

# POSSIBLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGIES



## Overview

---

The Housing Needs Study Committee is preparing an affordable housing plan for Newington. This booklet presents possible strategies for review and discussion. The strategies are derived from prior booklets and working meetings with the Committee members, Staff, and a consultant.

## What Are The Basic Strategies?

---

Discussions among the members of the Housing Needs Study Committee suggested the following major strategies for future housing development in Newington:

- 1. Encourage Housing That Meets Overall Development Goals**  
While Newington is mostly developed and has established residential neighborhoods, there are several opportunity areas identified in the 2020-2030 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) where Newington intends to encourage and promote new development and redevelopment that includes housing.
- 2. Maintain Housing And Regulations That Address Housing Needs**  
Newington has, and wants to maintain:
  - A diverse housing stock with a variety of housing choices at price levels which are “naturally affordable”, and
  - Regulations which enable this diversity of housing choices and options and enable the creation of additional such housing.
- 3. Provide For Housing That Addresses Needs**  
In Newington, housing is still essential to address the needs of:
  - An aging population,
  - Low-income and some moderate-income households, and
  - Groups with special housing needs.
- 4. Address Other Housing Issues**  
In addition, Newington wishes to improve its capacity for managing housing issues and partnering with other entities to meet future housing needs.

*“In reality, strategy is actually very straightforward. You pick a general direction and implement like [crazy]...”*

Jack Welch  
American CEO

Appendices

Appendices, which are mentioned several times in this briefing booklet, are available separately.

# 1. Encourage Housing That Meets Overall Development Goals

Newington wants future development (and redevelopment) to help it accomplish its overall community development goals as recommended in the 2020-2030 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Naturally, this includes housing development and, in particular, it includes some housing that is intended to meet identified local housing needs:

- Elderly, and
- Lower income households.

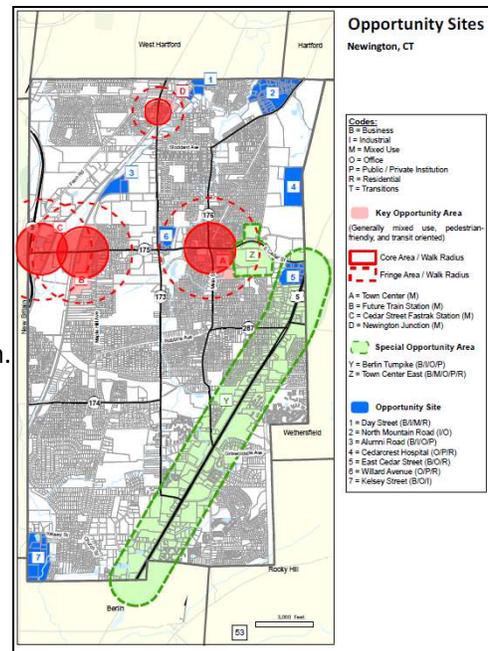
## 1.1 Support Development Of Mixed-Use Nodes With A “Sense Of Place”

The 2020-2030 POCD identified four **key** opportunity areas in Newington and recommended mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development and redevelopment at these locations:

- Town Center,
- Future Train Station,
- Cedar Street Fastrak Station, and
- Newington Junction Fastrak Station.

This includes housing.

The red circles on the adjacent map (walking distance radii) show the general location of these areas but are not intended to show the specific extent of each area.



### “MISSING MIDDLE” HOUSING

Some areas around the country are considering making provision for “missing middle” housing and this concept may have some applicability in Newington. The term “missing middle” refers to housing types that fall between single-family residential homes and larger scale multi-family projects. Historically, this type of housing supported pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented development which helped diversify housing options and choices while contributing to a “sense of place” in neighborhoods. A graphic illustrating the overall concept is shown on page 7.

### **1.1.1 Strengthen The Town Center**

The POCD included an entire chapter with strategies to strengthen Newington Center. The POCD recommended undertaking a community-driven planning process (like a community “charrette” or a carefully constituted steering committee) for the Newington Town Center area in order to:

- Establish an overall vision,
- Suggest possible regulation changes (including design guidelines), and
- Set the stage for complementary development.

While this **community-driven planning process should take place before any regulations are crafted**, it is envisioned that that such regulations should include provisions for:

- Requiring mixed use buildings on streets with residential units above businesses located at street level,
- **Requiring at least 10% of the residential units be set aside for low- to moderate-income households**,
- Requiring (or strongly encouraging) active street-front uses in order to establish and support a vibrant street environment,
- Allowing more building height / density / coverage to create a critical mass of people and uses, and
- Allowing parking structures to minimize the extent of surface parking.

This strategy in the POCD is significant because the possible availability of two large parcels will play a critical role in what becomes of the Center and how it will be relevant to Newington for the next century or more.

### **1.1.2 Support Development Of The Train Station Node**

In 2019, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission adopted regulations for the “Transit Village Design District” (TVDD) in order to enable creation of a mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development on Cedar Street where the Connecticut Department of Transportation is considering establishing a train station on the Hartford-to-New Haven rail line.

Since the regulations were adopted without a conceptual illustration of what might result, the POCD recommended that **a “visioning” process take place for this area** so that the adopted regulations can be adjusted to ensure the resulting development fits into the overall community.

**The regulation requiring 10% of the residential units be set aside for persons and families earning 80% or less of the area median income (Section 2.8 of the TVDD Regulations) should be retained.**

### 1.1.3 Support Development Of Nodes At Fastrak Stations

The POCD also supported development of mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development near the Fastrak stations (Cedar Street and Newington Junction).

Section 3.19.A of the Zoning Regulations already addresses the area near the Cedar Street Fastrak station and those Regulations should be revised to promote mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development and to require that 10% of new residential units be set aside for persons and families earning 80% or less of the area median income (See Appendix A).

For the Newington Junction area, the POCD recommended **a community-driven planning process** to establish an overall vision for a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented area. Any new regulations adopted for this area should promote mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented development and require that 10% of new residential units be set aside for persons and families earning 80% or less of the area median income.

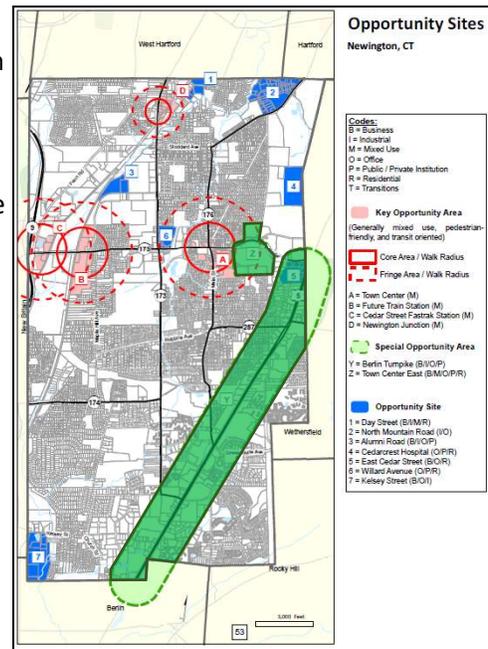
## 1.2 Encourage Redevelopment With Housing Where Appropriate

The 2020-2030 POCD identified two **special** opportunity areas in Newington (general locations shown in green on the adjacent map) and recommended that appropriate development and redevelopment be encouraged at these locations:

- Berlin Turnpike, and
- Town Center East.

The POCD also recognized several opportunity sites (shown in blue).

Any development or redevelopment in these areas which includes housing should set aside at least 10% of the residential units for low- to moderate-income households.



Existing regulations allowing housing in the PD zone should be extended to the B-BT zone (See Appendix B and Appendix C).

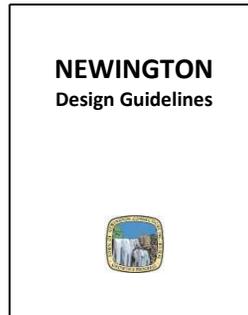
New regulations should be crafted for Town Center East based on **a community-driven planning process.**

### 1.3 Promote Other Development Goals

Although the POCD and this Affordable Housing Plan promote development and redevelopment in these areas, it is also important to note that the Town will continue to strive to:

- Preserve industrial zones for technology / employment in order to provide jobs, provide for goods and services, and enhance the tax base,
- Preserve the character and integrity of single-family residential neighborhoods, and
- Support the bus transit system.

Since the appearance of higher density residential development is critical to acceptance by Newington residents, the Town will also seek to prepare design guidelines for such developments (these may arise out of the community-driven planning processes recommended elsewhere). Design guidelines adopted by other communities (See Appendix D) can provide some guidance for Newington.



### 1.4 Consider Seeking Moratorium / Exemption From CGS 8-30g

Section 8-30g of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) provides that certain developments containing affordable housing may not have to comply with local Zoning Regulations. This provision applies to Newington and other communities where less than 10% of the housing stock meets the State criteria (see sidebar).

It is Newington’s strong desire to encourage and enable development that meets the overall development goals of the community ***in compliance with local Zoning Regulations***. Newington’s Zoning Regulations already allow for housing choice and opportunity and will continue to do so in the future.

Newington prefers that development in the community occur where the community wants it and with input, feedback, and guidance from the community rather than being in conflict with those goals but being dictated by a developer using the Affordable Housing Appeals procedures.

As a result, Newington may seek a moratorium or exemption from CGS 8-30g in the future. The purpose for doing so would be to guide development to places where it will meet overall development goals rather than have higher density development not consistent with overall development goals.

