Summary of Baseline Mansionization Ordinance as of 03/21/08

Amends Sections 12.03 (Definitions), 12.04 (Zones – Districts – Symbols), Subsection C of Sections 12.07 ("RA" Suburban Zone), 12.07.01 ("RE" Residential Estate), 12.07.1 ("RS" Suburban Zone), 12.08 ("R1" One-Family Zone), Section 12.21.1 (Height of Building or Structures), 12.23 (Nonconforming Building & Uses), Section 12.28 (Adjustments), Section 12.32 (Land Use Legislative Actions), and Section 13.13 ("RFA" Residential Floor Area District – Supplemental Use Districts) of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC).

- Amend existing Buildable Area and Floor Area definitions, and add new Residential Floor Area and Base Floor definitions.
- Rename Subsection C of each zone, and include new Residential Floor Area limits and 20% Residential Floor Area Bonus in each zone.
- Revise the existing height requirements to include a different height for flat roofs, add a Single-Story Height District, and amend this section to reference the new Residential Floor Area limits in each single-family zone.
- Amend the Nonconforming Section of the Zoning Code to incorporate the new Residential Floor Area limits.
- Amend the Zoning Administrator authority to include 10% Adjustments to Residential Floor Area limits.
- Amend the Zones – Districts – Symbols and Land Use Legislative Actions Sections to add "RFA" Residential Floor Area Districts to list of Supplemental Use Districts available.
- Create a new Section 13.13 establishing the enabling language for "RFA" Residential Floor Area Districts.

Lots Affected

Properties zoned single-family residential (R1, RS, RE9, RE11, RE15, RA, RE20, and RE40), not located in Hillside Area or Coastal Zone.

Applies to 304,410 properties.

Overwhelming majority of lots are zoned R1, and half of these (118,816) are in the 5,000 & 6,000 square-foot (sq-ft) ranges.

	No. of Lots	Percentage
R1	234,575	77.06%
RS	39,779	13.07%
RE9	2,343	0.77%
RE11	11,695	3.84%
RE15	780	0.26%
RA	14,971	4.92%
RE20	159	0.05%
RE40	108	0.04%

New Definitions for Single-Family Development

Residential Floor Area (RFA) definition:

The following **would** be counted towards the total square-footage:

- The area within the exterior walls of all structures on a lot, except as stated below.
- Portions of building, in excess of 100 sq-ft, with ceiling height greater than 14 feet (ft) would count as twice the area.
- The area of stairwells will only be counted once.
- Any attic, or portion thereof, with ceiling height more than 7 ft.

The following **would not** be counted towards the total square-footage:

- First 400 sq-ft, of covered parking area.

- Detached accessory buildings, no greater than 200 sq-ft; the total combined area not to exceed 400 sq-ft.
- First 250 sq-ft, of porches, patios, and breeze-ways with a solid roof open on at least 2 sides.
- Porches, patios, and breeze-ways that have an open lattice roof.
- Basements when the floor or roof above does not exceed 2 ft in height above the finished or natural grade, whichever is less.

Base Floor definition:

- Largest of the floors at or above grade that is not considered a basement.
- Includes the area of attached covered parking if part of the same story.
- All levels within 4 vertical feet of each other shall count as a single floor.

Objectives Accomplished:

✓ Current Floor Area definition inadequate, geared to commercial and industrial structures.

✓ New definition includes portions of building that add significantly to bulk of structures, thereby addressing massing concerns.

✓ Simplifies implementation of the proposed ordinance by clarifying intent and terminology.

FAR Reduction & Articulation Bonus

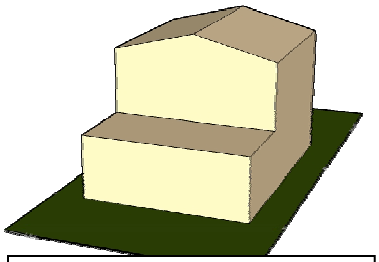
Rename Subsection C of each single-family zone to "Area (Development Standards)" section, and move the new Residential Floor Area limits to each zone.

Reduce the existing Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for each zone from 3:1 by Buildable Area and change it to an FAR by Lot Size for each zone with transitions for larger lots within a zone, as shown below:

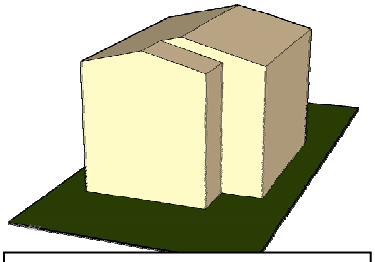
Zone	Lot Size	FAR (% of Lot Size)
R1	5,000 sq-ft min.	50%
	Lots ≥ 7,500 sq-ft	*45% or 3,750 sq-ft, whichever is greater*
RS	7,500 sq-ft min.	45%
	Lots ≥ 9,000 sq-ft	*40% or 4,050 sq-ft, whichever is greater*
RE9	9,000 sq-ft min.	40%
	Lots ≥ 15,000 sq-ft	*35% or 6,000 sq-ft, whichever is greater*
RE11	11,000 sq-ft min.	40%
	Lots ≥ 15,000 sq-ft	*35% or 6,000 sq-ft, whichever is greater*
RE15	15,000 sq-ft min.	35%
RA	17,500 sq-ft min.	25%
	Lots ≥ 20,000 sq-ft	*20% or 5,000 sq-ft, whichever is greater*
RE20	20,000 sq-ft min.	35%
RE40	40,000 sq-ft min.	35%

