



Memorandum

 **To:** City Council

From: Sarkis Sarkisian, Director of Planning & Community Development

CC: Charles Sisitsky, Mayor
Planning Board

Date: October 23, 2024

RE: **Planning Board Report/Recommendation** Zoning Amendments to the City of Framingham Zoning Ordinances Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act

The Planning Board, per Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, section 5, is required to submit a report to City Council on proposed Zoning Amendments.

On October 17, 2024, the Planning Board held a public hearing and voted 3-1-0 to send the amended MBTA zoning proposal (attached) to the City Council. A motion was made as follows: “a reduction to 15 units per acre density at the Saxonville and Nobscot districts, retaining the setback and height restrictions. To maintain the balance of required units under the MBTA Act, the district at 9/90 was increased to include all of the Staple’s property (48 acres).”

The MBTA Communities Law, M.G.L. c.40A, §3A was passed by the Massachusetts Legislature in January 2021. This statute states:

- a) An MBTA community shall have a zoning ordinance or by-law that provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right; provided, however, that such multi-family housing shall be without age restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children. For the purposes of this section, a district of reasonable size shall: (i) have a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre, subject to any further limitations imposed by section 40 of chapter 131 and title 5 of the state environmental code established pursuant to section 13 of chapter 21A; and (ii) be located not more than 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable.
- b) An MBTA community that fails to comply with this section shall not be eligible for funds from: (i) the Housing Choice Initiative as described by the governor in a message to the general court dated December 11, 2017; (ii) the Local Capital Projects Fund established

in section 2EEEE of chapter 29; (iii) the MassWorks infrastructure program established in section 63 of chapter 23A, or (iv) the HousingWorks infrastructure program established in section 27 of chapter 23B.

- c) The executive office of housing and livable communities, in consultation with the executive office of economic development, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, shall promulgate guidelines to determine if an MBTA community is in compliance with this section.

The law was intended as a means to address the Commonwealth's housing shortage and the impact that shortage was having on the state's ability to compete for business and talent, ensure our residents can live affordably regardless of their income, and to better link housing, jobs, and transportation to address climate change and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For purposes of the law, Framingham is categorized as a commuter rail community, Commuter rail communities are required to comply with the law by December 31, 2024. To meet its compliance requirements, Framingham's MBTA Communities districts and zoning must meet the following criteria: (1) The districts must have a minimum total land area of 50 acres with 25 acres that must be contiguous. (2) 40% of the total area must be located within a ½ mile of Framingham's commuter rail station. (3) One district must be at least 25 acres in size. (4) No single district can be less than 5 acres in size. (5) The zoning capacity of the districts must meet or exceed 4,335 units, which is based on 15% of Framingham's existing number of housing units (6) The districts must have zoning that allows for an average of at least 15 dwelling units per acre.

The law does not require that any housing be built. It only requires that the City of Framingham establish overlay/zoning that allows for multi-family housing to be built by right.

To help us with the MBTA compliance, the City of Framingham was one of three communities that received a generous grant from Northeastern University to provide a Zoning Design Study to help conceptualize zoning implications for the built environment. Over the course of 6 months, the study produced valuable levels of housing development options and better design of buildings, properties, and neighborhoods.

The Northeastern Design Team which included principles of Utile Consulting created the following:

- Analysis, with visual representation, possible buildout scenarios for properties, under current by-right zoning, current special permit zoning, and alternative zoning (either proposed by the planning department or municipal consultants, and/or suggested by the project team.)
- Shared draft visuals with the Framingham Planning Department.
- Participation in local Zoom events and meetings, and presented at public meetings.

Based on public input, the Planning & Community Development Division has updated its webpage to show the evolution of this proposal. We have also added an MBTA Communities Act FAQs page. For additional information, visit <https://www.framinghamma.gov/2865/Planning-Community-Development>

There have also been comments about adding Pinefield in Saxonville to the MBTA Zoning. The property can be added in the future, but prior to doing so, the City should look at redirecting Nicholas Road to allow for a parking area for its municipal building at 10 Nicholas Road. See Attached concept plan.

The Planning Board held several meetings in 2024 to engage with the public regarding the proposed zoning changes and the board also took public input at their October 17, 2024 public hearing. A summary of the public's comments can be found below.

1. Eddie Rodriguez, a community member, stated that there is a housing crisis which means that if housing is built, the population of the City will increase. Mr. Rodriguez stated that increasing the population could have a detrimental impact on the City's current systems. Mr. Rodriguez also had concerns about traffic and the schools which he stated that they already seem to be at capacity.
2. Ann (last name not mentioned) a community member, stated a concern over traffic.
3. Donna from Apple D'Or Road, a community member, stated that the City only needs 4,355 proposed units, whereas the current proposal has 4,500 units. Donna stated that the City already has available apartments, however they are too expensive for the average community member to afford. Donna stated that there is minimal transit in Nobscot and that most community members don't use public transit as is because it is not sufficient. Donna stated that infrastructure matters for quality of life.
4. Mr. Bloomfield, a community member, stated that the City should adjudicate the issue of compliance with the MBTA Communities Act. Mr. Bloomfield stated that he doesn't think that we should fear that we will lose every grant under every circumstance. Mr. Bloomfield stated that communities are submitting bogus overlay districts just to meet the requirements and we should at least know if that's happening.
5. Herb Chasan, a community member, stated that neighborhood meetings should occur before the Planning Board submits a recommendation to the City Council. Mr. Chasan stated that the proposal should maintain 4,355 units, required by the law rather than 4,500. Mr. Chasan requested that Nobscot be removed from MBTA because the owner of the property is still free to develop the property by 300 units under the existing regulations. Mr. Chasan stated that Speen Street, Shoppers World, 9-90, Route 9, and other suitable areas could have been examined with more hearings and best practices, those should be considered as prime areas for new housing because they are much more appropriate than downtown which already has 2500 new units already built.
6. Gregory Brown, a community member, stated that the City only needs 4,355 proposed units, whereas the current proposal has 4,500 units. Mr. Brown stated that the proposed Nobscot District is not near adequate public transportation. Mr. Brown stated that the proposal should include more already built lots, rather than empty lots.
7. Linda Kirchman, a community member, stated that the developments should include some type of green infrastructure and stated that we have enough problems with heat islands and that we do not need to create more of them. Ms. Kirchman stated that she wants to make sure that gets included in the design.

8. Andrew (last name not mentioned) a community member, stated that the City is unaffordable as many apartments are far more than \$2,000 per month. Andrew stated that developers should be required to allow tenants to collectively bargain over their rent, as well as to fund public transit projects. Andrew stated that the City should also have ownership over more housing.
9. Andrea Soo, a community member, stated a concern over the proposed Nobscot District being far away from the train station. Ms. Soo stated a concern that property developers would not take into consideration environmental, school, or traffic impact. Ms. Johnson stated that the Conservation Commission still holds jurisdiction over any parcels that fall into a resource area.
10. Sharon Gartenberg, a community member, stated that community members in the proposed Nobscot District would still use cars as public transit is not feasible in that area. Ms. Gartenberg stated that MBTA has two goals: to build more housing but to also to reduce reliance on private vehicles and people in Nobscot will still be using vehicles if they can. Ms. Gartenberg stated that 30 units per acre is not reasonable and there is too much density. Ms. Gartenberg stated that she thinks we need more housing but please let's not permit first and think about the infrastructure later. She stated that this would give us disadvantages of density: congestion, noise, traffic with none of the advantages. Ms. Gartenberg stated that when we have to drive everywhere it gives poor quality of life and we don't seem to be serious about public transit that's useable in the real world. Ms. Gartenberg stated that we have trails but how do we get to the trails.
11. Abby McCabe, a community member, stated that the proposed plan is beneficial for the City as it spreads development across multiple neighborhoods, rather than concentrating it all in the downtown area. Ms. McCabe stated that advocating for better funding towards infrastructure at the state-level should be a next step.
12. Robert Bolles, a community member, stated that taxpayers do not need another housing complex in the City. Mr. Bolles stated that lower and middle class can no longer afford to stay in Framingham. Mr. Bolles stated a strong opposition to the proposal.
13. Dan Varley, a community member, stated that his house is within the overlay district and there is a concern that developers would build up and over his home. Mr. Varley stated that there is not a lot of information for homeowner's whose properties would fall within the proposed overlay.
14. Kathleen Myers, a community member, stated a concern over any new developments' impact on the City's utilities. Ms. Myers stated a concern over traffic, schools, and walkability. Ms. Myers stated that having more units on Speen Street and 9-90 would be beneficial rather than in Nobscot.
15. Bill Durr, a community member, stated that the proposal should be only focused on the downtown. Mr. Durr also had concerns about traffic.
16. Anne Reagan, a community member, stated a concern over schools and any new developments' impact on the City's utilities. Ms. Reagan stated that the City should fight against the MBTA Zoning Act.

