

# BAR Process and Height District Ordinance Changes

## Frequently Asked Questions

### BAR Process

#### **What is the intention of updating the Board of Architectural Review processes?**

Changes are being proposed to the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) procedures to ensure the fairest, most timely and predictable process for both the applicant and the board.

#### **What are the major changes proposed regarding the BAR?**

The Board of Architectural Review is considering adopting updated Rules of Procedure that would allow more give and take between the board and the applicant, after public and board comments are received. The ordinance changes related to the BAR call for the adoption of new construction principles for an applicant and the board to consider in the design and evaluation of projects, sets out the procedure for the review of projects, and adds definitions to provide for purposes of clarity.

#### **How would this affect my property?**

If your property falls within the BAR's purview, it would still need to be reviewed by the BAR for any exterior changes to the property. If your property is not currently in BAR jurisdiction, there would be no change for your property – nothing about the BAR's area of review has changed. If your property is undergoing a change that will be reviewed by the BAR, it would be reviewed under the new principles process.

### Height Districts

#### **What is the intention of updating the height districts?**

Charleston's height zoning map has been reviewed extensively and the updated zones reflect the height range of buildings currently in that area or neighborhood and the City of Charleston Master Plan. The intent is to protect and enhance Charleston's historic character while also considering the rights of property owners and plans for new construction.

#### **What is the major change proposed regarding the height districts?**

Height would now be measured in stories, rather than feet. The height map is divided into zones, and areas have been assigned the allowable height by stories as a guide for new construction. This does not affect any current structures. For projects that demonstrate extraordinary architectural merit, the board may award a half-story of additional height.

#### **What is the benefit of measuring height in stories versus feet?**

Measuring buildings by stories rather than feet is easier for most people to visualize when a new project is being considered. Restricting height allowance by stories, rather than feet, also allows for overall better design and proportions of individual stories.

#### **How would this affect my property?**

The height allowance on your property would be converted from feet to stories. Based on the context of your property's immediate surroundings, it is possible that the overall height allowed on your property has changed, either upwards or downwards. This proposed ordinance does not affect any current structures, only new construction.