

# MBTA COMMUNITIES

Zoning Requirements, Timelines, Eligibility



**Arlington, MA**

# MBTA COMMUNITIES

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Legislation

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Funding and  
compliance

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Draft Guidelines

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Timeline

**5**

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Possible ideas  
for compliance



To be eligible for funding from MassWorks, Local Capital Projects Fund, or Housing Choice Initiative, an MBTA Community shall have...

“at least one zoning district of reasonable size  
in which multi-family housing is permitted  
as of right.”

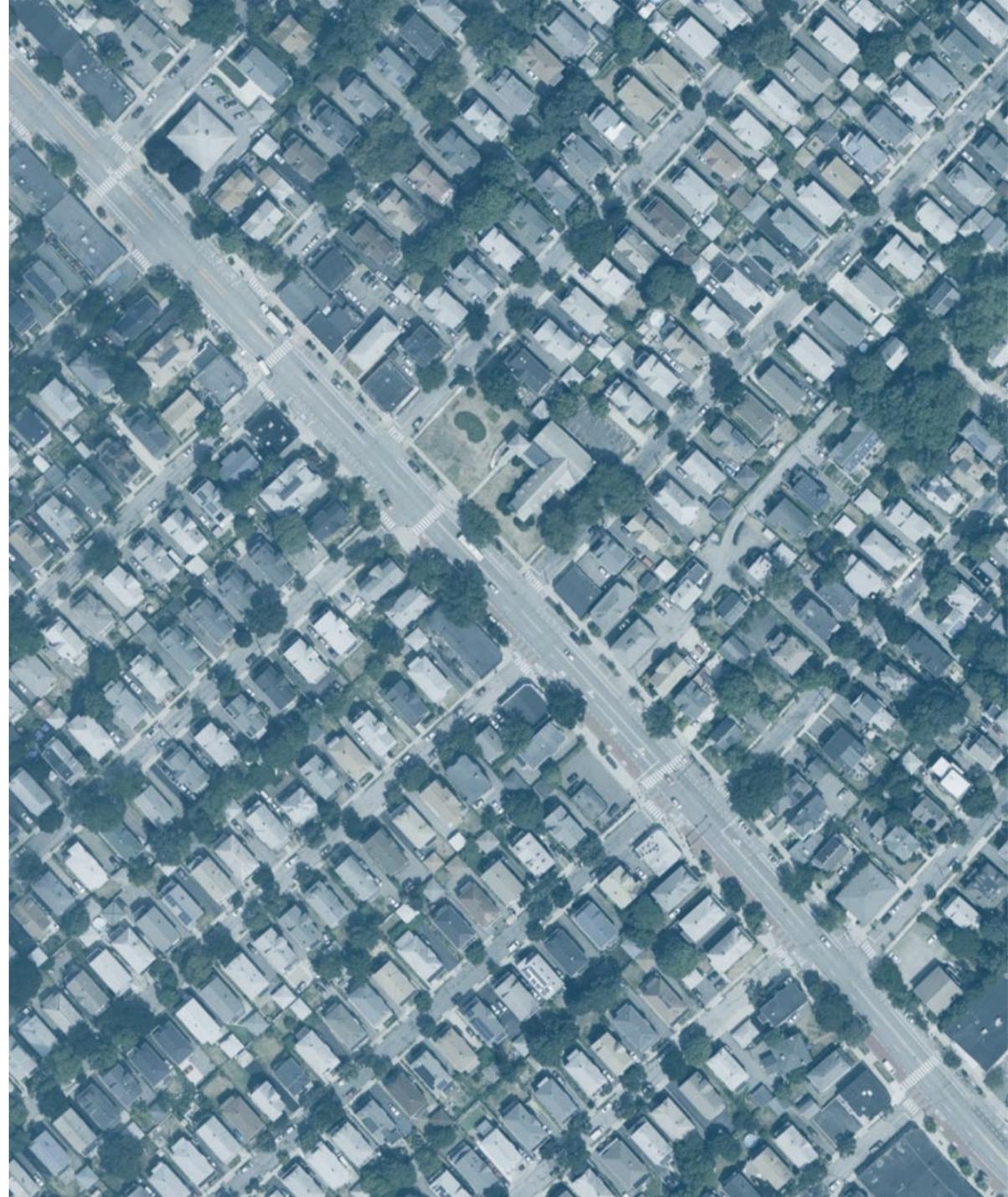
— ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOND BILL (PARTNERSHIPS FOR GROWTH), JANUARY 2021

