



THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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495/MetroWest commission talks residential development

Representative Kate Hogan, Senator Karen Spilka, and Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs Juan Vega co-chaired a meeting of the 495/MetroWest Suburban Edge Community Commission at the Acton Town Hall on Friday, November 18th.

The Commission, established by the legislature in 2015, studies the development challenges experienced by the Commonwealth's 35 "edge communities"—communities that are not adjacent to Gateway Cities with a population up to 35,000—including transportation, infrastructure, residential development, and reuse of former industrial facilities. The November 18th meeting focused on residential development.

Senator Jamie Eldridge (D-Acton), who sits on the commission and represents several towns in the 495/MetroWest region, hosted Friday's meeting in Acton. "Investing in housing development is an integral part of sustainable economic growth for any community," State Senator Jamie Eldridge said. "Residential development creates jobs, improves access to affordable housing for more Massachusetts residents, and provides a boost for local businesses."

Through June 2017 the Commission will hold regular meetings in towns across the 495/MetroWest region to hear from state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that have experience with the various development challenges the Commission seeks to address. With the help of its research partner, the UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center, the Commission will then develop policy responses and recommendations to ensure that edge communities can participate in state development initiatives and benefit from state resources.

At the November 18th meeting, the Commission heard from Undersecretary of Housing and Community Development Chrystal Kornegay, who gave a presentation titled "Residential Development that Drives Economic Growth." In addition, Dr. Michael Goodman, Executive Director of the UMass Dartmouth Public Policy Center, provided data on housing market trends and conditions in the 495/MetroWest region.

"As the Commission seeks to identify development challenges in the 495/MetroWest region, ensuring adequate housing opportunities to sustain our growing workforce is at the forefront of these discussions," said Representative Kate Hogan (D-Stow). "Today's meeting with Undersecretary Kornegay and Dr. Goodman offered insight into current housing trends and a framework of issues, challenges, and opportunities on how to move our region forward."

"Stable, safe and affordable housing is critical for family wellbeing and the physical, emotional and educational success of children in MetroWest," said Senator Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). "Today's discussion is an important step in our efforts to connect individuals, families and vulnerable people in our communities with the housing and supportive services they need."

“We were fortunate to have Undersecretary Kornegay join us to share an update on the state’s housing programs, and to have a comprehensive analysis of our regional housing market from Dr. Goodman, the Executive Director of the UMass Dartmouth, Public Policy Center,” said Paul Matthews, Executive Director of the 495/MetroWest Partnership. “In the resulting discussion, Commission members and municipal officials offered an impressive range of perspectives and experiences on how they’re addressing housing issues.”

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