

MAKING ACTON A PLACE TO CALL HOME: HOUSING NEEDS AND CHOICES IN ACTON

ACTON COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

JULY 24, 2018



Forum Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
 - State and Regional Housing Demand
 - Acton's Housing Story
 - What is Acton Doing and What Can Be Done
 - Questions and Answers
- 

Speakers

- Chris Kluchman, Director, Massachusetts Housing Choice Program
 - Judi Barrett, Barrett Planning Group LLC
 - Kelley Cronin, Executive Director, Acton Housing Authority
 - Nancy Tavernier, Chairman, Acton Community Housing Corporation
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State and Regional Housing Demand

CHRIS KLUCHMAN





Housing Choice Initiative



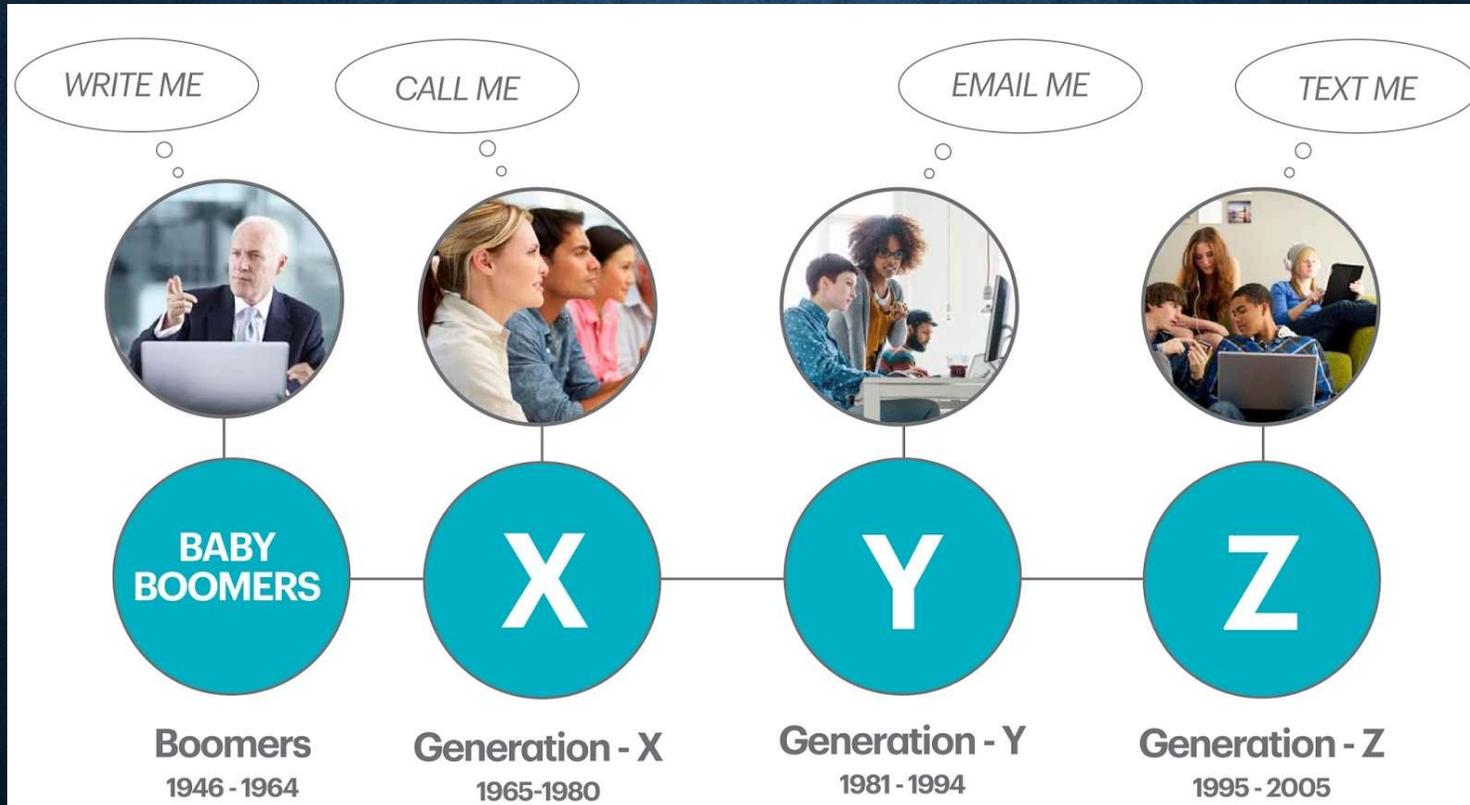
Town of Acton
July 24, 2018
Chris Kluchman, FAICP, Housing Choice Program Director



Does the state have the housing stock needed to accommodate changing needs?



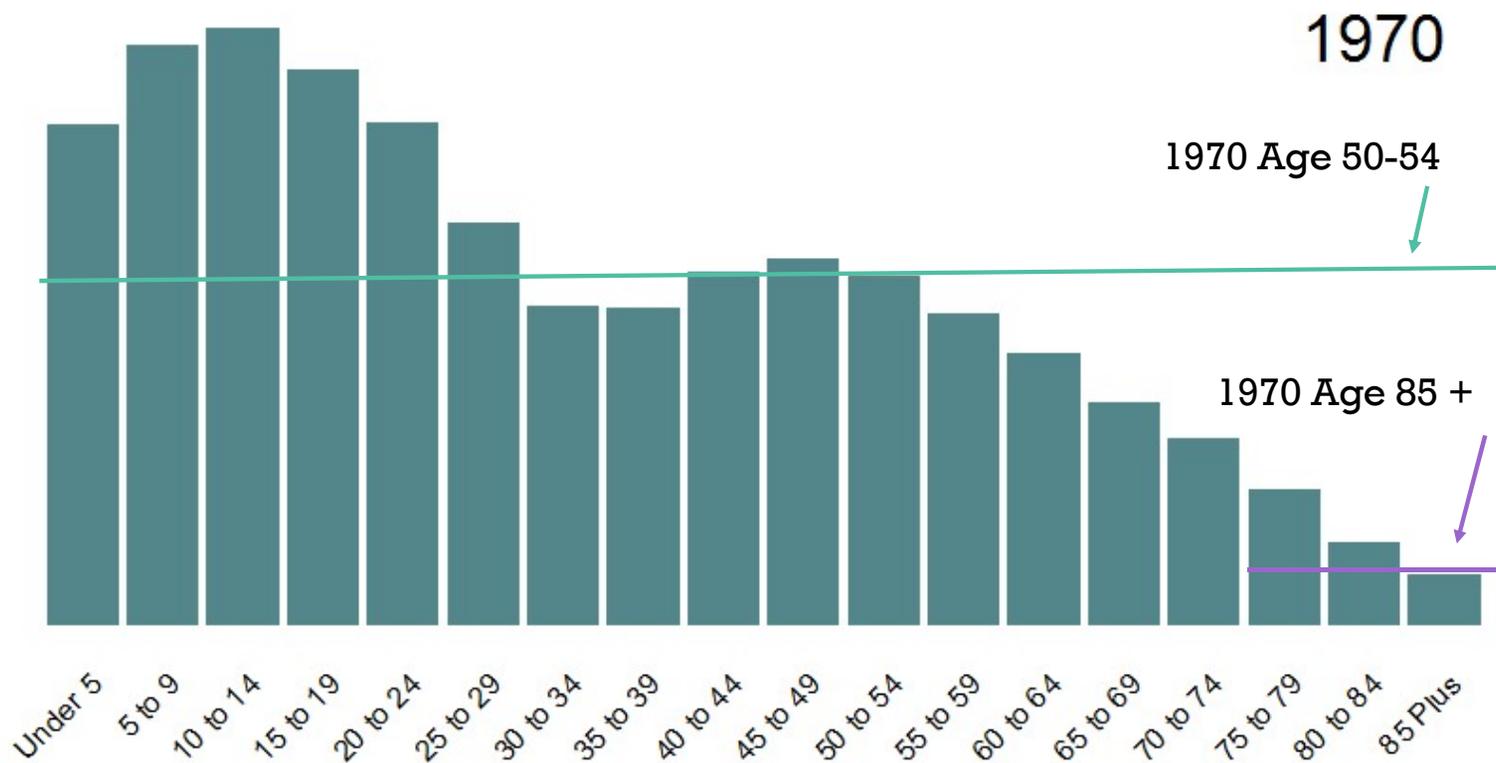
Different generations have different needs



