



# MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON

Planning Department  
400 Witherspoon Street  
Princeton, NJ 08540  
(609) 924-5366  
planning@princetonnj.gov

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Princeton Mayor and Council  
**From:** Justin Lesko, AICP, PP – Planning Director *JL*  
Nathan Foote, AICP, PP – Assistant Planning Director  
**Date:** March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
**Subject:** **Ordinance #2026-08: An Ordinance of the Municipality of Princeton Amending Chapter B17A Entitled “Land Use and Zoning” of the Municipality of Princeton to Create the Affordable Housing District-16 (AH-16) in Furtherance of the Fair Housing Act**  
Council Introduction – February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Council Re-Introduction – February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026  
Planning Board Review – March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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The Princeton Council has referred Ordinance #2026-08 to the Planning Board for master plan consistency review pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:55D-26a. The ordinance establishes the Affordable Housing District 16 (AH-16) at the properties of 13 Chestnut Street, which requires a 100% affordable housing development, with a minimum requirement of 16 affordable housing units. The ordinance was introduced on February 9<sup>th</sup>, and then re-introduced on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Planning Board reviewed the ordinance at their regular meeting open to the public on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

**By a unanimous vote, the Board found Ordinance #2026-08 to be substantially consistent with the Princeton Master Plan and recommended approval of the Ordinance.** The Board did not have any comments or recommendations. A member of the public expressed support for and appreciation of the ordinance.

See the memo from Mr. Foote to the Board for more information on the ordinance, the Affordable Housing District 16 (AH-16) it would establish, and its relation to the Princeton Master Plan, including the Fourth Round Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan. The memo is attached.

Please reach out if there are any questions or concerns regarding the ordinance or the Planning Board’s review.



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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Princeton Planning Board  
**From:** Nathan Foote, AICP, PP – Assistant Planning Director  
**Date:** February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
**Subject:** **Ordinance #2026-08: An Ordinance of the Municipality of Princeton Amending Chapter B17A Entitled “Land Use and Zoning” of the Municipality of Princeton to Create the Affordable Housing District-16 (AH-16) in Furtherance of the Fair Housing Act**  
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The Princeton Council has referred Ordinance #2026-08 to the Planning Board for master plan consistency review pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:55D-26a. The ordinance was originally introduced on February 9<sup>th</sup>, but had to be re-introduced on February 23<sup>rd</sup> due to substantive changes to the ordinance. It is scheduled for a public hearing on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Ordinance 2026-08 is attached to this memo for reference. The most substantial changes were: to permit a maximum building height of 48 feet instead of 45 feet, to allow up to 50% of parking spaces provided to be compact spaces, and to specify that the drive aisle shall be a minimum width of 20 feet past the existing building.

The ordinance establishes the Affordable Housing District 16 (AH-16), comprised of two lots at 13 Chestnut Street: Block 30.02, Lots 39.01 and 39.02. The municipally-owned lots are developed together with a vacant building that used to house a branch of the Princeton Fire Department. The building includes a historical 2.5-story building fronting on Chestnut Street and a one-story extension to the rear. Lot 39.01 is also developed with a paved parking area to the rear of the property. Both properties are located in the R-4 Residential zone of the former Borough, and are in the Affordable Housing Overlay-1 (AHO-1). The properties are adjacent to residential uses in the R-4 B zone to the north and across from residential uses in the R-4 B zone to the west (across Chestnut Street). Lot 39.01 borders a residential use to the south, beyond which are mixed commercial and residential uses along Nassau Street (in the NB Neighborhood Business zone of the former Borough). To the east are commercial and residential uses.

The AH-16 district is intended to provide a realistic opportunity for the construction of affordable housing pursuant to the New Jersey Fair Housing Act and to comply with the Municipality’s constitutional obligation to provide housing for low-and moderate-income households. The site is included in the Municipality’s Fourth Round Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (“Fourth Round HEFSP”) as adopted by the Planning Board on June 25, 2025, and endorsed by Council on June 26, 2025. Pages 71-72 of the Fourth Round HEFSP includes how the future development meets the criteria of site availability, suitability, approvability and developability as required by state law. Appendix O of the Fourth Round Plan includes a map of site constraints and an initial conceptual plan of the development. Appendix O is attached to this memo.

