

Existing Zoning Code – Corona del Mar Village

Under the existing zoning code, home size is determined by a “floor area ratio” (FAR) calculation which is essentially a lot’s square footage after setbacks have been deducted, multiplied by the allowable factor (1.5 on Balboa Island and Corona del Mar, and 2.0 for the rest of Newport Beach).

Parking requirements for a single family residence (R1) must be one enclosed garage space and one carport (covered or uncovered). The garage space is included in the total square footage while the carport is not.

A duplex (R2) can meet its parking requirements differently than an R1. A duplex can use enclosed garages or carports (covered or uncovered). That is, there is no enclosed garage requirement for a duplex.

Proposed Zoning Code – Corona del Mar Village

Under the proposed zoning code revisions, the floor-area ratio (FAR) used to calculate square footage limits would be replaced throughout Newport Beach with a building envelope concept comprised of front, back and side-yard setbacks and a height limitation, as well as a new “open space” requirement intended to reduce the visual impact of buildings from the street and neighboring residents. This “open space” would be achieved by modulating building structure and elevations (think of how a layered wedding cake might look). Since there is no limit on square footage, buildings could theoretically double in size utilizing below-grade space. The committee recommended this approach because they believe it gives architects and owners more latitude in creating interesting designs and larger homes.

Parking under the new code no longer allows the use of carports, and now requires two enclosed garage spaces for a single-family (R1) residence; three enclosed garage spaces for R1 homes in excess of 4,000 sq ft.

A duplex (R2) would be required to have a total of two enclosed garage spaces and two carports (covered or uncovered).

Corona del Mar Exception

In the mid 1970's, Newport Beach adopted the 2x floor-area ratio calculation city-wide to calculate building square foot limits. In the mid 1980's a survey of Corona del Mar residents and property owners revealed that the majority of residents believed 1.5 x FAR was more appropriate for the village area where lots were typically smaller than in most other Newport Beach neighborhoods. Balboa Island had earlier requested the same exception for similar reasons.

In 2009, Balboa Island requested that they be excluded from the proposed new building-envelope concept and maintain the 1.5 FAR calculation to determine building size. In April 2010, another survey of Corona del Mar residents was conducted, and again the conclusion was that the 1.5 FAR calculation was more appropriate for the smaller lots normally found on the Flower Streets in Corona del Mar. To offset the square footage needed to comply with the proposed garage requirement, a 200 square-foot allowance was added to the 1.5 FAR calculation for the newly proposed Corona del Mar exception.

April 2010 Newsletter Survey Responses Statistical Summary

CdMRA Spring 2010 Newsletter and survey was mailed to all residential addresses in Corona del Mar (Zip 92625), approximately 6350.

88% of survey respondents wanted to maintain the character and village atmosphere in the Flower Streets, and don't believe that can be achieved if the floor area ratio is increased over what it is today.

The number of survey responses exceeded what we needed to achieve a 95% confidence level within +/- 10%. Therefore our results are statistically significant, and we can conclude with a 95% confidence level that 78% to 98% of all CdM residents would respond in favor of maintaining the current 1.5 FAR.

Our actual response percentages were 88% in favor of maintaining the 1.5 FAR, 5% in favor of eliminating the FAR, and 7% had no comment.

Note: Accuracy depends on the percentage of the sample that picks a particular answer. If 99% of the sampling said "Yes" and 1% said "No," the chances of error are remote, irrespective of sample size.

Sampling of CdM Village Responses

- We are losing the great beach cottage feeling in exchange for pretentious Mediterranean mansions.
- We are very much in favor of leaving the zoning at 1.5FAR. Please fight for keeping us from having such huge homes on the small properties. It takes all the light away from the smaller homes. Thank you for asking for our input.
- I vote to keep Cdm home size as is at 1.5 per home. And put a stop to Super sized/Over sized homes.
- Do we need to destroy one of the main reasons individuals want to live here?
- Yes, keep the existing 1.5 FAR. We are the only single story house left on our corner. We need to preserve as much of the beach cottage feel as we can
- The City does not enforce their current code. Many of the new homes are granted requests for going into the setbacks so houses are getting closer and closer together. The mechanism for figuring height requirements is so convoluted that the existing height "limit" is meaningless. If someone wants to build a home larger than their lot will allow they should either buy a lot that is large enough or buy more than one lot.
- I favor maintaining the existing 1.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) building standard for Corona del Mar, such as Balboa Island has done.