Add a new 20% Residential Floor Area Bonus (20% increase from whatever the FAR allows, not an additional 20% of the lot size) if at least one of the following methods is utilized in the design/construction of the homes:

- **Proportional Stories Method** - all other stories are no more than 75% of the largest floor of the primary structure.
- **Front Facade Stepback Method** - at least 20% of the building frontage facing the front property line is stepped back at least 20% of the total building depth, rounded to the nearest foot.
- **Green Building Method** - new residential units are rated through the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Homes program with a target of certification at the "Certified" or higher level.



Proportional Stories Method



Front Facade Stepback Method

When lots are smaller than 5,000 sq-ft in the R1 Zone, a 30% RFA Bonus is allowed.

Over a third of the homes built under the proposed ordinance will be on R1 properties in the 5,000 to 7,000 sq-ft range and have a base development potential between 2,500 – 3,500 sq-ft, and between 3,000 – 4,200 sq-ft when the 20% RFA Bonus is utilized.

Objectives Accomplished:

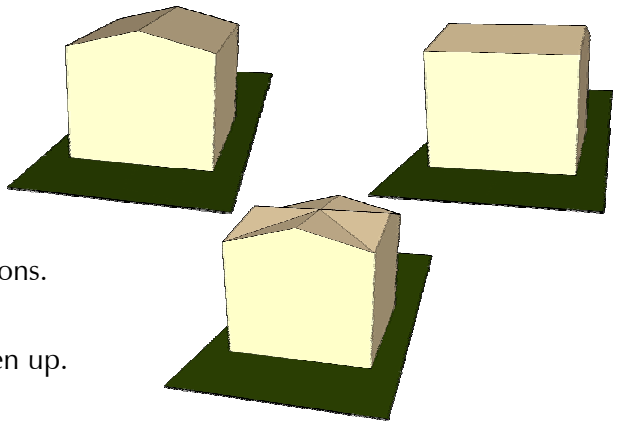
- ✓ Gives zones a unique scale for development, FAR is no longer "one size fits all".
- ✓ Discourages large box-like structures and creates incentive for articulated or green buildings.
- ✓ Extra area is mitigated by the resulting articulation of the building mass, or by reduced energy consumption.
- ✓ Ensure that substandard R1 lots are not negatively impacted as a result of the overall FAR reduction and that a reasonably sized home can be built.

Maximum Height Depending on Roof Slope

Revise the existing height requirements to include a lower height for structures, or portions of structures, with flat roofs:

R1, RS, RE9
25% Roof Slope or Greater: 33 feet
Less Than 25% Roof Slope: 28 feet

RE11, RE15, RA, RE20, and RE40
25% Roof Slope or Greater: 36 feet
Less Than 25% Roof Slope: 30 feet



Slope can be used in any number of configurations.

Objectives Accomplished:

- ✓ Ensures that mass of taller structures is broken up.
- ✓ Box-like structures have a lower height.
- ✓ Reduces "looming" factor – a concern commonly raised by the public.
- ✓ Varied rooflines allow more light & air to reach neighboring properties, add visual interest, and enhance transitions between properties.

Single-Story Height District

Add a new Single-Story Height District available only for properties zoned single-family residential.

- Limits construction to a single-story.
- Sets a maximum height limit of 18 feet.
- Communities could request this new height district through standard zoning procedures.
- Would **not** be applied to any neighborhood as part of this action.

Objectives Accomplished:

✓ Way to preserve single-story neighborhoods that want to stay single-story.

Residential Floor Area Districts

Add a new "RFA" Residential Floor Area District that will permit neighborhood-specific RFA limits that are higher or lower than established by this ordinance.

Intended for areas where a majority of community members wish to raise or lower the FAR in order to preserve the existing character of their unique neighborhood.

Districts will have a minimum area of 100 acres (just under a quarter-mile radius).

Objectives Accomplished:

✓ When property owners believe the proposed FAR limits are too restrictive or not restrictive enough, the RFA District creates an avenue for a community to consult with each other and determine if a larger or smaller FAR is more appropriate for their neighborhood.

Zoning Administrator Adjustments

Grants the Zoning Administrator Adjustment authority (discretionary action) that will allow for an increase of up to 10% beyond the proposed RFA limits.

- Adjustment may only be up to 10% because the proposed provisions already allow for two primary ways for a property owner to increase the amount of habitable square-footage: 20% RFA Bonus and habitable basements exemption.

The Variance process will remain available when there are special circumstances or hardships.

Objectives Accomplished:

✓ Increased flexibility in the application of the FAR limits when special circumstances are present.

Additional City Planning Commission Directions

1. Return to Commission 100 days from date this ordinance is adopted by the City Council and provide progress report addressing “flat” lots in Hillside Areas.
2. Monitor construction of single-family homes in areas affected by this Ordinance and report back to Commission with evaluation of effectiveness of this Ordinance in dealing with mansionization problem one year from the date Ordinance becomes effective.