

Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities

(New Section 3A of M.G.L Chapter 40A)

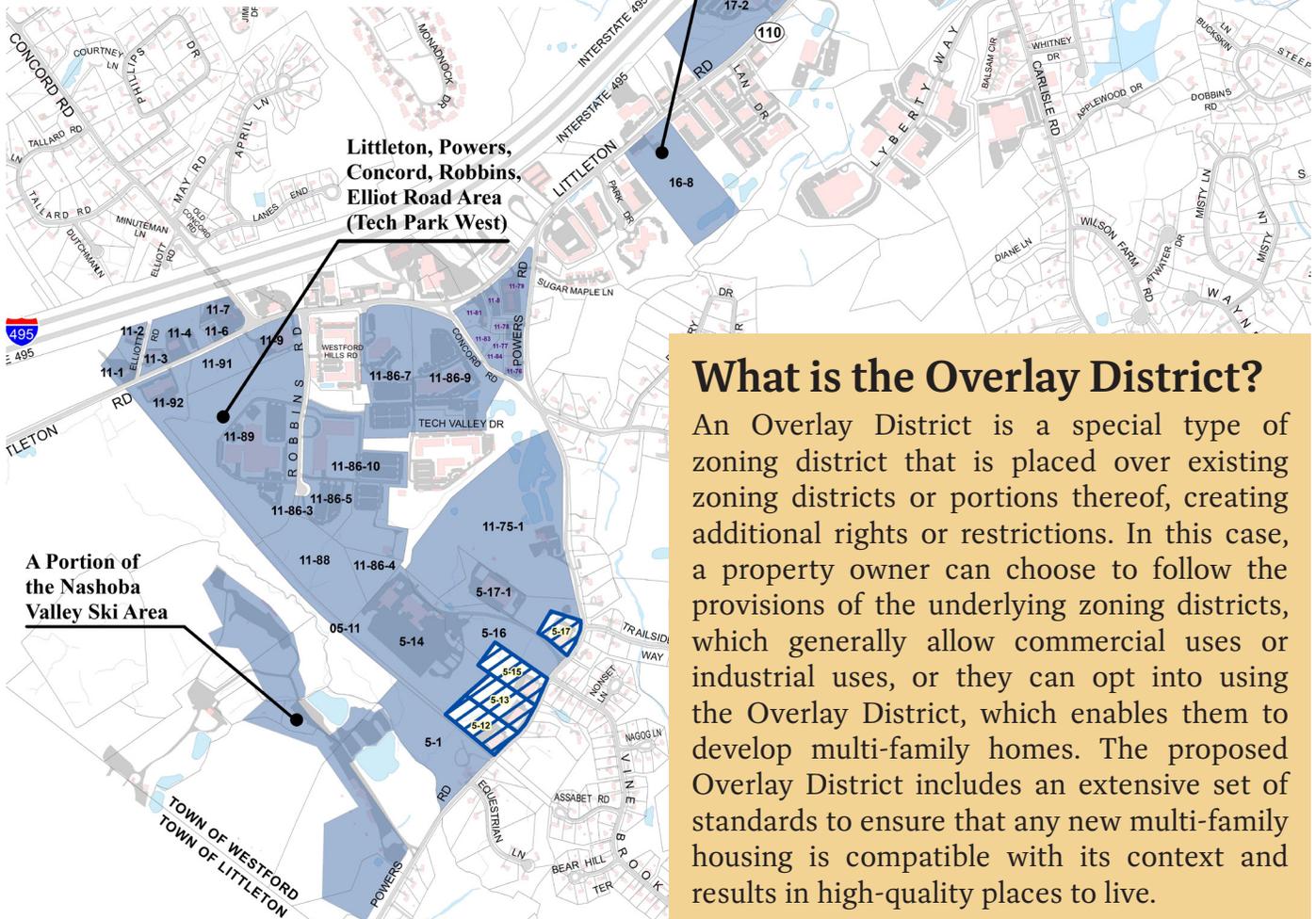
What are the proposed areas for the Overlay District and how were they chosen?

Map of Proposed Areas for MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District (MCMOD)

-  Parcels (5-12, 5-13, 5-15, 5-17) removed from proposed district by Planning Board vote on 4/19/24
-  Proposed MBTA Communities Areas



1,000 500 0 1,000 Feet



What is the Overlay District?

An Overlay District is a special type of zoning district that is placed over existing zoning districts or portions thereof, creating additional rights or restrictions. In this case, a property owner can choose to follow the provisions of the underlying zoning districts, which generally allow commercial uses or industrial uses, or they can opt into using the Overlay District, which enables them to develop multi-family homes. The proposed Overlay District includes an extensive set of standards to ensure that any new multi-family housing is compatible with its context and results in high-quality places to live.

