



South Shore 2030 Housing Initiative 2019 Year in Review

OUR WORK IS MADE POSSIBLE BY SUPPORT FROM



The following pages provide a snapshot of the impact in 2019.

Funding for the 2019 Housing Initiative was critical in assisting the Chamber to elevate the economic impact of housing within the region. The Chamber invested funds to expand our impact and program work to build greater awareness among the business community, to strengthen our ties with local officials and assist local communities to promote projects around specific types of housing.

outreach to business leaders & professionals

235

Number of business leaders & professionals we've met with to date

34

Number of meetings we've held with business professionals across the region

22

Number of business leaders & professionals identified for specific action step to support housing

20+

Number of industries represented at outreach meetings

outreach to local officials & opinion leaders

55

Number of local officials & opinion leaders we've met with to date

25+

Number of meetings we've held with local officials

15

Number of local officials identified for specific action step to support housing

Common themes raised from our conversations



Traffic & congestion



Housing type



Resident pushback & perceptions



Strained budgets



Workforce recruitment



Affordability



Water
Wastewater limitations



Public safety concerns



Transit access

tracking regional residential development activity

12

Number of housing development projects that were endorsed by Housing Committee

4

Number of town initiatives that were endorsed by the Housing Committee

9,511

Number of homes the endorsed housing projects will add to the region

30+

Number of municipal and community events the Chamber attended

broader communications strategy

1,500+

Hits on the 2030 Housing Webpage

38,700

Number of social media impressions across all channels

30

Number of times the project was covered in the press

12

Number of forums the Chamber was invited to speak

key communications accomplishments

- Launch of Housing Content on 2030 website
- Housing Development & Town Initiatives Endorsements profiled on website, social media, press releases in local newspapers
- Captured & highlighted business voices that support housing development in the region via the website, social media, mid-year report, housing update emails
- Source list sent to media with list of business leaders who are advocates for housing
- Distributed outline on misconceptions and real challenges around housing in the region to SSCC Board, SSED Board, local leadership & identified housing advocates in the business community
- Recognized out of the region, as close as Boston and as far as Rhode Island, for our housing work

working with towns



Braintree

- Led 2 meetings with 30 + attendees to discuss zoning proposals & housing
- Sent 3 notifications sent to Braintree businesses with public meeting details & website on the zoning changes
- Attended public meetings for 40R support & general housing development
- Limited impact --resident opposition to growth has won out in this town



Hanover

- Met with 15 Hanover businesses and residents to discuss housing
- Wide distribution and support for Hanover mall revitalization to include 300 units of housing
- Attendance at multiple information sessions, public meetings and hearings to support project -- verbal and written
- Held discussion at Hanover Crossing with 40 "up and coming" business leaders on the importance of the housing, place-making and taking a key leadership role in these discussions and attending public meetings.



Hingham

- Attended public meetings, master plan meetings to discuss housing and land use
- Working closely with key land owners identify opportunities for future growth along some key corridors



Kingston

- Attended public meetings
- Working with Kingston Collection owners and town officials
- Working with local officials interested in using housing as a development strategy for the mall and a connection to the commuter rail station

working with towns



Norwell

- Held multiple meetings with business leaders in Accord & Assinippi Park for input into Norwell's Economic Development plan,
- Continued conversations with Norwell Town officials on business engagement in the plan for rezoning of some key areas to include Accord Park & Queen Anne's Corner
- Set up meeting with town administrator & developer to discuss introducing multifamily housing next to amenities at Queen Anne's corner
- Attended multiple public meetings, community forums in support of economic development & housing - verbal and written support provided



Rockland

- Formal affiliation agreement signed with REiMAGINE Rockland
- Rockland Chamber of Commerce emerged as strong business voice advocating for housing
- In front of 60+ Rockland businesses Dr. Alan Cron, Superintendent of Schools, said "we want to see young families and children move into our town and welcome them to participate in the innovative programming and initiatives being led across the school district, both inside and outside of the classroom".
- Actively participate in Rockland Economic Development planning - ie Rockland Master Plan



Weymouth

- Continued support for Weymouth Commercial Corridors Overlay district zoning change via support for specific projects, formal endorsement of the zoning change
- Organized walking Tour of the Landing neighborhood revitalization efforts with Lt. Governor Polito included site visits to 4 housing projects within a 1/2 mile of commuter rail station
- Helped fund North Weymouth & Route 3A technical assistance study to determine best use along corridor including residential

what business leaders are saying

Chris Oddleifson

Rockland Trust Bank

"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 resolve this issue."

