

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT **2023-2024**

Dedicated monthly public HOC meetings and periodic forums to inform NF resident's awareness regarding housing needs.

Guest speakers: Zoning Enforcement Officer and Housing Trust.

Summer 2023: Draft Housing Affordability Plan (HAP) is developed based on 2023 survey and NF Housing data

Fall 2023: 35 day posting of HAP for public comment
Zoning Enforcement Officer as guest
Two public forums sharing draft HAP
Information meeting NF Housing Trust and Consultant

Winter 2023: Approval of extension of consultant's contract by newly elected administration
Setting Budget

Spring 2024: Presentation of draft HAP to BOS
Combined followup meeting of Planning/Zoning/BOS
Consultation with Zoning regarding specific strategies
Multiple presentations to Planning regarding POCD
HOC presentation at Commission on Aging Forum

Summer 2024: Revisions to draft HAP following consultation with Zoning/Planning/BOS
35 day posting of revised draft of HAP
Sip n Stroll public information
NF Housing Trust as guest, potential collaboration
July 4 Parade public information: Tin "Man"

Late Summer: Presentation of revised draft of HAP to BOS

Why are we developing a Town Affordability Plan?

- Required by State Statute 8-30j (adopted in 2017):
At least once every 5 years every municipality must prepare or amend & adopt an affordable housing plan
- GOAL “to undertake a proactive Planning process and lay out a strategy for meeting the housing needs of existing and future residents and workers” as required by Section 8-30j
- The plan must specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality
- Plan does not have to be limited to only housing that is affordable to residents earning under 80% Area Median Income (AMI)
- Can include strategies for providing housing options for people of all ages, mobility/accessibility needs, range of incomes
- Housing Plan = Guidance document, no regulatory authority

Frequently Asked Questions

- Will the town have to pay to create these affordable housing options out of the town budget?
No. The town can contribute if it wishes but most towns do not pay for the construction of new housing options that are affordable.
Many of the strategies in the housing plan will not require public funding.
- Will this housing plan change the small-town character of our town or threaten preserved open space?
No. Towns need both preserved open space and housing affordability. These are not in conflict.
- Most smaller towns have set a realistic goal of around 20 new affordable housing opportunities in 5 years.
Some of these can be in renovated buildings.
- Do current New Fairfield residents need affordable housing options?
- **New Fairfield has 1,405 households that earn below 80%AMI (qualify to live in “affordable housing”)**
- **485 households were spending more than 50% of their income on housing costs (= severely housing cost burdened)**
- **An additional 795 were spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.**

Resident Housing Needs Survey

- 48% anticipate that they, their children, or their parents will have to move out of New Fairfield to find the housing they need.
- 59% think the town needs options that allow older adults to “downsize”
- 45% think the town needs housing options that are affordable to entry level teachers and other workers who provide essential services.
- 38% think the town needs rental housing options for seniors.
- 35% think the town needs rental housing options young families and young adults can afford.

