

TOWN OF SCITUATE  
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**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, November 30, 2023**  
**Zoom Video/Audio Conference – 7:00 pm**

*Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2021, Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022 and Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023; Scituate Advisory Committee Members held the November 30, 2023 meeting via Zoom Video and/or Audio (Dial-in for those with only phone access). All participants participated remotely.*

**Committee Members Present:** Elise Russo, Chair; Lynda Ferguson; Dan McGuiggin, Vice-Chair; Missy Seidel; Marc DiCosimo; Conor Doherty and Jerry Kelly

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**

Patrice Metro, Jamie Gilmore

**Also in Attendance:** Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant; Seth Pfeiffer, SCTV Director ; Karen Joseph, Town Planner; Patricia Lambert; Planning Board Chair; Robert Chessia, Scituate Historical Society President; Michael Minchello, Information Technology Director; Mark Donovan, Fire Chief; Mark Thompson, Chief of Police; Don Knapp, Director of Veterans Services; Mary Anne Palleiko, Beautification Commission and Sue Casey, Beautification Commission

Ms. Russo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Mr. Kelly made a motion to accept the agenda which was seconded by Ms. Seidel and voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Ms. Russo-yes; Ms. Ferguson-yes; Mr. McGuiggin-yes; Ms. Seidel-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes; and Mr. DiCosimo-yes.**

**Ms. Seidel made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 16, 2023 meeting which was seconded by Mr. McGuiggin. The minutes were voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote; Ms. Russo-yes; Ms. Ferguson-yes; Mr. McGuiggin-yes; Ms. Seidel-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes and Mr. DiCosimo-yes.**

*Mr. Doherty joined the meeting.*

*MBTA Zoning Regulations Update – Karen Joseph, Town Planner*

Ms. Joseph stated at the end of 2020 the Commonwealth passed legislation mandating a change

in zoning in MBTA communities to provide more housing due to the overall housing shortage in the state. The regulations were issued in 2023 and the Department of Housing Development stated 25% offset with mixed use districts. Scituate is required to zone for 1,239 multi-family housing as an MBTA community. Ms. Joseph showed on a map the two new sub districts in Greenbush and North Scituate to meet the regulations with a combined capacity 239 units. If approved, the Town would only have to zone for 1,000 units which would allow the existing zoning bylaws to remain mostly intact with only a density increase of 3 from 12 to 15 per acre in certain districts. She reviewed a summary of all of the clarifications, revisions and updates to the zoning bylaws which are required to become compliant. She noted that failure to comply with the Commonwealth's mandate will result in a lack of access to grants and in some cases funding for housing authorities has been negatively affected. The Planning Board hopes to file for the missed use districts with the Commonwealth in December and try to get a pre-approval of the zoning changes from the Commonwealth prior to town meeting.

Ms. Russo asked if there was a good chance for the town to get the mixed use district and Ms. Joseph replied in the affirmative due to the use of a consultant and the issues raised by Scituate with the Commonwealth. Mr. Kelly asked if anyone is doing a Greenbush traffic study and Ms. Joseph responded that the Planning Board had solicited a proposal for a study and it will move forward after this zoning is completed. Mr. Kelly asked how many units are in the Drew Company project and Ms. Joseph stated 78 units. Ms. Joseph noted that the Town only has to zone for the units; they do not have to build them. Mr. Kelly asked how mixed use development will work without requiring commercial parking requirements. Ms. Joseph stated that there are MBTA and town parking lots available.

