

Articles 18 & 19

**AMEND ZONING BY-LAW – MULTI-FAMILY OVERLAY DISTRICT
(THE “BASE COMPLIANCE PLAN”)**

**AMEND ZONING BY-LAW – MAP CHANGE FOR MULTI-FAMILY
OVERLAY DISTRICT (THE “BASE COMPLIANCE PLAN”)**

**Annual Town Meeting
May 5, 2025**

MBTA Communities Act Overview

The law (MGL C.40A Section 3A) established a requirement that each of the 177 designated MBTA Communities must have zoning that:

- Provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right.
- Cannot have age-restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children.
- Must have a minimum gross density of 15 dwelling units per acre.
- A portion of the district must be located within 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station.
- Commuter rail communities, including Needham, have a deadline to comply of **July 14, 2025**.

Needham’s MBTA Communities Requirements:

Compliance Metric	Requirement
Gross Acres	50 acres
Unit Capacity	1,784 units
Dwelling Units per Acre	15 DU/AC
Percentage to be Located in Station Area	90%

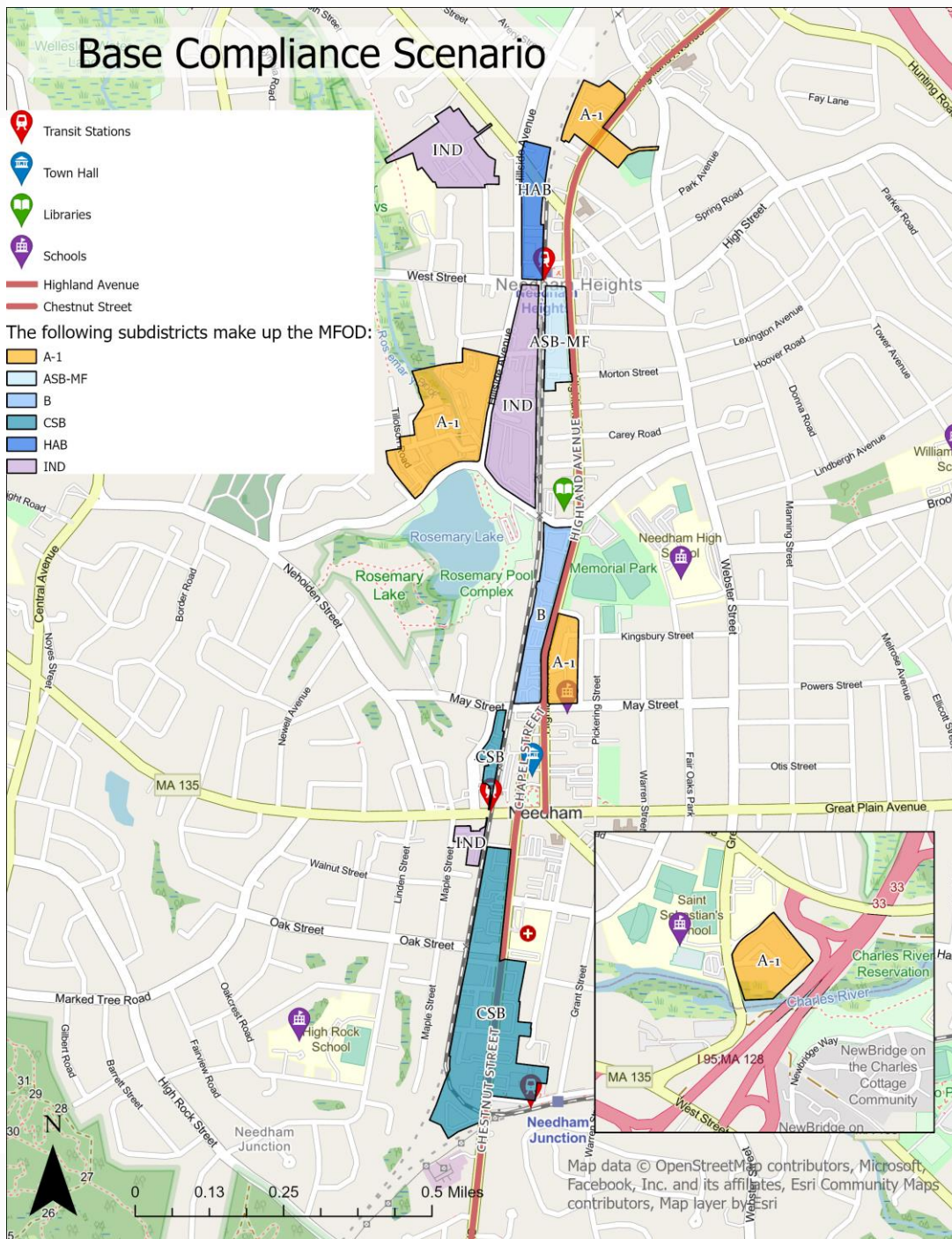
Article Overview

Base Compliance Plan: A scenario that adheres very closely to the zoning boundaries and dimensional standards in Needham’s current Zoning Bylaw. This scenario is intended to meet the minimum compliance requirements of the MBTA Communities Act.

Article 18: Creates a multi-family overlay district following the recommended district boundaries and dimensional standards in the Base Compliance Plan.

Article 19: The map change for the Base Compliance Plan to accompany Article 18.

