

Farm Residential Footprint Guide

November 2025



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Overview

The purpose of this document is to help users identify the size and location of the Farm Residential Footprint (FRF) on an A-Zoned property in Saanich.

The information and illustrations provided in this document do not replace Saanich bylaws and policies. It is for reference only, and the District of Saanich disclaims any liability from its use.



What is the Farm Residential Footprint?

The **Farm Residential Footprint (FRF)** is a contiguous portion of a parcel that includes a Single Family Dwelling and any residential uses. The purpose of the FRF is to cluster all residential uses together and limit their impact on existing or potential farmland.

A FRF shall be established on all rural zoned (A-zoned) parcels that are between 2,000 m² (0.49 acres) and 598,934 m² (148 acres).

A. DEVELOPED LOTS

A developed lot is one that has a pre-existing single family dwelling on the property. On developed lots, the FRF is established as follows:

Step 1.

Using Table 5.4 in Section 5 of Zoning Bylaw, 2003, determine your maximum FRF size according to your lot size.

Lot Size Range	Maximum Farm Residential Footprint Size
2,000 m ² to 4,999 m ²	1,000 m ²
5,000 m ² to 19,999 m ²	1,500 m ²
>20,000 m ²	2,000 m ²

Table 5.4: Maximum FRF size according to lot size

Step 2.

At the face or point of the building that is adjacent to the front lot line, draw a straight line that is the length of the single family dwelling and parallel with the front lot line. The line should touch the single family dwelling where it is closest to the front lot line, excluding exterior projections such as balconies, canopies, sundecks, patios and other similar features.

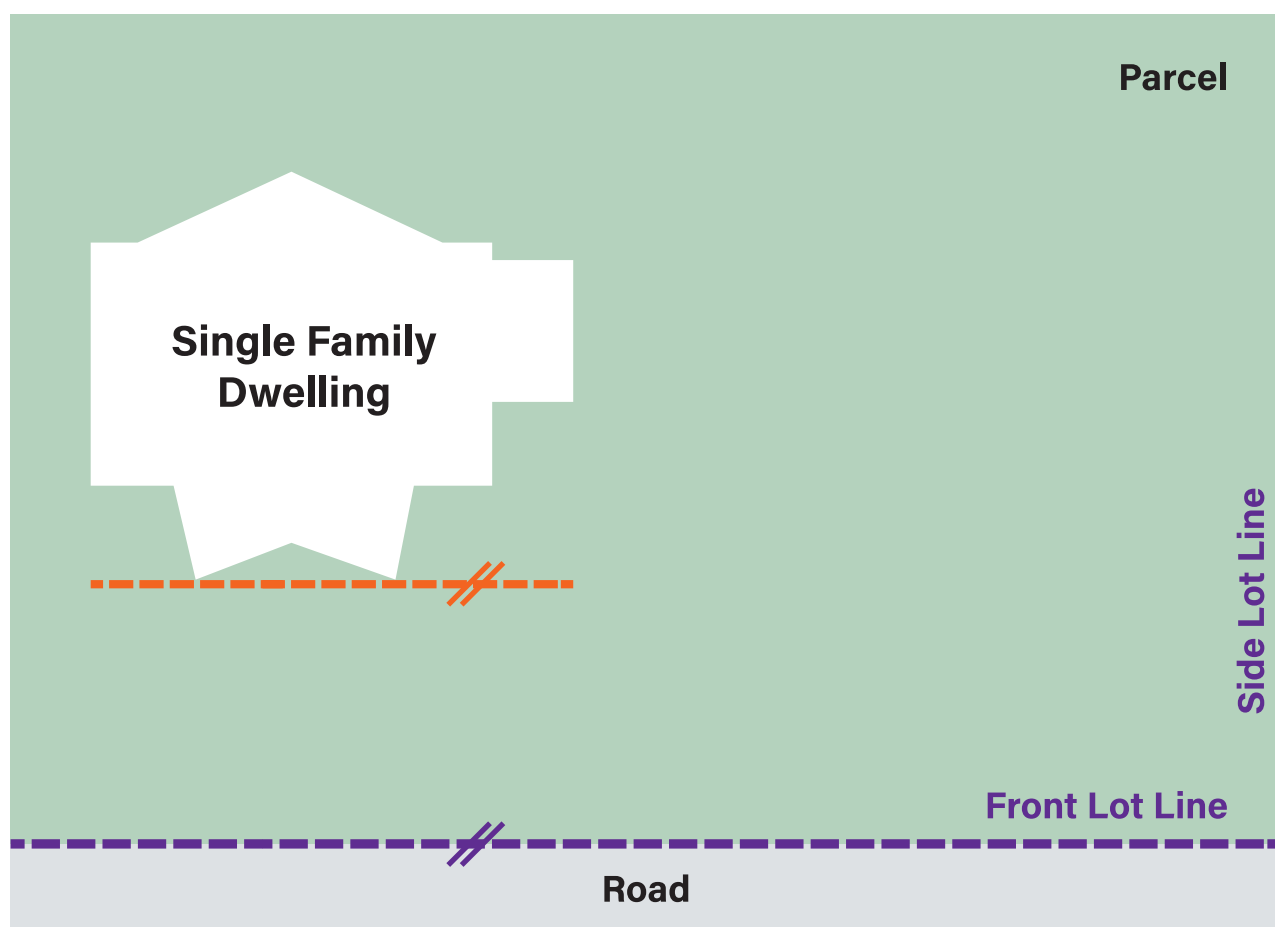


Figure 1: Front-facing side of FRF is parallel with front lot line.

If the front lot line is curved or irregular, draw a straight line between the two points, A and B, where the side lot lines meet the front lot line.

