

State of Zoning: Multi-family Housing

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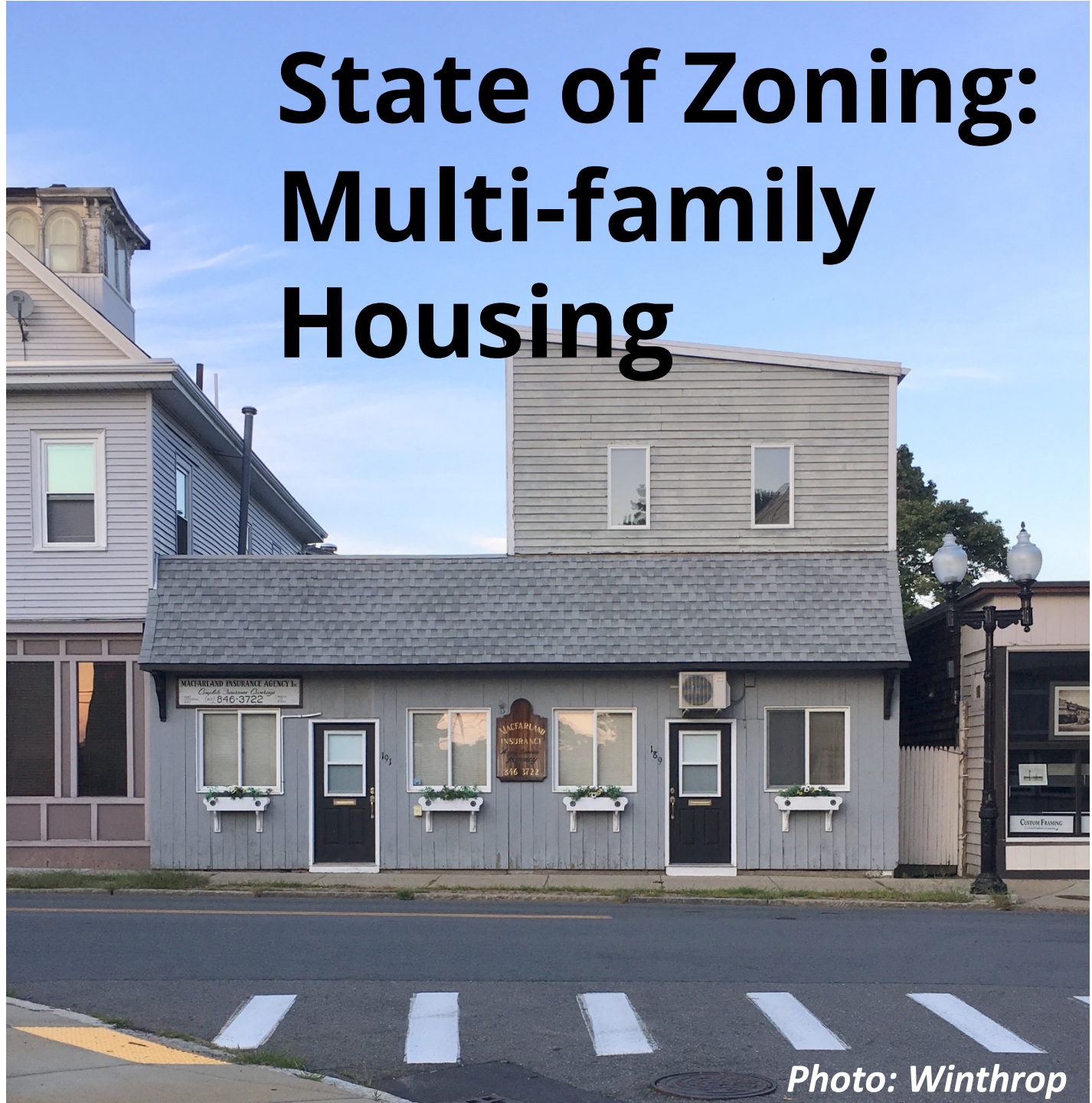
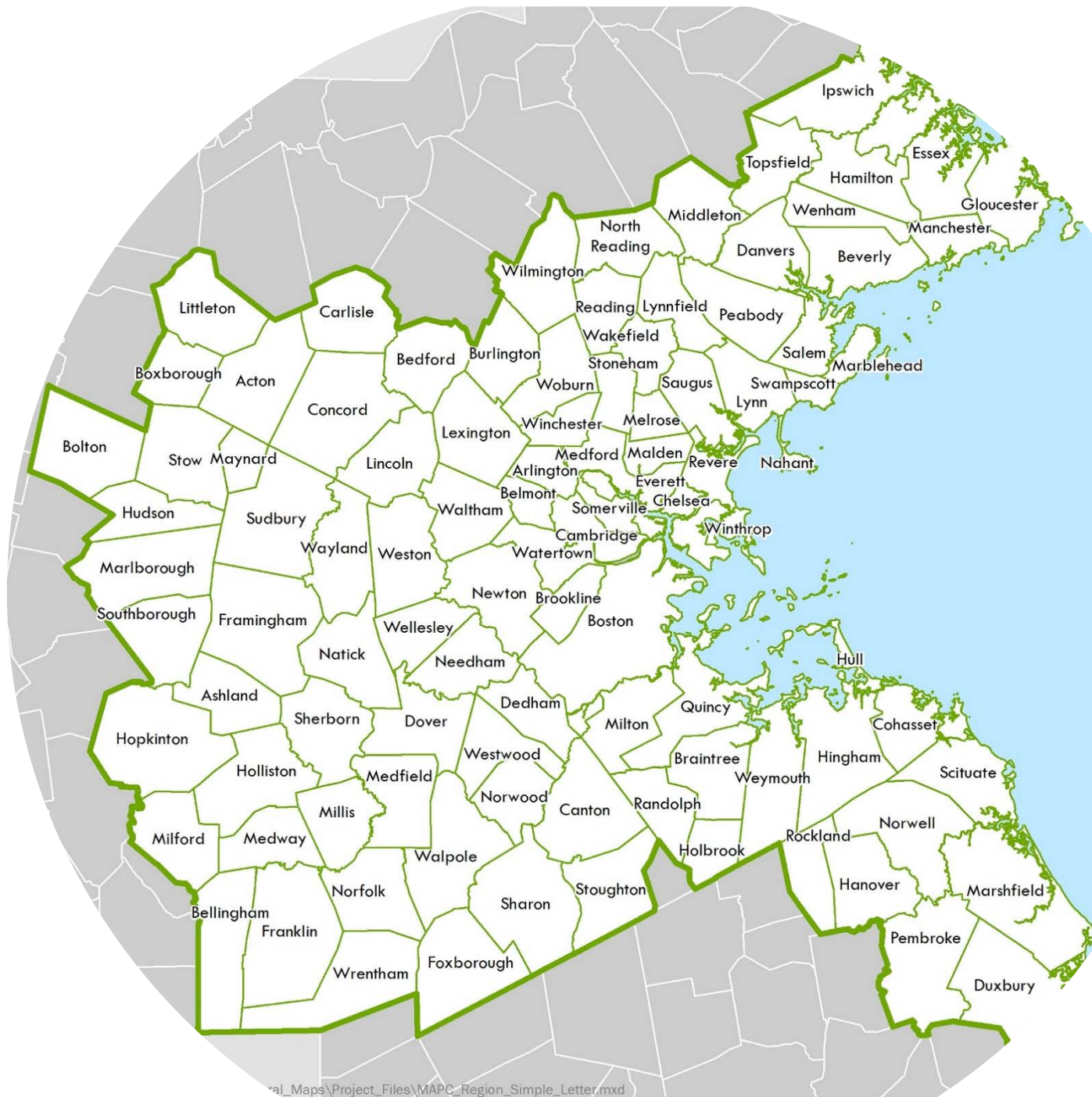


