Addressing The Region’s Housing Needs – A Recap
SNHPC Age-Friendly Housing Forum

• Topics
  • State Policy Update
  • Regional Viewpoint
  • Age-Friendly Subdivisions
  • Funding Opportunities
  • Innovations in Housing
  • NH DES Perspective
  • Developer’s View on Diversity
  • AARP’s Livable Communities
SNHPC Age-Friendly Housing Forum

- Presenters had five (yes, five!) minutes to present on their topics
- Each presenter provided a group topic discussion
- Audience groups discussed each question and developed recommendations, answers, and more questions to each question
- Presenters shared each group’s findings
Presenters and Topic Leaders
Sarah Jacobs – Director in the Center for Ethics in Business and Governance at Saint Anselm College (CEBG)

**Topic:** Housing We Need Initiative
- CEBG Initiative to find innovative solutions for the crisis in NH
- The Initiative conducts:
  - Community Surveys
  - Community Roundtables
  - Stakeholder Events
  - Land Use Research
Question: How do you encourage a variety of housing development in our community?

- Understand community fears
  - Where do the fears stem from – what are the fears rooted in
  - Who can best describe the fears
- Need for community champions who are objective and have nothing to gain, the YIMBY or yes in my back yard
- Having a housing commission for each town – advisory only but a safe place for people to talk about housing
- Try for the next step, i.e if attached ADUs are allowed, try detached ADUs
- Identify the messenger for projects, need for the right voice
**George Reagan** – Community Engagement Manager, NHHFA

**Topic:** Overview of New Hampshire’s Housing Market

![Image of George Reagan](image-url)

![Map of New Hampshire with median gross rental cost for 2-bedroom units](map-url)
**Question:** If your Master Plan calls for housing diversity, what is stopping it from being built?

- Ask – are your local regulations reflecting the ‘wants’ of your Master Plan?
- What is causing the shortage of housing? Who is the shortage serving?
- Local leaders needing to be engaged in the housing discussion, to advocate for housing diversity.
  - Some of the discussion should include inclusionary zoning
  - Each community is different but each can consider visualizing what would fit in their community
- Turning Master Plan recommendations into reality
**Cam Prolman** – Regional Planner, SNHPC

**Topic:** Chester Age-Friendly Subdivisions

- Working with a community from an input session to a voter-approved Age-Friendly Subdivision
**Question:** How can communities retain their rural character while diversifying their housing stock?

- Need to identify areas in their community where they can increase density, decreasing the minimum lot size requirements.
- Communities need to define what their character is, and identify what housing types will fit in that definition.
- Need to plan on a neighborhood level.
- Communities should embrace detached ADUs as a way to build more housing.
**Topic:** Municipal Technical Assistance Grant (MTAG)

- For communities who wish to expand options for places to live, but find that their zoning may be a barrier
- Grants between $5,000 and $20,000
Question: How do you or will you know if your community is ready for more choices in places to live?

- Identify public needs through conversation- surveys only get so deep into identifying needs and their root cause
- Ask people what did your town look like 5 years ago, what will it look like in 10 more years?
James Vayo – Project Manager, SNHPC

**Topic:** Innovations in Housing

- Examples of housing types including
  - Missing Middle Housing
  - Pre-Approved Building Plans
  - Co-Housing
  - And more
**Question:** Which housing innovations stand to have the greatest benefit to society?

- How are previous innovations in housing, such as 55+ subdivisions, impacting society today?
  - Loss of community connection, rural lifestyles make community difficult.
- What are the preferences of seniors? In selecting housing, some prefer 55+ other do not.
- How do taxes impact housing types? Acknowledgement that school funding systems play major role in self selection and preferences of households.
- Offering social and health services with dense living.
Robert Tardif – Administrator, Subsurface Systems Bureau, NH DES

**Topic:** Subsurface Systems Bureau Lot Sizing Requirements
- Reviewed DES Requirements
  - How these requirements are used at the local level
  - Many communities require larger lot sizes than DES requirements
Question: How does your town determine minimum lot sizes and why?

- Minimum lot size requirements at the state level are much smaller than at the local level
- Municipal boards are potentially not aware of the state’s lot size requirements and instead carry over requirements that have been in place for decades
  - NHDES should increase awareness of state regulations by increasing outreach and education to municipal boards
- Why are minimum lot sizes at the local level much larger than state level requirements?
  - Potentially a growth control tactic
  - Lack of awareness
  - Attempt to keep a town’s rural character
**Kir Harris** – Vice President of Development, Elm Grove Companies

**Topic:** Importance of Density

- Important to hold conversations about increasing units on a given parcel
- Increasing density is essential to reducing costs
Question: Would you support diverse and dense housing development in your town? How about the town next door?

- Hard to have higher density without sewer/water
- Understand the demographics of smaller units – not just new graduates
- Multifamily as a way to revitalize downtown cores
- Acknowledge that even with increasing density allowance, there can be problems with financing
Todd Fahey – State Director, AARP New Hampshire

**Topic:** AARP’s Liveable Communities

- Transportation
- Housing
- Social participation
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Community support and health services
- Communication and information
- Civic participation and employment
- Respect and social inclusion

**Becoming Age-Friendly**

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
Question: How does housing (or lack thereof) impact the other domains of livability?

- Housing has the potential to create connections with people with their work – historical mill example, why not duplicate this again, creating opportunities between home builders and companies needing workers.
- House vs home and creating homes that are multi-generational – built in childcare, social engagement.
- When kids move out so do parents – often parents who have contributed to the community for decades, with these pillars of the community gone – it leaves a large gap.
- Need for creating more tools for homeowners aside from ADU.
Help us continue the conversation. Please share with your communities and anyone who should be a part of this conversation.