Silver Tsunami

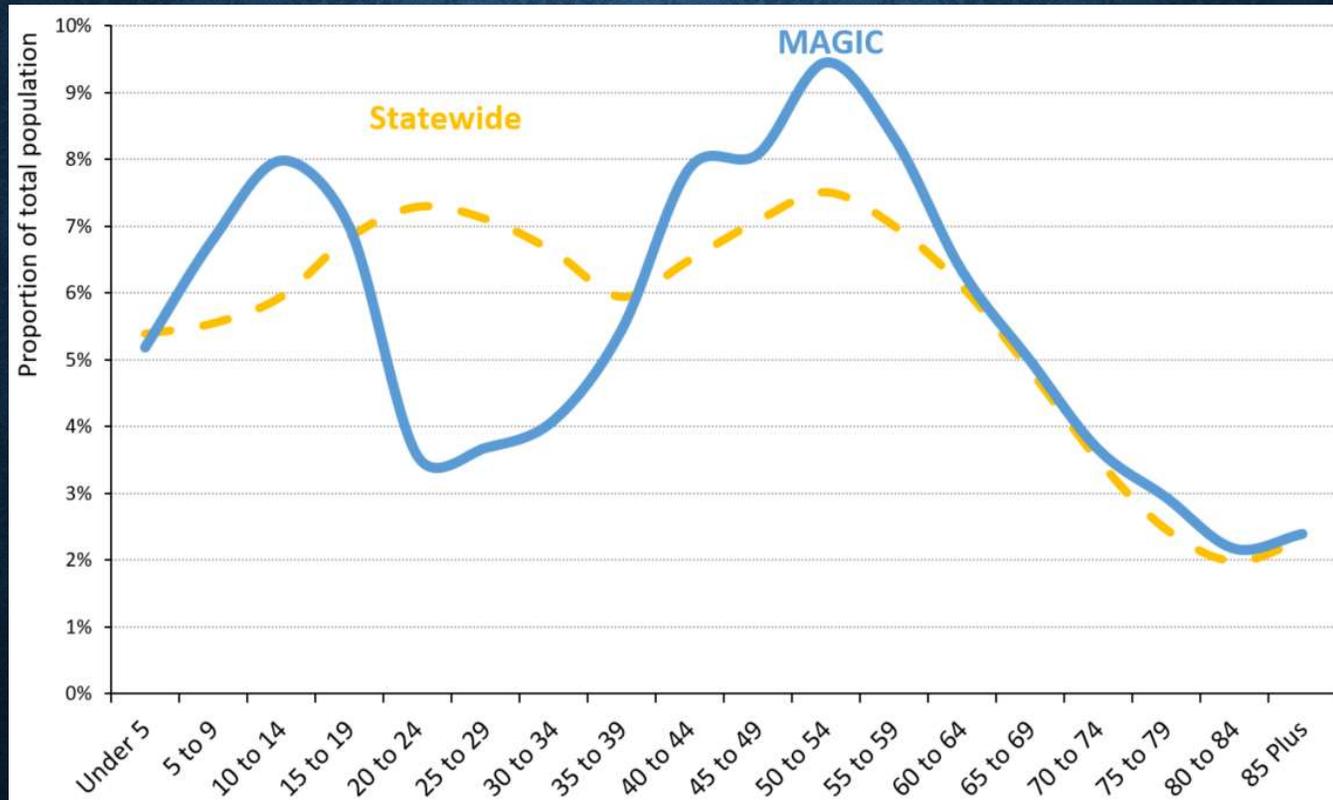


Massachusetts population by age cohort by year: 1970 to 2016



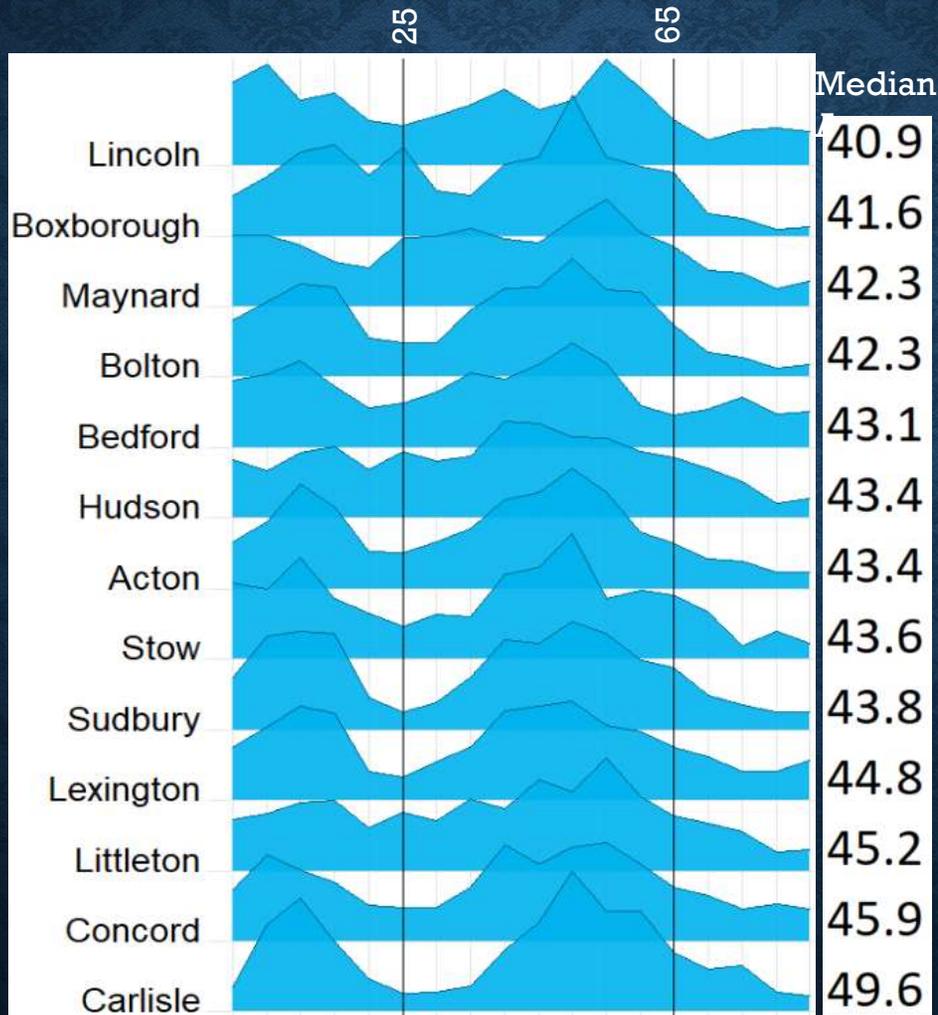
Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program

MAGIC demographic profile skews older than the rest of the state



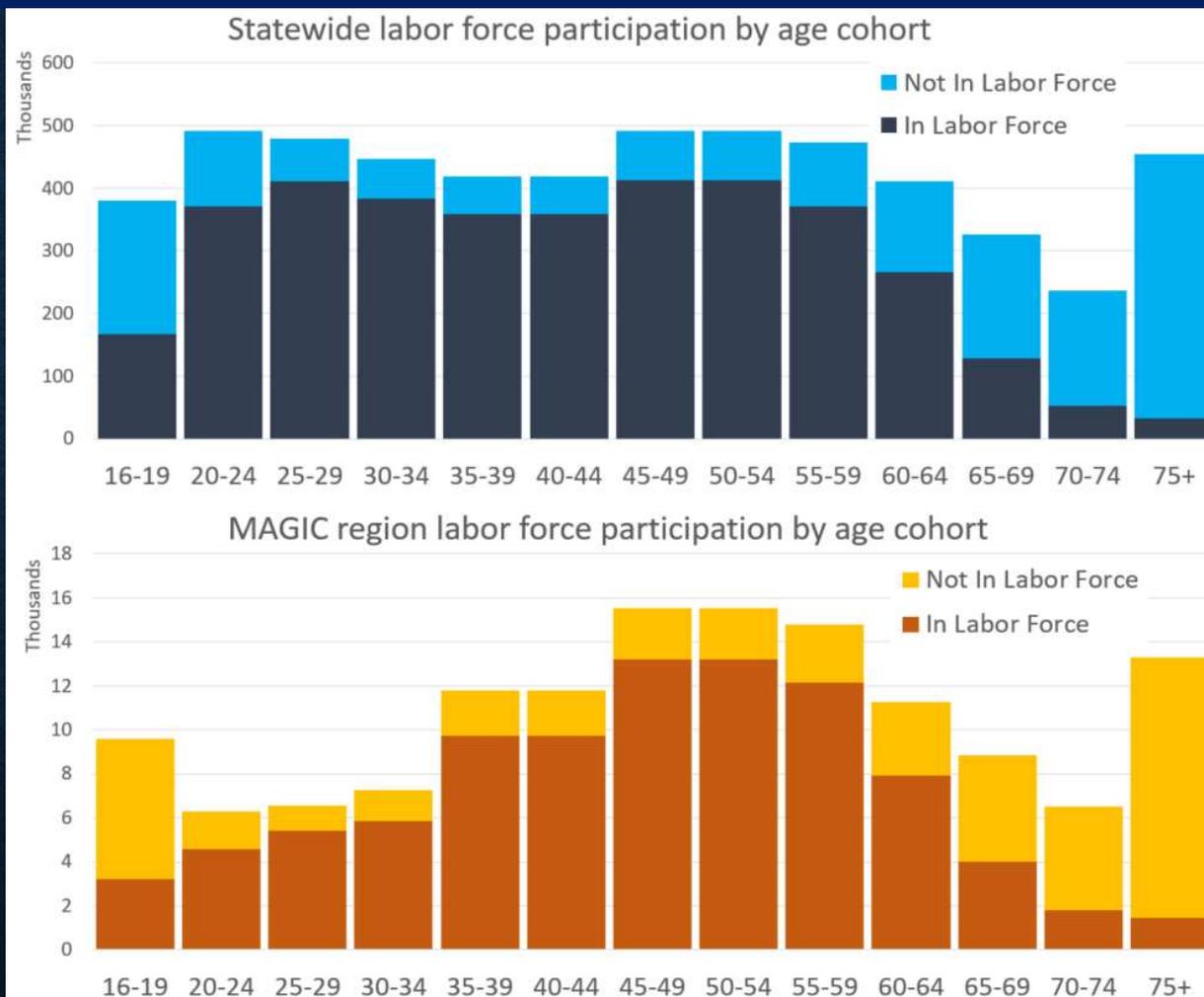
Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016

Boomer peaks, millennial valleys



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016

Older workforce, with increasing retirees



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016

Businesses are concerned about housing



Business Community support for Governor Baker's Housing Choice legislation and program, March 2018: **Boston Medical Center, Manulife Financial (John Hancock), iBoss, Dell, Mass Competitive Partnership, General Dynamics, McKinsey Consulting, NAIOP, Rockland Trust Bank, South Shore Chamber, and more!**

Over **2/3 of employers** claim home prices and rental costs have affected their ability to recruit **qualified candidates**.

Northeastern University survey of businesses in Greater Boston, April 2017



"High housing costs and housing availability are a **major concern** of businesses looking to expand or relocate in Massachusetts

MassEcon report, March 2017

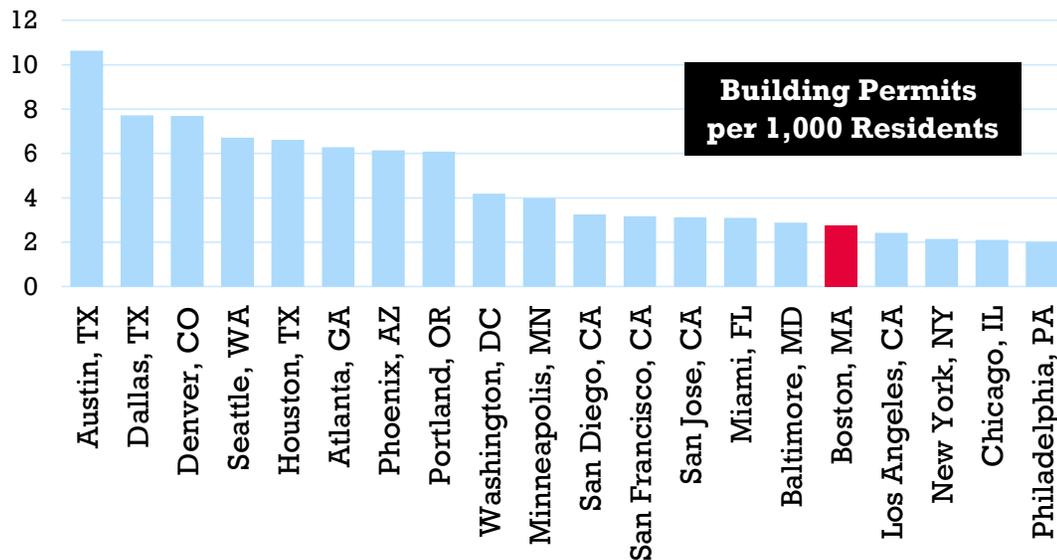
"The things that keep me up at night about other tech companies considering Boston are **transportation and housing** [challenges], less so about a fight for talent."

HubSpot chief people officer as quoted in the Boston Globe, 9/21/2017

Losing skilled workers to other U.S. regions

Building Permit Rates of the 20 Largest Innovation Economy Metros

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Building Permits Survey and 2016 Population Estimates



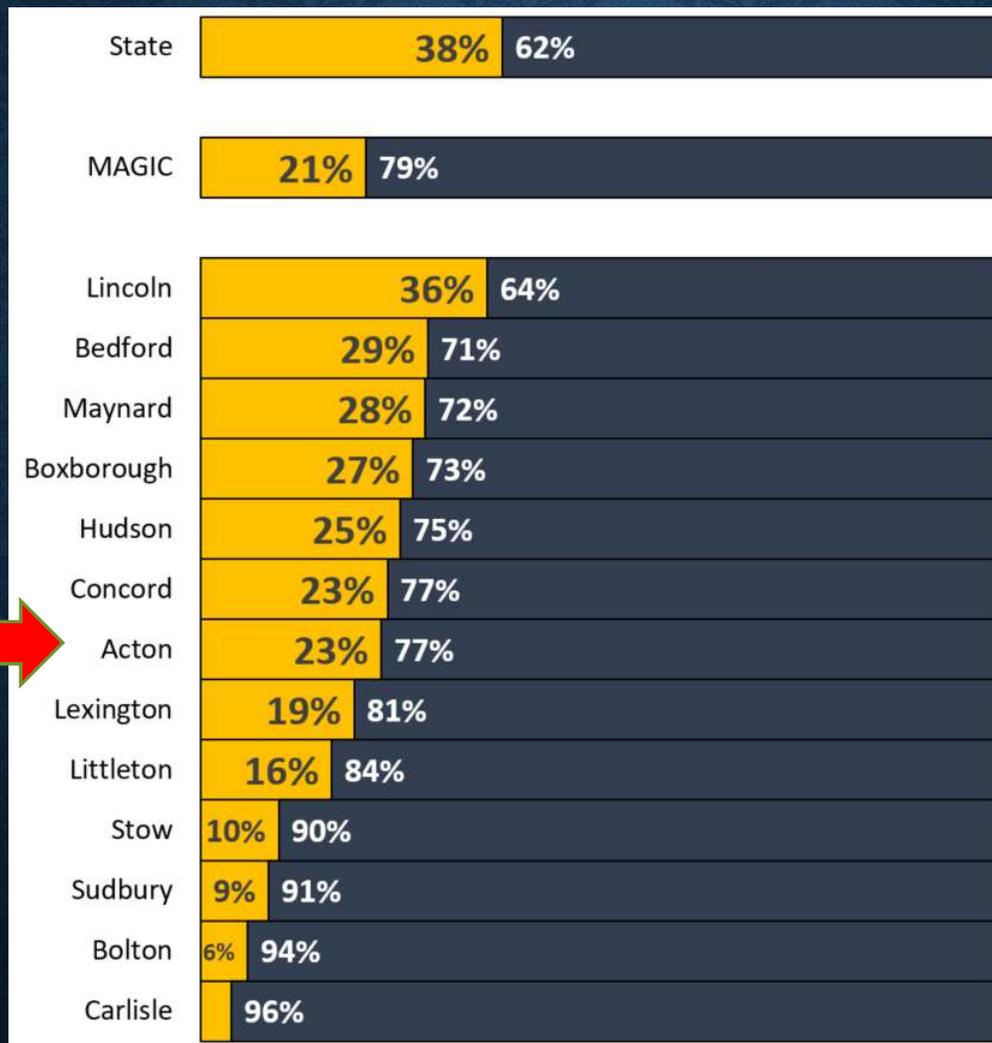
Most of the metros with the largest innovation economies are permitting a lot more housing per capita than we are.

