



NEEDHAM MBTA COMMUNITIES

Public Meeting #1 Input Summary



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INTRODUCTION

On November 9th, 2023, the HONE Committee of the Town of Needham hosted a Public Meeting at Powers Hall to discuss the town's compliance requirements for the MBTA Communities Act and to receive input from the public on potential MBTA districts, zoning districts, and zoning parameters. The meeting was held in-person and online with a synchronous presentation for all attendees and mirrored asynchronous activities so all could participate regardless of where they attended from. Overall, the meeting attracted approximately 300 participants both online and in-person.

This document provides a summary of the activities and feedback received from the participants of the Public Meeting.

PARTICIPANT EXERCISES: OVERVIEW

TABLE EXERCISE 1: ZONING OPTIONS

In the first table exercise, participants had the opportunity to review the Town's current zoning district map and a comparison map to the proposed changes under the Town's 2022 Housing Plan. This interactive exercise was designed to show the differences between the two zoning maps and options before participants engaged in the individual stations with information about each proposed zoning district.

TABLE EXERCISE 2: CENTER BUSINESS OPTIONS

In the second table exercise, participants provided their input on whether the Center Business District should be considered for inclusion in the MBTA District. Participants were asked to use sticky dots to indicate whether they would support allowing standalone residential in the Center Business District, which is not allowed today. The other option was to keep mixed use mandatory in the Center Business District as it is today.

STATION EXERCISES 1-5: ZONING LEVERS AND DISTRICTS

The station exercises provided space for public input on different zoning levers that impact MBTA unit capacity and density measures in different zoning districts that could be used to reach compliance with the MBTA Communities Act. For each station and each zoning lever, attendees were asked to place individual sticky dots where they would like to see zoning levers changed (or left the same). The density of the dots on each zoning lever thermometer were used as preference indicators for how attendees felt zoning could potentially change in each zoning district.

The red arrows indicate where the zoning lever is currently set in Needham's existing Zoning Bylaw. The purple colors represent the in-person feedback while the green represents the online feedback.

Below are the results that were aggregated from both the in-person and online input sessions.

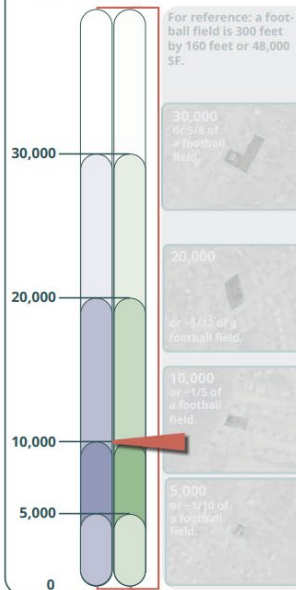


General Residential

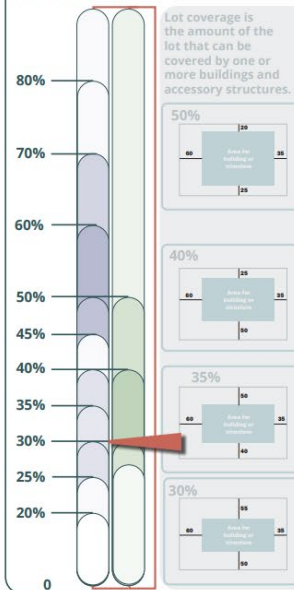
Scan this code with your phone for more information!



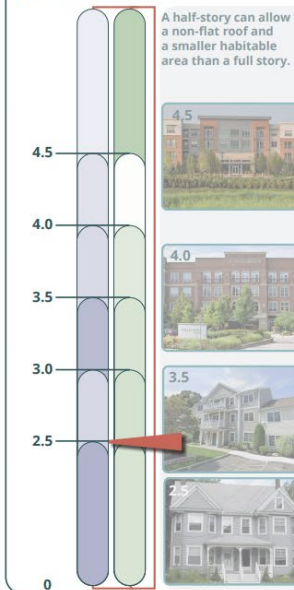
Lot Size (Minimum, SF)



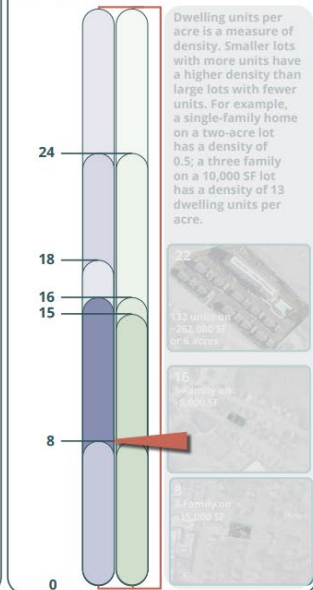
Lot Coverage (Maximum, %)



