

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group

Thursday, March 7, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Charles River Room

Public Services Administration Building, 500 Dedham Avenue

AND

Virtual Meeting using Zoom

Meeting ID:

834 7583 6726

(Instructions for accessing below)

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US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 Then enter ID: **834 7583 6726**

Direct Link to meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83475836726>

- I. Welcome and Meeting Goals, *Heidi Frail and Natasha Espada, Co-Chairs*
- II. Approval of Minutes from HONE Meeting of December 20, 2023, January 18, 2024, and January 29, 2024
- III. Presentation of final maps and zoning parameters for the base and add-on scenario for MBTA Communities Compliance, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates*
- IV. Presentation of susceptibility to change analysis for the base and add-on scenario for MBTA Communities Compliance, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates*
- V. Presentation of fiscal impact analysis for the base and add-on scenario for MBTA Communities Compliance, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates*
- VI. Review of format for Community Meeting of March 28, 2024, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates*
- VI. Overview of Design Guidelines options for MBTA Communities Compliance, *Mark Gluesing, Chair, Design Review Board*

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group

Heidi Frail	Select Board (co-chair)
Natasha Espada	Planning Board (co-chair)
Kevin Keane	Select Board
Jeanne McKnight	Planning Board
Joshua Levy	Finance Committee
Ronald Ruth	Land Use Attorney
William Lovett	Real Estate Developer
Liz Kaponya	Renter
Michael Diener	Citizen at Large

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group Meeting

Town of Needham, Massachusetts

March 7, 2024



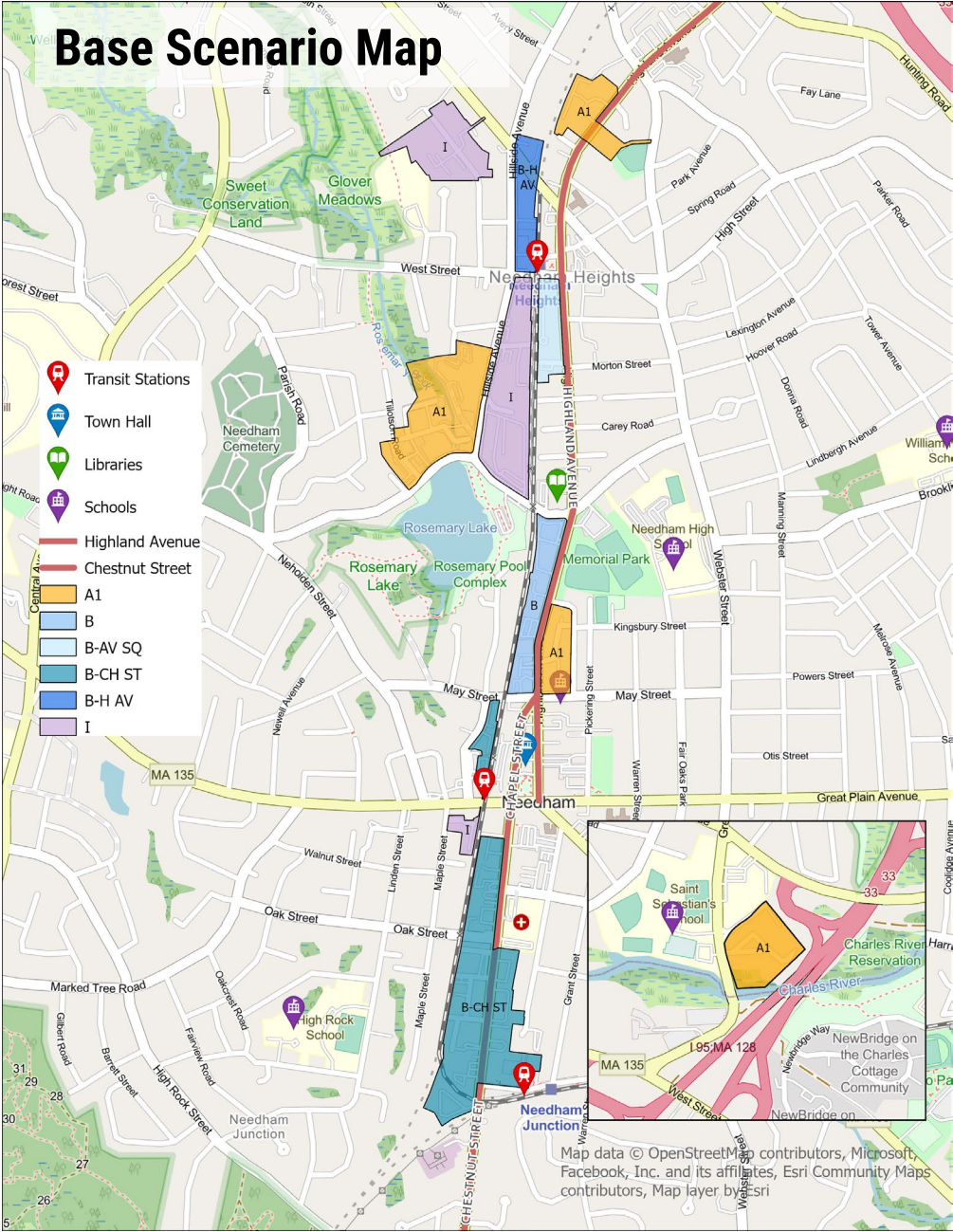
Content

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Updated Scenario Modeling Results

Base Scenario Zoning Metrics

	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street Business	Hillside Ave	Industrial
Minimum Lot Size	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
FAR	0.50		1.00	0.70	0.70	0.50
Max Blg Coverage						
Max Lot Coverage		25%				
Minimum Open Space (%)						
Open Space per Dwelling Unit						
FY Setback	25	10	10	25	25	25
Rear Setback	20	10	10	20	20	20
Side Setback	20	10	10	20	20	20
Parking per Unit	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Lot Area per Dwelling Unit						
Maximum Dwelling Units per Acre	18			18		



Base Scenario Results

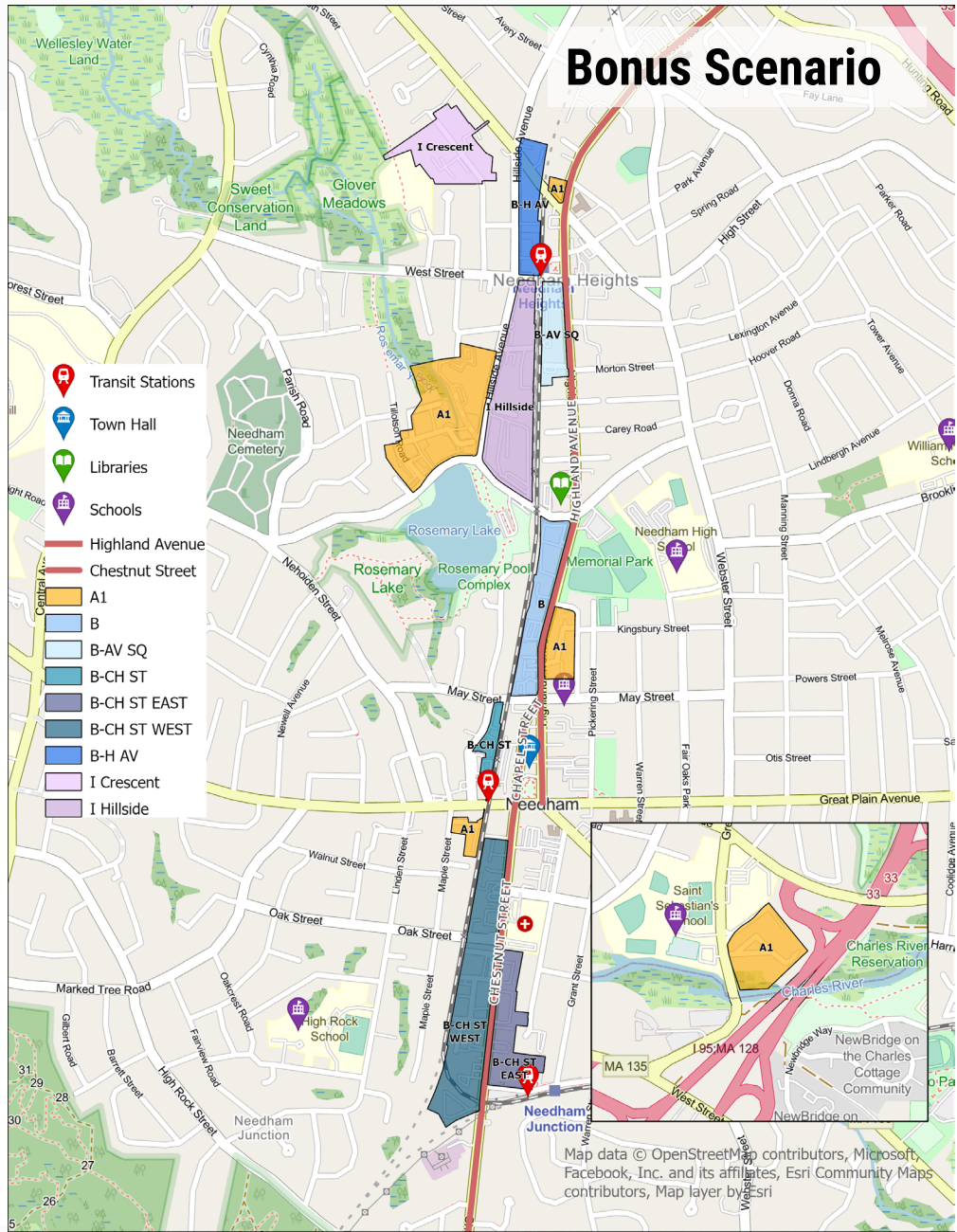
Model Outputs	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square	Chestnut Street	Hillside Ave	Industrial	Total
			Business	Business			
Gross Acreage	34.64	7.12	4.28	28.36	5.50	24.06	103.96
DDD Acreage	31.03	7.12	4.28	28.36	5.50	23.97	100.26
Unit Capacity	526	210	187	370	80	495	1,868
DU/AC	17.0	29.5	43.7	13.0	14.5	20.7	18.6

Bonus Scenario Overview

Bonus Scenario Zoning Metrics

	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street East Business	Chestnut Street West Business	Chestnut Street Business/Garden Street Overlay	Hillside Ave Business	Industrial - Crescent	Industrial - Hillside
Minimum Lot Size	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
FAR	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	0.75	1.0
Max Blg Coverage	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Max Lot Coverage	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Minimum Open Space (%)	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Open Space per Dwelling Unit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FY Setback	25	10	10	25	25	25	25	25	25
Rear Setback	20	0	0	20	20	20	20	20	20
Side Setback	20	0	0	20	20	20	20	20	20
Parking per Unit	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum Dwelling Units per Acre	36						24	24	24

Bonus Scenario Overview



Bonus Scenario Results

Model Outputs	Apartment 1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut Street East Business	Chestnut Street West Business	Chestnut Street Business/Garden Street Overlay	Hillside Ave Business	Industrial - Crescent	Industrial - Hillside	TOTALS
Gross Acreage	29.73	7.12	4.29	7.30	17.77	1.85	5.50	8.70	13.97	96.23
DDD Acreage	26.12	7.12	4.29	7.30	17.77	1.85	5.50	8.62	13.97	92.54
Unit Capacity	877	305	187	412	912	75	62	184	325	3,339
DU/AC	33.6	42.8	43.6	56.4	51.3	40.5	11.3	21.3	23.3	36.1

Scenario Unit Comparisons

Zoning District	Scenario Name			
	Existing Units	Existing Zoning	Base Scenario	Bonus Scenario
Apartment A1	588	526	526	877
Business	4	N/A	210	305
Avery Square Business	72	77	187	187
Chestnut St. East	46	987*	370	412
Chestnut St. West				912
Chestnut St./Garden St.				75
Hillside Ave Business	44	46	80	62
Industrial – Crescent	21	N/A	495	184
Industrial – Hillside				325
TOTAL UNITS	775	1,636	1,868	3,339

*Existing zoning assumes the Chestnut St. Overlay zoning.

Propensity for Change & Fiscal Impact Results

To test the fiscal impact of Needham’s two MBTA District Scenarios, RKG Associates constructed a fiscal impact model to understand the potential tax revenues from new development compared to the municipal and school costs to support that development.

MODEL ASSUMPTIONS

- Town tax rates
- Multi-family Valuation
 - Based on costs researched by RKG
- Existing property values and taxes
- Development program
- Incremental governmental expenditures
 - General government
 - Public safety (police and fire)
 - Public works
 - Schools
- Student generation rates per unit

CONSTRUCTION COST ASSUMPTIONS

Residential Type	Gross SQFT per Unit	Per SQFT Cost	Total Value per Unit
Studio Apartments	500	\$300	\$150,000
One Bed Apartments	750	\$300	\$225,000
Two Bed Apartments	1,050	\$300	\$315,000
Three Bed Apartments	1,250	\$300	\$375,000

Source: RS Means, CoStar, Needham Assessor Database, RKG Associates 2023

- RKG identified costs by department that are likely to increase with the addition of a new household in town. We anticipate costs such as police staff salaries, library expenditures, or maintenance of recreation fields to increase with new households while a department head’s salary or hours for Town Counsel to experience little to no impact.
- RKG identified all costs that are likely to vary (incremental costs) with the addition of new households as a subset of the Town’s total operational budget.
- Other Category accounts for debt service, unemployment, retirement, and insurance. Items not likely to increase substantially with the addition of a new housing unit.
- Once we establish the incremental budget, we must apportion that budget to residential and non-residential uses. For that we use a breakout of assessed value from Mass Department of Revenue (DOR) which shows 88% of Needham’s assessed value driven by residential with 9% driven by commercial/industrial property.

