

Housing Production & TOD Draft Recommendations

May 4, 2021



Welcome & Introductions

Thank you for joining us today to share your feedback on our draft policy recommendations.

Please share your name, title, organization, and what action(s) you are most interested in discussion today and why.



What is MetroCommon 2050?



MetroCommon × 2050

A set of actions that local and state government can take to improve the region over time.

MetroCommon includes 5 Action Areas:

- Equity of Wealth and Health
- Homes for All
- Inclusive Growth and Mobility
- Climate Mitigation and Resiliency
- Dynamic and Representative Government

Policy recommendations

Guide how we can move the region closer to the vision we articulate in the plan and achieve our goals

Housing Production

Provisional Goals

- ▶ Everyone has a home; homelessness is essentially nonexistent.
- ▶ Available housing meets the needs of residents throughout their lifetime as they form families, age, and experience unforeseen circumstances.
- ▶ New housing is built primarily in walkable neighborhoods that have easy access to the goods, services, public transportation, and amenities needed in daily life; enough new housing units are built in all communities to help moderate prices and meet the needs of our growing economy and population.
- ▶ New and existing housing, including deed-restricted units and naturally occurring affordable housing, are available at a range of prices that correspond to residents' income levels.

Housing Production

Provisional Goals (Cont.)

- ▶ Households with extremely low incomes are able to find housing they can afford, with rental assistance providing support to those who qualify.
- ▶ Communities welcome new residents and have enacted policies and programs that avert displacement resulting from rent increases, evictions, condo conversions, foreclosures, and loss of deed-restricted housing.
- ▶ People have access to credit and counseling that allows them, if they wish, to buy suitable homes in locations they desire, including in or near the communities where they work.
- ▶ Neighborhoods more closely reflect the racial and income diversity of the region; residents can choose their community based on preference and opportunity, without being limited by historic segregation patterns throughout the region.

Housing Production

Policy Recommendation:

- ▶ Accelerate the production of diverse housing types throughout the region, particularly deed-restricted Affordable Housing, with a focus on transit-oriented, climate resilient and other smart growth locations.
- ▶ Reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle travel through increased development in transit-oriented areas and walkable centers.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Accelerate the production of diverse housing types throughout the region, particularly deed-restricted Affordable Housing, with a focus on transit-oriented, climate resilient and other smart growth locations.

Strategy 1: Expand Housing Choices to further empower localities to zone for housing diversity.

- **Action 1.1:** Require that "missing middle" housing types be permitted by right in single-family districts in municipalities above a certain scale. Municipalities that meet this threshold should be required to permit moderate-scale housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, or cottage clusters, in districts zoned for single-family housing. Such a policy should also allow existing single-family homes to be converted to duplexes or triplexes. Mid-size municipalities, while exempt from the above, should be required to permit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right in districts zoned for single-family use.
- **Action 1.2:** Support the successful implementation of the 2021 law requiring multifamily zoning in MBTA communities to ensure efficacy and expand the definition of housing types required by right near transit. In developing guidance for implementation, incorporate additional provisions to ensure households with a range of incomes can live in these high opportunity locations. This may include an inclusionary zoning requirement or specific incentives to for municipalities to incorporate increased affordability.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Accelerate the production of diverse housing types throughout the region, particularly deed-restricted Affordable Housing, with a focus on transit-oriented, climate resilient and other smart growth locations.

Strategy 1: Expand Housing Choices to further empower localities to zone for housing diversity.

- **Action 1.3:** Monitor the impact of the Economic Development Bond Bill provisions that reform the abutter appeals process, and develop additional guidance as needed.
- **Action 1.4:** Expand the Housing Choices law, which requires a simple majority rather than a super majority, to include additional zoning changes that encourage diverse housing types. This most notably includes inclusionary zoning, as well as other zoning changes, including but not limited to: multifamily housing in any location, not just eligible locations; parking requirements for by-right multifamily development; disbursing property for the purposes of housing; and adaptive reuse.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Accelerate the production of diverse housing types throughout the region, particularly deed-restricted Affordable Housing, with a focus on transit-oriented, climate resilient and other smart growth locations.

Strategy 2: Strengthen state funding programs to support municipalities in promoting housing production of all types and Affordable Housing in particular.

- Action 2.1: Create a new funding stream for deed-restricted Affordable Housing production by pursuing an Affordable Housing bond measure financed through an income tax increase and coupled with an increase in bonding capacity.
- Action 2.2: Utilize public financing tools to enable public housing authorities to undertake renovation of existing properties and acquire new units.
- Action 2.3: Expand the 40S program to mitigate the impacts of new development on school enrollment.
- Action 2.4: Utilize public financing tools to enable public housing authorities to undertake renovation of existing properties and acquire new units.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Accelerate the production of diverse housing types throughout the region, particularly deed-restricted Affordable Housing, with a focus on transit-oriented, climate resilient and other smart growth locations.

Strategy 3: Dedicate resources to better equip the private market to build diverse housing.

