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Planning Commission  
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**J M Goldson**  
community preservation  
+ planning

**CITY OF METHUEN**

# Housing Production Plan

**2018-2022**

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## Acronyms

<b>ACS</b>	US Census Bureau's American Community Survey
<b>AMI</b>	Area Median Income
<b>DHCD</b>	MA Department of Housing and Community Development
<b>MVPC</b>	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission
<b>MOE</b>	Margins of Error

## Key Definitions

The following definitions are for key terms used throughout the document and are based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau, unless otherwise noted:

**ACS** – American Community Survey, conducted every year by the United States Census Bureau.

**Affordable Housing** – Housing that is restricted to individuals and families with qualifying incomes and asset levels and receives some manner of assistance to bring down the cost of owning or renting the unit, usually in the form of a government subsidy, or results from zoning relief to a housing developer in exchange for the income-restricted unit(s). Affordable housing can be public or private. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) maintains a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that lists all affordable housing units that are reserved for households with incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income (AMI) under long-term legally binding agreements and are subject to affirmative marketing requirements. The SHI also includes group homes, which are residences licensed by or operated by the Department of Mental Health or the Department of Developmental Services for persons with disabilities or mental health issues.

**Comprehensive Permit** – A local permit for the development of low- or moderate- income housing issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals pursuant to M.G.L. c.40B §§20-23 and 760 CMR 56.00.

**Cost Burdened** – Households who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing.

**Disability** – The American Community Survey defines disability as including difficulties with hearing, vision, cognition, ambulation, self-care, and independent living. All disabilities are self-reported via the 2011-2015 American Community Survey. Disability status is determined from the answers from these six types of disability:

- Independent Living: People with independent living difficulty reported that, due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition, they had difficulty doing errands alone.
- Hearing: People who have a hearing disability report being deaf or as having serious difficulty hearing.
- Vision: People who have a vision disability report being blind or as having serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses.
- Self-Care: People with a self-care disability report having difficulty dressing or bathing.
- Ambulatory: People who report having ambulatory difficulty say that they have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
- Cognitive: People who report having a cognitive disability report having serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.

**Income Thresholds** – The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets income limits that determine eligibility for assisted housing programs including the Public Housing, Section 8 project-based, Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher, Section 202 housing for the elderly, and Section 811 housing for persons with disabilities programs. HUD develops income limits based on Median Family Income estimates and Fair Market Rent area definitions for each metropolitan area, parts of some metropolitan areas, and each non-metropolitan county. The most current available income thresholds are provided in the appendices. Definitions for extremely low, very low, and low/moderate income are provided below.

- **Extremely Low Income (ELI)** – HUD bases the ELI income threshold on the FY2014 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which defines ELI as the greater of 30/50ths (60 percent) of the Section 8 very low-income limit or the poverty

guideline as established by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provided that this amount is not greater than the Section 8 50 percent very low-income limit.

- Very Low Income (VLI) – HUD bases the VLI income threshold on 50 percent of the median family income, with adjustments for unusually high or low housing-cost-to-income relationships.
- Low/Moderate Income (LMI) – HUD bases the LMI income threshold on 80 percent of the median family income, with adjustments for unusually high or low housing-cost-to-income relationships.

**Family** – A family is a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people (including related subfamily members) are considered as members of one family.

**Household** – A household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or roomers, is also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters.

**Median Age** – The age which divides the population into two numerically equal groups; that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older.

**Median Income** – Median income is the amount which divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having incomes above the median, half having incomes below the median. The medians for households, families, and unrelated individuals are based on all households, families, and unrelated individuals, respectively. The medians for people are based on people 15 years old and over with income.

**Millennials** – The demographic cohort following Generation X. There are no precise dates when the generation starts and ends. Researchers and commentators use birth years ranging from the early 1980s to the early 2000s.  
([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/millennials](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/millennials).)

**Housing Unit** – A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied, or, if vacant, is intended for occupancy as separate living quarters.

**Poverty** – Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually for inflation with the Consumer Price Index. The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and excludes capital gains and noncash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps).

**Subsidized Housing Inventory** – The state's official list for tracking a municipality's percentage of affordable housing under M.G.L. Chapter 40B. This state law enables developers to request waivers to local regulations, including the zoning bylaw, from the local Zoning Board of Appeals for affordable housing developments if less than 10 percent of year-round housing units in the municipality is counted on the SHI. It was enacted in 1969 to address the shortage of affordable housing statewide by reducing barriers created by local building permit approval processes, local zoning, and other restrictions.

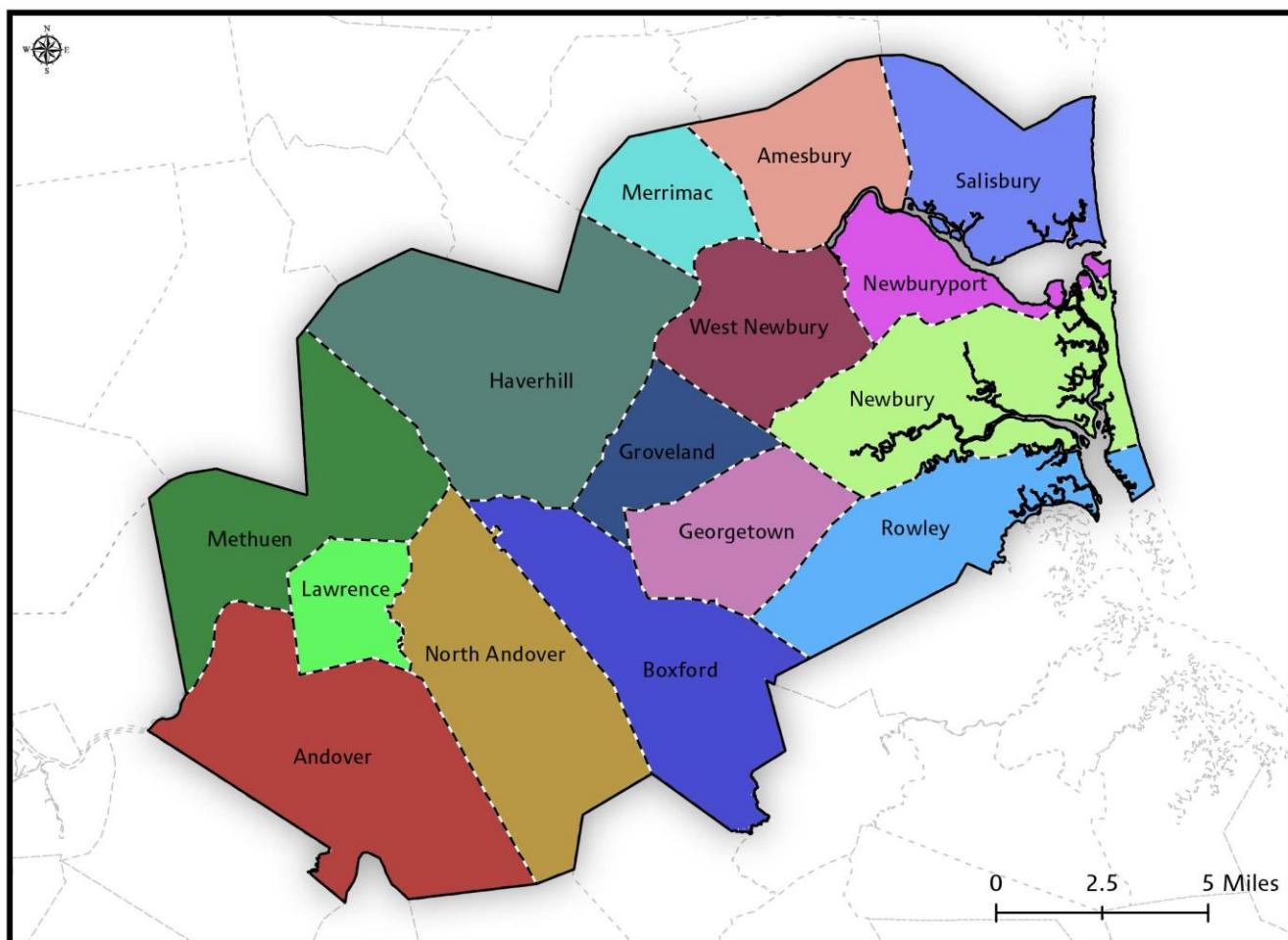
**Tenure** – Tenure identifies a basic feature of the housing inventory: whether a unit is owner occupied or renter occupied. A unit is owner occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit, even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. A cooperative or condominium unit is "owner occupied" only if the owner or co-owner lives in it. All other occupied units are classified as "renter occupied," including units rented for cash rent and those occupied without payment of cash rent.

## Merrimack Valley Region

Methuen is part of the Merrimack Valley Region consisting of 15 municipalities in the northeastern portion of Massachusetts that are connected by a common, natural thread – the Merrimack River.

**Amesbury**  
**Andover**  
**Boxford**  
**Georgetown**  
**Groveland**  
**Haverhill**  
**Lawrence**  
**Merrimac**

**Methuen**  
**Newbury**  
**Newburyport**  
**North Andover**  
**Rowley**  
**Salisbury**  
**West Newbury**



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Background and Purpose

In 2017, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) was awarded funds from the Commonwealth Community Compact Cabinet and MassHousing to develop the first Regional Housing Plan for the Merrimack Valley. The goal for the plan is to develop a strategy for meeting the housing needs of today and tomorrow's residents in the region. Using current data, populations projections, and state-of-the-art mapping, MVPC worked collaboratively with each community in the region to understand their housing needs, set goals, and craft appropriate, tailored strategies that address their specific needs over the next five years. The final deliverable for this project is a Regional Housing Plan, with chapters that serve as housing production plans for each of the 15 communities in the Merrimack Valley, including the City of Methuen. MVPC worked with Methuen throughout 2017, to collect data, understand local housing conditions and needs, and develop strategies that will meet the needs of residents today and in the future. The result is a comprehensive analysis, set of strategies and user-friendly implementation plan for the City of Methuen to follow over the next five years to develop housing for all.

This Housing Production Plan is intended to be a dynamic, living guide for housing production in Methuen. It should be regularly consulted by the various stakeholders identified in the Housing Action Plan, and used as a tool for planning, especially as new resources become available, legislation is passed, or funding opportunities are created. It is recommended that the City report regularly on progress achieved to celebrate Methuen's housing accomplishments.

### PLAN METHODOLOGY

MVPC created a three-tiered process to develop the Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Plan and the Methuen Housing Production Plan consisting of: 1) Public Engagement; 2) Align with Existing Planning Efforts; and 3) Information Gathering. Each of these steps helped to ensure that Methuen's plan is comprehensive, inclusive, and respectful of existing local, regional and state-wide planning efforts.



- 1) **Public Engagement:** MVPC worked with the City to facilitate in-person and virtual opportunities to engage stakeholders in Methuen in developing the Housing Production Plan (HPP). The in-person opportunities included two workshops; the first workshop was held in August 2017 to understand local housing needs, and the second workshop held in October 2017 identified potential housing locations and strategies to meet housing needs. Virtual opportunities consisted of social media posts and the use of the web-based tool coUrbanize to engage people that did not attend in-person workshops. The coUrbanize comments collected from Methuen can be found in the Appendix.
- 2) **Align with Existing Planning Efforts:** MVPC worked alongside the City planners and stakeholders to ensure that the HPP goals and strategies were consistent with existing planning efforts, including the existing Open Space and Recreation Plan and the development of the City's new 40R District in Downtown Methuen. The Environmental Considerations section and Strategies and Action Plan Sections reflect that effort.
- 3) **Information Gathering:** Numerous sources were consulted to develop the HPP. The U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial censuses of 2000 and 2010 and the 2010-2014 and 2011-2015 American Community Surveys (ACS) were the primary sources of data for the needs assessment. The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United

States by asking ten questions, whereas the ACS provides estimates based on a sample of the population for more detailed information. It is important to be aware that there are margins of error (MOE) attached to the ACS estimates, because the estimates are based on samples and not on complete counts. The Plan also uses data from a variety of other available sources including: The Warren Group; Massachusetts Departments of Education and Transportation; DHCD; and UMass Donahue Institute.

The housing needs assessment, which is included in the Demographic Profile and Housing Conditions sections, contains comparison data for a variety of geographies. Many data sets offer comparisons of the town to the region, county and the state, and some offer comparisons to other communities in the region.

## Community Overview and Findings

The City of Methuen is a community of about 48,000 people, located on the western edge of the MVPC region. There are 10 primary neighborhoods in the City: Marsh Corner, Howe Street/Washington Street, Graceland Park/Grosvenor Corner, Forest Street/Hill Street, Merrimack Street/Pleasant Valley Street, Jackson Street/Pleasant Street, Forest Street/Pelham Street, Lawrence Street/Phillips Street, City Center, and Berkeley Street/Arlington Street. Methuen is a primarily single-family residence City, with a historic downtown that is on the brink of revitalization and commercial areas along state roads (28, 97, 110, 113 and 213) and interstate highways (93 and 495).

The population in Methuen is growing (11 percent increase since 2000), but household growth is increasing at a slower pace, particularly compared to the Merrimack Valley region; between 2000-2015, Methuen grew by 5.56 percent while the region's population increased an average of 7.41 percent. Even though the number of households is growing slowly, the average household size continues to increase, from 2.62 people per household in 2000 to 2.76 in 2015. If household size continues to increase, thereby reducing household formation, it would generate less demand for new units.

The age composition of Methuen's population is projected to change with a substantially greater number of older adults (age 65 year and over), which is anticipated to almost double between 2015 and 2035. Projections estimate that there will be a decline in other age groups.

Income distribution in Methuen is fairly well-distributed amongst the income categories. The median income is \$71,392, which is lower than the region's median income, but higher than Essex County and the State. Roughly 32 percent of Methuen's households have income of \$100,000 or more and about 36 percent have income less than \$50,000.

When compared to housing affordability, there is a mismatch between sales price and household income. The median sales price for a single-family home in Methuen in 2016 was \$305,000, meaning a household would have to make \$79,500 per year to afford a home at the median sales price. However, at the Methuen median household income of \$71,392, a household could only afford a home up to \$273,000, creating a \$32,000 affordability gap.

# Chapter 2: Demographic Profile

## Key Findings

- Methuen's population is growing faster than the region, however household growth is much slower due to increased average household size. Projections indicate a continued growth in the coming years and a potential need for increased housing units overall. If average household size continues to increase, thereby reducing household formation, it would generate less demand for new units.
- The composition of Methuen's households has changed with more households with children. Single-person households increased less than 1 percent and households with children increased almost 8 percent between 2000 and 2015. The age composition of Methuen's population is projected to change with a substantially greater number of older adults (age 65 year and over), which is anticipated to almost double between 2015 and 2035.
- The region is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, as is Methuen. Methuen has a growing population that ethnically identifies as Hispanic/Latino – increasing from 10 percent of the total population in 2000 to about 23 percent in 2015.
- Methuen's population has comparable disability rates to the region across all age ranges, including an estimated 33 percent (about 2,209) of older adults age 65 years and over with disabilities. Persons with disabilities, whether physical, mental, or emotional, can have special housing needs including accessible units and supportive services.
- About 30 percent of Methuen's family households with children under age 18 are single-parent, mostly female-headed households. Single-parent households are more likely to struggle with housing costs.
- Methuen's households have slightly lower median income than households in the region, with renters having lower income than owners, as is typical, and slightly higher income than the regional weighted mean renter income. Poverty rates in Methuen are lower than the region, with an estimated 10 percent of the population living in households below the federal poverty thresholds.
- Methuen has designated Environmental Justice areas<sup>1</sup> in the area near Lawrence, extending along the Route 213 corridor and north toward the New Hampshire border.
- About 71 percent of Methuen's households own and 29 percent rent their home, which is a lower percentage of renter households than in the region overall.

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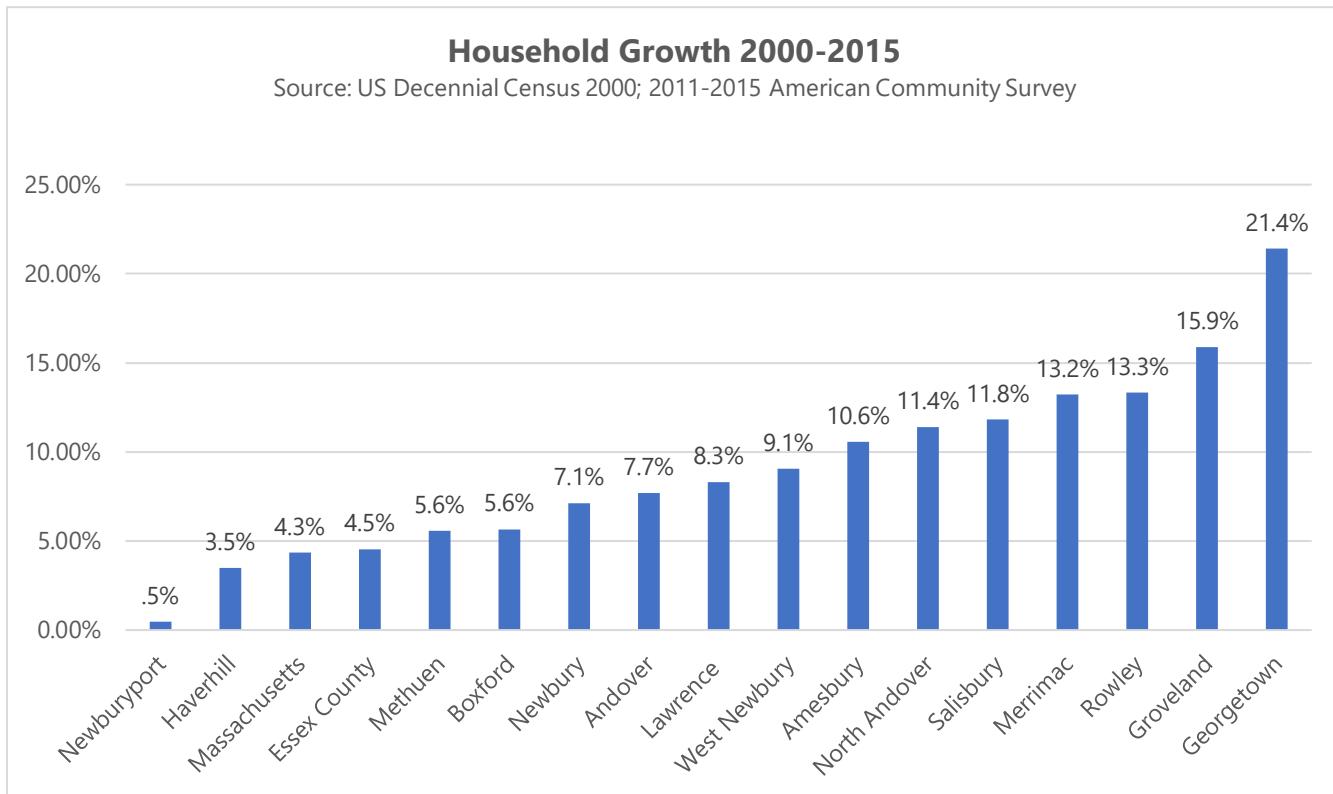
<sup>1</sup> Since 2002, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has been implementing an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy to help ensure that all Massachusetts residents experience equal protection and meaningful involvement with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

# Population and Household Trends

## POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD CHANGE

Methuen's estimated population per the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) is 48,607 people – a growth of about 11 percent from 2000. The population of Massachusetts (state) and Essex County (county) both increased about 5.6 percent between 2000 and 2015. The estimated population of the region increased 8.75 percent in the same period.

***The number of households in Methuen grew about 5.5 percent in the same period – a smaller growth than total population due to the increase in average household size from 2.62 persons per household to an estimated 2.76 persons per household.***



Average family size in Methuen also increased from 3.17 persons per household in 2000 to about 3.29 persons per household in 2015. A trend of increasing household size is reflective of trends in the state and county. As household sizes increase, the number of households grow at a slower rate than the population, thus tempering demand for housing units. The number of households in the state increased about 4.34 percent between 2000 and 2015 and about 4.54 percent in the county. Average household size increased just under 1 percent in the county and state from 2.53 pph in the state and 2.59 pph in the county in 2000 to an estimated 2.53 pph in the state and 2.59 in the county in 2015.

The composition of Methuen's households has also changed with an almost 8 percent growth in households with children under 18 from 16,532 households in 2000 to 17,451 estimated household in 2015. In the same period, single-person households increased slightly from 4,181 households in 2000 to about 4,188 households in 2015 – an increase of less than 1 percent. These local trends are counter to the trends in the county and state per the US Decennial Census and the ACS estimates. In the state, households with children under 18 years old decreased about 3.7 percent in the state and 3.16 in the county. Single households increased about 6.9 percent in the state and 5.7 percent in the county.

