

City of Medford

CDB

2024-2026 Zoning Update

July 16, 2025

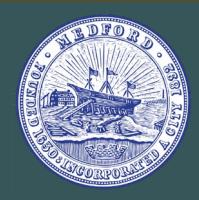


BBHS



Agenda

- ▶ Process Timeline
- ▶ Dover Amendment
- ▶ Tufts University: Existing Zoning
- ▶ Examples of Zoning for Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts
- ▶ Medford Special District: Tufts University Early Considerations



Introduction

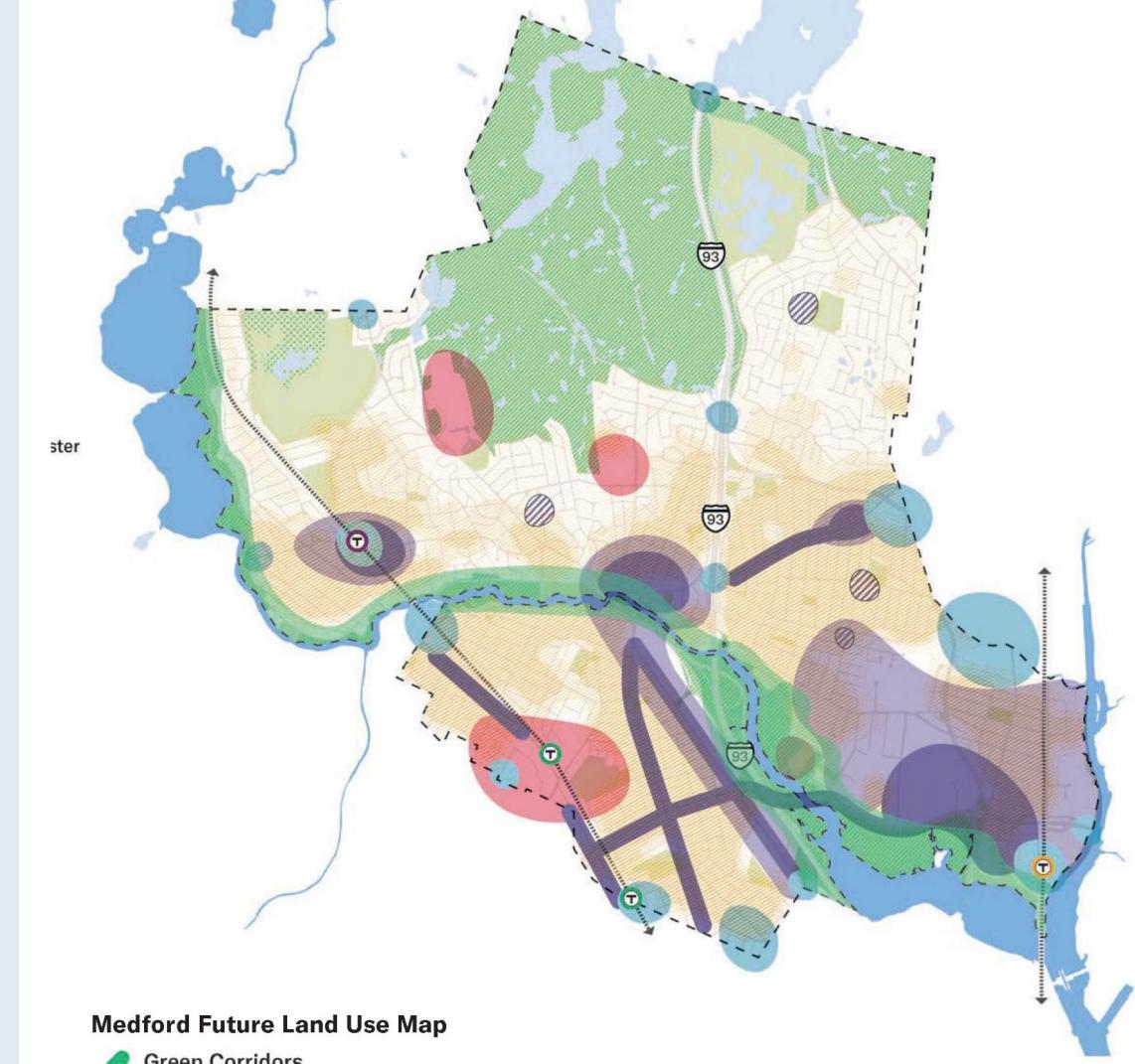


Figure XI. Medford Future Land Use Map

Medford Future Land Use Map

- Green Corridors
- Corridors
- Centers & Squares
- Gateway Nodes
- Civic & Institutional Anchors
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Neighborhood Centers
- Transformational Focus Areas



