

# West Newbury Housing Opportunities Initiative

Planning Board Public Forum  
September 5, 2023



Town of  
**West Newbury**  
Massachusetts

**DODSON & FLINKER**  
Landscape Architecture and Planning



# PROPERTY CONCEPT PLANS TO INFORM DISCUSSION OF ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Note: These are speculative development scenarios commissioned by the town. They are intended only to inform discussion of zoning standards. No actual development proposals are currently on the table.

# Mullen Property

- 0 Main Street/O Church Street
- Parcel ID: R13-131
- 34 acres
- Town-owned
- Extensive wetlands to rear of property
- Relatively good soils for septic



# Public Forum and Design Workshop: Mullen Property



## Duplex: 2 Units with shared walls



## Walk-up/Stacked Flats: 6-12 Units with central stair hall



## Townhouse/Manor House: 3-5 Units with shared walls



## Apartments: 22-32 units with center hall on each floor

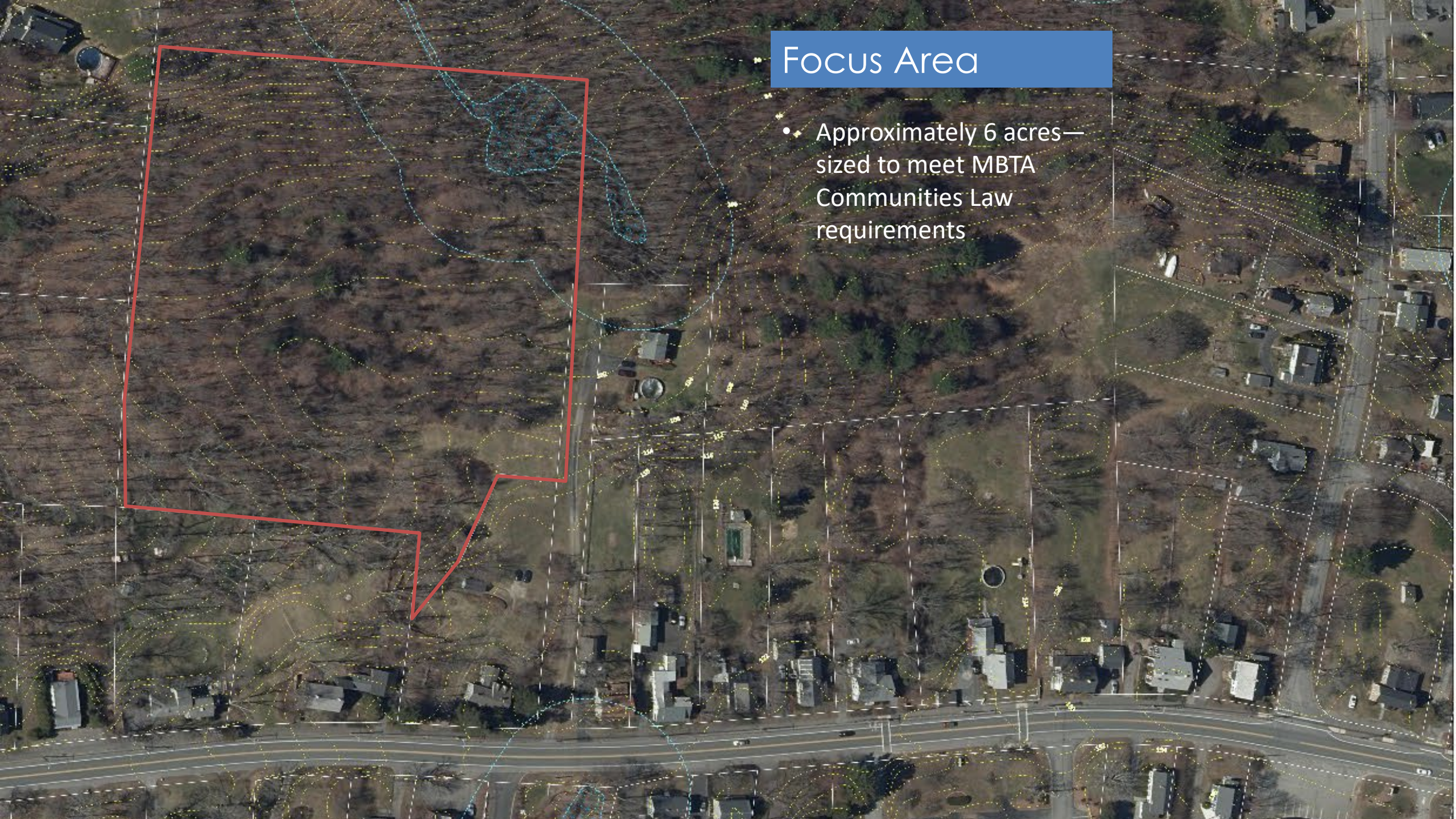


# Mullen Property



## Focus Area

- Approximately 6 acres— sized to meet MBTA Communities Law requirements