Height (Maximum, Stories)



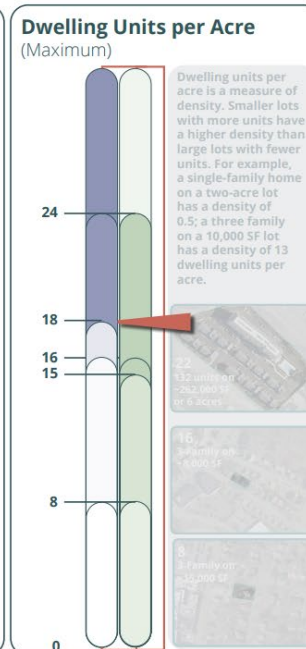
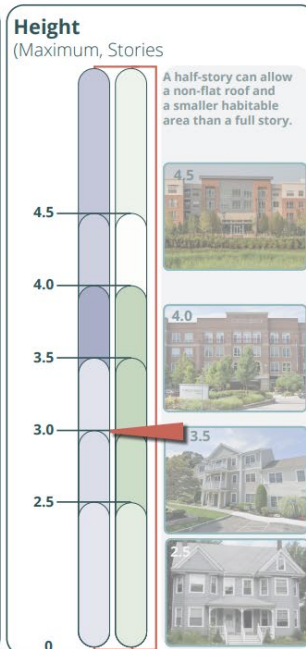
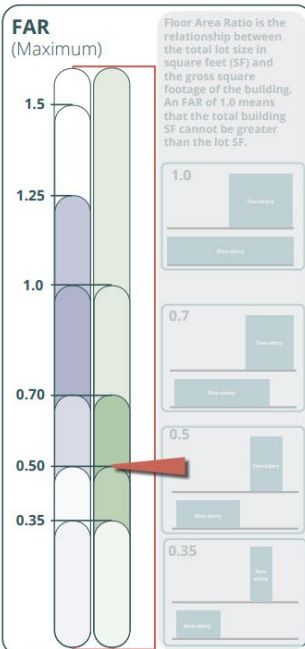
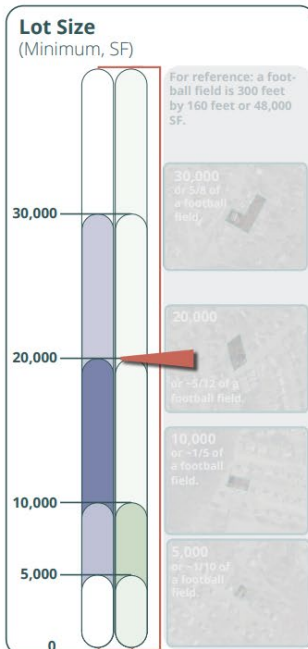
Dwelling Units per Acre (Maximum)



B

Apartment-1

Scan this code with your phone for more information!

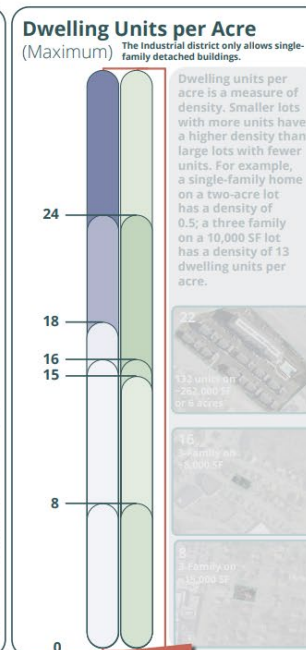
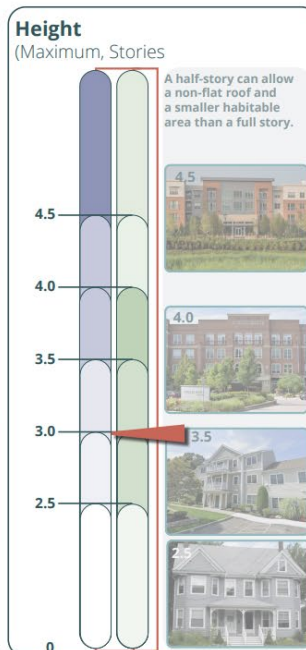
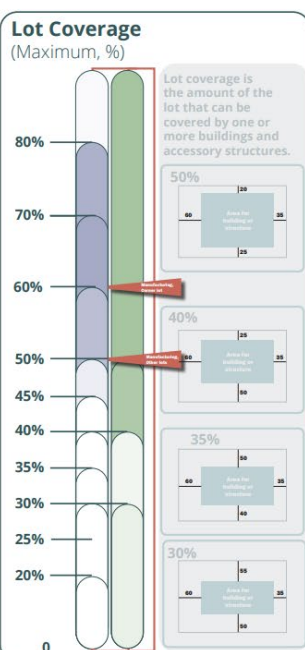
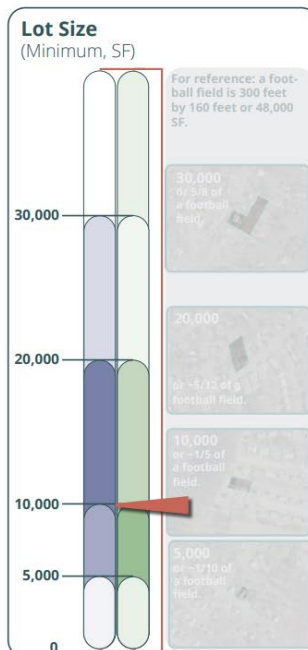


RESULTS: Community Meeting #1 | November 9, 2023 | Town of Needham RKG innos

C

Industrial

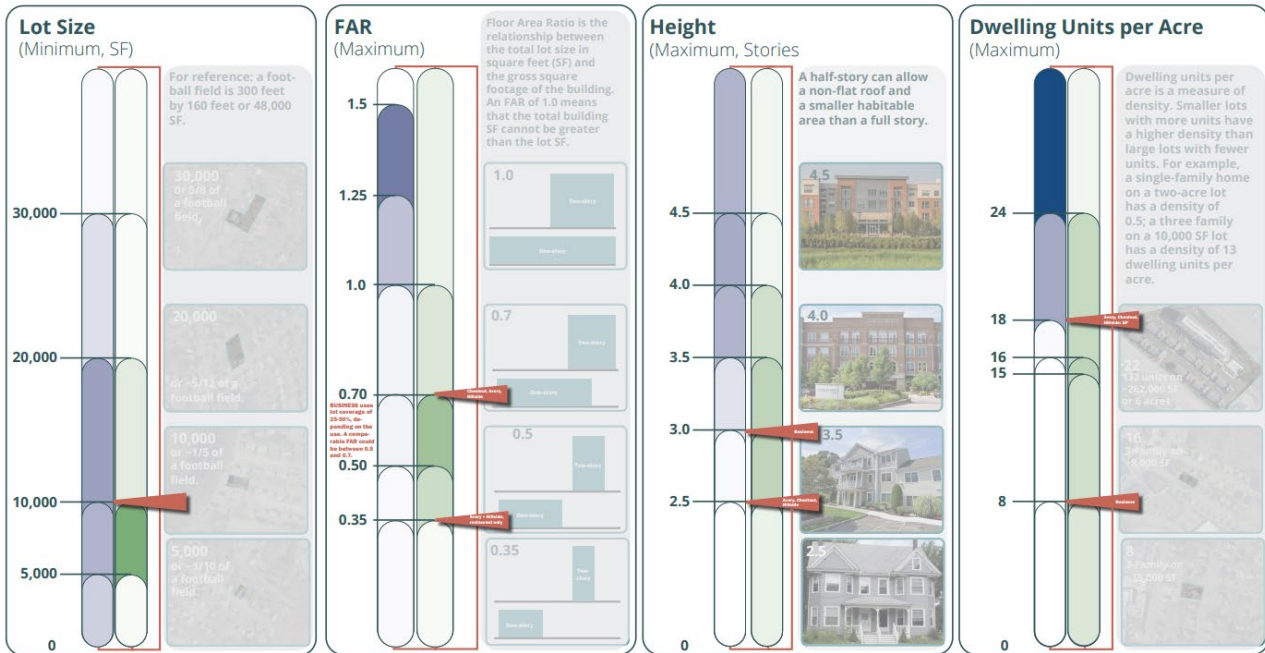
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RESULTS: Community Meeting #1 | November 9, 2023 | Town of Needham RKG innos