	Needham Requirement	Base Compliance Plan
Acreage (net)	50	100.3
Unit Capacity	1,784	1,870
Density (units/acre)	15	18.6
Percent in Transit Area	90%	93%



- Follows the Highland Avenue / Chestnut Street corridor from Webster Street to Needham Junction Station
- Incorporates Existing Multi-Family Housing Developments along the corridor at
 - Hamilton Highlands / Avery School
 - Rosemary Ridge
 - Rosemary Lake
 - The Highlands
- Utilizes existing Business and Industrial Districts
- Incorporates Multi-Family Housing at Charles Court Condos

CURRENT ZONING PARAMETERS

	Apartment A1	Business	Avery Square Business Overlay	Chestnut St. Business ²	Hillside Ave. Business	Industrial
Minimum Lot Size (Sq. feet)	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	3.0	3.0	4.0 ¹	2.5	2.5	3.0
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.50		1.1	0.70	0.70	
Max Lot Coverage		25%				60%
Max Dwelling Units Per Acre	18		18	18	18	
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

¹ Under existing zoning 4th story limited to 35% of total roof area.

² Chestnut Street Overlay:

- Min. Lot size – 15,000 SF
- By Special Permit:
 - 4 stories (4th stories is recessed)
 - FAR of 2.0
 - No limit on dwelling units per acre

BASE COMPLIANCE PLAN ZONING PARAMETERS

	Apartment A1	Business	Avery Square Business	Chestnut St. Business	Hillside Ave. Business	Industrial
Minimum Lot Size (Sq. feet)	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Height (Stories)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.50		1.30	0.70	0.70	0.50
Max Lot Coverage		25%				
Max Dwelling Units Per Acre	18		44	18		
Parking per Unit	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
			4 stories, an FAR of 1.7 and > 44 units/acre allowed by Special Permit.			

Key comparison between base and existing zoning

Dimensional Standards

- Height is increased from 2.5 to 3 stories in the Chestnut Street Business and Hillside Avenue Business subdistricts.
- Minimum number of required parking spaces is reduced from 1.5 to 1.0 spaces in all subdistricts.

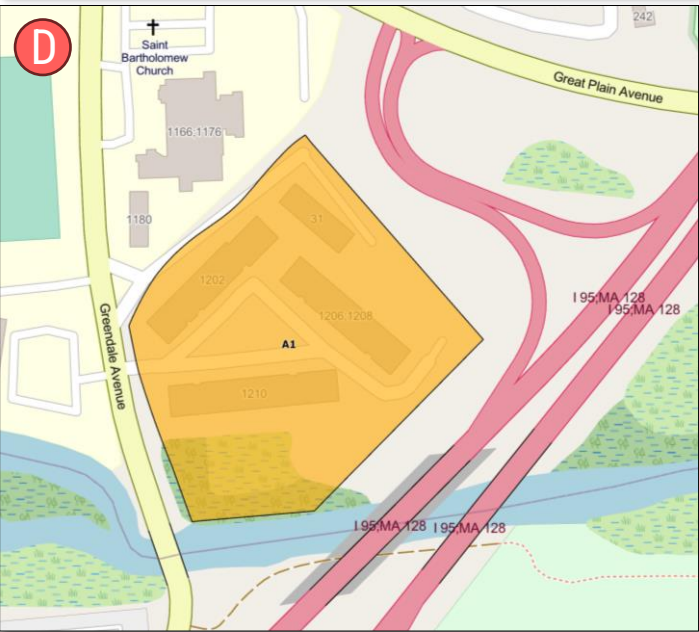
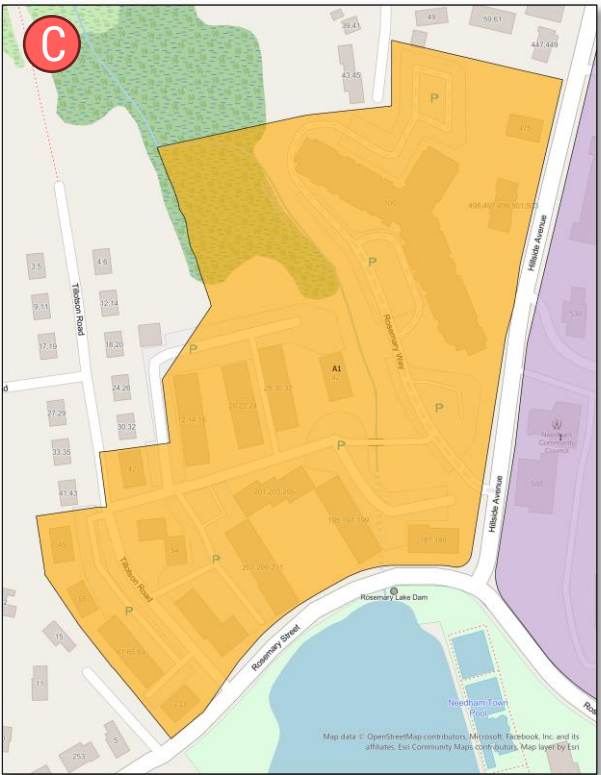
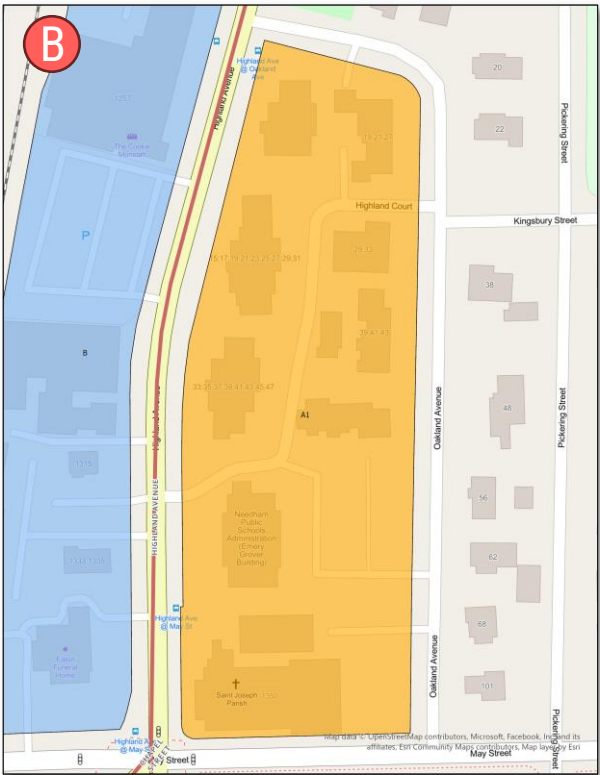
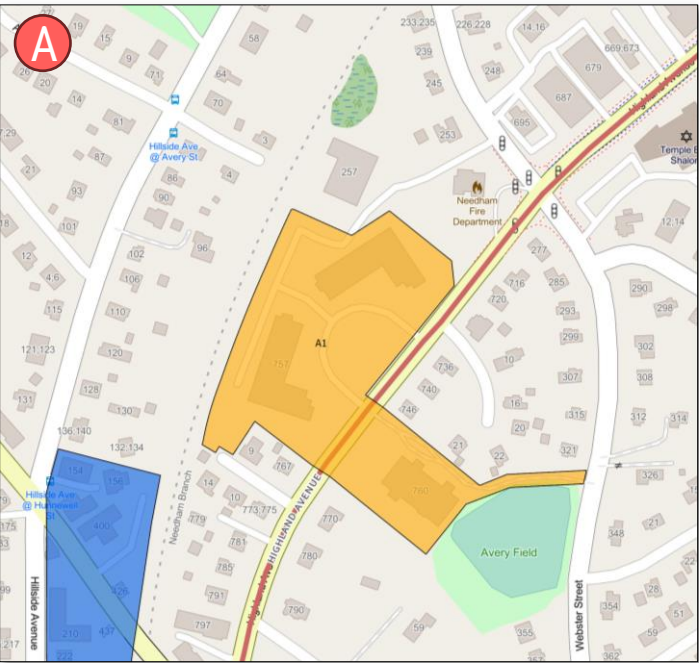
Land Use Standards