Upcoming Meetings

Type of Meeting	Anticipated Topic	Date	Location
City Council	Other Corridors referral to CDB	8/5	Hybrid
CDB	Residential and ADUs (Board deliberation only) Medford and West Medford Squares (recommended to be continued without discussion)	8/6	Virtual Only
PPCM	To Be Announced	8/7	Hybrid
CDB	West Medford Squares and New Public Hearing for Other Corridors	8/20	Virtual Only
CDB	New Residential Iteration Presented and ADUs (POTENTIAL: Continuation of Medford and West Medford Squares and Other Corridors)	9/3	Hybrid
PPCM	To Be Announced	9/10	Hybrid
CDB	New Residential Iteration and ADUs (Public Comment and Board Deliberation)	9/17	Hybrid



The Dover Amendment (G.L. c. 40A, §3)

"No zoning ordinance or by-law shall regulate or restrict the interior area of a single family residential building nor shall any such ordinance or by-law prohibit, regulate or restrict the use of land or structures for religious purposes or for educational purposes on land owned or leased by the commonwealth or any of its agencies, subdivisions or bodies politic or by a religious sect or denomination, or by a nonprofit educational corporation; provided, however, that such land or structures may be subject to reasonable regulations concerning the **bulk and **height** of structures and determining **yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking** and **building coverage requirements**" (G.L. c. 40A, §3).**



The Dover Amendment – Purpose and Interpretation

"The whole of the Dover Amendment, as it presently stands, **seeks to strike a balance between preventing local discrimination against an educational us, and honoring legitimate municipal concerns** that typically find expression in local zoning laws" (*Trustees of Tufts College v. City of Medford*, 415 Mass. 753, 615 N.E.2d 433 (1999)).



Institutional Districts and Dover

- ▶ Nothing in the Dover Amendment mandates the adoption of local zoning laws which are tailored specifically to educational uses.
- ▶ However, the court observes that ideally regulations should be specifically adapted to educational uses

Trustees of Tufts College v. City of Medford (1993).



Regulating Educational Uses and Dover

- ▶ *Regis College v. Town of Weston*, 417 Mass. 41, 627 N.E.2d 555 (1994) provides case law for regulating educational uses under Dover.
- ▶ Relevant findings from the majority opinion:
 - ▶ “The Dover Amendment protects only those uses of land and those structures that have as their bona fide goal something that can reasonably be described as “educationally significant. The educationally significant goal must be the “primary or dominant” purpose for which the land or structures will be used.”
 - ▶ “Although the dominant purpose requirement represents a judicial gloss on the statute, it is consistent with the statutory language and furthers the purposes of the act.”
 - ▶ “The protection of the Dover Amendment [is not] limited only to...facilities closely analogous to traditional schools and colleges.”
 - ▶ “A party seeking the protection of the Dover Amendment is [not] required to show that its proposed use of land will be analogous to a traditional educational institution.”



Determining “Reasonable Regulations” for Dimensional Standards.

- ▶ *Trustees of Tufts College v. City of Medford*, 415 Mass. 753, 615 N.E.2d 433 (1993), provides case law for regulating dimensional requirements of educational uses and provides some clarity on the definition of “reasonable regulations”
- ▶ Relevant findings from the majority opinion:
 - ▶ “A local zoning provision that requires an educational institution to adapt plans for the use of its land may be enforced, so long as the provision is shown to be related to a **legitimate municipal concern and its application bears a rational relationship to the perceived concern.**”
 - ▶ “When **compliance will involve no significant cost or other hardship to an educational institution** and does not interfere to any appreciable extent with the institutions plans, the institution has failed to make out a case that the requirement, as applied, is unreasonable.”



Determining “Unreasonable Regulations” for Dimensional Standards.

- ▶ *Trustees of Tufts College v. City of Medford*, 415 Mass. 753, 615 N.E.2d 433 (1993), provides case law for regulating dimensional requirements of educational uses and provides some clarity on the definition of “unreasonable regulations”
- ▶ Relevant findings from the majority opinion:
 - ▶ “A zoning **requirement that results in something less than nullification of a proposed educational use may be unreasonable** with in the meaning of the Dover Amendment.”
 - ▶ “Because local zoning laws are intended to be uniformly applied, an **education institution making challenges** similar to those made by Tufts will **bear the burden of proving that the local requirements are unreasonable as applied to its proposed project**. The educational institution might do so by demonstrating that **compliance would substantially diminish or detract from the usefulness of a proposed structure, or impair the character of the institution’s campus, without appreciably advancing the municipality’s legitimate concerns**. Excessive cost of compliance with a requirement imposed on an educational institution, without significant gain in terms of municipal concerns, might also qualify as unreasonable regulation of an educational use.”



