



Fact Sheet: Multi-family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities

What is in the new MBTA Communities Law?

In January 2021, the Massachusetts General Court enacted new zoning requirements as part of the economic development bill.

The new Section [3A of M.G.L. c. 40A](#)¹ (the Zoning Act) requires that, *an MBTA community shall have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right*, and meet other criteria set forth in the statute: *minimum gross density of 15 units per acre; not more than ½ miles from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable; no age restrictions; and suitable for families with children.*

How will the MBTA Communities Law be implemented?

In December of 2021, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) released [DRAFT guidelines](#)² for the implementation of the new zoning requirements. The public has the opportunity to comment on these DRAFT guidelines by March 31, 2022.

Detailed information, including the DRAFT guidelines, FAQs, videos, and slide presentations, can be found on DHCD's website under [Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities](#)³.

What does this mean for Gloucester?

Gloucester IS an MBTA community, and will be subject to the DHCD guidelines once they are finalized and approved. At this time, however, the City is ONLY required to take the following two steps by May 2, 2022 in order to continue to be considered in compliance with the Law:

- 1) Discuss the MBTA draft guidance at a City Council meeting and provide a copy of the presentation given to DHCD
- 2) Complete and submit the MBTA Community information form which includes basic information about existing zoning

If the City does not complete the above, it will not be eligible for the One Stop process, a state process in which the City accesses, and is matched with, several state funded grants.

¹ To read Section 3A of M.G.L. c. 40A, click the link or go to, malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter40A/Section3A

² To read the DRAFT guidelines, click the link or go to, www.mass.gov/doc/draft-guidelines-for-mbta-communities/download

³ To visit DHCD's web page on the MBTA Law and DRAFT guidelines, click the link or go to, www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities

What happens next?

- ② **March 9, 2022 at 6pm** - A presentation will be made on the DRAFT guidelines to a joint meeting of the City Council and the Planning Board. Members of the public are invited to attend the meeting via Zoom, details will be available on the City's website under [Public Meeting Notices](#)⁴.
- ② **March 21, 2022** - Deadline to submit comments to Mayor Verga's office on the DRAFT guidelines. The public is encouraged to share comments on the DRAFT guidelines with the Mayor at: mbtafeedback@gloucester-ma.gov. All comments will then be shared with our City Council and the public.
- ② **March 31, 2022** - Deadline to submit comments to DHCD on the DRAFT guidelines. The public is welcome to provide comments via an electronic form that can be found on DHCD's website under Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities, [Submit Your Comments](#)⁵.
- ② **March 31, 2022** - Mayor Verga will submit comments to DHCD after reviewing the presentation, analysis from city staff, and input from the community.

⁴ To find Zoom details for the March 9th City Council meeting, click the link or go to, gloucester-ma.gov/1021/Public-Meeting-Notices

⁵ To submit comments to DHCD on the draft guidelines, click the link or go to www.mass.gov/forms/submit-public-written-comment-on-draft-guidelines-for-multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities