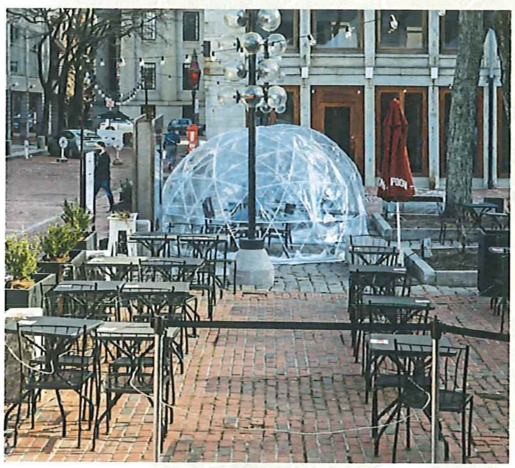
The Municipal Empowerment Act, S.2571

MAPC is grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for prioritizing legislation that supports cities and towns. Governor Healey's administration hosted listening sessions over the past year and listened to cities and towns top needs when creating "The Municipal Empowerment Act," S.2571, which includes more than 80 policies. MAPC is in strong support of the following measures to support cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth.

Key Legislative Provisions in the Municipal Empowerment Act:



Makes Permanent Pandemic Era Changes:

- Enable local option for remote or hybrid meetings for public bodies in perpetuity.
- Enable local licensing authorities with local approval to grant approval for outdoor food and alcohol services without further state approval.
- Enable restaurants to access licenses to sell to-go alcoholic beverages.

Municipal Governance:

- Increase the maximum bond term for school projects from 30 years to 40 years.
- Allow municipalities to amortize over 3 years any deficit related to a declared emergency.
- Allow municipalities to enter joint cooperative services for local financial officials.
- Allow municipalities to enforce the statutory prohibition on keeping double poles up after 90 days after passing a local ordinance. Penalties up to $1,000 could be imposed per occurrence.

MAPC
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Contact the Government Affairs team:

Leah Robins,
Director of Government Affairs
lrobins@mapc.org

Georgia Barlow,
Government Affairs Specialist
gbarlow@mapc.org

The Municipal Empowerment Act, S.2571

Continued Key Legislative Provisions in the Municipal Empowerment Act:

Procurement Updates:

- Equalize Ch. 30B thresholds for advertised procurements to $100K for all municipal purchasing, not just schools.
- Remove the requirement to post certain contracts on COMMBUYS.
- Amend cooperative purchasing language to make it easier for municipalities to select multiple vendors to fulfill an RFP.
- Update procurement language to make it easier for municipalities to procure and utilize electric school buses.

Local Option Taxes:

- Establish a new local option motor vehicle excise surcharge of 5%.
- Increase the ceiling for local option lodging tax from 6% to 7% (and 6.5% to 7.5% in Boston) and local option meals tax from .75% to 1%.

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MAPC urges local officials and residents to contact your legislators to share your support of these policies and investments and to share your experiences accessing housing in your region. Learn more about MAPC's full legislative agenda at: mapc.ma/Legislative-Priorities

Send a Municipal Empowerment Act Advocacy Letter at:
mapc.ma/MEA-letter-template

TRIC
Legislative Breakfast

April 5th, 2024
8:30am – 10:30am
Norwood Space Center, Norwood MA 02062

Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Medfield, Milton, Norwood, Randolph, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, Westwood

