### Building Code Height Limits vs. Planning/Zoning Code Height Limits

This Chart is a general summary of 2010 California Building Code (CBC) requirements related to building heights for the three main construction types commonly used for residential construction in the Bay Area. Also included is a discussion of recommended height limits for Planning and Zoning Codes so that they dovetail with the CBC requirements. It follows that Planning or Zoning height limits below—or just above—what is allowed by the CBC are not practical in that they tend to reduce

1. The following is a general summary only. It is not a comprehensive analysis of any specific site, nor does it take into account local modifications or other requirements, such as those relating to building area, bulk, sunlight access, setbacks, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type V-A On Grade</th>
<th>Type V-A On Podium</th>
<th>Type III-A On Podium</th>
<th>Type I Mid Rise &amp; High Rise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-hour rated, light frame (wood or metal) construction</td>
<td>One-hour rated, light frame (wood or metal) construction; concrete (Type I) podium.</td>
<td>One &amp; two-hour rated, light frame (wood or metal) construction; concrete (Type I) podium</td>
<td>Type I construction is structural steel or concrete. For all practical purposes, for residential buildings in the Bay Area, concrete is used even for high-rise buildings. Besides lower cost, concrete allows for a smaller floor-to-floor distance, allowing extra floors to be squeezed under Zoning and Building Code limits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For R.2 buildings (apartments), when equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system, the maximum building height is 60’ and no greater than four stories.</td>
<td>For R.2 buildings (apartments), when equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system, the maximum building height is no greater than five stories, four stories of Type V-A over one story of Type I construction.</td>
<td>Type III A construction differs from Type V primarily in that all exterior bearing walls must be of two-hour construction and non-combustible materials. More critically, when compared to Type V A (and when equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system) and the first level is of Type I construction, an additional story is allowed and the building height limit rises to 75’, though that height is probably not achievable with typical floor-to-floor heights.</td>
<td>Mid-Rise: Unless you consider residential ceiling heights of less than 8’, nine stories is the most that can fit under the 75’ limit (see below). Some adjustment between the ground floor and upper floor heights can be made depending on structural slab thickness, first floor uses, and other factors.</td>
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#### Zoning Height Recommendations

| If public/retail use programmed for ground floor, then Zoning Height should be MIN 42” (45+ is better) exclusive of roof structures/parapet | If public/retail use programmed for ground floor, then Zoning Height should be MIN 51’ (55’ is better, to max allowed 60’ best) exclusive of roof structures/parapet | If public/retail use programmed for ground floor, then Zoning Height should be MIN 60’ (63’+ is better) exclusive of roof structures/parapet |

#### Notes

1. **Type I Mid Rise & High Rise**
   - **Type V-A On Grade**
   - **Type V-A On Podium**
   - **Type III-A On Podium**
   - **Type I Mid Rise & High Rise**

#### Mid-Rise: Zoning Height should be a minimum of 60’.

High-Rise: The CBC classifies all buildings above the 75’ limit (see below) to be high-rise, triggering additional and costly requirements.

*When any FLOOR LEVEL is greater than 75’ above the LOWEST** point of Fire Department access, the building becomes a “High-Rise”.

**If the lot is sloping, this will affect the total allowed height.

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