

Marshfield also says ‘no’ to state zoning law aimed at boosting housing supply

By [Travis Andersen](#) Globe Staff, Updated April 23, 2024, 12:35 p.m.



Milton residents voted down a controversial plan that would open sections of the town to more housing development in February. DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Joining residents in Milton, Marshfield Town Meeting members on Monday rejected zoning changes to comply with the MBTA Communities Act, a state law meant to spur more multifamily housing, according to officials.

The measure was voted down by a decisive margin of 289 to 169, [the Patriot Ledger reported](#).

“The residents who attended Town Meeting are very much concerned about the welfare and well-being of the town and the adverse impacts of having to add over 400 new multifamily

units on top of all of its significant efforts to create new low and moderate income housing,” Town Counsel Robert W. Galvin said in a statement.

Galvin said the town is “very proud of its most recent efforts to create/approve new and affordable housing and is well on its way to meeting state inventory requirements for low and moderate-income housing, adding over 500 new units to its inventory in the last few years alone.”



In February, Milton voters also [rejected proposed zoning changes](#) to comply with the state law, which requires [177 municipalities served by the MBTA](#) to permit more multifamily housing and ease the housing crunch in the Greater Boston area.

About 54 percent of voters opposed the referendum. State officials said the town stood to lose grant funding, and Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell quickly sued over its failure to comply with the law.

A state Supreme Judicial Court justice [ruled last month](#) that the full court will hear the lawsuit later this year.

“I believe that this case raises novel questions of law which are of public importance, and which are time sensitive and likely to recur,” Justice Serge Georges Jr. wrote.

He scheduled oral arguments in October, not in May as Campbell’s office had hoped. That means a final ruling may come during, or even after, fall Town Meeting season, when some 130 municipalities are due to consider zoning that the law requires be completed by year’s end. That could present huge logistical challenges, depending on how the court rules.

Campbell’s representatives didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

Galvin said he doesn’t think Marshfield, a community of about 26,000 on the South Shore, will face any “immediate” litigation, noting the town has many months to comply with the state housing law.

“I hope that this additional time will enable us to learn the view of the SJC in the Town of Milton case ... and enable us to then decide again, if necessary, how to proceed prior to the deadline.”

Material from prior Globe stories was used in this report.

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