

IDENTIFYING & EVALUATING POLICIES

How do we protect where we live?

Workshop 4

GREATER BOSTON ANTI-DISPLACEMENT TOOLKIT





Toolkit

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Workshop 4

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Introduction

Communities across the country are experiencing threats to their homes and neighborhoods. There are many policy and strategy models communities can adopt to protect where they live. This workshop section is intended for engaging and developing community-driven ideas and solutions.

Communities can use this activity to:

- Generate ideas and solutions by and from the community,
- Identify policy and strategy models that work,
- Gather community knowledge about how different policy and strategy models can be adopted,
- Identify needs and gaps in information necessary to move forward with a specific policy or strategy.

The policies and strategies identified can be used to influence decision-makers and educate other community members about problems and potential solutions. This activity informs planning for organizing, developing, and advocating a specific policy or strategy to adopt in your community.

The facilitation guide below outlines how to conduct this activity, and is intended to be adapted as needed to fit your community needs.

Facilitation Guide

Purpose

To identify specific policies and strategies we have used or witnessed other communities use to protect their homes.

Outcomes

1. Learned about and documented policies and strategies we are aware of and/or used as proposals to fight displacement.

To evaluate which policies and strategies to consider adopting and advocating in our community.

2. Identified what we know and need to know (action plan) to consider specific policy proposals and strategies for our community.
3. Evaluated if a specific policy proposal or strategy will work in your community.

Whom to Invite

Those you invite (or exclude) will largely depend on the purpose (*Why do it?*) and outcomes (*What do you want to know/have at the end?*) of organizing this activity in your community.

Ideally, there would be a minimum of 6 participants who represent a cross-section of experiences to share and discuss different policies and strategies they are aware of or witnessed others use to protect their homes.

Once this has been identified, then ask:

- *Who can help fulfill this purpose?*
- *Who is most relevant for this activity?*
- *Who might threaten the purpose?*

For example:

- There is a new, mixed-use (live, work, play) development proposed that will stretch across two city blocks in the community, which could potentially bring new opportunities for jobs, housing, and services. The community is currently organizing to protect existing residents and businesses and ensure the development is beneficial for existing residents and businesses. You can invite community residents and business owners located in or close to the area being developed, key organizations or

organizers in the area fighting this development, and anyone else who might be directly impacted by this development.

- Gentrification and displacement are growing concerns for your community and the surrounding area. More and more residents are being pushed out of their homes due to rising housing costs. You can work with the community to identify and explore solutions to address the problem by inviting housing advocates, environmental advocates, past and current community members, or institution representatives from local schools or health care organizations. A cross-section of participants can help kick-start a conversation about potential policies and strategies your community can adopt and advocate to fight displacement.

Materials & Prep

- ☐ Identify 1-2 facilitators and assign roles for the session, including 1 note taker and 1 timekeeper. (If 2 facilitators, the 2 can rotate roles—e.g., 1 facilitates and the other takes notes and keeps time.)
- ☐ Print [blank group dialogue worksheets](#) for each participant.
- ☐ Print [worksheet examples](#) for each facilitator. **Note:** If helpful, the worksheet examples can be printed and shared with participants.
- ☐ Pens and pencils for writing on worksheets.
- ☐ Flip-chart/butcher paper (blank) for capturing share-backs and discussions.
- ☐ Markers for flip-chart/butcher paper.

Tips

- Design for what you want! Customize the facilitation guide to fit your desired purpose, needs, and outcomes.
- Determine the collective purpose of this activity to consider adopting and advocating in your community (e.g., *Is this for a specific campaign, issue, or target the community is wanting to influence?*).
- Identify how much time you will need for each discussion and activity (suggested time: 60 minutes). The Idea Generation (Part 1) exercise goes a bit quicker—5 minutes on your own and 10-15 minutes to share back. You will likely spend more time (about 30 minutes) doing the Evaluating Policies and Strategies (Part 2) group work and share-backs.
- Based on who is participating, identify the anticipated number of break-out groups.
- Schedule time after your activity to debrief with the facilitators on what worked and what you might change if conducting the activity again. Identify any action items for you, your organization, or community.

