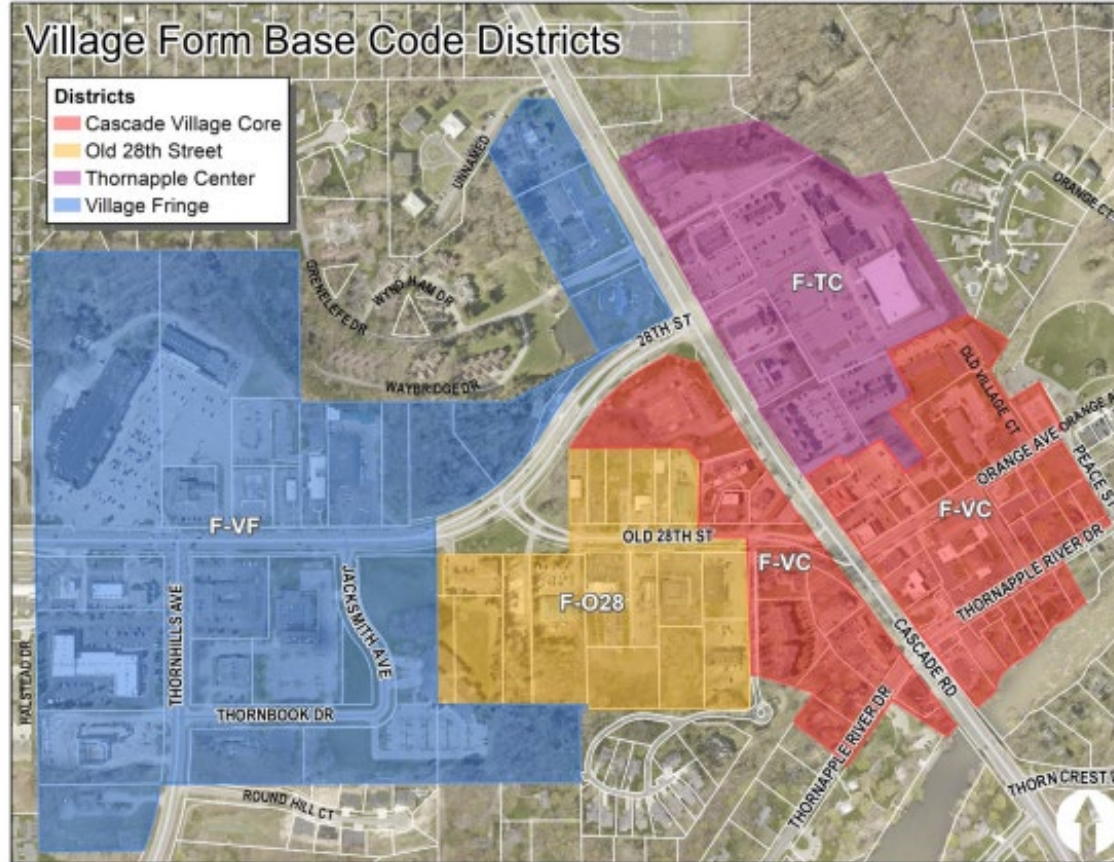
Mixed Use Overlays – Example

- **Base:** 8 units per acre
 - **Commercial Space:** 10,000 square feet = 1 unit/acre
 - **Green Space:** 12.5% = 1.25 units/acre
 - **Pathway:** 1 = 0.25 units/acre
 - **Homeownership Guarantee:** 1 unit/acre
- **Allowable Density:** 11.5 units per acre
- **Allowable Housing Units:** 11.5 x 4 acres = **46 dwelling units**

Mixed Use Overlays – Site Design

- Residential Units have to have access to **outdoor space** (balcony, rooftop patio, ground-level patio, etc) – *this is required, not a bonus.*
- Upgraded **landscaping requirements.**
- Access management restrictions – **no new driveways to 28th Street** unless there is no alternative.
- **Architecture Requirements**
 - **Building Materials** Requirements (same as Form Based Code)
 - **No Corporate Architecture** – must be one of the styles allowed in the Form Based Code

Form Based Code



Form Based Code

	Village Core	Thornapple Center	Old 28 th Street	Village Fringe
Allows Multi-Family Housing without Commercial?	No*	Special Use	Special Use	No*
Allows Mixed Use buildings, including Residential?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allows Hotels?	No	No	No	No

**Change from July 3 Draft – No standalone housing in Core and Fringe. Must be Mixed Use.*

Form Based Code - Housing

➤ In All Districts:

- Lots under 0.5 acres: Up to 2 dwelling units
- Lots between 0.5 and 1 acre: Up to 4 dwelling units
- Lots between 1 and 3 acres: Up to 6 dwelling units
- Lots over 3 acres: 2 dwelling units per acre
- **No Bonuses**
- **Purpose:** Encourage “Village-scale” mixed use development with 2-6 units, not large scale complexes.

**Change from July 3 Draft – Previously, there was no density limit.*

Form Based Code

	Village Core	Thornapple Center	Old 28 th Street	Village Fringe
Minimum Front Setback	3 feet	25 feet (Cascade) 6 feet (Other Roads)	25 feet (Cascade or 28 th) 0 feet (Other Roads, including Old 28th)	25 feet (Cascade or 28 th) 6 feet (Other Roads)
Maximum Front Setback	25 feet on Cascade 10 feet on other roadways	50 feet on Cascade 10 feet on other roadways	50 feet on Cascade or 28th 10 feet on other roadways (including Old 28 th)	50 feet on Cascade 10 feet on other roadways

Form Based Code

	Village Core	Thornapple Center	Old 28 th Street	Village Fringe
Minimum Side Yard Setback	5 feet 0 feet allowable on Thornapple River Drive	None	None	10 feet
Maximum Side Yard Setback	30 feet Total of both cannot exceed 40 feet	None	None	None
Maximum Building Height	35 feet*	35 feet*	35 feet*	35 feet*

**Change from July 3 Draft – Planning Commission can no longer allow taller buildings.*

Form Based Code– Site Design

- Sidewalks and **safe walkways to the front door.**
- Upgraded **landscape, lighting, and signage** requirements.
- Access management restrictions – **no new driveways to 28th Street or Cascade Road** unless there is no alternative.
- All buildings must have a **working front entrance facing the street.**
- **Village Design Review Committee.**

Architectural Design Options

➤ Craftsman



Architectural Design Options

➤ Main Street



Architectural Design Options

- **Victorian (this building is not in Cascade...)**



Next Steps

- **Public Hearing**
- **Discussion of Potential Revisions**
- **Vote to Recommend Ordinance to Township Board, including any revisions to be made**
- **Township Board Work Session: August 25**
- **Township Board First Reading: August 27**
- **Township Board Adoption Vote: September 10**



Discussion

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