

# Cornwall Housing Strategies

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



# *Housing Plan*

## **GOALS:**

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

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

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

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.

# Plan of Conservation & Development Housing Strategies:

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

### **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.