

# PLEASE GIVE US BACK OUR ATTICS...

## **The FAR Regulations do not produce what was intended. A change is needed and long overdue!**

When FAR (Floor Area Ratio) was adopted in 1989 it was conceived as a way to limit the visual size and bulk of dwellings. The Grade Plane Regulation acts as a reference plane from which to measure height. It also determines how much of the basement level can be exposed before the basement is counted in the Gross Floor Area calculation.

### **The Unintended Consequences of the Regulations**

#### **Grade Plane Walls**

Homeowners, architects and builders have been forced to create Grade Plane walls to artificially raise the Grade Plane to avoid having the basement area count in the Gross Floor Area. This becomes especially challenging on smaller lots and properties with sloping land where massive walls have to be constructed right on the property line.

#### **Wedding Cake Effect**

Sloping properties often require multiple retaining walls 5 feet up and 5 feet back to get to the desired Grade Plane, giving the property a layered “Wedding Cake” effect that clashes with existing streetscapes.

#### **Attics with Lightweight Trusses = Fire Hazards**

To exclude an attic from counting in the calculation in the FAR, one has to either build a low-pitched flat roof, or render the attic unusable by installing lightweight structural trusses. The height and bulk still exists on the outside yet the homeowner does not have use of the attic space for storage or other common uses. In the past, a growing household could expand into these spaces and then contract when needed, adding stability to our neighborhoods and helping to preserve more of our historic homes.

#### **Even More Restrictions**

Since these regulations have been implemented, new drainage requirements and Green Area regulations have further constrained homeowner’s ability to reasonably improve their properties.

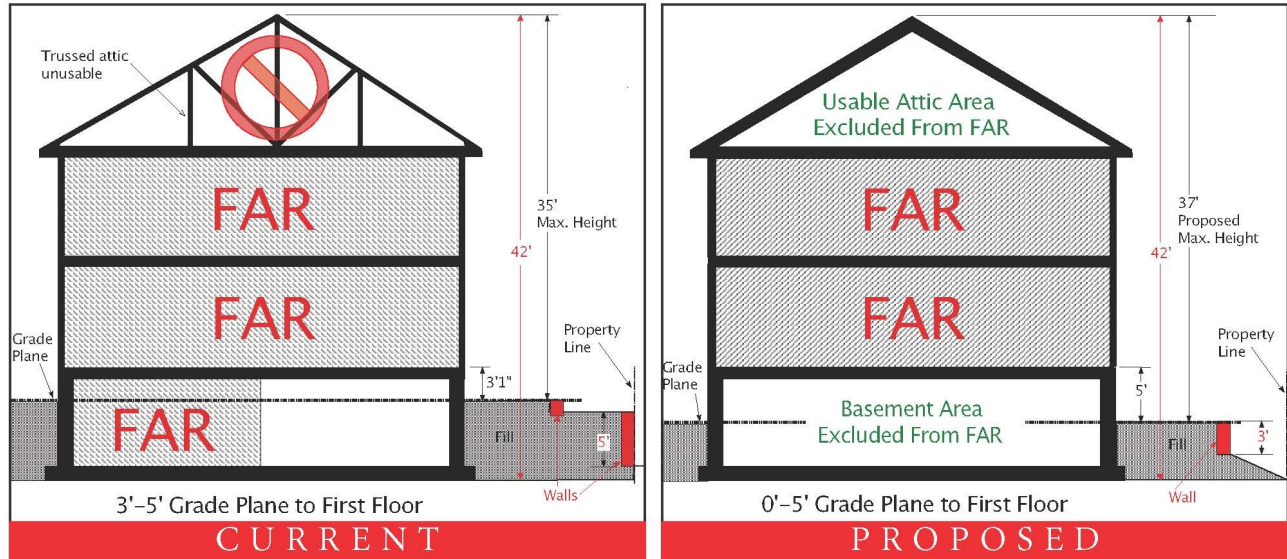
**It is time for these regulations to be changed.**

*Prepared and presented to and on behalf of  
Greenwich residents and property owners by:*



# AND STOP COUNTING OUR BASEMENTS!

It's the same size house – it just looks better and is more usable.



## Current Regulations

- Count 50% of basement in total FAR if the distance from First Floor to Grade Plane is more than 3 feet
- Require dangerous lightweight trusses, to prevent attic use, endangering first responders with catastrophic failure of trusses in fire emergencies
- Require higher retaining walls and more fill to exclude basement from FAR
- Allow less FAR on the primary floors of the house because the basement area is counted in the total FAR calculation

## Proposed Amended Regulations would...

- Exclude Attic from total FAR calculation
- Allow for standard sized roof structure protecting first responders from catastrophic collapse of lightweight trusses
- Reduce height and number of retaining walls and amount of fill
- Add 2 feet to maximum building height to accommodate lower Grade Plane and allow for traditional New England roof pitches (Note: height above adjacent properties and the road would remain the same)
- Allow for more FAR on First and Second Floors
- Add value to your home and the Town Grand List

## We Need Your Support

For more information visit [www.greenwichlanduse.com](http://www.greenwichlanduse.com)

Email Planning and Zoning at [LandUse@Greenwichct.org](mailto:LandUse@Greenwichct.org)

**Voice your opinion of these changes by coming to the public hearing on:**

**November 15th at 7:00PM at Town Hall**

If you can't make it to the meeting, watch the proceedings on Channel 79

These amended regulations have been submitted to the Town of Greenwich Planning and Zoning Commission by the Greenwich Association of Realtors, the Greenwich Chamber of Commerce and the Greenwich Property Owners Association (GPOA), on behalf of Greenwich residents and property owners.