

New Hampshire Zoning Atlas



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New Hampshire Department of
**BUSINESS AND
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Introduction and Overview



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What is the NH Zoning Atlas?

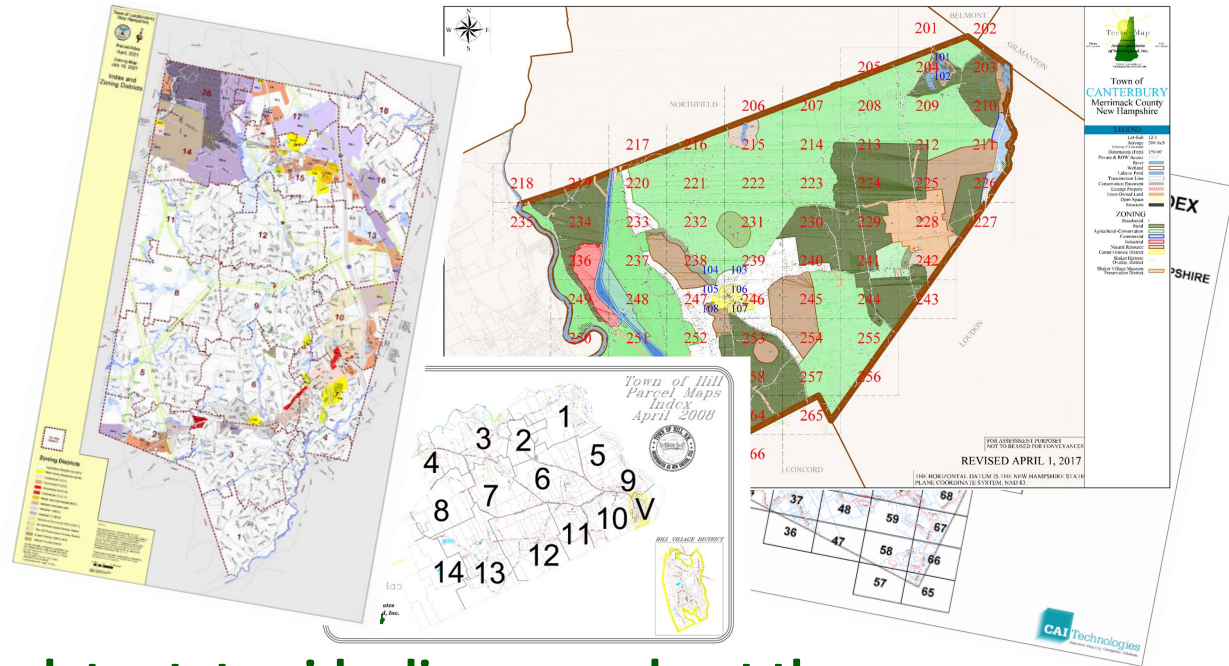
New Hampshire Zoning Atlas (NHZA)

The NHZA is a collaborative project to research, catalogue, digitize, and graphically display all of New Hampshire's zoning regulations, community-by-community, district-by-district.

Why do we need the NH Zoning Atlas?

Zoning is Complicated

- Decentralized
- Inconsistent
- Complex
- Full of jargon
- Piecemeal



The NHZA hopes to stimulate statewide discourse about the ways zoning in our communities - both individually & collectively - affects housing supply & affordability.

Our Partners



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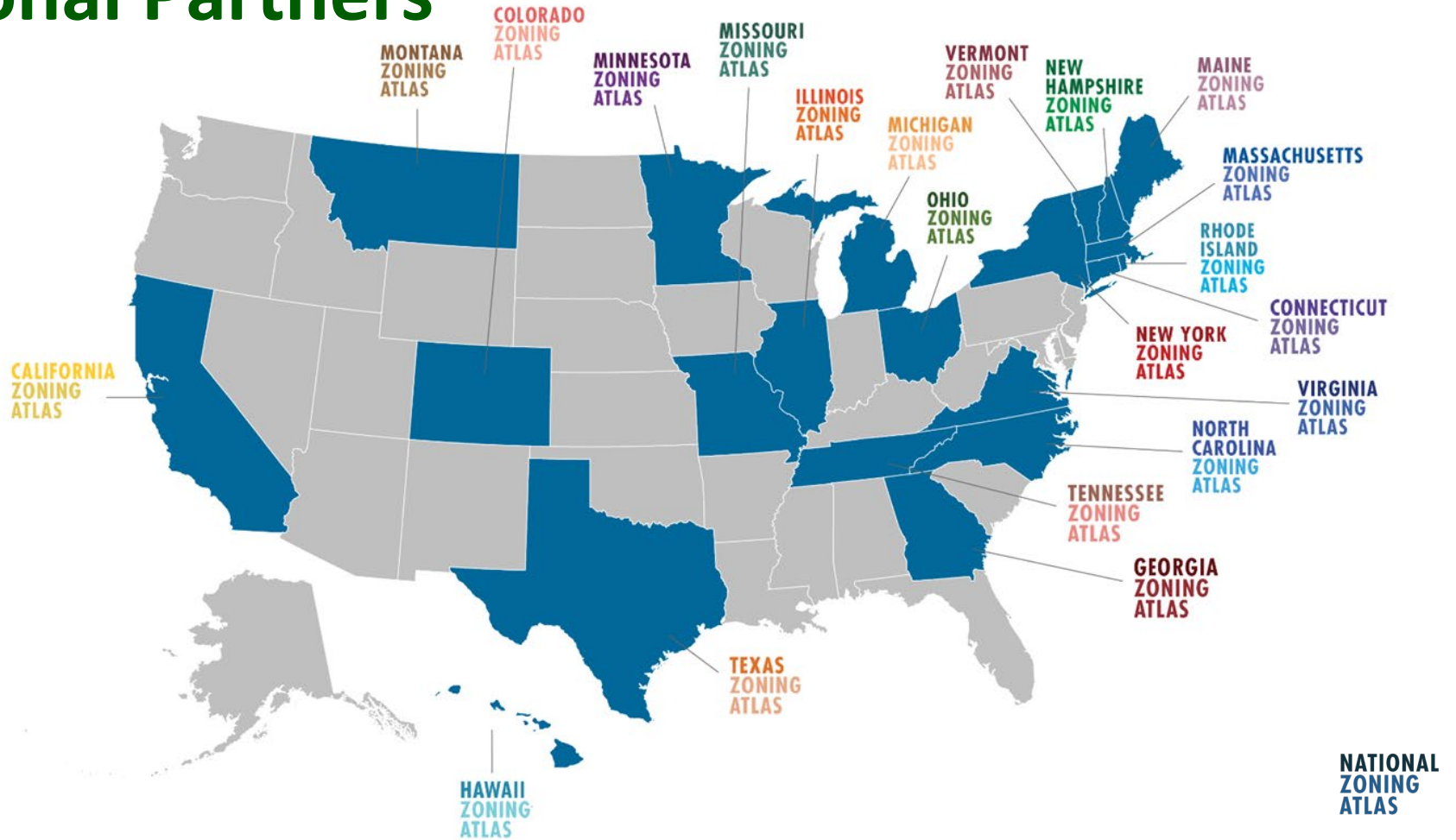
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MERCATUS CENTER
George Mason University



National Partners



Our Timeline & Milestones

January 2022

Assembled
Leadership
Team

March 2022

Secured
Funding

April-May 2022

Hired Zoning &
Geospatial
Analysts

June-September 2022

Zoning Data
Collected &
Coded

October-December 2022

Geospatial
Work
Completed

January-May 2023

Interactive
Story Map &
Roll-out

Our Rollout Plan

Pre-briefings
with
Stakeholders

Legislative
Testimony &
Briefing

Local, Regional, &
National Media
Outreach

**May 9 Public
Launch Event**

Atlas
Conversations

Outreach to
Individual
Communities

Atlas Data and Methodology



Zoning Atlas Scope

Zoning, subdivision, & site plan review ordinances & zoning maps as of **June 1, 2022**

Maps digitized if necessary, corrected

Unit of analysis: zoning district

269 jurisdictions

- 215 cities & towns with zoning
- 10 submunicipal & village districts with independent zoning
- 23 unincorporated places zoned by Coos County
- 19 towns without zoning
- 2 unincorporated places without zoning

Zoning Atlas Methods

2 datasets:

“Raw data” with overlays
distinct (publicly available
Google Sheet)

Fully quantitative table with
base/overlay segments, state
law (used in maps)

- Unmapped districts
- Extinct districts
- Unregulated areas
- District types: residential & non-residential
- Use zoning: 1- to 5-family, affordable, ADUs, manufactured
- Dimensional & parking regs by type, elderly/affordable only

The Map and Findings



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Story Map

Detailed explanation of methodology and findings including Manchester-area analysis

AMNH
New Hampshire Zoning Atlas

☆ ... 

