



December 10, 2021

Geoffrey Michel, Board Chair

St. Armands Business Improvement District (BID)

<https://www.sarasotafl.gov/government/special-districts/sd-bid>

Geoffrey.Michel@SarasotaFL.Gov

**RE: The BID's proposed St. Armands Commercial Height Increase**

Dear Mr. Michel,

The St. Armands Residents Association seeks clarification of the BID's proposed Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Text Amendments for the St. Armands Commercial District, specifically in regard to the proposed height increase.

From the BID's discussion at your meeting on December 8, 2021, it seems that we may have been confused about what is already allowed today, and what the BID is proposing.

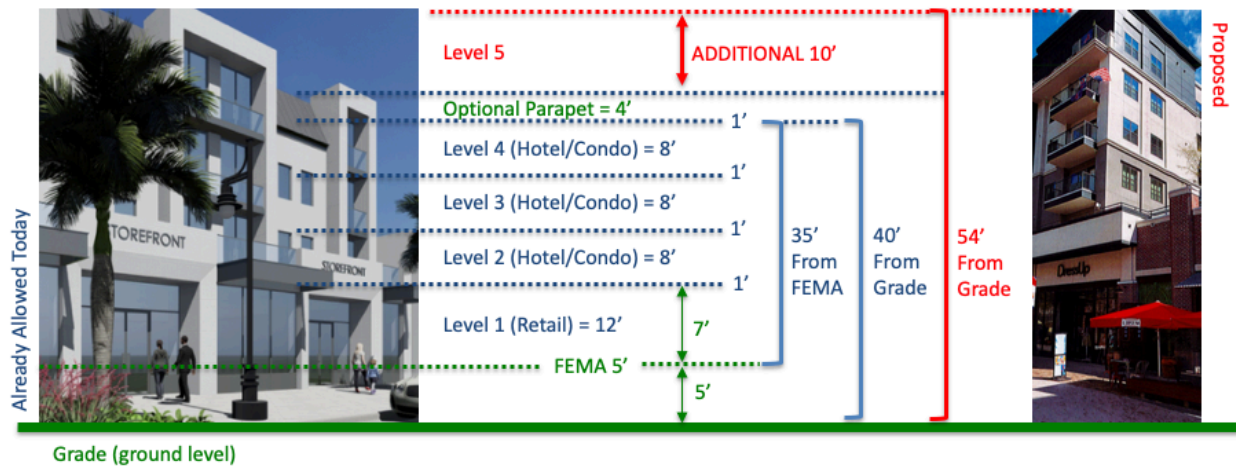
We have provided the following visual to help illustrate what we would like to better understand. Generally speaking, we would like to know the differences between what exists on St. Armands today (dimension "A" in the visual below) vs. what is already allowed to be built on St. Armands today (dimension "B") vs. what the BID is proposing (dimension "C").



When residents hear that the BID is only proposing a 10' height increase, we find that statement to be misleading when comparing what the BID is proposing (dimension "C") to what exists on St. Armands today (dimension "A").

From the Dec. 8 BID meeting, it is now our understanding that the BID believes that the current height limit for commercial buildings on St. Armands is 35' from FEMA. This is the same as

saying 40' from grade (from ground level). We believe that this existing height limit already allows for four-story buildings as shown in our second visual, below. We believe the BID's proposed 10' height increase would allow for five-story buildings.



Please note that according to website skyscraperpage.com: *Generally speaking, a concrete residential high-rise is 7-8" slabs, office is 9-10" and hotels somewhere in between. We've allowed for 12" (or 1') slab and finish materials thickness between levels in the above visual.*

**Specifically, we are requesting answers to the following questions:**

1. When did the City stop measuring commercial building height from grade and begin measuring it from the FEMA level, and who made the decision to do that?
2. What is the height from grade of the tallest commercial building with a retail business\* on St. Armands today? (note: for buildings with a pitched or unusual roof, their height should be measured to the roof mid-point or as required by code)
3. Is it correct that without changing the current height limit, it is already technically possible to build a four-story commercial building on St. Armands today?
4. Is it correct that the BID's proposed increase to the height limit would technically allow five-story commercial buildings to be built on St. Armands?

\* When responding, we ask you not to use as examples those buildings that serve the public interest, because these buildings do not contain retail businesses. We ask you to omit the following buildings from your response: the parking garage, the fire station, the Lutheran church, the Frontier Communications equipment building, and the SMH Urgent Care building.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

Chris Goglia, President  
 St. Armands Residents Association  
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