Mixed-Income Housing Bonus: Affordable Building Plans

The mixed-income housing zoning bonuses are for developers who add affordable dwellings to their projects or pay into a fund that supports affordable housing. In return, the developments get more floor area, height, and/or dwellings.

Developers apply for mixed-income zoning bonuses with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) through the Philadelphia Planning Commission (PCPC). PCPC must review any required Affordable Building Plans.

Do I need an Affordable Building Plan?

If you want to build affordable units, PCPC must approve your Affordable Building Plan before you get building permits.

You do not need an Affordable Building Plan to get a zoning permit. If you make a payment, you do not need an affordable building plan.

What do I submit?

If you are building affordable units, you will need to submit these items to PCPC before you get a building permit:

- A Marketing Plan
- A Comparable Design Statement
- Project Plans & Unit Table
- A Phasing Timeline (if applicable)
- Legal Description of the Property
- An Acknowledgment of Potential Penalties

The applicant and the design professional must sign the Affordable Building Plan.

PCPC may ask for more items to review the project.

What is the Marketing Plan?

You must prove that you can market the affordable units to eligible tenants/purchasers. Your marketing plan should include any efforts to:

- Provide the City and its partner organizations with early notice about affordable units
- Advertise affordable units within newspapers and on their websites
- Notify organizations near the project
- Advertise in grocery stores, employment centers, places of worship, or other locations

What is the Comparable Design Statement?

You must prove that affordable units are the same as or comparable to market-rate units in the development. Your design professional must submit a written statement that says the affordable units will be the same as or comparable to market-rate units in:

- Exterior and interior design
- Size
- Appearance
- Building materials and finishes
- Construction quality
- Energy efficiency
What are the Project Plans & Unit Table?

You must prove that affordable units are the same as or comparable to market-rate units in the development. The plans should support your design professional’s comparable design statement. You must also prove that affordable units are reasonably spread throughout the development. If market-rate units differ from unit to unit, affordable units must differ in the same way.

You need to submit the following plans. These plans must show the items listed below:

**Site Plan and Ground Floor Plans**
- All ground floor entries
- Access to common areas and lobbies
- Vertical circulation to dwelling units
- Open spaces for residents
- Streets, sidewalks, and on-site landscaping
- Vehicular access locations, including parking and loading
- Adjacent properties including building footprints and points of entry
- All ADA-compliant accessible routes to points of entry, dwelling units, parking areas, building amenities, and open spaces

**Building Plans**
- All market rate and affordable units on all floor levels
- Common amenities or open spaces not shown on the site plan or ground floor plan
- Potential nuisances, which may include dumpsters, elevators, and sources of unwanted noise or odors

**Typical Unit Plans**
- Size, location, and configuration of bathrooms, bedrooms, kitchens, living rooms, and dining rooms.
  (Each type of market-rate and affordable unit must be shown.)
- Description, manufacture, and pricing of interior finishes, fixtures, and equipment.
- HVAC equipment capacity and efficiency

**Elevation Plans**
- Building elevations of all facades and exposures
- Exterior materials illustrated and labeled
- Clearly marked windows with all operable panes and sizes listed

You must also submit a **Unit Table** for all dwelling units on the property. For each unit, this table should only include:

- The unit number
- The square footage
- The number of bedrooms
- **If a required affordable unit:** The maximum percentage of Area Median Income (AMI) allowed at initial occupancy

What is the Phasing Timeline?

If you plan to phase your development, your phasing timeline must be approved by PCPC. The phasing timeline must include the timing of any temporary certificates of occupancy. The timeline must also show the market-rate and affordable units that will be completed in each phase.

What is the Legal Description of the Property?

This is the official meets and bound of the property. This is included in the recorded deed or a surveyor’s letter.

What is the Acknowledgment of Potential Penalties?

The applicant must acknowledge in a statement that they understand the potential legal penalties if they do not follow the approved Affordable Building Plan.
What Happens After my Affordable Build Plan is Approved?

You must submit your approved Affordable Building Plan package to the Department of Licenses and Inspections.

You must record a deed restriction on the property that is approved by DPD and the Law Department before you get your building permit. The recorded deed restriction must be submitted to the Department of Licenses and Inspections. DPD will provide a standard deed restriction for your review.

What if I want to change my plans?

Changes to a project may need DPD approval of a new Affordable Building Plan. Changes may also need new permits or your recorded deed restriction. This could delay your project. Contact DPD right away if your plans change after you get your building permit or record your deed restriction.

What if I have Questions?

You can contact us at planning.development@phila.gov.

Disclaimer

Affordable housing must be provided and payments in lieu must be made in a manner consistent with the Philadelphia Code and City-issued regulations and code bulletins. If this document conflicts with any adopted regulation, ordinance, or code, the adopted regulation, ordinance, or code will govern.