Height rewrite · DKP v1.0

70 Feet, Not 42: The Height Rewrite

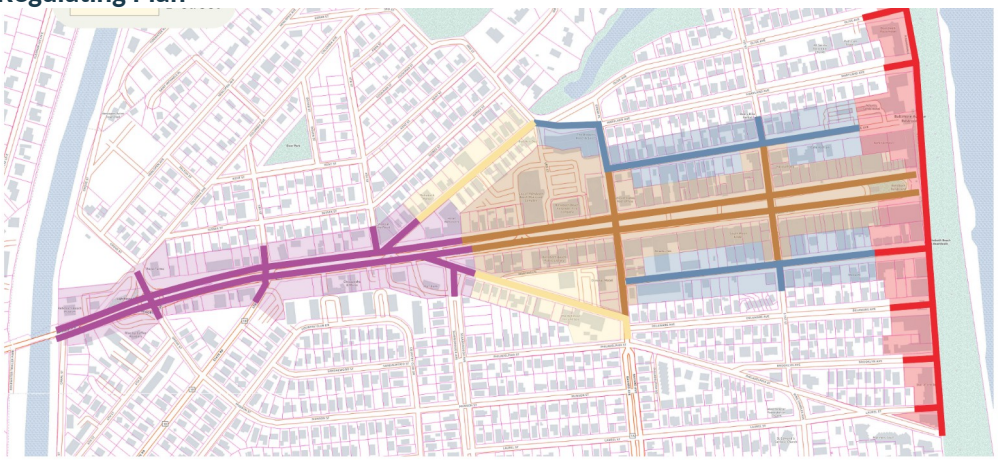
What's the rush? We need to get it right.

Joe Kohl told Commissioners on July 17, 2026 that charrette participants overwhelmingly wanted to keep the 42-foot height maximum. Version 1.0 still raises the cap on the Boardwalk and east Rehoboth Avenue — then adds 20 more feet that do not count as "height." Source: Dover, Kohl & Partners Version 1.0 (9/8/2026), proposed § 270-93-E.

Current code vs. proposed Table 270-93-E

Street type	Current max	Draft table max	With +20 ft equipment
A — Boardwalk	42 ft	50 ft	**70 ft**
B — Rehoboth Ave east of Christian	42 ft	50 ft	**70 ft**
C — Wilmington / Baltimore	42 ft	42 ft	**62 ft**
D — Rehoboth Ave west of Christian	42 ft	42 ft	**62 ft**
E — Lake / Christian	42 ft*	36 ft	**56 ft**

Figure 270-92-A, Regulating Plan



Legend: A red, Boardwalk · B orange, Rehoboth Ave east · C yellow, Wilmington and Baltimore · D green, Rehoboth Ave west · E blue, Lake / Christian

After Star of the Sea, the City set a 42-foot commercial maximum in the 1970s so Rehoboth would not become Ocean City. Proposed § 270-93-E(3) then excludes rooftop mechanical equipment, elevator shafts, one stair for roof access, and antennas — up to 20 feet above the roof. 50 + 20 = 70 feet. That is a 67% increase over 42 feet. *Residential streets today are often lower than the commercial cap; E-Street is the draft's lower table number, not a raise.

Why it matters. Height is one of three density levers (with FAR and parking). FAR is also removed downtown, and A- and B-streets allow 95% lot coverage. A 50-foot wall is three to four stories; the extra 20 feet of shafts and equipment sits on top. Over a decade that can replace one- and two-story buildings with a four-story canyon on more than half the downtown commercial area.

What can you do?

- Contact the Mayor and Commissioners.
- Contact Planning Commission members.
- Contact the City Manager and Director of Building & Licensing.

Stay informed. Stay engaged. This is complicated — we need to get it right.