## 90 Unit Plan

- Complies with MBTA Communities Law requirements—zoned for 15 units per acre and has a unit capacity of at least 87 units.
- Not feasible without a wastewater treatment plant





## 40 Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

Likely build out due to septic limitations. 90 Bedrooms is the limit for a Title V septic system.



# Knapp Property

- **147 Main Street**
- **Parcel: R2-41**
- **19 acres**
- **Privately Owned**



# Public Forum and Design Workshop: Knapp Property



# Knapp-Base Map



# Knapp Focus Area

Approximately 6 acres—  
sized to meet MBTA  
Communities Law  
requirements



# 90 Unit Plan

- Complies with MBTA Communities Law requirements—zoned for 15 units per acre and has a unit capacity of at least 87 units.
- Not feasible without a wastewater treatment plant



## 40 Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

Likely build out due to septic limitations.  
90 Bedrooms is the limit for a Title V septic system.



# Dunn Property

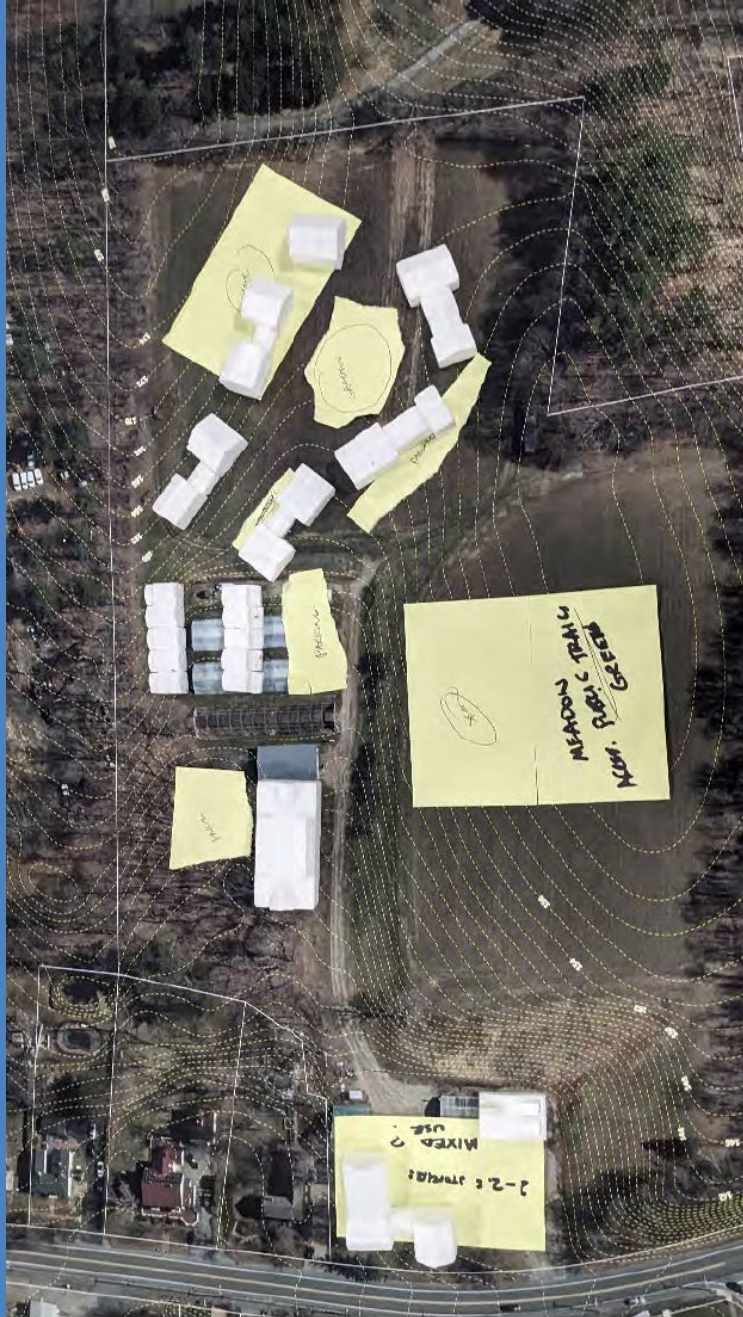
- 317 Main St
- Parcel: U1-38
- 15 Acres
- Privately owned







