

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group

Thursday, April 4, 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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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 February 15, 2024 and February 29, 2024.
- III. Review feedback from Community Meeting
- IV. Selection and approval of Final Base Compliance Scenario and Neighborhood Housing Plan Scenario.
- V. Presentation of zoning article framework, *Emily Innes, Innes Associates; Lee Newman, Director of Planning and Community Development*
- VI. Review list of items to be referred to Planning Board for further study
- VII. Next Steps.

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

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
February 15, 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, William Lovett, Ronald Ruth
Remote: Jeanne McKnight
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
Chairs commended HONE members for their thoughtful contributions to the charge.

II. Approval of Minutes from HONE Meetings of 12/20/23
This item was deferred to a future meeting.

III. Presentation and Approval of Final Base Scenario, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

The Final Base Scenario will be divided into two Warrant Articles to comply with MBTA Communities Law - a Base Compliance Scenario map and a bonus map, with the intention to produce housing in Needham.

Consultants presented Housing Needham (HONE) Town Visioning for Multi-Family Housing available at: <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx> Existing zoning parameters were reviewed.

Consultants modeled zoning capacity in existing zoning districts that align with Scenario A boundaries except Business and Industrial districts where housing is not allowed.

L. Newman discussed Scenario A mapping and community feedback on the loss of first floor retail in the Avery Square Business District. Consultants were asked to model the Carter building at the 100 West Parcel, calculate units under the existing overlay districts and the proposed zoning and compare results, which was a difference of 11 units.

Chair Frail supports commercial, ground floor use as an important neighborhood amenity stating the commerce attracts people to the area. She supports the moving of units lost to first floor commercial to the parcel at 100 West St., in the Alternative Scenario A.

A discussion revolved around the feasibility of a 3 or 4 story scenario. The Base Scenario would be 3 stories with the possibility of growing it with incentives in the Bonus Scenario.

Members supported Scenario A Alternate model with 4 stories by Special Permit and increased 1.0 FAR by right with a 1.4 FAR in the Base Scenario by Special Permit. The Base Scenario model will not change. Scenario A (Alternate) becomes the model for MBTA Communities Law base compliance.

Members discussed whether the Site Plan Review process notifies abutters. Consultants will confirm with EOHLC. Needham's current Zoning By-Law includes a Special Permit process for Site Plan Review, a process which notifies abutters. An MBTA Communities Site Plan Review process could be established.

Members discussed how to discourage developers from tearing down the Carters building to put up a new building. The Town's current understanding is that the owners intend to tear it down. It was not built for multi-family use. They will unlikely be swayed by incentives to keep the existing building.

Consultants await clarification from the State on the Center District. Consultants removed the Center from Scenario A Alternate and added in Hillside Ave. If the State approves the Center area, this will be a bonus number of units.

IV. Selection of Final Add-On Scenario for MBTA Communities Compliance, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates*

Scenario B is now named the Bonus Scenario. The intent of MBTA Communities Law is to produce neighborhoods within a one half acre radius of MBTA. Members reviewed the map by neighborhood. The HONE charge is to create zoning for MBTA Communities Law. Rezoning outside the one half mile radius can be determined by the Planning Board.

Base Scenario zoning will comply with MBTA Communities Law. The Bonus housing plan doesn't need to adhere to MBTA Communities guidance. Both will be sent to the State for clarification.

Members discussed each neighborhood in the model by current zoning, what was modeled, and any edits or additions including height, FAR, parking and inclusionary zoning.

Apartment A-1

Included in Apt. A-1 are Hamilton Highlands, Avery School condominiums, and Hillside Ave. Business as part of Scenario A. Greendale Ave. is outside the half mile radius and not counted.

Chestnut St., Scenario C Corridor

Members agreed to 2.0 FAR, 4 stories by right for standalone housing, mixed use by Special Permit.

Members agreed **Chestnut St. East** to allow 3 stories of standalone, multi-family housing by right, and 3.5 stories with first floor commercial by right at 2.0 FAR with exception of the Briarwood parcel.

In the Bonus Scenario, **Chestnut St. West** neighborhood, members agreed to allow 4 story, at 2.0 FAR for multi-family housing by right; members agreed to allow first floor commercial use, with an additional 0.5 story by right.

Members discussed offering fifth floor options on Chestnut St. West.

Needham has a Streetscape design plan. Greenspace is not naturally occurring in this area. The MBTA model leaves 20% for setbacks and Open Space which Consultants described. It is to account for setbacks. If the group wanted to have open space on the parcel beyond the setbacks, they would want to increase the open space requirement, but that would infringe on ability to build. It's a trade off.

The current bylaw for Chestnut St. Business requires a 50 foot setback from a residential district (with the 25 feet closed to the residential district being landscaped and the remaining 25 feet may be for an accessory use, no structure). Where the lot abuts the MBTA right-of-way, the side and rear setback shall be 10 feet landscaped. In the Overlay, the side and rear setback is 25 feet from the MBTA right-of-way. The front setback in the Overlay is a minimum of 5 feet and a maximum of 15 feet.

MOTION: J. Levy moved to add 20% Open Space in the Base District.
SECONDED: R. Ruth

J. Levy withdrew his motion in favor of using the landscaping standards in Site Plan Review to discuss setbacks, pervious surface and the like.

Chair Frail asked if there was group consensus on using landscaping standards in Site Plan Review to discuss setbacks, pervious surface and the like. No members were opposed to moving forward with this standard.

Members discussed the Garden St. district and agreed to mirror the Chestnut St. East side. The Garden Street Overlay District is currently zoned for 2.5 stories (35 feet) and 3 stories (37 feet) by Special Permit and for 0.70 FAR, with an increase by Special Permit to 1.2 FAR for mixed use and 1.0 for multi-family. Some members did not agree with applying Chestnut Street East standards and wanted either 2.5 stories of multi-family by right with 3 stories by Special Permit or did not want to increase the FAR beyond 1.5.

MOTION: H. Frail moved to approve 3 stories of multi-family housing by right with 2.0 FAR at the Garden St. overlay, and increase to 3.5 stories by right with 2.0 FAR with first floor commercial.

SECONDED: N. Espada

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

MOTION CARRIES: 7-2

Center Business, Scenario A

Center Business is not in the Base Scenario. Consultants modeled 5 stories with 1.25 FAR. Members discussed incentivizing first floor commercial mixed use.

Consultants described two Bonus Scenario strategies:

- 1) If the Bonus Scenario passes, the Base Scenario goes away.
- 2) You have a compliant Base, and a non-compliant Bonus. The Base must pass to be compliant. The Bonus Scenario may or may not pass but is not compliant with the MBTA Communities Act.

J. McKnight commented that Needham needs a vibrant downtown with housing and amenities. With Advocacy of Newton, we thought changes were to the guidelines would allow count mixed use buildings to count. EOHLC has made it very difficult to go in that direction because they won't allow the required parking. We're left with the option to allow standalone, multi-family housing if we want it to count toward MBTA Communities Law compliance. This circumstance is in opposition to the needed change to this area. J. McKnight voiced opinion for mixed use but against standalone, multi-family housing for this area.

This will not count toward the Base scenario. 4ember. Frail said it doesn't have to be MBTA compliant if they do it in the Bonus.

Members discussed Overlay A (3+1 height) and Overlay B (2+1 height) in the Consultant presentation available in the Meeting Packet at: <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>. At the time that the area was last rezoned, the 3 story height was retained around historic Town Hall to dominate. Members discussed whether to add the Center Business District to the proposal. J. McKnight questioned if the group should be proposing this as it wouldn't comply with MBTA, since the group already has a full plate. N. Espada said that the entire spine is being reviewed to create a vibrant area. Members then discussed whether to allow standalone multi-family housing in an area around the Center Business. The Community expressed they wanted first floor retail.

J. Levy suggested that they take the existing zoning and change from Special Permit to as of right, with mandatory mixed use. Currently, we have two overlays that allow for mixed use, so this would change to by right. L. Newman explained the history for having it by Special Permit, which was to make sure the Town retained some control or oversight to the center of Town.

H. Frail expressed concern that if HONE is proposing zoning that is not compliant with MBTA Communities, it may go beyond the scope of HONE's charge. J. McKnight noted that the group should be careful that what we bring to Town Meeting, Scenario A or B, can be enacted with a majority vote and will not require a 2/3 vote. When we talk about changing dimensions for mixed use housing in our downtown, we're getting away from zoning amendments that can be passed by majority vote.

Consultants read from Section 5 of the Zoning Act: If ordinance or bylaw allows for multi-family housing or mixed use development as of right in an eligible location, that can be a 51% vote according to the guidance. You allow for it as of right. It does not say "mandate" one way or the other.

Consultants recommend submitting only MBTA Communities Law compliant scenarios to the State.

Some members suggest the pink area should be left as is to focus on first floor commercial. Others suggest removing the pink area from the HONE plan as we don't want mandatory mixed use. You cannot have both. To deal with it cleanly, remove the pink area and keep Apt. A-1 on the west side.

MOTION: J. Levy moved that the Bonus Scenario does not need to strictly adhere to MBTA Communities Law.

SECONDED: R. Ruth

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

MOTION FAILS: 1-8

MOTION: H. Frail moved that all of the Map Scenarios should be compliant and in the spirit of MBTA Communities Law.

SECONDED: R. Ruth

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

MOTION CARRIES: 8-1

Members discussed the treatment of the Center Business District on the map with options to leave it off the map or include it with zoning as proposed in Scenario C. Some members disagree with the proposed 4 story housing plan which was 2.5 stories with a 1.0 FAR. One member asked to clarify to allow standalone multi-family housing by right in the pink area between the railroad right of way and Linden St. Commercial by right cannot be mandated. Members question whether the Congregational Church should be included in the contiguous area.

MOTION: H. Frail moved that the pink shaded area on the Center Business B map be zoned multi-family housing to the ground, 4 stories, 2.0 FAR, by right

SECONDED: R. Ruth

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

MOTION CARRIES: 6-3

MOTION: H. Frail moved that the meeting enter a 5 minute recess at 10:10 pm.

SECONDED: R. Ruth

ROLL-CALL VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Members returned to the meeting at 10:15 pm.

General Residence

Consultants successfully added units and contiguity but not density. This secures additional housing options not currently allowed. Members discussed the GR area near the Fire Station and former Santander Bank along Highland and Webster Streets. There are 1,056 units in these sections. We need more compliance.

MOTION: M. Diener moved not to include General Residence at this time and encourage the Planning Board to review the matter.
SECONDED: R. Ruth
ROLL-CALL VOTE: Unanimous
MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

At 10:44 pm, Jeanne McKnight recused herself for the reason she resides in zone A-1 and serves on the Board of the condominium that is in this zone.

Apt. A-1

This is currently zoned for 3 stories, at 0.5 FAR. The area contains the Baptist Church, Christian Science Church, and Hillcrest Garden. It is Town owned land and will not contribute to MBTA Communities Law compliance. HONE will drop this A-1 district. The Planning Board has already reviewed this.

In Scenario C, we looked at 4 stories and 1.0 FAR with maximum 24 dwelling units per acre. It includes St. Joseph's School but not Steven Palmer apartments. Some are SRB. Take everything off that is east of Pickering. The Base Scenario cuts the A1 district at May St. and Oakland.

Members agreed to not include Stephen Palmer parcel in the Scenario.

MOTION: J. Levy moved to approve 4 stories, 1.0 FAR, 24 dwelling units per acre in the Apt. A-1 District except where areas were cut out of A-1.
SECONDED: R. Ruth
ROLL-CALL VOTE: M. Diener, nay; N. Espada, nay; H. Frail, nay; K. Keane, nay; L. Kaponya, nay; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, nay; J. McKnight, abstained; R. Ruth, nay.
MOTION FAILS: 1-7

Some members agreed the FAR is too low for feasibility. Members discussed increasing the number of dwelling units per acre rather than the FAR.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to approve Apt. A-1 District across the board at 4 stories, 1.0 FAR, 36 dwelling units per acre.
SECONDED: R. Ruth
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, abstained; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

Members reviewed areas that are not currently zoned Apt. A-1 on the map.

- Congregational Church - Hillside Ave. is General Residence and Industrial on Pleasant St.
- Hillside School will probably be labeled excluded land by EOHLC and would not count.
- Industrial - Make commercial parcels Industrial (Needham Oriental Rug is currently GR but is occupied by Industrial use, pre-existing, non-conforming).

The Industrial is currently in the Base map. It is not expanding.

MOTION: H. Frail moved to keep the boundaries of the Industrial District as shown on the map and that multi family is added to the district.

SECONDED: L. Kaponya

Discussed followed and no vote was taken.

Apt. A-1 is currently zoned General Residential including two parcels. Include the A-1 District, but the GR will go to the Planning Board. The Industrial zone will be zoned multi-family housing by right as an allowable use. The boundaries will remain unchanged, but heights, FAR, and unit capacity will be adjusted. Members discussed using the same dimensions as A-1.

At 11:28 pm, J. McKnight recused herself as she lives across the street from the District.

Members considered each Industrial zone in the Bonus Scenario to see whether it could be made part of the A-1 District. Having higher density for one Industrial area than another was also considered.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to set the dimensions to 3 stories, no FAR, 24 dwelling units per acre in the Industrial District on Crescent St., and to set the dimensions to 4 stories, 1.0 FAR, 36 dwelling units per acre in the Industrial District on Hillside Ave.