### Change in Methuen Household Characteristics, 2000-2015

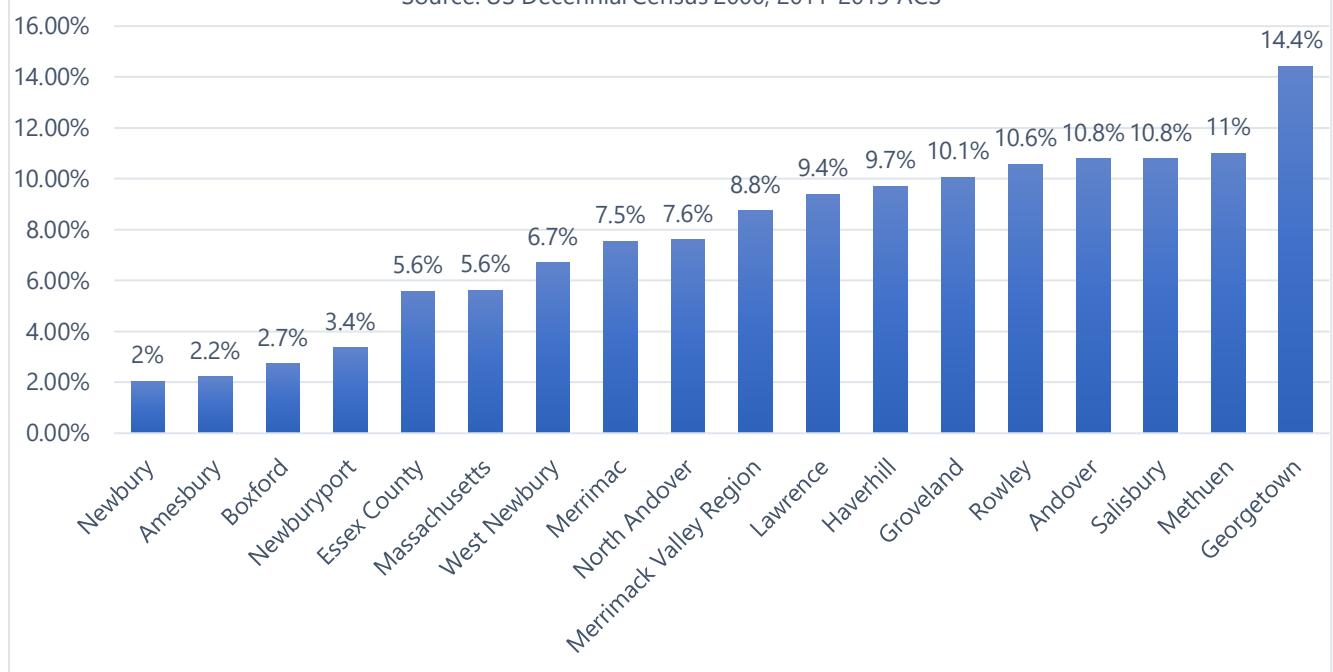
	2000	2010	2015 Estimate	% Change from 2000-2015
Population	43,789	47,255	48,607	11.00%
Households	16,532	17,529	17,451	5.56%
Households with individuals under 18 years	5,885	6,243	6,352	7.94%
Single Person Households	4,181	4,373	4,188	0.17%
Average Household Size	2.62	2.67	2.76	5.34%
Average Family Size	3.17	3.21	3.29	3.79%

Source: US Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, S1101, DP-1

**All 15 communities in the Merrimack Valley region had estimated population growth between 2000 and 2015, with average growth rate of 8.75 percent and median growth rate of 9.38 percent. Methuen's estimated population growth in this period was 11 percent - the second highest estimated population growth rate in the region.**

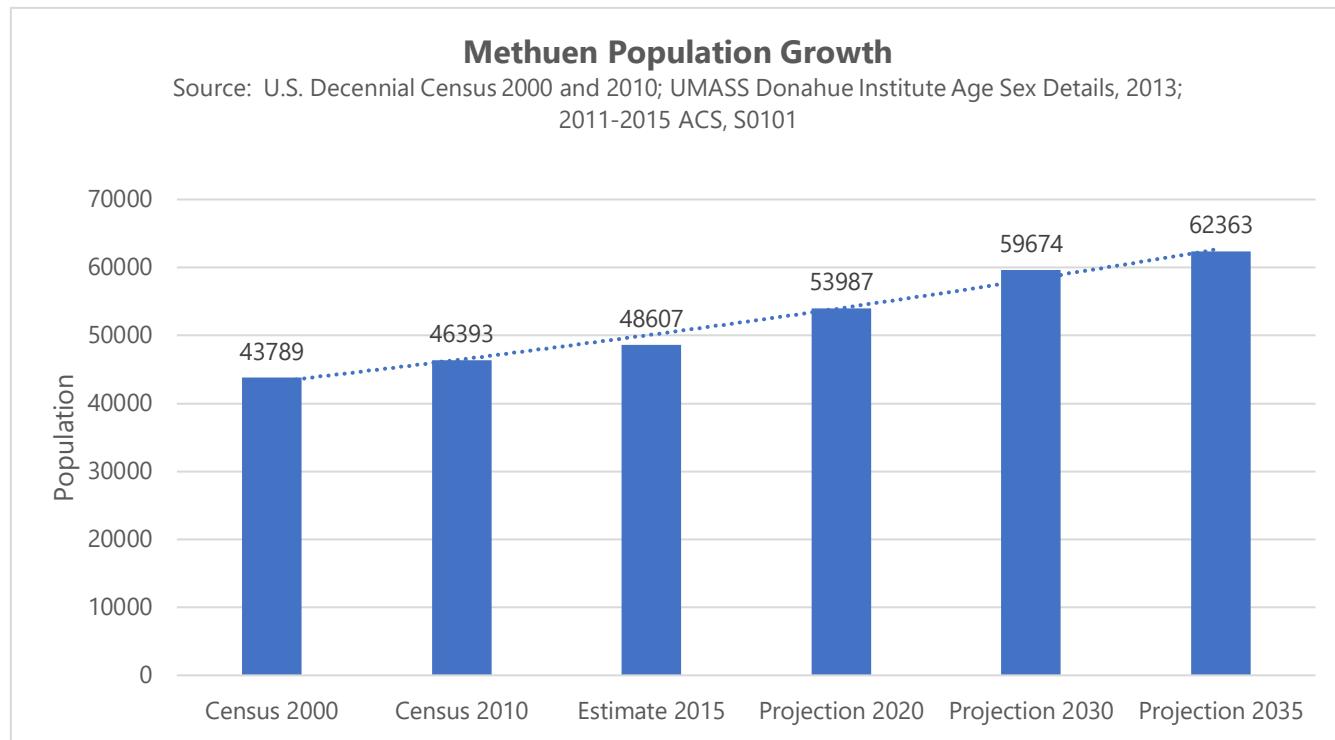
### Population Growth 2000-2015

Source: US Decennial Census 2000; 2011-2015 ACS



UMass Donahue Institute population projections indicate an increase in Methuen's population by close to 16,000 people from 2010 to 2035. With associated household growth, this projection indicates a growing demand for housing units. With the 2015 estimated average household size of 2.76, this level of population growth could generate a need for close to 5,800 new units. If average household size continues to increase, thereby reducing household formation, it would generate less demand for new units. However, it is important to remember that many factors affecting population

change cannot always be accurately predicted. The UMass Donahue projections are primarily based on rates of change for the years of 2005 to 2010, which was a period of relative instability and severe recession.<sup>2</sup>



## AGE

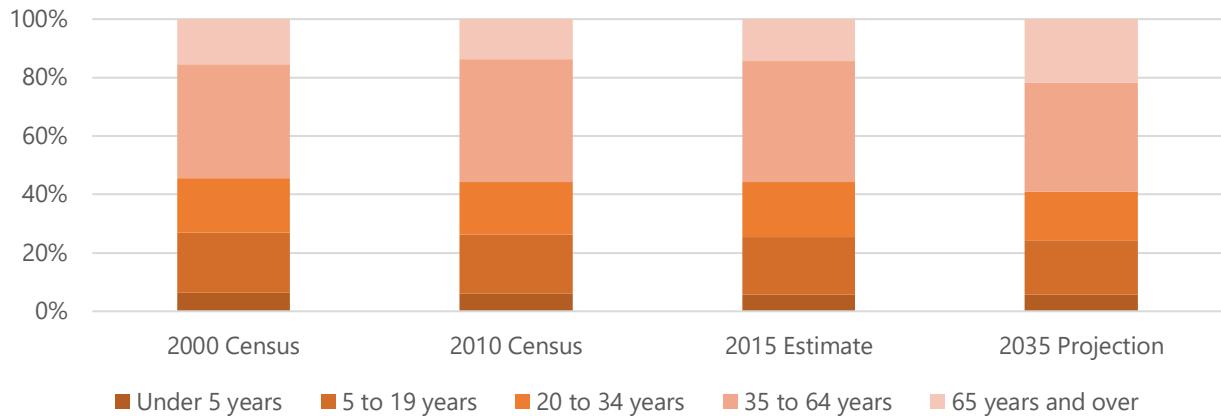
Per the UMass Donahue Institute projections, the age composition of Methuen's population is anticipated to change with a 109 percent increase in the number of older adults (age 65 year and over) and a slightly smaller percentage of all other age categories shown in the chart below. The median age in Methuen was estimated to be 39.0 years in 2015, according to the 2011-2015 ACS, which is lower than the county's median age of 40.6 years and the state's median age of 39.3 years.



<sup>2</sup> UMass Donahue Institute, *Long-term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities*, March 2015. [http://pep.donahue-institute.org/downloads/2015/new/UMDI\\_LongTermPopulationProjectionsReport\\_2015%2004%20\\_29.pdf](http://pep.donahue-institute.org/downloads/2015/new/UMDI_LongTermPopulationProjectionsReport_2015%2004%20_29.pdf), accessed 8/4/17.

## Methuen Age Distribution Projections

Source: UMass Donahue Age/Sex Details 2013; U.S. Decennial Census 2000 and 2010; 2011-2015 ACS



## RACE AND ETHNICITY

Per the 2015 ACS, Methuen's population continues to racially identify primarily as white alone, with an estimated 79 percent, a decrease from 2000 when 89 percent of the population identified as white alone. Methuen's racial diversity is comparable to the region. In the region, about 77 percent of the population identified as white alone in 2015, down from 83 percent in 2000. The region is becoming more racially diverse and so is Methuen.

In Methuen, per the 2015 ACS, about 4 percent of the population identifies as Black/African American alone, 1 percent American Indian/Alaska Native alone, 3 percent Asian alone, 11 percent as some other race alone, and 2 percent as two or more races. Regionally, about 3 percent of the population identifies as Black/African American alone, less than 1 percent American Indian/Alaska Native alone, 4 percent Asian alone, 10 percent some other race alone, and 2 percent two or more races.

About 23 percent of Methuen's population (of any race) per the 2015 ACS identifies as having Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, which is only slightly less than the region where 25 percent of the population identifies as having Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, with the City of Lawrence having the greatest proportion (76 percent) of total population identifying as having Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

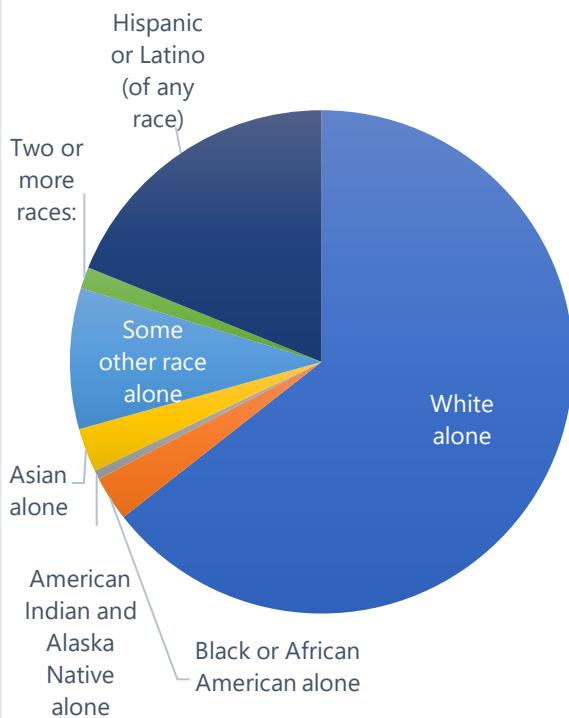
### Methuen Racial and Ethnic Characteristics, 2000-2015

	2000		2010		2015	
	number	%	number	%	est.	%
Total Population	43,789	100%	47,255	100%	48,607	100%
White alone	39,126	89%	38,672	82%	38,602	79%
Black or African American alone	591	1%	1,476	3%	1,722	4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	97	0%	160	0%	347	1%
Asian alone	1,040	2%	1,767	4%	1,688	3%
Some other race alone	2,131	5%	3,908	8%	5,423	11%
Two or more races:	799	2%	1,172	2%	825	2%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	4,221	10%	8,531	18%	11,316	23%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000 and 2010, Table QT-P3, 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Tables B02001, DP05.

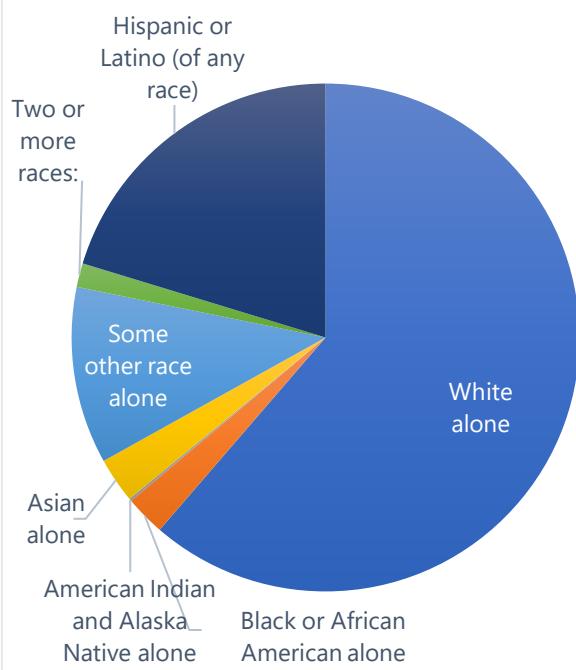
### Methuen Racial Composition

Source: 2011-2015 ACS, Table B02001



### Merrimack Valley Region Racial Composition

Source: 2011-2015 ACS, Table B02001



Per the 2015 ACS estimates, Methuen's population is about 16 percent foreign-born, which is comparable to the percentage of foreign-born population in the region (16 percent), county (15 percent), and state (16 percent). Of Methuen's foreign-born population, about 61 percent are naturalized U.S. citizens – higher than the region (54 percent), county (53 percent), and state (52 percent).

Of Methuen's foreign-born naturalized U.S. citizens, more than half were born in Latin America (52 percent). About 28 percent were born in Asia. Of the foreign-born-population not U.S. citizens in Methuen, most were born in Latin America (64 percent) and Asia (21 percent).

## DISABILITY

The U.S. Census Bureau, per the ACS, defines disability as including go-outside-home, employment, mental, physical, self-care, and sensory.<sup>3</sup> Methuen's estimated disability rate (11 percent of total non-institutionalized population)<sup>4</sup> is comparable to the region (11 percent), county (12 percent), and state (12 percent). The estimated percentage of children under 18 years with a disability in Methuen (5 percent) is comparable to the region (5 percent), county (6 percent), and state (5 percent). Methuen's estimated percentage of adults age 18 to 64 years with a disability (9 percent) is also comparable to the region, state, and county (9 percent in all three geographies).

Of the estimated disabilities in Methuen, the most reported was ambulatory (24 percent of reported disabilities). Cognitive was about 20 percent of total estimated reported disabilities. Independent living and hearing were each about 18 percent.

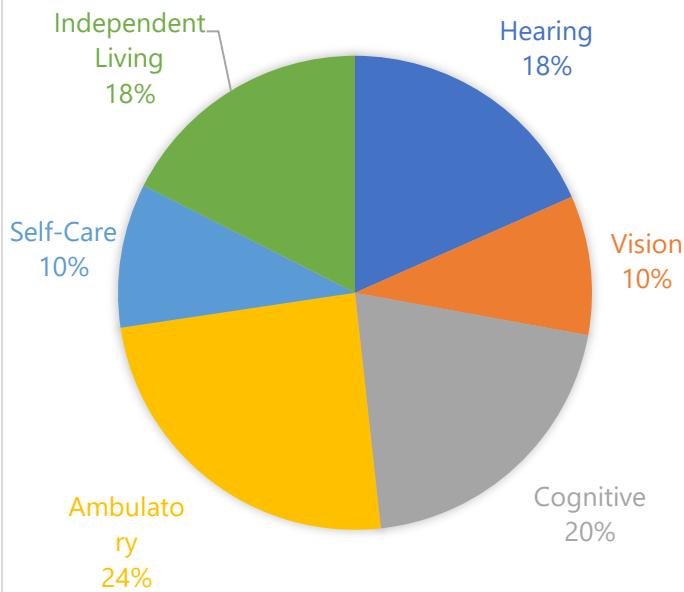
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey definition of disability: <https://www.census.gov/people/disability/methodology/acs.html>

<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Census Bureau defines non-institutionalized population as all people living in housing units, including non-institutional group quarters, such as college dormitories, military barracks, group homes, missions, or shelters. Whereas, institutionalized population includes people living in correctional facilities, nursing homes, or mental hospitals. <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/group-quarters.html>

**Methuen's estimated disability rate for persons 65 years and over is 33 percent and, similarly, about 33 percent in the region, county, and state population in this age cohort have disabilities.**

### METHUEN DISABILITY CHARACTERISTICS BY TYPE REPORTED

SOURCE: 2011-2015 ACS, TABLE S1810. NOTE: ACS RESPONDENTS CAN INDICATE MULTIPLE DISABILITIES; THE PERCENTAGES REPORTED HERE ARE A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ESTIMATED REPORTED DISABILITIES.



### Disability Type Definitions

All disabilities are self-reported via the 2011-2015 American Community Survey. Disability status is determined from the answers from these six types of disability.

**Independent Living:** People with independent living difficulty reported that, due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition, they had difficulty doing errands alone.

**Hearing:** People who have a hearing disability report being deaf or as having serious difficulty hearing.

**Vision:** People who have a vision disability report being blind or as having serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses.

**Self-Care:** People with a self-care disability report having difficulty dressing or bathing.

**Ambulatory:** People who report having ambulatory difficulty say that they have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.

**Cognitive:** People who report having a cognitive disability report having serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.

Source: American Community Survey Subject Definitions

### Disability by Age, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Total Civilian, (Non-institutionalized Population)	48,307	100%	341,082	100%	756,354	100%	6,627,768	100%
With disability	5,550	11%	38,493	11%	89,520	12%	763,526	12%
Under 18 years	11,173	100%	81,507	100%	130,327	100%	1,394,267	100%
With disability	539	5%	3694	5%	7,789	6%	63,543	5%
18-64 years	30,385	100%	215,620	100%	475,165	100%	4,286,479	100%
With disability	2,802	9%	20,377	9%	44,374	9%	383,623	9%
65 years and over	6,749	100%	44,026	100%	111,964	100%	947,022	100%
With disability	2,209	33%	14,406	33%	37,357	33%	316,360	33%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S1810

## GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY

Geographic mobility measures the movement of people from one location to another. A population's level of geographic mobility typically varies by economic status, family status, and age—Older adults tend to move less than younger adults and owners tend to move less than renters. Methuen's geographic mobility rate is slightly lower than the region, county, and state.

***Per the 2015 ACS, about 90 percent of Methuen's total population lived in the same home the year prior to the survey, which is slightly greater than in the region (89 percent), county (88 percent) and state (87 percent).***

Of the population that had moved in the prior year, most (64 percent of population that had moved; 6 percent of total population) moved to Methuen from another community in Essex County. This comparable with mobility characteristics of the region, county, and state.

### Geographic Mobility, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Total	48,099	100%	339,582	100%	755,597	100%	6,635,154	100%
Same Home	43,289	90%	301,390	89%	666,437	88%	5,779,219	87%
Same County	3,078	6%	24,315	7%	56,670	8%	477,731	7%
Same State	818	2%	5,547	7%	15,112	2%	179,149	3%
Different State	625	1%	5,646	2%	11,334	2%	139,338	2%
Abroad	289	0.6%	2,685	0.8%	6,045	0.8%	59,716	0.9%

*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S0701*

## HOUSEHOLD TYPES

Per the 2015 ACS estimates, Methuen has about 17,451 total households, with 72 percent family households. About 45 percent of family households have children under age 18.

***About 30 percent of family households with children are single-parent households in Methuen, which is lower than the region (34 percent), but higher than the county (19 percent) and state (17 percent).***

About 24 percent of households are single-person households and about 45 percent of single-person households in Methuen are age 65 plus. This is higher than percentages in the region (40 percent of single-person households), county (42 percent), and state (39 percent) of seniors living alone.

## Household Types, 2015

Household Type	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Total Households	17,451	100%	125,967	100%	287,912	100%	2,549,721	100%
Family Households	12,616	72%	87,499	69%	192,381	67%	1,620,917	64%
With children under age 18	5,648	45%	41,072	47%	85,481	44%	709,541	44%
Male householder with children, no spouse	253	4%	2,513	6%	13,166	5%	104,560	4%
Female householder with children, no spouse	1,482	26%	11,588	28%	39,538	14%	320,479	13%
Married couple without children under age 18	5,522	32%	36,993	29%	82,186	29%	703,162	28%
Nonfamily households	4,835	28%	38,545	31%	95,531	33%	928,804	36%
Total householders living alone	4,188	24%	31,495	25%	78,888	27%	731,770	29%
Householders 65+ living alone	1,867	45%	12,441	40%	33,110	42%	288,118	39%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S1101

## Tenure

Per the 2015 ACS, about 71 percent of Methuen households own and 29 percent rent their home. Methuen has a higher estimated percentage of owner households than the region (63 percent), county (63 percent), or state (62 percent).

## Households by Tenure, 2015

Tenure Type	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Own	12,440	71%	79,885	63%	181,293	63%	1,583,667	62%
Rent	5,011	29%	46,072	37%	106,619	37%	966,054	38%
Total	17,451	100%	125,957	100%	287,912	100%	2,549,721	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25003

## Household Size

***Methuen's estimates indicate a slight increase in the share of households with four-plus-people than in 2000 and has experienced a decline in smaller households.***

Per the 2015 ACS, most households in Methuen consist of either two-persons (30 percent) or four-plus-persons (29 percent). The percentage of one-person households has decreased about 1 percentage point since 2000 and the percentage of three-person households stayed the same at 17 percent of total households in the same period.

## Household Size, 2015

Size	2000		2010		2015	
	number	%	number	%	est.	%
1-person	4,181	25%	4,902	28%	4,188	24%
2-person	5,061	31%	4,538	26%	5,218	30%
3-person	2,862	17%	3,048	18%	2,914	17%
4+person	4,428	27%	4,833	28%	5,148	29%
Total	16,532	100%	17,321	100%	17,468	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S2501; U.S. Decennial Census 2010 and 2000, Table H013

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

### Income Distribution

***Methuen's households are estimated to have slightly lower incomes than households in the region, county, and state.***

Roughly 32 percent of Methuen's households have income of \$100,000 or more and about 36 percent have income less than \$50,000, per the 2015 ACS. About 34 percent of households in the region have income of \$100,000 or more, 39 percent in the county, and 38 percent in the state. About 39 percent of households in the region have income less than \$50,000 and 34 percent in the county and state.

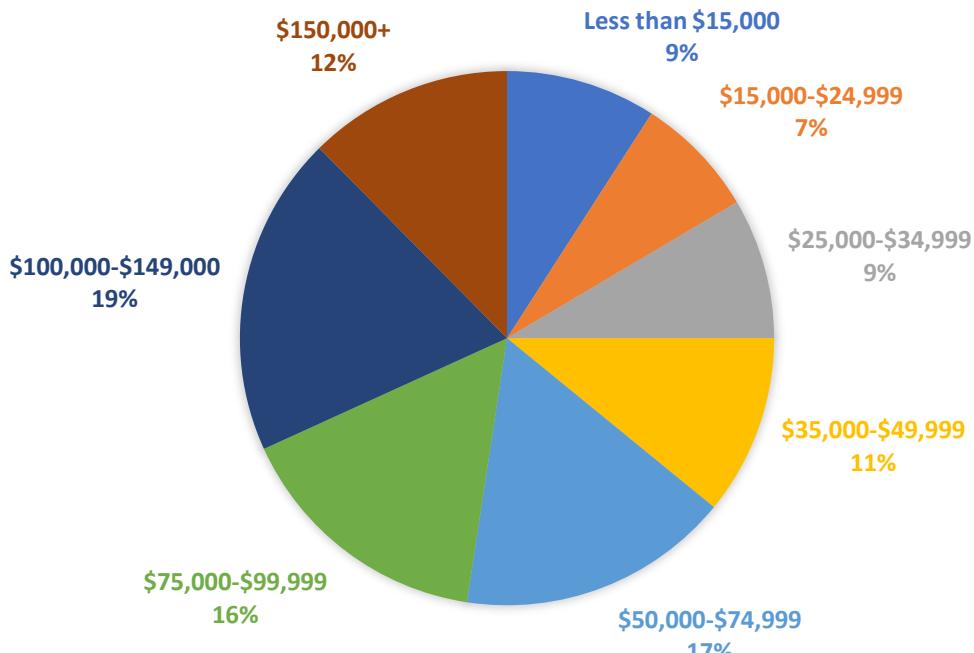
#### Household Income Distribution, 2015

Income	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Less than \$15,000	1,588	9%	13,534	11%	31,199	11%	286,426	11%
\$15,000-\$24,999	1,291	7%	10,751	9%	24,917	9%	217,314	9%
\$25,000-\$34,999	1,483	8%	10,273	8%	22,856	8%	196,102	8%
\$35,000-\$49,999	1,902	11%	13,344	11%	30,343	11%	266,140	10%
\$50,000-\$74,999	2,879	16%	19,317	15%	45,257	16%	402,960	16%
\$75,000-\$99,999	2,757	16%	15,456	12%	35,908	12%	317,568	12%
\$100,000-\$149,000	3,385	19%	20,172	16%	47,549	17%	429,874	17%
\$150,000+	2,164	12%	23,074	18%	49,883	17%	433,337	17%
Total	17,451	100%	125,921	100%	287,912	100%	2,549,721	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B19001

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

SOURCE: 2011-2015 ACS ESTIMATES, TABLE B19001



## Median Income

Methuen's estimated median household income per the 2015 ACS is \$71,392, which is less than the average of the median income for the fifteen Merrimack Valley communities (\$75,532), but higher than the county (\$69,068) or state (\$68,563).

### Median Income, 2015

	Methuen	Merrimack Valley Region*	Essex County	Massachusetts
Median Household Income	\$71,392	\$75,532	\$69,068	\$68,563

*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S1901.*  
*\*Note: Regional median incomes are calculations by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission of weighted mean of estimated median incomes by Census block groups for the 15 towns and cities in the region as reported in the ACS 2011-2015.s*

## Median Income by Tenure

Renters tend to have lower income than owners, as seen at the community, regional, county, and state level. In Methuen, estimated median renter income was \$35,090 per the 2015 ACS and estimated median owner income was \$90,048.

### Median Income by Tenure, 2015

Tenure	Methuen	Merrimack Valley Region*	Essex County	Massachusetts
Owner Occupied	\$90,048	\$104,451	\$95,660	\$92,207
Renter Occupied	\$35,090	\$34,997	\$35,254	\$37,780

*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25119.*  
*\*Note: Regional median incomes are the author's calculation of weighted mean of estimated median income of the 15 towns and cities in the region as reported in the ACS 2011-2015.*

## Income Distribution by Age of Householder

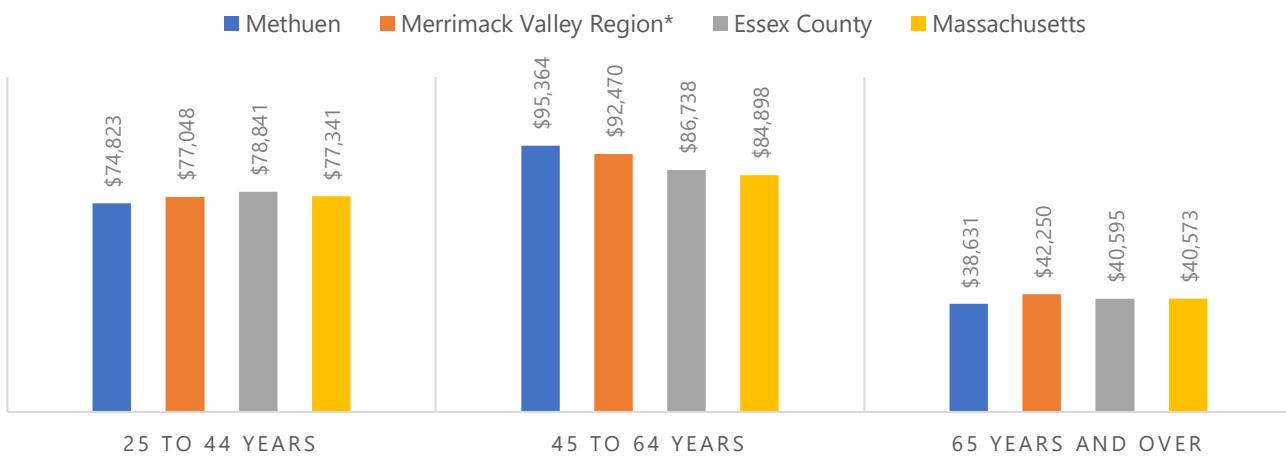
Per the 2015 ACS, households with householders age 44 to 64 years have the highest estimated median in Methuen (\$95,364) – this is higher than median incomes for this age cohort in the county (\$86,738) and state (\$84,898), but lower than the average of median incomes of this cohort for the fifteen communities in the region (\$92,470).

Households with householders age 45 to 64 as well as 65 years and over have lower estimated median incomes in Methuen when compared with the region, county, and state.

***Households with senior householders (age 65 years and over) have the lowest income compared with younger cohorts with an estimated median income of \$38,631 in Methuen.***

## MEDIAN INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER, 2015

SOURCE: 2011-2015 ACS ESTIMATES, TABLE B19049 \*NOTE: REGIONAL MEDIAN INCOMES ARE THE WEIGHTED MEAN OF THE 15 COMMUNITY'S MEDIAN INCOMES.



## POVERTY

Individuals are considered poor if the resources they share with others in the household are not enough to meet basic needs.

***Methuen has lower estimated poverty than the region, county, or state, with about 10 percent of the total population living in households below the federal poverty thresholds, as compared to the county and the state.***

### Federal Poverty Thresholds

*The federal poverty thresholds vary by household size and number of children under 18 and are updated annually. The thresholds do not vary geographically. For example, per the 2016 federal poverty thresholds, a household of three with no children under 18 years is below the poverty threshold if household income is at or below \$18,774 and a household of three with one child is below the poverty threshold if household income is at or below \$19,318.*

Size of Family Unit	No related children	One related child	Two related children
One person	\$12,486		
Two people	\$16,072	\$16,543	
Three people	\$18,774	\$19,318	\$19,337
Four people	\$24,755	\$25,160	\$24,339

*Source: 2016 Federal Poverty Thresholds <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>, accessed 8/2/17.*

The table below includes every individual in families that have total income less than the family's poverty threshold. In Methuen, about 34 percent of the population living in households below the federal poverty thresholds are children under 18 years.

**Population in Households Below Federal Poverty Thresholds by Age, 2015**

	<b>Methuen</b>		<b>Merrimack Valley Region</b>		<b>Essex County</b>		<b>Massachusetts</b>	
	<i>est.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>est.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>est.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>est.</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 5 years	431	9%	3,953	9%	8,119	10%	61,483	8%
5-17 years	1,180	25%	10,373	25%	19,400	23%	147,458	20%
18-34 years	837	18%	9,157	22%	19,157	22%	218,761	29%
35-64 years	1,543	33%	14,023	33%	27,877	33%	233,736	31%
65 years and over	754	16%	4,735	11%	10,864	13%	87,467	12%
Total in Poverty	4,745	10%	42,241	13%	85,417	11%	748,905	12%
Total Population	48,265	100%	338,637	100%	747,718	100%	6,471,313	100%

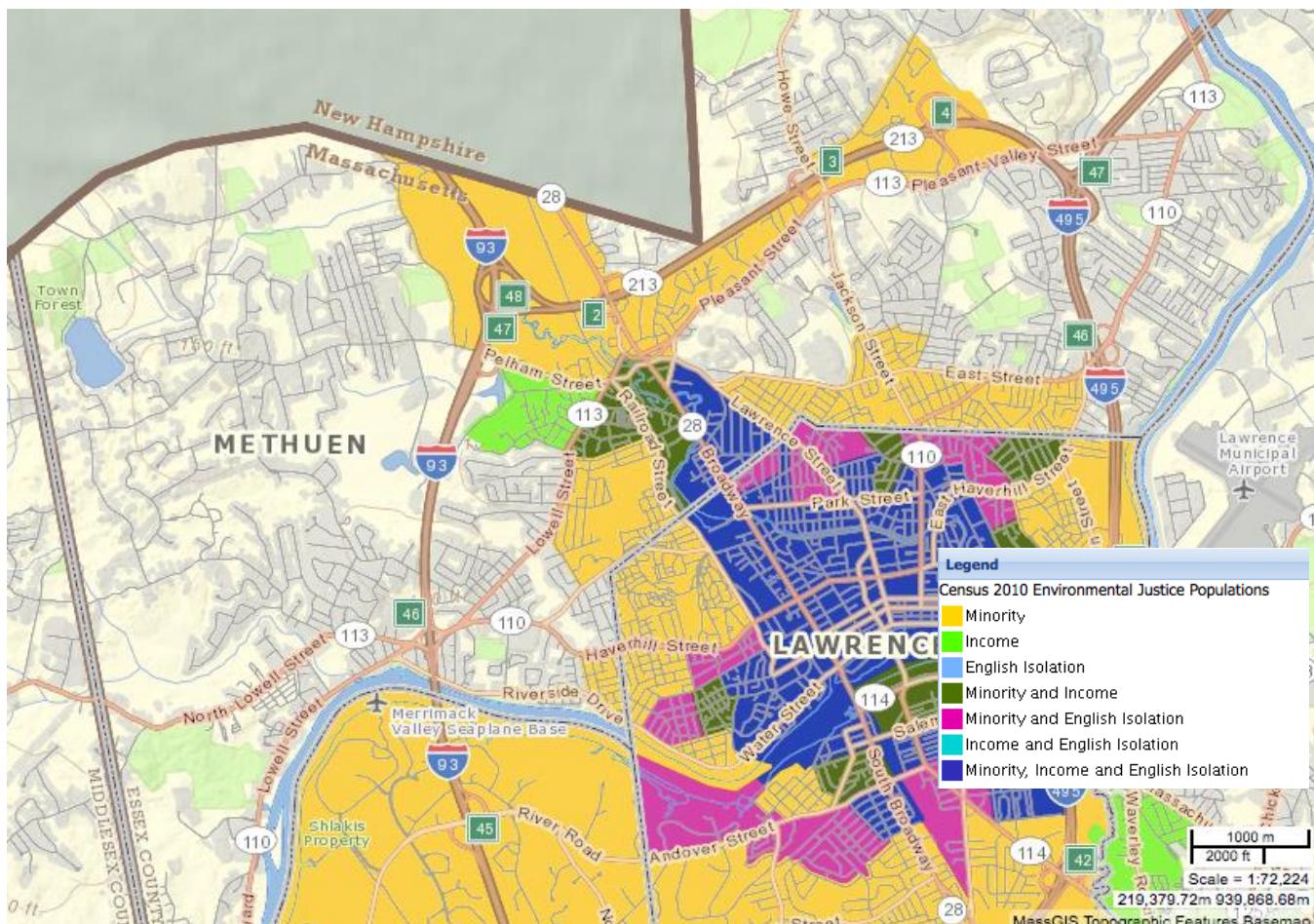
*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B17001*

In the appendix, there is a second table that breaks down the population living below the poverty thresholds by smaller age categories than the above table.

# Environmental Justice

Since 2002, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has been implementing an Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy to help ensure that all Massachusetts residents experience equal protection and meaningful involvement with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies, and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits. Historically, land use decisions in Massachusetts have caused lower-income people and communities of color to experience a disproportionate share of environmental burdens and often lacked environmental assets in their neighborhoods.<sup>5</sup> The state has identified Environmental Justice (EJ) neighborhoods that are comprised of EJ populations.<sup>6</sup>

Per MassGIS data, Methuen has designated EJ Areas in the area near Lawrence, extending along the Route 213 corridor and north toward the New Hampshire border. Designated EJ areas in the Merrimack Valley region are in the following communities: Andover, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, and North Andover.



<sup>5</sup> Source: MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, [www.mass.gov/eea/grants-and-tech-assistance/environmental-justice-policy.html](http://www.mass.gov/eea/grants-and-tech-assistance/environmental-justice-policy.html).

<sup>6</sup> Environmental Justice (EJ) Populations are those segments of the population that the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources. They are defined as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau census block groups) that meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) The median annual household income is at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income for Massachusetts; or 2) 25% of the residents are minority; or 3) 25% of the residents are foreign born, or 4) 25% of the residents are lacking English language proficiency. Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/ej/ej-policy-english.pdf>.

# Homelessness Characteristics

## POINT IN TIME COUNTS

Per the North Shore Continuum of Care (CoC), which includes every community in the region aside from Lawrence, the Point in Time count estimated that in 2017, there were 519 homeless individuals with children and 189 homeless individuals without children residing in the North Shore, down from about 1,336 with children and 243 without children in 2015. Most homeless individuals (96 percent) reside in emergency shelters. In 2017, there were 47 unsheltered individuals without children, an increase from 29 unsheltered individuals without children in 2015. Point in Time counts for Lawrence determined that in 2017, there were 224 people in emergency shelters, 87 people in permanent supportive housing, 47 people in other supportive housing, and 106 people in transitional housing.<sup>7</sup>

Homeless shelters in the Merrimack Valley area include the Newburyport YWCA, Community Action, Inc. in Haverhill, YWCA Haverhill, and the Emmaus Family House in Haverhill. There are several other shelters located in Lawrence, including Casa Nueva Vida, the Lazarus House, Daybreak Shelter, and Greater Lawrence YWCA.

### Homelessness Count in the North Shore, 2015-2017

	2015		2016		2017	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
<b>Homeless with Children:</b>	1,336	100%	978	100%	519	100%
Emergency Shelter	1,265	95%	907	93%	498	96%
Transitional Housing	67	5%	69	7%	21	4%
Unsheltered	4	0%	2	0%	0	0%
<b>Homeless without Children:</b>	243	100%	241	100%	189	100%
Emergency Shelter	169	70%	151	63%	117	62%
Safe Haven	6	2%	6	2%	6	3%
Transitional Housing	39	16%	25	10%	19	10%
Unsheltered	29	12%	59	24%	47	25%

*Source: North Shore Continuum of Care HIC PIT*

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS POPULATION

In 2017, the PIT counts estimated that of the 708 homeless individuals in the North Shore, 124 (33 percent) are chronic substance abusers, 91 (25 percent) are seriously mentally ill, 31 (8 percent) are veterans, two (.01 percent) are persons with HIV/AIDS, 80 (22 percent) are youth, and 43 (12 percent) are domestic violence victims. Percentages are based on total characteristics reported, not on individuals. From 2015 to 2017, the number of homeless individuals that are youth declined from 248 to 80 in the North Shore, though the number of homeless individuals that are substance abusers increased from 85 to 124 from 2015 to 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Lawrence Housing Inventory Count. Note: Demographic data of homeless population was not available for Lawrence.

# Economic Characteristics

Roughly 36 percent of Methuen's total labor force is employed in the industries of management, business, science, and arts. About 26 percent is employed in sales or office occupations, and about 17 percent is employed in the service industry. The remaining employed population works in the fields of natural resources, construction, and maintenance and production, transportation, and material moving.

## Economic Sectors, 2015

Industry	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Management, business, science, and arts	9,053	36%	69,906	41%	156,504	41%	1,510,715	44%
Service Occupations	4,380	17%	29,739	17%	70,286	18%	602,742	18%
Sales and office	6,690	26%	38,877	23%	90,572	24%	767,408	22%
Natural Resources, construction, and maintenance	1,896	7%	11,379	7%	27,135	7%	235,906	7%
Production, transportation, and material moving	3,413	13%	20,609	12%	39,385	10%	299,204	9%
Total civilian employed -16 years and older	25,432	100%	170,510	100%	383,882	100%	3,415,975	100%

*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table DP03*

The 2016 estimated unemployment rate for Methuen was 4.1 percent, which is slightly higher than the county rate of 3.8 percent. The state was estimated to have a 3.7 percent unemployment rate in 2016.<sup>8</sup>

Per the 2015 estimates, about 60 percent of Methuen households have less than 30-minute travel time to work. This is higher than the estimated population in the region (57 percent), county (57 percent), and state (56 percent) that have less than 30-minute travel time to work. About 10 percent of Methuen households commute over an hour, which is slightly less than the region, county, and state.

## Travel Time to Work, 2015

Travel Time	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Less than 15 minutes	6,444	27%	41,329	26%	94,276	26%	759,671	24%
15-29 minutes	7,948	33%	49,765	31%	110,489	31%	1,030,429	32%
30-44 minutes	4,559	19%	31,454	20%	68,326	19%	708,480	22%
45-59 minutes	2,700	11%	15,895	10%	34,430	10%	324,504	10%
More than 60 minutes	2,438	10%	20,539	13%	48,720	14%	371,904	12%
Total	24,089	100%	158,982	100%	356,241	100%	3,194,998	100%

*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B08303*

<sup>8</sup> Source: The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, 2016

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Per the 2015 ACS, about 89 percent of Methuen's population age 25 years and over are high school graduates or have higher education – this is comparable to the county (89 percent) and state (89.8). About 18 percent of the population have a Bachelor's degree – this is lower than the region (22 percent), county (22 percent) and state (23 percent). About 10 percent of Methuen's population has a graduate or professional degree – this is lower than the region (16 percent), county (15 percent), and state (18 percent).

### Educational Attainment, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Population 25 years and over	33,089	100%	230,513	100%	523,024	100%	4,610,510	100%
Less than 9th grade	2,016	6%	14,836	6%	28,930	6%	220,055	5%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,727	5%	13,017	6%	27,055	5%	251,050	5%
High school graduate	10,327	31%	58,210	25%	136,786	26%	1,169,375	25%
Some college	6,097	18%	38,913	17%	90,700	17%	745,794	16%
Associate's degree	3,356	10%	19,212	8%	43,250	8%	357,133	8%
Bachelor's degree	6,095	18%	50,116	22%	116,780	22%	1,049,150	23%
Graduate or professional degree	3,471	10%	36,211	16%	79,523	15%	817,953	18%
Percent high school graduate or higher	29,449	89%	202,851	88%	465,491	89%	4,149,459	90%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	9,595	29%	85,290	37%	198,749	38%	1,890,309	41%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S1501

# Chapter 3: Local Housing Conditions

## Key Findings

- Methuen has about 18,230 housing units, with about 96 percent occupied year-round and just under 50 seasonal units. Methuen's rental vacancy rates are estimated to be low, indicating a housing demand for rental housing that exceeds supply.
- Roughly 71 percent of Methuen's occupied housing units were owner occupied and 29 percent renter occupied, which is a lower proportion of renter housing than in the region overall.
- About 66 percent of Methuen's housing units were built prior to 1979 – homes of this age may contain lead paint, which can pose health hazards, and may need abatement and other health and safety improvements. This proportion of older housing units is lower than in the region overall.
- Methuen has relatively low residential taxes compared with other communities in the regions, with an average single-family tax bill of \$4,279.
- Methuen's building permit activity indicates construction of a mix of single-family, two-family units, and multi-family between 2000 and 2015.
- Methuen has a comparable proportion of younger owners ages 25 to 34 (8 percent) to the region, indicating availability of starter homes that are affordable to first-time homebuyers.
- For-sale housing prices are low in Methuen compared with other communities in the region with a 2016 median sales price for all residential sales of \$300,000. A household making the median income in Methuen could afford the median sales price for a single-family unit of \$305,000.
- Methuen renters tend to have moderately higher incomes than renters in the region. A household making the estimated median renter income in Methuen could not afford the Fair Market Rent.
- About 42 percent of Methuen's households have incomes at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). Of note: about 65 percent or 4,750 of low-income households in Methuen are estimated to spend more than 30 percent for housing costs. In Methuen, a greater proportion of low-income renters are cost burdened than low-income owners.
- Of particular concern are the roughly 1,115 extremely-low-income (ELI), 845 very-low-income (VLI), and 490 low/moderate-income (LMI) renter households and 645 ELI, 760 VLI, and 895 LMI owner households that spend too much on housing costs.
- The estimated 1,365 ELI households spending more than half of their gross income on housing is a population that can be particularly vulnerable to housing instability and possible homelessness.
- Housing cost burdened households in Methuen are most likely to be composed of small families. Second most likely household type to be cost burdened are non-elderly, non-family households.
- Nine percent or 1,641 units of Methuen's total year-round housing units are included on the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory. This analysis indicates that Methuen needs more rental assistance and affordable rental housing, especially units for ELI and VLI households (with income at or below 50 percent AMI), 3+ bedroom units that are appropriate for families, transitional housing, accessible housing, and housing with supportive services.
- In addition, Methuen's extent of cost burdened low/moderate-income homeowners and age of its housing stock indicates need for assistance with housing costs such as health and safety improvements and energy efficiency modifications.
- Low rental vacancy rates and projected population and household growth indicate need for production of new housing units, especially rental units at a variety of income levels including units affordable to low/moderate and more deeply affordable, as described above, as well as market-rate rental units.

# Housing Supply and Vacancy Trends

## OCCUPANCY AND TENURE

The 2015 ACS estimated 18,230 housing units in Methuen, with 17,451 year-round occupied units (96 percent) and an estimated 779 vacant units (4 percent of total housing units), with 48 of these (6 percent) for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. The estimated rental vacancy rate in Methuen was 3.1 percent and ownership vacancy rate was 1.3 percent. These vacancy rates indicate a need for more rental units. The county and state had comparable vacancy rates for both owner and rental housing.

An estimated 71 percent of Methuen's total occupied housing units were owner occupied while 29 percent were renter occupied per the 2015 ACS estimates. In comparison, the region, county, and state had a greater percentage of renter-occupied units (37, 37, and 38 percent, respectively).

