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MEMORANDUM

TO: Fort Myers Beach Local Planning Agency
FROM: Bill Spikowski
DATE: July 2, 2002
SUBJECT: **LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, Floor Area Ratios**

At the June 25 LDC workshop we discussed the new “floor area ratio” concept for setting upper limits on the bulk of new buildings. This concept would replace the “lot coverage” concept which is in the current LDC but which has not been regularly enforced in the past.

Lot coverage is the percentage of a site that is covered by a building or structure. (Driveways are considered to be structures.)

Floor area ratio, which would replace lot coverage, is the combined floor area of all stories of a building divided by the size of the site.

- All floor space under roof would be counted, including the square footage of underbuilding parking; driveways are *not* counted, nor are unroofed spaces such as porches, patios, or pool enclosures made totally out of screen.
- The size of the site includes the square footage within the site’s private property line, minus wetlands, canals, or other water bodies, and minus the sandy beach seaward of the old coastal construction control line (CCCL).

An advantage of using floor area ratios to regulate building bulk is that due to floodplain regulations, all new residential buildings at Fort Myers Beach are required to be multistory, often with a loft or additional living story on top of the main living story. Lot coverage simply ignores all second and higher stories; lot coverage is essentially a measure of impervious ground coverage rather than a valid measure of building bulk or intensity.

To begin testing the validity of the floor area ratio caps proposed in Table 34-3 (page 87 of the proposed LDC's chapter 34), I have computed the floor area ratios for all 225 new homes and duplexes that were built at Fort Myers Beach since 1990. The average floor area ratio for all new houses and duplexes has been about 0.45, and the average floor area (including underbuilding parking) has been about 3,875 square feet; both averages have held steady during the past decade. The table below presents the results for those buildings with a floor area ratio of 0.67 or higher. These floor area ratios are based on the records of the Lee County property appraiser, which I then adjusted slightly to match the definition of floor area ratio in the new LDC.

<u>Street Address</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Year Built</u>	<u>House Size in square ft.</u>	<u>Lot Size in square ft.</u>	<u>Floor Area Ratio</u>
220 Ostego Dr.	RS-1	1990	3,536	5,012	0.71
61 Mango St.	C-1	1995	9,930	13,910	0.71
144 Mango St.	RM-2	1998	4,124	5,468	0.75
155/157 Anchorage St.	TFC-2	1990	5,816	8,017	0.73
174/178 Anchorage St.	TFC-2	1996	7,466	9,449	0.79
21068 St Peters Dr.	RS-1	1991	5,207	7,511	0.69
121 Coconut Dr.	RS-1	1998	3,416	4,695	0.73
5390 Williams Dr.	RS-1	1998	4,518	5,946	0.76
5365 Palmetto St.	TFC-2	1996	4,479	5,626	0.80
21666 Indian Bayou Dr.	TFC-2	1995	6,108	9,108	0.67
6036 Estero Blvd.	TFC-2	1996	5,549	7,692	0.72
203 Egret St.	RS-1	1992	5,471	7,123	0.77
131 Albatross St.	RS-1	1992	4,427	6,594	0.67

The only building on this table affected by the CCCL is 61 Mango Street; my preliminary estimates suggest that the size of that lot lying *landward* of the old CCCL is only about 7,350 square feet, which would raise the floor area from the reported 0.71 to 1.35.

Over the summer it would be useful for LPA members to drive past each of these buildings to gain a visual understanding of floor area ratios. The buildings are listed in this table from north to south to simplify this tour.

While looking at these buildings, note that the June 17 draft of Table 34-3 would limit new houses in single-family (RS) zones to a floor area ratio of 0.60, whereas the table above shows six new homes in that district larger than this size (and my master list contains twelve others between 0.60 and 0.66). I will be reconsidering the 0.60 ratio over the summer and I would welcome your suggestions.