

Large House Review (LHR) Study Committee
Community Meeting
June 9, 2025

7:00 p.m.

Powers Hall, Needham Town Hall, 1471 Highland Ave, Needham

AND

Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Zoom: <https://needham-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/82721638505>

To view and participate in this virtual meeting on your phone, download the “Zoom Cloud Meetings” app in any app store or at www.zoom.us. At the above date and time, click on “Join a Meeting” and enter the following Meeting ID: 82721638505

To view and participate in this virtual meeting on your computer, at the above date and time, go to www.zoom.us click “Join a Meeting” and enter the following ID: 82721638505

Or to Listen by Telephone: Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 Then enter ID: 82721638505

Direct Link to meeting: <https://needham-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/82721638505>

1. 7:00 – 7:30 pm: Welcome & Foundational Presentation
2. 7:30 – 8:00 pm: Small Group Discussions
3. 8:00 – 8:15 pm: Report Back to Full Group
4. 8:15 – end of comments: Open mic for comments, questions, ideas
5. Closing and Next Steps.

LHR Committee Members:

Artie Crocker	Planning Board Member / Planning Board Designee
Jeanne McKnight	Planning Board Member / Planning Board Designee
Heidi Frail	Select Board Member / Select Board Designee
Marianne Cooley	Select Board Member / Select Board Designee
Moe Handel	Design Review Board Member / Design Review Board Designee
Tina Burgos	Finance Committee Member / Finance Committee Designee
Nik Ligris	Zoning Board of Appeals Member / Zoning Board of Appeals Designee
Bill Paulson	Real Estate Broker appointed by the Planning Board
Paul McGovern	Developer appointed by the Planning Board
Oscar Mertz	Architect appointed by the Planning Board
Chris Cotter	At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Rob Dangel	At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Joe Matthews	At Large appointed by the Planning Board
Ed Quinlan	At Large appointed by the Planning Board



Large House Review (LHR) Study Committee Community Meeting

June 9, 2025

Town Hall, Powers Hall and Zoom

Format for the evening



- 7:00 – 7:30 pm: Welcome & Foundational Presentation
- 7:30 – 8:00 pm: Small Group Discussions
- 8:00 – 8:15 pm: Report Back to Full Group
- 8:15 – close: Open mic for comments, questions, ideas

Committee Composition



Member	Seat		Member	Seat
Artie Crocker	Planning Board Member		Bill Paulson	Real Estate Broker
Jeanne McKnight	Planning Board Designee		Paul McGovern	Developer
Marianne Cooley	Select Board Member		Oscar Mertz	Architect
Heidi Frail	Select Board Member		Chris Cotter	At Large
Moe Handel	Design Review Board Designee		Rob Dangel	At Large
Tina Burgos	Finance Committee Member		Joe Matthews	At Large
Nik Ligris	Zoning Board of Appeals Member		Ed Quinlan	At Large

Committee Charge



The study area shall be all properties located in the Single Residence B and General Residence Districts, which are the residential zoning districts with the smallest lot size/dimensional requirements.

The Large House Review Study Committee shall consider the impact new or expanded homes are having on the character of the neighborhoods within the studied zoning districts and shall develop recommendations.

The Large House Review Study Committee shall:

1. Review past reports, plans and maps prepared by town committees, town officials, state agencies and consultants including the previous Large House Study Committee.
2. Seek the input of neighborhood residents, builders, contractors, real estate agents, property owners and others as required. It is also expected that the Large House Review Study Committee will hold citizen information meetings to elicit general public comments and input.
3. Review and analyze the current Zoning By-Law and Planning Board Regulations and consideration of amendments to each.
4. Analyze the impact of recent planned and potential new housing constructed in the past 5 years in the Residence B and General Residence Districts.

Committee Charge



5. Review and analyze alternative zoning dimensions, restrictions or limitations that may address neighborhood concerns.
6. Review the current FAR definition to determine whether it is too permissive and if so how it should be revised including whether the floor area designed for human occupancy on the third floor or basement level of a house should be included in the FAR calculation.
7. Prepare recommendations to amend the Zoning By-Law or propose other regulatory strategies that will protect the characteristics valued by residents in the Single Residence B and General Residence Districts.
8. Generally, identify key issues and needs, analyze alternative solutions, and make recommendations to the Planning Board, both short and long term, within the overall purpose of the Large House Review Study Committee.
9. Prepare Fiscal Impact Analysis to accompany recommendations of Committee.
10. Coordinate with current efforts around the Stormwater By-Law and Tree By-Law.

