

Building a Culture of Support via Coalitions

Monica C. Keel, Municipal
Engagement Program Manager



What does CHAPA do?

Our 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.

We do that via:

- Advocating for Opportunity
- Expanding Access to Housing
- Developing the Field

Municipal Engagement Initiative

Building support for affordable housing production in communities across the Commonwealth

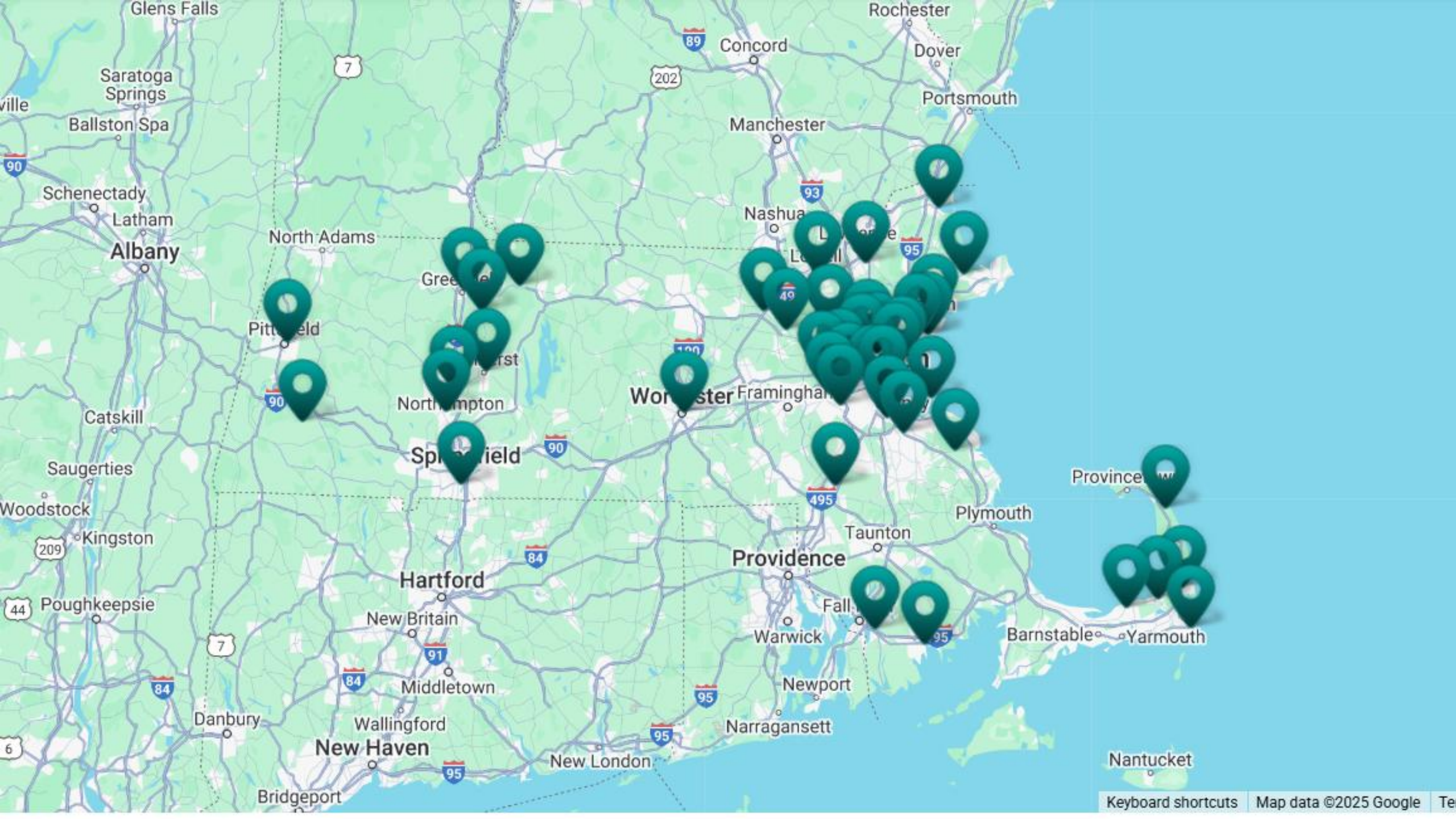
Why MEI?

