

Community Engagement and Narrative Change

CHAPA's Municipal Engagement Initiative





Massachusetts should always be a place where our communities nourish us and help us grow.



Right now, housing is the single best investment every community across the state can make to secure the future we all want and deserve.

What does CHAPA do?

Our mission is to encourage the production and preservation of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income families and individuals and to foster diverse and sustainable communities through planning and community development.



- **Advocate for Opportunity**
- **Expand Access to Housing**
- **Develop the Field**

Why is it so hard to create
more housing opportunities?





NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDERS: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis

Katherine Einstein, David Glick and Maxwell Palmer

- Compared with voters, commenters were disproportionately white, male, older, and homeowners.
- These trends persist in high- and low-cost cities, and contribute to an inadequate housing supply in highly desirable neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood defense in advantaged neighborhoods pushes development into less affluent communities, and may lead to potential displacement.

housingpolitics.com

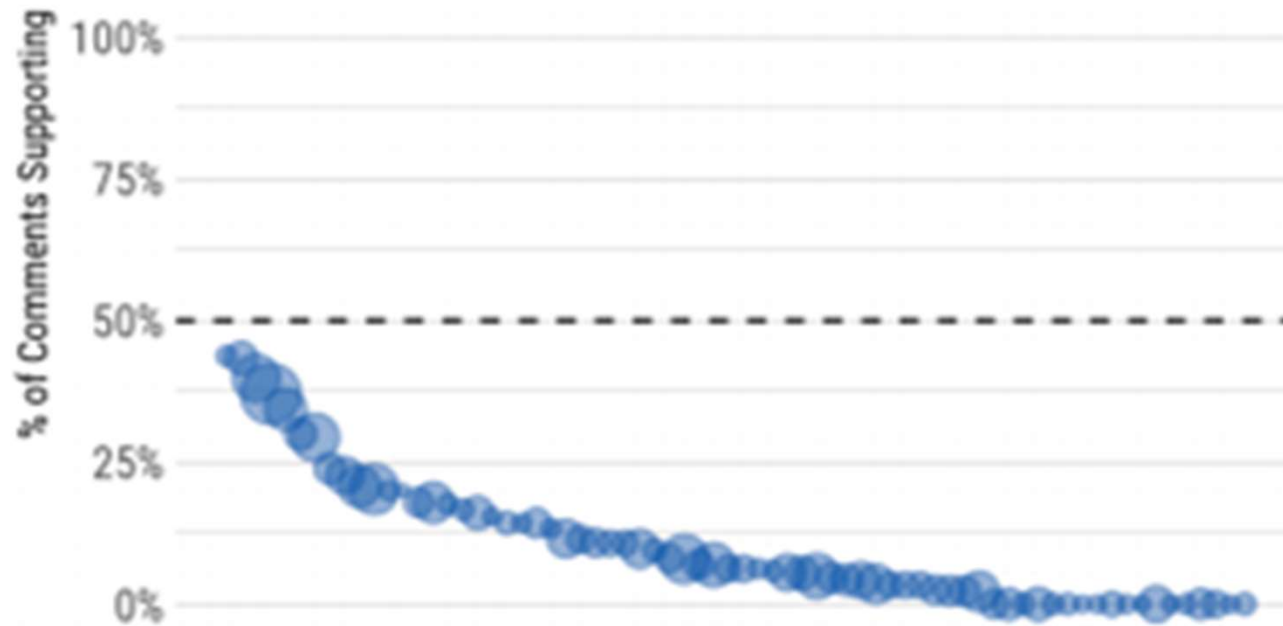
Differences Between Commenters & Voters

	Commenters	Voters	Diff.
Women	43.3%	51.3%	-8.0%
Whites	95.0%	86.7%	+8.2%
Age > 50	75.0%	52.6%	+22.4%
Homeowners	73.4%	45.6%	+27.8%

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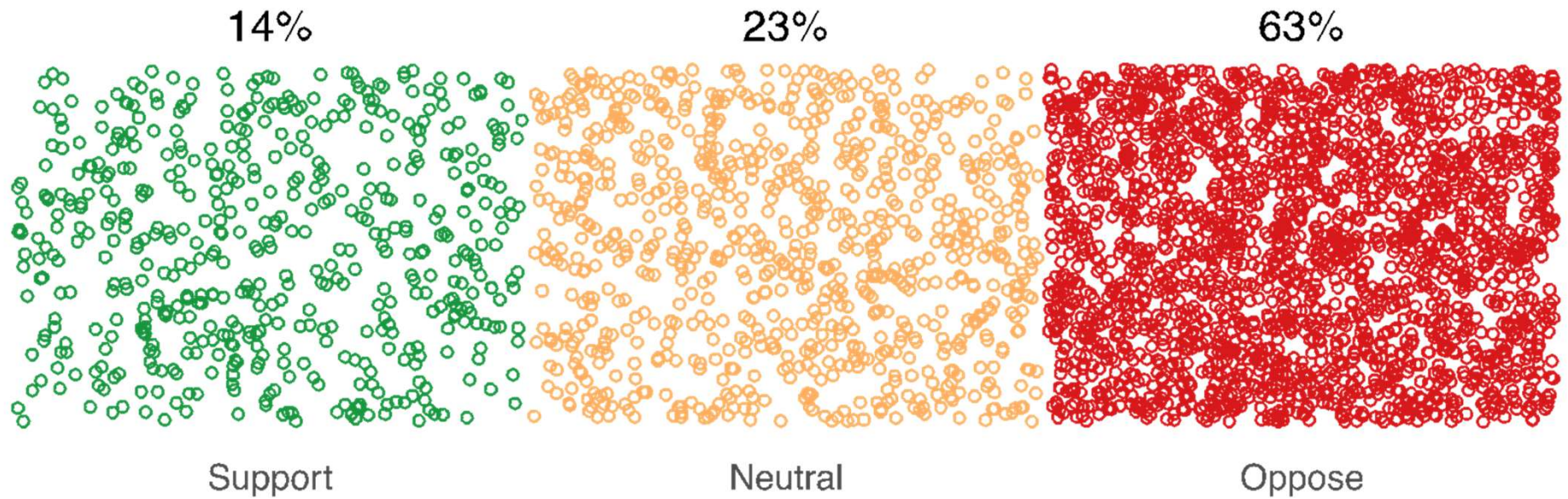


