



# TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 9, 2023  
7:00 P.M.  
Zoom Meeting

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Melissa Eusden, Chair  
Tiana Veldwisch, Vice Chair  
Robin Greenberg, Clerk  
Christina Olivieri  
Steffin Spears  
Julie Smith-Galvin, Town Council rep  
Ann Waitt, DPW rep proxy  
Sharon Daly, WMGLD rep  
Nate Chines, Youth Council rep

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Lillian Guinther  
Chris Lewis  
Joe Conway, DPW rep  
Amy Leeman, School Comm. rep

### ----- TOPICS OF DISCUSSION -----

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m by M. Eusden.  
The meeting is being recording and closed captioning is available.

#### Public Participation

-

#### Approval of Minutes

J. Smith Galvin motion. R. Greenberg motion second. Motion passed to approve the October 2023 meeting minutes.

#### MBTA 3A Multi- Family Overlay Zoning District

Erin Kokinda, Community and Economic Development Director, provided an overview of what is MBTA Multi-Family Zoning law and the working group proposed multi-family district to meet the law, see attached presentation. Wakefield is a MBTA community because of our commuter rail stations in town. R. Greenberg and J. Smith-Galvin are on the working group that developed the draft district. The committee is seeking feedback on district boundaries, parking ratios and general comments.

#### ESC Events

T. Veldwisch shared that the EV Showcase was a success. WCAT made a video of the event. For next year, it was suggested that a list of make and models of vehicles attending be made available to the public prior to the event.

T. Veldwisch attended Wakefield 101 on behalf the ESC. She answered questions about sustainability efforts in town and encouraged folks to join our mailing list.



Yesterday was the pumpkin compost collection event. ESC collected almost 500 pumpkins from the town elementary schools. Pumpkins were sent to Black Earth Compost facilities. Thank you to the DPW for sponsoring the event.

The candy wrapper collection program will continue at the school and library for another week.

The Specialize Energy Code info-session occurred on Monday. The video of the presentation will be posted on ESC's website and Facebook.

**Waste Reduction  
Subcommittee**

M. Eusden talked to Chamber of Commerce about waste reduction.

M. Eusden and N. Chines are working on the Galvin Middle School recycling. N. Chines is working to create a recycling club at the school.

**Building  
Efficiency  
Subcommittee**

R. Greenberg has no news on the town buildings.

It was noted that WMGLD Energy Park's Article 97 bill has passed the MA House of Representative. It is scheduled for review by the MA Senate soon.

**GHG Inventory /  
Green  
Communities  
Subcommittee**

M. Eusden and J. Smith-Galvin presented the need for a Climate Action Plan to the Town Council. Town Administrator Maio support the effort. A. Waitt is GHG town staff person assigned to the effort and will apply for grants to support the effort.

Green Communities Annual Report need to be done. A. Waitt will find out who will be assembling reports.

Town Hall LED lighting installation is in progress. The project is funded from Green Communities funding.

**Community  
Education  
Subcommittee  
School  
Committee  
Liaison Update**

T. Veldwisch shared the subcommittee is currently focused on education around the Specialized Energy Code warrant article.

Liaison not available

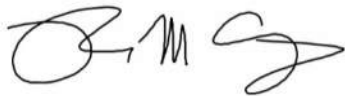
**DPW Liaison  
Update**

A. Waitt shared that cardboard container is going to leave the Pit and be located be at Town Hall from Dec 18 to Jan 12. There will be a string light collection from Dec 4 to Jan 4 at Town Hall.

The town metal recycling container has collected approximately 21,000 lbs of metal. The metal goes to Turner Recycling in Lynn. The collected metal netted ~\$1,600 to the town plus it saved the town from having to pay for the trash disposal of it.

<b>Town Council Liaison Update</b>	J. Smith-Galvin shared that the Town Council is talking about the revised Pedestrian Plan at their meeting on Monday.
<b>WMGLD Liaison Update</b>	S. Daly shared at the 480 North Ave solar panel project started construction. Community Solar info session is being planned in January. The Commissioners have formally voted to support Warrant Article 7, Specialized Energy Code.
<b>Student Liaison</b>	N. Chines is working to establish a recycling club. He has been talking with faculty members for support.
<b>Next Meeting</b>	The next regular Environmental Sustainability Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 7pm.
<b>Committee Meeting Adjournment</b>	R. Greenberg motioned to adjourn. J. Smith-Galvin second. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,




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Robin Greenberg, Clerk

Attachments: MBTA Multi-Family Zoning Requirements in Wakefield presentation

# MBTA Community Multi-family Zoning Requirements Wakefield, MA

M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 3A

October 16, 2023

# Proposed Multi-family District Summary

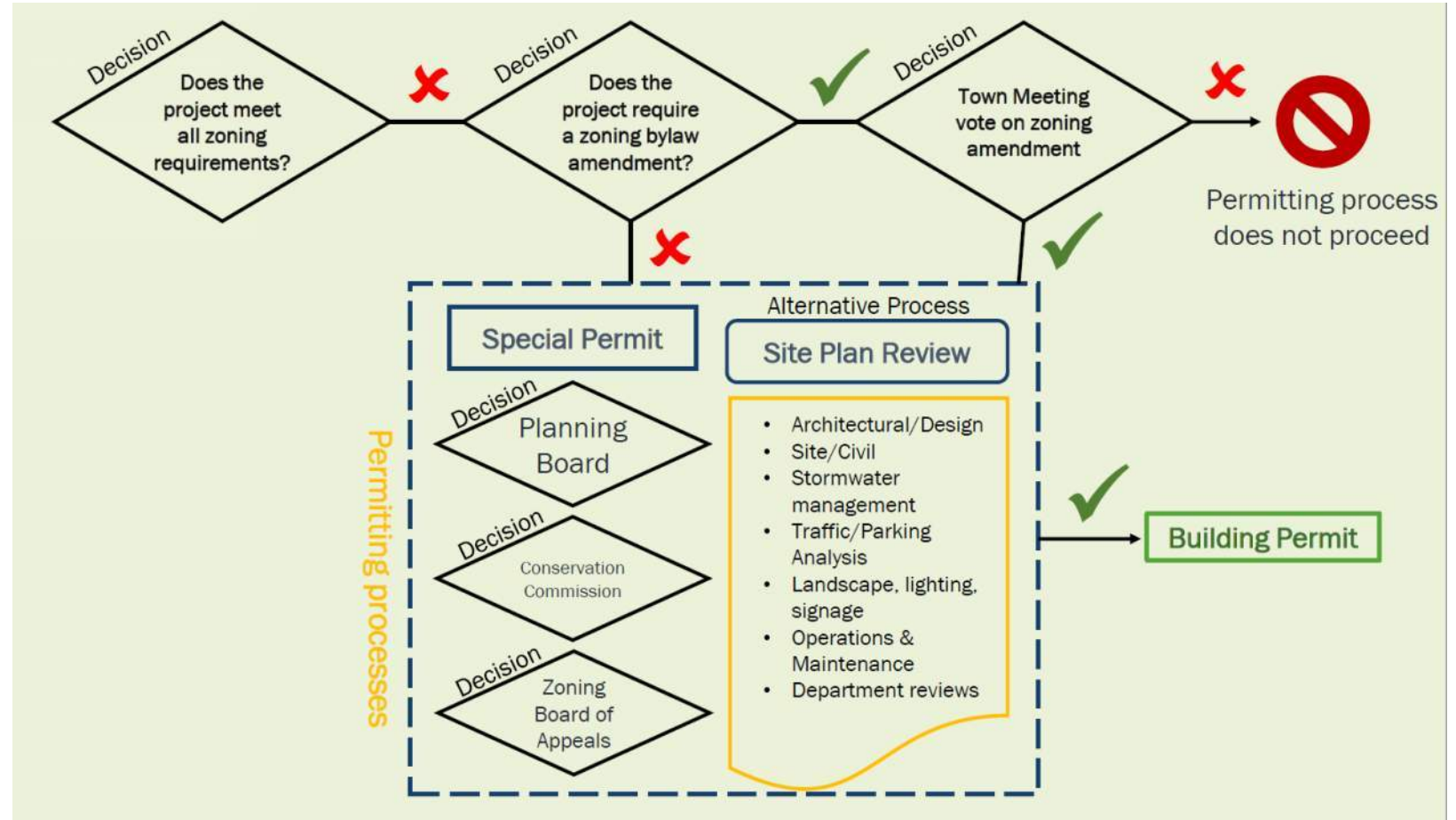
- Proposed District will comply with state zoning requirements (Section 3A of MGL c. 40A)
- Proposed Multi-family Zoning District will center on Wakefield Commuter Rail Station
- Proposed Multi-family Zoning District allows as of right developments to be up to three stories and a maximum four units/lot.
- The Proposed Multi-family Zoning District will exclude commercial parcels along North Ave, Main Street, and Albion Street to protect Wakefield's commercial footprint.

# Existing Permit Process

**“As of right”:** Development that may proceed without the need for a special permit, variance, zoning amendment, waiver, or other discretionary zoning approval.

**“Special permit”:** A discretionary permit to allow a development to proceed.

**“Multi-family”** – 3 or more units, though it is colloquially used to mean larger apartment buildings.



# What if Wakefield Does Not Comply?

MBTA communities that do not comply with Section 3A is not eligible for funding from:

- The Housing Choice Initiative
- The Local Capital Projects Fund
- MassWorks Infrastructure Programs

**Wakefield received \$3.6M from these programs over the past 3 years**

On March 15, 2023, an additional **14 programs** were added to the list of programs that non-compliant towns will be ineligible to receive.



