



Planning Commission Minutes

Note: Anyone wishing to speak at any Planning Commission meeting is encouraged to do so. If you wish to speak, please rise and, after you have been recognized by the Chair, give your name and complete address for the record. You will then be allowed to speak. Please note the public testimony may be limited by the Chair.

October 22, 2024

STUDY SESSION

Minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Vice-Chair Knauer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street. Commissioner Perkinson attended the meeting via Zoom.

Commissioners Present:

Doug Knauer
Kerry KenCairn
Susan MacCracken Jain
Gregory Perkinson
Russell Phillips
Eric Herron

Staff Present:

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director
Derek Severson, Planning Manager
Aaron Anderson, Senior Planner
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant

Absent Members:

Lisa Verner

Council Liaison:

Paula Hyatt

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Staff Announcements

Community Development Director Brandon Goldman made the following announcement:

- The City Council will hold its annual Commission/Committee workplan presentations on December 16, 2024. This event will also be held to show the City's appreciation for these volunteer groups.

2. Advisory Committee Liaison Reports

Commissioner MacCracken Jain gave the following announcements regarding the Public Arts Advisory Committee (PAAC):

- The first plaque of the Playwrights Walk was installed in front of the Chamber of Commerce. The remaining donated plaques are under development and will be installed in the near future.
- The project to paint and beautify Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) boxes has begun. One was completed at the corner of Beach Street and Siskiyou Boulevard, and a second was completed at the corner of Walker Avenue and Siskiyou Boulevard. The former was painted by the Ashland High School, though it was recently vandalized and is undergoing renovation.





Planning Commission Minutes

III. **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Approval of Minutes**

- a. October 8, 2024 Regular Meeting

Commissioners Herron/MacCracken Jain m/s to approve the consent agenda as presented. Voice Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

IV. **PUBLIC FORUM** – None

V. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

A. Approval of Findings for PA-T2-2024-00050, 113 Pine Street

Senior Planner Aaron Anderson noted that a non-substantive grammatical change was made to page 1 of the Findings. A correction was also made to section 3.1 of the Findings to accurately refer to the development as being “for a 3-unit performance standards subdivision” since the open space lot had been removed from the proposal.

Commissioner MacCracken Jain noted that there appeared to be an incomplete sentence in section 2.7.1 of the Findings. Mr. Anderson responded that a period had been omitted from the end of the sentence and that this would be corrected in the final draft.

Commissioners Perkinson/MacCracken Jain m/s to approve the Findings with the amendments suggested by staff and the correction made by Commissioner MacCracken Jain. Roll Call Vote: All AYES. Motion passed 6-0.

VI. **OTHER BUSINESS**

A. Climate Friendly Areas Adoption – Public Engagement Summary & Next Steps

Mr. Goldman related how three consulting firms to assist with the development of the City’s Climate Friendly Areas (CFAs), and explained that the purpose of CFAs is to maximize development within established walkable areas. He explained that this work was initially due by December, 2024, but that the City requested and received a 6-month extension from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).





Planning Commission Minutes

Vice-Chair Knauer asked if the Commission should keep certain issues in mind during the presentation in order to assist the development process more effectively. Planning Manager Derek Severson responded that the following topics should be kept in mind during the presentation: whether to recommend that certain regulations be adopted through an overlay; the option of allowing additional height for projects with deed restricted affordable housing; whether the Transit Triangle Overlay should be eliminated; and the adoption of the Railroad Property and the Transit Triangle as CFAs.

Consultant Team Presentation

Scott Fregonese of 3J Consulting introduced market feedback specialists Becky Hewitt and Mackenzie Visser of EConorthwest, and Elizabeth Decker of Jet Planning who specializes in zoning code analysis. Mr. Fregonese provided a brief background on CFAs, noting their similarities to downtown and neighborhood centers, with a focus on walkable areas with a mix of residential, office, retail, and public uses, and an emphasis on multi-modal transportation options. He described how CFAs could be developed, or be placed on currently developed areas, with a total residential capacity of 30% or more of a city's projected housing need. He added that cities can have more than one CFA.

Mr. Fregonese stated that the areas chosen for consideration were the Transit Triangle, the Railroad Property, and the Croman Mill Site. He added that the Downtown area was briefly considered but was rejected due to its highly developed nature and lack of vacant land available, as well as its status as a Historic District on the National Register. He stated that CFAs are part of the state's Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) program, which also included parking reform and updates to cities' Transportation System Plan (TSP). Mr. Fregonese described the project overview, which would build on the Phase I CFA study, and include a code analysis, a market study, community engagement initiatives, and culminate with code adoption by June of 2025.

Ms. Decker related how the three CFA candidates were reviewed through a code audit and market study, and the consultants concluded by recommending that the City focus on the Railroad Property and portions of the Transit Triangle. The team also developed code updates that would bring these proposed areas into CFA compliance, help inform the TSP, and align with the City's long-term goals. Ms. Decker outlined the key CFA requirements that eligible cities must adopt:

- Allow multifamily residential (apartments or mixed-use)
- Allow townhouses
- Allow commercial, office, and civic uses
- Allow at least 50-foot building height
- Require at least a minimum density of 15 dwelling units per acre
- Apply no maximum density





Planning Commission Minutes

Ms. Decker reiterated that not all potential sites chosen for study need to be designated CFAs. The consultant team described the types of development and redevelopment that the Croman Mill Site, Railroad Property, and Transit Triangle could accommodate with the necessary code changes (see attachment #1). They outlined the public engagement process that the team has undertaken, which included presenting before various City Advisory Committees, hosting a public Open House on September 17, 2024, and concluding with a presentation to the Council on November 4, 2024. The team also conducted a survey to gauge public support for the designation of the selected sites as potential CFAs, and found that the public is in general favor of all sites.

The consultant team offered the following preliminary and implementation recommendations:

- Move forward with designation of:
 - **Railroad Property:** Near downtown, existing mix of development, significant gap between existing zoning and potential development, further study height impacts
 - **Commercial portion of Transit Triangle:** Aligns with intent for area, near SOU, need to update existing overlay, limit changes within residential areas
- Address development goals for **Croman Mill** through master plan process in negotiation with applicant
- Do not include the **Downtown** as a CFA as it is largely developed and gains no benefit from CFA status
- Develop CFA Overlay zone to apply to selected areas:
 - Repeal/replace existing Transit Triangle Overlay
 - Replace existing Residential Overlay in Railroad Property
 - Explore applicability of solar setbacks
- Explore height bonuses for deed-restricted affordable housing in CFAs:
 - Existing height and density bonuses to be allowed outright
 - Mostly superseded by bonuses in state statute

Discussion

Vice-Chair Knauer introduced the following discussion items to help guide the conversation:

- **Should the City adopt CFA regulations as a zone overlay or should new zones be created?**
 - The Commission agreed that the CFA changes should be adopted as an overlay in order to have greater flexibility regarding land use.
- **Should the City allow additional height allowances (five stories or more) for deed-restricted affordable housing?**
 - Vice-Chair Knauer noted that the City could explore state allowances for potential adoption. There was agreement by the Commission that bonus height allowances in the existing code could have unintended consequences when combined with CFA guidelines.





Planning Commission Minutes

- **Should the Transit Triangle overlay be eliminated if the Transit Triangle is selected as a CFA?**
 - o The Commission agreed that the Transit Triangle overlay should be retained as some portions of it would not be encompassed by the proposed CFA overlay.
- **Should the Railroad Property and the Commercial areas of the Transit Triangle be designated as CFAs?**
 - o The Commission recommended that the Railroad Property and the Commercial areas of the Transit Triangle be designated as CFAs. The Commission discussed the omission of Downtown from CFA status and recommended that further study be done to determine its feasibility as one, provided that more funding can be obtained from DLCDC to conduct said study. The Commission accepted the consultant team's recommendation to exclude the Croman Mill Site at this time.

VII. OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Goldman reminded the Commission that the annual retreat would be taking place on November 7, 2024. The Commission will have lunch at the Phoodery in Phoenix before moving on to site visits.