Competitor metros that permitted more than 6 units per thousand residents saw net gains in population from domestic migration.

Net metro-to-metro migration, 2015-2016

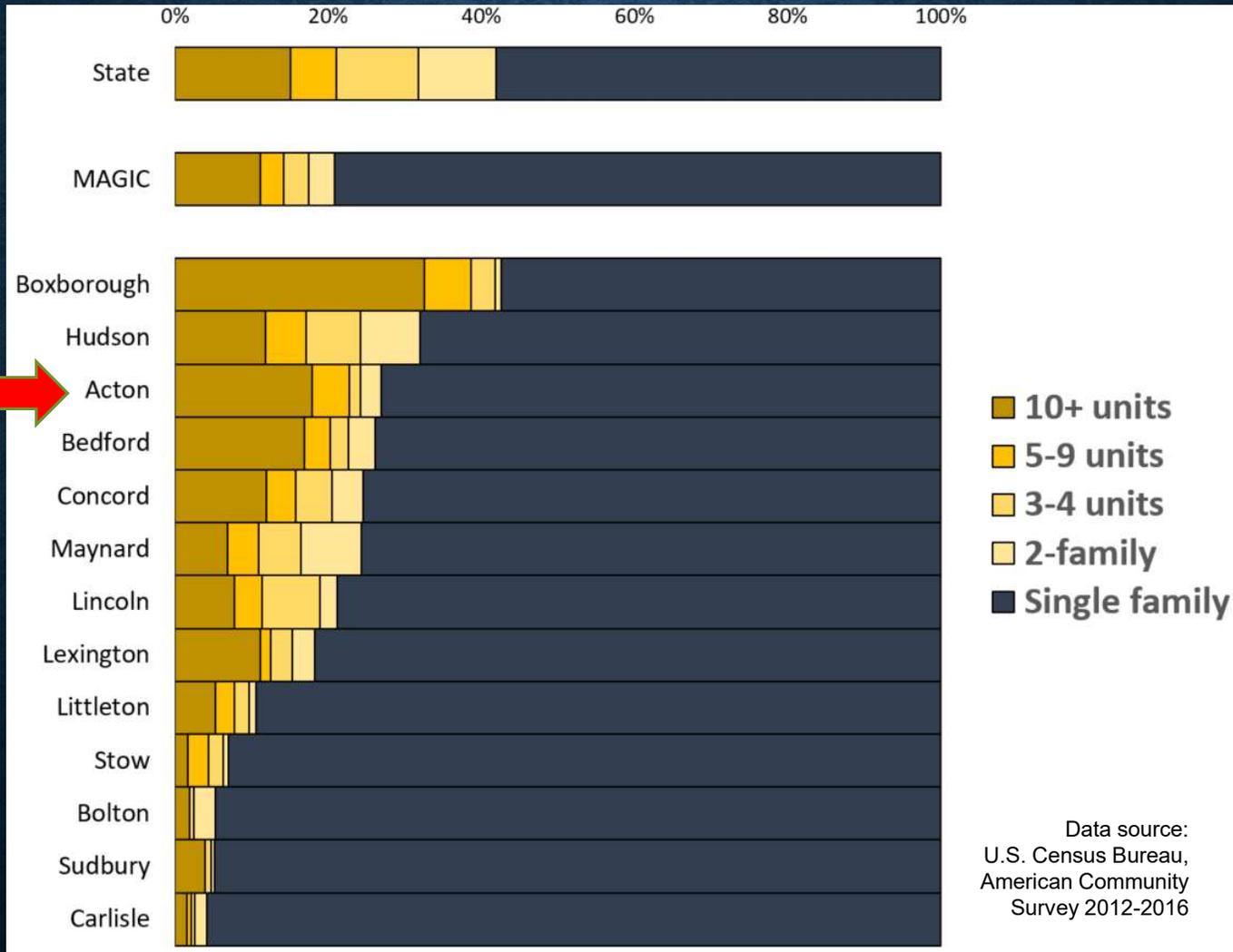


Limited rental housing in most of region



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016

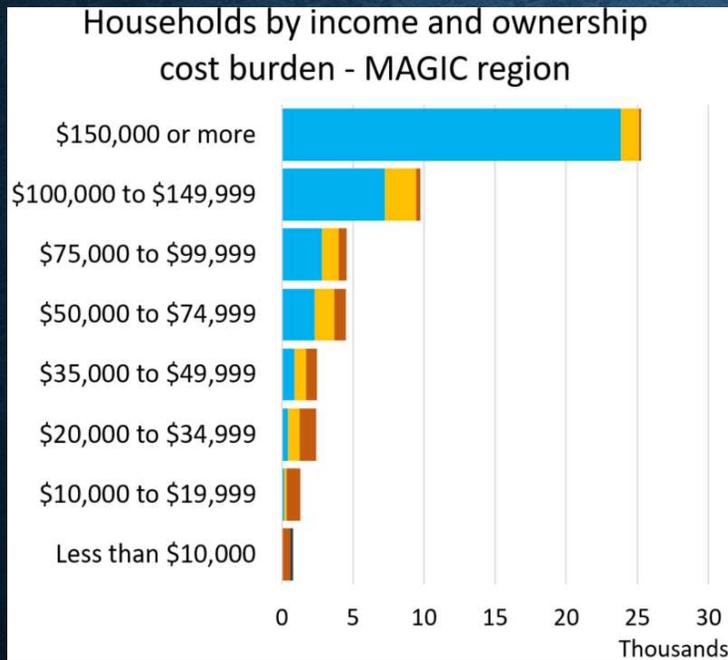
Single-family homes predominate



Low-income households are struggling with affordability

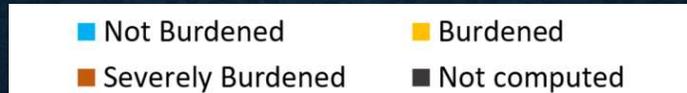
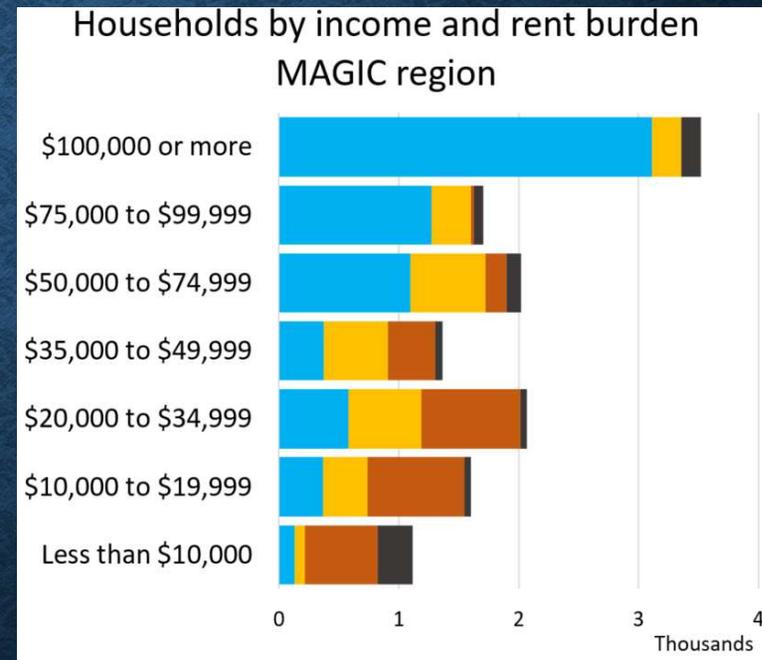
5,241

