Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Update

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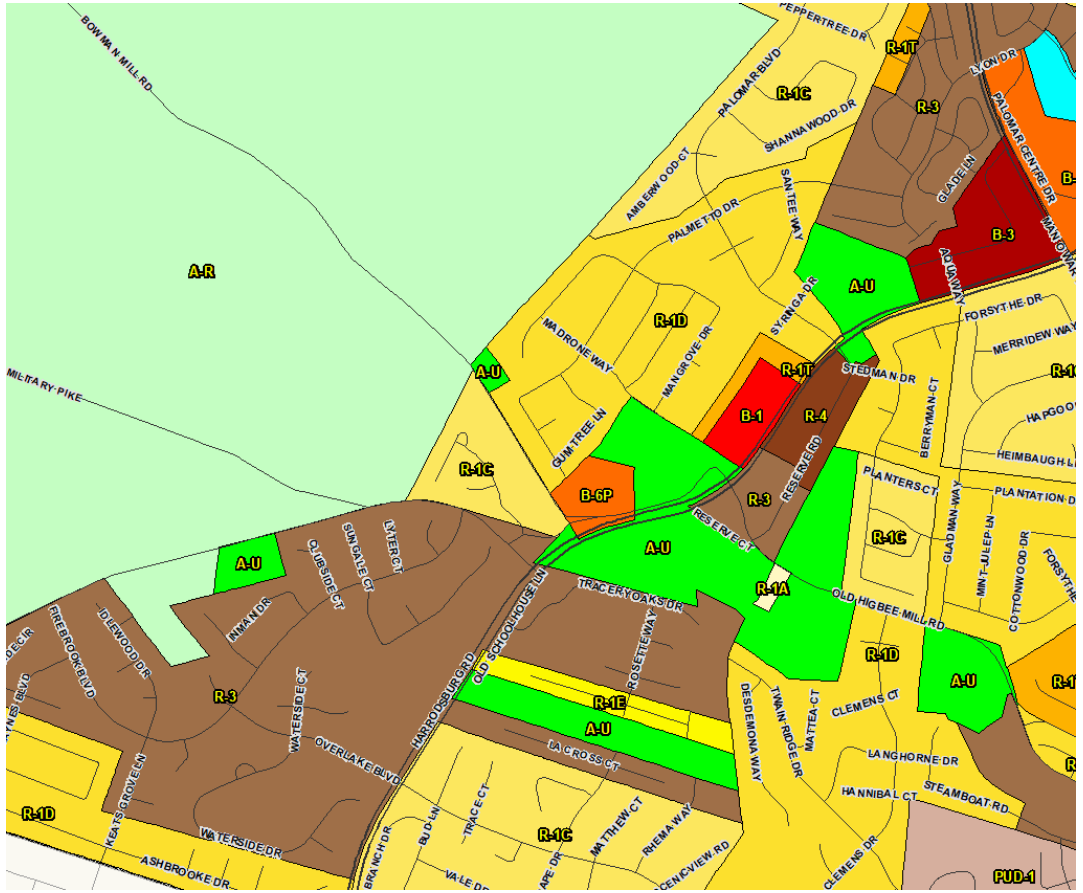
Multi-family Zoning History

1990-1999

- 122 zone changes requested R-3, R-4 or R-5
- R-3: 68%
- R-4: 23.7%
- R-5: 8.2%

In the early 90's, most single family construction was still seeking some form of R-1 zoning.

- It was a known product
- A number of R-1 options to accommodate most lot sizes.
- R-3 worked as a primarily multi-family zone

