



Welcome Home

Essex



Affordable Housing Trust Committee
November 12, 2025

John Cruz, AICP, MAPC





Welcome Home

Essex

Agenda



- Draft Plan Walkthrough
- Next Steps
- Feedback and Changes
- Process Wrap-Up & Vote

Welcome Home

Essex

2025 Housing Production Plan



Draft Plan Walkthrough

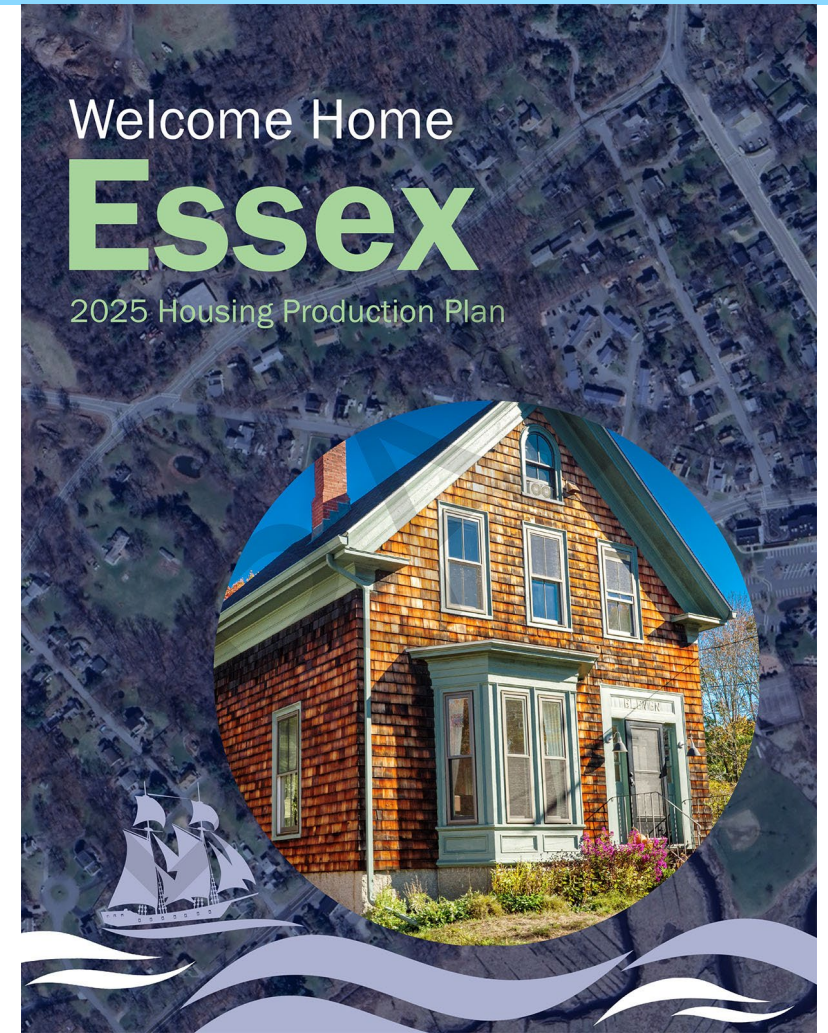
How to read this plan

FYIs For Reading The Plan

- Charts and graphs are in the process of being re-done for high-resolution graphics and clear text.
- Page number references and any missing figure references will be added.
- The appendices are items referenced throughout the plan.
- The executive summary serves as the quick read, with additional details in the chapters.

Intro Materials

- Acknowledgments and project overview details.
- Table of Contents for reference.
- Key housing terms for background information.



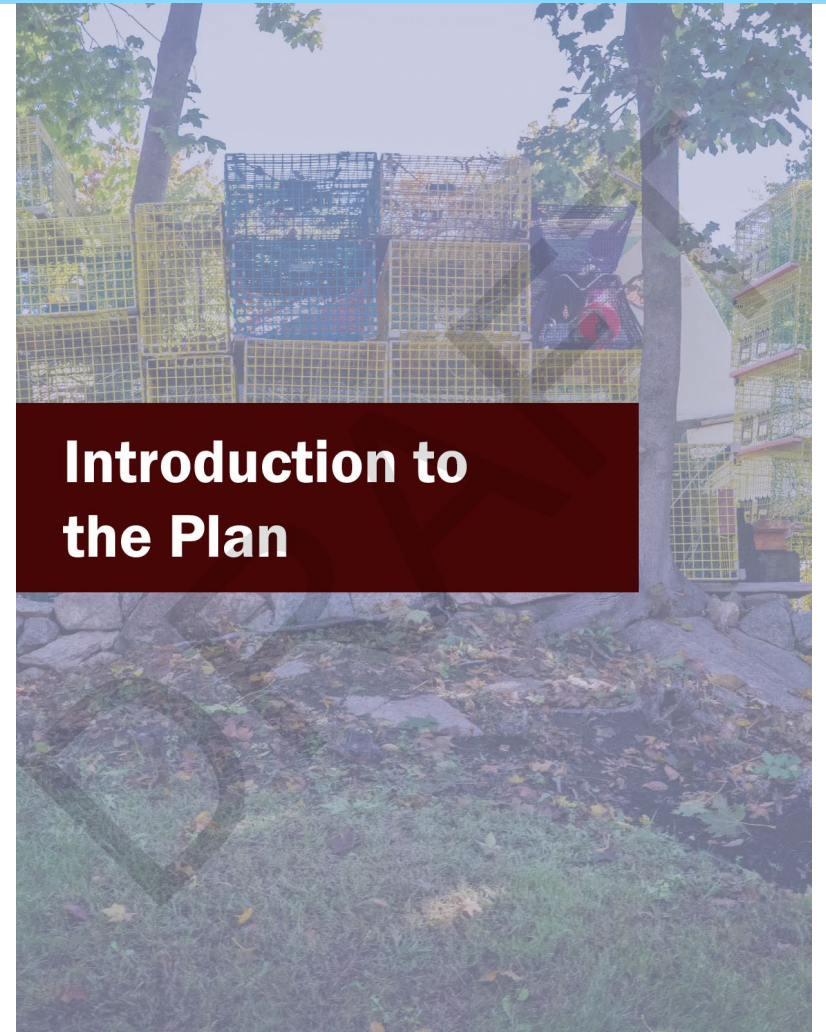
Executive Summary

- High-level information on what's in the plan.
- Data and Engagement summaries.
- Background information.
- Review of goals, strategies, and opportunity sites.



Intro to the Plan

- Discusses housing need in Essex.
- Who is undertaking this plan.
- Demographic overview.
- Information on MGL Chapter 40B.



Engagement Summary

- Brief overview of the engagement with the committee and public.
- Contains a narrative overview with some participation numbers.

A graphic for 'Community Engagement' featuring a large, stylized illustration of a lobster on a wall. Below the lobster is a wooden bench. To the right of the bench is a person in a red hooded jumpsuit standing next to a basket of pumpkins. The text 'Community Engagement' is overlaid in a red box.

**Community
Engagement**

Housing Needs Assessment

- Summarized main takeaways.
- Peer community comparison.
- Detailed data with a narrative about the housing need and affordability in Essex.
- Includes various charts, graphs, infographics, and other supplemental information.



Development Constraints

- Similar to “existing conditions”. Housing Toolkit: what the Town has right now to address housing need.
- Breakdown of recent CPA housing expenditures.
- Zoning Overview with narrative.
- Development constraints with supporting maps and photos.



**Development
Constraints**

Development Opportunities

- Overview narrative.
- Detailed maps and descriptions of each opportunity site.
- Breaks down current use, and development constraints for each site.
- *Some of these maps are incorrect. Correct versions have been prepared for the next version of the HPP.

A photograph of a residential street with houses and a dark red text box overlay. The text box contains the words "Development Opportunities" in white. The background shows a street with houses, a car, and a utility vehicle.

**Development
Opportunities**

Goals and Strategies

- Narrative detailed for each goal
- Brief narrative for each strategy
- Strategies are arranged in a matrix to see which goals they align with.

Strategy Matrix

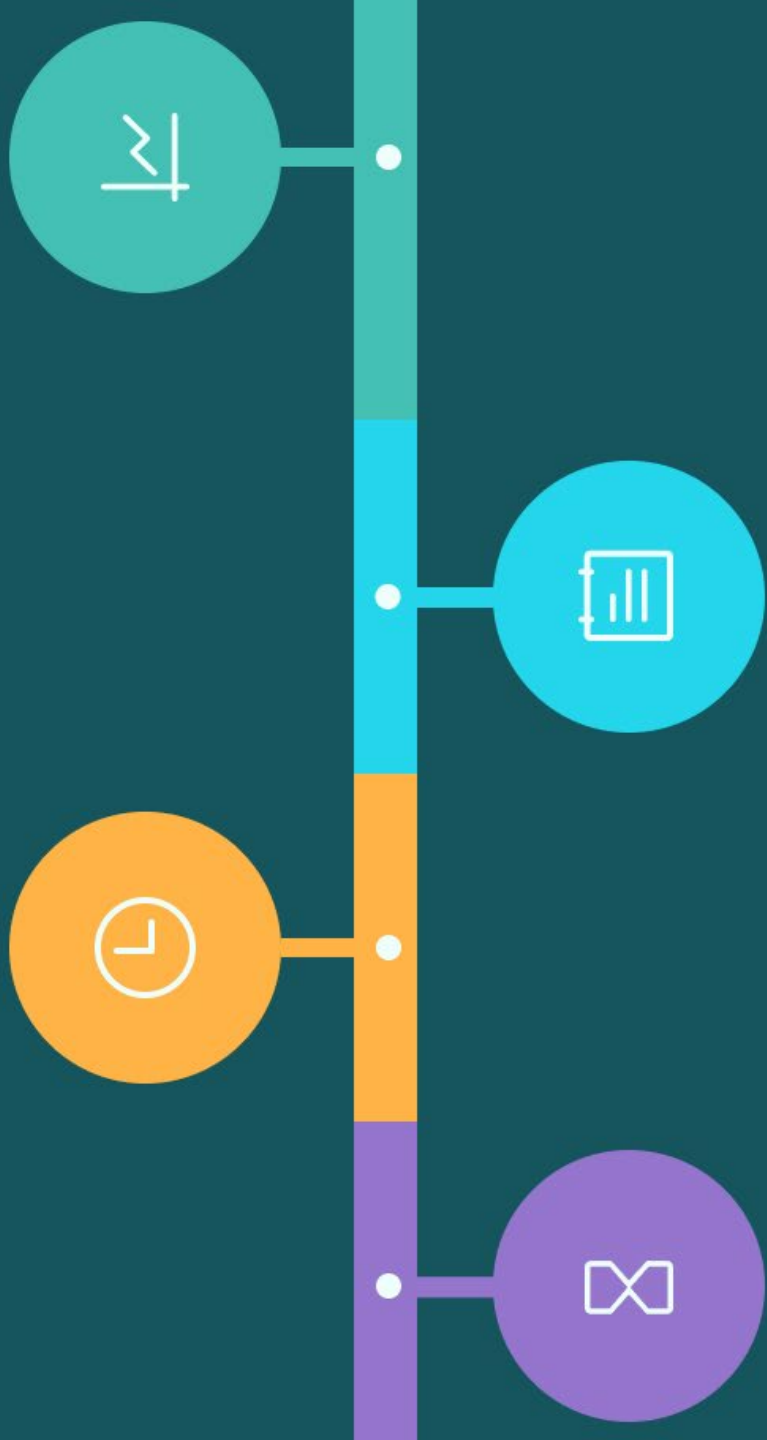
The strategies listed below are all achievable within the five-year lifespan of this plan. However, it is not the expectation that they will all be completed within five years. Essex has a wide variety of housing need, and a wide range of strategies could help accomplish the five goals outlined in this plan. Many strategies can help accomplish more than a single goal; for this reason, the strategies are not listed by goal or otherwise categorized. **To see which strategies can help accomplish which goals, refer to the strategy implementation matrix table.**

	Goal 1: Expand Housing options for small-scale housing development
	Goal 2: Establish Zoning and Incentives that Support Affordable Housing Production
	Goal 3: Target Housing Development in Essex Downtown
	Goal 4: Continue to Fund and Expand the Affordable Housing Trust
	Goal 5: Preserve all Existing and Future Units on the SHI

Strategy					
Strategy 1: Pursue a 40R Smart Growth or 40Y starter home zoning overlay district A 40R Smart Growth Overlay District can provide substantial financial benefits to the municipality, including incentive zoning and bonus payments, while increasing residential density. A 40S Starter Home Overlay District allows municipalities to receive incentives and technical assistance to create a district that enables the development of smaller, more affordable starter homes. This strategy would support Essex in creating additional small-scale housing options, adopting zoning reforms to support affordable housing, and enabling additional housing opportunities in downtown Essex.	✓	✓	✓		
Strategy 2: Support local Affordable Housing organizations through strategic planning and coordination There are existing nonprofits and regional organizations in and around Essex with the capacity to address affordable housing and development issues, and the Town should support their work and collaborate with them when opportunities arise. These relationships should be considered during strategic planning processes. Supporting local affordable housing organizations could include continued funding for the town's Affordable Housing Trust and aid in preserving affordable housing units on the State Housing Inventory (SHI).				✓	✓

Appendices

- A. The Subsidized Housing Inventory list from EOHLC
- B. The enabling bylaw for the Affordable Housing Trust
- C. The 2022 MAPC Zoning Diagnostic report for the Town of Essex
- D. Essex CPC 2025 Annual Report
- E. Fair Housing and Resident Selection Guidelines
- F. MAPC Engagement summary presentations



Next Steps

Where we are. Where we're going.

HPP Timeline

EXPLORING AND DATA GATHERING

- Project Startup
- Strategizing
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Public Engagement

2024 - 5
Q4 - Q1



CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Land use and zoning audit
- Draft site selection
- Constraints analysis
- Housing type / design

2024 - 5
Q4 - Q1



GOALS + STRATEGIES

- Refine site selection
- Draft goals
- Draft strategies
- Public Engagement

2025
Q1 - Q2



FINAL PLAN & DELIVERABLES

- Refine goals and strategies
- Draft Housing Plan
- Executive summary
- Educational Materials

2025
Q3 - Q4



ADOPTION & PROJECT CLOSE

- Public Comment period
- Joint Select and Planning Board meeting
- Vote for plan adoption

2025 - 26
Q4 - Q1



Some of these items and groupings are fluid since some items have dependences and others do not.

HPP End of Project Timeline with Dates

Date	What's Happening
November 12 (Today!)	Final Affordable Housing Trust Committee Meeting on HPP. Vote to advance the plan to the Planning and Select Boards.
November - December	14 Day Public Comment Period. Plan posted to the town website for public review and comments.
January 2026	Planning Board joins Select Board meeting for HPP adoption vote.
No later than Jan 31, 2026	HPP Submitted to EOHLC for Approval.

HPP End of Project Timeline with Dates

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2024 - 5
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2024 - 5
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GOALS + STRATEGIES

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2025
Q1 - Q2



FINAL PLAN & DELIVERABLES

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2025
Q3 - Q4



ADOPTION & PROJECT CLOSE

- Public Comment period
- Joint Select and Planning Board meeting
- Vote for plan adoption

2026
Q1



Some of these items and groupings are fluid since some items have dependences and others do not.

Committee Meeting Timeline

MEETING #2

- Discuss housing needs assessment findings
- Project messaging
- Prepare for first engagement event

2024
Q3 - Q4



MEETING #3

- Review constraints and opportunities
- Debrief the first public engagement event
- Provide input on housing strategies

2024 - 5
Q4 - Q1



MEETING #4

- Prepare draft goals and strategies for the public.
- Discuss feasibility of strategy recommendations.
- Prepare for second engagement event

2025
Q1 - Q2



MEETING #5

- Debrief second engagement event.
- Finalize goals and strategies as needed

2025
Q3 - Q4



MEETING #6

- Review of draft plan with feedback
- Reaching consensus on recommendations, goals, and strategies

2025
Q4



The process is scoped to have six total committee meetings for this project.

Housing doesn't have to be scary!

Let's talk about it.





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Thank you!