- Multifamily development is converted from special permit use to as of right use in Avery Square, Chestnut Street and Hillside Avenue Business subdistricts.
- Multifamily development is introduced as permitted as of right use in Business and Industrial subdistricts.
- * Avery Square Business subdistrict to be detailed in a subsequent slide.
- * There are currently overlay districts at Chestnut Street and Avery Square and **those overlays currently already allow higher density multifamily housing than the base plan.**

Units Allowed Under Existing & Proposed Zoning

Zoning District	Scenario Name: Unit Capacity				
	Existing Units	Existing Zoning Unit Capacity	Existing Zoning with Overlay Special Permit Unit Capacity	Base Compliance Plan Unit Capacity	Base Compliance Plan Likely Build
Apartment A1	588	526	526	526	0
Business	4	N/A	N/A	210	43
Avery Square Business	72	77	77	189	189
Chestnut St. East	46	370	987	370	50
Chestnut St. West					
Chestnut St./Garden St.					
Hillside Ave Business	44	46	46	80	8
Industrial – Crescent	21	N/A	N/A	495	121
Industrial – Hillside					
TOTAL UNIT CAPACITY	775	1,019	1,636	1,870	411

Scenario Comparison – Apartment A1 Subdistricts – Base Compliance

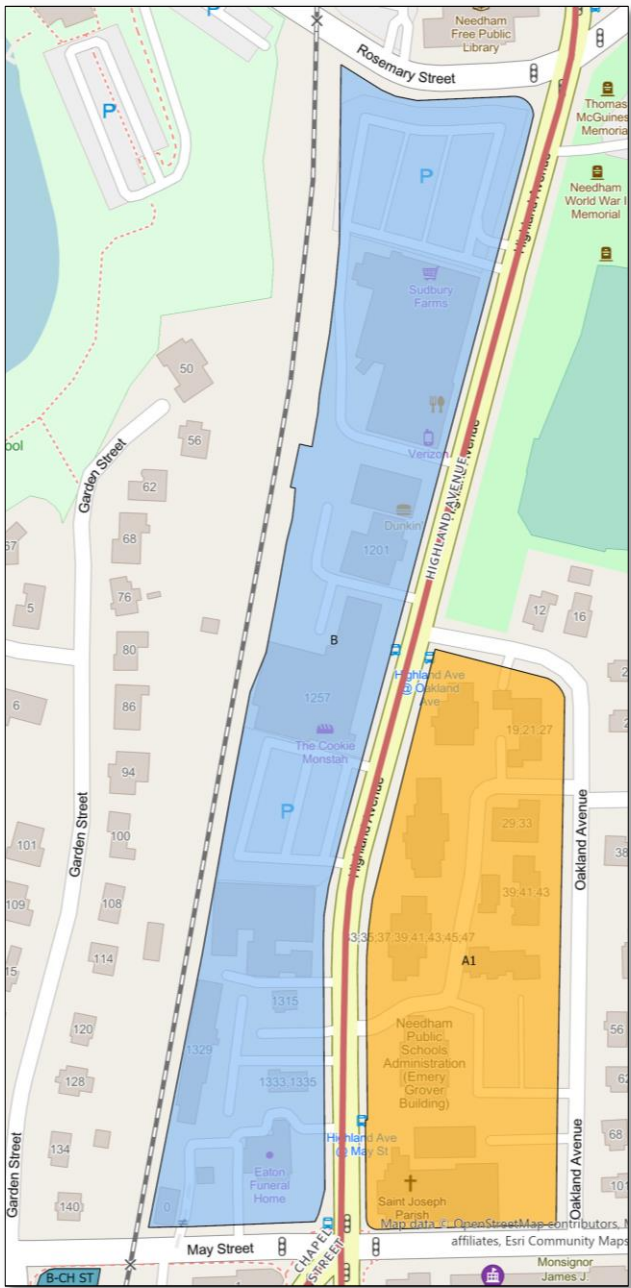


- A** Avery School/Hamilton Highlands
- B** The Highlands, NPS, St. Joseph (Highland Ave/May St.)
- C** Rosemary Ridge, Rosemary Lake Apts. (Rosemary St./Hillside Ave)