Mr. Doherty asked about the 15 grants that the town would be unavailable to Scituate and if these were grants we had used in the past or currently and Ms. Joseph replied yes for the Massworks grant. (*Maps appended to minutes*)

*FY25 Departmental Budget Reviews (full FY25 budget available at [final\\_fy25\\_budget\\_website.pdf](https://www.scituatema.gov/final_fy25_budget_website.pdf) ([scituatema.gov](https://www.scituatema.gov)))*

*Police Department (Dept 210) – \$5,301,204 - Mark Thompson, Chief of Police*

Chief Thompson stated the department is focusing on four areas including; (1) emergency preparedness, (2) complete capital improvement including CAD/RMS system, SAFE boat and shooting range, (3) policies and procedures including accreditation and (4) working in the community. He noted that recruitment is difficult across the country as well as locally. He stated that applicants are looking for what a community can offer them. He highlighted mental health as two part issue inwardly for resources for officers and outwardly for community members. Technology management as a data driven department is very important to him. He informed members that many of the officers have been trained in the OneMind campaign.

Ms. Russo asked if Chief Thompson had graduated from the FBI National Academy and Chief Thompson confirmed. He said the experience, network and education was incredible and so helpful to him in his capacity. Ms. Russo asked if there were statistics on police officers per capita and if it was a relevant statistic relevant to his request for additional officers. Chief Thompson responded that there are some metrics but the significant driver for his request was

due to police reform and the growth of the seasonal population that also impacts the beaches, waterways and the roadways. He stated it limits their community engagement and the department becomes reactionary.

Mr. Doherty noted the decrease in part-time salaries and the increase in educational incentive. Chief Thompson responded that there have been a number of officers have attained higher degrees which results in an increase in the educational incentive. Mr. Doherty asked if there are tasks that officers are doing that could be allocated to a civilian such as parking enforcement. Chief Thompson replied that they had looked at that when police reform came out and they chose to look at technology rather than personnel. Chief Thompson also responded that police reform required personnel to be brought up to the same level of a training standard which does not allow for lesser trained individuals to do law enforcement and pseudo law enforcement activities.

Ms. Seidel asked about the capital outlay decrease and the impact on the department. Chief Thompson responded that the reduction was two out of three cruisers due to financial constraints in this budget. He noted the fleet has been well maintained and that the reduction could be acceptable for one year but problematic beyond that as their patrol vehicles run throughout the day.

Mr. Kelly asked how the six new full-time officers equate to replacing seasonal officers. Chief Thompson responded that there are other initiatives including SROs and social services that are either not be fully addressed or being done on overtime. He noted it is not a one for one equation for coverage especially as there were more of the part-time officers which aided in flexibility and cost management due to the lower pay scale.

Mr. Doherty asked about the tire replacement for patrol vehicles and if it was done through DPW for bulk savings. Chief Thompson stated they buy the tires off state contract and they are also seeking alternative sources for brakes to save money.

*Public Safety Communications (Dept 230) – \$770,534 - Mark Thompson, Chief of Police*  
Chief Thompson stated they would like to work on improvements in technology and polices and procedures in the coming years. He wants to focus on training and efficiencies to become the best communications center in Massachusetts. He noted the budget is made up predominantly of personnel. He stated that staffing is a challenge due to medical issues and retention.

*Fire Department (Dept 220) – \$6,060,403 - Mark Donovan, Fire Chief*  
Chief Donovan discussed his goals in emergency management. He noted the grant application for a second generator at the middle school to allow that venue to be used as a shelter as it is more advantageous than the high school. He noted the grant funded training with Marshfield and that six firefighters are now certified as Train the Trainers. He also noted the risks involved with addressing fires in older buildings/residences. He stated the department wasn't to use new technology to reduce equipment accidents including backing up and maneuvering in tight areas. He stated the final goal is to merge the dive team, boat team and drone team as a single marine unit. He informed members that staffing was an issue for him as well including nine vacancies with another expected. He stated they have up to six new firefighters in the pipeline but also

have three firefighters that will be retiring within the year. He noted the ongoing battle with dealing with MEMA & FEMA to get the damages to the coastal infrastructure addressed.

He stated the SAFE program is still yielding great results and they hope to expand it. The program has a target group of preschoolers to sixth graders as well as a Senior SAFE program including replacing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. He stated they over \$200,000 in grants funds last year.

