

# Briefing on the 'MBTA Communities Act'

For the Ayer Planning Board

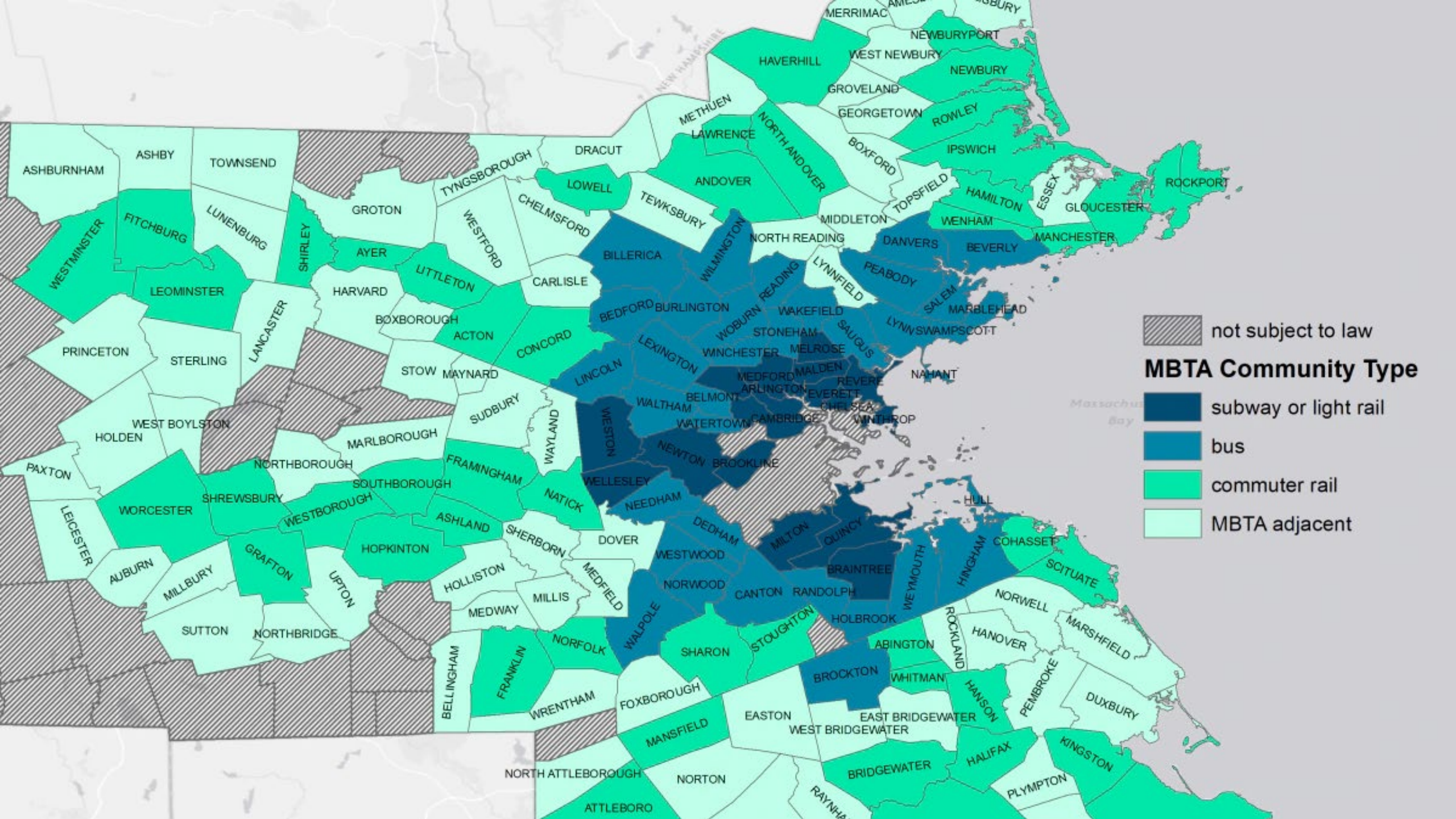
By Mark Archambault, Town Planner


April 12, 2022

# What is the ‘MBTA Communities Act’” MGL Chapter 40A, Sec. 3A?


- Legislation to address Mass. housing shortage by ensuring that **zoning** around MBTA transit stops provides for multi-family housing at a certain density.
- Requirements differ depending on the type of MBTA service in a city or town.
- In Ayer’s case, we’re a ‘**Commuter Rail**’ community.
- The legislation and admin. rules address housing **capacity** under Zoning. The MBTA Communities Act does not require a certain number of MF Housing units to be *produced*. It’s not a housing production plan.






