



Great Neighborhoods

Communities that work for families and seniors

Young people, families and seniors from across the Commonwealth tell us their stories about needing stable, affordable housing where they would like to live. We share a goal of helping communities create more great neighborhoods—welcoming, walkable places that offer a variety of homes, thriving downtowns and open space. You can help communities make Great Neighborhoods a reality by supporting these bills.

Housing Choice (H 3507)

We support Governor Baker's proposal making it easier for cities and towns to adopt zoning changes that promote housing production and smart growth practices--and easier to approve mixed-income housing in smart growth locations by special permit. It's a critical first step to set the stage for additional zoning reforms and anti-displacement legislation.

Housing Production

MSGA is the lead advocate for these housing production bills:

- Housing Production and Equity Task Force
Rep. Vargas (with Rep. Decker) (H 1325), Sen. Chandler (S 780)
- Accessory apartments within the main structure of a single family home
Rep. Hay (with Rep. Ciccolo) (H 1277), Sen. Cyr (S 788)
- Pilot program to provide transit infrastructure incentives for multifamily housing production
Rep. Garballey (H 1788), Sen. Chandler (S 779)
- Amending building code to allow tiny homes on foundations
Rep. Blais (H 2031), Sen. Hinds (S 1863)

We support CHAPA's efforts to locate more multifamily zoning around public transit, set a statewide affordable housing goal, and curb frivolous appeals. Rep. Honan (H 1288), Sen. Boncore (S 775)

Protecting the Environment

We are the lead advocate for promoting Open Space Residential Design (OSRD or cluster zoning) in residential subdivisions to preserve land conservation. Rep. Blais (H 1761), Sen. Cyr (S 787)

We also support the Conservation Law Foundation proposal for a local option program for property tax breaks on parcels used for urban agriculture. Rep. Malia (H 2551) Sen. Kennedy (S 1691)

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Neighborhood Stabilization

We support MACDC and MassINC in their advocacy for the Neighborhood Stabilization bill which includes a “spot blight rehabilitation” program for small scale residential projects and a capacity-building program focused on neighborhood stabilization. Rep. Cabral (H 177), Sen. Crighton (S 1627)

Anti-displacement and Fair Housing Legislation

We are lead advocate for a local option for municipalities to offer property tax relief to seniors and/or lower income homeowners in exchange for a right of first refusal on the home when it is for sale so that it can be converted to affordable housing. Rep. Peake (H 2587), Sen. Chandler (S 1604)

In addition, we support the following bills:

- Right to counsel for indigent tenants in eviction proceedings. Rep. Rogers (H 1537), Rep. Tyler (H3456), Sen. DiDomenico (S 913)
- Seal court records in eviction proceedings. Rep. Moran (H 3566) Sen. Boncore (S 824)
- Ban discriminatory zoning/permitting decisions. Rep. Barber (H 1344), Sen. Chang Diaz (S 781)

Municipal Tools

MSGa is lead advocate on these bills providing tools for municipalities:

- Streamlined master planning process and more zoning consistency Rep. Ciccolo (H 180)
- Recognizing 21st century “form based” codes Rep. Ciccolo (H 1768), Sen. Crighton (S 81)
- Local mediation of land use disputes and reasonable review standard for subdivision appeals Rep. Murray (H 1813), Sen. Chandler (within S 780)

We also support the following bills led by the American Planning Association/MA and Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors:

- Training program for zoning/planning board members. Rep. Honan (H 1802)
- Site plan review. Rep. Honan (H 1289)

New Resources for Climate Change, Housing and Planning

MSGa supports:

- Governor Baker’s proposal to raise the deeds excise tax for climate adaptation (Senate 10) & doubling increase to fund affordable housing; local option real estate transfer taxes for affordable housing; and a GreenWorks bonding program for climate change measures (H 3846)
- Full funding for Housing Choice grants to reward communities for producing housing and/or adopting best practices around development and more funding to help cities and towns plan
- Increasing the state match for Community Preservation Act communities. Outside sections in House/Senate FY2020 budget in conference; Rep. Ferrante (H 2363), Sen. Creem (S 1618)

MASSACHUSETTS SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

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