

Wenham Affordable Housing Trust Housing Needs Assessment & Action Plan

Affordable Housing Trust Meeting #1 – Kick-off

August 19, 2026



Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Overview of the AHT Housing Needs Assessment & Action Plan**
 - Context, scope of work, timeline, and roles
 - **Discussion:** What are your highest priorities for this plan?
- **Housing Needs Assessment & Context Communities**
 - Overview of the HNA process and context communities
 - **Discussion item:** Feedback on context communities
- **Community Engagement**
 - Major engagement activities and preliminary ideas
 - **Discussion:** Brainstorm your ideas for the community engagement plan
- **Next Steps**

Introductions

Project team

Town Staff

- Margaret Hoffman,
Town Planner

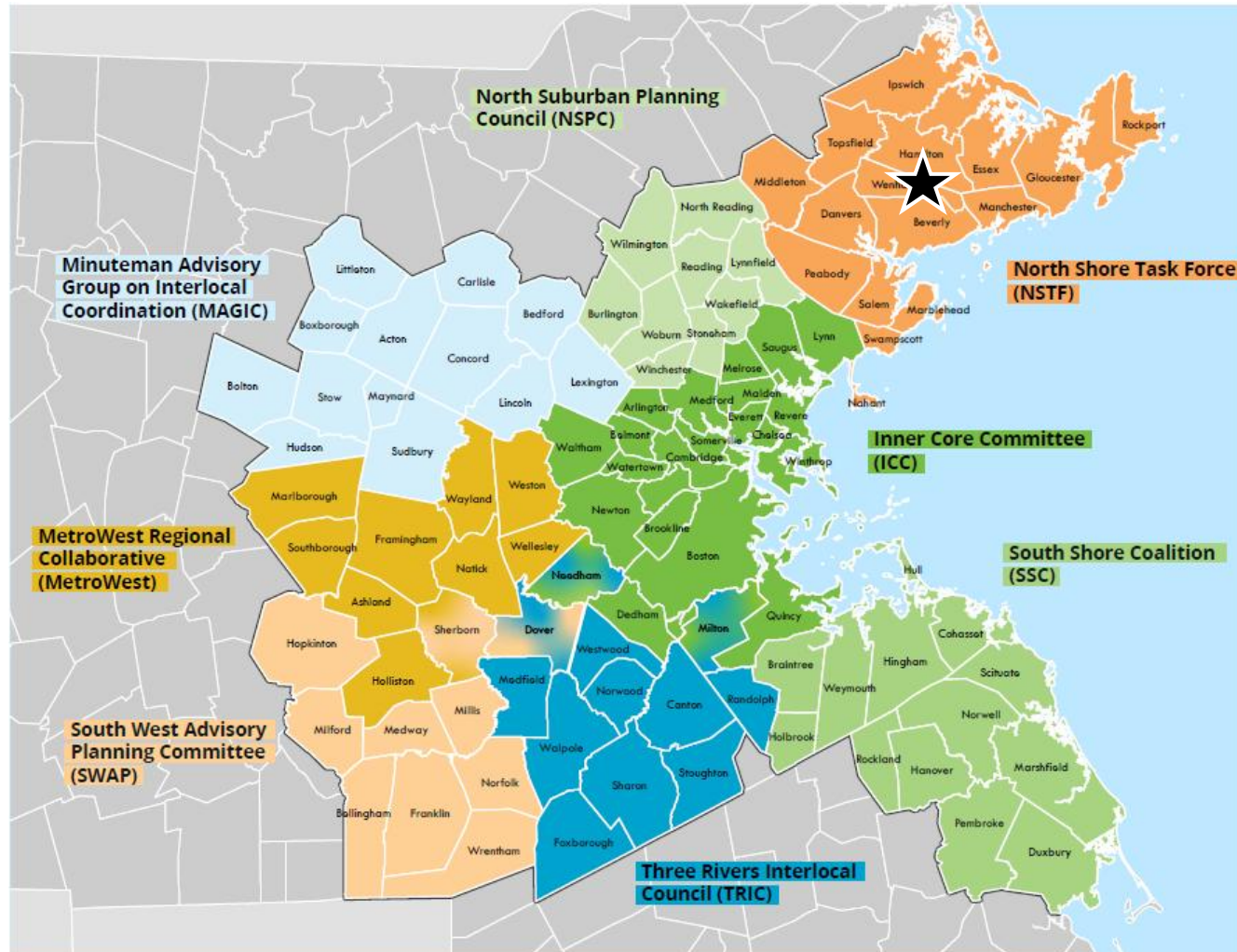
MAPC

- Adam Ploetz, Housing
Manager – *Strategic
guidance and oversight*
- Evelyne St-Louis,
Principal Planner -
Project Manager
- Elana Zabar, Housing
Planner II - *Project
Technical Assistance*

Wenham AHT

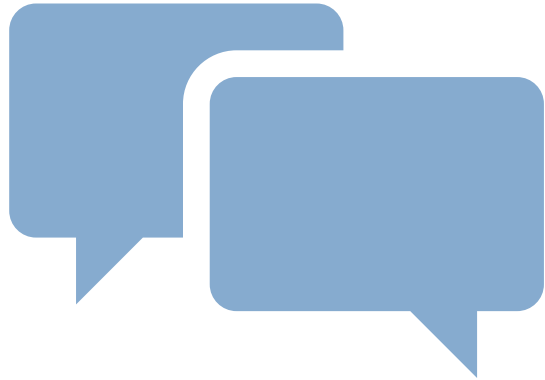
- Erica Ciampa
- Peter Clay
- Natalie Kavanagh
- John Maestranzi
- Nicole Roebuck
- Huntley Skinner (**Chair**)
- Corrie Sprague

MAPC



- **Who we are:** MAPC is the regional planning agency for the 101 cities and towns of Greater Boston.
- **Mission:** Create a more sustainable, equitable, collaborative, and climate-resilient region.
- We work with communities throughout the region to draft and implement local and regional plans in line with MetroCommon 2050 goals.

Introductions



- Name and pronouns
- How long have you lived in Wenham?
- What drew you to join the Wenham AHT?
- What is your favorite thing about living in Wenham?

Overview of the Wenham AHT Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) & Action Plan

Recent land use & planning context

- Wenham Housing Production Plan (HPP), 2008 (now expired)
- Wenham Housing Needs Assessment Report, 2017
- Wenham Affordable Housing Trust Action Plan, 2019
- Wenham Master Plan, 2024
- 3A District, 2025
