

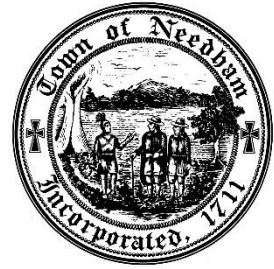
AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

Meeting Agenda

4:30 p.m. August 15, 2023

Needham Town Hall

Great Plain Room & Zoom



Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023, meetings of public bodies may be conducted virtually provided that adequate access is provided to the public.

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Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89766196266>
Webinar ID: 897 6619 6266

1. Approve Minutes from March 6, 2023
2. Small Repair Grant Program Update
3. Presentation on MAPC Parking Study: Adi Nochur, MAPC Senior Transportation Planner
4. League of Women Voters Study Update
5. Select Board FY24 Goals
6. Appointment to Town-Financed Community Housing Oversight Committee (T-CHOC)

NEEDHAM AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

* MINUTES *

March 6, 2023

5:04 p.m. A meeting of the Needham Affordable Housing Trust was convened by the Select Board Chair Marianne Cooley as a hybrid meeting in Needham Town Hall, Select Board Chambers and via Zoom. Also present were Matthew Borrelli, Kevin Keane, Heidi Frail, Marcus Nelson, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick, Housing Trust At-large Member Avery Newton, Assistant Town Manager Katie King, Support Services Manager Myles Tucker, Director of Planning and Community Development Lee Newman, and Community Housing Coordinator Karen Sunnarborg.

Approval of Minutes – Ms. Frail moved that the Minutes from the December 6, 2022 meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Borrelli. **Approved: Unanimous 7-0.**

Small Repair Grant Program – Ms. Fitzpatrick informed members that a policy statement had been prepared for the Small Repair Grant Program based on the application materials that have been used in the past as well as three recommended changes. First, there is a required one-year wait period before a former participant can reapply for program funds up to a maximum of \$7,000 for any one address from the date of the last payment. The recommendation is that the Town Manager be able to waive this requirement in an emergency. The second recommendation is that the existing requirement that 2% of the difference between the property's assessed value and outstanding liens be added to income to determine eligibility be eliminated as so many applicants with limited incomes have not been able to participate because of this provision. Third, the program has operated two funding rounds per year but the recommended change would allow any uncommitted funding be available on a rolling basis. Ms. Cooley mentioned that some of these recommendations have been discussed in the past, particularly the 2% net equity requirement. She added that the changes could support people staying in their homes.

Motion: Mr. Borrelli moved to approve the three recommended changes in the Small Repair Grant Program requirements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nelson. Unanimous: 7-0.

Needham Housing Plan – Ms. Cooley welcomed Jeanne McKnight and Natasha Espada to the meeting, the Co-Chairs of the Housing Plan Working Group and members of the Planning Board. She acknowledged that the Housing Plan includes a great deal of information that will likely keep the Town busy for many years. She added that the Planning Board is taking up the Plan's recommendation to amend the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw, and asked Jeanne and Natasha to offer information from the Housing Plan on which the Housing Trust should focus.

Ms. Espada acknowledged that the Housing Trust has been working effectively since it was established in 2017, but should consider pursuing partnerships and coalitions with other housing stakeholders and developers to make progress in meeting the guiding principles and housing goals included in the Housing Plan. For example, it might consider better defining its mission, role, and responsibilities and ensure accountability in the implementation of the Housing Plan. It might also broaden its membership to bring in a wider range of voices and expertise. Ms. Espada added that the Housing Plan recommended a role for the Planning Board in ensuring that all parties are working together towards implementation.

Ms. McKnight indicated that the Housing Plan proposed that the Housing Trust expand its mission statement to address the wide range of housing needs identified in the Plan, beyond the focus on low- and moderate-income households with incomes at or below 80% of area median income. Another recommendation was for the Housing Trust to utilize its powers more fully under MGL Chapter 44, Section 55C and become more proactively involved in housing development. She offered some examples of how other towns are using their Housing Trusts to create new housing opportunities. The League of Women Voters (LWV) has proposed to conduct a study of Housing Trusts, looking at governance and financing issues as well as model projects. The League will propose the study at its Annual Town Meeting in May and then conduct the study over the following several months.