- We are definitely FOR MAINTAINING the 1.5 FAR ratio; "Mcmansions" ruin our village atmosphere
- We have lived in the flower streets for almost 25 years and love the character of our neighborhood. We are strongly in favor of maintaining the existing 1.5 floor area ratio!! We suspect that if more CdM residents were made aware of the possibility of the zoning code being changed to allow even larger houses than are currently squeezed into individual lots, they would be strongly opposed to such action being taken.
- I am in favor of keeping the 1.5 Floor Area Ratio, as far as the zoning codes are concerned. I have emailed the City Council about my concerns about the mansionization of the Corona del Mar village. Whatever happened to the city's statement that they wanted to maintain the charm of the neighborhoods. Just take a look at the Ahmanson House on Ocean Blvd. This residence does not maintain the charm of the neighborhood. The size of the homes being built to replace the original cottages is ruining the quaint look of the neighborhoods.

- Like every era, new houses are built which add an exciting look to CdM. Two story homes are often architecturally attractive and enhance the look of the town. Yet, some homes in beach areas have a third floor tower. How can my skepticism be allayed that City Hall in Newport has not bent the FAR's for certain homes?
- I am responding to an article in the Corona Del Mar resident's association newsletter re the possible zoning code change in my neighborhood. I do not mind a new buyer tearing down a small house and replacing a new one on the same lot, (because that is what we bought seven months ago) but I do not like the idea of some giant house being built next to my small existing lot. So, please, do not change the current 1.5 FAR limitation, whatever that means.
- We are Corona del Mar residents and are writing to advise you that we strongly support maintaining the 1.5 FAR limitation for Corona del Mar. The charm and appeal that we paid so dearly for would be lost if the zoning code changes that are being contemplated are enacted.
- We favor maintaining the existing 1.5 floor area ratio (FAR) building standard for Corona del Mar such as Balboa Island has done. This standard was developed as a result of a community wide survey. In the 30+ years we have lived in Corona Del Mar, we have seen tremendous increases in traffic and congestion. This is due to the fact that when we moved here, most lots consisted of modest front owner occupied homes with small apartments over the garages. Through the years, these homes have been replaced by much larger homes. Condo conversions on many lots have resulted in structures that occupy the entire plot of land. Please do not allow a zoning change that will encourage this overbuilding. We cannot go backwards to the community of the past but we can prevent a zoning change that will have a detrimental influence on the future of our community
- Keep CdM's charm. If people want the larger homes, then they need to purchase adjoining lots where the ratio would stay the same and yet allow a larger structure for those that want such. Having the beachy feel with cottages and smaller dwellings keeps that olde charm that is unique to this area, and Balboa Island. If one needs a huge home, there's plenty of other nearby options in Newport/Newport Coast - let's have some differentiation and keep that old SoCal feel that is rapidly going away. Really, when you think about it, only CdM, BI and Laguna Beach retain what old CA used be like - overbuilding will ruin that and will ruin the feel of the area forever - it can never be gotten back. Property values will increase either way - let's fight to have the village feel which is unique to only a couple OC areas (and even rarer in LA and getting that way in San Diego).
- Keep the FAR at 1.5 and work to minimize masionization.
- Favor maintaining the existing 1.5 FAR building standard for CdM. The charm of the village is being lost with the ongoing construction of big houses.

- We favor maintaining the existing 1.5 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) building standard for Corona del Mar. And enforcing it for responsible residential development to preserve our beach community and relate with existing residences in CdM.
- I am in favor for maintaining the existing 1.5 FAR code. Otherwise the charm of the neighborhoods are in jeopardy.
- We already have too much "manionization"!
- I favor maintaining existing 1.5 floor area ratio building standard for CDM, or even making it smaller.
- I am for anything that keeps house to lot ratio down, encourages setbacks that allow green and fresh air and maintains the reasons people love to come to CDM.

Sampling of Planned Community Reponses

- We feel very strongly that we should keep the 1.5 FAR limitation. It is important to us that the charm of CdM will be maintained (like it is in Laguna Beach)
- I definitely prefer to keep the 1.5 FAR zoning. We absolutely do not need larger homes in our little neighborhoods.