### State Criteria

The types of housing which are counted towards the statutory criteria are:

- Assisted housing which receives financial assistance under any governmental program for the construction or substantial rehabilitation of low and moderate income housing.
- Any housing occupied by persons receiving rental assistance under chapter 319uu or Section 1437f of Title 42 of the United States Code.
- Any housing currently financed by Connecticut Housing Finance Authority mortgages or United States Department of Agriculture mortgages for low- or moderate-income households.
- Any housing which is deed-restricted to affordable prices to persons or families earning 80% or less of the area median income..

Encourage Housing That Meets Overall Development Goals

## Summary Of Strategies

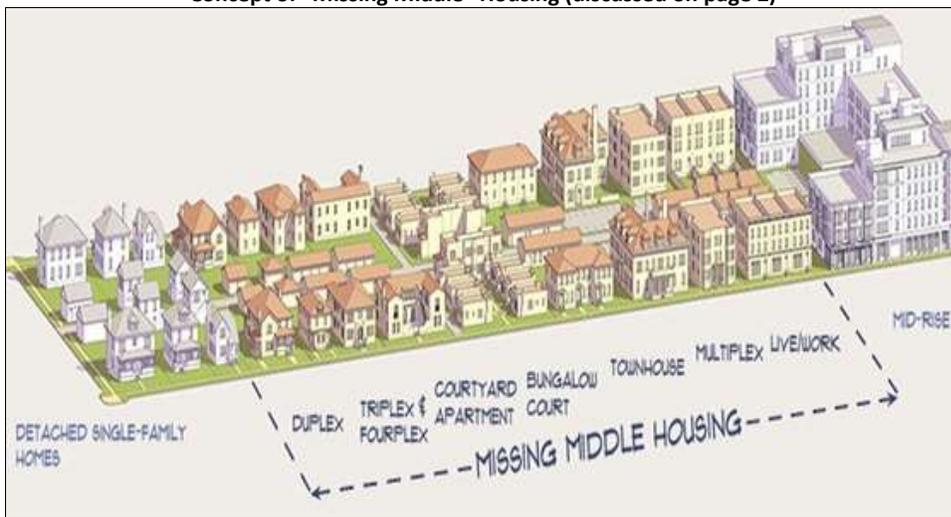
1. **Newington Center** - Following a [community-driven design process](#), adopt regulations for Newington Center that:
  - a. Implement the overall vision for Newington Center,
  - b. Rename the zone from “Business – Town Center” to just “Town Center” or something similar,
  - c. Allow for more flexibility (height, setbacks, coverage, etc. to help create a mixed use, pedestrian-friendly, and transit-oriented node), and
  - d. Require the set aside of at least 10% of new housing units for lower income households.
2. **Train Station / Transit Village** - Following a [community-driven design process](#), revise the Transit Village Design District regulations to:
  - a. Implement the overall vision for the train station area, and
  - b. Maintain the requirement that at least 10% of new housing units be set aside for lower income households.
3. **Cedar Street Fastrak – [Revise the TOD Overlay District](#)** (See Appendix A) for possible changes to Section 3.19.A) to:
  - a. Allow for consideration of a residential development (in addition to a mixed-use development) within the overlay zone area, and
  - b. Require the set aside of at least 10% of new housing units for lower income households.
4. **Newington Junction Fastrak** - Following a [community-driven design process](#), establish an “overlay zone” for the Newington Junction Fastrak area which:
  - a. Implements the overall vision for the area, and
  - b. Requires that at least 10% of new housing units be set aside for lower income households.
5. **Berlin Turnpike – Planned Development District - [Modify the provisions in the Planned Development \(PD\) district](#)** (See Appendix B) for possible changes to Section 3.19.2) which allow residential development by Special Permit to require the set aside of at least 10% of new housing units for lower income households.
6. **Berlin Turnpike – B-BT District - [Modify the Business – Berlin Turnpike \(B-BT\) provisions](#)** (See Appendix C) for possible changes to Section 3.15) to allow residential uses by Special Permit subject to the same provisions that apply in the PD district in Section 3.19.2 (including access / frontage on the Berlin Turnpike) and to require the set aside of at least 10% of new housing units for lower income households.

*(continued on next page)*

Encourage Housing That Meets Overall Development Goals  
**Summary Of Strategies (continued)**

7. **Town Center East** - Following a community-driven design process involving major property owners, consider modifying the Zoning Regulations for the Town Center East area to:
  - a. Implement the overall vision for the area to integrate it into (and help strengthen) the Town Center area, and
  - b. Require that at least 10% of new housing units be set aside for lower income households.
8. **Design Guidelines** - Prepare design guidelines or a “pattern book” (See Appendix D) for higher density residential developments in order to help them fit into the overall character of the community and:
  - a. Tailor the design guidelines to the unique character of each area,
  - b. Modify the village district considerations in the Town Center zone,
  - c. Consider “village district” zoning as provided in CGS Section 8-2j for the other mixed-use nodes (train station, Cedar Street Fastrak, and Newington Junction Fastrak), and
  - d. Consider “village district” zoning as provided in CGS Section 8-2j for the Town Center East area.
9. **CGS 8-30g Moratorium / Exemption** - Consider seeking a moratorium or exemption from CGS 8-30g so that housing development will support Newington’s overall development goals, be in accordance with local Zoning Regulations, and will be responsive to community input, feedback, and guidance.

