

Citizens' Petition for MBTA Communities Revised Article for Spring Town Meeting

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 9, 2024

ED DOMBROSKI, JR.

Background | What is an MBTA Community?

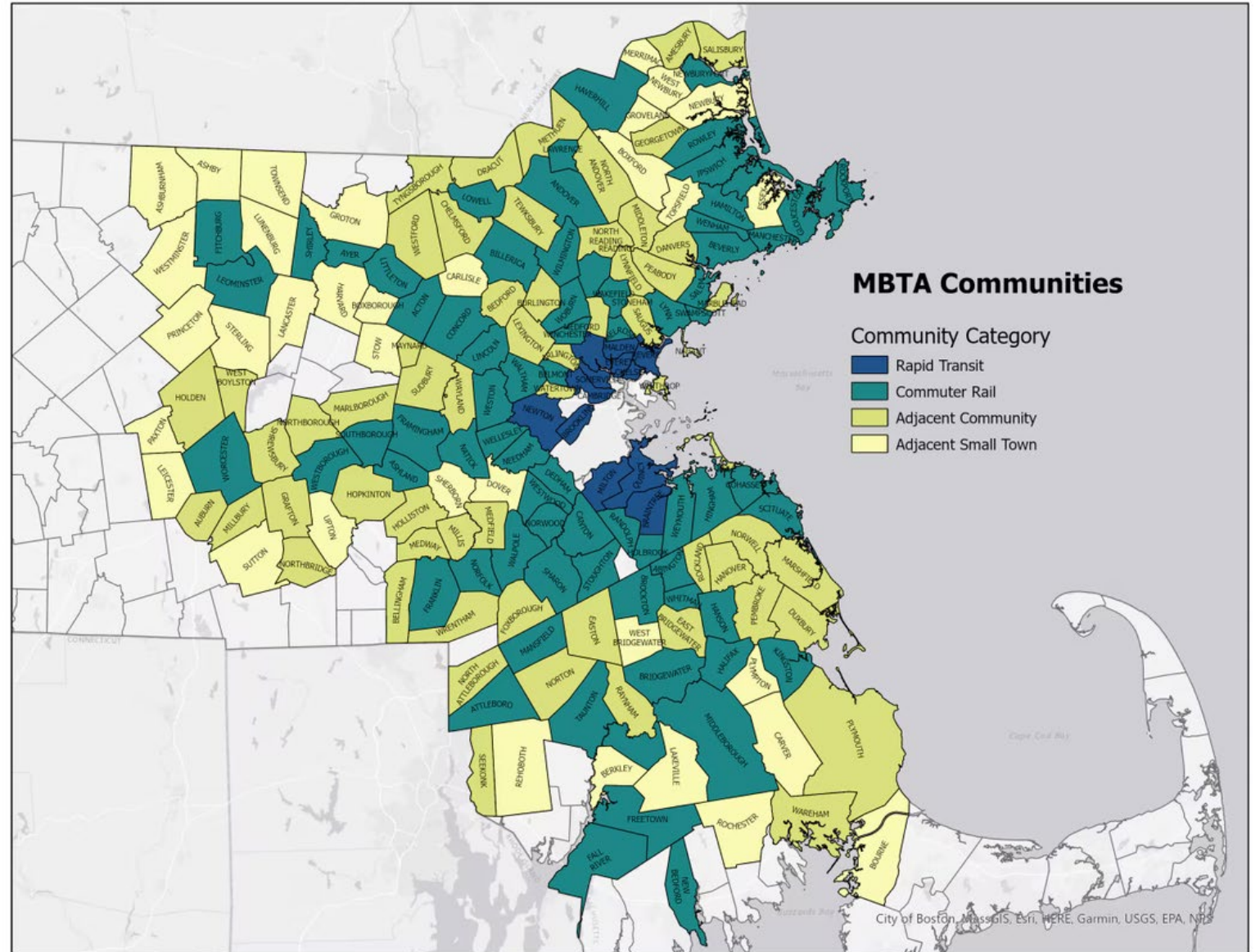
“MBTA Community” is defined as:

- one of the “14 cities and towns” that **initially hosted MBTA service**;
- one of the “51 cities and towns” that **also host MBTA service but joined later**;
- other “served communities” that **abut a city or town that hosts MBTA service**; or
- a **municipality that has been added** to the MBTA under G.L. c. 161A, sec. 6 or in accordance with any special law relative to the area constituting the authority.

