

Misinformation About Gloucester's Multi-Family Overlay District (aka "3A Zoning Plan")

✗ CLAIM: *"Voting NO saves Gloucester money. Voting YES will raise taxes massively to cover schools, police, fire, etc."*

✓ FACT: The plan **does not require any construction**—it only requires *zoning* to allow housing by-right in limited areas. *No guaranteed increase in population, no forced building.*

📊 Projection of thousands of units and millions in new costs is speculative and based on extreme assumptions, not local growth patterns. The city expects at most *10–20 units per year in the downtown districts*, which tracks with Gloucester's normal growth. And *school population has actually declined dramatically* over the past 15 years (MA Dept of Education), despite modest growth in housing units (US Census).

✗ CLAIM: *"If we pass the zoning plan, Gloucester will end up like Rantoul Street in Beverly or Broad Street in Lynn."*

✓ FACT: This is **simply not true**. The Gloucester zoning plan is **dramatically different** in size, zoning, and intent. *It only allows up to 3-family homes by right in limited areas, with larger buildings permitted only in two small districts where they already exist.*

🕒 Bottom line: Comparing Gloucester's zoning plan to major development areas in larger, denser cities like Beverly or Lynn is like comparing apples to lobsters. The **densities allowed in Gloucester's plan are significantly lower** than in places like Rantoul Street, which were developed under completely different zoning rules, market conditions, redevelopment goals, and proximity to Boston transit demands.

✗ CLAIM: *"The state will control Gloucester forever if the zoning plan is passed."*

✓ FACT: This zoning plan was created by Gloucester, for Gloucester, through a year-long process of public input. *It maintains all current Gloucester building, health, parking, and safety codes and ordinances.*

📍 Gloucester retains full local control over permitting and enforcement. But Gloucester could lose control if the **state makes a plan for us due to non-compliance with 3A.**

✗ CLAIM: *"It's an unfunded mandate, and municipalities don't have to comply."*

✓ FACT: The **MBTA Communities law is mandatory**, and Gloucester must comply. Voting NO doesn't exempt the city—it just means the **state may impose its own zoning plan** without local input.

⚖️ The State Auditor's unfunded mandate claim is not valid, since Gloucester received \$74,200 from the state to pay a consultant to help create a zoning plan which would comply.

✗ CLAIM: “Grants can’t legally be withheld—they include federal money.”

✓ FACT: Many of Gloucester’s crucial grants are **state-managed** and tied directly to 3A compliance. A NO vote **puts millions at risk**, including for water, wastewater, library funding, housing, and infrastructure.

📊 Gloucester got **\$8.7M from the state in 2024** alone—non-compliance jeopardizes future funding.

✗ CLAIM: “Gloucester will be required to build about 1,703 new housing units.”

✓ FACT: 3A does **not require Gloucester to build anything**—it just allows streamlined permitting for housing in limited, already developed areas, enabling *moderate, organic growth and affordability* consistent with neighborhood character. Based on current zoning and past trends, **only 10–20 new units per year** are expected in the downtown area, which is consistent Gloucester’s normal growth.

🚧 This is a zoning update, not a building order—most properties **won’t change at all**. The idea that Gloucester *must* add 1,703 units is a scare tactic, not a reality.

✗ CLAIM: “There’s going to be hundreds of housing units built on top of or next to Shaw’s.”

✓ FACT: While it is sad that Shaw’s did not choose to renew its lease, the Shaw’s property on Railroad Ave. **has nothing to do with the zoning plan and is not in any of the zoning plan districts**.

🛒 *The Shaw’s property is currently zoned entirely for commercial buildings* and it is up to the owner to decide what to do, but we hope another grocery store will come in!

🎯 Summary: What the 3A Zoning Plan *Actually* Does

- Maintains local control
 - Supports moderate, context-appropriate housing options
 - Preserves current standards for parking, public health, height and infrastructure
 - Keeps Gloucester eligible for key infrastructure funding
 - **Does not mandate construction or override neighborhoods**
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✓ **Vote YES on April 24!**

Early voting April 14-18

For more information, see www.yesforgloucester.com



YES FOR
GLOUCESTER