



# Concord MBTA Communities Public Discussion

**Zoning Scenarios**  
**September 20, 2023**

PLEASE BOARD AND TRAVEL  
AT THE HIGH LEVEL  
PLATFORM OR  
DESIGNATED LOCATIONS  
→

**CAUTION**  
STAY BACK OF YELLOW  
LINE UNTIL THE TRAIN COMES  
TO A COMPLETE STOP  
THANK YOU

# Agenda

- **Presentation**
  - MBTA Communities Refresher
  - Results of public survey
  - Initial Zoning Scenarios
- **Full group discussion**



Concord Greene



Wedgewood Common

# Sec. 3A of MGL c. 40A – Reminder . . .

MBTA Communities must have at least one zoning district in which multi-family housing is permitted by right (*which can include Site Plan Review*) and . . .

- Minimum gross density of 15 units per acre (*average across the district(s)*)
- Located not more than 0.5 miles from a transit station, if applicable
- No age restrictions and suitable for families with children, i.e. no bedroom or occupancy caps
- Parity with other uses – multi-family housing cannot be required to meet higher standards than other permitted uses

# Requirements for Concord

## Commuter Rail Community

- Deadline: December 31st, 2024
- Minimum Land Area: 50 acres
- Developable Station Area: 519 acres
- Minimum Multifamily Unit Capacity: 1,094 (15% of Concord's 2020 housing stock)
- % of District and unit capacity to be located in Station Area (1/2 mile radius around the stations): 50%

# Affordable Housing

The guidelines limit the amount of affordable housing that can be required

- No more than 10% of units can be affordable
- Targeted to no less than 80% area median incomes (AMI)
- **But!** Can be increased up to 20% in conjunction with a 40R district
- **Or** by conducting an Economic Feasibility Analysis (*which the Town plans to do*)

*Note: We looked at the areas identified in Concord's Housing Production Plan. Some are under consideration for the MBTA Communities district, others are not. The Town may wish to reserve these parcels for deeper affordability.*

# Reminder: Our Process

**HW is helping Concord test zoning scenarios for compliance**

**Step 1:** Determine district boundaries. Where might multi-family residential be appropriate? *Focus on the areas ½ mile around the two MBTA stations, but 50% can be elsewhere.*

**Step 2:** Determine dimensional requirements. *How tall should buildings be in this district? What setbacks? What density?*

**Step 3:** Ensure zoning policy for the district complies with the law (*affordable housing, limits on family-sized units, etc.*).

**Step 4:** Enter this data into the Compliance Model and “test” different iterations. *We’re going to look at some “tests” today!*

# Online Survey Overview

- **Duration:** Jul 26 – Sept 4
- **Participants:** 423
- **Advertised:**
  - Postcards
  - Planning Division website
  - Concord Bridge
  - Town social media
  - Community workshops
  - Connection hours, and more!



# Online Survey Results

- **~53%** agreed/strongly agreed  
Located as much as possible within ½ mile of an MBTA station
- **~52%** agreed/strongly agreed  
Located where multi-family housing exists today
- **~48%** agreed/strongly agreed  
Located approximately evenly between West Concord and Concord Center

# Online Survey Results

- ~56% said Yes
  - Incentives should be allowed in the MBTA Communities district/s to get things other than what's allowed by right
  - ~45% adding public green space, public realm improvements, or similar amenities for a reduction in parking requirements should be an incentive
  - ~37% adding mixed use/first floor commercial for a higher allowable height should be an incentive
- ~ 41% I do not believe we should provide incentives to developers

# Online Survey Results

## Maximum building height preferences:

- ~27% preference to maintain current building height
- ~30% preference to align with height of adjacent structures
- ~3% preference of 1 story
- ~18% preference of 2 stories
- ~25% preference of 3 stories
- ~16% preference of more than 3 stories

*Since the current height limit in all residential districts is 3 stories, most respondents were comfortable with 3 stories maximum.*

# Online Survey Results

Specific sites/parcels respondents thought might be appropriate for multi-family housing by right...