Ms. McKnight also brought up the issue of monitoring and the importance of annual reporting on housing production. Ms. Cooley indicated that some of this work is being reported as part of the school needs data. She then asked whether towns that have Housing Authorities are working with them or Housing Trusts on housing projects. Ms. Sunnarborg indicated that the examples that Ms. McKnight offered had Housing Authorities but the Housing Trusts were coordinating the projects. Ms. Cooley added that Needham has chosen to allocate its CPA funding for NHA projects.

Ms. Frail said that she attended a Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) conference and most of the lectures involved housing, featuring how communities have used Housing Trusts with varying amounts of success. She added that there might be a way forward on developing Town-owned or donated land for housing development. Ms. Espada interjected that there are a lot of potential opportunities to explore. Ms. Cooley indicated that the Housing Trust, as currently set up, does not preclude a wide range of scenarios for pursuing projects. Mr. Nelson suggested that it will be important to learn what we can from other communities on strategies for increasing housing production. Ms. McKnight interjected that payments in-lieu of actual units as part of inclusionary zoning provisions could provide an added financial resource for the Housing Trust. Ms. Cooley responded that the MBTA Communities zoning will also help boost production.

Mr. Borrelli suggested establishing target amounts of funding for the Housing Trust from Town Meeting as well as development incentives. He added that the Housing

Trust might want to explore how it can help tenants facing rising rents and provide input on proposed Local Initiative Program (LIP) projects. Ms. McKnight asked if we should look at models in comparable communities to which Ms. Cooley suggested the LWV study should help. Mr. Borrelli mentioned that there is a Conservation Fund to acquire property and a similar situation could be created for the Housing Trust so it can respond to development opportunities quickly as they may arise. Ms. McKnight said that she currently serves as the Planning Board representative on the CPC, pointing out that the CPC focuses its funding on specific projects. Ms. Cooley added that the CPC is maxing out its contributions for NHA's projects, and perhaps funding can be provided annually as part of the Town's budget. Ms. Espada indicated that it was essential that any funding raised be spent wisely.

Mr. Keane asked whether a surcharge on permit fees might be considered in support of the Housing Trust. Ms. McKnight responded that this might require state legislative approval through a home rule petition. She also mentioned that the Town has been typically applying a 12.5% inclusionary zoning requirement but the MBTA Communities Guidelines require a special feasibility study and DHCD approval to go above the 10% affordability level. This study will likely have to be prepared over the next year.

Ms. Newton asked how government and financing models will inform the Housing Plan. Ms. McKnight indicated that the Housing Plan has been approved and provides guidance in moving forward towards implementation. Ms. Espada added that the Town needs to be proactive and collaborative in the implementation process and is why both she and Ms. McKnight are present at this meeting. Ms. Cooley observed that the Housing Plan is not an official state Housing Production Plan with annual housing production goals, and that the Plan also does not include the trickle down impacts from the implementation of various actions. She expressed her hope that development can occur in such a way as to address housing needs while maintaining school enrollment levels.

Ms. Fitzpatrick questioned whether the current composition of the Housing Trust is the best option for moving forward as members of the Select Board are so busy on so many fronts. She added that meeting twice a year is insufficient. Ms. Cooley suggested that meeting demands will pick up when the Housing Trust has a specific project. Ms. Espada expressed the need for the Housing Trust to incorporate members from different boards and committees as well as a wider range of community representatives.

Mr. Keane raised the issue of who would administer the Safety at Home Program that is recommended as part of the Housing Plan. Ms. Sunnarborg said the program had been operated by the Council on Aging and Public Health Department but ended when the grant ran out. The Plan suggests some consideration for reintroducing the program. Mr. Keane also brought up the redevelopment of the

Stephen Palmer property, also included in the Housing Plan, and asked whether the Housing Trust should play a role in the project.

Other Business – Ms. Cooley inquired about high rent increases for tenants living in affordable 40B units and asked Ms. Sunnarborg to forward information on this.

Next Meeting Date – There was a discussion of the schedule for upcoming meetings. It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on June 7th at 6:00 p.m.

5:50 p.m. **Motion: Mr. Borrelli moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Ms. Newton. Unanimous: 7-0.**

As of 8-2-23

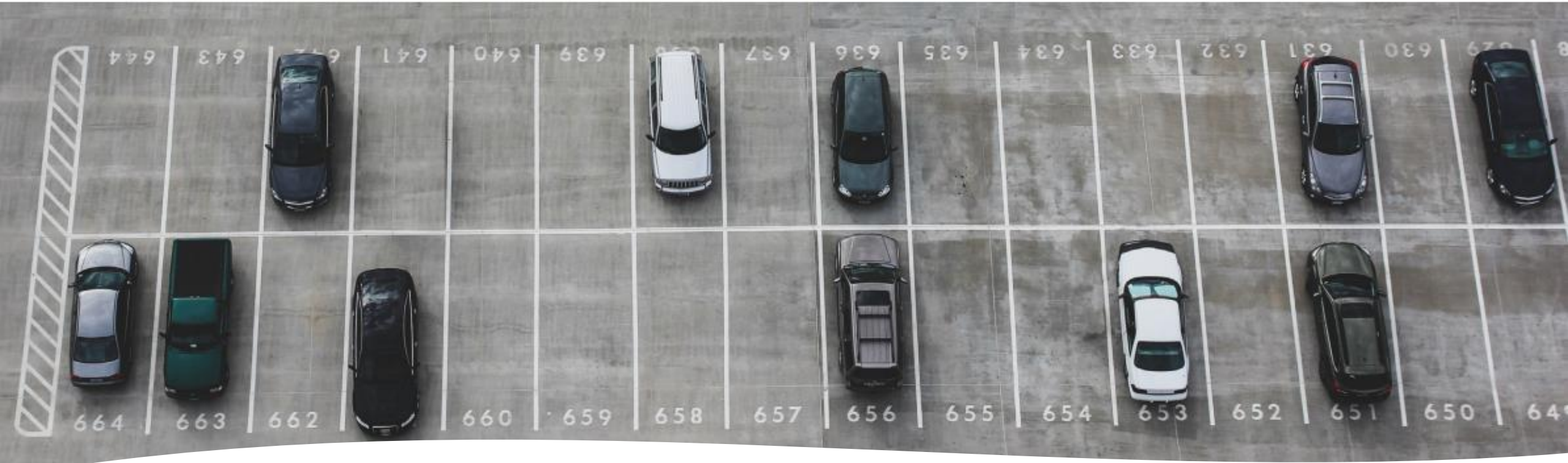
SMALL REPAIR GRANT PROGRAM

Funding Rounds	Initial Commitments	Invoiced to Date	Balance	# Participants
2020 Fiscal Year				
1st Round	\$15,750	\$10,850	\$4,900	4
2nd Round	\$34,750	\$28,150	\$6,600	9
Subtotal	\$50,500	\$39,000	\$11,500	13
(\$11,000 based on \$50K allocation)				
2022 Fiscal Year				
1st Round	\$21,332	\$13,832	\$7,500	6
2nd Round	\$29,253	\$14,255	\$14,998	7
Subtotal	\$50,585	\$28,087	\$22,498	13
2023 Fiscal Year				
1st Round	\$15,400	\$6,419	\$8,981	4
2nd Round	\$56,345	\$15,796	\$40,549	13
Subtotal	\$71,745	\$22,215	\$49,530	21
TOTAL	\$172,830	\$89,302	\$83,528	47

(Any amounts over the total \$150,000 allocation covered by the rollover of \$11,000 in the 2019-2020 allocation plus expected unspent funds in 2021 as well as approved 2023 allocation.)

WestMetro HOME Consortium Parking Utilization Study (Phase 4)





Previous Perfect Fit Parking research

- Phases 1 and 2 (~200 Inner Core sites) found 70% parking utilization at multifamily housing developments
- Phase 3 (20 North Shore sites) found 76% parking utilization at multifamily housing developments
- Reports and memos available at perfectfitparking.mapc.org

What factors influence parking demand?

Modeling of Phase 1 and 2 data found significant impacts from:

- Parking Supply
- Job Accessibility by Transit
- Percentage of Affordable Units

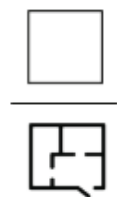
We investigated a total of 25 building and neighborhood variables for their potential influence on the parking demand per unit. These variables are described in Table 1.

Building Features	Parking Features	Built Environment	Socioeconomic Context
• Percentage of units that are affordable • Year of construction • Average bedroom count • Average rent or purchase price • Number of units in building • Housing tenure	• Presence of bicycle parking • Parking cost • Ratio of parking cost to monthly rent cost per bedroom • Ratio of parking cost to monthly rent cost per unit • Percent of provided parking spaces that are garaged • Ratio of garage to surface parking spaces • Parking supply	• Number of jobs accessible by 30-minute transit trip • Neighborhood population density • Neighborhood employment density • Neighborhood population and employment density (cumulative) • Presence of MBTA commuter rail station within half-mile • Presence of MBTA rapid transit station within half-mile • WalkScore®	• Median annual income (Census tract) • Average household size for rental households (Census tract) • Average household size for ownership households • Share of households in U.S. Census tract that are renter-occupied • Share of households in U.S. Census tract with zero vehicle

Table 1: Evaluated Building and Neighborhood Characteristics

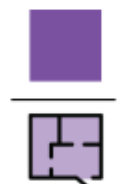
Perfect Fit Parking Initiative

**Parking Supply
per Unit**



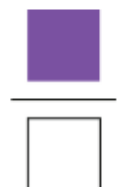
the total number of parking spaces divided by the total number of housing units

**Parking Demand
per Unit**



the number of occupied parking spaces divided by the number of occupied housing units

Parking Utilization



the number of occupied parking spaces divided by the total number of parking spaces


