



City of Phoenix
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Staff Report
Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment
Z-TA-2-17-7
June 29, 2018

Application No. Z-TA-2-17-7: Amend Section 1202 (Regulating Maps) of the Phoenix Zoning Ordinance to replace the Downtown Code map to amend height provisions for the property located at the northwest corner of Central Avenue and Willetta Street.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the amendment of the height provisions of Z-TA-2-17-7 as shown in the height map in Exhibit A of the staff report.

BACKGROUND

The northwest corner of Central Avenue and Willetta Street is a vacant lot located within the Downtown Gateway Character Area in the Downtown Code and is adjacent to the Central Avenue light rail corridor. The intent of the Downtown Gateway Character Area in the Downtown Code is for a “high-density, vibrant corridor with a mix of residential and commercial developments for transit riders.”

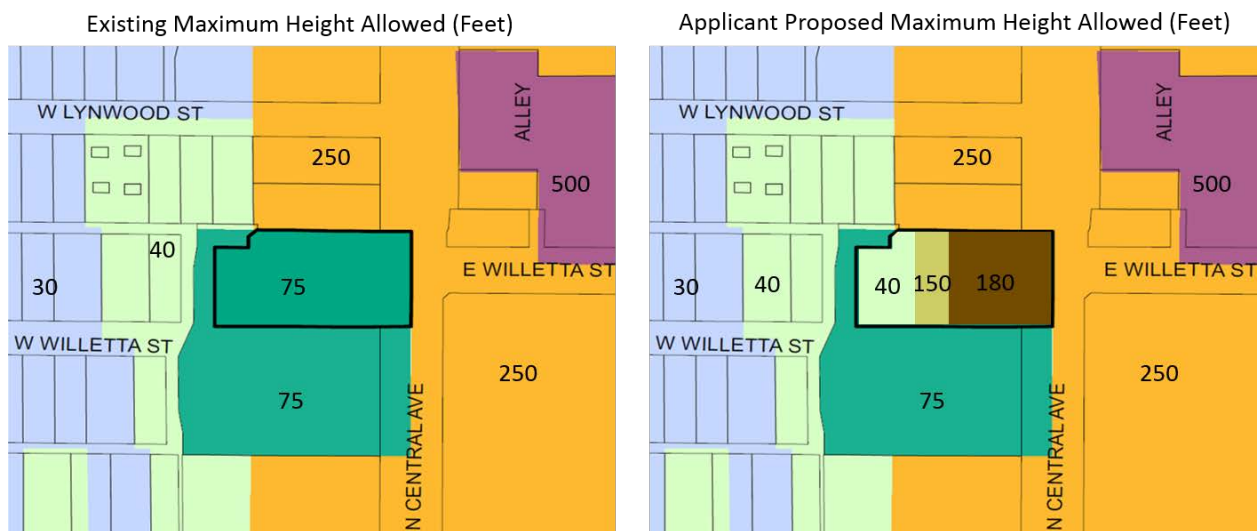
The site is adjacent to the Roosevelt North Character Area, the intent of which is to preserve the unique character and design of the historic properties with single-family homes. These properties typically have large front yard setbacks, homes with porches, lush landscaping and turf. Carriage houses or garages are often accessed from the front yard or alley by a port-cochère.

As designated by the regulating height map in the Downtown Code, the current maximum height allowed on the subject site is 75 feet. The property located to the south of the site also has a maximum height allowed of 75 feet and is currently developed with the Artisan Lofts on Central. North of the site is the Old Spaghetti Factory restaurant, which has a maximum height allowed of 250 feet for the eastern portion of the site and



maximum height of 40 feet on the western portion, used as the restaurant's parking lot. Across Central Avenue, to the east, the maximum height allowed is 250 feet. The Roosevelt North Character Area, which has maximum heights allowed of 40 feet, is located to the west of the subject site.

