

Coordination Between Zoning Code and Historic District Regulations

Following are items considered by Plan Commissioners at the Special Meeting held on December 16, 2020, to focus on better coordination between recommendations in adopted plans and among regulatory policies related to development and redevelopment in historic districts.

- 1) Change the Downtown Height Map in the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the changes recommended in the Lamp House Plan.

Consensus was reached for staff to proceed with changing the Downtown Height Map in the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the changes recommended and adopted in the Lamp House Plan.

Commissioners noted that the area of impact should be focused as narrowly as possible, including using the newly available data in the Dane County Digital Elevation Model to maximize the allowable height while still adhering to view shed recommendations in the plan. In addition Commissioners noted that both property owners and residents should be notified of this step to integrate the Lamp House Plan height parameters into the Zoning Code and be invited to engage in hearings related to implementation.

- 2) Map the building heights proposed in the Williamson Street BUILD Plan in the Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioners reached consensus to move forward on mapping heights in the Zoning Ordinance consistent with both Willy St BUILD I as well as BUILD II.

- 3) Explore mapping setbacks and/or stepbacks in Mansion Hill as suggested in the Downtown Plan.

Commissioners reached consensus to move forward with analysis of all of the Mansion Hill Historic District to map setbacks as was done on Langdon Street.

- 4) Delete the definition of "Height (of a Building)" in Section 41.02 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and rely on the Zoning Ordinance definitions.

Commissioner consensus was to go with staff recommended removal of the definition of height from the Historic Preservation Ordinance and rely on the Zoning code definition for historic districts with the inclusion in the Zoning code of a provision to measure height in historic districts to be inclusive of parapets.

Sentiment also was expressed to explore, in the future, making height definitions consistent throughout the city rather than having a different approach for the downtown from the rest of the city.

- 5) Mansion Hill Local Historic District height

Commissioner consensus was to address the lack of alignment between Zoning code maximum allowable height (5 stories) in the Mansion Hill Local Historic District and the more specific requirement in the Historic District ordinance and as supported in plans for height of buildings to be compatible with buildings built during the period of significance (2.5-3 stories). Consensus was to ask staff to address this disconnect by means of a footnote (or something equivalent) to the maximum height on the zoning height map for lots in the Mansion Hill Local Historic District along the lines of:

“In the Mansion Hill Local Historic District properties on which there currently is a building constructed during the period of significance, the maximum allowed height shall not exceed the height of the historic resource.”

Commissioners also requested that staff do a comparison showing an example of this approach vs. the approach of having a height maximum of 3 stories (option 1) for the whole Mansion Hill Local Historic District.

- 6) Apply a buffer between the 3 story height and 6 story height in the First Settlement Historic District to provide a transition similar to that in Urban Design District 8.

While there was no objection to the step back as conceptualized by staff, Commissioner consensus was not to proceed with this design requirement at this point largely due to lack of time to fully discuss.

The next step, on the items on which was consensus was reached by Plan Commissioners, is for staff to move forward on ordinance drafts or specified analysis and return those items to Plan Commissioners for formal action.