

What Limits How Much You Can Build?

- Total Size of Structure(s) (aka FAR)
- Footprint (aka Lot Coverage)
- Setbacks
- Height
- Daylight Plane
- Residential District

Total Size of Structure(s) (aka FAR)

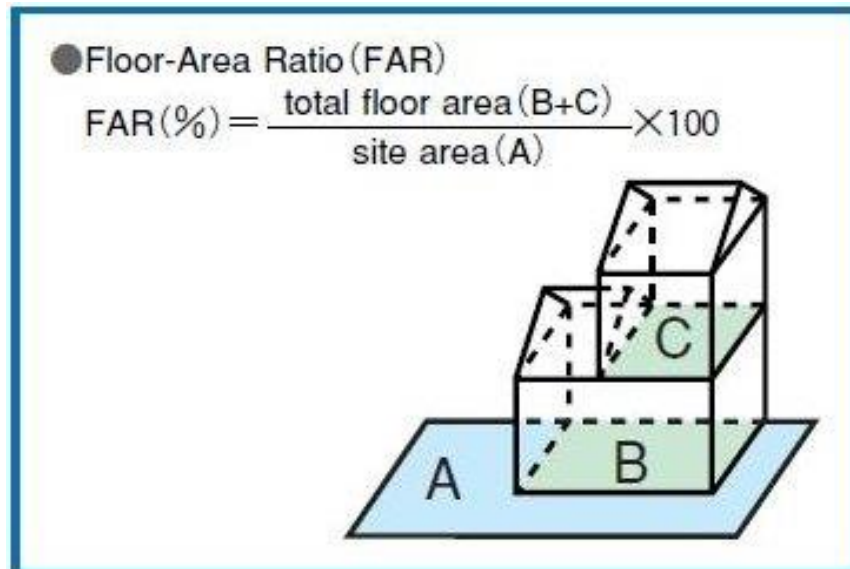
FAR = Floor Area Ratio

- The relationship between the total amount of floor space of a building and the total area of the lot on which the building stands.
- Gross Floor Area is the total covered area of all floors of the house, plus covered parking and all accessory buildings greater than 120 square feet.
- Basements do not count.
- For R-1, R-2 and RE districts, the maximum total gross floor area on a single family lot is 45% of the first 5,000 square feet of lot area plus 30% of lot area over 5,000 square feet.

For RMD districts, the FAR is 0.50.

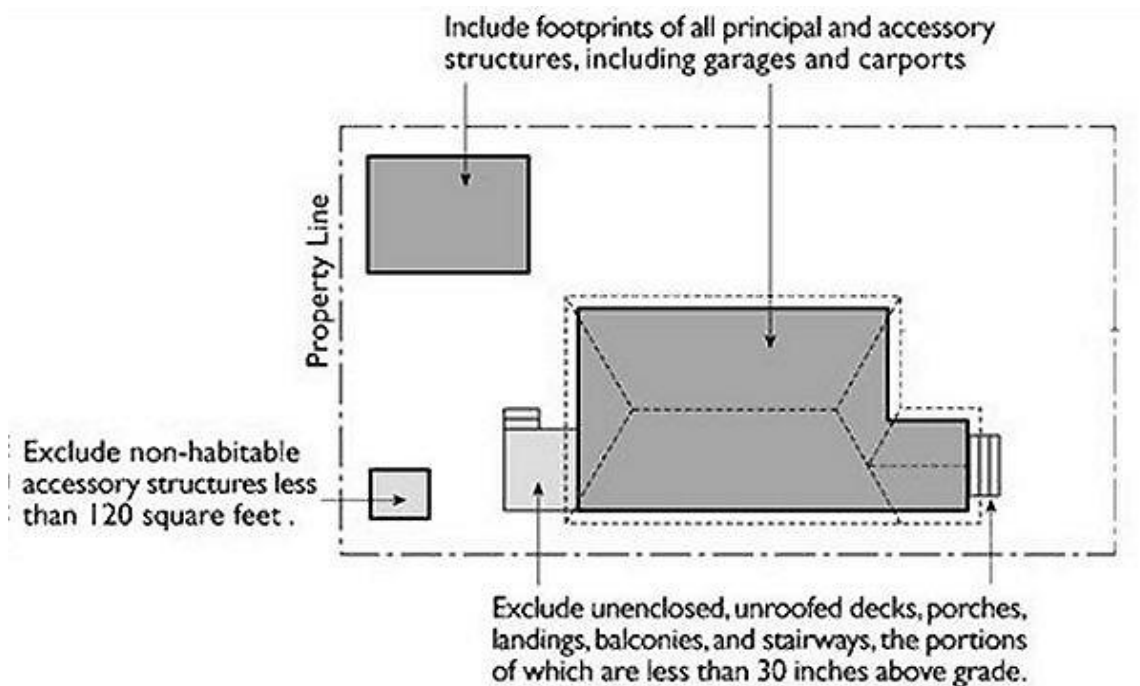
In OS districts, the FAR depends on lot size and impervious coverage.

