

Madalyn Letellier

From: Meredith Porter <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2026 1:52 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Affordable Housing Overlay Amendment (ID #26-0204)
Attachments: Land Use - 2026-04-2 AH Overlay Amendment (with 26-0204).pdf; Land Use - 2026-04-02 AH Overlay Presentation (with 26-0204).pdf

To whom it may concern:

Regarding the proposed Affordable Housing Overlay Amendment (ID #26-0204) which is on the agenda for consideration again at the April 16 joint hearing of the Land Use Committee and Planning Board, PPZ Director Bartman presented revised versions of the amendment and of the comparison table in his presentation to the April 2 meeting of the Land Use Committee, and those are attached. The comments below outline a few corrections to those which I believe are needed. Perhaps these corrections will be reflected in the presentation at the April 16 hearing. In any case, I am submitting these corrections to ensure that they are considered.

Note that the elimination of Parking Setbacks reflected in the revised amendment (but not yet in the comparison table, as noted below) would address the concern which Connor Ring of Just A Start expressed in his written comment of April 2.

Best regards,
Meredith Porter
[REDACTED]
Somerville, MA 02144

From: "Meredith Porter" <[REDACTED]>
To: "Daniel Bartman" <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED]
Cc: "Mayor Jake Wilson" <[REDACTED]>, "Ben Ewen-Campen"
[REDACTED], "Jesse Clingan" [REDACTED], "Lance Davis"
[REDACTED], "Matthew McLaughlin" [REDACTED], "Naima Sait"
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] AM
Subject: Affordable Housing Overlay Amendment - thanks; a few more updates needed

Dear PPZ Director Bartman and members of the Planning staff,

Thanks for your updates regarding the Affordable Housing Overlay Amendment (ID #26-0204) that Director Bartman presented to the Land Use Committee at their April 2 meeting. These are very helpful in clarifying the proposed changes.

I noticed just a few errors in the latest versions of the amendment and of the comparison table (Table 8.1.6 - Compared to Existing) which were presented at that meeting (as attached), which I am writing to call to your attention. Here they are:

1) The Revised AH Overlay values for Green Score shown in the comparison table do not match those in the latest version of the amendment that was presented. Judging from what Director Bartman stated at the April 2 Land Use Committee meeting, the values in the amendment should be updated from the current 0.20 Minimum and 0.25 Ideal to the 0.25 Minimum and 0.30 Ideal indicated in the comparison table. With this change, the values would agree with those in the Revised AH Overlay column of the comparison table, and the notations in red of "(+0.05)" there would make sense, and would be consistent with this statement from Director Bartman at the meeting: "So you can see we pulled forward the 100% lot coverage from the MR6 zoning district and decreased the open space requirement; maximizes the amount of building footprint, and in doing that we actually kept the Green Score score requirements from the MR3 and 4 districts, which is higher than in MR6, so you're decreasing the space available but trying to up the quality requirement 'cause we knew we're impacting the green score."

Thank you very much for this improvement to the Green Score requirements relative to the previous version.

2) Parking setbacks (both Primary Front and Secondary Front) have been removed from the latest version of the amendment. Thus, the comparison table should show "None" (in black) for these in the Revised AH Overlay column rather than the current "30 ft" in green.

3) For Side Setback (min), the amendment currently specifies values for "Lot Width < 100 ft" and "Lot Depth > 100 ft." The "Lot Depth" here should clearly be "Lot Width." Furthermore, one of these should read either "<= 100 ft" or ">=100 ft." Otherwise, the case where a lot is exactly 100 ft wide is not covered.

4) For Rear Setback (min), the amendment currently specifies values for "Lot Depth < 100 ft" and "Lot Depth > 100 ft." One of these should read either "<= 100 ft" or ">=100 ft." Otherwise, the case where a lot is exactly 100 ft deep is not covered.

Thanks in advance for your attention to these issues, and thanks for all your efforts.

