

Los Altos City Council

Floor Area Ratios (FAR)

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Los Altos Community Development Department



Floor Area Ratios (FAR)



- Shall new floor area ratios be developed?
- If so, which areas or zone districts in Los Altos should they be created for?
- What is the appropriate floor area ratio for a given area or zone district?
- Are there other development standards complimentary to floor area ratio regulations worth exploring?

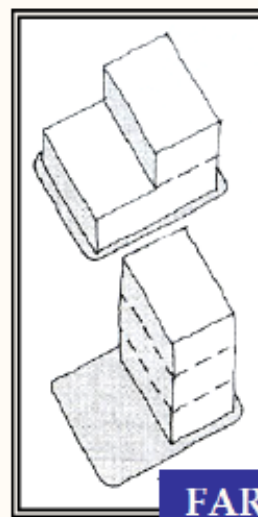
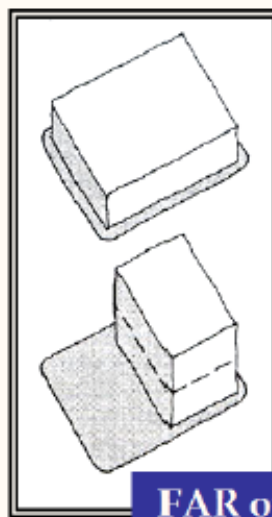
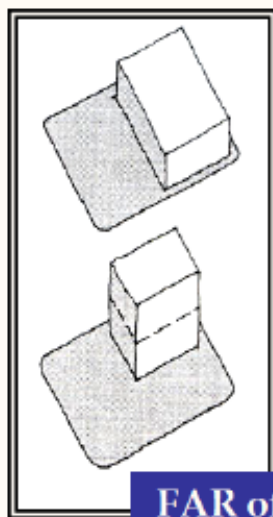


Floor Area Ratios (FAR)

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR): DEFINED

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is a measure of development density. Higher FARs equate to more dense development of a parcel.

$$\text{Floor Area Ratio} = \frac{\text{Building Space Square Footage}}{\text{Land Square Footage}}$$



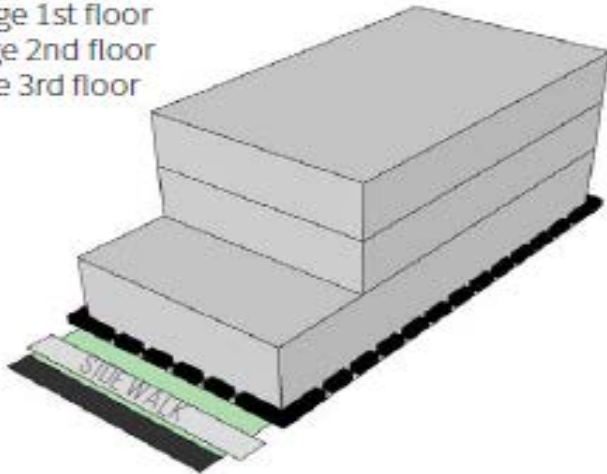
Floor Area Ratios (FAR)



FLOOR AREA RATIO

In areas of Downtown, such as the First Street or San Antonio Road Districts, use of a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in conjunction with height limitations, setbacks/massing, and articulation, may be an additional tool to ensure Downtown appropriate new development. Requiring a certain FAR in these Districts would limit the ultimate square footage of any new development. However, the City could allow for additional FAR coverage as an incentive if the development provided certain public benefits. Examples of public benefits could include publicly accessible open space or off-site public realm improvements, among others.

100% coverage 1st floor
75% coverage 2nd floor
75% coverage 3rd floor



100% coverage 1st floor
100% coverage 2nd floor
50% coverage 3rd floor

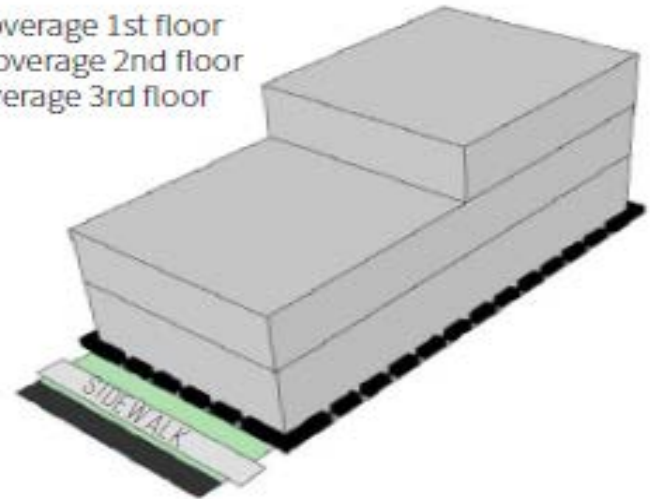


Figure 7: Examples of conceptual 2.5 FAR configurations.

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In general floor area ratios range from .25 for low density residential development to between 2.25 – 2.5 for commercial development in small downtowns.



Floor Area Ratios (FAR)



- Variable FARs, that adjust in line with the height of buildings
- Upper plate height limits
- Wall height limits – especially on upper floors
- Allowances for dormers or roof projections
- Roof pitch standards
- Setbacks for upper floors

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QUESTIONS - ?