

# Housing Brookline

## An Introduction to Affordable Housing in Brookline

Town of Brookline  
Department of Planning &  
Community Development  
September, 2008

A stylized, dark teal mountain range graphic is located in the bottom right corner of the slide, extending from the right edge towards the center.

What is affordable housing?

# What affordable housing IS NOT:

cheap housing

(it uses the same materials and design as most market rate housing)

# What affordable housing IS:

housing that is

- ◆ **targeted** to households who meet specific eligibility guidelines, most importantly household income, size composition

&

- ◆ **priced** to be affordable to such households.

# Typical Targeted Income Groups

(based upon a family of 4)

Level	Income as % of metro area median income (AMI)	Maximum family income
Low income	Up to 50%	\$42,900
Low-moderate income	Up to 80%	\$66,150
Moderate income	Up to 100% - 120%	\$85,800-\$102,960

# Housing is affordable when

- ◆ Housing costs (rent or sales price) are limited to a reasonable percent (for example 30%) of gross income
- ◆ by either
  - supply side subsidies: to developer to reduce price of housing
  - demand side subsidies: to renter/buyer to help defray housing costs (e.g., Sec. 8, down payment assistance)

# Affordable Housing Subsidy Sources

Town Controlled:

**HOME:** about \$500,000/year through West Metro Home Consortium

**CDBG:** application to Town for share of annual entitlement grant

**Housing Trust:** developer payments in lieu of units for small projects under inclusionary zoning; 6% of Town's free cash over \$6 million (est. \$300,000/year)

## other sources

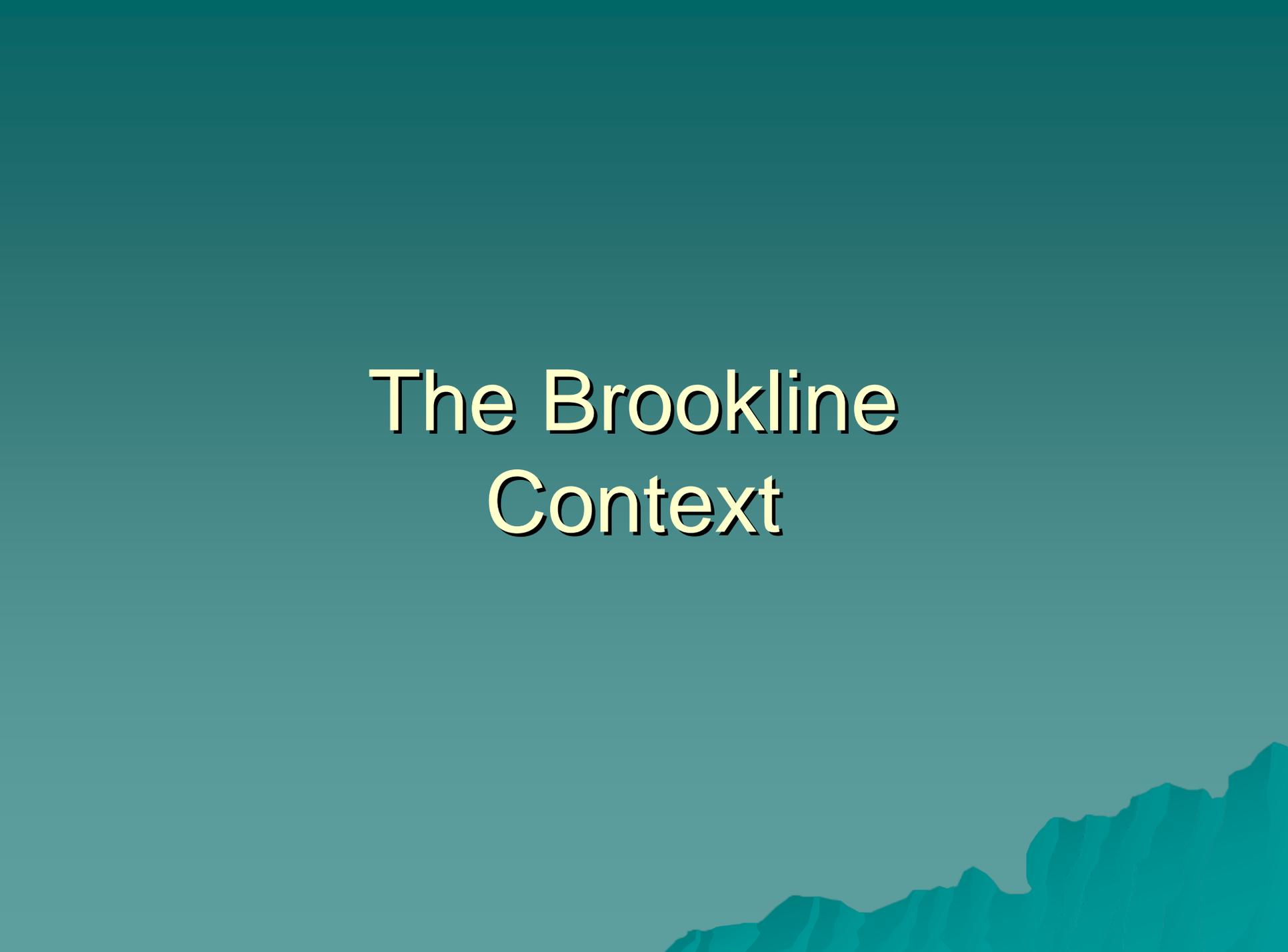
**State programs, Federal Home Loan Bank, federal tax credits/private investment:** available competitively on a project by project basis