## Occupancy, Vacancy, and Tenure, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Total Housing Units	18,230	100%	134,083	100%	307,894	100%	2,827,820	100%
Occupied	17,451	96%	125,957	94%	287,912	94%	2,549,721	90%
Owner Occupied	12,440	71%	79,885	63%	181,293	63%	1,583,667	62%
Renter Occupied	5,011	29%	46,072	37%	106,619	37%	966,054	38%
Vacant	779	4%	8,126	6%	19,982	6%	278,099	10%
Vacant Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	48	6%	1,831	23%	5,096	26%	123,040	44%
Rental vacancy rate	(x)	3.1	(x)	(x)	3.4%	(x)	4.2%	(x)
Ownership vacancy rate	(x)	1.3	(x)	(x)	0.9%	(x)	1.2%	(x)

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table DP04

## Vacancy Rates

*Vacancies are an essential measure of the state of the housing market. Vacant units represent the supply of homes that exceeds demand, which is related to economic trends. Vacancy rates are measured as a percent of total housing units. A low vacancy rate can result in pressure on housing prices. A 1.5% vacancy rate for ownership and 7% for rental units are considered natural vacancy rates in a healthy market.*

*Source: Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Basic Housing Needs Assessment, Sept 2014 – in consultation with Barry Bluestone, Dukakis Center at Northeastern University.*

## RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

Methuen's land is divided into 16,473 total parcels, with 14,560 parcels (88 percent) with residential uses. Most of the parcels in Methuen consists of single-family properties (approximately 65 percent), followed by condominiums at 15 percent.

### Methuen Residential Land Use by Parcel, 2017

Use Type	Number of Parcels	% of Land
Single-Family	10,745	65%
Two- or More Family	1,265	8%
Condominiums	2,419	15%
Apartments	131	0.8%
Commercial Parcels	460	3%
Other non-residential uses	1,453	9%
Total	16,473	100%

*Source: DOR Municipal Databank, Parcel Counts by Usage Code 2017*

About 59 percent of units in Methuen are single, detached, units, which is higher than the region (51 percent), county (52 percent), and state (50 percent). About 23 percent of Methuen's units are in multi-family (two or more units) buildings, which is lower than the region, county, and state.

### Methuen Units in Structure, 2017

Units in Structure	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Total	18,230	100%	132,221	100%	309,644	100%	2,858,087	100%
1, detached	10,792	59%	66,967	51%	159,484	52%	1,489,395	50%
1, attached	1,297	7%	10,856	8%	19,450	6%	145,650	10%
2	1,774	10%	12,787	10%	31,376	10%	292,932	10%
3 or 4	1,094	6%	14,721	11%	35,219	11%	308,861	7%
5 to 9	606	3%	7,349	6%	16,295	5%	164,745	2%
10 to 19	1,089	6%	6,295	5%	12,514	4%	120,407	5%
20 to 49	926	5%	5,271	4%	15,442	5%	122,166	11%
50 or more	616	3%	7,157	5%	18,063	6%	190,134	4%
Mobile home	36	0.2%	735	1%	1,651	1%	22,711	1%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0%	83	0%	150	0.05%	1,086	0.04%

*Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25024*

## AGE OF HOUSING

Housing in Methuen is generally somewhat newer than housing in the region, county, and state. Per the 2015 ACS estimates, roughly 66 percent of Methuen homes were built prior to 1979. Roughly 69 percent of the total housing units in the region were constructed in the same period, 75 percent in the county, and 73 percent in the state. Note that homes predating 1978 may contain lead paint, which can pose health hazards. The EPA's Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting

Rule was passed in 1978 and required the use of lead-safe practices and other actions aimed towards preventing lead poisoning.

The 2015 ACS estimates 8 percent of homes were built after 2000 in Methuen compared to roughly 8 percent in the region and county and 9 percent in the state. Roughly 26 percent of existing housing units were constructed in Methuen before 1940, compared with 35 percent in the region, 39 percent in the county, and 34 percent in the state.

### Age of Housing, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Total housing units	18,230	100%	134,083	100%	307,894	100%	2,827,820	100%
2010 or later	292	2%	1,318	1%	2,422	1%	26,488	1%
2000 to 2009	1,171	6%	9,902	7%	20,720	7%	213,547	8%
1990 to 1999	1,633	9%	12,568	9%	21,629	7%	211,209	7%
1980 to 1989	3,176	17%	17,324	13%	32,856	11%	303,738	11%
1970 to 1979	2,391	13%	15,047	11%	29,621	10%	328,414	12%
1960 to 1969	1,940	11%	12,141	9%	29,606	10%	292,628	10%
1950 to 1959	1,794	10%	11,893	9%	33,520	11%	324,491	11%
1940 to 1949	1,072	6%	7,101	5%	17,090	6%	165,661	6%
1939 or earlier	4,761	26%	46,789	35%	120,430	39%	961,644	34%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25034

### TRENDS IN RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY VALUES

A review of trends in residential property values provides some perspective on what is occurring with housing costs in the local real estate market. Data from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) and other sources can offer insights about residential assessed values, average single-family home values, tax rates, and tax bills for each municipality in the Commonwealth.

In FY17, the total assessed value of all residential parcels in Methuen was \$4,279,398,912, and the average value of a single-family home was \$292,074, among the three lowest in the region's communities (only Lawrence and Haverhill have lower single-family average values than Methuen).

Methuen's average single-family tax bill is \$4,279, which is just over \$1,700 lower than the median of the regional community's average single-family tax bill (\$6,027).



### Tax Rates and Average Tax Bills, FY2017

Municipality	Residential Assessed Values		Single-Family Parcels		Single-Family Average Value		Residential Tax Rate		Average Single-Family Tax Bill	
	\$	Number	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Amesbury	1,675,943,007	3,462	331,684	19.95		6,617				
Andover	6,184,310,780	8,610	604,053	15.18		9,170				
Boxford	1,664,441,900	2,655	607,635	16.31		9,911				
Georgetown	1,103,402,988	2,470	402,386	16.21		6,523				
Groveland	851,897,525	1,877	387,353	14.68		5,686				
Haverhill	4,878,245,216	10,411	287,543	14.99		4,310				
Lawrence	2,683,174,883	4,268	192,107	15.34		2,947				
Merrimac	700,971,527	1,621	348,594	16.34		5,696				
Methuen	4,279,398,912	10,745	292,074	14.65		4,279				
Newbury	1,364,127,901	2,356	479,372	10.61		5,086				
Newburyport	3,426,931,473	4,336	540,320	13.45		7,267				
North Andover	4,068,321,236	6,287	510,523	14.28		7,290				
Rowley	855,096,485	1,653	426,237	14.14		6,027				
Salisbury	1,315,585,336	2,067	342,387	11.92		4,081				
West Newbury	850,933,647	1,362	529,877	14.55		7,710				

*Source: DOR Municipal Databank, FY17*

## Permitting Activity

Between 2000 and 2015, residential permit activity in Methuen ranged from 38 units permitted in 2011 to 367 units in 2004. Methuen permitted an annual average of about 86 single-family units and three two-family units. Methuen also permitted four three to four family units and nine multi-family units. Methuen's overall annual average was about 117 units over all building types. Based on Department of Economic and Community Development records, at least three multi-family projects were permitted over this time period for a total of 452 units.

### Methuen Residential Building Permit Activity, 2000-2015

Permits Issued	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Single-Family	121	110	114	108	82	58	75	68	47	44	51	38	98	122	119	114
Two-Family Units	0	0	0	0	2	0	6	12	12	2	0	0	6	2	4	2
Three- or Four-Family Units	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Five+ Family Units	0	160	0	0	283	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
Total	121	270	114	108	367	62	81	80	59	46	51	38	113	124	123	116

*Source: MassBenchmarks Annual building permit data from Census Bureau Construction Statistics, 2000-2015*

# Owner-Occupied Housing Characteristics

## OWNER CHARACTERISTICS

Per the 2015 ACS estimates, most Methuen owner households (57 percent) moved into their current unit between 1990 and 2009. This is similar to trends in the region (60 percent), county (58 percent), and state (58 percent).

### Owner by Year Moved into Unit, 2015

Year	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
2015 or later	83	1%	429	1%	843	0.5%	7,437	0.5%
2010-2014	1,682	14%	11,451	14%	24,118	13%	203,982	13%
2000-2009	4,029	32%	28,806	36%	62,567	35%	546,366	35%
1990-1999	3,100	25%	19,046	24%	41,879	23%	356,671	23%
1980-1989	1,844	15%	9,645	12%	22,242	12%	197,852	12%
1979 or earlier	1,702	14%	10,508	13%	29,464	16%	271,359	17%
Total	12,440	100%	79,885	100%	181,293	100%	1,583,667	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25038

Most owner householders in Methuen (56 percent) are between the ages of 35 and 59 – this is similar to trends in the region (58 percent), county (54 percent), and state (53 percent).

### Owner by Age of Householder, 2015

Age of Householder	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Owner occupied units with householders aged 25+	12,360	100%	79,597	100%	180,847	100%	1,578,738	100%
25-34 years	987	8%	5,687	7%	12,501	7%	120,668	8%
35-44 years	2,387	19%	14,340	18%	29,565	16%	262,247	17%
45-54 years	2,762	22%	21,581	27%	45,865	25%	386,386	24%
55-59 years	1,810	15%	10,116	13%	22,635	13%	197,033	12%
60-64 years	1,298	11%	9,064	11%	20,879	12%	177,103	11%
65-74 years	1,822	15%	11,371	14%	28,059	16%	245,529	16%
75-84 years	892	7%	5,218	7%	14,517	8%	131,404	8%
85+ years	402	3%	2,220	3%	6,826	4%	58,368	4%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25007

## Owners by Household Income, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Owner Occupied Units	12,440	100%	79,885	100%	181,912	100%	1,583,667	100%
Less than \$5,000	159	1.3%	850	1.1%	2,139	1.2%	20,373	1.3%
\$5,000-\$9,999	144	1.2%	823	1.0%	1,633	0.9%	15,807	1.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	222	1.8%	1,246	1.6%	3,307	1.8%	32,840	2.1%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	270	2.2%	1,670	2.1%	4,379	2.4%	38,939	2.5%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	374	3.0%	1,935	2.4%	4,823	2.7%	44,314	2.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	685	5.5%	4,025	5.0%	9,683	5.3%	90,888	5.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,237	9.9%	6,826	8.5%	14,988	8.2%	138,683	8.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,817	14.6%	11,728	14.7%	27,220	15.0%	248,991	15.7%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2,374	19.1%	11,838	14.8%	26,922	14.8%	226,778	14.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	3,087	24.8%	17,289	21.6%	40,120	22.1%	343,696	21.7%
\$150,000 or more	2,071	16.6%	21,655	27.1%	46,079	25.3%	382,358	24.1%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25118

## OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUES

In the region, about 21 percent of owner-occupied units have estimated value between \$500,000 and \$999,999, with about 2 percent over \$1,000,000. About 21 percent of owner-occupied units have estimated value between \$500,000 and \$999,999 and about 3 percent over \$1,000,000 in the county and about 18 percent and 4 percent, respectively, in the state. In Methuen, less than 5 percent of owner-occupied units have estimated value between \$500,000 and \$999,999 and less than 1 percent over \$1,000,000, thus making Methuen one of the more affordable communities in the region.

## Owner-Occupied Units by Value, 2015

Home Value	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Less than \$50,000	383	3.1%	1,782	2.2%	4,070	2.2%	40,677	2.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	147	1.2%	1,431	1.8%	2,551	1.4%	28,322	1.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	526	4.2%	3,460	4.3%	5,675	3.1%	72,568	4.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,030	8.3%	6,771	8.5%	11,579	6.4%	148,612	9.4%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	5,115	41.1%	19,962	25.0%	42,285	23.3%	384,150	24.3%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	4,569	36.7%	28,009	35.1%	71,995	39.7%	563,047	35.6%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	604	4.9%	16,817	21.1%	37,673	20.8%	285,504	18.0%
\$1,000,000 or more	66	0.5%	1,654	2.1%	5,465	3.0%	60,787	3.8%
Total	12,440	100%	79,885	100%	181,293	100%	1,583,667	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25075

## For-Sale Market

In 2017, the median sales price for a single-family home in Methuen was \$325,000. The median sales price for a condo was \$198,000. From 2011 to 2017, the median sales price for a single-family home increased by roughly 48 percent in Methuen. The chart below displays, however, that median sales prices have not yet risen above the peak of \$328,000 that was reached in 2005.

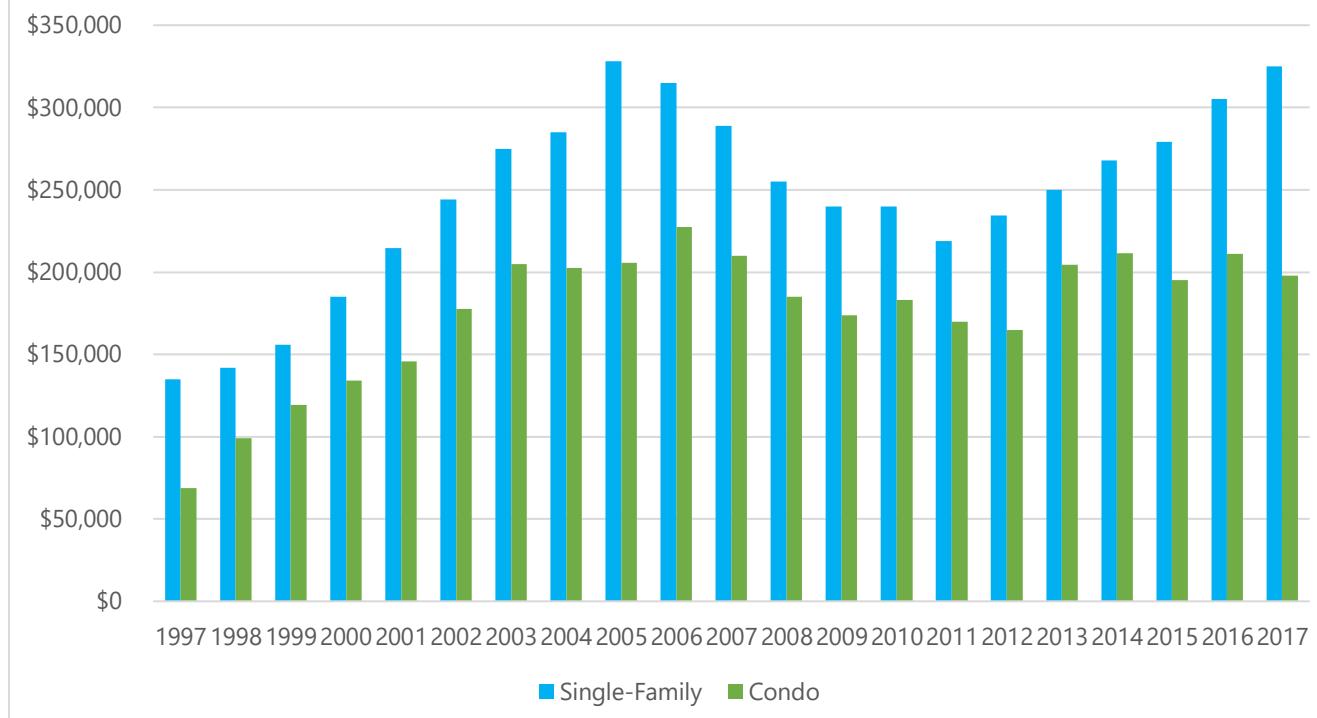
### Median Sales Price: 1997-2017

Year	Single-Family	Condo	All
1997	\$134,900	\$68,750	\$120,000
1998	\$142,000	\$99,000	\$134,500
1999	\$156,000	\$119,400	\$149,250
2000	\$185,000	\$134,050	\$169,900
2001	\$214,700	\$145,950	\$195,650
2002	\$244,000	\$177,500	\$230,000
2003	\$275,000	\$205,000	\$265,000
2004	\$285,000	\$202,500	\$275,000
2005	\$328,000	\$205,450	\$306,000
2006	\$315,000	\$227,400	\$295,000
2007	\$288,950	\$210,000	\$274,879
2008	\$255,000	\$185,000	\$248,150
2009	\$239,900	\$173,900	\$226,633
2010	\$240,000	\$183,000	\$232,250
2011	\$219,000	\$169,900	\$212,000
2012	\$234,500	\$165,000	\$232,000
2013	\$250,000	\$204,600	\$250,000
2014	\$268,000	\$211,475	\$265,000
2015	\$279,000	\$195,000	\$270,000
2016	\$305,000	\$210,900	\$300,000
2017	\$325,000	\$198,000	\$320,000

Source: The Warren Group Town Stats, 2017

### Median Sales Price 1997-2017

Source: The Warren Group Town Stats, accessed August 2017



# Renter-Occupied Housing Characteristics

## RENTER CHARACTERISTICS

Per the 2015 ACS estimates, most Methuen renter households (90 percent) moved into their current unit between 2000 and 2014. This is a slightly higher proportion of renter households in Methuen moving in to their unit in this period to the region (88 percent), county (84 percent), and state (87 percent).

### Renter by Year Moved into Unit, 2015

Year	Methuen		Merrimack Valley		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
2015 or later	93	2%	831	2%	2,057	2%	21,922	2%
2010-2014	2,595	52%	23,544	51%	53,482	50%	499,876	52%
2000-2009	1912	38%	17,015	37%	36,618	34%	331,130	34%
1990-1999	273	5%	3,211	7%	8,407	8%	71,061	7%
1980-1989	75	1%	873	2%	2,388	2%	22,277	2%
1979 or earlier	63	1%	598	1%	1,667	2%	19,788	2%
Total	5,011	100%	46,072	100%	106,619	100%	966,054	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25038

Renter households are typically younger than owner households. Most renter householders in Methuen (51 percent) are between the ages 25 and 44 years – this is higher than estimated renters in this age range than in the region (45 percent), county (44 percent), and state (48 percent).

### Renter by Age of Householder, 2015

Age of Householder	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Renter occupied units with householders aged 25+	4,858	100%	43,803	100%	101,464	100%	900,847	100%
25-34 years	1,364	28%	9,648	22%	22,861	23%	251,629	28%
35-44 years	1,138	23%	10,121	23%	20,887	21%	182,349	20%
45-54 years	759	16%	8,735	20%	19,632	19%	165,738	18%
55-59 years	325	7%	4,017	9%	9,431	9%	70,612	8%
60-64 years	203	4%	2,933	7%	7,464	7%	57,771	6%
65-74 years	574	12%	4,237	10%	9,710	10%	82,851	9%
75-84 years	349	7%	2,479	6%	6,727	7%	54,611	6%
85+ years	146	3%	1,633	4%	4,752	5%	35,286	4%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25007

Per the 2015 ACS estimates, about 34 percent of renter households in the region have incomes above \$50,000 and about 39 percent have incomes less than \$25,000.

***In Methuen, about 37 percent of households have estimated income above \$50,000 and about 34 percent less than \$25,000.***

In the county, about 38 percent of renter households have incomes below \$25,000 and about 36 percent above \$50,000. In the state, about 36 percent below \$25,000 and about 40 percent above \$50,000.

#### Renters by Household Income, 2015

	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Renter Occupied Units	5,011	100%	46,072	100%	106,619	100%	966,054	100%
Less than \$5,000	303	6.0%	2,433	5.3%	5,229	4.9%	53,541	5.5%
\$5,000-\$9,999	285	5.7%	3,117	6.8%	7,322	6.9%	65,749	6.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	468	9.3%	5,083	11.0%	11,569	10.9%	98,196	10.2%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	374	7.5%	3,809	8.3%	8,535	8.0%	73,538	7.6%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	272	5.4%	3,352	7.3%	7,180	6.7%	60,523	6.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	797	15.9%	6,244	13.6%	13,173	12.4%	105,214	10.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	670	13.4%	6,540	14.2%	15,355	14.4%	127,457	13.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,054	21.0%	7,581	16.5%	18,037	16.9%	153,969	15.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	389	7.8%	3,622	7.9%	8,986	8.4%	90,790	9.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	295	5.9%	2,879	6.2%	7,429	7.0%	86,178	8.9%
\$150,000 or more	104	2.1%	1,412	3.1%	3,804	3.6%	50,979	5.3%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table B25118



## RENTAL HOUSING COSTS

***A household making the median renter household income in Methuen could not afford an apartment at the Fair Market Rent.***

### Wages Needed to afford Fair Market Rent in Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the FY17 Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,148. To afford this level of rent and utilities – without paying more than 30% of income on housing – a household must earn \$45,924 annually. This level of income translates into a Housing Wage of \$22.08, assuming full-time employment.

In Massachusetts, a minimum wage worker earns an hourly wage of \$11.00. To afford the FMR for a one-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 80 hours per week.

In Massachusetts, the estimated mean (average) wage for a renter is \$19.70. The rent affordable to a renter with the state mean renter wage is \$1,025 or less.

Source: Source: National Low-Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2017: Massachusetts." Accessed August 2017.

About 74 percent of renter households in Methuen pay between \$500 and \$1,499 in monthly gross rent (rent and basic utilities), which is slightly higher than the region at 70 percent, and Massachusetts, where 59 percent of renter households pay between \$500 and \$1,499. 11 percent of renter households in Methuen pay more than \$1,500 in monthly gross rent, while in the region 15 percent pay more than \$1,500 per month.

The Lawrence HMFA (HUD Metro Fair Market) is made up of 39 percent renters, according to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition. The Fair Market Rent in this metropolitan area is \$1,024 for a one-bedroom apartment, which would require an income of \$40,960 to be affordable (spending not more than 30 percent of gross income). In Methuen, the median renter household income is about \$35,090 – a household with the median income could afford monthly rent (and utilities) cost of about \$877.

### Renter Households by Gross Rent per Month 2015

Gross Rent	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Less than \$500	717	15%	6,746	15%	16,228	16%	143,468	15%
\$500 to \$999	1,370	28%	12,981	29%	27,814	27%	256,163	27%
\$1,000 to \$1,499	2,260	46%	18,383	41%	40,965	40%	291,568	31%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	446	9%	4,938	11%	12,606	12%	148,031	16%
\$2,000 to \$2,499	73	1%	1,047	2%	3,780	4%	56,109	6%
\$2,500 to \$2,999	23	0%	381	1%	973	1%	20,885	2%
\$3,000 or more	0	0%	173	0%	507	0%	16,725	2%
Total Occupied Units Paying Rent	4,889	100%	44,649	100%	102,873	100%	932,949	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates; Table B25063.

# Housing Affordability

## HOUSING COST BURDEN

As defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "housing cost burden" occurs when households spend more than 30 percent of their gross income on housing costs. When a household is cost burdened, it has less income to spend on other necessities and to circulate into the local economy – this is especially challenging for low/moderate income households.

For homeowners, "housing costs" include the monthly cost of a mortgage payment, property taxes, and insurance. For renters, it includes monthly rent plus basic utilities (heat, electricity, hot water, and cooking fuel). When housing costs exceed 50 percent of a low- or moderate-income household's monthly income, the household meets the definition of "severely cost burdened."

***The 2014 ACS estimates indicated that about 42 percent of Methuen households have incomes at or below 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI).<sup>9</sup>***

About 29 percent of owner households have incomes at or below 80 percent AMI, and about 73 percent of renter households have incomes at or below 80 percent AMI.