Site Plan Review and Special Permits for Educational Uses and Dimensional Requirements

- ▶ “The Dover Amendment is intended to encourage “a degree of accommodation between the protected use...and the matters of critical municipal concern...”(citations omitted)...But add that such accommodation cannot be achieved by insisting that an educational institution seek a variance to obtain permission to complete its project.”
- ▶ “A Local zoning law that **improperly restricts an educational use by invalid means**, such as by special permit process, **may be challenged as invalid in all circumstances.**”



Existing Zoning for Tufts University

2024-2026 Zoning Update



Tufts University Boundary

A map of Massachusetts with a red dot indicating the location of the Harvard Forest in the northeastern part of the state.

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Categories

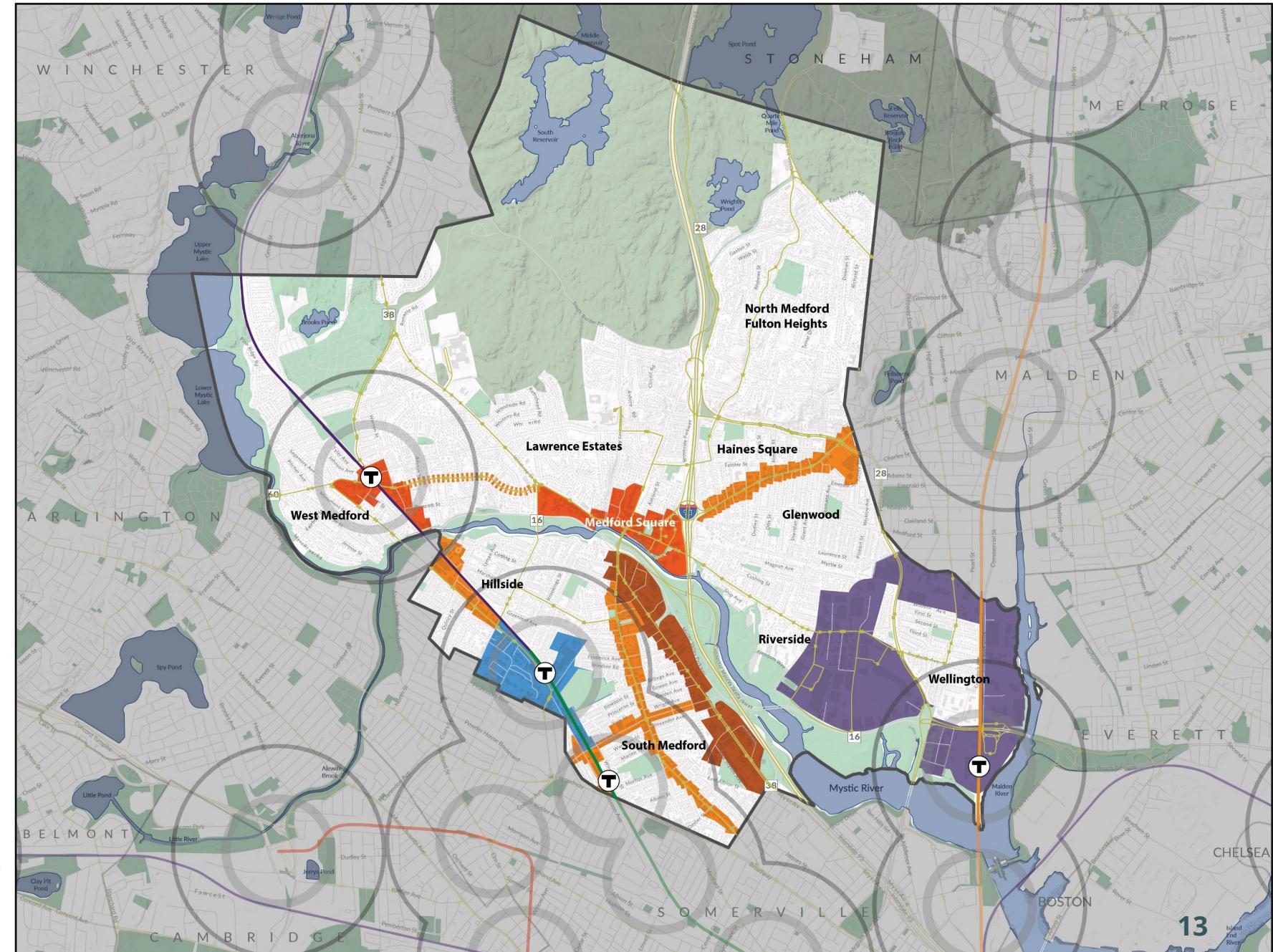
- Corridors
 - Squares
 - Institutional
 - Special District

This map shows open space
digitized from
MassGIS NextGen 911 project.



