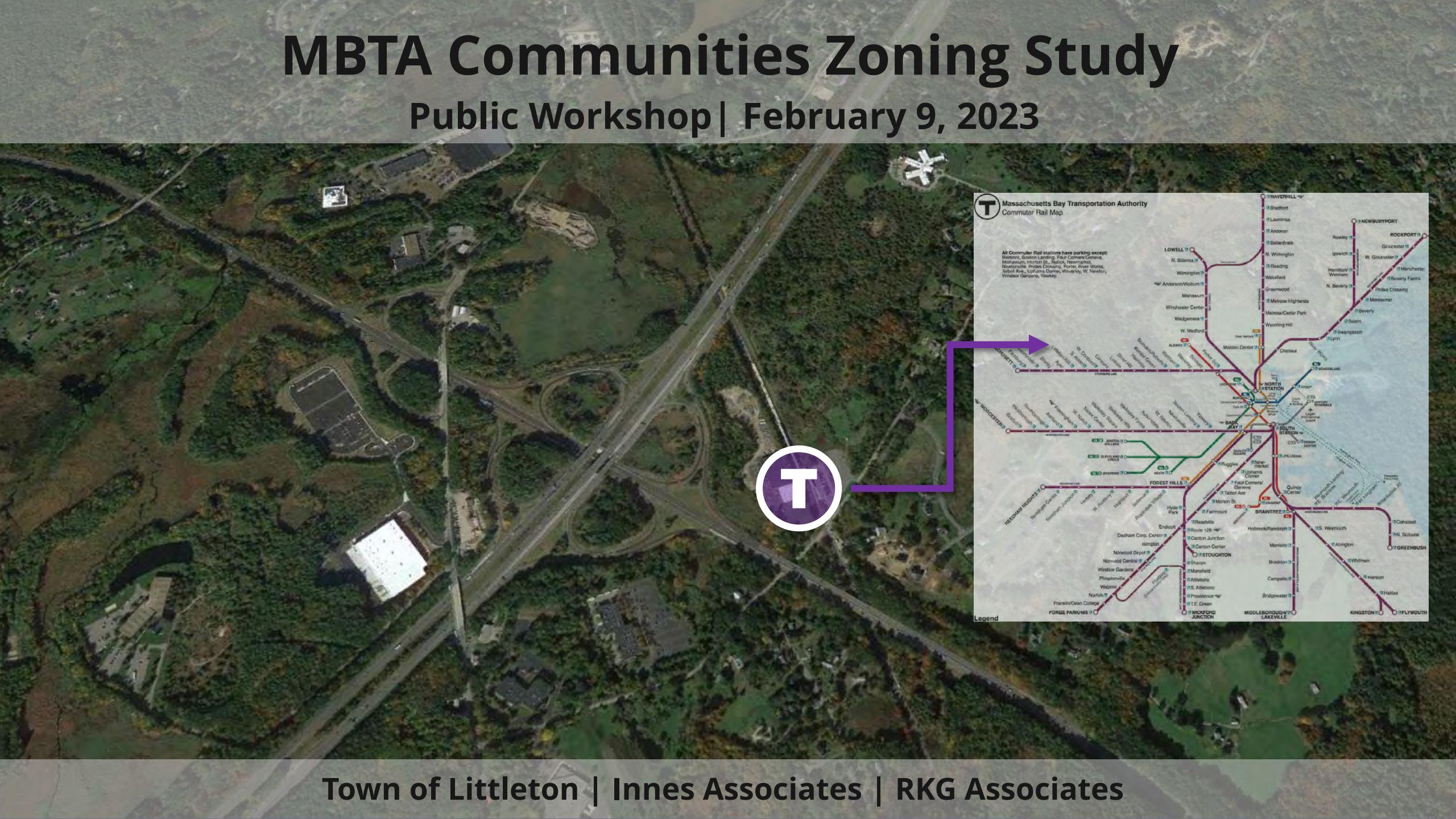


# MBTA Communities Zoning Study

## Public Workshop | February 9, 2023



**GET READY!**  
**We will start the poll on slide 57!**  
**Access the poll at**

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Littleton0209>**

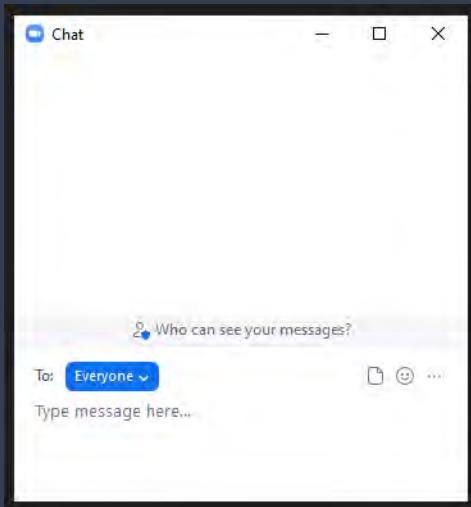


Choose  
Gallery to see  
everyone!

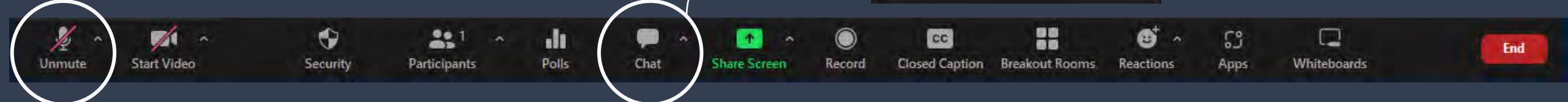
# How to use Zoom

Don't forget to  
mute when you  
aren't talking!

This is a webinar, so  
you should look for  
the Q&A button!  
(There is no chat  
button.)