Mr. McGuiggin asked if all newly hired firefighters are paramedics. Chief Donovan stated they are not but they will be required to become paramedics within a reasonable time period which is being defined currently. Mr. McGuiggin asked if Scituate had looked at the Mass Maritime emergency response program that enables students to become firefighters in their sophomore year. He noted they are currently working with Barnstable and Chief Donovan said they were already working with them as well as South Shore Vocational Technical.

Mr. Kelly asked Chief Donovan if the Governor's new Coastal Resiliency task force would assist Scituate. Ms. Holt responded that time would reveal if it was helpful in permitting or not. Mr. Doherty asked if the grant application for the generator could be through MEMA as well as FEMA. Chief Donovan stated that was a potential but the FEMA grant was more substantial. He asked about the course for accident prevention relevant to number of accidents, cost of damage or some other reason. Chief Donovan responded they do offer a course in house but they also want to include some policies and procedures. He noted most vehicles have warning devices on their bumpers but not major equipment such as the fire trucks. Chief Donovan further responded that the frequency is increasing and causing equipment to be out of service and many are avoidable.

Mr. DiCosimo asked if the shelter would move from the high school to the middle school with the new generator and Chief Donovan responded in the affirmative. Mr., DiCosimo asked if there were other buildings could be used for shelters as the entire school system gets shutdown. Chief Donovan responded the senior center is an alternate shelter but if shelters are open, schools are likely closed anyways. He also stated that people can be moved out to a regional shelter or hotels once the crisis is over.

*Information Technology (Dept 155) – \$833,091 – Mike Minchello, Information Technology Director*

Mr. Minchello stated his ongoing replacement of servers, the expansion of the VoIP telephone system, a change to the ISP provider and an increase in fault tolerance, replacement of firewalls and the grant funded cyber training. He noted the expansion of the fiber network funded by a grant. He noted all of these projects were done in addition to the department's day to day support of all departments. He noted the never ending increase of security measures and expansion of security cameras including the athletic fields. He is currently working on a stickerless beach parking solution project for next summer linked to the RMV for validation and uploaded to the police department parking enforcement program.

Mr. Minchello stated the budget was level service with the addition of a security related request in the Technical Services line including log aggregation which helps if there is an event but also

provides an AI component to look for patterns or other indicators of risk. Mr. Doherty asked if the town had cyber insurance and Mr. Minchello responded in the affirmative. Mr. Kelly asked if Mr. Minchello was satisfied with his disaster recovery program and he responded yes but he would like more of an opportunity to test it. Ms. Russo congratulated Mr. Minchello on his success rate for grant applications.

*Veterans (Dept 543) – \$206,818 – Don Knapp, Veterans Services Director*

Mr. Knapp informed members that his budget is level service. He noted he adjusted his office supply budget down but increased his flag marker budget due to an increase in costs. He stated that the majority of his budget is the subsistence support (MGL c. 115 benefits) and it is 75% reimbursable from the Commonwealth including the flag markers and wreaths. He stated one of his goals is to provide links on his webpage to programs for housing for veterans through multiple sources. He also wants to provide links to the education benefits and to get the younger veterans involved. He stated one of the challenges is mental health and connecting veterans and their families to these resources. He explained that the COVID relief and benefits actually hurt some veterans as they could no longer qualify for programs.

Mr. Doherty asked if the subsistence funding could be used for transportation and Mr. Knapp responded in the negative. He stated that there is a pilot program to allow Lyft and Uber reimbursements. The VA hospitals will send out a van if they make arrangements in advance but it will contain other patients so it can make for a long ride.

*Beautification Commission (Dept 650) – \$37,500 – Mary Anne Palleiko, Beautification Commission Member*

Ms. Palleiko stated their landscaping contract has increased over 100% for the maintenance of some island and the railroad crossings. The Commission has 28 adopt a lots and they are looking for three more volunteers. They have placed a tree in the gazebo and it was decorated by members already. She noted the Commission is encouraging native plants and they are more expensive.

