Local and Regional Housing Efforts in the Metro Boston Region

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A presentation to the National Association of Regional Councils

Major Metros
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RPA for 101 municipalities
3.4 million residents
2.1 million jobs
Media Reports on Boston’s Housing Crisis

The Boston Globe

Boston Appeared on Zillow’s List of Cities with Housing Markets at “Crisis Levels”

As rents soar in Boston, low-income tenants try to stave off eviction

160,000 on public housing wait lists

PRICED OUT: Pressure mounts on suburbs to find affordable housing solutions

Baker: Lack of new housing threatens booming economy

Housing crisis fuels homelessness in Cambridge, statewide
Key Statistics on the Crisis

Since 2010

- **New jobs**: 245,000
- **New homes**: 71,600
- **Median rent**: $2,366
- **Condo median**: $580,455
- **Single-family median**: $655,000
- **Cost - burdened**: 37%
- **Severely cost - burdened**: 17%
MAPC's Housing Work

- Municipal Housing Production Plans
- Housing Elements of Other Municipal & Area Plans
- Zoning and Local Policy Development
- Community Engagement and Organizing
- Research and Data Analysis
- Convening Local Leadership
- Legislative and Policy Advocacy
Housing Production Plans (HPP)
Why Develop a Housing Production Plan?

- **meet local housing need**
  Address a range of unmet housing needs in your community.

- **proactively influence development**
  Guide the type, amount, and location of housing.

- **comply with chapter 40B**
  Work to meet the state goal of 10% subsidized housing.
Housing Production Plan Elements

1. **COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
   - Most recent available Census data of municipality’s demographics + housing stock
   - Future population and housing needs, specifically housing needs of low- and moderate-income households
   - Development constraints

2. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS**
   - Types of housing consistent with community and regional needs
   - Numerical goal for annual housing production based on U.S. Census

3. **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**
   - Zoning for housing
   - Identifying sites for housing
   - Allocating resources and programs to housing
Housing Production Plan Process

**data**
- Comprehensive housing needs assessment
- Development constraints

**outreach**
- Open house
- Pop-ups and focus groups
- Community survey

**visioning**
- Goals and strategies
- Site selection

**deliverable**
- Presented to local boards
- Submitted to the state for approval
Community Engagement

Focused on under-represented and difficult-to-reach populations

Open house events

Focus groups and pop-ups events
Specialized Communication Tools

“If I were to stay in Salem, it would be very hard because it’s not a market that lends itself well to buy when you’re an entrepreneur or when you’re a young family or when you’re a young person.”

Meet Keshia De Leon

— Salem Resident

Occupation: Artist
Renter, Affordable unit

Hear residents share their struggles to find Affordable Housing, and learn why a diverse Salem needs diverse housing.

Common Housing Production Plan Recommendations

01 existing supply
Monitor and preserve affordability.

02 senior housing
Promote/support programs facilitating aging in place.

03 remove barriers
Zone for multifamily, mixed-use, and diverse housing types

04 fair housing
Work toward state’s 10% subsidized housing goal.

05 accessory dwellings
Adopt or amend accessory dwelling unit bylaw/ordinance.

06 universal design
Incentivize development of accessible, adaptable units.
Housing Research Activities

• Population and Housing Demand projections
  • Regionwide and Municipal Projections
  • Localized Analysis and Customization

• Creation of New Datasets
  • Online Rental Listings Database
  • MassBuilds Development Inventory
  • Regional Zoning Database

• Research and Analysis
  • Family-Sized Unit Occupancy
  • Perfect Fit Parking
  • Housing Production and School Enrollment Analysis
  • Displacement Risk Analysis
Use demographic models to create multiple housing demand scenarios based on uncertain factors such as:

• Migration rates
• Birth rates
• Household formation
• Labor force participation

Use scenarios to test robustness of policies considered for *MetroCommon2050*
New Datasets

Regionwide Zoning

Collected and standardized data from 101 municipalities. Can be used for estimating housing unit capacity under current zoning.

Online Rental Listing Database

Harvesting online rental listings from sources such as Craigslist. Partnering with municipalities to determine neighborhood-level distribution of advertised rents and assess impacts of policies and development.
Housing Research

Crowded in and Priced Out: Why It's so Hard to Find a Family-Sized Unit in Greater Boston

- 25% of families with children are severely cost burdened (>50% of income)
- Only 39% of 3+BR units occupied by families with kids
- 25% of large units are empty nesters with 1 or 2 residents
- Roommate households can outbid families by $450/month
- Newer units more likely to house families with kids

The Boston Globe

Family-size housing often goes to the childless

mapc.ma/largeunits
Agree upon shared principles to guide regional collaboration

Establish a shared regional goal for housing production needed to satisfy future demand

Identify practical and impactful actions municipalities can take to produce housing, improve affordability, and minimize displacement
10 Guiding Principles

1. STAKEHOLDER AND MUNICIPAL ENGAGEMENT
   We must engage in broad, inclusive outreach to municipal officials, residents, and other stakeholders within and beyond the MBC to understand and address regional housing concerns.