WAKEFIELD  
MASTER PLAN 2031

MAPC

TOWN OF WAKEFIELD

Urban Agenda Grant 2022-  
Master Plan- \$49,970



MassWorks Grant 2022-  
North Ave Water Main Improvements- \$2M

**Wakefield will not be eligible for any of the above grants unless a Multi-family District is passed.**

**The Attorney General has threatened legal action against non-compliant communities.**

# MBTA Communities District Requirements

Key requirements of the STATE LAW for Multi-family District include:

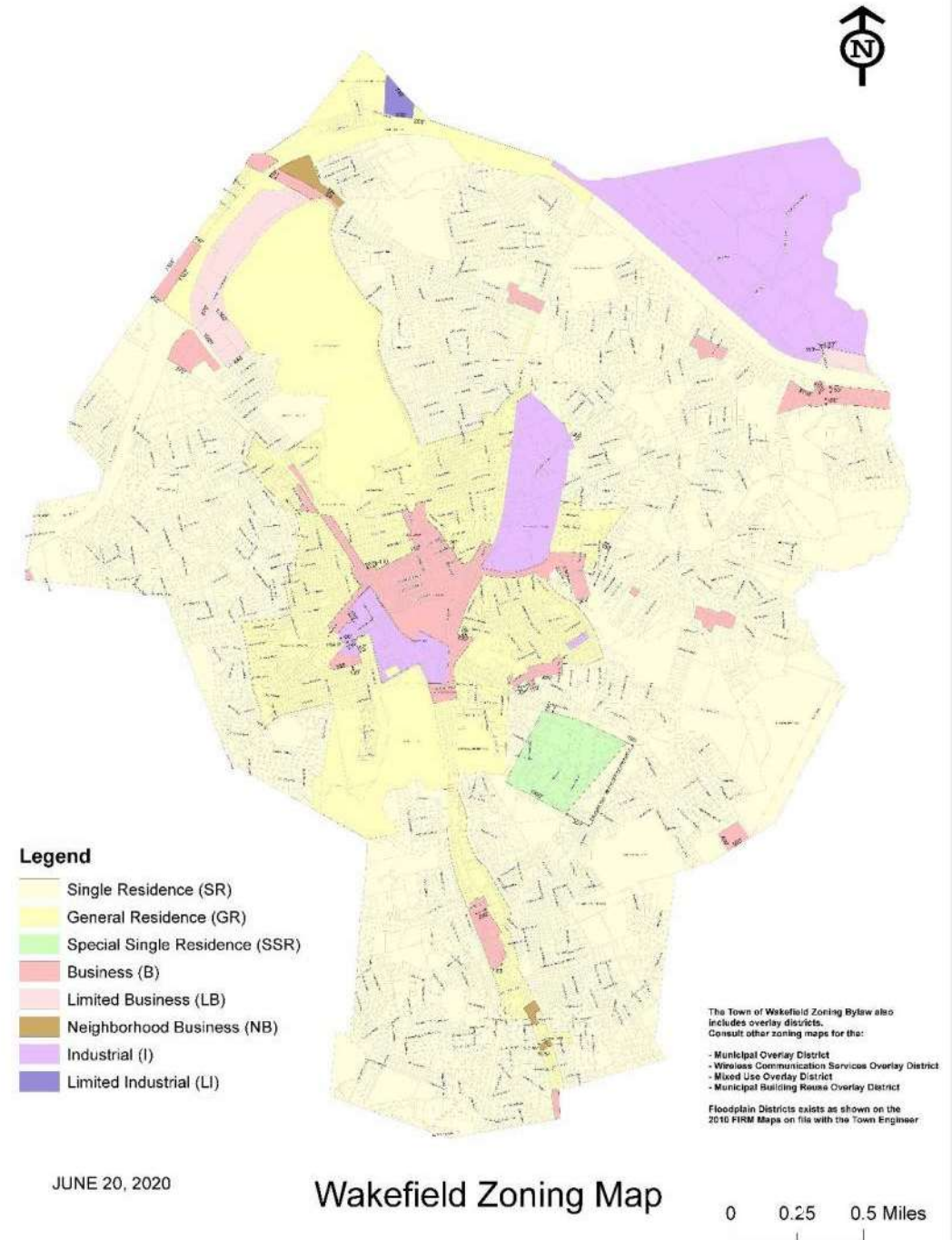
- Wakefield Minimum Multi-family Unit Capacity: 1,696 units
- Wakefield Minimum District Size: 114 acres
- Support a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre
- The district cannot be more than a 1/2 mile from a commuter rail station
- District can have no age restrictions
- District must be suitable for families with children (no bedroom or age restrictions)

**Multi-family= Building designed for 3+ dwellings**

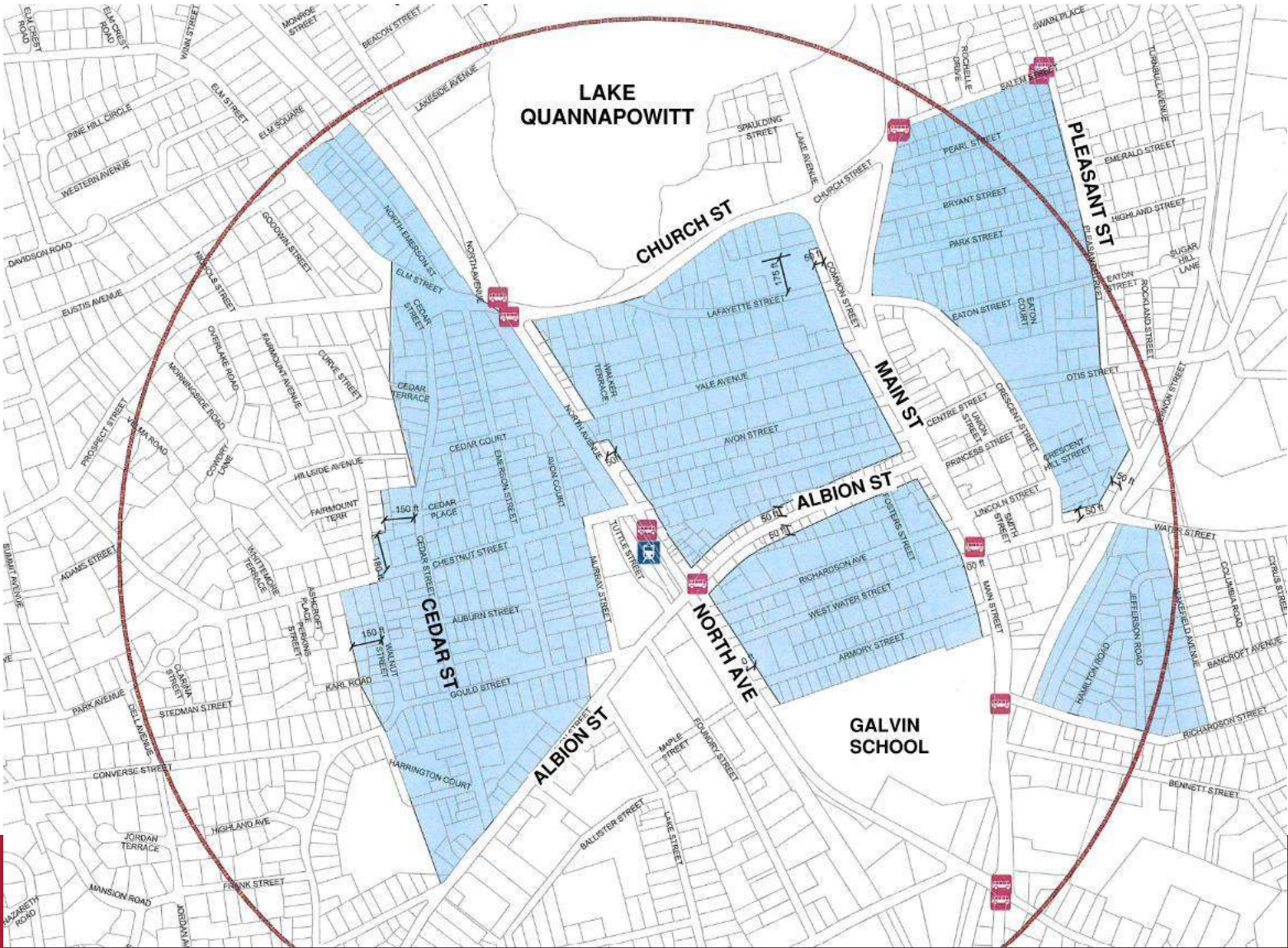


# Wakefield Zoning Today

- Wakefield currently has no zoning district where “multi-family” homes are allowed as of right
- Two-thirds of zoned land is for single-family dwellings only
- Two- Family homes are allowed in the General Residence, Mixed Use, Neighborhood Business and Business Districts
- Districts that allow two-families are located in Wakefield Center and Greenwood areas of the Town and represent about 20% of town land