- D** Charles Court Condos

Zoning Standards	Existing Zoning	Base Compliance
Minimum Lot Size	20,000 SF	20,000 SF
Height (Stories)	3	3
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.50	0.50
Max Lot Coverage	N/A	N/A
Max Dwelling Units per Acre	18	18
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.0

Scenario Comparison – Business Subdistricts

Base Compliance

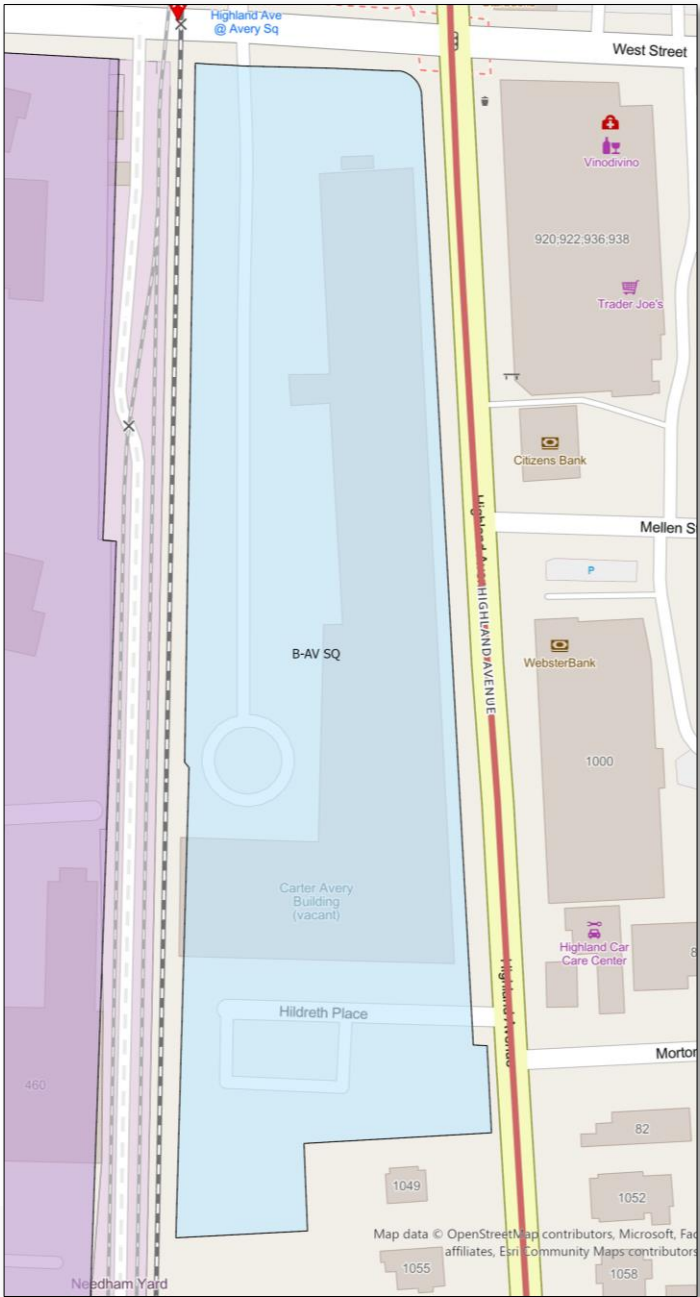


Zoning Standards	Existing Zoning	Base Compliance
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 SF	10,000 SF
Height (Stories)	3	3
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	N/A	N/A
Max Lot Coverage	25%	25%
Max Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A	N/A
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.0

Under existing zoning, multi-family housing is not allowed in this district.

Scenario Comparison – Avery Square Subdistricts

Base Compliance



Zoning Standards	Existing Overlay Zoning	Base Compliance
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 SF	10,000 SF
Height (Stories)	4 ¹	3
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.1	1.3
Max Lot Coverage	N/A	N/A
Max Dwelling Units per Acre	18	44
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.0

Under the Base Plan, the zoning would allow 4 stories, an FAR of 1.7 and a density greater than 44 dwelling units per acre by Special Permit. It would only apply to the 100 West parcel.

