

Final NPO Adjustment

January 23, 2018

Based on the feedback received at the January 21, 2018 meeting, the Working Group is proposing one final adjustment to the FAR component before the NPO is submitted to the Board for their vote. **This adjustment “fine tunes” the proposed FAR at the upper end and the lower end of lot sizes.** While the Working Group is hesitant to propose last minute changes, there was feedback given at the Sunday meeting that is: a) consistent with previous feedback received from multiple neighbors via multiple venues; b) consistent with the intentions and principles of the NPO initiative; and c) allows us to retain the simplicity which many neighbors value.

With that in mind we are making the changes shown below. Following these changes is a discussion of the rationale behind these changes. Both of the proposed changes are in the first component of the NPO - “Primary and Accessory Structure Bulk (FAR)”. As a reminder the FAR is the Floor Area Ratio - a ratio of built area SF to the building lot SF.

The first proposed change is to **increase the allowance for minimum built area from 2,000 to 2,200 SF.**

The second proposed change is to **set an upper limit for maximum built area of 3,600 SF.**

The primary reason for these changes is that it adjusts the previously proposed fixed FAR approach to act much more like the sliding scale, while retaining the simplicity of the fixed FAR. The sliding scale was recently proposed by neighbors (Thanks David!) and many agree it has certain advantages. Notably, it limits the bulk at the upper end and it provides more favorable treatment of smaller lot sizes. We have consistently heard that most neighbors agree with these concepts. More on each of these changes below.

By raising the allowance at the low end, smaller properties are accommodated in a way that many find desirable. Since the fixed FAR is particularly limiting for those with small lots, neighbors have been consistent in expressing a desire to allow neighbors on small lots to be able to expand in a reasonable way. Many of those who expressed favor for the sliding scale approach did so because they liked the fact that it allowed “a couple hundred extra square feet” to those with the smallest lots. A sliding scale is one way to do that, but another way is to simply raise the minimum allowance for the smallest lots by 200 SF and that is the approach we are proposing. This captures most of the advantage of the proposed sliding scale for small sized lots. For example, the sliding scale discussed yesterday at Monkey Bottom allowed 2,220 SF for 6,000 SF lots; the new proposal allows 2,200 SF. (The current standard allows just 2000 SF for a 6,000 SF lot.)

The second proposed change addresses a concern raised as we recently increased the FAR from 30% FAR to 32.5% FAR. That is, by making this final adjustment upwards, it will allow some REALLY large houses on the largest lots. That was an unhappy consequence of raising the FAR up to 32.5% and many have expressed discomfort with this, both at the Monkey Bottom meeting as well as in other forums. In fact, there were a number of neighbors at Monkey Bottom who own large lots (~ 12,000 SF) who

expressed a preference for the caps to be lower on these large lots. (Yes - they are recommending lower limits on their own properties - and others like them - for the good of the neighborhood. Kudos to them!)

For context, on a 12,000 SF lot the current 32.5% FAR allows a built area of 3,900 SF. On a 14,000 SF Lot, this rises to an allowance of 4,550 SF. One person who owns a large lot stated, "That is a castle!" and expressed a desire that the FAR should not allow this type of out-of-scale building. This is consistent with feedback we received from many, including those who support the concept of the sliding scale.

In response, the Working Group looked at the frequency distribution of these large properties. There are about 35 properties at +/- 12,000 SF and only about 15 above 12,500 SF. Those remaining large lots are of inconsistent size and rise as high as 19,700 SF. Using the 32.5% FAR standard (without an upper limit), built area could rise to more than 6,000 SF on the largest lots.

The proposed sliding scale - that has been favorably reviewed by many – would have set a 30% FAR standard for properties greater than 10,000 SF. That is about 20% of all properties. A 30% FAR for those lots clustered around 12,000 SF would allow about 3,600 SF of built area. It is worth noting, we had not received any pressure from people with large lots to raise the FAR cap from 30% to 32.5%. We raised it in response to requests from those with mid-size and smaller lots. **By setting the newly proposed cap to 3,600 SF we are effectively dialing back to 30% FAR for 12,000 SF lots – as it had been before the latest set of changes.** (That is how we arrived at the 3,600 SF number.) There are only a small number of lots substantially larger than 12,000 and they will still have a very generous building allowance even with this new cap.

The important thing to note is that this new FAR cap will limit the most egregious examples of overbuilding that could occur with the newly proposed 32.5% cap. That is a concept most everyone agrees with.

So the new Proposed FAR component will include the 32.5% FAR standard and letter b) of that Section will now read (changes in red):

b. Regardless of the calculated FAR, each parcel shall be allowed a minimum of 2,200 square feet of floor area and no parcel shall exceed 3,600 square feet of floor area.