Kay Lorenz

Craft Beer Cellar

"With the new residents and new restaurants, there's been a huge change in the last five years in the Weymouth & Braintree Landing. It's vibrant and you can feel the excitement. Of course, endless parking would be nice, but the growth is bringing the Landing back to what it used to be."

Kim Kroha

Baker, Braverman, & Barbardoro, P.C.

"Our firm is in the business of helping individuals and companies plan for growth, risks, and remedies. The core of our work is planning to minimize problems or strategizing an exit after problems happen. The biggest risk, however, is lack of planning. Our economy depends on a wide range of income earners to operate cohesively. It is important that we create housing options suitable for everyone in that range. If people need to pay a burdensome amount to afford a livable home, they are less able to contribute to the economy and community. 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 career. 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."

Christine McIntyre

Our Sales Coach

"I live and work in Braintree, so housing and business opportunities are always top of mind for me. A few years ago, I went to hear a report from Barry Bluestone, a Sociologist at Northeastern University. The report was about the demographics in Braintree, projections and contained specific recommendations. The zoning and housing initiatives coming out of Town Hall, recently, seem to be following the course of action in the report, similar to efforts of the South Shore Chambers' 2030 Committee, all good for Braintree and the South Shore. What I have heard from local business owners and companies, "... we cannot find individuals to work in our stores, our offices. We cannot fill entry level and trade positions."

It is expensive to live in Braintree. Workers who may be interested in some of these positions need to live in communities with housing they can manage, close to public transportation, as a car payment and insurance may not be in the picture for them at this time. Towns that support these workers and their needs are rewarded. People engage in professional development, save money, receive promotions. Then, where do they want to buy a house, or even continue renting? In the Town that has resources for them, good schools, recreational activities and volunteer positions that reflect their interest and concerns.

This is what I have experienced in Braintree. I want to see others benefit from the kind of life we can offer when we create an environment to prop up both the economy and people, full of possibility for its' businesses and citizens."

what business leaders are saying

Carol Bulman

Jack Conway Company, Inc.

"At Conway we know deep in our hearts that we don't assist people in buying or selling a house. It's much, much more than that. We assist people and families, when going through a transition in their lives, find their landing place, their happy place, their home and most of all their community. These communities on the South Shore are rich with roots and character and in order to protect this character and make sure future generations can experience these communities, we need to address some of the key housing challenges in the region. The Chamber and the South Shore Economic Development Corp. are taking the lead to strike a balance between preserving the way of life and helping our businesses and communities to grow. At Conway, we believe in the South Shore because we live here and we want to help people build lives here."

Patrick Powers

Liberty Mutual Insurance

"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. Our number one resource is good people, if they continue to leave that is a hurt felt across the board. When employees find housing that is reasonably priced, with good schools and services, they tend to be happier and more productive. I want to see top talent stay in the area for not only my business, but all industries."

Chris White

Road to Responsibility, Inc.

"Housing is of critical importance to Road To Responsibility, Inc. (RTR) in two key areas: 1) To best meet the needs of the people we support there needs to be access to a variety of housing options to meet the needs of a very diverse population. Unfortunately, there is insufficient variety available in the South Shore and what is available is incredibly expensive. 2) 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 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."

what business leaders are saying

Ed Callahan

Hanover Crossing

General Manager Ed Callahan of PREP Property Group has worked with the South Shore Chamber of Commerce on approving an outdoor lifestyle center in Hanover that will offer revenue and vitality to the South Shore. Born and raised on the South Shore, Callahan began his retail career at Bloomingdale's after graduating from Boston College. He went on to work with Burberry and Placewares, and then became Operations Director at Pheasant Lane Mall in New Hampshire. His breadth of experience allows him to understand how a positive retail experience can appeal not only to a customer, but to an entire community.