Photo: Winthrop

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- MassHousing
- Massachusetts Association of Realtors
- Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations
- Massachusetts Housing Partnership
- Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- NAIOP



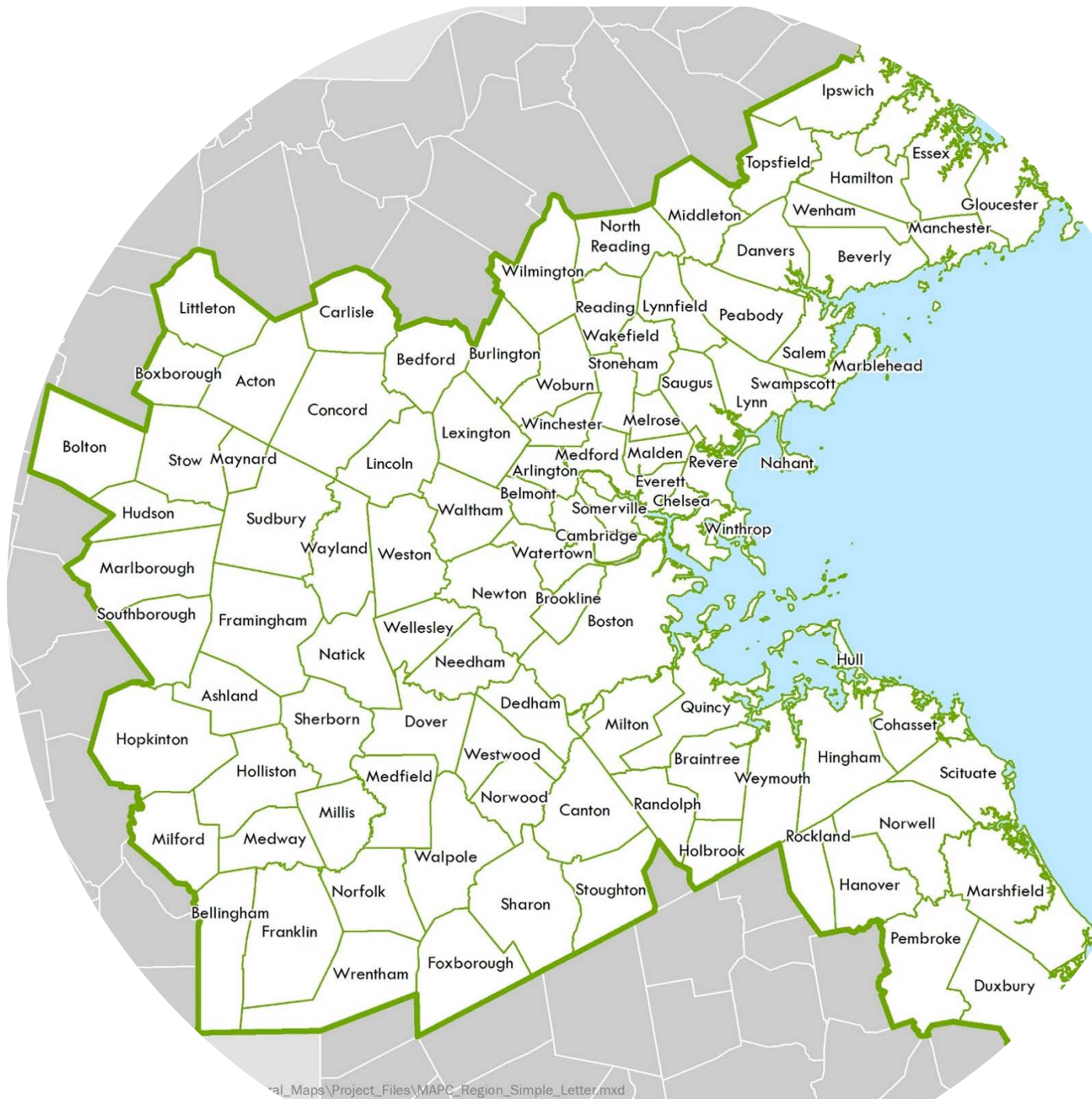


**Projected demand for
housing:
*Hundreds of thousands
of units***

**We do not have the
zoning in place to
meet demand for
housing.**



Somerville



What is our current plan for adding multi-family housing?

What should our plan be for more multi-family housing?

1

Very little land
is zoned for
multi-family
housing.





**In theory, land
area is not a
critical constraint.**





**Municipalities
highly restrict
density.**



Medfield



**Q: Is multi-family housing allowed
anywhere in the municipality?***

****Is there zoning on the books for it?***



1

Land Zoned

**Q: Is multi-family housing allowed
at a density of 4 units per acre?**

A: No

Bolton
Dover
Essex
Middleton
Nahant
Norwell



