

Build more housing near transit and within the urban core. Accelerate strategies to reduce vehicle reliance and ownership by growing alternative travel modes and reshaping the street to prioritize the needs of people over vehicles.

Connecting Outcomes to Goals

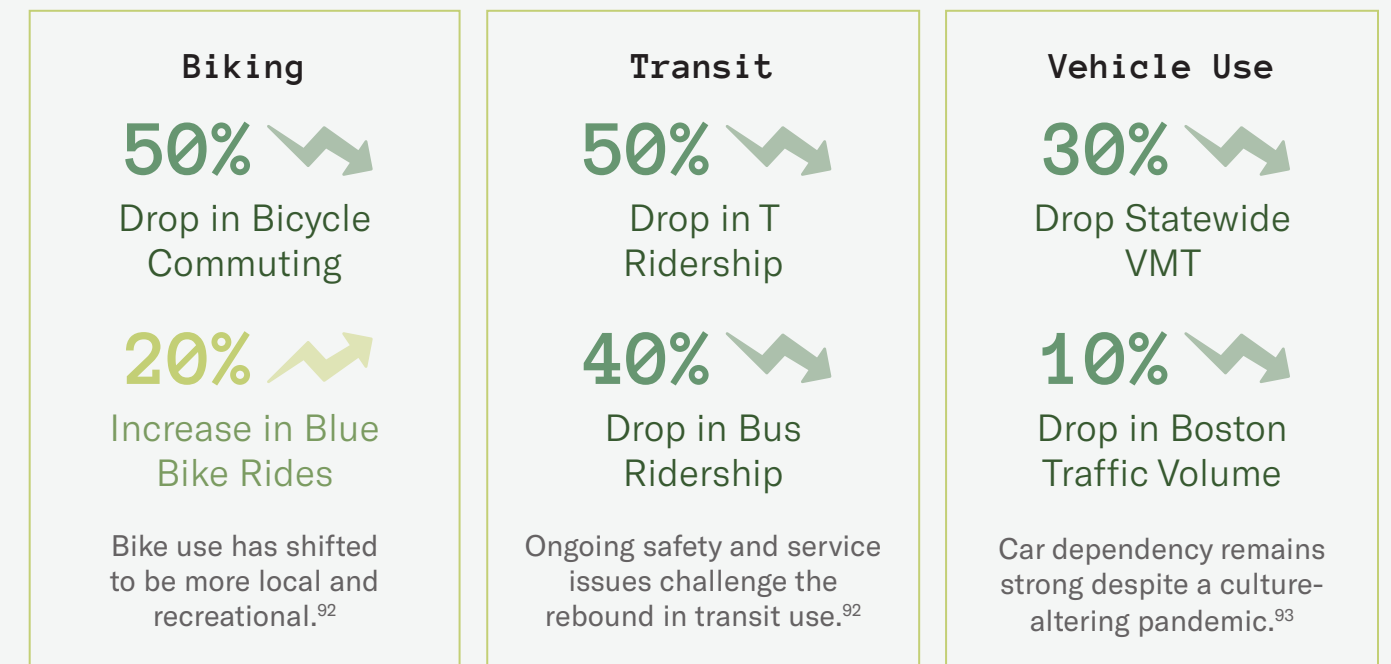
Net-Zero Emissions	Resilience	Increasing Social Equity
Urban lifestyles that are less dependent on personal vehicles have lower emissions and are more sustainable.	New construction can enhance resilience. Complete, people-focused streets help to make more connected and resilient communities.	Increased housing supports affordability and reduces displacement. Prioritizing moving people over cars improves access to mobility for those without cars.

Progress Assessment

The metro Boston region is not producing enough housing, nor does it have a functioning transit system that can reliably support efforts to reduce vehicle reliance. Between 2016 and 2020, the pace of housing construction was half that targeted by the Metropolitan Mayor's Coalition—a partnership of 15 urban core communities, including Boston.¹⁵ Community opposition has made it difficult to build housing outside the core despite many of these communities having access to the commuter rail system. This failure to provide housing for people in places they want to live is a primary driver of inflated housing costs and often pushes people further away from walkable, bike-able, or transit accessible areas.

Simultaneously, the state's historical under-investment in and inadequate management of the Greater Boston region's public transportation system undermines confidence in the system's ability to contribute to meaningful emissions reductions. Despite little progress in discouraging driving and providing adequate public transit, the region has seen applaudable but gradual progress in promoting "complete streets" and alternative mobility.⁶⁵ Notably, the deployment of rapid bus lanes has improved transit service, while several fare-free routes have resulted in increased ridership and

Figure 9. **The shift to work from home has markedly changed commuting patterns.**



Source: MassDOT Mobility Dashboard and Bluebikes system data.

lower transit burdens. The city is developing an e-bike incentive program, which, coupled with efforts to safely support riders, could potentially lead to a revolution in how people travel.

Equity Implications & Indicators

Develop Localized Indicators: Growing the housing stock to reduce vehicle reliance is likely to be the most impactful locally focused strategy for fighting climate change and increasing social equity. The annual Greater Boston Housing Report Card provides a rich set of indicators for evaluating progress on this front.

Mobility needs will vary by neighborhood, and measuring progress on meeting these needs calls for numerous location-specific indicators spanning transit access, vehicle reliance, and alternative mobility infrastructure, among others.

Big Lifts

Build More Housing and Address the Region's Transportation Crisis: This big lift goes far beyond the scope of this report, but cannot go without mention. Fundamentally, the pace of housing construction is too slow to fight climate change, and there is no concerted effort to evolve the region toward meaningfully reducing its reliance on private cars. The lack of progress in these overlapping areas is a lost opportunity to reduce emissions. This report acknowledges the importance of these actions, notes that the inability to do them is a systemic failure, but struggles to offer any recommendation beyond those made before and not acted on.

Prioritize Reparative Planning for Boston's Frontline Neighborhoods: In the absence of regional action on transit, the opportunity remains to reduce reliance on personal vehicles by improving neighborhood planning for complete and improving bus routes serving these neighborhoods.