

Multi-Unit Housing “Toolbox”

A Brief Summary of Multi-Unit Options & Initiatives in Wellesley

RIO Task Force Meeting #5 – 9/9/2025

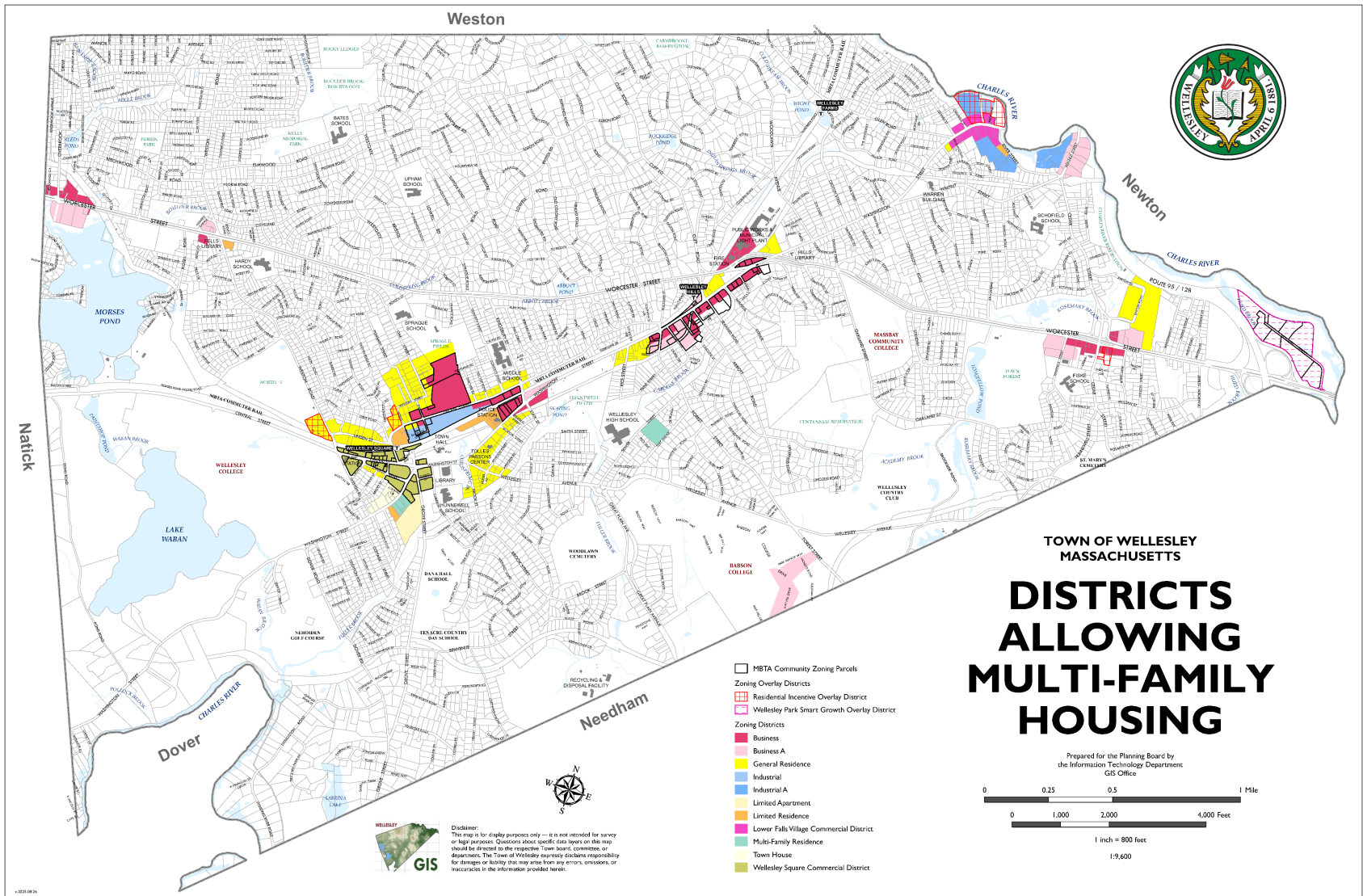
Multi-Unit Housing Toolbox

This document has been created to provide a reference of other bylaws, districts, programs and initiatives that could be utilized in the development of multi-family housing in Wellesley. Please note that this is a basic overview. Please refer to the town's Zoning Bylaw for specifics.

Multi-Unit Housing Alternatives to RIO

1. As of Right Multi-Unit Housing
 - a) General Residence & General Residence A Districts
 - b) Town House Districts
 - c) Multi-Unit Residence Districts
 - d) Limited Residence Districts
 - e) Limited Apartment Districts
 - f) Business Districts & Business Districts A
 - g) Lower Falls Village Commercial District
 - h) Wellesley Square Commercial District
 - i) Industrial Districts & Industrial Districts A
 - j) Wellesley Park Smart Growth Overlay District (Chapter 40R)
2. MBTA Communities Law
3. Mass. General Law Chapter 40B
4. Mass. Land for Homes Initiative

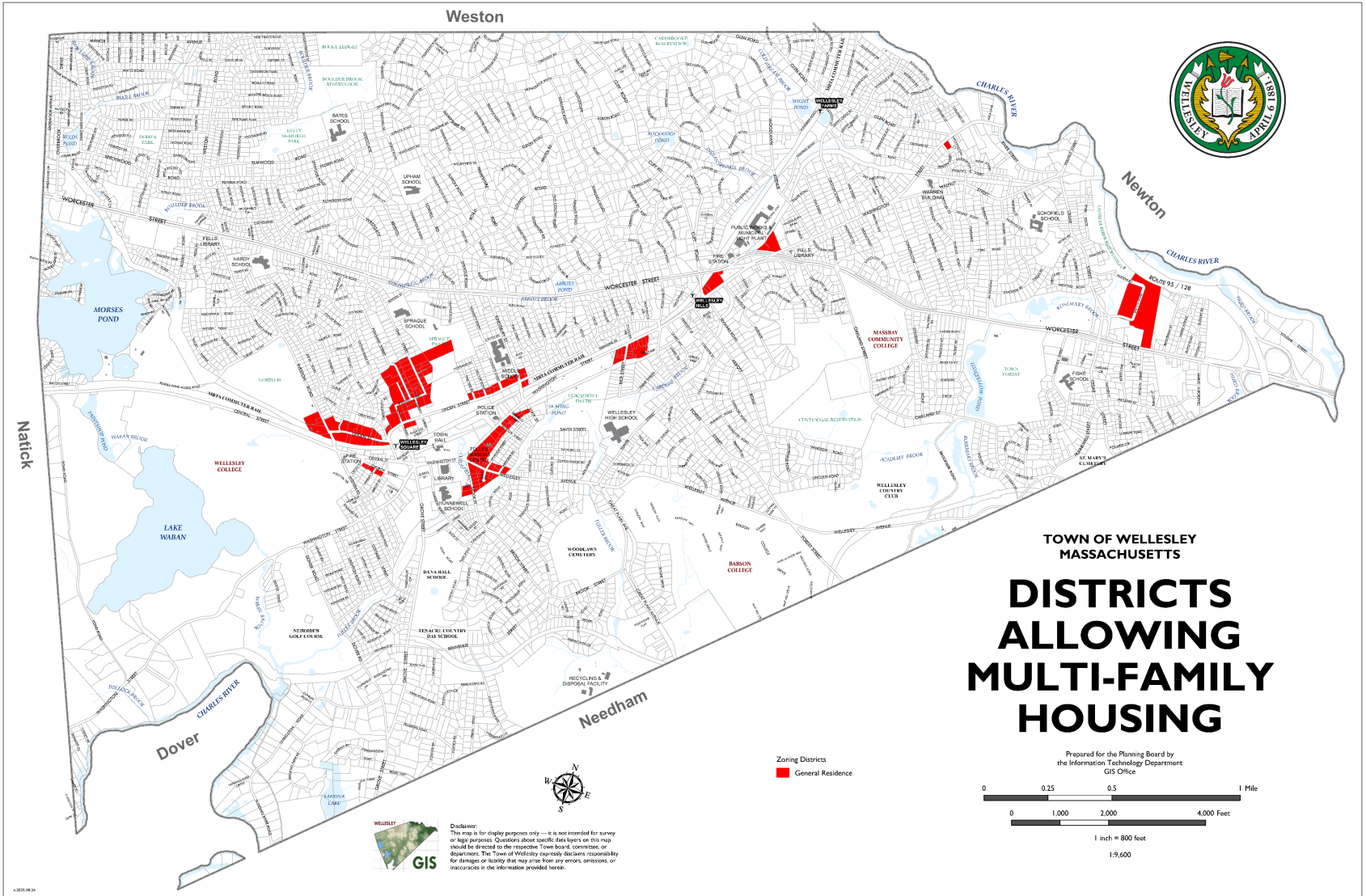
1) As of Right Multi-Unit Housing



a) General Residence & General Residence A Districts

- General Residence Districts allows the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - 2-Unit Dwellings or Duplexes
 - Town Houses with 3+ units
 - Boarding or lodging houses
- Total Land Area: 82.23 acres or 1.4% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 6.2 units/acre
- Example: Linden Street between Crest Road and Weston Road

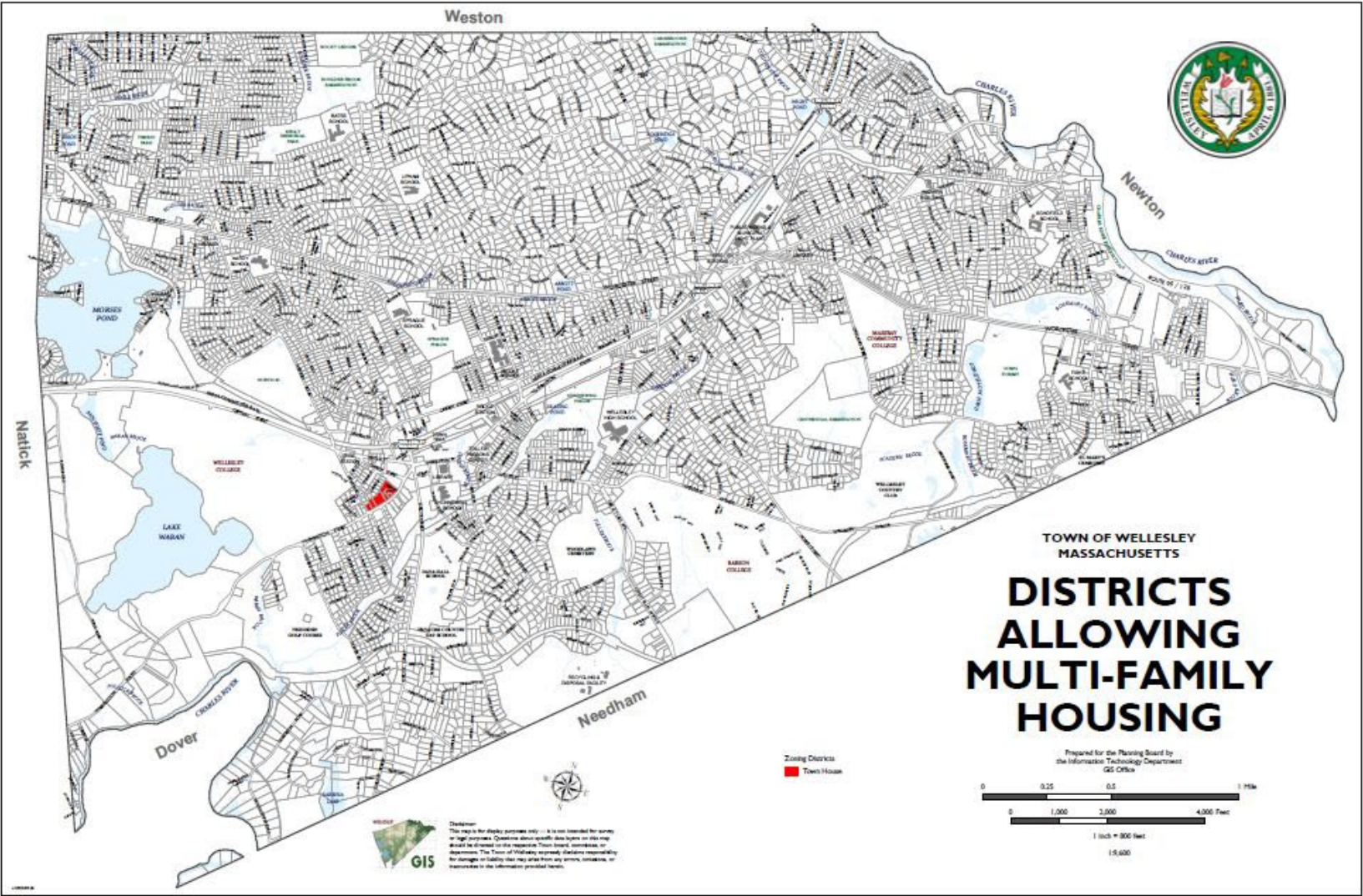
a) General Residence & General Residence A Districts



b) Town House Districts

- Town House Districts allow the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - Town Houses with 4-8 units
- Total Land Area: 4 acres or 0.07% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: A range of 7.6 to 10.9 units/acre, depending on total open space provided
- Example: Wiswall Circle

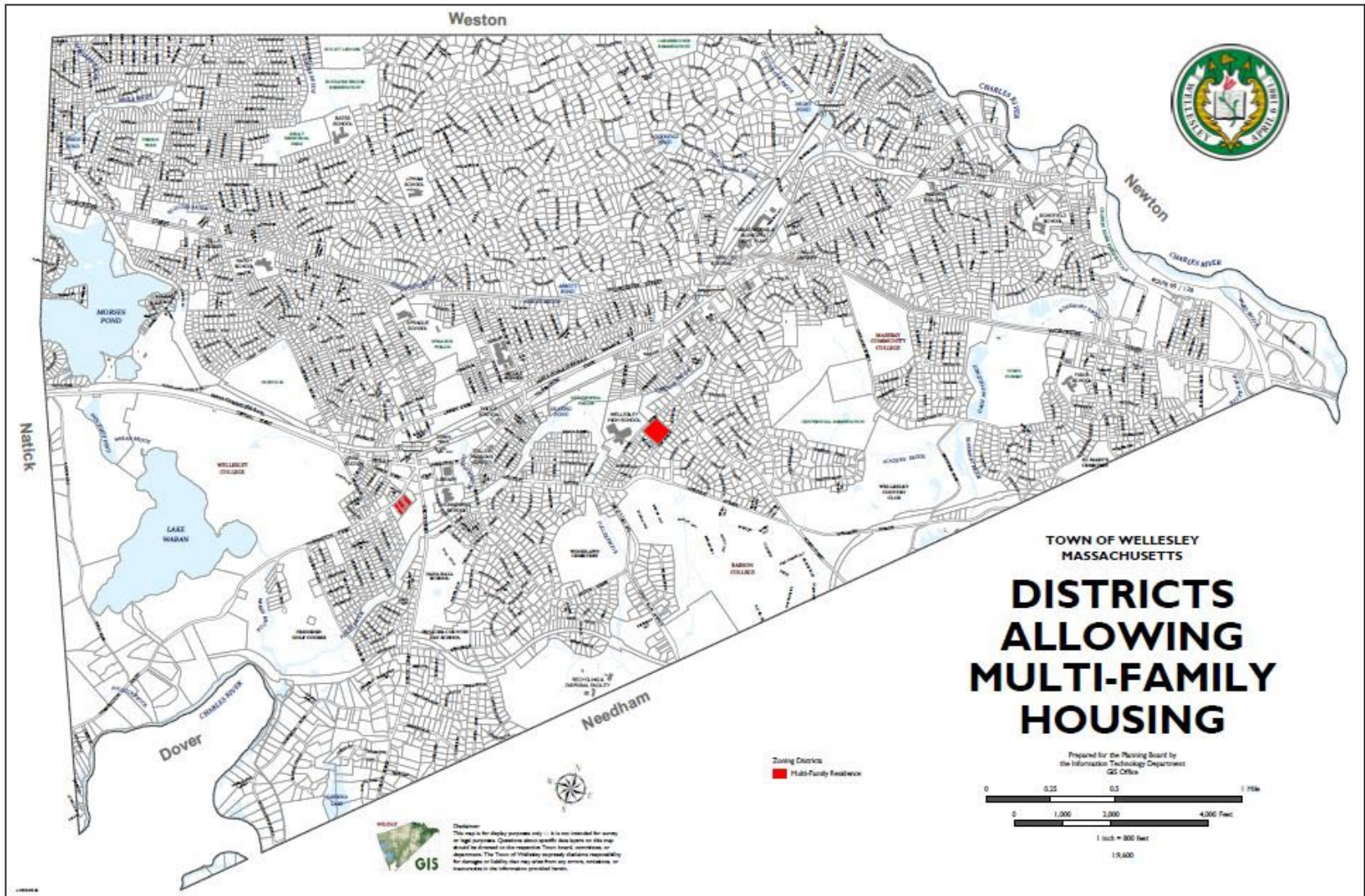
b) Town House Districts



c) Multi-Unit Residence Districts

- Multi-Unit Residence Districts allow the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - Building or group of buildings operated by a non-profit organization having three or more independent dwelling units for one or more persons at least one-half of whom are 62 year or older
 - Building or group of buildings containing four or more independent dwelling units
- Total Land Area: 6 acres or 0.1% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 14.5 units/acre
- Example: 40 Seaver Street

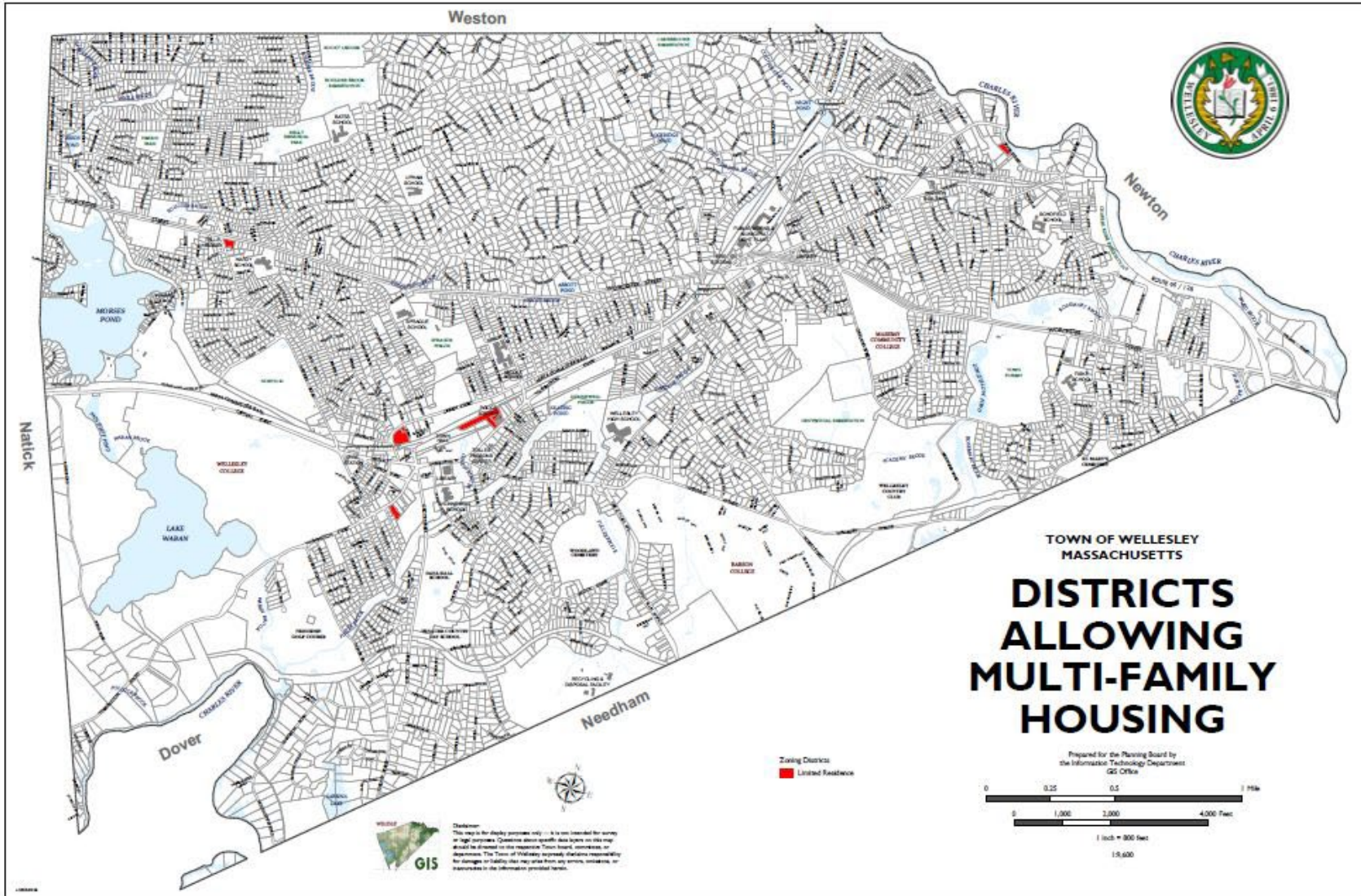
c) Multi-Unit Residence Districts



d) Limited Residence Districts

- Limited Residence Districts allows the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - Building or group of buildings operated by a non-profit organization having three or more independent dwelling units for one or more persons at least one-half of whom are 62 year or older
- Total Land Area: 8.5 acres or 0.14% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 17.42 units/acre
- Example: Morton Circle

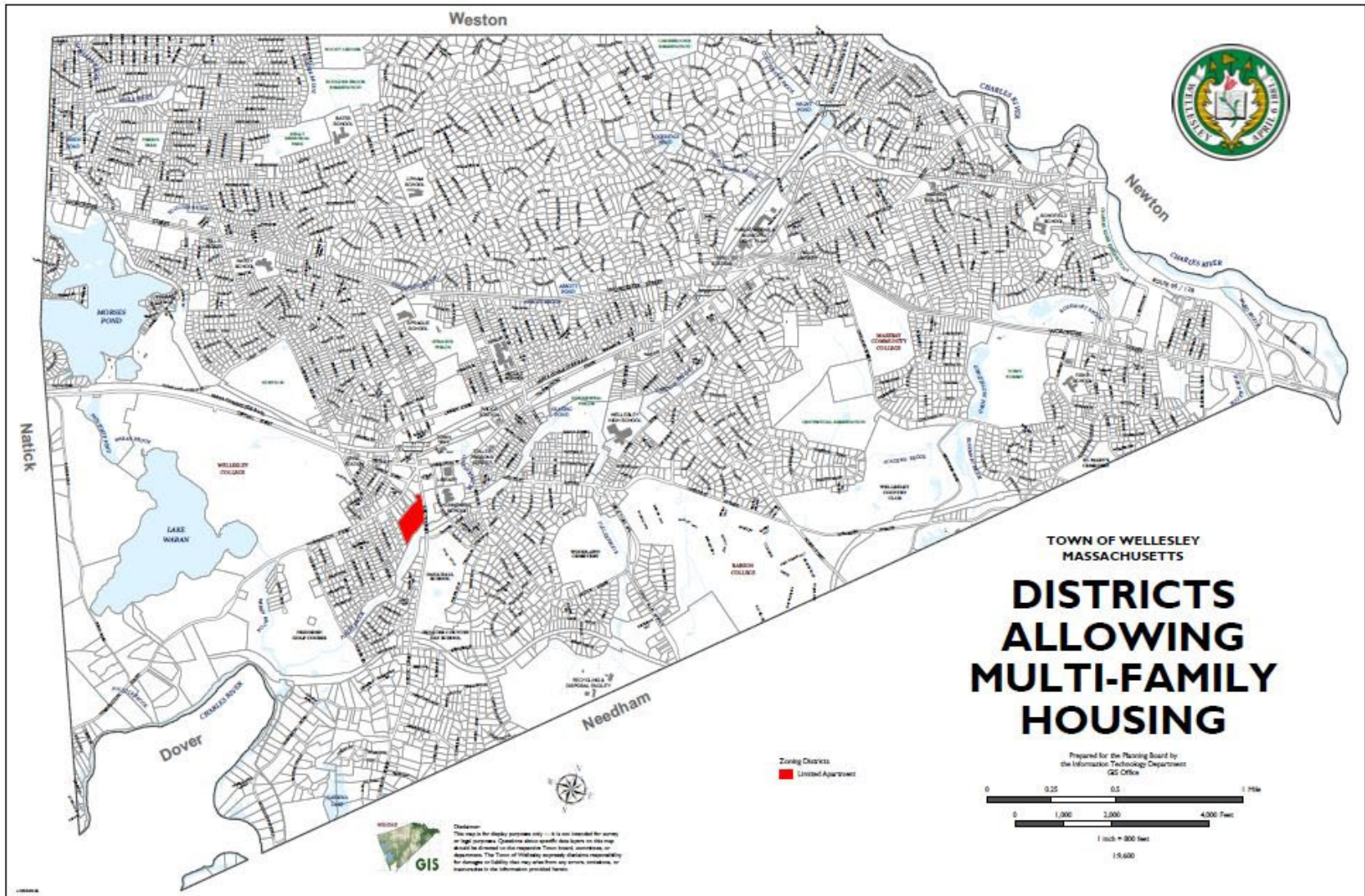
d) Limited Residence Districts



e) Limited Apartment Districts

- Limited Apartment Districts allows the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - Building or group of buildings containing twenty or more independent dwelling units
- Total Land Area: 7 acres or 0.12% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 24.2 units/acre
- Example: Wellesley Green

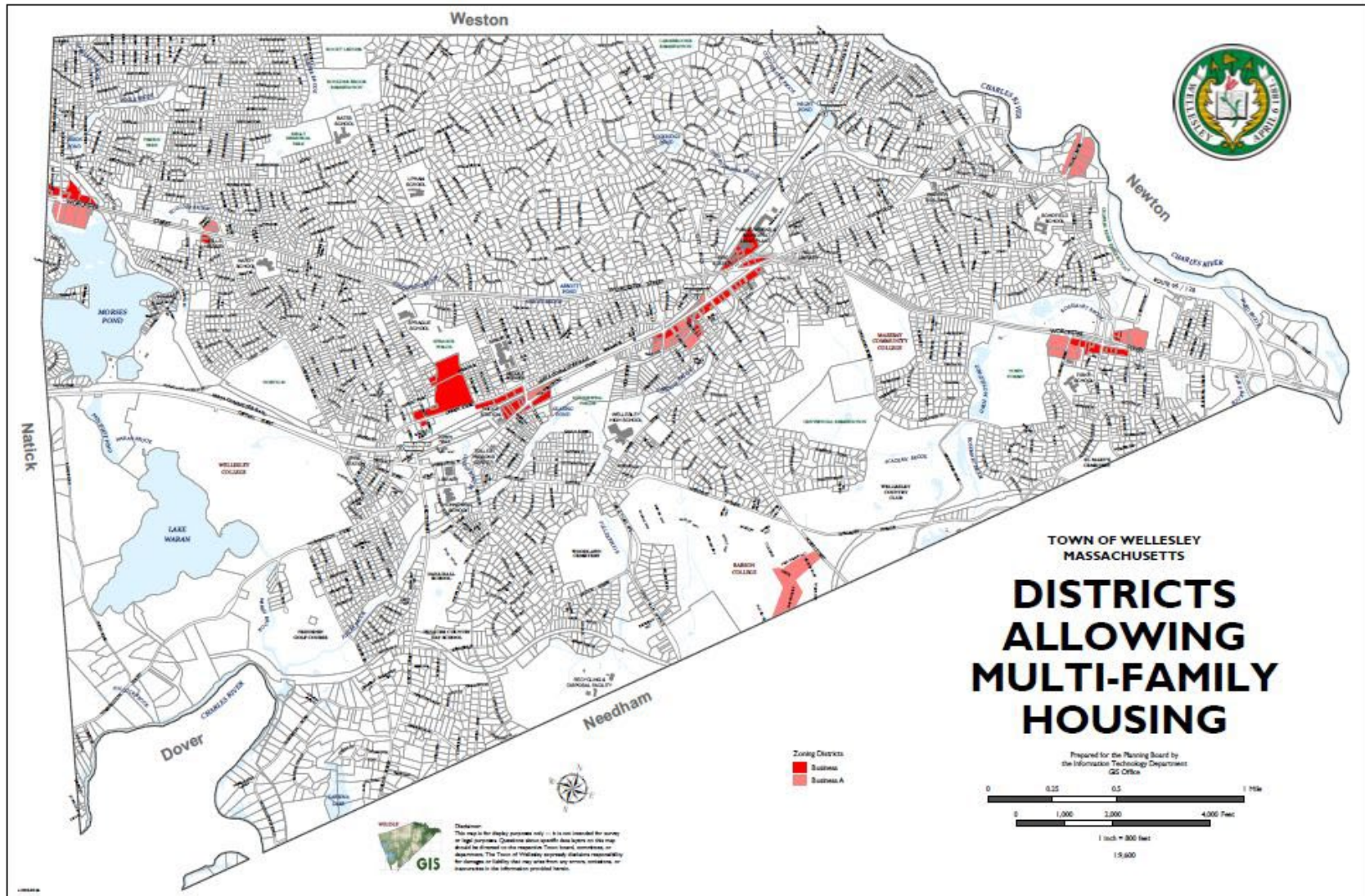
e) Limited Apartment Districts



f) Business & Business A Districts

- Business Districts allows the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - 2-Unit Dwellings or Duplexes
 - Town Houses with 3+ units
 - Boarding or lodging houses
 - Multi-Unit Apartment
- Total Land Area: 97 acres or 1.6% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 17.4 units/acre
- Example: 978 Worcester Street

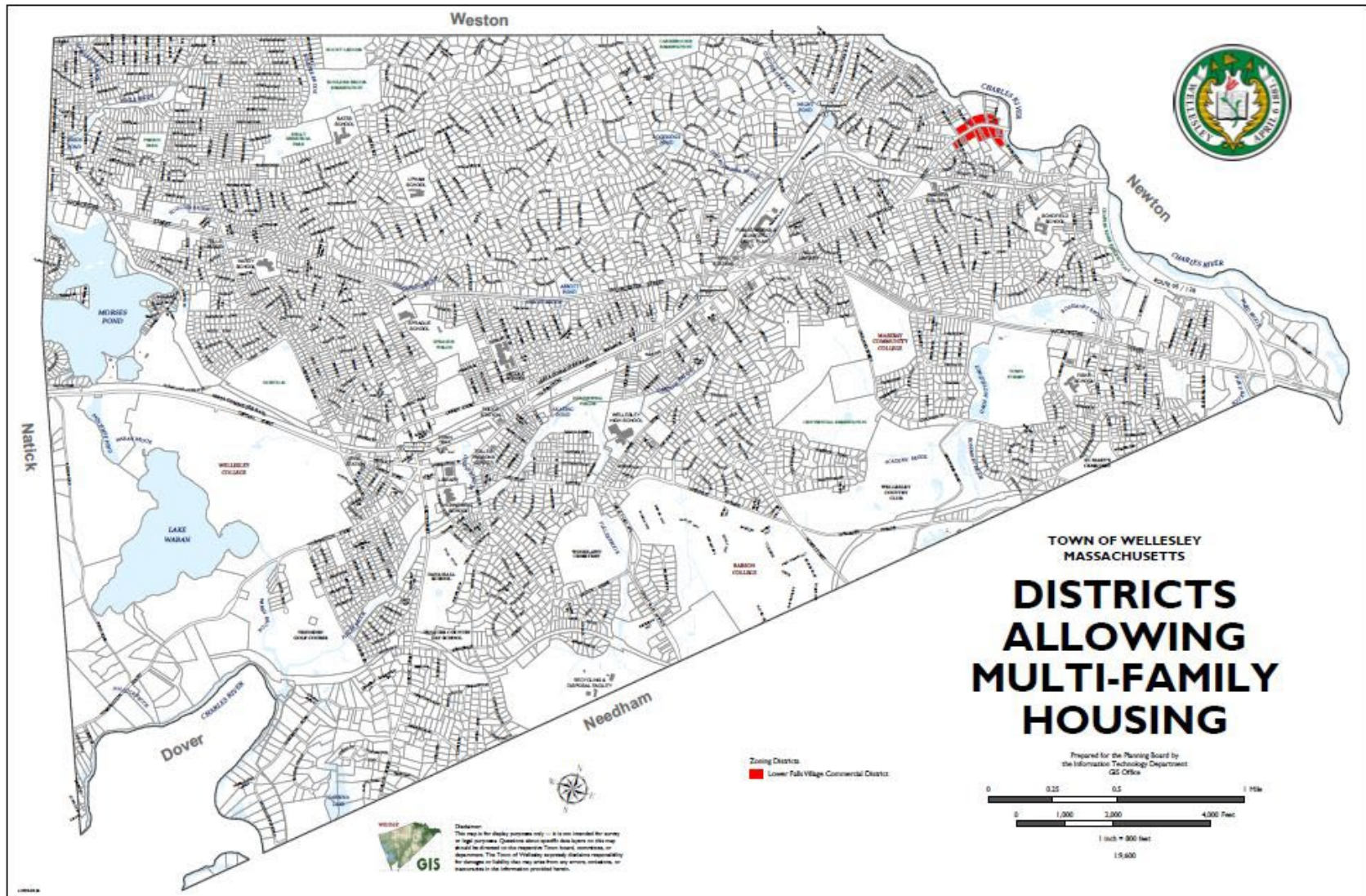
f) Business & Business A Districts



g) Lower Falls Village Commercial District

- Lower Falls Village Commercial District allows the following residential types:
 - Residence for more than 2 families
 - Multi-Unit Apartment
- Total Land Area: 9 acres or 0.15% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 17.4 units/acre

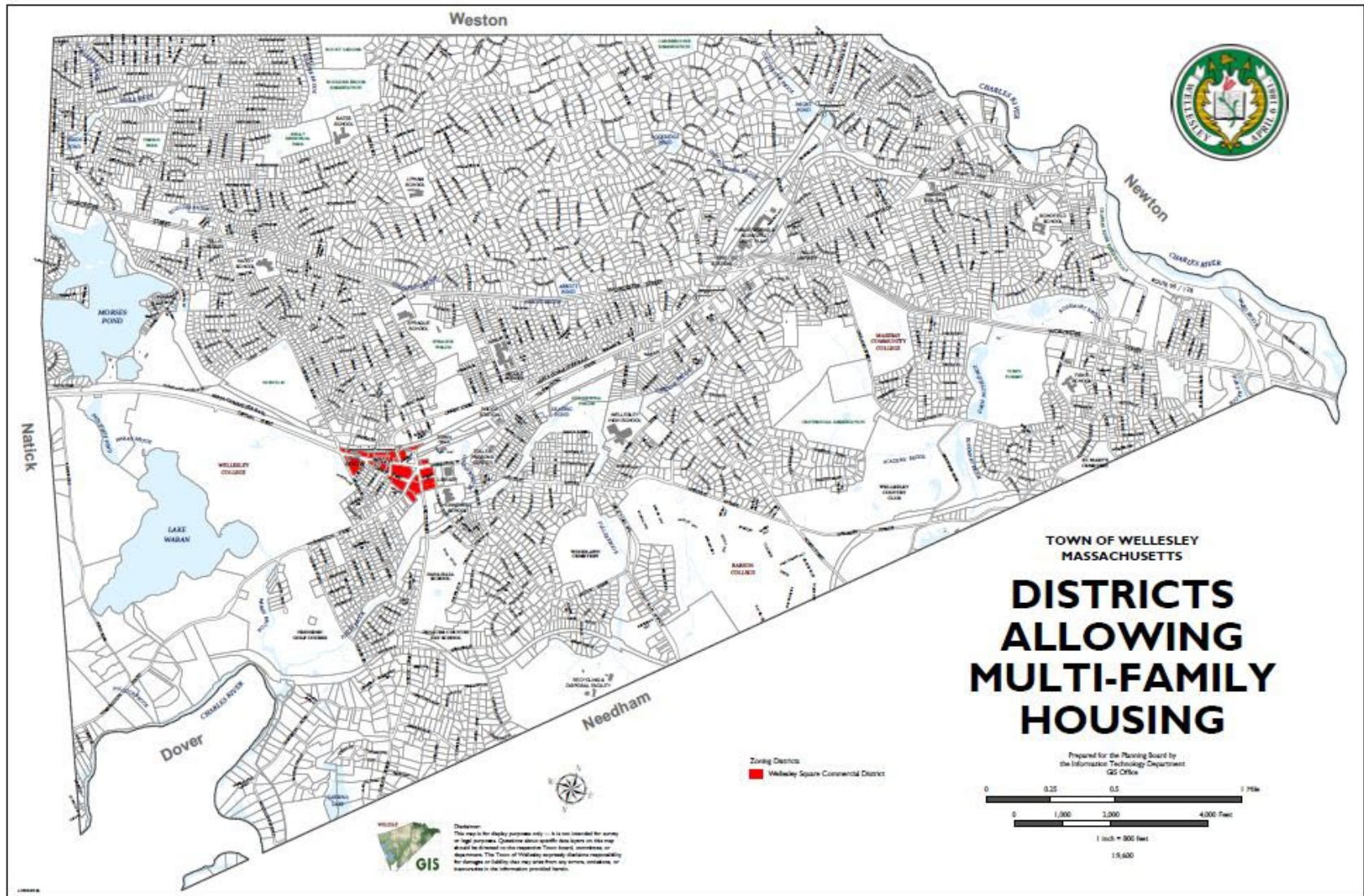
g) Lower Falls Village Commercial District



h) Wellesley Square Commercial District

- Wellesley Square Commercial District allows the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - 2-Unit Dwellings or Duplexes
 - Town Houses with 3+ units
 - Boarding or lodging houses
 - Multi-Unit Apartment
 - Residence for more than 2 families
 - Multi-Unit Apartment
- Total Land Area: 17.5 acres or 0.3% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: A range of 17.4 to 24.2 units/acre, depending on granting of Special Permit from the Planning Board for increased density
- Example: The Belclare

