

# PLANNING BOARD HOSTED HOUSING WORKSHOP

October 25, 2022

# MBTA COMMUNITIES REQUIRED ZONING

In 2020, State Zoning Act Amendments were enacted by the Legislature to promote the production of multi-family housing near public transportation, in order to address a severe housing shortage.

## The New Law:

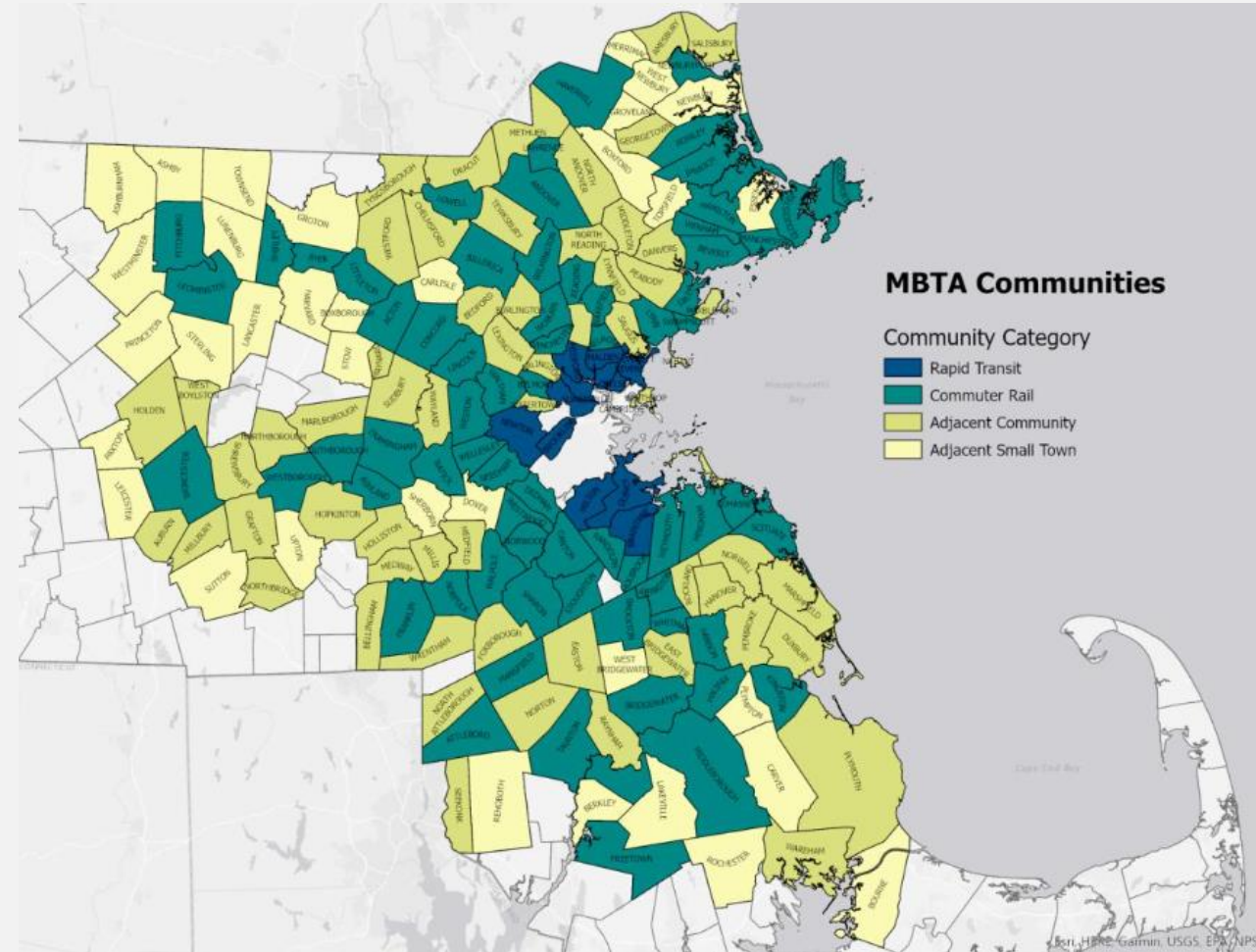
“M.G.L. c. 40A § 3A (a)(I) An MBTA Community shall have a zoning ordinance or by-law that provides for at least one district of a reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right...”



