



Community Development Department – Planning & Zoning Division
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STAFF REPORT – CITY COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Date: 3/26/2026	Case Number: 25-16	Name: Workforce and Hero Housing Program
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REQUEST

A request for the approval of an ordinance to establish a voluntary Workforce and Hero Housing Density Bonus Program (WHHDB) for eligible developments, submitted by the City of North Miami Beach.

BACKGROUND

The City of North Miami Beach (City) recognizes a significant shortage of attainable housing options for members of the local workforce and essential community-serving personnel (“heroes”). Rising housing costs have created affordability challenges, forcing many individuals who work within the City such as teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters, and other essential workers to live elsewhere and commute into the City.

In response, the proposed Workforce and Hero Housing Density Bonus Program (WHHDB) establishes a voluntary mechanism to encourage the private development community to integrate affordable workforce and hero units within new residential or mixed-use projects. The program seeks to improve housing access, reduce commuter congestion, and strengthen community stability by enabling essential workers to live closer to their places of employment.

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The intent of the proposed ordinance is to:

- Encourage the development of housing affordable to moderate- and middle-income households earning between 65% and 140% of the Area Median Income (AMI).
- Recognize and support essential service professionals (“heroes”) including law enforcement, teachers, healthcare workers, firefighters, and active duty/veteran military personnel.

Project Staff Planner: Zafar Ahmed, Director Mitchell S. Austin, AICP, CNU-A, Assistant Director Jackie Genard, City Planner	Review Dates: <u>Planning & Zoning Board Meeting:</u> 11/10/2025 <u>City Commission Meeting:</u> 12/16/2025 2/17/2026	Attachment: I. Staff Report II. Ordinance No. 2025-XX III. Staff Presentation IV. PZB Meeting Minutes
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- Promote economic and social diversity in new developments.
- Encourage mixed-income housing integrated throughout the city while preserving design quality and neighborhood character.
- Provide a voluntary density incentive to offset affordability requirements and encourage developer participation without mandating inclusionary zoning.

ANALYSIS

The Workforce and Hero Housing Density Bonus Program (WHHDB) is designed to:

- Balance development incentives with long-term community benefits.
- Attract private investment in workforce housing without requiring mandatory inclusionary provisions.
- Improve proximity between essential workers and their workplaces.
- Support transit-oriented development and reduce regional commuting patterns.
- Encourage equitable housing opportunities across diverse income levels.

Economic modeling based on comparable programs (e.g., City of Doral and City of Miami Beach) indicates that density bonuses of up to 30% can effectively incentivize private sector participation when combined with flexible unit distribution and predictable review timelines.

PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

The proposed ordinance supports and advances multiple adopted City policies and state directives, including:

- **City of North Miami Beach Comprehensive Plan**, Housing Element Goals 1–3: promoting affordable and workforce housing opportunities.
- **Strategic Plan 2025**: advancing livability and economic resilience by ensuring housing diversity.
- **Florida Statutes Chapter 163.3177(6)(f)**: requiring local governments to provide mechanisms to meet affordable housing needs.
- **Live Local Act (SB 102)**: promoting workforce housing near employment centers and transit corridors.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

This ordinance establishes the *Workforce and Hero Housing Density Bonus Program (WHHDB)* under Chapter 24, Article XXI of the City's Land Development Code.

The program implements Comprehensive Plan Policies by providing a density bonus of up to thirty percent (30%) within mixed-use districts in exchange for inclusion of workforce and hero housing units affordable to households earning between sixty-five percent (65%) and one hundred forty percent (140%) of Area Median Income (AMI).