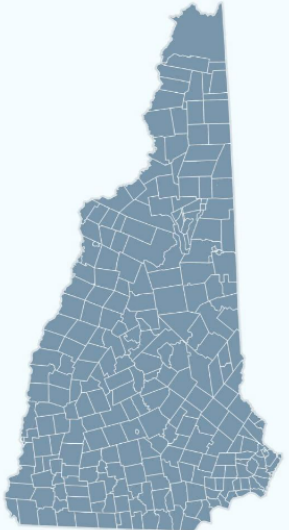
[Background](#) [Methodology](#) [Statewide Findings](#) [Further Analysis: Manchester](#) [Interactive Atlas](#) [Conclusions and Next Steps](#) [Credits](#)

The New Hampshire Zoning Atlas is a database and interactive online map cataloguing and portraying district-level land-use regulations affecting housing construction across the entire land area of the state. The data are valid as of June 1, 2022 and represent the zoning and other land-use regulations that local governments have adopted in their own ordinances, as well as in one of the available datasets the ways in which state law interacts with those provisions. The data are available for researchers to download so that they can reproduce their own maps, analyze the data statistically, and integrate the datasets with information from other sources or states. Below, the background and basic methodology for the Atlas is presented, followed by some of the major findings illustrated with static maps, and finally an interactive version of the Atlas for deeper exploration.

Background

New Hampshire has 227 jurisdictions with independent zoning authority. Most of these jurisdictions are municipalities, but some are submunicipal governments, and one (Coös) is a county with zoning authority for unincorporated areas within its territory. The goal of the NH Zoning Atlas is to compile the regulations of all of these authorities into a comprehensive statewide dataset. In total, there are 269 jurisdictions in the dataset: every municipal and submunicipal zoning authority plus municipalities without zoning plus unincorporated townships.

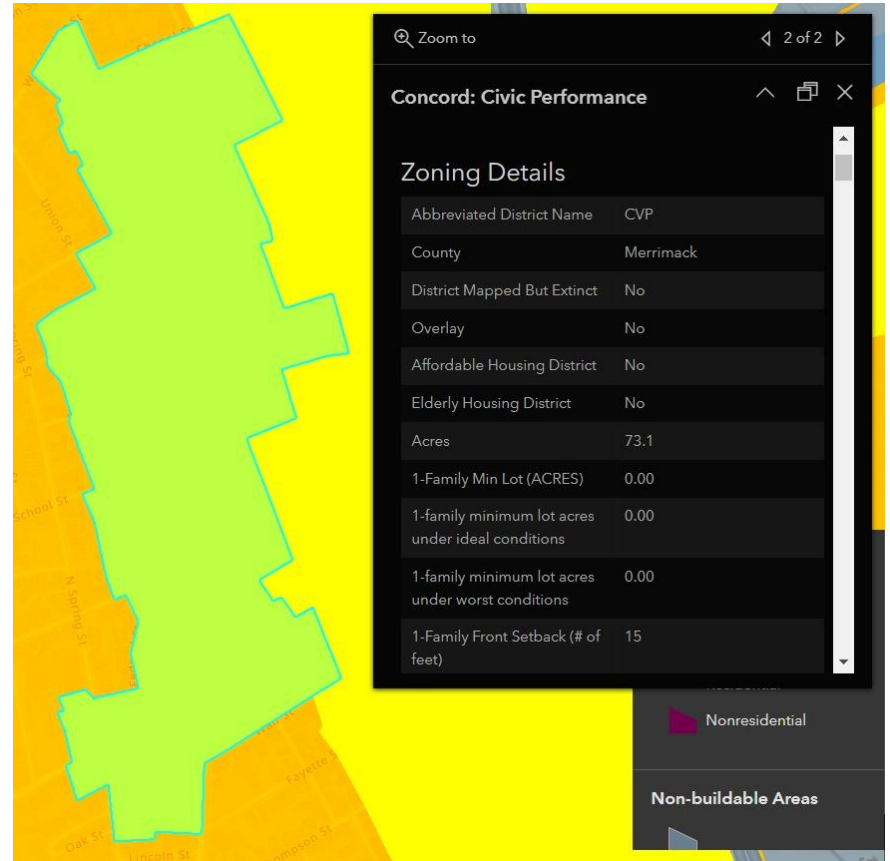
There are two datasets. The first, a Google spreadsheet, contains the "raw data" found in local ordinances, including textual descriptions of complex rules that could not be summarized with a single number without some loss of information, and covers all zoning districts in the state, including unmapped districts. The second dataset, available in comma-separated values format, covers only mapped districts, includes state legal provisions that in some cases override local zoning rules inconsistent with state law, and interprets complex rules as numerical codes suitable for statistical analysis and filtering operations in the map. It also removes base districts that are wholly contained within overlay districts to avoid double-counting. The second dataset links up to the attribute table in the



