



FROM	NAME & TITLE	Eric W. Tiso,  Director of Development Oversight and Project Support	CITY of BALTIMORE  <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Planning 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor, 417 East Fayette Street		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #25-0153 / Measurement of Building Height – Gambrel Roofs		

TO

The Honorable President and  
Members of the City Council  
City Hall, Room 400  
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: April 3, 2026

At its regular meeting of April 2, 2026, the Planning Commission considered City Council Bill #25-0153, for the purpose of amending the calculation of building height measurement for buildings with gambrel roofs.

In its consideration of this Bill, the Planning Commission reviewed the attached staff report, which recommended amendment and approval of City Council Bill #25-0153 and adopted the following resolution:

RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission concurs with the recommendation of its departmental staff, adopts the findings and equity analysis outlined in the staff report, with consideration for testimony and facts presented in the meeting, and recommends that City Council Bill #25-0153 be **amended and approved** by the City Council.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [eric.tiso@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:eric.tiso@baltimorecity.gov) or by phone at 410-396-8358.

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office  
The Honorable John Bullock, Council Rep. to Planning Commission  
Mr. Justin Williams, BMZA  
Mr. Geoffrey Veale, Zoning Administrator  
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD  
Ms. Hilary Ruley, Law Dept.  
Mr. Francis Burnszynski, PABC  
Mr. Luciano Diaz, DOT  
Ms. Nancy Mead, Council Services



Brandon M. Scott  
Mayor

## PLANNING COMMISSION

*Jon Laria, Chair; Eric Stephenson, Vice Chair*

### STAFF REPORT



Renata Southard  
Director

**April 2, 2026**

**LEGISLATION:** City Council Bill #26-0153/ Measurement of Building Height:

For the purpose of amending the calculation of building height measurement for buildings with gambrel roofs.

**SUMMARY OF REQUEST:** This bill will amend § 15-301 of the Zoning Code, which lays out the methodology for measuring building heights. The bill will add a specific calculation for buildings with gambrel roofs, adding the following to subsection (c) of the subtitle: “in the case of a gambrel roof, to the mean height of the roof as measured between the lowest point of the highest sloped portion of the roof and the peak of the highest sloped portion of the roof.” The goal is to prevent the construction of out-of-scale buildings that take advantage of the existing language, allowing the measurement to be taken as the average between the eaves and the peaks. Under current regulations, it is possible to drop the eaves below habitable space and reduce the technical building height.

**RECOMMENDATION:** approved with the following amendment:

- Add a change in language to § 15-301.B. to read as following “in the case of a pitched roof, to the mean height level of the roof as measured between [the eaves] THE TOP OF THE HIGHEST WALL PLATE and the [peak in the case of pitched 3 roofs] HIGHEST POINT OF THE ROOF.”

**STAFF:** Justin Walker

**PETITIONER:** Councilmember Parker

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

**SITE/GENERAL AREA:** Citywide

### HISTORY

In 2024, a new dwelling was constructed at 6702 Boston Avenue by a builder who failed to obtain permits and was building outside the bulk and yard regulations of the district. To gain retroactive approval, the owner applied for zoning relief from the BMZA under appeal number BMZ2024-272. The request included a number of variances for the structure, which was out of scale with the surrounding buildings. Among them was a request for a building height variance. In this case, the owner hired representation that disputed the need for the height variance, arguing that because the eaves of the roof were positioned below the third floor of the building, the height of the building met the requirements under the current standards.

**APPLICANT’S PROPOSAL AND CODE CONTEXT:**

The legislation was introduced to prevent developers from taking advantage of the current wording by designing a structure that is technically within the height limit, based on the average of the eaves to the peak, but is still out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood.

The legislation as proposed closes the loophole for gambrel roofs but leaves the possibility of exploitation for other roof styles. The amendment proposed by staff would change the methodology to measure from the top plate of the building. This will ensure that other roof styles cannot be used to add large amounts of habitable space above what should be the maximum permitted height of the building through specific roof design.

**EQUITY:**

The proposed amendment promotes equitable development by ensuring consistent measurement of building height and preventing loopholes that allow out-of-scale structures. Without this clarification, buildings may exceed intended height and massing, negatively impacting adjacent residents through reduced light, air, and neighborhood character. The bill supports a more predictable and fair application of the Zoning Code.

**NOTIFICATION:** Staff sent out notification of this action via GovDelivery.



**Renata Southard  
Acting Director**