



C20-2025-010 Central Business District Amendments

Austin Planning | Design Commission | 10/27/25

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Background

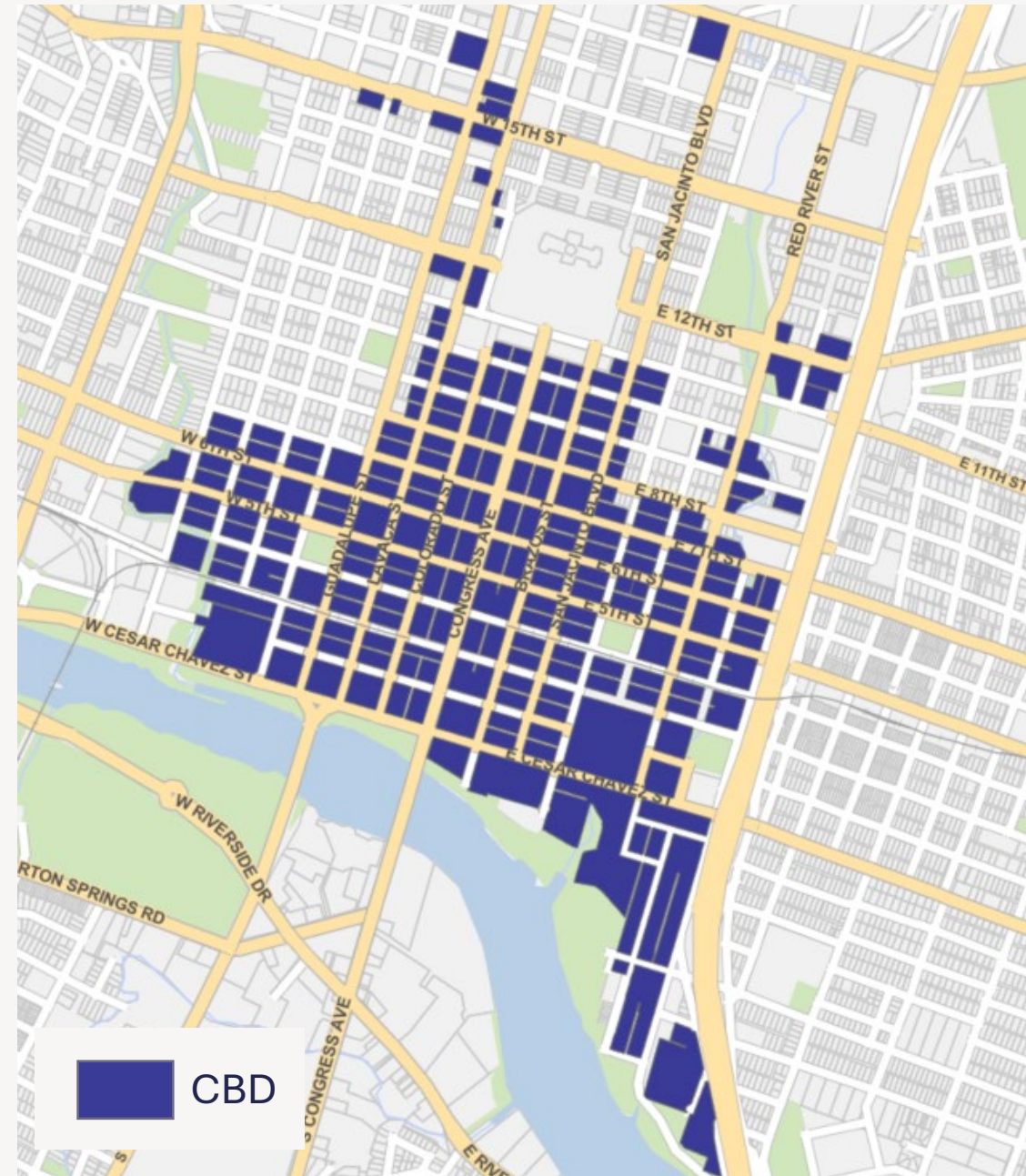
Texas Senate Bill 840



- Texas SB 840 went into effect on September 1.
 - Allows for multifamily or mixed-use in any commercial zone
- Under SB 840, multifamily and mixed-use residential developments in commercial zones will, by right, be able to:
 - Reach a height that is the greater of 45 feet or the height that applies to commercial uses for the site.
 - Reach a density of up to 54 units per acre.
 - Include setbacks that are the lesser of 25 feet or the setbacks imposed on commercial uses.
 - **Develop unlimited floor-to-area ratio (FAR).**