NEW HAMPSHIRE ZONING ATLAS

Interactive Atlas

Ability to search by location and call up details related to family treatment, ADUs, affordable housing, elderly housing, setback requirements, lot coverage restrictions, parking restrictions, etc. for every zoning district in the state



Finding #1

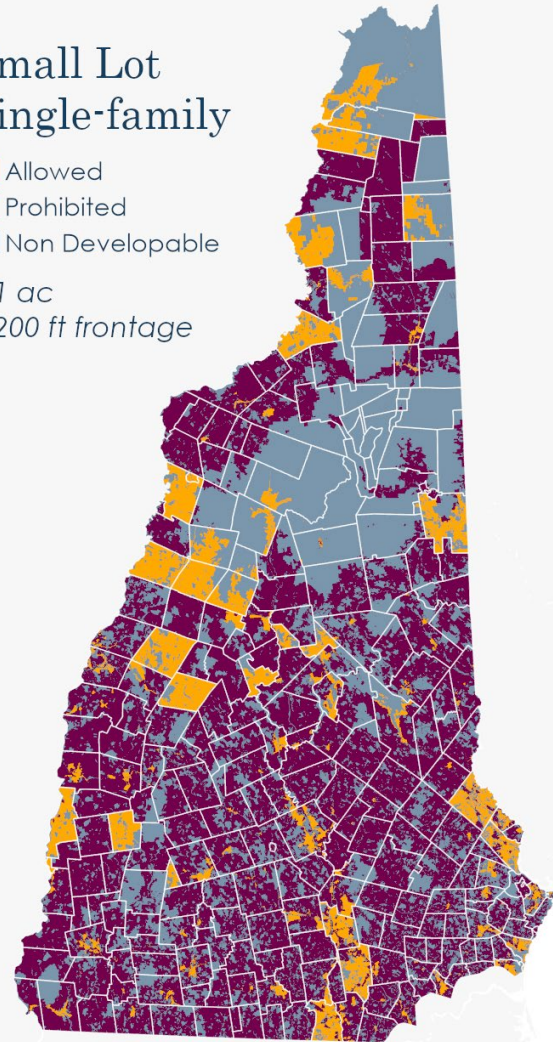
In NH, it is hard to find land to build small homes or starter homes in an economically viable way.

Most communities have prohibited single family homes on small lots over most or all of their territory.

