



MBTA Zoning Task Force

RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IN MANCHESTER BY-THE-SEA

On January 6, 2024, members of the Manchester MBTA Zoning Taskforce led a group of town residents on a walk through parts of the downtown. It was called the “Density Walk” because it was meant to acquaint citizens with multi-family residential buildings of varying densities here in Town. Multifamily housing is defined as a property with three or more residential units or a property with two or more structures with at least two residential units in each.

The following pages contain information about each of the properties that were visited during the Density Walk. Each was chosen to present buildings that represent Manchester-style multifamily development. The Taskforce will sponsor additional walks over the coming months and we welcome your participation. In the meanwhile, please use this summary to tour these sites on your own if you haven’t visited them before.

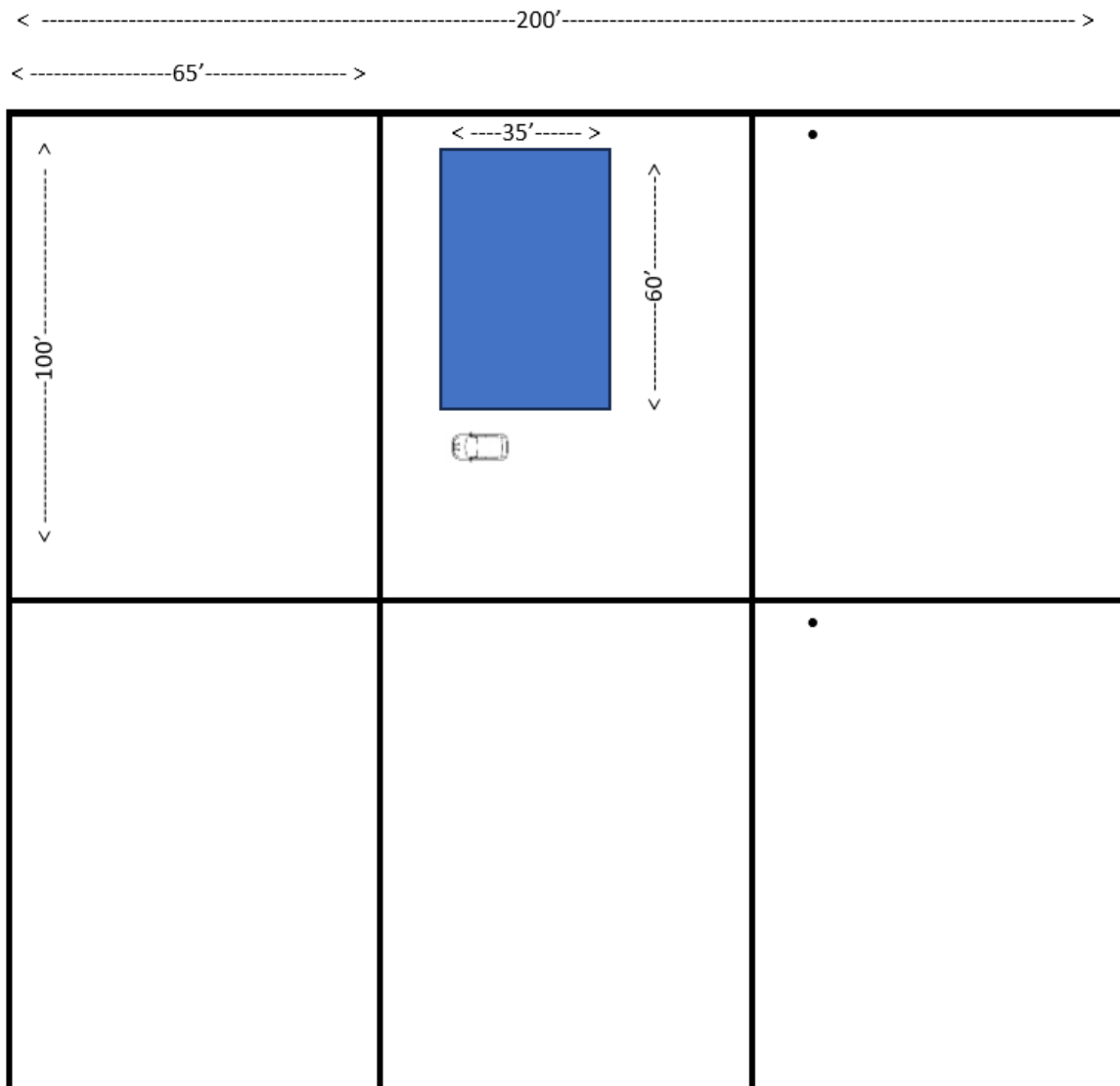
Also, please visit MBTA Zoning on the Town’s official website for more information and attend the Task Force's meetings and forums to keep informed.

