

New York State Pro-Housing Communities Program

Introduction:

Participating in the Pro-Housing Communities program will help your community participate in building a state-wide, shareable set of best practices in zoning. Different communities have shared their zoning to various degrees; this effort will allow planners, the public, and elected officials to compare options and get ideas from across the state that could be used in their own communities.

This guide will walk you through how to enter the information about your zoning code in a consistent format. Eventually, combining this information from villages, towns and cities of all sizes will provide insights into which tools are successful in increasing housing supply in rural, suburban and urban communities.

The template is generally based on the National Zoning Atlas project, which is based in NYS out of Cornell University, and has led the way in making zoning information accessible to more people.

The zoning code template currently focuses on describing the various types of zoning that allow residential usage, which may include commercial districts that allow residential uses or special use districts. Other zoning districts are included in the template, but currently less detail is requested.

Part I:

Who Should Fill Out the Template?

The template is designed to streamline the entry of key information from a municipality's zoning code into a format that can be used in conjunction with the GIS shapefiles of the zoning map.

- Zoning analyst to enter the details of the zoning code
- Submission of zoning map shapefiles
 - What if my municipality does not have a shapefile version of our zoning map?
 - If your municipality does not have an electronic zoning map, contact the Pro-Housing Community team at prohousing@hcr.ny.gov
 - What if we've already submitted the zoning map to the State?
 - Great! We'll work with you to confirm the files and connections to the zoning code template.
- The National Zoning Atlas team estimates that for a small municipality, filling out a similar template would require roughly an hour; for a medium municipality, it may require 90 minutes to two hours, however, this timing will depend on the number of zoning districts included in the municipality.

Part II: Zoning Template Overview

The zoning template is an Excel model that has been designed to streamline the input of the zoning data in a consistent manner. The model has four tabs that will collect critical information about each municipality's zoning.

- **Sheet 1: General Information.**
This tab includes high level information about the municipality, and space for contact information.
- **Sheet 2: Zoning District List**
This tab asks for information on all the zoning districts within the municipalities zoning code, up to 20 districts. The average municipality has between 5 and 15 districts; if your municipality has more than 20 zoning districts, please contact the HCR team at prohousing@hcr.ny.gov.
- **Sheet 3: Zoning Details by District**
The main information inputs are found on this tab. The tab is locked except for the cells that ask for information. Portions of the sheet will populate with the information from the previous tab, and the questions guiding data entry will always be found on the left of the sheet.
- **Sheet 4: SUMMARY**
The final tab will populate automatically with the data from previous tabs. The summary tab will be linked to the zoning map, with the underlying data made publicly available for all users.

Part III: Zoning Template Process

Preparing to Complete the Template:

To begin completing the Zoning Template spreadsheet, first ensure that you are working with the most recent version of your municipality's zoning code. Zoning codes are public documents, and many municipalities have placed their entire zoning code online. If your municipality's zoning code is not online, work with the city manager or central administration to identify where an electronic (PDF) or paper copy of the zoning code is located or how to obtain a copy of the zoning code.

Sheet 1: General Information

1. On the General Information Tab, first select your municipality from the dropdown menu. Note that if you have the most recent version of Excel, you will be able to use Autocomplete, however, in older versions you will need to scroll to find your municipality.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Zoning Summary Template							
Municipality Name (select from dropdown)	Harrison village						
Name of person filling out the form	Harrison village						
Name of contact person	Hartford town						
Email	Hartland town						
Phone Number	Hartsville town						
Address	Hartwick town						
	Hastings town						
	Hastings-on-Hudson village						
	Haverstraw town						
Municipality Type	Village						
If village, town where village is located	Harrison						
County	Westchester						
Region / REDC	Mid-Hudson						
Upstate / Downstate	MCTD						



Figure 1: General Information Tab

Selecting the specific municipality from the list (rather than manually typing it in) is important, as the list differentiates between villages and towns with the same name and links to additional information specific to that municipality.

Once you have selected your municipality, the details in the lower box should update automatically.

2. After you have selected your municipality, fill out the contact information for the Pro-Housing Communities coordinator for your municipality in the upper box.