Variable Expenses by Town Department (FY24)

Use Category	FY 2024 Budget	Incremental Share of Budget	Residential Proportional Share @ 88%	Efficiency Adjustment	Adjusted Expenses
General Gov’t	\$14,358,516	\$6,338,432	\$5,577,820	10%	\$557,782
Public Safety - Fire	\$10,695,558	\$10,655,531	\$9,376,867	75%	\$7,032,650
Public Safety - Police	\$8,749,162	\$8,614,268	\$7,580,556	60%	\$4,548,334
Public Works	\$20,340,339	\$8,793,620	\$7,738,386	15%	\$1,160,758
Other	\$66,335,088	\$0	\$0	0%	\$0
TOTALS	\$120,478,663	\$34,401,851	\$30,273,629		\$13,299,524

Source: Town of Needham FY24 Budget, RKG Associates.

Assessed Value by Property Class (2023)

Class	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$10,715,862,649	88%
Commercial/Industrial	\$1,151,557,337	9%
Total	\$12,247,868,326	97%

Source: MA DOR 2022, RKG Associates.
Remaining 3% is personal property tax.

- After calculating the incremental costs by department and the share of that budget allocated to residential uses, we must calculate municipal costs on a per household (HH) basis. This forms our estimates for calculating future costs of the housing in MBTA Districts.
- The cost allocation by land use table to the right summarizes the calculations used to estimate the per HH cost. The incremental budget for each major category of town services is allocated to residential uses using the share of total assessed value on the prior page. Those allocations are then divided by the total number of occupied households in Needham. This calculation gives us an estimate of cost on a per HH or per FTE employee that we can apply to each scenario.

Total Households in Needham

Category	Totals
Total Households (HHs)	11,710

Source: US Census 2017-2021 Estimates.

Cost Allocation for Residential Units

Cost Category	Variable Budget	Cost per HH
General Gov't	\$557,782	\$47.63
Public Safety - Fire	\$7,032,650	\$600.57
Public Safety - Police	\$4,548,334	\$388.41
Public Works	\$1,160,758	\$99.13
Other	\$0	\$0.00
TOTALS	\$13,299,524	\$1,136

- RKG calculated the estimated number of school aged children that could result from the addition of each residential unit.
- RKG utilized school aged children (SAC) ratios from local Needham data from the school department on recently constructed multi-family developments and RKG’s proprietary list of residential development projects and SAC ratios from around the Greater Boston region.
- RKG then calculated an incremental education cost specific to Needham’s school budget based on 2022 budget information provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Using local costs only (net of state aid and grants), the estimated cost to educate a child in the Needham District was \$12,128. This accounts for 58% of the full cost to educate a child in Needham of \$19,829.
- By multiplying the local cost to educate a child by the number of school children in each scenario we can estimate total education cost. These costs, along with municipal costs, are then then netted against the gross property tax revenue for each scenario later in this analysis.

SCHOOL ASSUMPTIONS

Use Category	SAC Ratio per Unit
Studio – MKT	0.00
One Bedroom – MKT	0.00
Two Bedroom – MKT	0.06
Three Bedroom – MKT	0.50
Studio - AFF	0.00
One Bedroom – AFF	0.00
Two Bedroom – AFF	0.06
Three Bedroom – AFF	1.20

Budget Category	FY22 General Fund	% of Included Costs	Per Pupil Cost
Classroom Teachers	\$41,671,615	62%	\$7,492
Instructional Leadership	\$8,319,399	12%	\$1,496
Other Teaching Services	\$9,466,212	14%	\$1,702
Instructional Materials	\$3,579,993	5%	\$644
Transportation	\$1,070,662	2%	\$192
Pupil Services	\$3,346,074	5%	\$602
Total	\$67,453,955	58%	\$12,128

Source: DESE 2022, Residential Demographic Multipliers for Massachusetts, 2017, Town of Needham SAC Metrics, RKG Associates SAC Database.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

To calculate an estimated net fiscal impact for each district under each scenario....

$$\begin{array}{l} \boxed{\text{Number of Units}} \times \boxed{\text{Per Unit Revenue}} = \text{Gross Property Tax Revenue} \\ \boxed{\text{Number of Units}} \times \boxed{\text{Per Unit Municipal Costs}} = \text{Municipal Costs} \\ \boxed{\text{Number of Units}} \times \boxed{\text{SAC Ratio}} \times \boxed{\text{Per Child School Costs}} = \text{Education Costs} \end{array}$$

$$\text{Gross Property Tax Revenue} - \text{Municipal Costs} - \text{Education Costs} = \boxed{\text{Net Fiscal Impact}}$$

Propensity for Change Modeling

17

The Rate of Change Analysis uses a financial feasibility model for multifamily development that derives land value utilizing market return metrics, asking rents, and construction costs.

The analytical approach can be simplified into the following steps:

- Identify development scenarios based on height, unit, parking, and affordability requirements.
- Run a financial feasibility model for each scenario based on market factors (e.g., rents, rates, construction costs, return expectations).
- Using target return metrics from the following step, derive land values required to meet an Return on Cost of 6.5%.
- Identify parcels that currently have values below the established threshold. These are parcels with the highest probability for turnover and redevelopment if the zoning is changed.

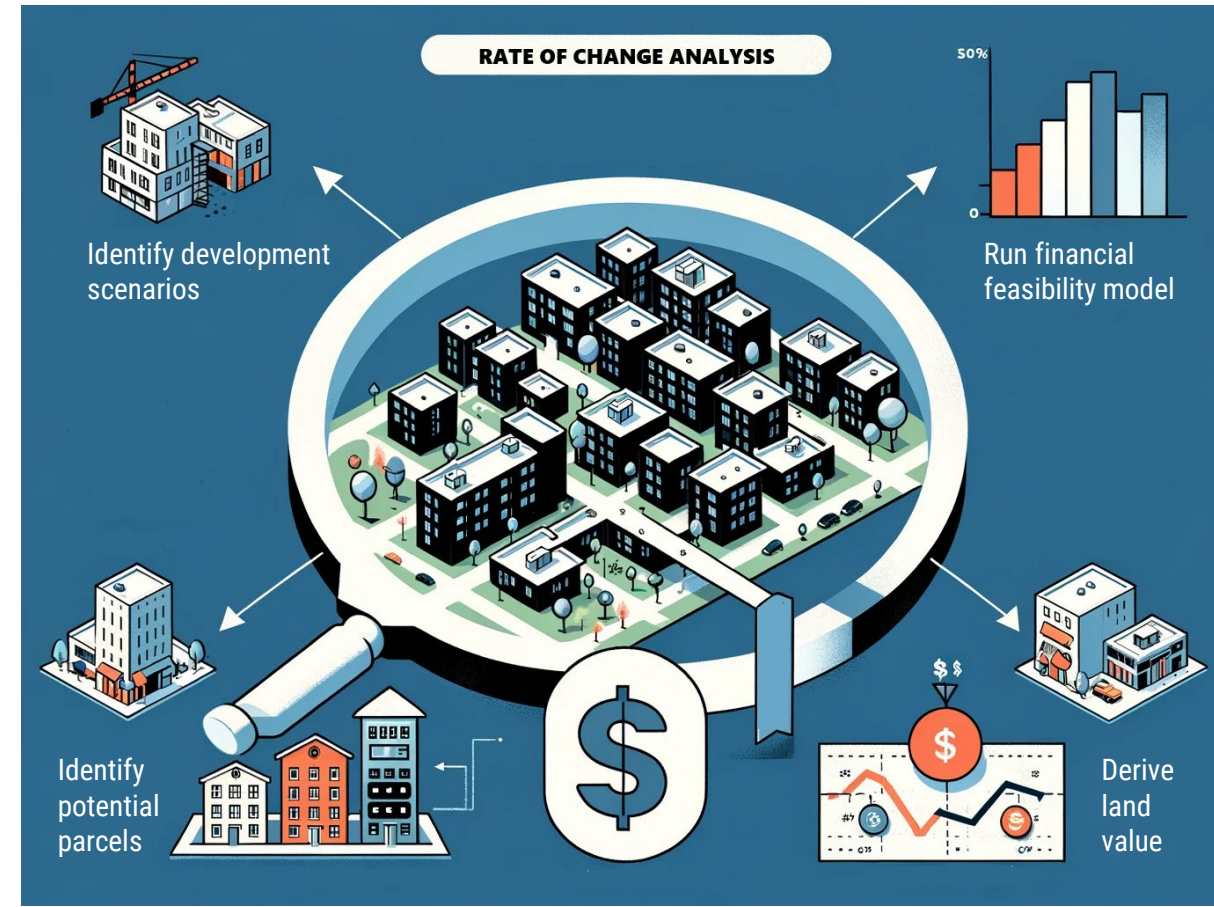
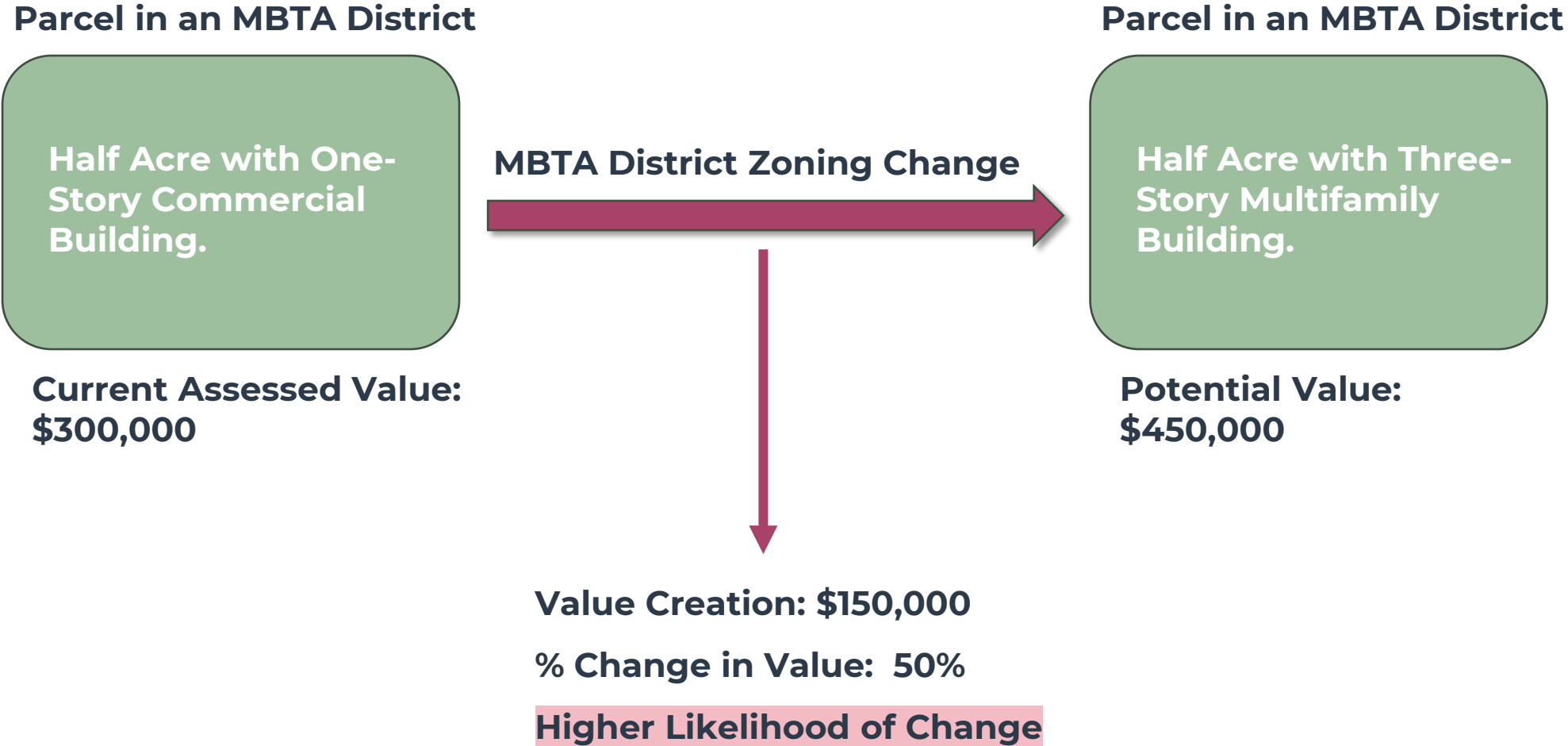