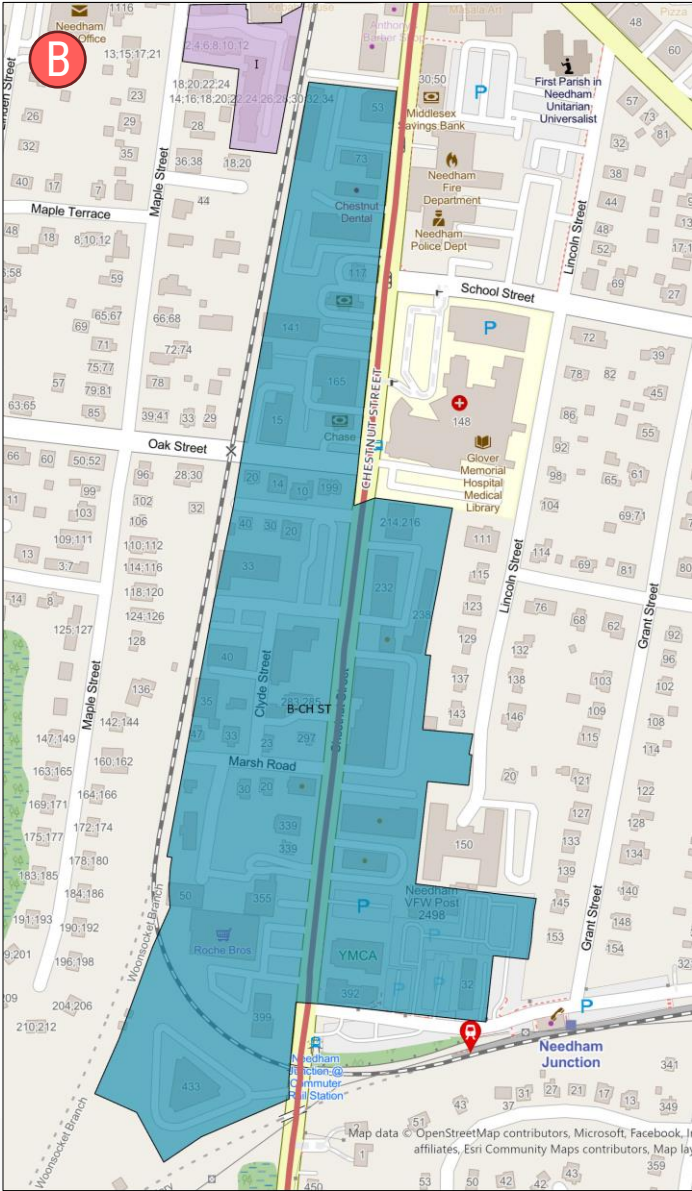
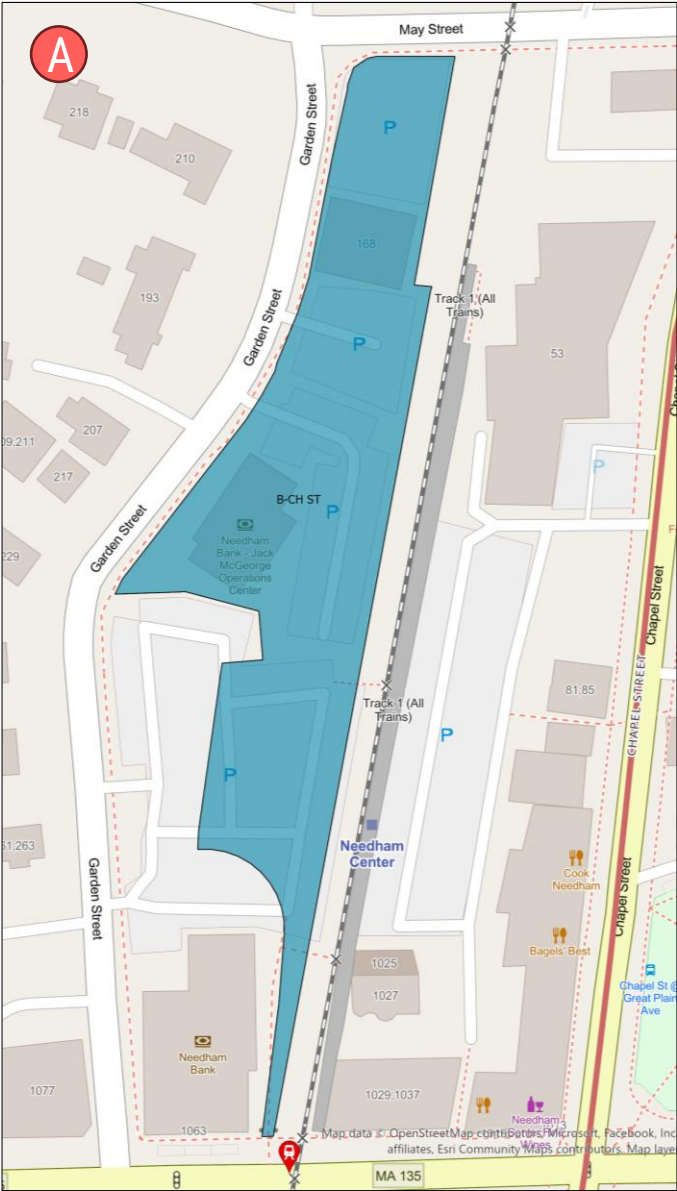
¹ Under existing zoning 4th story limited to 35% of total roof area.

