



City of Alexandria, Virginia

Department of Planning & Zoning

Frequently Asked Questions

Proposed Bonus Height Zoning Text Amendment

- I. Will there be a May Community Meeting on the proposed Bonus Height Zoning Text Amendment? *Response:* Yes; Community Meeting #2 will be held on Thursday, May 19, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. It will be virtual via Zoom. To register for the Zoom webinar, please use this link: Registration link: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN__s4au3nXR_SkzUtK2bZG4g

Webinar ID: 939 0324 7787

Meeting Passcode: 215700

Dial in: 301-715-8592

- II. Is there a webpage with information relating to this proposed text amendment? *Response:* Yes; the City's Bonus Height Zoning Text Amendment project webpage can be accessed here: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/zoning/bonus-height>
- III. Who can I reach out to if I want to comment or if I have a question on this proposed text amendment? *Response:* Comments or questions can be sent to the following Department of Planning & Zoning staff:
- Nancy Williams at Nancy.Williams@alexandriava.gov
 - Patrick Silva at Patrick.Silva@alexandriava.gov
- IV. What is Section 7-700 of the Zoning Ordinance? *Response:* [Section 7-700 of the Zoning Ordinance](#) is referred to as the City's Bonus Density and Height Program. This section of the Zoning Ordinance allows for increases in floor area ratio, density and height, and reductions in required off-street parking as incentives for provision of low- and moderate-income housing. There are two elements of Section 7-703:

Section 7-703(A) currently states (and is not proposed to change under the draft amendment) that: *Floor area ratio and density may not be increased pursuant to Section 7-700 by more than 30 percent of the floor area ratio*

and density otherwise permitted by this ordinance, unless a greater percentage increase is specifically designated in a small area plan chapter of the Master Plan. The increase permitted under Section 7-700 is exclusive of other floor area ratio and density increases allowable under any other section of this ordinance.

Section 7-703(B) currently states that: Height may not be increased pursuant to this section by more than 25 feet beyond the height otherwise permitted by this ordinance; provided, however, that no building located in any zone or height district where the maximum allowable height is 50 feet or less may be allowed to exceed such height limits.

- V. What are the proposed changes under the proposed Bonus Height Text Amendment? *Response:* The proposed changes to [Section 7-703\(B\)](#), the Bonus Height provision, are highlighted in red below:

Proposed
7-703(B)

1. Height increases pursuant to this section are not permitted for single-family, two-family or townhouse dwellings.
2. Height may not be increased pursuant to this section by more than 25 feet beyond the height otherwise permitted by this ordinance; provided, however, that no building located in any zone where the maximum allowable height is less than 45 feet or height district where the maximum allowable height is 50 feet or less may be allowed to exceed such height limits.

- VI. How is affordable housing defined? *Response:* Affordable rental housing is defined as housing that is affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI). Workforce rental housing is defined as housing that is affordable between 61% and 80% AMI. In the City, more deeply affordable units, those at 40% AMI or below, are commonly referred to as lower income, or deeply affordable units. More specifics regarding these income categories for Alexandria can be found on slide 4 of the April 12 Bonus Height Informational Meeting presentation which is located on the [Bonus Height webpage](#). Definitions of low- to moderate-income housing vary across the region.
- VII. Does the City have a map of existing affordable housing? *Response:* Yes; a map of existing [Committed Affordable Rental Housing](#) (Constructed and Under Construction) for Alexandria is posted on the Bonus Height webpage; the map can be accessed by clicking the hyperlink.

- VIII.** Where will the Bonus Height apply under the proposed changes? *Response:* It would apply to areas which allow multi-family housing subject to meeting zoning and other regulatory considerations. **Staff is preparing a map to show areas of the City where the proposal would potentially apply.**
- IX.** Will this apply to Single-family, two-family and townhouse dwellings? *Response:* No.
- X.** Where can the City's Height Districts' provisions and map be found? *Response:* The City's height district provisions are found in [Section 6-400 of the Zoning Ordinance](#). The City's height district map can be found online at [Height District Map](#) (*Please be sure that your browser is fully up-to-date as you click onto the hyperlink; once the map appears, click on any outlined height district on the map and information on that given height district will appear in the lower left corner of the map*).
- XI.** What height districts are applicable to Old Town. *Response:* Most of Old Town is covered by either height district #1 or height district #3. Height district #1 has a height limit of 50 feet and height district #3 has a height limit of 30 feet and 50 feet with a Special Use Permit.
- XII.** How many anticipated floors could be built under the proposed text amendment? *Response:* The added height allowed under Section 7-703(B) will not change under this proposal. The allowable amount of height will remain 25 feet. A maximum of two floors could be added for 25 feet with an approved Special Use Permit.
- XIII.** Will the provisions of this proposal be by-right? *Response:* No; in keeping with the existing requirements under [Section 7-702](#) of the Zoning Ordinance, a Special Use Permit, subject to public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council, would be required of anyone seeking bonus density or height under Section 7-700. The community is invited to provide comments at or before both public hearings.
- XIV.** What measures will be taken to ensure that the additional height fits in with the neighborhood? *Response:* As noted Section 7-700 requires a Special Use Permit public hearing. Staff would review the Special Use Permit application for compliance with zoning, other regulatory factors and design compatibility. Additionally, and as noted, public comment on the project would be taken into consideration at the Planning Commission and City Council public hearings.
- XV.** Does this provision increase a property owner's ability to request a rezoning to a higher density or height? *Response:* No; the provision does not change a property owner's ability to request a rezoning or change the criteria under which a rezoning request would be considered.