

MBTA Communities Draft Multifamily Guidelines

A Community Discussion

March 22, 2022



Agenda

Background

The Law and Guidelines

Important Dates

Compliance

Manchester

Ideas to Consider

Next Steps and Discussion

Background-Why the Requirement?

- The cost and availability of housing are threatening local and regional economies.
- In 2019, the Mass Housing Partnership (MHP) evaluated 261 station areas in Greater Boston and found the median housing density across all station areas is roughly 6.2 homes per acre. A modest increase to just 10 homes per acre could yield approximately 253,000 additional housing units over time.
- By allowing multifamily housing near transit (TOD), we facilitate the development of new housing in walkable neighborhoods.

Background-Why the Requirement

- The result of transit-oriented development
 - More housing closer to the places that we go every day, such as local shops, jobs, schools, restaurants, parks, etc.
 - Better access to work, services, and other destinations
 - Reduced reliance on single occupancy vehicles, which helps in our larger effort to confront the climate crisis and protect our environment

GOOD HOUSING POLICY = GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY = GOOD TRANSPORTATION POLICY



The Law

Economic Bond Bill (House No. 5250) signed into law January 2021.

Bill included a range of housing provisions including:

- Lowering threshold for Town Meeting vote for certain zoning provisions.
- Requirement of MBTA communities to have an as-of-right multifamily zoning district (MGL C40A, Sect 3A)



Draft Guidelines for MGL C.40A, S.
3A offered Dec 2021

Open for Public Comment through March 31,
2022



The Guidelines

Clarify elements of the law and
address implementation.

- Consistent with underlying law
- Provide local discretion on location of required district and other elements of the regulations.
- Do not require new units to be built
- Have nothing to do with 40B



MGL C. 40A S. 3A

- At least one district of *reasonable size*
- Multifamily housing permitted as of right
- No age restrictions; suitable for families with children
- Minimum gross density of 15 units/acre
- Not more than ½ miles from train station

Guidelines

- At least 50 acres total – may include subdistricts of 5+ acres
- Building with 3+ residential dwelling units
- No age restrictions or bedroom limits in zoning
- Capacity for 750 units (min 50 acres X 15 units/acre)
- At least ½ of the land area of district within ½ miles of station

More about the Guidelines

- The district may have **sub-districts with differing densities** as long as the overall district meets the minimum requirement of 15 units per acre and 750 units
- **Site plan review** is allowed – however it may not be used to deny a project that is allowed by right or impose conditions that make it infeasible
- The minimum required capacity must be **attainable** in the district(s) – legally and practically.
- The state and MHP will be developing **tools** that communities can use to make these calculations on a per lot basis and offering **technical assistance**.
- **Affordability restrictions** are not required however, a municipality may elect to include an affordability requirement

Important Dates



March 31, 2022 – Submit comments on Draft Guidelines.



May 2, 2022 – Submit MBTA Community Information Form.
Affirms the BOS has held a briefing on the Draft Guidelines.



December 2022 – Submit request for Compliance **or** Submit an Action Plan



July 31 2023 – Deadline for Action Plan and Schedule Approval by DHCD



December 31, 2024 – Adopt appropriate zoning amendment that complies with guidelines.



By complying
with MBTA
Communities
legislation,
Manchester
would remain
eligible for
funding

Housing Choice Initiative

Local Capital Projects Fund

MassWorks Infrastructure Program

DHCD may take noncompliance into consideration when making other discretionary grant awards.

Are these funding sources important to Manchester?

Funding Source	Received	Used For	Can be Used For
Housing Choice	\$100,000 (2020)	Wastewater Treatment Facility Decommissioning Study	Planning and Capital Projects to support Housing Projects
Mass Works	\$500,000 (2019)	Harbor Dredging	* Harbor Dredging **Water/Sewer Infrastructure Transportation Infrastructure
Local Capital Projects	n/a		Acquisition /Improvement of Land, Buildings, Infrastructure.

*Application anticipated for next phase of Harbor Dredging (\$1.75 M)

