

## **Compliance Methodology/Model**

Pursuant to 760 CMR 72.00  
As of January 14, 2025

The purpose of the compliance model is to ensure a consistent approach to measuring and evaluating multi-family zoning districts for compliance with Section 3A. The compliance model is intended to create a reasonable estimate of multi-family unit capacity of each multi-family zoning district. It is not intended to provide a precise determination of how many units may be developed on any individual lot or combination of lots.

The model uses geospatial tax parcel data from local assessors, compiled and hosted by MassGIS, to define lot boundaries and dimensions in each multi-family zoning district. The model also captures key dimensional and regulatory elements of the multi-family zoning district that impact multi-family unit capacity. The product of the compliance model is a Microsoft Excel workbook that must be submitted as part of a compliance application to EOHLC.

The Compliance Modeling Process at a Glance:

1. Download the compliance model and land database GIS files from [mass.gov/mbtacommunities](http://mass.gov/mbtacommunities).
2. Answer questions in a “checklist” using information about the zoning.
3. Using GIS land map files from EOHLC, draw a zoning district boundary to import to the Excel workbook.
4. The compliance model’s formula will estimate unit capacity and other zoning metrics that the municipality can review for accuracy.
5. The workbook results are compared to the requirements for the municipality’s zoning district. The municipality must submit the completed workbook as part of its District Compliance Application to EOHLC.

### **Components of the Compliance Model**

#### **Land database**

The compliance model includes geospatial parcel data for each MBTA community that identifies how much land area on each lot within a multi-family zoning district is developable land. Applicants will prepare this parcel data for the model’s calculations by creating a shapefile for each district, measuring each district’s land area, and exporting all lot records within the district’s boundaries into an Excel or .csv file. These exported tables can then be pasted into the zoning review checklist and unit capacity estimator, described below.

## Zoning review checklist and unit capacity estimator

To capture the data needed to estimate a district's multi-family unit capacity, municipalities will be required to complete a zoning review checklist. The checklist is of a series of questions and responses about allowed residential uses, parking requirements, dimensional restrictions (such as maximum building height and minimum open space), and other regulatory elements applicable in the district.

The unit capacity estimator uses the GIS exported lot information from the land database and the information entered into the zoning review checklist to calculate an estimate of the maximum number of multi-family residential units that could be constructed on each lot in each district as of right. It then aggregates the unit capacity estimates for each lot into an estimate of total unit capacity for each district. It also derives an estimate of the gross density for each district.

### **Case-Specific Refinements to the Compliance Model Inputs and Outputs**

To ensure the integrity and reasonableness of each unit capacity estimate, EOHLC may adjust the compliance model inputs and outputs as necessary to account for physical conditions or zoning restrictions not adequately captured by the compliance model. For example, EOHLC may override the GIS data and change one or more lots from excluded land to developable land where a municipality demonstrates those lots meet the definition of developable land. EOHLC may also adjust the unit capacity estimator's algorithm when it does not adequately account for an atypical zoning requirement or other local development restriction that will clearly impact unit capacity.