Majorities Oppose Multifamily Housing in Every Town



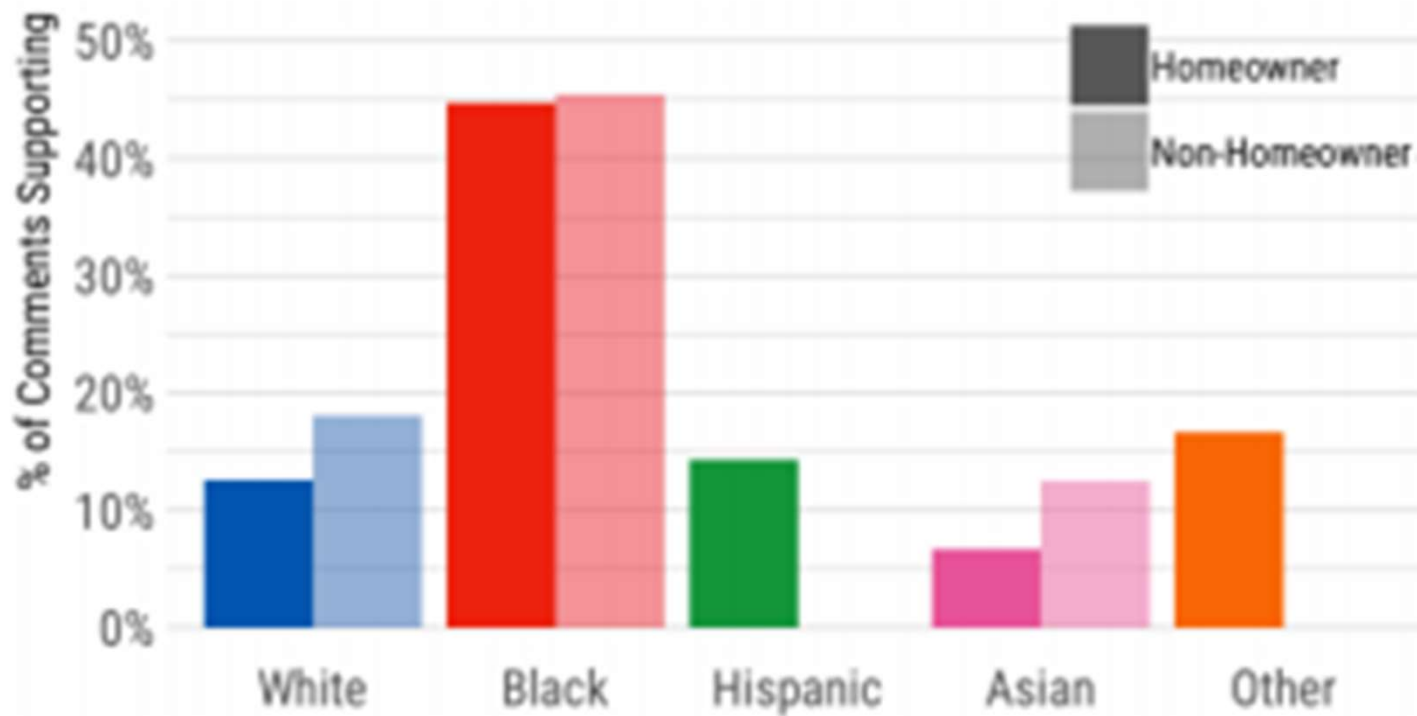
NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDERS: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis
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Public Meetings



NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDERS: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis
Katherine Einstein, David Glick and Maxwell Palmer

Differences in Support by Race and Homeownership

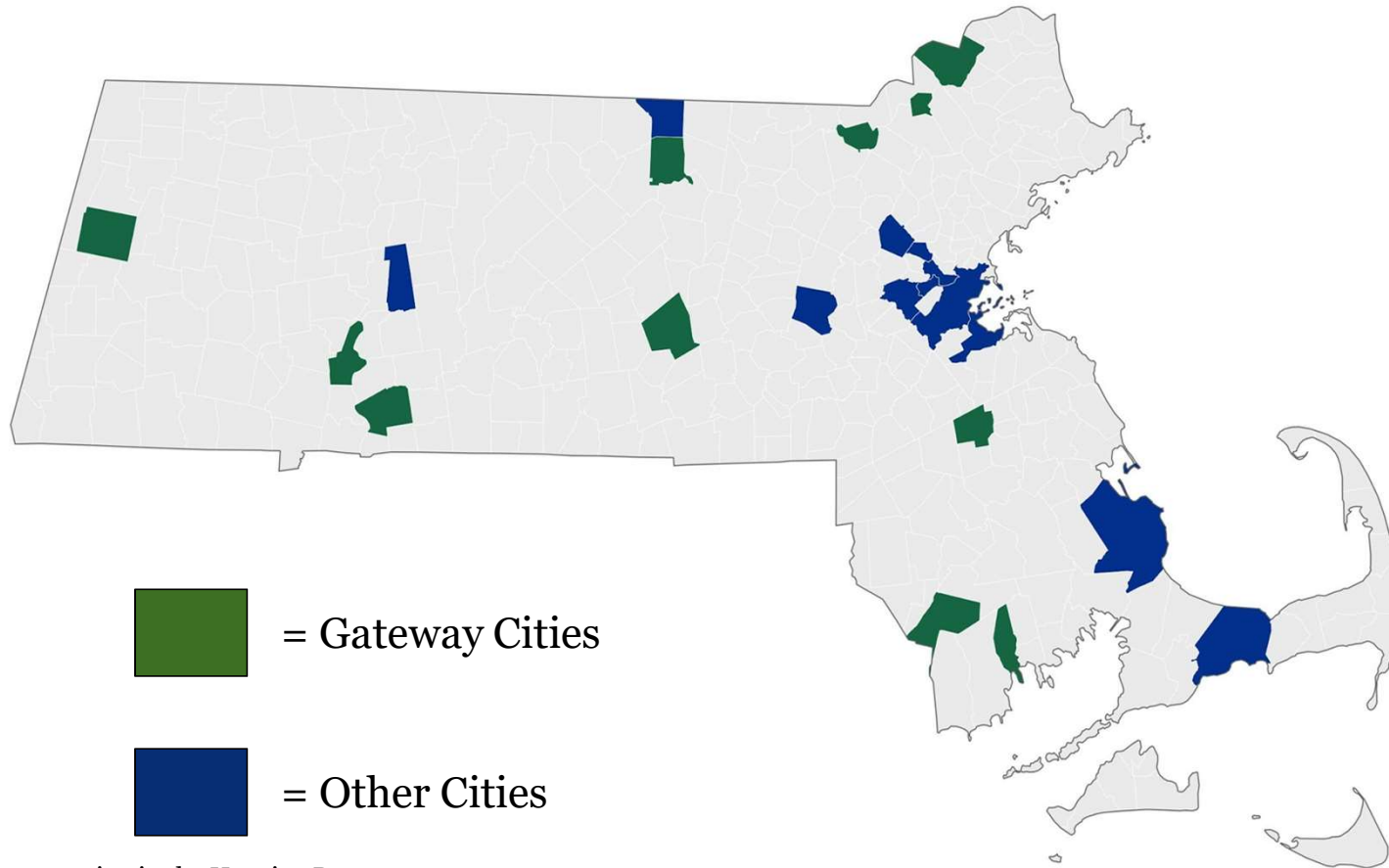


NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDERS: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis
Katherine Einstein, David Glick and Maxwell Palmer


Boards and Commissions

- Collected information on the names of 932 public officials across the following communities:
 - Gateway Cities: Brockton, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield, and Worcester
 - Other cities: Amherst, Arlington, Ashby, Barnstable, Boston, Cambridge, Framingham, Lexington, Newton, Plymouth, Quincy
- Match these officials with a commercial voter file to identify their race, sex, age, and homeownership status

