

# MBTA Communities Act: Basics



## What is the MBTA Communities Act?

It's a state law (M.G.L. Ch. 40A, §3A) requiring 177 cities and towns—including Carlisle—to adopt zoning that allows for a certain amount of **multi-family housing by right** in at least one district.



## What does Carlisle have to do?

- As an “Adjacent Small Town,” we must create zoning that allows for the possibility of **95 units** of multifamily housing
- The housing must have minimum density of 15 units per acre, cannot be age restricted, and must be suitable for families with children
- Our deadline for compliance is **December 31, 2025**



## Can we opt out?

- No. Carlisle is one of 177 communities required by law to comply.
- The law was upheld by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and is being actively enforced.
- The Attorney General sued the Town of Milton for noncompliance—and won.

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## What does "multi-family housing" mean?

In this law, it means:

- A building with 3+ dwelling units, or
- Two or more buildings on one lot, each with 2+ units.

The law does not require zoning for high-rises or large apartment complexes. It could look like duplexes, townhouses, or smaller-scale cluster developments.



## Can we protect Carlisle's rural character?

Yes—by planning with care. We control:

- Location of zoning
- Building scale
- Site review requirements

# MBTA Communities Act: Is NOT



## **This law is NOT:**

- **A mandate to build housing.** We must adopt zoning that allows for development, but no property owner is required to build anything. This law creates opportunity, not obligation. Property owners and the market decide what, if anything, gets built.
- **Restricted to affordable housing.** Any housing developed will be primarily market rate. Affordability is a local option and is limited to 10% of units.
- **Eminent domain.** Neither the State nor the Town is proposing to take private property from Carlisle residents to develop housing.

## **Owners of properties that may be rezoned do NOT have to:**

- **Opt-in to be re-zoned.**
- **Agree with the re-zoning.**
- **Give their land to the State or Town.**
- **Develop housing on their land.**
- **Do anything differently with their property than they can do today.**

# MBTA Communities in Carlisle: Status Update

- **Zoning Approach:** One Site – Minimum Land Area
  - Allows at least 95 units on the site
- **Sites:** 6 potential sites for Town Meeting Warrant
  - Ranging from:
    - Ripe for redevelopment → brand new multi-unit condominium
    - Center of town → edge of town

→ Town Counsel is taking the lead on drafting a compliant zoning bylaw

# MBTA Communities Act: Remaining Work

- **Compliance Modeling of Sites**
  - 5 sites need to be modeled (this has been coordinated w/compliance consultant)
  - Additional funding requested from Mass Housing Partnership
- **Final Public Hearing** on zoning amendments – **October 20**
  - Finalize site selection using Site Selection Scorecard
  - Finalize zoning language by October 22 for Motions Booklet
- **Update to boards and committees** – throughout October
- Town Meeting VOTE – November 2

# One Site – Minimum Land Area

- **Target Zoning Parameters:**

- Setbacks: 40'
- Height: 40' / 2.5 stories
- Density: 15 units/acre
- Maximum of 4 dwelling units per building
- Parking: 2 spaces/unit

- **Current Zoning Bylaw:**



→ Adjustments required if compliance model doesn't yield 95 units or 15 units/acre