Small Lot Single-family

- Allowed
- Prohibited
- Non Developable

< 1 ac
< 200 ft frontage



Finding #2

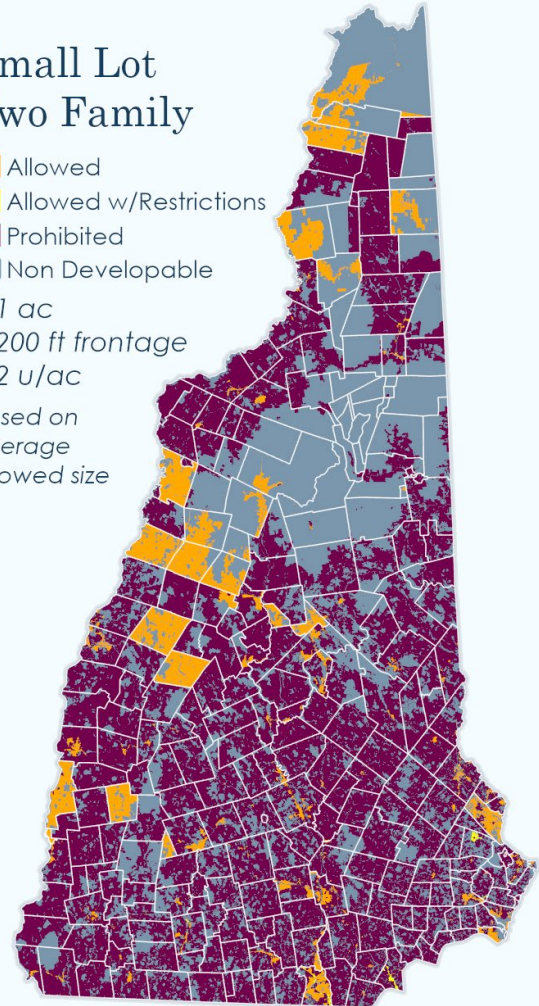
In New Hampshire, there is less area zoned for small lot two-family homes than there is for any other type of housing.

There are also 70 jurisdictions that do not allow two-family by right anywhere.

Small Lot Two Family

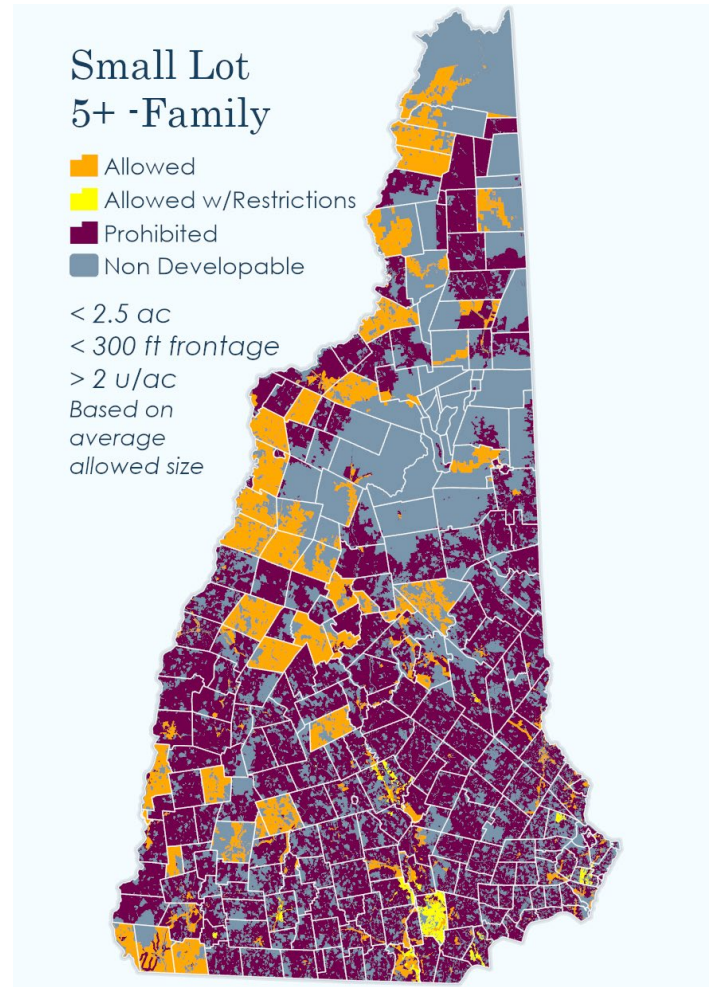
- Allowed
- Allowed w/Restrictions
- Prohibited
- Non Developable