### Household Income Distribution Overview, 2014

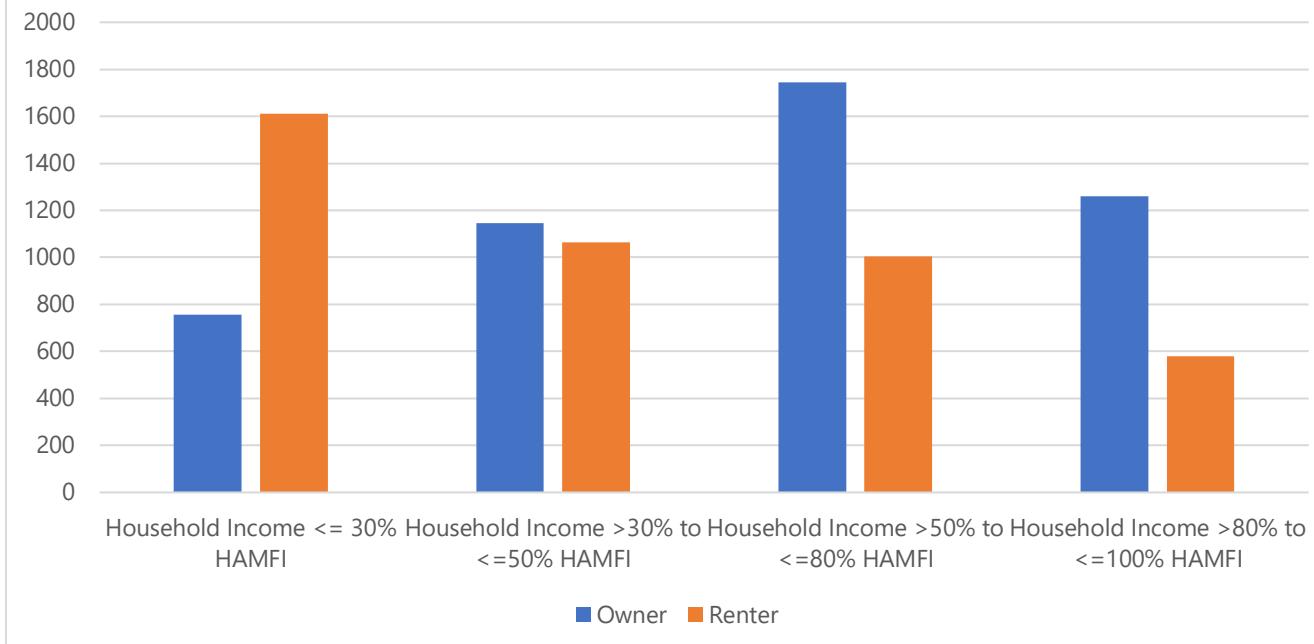
Income Range	Owner		Renter		Total	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	755	6%	1,610	32%	2,365	13%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	1,145	9%	1,065	21%	2,210	13%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	1,745	14%	1,005	20%	2,750	16%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	1,260	10%	580	11%	1,840	10%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	7,610	61%	810	16%	8,420	48%
Total	12,515	100%	5,070	100%	17,585	100%

*Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2010-2014 ACS Estimates*

<sup>9</sup> HAMFI – HUD Area Median Family Income. This is the median family income calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction, in order to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs. HAMFI will not necessarily be the same as other calculations of median incomes (such as a simple Census number), due to a series of adjustments that are made (For full documentation of these adjustments, consult the [HUD Income Limit Briefing Materials](#)). If you see the terms "area median income" (AMI) or "median family income" (MFI) used in the CHAS, assume it refers to HAMFI.

### Household Income: Owners and Renters

Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on ACS 2010-2014



About 28 percent of total owner households and 49 percent of renter households in Methuen pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing.

#### Cost Burdened Renters and Owners in Methuen (all incomes ranges), 2014

Housing Cost Burden	Owner		Renter		Total	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Cost Burden <=30%	8,945	71%	2,540	50%	11,485	65%
Cost Burden >30% to <=50%	2,225	18%	1,365	27%	3,590	20%
Cost Burden >50%	1,295	10%	1,095	22%	2,390	14%
Cost Burden not available	55	0.4%	75	1%	130	1%
Total	12,520	100%	5,075	100%	17,595	100%

Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2010-2014 ACS Estimates

**Of 7,330 households with incomes at or below 80 percent AMI in Methuen, 4,750 (65 percent) are cost burdened.**

### Cost Burdened Renters and Owners in Methuen by Income Range, 2014

Income by Cost Burden (owners and renters)	Cost burden > 30%		Cost burden > 50%		Total	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	1,760	29%	1,365	57%	2,370	13%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	1,610	27%	555	23%	2,210	13%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	1,380	23%	365	15%	2,750	16%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	495	8%	65	3%	1,835	10%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	735	12%	40	2%	8,420	48%
Total	5,980	100%	2,390	100%	17,585	100%

Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2010-2014 ACS Estimates

Of the estimated 3,680 low-income renter households in Methuen, about 80 percent are cost burdened and about 24 percent have extremely low income and are severely housing cost burdened - spending more than 50 percent of their gross income on rent.

### Cost Burdened Renters in Methuen by Income Range, 2014

Income by Cost Burden (Renters only)	Cost burden > 30%		Cost burden > 50%		Total	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	1,115	45%	865	79%	1,610	32%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	845	34%	185	17%	1,065	21%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	490	20%	45	4%	1,005	20%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	10	0%	0	0%	580	11%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	0	0%	0	0%	810	16%
Total	2,460	100%	1,095	100%	5,070	100%

Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2010-2014 ACS Estimates

About 3,645 owner households in Methuen are considered low income and roughly 63 percent of low-income owners spend more than 30 percent of income toward housing costs.

### Cost Burdened Owners in Methuen by Income Range, 2014

Income by Cost Burden (Owners only)	Cost burden > 30%		Cost burden > 50%		Total	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
Household Income <= 30% HAMFI	645	18%	500	39%	755	6%
Household Income >30% to <=50% HAMFI	760	22%	370	29%	1,145	9%
Household Income >50% to <=80% HAMFI	895	25%	320	25%	1,745	14%
Household Income >80% to <=100% HAMFI	485	14%	65	5%	1,260	10%
Household Income >100% HAMFI	735	21%	40	3%	7,610	61%
Total	3,520	100%	1,295	100%	12,515	100%

Source: HUD, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), based on 2010-2014 ACS Estimates

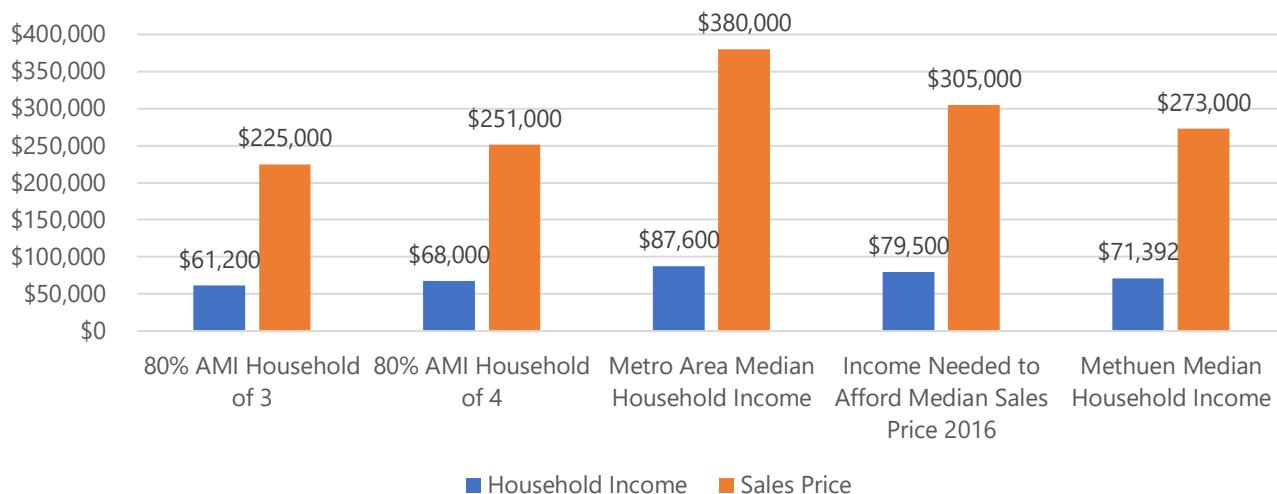
Of all households in Methuen, 5,977 (34 percent) are cost burdened. Most cost burdened households are small family households (40 percent) and other household types (non-elderly, non-family at 21 percent).

49 percent of renter households in Methuen are cost burdened, while 28 percent of owner households are cost burdened. Of cost burdened owner households, 37 percent are small family households. Tables detailing cost burden by household type can be found in the appendices.

## OWNERSHIP AFFORDABILITY BY INCOME

As seen in the figure below, a household of four in Methuen with 80 percent AMI could afford to purchase a home up to \$251,000. The median sales price for a single-family home in Methuen in 2016 was \$305,000, meaning a household would have to make \$79,500 per year to afford a home at the median sales price. At the Lawrence HMFA median household income of \$87,600, a household could afford a home up to \$380,000 in Methuen, though at the Methuen median household income of \$71,392, a household could only afford a home up to \$273,000. This results in an affordability gap of \$32,000.

Annual Income Needed to Afford to Purchase a Single-Family House  
Source: DHCD Sales Price Calculator, Author calculations using FY2017 tax rate, and assuming 30-year fixed mortgage, 20% downpayment, 4.20% interest rate.



## RENTAL AFFORDABILITY BY INCOME

In the Lawrence HMFA, the FY17 Fair Market Rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,024 and a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,305. The table below shows the rent affordable at different yearly salaries. A monthly gross rent that is affordable is no more than 30 percent of a household's monthly earnings.

A two-person household with extremely low income (less than or equal to 30 percent AMI) can afford a gross rent of \$526 per month in the Lawrence HMFA. A two-person household with very low income (greater than 30 percent and less than or equal to 50 percent AMI) can afford a gross rent of up to \$876 per month, and a two-person household with low income (greater than 50 percent and less than or equal to 80 percent) can afford a gross rent of \$1,360 per month. A two-person household with the area median income can afford a monthly gross rent of \$2,190.

### Rent Affordable to Two-Person Households by Income Limit 2017

	Two-Person Household Income Limit	Rent Affordable
<=30% AMI	\$21,050	\$526
>30% and <=50% AMI	\$35,050	\$876
>50% and <=80% AMI	\$54,400	\$1,360
Area Median Income	\$87,600	\$2,190

*Source: HUD FY17 Income Limits. \*Note: the area median income is for a four-person household*

## AFFORDABLE UNITS

As of August 2017, there were 1,649 units in Methuen listed on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. 91 percent of these were rental units, and the remaining 9 percent were owner units. About 9 percent of Methuen's housing units are affordable units.

### Affordable Units by Type

	Number	%
Total Units	18,268	100%
Affordable Units	1,649	9%
Rental	1,498	91%
Ownership	151	9%

*Source: DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory, 2017*

1,009 units listed on the SHI in Methuen (61 percent) have perpetual affordability, including Summit Place (280 rental units) and Appleton Estates (150 rental units). 120 units had affordability that was set to expire in 2015 or 2016, including Millfalls Apartments (97 rental units). Between 2017 and 2030, 308 units have affordability that is set to expire, including Merrimack Valley Apartments (60 rental units) and Park Gardens (160 rental units).

# Chapter 4: Housing Development Considerations

In 2013, the City of Methuen completed the *Methuen Open Space and Recreation Plan*. This plan includes environmental, infrastructure and development considerations that can be directly woven into this plan. Much of the content in this Chapter was taken from the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

## Environmental Resources

The City of Methuen is located about 27 miles north of Boston in the Lower Merrimack River Valley. It is bordered on the west by the Town of Dracut, on the south by the Merrimack River and the City of Lawrence, on the east by the City of Haverhill, and on the north by the New Hampshire communities of Salem and Pelham. Methuen covers 23.1 square miles of land area (0.7 sq. mi. of water) and is largely comprised of single-family dwellings.

Methuen lies within the Merrimack River watershed, a 5,000-square mile drainage basin with headwaters in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and outlet at the Atlantic Ocean in Newburyport. Methuen's 22.4 square miles is characterized by gently undulating uplands and low-lying floodplains that are interspersed with numerous rivers, streams, ponds, and wetlands.

Methuen's residents place a high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied landscape, diverse natural features, and traditional land use patterns. Methuen's inland location on two important rivers – the Merrimack and Spicket Rivers – played a critical role in the community's historical development, and the rivers, mills, former private estates, and historic granite walls remain among the city's most cherished landscape assets. The City has already taken some measures to preserve its most significant buildings and natural areas. It is now looking beyond the traditional resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, neighborhoods, and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most Essex County municipalities, Methuen is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its river frontage and farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

Development of the limited amount of Methuen's remaining agricultural land is of particular concern. This is an issue that bears the attention of city officials and residents alike. The Merrimack Valley is reported to have some of the richest soils east of the Connecticut River valley, and the few vegetable farms remaining on the eastern side of Methuen are subject to intense development pressures. These pressures stem from the high cost of land, the high demand of modern residential and commercial construction, and the difficulty of successful farming on limited agricultural land surrounded by development. This threatened part of the city's natural landscape, along with the remaining farmland in the northwest section of the city off Hampshire Road, should be a primary focus of the City's future preservation efforts.

### RIVERS AND STREAMS

#### **Merrimack River**

One of Methuen's prized natural resources is the Merrimack River. More than six miles of the river's 110 miles run through the city. Beginning at the West End boundary with Dracut, this magnificent river corridor offers Methuen and other communities in the area outstanding opportunities for active and passive recreation, nature education, and habitat preservation. Importantly, it also serves as part of the city and region's public water supply. It supplies water to Lowell, Lawrence, Dracut, Tewksbury and many other communities along its course. For many rivers in Massachusetts, water withdrawals can result in low-flow problems in summer and winter months. This has not been the case with the Merrimack River because of its large (5000-sq. mi.) watershed and high flow volume. However, water quality is another concern. The river passes through densely-developed urban areas where stormwater runoff and other sources of pollution are important issues. The MA Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulates the public use of

this water resource in Massachusetts. Protection and conservation of the water resources of the Merrimack River require regional cooperation.

### **Spicket River**

The Spicket River flows south through Methuen from Salem, NH, and may be divided into three distinct sections by considering the different reaches of the river created by two dams. The first section extends from the New Hampshire state line south to the dam at Lowell Street. This area has a large floodplain, a portion of which, known as the Nevins Pond and Wildlife Area, is under the management of the Methuen Conservation Commission. The development pressure on this section of the river corridor is significant due to its rural character and choice location at the Interstate 93 and Route 213 interchange. This section also contains the only sizeable floodplain for its run in Massachusetts, and the last floodplain which can mitigate the detrimental effect of floodwaters before they enter the urbanized sections of Methuen and Lawrence. The remaining two reaches are in a more urban setting, with floodplain development up to the river banks.

The second reach, extending from the Lowell Street dam to the Memorial Music Hall dam on Broadway, has minimal open land. A high, steep banking along the Union Street side is subject to erosion and needs attention. The dam located at the Music Hall was repaired in the 1990s and this significantly improved this scenic spot.

The last reach of the Spicket River extends from the Memorial Music Hall dam to the Lawrence city line. A continuous strip of land on the north side of the river, from the bridge on Broadway to the Neil Playstead on Lawrence Street, should be maintained as a green corridor. Even though the Spicket River is a small river, in the spring its floodwaters frequently spill over its banks into adjoining wetlands and have inundated and damaged numerous homes and businesses.

### **Hawkes Brook**

Hawkes Brook is an expansive drainage system that begins in the northeast section of the city and joins Baremeadow Brook prior to entering the Merrimack River near the Haverhill border. Much of this brook and its tributary streams have undeveloped swampy banks. Erosion problems at nearby Pie Hill have caused severe siltation problems in Hawkes Brook. A conservation project slated for the late 1970s never materialized and the problems at Pie Hill and Hawkes Brook remain.

### **Harris Brook**

Harris Brook begins in Pelham, NH, and is joined by Forest Lake brook in Methuen. As it flows toward the Spicket River, Harris Brook receives water from several unnamed tributaries plus Policy Brook. Several large wetlands abut this brook. For the most part, the land bordering Harris Brook is sparsely developed.

### **Bartlett, Sawyer, and Griffin Brooks**

On the west end of Methuen, three streams – Bartlett, Sawyer, and Griffin Brooks – flow into the Merrimack River. Bartlett Brook includes a swampy area in Methuen which has been proposed as a possible conservation site. The other two streams lack extensive bordering wetlands, but care should be taken not to further constrict the banks by filling.

## **LAKES AND PONDS**

Lakes and ponds are common throughout New England and Essex County. Many are natural; others are man-made for agricultural or industrial purposes. Regardless of their origin, Methuen's lakes and ponds are key features of the City's landscape.

### **Forest Lake**

Forest Lake, a large groundwater-fed pond of approximately 52 acres, is the only Methuen pond large enough for general recreational use. Methuen residents are provided access to the lake, for a fee, via the Town beach. The recreational area is maintained by the Methuen Department of Public Works, Environmental Management Division, and is managed by the Methuen Conservation Commission.

### **Hills Pond**

Two small ponds located on the former Hill's Farm property on Pleasant Valley Street and Milk Street are an integral part of the Baremeadow Brook watershed. The watershed for these ponds is heavily developed and includes the large residential Glen Magna area and The Loop commercial center.

### **Mystic Pond**

Mystic Pond, situated at the intersection of Route I-93 and Pelham Street, plays an important role in the watershed system. Peat Meadows and the springs from the hill to the south feed the pond, with the overflow entering the Spicket River at the Route 213 overpass.

### **Searles Pond**

Searles Pond, on Jackson Street, once a large pond that was filled in almost to the point of non-existence, has been all but restored to its pre-filled condition. At present, the primary use of this area is as a flood retention pond to prevent flood damage caused by an overflow of Bloody Brook which emanates from the pond. Due to its location in a highly urbanized area, this open space has great potential which should be further explored.

## **WETLANDS**

Wetlands come in a variety of shapes and sizes and are comprised of water-saturated lands and depressions, often located within floodplains, which include marshes, swamps, wet meadows, and bogs. Wetlands serve a variety of important ecological and societal functions including protection from flooding, pollution filtration, and fish and wildlife habitat. In recognition of these attributes, Methuen's wetlands are protected by both the State (MassDEP) Wetlands Protection Act and the City of Methuen Wetlands Protection Ordinance. Notable wetlands in Methuen include the following:

### **Peat Meadow**

Peat Meadow is a large, conspicuous perennial marsh, comprising over 200 acres, which is bounded by Route I-93, Forest Street, and Pelham Street. The watershed of this large, deep wetland, where the underlying organic soil may reach 30 feet in depth, has a contributing area of approximately 600 acres.

### **Adjoining New Hampshire Swamps**

Two other large wetland areas are shared with neighboring New Hampshire. One lies west of Howe Street and is bounded on the south by Route 213 and on the west by the state line. The other is bounded on the east by the Merrimack Valley Golf Club and on the west by the state line.

### **Vernal Pools**

Vernal pools are an important but vulnerable wetland resource in Methuen. Unlike Peat Meadow and other perennial wetlands, vernal pools are small, scattered seasonal water bodies that occur in isolated surface depressions which are usually wet during the spring and early summer and dry up as the summer progresses. At present, the State has certified 31 vernal pools in Methuen and has identified, via local field reconnaissance, an additional 86 potential vernal pools. The City's remaining vernal pools should be identified, certified, and mapped as soon as possible to steer future development activity away from these critical wetland habitats.

## **FLOOD HAZARD AREAS**

Significant parts of the City of Methuen lie within the floodplains of the Merrimack River and the Spicket River and are subject to recurring (and sometimes highly damaging) flooding. A GIS analysis of the City's FIRM flood hazard area maps by MVPC in 2012 determined that 1,938 acres (3.0 square miles) of land area in Methuen is located within the 100-year floodplain, which is vulnerable to flooding. An additional 727 acres (1.1 square miles) lies within the 500-year floodplain. Together, these two flood zones constitute nearly one-fifth (18.1%) of the total area of the community. In order to minimize flooding and its impacts, the City of Methuen has adopted a Floodplain Overlay District to regulate further development in the flood hazard areas as delineated on the City's Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), prepared by FEMA.

## **AQUIFERS**

An aquifer is an underground geologic formation (typically a coarse-grained deposit of sand and gravel or fractured bedrock) that is capable of yielding a significant, reliable volume of groundwater to a water supply well. Aquifers of sufficient capacity to serve as a municipal water supply are relatively scarce and found only in locations with certain favorable geologic and hydrologic characteristics. In New England, most aquifers with such capacity were formed in

valleys carved into bedrock by ancient rivers and glacial meltwaters that drained the continent thousands, and even millions, of years ago.

In Methuen, four small aquifers comprised of glacial stratified deposits and post-glacial floodplain alluvium have been identified and mapped by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The largest of these is located west of I-93 in the Hampshire Road area near the Salem, NH border. The others, all very small, are located respectively in the Lyndale Avenue area, by the Merrimack River along Rt. 110 in southwestern Methuen, and by the Merrimack River east of I-495 at the Haverhill-North Andover junction. According to Methuen Water Division personnel, none of the four small aquifers yields groundwater in sufficient quantity to serve as a reliable public water supply source for the City. For this reason, the City uses the Merrimack River to meet its municipal water needs.

## Environmental Challenges

### CHRONIC FLOODING

As mentioned under Environmental Constraints, significant parts of the City of Methuen lie within the floodplains of the Merrimack River and the Spicket River and are subject to recurring (and sometimes highly damaging) flooding during prolonged rainfall events. A GIS analysis of the City's FIRM flood hazard area maps by MVPC in 2008 determined that 1,969 acres (3.1 sq. mi.) of land area in Methuen is located within the 100-year floodplain and thus is vulnerable to flooding. An additional 737 acres (1.1 sq. mi.) lies within the 500-year floodplain. Together, these two flood zones constitute almost nineteen percent (19%) of the total area of the community. Based on an additional analysis by MVPC, 420 acres in these zones were found to be still open and "potentially developable" under the City's current zoning scheme. Development of this open space would increase the area's impervious surface cover and stormwater runoff, thereby exacerbating the existing flooding problems.

According to the City's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), the Merrimack River generally floods along Armory and Lowell Streets. The Spicket River generally floods where it approaches Methuen on Hampshire Road, the center of the city along Pine Street, Horne Street, Bentley Circle, and occasionally on Cross and Pelham Streets.