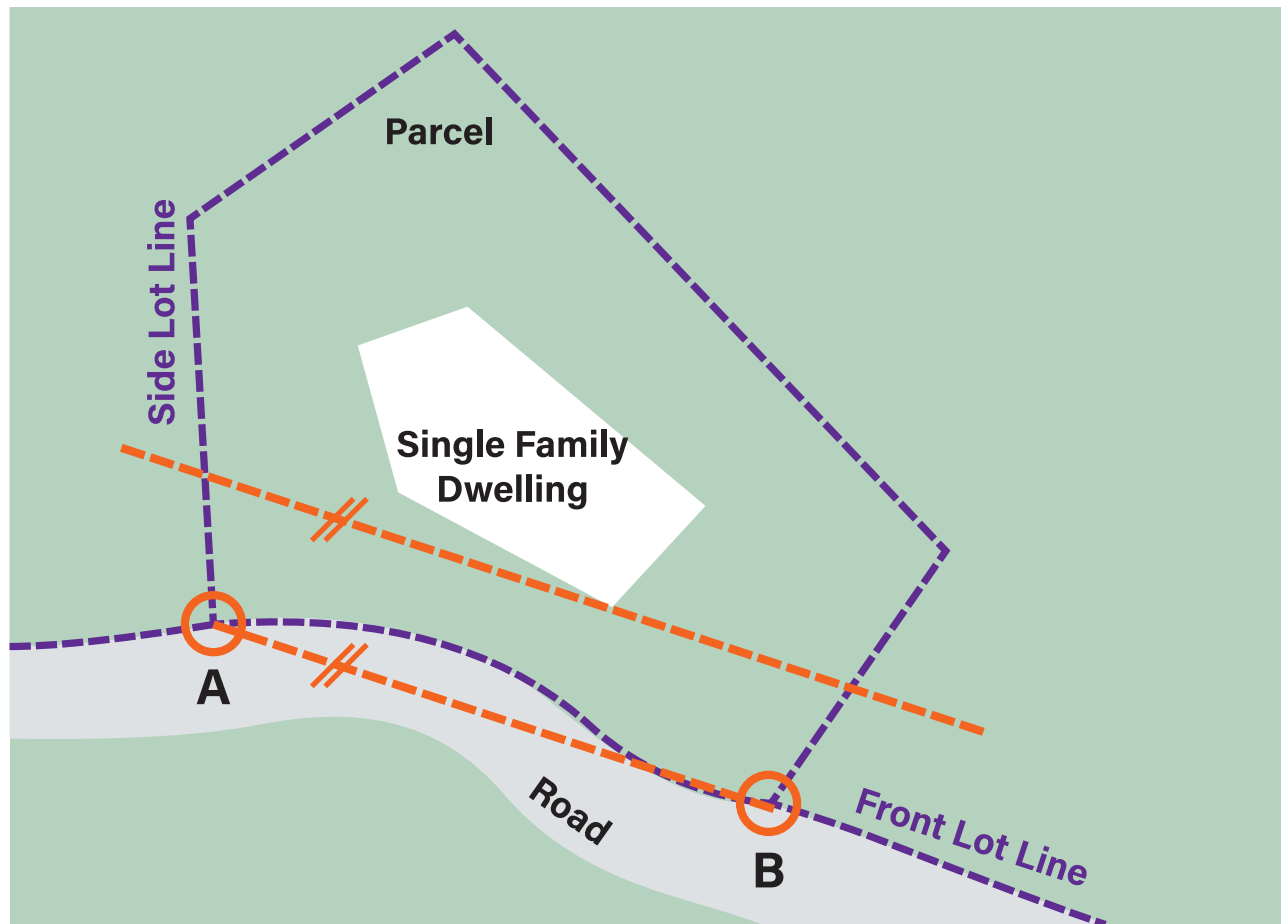


Figure 2: Orientation of the FRF when the front lot line is irregular.

Step 3.

With the line drawn in Step 2 forming one side of a rectangle, complete the shape around the single family dwelling by connecting the outer edges of the single family dwelling on four sides. This rectangular shape is the base FRF.

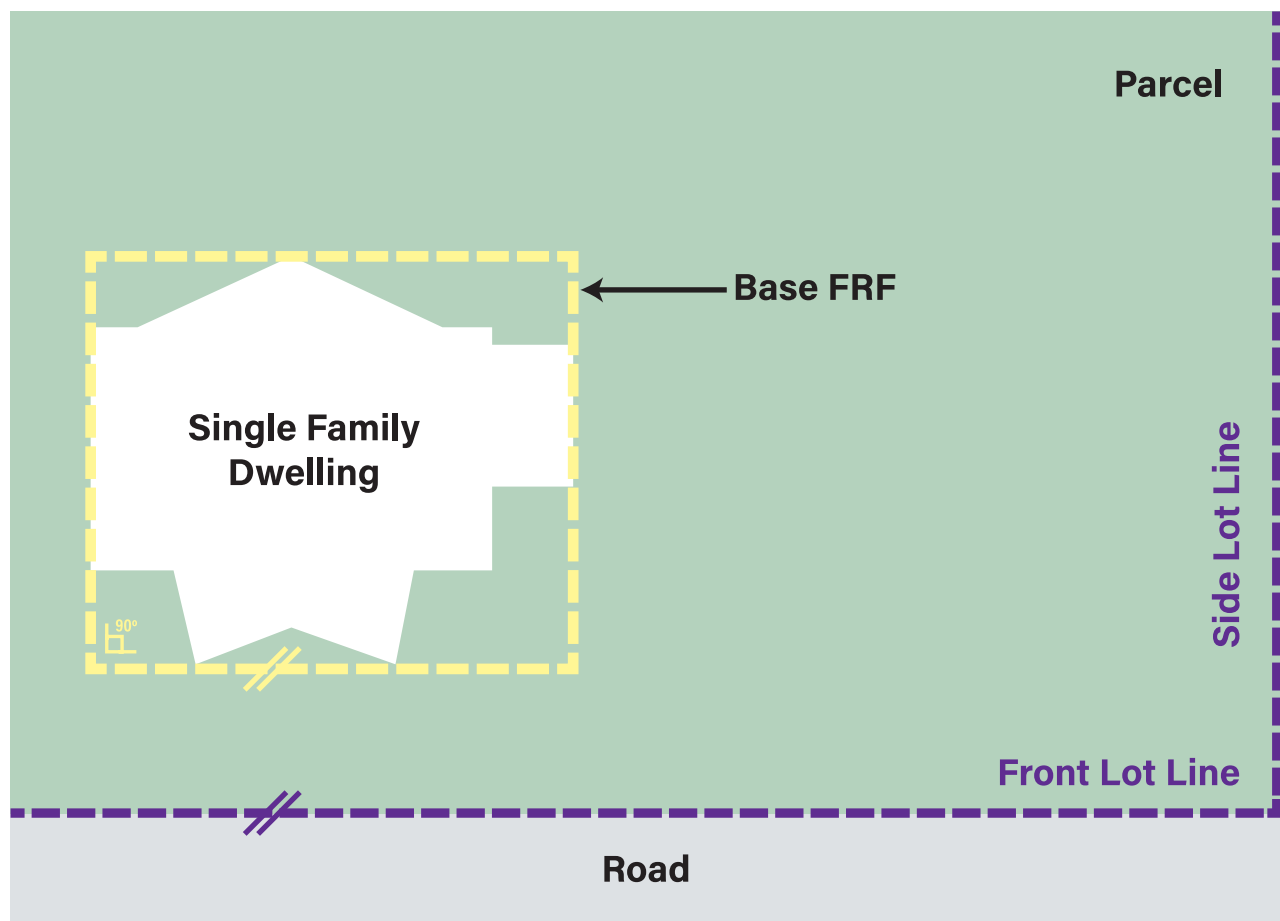


Figure 3: Rectangular base Farm Residential Footprint is sited around the single family dwelling.