Milk

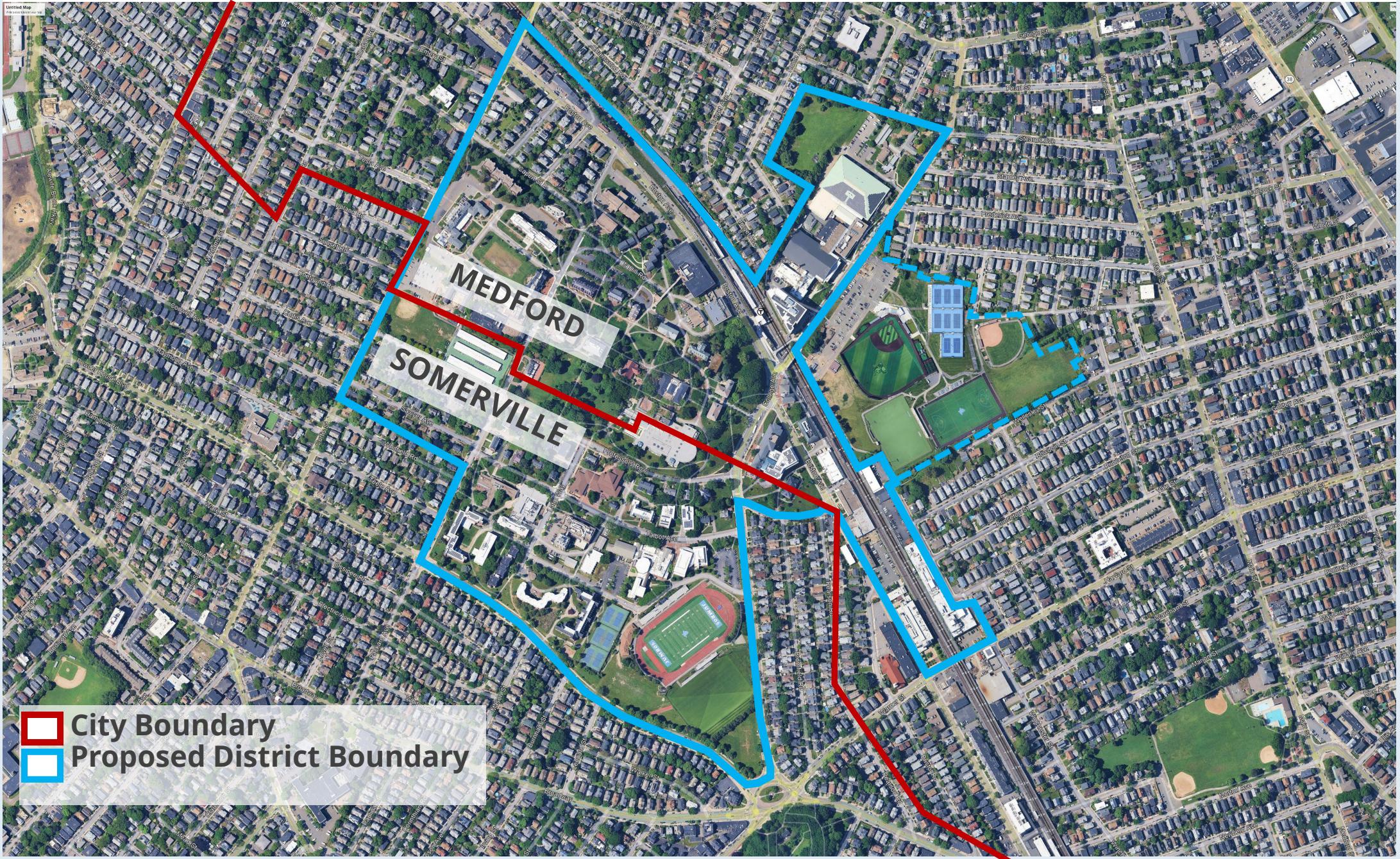
This map was produced in January 2025 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS: "Bureau of Geographic Information MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services"