Goals for the evening



- Raise awareness of the Large House Review Committee, its charge, and its work completed to date.
- Feedback from small group discussion.
- Listen and learn what questions, ideas, and concerns Needham community members have about the large house teardown issue.
- Answer any questions that we can. Make note of any that we cannot answer yet, but can circle back on later.

Committee Purpose



- In response to the action taken under Article 44 to refer the Large House/Teardown issue to the Planning Board for further study at the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting
- Large House Review Study Committee appointed by Planning Board
- Purpose: develop recommendations on how best to ensure that new residential construction in the Single Residence B and General Residence Districts will complement existing buildings, settings and neighborhood character.



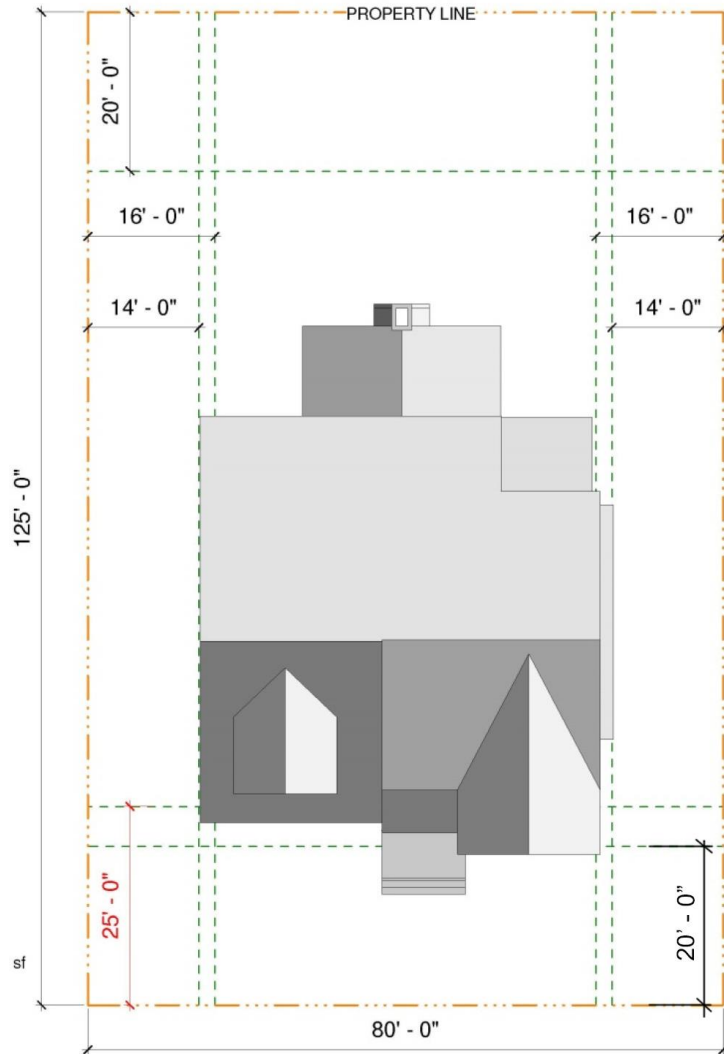
Dimensional Regulations: Single Residence B & General Residence Zoning Districts

New Construction

	Minimum Lot Area (sq ft)	Minimum Frontage (feet)	Front Setback (feet)	Side Setback (feet)	Rear Setback (feet)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	Maximum Lot Coverage %	Maximum Stories	Maximum Height (feet)
Single Residence B Zoning District (New Construction)	10,000	80	20 (a)(b)	14 (b)(c)	20	.36-.38 (d)	25%-30%	2.5	35 (e)(f)
General Residence Zoning District (New Construction)	10,000	80	20 (a)(b)	14 (b)(c)	20	NR	30%-35%	2.5	35 (e)(f)

- (a) Attached garages have minimum setback of 25'.
- (b) Special permit exception for existing structure non-conforming relative to front or side yard setback.
- (c) Increased to 16 feet for any length over 32' feet on a frontage conforming lot. On lots with non-conforming frontage side setback is 12 feet, increased to 14 feet after 32' of building length along the sideline.
- (d) For lots < 12,000 sq. ft. 38. For lots 12,000 sq. ft. or more .36.
- (e) .Maximum height of building at any one point may not exceed 41'.
- (f) If basement wall exposed to full height, dormers in half-story are not permitted.