Concept of “Missing Middle” Housing (discussed on page 2)



## 2. Maintain Housing And Regulations That Address Housing Needs

### 2.1 Retain Existing “Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing”

As indicated in Briefing Booklet #2, Newington has a diverse housing stock which includes:

- A wide variety of rental units at different price levels,
- A wide variety of ownership units (single-family houses, 2-4-family buildings, and condominiums) at different price levels, and
- A variety of other types of housing to meet special needs (elderly, congregate care, assisted living, nursing homes, etc.).

These housing units help make Newington a place where many people can find housing they want and can afford at all stages of their life. In addition, ***thousands*** of these units are affordable to lower income households.

This diversity of housing choices is a strength of Newington and it is the community’s desire to maintain this diversity and the “naturally occurring affordable housing” that exists.

### 2.2 Maintain / Improve Regulations That Allow Housing Diversity

In addition to the units which already exist in Newington, the Zoning Regulations contain a variety of provisions which can help meet housing needs:

Section	Description
3.2.4	... rest homes, assisted living, senior independent living facilities, convalescent or nursing homes, long term care facilities and continuing care retirement communities ... [allowed in all zones by Special Permit]
3.4.6	Group homes and community residences ... [allowed in all residential zones by Special Permit]
3.4.7	Conversion of large older residential homes to smaller residential units ... [allowed in all residential zones by Special Permit]
3.6.1	Two-family attached dwellings ... [allowed in R-7 residential zone by Special Permit]
3.7.1	Patio houses, duplex houses, townhouses, or multi-family structures (up to 5.5 units / acre when at least 10 acres and on arterial road) ... [allowed in R-7 and R-12 residential zones by Special Permit]

*(continued on next page)*

**DRAFT – For Housing Needs Study Committee Review And Discussion**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Description (continued)</b>
3.7.2	Affordable age-restricted housing for seniors sponsored by either the Newington Housing Authority, a non-profit developer, or a limited-profit developer for the health ... up to 20 units / acre ... [allowed in R-7 and R-12 residential zones by Special Permit]
3.7.3	Single-family entry-level housing ... up to 5.8 units / acre ... subject to a contract requiring the developer to abide by the income criteria <b>as from time to time may be established</b> ... [allowed in R-7 and R-12 residential zones by Special Permit] <i>(Clarification of income criteria should be considered)</i>
3.9	Residential Designed (RD) zone ... up to 3.5 units per acre ... [allowed in R-D zone by Special Permit]
3.13.1	Unrestricted multi-family residential buildings (and mixed-use buildings) in the Town Center zone ... up to 60 units/acre for elderly or affordable and 17.4 units/acre otherwise ... [allowed in B-TC zone by Special Permit] <i>(Proposed for modification elsewhere in this report)</i>
3.19.2	Residential building (and mixed-use buildings) ... up to 9.7 units/acre [allowed in PD zone on Berlin Turnpike by Special Permit] <i>(Proposed for modification elsewhere in this report)</i>
3.19.A	Mixed use development (including housing) in the area near the Cedar Street Fastrak Station <i>(Proposed for modification elsewhere in this report)</i>
3.26	Workforce Assisted Housing District for a site-specific affordable housing development on Cedar Street
6.12	Allows multi-family use within existing structures in the Willard Avenue Development District [allowed by Special Permit]
6.13	Allows accessory apartments [allowed in R-12 and R-20 zone by Special Permit] <i>(Proposed for modification elsewhere in this report)</i>
6.14	The use of a “residual lot” for a single-family house [allowed by Special Permit]
9.2	Definition of “family” allows up to five unrelated people to live together as single housekeeping unit

**Maintain Housing And Regulations That Address Housing Needs**

**Summary Of Strategies**

1. **Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing** - Seek to retain existing “naturally occurring affordable housing” in Newington which is effective at meeting housing needs of a variety of households.
2. **Current Regulations** - Maintain / improve existing Zoning Regulations that allow housing diversity (some suggested improvements in the Appendix).

### 3. Provide For Housing That Addresses Needs

Even though Newington has thousands of housing units affordable to people of modest means, there are still some housing needs that are not being met

- An aging population,
- Low-income and some moderate-income households, and
- Groups with special housing needs.

#### 3.1 Address Housing Needs Of An Aging Population

With increasing life expectancy, the number of elderly residents (and the share of the population which is over age 65) in Newington is increasing. This trend is expected to continue well into the future.

The housing needs of older households are different than younger households in a number of ways:

- Older households tend to be smaller,
- Older households tend to have lower income levels,
- Older households tend to have more disabilities or impairments which affect their quality of life and capabilities,
- Older households tend to have lower mobility and can suffer from social isolation, and
- Older households are less able to maintain the interior (and exterior) of their homes.



#### TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Note that “transitional housing” (housing which provides a transition from a single-family home to an elderly housing unit) is already permitted in many places in Newington. Such housing can meet “livability” standards (one-floor living, elevators or no threshold entry, HC accessible bathrooms, lever door handles, etc.) for a variety of people, not just older residents.

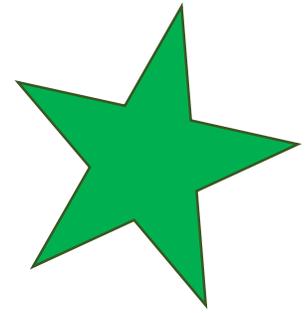
**3.1.1 Expand The Number Of Low-Income Elderly Units**

As indicated in Briefing Booklet #2, there is a significant shortage of low-income elderly units in Newington (and elsewhere). When an elderly person or couple gets to the point that they realize they need lower cost housing they can afford, it can be heart-breaking to learn that there is a two-year waiting period (or more) before a unit may be available.

Although there are 214 elderly housing units in Newington at the present time (106 managed by the Newington Housing Authority and 108 managed by other entities), it is not enough to meet the growing need. Most units were built in the 1970s and 1980s.

The only way to address the housing need for the lowest income elderly is to build subsidized elderly housing using State or Federal funding programs. Newington should start the process of working with State and/or Federal agencies to get funding to add more elderly housing units.

Of course, land is typically the biggest challenge for initiating a project such as this. In Newington, the following sites may have some potential for supporting the development of additional elderly housing units in Newington:



Site	Considerations
Cedarcrest Hospital Site Russell Road	A former state facility which has not been used since 2010. Condition of existing building(s) unknown
Former I-291 ROW	Closer investigation may show some areas around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maple Hill Avenue</li> <li>• New Britain Avenue</li> <li>• Willard Avenue</li> </ul>
645 Willard Avenue Other	Under-utilized former parochial school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Center East area</li> <li>• Excess Town Land</li> <li>• Underutilized School Building</li> <li>• Other Site</li> </ul>

**Supporting Aging-In-Place**

To help people age in place (and support their overall quality of life), Newington should consider:

- Maintaining senior center / recreation programs (social, recreational, health screening, life coaching, etc.),
- Maintaining hot lunch / meals-on-wheels,
- Maintaining dial-a-ride / transportation for seniors,
- Maintaining health screening and other services to maintain the well-being of seniors,
- Helping seniors with home handyman services and other useful services.

The municipal support programs outlined above will help older renters and homeowners continue to age in place until such time as they need to investigate other options.

**House Sharing**

House sharing by elderly residents is already permitted by the definition of “family” in the Newington Zoning Regulations.

**3.1.2 Support Aging In Place**

Data from AARP suggests that about 80% of older residents would prefer to age in place in their current residence.

*Older renters* tend to be income-constrained and asset-limited. If they are struggling to afford their current rental, they may need to investigate a less expensive options (which is no longer “aging-in-place at that point). On the other hand, if they have an affordable and appropriate place to live, the support programs identified in the sidebar will help meet their needs.

*Older homeowners* choosing to age in place may present some unique challenges and opportunities since they may be income-constrained but perhaps have some equity in their home:

Situation	Considerations
<p><b>1. Cost of homeownership may place stress on a fixed income</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town can maintain / enhance property tax relief (500 +/- participants)</li> <li>• Town could offer enhanced tax relief for deed restriction or equity share (although elderly do not like the idea of a lien)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. House is not configured well for independent older occupants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning Regulations could allow for one-story addition closer to property line provided it included an accessible full bath and another room that could be configured as a bedroom (see Appendix E)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Homeowner desires assistance / companionship / income supplement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning Regulations Section 6.13 could allow for an accessory apartment (within or attached) by Zoning Permit in some or all residential zones provided it was owner-occupied and included an operable door on a common wall and common water, sewer, gas, and electric service (see Appendix F and Appendix G). Under conditions spelled out in CGS Section 8-30g(k), accessory apartments can count as deed-restricted units when:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ legally approved</li> <li>○ restricted for 10 or more years to a rent affordable at 80% or less of area median income.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Zoning Regulations could allow for a <i>temporary</i> detached accessory structure (per CGS 8-1bb) sometimes favored by people caring for their parents provided the property was owner-occupied (see Appendix H).</li> </ul>

### **3.2 Address Housing Needs Of Lower Income Households**

Housing costs can also pose a significant burden for households earning less than 80 percent of area median income.

#### **3.2.1 Seek Opportunities To Create New “Family” Rental Units**

As indicated in Briefing Booklet #2, there are 316 “family” housing units (not limited to occupancy by the elderly or disabled) in Newington at the present time. These units are managed and operated by private and non-profit entities (none are managed by the Newington Housing Authority). There is strong demand for these units and waiting times can be lengthy.

