



**CHARLOTTE.**

## **Fact Sheet: Floor Area Ratio Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance - #2014-97**

### **Events**

2009: Planning staff became aware of a city-wide trend:

- Institutional uses (such as churches and schools) located in residential districts, were growing and needed to expand, yet had limited land available to expand the use or accommodate parking.
- Neighborhoods were experiencing: 1) intrusion from expanding institutional uses (new buildings and/or additional parking); and 2) increased traffic in neighborhoods, as institutional uses grew.

2010: Queens University was completing a campus master plan:

- Representatives of Queens approached staff about rezoning land to accommodate their expansion. Staff inquired about the details and determined that their issue was similar in nature to other institutional uses.
- Staff concluded that this issue wasn't just a Queens University issue and that rather than a single rezoning for Queens that there was a systemic issue with the current standards related to floor area ratios for institutional uses and a citywide text amendment would better address the issue.
- Planning staff convened a Community Advisory Group to explore the challenges facing institutional uses and neighborhoods.
- Stakeholders included representatives from Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, REBIC, universities, and neighborhoods. Several meetings were held.
- A text amendment to add new regulations excluding parking decks constructed as an accessory use to an institutional use from being counted toward the floor area ratio maximums was presented to the Planning Commission on February 8, 2010 and permission to file was granted.
- The text amendment was intended to minimize the impact of increased parking for institutional uses located in residential neighborhoods. By encouraging these uses to utilize structured parking facilities, the potential for overflow parking on abutting streets is reduced. This approach also reduces the potential for demolition of existing residential structures to accommodate additional surface parking lots.
- Design standards included in the text amendment are intended to minimize the visual impact of parking structures on abutting neighborhoods.
- The text amendment helps to limit the amount of surface parking and environment impacts.
- In addition, counting structured parking in the floor area ratio calculations for institutional uses promotes the use of surface parking which is not counted toward the floor area ratio calculations.
- 2010-33 was approved by City Council on June 21, 2010.

2014: A judge ruled that the City Council's 2010 statement of consistency repeated the state statute language, and did not explain why the text amendment was reasonable and in the public interest.

- Text amendment refiled at City Attorney's suggestion. A new public hearing is scheduled for October 20, 2014.



**Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Definition**

Floor area ratio (FAR) is defined as the total floor area of a building(s) on a parcel of land divided by the gross area of the parcel. It does not include area used exclusively for surface parking of vehicles or building or equipment access (such as stairs, elevator shafts, and maintenance crawl space), but does include the area used for a parking deck.