

Action Plan for MBTA Communities

Description Area Please read the Section 3A Guidelines before attempting to complete this form. Please note: Action Plan Forms must be submitted by a municipal official with authority to act on behalf of the municipality on matters of zoning, such as the municipal CEO or planning director.

Section 1: Identification

Description Area The Section 3A Guidelines establish zoning metrics that apply uniquely to each MBTA community based on its local transit stations, existing housing stock, population, and developable land. This section of the Action Plan helps to identify the transit stations that determined each community's category. Appendix 1 of the Section 3A Guidelines lists each community's category and minimum multi-family unit capacity requirement.

1.1 MBTA Community Name Wellesley

1.2. Community Category Commuter rail community

1.3. Multifamily Unit Capacity Requirement 1392

1.4. Does this municipality have any MBTA rapid transit stations within its boundaries? No

1.5. Does this municipality have any MBTA commuter rail stations within its boundaries? Yes

1.5a. Please list MBTA commuter rail stations that are located within the municipal boundaries Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills, Wellesley Farms

1.6. Does this municipality have any other MBTA transit stations that are located outside of its municipal boundaries that may have "developable station area" within them? Yes

Description Area Stations that are located outside of municipal boundaries but that have "developable station area" within the boundaries might affect district location criteria, as further described in Section 8 of the Guidelines. Please refer to Section 1 of the Guidelines for definitions of "transit station area", "developable station area", and "developable land".

1.6a. Please list the MBTA transit stations that are located outside of the municipal boundaries but might have developable station area within them.	Waban T Station
1.7. Please provide the name of the person filling out this form	Meghan Jop
1.7a. Title	Executive Director of General Government Services
1.7b. Email Address	mjop@wellesleyma.gov
1.7c. Phone Number	(781) 431-1019 ext. 2200
1.8 Please provide the name of the municipal CEO	Wellesley Select Board Chair Lise Olney
1.8b Mailing address of municipal CEO	525 Washington Street Town Hall Wellesley, MA 02482
1.8c Email address of municipal CEO	sel@wellesleyma.gov
1.9. Please briefly describe other members of the core team developing the multi-family zoning district.	Eric Arbeene, Interim Planning Director Emma Coates, Planner Michael Grant, Inspector of Buildings Marybeth Martello, Sustainability Director Amy Frigulietti, Assistant Executive Director, Economic Dev. Meghan Jop, AICP, Executive Director of General Gov't Services

Section 2: Housing Overview

2.1. Does this municipality have any established housing related goals or strategies from municipal planning documents, such as a Housing Production Plan, Master Plan, or Economic Development Plan?	Yes
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2.1a. Please briefly describe any relevant strategies, goals, or objectives, and the work that has been done to date.

The Town approved a Housing Production Plan (HPP) in September of 2018, and achieved Housing Choice Designation by the Commonwealth in March 2021. Since adoption of the HPP, the Town has reached over 11% in the Subsidized Housing Inventory. Since adoption the Town has achieved several critical goals including adoption of zoning provisions for a 40R District that allows for 600 housing units in 2019 of which 350 units were recently completed. There is currently a proposal to increase the density in the 40R to 850 units which will be reviewed in April 2023 at the Annual Town Meeting. The Town in 2019 expanded the Residential Incentive Overlay Zoning District to several sites to expand and encourage multifamily housing within close proximity to the Wellesley Square Commuter Rail Station. That zoning resulted in 26 units at 148 Weston Road, plus 2 affordable units on an adjacent site. The second project is at the Terrazza at the former Delanson Circle site which resulted in 35 units with 4 affordable on an adjacent site. There is a new proposal for the Annual Town Meeting to place a Residential Incentive Overlay district over an existing 14 acre site currently owned and operated by the Sisters of Charity. The HPP encouraged the redevelopment of office parks, and the 40R district does just that redeveloping the Wellesley Office Park with the 40R District. Additionally, the Town is working with a team of Boston College Seniors on a Real Estate Capstone Project to reimagine another office park area along the Charles River. The Town adopted an accessory dwelling unit provision at the 2022 Annual Town Meeting, and we continue to await the first project to come through. The Town's Housing Development Corporation in 2022 recently conducted an affordable housing market study to determine where deficiencies exist in the market, and has several multifamily projects previously approved through 40B under construction.

The Town also has the Unified Plan "UP" (adopted in 2019) which is both the Town's Comprehensive Plan and the Town's strategic plan. The UP also called for Accessory Dwelling Units, increased density, and diversity of housing types in appropriate locations. Given the duration of the UP process, the UP also called for adoption of the Housing Production Plan, which was achieved nearly simultaneously to the UP. As part of the UP, the Town further focused on public transportation to improve accessibility between multifamily housing and places of work and the broader commuter networks. The UP recommended an RFP for use of two town lots known as the Tailby and Railroad Commuter Parking Lots. The Town did release the RFP for those sites and was in negotiation with a developer, however the Town determined some reimagination was necessary on moving forward with that particular project. The UP also called for the study and analysis of the Wellesley Housing Authority land known as Barton Road. The CPC did fund a feasibility study, and next steps are currently being contemplated.

2.2. Is this municipality currently working on any other planning for housing?

Yes

2.2a. Please briefly describe the housing work underway.

In addition to preparing to meet the MBTA Communities requirements, the Town is working to expand housing density within the existing 40R District at Wellesley Office Park and has a Warrant Article for the Annual Town Meeting to rezone a 14 acre parcel with a Residential Incentive Overlay. The Town is also working closely with a developer on a plan to redevelop a series of single family residential parcels that were aggregated to rezone for upwards of 70 housing units within walking distance to Wellesley Hills Commuter Rail Station. The Town is also working with a developer who has acquired a 9 acre parcel split between Wellesley and Natick on an assisted living and memory care project site. This will require rezoning in both Natick and Wellesley. The Town has capital funds to study the Cedar Street/ Route 9 Commercial District which will encompass commercial, residential, and housing authority land. The Town anticipates a redevelopment of existing commercial into mixed use housing project in 2023.

Section 3: Preliminary Zoning Strategies

3.1. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following zoning strategies is this community most likely to use for compliance? (Select all that apply)

- a. An existing zoning district or districts that might already comply with the Section 3A Guidelines
- b. An existing zoning district or districts that must be amended to comply with the Section 3A Guidelines
- e. Other zoning strategy

3.1a. Please identify and briefly describe the possibly-compliant district(s), including any characteristics of existing development or transit options that make it suitable for use as this community's 3A-compliant district. Optional: Attach any supporting documents.

Wellesley has the following districts that are compliant: Wellesley Park Smart Growth Overlay District (40R District), Wellesley Square Commercial District, Business Districts, Business A Districts, Industrial Districts, Industrial A Districts, and the Residential Incentive Overlay District, Limited Apartment Districts, and Lower Falls Village Commercial. The density for these districts is identified in Area Regulations Section 5.2.C.2 and 3 as 2500 square feet of land per each housekeeping unit which equates to 17 units per acre. In the Wellesley Square Commercial District (via Special Permit) and Residential Incentive Overlay Districts (as of right) that can further be increased to 24 units per acre as it states there is a requirement for 1800 square feet of land per each housekeeping unit.

File

<https://massgov.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14093944001>

3.1b. Please select the changes that may be necessary for the existing district to comply. Optional: Attach any supporting documents that describe this district.

Parking requirements
Other: Project Approval Regulations

Explanation:

The Town of Wellesley, under Project Approval, has three primary review functions. The first is an advisory Design Review component with a Design Review Board. The second, unlike many communities, is a special permit issued by the Planning Board that reviews the offsite impacts to seven capital infrastructure components including Water, Sewer, Stormwater, Electric, Traffic and Pedestrian Safety, Fire and Life Safety, and Refuse. In consultation with DHCD, they have indicated this special permit is a barrier to housing and therefore not allowed. The third component is site plan review issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals for architecture, landscaping, lighting, interior circulation, ingress, egress, construction management, etc. Under the Town's 40R provisions the Town had to modify this process to a streamlined site plan review for the housing components. The team is currently evaluating how to address site plan review to meet the MBTA communities designation.

File

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3.1e. Please briefly explain the strategy. Optional: Attach any supporting documents that show planning work this community has already done for this strategy.

The Town's current strategy is to evaluate the existing 40R Site Plan Review for housing and Project of Significant Impact provisions for non-housing related projects. Please see 40R Site Plan Review procedures. We may also seek to rezone the Tailby Parking Lot and a property at 27 Linden Street to create connectivity between Wellesley Square Commercial District and Industrial zoned properties along Linden Street. The rezoning of the Tailby Parking Lot will create connectivity between two ripe areas for development of housing around the Wellesley Square Commuter Rail station. In addition to connecting the zoning, the current multi-unit zoning on Tailby and 27 Linden has an age restriction requirements that must be removed in order to meet the provisions of 3A.

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3.2. What non-housing characteristics are important for this community to consider in its 3A zoning district?

The Town has recently completed a Climate Action Plan (CAP) and a Sustainable Mobility Plan (SMP). In addition to meeting housing objectives, the Town continues to support our thriving commercial districts located in Wellesley Square, Linden Square, Wellesley Hills, Lower Falls, Wellesley Fells, Washington and State Street, Walnut Street Corridor, and Cedar Street corridors. We strive to have proper alternative modes of transportation for residents of all ages. The Town is incrementally working to reduce all bus fees for school age children over a 5 year period and works with the MWRTA for both fixed route and micro transit services. The Town has worked over the past 18 months to expand the use of micro transit and currently ridership is at an all-time high. The Town is working closely with the MBTA to continue the clock face scheduling, and more importantly to bring the Town's 3 commuter rail stations into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. As the Commonwealth mandates high density within proximity to MBTA stations, the mandate must also be on the Commonwealth to make this critical infrastructure accessible to all. Wellesley at this time has ZERO ADA compliant stations. The Town has invested in maintaining a complex series of trails and open spaces that provide enjoyment and enhancement to locations supporting multi-unit structures and residential areas. The Town is currently working to improve and/or reimagine the Wellesley Square Amenities including pedestrian, bike, and placemaking aspects including gathering space, lighting, landscaping, public art, benches, trash receptacles, etc. The Town continues to prioritize safe routes to school and routes to the Commuter stations for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Town is working to meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals to reduce to zero net GHG emissions by 2050 as mandated by a Town Meeting directive and Climate Action Plan. The Town is currently seeking 2023 Annual Town Meeting passage of the opt-in stretch code to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. The Town has a Municipal Light Plant, which, with goals of electrification, maintains some of the most favorable electric rates in the Commonwealth. The Town is also working to approve use of the PACE program to further allow for sustainable borrowing to enhance existing multi-unit redevelopment projects.

Section 4: Action Plan Timeline

Description Area

This section creates a framework to input preliminary plans for a zoning adoption process. On the table below, please use Column 1 (from the left) to describe a task, Column 2 to input a start date, and Column 3 to input a finish date. Every community must provide a timeline for the below-listed tasks. Additional space is provided for any other tasks that a community wishes to list. DHCD will review proposed timelines for feasibility before approving an Action Plan.

Public outreach
 Developing zoning
 Applying DHCD's compliance model to test for density and unit capacity
 Holding planning board hearings
 Holding legislative sessions and adopt compliant zoning
 Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

Description Area	Task
Description Area	Start
Description Area	Finish
Short Answer	Finalize proposed zoning modifications
	Jan 01, 2023
	Jun 15, 2023
Short Answer	Apply Compliance Model To test Density and Capacity
	Jan 01, 2023
	Mar 15, 2023
Short Answer	Board Discussions with Planning and SB
	May 01, 2022
	Jun 30, 2023
Short Answer	Hold Planning Board Public Hearings
	Sep 01, 2023
	Oct 01, 2023
Short Answer	Adopt Zoning Proposal
	Oct 15, 2023
	Oct 31, 2023
Short Answer	Submit Compliance to DHCD
	Nov 15, 2023
	Dec 31, 2023

Short Answer

Should Zoning Fail - Modify for ATM 2024

Mar 28, 2024

Apr 30, 2024

Short Answer

Should Zoning Fail - Modify for STM 2024

Oct 15, 2024

Oct 31, 2024