Commissioner MacCracken Jain requested that the Commission receive more information regarding the New Spirit Village development in the near future. Mr. Goldman described it as a new housing development done with the support of Proud Ground, which is an affordable housing land trust model being applied to the property. He stated that the City could ask Proud Ground to provide a presentation for the Commission and that the City could ask other land trusts about their current projects.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

*Submitted by,
Michael Sullivan, Executive Assistant*





Ashland Climate Friendly Areas

Planning Commission
Study Session

October 22, 2024

3J CONSULTING
CIVIL ENGINEERING | WATER RESOURCES | COMMUNITY PLANNING



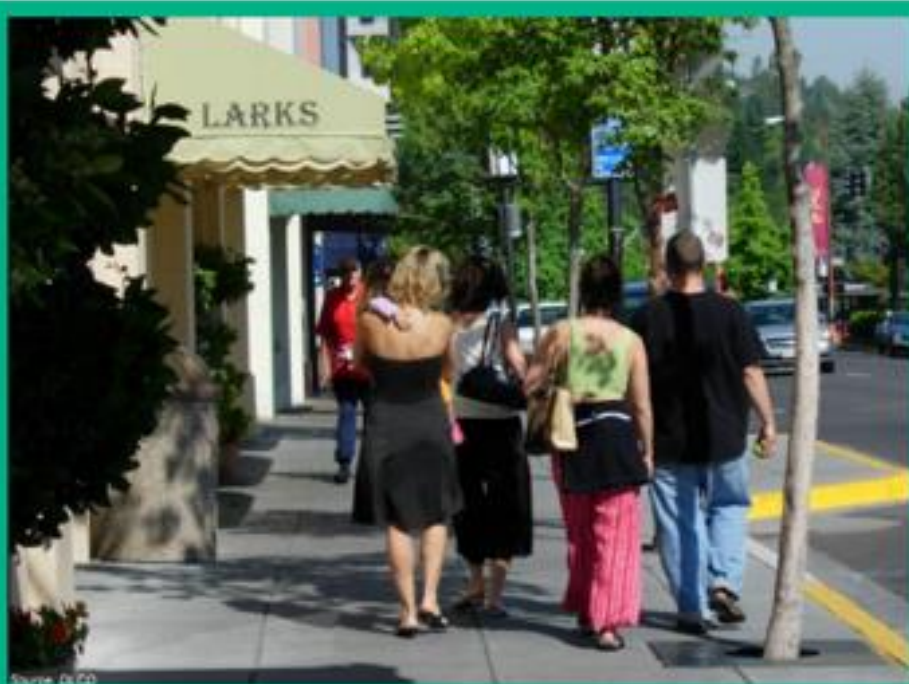
- I. CFA & Project Background
 - II. Candidate CFA Analysis
 - III. Community Engagement
 - IV. Recommendations & Discussion
- Team Introductions
 - ◆ Scott Fregonese, 3J Consulting
 - ◆ Elizabeth Decker, JET Planning
 - ◆ Becky Hewitt, EConorthwest
 - ◆ Mackenzie Visser, EConorthwest

CFA & Project Background



What is a Climate Friendly Area?

- CFAs similar to downtowns and neighborhood centers:
 - ◆ Walkable area with mix of residential, office, retails, services and public uses
 - ◆ Multimodal transportation options

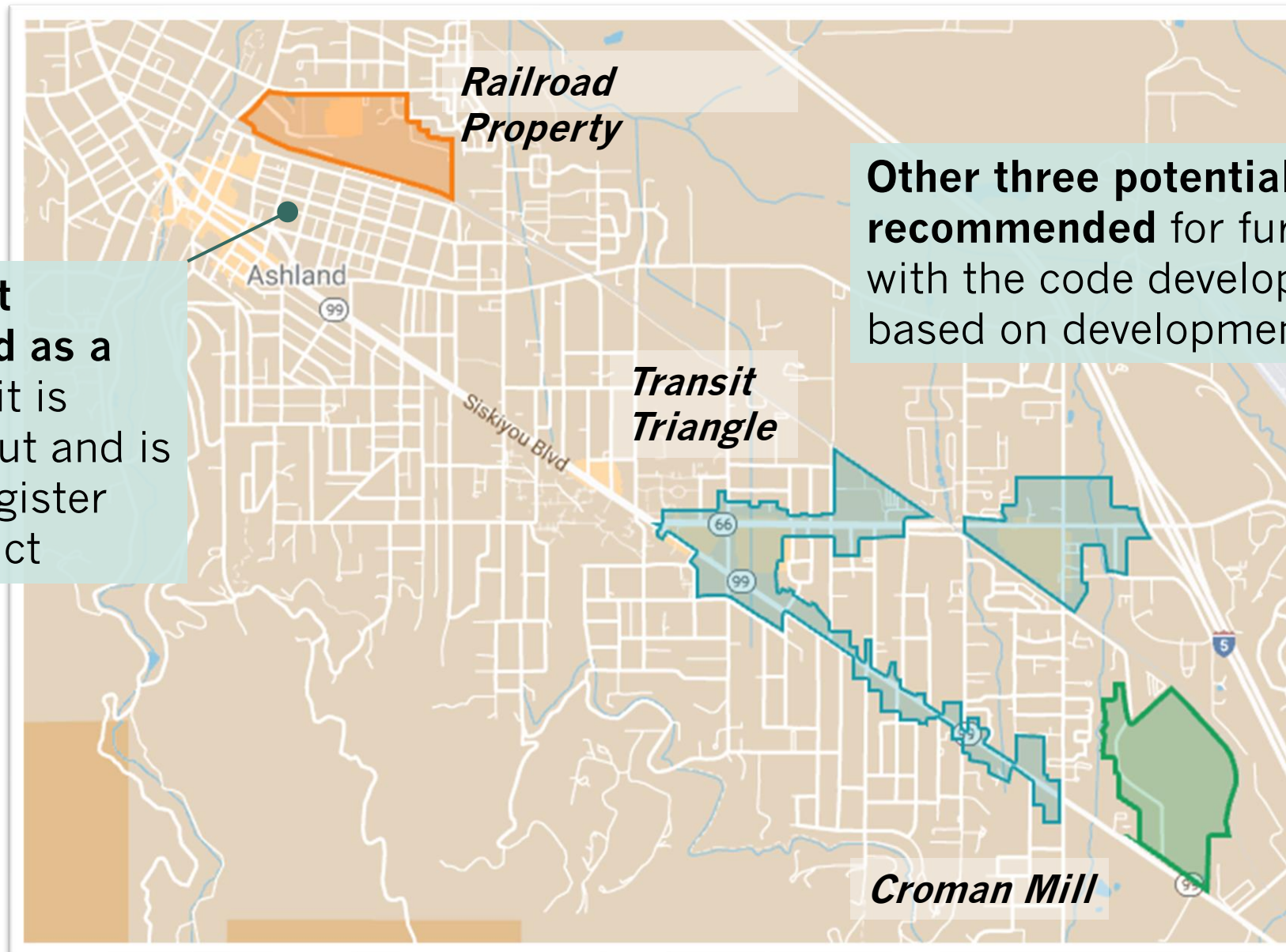


Selecting Climate-Friendly Areas

- CFAs can be developed or developing areas
- CFA size determined by residential capacity:
 - ◆ Must have capacity for 30% of the City's projected housing needs (3,496 dwellings)
- Can be one or more CFAs

Potential Climate Friendly Areas

Downtown not recommended as a CFA because it is largely built out and is a National Register Historic District



Other three potential sites recommended for further analysis with the code development phase based on development potential