Conforming Lot: New Construction

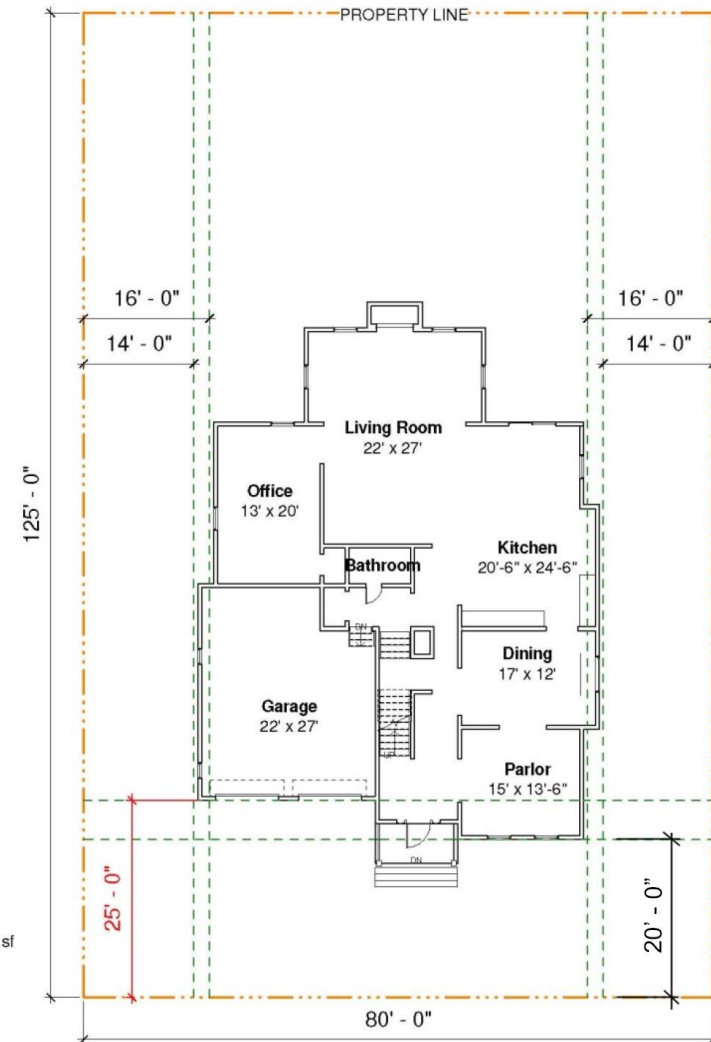


Lge House Study
Sample Plot Plan
