



Devens Housing Production Working Group Meeting #4

May 8, 2025



Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **General Updates**
- **Presentation of Revised Draft Report**
- **Discussion**
- **Next Steps and Closing Comments**

Devens Working Group Goal and Charge



Per Section 298 of Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024

Charge: Submit a report to the legislature that will determine a strategy and plan to provide for increased housing production within the Innovation and Technology Center zoning district in Devens.

The report is due **May 18, 2025**.

GOAL: Provide a vision for increasing housing production within Devens.



1. Devens Working Group Webpage

- All public comments and letters received throughout the Working Group’s deliberations have been uploaded and can be viewed
- The latest draft of the report has been uploaded
- Access page at: www.mass.gov/orgs/devens-working-group
 - Contains resources on Mass Leads, links to the Devens Enterprise Commission website, and hosts our public meeting notices for this group.

2. The Public Comment Period has Concluded

- Members of the public have been invited to participate and discuss at all DWG Meetings to date
- The Working Group collected written public comments from February 25th until April 28th
- We received 11 submissions in total:
 - 7 public comments from residents
 - 6 Devens residents
 - 1 Ayer resident
 - 4 letters from 3 municipalities (Ayer, Harvard x2, Shirley)

3. The Working Group Has 1 Meeting before the May 18th Report Deadline

- Final Meeting: May 14th at 1:00pm via Zoom

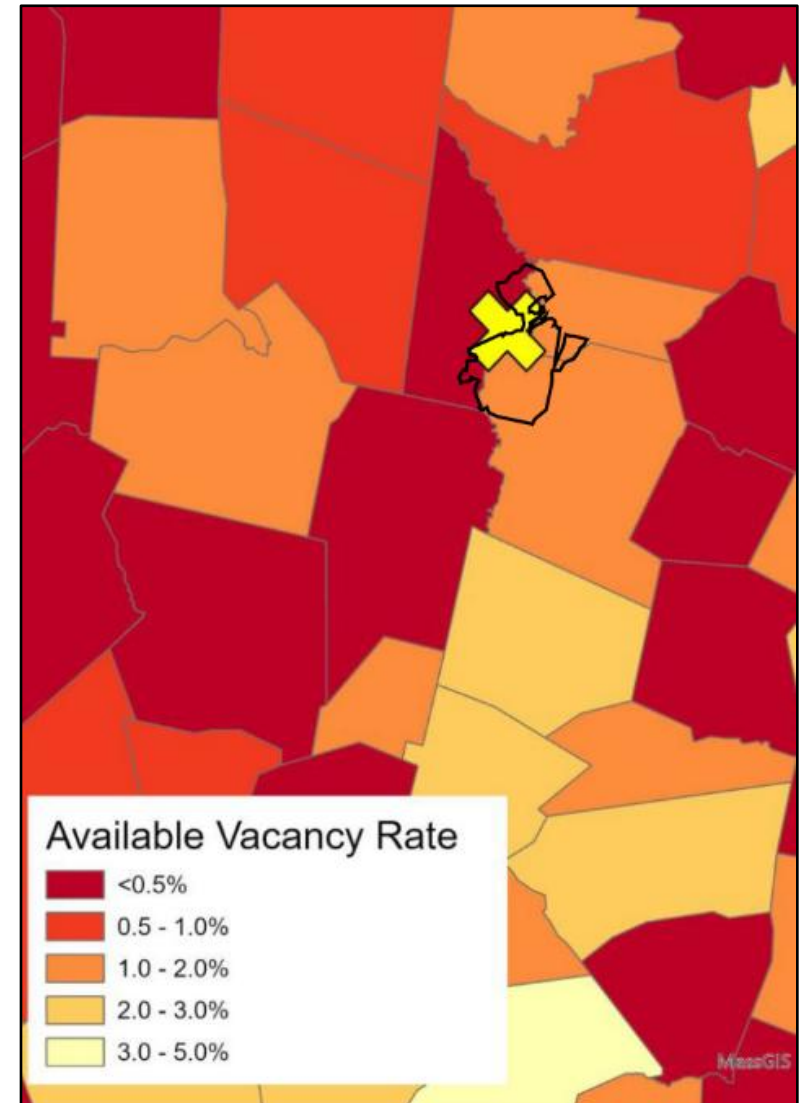


Revised Draft Report

Key Updates and Additions

Regional Housing Context:

- A new section detailing the **housing crisis** in the Montachusett region was added, highlighting:
 - 1.1% vacancy rate (critically low)
 - Median home prices more than doubled (2012–2023)
 - Projected need for 6,400 new homes by 2035
 - Significant cost burdens on renters and homeowners





Public Comments and Select Board Letters:

- A new **Appendix B** summarizes all the public input that was received, including letters from Ayer, Harvard, and Shirley.
- The final report will include copies of all public comments and letters received, in the appendix.