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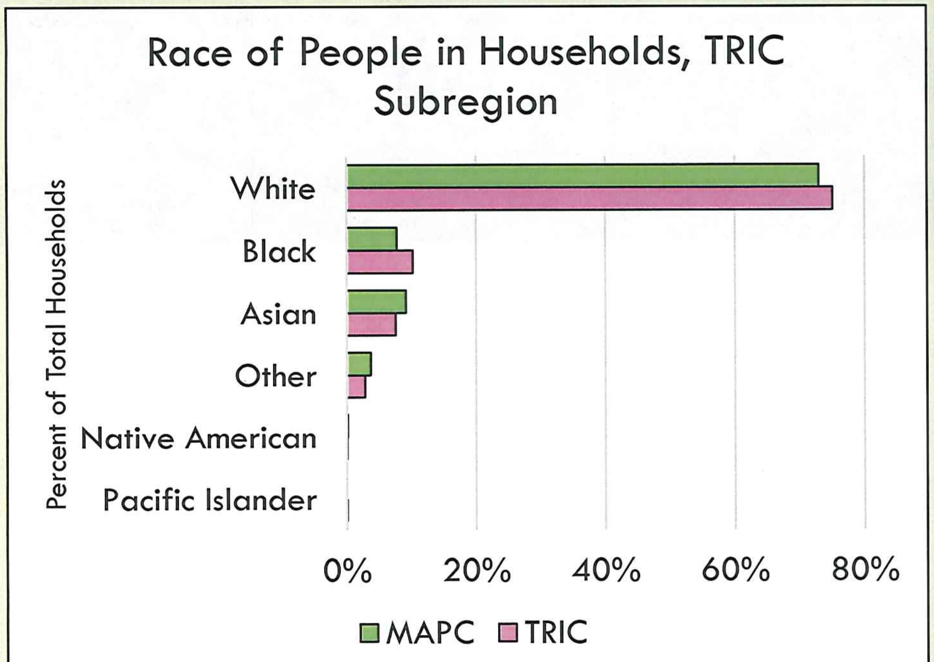
MAPC
METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

CURRENT CONDITIONS

MAPC has compiled subregional snapshots to understand local housing conditions and highlight how the Affordable Homes Act and other state-level investments and policies can support cities and towns.

Housing choice impacts diversity: Zoning regulations have resulted in fewer housing choices for TRIC residents. That said, TRIC has a similar percentage of people of color living in households as the MAPC regionwide average.



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2018-2022 5-year Estimates.

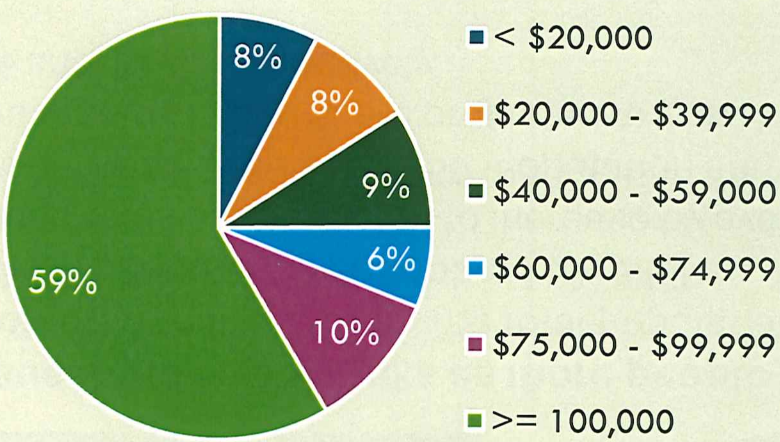
Few young householders: Only **12% of householders in TRIC are under 35 years old,** 8 percentage points lower than MAPC overall. Additionally, 33% of TRIC households have children, 5 percentage points higher than the MAPC average. In the coming years families may decide to downsize once their kids move out. With few young people already living in TRIC, it may be difficult to attract new families to move into TRIC and fewer families with children will live in the subregion.

Clean energy transition pending: 23% of households in TRIC heat their homes using oil and 59% with natural gas – similar to MAPC regionwide averages. Replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources limits the amount of indoor air pollution residents are exposed to and moves our region closer to reaching our state's sustainability goals.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Fewer Rental Options: Only **25% of TRIC households are estimated to be renter occupied compared to 42% in the MAPC region.** Fewer rental options mean young people, aging residents, and others with lower incomes may not be able to live in TRIC. Renter occupied households tend to be more diverse due to homeownership in the state historically being less accessible to non-white residents.

