



CITY OF BANGOR

## AGENDA

### **Business & Economic Development Committee**

Monday, October 5, 2026

73 Harlow Street – Council Chambers

Bangor, Maine

Immediately following Finance Committee

- 1. Floor Area Ratio Removal from Downtown Development District (DDD)**  
*Action request: Forward recommendation to full Council*
- 2. Discuss Proposed New Planning Fees**  
*Action request: Forward recommendation to full Council*
- 3. Discuss Proposed Climate Rebate Program for Residents**  
*Action request: Provide comments for staff to move forward*



# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## CITY OF BANGOR

ANNE M. KRIEG AICP  
DIRECTOR

### Memorandum

To: Business & Economic Development Committee  
From: Planning Division  
Date: October 5, 2026  
Regarding: Floor area ratio (FAR) removal from the Downtown Development District (DDD)

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This memo outlines the proposed removal of the floor area ratio (FAR) from the Downtown Development District (DDD). A need has been expressed to create more flexibility for expanding businesses and residences downtown. The floor area ratio in Downtown Development District can hinder infill development. Once the maximum floor area ratio is met on a lot, no additional floor area may be added.

Floor area ratio is the floor area of a building on a lot divided by the horizontal area of the lot. A building with 40,000 sqft of floor area on a 10,000 square foot lot has a FAR of 4.0. A building with 10,000sqft of floor area on a 40,000sqft lot has a FAR of 0.25.

Floor area ratio (FAR) is an outdated control; originally, it was placed in the code to address the following planning objectives:

- Control development intensity – limiting how much building floor area there could be on a lot without simply dictating a particular building footprint.
- Managing building scale – FAR is often used to limit the bulk of a building
- Allowing flexibility in design – unlike a simple lot coverage requirement, a developer can choose between a shorter, wider building or a taller narrower one
- Separating out core, more dense allowances to less density.

FAR is not used as much in modern zoning because:

- ❖ FAR doesn't directly control building form – a FAR number can produce many different buildings so if the city cares about other elements like frontage, setbacks, streetscape, public space, FAR will not address those priorities.
- ❖ Modern zoning often focuses on form rather than intensity such as building to street relationship and massing in a downtown
- ❖ In the downtown, FAR could have unintended consequences. If the city wants to have a certain number of stories in a building to create mass and pedestrian scale, FAR will not provide that form.
- ❖ FAR is difficult to understand – other requirements like minimums and maximums are easier to explain.
- ❖ FAR can discourage infill development or in the case that brought us here for this discussion, the addition of stories to an important building.
- ❖ FAR does not necessarily protect sunlight or neighborhood character because it does not consider how buildings are designed or positioned and the heights of them.
- ❖ Floor area is not a good measure to ensure infrastructure capacity. A multi-unit residential development and commercial development both with 40,000sqft of floor area will have different levels of usage and impacts on infrastructure. The City also has to ensure that all developments have adequate infrastructure capacity through other standards in the Ordinance.

City of Bangor Department of Community & Economic Development – Planning Division

Thus, rather than asking *What FAR should this district have*, we would ask ***what form, intensity, capacity and relationship to the street does this building have in our downtown?***

For these reasons, staff will be recommending removal of this control in the new Land Development Code. However, this current proposed text amendment will only remove it from the Downtown Development District (DDD) since new development is proposed there that would be limited by this.

Additionally, some of the most well-known historic buildings downtown already exceed this standard. For example, the Graham Building where the Rudman Winchell offices are has a FAR of approximately 4.5 and the Eastern Trust building at 6 State Street has a FAR of about 5.3.

The proposed amendment aligns with policy recommendations 1 and 7 in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan regarding encouraging development in the growth boundary and increasing housing supply downtown by revising zoning regulations.

The proposed language is included in your packets and will also be on the October 6th Planning Board agenda for the Board's feedback. If Councilors and Planning Board are amenable, staff will forward the formal language through for adoption.



## **CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

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Council Meeting Date: October 12, 2026

Item No: 26-

Responsible Dept: Planning

Action Requested: Ordinance

Map/Lot: n/a

### **Title, Ordinance**

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Amending Chapter 165, Land Development, Attachment 2 - Schedule A, Urban Developed Area to Remove Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from the Downtown Development District (DDD)

### **Summary**

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This amendment would remove Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from the Downtown Development District (DDD) to provide flexibility for growth in downtown and promote infill development. Floor area ratio is the floor area of a building on a lot divided by the horizontal area of the lot.