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UNDERSTANDING RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IN DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER

The MBTA Task Force has been organized to prepare possible zoning changes for the Town to consider. The revised zoning regulations would comply with the State Law MGL C.40 Sec 3A. The law requires towns to allow multifamily housing by right in areas near train stations. The density requirement is a minimum of 15 units per acre. Density is calculated by dividing the number of units by the number of acres. How big is an acre and what does a density of 15 units/acre look like?

An acre contains 43,560 square feet. It can be visualized as a football field without the endzones. Below is a rough diagram of a block of 6 lots. The 6 lots form a rectangle that is about 200 Ft X 200 Ft or 40,000 SF- slightly less than 1 acre. Each lot contains 6,500 SF.



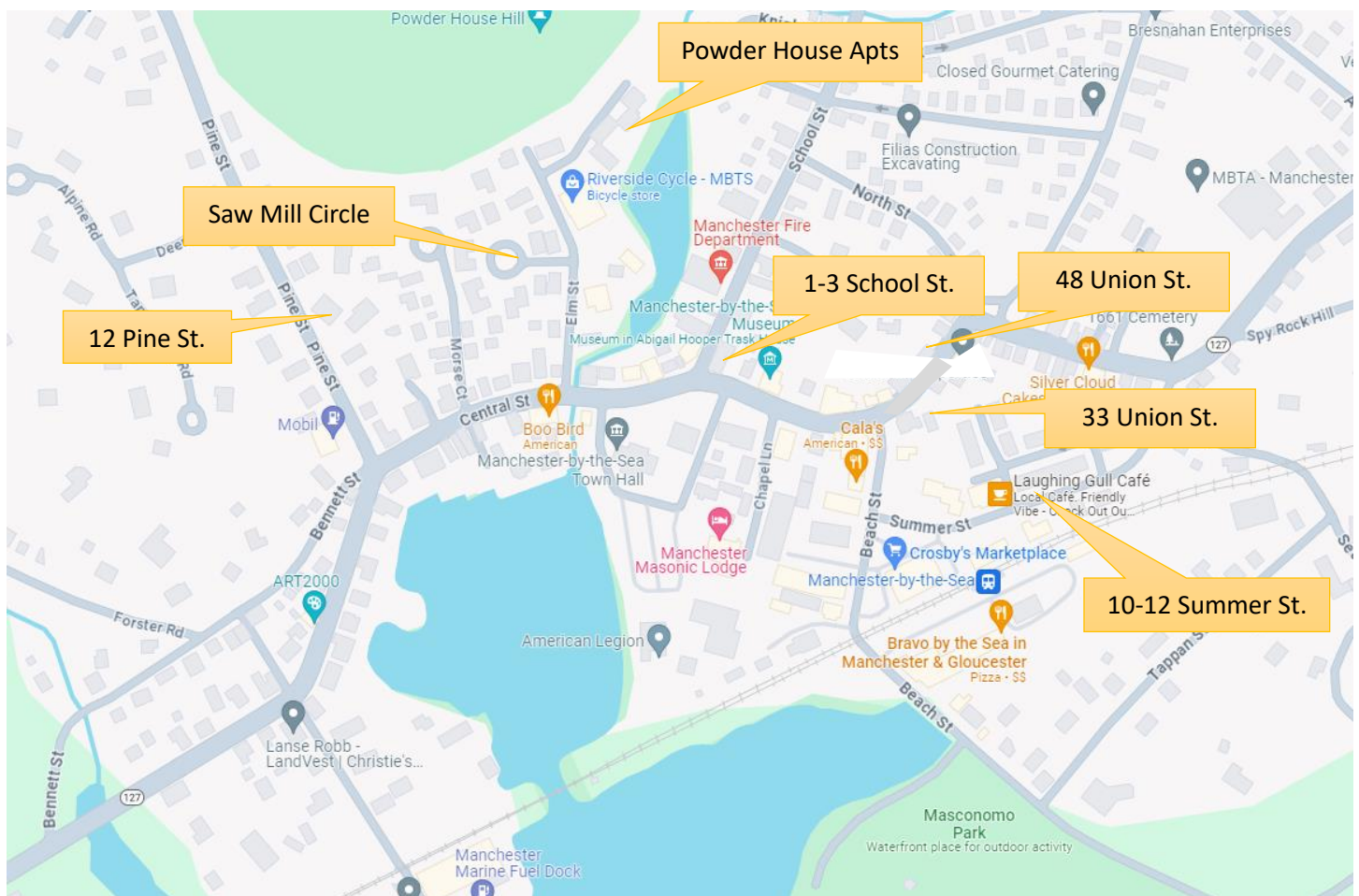
The building footprint in blue is 35 Ft X 60 Ft, or 2,100 SF. This diagram shows a car parked in the back yard. Setbacks are 5 Ft on the front and 10 Ft on the side. There is space for a 15-foot-wide driveway on the right. Lot coverage would be less than 33%. This would provide a single-story house of about 1,800 net SF. These lot dimensions comply with current zoning.