Severely burdened owner households



2,843

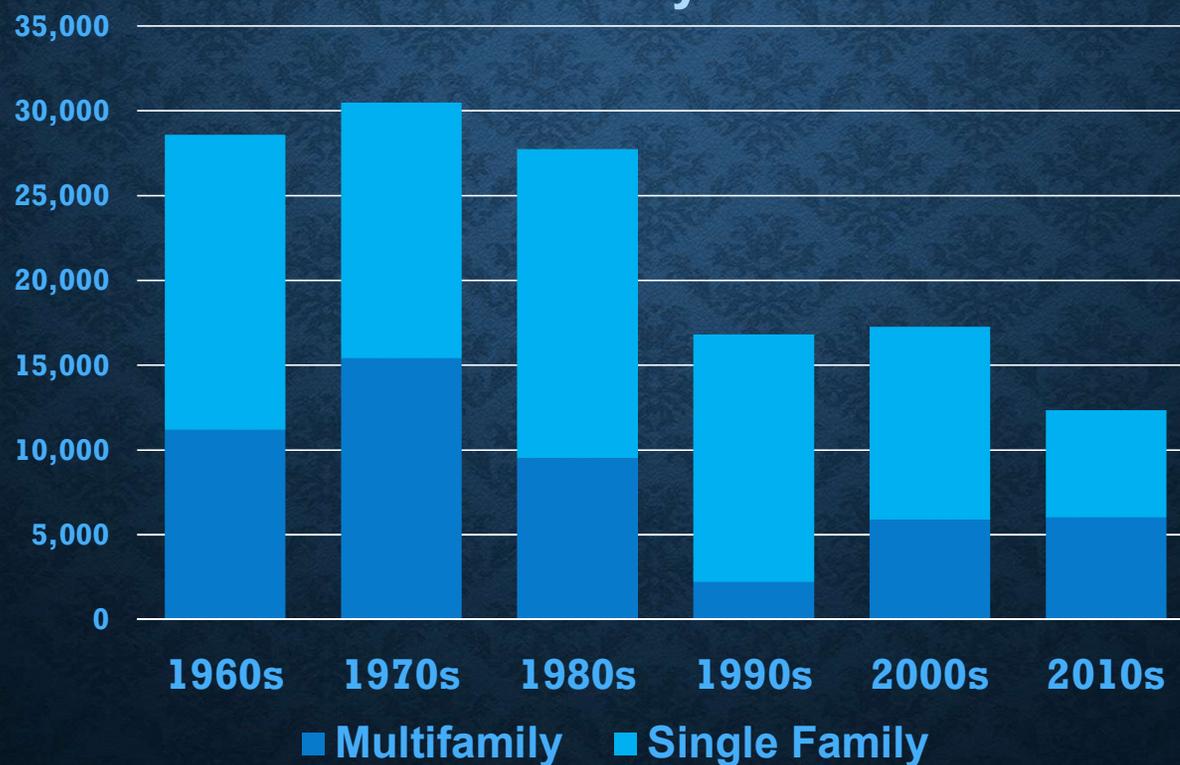
Severely burdened renter households



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

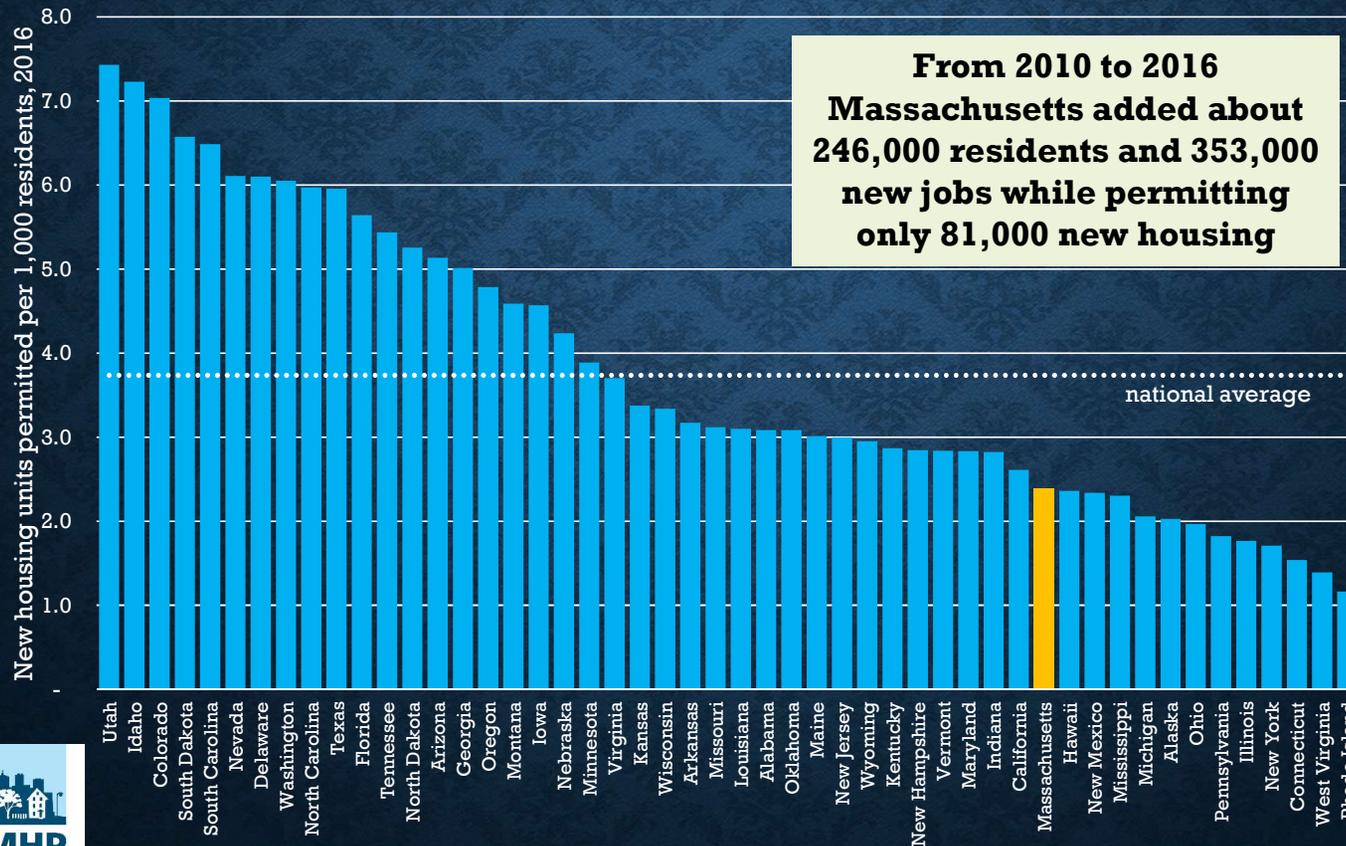
State producing fewer units

Annual Housing Production in Massachusetts by Decade



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, Building Permit Survey

Low rate of housing production despite increasing population and employment



Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Building Permit Survey.

Low vacancy rates, tight markets

County	Rental Vacancy Rate	Homeownership Vacancy Rate
Suffolk	1.40%	0.45%
Middlesex	1.56%	0.31%
Essex	1.61%	0.33%
Hampshire	1.75%	0.47%
Norfolk	1.78%	0.27%
Hampden	1.82%	0.45%
Franklin	1.95%	0.81%
Bristol	2.21%	0.51%
Worcester	2.49%	0.54%
Plymouth	2.79%	0.41%
Berkshire	3.20%	0.86%
Barnstable	3.51%	0.78%

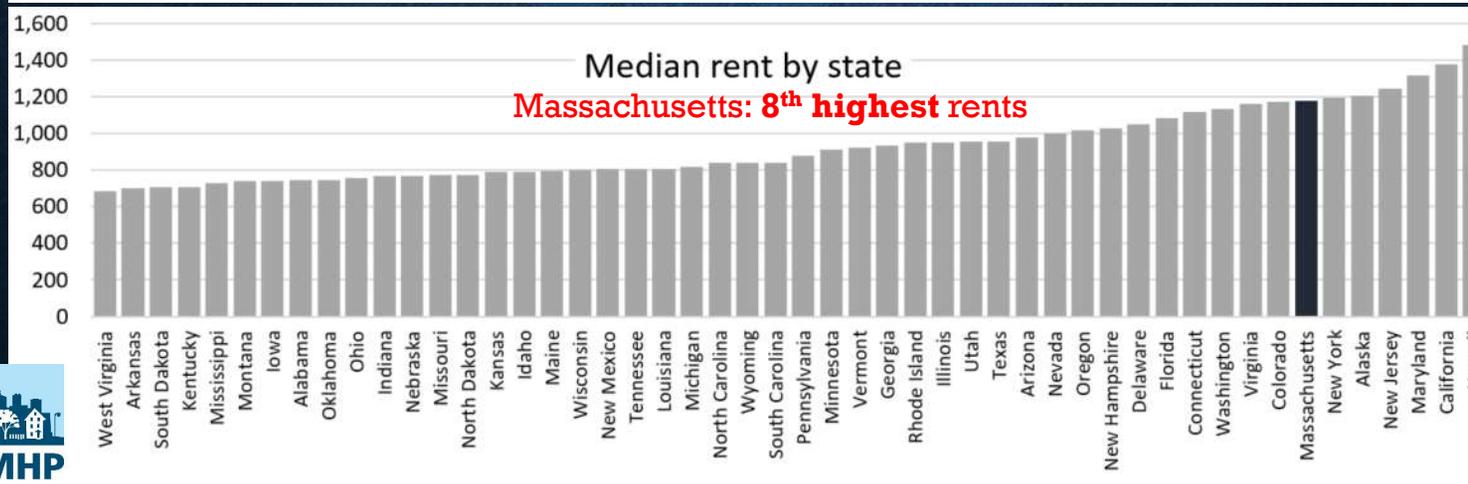
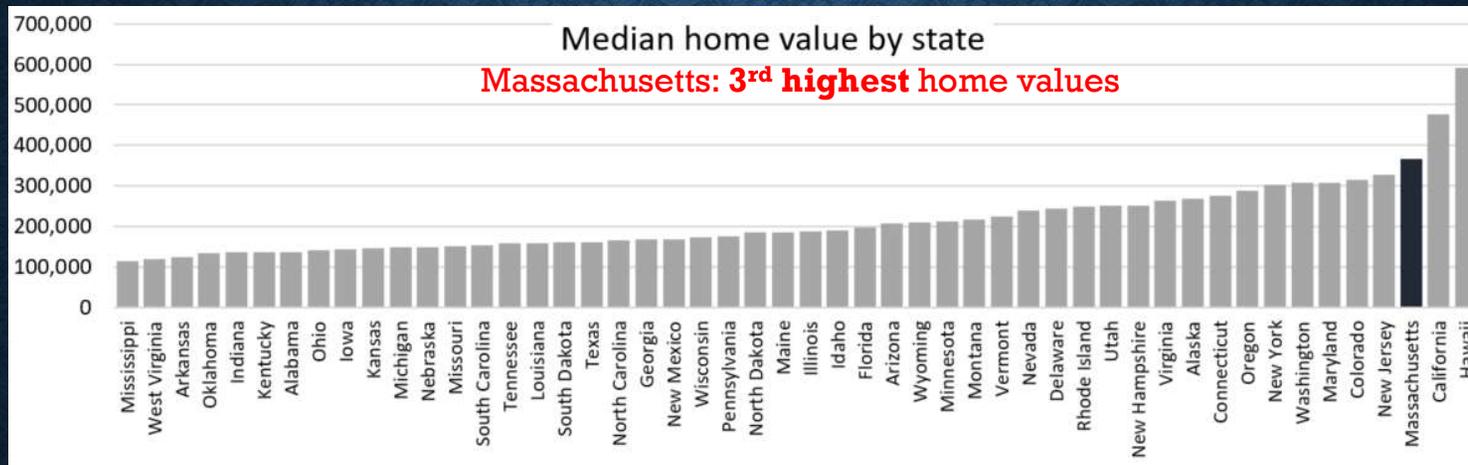
Healthy rates	6.00%	2.00%
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Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016

*Calculations adjust out seasonal, occasional, and off-market units

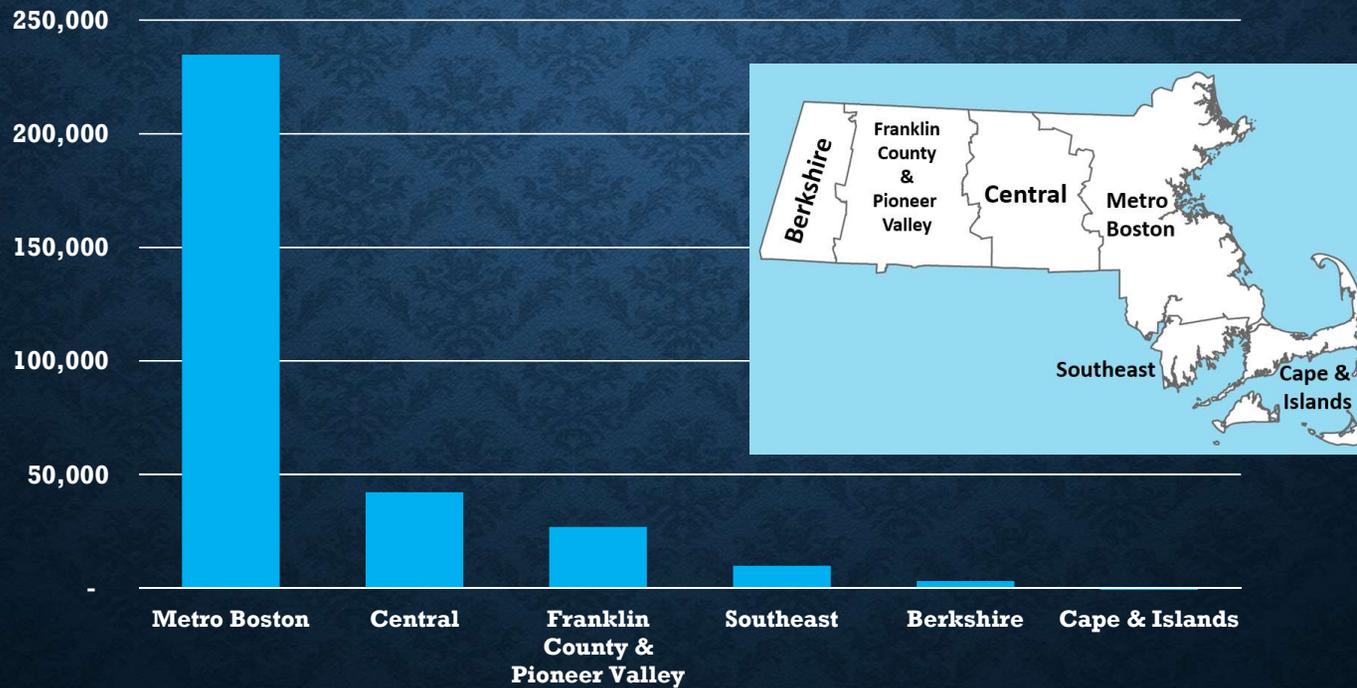
Massachusetts' housing costs are among the highest in the nation



Source: 2016 ACS 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

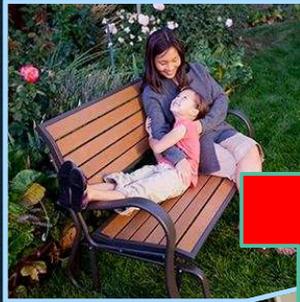
The projected future need for new housing by 2030 is heavily concentrated in metro Boston

Projected Net New Households 2015 to 2030



Data from forthcoming report for MHP, DHCD and the Urban Land Institute by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council

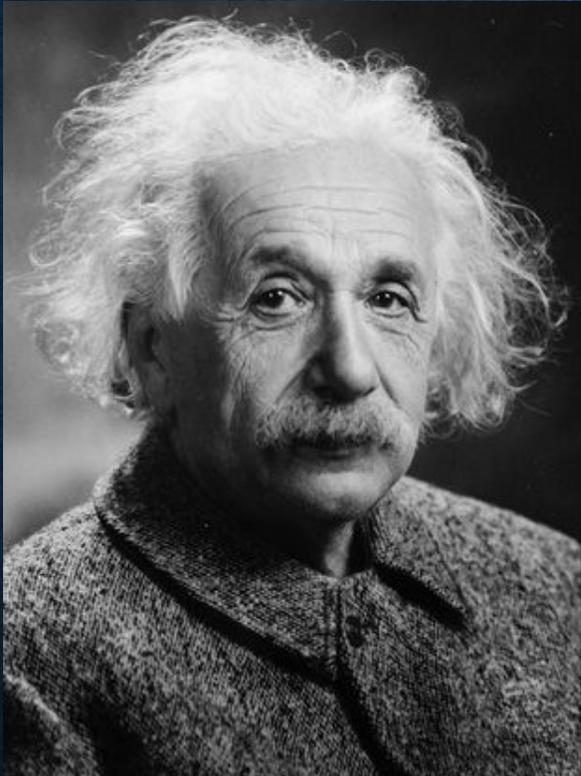
Does the state have the housing stock needed to accommodate changing needs?