If land were available (see the listing of possible sites for consideration on page 11), Newington could start the process of working with State and/or Federal agencies to seek development and construction funding to add more family housing units. This process could be led by the Housing Authority or a non-profit entity (as was done with Newington Interfaith Housing for Southfield Apartments).

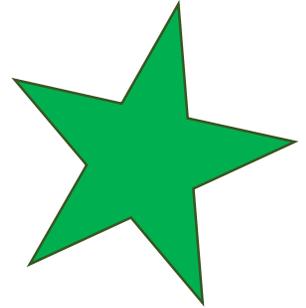
#### **3.2.2 Promote Rental Assistance Programs**

Until a site becomes available to build family units in the community, Newington should continue to use State and Federal “tenant rental assistance” programs to help lower income households meet their housing needs. There are two types of rental assistance programs:

- “Tenant-based” where a household is admitted to the program and, upon finding an appropriate rental unit, pays a percentage of their income for the unit and the State or Federal government pays the remainder. The tenant keeps the voucher when they change apartments, including relocating to other communities.
- “Project-based” where units in a development are reserved for lower income households and an eligible tenant pays a percentage of their income for the unit and the State or Federal government pays the remainder. The property keeps the voucher when a tenant departs.

Newington is credited with 116 tenant rental assistance units in the community. Since the Housing Authority has 30 vouchers (managed by Imagineers), there are 86 additional vouchers being used in Newington (either tenant-based or project-based). Newington should continue to support and promote the rental assistance programs to help meet the housing needs of lower income households, often using the existing housing stock.

If additional “vouchers” become available through HUD (through a notice of funding availability), Newington should consider obtaining more vouchers to help meet housing needs.



### **Accessory Apartments**

---

Accessory apartments (discussed on page 12) can also help address the housing needs of lower income households.

For one person or a couple, they might rent the accessory unit in a single-family dwelling and contribute rent and services to an elderly homeowner.

On the other hand, a larger household might rent the larger unit in a single-family dwelling and the elderly homeowner might occupy the smaller unit.

In other cases, a low- or moderate-income homeowner might benefit from some supplemental income to help them afford the single-family dwelling.

### **3.2.3 Help Support Ownership By Lower income Households**

In the history of America, homeownership has been a pathway to prosperity for many households. Newington is no different. Whether someone is trying to get on or climb “the housing ladder” (or trying to downsize and move down “the housing ladder”), Newington can be a part of that journey.

Due to the extensive stock of “naturally occurring affordable housing” (both rental and ownership) in Newington, most people (including many lower income households) are able to afford housing here for wherever they may want to be on the housing ladder.

Support Home Purchases - For lower income households seeking to purchase housing in Newington, they may be able to obtain financing from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through programs that have mortgage programs for lower income households.

As indicated in Briefing Booklet #2, there are 472 housing units in Newington where lower income households received CHFA/USDA mortgages. Newington should continue to support and promote these mortgage assistance programs to help meet the housing needs of lower income households, often using the existing housing stock.

If Newington wanted to be creative, it could consider:

- Offering education and coaching for first-time buyers.
- Offering down payment assistance to lower income purchasers in exchange for a share of the home equity (this would add to the number of households using CHFA/USDA mortgages in Newington),
- Offering down payment assistance or a one-time tax reduction for a deed-restriction limiting the sale price to affordable levels, or
- Purchase / restrict / resell “naturally occurring affordable housing” units (Town could also keep land and lease it back to homeowner over time).

Support Home Maintenance – In some situations, lower income households may struggle with housing maintenance / rehabilitation due to the tightness of their finances. Newington currently uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the federal government to assist lower income households with maintenance and housing rehabilitation. This program should continue.

In addition, if Newington could better promote the “community maintenance corps” of volunteers that helps lower income homeowners maintain and improve their properties, it might pay some considerable dividends. In addition, Newington should continue to partner with “HomeFront” and other non-profit and faith-based organizations (such as the United Methodist Action Reach-Out Mission by Youth) to help maintain homes for people in need.

### 3.3 Consider Adopting Inclusionary Zoning Provisions

CGS Section 8-2i allows a zoning commission to establish almost any regulation, requirement or condition which promotes the development of housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income (see sidebar).

Some communities have adopted provisions (see Appendix I) related to:

- Mandatory set-aside of units as part of new residential development,
- A fee-in-lieu-of affordable-housing, and/or
- An inclusionary zoning fee.

Newington may wish to consider adopting similar provisions. Inclusionary zoning can help meet a variety of housing needs.

### 3.4 Help Address Special Housing Needs

There are some population groups in Newington with special housing needs:

#### 3.4.1 Help Address Disabled / Special Need Populations

The housing needs of persons who are physically disabled or have special needs (mental health, developmental disabilities, rehabilitation, etc.) may be met in several ways (see sidebar).

Newington permits all of these housing options (including reasonable accommodations, if needed), In addition, the Town has a working group that addresses hoarding which may be related to these issues. The need for additional provisions is not apparent at this time.