SECONDED: R. Ruth

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, abstained; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

Hillside Ave. Business

Members reviewed all parcels on the map and decided to add housing units to the Industrial District. They selected two parcels which will become Apt. A-1 District: the Carter Methodist Church plot and the plot across the street which already has multi-family housing. Other parcels will remain SRB. Underlying zoning is not changed. HONE has not determined these parcels are A-1 for all purposes, but they are A-1 for the purposes of MBTA.

- The Library and the Episcopal Church on the corner of Rosemary and Highland is SRB currently. There was consensus to change this from SRB to Apt. A-1.
- The Denmark Ave. area contains apartments. There was consensus to make this Apt. A-1.
- The Congregational Church is currently SRB. There was consensus to change it to Apt. A-1.

Hillside Ave. - Hillside Business is currently in the Base Scenario at 3 stories, .5 FAR. In order to try to get the Base Scenario to the compliant numbers, make it 3 stories, 1.0 FAR.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to zone Hillside Business District as Apt. A-1 at 3 stories, 1.0 FAR, 24 dwelling units per acre.

SECONDED: R. Ruth

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, abstained; R. Ruth, aye. Unanimous.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

For clarification, the Industrial Crescent is zoned at 3 stories, FAR 0.75, 24 units per acre. Members decided to consider 100 West parcel separately.

Avery Square - There was consensus for no standalone multi-family housing.

100 West parcel - Overlay dimensions: It is in the Base by Special Permit.

Business District - Nothing needs to be changed in the boundaries.

Sudbury Farms to the north, funeral homes to the south, across the street from the A-1 district. Scenario A zoning is currently 3 stories, FAR not applicable.

Scenario C zoning is currently 5 stories, 1.5 FAR, 50 maximum dwelling units per acre.

One member felt this is one area to incentivize mixed use in the Bonus Scenario.

Members decided to use the same dimensional requirements as Chestnut Street West.

V. Finalize Inclusionary Zoning Percentage Recommendation, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

We will apply inclusionary zoning uniformly across the districts except GR at 12.5%.

VI. Finalize Parking Requirement Recommendation, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Emily Innes, Innes Associates

Members agreed to a Parking limit minimum of 1.0 space per residential unit uniformly across the Base and the Bonus Scenarios.

VII. Next Steps - Future meetings: 3/7, 3/28 Community Meeting #3, 4/4, 4/25

MOTION: N. Espada moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:11 am.

SECONDED: J. Levy

ROLL-CALL VOTE: Unanimous

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group
February 15, 2024

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**.

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

Town of Needham, Massachusetts
Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
February 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, William Lovett, Jeanne McKnight, Ronald Ruth
Absent: None
Staff: Lee Newman, Director of Planning & Community Development; Amy Haelsen, Director of Communications & Community Engagement
Guests: Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates; Christopher Heep, Town Counsel

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

Members reviewed the agenda and purpose of the meeting.

II. Overview of Site Plan Review and Special Permit Regulatory Framework, Christopher Heep, Town Counsel

Attorney Heep noted that he had been asked to offer a brief discussion of the key features, and notable differences, between special permits and site plan approvals. This is important to the work of HONE, because site plan approval is a type of review that can be applied under MBTA zoning, and special permit review is not.

Attorney Heep noted that special permits are a type of permit that is specifically provided for and regulated in Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40A. The key feature of a special permit is that the reviewing board has the discretion to allow the use or to deny it.

In contrast, site plan approvals are not mentioned or regulated in Chapter 40A; as a regulatory tool it was developed by local zoning bylaws all over Massachusetts. Site plan review is a type of review applied to uses that are allowed by right on a particular property. Because of this, site plan review involves reasonable regulation of the use, and never the outright denial of that use.

There are two exceptions to this general rule: When a plan shows a problem so intractable that it cannot be addressed through conditions, and when an applicant fails to provide information required by the bylaw. The first scenario is exceedingly rare and unlikely to be encountered in practice.

Site plan approvals can include conditions. Typical conditions may include modifying lighting, adding fencing, requiring drainage plans to demonstrate compliance with stormwater standards, moving around parking spaces within the site; and moving around other structural elements on the site plan. Conditions can be used to shape a project, provided they cannot go so far as to interfere with or effectively prohibit the allowed use.

There are some bylaws (like Needham's) that combine site plan and special permit review into one process. In this case, the review is effectively that of a special permit. This approach is acceptable generally, but not in the case of MBTA zoning. When reviewing a project under MBTA zoning, only true site plan review can be applied.

The tenor of the MBTA Communities Law is as of right. Be careful to make this purely a Site Plan Review which would not intertwine it with the Special Permit process.

A member suggested that the Planning Board may want to clarify all Site Plan Reviews if the Town's current review is ambiguous. Members discussed the advisory nature of the Design Review Board, which is not binding on the applicant. Design guidelines exist for Needham Center and Chestnut Street, but not for the other districts proposed for rezoning. The Design Review Board has been asked for their recommendations.

Members discussed the appeals process. HONE could draft the bylaw to allow an appeal to go to the Zoning Board of Appeals or write it to provide for an appeal goes directly to the court.

Town Counsel noted he has not seen anything prohibiting the Town from notifying abutters or holding a public hearing under site plan review. Counsel noted a rule under Chapter 40B and MBTA Communities zoning that prohibits imposing requirements on multifamily housing that are not required of other uses. That may go toward application requirements more so than dimensional requirements.

The public was reminded virtually that the meeting is open to the public but not for public comment. **Please feel free to email HONE at planning@needhamma.gov.**

Members clarified the Quantum vote. There was an amendment to the Zoning Act few years ago. If you are zoning to make it easier to build housing, a majority vote rather than a two-thirds vote is required. Counsel agreed. It gets complicated with the non-residential portion of mixed-use projects don't get the benefit of the majority vote. We'll have to think about that.

III. Presentation, Selection and Approval of Final Base Scenario, *Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates*

The Consultant presented Housing Needham (HONE) Town Visioning for Multi-Family Housing available at: <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>

The Consultant discussed parking requirements for mixed-use offset with EOHLC staff (Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.). New language was unclear about what the Town could or couldn't require for parking. EOHLC clarified that parking requirements apply to mixed use and not standalone scenarios. The Town could require parking ratios for residential portion but could not be required for commercial parking. To include an "offset" in our MBTA Communities proposal, HONE would have to change the parking requirements for commercial uses in Needham Center.

Members discussed the need to add more housing units to the Base Scenario.

If a new use is proposed for a building in Needham Center that is 100% commercial, we can have our usual parking applied. It's only in the situation where the commercial portion of the Center Business mixed use where you cannot have a parking requirement for the commercial portion.

The Consultant reviewed edited maps which indicate the Town is 81 units short on housing units for compliance. Options include using the Offset which is complicated. Or bring in the A-1 District on Greendale Ave. near St. Sebastian's at Charles Court that already exists, which gets us 141 units. This is walkable to Hersey Station but beyond 0.5 mi from the station.

Other options include changing Chestnut Street Business from 18 to 24 maximum dwelling units per acre. Or change the FAR in the Industrial district from 0.5 to 0.6.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to approve Apt. A-1 District, Charles Court pending acreage numbers verified between Staff and Consultants.
SECONDED: R. Ruth
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.
MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Members reviewed the FAR for the Hillside Ave Business District. The total unit count for the Base Scenario will be 1,844 plus 24 which equals 1,868 housing units.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to approve leaving the FAR at 0.7 for Hillside Ave. Business District and not decreasing it to 0.5 as voted previously.
SECONDED: R. Ruth
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.
MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Existing Zoning Modeled Capacity

There was a discussion about how to calculate the number of existing housing units on these parcels today. The consultant also discussed the Propensity for Change model which assesses parcels within MBTA Districts using a Financial Feasibility model. This model estimates the number of units that could be turned over based on the value differential between today and the future, providing insight into the number of units that are likely to be redeveloped and where.

IV. Presentation, Selection and Approval of Final Add-on Scenario for MBTA Communities Compliance, Eric Halvorsen, RKG Associates

Bonus Scenario Map also referred to as Neighborhood Housing Bonus Map

The Consultant reviewed the Bonus Scenario map which calculated to 4,170 units based on zoning parameters discussed at a density of 37 dwelling units per acre. Areas driving the most units are the Apt. A-1 District, Chestnut St. West, Chestnut St. East, Business District, Industrial District, and Center Business Cruller.

Members discussed the high number of units which if added to the right places result in the least impact to residents. Residents voiced that the Town should comply with MBTA Communities Act which the Base Scenario addresses; other residents indicate the Town should substantially exceed it which is addressed with the Bonus Scenario. Both will be presented at Town Meeting.

Members discussed not including the Steven Palmer School but including the St. Joseph's School on the south side of May St.; add it to Apartment A-1 District. Members discussed rezoning churches and schools in the unlikely and undesirable event that the businesses will someday dissolve although school land is excluded and not countable per state guidelines. The church is in the Apartment A-1 District.

The Base Scenario meets compliance; the Bonus Scenario exceeds compliance.

Members discussed modifying the unit density in Apartment A-1 District to make it more palatable. Would taking out a district be better than adjusting dimensional requirements? Keep zoning that enables housing production but on a smaller total number of acres. Preserve the good work done to date. Protect places where there could be housing production.

Members suggested there are two separate Articles. Bonus Scenario and Base Scenario will both go to the State for review and approval. Attain equity for housing across all MBTA districts including Hersey Station. Need to have Charles Court in both plans.

Needham Housing Coalition suggested adjustments to the map to decrease the number of units. Think about how much of the Center we want to retain for a mixed-use profile. Do we really want to include Needham Bank and the Comella's block, or should that be removed and preserved for mixed use development for the core? We currently allow 3 stories west of Maple St. in the other portion of the Center Business District. Do you really want 4 stories at the outer edge there?

Some members did not agree. If you're going to produce housing, do it near the trains and businesses. Bring more people to the downtown area.

There was a discussion about rezoning churches. One member suggested to remove areas of the Center Business district and revisit them more comprehensively in the future; the Planning Board could review this. Leave Comella's block off.

The Consultant modeled Business District (Sudbury Farms) changes to FAR and changes to dwelling units per acre.

Members suggested getting the housing unit number under 4,000 would be more palatable.

At 9:12 pm, J. McKnight recused herself from the meeting for the reason of conflict of interest.

One member expressed concern for dimensions for the Industrial zone on Hillside Ave. If you build 4 stories, there will be a shading effect on the hill. There are 3 and 3.5 stories there now. Consultants modeled the dwelling units per acre from 36 to 24.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to lower the unit height on Hillside Ave. Industrial from 4 stories to 3 stories.

SECONDED: K. Keane

VOTE: M. Diener, nay; N. Espada, aye; H. Frail, aye; K. Keane, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; R. Ruth, aye.

MOTION CARRIES: 7-1

After modeling dwelling units per acre, the above motion is amended to make Hillside Ave. Industrial the same as Hillside Ave. Business reducing the total amount of units by 175.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to lower the unit height on Hillside Ave. Industrial from 4 stories to 3 stories, leave FAR at 1.0, and modify dwelling units per acre from 36 to 24.

SECONDED: K. Keane

VOTE: M. Diener, aye; N. Espada, aye; H. Frail, aye; K. Keane, aye; L. Kaponya, aye; J. Levy, aye; W. Lovett, aye; R. Ruth, aye. J. McKnight recused.

MOTION CARRIES: 8-0

Members reviewed correspondence sent to planning@needhamma.gov which favored Scenarios A and C but had little support for Scenario B, and concerns to inform areas where units could be reduced to under 4,000. HONE will receive community feedback on 3/28 to adjust unit numbers.

Members agreed not to reduce buildability. Members asked Consultants to model the effect of removing all church parcels.

Members discussed communication from Housing Needham Coalition that the Comella's block should not be zoned for standalone multi-family housing. Members discussed contiguity.

MOTION: J. McKnight moved to remove the Comella's block between the railroad right of way and Nehoiden St. on the north side which includes Comella's Restaurant, Needham Bank and Dedham Savings Bank with the condition to keep it zoned as it is presently which allows mixed use but not standalone multi-family.

J. McKnight took back the motion moved above.

MOTION: J. McKnight moved to delete the Needham Center Business District.
SECOND: L. Kaponya
VOTE: No vote was taken.
MOTION CARRIES: 0-0

Produce housing for people will come to live, work and support retail. Residents expressed preference to leave the downtown area as commercial enforced by current zoning. After MBTA Communities Law compliance, further study can be done.

To ensure first floor commercial, leave the downtown out of MBTA Communities Law compliance. Needham Center also has a lot of Town parking lots. Removing this district removes 264 units. Members discussed removing Avery School and Webster Green from the Base Scenario. These are already fully developed. Hamilton Highlands nets 200 units.

Members discussed strategies to achieve a palpable number of units to pass at Town Meeting.

- Removing the churches takes away 286 units.
- Removing the Center Business District takes away 264 units.
- Removing A-1 Avery School plus Hamilton Highland takes away 205 units.
- If we remove them all, we would net 3,410 units.
- Removing the Center Business District and the churches nets 3,610.
- Removing only Avery School and Hamilton Highlands nets 3,960.

MOTION: N. Espada moved to remove the churches from the MBTA Communities.
SECOND: K. Keane
VOTE: No vote was taken.
MOTION CARRIES: 0-0

The following motion would change the number of units from 4,300 to 3,400 units. Members discussed why Hamilton Highlands in Apt. A-1 is different from Rosemary. It is the furthest district away from the MBTA. We increased the unit count in the A-1 district; it is a step down to residential neighborhoods. It makes sense to leave it out.