As called for in the Fourth Round Plan, Ordinance 2026-08 establishes an AH-16 zone that requires a 100% affordable housing development consisting of a minimum of 16 units, and an accessory publicly-accessible community room on the ground floor fronting Chestnut Street. Residential units are permitted on all floors. The affordable units would be regulated consistent with the Uniform Housing

## Affordability Controls (UHAC) and the New Jersey Fair Housing Act.

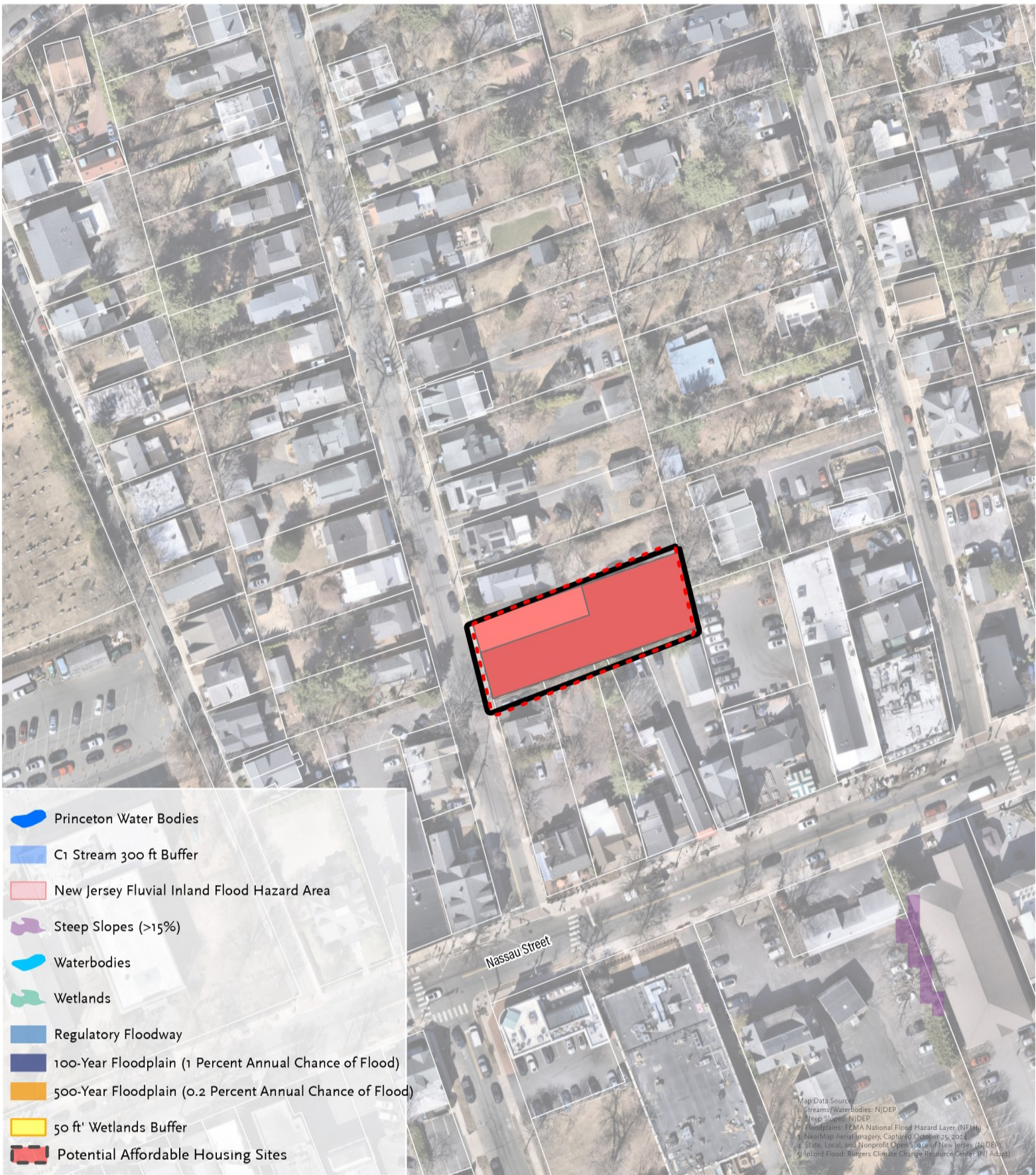
The proposed ordinance requires that the existing 2.5-story firehouse building be retained and adaptively reused; the one-story addition in the rear of the building can be removed. The existing firehouse signage is also required to remain. The ordinance permits specific elements of the 2.5-story building to be removed and replaced with good cause shown. The ordinance requires new construction to be to the rear of the 2.5-story building, with the exception of permitting additions like dormers to the rear of the ridgeline of the 2.5-story building. The ordinance permits a maximum height of 4 stories and 48 feet. Maximum impervious coverage is 90%. Side yard setbacks are required but provided in such a way that permits some portions of the building to reach the side property line. Staff recommends slightly amending the individual projections permitted into the setbacks to allow for 36 feet in length from the 30 feet currently allowed, and clarifying that first floor piers/supports are allowed in the setback as well, as shown on the concept plan. Per the proposed ordinance, 0.5 parking space is required for each residential unit. The required spaces can be on surface lots or in enclosed garages, with up to 50% of spaces allowed to be designed as compact spaces. Landscaping buffers of minimum three feet are required where side and rear yards are required and not needed for circulation.












