

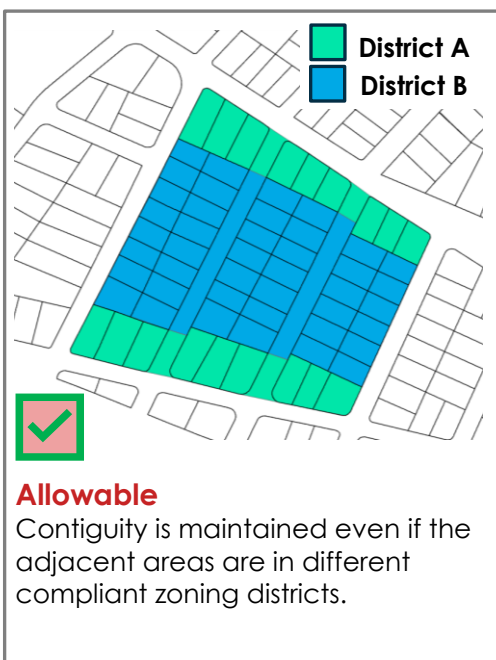
SECTION 3A REASONABLE SIZE REQUIREMENT: CONTIGUITY

Compliance with Section 3A can be achieved with multiple districts, or multiple areas of the same district. However, there are contiguity standards that must be met, in order to ensure that the compliant district(s) exist on a neighborhood scale. Section 5 of the Guidelines has Reasonable Size requirements including contiguity, and Section 8 has Location requirements.

50% of the total district area must be contiguous

(this is not the same as 50% of the minimum land area).

Graphics courtesy of Mass Housing Partnership



CONTIGUITY: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Why contiguity?

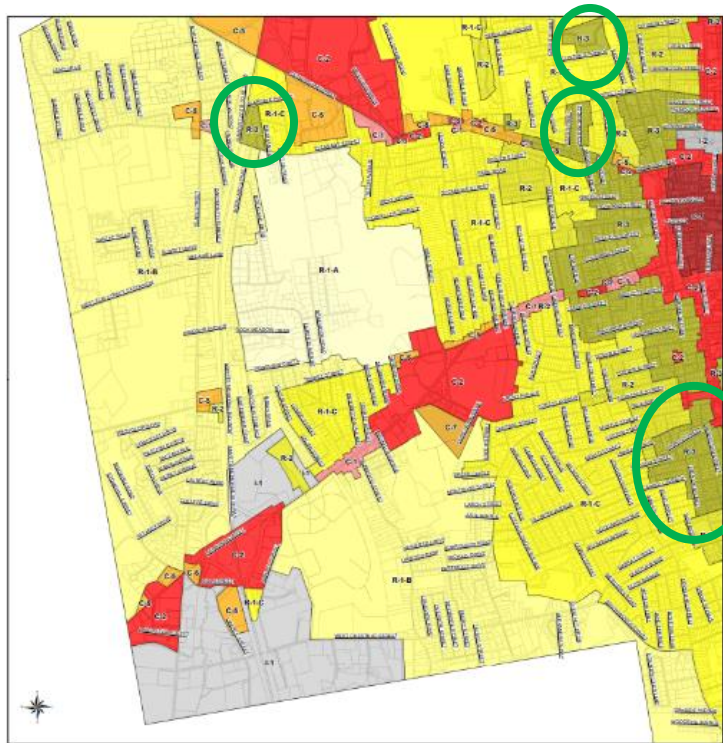
The inclusion of a contiguity requirement is designed to encourage neighborhood scale districts, and to avoid isolated developments or spot zoning. Spot zoning can occur when one lot is singled out for different treatment under zoning from other similar surrounding land. It is sometimes easier to identify individual lots where multi-family housing may be appropriate, however it is important to use good planning practices to evaluate a zoning district more broadly. By planning a zoning district on a neighborhood scale, a community has the opportunity to consider how multi-family housing will integrate into the fabric of the community.

The five-acre minimum

If a district has multiple locations, there is a **5-acre minimum district land area** in order to contribute towards the reasonable size requirement. This does not mean each parcel needs to be 5 acres. Instead it requires that each part of the district, which can be many or few parcels, be no less than five acres.

This allows the district to be located in multiple locations and creates flexibility for the compliant districts to meet the needs of the community. This requirement also helps create neighborhoods, not just "project sites," which also helps avoid spot zoning.

One exception to this rule is if a municipality can meet its entire unit capacity in less than 5 acres, then the entire district must be contiguous. This exception applies to communities in the adjacent small town category, which has no minimum land area requirement.



In this example, the circled areas are all subdistricts of the same zoning district.

Each subdistrict must be at least 5 acres to contribute to the reasonable size requirement.

The four subdistricts are not contiguous, but as long as one subdistrict is at least 50% of the total district area, this may satisfy the contiguity requirement.