**Cross subsidy:** (typical of privately developed projects under Chapter 40B or inclusionary zoning) each affordable unit is subsidized by excess profits from several market rate units.

**Section 8 contract:** project-based vouchers pay difference between what low income household can pay and a "Brookline standard" rent.

**State Soft Second Program:** State assistance to homebuyers, expanding range of households who can afford to buy

# The Brookline Context

The background is a solid teal color. In the bottom right corner, there is a silhouette of a mountain range with several peaks and valleys, rendered in a slightly darker shade of teal.

# Who are we today?

- ◆ 57,000 residents live in 26,400 units
- ◆ 55% of households rent their homes
- ◆ 21% of all units are single family homes;  
31% are in buildings with 20+ units
- ◆ 29% of units are condos

In 2000, the median income was \$66,700

- ◆ 32 % of households had incomes above \$100,000
- ◆ 19% of households had incomes below \$25,000
- ◆ 31% of households had low/mod incomes, i.e., below 80% area median income

# Current Affordable Housing by Use

<b>Total Affordable Units:</b>	<b>1,920</b>
Elderly:	975
General Occupancy:	808
Special Needs:	41
Single Room Occupancy:	96
Total Housing Units:	26,200
(Chapter 40B Count – soon 2110 or 8.%)	

# Current Affordable Housing by Ownership

- ◆ **Public Housing:** 921 units  
(Brookline Housing Authority)
- ◆ **Controlled by non-profits:** 504 units  
(including 3 Hebrew Rehab properties)
- ◆ **Privately owned:** 378 units  
(including Village at Brookline)
- ◆ **Owner-Occupied:** 117 units

# Town Goals

- ◆ to maintain Town's historic diversity

- ◆ to fulfill the Town's regional obligations

.... adding at least 25 affordable units per year, while ....

- ◆ achieving at least 10% of units affordable to lower income households (<80% of AMI)
- ◆ increasing units affordable to moderate income households (<120% AMI)
- ◆ giving preference to persons with ties to Brookline (residents, Town employees, METCO families) to the extent possible
- ◆ preserving affordability for the longest period allowable by law.
- ◆ using Town controlled funds to leverage outside funding.

# Constraints

The image features a solid teal background. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized, dark teal silhouette of a mountain range with jagged peaks. The word "Constraints" is centered in the upper half of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a thin black outline.