Sheet 2: Zoning District List

Zoning districts are the key descriptors in most zoning codes, and identifying each district and its qualities is critical.

Most zoning codes will have a list of all the zoning districts and their abbreviations. If there is no master list, you will need to go through the code to identify each district included in the zoning code, both its abbreviation and full name.

A	B	C	D	E
Zoning Summary Template				
Municipality Name	Harrison village			
Contact Person		0		
Table 1: Existing Zoning Districts				
ID#	District Name	District Abbreviation	District Type (drop down)	Acres within District (if known)
1	Example 1	Ex. 1	Primarily Residential	
2			Primarily Residential	
3			Mixed Residential Commercial	
4			Nonresidential	
5			Overlay	
6			Planned Residential District	
7				
8				
9				

1. Using the zoning district list, enter the full district name (i.e., One-family Residence District, Mixed Commercial/Residence (MC15) District, Light Industrial (M2) District) in Column B and the District Abbreviation in Column C.
 - a. Each distinct district will have its own row.
 - b. If the District Abbreviation is included in the full name, place the abbreviation in Column C and the remaining full district name in Column B.
 - c. When adding the full district name to Column B, remove the words “Zone,” “Zoning District,” or “District.”
2. In column D, you will classify the primary use(s) allowed in each district. For the purposes of this template, you will categorize each district into one of five categories. The majority of the districts likely to fall into one of the first three.

The categories are:

- Primarily Residential
- Mixed Residential Commercial
- Nonresidential
- Overlay
- Planned Residential District

Categorizing Districts

Begin by determining if the zoning code includes a use table, which is generally a chart describing the uses permitted/allowed in each district. If there is no use table, the chapter focused on each district may have the list of allowed uses for that district.

Primarily Residential

Districts should be categorized as Primarily Residential if they allow uses described using phrases such as: housing only; housing and various uses customarily allowed in residential areas, including religious institutions and schools; or housing and agricultural uses.

Generally, you can start by looking at the district’s name for initial direction (although district categorization should be confirmed in the zoning text). For example:

- Any district abbreviated as R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-10, R-15, R-20, R-40, etc, where the R stands for Residential, will usually be a Primarily Residential District.
- Any district with words such as Residence, Residential, Multifamily, Housing, Apartment, or Manufactured Home, are likely Primarily Residential. However, watch out for names that may include other uses (Multifamily-Retail, for example), that should be categorized differently.
- Districts that have been created specifically for one specific development, which are often smaller areas but distinct from an overlay, should be categorized as Planned Residential District (more information on these districts is below).
- Consistent with the methodology in the National Zoning Atlas, you should categorize agricultural zones as Primarily Residential unless the description specifically prohibits residential uses.

Mixed Residential Commercial

Districts that fall into this category will allow for both residential and nonresidential uses as primary uses. Note that either use could be allowed as a stand-alone use (i.e., a residential apartment building or an office complex) or mixed within the same building (i.e., a residential building with office or retail allowed on the ground floor). Alternatively, if commercial uses are only allowed as accessory uses (i.e. home office may be allowed but not a stand-alone office building), then the district should be categorized as Primarily Residential.

Similar to Primarily Residential districts, the name of the district will generally help identify a Mixed Residential Commercial district. For example:

- Districts with the words mixed-use, village, main street, center or central business are often (although not always) Mixed Residential Commercial
- However, in many places, districts with Commercial only in the name may also allow residential as a primary use, and should be categorized as Mixed Residential Commercial.

Nonresidential

Districts should be designated as Nonresidential if they prohibit residential uses or only allow a single accessory dwelling on a lot but no other residential uses.

Similar to the other categories, the names of districts will help identify potential Nonresidential districts, which may include:

- Park, conservation land, open space, are all likely to be non-residential.
- Other districts that are likely to be Nonresidential may include descriptions like cemetery, airport, public utility, etc.
- Districts named Industrial may need further review, as most are likely to prohibit residential, but not all.

Overlays

Many zoning codes include Overlay districts that add options or requirements specifically within their borders; a typical example would be a commercial overlay specifying where commercial uses can be allowed in a Primarily Residential district, as opposed to a district where all commercial or all residential uses are allowed.