Detailed Plan



Part 1: Idea Generation (15 min)

Step 1: INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITY (5 min)

FACILITATOR: *In Part 1 of this exercise, we would like to hear about what policies and strategies you have used or have witnessed being used in other communities. This is your vision of ideas for what policies and strategies you think can help protect where we live. There are no right or wrong answers in this exercise.*

Remember: no one knows everything and together we know a lot! Our goal is to get as many ideas on the table to share with one another.

In Part 2 of this exercise, we'll select a few ideas to dig deeper into evaluating what we already know and need to know to consider adopting for our community.



Step 2: ON YOUR OWN (5 min)

INSTRUCTIONS: Pass out Part 1 of the [worksheet](#) to participants.

Ask participants to take approximately 5 minutes to jot down on their own: (1) *What is the policy or strategy?* and (2) *Briefly describe how you have used it or witnessed it being used?*

If helpful, you might think about sharing one of the following prompts:

- *Think of policies and strategies as a vision or plan of action to achieve a specific goal. It sets the guidelines for how something does (or doesn't) get done. Policies and strategies guide decision-making within different systems and institutions, e.g. city/state government, corporations, schools, etc.).*
- *Think about your own stories and experiences with fighting displacement through your own movement and migration. This could be where you live now or in the past.*
- *Think of a time you've witnessed a community successfully protect their homes. How did they do this?*

Share [example cards](#) of other methods communities have considered and adopted with success.

Share that the goal is to get as many ideas as we can on the table in a short time—just jot down thoughts and ideas as they come to you.

Ask participants if they have any questions about the exercise before starting the clock.

If it is helpful, you can share [examples for Part 1](#). Start the time and provide participants with a 2- and 1-minute reminder of time left to work on their own.



Step 3: SHARING BACK (5 min)

INSTRUCTIONS: Ask participants to share (popcorn style) their ideas and briefly describe how they did/can help in our communities.

Share the ideas noted on flip-chart/butcher paper for participants to review as a group.

If they would like to expand the list, the facilitator can share [examples for Part 1](#) of other policies and strategies communities have considered and adopted as ideas to consider and examine in Part 2 of the exercise.

Once the group has shared and generated a list of ideas to consider, move to Part 2 of the exercise to dive deeper into a few of the ideas listed.

Part 2: EVALUATING POLICIES AND STRATEGIES (25-30 min)



Step 1: INTRODUCTION (5 min)

FACILITATOR: *For Part 2, we'd like to learn how you think the policies and strategies identified in Part 1 could be used in our communities. For this exercise, participants will work in small groups. Divide into groups by counting off based on the anticipated number of break-out groups and participants.*

NOTE: For example, if you have 20 participants and want groups of 4 people, have participants count off with 1, 2, 3, 4, which will give you 5 groups of 4.

- *Each group will choose 1 policy or strategy from the list generated in Part 1 of this exercise to focus on. You can choose from the ideas shared in the “share-back” to the larger group, or choose another idea within your group that you’re interested in exploring.*
- *It’s okay if groups choose the same policies and strategies to focus on.*
- *Once the group has chosen their policy or strategy, each group will examine 4 questions/areas:*
 1. *How would we adapt?*
 2. *What’s needed to advance these policies/strategies?*
 3. *Who can help?*
 4. *What opportunities and barriers exist?*
- *At the end, groups will be asked to share back. This series of questions can help communities explore the information available and needed to decide what actions to take.*



Step 2: DEEPER DIVE WITHIN GROUPS (10 min)

INSTRUCTIONS: Pass out Part 2 of the worksheet to participants.

Ask participants to pair up in groups of 2-3.

Review the worksheet steps with participants: (1) Identify policy or strategy to focus on and write it in at the top of the worksheet table, then (2) Think through answers together to the 4 questions outlined in the worksheet.

Remind participants that the goal here is to evaluate what we already know and need to know for our community.

Ask participants if they have any questions about the exercise before starting the clock.

If it is helpful, the facilitator can share [examples](#) for Part 2.

Start the time and provide participants with a 5-, 2-, and 1-minute reminder of time left to work in their groups.