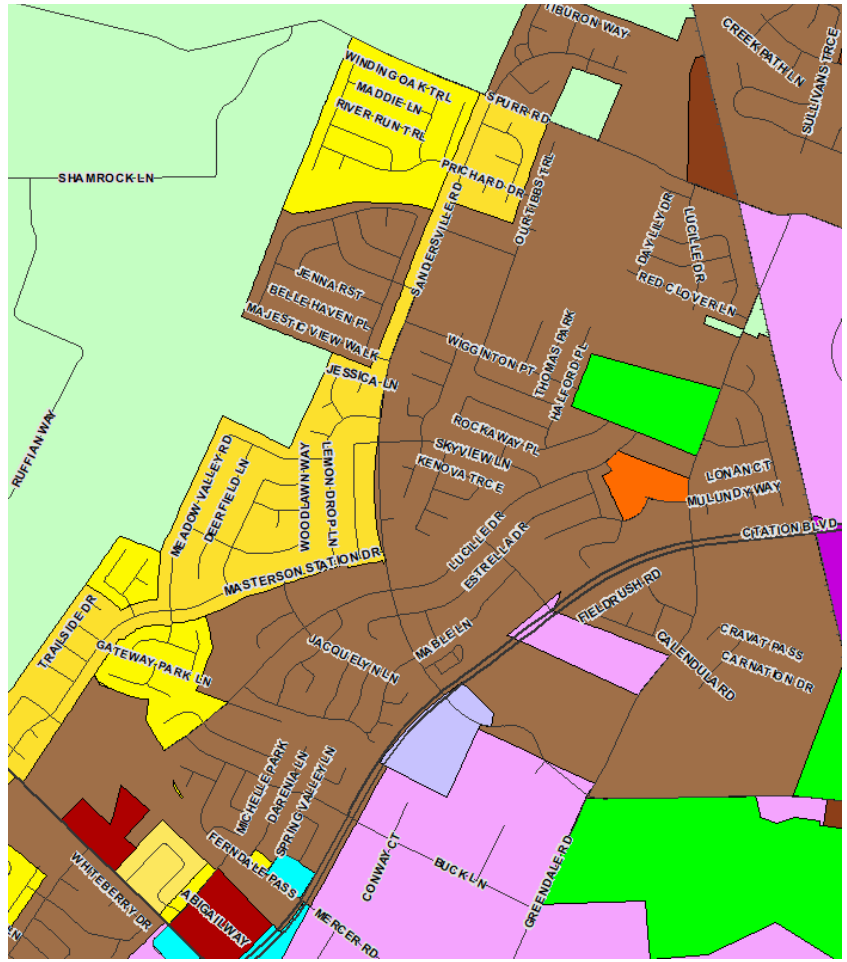


Multi-family Zoning History

2000-2009

- 117 zone changes requested R-3, R-4 or R-5
- R-3: 76.9%
- R-4: 18.8%
- R-5: 4.3%

Leading up to the 2008-09 recession, R-3 became the dominant single family zone.



Multi-family Zoning History

2010-2019

- 78 zone changes requested R-3, R-4 or R-5
- R-3: 52.5%
- R-4: 34.6%
- R-5: 12.8%

By the last decade, a significant shift had started to occur.

- Inconsequential number of R-1 applications
- R-3 was overwhelmingly used for single family attached and detached housing.
- Infill and redevelopment becomes more prevalent where R-3 struggles most to accommodate
- Clear shift in Multi-family to R-4 and R-5

Where does the existing ordinance fall short?

Routinely, preliminary discussions with applicants for multifamily projects indicate that R-3 can't work for their projects.

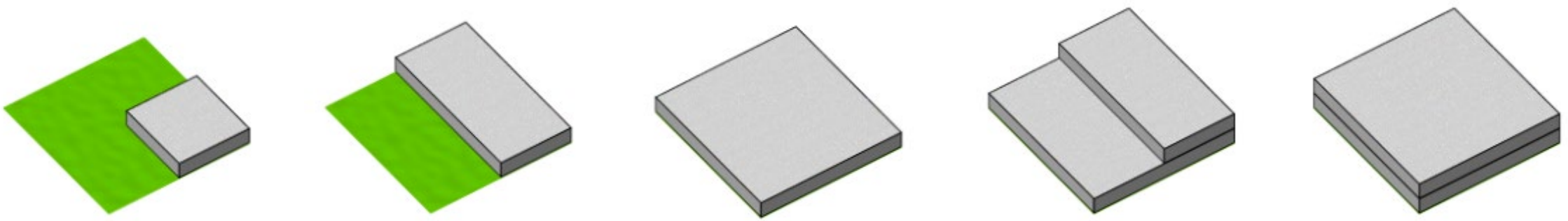
Factors include:

- Lot size/geometrics
- Land cost
- Units needed
- Zoning restrictions
    - Primarily, the maximum Floor Area Ratio

What is Floor Area Ratio (FAR)?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.

- FAR regulations tell you “how much” building you can create on a lot.



FAR 0.25 **FAR 0.5** **FAR 1** **FAR 1.5** **FAR 2**

How do we calculate FAR?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.

$$FAR = \frac{\text{Total Floor Area}}{\text{Lot Area}}$$

(the total square feet of all floors in a building)

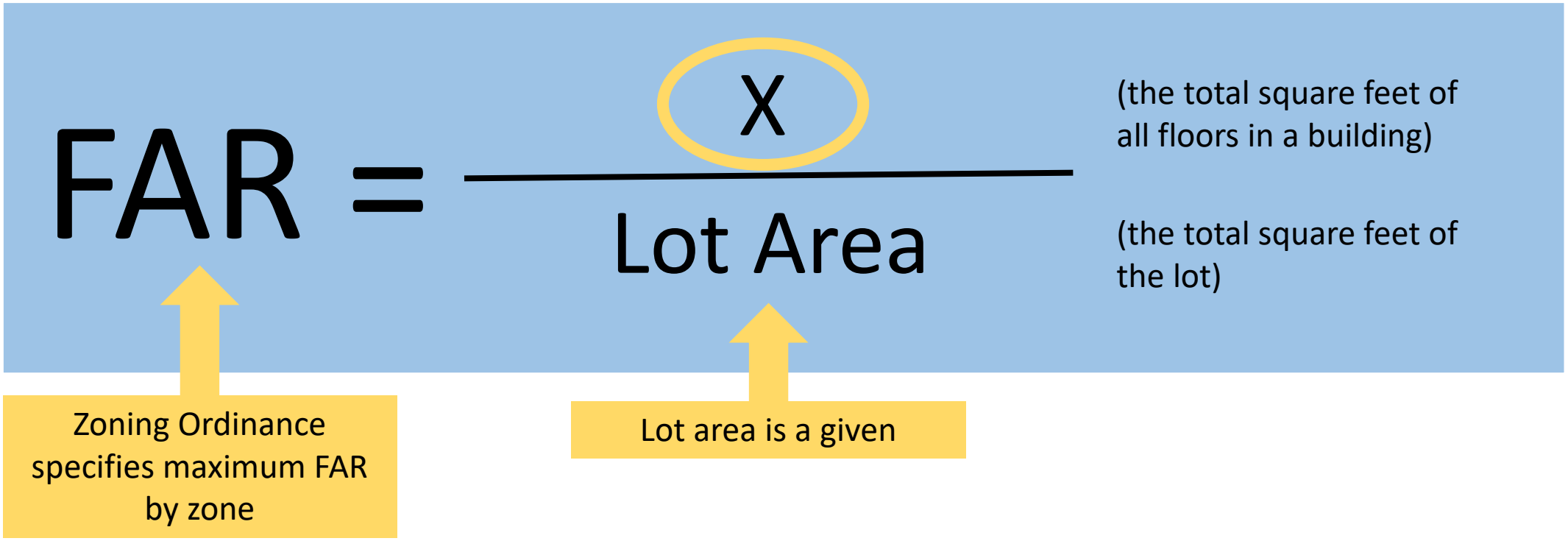
(the total square feet of the lot)