17. Susan Tsantes, a community member, stated the existing neighborhoods would be significantly impacted in a negative way. Ms. Tsantes stated that this would severely impact property values in a negative way. Ms. Tsantes asked to consider the right to quiet enjoyment as the existing homeowners. Ms. Tsantes stated she cannot see any way that it would not further deteriorate commutability, safety, class size, noise, traffic, trash, water, sewer, and crime. Ms. Tsantes stated that community members in the proposed Nobscot District would still use cars as public transit is not feasible in that area.
18. John Stefanini, a community member, stated that the City should look at each neighborhood and see how they can be enhanced. Mr. Stefanini stated that affordable housing in this community is something that we need to come to grips with. Mr. Stefanini stated that City should consider how to comply with the MBTA Act, rather than push back. Mr. Stefanini stated that the City should think proactively about the mitigation of traffic and utility impact. Mr. Stefanini stated that the waivers and other relief from the Zoning Board and Planning Board should not be accessible to developers in the proposed overlay district.
19. Fawaz El Khoury a community member, stated that traffic is a concern and some of the proposed districts are too far from public transit for community members to utilize public transportation. Mr. El Koury stated that the City should fight against the MBTA Zoning Act.
20. Samuel Mercurio, a community member, stated that the City should be advocating for better public transportation.
21. Mary Sammon, a community member, stated that the proposed plan should be revised and reasonable.
22. Kate (last name not mentioned) a community member, stated that the proposed Nobscot District was a last-minute addition to the plan. Kate stated that community members in the proposed Nobscot District would still use cars as public transit is not feasible in that area. Kate stated that Nobscot is a quiet area and 25 minutes from the train station. Kate asked that parcels be considered that will be able to support higher density.
23. Leora Mallach, a City Councilor, stated that the required affordability component is currently 10%, however the City can petition the state to increase that percentage to be in-line with the City's own percentage of 11% at 80% and 2% at 60%. Ms. Mallach stated that the design guidelines are beneficial. Ms. Mallach stated that building more densely in the downtown area would be beneficial. Ms. Mallach stated that it makes more sense to build more densely in downtown around the MBTA. Ms. Mallach stated that it doesn't make sense to have the same density requirements in all the districts in the city.
24. Steven (last name not mentioned), a community member, stated an opposition to the proposed Nobscot District. Steven stated that the City should fight against the MBTA Zoning Act. Steven stated a concern over traffic and safety.
25. Ron Chick, a community member, stated that additional density along Route 9 would be beneficial. Mr. Chick stated that the lumberyard would be great for greenspace. Mr. Chick stated that the Saxonville Mills, Pinefield Shopping Center and 1455 Concord Street could be considered for housing.

26. Elaine Murphy, a community member, stated that waivers for traffic and parking should not be available to developers who aim to build in the overlay.
27. Sean Silk, a community member, stated that while the downtown has been down-zoned, the other proposed districts are up-zoned. Mr. Silk stated that the proposed unit count is higher than the minimum needed by the State.
28. Brendan Carney, a community member, stated that having more affordable housing would be beneficial for the City. Mr. Carney stated biking via the rail trail to the train station is a possibility, making the Speen Street District a good place for density.
29. Mr. Rodriguez stated that increasing the population could have a detrimental impact on the City's current systems.

Written public comment letters were also received and are attached from the community.

30. Ron Chick requested to exclude the 2 School Street parcel from the MBTA rezoning plan. Mr. Chick explained in his letter about how this is the last remaining open space and keystone property in Saxonville Village. Mr. Chick stated that the preservation of this parcel is crucial and listed potential alternative uses. Mr. Chick suggested alternative parcels for MBTA zoning.
31. Herb Chasan sent information over stating that it is critically important for the City Council and Planning Board to review before any policy is voted on to ensure a smooth and timely compliance process including building upon existing transit-oriented development, conducting community outreach, involving various stakeholders, joint meetings with local boards, public input, and considering the bylaw. Questions were also sent regarding tax costs for water, sewer, traffic, schools, police, fire. Concerns were mentioned about quality of life.
32. Kathy Garrahan on Behalf of Urban Edge, the owners of Shopper's World sent a list of requests that were also sent to Council.
33. Cathy and Lowell Mercier sent concerns regarding new development in Nobscot, consideration of a master plan for housing and infrastructure according to current and future needs of residents and businesses and consideration of paper zoning.
34. David Hornfischer stated support to expansion of bus services to non-downtown areas. Mr. Hornfischer stated concerns regarding a rise in the number of residents, traffic and schools. Mr. Hornfischer requested that Nobscot be removed from MBTA zoning.
35. Donna and Philip Schaefer expressed their objection to the currently proposed MBTA zoning plan and to over a thousand units in Nobscot.

Framingham should be commended for taking leadership in Transit Oriented Development, which supported and strengthened the Downtown area. This change in zoning in 2015 allowed for increased density in the Downtown. Because of this, downtown residents suggested that the MBTA zoning be spread throughout the City.

The Planning Board is advancing a plan (attached) that provides housing throughout the community. This zoning proposal adds units near commercial nodes where housing is needed. Each MOD is proposed for an area that has access to either transportation, trails, neighborhood villages, retail, or business parks. Most of the areas chosen outside the downtown are existing parking lots or underutilized buildings.

III.G. MBTA Overlay Districts (MOD)

1. Purpose

The purposes of MOD are:

1. To provide family housing and ensure compliance with MGL c.40A §3A;
2. To promote multifamily housing near the commuter rail station, bus terminals, roadways, offices, retail sales and services, and civic and personal service uses;
3. To reduce dependency on automobiles by providing opportunities for mixed-use and multifamily housing near public transportation including the train station, bus stops, the rail trail, and major transportation routes;
4. To ensure pedestrian-friendly development by permitting higher-density housing in areas that are walkable to public transportation, shopping, and local services;
5. To respond to the local and regional need for affordable housing by permitting a variety of housing types with inclusionary housing requirements;
6. To promote concentrated housing in or near existing developed areas and major transportation routes, while offering residents the opportunity to live in different types of neighborhoods.

2. Description

1. The MBTA Overlay Districts shall not replace existing zoning districts but shall be superimposed over them. The provisions of this section apply only to developments on a lot(s) located entirely within a MOD, where the property owner has elected to comply with the requirements of the District, rather than complying with those of the underlying zoning district.
2. District Delineation
See map entitled "MBTA Overlay District (MOD)" for parcels included in the below districts.
 - 2.1 MOD-1 (Downtown)
 - 2.2 MOD-2 (Downtown)
 - 2.3 MOD-3 (Saxonville)
 - 2.4 MOD-4 (Nobscot)
 - 2.5 MOD-5 (Shopper's World)
 - 2.6 MOD-6 (9/90)
 - 2.7 MOD-7 (Speen Street)

3. Procedures and Regulations

1. Development under this section requires site plan review by the Planning Board under §435-47 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Board has adopted regulations to facilitate site layout, building design, and outdoor amenity spaces. All site plan review standards applicable to developments under this section shall be consistent with the purposes of this section and EOHLC's current Compliance Guidelines for Multi-Family Zoning Districts Under MGL c.40A §3A of the Zoning Act, as amended.
2. The Planning Board may impose reasonable terms and conditions, consistent with the parameters established by EOHLC's Compliance Guidelines, to promote these objectives and serve the purposes of this section. Approval may reasonably regulate matters such as vehicular access and circulation on site, architectural design of a building, site design, and screening for adjacent properties. The Planning Board may require a performance guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions.

3. The Planning Board may waive the Development and Design Standards where it finds that the waiver will allow for better design, in consistent with the public good, and does not substantially derogate from the purposes of the MOD or the underlying zoning.
4. Affordable Housing Component. A minimum of ten (10) percent (or a percentage to be approved by EOHLC) of the total housing units in any development using this MOD Ordinance shall be considered affordable units, which shall be provided in accordance with §435-35 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding Inclusionary Housing.
5. Commercial and Municipal Space Component.
 - 5.1. MOD-1 and MOD-2: See map titled “MBTA Overlay District (MOD)” delineating areas in MOD district that are required to have commercial space on the ground level.
 - 5.2. MOD-4: On projects larger than 250 units, an on-site location must be provided to allow for the construction of a 10,000 SF municipal first responder facility. The development must also contain a minimum of 6,000SF commercial space.
 - 5.3. MOD-5, MOD-6, and MOD-7: Commercial space must be accessible within a quarter-mile radius of the property. On-site commercial space must occupy a minimum of 10,000 SF.
6. Recreation Area Component. Any development containing forty (40) or more dwelling units shall provide an outdoor play are or common space appropriate for use by families with children which may include features such as swings, jungle gyms, slides, tables, chairs, benches, and similar features. These areas shall incorporate universal design standards.

4. **Definitions**

Active Use: See Framingham Zoning Ordinance §435-5.

Accessory Use: Framingham Zoning Ordinance §435-5.

Balcony: An unenclosed platform with a railing, wall, or balustrade that provides outdoor amenity space on upper stories.

Building Footprint Area: Area of the largest above grade floor of the building as measured to the exterior faces of the walls.

Façade Build Out Ratio: The ratio of the width of the entire front elevation to the lot width along the right of way.

Fenestration: The openings in the façade of a building, including windows and doors. Fenestration is measured from the inside face of the jambs on any window or door trim.

Frontage Zone: The area of a lot between the building façade(s) and any front lot line(s), extending fully to each side lot line(s).

Ground Story: The lowest story of a building with a finished floor at or above the average grade plane adjacent to the building.

Primary Frontage: If parcel fronts on two rights of way, the more active of the two.

Secondary Frontage: If parcel fronts on two rights of war, the less active of the two.

Side Lot Lines: S: Any lot line other than a front or rear lot line.

Step-Back: A recess of an upper story façade a set distance behind the façade of the story below.

Usable Open Space: See “Open Space, Usable”, Framingham Zoning Ordinance §435-5. The regulations of this MBTA Overlay District will supersede underlying zoning.

