



S T R A T E G Y E I G H T

# Expand Access to Housing

## Summary

---

Adopted in 2008, MetroFuture is Greater Boston's long term regional plan. The foundation of the plan is a well-defined vision for the region. Thirteen implementation strategies were included to support progress towards the vision. An extensive community engagement process ensured that MAPC constructed the vision and strategies from the hopes and dreams of the region. In anticipation of an update to the regional plan, MAPC is evaluating the extent to which regional actors, either intentionally or unintentionally, implemented these strategies. The authors gathered the information that follows through conversations with MAPC staff and content experts.

Strategy #8, [Expand Access to Housing](#), called for the development of a significant amount of housing. MetroFuture estimated that the Metro Boston region would need to develop 349,000 new housing units between 2000 and 2030 to accommodate projected population increases in the region. It is critical, the plan argues, that this production not be limited to market-rate housing, but address diverse housing needs, including those of low- and moderate-income residents, seniors, young households, and others. MetroFuture laid out strategies to reach this goal, highlighting the unique roles of local, state, and regional housing entities to advance policies that promote a range of housing types and affordability, expand programs that connect residents with housing opportunities, and ensure equitable access to these opportunities.

MAPC released MetroFuture in the early stages of the Great Recession. The recession not only severely altered growth prospects, but put many Massachusetts homeowners, particularly, minority homeowners into enormous debt. Ten years later, foreclosures are down and housing production is up, but limited to specific locations and is still not meeting overall demand, leading to extremely expensive housing stock. The negative perception of new housing (increased traffic congestion, density, and students) can derail development proposals. With limited production, investors and wealthier families are displacing long-standing residents who are often low- or middle-income people of color. To meet the long-term housing demand projected in MetroFuture, Massachusetts would need to average at least 17,000 new housing units permitted each year between 2010 and 2040. As of 2016, the state has fallen short of that goal in six out of the last seven years.

Governors and Legislatures have tried to incentivize and encourage housing production. Chapters 40B, 40R, and 40S incentivize housing production through local zoning overrides or through funding initiatives, but municipalities often argue that there is not enough assistance to encourage meaningful production. The Baker-Polito Administration recently launched the Housing Choice Initiative (2017), an initiative that proposed to lower the voting threshold for some pro-growth zoning measures and created incentives to encourage municipalities to build housing. The legislative proposal did not advance in the Legislature. The Community Preservation Act (2000) has enabled communities to raise funds for affordable housing, but the state match is diminishing.

MAPC has long advocated for changes to local laws that restrict housing production, especially affordable housing. In coalition with the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGa), Massachusetts Alliance of Community Development Corporations (MACDC), and Citizen Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) MAPC is helping to spearhead the Great Neighborhoods Campaign, which seeks to remove barriers to production and increase the opportunity for more housing. The housing production proposals have been politically challenging to say the least. A variety of organizations including MAPC provided municipalities and non-profits with technical assistance designed to encourage plans for diverse housing production in appropriate areas.

Housing production is primarily fueled by the market and responds to municipal regulatory frameworks. Inclusionary zoning, which requires that a certain percentage of all new residential developments have affordable units is becoming more popular. Many cities and towns adopted Housing Production Plans (HPP), many of which MAPC created. Despite increased planning for housing, many municipalities continue to maintain restrictive zoning policies that severely limit if not eliminate the potential for housing production, particularly affordable multi-family housing. This forces middle and lower income families further afield from the inner core to find homes and apartments in their price range. The cost pressures are also leading to displacement from a growing band of communities.

An emerging concern among practitioners is that while housing data, and data driven decision-making, is becoming more prevalent among municipalities, some residents are dubious and are actively opposing any development proposals. The update to the regional plan must then not merely advocate for better data systems, but for ways to communicate them successfully. Also, MetroFuture did not account the rise of short term rentals like Airbnb. Studies demonstrate that short term rentals, along with a variety of other factors, depress the rental market supply and raise both rents and home sale prices. Both the state and municipalities are creating regulations to limit and tax short term rentals.

