A circular inset image showing a two-story house with a porch, surrounded by greenery and a driveway. The image is framed by a thick green border.

"The success of every business depends on the ability to attract and retain qualified employees. The lack of adequate housing is a growing challenge to our economic well-being and we're proud to support the Chamber's efforts in bringing all the stakeholders together to tackle this issue."

Christopher Oddleifson
Rockland Trust Bank

IMPACT SUMMARY

HOUSING

WHY IS THE SOUTH SHORE CHAMBER INVOLVED IN HOUSING?



The South Shore Chamber of Commerce recognizes the link between housing and economic growth. Without a healthy mix of housing preferences to attract and retain a workforce local businesses and non-profits are limited in finding employees and customers. We also recognize the link between strong communities and a strong economy. Vibrant communities with strong services help attract people and businesses. Our Chamber has identified housing, specifically creating more diversity in housing products, as a critical strategy to strengthen our communities and make our economy more competitive. We know that in order for the South Shore regional economy to grow just 1%, our region needs 44,000 additional homes by 2030.

The South Shore is made up of 25 communities South of Boston.

Abington, Braintree, Canton, Carver, Cohasset, Duxbury, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Milton, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Scituate, Weymouth, Whitman

Project Strategies

Our three key strategies to drive housing growth in the South Shore have included:

- Connecting economic growth with housing supply. We knew the conversation had to change. We have helped change the conversation and create new housing champions outside of the real estate industry – even beyond business. They understand the need for more housing options and help counter the traditional knee-jerk opposition to local housing.
- Addressing common misconceptions about housing developments' impact on communities (school enrollment, traffic, "changing character", etc). Housing is more than just shelter and each new resident is not an added burden to local budgets.
- Collaborating with officials and municipalities on economic development initiatives, zoning changes and smart-growth planning to promote housing growth that strengthens local communities and the regional economy. This means more dense development AND more open space.

"It is not a question of finding everyone their dream home. That's not feasible. It's a question of whether there are options available for people to downsize, upsize, or simply find a livable home within a reasonable distance of their jobs. If we can plan to develop housing in locations that make sense – near highways or transit for example – we can support growth and still maintain the charm of our fabulous South Shore communities. We cannot create new land, but we can plan for appropriate use of the land we have available."

Kim Kroha

Baker, Braverman, & Barbardoro, P.C.

GOALS, BENCHMARKS & OUTCOMES

Educating and finding housing champions within the business community

In the past three years, we have held 20+ housing forums and events with housing as the primary focus. Those forums have engaged nearly 1,000 local business professionals, municipal officials, community members and other key stakeholders.

Collaborating with local officials on economic development initiatives & zoning changes

We've supported multiple zoning changes and zoning related conversations regionally. These have laid the groundwork for new home development - examples include the Weymouth Commercial Corridor Overlay District Rezoning; Rockland 40R Downtown district; Accord Industrial Park & Queen Anne's Corner Rezoning initiatives.

We've participated in master planning meetings and local economic development planning meetings with an eye on promoting efforts to beautify town and neighborhood centers; to encourage more interesting and robust centers of activity; to develop more diverse housing product and to connect existing/future housing to amenities. Examples of some of these include: gate opening at Quincy Adams T Station; downtown Quincy's Hancock Street revitalization & Kilroy Square; Paragon Boardwalk and Nantasket Ave revitalization.

Tracking regional residential development & endorsing projects that meet criteria laid out in 2017 Housing Report

We've publicly supported more than 20 specific projects through either participation at planning board meetings, written letters of support, website showcase, or advocacy at local level.

Our Housing Committee has formally endorsed projects to illustrate visually the types of housing production we believe is necessary for growth and how they enhance and are connected to surrounding areas. Full list of housing endorsements available at <https://www.southshore2030.com/housing-endorsements>.

Addressing common misconceptions about housing developments' impacts on communities

While we have had some opposition due to school enrollments, this issue has been easier to address as data shows that almost all South Shore communities have declining school enrollments. The top THREE concerns about housing development in our area were Transportation & Local Traffic; Water &/or Wastewater infrastructure limitations and strained municipal budgets & staff capacity. Additional concerns around the market pressures and steep increases in demand driving housing costs up in the region have been raised in the last 18 months.

"Often times I think people get tired of hearing transit advocates or housing advocates advocating for the thing they are supposed to be advocating for, but when it's someone you didn't expect, the South shore Chamber of Commerce, came out saying that building housing and thinking about walkable neighborhoods is an economic imperative, I think it really started to shift the narrative."

Callie Clark
Mass Housing Partnership

Key Project Accomplishments

- Recognized as a regional resource and leader in economic and community development related discussions. Uniquely positioned to drive critical conversations about creating the right environment to attract the right investment in the area. These topics include zoning, smart land use, smart growth practices, mixed use, neighborhood revitalization and more.
- Stronger connections with municipal officials, key municipal staff, community leaders and the housing advocacy community.
- Stronger connections with developers, land owners and other key stakeholders.