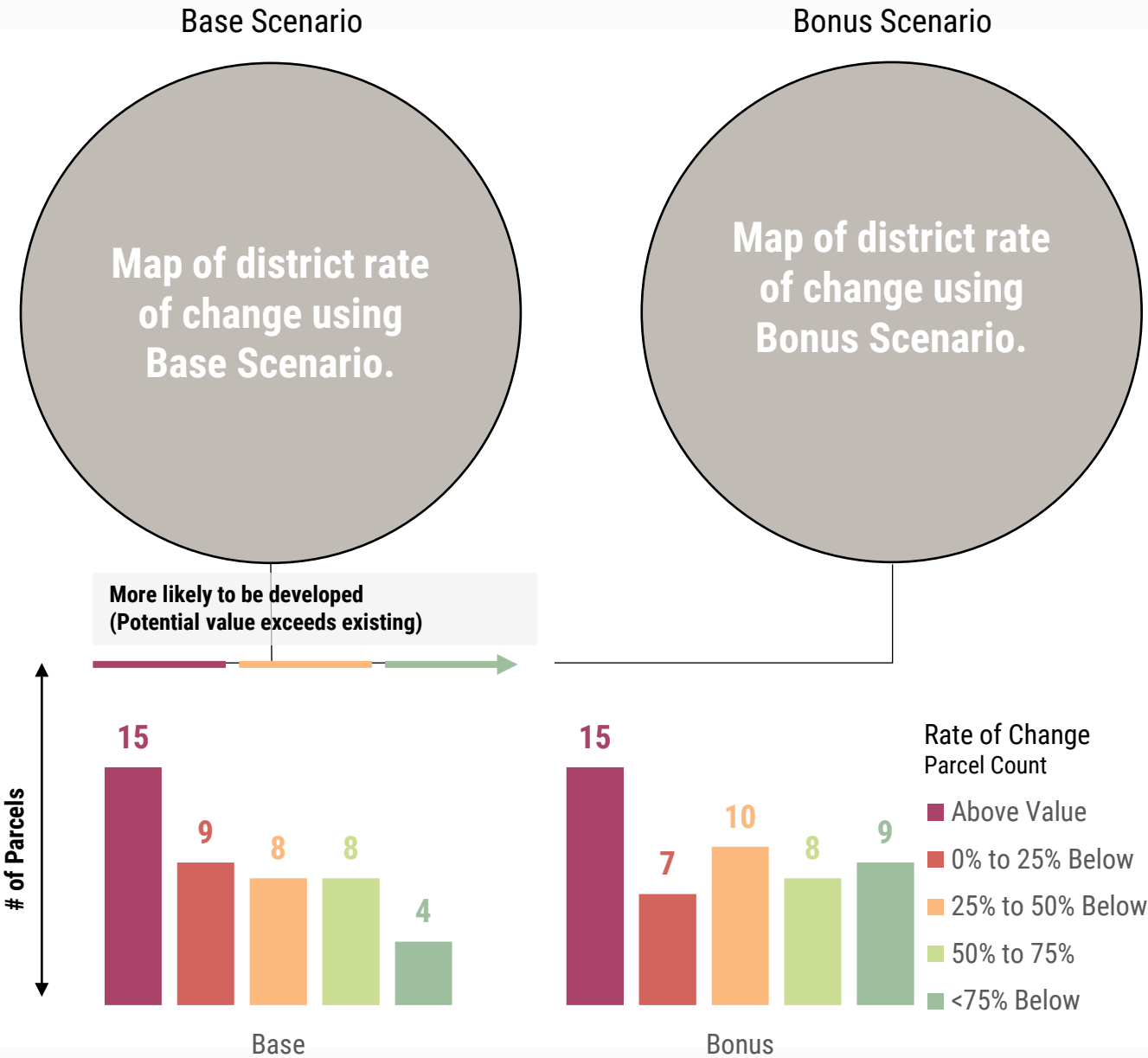
Image Source: RKG Associates, Inc.



OVERVIEW SLIDE

District Requirements	
Height	District requirements from MBTA Compliance Model
Max DU / AC	
FAR	
Minimum Lot Size	
Model Scenario	
Construction Type	Development Scenario Assumptions (Representative of average project type in district)
Units	
Parking Max	
Parking Type	

Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMeans

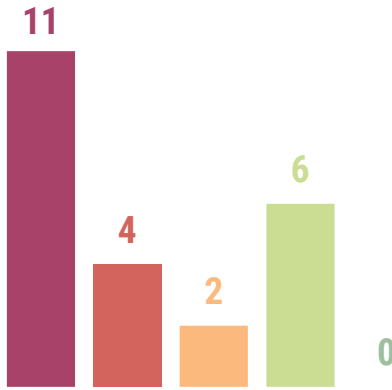
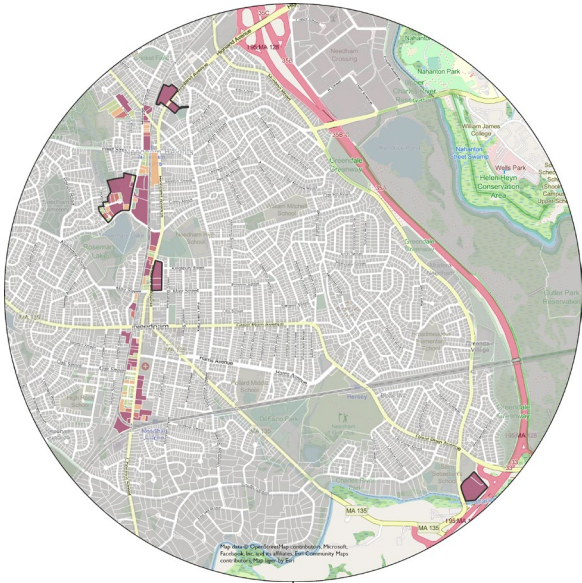


A 1 DISTRICT

	BASE	BONUS
District Requirements		
Height	3	4
Max DU / AC	18	36
FAR	0.5	1
Minimum Lot Size	20,000	20,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	25	50
Parking Ratio	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

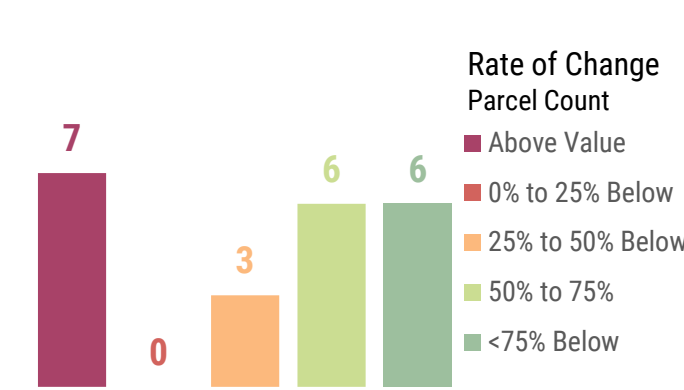
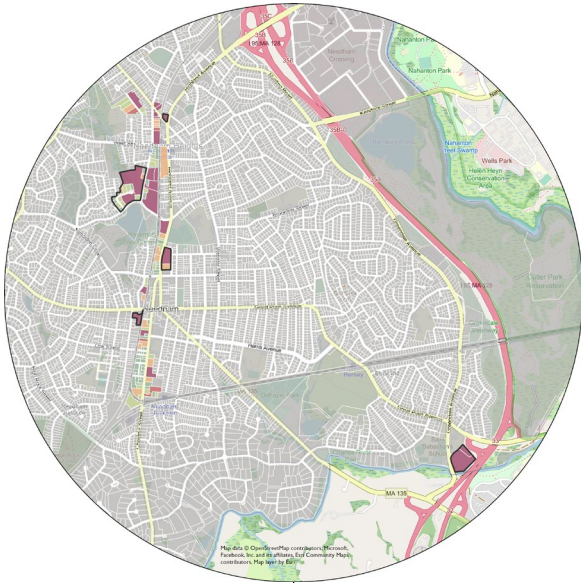
Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMeans

Base Scenario



Base

Bonus Scenario



Bonus

RKG Associates & Innes Associates

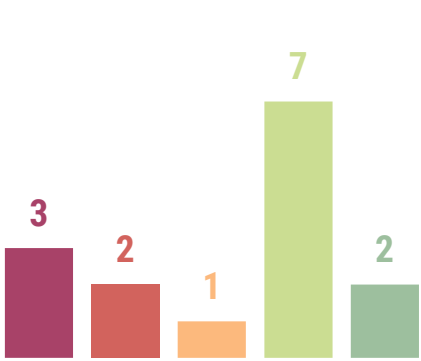
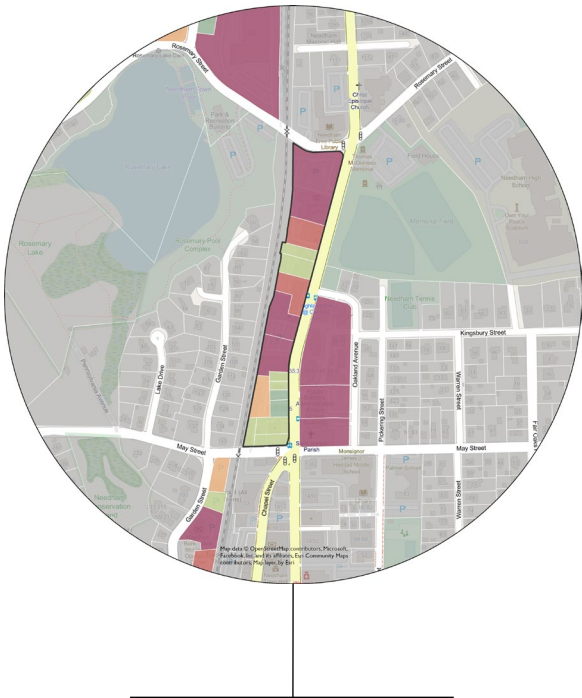
Propensity for Change Modeling

B DISTRICT

	BASE	BONUS
District Requirements		
Height	3	4
Max DU / AC		48
FAR		2
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	10,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	25	40
Parking Ratio	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

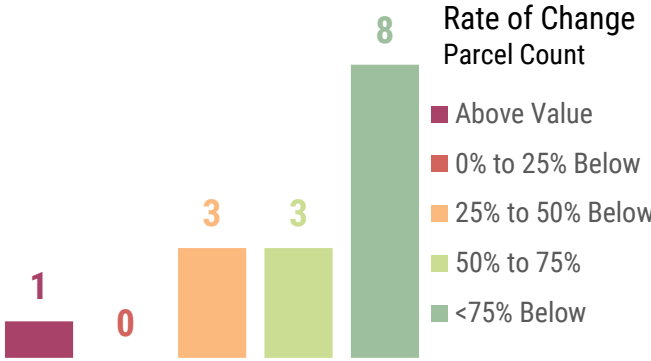
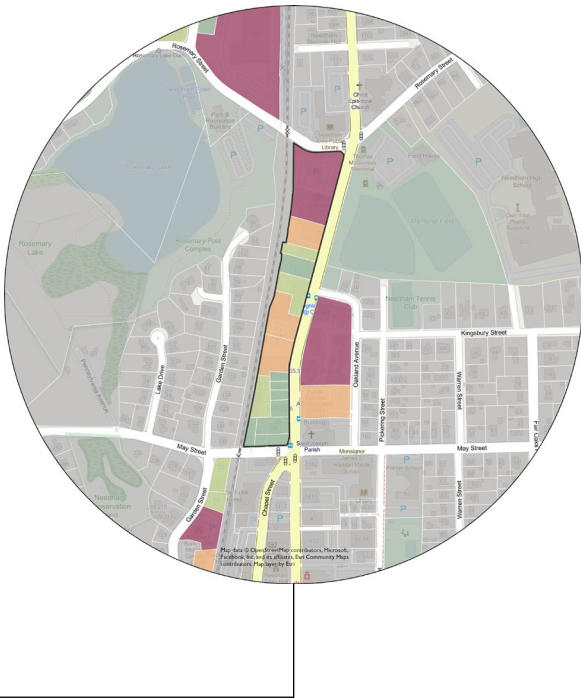
Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMears

Base Scenario



Base

Bonus Scenario



Bonus

RKG Associates & Innes Associates

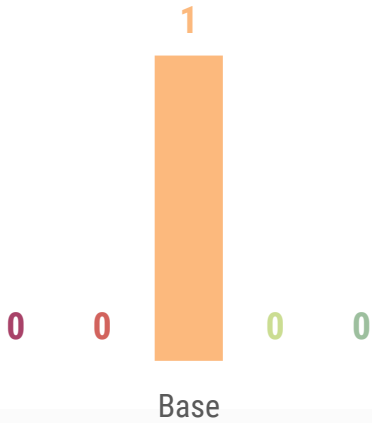
Propensity for Change Modeling

B - A V S Q DISTRICT

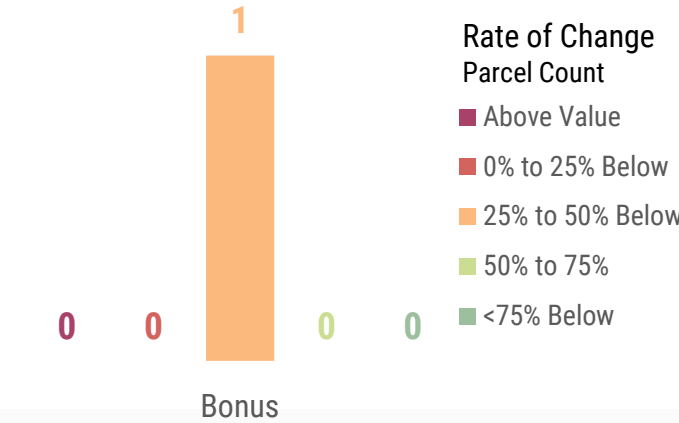
	BASE	BONUS
District Requirements		
Height	3	3
Max DU / AC		
FAR	1	1
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	10,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	150	150
Parking Ratio	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMeans

Base Scenario



Bonus Scenario



Rate of Change
Parcel Count

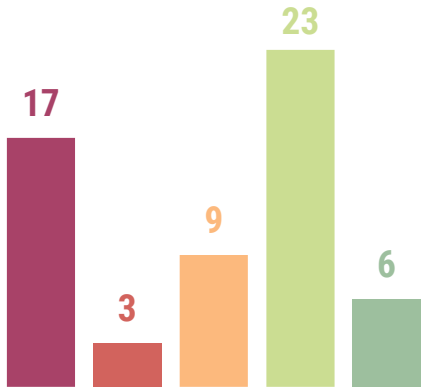
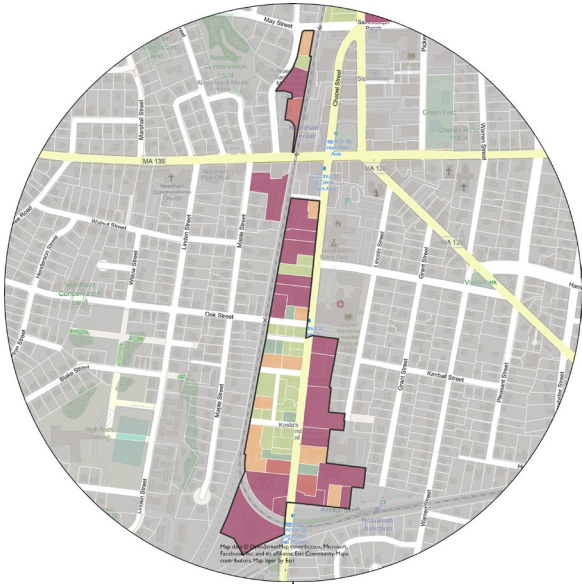
- Above Value
- 0% to 25% Below
- 25% to 50% Below
- 50% to 75%
- <75% Below