The Base Compliance Plan includes:

Avery Square Business District

- Multi-family housing development as-of-right at 3 stories, an FAR of 1.3, and a limit of 44 maximum dwelling units per acre. The MBTA Communities Compliance model calculates this at 189 units.
- Multi-family housing development by special permit at an FAR of 1.7, a density greater than 44 units per acre and 4 stories.
- More stringent development standards for parking garages facades and curb cuts.
- The maximum FAR permitted as of right under existing zoning is increased from 1.1 to 1.3 with a special permit to increase the maximum FAR to 1.7. Parking garages, structured parking or deck/roof top parking screened from Highland Avenue and West Street are not counted toward FAR. Maximum area of 4th floor is increased from 35% of roof area to 100%. A maximum number of dwelling units per acre standard of 44 is introduced for the as of right condition. A density greater than 44 units per acre is permitted by special permit.

Scenario Comparison – Chestnut Street Subdistricts – Base Compliance

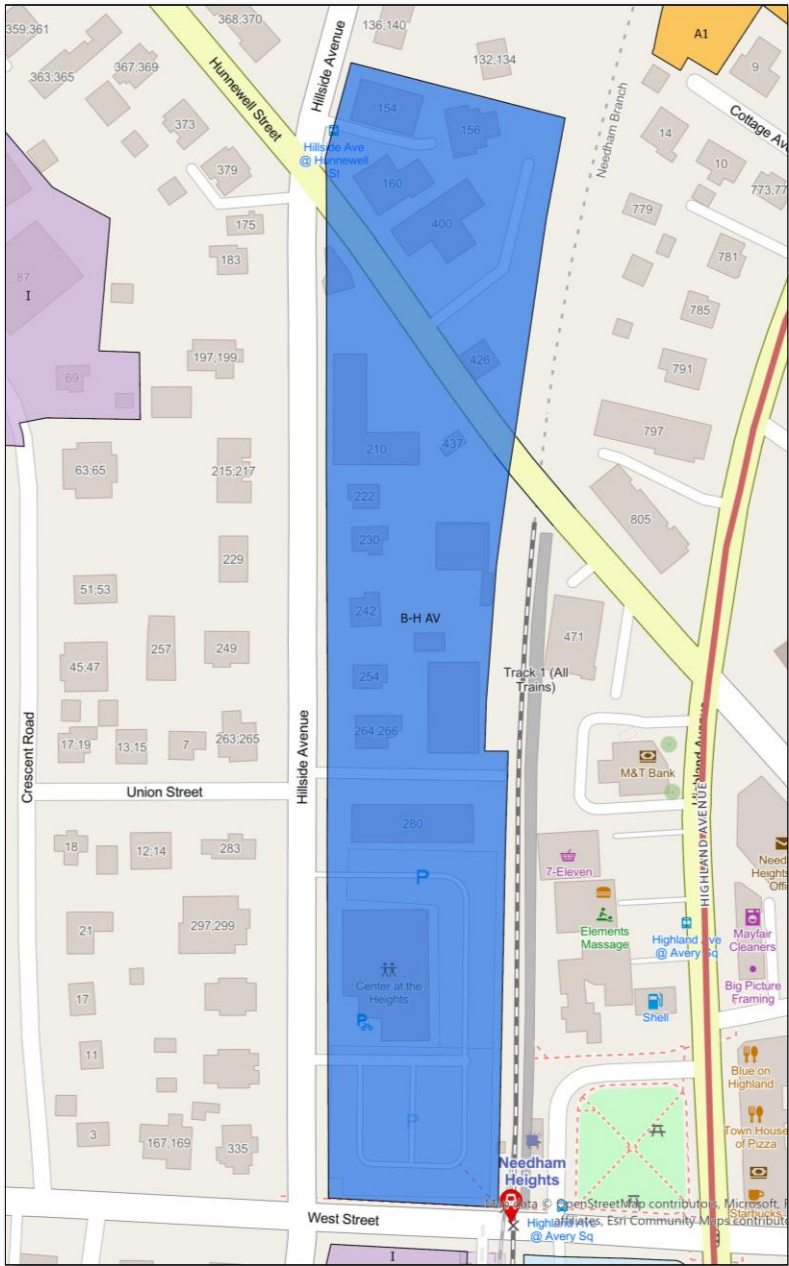


- A** Garden Street District between May St. and Great Plain Ave
- B** Chestnut St. from just south of Great Plain Ave to Junction St.

Zoning Standards	Existing Zoning	Base Compliance
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 SF	10,000 SF
Height (Stories)	2.5	3
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.70	0.70
Max Lot Coverage	N/A	N/A
Max Dwelling Units per Acre	18	18
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.0

