



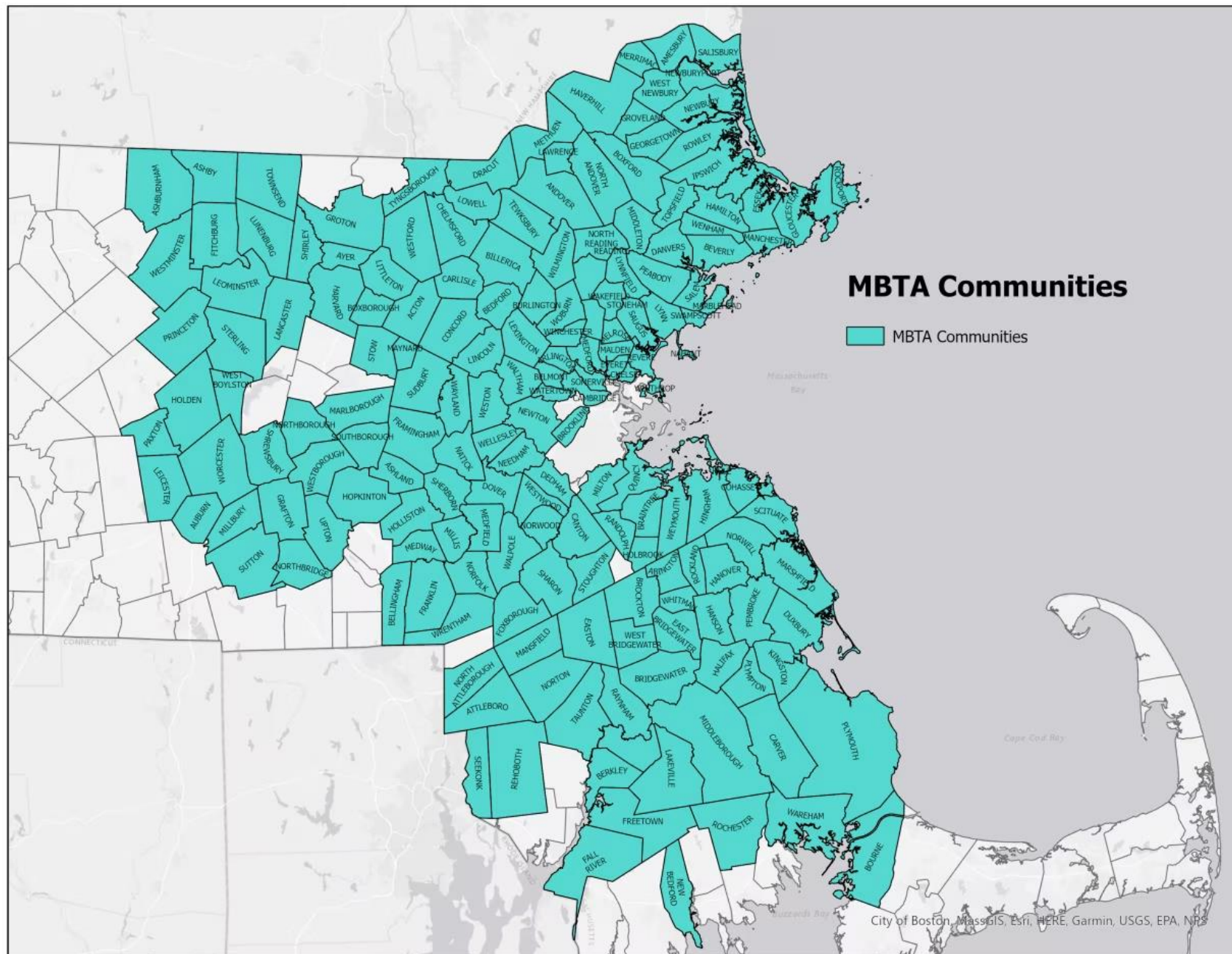
# **MBTA Multi-Family Zoning Information Session**

**March 6, 2024, 7:00 PM**  
**Public Hall at Town Hall**



In January of 2021 the Legislature enacted “Housing Choice” including Section 3A of MGL c. 40A.

This established the requirement that “MBTA Communities” create a zoning district in which multi-family housing is permitted by right.

