

Cornwall Affordable Housing Steering Committee

Prepared by Janell Mullen on behalf of the Cornwall Affordable Housing Working Group, July 2021

VALUES STATEMENT:

We want a diversity of housing types in Cornwall to meet the needs of a diverse population. A rich diversity of housing types is key to community vitality, economic mobility, and economic growth.

Housing Plan

GOALS:

**Gray language was drafted. Blue language suggested by planning consultant.*

We want our children to be able to live in Cornwall.

We want diversity in housing types to meet the diverse needs of our community.

We want our seniors to be able to downsize or age in place.

We want the aging population to be able to downsize or age in place.

We don't want our neighbors in Cornwall to be "housing cost-burdened".

We don't want existing or future Cornwall residents/workers to be housing-cost burdened.

Affordable Housing Plan Goals

*How do we measure if
we have met the housing
plan goals?*

Do we have a # of unit goal for:

creation of new affordable housing?

creation of new rentals?

conversion of housing into more units?

rental vs homeownership?

creation of new accessory apartments?

Plan of Conservation & Development Housing Goals

*How do we measure if
we have met the housing
plan goals?*

The Cornwall Town Plan of Conservation & Development housing subcommittee outlined the following **housing goals**:

- Increase the number of affordable housing units by at least 25 over the next 10 years
- Increase the number of attainable rental housing units
- Consider zoning and permitting changes that would make building homes more affordable
- Increase first-time homebuyer options
- Make the housing stock more energy efficient and accessible

Plan of Conservation & Development Housing Strategies:

What do we adapt/expand upon for our own housing plan?

The Cornwall Town Plan of Conservation & Development housing subcommittee outlined the following housing strategies:

- Encourage the private giving of land and funding to Cornwall Housing Corporation
- **Change regulations for a "free second cut"**
- Allow multifamily housing
- Allow conversion of existing homes to multiple units
- Increase flexibility of accessory apartment regulations, eg in regard to size
- ***NOTE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**
- Consider decreasing minimum lot size in certain locations
- Increase the possibility for smaller homes by considering more flexible buildable areas
- Adopt a more flexible zoning tool so P&Z can consider housing other than single family dwellings eg co-housing
- **Updates regulations so ADA adaptations are hassle free**
- Create community revolving loan fund, aka housing trust

Zoning Assessment:

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

Current **Town of Cornwall Zoning Regulations** involving housing:

Multi-family development:

- Town or non-profit sponsored permitted by Special Permit in any zone. There are limitations to density per zoning regulations and also limitations due to septic/well capacity.
- Buildings older than 15 years may be converted into "apartment use" by Special Permit. No more than four (4) units total and it must be owner occupied.

"Elderly" housing:

- Can be established through the Special Permit process in the Cornwall Plains Zone

Accessory Dwelling Units:

- Allowed in business building and allowed in residential zones with site plan for attached units and with Special Permit approval for detached. Owner occupation required.

Notable legislative updates pertinent to [land-use reform & housing](#):

Accessory Dwelling Units:

- At least one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) shall be allowed as of right on each lot that contains a single family dwelling
- The ADU may be attached or detached
- Maximum floor area may be no less than 30% of the net floor area of the principal building or at least 1,000 square feet, whichever is less, except that such regulations may allow for a larger net floor area for ADUs
- Only one parking space shall be required for an accessory apartment

Multi-family developments:

- Multi-unit housing cannot result in higher fees than other residential dwellings
- Must be allowed within the municipality per SB 6107

Use of the term "Character":

- Use of the term "rural character" shall be replaced with physical site characteristics to ensure that regulations are not used against people, but used for better delineation of the physical nature of places

Legislative Update

The 2021 state legislative session convened in January and ended on June 9, 2021.