Business, Avery Square, Chestnut Street, Hillside Avenue

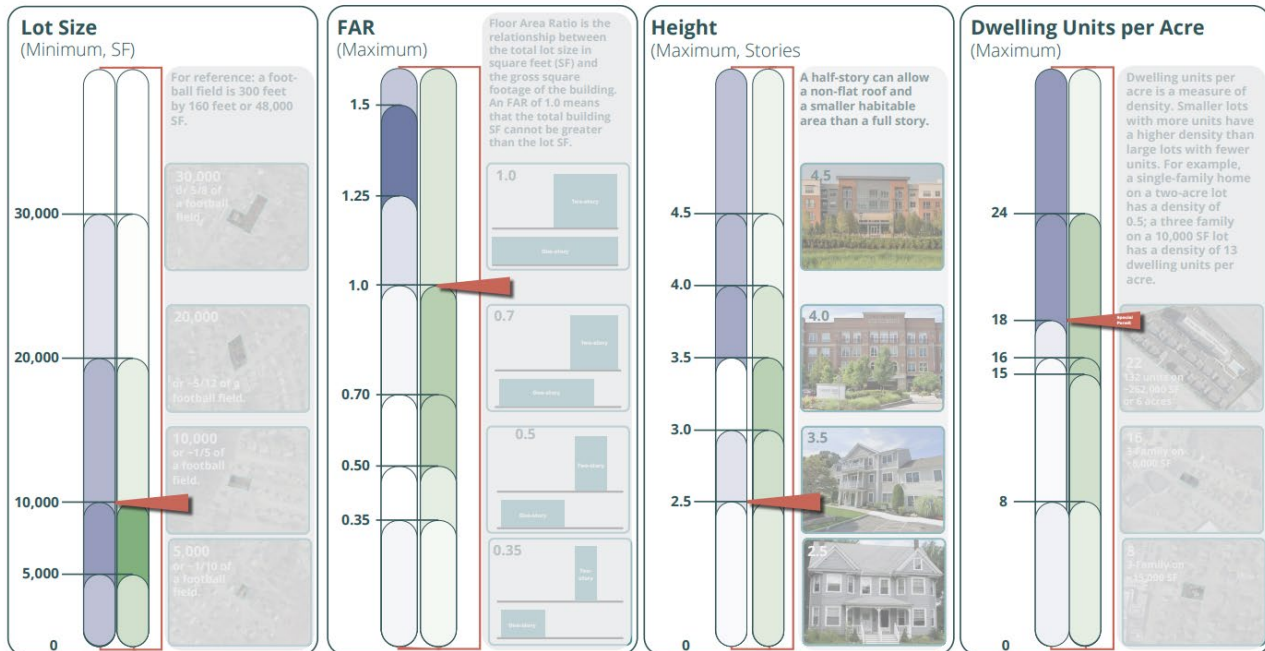


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Center Business

Scan this code with your phone for more information!



RESULTS: Community Meeting #1 | November 9, 2023 | Town of Needham



COMMUNITY INPUT

After concluding the interactive activities, attendees regrouped to report results and leave comments on the exercises. Below is a summary of the community input received at each of the zoning stations during the public meeting.

A. GENERAL RESIDENTIAL

LOT SIZE (MINIMUM, SF)

- 0 - 5k: 14 dots
- 5 - 10k: 26 dots
- 10 - 20k: 15 dots
- 20 - 30k: 4 dots
- > 30k: 0 dots

LOT COVERAGE (MAXIMUM, %)

- 0 - 20%: 0 dots
- 20 - 25%: 1 dot
- 25 - 30%: 5 dots
- 30 - 35%: 4 dots
- 35 - 40%: 5 dots
- 40 - 45%: 1 dot
- 45 - 50%: 12 dots
- 50 - 60%: 14 dots
- 60 - 70%: 8 dots
- 70 - 80%: 1 dot
- 80 - 100%: 1 dot

HEIGHT (MAXIMUM, STORIES)

- 0 - 2.5 stories: 21 dots
- 2.5 - 3.0 stories: 10 dots
- 3.0 - 3.5 stories: 18 dots
- 3.5 - 4.0 stories: 9 dots

- 4.0 - 4.5 stories: 7 dots
- > 4.5 stories: 4 dots

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (MAXIMUM)

- 0 - 8 units: 13 dots
- 8 - 16 units: 32 dots
- 16 - 18 units: 5 dots
- 18 - 24 units: 9 dots
- > 24 units: 5 dots

Comments 1-3:

1. None of these options are desirable in a town already congested and Fully developed!
2. Were? does the MBTA have the right to tell the Town they need larger? dwelling units.
3. We need more housing! As a recent NHS grad/ I won't be able to move back to Needham, as well as many of my friends.

GENERAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT LOCATIONS (MAP)

Comments 1-2:

1. Wexford St Area
2. Also support Wexford St/general area north of highway. Even if it's not contiguous, its still worth doing in general.

B. APARTMENT-1

LOT SIZE (MINIMUM, SF)

- 0 - 5k: 0 dots
- 5 - 10k: 10 dots
- 10 - 20k: 24 dots
- 20 - 30k: 8 dots
- > 30k: 0 dots

FAR (MAXIMUM)

- < 0.35: 2 dots
- 0.35 - 0.50: 1 dot
- 0.50 - 0.70: 6 dots
- 0.70 - 1.0: 14 dots
- 1.0 - 1.25: 14 dots
- 1.25 - 1.5: 10 dots
- > 1.5: 0 dots

HEIGHT (MAXIMUM, STORIES)

- 0 - 2.5 stories: 5 dots
- 2.5 - 3.0 stories: 7 dots
- 3.0 - 3.5 stories: 5 dots
- 3.5 - 4.0 stories: 19 dots
- 4.0 - 4.5 stories: 10 dots
- > 4.5 stories: 12 dots

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (MAXIMUM)

- 0 - 8 units: 0 dots
- 8 - 16 units: 1 dots
- 16 - 18 units: 4 dots
- 18 - 24 units: 22 dots
- > 24 units: 21 dots

No Comments.

A-1 DISTRICT LOCATIONS (MAP)

- 6 Dots in the bottom left portion of the top AV-SQ circle Perrault Rd area
- 9 Dots in the upper right portion of the top AV_SQ circle Alfreton Rd area
- 2 Dots at the bottom of the top AV-SQ circle
- 7 Dots to the far right outside the lines above Brookline St

- 4 Dots on a parcel bisected by May St in the middle circle
- 5 Dots on a parcel to the right of CTR purple dot on Warren St
- 3 Dots on a parcel touching the CTR purple dot
- 2 Dots on a parcel on Great Plain Av
- 4 Dots to the far right of the map near Plymouth Rd and Wilshire Pk

Comments 1-5:

1. Town should keep Hillside land for future use. [Next to this comment is a parcel with 14 dots - upper left GR in the AV-SQ circle Glen Gary Rd area]
2. Hersey should be part of Rezoning.
3. Why is Hersey not part of the discussion for rezoning & building!?
4. Do not include Baptist Ch. In A1 zoning.
5. Less dense/tall(?)/zoning in the Needham Center parcel (the closest to the purple dot) to keep the small-feel character.

C. INDUSTRIAL

LOT SIZE (MINIMUM, SF)

- 0 - 5k: 2 dots
- 5 - 10k: 13 dots
- 10 - 20k: 30 dots
- 20 - 30k: 7 dots
- > 30k: 0 dots

LOT COVERAGE (MAXIMUM, %)

- 0 - 20%: 0 dots
- 20 - 25%: 0 dots
- 25 - 30%: 0 dots
- 30 - 35%: 0 dots
- 35 - 40%: 0 dots
- 40 - 45%: 0 dots

- 45 - 50%: 3 dots
- 50 - 60%: 13 dots
- 60 - 70%: 18 dots
- 70 - 80%: 16 dots
- 80 - 100%: 1 dot

HEIGHT (MAXIMUM, STORIES)

- 0 - 2.5 stories: 0 dots
- 2.5 - 3.0 stories: 3 dots
- 3.0 - 3.5 stories: 5 dots
- 3.5 - 4.0 stories: 12 dots
- 4.0 - 4.5 stories: 12 dots
- > 4.5 stories: 27 dots

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (MAXIMUM)

- 0 - 8 units: 2 dots
- 8 - 16 units: 2 dots
- 16 - 18 units: 3 dots
- 18 - 24 units: 15 dots
- > 24 units: 28 dots

No Comments.

INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT LOCATION (MAP)

Comments 1-1:

1. Is there an opportunity to rezone + allow for commercial or mixed use without requiring + still get credit)

D. BUSINESS, AVERY SQUARE, CHESTNUT STREET, HILLSIDE AVENUE

LOT SIZE (MINIMUM, SF)

- 0 - 5k: 8 dots
- 5 - 10k: 14 dots

- 10 - 20k: 18 dots
- 20 - 30k: 5 dots
- > 30k: 1 dot

FAR (MAXIMUM)

- < 0.35: 1 dot
- 0.35 - 0.50: 1 dot
- 0.50 - 0.70: 1 dot
- 0.70 - 1.0: 2 dots
- 1.0 - 1.25: 11 dots
- 1.25 - 1.5: 28 dots
- > 1.5: 3 dots

