



Sherborn

MBTA Communities 3A-TA

Community input session

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Municipality

Town of Sherborn

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Funded by

Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP)

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Overview

This workshop provides a platform for community input and discussion to locate the MBTA Communities requirement.

Introduction

What is the purpose of MBTA Communities (3A)?

Massachusetts is in a housing crisis. It has among the highest, and fastest growing, home prices and rents of any state in the nation. Rising costs have dramatically increased financial pressures on low- and middle-income families. These high costs are a disadvantage to the State's economy.

As an "Adjacent small town", Sherborn doesn't have a station of its own, but Sherborn residents do make use of the MBTA Commuter rail. In 2019, on an average workday there were 93 car license plates registered to Sherborn at Framingham and West Natick stations.

What happens if Sherborn doesn't comply?

Penalties include loss of discretionary State funding, such as MassWorks.

However, funding disadvantage is not the only consequence. Non-compliance with MBTA Communities zoning legislation may mean a lawsuit from the Attorney General and possibly lawsuits from housing developers.

Introduction

MBTA Communities Requirements

Sherborn is an **Adjacent small town** with a minimum capacity of 78 units and the area must be at least 5 acres.

The compliance deadline is 12/31/2025.

| Community category | Minimum multi family unit capacity | Minimum land area* | % of district to be located in station area |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Adjacent small town | 78 | 5 acres | 0% |

* Sherborn does not have a designated minimum land area, but the minimum size of any MBTA Communities district is 5 acres

Glossary of terms

- 3A: Shorthand for MBTA Communities legislation
- Capacity: An estimate of the total number of units that could be built in the district, if every parcel (empty and not) was developed into by-right multi-family housing at the maximum allowed density
- Contiguity: A requirement of all 3A districts wherein at least 50% of the total district area must consist of contiguous parcels (touching or separated only by right-of-way).
- District: All areas to which the 3A-compliant overlay applies
- EOHLC: Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, the State office responsible for enacting the MBTA Communities process. EOHLC replaced the Department of Housing and Development (DHCD)
- Net new units: An estimate of how many additional units would be allowed to be built in the district - the district sum of the parcel-by-parcel difference between zoned capacity and existing units.

Location selection

What criteria determine suitable locations for 3A zoning? And what are the constraints?

Requirements

- Capacity for 78 units
- Contiguous 5 acres
- Minimum 15 units/acre

Considerations that Impact Compliance Calculations

- Wetlands
- Public land
- Other development constraints

State guidance

- Ideally close to existing services
- Ideally proximate to MBTA station

Town considerations

- Likely to be adopted by the community
- Available public water and sewer
- Sensitivity to historic character

Location selection

Discussion of single-parcel zoning

Is it “spot zoning”?

The inclusion of a 5-acre contiguity requirement is designed to encourage neighborhood scale districts, and to avoid isolated developments or “spot zoning”. By planning a zoning district with at least 5 acres, a community has the opportunity to consider how multi-family housing will integrate into the fabric of the community.

Single-parcel zones may use a unit cap

EOHLC supports unit capacity maximums in districts with a single parcel. As we’ll see, this is helpful in Sherborn where the target parcels are very large and otherwise would exceed the required unit capacity at the required density.

Process

MBTA Communities process to-date and next steps

Previously: MBTA Communities draft zoning for downtown parcels did not pass initial review by the EOHLC (capacity in floodplain, lot size maximum, partial parcels) and was problematic for historical preservation.

Today: Share new concepts for MBTA zoning location(s), discuss pros and cons, and provide input on site selection.

Next steps:

1. CommunityScale and the Town administration will process your input and create a draft scenario
2. CommunityScale will prepare a zoning overlay based on the selected scenario
3. CommunityScale will deliver a presentation at the Planning Board and conduct a question and answer session.
4. CommunityScale will prepare a compliance calculator for EOHLC submission
5. Schedule: We will conclude by December 15, 2024, with the final deadline in 2025..