



The Evolving Landscape of Social Housing in New England

Friday, April 18, 2025

[Online](#) and in Piper Auditorium, Harvard Graduate School of Design
(48 Quincy Street, Cambridge)

In response to persistent and worsening housing affordability challenges, the idea of “social housing” has been gaining momentum across the US. While the details differ, social housing proposals all call for creating permanently affordable housing while also expanding the public sector’s direct role in financing, developing, and/or managing projects; emphasizing broad inclusion by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status; and giving residents more control over their homes. In this half-day event, practitioners, policymakers, advocates, and researchers will discuss both existing models of social housing in New England and new efforts to create affordable, high-quality homes.

Detailed Agenda

1:00 pm **Welcome and Overview**

[Chris Herbert](#), Managing Director, Joint Center for Housing Studies

[Susanne Schindler](#), Research Fellow, Joint Center for Housing Studies

1:15 pm **Keynote: Why Social Housing?**

The Hon. [Mike Connolly](#), Massachusetts State Representative, 26th Middlesex District Representative Connolly is the lead sponsor of HD.4035, “An Act Advancing the Massachusetts Social Housing Program.” The bill calls for the state to issue \$100 million in bonds to initially capitalize a Social Housing Production Revolving Loan Fund. Local and regional housing authorities would apply to the Fund for financing of new, mixed-income, publicly owned housing. He believes this approach could help the state reach its goal of producing 200,000 new housing units by 2030 and do so in ways that would complement other modes of housing production, better target scarce public resources, and efficiently create truly affordable housing.

1:30 pm **Panel 1: Enabling Public Development**

For decades, the provision of housing by the public sector was considered a failure that should not be repeated. The expanding affordability crisis, coupled with examples of highly effective public agencies, has changed that narrative. How can the public sector build sufficient internal capacity to play a larger role in planning and development? What political arguments, financial innovations, and institutional strategies are mobilized toward that end? And how are housing authorities responding to the demand to serve households with a broader range of incomes than those they traditionally serve?

Speakers:

[Kenzie Bok](#), Administrator, Boston Housing Authority

[Deborah Goddard](#), Secretary, Rhode Island Department of Housing

[Margaret Moran](#), Deputy Director of Development, Cambridge Housing Authority

[Susanne Schindler](#), Research Fellow, Joint Center for Housing Studies (moderator)

2:30 pm **Break**

2:45 pm **Panel 2: Empowering Residents**

Calls for social housing emphasize the need for residents and the community to have a stronger voice in the development and management of their homes. What lessons can be drawn from community land trusts, resident-owned communities, and tenant unions? How can we balance resident control and financial stability? How can other priorities from the tenant justice movement—tenant opportunity to purchase, rent stabilization, fair cause eviction—inform new social housing models? And how can new social housing proposals inform established practices?

Speakers:

[Peter Fousek](#), Secretary-Treasurer, Connecticut Tenants Union

[Michael Monte](#), Chief Executive Officer, Champlain Housing Trust

[Mary O’Hara](#), Executive Vice President, ROC Movement

[Dana McKinney White](#), Assistant Professor of Urban Design, Harvard Graduate School of Design (moderator)

3:45 pm **Panel 3: Expanding Financial Supports**

Social housing requires financial support to bridge the gap between what it costs to produce and operate homes and what low- and moderate-income households can afford. Tax credits and housing vouchers—the principal sources available today—are limited and fund only a small share of the housing needed. How can new social housing efforts secure stable financial support to acquire and sustain an expanding supply of quality homes? How can revolving loan funds, mixed-income neighborhood trusts, and group-equity cooperatives contribute to long-term financial stability? Which strategies best address the scale and breadth of the housing crisis?

Speakers:

[Tanya Hahnel](#), Project Manager, East Boston CDC

[Chrystal Kornegay](#), Chief Executive Officer, MassHousing

[Craig Saddlemire](#), Cooperative Development Organizer, Raise-Op Housing Cooperative

[Rachel Weber](#), Professor of Urban Planning, Harvard Graduate School of Design (moderator)

4:45 pm **Wrap-Up: Responses and Reflections**

[Rachel Bratt](#), Professor Emerita, Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University

The Hon. [Mike Connolly](#), Massachusetts State Representative, 26th Middlesex District

[Chris Herbert](#), Managing Director, Joint Center for Housing Studies (moderator)

5:15 pm **Reception**