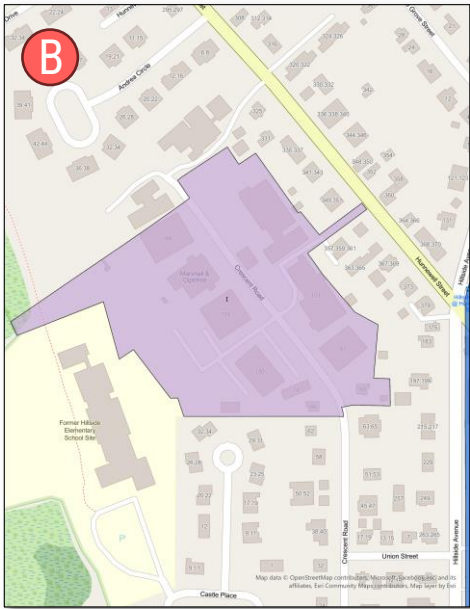
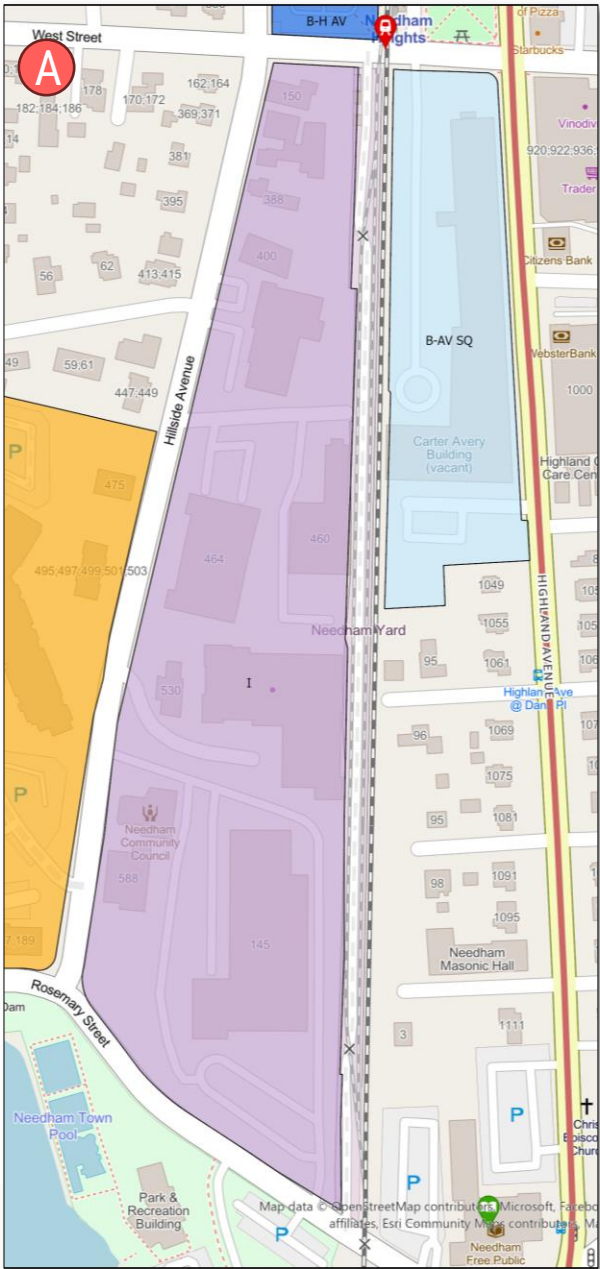
Scenario Comparison – Hillside Ave Business Subdistricts

Base Compliance



Zoning Standards	Existing Zoning	Base Compliance
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 SF	10,000 SF
Height (Stories)	2.5	3
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.70	0.70
Max Lot Coverage	N/A	N/A
Max Dwelling Units per Acre	18	N/A
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.0

Scenario Comparison – Industrial Subdistricts – Base Compliance



- A** Hillside Ave from West St. to Rosemary St.
- B** Crescent Road Industrial District
- C** Denmark Lane off Maple St. at Great Plain Ave

Zoning Standards	Existing Zoning	Base Compliance
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 SF	10,000 SF
Height (Stories)	3	3
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	N/A	0.50
Max Lot Coverage	60%	N/A
Max Dwelling Units per Acre	N/A	N/A
Parking per Unit	1.5	1.0

Under existing zoning, housing is not allowed in this district.

Site Plan Review

- Applications will be reviewed by the Planning Board, with a public hearing process.
- The Planning Board cannot deny an application that complies with the zoning (including building dimensions, height, setbacks, and development standards) because the use of multi-family housing is allowed as of right.
- The Board can apply limited, reasonable conditions, which may include modifying lighting, adding fencing, reviewing stormwater design for compliance with applicable standards, and adjusting parking layout and other structural elements on the site plan.
- Conditions can be used to shape a project, but conditions cannot go so far as to unreasonably interfere with or effectively prohibit the project.

Site Plan Review

- All projects will need to comply with Building Code, Fire Code, Health Code, Department of Public Works regulations, state and local wetlands and other environmental regulations.
- Given the limited nature of site plan review for a by-right use, the applicant cannot be required to fund major off-site public infrastructure improvements as a condition of approval, beyond the requirements of code and non-zoning regulations noted above.
- Conversely, the Town is under no obligation to make investments in public infrastructure to make an individual project viable.

The Base Compliance Plan includes:

Additional Site Plan review standards to:

- assure that buildings are designed with regard to their relationship to open spaces, existing buildings and other community assets in the area;
- address all collection and storage areas for residential refuse;
- assure provision of adequate water, sewer, and utility service to serve the project;
- address pedestrian and vehicular movement within and outside the project site including application of reasonable mitigation measures to address traffic attributable to the project; and
- include construction management standards consistent with those of the Town's General By-laws.