Katahdin Woods Apartments, 1 Katahdin Dr.  
120 units = 11 units per acre

# PURPOSE

- To address severe housing shortage by making it easier for housing to be constructed
- MA is among the highest and fastest growing home prices and rents in the country
- MBTA service is an asset to all communities
- Need more housing for young families, one-income households, and aging population
- More housing needed to support long-term economic growth and long-term prosperity
- Transit oriented development will help traffic congestion and climate crisis
- One tool for regional solution



*Multi-Family is illegal in many communities*



# KEY COMPONENTS OF THE **LAW**

## **MBTA Served Communities shall amend their Zoning Bylaws to include:**

- At least one zoning district of a reasonable size
- Located within 1/2 mile of a commuter rail station, subway, ferry terminal or bus station
- Suitable for families with children (no age or bedroom restrictions)
- Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre
- Permit process can not be discretionary (by-right or as-of-right)
- Multi-family = building designed for 3+ units, or 2 + buildings on a lot with more than 1 dwelling/building



Lexington Courtyard Condos



Jefferson Condos, Fletcher Ave.

## ZONING

- 





## MA GUIDELINES

- Compliant Zoning Adopted by December 31, 2024
- Defines “**reasonable size**” as:
  - At least 50 acres total land
  - Half has to be contiguous (25 acres)
  - Must allow total housing capacity of 1,231 units
  - No portion of zoning district < 5 acres, more than 1 lot

Lexington’s Zoning District of ~ 82 acres (1,231 units / 15 units per acre)

# DENSITY EXAMPLES

Emerson Gardens, Emerson Garden Rd.  
150 = **14** units per acre



Lexington Place Condos, Waltham St.  
30 units = **16** units per acre



# DENSITY EXAMPLES



Muzzy School Condos, Massachusetts Ave.  
71 units = **18** units per acre

Avalon at Lexington Hills, Metropolitan Parkway  
386 units = **17** units per acre





