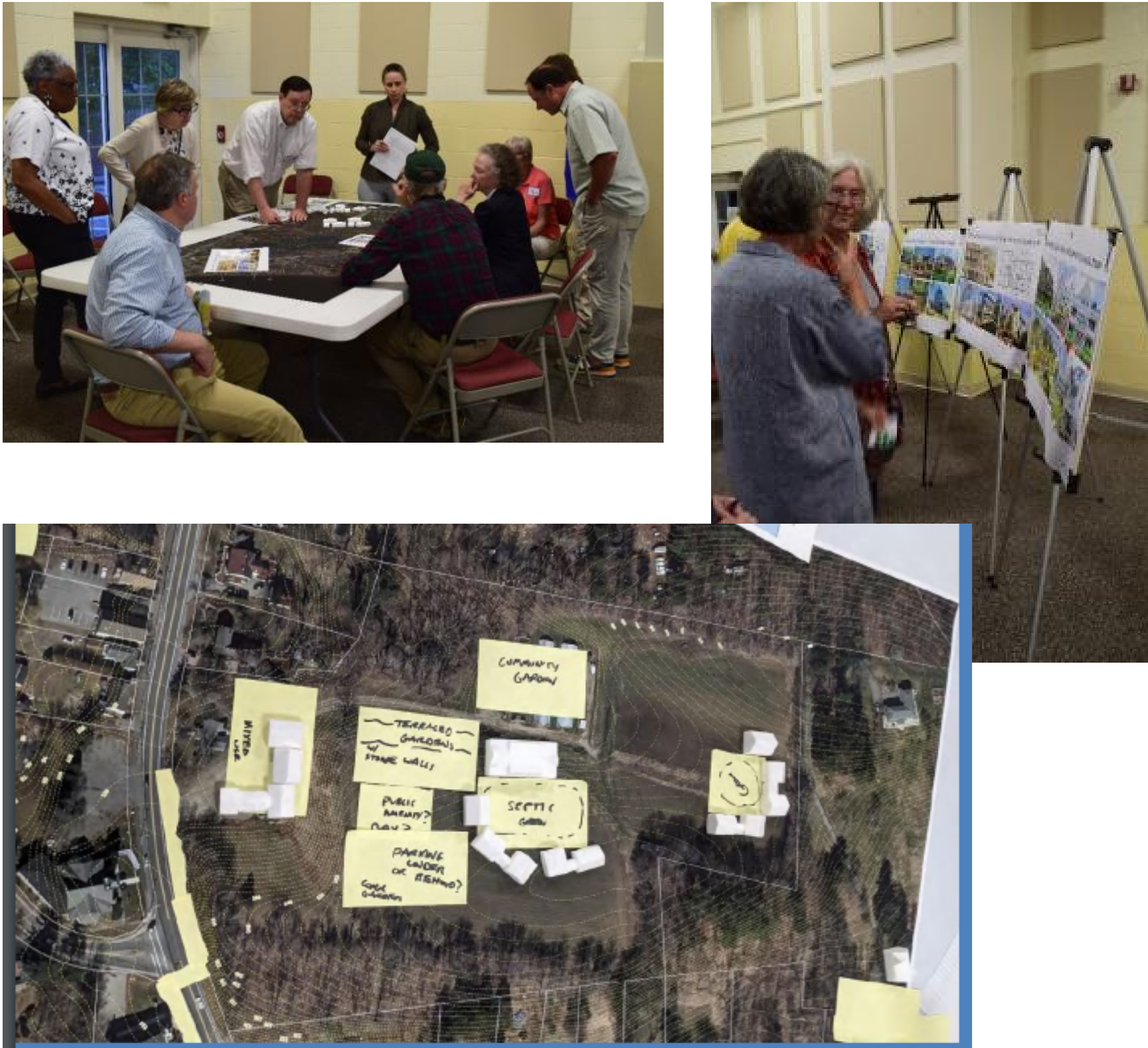




HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

Step Two: Kickoff Workshop

As part of the Community Engagement Plan, a number of forums and workshops have taken place, supplemented by discussion during Planning Board meetings. These events provided an opportunity for community members to help determine what styles of multi-family units were most favored, where suitable locations for these housing types and density would be (with respect to key aspects like traffic, access, and water supply), and how natural features could factor into design of a new neighborhood. Below, members of the community interact at the June 27, 2023 Design Workshop.



Upcoming Steps: Implementing Steps Five and Six

Next steps in the process will focus on drafting zoning regulations that would allow development that is consistent with the Town's vision for a neighborhood as identified in Concept Plans for each district and meets state requirements. The Planning Board will host additional community forums as well as a public hearing on the final proposed zoning bylaw in preparation for an April 2024 Town Meeting vote. Adoption of these zoning changes would enable the Town to be compliant with state law, and ensures continued access to state grants and awards.

How You Can Help and Where You Can Find Out More:

Check out the "Town Projects" page on the Town website for more information on this (and all Town initiatives), and stay tuned to the activities of the Planning Board.

Project Overview:

In 2020, to help address the Commonwealth's acute housing crisis, the state legislature amended the State Zoning Act (MGL 40A) to require "MBTA Communities" to adopt a Zoning District Bylaw that encourages the production of multi-family housing. For West Newbury, the final MBTA Communities Guidelines require the Town to create a Multi-Family Zoning District (or Districts) of a size and in a location of its choosing provided that the overall zoning meets the Section 3A requirements and allows for the development of at least 87 housing units (called unit capacity). Since the Spring of 2022, the Town has been hard at work to engage with the community to analyze locations for development, identifying what sort of housing styles might be most supported by residents, and what sites may be best suited for higher density housing. From the start, emphasis was placed on present land usage and conservation, as well as architectural aesthetics.

Recent Developments:

Dodson & Flinker (hired by the Town to help with this work) has recently shared Concept Plans for each of the two proposed zoning districts as well as the draft Zoning Regulations. They continue to test the regulations with the State's compliance tool and to gather Board and community input to finalize the proposed regulations. Meanwhile the Town has been exploring how this might look in its implementation. The timeline of the initiative is seen below:

PROJECT START, 2021

Step One:

Initiate Project and Develop Community Engagement Plan

Applied for and received state planning grant of \$67,500 with \$7,500 in local matching funds.

Step Three and Four:

Analyze Conditions, Identify Potential Districts

Three areas were initially identified as viable for providing an opportunity for a new neighborhood. Dodson & Flinker helped the community visualize design and density alternatives, and after continuing evaluation and community input, two properties were selected on Main St. for the Town to consider for overlay zoning: the Dunn Property and the Knapp Property.

Dunn Focus Area

Approximately 6 acres—sized to meet MBTA Communities Law requirements



Knapp Focus Area

Approximately 6 acres—sized to meet MBTA Communities Law requirements



PROJECT END, Annual Town Meeting 2024

Proposed Zoning Amendments to be voted on at Town Meeting.