2024-2026 Zoning Update

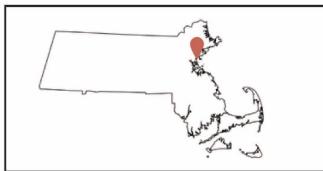
Current Zoning



2024-2026 Zoning Update



Current Zoning



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Buildings

Hydrography

Medford Zoning

APT1 - Apartment 1

APT2 - Apartment 2

C1 - Commercial 1

C2 - Commercial 2

GR - General Residential

I - Industrial

MUZ - Mized Use

O - Office

O2 - Office 2

ROS - Recreational Open Space

SF1 - Single Family 1

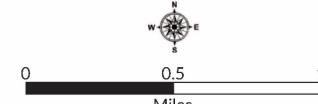
SF2 - Single Family 2

PDD-1

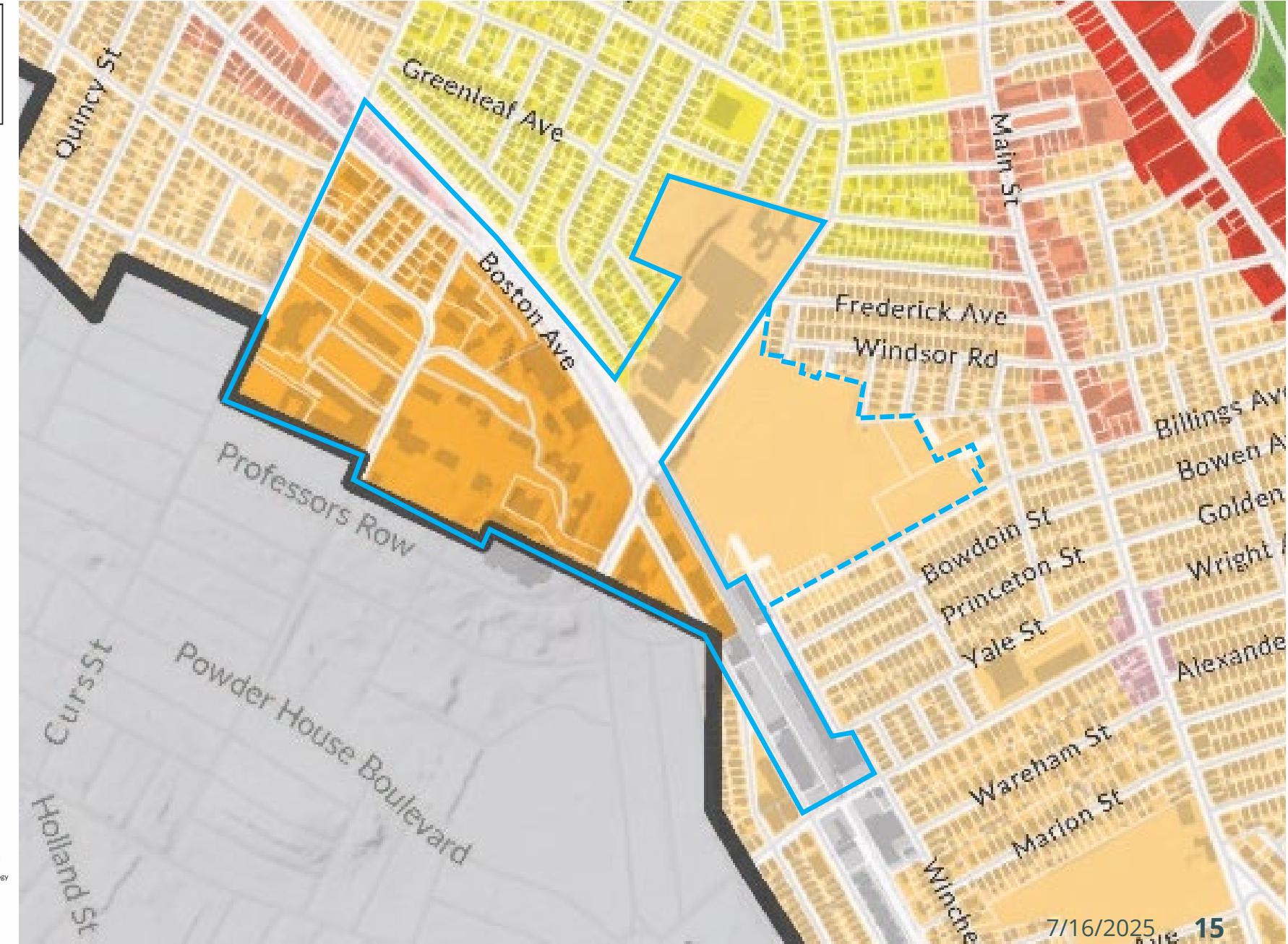
PDD-2

PDD-3

WSMOD



This map was produced in June 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS, "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".