Climate Friendly & Equitable Communities (CFEC) program

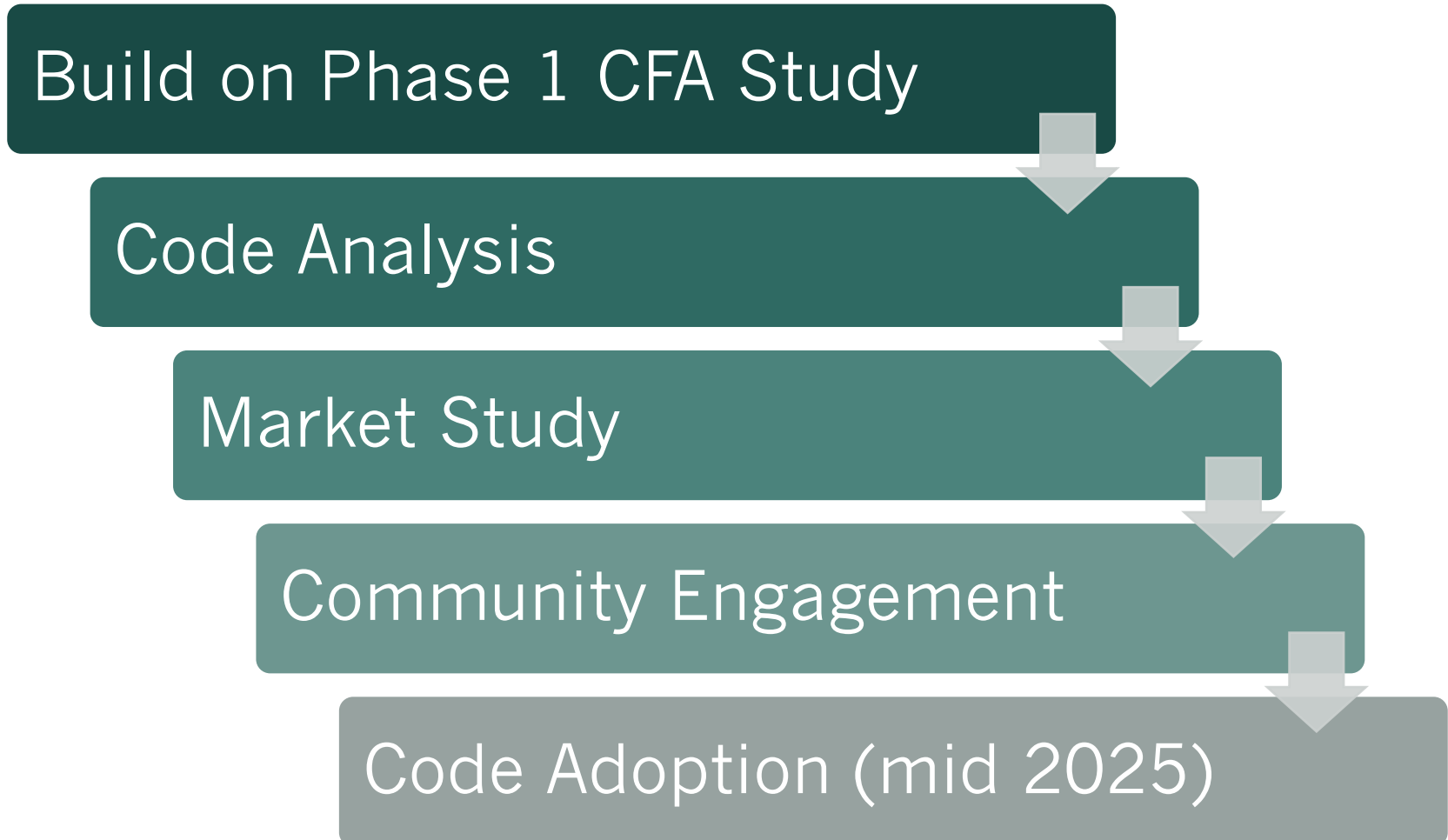
Parking
Reform

**Climate
Friendly
Areas**

TSP
Update

Designate one or more Climate Friendly Areas (CFAs) and update zoning code and maps to implement

Build on Phase 1 CFA Study



```
graph TD; A[Build on Phase 1 CFA Study] --> B[Code Analysis]; B --> C[Market Study]; C --> D[Community Engagement]; D --> E[Code Adoption (mid 2025)];
```

Code Analysis

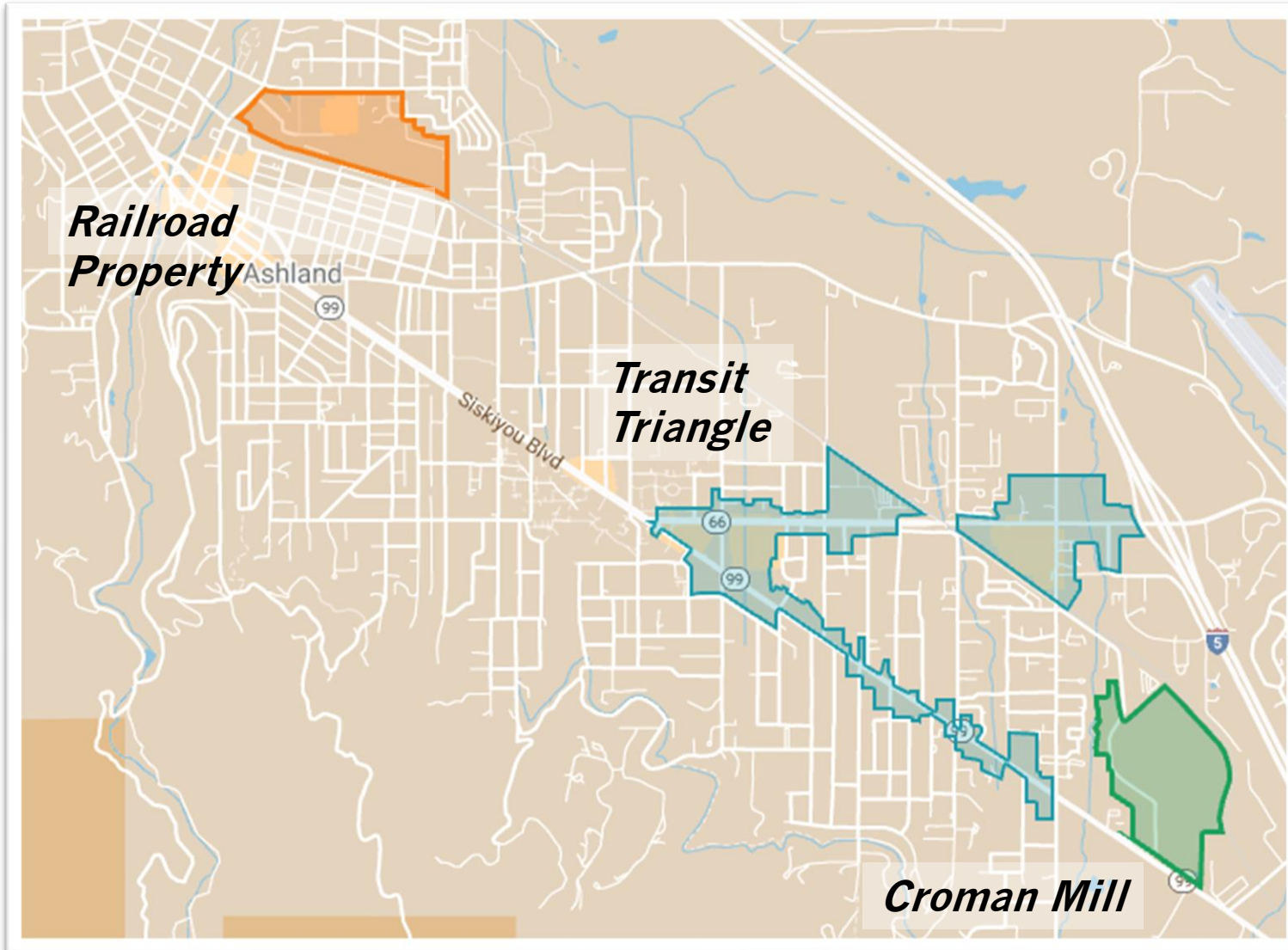
Market Study

Community Engagement

Code Adoption (mid 2025)

Candidate CFA Analysis

Candidate CFAs



- Three sites under consideration as CFAs
- Reviewed through code audit and market study
- Designate one or more with updated zoning now, future consideration in TSP
- Ideally, designation advances City goals for the area(s)

Key CFA Requirements

Allow multifamily residential (apartments or mixed-use)

