



## The Planning Board

19 Washington Street, Sherborn, MA 01770

Heidi Doyle, Town Planner

Addie Mae Weiss, chair

James Guarino

Stefani Harrison

Frank Hoek

Robert Wolff

Andrew Goodearl, associate member

Dear Resident. -

Thank you for taking time to review this information and especially your time to provide valuable feedback to the Planning Board and take the **survey linked below**.

[Sherborn MBTA Communities Survey \(google.com\)](#)

<https://forms.gle/PzMQ7Wr1BgYN9Kz96>

We will be discussing and deliberating choices based on survey results at our **August 13, 2024** meeting to be held in hybrid format both in person at Town Hall and via Zoom. The link for the zoom will be on the posted agenda for the 7 pm. 8/13/2024 meeting.

As an adjacent community we have until 2025 to comply, compared with towns in recent news who must comply in 2024. The timeline for getting materials completed, reviewed and prepared for Town meeting requires Sherborn to decide by the start of September the specific parcels we want our zoning overlay to cover.

## The MBTA Communities Law (MGL Chapter 40, Section 3A)

### Why did the state create this new law?

There is not enough housing supply to meet demand, especially in Massachusetts which has among the highest and fastest growing home prices and rents in the US. Many long-time residents cannot keep up with rising rents or cannot afford to move into different homes as their housing needs change. The state bylaw requires that communities in the MBTA service district (or adjacent to it) adopt zoning regulations that would allow multifamily developments close to transit locations by right. Multifamily housing tends to be Naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH): Housing that tends to be attainable in the marketplace (30% of household income) or housing that's less expensive due to size, age, or other characteristics. This housing is sometimes referred to as missing middle housing. A greater variety of housing choices increases opportunities for NOAH.

### What does Sherborn have to do to be compliant with the new law?

Sherborn is classified as an “adjacent small community”, being next to the Framingham and West Natick commuter stations. As such, requirements are more relaxed for Sherborn than they are for communities with stations or adjacent communities with larger populations. Sherborn must provide a zoning district (Multifamily Overlay District) that would allow for 78 multifamily dwelling units at a density of 15 units per acre. There is no requirement to build any of these units, just to provide the zoning overlay that would allow the property owners an additional option.



## **What is a zoning overlay district?**

Overlay districts add requirements and/or opportunities to a base zoning district. The original zoning does not change. An example would be a single-family home in the R2 zoning district, which requires 2 acres per home, could have a 3A Multifamily Overlay District (MOD) placed over it so that the property could continue to stay a single-family home or the owner could redevelop it in the future as a replacement single family home or to accommodate multifamily dwellings. A zoning overlay expands the potential opportunities of the parcel.

## **What criteria determine suitable locations for 3A zoning?**

For Sherborn it will require a district with the capacity for 78 units, a minimum of 15 units per acre, and meeting contiguity requirements. This is likely to be a single parcel, at least 5 acres, to produce 78 units. Wetlands, public land and sensitive areas are excluded from the compliance calculation. Ideal locations would be close to existing services and MBTA stations. Lack of infrastructure is not a consideration as there is no requirement that the Town build infrastructure to support the multifamily units – only a requirement to zone an area for multifamily by right.

## **What is the timing and process for compliance?**

The Planning Board is considering community input from the June 2024 Public Workshop and results from this survey, choosing a district area that complies with the law by end of summer. There are 2 State offices that will determine compliance:

- Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC): An application be submitted in September for review, and decision for compliance given within 90 days.
- Attorney General's Office: The Planning Board will submit a zoning bylaw for preliminary review in October, with comments expected back by mid-December. The Planning Board will submit a zoning bylaw for preliminary review to the AGO in October, comments expected to be received by mid-December.

The Planning Board will follow the Town's process leading up to the Annual Town Meeting, including holding a public hearing for zoning changes and submitting warrant article language to the Select Board in February. Advisory will hold a hearing in March for all warrant articles, and the town will vote on this proposed zoning overlay district at Town meeting in April 2025. Deadline for Sherborn to comply is December 31, 2025.

If you would like to learn more before taking this survey, please review the informational slides from the June 2024 Public Workshop : [MBTA-Communities-Technical-Details-Slides-posted-July-10-2024 \(sherbornma.org\)](https://sherbornma.org/MBTA-Communities-Technical-Details-Slides-posted-July-10-2024)

Many additional documents are available on the Planning Board website, with some of the most relevant documents linked below:

[Explaining-the-Housing-Crisis-Posted-June-2024 \(sherbornma.org\)](https://sherbornma.org/Explaining-the-Housing-Crisis-Posted-June-2024)

[Myth-Busting-the-MBTA-Communities-Law-posted-June-2024 \(sherbornma.org\)](https://sherbornma.org/Myth-Busting-the-MBTA-Communities-Law-posted-June-2024)

[MBTA-Communities-Law-101-posted-June-2024 \(sherbornma.org\)](https://sherbornma.org/MBTA-Communities-Law-101-posted-June-2024)

**SURVEY LINK – <https://forms.gle/PzMQ7Wr1BgYN9Kz96>**