If a building with three units were built on each lot, the density would be 18 units/acre. Each unit would have 1,500 SF of floor area. Each lot would have an adequate back yard to easily park at least 3 vehicles, plus landscaping.

The photo to the left shows two three-family homes located in downtown Manchester. They offer an example of what three-unit residential buildings might look like at the approximate density represented in the diagram.

There are many larger multifamily properties in downtown Manchester. This document presents eight examples, all within easy walking distance. They were built over a period of many years, and each has its own architectural style. Some are condos. Some are apartments. Some are luxurious. Some are modest. Apartments at Powder House Lane and 12 Summer Street are designated as Affordable, and offer below-market rents. They must be rented to qualified households with strict income limits.

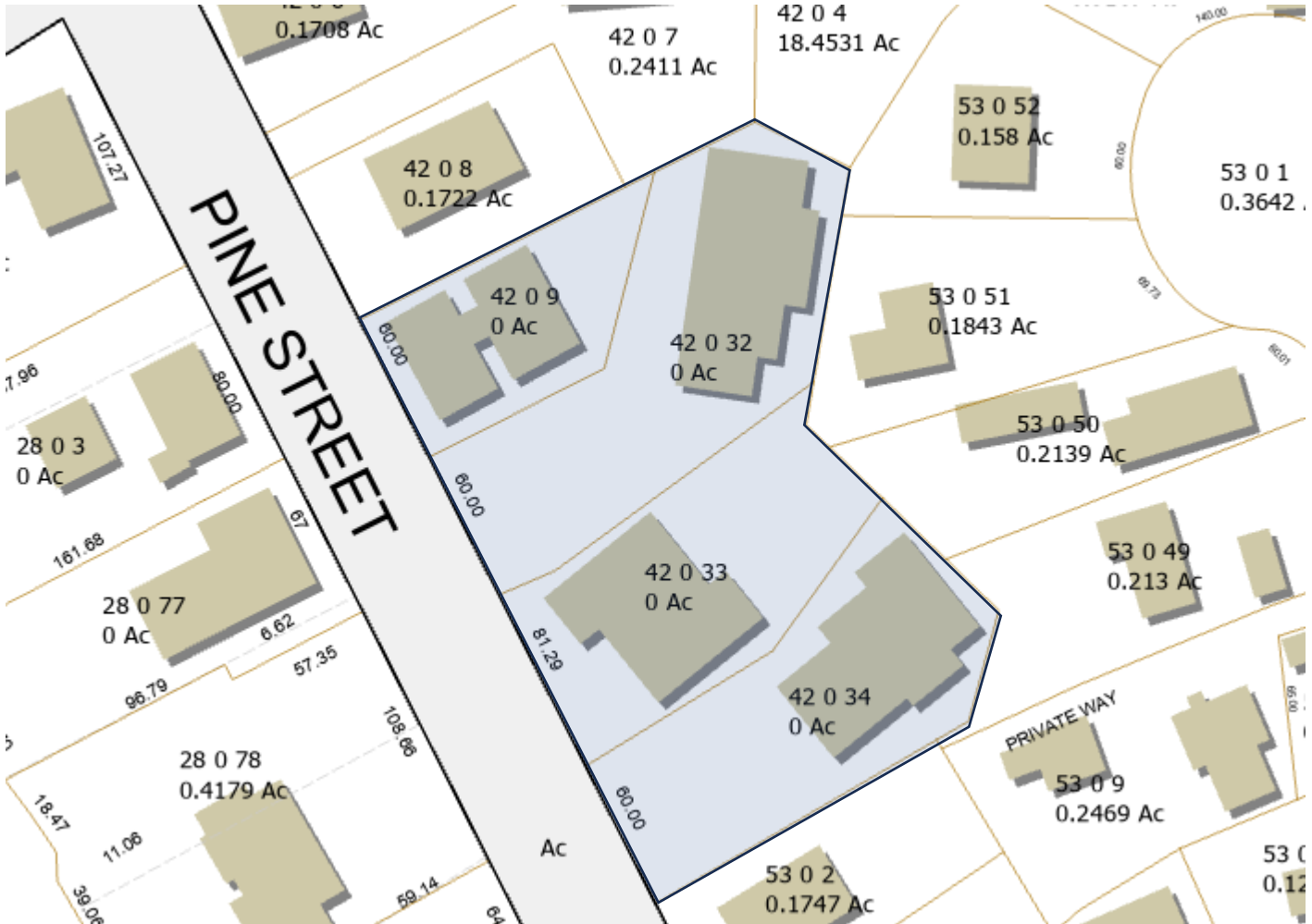


This table summarizes the properties, and each is described in the following pages with lot plans and data:

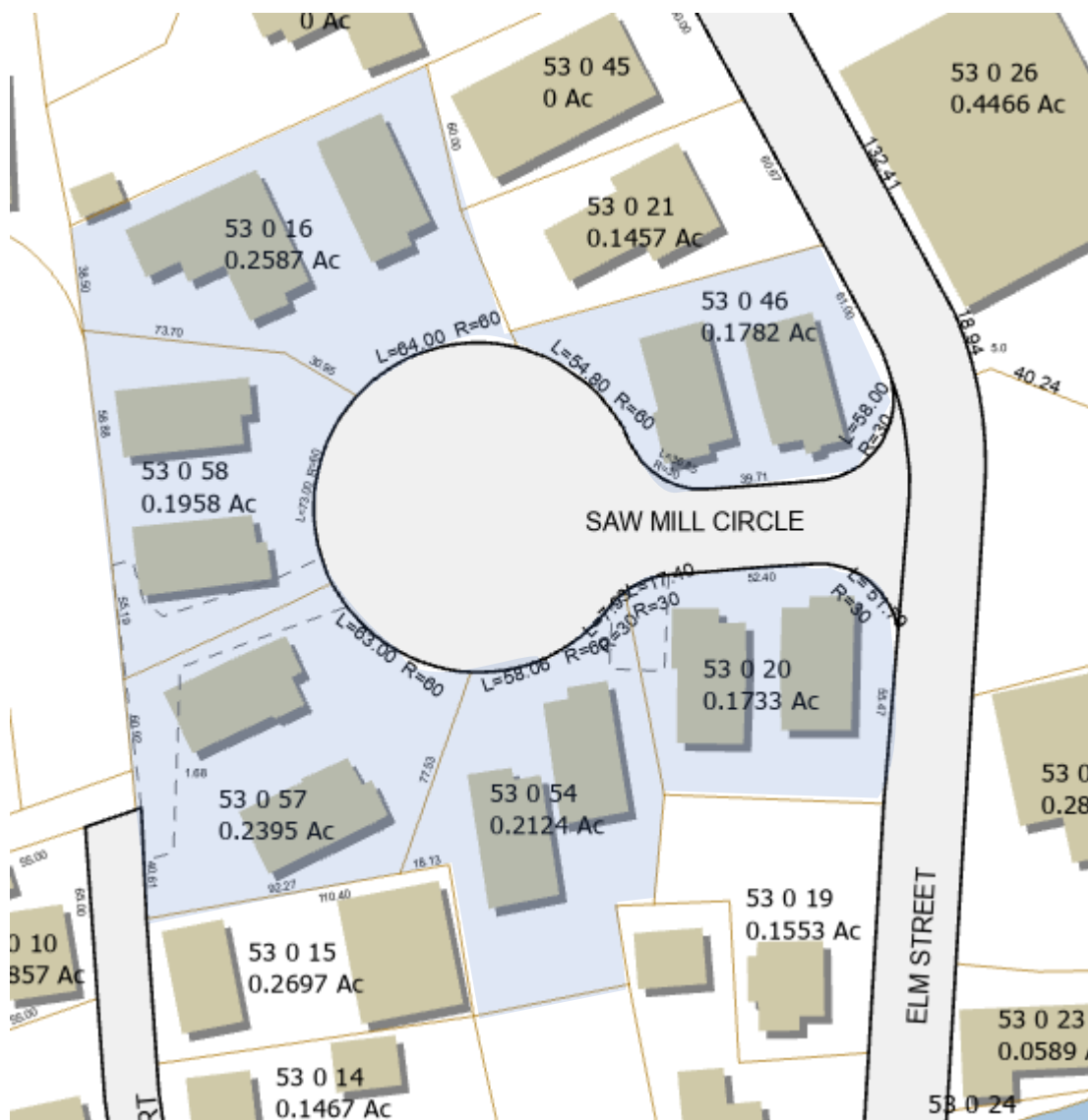
<u>Property</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Acres*</u>	<u>Density</u>	<u># of Stories</u>	<u>Year Built</u>
21 Pine St.	11	0.92	11.95	3	1988
Saw Mill Circle	12	1.26	9.52	3	2016
1-3 Powder House Lane	29	2.17	13.36	3	1973
1-3 School St.	13	0.14	92.86	3	1870
48-50 Union St.	9	0.28	32.14	4	1920
33 Union St.	7	0.16	43.75	3	1930
10-12 Summer St.	39	2.2	17.73	3	2004

- Most of this data was derived from the Town's property map. Some of the lot sizes are unlisted, and are estimated based on comparison with other listed lot sizes.
- Note that the density shown in the table is based on just the lot sizes. Zoning districts may include streets and restricted land which would have to be included in the density calculation. This additional area would decrease the density.