In my professional opinion, the ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan. Aside from being directly called for in the Municipality's adopted Fourth Round HEFSP, Ordinance 2026-08 is substantially consistent with many other goals of the Princeton Master Plan. One of the key findings from community input in the Introduction section of the plan is that Princeton needs more housing, especially at lower price points. The Vision statement includes that Princeton will have "housing ample and diverse enough to accommodate all who want to live here" and the Princeton of the future will be "affordable to households of all income levels." It is expected that both the market-rate and affordable units in the future development of the site will be rental units. A Land Use goal of the plan is to enhance the existing pattern of land use, particularly by strengthening mixed-use centers in town. The Mobility goals of the plan include reducing inbound commuting through the development of additional housing in areas where jobs are located and encouraging shifts from single-occupancy vehicle travel to low- or zero-emissions mobility options such as walking, cycling, and transit. Utility Goals and Natural Resource Conservation Goals such as accommodating future growth while minimizing adverse impacts to the natural environment are supported by repurposing an already developed parcel.

The Board shall determine if they find the Ordinance consistent with the Master Plan and provide any comments to Council. If Council approves the Ordinance, any future development would require site plan approval by the Board.



## Appendix O. Chestnut Street Firehouse Documentation



-  Princeton Water Bodies
-  C1 Stream 300 ft Buffer
-  New Jersey Fluvial Inland Flood Hazard Area
-  Steep Slopes (>15%)
-  Waterbodies
-  Wetlands
-  Regulatory Floodway
-  100-Year Floodplain (1 Percent Annual Chance of Flood)
-  500-Year Floodplain (0.2 Percent Annual Chance of Flood)
-  50 ft' Wetlands Buffer
-  Potential Affordable Housing Sites

Map Data Sources:  
 1. Streams/Waterbodies: NJDEP  
 2. Steep Slopes: NJDEP  
 3. Floodplains: FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL)  
 4. NearMap Aerial Imagery, Captured October 25, 2024  
 5. State, Local, and Nonprofit Open Space of New Jersey (NJDEP)  
 6. Inland Flood: Rutgers Climate Change Resource Center (NJ Adapt)