Unaffordable Housing: 31% of households in TRIC earn less than $75,000 per year and are likely eligible for affordable housing.



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2018-2022 5-year Estimates.

88% of households earning below $35,000 per year and **67% earning $35,000 to $75,000 per year are cost-burdened**.

Subsidized Housing Inventory: Over half of TRIC communities have more than 10% of their total units on the SHI. While TRIC has just over 10,000 homes listed on the SHI, when you remove market-rate units only 4,100 (3.8% of all units) are affordable homes (Source: Housing Navigator).

Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) Units

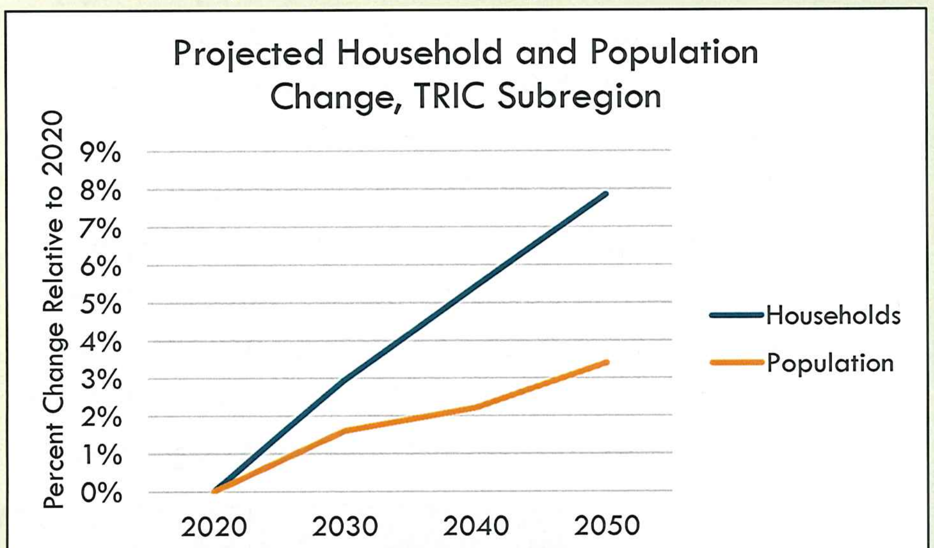
Municipality	Housing Units	SHI Units	SHI Units (%)	Units to 10% Threshold
Canton	9,875	1,173	11.88%	0
Dedham	10,412	1,125	10.80%	0
Dover	2,018	57	2.82%	145
Foxborough	7,652	878	11.47%	0
Medfield	4,432	393	8.87%	50
Norwood	13,614	1,228	9.02%	133
Randolph	12,885	1,268	9.84%	20
Sharon	6,526	690	10.57%	0
Stoughton	11,698	1,294	11.06%	0
Walpole	10,001	656	6.56%	344
Westwood	5,760	610	10.59%	0
TRIC	106,722	10,776	10.10%	0
MAPC	1,412,118	158,875	11.25%	0

MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC)