Allow townhouses

Allow commercial, office and civic uses

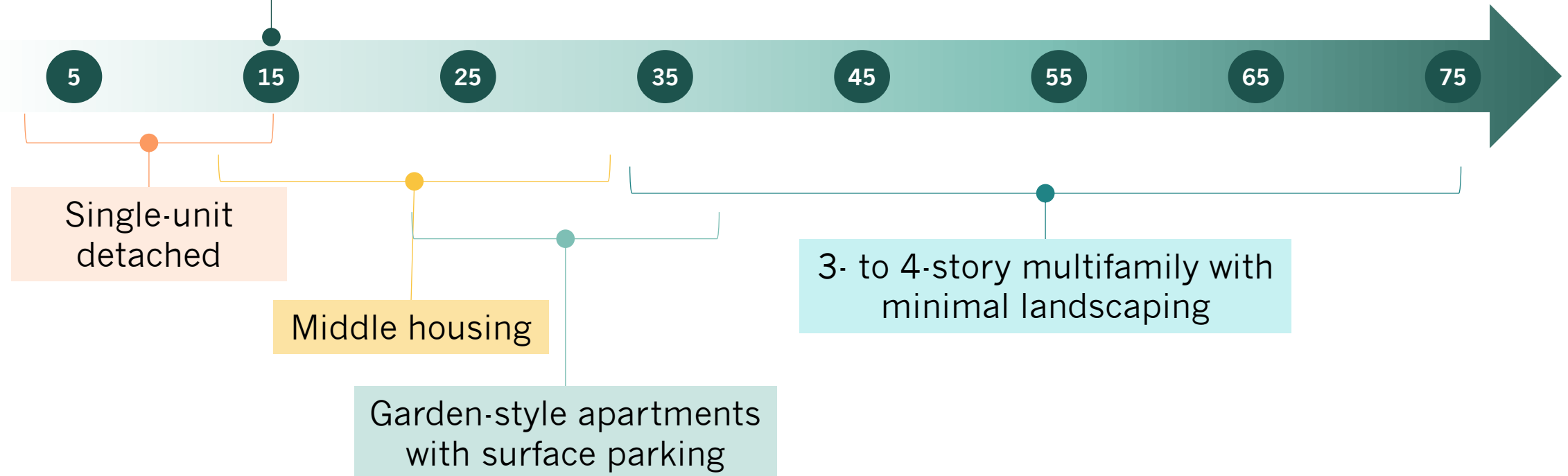
Allow at least 50-foot building height

Require at least a minimum density of 15 du/ac

Apply no maximum density

Residential Density

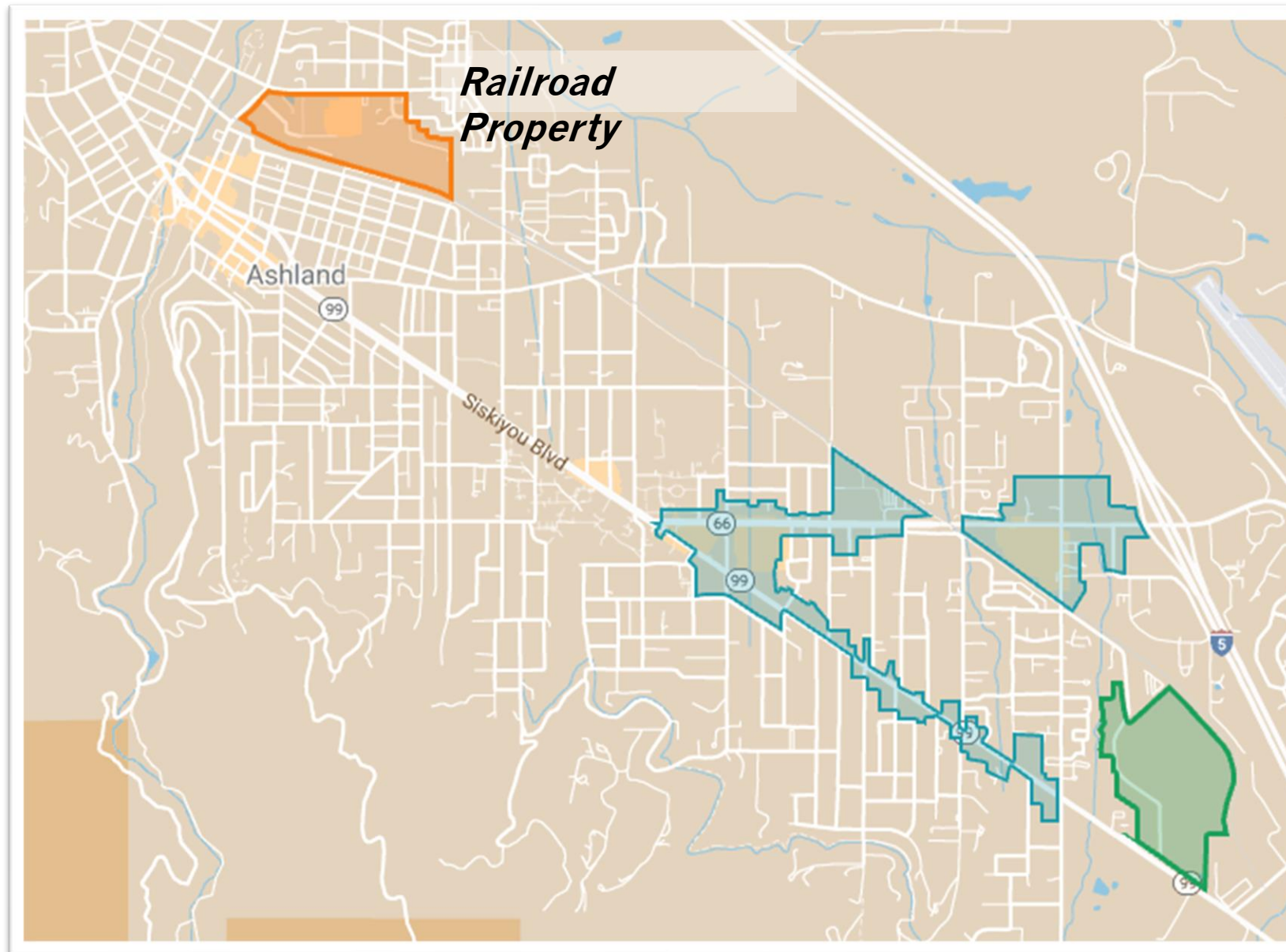
CFAs must have a minimum density of **15** dwelling units per acre and **no maximum** density