## Sub-Strategy Review

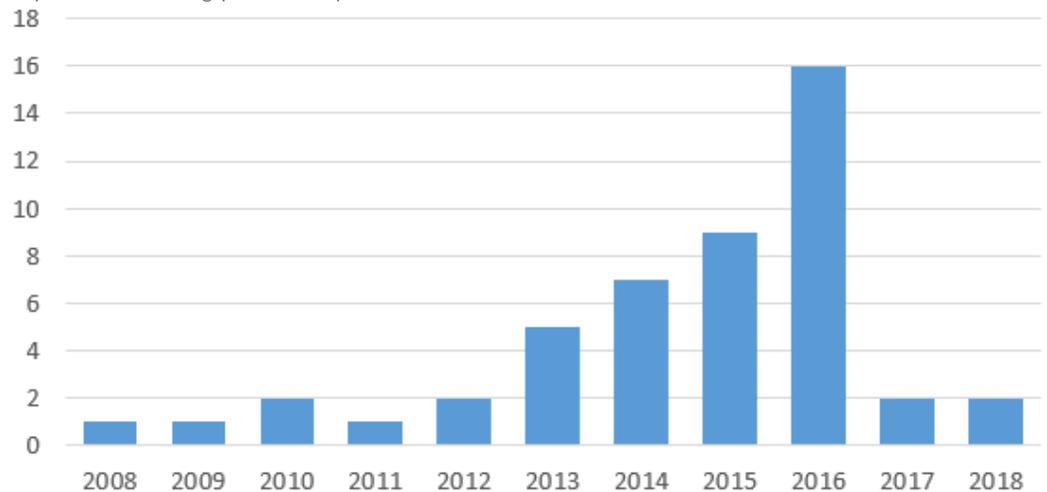
### Sub-Strategy A: Develop coordinated regional and local plans for diverse housing production

#### EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS:

- Since Metro Future was adopted, 116 towns in the state have completed HPPs in Massachusetts and 48 of them were within MAPC's region. MAPC consulted on 20 plans, all of which advocate for diverse housing production that takes local and regional housing supply into account. Examples of outcomes of those HPPs include stronger inclusionary zoning policies and more liberal accessory dwelling unit ordinances, but plan implementation is inconsistent.

Figure 1: HPPs Adopted in MAPC Region since 2008

Source: "HPPPlansApprovalExpiration.doc" downloaded from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/chapter-40-b-housing-production-plan-5/1/2018>



- Since 2008, 42 of the 101 municipalities in the region updated or created a master plan, all of which include plans for housing production. 25 municipalities have master plans from before 2008. Leaving thirty-four municipalities having never completed a master plan.
- Residential market analyses are a growing trend in the region. These analyses ensure that inclusionary zoning by-laws are sustainable in current market conditions. They take into account regional supply and demand and use that information to show how many affordable units a municipality can develop and sustain.
- In 2018, the MBTA released [new requirements](#) for how they would dispose of MBTA owned land. In the past these requirements centered on what the MBTA deemed to be “the highest and best use”. Now the requirements encourage uses and plans that incorporate equitable transit oriented development, including affordable housing.

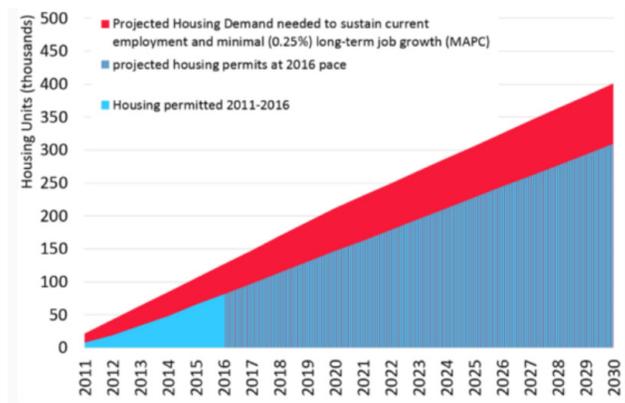
- 14 municipalities in the region completed transit oriented development plans with MAPC, all of which include recommendations to address housing demand through facilitation of multifamily and mixed-use development.
- MAPC convenes the [Metropolitan Mayors Coalition of Greater Boston](#), a collaborative, problem-solving group of 14 municipal leaders from Boston and the surrounding cities. The group recommends changes to zoning, local policies, and other tools to address the housing affordability crisis together. In 2017 the members announced that they created a regional housing partnership and in 2018, they announced a new regional housing production goal.

## BARRIERS TO PROGRESS:

- Many communities resisted HPP recommendations due to concerns over the impact of production on school capacity, traffic, and parking.
- An effort to compose a “Regional Housing Advisory Committee” as suggested in MetroFuture was formed, but was not sustained.
- MAPC convened sub-committees and created the [Fair Housing and Equity Assessment](#), which could inform fair housing at the local level, but municipalities are not consistently using the assessment because it did not come with any funding to operationalize it.
- Planning does not have teeth in Massachusetts. In other places, zoning must be consistent with plan, but in Massachusetts, plans are advisory in nature.

## RELEVANT INDICATORS<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2: Massachusetts Housing Production Compared to Projected Demand (2011-2016)  
Source: <https://www.mhp.net/about-us/data>

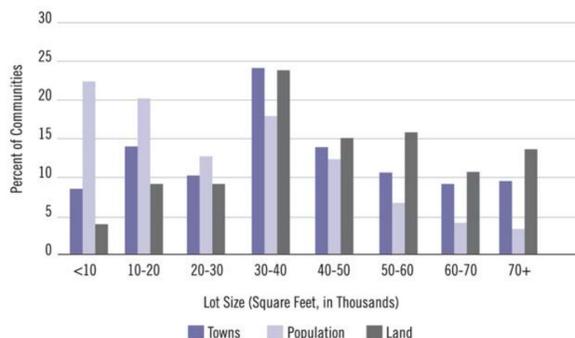


- To meet the long-term housing demand between 2010 and 2040 projected by MetroFuture, Massachusetts would need to permit, on average, at least 17,000 new housing units each year. The state failed to reach the goal in six of the last seven years.

