

Action Plan for MBTA Communities

Description Area Please read the Section 3A Guidelines before attempting to complete this form. Please note: Action Plan Forms must be submitted by a municipal official with authority to act on behalf of the municipality on matters of zoning, such as the municipal CEO or planning director.

Section 1: Identification

Description Area The Section 3A Guidelines establish zoning metrics that apply uniquely to each MBTA community based on its local transit stations, existing housing stock, population, and developable land. This section of the Action Plan helps to identify the transit stations that determined each community's category. Appendix 1 of the Section 3A Guidelines lists each community's category and minimum multi-family unit capacity requirement.

1.1 MBTA Community Name Northborough

1.2. Community Category Adjacent community

1.3. Multifamily Unit Capacity Requirement 750

1.4. Does this municipality have any MBTA rapid transit stations within its boundaries? No

1.5. Does this municipality have any MBTA commuter rail stations within its boundaries? No

1.6. Does this municipality have any other MBTA transit stations that are located outside of its municipal boundaries that may have "developable station area" within them? No

1.7. Please provide the name of the person filling out this form Laurie Connors

1.7a. Title Planning Director

1.7b. Email Address lconnors@town.northborough.ma.us

1.7c. Phone Number (508) 393-5019

1.8 Please provide the name of the municipal CEO John Coderre

1.8b Mailing address of municipal CEO	Town Offices 63 Main Street Northborough, MA 01527
1.8c Email address of municipal CEO	jcoderre@town.northborough.ma.us
1.9. Please briefly describe other members of the core team developing the multi-family zoning district.	Northborough's bylaw development team consists of the Planning Director and the Planning Board. We are getting assistance from the Central MA Regional Planning Commission and Barrett Planning Group, LLC. Consulting services provided by Barrett Planning Group, LLC are funded by a MHP technical assistance grant.

Section 2: Housing Overview

2.1. Does this municipality have any established housing related goals or strategies from municipal planning documents, such as a Housing Production Plan, Master Plan, or Economic Development Plan?	Yes
2.1a. Please briefly describe any relevant strategies, goals, or objectives, and the work that has been done to date.	The 2020 Master Plan contains a number of housing-related goals, including the need to 1) maintain and encourage a diversity of housing options to increase housing affordability and choice for all ages and to ensure that at least 10% of the Town's housing inventory continues to be deemed affordable under state guidelines; 2) Promote housing types that accommodate future growth in the community while maintaining and enhancing the existing character of residential neighborhoods; and 3) pursue a housing strategy that balances demand with the Town's capacity to provide services and infrastructure.
2.2. Is this municipality currently working on any other planning for housing?	Yes
2.2a. Please briefly describe the housing work underway.	The Town is currently under contract with a consultant team led by Weston & Sampson Engineers to create a downtown revitalization strategy and design report for Northborough Center. A key component of this effort includes planning for infill development consisting of multi-family housing and mixed-use development.

Section 3: Preliminary Zoning Strategies

3.1. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following zoning strategies is this community most likely to use for compliance? (Select all that apply)	c. A new 40R or other overlay zoning district
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3.1c. Please briefly describe the potential district and location. Optional: Attach any supporting documents that show planning work the community has already done for this district(s).

The Town is evaluating three sites for inclusion in the new overlay district- a 25-acre privately owned site off of Route 20, which is located near Northborough Crossing, a large open-air shopping center, and Avalon Northborough, a master planned community set on 42 acres that contains 382 apartments. The other two sites are located within Northborough Center. The White Cliffs Mansion site contains 7 acres of land, and the Hudson Street/Blake Street/Main Street location contains approximately 18 acres. The Town is in talks with two potential developers of the Route 20 property (see attached presentation) and the White Cliffs property. If rezoned, it is likely that the property located off of Route 20, 333 Southwest Cutoff, would be developed into apartments with a minimum of 10% of units allocated to low-income housing. The White Cliffs Mansion property, on the other hand, would be developed into 100% affordable housing. Attached are GIS maps depicting the three proposed locations of the overlay district.

