



A Practical Guide to Affordable Housing: Separating Fact from Fiction

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About CHAPA

CHAPA's 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.

What Does CHAPA Do?




Advocate for
Opportunity



Expand Access
to Housing



Develop the
Field



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.

A diverse mix of homes in every part of Massachusetts plants the seeds of our long-term success:

- Protects our environment
- Improves our overall health
- Improves the quality of our childrens' education
- Strengthens our economy
- Builds wealth for everyone



Why is it so hard?





NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDERS: Participatory Politics and America's Housing Crisis

Katherine Einstein, David Glick and Maxwell Palmer

- People who show up to public meetings are unrepresentative of their community as a whole
- 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, leading to gentrification and displacement.

housingpolitics.com

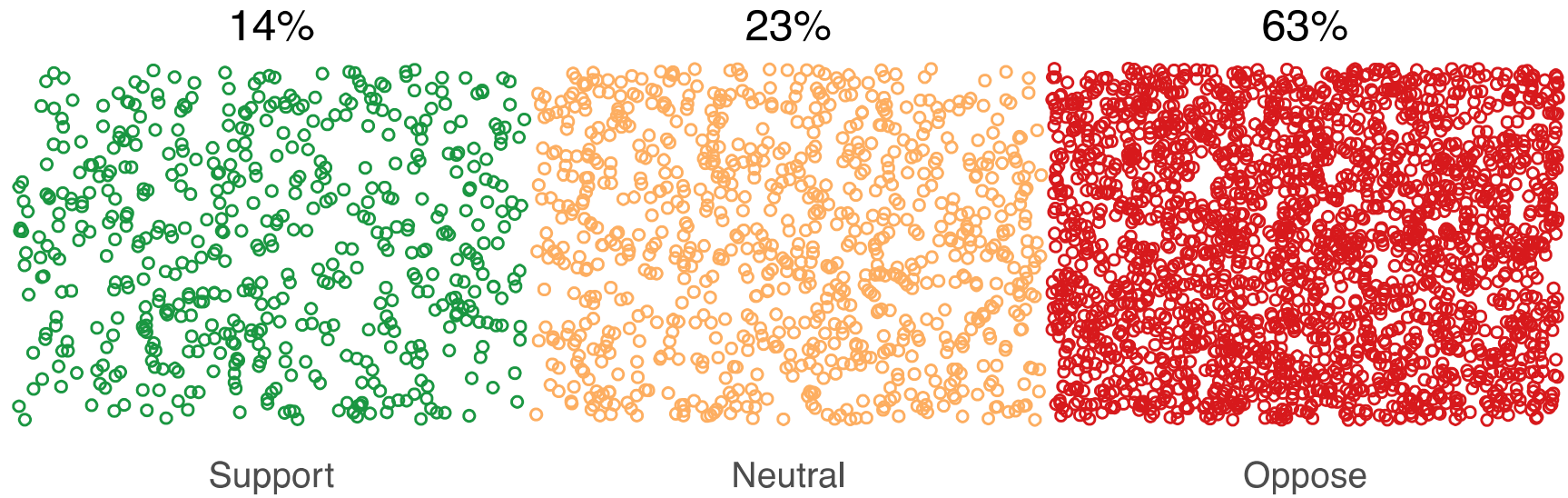
Public Meetings

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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Public Meetings

People who benefit from new housing almost entirely absent from these forums!

Barriers to attending

- May not live in relevant jurisdiction
- Sense of efficacy
- Interest/engagement
- Time

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

Coalition Building Model

- Municipal Staff
- Elected Officials
- Housing Advocates and Developers
- Local Businesses
- Civic Groups
- Houses of Worship
- Environmental Groups
- Transit Advocates
- Service Providers
- Residents (renters, homeowners)
- Cultural Groups
- Racial Justice Advocates



Flexible Model for Unique Communities



Who is missing? Why?

- Fair housing lens to the approach.
- Who are the stakeholders? Who are the experts?
- Go beyond the minimum threshold to create a welcoming environment.
- Underrepresented voices
- Food. Timing. Translations.



What might you hear?

And how should you respond?

This is what we are trying to avoid



Typical Disruptors

- Those people don't belong here.
- Need a fully comprehensive plan before we can do anything.
- I support affordable housing but not here. (NIMBYism)
- But we don't have the infrastructure here – our schools don't have space, etc.
- We can't take down the trees.
- More housing just means more luxury housing.
- Not in our town's character.
- Why should we support greedy developers?
- We need to raise the tax base and need to attract young professionals.
- Traffic!
- Fiscal burden arguments (schools, services, traffic)
- Leave it up to the free market.
- It's too expensive for developers...
- AMI is too high.
- We don't want to be like THAT town.
- We're for affordable housing but only under THESE circumstances...
- Overcrowded schools
- How will this impact my home value?
- If you can't live here, find another town.
- It'll reduce my property values.
- Climate change means we shouldn't be building...
- I worked hard to get here. Others should, too.
- Why should I subsidize condo fees?
- We like our town the way it is.

Keep in Mind

- People want to be heard. Even if you don't agree, it is helpful to make clear you hear them.
- Try to tease out whether concerns expressed are genuine or meant to distract
- Address any concerns possible with mitigation or alternatives
- Highlight supporters – often loudest voices are opponents, but not the only or even largest voices
- Who delivers a message matters – find people who are respected and from various viewpoints to support

Navigate the Dominant Narratives

- Understand what pre-existing beliefs may be driving conversations
- Be prepared for how to respond effectively
- Be proactive, not just reactive
- Get back to the future-focused vision you are working towards
- Offer solutions to address concerns
- Never, ever, ever repeat lies, unhelpful comments or stereotypes

The importance of Bridging Statements...

- I share your concern for our _____ and that's why I believe...
- Ten years ago, I would have said the same thing, but this is how I have changed and how I see it now...
- You raised a lot of important points. What people need to know is...
- Those are important concerns, and the most compelling is...

Examples

