

Housing Audit: Newbury, NH



Audit Process

Policy and Regulatory Audit - Housing

- Review of existing plan and regulations:
 - Newbury Master Plan,
 - Zoning Ordinance,
 - Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations

Identified the disconnects between the ***Housing*** vision and policy related language in the Master Plan and the three existing land use regulations.

Envision Newbury 2027

Three major implementation actions were identified to continue this work:

- ✓ The Town should **initiate an outreach and education campaign** related to the new workforce housing provision.
- ✓ **Conduct a housing needs assessment of the community** to identify additional unmet housing needs.
- **Review and amend the zoning regulations** to encourage development of a variety of housing types beyond single family residential units.

Regulatory Actions Identified

Zoning Ordinance – *Town Meeting*

Near Term Changes:

- Duplex: There is no definition of a Duplex in any Newbury Land Use Regulation. This two-unit form of housing should be defined.
- Cluster Definition: The definition only allows for residential uses currently. Consider revising this definition to allow mixed-use developments to make use of this regulation if they are within or adjacent to future Business or Village Zoning Districts.
- Accessory Apartments: Could the number of bedrooms permitted be increased to three? Could the maximum square footage be increased?

Zoning Ordinance – *Town Meeting*

Longer Term Changes:

- Duplexes: could be allowed by right in the community. If so, could duplexes be permitted on a smaller lot size in the Residential District? Maybe 3 acres?
- Multi-Family Structures: Allow a smaller lot size calculation for multi-family structures that will provide workforce housing units. This approach may be best accomplished with an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.
- Lot Size and Density Requirements: Zoning areas of Newbury for higher density development should be a priority. South Newbury, Newbury Town Center, and the Commercial District area by the Traffic Circle are all candidates for mixed use development. The Commercial District may also be more conducive to larger multi-family structures.
- Cluster Development: This regulation should be reviewed and revised. Revisions should include a larger unit bonus for the inclusion of workforce housing units, a higher density than traditional subdivisions, and incentives for the mixing of multi-family, duplex, and single-family units (such as a waiver of the Site Plan Review requirement). There should also be a provision for allowing a mix of uses

Subdivision Regulations – *PB Hearing*

Near Term Changes

- The definitions in this document do not refer back to the Zoning Ordinance Definitions, but they do so in the Site Plan Regulations.
- Is there a way to waive the additional Site Plan requirements for new subdivisions if the multi-family units will primarily provide workforce housing units?

Site Plan Review Regulations – *PB Hearing*

Near Term Changes

- Multi-family structures with three or more units must comply with the requirements for a Major Site Plan Approval. Could this standard be changed to a requirement for Minor Site Plan Approval for multi-family units that include 3-5 units, and Major Site Plan for units with more than 5 units?

New Ideas from Away

Longer Term Changes

- **Lot Size Averaging:** This provision allows the lots in a subdivision to meet the minimum lot size requirement on average. This allows some lots to be smaller and more affordable if they are balanced by larger lots.
- **Form Based Code:** This regulatory approach emphasizes the location and size of new structures rather than the uses within. It also provides a clear and user friendly approach to communicating land use regulations.
- **Inclusionary Housing:** Some communities have also drafted and adopted a zoning provision that provides incentives for the construction of workforce housing units. The incentives usually include density bonuses, expedited permitting, or other benefits that help reduce development costs.