

West Newbury Housing Opportunities Initiative

Town Projects Fair and Forum
November 15, 2023



Town of
West Newbury
Massachusetts

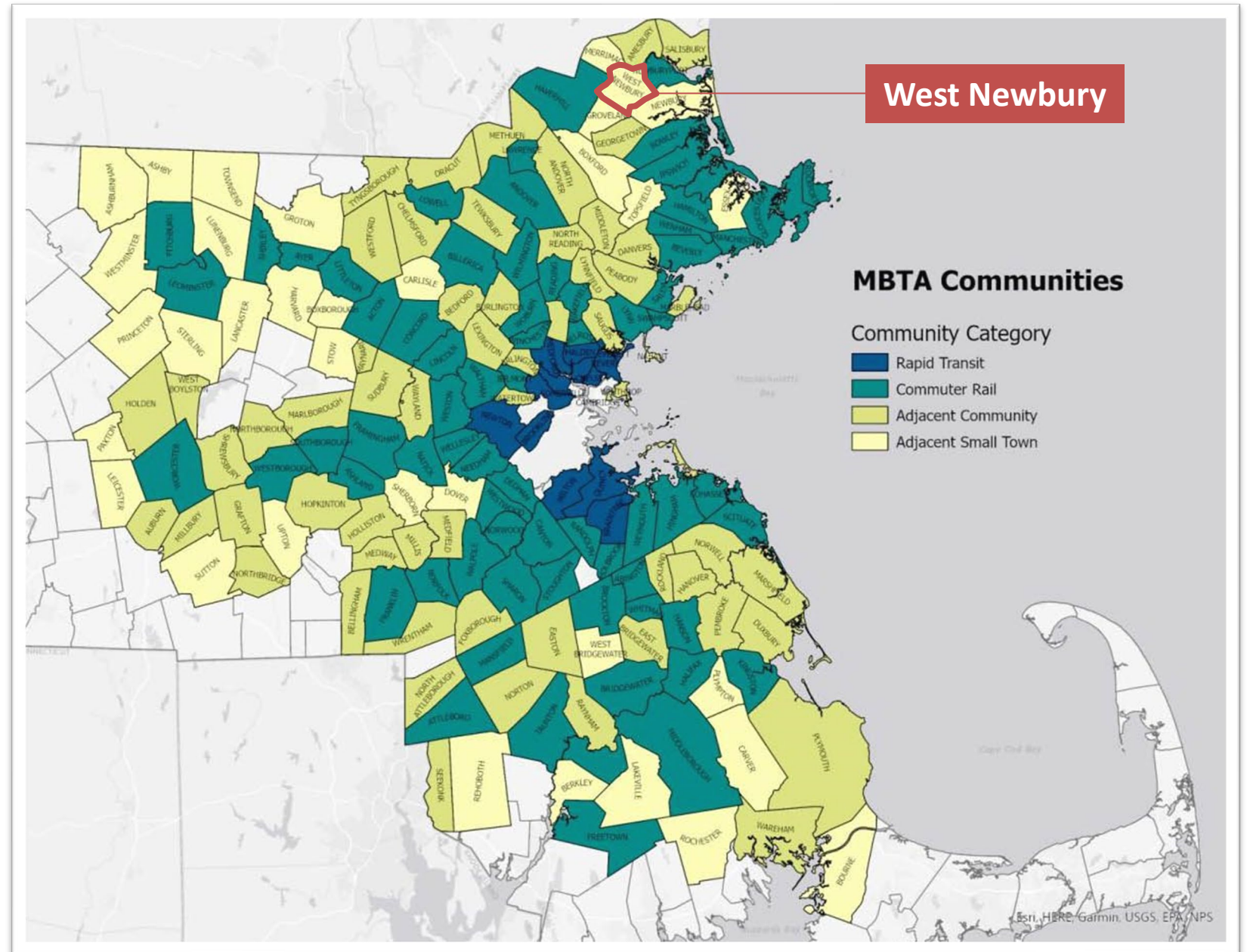
DODSON & FLINKER
Landscape Architecture and Planning



**SECTION 3A OF MGL C.40A (THE ZONING ACT)
& THE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES**

What is MBTA Communities Law?

