

# Combining Section 3A Compliance with Neighborhood Planning: South Acton Vision & Action Plan

The South Acton Vision & Action Plan is an effort to establish a community vision for South Acton Village and make zoning and design recommendations that can best achieve the vision. Led by the Town of Acton and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), this work continues the establishment of key center plans as recommended in the Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan.

Because this project coincides with new regulations from the State of Massachusetts about how communities with MBTA stations zone for multifamily housing, the South Acton Vision & Action Plan also looks at how Acton can comply with Section 3A within the context of the community's vision. The MBTA Commuter Rail Station is located in South Acton Village.

This project is funded through the Commonwealth's Community One Stop for Growth and MAPC's District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Grant Programs.

## Proposed Concept for Section 3A Compliance

The proposal for Acton includes the adoption of two overlay zoning districts that would comply with Section 3A:

- **MBTA Communities Overlay District 1:** Would allow for smaller-scale multifamily homes at a scale of 10 units per acre primarily within the 1/2-mile radius of the South Acton train station. This district would also allow mixed-use along Main Street, allowing for a mixed-use connection between South Acton Village and Kelley's Corner.
- **MBTA Communities Overlay District 2:** Would allow for larger-scale multifamily development at a scale of 25 units per acre on two larger sites that are outside the 1/2-mile radius, but close to village or commercial centers.

|                                 | Acreage     | Unit Capacity | Gross Density   |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>Compliance Model Results</b> | 111.2 acres | 1,553 units   | 18.8 units/acre |
| <b>Guidelines Requirement</b>   | 50 acres    | 1,383 units   | 15 units/acre   |

**MAPC Project Manager:** Emma Battaglia, Senior Housing and Land Use Planner, [ebattaglia@mapc.org](mailto:ebattaglia@mapc.org)

**Town of Acton Contact:** Kristen Guichard, Planning Director and Zoning Enforcement Officer, [kguichard@acton-ma.gov](mailto:kguichard@acton-ma.gov)



## SOUTH ACTON Vision & Action Plan

### Project Timeline

**Summer 2022:** Project start-up

**Fall 2022 to Winter 2023:** Community visioning process and existing conditions analysis

**Spring 2023:** Assessment of compliance with Section 3A

**Summer 2023:** Outreach related to Section 3A and draft compliance concept

**Fall 2023:** Public input to review Acton's refined proposal for Section 3A compliance and recommendations for South Acton Village

**Winter 2023:** Vision plan released and zoning adoption by Select & Planning Boards

**Spring 2024:** Zoning adoption at Annual Town Meeting



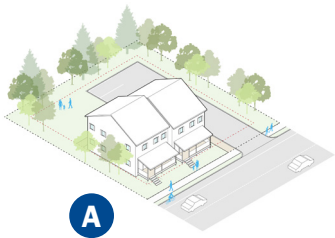
### Metropolitan Area Planning Council

60 Temple Place  
Boston, MA 02111  
Phone: 617.933.0700

To learn more about MAPC's Section 3A work, visit:  
[www.mapc.org/](http://www.mapc.org/)  
[mbta-multifamily-zoning](http://mbta-multifamily-zoning)

## What could new housing in these 3A-compliant overlay districts look like?

|                                 | MBTA Communities Overlay District 1 | MBTA Communities Overlay District 2 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Maximum density                 | 10 units/acre                       | 25 units/acre                       |
| Maximum FAR                     | none                                | none                                |
| Minimum lot size                | 5,000 square feet                   | 1 acre                              |
| Maximum height                  | 2.5 stories                         | 4.5 stories                         |
| Minimum open space              | 20%                                 | 40%                                 |
| Minimum front/side/rear setback | 10/10/10 feet                       | 35/50/50 feet                       |
| Minimum frontage                | 50 feet                             | 50 feet                             |
| Maximum parking                 | 1.5 spaces/unit                     | 2 spaces/unit                       |

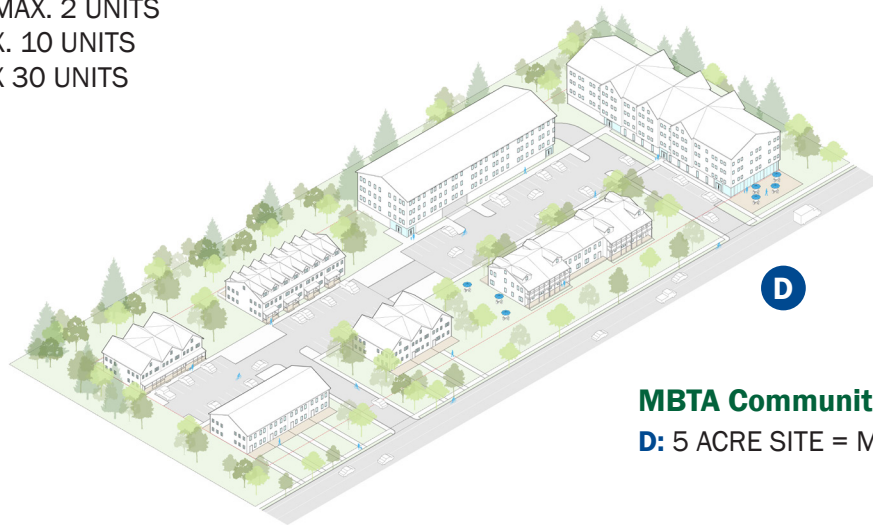


### MBTA Communities Overlay District 1

**A:** 0.25 ACRE SITE = MAX. 2 UNITS

**B:** 1 ACRE SITE = MAX. 10 UNITS

**C:** 3 ACRE SITE = MAX 30 UNITS



### MBTA Communities Overlay District 2

**D:** 5 ACRE SITE = MAX. 125 UNITS

## How can MAPC help my municipality with Section 3A compliance?

MAPC provided a range of technical assistance - from compliance modeling and public engagement to planning and writing zoning - to help Acton comply with Section 3A requirements. If you're interested in working with MAPC to achieve compliance, contact:

- Emma Battaglia, Senior Housing and Land Use Planner, at [ebattaglia@mapc.org](mailto:ebattaglia@mapc.org)
- Andrea Harris-Long, Manager of Housing and Neighborhood Development, at [aharrislong@mapc.org](mailto:aharrislong@mapc.org)



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