

## **Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary**

**Bill #:** H.4152

**Title:** An Act granting the City of Medford the authority to require the adoption of institutional master plans subject to the review and approval by the municipality

**Sponsor:** Rep. Christine Barber

**Committee:** Municipalities and Regional Government

**Hearing Date:** July 22, 2025

**Prior History:** H.3776 (2023-2024) and H.2137 (2021-2022) (Study Orders)

**Current Law:** Chapter 40A Section 3 of MGL outlines the subjects which zoning may not regulate; exemptions; public hearings; temporary manufactured home residences. This chapter provides exemptions for specific uses and structures.

The second paragraph states, in part: "No zoning ordinance or by-law shall regulate or restrict the interior area of a single family residential building nor shall any such ordinance or by-law prohibit, regulate or restrict the use of land or structures for religious purposes or for educational purposes on land owned or leased by the commonwealth or any of its agencies, subdivisions or bodies politic or by a religious sect or denomination, or by a nonprofit educational corporation; provided, however, that such land or structures may be subject to reasonable regulations concerning the bulk and height of structures and determining yard sizes, lot area, setbacks, open space, parking, and building coverage requirements."

Currently, the city of Boston requires institutional master plans to be submitted by hospitals, colleges, and universities having more than 150,000 square feet of property.

**Summary:** The bill exempts the city of Medford from Section 3 of Chapter 40A, and any other applicable laws, to allow the city to adopt ordinances that impose institutional master plan review "to regulate the use of land or structures for land owned, leased, or otherwise occupied by hospitals, health care institutions, colleges, universities, and non-profit educational corporations" for long-term planning purposes.

Such institutions would be required to submit their master development plan to the city for review and approval.

Section 1 authorizes the city of Medford to require the adoption of an institutional master plan, which is defined as a land-use and development plan for all landowners or used by an institution within a community, which identifies growth and development over a number of years, or in several phases. This tool allows the community to address strategies and development impacts through the review and adoption processes for the plan and allows the community to determine predictable outcomes for any planned growth of the institution.

Section 2 authorizes Medford to adopt local legislation imposing institutional master plan review to regulate the use of land or structures for land owned, leased, or otherwise occupied by hospitals, health care institutions, colleges, universities, and non-profit educational corporations.

Section 3 states that this act shall take effect upon passage.

**Notes:**

This language was approved by the Medford City Council on February 25, 2025 with 7 yes votes and 0 no votes.

Similar to H.3923 (Somerville).