PROJECTIONS

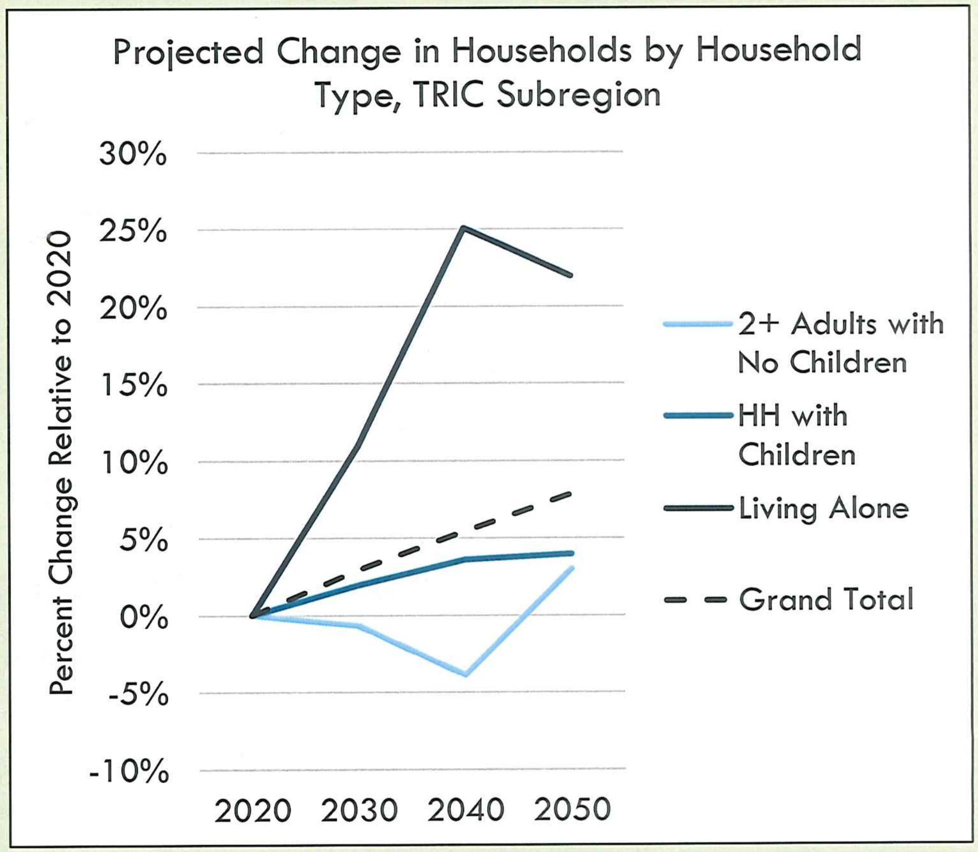
Household size shrinks as more people are projected to live alone : The total population in TRIC is projected to grow about 3% while households are projected to increase by over 8% between 2020 and 2050. Population and households in MAPC are projected to grow by 9% and 13%, respectively.

The number of single-person households is projected to increase by up to 25% by 2040 (relative to 2020). Households with children or two or more adults without kids (e.g., roommates or empty nesters) are projected to increase by less than 5% by 2050.



Source: MAPC Socioeconomic Projections 2010-2050.

On average, household sizes are projected to shrink. Smaller households living in homes that do not match their needs can drive up housing costs for larger households eager to move to the subregion. For example, when empty nesters cannot downsize to a smaller home in their community, there are fewer homes available that meet the needs of larger families.