Step 3: SHARE BACK (10-15 min)

INSTRUCTIONS: Ask each group to share the policy or strategy they focused on, and for each of the 4 questions, one highlight they discussed and documented (e.g., How they think it could be adopted, specific action steps, etc.).

Share the discussion noted by groups on flip-chart/butcher paper for participants to review as a group.

After each group shares, ask other participants if they have any questions or reflections on what the group shared.

Once all of the groups have shared, reflect with participants on the ideas and information shared by asking (1) *What stood out to you as possible policies and strategies for their community?* (2) *What policies and strategies are you most excited about learning more about, exploring after today?* (3) *How do we want to use the ideas and information we generated here today?*

Gather the reflections shared by groups on flip-chart/butcher paper for participants to see as a group.

Based on the activity purpose, goals, and outcomes set forth for organizing this session, close the discussion by identifying and outlining any next steps as a result of this activity. For example, you may consider organizing a planning session to prioritize one or two policies and strategies for the group, organization, or community members to focus on for an advocacy campaign, want to conduct more research on one or two policies/strategies to decide if they will work in your community, or build a shared action plan to help move identified policies and strategies forward in your community.

Taking Action!

At the close of this activity, consider any asks of the group to support community mobilizing efforts and actions in and outside the space created today.

- ☐ Use the policies and strategies discussed to influence decision makers and educate other community members about problems and potential solutions.
- ☐ Join other local groups and organizations you learned about today who are already working on adopting one or more of the policies and strategies in the community.
- ☐ Organize this activity with other community members and stakeholders.

Additional Resources & Tools

- [All-In Cities Policy Toolkit](#)
- [Dealing with Gentrification Toolkit](#)
- Just Cause Eviction Ordinances, [The Jim Brooks Community Stabilization Act](#)
- [Our Homes, Our Future: How Rent Control Can Build Stable, Healthy Communities](#)
- [Somerville Community Preservation Act](#)
- [Greater Boston Community Land Trust](#)



Part 1: Idea Generation

Jot down all your ideas here! Think of policies and strategies you have seen, heard of, or witnessed being used in other communities to protect their homes.

What is the policy or strategy?		How did/can this help?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		



Part 2: Evaluating Policies & Strategies

Choose a policy or strategy from Part 1 by exploring the **4** questions below to learn how it can help protect your community.



Policy or Strategy (write-in):



(1) THINK OF: How would you adopt this policy or strategy in your community?
Where have you witnessed this work being done?



(2) IMAGINE: What specific **actions, steps** are most needed to **advance** this policy or strategy?

	<p>(3) SEEK OUT: Who (audiences/allies) can help advance this policy or strategy? What is their role?</p>	
	<p>(4) DISCOVER: What opportunities and barriers exist? How viable is this change in your community?</p>	<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p><u>Barriers:</u></p>




Worksheet Examples





Part 1: Idea Generation Jot down all your ideas here! Think of policies and strategies you have seen, heard of, or witnessed being used other communities use to protect their homes.

	What is the policy or strategy?	How did/can this help?
1	Community Land Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A method where community members in Utopia gain ownership of 5 parcels of land. • Gives community members control over community development instead of profit-driven entities. Community members gain long-term control over the use and development of what they need. • Examples of this working in other communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All-In Cities Policy Toolkit in King County and Albuquerque, NM ◦ Greater Boston Community Land Trust, in Boston, MA
2	Cultural Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A designation of a geographic area that recognizes the voices, histories, and experiences of a particular community or set of communities. • A cultural district designation offers opportunities for community-driven economic and cultural development and enables long-term visioning for the area through existing buildings and parcels of land, as well as future projects. • Examples of this working in other communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Six Square in Houston, TX ◦ Calle 24: Latino Cultural District in San Francisco, CA ◦ Little Tokyo in Los Angeles, CA ◦ Massachusetts Cultural Districts Initiative in Boston, MA ◦ Africatown in Seattle, WA

What is the policy or strategy?	How did/can this help?
3 Good Jobs Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverages economic investments to benefit existing residents by building in specific, local hiring and employment requirements for new business developments in the community. • Can help increase job opportunities and higher wages for local residents in gentrifying communities. • Strengthens local workforce pipeline. • Examples of this working in other communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, DC