< 1 ac
< 200 ft frontage
> 2 u/ac
Based on
average
allowed size



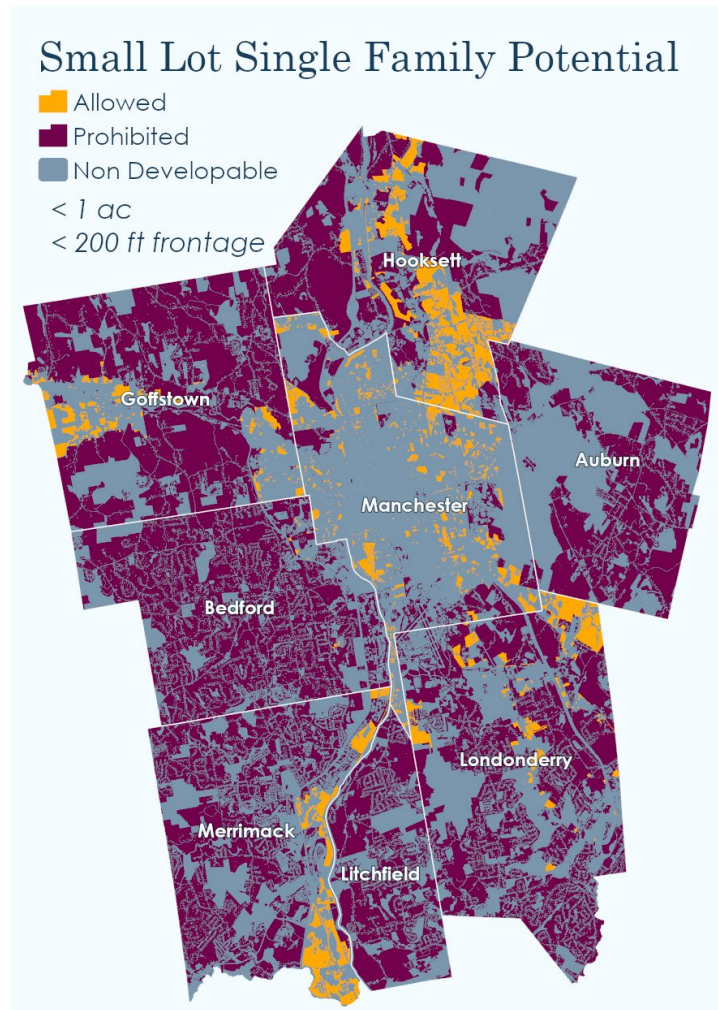
Finding #3

Many of New Hampshire's communities, including those close to job markets, require larger lots for multifamily housing, thereby driving up the cost of these homes and making them unaffordable to residents.



Finding #4

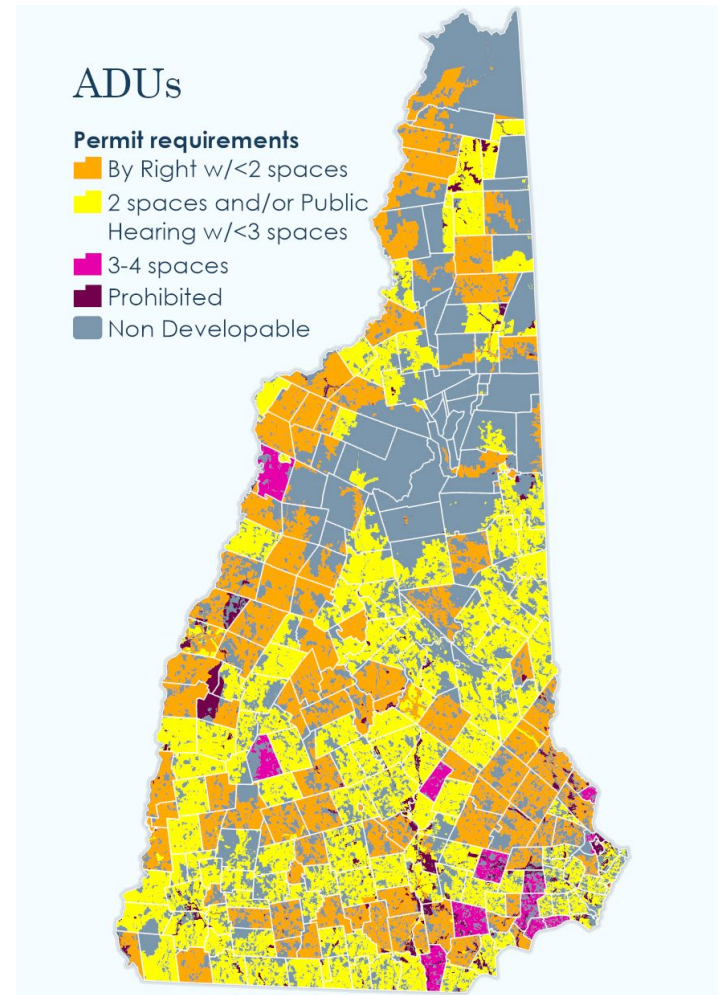
An analysis of New Hampshire's largest metropolitan area (Manchester & contiguous communities) shows that once existing development and land use restrictions are taken into account, the percentage of by-right buildable small lots shrinks from 21% to 7.8%.



