

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:

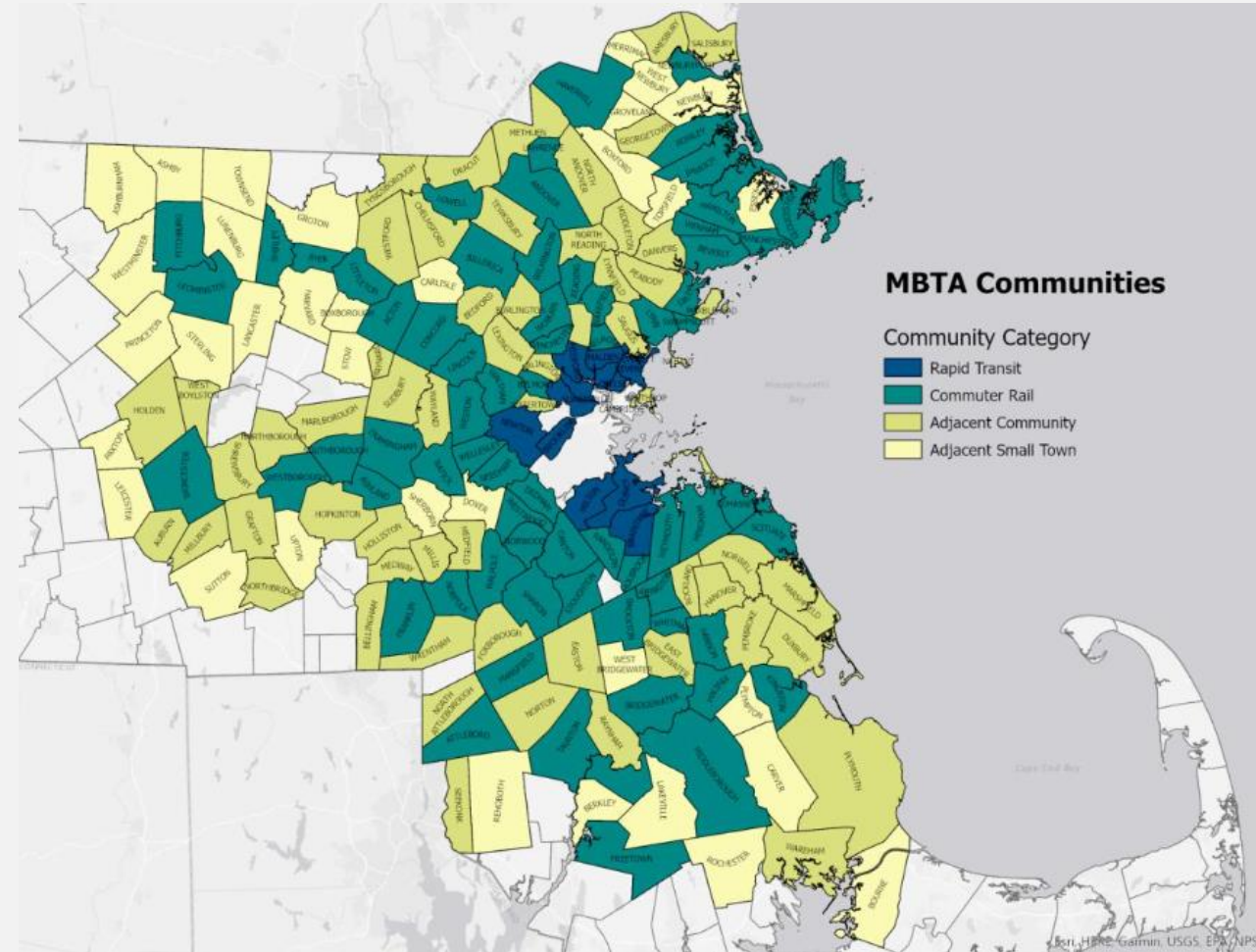
“M.G.L. c. 40A § 3A (a)(I) An MBTA Community shall have a zoning ordinance or by-law that provides for at least one district of a reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right...”



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 cannot 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



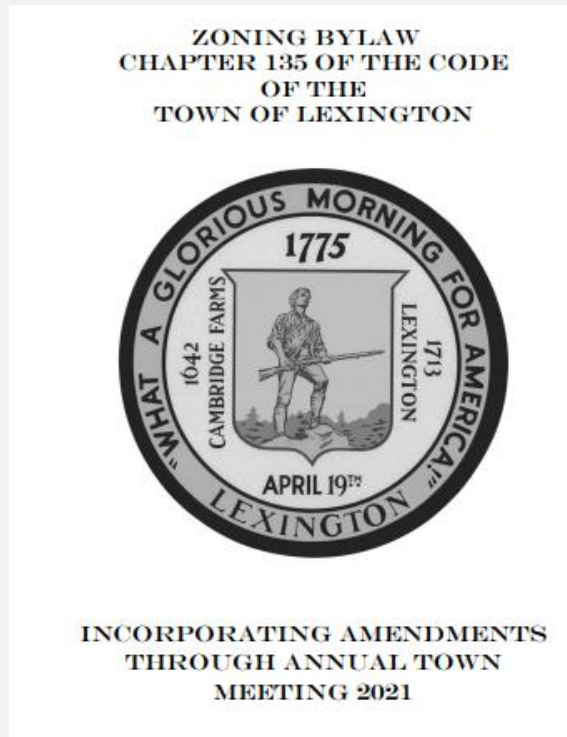
Lexington Courtyard Condos



Jefferson Condos, Fletcher Ave.