Boards and Commissions

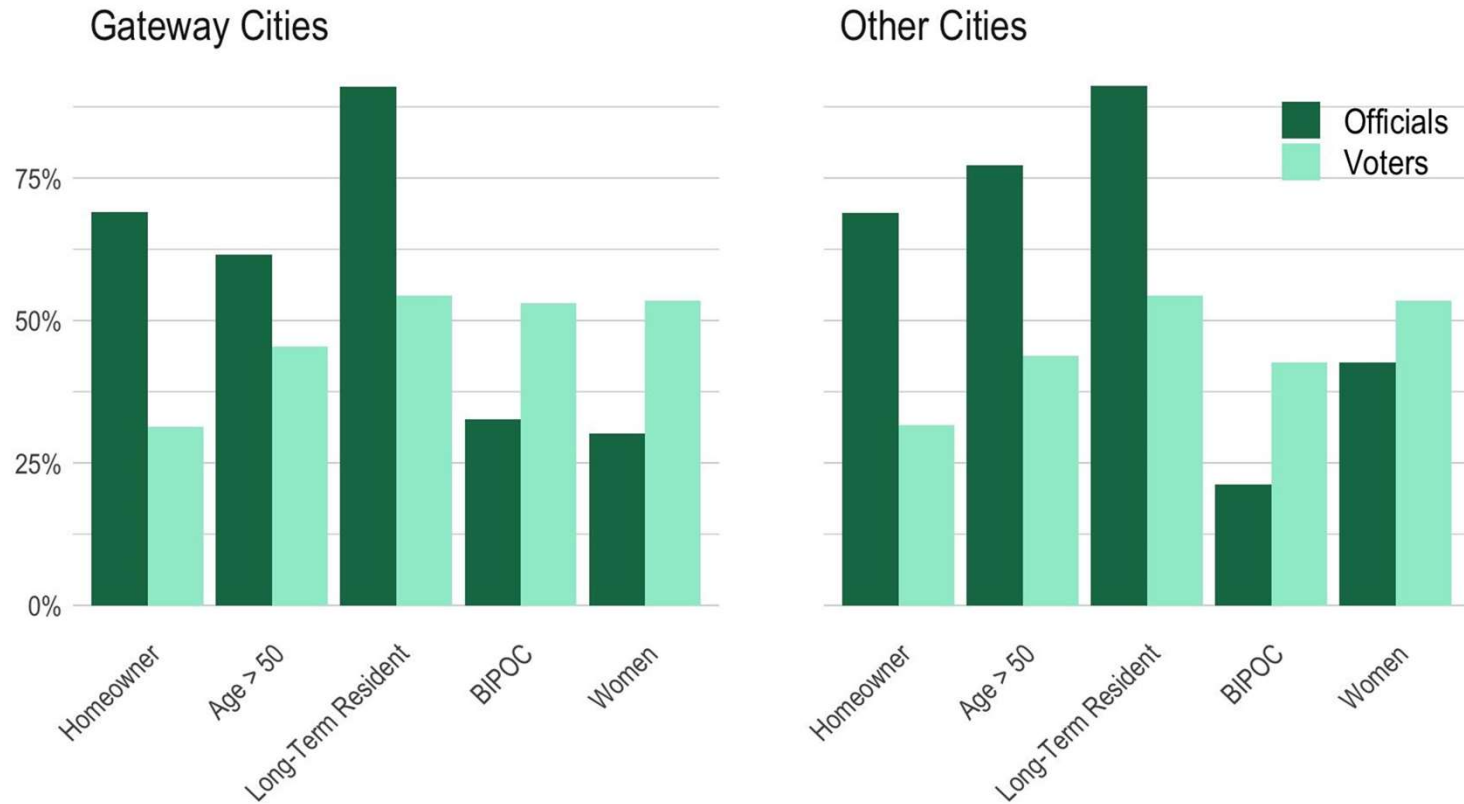


 = Gateway Cities

 = Other Cities

Representation in the Housing Process
Katherine Einstein and Maxwell Palmer

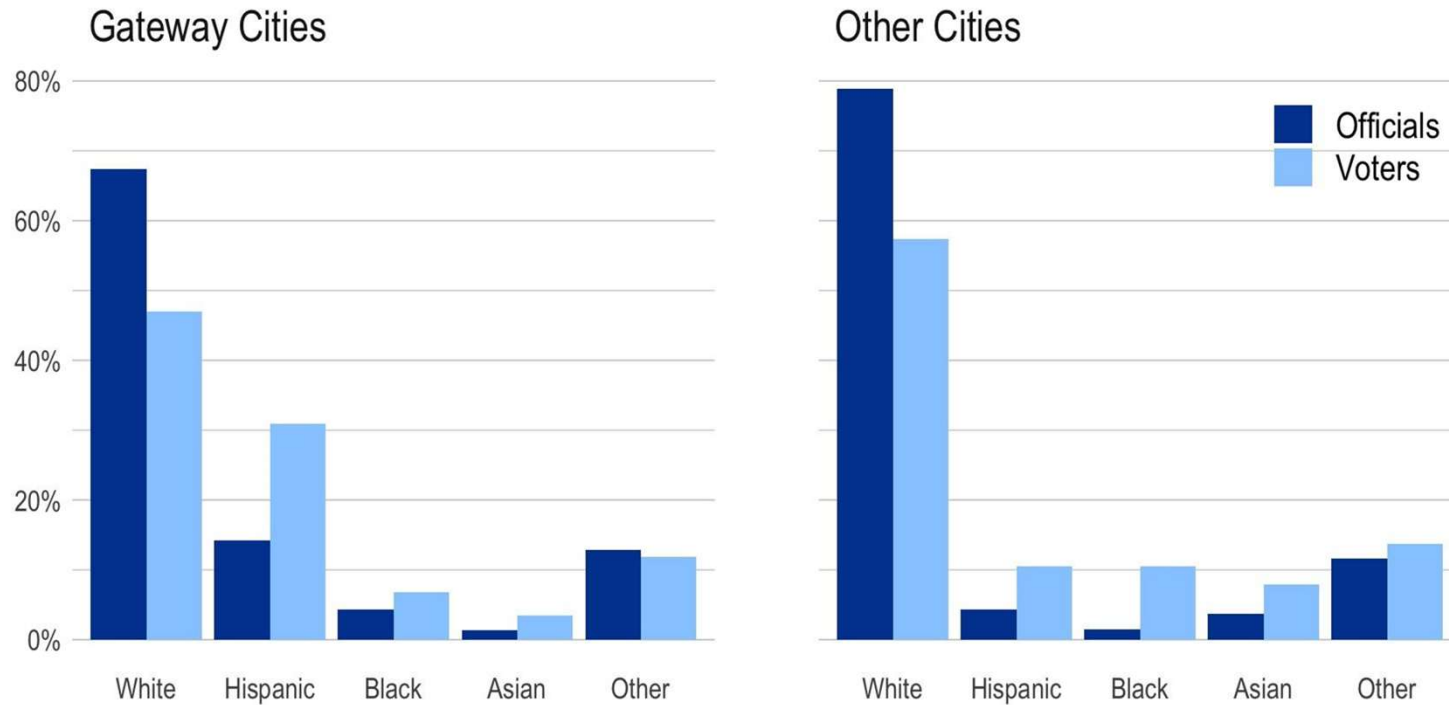
Boards and Commissions



Representation in the Housing Process
Katherine Einstein and Maxwell Palmer



Boards and Commissions



Representation in the Housing Process
Katherine Einstein and Maxwell Palmer



Community support can
make or break housing
development at local level,

BUT many communities
have no strategy or coalition
to build local support.



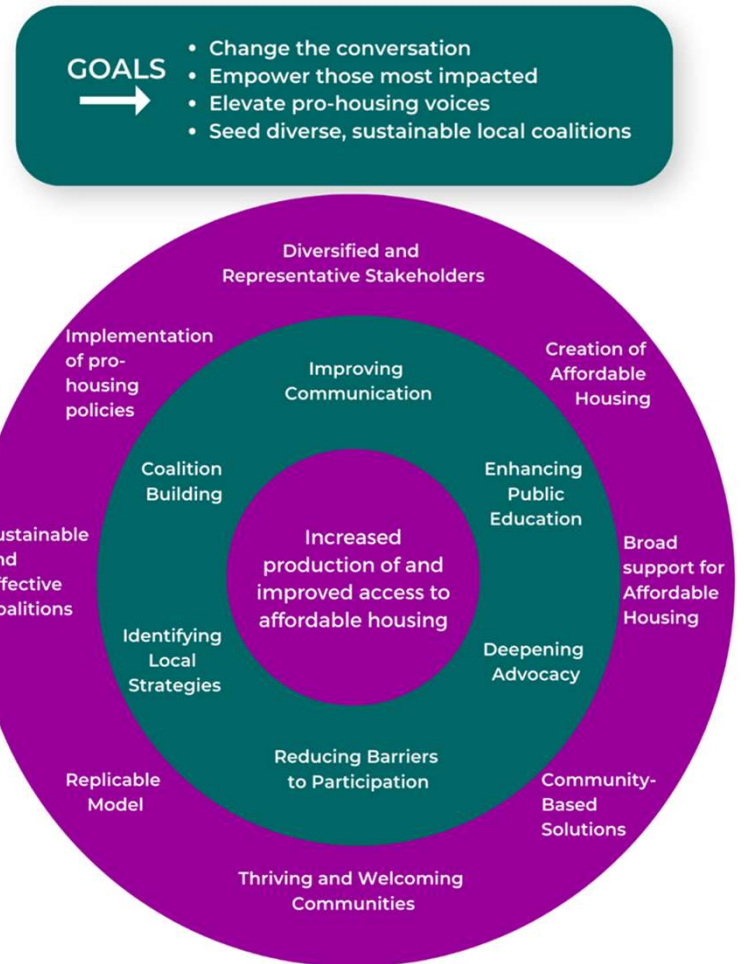
Municipal Engagement Initiative

Building support for affordable housing production in communities across the Commonwealth



