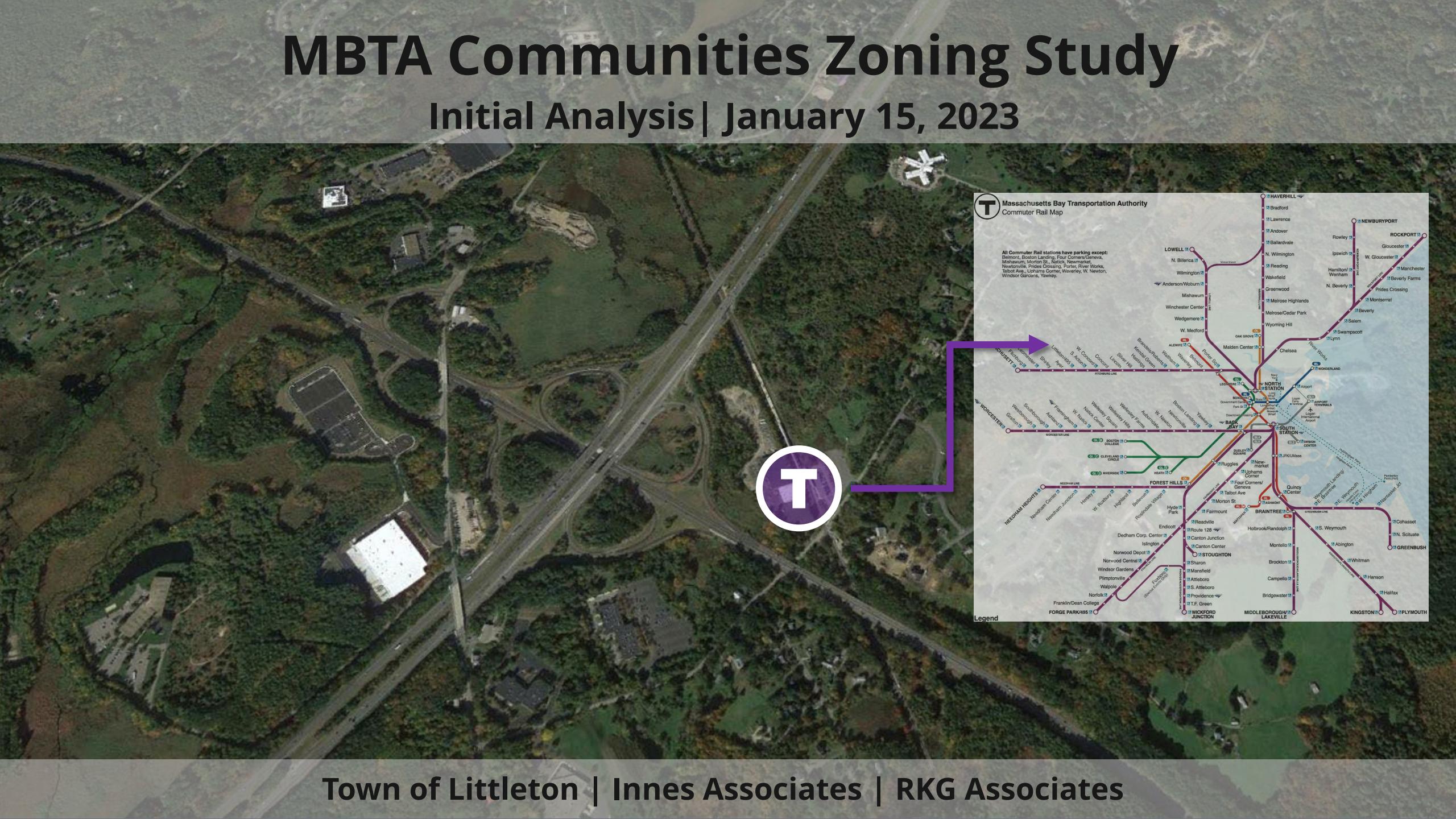


MBTA Communities Zoning Study

Initial Analysis | January 15, 2023



AGENDA

Introduction to this review process

Review of King Street Common and Draft
Littleton Station Smart Growth Overlay
Districts

Results of Compliance Model

Options and Discussion

Consultant Team



Planning Process

Overview

PLANNING PROCESS

Evaluate **draft Smart Growth Overlay District** and **approved Village Common Form-Based Code** for compliance with Section 3A of the Zoning Act and the Compliance Guidelines from DHCD.