Dover

1

Land Zoned

A: No

Bellingham	Nahant
Bolton	Norfolk
Boxborough	Norwell
Carlisle	Pembroke
Dover	Sherborn
Duxbury	Southborough
Essex	Stow
Hanover	Topsfield
Holbrook	Wenham
Medfield	Weston
Middleton	

Q: Is multi-family housing allowed at a density of 12 units per acre?





Southborough's zoning
for **multi-family**
housing for the elderly



“No development shall exceed ...
three units per contiguous acre ... and
six bedrooms per contiguous acre...”

1

Land Zone



1

Land Zoned

Gloucester's 2017 Housing Production Plan explains:

“The zoning ordinance appears to encourage multi-family projects in the higher density residential zoning districts, the majority of which are located in the downtown area. [...] **The dimensional requirements, however,** are not consistent with historic multi-family development patterns within these districts and **do not support future development.**” *[emphasis added]*



2

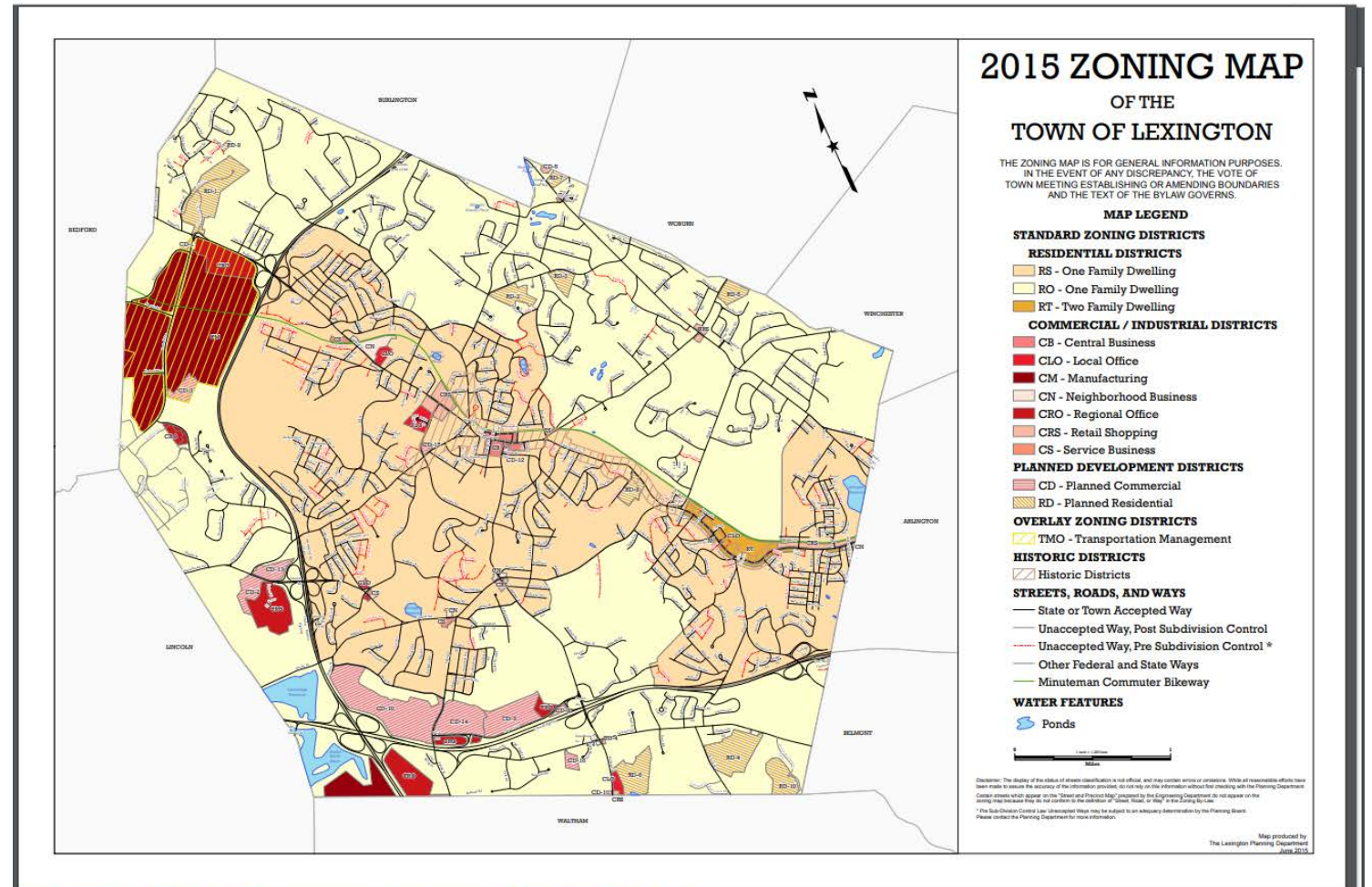
**We are moving to
a system of
project-by-project
decision-making.**