HEIGHT (MAXIMUM, STORIES)

- 0 - 2.5 stories: 0 dots
- 2.5 - 3.0 stories: 1 dot
- 3.0 - 3.5 stories: 2 dots
- 3.5 - 4.0 stories: 14 dots
- 4.0 - 4.5 stories: 16 dots
- > 4.5 stories: 14 dots

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (MAXIMUM)

- 0 - 8 units: 0 dots
- 8 - 16 units: 0 dots
- 16 - 18 units: 1 dot
- 18 - 24 units: 18 dots
- > 24 units: 32 dots

No Comments.

BUSINESS DISTRICT LOCATIONS

1. Concentrate taller, dense zoning on the lower side of CH(M?)-ST (avoid Great

Plan & Highland intersection).

2. How tall is the Town Hall? I wouldn't want business/center zoning to obstruct the "dome" of the Town Hall

3. I would like to see us maintain options for commercial while allowing pure residential. Don't let all business space in town disappear

E. CENTER BUSINESS

LOT SIZE (MINIMUM, SF)

- 0 - 5k: 9 dots
- 5 - 10k: 16 dots
- 10 - 20k: 11 dots
- 20 - 30k: 2 dots
- > 30k: 0 dots

FAR (MAXIMUM)

- < 0.35: 1 dot
- 0.35 - 0.50: 0 dots
- 0.50 - 0.70: 0 dots
- 0.70 - 1.0: 1 dot
- 1.0 - 1.25: 4 dots
- 1.25 - 1.5: 24 dots
- > 1.5: 8 dots

HEIGHT (MAXIMUM, STORIES)

- 0 - 2.5 stories: 1 dot
- 2.5 - 3.0 stories: 6 dots
- 3.0 - 3.5 stories: 0 dots
- 3.5 - 4.0 stories: 17 dots
- 4.0 - 4.5 stories: 13 dots
- > 4.5 stories: 12 dots

DWELLING UNITS PER ACRE (MAXIMUM)

- 0 - 8 units: 2 dots
- 8 - 16 units: 1 dot
- 16 - 18 units: 3 dots
- 18 - 24 units: 18 dots
- > 24 units: 18 dots

No Comments.

SHOULD NEEDHAM'S CENTER BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICT BE INCLUDED IN THE MBTA DISTRICT?

- Change the zoning to allow multifamily right: 31 dots
- Leave zoning as it is: 33 dots

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT AND NEEDHAM'S

1. It seems to me this law does not alleviate the affordable housing crisis for low & middle income folks, meaning less diversity in Needham and still no housing for those in crisis. Why is that?
2. Central Business Center SHOULD have multi-family development but should not restrict mixed-uses. For businesses to thrive on Great Plain Ave, they need the foot traffic generated by over-commercial residential development.
3. Any zoning changes should not exclude mixed use development in commercial zones.
4. Hersey Station Area should be part of the rezoning.
5. Why isn't Hersey Station in the conversation?
6. Hersey Area should absolutely be included.
7. Concern about the tax income implications - for example putting housing eliminates industrial (see #13 below).
8. Why is the Hersey Station area not included in the rezoning discussion? (red dot on note).
9. Add Hersey where D&D and gas station are.
10. Center Business District - didn't state change requirements as it relates to multifamily & mixed use?

11. What about zoning near Hersey that (simply) allows 2- or 3-family houses?
12. Will there be traffic impacts taken into consideration.
13. (continuation of #7 comment) Concern about potential cost of educating students - any estimates?
14. There seems to be some misinformation that the added housing needs to be contiguous and it does not. Please be sure to clarify in future discussion.
15. There is information that the golf course is conservation land and therefore we cannot consider the Hersey area. Please clarify.
16. Let's master control the downtown parking areas so it can be efficiently used for parking to serve residential density [¶] support our vital business community.
17. How do we know this consultant data is independent and objective:
18. How much has the consultant been paid?
19. Have we researched a legal Avenue to oppose this?
20. Why not convert Avery to affordable housing.
21. Can we get rid of train whistles

SUMMARY

After reviewing and tallying the results from the individual stations, both in-person and online, it appears that participants would like to test increases to many of the levers above what is currently allowed in the Town's Zoning Bylaw. This includes increases to lot coverage and floor area ratio (FAR), building heights, and density as measured by dwelling units per acre. These summary findings will be shared with the HONE Committee and incorporated into future scenarios for Needham's MBTA District.