## ◆ high costs:

- single family median sales price: \$1,070,000
- condo median cost: \$446,625

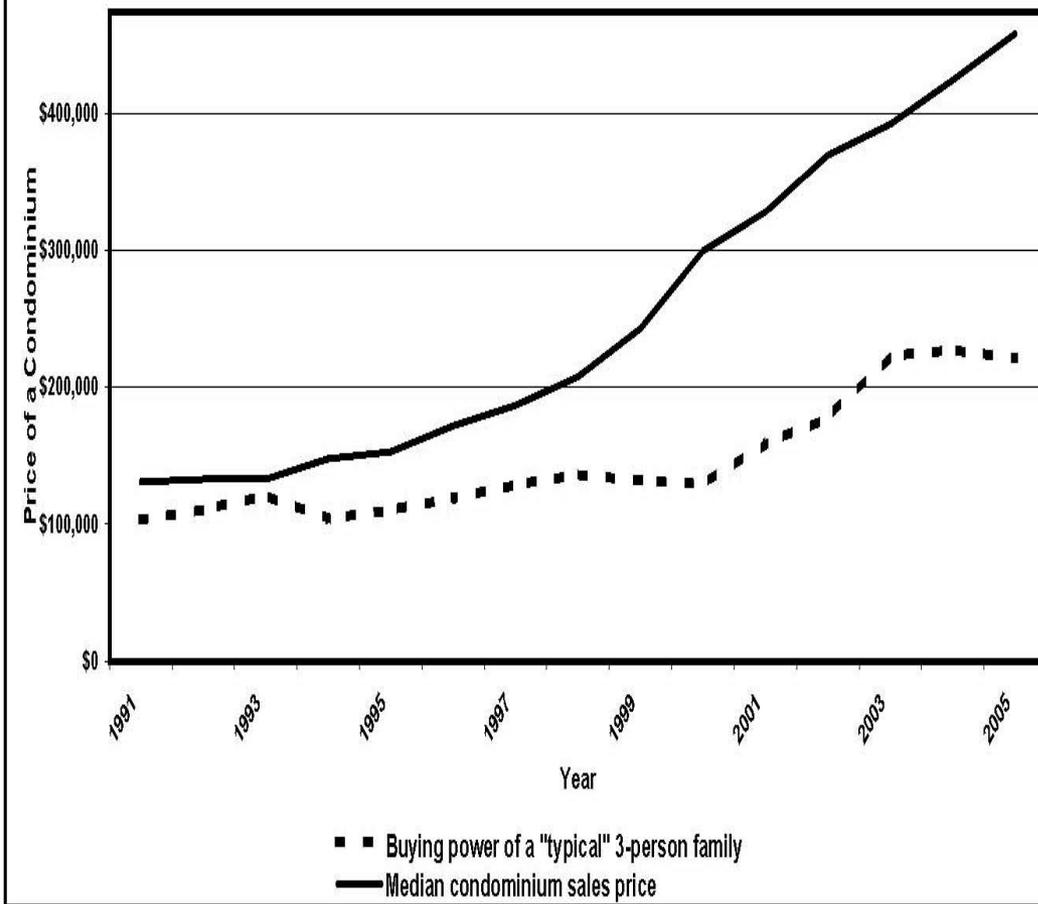
## ◆ lack of sites:

- rental buildings rarely on market; sell at condo conversion prices
- little buildable land without teardowns

## ◆ neighborhood concerns:

- density, design, traffic, parking

Comparison between  
AN AFFORDABLE SALES PRICE  
for a "Typical" 3-Person Family  
and  
Median Condominium Sales Price  
1991-2005



# Town Strategies

The image features a solid teal background. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized, dark teal silhouette of a mountain range with jagged peaks. The main text, 'Town Strategies', is centered in the upper half of the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font with a subtle drop shadow.

1. **Preserve** existing affordable housing
2. **Encourage purchase** of existing market-rate rental buildings for redevelopment as affordable
3. **Use inclusionary zoning** to achieve set-asides in new market-rate projects
4. Partner with developers to **develop new** affordable housing with high proportions of affordable units
5. **Assist** income eligible **households to purchase** existing units.

