

## January 30, 2013 Public Open House Meeting Summary of Public Comments

The final public open house meeting was held on January 30, 2013 with an estimated 60-70 in attendance. The format of the meeting reflected an informal “drop in” style for citizens to review the project information and provide written and verbal comments. Staff also provided two brief overview presentations of the proposed new Code changes relating to implementation of the recommended strategy options from the Eastside & Westside Neighborhoods Character Study.

Summary of all written and verbal comments received by staff:

### 1. & 2. Where do you live? Do you own or rent?

- Of the 52 people who signed our roster, 33 completed a comment sheet. Five did not own or live in the two neighborhoods and 28 are residents or owners within the two neighborhoods.

### 3. Which actions should be adopted to address the identified objectives and issues for the Eastside and Westside neighborhoods? (Numbers in Table represent # of people responding to question)

Implementation Action		Implementation Action	
Promote the existing design assistance program	19	Revise maximum floor area ratio (FAR) standards	16
Expand notification of variances	19	Limit side wall height to promote solar access	19
Create voluntary design guidelines	21	Address front façade character	17
Adjust side wall height measurement	19	Address side façade character	13
Adjust floor area ratio (FAR) measurement	17	Take no action	8

Other Potential Actions:

- Count balconies as part of FAR
- No further action on any non-voluntary issues
- Promote discussions among neighbors prior to large proposed changes
- Big improvements from previous (2010?) proposal
- Caveat; see if you can tweak limited side wall height to promote solar access so we don't get a bunch of lean-to asymmetrical roofs. Ask Boulder how they will fix this problem.
- FAR already removed by community. Help folks with design!!

### 4. Do you have comments on the potential revisions to existing maximum floor area ratio (FAR) standards?

- Clever with the new ways of measuring FAR & sliding scale by lot size
- Maybe change 250 sq.ft. to 500 sq.ft.
- A change to the floor area ratio calculation, to count high ceilings, is appropriate. The change to address fill dirt hauled in to increase grade, inappropriate. I feel that 40% and 50% floor area ratios are more than plenty. GARAGES SHOULD COUNT TOWARDS THE PERCENTAGE. I never understood the logic behind the additional 600 sq.ft. garage! If someone wants a smaller house and a larger garage,

fine. But to say the garage does not count towards the floor area ratio is just not appropriate. The biggest issue to the neighborhood is the move to the densely populated, fully built out, suburban to urban, change, that will profoundly change the character of old town. To a large degree, the rights of homeowners, and the nature of the real estate market will move in that direction, without regard to any changes government can make. But floor area ratio is the best, most objective, least subject to discrimination, easiest to administer tool.

