

MBTA Communities Law | Commonly asked Questions

Q: What is the “MBTA Communities Law”?

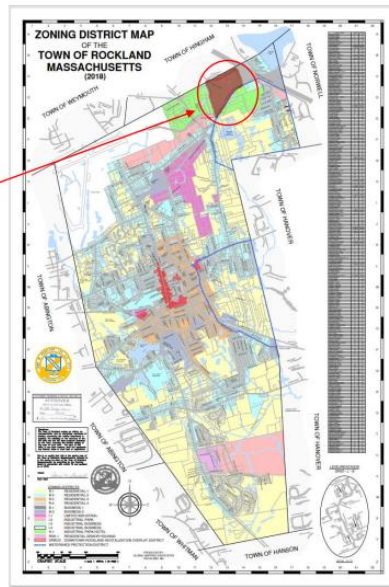
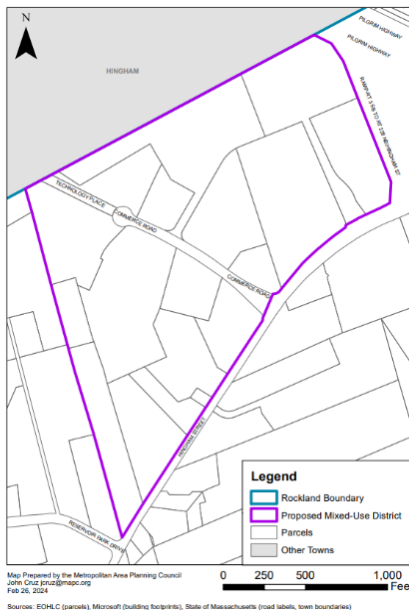
The MBTA Communities law is a new state law that passed in 2021 as part of the Housing Choice Initiative and Economic Development Bond Bill.

Q: What is the purpose of the new state law?

The purpose of the new state law is to address the state’s housing crisis, encourage multifamily housing development and boost the state’s housing supply.

Q: Where is the new zoning district located?

Rockland’s Planning Board has put forward a proposed amendment to the Town’s zoning that would create a **new zoning district “MUDD”** that would make the Town of Rockland compliant with new State law. The new zoning district is located near the park n ride station by the Hingham Town Line. The proposed zoning district includes 60.5 developable acres, roughly 10 more than the minimum requirement of the State law. This additional acreage was included after consideration of how to retain openspace and the potential for how zoning could address the need to mitigate on-site water and sewer engineering needs without compromising open space and good design.



Q: How does this impact our sewer capacity? How does this impact our water supply?

This law does NOT require communities to pay for infrastructure to support the zoning district. All sewer and water infrastructure requirements will need to be mitigated onsite by private development. The Town and their departments are not required to provide upgrades to accommodate the new district.

Q: Do developers get to circumvent local zoning or environmental protections in this district?

The proposed new zoning district, does NOT override the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act or Title V of the Massachusetts Environmental Code and does NOT provide options for waivers or exemptions. The new law does not override local zoning laws.

Q: What types of development is allowable in the new district?

The proposed zoning district is required to allow multifamily housing development “by-right”. Additionally, the zoning identifies new possible uses including live-work spaces, independent and assisted living residences, artisanal markets, artisan/makers halls, or market/food halls, arts & crafts studios or workshops, cultural centers, and farmers’ markets.

Q: What happens if the Town of Rockland chooses not to comply with the new Law?

The State and the Attorney General's Office have been clear that non-compliance with the MBTA Communities zoning law will result in the loss of critical State grant funding. Rockland is completely dependent on these types of grants. For FY2020 through FY2024 the Town of Rockland has received or has been allocated to receive \$19,710,673.20 in grant funding from the State.

Q: How does potential new development impact Rockland Residents? What is the fiscal impact of potential development in the zoning district?

Although the Town has created some programming aimed at offsetting some of our local taxes and fees, some of Rockland's residents are experiencing financial hardships.

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities has provided \$1.929 million to Rockland in blight grants in FY22 & FY23 with a waiting list of 35+ Rockland residents. The Rockland Sewer Department lien'd 493 sewer accounts in December 2023 due to outstanding balances from FY22 and Rockland has \$422,042.95 owed in delinquent taxes for FY23.

The redevelopment of the district has the potential to modestly grow the local economy without a significant impact on the Town's existing residential neighborhoods. The goal is to deter from additional local tax increases as some of Rockland's residents are currently facing economic challenges.

New development promises new tax revenue for the Town. According to a very rough analysis of parcels in the new district, and using some of the fiscal impact analysis done for the Union Point parcels (approximately the same land area size), Rockland could expect a net revenue of between 1.6 million to 5.5 million depending on what is able to be built out over time.

Q: How is this law related to the MBTA?

The law really does not have any impact on our MBTA service or assessment fees. The Town of Rockland pays approximately \$132,000 annually for MBTA & RTA assessments. These assessments are not elective – we are required to pay them.

The law was established to address the state's housing crisis. The purpose of the law is for the state to create a mechanism for multifamily housing development by-right across Massachusetts communities that are benefited by the MBTA services. Rockland is an MBTA-Adjacent community.

More questions?

Please see the Town of Rockland [Planning Department Webpage](#) for more information about the proposed zoning amendment, upcoming dates and events, and contact information should you have additional questions.

Please contact Allyson Quinn, Town Planner at 781-871-0154 X1197 & aquinn@rockland-ma.gov for more questions or further information. **See you at Town Meeting on Monday, May 6th!**



Scan QR code for link to the Planning Department Website with additional information and answers to Resident Questions from Community Meetings.