

Northampton Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan

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Prepared by the Northampton Housing Partnership

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Karen Sunnarborg, Consultant; photos courtesy of Dietz & Company Architects, Inc. and Kraus-Fitch Architects, Inc.

Benefits

- **Serves as a local resource/reference on wide range of housing issues including characteristics, trends, market conditions, resources and priority needs**
- **Assists the City in making funding decisions including CPA and CDBG funds**
- **Assists the City in promoting affordable housing**
- **Provides information to non-residents, including developers, on housing needs in Northampton**

Benefits

- **Assists City and developers in obtaining grant and loan funds for affordable housing**
- **Proposes actions that the City can take to meet the range of local housing needs**
- **Establishes accountability for proposed actions by indicating the entities that are responsible for implementation**
- **Provides information on the implementation of each strategy**
- **Helps increase the City's Commonwealth Capital score**

Guiding Principle



“Support a wide variety of housing types that increase rental and homeownership units to create and preserve a range of affordability and choice in housing options.”

**Sustainable Northampton
Comprehensive Plan**

What is Affordable Housing?

Subsidized affordable housing/ Chapter 40B definition:

- **Deed restricted**
- **Affirmatively marketed**
- **Available to households earning at or below 80% of area median income with housing costs of no more than 30% of income**

Community housing: Affordable to households earning at or below 100% of area median income

Workforce housing: Affordable to households earning between 80% and 120% of area median income

What housing is affordable in Northampton?

- **Of the 12,282 year-round housing units, 1,452 units or 11.8% are currently included in the state's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Also, 93 units are eligible for inclusion, bringing the percentage to 12.7% (10.9% without Hathaway Farms).**
- **Planned development should push Northampton beyond 12%, but expiring affordability restrictions threaten to eliminate some units from SHI in the future.**
- **The number of affordable units needed will increase over time based on housing growth, projected to be almost 13,000 for the next census.**

Demographic Trends

- **Population stability with small recent declines in population and slow future growth**
- **Increasing number of households -- substantial increase in smaller families, more non-family households and more single-person households**
- **Aging population**
- **Fewer children**
- **Somewhat lower incomes on average in comparison to the county and state**

Housing Trends

- **Slow but steady growth**
- **Decrease in number of persons per unit**
- **About half rental housing but limited growth in rental units**
- **High housing prices despite poor market conditions**



Priority Housing Needs

- **Homelessness prevention**
- **Shelter system/
Housing First
model**
- **Producing and
preserving
affordable housing**



Producing and Preserving Affordable Housing -- Needs

- 1. Rental housing for individuals**
- 2. Rental housing for families**
- 3. Preservation of existing affordable rental stock**
- 4. Housing rehabilitation**
- 5. Affordable homeownership for families**
- 6. Housing for at-risk and special needs populations**
- 7. Nontraditional models that meet local needs (such as artist live-work space and workforce housing)**

Housing Goals



- 1. Create new housing along range of income levels – ownership & rentals**
- 2. Preserve and sustain existing affordable housing**
- 3. Work to end homelessness**

Goal #1: Organizational Strategies



- **Conduct community education**
- **Capitalize the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**
- **Monitor/report on implementation of this Plan**
- **Formalize the affordable housing review process**

Goal #1: Regulatory Strategies

- **Adopt inclusionary zoning**
- **Ease restrictions on development near city and village centers**
- **Promote mixed-use development in more locations**
- **Revise cluster zoning provisions**
- **Modify accessory apartment requirements**

Goal #1: Regulatory Strategies

- **Rewrite TDR ordinance**
- **Revise parking requirements**
- **Explore form-based zoning**
- **Establish a new mixed-use innovations zone**



Goal #1: New Housing Production Strategies



- **Continue to pursue nontraditional housing models**
- **Fund small infill development**
- **Establish a subsidy guarantee program**
- **Make suitable public property available**
- **Provide down payment and closing cost asst.**

Goal #2: Promote the Aff/Sustainability of Existing Housing

- **Monitor and maintain SHI units**
- **Convert existing housing to affordability**
- **Rehabilitate the Grove Street Inn**
- **Promote sustainable energy conservation**



Goal #2: Help Preserve Affordable Market Units



- **Sustain and expand housing rehab programs**
- **Sustain and improve existing SRO units**
- **Create a climate of public support for landlords**

Goal #3: Continue Active Support for Efforts to End Homelessness

- **Continue to facilitate/support the Three-County Continuum of Care**
- **Continue to participate in WMNEH**
- **Support homelessness prevention programs**
- **Support Housing First efforts**
- **Work on economic development and poverty issues**

Next Steps

- **Conduct public meeting to present draft and obtain feedback**
- **Adoption of Plan by Northampton Housing Partnership**
- **Obtain endorsements/ approval from the Mayor, Planning Board and City Council**
- **May submit Plan to the state at some point under Housing Production requirements**

For more information, visit the City's web site at
<http://www.Northamptonma.gov\CEDO>