Zoning Ordinance specifies maximum FAR by zone

Lot area is a given

How do we calculate FAR?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.



How do we calculate FAR?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.

$$0.5 = \frac{\text{Total Floor Area}}{10{,}000}$$

(the total square feet of all floors in a building)

(the total square feet of the lot)

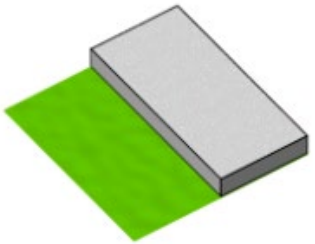
How do we calculate FAR?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.

$$0.5 = \frac{5{,}000}{10{,}000}$$

(the total square feet of all floors in a building)

(the total square feet of the lot)



FAR 0.5

How do we calculate FAR?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.

$$1.5 = \frac{\text{Total Floor Area}}{10{,}000}$$

(the total square feet of all floors in a building)

(the total square feet of the lot)

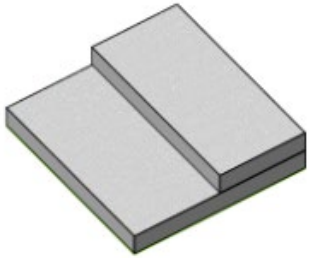
How do we calculate FAR?

FAR is the relationship between the square footage of the building and the square footage of the lot.

$$1.5 = \frac{15{,}000}{10{,}000}$$

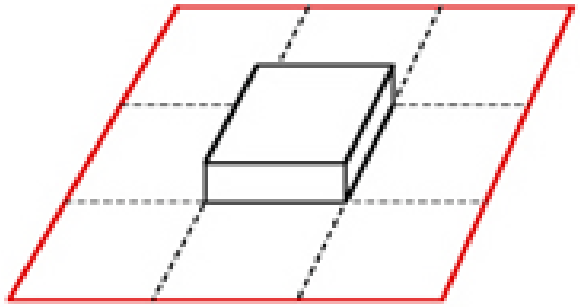
(the total square feet of all floors in a building)

(the total square feet of the lot)