Local Strategy

- **Supporting** the efforts in each community to build a culture that welcomes housing, including affordable housing.
- **Bolstering** efforts to expand housing opportunities in these communities.
- **Growing** the number of people supporting housing production in each community.
- **Shared and Collective Responsibility:** Our stakeholders see the resolution of this issue as inextricably connected to their own social and economic wellbeing



Building a Big Tent Coalition

- Municipal Staff
- Housing Advocates
- Housing Authority
- Planning Board
- Town/City Council Member
- Environmentalist Groups
- Religious Leaders
- School Representative
- Council on Aging
- Veterans Agency
- Transit Advocates
- Walk/Bike Advocates
- Commission on Disabilities
- Fair Housing groups
- Private Developers
- Non-profit housing developers
- Social Services
- Civic Groups (i.e. League of Women Voters)
- Interfaith Organizations
- Cultural Groups
- Residents (particularly active ones)
- Tenant Advocates
- Chamber of Commerce or other Business Leaders
- Racial Justice Advocates

Flexible Model for Unique Communities



Every community has their own unique challenges, opportunities, and cultural context. We never go into a community with a predetermined agenda.

Who is missing? Why?

- Underrepresented voices
- Who are the stakeholders? Who are the experts?
- Fair Housing lens to the approach
- Go beyond the minimum threshold to create a welcoming environment.
- Provide food, child care, translation, and stipends
- Consider the timing and format

What does success look like?



Municipal Engagement Initiative Toolkit



Pre-Launch

- Gather a Steering Group
- Develop your stakeholder list
- Pick a date and location for the launch
- Invite
 - Stakeholder List Option
 - Broad Community Invite Option
- Direct outreach to key stakeholders

Potential Key Stakeholders

You know your community better than anyone else. If there are others that are critical thought leaders, civic leaders, or people who get things done in your community, you should invite them to be at the table as well.

Launch Meeting Structure

- Welcome and framing of why we are all here
- Introductions of everyone's different roles/groups they represent
- Sharing Housing Data
- Identifying key barriers that folks view as keeping more affordable housing from being built in their community
- Identifying community concerns that the group will have to address in order to move an agenda forward
- Identifying opportunities and potential solutions
- Starting the conversation about next steps

Next Steps

- Immediate Communication and Summary
- Follow Up Meeting
 - Lifecycle of Housing
 - Who is Missing?
 - Shared Goals and Plans
- Set up communication channels
 - Google Group, Facebook, Linktree, etc.
- Take Action!
- Be Consistent
 - Regular meeting time and location

