



Housing Choice Initiative

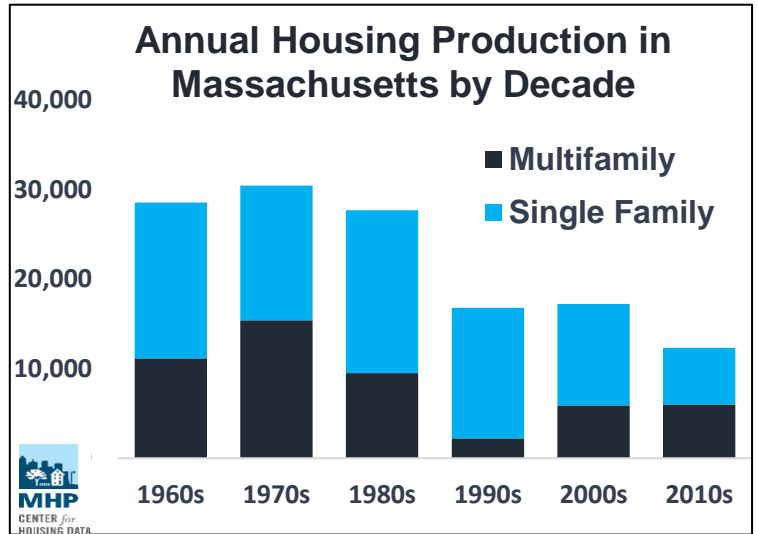
www.mass.gov/housingchoice

NEED FOR MORE HOUSING

Massachusetts home prices have increased at the fastest rate in the nation, and metropolitan Boston rent prices rank among the highest in the country. **The Commonwealth must add to its housing stock to support a growing economy and provide new housing choices.**

But we can't do it alone: municipalities have control over local zoning and permitting, and they must be partners if the Commonwealth is to successfully overcome these housing challenges. Cities and towns should be encouraged to adopt best practices and zoning that supports sustainable housing production.

The Housing Choice Initiative provides incentives, rewards, technical assistance and targeted legislative reform to encourage and empower municipalities to plan and build the diverse housing stock that the Commonwealth needs to continue to thrive.



HOUSING CHOICE DESIGNATION

A Housing Choice Designation rewards communities that are producing new housing and have adopted best practices to promote sustainable housing development. Housing Choice designation provides:



Exclusive admission to new **Housing Choice Capital Grants**, Housing Choice Communities will be eligible for a major new capital grant program.

Priority access to many Commonwealth grant and capital funding programs such as MassWorks, Complete Streets, MassDOT capital projects, and LAND and PARC grants.

NEW AND BETTER COORDINATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

To assist municipalities to achieve Housing Choice status, DHCD's Housing Choice Program Director will coordinate existing technical assistance and provide "one-stop shopping" for information about **technical assistance grants** for local governments. In addition, MassHousing will provide **\$2 million** in planning assistance to help cities and towns achieve their affordable housing goals under Chapter 40B through its new "Planning for Production" program.

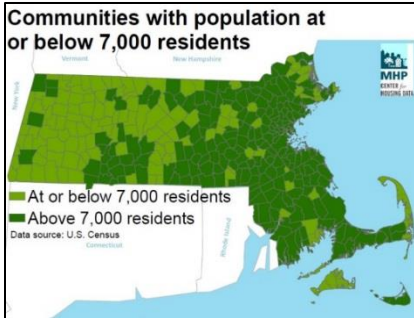




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SMALL TOWN PROGRAM

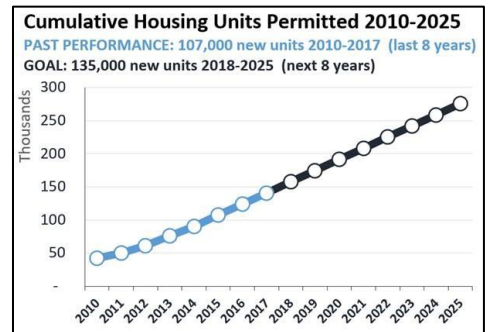


Recognizing that small towns face different challenges, the Housing Choice Initiative will set aside funding for a competitive capital grant program exclusively for towns with population under 7,000. **\$1 million** in capital grant monies are expected to be available in the first year, to grow thereafter. Small Towns can also apply for Housing Choice Designation.

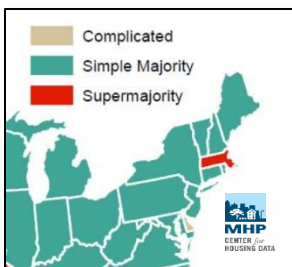
TRACK PROGRESS TOWARD THE HOUSING GOAL

The Housing Choice Initiative will track progress toward a goal of **135,000 new housing units statewide by 2025**, or about 17,000 new units per year.

- This goal requires sustaining the level of production over the last three years
- Represents a 26 percent increase in housing production compared to the last eight years
- Keeps pace with projected increases in housing demand
- Closely aligned with the housing production goals required for designation as a Housing Choice community



LEGISLATION – AN ACT TO PROMOTE HOUSING CHOICES



The Administration will file **An Act to Promote Housing Choices**, to facilitate housing production and adoption of zoning best practices. It eliminates barriers to building new housing and improving land use without mandating that cities and towns adopt any specific zoning practices. The Act will change state law **to reduce the required vote from 2/3 “supermajority” to a simple majority for certain zoning changes**. This change makes Massachusetts more consistent with current practice in most states. Zoning changes that promote best practices that would qualify for the simple majority threshold include:

- Building mixed-use, multi-family, and starter homes, and adopting 40R “Smart Growth” zoning in town centers and near transit
- Clustering new homes to permanently preserve open space and protect natural resources
- Reducing parking requirements and dimensional requirements such as minimum lot sizes
- Allowing for transfer of development rights (TDR) zoning and natural resource protection zoning
- Allowing for increased density through a Special Permit process, promoting more flexible development
- Allowing accessory dwelling units or “in-law” apartments