For over 25 years, he has applied his expertise here on the South Shore. In 1995, he became the Operations Director of Hanover Mall. He assisted with its 60-million-dollar renovation and became General Manager three years later. He has managed to navigate the property through the 2008 - 2010 recession and multiple owners. When PREP Property Group bought the space in 2016 and plans were made to for an outdoor lifestyle center called Hanover Crossing, Callahan was enthusiastic about how it would revitalize the space and preserve a landmark of the South Shore. Hanover Crossing will be a shopping center and entertainment complex with restaurants, a bowling alley, escape rooms, a gazebo, an outdoor gathering space and more. During the process of receiving permits and approval for Hanover Crossing, Callahan found incredible support from the South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

When PREP Property proposed an apartment complex as part of Hanover Crossing, it caused concern and opposition from many locals who were concerned that apartments would stress the water infrastructure and overwhelm the schools with additional students, among other things. In order to build apartments, PREP Property needed a unanimous vote from six board members of the Town of Hanover for a zoning variance.

The South Shore Chamber saw the value that Hanover Crossing would add to the South Shore: providing revenue and a place for residents to gather. "Chamber Board Chairman, James Dunphy, spoke about the initiative to its leadership teams, and president, Peter Forman, took the time to introduce me to local officials," Callahan said. They came out to show their support at public meetings.

"I could not be more grateful for the way that the Chamber stepped in and supported us" Callahan said. The Chamber's support helped us to reassure residents that few children would be in the apartment complex that will consist of mostly studios and 1-bedrooms, and that a new water infrastructure would obviate water issues.

Peter Forman spoke in support of the project on Bloomberg public radio, and the entire Chamber took steps to get the positive message out. "They called attention to their Housing Report. Hanover Crossing perfectly fit the type of housing initiatives that they found were needed in this area," said Callahan. "The Chamber believes in the positive impact the project will have on the heart of the South Shore." Thanks to a lot of hard work, the permit passed.

The South Shore Chamber cares about the community and about safeguarding Hanover and its residents. They worked tirelessly to not only support this project, but make sure it is done right.

"If there were no plans to invest in the property, it would drop in value and offer nothing for the South Shore. Hanover Crossing will revitalize the space and the community". Callahan offers his gratitude for how the Chamber stood by the project: "Woven throughout this entire endeavor are the efforts of the South Shore Chamber."

what business leaders are saying

Jimmy Liang

JP Fuji Restaurant Group

Jimmy Liang of the JP Fuji restaurant group spoke at the administration's event in Quincy in October. Liang, who has a restaurant in the retail space at West of Chestnut, said it's hard to hire new employees in a city that lacks housing and that he's in support of further downtown development.

"My home is no longer the same as when I grew up here, but that's OK," he said. "We're growing."

Dolly DiPesa

DiPesa & Co.

Dolly Di Pesa, Managing Partner of Di Pesa & Co., says new housing in Quincy Center has led to business growth that is creating jobs and making downtown [Quincy] once again a driving economic force.

Adam Goodrich

Marathon Physical Therapy

With regards to our licensed positions, it has always been harder for us to staff our clinics in towns like Pembroke and Norton than it has been to staff our clinic in Newton. We've found that having a community like Allston/Brighton next to Newton is an appeal to new graduate physical therapists and athletic trainers. We hire a lot of people after graduation and before marriage and having children. Pembroke and Norton are not necessarily known for the nightlife and walkability.

I believe that living too far from the city is concerning to many people as they understand everything else to be 'in relationship' to Boston. I grew up in Quincy and our friends who continue to live and raise families there always reference towns like Marshfield (where I live) to be *so far*. My response is, 'to what?'. It's about helping people understand that a great quality of life with dining, shopping, history, etc can exist further down route 3 and 95, especially as we see the expansion of towns like Plymouth and their waterfront, and Foxboro with Patriot Place.... and both with commuter rail access to the city nearby.

