

Small Lot Development Standards in Belltown

Final Proposal

April 2021

OVERVIEW

OPCD is proposing legislation to address certain issues relating to construction on small lots in DMR zones located in Belltown. Currently, lot coverage and setback requirements in these zones require complex building forms with floor plates that gradually decrease in size at various heights. While construction is already challenging on small lots, existing lot coverage and setback standards make it even more challenging because they result in complicated construction, varying floor layouts, and small upper-story floor plates. Advancements in modular and panelized construction are making small lot development more feasible; however, these types of construction require more consistent floor plates to accommodate the stacking of units. The goal of this legislation would be to implement zoning standards that are more appropriate for small lots in order to increase the supply of market-rate and rent-restricted housing. OPCD proposing to transmit legislation to Council for their consideration in early 2021.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Projects meeting the following minimum requirements would be allowed to meet alternative development standards:

- The site is located in a DMR/C 145/75, DMR/R 145/65, DMR/R 280/65, or DMR/C 280/125 zone. (see map on page 2)
- The site is less than 14,500 square feet in size (equal to two platted lots in most of Belltown). Buildings on sites this size can only be built to 145 feet in height.
- At least 75% of gross floor area is in residential use

ALTERNATIVE STANDARDS

Projects meeting minimum requirements would be allowed to use the following alternative standards in order to provide more appropriate massing for smaller lots.

Coverage Limits

Currently, lots less than 19,000 square feet in DMR zones have a maximum coverage limit of 75% above 65 feet and 65% above 85 feet. The first 65 feet have no coverage limit. We are proposing to allow the following alternative:

- For lots 8,000 square feet or less, the first 25 feet in height would have no coverage limit and the project would have to meet one of the following:
 - all floors above 25 feet in height would have a maximum coverage limit of 80%; or
 - all floors above 25 feet in height would have a maximum coverage limit of 85% and the height limit would be reduced by 10 feet to 135 feet.
- For lots 14,500 square feet or less but greater than 8,000 square feet, the first 45 feet would have no coverage limit and all floors above 45 feet would have a maximum coverage limit of 75%. Maximum width standards would also be modified to allow this coverage.

Green Street Setbacks

Currently, development on green streets in DMR zones is required to be setback 10 feet from the green street property line between 65 and 85 feet in height, plus an additional foot of setback for each 5 feet above 85 feet. However, buildings frequently get departures from the stepped setback through design review as it results in a strange shape.

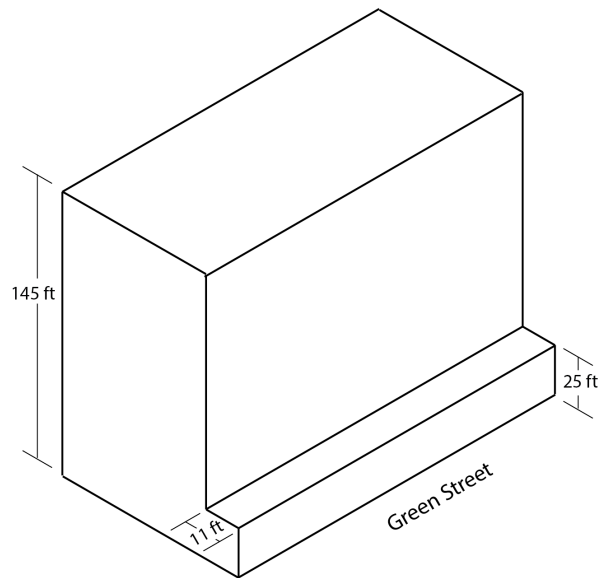
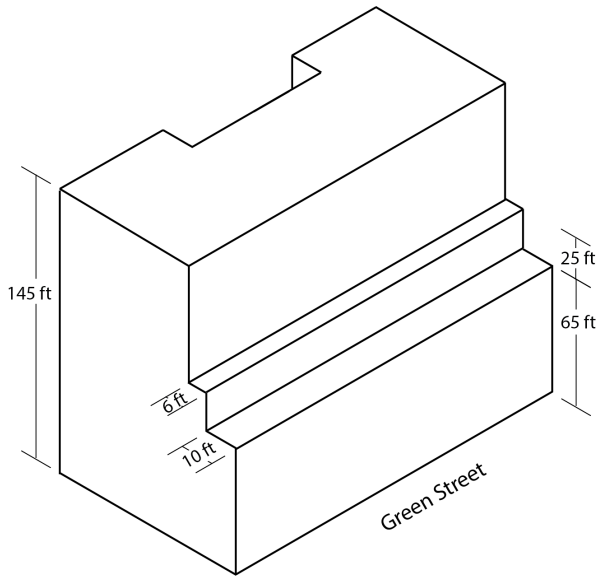
The proposed alternative is to require no setback for the first 25 feet and a setback of 10 feet for the remainder of the building. This alternative would only be allowed on the north side of a green street without view corridor requirements to ensure it does not significantly reduce the amount of light on the street.

Building Width

Currently, the maximum width of a building along an avenue above 65 feet in height is 90 feet. The proposed alternative would modify this to 100 feet for portions of a building above 45 feet in height.

EXAMPLE

Likely Development on Single Parcel Lot Adjacent to Green Street



EXISTING ZONING

- Setbacks at 65 and 85 feet
- Light well in interior of building needed to comply with lot coverage

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE STANDARD

- Setbacks at 25 feet
- More consistent floor plates allow modular or panelized construction

Affected Areas

This proposal would affect the following zones:

- DMR/C 145/75
- DMR/R 145/65
- DMR/R 280/65
- DMR/C 280/125



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