2

Approval
Process

Away from mapped
districts for multi-
family housing



2

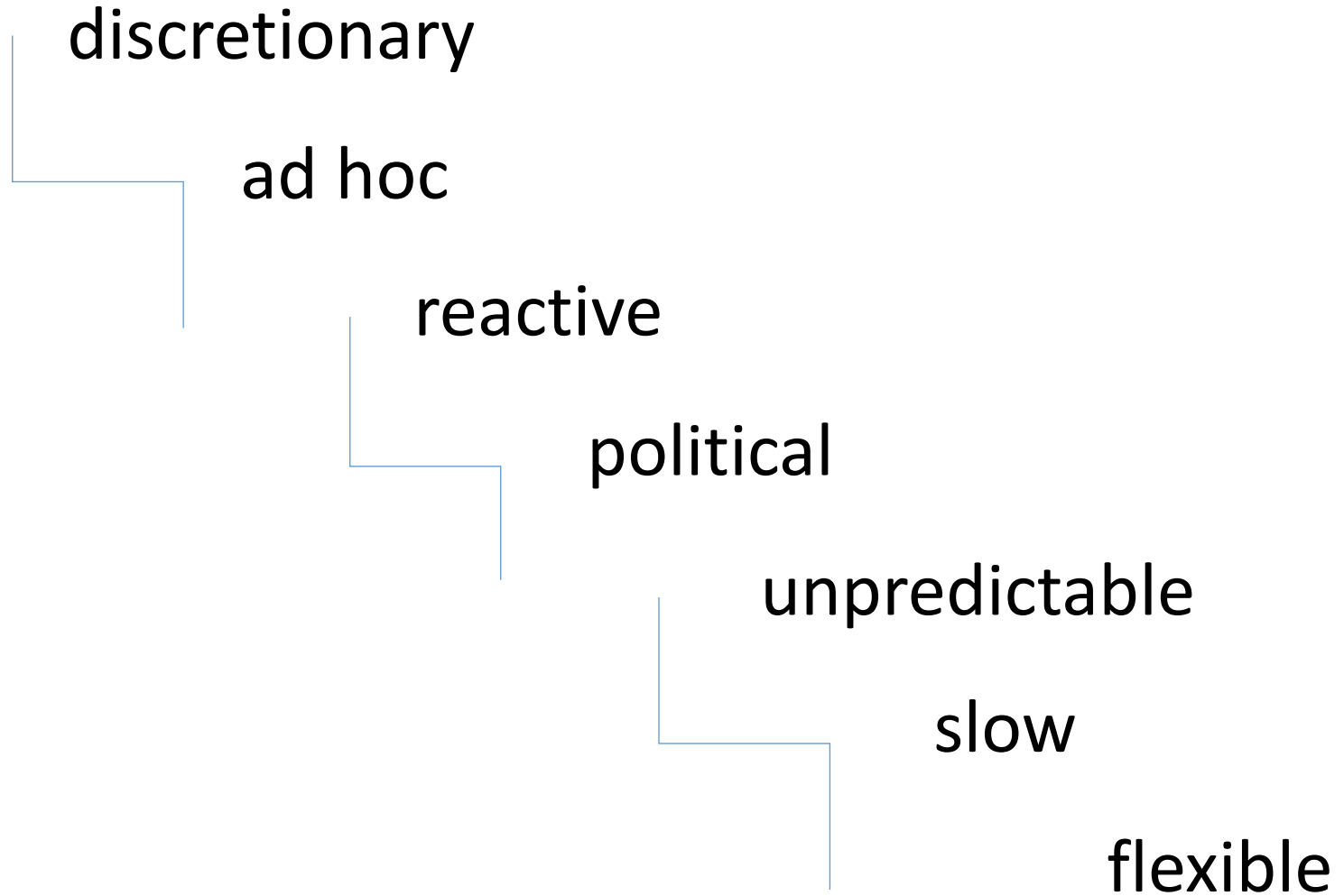
Approval
Process



Survivor of Two
Town Meetings



Lexington





The current system is
problematic for...