The applicant's request is to amend the existing 75-foot maximum height to allow a maximum height, from the west to east, of 40 feet, 150 feet, and 180 feet on the subject site (outlined in black), as represented on the image below and shown in Exhibit A. The maximum building height of 180 feet is not a current designation within the height regulating map in the Downtown Code and if approved it will need to be added as a new height category.



In addition, the small strip of land that is located to the west of the subject site and which allows a maximum height of 75 feet, is an undeveloped retention area for the Artisan Lofts on Central property and is not owned by the applicant.

Downtown Code

The Downtown Code is a form-based code that regulates the form of development to ensure it is pedestrian-oriented for an urban environment within Downtown Phoenix. The Downtown Code includes regulating maps for maximum height, density, character areas, side street and pedestrian streets, buffer alleys, and the Arts, Culture and Small Business Area. Because these maps regulate the development standards for development within the Downtown Code boundary, any changes to these regulations are processed as a text amendment and not as a rezoning case. Although a rezoning case could be subject to stipulations, such as conformance to a site plan, or specific design criteria, the text amendment process cannot be subject to stipulations. However, any development that is planned for the site will need to go through the City of Phoenix site plan review processes and comply with the Downtown Code requirements.

The current maximum building heights that are designated in the Downtown Code height regulating map are based on the standards that were allowed in the underlying zoning of the parcels at the time the Downtown Code was adopted in 2010.

History of the Subject Site

In 1981, the subject site was rezoned from C-2 (Intermediate Commercial) to C-2 HRI (Intermediate Commercial, High-Rise Incentive District) through the Text Amendment Case No. Z-162-81. This case also rezoned a significant portion of the Central Avenue Corridor to the HRI designation. During that rezoning process the Willo Neighborhood (north of McDowell Road) and other residential areas east of Central Avenue, were very involved in the drawing of the C-2 HRI rezoning lines. The C-2 HRI zoning designation allows up to 250 feet in height.

In 2001, the subject site and the parcel located to the south were rezoned from C-2 HRI (Intermediate Commercial, High-Rise Incentive District), R-4 (Multifamily Residence District), and P-1 to the Urban Residential (UR) zoning district through Rezoning Case No. Z-104-00. The UR zoning district allows up to 75 feet in height.

In 2003, the parcel to the south developed as the Artisan Lofts on Central. The subject site was intended to be Phase II of that development, but it was never completed.

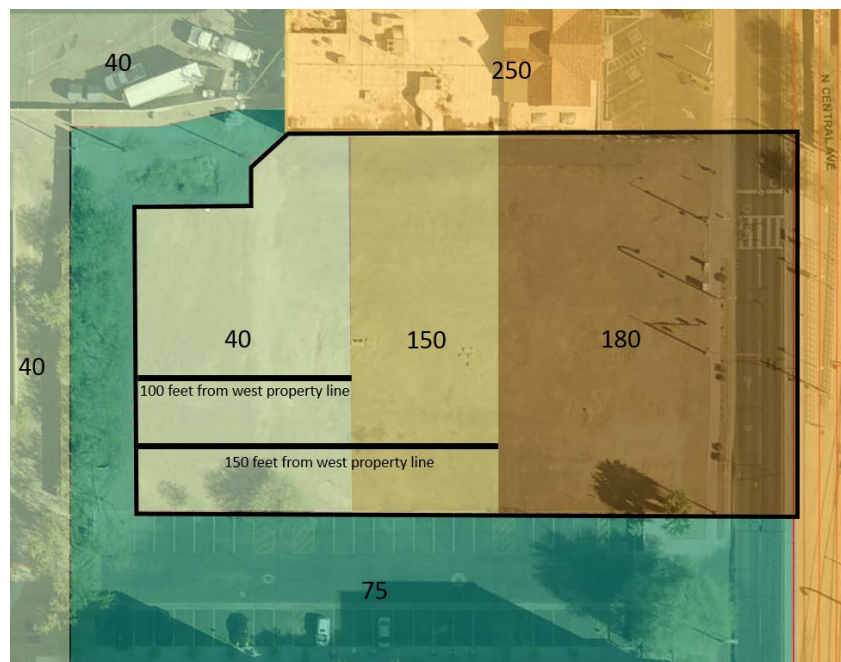
When the Downtown Code was adopted in 2010, the subject site had a zoning designation of Urban Residential and a maximum height allowed of 75 feet, which is the basis for the current maximum height allowed of 75 feet in the Downtown Code height regulating map.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Setback from Roosevelt District Neighborhood (Roosevelt North Character Area)