SITE #	BLOCK	LOT	SITE ADDRESS
12	30.02	39.01, 39.02	13 CHESTNUT STREET

**Clarke Caton Hintz**  
 Architecture  
 Planning  
 Landscape Architecture



# Potential Sites for Affordable Housing Development

## Site 1: Chestnut Street Firehouse

LOCATION:  
 Princeton, Mercer County, NJ

DATE:  
 May 2025



New Addition

Existing Building to Remain

Details:

- Community Room provides neighborhood amenity TBD
- 16 affordable rental apartments meeting Uniform Affordable Housing Controls and COAH requirements
- Eligible for 3 types of bonus credit. One credit yields 16 units while two other credits yield 8 units. Only one credit may be taken.
- Preliminarily conforms to most AHO-1 overlay zone requirements.

13 Chestnut Street Firehouse Remodel and Addition for Princeton Community Housing

07.19.2024

Marina Rubina, Architect



Adaptive Reuse – Concept Plans



# MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON

Office of the Municipal Clerk

400 Witherspoon Street

Princeton, NJ 08540

(609) 924-5704

[dmount@princetonnj.gov](mailto:dmount@princetonnj.gov)

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Planning Board  
**From:** Dawn M. Mount, *Municipal Clerk*  
**CC:** Justin Lesko, *Planning Director*  
**Subject:** Planning Board Review of Ordinance 2026-8 upon Introduction  
**Date:** February 10, 2026

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On behalf of the Mayor and Council, and in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40:55D-26 and N.J.S.A. 40:55D-64, the attached ordinance, introduced at the Regular Meeting of February 9, 2026, is being directed to the Planning Board for its review and consideration. Please transmit the report of findings and recommendations from the Planning Board no later than thirty-five (35) days from this referral. It should be noted that the tentative date of the public hearing and final adoption of this ordinance is scheduled to take place at the Mayor and Council Regular Meeting of February 23, 2026.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

**ORDINANCE #2026-08**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON AMENDING CHAPTER B17A ENTITLED “LAND USE AND ZONING” OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON TO CREATE THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DISTRICT-16 (AH-16) IN FURTHERANCE OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Supreme Court, through its rulings in Southern Burlington County NAACP vs. Mount Laurel, 67 N.J. 151 (1975) (“Mount Laurel I”) and Southern Burlington County NAACP vs. Mount Laurel, 92 N.J. 158 (1983) (“Mount Laurel II”), has determined that every municipality in New Jersey has a constitutional obligation to provide, through its land use regulations, a realistic opportunity for its fair share of the regional need for housing for low- and moderate-income households and families; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 20, 2024, Governor Murphy signed P.L.2024, c.2. into law, amending the Fair Housing Act of 1985, N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301, *et seq.*, to establish a new framework for determining and enforcing municipalities’ affordable housing obligations under the New Jersey Supreme Court’s Mount Laurel doctrine and the Act (the “FHA”), starting with fourth round (2025-2035) affordable housing obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the FHA and Administrative Directive #14-24 issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts on December 13, 2024 (“Administrative Directive #14-24”), Princeton filed a Complaint for Declaratory Judgment entitled *In the Matter of the Application of the Municipality of Princeton in Mercer County*, Docket No. MER-L-000207-25 on January 28, 2025 (the “Fourth Round DJ Action”), identifying Princeton’s present and prospective fair share obligations for the Fourth Round, and committing to adopting and submitting a Fourth Round Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan (“HEFSP”) as required by the FHA; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 25, 2025, the Princeton Planning Board (“Board”) adopted a Fourth Round HEFSP pursuant to the Municipal Land Use Law at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1, *et seq.*, as required by and in conformance with the FHA; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 26, 2025, by Resolution No. 25-230, the Mayor and Council endorsed Princeton’s Fourth Round HEFSP, which was filed with the court in the Fourth Round DJ Action on June 27, 2025; and