7/16/2025

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Current Zoning

Medford Zoning Dimensions															
		Minimum Permitted												Maximum Permitted	
		Lot			Length (FT)			Open Space % Gross Floor Area			Yards (feet)				
		Area (SF)	Per Dwelling Unit	Total	Frontage	Width	Depth	Landscaped	Gross Floor Area	Usable	Front	Side	Rear	Lot Coverage (%)	Height
District	Use	Per Dwelling Unit	Per Dwelling Unit	Total	Frontage	Width	Depth	Landscaped	Usable	Front	Side	Rear	Lot Coverage (%)	Feet	Stories
C1	4. Multiple Dwelling	-	10,000	50	100	100	10%	-	15	15	15	30%	-	-	-
	4(a) 1st and 2nd dwelling units, total	4,500	-	-	-	-	25%	-	-	-	-	-	35	3	
	4. 1) on first three floors	1,000	-	-	-	-	25%	-	-	-	-	-	35	3	
	4. 2) on or above fourth floor	600	-	-	-	-	20%	-	-	-	-	-	75	6	
	4B. (a) Assisted Living (1st and 2nd dwelling units, total)		10,000	50	100	100	10%	25%	15	15	15	35%	75	6	
	4B. (b) Assisted Living (each additional dwelling unit)	4,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4B. 1) On first three floors	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4B. (b) On or above fourth floor	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4A. Hotel	-	-	50	100	100	10%	25%	-	-	15	-	140	15	
	5. Other permitted principal structures	-	-	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	50	4	
APT 2	1. Detached Single-Family	-	5,000	35	50	55	-	-	15	7 1/2	15	40%	35	2.5	
	2. Detached Two-Family	-	6,000	35	60	60	-	-	15	7 1/2	15	35%	35	2.5	
	3(a) Attached Single-Family (End Dwelling Unit)	-	3,500	35	35	75	10%	25%	15	10	15	30%	35	3	
	3(b) Attached Single-Family (Middle Dwelling Unit)	-	2,500	25	25	75	5%	25%	15	-	15	35%	35	3	
	4. Multiple Dwelling	-	10,000	50	100	100	10%	-	15	15	15	30%	-	-	
	4(a) 1st and 2nd dwelling units, total	4,500	-	-	-	-	25%	-	-	-	-	-	35	3	
	4. 1) on first three floors	1,000	-	-	-	-	25%	-	-	-	-	-	35	3	
	4. 2) on or above fourth floor	600	-	-	-	-	20%	-	-	-	-	-	75	6	
	4B. (a) Assisted Living (1st and 2nd dwelling units, total)	-	10,000	50	100	100	10%	25%	15	15	15	30%	50	4	
	4B. (b) Assisted Living (each additional dwelling unit)	4,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
APT 3	4B. 1) On first three floors	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4B. (b) On or above fourth floor	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	5. Other permitted principal structures	-	10,000	50	100	100	10%	25%	15	15	15	35%	125	15	



Current Zoning

Medford Zoning Dimensions																
		Minimum Permitted												Maximum Permitted		
		Lot			Length (FT)			Open Space % Gross Floor Area			Yards (feet)					
		Area (SF)		Per Dwelling Unit		Total	Frontage	Width	Depth	Landscaped	Usable	Front	Side	Rear	Lot Coverage (%)	Height
District	Use	Per Dwelling Unit	Total	Frontage	Width	Depth					Usable	Front	Side	Rear	Lot Coverage (%)	Height
GR	1. Detached Single-Family	-	5,000	35	50	55	-	-	-	-	15	7 1/2	15	40%	35	2.5
	2. Detached Two-Family	-	6,000	35	60	60	-	-	-	-	15	7 1/2	15	35%	35	2.5
	3(a) Attached Single-Family (End Dwelling Unit)	-	3,500	35	35	75	10%	25%	15	10	15	30%	35	3		
	3(b) Attached Single-Family (Middle Dwelling Unit)	-	2,500	25	25	75	5%	25%	15	-	15	35%	35	3		
	4B. (a) Assisted Living (1st and 2nd dwelling units, total)		10,000	50	100	100	10%	25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4B. (b) Assisted Living (each additional dwelling unit)	4,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4B. 1) On first three floors	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	4B. (b) On or above fourth floor	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	5. Other permitted principal structures	-	10,000	50	100	100	10%	25%	15	15	15	30%	35	3		
	5.e.1) Detached building	-	10,000	35	-	-	-	-	-	15	15	15	50%	30	2	
I	5.e.2a) Attached Building (end building)	-	10,000	35	-	-	-	-	-	15	15	15	50%	30	2	
	5.e.2b) Attached Building (middle building)	-	10,000	35	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	15	50%	30	2	



Examples of Zoning for Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts



Overview of Zoning Standards for Educational Uses in Select Massachusetts Cities and Towns.