# DENSITY EXAMPLES



Interfaith Apartments, Garfield St.  
6 apartments = **17** units per acre

The Manor House Condos, Woburn St.  
51 units = **25** units per acre





# DENSITY EXAMPLES

Newton, Apartments  
68 units = **39** units pre acre



Westwood, Condos  
18 units = **21** units per acre



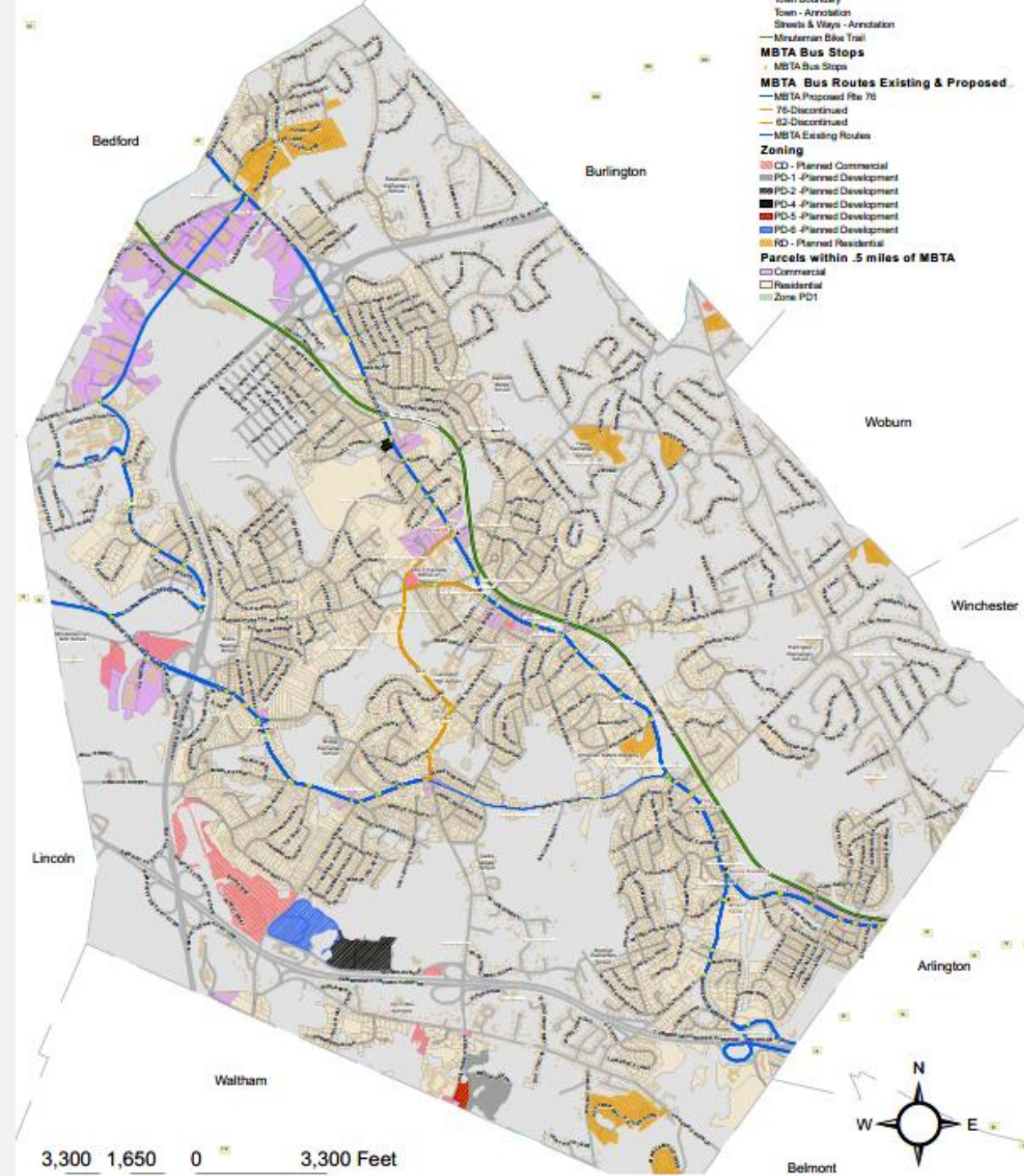
# NONCOMPLIANCE

- Ineligible to apply for funding from MassWorks Grants, Housing Choice Initiative, Local Capital Project Funds
- Applied to other state grant programs
- Applied to other state funding decisions



# HELP US IDENTIFY AREAS TO ZONE

- Each table has map of Lexington
- Shaded gray areas are considered ineligible (over half mile from existing or proposed bus route, restricted and undevelopable land such as cemeteries, parks, conservation land, wetlands).
- Colored rectangles each represent 5 acres
- Each table given 17 of these rectangles
- Place 17 rectangles on the map in areas you think appropriate for multi-family housing (will represent total size of zoning district to comply)
- One contiguous area of 5 rectangles to equal 25 acres
- *Real life zoning is not in rectangles this is an early stage exercise to help identify areas*





# CONSISTENCY WITH LEXINGTON NEXT

- **Diversity & Inclusion** *“To promote diversity, equity, and inclusion of people living & working in Lexington”*
- **Housing** *“...a wide range of housing options that respond to the needs of households, regardless of income and life stage.”*
- **Transportation & Circulation** *“...make traveling into, out of, and within Lexington safe, pleasant, and efficient with equitable mobility options.”*
- **Sustainability & Resiliency** *“...implement policies that enhance sustainability and resiliency in our community.”*
- **Economic Development** *“...vital economy, including a variety of businesses to contribute to the tax base and provide goods and services to meet the needs of residents, employees, visitors.”*
- **Land Use** *“support goals of Lexington Next through wise land use planning.”*



## QUALITIES & CONSIDERATIONS FOR ZONING LOCATIONS:

- Near bus stops, public transportation
- Walkability, sidewalks, trails, bike lanes
- Developable land (not areas known to flood/not wetlands or park land)
- Near retail and services, parks and playgrounds
- Under-utilized area that can be redevelopment for multi-family housing
- Physical access and connections
- Lot sizes, likelihood of producing housing
- Current uses
- Appropriate for housing, safe for children
- Transportation routes, minuteman commuter bikeway



# PLANNING PROCESS

- Planning Board sponsor zoning amend for Town Meeting
- Requires a majority vote at Town Meeting

## Timeline for Annual Town Meeting in March 2023:

- Public work sessions at Planning Board Meetings (Nov. 9 & 16, Dec. 7 & 21)
- Planning Board will host more opportunities for public input
- Public hearings begin late January/early February 2023
- Town Meeting vote March/April 2023
- Sign up for [Planning Board Meeting Notifications](#)
- Contact staff at: [Planning@lexingtonma.gov](mailto:Planning@lexingtonma.gov)

[www.LexingtonMA.gov/MBTAZoning](http://www.LexingtonMA.gov/MBTAZoning)