- I support the new, proposed FAR standards. Regarding balconies needing to be counted as part of FAR standards, please reference house at 122 S Whitcomb with its second story balcony which extends beyond neighbor's garages, uses majority of lot and reduces/diminishes neighbor's privacy.
- I think the changes (if approved) will help resolve some of the concerns presented by citizens in the workshops. Will definitely be an improvement.
- Not sure they go far enough to meet objectives.
- I like what I hear. It sounds like it has the potential to close loopholes.
- I am sure the potential revisions will upset larger lot owners.
- It is a thinly veiled attempt to reinstate the FAR standards that were repealed by the public in '11. It should not be passed and it has been a gross waste of City time and resources and Council is out of line in trying to push it through on short notice before an election.
- Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes!!! The projects that are maxing out the standards or getting "variance" in (is that a word?), are obtrusive, greedy, obsessive, completely against the character of the neighborhoods of Old Town.
- I like these suggestions. I think you've creatively allowed for growth without allowing for obscenity in terms of size.
- Please do not make additional restrictions on building standards. We are right back to what was repealed before. This will damage the development of our growing neighborhood. People will leave or decide to go elsewhere. This will financially impact our neighborhood and home values.
- FAR!! 003 repealed this issue.
- No adjustment to floor area ratio (FAR) measurement. Petition in 2011 was successful and 003 was repealed and City Council stated that if this issue came back, it would not be based on "FAR". The people of Fort Collins spoke via that petition in 2011.
- Looks intelligent, fair, forward-looking.
- Differentiation of NCL & NCM seems arbitrary. Use the NCL standard for both zones. Sliding scale by lot size is good, but the FAR is still too high. It should be .30 for a 10,000 sq.ft. lot in both zones and without the 250 sq. ft. accessory building exception.
- New plan looks very positive in being able to place some limits without prohibiting reasonable expansion of house sizes in the neighborhood.
- Good idea to include elevated basements in the FAR. Should point out in presentations and to City Council that non-elevated basements do not count in FAR thus possible to have more finished square feet than what is listed in the tables presented.
- If the new unit fits the lot it should be ok. Each lot design is different.
- Using a sliding scale by lot size makes sense now. Yes, differentiate between the NCL and NCM zone districts. OK – provide a 250 sq.ft. exception for detached rear accessory structures. Yes, work with a revised floor area measurement method that considers high volume spaces.
- Too restricted, limits creating decent sized family homes with garages. Prohibits diversity and value of property.
- I like them, particularly adding 3' above ground basements and high ceiling rooms to the FAR.
- Yes, differentiate between the NCL and NCM zone districts. Yes, provide a 250 sq.ft. exception for detached rear accessory structures. No to: Work with a revised floor area measurement method that considers high volume spaces.

- Check to see what Boulder is going to do about slanting roofs. Concerned about odd setbacks different on north and south side.
- Include balcony measurements into accounting the FAR requirements/calculations. I think the proposed FAR standards are overly restrictive. Should have existing FAR the same. Limits to side wall height. Should be on a case by case basis. One size does not fit all . . . especially in Old Town. The example used for the NCL zone of a lot of 7,000 sq.ft. seemed like an extreme result. What good is a 250 sq.ft. accessory building.
- There is NO current problem.

**5. Do you have comments on the potential side wall height standards for solar access?**

- Will this result in homes that do not fit into the overall character of the neighborhood?
- Protecting neighbor's light & sun is one of the **most important** requirements. Measurements taken at 12:00 noon, winter solstice. No loss of sun to neighbor needs to be the standard.
- Not really – I think it's a great idea to make the proposed changes.
- Good idea
- It's only fair, for both solar & gardening.
- Solar access is important so 18' is generous.
- At this time, I believe the proposal is too vague and should be studied further before a final proposal is put forth for adoption.
- The value of these Old Town lots and yards is greatly reduced as these extreme projects get taller and closer to lot boundaries.
- My only concern here is that we might end up with funky, lop-sided houses.
- No more standards! Solar access can be blocked by planting a tree and everyone supports tree planting. Standards do not address this without negatively effecting home values.
- For our property it's not a large impact but larger lots are greatly impacted. Large houses are not out of place in Old Town, just need to be done in character.
- What about landscaping – trees grow – is that an issue? Old Town has big trees – do you want them cut down!?
- Limit wall height at the minimum side setback on the north side of the lot to preserve solar access.
- I am strongly in favor of the standards as defined
- Applying only to large additions or new construction is a huge loophole. Somebody could build a 250 sq.ft addition on a roof and significantly shade a neighbor to the north. Is there a sliding scale so houses/additions built at a 5'6" setback can't move up to 18'? Also, the 1:1 height increase for lots narrower than 40' seems overly generous. A tall house on a narrow lot has a greater potential to impact neighbors, so maybe buying a narrow lot should limit what you can do. A height increase of 6" for each foot narrower than 40' with a maximum of 16' would be better.
- North-south impact is addressed well without being overly prohibitive. East-west impacts may need to be considered as well.
- Good idea for north facing wall heights restrictions.
- Doesn't apply to my lot, but it is an important issue. Yes, apply only to large additions and new construction adjacent to a neighbor to the north. Yes, limit wall height at the minimum side setback on the north side of the lot to preserve solar access.
- Properties are in flux. A single story home may become a two story in the future. South properties are always subject to a northern neighbor . . . which may also change height in the future.
- I like the concept although I'm concerned about asymmetrical roofs.
- OK, apply only to large additions and new construction adjacent to a neighbor to the north. Yes, limit wall height at the minimum side setback on the north side of the lot to preserve solar access.
- Solar access protection needs to be set at winter solstice rather than spring equinox.
- Needs to have a variance for homes that are forced to raise their base elevations due to flood plains.