You should capture overlay districts using this category, however, if an overlay district actually overrides the base zoning, the district should be categorized using the primary use. For example, if an overlay overrides the underlying zoning to allow for residential usage, the district should be categorized as primarily residential.

Most overlays are shown with hatches, dots or cross-hatches on the zoning map, which may assist in categorization.

Planned Residential District

Some municipalities may use zoning districts that encompass just one or a select number of developments, with more targeted zoning for the specific development. If your municipality uses this type of district (sometimes referred to as a Planned Unit District, or with a specific reference to the project), you should categorize these smaller districts here. If your municipality does not use this type of district, you may ignore this category.

3. In column E, if you have the total acreage of the type of zoning district within your municipality, add it into this column. If you do not have the total acreage, you may leave this column blank.

Sheet 3: Zoning Details by District

In the Zoning Summary Template, you will answer a series of questions for each district. The sheet will automatically populate the name of the district from the previous tab. Reminder that if you have more than 20 districts, contact the team at prohousing@hcr.ny.gov for assistance.

Columns A and B contain the questions and guidance for filling out each question. Not every question will be relevant to each district entered on the previous sheet. As you scroll to the right to fill in the information for subsequent districts, the questions will remain visible on the left of the screen.

The questions are arranged in seven categories:

1. Allowable Residential Building Types
2. Lot sizes
3. Restrictions on Building Volume
4. Restrictions on Building Footprint
5. Restrictions on Dwelling Units
6. Restrictions on Permitting
7. ADU Restrictions (If applicable)

As you go through the questions, if additional information or clarification is needed, you can use the cells to the right of the questions to supplement the answer.

Zoning District Analysis

1. Allowable Residential Building Types

This section asks what types of residential uses are allowed or prohibited in the district and if there are a maximum number of units per lot in the district. (Note that not all of the questions will apply to each district.) The question covers six types of residential use: 1-family, 2-family, 3-family, 4-family, 5 or more dwelling units and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). You should select all that apply.

For example, one district may allow 1-family homes and ADUs, but not other unit types. Other districts may allow all six types of housing units. Each yellow cell in this section should be completed.

1. Allowable Residential Building Types				
<p>Question Guidance</p> <p>Does this zoning district allow the residential building typologies listed to the right?</p> <p>If your zoning does not have a maximum, leave this blank and explain.</p>	Building type and density		Y/N	Please explain your response as needed
	Is residential allowed in this district?			
	One-family?			
	Two-family?			
	Three-family?			
	Four-family?			
	Five or more dwelling units per lot?			
	Accessory Dwelling Units?			
	What is the maximum number of units per lot?			

For the field referring to the maximum number of units per lot, only complete this cell if applicable in that district.

2. Lot sizes

For the first question, if the district has a minimum lot size requirement, enter the square footage in the relevant cell.

- Note that if the lot size is listed in acres, the size should be converted to square feet. One acre is equal to 43,560 square feet.

For the second question, if there are specific lot size requirements for certain types of uses (such as multifamily, etc), include those in the adjacent cells. If not applicable, leave blank.

2. Lot sizes				
<p>Question Guidance</p> <p>The size of the minimum lot in this district. If there is no minimum, enter 0.</p>	Dimensional Standards		Value	Please explain your response as needed
	Minimum Lot Size (in square feet)		43,560	
<p>Question Guidance</p> <p>Please indicate any requirements for lot size in square feet based on the building type and provide an explanation in the Response column. If you have a district-wide</p>	Building type and lot size		Value	Please explain your response as needed
	Three-family (in square feet)			
	Four-family (in square feet)			
	Five or more dwelling units per lot (in square feet)			

3. Building Volume

Question 3a: If the district has a height restriction, enter it in the column to the right. If the height in the zoning code is expressed in feet, an estimated conversion to stories is sufficient.

In the second part of question 3a, if there is a height restriction for certain types of residential uses, include them in this column. If this section is not applicable, leave blank.

Question 3b: If the code includes a requirement that higher floors be set back from the lower floors, include the setback measurement in this section. If the requirement does not exist, leave the lines blank.