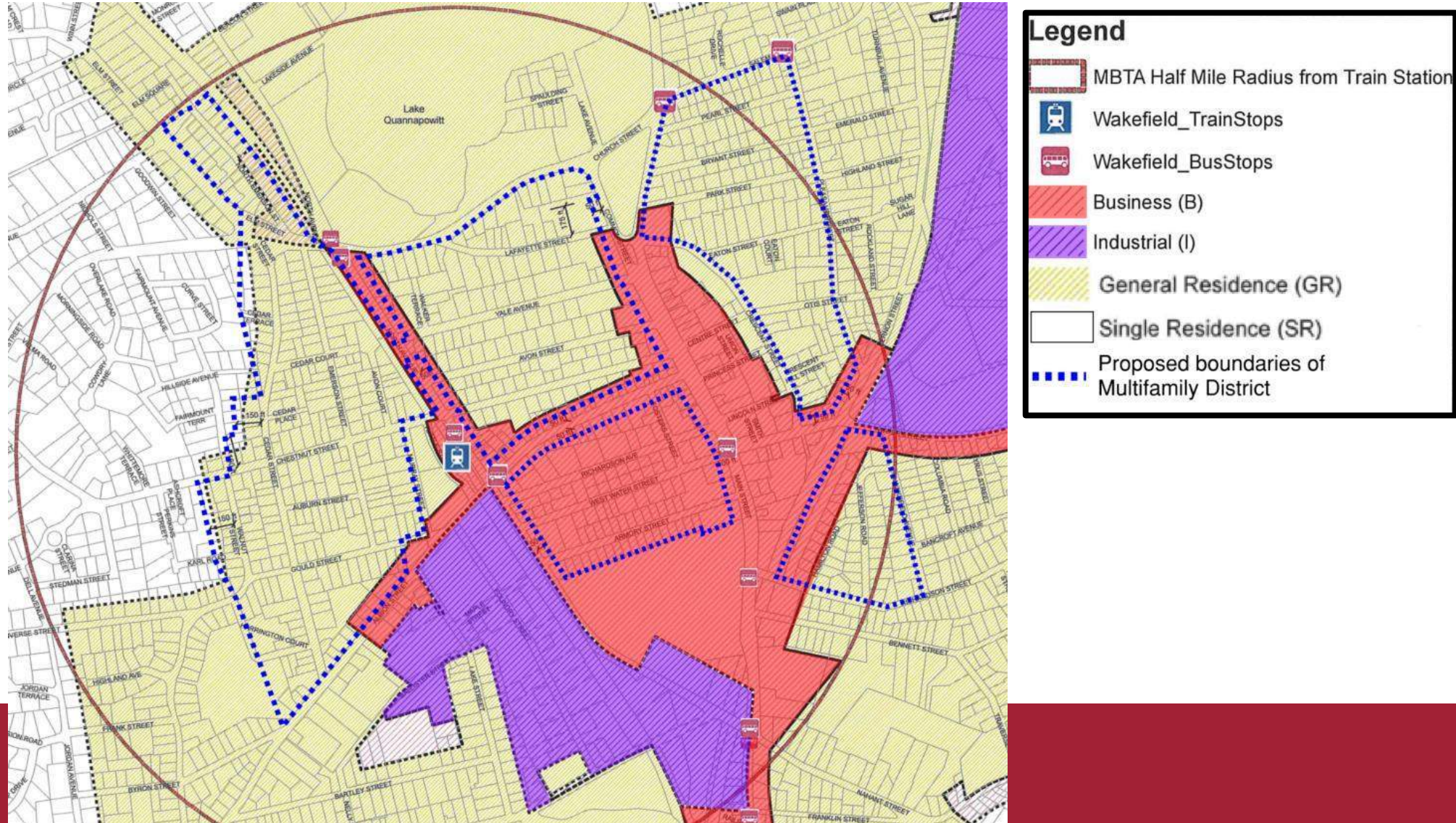


# Proposed Multi-family District Zoning





# Existing Zoning in Proposed District



# Proposed Dimensional Requirements

Criteria	Proposed Multifamily District	Requirements from State Law
Allowable Unit Count	2,355 units	1,696 units
Allowable Units/Acre	16.3 units/acre	15.0 units/acre
Criteria	Proposed Multifamily District	Existing Mixed-Use Zoning (Garden Apartment)
As of right number of units	4	N/A
Maximum Stories	3 stories	3 stories
Building Height	35 ft	35 ft
Parking Spaces	1.5 per unit	1.5 per unit for 1&2 beds 2 per unit for 3+ bed



# Existing Wakefield Multi-family

## Pleasant St

4 Units on 5,663 Sq. Ft lot



## Richardson Ave

4 Units on 4,356 Sq. Ft lot





# Existing Wakefield Multi-family

## Wakefield Ave

3 Units on 5,663 Sq. Ft lot



## Avon St

4 units on 6,098 SF lot



# Example Wakefield Development

## 49A Chestnut Street Completed 2022

- 3 Units
- 6,978 Sq. Ft lot





# Development Context

**Townwide housing units-** 11,261 total housing units  
(source: 2020 Census)

**Current Housing Units-** 1,641 (Source: Residency)

**Required Housing Unit Capacity-** 1,696\*

**Proposed Housing Unit Capacity-** 2,355

The proposed district would allow an additional 714 units as of right above the currently built housing stock (6.3% of total housing stock)

The proposed district is 145.5 acres

Total acres for town 4,729.6 acres.

**The proposed district is 3.08% Wakefield's land.**





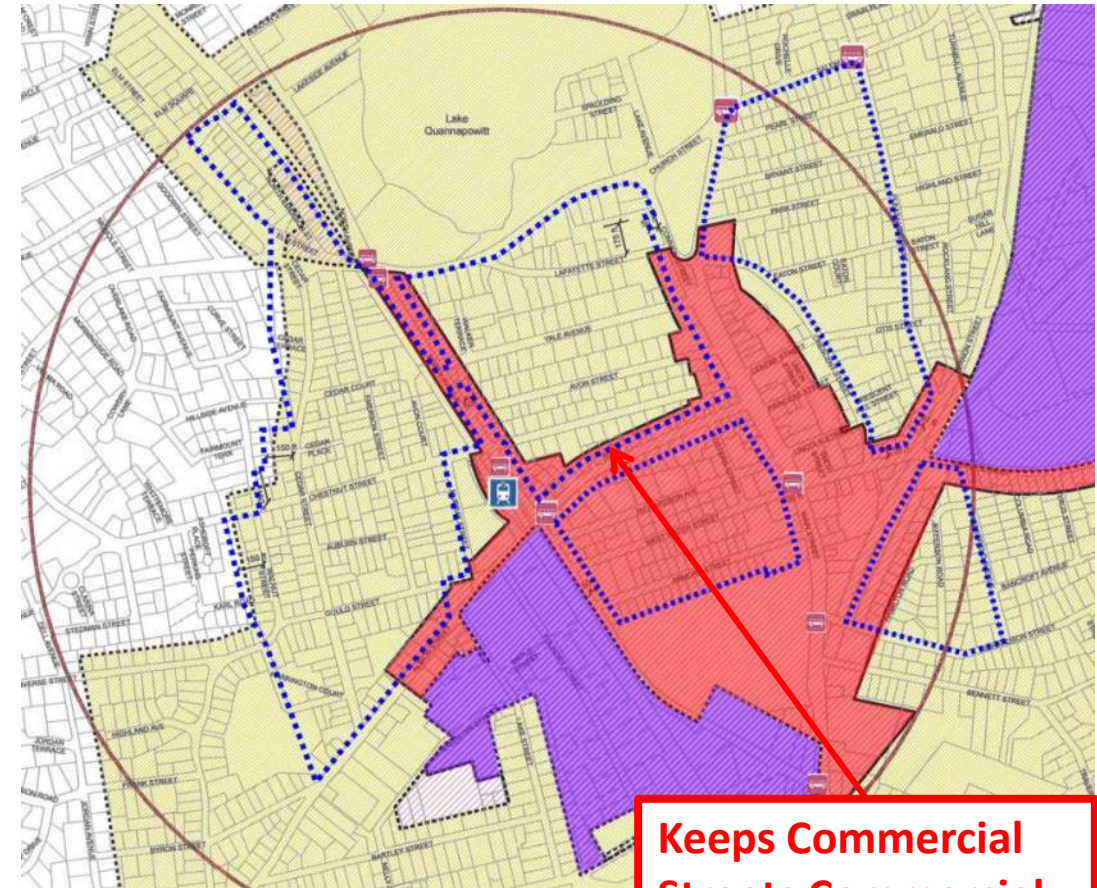
# Reasons for Proposed District

## Statewide:

- 3A law was passed to increase region-wide housing supply to address estimated shortage of 200,000 housing units in Massachusetts

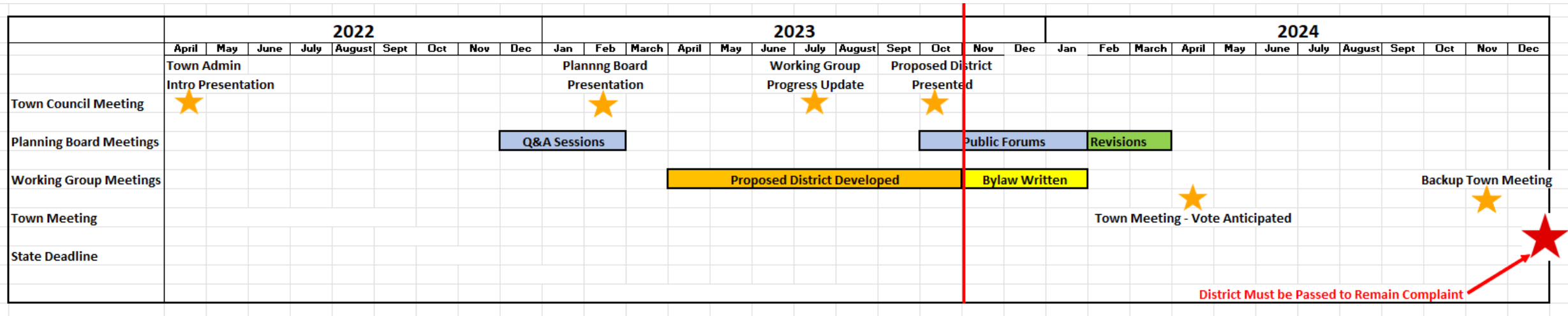
## Wakefield:

- Want to center district around business district
- Drive economic development by increasing foot traffic to downtown businesses
- Increase housing options near transit (bus and commuter rail)
- Increase housing option types by expanding supply



Keeps Commercial  
Streets Commercial

# District Implementation Schedule



## Future Known Meetings:

- October 24, November 14, December 12, 2023: Planning Board Public Forums
- October 25, 2023: Zoning Board of Appeals Presentation
- November 9, 2023: Environmental Sustainability Committee Presentation
- Spring Town Meeting – Vote Anticipated (Simple Majority Vote)

# Summary

- Town leadership intends to comply with State 3A law. A multifamily district of some kind will be presented to town meeting before deadline
- Proposed Multi-family District is in full compliance with State Zoning Law
- Proposed district maintains Wakefield eligibility for state grants & provides a competitive advantage for all other state grants
- Provides opportunity for Wakefield to help local and regional housing needs
- Provides increase housing options for Wakefield residents
- Centers growth on downtown business district
- Supports local downtown business by increasing foot traffic

# More Info:

<https://www.wakefield.ma.us/mbta-3a-multi-family-zoning-overlay-district-project>

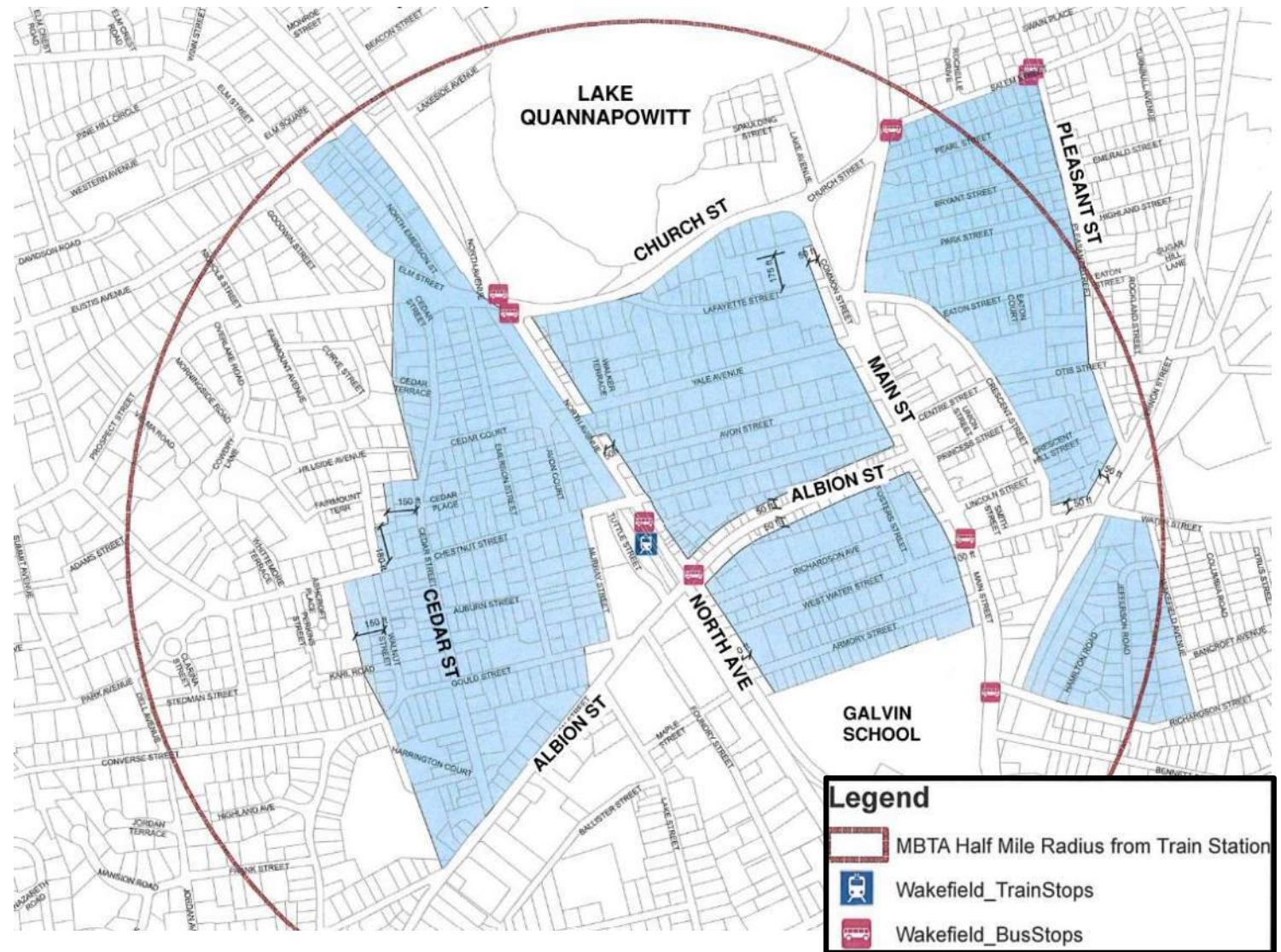




# Questions & Answers

The Planning Board is looking for feedback on:

- Proposed district map
- Parking ratios proposed (1.5 / unit)



# Appendix

# Background

- In 2020, the Massachusetts Zoning Act (Section 3A of MGL c. 40A ) was amended to promote the production of multi-family housing within walking distance of public transportation to address the severe regional housing shortage.
- The state has an estimated shortage of up to 200,000 housing units
- Zoning Act requires MBTA communities to pass a Multifamily Zoning District. An MBTA community shall have at least one multi-family zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted **as of right**. Existing regulations, for example setbacks, are still enforced.
- Wakefield is A MBTA community because of commuter rail stations are located within the town
- Massachusetts has among the highest and fastest-growing home prices and rents of any state in the nation.
- According to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), multi-family housing near transit creates walkable neighborhoods with climate and transportation benefits:
  - Better access to work/services
  - Increased utilization of public transit
  - Reduced reliance on single-occupancy vehicles

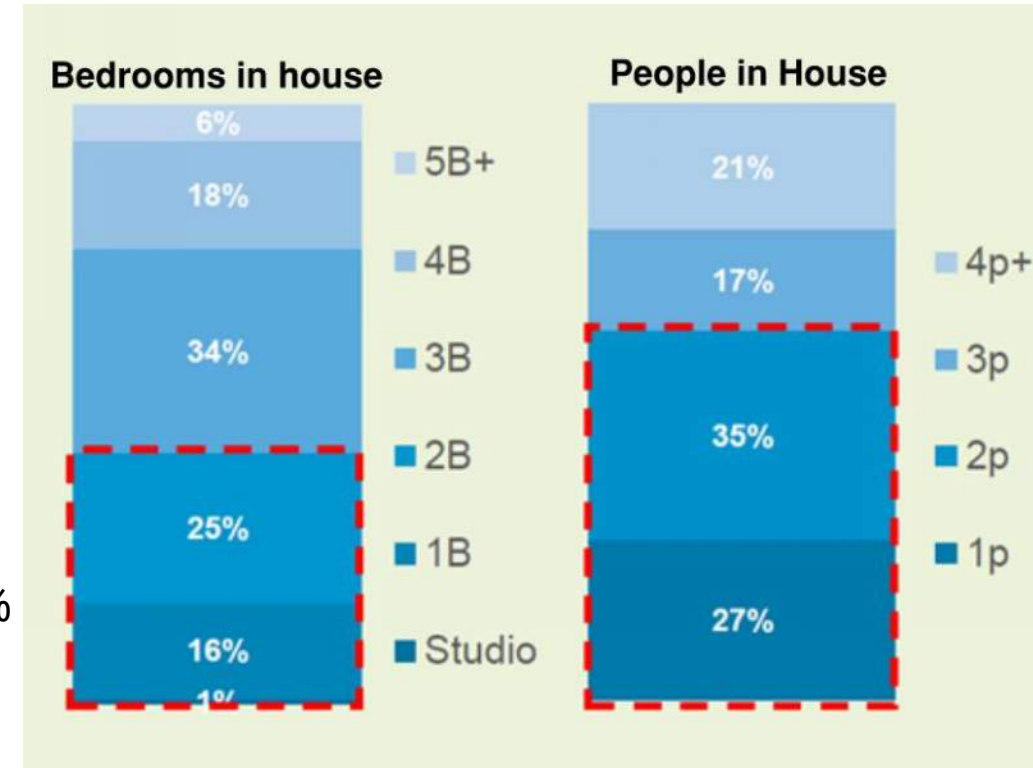
# Wakefield Housing Today

## Wakefield Existing Housing Stock:

- 61% are single family
- 16% are two families
- 11% are small multifamily properties between 3 and 9 units
- 2% are medium multifamily properties between 10-19 units
- 10% are larger multifamily properties between 20 + units (Example: Harvard Mills, WS Residents/Tonno)

## Housing Market

- A “Healthy” vacancy rate is 5%-8%. Wakefield vacancy rate is 3.7%
- Lower vacancy rates indicate a tight housing market with challenges in housing turnover and costs
- 62% of Wakefield's households have 1-2 people but only 42% of homes have 2 bedrooms or less

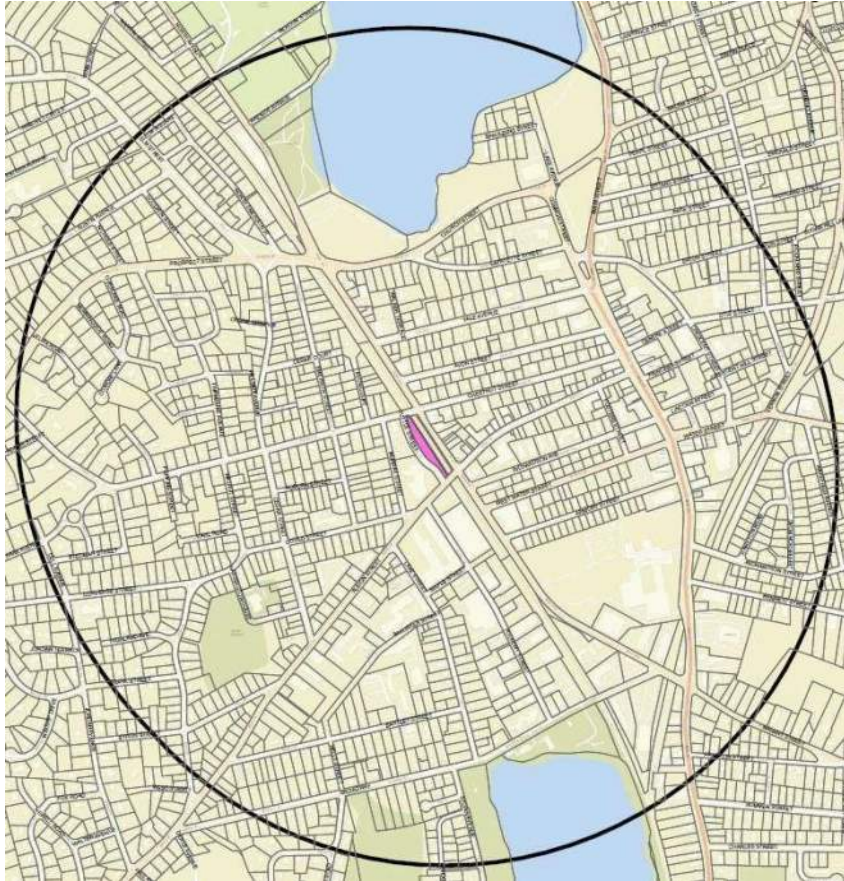


Source: Wakefield Housing Forum

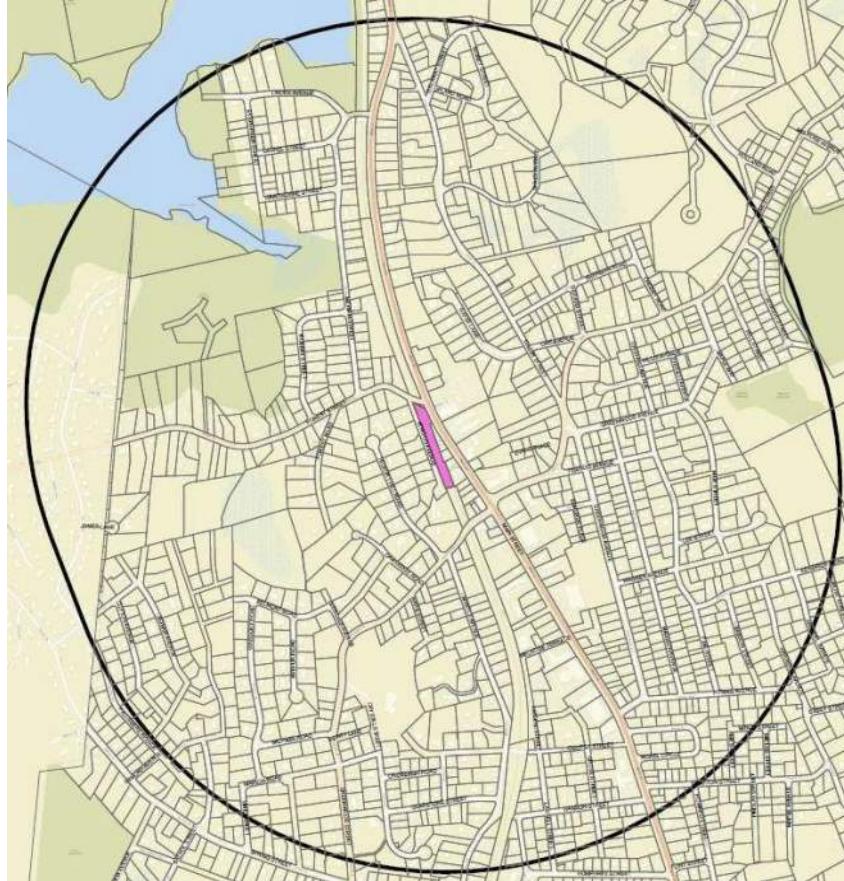


# MBTA Communities District Process

Possible Zoning Areas (0.5 miles from train station)



Downtown



Greenwood

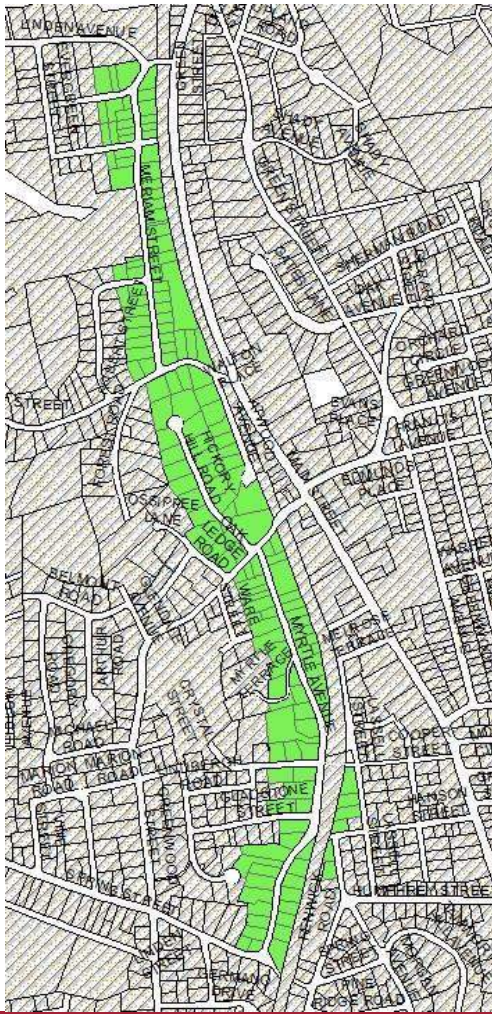


# Other District Considered - Greenwood

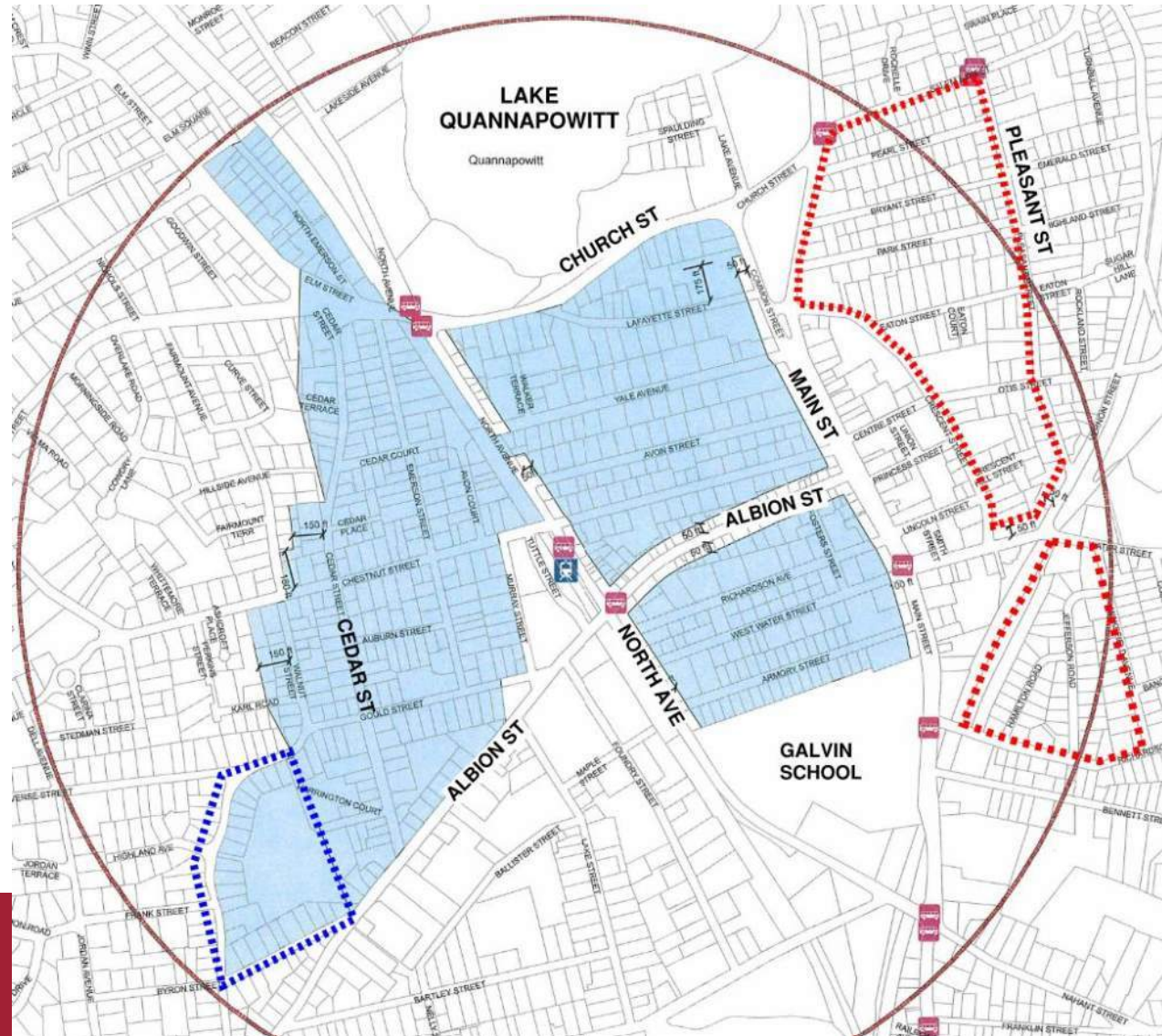
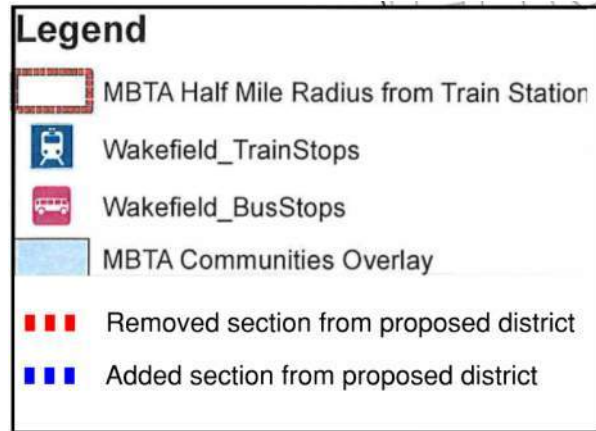
Working Group Considered Greenwood at center of an overlay district. The existing lots around Greenwood made the proposed overlay less dense than acceptable for MBTA Community Overlay Compliance