Building Height



Railroad Property

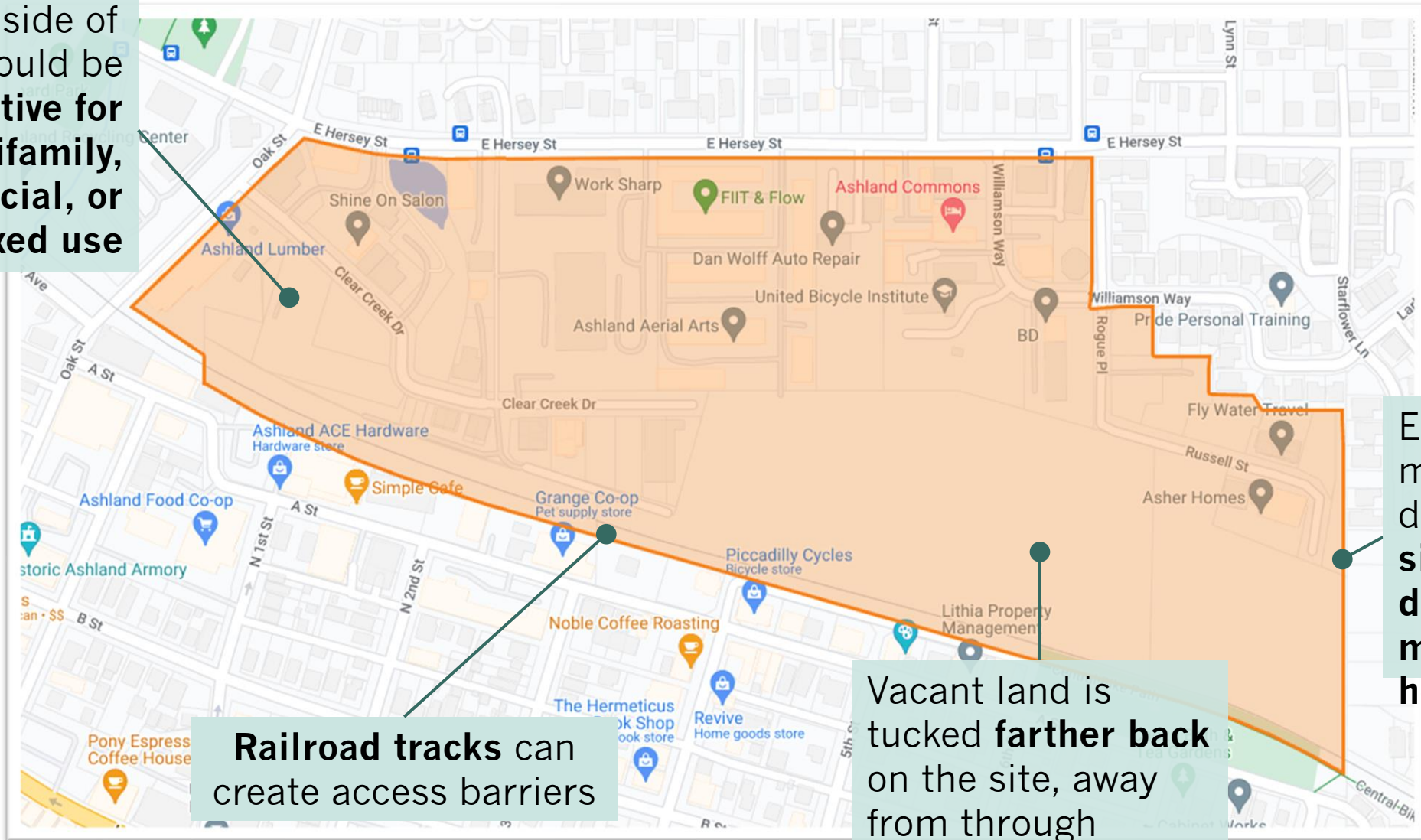


Code Analysis: Railroad Property

- Existing employment, residential zoning with district goals for a mix of uses; earlier Master Plan
- CFA implementation would require code changes to:
 - ◆ Maintain apartment uses
 - ◆ **Introduce townhouse uses**
 - ◆ Expand commercial, office and **civic uses**
 - ◆ Increase maximum height from 40 to at least 50 feet
 - ◆ **Introduce minimum density of 15 du/ac**
 - ◆ **Remove current maximum density of 15 du/ac**

Market Considerations: Railroad Property

Western side of the area could be **attractive for multifamily, commercial, or mixed use**

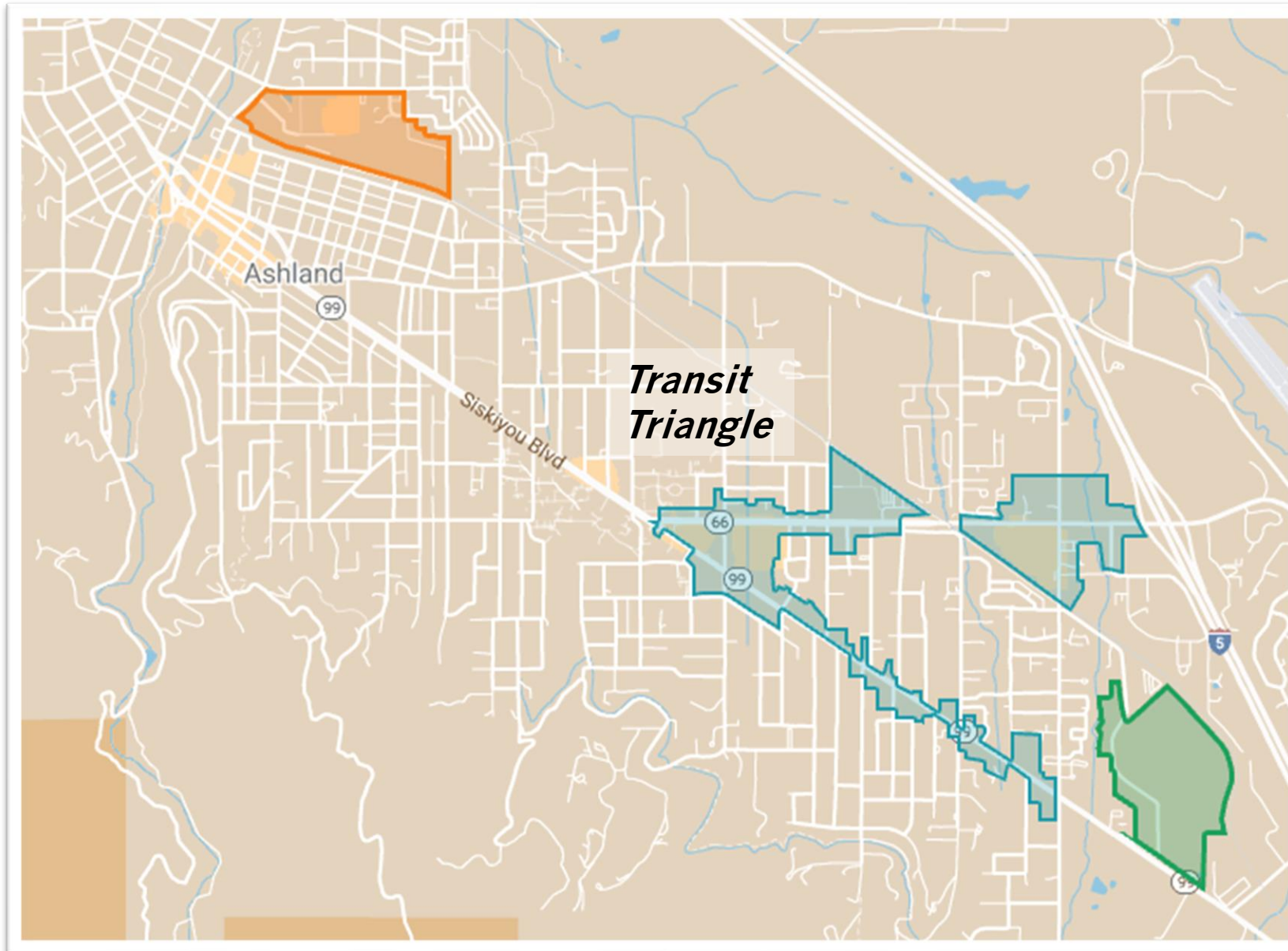


Eastern side may also be desirable for **single-detached or middle housing**

Railroad tracks can create access barriers

Vacant land is tucked **farther back** on the site, away from through streets

Transit Triangle



Code Analysis: Transit Triangle

- Multiple overlays to support mix of walkable commercial, employment and residential development
- CFA implementation would require code changes to:
 - ◆ Expand apartment uses in E-1
 - ◆ **Introduce townhouse uses** (beyond R-2 and R-3)
 - ◆ Expand commercial, office and civic uses, **especially in residential**
 - ◆ **Increase maximum heights to 50 ft** from 35-50 ft currently
 - ◆ Increase minimum densities to at least 15 du/ac
 - ◆ Remove current maximum densities (15-30+ du/ac)
 - ◆ Consolidate some of the existing overlays to reduce complexity