177 cities and towns (of 351) have been designated “MBTA Communities”:

- Rapid Transit
- Commuter Rail
- Adjacent Community or Small Town
- Adjacent Small Town

Impact of “MBTA Communities” Designations



MBTA communities must have a multi-family district

Compliance required by December 31, 2024

According to Section 3A of M.G.L. c. 40A an MBTA Community:

“shall have **at least one zoning district of reasonable size** in which **multi-family housing is permitted as of right**, and that meets other criteria set forth in the statute.”

Failure to comply with the law results in a **loss of eligibility for certain state funding programs and potential litigation** by the AG’s office

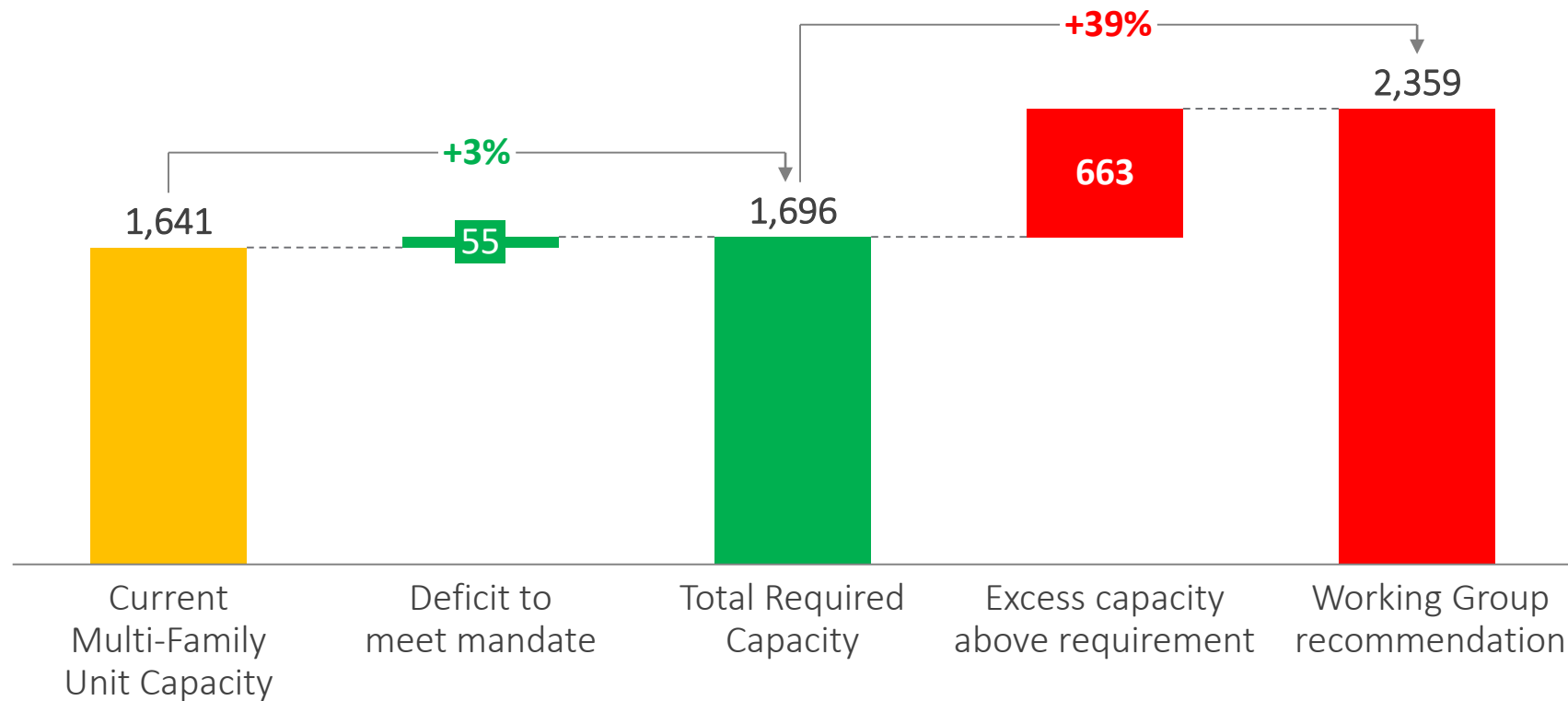
This is a “one size fits all requirement”

- Minimum gross **density of 15 units per acre**
- Located **not more than 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station**, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable
- **No age restrictions** and suitable for families with children
- **“As a matter of right”** – lose local control
- **Fails to address affordability**