FAR was used to control building bulk and volume in the early to mid-20th century. When FARs were implemented around the country, some of the perceived benefits were protecting sunlight, neighborhood character, and infrastructure capacity, most of which do not hold true today. Additionally, some of the most well-known historic buildings downtown already exceed this standard. For example, the Graham Building where the Rudman Winchell offices are has a FAR of approximately 4.5 and the Eastern Trust building at 6 State Street has a FAR of about 5.3.

The proposed amendments align with policy recommendations 1 and 7 in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan regarding encouraging development in the growth boundary and increasing housing supply downtown by revising zoning regulations.

### **Committee Action**

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Committee: Planning Board

Meeting Date: 10/20/2026

Action:

For:

Against:

### **Staff Comments & Approvals**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

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City Solicitor

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Finance Director

**Introduced for:** First Reading



## **CITY COUNCIL ORDINANCE**

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Date: October 12, 2026

Assigned to Councilor:

**ORDINANCE**, Amending the Land Development Code, to Remove Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the Downtown Development District (DDD).

**WHEREAS**, the Land Development Code currently sets a maximum floor area ratio of 4.0 in the Downtown Development District (DDD); and

**WHEREAS**, this is an outdated dimensional control that hinders growth of downtown businesses and residences; and

**WHEREAS** the proposed amendments align with policy recommendations 1 and 7 in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan regarding encouraging development in the growth boundary and increasing housing supply downtown by revising zoning regulations;

**Be it Ordered by the City Council of the City of Bangor that,**

Chapter 165, Attachment 2 - Schedule A of the Code of the City of Bangor is amended as shown on the attached.

# LAND DEVELOPMENT

## 165 Attachment 2

### City of Bangor

#### Schedule A

#### Urban Developed Area

#### Article XIII, §§ 165-88 through 165-97

[Amended 10-23-1995 by Ord. No. 95-412; 12-27-2000 by Ord. No. 01-64; 9-9-2002 by Ord. No. 02-320; 11-22-2004 by Ord. No. 05-08; 12-12-2005 by Ord. No. 06-21; 6-26-2006 by Ord. No. 06-226; 11-14-2007 by Ord. No. 07-323; 3-24-2008 by Ord. No. 08-104; 5-9-2011 by Ord. No. 11-131; 12-23-2013 by Ord. No. 14-034; 3-13-2017 by Ord. No. 17-082; 3-27-2017 by Ord. No. 17-103; 9-11-2017 by Ord. No. 17-288; 9-10-2018 by Ord. No. 18-315; 1-14-2019 by Ord. No. 19-053; 11-23-2020 by Ord. No. 20-355; 12-28-2020 by Ord. No. 21-031; 7-19-2021 by Ord. No. 21-259; 9-11-2023 by Ord. No. 23-258; 6-10-2024 by Ord. No. 24-164; 4-13-2026 by Ord. No. 26-118]

|                                  | Maximum              | Minimum       | Maximum  | Minimum   | Minimum         | Minimum   | Minimum                       | Maximum       | Minimum |            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------|------------|
|                                  | District Height      | Lot Area      | Lot      | Lot Width | Front Yard      | Side Yard | Rear Yard                     | Impervious    | Water   | Maximum    |
| Zoning Districts                 | (feet)               | (square feet) | Coverage | (feet)    | Depth           | Depth     | Depth                         | Surface Ratio | Setback | Floor Area |
|                                  |                      |               |          |           | (feet)          | (feet)    | (feet)                        |               | (feet)  | Ratio      |
| Urban Residence 1 (URD-1)        | 35                   | <sup>1</sup>  | 35%      | 50        | 10 <sup>7</sup> | 5         | 15; 5 for accessory structure | 0.75          | --      | --         |
| Urban Residence 2 (URD-2)        | 40                   | <sup>2</sup>  | 40%      | 50        | 10 <sup>7</sup> | 5         | 15; 5 for accessory structure | 0.8           | --      | --         |
| Multifamily and Service (M & SD) | 45 <sup>10, 11</sup> | <sup>3</sup>  | 50%      | 50        | 10              | 5         | 5                             | 0.85          | --      | --         |
| Neighborhood Service (NSD)       | 35 <sup>11</sup>     | <sup>9</sup>  | 25%      | 75        | 20              | 10        | 20                            | None          | 0.4     | 0.4        |
| Urban Service (USD)              | 45 <sup>10, 11</sup> | <sup>12</sup> | 40%      | 80        | 10              | 10        | 10 <sup>8</sup>               | None          | --      | --         |
| Downtown Development (DDD)       | None                 | None          | None     | None      | None            | None      | None                          | None          | 4.0     | 4.0 --     |



# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## CITY OF BANGOR

ANNE M. KRIEG AICP  
DIRECTOR

### Memorandum

To: Business & Economic Development Committee  
From: Planning Division  
Date: September 22, 2026  
Regarding: Proposed new fees

The purpose of this memo is to discuss potential new fees to cover costs incurred for land development projects, zoning map changes, and historic preservation applications. Currently, there is no fee to send mailed notices for these applications. However, notices to abutting property owners are required for almost all types of development, all zoning map changes, and historic preservation applications. Depending on whether the project is a conditional use or there are many abutting property owners, mailings can be quite large. Due to the number of development projects, zone change requests, and historic preservation applications, the number of mailed notices that go out every year can be substantial. Therefore, similar to how the City charges developers for the cost to advertise certain developments and review land development permits, staff proposes to charge for the cost to mail notices to abutters so that this cost doesn't fall on taxpayers. The cost to print and mail a letter is roughly \$1.09-1.35 per letter, \$0.31-0.57 of which is for the printing and envelope and \$0.78 of which is for the postage. We would propose charging in the middle of this range at \$1.22/letter. Since postage is paid for from Treasury, the amount that would be reimbursed to the C&ED Department for postage would be transferred to Treasury.

Another proposed new fee is to cover the cost of stormwater permitting review. Recently, the City was given delegated authority by the State to review the stormwater permits triggered by developments that create 20,000 square feet of new impervious area within an urban impaired stream watershed or one acre of impervious area in unimpaired watersheds. However, this authority comes with extra staff time needed to review projects and inspect stormwater systems to ensure compliance. The State currently charges developers for this permitting; therefore, staff are proposing to charge a similar amount for the City to do this permitting. This fee would be charged as part of the land development permit application for a project (if it meets the threshold for requiring this permitting), and the stormwater permitting portion would be transferred to the Stormwater Utility fund to cover these extra costs. This fee would not apply to sites with stormwater permits previously issued by Maine DEP; revisions to those permits would have to be completed by Maine DEP.

| Area of Impervious | Fee                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <1 acre            | \$827                     |
| 1-2 acres          | \$1,156                   |
| 2-2.99             | \$1,486                   |
| Revision           | ½ of applicable fee above |



# COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## CITY OF BANGOR

ANNE M. KRIEG AICP  
DIRECTOR

### Memorandum

To: Business & Economic Development Committee  
From: Planning Division  
Date: September 29, 2026  
Regarding: Proposed climate rebate program for residents

The purpose of this memo is to discuss a proposed new climate rebate program for residents of the City that would be focused on saving households money on energy bills. Details have not been worked out yet (they would be established over the next month or so), but the program would allocate up to \$50,000 from the Climate Action Plan funds to provide rebates to residents for weatherization, heat pump installations, and possibly solar. This would work in concert with rebates provided by Efficiency Maine and the City's CDBG program by providing "gap financing" (covering any funding gap leftover by these other rebate programs). Climate Action Plan funds are intended for actions that help implement the Penobscot Climate Action Plan. This program would implement Toolkit 2<sup>1</sup> in the Climate Action Plan, which recommends helping residents with retrofitting their homes. This was one of the highest impact toolkits in the plan, having a very high potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and high potential to build community resilience. It has the added benefit of saving households money during a very expensive heating season.

Initial public outreach at the Farmers' market on a potential program like this garnered a lot of excitement. Staff gave people the option to choose a category that would help their household the most - weatherization, solar, bikes, and an "other options" category. People who gave feedback were evenly split between the different categories, so staff would propose providing rebates for different options since these would serve different needs (heat pumps would help households that currently use heating oil to save the most money, while solar would help households that use electric heating save the most, and weatherization would help all households save money). The benefit of all three of these categories would be that they would save households money over many heating (and cooling) seasons. Given the high price of heating oil and the efficiency difference between heat pumps and oil heating, it may make the best use of funds to limit any heat pump rebates to residents currently using oil. Also, similar to Efficiency Maine, staff would propose tiering the rebate amount based on income, so lower income residents would receive a higher rebate. Staff would also propose that an energy audit be completed and funded by this program first before weatherization and heat pumps are done in order to help identify the best strategy for each home (such as whether weatherization needs to be done before a heat pump is installed).

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.penobscotclimateaction.org/files/ugd/20c262\\_f7a0375896f44dd1a583805fb95139ee.pdf](https://www.penobscotclimateaction.org/files/ugd/20c262_f7a0375896f44dd1a583805fb95139ee.pdf)