INFO



Solving the Problem: Housing Choice Initiative



We cannot solve our problems

with the same thinking we used

when we created them.

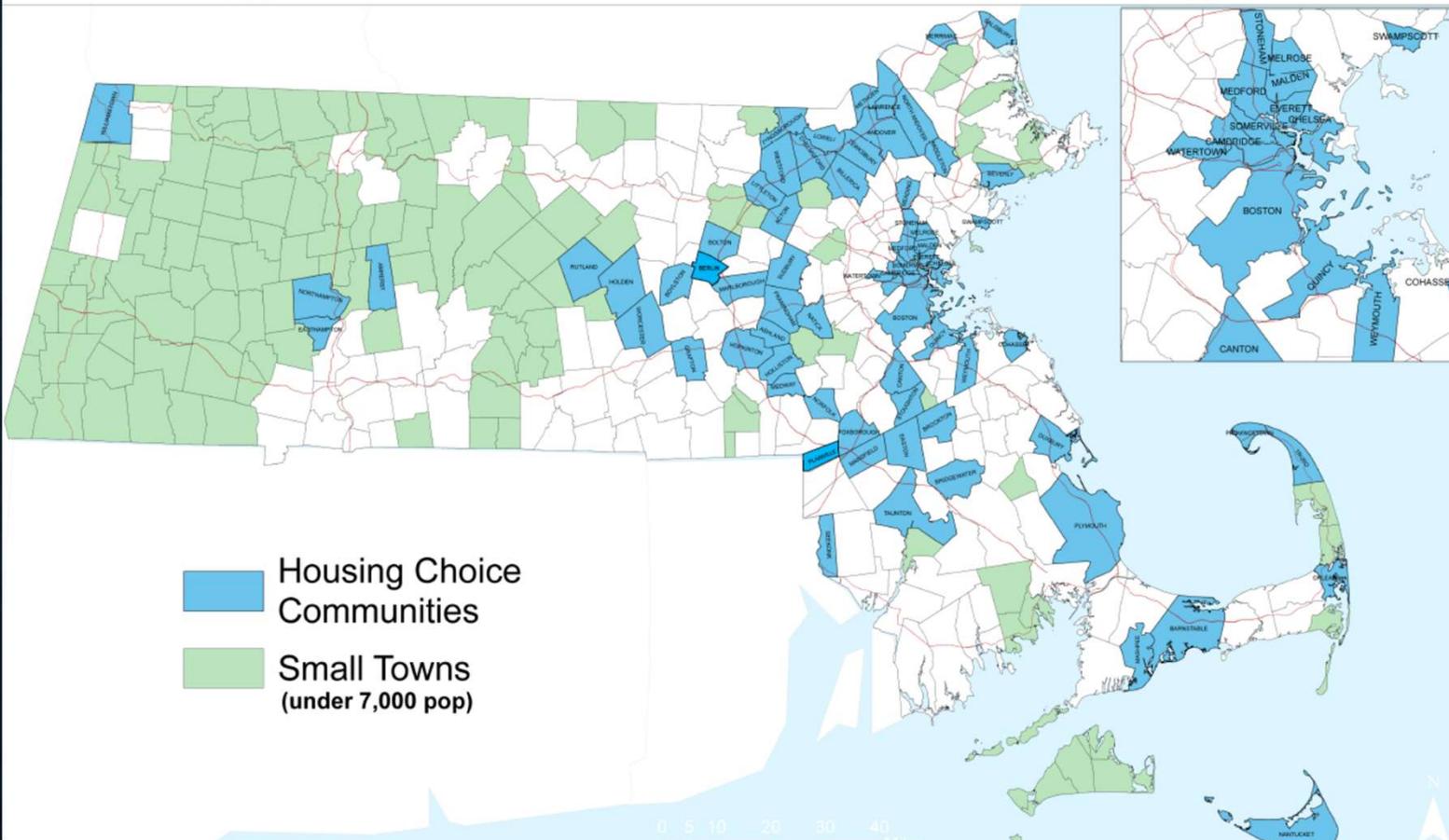
- Albert Einstein

- ◆ Legislative Fix to c. 40A
- ◆ Incentives and Rewards
- ◆ Data and Tracking
- ◆ Coordinated Technical Assistance

69 Housing Choice Communities in 2018 !



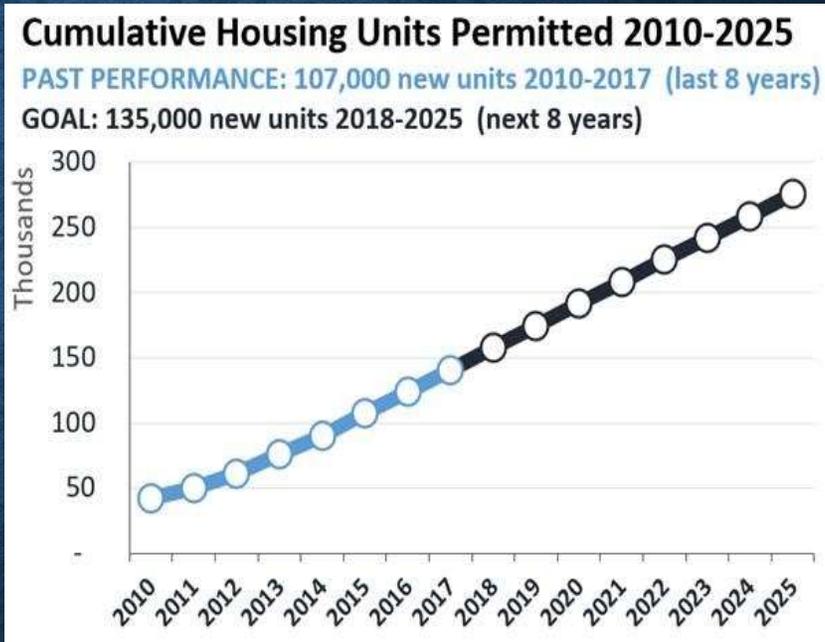
Housing Choice Communities and Small Towns



Establish a Housing Goal

The Housing Choice Initiative will track progress towards the Goal of 135,000 new units by 2025 and improve data systems.

- Goal is achievable because production in the last 3 years has been strong, but it needs to be sustained.
- Represents a 26 percent increase in housing production compared to the last eight years.
- Keeps pace with projected increases in housing demand.
- Is closely aligned with the housing production goals required for designation as a Housing Choice community.



Housing Choice Initiative: Major Milestones

December 2017

- **Announce Housing Choice Initiative**
- Governor filed **An Act to Promote Housing Choices** legislation (H. 4075)
- **\$2 million** new MassHousing Technical Assistance “**Planning for Production**” grants
- Contract with regional planning agencies on **new DLTA round, which includes support for the Housing Choice Initiative**

January to April 2018

- **Open applications for Housing Choice Community** designation
- Hearing on H. 4075, at Joint Committee on Housing (voted out of committee 12-1 in support and redrafted as H. 4290)

May to July 2018

- **Announce Housing Choice Communities**
- **Incorporate HCC into multiple grant programs and new MassDOT capital plan**
- **Open Housing Choice Capital Grant Program and Small Town Grant Program applications**

Fall 2018

- **Announce Housing Choice and Small Town Capital grant recipients**

Questions / Comments ?

www.mass.gov/housingchoice

Chris Kluchman, FAICP

Housing Choice Program Director
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Boston MA 02114
617-573-1167

chris.kluchman@mass.gov



Other Resources

Planning for Production

www.masshousing.com – Planning & Programs

www.housingtoolbox.org – A great resource !

HOUSING TOOLBOX
for Massachusetts Communities 



Housing Demand in Acton

JUDI BARRETT



Housing & Economic Development Implementation Program

Hired by Town Manager in April.

Project funded primarily by grant from Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, with cash match from Acton Community Housing Corporation and in-kind services match from CHAPA.

Over-arching goal: implement Acton 2020.



J M Goldson

community preservation
+ planning



Our charge

“The goal is to create a solid housing and economic development implementation program that is based on today’s reality and that streamlines the allocation of municipal resources. Acton would like to shape a unique and attractive environment for new business opportunities, within the Commonwealth, that is uniquely competitive, but compatible with its neighbors. This program should explore previous research on the inextricable links between housing, walkable urbanism, and economic development.”

Big questions

HOUSING

1. Under existing conditions, does Acton have the tools it needs to implement the Housing Recommendations of Acton 2020?
2. Unmet housing needs exist throughout Greater Boston. Prior plans identify Acton's. What can the Town do to address some of those needs?
3. To what extent – if any – does the cost of housing in Acton affect the Town's ability to attract and keep a variety of industries?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. What are Acton's competitive strengths for attracting and keeping prosperous businesses? What are its weaknesses?
2. How does Acton compare with "peer" communities in terms of industry mix, land & building inventories and prices, and regulatory policies?
3. How is Acton organized for economic development?
4. Does the local labor force have a range of options to work locally?

What are Acton's opportunities?