**6. Do you have comments on the potential additional building design standards to address front and side façade character?**

- The illustrations I saw on the poster do not reflect the character of homes in the area. I think it's a good idea but designs need to be tweaked.
- I am in favor!
- This should be approached with caution. Jackson Hole did it and now it looks like a Disney theme park. Variety is good.
- Compatibility with other buildings important.
- Tightening up the standards will ensure that the character of a neighborhood will evolve gracefully.
- I love that you're not only looking at FAR but you're considering design as well. Thank you.
- No more standards! This will negatively impact our neighborhoods.
- This design standard alone could address many of the out of place renovations.
- Provide a menu of options to address the character of front and side facades.
- Positive
- Can't legislate accounting for task. It is a diverse neighborhood. That's part of the flavor of Eastside. Save the cookie-cutter mindset for the "burbs".
- New plan offers good options. Design assistance will help achieve better outcomes.
- Good ideas
- An important issue to maintain the character of the neighborhoods. I enjoyed judging the various facades at the Lopez Elementary workshop. OK, apply only to large additions and new construction – it saves time and effort spent on small projects. OK, provide a menu of options to address the character of front and side facades.
- They are ok
- No to: Apply only to large additions and new construction. Yes, provide a menu of options to address the character of front and side facades. Develop standards for front setback to align with others on the block. Address porches, trim, etc. to mimic nearby older homes.
- Are porches the only way to create a more friendly façade in character? I think the standards are narrow and will create a cookie cutter effect and most likely unintended consequences.
- Why should the City get involved in how people design their homes? It's all subjective.

**7. Do you have other comments and feedback?**

- These neighborhoods are the jewels of Fort Collins, and their character needs to be preserved. It's what makes them so popular.
- Please do not make the building process (permits, notifications, etc.) expensive. Voluntary design guidelines and example designs – Great!
- "Neighborhood Contexts?" On one hand they do seem to **assign a label** to neighborhoods. But so what! I see this as a first step in an unannounced hidden agenda towards mandating HOA. Folks can see the context of the neighborhoods without a government definition.
- Consultation with neighbors before building may reduce disharmony and help create a neighborly feeling. In the case of a builder/developer building a spec house to be sold in near future, hold these houses to the standards & insist on neighborhood meeting for guidance. City needs to be proactive in designating historic home protection recognizing the desirability of living in these neighborhoods and the fact that some people have so much money they can buy, scrape & build anything.
- Keep doing this. I hope City Council will enforce these changes. Keep our neighborhood's historic character.
- Pleased that you have a significantly involved those of us living in the areas. Hope City council has same approach vs. only interests of developers.