Step 4.

Determine the area (size) of the base FRF. If the base FRF size is equal to or larger than the maximum permitted FRF size according to Table 5.4, the base FRF represents the final size and siting (location) of the FRF for the property.

If the base FRF is smaller than the maximum permitted size, the base FRF may be expanded by equal distances - E_q (m) - on all sides until it reaches its maximum size.

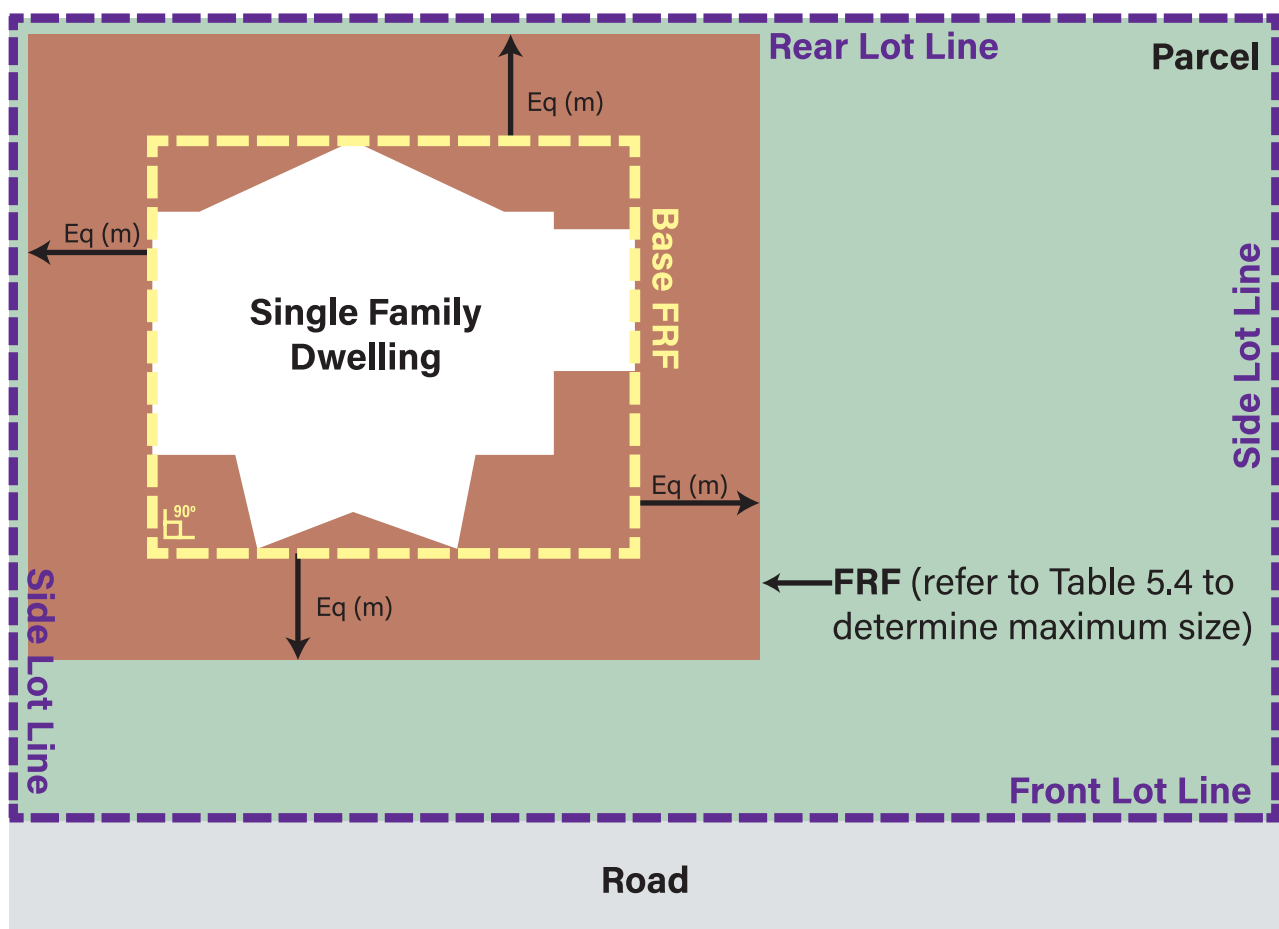


Figure 4: The based Farm Residential Footprint is expanded by equal distances on all four sides.

Should a boundary of the FRF reach a lot line before the maximum permitted size is achieved, the remaining area may be distributed proportionally on the other unrestricted sides. The FRF may be expanded until it reaches its maximum size as per Table 5.4.

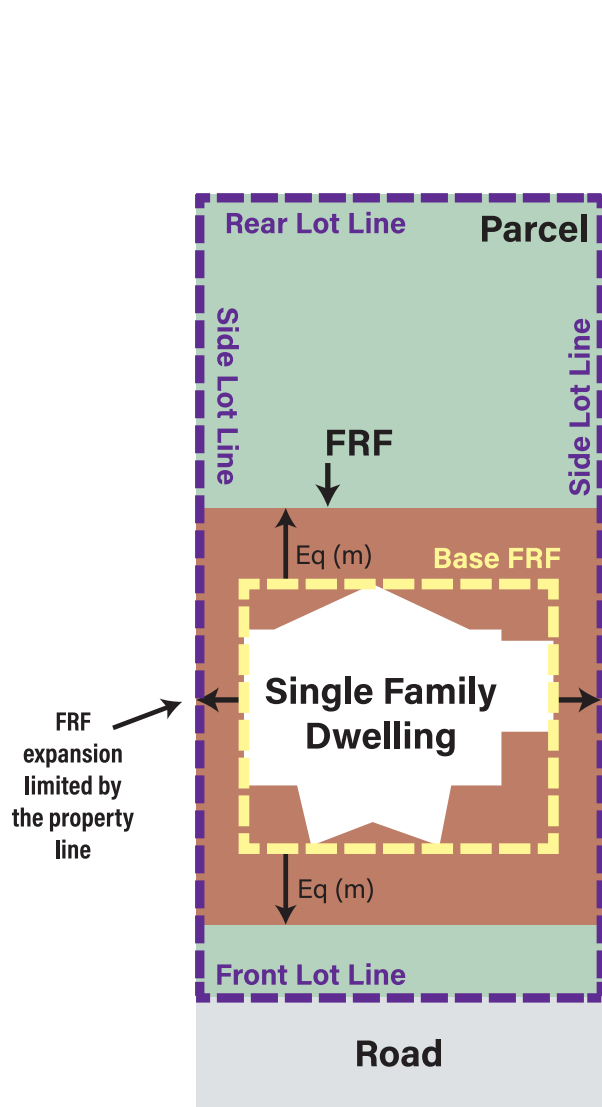


Figure 5: Expanding the FRF on a narrow lot.