- 1 Test: Do these districts comply?
- 2 Test: If not, which zoning changes are required for compliance?
- 3 Test: Which changes will the community support?
- 4 Draft zoning that is compliant for approval at Town Meeting.

ABOUT THE PROCESS: MBTA COMMUNITIES (SECTION 3A)

Section 3A of the Zoning Act (MGL Chapter 40A)

- New law to require that MBTA communities allow multifamily housing as of right.
- Legislative requirements for the zoning district:
 - At least one district of **reasonable size**.
 - **Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre**, subject to **limitations**.
 - Located **not more than 0.5 miles** from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal, or bus station (as applicable).
 - The regulations must be **without age restrictions** and must permit multifamily housing that is **suitable for families with children**.

ABOUT THE PROCESS: REQUIREMENTS FOR LITTLETON

1	Community Category	Commuter Rail
2020 Housing Units (Census PL-94)		3,889
2	Minimum Multifamily Unit Capacity	750
3	Minimum Land Area	50
4	Developable Station Area	244
5	% of district to be located in station area	20%

Calculations by Community Type

3 **MINIMUM LAND AREA:** (*Guidelines: 5a*) For Littleton, the minimum land area of the multi-family zoning district is 50 acres, or 1.5% of the developable land in an MBTA community, whichever is less. At least half of the area must be contiguous lots of land. No portion may be less than 5 acres of contiguous land.

2 **MINIMUM MULTIFAMILY UNIT CAPACITY:** (*Guidelines: 5b*) The greater of either the required percentage by community type (15% of 2020 housing units for a Commuter Rail community) **or** the minimum gross density of 15 units per acre times the minimum land area. For Littleton: $3889 * 0.15$ **or** $15 * 50 = 583$ **or** $750 = 750$.

Check: Minimum multifamily unit capacity cannot exceed 25% of total housing units: $3889 * 0.25 = 778$.

Definitions

1 **COMMUTER RAIL COMMUNITY:** An MBTA community that (i) does not meet the criteria for a rapid transit community, and (ii) has within its borders at least 100 acres of developable station area associated with one or more commuter rail stations.

2 **MULTI-FAMILY UNIT CAPACITY:** An estimate of the total number of multi-family housing units that can be developed as of right within a multi-family zoning district, made in accordance with the requirements of section 5.b below.

4 **DEVELOPABLE STATION AREA:** Developable land that is within 0.5 miles of a transit station.