Conforming Lot 10,000 sf

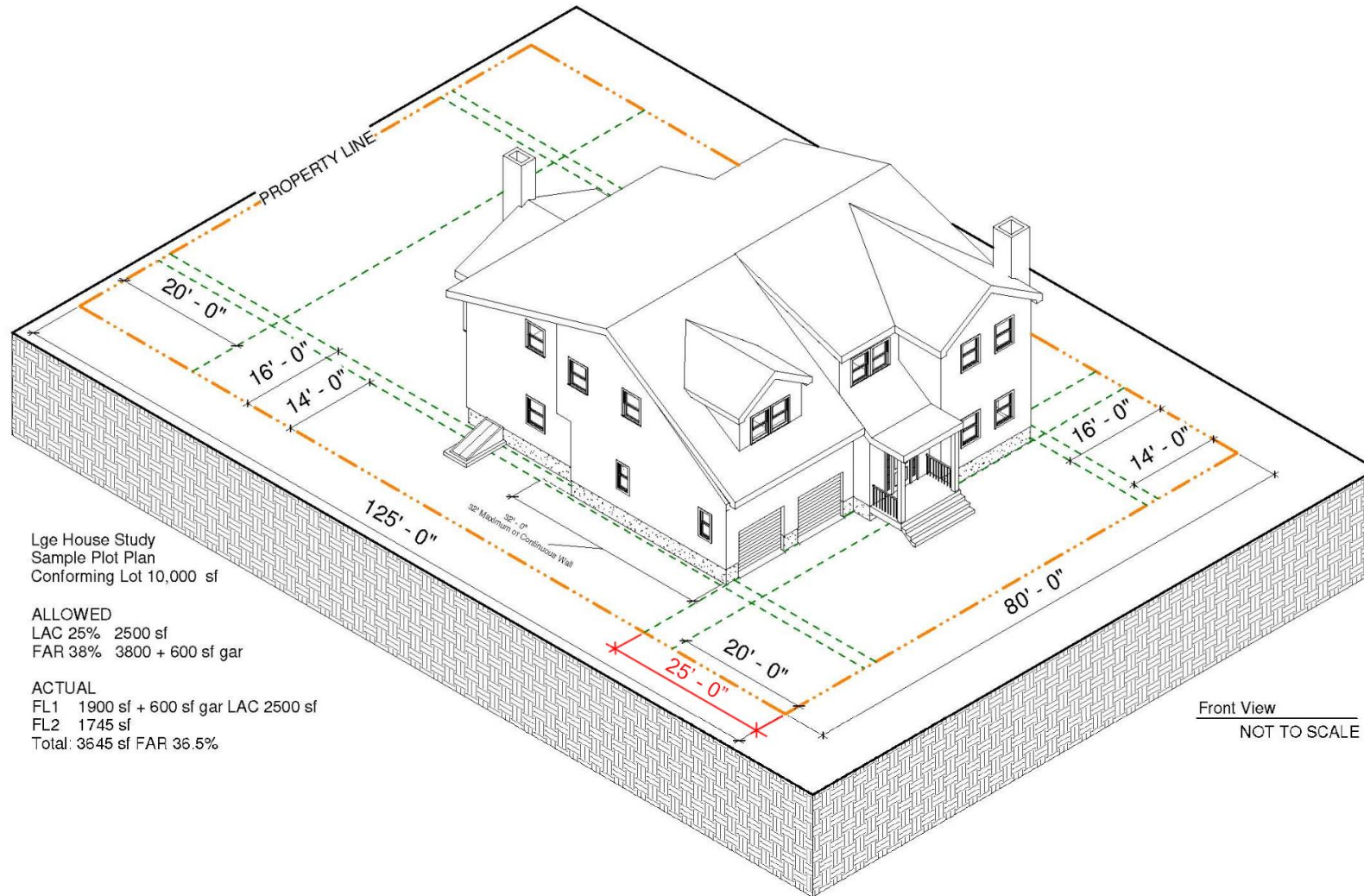
ALLOWED
LAC 25% 2500 sf
FAR 38% 3800 + 600 sf gar

