

SMALL TOWN HOUSING WORKING GROUP

Thursday, August 1, 2019

6:00 – 7:30 pm

JWO Transit Center, Greenfield

April 2019 Affordable Housing Roundtable

- Need for more affordable rentals and homeownership options through various methods - new production and rehabilitation of existing homes and buildings.
- The specific needs and opportunities vary by community and depend on the capacity of municipal staff/volunteers and infrastructure.
- **Need to address unique issues for smaller towns – potential next steps:**
 - FRCOG will convene a working group of affordable housing stakeholders from smaller towns (with limited staff and/or infrastructure capacity) to facilitate networking and developing shared strategies to address challenges
 - Address specific rural challenges – infrastructure, staff capacity, funding and economies of scale etc. - in the Rural Policy Plan

Rural Policy Plan – DRAFT Housing Issues

1. Investment in new and existing housing is a critical need in rural towns, where a mismatch exists between current housing stock and current needs
2. There is insufficient funding to fully address rehabilitation of the aging housing stock
3. Wages have not kept up with the cost of housing and transportation
4. High development costs, lack of infrastructure and local capacity, and the small scale of development, make rural housing production non-competitive for limited State and Federal funds

Rural Policy Plan – DRAFT Housing Recommendations

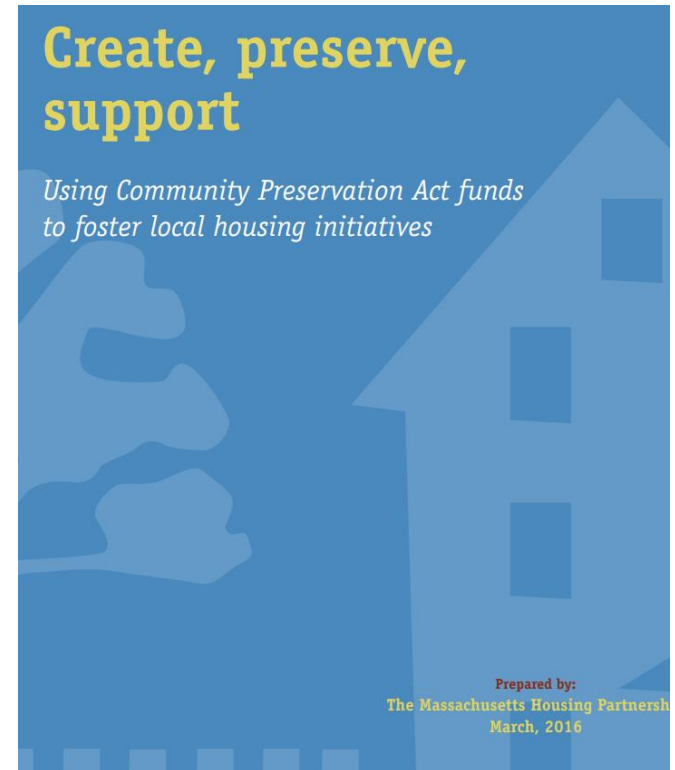
1. Support rehabilitation of underutilized, vacant, distressed, or deteriorated properties in rural areas.
2. Revise the Community Scale Housing Initiative (CSHI) so that it is more useable in small towns.
3. Facilitate and reward regional solutions to local challenges.
4. Build capacity in rural areas to develop and manage housing.
5. Support year-round homeownership in rural towns.
6. Create flexibility in State programs to meet the needs of rural communities.

Recent Housing Planning Efforts

- 2013 Sustainable Franklin County Plan
- 2014 Franklin County Regional Housing Study
- 2014 Greenfield Housing Study
- 2014 Deerfield Housing Production Plan
- 2015 Montague Housing Production Plan
- 2016 Sunderland Housing Production Plan
- 2016 Buckland Housing Plan
- 2017 Shelburne Housing Production Plan
- Conway Housing Needs Assessment (in process)

Strategies to Create Affordable Housing

- Purchase land for affordable housing
- Dispose of Town property for affordable housing
- Provide grants to developers of affordable housing
- Rental assistance programs
- Accessory Dwelling Unit / Single Family Conversion
- Affordable Homeownership Programs
 - Down-payment assistance
 - Buy-down programs
 - Purchase, rehab, and sell



Strategies to Build Local Capacity

- Adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA)
- Establish a Housing Committee
- Establish a municipal affordable housing trust
 - Can be capitalized with CPA funds
 - Can act as a funding entity, or more directly through acquisition and conveyance of property
 - Allows for more timely action when opportunities arise
- Collaborate with local and regional organizations
- Professional staff – shared housing coordinator / regional housing service office