- Change to the state law that enables zoning (MGL c.40A)—Section 3A
- And Compliance Guidelines adopted by DHCD (now know as EOHLC)
- Applies to 177 communities
- West Newbury is designated an “adjacent small town”



What does it require?

MBTA Communities must have:

- At least one zoning district that allows multi-family housing by-right.
 - Multi-family housing is:
 - A building with 3 or more residential dwelling units, or
 - 2 or more buildings on the same lot with more than 1 residential dwelling unit in each building
- Minimum gross density: 15 units per acre

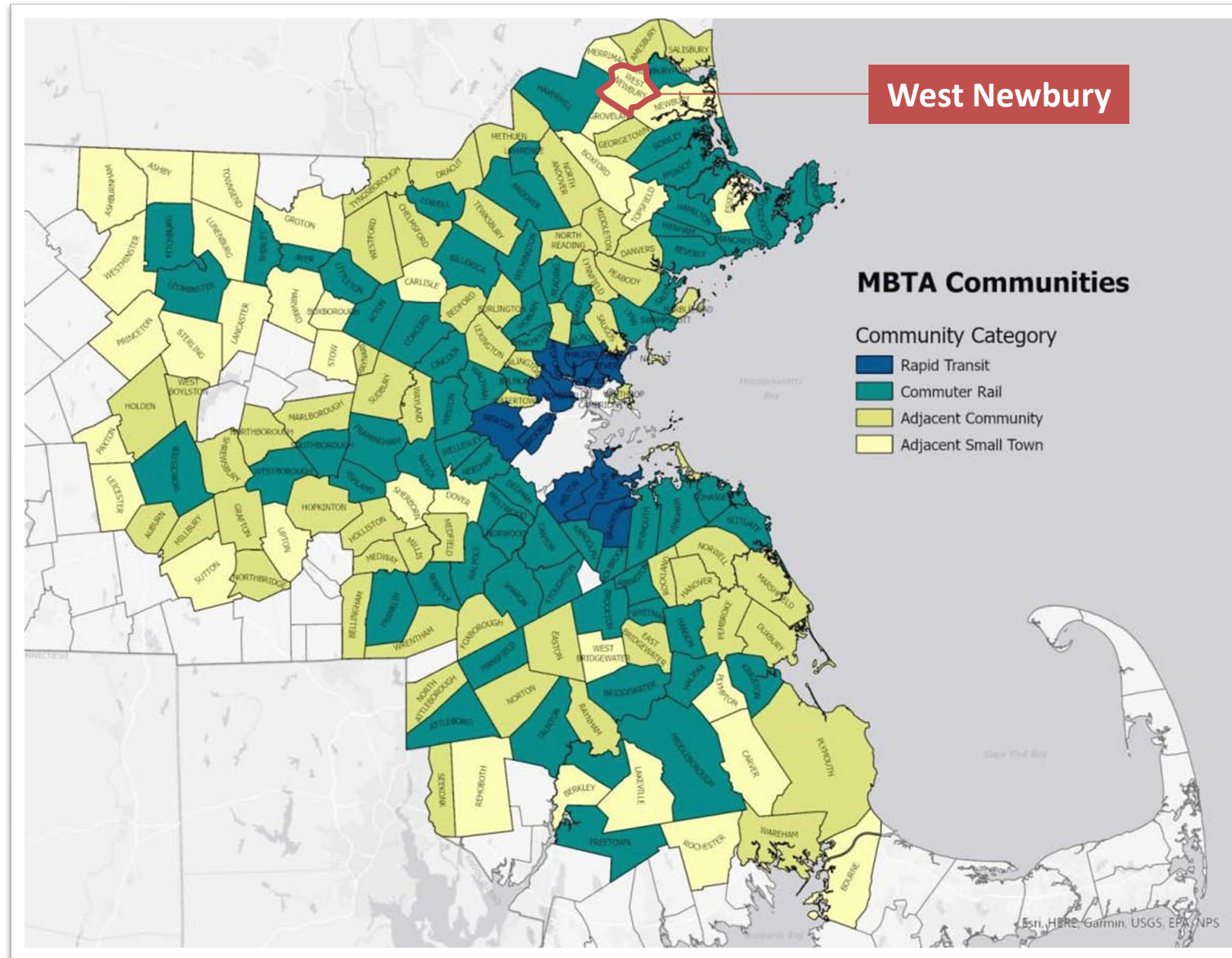
1 or more districts

**≥ 3 units/dwelling
or
 ≥ 2 buildings on a lot
with >1 unit each**

≥ 15 units/acre

How many units must West Newbury zone for?