We'll be able to see your  
questions in this box and  
will answer them here or  
verbally ("live").



# AGENDA

## About the Process

### Consultant Team



## Zoning

King Street Common and Draft Littleton Station Smart Growth Overlay Districts

## Compliance Model: Implications and Options

## Building Typologies and Densities

# AGENDA

## About the Process

## Zoning

King Street Common and Draft Littleton Station Smart Growth Overlay Districts

## Compliance Model: Implications and Options

## Building Typologies and Densities



Q&A #1:  
Technical  
Questions about  
the process and  
the model  
results.



Q&A #2:  
Questions about  
typologies and  
densities;  
comments/  
preferences for  
either.

# Planning Process

## Overview

# PLANNING PROCESS

Evaluate **draft Smart Growth Overlay District** and **approved Village Common Form-Based Code** for compliance with Section 3A of the Zoning Act and the Compliance Guidelines from DHCD.

- 1 Test: Do these districts comply?
- 2 Test: If not, which zoning changes are required for compliance?
- 3 Test: Which changes will the community support?
- 4 Draft zoning that is compliant for approval at Town Meeting.

# ABOUT THE PROCESS: MBTA COMMUNITIES (SECTION 3A)

## Section 3A of the Zoning Act (MGL Chapter 40A)

- New law to require that MBTA communities allow multifamily housing as of right.
- Legislative requirements for the zoning district:
  - At least one district of **reasonable size**.
  - **Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre**, subject to **limitations**.
  - Located **not more than 0.5 miles** from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal, or bus station (as applicable).
  - The regulations must be **without age restrictions** and must permit multifamily housing that is **suitable for families with children**.

# ABOUT THE PROCESS: REQUIREMENTS FOR LITTLETON

1	Community Category	Commuter Rail
2020 Housing Units (Census PL-94)	3,889	
2	Minimum Multifamily Unit Capacity	750
3	Minimum Land Area	50
4	Total Acres in Developable Station Area	244
5	% of district to be located in station area	20%

## Definitions

1 **COMMUTER RAIL COMMUNITY:** An MBTA community that (i) does not meet the criteria for a rapid transit community, and (ii) has within its borders at least 100 acres of developable station area associated with one or more commuter rail stations.

2 **MULTI-FAMILY UNIT CAPACITY:** An estimate of the total number of multi-family housing units that can be developed as of right within a multi-family zoning district, made in accordance with the requirements of section 5.b below.

4 **DEVELOPABLE STATION AREA:** Developable land that is within 0.5 miles of a transit station.

## Calculations by Community Type

3 **MINIMUM LAND AREA:** (*Guidelines: 5a*) For Littleton, the minimum land area of the multi-family zoning district is 50 acres, or 1.5% of the developable land in an MBTA community, whichever is less. At least half of the area must be contiguous lots of land. No portion may be less than 5 acres of contiguous land.

2 **MINIMUM MULTIFAMILY UNIT CAPACITY:** (*Guidelines: 5b*) The greater of either the required percentage by community type (15% of 2020 housing units for a Commuter Rail community) **or** the minimum gross density of 15 units per acre times the minimum land area. For Littleton:  $3889 \times 0.15$  **or**  $15 \times 50 = 583$  **or**  $750 = 750$ .

Check: Minimum multifamily unit capacity cannot exceed 25% of total housing units:  $3889 \times 0.25 = 778$ .

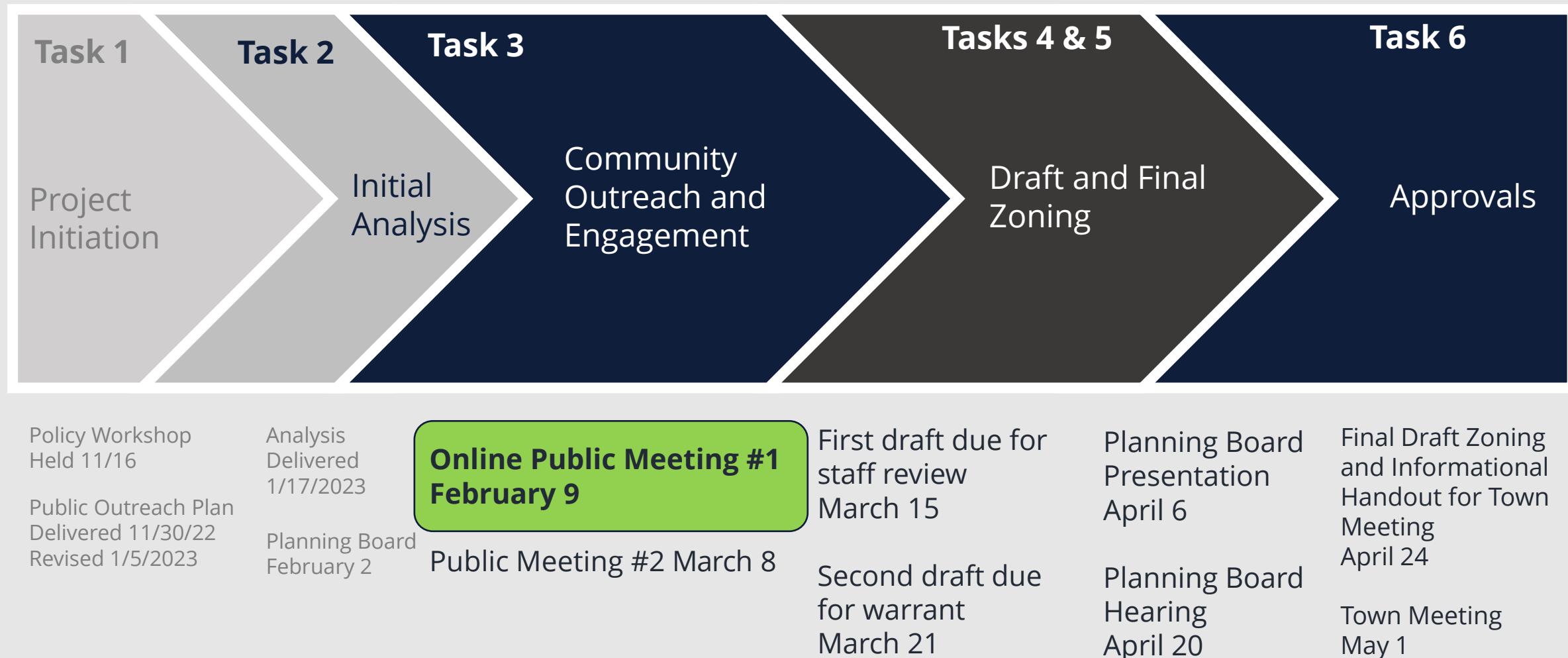
5 **PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICT WITHIN STATION AREA:** (*Guidelines: 8a*) Percentage based on number of acres of developable station area in the community.