As laid out in the "Neighborhood Defenders" report, local support can make or break new housing development. Yet many communities in Massachusetts lack a strong pro-housing advocacy group.

Founded in 2018, MEI works with residents on the ground to change the conversation and support existing local efforts in favor of more affordable housing.

Each city or town has its unique housing challenges, so we focus on bringing together big tent coalitions to support affordable housing production.





Big Tent Coalition

- Municipal Staff
- Housing Advocates
- Housing Authorities
- Planning Board
- Town/City Council Member
- Environmentalist Groups
- Religious Leaders
- School Representatives
- Councils on Aging
- Veterans Agencies
- Transit Advocates
- Walk/Bike Advocates
- Commission on Disabilities
- Fair Housing Groups
- Private Developers
- Non-profit Housing Developers
- Social Services
- Civic Groups (i.e. League of Women Voters)
- Interfaith Organizations
- Cultural Groups
- Residents (particularly active ones)
- Tenant Advocates
- Chamber of Commerce or other Business Leaders
- Racial Justice Advocates

Meeting the community where they are

- **Full MEI vs. MEI Lite Communities**
 - Difference in time of engagement and support
 - Launching new coalitions vs. supporting existing coalitions and pro housing groups
 - Continued support post “graduation”
- **Supporting Materials**
 - MEI Toolkit- turning that to a one pager
 - Facilitating peer connections
 - Tailored graduation packets
- **Sustainability Grants**
 - Hiring interns
 - Paying for administrative services
- **Coordination with our policy team**



Eliminating Barriers to Engagement

Giving folks as many ways as possible to engage

- Lack of childcare- provide childcare during the meeting if possible
- Lack of food- provide light refreshments
- Meeting room is not accessible- hybrid meetings, making sure the room is accessible to all when possible
- Language barrier- create marketing materials in different languages, provide interpretation, hold a meeting in a language other than English
- Meeting schedule- evenings on Tuesdays-Thursdays, hybrid meetings
- Lack of transportation- offer carpooling
- Lack of time- share timeframes for action items
- Stipends- people's time is valuable, especially if they are sharing personal stories

What does success look like?



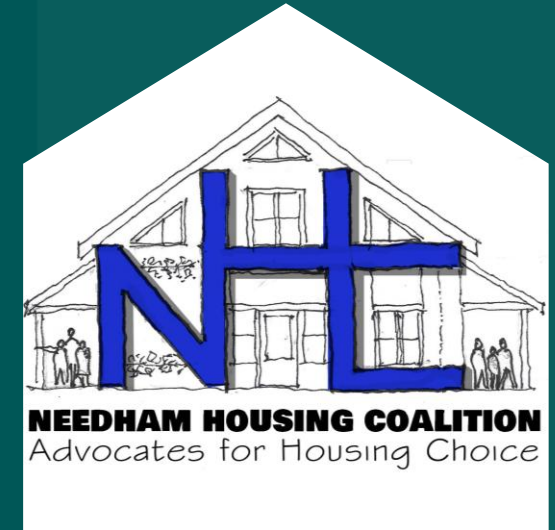
Revere Housing Coalition

- Supported the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund
- Advocated for representation of community members on the Board
- Worked on first Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance



Greater Newburyport HCC

- 5 Community coalition
- Brown School Redevelopment Project
- Public comments pushed this past the finish line



Needham Housing Coalition

- MBTA Communities Campaign
 - Housing Story Videos
- Collaboration with the Charles River Chamber of Commerce

Lessons Learned

- Be open to last minute changes to your agenda
- Focus on values and goals, not numbers
 - Who are we as a community? What do we believe?
- Provide images and metaphors to help people visualize
- Don't overestimate how much people know- do not make assumptions
- Don't waste time trying to convince the inconvincible
- Engagement should start ASAP
- Importance of peer-to-peer learning



Thank you!

Monica C. Keel, Municipal
Engagement Program Manager
mkeel@chapa.org