# 1. PRESERVATION OF AFFORDABILITY IN EXPIRING USE PROJECTS

- ◆ Assisted nonprofit **Hebrew Rehab** to acquire 3 senior developments, extending affordability for **330** out of 520 units for an **additional 30–40 years**.
- ◆ Negotiated tax agreement with **Druker Co.**, extending affordability of **30 units** for an **additional 16 years**.
- ◆ When **116-unit Brookline Cooperative** completed affordability term and converted to market rate condos, **32 members --28% -- committed to permanent affordability**.

# *example - Hebrew Rehab*



- ◆ Town agreed to tax relief by terminating 121A agreements for 3 properties
- ◆ Town provided \$1 million from Housing Trust to complement MassHousing and State sources, underwriting acquisition & rehab

## 2. TRANSFER & RENOVATION OF EXISTING, MARKET-RATE RENT HOUSING

- ◆ Board of Selectmen outreach letter to 140 owners of properties with 8+ units
- ◆ Meetings with individual & associations of brokers
- ◆ Monitoring market for appropriate properties
- ◆ Linking of interested owners with appropriate nonprofits

results: underwriting the purchase & rehab of

◆ dilapidated lodging houses:

- 17 SRO units by Brookline Improvement Coalition
- conversion to 9 small apts. by Committee to End Elder Homelessness
- mix of 14 SRO's and studios by Pine St. Inn
- 15 SRO's by Caritas Communities

◆ **family housing:** 6 unit bldg by the Brookline Improvement Coalition

## *example – 1754 Beacon St.*

- ◆ Town committed \$1.1 million from Housing Trust to allow volunteer-run Brookline Improvement Coalition (BIC) to purchase deteriorated but historic lodging house.
- ◆ Town assisted BIC to issue RFP, selecting Pine Street Inn as developer/operator.





- ◆ Pine St. Inn raised additional \$1.7 million in State and private funds for substantial rehab.



- ◆ Town substituted federal HOME monies for Housing Trust; leaving \$908,000 of HOME in project to assure permanent affordability.

# Award winning project with 5 studios, 9 single rooms, common spaces, wheelchair accessibility

(photos by Richard Howard)



### 3. INCLUSIONARY ZONING

- ◆ Affordable housing requirements for developers of **6 or more units**
- ◆ **> 15 units**: 15% of units must be affordable
- ◆ **6-15 units**: may make cash payment
- ◆ **to date**: 98 units in 18 projects completed or underway; \$5.9 million to Housing Trust from 15 projects

# Goddard House: assisted living



- ◆ 115 assisted living units
- ◆ 17 (15%) affordable
  - 4 units for <50%
  - 9 units for <80%
  - 4 units for <100%rent with services:  
\$1,739-\$2,279
- ◆ market-rate:  
\$3,758- \$4,028

# Kendall Crescent: condo project



- ◆ 35 condos
- ◆ 5 (15%) affordable sales:
  - 4 for buyers <80%
  - 1 wheelchair accessible unit for buyer <100%
- ◆ initial market sales:  
\$240,000 – \$670,000

# Lofts at Brookline Village: low income rentals in condo loft project



- ◆ 21 condos
- ◆ 2 (10%) affordable rentals  
3 & 4 brs.  
kept by owner for rent <50%  
(priority to Sec.8)
- ◆ initial market sales:  
\$437,000-\$955,000  
(loft or finished space)

# Marion Square: rental project



- ◆ 44 rental units
- ◆ 4 (10%) affordable rentals < 50%  
(priority to Section 8 certificate holders)
- ◆ initial market rents:  
\$1,900-\$4,000

# St. Paul Crossing: condo project



- ◆ 49 condo units
- ◆ 8 (16%) affordable sales:
  - 5 units < 80%
  - 3 units < 100%
- ◆ initial market sales:
  - \$425,000 - \$925,000

