## 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 byright 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).

X 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 <u>significantly</u> 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.

X 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.

X 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.

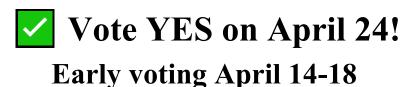
- X CLAIM: "Grants can't legally be withheld—they include federal money."
- FACT: Many of Gloucester's crucial grants are state-managed and tied directly to 3A compliance. A NO vote puts millions at risk, including for water, wastewater, library funding, housing, and infrastructure.
- Gloucester got \$8.7M from the state in 2024 alone—non-compliance jeopardizes future funding.
- X 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.
- X 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



For more information, see www.yesforgloucester.com