Wakefield has been designated a Commuter Rail Community

Working group has proposed capacity above mandate

+39% (+663 unit) above requirement



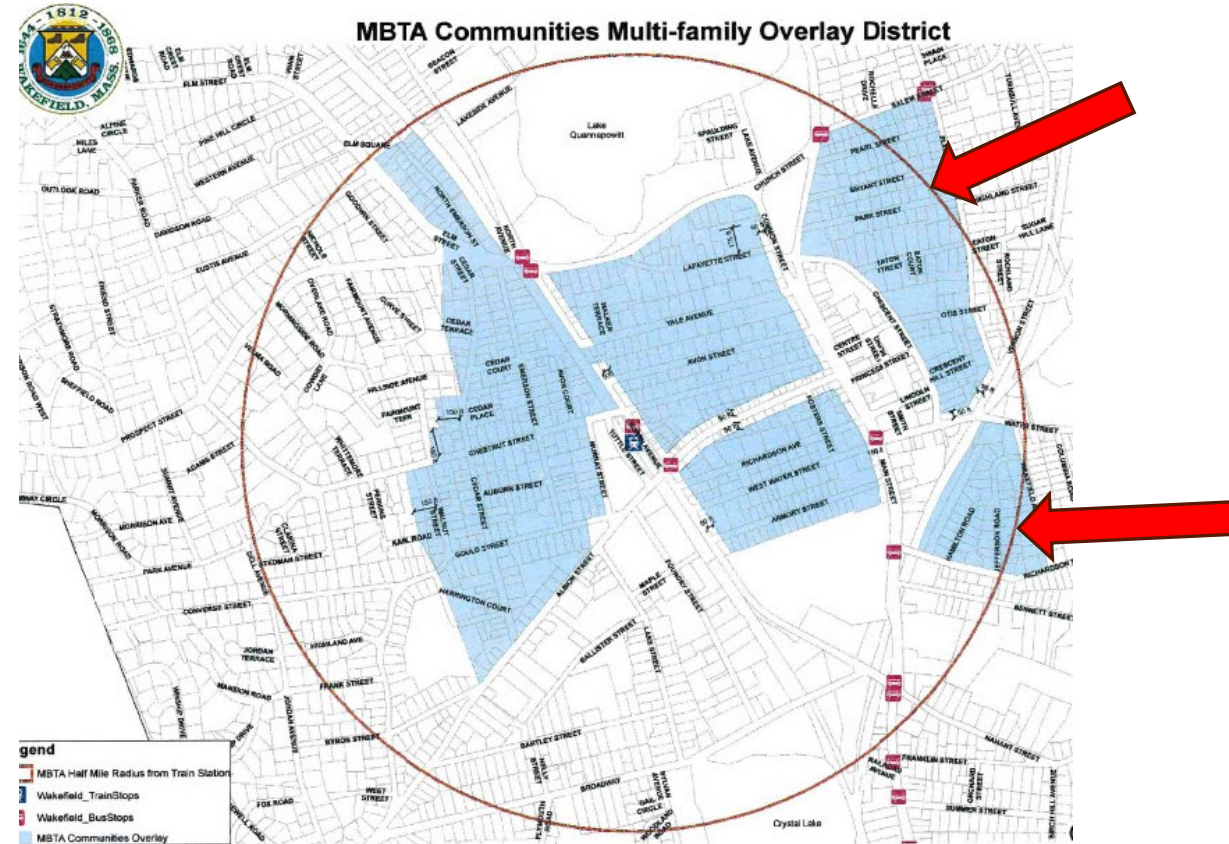
Comparing Citizen's Petition to Working Group Proposal

Three-zone vs. expanded five-zone area

MBTA Communities Multi-Family Overlay District Map (Fully Compliant with M.G.L. c40A, section 3A)



Citizen's Petition



Working Group Proposal
(+663 more units)

CITIZENS' PETITION | Proposed *Revised* Article 18

- **Downsizes** the proposed MBTA Communities Overlay District
 - limited to the west of Main St., around Commuter Rail Station
- **Reduces capacity to meet minimum** multi-family unit requirement of **1,696 units**
- **Follows current off-street parking requirements:**
 - 1.5 spaces for one- and two-bedroom units
 - 2 spaces for three+ bedroom units
- The Planning Board shall, whenever appropriate, seek the input of other municipal boards or officials *and in all instances seek input of the public.*