# Park Place: first voluntary on-site units

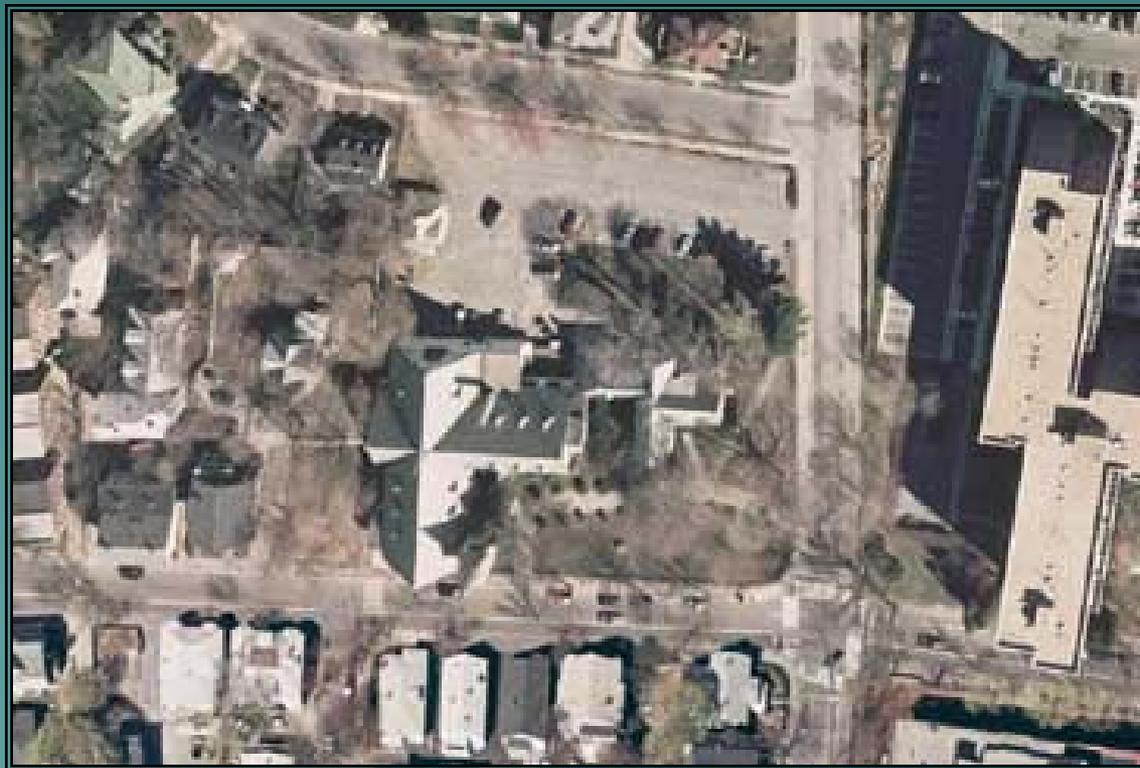


- ◆ instead of 8 luxury condos and cash payments, 9 condo units
- ◆ 2 (22%) affordable sales < 80%  
(built out of footprint of one luxury unit)
- ◆ initial market sales: \$900,000 to \$1.55 million

## 4. DEVELOP NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- ◆ work with owners of institutional properties

for example,  
Archdiocese of  
Boston &  
non profit  
Planning  
Office for  
Urban Affairs  
at St. Aidan's



Redevelopment of St.  
Aidan's campus,  
currently underway,

preserves

- ◆ the church, using it for 9 luxury condominiums
- ◆ the forecourt & specimen trees, with 4 conservation/ pedestrian easements



- ◆ and creates 36 permanently affordable units:  
20 low income rentals and  
16 low-moderate income condos