Ms. Casey noted the increased over FY24 due to the landscape contract as some islands had to be added. Also there have been some special projects at the train station, in Greenbush and North Scituate. The additional businesses in Greenbush may result in additional adopt a lots. She also thanked the DPW for their support with their endeavors.

Ms. Russo thanked the Commission for all of their hard work and effort around town and it is greatly appreciated. Ms. Russo asked about the 3,000 gallon water tank at the DPW. Ms. Casey responded that the DPW has a tank that you can use to fill a rain barrel. Ms. Ferguson asked which properties the Commission tends rather than the DPW. Ms. Casey responded that the DPW takes care of the recreational areas, schools and fields and the bid common areas while the Beautification Commission takes care of the extras. Ms. Ferguson stated the mowing and mulching should be done by the town and should not be reliant on volunteers. Ms. Casey said the Commission takes care of the adopt a lots. Mr. Doherty also thanked the Commission for their work as it translates to citizens wanting to support that work. He noted that the budget was small but the results are much greater.

*Historical Buildings (Dept 691) – \$49,228 – Robert Chessia, Scituate Historical Society President*

Mr. Chessia stated the lighthouse was coming along and should be painted in the spring. The renovation of the Cudworth House was also coming along. He responded that the Scituate Historical Society takes care of 13 properties. Ms. Russo asked if the scaffolding would be up all winter and Mr. Chessia responded in the negative and it would be removed when the mortar sets on the bricks.

Mr. Doherty asked about the insulation of the historical properties and whether MassSaves could be utilized as they are not residences. Mr. Chessia responded that they had not looked into that program yet. He noted the budget now includes the heating oil for the Mordecai Lincoln property. Mr. Kelly asked if Scituate Historical Society maintains Mordecai Lincoln property and Mr. Chessia said the town maintains it. Ms. Russo asked if there was anything of value to sell and Mr. Chessia stated that most of the valuable items were removed by the previous owners. Mr. Chessia informed members that the sister city visitors all came to visit the historical properties in addition to 1,000 annual visitors.

*Town Accountant (Dept 135) – \$484,568 - Nancy Holt, Finance Director/Town Accountant*  
Ms. Holt informed members of the implementation of the new Munis platform and the additional modules for school, police and fire details as well as septage disposal and the student activity module. She noted the publication of the first Popular Annual Financial Report and the town achieving the Certificate of Excellence Award in Financial Reporting for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the ninth year.

She stated the majority of the budget was for personnel costs for the four full-time positions and the remainder was in technical services for the independent audit and OPEB actuarial study. Ms. Russo asked if the vacant position would be filled and Ms. Holt said not currently.

*Other Business*

Ms. Russo informed members that there would be a special town meeting on April 29, 2024 for the Hatherly School project. Ms. Holt will supply a link to the public forum next week. Mr. Kelly noted that the architect and OPM are wonderful and they are the same as the Gates project.

Mr. Doherty asked about the Social Service Manager and Ms. Holt summarized the additional services available through the tri-town grant including two social workers and a case manager to assist with the workload.

Ms. Holt reminded members that the 12/7/23 meeting was by ZOOM but the 12/14/23 meeting would be in person in the Community Room at the Town Library.

**Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Mr. Doherty at 9:01 p.m.; the Committee voted unanimously in favor (7-0) by roll call vote; Ms. Russo-yes; Ms. Ferguson-yes; Mr. McGuiggin-yes; Ms. Seidel-yes; Mr. Kelly-yes; Mr. Doherty-yes and Mr. DiCosimo-yes.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Holt  
Recorder

# Advisory Committee

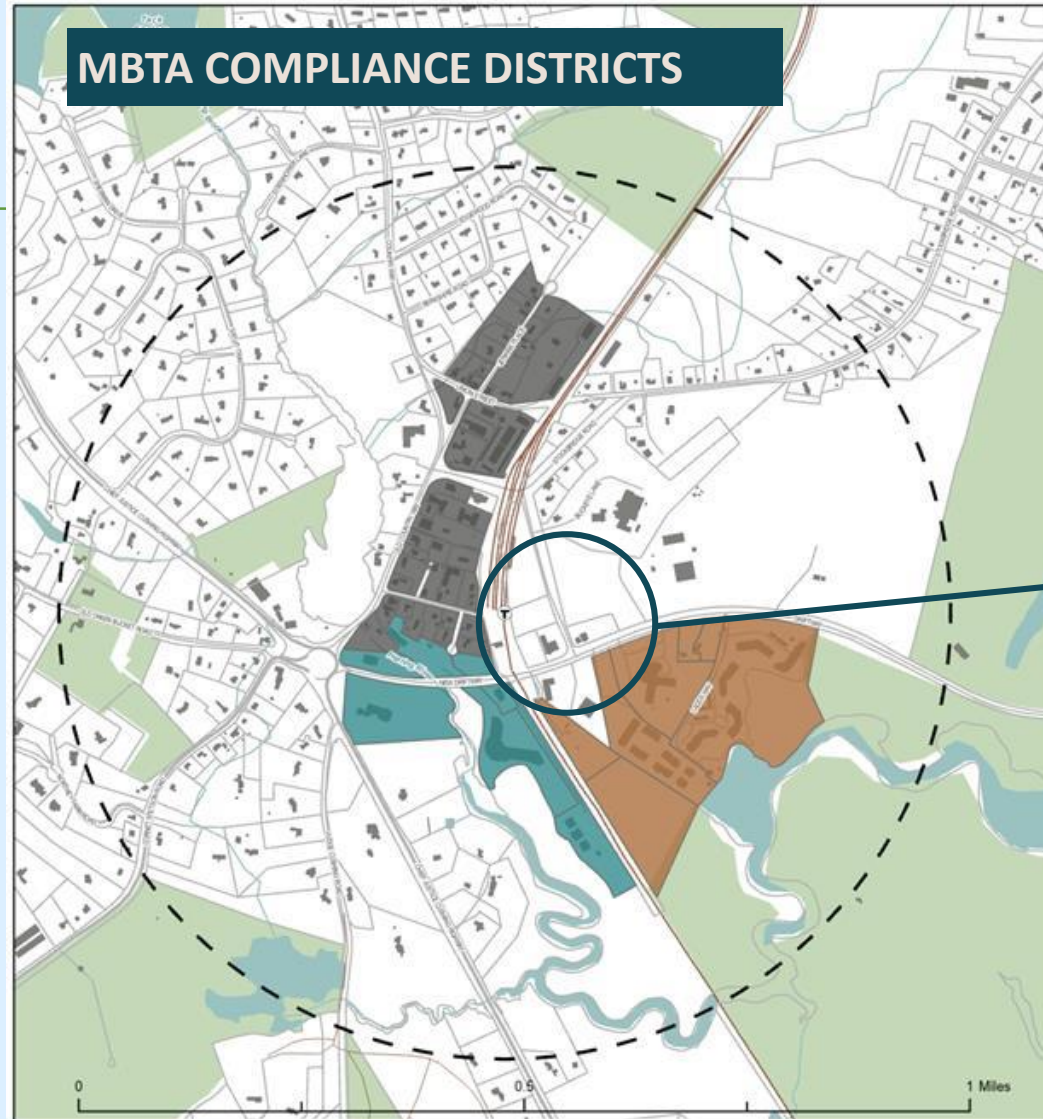
November 30, 2023

Planning Board

MBTA Communities

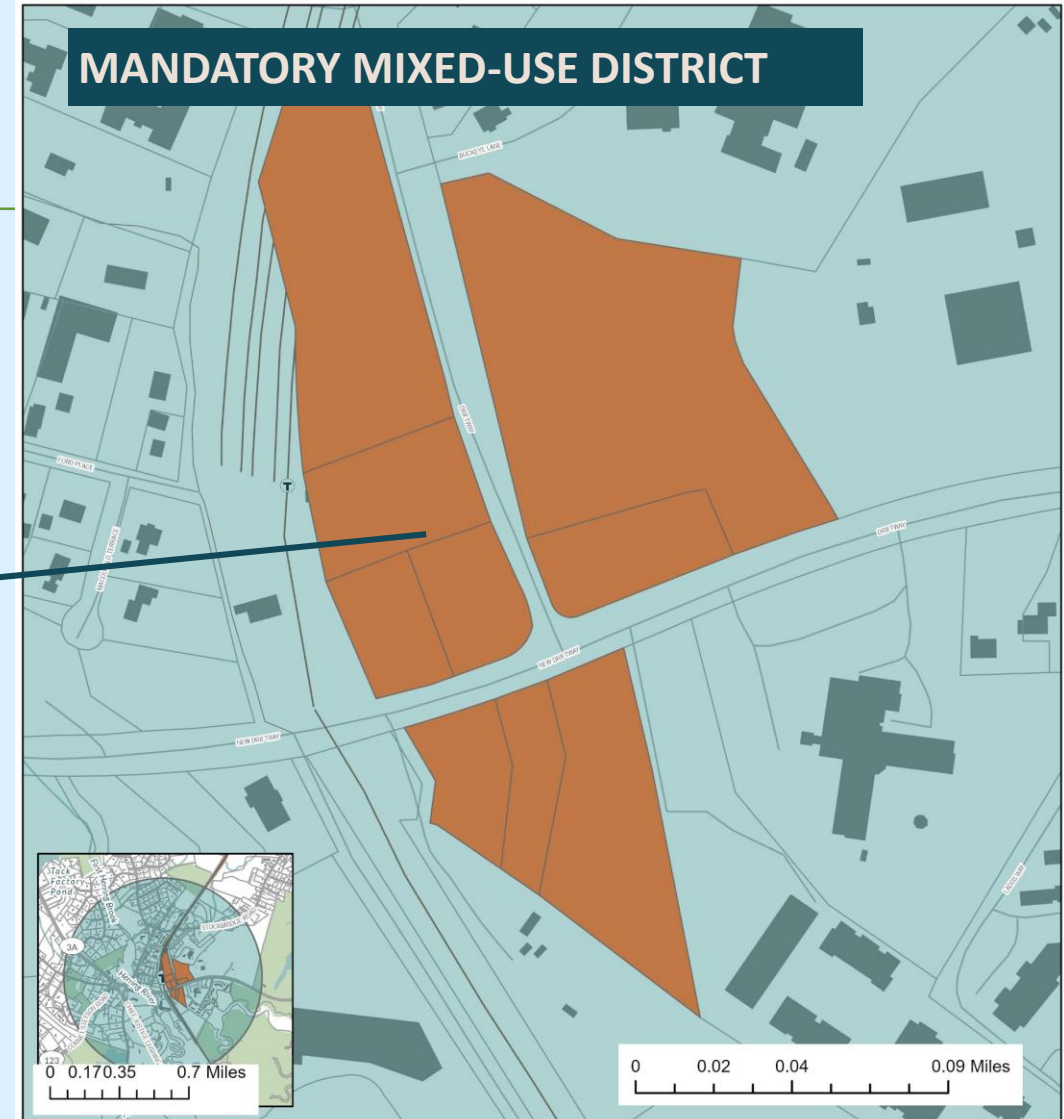


## MBTA COMPLIANCE DISTRICTS



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP,  
MAPC Trailmap

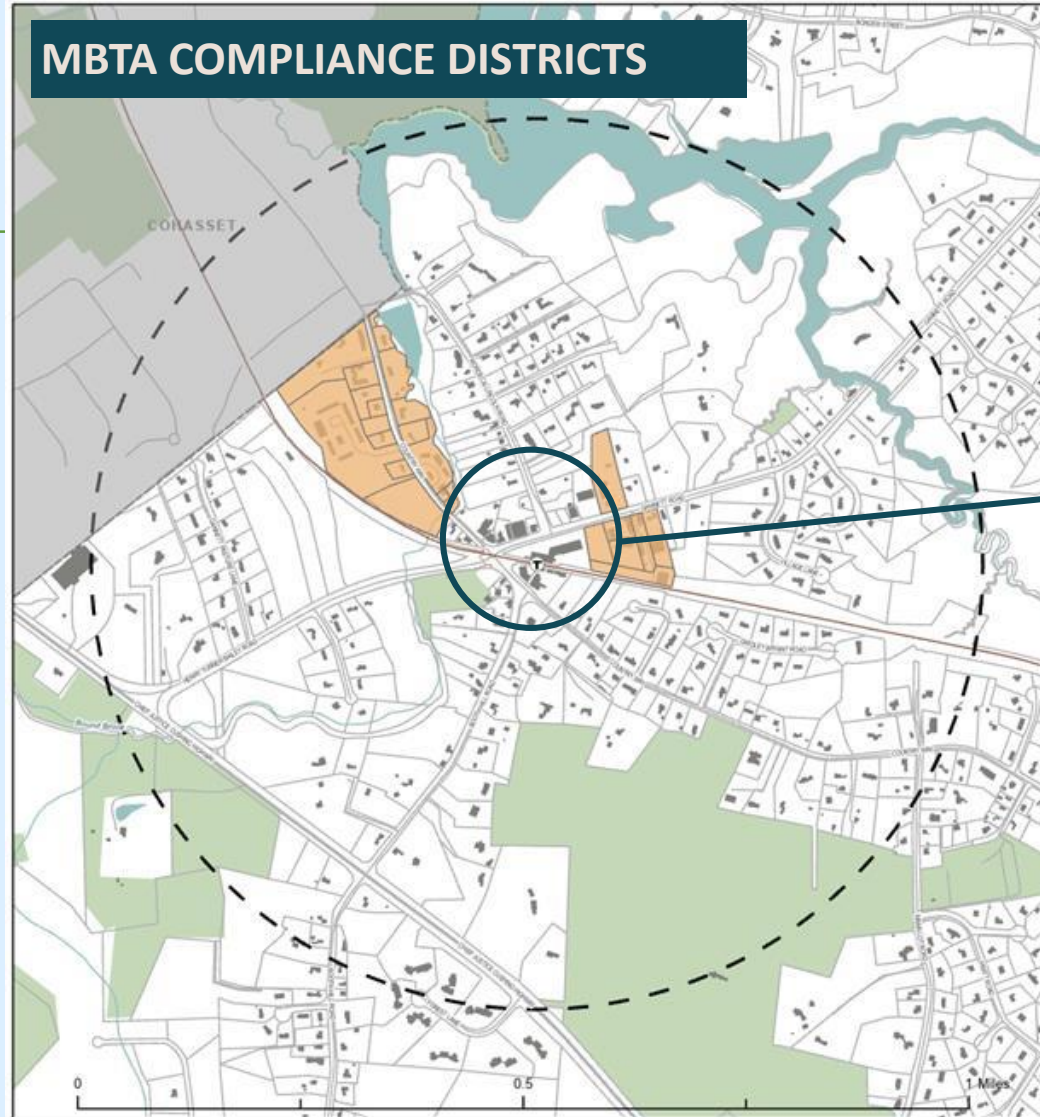
## MANDATORY MIXED-USE DISTRICT



Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP,  
MAPC Trailmap



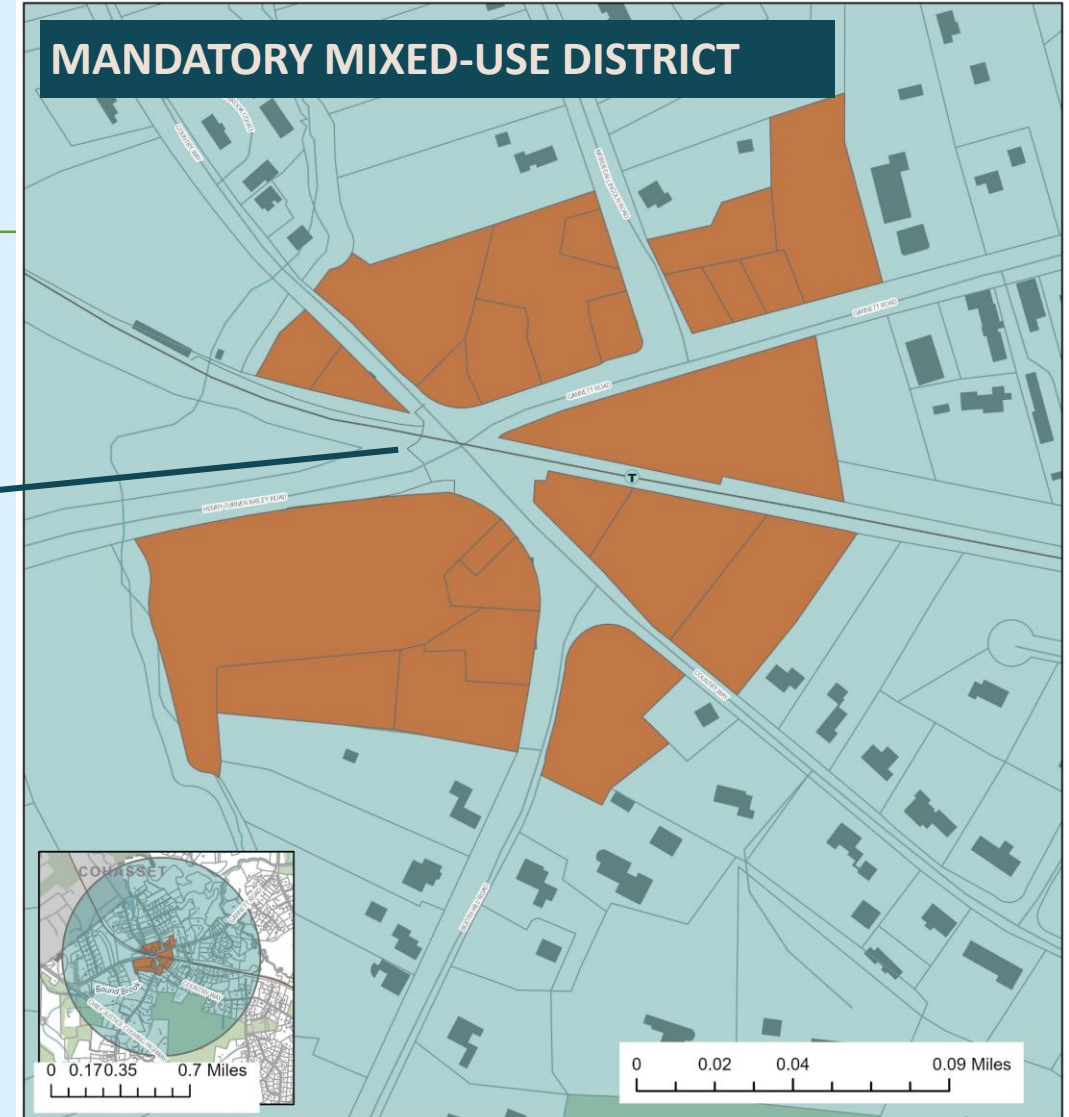
## MBTA COMPLIANCE DISTRICTS



- Schools
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open
- North Scituate Outer Village
- Transit 1/2 Mile Buffer

Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap

## MANDATORY MIXED-USE DISTRICT



- Schools
- Buildings
- Parcels
- Trails
- Water bodies
- Open space
- Commuter Rail Station
- North Scituate Village Center
- .5 mile Station Buffer

Sources: MassGIS, MassDEP, MAPC Trailmap