

August 2023 Housing Choice Working Group FAQs

Information on HCA Zoning Potential Impacts on the Town's Fiscal Outlook, School Children, Traffic, Infrastructure, and Affordable Housing

This set of FAQs responds to resident questions raised during the June and July Housing Choice Act (HCA) public forums and neighborhood meetings.

What are the potential impacts on Town finances?

In 2020, the South Lincoln Planning & Implementation Committee (SLPIC) commissioned the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to do a study on the financial impact of increased housing in the Lincoln Station area. Based on a buildout of 240 net new units in the Village Center area, MAPC conducted a buildout and fiscal impact analyses. Although some of the parcels identified in the study may be different than the final Housing Choice Act parcels, the information remains relevant. The study used a variety of housing units including studio, one, two and three bedroom units. The analysis estimated the anticipated revenues generated by new development against the costs attributable to the increased demand for public services and forecasted the net cash flow. The study concluded that whether a project was mixed-use or purely residential, the fiscal impact to the Town, including additional school costs, would most likely be positive. To view the study, please click here.

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/79179/SLVD-Buildout-and-FIA-Memo--10302020>

A similar fiscal impact study conducted before the development of Oriole Landing predicted a positive impact on town finances of approximately \$100,000, which has proven to be true.

What are the potential traffic impacts?

Another question that has been raised is the impact of the traffic that may be generated by the creation of more housing. As part of the SLPIC planning process, a traffic analysis was conducted by an outside consultant based on the same proposed 240 net new housing units. The study compared a no-build scenario and two levels of buildout. The study concluded that the increase in traffic expected from the maximum buildout (240 units additional residential units) within the Lincoln Station area would not significantly alter traffic operations compared to the No-Build conditions. The study suggested that the Codman Road/Lincoln Road intersection be monitored for increased traffic and accidents which may necessitate a signal at this intersection. To view the traffic study, please click here.

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/79177/19055-Traffic-Study-123020--Final>

What is the potential impact on the Lincoln School population?

Former Lincoln Public Schools Superintendent, Becky McFall, addressed the question of whether additional students from new housing would negatively impact the schools. She noted that enrollment in the Lincoln School K-8 was in the low 700's in the years 2001 through 2004. Since then, there has been a gradual decline in enrollment resulting in the 2021 enrollment of 524 students as of October 1, 2021. She welcomed the opportunity for more school age

children to attend the Lincoln Schools. To read her memorandum, please click here. <https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/79180/Planning-Dept-School-Enrollment-Memo-102521> The School Committee also issued a statement regarding the school population in their Fall 2022 newsletter. To read the letter, go to: <https://www.lincnet.org/domain/3>

Lincoln's real world experience with concerns about increased costs, fiscal impact, traffic, and school children shows that the projections of the reports and studies above are likely accurate. As previously noted, Oriole Landing, completed in 2020, is a 60 unit rental property with 25% of the units being affordable to households earning 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). The analyses required by the Planning Board forecasted a net positive fiscal impact on the Town as it relates to municipal costs and an estimated 7 new school age children. Both of these projections proved accurate. To review Civico's Financial Pro-Forma and Fiscal Impact Analysis for Oriole Landing, please click here.

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/79178/LDS-Memorandum-to-the-Town-of-Lincoln-re-Oriole-Landing--3162018-1>

Will the Town have any control over projects developed in the Housing Choice district?

Yes!

Planning Board: Any development that is allowed under the Housing Choice Overlay District will require Site Plan approval. As part of the Site Plan Approval process, the Planning Board will review how an individual project complies with the zoning requirements, including design guidelines, parking, traffic, circulation, lighting, screening, and stormwater control.

Historic Commission: Any proposed project that includes partial or total demolition of an existing building must comply with the Demolition Bylaw that is administered by the Historic Commission.

Conservation Commission: All projects must comply with Lincoln's wetlands protection bylaws.

Sustainable Construction: All projects must comply with the Specialized Stretch building code adopted by residents at the March 2023 Annual Town Meeting: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stretch-energy-code-development-2022>. In addition, Lincoln has applied to be one of the 10 towns piloting a "no new fossil fuel hook-ups" policy for new construction and gut renovations. Once Lincoln's application to the state is approved, proposed projects will need to comply.

What about wastewater treatment capacity?

The HCA does not require towns to have wastewater treatment facilities in place within the zoned areas. It is the responsibility of the developer to provide the necessary infrastructure.

Currently, the Town is working with The Community Builders and the Rural Land Foundation (RLF) to design an updated and expanded wastewater treatment plant at Lincoln Woods. The Lincoln Woods plant services the Mall (which is owned by the RLF). An expanded facility would

also service the redevelopment project being put forward by the RLF. The Town received a \$400,000.00 grant from the State to pay for the engineering and design work going on now. The design will be completed by June 30, 2024. To enable the construction of the updated wastewater treatment plant, the Town would work with The Community Builders to submit a MassWorks grant application to help fund the upgrade. To review the studies that have been completed regarding the WWTP, please click here. <https://www.lincolntown.org/1242/Studies-and-Reports>

MassWorks grants are the only available large money grants that help cities and towns with the costs of building infrastructure. To learn more about MassWorks grants, typical projects, and awards, please click here.

Do we have enough drinking water capacity?

Yes. The Water Department issued a memo in August 2023 that outlines current and potential usage and capacity. Click here to read the memo.

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/79216/Housing-Choice---Water-Dept-Comments---Final-Approved-81523>

Will additional housing jeopardize the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)?

No. The Town's current SHI based on the 2020 Federal Census is 12.83%.

The Town is currently doing a feasibility study to determine whether the 3A HCA District can support a 15% affordable housing requirement. If the study determines that it can, the zoning will require any project to include 15% affordable residential units at 80% Area Median Income (AMI). If the study determines that a 15% requirement is too high and will make a multi-family project economically infeasible, the 3A regulations allow a 10% affordability requirement. In either case, the Town's SHI will not be in jeopardy.

To see the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of June 29, 2023, please click here.

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/79217/LIncoln-SHI-as-of-July-2023--FINAL>