



CITY OF BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT  
KIM M. JANEY, MAYOR

## **The Housing Innovation Lab and Boston Society for Architecture Announce a Request for Ideas to Create New Housing Inspired by Boston's Triple-Deckers**

*An invitation to imagine the future of multifamily housing in Boston's neighborhoods.*

BOSTON - July 6, 2021 - The Housing Innovation Lab (iLab) and the Boston Society for Architecture (BSA) have released the "[Co-Creating Boston's Future-Decker](#)" Request for Ideas (RFI), inviting residents, advocates, designers, and all who are interested to share ideas for multifamily housing in Boston's neighborhoods. Interested participants are asked to imagine replicable housing models that can be built on sites throughout the city ranging from 3,000-8,000 square feet. The RFI marks the first phase of this year's Housing Innovation Competition and is a continuation of last year's [triple-decker community conversations](#), where residents and many others shared their stories and experiences with this familiar building type.

The "Co-Creating Boston's Future-Decker" Competition aims to address a key housing challenge: How can innovative models for housing address systemic racism in our housing landscape? By drawing inspiration from the triple- or three-decker, a once deeply affordable housing model and replicable building type originally built on small sites, participants are asked to imagine new ways of addressing Boston's current housing challenges.

The RFI can be downloaded at [boston.gov/future-deckers](https://boston.gov/future-deckers) and submissions are welcomed through July 30th, 2021. Later this year, the iLab and the BSA will showcase the ideas and invite responses and feedback on the shared submissions. The RFI responses will inform the second phase of the competition, which will include a request for innovative proposals for a yet-to-be-selected city-owned lot. A call for development teams will follow.

"This Future Decker RFI is truly an opportunity to test how we might co-create a shared, anti-racist vision for housing that centers the experiences and knowledge of many communities—including residents, designers, architects, and developers," said Taylor Cain, Director of Housing iLab. "We are looking forward to generating ideas that help lay a foundation for housing solutions that will meet the needs, both present and future, of Boston's neighborhoods."



Interested respondents for the RFI can submit ideas through two tracks:

- **Track I**, by responding to a short list of questions to share visions, ideas, and thoughts through a brief and low-touch manner, and
- **Track II**, by providing a longer and more in-depth response of up to 8 pages for which housing models could best suit the needs of residents.

Additionally, participants seeking to respond to the RFI through **Track II** will have the opportunity to access any of the resources listed below:

- **Technical Assistance:** The BSA can offer a small amount of funding for organizations and groups to participate with some support.
- **Connecting with Designers:** The BSA recently launched the [Community + Collaborative Design Initiative](#) to create partnerships with designers and groups throughout Boston.
- **Sketch Night Event:** The BSA and iLab will host several events throughout the RFI period, including a Sketch Night Pop-Up Event on July 19th from 6:00-7:30 PM at the recently built outdoor wifi zone at the Codman Square Branch of BPL. Here, participants will be able to meet one-on-one with artists and designers to talk through their RFI idea, while they sketch it out in real time. To learn more about the event, visit the following [link](#). All are welcome to join!

“By working with community members early on, we are also looking at ways in which the process of development can further be improved for housing at this scale. We hope that this can be part of the innovation in creating more housing opportunities for residents,” said Jennifer Efron, BSA Policy Director.

Visit [boston.gov/future-deckers](https://boston.gov/future-deckers) to learn more about this year’s Housing Innovation Competition.

### **About the Boston Society for Architecture**

The Boston Society for Architecture (BSA) brings leadership about the built environment to New England’s design profession and to communities throughout Greater Boston. The BSA keeps its 4,500 professional members working at the top of their fields while empowering children, communities, and municipalities to use design to create safe and healthy neighborhoods. Architecture can provide equitable solutions for housing, regional planning, and climate change. The BSA uses the expertise of architects, designers, and building professionals to make good design a part of life for everyone who lives, works, and plays in Boston. The organization helps architects thrive and communities flourish through design. The BSA believes that architecture is for everyone. For more information visit [architects.org](https://architects.org).

### **About the Housing Innovation Lab**

The Housing Innovation Lab was established in 2015 as a first of its kind effort to pilot and scale affordable housing innovations within municipal government. The iLab works with experts inside and outside of government to explore new ideas for making Boston’s housing more affordable. Taking a prototype driven approach to housing policy, the iLab maintains a diverse portfolio of projects, including [Additional Dwelling Units](#), [Housing with Public Assets](#), and the [Future Decker](#)

[initiative](#), to experiment with different ways of increasing housing opportunity and affordability. The iLab is embedded within the City's Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), which is the agency responsible for housing creation, preservation and policy and the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (MONUM), which is the City's innovation team.

For more information, visit: [Housing Innovation Lab](#).