Finding #5

Under NH law communities are required to allow attached ADUs, but the approval process is often time-consuming and expensive.

In some communities the requirements for additional parking limits ADU development.



Finding #6

NH law requires communities to allow manufactured homes, but they can choose how to meet that requirement.

Manufactured homes on small lots and in parks are allowed on only 9.9% of developable land statewide.

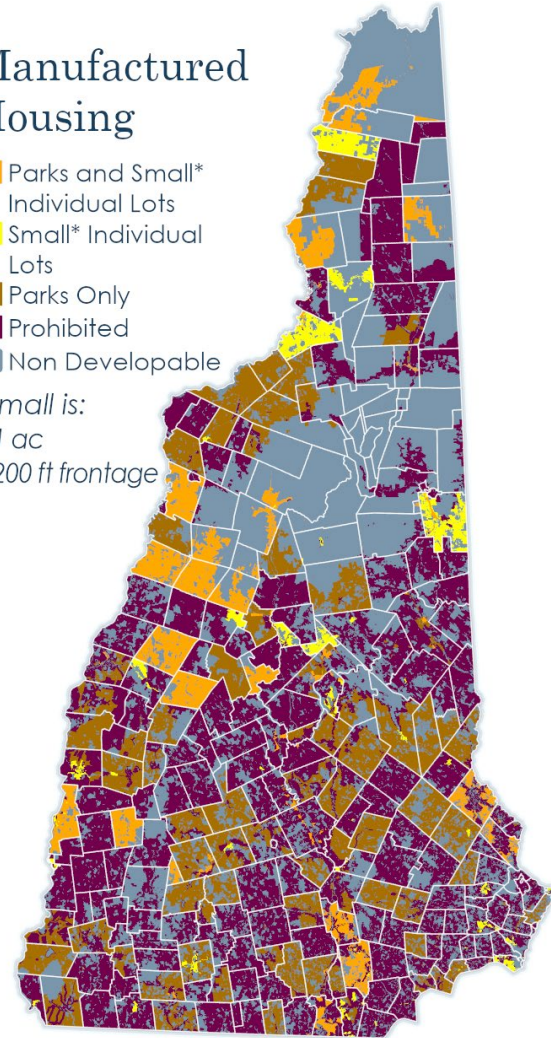
Manufactured Housing

-  Parks and Small* Individual Lots
-  Small* Individual Lots
-  Parks Only
-  Prohibited
-  Non Developable

*Small is:

< 1 ac

< 200 ft frontage



Atlas Implications and Impact



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Implications: Zoning Matters

The Zoning Atlas doesn't take a position; it provides answers

- What do people need to know?
- What does zoning do?
- What's the relationship between zoning and housing production?

Purposes of zoning

- Originally: keep right things from the wrong places
- Later NH response to booms of the 1970s and 1980s: limit/prohibit any growth except large-lot single-family development

Impact: State Law Matters

In NH, local zoning is an exercise of *state-delegated power*

- The Legislature can say how to use that power

Accessory Dwelling Units - a state law zoning limitation

- Many municipalities use the law's flexibility to make ADU development practically infeasible (or at least very difficult)

Workforce Housing Law - a state law zoning limitation

- Communities must allow 5-unit structures
- As a result, in some it may be easier to build a 5-plex than a duplex
- Some municipalities will only do the minimum, regardless of logic

Conclusions: Room for Change

Why housing as a focus?

- Severe shortage of housing - 23,500 units currently needed
- We need more housing production - modest increases overall

Local zoning barriers impede economic growth statewide

- Without affordable places to live, new employees will look elsewhere

Zoning can be changed to be more welcoming to housing

Demonstration

Interactive Atlas: <https://arcg.is/0vzDan>

Story Map:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/410e9b3e818344d7858a043b9a5fe8c7>



Questions?

Thank you!

- All Conference Session slides and recordings will be available next week [online](#)

Feedback Encouraged!

- Please fill out the anonymous evaluation form that can be found at link below

[Click Here for Feedback Survey](#)

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!