

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-7 – FINAL PUBLICATION

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

In the Year Two Thousand and Twenty-Five

AN ORDINANCE

That the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge be amended on a Zoning Petition by the Cambridge City Council to amend the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance in Article 11.000 with the intent to amend certain subsections of the Affordable Housing Overlay, Section 11.207 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, with the intent of limiting allowable height increases in Residence C-1 districts, removing references to provisions in the base zoning that are no longer applicable, and clarifying references to departments responsible for enforcement.

Amend Subsection 11.207.4 to read as follows:

11.207.4 Use

- (a) In all zoning districts, an AHO Project may contain single-family, two-family, townhouse, or multifamily dwellings as-of-right.
- (b) An AHO Project may contain active non-residential uses on the ground floor as they may be permitted as-of-right in the base zoning district or the overlay district(s) that are applicable to a lot, which for the purpose of this Section shall be limited to Institutional Uses listed in Section 4.33, Office Uses listed in Section 4.34 Paragraphs a. through e., and Retail and Consumer Service uses listed in Section 4.35 that provide services to the general public.

Amend Subsections 11.207.5.2.1, 11.207.5.2.2, and 11.207.5.2.3 to read as follows:

11.207.5.2.1 Building Height and Stories Above Grade. For an AHO Project, the standards set forth below shall apply in place of any building height limitations set forth in the District Development Standards.

- (a) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of less than seventy-five (75) feet, an AHO Project shall contain no more than nine (9) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred (100) feet, as measured from existing Grade.
- (b) The height of an AHO Project on an AHO Corridor Lot may be increased from the height limits in Paragraph (a) above, not to exceed twelve (12) Stories Above Grade and a building height of one hundred and forty (140) feet.
- (c) Where the District Dimensional Standards set forth a maximum residential building height of seventy-five (75) feet or more, an AHO Project shall contain no more than thirteen (13) Stories Above Grade and shall have a maximum height of one hundred and fifty (150) feet, as measured from existing Grade.
- (d) The height of an AHO Project within an AHO Square District may be increased from the height limits in Paragraphs (a) through (c) above, not to exceed fifteen (15) Stories Above Grade and a building height of one hundred and seventy (170) feet.
- (e) An AHO Project may exceed the allowable height limitations of the previous paragraphs of this Section, not to exceed three additional stories and thirty-five feet (35') of additional building height, under the following circumstances:

- (i) The total gross floor area on the AHO Lot will not exceed 70% of the total lot area multiplied by the maximum number of stories otherwise permitted under the previous paragraphs of this Section; and
 - (ii) pre-existing, contiguous Green Area Open Space on the AHO Lot will be preserved or expanded, consisting of at least 5% or more of the total area of the AHO Lot; and
 - (iii) the AHO Project will exceed the minimum required open space as set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.4 of this Article; and
 - (iv) the AHO Project is not located in a Residence C-1 district, unless it is also on an AHO Corridor Lot or within an AHO Square.
- (f) If the height of an existing building on the AHO Lot, or on an abutting lot, exceeds the height limits in the previous paragraphs of this Section 11.207.5.2.1, then the height of the AHO Project may be increased, not to exceed the building height and Stories Above Grade of the existing building.
 - (g) Where an AHO Project has different applicable Building Height and Stories Above Grade limitations as specified in the preceding paragraphs of this Section 11.207.5.2.1, the most permissive height limitations shall control.
 - (h) The Height Exceptions set forth in Section 5.23 of this Zoning Ordinance shall apply when determining the building height of an AHO Project.

11.207.5.2.2 Residential Density. There shall be no maximum FAR or minimum lot area per dwelling unit for an AHO Project.

Amend Subsection 11.207.5.3 to read as follows:

11.207.5.3 Standards for Existing Buildings.

A building that is in existence as of the effective date of this Ordinance and does not conform to the standards set forth in Section 11.207.5.2 above may be altered, reconstructed, extended, relocated, and/or enlarged for use as an AHO Project as-of-right in accordance with the standards set forth below. Except as otherwise stated, the required dimensional characteristics of the building and site shall be those existing at the time of the conversion to an AHO Project if they do not conform to the standards of Section 11.207.5.2. The following modifications shall be permitted as-of-right, notwithstanding the limitations set forth in Article 8.000 of this Zoning Ordinance:

- (a) Construction occurring entirely within an existing structure, including the addition of Gross Floor Area within the interior of the existing building envelope, and including any increase to the number of dwelling units within the existing building, provided that the resulting number of Stories Above Grade is not more than the greater of the existing number of Stories Above Grade or the existing height of the building divided by 10 feet.
- (b) The relocation, enlargement, or addition of windows, doors, skylights, or similar openings to the exterior of a building.
- (c) The addition of insulation to the exterior of an existing exterior wall to improve energy efficiency, provided that the resulting exterior plane of the wall shall either conform to the yard setback standards set forth in Section 11.207.5.2 above or shall not intrude more than eight (8) inches further into the existing yard setback and provided that the lot shall either conform to the open space standards set forth in Section 11.207.5.2 or shall not decrease the existing open space by more than 5% or 100 square feet, whichever is greater.

- (d) The installation of exterior features necessary for the existing structure to be adapted to meet accessibility standards for persons with disabilities, including but not limited to walkways, ramps, lifts, or elevators, which may violate or further violate of the dimensional requirements set forth in Section 11.207.5.2.
- (e) The repair, reconstruction, or replacement of any preexisting nonconforming portions of a building including but not limited to porches, decks, balconies, bay windows and building additions, provided that the repair, reconstruction or replacement does not exceed the original in footprint, volume, or area.
- (f) Any other alterations, additions, extensions, or enlargements to the existing building that are not further in violation of the dimensional requirements set forth in Section 11.207.5.2 above.

Amend Subsection 11.207.10 to read as follows:

11.207.10 Enforcement of Affordable Housing Overlay.

The Community Development and Housing Departments shall certify in writing to the Superintendent of Buildings that all applicable provisions of this Section have been met before issuance of any building permit for any AHO Project, and shall further certify in writing to the Superintendent of Buildings that all documents have been filed and all actions taken necessary to fulfill the requirements of this Section before the issuance of any certificate of occupancy for any such project.

In City Council June 2, 2025.

Ordained by a yeas and nays vote:-

Yeas 9; Nays 0; Absent 0.

Attest:- Paula M. Crane, Interim City Clerk

A true copy;



ATTEST:-

Paula M. Crane, Interim City Clerk