Data Metric	
District Name	Greenwood Station
District Acreage (see note)	69.0
District Density Denominator (see note)	69.0
Final Unit Capacity per District DU/AC	11.8
Parcel Acreage	68.6
Total Built Square Feet	1,880,485
Total Units in Station Area	815
Non-Conforming Parcels	16
Total Excluded Land (sf)	686,492
Total Open Space (sf)	1,582,313
Total Parking Area (sf)	940,243
Units Forgone due to Unit Cap in Zoning	974.00

LESS THAN  
MINIMUM OF 15  
UNITS/ACRE!



# Minimum Compliance Map



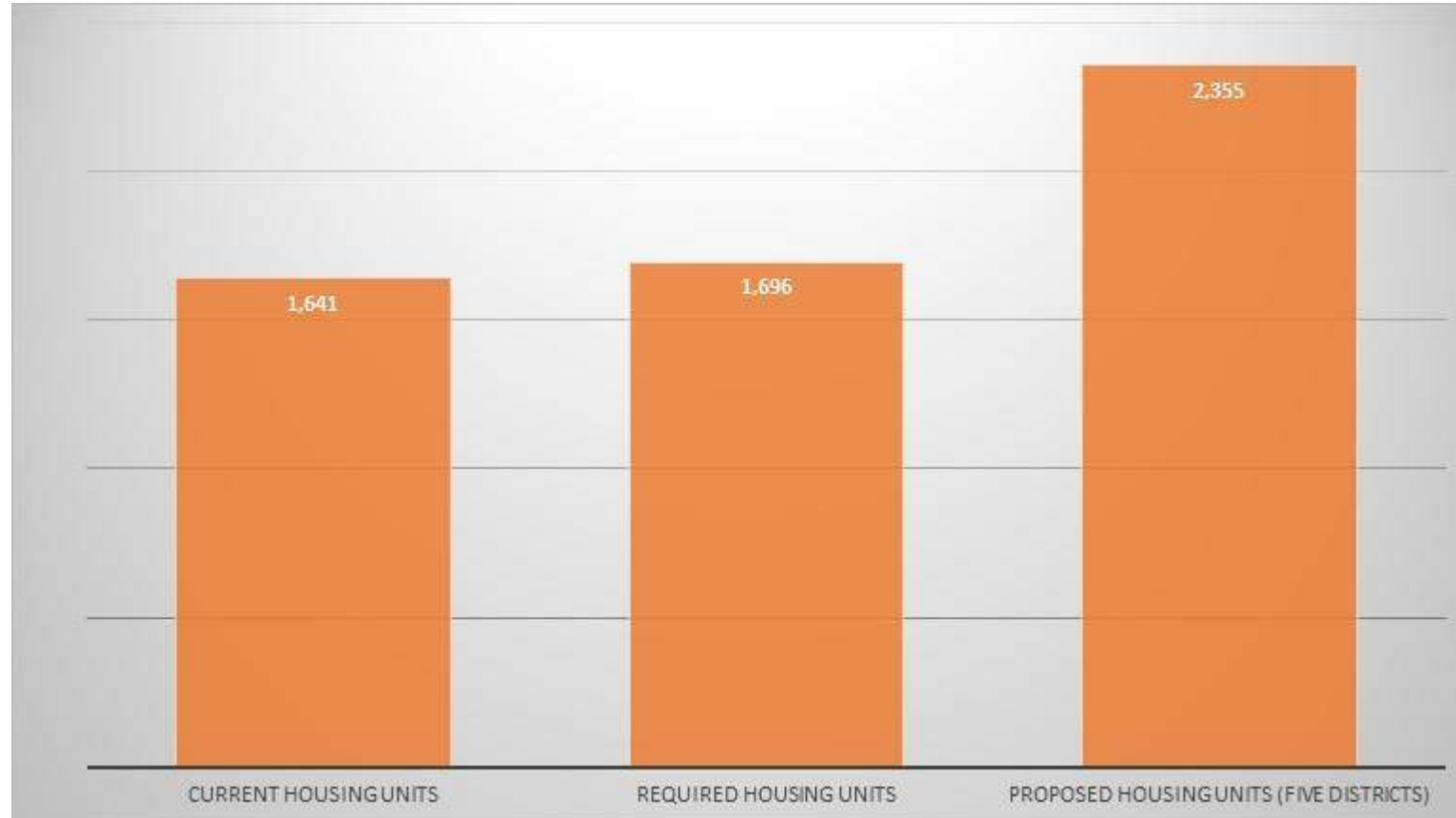
# Grants Non-compliant Communities are not Eligible for

On March 15, 2023, an additional 14 programs were added to the list of programs that non-compliant towns will be ineligible to receive. They include:

- Community Planning Grants
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
- Urban Agenda
- Rural and Small Town Development Fund
- Brownfields Redevelopment Fund
- Site Readiness Program
- Underutilized Properties Program
- Collaborative Workspace Program
- Real Estate Services Technical Assistance
- Commonwealth Places Programs
- Land Use Planning Grants
- Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grants
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning
- Project Grants



# Proposed Zoning Area- Compliance Model



# Public Meetings & Presentations

<b>April 25, 2022</b> Town Council Presentation	<b>Dec 13, 2022</b> Planning board Q&A	<b>Jan 24, 2023</b> Planning board Q&A	<b>Feb 13, 2023</b> Town Council Presentation
<b>Feb 28, 2023</b> Planning Board Q&A	<b>April 18, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting	<b>May 16, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting	<b>June 6, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting
<b>July 10, 2023</b> Presentation to Town Council	<b>July 18, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting	<b>Aug 15, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting	<b>Sept 19, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting
<b>Oct 3, 2023</b> Working Group Meeting	<b>Oct 16, 2023</b> Town Council Presentation	<b>Oct 24, 2023</b> Planning Board Public Forum	



Wakefield MBTA Communities Working Group Meeting - April 18th, 2023  
WCAT Wakefield 7,228 subscribers



## 15 Public Meetings & Presentations to date

Webpage: <https://www.wakefield.ma.us/mbta-3a-multi-family-zoning-overlay-district-project>

Postings in Wakefield Daily Item

# MBTA Communities Working Group

## Members:

Julie Smith Galvin - Town Council  
Jim Hogan - Planning Board  
Matt Lowry - Planning Board  
Greg McIntosh - Zoning Board of Appeals  
Robin Greenberg - Environmental Sustainability Committee  
Erin Kokinda - Community & Economic Development Town Staff  
Matt Bown - Wakefield Resident



