

Your Downtown

Community engagement around the smart growth district

*Development Webinar
October 19, 2021*



Agenda

Welcome by the Town

6:00 - 6:05 PM

Opening presentation from MAPC

6:05 - 6:15 PM

Developer discussion

6:15 - 7:00 PM

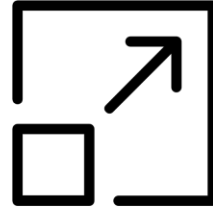
Q+A with attendees

7:00 - 7:15 PM

Downtown Smart Growth District



Adopted in 2009
126 votes to 7 no's



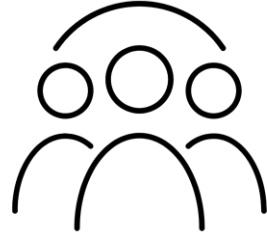
Expanded in 2017
136 votes to 3 no's

DSGD Goals

1. Increase activity, address vacant properties, and rebuild the walkable center Downtown used to be
2. Ensure development occurs in an appropriate smart growth location, while preserving other areas, and advancing community priorities



DSGD Successes



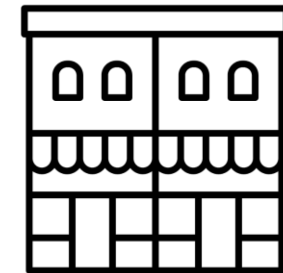
New residents

Help support local businesses and create vibrancy and activity



Housing Opportunities

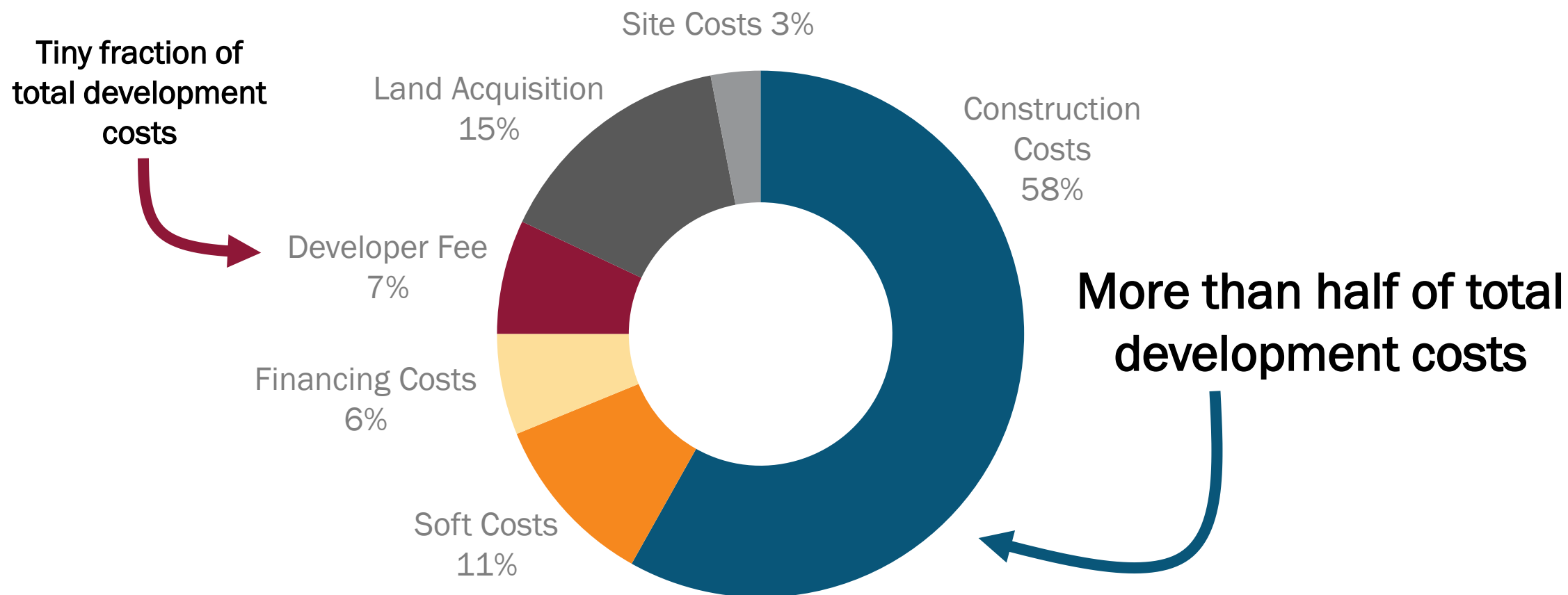
192 new homes, of which
43 are affordable