**Potential application for water & sewer line replacement

Master Plan Goals

Economic Development

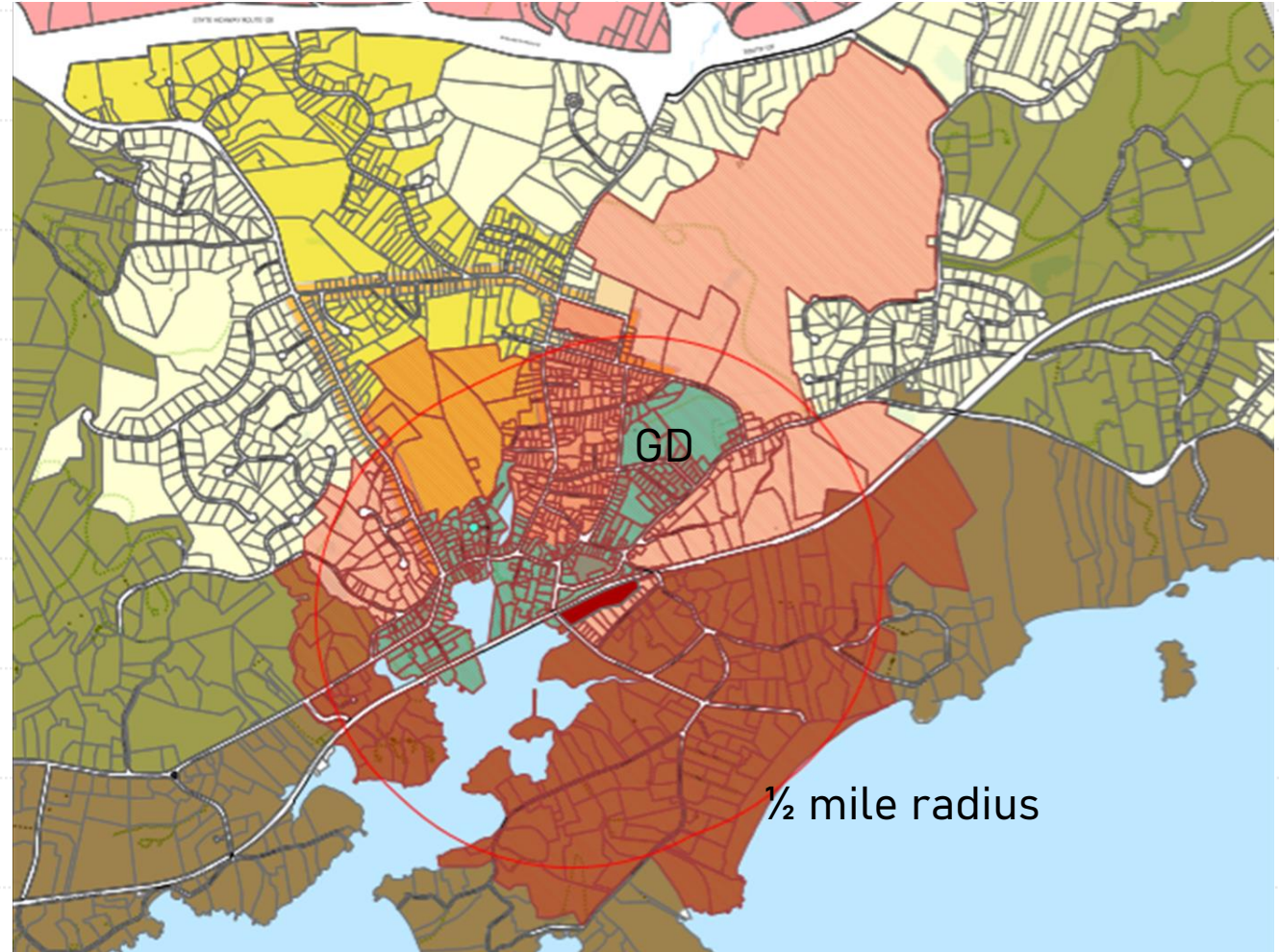
- **ED – 2: Consider revising zoning in the General District to generate more commercial and residential opportunities Downtown in a manner sympathetic to existing character.**
 - Revisions to consider for zoning in the General District should focus on encouraging appropriate development that will create a vibrant mixed-use Downtown and potentially expanding the District's boundaries.

Housing

- **H – 1: Modify zoning to encourage housing of the size, style, and prices appropriate for downsizing households, elders, young families, singles, and couples (including as part of Downtown development).**
 - Consider modifications to allow residential above retail, more accessory apartments and innovative uses of existing houses, support small-scale infill development and allow detached unit conversion without the requirement of employee status, pursue mixed-use Transit Oriented Development.