- Example: For an R-1 7,000 sf lot, the allowable gross floor area is 2,850 sf (0.45 x 5000 sf + .30 x 2000 sf)



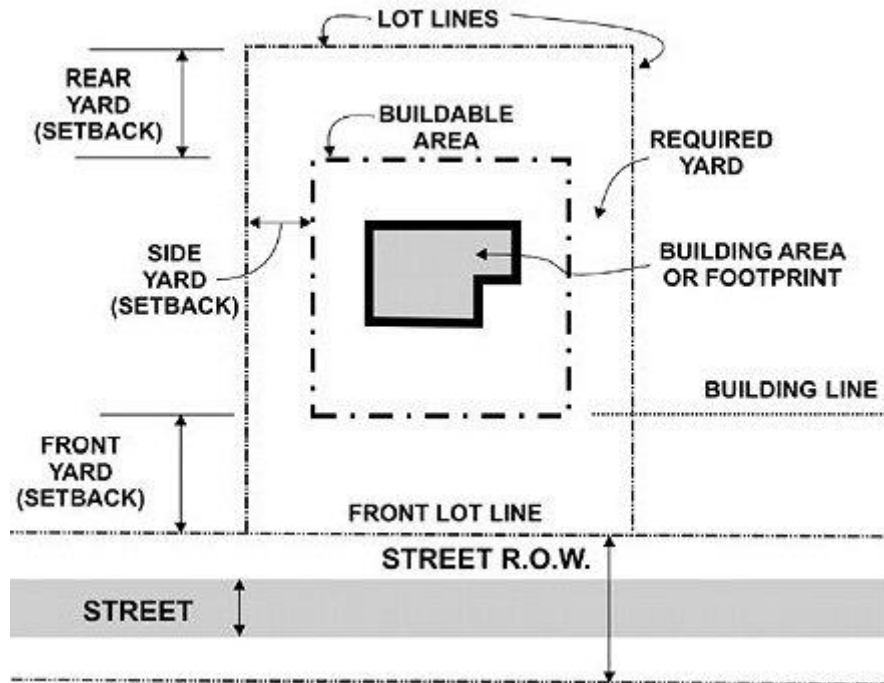
Footprint (aka Lot Coverage)

- Describes how much of the lot is covered by structures—that is, their footprint.
- Includes all structures--the main residence, covered parking, and accessory units, as well as projecting elements such as balconies, stairways, porches, and patio covers.
- Although lot coverage differs depending on zoning district and number of house stories, the range is 25-40%.
- For a single story home (or in a single-story overlay zone), the maximum lot coverage is the same as the Floor Area Ratio.
- For a multi story home, the maximum lot coverage is 35%.
- An extra 5% of area is allowed to be covered by a patio or overhang.



Setbacks

- The distance by which any structure is required to be removed from a property line or street.
- Setbacks define the required yards surrounding the building area. These required yards are important as landscaping opportunities to keep neighborhoods attractive as well as for the preservation of privacy.



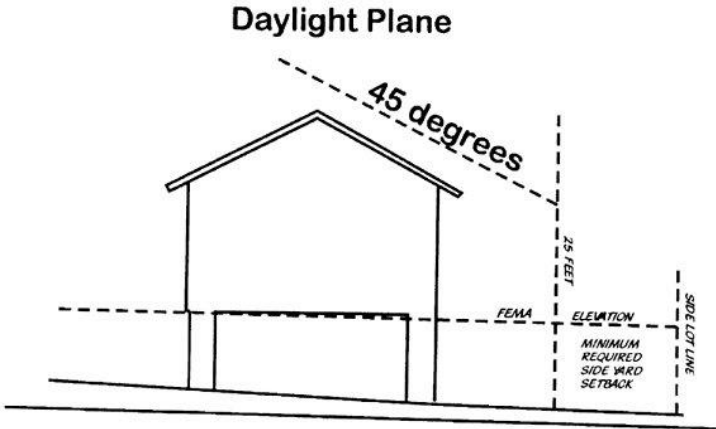
- Generally for R-1 zones:
 - 20 feet front yard
 - 20 feet rear yard
 - 6-8 feet interior side yard
 - 16 feet street side yard

Height

- In R-1 districts, ADUs must be 1-story with a height restriction of 17 feet, even if the main house is a 2-story house or the property is in a flood zone.
- In RE districts, attached ADUs may be 2-stories and 30-ft.
- In OS districts, attached ADUs may be 2-stories and 25-ft.
- In all districts, detached ADUs must be 1-story with a height restriction of 17 feet.

Daylight Plane

- Refers to a measurement that limits the impact of a building on neighboring properties.



ENSURES THIS



INSTEAD OF THIS



Residential Districts

Palo Alto has several residential zoning districts. ADU rules vary somewhat depending on the district.

R-1	Single-family
R-2	Two-family
RMD	Two unit multiple-family
RE	Residential Estate – 1 acre minimum
OS	Open Space District – 10 acre minimum
RM-15	Low density multiple-family
RM-30	Medium density multiple-family
RM-40	High density multiple-family
S	Single-story combining district