Overheard at... South Shore Health Foundation

Rich Beal, A.W. Perry, Daniel DeMarco, Campanelli, Jason Ward, Fox Rock Properties

South Shore Health Foundation invited key developers to address their President's Circle partners and offer a discussion on the market and the importance of economic growth on the South Shore. Of notable importance was addressing housing and transportation challenges, due to its impact on workforce shortages across the region -- mentioned and echoed by all three speakers (with shout outs to the Chamber's leadership through South Shore 2030 and Housing work).

what local officials are saying

Senator John Keenan

At a housing choice event in Quincy, Senator John Keenan talked about the importance of passing the Housing Choice bill. He says his children are in their early 20s, and like many local families want to stay in Quincy - "they want to be here" - but they can't afford it right now.

"Something's going to have to change and one the things that is going to have to change is the generation of new housing. This housing choice proposal will do that. It will give local communities who make the decisions to have people who grow up there stay there it will give them the ability to provide the housing that makes that possible." Senator

Norwell

Ellen Allen, chairwoman of the Norwell Board of Selectmen, said the new developments would increase public safety by allowing emergency workers like firefighters to live in town. Norwell also needs more multi-family housing for seniors looking to downsize, and more workforce housing, she said. "Businesses won't develop here is the people they want to work here can't afford to live here," she said.

Hull

Ferry service in Hull -- Hull Board of Selectman member recently heard from younger couple about the reason they moved to Hull. They were tired of living and working in such close proximity (the Seaport). They moved to Hull because of the transportation offered through the Ferry. The Ferry offers a quick, reliable boat ride into the city & work (20-30 minutes). It's important for us to think about the key role that Ferry service does play and how it can play a bigger role in the public transportation discussion.

Weymouth

Weymouth is looking at Jackson Square to introduce housing in the neighborhood. It's proximity to the Commuter rail and to retail and restaurants makes it an ideal location for more housing. The town has also begun to get creative with parking limitations, leasing the MBTA lot for weekends and evenings for local restaurant and retail parking.

Overheard at... South Shore Legislative Breakfast

Shout out from a couple of the region's state representatives & state senators on the South Shore Chamber's leadership role in the housing discussion.

SSCC housing in the news

10/2018

Cape & Plymouth Business Magazine, "Plymouth seeks to invigorate economy with innovative housing"

12/27/2018

The Boston Globe, "Housing at a mall? It's becoming more common in Mass."

12/28/2018

The Patriot Ledger, "South Shore economic boom expected to last through 2019"

1/2/2019

The Patriot Ledger, "Norwell selectman discuss development options for Accord Park Drive, Queen Anne's Plaza"

1/7/2019

Wicked Local Norwell "Norwell selectmen discuss development options for Accord Park Drive, Queen Anne's Plaza"

1/14/2019

Bloomberg Radio, "Baystate Business: The Future of the Mall"

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/audio/2019-01-14/baystate-business-the-future-of-the-mall-radio>

Week of 2/5/2019

Announcement of Next Phase of Housing Initiative

- Coverage by MHP, Banker & Tradesman, WATD, The Patriot Ledger, Cape & Plymouth Business Magazine

2/11/2019

The Patriot Ledger "Boston: Kudos to South Shore Chamber of Commerce"

2/18/2019

Wicked Local Weymouth "Weymouth board makes room for shops and apartments plan"

2/21/2019

The Patriot Ledger, "Braintree 'smart growth' plan criticized"

SSCC housing endorsements in the news



Duxbury (announcement distributed June 24)

The Clipper, Boston CityBizList

Braintree (announcement distributed July 25)

New England Real Estate Journal (Facebook Post), New England Real Estate Journal, Braintree Forum/WickedLocal, New House

Plymouth (announcement distributed August 14)

Old Colony Memorial/Plymouth WickedLocal, Enterprise News, Cape & Plymouth Business

