



Regional Housing Services Office

May 2023 Newsletter

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Welcome to our inaugural newsletter,
a monthly update on highlights in and around the RHSO service area

Busy with several town grant programs

The RHSO administers several grant programs for RHSO municipalities that have secured funding through a variety of sources, including ARPA pandemic relief funds, federal HOME funds, the Community Preservation Act, and local non-profit funds. Programs include assistance for security deposits and first month's rent, ongoing rental subsidies, mortgage assistance, condo fees, and Small Grants for eligible home repairs. Over the last three years, the RHSO member communities have committed over \$1 million and assisted 315 households through 15 separate programs, with more on the way. Please ask us how we can help your town to run a financial assistance program for your residents.

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THIS MONTH'S TOP STORIES

Town Meetings approve Community Preservation Act funds for housing

All towns in the RHSO service area have adopted the Community Preservation Act by approving a surcharge on local property taxes that is used to fund affordable housing, open space, outdoor recreation, and historic preservation projects. Successful votes at this year's Annual Town Meetings included solar panels for senior and low-income housing in Lexington and Acton (which also added EV charging stations), property acquisition prefunding in Lexington and Sudbury, design and creation of new housing on town land in Concord, and support for residents of subsidized housing in Bedford. The 2023 community housing allocations totaled over \$5.1 million, with 53% as prefunding for new development to local Housing Trusts and non-profits. Way to go!

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Lexington passes multi-family zoning at Town Meeting

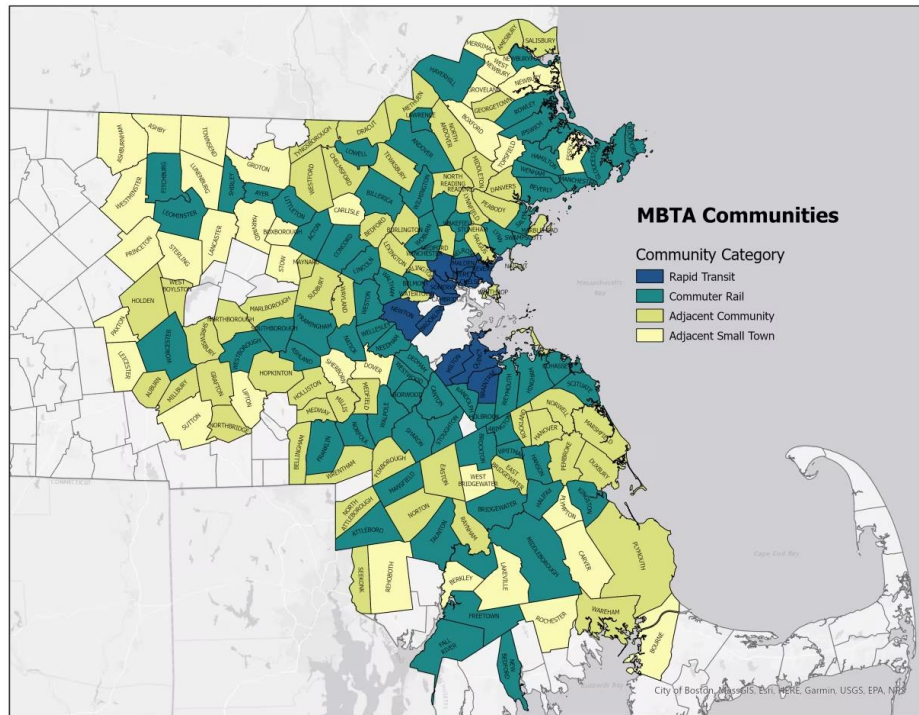


Image: Map of MBTA communities by category (rapid transit, commuter rail, adjacent community, adjacent small town) from mass.gov website

At its April Town Meeting, Lexington became the first Massachusetts community to pass new multi-family zoning to meet the requirements of the state's new Housing Choice legislation, including a 15% affordable component. The [Lexington Observer](#) offers a good summary of the components and amendments that were debated. This outstanding local legislation was even published in the [New Yorker](#) magazine! We will hear from Lexington's Town Planner at our next advisory board meeting to learn about their secret ingredient to make this happen.

RHSO Tenants' Rights Session

We held our first tenants' training this spring! We had nearly 70 people register for our April webinar with Metrowest Legal Services, which focused on different lease types, eviction procedures, reasonable accommodation, and court proceedings. The webinar also provided useful advice and resources to seek legal aid and rental assistance. The presentation recording and slides are posted on [our website](#) for on-demand viewing.

RHSO Homeowner Training

Once again we have scheduled our annual homeowner training, scheduled for May 23. This workshop covers all manner of deed restriction requirements, including Monitoring Agents, refinancing, capital improvements, the Resale Process, and inheritance. We also have a real estate attorney join us for the detailed review of Condominium or Homeowner's Association overview and questions. This session is on zoom, with the following registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4C-he7QHThusaXg-WqVL0Q and QR Code:



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