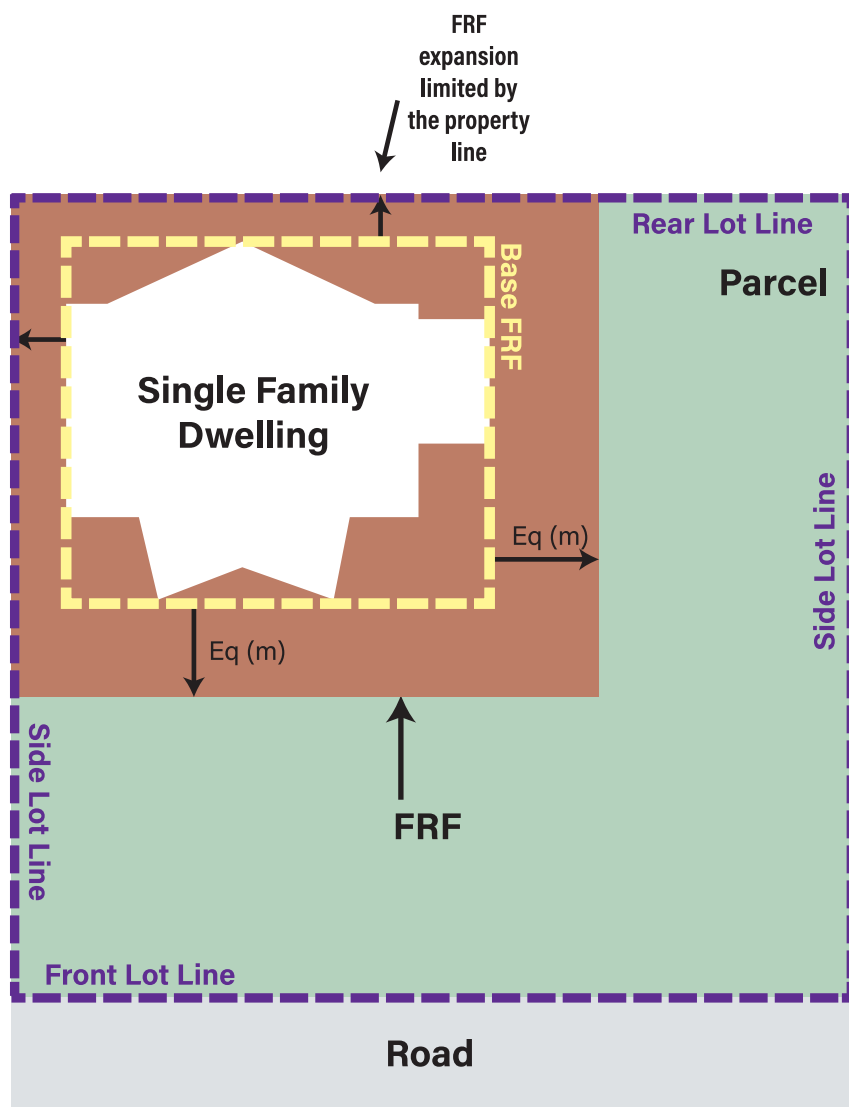


Figure 6: Expanding the FRF when the single family dwelling is sited near a lot line.

B. UNDEVELOPED LOTS

An undeveloped lot is one where a single family dwelling has never been constructed on the property. If the property has a house that was demolished, refer to Section D. On undeveloped lots, the FRF is established as follows.

Step 1.

Determine which corner of the lot the single family dwelling and FRF will be sited. On undeveloped lots, the FRF is sited at the intersection of the front lot line and a chosen exterior or interior side lot line.