- Current Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) (2025): 12.35%
 - The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) requires that 10% of a community's housing is affordable to be in compliance with Chapter 40B.

Overall goals of this planning process

- **Plan for the housing needs of low- and moderate-income households** and other population groups, such as seniors.
- **Engage community members in a variety of ways** to ensure different perspectives and lived experiences inform the plan.
- **Craft a five-year AHT action plan** that is tailored to Wenham's context as a small, rural community with environmental and infrastructure constraints.
- **Long-term outcome:** The housing needs in Wenham will be better met, with new, more diverse housing options. The Town will have a better understanding of the development challenges in Wenham, and plan implementation will result in new market-rate and deed-restricted affordable housing units (from private and non-profit developers).

Plan elements

- 1 UNDERSTAND LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS: Housing needs assessment**
 - Identify unmet housing needs in your community.
 - Analyze most recent available census data of municipality's demographics + housing stock
 - Informed by community engagement input.
- 2 PROACTIVELY INFLUENCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT: Development constraints + opportunities**
 - Guide the type, amount, and location of housing, consistent with community needs and regional goals.
 - Identify potential opportunity sites.
 - Informed by engagement with local housing experts, local development activity, and mapping.
- 3 GUIDE THE AHT'S ACTIONS: Goals and strategies organized into a five-year action plan**
 - Recommend zoning and regulatory changes to further enable diverse housing options.
 - Allocate resources and programs for diverse housing needs.
 - Raise awareness and build support for housing issues in Wenham.

Timeline



Note: This timeline is subject to change given that some items have dependencies.

