

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust
From: Cassie Arnaud, Senior Manager of Housing Development
Alexis Turgeon, Housing Development Planner
Date: April 30, 2026
Re: Corcoran Park – Phase I – Planning Board AHO Design Consultation Report

Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) has been working with staff from the Housing Department and the Community Development Department on the first phase of the Corcoran Park redevelopment at 8-12 May Street and 53 Lawn Street. The project includes the replacement of the 29 existing distressed public housing units with 67 new energy-efficient, climate resilient apartments in two new buildings that surround open space designed for active and passive recreation. The project recently completed the advisory design review process with the Planning Board under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). The two required Planning Board advisory design consultations were held on December 16, 2025 and March 10, 2026.

The proposed design was favorably received by the Planning Board. The report commended the CHA on its thorough community engagement process and responsiveness to staff and Planning Board member feedback, including the use of updated color palettes, revised roof lines, simplified courtyard design, screening of parking, and the creation of a welcoming entry plaza which improves the residential character of the project. The Planning Board offered suggestions for the development team to continue to explore, including increased refinement of the rooflines of Building B to further enhance its residential character and the addition of large growth trees along the Building A entry plaza. The Board also suggested evaluating the need for play areas and parking, including alternatives to surface parking, when the CHA begins designing the redevelopment's second phase.

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 (3/31/2026), including:
 - CDD Staff Memo (3/4/2026);
- Planning Board Initial Report of AHO Design Consultation (1/5/2026), including:
 - CDD Staff Memo (12/9/2025); and,
 - DPW Staff Memo (12/9/2025).

Project Overview:

The first phase of the Corcoran Park redevelopment involves the new construction of a four-story building with a walkout basement containing 46 units (Building A) and a three-story building containing 21 units (Building B) on the northern portion of the Corcoran Park site under the provisions of the AHO. The Phase I site currently contains 29 distressed public housing units in need of replacement due to long-standing flooding and subsidence issues. Approximately seventy-five percent of the 67 newly created affordable rental units will be family-sized. All units will be affordable to households earning at or below 80% Area Median Income (AMI), with some units being deeply affordable to those making at or below 30% AMI. This project is the beginning of a larger redevelopment which, in total, will include the replacement of all 153 public housing units at Corcoran Park with approximately 300 new energy-efficient, climate resilient apartments.

More information on the proposed development, including the presentation and materials submitted to the Planning Board, can be found on the Housing Department's Cocoran Park project page at:

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

The Trust approved a commitment of \$14,405,000 to support the development of this project in November 2025. The development team has submitted an application for state funding and, if awarded, anticipates beginning construction by the end of 2026.

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. We recommend the Trust vote to accept this report to satisfy that condition of the Trust's funding commitment to this development.