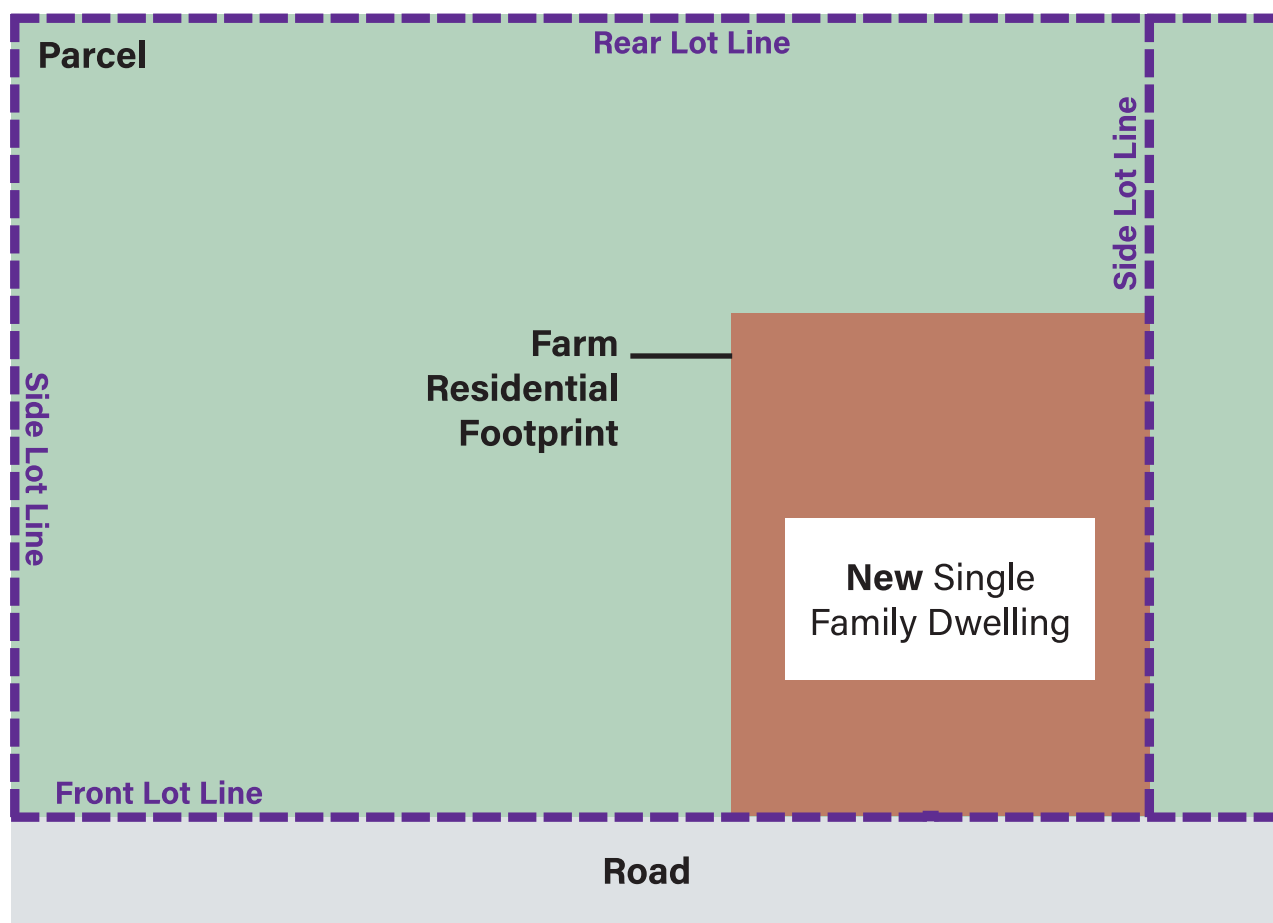


Figure 7: Establishing a FRF on an undeveloped lot.

Step 2.

Determine the lot size range that applies to the development parcel and draw the maximum distances from the front and exterior or interior side lot lines, in accordance with Table 5.5, to create the FRF.

Lot Size Range	Maximum Distance from Front Lot Line	Maximum Distance from Side or Exterior Lot Line	Maximum Farm Residential Footprint Size
2,000 m ² to 4,999 m ²	40 m	25 m	1,000 m ²
5,000 m ² to 19,999 m ²	40 m	37.5 m	1,500 m ²
>20,000 m ²	40 m	50 m	2,000 m ²

Table 5.5: Size and siting of the Farm Residential Footprint on undeveloped lots

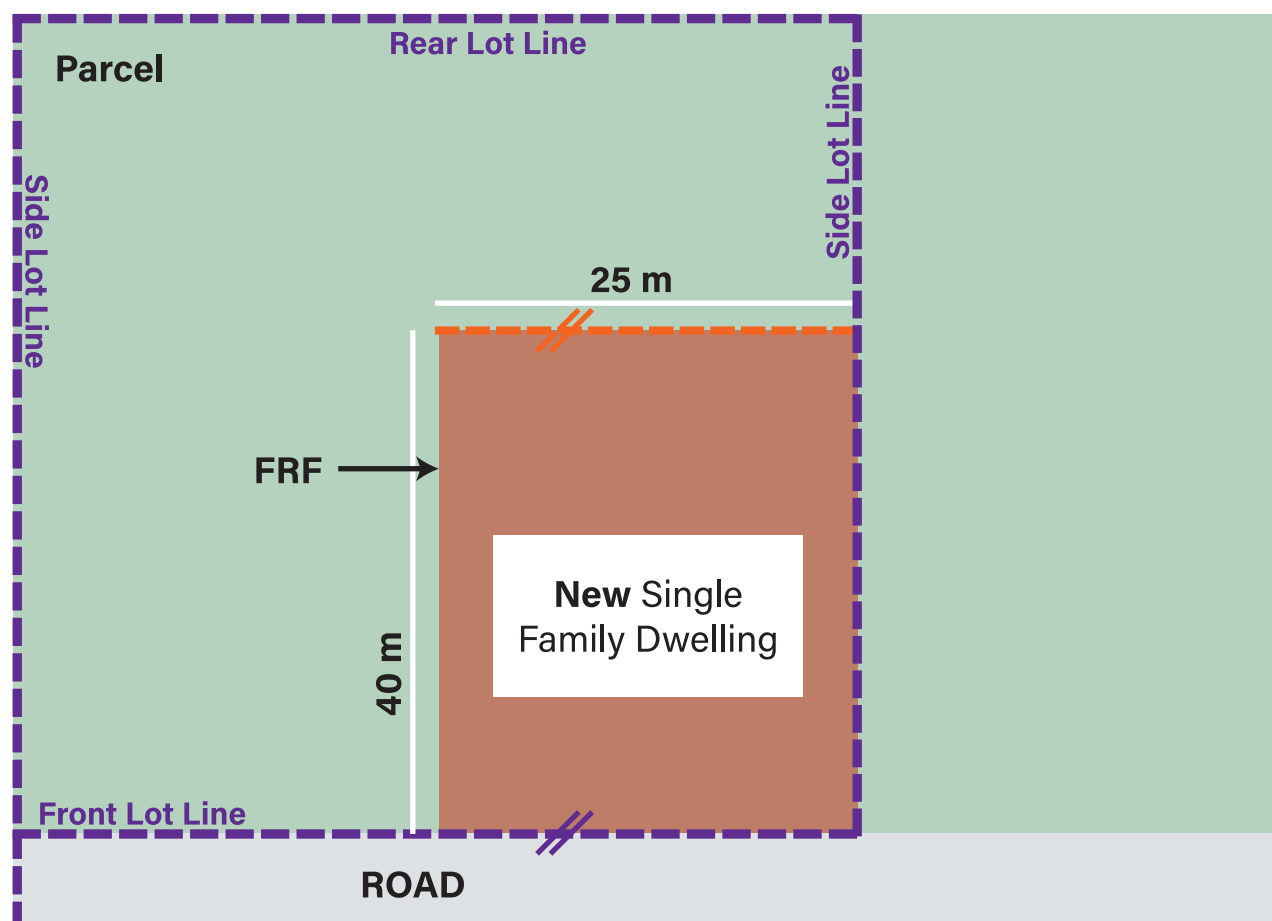


Figure 8: The FRF is established by measuring maximum distances from the side and front lot lines.

C. A-2 ZONED LOTS

A-2 (Rural) Zoned lots are permitted to have two single family dwellings.

- a. Should an A-2 lot have two pre-existing single family dwellings or a building permit has been issued prior to January 1, 2026, each single family dwelling may have its own FRF that is established in accordance with the "A. DEVELOPED LOTS" section of this guide (5.41 c. of Zoning Bylaw, 2003).
- b. Should an A-2 lot have one single family dwelling and no building permit has been issued as of January 1, 2026 for a second single family dwelling, the FRF of the existing single family dwelling may be expanded by 1,000 m² in any direction to accommodate a second single family dwelling.

