

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission

FROM: Planning Staff

DATE: February 9, 2016

SUBJECT: Downtown Zoning Premium Evaluation – 2/5/16 Draft Amendments

Following your working session on January 12, staff asked our consultant ENP & Associates for one last revision to the proposed premium amendments that would balance strengthening the premium thresholds, prioritizing uses and needs that the development market is not currently providing, and ensuring a sustainable, efficient, and desirable downtown.

Megan Masson-Minock has offered a two-stage approach. Half of the maximum premium FAR allowance, up to 150% FAR in the D1 district and up to 100% FAR in the D2 district, is designed to be relatively easily attained. Downtown developers will have ample flexibility to plan mixed use buildings, buildings with sufficient density to support mass transit, and buildings with the critical mass of occupants to support a 24-hour downtown. The relative ease of incorporating these “Tier 1” premiums serves to further the goals of a wide variety of all of the City’s adopted plans and policies. Most developments using Tier 1 premiums should be considered mid-rise buildings, likely between six to ten stories tall.

However, earning the full premium FAR allowance, 300% in the D1 district and 200% in the D2 district, will both require significant investment by a developer and offer our greatest FAR bonus. In exchange for the possibility of a large-scale, high-rise development in the downtown, the City will gain one of two unmet needs of our community, affordable housing or an exceptionally low impact development.

Staff recommends the Planning Commission schedule the proposed amendments for a public hearing on March 22.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo
2/5/16