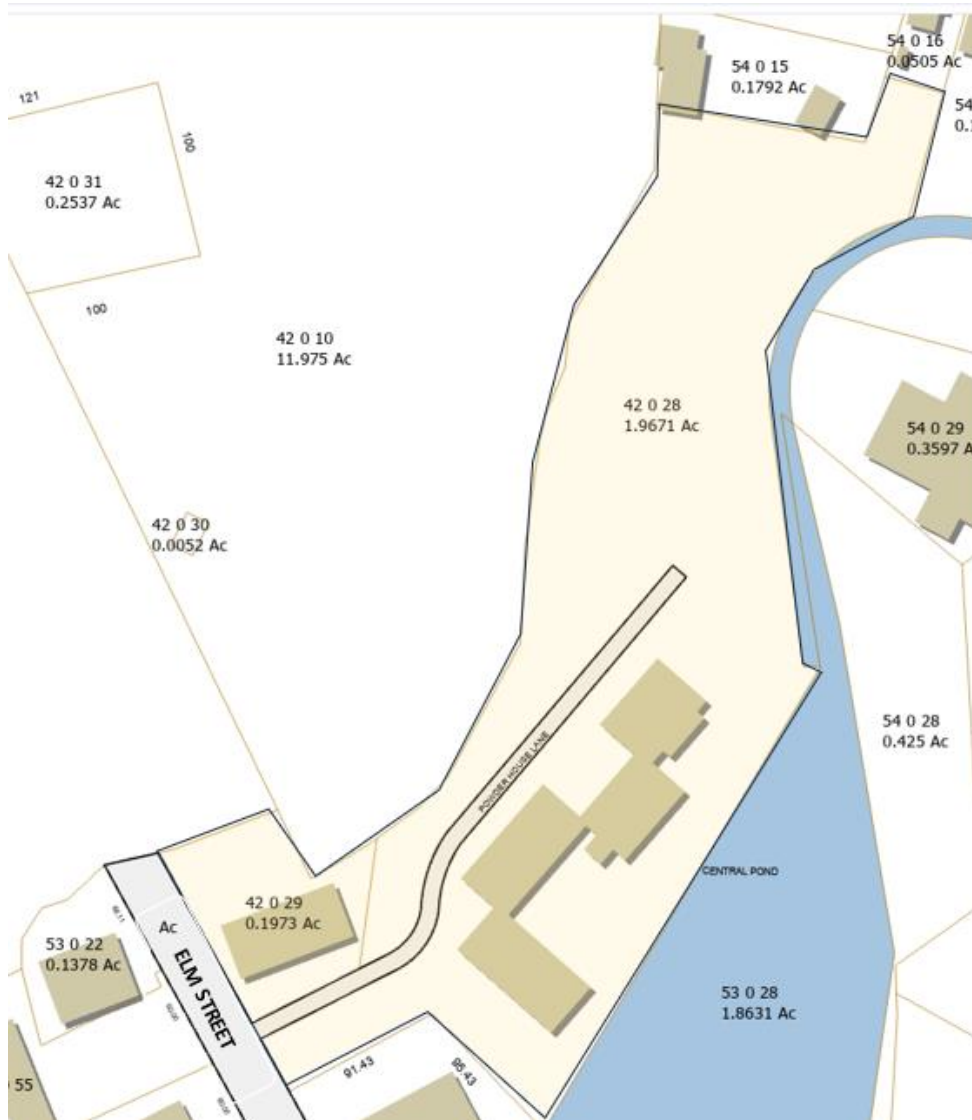
<u>Property</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Density</u>	<u># of Stories</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Comments</u>
21 Pine St.	11	0.92	11.95	3	1988	Condo community. Lot area is approximate.



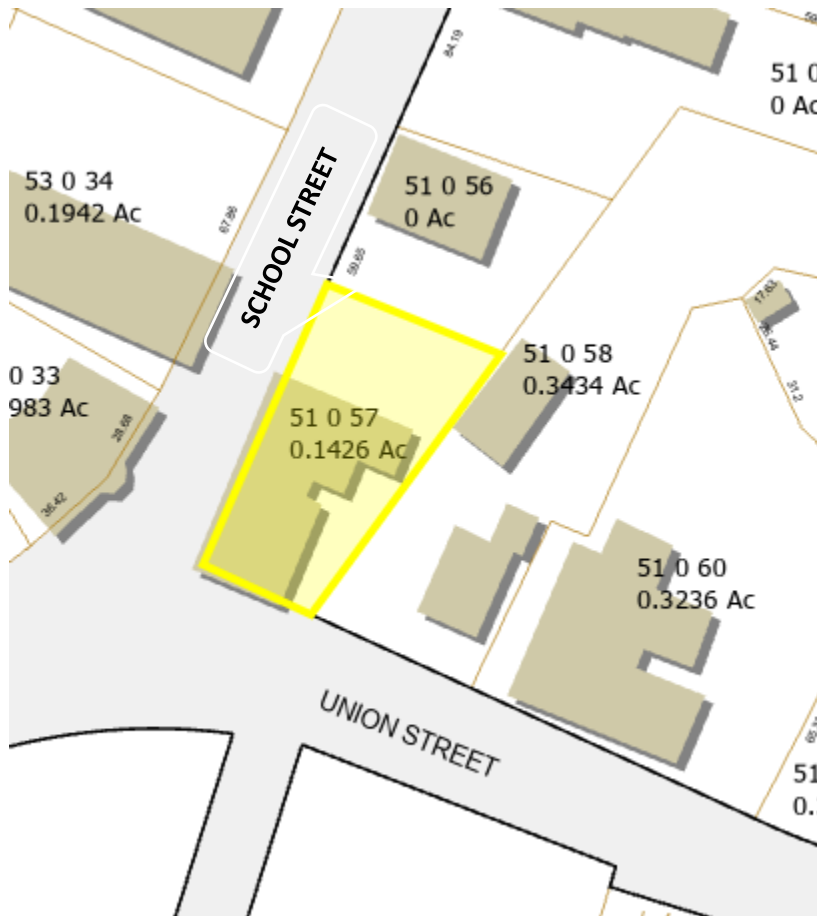
<u>Property</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Density</u>	<u># of Stories</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Saw Mill Circle	12	1.26	9.52	3	2016	Single family homes, 2 per lot. If each were a duplex, density would be 19 per acre.