<sup>1</sup> While not directly tied to the success or failure of a sub-strategy, indicators show how the region has changed in the face of the aforementioned actions or inactions.

- At this pace, Massachusetts will fall more than 90,000 units short of demand by 2030.
- While housing construction is happening, especially in and around downtown Boston, annual housing production is about half of production 1960s, 70s and 80s. The Commonwealth permits 36% less new housing per capita than the national average and is ranked 38th out of the 50 states.
- Larger than necessary minimum lot size requirements are a key impediment to building denser housing. The chart below shows that a number of communities require well over an acre per unit (just over 40,000 sq. ft.). Other local regulations that can inhibit production include local wetlands and septic rules that go beyond the state minimum controls.

Figure 3: Distribution of Minimum Lot Size Requirements  
 Source: <https://www.mhp.net/about-us/data>



## Sub-Strategy B: Increase affordable housing production in appropriate locations

### EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS:

- [Chapter 40R](#) provides a way for municipalities to zone for mixed-income housing developments if at least 20-25% of the units have long-term affordability restrictions. 40R encourages communities to create dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts near transit that include a high percentage of affordable housing units.
  - Between 2006 and 2017, the state created forty-four 40R districts. Twenty-six (60%) of those were created between 2006 and 2008<sup>2</sup>.
  - 34% of the districts created since 2008 were in MAPC municipalities and 18% of the units permitted in 40R Districts happened in MAPC municipalities.
  - In 2016, legislation created a new 40R category for smaller, single-family homes on smaller lots called Starter Home Zoning Districts<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/01/26/40RDistricts-Activity.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

- The [Massachusetts Housing Partnership](#) provides technical assistance in the form of staff time and consultants and financing for projects that advance affordable housing in appropriate locations.
- The Community Preservation Act allows municipalities to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. This continues to be an important resource for municipalities, but despite more and more communities joining, funding for the state match is decreasing.
  - Municipalities completed 157 CPA projects in 2016, an all-time high, but the percentage of state matching funds (15% this year) have dropped 50% from the 2008 match and will only be at 11% in FY19. Legislation has been filed to raise the percentage back up to between 30-50%.
  - Between 2001 and 2006 CPA 54% of CPA projects occurred in the MAPC region. Since then 38% of CPA projects occurred in the MAPC region.

Figure 4: Number of CPA Projects by Year (2001 to 2017)

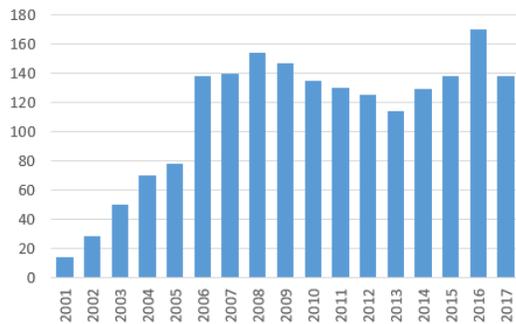
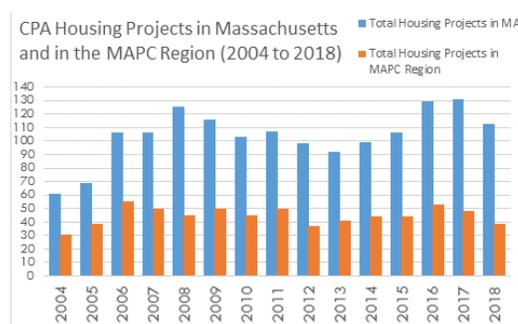


Figure 5: Percentage of CPA Projects in MAPC Region by Year (2001 to 2017)