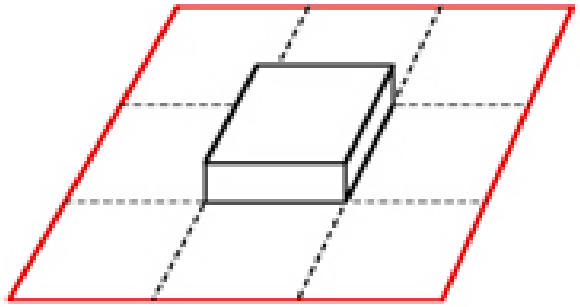
FAR 1.5

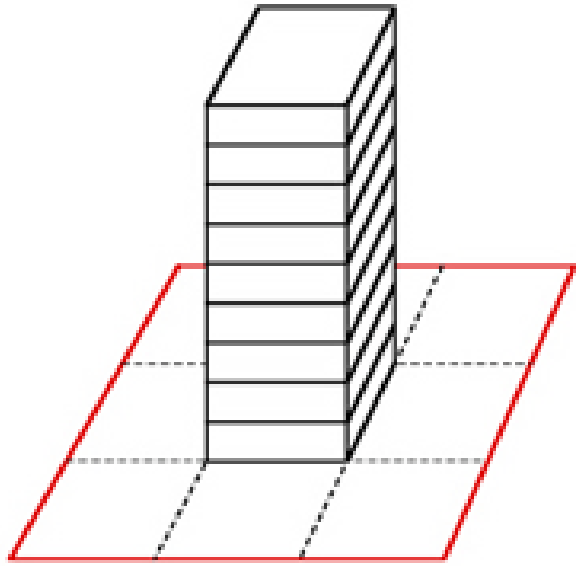
Visualizing FAR



$$\text{FAR} = \frac{\text{Total Floor Area}}{\text{Lot Area}}$$

Visualizing FAR



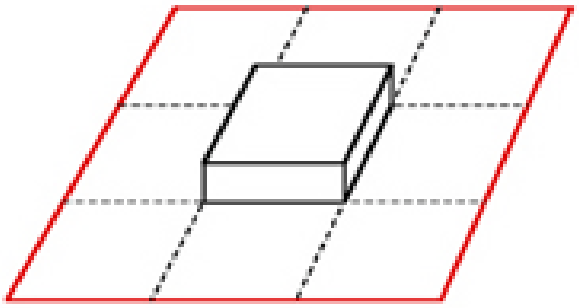


$$0.11 = \frac{1}{9}$$

$$\text{FAR} = \frac{\text{Total Floor Area}}{\text{Lot Area}}$$

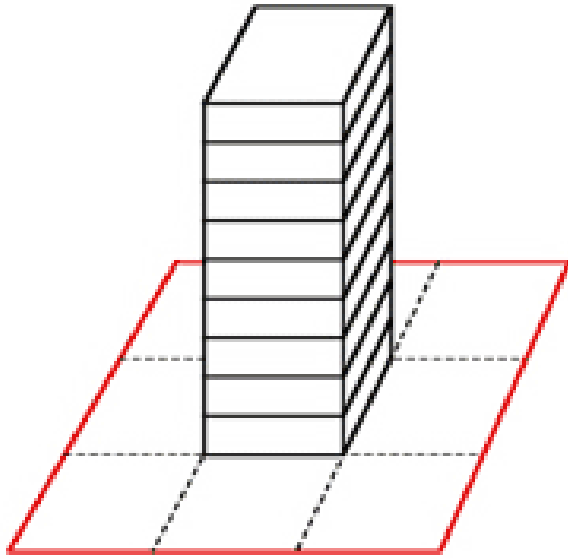
Visualizing FAR + Lot Coverage

Lot Coverage is the relationship between the **ground** floor area of the building and the area of the lot.



FAR = **0.11**

Coverage = **11%**



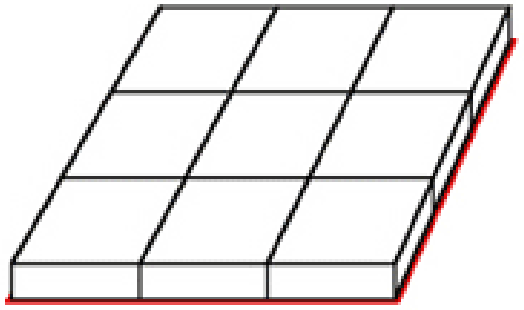
FAR = **1.0**

Coverage = **11%**

Visualizing FAR + Lot Coverage

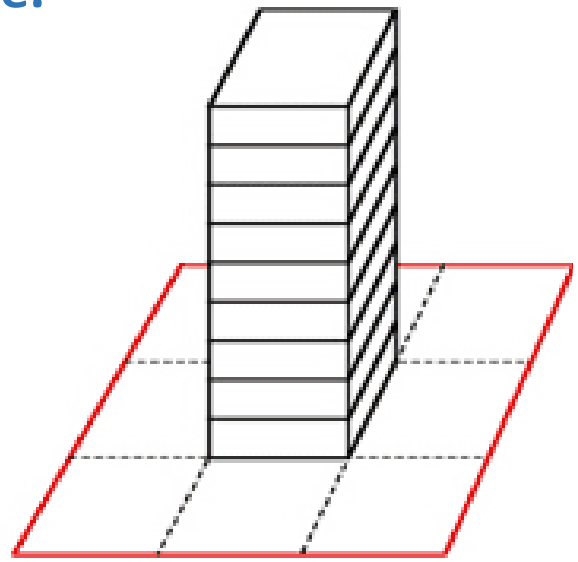
Lot Coverage is the relationship between the **ground** floor area of the building and the area of the lot.

Development scenarios with the same FAR but different coverage will produce varying types of development: for example, low-rise or high-rise.



FAR = **1.0**

Coverage = **100%**



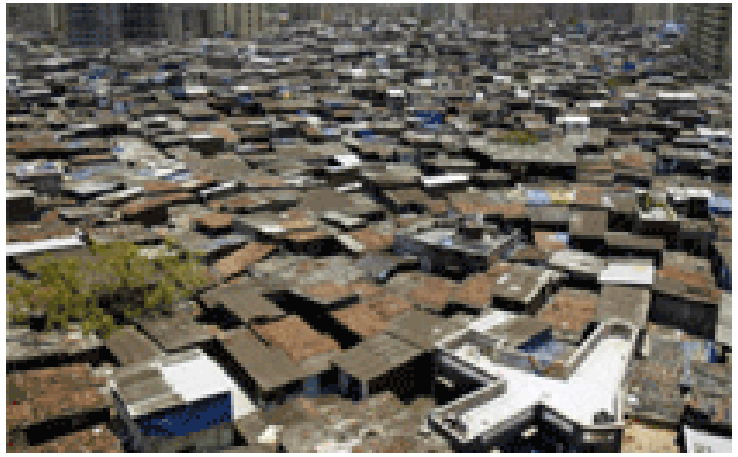
FAR = **1.0**

Coverage = **11%**

Visualizing FAR + Lot Coverage

Lot Coverage is the relationship between the **ground** floor area of the building and the area of the lot.

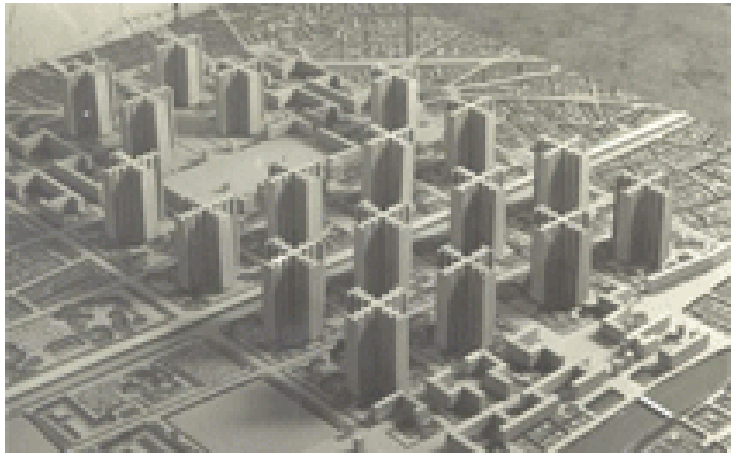
Development scenarios with the same FAR but different coverage will produce varying types of development: for example, low-rise or high-rise.



Dharavi, Mumbai, India

FAR = **2.0**

Coverage = **95%**



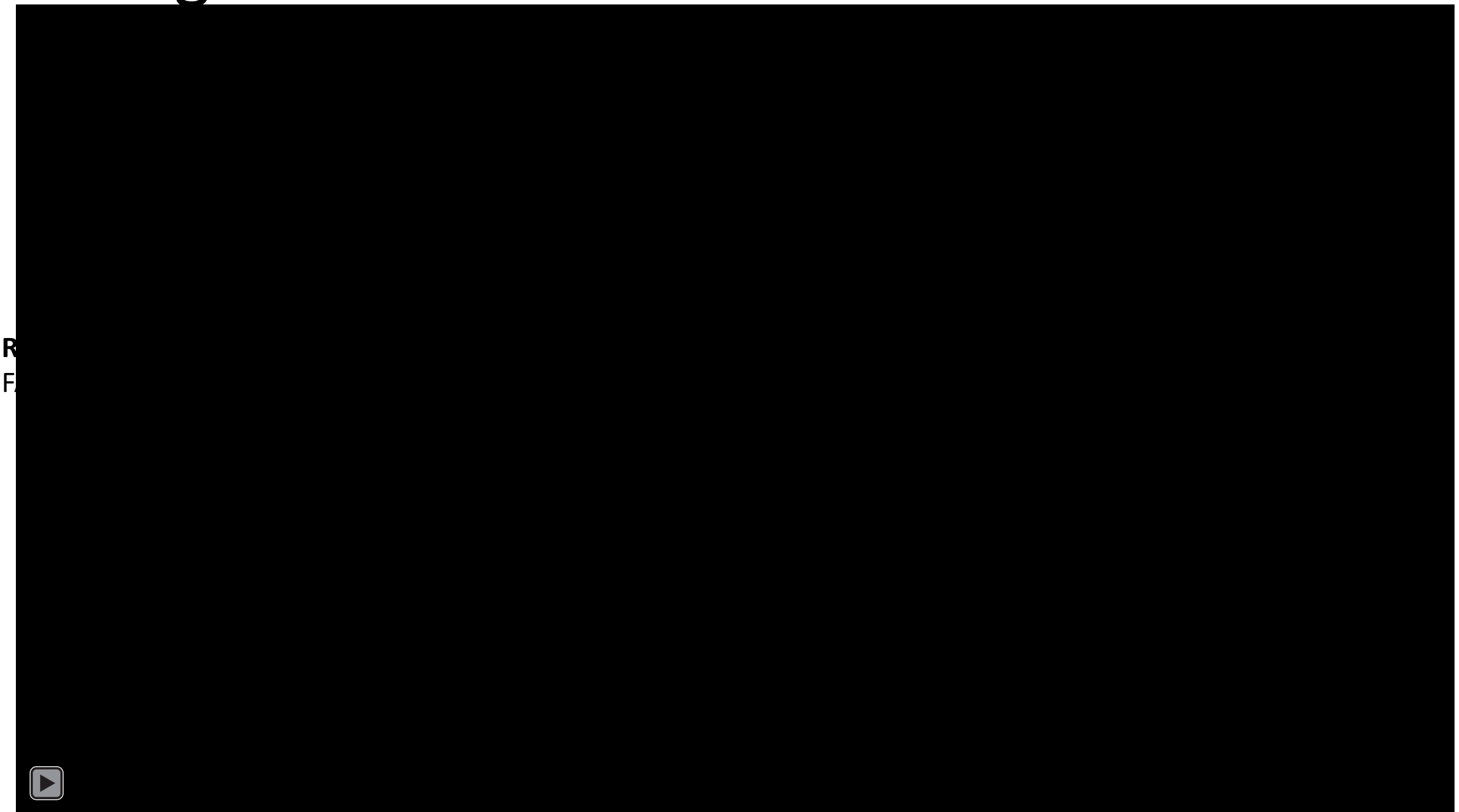
Plan Voisin, Paris, France

FAR = **2.0**