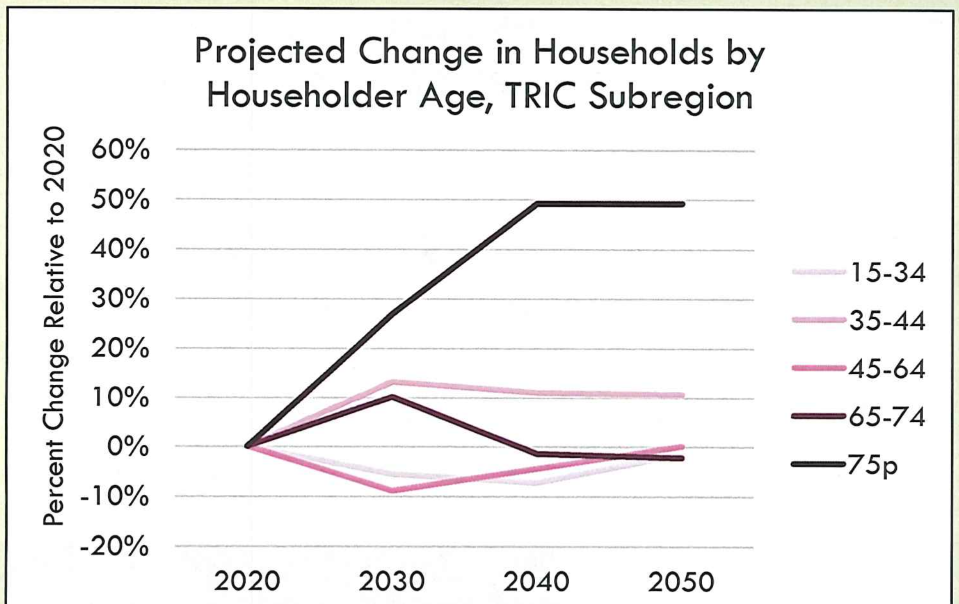


Source: MAPC Socioeconomic Projections 2010-2050.

PROJECTIONS

Householders aging across the subregion: Households in TRIC are projected to become much older over the projection period – **households over the age of 75 are estimated to grow by more than 50%** by 2050. Households between the ages of 35 and 64 years old, on the other hand, are projected to grow by less than 10%.

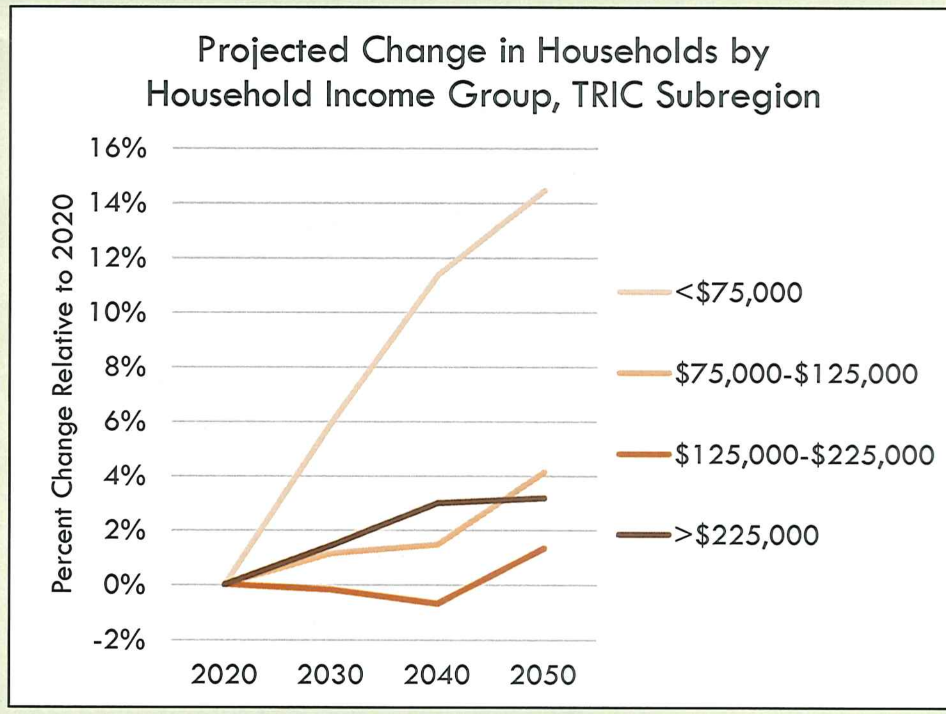
Aging households will need to retrofit their homes with appropriate accommodations or move to smaller houses more conducive to aging in place in their communities.



Source: MAPC Socioeconomic Projections 2010-2050.

Growth in households most likely to be cost burdened: Households earning less than $75,000 per year are projected to grow by over 14% in the TRIC subregion over the projection period. Households earning greater than $225,000 per year, meanwhile, are projected to increase by nearly 3%.

As more households earning less than $75,000 form and housing costs increase, a greater number of households in the subregion will become cost burdened.



Source: MAPC Socioeconomic Projections 2010-2050.

ANALYSIS

Transfer fee is a tool to achieve affordability goals: If all TRIC communities levied a 2% local option transfer fee on all transactions in 2022, the subregion could have raised nearly **$18 million** for affordable housing.