**Developable Station Area:** Developable land that is within 0.5 miles of a transit station.

**Developable land:** Land on which multi-family housing can be permitted and constructed. For purposes of these guidelines, developable land consists of: (i) all privately-owned land except lots or portions of lots that meet the definition of excluded land, and (ii) developable public land.

**Excluded land:** Land areas on which it is not possible or practical to construct multi-family housing.

# ABOUT THE PROCESS: TIMELINE



# PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

## **King Street Common**

2021

Based on the Village Common Form-Based Code, passed in June 2020. This process included three public meetings in 2019 and a public hearing in 2020.

The King Street Common district was added in October 2021.

### **2023 Update**

An amendment adding additional properties is under review.

This process will test the approved bylaw for compliance with Section 3A and the Compliance Guidelines.

## **Littleton Station Village**

2018-2023

Survey: May 2019

Presentations and Events:  
January , April, June 2019  
June 2020 (Vision Plan)

Zoning Bylaw prepared for January 2021 but not submitted to Town Meeting.

### **2023 Update**

This process will test the draft bylaw for compliance with Section 3A and the Compliance Guidelines.

# Zoning

King Street Common and Draft Littleton Station Smart Growth Overlay

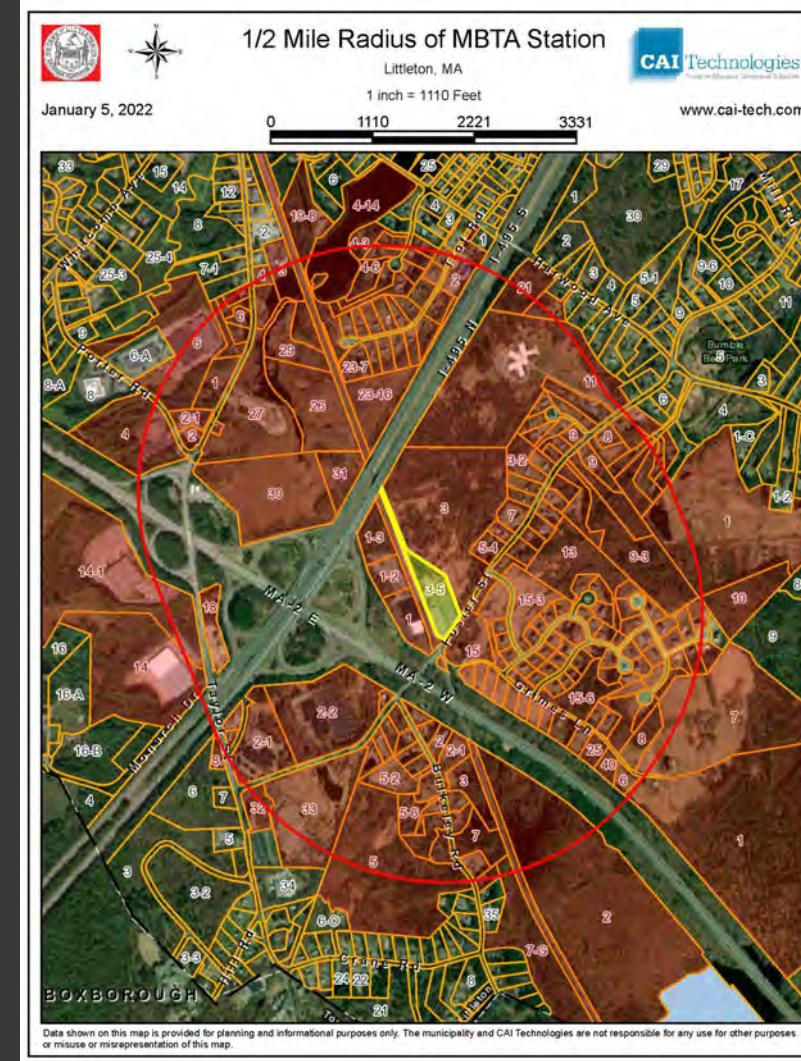
# STUDY AREAS

## KING STREET



Images courtesy of the Town of Littleton

## LITTLETON STATION



February 9, 2023

13

# KEY DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

## King Street Common

Lot Size 15,000 SF

Building Coverage 50%

Lot (Building + Parking) Coverage 80%

## Height

Within 255 ft. of King St ROW 4 stories

Beyond 255 ft. of King St ROW 6 stories

Parking spaces per dwelling unit 1.25

Maximum residential density 20 units/acre

## Littleton Station Village

No minimum

None

50 feet (~4 stories)

1.5

Subdistrict A: 323 units 20 units/acre  
Subdistrict B: 80 units 12 units/acre  
Subdistrict C: 123 units 8 units/acre

