

*Town of Weymouth  
Massachusetts*

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# Press Release

For Immediate Release – May 16, 2018

## Weymouth designated by state as Housing Choice Community

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today that the Town of Weymouth has been designated a Housing Choice Community by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). As a Housing Choice Community, the Town will have exclusive access to a major new capital grant program for local projects and will receive extra points on a wide variety of other state grants. Mayor Robert Hedlund, Town Planning Director Robert Luongo, and Town Housing Coordinator Jane Kudcey joined Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito at the state house on May 14th for an announcement of the new designation. A total of 67 municipalities will participate in the program in year one.

“Housing continues to be a critical element of revitalization efforts in communities like Weymouth,” **said Mayor Robert Hedlund**. “This Housing Choice designation will give us exclusive admission to new financial resources that we can use to drive meaningful housing production and support our local needs. It’s a great opportunity, and we are getting in on the ground floor.”

Modeled after Massachusetts’ successful Green Communities program, the Housing Choice Designation and Grant Program rewards communities for producing new housing and adopting best practices that maximize land-use and create opportunities for sustainable housing development. Participation in the program is based on the amount or rate of new housing units produced by each community. Municipalities can apply as either a High Production Community, demonstrating at least 500 new units or a five percent increase in housing stock in the last five years, or a Production and Planning Community,

showing at least 300 new units or a three percent increase in housing stock with best practices. Weymouth qualified as a High Production Community with more than 1,000 new units produced since 2012.

As a Housing Choice Community, Weymouth will have exclusive access to the DHCD's new Housing Choice Grant Program, which will make grants up to \$500,000 for local capital projects in Housing Choice Communities. The Town will also receive preferential treatment in other Commonwealth grant and capital funding programs, including MassWorks, Complete Streets, MassDOT capital projects, and PARC and LAND grants. In addition, MassHousing will provide \$2 million in planning assistance to help Housing Choice Communities achieve their affordable housing goals through a new "Planning for Production" program. The planning services offered by MassHousing will vary based on local needs but may include planning for public infrastructure improvements, capacity-building in planning and community development, and assistance in crafting new zoning.

The Housing Choice Designation and Grant Program is part of a larger, multi-pronged Housing Choice Initiative launched by the Baker-Polito Administration in December 2017 to substantially increase housing production across the Commonwealth. According to the DCHD, Massachusetts home prices have increased at the fastest rate in the nation, and metropolitan Boston rent prices rank among the highest in the country. [Governor Charlie Baker states](#) that it has been decades since the state has produced enough housing to keep pace with demand. To address this challenge, the Housing Choice Initiative will deliver more than \$10 million in incentives, grant funding, and technical assistance per year to help Massachusetts cities and towns drive housing production that is appropriate for their communities.

The Housing Choice Initiative will track progress toward a new statewide goal of 135,000 new housing units created by 2025, or about 17,000 new units per year. This goal requires sustaining the level of production over the last three years and represents a 26 percent increase in housing production compared to the last eight years. Communities who received Housing Choice Designation have produced a total of nearly 60,000 new housing units in the last five years.

"Municipalities are on the front lines of development issues," **said Town Planning Director Robert Luongo**. "In many ways, we are the drivers for whether or not housing is built, which makes us the best partners for pursuing sustainable housing production. The Housing Choice Designation and Grant Program is a great partnership opportunity, and we thank the Baker-Polito Administration for making it possible."

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