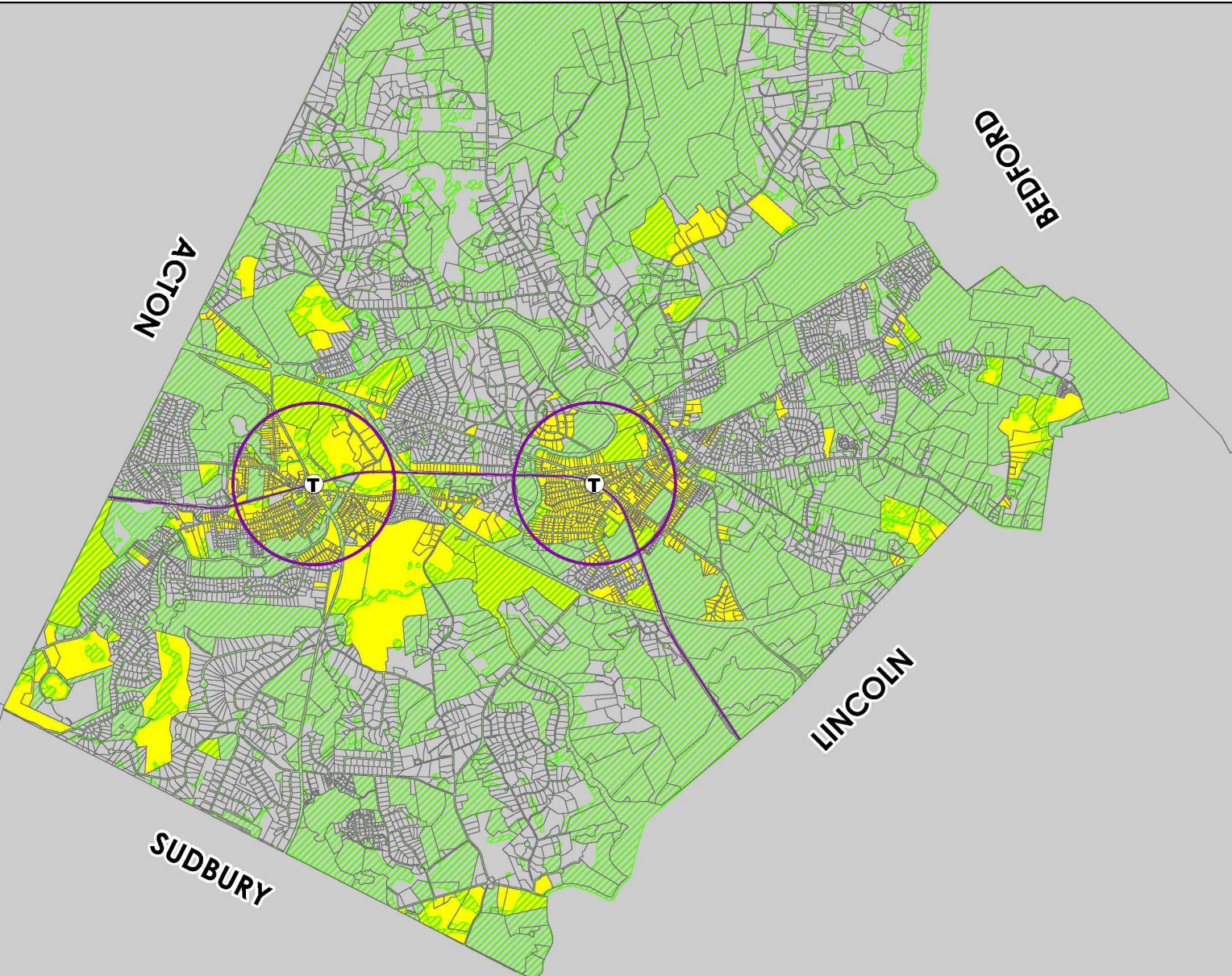
- **122** individuals provided written suggestions in the online survey
- **6,743** “pins” dropped on the interactive map
- High level of support for locations within ½ mile radius of the two MBTA station areas
- Some support for locations immediately outside of ½ mile radius (*e.g., parcels on Elm Street near the Rt 2 rotary and on Lowell Road leading into Concord Center*)