Roles & responsibilities

Town Staff

- Oversees MAPC's work, and is the point of contact between MAPC & AHT
- Provides data requests, background materials, stakeholder contact info
- Guides the community engagement process
- Keeps Town Boards/Committees informed of plan progress

MAPC

- Leads technical assistance work
- Conducts data, research, and mapping
- Develops plan content & writing
- Supports the Town with community outreach

Wenham AHT

- Stewards of the overall planning process
- Conducts outreach for engagement w/ community members
- Provides local expertise
- Provides feedback on draft & final materials
- Attends and participates in x6 scoped AHT meetings
- Advocates for plan adoption

Discussion

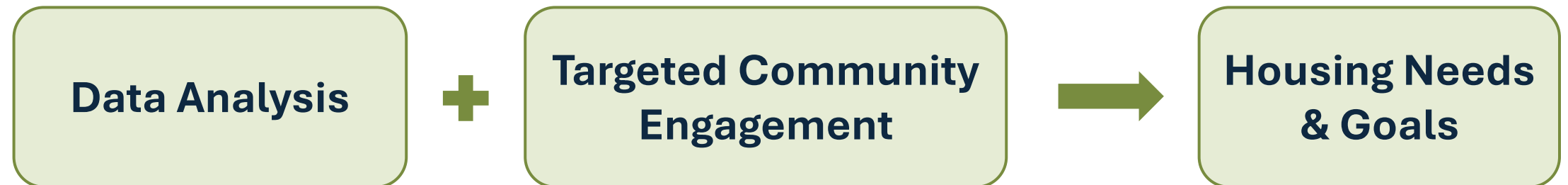


- What are your desired outcomes for this plan?
- Is there anything from the traditional HPP scope of work that you would like to see de-emphasized or more emphasized?
- Thinking about your previous 2018 AHT Action Plan, are there any elements that were especially helpful?
- How do you envision the five-year AHT action plan -- higher level or more detailed?
- How should we refer to this plan in public-facing materials?

Housing Needs Assessment: Context Communities

What is a Housing Needs Assessment?

- Analysis of community housing needs using a combination of data and insights from community engagement
 - Household demographics
 - Housing supply
 - Housing affordability



Why Context Communities?

- When conducting a Housing Needs Assessment for a given municipality, it is a good practice to include a larger reference geography (e.g., county or state) as well as “context communities” to compare trends and findings.
- This helps us evaluate the significance of data findings and trends observed in Wenham.
- This can also be helpful when thinking about strategies that are well-suited for Wenham’s local context.

Selecting Context Communities

- Start with communities with high similarity score based on demographics, housing characteristics, and land use context
- Other factors can also inform this selection (e.g., geographic proximity, best practices, other local connections, wanting a contrasting type of, etc.)
- We would like to select up to 3-4 for MAPC's upcoming analysis

Potential context communities:

- *Stow*
- *Hamilton*
- *Medway*
- *Newbury*
- *Georgetown*
- *Lynnfield*

Discussion



- Are you comfortable with MAPC moving forward with 3-4 of these proposed context communities?
- Are there are any **recent plans or local data sources** we should consult in addition to the census and our engagement process?
- Are there any major questions you have as we begin the Housing Needs Assessment?

Community Engagement

Community engagement activities

- Early landscape analysis
 - Preliminary 1:1 conversations to inform the engagement plan
 - Draft Community Engagement Plan – iterative
- Townwide activities #1 and #2
 - Typically, one earlier in the process to inform housing needs assessment, and one later in the process to inform strategies, but this is flexible.
 - **Options:** Online survey, tabling at existing events/popular places, open house forum, etc.
- Targeted conversations or focus groups:
 - Housing experts (e.g., developers, municipal staff/board members, etc.)
 - Priority groups based on housing needs (e.g., renters, seniors, service providers, etc.)

Potential priority groups

- This plan should reflect diverse perspectives and lived experiences.
- Who do we need to target in our engagement?
 - Seniors
 - Families with children
 - Renters
 - Workforce, folks commuting to work in Wenham, e.g., teachers, public servants, etc.
 - *Others?*

Discussion



1. Are there upcoming community events or community gathering places we could leverage (e.g., for tabling)?
2. What engagement activities would be most effective for this type of plan?
3. Who are the priority populations in your communities? How might we reach these groups?
4. What is your capacity to support engagement efforts? We would love active representation from Trust members!

