

Littleton and compliance with MBTA Communities DRAFT requirements issued December 15, 2021. DRAFT POSITION PAPER – where are we TODAY and how do we MOVE FORWARD?

Littleton is just reviewing the MBTA Communities requirements issued on December 15, 2021. We are looking forward to fully complying with the requirements, taking into account the Town's current focus on Littleton Common, Town Sewer, and meeting State, Regional, and Local housing goals. If we focus first on new multifamily development in Littleton Common where public sewer and water will be available within the next 24 months, we will be able to realize this new development in a short period of time. While Littleton supports Transit-Oriented-Development immediately adjacent to the commuter rail station, adequate roadway and sewer infrastructure are not currently available, and not anticipated within the next 5 years. It took us 20 years to plan for, design, and fund construction of sewer infrastructure to support development at Littleton Common. With help from the State, Littleton can put zoning in place and plan for future infrastructure needs for TOD immediately adjacent to the Foster Street Commuter Rail Station to bring us into full compliance with all requirements for MBTA Communities, and to better meet local and regional housing need.

1. **Littleton Common:** Littleton's brand new 550 King Street/King Street Common (KC) District (adopted at the Fall 2021 TM) allows up to 800 multifamily units across a 39-acre zoning district. Pending further input from DHCD, it appears to me that this district brings Littleton MOST of the way into compliance, surpassing the MBTA Communities goal of at zoning that would allow at least 750 new multifamily housing units, but missing the goal of the size of the district by approximately 11 acres. Shuttle service between Littleton Common and the Foster Street commuter rail station will be re-invigorated once multifamily development is in place; sidewalks, trails, and bicycle paths will eventually provide new/additional connections between the King Street Common District and the Foster Street Commuter Rail station. Town Meeting appropriated \$27M to fund construction of town sewer for Littleton Common, including the KC district (IBM site); we have spent close to \$400,000 on planning studies to support redevelopment of Littleton Common (Master Plan, Littleton Common Redevelopment Roadmap, developing Littleton Common Form Based Code Zoning Bylaw, and the King Street Common Zoning Bylaw). All the work the Town has accomplished to meet State, Regional and Local sustainable development goals should "count", especially considering the several hundred new multifamily units in Littleton Common we anticipate to be constructed over the next 2 to 4 years.

To fully bring Littleton into compliance with the DRAFT MBTA Communities guidelines, I would suggest we undertake a phased approach. Phase 1 is to work through the permitting process for King Street Common, working in concert with Lupoli Development, the Littleton Sewer and Littleton Water Departments, MassDOT, and State and Federal infrastructure funding to realize the significant development potential in the King Street Common and Littleton Common Form-Based Code zoning districts. I would suggest that Littleton is an "unusual case", planning, funding, and supporting the development of hundreds of multifamily housing units that happens to be outside of the 0.5-miles to a transit station.

2. **Timelines:** Timelines outlined in the DRAFT guidance provide for a community "action plan" and "timeline". Implementation of the action plan, including adoption of a new zoning bylaw amendment must be completed by December 31, 2024. This allows Littleton time to fully support and respond to impacts of development at King Street Common and Littleton Common,

while looking forward to adopting a new zoning district immediately adjacent to our Foster Street Commuter Rail Station. Littleton is committed to:

- a. **By December 31, 2022:** Submit complete request for determination of compliance or notify DHCD of lack of full compliance.
- b. **By July 1, 2023:** Create and submit our “action plan” (with compliance timeline) and receive approval.
- c. **By December 31, 2023:** Adopt Zoning Bylaw amendment to allow TOD for Littleton Station Area.

3. **Littleton Station Area:** Littleton has completed a significant amount of work on planning for the Littleton station Area (Littleton Master Plan, Littleton Station Village Vision Plan, Design Guidelines for the Littleton Station Village Area, and a draft 40R Zoning Bylaw). Littleton will spend approximately \$400,000 on the design of roadway reconstruction for Foster Street to provide safe access from Taylor Street – past the commuter rail station – to King Street. There are no plans to provide municipal sewer to the Littleton Station Village area. Water supply will need to be developed, but a new potential well site now owned by the Littleton Water Department near Taylor Street will likely provide PFAS-free water for Littleton.

I would suggest that Littleton should take a progressive stance and add a zoning district near our Foster Street commuter rail station to support the development of multi-family, first-time home buyer, and other “housing choice” units. This will allow for future TOD that would serve to relieve traffic/congestion pressures by allowing residents to live right next to the commuter rail station. While Littleton ended up NOT bringing the 40R District proposal to the June 2021 Town Meeting as initially planned, we can build on the success of the King Street Common District to craft a zoning bylaw that meets the requirements of the MBTA Communities guidance while meeting local and regional housing need. The zoning bylaw could allow for phased development of the new TOD district, allowing sufficient time assure infrastructure needs of any development are met.

The previously-considered draft 40R District, at 51.4 acres, included the following requirements:

District Name “Littleton Station Village 40R” (LSV)	Acreage (Acres)	Maximum Density (Units per Acre)	Theoretical Number of Units	Maximum DRAFT 40R Bylaw
High-density LSV	26.0	20	526 Apartments	323 apartments
Medium-density LSV	9.0	12	107 Townhouse Units	80 townhouse units
Low-density LSV	16.2	8	130 Single-family Units	123 single-family units
TOTAL	51.2	10.3**		526 new housing units
Retail Store				Maximum 20,000 sf retail
Other Commercial (Offices, banks, restaurant, etc.)				Maximum 20,000 sf other commercial

** Please note that the 10.3 units per acre does not meet the minimum standard of 15 units per acre for MBTA Communities, so we have some work to do to finalize the draft zoning for TOD at the Foster Street commuter rail station. We may end up with a SMALLER district with a HIGHER density in order to meet the requirements.

MassHousing Partnership has reached out to Littleton to inquire about partnering with the Town as a “test case for compliance”, as a commuter rail community. My recommendation is to say “yes” to this opportunity – it allows us to work closely with the State on how not only comply with the statutory requirements, but to better meet local and regional housing need.

DRAFT