# Public Forum and Design Workshop: Dunn Property



# Dunn Focus Area

Approximately 6 acres—  
sized to meet MBTA  
Communities Law  
requirements



# 90 Unit Plan

- Complies with MBTA Communities Law requirements—zoned for 15 units per acre and has a unit capacity of at least 87 units.
- Not feasible without a wastewater treatment plant





# 40 Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

Likely build out due to septic limitations.  
90 Bedrooms is the limit for a Title V septic system.







Dunn Greenhouse Property

331 Main St

347 Main St

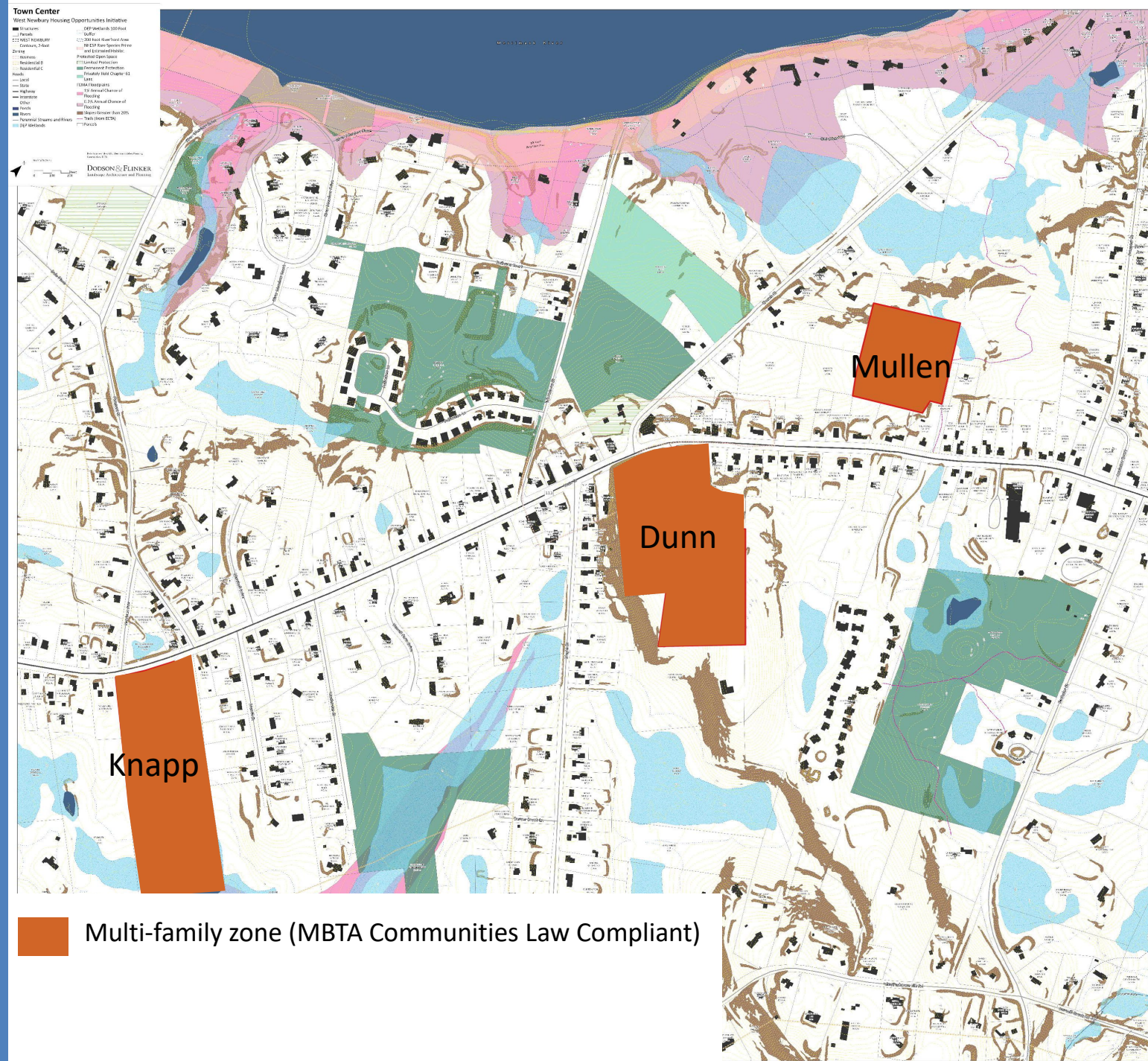
Daley Drive

New streets could link properties from Dunn to Daley Drive



# Zoning Approaches

1. Rezone one full parcel to comply with MBTA Law:
  - Adopt an overlay district on one full parcel: Dunn, Mullen, or Knapp. Allow 15 units per acre by right on that parcel.
  - This would result in significantly more zoning capacity than is required by the MBTA Communities Law.
  - With this amount of unit capacity, it would potentially be financially feasible for a developer to build a wastewater treatment facility, which has been previously discussed for this area.
  - On the other hand, public input for this project indicates that this level of development is beyond what many citizens of West Newbury want.



# Zoning Approaches

## 2. Minimal Compliance with MBTA Law:

- Adopt an overlay district on 6 acres of one of the following properties: Dunn, Mullen, or Knapp properties. Allow 15 units per acre by right on the chosen parcel.
- This would comply with the requirements of the MBTA Communities Law, but because of septic constraints this is unlikely to result in more than 90 bedrooms (e.g. thirty 3 bedroom units, or forty-five 2 bedroom units, etc.).

