

MBTA Communities Act

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) [What requirements must Framingham comply with under the MBTA Communities Law?](#)

Framingham is a Commuter Rail Community. We need to allow multi-family housing, by-right in an overlay zone that

 - a) is at least 50 acres, 25 Acres must be contiguous, 40% of the total area must be within a half-mile radius of the commuter rail station and all sub-zones must be at least 5 contiguous acres.
 - b) provides a density of at least 15 units per acre
 - c) provides units suitable for families (no maximum square footage or number of bedrooms are allowed)

NO HOUSING IS REQUIRED TO BE BUILT
- 2) [What does zoning control?](#)

Zoning laws control how land can be used, including the types of buildings that can be built and how they can be designed.
- 3) [What does “by-right” mean?](#)

“By-right” is a type of zoning that allows for development to proceed without the need for special permits, variances, or other discretionary approvals. This is because the development proposal strictly adheres to zoning and building codes.
- 4) [Can Framingham design districts that meet specific needs of the city?](#)

Yes. Design controls will be built into the Zoning Ordinance. Controls like maximum height and density requirements will preserve the aesthetic and historic nature of downtown Framingham, Nobscot, and Saxonville, while mandatory mixed-use zoning will allow much needed amenities at Shopper’s World, Speen Street, and 9/90.
- 5) [Why should we comply?](#)

State grants and other funding will be denied and the risk of possible litigation for noncompliance. Framingham has received over \$11 million in state grants within the past 5 years.
- 6) [How were the seven proposed overlay districts \(MODs 1 - 7\) selected?](#)

A minimum of 25 contiguous acres must be located within a half mile of the MBTA Commuter Rail station. This created MODs 1 & 2. The other 5 zones were selected to relieve the Waverly Street corridor of all the burden.
- 7) [What is the deadline for compliance?](#)

The new Zoning Ordinance must be adopted and a District Compliance Application must be submitted by December 31, 2024. Please note that a simple majority of city council is needed to pass the MBTA Zoning Ordinance.

8) [Has resident feedback been incorporated?](#)

Yes. Several public hearings held by the Planning Board, along with multiple community discussions, have allowed numerous opportunities for public engagement.

9) [How is Framingham going to protect against inappropriate developments?](#)

Framingham will implement strict design controls into the new Zoning Ordinance. The Minor Site Plan Review process gives the Planning Board the opportunity to ensure appropriate developments are being built.

10) [Will the new zoning help provide housing that is affordable?](#)

Yes. The city mandates 13% affordability in all new housing developments.

11) [Will new development cause too much traffic in our community?](#)

Section 3A-compliant districts are designed to be in areas served by public transit and/or located in walkable neighborhoods to reduce the number of car trips that are necessary for residents to get to work and access services and amenities (mapc.org). Furthermore, correcting the city's housing shortage is a priority.

12) [What is the city's recommendation?](#)

To comply with the state's mandate. The benefits of increasing the housing stock and maintaining eligibility for state funding outweigh any potential downside.

13) [Where can people find more information about the MBTA Communities Law and the proposed Zoning Ordinance?](#)

On the state's website:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities>