

MetroCommon 2050 Equitable Recovery Recommendations For ICC Consideration – 04-21-202

Finance tuition free community college for low-income individuals, including older adults. The Commonwealth should look to the City of Boston's Tuition Free Community College initiative to structure a comparable statewide program that takes into account student income, eligibility for federal aid, and other factors.

Adopt state enabling legislation that allows municipalities to stabilize rental costs by prohibiting large and short-term increases in rent: Municipalities should be allowed to adopt local policies that cap rent increases within a specified timeframe to a certain percent. These requirements would be based on local conditions, and caps would apply to vacant units so landlords are discouraged from evicting tenants in favor of new tenants that can afford more expensive rent.

Require publicly owned land to be disposed of for the production and preservation of community-owned affordable housing, focusing on areas vulnerable to displacement: One way municipalities and the Commonwealth can alleviate displacement pressure is to increase the amount of land available for affordable housing development, and to ensure it remains available by placing that land in community ownership.

Require that "missing middle" housing types be permitted by-right in single-family districts in municipalities above a certain scale or in certain areas like town centers.

Give the region a say in major housing developments by creating a Greater Boston Regional Housing Board, which would be able to examine and potentially seek reconsideration or appeal local decisions where they are considered detrimental to efforts to meet regional housing needs as documents in local and regional plans.

Facilitate access to quick-strike acquisition and property improvement financing, especially for unsubsidized, smaller properties deemed 'naturally affordable:

Promote the redevelopment of vacant commercial spaces through financial incentives and zoning changes.

Create a Greater Boston Infrastructure Coordination Committee that brings together representatives from all regional infrastructure and planning agencies to coordinate regional investment (generated in part by regional revenue sources) and capital plans and oversee major project implementation. T

Assure that state climate resources are directed where the need is the greatest by providing dedicated funding and priority in state climate grants, loans, and investments for Environmental Justice communities.

Implement a local climate zoning package that leads buildings to reduce their GHG footprint, utilize renewable energy, and integrate robust resiliency measures: The municipal zoning code can serve as a strong local tool to mandate and encourage building decarbonization. While individual jurisdictions cannot govern building energy use if it conflicts with the building code, they can utilize local levers such as zoning to regulate other uses and functions, including those related to climate.

Pursue public-private partnerships to advance electrification upgrades to MBTA bus maintenance facilities: Providing adequate charging infrastructure is imperative to effectively advance bus electrification. The MBTA's 2017 Integrated Fleet and Facilities Plan recognized that either upgrading or replacing all eight of the facilities that maintain and garage MBTA buses is a critical need.