# Multi-Family Zoning Requirement

codified in Section 3A of MGL c. 40A

- At least one district *of reasonable size*
- Multifamily housing permitted as of right
- No age restrictions; suitable for families with children
- Minimum gross density of 15 units/acre
- Not more than ½ miles from a subway station or bus station\*

\* As applicable to Arlington



# MGL C. 40A SECTION 3A

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# DRAFT GUIDELINES

- At least 50 acres total
- Building with 3+ residential dwelling units
- No age restrictions or bedroom limits in zoning
- Capacity for 5,115 units\*\*
- At least ½ of the land area of the district is within ½ miles of the station

\*\* This number is based on current housing units and community type; Arlington is categorized as a Rapid Transit Community; this number is 25% of total housing units

**By complying with MBTA  
Communities legislation,  
Arlington would remain  
eligible for funding from...**

**\$ MassWorks Infrastructure  
Program**

**\$ Housing Choice Initiative**

**\$ Local Capital Projects Fund**

2

# HOW COULD WE USE THIS FUNDING?

MassWorks, Housing Choice Initiative, or Local Capital Projects Fund

# 2

## How could Arlington use this funding?

MassWorks, Housing Choice Initiative, or Local Capital Projects Fund

Design and construction funding for public infrastructure (roads, utilities, biking and pedestrian facilities, and improvements to public properties

Community capital grants for infrastructure upgrades, updating Master Plan, zoning amendments/studies

# 2

## How could Arlington use this funding?

MassWorks, Housing Choice Initiative, or Local Capital Projects Fund

### In Last 5 Years

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\$0 Awarded

### In Near Future

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Applying for MassWorks funding for Mass Ave/Appleton project

MassWorks 2021 awards averaged \$1.1 M per project in 51 communities

May be eligible for Housing Choice Initiative Grants in 1-2 years

Not eligible for Local Capital Projects Fund

### In Outyears

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State may funnel more state funding through these programs like these that are tied to incentive-based standards

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# DRAFT GUIDELINES

Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development  
released *DRAFT* Guidelines regarding the Multi-Family Zoning Requirement  
for MBTA Communities

[www.mass.gov/mbtacommunities](http://www.mass.gov/mbtacommunities)

# 3

## How does Arlington comply now with the *draft* guidelines?

### Suitable for children – no limits on:

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- Age
- Size of units
- Number of bedrooms
- Size of bedrooms
- Number of occupants

### As of right

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- At least 3 units on a parcel\*
- Without discretionary permits

\*Currently only allow two units per lot by right. Special permits are required for three-family structures even in the R3 zoning district.

### Reasonable Size

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- 50 acres
- Within ½ mile of MBTA stations
- At least 15 residential units/acre

# 3

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- 50 acres
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- Capacity for 5,115 residential units

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# TIMELINE

to remain in compliance as a MBTA Community

# 4

## Timeline to remain in compliance

**May 2, 2022**

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Hold a briefing with the Select Board and submit information regarding current compliance

**March 31, 2023**

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Submit action plan of how Arlington intends to come into compliance to the state for approval

**December 31, 2023**

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Action plan for any zoning changes must be adopted

# 4

## Next Steps

- Please copy staff on any comments on draft guidelines – comments due by March 31st
- Consider attending Select Board meeting once scheduled in March
- Once DHCD Final Guidelines are issued, DPCD will return to ARB with an update and discussion on how to move forward (end of summer/ early fall 2022)

[mass.gov/mbtacommunities](https://mass.gov/mbtacommunities)

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# IDEAS FOR COMPLIANCE

Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development  
released DRAFT Guidelines regarding the Multi-Family Zoning Requirement for  
MBTA Communities

# 5

## Ideas for compliance with draft guidelines

### Reduce Development Subject to Special Permit

3 or more residential units

Structures along or immediately  
behind Mass Ave

Structures in R3 – R7 and some  
Business Districts

### Increase Dwelling Unit Flexibility

Create a very large 40R District (150 to  
300 acres)