Housing Affordability

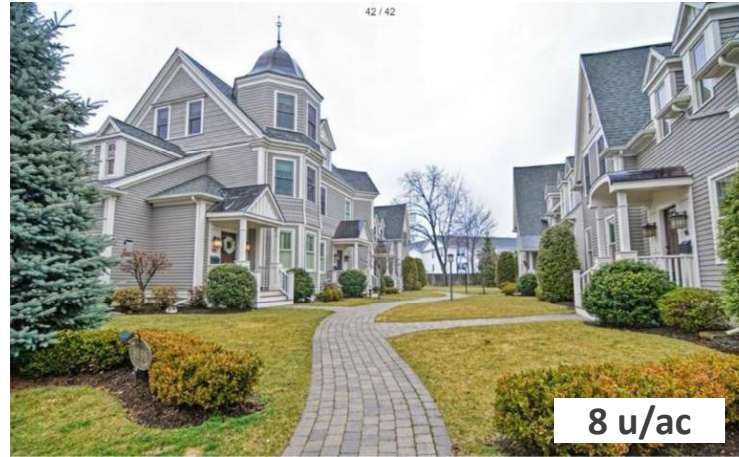
- Zoning requires that 12.5% of all new units in buildings with 6 or more units are set aside as deed restricted affordable housing for those making up to 80% of Area Median Income. This is consistent with Needham's existing zoning.
- RKG's Economic Feasibility Analysis (EFA) supports this recommendation in compliance with State guidelines under the MBTA Communities Act.
- Keeping the affordability set aside at 12.5% helps Needham continue to stay above the state's requirement of 10% affordability townwide.



Existing Needham Multifamily Housing



1110 Great Plain Avenue



90-98 Dedham Avenue



401-405 Hunnewell Street



The Highlands



Denmark Lane

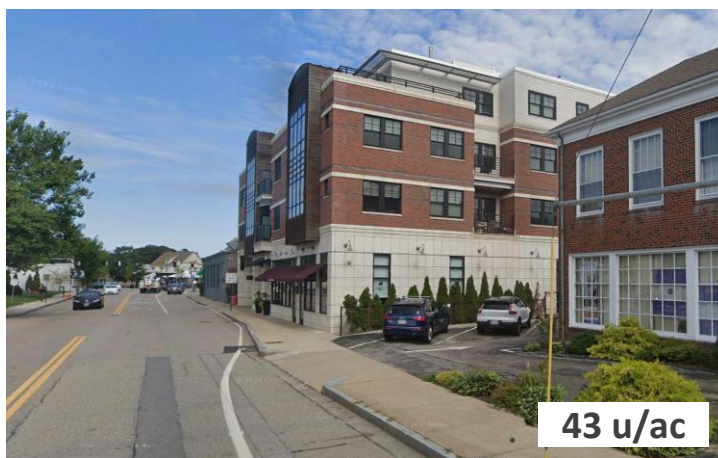


25 High Street

Existing Needham Multifamily Housing



Stephen Palmer



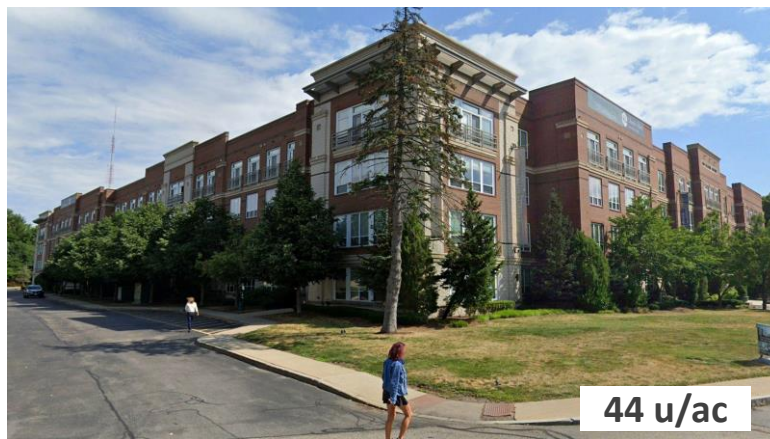
50 Dedham Avenue



100 West Street



Rosemary Ridge



Charles River Landing



Rosemary Lake

Examples of multifamily housing



Townhomes



3-4 story multifamily



Denser single-family homes



3-story multifamily



3-story multifamily



Live-work townhomes

Base Height

Chestnut
Street
Business

3

Chestnut
Street
Business

3

Chestnut
Street
Business

3

Hartney
Greymont

Roche
Bros.

VFW

Junction Street

Chestnut Street

Lincoln Street

Warren Street

Linden Street

Base Height

Linden Street

Maple Street

Chestnut Street Business

3

Chestnut Street Business

3

Roche Bros.

Chestnut Street

Dunkin Donuts

Chestnut Street Business

3

Lincoln Street

VFW

Grant Street

Warren Street

Junction Street

Base Height

Industrial,
Apt-A1

3

Chestnut
Street
Business

3

Town Common

Great Plain Avenue

CVS

Dedham
Avenue

Public Safety
Building

School Street

Grant
Street

Lincoln
Street

Oak Street

Chestnut Street

Lincoln Street



Base Height

Chestnut St.
Business

3

Industrial,
Apt-A1

3

St. Joe's

May Street

Town Hall

Town Common

Great Plain Avenue

Michelson's

Harvey's

Dedham Avenue

Chestnut Street

Maple Street

Linden Street

Garden Street

Highland Avenue

Chapel Street



Base Height

Needham
Library

Needham
High School

Bertucci's

3

Apartment
A1

Business
District

3

Highland Avenue

St. Joe's

3

May Street

May Street

Base Height

Avery Square Business

100 West Street

Rosemary Ridge

Apartment A1

3

Rosemary Lake Apartments

Industrial - Hillside

3

Rosemary Lake

Rosemary Street

Highland Avenue

West Street

Hillside Avenue



Base Height

Industrial -
Crescent

3

Hillside
Ave.
Business

3

Apartment
A1

3

CATH

Avery
Square
Business

3 By Right;
4 Special
Permit

Industrial -
Hillside

3



Base Height

Apartment
A1

3

Thank you.