



H.4263: AN ACT TO PROMOTE HOUSING CHOICES

Sponsor: Governor Charlie Baker

This bill will help meet the Commonwealth's housing needs by enabling a municipality to pass – **by a simple majority vote** – certain zoning changes that would help to advance housing production and smart growth. The bill would also allow a simple majority vote to approve certain special permits to build affordable housing around public transit or in mixed-use developments.

The legislation would **eliminate a key barrier to housing production** – the need for a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting or a City Council to approve certain zoning changes for housing and smart growth planning.

The proposed statute **would not require** a community to bring any of these certain zoning changes forward. Rather, if a community decides to bring forward these zoning changes, the bill would change the vote necessary to **allow** them to take these steps if a simple majority of the community approves.

H.4263 would allow **only the following zoning changes** to be approved by a majority vote:

- Allowing **multi-family housing** as-of-right or by special permit in town in smart growth locations such as town centers or near transit centers
- Approving special permits for **affordable housing** around public transit or in mixed-used developments
- Allowing a small **accessory dwelling unit** or “in-law” apartment in the same building or on the same lot as an existing home
- Adopting **smart growth zoning districts** and starter home zoning districts
- Allowing **mixed-use developments** by special permit in town and city centers, commercial districts and rural village districts
- Reducing **dimensional requirements**, such as minimum lot sizes, to allow homes to be built closer together
- Allowing special permits to enable developments that have **more density** or **fewer parking spaces**
- Providing for **Natural Resource Protection Zoning, Open Space Residential Development**, and **transfers of development rights** to allow the clustering of new development while protecting open space or conservation land

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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CHAPA Urges Legislature to Pass Housing Choices Legislation

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CHAPA urges the Legislature to swiftly pass H.4263, *An Act to promote housing choices*, in time for spring Town Meetings so that cities and towns can immediately start planning for zoning changes that will allow for more housing.

Treasurer
Kenneth Willis

H.4263 would enable a municipality to pass by a simple majority vote certain zoning changes that would help to advance housing production and smart growth, as opposed to the currently required super majority vote. The bill would also allow a simple majority vote to approve certain special permits for affordable housing developments around public transit or in mixed-use developments.

Clerk
Naomi Sweitzer

Chief Executive Officer
Rachel Heller

Passing this bill would be a significant step towards meeting the Commonwealth's housing needs. H.4263 will make a substantial impact in communities working to encourage housing development and undo policies that prevent housing production and perpetuate segregation.

H.4263 will empower the simple majority of people in a community to vote "Yes" for housing. It is imperative that we provide these tools to communities who are actively working to create more housing, including affordable housing, and to put smart growth policies into place.

In order to help communities as they prepare for spring Town Meetings, we respectfully ask the House and Senate to enact H.4263 as quickly as possible.

The Housing Choices legislation is not a standalone solution to Massachusetts' affordable housing crisis. Additional strategies will be needed to address the many challenges faced by the people of this state. We look forward to working with the Legislature to expand opportunities for people with extremely low-, low-, and moderate-incomes to have a safe, healthy, and affordable place to call home.

At CHAPA, we will work to pass policies this session that further increase access to affordable housing, prevent displacement, reduce homelessness, grow the housing stock for people across income levels, and expand opportunities for people to live in the communities they choose.

For more information, please contact Eric Shupin, Director of Public Policy, eshupin@chapa.org or (617) 682-9712.