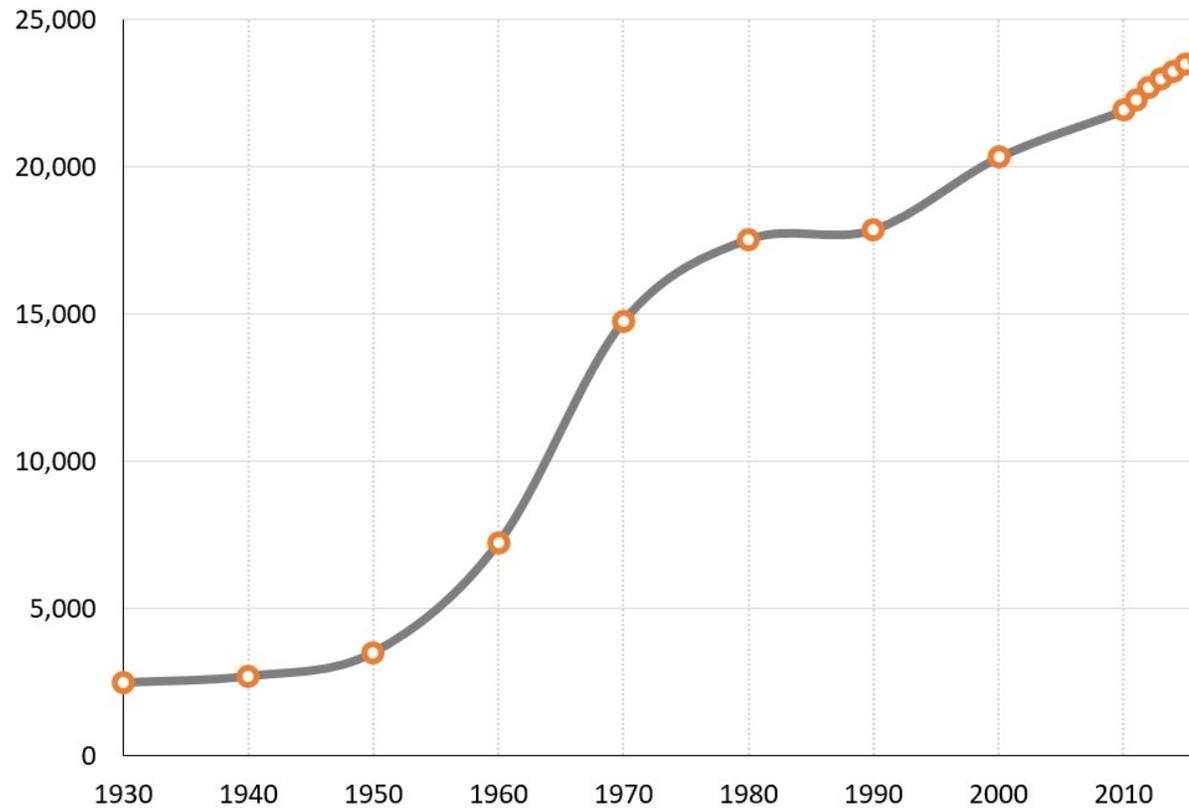


**ACTON'S
HOUSING STORY**

WHERE DO WE COME FROM AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

- Acton population has seen significant growth over the last 18 years
- Population is aging
- Most Housing is single-family units
- Housing Cost is prohibitive for many
- Key areas of concern:
 - Attracting young families
 - Helping seniors age in their community

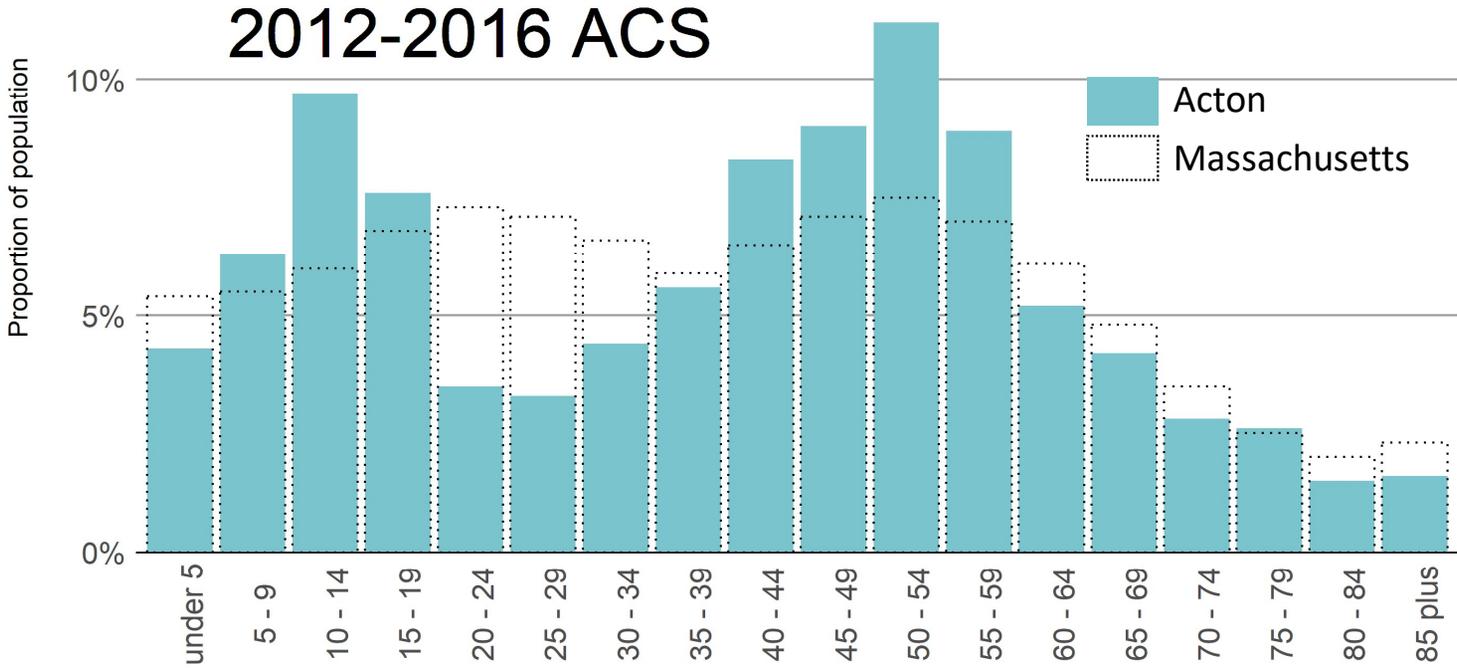
Population Growth in Acton



U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program



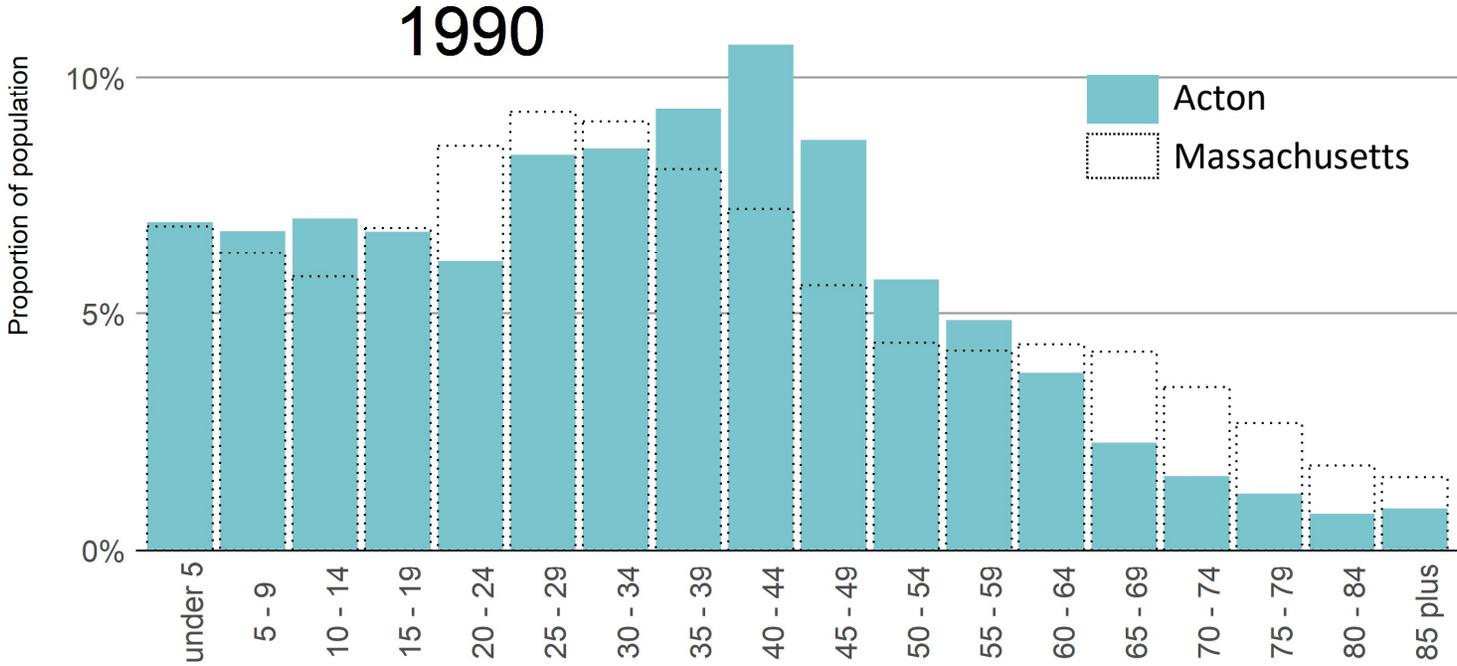
Which age groups are dominant? Has this always been the case?



U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey



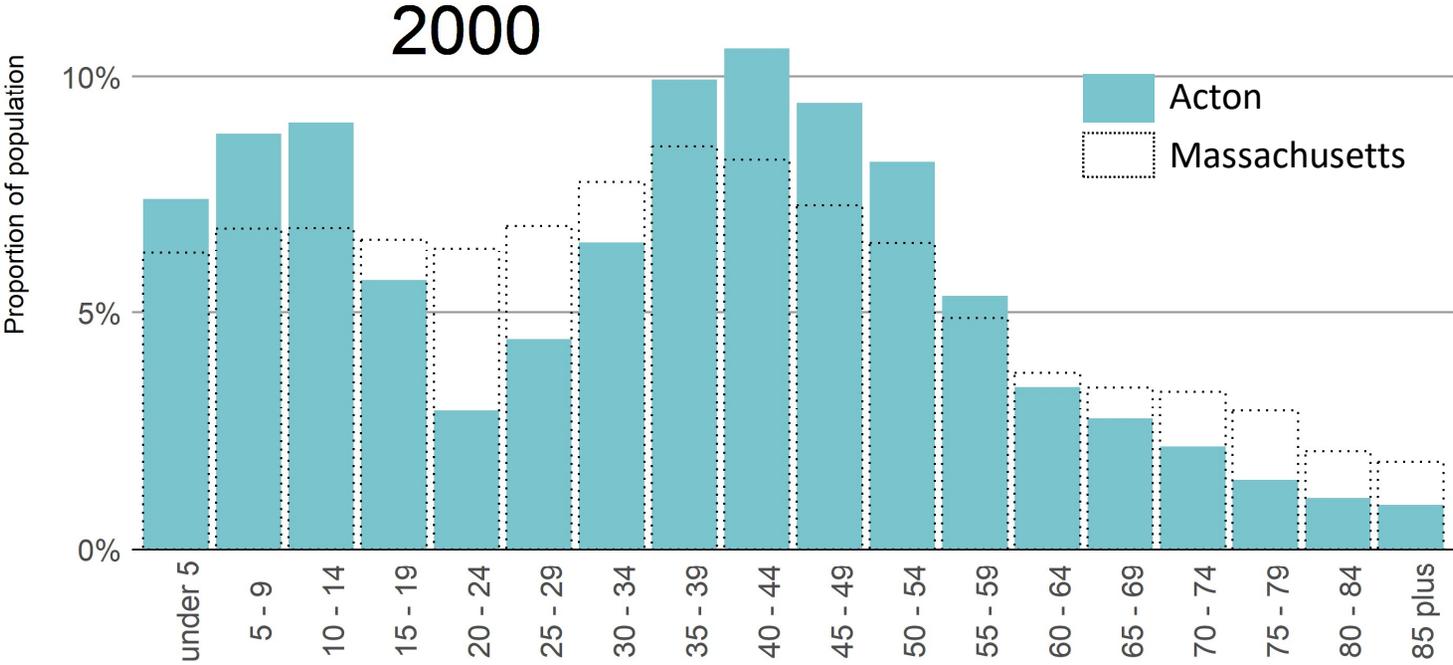
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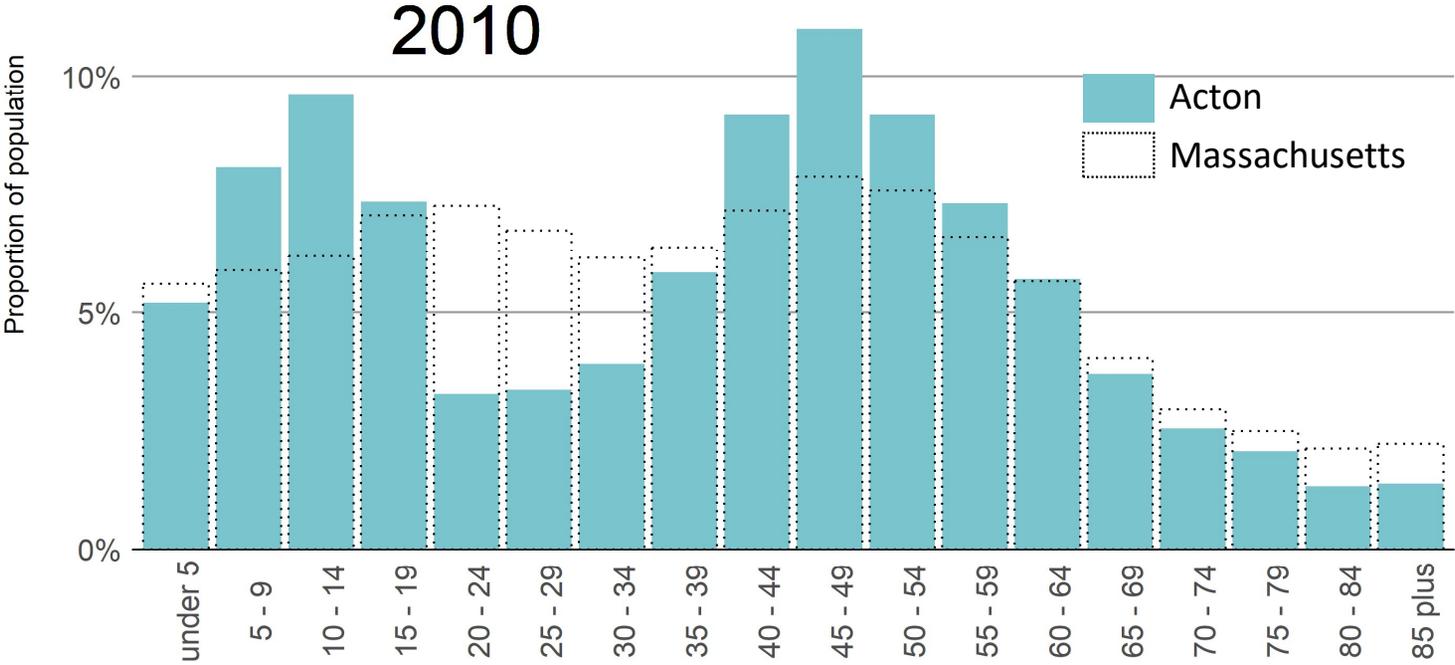
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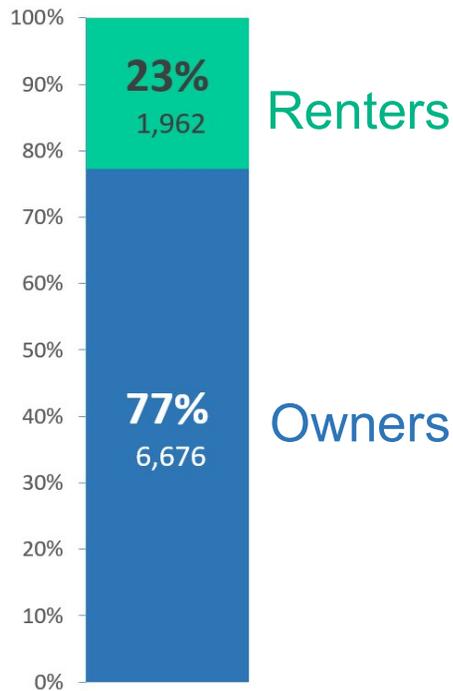