# Potential Locations



## Based on what we heard from the public...

- The next slide shows a map of **all the potential parcels** under consideration to include in the MBTA Communities district.
- We expect **some iteration** of these parcels to be included (not all of them).
- These parcels . . .
  - Focus on locations **within ½ mile radius** of the two MBTA station areas
  - Explore areas **outside the ½ mile radii** with existing multi-family housing or that the public otherwise identified in the survey.
  - Consider areas where the Town may want to provide **incentives for ground-floor commercial/mixed-use.**

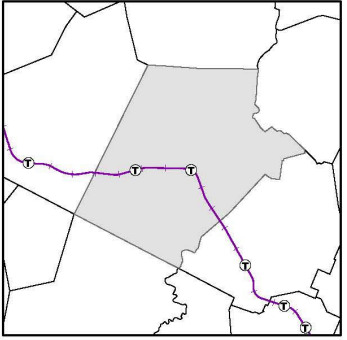
# Locations “pinned” in the survey









**Concord MBTA  
All Identified Parcels**




Date: 9/19/23  
Source: MassGIS, Town of Concord  
Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.



**LEGEND**

-  MBTA Station
-  Transit Station Area (1/2 Mile)
-  Commuter Rail Line
-  Parcels
-  State Recognized Excluded Land
-  Identified Parcels

N



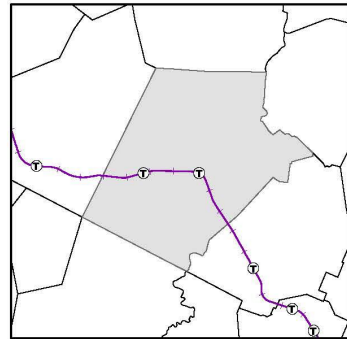
0 0.15 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Miles

# Potential Locations

## Concord MBTA Identified Parcels with Consideration for Survey Criteria

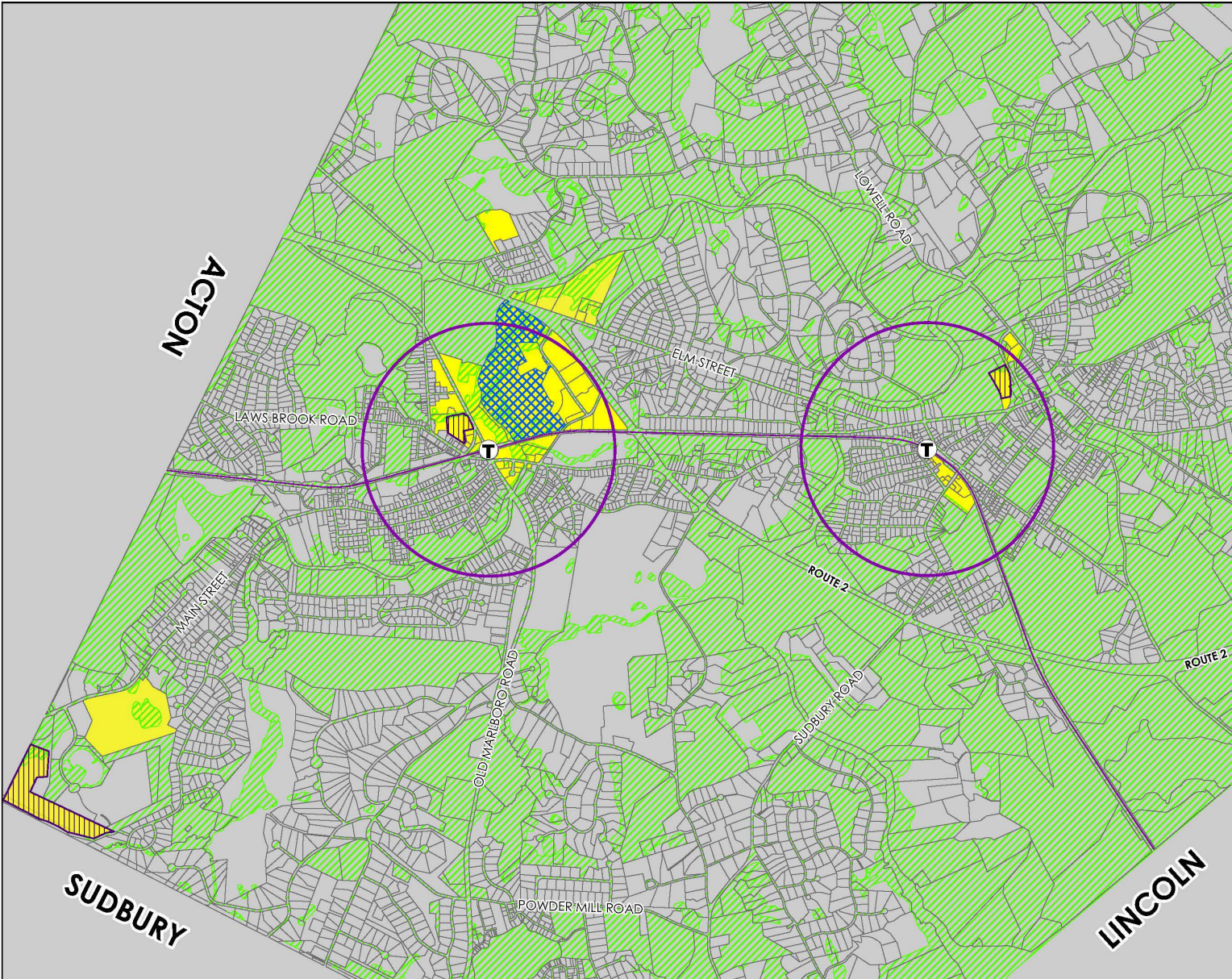
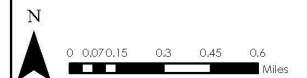


Date: 9/19/23  
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Concord  
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.



### LEGEND

- MBTA Station
- Transit Station Area (1/2 Mile)
- Commuter Rail Line
- Parcels
- Identified Parcels
- State Recognized Excluded Land
- Parcels with Active Proposals for Multi-Family Housing
- Parcels with Existing Multi-Family Housing

