



Guide to Writing Letters to the Editor in Support of MBTA Communities

Letters to the editor are one of the most important tools for promoting zoning associated with the MBTA Communities Law in local media. A steady cadence of letters to the editor helps ensure a balanced public conversation and showcase the wide variety of community members who support more housing.

Tips for submitting a letter to the editor:

- Make it original, localized, and focused more on community members than on policy or statistics.
- Keep your letter under 150 words (or check the publication's word count limit, which can often be found online).
- Give your full contact information as they may follow up to confirm you are the author.
- Include an affiliation if relevant or helpful (e.g. if you're representing a civic or other organization).

A template might look something like the below:

Paragraph 1: Why you are writing the letter. Be sure to personalize to your own community.

Examples:

I bought a home in [community] 30 years ago. I'm concerned that because housing has gotten so expensive, my kids won't be able to settle down here like I did. I'm asking Town Meeting members and our community to come together around MBTA Communities zoning this fall to create more housing choices for everyone.

I own the restaurant on Main Street, and my single biggest challenge is recruiting staff. Why? Housing is so scarce and rents so high in [community] that people are finding it hard to live here. As a business owner who cares about my employees, I urge our City Council and our community to support MBTA Communities zoning.

Paragraph 2: Choose one or two key facts from Page 2 that you think will be most persuasive in providing context about the plan being put forward for your community.

Examples:

The Planning Board has led a thorough engagement process and created a plan we should be proud to support. It will help make housing more affordable for people at all stages of life – people looking to grow their career, start a family, or start a new chapter later in life.

This truly is an issue that affects all of us. Massachusetts has built far too few homes in recent decades. Buying a home now means competing against wealthier people for the same limited number of homes available. Even if your current home value is going up, you will be at a disadvantage when you try to buy your next home.

Paragraph 3: Reiterate your ask for support.

Example:

I hope my fellow community members will join me in supporting zoning that creates more homes for all.



Facts on MBTA Communities zoning planning

Below are facts on zoning related to the MBTA Communities Law. Feel free to draw from these facts as you draft your letter, connecting the facts back to your own personal stories and experiences.

- **Creates more housing options for everyone**
This plan will help make housing more affordable for people at all income levels and all stages of life – people looking to grow their career, start a family, or start a new chapter later in life.
- **Makes homebuying less competitive**
Buying a home now means competing against wealthier people for the same limited number of homes available. Even if your current home value is going up, you will be at a disadvantage the next time you need to move.
- **Provides renters more options and predictability** (*for communities with high populations of renters*)
Creating more homes overall will lead to more rental homes, which will stabilize rents and give renters better options.
- **Will lead to a more climate-friendly, walkable, and vibrant community.**
Building housing near transit helps solve our housing crisis while creating more customers for local businesses, less car traffic, and cleaner air.

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