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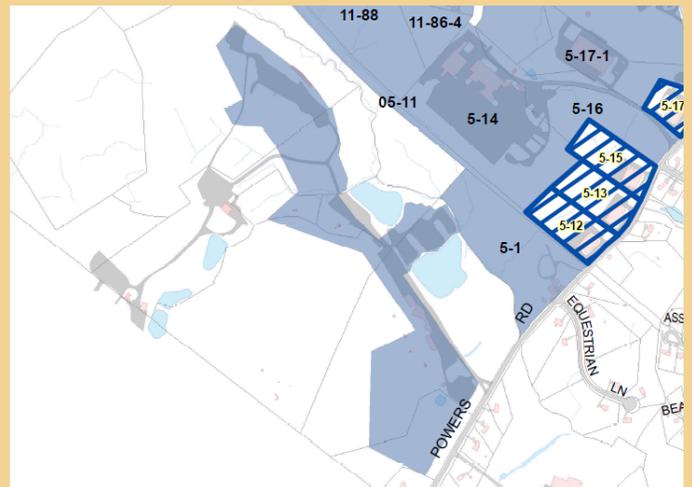
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How were the areas for the Overlay District prioritized?

- Public feedback from three surveys (2022 & 2023), two Strategic Planning Retreats (2022 & 2023), and a public workshop (Oct. 2023)
- Discussions throughout the many meetings of the Town's MBTA Communities Multi-family Housing Advisory Committee (MCMAC)
- Joint Discussions between MCMAC and the Planning Board
- Review of existing infrastructure to support development
- Parcel feasibility analysis conducted by a consultant to the Town, including environmental constraints, regulatory constraints, and suitability for housing based on proximity to major transit routes, shopping areas, and other amenities
- Identification of underutilized properties, including those with aging building(s) and infrastructure, and/or uses whose industries are struggling, such as professional office and hotels in the post-COVID business market
- Balancing short-, medium-, and long-term growth opportunities with service needs

Proposed areas for the MCMOD

A Portion of the Nashoba Valley Ski Area



With changing times, increasing energy costs, and climate change, it has been more and more difficult for the Nashoba Valley Ski Area to maintain successful winter commercial recreation operations. The property owner seeks to expand their commercial recreation uses to be more year-round and construct a mixed-use development which includes a multi-family housing component. Adding multi-family housing to the property would create a built-in customer base for the Nashoba Valley Ski area and other businesses in the area. It would increase the likelihood that the Nashoba Valley Ski Area will continue to be used for commercial recreation activities for the very long-term. Redevelopment may also result in improved trail connections in the area. Only the areas that Nashoba seeks to redevelop for multi-family housing are proposed to be included in the overlay district, not the entire property.

To learn more about the MBTA Communities Law, please scan the QR Code or visit this webpage:

<https://www.westfordma.gov/1490/MBTA-Communities-Act-Requirement-for-Mul>



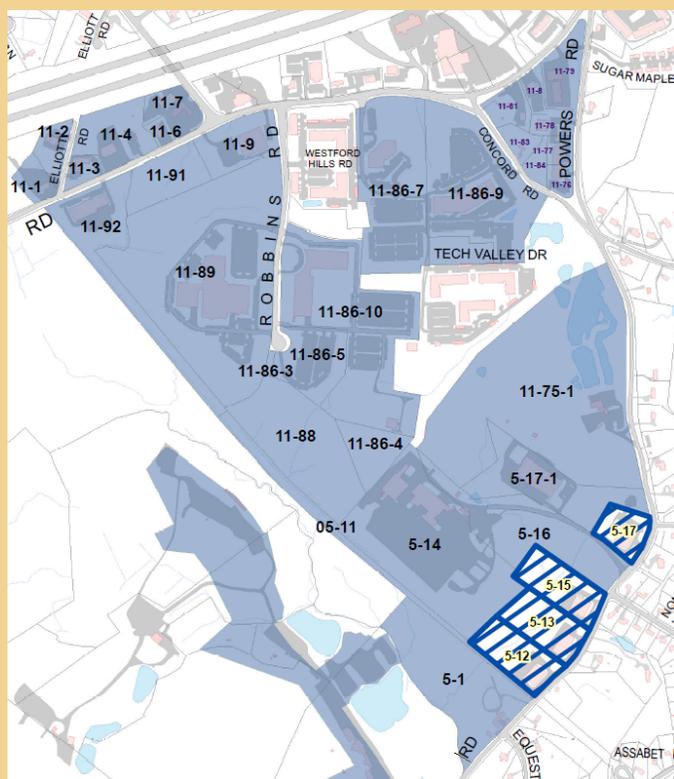
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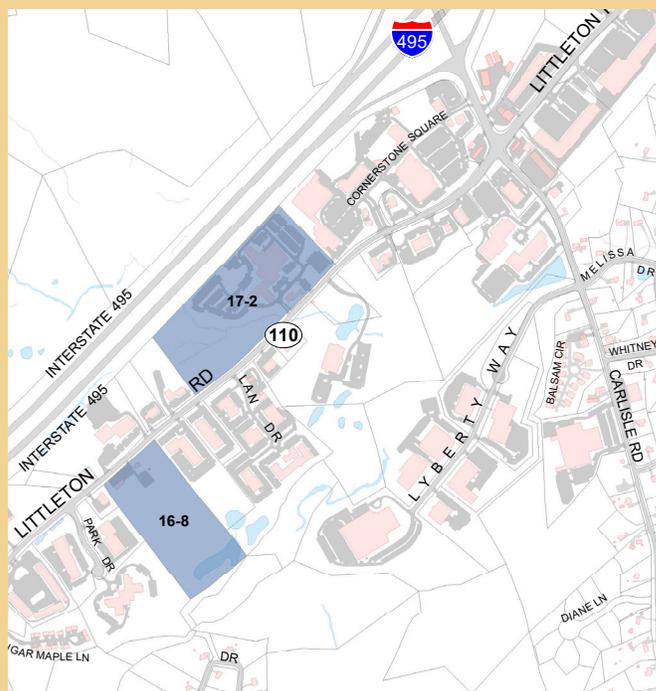
Proposed areas for the MCMOD