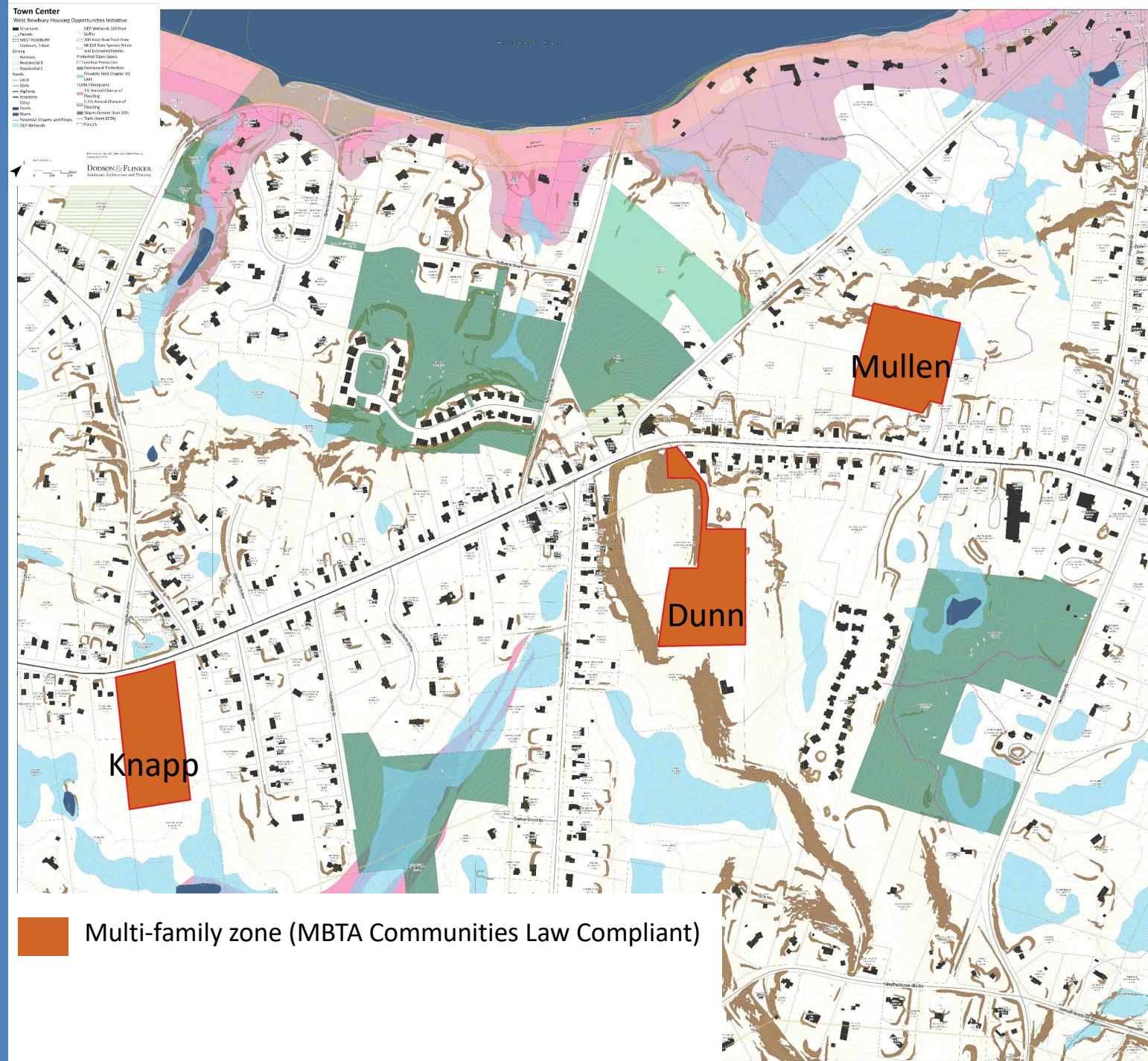


 Multi-family zone (MBTA Communities Law Compliant)

