



Select Board

Meeting Packet

February 18, 2025



East Milton Fire Station Project

FEBRUARY 18, 2025



Headquarters Update

The new Milton Fire Headquarters Building opened in February 2024.

The meeting room in the Old Fire Headquarters Building opened in Summer 2024.

Both projects are completed; Final invoices have been paid.



East Milton

March 12, 2024: Select Board approves contract amendment to include a design of East Milton Station with two bays: one active, one storage

East Milton design completed in Fall 2024 and put out to bid with an Alternate for the second bay

9 bids received January 22, 2025

Tower Construction Corp = low bidder

- Base bid: \$7,553,000
- Alternate 1: \$724,000 (second bay)
- Total: \$8,277,000 with two bays



East Milton

Total HQ and East Milton Budgets

	HQ and East Milton (1 Bay)	HQ and East Milton (2 Bay)
East Milton Low Bid	\$7,533,000	\$7,533,000
East Milton Alternate	N/A	\$ 724,000
East Milton Soft Costs	\$3,192,488	\$3,241,916
East Milton Total	\$10,745,488	\$11,010,776
HQ Total	\$23,939,224	\$23,939,224
Both Projects Total	\$34,684,712	\$34,950,000
Available Appropriation	\$34,950,000	\$34,950,000
Surplus/ Deficit	\$ 265,288	\$0



Milton Fire Apparatus Layout		Milton Fire Apparatus Layout	
Current		Proposed - East Milton with 2 Bays	
Milton Fire Headquarters		Milton Fire Headquarters	
1 Engine Road		1 Engine Road	
Bay 1	Car 2 (Shift Commander) and Squad 1 (F-250 utility truck)	Bay 1	Car 2 (Shift Commander) and Squad 2 (brush truck)
Bay 2	Squad 2 (brush truck) with Utility Vehicle on trailer	Bay 2	Engine 1 (2006) spare
Bay 3	Engine 1 (2006)	Bay 3	New Engine 1 (2026)
Bay 4	Ladder 1 (2005) (drive through)	Bay 4	New Tower 1 (2026) (drive through)
Bay 5	Engine 3 (1999) (spare engine) and 14' rescue boat	Bay 5	Ladder 1 (2005) (spare)
Other Bay Storage		Other Bay Storage	Utility Vehicle on trailer and 14' rescue boat
Outdoor storage	Car 1 (Chief)	Outdoor storage	Car 1 (Chief)
	Car 3 (Fire Prevention)		Squad 1 (utility truck)
			Car 3 (Fire Prevention)
East Milton		*New East Milton	
525 Adams Street		432 Adams Street	
Bay 1	Engine 2 (2012)	Bay 1	Engine 2 (2012)
Bay 2	no fire truck allowed per structural engineer	Bay 2	Engine 3 (1999) (spare engine)
Atherton Street		Atherton Street	
815 Blue Hill Ave		815 Blue Hill Ave	
Bay 1	Engine 4 (2017)	Bay 1	Engine 4 (2017)
Bay 2	HAZMAT Decon Trailer	Bay 2	HAZMAT Decon Trailer



Fire Stations Debt Service

Debt service for the fire station projects are accounted for through the Special Purpose Debt Stabilization Fund (“Hurley Amendment”)

August 2024: \$22 million bond issued, 30 years at 3.67% interest

- Principal and Interest first due in FY2026

August 2025: \$4 million BAN anticipated

August 2026: \$12,950,000 BAN anticipated

August 2027: \$12,950,000 Bond issued

- 1 interest payment in FY2028
- Principal and interest payments in FY2029



Fire Stations Debt Service

Special Purpose Debt Stabilization Fund / “Hurley Amendment”

- As debt from the past library and school projects decline, keep tax bills level and dedicate funding to a stabilization fund for fire stations / DPW Yard project(s).
- Once library and school debt service falls off after FY2029, the annual debt service available is \$2,329,180
 - Annual average debt service of HQ and East Milton projects is approx. \$2,074,000, leaving approx. \$255,000 per year for additional debt service
 - East Milton debt service: averages approx. \$780,000, per year
- There will not be enough capacity under the SPDSF/Hurley Amendment to fully fund the Atherton Street project anticipated debt service



FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL DEBT SERVICE	SPECIAL ACT DEBT SERVICE CAPACITY	CUMULATIVE STABILIZATION FUND LESS DEBT SERVICE	NOTES
2020		74,765	74,765	
2021	0	219,589	294,354	
2022	0	295,455	589,809	
2023	82,571	369,868	877,106	HQ BAN
2024	468,753	459,451	867,804	HQ BAN
2025	838,000	534,247	564,051	HQ BAN
2026	1,318,236	992,187	238,002	HQ Bond
2027	1,314,475	1,389,899	313,426	HQ Bond + East Milton BAN
2028	1,713,225	1,580,594	180,795	HQ Bond + East Milton BAN
2029	2,156,975	2,177,716	201,536	HQ Bond + East Milton Bond
2030	2,062,200	2,329,180	468,516	
2031	2,066,475	2,329,180	731,221	
2032	2,083,500	2,329,180	976,901	
2033	2,068,625	2,329,180	1,237,456	
2034	2,163,300	2,329,180	1,403,336	
2035	2,059,400	2,329,180	1,673,116	
2036	2,154,100	2,329,180	1,848,196	
2037	2,160,100	2,329,180	2,017,276	
2038	2,154,300	2,329,180	2,192,156	
2039	2,156,700	2,329,180	2,364,636	
2040	2,059,100	2,329,180	2,634,716	



	TOTAL	ATHERTON	SPECIAL ACT	CUMULATIVE	
FISCAL	DEBT	DEBT	DEBT SERVICE	STABILIZATION FUND	
YEAR	SERVICE	SERVICE	CAPACITY	LESS DEBT SERVICE	NOTES
2020			74,765	74,765	
2021	0		219,589	294,354	
2022	0		295,455	589,809	
2023	82,571		369,868	877,106	HQ BAN
2024	468,753		459,451	867,804	HQ BAN
2025	838,000		534,247	564,051	HQ BAN
2026	1,318,236		992,187	238,002	HQ Bond
2027	1,314,475		1,389,899	313,426	HQ Bond + East Milton BAN
2028	1,713,225		1,580,594	180,795	HQ Bond + East Milton BAN
2029	2,156,975		2,177,716	201,536	HQ Bond + East Milton Bond
2030	2,062,200	780,000	2,329,180	(311,484)	HQ Bond + East Milton Bond + Atherton Bond
2031	2,066,475	780,000	2,329,180	(828,779)	
2032	2,083,500	780,000	2,329,180	(1,363,099)	
2033	2,068,625	780,000	2,329,180	(1,882,544)	
2034	2,163,300	780,000	2,329,180	(2,496,664)	
2035	2,059,400	780,000	2,329,180	(3,006,884)	
2036	2,154,100	780,000	2,329,180	(3,611,804)	
2037	2,160,100	780,000	2,329,180	(4,222,724)	
2038	2,154,300	780,000	2,329,180	(4,827,844)	
2039	2,156,700	780,000	2,329,180	(5,435,364)	
2040	2,059,100	780,000	2,329,180	(5,945,284)	



FY2026 Budget Update

FEBRUARY 18, 2025



Level Service Budget

	FY25	FY26		
Revenue	Budget	Level Service	\$ Change	% Change
Property Tax Levy	\$101,944,061	\$105,421,933	\$3,477,872	3.41%
Local Receipts and Indirect Costs	\$11,902,067	\$11,783,205	(\$118,862)	-1.00%
State Aid	\$17,923,153	\$18,326,806	\$403,653	2.25%
Other Funds	\$557,932	\$421,049	(\$136,883)	-24.53%
Free Cash	\$2,764,658	\$1,655,666	(\$1,108,992)	-40.11%
Total	\$135,091,871	\$137,608,659	\$2,516,788	1.86%
Expenditures				
Capital	\$955,000	\$1,000,000	\$45,000	4.71%
Town Departments	\$32,856,871	\$34,392,559	\$1,535,688	4.67%
School Department	\$67,225,230	\$73,573,914	\$6,348,684	9.44%
Blue Hills Regional	\$813,159	\$874,146	\$60,987	7.50%
Shared	\$33,227,106	\$37,214,780	\$3,987,674	12.00%
Total	\$135,077,366	\$147,055,399	\$11,978,033	8.87%
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$14,505	(\$9,446,740)		