# Compliance Model

## Overview and Analysis

# OVERVIEW OF ANALYSIS

- **Littleton's MBTA 3A Requirements**
- **Potential Districts for Compliance**
  - **Smart Growth Overlay District**
  - **King Street District**
- **Key Zoning Parameters for Modeling**
  - **Smart Growth Overlay Districts**
  - **King Street Districts**
- **Model Results**
- **Potential Pathways for Compliance**

# LITTLETON'S 3A COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

**Littleton is classified as a Commuter Rail community by DHCD for compliance with Chapter 40A, Section 3A. As a Commuter Rail community, Littleton's district(s) and zoning must meet or exceed the following requirements:**

Metrics	Requirements
Category	Commuter Rail
2020 Housing Units	3,889
Minimum Multi-Family Unit Capacity	750 Units
Minimum Land Area for District(s)	50 Acres
Percent of District Located in Station Area	20% (10 Acres)
Percent of Unit Capacity Located in Station Area	20% (150 Units)
Minimum Gross Density for District(s)	15 DU/AC

# POTENTIAL MBTA DISTRICTS TO TEST IN LITTLETON

In order to run the MBTA Compliance Model for Littleton, we must identify one or more districts that will be designated as the town's MBTA districts where multi-family will be allowed as-of-right. The district(s) must total 50 acres in size with a minimum of 10 acres located within a half-mile radius of Littleton's MBTA station. Districts do not have to be contiguous, but one district must be a minimum of 25 acres and no district can be smaller than 5 acres in size.

Based on work the town has already completed around the commuter rail station and on-going work in the King Street/Littleton Common area, this early testing phase is focused on two primary areas of town for compliance:

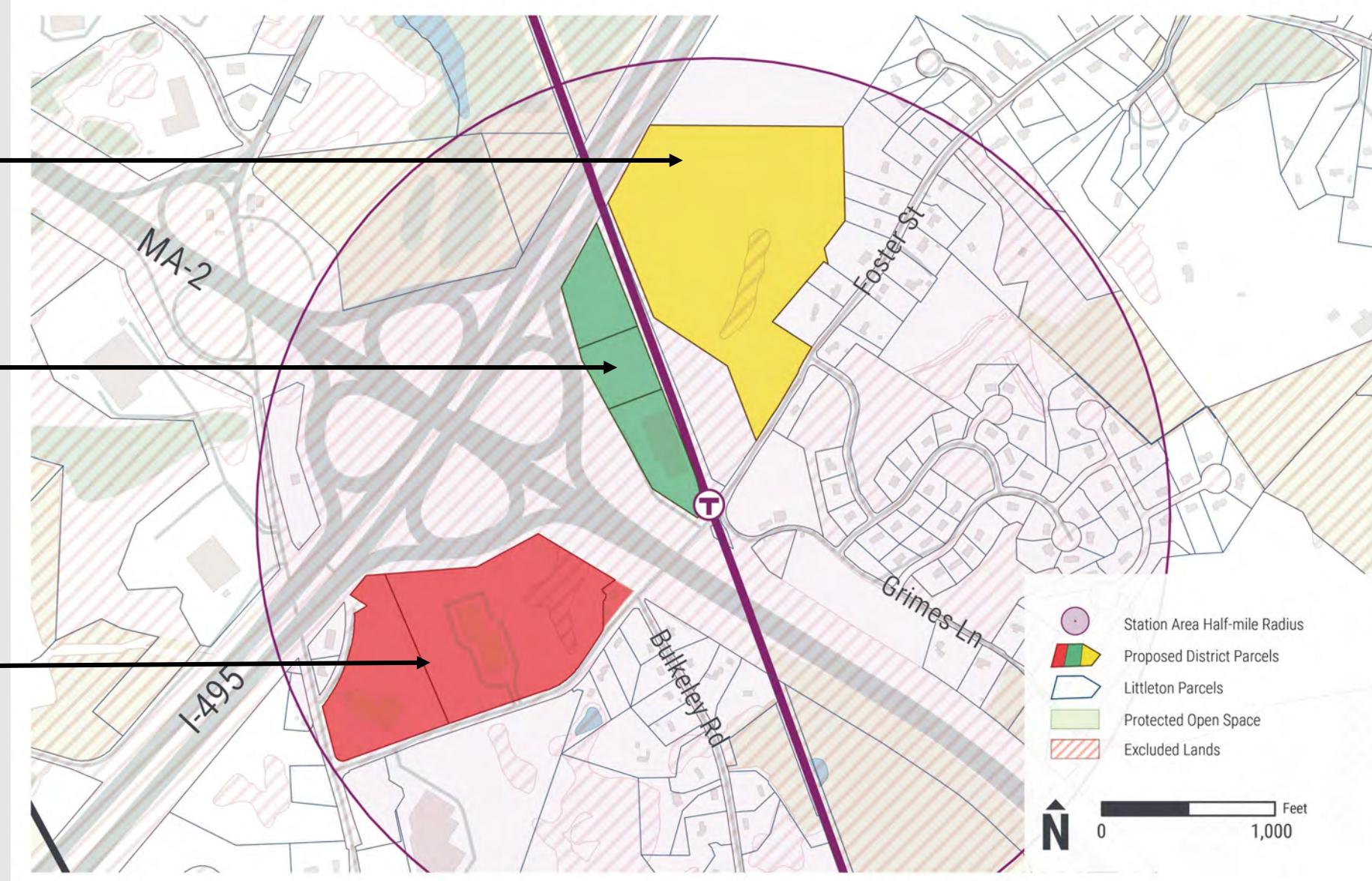
- 1. Smart Growth Overlay District** – the area around the commuter rail station.
- 2. King Street Common** – the area that includes the former IBM campus. This has been expanded to look at other nearby properties as well.