**WHEREAS**, Princeton’s Fourth Round HEFSP addresses Princeton’s affordable housing obligations in a manner which will promote the public health and general welfare, and sets forth a plan which fully satisfies Princeton’s Fourth Round affordable housing obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, as contemplated by and in conformity with P.L.2024, c.2, Princeton now looks forward to implementing the goals, objectives and housing opportunities contemplated by its HEFSP by creating a new Affordable Housing District-16 (“AH-16”) zoning district; and

**WHEREAS**, the Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S.A. 40:55D-1 (“MLUL”) at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-62.a requires that the provisions of a zoning ordinance be substantially consistent with the land use plan element and the housing plan element of the master plan or designed to effectuate such plan elements; and

**WHEREAS**, Princeton finds and declares that, pursuant to the purposes of the MLUL, the within ordinance promotes the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare and advances the municipality’s efforts to meet its constitutional obligation to provide for its fair share of very low, low and moderate income housing; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council formally refers this Ordinance to the Board for review, examination, discussion and recommendations in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-26; and

**WHEREAS**, the adoption of this Ordinance was appropriately noticed pursuant to the requirements of the MLUL.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Mayor and Council of the Municipality of Princeton as follows:

**Section 1. Affordable Housing Districts.** Section §B17A-202(i), “Affordable Housing Districts”, of Chapter B17A of the “Code of the Borough of Princeton, New Jersey, 1974” (the “Code”), entitled “Land Use and Zoning”, is amended to add the following new zoning district:

- (16) AH-16 Affordable Housing – 16.

**Section 2. Zoning Map.** Section §B17A-203, “District Map”, of Chapter B17A of the Code, is hereby supplemented and amended to modify the “Official Zoning Map of Princeton, Mercer County, New Jersey” by designating the following lands identified by block(s) and lot(s) on the official Tax Map of Princeton as follows:

<b><u>Block(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Lot(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Street Address</u></b>	<b><u>Existing District</u></b>	<b><u>New District</u></b>
30.02	39.01, 39.02	13 Chestnut Street	R-4B	AH-16

**Section 3. Affordable Housing District Provisions.** Division 10 “Affordable Housing Zones” of Chapter B17A of the Code is hereby supplemented and amended to add the following new Affordable Housing Zone to Subdivision II “Affordable Housing (AH) Zones” as follows:

**§B17A-496. Affordable Housing - 16 (AH-16)**

- A. Purpose. The purpose of the Affordable Housing-16 (AH-16) zoning district is to redevelop land no longer necessary for a public use for fully affordable housing in furtherance of the housing policies expressed in the Fourth Round of the Housing Element and Fair Share Plan while retaining the existing two-and-a-half story firehouse structure.
- B. Comprehensive Development Required. The AH-16 zone shall be constructed in accordance with a single, unified development plan in one phase.
- C. Permitted Uses. In AH-16, no lot shall be used and no structure shall be erected, altered or occupied for any purpose except the following:
  - (1) Multiple dwellings.
  - (2) Municipal use.
- D. Accessory Uses Permitted. Any of the following uses shall be permitted when used in conjunction with a principal use:
  - (1) Residential management office.
  - (2) Common rooms/areas, including for meetings, recreation, laundry and storage.
  - (3) Community room accessible to the public.
  - (4) Communications infrastructure.
  - (5) Maintenance and storage.
  - (6) Off-street parking and loading.
  - (7) Street/site furnishings.
  - (8) Home occupations.
  - (9) Off-street surface parking.
  - (10) Fences and walls.
  - (11) Landscape amenities and open space.
  - (12) Signs.
  - (13) Storm water management facilities and other utilities
  - (14) Other customary uses which are clearly incidental and subordinate to a

permitted principal use on the same lot.