Central Business District

- Central Business District (CBD) is the designation for an office, commercial, residential, or civic use located in the downtown area
- CBD currently regulates development based on floor-area ratio (FAR)
 - Currently, the allowed FAR is 8:1
- There is no maximum building height under CBD
- **As of September 1, the City can no longer regulate FAR in developments utilizing Senate Bill 840**



Downtown Density Bonus



- Produces highest density/heights in our city and produces the most affordable housing fees-in-lieu for the City
- CBD and Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) zoning today:
 - CBD zoning does not have a height limit but has FAR limit of 8:1.
 - DMU zoning has height limit of 120' and FAR limit of 5:1.
- DDB allows for developments to go above their base entitlements
 - Additional entitlements are mapped, but in general, DDB can increase CBD and DMU sites:
 - Up to 25:1 FAR
 - Up to unlimited height

Proposed Changes

CBD Median Height Equivalent

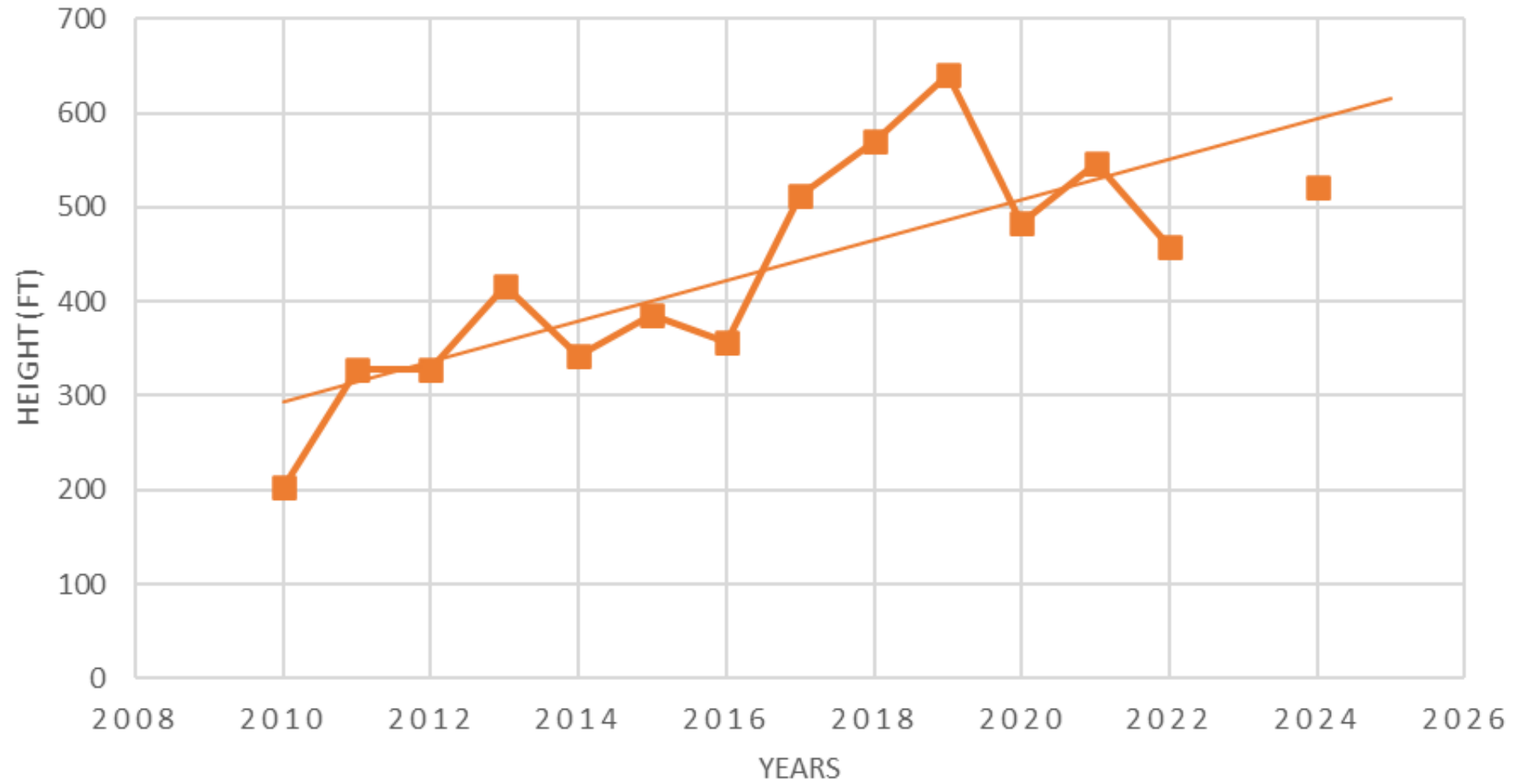


- Staff analyzed the median and average height for sites participating in the Downtown Density Bonus to find the height equivalent for 8:1 FAR

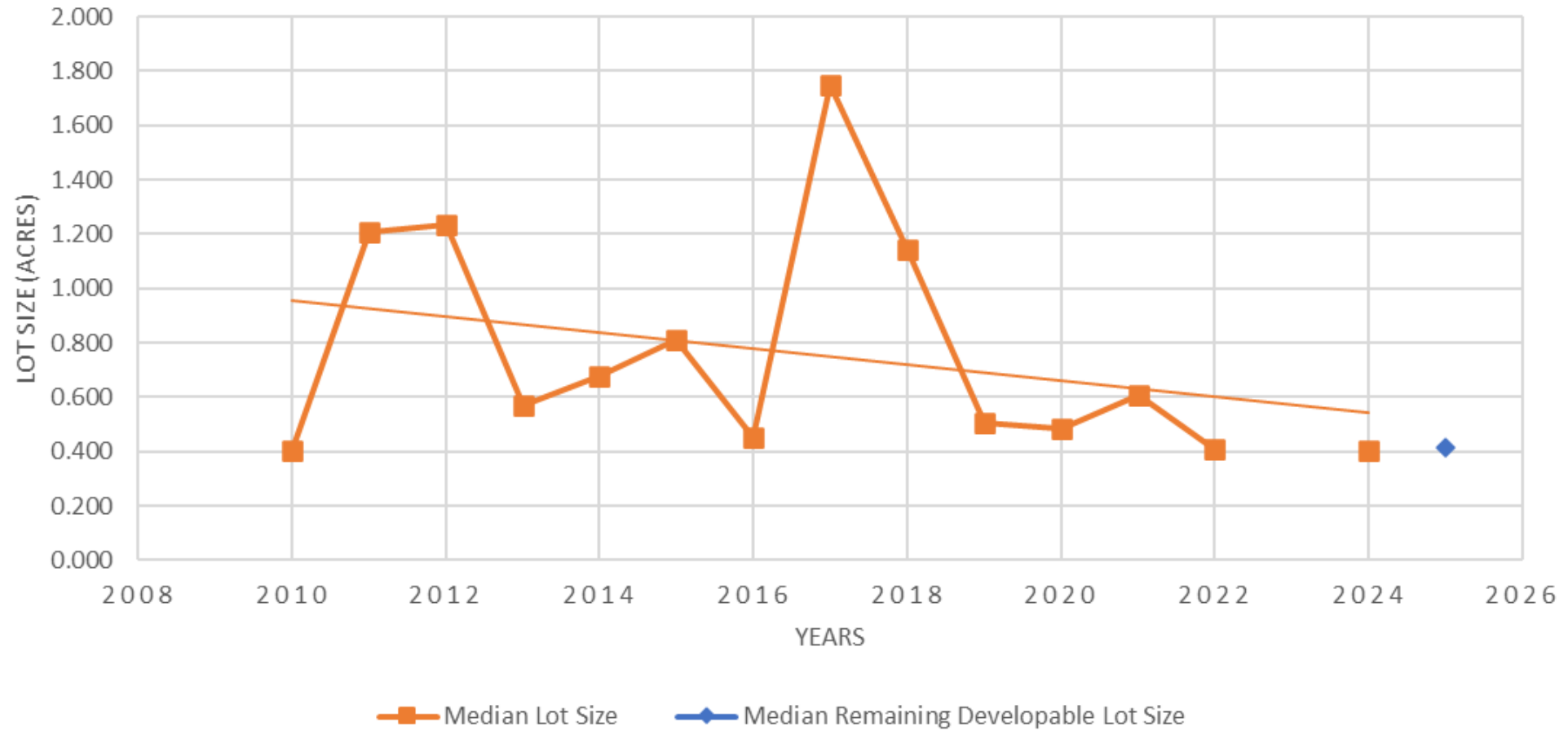
		Site Area (acres)	Floors with 8:1 FAR*	Height with 8:1 FAR* (feet)
Density Bonus Sites	CBD Median	0.55	16	207
	CBD Average	0.72	18	233