ACTUAL
FL1 1900 sf + 600 sf gar LAC 2500 sf
FL2 1745 sf
Total: 3645 sf FAR 36.5%

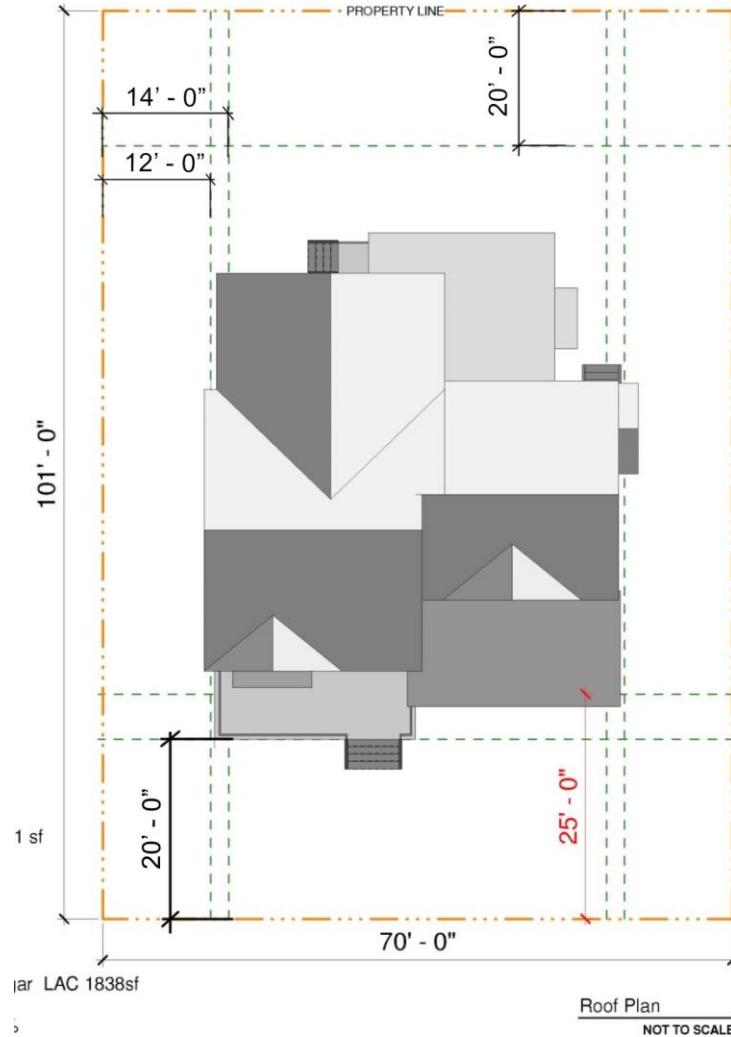
First Floor
NOT TO SCALE



Conforming Lot: New Construction



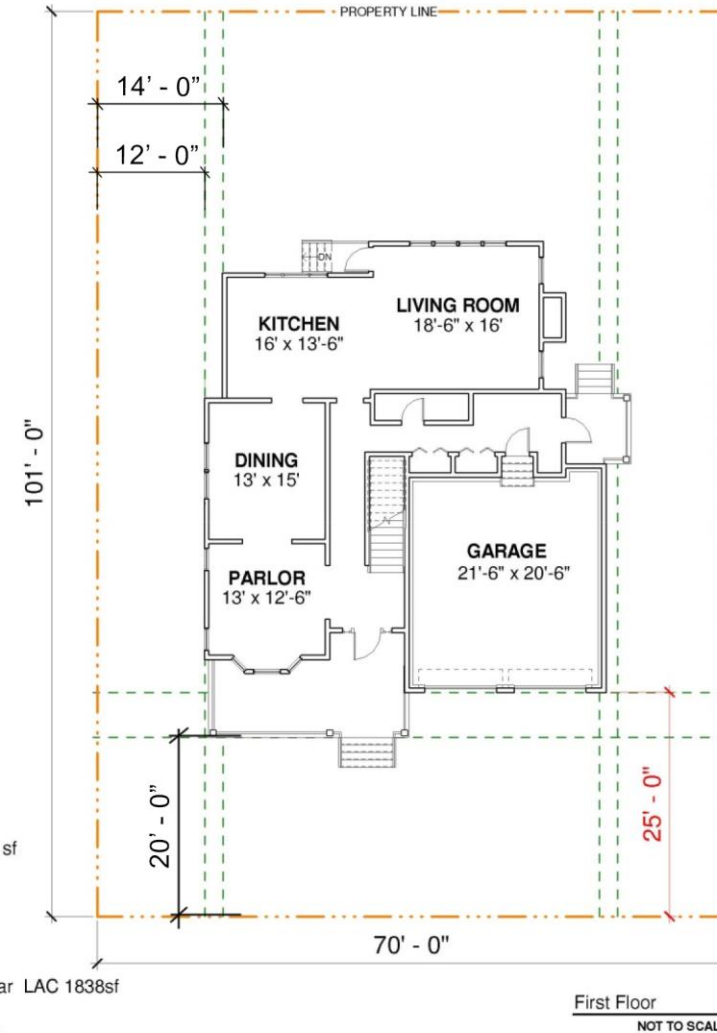
Non-Conforming Lot: New Construction



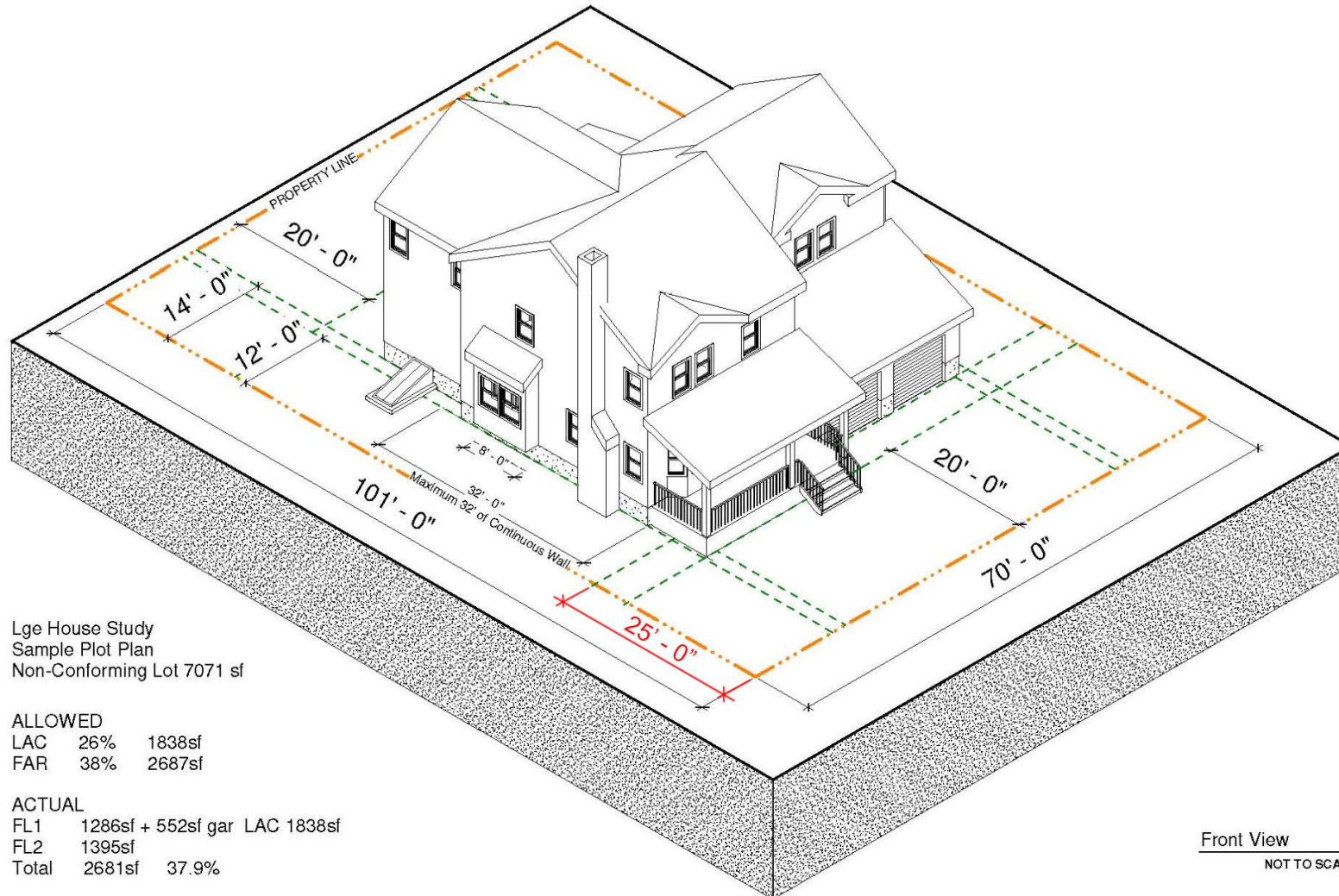
Lge House Study
Sample Plot Plan
Non-Conforming Lot 7071 sf

ALLOWED
LAC 26% 1838sf
FAR 38% 2687sf

ACTUAL
FL1 1286sf + 552sf gar LAC 1838sf
FL2 1395sf
Total 2681sf 37.9%



Non-Conforming Lot: New Construction



Lge House Study
Sample Plot Plan
Non-Conforming Lot 7071 sf

ALLOWED

LAC	26%	1838sf
FAR	38%	2687sf

ACTUAL

FL1	1286sf + 552sf gar	LAC 1838sf
FL2	1395sf	
Total	2681sf	37.9%

Front View

NOT TO SCALE

Table of Lot Size Ranges



	Lot Size (SF)	% Coverage	Allowable Coverage (SF)
Single Residence B	7500 or more	25	1875 or more
	7000-7499	26	1820-1950
	6500-6999	27	1755-1890
	6000-6499	28	1680-1820
	5500-5999	29	1595-1740
	5499 or less	30	1650 or less
General Residence	9000 or more	30	2700 or more
	8500-8999	31	2635-2790
	8000-8499	32	2560-2730
	7500-7999	33	2475-2640
	7000-7499	34	2380-2550
	6999 or less	35	2450 or less

