MHP’s Rural Housing Initiative Overview

June 10, 2016
MHP is a self-supporting quasi-public nonprofit organization that works with state government and with business, civic and community leaders to increase the supply of affordable housing across the Commonwealth.
Rural Initiative Approach

- Listening tour
- Research and data collection
- Investigate best practices from other states
- Steering committee
What’s affecting rural housing?

• Job losses and underemployment

• Rapid increase in elderly population

• Second home market pressures in some regions

• Policies and programs that don’t recognize unique challenges
Isolation

RURAL MASSACHUSETTS

Density
- Less than 500 people/sq mi.
- More than 500 people
- County Boundary

Data source: US Census 2000 and 2010, SF 1 100% file
Infrastructure

AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC WATER AND SEWER

- Full water and sewer (75% or more served)
- Partial water and sewer (less than 75%)
- Public sewer only (full or partial)
- Public water only (full or partial)
- No public water or sewer systems
- Too little or no data available

Sources of data include individual municipalities' Berkshire Regional Planning Commission; Pioneer Valley Regional Planning Commission; Franklin County Regional Council of Governments; Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission; Sewer Availability report "Percnell Homes on Public Sewer," 2004, the Pioneer Institute; "Final Report: Water and Sewer Service Area Maps (by Town), Taunton River Watershed Project." Phase I Final Report, Item 13. Horsley Witten Group, 2005. No guarantees on accuracy are made.
Rural Massachusetts

• Rural communities have a broad, and significant, geographic reach
  – 167 towns total, in 13 of the Commonwealth’s 14 counties
  – Rural towns are home to 829,000 total residents
  – Roughly 12.5% of the state’s total population live in rural communities

Source: 2000-2014 5-year ACS
Rural Massachusetts

- As a unit, rural communities have grown far more quickly than the Commonwealth.
- Between 2000 and 2014, rural towns saw 6.3% population growth, compared to 4.9% growth statewide.
- However, rapid topline growth data masks deeply divergent regional fortunes.
- Rural towns in Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Plymouth, and parts of Worcester County function like suburban bedroom communities.
- The Cape and Islands, the four western counties, and outlying parts of Worcester County have struggled with stagnant or negative population growth, and a flat or shrinking jobs base.

Source: 2000-2014 5-year ACS
Aging Population

- Rural communities are older than the state as a whole, and aging more quickly.
Stagnant Incomes

- Rural communities generally have lower-than-average incomes, and many are growing more slowly than the state as a whole

Source: 2014 5-year ACS
Employment Breakdown

Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties

2001-2005

2006-2010

2011-2014

- 11 (Agriculture)
- 31-33 (Manufacturing)
- 44-45 (Retail)
- 61 (Education)
- 62 (Medical)
- 54 (Professional)
- 71 + 72 (Tourism)

Other
Employment Breakdown

Worcester County

2001-2005

2006-2010

2011-2014

- 11 (Agriculture)
- 31-33 (Manufacturing)
- 44-45 (Retail)
- 61 (Education)
- 62 (Medical)
- 54 (Professional)
- 71 + 72 (Tourism)
Employment Breakdown

Massachusetts

2001-2005

- 36% Other
- 11% Agriculture
- 13% Manufacturing
- 16% Retail
- 12% Education
- 8% Medical
- 4% Professional
- 0% Tourism

2006-2010

- 35% Other
- 11% Agriculture
- 13% Manufacturing
- 9% Retail
- 18% Education
- 4% Medical
- 13% Professional
- 0% Tourism

2011-2014

- 20% Other
- 12% Agriculture
- 10% Manufacturing
- 11% Retail
- 13% Education
- 0% Medical
- 4% Professional
- 4% Tourism
Policy Recommendation

• Establish an Office of Rural Policy

• Maryland model: The Rural Maryland Council (RMC)
  • Member-based organization bringing together citizens, organizations, and local, state and federal government to advocate for interests of rural MD
  • Manages a data clearinghouse in partnership with a local university
Section XX. Chapter 23A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:

Section 66. (a) There shall be within the executive office of housing and economic development, but not subject to the supervision or control of the executive office, a rural policy advisory commission. The mission of the commission shall be to enhance the economic vitality of rural communities, defined as municipalities with a population density of less than 500 persons per square mile, and to advance the health and well-being of rural residents.
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Rural Agenda

- A multi-pronged initiative to promote the economic welfare of rural communities
- Leveraging the work of regional planning agencies
- Aimed at stabilizing negative demographic trends, and providing a platform for future growth
- Providing a check on the urbanization of poverty
- Supporting the work of the Commonwealth’s Rural Policy Advisory Commission

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner for Targeted Local Economic Development</th>
<th>Deliver Smart Housing Development</th>
<th>Expand Workforce and Industry Cluster Development</th>
<th>Support Entrepreneurship</th>
<th>Leverage Local Agriculture and Food Policy</th>
<th>Enhance Quality of Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Assemble a responsive state leadership team to hear local concerns and assess development opportunities on a regular basis</td>
<td>- Link housing policies to regional demographic drivers</td>
<td>- Promote the growth of regional industries</td>
<td>- Retain talent and drive in-migration by aiding startup activity</td>
<td>- Drive stable, sustainable family income by:</td>
<td>- Celebrate, and deepen, the unique character of rural regions</td>
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<td>- Deliver customized data on regional economic assets</td>
<td>- Prioritize funding for rehabilitation and community-scale development</td>
<td>- Foster upward mobility by supporting strong workforce pipelines that link job-seekers to regionally significant employment clusters</td>
<td>- Create regional economic opportunity through new business formation</td>
<td>- Increasing market access</td>
<td>- Support the creation of livable communities through cultural districts and other quality of life anchors</td>
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<td>- Conduct site assessments</td>
<td>- Unlock smart growth development, oriented around town centers, existing services, and infrastructure</td>
<td>- Invest in vocational education and training equipment</td>
<td>- Leverage broadband expansion</td>
<td>- Advancing direct-to-consumer sales</td>
<td>- Highlight natural attractions, art, and institutions of creativity</td>
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<td>- Discuss funding opportunities</td>
<td>- Encourage the development of housing options for families and individuals, across all income ranges</td>
<td>- Support programs, such as internships, that connect youth with leading regional employers</td>
<td>- Support shared workspaces</td>
<td>- Aiding cooperative processing and distribution systems</td>
<td>- Deepen links across rural regions, to build productive partnerships</td>
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<td>- Match opportunities with communities seeking growth</td>
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<td>- Maintain a focus on target populations, including veterans</td>
<td>- Get up existing successes</td>
<td>- Boost food-based entrepreneurship as a driver of regional employment</td>
<td>- Share best practices</td>
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<td>- Models include LEVER, Valley Venture Mentors, and Cape Cod Young Professionals</td>
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