# SMART GROWTH OVERLAY DISTRICT

**SGOD District 1**  
35.3 Acres

**SGOD District 2**  
11.5 Acres

**SGOD District 3**  
30.7 Acres



# KING STREET COMMON AREA

**King Street  
Option 1**  
40.6 Acres

**King Street  
Option 2**  
47.7 Acres



# DISTRICT SIZE AND LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

The five potential districts analyzed provide Littleton with several options for mixing and matching districts to meet the minimum land area requirement of 50 acres and 10 acres within the station area.

The next step is to test the zoning for each district to derive the unit capacity, which is the second critical test for MBTA Communities compliance.

District Name	Gross Acres	Meets Station Area Req't?
SGOD D1	35.27	Yes
SGOD D2	11.49	Yes
SGOD D3	30.67	Yes
King Street Option 1	40.63	No*
King Street Option 2	47.74	No*

\*King Street is not within ½-mile of the station.

# ZONING PARAMETERS FOR LITTLETON DISTRICTS

Once the districts are defined the MBTA Compliance Model requires specific zoning inputs to calculate the unit capacity of each individual district.

As inputs in the model, the consultant team used the previously proposed SGOD zoning and the current King Street area zoning parameters which are shown in the table to the right. The zoning parameters represent the primary drivers of unit capacity in the model and are not meant to represent all aspects of the zoning for these districts.

Zoning Parameter	SGOD Zoning Parameters	King Street Zoning Parameters
Minimum Lot Size	N/A	15,000 SF
Building Height	4 stories / 50'	4 stories / 50'
Floor Area Ratio	N/A	2.4
Building Coverage	N/A	50%
Open Space Requirement	5% (model uses 20%)	0% (model uses 20%)
Setbacks	50' from abutting residential	15 feet
Parking Spaces per Unit	1.5 Spaces per Unit	1.25 Spaces per Unit
Maximum DU/AC	12 DU	20 DU

# MODEL RESULTS FOR LITTLETON DISTRICTS

Using the MBTA Communities Compliance Model to test each districts' location, size, and zoning parameters we found no singular district meets or exceeds the requirements for Littleton. However, a combination of districts (including King Street) could help Littleton meet or exceed the MBTA requirements. The question is: How does the town want to use the districts and zoning to comply, achieve the vision of the station area plan, and address housing needs.

**Littleton District Model Results**

Compliance Metrics	Requirements	SGOD D1	SGOD D2	SGOD D3	King Street	King St Expanded
District Acreage	50 Acres	35.3	11.5	30.7	40.6	47.7
Density Denominator Acreage	50 Acres	33.7	11.5	28.5	39.6	46.7
Acreage within Transit Area	10 Acres	35.3	11.5	30.7	0	0
Unit Capacity	750 Units	423	138	368	813	941
Units within Transit Area	150 Units	423	138	368	0	0
DU/AC	15 DU/AC	12.5	12.0	12.9	20.5	20.1

# Compliance Model

## Implications and Options

# POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR COMPLIANCE

The King Street area plays a critical role in helping Littleton reach its unit capacity and density requirements and should be considered a part of any compliance scenario.

The active/approved development proposals at King Street already have voter approval for multifamily housing and the density approved helps lessen the burden on the area(s) directly around the commuter rail station.

King Street Districts		
Compliance Metrics	King Street	King Street Expanded
Unit Capacity	813	941
District Acreage	40.63	47.74
Density Denominator	39.64	46.73
DU/AC	20.5	20.1

# POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR COMPLIANCE

The MBTA Communities requirement of 20% of land area and units in the station area necessitate including a district within a half-mile of the Littleton commuter rail station.

Of the three potential districts explored in this early analysis, all three exceed the 10-acre minimum district size, but only Districts 1 and 3 exceed the unit capacity of 150 units within a half-mile of the station.

If District 2 were to qualify on its own, the zoning would need to allow a minimum of 15 DU/AC instead of 12 DU/AC.

<b>SGOD Districts</b>			
<b>Compliance Metrics</b>	<b>District 1</b>	<b>District 2</b>	<b>District 3</b>
Unit Capacity	423	138	368
District Acreage	35.27	11.49	30.67
Density Denominator	33.73	11.49	28.53
DU/AC	12.5	12.0	12.9

# POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

- Is the goal of compliance to reach the minimum requirements of the MBTA 3A guidelines, or maximize housing opportunities in Littleton?
- Which King Street option should we include?
- Which SGOD district(s) should we include?
- Should we consider a mix of housing options in the SGOD with a range of densities?
  - An average density of 9-12 DU/AC in District 1 or 3 would likely result in compliance.

Data Metric	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	Totals
District Name	Station North District	Station Central District	Station South District	Orig King St	King St Expanded	
District Acreage (see note)	33.7	11.5	28.5	39.6	46.7	160.1
District Density Denominator (see note)	33.7	11.5	28.5	39.6	46.7	160.1
<b>Final Unit Capacity per District</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>2,683</b>
DU/AC	12.5	12.0	12.9	20.5	20.1	16.8

# POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

The draft Smart Growth Overlay District created three subdistricts, with different density levels and unit caps. The draft unit caps are greater than what Section 3A requires, **giving the Town flexibility in meeting the requirements of Section 3A.**

The pathways to compliance can build on one or more of these scenarios to create a variety of densities near the train station **to meet community needs.**

# Q&A

We will take questions about this process and the results of the model.

Please enter your questions and comments into the Q&A box.

# Building Typologies

# BUILDING TYPOLOGIES

**What could a density of 9-12 dwelling units per acre look like?**

**What are the appropriate building types for the station area that could produce this type of density?**

**How do these building types address the housing needs in Littleton?**

# POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS



Image source: <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>

# POLICY AND COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS

We will focus on this range of building types.