Draft Zoning Amendment Language:

- The initial draft had a general recommendation to include a zoning amendment; no draft language was provided.
- **Appendix C** contains a red-line proposed zoning bylaw changes, including:
 - Removing outdated references to the 282-unit cap, to reflect elimination of the cap by the Mass Leads Act
 - Permitting residential uses in the ITC District
 - Clarifying definitions of multi-family housing
- *Table of Permitted Uses* is included



DEC Regulation Adoption Process

- **Appendix D** was added to explain how the **Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC)** will revise or create new regulations after any zoning amendment is approved.
- It details a formal public rulemaking process, including:
 - Drafting regulations specific to housing in the ITC District
 - Notification to the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC)
 - 30-day public comment period
 - Public hearing in Devens
 - Filing with the Massachusetts Register to finalize changes
- The process ensures transparency and continued public involvement before any housing development is permitted.



Strategies and Principles for Housing in ITC:

- Language was clarified and expanded (e.g., more detail on missing-middle housing, emphasis on innovative, low-carbon design).
- Acknowledgement that the reuse of Vicksburg Square requires feasibility studies.

Zoning Amendment Method:

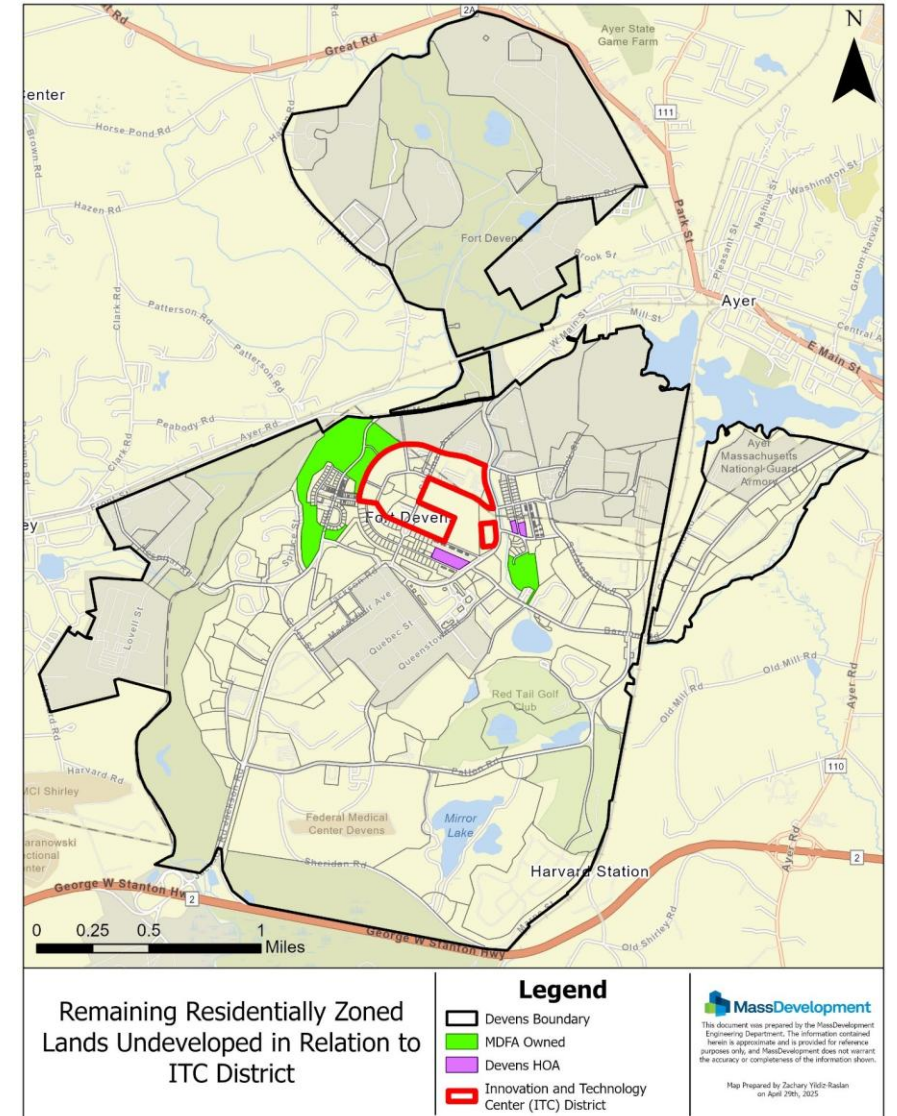
- The report states the group makes no recommendation on the method (super town meeting vs. legislation), only that zoning should be amended.

Additional Revisions (2/2)



Planning & Studies:

- Planning for any additional housing within the ITC District to consider the existing undeveloped residentially zoned lands within Devens (context-sensitive planning and design).
- Expanded detail on School Needs Assessment, acknowledging the importance of understanding enrollment forecasting.
- Rewording of community engagement strategy to include design charrettes and study of topographic/utilities constraints.





Discussion

- The subgroup will take back today's discussion and feedback and prepare a final report.
- Final report will be sent to DWG Members ASAP for review before the final meeting
- We will submit the report on time to the Legislature on time.

Final Meeting: May 14th at 1:00 pm via Zoom

- EOED will post a link for the public to view the final meeting at:
mass.gov/orgs/devens-working-group