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Cape Post-2000 Housing Growth Leads Mainland Counties Only Islands Top Cape Housing Pace

Cape housing growth between 2000 and 2005 led all 12 Massachusetts mainland counties and trailed only its two island neighbors, per Cape Cod Commission staff analysis of new U.S. Census Bureau annual estimates for 2005, issued August 21, 2006.

The number of housing units in Barnstable County (Cape Cod) increased by an estimated 6,715 from the U.S. Census count of 147,083 in April 2000 to reach 153,798 in 2005.

The Cape's estimated housing growth rate of 4.6% in five years led the state's 12 mainland counties, topped only by Nantucket County's 11.8% growth (up 1,086 from 9,210 in 2000 to an estimated 10,296 in 2005) and Dukes County's 7.1%, where homes on Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands increased by an estimated 1,060 from 14,836 in 2000 to 15,896 in 2005. The Cape's estimated 4.6% housing growth was nearly double the Statewide 2.5% housing growth rate from the addition of 66,025 new units, reaching an estimated State total of 2,688,014 in 2005.

The Cape's estimated gain of 6,715 units in five years ranked fifth among all 14 Massachusetts counties, following Worcester County's addition of an estimated 13,174 units, Middlesex County's 9,552, Plymouth County's 7,692 and Essex County's 7,054.

Barnstable County also ranked fifth with an annual housing growth rate of 0.8% in 2005, the most recent year estimated, following Nantucket's 2.5%, Dukes County's 1.4%, Worcester County's 1% and Plymouth County's 0.9%. The Statewide 2005 housing growth rate was 0.6%.

Estimated annual housing growth in Barnstable County increased to 1,215 units in 2005, up from 974 in 2004 and 1,138 in 2003.

Cape 2005 Housing Density Growth 3rd after Nantucket, Suffolk

Distributing another 6,715 housing units over the Cape's nearly 396 square miles of land area increased the number of housing units per square mile from 371.6 in 2000 to an estimated 388.9 in 2005. Statewide housing density increased from 334.5 in 2000 to 342.9 in 2005.

Cape housing density has exceeded the Statewide average since 1990, and the Cape's addition of 17 housing units per square mile in the past five years was double the estimated Statewide addition of 8.5 units per square mile over the same span.

The Cape's addition of 17 housing units per square mile between 2000 and 2005 was also third highest of the 14 Massachusetts counties, and ahead of its pace in the 1990s, when 30 units were added per square mile in the full decade. Urban Suffolk County led with an estimated gain of 24 units per square mile, followed by Nantucket's addition of an estimated 22.8 units per square mile, raising island density from 192.7 units per square mile in 2000 to an estimated 215.4 in 2005. Suffolk County housing reached an estimated density of 5,023 units per square mile in 2005.

Cape Housing Density Above State Average Since 1990

Cape housing density first exceeded the Statewide average of units per square mile in 1990. With the addition of 35,246 units over the decade, Cape housing totaled 135,192 units in 1990, up 35% from 99,946 in 1980, second only to Nantucket's 47% growth and nearly triple Statewide 12% housing growth. The decade's housing growth raised Cape housing density from 252.5 in 1980, below the Statewide average of 281.7, up to 341.6 units per square mile in 1990, above the Statewide average of 315.5.

Cape Housing Up 9% in 1990s; State Up 6%

In the most recent full decade, Cape housing increased by another 11,891 units from 135,192 in 1990 to 147,083 in 2000, up 9%, compared with Statewide housing growth of 6%, per U.S. Census counts. This amounted to another 30 units per square mile on the Cape, compared with an additional 19 Statewide.

Cape Leads State with Fivefold Housing Growth in 50 Years

In the 50 years from 1950 to 2000, Cape housing increased nearly fivefold (385%) to lead the 14 Massachusetts counties, from a U.S. Census count of 30,306 housing units in Barnstable County in 1950 to 147,083 in 2000.

In the 1950-60 decade, Cape housing growth led the state, ranking second in 1960-70 and 1980-90, third in 1970-80, and fourth in 1990-2000, before rising to an estimated third-place ranking between the 2000 U.S. Census count and the 2004 and 2005 Census Bureau estimates. Disregarding the exceptional growth rates of the two relatively small island housing totals, Cape housing growth led the State's 12 mainland counties in both the 1970s and 1980s, as well as in the estimated housing growth of the first half of this decade, from 2000 to 2005.