Hingham (announcement distributed September 24)

Hingham Journal/WickedLocal, Cape & Plymouth Business, Boston Real Estate Times

SSCC housing in the news

2/23/2019

Wicked Local Rockland "Rockland officials talk about 'Moving Forward'"

4/19/2019

New England Real Estate Journal, "NEREJ [and South Shore Chamber] hosts South of Boston Summit"

6/4/2019

Patriot Ledger "Weymouth Landing offers state model for redevelopment"

6/5/2019

Wicked Local "Weymouth Lt. Gov. Polito tours Landing 53 with Weymouth, Braintree mayors"

6/28/2019

The Patriot Ledger "Report: Region needs more multifamily housing"

7/7/2019

Banker & Tradesman "South Shore Shake-Up: State Street Buildings Have Uncertain Future"

8/29/2019

Banker & Tradesman "Making the South Shore More Competitive"

10/28/2019

Cape & Plymouth Business Magazine "Mix It Up – Mixed-use Development "

10/28/2019

The Patriot Ledger "Baker: Quincy sets example for housing growth"

11/5/2019

Patriot Ledger "Commuter rail plans could bring trains every 15 minutes"

11/6/2019

APN News "South Shore Chamber of Commerce forms Transportation Advisory Group; will review and advise on numerous proposals to improve congestion, infrastructure"

11/21/2019

Wicked Local Norwell "Norwell pitches zoning changes for Queen Anne's Corner and Accord Park"



SSCC in Rhode Island

Forman was invited to speak at a panel with the Governor of Rhode Island to lay out the South Shore Chamber's involvement in the Housing discussion and why we see it as such a critical component of economic growth and vitality. 250 attendees from various sectors.

Project Summary: SSCC Housing Initiative

Where we started

The South Shore Chamber's Housing Initiative calls for 44,000 new homes by 2030 (over 2010 levels) across the 25 communities that make up our region. How did we get to this number? This number ensures moderate economic growth (+1%) and helps our region to remain economically competitive in attracting employees (current and future), attracting new businesses and supporting our existing businesses. Our Initiative looks at housing as a strategy for economic and community development. The region's lack of adequate housing critically impacts any company's ability to recruit and retain talent. It also poses a serious challenge when we look at recruiting and retaining companies in the region. Over the past 3 years we've heard numerous companies' reason for closing is that they are not able to recruit the talent needed – one of the key pressures being lack of housing.

When we talk about housing, we're talking about two things primarily – place and product type. Our Initiative calls for new types of housing in our existing downtowns, neighborhood centers, underutilized lots, under-performing retail districts, retail centers and tired industrial parks. It emphasizes the need to build different products than we typically see in our region – multifamily, apartments, townhouses, condos and cluster style development. We are aging faster than any other metro Boston region. These two factors, place and housing product type, we hope will help us to attract new people to the area and also keep our existing downsizing baby boomers here in our communities. Our approach is simple – we need to focus more on building what the market wants rather than what past anti-growth zoning has produced.

Our work in 2019

Funding for our work in 2019 was critical in bringing further awareness and education to the connection between housing and our region's economy. Our key strategies included:

- Finding and educating **housing champions within the business community**;
- **Collaborating with local officials** on economic development initiatives, zoning changes that allow for smart growth and higher density home options;
- **Tracking regional residential development** and endorsing specific developments; and
- **Addressing common misconceptions** about new housing impacts on communities.

Outreach to Business, Community & Local Officials

Over the course of the year, the Chamber was able to meet with over 250 business people (from a variety of industries), local officials (from nearly all our communities) and key community leaders. We were able to identify over 30 individuals who want to step up or have stepped up in the past year to support housing efforts locally across the region. This has included participating in a source letter sent to media, providing written testimonial on importance of housing for the region, attendance at local meetings & forums, participation on internal and external boards and advisory groups and other similar activities. We found housing advocates from the business community in some towns with a lot of development happenings (Braintree, Weymouth, Hanover, Kingston, Plymouth) and also in some of our smaller communities further from Boston (Marshfield, Hanson, Duxbury). Most of these advocates were under the age of 50, were newer residents of the South Shore, played an active role in community organizations or local politics, had children in the school systems, soon to be parents, or professionally connected the housing and real estate industry. They are working as attorneys, insurance agents, consultants, small business owners, real estate agents, engineers, construction suppliers, builders, non-profit employees, healthcare professionals, marketing agents to name a few.