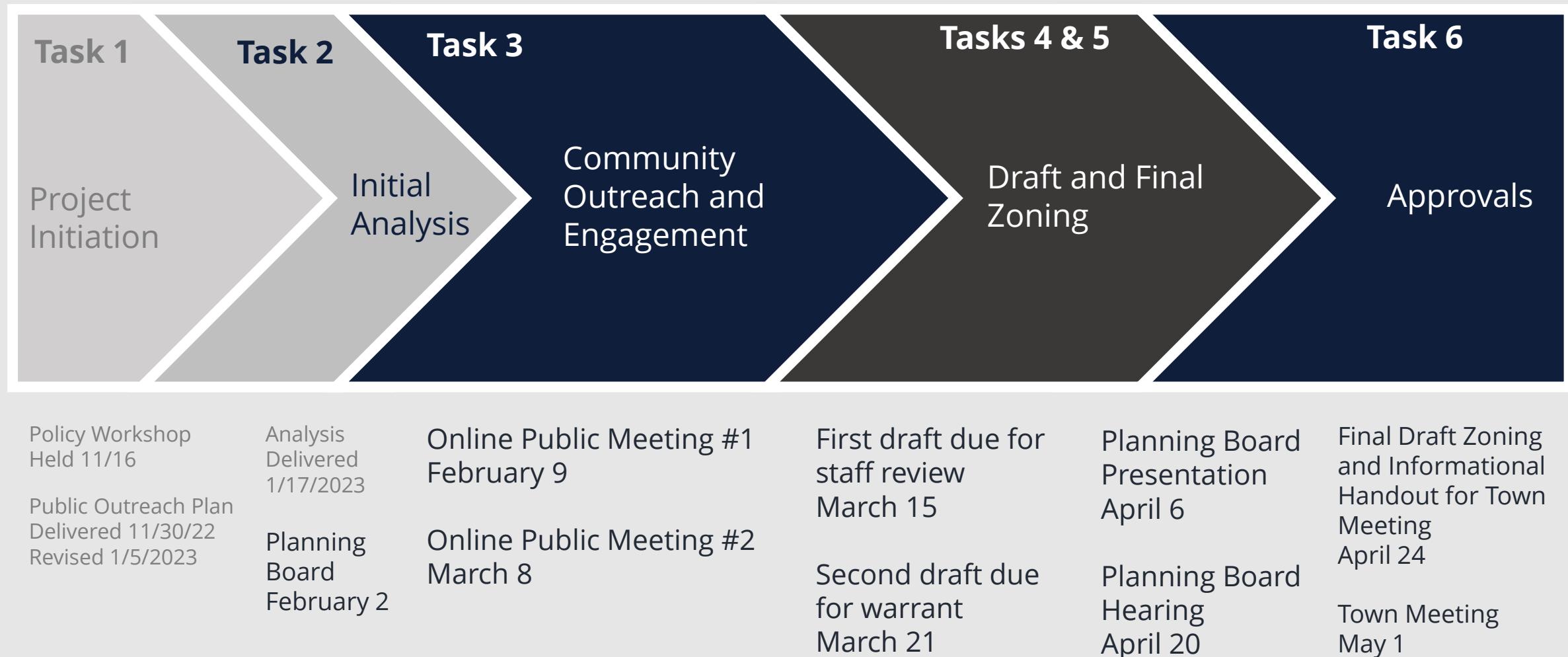
5 **PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICT WITHIN STATION AREA:** (*Guidelines: 8a*) Percentage based on number of acres of developable station area in the community.

Developable Station Area: Developable land that is within 0.5 miles of a transit station.

Developable land: Land on which multi-family housing can be permitted and constructed. For purposes of these guidelines, developable land consists of: (i) all privately-owned land except lots or portions of lots that meet the definition of excluded land, and (ii) developable public land.

Excluded land: Land areas on which it is not possible or practical to construct multi-family housing.

ABOUT THE PROCESS: TIMELINE



PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

King Street Common

2021

Based on the Village Common Form-Based Code, passed in June 2020. This process included three public meetings in 2019 and a public hearing in 2020.

The King Street Common district was added in October 2021.

2023 Update

An amendment adding additional properties is under review.

This process will test the approved bylaw for compliance with Section 3A and the Compliance Guidelines.

Littleton Station Village

2018-2023

Survey: May 2019

Presentations and Events:
January , April, June 2019
June 2020 (Vision Plan)

Zoning Bylaw prepared for January 2021 but not submitted to Town Meeting.

2023 Update

This process will test the draft bylaw for compliance with Section 3A and the Compliance Guidelines.

