

# Traffic and Housing: Related? A Cape Cod Case Study

by Lynne D. Sweet, LDS Consulting Group, LLC



Andrew Bossi, Wikimedia

**H**ousing Assistance Corporation of Cape Cod (HAC) hired LDS Consulting Group, LLC (LDS) to provide market research services to better understand the need for year-round rental housing in the fifteen towns that comprise the peninsula of Cape Cod, Massachusetts to assist HAC as part of their advocacy efforts for year-round rental housing on Cape Cod. One of the items LDS examined was commuting patterns on the Cape and below is an excerpt from the report.



## Commuting Patterns

Studying commuter patterns can show who is employed on Cape Cod but does not live there. The table below summarizes the traffic volume over both the Sagamore Bridge and the Bourne Bridge at peak commuting times on a Wednesday and Thursday in each of the four seasons comparing the most recent data with traffic counts from 2010 and 2011. In the morning from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. we counted traffic traveling southbound on to Cape Cod and in the evening from 3 pm to 6 pm, we counted traffic traveling Northbound off of Cape Cod. These two bridges are the only two ways on and off the peninsula by

automobile and therefore are the route taken by all commuters.

In 2021, between both bridges, there are an average of 5,093 automobiles traveling southbound during morning commuting hours and an average of 5,772 automobiles traveling northbound during the evening commute (MA Department of Transportation, 2021). An additional 5,000 rental housing units on Cape Cod would house those employees. Ten years ago, automobile traffic over the bridges during commute times was significantly less averaging 4,552 morning commuting cars and 5,196 automobiles commuting in the evening (MA Department of Transportation, 2021). In the past 10 years the number of those commuting to Cape Cod increased by approximately 2,125 cars or 41% more volume. While the number of automobile travelers is slightly higher in the Spring and Summer months when many people vacation on Cape Cod, there is still a significant amount of people traveling to the cape at peak commuting hours. The traffic data suggests that there are many employees of Cape

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**Cape Cod Commuter Traffic Counts (2010-2021)**

		Average # Commuters	10 year Change # Commuters
<b># Cars Bourne Bridge</b>	7-10 am Southbound 2010/2011	4,479	422
	7-10 am Southbound 2020/2021	4,902	
	3-6 pm Northbound 2010/2011	4,682	424
	3-6 pm Northbound 2020/2021	5,106	
<b># Cars Sagamore Bridge</b>	7-10 am Southbound 2010/2011	4,626	551
	7-10 am Southbound 2020/2021	5,177	
	3-6 pm Northbound 2010/2011	5,710	728
	3-6 pm Northbound 2020/2021	6,438	
<b>Total increase in average number of commuters</b>			<b>2,125</b>

Traffic and Housing *cont'd*

Cape Cod businesses that commute from off Cape Cod daily to work. Information gained from stakeholder interviews confirmed this claim when landlords mentioned that potential renters were moving to New Bedford and Fall River when they found no available rental options on Cape Cod.

LDS concluded that there is a pressing need for more rental housing on Cape Cod. Studying vehicular commuting patterns onto Cape Cod over ten years revealed that there is a large population of the workforce that cannot afford to live in the towns that they work in due to a lack of housing choice. In the past 10 years the number of those commuting to Cape Cod increased by an approximate average of 2,125 vehicles per day or 41%. Based on commuting patterns, the low annual turnover of existing units combined with a low volume of construction, this causing a housing deficit. Based on LDS estimates of waitlist and other factors, LDS estimated an unmet demand for rental housing of more than 3,900 units on Cape Cod.

— *Lynne D. Sweet is the founder and owner of LDS Consulting Group, LLC, based in Wellesley, MA. She has more than 35 years of experience working in the planning and development field, most recently as a consultant involved in many different types of engagements with municipalities throughout New England. Lynne is also a licensed real estate broker. She can be reached at [ldsweet@ldsconsultinggroup.com](mailto:ldsweet@ldsconsultinggroup.com).*



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