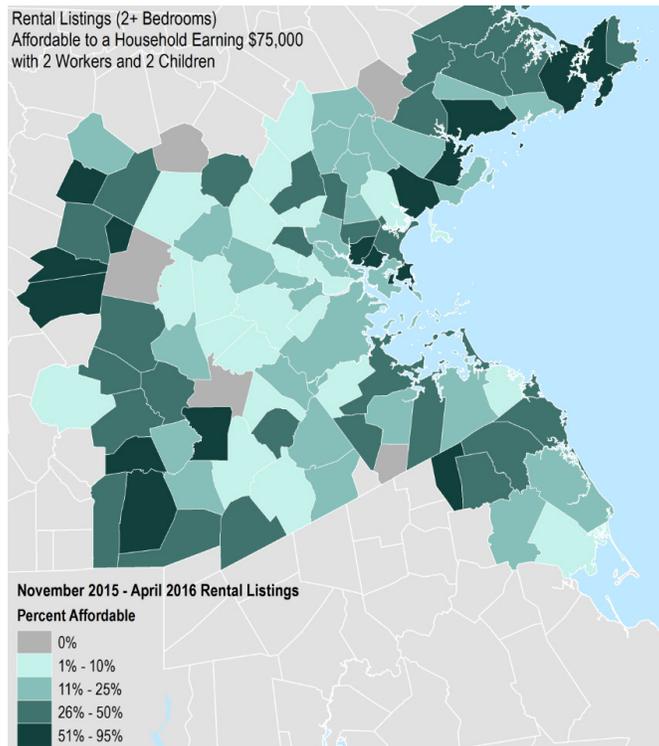
- The [Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance](#), with support from MAPC and others, have consistently advocated for zoning reform. So far, legislative efforts have failed to gain traction in the House. The legislation passed the Senate in 2016.
- MAPC assisted in developing three [Regional Housing Services Offices](#), which monitors a municipality's affordable housing stock relative to the threshold they are required to maintain.
- The Baker-Polito Administration recently launched the [Housing Choice Initiative](#) (2017), an initiative that awards municipalities who produce certain amounts of housing and implement best practices while also providing funding priority to certain grant programs.
- The Baker-Polito Administration authorized the Planning Assistance Towards Housing fund (2014), which awards money to support multi-family housing development efforts near existing infrastructure, community services and public transportation. Within the first two years of the program, the state granted 25 awards between \$10,000 and \$30,000.

- MassHousing launched a [Planning for Production](#) grant program (2017), which provides cities and towns with additional technical capacity to implement their own housing production goals, and deliver new mixed-income housing by resolving problems with implementing their housing plan.
- An increasing amount of municipalities are implementing progressive parking strategies like reducing parking requirements or allowing for spaces that host car sharing services to count as multiple parking spots. High parking requirements not only attract households that tend to be car-reliant, but also adds costs to development projects.
- The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) offers Massachusetts cities and towns technical help to improve their land use practices. Priorities include zoning for sustainable housing production and other smart-growth consistent practices. In 2017, EEA awarded \$1.2 M to 37 applicants.
- The [Community Investment Tax Credit](#) (CITC) is designed to enable local residents and stakeholders to invest in community development corporations (CDCs) that partner with nonprofit, public, and private entities to improve economic opportunities for low and moderate income households and other residents in urban, rural, and suburban communities across the Commonwealth. In 2016, they allocated \$5.9M.
- In 2018, CHAPA launched the [Municipal Engagement Initiative](#) to build support for affordable housing production in Massachusetts. CHAPA staff works with local municipalities to conduct public education efforts that support housing production that emphasizes affordable housing.

## **BARRIERS TO PROGRESS:**

- Public opposition to housing, particularly affordable housing, remains strong throughout our region, which often leads to failed zoning amendments and reductions in the amount and type of affordable units provided.
- State agencies sometimes approve comprehensive permits in areas not appropriate for growth. Sites far from public transportation or in areas with vulnerable natural resources are examples of areas MetroFuture deemed inappropriate for growth.
- The federal government defines affordability based on the area median income (AMI). The wealthy communities around Boston drive up AMI resulting in inflated levels of housing “affordability” that many low-income families in the region cannot afford.
- At times during the program’s history, Chapter 40R funds have run out before the end of the fiscal year, which has resulted in some municipalities choosing to not pursue 40R districts.

Figure 6: Middle Income Rental Opportunities



- Chapter 40S, additional state funding to cover the net increased costs of educating any school-age children who move into 40R districts, was not fully funded. As of May 2018, only five towns have applied and the state granted awards to three. However, experts think that some municipalities would have qualified if they had applied<sup>4</sup>.
- State law still prohibits groups of municipalities from contributing to a regional affordable housing trust fund.
- Increasingly, some municipalities and residents express concerns that Transit Oriented Development (TOD), particularly the creation of multi-family residential units around transit, would cause more traffic than the area could sustain. And some fear that public transportation routes have reached capacity during peak commuting periods and could not handle a significant increase in riders.
- Laws tend to favor abutters in conflicts around prospective developments. The threshold for damages are very low and an abutter committed to legal suits and appeals can often outlast a developer who does not want to lose money on a vacant parcel or underperforming property.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid..

