

**TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION**

***Building & Planning Committee***

**Issue Briefing**

**Topic:** Proposed Ordinance to Amend ROHO – Rock Hill Overlay District

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**Date:** December 7, 2018

**I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:**

Authorizing the Township Secretary to advertise a public hearing and notice of intent to adopt an ordinance to amend the Zoning Code to revise the ROHO - Rock Hill Overlay District to advance the goals of the District by requiring ground floor nonresidential/commercial uses.

**II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:**

The Board of Commissioners must adopt Zoning Code amendments in compliance with the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.

**III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):**

The ROHO District was amended in 2008 to establish a threshold of new development before mixed-use development was required. As a result, the ROHO District required ground floor nonresidential/commercial uses once new development exceeds 600,000 square feet, which allowed for single-use residential buildings in the district.

**IV. Other Relevant Background Information:**

Residential and mixed-use residential development was incentivized in the ROHO District as a tool to promote the overall redevelopment of the District by adding ‘feet on the street’ to support desired retail/restaurant uses. Since ROHO was adopted a single-story retail building (CVS), an 86-unit, six-story home for the aged/modern senior living apartment building, and a five-story 332 unit residential building have received land development approval in the ROHO District. Since 2010, over 3,000 new residential units have been proposed in Bala Cynwyd.

The proposed ordinance amendments seek to equalize the intended land use mix by requiring all development to include ground floor nonresidential/commercial uses.

The proposed amendments are consistent with Comprehensive Plan Recommendation LC27 – “Continue to refine zoning regulations as necessary.”

A brief description of the proposed amendments is provided below.

Section 1 The ROHO District currently requires ground floor nonresidential/commercial uses once new development exceeds 600,000 square feet. This threshold currently allows for single-use residential buildings in the district, instead of the mixed-use and commercial development envisioned. The

proposed ordinance eliminates the 600,000 square feet threshold thereby requiring nonresidential/commercial uses for all development.

V. **Impact on Township Finances:**

This ordinance will have no immediate impact on Township finances. It should be noted that the ROHO – Rock Hill Overlay District was created to promote the redevelopment of this underperforming commercial area.

VI. **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends the Board of Commissioners authorize the advertisement and the scheduling of a public hearing to consider the ordinance to amend the Zoning Code to revise the ROHO – Rock Hill Overlay District.