

Housing Plan Strategies

prepared by Janell Mullen, June 2021

Adaptive Reuse/"Infill"

Adaptive reuse: the renovation and reuse of a pre-existing structure for new purposes

Examples of buildings that could be converted into housing:

Senior Center (107 Main Street)
Firehouse
(Offices)

Advantages:

Historic Preservation (and open space)
Better use for underused, abandoned, or otherwise obsolete buildings
Existing infrastructure
Revitalization encourages investments & boosts property values
Faster municipal approvals and permitting

Further Reading:
[Planning Toolbox: Adaptive Reuse](#)



Example: [WinnDevelopment](#) in East Haven CT is currently converting a school into 70 mixed income apartments for seniors.

Local example met with opposition: [Bantam School in Litchfield](#) (2018)

CT Example: [Milford Firehouse](#)

Challenges:

Possible zoning barriers (eg change of use to multifamily)
Complying with building codes in historic buildings
Costly to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation in historic buildings
Costly to abate or remediate old building materials

Housing Development on Town-owned properties

Public/Private Partnership: Property could remain in town ownership, developer could lease land from town, invest in infrastructure, and develop land for affordable housing

Examples:

DPW Garage (100 Railroad Street)
27 Page Road
28 Facchin Street

Advantages:

Town retains ownership of land; developer isn't burdened by up-front land costs
Town could incentivize developer with mixed-use opportunity or government use component

Challenges:

Possible zoning barriers for denser housing
Health code approvals & cost of infrastructure for denser housing
Adequate developer incentive to outweigh the cost of construction

Further Reading: [Local Housing Solutions](#)

[Public Benefit from Publicly Owned Parcels](#)

Opportunities on private property

FREE CUT FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

How: Allow a "free cut" for a property owner should they cut off excess land from their lot to be donated to Town or a non-profit to be developed for affordable housing.

Advantages:

Smaller lot; Lower taxes
Circumvent subdivision regulations (which are burdensome, costly to comply, and time consuming)
Method for creating small available buildable lots

Challenges:

Incentivizing property owner

Examples: Salisbury and Cornwall have provisions in their regulation that allows for this exemption from the subdivision regulations when a lot is created for affordable housing.

INCENTIVIZE EFFICIENCY UNITS/AFFORDABLE RENTALS

How: Property tax cut to property owners that rent an accessory apartment or their rental property to a tenant long-term (1 year term minimum) and at an affordable cost

Advantages:

More long-term rental options in Town
More transparency when it comes to finding rental options
More mixed use properties (apartments above businesses)

Challenges:

These rentals will not qualify for the State List of Affordable Housing Appeals

Opportunities on private property

COOPERATIVE HOUSING (CO-HOUSING): Property is owned by a private individual/organization, and then sold as "shares" to its residents. Amenities and maintenance costs are shared. Co-op rules might be able to ensure affordability.

Example: Music Mountain

Advantages: Vacant or underutilized property can incorporate housing as an additional use

Organizations may be able to become more economically viable by offering a housing option

Challenges:

Zoning barriers to "Cluster Housing"
Upfront costs of developing housing



Examples: [Rocky Corner Cohousing](#) in Bethany, CT includes market and affordable units (30 total) on old dairy farm property.

[Living Year-Round in A Summer Bungalow](#)

Other programs (eg: maintenance)

Maintenance Program: Develop affordable loan program to assist homeowners with upkeep and upgrades

Local bank can establish a revolving fund (eg Iron Bank/Norfolk)

Advantages:

This may help assist seniors living on a fixed income with maintenance costs so that they are able to "age in place".

Homes may become more energy efficient with upgrades, which may induce further long-term savings.
Neighborhood revitalization

Examples: [Habitat for Humanity Home Preservation](#)

[Housing Rehab Program: Town of Mansfield](#)

Down-Payment Assistance

Program: Develop program to assist first-time homebuyers with an interest free loan for a downpayment on a home

Local bank can establish a revolving fund

Advantages:

Current renters and future residents may be able to purchase a home in the community

Challenges:

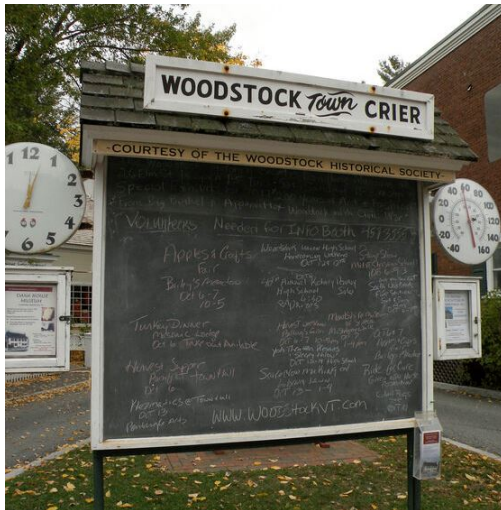
The Town will need to designate who oversees this fund & an application process for disbursement of funds-existing Housing Trust? BOS?

Communication Strategies

Town Message Board: To be located near Town Hall, can include announcements about housing

Advantages:

This "analog" approach is cost-friendly, accessible to all passer-bys. Community cohesiveness. No need for internet.



Examples: [Town of Woodstock Town Crier](#)

Town Hall List Serv: To build off of past initiatives to better reach Town citizens

Advantages:

Can serve as a bonafide Town resource of regularly issued information
Can serve a broad purpose than just the FVAHP Task Team

Challenges:

Point person to develop materials for disbursement and to maintain email list

Next Topic . . . Zoning Reform

Housing Goals?

Bearing in mind the housing needs assessment and the housing goals of the Plan of Conservation and Development, what are our housing goals and how do we achieve them?

Strategies laid out in the **Plan of Conservation and Development (2013)** to address housing include:

- Form a local housing group of volunteers to proactively seek ways of meeting the housing needs of residents: rental and homeownership.
- Revise zoning regulations to allow for the conversion of larger homes into two-or-three family homes.
- Consider adopting an Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) to allow zoning flexibility to create well designed affordable and market rate housing.
- Continue to allow for two-family housing to provide for housing choice.
- Consider zoning regulation revisions that would allow multifamily housing in the Village Center.
- Promote accessory apartments by holding an outreach session at least once a year in Falls Village on how to create them. Continue to modify regulations as needed to encourage accessory apartments.

Zoning Assessment

What are our current parameters when it comes to planning for housing?

Current **Town of Canaan (Falls Village) Zoning Regulations** addressing housing:

Within Article 1 (Purpose): Encouraging the development of housing opportunities, **including opportunities for multi-family dwellings**, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, which will promote housing choice and **economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households**, and encouraging the development of housing which will meet identified housing needs;

Two Family Dwelling (duplex):

- Allowed with Zoning Permit in Village Residential zoning district.
- Allowed with Special Permit in Residential/Agricultural Zone.
- Not permitted in Mountain/Residential Zone.

Multiple single-family dwellings on a lot:

- No more than four (4) units
- Served by single driveway
- Subdivision is possible in the future
- Permanent provision for the protection of open space is included in the development

Zoning Assessment

What are our current parameters when it comes to planning for housing?

Current **Town of Canaan (Falls Village) Zoning Regulations** addressing housing:

Accessory Apartments:

- Allowed in single family dwelling with Special Permit approval.
- Owner occupation required.
- Assessor estimates about 15 currently. Some are used as short-term rentals.

Incentive Housing Overlay Zone (IHZ):

- Requires 100% affordable units for a period of 30 years.
- Proposed multifamily developments are subject to site plan approval within this overlay zone.
- No more than 4 single-family units per acre; no more than 6 duplex/townhouse style.