B - C H S T DISTRICT

	BASE	BONUS
District Requirements		
Height	3	3
Max DU / AC	18	
FAR	0.7	2
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	10,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	15	25
Parking Ratio	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

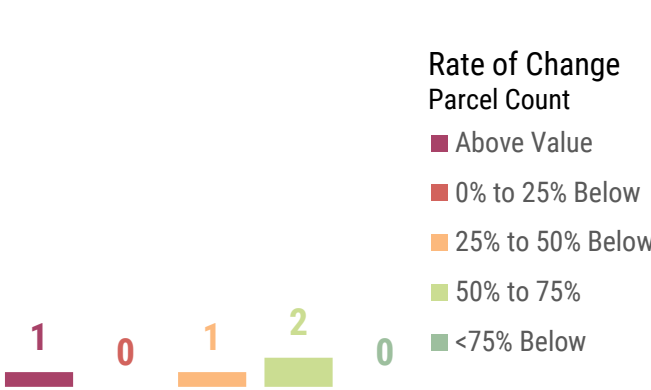
Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMeans

Base Scenario



Base

Bonus Scenario



Bonus

RKG Associates & Innes Associates

Propensity for Change Modeling

B - C H S T E A S T & W E S T

BONUS		BONUS
District Requirements		
Height	3	4
Max DU / AC		
FAR	2	2
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	10,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	40	50
Parking Ratio	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

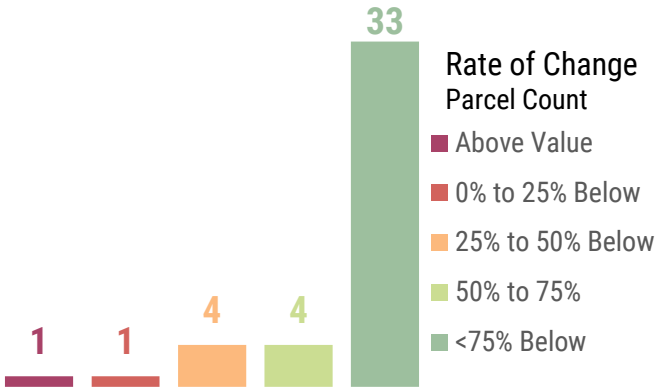
Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMeans

B-CH ST EAST



East

B-CH ST WEST



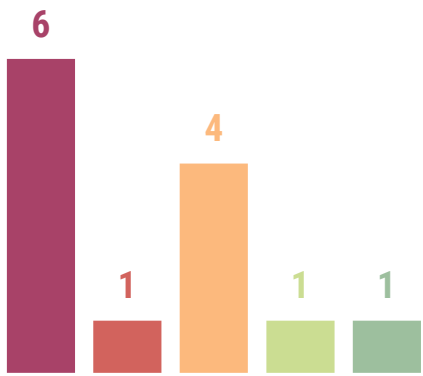
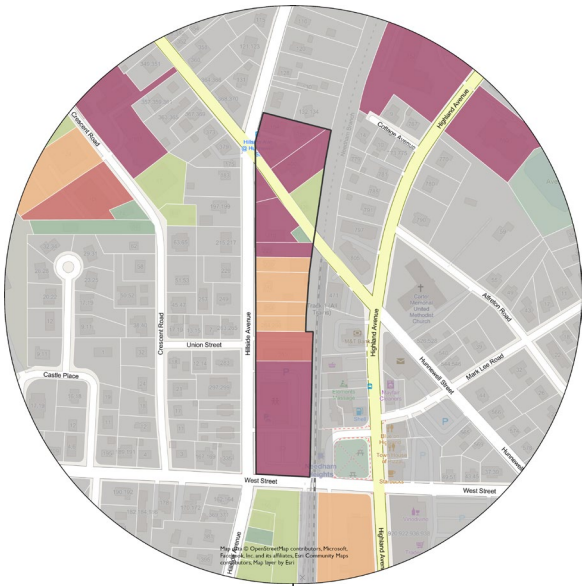
West

B - H A V D I S T R I C T

	BASE	BONUS
District Requirements		
Height	3	3
Max DU / AC		24
FAR	0.7	1
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	10,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	15	15
Parking Ratio	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

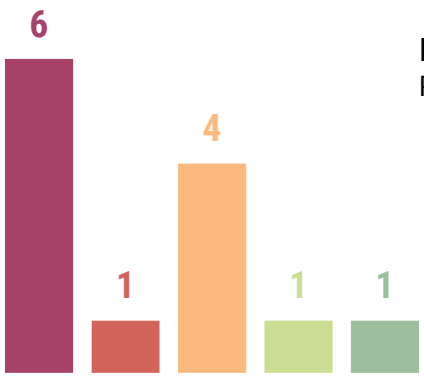
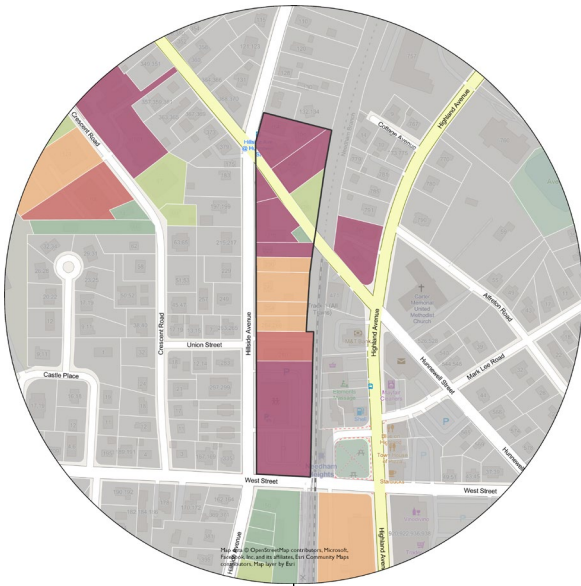
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Base Scenario



Base

Bonus Scenario



Bonus

RKG Associates & Innes Associates

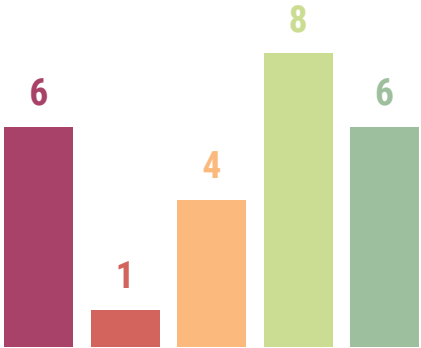
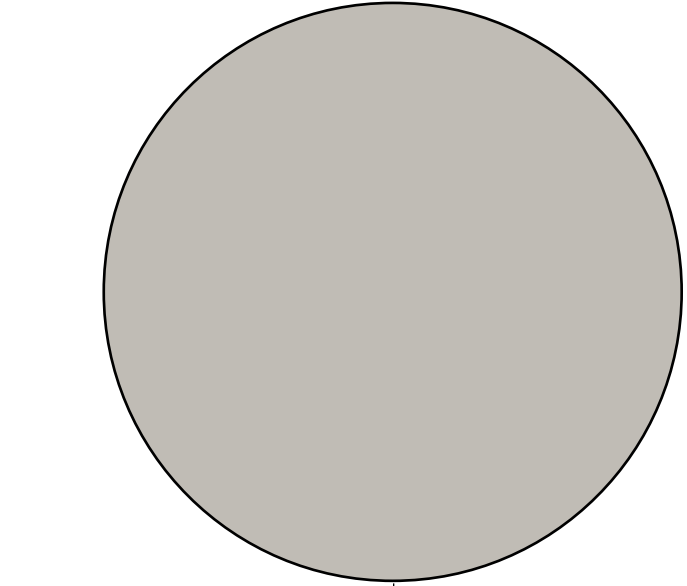
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

BASE -

District Requirements		
Height	3	-
Max DU / AC		-
FAR	0.5	-
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	-
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	-
Units	25	-
Parking Ratio	1	-
Parking Type	Surface	-

Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHL, RSMMeans

Base Scenario



Base

Rate of Change
Parcel Count

- Above Value
- 0% to 25% Below
- 25% to 50% Below
- 50% to 75%
- <75% Below

Propensity for Change Modeling

I - C R E S C E N T & I - H I L L S I D E

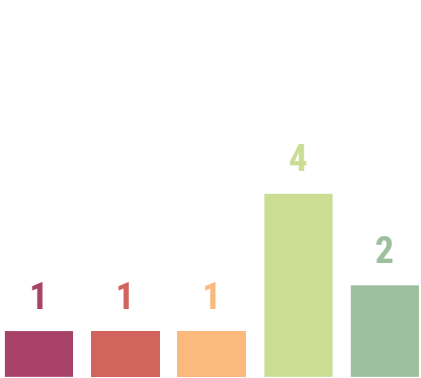
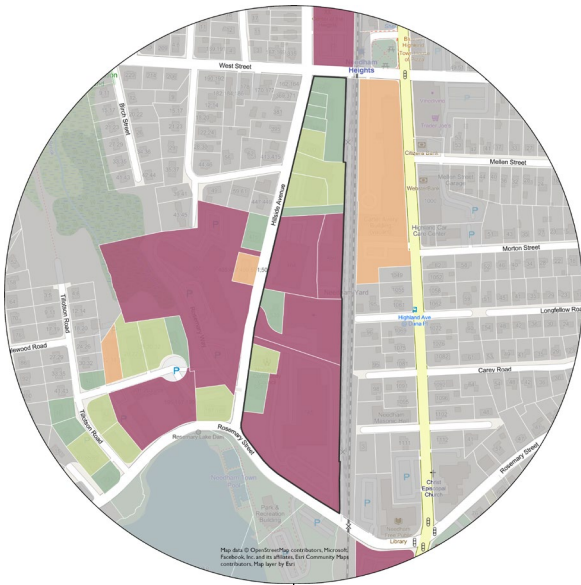
BONUS		
District Requirements		
Height	3	3
Max DU / AC	24	24
FAR	0.75	1
Minimum Lot Size	10,000	10,000
Model Scenario		
Construction Type	Wood Frame	Wood Frame
Units	25	40
Parking Max	1	1
Parking Type	Surface	Surface

Source: MassGIS, Town of Needham, CoStar, EOHLC, RSMeans

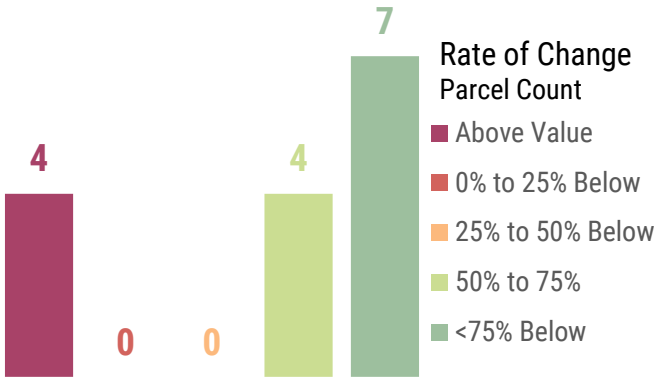
I-Crescent



I-Hillside



Crescent



Hillside

RKG Associates & Innes Associates

Fiscal Impact Analysis –Scenario Results

District Name	Base Propensity Units	Base Full Build Out Units	Bonus Propensity Units	Bonus Full Build Out Units
Apartment 1	0	526	82	877
Business	43	210	111	305
Avery Square Business	0	187	0	187
Chestnut Street East	50	370	137	412
Chestnut Street West	-	-	560	912
Chestnut Street Business	-	-	33	75
Hillside Ave Business	8	80	6	62
Industrial	121	495	-	-
Industrial - Crescent	-	-	79	184
Industrial - Hillside	-	-	91	325
TOTALS	222	1,868	1,099	3,339

Fiscal Impact Analysis – Base Scenario Results

Base – Propensity Model

District Name	Base Propensity	
	Units	Net Fiscal Impact
Apartment 1	0	\$0
Business	43	\$50,683
Avery Square Business	0	\$0
Chestnut Street Business	50	\$66,830
Hillside Avenue	8	\$4,840
Industrial	121	\$157,849
TOTALS	222	\$280,202

District Name	Pupils
Apartment 1	0
Business	4
Avery Square Business	0
Chestnut Street Business	4
Hillside Avenue	1
Industrial	10
TOTALS	19

Base – Full Build Model

District Name	Base Full Build	
	Units	Net Fiscal Impact
Apartment 1	526	\$704,026
Business	210	\$278,262
Avery Square Business	187	\$249,461
Chestnut Street Business	370	\$489,694
Hillside Avenue	80	\$99,652
Industrial	495	\$656,770
TOTALS	1,868	\$2,477,865

District Name	Potential Pupils
Apartment 1	42
Business	17
Avery Square Business	15
Chestnut Street Business	30
Hillside Avenue	7
Industrial	40
TOTALS	151

Base – Propensity Model

District Name	Base Propensity	
	CPA Tax	Excise Tax
Apartment 1	\$0	\$0
Business	\$2,961	\$25,772
Avery Square Business	\$0	\$0
Chestnut Street Business	\$3,443	\$29,967
Hillside Avenue	\$521	\$4,795
Industrial	\$8,331	\$72,521
TOTALS	\$15,256	\$133,055

Base – Full Build Model

District Name	Base Full Build	
	CPA Tax	Excise Tax
Apartment 1	\$36,216	\$315,255
Business	\$14,459	\$125,862
Avery Square Business	\$12,875	\$112,077
Chestnut Street Business	\$25,475	\$221,757
Hillside Avenue	\$5,508	\$47,948
Industrial	\$34,081	\$296,675
TOTALS	\$128,614	\$1,119,574

