



## MIDDLE INCOME AFFORDABILITY

Metro Boston has some of the highest housing costs in the nation, which are burdensome for many working families, including a growing share of middle-income households. Economists and public policy makers are concerned that high housing costs present a significant impediment to long-term economic growth.

To illuminate the challenges and opportunities facing middle-income households, MAPC analyzed property sales from 2014 and 2015 to determine which homes would be considered affordable to middle-income working households, after accounting for purchase price, financing, taxes, and transportation costs. Regionwide, only 22% of single-family homes and 39% of condos sold in 2014 and 2015 were affordable to a typical 4-person household earning \$75,000 per year. That household would be effectively priced out of nearly 40 municipalities (almost all suburbs) where fewer than 10% of

the sales were affordable. In contrast, they could afford the majority of homes sold in Regional Urban Centers (such as Lawrence, Brockton, Lowell, and Chelsea), which contain about half of the total affordable transactions. Unfortunately, concerns about schools, safety, and quality of life—both real and imagined—may discourage middle-income families from taking advantage of these opportunities.

These findings suggest that middle-income housing choices can be expanded not only by producing moderately priced housing in exclusive communities, but also by efforts to make affordable communities more attractive to the middle class.