MOTION: H. Frail moved to remove the churches, the pink Center Business District on the map, Hamilton Highlands and Avery School.
SECOND: K. Keane
VOTE: Unanimously approved
MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

The Consultant ran the model which contained a parameter table leaving all setbacks to be determined. The Town will apply the underlying setbacks in those districts.

V. Next Steps

The Consultant outlined next steps:

3/7 meeting - look at build-outs, impact analysis	3/28 Public meeting - setbacks are not decided
Early April meeting to discuss addressing setbacks	

The Consultant described expectations for the March 7 meeting:

Final Scenarios decided 2/29, Base and Bonus	Fiscal Impact Analysis-Base Scenario Propensity for Change
Create a table: existing # of units, what zoning allows, what Base and Bonus Scenarios would allow	Fiscal Impact Analysis-Bonus Scenario Propensity for Change
Present Propensity for Change, Base & Bonus	Show 12.5% Inclusionary Zoning
Deliver plan for 3/28 Community meeting	No Meeting Packet available before 3/28 meeting

MOTION: J. Levy moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 pm.

SECONDED: H. Frail

VOTE: Unanimously approved

MOTION CARRIES: 9-0

Respectfully submitted,

Dale Michaud
Recording Secretary

To subscribe to the multi-family zoning initiative in Needham, **visit the project page on the Town's website**. The Meeting Packet is available at <https://www.needhamma.gov/Archive.aspx>



NEEDHAM MBTA COMMUNITIES

HONE Meeting
April 4, 2024



Contents

Zoning Format

Draft Purpose

Draft Dimensional Standards

Zoning Format

ZONING FORMAT

- **Two-article strategy**
 - **Article 1: Multifamily Overlay District = Base Compliance**
 - **Article 2: Neighborhood Housing Plan = Additional Density**
 - In the current draft, Article 2 **MODIFIES** Article 1.
- **Additional changes:**
 - Amend **Section 2.1 Classes of Districts** to add the Multi-Family Overlay District.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

3.17.2 Scope of Authority

3.17.3 Definitions

3.17.4 Use Regulations

3.17.5 Dimensional Regulations

3.17.6 Off-Street Parking

3.17.7 Other Development Standards

3.17.8 Affordable Housing

3.17.9 Site Plan Review

3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

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3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

Establishes the public need for and benefit from the district.

ZONING FORMAT

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Relationship between the overlay and the underlying district(s).

Also establishes the subdistricts.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

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**Adds any defined terms
that are unique to this
zoning district.**

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

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3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

**Establishes allowable uses
- in this case, multi-family
housing and parking as an
accessory use.**

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

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**Establishes the
dimensional standards for
each subdistrict.**

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

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3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

Establishes the required off-street parking spaces (vehicular and bicycle) and points to the existing parking standards in the zoning.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

3.17.2 Scope of Authority

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3.17.9 Site Plan Review

3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

Defines the standards to be used in the Site Plan Review Process.

Where applicable – points to existing requirements.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

3.17.2 Scope of Authority

3.17.3 Definitions

3.17.4 Use Regulations

3.17.5 Dimensional Regulations

3.17.6 Off-Street Parking

3.17.7 Other Development Standards

3.17.8 Affordable Housing

3.17.9 Site Plan Review

3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

Requires 12.5% of units be affordable for multi-family buildings with six or more units.

Establishes standards for the provision and distribution of those units.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

3.17.2 Scope of Authority

3.17.3 Definitions

3.17.4 Use Regulations

3.17.5 Dimensional Regulations

3.17.6 Off-Street Parking

3.17.7 Other Development Standards

3.17.8 Affordable Housing

3.17.9 Site Plan Review

3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

Establishes the review process for projects within the Multi-Family Overlay District.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

3.17.2 Scope of Authority

3.17.3 Definitions

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3.17.5 Dimensional Regulations

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3.17.7 Other Development Standards

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3.17.9 Site Plan Review

3.17.10 Design Guidelines

3.17.11 Severability

Establishes the right of the Planning Board to develop Design Standards and Guidelines for projects within the district.

ZONING FORMAT

Article 1: Creates 3.17 Multi-family Overlay District

3.17.1 Purposes of District

3.17.2 Scope of Authority

3.17.3 Definitions

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3.17.11 Severability

Boilerplate – if one section is invalid, the rest of the zoning stands.

Draft Purpose

DRAFT PURPOSE

The purposes of the Multi-family Overlay District include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) Providing Multi-family housing in Needham, consistent with the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 40A (the Zoning Act), Section 3A;
- (b) Supporting vibrant neighborhoods by encouraging housing that provides Multi-family housing within a half-mile of a Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority (MBTA) commuter rail station; and
- (c) Establishing controls which will facilitate responsible development and minimize potential adverse impacts upon nearby residential and other properties.

Draft Dimensional Standards

														Resdeintial Districts	
Dimensional standard	Chestnut Street	Lower Chst Overlay	Garden St Overlay	Base Scenario Chestnut Street	Bus.	Base Scenario Business	Avery Sq.	Avery Sq. Overlay	Base Scenario Avery Sq. Overlay	Industrial	Base Scenario Industrial	Hillside Avenue Business	Base Hillside Ave Business	A-1	Base Scenario A-1
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 SF	15,000 SF	15,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,000	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,00 SF	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	20,000 SF	20,000 SF
Minimum Frontage	80 feet	100 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	120 feet	
Maximum Building Height: By Right	35 feet 2.5 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 stories	40 feet 3 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 stories	40 feet 3 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 stories	40 feet 3 Stories
Maximum Building Height: By Special Permit	N/A	For lots with frontage on Chestnut Street: 37 feet 3 stories <u>or</u> 48 feet 3+1 stories	37 feet 2+1 stories		N/A		N/A	44 feet, including the elevator shaft overruns 49 feet Up to 4 stories, where the fourth story is allowed by Special Permit for specific uses, not exceeding 35% total roof area		N/A				N/A	
<u>Minimum</u> Building Height	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		N/A	N/A		N/A				N/A	
Floor Area Ratio: By Right	0.7	0.7	0.7 by right	0.7	N/A	N/A	<u>For eating establishments, or any use providing service to patrons while in autos, or any use having gas pumps</u> 0.35 <u>For all other uses</u> 0.7	1.1	<u>1</u>	N/A	0.5	<u>For eating establishments, or any use providing service to patrons while in autos, or any use having gas pumps</u> 0.35 <u>For all other uses</u> 0.7	0.7	0.5	0.5
Floor Area Ratio: By Special Permit		For lots with frontage on Chestnut Street: 1.5 <u>or</u> 2.0	1.0 for multi-family 1.2 for other uses		N/A										

														Resdeintial Districts	
Dimensional standard	Chestnut Street	Lower Chst Overlay	Garden St Overlay	Base Scenario Chestnut Street	Bus.	Base Scenario Business	Avery Sq.	Avery Sq. Overlay	Base Scenario Avery Sq. Overlay	Industrial	Base Scenario Industrial	Hillside Avenue Business	Base Hillside Ave Business	A-1	Base Scenario A-1
Minimum Front Setback	Minimum 20 feet for all buildings along both sides of Chestnut Street. All other buildings 10 feet.	Minimum 5 feet or Average of setbacks within 100 feet, whichever is smaller	Minimum 10 feet or Average of setbacks within 100 feet, whichever is smaller	Minimum 20 feet for all buildings along both sides of Chestnut Street. All other buildings 10 feet.	<u>For lots zoned Bus. prior to April 14, 1952</u> Minimum 10 feet <u>For lots zoned Bus. thereafter</u> Minimum 20 feet	10 feet	<u>Minimum</u> 10 feet <u>or</u> a setback consistent wth the stebacks for principal buildings existing on the premises as of the effective date of this provisiion, <u>or</u> the average of the setbacks of the buildings on adjoining lots, whichever is less restrictive <u>Maximum</u> not more than 15 feet on Highland Ave	Same as Avery Square	Minimum 10 feet Maximum 15 feet	<u>All lots zoned for a manufacturing district prior to April 15, 1952</u> Minimum front setback of 10 feet <u>All other lots</u> 20 feet	25 feet	20 feet	20 feet	25 feet	25 feet
Side and Rear Setback Adjacent to Residential Zones	Minimum 50 feet, including 25-ft landscaped buffer closest to residential boundary	Same as Chestnut Street except: <u>Lots adjacent to residential districts</u> *Minimum setback 10 feet for underground parking structure <u>Lots adjacent to MTBA ROW</u> *Minimum setback 10 ft. for underground parking structure *Minimum 25-ft setback composed of: (a) 10-ft landscaped buffer or, by special permit, surface parking if landscaped and (b) 15 ft for accessory uses, excluding buildings or structures	Minimum 10 feet side and rear	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	<u>For lots zoned Bus. after April 15, 1952 adjoining a residential district</u> 50 foot setback, which shall be landscaped, no accessory parking or storage within setback (few exceptions may be granted by ZBA SP)	Minimum 10 feet side and rear	No Building or structure for a use not allowed in a residential district shall be placed within 50 feet of a residential district boundary, including 10-ft landscaped buffer closest to residential boundary	Same as Avery Square	Minimum 10 feet side and rear	<u>For lots zoned manufacturing or industrial after April 15, 1955 adjoining a residential district</u> 50 foot setback, which shall be landscaped, no accessory parking or storage within setback (few exceptions may be granted by ZBA SP)	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	20 feet	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	District has 20 foot side and rear setback	Minimum 20 feet side and rear

														Resdeintial Districts	
Dimensional standard	Chestnut Street	Lower Chst Overlay	Garden St Overlay	Base Scenario Chestnut Street	Bus.	Base Scenario Business	Avery Sq.	Avery Sq. Overlay	Base Scenario Avery Sq. Overlay	Industrial	Base Scenario Industrial	Hillside Avenue Business	Base Hillside Ave Business	A-1	Base Scenario A-1
Building Coverage	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	range from 25% to 50%, dependant on corner or interior lot and number of stories	25%	N/A	N/A	N/A	<u>lots devoted to a manufacturing use listed in Section 3.2</u> 60% for corner lots 50% any other lot	N/A		N/A	N/A	N/A
Enclosed Parking	Included within FAR calculation with exception of underground parking exclusion by Special permit	Underground parking exempt from FAR	Underground parking exempt from FAR		Underground parking, or parking contained within a building, allows max. coverage of the building to be increased up to the limits of the required setbacks. The lot coverage of the building up to 2.5% points above max., by one SF for each SF of parking space that is undergrdound or within building.		Included within FAR calculation with exception of underground parking exclusion by Special permit	the enclosed area of a building devoted to off-street parking shall not be counted towards FAR				Included within FAR calculation with exception of underground parking exclusion by Special permit		N/A	
Basic Off-Street Parking Requirements	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	Same as Needham Center Overlay	Same as Lower Chestnut Overlay	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit
Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre	18	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	N/A	18	18

																	Resdeintial Districts	
Dimensional standard	Chestnut Street	Lower Chst Overlay	Garden St Overlay	NH Chestnut Street Business - East	NH Chestnut Street Business - West	NH Chestnut Street - Garden Street	Bus.	NH Scenario Business	Avery Sq.	Avery Sq. Overlay	NH Scenario Avery Sq. Overlay	Industrial	NH Scenario Industrial	NH Industrial – Crescent	Hillside Avenue Business	NH Hillside Ave Business	A-1	NH Scenario A-1
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 SF	15,000 SF	15,000 SF	10,000 SF revise 15,000 SF?	10,000 SF revise 15,000 SF?	10,000 SF revise 15,000 SF?	10,000 SF	10,000	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,00 SF	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	10,00 SF	10,000 SF	10,000 SF	20,000 SF	20,000 SF
Minimum Frontage	80 feet	100 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	80 feet	120 feet	120 feet
Maximum Building Height: By Right	35 feet 2.5 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	50 feet 4 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 stories	50 feet 4 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	35 feet 2.5 Stories	40 feet 3 Stories	40 feet 3 stories	50 feet 4 Stories
Maximum Building Height: By Special Permit	N/A	For lots with frontage on Chestnut Street: 37 feet 3 stories or 48 feet 3+1 stories	37 feet 2+1 stories				N/A		N/A	44 feet, including the elevator shaft overruns 49 feet Up to 4 stories, where the fourth story is allowed by Special Permit for specific uses, not exceeding 35% total roof area		N/A					N/A	
Minimum Building Height	N/A	N/A	N/A				N/A		N/A	N/A		N/A					N/A	
Floor Area Ratio: By Right	0.7	0.7	0.7 by right	2	2	2	N/A	2	<u>For eating establishments, or any use providing service to patrons while in autos, or any use having gas pumps</u> 0.35 <u>For all other uses</u> 0.7	1.1	<u>1</u>	N/A	1	0.75	<u>For eating establishments, or any use providing service to patrons while in autos, or any use having gas pumps</u> 0.35 <u>For all other uses</u> 0.7	1	0.5	1
Floor Area Ratio: By Special Permit		For lots with frontage on Chestnut Street: 1.5 or 2.0	1.0 for multi-family 1.2 for other uses				N/A											