3.2. What non-housing characteristics are important for this community to consider in its 3A zoning district?

For all sites, we want to ensure that the new housing blends with the character of and complements the surrounding commercial and residential uses. The Northborough Center locations are key to our downtown revitalization efforts as the new housing will provide a customer base for existing and future businesses. It will also infuse life and vitality into the downtown. It will include adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings- the White Cliffs Mansion is a town-owned property built in 1884 that has been vacant since 2014, the current Town Hall is the 100-year-old former high school, and a mill building located at 56 Hudson Street has potential to be reused for multi-family development when the current office/industrial uses have run their course. The balance of the new housing within the downtown location will be infill development on underutilized lots. The goal of the revitalization project is to comply with Complete Streets principles and create a more pedestrian and bike-friendly downtown that better serves the needs of Northborough's residents.

For the 333 Southwest Cutoff site located off of Route 20, the primary consideration will be to create a multi-generational, walkable neighborhood. Residents will enjoy easy access to Routes 20 and 9, and the retail/restaurant opportunities afforded by Northborough Crossing and other businesses located along these corridors. This will be a redevelopment of the New England Baseball Complex, a multi-sport outdoor complex featuring 3 lighted baseball fields. Amenities of the new residential development, including pocket parks, beautiful landscaping, sidewalks, bike facilities, and outdoor patios where people can gather, are desired to serve the needs of residents within the development. Although this property is currently served by municipal water and sewer, the Town is interested in extending sewer service beyond the property to Route 9. There are a number of Northborough businesses along Route 9, including a restaurant and two motels, that are currently plagued by failing septic systems.

Section 4: Action Plan Timeline

Description Area

This section creates a framework to input preliminary plans for a zoning adoption process. On the table below, please use Column 1 (from the left) to describe a task, Column 2 to input a start date, and Column 3 to input a finish date. Every community must provide a timeline for the below-listed tasks. Additional space is provided for any other tasks that a community wishes to list. DHCD will review proposed timelines for feasibility before approving an Action Plan. Public outreach
Developing zoning
Applying DHCD's compliance model to test for density and unit capacity
Holding planning board hearings
Holding legislative sessions and adopt compliant zoning
Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

Description Area	Task
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Description Area	Start
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Description Area	Finish
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Short Answer	Public outreach
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	Mar 01, 2023
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	Apr 30, 2024
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Short Answer	Develop zoning
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	Feb 15, 2023
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	Nov 30, 2023
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Short Answer	Applying compliance model
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	May 01, 2023
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	Nov 30, 2023
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Short Answer	Hold Planning Board public hearing
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	Jan 02, 2024
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	Feb 28, 2024
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Short Answer	2024 Annual Town Meeting to adopt new zoning
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	Apr 15, 2024
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	Apr 30, 2024
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Short Answer	Submit District Compliance application to DHCD
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May 01, 2024

Jul 31, 2024

If there is any other feedback you would like to share about the compliance process, please use this space to provide it.

One of the most challenging aspects of this planning process is to identify a path towards compliance that will not immediately overwhelm municipal services. For a medium-sized, centrally-located community like Northborough, there is a significant amount of development pressure. It is very likely that this zoning will result in the immediate development of multi-family housing. Northborough already has a significant amount of multi-family housing and is Chapter-40B compliant. Creation of 750 additional units within a 2 to 5-year timeframe will severely impact our community's ability to absorb impacts of that development and to provide municipal services at current levels and standards. In my opinion, phased compliance would have been preferable (i.e creation of a 25-acre zone within 2 years and creation of a second 25-acre zone within 7 years) and would better ensure the successful and orderly absorption of the new development.

Also- note that the program only allows me to upload one file. I wanted to upload 3 maps showing the potential multi-family overlay locations.