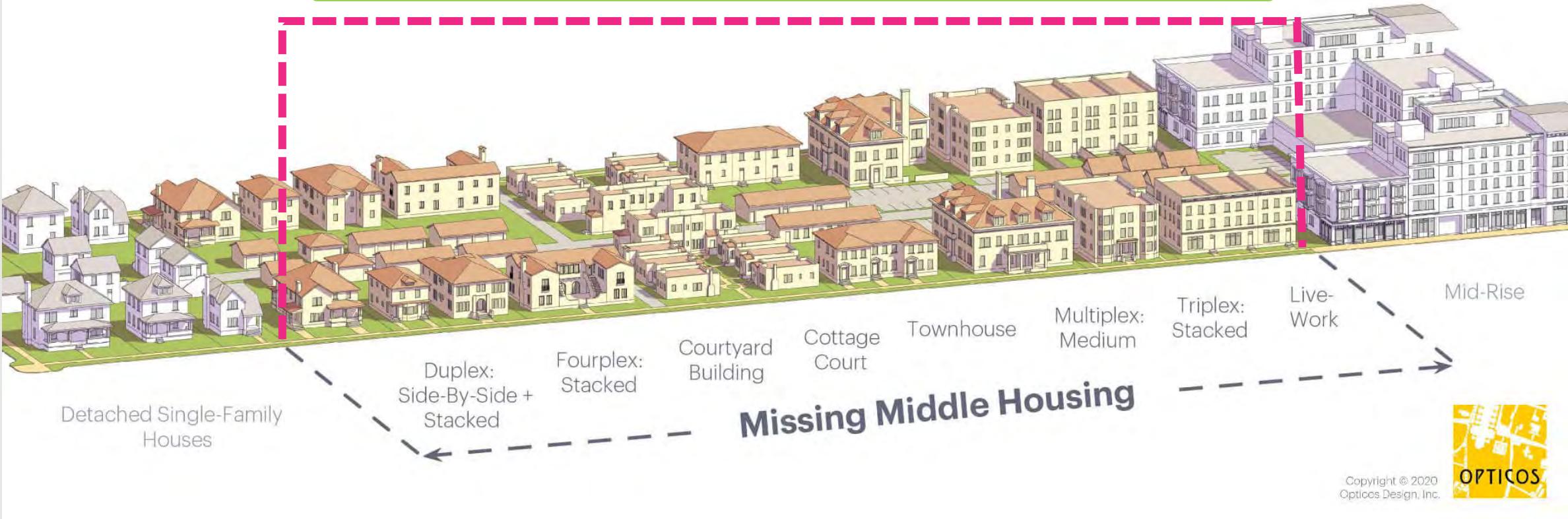


Image source: <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>

# Building Types and Densities

Data from RESiDENSity and MassGIS

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



7-13 Munroe Street  
Newburyport  
10 units (2 buildings)  
Lot Size 1.10 acres  
Units per acre 9.12

Image credit: Google Earth

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



Image credit: Google Earth

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



20 Bartletts Reach  
Amesbury, MA  
4 Units  
Lot Size: 17,000 SF  
Units per Acre: 10

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS

37.5 of these = 150 units  
14.63 acres  
Units per acre 10.25



# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



129 Merrimac Street  
Newburyport  
20 units  
Lot Size 1.26 acres  
Units per acre 15.84

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



7.5 of these = 150 units  
9.45 acres  
Units per acre 15.9

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



3 Fox Hollow Drive  
Windsor Locks, CT  
4 Units  
Lot Size: 10,000 SF  
Units per Acre: 16

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS

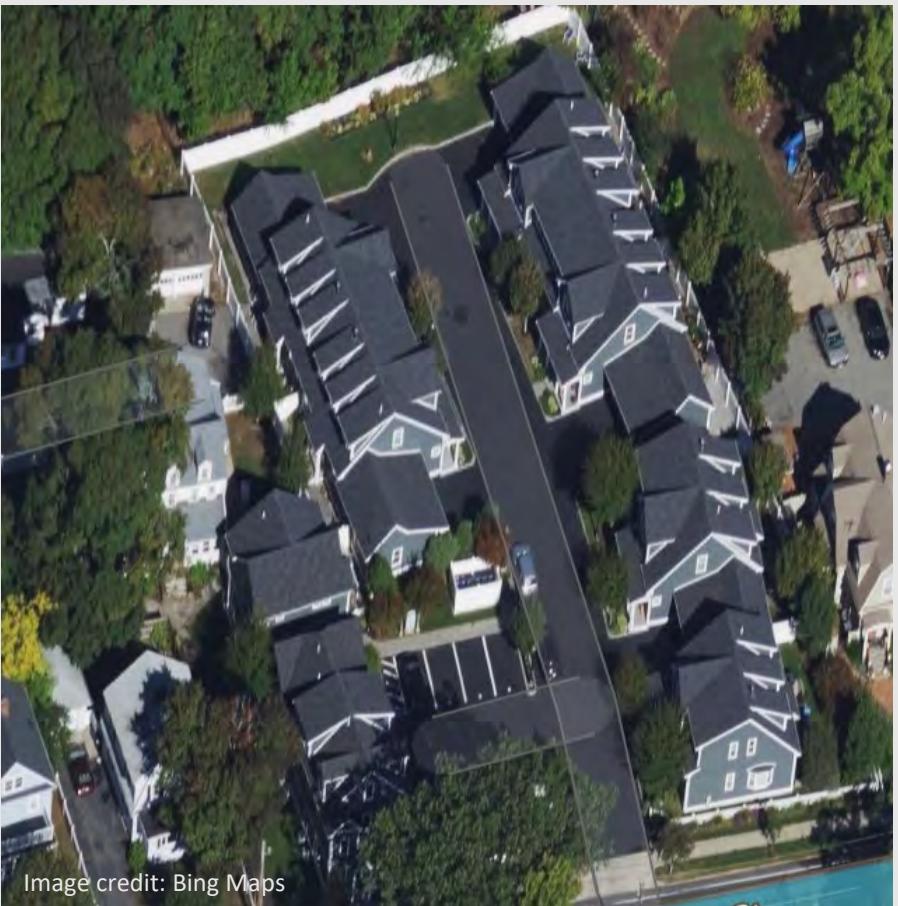


Image credit: Bing Maps



Greywood Estates  
Melrose, MA  
11 Units  
Lot Size: 34,000 SF  
Units per Acre: 14