#### 3.4.2 Transient Lodging / Single-Room Occupancy

Newington has experienced issues (substance abuse and criminal behavior) at older motel facilities on the Berlin Turnpike. Although specifically prohibited by the Zoning Regulations, the issue persists because there are few other places for these people to live. The Town has a Task Force which continues to work on addressing these issues. Redevelopment of these sites along the Berlin Turnpike is already allowed and encouraged (see Appendix C).

#### 3.4.3. Homeless / Emergency Shelter

The Police Department coordinates with the Human Services Department whenever there is an issue in Newington related to homelessness, domestic crisis, or similar interventional situation. Regionally, there is not enough capacity to address the need, especially during colder weather. Newington continues to work on addressing this situation in the short-term (finding a safe place when needed) and the long-term (helping address regional needs).

### Inclusionary Zoning

CGS Section 8-2i indicates that “inclusionary zoning” may include but not be limited to:

- the setting aside of a reasonable number of housing units for long-term retention as affordable housing through deed restrictions or other means;
- the use of density bonuses; or
- in lieu of or in addition to such other requirements or conditions, the making of payments into a housing trust fund to be used for constructing, rehabilitating or repairing housing affordable to persons and families of low and moderate income.

### Special Need Housing

The housing needs of people with special needs might be met in a several ways:

- Living independently,
- Living with assistance from family / caregiver,
- Living in elderly/isabled housing,
- Living in a group home,
- Living in a specialized facility.

**Provide For Housing That Addresses Needs**

**Summary Of Strategies**

1. **Expand The Number Of Low-Income Elderly Units -**
  - a. Obtain and dedicate land in Newington for development of additional elderly housing units.
  - b. Start the process of working with State and/or Federal agencies to get funding to add more elderly housing units.
2. **Elderly Tax Relief –**
  - a. Maintain / improve /enhance existing elderly tax relief programs that support elderly residents desire to age in place
  - b. Consider offering enhanced tax relief for deed restriction for affordability or for an equity share.
3. **Elderly Support Services / Activities -** Maintain / improve /enhance programs that support elderly residents desire to age in place:
  - a. Senior center / recreation programs,
  - b. Hot lunch / meals-on-wheels,
  - c. Dial-a-ride / transportation for seniors,
  - d. Visiting nurse services for seniors,
  - e. Home handyman services and other useful services.
4. **Allow For Aging-Appropriate Renovations –** Modify the Zoning Regulations to allow for one-story addition closer to property line provided it included an accessible full bath and another room that could be configured as a bedroom (see Appendix E).
5. **Allow More Flexibility For Accessory Apartment –**
  - a. Modify the Zoning Regulations to allow for an accessory apartment (within or attached) by Zoning Permit in some or all residential zones provided it was owner-occupied and included an operable door on a common wall and common water, sewer, gas, and electric service (see Appendix F).
  - b. Consider modifying the Zoning Regulations to allow for an accessory apartment deed-restricted to rent at an affordable price level for at least 10 years (see Appendix G).
6. **Allow For Temporary “Granny Pods” –** Zoning Regulations could allow for a temporary detached accessory structure (per CGS 8-1bb) sometimes favored by people caring for their parents provided the property was owner-occupied (see Appendix H).

*(continued on next page)*

**Provide For Housing That Addresses Needs**

**Summary Of Strategies (continued)**

7. **Expand The Number Of Low-Income “Family” Units -**
  - a. Obtain and dedicate land in Newington for development of additional “family” housing units not restricted to elderly/disabled persons.
  - b. Start the process of working with State and/or Federal agencies to get funding to add more “family” housing units not restricted to elderly/disabled persons.
8. **Promote Rental Assistance Programs -**
  - a. Continue to support and promote rental assistance programs (tenant-based and project-based) to help meet the housing needs of lower income households.
  - b. Seek additional “vouchers” from HUD should funding become available.
9. **Help Support Ownership By Lower income Households –** Continue to support and promote the CHFA/USDA mortgage assistance programs to help meet the housing needs of lower income households.
  - a. Maintain / improve /enhance existing elderly tax relief programs that support elderly residents desire to age in place
  - b. Consider offering enhanced tax relief for deed restriction for affordability or for an equity share.
10. **Creative Supplemental Programs -** Consider:
  - a. Offering down payment assistance to lower income purchasers in exchange for a share of the home equity (this would add to the number of households using CHFA/USDA mortgages in Newington),
  - b. Offering down payment assistance or a one-time tax reduction for a deed-restriction limiting the sale price to affordable levels, or
  - c. Purchase / restrict / resell “naturally occurring affordable housing” units (Town could also keep land and lease it back to homeowner over time).
11. **Support Home Maintenance / Rehabilitation –**
  - a. Continue to use Small Cities funding to assist lower income households with maintenance and housing rehabilitation.
  - b. Continue to promote volunteers that would be available to help low- and moderate-income homeowners maintain their properties.
12. **Consider Adopting Inclusionary Zoning Provisions –** Consider adopting a mandatory set-aside of units as part of any residential development, a fee-in-lieu-of affordable-housing, and/or an inclusionary zoning fee (see Appendix I).
13. **Disabled / Special Needs –** Maintain regulations which allow for a variety of living arrangements for disabled and special need persons.
14. **Transient Lodging –** Continue efforts to address the issue of transient lodging on the Berlin Turnpike.
15. **Homeless Emergency Shelter –** Continue to address issues related to the need for a homeless shelter and/or an emergency shelter.