																	Resdeintial Districts	
Dimensional standard	Chestnut Street	Lower Chst Overlay	Garden St Overlay	NH Chestnut Street Business - East	NH Chestnut Street Business - West	NH Chestnut Street - Garden Street	Bus.	NH Scenario Business	Avery Sq.	Avery Sq. Overlay	NH Scenario Avery Sq. Overlay	Industrial	NH Scenario Industrial	NH Industrial – Crescent	Hillside Avenue Business	NH Hillside Ave Business	A-1	NH Scenario A-1
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Side and Rear Setback Adjacent to Residential Zones	Minimum 50 feet, including 25-ft landscaped buffer closest to residential boundary	Same as Chestnut Street except: <u>Lots adjacent to residential districts</u> *Minimum setback 10 feet for underground parking structure <u>Lots adjacent to MTBA ROW</u> *Minimum setback 10 ft. for underground parking structure *Minimum 25-ft setback composed of: (a) 10-ft landscaped buffer or, by special permit, surface parking if landscaped and (b) 15 ft for accessory uses, excluding buildings or structures	Minimum 10 feet side and rear	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	For lots zoned Bus. after April 15, 1952 adjoining a residential district 50 foot setback, which shall be landscaped, no accessory parking or storage within setback (few exceptions may be granted by ZBA SP)	20	No Building or structure for a use not allowed in a residential district shall be placed within 50 feet of a residential district boundary, including 10-ft landscaped buffer closest to residential boundary	Same as Avery Square	10	For lots zoned manufacturing or industrial after April 15, 1955 adjoining a residential district 50 foot setback, which shall be landscaped, no accessory parking or storage within setback (few exceptions may be granted by ZBA SP)	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	20 feet	Minimum 20 feet side and rear	District has 20 foot side and rear setback	Minimum 20 feet side and rear

																	Resdeintial Districts	
Dimensional standard	Chestnut Street	Lower Chst Overlay	Garden St Overlay	NH Chestnut Street Business - East	NH Chestnut Street Business - West	NH Chestnut Street - Garden Street	Bus.	NH Scenario Business	Avery Sq.	Avery Sq. Overlay	NH Scenario Avery Sq. Overlay	Industrial	NH Scenario Industrial	NH Industrial – Crescent	Hillside Avenue Business	NH Hillside Ave Business	A-1	NH Scenario A-1
Building Coverage	N/A	N/A	N/A				range from 25% to 50%, dependant on corner or interior lot and number of stories	25%	N/A	N/A	N/A	lots devoted to a manufacturing use listed in Section 3.2 60% for corner lots 50% any other lot	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A
Enclosed Parking	Included within FAR calculation with exception of underground parking exclusion by Special permit	Underground parking exempt from FAR	Underground parking exempt from FAR				Underground parking, or parking contained within a building, allows max. coverage of the building to be increased up to the limits of the required setbacks. The lot coverage of the building up to 2.5% points above max., by one SF for each SF of parking space that is undergrdound or within building.		Included within FAR calculation with exception of underground parking exclusion by Special permit	the enclosed area of a building devoted to off-street parking shall not be counted towards FAR					Included within FAR calculation with exception of underground parking exclusion by Special permit		N/A	
Basic Off-Street Parking Requirements	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	Same as Needham Center Overlay	Same as Lower Chestnut Overlay				Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit	Per Zoning By-Law Section 5.1.2	1 space per unit
Maximum Dwelling Units Per Acre	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	18	18	N/A	N/A	24	24	18	24	18	36



Needham Housing Coalition Message to HONE

March 12, 2024

The Needham Housing Coalition is very interested in the HONE MBTA Communities Act proposed Neighborhood Housing Plan, which presents a more robust plan for housing development. We appreciate the amount of work that has gone into the development of these two plans, which will be drafted as zoning articles and submitted to the Commonwealth's EOHLIC for review to verify compliance with the mandates of the MBTA Communities Act.

The goal of the Needham Housing Coalition is to help create opportunity for the development of a range of much needed "missing middle" multifamily housing in Needham at a variety of price points and sizes that will be more attainable for more people. More housing choices are critical to help serve a diverse group including seniors, young people and families, and our town and regional workforce. After the zoning is passed by Town Meeting this fall, there will still be many months/years of planning, approvals, and financing before any housing can be built. Housing production resulting from the proposed zoning changes in the two plans is projected to take many years and to be modest in total units created since the regional economy faces significant financial and investment challenges in the production of multifamily housing.

We continue to support the fact that in both HONE plans, the downtown ground-floor commercial core blocks in Needham Center and Needham Heights are not areas being considered for stand-alone multifamily housing. We understand that the Planning Board will be responsible for this continued and careful rezoning effort going forward to ensure that Needham continues to find opportunities for multifamily housing in the spirit of the MBTA Communities Act.

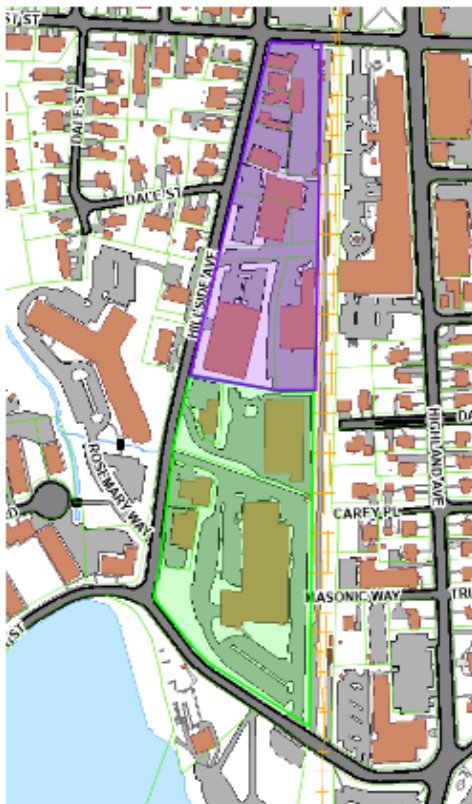
HONE will be providing important recommendations to the Planning Board later in their process and we consider this critical continuity for the multifamily rezoning work needed to support these vital commercial areas. This includes pursuing zoning changes to allow opportunity both for stand-alone multifamily housing near Needham Center and Needham Heights commercial districts, and for updating zoning for our mixed-use (MXU) core blocks that could have housing above commercial ground floors. Adjusting the zoning for these adjacent and downtown parcels to make sure they have the appropriate scale and mix of uses, and making them more economically feasible for development, is vitally important. Providing housing development opportunities to support vibrant downtown shops and services will help safeguard their economic viability and their larger role as dynamic activity centers for the greater Needham community.

Our review of the Base Compliance Plan acknowledges that it is intended to be very limited in impact to ensure a positive vote at Town Meeting. However, there is a very real understanding that, with the more limiting thresholds, it is less likely that multifamily housing would be developed with this plan.

Therefore, we have carefully reviewed the proposed Neighborhood Housing Plan map and charts and have a few comments and recommendations to offer to HONE for consideration. Our few adjustments to the plan continue to be driven by the goal to find the greatest opportunity for multifamily housing where it makes sense, with a vision for the appropriate scale and density that respects the adjacent neighborhoods. The recommended changes are listed below and are also included as mark-ups on the attached map and charts.

Neighborhood Housing Plan: Map and Chart Comments

- **Apartment-1 (Rosemary Lake)** – Correct the Petrini site: the model is not representing the true development potential due to the multiple smaller parcels, some of which are under 20K sf. Recommend aggregating the parcels (since they have one owner) to ensure the model can better reflect the development yield.
- **Hillside Business** - The model results for this area shows very limited potential for multifamily housing because 6 of the 13 parcels are under 10K sf and do not generate any units. Given the unique parcel configuration, we recommend using 8K sf for minimum lot size and removing the 24u/ac density.
- **Hillside Industrial** – This area has considerably more development potential than HONE’s model is showing. We recommend dividing the district into Hillside North and Hillside South (similar to what HONE has done on Chestnut Street). The south portion of the district (starting at 530/540 Hillside Avenue), should have a 4-story limit because this area overlooks Rosemary Lake and is adjacent to the A-1 district across Hillside Avenue. The district is large enough to keep the north portion at 3 stories.



- **Apartment-1 (Charles Court East)** – Remove this site from the Neighborhood Housing Plan. The units in this development are not necessary for compliance; adjustments to the other areas noted above should make this unnecessary for the unit total. We understand that Charles Court may have been included for distribution purposes, being approximately 0.9 miles from Hersey Station and part of the allowable 10% district that can be outside of the ½-mile radius of a station.

Bonus Scenario Overview

NHC comments
submitted 03.12.2024

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLAN:
(HONE Bonus Scenario)

Divide large Hillside Industrial district into north and south areas with different height limits:
Keep 3 stories (N) and make 4 stories (S)
(see enlarged map for where to split)

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	(8,000) 10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	(4.0) 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

(make this two districts N & S w/ different ht limits)

6 of 10 parcels are under 10k sf and do not generate any units. Use 8,000 sf for minimum lot size.

Remove the density limit in these districts and keep FAR limit.

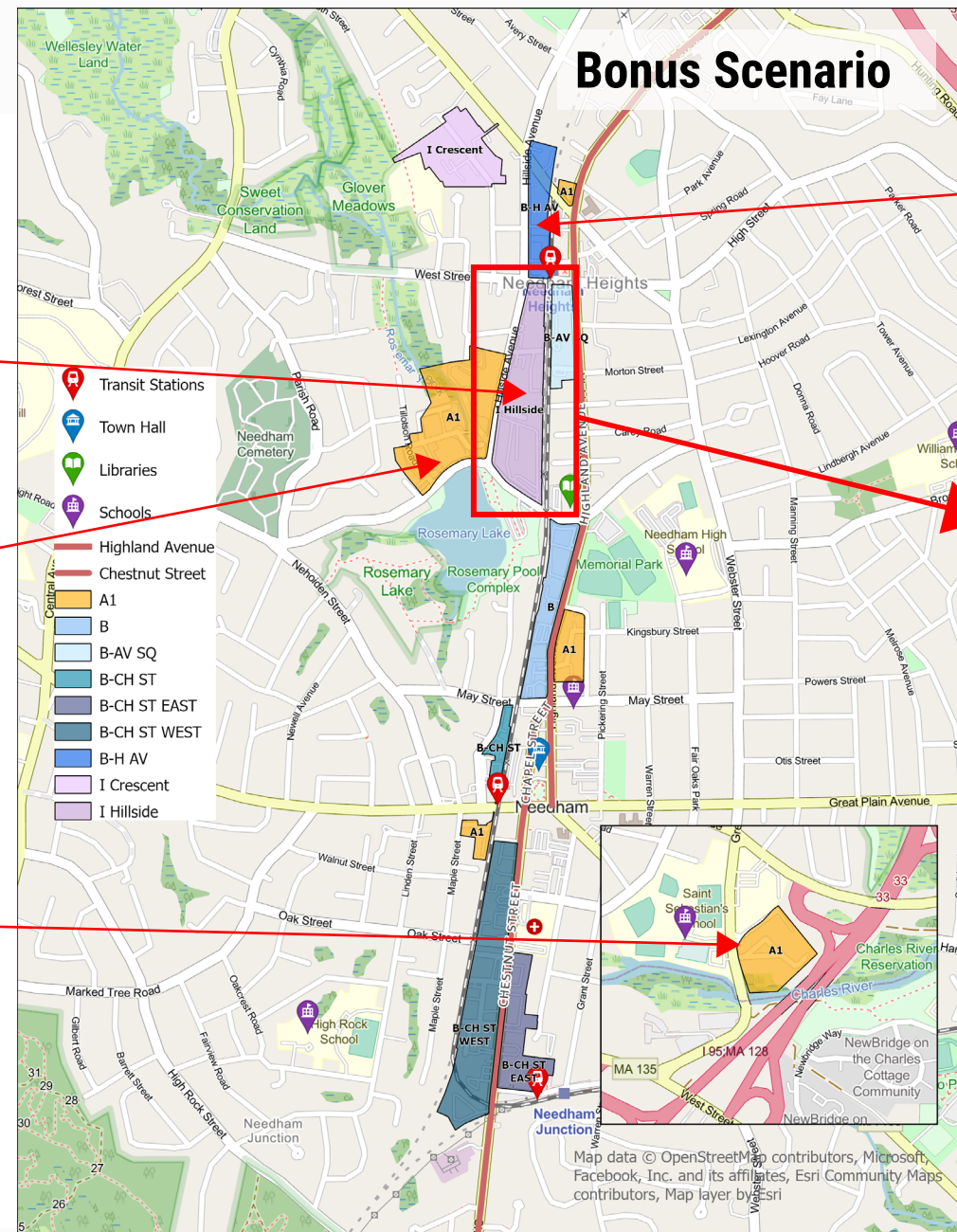
Bonus Scenario Overview

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLAN: (HONE Bonus Scenario)

Divide large Hillside Industrial district into north and south areas with different height limits:
Keep 3 stories (N) and make 4 stories (S)
(see enlarged map for where to split)

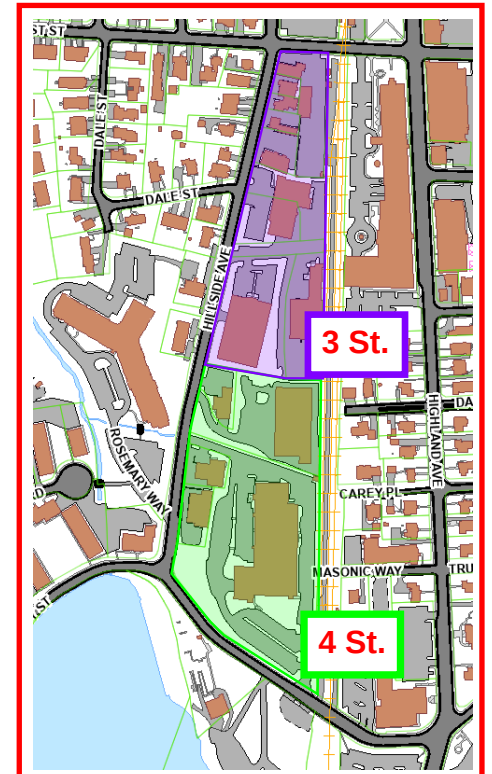
Correct the Petrini site to be one aggregated development parcel (currently site is multiple parcels some of which are over 20K sf limit).
The compliance model should be able to reflect the development potential for the whole site under one owner. This will offer a more accurate projection of development yield.
Currently the model will show less than what is development yield.

Remove Charles Court (removal allows the increased yield for Hillside Industrial going to 4 stories)



NHC comments
submitted 03.12.2024

This area is modeling low because 6 of 10 parcels are under 10k sf and do not generate any units. Use 8,000 sf for minimum lot size. Keep FAR and remove density limit.



Bonus Scenario Overview

NHC comments
submitted 03.12.2024

NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PLAN:
(HONE Bonus Scenario)

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

Adjust the totals in these districts to reflect the change in Hillside Industrial metrics and the removal of Charles Court

This is low because 6 of 10 parcels are under 10k sf and do not generate any units. Use 8,000 sf for minimum lot size. Keep FAR and remove density limit.

Comparison of Scenarios

NHC comments
submitted 03.12.2024

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

Adjust this total to reflect realistic Petrini aggregated parcel yield and the removal of Charles Court

Make this reflect existing byright housing total

Remove the density restriction for the Bonus scenario for this site. This number should NOT be lower than the Base Scenario total.

Make this reflect adjusted yield for increasing limits

~~*Existing zoning assumes the Chestnut St. Overlay zoning.~~
(*987 units allowed w/ special permit consistent with existing Chestnut Street Overlay district)

From: [Ronald W. Ruth](#)
To: [Alexandra Clee](#)
Cc: [Lee Newman](#)
Subject: Fwd: HONE + 100 West.
Date: Thursday, March 14, 2024 4:26:51 PM

Alex, FYI, I received and acknowledged the email below in connection with HONE.

I hope you're well.

Thanks,

Ron

Sent from my iPhone
Ronald Ruth
Sherin and Lodgen LLP
617.646.2165

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Ronald W. Ruth" <RWRuth@sherin.com>
Date: March 10, 2024 at 9:13:23 PM EDT
To: Joe <jsmatthews1988@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: HONE + 100 West.

Thanks, Joe.

Yes, HONE received your earlier letter.

As for 100 West, I'll pass this letter onto HONE.

Ron

Sent from my iPhone
Ronald Ruth
Sherin and Lodgen LLP
617.646.2165

On Mar 10, 2024, at 6:34 PM, Joe <jsmatthews1988@gmail.com>
wrote:

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Ron,

I am writing to see if you have received the letter I submitted to HONE.

I am generally supportive of the HONE proposals. One point of feedback would be to focus on and discuss height restrictions in terms of actual feet - I think it would help people better understand the proposals.

Regarding 100 West St.:

The original motivation behind the MBTA Communities law was under-developed land near public transit - parking lots, fields, vacant lots, single detached houses on acre lots. As such, the zoning for MBTA Communities (if it is to be a new Apartment 1 zone) should be a foundational zoning policy to enable new houses to be built on under-developed lots.

However, 100 West St. is developed for more housing. In fact, the developer said less than 2 years ago they were ready to invest serious capital to convert the building to 150+ units. Although those units are classified as independent living, memory case, assisted living, etc., they are similar structurally to studios or apartments.

I am worried that rezoning under MBTA Communities law could actually result in *less* housing than another way. MBTA Communities does not mandate a minimum amount of housing be developed. It is entirely possible that the building is demolished and luxury townhouses/condos are built at a density of less than 15/acre.

Given the recent history of this lot, current building already suitable for apartments, and controversy over how zoning for the policy is handled, HONE is not the right medium to set new policy for this lot. As was said during your recent meetings, HONE is not the Planning Board. I strongly believe that the future of 100 West St. should run through the Planning Board and Town Meeting as its own subject, not packaged along with 100 other acres of zoning.

Best,

Joe

<Hone Letter Feb 19 2024.pdf>

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If you have any questions regarding this disclaimer, please contact Sherin and Lodgen LLP at 617.646.2126

From: ted.english97@gmail.com
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: HONE MBTA Communities Act presentation questions
Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 10:13:38 PM

Dear Members of the HONE Advisory Group

Thank you very much for your time and effort serving on this important town advisory group.

In reviewing the meeting that occurred on March 7th and the related materials, a key highlight of the presentation appears to be that the impact of complying with this MBTA communities law will be a net fiscal benefit to Needham. Surprised, I reviewed some of the calculations and assumptions and thought it would be helpful to town residents if they had a better understanding of the following:

- It appears that a 50% increase in value of a property is the threshold used to decide which properties will have a “propensity” to convert? Would owner’s consider selling/converting with potentially a much less significant increase, such as a 10%, 20% or 30% increase? Apartments and housing complexes in particular are frequently built and owned by investors and would seem relatively fluid in these circumstances. Unless there is a substantive reason to use 50%, I would recommend the analysis be run with an additional scenario using a 20% increase in value to inform and sensitize the town to the impact of that revised threshold;
- The presentation estimates that on average each new unit under these proposed plans will add \$1.1k per year in variable town operating costs (school/capital costs are excluded). Further, each new pupil will add \$12.1k per year in incremental variable school costs. Comparing these costs to the annual incremental taxes that will be raised by the new units, the presentation gives the impression that this will yield a net fiscal (financial) positive to Needham under any scenario. In reviewing the math used to get to these figures (albeit in a limited manner given the detail available), I have concerns that the carve backs used are not in keeping with traditional Needham practice of conservative estimation, at best leaving no room for error and at worst potentially going beyond what may be reasonably expected. It would be good to have a fuller understanding of the following:
 - Town departments (Non-school related) deemed to include costs that vary for population growth seem too few.
 - The “efficiency adjustments” applied do not appear to have any substantive support. It would be good to have a better understanding of how these were arrived at and the assumptions and mechanics behind them;
 - The figures used to develop the estimated incremental school costs per pupil depend on the 2022 school budget - \$82M. The 2024 budget is available - \$92m and should be used instead.
 - The already reduced school costs (noted above) are then carved back very significantly for undefined “variable” costs in order to go from the roughly \$20k fully burdened costs per pupil in Needham schools to a roughly \$12k per pupil incremental cost. That doesn’t seem very conservative since schools (excluding capital) are very sensitive to population changes as is noted during each annual town budgeting cycle. It would be great to have fuller

understanding/reconciliation between these two figures.

- A discussion and analysis of the increase in special education costs per pupil was not included but should be factored in.
 - There is no provision for increased capital costs in either the town operating expense analysis or per pupil analysis and required capital figures could be very significant;
- Given that the average number of children per family in MA is approximately 1.7-1.8, the SAC ratio being employed seems low. For instance, the “Base - full build model”(1,868 units) estimates only 151 additional pupils each year once fully in place. The presentation notes that the SAC ratio is the result of blending between Needham experience, RKG ratio and certain other greater Boston community ratios. It would be good to know exactly the weight that was placed on each and why such weighting makes sense for Needham given the attractiveness of its school system;
 - Given that real estate investors build multi unit complexes to receive a return on investment, even accounting for a reasonable vacancy level in the short term the math doesn’t make sense to assume complexes built in Needham will wait 19 or even 10 or even 5 years to be completely “net absorbed”, occupied and yielding return. The town could use a better explanation of this net absorption concept since it appears to be a key promotional factor;
 - Given the valuation of a home in Needham versus the estimated valuation of these new units, mathematically the individual homeowners in Needham will bear the lion’s share of the increase in the town’s costs due to these additions. For example purposes, if we use as rough guess \$0.8m as an average assessed value for a stand alone home versus approximately \$0.4m avg assessed value for a unit, that is 2x toward the household. If also factoring in that some commercial properties (higher per sq ft tax rate) will convert to residential, the costs will shift further. Whether this matters is anyone’s guess but it should probably be part of the analysis presented to the town;
 - Will there be an analysis of the long term capital costs to be incurred for things like digging up the streets and expanding the infrastructure that will be needed? Rumor had it that towns like Franklin not so many years ago struggled (and may continue to struggle) with these tremendous capital costs which were the direct result of significant growth in their populations.

Thank you again for all your hard work and for your attention to these questions.

Ted English
40 Fairfield St.
Needham, Ma 02492

From: [richard.ruggiero](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Housing design review
Date: Saturday, March 23, 2024 2:08:54 PM

I'm not opposed to the development of new multi family housing if they are well planned,designed and landscaped... The town thru the planning board or a design review committee should have approval of all new multi family housing...If you drive around many adjacent towns you can see how poorly they have been blended into the community....Having experienced architecture group can add an important element to the final project....Well designed projects don't cost any more to build than ugly buildings....
Sent from my iPad

From: [Jane Volden](#)
To: [Planning](#); [Jane Volden](#)
Subject: Multi-Family Zoning
Date: Saturday, March 23, 2024 2:50:37 PM

Concerns about the proposed multi-family zoning:

(1) The increased number of housing units are concentrated in two areas of town:

(a) Crescent/Hillside - going from 65 existing units to 571 units under neighborhood housing plan and 575 units under base compliance plan.

(b) Chestnut Street - going from 46 existing units to 1399 units under neighborhood housing plan and 370 units under base compliance plan.

In your comments about traffic, there is no mention of any kind of traffic study that was undertaken to assess the impact of potential traffic on:

(a) the small side streets of the neighborhood between Hillside and Crescent Streets and also upon Needham Heights

(b) Chestnut Street.

Your assumption that development will continue at its slow pace may not be valid if both federal and state incentives are offered to developers in the future.

Jane Volden
133 Brookside Rd, Needham, MA 02492

From: [donna Meyer](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Cc: [donna Meyer](#)
Subject: MBTA Communities Act feedback
Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 10:16:23 AM

Hello,

My name is Donna Meyer. I am a 25 year resident of Needham, currently residing with my family on Whittier Road in Precinct H. I write in regards to the MBTA Communities Zoning proposal.

I strongly support the Base Compliance Plan. This plan allows Needham to be in compliance with the MBTA Communities Act. I have concerns about the impact of this plan on Needham's public services - schools, fire, police. I see that the consultant's have determined that tax revenue is expected to exceed the \$ impact on town services. This calculation is based on the expected make up of the residents of these new units. I strongly disagree with the assumed numbers - scenario assumptions are as follows:

19 students per 222 units / .08 students per unit
151 students per 1,868 units / .08 students per unit
91 students per 1,099 units / .08 students per unit
268 students per 3,339 units / .08 students per unit

These assumptions seem incredibly unrealistic. If you are considering impact on town service, has an analysis been done to understand the impact of 5, 10 20 times the number of students? Seems the equation would quickly change to a negative dollar impact.

Once we put the compliance plan in place, if there is still an interest in getting to a higher multifamily zoning number, let the voters of Neeham decide via a ballot question. A decision of this level of magnitude should not be in the hands of a few.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donna Meyer
Precinct H

From: [Molly Silverberg](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: MBTA concerns
Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 1:01:11 PM

Supporting the compliance plan and very concerned about the projections proposed. I am worried HONE is not considering all the other new developments and residents moving into town. One small relevant example, the tear down of Grace Lutheran Church is being replaced by 3 single family homes. We need to be considering and reviewing all expansion throughout town. How quickly we can be overpopulating our town and schools.

Molly Silverberg

From: [Beth Bourguignon](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: HONE March 28 meeting
Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 5:05:35 PM

Thank you for posting the relevant information for Thursday's meeting. It is unfortunate that the meeting is scheduled for the Thursday evening before Easter when many residents will be attending Church services. I had hoped to attend. The packet on the town website is helpful. I live on Warren St between Kimball and Junction in close proximity to Chestnut St. I favor the base model. A Needham resident since 1972 I have witnessed many changes and obvious growth of the town. I fall into several of the categories you describe in the FAQ section: family whose children cannot afford to buy/rent in Needham, older adult finding it increasingly difficult to remain in a single family home and "empty nester" who would like to downsize. I favor the base model at this time as, to me, it seems more prudent to meet the MBTA requirements and leave the option to expand zoning in the future rather than establishing broad parameter that could be more difficult to curtail.

Off topic, but of great concern to me: the empty Muzi property, the empty Avery Crossing building, the empty Hillcrest Gardens property.

Yours truly,
Elizabeth H. Bourguignon
287 Warren St
Needham

From: [Diane Lombardo](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: HONE
Date: Tuesday, March 26, 2024 8:17:55 PM

To Members,

HONE has recently come to my attention. I strongly oppose this as do so many others in this town.
We will all be attending in person / zoom for this upcoming meeting.

Thank you,
Diane Lombardo

Sent from my iPhone

From: [John Flanagan](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Questions on HONE scenarios from released presentation for 28 MAR 2024 meeting
Date: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 11:15:27 AM

Good morning planning board.

I am an original Needhamite who has recently returned to town. I have been following the HONE discussions and have a couple of questions.