Of the roughly 3,200 transactions in the region that year, **just 544** would have required sellers to pay a transfer fee.

Transfer fee revenue can help communities reach and exceed their minimum 10% SHI threshold. Building more modern, affordable housing will:

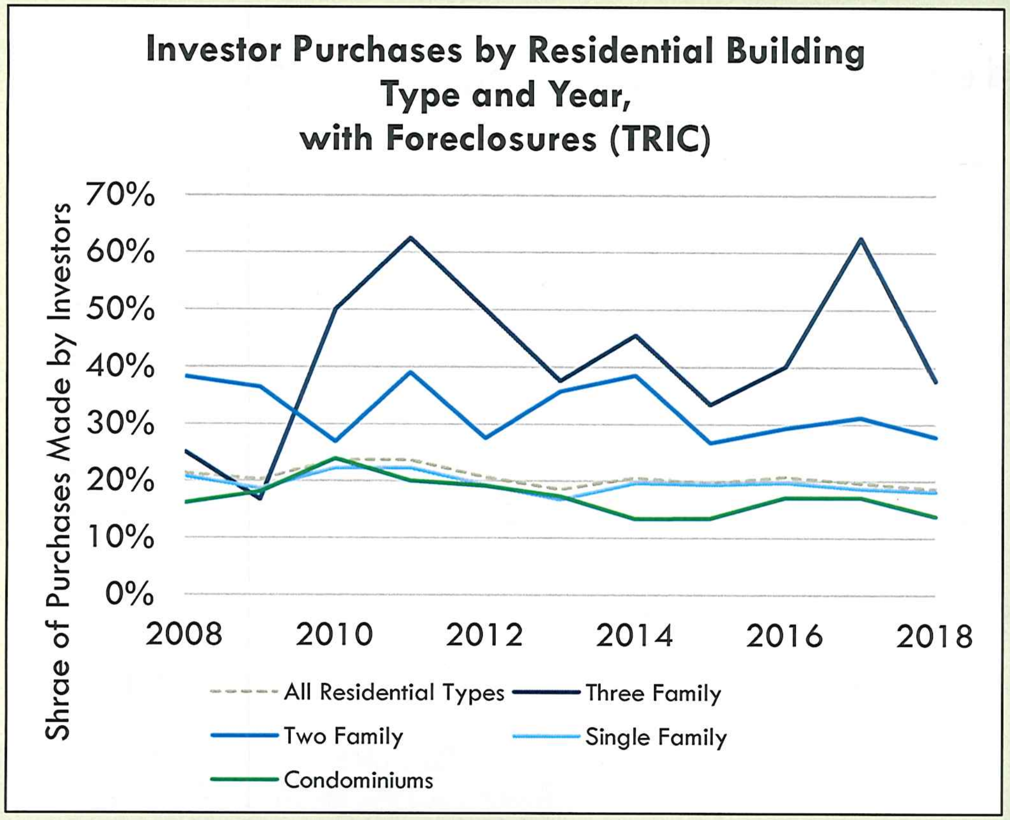
- Reduce the number of cost-burdened households
- Reduce the number of housing units reliant on fossil fuels for home heating
- Provide more flexible rental housing options

Estimated Transfer Fee Revenue

Year	Subregion	Total Sales	Total Eligible Sales	0.5% Fee	1% Fee	2% Fee
2018	TRIC	3727	261	$8,517,930.44	$17,035,860.88	$34,071,721.76
2019	TRIC	3621	249	$4,313,859.57	$8,627,719.13	$17,255,438.26
2020	TRIC	3511	315	$3,817,668.39	$7,635,336.77	$15,270,673.54
2021	TRIC	3809	484	$4,090,199.10	$8,180,398.19	$16,360,796.38
2022	TRIC	3165	544	$4,499,608.41	$8,999,216.82	$17,998,433.64