Question 3c: Include the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) for the district, if applicable. Note that in some zoning codes, the FAR may be located in a separate table or section of the zoning code.

Question 3d: If there are other restrictions on height within the district, for example a height limit on lots adjacent to other districts, corner lots, etc, include those restrictions in this cell.

3. Building Volume			
	Question Guidance	Dimensional Standards	Please explain your response as needed
3.a. Height	If the building height is in feet, please convert to stories based on the requirements in the building code or your zoning definitions. Add the number of feet to the response column.	Building height (in stories)	2
3.b. Setbacks	If this zoning district restricts height for one or more of the following, please enter the height in stories in the Value column	Building type and lot size	
		Three-family (in stories)	
		Four-family (in stories)	
		Five or more dwelling units per lot (in stories)	
3.c FAR	FAR is Floor Area Ratio	FAR (enter as a decimal, not ratio)	0.3
3.d. Other Restrictions on Height	If there are additional restrictions on height, please provide more information in the Response column.	Does this district restrict height for any other reason? (based on proximity to other districts or uses, etc)	

4. Building Footprint

Question 4a: Some zoning codes may have different requirements for all three types of lot coverage, or only one or two of the requirements. If your municipality does not have one of the three types of lot coverage, leave that cell blank. The three types are Maximum Building Coverage (buildings only); Maximum Building Coverage + Parking Coverage (buildings and parking; this may be described as nonpermeable coverage in some codes), and Maximum Lot Coverage (all buildings and nonpermeable surface coverage).

Question 4b: Similar to lot coverage, different municipalities may include open space requirements (or not) in different formats. Review the zoning district and complete the applicable cells. If the code allows for more than two families per lot, but does not have additional open space requirements specific to the district, leave the section blank.

Question 4c: The section may be called yard requirements, building setbacks, or similar phrasing. Not all districts will include all four listed yard setbacks; fill out as many of the cells as applicable.

If the district has additional yard or setback requirements, select yes or no from the dropdown, and add a short explanation in the adjacent cell.

Question 4d: If the district has a requirement for a minimum number of parking spaces per housing unit, include it in the first cell. As noted, if the district has requirements for parking spaces per bedroom, add those requirements in the following rows.

If there are different parking requirements for different unit types, include the additional detail in the next rows.

4. Building Footprint				
	Question Guidance	Dimensional Standards	Value	Please explain your response as needed
4.a. Lot Coverage	Enter if applicable. Building coverage is only for buildings. Building + Parking is for buildings and parking. Maximum Lot Coverage	Maximum Building Coverage (%)	20%	
		Maximum Building + Parking Coverage (%)		
		Maximum Lot Coverage (%)	25%	
4.b. Open Space Requirements	Enter if applicable. Enter if applicable. If this zoning district has an open space requirement for one of more of the following building types, please enter the requirement in square feet in the Value column.	Minimum Open Space Required (%)		
		Minimum Open Space per Dwelling Unit (square feet)		
		Three-family?		
4.c. Setbacks	Please enter the setbacks for this zoning district in the column to the right. If other setbacks are required, please provide more information in the Response column. Use the drop-down boxes to answer in the Y/N column. If these restrictions are applicable, please provide more information in the Response Column	Four-family?		
		Five or more dwelling units per lot?		
		Front yard setback (in feet)	10	
		Side yard setback 1 (in feet)	8	
		Side yard setback 2 (in feet)	8	
		Rear yard setback	30	
		Other		
			Y/N	Please explain your response as needed
		Does this district have special setbacks for corner lots (Y/N)		
		Does this district have any other restrictions on the building envelope?		
4.d. Parking	Question Guidance Please provide a single number for parking spaces per dwelling unit. If the district has requirements based on the number of bedrooms or unit type, please provide them below. If this district defines parking by the housing type, please identify the requirements here. Consider an average of these or other reasonable estimates of spaces per dwelling unit to enter above. Please provide more information in the Response column. If this district defines parking by the number of bedrooms, please identify the requirements here. Consider an average of these or other reasonable estimates of spaces per bedroom to enter above. Please provide more information in the Response column.		Value	Please explain your response as needed
		Parking Spaces per Dwelling unit (number of spaces)	2	
		Three family?		
		Four family?		
		Five or more dwelling units per lot?		
		Other		
		Studio		
		One-bedroom		
		Two-bedroom		
		3+ bedrooms		
		Other		

5. Dwelling Units

This question is meant to capture additional requirements that may be included in the details of the zoning district. This question focuses on restrictions for multifamily or other actions that may delay/affect the construction of new housing.