- Adjacent Small Towns must zone for **multi-family unit capacity** equal to 5% of the total number of existing housing units.
- 5% of 1,740 housing units = **87 multi-family units**
- At 15 units/acre, 87 units would require a minimum of **5.8 acres** zoned for multi-family housing



PROPERTY CONCEPT PLANS TO INFORM ZONING PARAMETERS

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.

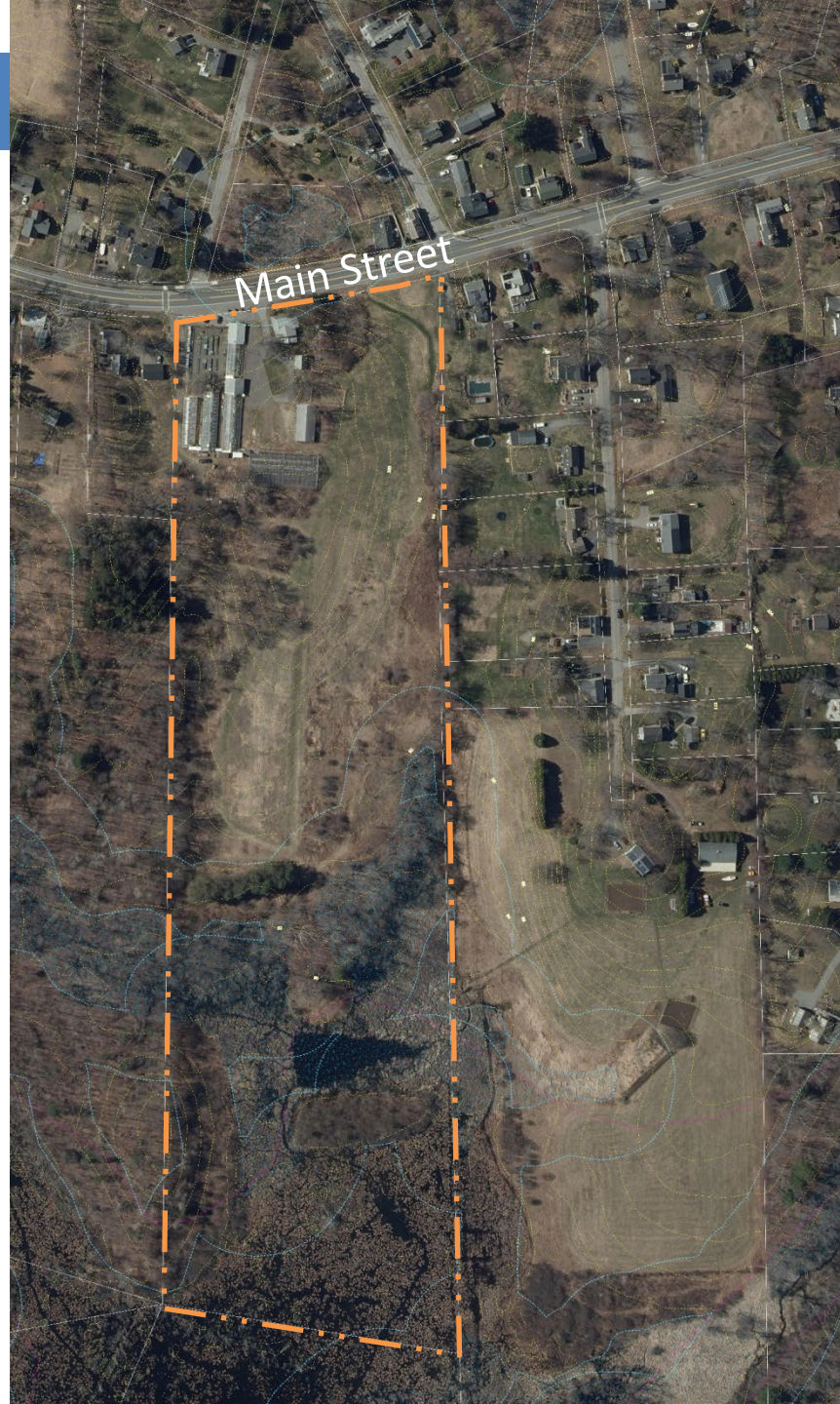
Knapp Property

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



Knapp-Base Map

- Greenhouses and house at front of lot
- Wooded rear portion of property has extensive wetlands



