



Housing Building Permit Reporting

Greater Boston is in a housing crisis. Since the 1990s, housing production has not kept up with population growth, resulting in low vacancy rates and high prices. Many state and local leaders are working to alleviate the pressure through new housing programs, policies, and production, but progress is slower than needed. Tracking housing production progress requires good data, and the best available come from the U.S. Census Bureau's Building Permits Survey (BPS), which tracks new housing units authorized by building permits every month. However, the BPS is only useful if all municipalities submit accurate monthly permit information to the

Bureau, and keeping and reporting data is a staff expense that municipalities have to incur.

From 2010 to 2017, more than 60% of MAPC's cities and towns provided complete or near-complete permit information. However, 14 municipalities in the region reported data less than half the time. When data is unreported, the Bureau fills in missing values based on prior years, which can severely underestimate the number of units built in rapidly-growing areas and overestimate in areas where current growth has dropped. To accurately track our housing production goals, municipalities must consistently report their housing permits.