2. HOUSING PRODUCTION
   We strive to increase the production of housing throughout Metro Boston so that we can provide homes for all types of households and income levels. This should include both rental and homeownership opportunities, consistent with regional need, and designed in ways that respect the neighborhoods in which they are located.

3. HOUSING PRESERVATION
   We support the preservation of existing affordable housing choices. This includes protecting affordable apartments at risk of expiring subsidies or deed restrictions, preserving “naturally occurring” affordable housing, repairing older homes in need of maintenance and retaining tear-downs and preserving smaller homes.

4. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
   We welcome and will invest in the development of housing that is affordable to low-, moderate-, and middle-income households.

5. HOUSING STABILITY
   We will work to address extreme cost burdens, minimize the risk of displacement, reduce evictions, eliminate unfair rental practices, create permanent housing for homeless residents, and ensure safe and stable housing throughout Metro Boston.

6. FAIR HOUSING
   We are committed to addressing discrimination against tenants and buyers, and advancing fair and equitable access to housing opportunity for everyone.

7. HOUSING DIVERSITY
   We promote the development and preservation of diverse types of rental and homeownership housing at a range of scales and a unit mix inclusive of multiple bedrooms.

8. HOUSING DESIGN
   We support universal design in housing to create accessible and barrier-free homes through the incorporation of features that are commonly available and easily usable by people of virtually all ages and abilities.

9. HOUSING LOCATION
   We encourage residential and mixed-use development in transit-accessible and/or walkable areas where people can get around locally and make connections throughout the region without relying on private auto. We also support creation of more such neighborhoods through expansion of public transit and retrofits of select former industrial sites.

10. COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS
    Our commitment to greater housing opportunity is part of a holistic approach to community building that includes a mix of land uses and access to open space. Our residents want to live in areas that offer a range of activity throughout the day and evening.
Key Questions for Task Force Target-Setting

• Under various economic growth scenarios, how many new jobs may be created, and how many housing units will those workers need?

• How will the needs of existing residents change in the coming years, and what kind of housing will they need in the future?
Components of Net Housing Unit Demand, Regional Housing Target, 2015-2030, Metro Mayors Coalition

- 17,400 Vacant Units
- 50,500 Non Working Households
- 117,000 Working Households

Total Production Target
Catalogue of Strategies

The housing crisis in Metro Boston is serious and complicated. It requires a robust toolkit of strategies to plan for and facilitate housing production and preservation, mitigate displacement, foster housing discussion, and other important approaches to addressing housing need and demand. Towards that end, the MMC Regional Housing Task Force looked to local and national case studies and reports from reliable public, private, and non-profit organizations, including but not limited to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, Berkeley's Terner Center for Housing Innovation, NYU's Furman Center, the Alliance for Housing Affordability, Mass Gov., and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This serves as a digital repository of a diverse set of housing strategies, a go-to resource for residents, advocates, municipal staff, elected officials, community leaders, and others to educate themselves and their neighbors, advocate for, and implement. Here you will find information on more than 100 strategies ranging from state legislation to local planning and zoning to funding resources to programming to construction techniques to community engagement and beyond. And yet this is by no means a comprehensive list; it should serve as a menu of housing strategies for communities to learn and choose from.

No one strategy will solve the housing crisis, and not all strategies are appropriate for all places. But the right combination for the region and its diverse communities will help expand housing diversity and opportunity across the Commonwealth.

STRATEGY

ALL  PLANNING + POLICY  ZONING + REGULATORY  PROGRAMMING  FUNDING  CONSTRUCTION + DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES
EDUCATION + OUTREACH

PRINCIPLES

Which of the MMC Regional Housing Task Force principles do these strategies advance?

ALL  STAKEHOLDER AND MUNICIPAL ENGAGEMENT  HOUSING PRODUCTION  HOUSING PRESERVATION  HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
HOUSING DIVERSITY  HOUSING LOCATION  FAIR HOUSING  HOUSING STABILITY  COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS  HOUSING DESIGN

UPZONING

Increases capacity for new residential development, including affordable housing.

FORM-BASED CODE

A form of municipal zoning that focuses on desired form and character of buildings, rather than on specific density and use requirements.

housingtaskforce.mapc.org
Regional Housing Task Force - Phase 2

- Local Targets
- State Policy Agenda
- Adding Detail to Regional Target
- Local Strategies
- Messaging and Materials
Thank you!

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