

Gentrification and Displacement

An agenda for addressing
gentrification and preventing
displacement

Developed by
The Gentrification Learning Community



Our Goals

Our primary goal in addressing gentrification is to **prevent displacement of low- and moderate-income people** from neighborhoods experiencing gentrification and development pressure due to rising housing costs in Greater Boston.

Our additional shared goals include:

- Preserving the cultural and historic character of neighborhoods of color
- Maintaining or increasing the racial and economic diversity of neighborhoods

We are also committed to improving the quality of life in low- and moderate-income communities, regardless of the presence or absence of upper or middle-income families, and regardless of whether gentrification and displacement are involved.

Our Approach

We have prioritized strategies that are **actionable, impactful, and rooted in our goals.**

We recognize the local and national history that has created a widespread need for **greater community control.**

We will address **systemic power imbalances.**

We will fight for the **right of existing residents to remain** in their housing, participate in local governance, and control land.

We will center our work on the **needs and leadership of people and communities of color.**

We will work to **mitigate gentrification and displacement** by building bridges among long-time and newer residents in gentrifying communities and reducing cultural dislocation for people who are displaced.

We will **hold one another accountable** in our work addressing racial equity and structural racism.

We will advocate for the causes of others that align with our goals, **building relationships and allies for a shared cause.**

Gentrification Learning Community

The Gentrification Learning Community was co-hosted by LISC Boston and the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, and was facilitated by the Interaction Institute for Social Change. This group included housing and housing finance professionals, organizers, researchers, public officials, and more. This agenda reflects a broad consensus developed over the group's 15-month learning journey to explore the drivers and impacts of gentrification on communities in Greater Boston, as well as strategies and solutions.

Strategies and Solutions

We are prioritizing strategies for preventing and mitigating displacement that are actionable, impactful, and rooted in our goals.

1

Protect Residents and Prevent Displacement

- Support Just Cause Eviction Ordinance
- Advocate for and support increased government resources for tenant organizing and housing-related legal services
- Promote Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) that include anti-displacement provisions, prioritize minority- and women-owned businesses, and include local monitoring
- Support tenant organizing that is focused on specific campaigns or institutions, with the goal increasing community control

2

Intervene on Speculators

- Support adoption of an anti-speculation, anti-flipping tax
- Strengthen laws regulating condominium conversion
- Expand and improve inclusionary development policy
- Support programs to acquire and convert housing to permanent affordability
- Support research to ensure compliance with existing laws and regulations
- Explore viability of “Right to Purchase” ordinance to enable multifamily building residents to purchase their buildings

3

Reduce Racial and other Disparities in Income and Wealth

- Support enforcement of local hiring ordinances
- Support enforcement of Fair Housing laws
- Advocate for good jobs standards, including living wages and benefits
- Support the “Fair Share” tax referendum
- Support tax abatement for low income homeowners
- Urge municipalities to apply a racial equity lens to their policies and programs, with clear responsibility for implementation and monitoring

Strategies and Solutions

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4 Preserve and Produce Affordable Housing to Increase the Amount of Socially Controlled Housing

- Advocate for enactment of Community Preservation Act (CPA) in communities where it doesn't exist to provide more funding for housing
- Support appropriate increases in linkage formulas to increase resources for affordable housing
- Advocate for inclusionary zoning as a law where it only exists as a policy
- Advocate for policies that support Equitable Transit Oriented Development
- Maximize efforts to preserve all existing subsidized housing, particularly in gentrifying neighborhoods
- Support the increased role of neighborhoods in determining the use of impact fees to support affordable housing

5 Preserve and Prevent Displacement of Cultural Institutions and Small Businesses

- Support local businesses, including minority-owned business enterprises (MBE) and immigrant-owned businesses, to stay in place by stabilizing commercial rents and providing access to SBA loans that enable businesses to acquire their buildings
- Help local businesses, including MBE and immigrant-owned businesses, to stay in place by providing technical assistance related to serving a changing market
- Support emerging indigenous businesses to start, grow, and stabilize
- Create easier access for Gateway Cities with high immigrant populations to apply as cultural districts
- Build broad coalitions between housing, community, and small business groups
- Support the preservation and creation of cultural institutions, public art, and cultural markers

Why form the GLC?

Many community development leaders in Boston were responding to the housing crisis and increasing housing market pressures in a variety of ways. We wanted to come together to share ideas and learn other approaches to achieving equitable outcomes for communities.

When and how did the GLC work?

Between July 2014 and November 2015, the GLC met for five learning sessions and two strategy development sessions. Pairs of learning buddies met between sessions. We also observed and discussed many “real time” learning opportunities, including public processes in different neighborhoods and cities hosted by our organizations and others.

How were the recommendations developed?

The recommendations reflect a broad consensus of the group, though not unanimous agreement on every item. Further, members participated as individuals, not representatives of their organizations or networks. Their organizations have not endorsed these recommendations.

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