

From: [Sean Suder](#)
To: [Wayne Bergman](#); [Jennifer Hofmeister-Drew](#); [James Murphy](#)
Subject: FAR
Date: Monday, November 7, 2022 4:23:23 PM
Attachments: [image004.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

*****Note: This email was sent from a source external to the Town of Palm Beach. Links or attachments should not be accessed unless expected from a trusted source. Additionally, all requests for information or changes to Town records should be verified for authenticity.*****

Here is a draft FAR definition for your review and consideration:

Floor Area Ratio (FAR): Is the gross floor area of a principal building divided by the size of the lot, expressed as a decimal number. For example, a building with 3,000 square feet of gross floor area located on a 10,000 square foot lot has a FAR of 0.30 or 30%, while the same building located on a 15,000 square foot lot would have a FAR of .20 or 20%. The following shall be included in gross floor area for the purpose of computing FAR:

- a. Exterior and interior walls (that is, the thickness of the wall is included) **I think this is not necessary and difficult to decipher.**
- b. Laundry rooms, mechanical rooms, closets, storage rooms, *built in cabinets and media niches*. **FAR should be limited to gross floor area. This information will not be known at the time of site plan approval.**
- c. Floor areas used by interior stairways, elevators and similar features. The floor area of each stairway shall be counted once (not twice by counting floor levels).
- d. Usable spaces (generally defined as having a 5' minimum height) such as rooms and closets shall also be counted.
- e. Porches, patios, and breezeways with a "solid" cover. **Should be limited to air conditioned space as we want to encourage these elements.**
- f. Accessory buildings that are deemed habitable space, including but not limited to guest houses and second units.
- g. Basements that qualify under state building code as a story.
- h. Attic spaces that meet the state building code definition of habitable and clearly having

The following are to be excluded in the gross floor area for the purpose of computing FAR:

- a. Basements that do not qualify under state building code as a story.
- b. Attached or detached garages and carports.
- c. Porches, balconies, patios, breezeways and decks which do not have "solid" cover. **See comment above**
- d. Air spaces within buildings such as vaulted ceilings. More specifically, the floor area shall be counted at the actual floor area only and not in the air spaces above.
- e. Attic spaces not meeting the state building code definition of habitable and clearly having the sole purpose of storage or utilities.

Thank you,

Sean

EXAMPLE: FAR IN JUPITER ISLAND, FL

Floor area is measured as follows:

- A. All areas on all floors of all buildings which are included within the outside faces of their exterior walls, including floor penetration areas for circulation and shaft areas that connect one floor to another, except basements and other floors below the first floor, which are counted as provided in paragraphs D and E of this section, plus
- B. If any portion of a building is taller than one-story, a second floor will be assumed for that portion of the building, regardless of whether the floor is in place, plus
- C. Fifty percent of all areas described in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, below, with no specific area counted more than once:
 1. Areas which are covered, but not completely enclosed by walls (including but not limited to gazebos, trellises, porticos, pergolas, patios, balconies, carports, and porches, except that with regard to these structures or buildings the following are not counted as floor area:
 - a. Ten percent of the maximum permitted floor area on the parcel proposed for development or 1,000 square feet (both measured without the 50 percent adjustment), whichever is less; and, in addition,
 - b. The unenclosed areas, and any areas which are enclosed by walls which are less than three feet in height, which are directly underneath a building which is constructed on pilings, in instances in which such construction is required by state or federal law.
 2. Areas which are covered by a roof overhang or balcony that extends more than 30 inches in horizontal distance from a building wall (See Illustration 15: Floor Area Measurement, Balconies and Illustration 16: Floor Area Measurement, Overhangs, Exhibit A).
 3. Areas which are open to the air, but completely surrounded by walls that are seven feet in height or taller, unless the walls have substantial penetrations that mitigate the appearance of mass (See Illustration: Floor Area Measurement, Walled-in Areas, Exhibit A).
 4. Areas of freestanding, uncovered decks, and uncovered porches which are attached to the first floor of a building, that are greater than seven feet in height to the top of the railing as measured from adjacent ground level (See Illustration: Floor Area Measurement, Decks, Exhibit A).
 5. Areas which are within screened enclosures.
- D. Basements do not count as floor area, and no floor or part of a floor which would otherwise qualify as a basement shall be disqualified as a basement due to access to ground level which is provided by light wells that:
 1. Extend no more than four feet from the outside wall of the building and cumulatively occupy no more than 25 percent of the length of the first floor wall to which they are adjacent; and
 2. Are configured such that they are not visible from:
 - a. The building envelopes of neighboring properties; and
 - b. Public rights-of-way.

EXAMPLE: FAR IN MIAMI BEACH, FL

Floor area means the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the floors of a building or buildings, measured from the exterior faces of exterior walls or from the exterior face of an architectural projection, from the centerline of walls separating two attached buildings. For the purpose of clarity, floor area includes, but is not limited to, stairwells, stairways, covered steps, elevator shafts at every floor (including mezzanine level elevator shafts), and mechanical chutes and chases at every floor (including mezzanine level).

For the avoidance of doubt, unless otherwise provided for in these land development regulations, floor area excludes only the spaces expressly identified below:

1. Accessory water tanks or cooling towers
2. Uncovered steps.
3. Attic space, whether or not a floor actually has been laid, providing structural headroom of less than seven feet six inches.
4. Terraces, breezeways, or open porches.
5. Floor space used for required accessory off-street parking spaces. However, up to a maximum of two spaces per residential unit may be provided without being included in the calculation of the floor area ratio.
6. Commercial parking garages and noncommercial parking garages when such structures are the main use on a site.
7. Mechanical equipment rooms located above main roof deck.
8. Exterior unenclosed private balconies.
9. Floor area located below grade when the top of the slab of the ceiling is located at or below grade. However, if any portion of the top of the slab of the ceiling is above grade, the floor area that is below grade shall be included in the floor area ratio calculation. Despite the foregoing, for existing contributing structures that are located within a local historic district, national register historic district, or local historic site, when the top of the slab of an existing ceiling of a partial basement is located above grade, one-half of the floor area of the corresponding floor that is located below grade shall be included in the floor area ratio calculation.
10. Enclosed garbage rooms, enclosed within the building on the ground floor level.
11. Stairwells and elevators located above the main roof deck.
12. Electrical transformer vault rooms.
13. Fire control rooms and related equipment for life-safety purposes.
14. Secured bicycle parking.
15. Volumetric buildings, used for storage, where there are no interior floors, the floor area shall be calculated as if there was a floor for every eight feet of height.