

Summary of break-out session comments 03-17-08

A. Step-down from adjacent contributing buildings

1) Should step-downs be required next to historic structures? How would this be quantified?

- Yes, recommend different criteria for 4 different contexts
 - 100% lot coverage
 - 75% lot coverage
 - East-West streets
 - North-South streets
- Yes, “credit” lost step down area using FAR
- Use in Commercial vs residential areas
- Only when there is a difference of more than two stories
- Columbia Square condo given as an example. All in agreement that step downs...

2) What should the measurement be for the width of a step-down?

- Step-downs shall be a minimum of one third or 20 feet whichever is less.
- Study heights that determines quantitative measurements
- 30 feet from the property line
- Height can be no more than two stories above adjacent building
- Step down should be relative to the height of the building next to it.

3) Define adjacency. Should adjacency be treated the same across a boulevard, East-West connecting street, lane?

- Adjacency means immediately abutting, across a lane, or across a street of less than 40 feet.
- Not @ boulevard
- Not @ lane
- Yes @ East/west
- Across the lane, next door, not across the boulevard; language should be very specific

PROS: Maintains scale and proportion of the City; helps reduce show boxes; keep character

CONS: If you get too tight you lose civility; Subjectivity if we don't clearly define ordinance; superficial things happening in design elements; hard to state required ordinance.

B. Floor Area Ratio

1) In the area where 75% maximum lot coverage applies, do we want to see increased lot coverage?

- No, unless there is a definable benefit to the community, such as in illustration 2 on the FAR, or other goals such as affordable housing.
- Not in residential districts
- Yes, in commercial districts
- No, all in agreement with 75%, 25% left over quality is very important

2) If yes, where would this apply?

- If it respects historic adjacency

3) What should be the criteria for approving increased lot coverage within large-scale development projects?

- To achieve architectural compatibility
- Use compatibility standards
- If the building steps down even where not required
- Compelling public purposes such as low income requirements
- Does not come into play if it comes into play

PROS: (assuming the No FAR vote) Maintains scale, improves environment, maintains property value by keeping historic fabric, keeps developers from taking unfair advantage of us.

- C. Maximum square footages or widths that reach up to allowed height.
- 1) Should incentives (Trade-offs) be created to give(up) more height?
 - Yes, in appropriate circumstances to achieve community goals
 - Yes, if historic patterns recreated , tax abatement, lot coverage
 - Same amount of square footage, but different height variety
 - Tax incentives can be helpful
 - Probably a floor here and there
 - 2) If, so, over what percentage of the footprint?
 - 25%
 - 3) Should incentives only be given if they benefit the public good. Define public good.
 - Yes, affordability, quality design and materials, other objectives as stated in Downtown Master Plan.
 - No
 - Public good is significant restoration of historic structure, or restore lane.
 - Museums, public housing, environmental, green roofs

PROS: Bin, presentation or orientation for builders who demonstrate how they comply.

CONS: Put in the Bin, What happens if a historic building burns down? What rules does another structure have to follow?

VGW Notes: Step-downs: Mixing these three approaches – yes. What are criteria for applying?
Depending on _____ in Historic District. Step-down required – historic building-carriage-prime building-
step down for lanes-ratio- East west streets- 2 stories shorter – north-south streets-lanes- one step
down for east/west and two for n/s neighbor.- definable set of rules; 100% lot coverage- skyline rhythm
look at stepdown 100%-75%- 8-4, 8-6- 3 story difference- ordinance between 75%-100% lot coverage

Step down rules can grid it like a zoning chart for e/w, n/s; some measurement from building
immediately abutting, across a lane some other way. Streets, boulevards treated differently.
Oglethorpe example. Bull-Broughton 25 – middle of squares 35 Jones Gordon Harris 25

Whitaker/Drayton 45/50 Historically double the lane – 22 officially.

N/S blockface Bay Street 6 or 7 story not a problem

Step downs across streets in some cases yes.

Threshold issue – step down 3 or more – how much of a step down/

Telfair – LSO Tall building FAR increased

More than 75% when there is some compelling benefit to the community such as affordable housing
specific

Liberty/Oglethorpe rest of residential area good answer Come up with something to allow this on
boulevards

Developers lose with FAR square footage

Affordable housing, Class A office space

Lot coverage with massing – Columbia Place Big mass 25% paved in back

75% anyway think about it you used to be able to this now you can't " _____ " current owner no, future
owner yes Some middle ground bridge to get this

Varied roof line-creative energy- skyline visual compatibility

Can't see this challenge trading off height- No unless definable benefits.

If we wanted a development standard build higher on the front.

Don't want to encourage people fo higher

Language

No, incentives granting incentives not the right word Trade off allowed in exchange inducements