

CHAPTER XXIV

Housing Opportunity Overlay (HOO) Zone

1.0 ESTABLISHMENT

The Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone (HOO) is established as an overlay district to the current (underlying) zoning. The HOO area is generally bounded by Front Street on the north, Clover Street on the south, the Providence and Worcester Railroad tracks on the east, and West Street, Fremont Street, Pine Street, and Spruce Street on the west. The boundaries of the HOO zone are depicted on the Town of Oxford Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone Map.

2.0 PURPOSE

The Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone (HOO) is intended to create additional multi-family housing opportunities within Oxford while promoting the appropriate development of Oxford's historic town center and other areas of the community.

3.0 VISION STATEMENT

Recognizing the need for more diverse housing opportunities in the Town of Oxford and the surrounding area, this bylaw shall serve to provide for that need by allowing, by Special Permit, multi-family housing developments within the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone.

4.0 OVERLAY DEFINITION

The Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone (HOO) is an overlay district superimposed over all underlying districts within its boundaries. Within the HOO zone, all requirements of the underlying district remain in effect, except where these regulations provide an alternative to such requirements. The HOO zone enables a property owner to apply for approval of a multi-family housing development using the provisions of this Chapter instead of those for the underlying zone. In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this Chapter and any other Chapter of the Zoning Bylaw, the provisions of this Chapter shall control.

5.0 REGULATIONS

5.1 Permitted Principal Uses

The following uses are permitted in the HOO zone subject to granting of a Special Permit by the Planning Board acting as the Special Permit Granting Authority.

1. Multi-Family Dwellings
 - a. Multi-family residential development at up to 20 units / acre of site area (not including any area designated as wetland, watercourse, slopes greater than 25 percent, or 100-year floodplain).
 - b. Uses and structures accessory thereto.

5.2 Dimensional Standards

The dimensional standards of the underlying zone shall continue to apply except that the Special Permit Granting Authority may modify any dimensional standard in considering an application for Multi-Family Dwelling special permit in order to:

1. Facilitate the creation of multi-family housing opportunities as provided in this Chapter.
2. Address on-site constraints or protect important resources.
3. Enhance the development and/or surrounding neighborhoods.
4. Be consistent with the setback of nearby buildings.

5.3 Additional Provisions

1. Unless otherwise approved by the Special Permit Granting Authority, any development approved under this Chapter shall provide for off-street parking as provided in Chapter XI, Section 3.0 of the Oxford Zoning Regulations.
2. Any developments proposed under this Chapter shall, unless modified by the Special Permit Granting Authority, construct or improve the sidewalks abutting the project site in order to enhance the pedestrian nature and character of the proposed development and the surrounding area.

6.0 BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Preserving the small-town, historic character of Oxford is a priority, and the design of buildings and sites is a crucial part of integrating housing at permissible densities into the community. The design of multi-family housing development in the HOO zone shall meet the following criteria.

6.1 Overall Character

- a. Proposed development projects should enhance the general essence of a historic New England community and complement the scale and architecture of adjacent buildings.
- b. An overall design theme (including building placement, building massing, exterior treatments, signage, and other design considerations) shall be established where harmony in textures, lines, and masses is provided and monotony is avoided.
- c. The illustrative HOO zone design guidelines handbook as provided by the Planning Board shall be used by applicants and the Planning Board as a general reference for desirable characteristics of buildings and sites.