## Process included:

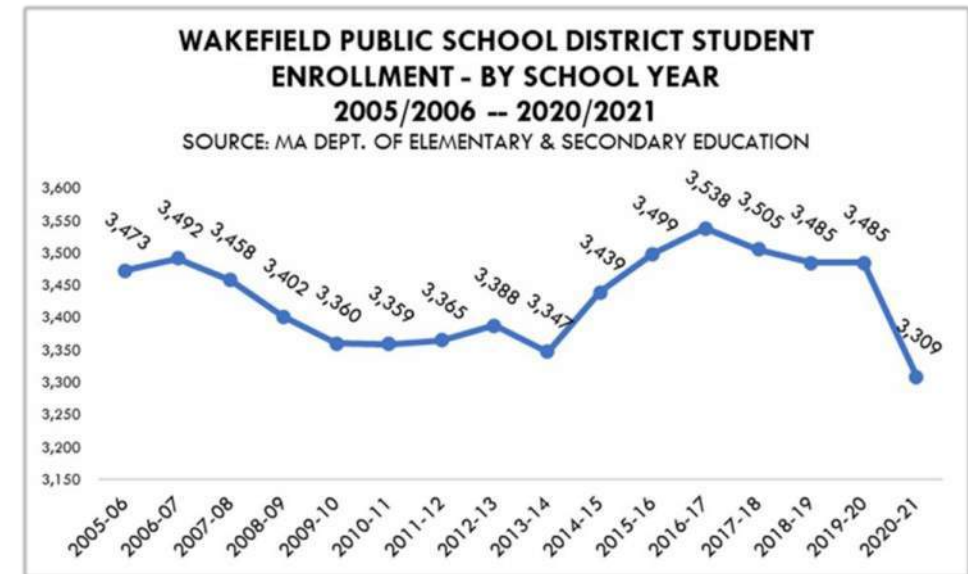
- Reviewing the regulations of the MBTA Communities
- Mapping out potential zoning areas to be in compliance and for equity in the Town
- Inputting GIS data from potential zoning areas with possible dimensional requirements (setbacks, parking, height, open space, etc.) into the 'Compliance Model' which was provided by DHCD
- Eliminating zoning areas that did not fit the state's requirements for compliance (dwelling units/acre, acreage, etc.)

# School Enrollment Numbers

There has been a decrease of 6.5% between 2017 and 2021 in Wakefield Public School enrollment even after a spike in residential units permitted in 2016, 2018, and 2019



Source: Wakefield Housing Forum

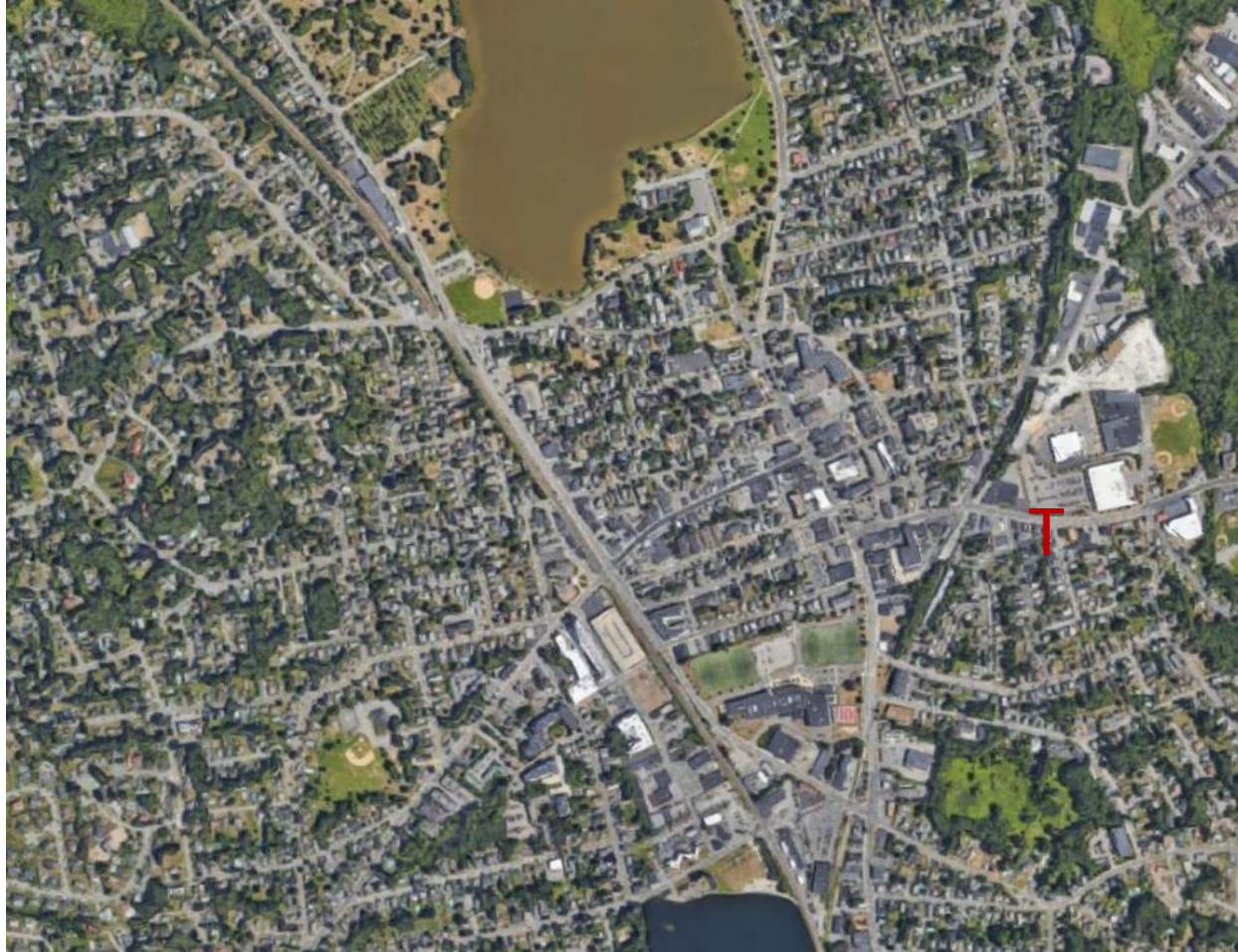


Source: Wakefield DRAFT Master Plan

October 2022: Enrollment- 3,354 (WPS)