*8:1 FAR equivalent for developed sites.

MEDIAN HEIGHT FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN CBD



MEDIAN LOT SIZE FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN CBD



Proposed Changes to CBD



- **Create a new maximum by-right height limit of 350 feet for the Central Business District.**
 - 350 feet follows the trend toward taller buildings in Downtown to help support development and growth in the city center.
 - The height limit will address the effects of the removal of FAR limits for residential and mixed-use developments under Senate Bill 840.
 - Developers can participate in the Downtown Density Bonus Program to exceed this new maximum height with Council approval.
 - 350 feet includes parking and any other above grade structure.

Building Height Examples

Current CBD 8:1 FAR Median Height Equivalent : 207 feet



CitizenM Hotel, 204 ft height

Proposed CBD Max Base Height : 350 feet



Windsor on the Lake, 332 ft height

Allowable Height using DDB : >350 feet



44 East Avenue, 570 ft height

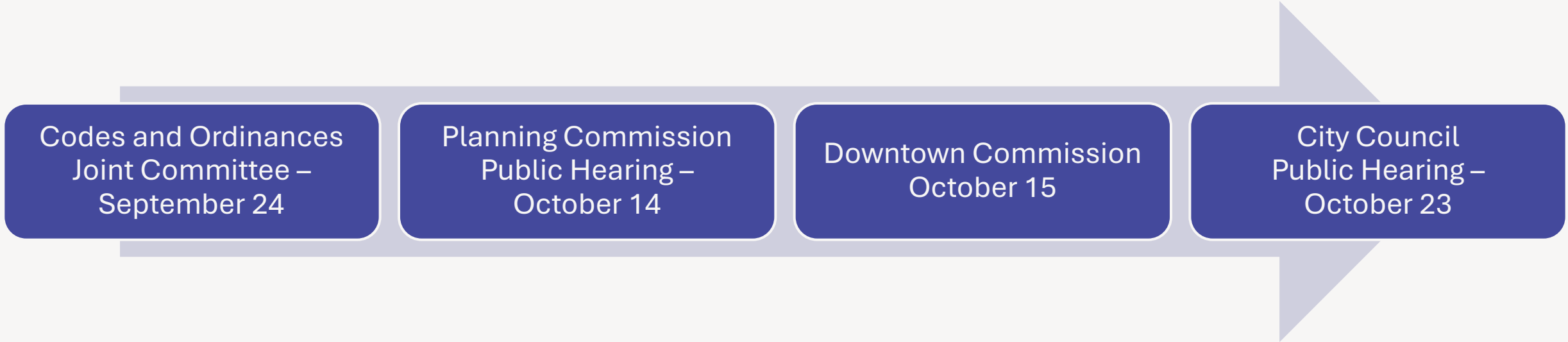
Proposed Changes to Downtown Density Bonus (DDB)



- **Amend text in DDB to implement proposed CBD height.**
 - Amend height maps and DDB & Rainey Subdistrict language to ensure CBD height limit can be incorporated into the DDB program

Next Steps

Timeline



Codes and Ordinances
Joint Committee –
September 24

Planning Commission
Public Hearing –
October 14

Downtown Commission
October 15

City Council
Public Hearing –
October 23

Thank you!

For updates and additional information, visit:
SpeakUpAustin.org/LDCUpdates