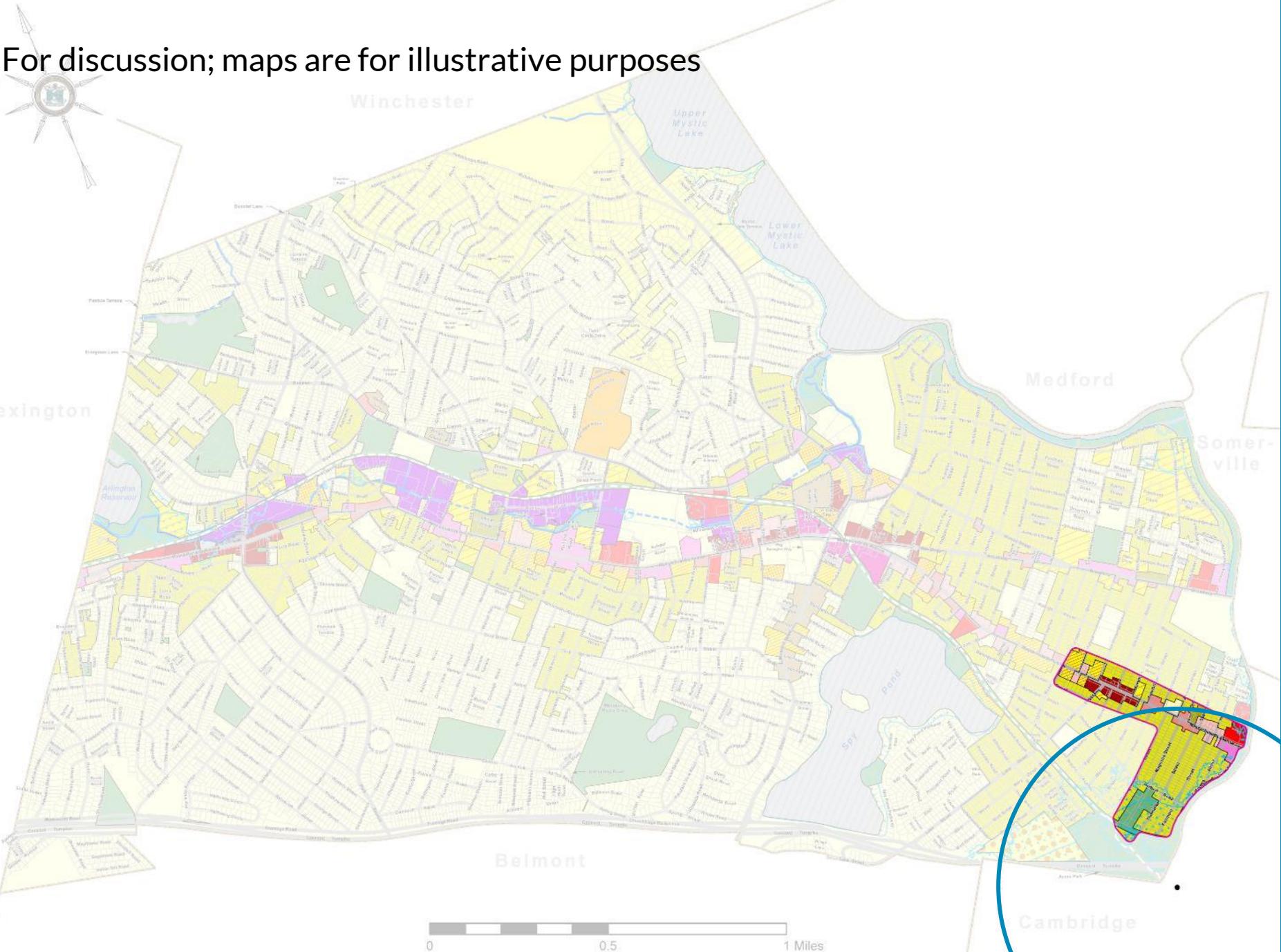
Permit 2 accessory dwelling units in  
single-family zones