Floor Area Ratio



- Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) Requirement in the SRB District as noted in table below.
- **Area calculated for FAR is the first and second floor area. Attic/third floor and basement are currently not included.** There is an additional allowance of 600 square feet for the garage.
- Basic assumptions: First floor includes 2 car garage, LR, DR, kitchen, family room, mud room and study. Second floor includes 4 BRs, 2-3 Baths, Laundry.

Lot Size in Square Feet	FAR
Lot size < 12,000	.38
Lot size $\geq$ 12,000	.36

Height Measurement Method



- In all residential districts, two measurement options are offered at applicant's discretion:
 - Measure from average existing grade or average new grade, whichever is lower. Height limit is 35 feet.
 - Measure from a single point in the street centerline as the average of the highest 1/3 of the properties' street frontage. Height limit is 32 feet.
- In SRB and General residence districts:
 - Maximum height at any point may not exceed 41 feet.
 - Dormers in the half story above second floor on the façade containing a basement walk-out are not permitted.

Prompts for Small Groups



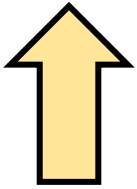
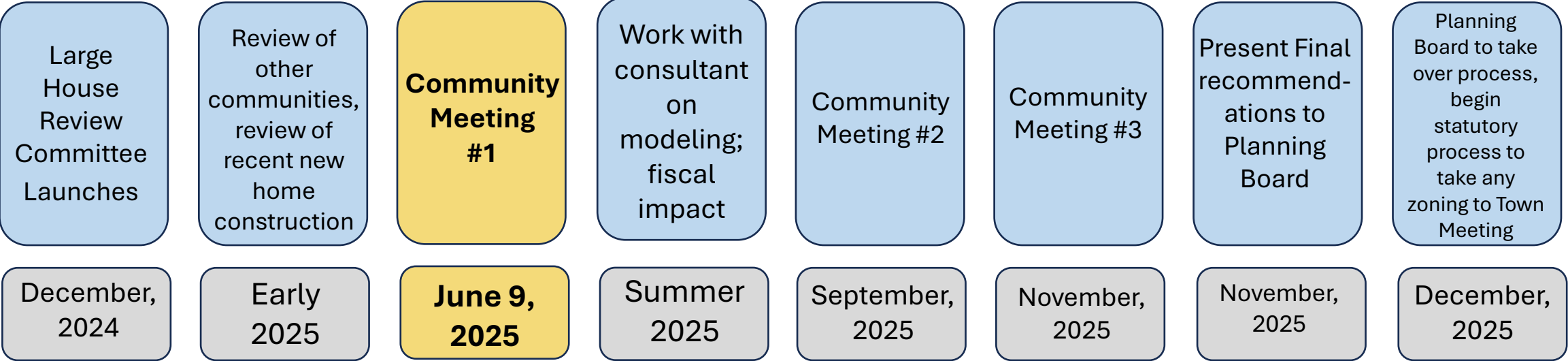
- PROMPT 1: *What brought you here tonight?*
- PROMPT 2: *How do you feel about the houses being built in Needham over the last 10 years?*
- PROMPT 3: *Do you think the Town should be regulating/moderating house size differently than it currently does? Would a change impact you personally?*
- PROMPT 4: *How has your neighborhood been changed over the last 10 years? Has this been a positive change or a negative change? Why?*

Open Public Comment



- Please state your name and address for the record.
- Please limit your comments to 3 minutes.
- We commit to speaking respectfully towards one another.
- We will answer any questions that we can.
- The Committee will gather the information heard tonight and will share it back with the Needham community.
- Your feedback will inform the Committee's future work.

Schedule/Timeline



We are here!

Survey



- The LHRC is also conducting a survey to collect feedback from stakeholders on the large house issue.
- The short survey will only take a few minutes to complete and will be open until Monday, June 16th at 11:59 pm.
- Please go to <https://polco.us/skvh6v> to take the survey.

