

GROSS DENSITY

What is gross density?

In Section 3A, gross density is defined as a units-per-acre density measurement that includes land occupied by public rights-of-way and any recreational, civic, commercial, and other nonresidential uses. Section 3A requires that compliant zoning district(s) allow a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre.

How does a municipality show that the 3A compliant district(s) meet the gross density requirement?

The Compliance Model is a tool that communities must use to determine the gross density of the multi-family district(s). The Compliance Model calculates the district area and summarizes zoning restrictions to derive an estimate the number of units that are allowed on each parcel, which is unit capacity. Using the unit capacity and the area of the district, the Compliance Model can then calculate gross density. The Compliance Model ensures that the gross density and unit capacity accurately considers the zoning restrictions in the district.

How does gross density work across multiple districts/subdistricts?

Many communities will comply with Section 3A by mapping multiple zoning districts or subdistricts. The overall gross density of all districts/subdistricts used to comply with Section 3A must be at least 15 units per acre. This means that some subdistricts may have a gross density of less than 15 units per acre, and some subdistricts may have a greater gross density.

How is gross density different from other ways housing density is measured?

Housing density can be measured in a few different ways. Often, housing density is discussed in terms of one lot or development site, for example how many units a particular site allows, which is referred to as net density. However, gross density differs from this approach because it includes all of the land in the district such as public rights-of-way. Gross density is a way to measure density on a district-wide basis, instead of at the parcel level. Another way density can be described is floor-to-area ratio (FAR). Many communities already have FAR requirements in their zoning. FAR controls how intensely a site can be developed, by restricting a building's floor area in relation to the size of the lot. A district can include FAR requirements and still meet the gross density requirement of Section 3A.

Net density measures how many units a particular site allows. The density of each parcel would be measured individually:



Gross density measures how many units a particular district allows. The density of the district would be measured inclusive of rights of ways:

