



City of Medford

Office of Planning, Development and Sustainability

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To: City Council President Zac Bears and Honorable Members of the City Council
From: Danielle Evans, Senior Planner, Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability *on behalf of* the City of Medford Community Development Board
Date: December 13, 2024
RE: Community Development Board Recommendation (Council Paper #24-490)

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c.40A, s. 5, the City of Medford Community Development Board held duly noticed public hearings on November 20, 2024 and December 4, 2024 to consider and make a recommendation to City Council on the following proposed zoning amendments (Council Paper #24-490):

1. Amend Section 94-2.1 (Division into Districts) to add the Mystic Avenue Corridor District.
2. Amend Section 94-3.2 Table of Use Regulations (Table A) by incorporating the Mystic Avenue Corridor District into the existing table and to designate the uses permitted therein.
3. Amend Section 94-4.1 Table of Dimensional Requirements (Table B) by incorporating the Mystic Avenue Corridor District and to state the dimensional requirements therein.
4. Amend Section 94-12 (Definitions) to amend and add various definitions.
5. Amend Section 94-9.0 to insert a new subsection to create the Mystic Avenue Corridor District.
6. Amending the Zoning Map to create a new Mystic Avenue Corridor District, and to change the zoning district designation of various properties along Mystic Avenue to place them within said district, as shown on a map entitled, "Mystic Ave Corridor Zoning Map" dated October 9, 2024.

November 20, 2024

Board members present at the meeting were Chair Jacqueline McPherson, Member Peter Calves, Member Ari Fishman, Member Ayni Strang, Member Adam Behrens, Member Sabrina Alpino, and Associate Member Benjamin Lavallee. Vice Chair Emily Hedeman was absent.

Emily Innes of Innes Associates gave a presentation of the draft ordinance along with the following proposed changes identified subsequent to City Council's vote to refer the amendment to the CDB:

1. Add a table for the Affordability Requirements to the Table of Development Incentive Bonuses in Section 94-9.X.4 Development Incentives.
 - o Reason for the change: to more clearly explain the bonus structure.

2. Delete from the Table of Development Incentive Bonuses in Section 94-9.X.4 Development Incentives the 'Certified as LEED Gold or equivalent standard' and modify 'Certified as LEED Platinum or equivalent standard' to 1 additional story.
 - o Reason for the change: As the City has adopted the Specialized Stretch Energy Code it is already required that development meet the LEED Gold standards.
3. Delete from the Table of Development Incentive Bonuses in Section 94-9.X.4 Development Incentives 'Provide active ground floor space at more than 75% of the ground floor.'
 - o Reason for the change: This is a requirement in the MACD so should not be an incentive.
4. Add to Section 94-9.X.3 Dimensional Requirements and Waivers:
 - i. Height Waiver 2. The minimum height requirement may be waived by a Special Permit from the Community Development Board for projects that are consistent with the purpose of the district and goals of the Medford Comprehensive Plan.
 - o Reason for the change: To give the CDB the flexibility to make an exception to approve a very good project which otherwise meets City goals.

Due to the late hour and to give the Board more time to review the proposed revisions to the original draft, the CDB voted to continue the public hearing to December 4th, 2024.

December 4, 2024

Board members present at the meeting were Chair Jacqueline McPherson, Vice Chair Emily Hedeman, Member Peter Calves, Member Ari Fishman, Member Ayni Strang, Member Adam Behrens, and Associate Member Benjamin Lavallee. Member Sabrina Alpino was absent.

Emily Innes of Innes Associates gave an overview of the draft ordinance and revisions as previously presented at the November 20, 2024 public hearing with the additional change to revision #2 to change "certified" to "certifiable" to acknowledge that actual LEED certification can not be achieved until after a building is built and not at the time of awarding a density bonus. In addition, there are now other organizations and standards that would meet the City's goals.

Public Comment provided at the public hearing:

-) Laurel Ruma, 149 Burget Ave, asked for an explanation of how the new zoning would prevent a canyoning effect. Emily Innes responded that the zoning is written intentionally to not create a canyon effect by requiring step backs for upper stories and keeping taller buildings on the side adjacent to I-93. Shorter buildings would be allowed on the other side so that the height steps down to the residential area.
-) Amy Burnis, 138 Burget, spoke in favor of the zoning that would increase development of the area and asked about the height limits. Emily Innes responded that the I-93 side would be zoned MX-3 which has a base height of 4 stories plus a tower of 6 stories with maximum height of 14 stories with incentives. The other side would be MX-2, which would have a base height of 4 stories plus a tower of 2 stories with incentives.
-) Alex Hackman, 71 Hume Ave, spoke in favor of the increased density, but expressed concern with sea level rise which could cause the overtopping of the Amelia Earhart Dam.

-) Jamie Thompson, asked for the specific dollar values associated with the area median incomes for the incentive bonuses. Staff responded that these values are set annually by HUD, but noted that for 2024, 80% of AMI for a 1-person household in Middlesex County is \$91,400.

The Board voted 6-0 (Emily Hedeman ineligible to vote due to the prior public hearing absence) to recommend to City Council the approval of the zoning amendment with the following revisions:

1. Add the new table for the Affordability Requirements to the Table of Development Incentive Bonuses in Section 94-9.X.4 Development Incentives
2. Delete from the Table of Development Incentive Bonuses in Section 94-9.X.4 Development Incentives the 'Certified as LEED Gold or equivalent standard' and modify 'Certified as LEED Platinum or equivalent standard' to 1 additional story and changing 'certified' to 'certifiable'
3. Delete from the Table of Development Incentive Bonuses in 19.X.4 Development Incentives 'Provide active ground floor space at more than 75% of the ground floor.'
4. Add to Section 94-9.X.3 Dimensional Requirements and Waivers:
 - i. Height Waiver 2. The minimum height requirement may be waived by a Special Permit from the Community Development Board for projects that are consistent with the purpose of the district and goals of the Medford Comprehensive Plan.

cc: Alicia Hunt, Director of Planning, Development, and Sustainability
Jacqueline McPherson, Chair, Community Development Board
Breanna Lungo-Koehn, Mayor
Adam Hurtubise, City Clerk