Manchester-by-the-Sea

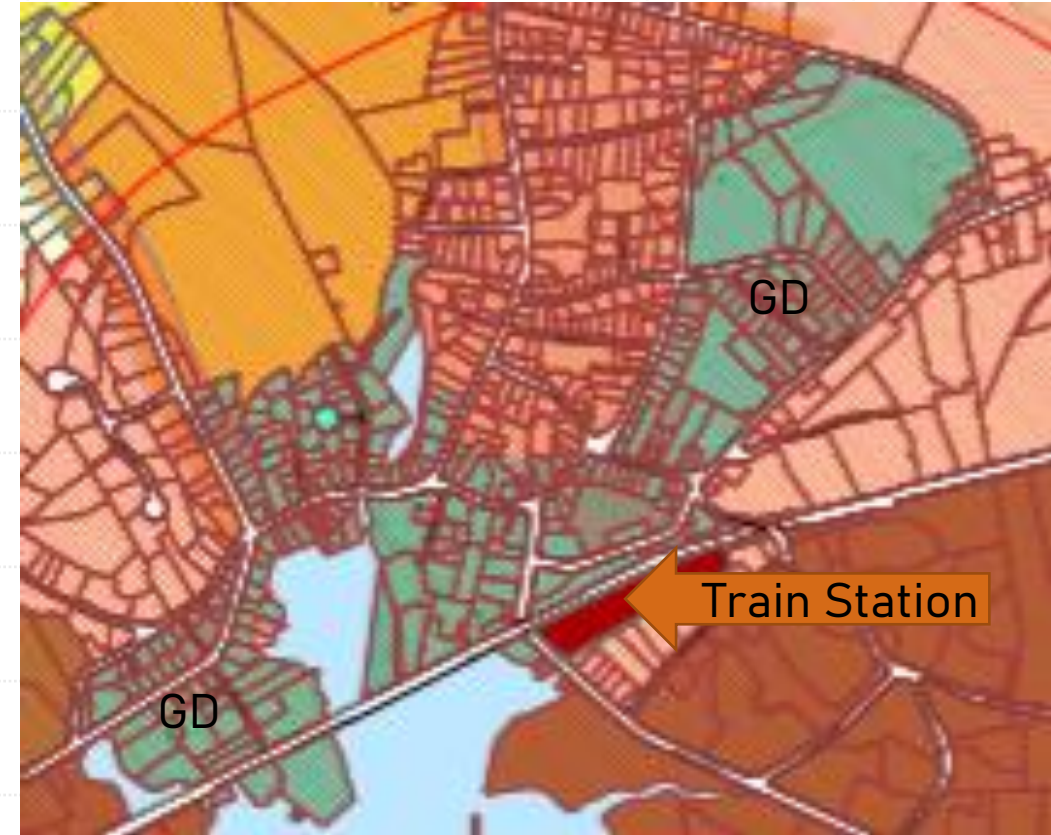
- ½ mile of station includes nearly 450 acres of land
- The General Zoning District (GD) is around 100 acres and is fully within half mile of the station
- The required Multi-Family District could be entirely within the GD



General Zoning District

- Minimum lot requirement of 6,000 square ft
- Allows up to 3 dwelling units per lot by right in existing buildings, (4 units by Special Permit)
- Consider then the potential *
 - 50 Acre District x 7 lots per acre = 350 potential lots
 - 350 potential lots x 3 units/lot = 1050 potential residential units
 - This means a density of 21 units per acre
- There are currently 251 lots on 75 acres and 551 residential units
- This is an overall density of 7.3 units per acre

*The potential however is not quite enough – the 15 units per acre density must be attainable. All land within the 50 acres cannot be divided into 6,000 sf lots (due to lack of street frontage and other constraints). And each lot would not have an existing building. However, it shows that in areas where lot sizes are near the minimum, the allowed density exceeds the requirement of the new law.



What does 15 units/acre+ look like?

- Any number of properties and/or areas in Manchester already have densities in excess of the 15/units per acre required