Zoning

King Street Common and Draft Littleton Station Smart Growth Overlay

STUDY AREAS

KING STREET



Images courtesy of the Town of Littleton

LITTLETON STATION



KEY DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

King Street Common

Lot Size 15,000 SF

Building Coverage 50%

Lot (Building + Parking) Coverage 80%

Height

Within 255 ft. of King St ROW 4 stories

Beyond 255 ft. of King St ROW 6 stories

Parking spaces per dwelling unit 1.25

Maximum residential density 20 units/acre

Littleton Station Village

No minimum

None

50 feet (~4 stories)

1.5

Subdistrict A: 323 units 20 units/acre
Subdistrict B: 80 units 12 units/acre
Subdistrict C: 123 units 8 units/acre

Article II: Definitions

DWELLING, MULTIFAMILY A building designed or intended or used as the residence of three or more families, each occupying a separate dwelling unit and living independently of each other, and who may have a common right in halls and stairways; with the number of families in residence not exceeding the number of dwelling units provided.

King Street Common

173-228. Permitting. and 173-229. Permitted Uses

Multifamily dwelling uses are allowed **as of right**.

All projects of five or more acres require a **Master Planned Development Special Permit**. (Four with proposed revision.)

Littleton Station Village

A.4. Permitted Uses

...3 family and/or Multi-family Residential Use(s)...

However, the affordability requirement (A.5) is 25% and an Eligible Household (A.2) is defined as having an income equal to or less than 80 percent AMI. **Neither requirement meets DHCD guidelines.**

OTHER ZONING REQUIREMENTS

We are continuing to review the Zoning Bylaw for other potential conflicts; today's analysis is focused on use and dimensional standards.

Compliance Model

Overview and Analysis

OVERVIEW OF ANALYSIS

- **Littleton's MBTA 3A Requirements**
- **Potential Districts for Compliance**
 - **Smart Growth Overlay District**
 - **King Street District**
- **Key Zoning Parameters for Modeling**
 - **Smart Growth Overlay Districts**
 - **King Street Districts**
- **Model Results**
- **Potential Pathways for Compliance**

LITTLETON'S 3A COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Littleton is classified as a Commuter Rail community by DHCD for compliance with Chapter 40A, Section 3A. As a Commuter Rail community, Littleton's district(s) and zoning must meet or exceed the following requirements:

Metrics	Requirements
Category	Commuter Rail
2020 Housing Units	3,889
Minimum Multi-Family Unit Capacity	750 Units
Minimum Land Area for District(s)	50 Acres
Percent of District Located in Station Area	20% (10 Acres)
Percent of Unit Capacity Located in Station Area	20% (150 Units)
Minimum Gross Density for District(s)	15 DU/AC

POTENTIAL MBTA DISTRICTS TO TEST IN LITTLETON

In order to run the MBTA Compliance Model for Littleton, we must identify one or more districts that will be designated as the town's MBTA districts where multi-family will be allowed as-of-right. The district(s) must total 50 acres in size with a minimum of 10 acres located within a half-mile radius of Littleton's MBTA station. Districts do not have to be contiguous, but one district must be a minimum of 25 acres and no district can be smaller than 5 acres in size.

Based on work the town has already completed around the commuter rail station and on-going work in the King Street/Littleton Common area, this early testing phase is focused on two primary areas of town for compliance:

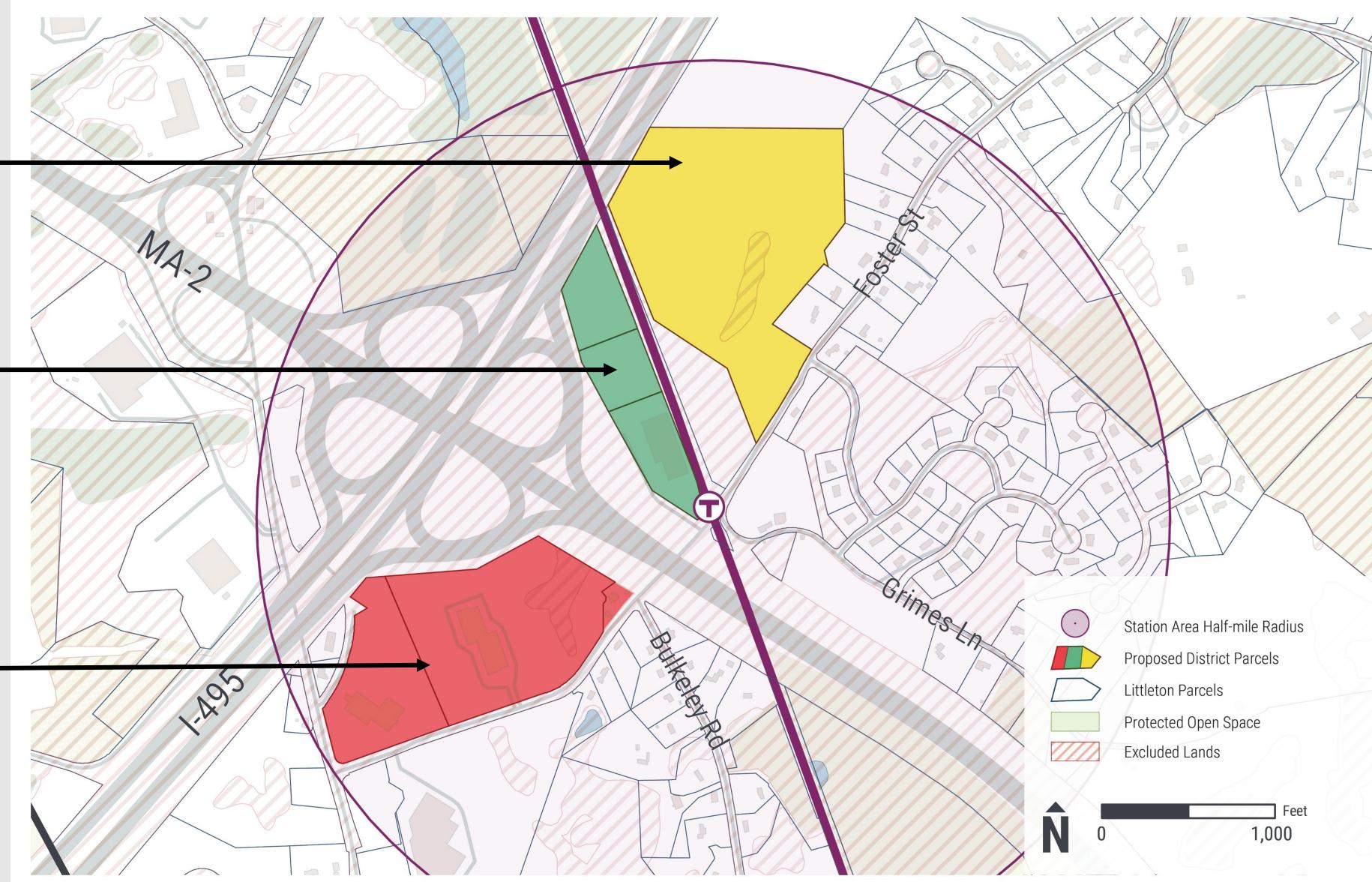
- 1. Smart Growth Overlay District** – the area around the commuter rail station.
- 2. King Street Common** – the area that includes the former IBM campus. This has been expanded to look at other nearby properties as well.

SMART GROWTH OVERLAY DISTRICT

SGOD District 1
35.3 Acres

SGOD District 2
11.5 Acres

SGOD District 3
30.7 Acres



KING STREET COMMON AREA

**King Street
Option 1**
40.6 Acres

**King Street
Option 2**
47.7 Acres



DISTRICT SIZE AND LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

The five potential districts analyzed provide Littleton with several options for mixing and matching districts to meet the minimum land area requirement of 50 acres and 10 acres within the station area.