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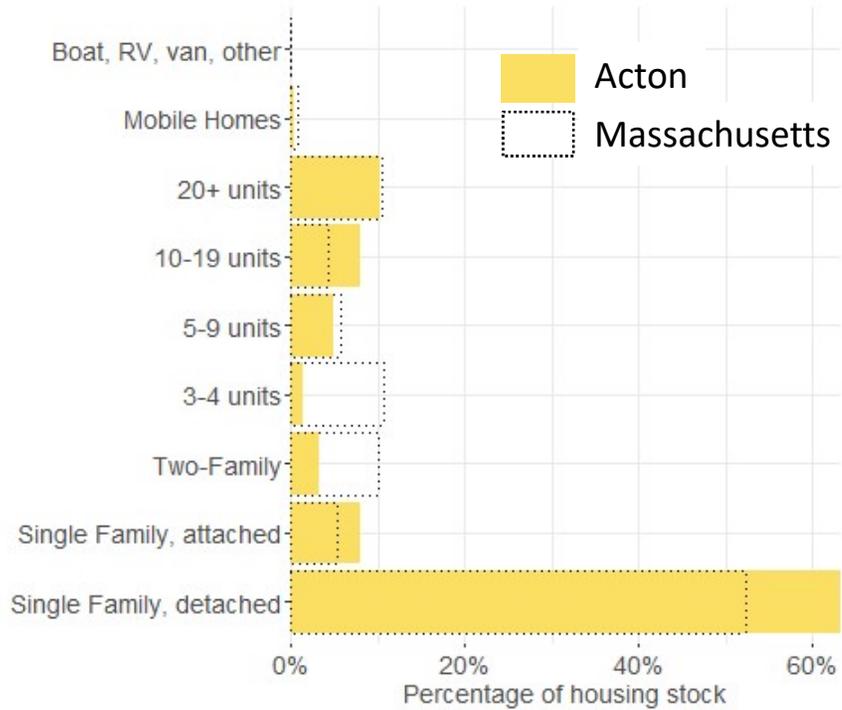


Owners dominate the population of our town

Households by tenure



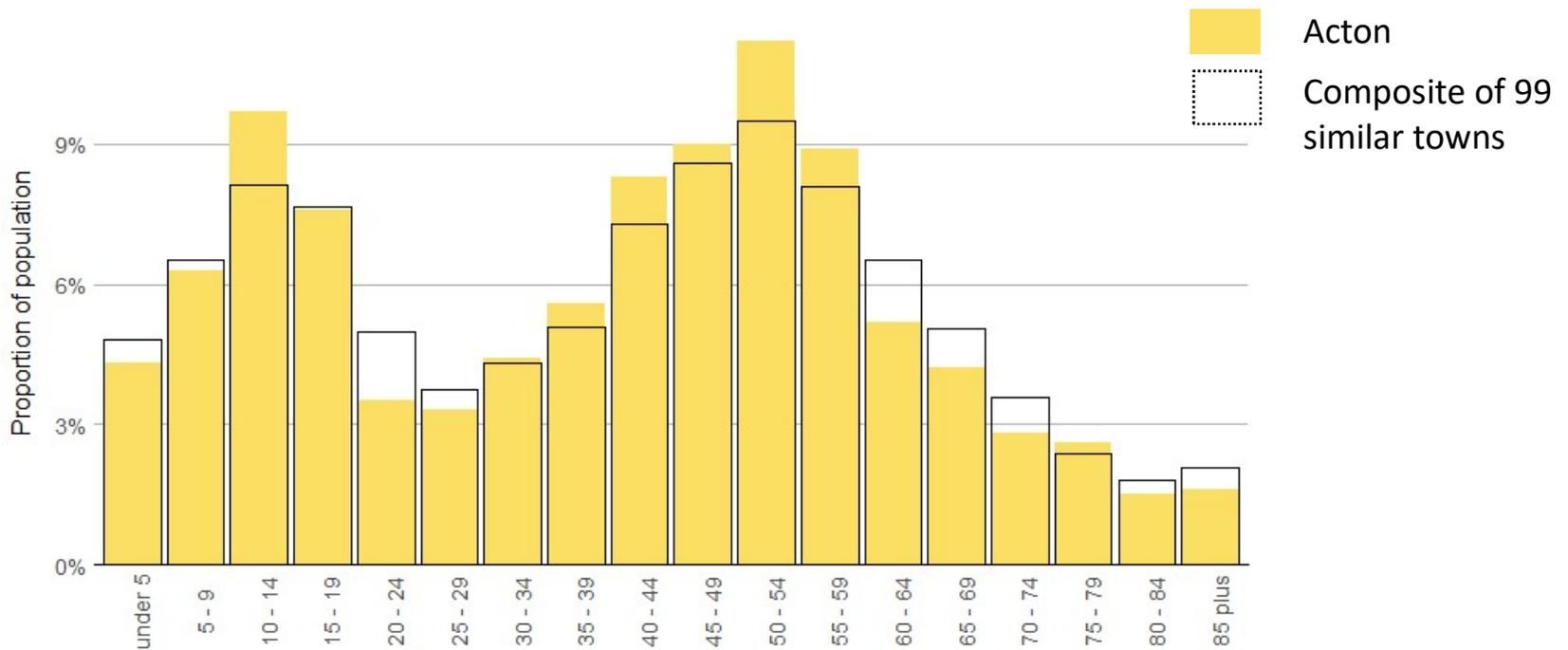
Housing units by building type



U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016, 5-year estimates



Are other towns in the same situation? Of course.



MHP analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2012-2016, 5-year estimates

MASSACHUSETTS HAS THE 6TH HIGHEST HOUSING WAGE IN THE U.S.

In **Massachusetts**, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment is **\$1,489**. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities — without paying more than 30% of income on housing — a household must earn **\$4,964** monthly or **\$59,571** annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 52 weeks per year, this level of income translates into an hourly Housing Wage of:

\$28.64
PER HOUR
STATE HOUSING
WAGE



Working at
minimum wage

\$11.00/hr



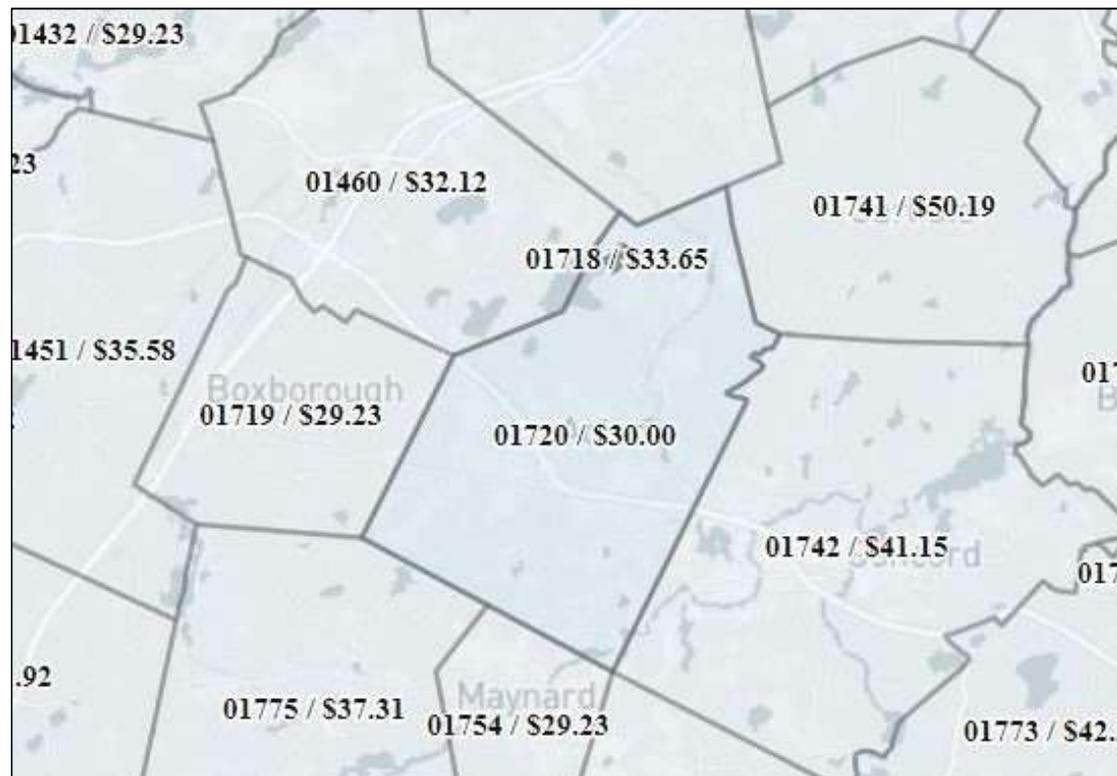
Each week you
have to work

84
HOURS!



To afford a modest
1 bedroom
rental home at
Fair Market Rent

TO AFFORD A TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT IN ACTON, YOU WOULD NEED TO EARN \$30.00 PER HOUR



Source: NLIHC Out Of Reach 2018 Report <http://nlihc.org/oor>

THE YOUNG ACTON HOME BUYER

YESTERDAY

TODAY

\$50,979*

18 – 34 year olds median income in Acton (1980)



\$55,279*

18 – 34 year olds median income in Acton (2013)

\$349,956*

Acton Median Home Price (1987)



\$520,000

Acton Median Home Price (2018)

43%

National % of Students Graduate with Debt



60%

National % of Students Graduate with Debt

\$13,863*

Average debt per student

\$29,268*

Average debt per student

All figures adjusted to 2018 dollars

Sources:
U.S. Census Bureau – “Young Adults Then and Now”
The Warren Group – TownStats
LendEDU – Current student debt stats
American Council on Education, Report on College Debts of Recent Graduates, 1987

*Adjusted to 2018 dollars using Bureau of Labor Statistics Inflation calculator

What do these facts mean for our future?