We worked extensively with local officials from Braintree, Hanover, Hingham, Kingston, Norwell, Rockland & Weymouth. Additionally, our Housing Committee members met with either a town administrator, town planner, board of selectman or similar position from the remaining towns. The tone is positive and officials want to do something, but often they are concerned about things like water and wastewater capacity and traffic issues. Most local officials acknowledge and are actively looking at ways that they can attract investment to their communities and address some of the previously mentioned concerns. When they talk about housing they are most interested in cluster style, smaller multifamily (townhomes) and some apartments near transit.

While the attitude is generally positive, there are a handful of communities that don't see the need for new housing or development and who are actively opposing these efforts. In one local community, residents came out in large numbers to protest rezoning initiatives and a 40R proposal for a parcel adjacent to a public transit stop. Residents orchestrated a protest outside of town hall. This community will usher in a new Mayor in 2019 that is not interested in introducing new development or housing into their community. Most recently in a forum we hosted, the incoming mayor stated the following: "no new housing", "no millennial wants to live in [community]", "we meet the threshold for affordable housing", and "it's not our responsibility to talk about regional issues".

Addressing misconceptions & tracking regional development

The Chamber's Housing Committee formally recognized and endorsed **twelve(12)** housing developments and **four(4)** town initiatives. The project endorsements were selected by the housing committee, based on the criteria laid out in the Chamber's original report, in an effort to highlight, visually and with some facts, the type of housing that we are pushing for on the South Shore. We chose 12 projects and 4 town initiatives and would like to continue to recognize developers and towns for their thoughtful projects and contributions to the region's housing efforts. We looked at the following set of criteria when evaluating projects: Density; Proximity to transit and/or downtown area/village center; Revitalization and use of underutilized commercial, office and industrial parcels / corridors; Smaller square footage; Land Use – compact neighborhoods, smaller lots (with open space component). Below is a list of the selected projects and initiatives by town.

Endorsed Projects

Abington

- Union Point*

Braintree

- Landing 53
(172 apartments)
- The Hampton House Apartments & Townhomes
(15 apartments, 2 townhomes)

Duxbury

- Feinberg Bog Road
(6 townhomes; all affordable)

Hingham

- The Cove - Hingham
(220 apartments; 55 affordable)

Norwell

- Herring Brook Hill - Norwell
(18 apartments; all affordable, age restricted)

Plymouth

- Harborwalk Apartments at Plymouth Station
(300 apartments; 75 affordable)
- The Pinehills
(3,065 apartments, homes, condos)
- Redbrook
(1,200 apartments, homes, condos; some workforce housing)

Quincy

- Quincy Adams T Station Gate Opening

Randolph

- Residences at Great Pond
(234 apartments)
- Randolph Union Crossing Overlay District

Rockland

- Rockland 40R Overlay District
- Union Point*

Weymouth

- Weston Park Apartments
(42 apartments)
- 1500 Main Street
(237 apartments)
- Union Point*

*The "Union Point" parcel is located in 3 communities. Currently undergoing search for new Master Developer. Project was endorsed based on prior master developer's proposed plans that included a mix of housing and amenities. The Housing Committee will review new master developers plans when selected.

Highlighting various projects across the South Shore helped to tell our story and address misconceptions about what "housing looks like" and what "density looks like". In addition to the endorsements, there were four critical opposing arguments to housing that we felt were inaccurate and needed clarification. We provided an outline to our leadership and key contacts from our outreach meetings to address the following: "we're building too much, too fast", "definitions of affordability", "more apartments equal more pressure on our schools", "more housing will change the character of our community".

