

Midtown SPI-16 Zoning Revisions - Summary

BACKGROUND

- The current Midtown SPI-16 Ordinance has been in place since 2001.
- After administering the zoning code throughout the last 15 years of intense growth, the City's Office of Zoning and Development has collaborated with Midtown Alliance to identify key revisions that will make the code more effective and easier to use, both for planning staff and the development community.
- Proposed changes streamline text, enhance clarity and consistency, reduce the potential for variation requests, and reinforce Midtown's inherent strengths – walkability, access to transit and a balanced mix of uses to support a high quality of life.
- These revisions are the product of extensive community involvement through our updated Blueprint 3.0 process, and specific outreach to property owners and developers active in the Midtown market.

WHAT IS PROPOSED?

Proposed revisions fall within three categories:

ONE: Simplify and Clarify

- Improve definitions so they are clear and unambiguous.
- Replace text with tables where feasible to present information in a user-friendly format.
- Increase consistency with similar SPI districts in the City of Atlanta.
- Revise maps to be clear and comprehensive (Refer to attachments A, B, C and D)

TWO: Reinforce Priorities – Connectivity, Balanced Uses, Quality Public Space

- **Street typology** - Update street typology map to provide an expanded framework for rational decisions related to curb cuts, loading, ground floor uses and fenestration requirements. This will be a comprehensive guide for site planning and development on all Midtown corridors (Refer to Attachment C – Street Typology).
- **Parking structures and public screening** - Eliminate confusion about the desired appearance of parking decks with revised guidelines for screening. For all facades facing a public or private street, require decks to be wrapped in an intervening building (with conditioned habitable space) at a height of 20' or less above finished grade. At a height of 20' or more above finished grade, one of the following will apply:
 1. An intervening building at an average depth of 20' along the length of the building; or
 2. Along type "A" streets, the parking structure shall be fully enclosed and architecturally compatible with the other buildings on the site.
 3. Along all other street types, the parking structure shall be screened to conceal automobiles from view from adjacent public or private streets, and shall have the appearance of a horizontally storied building.
- **Parking reductions** - Reduce parking maximums to be more in-line with market demand and best practices in transit supported peer cities (ex: reduce office max from 2.5 to 2.0).
- **Shared parking** - Increase efficiency of existing parking investments by allowing shared parking arrangements for public parking without the need for a Special Use Permit.

- **Drive-through service** - Enhance safety for pedestrians and cyclists and reduce vehicle conflicts, queueing and idling by prohibiting drive-through elements.
- **Affordability** – Promote affordable housing options by refining the definitions in the code and aligning incentive requirements with the City/Invest Atlanta's policies on affordable housing.
- **Transfer of Development Rights** - Allow for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for open space (min. ½ acre) and public parking deck (min. 400 spaces) for parcels within SPI-16.
- **Open space** - Incentivize publically accessible, sidewalk-level open space by allowing it to count multiple times towards a project's open space requirements.
- **Public art** - Encourage public art sites by allowing them to count toward a project's open space requirements.
- **Entertainment venues** - Minimize impact of incompatible uses adjacent to residential by allowing large scale entertainment (min. 6,000 SF) venues only by Special Use Permit.
- **Setback** - Clarify setback requirements by providing build-to lines (max. setback) along all street faces and by reducing or eliminating excessive side and rear yard setbacks.
- **Demolition requirements** - Strengthen regulations around demolition permits by requiring that all adjacent sidewalks be constructed to minimum standards within 12 months of demolition.
- **Utilities** - Facilitate unobstructed use of sidewalks by requiring all above-grade utilities be placed underground or to the rear of structures for parcels fronting A and B street classifications.
- **Off-street loading** - Reduce off-street loading requirements to align with best practices.
- **Merchandising in supplemental zone** - Support retailers fronting A and B street classifications by allowing for outdoor display of merchandise.
- **Transparent storefront windows** - Support a vibrant and welcoming pedestrian environment, with increased visibility and improved sightlines by prohibiting opaque or blocked off ground floor windows on A and B street classifications.

THREE: Promote TOD Principles Throughout Midtown

Based on the current SPI-16 zoning map, there are some parcels that are closer to rail transit stations yet are not within the SPI-16 "Transit Station Area" boundaries, while other parcels further away are within these boundaries.

In reality, virtually all of the area in SPI-16 is within a short walk (6 mins) of a rail transit station, and an even shorter walk to multiple bus transit options.

In an effort to address current inequities and continue to promote walkability and access to alternative modes of transportation, the revised zoning proposes a menu of performance-based incentives to achieve increased density outside the transit station area boundaries (Refer to Attachment D – Midtown Bonus Incentives). The existing bonus of 3.2 FAR for parcels within Transit Station Areas will remain and the following opportunities will be available to all parcels within SPI-16:

- **Retail Bonus** – new street-fronting retail or restaurant uses for a minimum of 20% of the building footprint (existing bonus retained) = 2.0 FAR
- **Affordable Housing Bonus** – to encourage development of affordable housing in market rate residential developments = 3.0 FAR
- **Buried Parking Bonus** – structured parking that is located below sidewalk level grade on all Type A and B streets = 3.0 FAR
- **Public Parking Bonus** – new parking structure with 400 or more spaces that are not used to satisfy the parking requirements for any on-site or off-site uses; limited to one such location for

each eligible area on the Public Parks and Parking Map; shall be located a minimum distance of 1,000 feet from any other site utilizing this bonus = 2.0 FAR

- **Reduced Parking Bonus** – on-site parking provided at less than 50% of the maximum parking allowed = 0.8 FAR
- **Green Building Bonus** – professional documentation that the project would achieve a minimum level of LEED Gold or equivalent, utilizes non-potable water sources for 100% of outdoor water use, demonstrates a 10% reduction of energy use in comparison to the City Energy Code requirements = 0.5 FAR
- **Connectivity Bonus** – new street, pedestrian path or shared vehicular access (alley) to an adjoining property and meeting specified design criteria; documented perpetual easement or dedication recorded in the office of the Superior Court, referenced to deed book with a copy provided to the Office of Zoning and Development = 2.0 FAR
- **Building Reuse** – if the structure is fully reused as part of other on-site development of an equal or greater floor area = 1 s.f. reused = 2 s.f. bonus; and reused bonus does not count toward floor area
- **Public Park** – (min. area of 20,000 s.f.), limited to one such location for each eligible area on the Public Parks and Parking Map; shall be located a minimum distance of 1,000 feet from any other site utilizing this bonus = 1 s.f. public park = 8 s.f. bonus to a maximum of 2.0

The maximum density in SPI-16 is capped at 10.2 FAR. The only exception to this is via the provision of certain bonuses for Affordable Housing, Buried Parking, or Public Park, or via a special use permit for the transfer of development rights (TDR).

For questions or additional information, please contact Keyetta Holmes in the Office of Zoning and Development – Kmholfmes@AtlantaGa.Gov