Planning infrastructure
and services

Reducing the high cost
of building

Addressing an urgent
housing crisis

3

The most widespread trend in zoning for multi-family housing has been to adopt *mixed use zoning*.



3

Mixed
Use





83



3

Mixed
Use

**Housing is also going
up in new lifestyle
shopping centers.**



3

Mixed
Use



Watertown

4

Municipalities are allowing incremental development in historic centers; and more on the municipal peripheries.



**Bedford's center:
7 units**

**Bedford's edge:
188 units**



4

Centers/
Edges

Where to put multi-family housing?

Residential areas?

City/town/village centers?

Commercial corridors?

Office parks?

Industrial districts?

4

Centers/
Edges

Interpretation of local
plans, in aggregate:
**Where to put
multi-family housing?**

Residential areas?

No, but maybe with *extreme* caution, someday

City/town/village centers?

Let's do this, carefully

Commercial corridors?

Maybe yes, but it's hard to do well

Office parks?

Hmm, perhaps

Industrial districts?

Yes, we're on it!

4

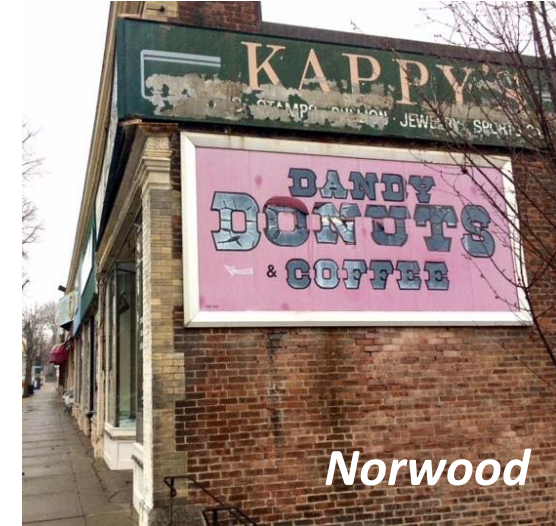
Centers/
Edges



Beverly



Beverly



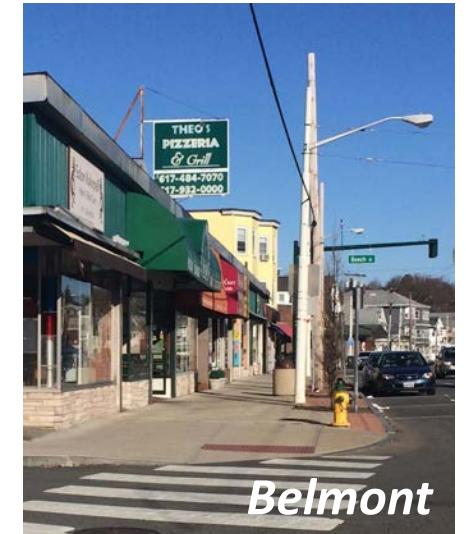
