

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
From: Cassie Arnaud, Senior Manager of Housing Development
Christine Yu, Associate Housing Planner
Date: April 30, 2026
Re: 240 Broadway (Broadway Park) – Planning Board AHO Design Consultation Report

Just A Start (JAS) has been working with staff from the Housing Department (Housing) and the Community Development Department (CDD) on its 240 Broadway (Broadway Park) development, which will create a new six-story building containing 16 affordable rental units, to ensure the proposal met AHO zoning and other requirements. The project recently completed the advisory design review process with the Planning Board under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). This project was subject to only one Planning Board Advisory Consultation, which was held on March 10, 2026, because it exceeds the height limit of the underlying zoning district but does not meet the size threshold for a two-session review process.

The AHO requires that the results of the design review process be shared with the Affordable Housing Trust. The Planning Board report is attached and includes:

- Planning Board Final Report of AHO Design Consultation (4/6/2026), including:
 - CDD Staff Memo (3/4/2026); and,
 - DPW Staff Memo (3/5/2026).

As noted in the attached final report, the Planning Board expressed support for the creation of affordable housing at this location and supported the proposed project's height and inclusion of family-sized units. However, the Board also advised that the project could benefit from continued design consultation with City staff regarding certain aspects of the proposed development, particularly around the building façade. The following summarizes some of the specific recommendations, as described in more detail in the attached materials:

- Explore ways to refine building's exterior through revisiting approaches to façade articulation, façade materials, uses of colors, and window trim/proportions;
- Consider incorporating more residential features, such as mullions and window sills;

- Explore ways to improve appearance of building’s proportions (e.g., top floor appears “added on” and bottom floor appears “squat”);
- Work with the Department of Public Works to protect the existing street trees during construction;
- Explore ways to further improve the site layout and ground-floor experience, to the extent feasible, such as adding/orienting windows to offer resident views of adjacent park; adding landscaping; minimizing the visual impact of the transformer; increasing ground-floor fenestration and exterior doors where/if possible; and,
- Explore whether changes to the locations/layout of ground-floor uses would improve functionality and better activate the space.

Project Overview:

The development of Broadway Park involves the new construction of a six-story building. The site has been being used a second parking lot for JAS staff and residents of the George Close building across the street. The development proposal involves the creation of 16 affordable rental units, almost all of which will be family-sized. This project is permitted under the AHO. Under JAS’s AHO submission, all units will be affordable to households earning at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI), with some units being more deeply affordable to those making at or below 30% AMI.

More information on JAS’s proposed development, including the materials that JAS submitted to the Planning Board and presentation materials, can be seen on the Housing Department’s Broadway Park project page at:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Projects/Housing/240broadwaybroadwaypark>.

Housing Department Recommendation:

All approvals of Trust funding for AHO projects are conditioned on the Trust’s review and consideration of the final Planning Board report. Even after the Trust votes to accept the final Planning Board reports, Housing staff will continue to work with the AHO developers to ensure that all remaining design recommendations are considered and oftentimes able to be incorporated into the final development plans.

In the case of Broadway Park, the Planning Board’s final report included more design recommendations for JAS to consider than we have seen in most other final reports. While we do not expect that JAS will necessarily be able to update their designs to address all of the Board’s comments, we understand that JAS is in the process of reviewing the report and plans to meet with City staff to share their response to the Board’s comments. Given this, Housing staff recommend that the Trust begin to review the attached report but wait to take a vote on accepting the report until Housing staff can bring back an update to the Trust on how JAS plans to respond to the items noted in the Planning Board’s final report.