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS

13.6 of these = 150 units  
10.64 acres  
Units per acre 14.09



# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



124 Merrimac St

Newburyport

10 units in 3 buildings (1, 4, and 5)

Lot Size: 0.62 acres

Units per acre: 16.15

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



Image credit: Google Earth

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



Image credit: Google Earth

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



118 Merrimac Street  
Newburyport  
2 units  
Lot Size 0.05 acres  
Units per acre 38.61

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



Google Earth

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



55 Fox Hollow Drive  
Windsor Locks, CT  
4 Units  
Lot Size: 8,000 SF  
Units per Acre: 21

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS

37.5 of these = 150 units  
6.89 acres  
Units per acre 21.8



# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



31-35 Warren Street  
Newburyport  
3 units  
Lot Size 0.13 acres  
Units per acre 22.37

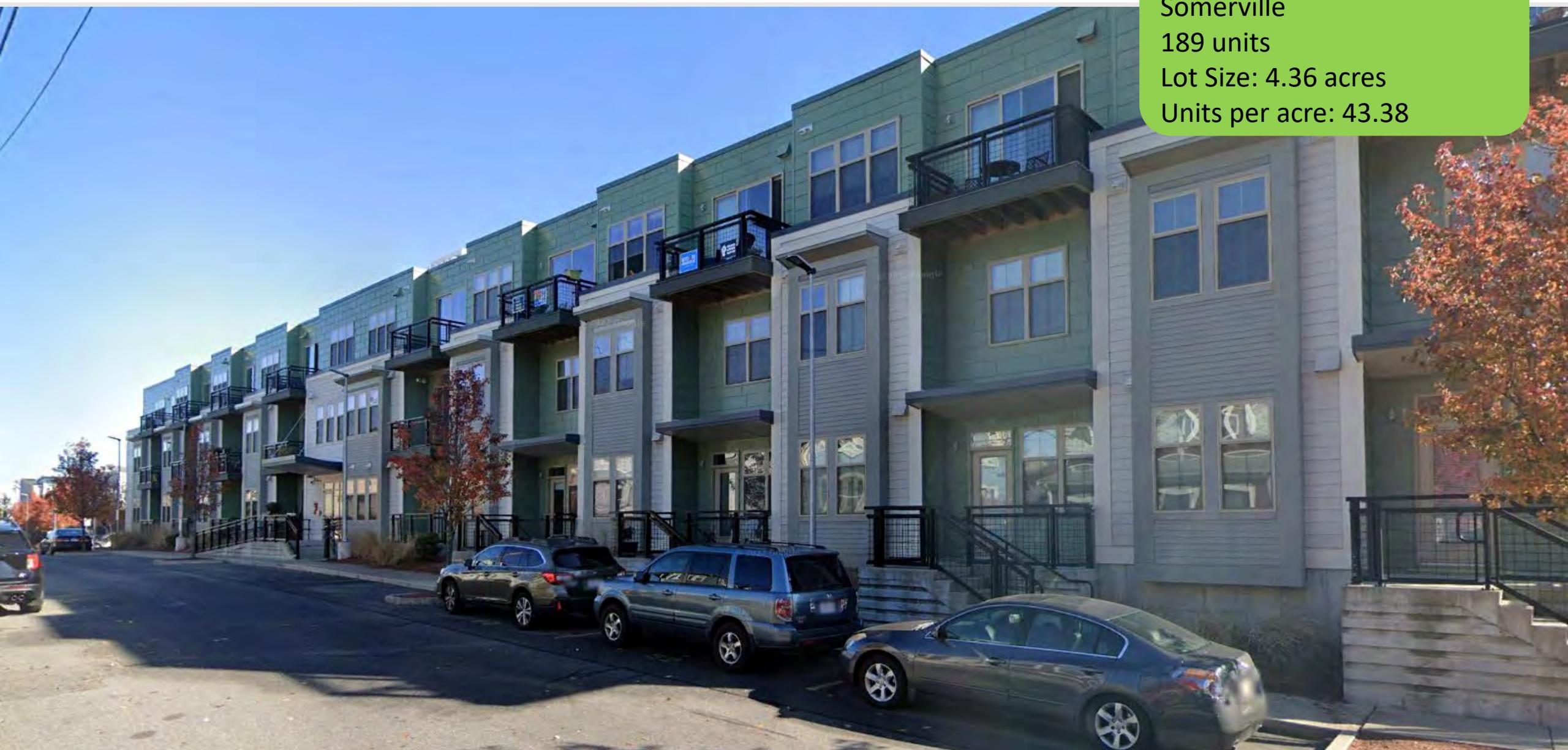
# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