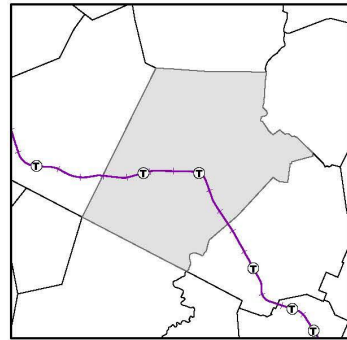


# Scenario 1

## Concord MBTA Iteration 1 - DRAFT

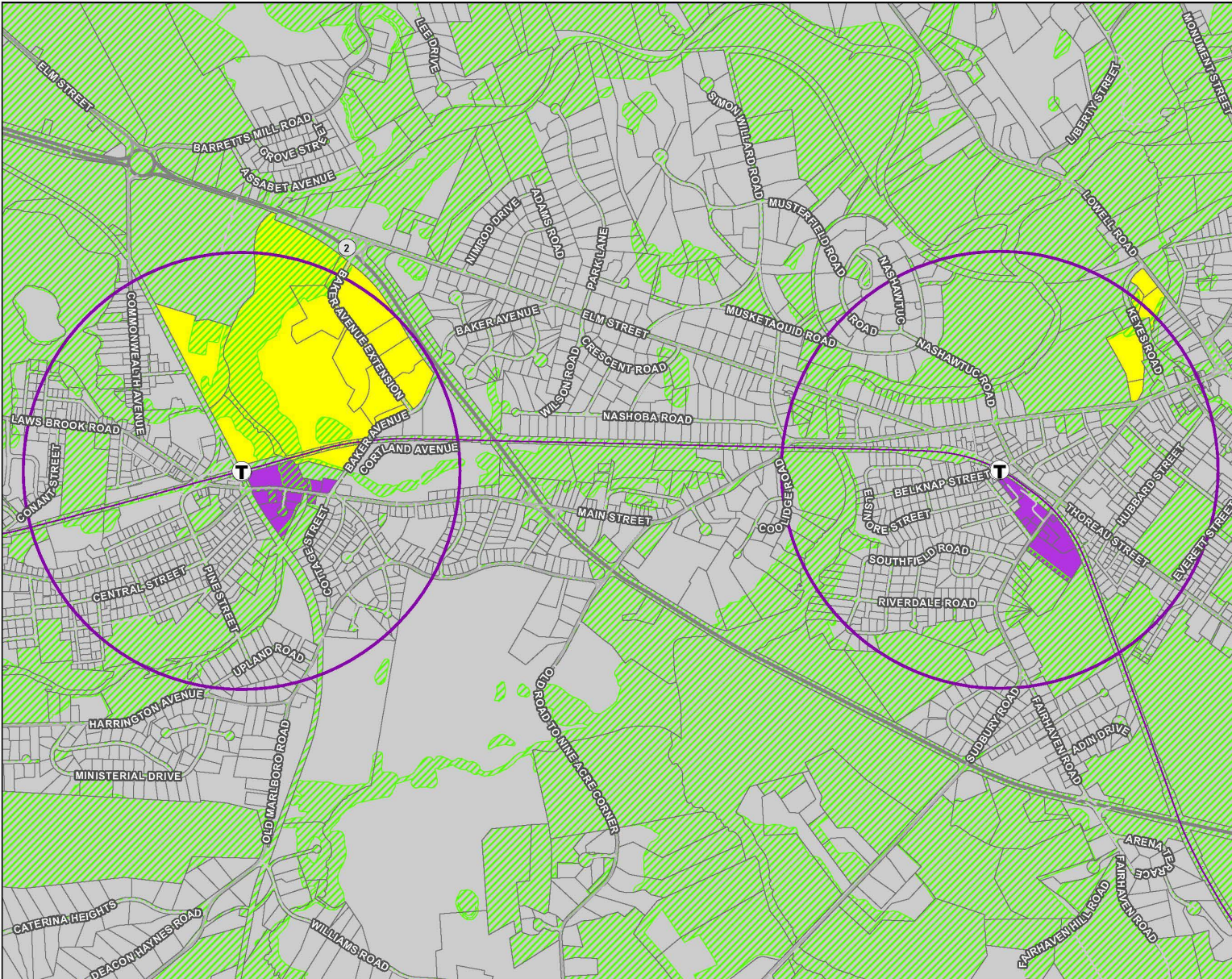
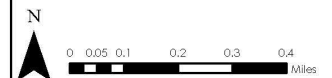


Date: 9/19/23  
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Concord  
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.



### LEGEND

- MBTA Station
- Transit Station Area (1/2 Mile)
- Commuter Rail Line
- Parcels
- State Recognized Excluded Land
- Proposed Multi-Family District
- Proposed Multi-Family District with Mixed Use Incentivized District



# Scenario 1 Assumptions

## West Concord (yellow parcels)

Minimum Lot Area: **20,000 SF**

Maximum Lot Coverage: **40%**

Maximum Building Height: **3 stories**

Maximum residential density: **15 dwellings/acre**

Minimum Open Space: **20%**

Minimum Parking: **2 per dwelling unit**

Minimum Front Yard Setback: **20 feet**

Minimum Side Yard Setback: **15 feet**

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: **20 feet**

# Scenario 1 Assumptions

## Concord Center (yellow parcels)

Minimum Lot Area: **20,000 SF**

Maximum Lot Coverage: **40%**

Maximum Building Height: **3 stories**

Maximum residential density: **10 dwellings/acre**

Minimum Open Space: **None**

Minimum Parking: **2 per dwelling unit**

Minimum Front Yard Setback: **10 feet**

Minimum Side Yard Setback: **15 feet**

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: **15 feet**

# Scenario 1 Assumptions

## West Concord & Concord Center Mixed-Use Incentive (purple parcels – currently zoned West Concord Business and Thoreau Depot)