Next Steps

Next steps

- Community engagement
 - Website creation
 - Landscape analysis – 2-3 early conversations to inform the engagement
 - Draft the Community Engagement Plan
- Housing needs assessment
- **Next meeting: Wednesday September 16?**

Thank you!

Adam Ploetz, Housing Manager, MAPC (aploetz@mapc.org)

Evelyne St-Louis, Principal Planner, MAPC (est-louis@mapc.org)

Elana Zabar, Regional Land Use & Housing Planner II, MAPC (ezabar@mapc.org)



Appendix

Context Communities Similarity Score

Municipality	Similarity score	In MAPC region?	Active HPP?
Stow	14	Yes	Yes, 2024-2029
Hamilton	13	Yes	Expired in 2025
Medway	13	Yes	Yes, 2022-2027
Newbury	13	No	Yes, 2025-2030
Rutland	13	No	No
Townsend	13	No	Yes, 2022-2027
Upton	13	No	Yes, 2023-2028
Wilbraham	13	No	No
Boylston	12	No	Yes, 2021-2026
Charlton	12	No	No
Cohasset	12	Yes	Expired in 2025
Essex	12	Yes	Yes, 2026-2031
Georgetown	12	No	Yes, 2025-2030
Groton	12	No	Expired in 2025
Hanover	12	Yes	Yes, 2022-2027
Hanson	12	No	Yes, 2026-2031
Holden	12	No	No
Holliston	12	Yes	Yes, 2024-2029
Lynnfield	12	Yes	Expired in 2011
Milton	12	Yes	Expired in 2025
Oak Bluffs	12	No	Yes, 2026-2031
Pepperell	12	No	Expired in 2025
Sterling	12	No	Expired in 2024
Topsfield	12	Yes	No
Walpole	12	Yes	Expired in 2024

- The “similarity score” relative to Wenham is calculated on a scale of 0-15.
- This table shows all MA municipalities that scored a 12 or higher.
- The higher the similarity score, the more similar that community is to Wenham based on different indicators.
- These indicators include characteristics about a municipality’s population (age, household size, population growth), housing stock, market conditions, and housing affordability, as well as its general land use context.

Context Communities Indicators

- Total population, 2010, 2020, and 2020-2024 ACS
- Total population by race/ethnicity and age group
- Total population by disability status and age group
- School enrollment by school district
- Percentage of housing units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI)
- Average household size
- Households with seniors present
- Owner occupied households
- Median household rent
- Housing units by number of units in a structure
- Residential real estate sales by type, Single Family and Condo Sales
- Median household income
- Household income by cost burdened status
- Characteristics of MA municipalities. More information here: <https://github.com/MAPC/mapcdatakeys>
- Community classification by various socio-demographic factors. More information here: https://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Massachusetts-Community-Types-Summary-July_2008.pdf
- MAPC Housing submarkets index. More information here: <https://housing-submarkets.mapc.org/about>

Housing supply in Wenham (2024 ACS)

- U.S. Census American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, 2020-2024
 - Total housing units: 1,334 units
 - Total occupied housing units: 1,279 units (4% vacant)
 - Tenure: 86% owner-occupied, 14% renter-occupied
 - Structure type: 84% of units are single-family homes, 4% are duplexes
 - Unit types: 83% of units are 3+ bedroom units
- Most recent SHI update (September 2025)
 - SHI units: **178 units**
 - Percent: **12.35%**
 - This is calculated based on Wenham's 2020 Census Year-Round Units: 1,441

Landscape Analysis: Potential Outreach List

- Erika Lindquist, Wenham Museum
- Dacia Rubel, League of Women Voters
- Kristen Sleeper or Alison Hawkins, Wenham Village Improvement Society
- Kim Butler, Hamilton-Wenham Public Library
- Adam Kramer, Hamilton-Wenham Athletic Director
- Sean Timmons, Hamilton-Wenham Recreation Director
- Cormac Callanan, Harborlight Homes
- Paula Mountain, Enon Village

Local housing experts: Potential Outreach List

- Enon Village (Housing Authority)
- Essex Habitat for Humanity
- Harborlight Homes
- North Shore Community Development Coalition
- WISSH Board (Wenham Issues of Social Service Help)
- Wells Company
- Win Dodge, former AHT member