Meetings & Forums

- Regular Housing Committee Meetings to hear updates from members on specific projects, legislative issues, developer insight, industry news, and trends. The Housing Committee launched a “municipal engagement program” keeping us connected to each community across the South Shore and helping us to get a better understanding of housing needs, challenges, zoning, and other critical issues across the region.
- Multiple informational forums on Housing Choice Legislation, MBTA Multi-family zoning requirements,
- Held [3-Part deep dive into Housing](#) from public meetings & zoning to TOD's to Water & Wastewater impacts on development opportunities.
- Inclusion of housing development priorities in all [five](#) annual South of Boston Summits which brought together commercial real estate industry experts to talk about economic development on the South Shore.

Advocacy

- The Chamber was an early and frequent supporter of Governor Baker's Housing Choice legislation that passed in January 2021. [Read our blog](#) and check out [video with our remarks](#) (4:07) at the Housing Choice launch in 2017.
- The Chamber played a critical role in [preserving MBTA Commuter services](#), particularly Ferry service out of Hingham & Hull, protecting significant real estate investment around those transit stops and in those communities.
- Report Release – [South Shore Site Readiness Water & Wastewater study](#) – with a regional focus on development planning on parcels across 5 communities along the Rt. 3 corridor.
- The chamber and SSEDG supported local applications for grants, like MassWorks, that tied into housing.

Recognition

- Received the Housing Hero Award from Massachusetts Housing Partnership in 2017
- Received the Community Service Award from Housing Solutions of Southeastern MA in 2017
- Invited as a panelist with the Gov. of Rhode Island to discuss our Housing Initiative in 2019
- Participation in a national U.S. Chamber of Commerce forum on housing to discuss our project
- Joined the U.S. Chamber's initiative to promote housing as a national economic strategy for growth and economic/social inclusion.

Want more details about our work?

ANNUAL HOUSING REPORTS

2019

2020

WWW.SOUTHSHORE2030.COM/HOUSING


COVID & RECOVERY

EARLY IMPACT OF COVID ON SOUTH SHORE HOUSING

- Some construction delayed due supply chains, labor shortages, and higher costs.
- Some projects paused in planning stages while developers re-assess markets and cost assumptions
- Gridlock in the multi-family market delayed normal turnover and reduced vacancy rates.
- New suburban housing demand pushed prices up and tightened inventory.

WHAT WE ARE WATCHING IN RECOVERY THAT MAY IMPACT HOUSING MARKET

- Changes in MBTA planning could adversely impact suburban Transit Oriented Development market AND Housing Choice and MBTA housing regulations could increase Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) housing supply.
- Continued movement from the city to suburbs due to normal generational shift in interest and new flexibility due to changes in business practices.
- Some new opportunities for business expansion or relocation in the suburbs.
- Projects paused as well as higher demand could accelerate plans for new constructionbut that acceleration could be limited by workforce shortages and some back-up in some local planning offices.
- Will new remote work options and at-home work change preferences in housing products? For example, will people be looking for larger homes, including multi-family to accommodate home offices, outdoor space, or proximity to amenities?



"As a hiring manager in the South Shore area the company I work for pays a higher-than-average entry level salary. Even with a higher pay, in many cases families are having a tough time finding reasonably priced housing in the surrounding communities. That can cause an additional expense added by longer commutes from more affordable areas or even seeing top talent move out of the area to find employment elsewhere closer to more affordable communities...I want to see top talent stay in the area for not only for my business, but all industries."

Patrick Powers
Liberty Mutual Insurance

"Our employees need affordable housing options so that they can actually live near where they work. Sadly, many members of our workforce end up commuting from fairly distant locales (Rhode Island, Fall River, even a couple of people who come here from Connecticut) because those communities actually have the types of housing options available that they want and can afford... if we want the South Shore to continue to thrive in the coming years we need to find ways of expanding and diversifying the housing options for everyone, especially our young and differently-abled."

Chris White
Road to Responsibility

Mentions & Press Coverage

Governor Baker's Housing Alliance offers opportunities and deserves support, Boston Business Journal, Op-Ed by Peter Forman, January 2018

Mixed-use Development Key To Region's Economic Growth, Cape & Plymouth Business, October 2019

Mass., Municipalities Must Look Beyond Housing to Broaden Growth: Housing Choice Should Be the First Step, Not the Last, Banker & Tradesman, Co-authored by Peter Forman and Chris Oddleifson, February 2021

Housing Choice Bill News Coverage

<https://www.patriotledger.com/story/news/2021/08/09/massachusetts-housing-crisis-born-decades-long-urban-flight/5459486001/>

- "One way for towns to stop development was to restrict multifamily housing and to increase the required lot size for new houses and developments through zoning regulations. The bigger the minimum lot size, the fewer housing units could be built. The zoning and permitting process has been used to stop a lot of growth and a lot of towns", Forman said.

Site Readiness Water & Wastewater Study News Coverage

<https://www.patriotledger.com/story/news/2021/10/03/study-water-and-sewer-upgrades-needed-maintain-status-quo-south-shore-chamber-of-commerce-mpac/5915315001/>

Town Meetings attendance increase with remote participation option

<https://www.patriotledger.com/story/news/2021/05/27/governor-proposes-extension-outdoor-dining-remote-meetings-baker-norwell-hanover-rockland-hull/7445006002/>

- Excerpt: South Shore Chamber of Commerce President Peter Forman said he is hearing from public officials that remote meetings have brought in younger residents who otherwise would not be able to attend meetings because of young children at home or other commitments. "I think a lot of people, residents, town officials, have found it to be a little refreshing," he said.

On the Workforce Shortage

<https://www.patriotledger.com/story/news/local/2021/09/03/south-shore-employers-get-creative-offset-labor-shortage/8229676002/>

- "Two pressing issues in many communities are transportation and housing, according to a recent report by the MassHire South Shore Workforce Board...", South Shore Chamber of Commerce President Peter Forman said. "Some employers are trying to tap into new labor markets beyond their usual geographical limits", the Chamber president said. "A lot of the personal service industry and allied health care industry, home care workers ... actually live in Rhode Island," Forman said.

"... there is a constituency in Weymouth that does not agree with how we are zoning...typical pattern for development is through variances or special permits and then those are met with resistance. I think there's a way around that and I think the first way is what you've already started here at the Chamber...all of that is essential information for us to use to think about how are we zoning? How are we going to get out of the Weymouth mindset that this is just going to benefit Weymouth? We have to look globally, our world is getting smaller and smaller."

Lisa Belmarsh

Weymouth Town Council Candidate @ Candidate Forum
October 2021



Goal

44,000

new homes across the
South Shore's 25 communities by 2030

Progress

13,305

permitted between 2010–2019
30% TO OUR REGIONAL GOAL



55%

of new built and
permitted homes are
single-family



41%

of new built and
permitted homes are
multifamily with 5+ units



3%

of new built and
permitted homes are
projects with 2–4 units

These numbers are based on Building Permit Surveys and relies on the reporting of local officials in supplying the data. Unfortunately, many municipalities fail to report all of the requested data for a number of reasons, primarily staff capacity. This data source is the only one that compiles housing permit information across the state.
Source: Mass Housing Partnership DataTown Toolkit.

NEXT STEPS

How will the Chamber support the housing agenda moving forward?

Our South Shore 2030 project assumes a series of initiatives related to economic competitiveness. Workforce development and attracting new residents continues to be important and as such, housing will remain a key strategy in our broader economic plan.

Long-term changes in work and housing stemming from the pandemic are not completely clear or even evident. We are confident that our initial assumptions about economic competitiveness and housing are more valid and that we were slightly ahead of changes that are coming. But the results of our initial project have now broadened our scope of work beyond simply promoting diversity in housing products and promoting more production of housing. The next phase of our housing initiative will include:

- Continued advocacy for multi-family housing
- More attention on infrastructure to support that housing, including local roads, water resource management and smart-growth land use practices.
- Increased attention to incorporate housing into local placemaking efforts as more communities pursue economic development strategies.
- More engagement and assistance to local officials who are stepping up development strategies and dealing with new state and federal efforts such as the new Multi-family Zoning Requirement for MBTA Communities and funding from the recent federal infrastructure bill.

A Spotlight on the Landing

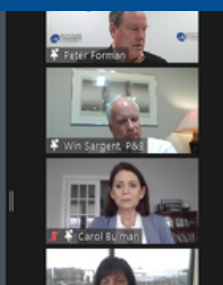
These economic development efforts don't happen overnight. Over these past few years we have started to see the results of the zoning overlay district passed in 2010 in the Braintree/Weymouth Landing area.

As Mayor Hedlund would say, "if you drove through the Braintree and Weymouth Landing 10+ years ago, you'd see literal tumbleweeds", but now you'll find five new multifamily buildings, with 336 new units of housing (with a few more on the way) and nearly 25,000 sq. ft. of commercial all within a 1/2 mile of the commuter rail station.



THOUGHTS ON HOUSING

- Growing number of towns "get it" about the importance of housing choices
- Housing & mixed-use developments, activity/neighborhood centers – beginning to connect housing development with making place
- Housing as an agent in resuscitating troubled mall sites
- Infrastructure challenges exist – making housing



Site Readiness Project

- SSED-Development-Weston & Sampson-MAPC
- Goal to facilitate development in region by finding solutions to water/wastewater needs
- 6 sites, 5 municipalities



"In terms of South Shore 2030's roadmap, the Housing Initiative work [the chamber has] done, the several bills you've [championed] in the legislature, these are great ideas. Adding new housing, new commercial space, creating walkable neighborhoods where people feel safe and happy and excited to live, these are great opportunities for us and I think frankly, we would be remiss not to take advantage of this [zoning change]".

Ash Eikelberg

Weymouth Town Council Candidate Forum, October 2021
talking about commercial corridor overlay district

This project would not have been possible without the support of our Housing Initiative and South Shore 2030 Funders.

As we continue to tackle these important regional issues we are grateful for the continued leadership and support from our business community.

We are committed to leading on these critical economic development strategies to ensure our region continues to be the best place in Massachusetts to do business, to start a business, to put down roots, to start a family and to be part of the larger community.

Housing Initiative Funders



South Shore 2030 Funders



SouthShore2030.com

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