# MBTA Communities Act Potential Sites

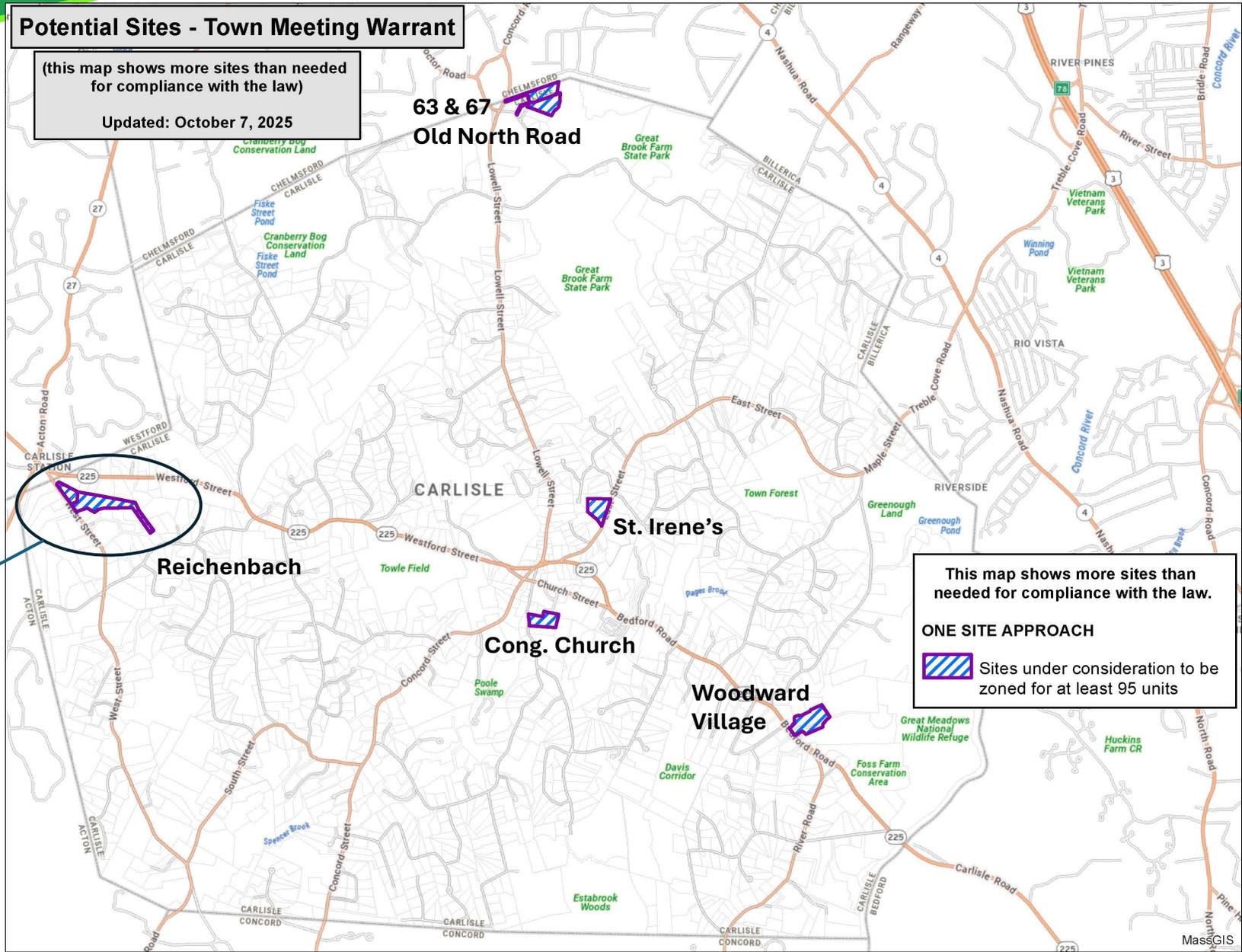
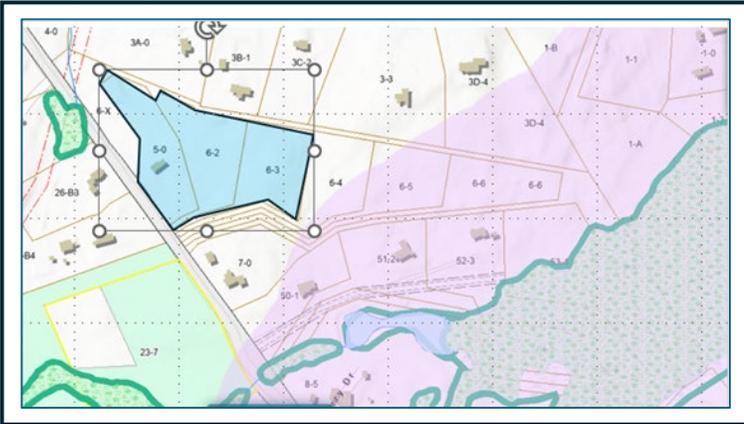
## Potential Sites - Town Meeting Warrant

(this map shows more sites than needed for compliance with the law)  
Updated: October 7, 2025

Property Address	Name / Owner	Acreage
147 SCHOOL ST	Congregational Church	5.5
187 EAST ST	St. Irene's Parish	6.24
63 OLD NORTH RD	Miller	5.85
67 OLD NORTH RD	Mulgrew	6.74
KAY'S WALK	Woodward Village	9.48
75 & 6-X WEST ST	Reichenbach	17.19

(includes all 6 development lots)

Example – possible to use 3 of the development lots:



This map shows more sites than needed for compliance with the law.  
**ONE SITE APPROACH**  
Sites under consideration to be zoned for at least 95 units

# MBTA Communities Act Site Selection

## Potential Locations Detailed Score Card

Legend	
3	Very Good
2	Good
1	OK
0	Poor or N/A
<i>Italics</i>	More info needed

### Scoring based on input from:

- Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Historical Commission
- Recreation Commission
- Members of Safety Committee
- Water/Wastewater Subject Matter Expert
- Board of Health data
- Survey ranking also considered

RANKING	Development	~ 6 acre Sites			Min.Land Sites	
Parcel / Address	Kay's Walk (Woodward Village)	147 School St. (Congregationa l Church)	187 East St. (St. Irene's Catholic Church)	75 & 6-X West St.	67 Old North Rd.	63 Old North Rd.
Acreage	9.48	5.5	6.24	6 of 17.19	6.74	5.85
Owner	Various	Carlisle CC	RC Archbishop	Reichenbach	Mulgrew	Miller
<b>Ecological Sensitivity</b>	2.5	2.7	3.0	1.7	1.8	2.0
<b>Septic &amp; Water Supply Suitability</b>	1.8	2.4	2.4	1.2	1.0	1.0
<b>Prioritized Master Plan Goals</b>	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.3	0.3
<b>Traffic Capacity / Mitigation</b>	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>Abutter Impact</b>	3.0	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.7
Limited number of abutters	3	3	2	3	3	2
Distance from Abutters	3	0	1	0	0	0
Parcels visually buffered from abutters	3	2	2	3	3	3
<b>Structure Suitability</b>	2.7	3.0	1.3	1.3	2.0	2.0
<b>Unweighted Score:</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.5</b>
<b>Weight</b>						
2.0 Ecological Sensitivity	5	5	6	3	4	4
3.0 Septic & Water Supply Suitability	5	7	7	4	3	3
1.0 Prioritized Master Plan Goals	1	1	1	1	0	0
2.0 Traffic Capacity / Mitigation	4	4	4	3	3	3
2.0 Abutter Impact	6	3	3	4	4	3
1.0 Structure Suitability	3	3	1	1	2	2
<b>11.0 Weighted Score:</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>15.7</b>

**MBTA Communities Act:  
VOTE November 2**

# QUESTIONS?

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