Fiscal Impact Analysis – Bonus Scenario Results

31

Bonus – Propensity Model

District Name	Bonus Propensity	
	Units	Net Fiscal Impact
Apartment 1	82	\$104,266
Business	111	\$146,908
Avery Square Business	0	\$0
Chestnut Street East	137	\$182,630
Chestnut Street West	560	\$746,075
Chestnut Street Business	33	\$36,795
Hillside Ave Business	6	\$1,987
Industrial - Crescent	79	\$97,345
Industrial - Hillside	91	\$112,899
TOTALS	1,099	\$1,428,905

District Name	Pupils
Apartment 1	7
Business	9
Avery Square Business	0
Chestnut Street East	11
Chestnut Street West	45
Chestnut Street Business	3
Hillside Ave Business	1
Industrial - Crescent	7
Industrial - Hillside	8
TOTALS	91

Bonus – Full Build Model

District Name	Bonus Full Build	
	Units	Net Fiscal Impact
Apartment 1	877	\$1,174,145
Business	305	\$400,389
Avery Square Business	187	\$249,461
Chestnut Street East	412	\$550,197
Chestnut Street West	912	\$1,218,501
Chestnut Street Business	75	\$100,246
Hillside Ave Business	62	\$82,385
Industrial - Crescent	184	\$242,540
Industrial - Hillside	325	\$434,398
TOTALS	3,339	\$4,452,262

District Name	Pupils
Apartment 1	70
Business	25
Avery Square Business	15
Chestnut Street East	33
Chestnut Street West	73
Chestnut Street Business	6
Hillside Ave Business	5
Industrial - Crescent	15
Industrial - Hillside	26
TOTALS	268

Bonus – Propensity Model

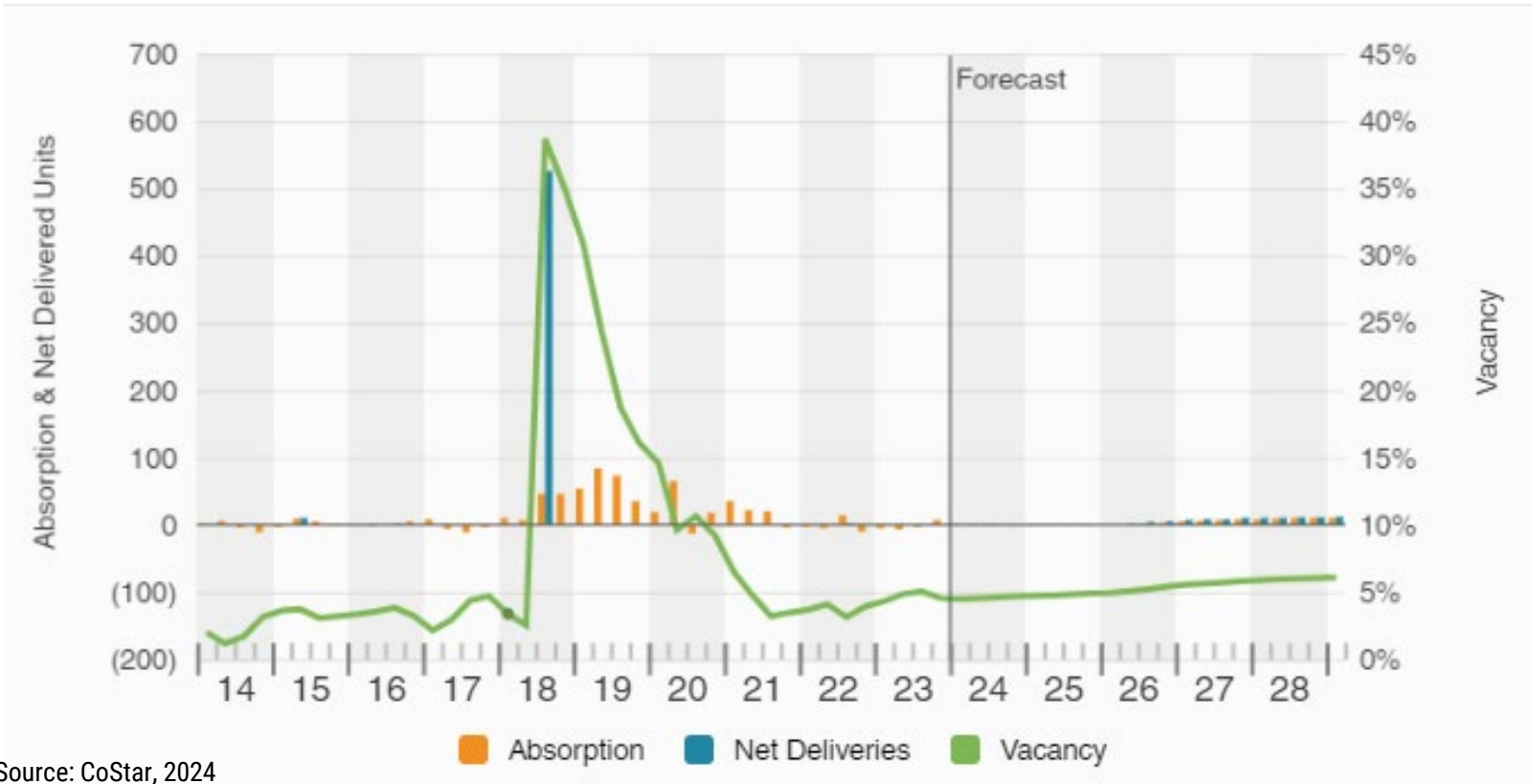
District Name	Bonus Propensity	
	CPA Tax	Excise Tax
Apartment 1	\$5,646	\$49,146
Business	\$7,642	\$66,527
Avery Square Business	\$0	\$0
Chestnut Street East	\$9,433	\$82,110
Chestnut Street West	\$38,557	\$335,633
Chestnut Street Business	\$2,188	\$19,104
Hillside Ave Business	\$419	\$3,596
Industrial - Crescent	\$5,439	\$47,348
Industrial - Hillside	\$6,265	\$54,540
TOTALS	\$75,589	\$658,004

Bonus – Full Build Model

District Name	Bonus Full Build	
	CPA Tax	Excise Tax
Apartment 1	\$60,383	\$525,625
Business	\$21,000	\$182,800
Avery Square Business	\$12,875	\$112,077
Chestnut Street East	\$28,367	\$246,930
Chestnut Street West	\$62,792	\$546,602
Chestnut Street Business	\$5,164	\$44,951
Hillside Ave Business	\$4,269	\$37,159
Industrial - Crescent	\$12,669	\$110,279
Industrial - Hillside	\$22,377	\$194,787
TOTALS	\$229,896	\$2,001,210

Net Absorption of Multifamily Units

Absorption, Net Deliveries & Vacancy



Source: CoStar, 2024

Period	Absorption	Net Deliveries
2023	(8)	-
2022	(4)	2
2021	73	-
2020	89	-
2019	246	-
2018	109	526
2017	(12)	-
2016	2	2
2015	10	10
2014	(7)	-

Source: CoStar, 2024

When larger projects are delivered in Needham, annual absorption has average about 100 units per year. At that pace, it could take 19 years to absorb the Base Scenario Full Build and 34 years to absorb the Bonus Full Build.

It is worth noting that over the past 10 years, Needham has delivered only 53 units per year on average with most years showing no new deliveries of multifamily housing.

Public Meeting 3 Overview

Public Meeting #3:

Date – March 28th

Time – 7:00 PM

Location – Powers Hall

Agenda:

- 7:05PM – Meeting Start
 - Welcome from Co-Chairs
 - Update on Process to Date
- 7:15PM – Consultant Presentation
 - Review Base and Bonus Scenarios
 - Review Propensity for Change Results
 - Review Fiscal Impact Analysis
 - Discuss Keeping Existing Affordability Thresholds
- 7:45PM – Open Mic Comment/Questions
- 8:50PM – Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Housing Needham Advisory Group (HONE)
Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2023

Place: Charles River Room, 500 Dedham Ave, Needham and Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Present: Co-Chair, Heidi Frail; Co-Chair, Natasha Espada; Liz Kaponya, Kevin Keane, Joshua Levy, William Lovett, Jeanne McKnight, Ronald Ruth
Remote: Michael Diener
Absent: None
Staff: Katie King, Deputy Town Manager; Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development; Alexandra Clee, Assistant Town Planner
Guest: Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

At 7:00 pm, H. Frail called the meeting to order. The meeting is being video recorded.

I. Welcome and Meeting Goals, Heidi Frail and Natasha Espada, Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Frail stated that the HONE Advisory Group will not recommend the Hersey Station area for modeling by the Consultants for the following reasons:

1. There is not enough usable land within the Neighborhood Business District at Hersey Station to make a district an MBTA compliant district with the MBTA Communities Act of 5 contiguous acres.
2. The 1.5-acre MBTA parking lot can't be counted for MBTA Compliance as the land is publicly owned.
3. HONE Group has decided not to recommend rezoning 4.5 acres of single-family residences to make Hersey Station an MBTA Communities compliant district.

The HONE mission is to create a compliant MBTA Communities District to pass at Town Meeting. HONE will recommend to the Planning Board the Hersey Station area business parcels be rezoned outside of the MBTA Communities process. Ms. McKnight noted that Panellas market on Central Avenue recently had an overlay to allow for multi-family in a mixed-use setting and this overlay could serve as a model for the Planning Board.

II. Approval of Minutes from HONE Meetings of September 7, 2023, October 5, 2023, October 18, 2023, November 9, 2023, and November 15, 2023.

MOTION: J. Levy moved to approve HONE Meeting Minutes of 9/7/23, 10/5/23, 11/9/23 and 11/15/23.

SECONDED: N. Espada

ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Espada, aye; H. Frail, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; K. Keane, aye; J. Levy, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

MOTION: R. Ruth moved to approve HONE Meeting Minutes of 10/18/23.

SECONDED: J. McKnight

ABSTAINED: J. Levy was not present on 10/18/23.

ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Españada, aye; H. Frail, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; K. Keane, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-0-1

III. Review of Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Compliance Modeling Results for Studied Scenarios, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

E. Halvorsen explained 6 scenarios from the presentation, *Housing Needham (HONE), Town Visioning for Multi-Family Housing.ppt*. The presentation is available in the Meeting Packet at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

HONE members discussed the 6 Scenarios presented in the light of height and density, areas with or without General Residence that do or do not meet MBTA Communities compliance, and areas that could be made compliant as MBTA Communities Districts.

Members discussed contiguity in Scenario 3 versus Scenario 2. Scenario 3 has lower density but more units. Downtown buildings lack vibrancy. Scenario 3 would encourage vibrancy.

Members discussed whether or not to incentivize mixed use in other Scenarios. Consultants specified a 51% approval vote is required if seeking zoning for a housing use overlay. A two-thirds majority vote is required for mixed use other than housing only.

Consultants suggest separating in the Housing Plan what to accomplish with MBTA Communities zoning versus other zoning. MBTA will not work for everything.

Members discussed 3 Scenarios: minimum, middle, and maximum ground concepts ~~Scenarios~~. Consultants modeled unit density per parcel in the General Residence District. Members discussed proposing targeted units per acre rather than height specific. Create a control for the number of units per lot versus per acre and where to add density in each District.

Once the prime Scenario is approved, Town Staff will talk with Police, Fire, DPW, and schools regarding building infrastructure, capacity, and school enrollment in the Due Diligence process.

Members discussed Districts for consultants to model for compliance with MBTA Communities Law.

J. McKnight, a Rosemary Ridge condominium homeowner and HONE Board member, will refrain from discussion of upzoning the Apartment A-1 districts and/or rezoning the Industrial District along Hillside Avenue to allow multi-family housing as an additional use.

Members will keep boundary Districts the same on Chestnut St. Center Business District and Avery Square and add density to get the maximum Scenario then get public feedback.

Members discussed modeling a 5 story height cap for Chestnut St. Center and Avery Square while keeping all General Residential.

HONE Members expressed interest in having the Consultants model the 3 Scenarios as presented, two Scenarios as is: Scenario 1 for minimum ground, Scenario 3 for middle ground, and Scenario 6 as maximum ground to have density created to comply with MBTA Communities.

~~**MOTION:** H. Frail moved to have Consultants model the 3 Scenarios as presented, two Scenarios as is: Scenario 1 for minimum ground, Scenario 3 for middle ground, and Scenario 6 as maximum ground to have density created to comply with MBTA Communities.~~

~~**SECONDED:** K. Keane~~

~~**ROLL CALL VOTE:** M. Diener, aye; N. Espanada, aye; H. Frail, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; K. Keane, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.~~

~~**MOTION CARRIES: 9-0**~~

IV. Review of Alternative Affordability Percentage Thresholds Analysis, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Consultants presented the Economic Feasibility Analysis (EFA) available in the Meeting Packet at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

MBTA Communities Act guidelines require an EFA be completed for any community that wants inclusionary zoning (a set-aside for affordable units within a residential development over a certain number of units) higher than 10%.

For example, if a parcel ~~will contain~~contains over a certain number of units, 12.5% of units must be set aside as deed-restricted affordable for people earning less than 80% of the area median income.

MBTA guidelines limit inclusionary zoning thresholds to 10% of total units at or below 80% of AMI for income restricted units. The EFA is can support an exception that allows higher limits. The model tests Scenarios to determine feasibility if inclusionary zoning is increased.

Consultants worked with EOHLC to develop EFA guidelines. They built a model for other communities. It is a point in time analysis. Assumptions and Return on Costs were discussed.

Consultants will clarify for the public that MBTA Communities Act will not create more than a set percentage of affordable housing.

If the Town wants inclusionary zoning, it must comply with the State and ~~and~~ the EFA must be part of this package unless HONE members decide on inclusionary zoning between 0% and 10%. Because we are already at 12 1/2% in some zoning districts~~areas~~, HONE should make a recommendation as part of its submission ~~this recommendation~~ to the State by April.

