



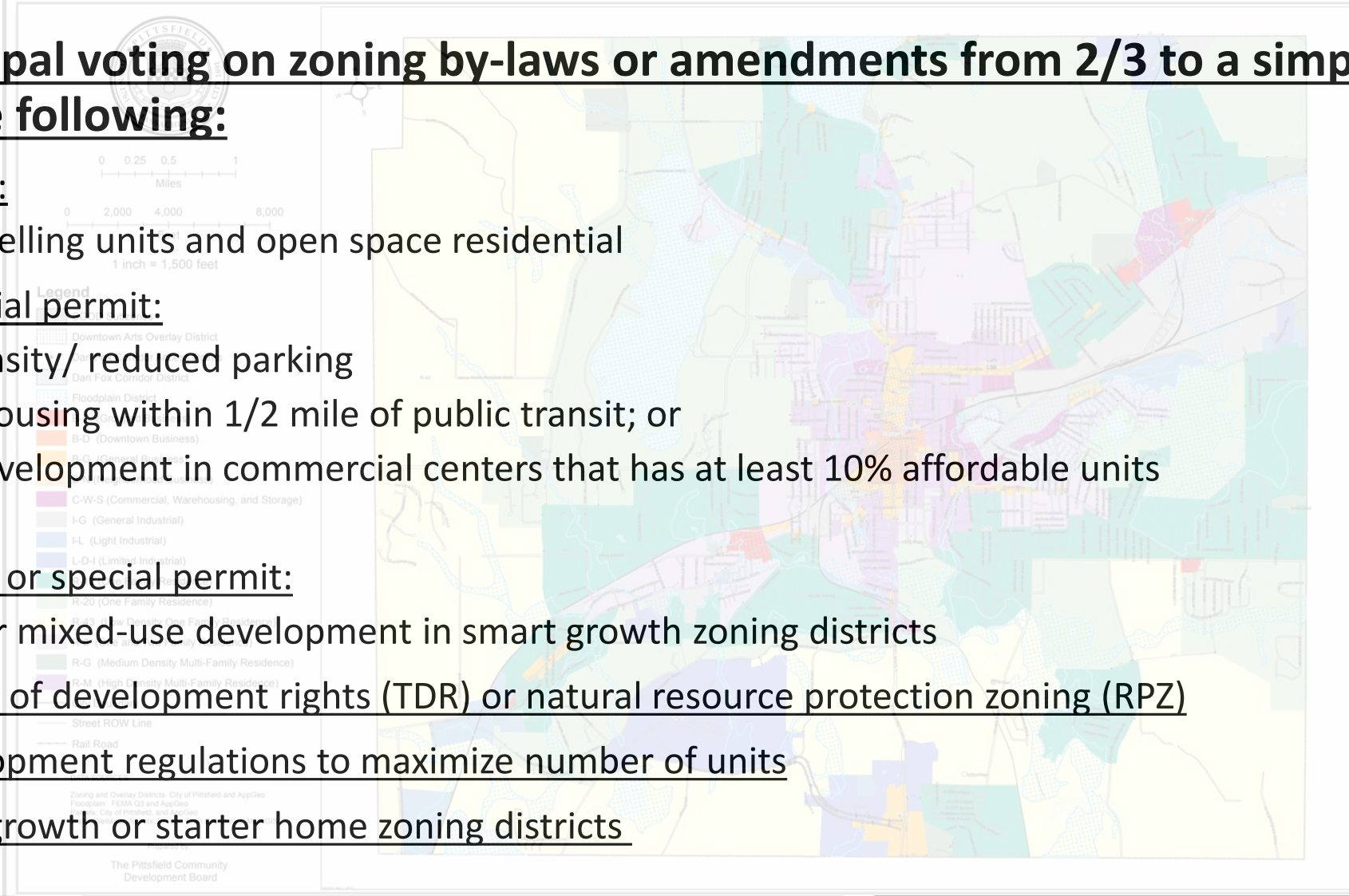
MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM THE
MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Justin Davidson, MAR General Counsel
& Director of Government Affairs

Changes municipal voting on zoning by-laws or amendments from 2/3 to a simple majority for the following:

- Allowing by right:
 - Accessory dwelling units and open space residential
- Allowing by special permit:
 - Increased density/ reduced parking
 - Multifamily housing within 1/2 mile of public transit; or
 - Mixed-use development in commercial centers that has at least 10% affordable units
- Allowing by right or special permit:
 - Multifamily or mixed-use development in smart growth zoning districts
- Allowing transfer of development rights (TDR) or natural resource protection zoning (RPZ)
- Modifying development regulations to maximize number of units
- Adopting smart growth or starter home zoning districts



Housing Choice H.3507





- Promotes community-supported development.
- Changes local voting requirement from 2/3rds super majority to a simple majority to adopt zoning changes **for 10 zoning changes that promote best practice for housing growth.**
- Massachusetts is one of only 9 states using a super majority approval system.
- MAR supports Housing Choices as part of a diverse coalition of interest groups including, for example, the MA Municipal Association and commercial real estate developers.

Housing Choice H.3507



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Historically High Housing Costs Student Loan Debt

Allow future home buyers to:

- Deposit up to \$5,000 per year (\$10,000 for joint account holders who file a joint tax return) into a First Time Home Buyer Savings Account
- Claim that contribution as a deduction on their income tax.
- Gains on the savings would be exempt from taxes.

Account holders can claim this deduction for up to 15 years and an aggregate total amount of principal and earnings up to \$50,000.



1st Time Homebuyer Savings Accounts



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An Act relative to the relief of mortgage debt

Hold homeowners harmless from tax liability for forgiven debt related to:

- Loan modifications
- Short sales
- Foreclosures



Under current law, the amount of the mortgage loan forgiven is treated as income. Sometimes referred to as “Phantom income”

Mortgage Debt Relief



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Transfer Taxes

– Several bills, including the Governor’s climate resiliency proposal, contain statewide or local transfer taxes. Transfer taxes represent a flawed tax policy that will harm homebuyers and sellers.



1. Transfer taxes increase the cost of housing. On a micro level they raise the bottom-line price of home ownership, for many homes by thousands of dollars. On a macro level, they further exacerbate the housing affordability crisis facing the state as these cost increases are passed along to subsequent renters or buyers.

2. Transfer taxes are unfair tax policy, forcing the roughly 2.5% of housing unit owners who sell their homes in any given year to fund programs benefitting the whole community.

3. These taxes are unlikely to provide a steady source of revenue because the real estate market is at best cyclical and often volatile. Over the past 20 years, deeds excise tax revenue has varied widely from year-to-year. It is unrealistic to expect stable funding from this source.

Real Estate Transfer Taxes



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