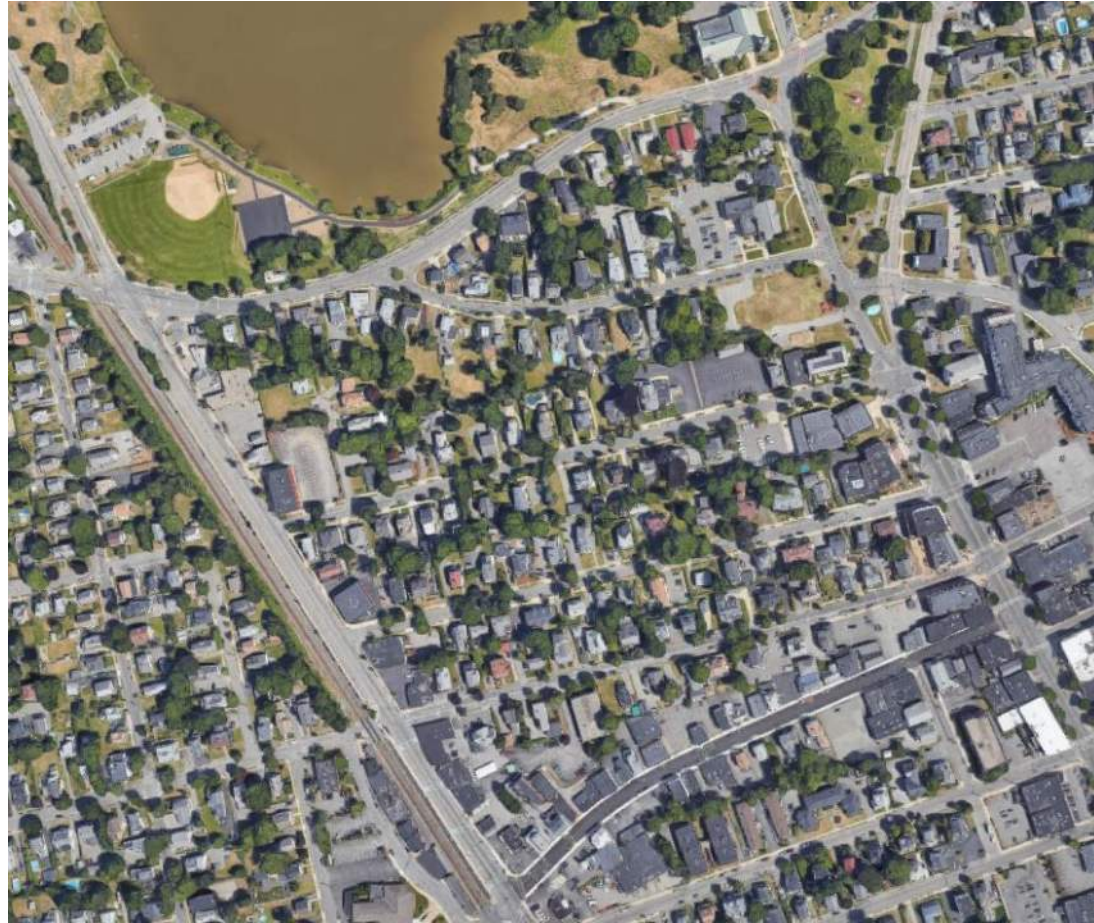


# Wakefield Station



Source: Google Maps

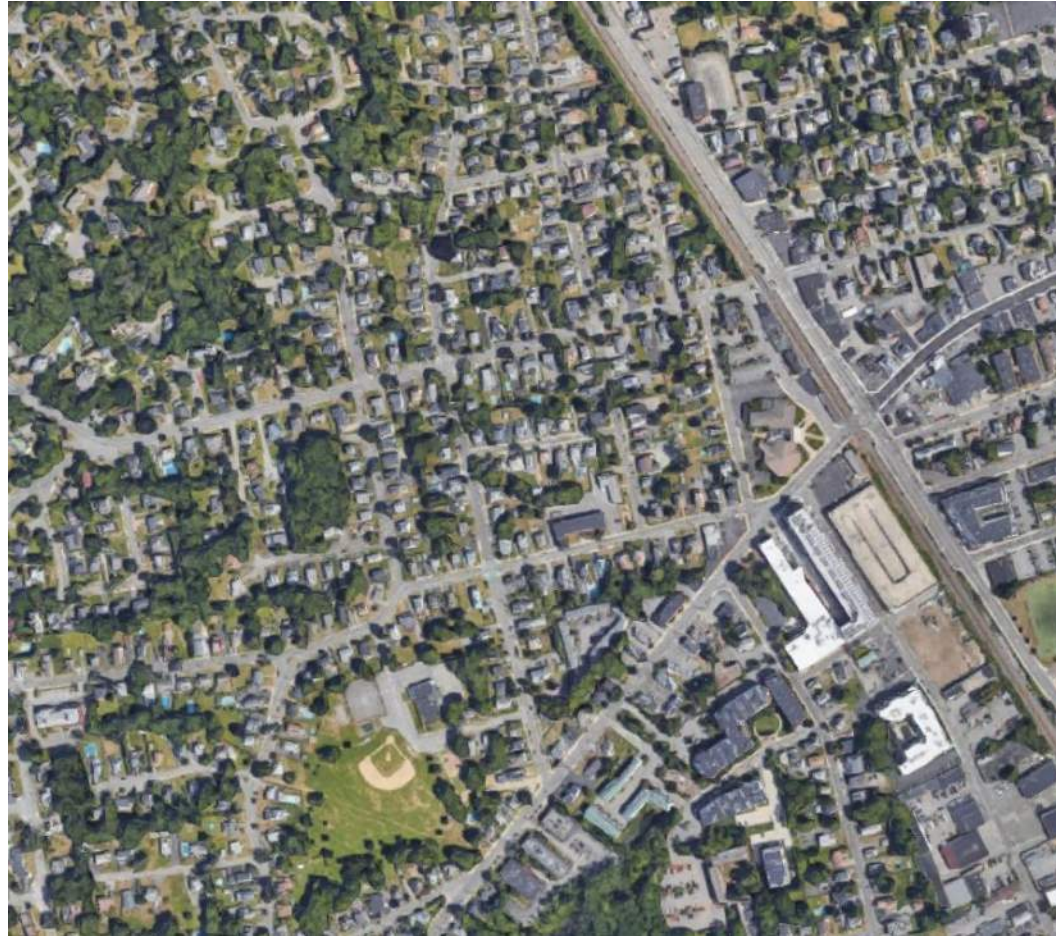
# Satellite Images



Source: Google Maps



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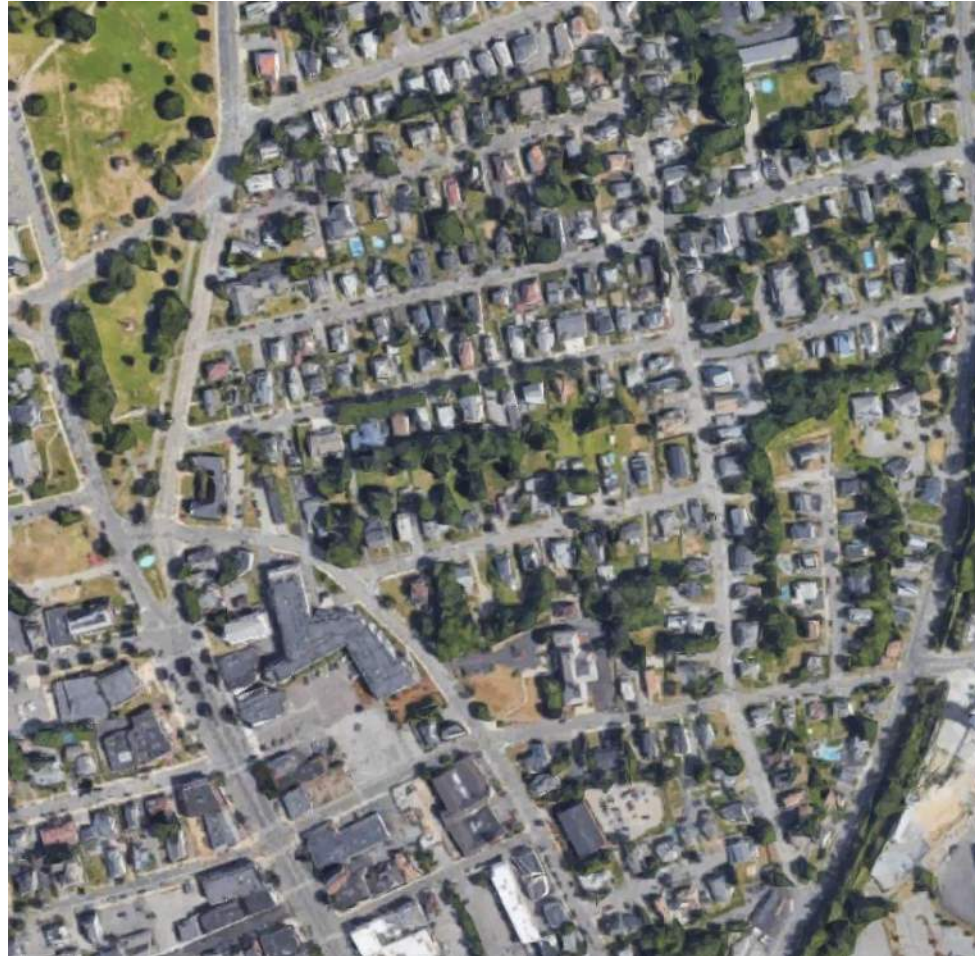


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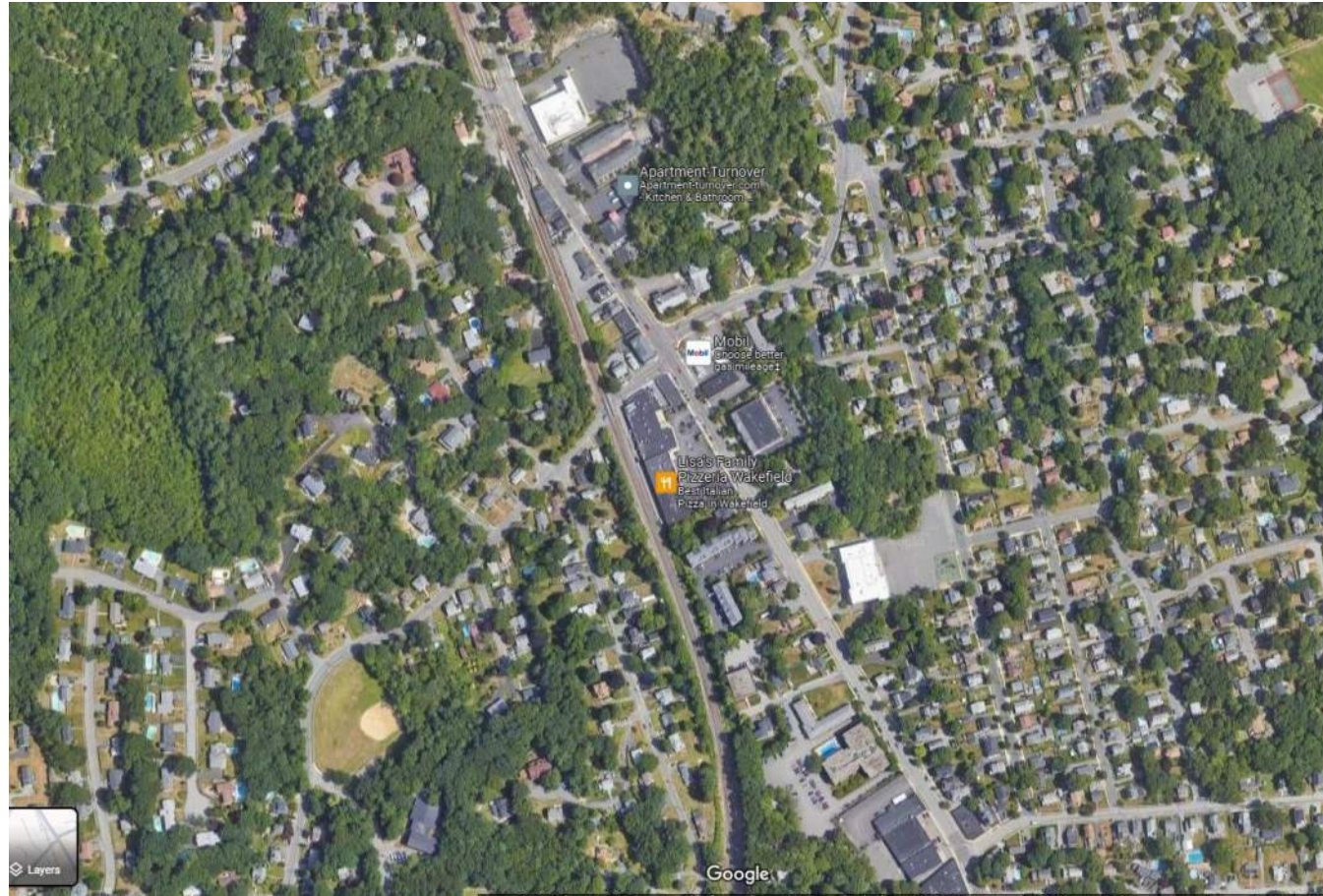
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