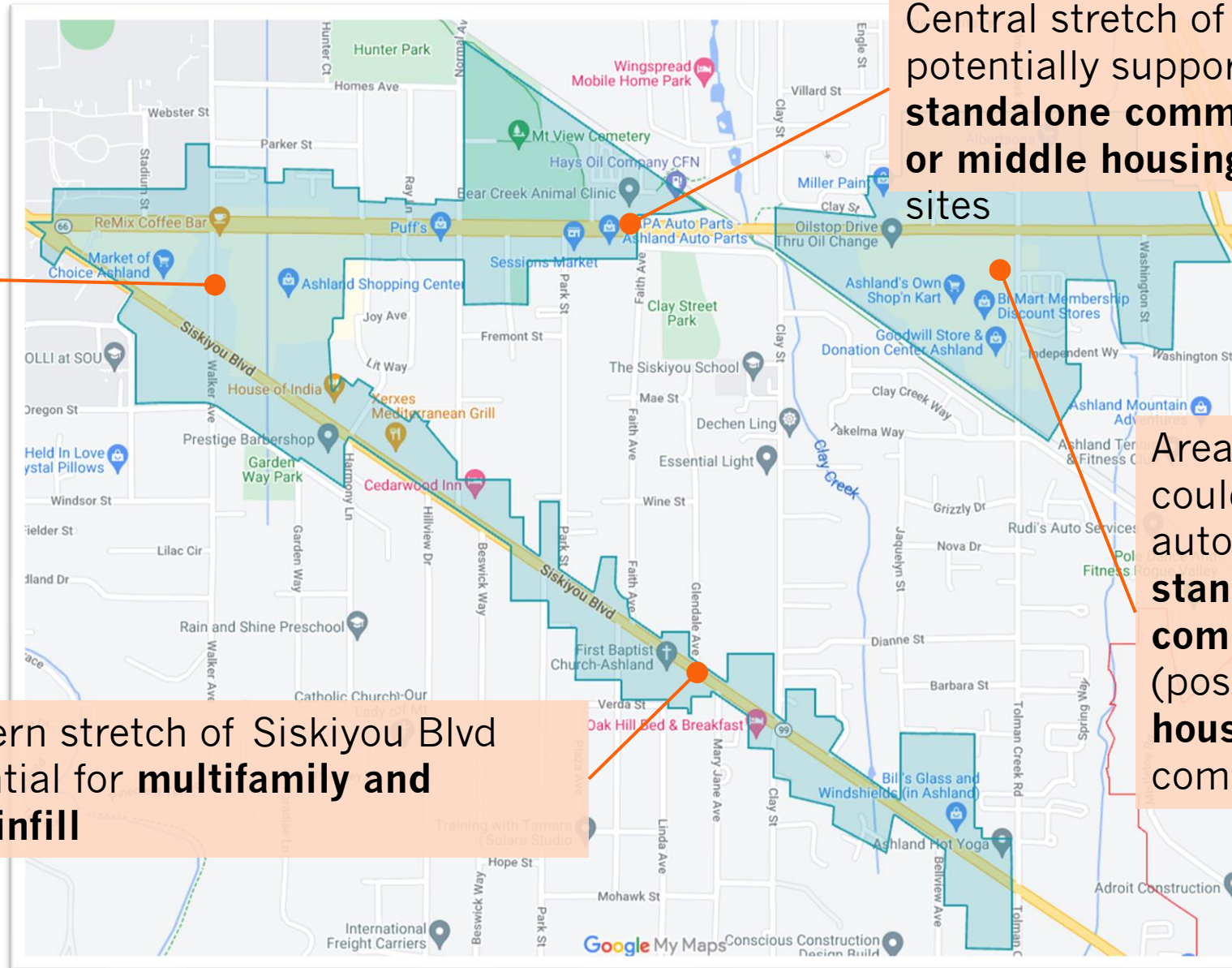
Market Considerations: Transit Triangle

Visibility, proximity to SOU, and upgraded streetscape could create potential for **commercial, multifamily, or mixed-use redevelopment**

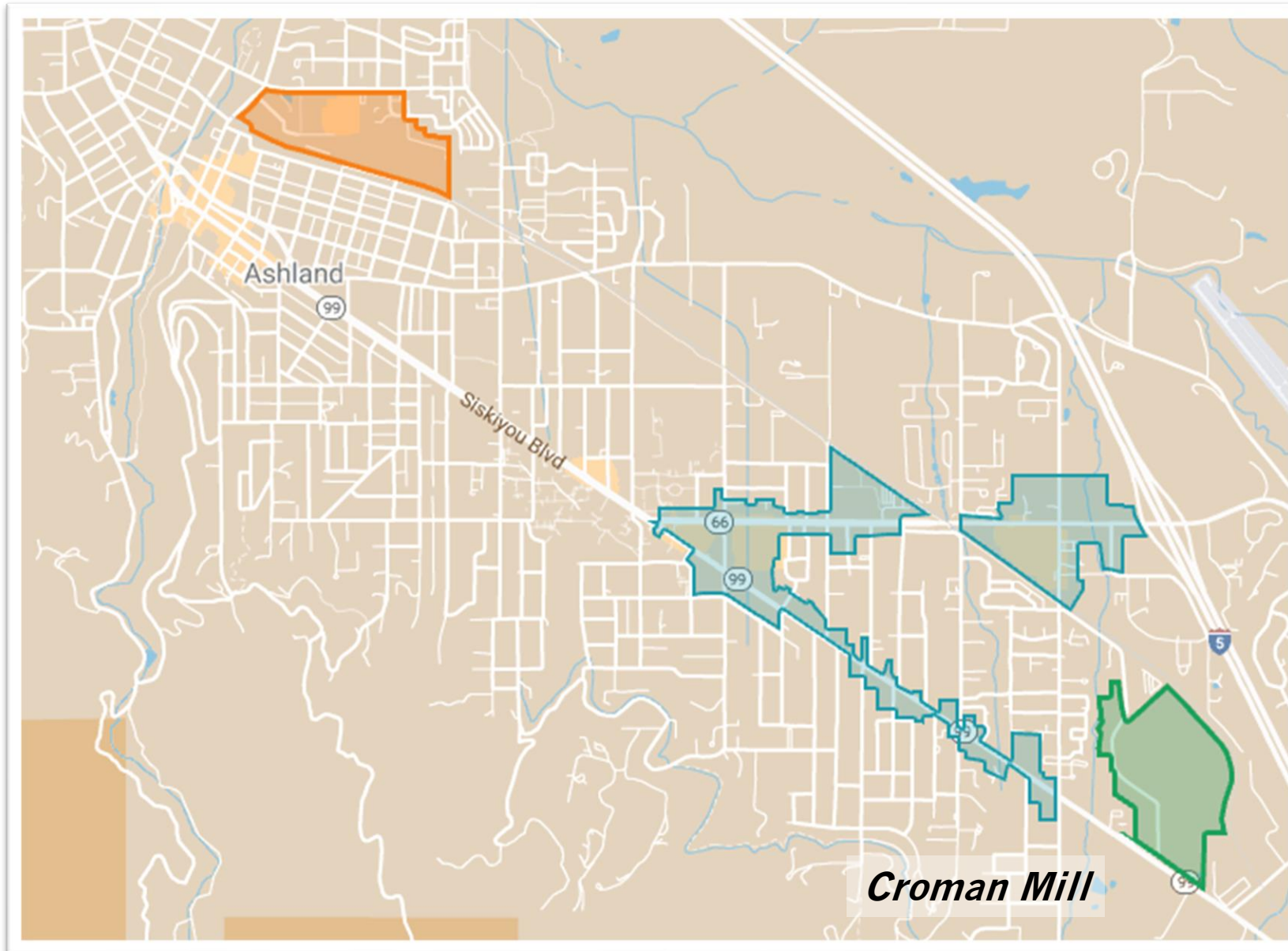
Less busy southern stretch of Siskiyou Blvd could have potential for **multifamily and middle housing infill**

Central stretch of Ashland St could potentially support additional **standalone commercial, multifamily, or middle housing** on underutilized sites

Area closer to I-5 could be appealing for auto-oriented **standalone commercial, flex, or (possibly) multifamily housing** catering to commuters



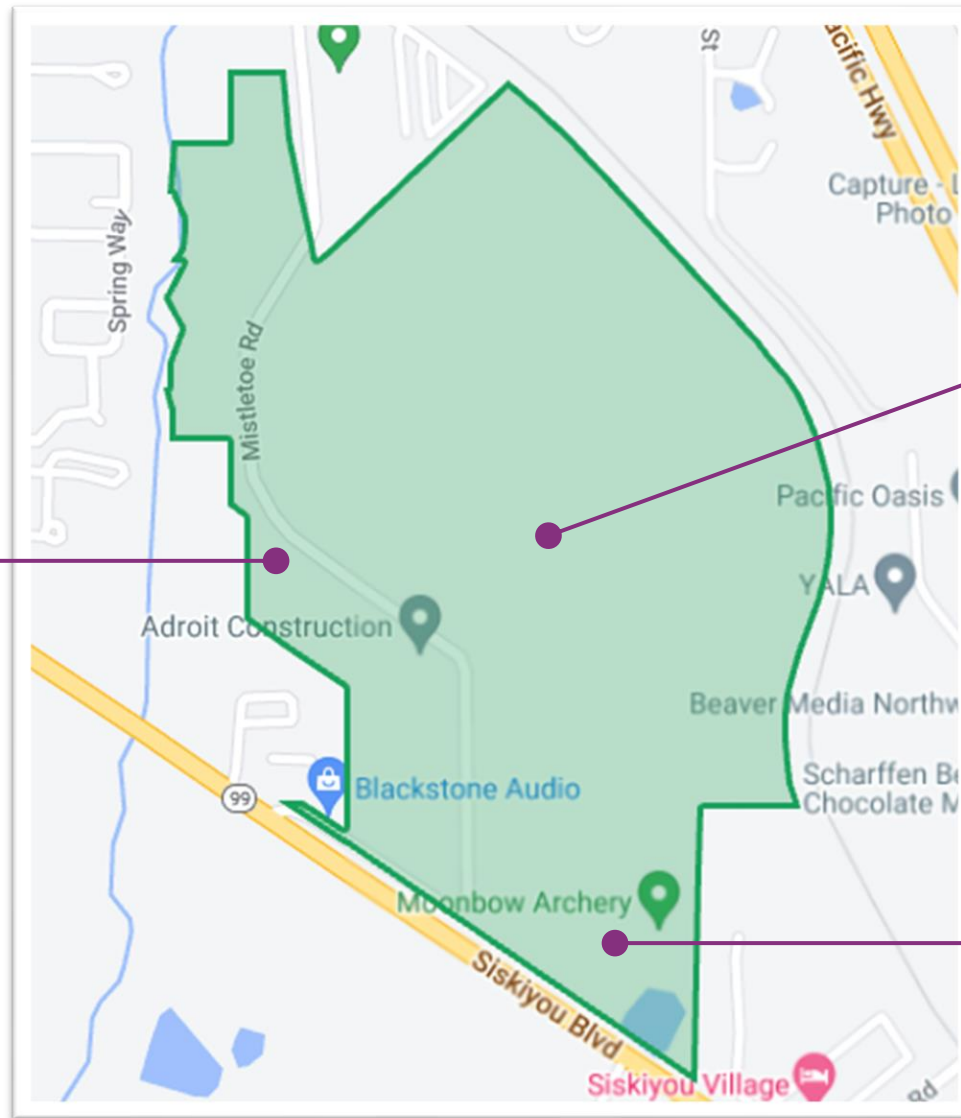
Croman Mill



- Redevelopment planned to create mix of employment, recreation and residential options, limited commercial
- CFA implementation would require code changes to:
 - ◆ Expand apartment uses
 - ◆ **Introduce townhouse uses district-wide**
 - ◆ Expand **commercial**, office and **civic uses**
 - ◆ Increase maximum heights to 50 ft (currently 35-40 ft, remove bonus height structure)
 - ◆ **Introduce minimum densities of at least 15 du/ac**
 - ◆ Remove current maximum densities (15-60 du/ac)
 - ◆ **Align with pending land use application for district**

Market Considerations: Croman Mill

Could be demand for **light industrial** near other industrial development



Area could support a **mix of single- and multifamily housing** in a master-planned development

Could be demand for **commercial** development closer to Siskiyou if part of a master plan

Community Engagement & Preliminary Survey Results

Advisory Committees, Planning Commission & Council

September – November 2024

- **2024-0904 4:00 P.M.** Historic Preservation Advisory Committee
- **2024-0912 5:30 P.M.** Climate and Environment Policy Advisory Committee
- **2024-0919 6:00 P.M.** Transportation Advisory Committee
- **2024-0926 4:00 P.M.** Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee
- **2024-1003 4:00 P.M.** Social Equity and Racial Justice Advisory Committee
- **2024-1022 7:00 P.M. Planning Commission Study Session**
- **2024-1104 5:30 P.M.** City Council Study Session

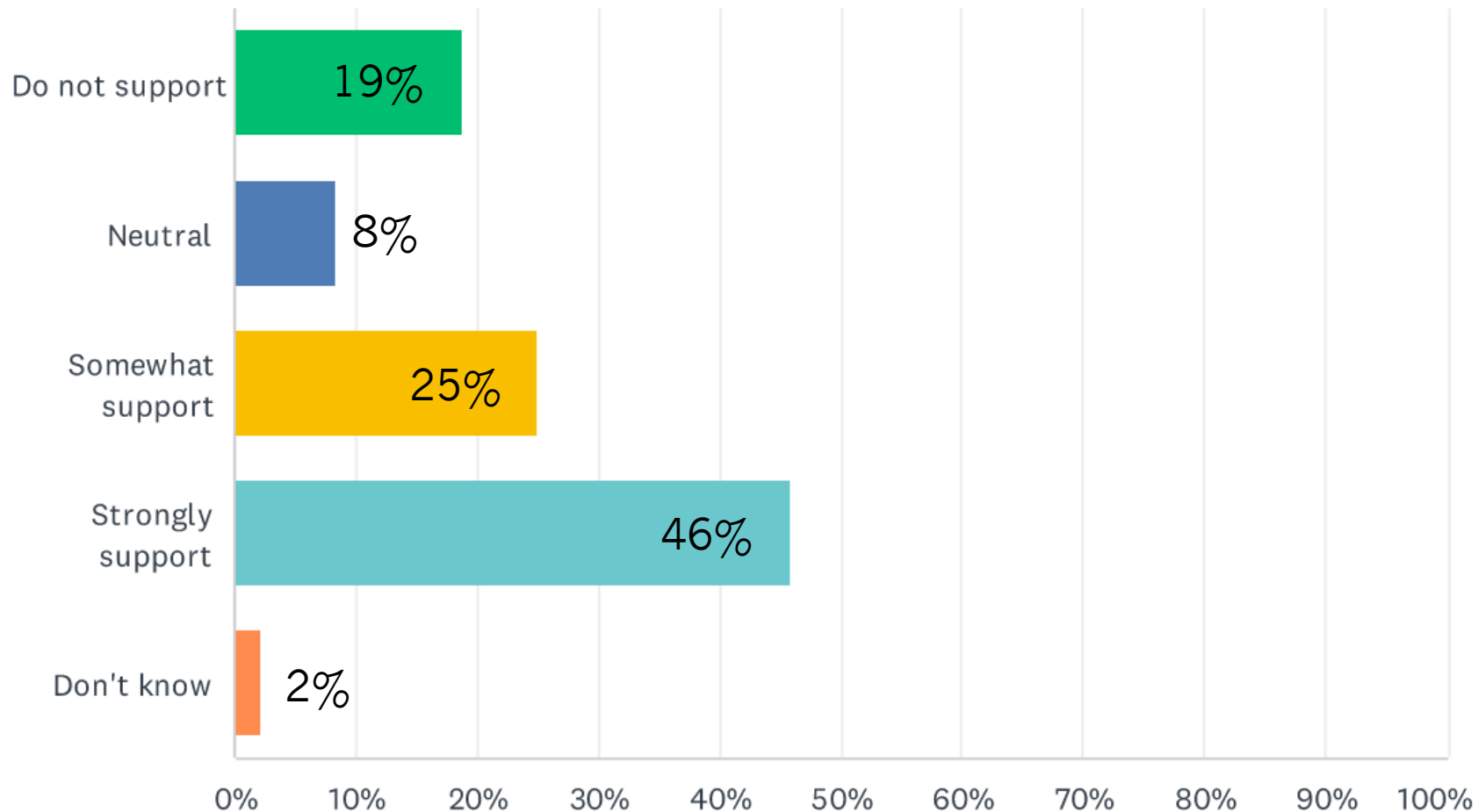
Public Meeting/Open House

September 17, 2024

- Present Project Scope, Goals & Recommendations
 - Code Audit Findings
 - Market Study Findings
 - Code Concepts
- In-person and online, with 25-30 attendees
- Interest to learn more about CFAs generally and specific questions:
 - Impacts of height in Railroad Property for solar, viewsheds
 - Whether promoting Croman Mill site would be detrimental to downtown businesses
 - How to incorporate equity and affordable housing into CFAs