The main question is, this is just a re-zoning to comply, not a demand for a building bonanza, so what would stop Needham from changing the zoning in the future if it is determined that the MBTA requirement is no longer good for Needham?

Recently, some other towns have voted to not participate in the MBTA requirements. What would the consequences be if Needham decided to forgo the MBTA requirements? Is the financial downfall worth the output that would be required to meet the demand of the MBTA?

Most of the areas being discussed are currently business districts or already developed parcels, such as the Garden St, Hillside and Crescent. In the scenarios, I do not see any evaluation of the loss of business if those parcels were re-zoned and then actually developed into housing units to comply. Why has this not been part of the evaluation?

On the tax slides, you show there is a huge upside to tax revenue for the town if all of the lots are developed according to the Housing Plan Full Capacity. Yet you do not show the loss of revenue from the loss of businesses that would ultimately be replaced by the proposed housing. That info seems incomplete to me. Even if the increase in tax revenue was accurate, what would the benefit to existing residents be? Would the town lower the tax rates to compensate the existing residences for these changes or just take all of the increased revenue and not give current residents a reason to approve this plan.

The tax plan also reads that it would be a good thing, but that data is only real if each and every unit is actually built. What is the real feasibility of that actually happening, knowing some of the lots, especially the ones directly adjacent to the MBTA, would have to deal with rail noise and other unpleasant living conditions.

One alternative that intrigues me is the Avery Square portion. That building has been unused for a very long time and would probably have to be demolished and re-built to meet current codes. What is the possibility of the Town of Needham purchasing that property, developing it as a 4 story (yes the 35% of 4th story limitation applies) and having that meet the full requirement of the MBTA demand? At the same time it could be part of the towns low income affordable housing plan.

And has anyone taken a look at the water issue that these new units would cause? We already have a major problem with lack of permeable surfaces due to all of the McMansions being built with hardly and green grass or trees. This has been evident with the storms last year that caused heavy flooding. Highland Ave and Hillside are the ones that I think would be mostly affected.

Just some questions from a Needham OG.

Thanks,

John Flanagan

From: [jean.allison](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Existing Denmark Lane
Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024 6:08:50 PM

Hello

A friend of mine called very upset that the new zoning could force existing structures such as Denmark lane to meet new requirements. They understood the zoning to take such properties by eminent domain. I do not believe that's the case but wanted to confirm my understanding and if you can address that in your FAQs, that could help alleviate concerns.

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Scott Schwartz](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: March 28th Meeting
Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024 10:19:15 PM

The recent legislation passed by the Massachusetts state government mandates towns adjacent to train stations, such as Needham, to change their zoning laws so that new residents utilize mass transit for work and commerce to travel OUTSIDE of Needham, thereby reducing vehicular traffic on our roads. However, the law's intent WAS NOT to ensure that employees working in Needham to reside within the town, to universally lower housing costs or to bring affordable housing here. The goal of this board should be to follow the wishes of the state law.

Moreover, I am skeptical about the projected number of school-aged children these plans anticipate, which may lead to enrollment numbers that exceed current forecasts

Finally, there was no mention on how much these new units created may rent or sell for.

From: [jean allison](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Comments
Date: Friday, March 29, 2024 10:25:30 AM

Dear HONE committee,

I listened with great interest to the presentation and the many questions and comments that followed last night's HONE presentation.

I was struck by compelling remarks by small businesses and those who try to serve the town in such an important way. Objectively, town center is looking old, tired, and empty. There's no question that we need a revitalization and there's no question that the remaining small businesses desperately need to see this housing increase happen. I'm in for the larger plan. We need it.

A bit of sidebar but related venting: I live in Denmark Lane and to me my little complex also has an opportunity to contribute more to the town. I had no idea how abusive that train noise would be when I came during covid and the train was only running part time. We desperately need the quiet/safe zone especially as density increases but in any case we're way below safety standards for people and noise. Our real estate values would increase therefore tax revenue would increase, businesses would benefit, the new zoning would increase in value and the town would overall be a better place to walk and enjoy life in town. If we're intending fewer cars, the traffic concern of a safe zone could help reduce car traffic and make foot traffic more desirable. I just do not understand why the town is not moving on this life enhancing change.

I respectfully suggest future discussions do look at zoning opportunities more broadly and appreciate that this MBTA change alone took many months of hard work and received lots of opposition.

Thanks for your leadership. You did a terrific job leading a respectful comment period last night. And thanks for listening.

Jean Klugman

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Margaret Murphy](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Comments on the MBTA Neighborhood Plan
Date: Friday, March 29, 2024 3:51:56 PM

Hello HONE Committee

I have lived in Needham for many years and raised my four children here. I have been a Town Meeting member and School Committee Member. I attended all of the HOME meeting including the meeting last night. I have to commend all of you for all of the time you have spent on this issue. The presentation last night was very well done.

I want to comment on a few issues that were discussed last night. The charge that developers will not provide enough parking is unfounded. The last thing a developer wants is tenants that can't park their cars. Condos won't sell without enough parking and renters won't stick around without parking. Many high-end condos and apartments residents want covered parking which is expensive but necessary to sell/lease their units.

I think most people know there are many seniors in Needham who would love to sell their homes and move to something smaller near downtown or the Heights. This population may be able to manage with one car. Some are single and couples can share a car. With Uber and Lift available, every adult in Needham does not need car.

I remember all of the retail stores that use to be in Needham. People came from all over to shop at Calvert's in the Heights. Recently, I have never seen so many empty parking spaces downtown or the large number of businesses that are open on a part time basis. In the past, there was talk about a parking garage downtown. We certainly don't need that now.

I strongly support the Neighborhood Plan. It will help provide much needed housing for seniors, etc. and help Needham businesses attract and keep employees and customers. It will still be challenging, expensive and time consuming for developers to assemble parcels, determine plans for appropriate housing, get financing, permit and then build anything. It won't be easy but it is a start.

Thanks, Margaret Murphy 88 Edgewater Drive, Precinct E

From: [Tom Hayes](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Follow up to Thursday's [3/28] meeting
Date: Saturday, March 30, 2024 7:08:23 AM

Heidi, Natasha, Kevin, Jeanne Josh, Ron, Bill, Liz & Michael,

First and foremost, I want to thank you for all you've done and the extensive hours you've put into HONE and the study of housing related to the MBTA requirements for Needham. Heidi, this is repetitive for you but, based on your response, I wanted to share my email to you with all in support of hopefully making the best decisions for the town of Needham.

Many thanks to all!

Tom Hayes
68 Oakland Ave
508-4949-1099
March 29, 2024

Heidi,

It was a pleasure to meet you last night at the town meeting! As many said, we thought you did a really nice job introducing and setting up the meeting and we truly appreciate all the hard work you and your colleagues have put into to this journey. **Many thanks!**

We had several take aways from last night, the biggest being that those in the know are consistently in favor of more housing but **divided on which plan is best**. While you managed the evening well, it appeared from your reactions and expressions that you are unwaveringly committed to the Neighborhood Housing Plan. **Are you and the committee truly open minded?**

Carol [*my wife*] and I went to listen and, while supporting our neighbors in favor of the base plan, wanted to learn and remain as open minded as possible. We left confused as to what are the real benefits to accelerating to the Neighborhood Plan are and is everyone being realistic to the potential draw backs when Needham shifts from an amazing town [and place to live] to another congested small but cumbersome city. We agreed with those who questioned the rush to build and those who pointed out that this plan focuses on the MBTA accommodating map vs utilizing various logical points throughout the town for gradual expansion. "Be careful what you zone for – you might just get it!" The gentleman who relocated from California made a great point about a significant uptick in traffic over retail activity.

Personally, I've been a senior executive for many years managing, amongst other things, strategic planning. Not once has "going for it all in" proved more successful than a gradual "grow – learn – adjust – continue growing" approach.

Our final thought is the **lack of people in Needham aware** of what's happening and the two options toward Needham growth. Like Emily Crugnale, I work with a lot of TJX Needham associates and have spoken to many about HONE and the MBTA laws. Most are completely unaware of any of this with a few knowing just a bit but not aware of the two options. **How does HONE and our Needham elected officials get the word out** so that as many as possible can weigh in and feel heard? We appreciate your offer to meet with a group. Would doing so be an opportunity to have an open minded question/answer type discussion or has the decision already been made?

Again – thanks for all you do and it was a pleasure meeting you.

New MBTA Communities Zoning Law

Deadline: 12/31/2024

G.L. c. 40A (Section 3A)

To: planning@needhamma.gov
Bcc: Heidi Frail et al
From: Andrew Thoresen
Subject: My Comments — HONE Meeting of March 28, 2024

Saturday, March 30, 2024 5:00 PM

Andrew's Comments

My name is Andrew Thoresen. I have lived in Needham at 41 Carey Road since July, 1950. And I welcome the opportunity to help ensure Needham experiences strong and healthy growth. The New MBTA Communities Zoning Law — “Section 3A” offers us an opportunity for more choice through the removal of barriers to the creation of diverse housing types. Section 3A includes an important feature that I support: “As-of-Right” is a rule-based permit and approval process, also known as “By Right”.

Under As-of-Right our present discretionary processes go away as they pertain to Section 3A initiatives. This is good, because discretionary approaches require public hearings on a project-by-project basis. And there are several disadvantages when using discretionary permit and approval processes. Here are five related to public hearings:

- Public participation is complex and uncertain
- Public hearings prioritize neighbor participation that may be biased
- Who does not attend is critical. Non-attendees may include future residents, and experts offering objective testimony
- Speakers are unrepresentative of the whole community
- Hearings have few mechanisms for addressing misinformation

This stifles housing production and contributes to the ongoing housing affordability crisis. Zoning ought to be rules based similar to National building and electrical codes which must be followed. My only question is, “Can we change our initial As-of-Right rules down the road, after the State approves our Section 3A plan?” I’m guessing we can but I’m not sure.

Okay. Here is an example placing our housing situation in perspective. The home I live in was purchased in 2009 from my mother’s estate for \$427,500. My parents purchased the house in 1950 for \$17,275 of which \$7,000 came from a 20-year mortgage with a 3 percent ‘GI’ interest rate. Sixty-five years later in 2015, the modest Cape-style home next door had been demolished and developer-replaced by a larger home which sold for \$1,300,000 with a \$1-million mortgage. And my property’s land value is now \$538,400. Yes, Needham has changed during my lifetime, but this is expected to a degree. The only thing that does not change is change itself.

To continue, there now are very few buildable vacant lots in Needham. Developers must buy existing land with its building(s), demolish the existent structures while first removing hazardous material, and then construct a new building meeting code and the perceived desired marketable features while setting a price that accommodates a certain percentage of developer profit. All of that is very costly and this, my friends, is why Needham’s housing is so expensive today. Folks who have acquired wealth choose Needham; the downside is insufficient affordable housing, a lack of ethnic diversity, no housing for employees of local businesses, and long-time Needham youth and senior residents having little or no chance to continue living in their hometown.

Today town officials including Tim McDonald, Director of Health & Human Services, recognize with all its wonderful attributes Needham has several major problems, each of which is vastly influenced by how we as residents address the others. These issues are, in no particular order:

1. RENT ISSUES:

New MBTA Communities Zoning Law

Deadline: 12/31/2024

G.L. c. 40A (Section 3A)

Some people are still struggling to pay their rent since COVID.

2. HOUSING ISSUES:

- NEEDHAM HAS INSUFFICIENT HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE and ACCESSIBLE.
- SENIORS HAVE FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO AGE IN PLACE.
 - Needham's housing stock is not designed with aging occupants in mind. Few homes here offer one floor living, wheelchair accessibility, and/or elevators.
 - There are no incentives being offered developers to build senior-friendly housing.
- To seniors' disadvantage NEEDHAM IS CAR-CENTRIC; mobility concerns are high.
- RISING REAL ESTATE TAXES ARE BURDENSOME TO MANY NEEDHAM SENIORS who find they are income poor but asset rich. Regardless of the Supreme Judicial Court's decision declaring the practice unconstitutional, Massachusetts property owners can still lose their entire home equity value if they fail to pay even a small amount of real estate tax. Some cities and towns have been slow to implement changes.
- Eviction
- Unable to make mortgage payments
- Emergency housing (due to fire, for example)

3. DIVERSITY ISSUES:

Needham's homogeneous demographic is limiting its diversity.

- RACIAL DIVERSITY IS VERY LOW.
- SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIMITATIONS HALT GROWTH OF A MORE DIVERSE POPULATION.
 - Needham's linguistic diversity is actually a challenge for Tim and his team. Communicating to non-English speaking people is difficult. And those who do not speak English feel isolated.

4. AGING ISSUES (OTHER THAN HOUSING):

Needham's seniors often struggle socially.

- Building their social support network is hard.
- Seniors feel isolated which shortens lifespan and makes them susceptible to crime.

5. MENTAL HEALTH & INCREASING SUICIDE FREQUENCY – NEEDS:

- Have discussions on coping with loss
- Assess folks' states of mind
- Use collaborative healing

6. YOUTH TRANSPORTATION:

- Where they have parents who work, kids don't have adequate access to programs which is a challenge and barrier.
- *Bullying*: awareness

7. INTER-GENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

- Create new opportunities for kids and adults to connect.
- *Civic Engagement Program*: educate folks on how Town government works

The bottom-line is we must not make housing decisions in a vacuum. We also need to focus on the anticipated impacts of our housing decisions on Town resources and infrastructure, on people, and on how we are affecting and addressing Needham's other urgent problems. And I

New MBTA Communities Zoning Law

Deadline: 12/31/2024

G.L. c. 40A (Section 3A)

must say I am pleased how the HONE committee members and consultants have reached out across Town departments, just as they must.

