

What is a “Pro-Housing” Community?

LOOKING AT THE NEXUS BETWEEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

OLD COLONY PLANNING COUNCIL

JULY 20, 2021



Three key opportunities for cities & towns

Leadership & Policy

Regulatory

Investments



“Pro-Housing” Policy Perspective

- Where is your City or Town Manager? Mayor or Select Board? Planning Board? Economic Development Commission?
- What does your City or Town Master Plan say about where to encourage mixed uses and higher-density housing? Has that plan been implemented? Has it produced affordable housing?
- Do your Economic Development Commission and Housing Trust or Partnership communicate? Ever?



“Pro-Housing” Policy Perspective

- Where is your community’s leadership for equity and affordable housing?
 - Housing insecurity is not evenly distributed across the population. It disproportionately affects people of color, older people, and those living on low incomes.
 - High-quality, stable housing is central to the health and well-being of families. It helps foster relationships and opportunities in communities, limits chronic stress, and reduces food insecurity.



Regulatory

- Inclusionary zoning ... do you have it, and what has it produced?
- Where do you encourage a mix of different types of housing?
- Do you allow multifamily units at a realistic density in your town center? Neighborhood commercial centers?
- If you have public transportation in your community, do you encourage a housing mix, including affordability, within walking distance?
- If you have a train station or commuter ferry, have you created a transit-oriented mixed-use district?



Regulatory

- Have you taken the time to study wage levels and housing prices in your community? What is the impact of housing costs on local workers? Where do they commute from?
- Have you talked to local workers? Local business owners (the business tenants, not just the property owners)?
- Do you have opportunities to use proven tools like Chapter 40R or Chapter 40B to increase your housing supply?
- What is the demographic make-up of your community? How does it compare to the region?
- Has your community done a racial impact study to evaluate whether current rules disproportionately affect Black people and people of color?



Investments

- What does your City or Town Master Plan, or any neighborhood plans, say about targeting development?
 - Where are your opportunity nodes?
 - Have you aligned your capital spending commitments with your planning goals?
- Is your capital plan a “sidebar” to the annual budget cycle, or does your Planning Department, Economic Development Commission, Housing Partnership, and Finance or Advisory Committee work together to develop your five-year capital plan? (Do you have a five-year capital plan?)
- Have you funded a full-time Economic Development Director? Municipal Housing Director?



Investments

- Does your Community Preservation Committee work closely with your Affordable Housing Trust? Does your community automatically transfer its CPA housing funds to the Affordable Housing Trust and let the AHT decide how best to invest those dollars?
- Does your City Council or Town Meeting make non-CPA resources available for affordable housing development?
- Has your community prepared a municipal land study and identified potential locations for affordable housing?
- Have you invested in a comprehensive housing strategy for your town?
- Does your community pay for training each year for your Planning Board, ZBA, other boards, and municipal staff?

