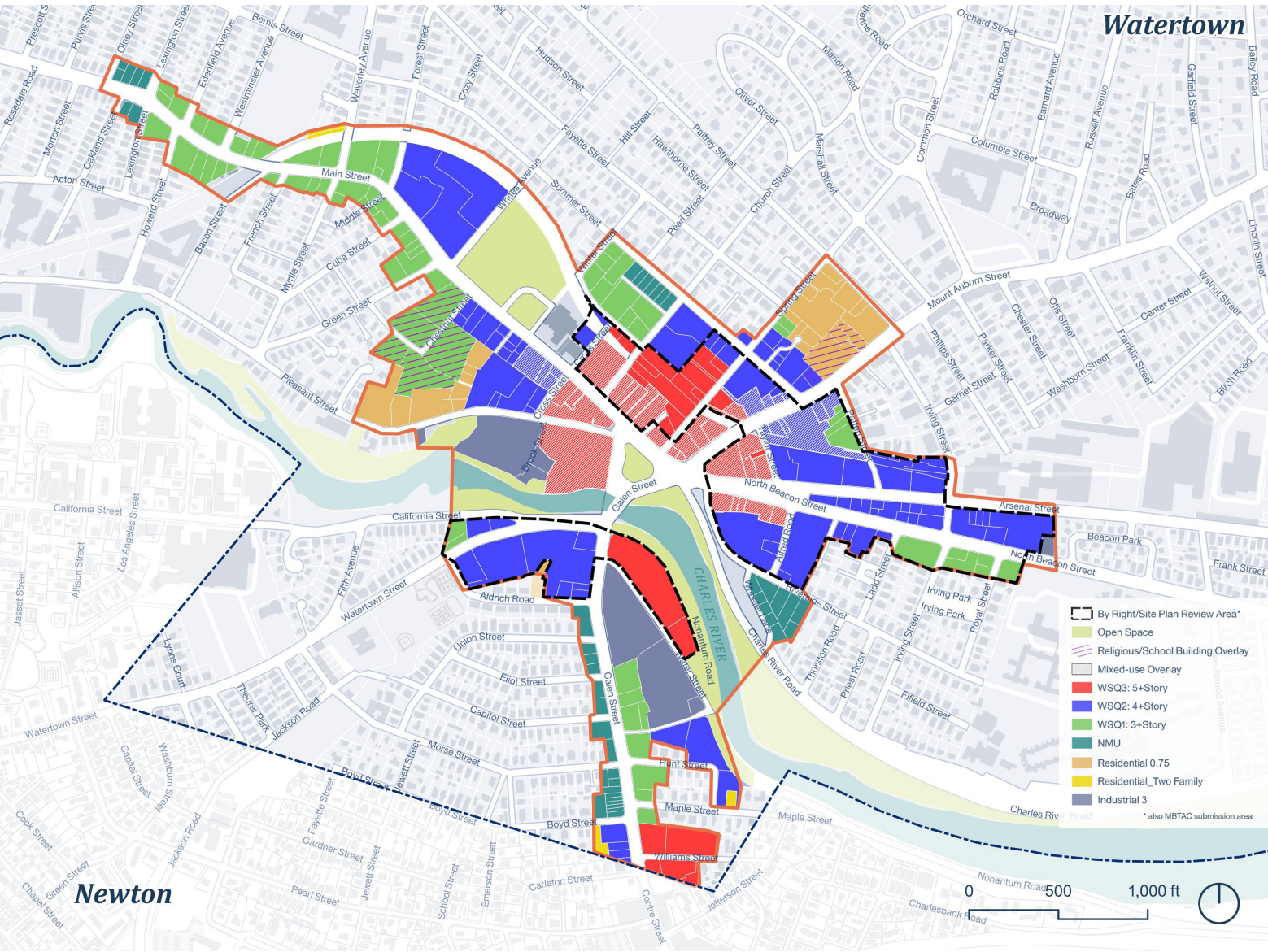


MBTA Communities Zoning Update

Summer 2024



MBTA Communities Zoning Map



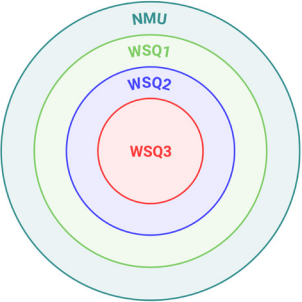
Proposed Zoning District	Multi-Family Only Unit Capacity	Mixed-use Unit Capacity (excluding ground floor commercial area)	
WSQ1: 3+ Story	227	0	
WSQ2: 4+ Story	2,002	223	
WSQ3: 5+ Story	182	499	
Total	2,411	722	
District Total Capacity			3,133
Required Minimum Capacity			1,701
Additional Units Beyond Minimum Required			1,432

Urban Design Considerations

- From the beginning, our goals have emphasized the Square as a **vibrant** destination with thriving businesses, walkable streets, better community spaces and more people. We need more people to support businesses and keep the Square our community center.
- The Square’s look and feel matter. The proposed plan uses a form-based zoning approach with required design standards to shape future development. The proposed standards include building height, stepback requirements, varied facades, roof, and architectural features. They will apply in both “by right/site plan review” and “special permit” areas.
- There is a “tiered” approach to density, with higher density (red) mainly in the downtown core, medium density (blue) around that core, and medium and lower density (blue and green) as a transition to lower density residential neighborhoods. Each will be a separate zone.
- Higher density makes sense in the downtown core to support a strong Watertown Square identity and increase the opportunity for new housing in the area that has the best access to public transit and is the most walkable.
- We want meaningful buildings in the downtown core to thrive and offer ground floor retail. Much of the downtown core should remain under a discretionary “special permit” process with a ground floor retail requirement.

MBTA Communities Considerations

- Some blocks in the WSQ3, WSQ2, and WSQ1 zones would be by right/site plan review and comply with the MBTA Communities law. The NMU zone would be special permit only.
- By right/site plan review permitting is proposed for some of the downtown core as well as the Galen Street gateway and the Arsenal/North Beacon Street gateway (where auto uses are now dominant). Zoning for these blocks would comply with the MBTA Communities law.
- Most other portions of the study area, e.g., going west on Main Street, provide a transition to lower density residential neighborhoods and/or don’t present important opportunities for change. Special permits should continue to be required for these blocks.
- “Unit capacity” is the state’s way of measuring compliance with the MBTA Communities law—it is a theoretical measure of the maximum number of units that could be built and assumes the land is vacant. The “unit capacity” of the MBTA Communities zone in the proposed plan is **3,133** units. The required number is 1,701 units.
- Publicly-owned parcels, such as the Watertown Yard lot owned by the MBTA and the municipal parking lot, cannot count towards compliance with the MBTA Communities modeled unit capacity requirements. These publicly-owned parcels are proposed as by right/site plan review to promote redevelopment as part of a coherent vision for Watertown Square.



WSQ3: 5+ stories



WSQ2: 4+ stories



WSQ1: 3+ stories



NMU: 2+ stories