The applicant's request provides a large buffer from the Roosevelt Historic District (Roosevelt North Character Area) with a maximum building height of 40 feet for 100 feet of their property, measured from the western property line, depicted in the image below. This 40-foot designation is approximately 50 feet from the west edge of the alley in the adjacent character area (Roosevelt North Character Area).

The applicant's proposal is in excess of the setback requirements for buildings over 40 feet that are adjacent to historic properties in the Walkable Urban Code (Section 1303 A.3). The Walkable Urban Code is a zoning option applicable to properties outside of the Downtown Code that are within the Transit Oriented Development Policy Plan Districts located along the light rail corridor. The Walkable Urban Code is the most comparable zoning designation to the Downtown Code because they are both form-based codes.



The Walkable Urban Code requires that for buildings that are between 40 and 80 feet in height, there is a minimum 25-foot setback from the property line. For buildings that are 80 feet and above, there is a minimum 30-foot building setback from the property line, plus a one-foot setback for each two-foot increase in height, up to a maximum 75 feet setback. This request provides a 100-foot area with maximum height of 40 feet before the maximum building height changes to 150 feet in the middle portion of the site. This setback measurement does not include the existing 30-foot undeveloped retention area located to the west of their site (nor the 20-foot alley), which further buffers the Roosevelt Historic District (Roosevelt North Character Area) from development that may occur on the site.

Transit Oriented Development Strategic Policy Framework

The site is located less than a quarter mile from the McDowell Road and Central Avenue light rail station and is along the Central Avenue light rail corridor. The Transit Oriented Development Strategic Policy Framework, originally adopted in 2013, identifies policies and place types that are designed to shape walkable and mixed use environments and focus redevelopment within a half-mile of high capacity transit stations. The identified environment for the McDowell Road and Central Avenue light rail station area is Major Urban Center. Major Urban Center is a place type characterized by medium to high intensity with building heights typically from four to eight stories, with incentive heights of up to fifteen stories.

The requested building height maximums represent a range of heights that could be achieved within the Major Urban Center.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that the applicant's request provides a height transition from the allowed maximum building heights within the area. Because the site is between parcels that allow 75 feet (to the south) and 250 feet (to the north), it is important for the subject site to offer a height that complements each of these designations to provide a reasonable height transition for the area.

Additional height on the subject site is warranted, given the subject site's location along the light rail corridor and within a quarter mile of the McDowell Road and Central Avenue light rail station and is in line with the adopted Major Urban Center place type. Staff believes the applicant's request provides an appropriate height transition from the parcels with lower height entitlements to the south and west to those with higher height allowances to the north and east.

Staff recommends approval of the amendment of the height provisions of Z-TA-2-17 as shown in the height map in Exhibit A of the staff report.

Writer

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Exhibits

A. Proposed Changes to Height Regulating Map

EXHIBIT A

Text Amendment Z-TA-2-17-7: Downtown Code Height Map Revisions

Proposal:

Amend Chapter 12, Section 1202 (Regulating Maps) by removing the old map, and inserting new map as follows:

- C. The height for any property in the Downtown Area shall not exceed the following unless a height bonus is allowed by the Character Area and approved by Planning and Development Department staff, or an appeal is approved by the Design Review Committee (DRC). In no event can the height exceed the airport height limit: **(NOTE: SUBJECT PARCEL IS CIRCLED IN RED)**