The notorious "Mother's Day Flood" of May 2006 flood event inundated much of the Swan Street and Jackson Street area for up to seven days, shutting down commercial establishments and forcing the evacuation of numerous residences, including six multi-family homes. The roadways in the area were also closed for this period, seriously impacting commuter traffic. A minimum of five police officers were required to post detours around the impacted areas. Other city personnel and private utility company crews were also required to respond. The 2006 flood was but the latest in a series of such episodes. Other significant flooding events occurred in March/April 2004, spring 1998, and October 1996. Each of these flood events resulted in impacts similar to those of the May 2006 Mother's Day Flood, although they were of shorter duration.

City public safety officials have long been concerned over the potential impact of Spicket River flood waters on the Spicket River Dam. This concern became a reality during the May 2006 Flood when the river's surging floodwaters began to overtop the dam and threaten the abutment, requiring City public safety crews to deploy sandbags to contain the water and prevent further scouring and erosion. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Spicket River peaked at 2,080 cubic feet per second, the highest flow recorded since streamflow monitoring began in the river in 2000.

In addition to the Spicket and Merrimack Rivers, the City has numerous other surface water bodies – lakes, ponds, streams, and wetlands – that give rise to occasional localized flooding problems. These latter water bodies include: Forest Lake, Mystic Pond, Mill Pond, Searles Pond, and Hills Pond, as well as Bloody Brook, Hawkes Brook, Bare Meadow Brook, Harris Brook, Bartlett Brook, Sawyer Brook, Griffin Brook, and Bradley Brook.

### EROSION, SEDIMENTATION, AND STORMWATER POLLUTION

As in many urban areas, land development in Methuen has the potential to adversely impact the local environment. Impacts can occur during and after construction as vegetation is altered and topsoils are disturbed, temporarily allowing wind, rainfall, and snowmelt to increase erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater runoff. In Methuen, stormwater runoff

contributes to the periodic impairment of local water quality, most notably in the larger surface waters of the Merrimack and Spicket Rivers and Forest Lake, but also in smaller streams, ponds, and wetlands.

Urban stormwater discharges typically carry a wide range of concentrated pollutants which collect on impervious surfaces (such as streets, driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks) until a storm event washes them into nearby storm drains and waterways. Common stormwater pollutants include: fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, automotive fluids, sand and salt, pet waste, litter, and other debris. Another concern is illicit connections from households and businesses (such as septic systems and floor drains) which can discharge fecal coliform bacteria, cleaning agents, and other pollutants into the storm sewer system. Stormwater runoff picks up these and other harmful pollutants then transports them—untreated—to waterways via storm sewer systems. When left uncontrolled, these discharges can result in fish kills, the closure of public swimming beaches, the destruction of wildlife habitats, loss of recreational and aesthetic values, and the contamination of surface drinking water supplies.

Construction site runoff in urbanized areas is also a significant water quality concern because of the devastating effects that concentrated sediment loads can have on local water bodies, especially small streams, ponds, and wetlands. Numerous studies have shown that the amount of sediment transported by stormwater runoff from construction sites that lack adequate sediment controls is significantly greater than from sites with controls. During storms, sediment-laden runoff can overwhelm a small stream channel's carrying capacity, resulting in streambed scour, stream bank erosion, and destruction of bordering vegetative cover. When left uncontrolled, sediment-laden runoff has been shown to result in the impairment of instream and in-lake habitats for fish and other aquatic species, loss of flood storage capacity, and adverse impacts on navigation and recreation.

The City of Methuen is actively working on a number of fronts to minimize and mitigate local stormwater runoff pollution, as well as soil erosion and sedimentation. These efforts include enforcement of local development and wetland regulations, monitoring of construction sites, and the development and implementation of a municipal stormwater management program (SWMP) consistent with EPA's "Phase II" stormwater regulations. Through this latter program, the city has begun to develop and implement various stormwater management measures (known as "best management practices", or BMPs) in the following six areas: 1) public education and outreach, 2) public participation and involvement, 3) illicit discharge detection and elimination, 4) construction site runoff control, 5) post-construction runoff control, and 6) municipal operations pollution prevention/good housekeeping. Over time, addressing these six criteria is expected to result in a reduction in local stormwater generation and improved local stormwater quality.

## Historic and Cultural Resources

Within the Merrimack Valley, Methuen is part of the Greater Lawrence-Greater Haverhill sub regional employment hub, which also serves as a regional destination for culture, entertainment, commerce, and recreation. The City and surrounding communities offer numerous attractions for residents, but also draw visitors from farther afield, providing opportunities for history and architecture buffs, boaters, birders, trail-users, and others who enjoy the City's and region's festivals, concerts, shops, and restaurants.

Methuen's distinctive inland, riverine landscape was instrumental in shaping the history of the community from the earliest Native American use of the land to the 19th century factories on the Merrimack and Spicket Rivers to land use patterns that survive today. Native Americans of the Pawtucket tribe established mainland trails along the banks of the two major waterways that flow through Methuen – an east-west route along the Merrimack River and a north-south route following the course of the Spicket River. There are documented Native American sites from the Woodland Period which extends back to about 3,000 years ago. Prior to its incorporation as a town in 1726, Methuen was part of the City of Haverhill. The Town's first English settlement was on Meeting House Hill (now known as Daddy Frye's Hill), near the present-day site of Holy Family Hospital.

Up until the early 19th century, Methuen's primary economic base was agriculture, reliant at first on the Salem, MA market and later, after the 1820s, on the Lowell market. The Early Industrial Period (1830-1870) was the time of a shift to a mixed economic base of agriculture and manufacturing. The center of the community moved to the area of the Spicket River and Spicket Falls, which provided energy for the industrial mills built along the riverbank. In the second half of the 19th century, the textile industry expanded rapidly in the region. Methuen's population growth during this period (from

around 1,400 to over 4,500 by 1885) was fueled by the prosperity of the Methuen Company Cotton Mills, owned by David Nevins, and the textile mills of neighboring Lawrence. Many of Methuen's most distinctive architectural and cultural resources date to three entrepreneurial families who amassed great wealth in the 19th century. The legacies of the Nevins, Searles, and Tenney families include, among others, the Nevins Memorial Library, the Nevins Home for the Aged and Incurable, the MSPCA property donated by the Nevins family, the Methuen Memorial Hall (built by Edward Searles to house the first concert organ in the U.S.), the Searles Building constructed as the city's high school and now used as municipal offices, the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial donated by Charles Tenney, and the granite walls and towers of the Searles and Tenney Estates.

## **SEARLES TENNEY NEVINS HISTORIC DISTRICT**

In 1992, the City established the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District to preserve the distinctive architecture and rich character of one of the Merrimack Valley region's and Massachusetts' most unique neighborhoods. The Historic District is administered by the Methuen Historic District Commission, an oversight board appointed by the City Council that applies rules and regulations to protect the district from alteration and development that might compromise its aesthetic integrity or diminish its historic value. As mentioned previously, in the industrial boom of the late 19th century, Methuen city fathers Edward F. Searles, Charles H. Tenney, and David C. Nevins amassed considerable personal fortunes through hat manufacturing, textile production, and railroads. Choosing to invest their wealth in Methuen, they heavily influenced the city's economic development and left a legacy of architecture and civic works that has helped shape the community's character and quality of life. Methuen Open Space and Recreation Plan 2013 - 2020 III - 9 Today, the trio's collective vision can be seen in mills, housing, schools, mansions, churches, monuments, playgrounds, the Library, and the architectural fantasies that resulted from their artistic rivalry. The historic district boundaries were established to include properties and buildings constructed or used by the Searles, Tenney and Nevins families and the people who worked for them.

# **Infrastructure Capacity**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Methuen is located near two interstate highways, I-93 and I-495, and is served by State Routes 28, 110, 113, and 213. Methuen has approximately 200 miles of roadway, of which 165 miles are owned and maintained by the City. Public transportation is provided by the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA), which provides fixed-route bus service both within Methuen and to the communities of Amesbury, Andover, Haverhill, Lawrence, Merrimac, Newburyport, and North Andover. The MVRTA also provides an advanced phone request service (Methuen Ring and Ride), which provides service to the following Methuen locations: Holy Family Hospital, The Loop, Methuen Plaza, Methuen Square, and Merrimack Plaza. Methuen has a Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) designated Park-and-Ride Lot. Built in 2000 and located on Pelham Street east of I-93, this lot has 177 parking spaces available to commuters. The MVRTA offers bus service from this lot to Lawrence, Andover, and Boston, with 4 trips per weekday. Commuter rail service to Boston is available to Methuen residents in the neighboring communities of Haverhill, Lawrence, and Andover. General air travel to most parts of the U.S. is available to residents from Logan International Airport in Boston and the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport in Manchester, NH. Several specialized regional services are also available, including the Merrimack Valley Seaplane Base in Methuen.

## **WATER SUPPLY**

Methuen's primary drinking water supply source is the Merrimack River (MassDEP Source I.D. #3181000-1S). The Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards classify the Merrimack River as a Class B waterway. This means that the water withdrawn for drinking water purposes must be treated prior to delivery and consumption. Water pumped from the Merrimack River is treated at the City-owned water treatment plant, located on Burnham Road, before being distributed through the system to area homes, institutions, and businesses. Currently, the treatment plant has a maximum capacity (during emergencies) of 13 million gallons per day (mgd), although the average annualized demand is 4.7 mgd. During dry summer periods, when lawn watering peaks, the demand can increase to 9.5 mgd. The water system currently has 14,338 customer connections served by 216 miles of water pipe. Although the Merrimack River is an abundant water supply source, the Methuen Water Department regularly encourages and educates all of its customers to be 'water-wise' and conserve water.

## SEWER SERVICE

With the exception of a few small isolated rural sections, most of Methuen is part of the public wastewater system. The City is a member of the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District (GLSD), a regional wastewater management district that also includes Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, and Salem, NH. The wastewater treatment plant for the District is located in North Andover, with discharges into the Merrimack River. The maximum (design) treatment capacity of the GLSD plant is 52 million gallons of wastewater per day. In a typical year, the plant treats roughly 30 million gallons of wastewater per day, 900 million gallons per month, and 11 billion gallons per year. It also treats over 50,000 gallons of septic from its member district communities and from other municipalities. Methuen has 105 miles of sewer lines to collect and transport wastewater to the GLSD treatment plant.

## Regulatory Barriers

Most of Methuen is zoned for residential uses, and 73.4% of residential development is on lots of  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre or less. The largest amount of land area (32%) is designated RR (Rural Residential) which allows single-family homes on minimum sized 80,000 square foot lots (almost 2 acres). The second and third most expansive zoning districts are the R-A and R-B districts (10% of city area each). These single-family residential zones require 40,000 square foot and 25,000 square foot minimum lot sizes, respectively. These lower density residential zones are located in the west and north ends furthest from Downtown Methuen and outside the ring or beltway formed by the limited access highways I-93, State Route 213, and I-495. Inside this ring are found the higher density residential zones R-C and R-D (3% and 14% of city area), requiring 15,000 square feet and 10,000 square feet minimum lot sizes, respectively.

There are two multi-family zoning districts in Methuen (MA and MB). The MA zone requires a 3-acre minimum lot size and allows a maximum density of 2 dwelling units per acre. The MB zoning district requires 1-acre minimum lot size and allows a maximum density of 4 dwelling units per acre. The MA and MB zones account for about 1% each of Methuen's land area. Almost all multi-family zones are located inside the ring with the exception of one RA zone located along Washington Street just north of Route 213 and The Loop commercial area. Downtown Methuen is zoned Central Business District (CBD) which requires 4,000 square foot minimum lot sizes and allows retail and offices uses. It encompasses only 83 acres and accounts for less than 1% of Methuen's land area. Methuen does not have an extensive downtown area. Much of Methuen's business activities are located along arterial roadways and in the regional shopping plaza known as The Loop, located along Route 213.

## PROJECTED GROWTH

During the Master Plan development process, a residential build-out analysis was conducted to project Methuen's maximum future population under the current zoning. The assessor's data showed 983 acres in 430 parcels of vacant developable residential land. Most of this land is located in the west and north ends outside the three "ring" roads. This land would support almost 1,700 new dwelling units, assuming an average density of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre per unit and 15% of the land used for new roads and utilities. Assuming a future population per housing unit figure of 2.6, the total number of additional people that could reside in Methuen when all the developable vacant residential land is developed is 4,420. If the remaining developable residential land is developed at higher densities, the future additional population would be higher.

## POTENTIAL HOUSING LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS IN METHUEN

In October 2017, City stakeholders identified potential locations for future housing development. A number of sites were identified for potential housing unit development because of their access to public services and public transit, proximity to existing housing, and areas where the City would like to concentrate additional development (i.e., reducing sprawl). However, not all of the sites used these filters. There are other criteria the City could use to prioritize the conceptual parcels (see Status column) further, including presence of environmental resources, lot size, ownership and type of use, and units on the lot. Please see Appendix I for a list of specific criteria the City can use to prioritize these sites further. The following map is a visual representation of these potential sites.

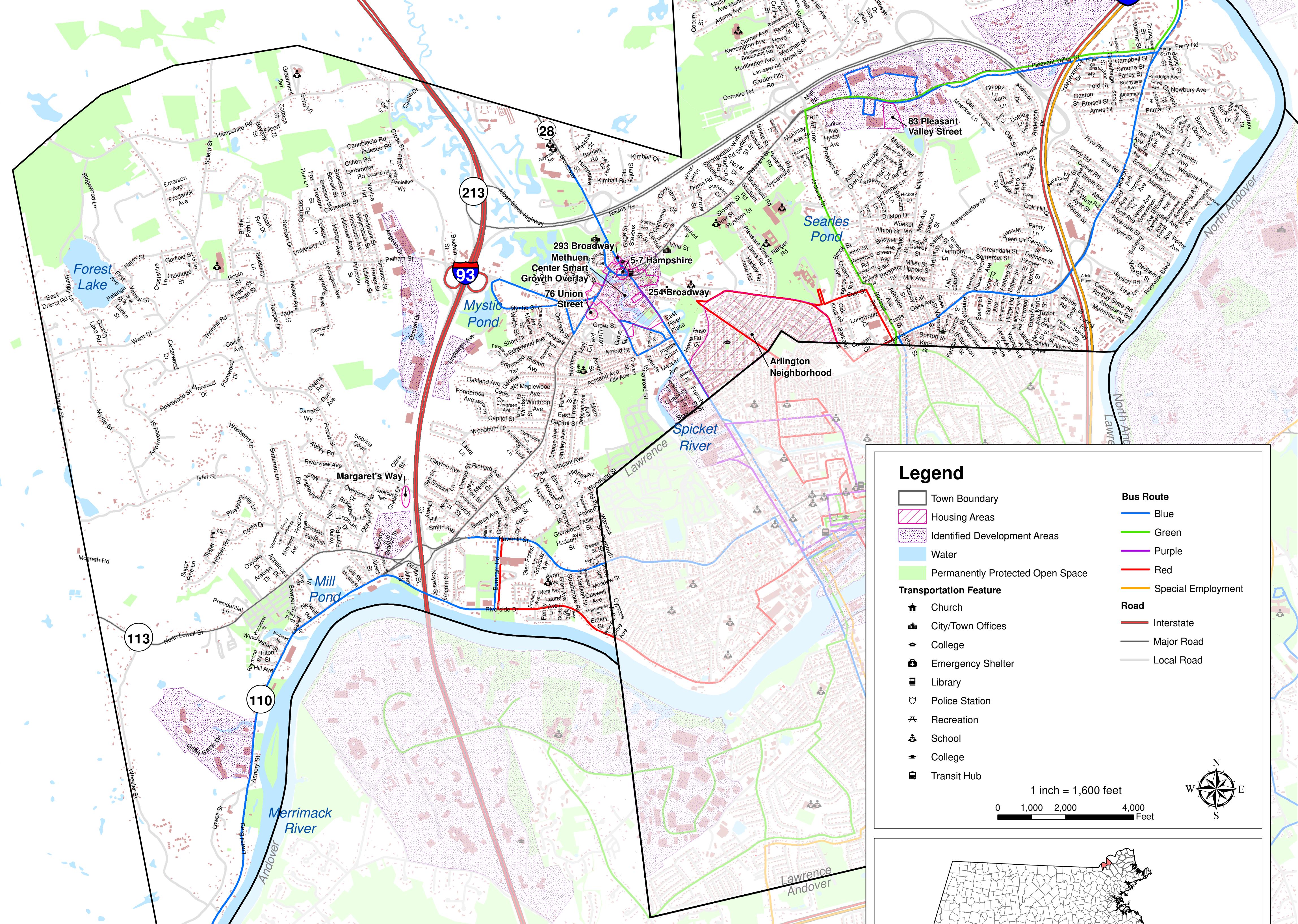
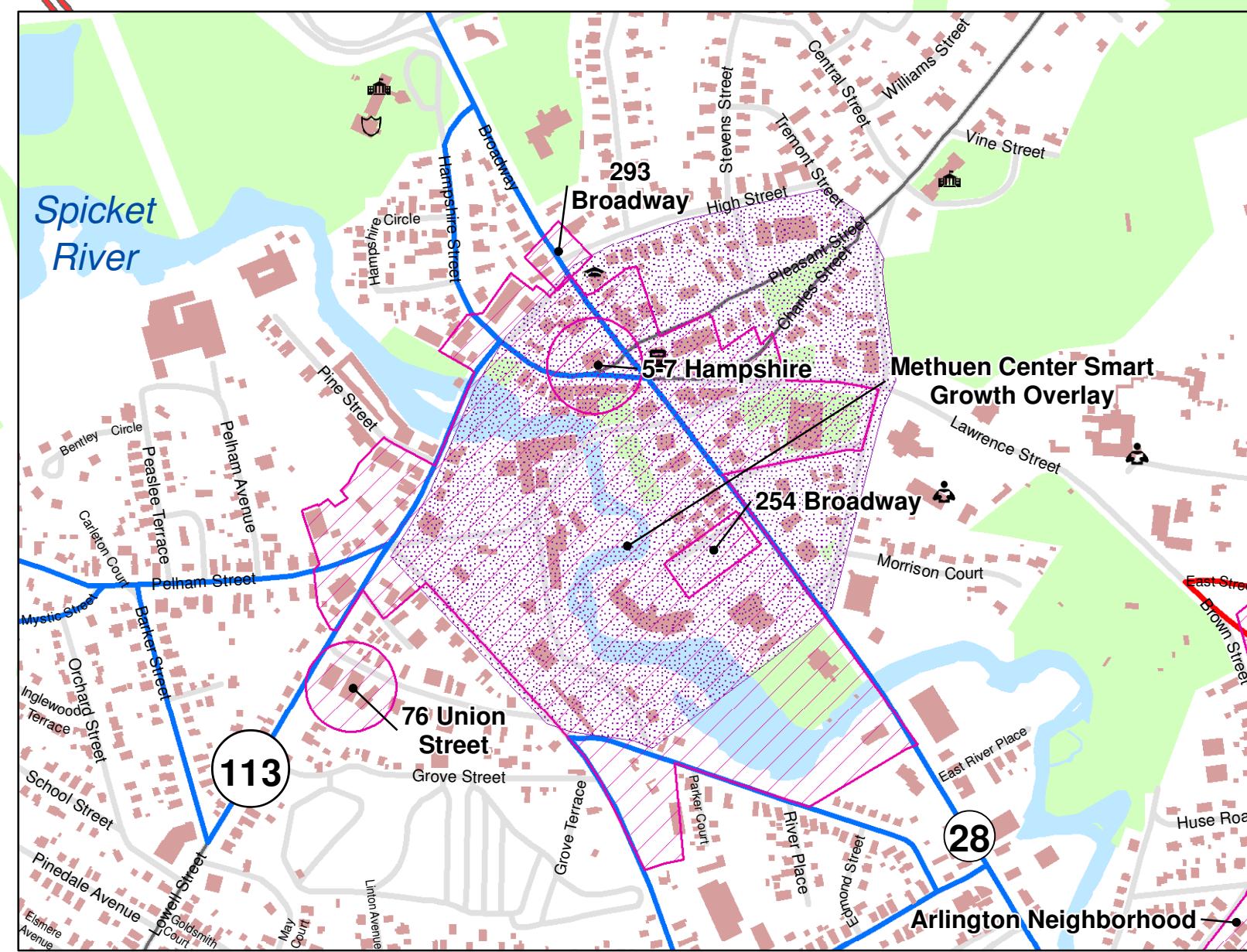
### Potential Housing Locations and Environmental Considerations in Methuen

Project Name/ Location	Housing Type	Status	Tenure	Category	Affordable Units	Number Affordable Units	Total Units	Development Area (Acres)	Environmental Considerations (Wetland, 100- Year Floodplain, Rare Species, Water Supply)	Brownfield Present Y/N?
195 Howe Street	Multi Family	Permitted	For Rent	Assisted Living/ Senior Housing - LIP	Yes	10	140	14.23	Wetlands	No
254 Broadway	Multi Family	Permitted	For Rent	Affordable Rental - 40B	Yes	40	40	1.19	No	Yes
293 Broadway	Multi Family	Building Permit	For Rent	Mixed Use - CDBG/ HOME	Yes	2	3	0.75	No	Yes
5-7 Hampshire	Multi Family	Conceptual	For Rent	MCSGOD - 40R	Yes	4	14	2.28	No	No
76 Union Street	Multi Family	Conceptual	For Rent	Recovery Housing	Yes	15	15	2.05	No	Yes
83 Pleasant Valley Street	Multi Family	Permitted	For Rent	Apartments - 40B	Yes	39	156	7.65	Wetlands	No
Arlington Neighborhood				Infill CDBG/ HOME funds	Yes	25	25	157.59	No	Yes
Graceland Park	Single Family	Building Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	1	9	15.54	Wetlands Rare Species	No
Great Oaks	Single Family	Building Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	3	30	7.46	Wetlands 100-Year Floodplain Rare Species	No

Maple Park	Single Family	Building Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	1	10	19.41	Wetlands 100-Year Floodplain Rare Species	No
Margaret's Way	Single Family	Occupancy Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	1	9	2.73	No	No
Methuen 40R/Smart Growth Overlay District	Multi Family	Conceptual	For Rent	40R Smart Growth	Yes	88	350	60.04	Wetlands 100-Year Floodplain	Yes

# City of Methuen

## Downtown Methuen



Town	Name	Type	Status	Tenure	Category	Affordable	Number Affordable	Total Number
Methuen	Margats Way	Single Family	Occupancy Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	1	9
Methuen	195 Howe Street	Multi Family	Permitted	For Rent	Assisted Living/ Senior Housing - LIP	Yes	10	140
Methuen	254 Broadway	Multi Family	Permitted	For Rent	Affordable Rental - 40B	Yes	40	40
Methuen	293 Broadway	Multi Family	Building Permit	For Rent	Mixed Use - CDBG/ HOME	Yes	2	3
Methuen	83 Pleasant Valley Street	Multi Family	Permitted	For Rent	Apartments - 40B	Yes	39	156
Methuen	Maple Park	Single Family	Building Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	1	10
Methuen	Great Oaks	Single Family	Building Permit	For Sale	OSRD - LIP	Yes	3	30
Methuen	Graceland Park	Single Family	Building Permit	For Rent	40B Smart Growth	Yes	1	9
Methuen	Methuen Center Smart Growth Overlay	Multi Family	Conceptual	For Rent	MCSGOD - 40R	Yes	88	350
Methuen	5-7 Hampshire	Multi Family	Conceptual	For Rent	MCSGOD - 40R	Yes	4	14
Methuen	76 Union Street	Multi Family	Conceptual	For Rent	Recovery Housing	Yes	15	15
Methuen	Arlington Neighborhood				Infill CDBG/ HOME funds	Yes	25	25



# Chapter 5: Housing Goals and Strategies

## Five-Year Goals

The City of Methuen currently has 1,649 subsidized housing units listed on the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of December 2017. This number represents 9% of the total year-round housing units as reported by the 2010 U.S Census. Therefore, the City is 178 housing units shy of the 10% affordable housing goal as defined by DHCD. Please note: in 2017, the City approved three projects that include 236 units of housing that are eligible for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory, which would bring Methuen over the 10% goal.

