

Zoning Compliance Assistance in Rapid Transit Communities

As part of the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) MBTA Zoning Compliance Technical Assistance program, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) **conducted compliance testing for the communities of Everett, Revere, and Somerville**. These communities gained insights into the alignment of their existing zoning with Section 3A requirements, and the ways various zoning components impact compliance. MAPC identified potential paths to compliance, equipping the communities for informed public engagement on compliance options.

The deadline for rapid transit communities (RTC) to adopt Section 3A-compliant zoning was December 31, 2023, marking the earliest deadline among the four community types. Additionally, **MAPC employed a cohort model to establish a forum for shared learning and support among the 12 RTCs**. With support from MHP and EOHL, MAPC hosted three cohort meetings for all RTCs. These sessions addressed technical questions, helped in troubleshooting common issues, and facilitated the sharing of successes and challenges among peers.

RTC 3A Cohort Goals



Technical Assistance

Compliance testing
Zoning amendments
EFAs
Other need-based TA



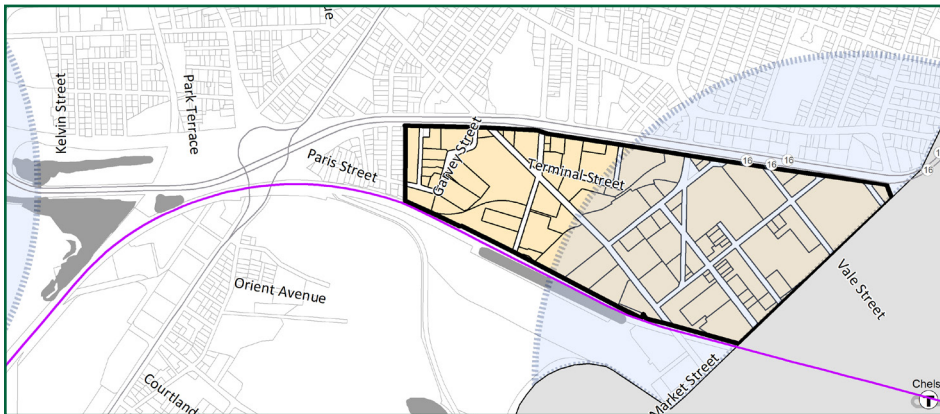
Collective Space to Support and Learn Together



Explore Paths to Section 3A Compliance

Highlights: City of Everett

MAPC conducted three iterations of compliance testing using various combinations of zoning districts and proposed zoning changes. Ultimately, after adopting the recommended zoning changes, the Commercial Triangle Economic Development District within Everett met the requirements for Section 3A compliance. The zoning changes included:



- Changes to the approval process pertaining to multifamily housing within the district. **The adopted zoning allows multifamily by-right up to three floors.**
- Changes to the mixed-use requirements from mandatory to allowable. However, the City envisioned this area to be a mixed-use district. **To incentivize mixed-use developments, the zoning allows multifamily by-right up to three floors and incentivizes mixed-use by allowing building heights up to seven floors.**

	Acreage	Unit Capacity	Gross Density
Compliance Model Results	94.1 acres	5,829 units	61.9 units/acre
Guidelines Requirement	22 acres	4,552 units	15 units/acre

The City of Everett adopted these zoning changes by December 2023.



Metropolitan Area Planning Council

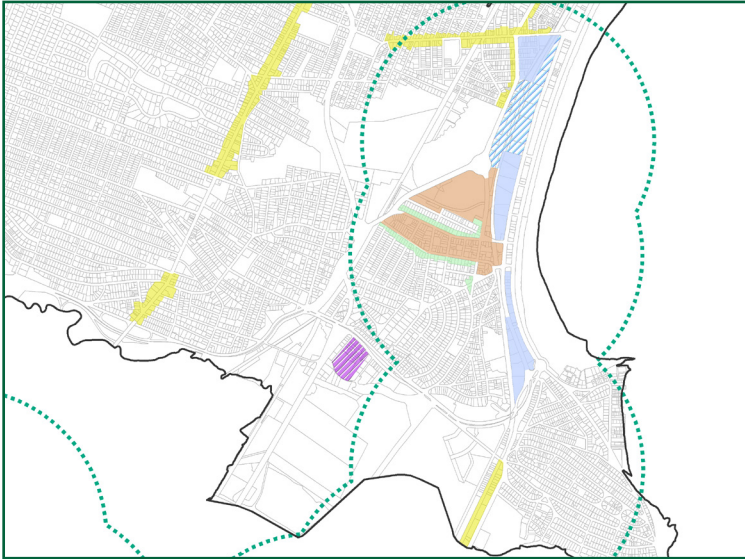
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Boston, MA 02111
Phone: 617.933.0700

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

Highlights: City of Revere

After a few iterations of testing using various combinations of zoning districts and proposed zoning changes, the City with support from EOHLIC, decided to pursue creation of two smart growth overlay districts (4ORs) to boost their unit capacity. MAPC assisted the city in undertaking various tweaks to identify units lost/gained as per assumed zoning changes. **The city adopted two new 4OR Smart Growth Overlay districts in December 2023.**

The City met the required unit capacity and density requirements by including the following zoning districts that constitute the test district:



- Residence C2 District (RC2)
- Wonderland Transit Oriented Development Overlay District (WOTD)
- General Business District (GB)
- Residence C District (RC)
- Shirley Ave Smart Growth Overlay District (NEW)
- Green Street Smart Growth Overlay District (NEW)

	Acreage	Unit Capacity	Gross Density
Compliance Model Results	153.7 acres	6,677 units	43.4 units/acre
Guidelines Requirement	15 acres	6,135 units	15 units/acre

Highlights: City of Somerville

After a few iterations of testing using various combinations of zoning districts and translating the **City's form-based codes to the compliance model**, the test district comprising portions of the Neighborhood Residence (NR) Zoning District met the requirements of the Section 3A compliance model with a few zoning amendments. **Adopted in December 2023, the changes permit three units by right in the NR zoning district without any required special permits and without any zoning restrictions on the age of occupants, number of bedrooms, the size of bedrooms, or the number of occupants.** The zoning amendments included:

Amendments to Residential Districts:

- Permit triple-decker on any compliant lot
- Repeal lot depth (use only min. building depth and setbacks)
- Repeal dwelling units per lot
- Repeal 3rd unit affordability requirement

Amendment to Use Provisions:

- Repeal and replace household living and group living uses with residential housing use (removed no more than 4-person unrelated rule)

Amendment to Related Article:

- Repeal steep slopes special permit citywide

	Acreage	Unit Capacity	Gross Density
Compliance Model Results	55.6 acres	59,474 units	55.6 units/acre
Guidelines Requirement	15 acres	9,067 units	15 units/acre

Project Status: Compliance applications submitted

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City of Revere Contact: Tom Skwierawski, Chief of Planning and Community Development

City of Somerville Contact: Dan Bartman, Deputy Director Planning, Preservation, & Zoning Division



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