# Transit loci

— ½ mile radius



For discussion; maps are for illustrative purposes

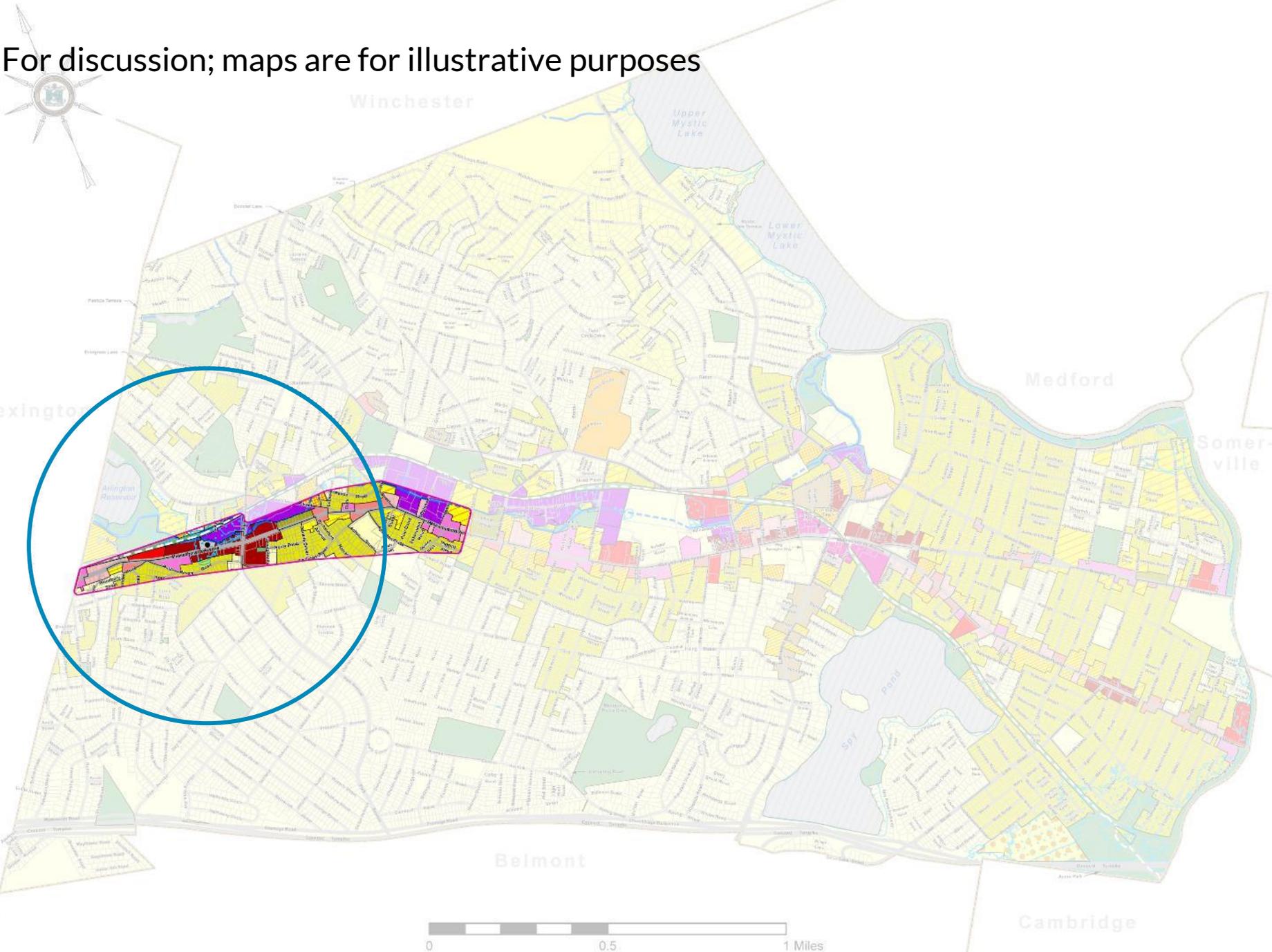


# East Arlington

Approximately 65-70 acre district, primarily within 1/2 mile of Alewife Station

— 1/2 mile radius

For discussion; maps are for illustrative purposes



# Arlington Heights

Approximately 50-55 acre district, primarily within 1/2 mile of Heights Bus Depot

— 1/2 mile radius

For discussion; maps are for illustrative purposes

# Business Districts

Three districts totaling roughly 140-145 acres, one located in each business district

— ½ mile radius



For discussion; maps are for illustrative purposes

# Corridor overlay

Establishing an overlay a set distance from the Mass Ave corridor (1/10<sup>th</sup> and 2/10<sup>th</sup> mile distances shown). Total district size between 200 and 450 acres.

— 1/2 mile radius



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