- **Action 3.1:** The Commonwealth should establish a revolving, low-interest loan fund that enables homeowners to borrow funds based on anticipated income from the future ADU.
- **Action 3.2:** Amend the requirements of Chapter 40R to increase the income diversity of homes within the Smart Growth Overlay District. Consider offering an alternative path to meet affordability requirements, such as a mix of units affordable to households at or below 50% and 100% of Area Median Income. New affordability requirements should include housing for low-income households and not allow only deed-restricted housing for those with incomes above 80% of AMI.
- **Action 3.3:** Utilize the 40R, 40S, and other existing state programs to better incentivize production of housing suited to first-time homeowners.
- **Action 3.4:** Actively utilize state-owned land towards housing development that includes a substantial portion of deed-restricted Affordable Housing units.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle travel through increased development in transit-oriented areas and walkable centers.

Strategy 1: Facilitate transit-oriented and other smart growth development through incentives and requirements.

- **Action 1.1:** Strengthen existing state programs, like 40R to increase smart growth development. Consider improvements to simplify the process and requirements of the program. Clarify the mission of 40R is focused not only on housing production but also advancing a number of smart growth principles, such as improving walkability and developing a sense of place. Consider allowing housing by special permit, instead of only by-right, to better create multi-parcel districts.
- **Action 1.2:** Incentivize higher density residential development through improvements in transit service. Prioritize increased service and other improvements for stations in communities that have enabled smart growth development.
- **Action 1.3:** Empower a state or regional actor to directly participate in equitable, transit-oriented development through a new funding program. Identify the appropriate state actor to operationalize this program and create or identify a funding source for land acquisition. State laws should be updated to allow the relevant purchasing stakeholder to develop housing in TOD locations, regardless of the existing local zoning regulations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle travel through increased development in transit-oriented areas and walkable centers.

Strategy 2: Ensure site design, land use program, and development characteristics prioritize walkability and affordability.

- **Action 2.1:** The State should support municipalities to update parking policies that both accurately reflect the demand for parking and encourage a reduction or elimination of parking in transit-rich areas.
- **Action 2.2:** Codify site design principles into regulations to prioritize walkability and connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood.
- **Action 2.3:** Ensure affordability and optimize land use around transit and smart growth locations. Municipalities should ensure all smart growth locations within their communities apply a suite of tools to manage neighborhood change, such as requirements for inclusion of deed-restricted affordable housing, renter protections, and other measures.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

Reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle travel through increased development in transit-oriented areas and walkable centers.

Strategy 3: Require new developments to focus their transportation mitigation on producing fewer Single-Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips.

- **Action 3.1:** MassDOT and the Department of Environmental Protection should require developers to use local data to accurately estimate vehicle trip generation to avoid overestimating impacts.
- **Action 3.2:** The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs should require new development sites that trigger the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act to measure their transportation impacts based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) rather than level of service (LOS) at intersections.
- **Action 3.3:** The Legislature should allow municipalities to retroactively require employers to reduce the Vehicle Miles Traveled of their employees.
- **Action 3.4:** The Legislature should allow a municipality, or groups of municipalities, to pool mitigation funding for multiple development sites, and across municipal boundaries, to support public transit infrastructure and cycling/walking trails.

Actions we will focus on today

- ▶ Require that "missing middle" housing types be permitted by right in single-family districts in municipalities above a certain scale. Municipalities that meet this threshold should be required to permit moderate-scale housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes, or cottage clusters, in districts zoned for single-family housing. Such a policy should also allow existing single-family homes to be converted to duplexes or triplexes. Mid-size municipalities, while exempt from the above, should be required to permit accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right in districts zoned for single-family use.
- ▶ Create a new funding stream for deed-restricted Affordable Housing production by pursuing an Affordable Housing bond measure financed through an income tax increase and coupled with an increase in bonding capacity.
- ▶ Utilize public financing tools to enable public housing authorities to undertake renovation of existing properties and acquire new units.
- ▶ Utilize the 40R, 40S, and other existing state programs to better incentivize production of housing suited to first-time homeowners.

Actions we will focus on today

- ▶ Incentivize higher density residential development through improvements in transit service. Prioritize increased service and other improvements for stations in communities that have enabled smart growth development.
- ▶ Ensure affordability and optimize land use around transit and smart growth locations. Municipalities should ensure all smart growth locations within their communities apply a suite of tools to manage neighborhood change by, for instance, requiring deed-restricted affordable housing, renter protections, and other measures.
- ▶ Empower a state or regional actor to directly participate in equitable, transit-oriented development through a new funding program. Identify the appropriate state actor to operationalize this program and create or identify a funding source for land acquisition. State laws should be updated to allow the relevant purchasing stakeholder to develop housing in TOD locations, regardless of the existing local zoning regulations.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What are your initial reactions to this policy action? Did we get this right?
- Where should we adjust?
- Are there gaps?
- How would this policy impact your work/your municipality?
- How does this relate to key challenges and/or opportunities you are facing?



Thank you!

We will continue hosting a series of focus group with partner organizations through the spring and will publish a final plan in the summer.

If you have additional questions or feedback, email **Kasia Hart**, Policy Analyst at khart@mapc.org.