V. Review of Fiscal Impact Model & Analysis Results, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates

Consultants presented the *Housing Needham (HONE), Fiscal Impact Model & Analysis Results* presentation available in the Meeting Packet at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

The [Fiscal Impact Analysis \(FIA\)](#) measures the impact of a hypothetical development scenario by comparing gross property taxes with municipal and school costs with positive impact if revenue outweighs costs. At the time, Consultants had not met with departments, but had received some data from the town, including department staffing and budget information from the finance director.

The mixed-use scenario was not modeled at this time, but Consultants have a commercial module. The model separately analyzes police, fire, DPW, schools, and general government (everything else).

The modeling approach is different for schools versus other departments as it estimates the number of new students. Modeling for the schools included actual data from the school department about the types of housing units where students live. It was noted that the number of students in prior developments was less than what the town's demographer had projected. For units with three bedrooms, estimated numbers were increased from Needham's actual experience to project costs more conservatively (i.e., higher). Consultant noted that the total per student cost from the model was likely high, but a conservative estimate.

Consultants shared model assumptions used. Consultants will meet with departments and schools in January to go over analysis results. The FIA [is focuses on](#) operating costs, not capital expenses. One purpose of the meetings with departments will be to review potential capital costs.

The analysis calculated an estimated net fiscal impact for each District under each Scenario. The preliminary analysis showed a positive fiscal impact to the levy, with additional revenue from CPA and vehicle excise taxes.

V.VI. Review Strategy for January 18 Community Meeting, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

The public meeting will be offered in-person with a hybrid option. Consultants will present the 3 Scenarios. A public feedback survey will be ready in the room and on-line to answer specific questions. The survey will remain open for two weeks so people can watch the video recording of the public meeting. HONE members will hear public comments. Members will answer clarifying questions. Complex answers will be provided after the public provide survey responses.

V.VII. Next Steps

Town Staff will produce a timeline of decisions that need to be made.
Consultants will finalize Scenarios.

Consultants will create visual maps showing height and density for the January 18 public meeting.
Consultants will prepare draft survey questions for the public meeting.
The second HONE postcard will be mailed to residents for outreach before January 5.
Town Staff will meet to discuss consultants fiscal impact analysis.

Informational - The Meeting Packet is available at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

MOTION: R. Ruth moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 pm.

SECONDED: N. Espanada

ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Espanada, aye; H. Frail, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; K. Keane, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Housing Needham Advisory Group (HONE)
Powers Hall, Town Hall, 1471 Highland Ave.
TOWN-WIDE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Minutes
January 18, 2024

Place: In-person at Powers Hall or on-line registration to participate via Zoom
Present: Co-Chair, Heidi Frail; Co-Chair, Natasha Espada; Michael Diener, Kevin Keane, Joshua Levy, William Lovett, Jeanne McKnight, Ronald Ruth
Absent: Liz Kaponya
Staff: Katie King, Deputy Town Manager; Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development; Alexandra Clee, Assistant Town Planner
Guest: Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Call to Order

At 7:00 pm, H. Frail called the meeting to order. The meeting is being video recorded.

Sign-in and Welcome

N. Espada thanked 200 participants, HONE Advisory Group volunteers, consultants, Town staff, and The Needham Channel for their efforts and expressed gratitude for their hard work.

Introductory Remarks

The MBTA Communities Law applies to 177 cities and towns that have or are adjacent to communities with MBTA transit. Municipalities must confirm they have zoning districts of reasonable size where multi-family housing of 3 or more units is zoned for by-right. Needham does not comply with this law and must design zoning to comply by December 2024.

N. Espada highlighted HONE's progress, which was built on community engagement from the Housing Plan Working Group starting in 2021 to update the Town of Needham's 2007 Housing Plan which was finalized in January 2023.

The law establishes a requirement that each of 177 MBTA Communities have zoning that provides:

1. At least one district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of-right
2. It cannot have age restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children
3. It must have a minimum gross density of 15 dwelling units per acre
4. Part of the district must be located within 0.5 mile of transit stations.

Needham is a Commuter Rail Community with a December 31, 2024 compliance deadline.

- We hired consultants in Fall 2023 when we held our first Community meeting.
- The next Community meeting is slated for March.
- The State needs 90 days to review the proposed zoning.

- The Planning Board needs to finalize the zoning article between July and September.
- Town Meeting members vote in October.
- The final State review will be in December 2024.

Three compliance options were created using maps to inform community choice. Staff, consultants and volunteers have worked hard to find the right fit for Needham.

The committee will gather community feedback to create a final map that aims to balance community feedback with different visions for the Town's future. This is the central question:

How do we envision Needham's future?

1. Thriving walkable streets where people can shop and socialize?
2. Economically viable streets for both employers and employees, visitors and residents?
3. Safe streets for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists?

Participants were asked to remain openminded when considering Survey questions; visualize each option. Perspectives on the pace of change were noted as well as construction timelines and other elements beyond zoning (like parcel consolidation) that impact the likelihood of new housing being built. Town departments are being consulted for potential impact of the Scenarios (for example, school enrollment and infrastructure).

The consultant presentation includes a short survey which will remain open until January 24.

The HONE Group decided at the last meeting that a compliant district at Hersey Station would require a re-zoning of 4.5 acres of area now zoned for single-family homes to count toward a compliant map. The MBTA-owned parking lot could be zoned but would not count towards MBTA compliance. To zone it, the 4.5 acres needed would significantly alter the neighborhood as the existing Neighborhood Business zone contains less than 0.5 acres. Zoning these single-family districts may be discussed in the future, but not to comply with the MBTA Communities Law.

HONE will make recommendations to the Planning Board of changes that the Town may want to consider outside of the specific requirements of the MBTA Communities Law/Act.

An FAQ will be available on the web site. Participants were invited to listen to HONE's 1/29/24 meeting.

Presentation & Survey

Needham MBTA Communities Process, MBTA District Scenarios, Public Meeting #2
Eric Halvorsen of RKG Associate; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

E. Halvorsen reviewed Contents:

- Meeting #1 Feedback Summary (available in meeting packet on-line)

- Three MBTA Scenarios & Maps
 - o A: Base Compliance (Keep Center Business (CB) as mixed-use; no standalone multi-family)
 - o B: 2022 Housing Plan Scenario (Keep some Center Business as mixed-use but rezone some edges for standalone multi-family, add in some additional areas to be zoned as Apartment-1)
 - o C: Increased Density & General Residence Scenario
 - Incorporates the General Residence (GR) District allowing up to 4 units per parcel at a maximum height of 2.5 stories.
 - Keep some CB as mixed-use but rezones some edges for standalone multi-family
- Conduct Preference Survey question by question expounded by consultant (paper or online)
- Question and Comment Period

Questions & Comments

Bob Smart, 25 Mayo Ave.

Three Scenarios suggest an average of 15 units per acre. All Scenarios require more than 50 acres under the law. If you select 30 units per acre, the rezoning process may yield similar results. Has HONE considered how much housing production is likely to occur at different density levels? You may get little action at 15 units per acre but a lot of action at 30 units per acre. If you increase density, what would be the effect on the cost of development and the cost of the units?

Jan Soma, 106 Marked Tree Rd.

She read a letter containing statistics for the number of young Needham residents between the ages of 25 - 34 who cannot afford to live in Needham, noting that, Scenario ~~C affords~~ C affords the most housing units.

Nordo Yusi, 450 Chestnut St.

In districts considered for development, flooding should be prioritized with storm drain and water flow improvements to minimize runoff. Scenario C's issue is excessive water ~~storage~~ land development. The Hartney Greymont parcel would require significant infrastructure changes. He supports inclusion of the Center Business district but commercial should be maintained to include active, downtown space.

Rachel Krimlisk, Seabeds Way

She suggests zoning to include a walkable downtown, incorporating diverse commercial properties, and promoting a more artsy, music town, fostering a pedestrian-friendly community. Consider first floor commercial other than coffee shops. Zone a diverse commercial downtown.

Steve Snitzer, 112 Greendale Ave.

What are the ramifications of including those residence districts in the MBTA count?

Jeff Handler, 100 Valley Road

He owns an office building at 257 Hillside Ave. He supports Needham's progressive housing development approach advocating for standalone residential units to stimulate commercial space and make it more desirable. He warned against requiring first floor commercial space which may discourage developers. He acknowledged the gradual nature of development and the increasing costs of construction and stabilizing housing.

Jane Volden, 133 Brookside Rd.

She chose Scenario A as a conservative approach to expanding housing in Needham, starting small and considering the financial impact on taxpayers. Creating dense housing will increase the number of students which adds expense. She hopes that expanding zoning will create housing for young people though affordable housing is not affordable to people in their 20's and 30's.

Irene Berlinsky, 96 Gay St.

She thanked HONE members for their time to consider the Town center. How can it be more walkable, vibrant, and bring more foot traffic? I've heard ideas for pedestrian only streets.

Since we're voting on options that may require rezoning in the Town center for residential only, how will you go about making changes as this will impact us for many years? It would be good to have this information within the six day Survey window so we can make an informed decision.

Joe Leghorn, 40 Linden St.

As a Town Meeting member, he supports low income housing and is concerned about flooding in the lower Maple St., Linden St. area. He favors redevelopment of the Needham Housing Authority (NHA) property but has concerns about the inclusion of the General Residence district south of Maple and Oak Streets. The Town should address all issues rather than one at a time. He currently supports Scenario B but has reservations on Scenario C unless other issues like flooding and traffic are addressed.

Paula Dickerman, 20 Burnside Rd.

The Housing Plan research indicated the housing shortage is exacerbated by high housing costs, low production, limited housing diversity, and large upfront cash requirements for homeownership and rentals. Without major interventions, the Town will lose ground in providing affordable housing for individuals and families across various economic and social strata. The committee should draft zoning that requires a maximum feasible percentage of affordable units beyond the current 12.5% benefiting professionals and local workers. The committee should address flooding and significant issues to ensure housing needs are met.

Kunal Randery, 217 Hillside Ave.

He seeks clarification on the distinction between future Business and Industrial zoning based on his observations of existing zoning and the presence of businesses in certain areas.

HONE clarification by Lee Newman

Business uses generally allow retail, office, restaurant uses, and consumer service. Industrial districts open up uses in wholesale distribution, industrial services, auto body processing, and laboratory space. Rezoning those districts for housing requires determination of how much housing should be there. This is a decision for HONE.

Jeff Heller, 1092 Central Ave.

He owns a non-conforming multi-family property and supports the proposal that Needham have a Brookline Village feel. Details are crucial in creating a desirable housing stock for families. He disagrees with Scenario C which lacks specific unit sizes, units per lot, and parking restrictions. The goal should be to create affordable housing without creating a loop-hole for builders to cash in.

Eric Bailey, 64 Hillside Ave.

I agree with the vast majority of what's been said. I voted for Option C. I love hearing the passion for an affordable, walkable Needham. I think the Needham Heights area is right for development. I indicated on the survey to increase for the number of units. I'm really appreciative and excited.

Susan Herman, 13 Carrie Rd.

She needs a 3-D map model to view options. She would like to see parking in various districts. She is comparing districts and MBTA Act compliance zones to see if they are being equitably cast throughout town. The hospital and fire station are color coded on the map. Very little is being zoned in the downtown area. Can the 10% housing the MBTA Act allows be beyond 0.5 mi. of a commuter rail station be spread out in different lots throughout town? This might help alleviate the water problems in town.

Laura Dorfman, 66 Jarvis Circle

She is a Town Meeting member, CPC co-chair, and Historical Commission member. Current Demo Delay bylaws allow ranches and multi-family homes to be demolished and rebuilt unless on a historic registry then replaced with huge 4,000 square foot homes which low income people cannot afford. Can requests for Demo Delays within MBTA zones be reviewed before demolition as part of the overall approach to affordable housing and not just within MBTA Communities?

Gary, Ajamian, 47 Meetinghouse Circle

Why are plans protecting the Hersey MBTA neighborhood but penalizing residents at other MBTA stations and heavily impacting the Junction and the Heights? Why has Hersey Station been excluded? The Open Space next to Hersey Station could easily be used. The Open Space portion of the Needham-owned golf course could be used.

HONE response - Heidi Frail - Town land is not eligible to count towards MBTA Communities compliance.

Plans are to have the MBTA Communities Act and affordable housing issues merge, but people often misunderstand that the Act is a zoning issue. A true minimum Scenario A is suggested, but the 10% allowance for units outside MBTA districts is not included.

HONE response - Joshua Levy - The offset is included in Scenario A.

Ann Fox, 238 Edgewater Dr.

Does the State have constitutional authority to determine Town zoning?

Artie Crocker

He supports Scenario B suggesting to add multi-family homes to the triangle toward the intersection of Warren St. heading back to Dedham Ave. He envisions the Hersey Station area as a village for the future. He suggested a plan that includes Hersey Station and one without it. Creating affordable housing will take time. He emphasized the need for a planning vision.

James Goldstein, 40 Coolidge Ave.

Maximize housing in Scenario C. Consider Needham Heights within districts so people can get a sense of 3.5 or four-story buildings along Highland Avenue. The existing affordability requirement for 6 more units at 12.5% highlights a significant affordability gap in the Housing Plan.

Jonathan Traub, 299 Central Ave.

We are here to comply with a Massachusetts law by writing new bylaws requiring State approval in a condensed timeline. Let's focus on the compliance deadline. Scenarios A and B meet minimum compliance of 900 or 1,900 units and Scenario C is a wider option. A study was conducted for 50 future years of housing needs which doesn't have to be solved by vote this year.

Cynthia Landau, 57 Pine St.