Revenue Forecast

FY2026 Revenues: \$137.6 million, including proposed use of Free Cash

Updates to the FY2026 revenue forecast:

- New Growth revised to \$1 million from \$850,000
- No change in Local Receipts
- State Aid: Governor's Budget was released in January – Minimal increase year over year in state aid, much of which was offset by the increase in state assessments

	FY2025 Final	FY2026 Governor's Budget	Change
Aid	17,923,153	18,326,806	403,653
Assessments	4,685,347	5,015,852	330,505
Net Aid	13,237,806	13,310,954	73,148



Level Service Budget Outlook

- **Revenues \$137.6 million, including use of Free Cash of \$1.66 million for non operating expenses**
 - \$1 million for town and school capital
 - \$155,666 for opioid settlement purposes, as required by the settlements
 - \$500,000 for general stabilization due to growing budget and lack of contribution in FY2025
- **Expenditures \$147.1 million**
 - Schools - \$74.5 million
 - Town - \$34.4 million
 - Shared - \$36.7 million (Health Insurance, Retirement Unemployment, General Insurance, Debt, Assessments)
 - Stabilization Fund - \$500,000
 - Non-bonded capital - \$1 million
- **\$9.5 million override is necessary to balance**



Balanced Budget (No Override)

Use of Free Cash to support the budget

- \$1 million for Milton Retirement
- \$1.56 million for OPEB
- \$250,000 for the reserve fund
- \$294,956 other operating budget support

Use of Free Cash for other items:

- \$1 million for town and school capital
- \$155,666 for opioid settlement purposes, as required by the settlements
- \$300,000 to maintain the Town's total stabilization funds at the current percentage

Town and school department budgets: 1.5% increase over FY2025

- Town departments: approx. \$1,040,000 reduction from Level Service affecting multiple departments and cutting numerous positions
- School department: approx. \$5,340,000 reduction from Level Service with significant reduction in FTEs (see Feb. 7, 2025 presentation)

Other considerations:

- Reduction in health insurance costs due to fewer employees
- Increase in unemployment costs



Questions

1. Whether to have an operating override for the FY2026 Budget?
2. When to put the ballot question to voters?
 - i. Override ballot questions may take place before or after a Town Meeting. State Law requires a minimum 35 days notice to the Town Clerk.
 - ii. Annual Town Election: April 29
 - iii. Special Election after Town Meeting: May or June
3. What dollar amount to ask voters for an override?

February 21, 2025

Secretary Ed Augustus
Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Town of Milton's Comments on 760 CMR 72.00

Dear Secretary Augustus:

Please find enclosed the Town of Milton's comments on 760 CMR 72.00 MULTI-FAMILY ZONING REQUIREMENT FOR MBTA COMMUNITIES.

The Town of Milton finds itself uniquely affected by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities' ("HLC") Regulations and its previously issued Guidelines because its primary transit access is a legacy trolley system that connects two larger transportation hubs. The Town has long stated its intention to comply with the MBTA Communities Act, but has simultaneously expressed its rejection at how the Town is affected by the Guidelines/Regulations.

MGL Chapter 40A, section 3A states, "An MBTA community shall have a zoning ordinance or by-law that provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right...For the purposes of this section, a district of reasonable size shall: (i) have a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre, subject to any further limitations imposed by section 40 of chapter 131 and title 5 of the state environmental code established pursuant to section 13 of chapter 21A; and (ii) be located not more than 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable.

760 CMR 72.00 uses the following definition: "Subway station" means any of the stops along the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Red Line, Green Line, Orange Line, or Blue Line, including but not limited to the Mattapan High Speed Line and any extensions to such lines.

This definition in the regulations conflicts with the statute and categorizes the Mattapan High Speed Line alongside four transit lines that each operate partly underground while the Mattapan High Speed Line travels exclusively above ground.

As the Town wrote in its brief in *Attorney General v. Town of Milton*:

The plain meaning of "subway," consistently reflected in dictionary definitions, is a "railway" that runs "partly or entirely underground." See Webster's Third New Int'l Dictionary ("a usually electric railway built partly or entirely underground and usually for local transit in metropolitan areas"); The American Heritage Dictionary (defining subway as "an underground urban railroad, usually operated by electricity"); Concise Oxford English Dictionary (defining subway as "an underground railway").

This definition of subway also does not account for significant differences between the Mattapan High Speed Line and the other identified subways. It ignores historical precedent, infrastructural characteristics, and policy history making this definition neither methodologically sound nor administratively justifiable.

Trolley History

The Mattapan High Speed Line, operational since 1928, functions as a light rail trolley service rather than a rapid transit system. Its use of PCC (Presidents' Conference Committee) streetcars—first introduced in the 1940s—demonstrates its reliance on an antiquated yet distinct mode of transport that fundamentally diverges from subway operations. Unlike subway networks, which operate within fully grade-separated and subterranean environments, this trolley system remains at surface level, necessitating interaction with vehicular and pedestrian traffic at at-grade crossings. The infrastructural and operational attributes of this line, therefore, do not conform to the definition of a subway as commonly understood within transportation planning.

From a legal and administrative perspective, precedents such as *Daniels-Finegold v. Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority* have reinforced the conceptual and operational distinction between the Mattapan Line and subway services. The MBTA itself has consistently acknowledged this differentiation, even in recent public documents issued in 2019 where the MBTA describes the Mattapan Trolley as connecting to the Red Line (not an extension of the Red Line), many bus routes, and the Neponset Greenway. Such explicit institutional recognition further undermines any justification for classifying this service as a subway.

(<https://cdn.mbta.com/sites/default/files/projects/mattapan-high-speed-line/mattapan-line-public-meetings-spring2019-accessible.pdf>)

Additionally, the MBTA once proposed an extension of the Red Line subway from Ashmont to Mattapan in the 1960s that was ultimately abandoned. As a result, the Mattapan High Speed Line has remained largely unchanged since its inception substantiates its classification as a heritage trolley rather than an integral extension of the subway system.

Mattapan Trolley Investment

Compounding the misclassification of the Mattapan High Speed Line is the persistent pattern of underinvestment and systemic neglect that has contributed to its decline in service quality. Over several decades, the MBTA has failed to adequately modernize infrastructure, replace aging rolling stock, or implement service enhancements commensurate with regional transit demands. The reliance on historic PCC streetcars—many of which have exceeded their intended operational lifespan—exemplifies a broader reluctance to integrate this transit mode into a forward-looking mobility strategy. This stagnation has resulted in increasingly unreliable service, mechanical failures, and prolonged service disruptions that disproportionately affect transit-dependent populations in Mattapan, Milton, and Dorchester. The lack of capital investment not only undermines the efficiency of this transit link but also exacerbates transit inequities within the MBTA network, rendering the classification of the line as a "subway" even more untenable.

The MBTA has given no clear indication, when, or even if at all, the Mattapan Line Transformation project will resume.

Level of Service and Reasonable Size

760 CMR 72.05 Determining “Reasonable Size” groups communities into different categories based on the level of transit access HLC deems each to have. The Town objects to these classifications because HLC provides no methodology or background information that explains how HLC arrived at these arbitrary percentages.

All rapid transit communities are treated equally whether they have multiple transit lines that provide direct access to Boston or no direct access. For example, Newton has both commuter rail and subway service and is classified as rapid transit. Milton has neither a commuter rail nor a subway and is classified as rapid transit. Even if the Town were to accept HLC’s definition of subway, the level of transit access and capacity in Milton pales significantly in comparison to each of the other rapid transit communities, except for Lynn and Chelsea which like Milton have no subway.

In addition, each trolley has the capacity akin to a 40-foot bus with approximately 38 seats available on each but with far less reliable and consistent service with aging infrastructure and vehicles that are far beyond their intended useful life and chronically underfunded investment in their maintenance.- The Mattapan Line Transformation Project to invest in the rail infrastructure and equipment has lagged far behind schedule and it is unclear whether the MBTA is continuing to work on the project at all. The last public meeting was held on June 20, 2023, which anticipated the 15% design would be completed in Fall/Winter 2023/24, but there is no public indication if this milestone has been achieved by the MBTA.

The definitions and classifications do not sufficiently account for varying levels of service across the different subway lines nor do they account for the varying levels of access to job centers that lines provide. Passengers on the Mattapan High Speed Line do not have a single seat ride into Boston, Somerville, or Cambridge or other major job center; rather the Mattapan High Speed Line connects riders to a bus station (Mattapan Square) and a bus / Red Line Station (Ashmont). A minimum two-seat ride is required to reach downtown Boston compared to each of the other lines that provide rapid, direct one-seat rides.

Further compromising HLC’s classifications is the meaningful difference between the level of transit access found in commuter rail communities compared to Milton. Many commuter rail communities have significantly greater transit access than rapid transit communities like Milton. Needham has four commuter rail stations and the longest ride into Boston from Needham is a one-seat ride that takes approximately 45 minutes. Wellesley has three commuter rail stations that provide a one-seat ride for a similar length. Dedham has two commuter rail stations that provide a one-seat ride for less than 40 minutes.

HLC has not demonstrated the rationale for its decision-making nor has the classification accounted for significantly different transit access, service, and opportunity. HLC has also not provided the methodology for why a rapid transit community should create a district that has a

zoned capacity for 25% of its housing stock. It is not clear where the 25% metric is derived nor did HLC show its work in making this determination as opposed to other percentages – why not 30%, why not 20%? Commuter Rail communities are required to create a district with a zoned capacity of 15% of their housing stock. HLC has provided no methodology as to why there's a ten percent differential between commuter rail communities and rapid transit communities. HLC has greatly exceeded its authority under the statute by developing these arbitrary capacity targets.

Statute and HLC's Regulations

The statute's words and math applied to Milton are dispositive: The statute's term "Developable land located not more than 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station" is "applicable" to Milton.

That is dispositive because Milton has developable land located not more than 0.5 miles from three commuter rail stations. Therefore, Milton can fully comply with the statute's mandate by adopting a multi-family-zoning ordinance that provides for "at least 1 District of reasonable size" as defined by the statute itself.

Specifically, Milton will fully comply with the statute's exact wording by adopting a multi-family zoning ordinance that provides zoning for multi-family units, "with minimum gross density of 15 units per developable acre" "located not more than 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station" as the statute specifies.

The requisite statutory multi-family zoning area is 37.5 developable acres. The Fairmount, Readville, and Blue Hills Ave MBTA Commuter rail stations have a total of 37.5 acres of developable land in Milton located not more than 0.5 miles from them.

The statute's clear wording and math as applied to Milton define the required "at least 1 District of reasonable size" with total Milton Section 3A multi-family zoning to be zoning for 563 multi-family units. (i.e. 15 units per developable acre multiplied by 37.5 such acres within 0.5 miles of the three commuter rail stations). The statute's words and the statute's math govern, not EOHLC's inapposite guidelines/proposed regulations.

Conclusion

It is evident that the misclassification of this transit system has led to an inequitable and inconsistent application of zoning regulations under the MBTA Communities Act. Communities genuinely served by subway infrastructure face regulatory expectations that are being inappropriately extended to Milton, despite the absence of comparable transit service. This administrative inconsistency undermines fosters an arbitrary regulatory landscape.

In light of these findings, the Milton Select Board strongly urges HLC to reevaluate its classification of the Mattapan High Speed Line. An accurate and empirically justified designation will facilitate zoning policies that align with actual transit capabilities and investment while ensuring equitable urban planning outcomes that reflect the realities of transportation infrastructure in Milton and surrounding areas.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your response and an opportunity to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Milton Select Board

CC: _____

DRAFT