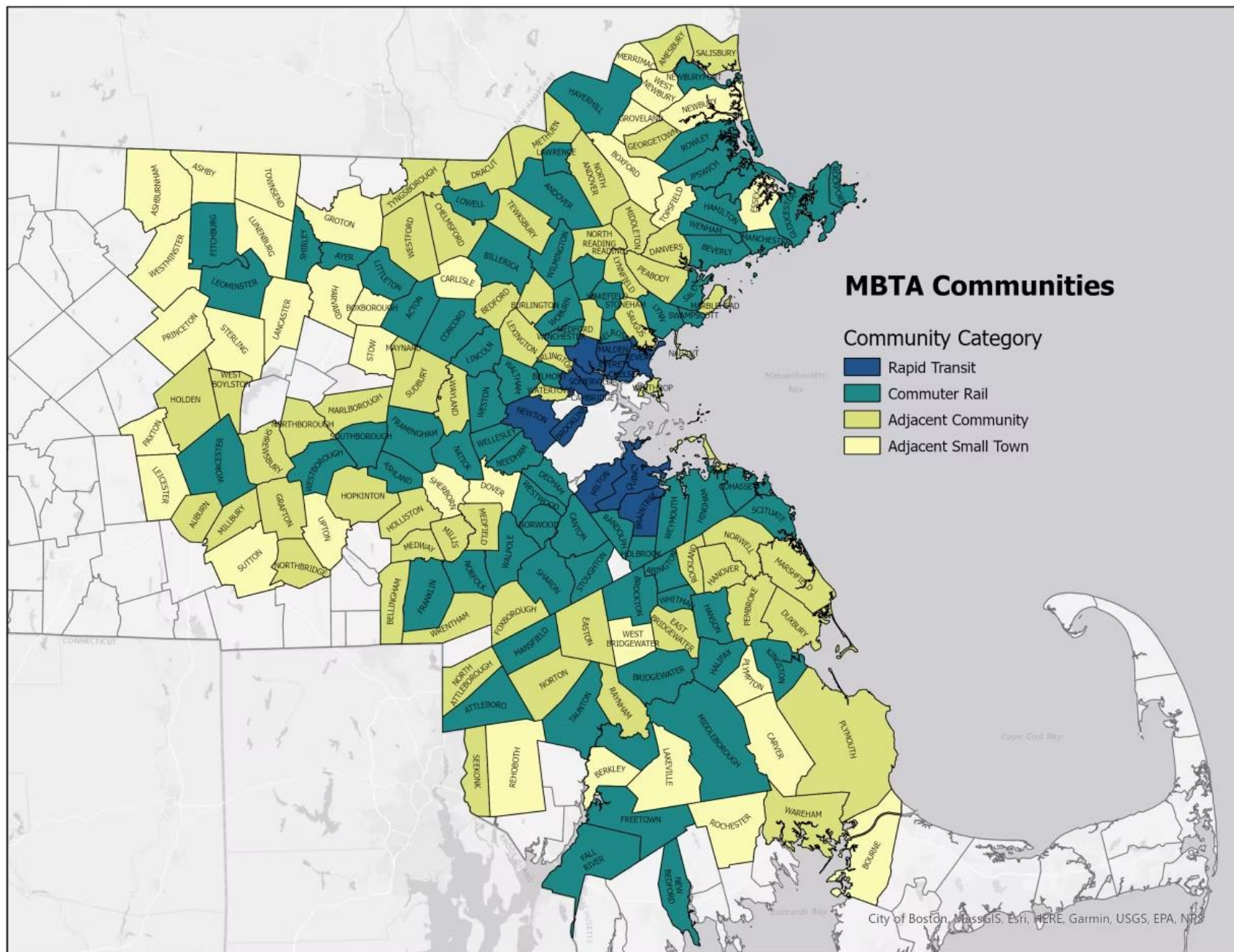




The first guidelines were revised after many communities protested the magnitude of the required number of units.

For example, Topsfield was initially required to accommodate 750 new units, but that was reduced to 118.

There are now different categories of MBTA communities, and each category has its own obligations.



## MBTA Communities

### Community Category

- Rapid Transit
- Commuter Rail
- Adjacent Community
- Adjacent Small Town

# What does this mean for Topsfield?

- Topsfield is an adjacent small town.
- We must create an MBTA Multi-family zoning overlay district in which multi-family, non-age-restricted housing is allowed by right though Site Plan Review is allowed.
- Topsfield's district must accommodate 118 units.
- A minimum “gross density” of 15 units per acre is required, subject to Title V Septic System regulations and the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.

# Result of Non Compliance

A town/city would not be eligible for the following grant programs from which we have received \$927,000 in the past and to which we might apply in the future:

- Housing Choice Initiative
- Local Capital Projects Fund
- MassWorks Infrastructure Program
- Community Planning Grants
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- Urban Agenda FY22 - \$ 100,000.00
- Rural and Small Town Development Fund FY22 - \$ 400,000.00
- Brownfields Redevelopment Fund
- Site Readiness Program
- Underutilized Properties Program
- Collaborative Workspace Program
- Real Estate Services Technical Assistance
- Commonwealth Places Programs
- Land Use Planning Grants
- Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity FY19 - \$ 400,000.00
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)
- Planning and Project Grants FY20 - \$ 27,000.00

# What is not required

- No housing has to be built.
- Property owners do not have to sell their property.
- Existing zoning in the underlying district still applies.