The MBTA Communities Act is not intended to be an affordable housing initiative. Build multi-family homes in specific districts and smaller affordable housing units alongside larger ones rather than building mansions. This will occur one parcel at a time as they become available. Changing zoning to allow multi-family housing doesn't guarantee builders will comply. Can we mandate building multi-family housing especially when houses are demolished? Studies are needed to predict the proportion of multi-family homes to be built over the next five to ten years and their impact on infrastructure and services. Promote resident involvement.

Doug Fox, 43 Marked Tree Rd.

He thanked the committee for their hard work on a crucial topic. He voted for Scenario C. He urged residents to spread the word about the importance of public input in determining the right housing choice for this community. Respond to the survey. Attend the next meeting.

Dina Creiger, 7 Utica Rd.

She advocates for increasing housing. She desires her 25-year old son to live in Needham. She suggests complying with the law and then thoughtful consideration of aspirational changes the Town wants as well as evaluating the Town's control over as of right housing.

Lois Sokol, 611 Greendale Ave.

She thanked the committee for the excellent job to inform the public. A comment was made earlier that the law requires 90% of housing be within a 0.5 mile radius of transit. Can the remaining 10% be outside the district and comply? What does this mean to homeowners?

HONE clarification by Lee Newman - To be compliant, 90% of Needham's district must be within 0.5 miles of a transit station. 10% of the district can be outside but they still need to meet other criteria, in terms of the size of the sub-district, if it is not contiguous to the rest of the district.

Barbara Ridge, 83 Fair Oaks Park

Where can these three maps be accessed after the meeting? When one of these three Scenarios has been approved, is the color coded area going to be a new zoning area or is it something else?

Maps can be found at:

<https://needhamma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/45157/2024-01-18-Public-Meeting-Maps-for-Survey>

Wrap-up & Next Steps

For general information about the work of the HONE Committee and the MBTA Communities Law:

<https://www.needhamma.gov/5402/MBTA-Communities-Law-the-Housing-Needham>

<https://www.needhamma.gov/5480/HONE-Meeting-Agendas-Presentations-and-M>

- The survey can be completed online until January 24.
- Drop off your Survey at the Town Manager's Office at Town Hall, or at the Planning Department in the Public Services Administration Building.
- Email inquiries to **Planning@needhamma.gov** which goes to Lee Newman and Alex Clee.
- Online and in-person comments will be answered in the FAQs.
- A recording of this presentation will be available online.

Next HONE meeting - March 7

The public is welcome to watch HONE meetings: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TownofNeedhamMA>

Informational - The Meeting Packet is available at: <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

- Agenda 1/18/24

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud

Recording Secretary

To learn more and subscribe to updates on the multi-family zoning initiative in Needham, please **visit the project page on the Town's website**

DRAFT

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2024

Place: Charles River Room, 500 Dedham Ave, Needham and Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Present: Co-Chair, Heidi Frail; Co-Chair, Natasha Espada; Michael Diener, Kevin Keane, Liz Kaponya, Joshua Levy, Jeanne McKnight, Ronald Ruth
Remote: William Lovett
Absent: None
Staff: Amy Haelsen, Director of Communications and Community Engagement; Katie King, Deputy Town Manager; Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development; Alexandra Clee, Assistant Town Planner
Guests: Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

At 7:00 pm, H. Frail called the meeting to order. The meeting is being video recorded.

I. Welcome and Meeting Goals, Heidi Frail and Natasha Espada, Co-Chairs

Goals are to review the Schedule Overview, the 6 facilitation questions to comply with MBTA Communities Law, and whether to add an additional Scenario model as a separate Warrant Article.

The group needs to determine an alternative to using the offset calculation, finalize base Scenario boundaries, finalize base zoning parameters, decide on affordable housing/inclusionary zoning percentage and parking requirements. Present + Results will be presented to the 3 boards, the Planning Board, the Design Review Committee and the Select Board, followed by the 2/15 HONE meeting. Present the final base Scenario and discuss the add-on Scenario.

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II. Approval of Minutes from HONE Meetings of 12/11/23, 12/20/23 and 1/4/24

The minutes of 12/20/23 will be held for discussion at a future meeting.

MOTION: J. McKnight moved to approve the meeting minutes of 12/11/23 and 1/4/24.

SECONDED: K. Keane

ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Espada, aye; H. Frail, aye; K. Keane, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. **Unanimous.**

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

III. Overview of Schedule Moving Forward, Lee Newman, Director of Planning and Community Development; Katie King, Deputy Town Manager

Members discussed feedback that drives HONE goals and schedules to conclude the HONE process in time to get both Articles to the State for review by May 1. There is a need to separate whether compliance is the goal or a two-Article recommendation from HONE to appointing boards.

Schedule Updates:

- 1/29 - Process community feedback; make final decisions for a base compliance Scenario
- 2/6, 2/12, 2/13 - New meetings to update the Planning, Design Review, and Select Boards
- 2/15 - Make final decisions about the add-on Article
- 3/7 - HONE meeting instead of Community meeting (finalize format for 3/28 meeting)
- 3/28 Community Meeting #3
- 4/4 - Debrief 3/28 Community meeting; make final recommendations
- Additional meeting April 25 for consultants to share final report with HONE, based on decisions at 4/4 meeting
- Schedule April 30 as a joint meeting with boards to send recommendations to State on 5/1

J. McKnight requested members ~~to alert her~~provide notice before discussion of Scenario changes to A-1 zoning or Hillside Ave. Industrial area inclusion as she is a resident/Board member of Rosemary Ridge Condo miniums and will recuse herself to avoid conflict of interest.

IV. Review Feedback from Community Meeting and Survey Results, Heidi Frail and Natasha Espada, Co-Chairs; Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Consultants reviewed Survey results from 595 paper and on-line Surveys. People who chose Scenario A or B did not want to grow the unit capacity or boundaries from what was presented. People who chose Scenario C wanted more housing. Community comments were reviewed. Members were grateful for resident participation.

Residents expressed concern for not rezoning the single family residential districtes in the Hersey Station area. It was implied a section of SRB on Highland Ave. was already zoned GR but it was proposed for rezoneding in the Housing Plan. Be consistent with rezoning. Do not take single-family residences to make compliant parcels. Revisit the change of SRB to GR in other areas and exempt that portion.

Comments were made about areas outside the half-mile radius such as the former Muzi Ford site as well as mixed use districts and the possibility to incentivize starter homes. The Planning Board is not constrained by the MBTA Communities Act and could do something with the Hersey Station area. The golf course and parking lots are not eligible to contribute to MBTA Communities Act compliance.

Members discussed answers the Community would like clarified such as how new housing would affect school system enrollment and costs, Town department input on infrastructure analysis, and the financial benefit to the Town if more people moved into Needham.

Some participants did not fully understand proposed boundary changes in individual zoning districts or what HONE presented. Members discussed how this could have been better clarified. Participants made thoughtful comments and seemed supportive that HONE presented satisfactory solutions. One member suggested residents would be satisfied with Scenario A with changes (Scenario A Version 2).

FAQs are being prepared. To learn more and subscribe to updates on the multi-family zoning initiative in Needham, ~~residents were encouraged to~~ please visit the project page on the Town's website: <https://needhamma.gov/5402/MBTA-Communities-Law-the-Housing-Needham>.

V. Review Feedback from Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) Meeting, Heidi Frail and Natasha Espada, Co-Chairs; Bill Lovett

CEA feedback focused on understanding the impact of HONE maps on compliance and housing production and highlighted the complexity of redevelopment compared to other communities. CEA discussed factors that make projects economically feasible as well as reasons why projects are not pursued and what the Town can do to make decisions that facilitate some development.

Speeding up projects is crucial for economic growth. A long process can hinder small and medium sized developers who lack capital. To expedite the process, incentivize small developers to build ~~40 or 50 unit~~ 40- or 50-unit developments. The Town should allow developers to decide whether to provide one parking space per unit rather than a Town mandate. Be flexible with parking and building height. Density could be increased in existing apartment areas.

CEA discussed first floor commercial use in the Town center and felt the Center Business "cruller" surrounded by residential units was a good approach. Members discussed the unpopularity of first floor, sidewalk residences and the developer's expense to provide a lobby or gym instead.

CEA consensus was that Scenarios A and B don't incentivize development due to insufficient zoning changes. Scenario C or a Scenario C Plus would do so. ~~We should~~ call out existing sites where we have existing density such as at 100 West St. There was mixed feedback on the special permit process with large developers comfortable and small developers concerned.

One HONE member favored mixed use not only in the downtown Central Business district but in ~~other~~ existing business areas. If housing will be allowed, there should be incentives for mixed use. We want to continue to provide businesses for the additional amount of residences.

The CEA discussion focused on the vertical aspect of how much is allowed on a given lot and how to spread fixed costs like elevators over the cost of the project. The developer ~~would~~ determines how to rent units with no off-street parking and if there is a market for that. The compliant district could have map boundaries similar to Scenario A but with heights similar to Scenario C.

Members discussed zoning barriers to have more multi-family housing approved. We need a consensus on density differences between the Center and General Residence. The process is laborious and requires site plan review. Learn from other municipalities who have already passed their MBTA Communities Act zoning.

R. Ruth addressed E. Halvorsen ~~as to~~ with the degree to which the Needham site approval process complied with what was supposed to be as of right site plan approval under the MBTA guidance.

ACTION: This matter will be discussed at the next HONE meeting on 2/15/24.

VI. Selection of Final "Base Model" for MBTA Communities Compliance, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Members discussed ~~changing to~~changing the parking requirements in our existing Central Business mixed-use zoning to let us use the "offset" calculation in the Scenario A model. To comply with MBTA Communities Law, parking ~~requirements for~~restrictions on some commercial uses would have to be removed. It was suggested that this should be a Planning Board decision, rather than included in HONE's proposals.

Consultants discussed hypothetical alternatives to using the "offset" in Scenario A:

- 146 additional units are needed in Scenario A to comply without the offset
- Add the Hillside Avenue- Business² District to Scenario A to get an additional 56 units at 3 stories in height.
- To increase units, consider adding in the Avery School Condominium parcel, now zoned in SRB, to the Apartment A-1 district, and including Hamilton Highlands, now in Apartment A-1, which would be contiguous to each other and already have multi-family housing existing today.

Consultants discussed policy oriented questions. Members discussed height, a special permit for setbacks, and modeling Scenario A at 0.7 FAR ~~for the~~ Chestnut Street Business District.

Consultants will remodel Scenario A as Version 2. Bring Hillside Ave. Business² District back in, make minor changes to the Chestnut Street Business District, bring in the Avery School Condominiums and Hamilton Highlands parcels.

MOTION: K. Keane moved to support not doing the parking changes for the Center offset and instead adding in the areas as discussed for Hillside Avenue, Hamilton Highlands and Avery School unless EOHLC gets back to us then we can do the original plan.

SECONDED: N. Espada

ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Espada, aye; H. Frail, aye; K. Keane, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. **Unanimous.**

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Q6: Please note if you would like to see the boundaries changed in any of the individual zoning districts delineated on the Scenario C map.

Scenario A - The existing zoning in Avery Square currently allows standalone multi-family housing by special permit under the same rules that are now proposed to convert to as of right.

Members discussed preserving mixed use where it already exists. People may not be willing to accept dramatic changes to incentivize. If we have places to add extra density while protecting first floor commercial, it will be more acceptable. The plan will be metered slowly into

production. Make sure the density can keep up with the retail; we don't want vacant store fronts. We've seen a plan for 100 West St. for 4 stories.

Some members felt the Town should not require mixed use in Avery Square. You're going to attract ancillary tenants. Not mandating mixed use will be a loss for retail, though. If we don't mandate mixed use, we don't have to incentivize greater height and density.

Consultants described Town Meeting voting thresholds. It was noted that the Community Survey provided data points and not votes.

MOTION: H. Frail moved to leave current zoning as is for Avery Square in base model Scenario A and allow multi-family to the ground by special permit as of right. (unclear - contradictory)

SECONDED: K. Keane

ROLL-CALL VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Members discussed keeping the 100 West St. parcel if not increasing it. (unclear) We can provide 10% compliance in an area outside the half-mile radius. An Apartment-1 district with a multi-family condominium development already exists on Greendale Ave. and Hamlin Lane called Charles Court East. This could be added if we need additional unit capacity to achieve compliance.

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MOTION: N. Espada moved to include Charles Court East condominium development on Greendale Ave. and Hamlin Lane as part of the 10% of MBTA Communities Law outside the half-mile radius.

SECONDED: K. Keane

ROLL-CALL VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Members discussed incentivizing commercial, particularly in the Business, Chestnut Street Business and Avery Square Districts. The group could consistently add height to first floor commercial to maintain the same number of residences. Setbacks is another incentive that can be determined when writing the zoning.

A member noted that Needham established the Apartment-1 district to allow multi-family as of right decades ago, when other cities and towns pushed back on multi-family housing. Needham moved forward with multi-family zoning at that time and now we can take advantage of the zoning that's already in place.

Members discussed pulling back the boundaries on Scenario C and putting in density where it makes sense. There was discussion about excluding General Residential in Scenario C.

To achieve compliance of 1,784 required units in Scenario A, boost dimensional regulations in the Heights, increase the FAR to 2.0, and increase unit density.

Members discussed whether adding commercial to residential in a mixed-use concept would help to incentivize housing. A straight allowance for density, more FAR or height is more incentive than adding mixed use. Creating more density by right will create more development.

Consultants discussed voting thresholds at Town Meeting; a 51% threshold would be allowed for articles that include more residential. [with mixed-use?] If an article is standalone commercial or hotels, that would require a two thirds majority vote. Check with Town Counsel to confirm.

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Members agreed Scenario A would include uniform building heights of at least three stories for multi-family by right for the Chestnut Street Business-, Garden Street-, Overlay, and Avery Square Overlay districts. Change FAR to 0.7.

At 9:52 pm, W. Lovett left the meeting.