The ordinance creates a Workforce and Hero Housing Overlay District (WHH Overlay) that allows **Establishment of Density Equivalency Factors** for the purpose of calculating allowable residential density, qualifying workforce or hero housing units shall be assigned fractional equivalency values according to the following table:

Unit Type	AMI Level	Density Equivalency Factor (DEF)
Studio or 1-Bedroom Workforce/Hero Unit	≤120% AMI	0.5 unit
2-Bedroom Workforce/Hero Unit	≤120% AMI	0.75 unit
3+ Bedroom Workforce/Hero Unit	≤120% AMI	1.0 unit
Market-Rate Units (any size)	—	1.0 unit

This mechanism enables attainable housing production while maintaining total unit counts within the maximum density permitted by the underlying land-use category.

The WHHDB framework establishes:

- Eligibility and application requirements (§§ 24-58.1 & 24-58.2 reference);
- Design and quality standards ensuring workforce units are physically integrated and visually comparable to market-rate units;
- Long-term affordability and compliance monitoring (20-year minimum period); and
- Enforcement procedures and civil penalties for violations.

Adoption of this ordinance supports the City’s strategic goal of promoting attainable housing opportunities for essential workers while maintaining high design standards and neighborhood compatibility.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposed Workforce and Hero Housing Program ordinance is supported by the following goals, objectives, and policies of the City of North Miami Beach Comprehensive Plan:

Future Land Use Element

Goal 1

Encourage redevelopment and development to enhance the economic base of the City, improve the aesthetic quality of the commercial corridors and existing neighborhoods, and provide a range of housing and employment opportunities to accommodate, serve and employ the projected population, while protecting established single family neighborhoods.

Policy 1.2.1

The City shall ensure that infill and redevelopment efforts are balanced with the need to preserve community character, provide affordable housing, and preserve historic resources.

Policy 1.12.1

The City should promote the mixing of income levels in neighborhoods by encouraging the development of affordable housing in new and infill development projects that include a residential component.

Policy 1.12.6

The City shall continue to evaluate its existing housing stock conditions, and encourage the provision of housing that is affordable to and appropriate for households of all income levels and needs.

Policy 1.12.7

The city should periodically monitor the range of housing choices provided within its boundaries, and adjust codes, incentives and/or subsidies as necessary to encourage a variety of housing types and price ranges.

Housing Element

Goal 1

To assure the availability of adequate, safe, and affordable housing for all residents of North Miami Beach.

Objective 1.1

Assist the private sector in providing a diversity of housing types, including "in-fill" housing and redevelopment as appropriate, to achieve new owner-occupied and rental single-family units and multi-family units. In-fill housing is new housing on scattered vacant lots in neighborhoods which are largely developed. Redevelopment means new units in existing residential areas. Measures: Number of new housing units provided and resulting percentage of households in each income group.

Policy 1.1.1

In order to accommodate the market as it responds to the increased demand for a diversity of housing types, including middle, low, and very low-income single-family housing units, the City should investigate the possibility of identifying areas where changes to future land use designations, density and intensity restrictions, land development regulations, and urban design principles would be appropriate. In accordance with the Coastal Management Element, density and intensity increases shall not be considered in the Coastal High Hazard Area.

Objective 1.4

The City shall promote the provision of a full range of housing types to meet the existing and future needs of all residents, including very low, low, moderate, middle income, and special needs households in proportions reflective of demand.

Policy 1.4.1

The City shall support efforts to bring rental units within the reach of low and moderate income households, with a particular focus on infill lots and redevelopment areas west of Biscayne Boulevard.

Policy 1.4.3

The City will continue to seek partnerships with private and/or non-profit housing corporations to promote homeownership and housing opportunities.

Objective 1.2

Continue to utilize the appropriate mechanisms to address all housing issues, including redevelopment, rehabilitation, the quality of housing, housing affordability, and increasing home ownership City-wide.

Policy 1.2.1

The City shall continue to utilize the appropriate mechanisms for housing policy development as well as coordination and implementation of the housing policies contained in this plan.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD ACTION

Based on the evidence and testimony presented at the November 10, 2025, the meeting minutes provided as *Attachment IV – Planning and Zoning Board Meeting Minutes*, the Planning and Zoning Board of the City of North Miami Beach voted **4 to 1** recommending approval of this ordinance to the Mayor and City Commission of the City of North Miami Beach by finding it consistent with the applicable Florida Statutes and the City of North Miami Beach Comprehensive Plan.