5. **Dimensional Standards**

1. Site Dimensional Standards

<u>MBTA SITE STANDARDS</u>	MOD-1	MOD-2	MOD-3	MOD-4	MOD-5	MOD-6	MOD-7
UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, UNDERLYING ZONING REGULATIONS SHALL APPLY							
Dwelling Units per Acre (max)	30		15			30	

Minimum Lot Size	8,000 SF	5 AC	10 AC
Minimum Frontage	25 FT		
Usable Open Space (min)	36 SF/unit		
Side Setbacks			
Abutting MOD District	0 FT		
Abutting Residential Zones/Uses	15 FT	30 FT	15 FT
Abutting Commercial Zones/Uses	0 FT		
Façade Build Out Requirements			
Primary Street	80% or lot width between side setbacks minus 15 FT, whichever is less		
Secondary Street	50%		
Lot Sides	N/A		
Building Separation for Multiple Buildings on a Lot (min)			
Average height of buildings is less than or equal to 3 stories	15 FT		
Average height of buildings is between 3 and 3.5 stories	20 FT		
Average height of buildings is equal to or greater than 3.5 stories	25 FT		
Parking Setbacks from all lot lines (min)	5 FT		

2. Building Dimensional Standards

<u>MBTA BUILDING STANDARDS</u>	MOD-1	MOD-2	MOD-3	MOD-4	MOD-5	MOD-6	MOD-7
Massing							
Footprint (max)	15,000 SF		30,000 SF		45,000 SF		
Height (Stories/Feet) (max)	3.5 / 50	2.5 / 35	3.5 / 50 or 2.5 / 35 within 150 FT of residential zone		6.0 / 85		
Ground Story Height (min)							
Active Commercial / Retail Uses	15 FT						
Residential Uses	12 FT						
Top Floor Half Story Height (max)							
Flat Roof	12 FT						

Pitched Roof	18 FT						
Frontage Zones							
Primary Frontage Use	80% must be active or residential use	80% must be active use	N/A				
Façade Ground Floor Fenestration							
Active Uses	70%						
Residential Uses	15%						
Façade Articulation							
Continuous Length (max)	200 FT						
Area of Recess (min)	96 SF						
Depth of Offset (min)	8 SF						

6. Development and Design Standards

Site Design Standards

1.1. Setbacks

- 1.1.1. Buildings must meet the minimum setback requirements specified in the Site Dimensional Standards for the respective MBTA District.
- 1.1.2. Buildings must be set back from any lot line abutting a sidewalk an additional distance so that at least ten (10) feet in width is provided between the back of curb and exterior façade of the building at all points. Including the furnishing zone, the area of the lot that is within ten (10) feet of the curb shall be paved in compliance with the City's Roadway Construction Standards (See Framingham City Ordinance §540-5.6).

1.2. Building Placement

- 1.2.1. The width of the front elevation must be built out to a percentage of the lot width as specified by the Façade Build Out Ratio in the Site Dimensional Standards for each district, measured linearly.
- 1.2.2. The Façade Build Out Ratio may be met cumulatively by multiple buildings on a lot.
- 1.2.3. Usable open space between the front lot line and front elevation is considered part of the building for the purposes of calculating the Façade Build Out Ratio.

1.3. Number of Buildings

- 1.3.1. Multiple buildings are permitted on each lot by-right.

1.4. Building Separation

- 1.4.1. Multiple buildings on a single lot must comply with the building separation distance at all points specified in the Building Dimensional Standards for each zone.
- 1.4.2. Buildings on abutting lots may not be interconnected so as to be internally accessible from one to the other at or above grade level.

1.5. Usable Open Space

- 1.5.1. Usable Open Space must be provided as per the Site Dimensional Standards. The open space can be furnished as a single or multiple space, freely accessible to all tenants of the development, or as private open space accessible only to tenants whose unit has direct access, or a combination of the above.
- 1.5.2. Usable Open Space is defined as exterior space open to the sky (shading devices, structures, and plantings allowed), which is designed and maintained for the use of residential tenants. It is designed to be programmed and used by active or semi-active uses, and not as an inaccessible landscape or passive area.
- 1.5.3. The following is a list of allowable uses: Balconies, Terraces, Stoops, Dooryards, Courtyards, Dog Runs, Plazas, Gardens, Roof Decks, and Pools. Other uses may be proposed by a proponent and will be reviewed in site plan review.
- 1.5.4. Usable Open Space areas are allowed to be located within site setbacks

2. Building Design Standards

2.1. Top Floor Half-Story Requirements

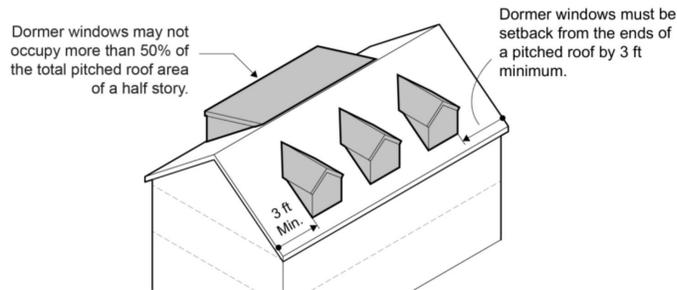
Buildings must meet the Top Floor Half-Story step-back requirement along any lot line abutting a residential district.

2.1.1. Pitched Roofs

Space located directly under a pitched roof is counted as a half (0.5) story, provided the following standards are all met:

- 2.1.1.1. At least two (2) opposite roof planes are pitched toward each other.
- 2.1.1.2. A pitched roof may be composed of roof planes with different slopes.
- 2.1.1.3. The slope of any pitch must be no greater than 14:12 (49.4 degrees); otherwise, this story is counted as a full story.
- 2.1.1.4. The roof rafters must intersect the wall plate or top of wall frame of the exterior walls at a height no more than two (2) feet above the finished floor of the half (0.5) story; otherwise, this story is counted as a full story.
- 2.1.1.5. Dormer requirements

Figure 7. Dormer Windows



2.1.2. Flat Roofs

- 2.4.2.1. For buildings in MOD-1, the required step-backs must be provided above the third story.
- 2.4.2.2. For buildings in MOD-2, the required step-backs must be provided above the second story.

2.1.3. Exceptions

- 2.4.2.3. Sections of buildings that are on a portion of a lot where the lot depth is less than seventy (70) feet are exempt from the Top Floor Half-Story step-back requirement along the rear lot line, except when the rear lot line abuts a residential district.
- 2.4.2.4. Any portion of the upper story set back more than twenty-five (25) feet from any lot line is exempt from the Top Floor Half-Story step-back requirement, except when the lot line abuts a residential district.

2.5. Building Entry

- 2.5.1. For parcels with Primary Frontage, buildings must have their main entrance from a sidewalk on a primary street.
- 2.5.2. Multi-story buildings with ground floor Active Commercial / Retail Uses must have one (1) main entrance for each Active Commercial / Retail Use space in addition to any main entrance(s) necessary for any Residential Uses within the building.
- 2.5.3. Main entrances must either be recessed from the plane of the façade or have a projecting awning or canopy to signal building entry and provide adequate protection from the elements.
- 2.5.4. For buildings with Residential Uses on the ground floor fronting a public right-of-way, individual unit entrances are required.
- 2.5.5. Main Entrances are required every 60 feet, measured linearly.

2.6. Frontage Zones

Frontage Zones provide access to primary entrances, and serve as the interface and transition between the private realm (building interiors) and the public realm (sidewalks and public spaces).

2.6.1. Frontage Zones are described in two categories:

- 2.6.1.1. Active Commercial / Retail Uses: Includes residential lobbies, restaurants, retail establishments, bars, galleries, art studios, community spaces, personal services
- 2.6.1.2. Residential Uses: Includes individual residential units, live/work spaces

2.7. Architectural Features for MOD-1, MOD-2, MOD-3, and MOD-4

Refer to Central Business (CB) District regulations.

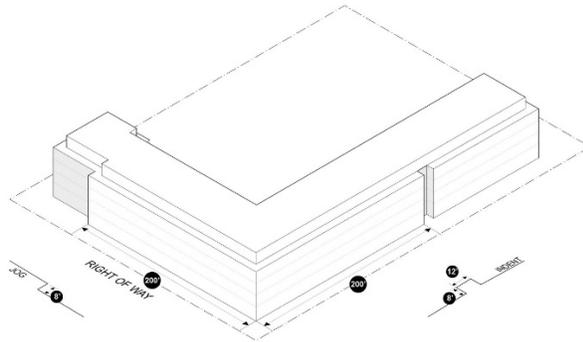
2.7.1. Bay Windows. Architectural features may project into the front setback and/or right of way only based on the following standards:

<u>BAY DIMENSIONS</u>	
Width of each bay (max)	Greater of 20% of wall length or 12 FT
Depth (max)	3 FT
Front setback encroachment at the ground story (max)	3 FT
Extension into the right of way (max)	3 FT
Clearance above grade within the right of way (min)	Top of the ground story

2.7.2. Façade Articulation

The façade of any building greater than two hundred (200) feet in length must be divided vertically by a recess with a minimum area ninety-six (96) feet and minimum depth of eight (8) feet, or a façade offset with a minimum depth of eight (8) feet for the full height of the building, excluding:

- 2.7.2.1. The Top Floor Half-Story
- 2.7.2.2. Any portion of the ground story with Active Commercial / Retail Uses as defined in Section 2.6.1.1 of this Overlay District
- 2.7.2.3. Balconies and awnings may be located within the recess or adjacent to the offset



2.7.3. Mechanical Equipment

- 2.7.3.1. Roof-mounted mechanical equipment must be screened and setback at least ten (10) feet from the intersection of the roof and wall plane immediately below.
- 2.7.3.2. Wall-mounted alarm devices, cable boxes, and utility meters shall not be mounted on a wall plane facing a primary street.
- 2.7.3.3. Wall-mounted mechanical, plumbing, and/or electrical equipment such as louvers, exhaust equipment and ducts vents along the front elevation must be architecturally integrated into the design of the building and located to minimize adverse effects on pedestrian comfort along sidewalks and within open spaces.
- 2.7.3.4. All free-standing mechanical and/or electrical equipment are prohibited between any front lot line and front façade.