Commercial Space

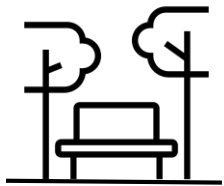
41,646 square feet in
mixed-use development

Development Costs



Total Housing Development Costs Breakdown,
Massachusetts Urban Projects, 2011-2015

Construction Costs vs. Project Income



Construction Costs vs. Project Income



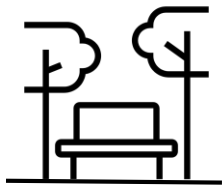
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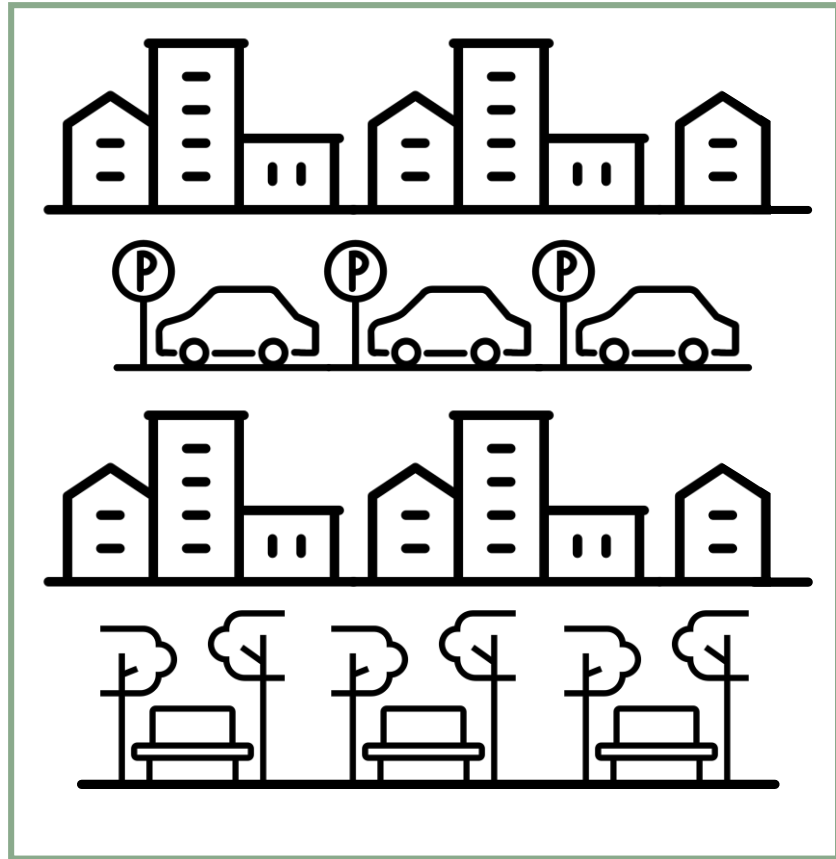
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Construction
Costs

Future
Project Income

Construction Costs vs. Project Income



Development
Site

A development **is** possible if
project income > project costs

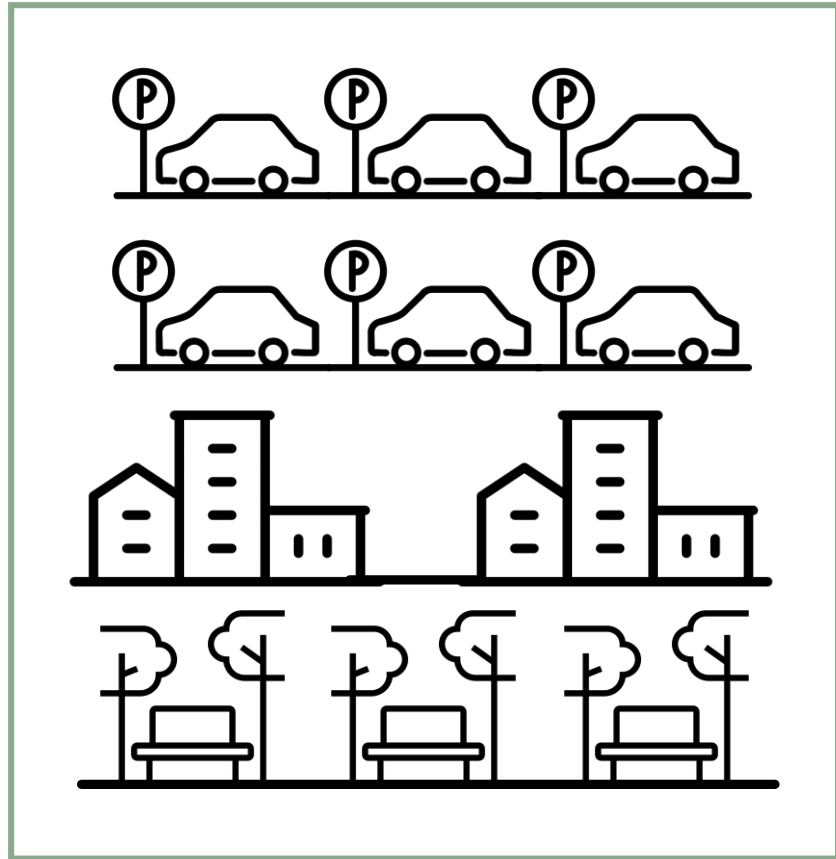
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Construction
Costs

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Future
Project Income

Construction Costs vs. Project Income



Development
Site

A development **is not possible** if
project income < project costs

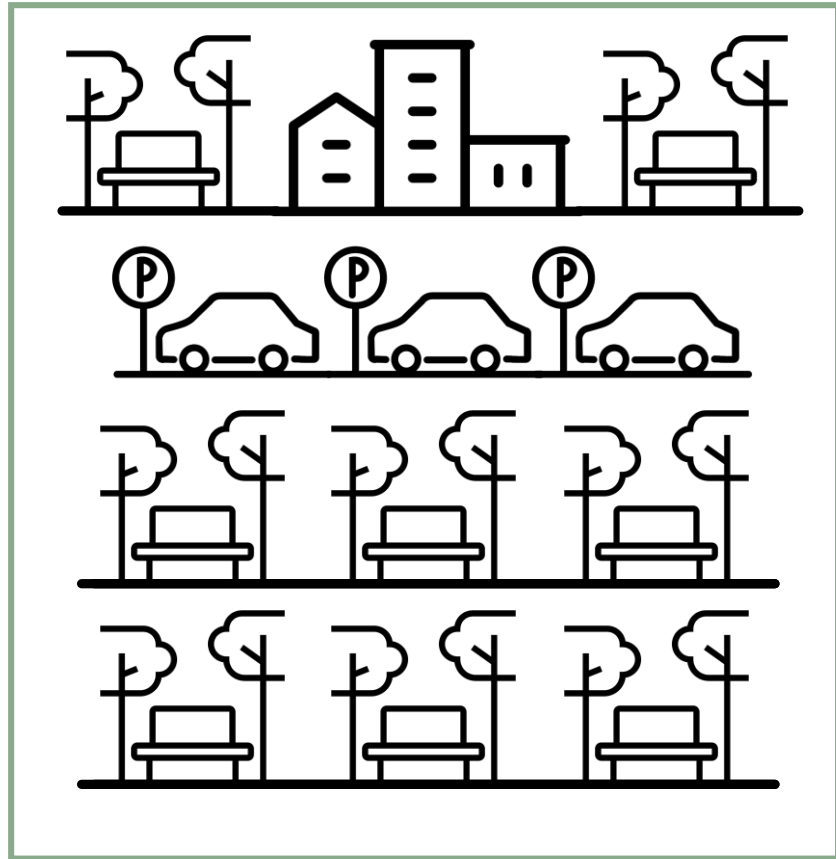
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Construction
Costs

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Future
Project Income

Construction Costs vs. Project Income



Development
Site

A development **is not possible** if
project income < project costs

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Construction
Costs

\$

Future
Project Income

Development Priorities & Tradeoffs

To ensure project income is greater than costs, communities must **prioritize** what they want on a site and accept **tradeoffs**, e.g.:

If you want...