Municipality	District	Allowed Non-Educational Uses	Dimensional Regulations	Parking	Project Review
Amherst	Special District	Greater Flexibility	Greater Flexibility	Greater Flexibility	Greater Flexibility
Wellesley	Special District	Some Flexibility	Some Flexibility	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Worchester	Special District	Some Flexibility	Greater Flexibility	Some Flexibility	No specific provisions
Fitchburg	Special District	Some Flexibility	Some Flexibility	Some Flexibility	Greater Flexibility
Northampton	Overlay District	Some Flexibility	Greater Flexibility	Greater Flexibility	No specific provisions
Boston	Institutional Master Plan				
Salem	Institutional Master Plan				
Waltham	Residential District	Same as Base zoning	Some Flexibility	No specific provisions	No specific provisions
Dartmouth	Residential District	Same as Base Zoning	No specific provisions	No specific provisions	No specific provisions



Amherst, MA Educational Zoning District

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ Amherst zoning provides significant flexibility for universities through its Educational District.
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ All educational uses and other uses necessary for the university.
- ▶ **Dimensional regulations:**
 - ▶ No dimensional regulations other than a 50ft buffer around the boundary of the educational district where dimensional regulations of the abutting zoning district shall apply.
- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ The zoning requires universities to provide enough off-street parking that there is no street parking or parking on property outside of the educational district.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ The educational institution must provide its plans to the Planning Board; however, the planning board does not have authority over the development.



Wellesley Educational Zoning District

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ Wellesley have 3 educational districts, Educational Districts, Educational Districts A, and Educational Districts B.
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ all uses that serve an educational purpose.
 - ▶ The district also allows for one to multi-unit dwellings for faculty, staff, and employee housing as well religious purposes, childcare, and clubs.
 - ▶ Educational Districts A and B allow for some more parking flexibility and some additional sports facilities.



Wellesley Educational Zoning District - Continued

- ▶ **Dimensional regulations:**
 - ▶ The Educational district has modest dimensional regulations that apply to the entire zoning district.
- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ Projects in Educational Districts must go through the same project approval process as the rest of the town.



Worchester, MA Institutional – Education Zoning District

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ Worcester has an instructional zoning category for educational and medical campuses (IN-S and IN-H respectively).
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ The Institutional – Education (IN-S) use allows for all educational uses as well as some additional uses by-right and by special-permit.
- ▶ **Dimensional regulations:**
 - ▶ IN-S requires a 50ft setback from the nearest property line and structures between 50-100ft from the property line must be no higher than the height limitations of the abutting district. Outside of the 100ft setback, there is no regulations for the height of buildings.
- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ Notwithstanding general provisions for off-street parking and loading requirements, IN-S off-street parking requirements are calculated solely upon classroom and dormitory uses.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.



Fitchburg, MA - University Zoning District (FSU)

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ Worcester has an instructional zoning category for educational and medical campuses (IN-S and IN-H respectively).
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ A mix of non-educational uses are permitted by right and by special permit.
- ▶ **Dimensional regulations:**
 - ▶ The FSU District has its own set of dimensional regulations similar to other districts except for its minimum lot area requirements which is significantly less than other districts.



Fitchburg, MA - University Zoning District (FSU)

- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ One (1) parking space for each five (5) seats or, where benches are used, one (1) space for each ten (10) linear feet of bench. Where no fixed seats are used (as in a museum), for each hundred (100) square feet of public floor area, there shall be one (1) parking space.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ The Planning Board can grant increased dimensional flexibility for projects in the district. Site plan review is required in FSU districts including major and minor site plan review.



Northampton, MA Educational Use Overlay District

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ Northampton employs a zoning overlay district for educational districts as opposed to a change in base zoning. The overlay provides greater dimensional flexibility including the elimination of lot area requirements setbacks, and minimum open space requirements.
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions beyond base zoning.
- ▶ **Dimensional regulations:**
 - ▶ The maximum building height in the overlay is increased to 85ft with some dimensional limitations within 30ft of the edge of the overlay boundary and near some residential streets.
- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ In addition to the overlay district, Smith College agreed to create a parking master plan in cooperation with the City to reach a mutual agreement on parking requirements.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.