2.8. Parking Design Standards for MOD-1, MOD-2, MOD-3, and MOD-4 Refer to Central Business (CB) District regulations.

2.8.1. Required Motor Vehicle Parking Spaces

Motor vehicle parking must be provided as specified below:

- 2.8.1.1. A minimum of one and a half (1.5) parking stalls per residential unit is required for all MBTA zones.
- 2.8.1.2. Ground floor retail spaces are exempt from parking minimum requirements.
- 2.8.1.3. Centralized parking facilities must provide signage identifying the permitted users.
- 2.8.1.4. Pedestrian access to motor vehicle parking must be via a paved sidewalk or walkway from main entrance to building.
- 2.8.1.5. Motor Vehicle Parking Spaces Dimensions
Standard parking space dimension is nine (9) feet by eighteen (18) feet. The Planning Board can allow that 20% of the required spaces may be compact, with dimensions of eight (8) feet by sixteen (16) feet.

2.8.2. Required Accessory Bicycle Parking Spaces

Bicycle parking must be provided as specified below:

- 2.8.2.1. One (1) bicycle space per five residential units are required in all MBTA Districts.
- 2.8.2.2. Bicycle racks should be placed in safe, accessible areas that are visible and well-lit. Racks should be securely anchored.
- 2.8.2.3. Bicycle Parking Spaces Dimensions
2 FT x 6 FT with 4 FT clearance for pedestrians

2.8.3. Parking Access

- 2.8.3.1. Vehicular access to parking lots and structures along the Primary Frontage is prohibited when vehicular access along another lot line is available.
- 2.8.3.2. Shared use of vehicular parking lots by multiple uses and/or developments on multiple parcels is permitted.

2.8.3.3. If the entrance to a parking area is along the Primary Frontage, the width of the entrance may be no more than 40% of the front façade along the Primary Frontage.

2.8.4. Curb Cuts and Driveways

2.8.4.1. Curb cuts are prohibited along the Primary Frontage when vehicular access along another lot line is available. A curb cut along a Primary Frontage on a corner lot is permitted if the Director of Public Works, or their designee, determines a one-way vehicular access along the Primary Frontage and a one-way vehicular access along the Secondary Frontage improves safety and traffic flow.

2.8.4.2. Each lot is limited to one curb cut per street frontage.

2.8.4.3. The maximum width of a driveway for vehicular access to parking lots and structures is as follows:

Access Type	Width (max)
One-way	12 FT
Two-way	24 FT

2.8.5. Vehicular Parking Placement

2.8.5.1. All vehicular parking spaces must not be located within five feet of any lot line.

2.8.5.2. Vehicular parking between the front lot line and the front façade of the structure is prohibited.

Zoning by Design | Framingham

Zoning Study Update

October 23, 2024



MBTA Communities
Urban Design Study

*Funding from
Northeastern Impact Engine Grant*

Current Proposal

October 23, 2024



As Voted by Framingham Planning Board on October 17, 2024

Current Proposed Map - 4,953 total units (4,355 required)

- Downtown Districts - 70 acres**
 - + 2,100 units (42%)
 - + **MOD-1 - (39 acres)**
 - + 1,170 units
 - + 3.5 stories - 30 units/acre
 - + **MOD-2 - (31 acres)**
 - + 930 units
 - + 2.5 stories - 30 units/acre

- Saxonville District - 5.4 acres**
 - MOD-3**
 - + 81 units (2%)
 - + 15 units/acre

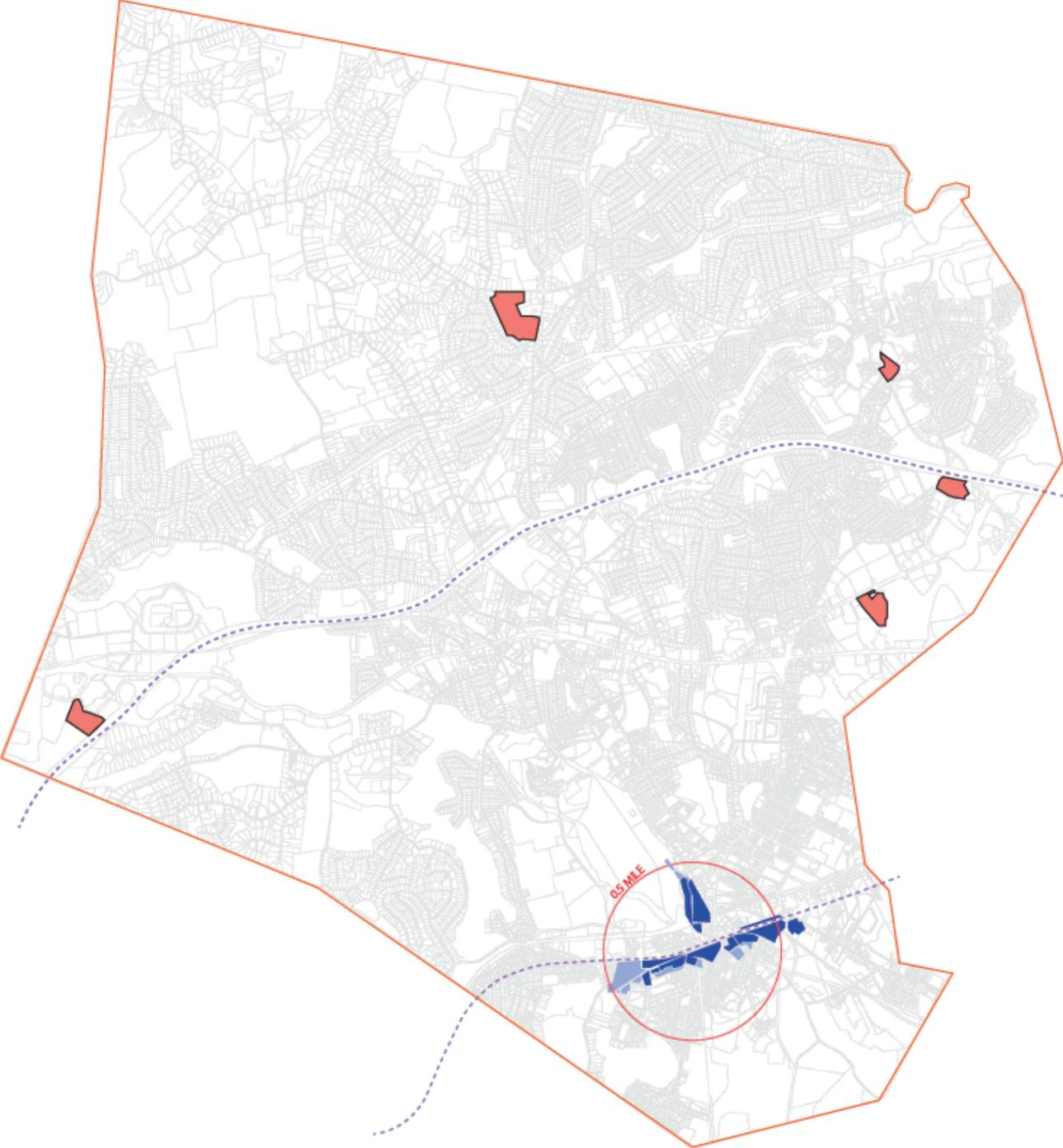
- Nobscot District - 36.8 acres**
 - MOD-4**
 - + 552 units (11%)
 - + 15 units/acre

- Shoppers World District - 12 acres**
 - MOD-5**
 - + 360 units (7%)
 - + 30 units/acre

- 9/90 District - 48 acres**
 - MOD-6**
 - + 1,440 units (29%)
 - + 30 units/acre

- Speen St District - 14 acres**
 - MOD-7**
 - + 420 units (8%)
 - + 30 units/acre

Over **40%** of units are within 0.5 mile radius of Framingham Commuter Rail Station.
Up to **25%** of unit capacity can be required to be within a mandatory mixed use district



Downtown Districts - MOD-1 & MOD-2 (2,100 units)