Minimum Lot Area: **None – per existing zoning**

Maximum Lot Coverage: **None – per existing zoning**

Maximum Building Height: **1 story (by right)**

Maximum residential density: **10 dwellings/acre**

Minimum Open Space: **None**

Minimum Parking: **2 per dwelling unit**

Minimum Front Yard Setback: **0-10 feet – reflects range of existing zoning**

Minimum Side and Rear Yard Setback: **0 feet – per existing zoning**

# Scenario 1 Testing the Model

## West Concord (yellow parcels)

District Area: **131.2 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **1,883 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **22.5** (15 average required)

## West Concord Mixed-Use Incentive (purple parcels)

District Area: **10.9 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **80 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **9.6** (15 average required)

# Scenario 1 Testing the Model

## Concord Center (yellow parcels)

District Area: **9.6 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **94 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **11.5** (15 average required)

## Concord Center Mixed-Use Incentive (purple parcels)

District Area: **10.9 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **91 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **8.4** (15 average required)

# Scenario 1 Testing the Model

## Total: All 4 Areas Combined

District Area: **162.6 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **2,148 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **19.4** (15 average required)

Land within the station area: **91%** (50% required)

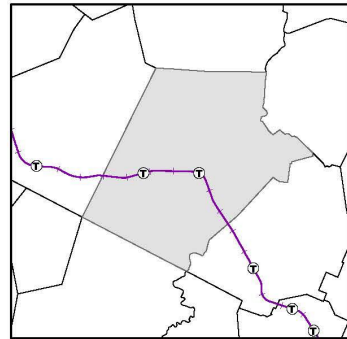
Unit capacity within the station area: **99%** (50% required)

