

On August 17 2023 I published a web document entitled:

Thoughts on Newton Village Center Zoning Version 2 and MBTA Communities Zoning

This document discussed:

- How to implement the MBTA Communities Law zoning using 100% MRT zoning in the 5 half mile circles at Newton Centre, Newton Highlands, Eliot, Waban, and Woodland.
- This will detach the MBTA Communities Law zoning from the more complex VCOD zoning and will make it easier to implement MBTA Communities Law zoning by the end of 2023.
- How to define MRT so that the housing enabled will be acceptable in Newton even when the MRT district overlays a single residence (SR) district. The key ideas will be to adapt the work of Daniel Parolek on *Missing Middle Housing* to Newton.
- The fact that MRT may be used to solve the MBTA Communities Law zoning means that VCOD zoning does not need to supply any housing for MBTA purposes. The consequence of this is that VCOD buildings in a village center may supply housing if that is viewed as useful for a village center but may alternately supply upper story spaces for business or professional services uses. This increases the flexibility of VCOD.

More than one councilor pointed out to me that my plan might fail because the requirement for a minimum density of 15 housing units per acre might not be reachable using MRT alone. This point was very well taken and I have thought long and hard about it.

I have posted a revision to the web document using the same link. The revision clearly explains what material is new.

The key idea of the revision is to introduce a sub-zone of MRT called MRT-A:

MRT-A means *MRT with Small Apartment Buildings*

MRT-A allows small apartment buildings with 8-24 units and from the MBTA Compliance point of view may count as 8 units per lot in contrast to 4 units per lot for MRT.

Use of MRT-A is restricted to lots within one quarter mile of a transit station.

I hope that this tips the balance and makes the MRT plus MRT-A combination a feasible way to solve the MBTA Community Law zoning problem.

I request the assistance of the Planning Dept and Utile to run the scenarios outlined in the document. We all really need to know what is possible and what is not possible.

Note that many of the suggestions for MRT zoning and VC zoning are stand alone and may significantly enhance VCOD zoning regardless of how MBTA zoning is resolved. Please take these suggestions seriously on their own merits.

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September 12 2023