Parking or open space

Less density

Affordable units

Then it can be paid for with...

More housing

Less on-site parking or open space

More market-rate units

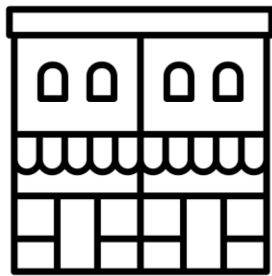
DSGD Priorities

Current zoning prioritizes (1) **mixed-use development** and (2) **Affordable Housing** in order to:

- Create starter homes and downsizing opportunities for seniors
- Bring residents to support local businesses
- Ensure use of the commuter rail
- Foster a vibrant downtown
- Meet Reading's share of the region's housing need
- Create a diverse and equitable neighborhood

Mixed-use Development

- There's a cost to build retail space on the ground floor
- It brings in less project income: retail rents are < apartment rents
- There's also a greater risk of vacancy



Ground-floor
Retail



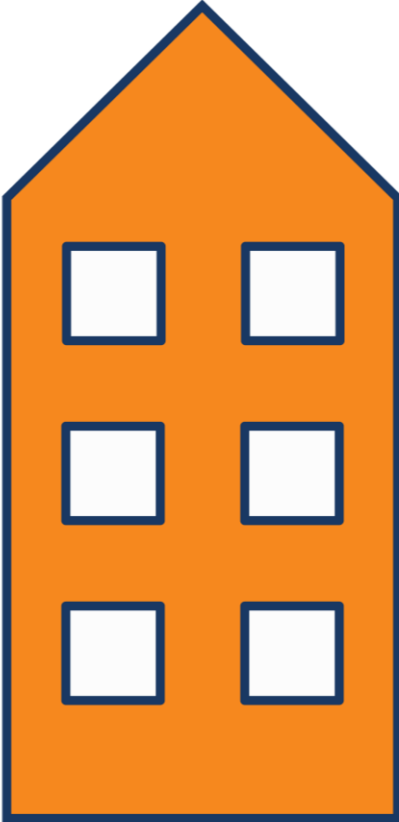
Construction
Costs



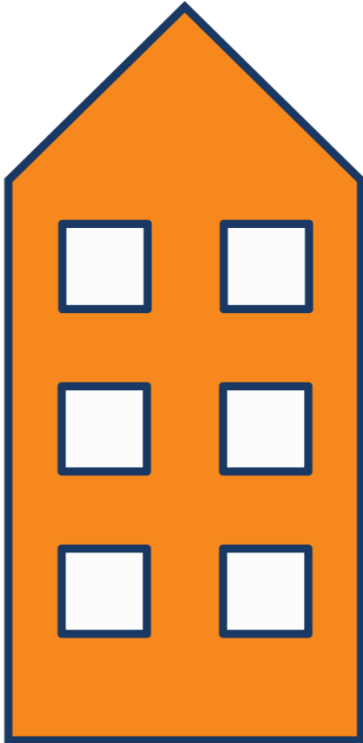
Future
Project Income

Affordable Housing

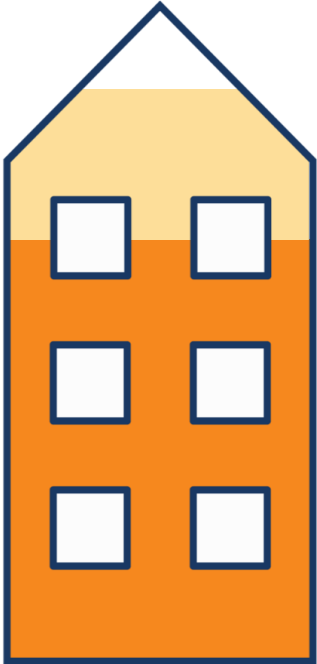
100% Market-rate



Some affordability



Greater affordability



} Less income overall

} Income from affordable rents

} Income from market-rate rents

Developer Panel



Ian Gillespie
Gillespie and Co.



Matt Zahler
MPZ Development



Dave Traggorth
Traggorth Companies

Next Steps

1. Complete the visioning survey by October 31st!
<https://mapc.ma/YourDowntownSurvey>
2. Our next meeting will focus on how zoning can be used to advance priorities for the downtown

Find more information at www.readingma.gov/yourdowntown

Thank you

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