## RELEVANT INDICATORS:

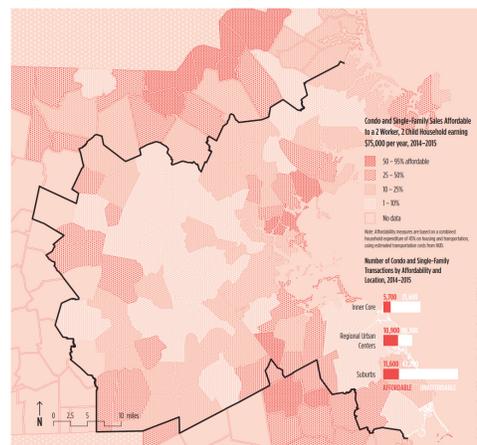
- Metro Boston has some of the highest housing costs in the nation, which are burdensome for many families. Economists and public policy makers are concerned that high housing costs present a significant impediment to long-term economic growth. To illuminate the challenges, MAPC and the Urban Land Institute analyzed property sales and rentals from 2014 and 2015 to determine which homes would be considered affordable to middle-income working households. Rentals can be seen in Figure 6 and sales in Figure 7. 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 making affordable communities more attractive to the middle class.

## Sub-Strategy C: Support private sector conservation initiatives

### EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS:

- The Commonwealth continues to administer the state-wide [Affordable Housing Trust Fund](#), a federal program which provides resources to create or preserve affordable housing throughout the state for households whose incomes are not more than 110% of median income.

Figure 7: Condo and Single-Family Sales Affordability



- As of 2018, there are currently 96 Municipal Affordable Housing Trusts in Massachusetts and 17 trusts organized before the enabling legislation in 2005.
- More communities have adopted accessory dwelling unit bylaws, but it will be important that the same communities make sure their bylaws actually lead to construction of such units. This is a low-impact way to introduce more diversity of housing types.

- The state continues to offer an [Open Space Design/Natural Resource Protection Zoning](#) (OSD/NRPZ) module, which includes elements of conservation subdivision regulations and cluster development bylaws and is used to regulate new subdivisions of land in a manner that maximizes the protection of natural resources while providing for new construction and adequately compensating landowners.
- The City of Boston created zoning to allow for micro-apartments, very small apartments (<500 sq. ft.) that offer shared living space.
- A number of business-centric organizations are focused on growth as a productive pathway towards more employees and consumers:
  - The South Shore Chamber of Commerce' [South Shore 2030](#) economic and community development plan included recommendations to increase housing in its assessment of how to generate more revenue for area businesses.
  - [City Awake](#), a program of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, offers programming intended to build community and foster dialog about pressing regional issues such as housing and workforce development.
  - The Boston chapter of the Alliance of Business Leadership hosted a Leaders Learning series on housing as an economic driver.

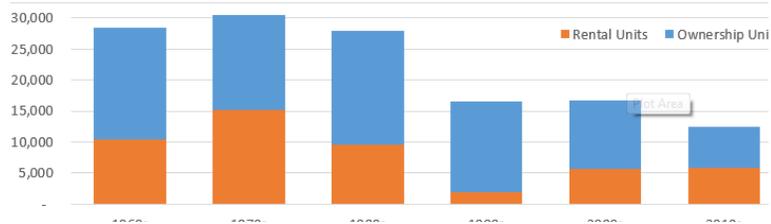
## BARRIERS TO PROGRESS:

- Many zoning codes limit or outright ban zoning for multifamily units and updating municipal codes can be an uphill battle due to fears about growth and the impacts of growth.
- MAPC, in coalition with the MSGA and others, have consistently advocated for zoning reform. Strong opposition to certain elements of the legislation remain.
- Many municipalities include restrictions on who is eligible to occupy an accessory dwelling units.
- Inclusionary zoning provisions are often a recommendation in MAPC produced plans, however, local adoption and implementation is mixed.
- Federal funding for affordable housing subsidies continue to diminish and while the state continues to support affordable housing creation, funds are always at risk.
- The demand for middle income housing has gone unmet due to the lack of incentives for developers to build anything except upper income housing or, to a much lesser degree, low income housing.

## RELEVANT INDICATORS:

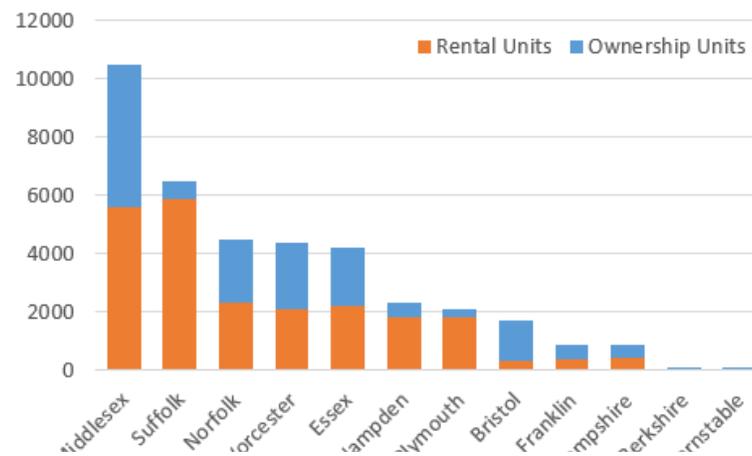
- Through the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, Massachusetts produced roughly 30,000 housing units per year. In the subsequent three decades, production was nearly cut in half (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Annual Housing Production in Massachusetts by Decade  
 Source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permit Survey



- An additional MHP analysis suggests that the state is 38,000 units below the current housing demand. Figure 9 shows the number of rental and ownership units needed by county to achieve what is considered a balanced vacancy rate for rentals and owner occupied units.