Norwood



Walpole



Woburn



Belmont

4

Centers/
Edges

NEEDHAM



4

Centers/
Edges

Ten dwelling units: Needham Center



4

Centers/
Edges

NEEDHAM

Age-restricted,
special permit

52

390

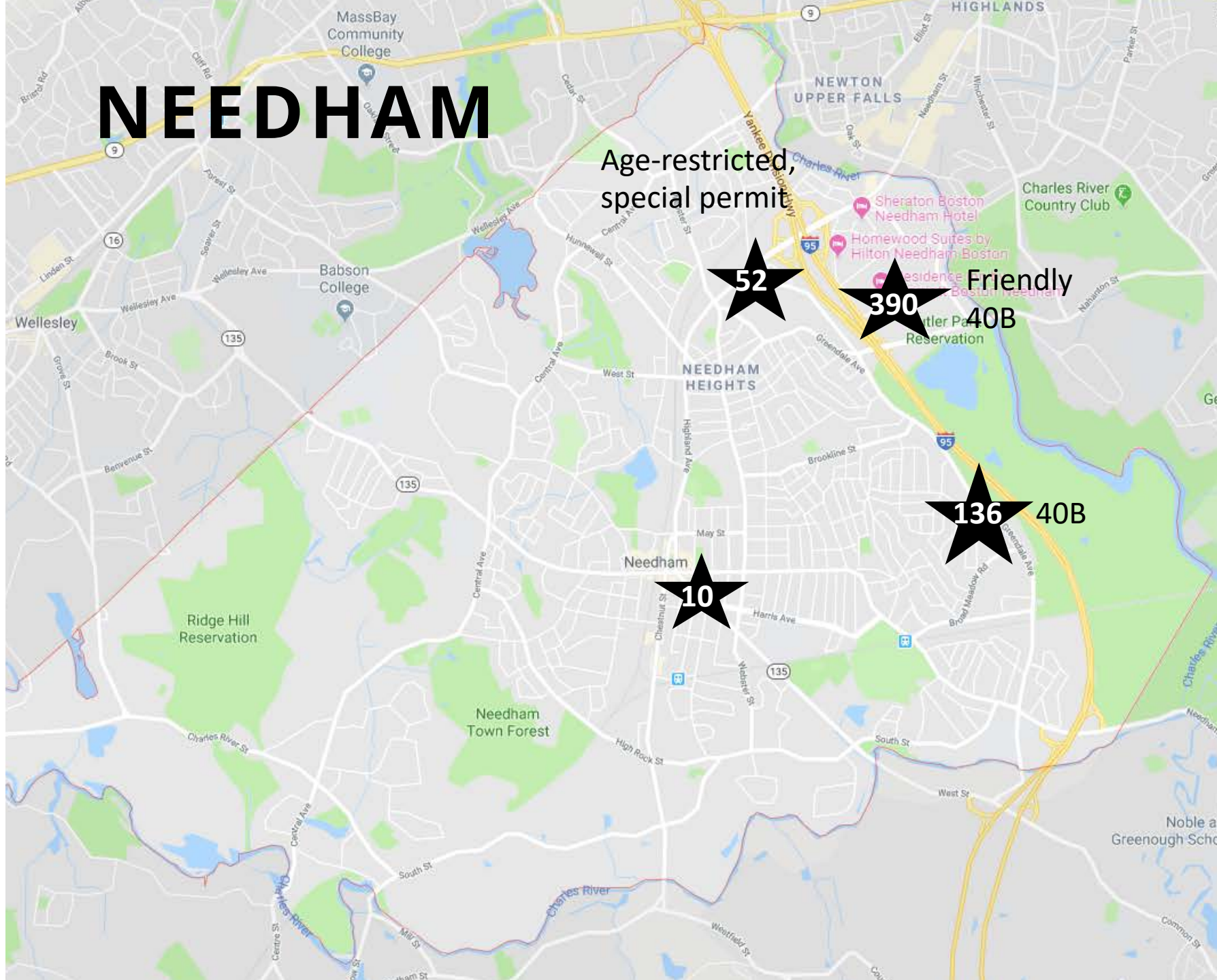
Friendly

40B

136

40B

10





Edge City

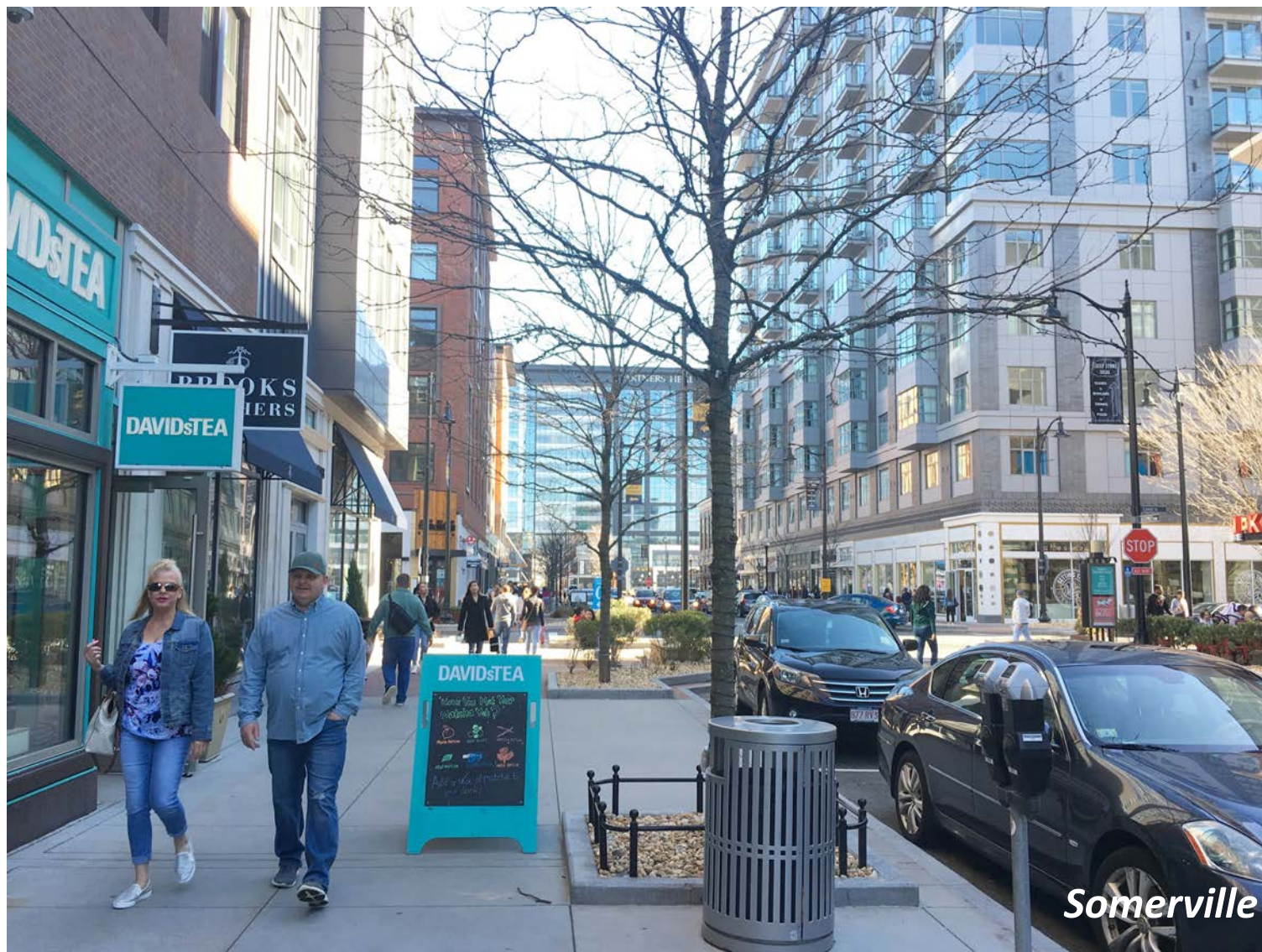


Waltham

4

Centers/
Edges

Edges





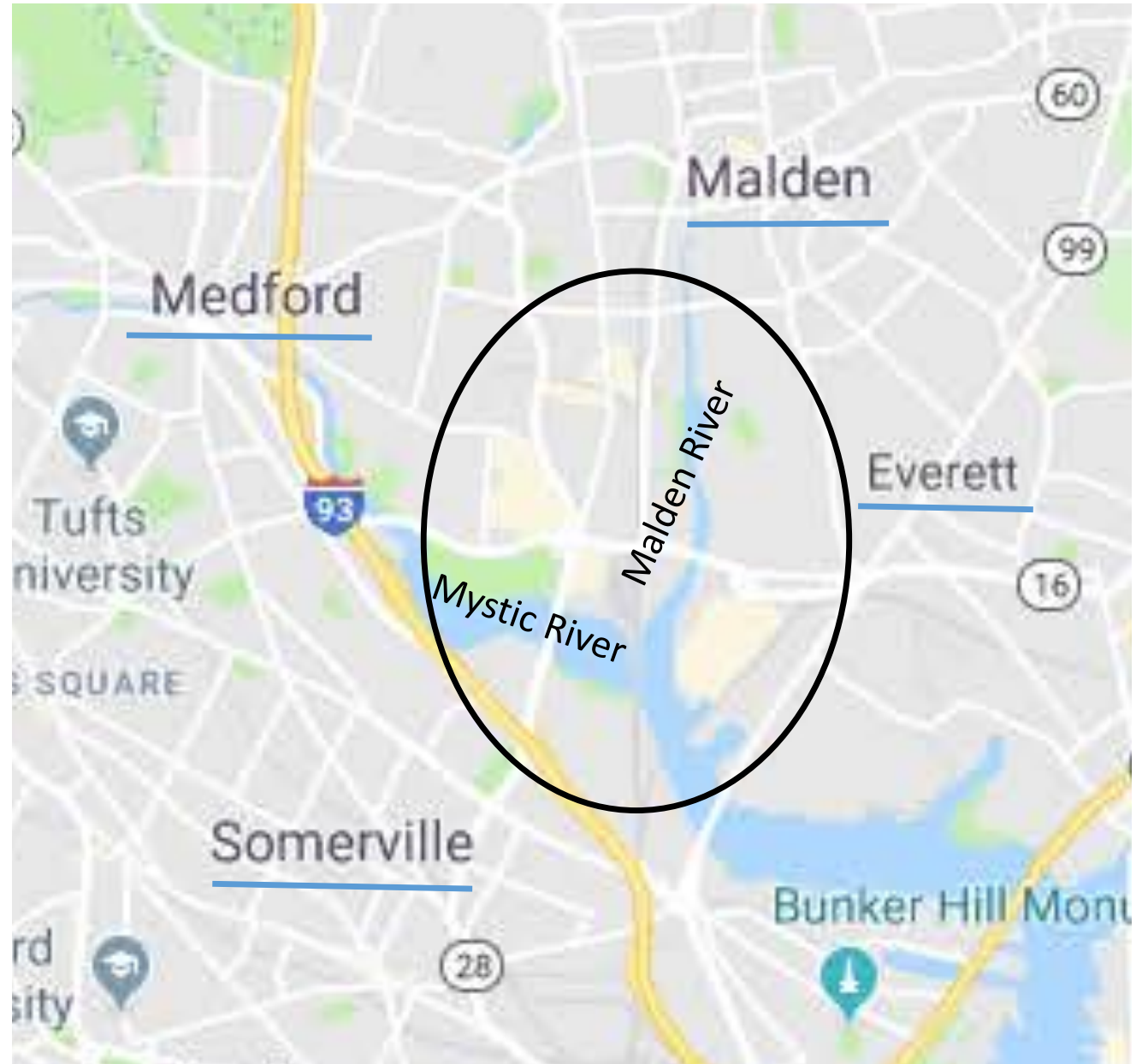
Edges



4

Centers/
Edges

- ~3,000 new dwelling units
- Partners Healthcare Headquarters
- Puma Headquarters
- Office for Amazon Alexa
- Encore
- Retail