Current Proposal

Downtown Districts - 70 acres

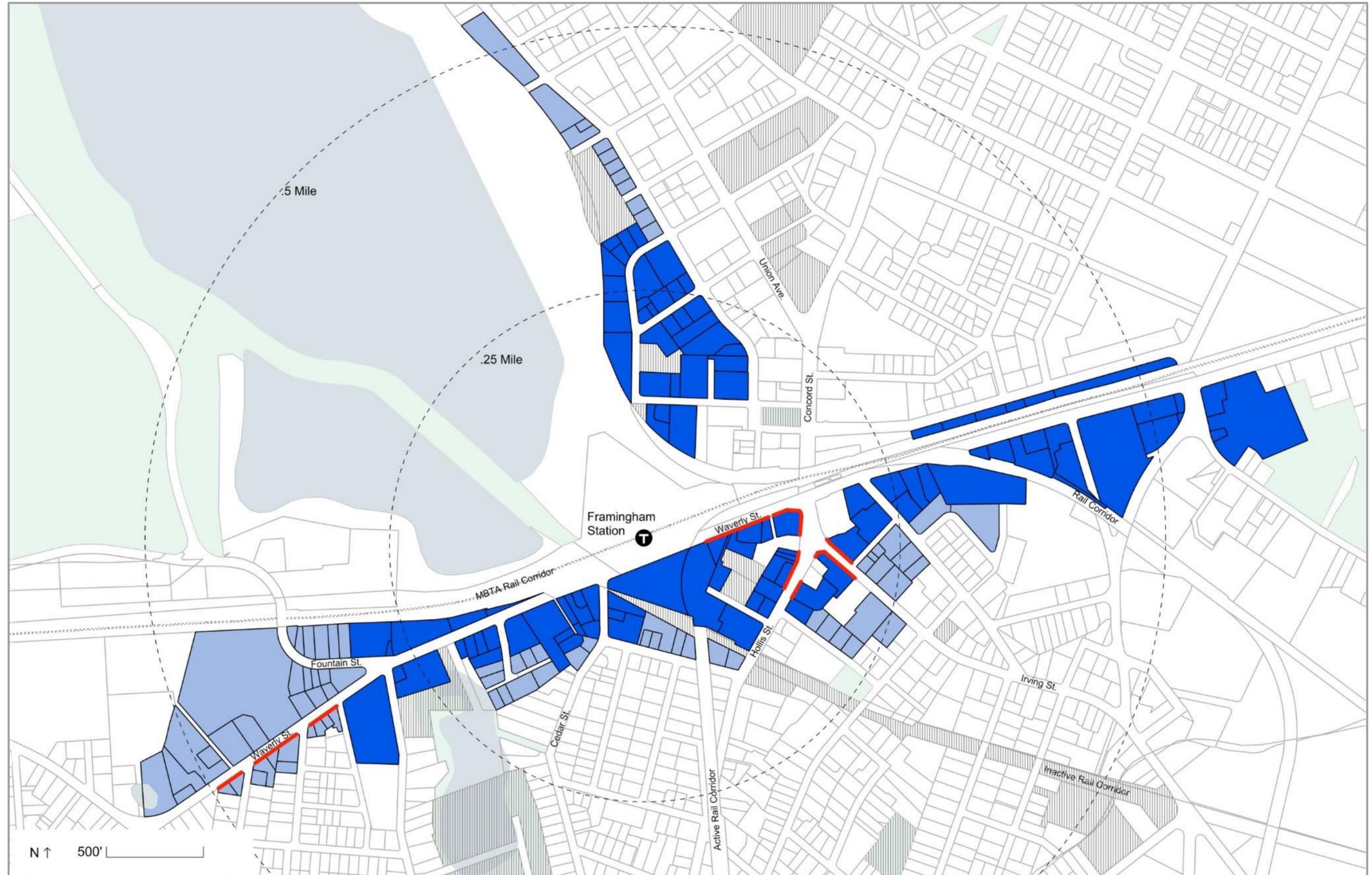
- + 2,100 units (42%)
- + **MOD-1 - (39 acres)**
 - + 1,170 units
 - + 3.5 stories - 30 units/acre
- + **MOD-2 - (31 acres)**
 - + 930 units
 - + 2.5 stories - 30 units/acre

Over **40%** of units are within 0.5 mile radius of Framingham Commuter Rail Station.

Up to **25%** of unit capacity can be required to be within a mandatory mixed use district

**retail required at red edges (4.5 acres total)*

**Diagonal hatching on property owned by the City/State*



Saxonville District - MOD-3 - 81 units

Current Proposal

**Saxonville District - 5.4 acres
MOD-3**

- + 81 units (2%)
- + 15 units/acre (max)

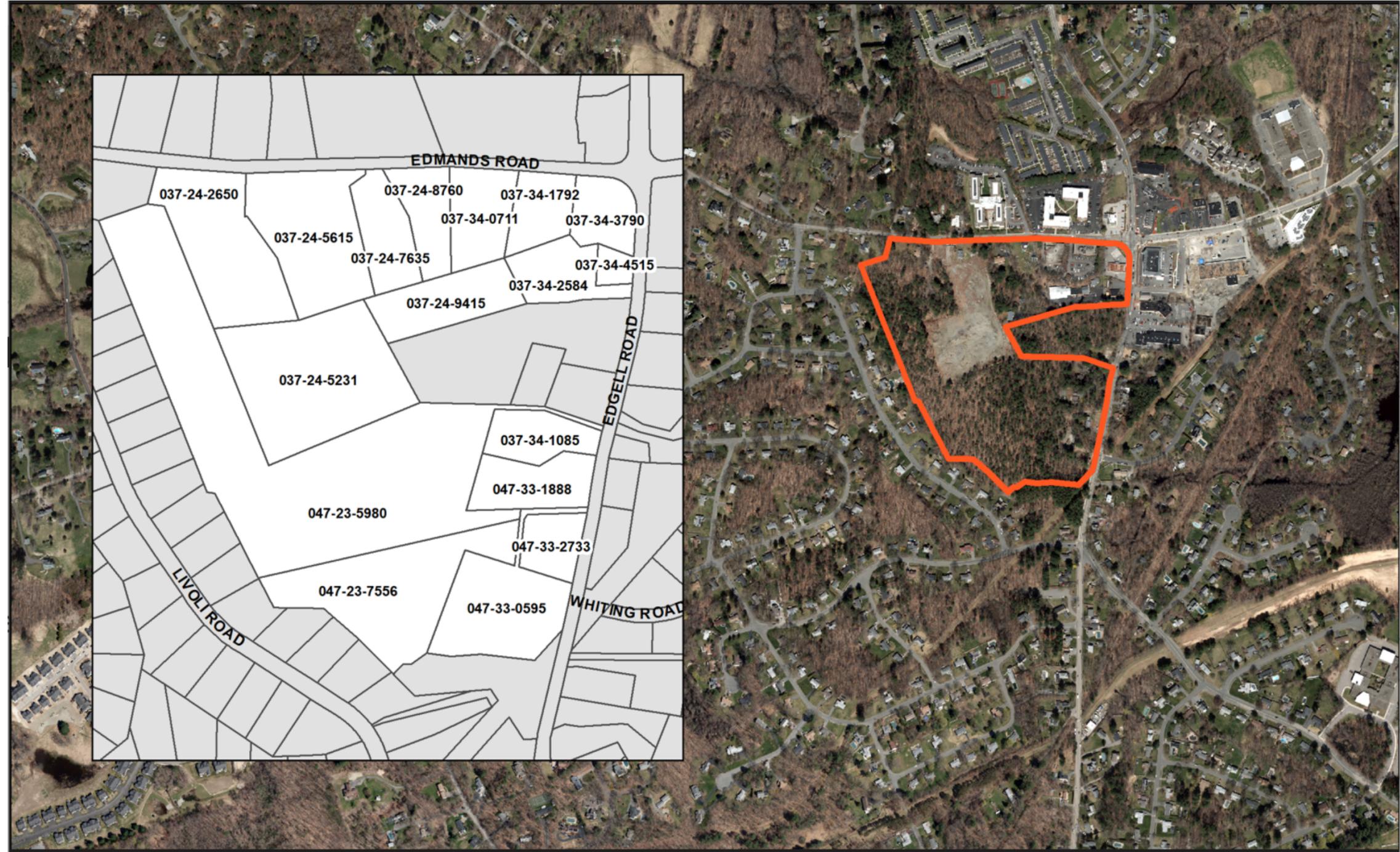


Nobscot District - MOD-4 - 552 units

Current Proposal

**Nobscot District - 36.8 acres
MOD-4**

- + 552 units (11%)
- + 15 units/acre (max)



Shoppers World District - MOD-5 (360 units)

Current Proposal

Shoppers World District - 12 acres

MOD-5

+ 360 units (7%)

+ 30 units/acre (max)

Over **40%** of units are within 0.5 mile radius of Framingham Commuter Rail Station.

Up to **25%** of unit capacity can be required to be within a mandatory mixed use district



9/90 District - MOD-6 (1,440 units)

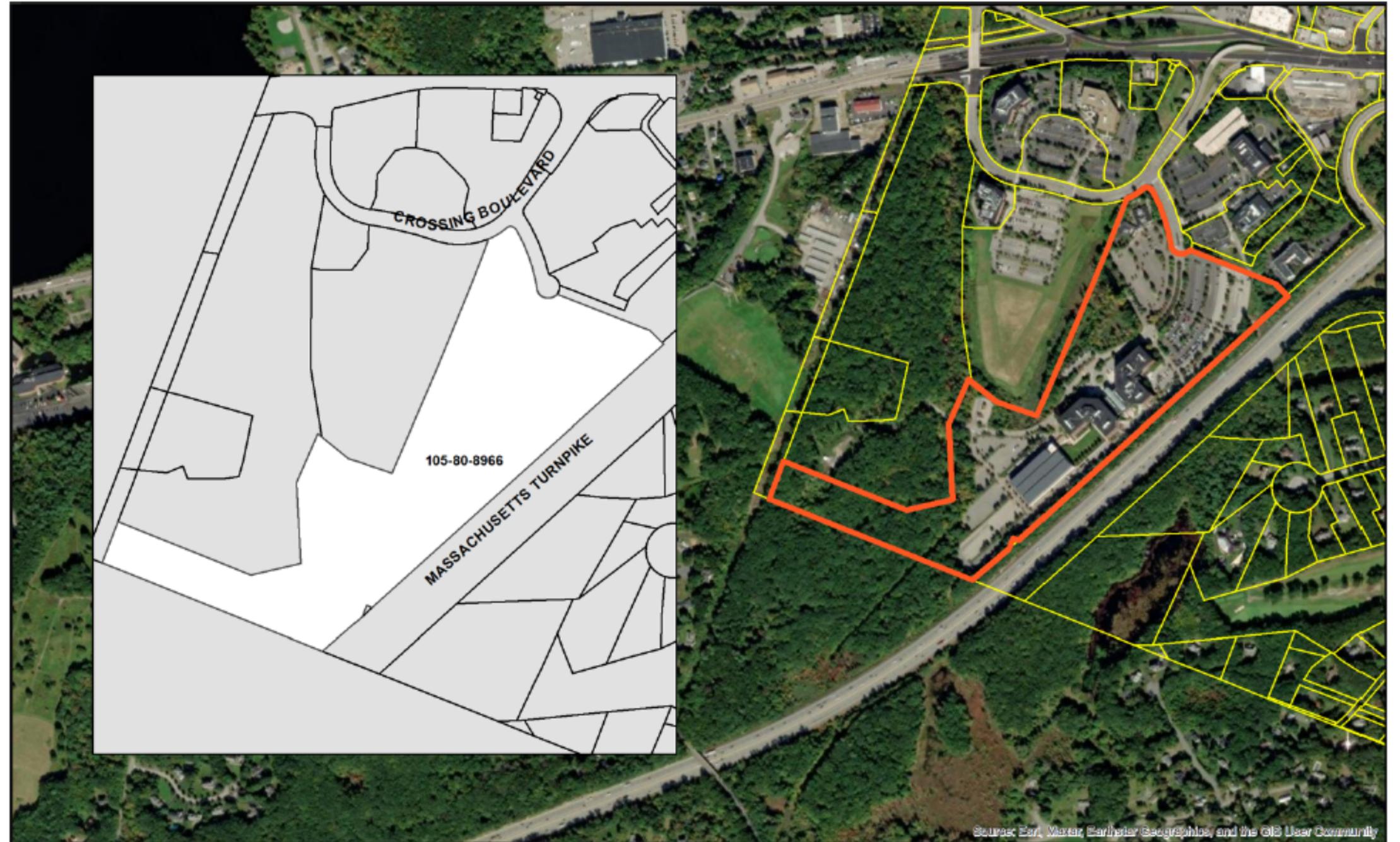
Current Proposal

9/90 District - 48 acres

MOD-6

- + 1,440 units (29%)
- + 30 units/acre (max)