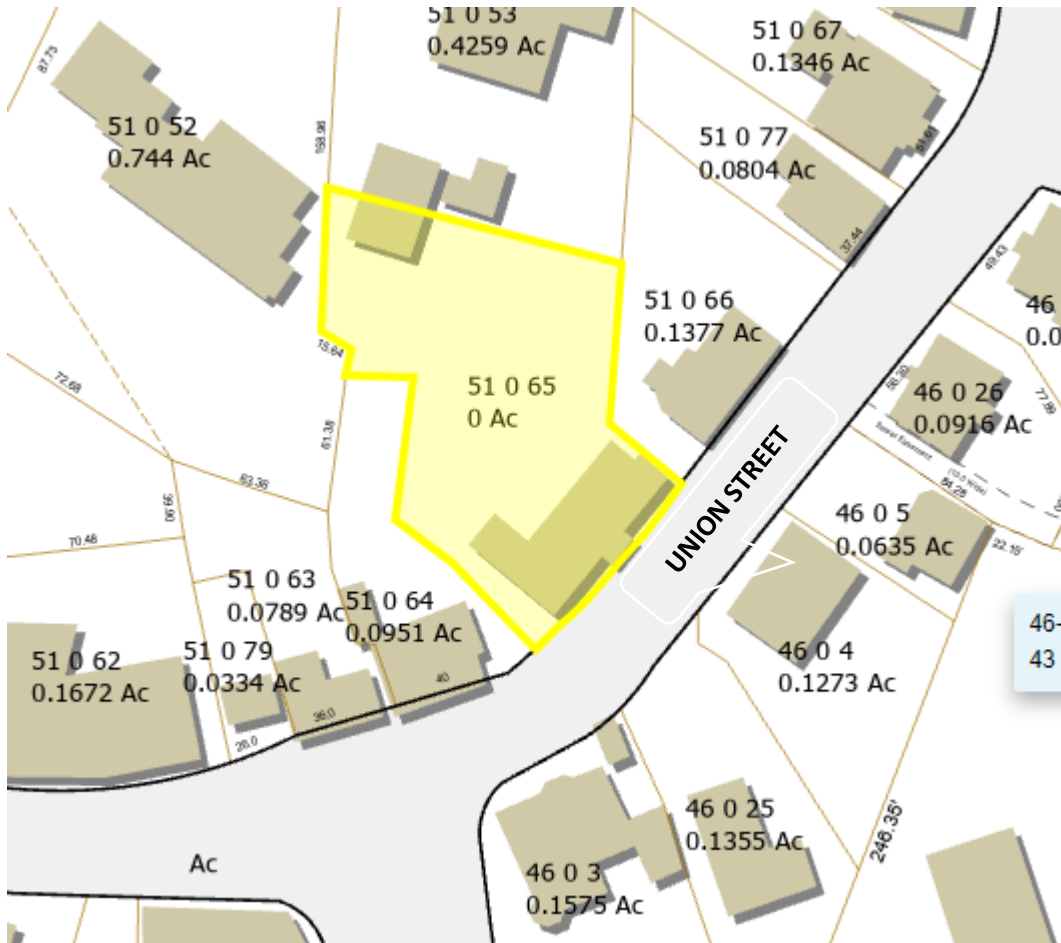
<u>Property</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Density</u>	<u># of Stories</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1-3 Powder House Lane	29	2.17	13.36	3	1973	Density for both properties is 13 units per acre INCLUDING unused portion of site. These units are being converted to income restricted.



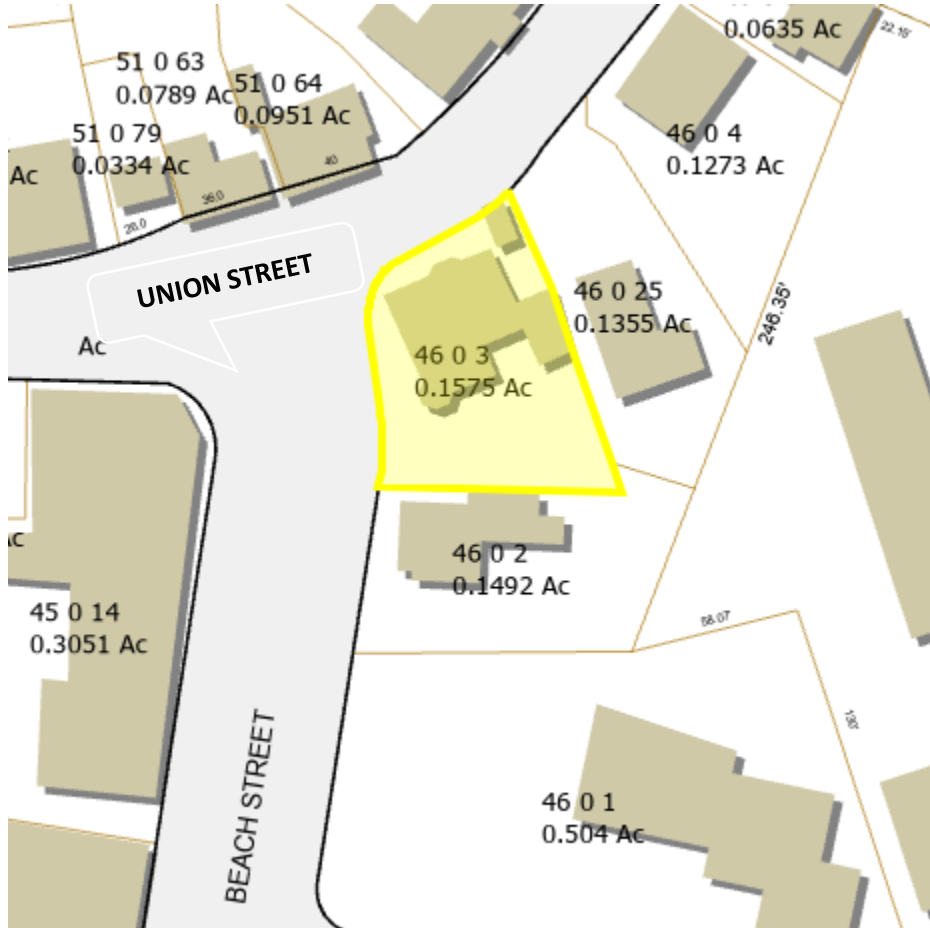
<u>Property</u>	<u># of Units</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Density</u>	<u># of Stories</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1-3 School St.	13	0.14	92.86	3	1870	Currently under renovation. Limited parking.



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48-50 Union St.	9	0.28	32.14	4	1920	Condos. Lot size is estimated. Limited parking



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33 Union St.	7	0.16	43.75	3	1930	This property also contains a commercial space on the ground floor.



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10-12 Summer St.	39	2.2	17.73	3	2004	Includes retail space on ground floor along the street. Also includes Affordable units. Lot area is approximate.