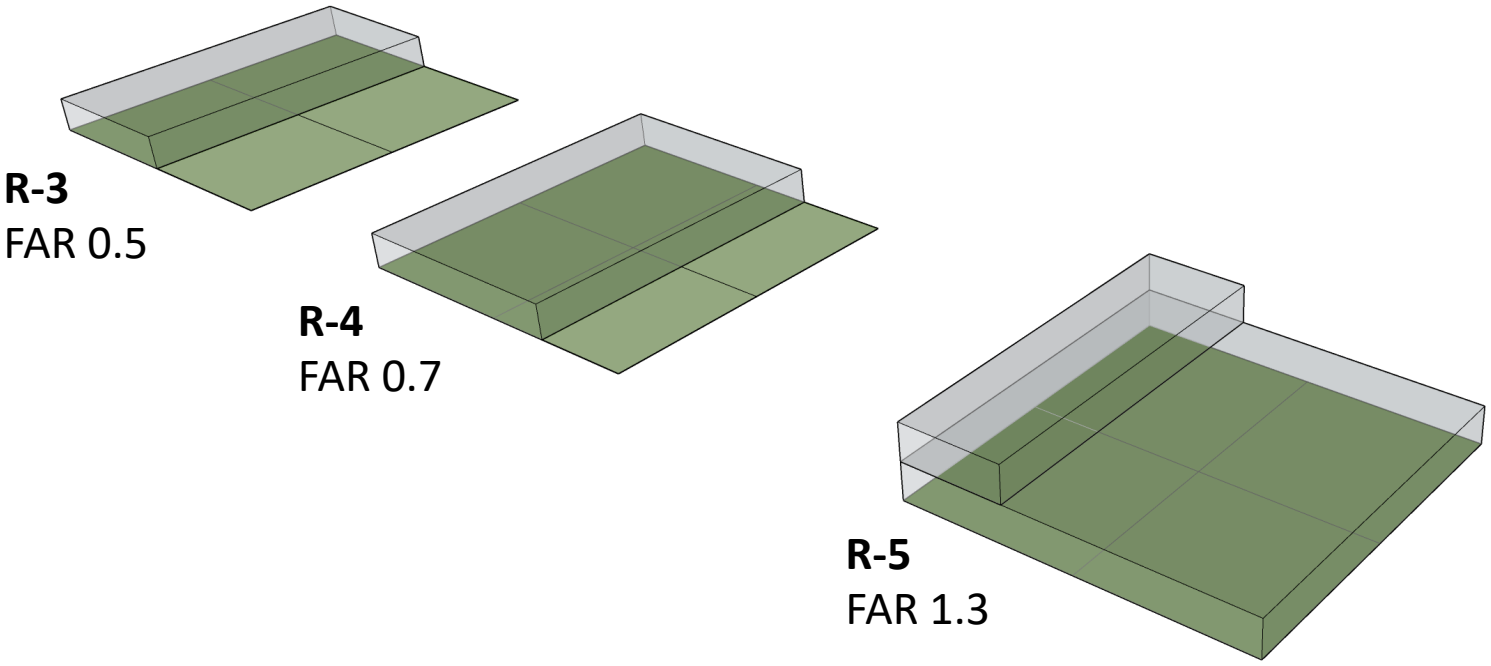
Coverage = **11%**

Existing Standards: FAR

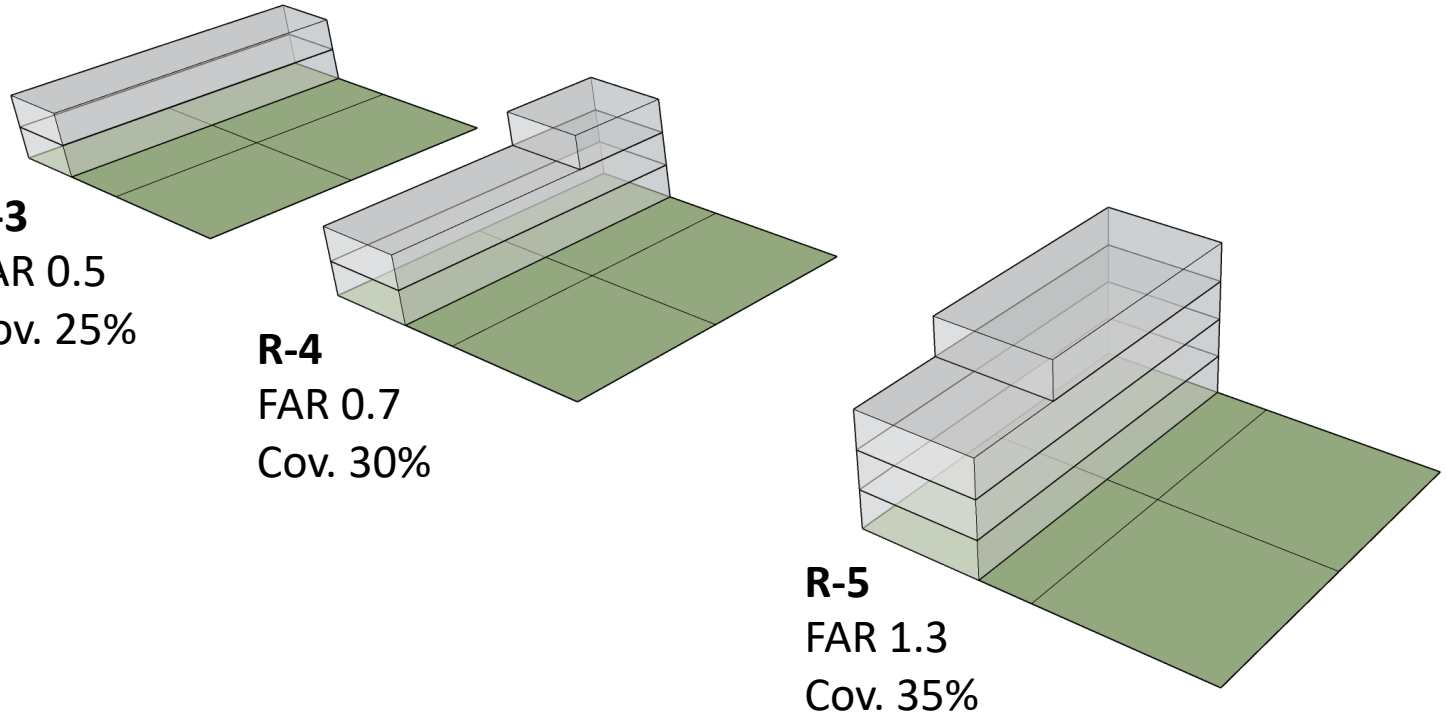
R
F



Existing Standards: FAR (+ property line)



Existing Standards: FAR + Lot Coverage

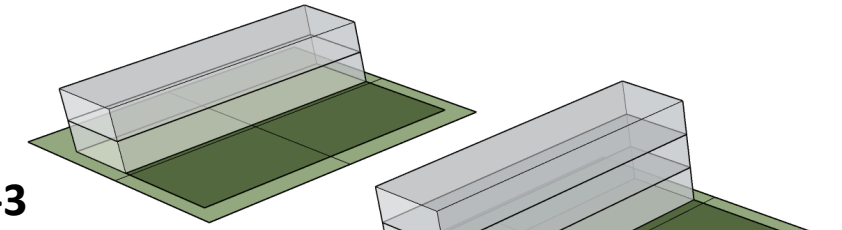


R-3
FAR 0.5
Cov. 25%

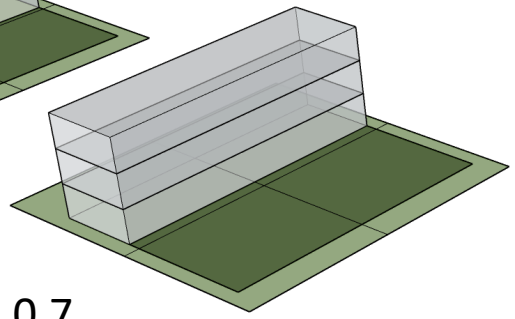
