

Form Name: Action Plan for MBTA Communities  
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## Action Plan for MBTA Communities

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**Description Area** Please read the Section 3A Guidelines before attempting to complete this form. Please note: Action Plan Forms must be submitted by a municipal official with authority to act on behalf of the municipality on matters of zoning, such as the municipal CEO or planning director, are accepted.

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### Section 1: Identification

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**Description Area** The Section 3A Guidelines establish zoning metrics that apply uniquely to each MBTA community based on its local transit stations, existing housing stock, population, and developable land. This section of the Action Plan helps to identify the transit stations that determined each community's category. Appendix 1 of the Section 3A Guidelines lists each community's category and minimum multi-family unit capacity requirement.

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**1.1 MBTA Community Name** Townsend

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**1.2. Community Category** Adjacent small town

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**1.3. Multifamily Unit Capacity Requirement** 178

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**1.4. Does this municipality have any MBTA rapid transit stations within its boundaries?** No

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**1.5. Does this municipality have any MBTA commuter rail stations within its boundaries?** No

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**1.6. Does this municipality have any other MBTA transit stations that are located outside of its municipal boundaries that may have "developable station area" within them?** No

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**1.7. Please provide the name of the person filling out this form** Michael Crowley

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**1.7a. Title** Land Use Coordinator

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**1.7b. Email Address** mcrowley@townsendma.gov

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1.7c. Phone Number	(978) 597-1700 ext. 1723
1.8. Please briefly describe other members of the core team developing the multi-family zoning district.	Eric Slagle - Town Administrator Jodie Deschenes - Housing Authority Administrative Assistant. Karen Chapman- (MRPC) Montachusett Regional Planning Authority

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## Section 2: Housing Overview

2.1. Does this municipality have any established housing related goals or strategies from municipal planning documents, such as a Housing Production Plan, Master Plan, or Economic Development Plan?	Yes
2.1a. Please briefly describe any relevant strategies, goals, or objectives, and the work that has been done to date.	Townsend compiled a housing production plan earlier this year, which identified several priorities, including the need for more affordable housing. A pathway identified to these goals was through the 40R smart growth districts. These districts would allow for a higher percentage of affordable housing, which is one of Townsend's highest priorities.
2.2. Is this municipality currently working on any other planning for housing?	Yes
2.2a. Please briefly describe the housing work underway.	Townsend established a housing trust, and the Land Use Coordinator is working with them to assess feasibility of high density, multifamily, affordable housing. Additionally, we have been conducting comprehensive bylaw review to promote and facilitate affordable housing.

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## Section 3: Preliminary Zoning Strategies

3.1. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following zoning strategies is this community most likely to use for compliance? (Select all that apply)	c. A new 40R or other overlay zoning district
3.1c. Please briefly describe the potential district and location. Optional: Attach any supporting documents that show planning work the community has already done for this district(s).	For Townsend, we are developing a Townsend Border Village Smart Growth 40R district with MRPC. We are planning to create several districts in phases to allow for revision and development to be iterative and more successful. Our pilot area was identified in eastern Townsend along Rt 119 (our main roadway in town). Our pilot parcels are Parcel ID 41-3-0, 41-2-0, and 41-1-0. These three sites are adjacent to our largest commercial center in townsend, including the grocery store, and is across the street from the regional high school, which allows for walkability to and from the housing and proximity to jobs. This area also has the best water utility services, and the roadway is already being discussed for traffic analysis and planning.

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**3.2. What non-housing characteristics are important for this community to consider in its 3A zoning district?**

For Townsend, we are well short of our state affordable housing requirements. As such, we need our multifamily housing to allow for the greatest percentage of affordable housing. The Final MBTA requirements outline for affordable housing that "the zoning requires not more than 10 percent of the units in a project to be affordable units", or 20 percent if "the multi-family zoning district requires DHCD review and approval as a smart growth district under chapter 40R."

Because Townsend is in critical need of affordable housing, and the creation of high volumes of multifamily housing with only 10% affordability would forever put our state mandated goal out of reach. As such, we are looking to fulfill out MBTA requirements exclusively through 40R smart growth overlay districts.

**Section 4: Action Plan Timeline**

**Description Area** This section creates a framework to input preliminary plans for a zoning adoption process. On the table below, please use Column 1 (from the left) to describe a task, Column 2 to input a start date, and Column 3 to input a finish date. Every community must provide a timeline for the below-listed tasks. &nbsp;Additional space is provided for any other tasks that a community wishes to list. DHCD will review proposed timelines for feasibility before approving an Action Plan.&nbsp;Public outreach  
Developing zoning&nbsp;Applying DHCD's compliance model to test for density and unit capacity  
Holding planning board hearings&nbsp;Holding legislative sessions and adopt compliant zoning&nbsp;Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

<b>Description Area</b>	Task
<b>Description Area</b>	Start
<b>Description Area</b>	Finish
<b>Short Answer</b>	Public Outreach
	Jul 18, 2022
	Dec 31, 2025
<b>Short Answer</b>	Developing Zoning
	Aug 02, 2022
	Dec 31, 2023
<b>Short Answer</b>	Applying DHCD's compliance model to test for density and unit capacity
	Aug 01, 2022

Aug 01, 2025

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**Short Answer**

Holding planning board hearings

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Sep 01, 2022

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Jun 30, 2025

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**Short Answer**

Holding legislative sessions and adopt compliant zoning

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May 30, 2023

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May 30, 2025

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**Short Answer**

Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

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Dec 01, 2025

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Dec 30, 2025

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