



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

Cape Housing Institute – Year 2 Takes Off

“What has changed most about the discussion at this year’s Institute...is the growing understanding that the economics of housing relate to the health of the rest of our economy.”

Andrea Aldana, CDP Director of Housing Advocacy



Thanks to the generous support of many CDP donors, the Cape Housing Institute kicked off earlier this month. It has been an intense, informative, and motivating experience for the more than 50 participants from towns across the Lower Cape.

The Institute, a six-week intensive program designed for municipal leaders, starts with participants studying the data that show our need for affordable housing. The course then moves from those facts to learning about strategies towns can pursue to make a difference.

“What has changed most about the discussion at this year’s Institute,” says Andrea Aldana, the CDP’s Director of Housing Advocacy, “is the growing understanding that the economics of housing relate to the health of the rest of our economy.”

That awareness is helping leaders who have attended the Institute to go back to their towns to work on better housing strategies.

“Success,” Andrea says, “doesn’t come simply from presenting those strategies. It starts with breaking down myths about affordable housing.”

For example, leaders who attended last year’s Institute reported that “NIMBY-ism” was a real barrier to community support. Participants said they heard fears about increasing traffic, the presence of children, or drug use. That’s why this year, the program includes a workshop on advocacy, to help participants find the right opportunities to address those myths and fears.

“It’s about winning hearts and minds with facts and with confidence,” says Andrea.

3 Main Street Mercantile, Unit 7 Eastham, MA 02642
P 508.240.7873 F 508.240.5085 E contact@capecdp.org

www.capecdp.org



This year's Institute also explores role private developers can play in addressing the Lower Cape's housing crisis.

Kevin Maguire of Oxbow Partners, a Boston-based developer, offered his point of view in a session about Chapter 40B. His comments are focused on the state statute that enables local zoning boards of appeals to approve flexible rules for developments where at least 20-25% will be designated affordable.



Profit margins are narrower for 40B projects than for other developments, Kevin said. He also explained that the market for land lends itself to increasing density whether that increase is going to mean more housing available to people at low to moderate incomes or not.

“His talk went a long way to helping participants see 40B as a tool rather than as a controversial topic,” says Andrea. In fact, she adds, “it has become the single most effective tool we know of for creating more affordable housing.”

Our year two sessions have been energized by the success that followed last year's Institute. This past spring saw a marked increase in housing initiatives brought to town meetings, and over \$4.9 million dollars was earmarked for affordable housing initiatives in the eight Lower Cape towns.

We are grateful for our collaboration with HAC (the Housing Assistance Corporation), which offers Institute sessions on the Mid and Upper Cape.

We're also thankful to numerous sponsors who have made the Institute strong—and free of charge to participants: The Cape Cod Foundation, Cape & Islands United Way, Wells Fargo, the Kelley Foundation, Cape Cod Young Professionals, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The CDP also received Community Preservation Committee funds from the towns of Provincetown, Wellfleet, Eastham, Orleans, Brewster, Harwich, and Chatham to support this year's program.