CITY COMMISSION – 1ST READING

Following is a summary of the presentation of this item at City Commission 1st Reading December 12, 2025, based on review of the video recording:

1. Joseph Geller, City Attorney read the ordinance into the record by title only.
2. The floor was opened for public comment.
3. Mubarak Kazan, resident of the City of North Miami Beach, made comment to the HERO Housing program as enabled by the State of Florida being discriminatory relaying a story of his inability to buy the house next to his, because he was not a first responder.
4. Commissioner Danella Jean noted that the HERO Housing Program is a program of the State of Florida, and the city would be “piggybacking” on the existing state statute.
5. Commissioner Lynn Su inquires regarding the fractional density and zoning.
6. Director Zafar Ahmed explained fractional density as related to building massing as smaller units, those with fewer bedrooms consume less of the building mass. The smaller units are to be counted at a fractional density as an incentive to provide the intended workforce and affordable housing.
7. Commissioner Su inquires, about parking and addressing reduced parking requests and observed parking demand issues, as well as inquiring to what areas of the city, land use types this ordinance would apply.

8. Director Ahmed states that the ordinance would apply to mixed-use areas and areas designated for high density residential uses. Addressing the parking concerns, Director Ahmed explains that the intent is to enable housing in areas closer to mobility centers reducing the need for vehicular traffic.
9. Commissioner Fortuna Smukler comments that whatever happens in Tallassee may determine what can be done here in the city.
10. Commissioner McKenzie Fleurimond comments that he supports this ordinance.
11. Commissioner Phyllis Smith inquires regarding parking requirements.
12. Director Ahmed states that the parking requirement will not be increased, and the focus will be on the commute as these will be near transit.
13. Commissioner Smith follows up questioning how commute will be determined as this (proximity to transit) is not in the ordinance.
14. Director Ahmed states that it will be discussed in the Pre-Application process, further stating that projects which could qualify would be within mixed-use and transit oriented environments
15. Commission Smith then questions City Attorney Geller if the city can make the proximity to transit a requirement for the ordinance.
16. Commissioner Jean interjects a question to City Attorney Geller inquiring if this ordinance negates the current parking requirements.
17. City Attorney Geller defers to the Director of Community Development.
18. Director Ahmed begins to explain that requirements for parking are not changed in this ordinance.
19. Commissioner Smith comments that a three bedroom requires in some cases three parking spaces and what happens when that in now a one bedroom
20. City Attorney Geller speaks regarding that the State Statute impacts on this ordinance, stating that the city may have limited ability to take advantage of the parts the city likes and modify or not take the parts the city does not like.
21. Commissioner Smith noted that she wanted to bring this up at 1st reading because the Planning and Zoning Board members that voted against recommending this ordinance did so based on their concerns regarding parking impacts. Second concern regarding program oversight being vested with the Community Development Department and the continuity of that oversight over time.
22. Director Ahmed clarifies parking requirements, stating that parking is based on residential unit size and projects certified under the proposed ordinance would be required to meet those standards.
23. Mayor Joseph summarizes discussion stating that the parking doesn't change and calls the question based on motion to approve by Commissioner Smukler and Second by Mayor Joseph.
24. Motion passes on voice vote of 7 to 0.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

Move to approve Ordinance No. 2025-XX, "Workforce and Hero Housing Density Bonus Program," finding it consistent with Florida Statutes §163.3177, the City of North Miami Beach Comprehensive Plan, and the City's Land Development Code.

FISCAL/BUDGETARY IMPACT

The proposed ordinance is **not expected to have a direct fiscal impact** on the city. Implementation will be administered within existing staff capacity of the Community Development Department through plan review and annual compliance audits. Long-term affordability enforcement will be supported by existing Code Compliance mechanisms