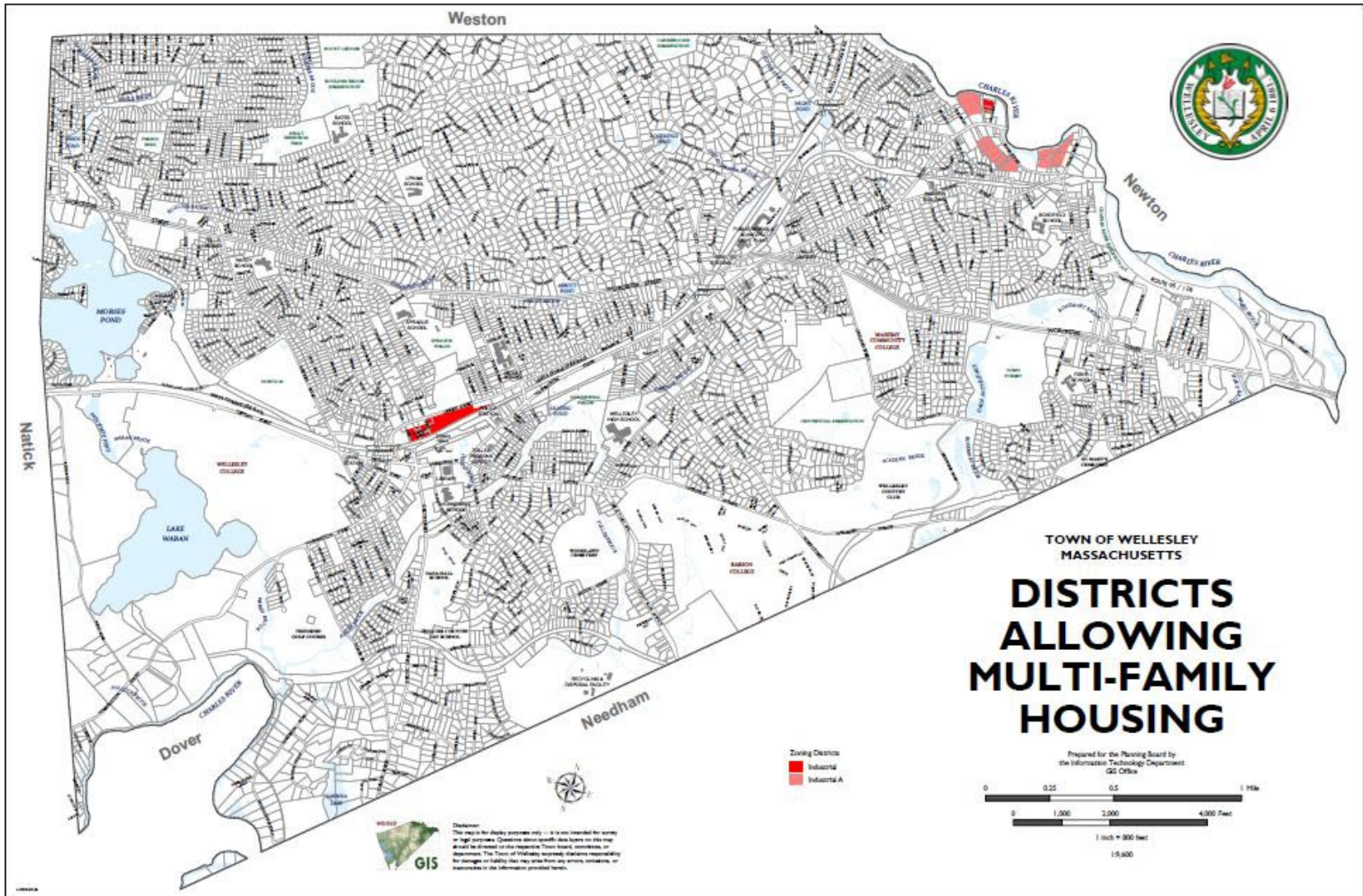
h) Wellesley Square Commercial District



i) Industrial & Industrial A Districts

- Industrial Districts allows the following residential types:
 - Single Family structures
 - 2-Unit Dwellings or Duplexes
 - Town Houses with 3+ units
 - Boarding or lodging houses
 - Multi-Unit Apartment
- Total Land Area: 28 acres or 0.5% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: 17.4 units/acre
- Example: Proposed multi-family project at 49 Walnut Street

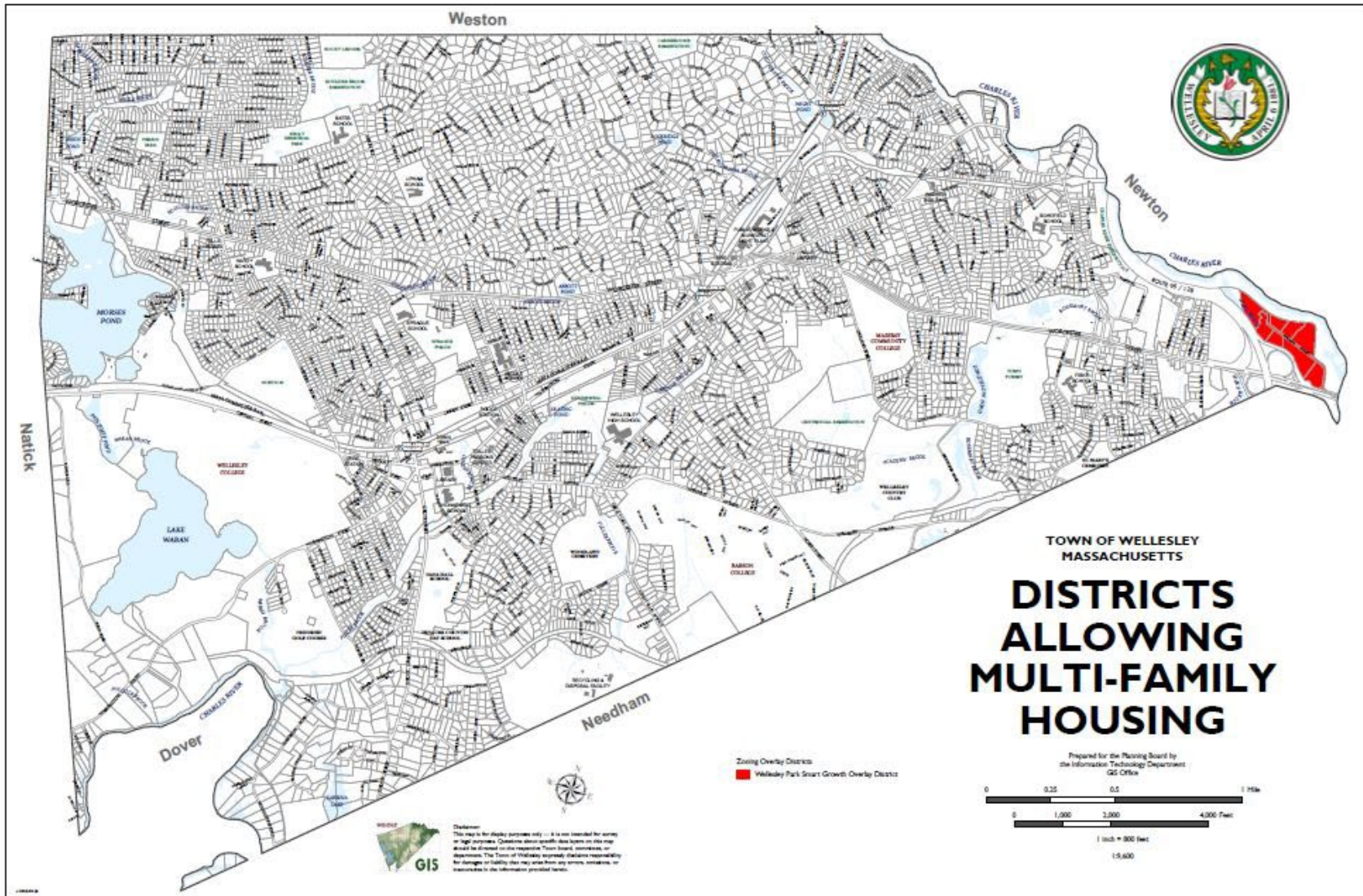
i) Industrial & Industrial A Districts



j) Wellesley Park Smart Growth Overlay District (Chapter 40R)

- Chapter 40R is a state program with financial incentives that encourages communities to create dense residential or mixed-use communities. For multi-family projects there is a minimum density of 20 units per acre with at least 20% of the units affordable.
- Smart Growth Overlay District allows the following residential types:
 - Multi-Family Dwellings
 - Assisted Elderly Housing
 - Independent Elderly Housing
 - Nursing Homes and Skilled Nursing Facility
- Total Land Area: 1.4% of total Town land
- Allowed Density: No more than 850 total units across the entire district, or 20 units/acre based on the entire area of the district, whichever is greater. If 850 total achieved with vacant parcels, up to 15 units/acre on remaining parcels.
- Example: Wellesley Office Park “The Nines”