# Topsfield's proposed MBTA district

15.8 acres:

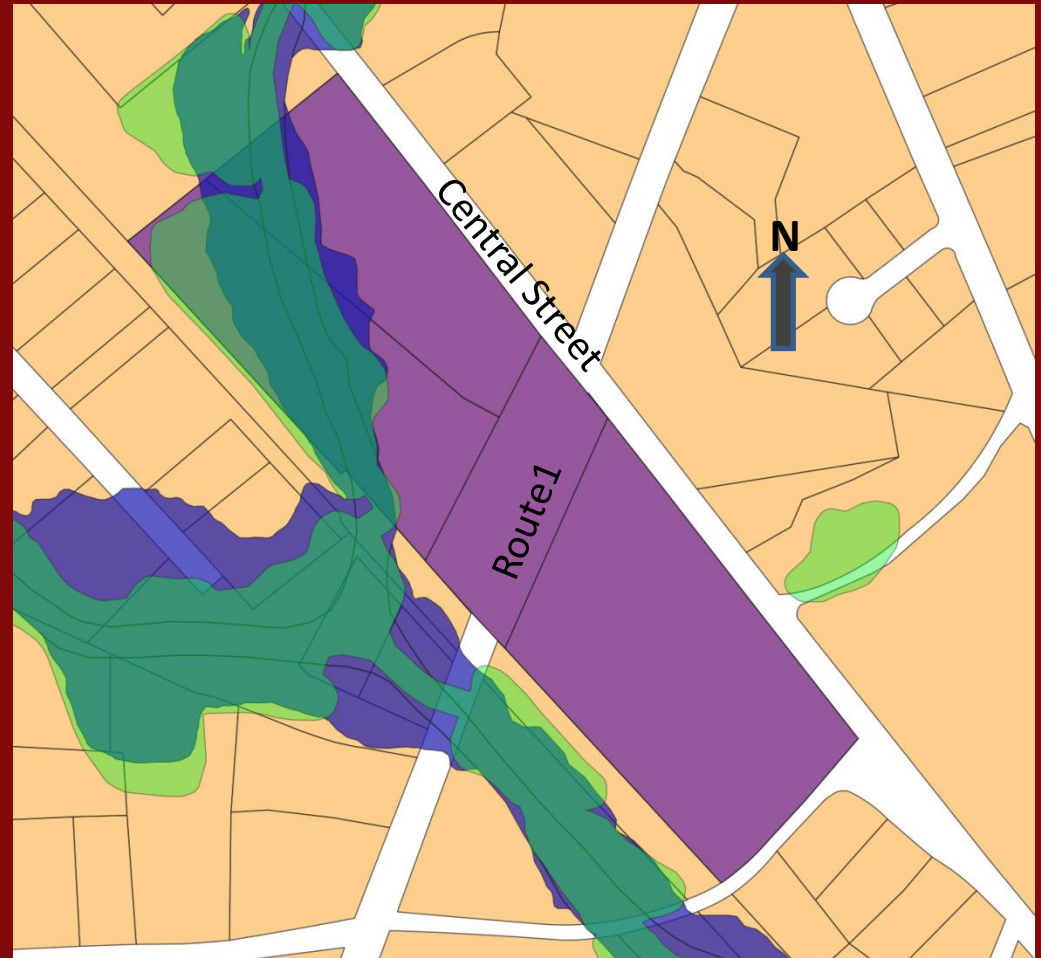
Intersection of  
Central St. and Rt 1

Lots:

230 Boston St. - west of Rt 1

236 Boston St. -west of Rt 1

233 Boston St. -east of Rt 1



Wetland

Floodplain

Existing Conditions in the  
proposed district













# Multi-family housing definition

A building with 3 or more residential units, or 2 or more buildings on the same lot with more than 1 dwelling unit in each building.

Three Family Home Plan rendering from *Family Homes Plans*.



# Three Story Apartment Buildings

*From Architectural Designs House Plans*





# Examples of Multi-family housing from other communities





# Examples in Topsfield of the kinds of buildings which could be expected



A commercial building with the height and mass to be allowed for housing.

# Multi-Family Structures in Topsfield







Amberwood





Little Brook Village



# Opportunities for Topsfield

- Diversify our housing stock
- Improve the appearance of Route 1 in the Business Highway District

# What is necessary for change

- Pass the bylaw at the 2024 ATM
- Developers would need to be interested.
- Property owners would need to be willing to sell or develop their land.