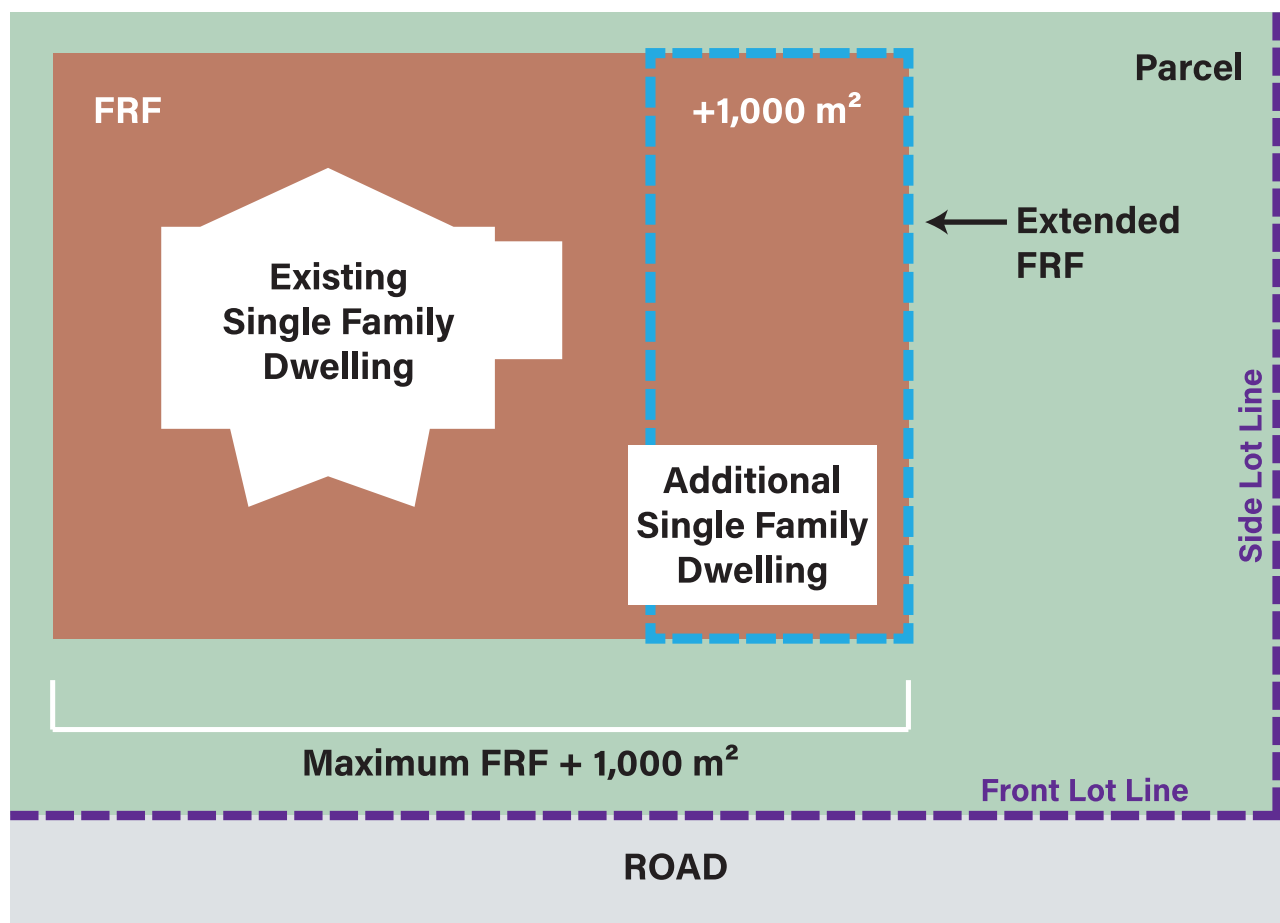


Figure 9: An additional 1,000 m² may be added to the existing FRF on A-2 properties to accommodate a second single family dwelling.

D. REPLACING A SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING ON A FARM FOOTPRINT LOT

Should a property owner wish to replace their single family dwelling, the new single family dwelling must be sited within the FRF of the original single family dwelling.