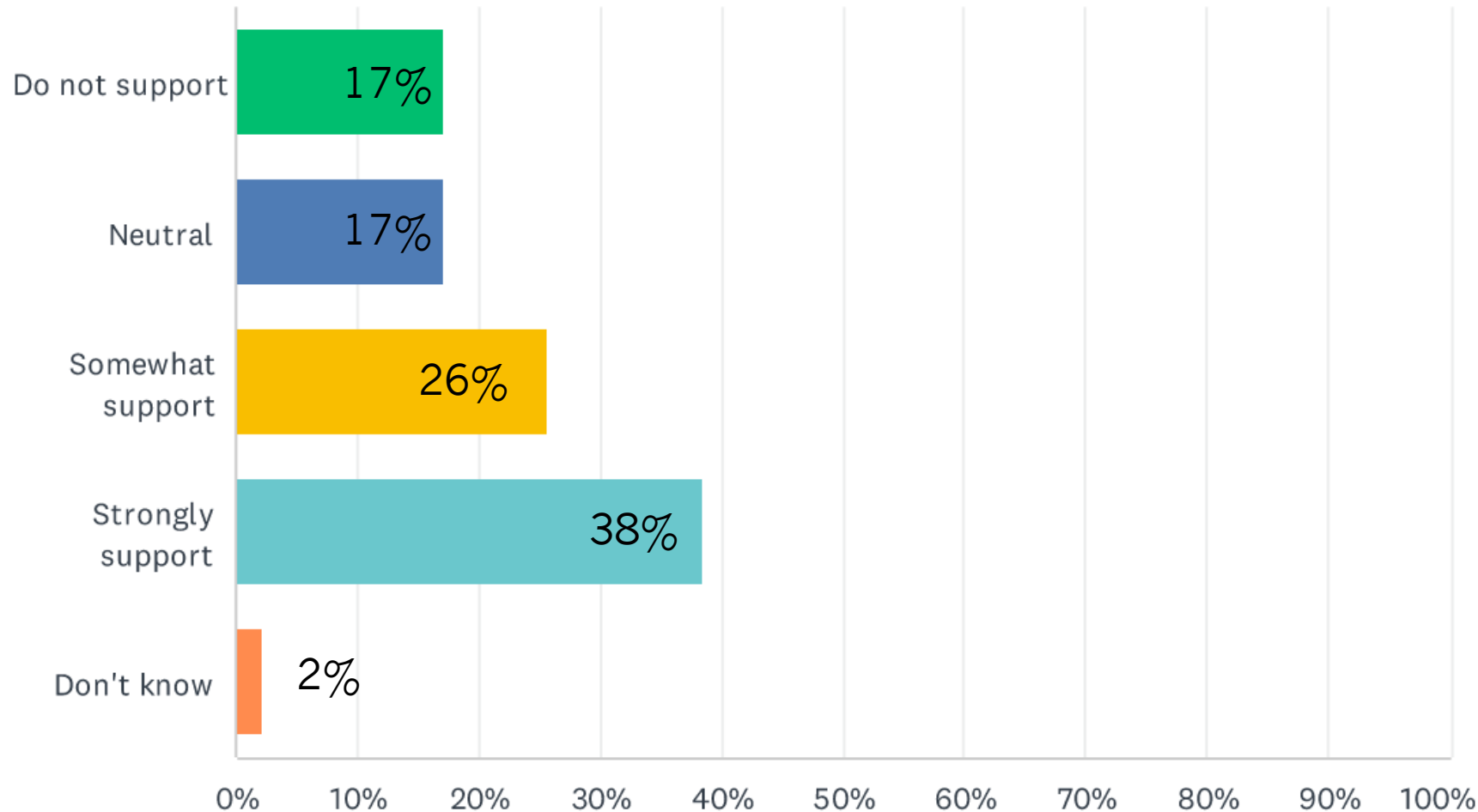
Preliminary Survey Results (48 Responses) 10/22/2024

Do you support making the code changes and designating the **Railroad Property** as a CFA?



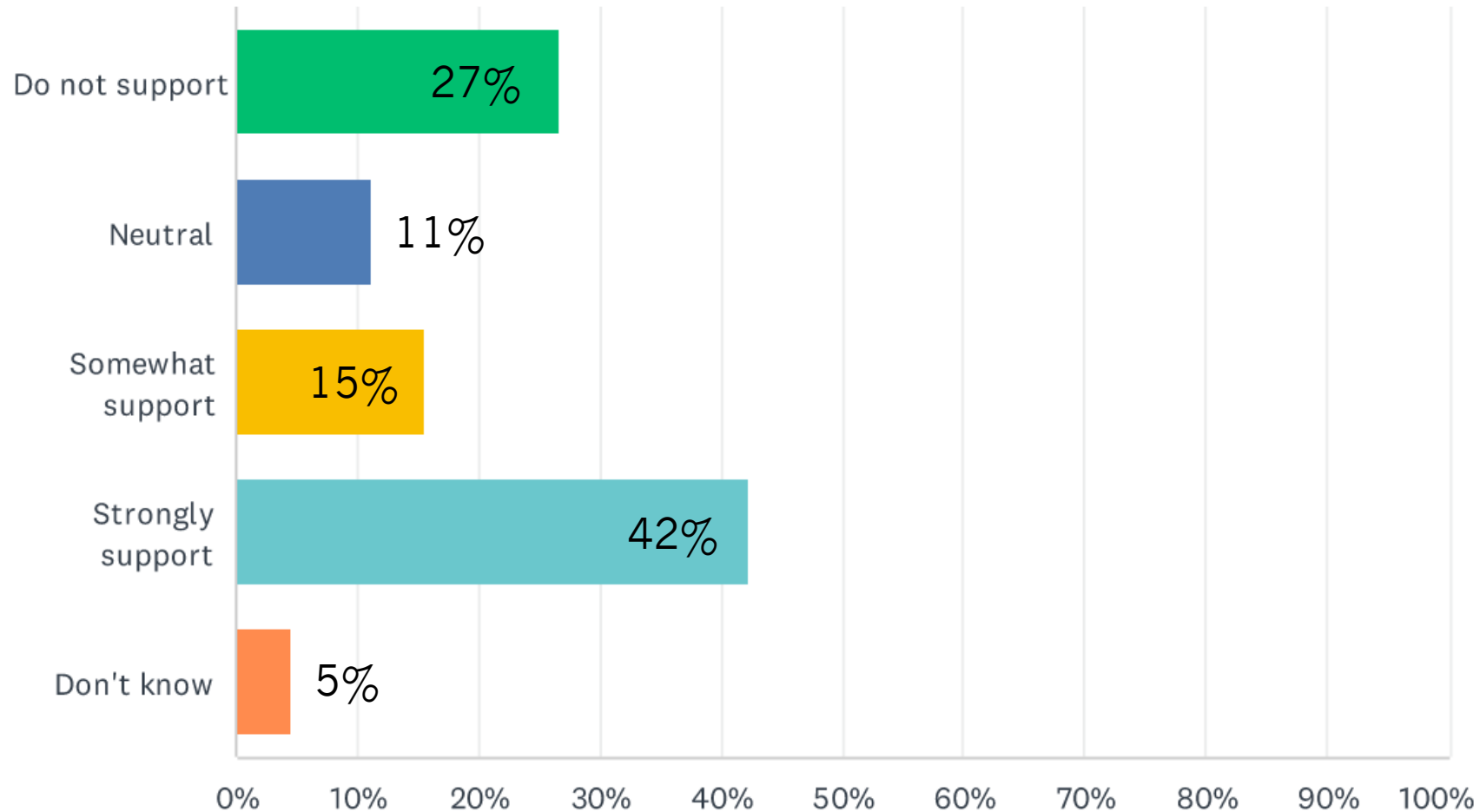
Preliminary Survey Results (48 Responses) 10/22/2024

Do you support making the code changes and designating the **Transit Triangle** as a CFA?



Preliminary Survey Results (48 Responses) 10/22/2024

Do you support making the code changes and designating the **Croman Mill** as a CFA?



Recommendations & Discussion

Preliminary Recommendations

- Move forward with designation of:
 - ◆ **Railroad Property:** Near downtown, existing mix of development, significant gap between existing zoning and potential development, further study height impacts
 - ◆ **Commercial portion of Transit Triangle:** Aligns with intent for area, near SOU, need to update existing overlay, limit changes within residential areas
- Address development goals for **Croman Mill** through master plan process in negotiation with applicant
- ***Downtown*** is already developed, no benefit from CFA

Implementation Recommendations

- Develop CFA Overlay zone to apply to selected areas:
 - ◆ Repeal/replace existing Transit Triangle Overlay
 - ◆ Replace existing Residential Overlay in Railroad Property
 - ◆ Explore applicability of solar setbacks
- Explore height bonuses for deed-restricted affordable housing in CFAs:
 - ◆ Existing height and density bonuses to be allowed outright
 - ◆ Mostly superseded by bonuses in state statute

Discussion

- Do you support the proposed CFAs or other CFA designations?
- What opportunities or concerns do you note specific to proposed CFAs?
- Other questions or priorities?

