



WORKFORCE HOUSING TOOLKIT

THE UPPER VALLEY HOUSING COALITION is a partnership of business, community, municipal and nonprofit groups. Our mission is to promote balanced communities that provide an adequate supply of housing for the region's workforce. The concept of workforce housing includes:

- affordable housing,
- market-rate housing,
- mixed-income housing.

The Coalition believes the availability of diverse housing choices is critical to the greater Upper Valley region's economic vitality, and it is through further implementation of some of the following municipally-sponsored opportunities that we can responsibly increase the supply of workforce housing.

1. Accessory Apartments (also known as in-law apartments or Granny Flats)- Small dwelling units added to or constructed within an existing single family house. This option increases the supply of housing within the footprint of an existing structure, provides income for the homeowner, and offers less expensive housing for the renter, as well as security and companionship (in the case of elderly residents).

2. Conservation/Open Space Development- A land development technique which allows buildings to be grouped more closely together, disturbing a smaller portion of the site than conventional development to preserve open space. Grouping buildings can decrease the cost infrastructure construction, long-term maintenance costs, and hopefully reduce the per-unit cost.

3. Planned Unit Development (PUD)- A comprehensively planned land development project which permits flexibility in the siting of buildings, allows a mixture of housing types and sometimes other land uses, provides useable open space, and preserves significant natural features. It is similar to open space development, but also allows mixed-use development that, with sufficient density, can help create a community within a community.

4. Master Plan Statements of Values- The community's visions and values on how it wants to grow are described in its Master Plan. This is a policy document that supports and validates a community's land use regulations and controls. When appropriate, a Master Plan should reference the growth and design concepts that encourage varied housing opportunities such as Minimum Impact Design, New Urbanism, and Smart Growth. Development priorities would speak to the need to:

- Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Places with a Strong Sense of Place
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Mix Land Uses
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design



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5. Infill Construction- Development that makes use of vacant or underutilized land and buildings in downtown or suburban areas. Infill developments provide more affordable housing opportunities for smaller households (i.e. singles, the elderly and empty nesters), discourages sprawl, makes use of existing infrastructure, encourages community revitalization, and makes residents less auto-dependant.

6. Mixed-Use Development- Through land use ordinances and regulations that allow mixed-use development, higher densities are allowed and thereby permit more diverse residential opportunities. Intensifying the use of a location, allowing second floor housing above retail space for example, often will create a demand for and improve the efficiency of services such as public transit.

7. Inclusionary Zoning- In exchange for development approval, developers must include affordable homes when they build a particular number of market-rate homes. Some communities allow building the units off-site or a contribution to a housing fund in an equivalent amount of money.

8. Density Bonus- Developers who commit to allotting a certain percentage of units at below market rates may be allowed to reduce lot sizes or increase the number of houses on a lot, thereby reducing land cost per unit. Density bonuses may be used in conjunction with open space development or planned unit development where the community desires to preserve open space and have lower municipal costs (street, water, sewer). Municipalities can also offer density bonuses in a trade with developers who agree to provide additional community benefits, such as nature trails, a conservation easements, additional public transportation stops, or public access to waterways.

9. Lot Size Reductions- Where the infrastructure (water and sewer) allows, reducing the lot size is a solution to lessen the cost of building housing, with savings that can be passed along to buyers. Relaxing of regulations regarding frontage or lot width requirements, allowable lot coverage, side and rear setback, and the height of structures promote smaller, more affordable lots.

10. Donation of Municipally Owned Land- This can be linked with the recipient providing lower cost and affordable housing. Towns with land or property received through tax liens can donate them to affordable housing developers who will rehabilitate them into permanently affordable housing.

11. Housing Trust Fund- A trust fund earmarked for a community's housing needs can be made up of developers, contributions, repayments of CDBG loans, sale of municipal owned property, higher building permit fees, town and city capital budget appropriations, inclusionary zoning payments made in lieu of providing on-site units, and annual repayments of loans made by the housing trust fund. The money in turn can be used for building or rehab, subsidizing low and moderate-income families, mortgages, and helping finance construction of new housing.

12. Limiting Condominium Conversion- Conversions to condominiums usually increases the cost of housing and often displaces residents. An ordinance that requires a certain percentage of units remain in the rental market can have the purpose of preventing large reductions in a town's available rental stock. Turnover of affordable units can be prevented through deed restrictions.



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13. Linkage- A municipality requires the provision of affordable housing in return for a permit to build certain types of development. The concept is that there is a link between the construction of offices and/or industrial facilities and the need to accommodate workers.

14. Manufactured Housing Subdivision- With improved construction quality in recent decades, manufactured housing provides a viable option for people seeking affordable homeownership opportunities. Towns can develop design standards for manufactured housing to ensure quality design and siting.

15. Parking Space Allotment- Reducing the requirements for parking spaces per unit reduces overall costs. Reductions result in more efficient use of land, more units per site, and more open space. This is particularly effective in multi-family housing when related to the number of bedrooms (i.e. 1.25 spaces for efficiencies, 1.35 for one-bedrooms, 1.5 for 2 bedrooms, etc...).

16. Streamlining of Permit/Review Process- The costs of development can be decreased when governments (state and local) can better articulate the ground rules for development, strive to decrease the number of months for approvals, and can consolidate permits.

17. Street Right-of-Way and Pavement Width Reduction- The purpose is to reduce development costs. This may include options such as reducing a sidewalk requirement from two sides of the street to one and reducing the thickness of pavement.

18. Encourage Non-Traditional Housing Developers- Nonprofit organizations, communities, and neighborhood associations are increasingly involved in the rehabilitation and upgrading of older or substandard housing for affordable housing. This private sector solution can be encouraged by reducing regulatory requirements, streamlining the approval process, and waiving permit fees. Municipalities can inform these parties of federal and state subsidized housing and financial programs to serve their work.

19. Infrastructure Investment- Expansion of water and sewer service areas and/or allowing community water or septic systems in appropriate areas provides alternatives for developers whose cost rise dramatically with the need for wells and private septic systems.

Sources:

Affordable Housing in the Seacoast: Needs and Options for Action by Susan Werner Thoresen. For the United Way of the Greater Seacoast, January, 1987.

Rockingham Planning Commission Housing Policies, revised 9/2001: (603) 778-0885

Strafford Regional Planning Commission: (603) 742-2523

Congress for the New Urbanism: www.cnu.org

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