Best regards,
Meredith Porter



#26-0204

Affordable Housing Overlay
Amendment

April 2, 2026

Dan Bartman, Planning Director

**Office of Strategic Planning and
Community Development (OSPCD)**
Planning Division



Key Provisions

1. **Superseding Standards** – §8.1.6.a.i says Table 8.1.6 supersedes the same standards of a base district
2. **Dimensional Compliance** – §8.1.6.b.ii provides 5% margin of flexibility for the dimensions of Table 8.1.6
3. **Use Provisions** – §8.1.6.c.iii exempts buildings from being required to reserve five percent (5%) of any commercial space(s) for Arts & Creative Enterprise uses
4. **Table 8.1.6** – This table of Superseding Dimensional Standards replaces the exiting Table 8.1.6.

Table 8.1.6

Table 8.1.6 <u>Superseding</u> Dimensional Standards		
	Apartment Building	General Building
Lot Development		
Lot Coverage (max)	100%	100%
Green Score	--	--
Minimum	0.20	0.20
Ideal	0.25	0.25
Open Space (min)	10%	10%
Building Setbacks		
Curb Setback (min)	12 ft	12 ft
Primary Front Setback (min/max)	0 ft / 15 ft	0 ft / 15 ft
Secondary Front Setback (min/max)	0 ft / 15 ft	0 ft / 15 ft
Side Setback (min)		
Abutting an Alley or R-ROW	0 ft	0 ft
Abutting any non-NR or LHD	0 ft	0 ft
1 st -3 rd Story abutting NR or LHD	10 ft	10 ft
4th - 7th Story abutting NR or LHD	--	--
Lot Width < 100 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Lot Depth > 100 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Rear Setback (min)		
Abutting an Alley or R-ROW	0 ft	0 ft
Abutting any non-NR or LHD	10 ft	10 ft
1 st -3 rd Story abutting NR or LHD	20 ft	20 ft
4th - 7th Story abutting NR or LHD	--	--
Lot Depth < 100 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Lot Depth > 100 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Main Massing		
Number of Stories (max)		
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	4	4
All other MR3-MR6 lots	7 8	7 8
Step Back, Top Story (min)		
— 4 or less stories	none	none
— 5 or more stories	10 ft	10 ft
Building Height, Feet (max)		
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	50 ft	52 ft
All other MR3-MR6 lots	86 96 ft	88 100 ft
Facade Composition		
Fenestration (min/max)	15% / 50%	15% / 50%
Use & Occupancy		
Ground Story Commercial Unit (min)	n/a	1

Table 8.1.6 – Compared to Existing

	Existing MR3	Existing MR4	Existing MR5	Existing MR6	Existing AH Overlay	Revised AH Overlay
Lot Dimensions						
Lot Width (min)	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	Base District	None
Lot Development						
Lot Coverage (max)	90%	90%	90%	100%	Base District	100% (+10%)*
Green Score (min)						
Minimum	0.25	0.25	0.20	0.20	Base District	0.25 (+0.05)
Ideal	0.30	0.30	0.25	0.25	Base District	0.30 (+0.05)
Open Space (min)	15%	15%	15%	15%	Base District	10% (-5%)

Table 8.1.6 – Compared to Existing

	Existing MR3	Existing MR4	Existing MR5	Existing MR6	Existing AH Overlay	Revised AH Overlay
Building Setbacks						
Curb Setback (min)	12 ft	12 ft	12 ft	12 ft	Base District	12 ft
Primary Front Setback (min/max)	2 ft 12 ft	2 ft 12/15 ft	2 ft 12/15 ft	2 ft 12/15 ft	Base District	0 ft 15 ft (+3 ft)
Secondary Front Setback (min/max)	2 ft 12 ft	2 ft 12/15 ft	2 ft 12/15 ft	2 ft 12/15 ft	Base District	0 ft 15 ft (+3 ft)
Side Setback (min)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Abutting an Alley or R-ROW	--	0 ft	0 ft	0 ft	Base District	0 ft
Abutting any non-NR or LHD	--	0 ft	0 ft	0 ft	Base District	0 ft
1 st -3 rd Story abutting NR or LHD	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	Base District	
4th - XX Story abutting NR or LHD	n/a	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	--	--
Lot Width < 100 ft					20 ft	20 ft
Lot Depth > 100 ft					30 ft	30 ft
Rear Setback (min)	--	--	--	--	--	--
Abutting an Alley or R-ROW	--	0 ft	0 ft	0 ft	Base District	
Abutting any non-NR or LHD	--	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	Base District	10 ft (-10 ft)
1st-3rd Story abutting NR or LHD	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	Base District	20 ft
4th - XX Story abutting NR or LHD	n/a	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	--	--
Lot Depth < 100 ft					20 ft	20 ft
Lot Depth > 100 ft					30 ft	30 ft

Table 8.1.6 – Compared to Existing

	Existing MR3	Existing MR4	Existing MR5	Existing MR6	Existing AH Overlay	Revised AH Overlay
Parking Setbacks						
Primary Front Setback	--	--	30 ft	30 ft	Base District	30 ft
Surface Parking	30 ft	30 ft	--	--	Base District	--
Structured Parking	30 ft	30 ft	--	--	Base District	--
Secondary Front Setback	--	--	30 ft	30 ft	Base District	30 ft
Surface Parking	10 ft	10 ft	--	--	Base District	--
Structured Parking	2 ft	2 ft	--	--	Base District	--

Table 8.1.6 – Compared to Existing

	Existing MR3	Existing MR4	Existing MR5	Existing MR6	Existing AH Overlay	Revised AH Overlay
Main Massing						
Building Width	200 ft	200 ft	200 ft	200 ft	Base District	None
Façade Build Out						
Primary Front	80%	80%	80%	80%	Base District	None
Secondary Front	65%	65%	65%	65%	Base District	None
Floor Plate	15,000 gsf	15,000 gsf	20,000 gsf	25,000/30,000 gsf	Base District	None
Ground Story Elevation	2 ft / 0 ft	2 ft / 0 ft	2 ft / 0 ft	2 ft / 0 ft	Base District	None
Story Height	10 ft / --	10 ft / --	10 ft / --	10 ft / --	Base District	None
Ground Story Height	-- / 14 ft	-- / 14 ft	-- / 14 ft	-- / 18 ft	Base District	None
Upper Story Height	-- / 10 ft	-- / 10 ft	-- / 10 ft	-- / 10 ft	Base District	None
Number of Stories (min max)	2 3	3 4	3 5	3 6		
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR					4	4
All other Lots					7	8 (+1 story)
Building Height, Feet	38 ft / 40 ft	50 ft / 52 ft	62 ft / 66 ft	74 ft / 80 ft		
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR					50 ft / 52 ft	50 ft / 52 ft
Al other Lots					86 ft / 88 ft	96 ft (+10) / 100 ft (+12)
Step-Back (5 th and above)			10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	None
Roof Type	Flat	Flat	Flat	Flat		None

Table 8.1.6 – Compared to Existing

	Existing MR3	Existing MR4	Existing MR5	Existing MR6	Existing AH Overlay	Revised AH Overlay
Façade Composition						
Ground Story Fenestration						15% 50%
Primary Façade	15%/-- 50%/70%	15%/-- 50%/70%	15%/-- 50%/70%	15%/-- 50%/70%	Base District	
Secondary Façade	15% 70%	15% 70%	15% 70%	15% 70%	Base District	
Upper Story Fenestration	15% 50%	15% 50%	15% 50%	15% 50%	Base District	15% 50%
Blank Wall	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	Base District	None
Use & Occupancy						
Ground Story Entrance Spacing	30 ft*	30 ft*	30 ft*	30 ft*	Base District	None
<u>Ground Story Commercial Spaces</u>						1
Commercial Space Depth	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	30 ft	Base District	None
Density Factor	--					
Lot Area <= 5,000 sf	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,125	None	None
Lot Area >= 5,000 sf	1,125	1,125	1,125	850	None	None
Net Zero Ready + LEED	850	850	850	650	None	None
Outdoor Amenity Space	1/DU	1/DU	1/DU	1/DU	None	None
Roof-mounted Mechanicals						
Equipment, Screening, Penthouse Height	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	Base District	None

Thank you!

8.1.2 Purpose

- a. To permit the development of buildings that provide all dwelling units as affordable dwelling units.
- b. To permit additional residential use intensity, additional building height, and additional tolerance for dimensional standards to incentivize the development of affordable dwelling units.

8.1.6 Mid-Rise Districts

- a. Building Types
 - i. The following building types are permitted by right:
 - a). Apartment Building
 - b). General Building
 - ii. The standards of Table 8.1.6 supersede ~~or supplement the dimensional standards~~ all of the standards of a. Lot Standards, b. Building Placement, c. Massing & Height, and d. Uses & Features for the specified building types permitted by the underlying zoning district.
- b. Dimensional Compliance
 - i. Development of any Apartment Building or General Building may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from the numeric value of the ~~following~~ dimensional standards of ~~the underlying zoning district~~ Table 8.1.6:
 - ~~a). Lot coverage (max)~~
 - ~~b). Green score (min)~~
 - ~~c). Open space (min)~~
 - ~~d). Front building setbacks (min & max)~~
 - ~~e). Side building setbacks for lots abutting any non-NR or LHD lot (min)~~
 - ~~f). Facade build outs (min)~~
 - ~~g). Floor plate (max)~~
- c. Use Provisions
 - i. Uses from the following principal use categories are permitted by right:
 - a). Residential Housing
 - ~~ii.~~ Development is exempt from any minimum gross floor area per dwelling unit specified elsewhere in this Ordinance.
 - ~~iii.~~ Development is exempt from providing any required leasable floor area for uses from the Arts & Creative Enterprise use categories specified elsewhere in this Ordinance.
 - ~~iv.~~ The use of any upper story of a general building is limited to the following principal use categories and specific uses:
 - a). Community Center
 - b). Library
 - c). Public Service
 - d). Religious & Educational Uses Protected by M.G.L. 40A. Sec. 3
 - e). Day Care Services
 - f). Health Care Services
 - g). Residential Housing
 - h). Institutional Housing
 - ~~v.~~ At least forty percent (40%) of the gross floor area of any general building must be occupied by uses from the Residential principal use categories.
 - ~~vi.~~ All dwelling units must be affordable dwelling units.
- d. Parking & Mobility
 - i. Development may deviate by up to five percent (5%) from the minimum number of bicycle parking spaces required per dwelling unit.

Table 8.1.6 Superseding Dimensional Standards

	Apartment Building	General Building
Lot Development		
<u>Lot Coverage (max)</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Green Score</u>	--	--
<u>Minimum</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.20</u>
<u>Ideal</u>	<u>0.25</u>	<u>0.25</u>
<u>Open Space (min)</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>10%</u>
Building Setbacks		
<u>Curb Setback (min)</u>	<u>12 ft</u>	<u>12 ft</u>
<u>Primary Front Setback (min/max)</u>	<u>0 ft 15 ft</u>	<u>0 ft 15 ft</u>
<u>Secondary Front Setback (min/max)</u>	<u>0 ft 15 ft</u>	<u>0 ft 15 ft</u>
Side Setback (min)	--	--
<u>Abutting an Alley or R-ROW</u>	<u>0 ft</u>	<u>0 ft</u>
<u>Abutting any non-NR or LHD</u>	<u>0 ft</u>	<u>0 ft</u>
<u>1st - 3rd Story abutting NR or LHD</u>	<u>10 ft</u>	<u>10 ft</u>
<u>4th - 7th 8th Story abutting NR or LHD</u>	--	--
Lot Width < 100 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Lot Depth > 100 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Rear Setback (min)	--	--
<u>Abutting an Alley or R-ROW</u>	<u>0 ft</u>	<u>0 ft</u>
<u>Abutting any non-NR or LHD</u>	<u>10 ft</u>	<u>10 ft</u>
<u>1st - 3rd Story abutting NR or LHD</u>	<u>20 ft</u>	<u>20 ft</u>
<u>4th - 7th 8th Story abutting NR or LHD</u>	--	--
Lot Depth < 100 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Lot Depth > 100 ft	30 ft	30 ft
Main Massing		
Number of Stories (max)	--	--
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	4	4
All other MR3-MR6 lots	7 <u>8</u>	7 <u>8</u>
Step-Back, Top Story (min)		
 — 4 or less stories	none	none
 — 5 or more stories	10 ft	10 ft
Building Height, Feet (max)	--	--
Mid-Rise 3 abutting NR	50 ft	52 ft
All other MR3-MR6 lots	86 <u>96</u> ft	88 <u>100</u> ft
Façade Composition		
<u>Fenestration (min/max)</u>	<u>15% / 50%</u>	<u>15% / 50%</u>
Use & Occupancy		
<u>Ground Story Commercial Unit (min)</u>	<u>n/a</u>	<u>1</u>