Littleton, Powers, Concord, Robbins, Elliot Road Area (Tech Park West)



This area is home to existing multi-family housing as well as a number of commercial and industrial uses. Its central location between Route 110, Concord Road, and Powers Road provides access to nearby shopping areas, public transit, and other amenities. A large vacant office building and huge underutilized parking lots provide opportunities for new multi-family or mixed-use neighborhoods with enhanced open spaces, new trail systems, and connections to existing trails. The Planning Board agreed to remove 4 parcels (5-12, 5-13, 5-15, & 5-17) from the proposed district as requested by neighborhood residents.

Littleton Road (Route 110)



Several property owners along the Route 110 corridor expressed interest in being included in the proposed overlay district. Areas included in the Overlay District are underutilized properties with opportunities for re-use/ redevelopment. For example, the Westford Swim and Tennis Club has been identified as a suitable site for housing in the Town's Housing Production Plan for many years. Multi-family homes in this area could support the existing business community—like the Cornerstone Square shopping center—with new customers, improve stormwater management, add sustainability features, and enhance walkability.

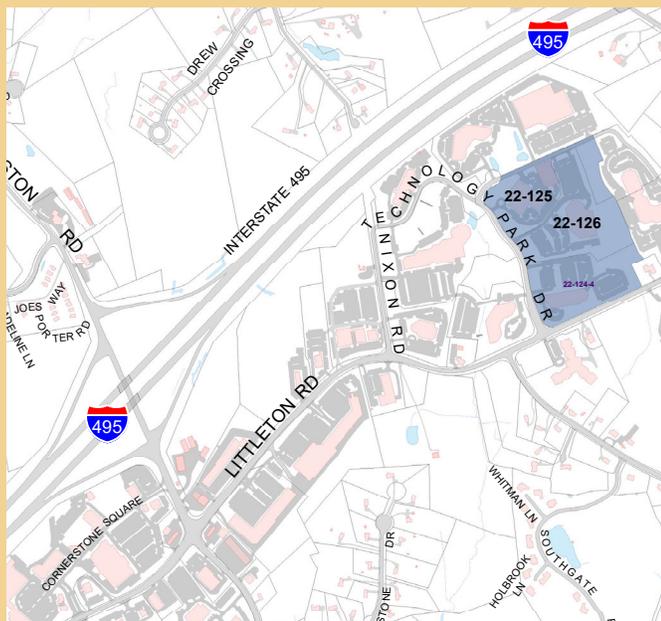
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Technology Park East



Across the country, demand for commercial office space has dropped due to remote and hybrid work options becoming commonplace. At Tech Park East, some leases will be up in approximately two years, potentially leaving large spaces vacant. Additionally, while some spaces in this office park are currently 100% leased, they may be only 20%-40% utilized. The owners have conducted informal parking surveys which suggest that parking usage is also down to 20%-40%, where it used to be 70%. Inclusion in the overlay district will provide opportunities for redevelopment, supporting the Town's tax base. It will also bolster the remaining office buildings and other area businesses that used to rely on office workers. The area is close to shopping areas, other amenities, public transit, and Route 495, making it suitable for residential use.

More Area Equals More Opportunity

Throughout their review process, the MCMAC discussed whether to recommend a zoning district that is the minimum size needed to meet the requirements of the new state law, or whether to bring forward what they feel is the best proposal to Town Meeting, even if the district area would be larger than the minimum required. Ultimately, the Committee decided to recommend the latter approach because including more area in the overlay district provides more opportunities to meet Town goals and the housing needs of current and future residents. The areas that have been incorporated into the proposed district will provide short-, medium- and long-term redevelopment opportunities that strike a balance between capturing the benefits of multi-family development and minimizing potential impacts.

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