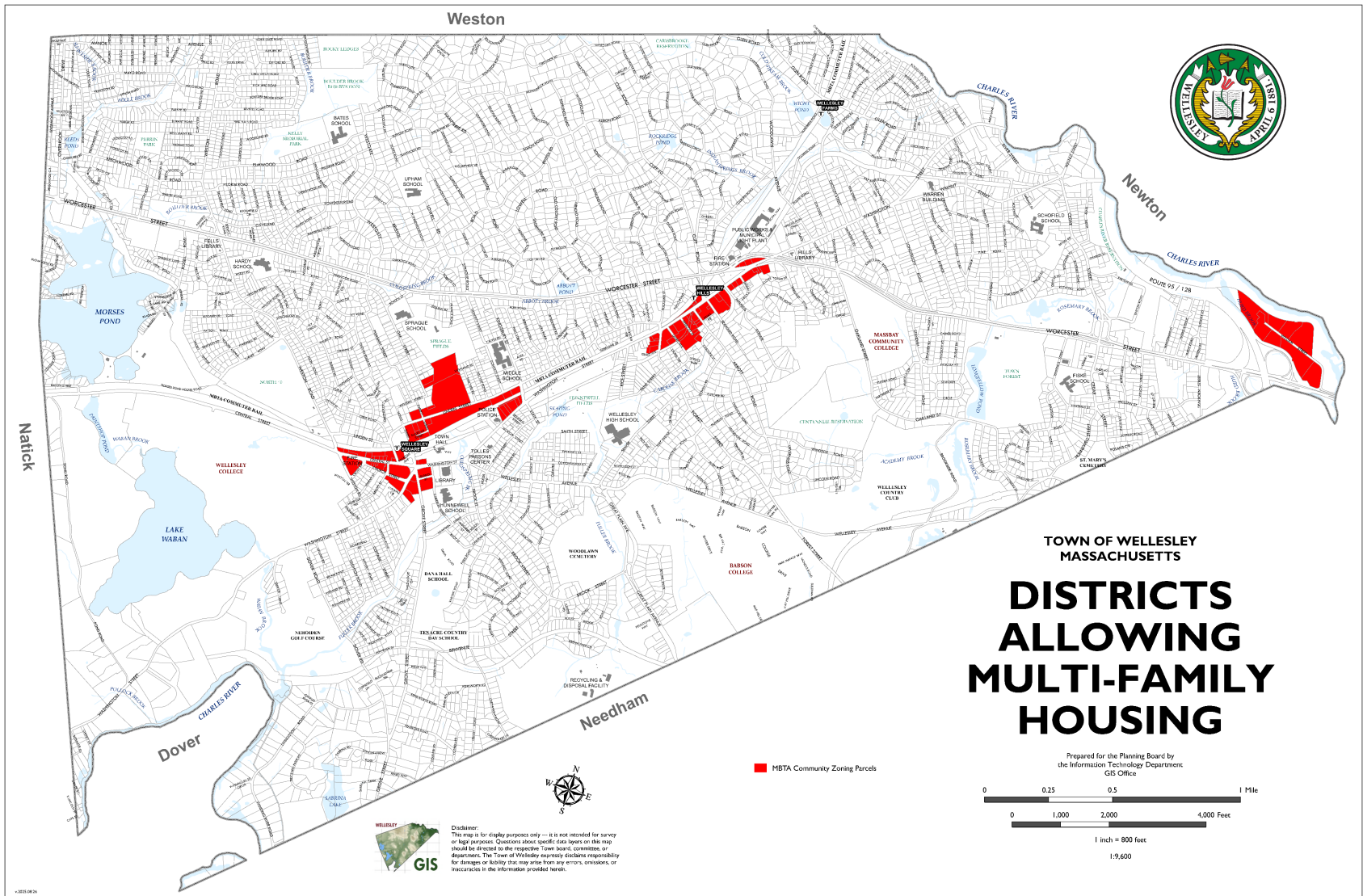
j) Wellesley Park Smart Growth Overlay District (Chapter 40R)



2) MBTA Communities Law

- The MBTA Communities Law stipulates a community shall:
 - Have a zoning ordinance or bylaw that allows multi-family housing “as of right” (no special permits required)
 - Have a minimum density of 15 units per acre
 - Be located not more than ½ mile from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station etc.
- What Wellesley Did to Comply
 - Defined MBTA Communities Project in the Zoning Bylaw with specific criteria:
 - A project in the Wellesley Sq. Commercial, Business, Business A, Industrial, Industrial A districts that allows a minimum density of 15 units per acre and is located within ½ mile of the MBTA Commuter Rail Stations
 - MBTA Communities Projects do **not** have to go through Project of Significant Impact (PSI) special permit process
- What Wellesley Did Not Do (unlike most other towns)
 - Rezone any parcels in Town
 - Add density to any district
 - Commercial Districts in Wellesley have already allowed a maximum density of 17 units per acre for 50+ years

2) MBTA Communities Law



3) Mass. General Law Chapter 40B

Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit Act

- [Chapter 40B](#) is a state statute, which enables local Zoning Boards of Appeals (ZBA) to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules (Comprehensive Permit) if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions.
- Chapter 40B was enacted to facilitate the construction of low- and moderate-income housing; avoid perceived long delays in developers' proposals to construct affordable housing; and allow waiver of local zoning by-laws that are not "consistent with local needs."
- Each community in the Commonwealth must strive to have at least 10% of their housing stock qualify as "affordable housing". Wellesley is currently at 10.68% and has the ability to deny a comprehensive permit application.

3) Mass. General Law Chapter 40B

Recent 40B Projects in Wellesley

Property (Year Filed)	Total Units	Affordable Units
135 Great Plain Avenue / Fieldstone Way (2018)	44 (condo)	11
3 Burke Lane / Cedar Place Apartments (2020)	19 (rental)	5
16 Stearns Road / The Albion (2021)	24 (condo)	6
680 Worcester Street / Highland Park (2021)	20 (rental)	5

4) Mass. Land for Homes Initiative

- Initiative led by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) in partnership with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)
- Goal is to expedite the availability of public land for housing development.
- Opportunities underway include the former Lowell District Court, the former Fitchburg Superior Courthouse, and surplus parking lot at Middlesex Community College in Bedford
- Potential MassBay Community College project:
 - 45-acre parcel on west side of Oakland St.
 - Stated MassBay goals: development of underutilized land to fund space for new CyberSecurity program and athletic facilities

FY 2025 HUD Income Limits*

Number of Persons in Household	30% AMI	50% AMI	80% AMI
1	\$34,750	\$57,900	\$92,650
2	\$39,700	\$66,200	\$105,850
3	\$44,650	\$74,450	\$119,100
4	\$49,600	\$82,700	\$132,300
5	\$53,600	\$89,350	\$142,900
6	\$57,550	\$95,950	\$153,500
7	\$61,550	\$102,550	\$164,100
8	\$65,500	\$109,200	\$174,650

*For Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH HUD Metro FMR Area