

What is the MBTA Communities Act?

The MBTA Communities Act is Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 3A. This law established a requirement that each of the 177 designated MBTA Communities (MGL c. 161A Section 1) must have zoning that:

- Provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right.
- Cannot have age-restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children.
- Must have a minimum gross density of 15 dwelling units per acre.
- Part of the district must be located within 0.5 miles from a commuter rail, subway, ferry, or bus station, as applicable.

Why is Groveland an MBTA Community?

Groveland is classified as an Adjacent Small Town because it has (a) less than 100 acres of developable station area and (b) either a density of less than 500 persons per square mile or a year-round population of less than 7,000.

Why is this Act important?

The MBTA Communities Act addresses four critical components of our state’s economy:

- Massachusetts has a housing shortage, and we need to produce more housing.
- The amount of housing that is financially attainable to most households is dwindling.
- The Commonwealth is at a disadvantage to compete for businesses, jobs, and talent.
- Placing housing near transit is good housing, economic, transportation, and climate policy.

Why is compliance important?

Compliance with the law allows the Town to support housing to meet its own needs for different housing types, different levels of affordability, and support for economic development.

Compliance also allows the Town access to sixteen different grant programs administered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and related agencies.

What else is important to know about the MBTA Communities Act?

The MBTA Communities Act is **not**:

- A mandate to build housing.
- A housing production target.
- Restricted to only addressing affordable housing needs.
- A one-size fits all tool to address all housing needs in a community.
- Viewed as optional by the Commonwealth and Attorney General.

What are the requirements for Groveland?

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) defined the following requirements for Groveland:

Community Category	Adjacent Small Town
2020 Housing Units (Census PL-94)	2,596
Minimum Multifamily Unit Capacity	130
Minimum Land Area	0

This means that Groveland will need to create one or more zoning districts that allow for a **minimum of 130 dwelling units** at a **minimum density of 15 units per acre**.

What is the Town's deadline for compliance?

The Town must have the zoning in place by **December 31, 2025**.

How will Groveland comply?

The Town of Groveland will begin working on potential strategies after Town Meeting. The first step will be an MBTA Communities 101 Workshop for the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board.

The next step will be a similar public workshop to gather community input on the options for locations, housing types, and density levels. This workshop will be supported by an online option for input for those who cannot attend in person.

Finally, the Town will develop draft zoning that will be presented to the public for comments and then added to the standard public hearing process for zoning change through Town Meeting.

The community will have multiple opportunities for input and comment.

What else will this planning process include?

Participants in the workshops can discuss several options for housing in Groveland. The definition of multi-family for the MBTA Communities Act is a building of at least three units or more than one building on a lot with more than one unit per building (the minimum would be two duplexes). The Town is also interested in community input on other housing types, such as two-family buildings.

This project will also include a study of the fiscal impact of the zoning on the Town.

When will this planning process start?

We expect that the first workshop for public officials will take place in June and the first public workshop will follow soon after.

Is the Town working with a consultant?

Yes. The Town hired Innes Associates to lead the workshops and draft the zoning. RKG Associates will conduct the fiscal impact study.

Innes Associates also assisted the Town with the Groveland Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2023.

Where can I find more detailed information about the MBTA Communities Act and the requirements?

This is EOHLC's page with all their information:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities>



Workshop participants discussing options for locating housing in their community.