TOWN OF WINTHROP
OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall 1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152 Telephone 617-846-1742

February 4, 2023

Governor Maura Healey
Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon Street
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Compliance of DHCD's Guidelines for G.L.C. 40A Section 3A (MBTA Communities)

Dear Governor Healey,

Winthrop's need to maintain its identity as a welcoming small community of 1.6 square miles on the shores of Boston Harbor and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' demand to build more housing via the MBTA Communities/3A zoning mandate are at odds with one another. While we agree that we could add some housing in a planned and organized manner, 882 units are beyond our capacity. Listed below are our concerns and requests from your office for some special consideration:

- Reclassify Winthrop as an Adjacent Small Town, which will reduce the number of units to 5% of total housing stock to account for Winthrop's size constraints (a peninsula totaling 1.6 square miles), existing density (Winthrop ranks 9th for density), existing diverse housing stock, and limitations due to only having two means of egress with both being compromised during extreme weather and high tide events.

- Request an extension of time until December 31, 2025, in line with our request to be reclassified as an Adjacent Small Town, to allow for our Town Council, Planning Board, and Consultant time to fully analyze Winthrop's Housing Stock and upcoming projects to allow for MBTA (3A) Zoning districts to be established.

- Given the existing dense neighborhoods referenced above, flooding concerns from extreme weather events and high tides, and the limited land mass as we are only 1.6 square miles, reduce the multi-family zoning district acreage requirement for multiple town/city wide districts to ten (10) acres which would allow us the flexibility to meet the unit requirement without unfairly burdening one or two neighborhoods.

- Recognize that Winthrop has an underutilized bus service that is being reduced in the upcoming MBTA bus route changes that were proposed last year. With 25% of our population being senior citizens and many unable to get to the existing and soon-to-be-modified bus stops, we request more flexibility to create this zoning further away from our limited MBTA bus routes.

- Reclassifying Winthrop as an Adjacent Small Town will recognize that Winthrop has limited to no land for new development, and our redevelopment opportunities have very narrow streets that cannot

handle additional street parking. The ongoing redevelopment that has been naturally occurring is already causing parking issues in Winthrop's densely populated neighborhoods.

- Unlike other communities, Winthrop is unique; we have additional traffic and risk from Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) and Logan Airport. For example, our proximity to Logan Airport causes air and noise pollution. The close proximity of the airport also causes health concerns for our residents, including increased asthma and cancer rates. Also, unlike most other communities in the Commonwealth, and even though it is technically in Boston, Winthrop is the host community to the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) sewer treatment facility and the traffic and risk associated with the operation of this facility. The additional public safety resources that both organizations require of our Police and Fire Departments increase our call volume and stress the departments. Lastly, a safety incident at the MWRA plant or Logan Airport will require a regional response, and if our access roads are overly congested and compromised, it will negatively affect our incident response.

Given everything listed above, we reiterate that Winthrop is unique and believe it has been placed in the wrong category as an Adjacent Community. Winthrop is a small sliver of land threatened by pollution, rising tides, aging infrastructure, high density and limited commercial tax base. Please consider our request for reclassification and a reduction in the MBTA district acreage requirement, as we are truly a unique community with challenges that do not fit the one-size-fits-all that the MBTA Communities/3A law/guidelines offered by the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

James Letteriie
Winthrop Town Council President

Hannah Belcher
Winthrop Town Council Vice-President

Robert DeMarco
Town Councilor – At Large

John Munson
Town Councilor P-2

Richard Fucillo
Town Councilor P-1

Joseph Aiello
Town Councilor P-5

John DaRos
Town Councilor P-6

Suzanne Swope
Town Councilor P-4

Max Tassinari
Town Councilor - At Large

Cc: Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll
Senate President Karen Splika
Senate Majority Leader Cynthia Stone Creem
Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr
Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano
Senator Lydia Edwards
Representative Jeffrey Turco
Housing Secretary Edward M. Augustus