CITIZENS' PETITION | How the Articles compare

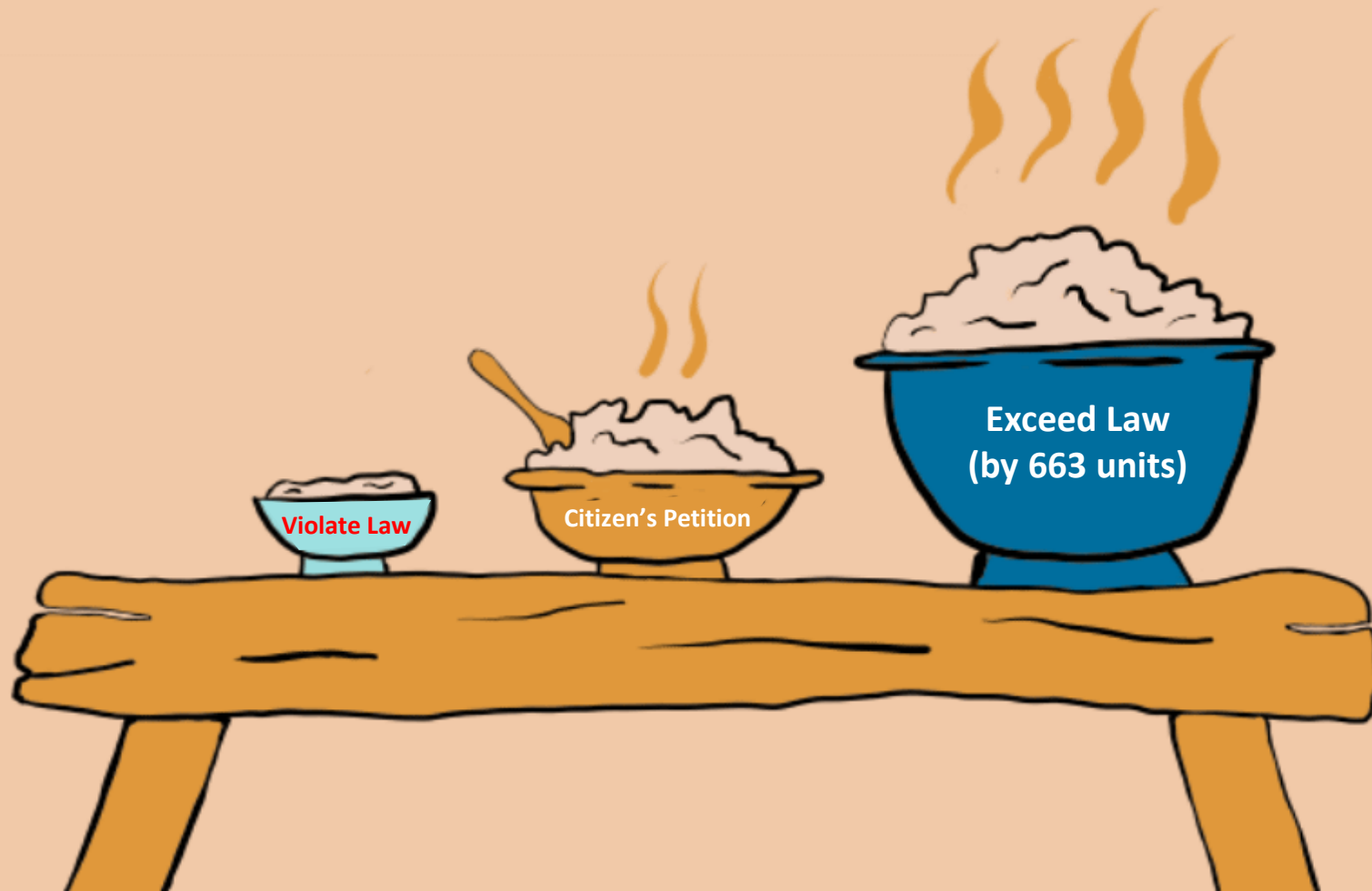
	<u>Citizens' Petition</u>	<u>Working Group</u>
Number of Units (Capacity)	1,696 <i>(state minimum)</i>	2,359 <i>(+663 excess units)</i>
Off-Street Parking Requirements	1.5 spaces (1 & 2 bedroom) 2 spaces (3+ bedrooms)	1.5 (all units)
<u>Public</u> Input to Planning Board	Always	Not mentioned
<u>Municipal Boards or Officials</u> Input to Planning Board	"whenever appropriate"	"when appropriate"

Advantages to Citizens' Petition *Article 18*

- Meets **minimum compliance** with the law, preserving state funding and avoiding litigation
- Respects public concerns over **state overreach** and too much **neighborhood density**
- **Protects our independence** to make our own **local zoning decisions** that best meet our Town's needs, to greatest extent
- Gives Wakefield more opportunity to explore ways to address **affordability and Senior housing**



*Examples of Recent Sales here: 6/2023: \$750,000
2/2022: \$725,000*



Unfortunately, given the State Mandate, our choices are limited.

The Citizen's Petition Article 18 is as "just right" as we can get.

Comments & Questions

THANK YOU!