R-4
FAR 0.7
Cov. 30%

R-5
FAR 1.3
Cov. 35%

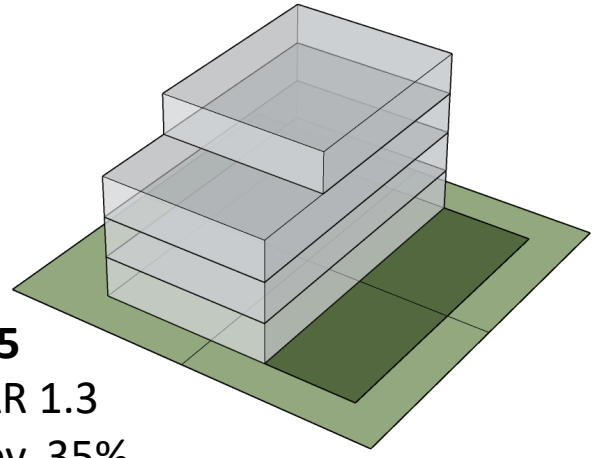
Existing Standards: FAR + Lot Coverage + Setbacks



R-3
FAR 0.5
Cov. 25%



R-4
FAR 0.7
Cov. 30%



R-5
FAR 1.3
Cov. 35%

Setback areas

Remaining area for usable open space & parking

How do we make these zones useful for the next 30 years?