But I worry that the new housing units will not be economically accessible for the demographic we wish to attract. Section 3A does not mandate development of affordable housing units at the volume we require to be an ethnically diverse community with a place for Needham's grown up youth and seniors to continue living in their hometown.

I have no preference for either the Base Compliance Scenario or the Neighborhood Housing Plan Scenario. You all heard the many public comments at the March 28 meeting, and I won't repeat those here—that was the way government was designed to work, and I love it. It seems to me that the district boundaries are nearly identical. The difference is the Neighborhood plan allows greater unit density. One solution might be implementing the Basic plan for purposes of Section 3A compliance, and then locally designing Overlay Special Permit structures to allow for additional density to be built in the same districts following the Neighborhood plan's attributes. Just a thought—it might be an acceptable compromise for the two differing public points of view: Base Compliance conservatism vs. Neighborhood Housing Plan enthusiasm. This would be especially nice because for the public it is very difficult to visualize neighborhood change; in fact, we won't really know what the As-of-Right developments will actually look and feel like until after a few buildings are built out. We might later say, "Oh, no. That's not what I thought we would have. We need to fix this."

My final thoughts are regarding how to increase our inventory of subsidized and marketable affordable housing as this issue has been raised many times during your public hearings. First, I do not want us as a town to restrict the location of affordable units to one-half mile radius of the Needham Center and Needham Heights commuter rail stops. Second, I feel the units built out under the Section 3A mandate will be approximately 87 percent unaffordable; developers are in business to make profits. And third, there must be some way to vastly increase Needham's affordable housing inventory.

Lastly, I truly believe that what Needham needs is a **public/private partnership** directed at the lack of affordable housing problem. No other method will work, quite frankly.

Blessings and thank you for all that you do,

Andrew Thoresen
41 Carey Road
Needham, MA 02494

From: [Lee Newman](#)
To: [Alexandra Clee](#)
Subject: FW: HONE - Brookline Oriental
Date: Monday, April 1, 2024 10:16:34 AM

From: lw29@comcast.net <lw29@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, April 1, 2024 9:59 AM
To: Lee Newman <LNewman@needhamma.gov>
Subject: HONE - Brookline Oriental

Lee

In speaking with Heidi today she asked I address my thoughts to the planning board.

I know at one point Brookline Oriental on Hunnewell and Crescent which is in two zones the industrial and residential was going to be part of the new zoning to allow for apartments.

I believe it should be reconsidered as in viewing the proposed HONE map, without its inclusion it pigeonhole all traffic down either the sliver cutout that MDL owns or down Crescent to West.

I realize the concern was shadowing and the residence on Hunnewell. Maybe if you leave the front residential as an alternative access and exit to Crescent Road with maybe a teared building it may alleviate some of your concerns. But without this additional access the traffic pattern will be horrible.

Just my thoughts. Appreciate the hard work and believe the Bonus scenario is best as the likelihood of it getting built out is small and the key parcels can not be revisited later as they will of already been built on.

Louis

Louis Wolfson
29 Cimino Road
Needham, MA 02494

617-799-3326

From: [Marianne Cooley](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Comments for the Planning Board and for HONE
Date: Tuesday, April 2, 2024 1:29:45 PM

Dear All,

I was not able to attend the last HONE public meeting, or I would have made this comment in public.

I am writing about 100 West Street. It seems like a parcel that is "one of these things is not like the other." It is, as far as I can see, the one place that does not have additional zoning capacity added in the Neighborhood Plan. This is a site where the Town has clearly indicated that we would like housing. It faces commercial buildings across the street, and train tracks with commercial/industrial buildings behind it. It is right next to a commuter rail station and walkable to our senior center. I could argue that there is no better, more buildable spot for housing in Needham that sits waiting to be re-developed. What it needs is zoning that supports re-development for housing.

I would very much like to see the ability to go to 4 stories in the Neighborhood Plan. I am not clear what happens to density in the other Neighborhood Plan locations with 4 stories, but I hope this parcel will be treated similarly, by right, to other overlay areas which will permit 4 stories.

I know that there has been some discussion of this parcel being historic. And I understand that. However, people who are seeking to live in modern apartments are seeking higher ceilings and require spaces between floors for ducting for amenities needed in today's climate, etc. The factory floor configuration does not support that. Please, let's not handcuff this terrific location for multi-family housing. As a Needham Heights resident, I would love to see the Heights as a vibrant center in its own right.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Marianne

Needham Housing Coalition Message to HONE

April 2, 2024

The Needham Housing Coalition is submitting a list of housing rezoning considerations to the HONE Advisory Group before their April 4th meeting after which time they will be providing their List of Recommendations to the Needham Planning Board. The continuation of zoning reforms to facilitate multifamily (MF) housing is important for Needham in the coming years and decades. Following adoption of the MBTA compliance plan, the town will proceed with considering zoning changes beyond the ½-mile radius of the MBTA compliance maps already considered. This means more parts of Needham can contribute to a more diverse collection of housing types. Again, it must be stressed that this rezoning process is to foster positive, thoughtful changes to solve a housing crisis that threatens the economic viability of our town.

More housing choices are critical to help serve a diverse group including seniors, young people and families, and our town and regional workforce. Any housing production resulting from the proposed zoning changes in either of the two MBTA compliance plans is projected to take many years and to be modest in total units created since the regional economy faces significant financial and investment challenges in the production of MF housing, and many property owners will choose to maintain their property's current use.

Two critical areas, the ground-floor commercial core blocks in Needham Center and Needham Heights, were not included in the MBTA compliance plans developed by HONE. These areas must continue to be a focus of the Planning Board because MF housing is absolutely necessary to support the vitality of these two important and walkable commercial mixed-use (MXU) districts.

While we appreciate the two-plan approach developed by HONE to comply with the MBTA Communities Act, we do not believe these plans will ultimately be sufficient to meet the goals of the Needham Housing Plan approved on December 22, 2022.

The following additional zoning changes are submitted for consideration by the Planning Board. The changes are listed below as well as included in the attached map.

Zoning reform beyond the MBTA Compliance Housing Plan: Map and Chart Comments

- **Apartment-1 (Rosemary Lake)** – Recommend a maximum allowable height of 4 stories. A sizable portion of this zone is divided into multiple small parcels, some of which are below the 20K minimum lot size, but have a single owner. Future zoning should allow the combination of multiple small parcels to meet the minimum lot size requirement.
- **Hillside Business** - Given the unique parcel configuration with several lots below the minimum required 10K lot size, we recommend using 8K for minimum lot size and removing the 24u/ac maximum density.
- **Hillside Industrial** – We recommend dividing the district into Hillside North and Hillside South (similar to what HONE has done on Chestnut Street). The south portion of the district (starting at 530/540 Hillside Avenue) should have a 4-story limit because this area overlooks Rosemary Lake and

is adjacent to the A-1 district across Hillside Avenue. The 3-story limit for the north part is also closer in scale to the adjacent residential and station areas across Hillside Avenue and West Street.

- **Chestnut Street East** – Add the skilled nursing facility at the end of Lincoln Street to this district but set the maximum height at 3 stories.
- Adjust the **Needham Center Business Overlay Districts A and B** dimensional metrics to allow 4 stories for MF housing above the commercial ground floors throughout the downtown blocks north and south of Great Plain Avenue including the Highland and Chapel Street blocks facing the town green. Reduce parking requirements to 1c/unit.
- Adjust the **Avery Square Business District** dimensional metrics to allow 3.5 stories for MF housing above the ground floor commercial blocks on the east and west sides of Highland Avenue. Reduce parking requirements to 1c/unit.
- Adjust the **Neighborhood Business** district across from Hersey Station to allow MF housing above the ground-floor commercial with a maximum height of 3 stories.
- Adjust the **Neighborhood Business** district around Central and Reservoir Streets to allow MF housing above the ground-floor commercial with a maximum height of 3.5 stories.

The following areas for rezoning consideration are in support of our commercial MXU areas and include parcels currently zoned **SRB** or **GR**:

- Adjust the Great Plain Avenue blocks to the west of the Center MXU blocks as follows:
 - Allow stand-alone residential 3 stories / MXU 3.5 stories for the blocks west of Linden/Glendon Streets up to the Congregational Church.
- Adjust the Great Plain Avenue blocks to the east of the Center MXU blocks as follows:
 - Expand Center Business district to include the Hillcrest Gardens parcel (888 Great Plain Avenue).
 - Change the Dedham Avenue (north side) of this block from GR to A-1 to include the existing office and MF sites.
 - Rezone the GR block across Dedham Avenue (south side) to be 3u or 4u/10K parcel.
 - Rezone the GR portion of the CVS parking lot south of UU Church to be part of the Center Business district.
 - Rezone Stephen Palmer as A-1 MF at 36u/acre.
 - Rezone Verizon and Bailit Health buildings as A-1 MF at 36u/acre.
- Convert Hillside School and the rear portions of the (Crescent) Industrial district parcels on Crescent Road that abut the Hillside School to A-1.

HOUSING CHOICE

PLAN: *(following approval of the MBTA Compliance Plan)*

The indicated areas on the map are recommended for rezoning by the Planning Board to meet the need for multifamily housing in Needham by rezoning areas that are NOT covered by Needham's MBTA Communities Act Compliance Plans. These recommendations are additions to the parcels indicated in the two HONE Compliance Plans dated 03/28/24.

Note the inclusion of the two commercial core areas of the Center and the Heights designated for MXU residential which were protected, but not illustrated, in the HONE Compliance Plan map.

Maintain maximum height at Rosemary A-1 to 4-stories

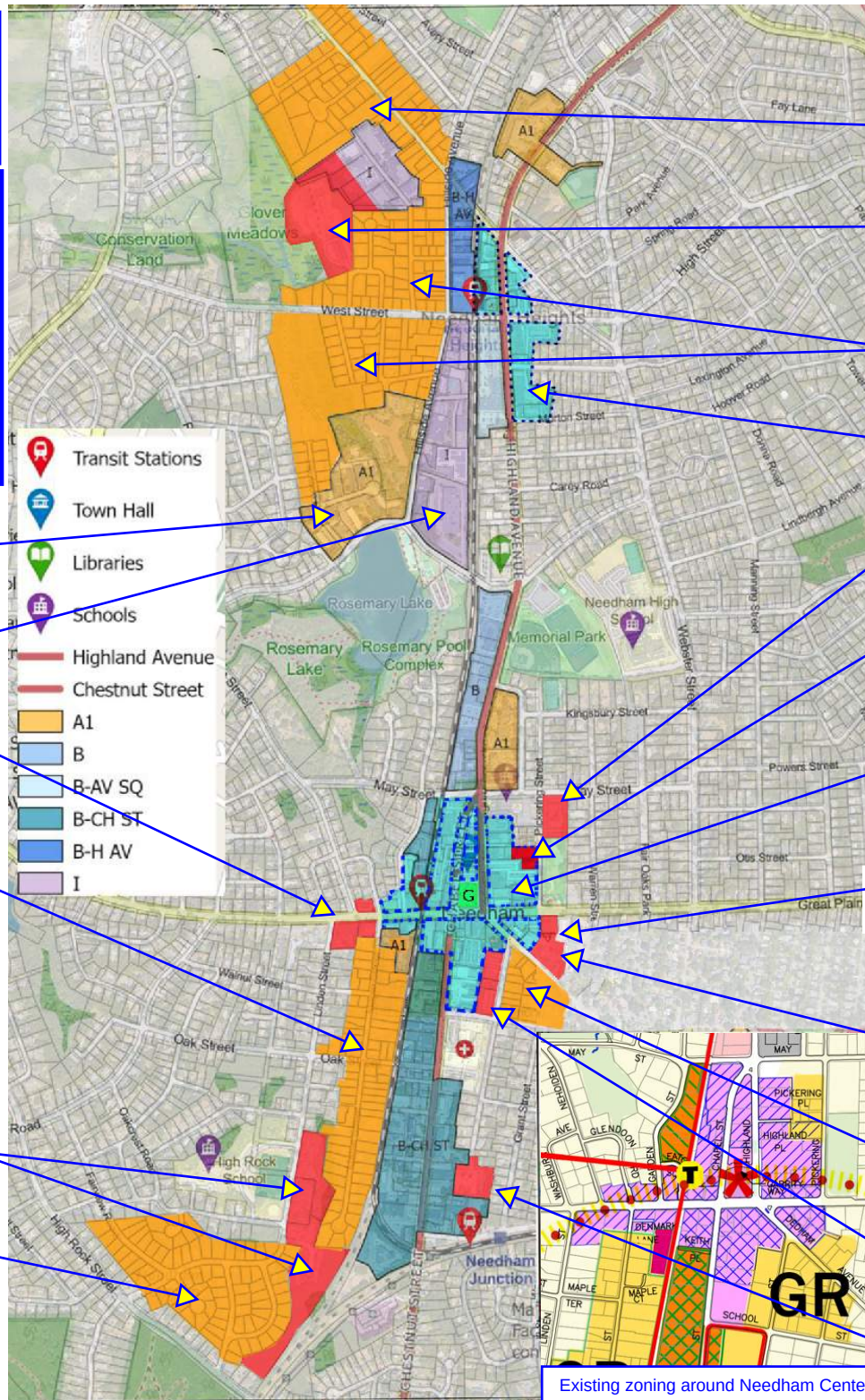
Add height to south end of Hillside Industrial to 4-stories

Rezoning parcels west of Glendon / Maple as A-1 stand-alone MF

Rezoning GR for 3u/ac minimum density MF (This area represents a great housing choice opportunity adjacent to the Chestnut Street / Downtown commercial area, the Hospital district and two MBTA stations)

Rezoning NHA (Linden / Chambers) parcels for MF

Rezoning NHA GR for 3u/ac minimum density MF (opportunity for more Needham public housing units to meet waiting list demand)



NHC comments
submitted 04.02.2024

Rezoning Brookline Oriental to GR at 3u/ac minimum density MF

Rezoning Hillside school parcel to A-1 MF (potential for public or private development).