total housing
units


unoccupied
housing units


occupied
housing units

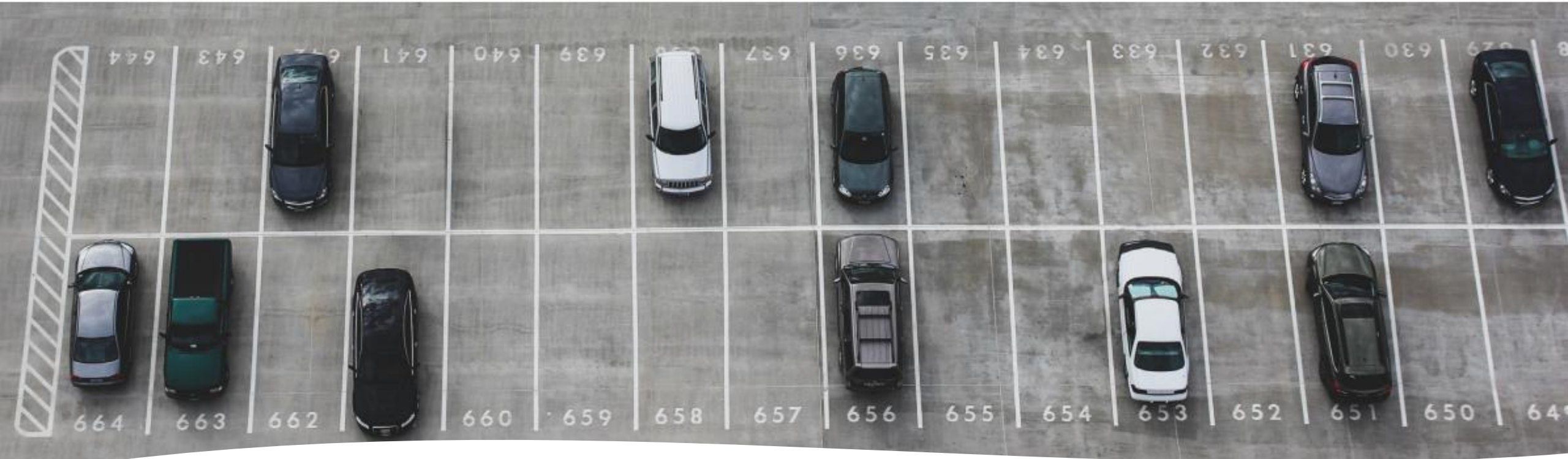

total parking
spaces


unoccupied
parking spaces


occupied
parking spaces

Phase 4 Data (WestMetro HOME Consortium)

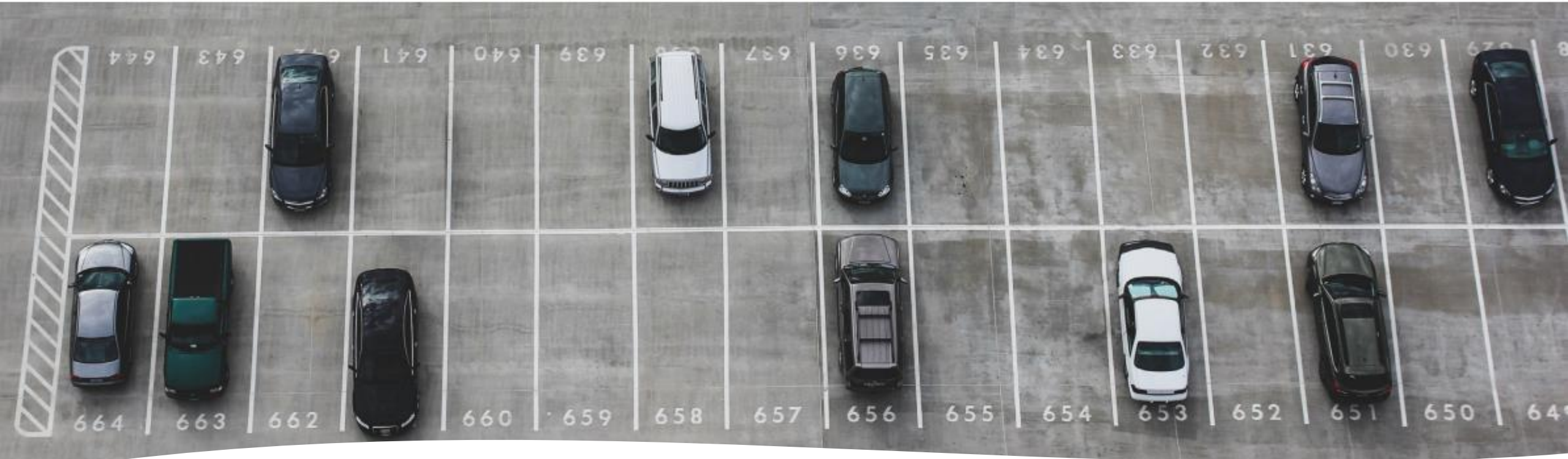
Municipality	Number of Sites	Parking Supply Per Unit	Parking Demand Per Unit	Parking Utilization %
		$\frac{\text{Total Spaces}}{\text{Total Units}}$	$\frac{\text{Occupied Spaces}}{\text{Occupied Units}}$	$\frac{\text{Occupied Spaces}}{\text{Total Spaces}}$
Brookline	2	0.80	0.65	87%
Concord	3	2.32	1.05	53%
Needham	2	1.59	0.62*	62%
Newton	10	1.52	0.83	50%
Sudbury	2	1.40	0.98	71%
Watertown	17	1.45	0.99	62%
All Sites	36	1.58	1.00	61%



Results were consistent with Phases 1 and 2:

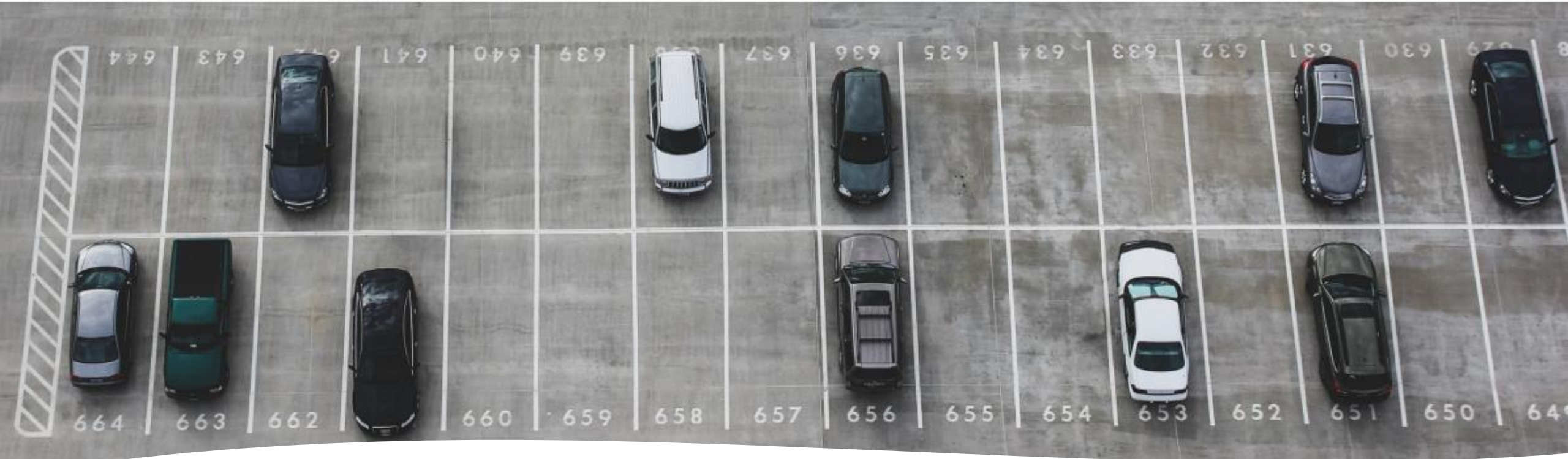
Phase 4 Modeling Results

- Increased parking supply was the dominant factor associated with increased parking demand.
- Increased job accessibility by transit was associated with reduced parking demand.
- Increased percentage of affordable units was associated with reduced parking demand.



Phase 4 Modeling Results

- Parking Supply: Each additional parking space per unit was associated with an increase of 0.22 parked cars per household.
- Job Accessibility by Transit: Every 100,000 additional jobs accessible by a 30-minute transit ride from the site was associated with a decrease in parking demand of 0.06 cars per household.
- Percentage of Affordable Units: A one percent increase in the share of affordable units was associated with a decrease in parking demand of 0.26 cars per household.



Phase 4 Conclusion

The Perfect Fit Parking Phase 4 study marks another contribution to an increasingly robust regional dataset that highlights opportunities to right-size parking in line with affordable housing, transportation and climate goals.

Policy Recommendations

- Shift from parking minimums to maximums
- Reduce parking ratios
- Unbundle parking from housing costs
- Explore strategies for shared parking

Examples of Local Policy Change

- Somerville has eliminated mandatory parking requirements across much of the city and set an upper limit to how much new parking can be built in the city's most transit-accessible neighborhoods.
- Recent changes to Arlington's zoning bylaw included the ability to have all parking requirements waived in business districts via special permit.
- Brookline's Town Meeting voted to lower minimum residential parking requirements by around half near public transit - with the opportunity to lower them to zero with a special permit from the Zoning Board.

Next Steps

- Support municipalities in efforts to change local parking policies
- Explore local and regional communications about updated Perfect Fit Parking research

Questions?

- Contact Adi Nochur – anochur@mapc.org