- As Acton's population grows, housing needs change.
 - Currently long-time residents do not find suitable options within the community.
 - Moderate cost housing is not available, therefore younger people can't or don't want to move in.
 - By not addressing the issue of housing affordability, long-term residents and seniors become the primary tax base. This is not sustainable.
 - The town must pursue housing strategies that provide the kind of housing that both young people and down-sizing adults both want. For example, higher density in town centers, walkable locations, near transit, and others.
- 

Acton Housing Authority

KELLEY CRONIN



ACTON
HOUSING
AUTHORITY
OWNS AND
MANAGES
160 UNITS

State Public Housing Inventory-140 Units

68 Windsor Avenue- 68 units of senior housing

1-2 Sachem Way- 23 units of senior housing

3-14 Sachem Way- 12 units of family housing

Scattered Site Condominiums- 25 units of family housing

Group Home- 12 units of supported housing for people with disabilities

ACTON
HOUSING
AUTHORITY
OWNS AND
MANAGES
160 UNITS

Local Initiative and Mixed Finance- 20 Units

Scattered Site Condominiums- 8 family units

15-26 Sachem Way- 12 family units

These 20 units were partially funded with
Community Preservation Funds

ACTON
HOUSING
AUTHORITY
175 HOUSING
CHOICE
VOUCHERS

Rental Subsidies

155 Federal Housing Choice Vouchers

20 State Alternate Housing Vouchers

The vouchers are used to subsidize the rent households pay to landlords in the private rental market

Households pay between 30% of their income towards rent and utilities and the Housing Authority pays the rest

Prior to subsidizing a unit, the unit is inspected to ensure it meets Housing Quality Standards and meets the fair market rent for the Town

All seniors housed were Acton residents

50% of all new seniors had a **Veterans** preference

25% of all new seniors previous housing could not accommodate their disability

All of our Federal Vouchers went to households who live or work in Acton

66% of all families were Acton residents

WHO DID WE
SERVE OVER THE
PAST TWO YEARS

ACTON HOUSING AUTHORITY WAITING LIST

UNIT TYPE	TOTAL APPLICANTS ON LIST	TOTAL LOCAL APPLICANTS	APPLICATION DATE FOR LOCAL TOP OF LIST
ONE BEDROOM OVER 60	126	69	3/22/2013
ONE BEDROOM UNDER 60 DISABLED	99	12	9/21/2010
TWO BEDROOM	368	15	8/6/2014
THREE BEDROOM	172	5	7/11/17
SECTION 8	180239	321	10/4/2013

MOST PRESSING LOCAL HOUSING NEED IS SENIOR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

The average wait for senior housing is almost 5 years

Last two years only assisted 8 new senior households with over 120 on the list

More than 50% of the senior units are on second or third floor with no elevators

To serve waiting list at current turnover rate will take over thirty years

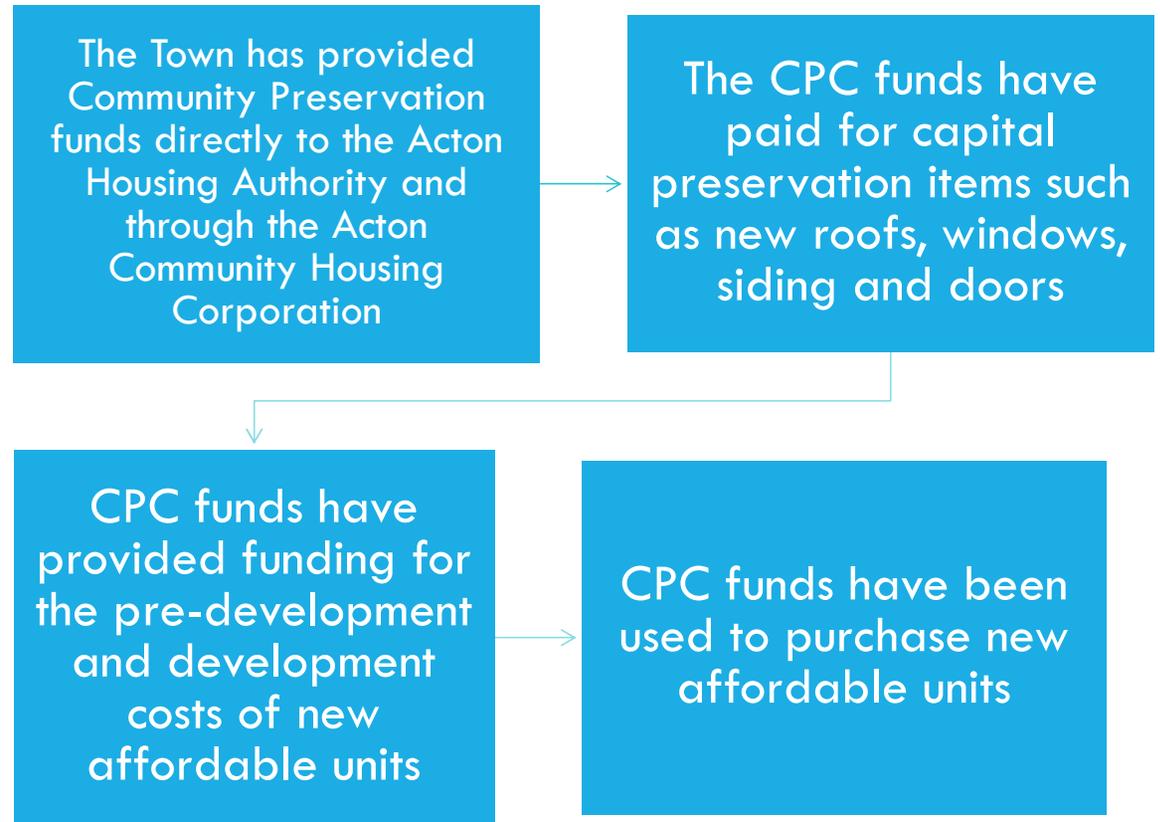
TOWN SUPPORT

The Town has provided Community Preservation funds directly to the Acton Housing Authority and through the Acton Community Housing Corporation

The CPC funds have paid for capital preservation items such as new roofs, windows, siding and doors

CPC funds have provided funding for the pre-development and development costs of new affordable units

CPC funds have been used to purchase new affordable units



INCOME LIMITS

1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person
\$56,800	\$64,900	\$73,000	\$81,100	\$87,600

FAIR MARKET RENT

BEDROOM SIZE	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom
Fair Market Rent	\$1,421	\$1,740	\$2,182

Acton Community Housing Corporation

NANCY TAVERNIER





Creating Community Housing

Acton Community Housing
Corporation (ACHC)

Who We Are

- ◆ Selectmen-appointed Town Board
- ◆ Facilitate affordable housing
- ◆ Guide developers
- ◆ Recommend to town boards
- ◆ Nancy Tavernier
- ◆ Bob Van Meter
- ◆ Jennifer Patenaude
- ◆ Lara Plaskon
- ◆ Bernice Baran
- ◆ Corrina Kreuze
- ◆ Dan Buckley

Affordable Housing Goals

- ◆ Mass. General Laws Chapter 40B
- ◆ State Goal: 10% all units = affordable
- ◆ Acton total housing units: 8500
- ◆ Acton percentage: 6.7% (574 units)

TOWN OF ACTON HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

Goals for Affordable Housing Production

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Preserve & Advance Affordable Housing
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Build Community Awareness
- ◆ **Goal 3:** Increase Town Capacity for Affordable Housing Production
- ◆ **Goal 4:** Target Affordable Housing to Appropriate Areas
- ◆ **Goal 5:** Adopt Zoning Changes to Allow for Housing Choices
- ◆ **Goal 6:** Address Unmet Housing Needs

What Is A Comprehensive Permit a.k.a. 40B?

- ◆ Streamlines development of affordable housing by overruling local zoning
- ◆ Allows multi-family housing, greater density
- ◆ Meets Wetlands Protection Act
- ◆ Meets local building codes
- ◆ Meets DEP Title V for wastewater disposal
- ◆ Granted variances to local bylaws

What Is Affordable Housing?

- ◆ Housing units with long-term deed restriction keeping it affordable
- ◆ Affordable price or rents for low or moderate income eligible households
- ◆ Unit counted toward 10% goal
- ◆ Affirmative fair marketing of units with lottery

Who Is Income Eligible?

- ◆ Working families with Household incomes \$45,000-\$78,000
- ◆ Household assets below \$75,000
- ◆ First time homebuyer, with exceptions
- ◆ Housing costs cannot exceed 38% gross monthly income
- ◆ Must qualify for fixed 30 year mortgage

Who Can Occupy Acton's Affordable Units?

- ◆ Local Preference given for 70% of affordable units
 - Town, school, water district employee
 - Employed privately in Acton
 - Current resident of Acton

What Is The Approval Process?

- ◆ Preliminary Plans developed by developer
- ◆ Consult with ACHC, Town staff, Town boards
- ◆ Public Information Session
- ◆ Presentation to Selectmen, ACHC for support letter
- ◆ MA DHCD or MassHousing approval
- ◆ File Final Plan with Town (ZBA) for approval of Comprehensive Permit

CURRENT HOUSING PROPOSALS

RESIDENCES AT KELLEY'S CORNER

- ◆ 31 1BR units for seniors age 62+ and eligible persons with disabilities
- ◆ Building fully accessible with elevator
- ◆ Easy access to Kelley's Corner goods and services
- ◆ All 31 units will count towards Acton's 10%



CURRENT HOUSING PROPOSALS

AVALON ACTON – NAGOG PARK

- ◆ 80-90 Upscale rental units, 2 & 3BR
- ◆ Located inside existing Avalon Acton rental project (296 units in Acton)
- ◆ Each unit has outside door and garage
- ◆ Hope to attract downsizing seniors
- ◆ High end finishes and amenities



Front Elevation

CURRENT HOUSING PROPOSALS PIPER LANE & SCHOOL STREET

- ◆ 40 attached Townhouses on 6 acres
- ◆ 2 and 3 BR units, 1400 sf
- ◆ Ownership units to first time homebuyers unless over 55
- ◆ 25% of units affordable and countable
- ◆ Walkable to commuter rail, SA center



CURRENT HOUSING PROPOSALS

APARTMENTS AT POWDER MILL

- ◆ 254 Rental Units On Acton-Maynard Line
- ◆ Mixture Of 1, 2, 3 Br Units, 25% Affordable
- ◆ 173 Units In Acton, 81 Units In Maynard
- ◆ Amenities: Club House, Pool, Fire Pit, Access To Trails, Dog Park, Dog Spa
- ◆ Friendly 40B, All Units count toward 10%



FRONT ELEVATION BUILDING B

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

- ◆ EXPAND ACCESSORY UNIT PROGRAM TO ALLOW DETACHED UNITS
- ◆ DIVIDE LARGE HOMES IN HISTORIC DISTRICT INTO SMALL APARTMENTS
- ◆ SUPPORT THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S EFFORTS ON MAIN ST., RIVER ST.
- ◆ ENCOURAGE ACCESSIBLE UNITS

Questions and Answers

- Please introduce yourself
 - Use brevity and respect time of other attendees
- 

Thank You!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

NANCY TAVERNIER, ACHC, ACHC@ACTON-MA.GOV