ANALYSIS

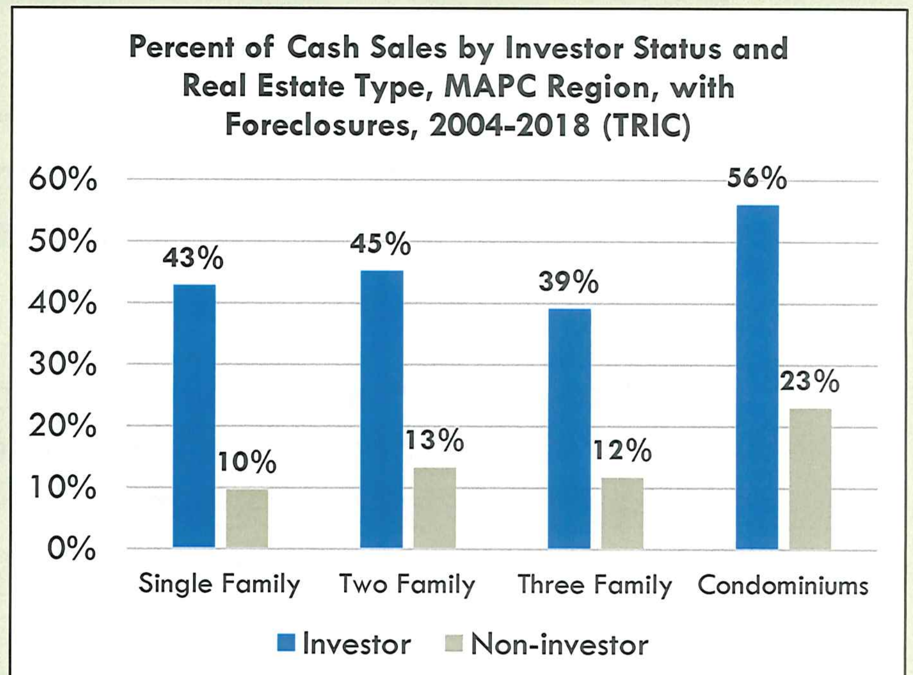
Since 2008, investors bought, on average, **1 in 5 properties in TRIC**. On average over the last decade investors bought 20% of single-family homes and about 30% of two-family homes. Investor purchases of three-family homes has varied considerably due to the small number of sales annually. These trends are similar to the whole MAPC region and indicate challenges for prospective homebuyers.



Source: Warren Group 2000-2022. MAPC Analytical team analysis.

Cash purchases predominant for investors: Buyers who can purchase property in cash have an advantage over those who finance their home. as sellers often prefer the faster closing time and limited paperwork that comes with cash sales.

In TRIC communities, **investors were four times more likely to purchase a single-family home with cash** than non-investors.



Source: Warren Group 2000-2022. MAPC Analytical team analysis.

RESOURCES

DataCommon is MAPC's open data website. It contains tabular and spatial data for Massachusetts, the MAPC region, and all subregions, counties, municipalities, census tracks, and block groups. The site contains data on topics such as population demographics, the economy, the environment, housing, land use, and public health. https://datacommon.mapc.org/

MAPC has prepared updated **projections** of population change, household growth, and housing demand for Metro Boston and its municipalities to help the region and its communities plan for a changing and uncertain future. https://www.mapc.org/learn/projections/

MAPC's **Homes for Profit** report examines the prevalence, characteristics, and spatial patterns of residential property speculation in Greater Boston. The report is paired with an interactive map that lets users filter and visualize a range of municipal and census tract level data related to investor activity in the state. http://homesforprofit.mapc.org/

As part of the **MetroCommon 2050 plan**, MAPC has published numerous research reports that explore some of the most important realities of our region including issues around climate change, land use, housing, and employment. https://metrocommon.mapc.org/find-out/publications/all%20topic%20areas

For more information, please email Brandon Stanaway (bstanaway@mapc.org) or datacommon @mapc.org