- E. Required Income Restriction. In any AH-16 district, all dwellings shall be affordable to very low, low and moderate income households. Affordable units shall be restricted, regulated and administered consistent with the Municipality's affordable housing regulations, the Uniform Housing Affordability Controls rules (N.J.A.C. 5:80-26.1 et seq.) and the New Jersey Fair Housing Act (N.J.S.A. 52:27D-301 et seq.), including the Fair Housing Act's definition of very low-income households and all other provisions of the Municipality's Affordable Housing Ordinance (§T10B-332).
- F. AH-16 Site Development Regulations. The following site development regulations shall apply to all lots and buildings:
- (1) The existing two-and-a-half story firehouse (without the rear addition) shall be retained and adaptively reused for residential use and accessory uses, including a community room on the first floor, unless specific elements need to be removed on good cause shown.
  - (2) All new external construction shall be behind the existing two-and-half-story firehouse, except for new construction to the rear of the ridgeline of the existing roof (such as the addition of dormers or replacement of that section of the roof) – which shall be permitted.
  - (3) Minimum yard requirements:
    - (a) Front yard: twelve (12) feet. Parking and a garden shall be permitted in the front yard setback.
    - (b) Side yard: five (5) feet, except that no more than sixty percent (60%) of the building shall be permitted to project up to the property line. Any such individual projection shall not exceed thirty (30) feet in length and shall be contiguous with sections of building meeting the five (5) foot requirement. The existing historic street facing building to remain shall count towards the sixty percent (60%) limitation.
    - (c) Rear yard: five (5) feet. An emergency generator shall be permitted in the rear yard setback.
  - (4) Maximum impervious coverage: ninety percent (90%).
  - (5) Building height: Maximum building height shall be four stories (4) stories, not to exceed forty-five (45) feet.
  - (6) Minimum dwellings. At least sixteen (16) dwelling units shall be developed within the AH-16 district.
- G. Off-street parking.

- (1) 0.5 parking space per dwelling.
  - (2) On-street parking credit. Off-street parking requirements shall be reduced by the number of new on-street parking spaces created.
- H. Landscaping. A landscaped buffer of not less than three (3) feet in width shall be provided along any common property line in a side or rear yard where a side or rear yard is required and is not necessary for vehicular, bicycle or pedestrian circulation. In other areas, an opaque fence shall be required on the property line, six (6) feet in height, except in a front yard. Buffers may be comprised of landscaping with fencing, which shall be of a sufficient quantity and size to provide a visual separation from adjacent property. Front yard landscaping is required to reduce existing impervious cover by at least four hundred (400) square feet.
- I. Lighting. Illumination of sites and buildings shall be regulated pursuant to §B17A-365.1 Lighting.
- J. Signs. Signs shall be as permitted by the municipal code. The existing firehouse signage and changeable copy sign on the front façade of the building shall be retained.
- K. Additional development requirements.
- (1) Any new construction within the AH-16 district shall be subject to a municipal developer's agreement, or equivalent thereof, for the development of the site.

**Section 4. Conflicts.** If the terms of this Ordinance shall be in conflict with those of another Ordinance, the provisions of this Ordinance shall control.

**Section 5. Severability.** If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision so adjudged, and the remainder of this ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.

**Section 6. Referral.** After introduction, the Municipal Clerk is hereby directed to submit a copy of this ordinance to the Princeton Planning Board for its review and report in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:55D-64.

**Section 7. Notice.** The Municipal Clerk is directed to give notice at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing on the adoption of this Ordinance to the Mercer County Planning Board and to all other persons entitled thereto pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:55D-62.1.

**Section 8. Effective Date.** This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon final passage and publication, filing with the Mercer County Planning Board, and as otherwise provided for by law.

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Dawn M. Mount, Clerk

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Hon. Mark Freda, Mayor

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this ordinance is to amend Princeton's zoning ordinance by creating a new affordable housing zoning district in furtherance of Princeton's Fourth Round Housing Plan Element and Fair Share Plan.

### NOTICE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the above Ordinance was introduced and passed on first reading at the Council Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Municipality of Princeton in the County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, held on February 9, 2026 and will be considered for final passage and adoption at the Council Meeting scheduled for February 23, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. at the Princeton Municipal Building, 400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, New Jersey. Any person interested in this matter will be given an opportunity to be heard at that meeting. A copy of this Ordinance may be obtained at no cost by any member of the general public upon request at the Municipal Building during business hours.