- I don't believe there is enough evidence of a problem caused by the current FAR standards that will be solved by the proposed new standards. Furthermore, I feel that Council is attempting to railroad through new standards that the community has shown they do not support (i.e. the 2011 repeal of an extremely similar FAR standard to the one now being proposed). Additionally, the graphs and presentation is misleading (i.e. the 250 sq.ft. exemption for detached structures).
- The market does an excellent job of monitoring the developing and maintaining the market. This tinkering isn't going to do anything except screw up the market and leave some properties that should be address without a suitor. Your building size is ratcheted down so that no one will buy the old houses and fix them up – not profitable. You are seriously messing with the market which is the best control.
- Thanks for all your hard work in this lengthy and difficult process. Even if we pretend not to like you!! ☺ We still appreciate your time.
- Great job so far, we need change for the better!
- I really appreciate how well you all have listened to the community. I feel like you've done a good job at considering all sides of these issues. I also think you've come up with some creative solutions that have the potential to work well. I especially liked being able to see how a newly built house might look different under your new proposals. This really helped to solidify in my mind what exactly the proposals would mean. Thanks for all your hard work.
- The redevelopment and growth of our neighborhood will be stunted with these standards being implemented again. These changes were repealed once before but the agenda of the Council is being pushed. Not the voice of the community. These last minute explanations and last minute finalization of suggestions leading to meetings where decisions will be made is exactly what happened last time. This is not ok. No more standards.
- I worry if we get too prescriptive, young families will not look to move/reinvest in Old Town. Without flexibility, many people will get priced out of the Old Town market. The neighborhood will eventually grow stagnant and start to decline.
- I believe the new construction is good for the neighborhood. Keep the current standards. I thought this was sealed a couple of years ago. The people of Fort Collins have spoken by repealing 003.
- Grade is required to be raised in some of the area because of a high water table, so home owners are being penalized with height restrictions, based on existing City imposed restrictions. In considering financial impacts, both positive and negative impacts should be considered. Improvement of neighboring properties improves the neighborhood as a whole . . . property values go up, and this is what causes taxes to go up. Property value increase only benefits the community.
- Great job. Wonderful outreach. Cooperative approach. Nicely phased. Good communication. Kudos to City, Winter, other support staff.
- Case by case – some projects are more disappointing in their choices than others. Don't punish the many for the disappointments of the few. Happy that due to additions, new builds, etc. that families are able to thrive in Old Town.
- 1. Thank you for finally listening to citizens and council by addressing solar access. It's a good start, but it needs to directly protect solar access (e.g. regardless of lot size or width, or building size, additions or new houses would not be allowed to cast a shadow higher than 5' on a house to the north built at the 5' setback, at noon on Dec. 21). This would allow maximum flexibility for construction without allowing a negative environmental or economic impact (by shading windows) on neighbors to the north.  
2. Why do the standards kick in at 2,500 sq. ft. for new construction, but 3,000 total sq.ft. for additions? 2,000 sq. ft. would be a good threshold for both. Remember, it's not saying a house can't be bigger – it just says you have to consider your neighbors.
- Thanks for the good work.
- Didn't we go through this two years ago? Things are working ok now – no action is needed.
- It appears from this information and my discussion with Abe that converting my one-car garage to a two-car garage will not exceed the potential FAR standard.

- It always seems to go back to the City Council's agenda of changing the FAR and creating restrictive standards that were vetoed last year!!! I feel that these changes affect the property values and desirability of Old Town. WATCH OUT!! Is this even legal? Put it to a vote, not a Council that determines citizen's outcome! Washed A LOT of resources \$\$ to get this FAR changed again. Outrage.
- Provide for neighbors consultation on new building and in some cases remodels. Work toward neighborhood harmony.
- It might be helpful to make a table that shows total FAR by lot size with an assumed addition of a full basement to estimate total possible finished square footage. For example, a NCL lot of 7,000 sq.ft. could allow a 2,650 sq.ft. FAR. If that 2,650 is two floors of 1,200 sq.ft. each plus a detached garage, then a full basement could be 1,200 sq.ft. and usable space would really be closer to 3,600 sq.ft.
- City Council is once again creating a mountain out of a mole hill. Fort Collins is land locked and in one breath the "City" promotes infill projects and building up not out, and in the other breath they restrict future building and improvements by making regulations over restrictive. Fort Collins (City Council) needs to figure out what they really want and they need to listen to all the people – not just the loud few. Regarding high volume space being counted as two floors – why would that matter? This will financially impact the home.
- Can we please finally allow the FAR conversation to die? The citizens spoke in 2011, and they don't want it. Just because there are two City Council members who are so arrogant as to believe that their opinions are more important than the thousands of citizens who signed on to repeal the last FAR proposal doesn't make it right.