# Zoning Approaches

## 3. Meet the Spirit of the MBTA Law while recognizing septic limitations in West Newbury

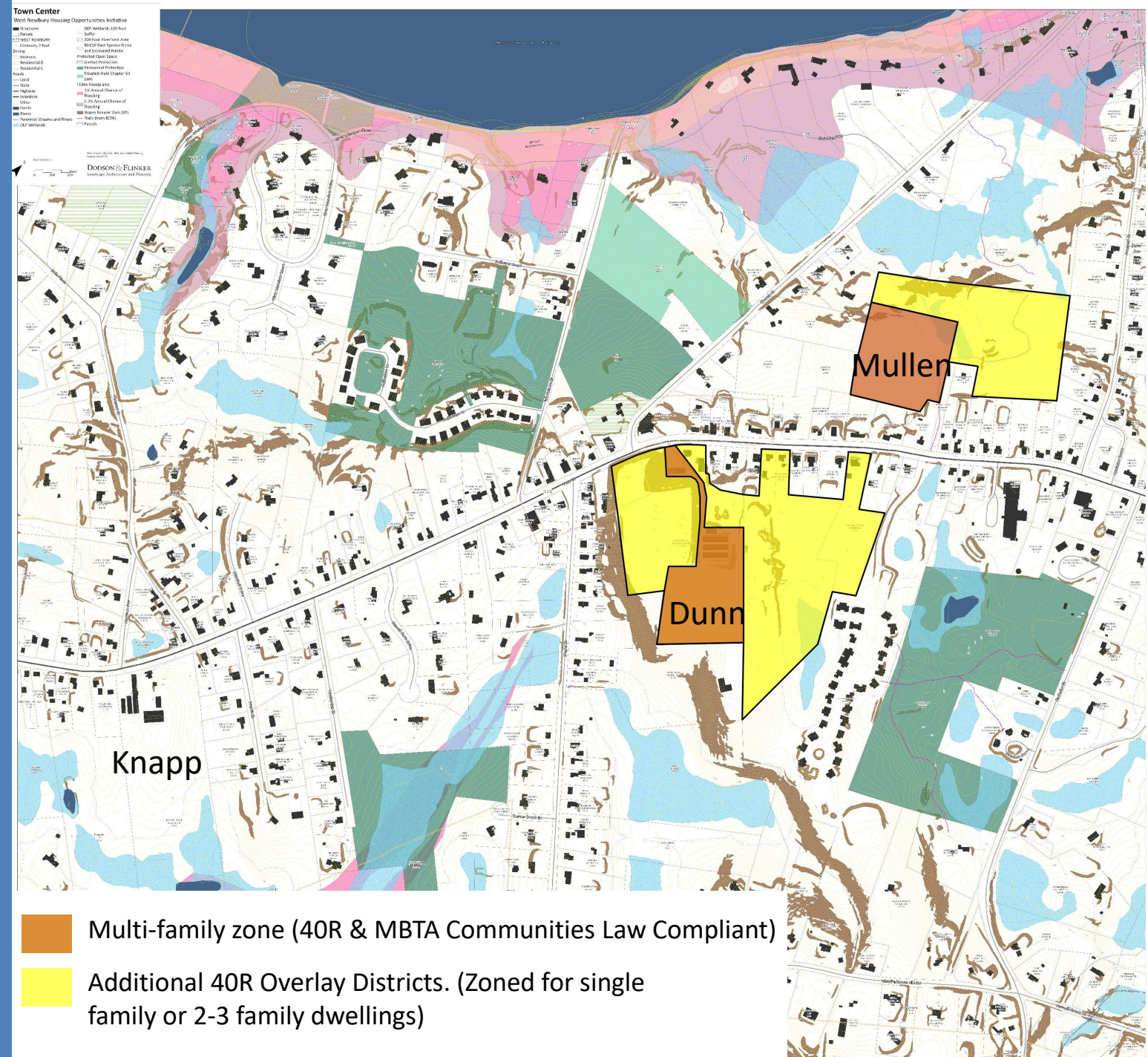
- Adopt an overlay district on 6 acres of each of the following properties: Dunn (with or without adjacent properties), Mullen and Knapp. Each would allow 15 units per acre.
- If soils are adequate, individual septic systems could allow for up to 90 bedrooms (approximately 30 units) on each of these sites. This meets the spirit of the MBTA Communities Law by making it feasible for approximately 87 units to be built in total.