Examples of other requirements may include restrictions on building footprints, building height, unit sizes, accessory uses, or age or family restrictions.

The question is qualitative, not quantitative; if there are no additional restrictions for the district, you may leave this question blank.

5. Dwelling Units			
	Question Guidance	Y/N	Please explain your response as needed
	Does your zoning ordinance/bylaw have any other restrictions on building footprint, building height, unit sizes, age restrictions, or permission for multi-family not covered above? Please explain your response in the box to the right. (For example, does your community require a special permit for demolition delay or accessory uses?)		
	Does your zoning have any provisions for exemptions or waivers? Are there additional restrictions not captured in the tables above?		

6. Permitting

The question captures the types of approvals required for each housing type. **You must make one of the four selections from the drop down for each category.** The selections are:

- **As-of-Right:** select this option if no zoning changes, waivers, site plan approvals, etc, are required. If building permits are the only required permits, the category would be counted as As-of-Right.
- **Planning or staff review required:** select this option if a property owner must get approvals from a government department, but NOT a public hearing or a vote by a public body.

- Public hearing required: select this option if the housing type requires any type of public hearing or public vote prior to obtaining building permits. This includes any type of site plan review, architectural review, historic preservation review, planning or variance vote, etc.
- Not allowed / Prohibited: select this option if the housing type is not allowed in any form in the district.

For some districts, different types of housing may have different requirements; for example, if single family homes are allowed without additional permitting, but adding an Accessory Dwelling Unit requires a hearing, each category should have the appropriate selection chosen.

6. Permitting		
Question Guidance	Selection	Please explain your response as needed
Does this zoning district allow the residential uses as-of-right or require additional process? Please select from the dropdown menu on the right.		
	Single family	As-of-right
	Two family	Not allowed / Prohibited
	Three-family	Not allowed / Prohibited
	Four-family	Not allowed / Prohibited
	Five or more dwelling units per lot	Not allowed / Prohibited
	Accessory dwelling units	Public hearing required
	Other (please provide more information on the right)	

7. ADU Regulations (if applicable)

If ADUs are allowed in the district (with or without additional permitting), use this section to fill out ADU specific requirements. The question includes spaces for minimum or maximum unit sizes, any parking requirements separate or in addition to the underlying zoning, residency restrictions if any (for example, only a relative or domestic worker may live in the ADU), or any additional requirements listed in the zoning code.

7. ADU Regulations (if applicable)		
Question Guidance	Value	Please explain your response as needed
If ADUs are allowed in this district, are there minimum or maximum unit sizes, parking restrictions, residency restrictions, or other ADU specific requirements? Please complete the appropriate response to the right. If additional restrictions exist, add additional information in the box to the right.		
	Minimum unit size	
	Maximum unit size	1000
	Parking spaces per ADU	2
	Residency Restrictions (if any)	Family only
	Other ADU specific requirements (if any)	

Sheet 4: Summary

The summary sheet should automatically populate with the information entered in the previous two sheets. Prior to submission, you should review the Summary sheet to ensure that there are no mistakes or changes that need to be made in the prior sheets. If the sheet shows an unexpected error message, email the team at prohousing@hcr.ny.gov.

Part IV: Resources

If you have questions about how to complete the housing permit template, you can visit our website at <https://hcr.ny.gov/pro-housing-community-program> for FAQs and a webinar schedule and recordings. The FAQs will be updated as new questions come in.

To reach the Pro-Housing team, you can send an email to prohousing@hcr.ny.gov.

During the initial rollout of the program, HCR will hold webinars to provide additional guidance. If you cannot make the webinar(s), they will be recorded and posted on the Pro-Housing Community website for future reference.

Initially, there will also be monthly “office hours” where staff can join a video call to receive guidance from HCR staff.