Image credit: Google Earth

50 of these = 150 units  
6.5 acres  
Units/acre = 23

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS



Maxwell's Green

Somerville

189 units

Lot Size: 4.36 acres

Units per acre: 43.38

# LITTLETON STATION: OTHER OPTIONS

4 buildings for 189 units

Magoun Square  
Green Line



Somerville  
Community Path



# QUESTION TIME – GET READY!

Access the poll at

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Littleton0209>**



**POLL 1:**

**Clusters of Duplexes (or Triplices)**

# IN-MEETING POLL: WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

A

75 duplexes = 150 units  
8 acres  
Units per acre 19

50 triplexes =  
150 units



B

75 duplexes = 150 units  
11.25 acres  
Units/acre = 13

50 triplexes =  
150 units



# **POLL 2:**

## **Four-families**

# IN-MEETING POLL: WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

A

14.63 acres  
Units per acre 10.25

37.5 4-families = 150 units



B

6.89 acres  
Units per acre 21.8



C

8.6 acres  
Units per acre = 17.42



# **POLL 3:**

# **Height**

# IN-MEETING POLL: WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

A

7.5 20-unit buildings = 150 units  
9.45 acres  
Units per acre 15.9

B

50 triplexes = 150 units  
6.5 acres  
Units/acre = 23



# **POLL 4:**

# **Multi-building clusters #1**

# IN-MEETING POLL: WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

A

13.6 clusters of 11 units = 150 units  
10.64 acres  
Units per acre 14.09



Image credit: Bing Maps



B

15 clusters of 10 units = 150 units  
9.3 acres  
Units per acre 24



Units on both sites divided into three buildings.

# **POLL 5:**

# **Multi-building clusters #2**

# IN-MEETING POLL: WHICH DO YOU PREFER?

A

15 clusters of 2 5-unit buildings = 150 units  
16.5 acres  
Units/acre = 9



B

4 buildings = 189 units  
Lot Size: 4.36 acres  
Units per acre: 43.38



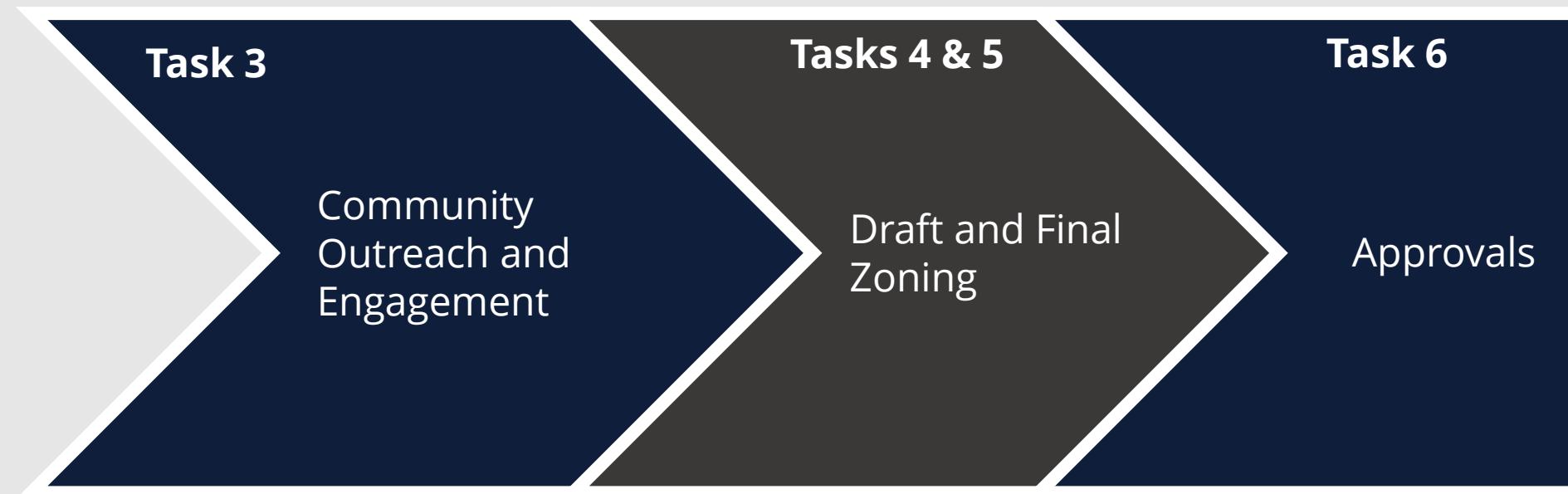
# Q&A

We will take questions about the typologies and densities.  
What do **you** think about the building types and level of density?

Please enter your questions and comments into the Q&A box.

# Next Steps

# ABOUT THE PROCESS: TIMELINE



**Public Meeting #2**  
**March 8**

**A new online questionnaire**  
**will be available until**  
**March 17.**

First draft due for  
staff review  
March 15

Second draft due  
for warrant  
March 21

Planning Board  
Presentation  
April 6

Planning Board  
Hearing  
April 20

Final Draft Zoning  
and Informational  
Handout for Town  
Meeting  
April 24

Town Meeting  
May 1

## NEXT STEPS

If you have questions about this process, please email Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner, at [mtoohill@littletonma.org](mailto:mtoohill@littletonma.org)

If you have additional thoughts about the presentation, please go to <https://www.littletonma.org/planning-board/pages/littleton-station-village-mbta-communities> the presentation and a link for comments will be on that page. The link will be open until **March 3**.

You can also take the poll, if you are reviewing this presentation after the meeting (see slide 56 for the link).

## NEXT STEPS

Are you interested in finding out more about this topic?

For a map of Littleton's current residential density, please go to:

<https://residensity.mhp.net/>

For an explanation of the MBTA Communities Act and the requirements, please go to: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities>

For data about Littleton's housing stock and needs, and the ability to compare Littleton to other communities, please go to

<https://mhpcenterforhousingdata.shinyapps.io/DataTown/#>

# MBTA Communities Zoning Study

## Initial Analysis | January 15, 2023

Thank you!