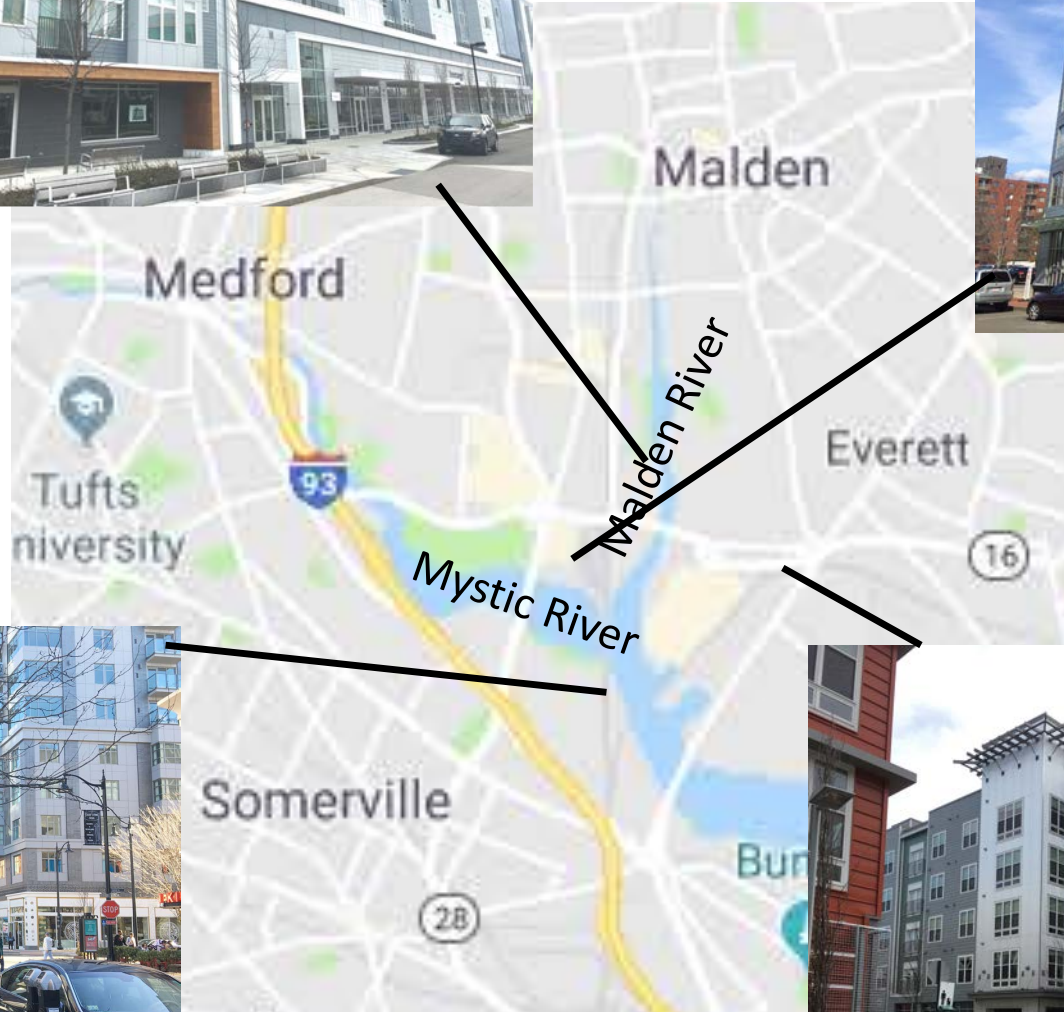
4
Centers/
Edges



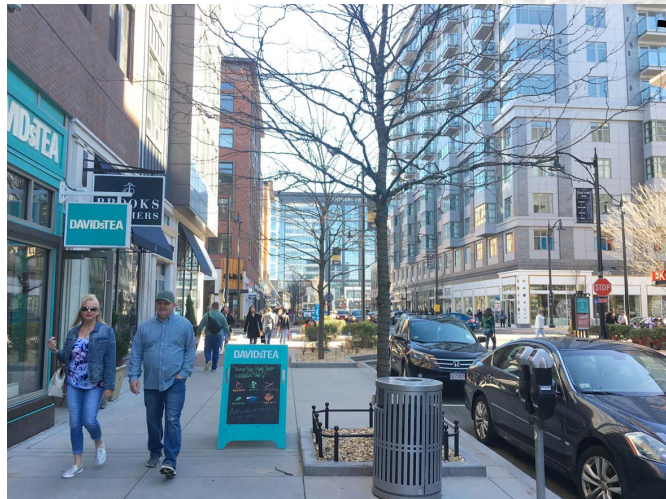
Medford's River's Edge:
Between river and tracks



Medford's Station Landing:
Between highways, tracks,
and river



**Somerville's
Assembly Row:**
Between 93, river,
and tracks



Everett's Batch Yard:
Between Broadway
and tracks and casino



At the Mystic and Malden Rivers, and Route 128, and other edges, do we:

**Isolate each new
project**

OR

**Make places where
you can**

- Walk from site to site
- Take a...
 - bike
 - train
 - boat
 - bus
 - Uber
 - your own car



Four Fab Findings:

- 1 Zone more land for multi-family housing, [up and out](#)
- 2 Reform [approval process](#), for flexibility and predictability
- 3 Allow multi-family housing next to [mixed use](#) hubs
- 4 Allow more housing in [centers](#) (and near transit), and plan connected growth nodes on the [edges](#)

Peabody





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