

Q3: Is RW maximum height of 35ft too high, too low, or about right?

CRCRC Conclusions: We determined that most people are comfortable with the building height of 35ft, the issue is how it is measured and enforced.

All summaries provided by ChatGPT:

Too High (25%):

The comments express concerns about the maximum height limit of 35 feet, with many arguing that it is too high. There are observations that the code is not consistently enforced, allowing creative strategies to surpass the limit. Suggestions include reevaluating height calculations, considering slope allowances, and tightening enforcement to address privacy issues and neighborhood aesthetics. Some propose lowering the maximum height to 25 or 30 feet, limiting structures to two stories, and closing loopholes that lead to taller buildings. Overall, there is a consensus that the current height limit may not adequately consider topography, resulting in structures that appear taller than expected.

Too Low (7%):

Some individuals express the view that the maximum height of 35 feet is too low. They argue for increased flexibility, suggesting a higher limit of 40 feet to accommodate three floors and maximize square footage on lots. Some also mention the potential benefits of higher height limits for incorporating multifamily options and accommodating diverse property owner needs. Overall, there is a sentiment that more height flexibility could enhance design possibilities and meet varying circumstances.

About Right (63%):

The comments revolve around the regulation of building heights, specifically set at 35 feet. There are varying opinions on whether this height is appropriate, with considerations for factors such as the measurement point (ground or finished floor elevation), slope of the lot, and potential exploitation of loopholes. Some argue that the existing height is suitable for aesthetics, resale value, and neighborhood attractiveness, while others express concerns about overbuilding, manipulation of codes, and the impact on natural light and views. Suggestions include clearer code language, considerations for foundation thickness, and addressing issues related to sloped lots. Some advocate for maintaining the status quo, while others propose adjustments based on topography or setbacks. Overall, the consensus seems to be a need for clarity in measurement points and potential adjustments for specific conditions like slope or lot size.

Sample Comments for “About Right” were important to parse as it was most preferred:

- *It depends on where the 35 ft start and stop. Need clarity around this*
- *Depends on how it is measured*
- *the place of measurement is important*
- *It really depends on whether it is measured from the ground, or the finished floor elevation. It should be from the ground.*

- *The foundation should be included in this (unless the lot and highest backs onto a canyon or where it wouldn't be overbearing on a neighboring lot).*
- *The problem is not the height per se but the height from what grade?*
- *But: does that include the foundation thickness?*
- *this very much depends on the topography of the property and how the "height" is measured*
- *it depends on where it's measured, everyone seems to take their own advantage and finish new homes above 35' which is not right*
- *the code language needs to be more specific about the point from which the 35 feet is measured. Someone could build up the lot with berms - and then build a house that is (say) 50 feet higher than the street.*
- *But consideration should be made factoring in grade, inappropriate foundation heights and other "cheats" that can get around height regulation.*
- *Problem is that lots are being built up to get to house higher and that is not being penalized.*
- *I certainly wouldn't raise the maximum height; it's plenty high. I might consider slightly lowering it.*
- *This needs to be clarified to avoid builders taking advantage of sloped lots.*
- *The height needs to vary/adjust/step up or down on flatter lots and you should not be able to build 35' right on the setback. The max height should be restricted to the "middle" of the lot.*
- *Homes should be street level.*
- *I don't think the code needs to be changed to address the height of houses - instead, I think it needs to look at houses in relation to neighboring houses and lots. New houses should only be approved if they don't substantially decrease the sunlight or privacy of neighboring houses.*