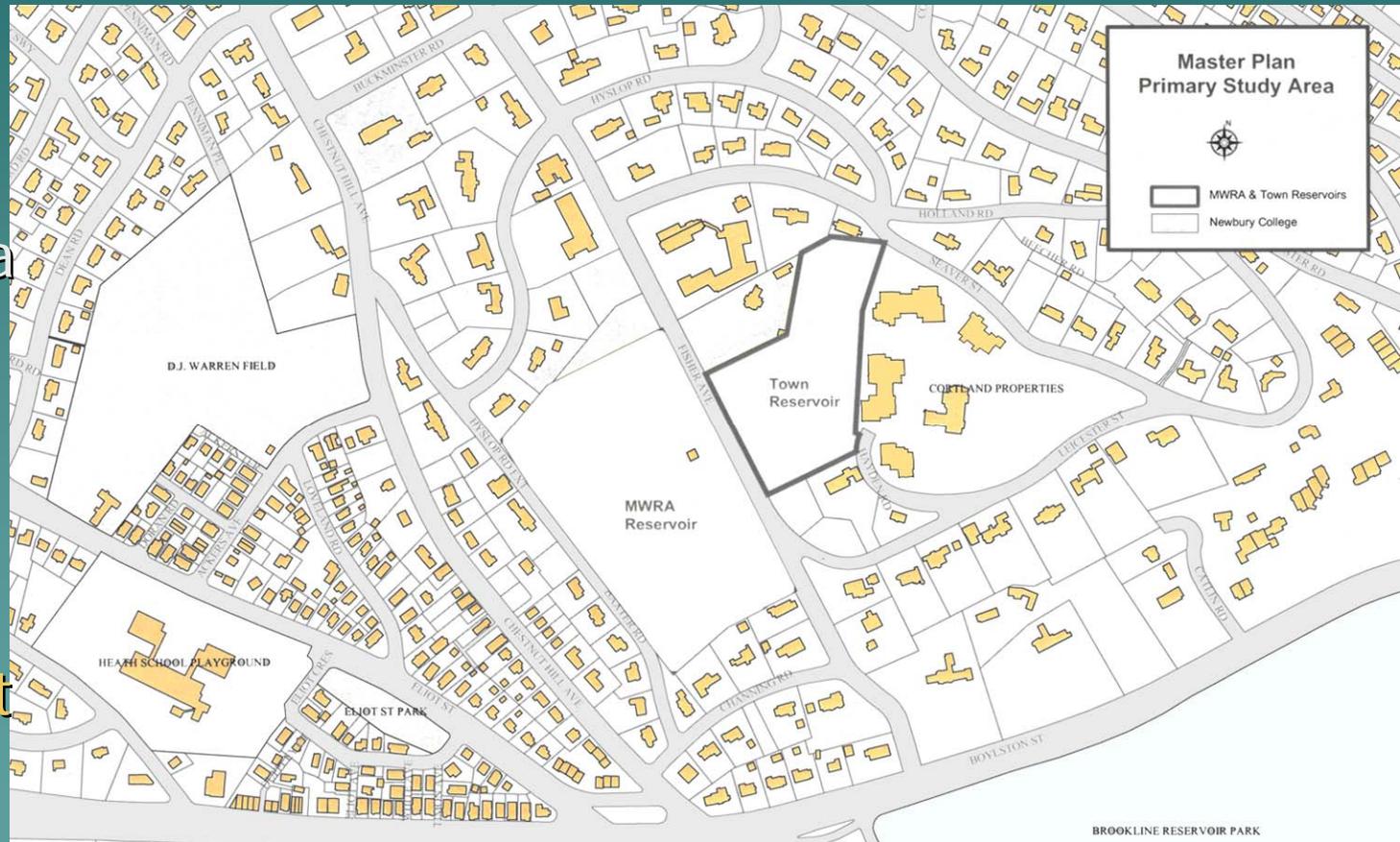


The Town is providing \$6.1 million in Town subsidies from its Housing Trust and federal HOME and CDBG funds to complement State and private subsidies

# Develop new ....

- ◆ consider **Town-owned land**

The Town is seeking to sell the 5 acre site of a surplus reservoir on **Fisher Hill** for a **mixed income development**





# 5. HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE

- ♦ **financial** assistance up to \$175,000 per buyer for households with incomes < 80% AMI
- ♦ **technical** assistance, including help accessing state subsidy sources, for first time homebuyers

(does not create permanently affordable housing, but recycles units &/or resources through rights of first refusal/shared appreciation)

Visit us at  
[www.townofbrooklinemass.com](http://www.townofbrooklinemass.com)