Over **40%** of units are within 0.5 mile radius of Framingham Commuter Rail Station.
Up to **25%** of unit capacity can be required to be within a mandatory mixed use district



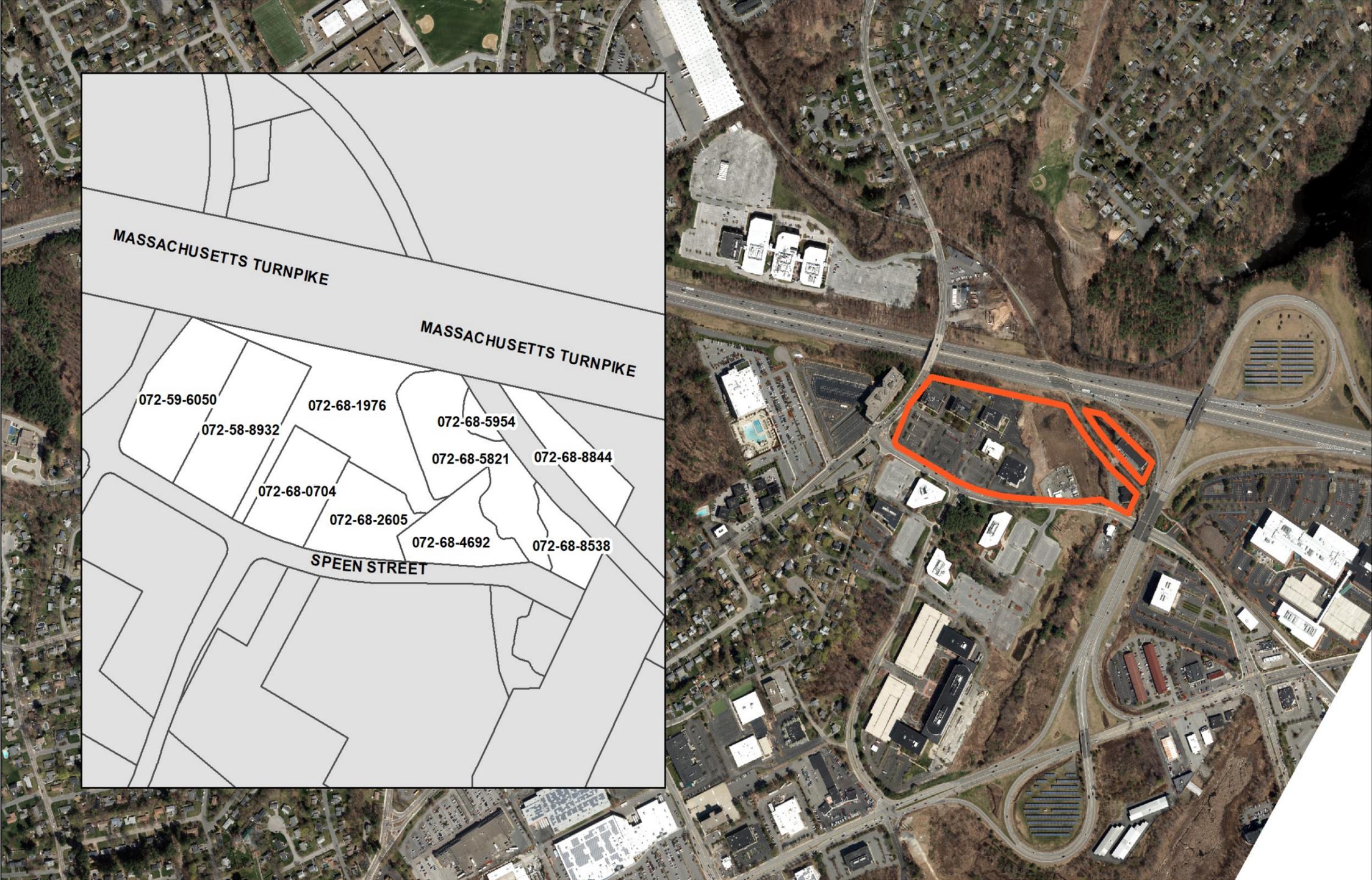
Speen Street District - MOD-7 (420 units)

Current Proposal

Speen Street District - 14 acres

MOD-7

- + 420 units (8%)
- + 30 units/acre (max)



From: [Ron Chick](#)
To: [PlanningBoard](#)
Cc: [Sarkis Sarkisian](#)
Subject: 2 School Street Parcel from MBTA Rezoning Pla
Date: Thursday, October 17, 2024 6:58:25 AM
Attachments: [Kwan Bridge #4.pages](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Subject: Request to Exclude 2 School Street Parcel from MBTA Rezoning Plan

Dear Framingham Planning Board Members,

I am writing to request the removal of the 2 School Street 5.43-acre parcel (Old State Lumber property) from consideration in the MBTA rezoning plan for Saxonville.

Importance of the Property:

This parcel is the last remaining open space and a keystone property in Saxonville Village, located in an environmentally sensitive area within the 100-year floodplain, at the confluence of the Sudbury River and Cochituate Brook. Its preservation is crucial for several reasons:

- It is situated on an urban river just upstream from the federally designated Wild and Scenic Sudbury River.
- The property's ecological significance could enhance climate resiliency for the city and state.

Potential Alternative Uses:

Rather than rezoning for housing development, I urge the City to consider these potential uses:

- An ecological restoration project
- A public park and green space
- Access to the Sudbury River
- Provide parking for the Cochituate Rail Trail
- Viewing access for the upcoming migratory fish restoration project on the Sudbury River

Additionally, a bridge design funded by the Solomon Foundation, which connects the Cochituate Rail Trail to several key trails, highlights the strategic importance of this parcel.

Suggested Alternative Parcels:

If rezoning is necessary to meet MBTA requirements, I suggest considering one of the following Saxonville properties instead:

- 1455 RR Concord Street– 8.43 acres
- Saxonville Mills - 17.55 acres
- 1 Nicholas Road – 6.65 acres

In conclusion, I strongly urge the City Council to remove the 2 School Street parcel from the MBTA rezoning plan and explore the option of purchasing the property when the current lease to Stop & Shop expires in approximately four years.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,
Ron Chick
SuAsCo River Stewardship Council Framingham Representative
Friends of Framingham Trails
Metrowest Greenway Coalition

Massachusetts River Herring Network
Saxonville Resident

Cochituate Rail Trail bridge connection to numerous miles of trails.

From: [herb chasan](#)
To: [PlanningBoard](#); [herb chasan](#)
Subject: Best practices for implementing the MBTA housing law
Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024 10:21:32 AM

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The following information, which I believe is critically important for the City Council and the Planning Board to review before any policy is voted on, came from the Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research, Oct. 2024.

Thanks for considering,
Herb Chasan

Here is a summary:

The MBTA Communities Act, Three Years Later: How Massachusetts Towns and Cities are Implementing (or Resisting) Multi-Family Zoning Provisions.

<https://pioneerinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/MBTA-Communities-Act-WP-Final-10072024.pdf>

State and local officials and policymakers alike have a role to play in facilitating a smooth and timely compliance process for the MBTA Communities Act that is best adapted to the needs of local residents.

„ Whenever possible, build upon existing work on transit-oriented development and/or planning for multi-family housing. The compliance process in communities like Lexington and Topsfield went so smoothly in large part because they had momentum behind zoning reforms from recently completed master plans.

„ Conduct meaningful community outreach and engagement events early and often. More than two years before its compliance deadline, Lexington held in-person community meetings that gave residents the first chance to identify potential zoning districts and set guardrails for the compliance process. It was an incredibly effective way of building consensus about how to implement the law. In many other communities, resident input was limited to reacting to the opinions of elected officials and consultants.

„ Involve a broad group of stakeholders in the compliance process. In addition to the concerns of residents, those of property owners and business owners should also be addressed.

„ Make sure different local boards and committees are on the same page. As was the case in Wrentham, it's not uncommon for a Select Board and a Planning Board to have different preferences for how to comply with Section 3A. Joint meetings, public input, and communication with and among non-elected staff could help provide clarity and enrich the conversation in advance of a City Council vote.

