

Flood Plain Districts

ARTICLE 31

2026 Annual Town Meeting

Purpose

To amend The Flood Plain or Watershed Protection District Bylaw subsection E, to add additional language on prohibitions to floodway encroachment, namely, a new Zone in which all Recreational Vehicles to be placed on a site must be elevated and anchored in accordance with the zone's regulations for foundation and elevation requirements or be on the site for less than 180 consecutive days or be fully licensed and highway ready.

Flood Plain or Watershed Protection District Overview

The Flood Plain or Watershed Protection District Bylaw

- Ensure public safety by reducing threats to life and property
- Eliminate new hazards to emergency response officials
- Prevent public emergencies resulting from water quality, contamination, and pollution due to flooding
- Avoid the loss of utility services damaged by flooding and impact beyond the site of the flooding
- Eliminate costs associated with the response and cleanup of floods
- Reduce damage to public and private property resulting from floods

Background

- In the 1970s, Wellesley adopted 100-year base flood elevations for bodies of water in town and set restrictions for new construction within flood plains.
- FEMA concurrently issued a Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that identified hazard areas.
- The FIRM is updated periodically, most recently at ATM 2025 (Article 39).
- The Bylaw was last updated at ATM 2022 (Article 33) and ATM 2025 (Article 39).

Overview

- Article 31 revises the Zoning Bylaw text to conform to the most recent version of the 2020 Massachusetts Model Floodplain Bylaw.
- All proposed changes to the bylaw have been conditionally approved by the State – this change was suggested.

Revisions

- **Section E:** Provide additional language on prohibitions to floodway encroachment
- f. Recreational Vehicles
 - i. In **A**, A1-30, AH, AE Zones, V1-30, VE, and V Zones, all Recreational Vehicles to be placed on a site must be elevated and anchored in accordance with the zone's regulations for foundation and elevation requirements or be on the site for less than 180 consecutive days or be fully licensed and highway ready.

Summary

- Adopting Article 31 will bring Town Bylaws into compliance with Federal and State Requirements.
- Adopting Article 31 is necessary to ensure that Town residents can continue to purchase federal flood insurance.

Questions?