Accomplishments, takeaways and lessons learned

Overall, there is greater receptiveness to more development and housing in the region among most local officials and an increasing awareness of the important connection between housing and the region's economic growth. Key accomplishments, takeaways and lessons learned are below.

- **Stronger connections with local officials** – more towns are including the Chamber and business community in economic development conversations - viewed more as partner.
- Often asked to join South Shore **community meetings with focus on housing**.
- Work has drawn **accolades outside of the region and out of state** (across the border in Rhode Island).
- Identification of **new group of community leaders** (who are in support of housing) for local boards, internal volunteer groups, leadership programs, external organizations.
- **Receptiveness to housing depends on the failings of existing parcels** within a town – old retail strip malls, failing industrial parks, underutilized lots, empty storefronts. There is greater acceptance of housing development when it will be used to help improve or revitalize an existing space that is visibly tired, underdeveloped or in trouble.
- The tide is shifting with **more young people getting involved and interested in economic development** in their towns – challenge is getting them to attend public & town meetings.
- The **local small business owner is more reluctant** to speak up at town meeting supporting housing if the room is full of opposition (fear of economic repercussions on business).
- **Traffic, water, wastewater, land use restrictions and transportation** are more of an issue inhibiting housing than school impacts.
- **Regulatory burdens** are often the same for all projects, making it more difficult for developers to build smaller projects.
- Surprising champions emerge on the need for more housing options
- Individual business people usually **need a platform and prompting** to be vocally involved.
- Interesting anecdotal evidence indicates **community interest in "co-housing" for aging populations** (co-housing: housing consisting of a cluster of private homes/rooms and a shared community space)
- As local opposition to apartments grow, so does the misconceptions of who lives in the apartments. **Two important demographics** we are hearing more from are **divorcees** who sold their houses and **relocating professionals**.

Moving forward: What's next?

As we move forward and continue to be an active business voice in the housing conversation in our region, it will be important for us to connect the housing project to other critical parts of our South Shore 2030 Initiative that are identified as key obstacles to housing growth. These obstacles have been identified through our outreach to business owners, employees, developers, local officials and often fall into the following categories: Zoning & Land Use; Water & Wastewater Infrastructure; and Transportation.

Housing work in 2020

To continue to influence and advocate for the creation of 44,000 new homes (over 2010 inventory) by 2030, the Chamber proposes the following strategies to build upon our work:

- Connecting housing to other critical parts of the South Shore 2030 initiative that have been identified as key obstacles to housing growth.
- Supporting, expanding and encouraging active involvement by the business community in efforts that focus on production of variety of housing types (product that attracts young families and individuals, as well as, baby boomers)
- Using housing as strategy for business recruitment and community development

We will accomplish these strategies by:

Focusing on other key challenges that prohibit housing development to include: zoning, water, wastewater & transportation

- Support efforts to repurpose outdated office parks, downtowns/ town centers/ neighborhood centers, malls/old retail and other underutilized lots for mixed-use and housing.
- Support Transit Oriented Developments & identify potential action steps for 5 transit stops within the region to include ferry, bus, commuter and T.
- Work with businesses and local officials to **identify potential transportation solutions to connect workers and residents to jobs.**

Supporting projects at local town meetings, ZBA hearings, community meetings and other related forums

- **Continue to collaborate with local officials on zoning reform** to allow “higher density” and/or different types of housing than what current zoning allows.
- Work with towns to **identify at least 5 distinct areas** (within the 25-town region) that would be optimal for housing.
- **Support for specific housing developments & town initiatives through** written & verbal support for a minimum of 10 specific housing developments or town initiatives.

Supporting and promoting more of the housing that fits our 2030 vision

- Engage a core group of **20-25 business leaders to attend important housing meetings** at state house and at local public meetings.
- Support **one regional training and education workshop** for business professionals, town planners and officials, and developers.

Creating an avenue for information sharing and a model that can be replicated for other entities to engage in economic development in their own communities.

It's critical that we continue to tackle and talk about these obstacles as they will have a direct impact on the region's receptiveness and ability to produce more housing.