 not subject to law

### MBTA Community Type

 subway or light rail

 bus

 commuter rail

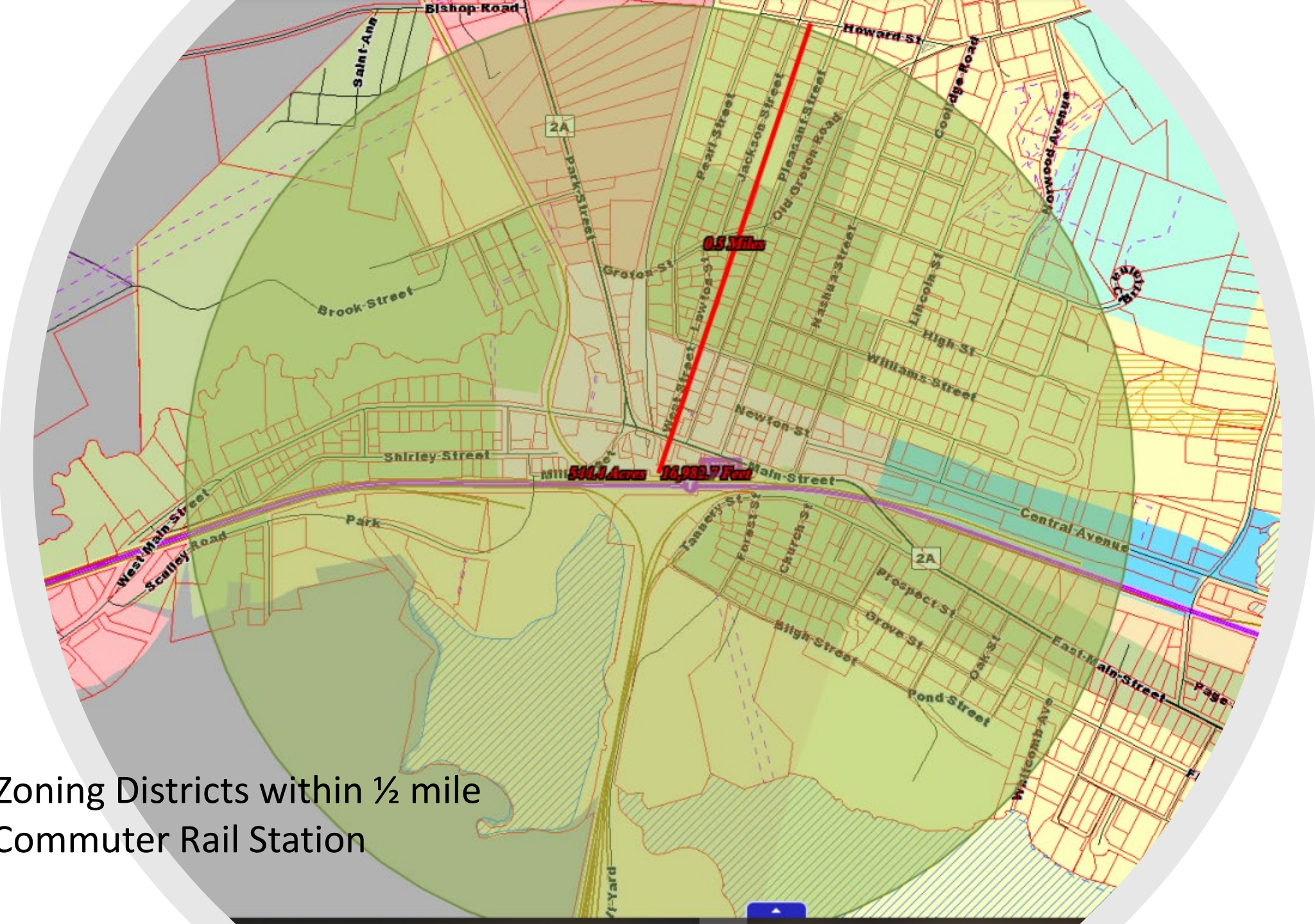
 MBTA adjacent

# Commuter Rail Community Standards from draft Guidelines

- Multi-Family (MF) Zoning districts must be of a 'reasonable size' (min. of **50 acres**) with housing at ...
- A Gross Density of **15 units per acre**.
- Housing allowed under zoning cannot be age restricted or prohibit children.
- MF housing districts must be **within one-half (1/2) mile of the commuter rail station**, though some outlying districts that otherwise meet the density requirements and are linked to the commuter rail station may be permissible (*West Ayer Village FBC district as an example*).

## Deadlines, Timelines and Actions

- **April 5, 2022:** Deadline for DLTA Technical Assistance Grants from the RPCs. Ayer submitted an application for assistance with analysis and mapping of potential districts on April 4.
- **May 2, 2022:** Deadline for each community to submit online 'MBTA Community Information Form'. Must be submitted *after* presentation to Select Board (April 19).
- **December 31, 2022:** Communities submit an 'Action Plan' or 'Request for Compliance' Determination. Action Plan details how each community plans to meet the requirements of the MBTA Communities Act.
- **July 2023:** Action Plans reviewed and approved by Mass. DHCD.
- **December 31, 2024:** Commuter Rail communities must have **adopted** zoning consistent with MBTA Communities by this date.



Ayer's Zoning Districts within ½ mile of the Commuter Rail Station

# How is Ayer likely to fare under these requirements?

Fairly well, due to:

1. **Downtown Ayer / Park St. FBC District** (no min. lot size, density of units limited by building space, likely exceeds 15 units per acre).
2. **West Main Village FBC** (3/4 miles)
3. **General Residence** district allows up to 12 units per acre gross density.
4. Analysis under the DLTA technical assistance grant will help us determine exactly where we stand in terms of allowable gross density and help us identify potential 'MBTA districts'.