The next step is to test the zoning for each district to derive the unit capacity, which is the second critical test for MBTA Communities compliance.

District Name	Gross Acres	Meets Station Area Req't?
SGOD D1	35.27	Yes
SGOD D2	11.49	Yes
SGOD D3	30.67	Yes
King Street Option 1	40.63	No*
King Street Option 2	47.74	No*

*King Street is not within ½-mile of the station.

ZONING PARAMETERS FOR LITTLETON DISTRICTS

Once the districts are defined the MBTA Compliance Model requires specific zoning inputs to calculate the unit capacity of each individual district.

As inputs in the model, the consultant team used the previously proposed SGOD zoning and the current King Street area zoning parameters which are shown in the table to the right. The zoning parameters represent the primary drivers of unit capacity in the model and are not meant to represent all aspects of the zoning for these districts.

Zoning Parameter	SGOD Zoning Parameters	King Street Zoning Parameters
Minimum Lot Size	N/A	15,000 SF
Building Height	4 stories / 50'	4 stories / 50'
Floor Area Ratio	N/A	2.4
Building Coverage	N/A	50%
Open Space Requirement	5% (model uses 20%)	0% (model uses 20%)
Setbacks	50' from abutting residential	15 feet
Parking Spaces per Unit	1.5 Spaces per Unit	1.25 Spaces per Unit
Maximum DU/AC	12 DU	20 DU

MODEL RESULTS FOR LITTLETON DISTRICTS

Using the MBTA Communities Compliance Model to test each districts' location, size, and zoning parameters we found no singular district meets or exceeds the requirements for Littleton. However, a combination of districts (including King Street) could help Littleton meet or exceed the MBTA requirements. The question is: How does the town want to use the districts and zoning to comply, achieve the vision of the station area plan, and address housing needs.

Littleton District Model Results

Compliance Metrics	Requirements	SGOD D1	SGOD D2	SGOD D3	King Street	King St Expanded
District Acreage	50 Acres	35.3	11.5	30.7	40.6	47.7
Density Denominator Acreage	50 Acres	33.7	11.5	28.5	39.6	46.7
Acreage within Transit Area	10 Acres	35.3	11.5	30.7	0	0
Unit Capacity	750 Units	423	138	368	813	941
Units within Transit Area	150 Units	423	138	368	0	0
DU/AC	15 DU/AC	12.5	12.0	12.9	20.5	20.1

Compliance Model

Implications and Options

POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR COMPLIANCE

The King Street area plays a critical role in helping Littleton reach its unit capacity and density requirements and should be considered a part of any compliance scenario.

The active/approved development proposals at King Street already have voter approval for multifamily housing and the density approved helps lessen the burden on the area(s) directly around the commuter rail station.

King Street Districts		
Compliance Metrics	King Street	King Street Expanded
Unit Capacity	813	941
District Acreage	40.63	47.74
Density Denominator	39.64	46.73
DU/AC	20.5	20.1

POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR COMPLIANCE

The MBTA Communities requirement of 20% of land area and units in the station area necessitate including a district within a half-mile of the Littleton commuter rail station.

Of the three potential districts explored in this early analysis, all three exceed the 10-acre minimum district size, but only Districts 1 and 3 exceed the unit capacity of 150 units within a half-mile of the station.

If District 2 were to qualify on its own, the zoning would need to allow a minimum of 15 DU/AC instead of 12 DU/AC.

SGOD Districts			
Compliance Metrics	District 1	District 2	District 3
Unit Capacity	423	138	368
District Acreage	35.27	11.49	30.67
Density Denominator	33.73	11.49	28.53
DU/AC	12.5	12.0	12.9

POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

- Is the goal of compliance to reach the minimum requirements of the MBTA 3A guidelines, or maximize housing opportunities in Littleton?
- Which King Street option should we include?
- Which SGOD district(s) should we include?
- Should we consider a mix of housing options in the SGOD with a range of densities?
 - An average density of 9-10 DU/AC in District 1 or 3 would likely result in compliance.