„ Consider the entire zoning code or bylaw when facilitating compliance. A common concern the EOHLC identifies in interim compliance proposals is that their “as of right” provisions are negated by other sections of the municipality’s zoning code. The simplest way to solve this is to include language in the zoning that gives projects proposed under 3A-compliant zoning a separate set of approval criteria from others. For example, if all multi-family housing is required to receive a special permit under Chapter X of the ordinance or bylaw, the chapter creating Section 3A overlay district (Chapter Y) could say something to the effect of “notwithstanding Chapter X, multi-family is allowed by right under the conditions set forth in Chapter Y.” Such an approach could both make it much easier for the EOHLC to evaluate 3A compliance and potentially save individual communities from the consequences of unintentional non-compliance.

„ Give leniency on technical language to communities that made every effort to comply. Even Lexington, in its above-and-beyond 3A compliance effort, was initially considered “conditionally compliant” with the law because of provisions in its pre-existing zoning bylaw that run afoul of Section 3A’s “as of right” building requirement.

„ If Massachusetts’ housing supply is going to grow to meet regional needs in the near future, it will be very difficult to avoid compelling change in communities that in some capacity are resistant to it. But this “forced change” could still be relatively politically palatable if it scales up existing reforms taking place in many local communities such as ADUs.

„ Build on existing programs where practical. Adjusting requirements or incentives as part of existing zoning or housing production efforts will likely prove less costly than creating a new program.

From: [herb chasan](#)
To: [PlanningBoard](#); [herb chasan](#)
Subject: Letter regarding the MBTA housing / zoning law and Framingham's compliance
Date: Monday, October 14, 2024 4:15:18 PM
Attachments: [Herb Chasan letter to City Council 10-6-24 -1.xlsx](#)
[Herb letter council facebook.pdf](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Board,

Please find below my letter to you about the situation concerning the MBTA housing/zoning law and Framingham's compliance with it.

I sent this out to my mailing list and posted it on Facebook.

One attachment shows 37 responses to my request to co sign the letter.
The second attachment shows 17 responses from Facebook .

I do hope that you will give my letter and the responses due consideration.
Thank you, Herb Chasan

Dear Planning Board,

The new MBTA housing law requires Framingham to zone for 4355 new multi housing units, assuming 2.5 people per unit that comes to 10,888 new people will be living in Framingham. The latest population for Framingham is 72,362.
That calculates to a 15 percent increase. That is Huge !!

The Big question is, what are the associated costs to the city and taxpayers for water, sewer, traffic, schools, police, fire, quality of life concerns for additional 10,888 new residents ?? This should be investigated before we comply with the State mandate.

The background to this situation started 3 years ago.

In 2021 the State enacted the Multi-Family Zoning Law, How did Framingham react to this?

Did we start to develop the required zoning in early 2022?

Was a compliance model formulated in late 2022?

Was the compliance model submitted in early 2023?

Did the Planning Board then begin a year long consideration of all neighborhoods and districts while doing public information and outreach, ahead of adoption by the City Council

in early 2024?

No that didn't happen, this is what happened :

On June 11, 2024 the planning board held a session to explain our compliance plan with the MBTA housing law.

On June 27 , 2024 the administration published the plan showing 4502 multi family units, All planned for downtown. This plan was outrageous for the people of Downtown!

On Aug, 22, 2024 the numbers for downtown were reduced and Shoppers world, Speen St, and Staples 9/90 were added to the mix..

On Sept 19 , the numbers were reduced again for downtown and Shoppers world, Speen St, and Staples 9/90 numbers were increased accordingly.

On the same day Sept. 19. The numbers were changed once again to reduce downtown and Shoppers world, Speen St, and Staples 9/90, But Nobscot and Saxonville were added. Totally blindsiding the Nobscot and Saxonville folks, no warning.

Sept 24, at **3 minutes before the end** of a planning board meeting, numbers were changed once again to reduce downtown, Shoppers world, Speen St, and Staples 9/90 numbers, but both Saxonville and Nobscot numbers were doubled. Outrageous ! Unbelievable !!

Does that sound like a crazy, insane and irresponsible way to implement public policy?

This shows a total lack of good government. This whole process should have been started in 2022 with public input!

Is the above policy , formulated with no public participation, no neighborhood meetings, no outreach ; really the cause of public outrage and north / south division and anger??

Here is a suggestion for a way forward: Reduce the downtown numbers as much as possible under the Law, Remove Nobscot and Saxonville, then find other areas that are already zoned non residential such as Shoppers World, Speen St. , 9/90 and Route 9 which will take up the remaining required numbers.

We need to Ask the state for waivers considering what we have already done to provide new multi family housing. Over 2500 multi family housing units have recently been built or in process. We certainly comply with the spirit of the Law, maybe not with the exact letter of the Law.

To help us out with the State, we should enlist the help of our 4 State Reps and our State Senator and our Mayor. Please step up to the plate!!
Not asking for special favors, just fairness and common sense .

Thank you for your consideration,
Herb Chasan

Katherine Garrahan
Direct telephone: 508-416-2474
Direct facsimile: 508-929-3185
Email: kgarrahan@bowditch.com

October 17, 2024

Mr. Philip R. Ottaviani, Jr., Chair
Ms Christine Long, P & Z Subcommittee Chair
Framingham City Council
150 Concord Street #129
Framingham, MA 01702

Ms. Kristina Johnson, Chair
Framingham Planning Board
150 Concord Street #B2
Framingham, MA 01702

Re: *Written Input for Public Hearings on Amendments to the Framingham Zoning Ordinances, Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act*

Dear Mr. Ottaviani, Ms. Long, and Ms. Johnson:

This firm represents Urban Edge and its affiliates UE Shoppers World LLC, UE Shoppers World East LLC, and UE Shoppers World West LLC (collectively, “Urban Edge”) related to approximately 150 acres of land comprising the central mall, east, and western portions of Shoppers World in Framingham. Urban Edge has been following the City’s discussions on rezoning certain areas related to the MBTA Communities Act, and appreciates the thoughtfulness in which the City Council and Planning Board have considered overlapping goals of addressing the state’s housing crisis and revitalizing shopping centers by providing mixed use in a climate of changing consumer shopping.

Urban Edge respectfully submits this letter with comments and requests for your consideration as you hold public hearings and further discuss the proposed zoning changes. Some specific requests include consideration of the following:

- (1) More flexibility in the land comprising the MOD-5 overlay district at Shoppers World, including the main mall area and land off of Flutie Pass, allowing for pockets of mixed use in a modern development, and opportunities for walkability within the shopping center.
- (2) Additional height limit. At least 7 stories/85’ is necessary for development with garage beneath, and height similar to the condo project at the Natick Mall would be 10 to 12

stories. Such height, particularly on the eastern side of Shoppers World would be consistent with its surroundings.

- (3) Some draft provisions are tailored to smaller parcels and would not be feasible when applied to larger campuses or shopping centers, or do not seem to meet a necessary purpose for larger parcels.
- (4) Some design criteria such as ground floor fenestration for the façade would interfere with leasable ground level space.
- (5) Building separation requirements would prevent underground or connected parking structures to multiple buildings, and shared systems desirable for larger campuses.
- (6) Please clarify whether a parking facility to serve multi-family housing in the MOD is exempt from any special permit requirement set forth in Section II.B.5.Q of the Zoning Ordinance.

Specific comments are further detailed on the attached Exhibit A.

Urban Edge looks forward to your further discussions at your upcoming meetings.

Very truly yours,



Katherine Garrahan

KG:smm

cc: Sarkis Sarkissian, Director of Planning and Community Development

Exhibit A

Comments of Urban Edge to Proposed Section III.G of the Framingham Zoning Ordinance

III.G.2.1 Description of Overlay Districts. Suggest that “lot(s)” be replaced with “property”. For large lots (such as at Shoppers World and 9/90), lots exceed the areas shown as within MOD districts, which would appear to disqualify the lots from the MOD.

III.G.3.3 Waivers. Suggest that waivers also apply to Section III.G.5. This would be similar to Mixed Use Development Waivers set forth in Section V.G.5 and not require that dimensional differences which allow better design, are consistent with public good and that do not denigrate from purposes of MOD, not to be allowed only by variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

III.G.5.1 Façade Build-Out. We would request that façade build out requirements not apply within shopping centers or campuses, as calculation is problematic for larger properties.

III.G.5.2 Dimensional Standards. We would request additional height, at least in certain locations. For reference, the condos at the Natick Mall are 10 to 12 stories tall.

III.G.5.2 and III.C.7.2 Fenestration. Fenestration requirements within retail centers and/or where there is lower level retail/active uses appear to be excessive in compared to typical commercial storefronts, and would create challenges to commercial space. The requirements also seem to conflict with III.G.6.2.7.2.2 which exempts any portion of the ground story with Active Commercial / Retail Uses as defined in Section 2.6.1.1.

III.G.6.1.4.2 Separation of Buildings. This requirement is not feasible at campuses and shopping centers which may have or require garages and systems that interconnect.

III.G.6.2.5.1, 3, and 5 Building Entry. These requirements are not feasible at campuses and shopping centers, where buildings may be a significant distance from a primary street, and where retail floor plans and storefronts may be of different sizes.

III.G.6.2.7.3 Mechanical Equipment. These requirements may be difficult at campuses and shopping centers. Prohibition of equipment facing “primary street” and in locations between “lot line” and front façade is not practical with large properties.

III.G.6.2.8.2 Bicycle Parking. Request consideration of interior bicycle parking.

III.G.6.2.8.3.1 and 3 Parking Access. These requirements are not feasible at campuses and shopping centers.

III.G.6.2.8.4.1 and 2 Curb Cuts. These requirements are not feasible at campuses and shopping centers.

III.G.2.8.5.2 Parking Placement. This requirement is not feasible at campuses and shopping centers comprised of large lots with multiple structures.