	Part 2: Evaluating Policies & Strategies Choose a policy or strategy from Part 1 to dig deeper into by exploring the 4 questions below to learn how it can help protect your community.	
	Policy or Strategy (write-in): <i>Community Land Trust</i>	
	(1) THINK OF: How would you adopt this policy or strategy in your community? Where have you witnessed this work being done?	<p>GreenRoots is currently organizing a Chelsea land trust initiative to protect access to affordable housing.</p> <p>Other examples: All-In Cities Policy Toolkit in King County and Albuquerque, NM.</p>
	(2) IMAGINE: What specific actions or steps are most needed to advance this policy or strategy?	<p>Land Inventory: How to do a land inventory? What land is owned by the city/municipality? Where's it located? What's open?</p> <p>\$\$\$: Get access to a pool of capital to acquire properties.</p> <p>Community Steering Board: A team of community members who will guide decisions on how properties will be disposed of and which properties to acquire.</p> <p>Legal Structure: How will the land trust be organized? Is it a separate nonprofit? Organized under an existing organization?</p> <p>Power Analysis to map relationships and power in the community.</p> <p>Community mobilization to initiate dialogue and planning for a community trust. Need more guidance on how to activate community members for this.</p>

	<p>(3) SEEK OUT: Who (audiences/allies) can help advance this policy or strategy? What is their role?</p>	<p>Directly impacted populations and their families. People who are vulnerable to displacement are often left out of conversations about development. Lift up their voices, experiences, and needs in the planning and development of a land trust.</p> <p>Community development corporations & community-based non-profit organizations. They can help identify financing opportunities and offer technical support in land trust development and operation.</p> <p>Residents or other volunteers with construction experience can help make repairs and improve properties.</p> <p>Credit unions or large nonprofit institutions like hospitals or universities can provide capital through no-interest, revolving loans.</p> <p>Long-time residents or small landlords might be more willing to sell the property to a land trust to ensure that it stays affordable.</p> <p>State/city/town governments may maintain ownership of lots/properties within the proposed land trust area and may be willing to sell below market rates.</p>
	<p>(4) DISCOVER: What opportunities and barriers exist? How viable is this change in your community?</p>	<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p>Greater Boston Community Land Trust Network: Group can be a resource and ally. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative launched a group to share best practices for the creation of community land trusts. They also offer technical support.</p> <p><u>Barriers:</u></p> <p>Cost of land acquisition is already very high in neighborhoods where gentrification is underway.</p> <p>Building trust among residents can be a challenge, especially when there are clear winners and losers in the short-term for a small-scale community land trust.</p> <p>Wealth and equity, which homeownership contributes so much to in the US. Participating in an affordable-housing land trust can make it harder for people to build generational wealth.</p>



Part 2: Evaluating Policies & Strategies

Choose a policy or strategy from Part 1 to dig deeper into by exploring the **4** questions below to learn how it can help protect your community.

Policy or Strategy (write-in): **Cultural Districts**



(1) THINK OF: How would you adopt this policy or strategy in your community? Where have you witnessed this work being done?

Three neighborhoods (Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Fenway) in Boston have organized to establish cultural districts to preserve the histories and identities of marginalized communities.

Other examples:

[Six Square](#) in Houston, TX

[Calle 24: Latino Cultural District](#) in San Francisco, CA

[Little Tokyo](#) in Los Angeles, CA



(2) IMAGINE: What specific **actions or steps** are most needed to **advance** this policy or strategy?

Asset Mapping: What do we consider to be our community's assets? What are the existing community assets in danger of erasure? How can assets adapt and change in the future?



Community-Based Coalition: A group of community members who will guide the asset-mapping process and compile materials for cultural-district application.




Funding: Depending on available public or private land resources to secure properties as anchor institutions in a cultural district.

Organizational Structure: How will development decisions be made in the district? Who will plan events and convenings? Will district management fall under an existing organization?

Cultural District Vision Plan to establish long-term visioning for areas within the boundaries of the district. What are the expectations for economic development, residential development, and arts & culture?

Community Benefits Agreement Template to ensure enforceability of community visioning for a cultural district.