Knapp Property-Focus Area

- Redevelopment should use the previously developed area near the road
- Avoid development of the field to east of greenhouses to preserve view from road



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



90-Unit Plan

- A new street on western side of property is aligned with Harrison Ave
- New field at front of site (left side of image)
- View of existing field from street preserved (right side of image)
- Existing house preserved and expanded, if feasible.
- New townhouse and stacked flat buildings share a common driveway



90-Unit Plan

- Second neighborhood at back of site
- Buildings arranged around a green
- Loop road provides emergency access
- Most parking is behind or beside buildings or in tuck-under garages
- Two small apartment buildings at rear of site
- Other buildings are townhouses and stacked flats
- Buildings have a front side that relates to street and private side with views to woods or field
- Continuous sidewalk network connects to a trail to rear of property—possible connection to landlocked town-owned land behind site.
- Extensive tree planting



40-Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

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



40-Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

- Basic site design is the same as the 90-unit plan
- This plan does not include small apartment buildings.
- Most buildings have 2-units. This results in more, but smaller, buildings than the 90-unit plan



40-Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

- Fewer units so fewer parking spaces. All parking can be beside or behind buildings on the main loop.
- Larger shared green than the 90-unit plan
- Extensive tree planting



Dunn Focus Area

- 1/3rd of front of lot is previously developed. Steep slopes on remainder of frontage.
- Steep driveway up to back fields
- Additional greenhouses at top of driveway
- Wetland in wooded area north of back greenhouses
- Large field on knoll on west side of property
- Second field behind greenhouses



90-Unit Plan

- Mixed-use building at front of lot (could also be a multi-family building)
- Existing driveway upgraded to a tree-lined street
- Large field on knoll remains undeveloped
- Woods around wetland left intact



90-Unit Plan

- A mix of building types: townhouses, stacked flats, small apartment buildings.
- Parking in a mix of tuck-under garages, parking under apartment buildings, and parking courts hidden behind buildings
- Continuous sidewalks
- Walking path loops around site
- Several shared open spaces and private outdoor spaces



40-Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

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



40-Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

- Two multi-family buildings at front of site—similar in size to houses on adjacent lots
- Like 90-unit plan, the driveway is upgraded to a street and the development avoids the large field to west of the site and the woods around the wetland to east of the site



40-Unit Plan (90 bedrooms)

- Street arranged in two curving loops each with a common green
- Buildings lined up along streets
- Buildings are a mix of townhouses and stacked flats
- Parking mostly in garages accessed from sides of buildings
- Like all other plans, buildings are composed of smaller masses similar to houses in surrounding area



Translating Concept Plans into Zoning

- Overlay District Boundaries were drawn to steer multi-family projects to the parts of the parcels that are most appropriate for development
- Zoning standards based on the concept plans



Zoning Approach

Meet the requirements and spirit of the MBTA Law while recognizing septic limitations in West Newbury

- Adopt an overlay district on both the Dunn and Knapp properties. Each allows up to 15 units per acre.
- Establish two subdistricts: MCMOD Neighborhood and MCMOD Mixed-Use
- If soils allow wastewater treatment facilities, MBTA Communities density could be achieved. Otherwise, projects will be limited by Title V septic capacity—approximately 90 bedrooms per project.