Prioritization of parcels added to the base map

- Get to 1,784 units with a bit of cushion over this number
- Increase to 3 stories in height in all districts
- FAR of 0.7
- Is HONE's top priority to use the parking offset for Center Business if we hear from the State that we can do so without making changes to the zoning parking requirement zoning?
- We've added 4 areas: Hillside Avenue Business-, Hamilton Highlands, Avery School Condominium and Charles Court.
- Charles Court for Scenario A, Option 2 can be recommended to the Planning Board
 - o Charles Court is built and outside the half-mile radius. The State may reject the area because there is no access to public transportation there. If needed, drop Charles Court.

Parking Minimums

Members discussed the parking study that was done for 4 multi-family locations in Needham. The average was .84 parking spaces used overnight. Members decided the minimum parking space would be reduced from 1.5 parking spaces down to one parking space as part of the base.

Inclusionary Zoning

Members agreed to a 12.5% inclusionary zoning affordable housing requirement, which reflects what is in Needham's existing zoning.

MOTION: J. McKnight moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:35 pm.

SECONDED: N. Espada

ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Espada, aye; H. Frail, aye; K. Keane, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; J. Levy, aye; J. McKnight, aye; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

Respectfully submitted,

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group
January 29, 2024

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

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- Housing Needham Advisory Group (HONE) 1/29/24 Agenda
- HONE Draft Meeting Minutes 12/11/23, 12/20/23, 1/4/24
- HONE Scope of Work/Timeline
- Needham MBTA Communities, Public Meeting #1 Input Summary, RKG Associates, Innes Associates
- Needham MBTA Communities Process, Scenario Overview, RKG Associates, Innes Associates
- Scenario A: Framing Questions, RKG Associates, Innes Associates
- Existing Zoning and Base Scenario Zoning, RKG Associates, Innes Associates
- Memo from Gary Ajamian
- Memo from Marianne Cooley
- Memo from Michael Normile
- Memo from Michael
- Memo from Scott Schwartz
- Memo from John Cross
- Memo from Eric Fritz
- Memo from Needham Housing Coalition
- Needham Housing Coalition 1/21/24 Response to HONE 1/18/24 Meeting Materials
- Memo from Jane Volden
- Memo from Les Kalish
- Memo from Andrew Thoresen
- Memo from Scott Schwartz
- MRSC Municipal Research and Services Center Articles
- Memo from Michael Normile
- Memo from Michael Baker
- Memo from Paula Dickerman
- Letter dated 1/29/24 from Robert T. Smart, Jr., Esq.
- Memo from Linda Barry
- Memo from Mark Osborne

From: [James Goldstein](#)
To: [Planning](#); [Lee Newman](#); [Heidi Frail](#); [N. Espada](#)
Subject: For HONE: Materials for HONE March 7 meeting
Date: Monday, March 4, 2024 3:15:12 PM

HONE Advisory Group,

I know that at HONE's February 29 meeting, Eric Halvorsen from RKG Associates indicated that the workload to prepare for the March 7 meeting meant that they could not prepare and distribute a packet prior to the meeting. While I understand that the workload is indeed significant, **I would like to request that HONE provides / posts whatever materials have been completed by close of business on March 5. At a minimum, I assume this would include the final maps and zoning parameters for the two scenarios**, and possibly other materials. Providing this prior to the meeting will allow the Committee and interested stakeholders some time to review the material ahead of time, making the meeting more efficient and stakeholder input more timely.

As an aside, it does not appear that HONE has made a definitive decision regarding the name of the second scenario. It first called it the "Add-on Scenario", which incidentally still appears on the agenda for the March 7 meeting. HONE then used "Bonus Scenario" at a couple of meetings. And at the end of the February 29 meeting there was a brief discussion of the name, at which time Heidi Frail suggested using "Neighborhood Housing Plan." Since names carry certain connotations, as HONE moves towards finalizing the scenarios and providing outreach to the community, it would be useful to finalize a name for the second scenario and use it consistently both in written materials, at HONE meetings, and in presentations. I suggest that "Add-on Scenario" and "Bonus Scenario" not be used, as they connote something extra.

Thanks to HONE for your ongoing work,

James Goldstein
40 Coolidge Ave.
617-429-2966

From: [Doug McCarthy](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Boston Globe: Resistance grows against MBTA housing law.....
Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 8:04:07 PM

HONE committee members,

I suppose you've seen this article from the Globe relating to the concern of other communities to the MBTA Communities Act.....if not, here you go:

Doug McCarthy

planning@needhamma.gov

‘It’s an invasion.’ In towns across Eastern Mass., resistance grows against ambitious state housing law.

From Rockport to Wrentham, residents and town officials are vowing to push back on denser, transit-oriented housing.

By [Andrew Brinker](#) Globe Staff, Updated March 3, 2024, 1 hour ago
<image001.jpg>

Homes along the ocean in Rockport. VINCENT ALBAN
FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

ROCKPORT — On a brisk Wednesday a few weeks ago, residents filed into a meeting room on the second

floor of the public library in this seaside town.

There were seafood industry workers, retirees, small business owners from all over Cape Ann, using words like “sovereignty,” “invasion,” and “blackmail.”

It sounded like the rumblings of a revolution. And in a sense it was: The meeting that night was another spark in the fast-growing resistance against the state’s ambitious new housing law, which will require towns like Rockport to find room for waves of new apartments and condos by the end of this year. On the [heels of Milton’s vote last month](#) to shoot down that town’s version of the plan, those sparks are multiplying rapidly.

The law, known as the MBTA Communities Act, requires cities and towns served by transit to zone for more multifamily housing, in a bid by state lawmakers to tackle the region’s deep housing crisis. But it does so by challenging the state’s long, proud history of letting towns control their own zoning. And some residents are very unhappy.

“How close does this come to quid pro quo, extortion, or blackmail?” one man asked in that Rockport library. “And when can we send someone to jail?”

The pushback has been brewing on social media for the better part of a year, and in community meetings in public libraries and town hall basements all over Eastern Massachusetts, from Cape Ann to Wrentham, Winthrop to Holden, and it is boiling over now that Milton has defied the law.

Now officials in some towns are telling the state they simply will not comply, while residents in others are strategizing referendums of their own and organizing to take over Town Meetings and vote “No.”

They see the effort as everyday people, the oft-ignored residents of Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns, taking on the powerful state government. And in some ways, it is a clash between a vision for the future of this state and the ideals of its past — a tradition of small-town self-government that predates even the American Revolution.

“Our Governor is totally out of touch with what the people want,” Bellingham Select Board member Michael Hennessy wrote on Facebook recently. “You can vote NO on this matter. This is the state telling us that we need to develop more... and we need to push back.”

That meeting in Rockport stretched on for hours, and at times broke into debates about whether the MBTA Communities Act is a state scheme to house migrants. (The law was passed in 2021, well before the state's shelter system was overwhelmed by an influx of migrants.) It featured a panel, including a lawyer named Michael Walsh, who in 2022 sued to overturn the act. The lawsuit is still pending.

Walsh talked at length about the rights of cities and towns, and how he thinks a law that influences local zoning is an egregious overstep by the state government.

“If you have your own sovereignty within your municipal boundaries, what business does the Legislature have telling you what to do?” he said. “If zoning is a local power, then they definitely can't tell you how to use it, or when or where or how.”

The meeting was organized by a local political action committee, and word about it circulated on a Facebook page called [Don't Boston My Cape Ann](#), where posts range from conspiracy theories about the elimination of single-family homes to strategizing

about how to defeat the MBTA Communities Act at the state level. The group is holding similar meetings in other Cape Ann communities, including Gloucester, where local officials are currently working on a plan that would meet the law's requirements.

"It's an invasion," said one resident at that Rockport meeting. "Everybody needs to wake up and get to these meetings and shut it down."

The mounting opposition presents a tricky situation for officials in towns like Rockport. Like many smaller communities in Massachusetts, it conducts much of its business through open Town Meetings. When zoning amendments came up for a vote last year, only about 300 of the town's 7,000 residents voted. It wouldn't take much, said Planning Board chair Jason Shaw, for an organized opposition group to block an MBTA Communities plan.

"If we don't have enough thoughtful people who understand what's really going on here, [a zoning proposal] will be defeated, because there will be people who just don't want any change at all," said Shaw, [who says Rockport needs more housing to maintain its economic vitality](#). "It is pretty easy to imagine a group getting 30 or 40 people to go to Town Meeting and vote, and kill this zoning."

<image002.jpg>

Rockport Planning Board chairman Jason Shaw at the town's Commuter Rail station. SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF
There are housing advocacy groups on Cape Ann, like Housing for All Gloucester, that are working to bring out supporters too. But in close-in communities that debated their new zoning last year in order to meet an end-of-2023 deadline, including Milton, Newton, and Brookline, similar pro-housing groups struggled to combat opposition campaigns, leading to plans that were watered-down or — in Milton's case — defeated

outright. Some 130 cities and towns — many governed by Town Meeting — are in the “second wave” of towns due to craft their plans this year.

Resistance has spread well beyond Cape Ann. Town officials in several communities have taken votes in recent weeks to ask the state for exemptions, with the caveat that if they do not receive those exemptions, their next move may very well be outright defiance. The Select Board in Wrentham, for example, [sent a letter to Governor Maura Healey this week](#) saying that if the town complied with the MBTA Communities Act, it would “lead to the destruction of the small-town New England charm we’ve come to love.” The letter requested a reduction of Wrentham’s requirements under the law.

The Healey administration has been denying such requests, but each time it does so, has repeatedly emphasized that it wants to work with local leaders to help them comply.

“The Healey-Driscoll Administration values our strong partnership with local cities and towns to move Massachusetts forward,” Housing Secretary Ed Augustus wrote recently in a letter to the Town Council in Winthrop.

But the tone has grown harsher recently. In Wrentham, Select Board members complained that the zoning is being “shoved down our throats.”

“There’s a lot of towns fighting this,” Select Board member Christopher Gallo said in a recent meeting. “Everyone that shakes their head and says, ‘We’re never going to win,’ refer back to ‘We the people.’ All it takes is a few communities to say, ‘No, we need to pump the brakes, this is not what our voters want.’”

And there are growing signs that some towns may be

entertaining the idea of teaming up and resisting together.

A Wrentham Select Board member, for example, said at a recent meeting that she has met with leaders of Milton's "No" campaign, as well as officials in other towns that are considering defiance. There is even a private Facebook group run by a Manchester Planning Board member for MBTA Communities opponents statewide to discuss happenings in different communities.

The Healey administration is attempting to get out in front of the rising resistance to the law.

When [Attorney General Andrea Campbell sued Milton](#) last week, housing advocates said it sent a message to other communities that the MBTA Communities Act is a law, and that they have no choice but to comply.

And legal experts say Campbell has a strong case. While Massachusetts has long deferred to towns on zoning matters, the ultimate power over land use resides with the state, experts say, and there are several state laws that override local zoning control, including Chapter 40B, which allows developers to bypass land-use rules in towns that don't meet state affordable housing standards.

But to some opponents, that lawsuit already serves as a rallying cry.

<image003.jpg>

Attorney General Andrea Campbell has sued the Town of Milton after residents voted to overturn the town's MBTA Communities zoning plan. JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

"From a public policy standpoint, a lawsuit by the attorney general against the Town of Milton is an attack on democracy," said Peter Lukes, the town administrator in Holden, a Worcester County town that last year was one of the first places that said it

would not go along with the MBTA Communities Act, and [was sued by advocacy groups](#). (The lawsuit was dismissed on procedural grounds.) “Milton voters expressed themselves in a free and fair election.”

Few towns have seen more resistance than Winthrop, where residents have been filling Town Council meetings in recent weeks, promising to trigger a referendum or vote out council members if they support a new zoning plan. They’re circulating [“Winthrop says no”](#) graphics on social media, depicting wrecking balls demolishing single-family homes and cash-hungry developers displacing renters.

The Town Council, it seems, has received the message, [sending a letter to the Healey administration](#) asking to have Winthrop’s requirements under the law lessened. Last week, Augustus declined that request.

But many of the council members have spoken openly about defying the law, some as a matter of principle.

“I’m a no,” Town Council President James Letterie said at a recent meeting. “I’m a no at 800 units. I’m a no at one unit. Not because of the number of units, but because we’re being told what to do with our town. I think it’s unconstitutional.”

Andrew Brinker can be reached at andrew.brinker@globe.com. Follow him [@andrewnbrinker](#).

From: [Brian Torrasi](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Please read - MBTA Zoning Law Residents view/perspective
Date: Thursday, March 7, 2024 10:51:31 AM

Good Morning,

My name is Brian Torrasi and I have lived in Needham for almost 20 years. I love Needham. It is not a perfect town and I don't expect it to be. Needham has a lot of strengths and I hope we can continue to be a great place to live.

I am very concerned about how the Town is thinking about the new MBTA communities law. I believe we need to follow the law, but I would ask the Planning committee and the HONE committee to be VERY careful with how you interpret the it and what you do to try and expand it. Personally, I do not understand why the town would not simply start with the MINIMUM requirements. Start there and if it is working you can expand it in a few years. I do not understand why the town would even think about expanding the minimum requirements without knowing what the EXACT ramifications will be. I implore the committees to simply start with the minimum requirements. See how it plays out for a few years and then reassess. People spent and spend a lot of money to live in Needham on a certain street. This new proposal will allow for those streets to become denser with more cars being parked on the street and potentially overcrowding our already overcrowded schools. The only answer to this new law is to do the minimum to comply, see what impact that has on the town and expand it if necessary.

I appreciate you volunteering for the benefit of the town and admire the time and efforts you each put into the town. As Town stewards, I ask you to do what is best for the Town today and in the future. I believe there is only one option and that option is to pas the MINIMUM requirements.

Thanks for listening and please do the right thing for the Town of Needham and the current residents living and working here.

Thank you,

Brian Torrasi

24 Parkinson Street

Needham, MA 02492

Sent from my iPhone