# Scenario 2

## Concord MBTA Iteration 2 - DRAFT

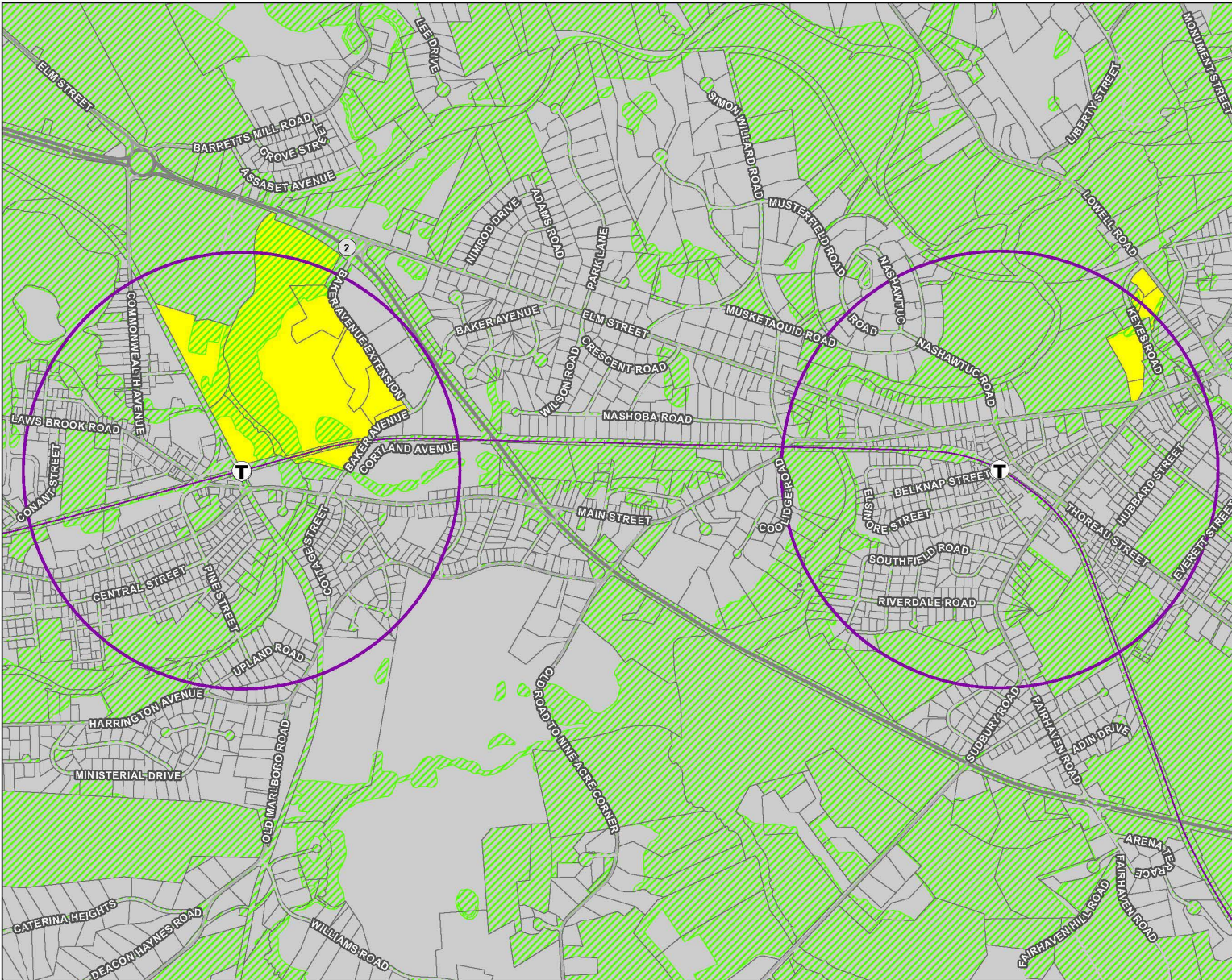
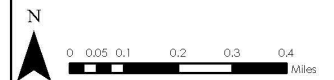


Date: 9/19/23  
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Concord  
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.



### LEGEND

- MBTA Station
- Transit Station Area (1/2 Mile)
- Commuter Rail Line
- Parcels
- State Recognized Excluded Land
- Proposed Multi-Family District



# Scenario 2 Assumptions

## West Concord – Same Assumptions as Scenario 1

Minimum Lot Area: **20,000 SF**

Maximum Lot Coverage: **40%**

Maximum Building Height: **3 stories**

Maximum residential density: **15 dwellings/acre**

Minimum Open Space: **20%**

Minimum Parking: **2 per dwelling unit**

Minimum Front Yard Setback: **20 feet**

Minimum Side Yard Setback: **15 feet**

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: **20 feet**

# Scenario 2 Assumptions

## Concord Center - Same Assumptions as Scenario 1

Minimum Lot Area: **20,000 SF**

Maximum Lot Coverage: **40%**

Maximum Building Height: **3 stories**

Maximum residential density: **10 dwellings/acre**

Minimum Open Space: **None**

Minimum Parking: **2 per dwelling unit**

Minimum Front Yard Setback: **10 feet**

Minimum Side Yard Setback: **15 feet**

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: **15 feet**

# Scenario 2 Testing the Model

## West Concord

District Area: **109.3 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **1,593 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **25.2** (15 average required)

## Concord Center

District Area: **9.6 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **94 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **11.5** (15 average required)

# Scenario 2 Testing the Model

## Total: Both Areas Combined

District Area: **118.9 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **1,687 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **23.7** (15 average required)

Land within the station area: **90%** (50% required)

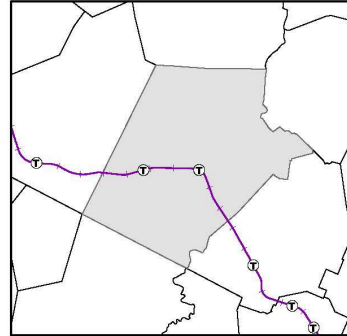
Unit capacity within the station area: **99%** (50% required)

# Scenario 3

## Concord MBTA Iteration 3 - DRAFT



Date: 9/19/23  
 Source: MassGIS, Town of Concord  
 Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.