From: cboettjer@verizon.net
To: [Mollie Febus](#); [City Council](#)
Cc: [Cathy Mercier](#)
Subject: MBTA Act and Framingham
Date: Thursday, October 17, 2024 11:38:19 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

Much has been discussed and written regarding the MBTA Community Act and its impact on Framingham. As long time residents of Nobscot, we are extremely upset that even the idea of extending the MBTA zoning to this area. Our Mayor, the Planning Board and the Economic Director and other leaders in our community seriously need to rethink their priorities for the future of Framingham and their relationship with developers who are egger to destroy our communities.

New apartments in Nobscot were not built as designed/ promised; downtown Framingham high riser apartments tower over much of that landscape with little to no setbacks/greenspace. (Natick's new downtown apartments in progress have a lower height with great setbacks.) Stop bending to what the developers want and build what residents need!)

We think Framingham needs to seriously consider a master plan for housing and infrastructure according to the current and future needs of residents and businesses. You know the drill and good planning should not be rocket science for anyone involved in municipal government. Excellent city planning, which all of Framingham deserves, should be top of mind for any Planning/Zoning Board(s), Economic/Development Boards and a city's budget planner. Take care of Framingham's needs first.

Please consider:
Nobscot:

No on street parking for new apartment's commercial spaces. Before you issue an "occupancy" permit, make sure there are enough parking spaces for the 159 units and 7 more for retail. I don't want to see "apartment" cars at the library, CVS or Hemenway. If you give in to the 7 spaces, you set a precedent for future developments in Nobscot.

How about some owner occupied development? I know it is up to the developer, but let's put some pressure on these people. After all, the parcel owners will be reaping the benefits of apartment income for years, while we have two generations of young people who want to establish/buy homes here and are being forced into using Section 8 or moving away. We have seniors who don't want to give up home ownership but would rather downsize to smaller homes that can still be owned.

City Wide

Consider 'paper zoning" until a better housing /infrastructure plan is in place. Our Mayor is on a MBTA board; he must have some clout? Help us out here, Charlie.

Consider other parcels with access to Route 9, the Mass Pike and quick, local buses to the commuter train. Let's talk seriously about Shopper's World (See what Braintree is doing.) and the 9/90 parcel. We need more info about these possibilities and more info about the impact more development could have on surrounding neighborhoods.

More transparency needed.

After what happened in Nobscot, it is so difficult to trust what are city officials are doing. Please help us reestablish that trust by working harder for the residents of Framingham.

But, a huge shout out to those counselors who sit on the Planning Board subcommittee. We are grateful for those of you who have the professional expertise to work with the city departments to get what residents need. We are grateful for those of you who are "learning the ropes" of the city planning process and are always asking the right questions. Thank-you.

Respectfully,
Cathy and Lowell Mercier
84 Davidson Rd.

From: [David Hornfischer](#)
To: [Mollie Febus](#)
Cc: [City Council](#)
Subject: MBTA housing and zoning.
Date: Thursday, October 17, 2024 4:01:49 PM

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TO : Council and planning board

I'd like to add my EDITRD support to the compromise proposal as described below.

I'd also support additional METRO bus service on the underused busses to the non "downtown " areas that can serve additional housing out of downtown

In general Framingham does not need over 11,000 new residents. Roads and schools are already over crowded.

Mbta commuter rail service from existing trains clog city streets downtown. That's another problem ! We don't need more trains!

the Planning Board needs to hear your views on the current proposal which requires

...

2100 new housing units Downtown,((YIKES)

162 new housing units Saxonville,

1,104 new housing units Nobscot,

360 new housing units Shoppers World,

450 new housing units 9/90,

420 new housing units Speen St.

Total of 4,596 units but only 4,355 units are required by the MBTA law, which calculates to approx. 11,000 new residents

The following compromise while imperfect, acknowledges that there exists a housing crisis in Mass. That said high tax states like Mass are losing population. The real problem is a need for low income less costly housing.

Making our downtown community more dense with more low income individuals creates other problems

This compromise suggests a way for Framingham to address this artificial man made problem in a way that respects our residents .

Downtown, Remove the special permit requirement from the existing zoning regulations.

This would take away the MBTA requirement that calls for 2100 new housing units. We don't need that packed into dense downtown!

Developers can still build new units under the existing zoning regulations, but the city has much more control over what and how much gets built.

New housing might still need be built which will comply with the spirit of the MBTA law.

THE LAW NEEDS AMENDING!! Our reps need to drive that

Nobscot, Remove it from the MBTA requirements.

This means that the owner of the Nobscot parcel is still free to develop the property by building approximately 300 housing units under the existing residential zoning regulations. New housing will be built which will comply with the spirit of the MBTA law.

Speen St, Shoppers World, 9/90, Saxonville mills and Route 9; these areas should be considered prime areas for new housing because they are much more appropriate than Downtown (which already has over 2500 new units built or approved) or Nobscot @ Water/Edgel which is already crowded. There are however open areas in Nobscot where low income housing could be developed if mandated

But new housing could be built to comply with the MBTA law. However our and other legislators should work to amend that law first!

David HORNFISCHER
29 Arch st
District 7

From: [herb chasan](#)
To: [PlanningBoard](#); [herb chasan](#)
Subject: MBTA housing law: please call for more public hearings
Date: Monday, October 14, 2024 4:11:18 PM
Attachments: [Facebook replies Let them speak.pdf](#)
[1 New MBTA proposal \(Responses\) 1.xlsx](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize and verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Board,
I sent this letter out to my mailing list and Facebook regarding the need for more public hearings.
Here is the letter and responses attached.
Thank you for your consideration,
Herb Chasan

Let the people speak!

A proposal dated Sept. 19,2024, regarding the MBTA Housing Law was submitted to the City Council on Sept. 26, 2024.

This proposal will have huge impacts on water, sewer, traffic, schools, police, fire, and quality of life concerns for all Framingham residents .

4355 new multi housing units are called for in the proposal. Which comes to 10,888 new people will be living in Framingham.

The general reaction to the proposal seems to be : big revisions are needed.

The MBTA Housing Law was passed in 2021 and after 3 years this is what is on the table?
No public hearings.

It is not fair, not right, not appropriate , and not respectful to anyone in the city.

How do you expect people to react to this huge change, adding almost 11,000 people to the city.

Something is very wrong here and we're under the gun to put something together and shove it down everyone's throats before December 31.

The City Council will be voting to send it back , asking for a new proposal.

This new revised housing / zoning proposal should be vetted by having public hearings in each neighborhood all over the city.

If there's a lot of pushback, it needs to be revised and the process has to start all over

again.

This is what other cities have done but they started this process 3 years ago, not at the last minute, not 2 months before the deadline.

If you agree with this approach to moving ahead, please add your name and comments.

Please Click [here](#)

From: [D.Schaefer](#)
To: [PlanningBoard](#)
Subject: MBTA Zoning and Amendment
Date: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 1:47:38 PM

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Planning Board, this was also sent to the Mayor and the City Council,

We are writing to express our unbending and vehement objection to the currently proposed plan, put forward by the Planning Board, to comply with the MBTA Zoning Law where on earth they came up with over a thousand units in Nobscot is outrageous and ridiculous. In particular, we object to the inclusion of approximately 32 acres in Nobscot and 5 acres in Saxonville. The reasons for our objections are many and were spelled out clearly in a petition that was filed with the City Council last year opposing another petition that was filed to request rezoning of the Nobscot acreage.

- The 32 acres in Nobscot are currently zoned R-4 (single family homes) and are surrounded primarily by single-family homes. The developer knew the zoning when they purchased the property and they should adhere to that zoning.
- When someone buys a home, they generally do so with the trust that their elected officials will not approve a zoning amendment that significantly changes the character of the area they live in and ruins the quality of life in the area. Rezoning the 32 acres in Nobscot as suggested by the proposed plan would drastically alter the character of that area, increasing the housing density by more than 10-fold over the existing zoning, and would thus represent a gross violation of that trust. Everyone one on the City Council, the Mayor, the Director of Development, the planning board are all supposed to protect and represent the residents of the community.
- On July 16, 2019 the City Council adopted the Nobscot Village B-4 Zoning District based on intense research (that considered all possible uses for the district), broad-based community input, and the recommendations of the Planning Board and City administration. In adopting the Nobscot Village B-4 Zoning District, the City Council implicitly rejected inclusion of the 32 acres into the Nobscot Village B-4 Zoning District. Including the 32 acres now as part of the MBTA Zoning District would be a complete contradiction of the City Council's earlier well-considered decision.
- The city's existing plan for the Nobscot area ensures that it is in harmony and compliance with the City's updated 2020 Master Land Use Plan, which is intended to guide the municipality when making land use decisions.
- The City has completed the road work relative to the \$3.2 million MassWorks grant to improve the intersection at Water/Edmands/Edgell Roads in order to accommodate the redevelopment of the Nobscot Plaza and gas station located directly across from the Plaza. The redevelopment of Nobscot Plaza, including 158 units of multifamily residential housing, has not yet been completed. Even so, the congestion at the intersection is already problematic at certain times of day. The actual impacts of an additional 158 units will only make the congestion at the adjacent intersection and surrounding area worse. The roads around the 32 acres are unnumbered narrow two-lane roads with no room for further widening. Adding another 400+ units of multi-family housing into this area, as proposed in the current plan, defies logic.

Any one of the above factors should be sufficient reason to exclude the 32 acres in Nobscot from the

MBTA Zoning District. Taken together, the case for excluding the 32 acres in Nobscot from the MBTA Zoning District is overwhelming.

Additionally, Nobscot and Saxonville are nowhere close to a half a mile from the train station and there is no public transportation to the one station.

There are other options that have been proposed that make far more sense. As one city councilor stated she wanted to live near the train station so she could walk to it people like us chose to move to a more rural section of town, we made the choice with the expectation that our town now city would uphold and respect the current zoning laws and our rights as residents.

Regards,

Donna and Philip Schaefer

District 3