# Zoning Approaches

## 4. MBTA + Smart Growth Overlay District (40R):

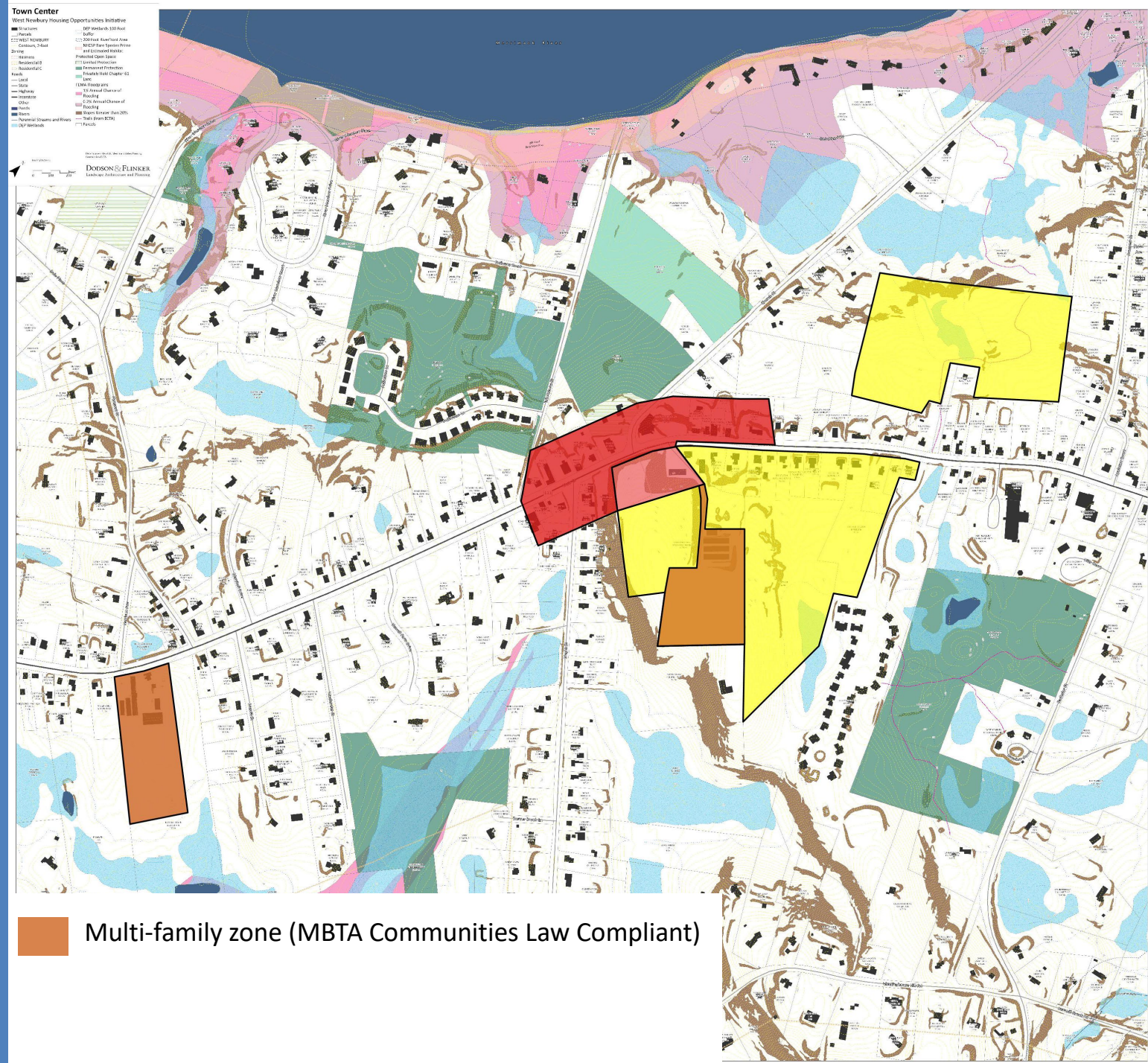
- Why consider 40R? Per MBTA Communities Law, multi-family zones that are in a Chapter 40R overlay district are allowed to require more affordable housing (20% vs. 10%). 40R statute enables design standards. 40R offers payments for upzoning and units created.
- Disadvantages of mixing 40R and MBTA zoning? Adds complication. The programs have different requirements for zoning & adoption processes that would need to be reconciled.
- Approach for both 40R and MBTA Compliance:
  - Pursue a 40R Overlay District for the Dunn property plus the two adjacent properties to the east (331 and 347 Main Street).
  - Mullen could be included in the 40R District or not. Knapp does not qualify for 40R.
  - At least one area would be zoned for 87 units and would comply with both MBTA Communities Law and 40R.
  - The remainder of the overlay district would comply with only 40R requirements: allowing single family at minimum of 8 units per acre and/or 2-3 unit buildings at minimum 12 units per acre.
  - Design standards would be adopted and empowered via 40R.



# Zoning Approaches

## 5. Integrated Village Center Approach. Minimal MBTA zone with improved zoning in surrounding area:

- Zone 6 acres of the Dunn or Knapp properties at 15 units per acre.
- Rezone the remaining portions of Dunn, 331 Main Street, 347 Main Street, and/or Mullen properties to allow more housing diversity. On the latter properties, make conservation development with better design the default pathway for development. Set allowed housing density to generate significant amounts of new units while reflecting desired character, market demands/feasibility, and septic constraints.
- Consider revising the zoning for the business district (e.g. expand boundaries, allow mixed-use by right, etc.)
- Consider revising zoning for residential lots on Main Street in the village center to make it easier to do small scale multi-family conversions of existing houses.