Over the next five years, the goal is for Methuen's HPP to become "certified." Reaching the annual numeric goals of 0.5% or 1.0% will allow the Housing Production Plan to be certified by DHCD for one year if they develop 0.5% of their overall goal in a year's time, or for two years if they develop 1.0% of the target units in a year's time. To produce 0.5% of its total units annually as SHI units, Methuen will need to add an additional 91 SHI-eligible housing units each year. In order to produce 1.0% of its total units annually, the City will have to produce 183 SHI units annually. This will be a challenging, but achievable, task given the number of housing units likely to be permitted each year. Between 2000 and 2015, residential permit activity in Methuen fluctuated between 38 and 367 permits, with an annual average of about 117 units per year. These units were primarily single-family homes, with an average of only three 2-family units per year over that time period. According to MassBenchmarks and the Methuen Department of Economic and Community Development, about 452 were permitted between 2005 and 2015. In order to achieve certification and meet the needs of Methuen's population today and tomorrow, units of all types must be considered for development. The City identified some potential locations for housing of all types as part of the development of this HPP. The enclosed map of Methuen is the result of that exercise, indicating potential housing developments sites that could be suitable for additional new development.

### Chapter 40B Housing Production Schedule – 0.5% and 1% Growth\*

Year	0.5% Increase				1.0% Increase			
	Additional Units - 0.5%	Number of Total Affordable Units	Total Units	Percent Affordable	Additional Units - 1%	Number of Affordable Units	Total Units	Percent Affordable
Current numbers		1,649	18,268	9.0%		1,649	18,268	9.0%
2018	91	1,740	18,359	9.5%	183	1,832	18,451	9.9%
2019	91	1,831	18,450	9.9%	183	2,015	18,634	10.8%
2020	91	1,922	18,541	10.4%	183	2,198	18,817	11.7%
2021	91	2,013	18,632	10.8%	183	2,381	19,000	12.5%
2022	91	2,104	18,723	11.2%	183	2,564	19,183	13.4%

\* Note: this schedule will need to be re-evaluated and revised when the 2020 U.S. Census numbers are released to accommodate any changes in housing units reported.

If a community has a DHCD-approved HPP and is granted certification of compliance with the plan by DHCD, a decision by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) relative to a comprehensive permit application will be deemed "consistent with local needs" under MGL Chapter 40B. "Consistent with local needs" means the ZBA's decision will be upheld by the Housing Appeals Committee.

Additionally, once certification has been achieved—within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the Comprehensive Permit, the ZBA shall provide written notice to the Applicant (developer), with a copy to DHCD, that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, on the grounds that it believes have been met (HPP Certification), and the factual basis for that position (an example would be a DHCD HPP certification letter), including any necessary supportive documentation.

If the Applicant wishes to challenge the ZBA's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to the Department, with a copy to the Board, within 15 days of its receipt of the ZBA's notice, including any documentation to support its position. DHCD shall thereupon review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The ZBA shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent with local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the DHCD to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

## Strategies

Based on the local needs, existing resources, and development considerations, the following strategies have been developed for Methuen. The proposed strategies were developed to help the community direct and leverage funding, resources, and capacity to best meet the community's housing needs. The strategies have been grouped into three main categories:

- 1) **Planning and Policies:** this includes capacity-building strategies such as staffing and creating committees or housing trusts, as well as recommended changes in zoning and/or municipal policies.
- 2) **Production:** How can the community produce units to achieve 10%? This category provides specific strategies, developing partnerships, purchasing land/property, and converting existing structures to create affordable housing.
- 3) **Preservation:** communities go through a great deal of effort to create affordable units. This category outlines tactics necessary to keep those units affordable.

While some of the strategies – like those aimed at capacity-building – do not directly create affordable units, they do serve as a foundation for achieving housing goals. The final strategies also reflect the state's requirements to address the following strategies to the greatest extent possible:

- Identify zoning districts of geographic areas where the municipality proposes to modify current regulations to create subsidized housing inventory (SHI) eligible housing units to meet its housing production goals;
- Identify specific sites where the municipality can encourage the filing of Comprehensive Permit applications;
- Identify the characteristics of proposed residential or mixed-use developers that would be preferred by the municipality;
- Identify municipally-owned parcels that the community commits to issue requests for proposals to develop SHI eligible housing; and
- Participate in regional collaborations addressing housing development.

### PLANNING AND POLICIES

#### 1. Develop an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

The purpose of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) is to support the creation or preservation of housing that is affordable to people with incomes that do not exceed 110% of the area median income, as defined by HUD. AHTF funds may also be used for permanent or transitional housing for homeless families and individuals, and for the modernization, rehabilitation and repair of public housing.

**2. Examine the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance.**

Accessory dwelling units are allowed in all districts in Methuen's existing zoning ordinance. The size of these units is limited to 700 square feet. Examine whether this is appropriate in all neighborhoods.

**3. Reconsider passing the Community Preservation Act Program.**

Passage of the Community Preservation Act can provide the funds needed to create affordable housing, protect historic resources, and to protect valuable environmentally sensitive land.

**4. Review Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.**

Review the zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure they are compatible and consistent with the stated direction of housing development and preservation that the city desires, and consistent with market conditions.

**5. Re-Zone Merrimack Street.**

Consider adopting a mixed-use district along Merrimack Street to support housing and retail/commercial development.

**6. Partner with for- and non-profit developers to create affordable housing on privately owned sites.**

Both for- and non-profit developers can play a crucial role as a partner in developing affordable housing. In addition to have access to upfront capital, they also understand the design, development, construction, preservation, weatherization, and/or management steps necessary to create and maintain affordable housing units. They can help navigate the state and federal subsidy processes that can be challenging for local governments with limited capacity and/or experience.

**7. Seek designation as a Housing Choice Community which will provide preferential access to Commonwealth grant programs as well as a new grant program open only to Housing Choice Communities.**

In 2018, the Baker-Polito Administration created the Housing Choice Initiative, a multi-pronged effort to align resources and data to create a single point of entry for communities seeking assistance in increasing their supply of housing. A crucial part of Housing Choice Initiative is the Housing Choice designation and grant program. The Administration has identified simple, flexible standards that are achievable to all municipalities. For more information on how to become designated as a Housing Choice Community, please visit:

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/housing-choice-initiative>.

**8. Adopt an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw.**

The purpose of an inclusionary housing bylaw is to provide for the development of affordable housing in compliance with MGL c. 40B, § 20-23. The goal is that affordable housing units created by the bylaw will qualify as a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) under Chapter 40B and the regulations and guidelines of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). A model inclusionary zoning bylaw can be found: [http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart\\_growth\\_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/IZ-Bylaw.pdf).

**9. Investigate securing the services of a shared housing coordinator with neighboring communities.**

Developing and maintaining affordable housing can be a full-time job in some communities. In others, it at least necessitates on-going, dedicated staff to employ the various tasks involved with creating, tracking and retaining affordable units. While communities might not be able to hire someone solely focused on housing, there would be benefits to working with neighboring communities who are likely experiencing the same issues. One possible avenue of exploration would be to procure the services of a shared/regional housing coordinator, whose regional view and approach would be valuable to all participating communities, by identifying best practices, potential partnerships, education techniques, etc. Of note: MVPC is considering how to serve in this capacity for its member communities by including this strategy in the Regional Housing Plan.

**10. Conduct ongoing community education.**

In order to successfully create affordable housing, it is important to remove one of the biggest obstacles – lack of community support. In many communities, the term “affordable housing” conjures up negative connotations and evokes “not-in-my-backyard” sentiments. However, community education that focuses on why affordable housing is important, including the economic benefits and a focus on the profile of those who would benefit, will help remove that barrier to creating affordable units and help to create a richer, well-rounded and healthy community. There are a variety of successful educational campaigns, and one of the most successful is to put a “face” to affordable housing. The Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) created a document called *The Faces of 40B* which can serve as a template for communities in creating their own education programs: <https://www.chapa.org/sites/default/files/Facesof40B.pdf>.

**11. Work with for- and non-profit developers to create affordable housing through methods such as a Host Community Agreement.**

This is a relatively new strategy that is being used to establish an on-going long-term relationship between a developer(s) and a local government in an effort to create affordable housing that aligns with the community’s goals. It aligns with the Housing Production Plan’s production goals, as stated in the Goals section of this plan, and is non-exclusive. The agreement encourages regular communication between the developer and various boards and committees responsible for creating affordable housing. A sample Host Community Agreement can be found at: <http://www.hamiltonma.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Draft-Host-Community-Agreement.pdf>.

**12. Provide support for elderly to age in place.**

In each of the community workshops held to create this plan, and through the online tool coUrbanize, we heard that elderly residents want the opportunity to not just remain in their community, but age in place in their existing home. There are a variety of tools that could help accomplish this, including public transportation subsidies, grants to maintain and retrofit existing housing, and real estate tax abatements.

**13. Participate in the MA Healthy Aging Collaborative’s Age-Friendly Communities Program.**

Age-friendly communities strive to better meet the needs of their older residents by considering the environmental, economic, and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults. These programs seek to allow older adults to stay in their communities and “age in place.” One option is to join an age-friendly network. The World Health Organization (WHO) established a Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities to support communities who are taking active steps toward becoming more age-friendly.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Network of Age-Friendly Communities is the U.S. affiliate of the WHO network. Several Massachusetts communities have been accepted into the WHO global network, and other communities are exploring applications. MVPC has included this strategy in the Regional Housing Plan. To learn more, visit: <https://mahealthyagingcollaborative.org/programs/overview/age-friendly-communities/>

**14. Provide direct support for low income homeowners and renters struggling with housing costs.**

A common cause of homelessness is the inability to pay for the increasing costs of housing. There are a variety of programs that can help mitigate those rising costs, including loan assistance, homeowner counseling, and mortgage purchase or modification programs. Housing trust funds can provide funding for local counseling programs, and community land trusts provide important services to prevent foreclosures and can purchase foreclosed properties to preserve affordability and help residents stay in their homes. This support would be extended to our veterans who are a population at risk of becoming homeless in the Merrimack Valley and beyond.

**15. Develop trainings for board and committee members to learn more about affordable housing processes and needs.**

An important element of creating and maintaining affordable housing in a community is educating local boards and committees. Some of the issues to address in these trainings should be: What is the process to create an affordable housing unit? What are the needs of our community? Who are we providing affordable housing for? What is our role in creating affordable housing? What barriers do we have to creating affordable housing in our

community and how can we remove those obstacles? The Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) is a great resource for educating local boards and committees about affordable housing and working together to create it for the community's residents today and tomorrow. Trainings should also emphasize the importance of creating units that are accessible to all incomes, abilities, and ethnicities to encourage diversity and inclusivity. Visit [www.chapa.org](http://www.chapa.org) for more information.

**16. Create a fund that offsets the tax increase for seniors in both single-family homes and condos (i.e., adopt/expand Senior Work Off Program and Elderly Abatement programs).**

In 2009, the Massachusetts Legislature created the Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Abatement Program. The tax work-off abatement provision allows any community in Massachusetts to establish a program giving homeowners aged 60 or older the opportunity to volunteer their time to the city or town in exchange for a reduction in property tax of up to \$1,000. The city or town administers the program, keeping track of hours worked and crediting for each hour worked an amount not to exceed the minimum wage. Regulations for the program vary from community to community. This program is usually administered by the local council on aging, senior center, or assessor.

**17. Investigate opportunities and models for shared living situations for seniors.**

With an increasing aging population in the Merrimack Valley, now is the time to investigate home sharing as an option for seniors, particularly for women. According to AARP, "four million women aged 50-plus live in U.S. households with at least two women 50-plus — a statistic that is expected to rise." According to the National Center for Family & Marriage Research, "one out of three boomers will probably face old age without a spouse." Women, on average, live about five years longer than men. If you add in rising housing costs and the desire to 'downsize', more and more aging adults will be looking for opportunities to stay in their community, and with their peers. AARP released an article with numerous resources on shared living situations around the United States: <https://www.aarp.org/home-family/your-home/info-05-2013/older-women-roommates-house-sharing.html>. Another model that is being used here in Massachusetts, is *Nesterly*.

## PRODUCTION

**1. Develop the 40R District.**

Now that the Downtown 40R district is in place, all efforts should be made to develop and redevelop the downtown as planned.

**2. Encourage development of housing that is affordable to both low- and moderate-income households (i.e., those who earn between 60 to 120% area median income).**

As shown in the household income distribution chart, there are a variety of income levels in the community. Households that make above 100% area median income (AMI) struggle with housing costs as do those who earn 60% of the AMI. To accommodate the diversity in household incomes, housing options should be offered to be affordable at all levels, including those between 60% and 120% of the area median income.

**3. Ensure that new/remodeled units and infrastructure follow ADA Standards at a minimum but ideally incorporate Universal Design Standards.**

With an average of 14% of residents, including our veterans, having disabilities and a projected 30% of the population being over 65 years old by 2035, there is an even greater need for units and infrastructure that follows, at the minimum, standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, preferably, these units follow more stringent standards such as Universal Design, which means that a housing unit is both accessible and barrier-free. Universal Design goes far beyond the minimum specifications and limitations of legislated mandates for accessible and barrier-free facilities. Universal Design homes avoid use of special assistive technology devices and, instead incorporate consumer products and design features that are easily usable and commonly available. In addition to create a more livable environment, the home is also "visitabile", which allows relatives and friends to access the unit as well. For more information on Universal Design, please visit: <https://humancentereddesign.org/index.php?q=resources/universal-design-housing>.

**4. Inventory publicly-owned land to determine suitability and availability for developing affordable housing.**

One way to reduce the costs associated with developing affordable housing is to utilize publicly-owned land. By creating an inventory of land, a community can work collaboratively to develop criteria that narrows down which properties are most suitable for housing development. Criteria can include access to services and transportation, proximity to schools, wetlands or environmental constraint present, etc.

**5. Conduct a land use study that explores the creation of homes that are “right-sized”.**

Since 1960, the size of our homes has doubled. However, our families are getting smaller (as shown in the Household Characteristics table). The goal of this study would be to understand the feasibility of creating housing, such as starter homes and tiny houses, that are affordable, minimize land impacts and help preserve open space. So, what is the right size? How much house do our current residents need? Here are some questions to consider when determining the “right-size”:

- **Lifestyle.** Do residents need space to work from home, entertain, engage in hobbies?
- **Family.** Is there room for children or parents moving in with their grown children?
- **Future goals.** Are residents staying for long periods in the community? Or is the population transient?

**6. Follow Sustainable Design Standards to create/remodel housing units.**

Sustainable Design Standards help to create more energy efficient, low-carbon solutions for housing that reduces the costs to renting or owning a home. There are several methods that can be used, including (but not limited to) Passive House design, EnergyStar and GreenGlobes.

## PRESERVATION

**1. Explore using Historic Preservation Tax Credits.**

Explore the use of historic preservation tax credits to renovate existing housing. According to the HUD Exchange, “The 20% federal Historic Tax Credit is a financial incentive that supports investment in historic buildings. It encourages private property owners to rehabilitate historic properties for an income-producing use, such as rental housing, office, retail, manufacturing and entertainment space. It is an important tool for the redevelopment of historic Main Streets and can be a catalyst for neighborhood and downtown revitalization. It can also be an effective tool to create affordable housing, including mixed-use developments that have commercial space on the first floor and residences on the upper floors.” Historic Tax Credits could be especially useful in redeveloping the new 40R District in Downtown Methuen.

**2. Consider converting abandoned structures into affordable housing, as appropriate.**

Similar to federally-initiated government programs such as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Base Realignment and Closure Act, local governments can adopt programs that convert empty or underutilized properties to affordable housing. Converting existing structures can save money and be a great revitalization tool. As with the strategy above to use public land for affordable housing, it is important to develop criteria for assessing suitability to reuse these structures for housing.

**3. Develop a system to monitor the Subsidized Housing Inventory to ensure that units do not expire.**

In order to maintain the existing stock of subsidized housing units, it is important to develop and utilize a system to track when the units expire if they are not protected in perpetuity. MVPC is including this strategy in the Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Plan and encourages communities to identify ways to track these units on an on-going basis.

**4. Convert single-family homes to multi-unit for supportive services, small-scale, or multi-family housing.**

As our population ages and there is more of a need for services for the disabled and elderly, converting existing single-family homes into multi-unit structures could be an affordable tool for communities. Large, underutilized mansions are being converted to multi-level apartments that are affordable. It can also be a great way to provide more affordable units without constructing brand-new multi-family developments, which can create opposition and deter from neighborhood character. Small multi-family residences also offer connection and proximity to others and create the opportunity to expand the definition of family to include our neighbors.

**5. Consider retrofitting municipally-owned buildings to affordable housing.**

Similar to the abandoned buildings strategy, retrofitting municipally-owned buildings for affordable housing could provide another option for communities. Buildings such as old schools and other municipal structures can provide a unique opportunity to maintain the community's historic buildings while providing more affordable options for residents.

## Action Plan

The most important part of a plan is outlining an approach to implement the strategies. That approach should include how long each strategy will take to complete, the champion (aka responsible party) who 'owns' the strategy and whether there is funding needed to implement the strategy. Without that approach, the plan is in jeopardy of just 'sitting on the shelf.'

<b>Housing Strategies</b>			
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Time to Complete (months/years)</b>	<b>Strategy Champion(s) (Board, committee, person, etc.)</b>	<b>Funding Needed? Y/N and Source</b>
<b>Planning and Policies</b>			
Develop an Affordable Housing Trust Fund	2 years	Housing Committee	Yes Community Preservation Act (once passed)
Examine the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance	1 year	DECD, Community Development Board, ZBA, City Council	No, assumes City Solicitor is involved
Reconsider passing the Community Preservation Act Program	1-2 years	DECD, Community Development Board, City Council	No
Review Zoning and Subdivision Regulations	1-2 years	DECD, Community Development Board, ZBA, City Council	Yes, contract support
Re-Zone Merrimack Street	1-2 years	DECD, Community Development Board, ZBA, City Council	Yes, contract support
Partner with for- and non-profit developers to create affordable housing	Ongoing	DECD, Housing Committee, Community Development Board	No
Seek designation as a Housing Choice Community	1 year	DECD	No
Adopt an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw	1 year	DECD, Community Development Board, ZBA, City Council	No if using sample ordinance and City Solicitor
Investigate securing the services of a shared housing coordinator with neighboring communities	1 year	DECD, Housing Committee, City Council, MVPC	Yes Housing Choice Program

Work with for- and non-profit developers to create affordable housing through methods such as a Host Community Agreement	Ongoing	DECD, Housing Committee	No
Provide support services for elderly to age in place	Ongoing	DECD, Senior Center, Council on Aging	No
Participate in the MA Healthy Aging Collaborative's Age-Friendly Communities Program	6 months – 1 year	DECD, Housing Committee, Council on Aging	No, but could be eligible for Tufts Foundation funding once officially participating
Provide direct support for low income homeowners and renters struggling with housing costs	Ongoing	DECD, Community Housing Trusts, Council on Aging	No
Develop trainings for board and committee members to learn more about affordable housing processes and needs	Ongoing	DECD, Housing Committee, MVPC	No, but could use Housing Choice Initiative funding to support a training
Create a fund that offsets the tax increase for seniors in both single-family homes and condos	2 years	DECD, Housing Committee, MVPC, Council on Aging	Yes CPA
Investigate opportunities and models for shared living situations for seniors	6 months – 1 year	DECD, MVPC, Council on Aging	No
<b>Production</b>			
Develop the 40R District	Ongoing	DECD, City Council, Community Development Board, ZBA	Yes and No Depends on activity – Historic Tax Credits, HOME, CDBG, etc.
Encourage development of housing that is affordable to both low-and moderate-income households	Ongoing	DECD, Housing Committee	No
Ensure that new/remodeled units and infrastructure follow ADA Standards at a minimum but ideally incorporate Universal Design Standards	Ongoing	DECD, Engineer, Council on Aging, Northeast Independent Living Program, and Elder Services of Merrimack Valley, Housing Authority	Yes MassWorks, DHCD
Inventory publicly-owned land to determine suitability and availability for developing affordable housing	1-2 years	DECD, Housing Committee, City Council, Community Development Board	No
Conduct a land use study that explores the creation of homes that are "right-sized"	1 year	DECD, Housing Committee	Yes, Land Use Consultant

Follow Sustainable Design Standards to create/ remodel housing units	Ongoing	DECD, Community Development Board, Housing Committee	No
<b>Preservation</b>			
Explore using Historic Preservation Tax Credits	1 year	DECD, Historic Preservation Committee	No
Consider converting abandoned structures into affordable housing, as appropriate	Ongoing	DECD, City Council, Housing Committee	Yes U.S. HUD
Develop a system to monitor the Subsidized Housing Inventory to ensure that units do not expire	1 year	DECD, MVPC, Housing Committee	Yes Housing Choice Program Tufts Foundation
Convert single-family homes to multi-unit for supportive services, small-scale, or multi-family housing	Ongoing	DECD, Housing Committee, ZBA, City Council	Yes DHCD
Consider retrofitting municipally-owned buildings to affordable housing	2-5 years	DECD, City Council, Housing Committee	Yes U.S. HUD

# Appendix A

## HUD Income Limits FY2017

Methuen is part of the Lawrence HUD Metro FMR Area, so the income limits presented below applies to all of the Metro FMR Area. For more information, go to [www.huduser.org/datasets/incomelimits](http://www.huduser.org/datasets/incomelimits).