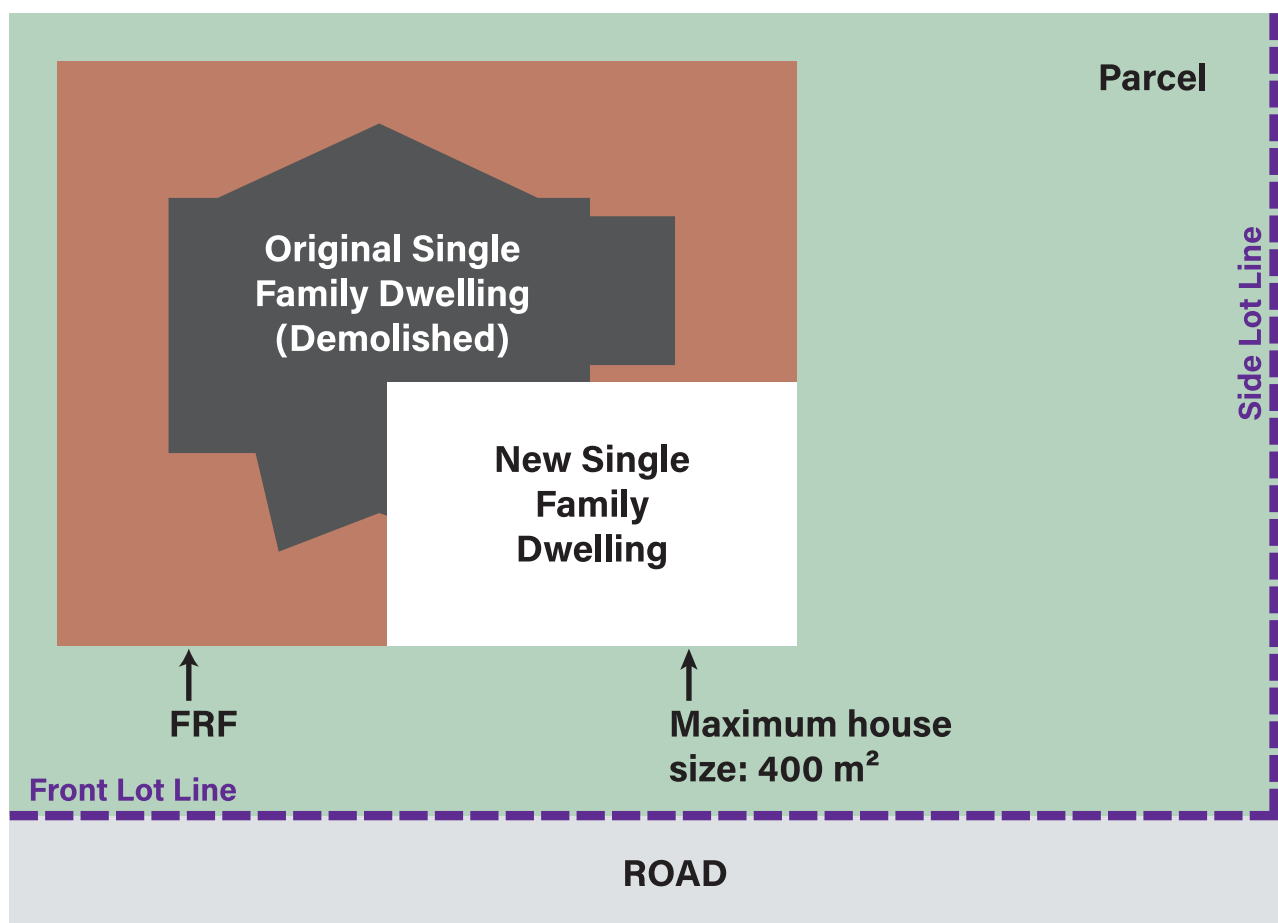
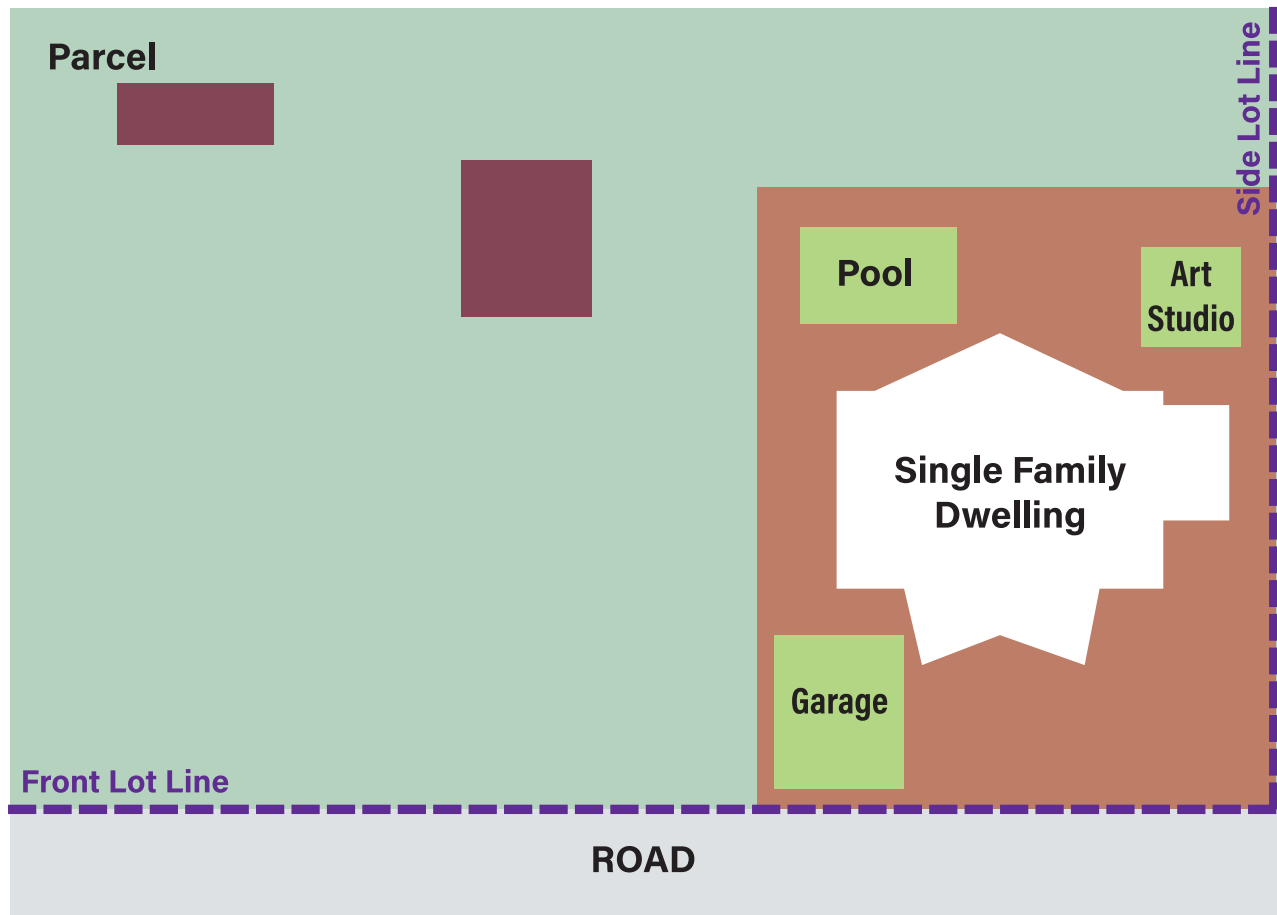


Figure 10: A new single family dwelling is constructed in the original FRF.

E. FARM RESIDENTIAL FOOTPRINT LOT EXAMPLES

Example A:



LEGEND:



Accessory Farm
Residential Use

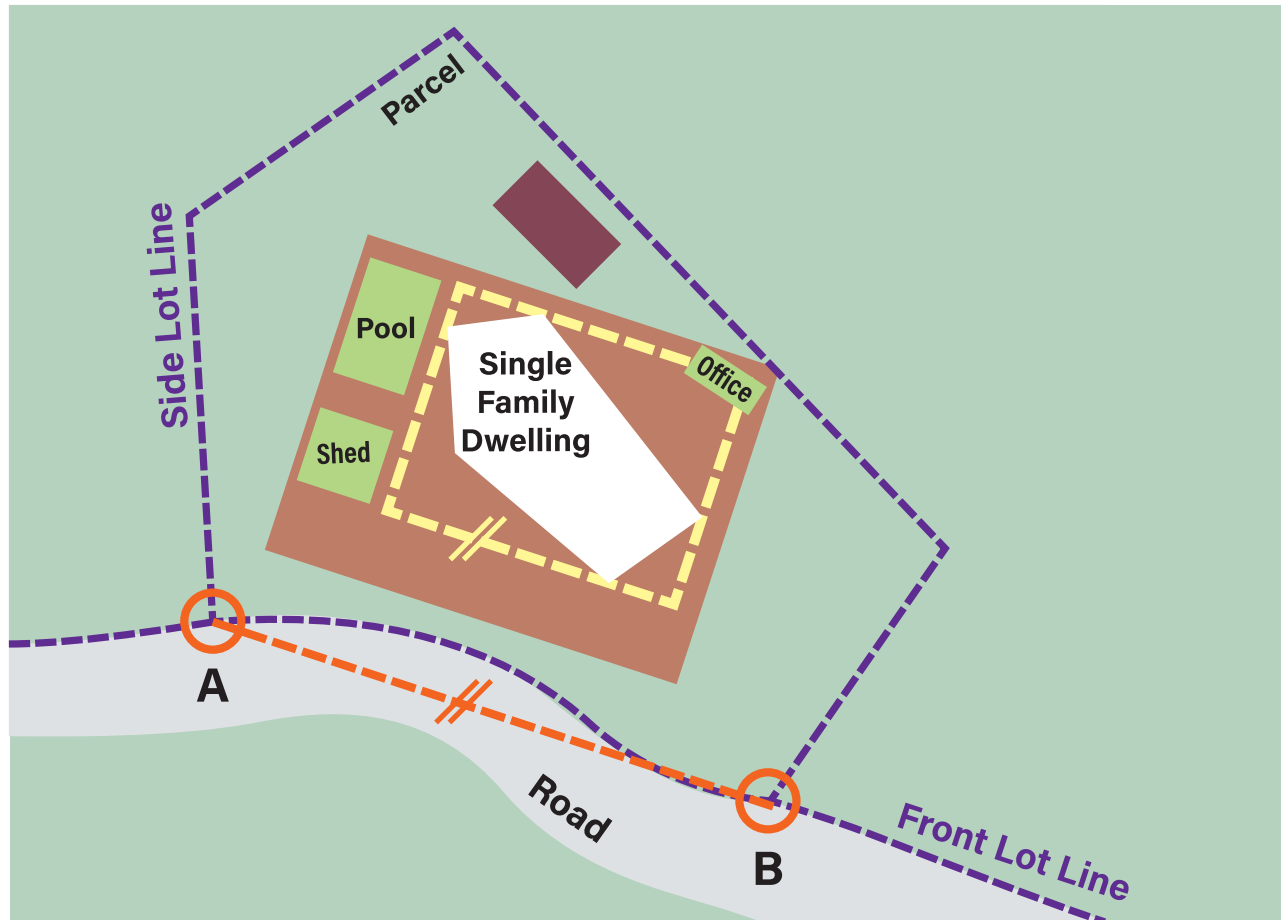


Agricultural Uses



Farm Residential
Footprint

Example B:



LEGEND:



Accessory Farm
Residential Use



Base Farm
Residential
Footprint



Farm Residential
Footprint



Agricultural Uses

FAQs

What properties have a Farm Residential Footprint?

All A-Zoned lots that are between 2,000 m² (0.49 acres) and 598,934 m² (148 acres).

What uses must be contained within the Farm Residential Footprint?

All single family dwellings and Accessory Farm Residential Uses must be sited within the Farm Residential Footprint. Accessory Farm Residential Uses means any Accessory Buildings & Structures or infrastructure that are accessory to the Single Family Dwelling and include, but are not limited to; attached or detached garages or carports, workshops, sheds, offices, sunrooms, recreation facilities (such as indoor and outdoor swimming pools, sports courts, gyms, art studios, yoga studios), gazebos and outdoor sitting areas, artificial ponds that do not serve an agricultural purpose, manoeuvring and parking spaces for residential vehicles, residential water wells/ systems and residential sewage septic systems.

Are farm uses included in the Farm Residential Footprint?

Farm Uses are any building, infrastructure, or amenity used exclusively for agricultural purposes (i.e., barn, coop). Farm uses are excluded from the FRF and can be sited anywhere on a rural zoned (A-Zoned) property. Note that farm uses should be necessary for and commensurate with the level of agricultural operations on the property. Farm uses on all rural zoned properties should refer to the Agricultural Land Commission's Guidelines for Necessary Farm Use Structures.

Can I build residential uses anywhere within the Farm Residential Footprint?

Other regulations within Zoning Bylaw, 2003 still apply. For instance, should the FRF overlap with property line setbacks, the property owner may not build within the setback area unless a setback variance is granted.

What if I have existing legal residential uses on my property that fall outside the FRF area?

If a legal Accessory Farm Residential Use (i.e. garage, office, gazebo, gym, etc.) falls outside of the FRF, it may be continued as a legal non-conforming use. The Accessory Farm Residential Use can be maintained or repaired as long as it does not further contravene Zoning Bylaw, 2003. For example, the building footprint of the legal non-conforming structure cannot be expanded or rebuilt (See "Non-Conforming uses" at Zoning bylaws - Province of British Columbia).

How and when is the Farm Residential Footprint determined on a property?

The size (area) and location (siting) of the FRF, as per Zoning Bylaw, 2003, should be indicated on the site plan that is submitted with your building permit application. See Residential Permits | District of Saanich for more information.

Can the Farm Residential Footprint be varied?

Yes, the siting and size (area) requirements of the FRF can be varied.

Variances for the siting of the FRF are considered by Planning staff through the application of a Development Variance Permit or by the Board of Variance if undue hardship is demonstrated.

Variances to increase the overall size (area) of the FRF must be considered by Council through an application for a Development Variance Permit.

Variance applications may be supported if the proposal meets the intent of the FRF, where residential uses are clustered, sited near property lines, and/or their impact on rural land is minimized.

Note that if the property owner wishes to apply for a variance, a professional surveyor must be engaged to provide drawings of the proposed FRF location.

Why does the FRF apply to all A-Zones and not only properties that are currently farming?

Currently, Saanich's Zoning Bylaw, 2003, does not differentiate between "agricultural" and "rural" properties, and many contain both arable land and treed or rocky areas. Applying the FRF to all A-zones preserves the form and integrity of all rural Saanich. It also protects land that is not currently farmed from development and allows for the potential of future soil-based and non-soil based agriculture.

How does the FRF impact Temporary Farm Working Housing (TFWH)?

TFWH is permitted on A-Zoned properties that are classified as a 'Farm' under the BC Assessment Act. TFWH is permitted through the issuance of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP). The District of Saanich's Temporary Farm Worker Housing Policy provides guidance on siting criteria. Stating that the TFWH must minimize the residential impacts on agricultural land and encourage the clustering of residential structures.

When do the FRF regulations come into effect?

The FRF regulations come into effect January 1, 2026. Any applications that have been issued a Building Permit prior to this date may continue as planned. If an application has been submitted but has not been issued a Building Permit by January 1, 2026, the property owners will be required to resubmit their application with a Farm Residential Footprint site plan.