### LEGEND

- MBTA Station
- Transit Station Area (1/2 Mile)
- Commuter Rail Line
- Parcels
- State Recognized Excluded Land
- Proposed Multi-Family District



# Scenario 3 Assumptions

West Concord – Same Assumptions as Scenario 1

Concord Center – Same Assumptions as Scenario 1

# Scenario 3 Assumptions

## All Areas Outside the ½ Mile Radius (Same as West Concord)

Minimum Lot Area: **20,000 SF**

Maximum Lot Coverage: **40%**

Maximum Building Height: **3 stories**

Maximum residential density: **15 dwellings/acre**

Minimum Open Space: **20%**

Minimum Parking: **2 per dwelling unit**

Minimum Front Yard Setback: **20 feet**

Minimum Side Yard Setback: **15 feet**

Minimum Rear Yard Setback: **20 feet**

# Scenario 3 Testing the Model

## West Concord

District Area: **109.3 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **1,593 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **25.2** (15 average required)

## Concord Center

District Area: **9.6 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **94 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **11.5** (15 average required)

# Scenario 3 Testing the Model

## Elm Street

District Area: **34.1 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **457 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **30.3** (15 average required)

## 2229 Main/Nathan Pratt

District Area: **76.3 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **1,145 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **17.0** (15 average required)

## 874 Barretts Mill Road

District Area: **9.9 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **148 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **15.6** (15 average required)

# Scenario 3 Testing the Model

## Total: All Areas Combined

District Area: **239.2 acres** (50 acre minimum town-wide required)

Modeled Unit Capacity: **3,437 units** (1,094 units town-wide required)

Dwelling Units per Acre: **21.0** (15 average required)

Land within the station area: **45%** (50% required)

Unit capacity within the station area: **49%** (50% required)

# Mixed-Use Guidelines

## What if we used the new Mixed-Use Guidelines?

- Guidelines allow communities to use mixed-use zoning districts – separate from the MBTA Communities district – to offset required unit capacity by up to 25%.
- Could use West Concord Village, West Concord Business, and/or Thoreau Depot Business as mixed-use district(s).
- In theory, this could reduce the required unit capacity within the MBTA Communities district from 1,094 to as little as 821.

# Mixed-Use Guidelines

## However ...

- West Concord Village, West Concord Business, and/or Thoreau Depot Business would all need to be amended to meet the requirements for a mixed-use district.
  - Most notably, there can be ***no minimum parking requirement*** for non-residential uses.
- Per our calculations above, the Town has no shortage of options to hit its unit capacity target. There is not much benefit to the Town in using the Mixed-Use Guidelines.

*That said, this remains an option for the Town*

# Full Group Discussion

- What do you think about these scenarios? Do you have a preference?
- What option makes the most sense for Concord?
- What assumptions might you change or adjust?
- Are there any options you feel are missing?

# Next Steps

## *Preparation of Preferred Scenario*

Town staff and the consultant team will prepare a preferred scenario based on the feedback from tonight.

- Preferred scenario brought to Planning Board meetings for further discussion and decision on final zoning boundary.
- Planning Board works with Planning staff and Town Counsel to create draft zoning bylaw amendment
- Planning Board review of overlay districts with public input
  - September through December meetings: 9-26, 10-10, 10-24, 11-14, 11-28, 12-12
  - Each Multi-family housing overlay district as outlined in draft Zoning Overlay Map
  - Zoning elements— Dimensional requirements (density, setbacks, height restrictions)
  - Incentives to optimize open space and recreation, sustainability, economic vitality, transit use and walkability
  - Affordability options
- Continue to “test” the GIS model for compliance