



## MEMORANDUM

To	Town of Concord Planning Board
From	Amelia Morton, Planner
Date	June 18, 2025
Project	24138: Mixed Use Zoning - Town of Concord
Subject	June 17, 2025, Planning Board Meeting
Cc:	Emily Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, President Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner Heather Carey, Office Coordinator

### Summary:

This memorandum summarizes the feedback received at the Town of Concord’s Planning Board meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, regarding amending the Town’s Mixed-Use Zoning. Eight attendees and the Planning Board were present. The main goal of the presentation was to address the Planning Board’s concerns regarding the restrictive mixed-use language in the current zoning and to understand what the community wants and needs for new language.

### Presentation:

Innes Associate, Ltd. (the consultant team) presented the current mixed-use zoning and the barriers to achieving mixed-use development in its current form. The consultant team also presented the current zoning language and how it hinders development, which was described in the presentation as follows:

**4.2.3.1:** “Each such unit is structurally part of the commercial building, having common walls, foundation, roof, and floor.”

- This restricts the flexibility of where and how the mixed uses are achieved on the site.

**4.2.3.2:** “For development of four (4) or more units, at least twenty percent of the dwelling units (and no less than one unit) are available as affordable housing.”

- Financially infeasible (mathematically equals 25% for multiples of four (4)) and inconsistent with other zoning sections.

**4.2.3.3:** “Open space shall be provided on the lot (apart from the paved area) equal to twice the gross floor area of the residential portion of the building. Any deck, balcony or rooftop garden shall be considered as open space if its floor area is more than twenty-five (25’) square feet. The Planning Board may grant a special permit to allow less than the required amount of open space if the Planning Board finds that the proposed combined business/residence development is in

harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Section and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to the neighborhood in which it is to take place.”

- This requirement is onerous and unachievable.

**4.2.3.4:** “Except in Limited Business District #2, in a combined business/residence building where more than ten percent of the dwelling units are available as affordable housing, the Board may grant a special permit to allow less than the required amount of open space, an increase in the height of the building to forty (40’) feet and/or a decrease in the number of parking spaces if the Board finds that the proposed combined business/residence development is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this Section and that it will not be detrimental to the neighborhood in which it is to take place. “

- Does not create the desired flexibility, and special permit requirements are not well defined.

## Q&A

After the presentation, people were encouraged to ask questions and voice opinions on the points made during the conversation. The points made during the conversation are as follows:

- There is a desire for taller mixed-use buildings (like Brookside).
  - There is especially an interest in larger form buildings with additional design guidelines/zoning options.
- Open space needs to be reformed as a high priority.
- Create additional housing options for aging populations.
- The Planning Board needs to decide if they wish to do a new master plan, as the “West Concord Village Master Plan (2010)” and the “Envision Concord - Bridge to 2030” must be updated after 2030.
  - There may be a 2027 update to the Concord Long Range Plan (Currently the “Envision Concord - Bridge to 2030”) if the capital request is granted at the 2026 Town Meeting.
- The new mixed-use language cannot be a “one-size-fits-all” zoning solution, and traffic constraints must be considered.
- A payment-in-lieu (PILOT) for partial units must also be included in the new zoning language.
  - The Provincetown example was pointed out to the Consultant Team.
- There were concerns surrounding the MBTA Communities Law (Section 3A).
  - Currently in the interim but not related to this project's scope.

- Should a form-based component be added to the zoning language?
  - Updating the contract to accommodate the community's wants will be essential.
  - Emily Innes will send additional information to the Concord Staff.

**Boards and Feedback:**

After the conclusion of the meeting, participants were given an additional opportunity to note thoughts and feelings on what they had seen during the presentation on boards in the hallway outside of the meeting room. The prompts that were on the boards, as well as the comments provided, are as follows:

**What I like about the potential changes:**

Comments:

1. Increase the overall mix of housing - businesses need places for workers to live.
2. Reduce barriers to quality development that is an asset

**What I am concerned about with the potential changes:**

Comments:

1. Need design standards
2. Height and overall massing

**What I don't like about the potential changes:**

Comments:

1. None

**What topics were not discussed but are important to consider:**

Comments:

1. Consider tailoring requirements to refer to existing abutters, so as to avoid architectural clashes.

**Comments from conversations with the consultant team after the meeting:**

These informal conversations resulted in some additional notes that the consultant team felt necessary to add.

- It is essential to note what fails

- Attendees were interested in seeing additional context by visualizing vacant parcels around town.