ZONING

- Official Zoning Map and Zoning Bylaw (Text)
- Specifies how properties can be developed and under what conditions
- Legal framework regulates development



MA GUIDELINES

- Compliant Zoning Adopted by December 31, 2024
- Defines “**reasonable size**” as:
 - At least 50 acres total land
 - Half of total area has to be contiguous (42 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

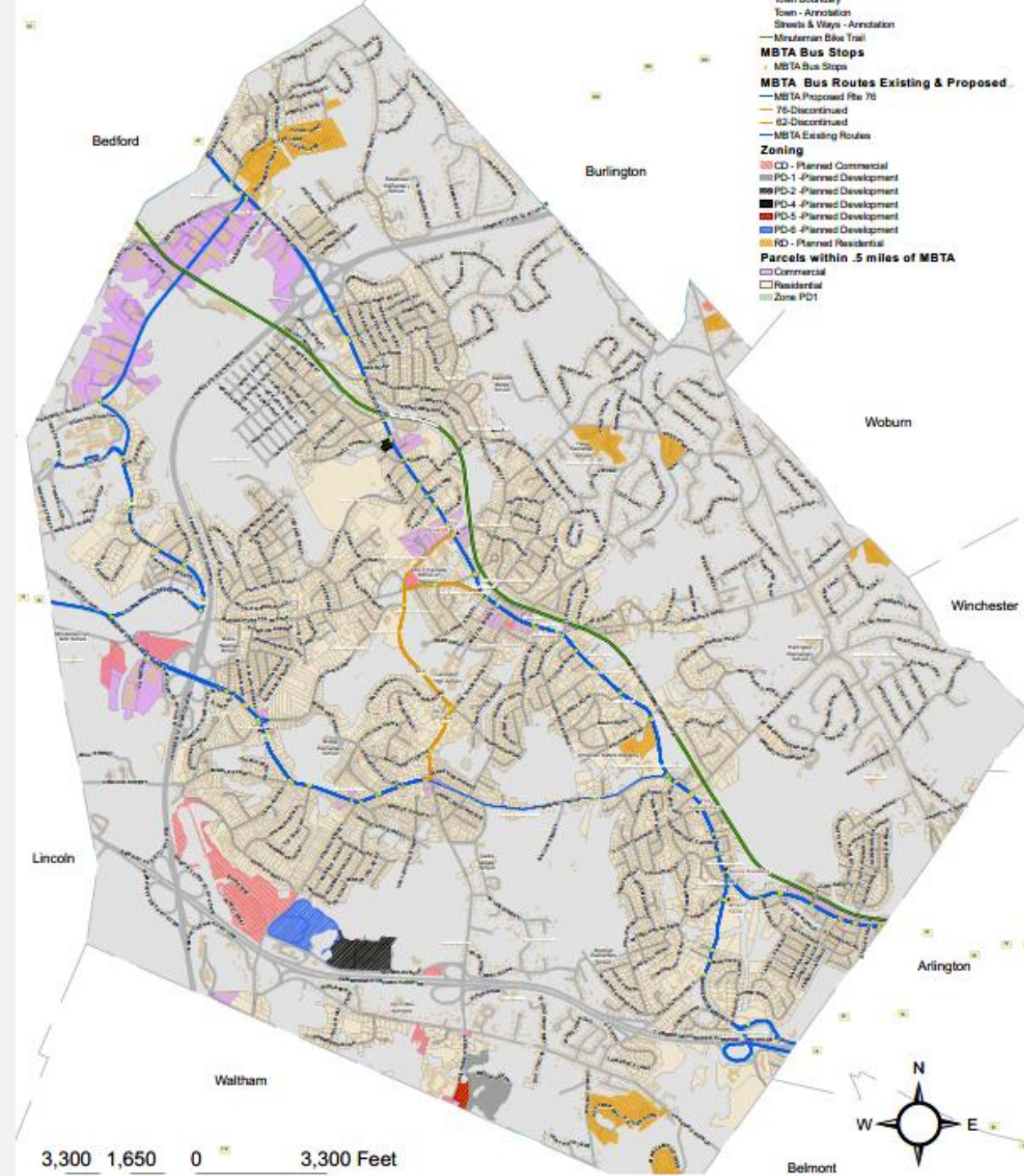
NONCOMPLIANCE

- 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

www.LexingtonMA.gov/MBTAZoning