



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Steve Regner, Senior Planner
DATE: Oct. 2, 2020
SUBJECT: Downtown Design Project – Exceeding Maximum Height

The purpose of this memo is to respond to concerns expressed by Planning Commissioners regarding how building massing should be regulated when exceeding the maximum height of the zone.

During the September 23, 2020, adoption hearing, Commissioners suggested that the proposed language in Section 70.04.2.1, specifically guidelines G4, G6, and G8, lacked sufficient clarity on how to evaluate development proposals that seek to exceed the maximum height of the zone. The proposed language of G4 can be found below for reference.

- G4. In RC-BC, buildings may exceed the 120-foot height limit by reducing building mass on upper floors and providing at-grade pedestrian improvements. Massing changes on upper floors shall:
- a) Reduce the sense of enclosure for pedestrians along at least one street;
 - b) Increase access to light or sky views for people on abutting streets; and
 - c) Increase access to light for people inside current or future buildings across the street from the proposed development.

Development applying for this Design Guideline shall also provide at-grade publicly accessible open space or on-site creek access and enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience.

The objective of the proposed language is to require development proposals that exceed the maximum height of the zone to reduce the massing of upper floors so there is less of an impact to the street and adjacent buildings when compared to a building of the same height that does not reduce its massing. Staff recognizes that the language was unclear about whether the proposal should be evaluated against a similar building with no massing reduction or the existing development on site. To clarify this, staff proposes the following changes below.

G4. In RC-BC, buildings may exceed the 120-foot height limit by reducing the building mass of upper floors to minimize impacts on surrounding streets and buildings, and by providing at-grade pedestrian improvements. The building mass of upper floors shall be reduced by stepping back façades, shortening façade lengths, or other methods that reduces the massing compared to lower floors which results in:

- a) Reduced the sense of enclosure for pedestrians along at least one street;
- b) Increased access to light or sky views for people on abutting streets; and
- c) Increased access to light for people inside current or future buildings across the street from the proposed development.

Development applying for this Design Guideline shall also provide at-grade publicly accessible open space or on-site creek access and enhancements to improve the pedestrian experience.

This proposed modification, if found satisfactory by the Planning Commission, shall be added to Section 70.04.2.1, guidelines G4, G6, and G8.