	<p>(3) SEEK OUT: Who (audiences/allies) can help advance this policy or strategy? What is their role?</p>	<p>Current and former residents. People who have lived or currently live in the cultural district have intimate connections with a place that should be centered in discussions about place assets. Honor their voices, histories, and needs (past, present, and future) in the development of the cultural district.</p> <p>Massachusetts Cultural Council is the organizing body for cultural districts in the state. They can direct similar cities/towns that have pursued designations and provide guidance on the application process.</p> <p>Local anchor institutions can provide financial support for community-driven initiatives.</p> <p>Local business owners can contribute perspectives to the asset-mapping process and may be interested in exploring new ownership models within the cultural district.</p> <p>State/city/town governments may maintain ownership of lots/properties.</p> <p>Local artists and art-focused organizations can help with design and promotional activities within the district. Artists may also be partners in creating work that represents the experiences of different communities in place.</p> <p>Legal services providers can offer guidance crafting community benefits agreements for cultural district areas.</p>
	<p>(4) DISCOVER: What opportunities and barriers exist? How viable is this change in your community?</p>	<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p>Massachusetts Cultural Council</p> <p>Hyde Square Task Force, the most recent group in Boston to secure cultural district designation for Hyde Square/Jackson Square, could offer guidance on the process.</p> <p><u>Barriers:</u></p> <p>Ensuring equitable development as a central principle in cultural district designation is not always common practice. Communities would need to make anti-displacement efforts an explicit focus.</p> <p>The cultural district's emphasis on tourism can sometimes come at the expense of existing communities.</p> <p>Timing of designation can feel too late, especially if gentrification is already underway or advanced.</p>

	<p>Part 2: Evaluating Policies & Strategies</p> <p>Choose a policy or strategy from Part 1 to dig deeper into by exploring the 4 questions below to see how it can help protect your community.</p> <p>Policy or Strategy (write-in): Zoning Overlay District</p>	
	<p>(1) THINK OF: How would you adopt this policy or strategy in your community? Where have you witnessed this work being done?</p>	<p>We could adopt a zoning overlay district along Chelsea Creek on the Chelsea side. It could be a no-eviction zone, affordable housing overlay district, or development-without-displacement zone.</p> <p>We know this strategy has been used several times, but don't have specific examples or know the mechanics of how this works.</p>
	<p>(2) IMAGINE: What specific actions or steps are most needed to advance this policy or strategy?</p>	<p>Base-building. Block-by-block organizing. Neighborhood councils. People power. Electoral and political power. A strong voice at city hall.</p> <p>Understand zoning overlay districts.</p> <p>Understand zoning and planning processes.</p> <p>Understand clear examples of other communities that have successfully applied these types of zoning overlay districts.</p> <p>Define zone, define district, define neighborhood.</p> <p>Engage residents so that we can all understand these tools.</p> <p>Develop clear demands.</p> <p>Engage local councilors and share the neighborhood's demands.</p> <p>Formulate demands into a policy proposal.</p>

	<p>(3) SEEK OUT: Who (audiences/allies) can help advance this policy or strategy? What is their role?</p>	<p>Current residents: Base-build with people and political power.</p> <p>City manager and local councilors: Be our allies and champions at city hall, and help us get other councilors and city hall departments on board.</p> <p>The Neighborhood Developers</p> <p>Greater Boston Legal Services</p> <p>Anti-Displacement Network</p> <p>Citywide allies (people and/or organizations): Help build support for the policy.</p> <p>External allies (City Life/Vida Urbana and statewide Anti-Displacement Network): Show up and support when needed.</p>
	<p>(4) DISCOVER: What opportunities and barriers exist? How viable is this change in your community?</p>	<p><u>Opportunities:</u></p> <p>Friendly councilors and city manager.</p> <p>Urgency and need: people will immediately engage.</p> <p><u>Barriers:</u></p> <p>Arriving, upwardly mobile, white folks moving into the neighborhood who won't be supportive.</p> <p>Developers trying to buy and rapidly renovate ("flip") buildings in the neighborhoods. In terms of time, we need to act fast.</p> <p>Legal and technical processes: What is possible and what is not? What do municipalities have the power to do and implement?</p>