Multi-family zone (MBTA Communities Law Compliant)

# Proposed Zoning Parameters for MBTA-compliant zones

## Dimensional Standards, Lots

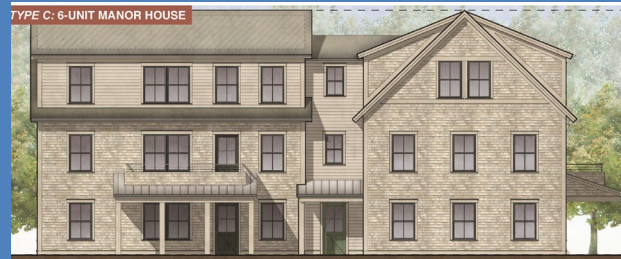
- Minimum size: 5-acre lot
- Front setback (min.): 20'
- Side and Rear Setback (min.): 30'
- Open Space (min.): 30%



# Proposed Zoning Parameters for MBTA-compliant zones

## Building Types

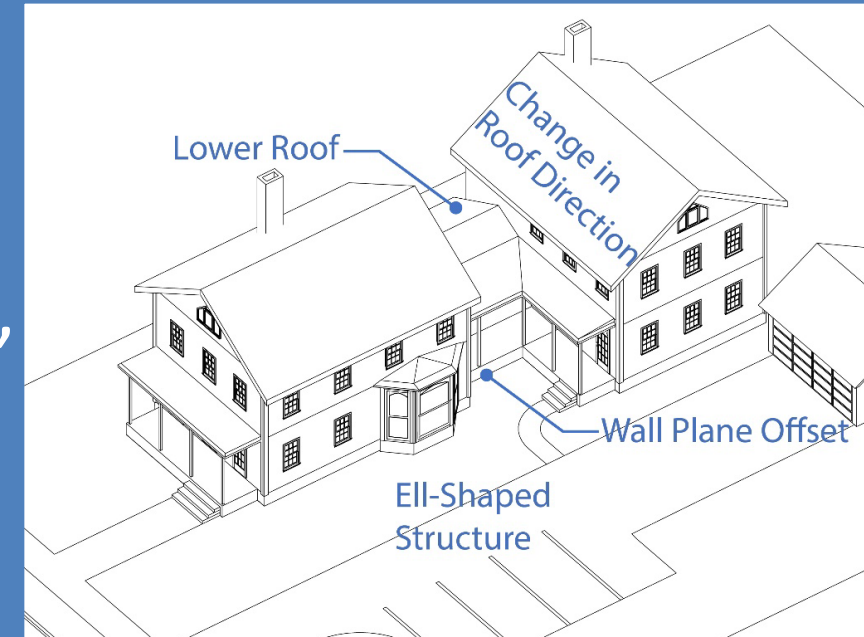
- 2-family
- 3-5 family with manor house or farmhouse massing
- Stacked flats (6-12 units)
- Apartments (10-20 units)



# Proposed Zoning Parameters for MBTA-compliant zones

## Building Standards

- Maximum height: 3 stories
- Space between buildings (min.): 10'
- Space between building and street line: 5'
- Maximum length of wall without 2' change in wall plane: 40'
- All buildings must have a pedestrian entrance facing a street
- Flat roofs not allowed. Maximum length along roof without variation 40'.





# Proposed Zoning Parameters for MBTA-compliant zones

## Parking Requirements

- 1.5 spaces per unit (minimum)
- Shared parking allowed by right within common plan of development
- All parking areas located to side, rear, or within buildings
- Garage door set back from front façade by at least 2'. No more than 1/3 of a front façade can be garage doors.

# Discussion Questions

1. Which concept plans were most appropriate for multi-family housing in West Newbury? Why?
2. Which zoning approach is the best fit for West Newbury?
3. Do you have feedback on the basic zoning parameters we outlined?

# Next Steps



- Select overall zoning approach to comply with MBTA Communities Law and open opportunities to meet housing needs in West Newbury
- Refine zoning parameters
- Test them with the Compliance Tool
- Write draft zoning