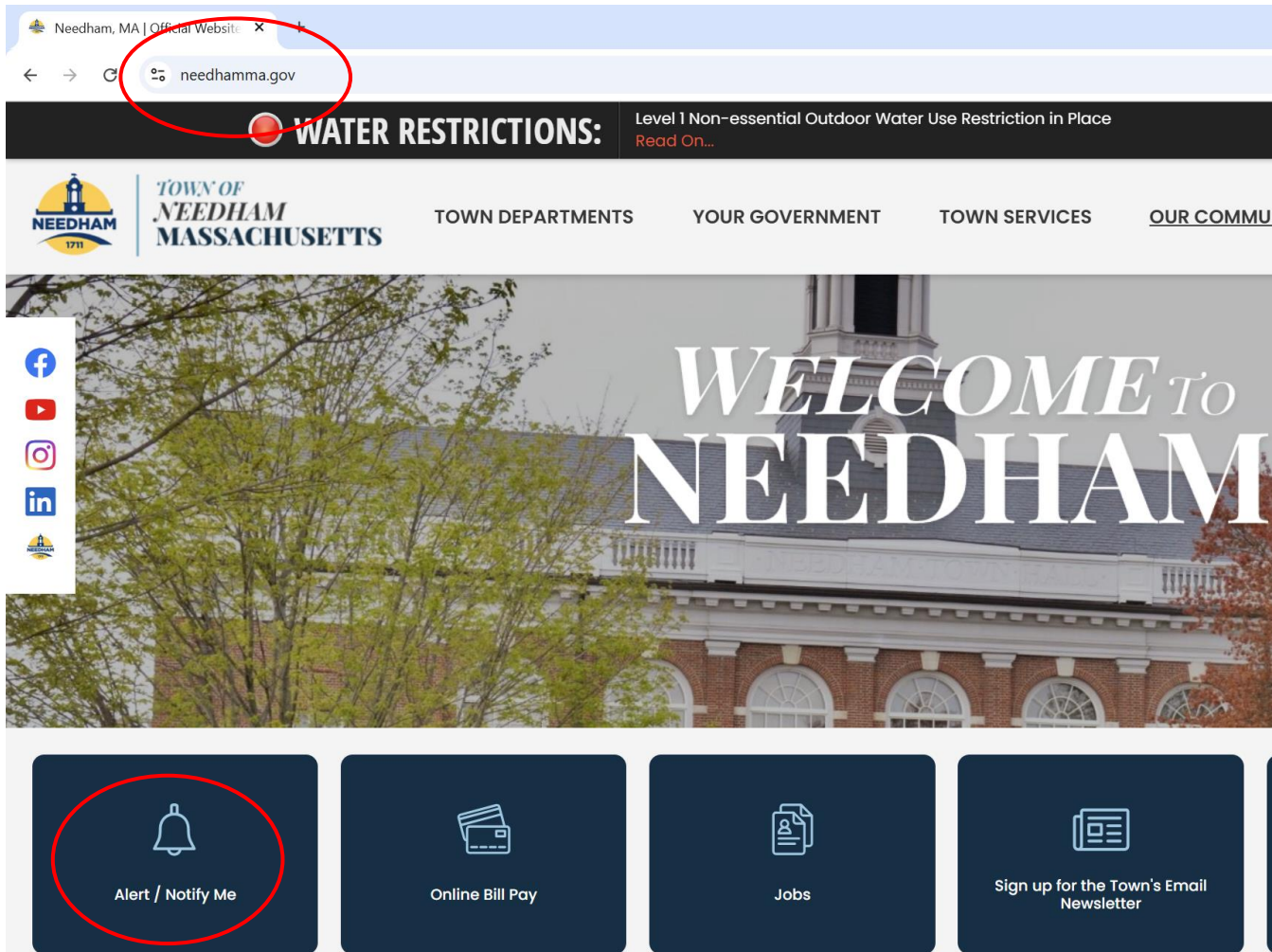
Scan the QR code below to take the Large House Review Committee's Survey.

You may also access the survey at:

<https://polco.us/skvh6v>



Stay Engaged



- Visit www.needhamma.gov/largehouse2025
- Sign up for Alert/Notify Me
- Email planning@needhamma.gov

Thank you!