Figure 9: New Housing Needed to Reach Statewide Demand by County  
 Source: Massachusetts Housing Partnership Analysis of 2016



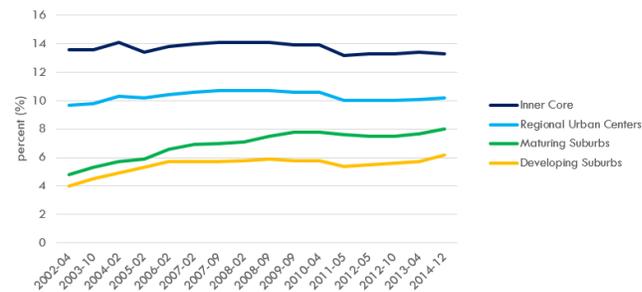
- Half the region's renters are housing cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their household income on rent, and 30% of the region's homeowners are cost burdened. While the overall rate of housing cost burden is slightly down since 2005, more recently, the rate of housing cost burden has been trending on divergent paths, up for renters and down for homeowners. Disparities in homeownership by race continue to persist, limiting opportunities for families of color to close the racial wealth gap.
- Severe cost burden entails spending more than 50% of household income on housing. The share of homeowners estimated to be cost burdened has decreased 5.5 percentage points between 2005-09 and 2011-15. This decline may be attributed to depressed sale prices which in many locations have not yet recovered the losses suffered during the Great Depression, or to historically low interest rates which reduce financial costs substantially. While the rate of cost burden held fairly steady between 2005 and 2011 for both renters and owners, since 2012 the rate of cost burden has been trending up for the renter population and down for the homeowner population, indicating a growing housing cost burden gap between homeowners and renters and underscoring the vulnerability of the region's renters.

- In the Inner Core, deed-restricted and affordable housing has remained above 10% of housing stock since 2002 (see Figure 10), according to records from the Subsidized Housing Inventory maintained by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. The share in the Inner Core did decrease, however, from 13.6% in 2002 to 13.3% in 2014. The high rate in the Inner Core is driven by Boston, Chelsea and Cambridge, where more than 15% of housing stock is affordable. Malden has 10.2% affordable units, and the remaining 12 municipalities have less than 10%.

Figure 10: Cost Burdened Renters in Greater Boston



Figure 11: Subsidized Housing Units as a Share of Total Units  
Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development



- As of 2014, Regional Urban Centers' deed-restricted, affordable housing stock was 10.2% of all stock, an increase of half a percentage point since 2002, when the rate was 9.7%. Eight Regional Urban Centers have affordable housing at more than 10%, 13 have less than 10%. Norwood and Marlborough have added the most affordable housing relative to their total housing stock, increasing 2.5 and 2.2 percentage points, respectively.
- In the Maturing Suburbs, the share of affordable housing increased from 4.8% in 2002 to 8.0% in 2014. Just 15 out of 50 Maturing Suburbs have 10% or more affordable housing, but all but six have increased their share since 2002. Bedford, Lynnfield, North Reading, and Concord have each increased their share by more than 7 percentage points.
- In the Developing Suburbs, the share of affordable housing increased from 4.0% in 2002 to 6.2% in 2014. Just five out of 77 Developing Suburbs have 10% or more affordable housing, but all but 14 have increased their share since 2002. Northborough and Cohasset have each increased their share by more than six percentage points.

## Sub-Strategy D: Connect residents to housing opportunities

### EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS:

- [Home Modification for the Disabled](#) program is a lending program that finances housing adaptations or modifications to improve accessibility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The program is funded through a state-bond and most loans are secured by a mortgage in order to guaranty repayment. Repaid loan funds will be lent out to other similar borrowers in the future.
- MassHousing and [MHP](#) continue to offer their first-time homebuyer programs, including a newly launched 2018 program designed to lower the barriers to achieving homeownership, which finances up to 100% of the purchase price of a first home for low-, moderate-, and middle-income buyers.

### BARRIERS TO PROGRESS:

- Homelessness in and around Boston persists and is getting worse. In 2016 it was up 29% from 2007. In order to afford rent and utilities and spend only 30% of income for housing, a household needs to earn \$56,967 annually/\$27.39 an hour. The average renter's wage is \$19.70. Still, Massachusetts ranks among the states with the lowest percentage of homeless people who are unsheltered, at 3.9%.
- In other parts of the nation, employers play a more active role in assisting their employees with housing needs. This has not been the case in Massachusetts.

### RELEVANT INDICATORS:

- Through an online survey and in-depth phone interviews, Northeastern University and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership sought to better understand the experiences, expertise, and challenges of Greater Boston businesses. Despite significant progress since the Great Recession, economic stagnation is still the norm for many Greater Boston residents due to increasing income inequality and extreme housing prices for both buyers and renters. Of the survey's 87 respondents, over 72% of companies say they have found it "Extremely or Somewhat Difficult" to recruit and/or retain talent in the past five years. In addition, over 67% claim home prices and rental costs have affected their ability to recruit qualified candidates. While the allure of Greater Boston's professional and cultural offerings is substantial, the cost of housing is an omnipresent barrier for current and potential residents alike<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 12: Barriers to Employee Recruitment



<sup>5</sup> [https://www.mhp.net/writable/resources/documents/MHP-Report-Final\\_042817.pdf](https://www.mhp.net/writable/resources/documents/MHP-Report-Final_042817.pdf)

## Sub-Strategy E: Ensure Fair and Accessible Housing

### EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS:

- Municipalities are creating [Fair Housing Assessments](#), including the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment that MAPC completed for Metropolitan Boston.
- MAPC assisted with the [Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing](#) with the South and the West Metro HOME Consortiums.
- A number of organizations such as Metro Housing Boston and the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston provide research, testing, advocacy, and legal support to end discrimination in housing.

### BARRIERS TO PROGRESS:

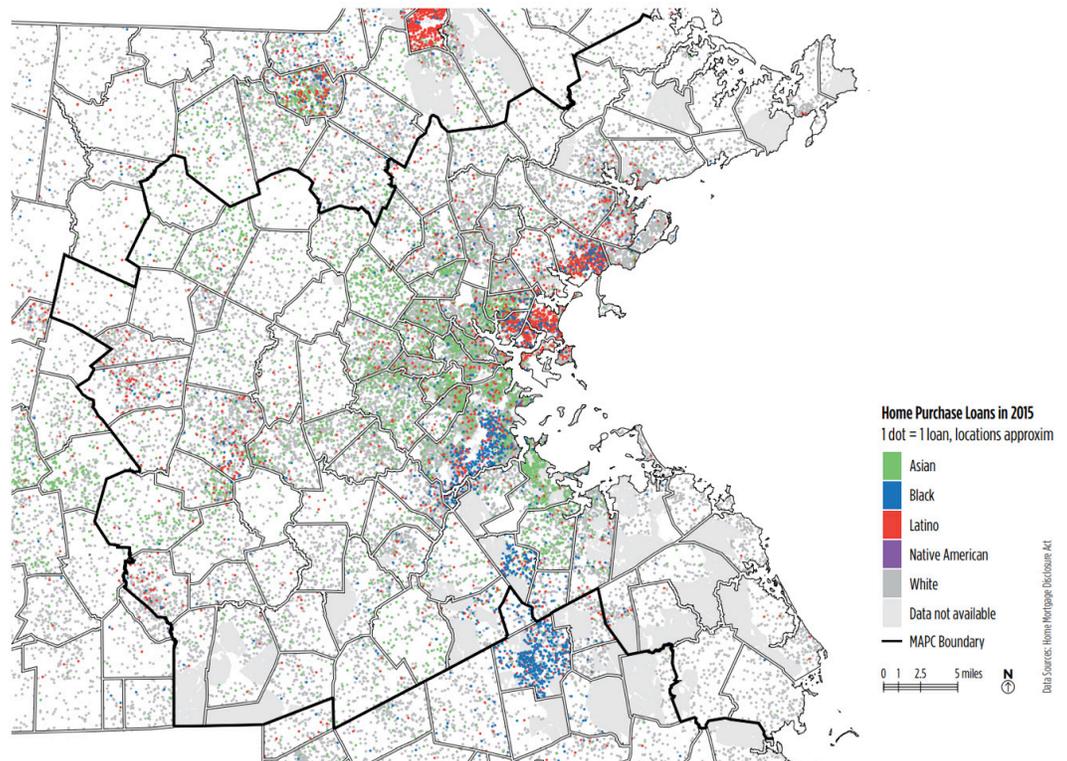
- The Obama Administration passed the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule in 2015, which incentivizes municipalities receiving federal entitlements such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) to complete a comprehensive Assessment of Fair Housing planning process to ensure that no local racial discrimination in housing exists and to ensure that local governments are working to desegregate their communities. However, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson slowed the release of data available to grantees and extended the deadline to finish the assessment to 2020. Advocates worry this indicates that HUD may weaken the assessment tool and the action plans.
- Legislation aimed at curbing displacement and gentrification was proposed by the City of Boston and endorsed by MAPC, but the bills stalled in the legislature. The proposals would have given tenants the right to an attorney in an eviction proceeding and the right of first refusal in the event that their rental property was being sold.
- Practitioners report that residents in places discussing multi-family housing projects have become emboldened to publically voice anti-immigrant, anti-minority, anti-low income sentiments.

### RELEVANT INDICATORS:

- Every decade the MAPC region becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, yet discrimination and segregation continue to impact residents of color in negative ways. Buying a home is a cornerstone of building wealth in America, yet mortgage data show Black and Latino home loan applicants in the MAPC region—even those with higher incomes—are denied at rates double that of White applicants. The data also show successful residential mortgage applications for Black and Latino applicants are concentrated in limited areas. In the MAPC region, Boston, Randolph, and Lynn account for 50% of total home-purchase loans to Black borrowers, while Lynn, Boston, Revere, Chelsea, Everett, and Framingham account for 53% of home-purchase loans to Latino borrowers (See Figure 13).

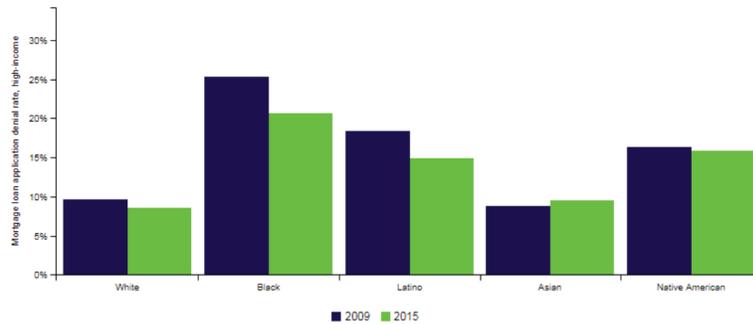
- The data reveal discrimination during the mortgage process, but this alone does not explain these patterns. Historical de jure segregation and the relative affordability of different locations may explain some of it. However, discrimination prior to the mortgage process—by agents, neighbors, and sellers—may unfairly steer prospective homeowners of color to or away from specific locations. Planners, real estate professionals, lenders, advocates and municipal officials have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure residents of color have the opportunity to purchase a home in any part of the region they choose.

Figure 13: Eastern Massachusetts Home Purchase Loans by Race in 2015



- Discriminatory lending practices remain a significant barrier to homeownership, even for high-income people of color. Regionally, denial rates for all high-income applicants (those with incomes over 120% of the Area Median Income, or approximately \$118,000 in 2015) dropped from 9.9% to 9.1% between 2009 and 2015. Denial rates for high-income applicants who are Black and Latino are substantially higher than their White or Asian counterparts, though the gaps have narrowed in recent years (see Figure 14). For high-income Black applicants, the denial rate dropped 4.7 percentage points, from 25.3% to 20.6%, but remains more than double the overall rate. For high-income Latino applicants, the denial rate dropped 3.3 points from 18.3% to 15.0%. As a result, high-income applicants who are Black or Latino are denied a mortgage at rates that are 7 to 12 percentage points higher than high-income applicants who are White.

Figure 14: Home Loan Denial Rate by Race (2009 to 2015)



## Sub-strategy F: Preserve, maintain, and upgrade existing affordable housing stock

### EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS:

- Housing authorities in the region have regionalized, centralizing administrative services in an effort to become more efficient, transparent, and to increase procurement power.
- The Boston Housing Authority and Corcoran Group have proposed a redevelopment of the Bunker Hill Housing Development. 1,000+ affordable units will be rebuilt, along with 2,000 new market rate units with commercial spaces at ground level.
- Similarly, the 125 Amory Street project in Egleston Square is reconstructing affordable units, by incorporating market-rate units into the project.
- CDCs, such as Somerville Community Corporation and Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation are buying then deed-restricting homes to ensure they remain affordable.
- All of the HPPs that MAPC assisted on contain recommendations on how to preserve long term affordability.

### BARRIERS TO PROGRESS:

- Affordable housing rehab programs are few and far between and where they exist, they do not have much capital to effect large scale improvements.
- The federal government reduced funding for maintaining and preserving affordable housing even before the Trump administration, who are now proposing even more drastic cuts.
- Some local housing authorities lack the capacity and resources to successfully manage their housing stock.

## Emergent Themes

---

- Evidence suggests that the rise of short term home rentals is further reducing affordability in large cities by repressing the supply of apartment to renters. A variety of municipal and state rules are under consideration to limit and tax short term rentals.
- While MetroFuture sought to minimize residential displacement, these trends have only intensified in Boston and surrounding urban areas.
- Housing production costs continue to rise, further elevating housing costs.
- There is a growing Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY) movement that was not as prevalent as it was in 2008. These are pro-growth residents who champion housing development at the local level.
- The increase in non-traditional housing groups who approach housing as a fundamental piece of economic growth.
- Hospital networks in the Boston area are developing affordable housing as a way to address social determinants of health.