Boston, MA Institutional Master Plan (IMP)

- ▶ **Purpose:**
 - ▶ The IMP is a comprehensive development plan for an institution that describes existing conditions, long range planning goals, and proposed projects. The plans also identify impacts on the surrounding community and mitigation efforts as well as community benefits.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 1. Institutions must submit an IMP notification form summarizing the master plan.
 2. The public may comment on the notification form.
 3. The project and public comments are reviewed and given a scoping determination by the City to determine what the plan should include.
 4. After the institution submits its IMP, it is reviewed and given an Adequacy Determination by the City.
 5. The Zoning Commission approves the IMP.
 6. The Mayor issues final zoning approval.
 7. Plans must be updated every two years describing their progress on campus projects.
 8. IMPs must be amended for new projects
 9. Plans must be renewed periodically, usually every 10 years.



Salem, MA – Institutional Master Plan (IMP)

- ▶ **Purpose:**
 - ▶ The IMP encourages systematic communication between the institutions and the city and provides an opportunity for improved public awareness of the goals and infrastructure needs of each institution. The IMP assist's the city in understanding future uses of property planned by the institutions covered herein.
 - ▶ Any use of land or structures for educational institutions shall be in conformance with its IMP.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ The IMP must be submitted to the Planning Department and be updated every 5 years.
 - ▶ Amendments to the plan must be submitted with the Planning Department
 - ▶ The plan shall contain the following:
 - ▶ A description of the organization
 - ▶ A site plan indicating all the property the institution owns, leases, uses ,or otherwise has an interest in or use of within the city
 - ▶ A description of planned growth, renovation, expansion, or other development activity of the institution over 5 years.



Waltham, MA

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ Colleges and Universities in Waltham are zoned as residential districts, specifically Residence A-2 and A-3. (RA2 and RA3).
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ The districts allow educational uses defined as "uses of land, buildings, or structures for providing learning in a general range of subjects."
 - ▶ All uses permitted by right or by special permit in RA2 and RA3.
- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.



Waltham, MA Continued

► Dimensional Regulations:

- ▶ Educational uses in RA2 and RA3 are subject to the base zoning dimensional regulations except height limitations given the following building setback criteria from residential or public open space property lines:
 - ▶ The minimum setback for all structures shall be 75ft. Surface parking is allowed within 40ft of the lot line with landscaping.
 - ▶ Structures are allowed up to a certain height within a certain setback as follows:
 - ▶ 75ft setback: 2 stories of 24ft
 - ▶ 125ft setback: 3 stories or 36ft
 - ▶ 350ft setback: 4 stories or 48ft
 - ▶ 450ft setback: 5 stories or 60ft.
 - ▶ All residential dormitories and recreational structures, such as bleachers and concession stands shall be at least 350ft from any residential property lines.
 - ▶ All parcels less than two acres are subject to the dimensional regulations of the zoning districts in which they are located.
 - ▶ All newly constructed recreational backstops, shall be at least 500ft from any residential property lines.



Dartmouth, MA

- ▶ **Zoning District:**
 - ▶ UMass Dartmouth is in Single Residence B Districts (SR-B), a low density, single-family district that comprises most of the town.
- ▶ **Allowable Uses:**
 - ▶ A mix of non-educational uses are permitted by right and by special permit within the SR-B.
- ▶ **Dimensional regulations:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.
- ▶ **Parking:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.
- ▶ **Project Review:**
 - ▶ No specific provisions for educational uses.



Medford Special District: Tufts University Early Considerations



Framework: Use Considerations

- ▶ What non-educational uses should be allowed in the district by-right?
- ▶ Are there some non-educational uses that should be allowed by special permit?



Framework: Dimensional Considerations

- ▶ Given proposed zoning changes, all abutting residential districts will allow up to 3 stories and commercial uses will allow between 3 stories and 7 stories.
- ▶ Should there be a density gradient along abutting residential properties?
- ▶ Should there be lot dimensional controls or district-wide maximum square footage?
- ▶ What are appropriate and reasonable allowable heights depending on topography, distance from existing residential, distance from transit, and existing campus development pattern?



Framework: Procedural Considerations

- ▶ Ways that the City can be involved in the planning process without violating the Dover Amendment
- ▶ What type of project review could be permissible and relevant for city input?
 - ▶ Conditional Site Plan Review
 - ▶ Advisory Site Plan Review
 - ▶ Administrative Site Plan Review
 - ▶ Institutional Master Plan



Framework: Other Considerations

- ▶ Parking regulations (location)
- ▶ Relation to corridor zoning, particularly Boston Avenue
- ▶ Development standards?



Map: Campus Characteristics (DRAFT)