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MCMOD

Lot Standards

- Minimum lot size for MCMOD: 5-acres
- Front setback along Main Street: average of adjacent structures
- Front setback elsewhere (min.): 5'
- Side Setback (min.): 7.5'
- Rear Setback (min): 10'
- Buffer at Edge of District: 30'
- Screening required if new buildings within 150' of existing houses
- Maximum 15 units per acre
- 10% of units must be affordable for a household that earns 80% of area median income. (For example, an income of \$94,650 or less for 4-person household)



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MCMOD

Site Design

- Loop roads preferred
- Continuous network of sidewalks and paths required
- Building placement must create pedestrian-scale streetscape
- Buildings grouped around common open space, where possible
- Site designed to minimize impervious surfaces



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MCMOD

Open Space and Landscaping

- Open Space (min.): 30%
- Shared open space encouraged
- Open space must serve a function
- Native or low-maintenance plants
- Landscaping used to define outdoor spaces, habitat, beauty, green stormwater management



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MCMOD

Building Types

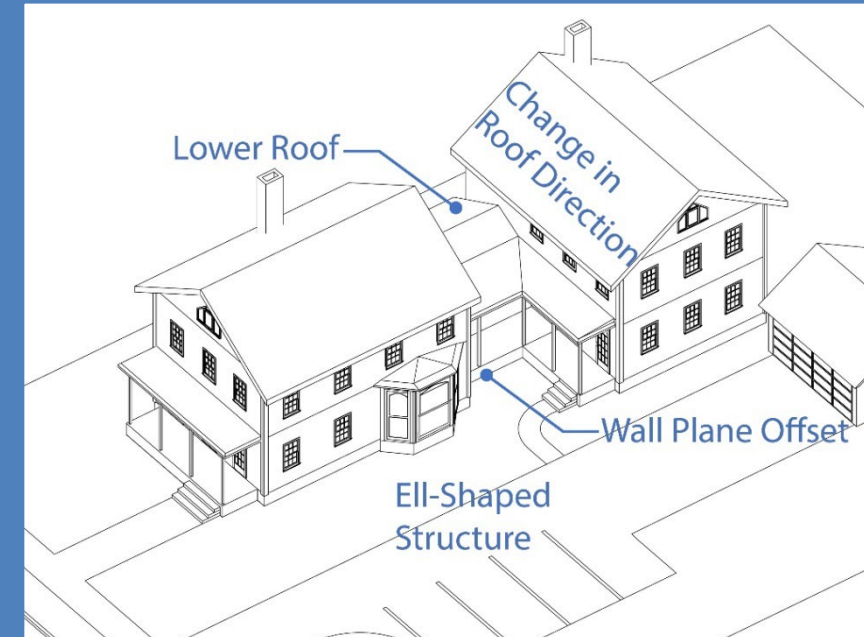
- 2-family
- Townhouses with manor house or farmhouse massing (3-5 units)
- Stacked flats (3-10 units)
- Apartments (8-24 units)
- Mixed-Use (up to 20 units)



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MBTA-compliant zones

Building Standards

- Maximum height: 3 stories
- All buildings must have a front entry facing a street or shared open space
- Maximum length of wall without 2' change in wall plane: 40'
- Flat roofs not allowed. Maximum length along roof without variation 40'
- Windows must be aligned, predominantly vertically proportioned. No more than 5 types of window on a façade.



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MCMOD

Parking Requirements

- 1.5 spaces per unit (minimum)
- Bicycle parking required
- All parking areas located to side, rear, or within buildings. Planning Board may waive requirement, when infeasible
- Curb cuts minimized
- Garage door set back from front façade by at least 2’.
- No more than 1/3 of a front façade can be occupied by garage doors.



Proposed Zoning Parameters for MCMOD

Bonuses

- If at least 20% of the dwelling units in a building are affordable, then the number of units in the building may be increased by 1/3.
- If permanent protection of open space on remainder of parcel not covered by MCMOD, then the allowed gross density of the project may be increased to 20 units per developable acre.



Questions?

- Do the concept plans show appropriate design principles for multi-family housing in West Newbury?
- Do you have any comments or concerns about the proposed zoning?
- Do you generally support the proposed zoning?
- How do you think Town Meeting will respond the proposed zoning? What will people ask? What will they respond to—positively or negatively?

Next Steps



- Planning Board provides comments on draft zoning
- Revise draft zoning
- Produce zoning diagrams
- Submit zoning to EOHLC for pre-approval review
- Finalize zoning
- Planning Board public hearing
- Spring Town Meeting—vote on proposed zoning