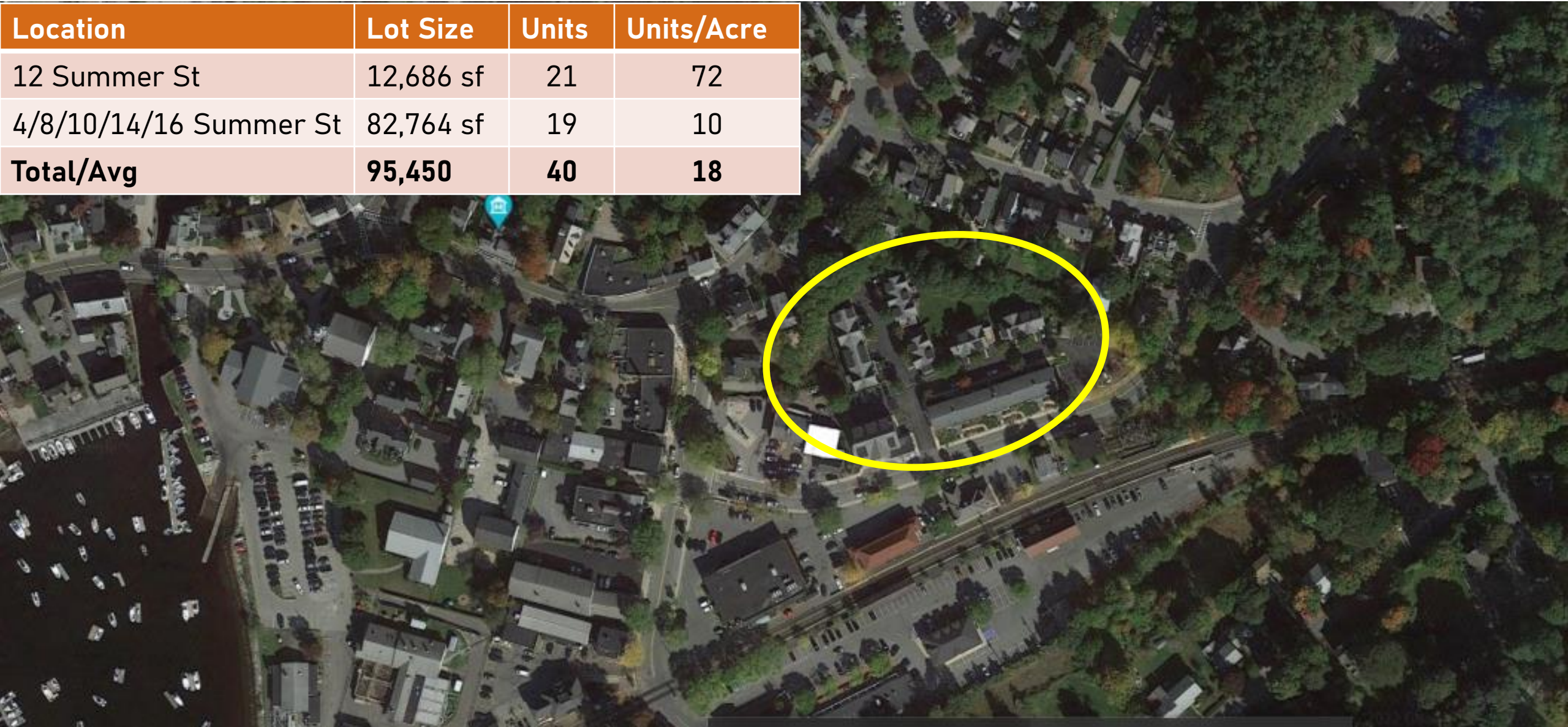
Location	Lot size	Units	Units/Acre
33 Union	6,860 sf	7	44
39 Union	5,902 sf	3	22
40 Union	4,142 sf	4	42
41 Union	5,544 sf	3	23
48/50 Union	12,326 sf	8	28
Total / Avg	34,744 sf	25	31



Is this density and this type of housing appropriate in Downtown Manchester?

What does 15 units/acre+ look like?

Location	Lot Size	Units	Units/Acre
12 Summer St	12,686 sf	21	72
4/8/10/14/16 Summer St	82,764 sf	19	10
Total/Avg	95,450	40	18



Ideas to Consider

- Subdistricts of **varying densities** could allow greater density closest to the train station and less density in areas with more single and two-family homes.
- Subdistricts with **varying dimensional requirements**: heights, setbacks, would allow the town to take the context of the immediate area/neighborhood into consideration
- A **40R district** is an option that provides **financial incentives** to the Town as well as meeting zoning requirements.
- A **diversity of housing types** including more than one ADU per property, more than one residential building on a lot, attached townhouses and pocket neighborhoods would allow natural density, diversity and affordability.

Ideas to Consider

- **Parking** can be a constraining element and must be considered.
- **By-Right** does not mean unregulated – regulations (dimensional and others) are created by the Town and development must comply.
- **Site plan review** including **historic commission review** can be used as appropriate.
- Zoning cannot include **age restrictions**, however; developers can build age restricted units.
- Development does not automatically follow zoning, and **zoning does not guarantee development**.
 - In the GD, 3 residential units are allowed on each property by-right yet, this is not the norm.

Ideas to Consider

Considerable residential density exists downtown today and is part of the Town's historic development pattern and character.

We can embrace the goals of protecting the town's character and natural resources and promoting housing where it is most appropriate.



Photo Credit: Ben Swanson

Next Steps/Discussion

- Assess capacity to study options for compliance
 - Identify existing tools & resources
 - Identify needs
- Request assistance as appropriate
- Engage with the Community
- Outline goals and work plan
- December 2022 – Submit Action Plan to DHCD
- 2023 & 2024 – Develop downtown plan & regulations
- December 2024 – Compliance Deadline

Manchester

Station:
Manchester

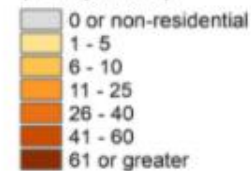
Line/Route:
Rockport Line

Communities in area:
Manchester

Total units:
908

Average density:
2.4 units per acre

Residential Density
(units per acre)



BLUE
GREEN
ORANGE
RED
SILVER

