

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Building and Planning Committee

Issue Briefing

Topic: Moderate Income Housing Ordinance – Planning Commission recommendations

Prepared By: Christopher Leswing, Director, Department of Building & Planning

Date: July 29, 2025

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Authorize the Township Secretary to advertise a public hearing and notice of intent to adopt an Ordinance, to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, entitled Zoning for adoption of an ordinance to incentivize moderate income housing in the Open Space Overlay District (OSOD) in the LDR3 and LDR4 districts.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

The Board of Commissioners approve all amendments to Township codes.

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

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

A detailed explanation of the ordinance is provided in the accompanying memo to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed legislation at a meeting held on Monday July 28, 2025.

The Planning Commission discussed the proposed ordinance at length and recommended removing reference to the LDR4 district and only having the proposed ordinance apply to the LDR3 district. The Planning Commission commented that application of the proposed ordinance to the LDR4 district should be further evaluated to ensure that the resulting density provided by the incentive would be appropriate for the surrounding context. The Planning Commission expressed concern that the proposed ordinance did not contain guardrails on the yield calculation process to prevent developers from potentially exploiting the incentive.

The Planning Commission views the proposed ordinance as a pilot case to incentive moderate income housing as a targeted infill strategy in single-family housing districts. The Planning Commission commented that as a pilot the ordinance could be reviewed and potentially applied to other LDR districts if proven successful in the LDR3 district.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

There is no impact upon Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff concurs with the Planning Commission recommendation to remove LDR4 from the proposed ordinance and to stress test the application of the proposed incentives to the LDR4 district.