Data Metric	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Totals
District Name	Station North District	Station Central District	Station South District	Orig King St	King St Expanded	
District Acreage (see note)	33.7	11.5	28.5	39.6	46.7	160.1
District Density Denominator (see note)	33.7	11.5	28.5	39.6	46.7	160.1
Final Unit Capacity per District	423	138	368	813	941	2,683
DU/AC	12.5	12.0	12.9	20.5	20.1	16.8

POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

The draft Smart Growth Overlay District created three subdistricts, with different density levels and unit caps. The draft unit caps are greater than what Section 3A requires, **giving the Town flexibility in meeting the requirements of Section 3A.**

The pathways to compliance can build on one or more of these scenarios to create a variety of densities near the train station **to meet community needs.**

POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

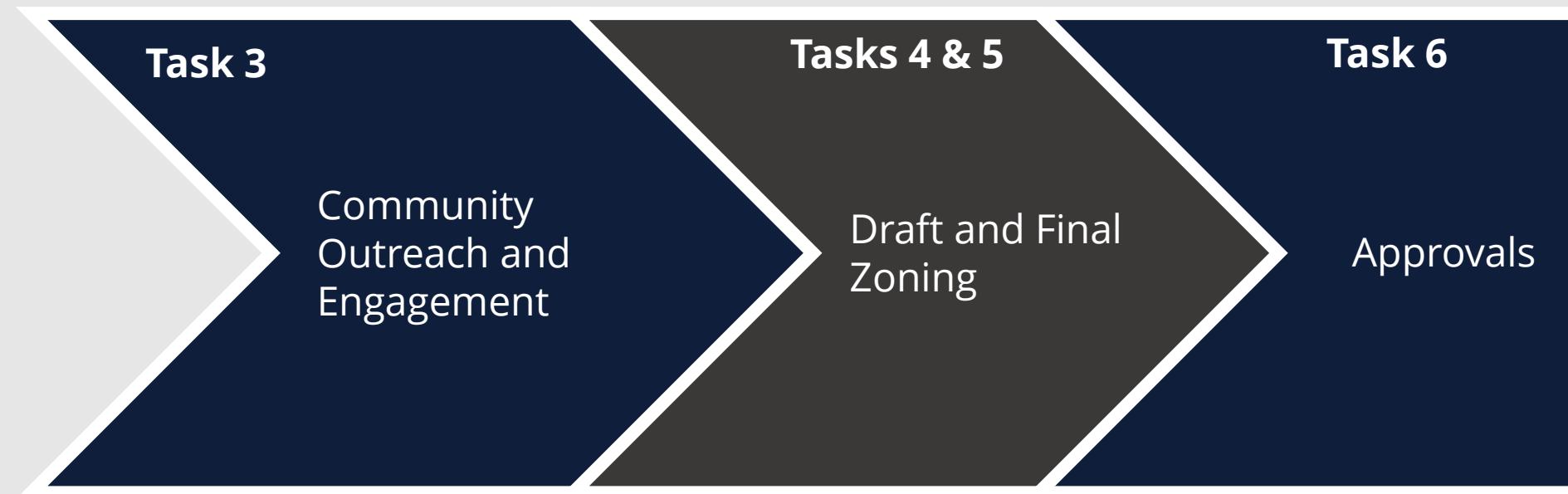


Image source: <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>

Q&A/Discussion

Next Steps

ABOUT THE PROCESS: TIMELINE



Online Public Meeting #1
February 9

Online Public Meeting #2
March 8

First draft due for staff review
March 15

Second draft due for warrant
March 21

Planning Board Presentation
April 6

Planning Board Hearing
April 20

Final Draft Zoning and Informational Handout for Town Meeting
April 24

Town Meeting
May 1

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Thank you!