Strategic CaseMaking 101



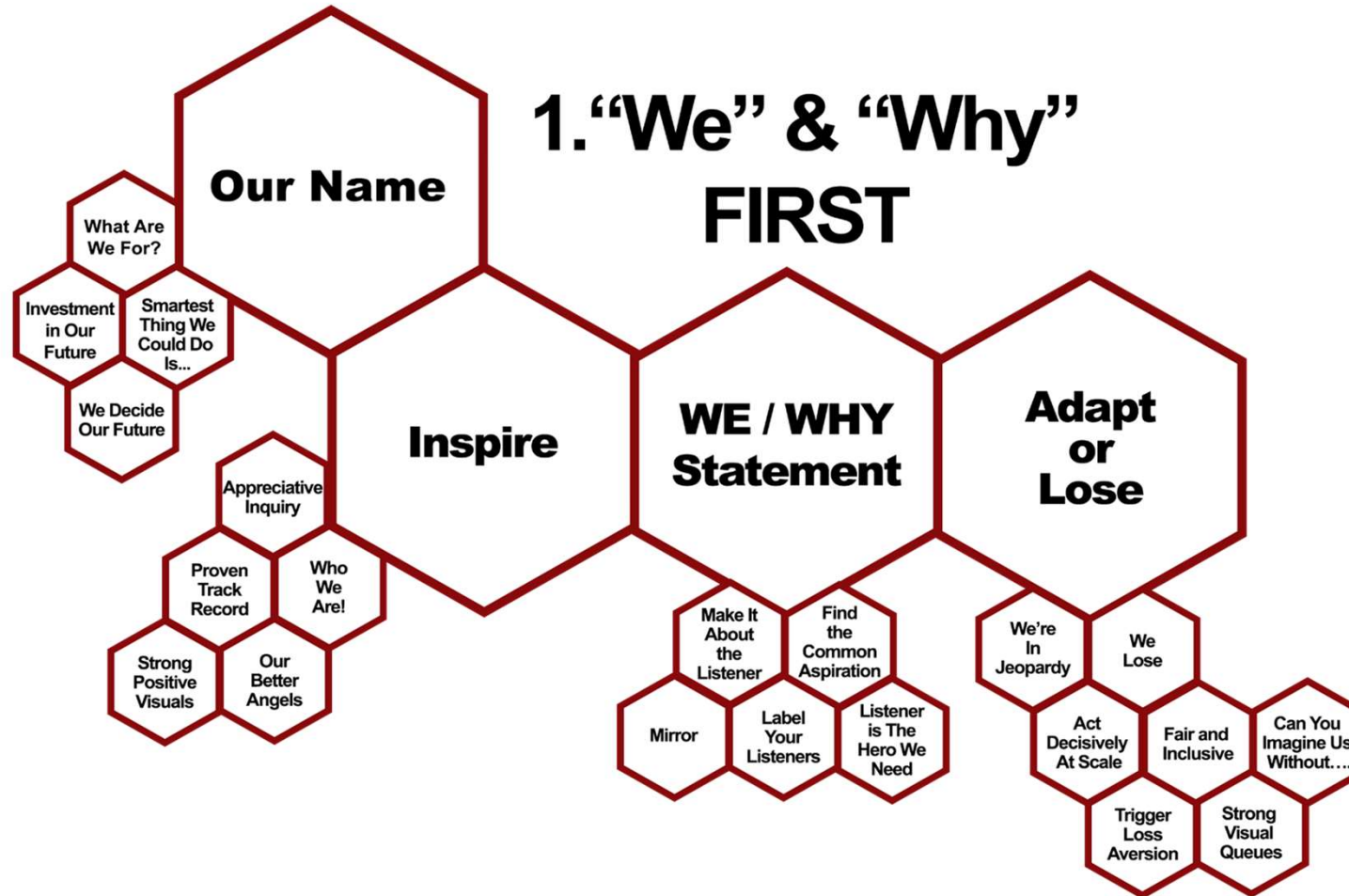


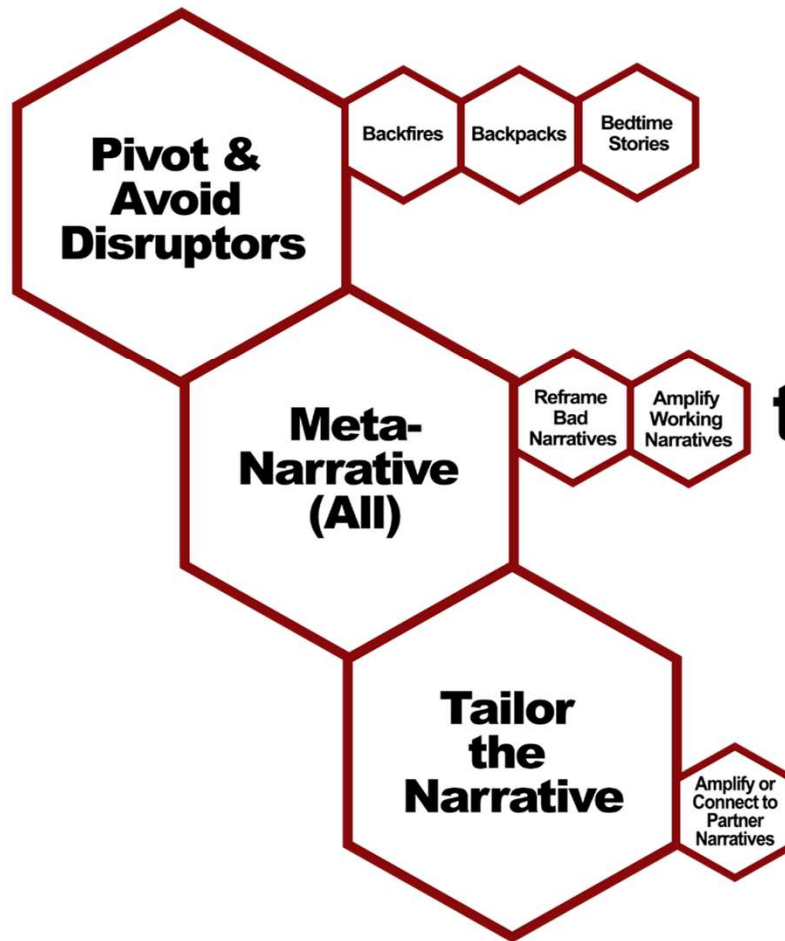
10 Core Principles of Strategic CaseMaking™

Public Will Building Requires Strong CaseMaking



1. "We" & "Why" FIRST





2. Navigate the Dominant Narratives

Make Your Own Case



Purpose

- Get all your advocates speaking the same language consistently
- Provide quick and easy examples for all of your advocacy channels
- Provide clarity on your values, goals, and action plan
- Centralized images and soundbites
- Ensure you are touching on all of the key casemaking principles in your local advocacy
- Reminder: [The CaseMade](#) and [The CaseMade Knowledge Center](#)

Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Be consistent
- Keep it focused and simple
- Set your own vision
- Make it clear why your group is best positioned to solve the problem
- Come up with your own metaphor
- Create concrete goals
- Be aspirational
- Practice! Practice! Practice!

DON'T

- Fall back on your old crisis messaging
- Get bogged down in every detail
- Repeat opposition narratives
- Worry if this language feels weird to start
- Simply copy and paste others words/message
- Jump to solutions before making your case

Getting Started

- Think about your community's aspirations
- What are you best known for?
- What do people think of when they think of your community?
- What have you excelled at?
- What are you proud of?

Examples: We have the best schools, we have a rich history, we have always valued diversity, we were the first to...

CHAPA: In Massachusetts, we have historically been leaders and we know we can do this in housing too.

Set Concrete Goals

- Make sure they connect back to your values statement or mission
- Be aspirational but practical
- Try to set a number (units, affordable units, bills passed, new homeowners, increase in % of affordable units) so you can tie success back to it
- Keep it short and sweet

CHAPA: 200,000 Affordable Homes in Thriving Communities By 2030
Achieved via Planning, Preservation, Production and People (our four pillars)
Set Milestones leading up to 2030

Use Data to Your Benefit

- [DataTown](#)
- [NLIHC Out of Reach Report](#)
- Local Housing Needs Assessment
- Housing Production Plan
- Master Plan
- [National Housing Conference Paycheck to Paycheck](#)
- Fair Housing Plans and Analysis of Impediments

CHAPA: Income vs. Rent Gap for various occupations, Economic benefit of affordable housing production, Studies showing affordability as a top concern of residents

Images

- Make them locally specific – images people will instantly recognize
- Tap into people’s aspirations for the future and what they currently love
- Show images of people you want to work with and what you want your community to look like
- Don’t use crisis imagery or images that other people you are trying to help

CHAPA: Triple-deckers, affordable housing development next to playgrounds, diversity, families in their home

How to Use It

- Test it out among allies first and get feedback
- Pick and choose best pieces based on your audience and method of communicating
- Use metaphor and language consistently in all communication
- Reiterate your goal in all messaging
- Always utilize CaseMaking principles when offering solutions

CHAPA: “We need to create 200,000 more homes across income levels by 2030 to keep up with demand and so people have affordable options in communities of their choice. A diverse mix of homes in every part of Massachusetts plants the seeds of our long-term success.”

CaseMaking 101



Step 1: Set the Stage

- What makes your community great?
- Who are you as a community?
- Why do we know we can do this hard thing?
- Introduce metaphor

CaseMaking Principles: Story of Us, Collective Responsibility, Connect to Aspirations

Step 2: Why Now?

- Why now?
- What do we stand to lose from inaction?
- Lean into metaphor

CaseMaking Principles: Story of Us, What People will Lose, Collective Responsibility

Step 3: Why Our Solution?

- This is where your key message begins
- Use language that is clear and easily repeatable
- Make the system the villain, not specific people
- Housing and zoning changes are the solution – think about what would resonate in your community
- Continue to build up your metaphor

CaseMaking Principles: Navigate Dominant Narrative, Anchor and Credential Solutions, Make Systems the Villain

Step 4: Anchor Your solutions

- Introduce Data to bolster your solution
- Help people understand who will benefit
- Quotes from respected leaders/stakeholders who believe in your solutions (always get their permission first!)
- Show that trusted people in your community trust YOU
- Show that the need has been established, named and identified through studies, data, and leaders

CaseMaking Principles: Anchor and Credential Solutions, Make Systems the Villain, Foster Collective Responsibility

Step 5: Power of the Moment

- Start to introduce solution details
- Why are you the group that can help?
- How can this moment be the catalyst for future efforts?

CaseMaking Principles: Name the Power of the Moment to Affect the Future, Anchor and Credential Solutions

Step 6: Goals

- Introduce the goal of your work
- Use concrete numbers if you can
- Why your group? – what is unique about how you can help
 - Lived experience, Broad Stakeholders, Past victories, Mission
- Show contrast between what you propose vs. old way/status quo

CaseMaking Principles: Share Your Roadmap and Metrics for Success,
Reimagine Your Value Proposition, Connect to People's Aspirations

Step 7: Action Plan

- Provide detail on how you plan to achieve your goals
- Set milestones if possible
- Resist urge to jump straight to this – all the work up to now was getting audience on your road, so now you can give them the what and how of your solution

CaseMaking Principles: Share Your Roadmap and Metrics for Success

Checklist

- ❑ Did you provide a clear and concise vision?
- ❑ Did you hit on key casemaking principles?
- ❑ Did you lead with casemaking, not opposition narratives?
- ❑ Do you have a strong metaphor?
- ❑ Did you provide data to support your case?
- ❑ Do you propose a concrete goal and subsequent action plan?
- ❑ Do your images evoke what you want?
- ❑ Were you consistent with language throughout?
- ❑ When testing it out, does it resonate?

Coalition Success Examples





Amherst Affordable Housing Coalition

**I support
affordable
housing.**

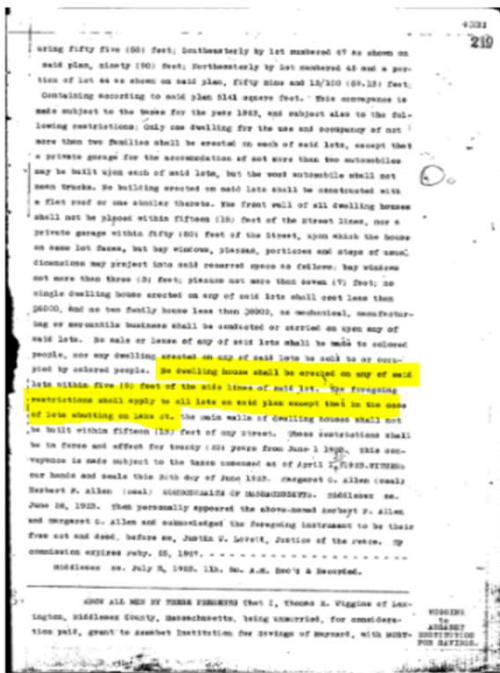


Equitable Arlington

Arlington residents for more Arlington residents

Restrictive Covenants on the old Allen Farm

Here's page 219. The racial covenant appears halfway down the page. It reads "No sale or lease of any said lots shall be made to colored people, no any dwelling on any said lots be sold or occupied by colored people".



Town's proposed housing affordability zoning changes make good sense

Town's proposed housing affordability zoning changes make good sense

It has been a joy to raise a family in Arlington. These past 15 years, my two kids went to Thompson, Otisson and Arlington High School. As they head off to college, I find myself thinking about how other young families can have the same experience in this wonderful community.

Some things have changed over the years. There is more awareness of climate change now than there was even 15 years ago; housing prices are much higher; and income inequality continues to worsen.

For young working people today, if they are not independently wealthy, it is difficult to follow the same path that my wife and I followed. Many young people rent or own apartments for more years before buying a house. To reduce their carbon footprint, more young people take the bus, T, or bike path to work.

I hope our town can make some reasonable changes with the times. I read in the Arlington Advocate about the new zoning proposal from Arlington's Department of Planning and Community Development, and I attended two of the public meetings. These proposals look great. I listened carefully to the concerns of people around me about higher density, and transportation, but it seemed that the town's community development folks had balanced these issues carefully. Just for example, the zoning changes require developers to have at least one parking space per unit. In a time of climate change, when we are trying to support public transportation, I wouldn't want the town to force developers to have two parking spaces per unit.

I know not everybody wants changes, but, to me, these changes seem adapted to the times, preserving what my wife and I most treasured raising our own family in Arlington. I feel a deep gratitude for the teachers, nurses and health care aides, retail workers, and hundreds of other people with modest incomes who make Arlington terrific. We should never pull the ladder up behind us ourselves.

For housing affordability, for the climate, and for allowing everybody who works in Arlington to have a home here, I hope the Arlington community members find it in their hearts to support these zoning proposals.

— Parke Wilde, Amherst Street



HO using
ME dford



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Debrief and Next Steps for Housing Medford

20

THURSDAY, 20 MAY 2021 FROM 18:30 EDT-20:00 EDT

Housing Medford: Community Conversations Debrief and Next Steps

Online event

Event Ended

Housing for All in Acton



Housing for All Urges Your Support for an Inclusive Acton

Vote Yes on Articles 11, 13 and 30

Housing for All is newly formed housing advocacy coalition in Acton. Housing for All believes that Acton can and should be an inclusive community with housing options to meet the needs of people of different incomes, abilities, household types, and stages of life.

