

**What is Floor Area Ratio (FAR):**

Floor Area Ratio is the gross floor area of a building or buildings on a zoning plot divided by the area of such zoning plot. The objective of FAR is to assist in determining whether the mass and scale of the project is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The FAR is a nominal limit, not a goal, and shall be used in conjunction with the Residential Design Guidelines adopted by resolution.

**When is the FAR formula applied?**

FAR applies to lots developed or proposed to be developed with a single-family or two-family dwelling in all residential zones. Any lot containing more than 30,000 square feet or located in the Hillside Area is subject to the gross floor area requirements of the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines.

**How is a property's FAR calculated?**

FAR is divided into two categories: residential and garage.

- **Residential FAR** includes the main residence and any other enclosed accessory structures (shed, cabana, detached guest room, etc.) This category does not include garages or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).
- **Garage FAR** includes all garage areas designed or used for parking or storing of one (1) or more vehicles.

FAR is calculated using the following formulas:

1. **Residential FAR:** The allowable residential FAR for all structures (excluding garages) on lots between 5,000 S.F. and 30,000 S.F. shall be determined by the following formula:

$$FAR = .35 - \left( \frac{[A - 5]}{25} \times .20 \right)$$

where:

A is the net lot area **in thousands** of S.F. (e.g. 7,500 S.F. is written as 7.5)

**Note:**

The product of the **residential FAR** equation will be a decimal, which shall be rounded to **two** decimal places. For example, a product of 0.326 shall be rounded to 0.33, which is the residential FAR for an 8,000 S.F. lot. To calculate the maximum living area, multiply the FAR by the lot area as follows:

$$0.33 \times 8,000 \text{ S.F.} = 2,640 \text{ S.F. of maximum residential area}$$

2. **Garage FAR:** The allowable FAR for a **garage** on lots between 5,000 S.F. and 30,000 S.F. shall be determined by the following formula:

$$FAR = .10 - \left( \frac{[A - 5]}{25} \times .07 \right)$$

where:

A is the net lot area **in thousands** of S.F. (e.g. 7,000 S.F. is written as 7.0)

**Note:**

The product of the **garage FAR** equation will be a decimal, which shall be rounded to **three** decimal places. For example, a product of 0.0916 shall be rounded to 0.092, which is the Garage FAR for an 8,000 S.F. lot. To calculate the maximum garage area, multiply the FAR by the lot area as follows:

$$0.092 \times 8,000 \text{ S.F.} = 736 \text{ S.F. of maximum garage area}$$

3. **FAR for lots less than 5,000 S.F.:** The allowable FAR for all structures (excluding up to 400 S.F. of garage space) on any lot containing less than 5,000 S.F. shall be determined by the following formula:

$$FAR = .40 - \left( \frac{[A - 2]}{3} \times .05 \right)$$

where:

A is the net lot area **in thousands** of S.F. (e.g. 4,500 S.F. is written as 4.5)

**Note:**

The product of the FAR equation will be a decimal, which shall be rounded to **two** decimal places. For example, a product of 0.358 shall be rounded to 0.36, which is the FAR for a 4,500 S.F. lot. To calculate the maximum living area, multiply the FAR by the lot area as follows:

$$0.36 \times 4,500 \text{ S.F.} = 1,620 \text{ S.F. of maximum floor area}$$

**May a proposal exceed the FAR requirements?**

An applicant proposing to exceed FAR must file an Architecture and Site Application. The deciding body may allow a FAR in excess of the standard if it makes the following findings:

- The design theme, sense of scale, exterior materials and details of the proposed project are consistent with the provisions of:
  - Any applicable landmark and historic preservation overlay zone
  - Any applicable specific plan
  - The adopted residential development standards
- The lot coverage, setbacks and FAR of the proposed project is compatible with the development on surrounding lots

**How is the FAR calculated for sloping lots?**

For all residential projects, if a slope is greater than 10% then the net lot area shall be reduced according to the following standard:

Average lot slope	% of net site to be deducted
10.01 - 20%	10% plus 2% for each 1% of slope over 10%
20.01 - 30%	30% plus 3% for each 1% of slope over 20%
Over 30%	60%

**Note:**

The net site area after this deduction is calculated shall be used to calculate the FAR for the site.

**Other requirements?**

For answers to other questions such as the submittal requirements, development review process, fees, or general information, please contact the Community Development Department.

Town of Los Gatos  
Community Development Department  
110 E. Main Street  
Los Gatos, CA 95031  
(408) 354-6874

[www.losgatosca.gov](http://www.losgatosca.gov)

Notes:

Town of Los Gatos  
Community Development  
Department



**FAR**  
(Floor Area Ratio)

Summary Handout