Lift FAR barriers to allow in as many situations as possible:

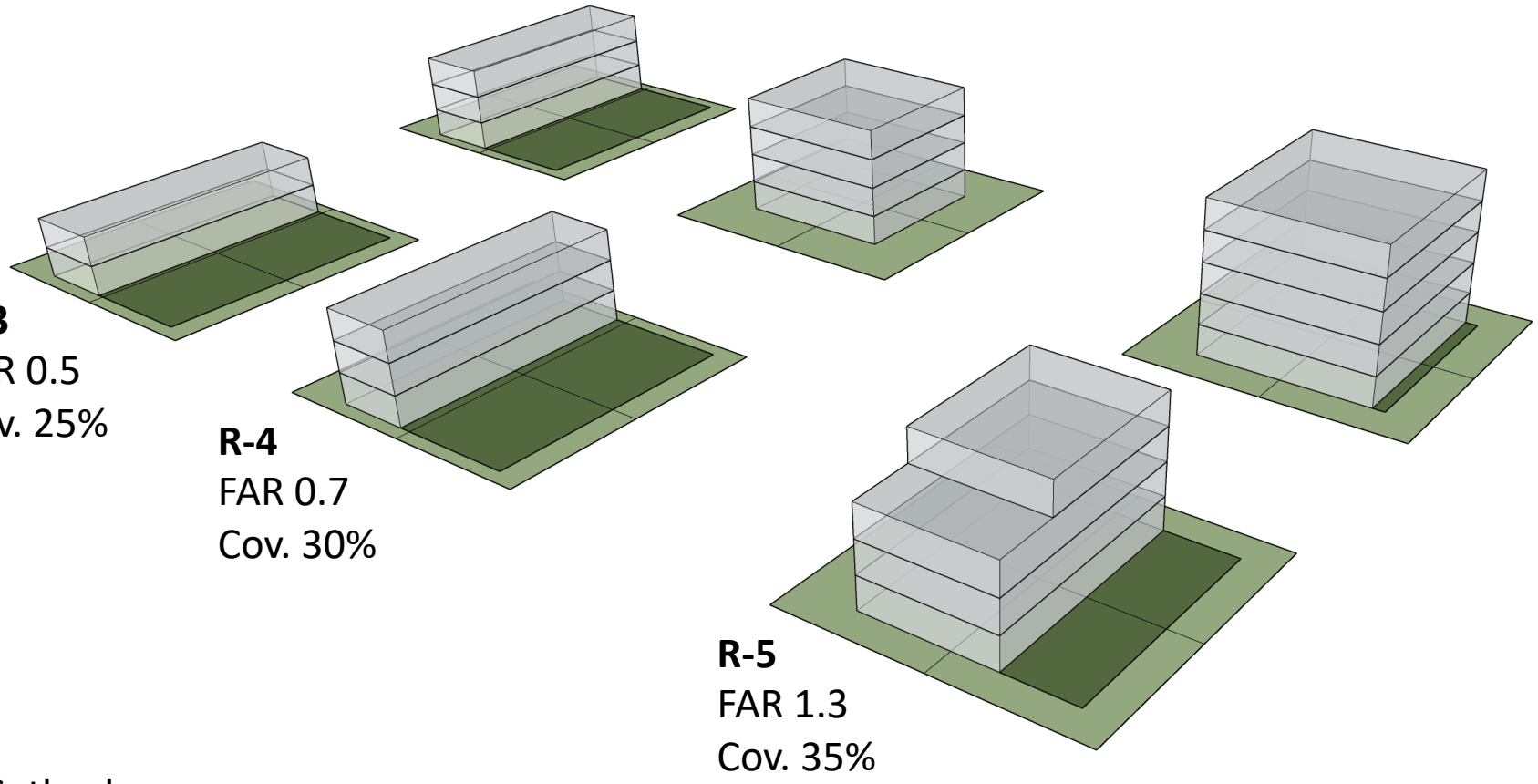
- 3 story R-3
- 4 story R-4
- 5 story R-5

Adjusting the allowable FAR is a first step.

Future text amendments will look comprehensively at:

- Context sensitivity (setbacks and height)
- Open space requirements
- Parking

Proposed Standards: FAR + Lot Coverage + Setbacks



R-3
FAR 0.5
Cov. 25%

R-4
FAR 0.7
Cov. 30%

R-5
FAR 1.3
Cov. 35%

Setback areas

Remaining area for usable open space & parking

ZONE	EX.	PRO.
R-3		
FAR	0.5	**0.75**
COVERAGE	25%	**25%**
R-4		
FAR	0.7	**1.6**
COVERAGE	30%	**40%**
R-5		
FAR	1.3	**2.25**
COVERAGE	35%	**45%**

What does this mean for builders?

ZONE	EX.	PRO.	% Increase
R-3			
FAR	0.5	**0.75**	**50%**
COVERAGE	25%	**25%**	
R-4			
FAR	0.7	**1.6**	**129%**
COVERAGE	30%	**40%**	
R-5			
FAR	1.3	**2.25**	**73%**
COVERAGE	35%	**45%**	

Gives & Takes of Improved Regulation

Quantitative regulatory relief in exchange for qualitative improvements.

- Increased density (FAR) & greater flexibility to build more housing types (ADUs, Cluster Housing)
- Parking reform
- Rethinking open space
- Revising setbacks that are barriers to density (Height:Yard reqs)

All of these should result in:

- Faster through the planning process
- Meet the expectations of the public and the needs of the development community