We ask your support for the following warrant articles at Acton Town Meeting spring 2019.

Article 11: Community Preservation Program.

Specifically, we urge support for Items E1 and E2 and Item F to support affordable housing in Acton.

Item E1 and E2 support the work of the Acton Community Housing Corporation to enable low income home ownership initiatives and support non- profit affordable housing development efforts.

Item F supports the maintenance of existing Acton Housing Authority units.



Having enough homes is fundamental
to strong, inclusive communities.

**Newton does not have
enough homes.**

BREAKING:
NEWTON VOTES
YES 
for
NEWTON'S FUTURE

"Thank you to the thousands of Newton residents who voted in favor of bringing affordable housing, new open space, sustainable design, and smart growth to our city. The Northland Newton project is a huge win both for current residents and for future neighbors who will now have the opportunity to join our community. We are grateful to the hundreds of volunteers who worked tirelessly to inform voters, and to the civic organizations and city leaders who supported and shaped the Northland project over the past several years. We look forward to seeing the Northland project and all of its benefits come to fruition."

– Allison Sharma, chair of Yes for Newton's Future

Shirley Avenue Cultural Event with Revere Housing Coalition table



Coalition Members showing their support for Inclusionary Zoning



Lynn Candidate Questionnaire Social Media Posts



facebook.com/lynnhousingcoalition

When it comes to making Lynn
a safe and affordable place to live,
do you know where the candidates stand?

Mayor
Councilor-At-Large
Ward Councilor

Check out our
Candidate Housing Questionnaire
and find out for yourself!

Learn more about us: linktr.ee/lynnhousingcoalition



facebook.com/lynnhousingcoalition

Cuándo se trata de hacer de Lynn un lugar
seguro y asequible para vivir, ¿sabe dónde
están los candidatos?

Alcalde
Concejal en general
Concejal

¡Echa un vistazo a nuestro
Cuestionario Vivienda de Candidato
y descubre por sí mismo!

Aprender más sobre nosotros a: linktr.ee/lynnhousingcoalition

Housing Lynn Plan Petition

Support adoption of the Housing Lynn Plan / Apoyar la adopción del plan de Housing Lynn



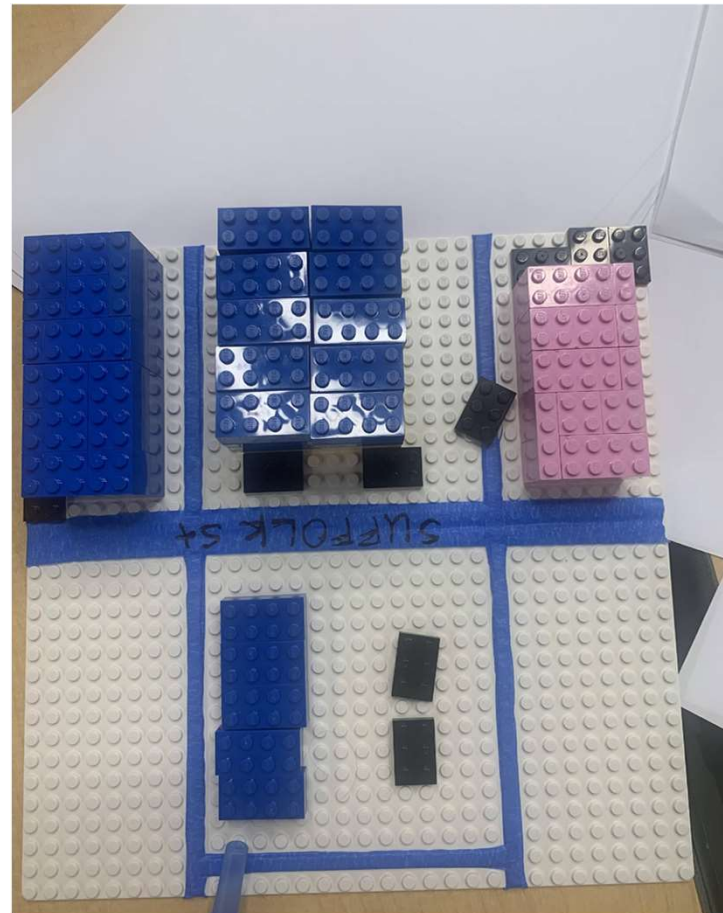
125 have signed. Let's get to 200!



At 200 signatures, this petition is more likely to be **featured in recommendations!**



Chelsea residents using Legos to build out a site with their vision versus what zoning allows



Childcare at Chelsea events allowed parents to fully participate



Andover in-person meeting, August 2022



Lessons Learned



Lessons Learned

- Every community is unique
- Make space for joy and connection
- Stipend leadership roles are critical
- It's never too early to start and it's never too late to join
- Never stop asking, 'Who is missing?'
- Don't be afraid to change the narrative
- Peer to peer learning is vital

Challenges

- Role of Municipality
- Momentum and Fatigue
- Invitation versus Open
- Increased opposition
- Conflicting immediate community concerns (BLM, Health Crisis, unemployment, political climate)



Who is missing? Why?

- Underrepresented voices
- Who are the stakeholders? Who are the experts?
- Fair Housing lens to the approach
- Go beyond the minimum threshold to create a welcoming environment.
- Provide food, child care, translation, and stipends
- Consider the timing and format

What can I do now?



What can I do in the meantime?

- Dig into local housing data
- Listen to people with deepest affordability concerns in your community
- Meet with your local planners and elected officials to better understand climate
- Push back against myths, exclusionary language, and unfounded concerns
- Host an educational forum in your community
- Show up to public meetings and speak up for more housing and more affordability

Next steps

- [MEI Lite Toolkit](#)
- [MEI Office Hours](#)
- [Monthly Making the Case Calls](#)
- [Affordable Housing 101 sessions](#)
- [Confronting the History of Housing Discrimination](#)
- CaseMaking Guide
- [Join a CHAPA Committee](#)
- [Tell Us Where You Live!](#)

CHANGE HAPPENS WHEN COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER

Questions?

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