### FY 2017 Income Limits Summary

FY 2017 Income Limit Area	Median Income	FY 2017 Income Limit Category	Persons in Family							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Methuen city</b>	\$87,600	Very Low (50%)								
		Income Limits (\$)	30,700	35,050	39,450	<b>43,800</b>	47,350	50,850	54,350	57,850
		<b>Explanation</b>								
		Extremely Low Income Limits (\$)*	18,450	21,050	23,700	<b>26,300</b>	28,780	32,960	37,140	41,320
		<b>Explanation</b>								
		Low (80%)	47,600	54,400	61,200	<b>68,000</b>	73,450	78,900	84,350	89,800
		<b>Explanation</b>								

# Appendix B

## DHCD Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Guidelines

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a compelling interest in creating fair and open access to affordable housing and promoting compliance with state and federal civil rights obligations. Therefore, all housing with state subsidy or housing for inclusion on the SHI shall have an Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan. To that end, DHCD has prepared and published comprehensive guidelines that all agencies follow in resident selection for affordable housing units.

The local preference allowable categories are specified:

- *Current Residents.* A household in which one or more members is living in the city or town at the time of application. Documentation of residency should be provided, such as rent receipts, utility bills, street listing, or voter registration listing.
- *Municipal Employees.* Employees of the municipality, such as teachers, janitors, firefighters, police officers, librarians, or town hall employees.
- *Employees of Local Businesses.* Employees of businesses located in the municipality.
- *Households with Children.* Households with children attending the locality's schools.

These were revised on June 25, 2008, removing the formerly listed allowable preference category, "Family of Current Residents."

The full guidelines can be found here: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/docs/dhcd/hd/fair/afhmp.pdf>.

# Appendix C

## Interagency Bedroom Mix Policy

### INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT

#### Regarding Housing Opportunities for Families with Children

This Interagency Agreement (this "Agreement") is entered into as of the 17th day of January, 2014 by and between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acting by and through its Department of Housing and Community Development ("DHCD"), the Massachusetts Housing Partnership Fund Board ("MHP"), the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (in its own right and in its capacity as Project Administrator designated by DHCD under the Guidelines for Housing Programs in Which Funding is Provided By Other Than a State Agency, "MassHousing"), the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency ("MassDevelopment") and the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation ("CEDAC"). DHCD, MHP, MassHousing, MassDevelopment and CEDAC are each referred to herein as a "State Housing Agency" and collectively as the "State Housing Agencies".

#### Background

A. DHCD's 2013 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice ("AI") includes action steps to improve housing opportunities for families, including families with children, the latter being a protected class pursuant to fair housing laws, including the federal Fair Housing Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 3601 *et seq.*) and Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 151B. In order to respond to development patterns in the Commonwealth that disparately impact and limit housing options for families with children, such steps include requiring a diversity of bedroom sizes in Affordable Production Developments that are not age-restricted and that are funded, assisted or approved by the State Housing Agencies to ensure that families with children are adequately served.

B. The State Housing Agencies have agreed to conduct their activities in accordance with the action steps set forth in the AI.

C. This Agreement sets forth certain agreements and commitments among the State Housing Agencies with respect to this effort.

#### Definitions

- 1) "Affordable" - For the purposes of this Agreement, the term "Affordable" shall mean that the development will have units that meet the eligibility requirements for inclusion on the Subsidized Housing Inventory ("SHI").
- 2) "Production Development" - For purposes of this Agreement "Production Development" is defined as new construction or adaptive reuse of a non-residential building and shall include rehabilitation projects if the property has been vacant for two (2) or more years or if the property has been condemned or made uninhabitable by fire or other casualty.



### Agreements

NOW, THEREFORE, DHCD, MHP, MassHousing, MassDevelopment and CEDAC agree as follows:

#### Bedroom Mix Policy

1) Consistent with the AI, it is the intention of the State Housing Agencies that at least ten percent (10%) of the units in Affordable Production Developments funded, assisted or approved by a State Housing Agency shall have three (3) or more bedrooms except as provided herein. To the extent practicable, the three bedroom or larger units shall be distributed proportionately among affordable and market rate units.

2) The Bedroom Mix Policy shall be applied by the State Housing Agency that imposes the affordability restriction that complies with the requirements of the SHI.

3) The Bedroom Mix Policy shall not apply to Affordable Production Developments for age-restricted housing, assisted living, supportive housing for individuals, single room occupancy or other developments in which the policy is not appropriate for the intended residents. In addition, the Bedroom Mix Policy shall not apply to a Production Development where such units:

- (i) are in a location where there is insufficient market demand for such units, as determined in the reasonable discretion of the applicable State Housing Agency; or
- (ii) will render a development infeasible, as determined in the reasonable discretion of the applicable State Housing Agency.

4) Additionally, a State Housing Agency shall have the discretion to waive this policy (a) for small projects that have less than ten (10) units and (b) in limited instances when, in the applicable State Housing Agency's judgment, specific factors applicable to a project and considered in view of the regional need for family housing, make a waiver reasonable.

5) The Bedroom Mix Policy shall be applicable to all Production Developments provided a Subsidy as defined under 760 CMR 56.02 or otherwise subsidized, financed and/or overseen by a State Housing Agency under the M.G.L. Chapter 40B comprehensive permit rules for which a Chapter 40B Project Eligibility letter is issued on or after March 1, 2014. The policy shall be applicable to all other Affordable Production Developments funded, assisted, or approved by a State Housing Agency on or after May 1, 2014.



# Appendix D

## Comprehensive Permit Denial and Appeal Procedures

(a) If a Board considers that, in connection with an Application, a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs on the grounds that the Statutory Minima defined at 760 CMR 56.03(3)(b or c) have been satisfied or that one or more of the grounds set forth in 760 CMR 56.03(1) have been met, it must do so according to the following procedures. Within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the Comprehensive Permit, the Board shall provide written notice to the Applicant, with a copy to the Department, that it considers that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, the grounds that it believes have been met, and the factual basis for that position, including any necessary supportive documentation. If the Applicant wishes to challenge the Board's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to the Department, with a copy to the Board, within 15 days of its receipt of the Board's notice, including any documentation to support its position. The Department shall thereupon review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The Board shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent with local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the Department to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

(b) For purposes of this subsection 760 CMR 56.03(8), the total number of SHI Eligible Housing units in a municipality as of the date of a Project's application shall be deemed to include those in any prior Project for which a Comprehensive Permit had been issued by the Board or by the Committee, and which was at the time of the application for the second Project subject to legal appeal by a party other than the Board, subject however to the time limit for counting such units set forth at 760 CMR 56.03(2)(c).

(c) If either the Board or the Applicant wishes to appeal a decision issued by the Department pursuant to 760 CMR 56.03(8)(a), including one resulting from failure of the Department to issue a timely decision, that party shall file an interlocutory appeal with the Committee on an expedited basis, pursuant to 760 CMR 56.05(9)(c) and 56.06(7)(e)(11), within 20 days of its receipt of the decision, with a copy to the other party and to the Department. The Board's hearing of the Project shall thereupon be stayed until the conclusion of the appeal, at which time the Board's hearing shall proceed in accordance with 760 CMR 56.05. Any appeal to the courts of the Committee's ruling shall not be taken until after the Board has completed its hearing and the Committee has rendered a decision on any subsequent appeal.

Source: DHCD Comprehensive Permit Regulations, 760 CMR 56.03(8).

# Appendix E

## Methuen's Subsidized Housing Inventory

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CH40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

## Methuen

DHCD ID #	Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built w/ Comp. Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
1933	Jade & Nelson	25 Jade St.	Rental	42	Perp	Yes	HUD
1934	n/a		Rental	8	Perp	No	DHCD
1935	n/a	Pinewood/Tudor/Kenwood/Larchwood/Oaks	Rental	60	Perp	No	DHCD
1936	n/a	36 Oakland Ave.	Rental	40	Perp	No	DHCD
1937	Corliss Sr. Hsg	101 Broadway	Rental	41	Perp	No	DHCD
1938	Edgewood Ave. Elderly		Rental	64	Perp	No	DHCD
1939	Mystic Ave. Elderly	22 Mystic Ave.	Rental	72	Perp	No	DHCD
1940	Mystic St Elderly	Mystic St	Rental	72	Perp	No	DHCD
1941	n/a	28 Haverhill St.	Rental	8	Perp	No	DHCD
1942	n/a	601 Lowell St.	Rental	8	Perp	No	DHCD
1943	n/a	36 1/2 Oakland Ave.	Rental	8	Perp	No	DHCD
1944	n/a	19 Mystic St.	Rental	8	Perp	No	DHCD
1945	n/a	601 Lowell St.	Rental	8	Perp	No	DHCD
1946	n/a	Mystic St.	Rental	2	Perp	No	DHCD
1947	Appleton Estates	171-174 East Street	Rental	150	perp	YES	DHCD
1951	Merrimac Valley Apartments	20 Calumet Rd.	Rental	60	2024	No	HUD
1952	Millfalls Apts	51 Osgood St	Rental	97	2030	Yes	DHCD

MassHousing

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CH40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

## Methuen

DHCD ID #	Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built w/ Comp. Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
1953	Nevins Manor	10 Ingalls Ct	Rental	44	2037	No	HUD
							DHCD
1954	Park Gardens	10-12 Burnham Rd.	Rental	160	2029	No	MassHousing
1955	Phillips & Tenney Streets	Scattered sites: 2 Phillips St, 136-146 and 180 Tenney St	Rental	12	2030	No	DHCD
1956	Prides Crossing	1 Riverview Blvd	Ownership	27	-	Yes	DHCD
1957	Prides Crossing	1 Riverview Blvd	Ownership	20	Perp	Yes	DHCD
							DHCD
1959	Cedars Home	222 Pelham St.	Rental	40	2024	Yes	HUD
3776	Cedars Home II	222 Pelham St.	Rental	31	2035	Yes?	HUD
							HUD
3777	Stone Castle Condominium	Tyler Street	Ownership	23	perp	Yes	FHLBB
4118	4 Gleason Street	4 Gleason Street	Rental	91	Perp	Yes	MassDevelopment
4366	DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	78	N/A	No	DDS
4583	DMH Group Homes	Confidential	Rental	4	N/A	No	DMH
8155	Tyler Village	188 Tyler St	Ownership	0	perp	YES	MassHousing
8156	Fernhill Estates	Forest St	Ownership	4	perp	YES	MassHousing
8163	Methuen HOR Program	Tenney St	Ownership	2	2025	NO	DHCD
							HUD

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CH40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

## Methuen

DHCD ID #	Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built w/ Comp. Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
8164	Methuen HOR Program	Tenney St	Ownership	1	2019	NO	DHCD
8165	Methuen HOR Program	Tenney St	Ownership	2	2018	NO	DHCD
8167	Methuen HOR Program	Bolyston St	Ownership	1	2028	NO	DHCD
8170	Methuen HOR Program	Gill Ave	Ownership	2	2028	NO	DHCD
8171	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Ownership	2	2030	NO	DHCD
8173	Methuen HOR Program	Durrel St	Ownership	2	2028	NO	DHCD
8175	Methuen HOR Program	Center St	Ownership	3	2030	NO	DHCD
8181	Methuen HOR Program	Lawrence St	Ownership	2	2031	NO	DHCD
8184	Methuen HOR Program	Union St	Ownership	1	2033	NO	DHCD
8186	Methuen HOR Program	Center St	Ownership	3	2033	NO	DHCD
							HUD
8187	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Ownership	1	2034	NO	DHCD
8189	Methuen HOR Program	Bicknell Ave	Ownership	2	2034	NO	DHCD
8191	Methuen HOR Program	Kirk St	Ownership	2	2025	NO	DHCD
8194	Methuen HOR Program	Gill Ave	Ownership	1	2034	NO	DHCD
8196	Methuen HOR Program	Joy Terrace	Ownership	1	2025	NO	DHCD
8198	Methuen HOR Program	Arnold St	Ownership	1	2036	NO	HUD
							DHCD
8199	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Ownership	1	2026	NO	DHCD

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Methuen

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This data is derived from information provided to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) by individual communities and is subject to change as new information is obtained and use restrictions expire.

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CH40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

## Methuen

DHCD ID #	Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built w/ Comp. Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
8201	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Ownership	2	2036	NO	DHCD
							HUD
8203	Methuen HOR Program	Camden St	Ownership	1	2036	NO	DHCD
8204	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Ownership	2	2022	NO	DHCD
8207	Methuen HOR Program	Temple Dr	Ownership	1	2034	NO	DHCD
8208	Methuen HOR Program	Morrison Ct	Ownership	3	2019	NO	DHCD
8210	Methuen HOR Program	Davis Rd	Ownership	1	2020	NO	DHCD
8211	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Ownership	1	2020	NO	HUD
8213	Methuen HOR Program	Somerset St	Ownership	1	2029	NO	HUD
8217	Methuen HOR Program	Noyes St	Ownership	1	2025	NO	HUD
8219	Methuen HOR Program	Kirk St	Ownership	1	2033	NO	HUD
8539	Methuen HOR Program	Camden St	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8541	Methuen HOR Program	Vermont St	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8543	Methuen HOR Program	Greendale St	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8545	Methuen HOR Program	Glenwood Ave	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8546	Methuen HOR Program	Pilgrim Circle	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8548	Methuen HOR Program	Comet Rd	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8550	Methuen HOR Program	Temple Dr	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8553	Methuen HOR Program	Hampshire Rd	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD

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Methuen

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This data is derived from information provided to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) by individual communities and is subject to change as new information is obtained and use restrictions expire.

# DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CH40B SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY

## Methuen

DHCD ID #	Project Name	Address	Type	Total SHI Units	Affordability Expires	Built w/ Comp. Permit?	Subsidizing Agency
8555	Methuen HOR Program	Broadway	Ownership	1	2019*	NO	DHCD
8595	Summit Place	142 Pleasant Valley St	Rental	280	perp	YES	FHLBB
9400	Methuen HOR Program	Pearl Ct	Rental	4	2027	NO	HUD
9401	Methuen HOR Program	E Capital St	Rental	5	2036	NO	HUD
9403	Methuen HOR Program	Brook St	Rental	4	2037	NO	HUD
9405	Methuen HOR program	Oak St	Rental	4	2037	NO	HUD
9722	Methuen HOR Program	Oakland Ave	Mix	2	2042	NO	HUD/DHCD
9723	Methuen HOR Program	Swan St	Mix	4	2042	NO	HUD/DHCD
9724	Methuen HOR Program	Meadow Brook Rd	Rental	3	2041	NO	HUD
<b>Methuen Totals</b>				1,641	<b>Census 2010 Year Round Housing Units</b>		18,268
					<b>Percent Subsidized</b>		8.98%

# Appendix F

## Unrelated Individuals Below Federal Poverty Thresholds by Age, 2015

This table includes poverty status for unrelated individuals age 15 years and over. Note that if someone is under age 15 and not living with a family member (such as foster children), we do not know their household income and they are excluded from the poverty universe (table totals).<sup>10</sup>

Age	Methuen		Merrimack Valley Region		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%	est.	%
15 years	-	0%	11	0.1%	51	0.2%	1,672	0.5%
16-17 years	25	2%	154	1%	338	1%	3,736	1%
18-24 years	147	10%	1,592	12%	3,455	12%	6,9473	22%
25-34 years	182	12%	1,755	13%	4,348	15%	55,572	18%
35-44 years	214	14%	1,899	14%	3,312	11%	28,476	9%
45-54 years	232	15%	2,440	18%	5,252	18%	43,985	14%
55-64 years	182	12%	2,238	17%	5,616	19%	50,784	16%
65-74 years	226	15%	1,638	12%	3,749	13%	28,876	9%
75+ years	303	20%	1,541	12%	3,777	13%	34,201	11%
Total in Poverty	1,511	3%	1,3268	4%	29,898	4%	316,775	5%
Total Population	48,265	100%	33,8637	100%	747,718	100%	6,471,313	100%

Source: 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, Table S1701

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, People Whose Poverty Status Cannot Be Determined." <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/poverty-measures.html>, accessed 8/3/17.

# Appendix G

## Cost Burdened Renters and Owners by Household Type

**Cost Burdened Renters and Owners**

Household Income Range	Household type is elderly family (2 persons, with either or both age 62 or over)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is small family (2 persons, neither person 62 years or over, or 3 or 4 persons)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is large family (5 or more persons)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is elderly non-family	% of Cost Burdened	Other household type (non-elderly non-family)	% of Cost Burdened	Total Cost Burdened	% of Total	Total
<=30% AMI	130	7%	550	31%	55	3%	585	33%	435	25%	1,755	74%	2,365
>30% and <=50% AMI	174	11%	630	39%	145	9%	450	28%	215	13%	1,614	73%	2,210
>50% and <=80% AMI	130	9%	535	39%	170	12%	155	11%	395	29%	1,385	50%	2,750
>80% and <=100% AMI	95	20%	210	43%	100	21%	14	3%	64	13%	483	26%	1,840
Income >100% AMI	85	11%	475	64%	30	4%	45	6%	105	14%	740	9%	8,420
Total Cost Burdened	614	10%	2,400	40%	500	8%	1,249	21%	1,214	20%	5,977	34%	17,585

### Cost Burdened Renter Households

Household Income Range	Household type is elderly family (2 persons, with either or both age 62 or over)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is small family (2 persons, neither person 62 years or over, or 3 or 4 persons)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is large family (5 or more persons)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is elderly non-family	% of Cost Burdened	Other household type (non-elderly non-family)	% of Cost Burdened	Total Cost Burdened	% of Total	Total
<=30% AMI	45	4%	460	41%	10	1%	280	25%	315	28%	1,110	69%	1,610
>30% and <=50% AMI	54	6%	480	57%	100	12%	125	15%	90	11%	849	80%	1,065
>50% and <=80% AMI	0	0%	160	33%	15	3%	70	14%	245	50%	490	49%	1,005
>80% and <=100% AMI	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	100%	10	2%	580
Income >100% AMI	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	810
Total Cost Burdened	99	4%	1,100	45%	125	5%	475	19%	660	27%	2,459	49%	5,070

### Cost Burdened Owner Households

Household Income Range	Household type is elderly family (2 persons, with either or both age 62 or over)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is small family (2 persons, neither person 62 years or over, or 3 or 4 persons)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is large family (5 or more persons)	% of Cost Burdened	Household type is elderly non-family	% of Cost Burdened	Other household type (non-elderly non-family)	% of Cost Burdened	Total Cost Burdened	% of Total	Total
<=30% AMI	85	13%	90	14%	45	7%	305	47%	120	19%	645	85%	755
>30% and <=50% AMI	120	16%	150	20%	45	6%	325	42%	125	16%	765	67%	1,145
>50% and <=80% AMI	130	15%	375	42%	155	17%	85	9%	150	17%	895	51%	1,745
>80% and <=100% AMI	95	20%	210	44%	100	21%	14	3%	54	11%	473	38%	1,260
Income >100% AMI	85	11%	475	64%	30	4%	45	6%	105	14%	740	10%	7,610
Total Cost Burdened	515	15%	1,300	37%	375	11%	774	22%	554	16%	3,518	28%	12,515

# Appendix H

## coUrbanize Comments from the City of Methuen

Community	Creator	Comments
Methuen	Ann DiBenedetto	Methuen Housing thoughts: We need affordable housing for people over 55 (not \$300,000 homes) and more senior housing. The senior population is increasing. Thank you for seeking input.
Methuen	coUrbanizer via Text	Please stop landlords renting out properties without providing enough parking spaces. Center of Methuen is has become nightmare to get in or out of your parking lot with so many cars being parked on the street.
Methuen	coUrbanizer via Text	The traffic congestion on Howe Street is horrendous. Now with the planned assisted living off Howe it will just get even worse. Please can you remedy this?
Methuen	coUrbanizer via Text	Housing workshop email / in general, I don't think we should do more affordable housing than necessary and if we do, limit the height so it doesn't turn into looking like the projects. Sean Lydon Methuen resident
Methuen	coUrbanizer via Text	Methuen is already overdeveloped. Please stop these developers from ruining what's left of this city. Leave it alone please. You're going to lose all of your great & respectful residents to nicer, less developed surrounding towns. Jennifer P.

# Appendix I

## Potential Affordable Housing Ranking Criteria (*from Belmont Open Space and Housing Inventory Project*)

The Housing Ranking Criteria was developed based on available data and information pertinent to the creation of affordable housing in Belmont. These criteria include: lot sizes, ownership, type of use, public transit access, proximity to town services and schools, number of dwelling units on a lot, ratio or status of lot utilization, existing water and sewer access, and zoning districts. The Town of Belmont's 2014 Assessor's database provided quantifiable statistics for each of these factors. The ranking system utilizes the same base point system of 3, 2, 1, 0 and additional weighted point system as the Open Space Ranking Criteria. Significant criteria that may contribute to affordable housing development were weighted 3 times or 5 times in a 9, 6, 3, 0 or 15, 10, 5, 0 point systems. The higher number indicates a greater level of significance for affordable housing consideration. Individual parcels did not receive multiple levels of points within one criteria.

The rationale behind each affordable housing criteria include:

### **1. Lot size**

Larger parcels were indicated as a priority by the Town for affordable housing development. Six points were assigned to parcels greater than 2 acres in single residence zones and parcels greater than 1 acre in other zones.

### **2. Ownership and type of use**

A parcel's potential or readiness for affordable housing development is considered to be affected by its ownership and type of use. For this criteria, any parcel that is currently used for affordable housing receives 15 points as the Town would like to continue such use. Town-owned and Housing Authority properties are assigned 10 points to indicate a relatively high potential for future affordable housing opportunity. Commercial and residential mixed use, office buildings in residential zones, the 40R district, as well as church and school properties present additional affordable housing potentials and are assigned 5 points. Many of these areas were also identified as having potential for affordable housing in the Belmont Housing Production Plan Draft October 2013 goals and strategies.

### **3. Public transit access**

Public transit access is considered essential for affordable housing to increase mobility and overall quality of life. Parcels within ¼ mile of bus stops and ½ mile of the commuter rail station are assigned 6 points.

### **4. Proximity to services**

Pedestrian access to town services and schools is also considered important for affordable housing. Parcels within ¼ mile of town centers2 and schools are assigned 3 points.

### **5. Units on lot**

Lots that have multiple dwelling units present more opportunity for affordable housing. Lots with three or more units are assigned 9 points.

### **6. Underutilization**

Underutilized parcels present opportunities for infill, mixed use, and affordable housing development. The status of underutilization can be represented by multiple factors, such as type of use and related zoning district, floor area ratio (FAR), vacancy, and the building-land ratio value. These factors are grouped into three categories and assigned 6 or 3 points accordingly.

## **7. Zoning**

Different zoning districts of Belmont offer varying flexibilities and opportunities for affordable housing, either by right or by special permit. Belmont's zoning districts are grouped into four categories based on their use, density, and other related zoning provisions, and are assigned 3, 2, or 1 respectively. The zoning district categories include: General Residence and Apartment House (3 points), Single Residence and Local Business I (2 points), and Local Business II, III, and General Business (1 point). Any parcel that did not fit into one these categories was assigned a 0.

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