



MBTA Communities FAQ

This sheet has been developed to assist the 3A Advisory Group in answering common questions about the law and its requirements. It will also be used as a public information tool, to help spread awareness and information on the requirements for Boxborough.

Comment/Question	Response		
The Basics			
What is an MBTA Community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A MBTA Community is one of the 65 cities and towns in Massachusetts that hosts MBTA service, or,• In the case of Boxborough, we are one of the approximately 120 other communities that abut a city or town with MBTA service.		
What are the requirements of the law?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zoning shall be created that designates a “reasonable sized” district in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right, and,<ul style="list-style-type: none">o The zoning shall have no age restrictions for housing, and,o The zoning shall allow for housing that is suitable for families with children.		
Designation	2020 Housing Units	District Unit Capacity	Deadline
Adjacent Small Town	2,362	118 (5%)	December 2025
Zoning vs Building			
Do we have to build 118 new houses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our responsibility to create a new overlay or zoning district that allows multifamily housing at a density of 15 units per acre or more.• We are not responsible for any new construction or buildings.		
What is Zoning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zoning is a set of laws that effects land and how it can be changed. For example, residential zoning allows homes to be built, and business zoning allows businesses to operate.		
What is an overlay district?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An overlay district is a unique zoning tool, that doesn't change the zoning already in place. Instead, overlay districts give property owners more options as to what they do with their land, by overlaying the special district on top of zoning that still exists.		
Multi-Family			
What is multifamily housing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multifamily housing is a style of housing, with multiple homes built separately in the same building or on the same lot.		

What does multifamily housing look like?

- Multifamily housing can look like all sorts of things, depending on the density it is built at.
- 15 units per acre looks like this:



Do we have multifamily housing in Boxborough?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, some well known examples include Enclave, Swanson Court, and Codman Hill Condominiums.
Wont this change our rural character?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxborough is able to set parameters on multifamily housing through simple site plan review, helping ensure new development is in keeping with our community.

Why

How does creating zoning for multi-family housing help resolve the housing crisis?	<p>The lack of zoning for multi-family housing is a barrier for developing new housing, particularly “the missing middle” or “workforce” housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massachusetts has among the highest, and fastest growing, home prices and rents of any state in the nation. • Rising costs have dramatically increased financial pressures on low- and middle-income families, young families, single-income households, and our aging population. • Lack of available housing and high housing costs are a primary driver of homelessness. • This has put our economy and businesses at a disadvantage as we compete economically against peer states. The risk of future job growth moving outside Massachusetts is rising due to high living costs.
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What if we don't comply?

A MBTA community that does not comply is not eligible for funding from several programs, including capital funding grants, such as the grant that payed for sidewalks along Mass Ave. In total, Boxborough will lack access to 15 funding programs, many it has used in recent years.