## 4. Address Other Housing Issues

### 4.1 Enhance Local Framework / Capacity

#### 4.1.1 Increase Capacity Of Housing Authority

When additional units are added to the Housing Authority portfolio, it is unlikely the part-time staff will be able to keep up with the additional responsibilities.

Newington should:

- Anticipate the need to have some full-time Housing Authority staffing (management, administrative, and/or maintenance) to manage more units, and
- Supplement the part-time staff with technical assistance for development / expansion planning.

#### 4.1.2 Prepare For Overseeing Additional Deed-Restricted Units

With the completion of additional housing units deed-restricted to sell or rent at affordable prices, Newington should supplement the tools at its disposal to oversee such units.

First, Newington should prepare and adopt a “model housing affordability plan.” This is a document which specifies how deed-restricted affordable housing units will be overseen in accordance with local, State, and Federal requirements related to income eligibility, rental rates, sale prices, fair housing marketing, and similar requirements. If the Town does not have a model plan, each development will prepare their own (or ignore the requirement entirely) and this will become a nightmare.

Second, Newington should consider who will be the Housing Administrator to oversee the sale/ rental of deed-restricted affordable housing units in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements. The Town Planner oversees the 36 deed-restricted units in Newington currently and this arrangement may continue to work best. Alternatively, the responsibility could be delegated to another entity. For example, the Housing Authority may have experience with income verification and housing programs. Alternatively, some towns use a third-party consultant to provide these services and Newington could consider the same approach.

#### **4.2 Establish A Housing Trust Fund**

In order to accumulate funds to help support housing-related initiatives, Newington should consider establishing a Housing Trust Fund. This account could be funded by:

- The Town Council as part of the annual budget,
- Payments made as part of any inclusionary zoning provision,
- Grants from outside sources or donations by residents, and/or
- Other sources

#### **4.3 Right-Size Parking Requirements**

Parking areas consume considerable land area (that could be used for tax-paying uses) and parking requirements can be a major impediment to development yields. Newington might consider modifying the parking standards in the following situations:

- Allow fewer than 2.0 parking spaces per studio or one-bedroom unit to reflect the smaller household sizes which are prevalent these days,
- Allow a reduction of parking requirements (perhaps by 25% to 50%) in areas within ¼-mile of a train station or Fastrak station (a developer could choose to install more parking if they wished).

It is worth noting that Section 6.1 already provides for a 25% reduction in the number of parking spaces for a multi-family unit located in the Town Center (1.5 spaces per unit) versus one located in another zoning district in Newington (2.0 spaces per unit).

Housing Partners

Local Organizations

- Municipal Departments, Agencies, And Commissions
- Newington Housing Authority
- Newington Interfaith Housing
- Local Non-Profit Organizations

Regional Organizations

- Capital Region Council Of Governments
- Neighborhood Housing Services Of New Britain

State-Wide Organizations

- Connecticut Department Of Housing
- Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA)
- Partnership For Strong Communities

National Organizations

- US Department Of Housing And Urban Development
- US Department Of Agriculture (USDA)

4.5 Continue To Work With Housing Partners

Newington has had success working with other organizations as “housing partners” and these efforts should continue. Organizations to work with in the future might include one or more of the organizations listed in the sidebar.

Address Other Housing Issues

Summary Of Strategies

1. **Increase Capacity Of Housing Authority -**
  - a. Anticipate the need to have full-time Housing Authority staffing (management, administrative, and/or maintenance) to manage more units.
  - b. Supplement the part-time Housing Authority staff with technical assistance for planning the development / expansion of Housing Authority developments.
2. **Adopt A Model Housing Affordability Plan** – Prepare and adopt a “model housing affordability plan” which will specify how deed-restricted affordable housing units will be overseen.
3. **Designate A Housing Affordability Administrator** - Designate who will be the Housing Administrator to oversee the sale/ rental of deed-restricted affordable housing units in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements.
4. **Establish A Housing Trust Fund** – Consider establishing a Housing Trust Fund to accumulate funds to help support housing-related initiatives.
5. **Right-Size Parking Requirements** – Consider modifying the parking standards to require fewer spaces for small units and allow a parking reduction in areas near to transit stations.
6. **Continue To Work With Housing Partners** – Continue to work with other organizations as “housing partners” in order to accomplish housing goals.



HOUSING NEEDS  
STUDY COMMITTEE



Planimetrics

70 County Road, Simsbury, CT 06070 860-913-4080