Rezoning GR at 3u/ac minimum density MF

Rezoning Avery Square Business to be all 3.5-story MXU MF

Rezoning Stephen Palmer as A-1 MF from SRB

Rezoning Verizon and Bailit Health parcels to A-1 from SRB to allow stand alone residential on the park

Rezoning Center Business Overlay to be all 4-story MXU MF including around the Town Green

Rezoning Hillcrest Gardens to A-1 with GR parcels to the south or Center Business Overlay w max 4-stories

Rezoning GR to A-1 north side of Dedham Ave and combine with Hillcrest Gardens

Rezoning GR for 3u/ac minimum density MF

Rezoning GR (CVS parking lot) to A-1 stand-alone MF

Rezoning skilled nursing to Chestnut Street East

From: [Lynn Klatt](#)
To: [Planning](#)
Subject: Vote for HONE Advisory Group to pursue Base Compliance Plan
Date: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 11:29:09 AM

Attention Planning Board,

I'm responding to the recent NEEDHAM MBTA COMMUNITIES, Public Meeting #3 held March 28, 2024. I attended the meeting on Zoom. After careful consideration of the two options I want to recommend we pursue the **Base Compliance Plan** (vs. Neighborhood Housing Plan).

I heard 2 local business owner / executives (French Press Café & BID hospital president) comment on the fact that housing in Needham is too expensive for all or most of their employees, however neither of these plans addresses the **affordability** of housing. Existing state guidelines ensure that 10% of housing meets affordability guidelines:
<https://www.needhamma.gov/3679/Housing-Division>

Needham currently offers **12.7%** affordable housing under the **40B - 80% AMI Moderate Income Program** (so, annual income of \$82,950 or less) but this is a very small percentage of the available housing. There is currently **no 40B housing available**, per the website listed above.

Currently, there is a total of **1,019** units. Under the **Base Compliance Plan** a total of **1,868** units could be built (without seeking a Special Permit). This is an additional **849** units, of which only **10%** or approximately **85** units might be designated affordable for people making **80%** of the median income in Needham. Under the **Neighborhood Housing Plan** there might be a total of **3,339**, so an additional **2320** units could be built (**232** of which might be designated "affordable").

As an example of what it costs to rent a newly built apartment in Needham, I'm using a new apartment complex that recently opened near me, per (<https://www.apartments.com/1180-great-plain-ave-needham-ma-unit-204/d2xj98j/>) *1180 Great Plain which consists of 16 residential units, 8 one-bedroom and 8 two-bedroom units. 4 of the apartments are designated as "affordable" through the Local Initiative Program (LIP) and will be rented to households earning less than the 80% Area Median Income (AMI). However, the current (market-rate) for these rentals is listed as: 11 (remaining) luxury 1 and 2 bedroom rental units from 1090 sq' to 1496 sq' with rents from \$3346 to \$4217 (adjusted with 1 month FREE rent). All units offer a spacious open floor plan w/living room/dining area, 1 assigned parking space (2nd space available for \$175/month). 1 bedroom units feature a den and 1.5 baths. 2 bedroom units feature 2 full baths. Tenant is responsible for electric heat, gas hot water, gas cooking and electricity. Tenant pays first month's rent and one month security deposit to landlord and half month rental fee to listing agency. The owner requires a one year lease, very good credit, good references and verification of income/subsidy.*

I should add that before these units were built, we were assured by the developer (over various meetings) that these rentals would be offered at **below market rate**.

In order to afford a 1 bedroom at 1180 Great Plain at \$3346 + electric heat, electricity gas: hot water, cooking, as a single person, I would conservatively estimate the full monthly cost to be \$3600 (plus 1.5 months additional cost, at signing).

Conservatively, if this cost is 30% of a person's total income, an individual would have to be making over \$130,000 / year. How many baristas, day care workers, nursing home workers, teachers, lab techs, recent college graduates, municipal workers, etc. are making anything close to this? I NEVER made this much money and would probably have qualified for 40B housing for most of my career (despite working in the software industry for 40+ years).

So, what we will inevitably get with increased housing density, (given high demand) is **increased** housing costs. This will not support local businesses who want their employees to be able to live here. This will not support local seniors who want to downsize. It does not support any stated housing goals for Needham which might improve diversity of age, income, ethnicity, etc.

Additional housing density will increase infrastructure upgrade costs (sewer, water, gas hookups, flood mitigation, storm drains, sidewalks, road maintenance costs). More households ensures more road traffic, additional parking requirements (1 car per unit won't serve two working adults with jobs in different locations), air pollution (EV chargers are generally not provided to rental units), noise pollution from trash pickup, landscape companies and housing development. Per the Base Compliance Plan, we will need at least one additional school to be built and supported operationally, since 42% of Needham households have 1 or more children (<https://www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/MA/Needham-Demographics.html>).

There is scant evidence that additional household density improves prospects for small business by increasing foot traffic, though it might be convenient to think it will. If a business provides value to people living nearby, foot traffic might be of benefit, as long as the business offers something households need and can afford, at a time when working people can visit the business. Based on my own experience, working people don't have the time (or disposal income) to spend in (sometimes expensive) local retail stores, except possibly on a Saturday and when discounts are offered. Most of my neighbors shop online (Amazon, Chewy, retail clothing, household goods). Grocery stores don't really benefit from foot traffic, as most people use a car and shop for a week's worth of groceries.

Since Needham has to make a timely decision, I again propose that going with the **Base Compliance Plan**, as a means of discovering whether Needham's housing goals are served by this, is the safest course of action. Increasing the number of housing units is a laudable goal, but not if the desired demographics can't afford them and not if the cost to do so makes it harder for people already living here to afford these changes. Zoning changes can be revised at a later time, once the **Base Compliance Plan** is implemented and we see how well it works.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lynn Klatt
16 Walnut Street
Needham, MA
lynn.klatt@outlook.com

Resident since 2002

April 3, 2024

From: Needham Residents for Thoughtful Zoning (NRTZ.org)

To: HONE

Re: HONE/ Town Meeting Member Community Outreach

Many are requesting that your precinct meetings planned with the Town Meeting Members be public and open to all with Q & A dialog and open- minded discussions.

We await your reply.

Needham Residents for Thoughtful Zoning (48 members & growing)

Needham: Public Meeting #3
March 28, 2024
Written Questions from Chat

Highest online attendees: 176

Response to questions below: Thank you - I have recorded your question to share with HONE.

Questions

There is no reason why a lot of land that meets the sf requirements for multi unit housing, will not be included in the Hersey Station area. Once again- the Heights is being overly burdened with big buildings and impossible traffic. It is patently unfair in a plan that could further increase housing and share the burden throughout the town . The groups in charge have not listened nor have they applied this much needed increase in housing fairly throughout the town.

Could we get a little more granular on the parking study evaluation? Is it specifically around the developed neighborhoods and secondly how to we account for already overburdened roads and traffic stops specifically on Highland Ave

Appreciate your undertaking and presentation. This is a parking question. 1 parking for each unit. You said we have excess parking in the community at this time. At this time in caps. Add a second car to most of the units...in all likelihood. Exactly how much excess parking is there at this time? And exactly where is the current excess parking?

Emily, My question: Does the plan take into account the increased parking requirements of new businesses that move into the commercial spaces that will be created?

While people are talking about affordability, there is no guarantee or even talk about these new units being affordable. Million dollar condos are no more affordable than apartments at \$5,000 a month. No developer in Needham is going to build an apartment building with all the apartments at \$2000 a month. No new house built in Needham is less than 1.5 million.

My concern is that this zoning does not ensure much affordable housing, it only adds additional housing with a small percentage (12.5%) designated as affordable. This won't solve the problem that local businesses cite as a lack of affordable housing for their workers.

My comment for the HONE committee is that I don't feel there is any need to wait for the SJC to make a decision about what Milton or other towns have done and I don't feel that Needham needs to be affected by what other towns are doing. The important thing is that all towns in the MBTA

region need to participate in this project, but each town in its own way. Personally, I think HONE has done a great job - thank you.

I could be misunderstanding this, but it seems that all these units would have to be income limited and cost controlled to have any effect..

From: [Jeanne McKnight](#)
To: [Alexandra Clee](#); [Lee Newman](#); [Katie King](#); [Amy Haelsen](#); [Heidi Frail](#); [N. Espada](#); [Karen Sunnarborg](#)
Subject: RE: HONE agenda (and more) for April 4
Date: Friday, March 29, 2024 5:23:18 PM

Team:

I took careful notes last night, and working from my notes, this is what I concluded:

20 speakers support or, based on comments, seem to support the NHP;

9 speakers support or seem to support only the base plan;

1 speaker seemed to oppose complying with MBTA Communities law at this time, and the 3 speakers who spoke against by-right zoning seem opposed.

Questions & Concerns/Comments:

- Q – how are we incentivizing housing with first floor commercial?
- C – don't want by-right zoning, need special permit control for MF housing (3X).
- Q – why is an area that is included in base compliance NOT included in NHP?
- C – opposed to lowering parking requirements (3X).
- C – Hartney Greymont access is unsafe, and flooding is an issue in Hartney Greymont area.
- C - 4 stories is too high.
- C - Traffic concern.
- Q – What is proposed NHP height for Hillside Industrial? Concern about shadow impact.
- C – Impact on schools, numbers of children.
- Q – Why not include Brookline Oriental Rug property?
- Q – What about Hersey?
- Q – Chestnut Street – why is base scenario # of units down from existing zoning, then up in NHP?

Hope this is helpful. I struggled to hear a few speakers.

Jeanne

From: Alexandra Clee <aclee@needhamma.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 29, 2024 4:08 PM
To: Bill Lovett <blovett@claremontcorp.com>; Elizabeth Kaponya <liz.kaponya@gmail.com>; Emily Innes <emily@innesassocltd.com>; Eric Halvorsen <ehalvorsen@rkgassociates.com>; Heidi Frail <hfrail@needhamma.gov>; Jeanne McKnight (jeannemcknight@comcast.net) <jeannemcknight@comcast.net>; joshua.w.levy@gmail.com; Karen Sunnarborg <ksunnarborg@needhamma.gov>; Katie King <kking@needhamma.gov>; Kevin Keane <kkeane@needhamma.gov>; Lee Newman <LNewman@needhamma.gov>; Michael Diener <madiener@hotmail.com>; N. Espada <nespada@studioenee.com>; Ron Ruth <RWRuth@sherin.com>; Amy Haelsen <ahaelsen@needhamma.gov>
Subject: HONE agenda (and more) for April 4

HONE Recommendations to Planning Board

Over the course of the Housing Needham Advisory Group deliberations, there were some matters that the members chose to exclude from their recommendations for compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, but voted to recommend further action by the Planning Board.

The Housing Needham Advisory Group recommends that the Planning Board:

- rezone the Hersey Station area, encompassing at least the area which is now commercially zoned, which would not be an MBTA compliant district, for multi-family housing.
- review allowing 3 or 4 units per 10,000 square foot lot in the General Residence district. Current zoning has a 2-unit per parcel restriction.
- consider rezoning the south side of Great Plain Avenue between Pickering Street and Warren Street for multi-family housing.
- review and update existing parking requirements for commercial uses.

For HONE discussion:

- Do you want to refer to the Planning Board a review of whether to reduce lot size from 10,000 square feet to 8,000 square feet in Chestnut Street and the Industrial districts?
- Other?

HONE Recommendations to Planning Board

Over the course of the Housing Needham Advisory Group deliberations, there were some matters that the members chose to exclude from their recommendations for compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, but voted to recommend further action by the Planning Board.

The Housing Needham Advisory Group recommends that the Planning Board:

- Review ~~rezone-zoning in~~ the Hersey Station area, encompassing at least the area which is now commercially zoned ~~and the -MBTA lots, which would not be an MBTA-compliant district,~~ for multi-family housing, ~~with or without mixed use.~~
- Review the General Residence district to consider ~~review~~ allowing 3 or 4 units per 10,000 square foot lot in the General Residence district, ~~and to consider whether the 10,000 square foot threshold should be reduced.~~ Current zoning has a 2-unit per parcel restriction.
- Reconsider the Central Business District limitations and consider whether and where stand-alone multi-family housing should be considered.
- ~~C~~onsider rezoning the south side of Great Plain Avenue between Pickering Street and Warren Street for multi-family housing.
- ~~R~~review and update existing parking requirements for commercial uses.
- ~~-Review whether to reduce lot size from 10,000 square feet to something less in the Chestnut Street and the Industrial districts.~~

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For HONE discussion:

- ~~Do you want to refer to the Planning Board a review of whether to reduce lot size from 10,000 square feet to 8,000 square feet in Chestnut Street and the Industrial districts?~~
- Other?