

# Homes for All

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UPDATING MUNICIPAL POLICIES TO IMPROVE  
HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

# Setting the Stage

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QUESTIONS TO ASK AND STEPS FIRST

# 1

## What kind of homes do people need?

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Check out:

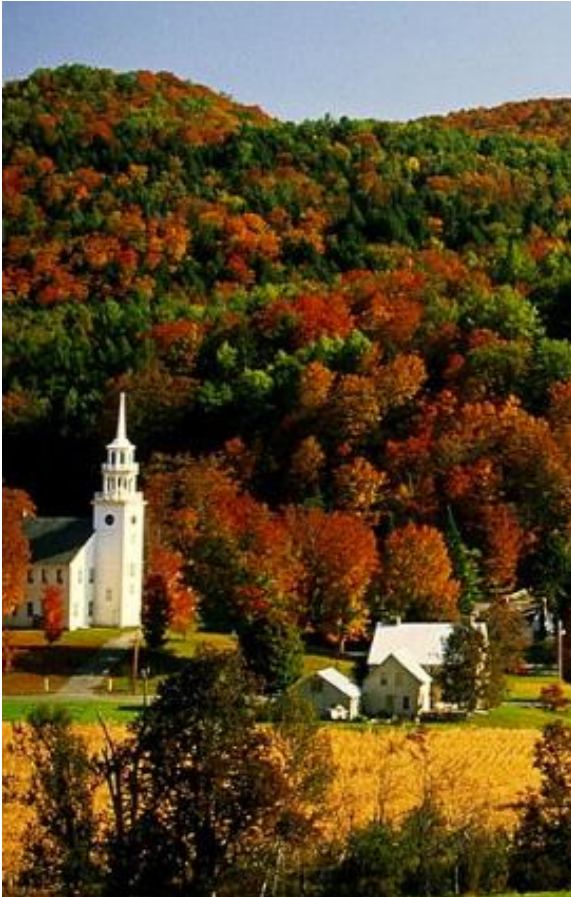
- Vermont's State and County [Housing Needs Assessments](#)
- Housing section of your regional plan
- Talk with your local/regional housing non-profits
- Talk to local realtors and non-profit housing providers
- [ACCD's 2010 – 2030 Population Projections](#)



# 2

## What kind of housing does your community support?

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- Is there widespread acceptance of the problem?
- Is there an understanding of the issue and the people affected?
- Is the state planning goal of promoting housing in compact centers (24 VSA § 4302(c)(11)) embraced?

# 3

## What kind of housing does your Town Plan support?

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- Does your town plan identify housing needs?
- Does it support housing in locations suitable for development?
- Does it identify clear strategies for addressing housing needs.

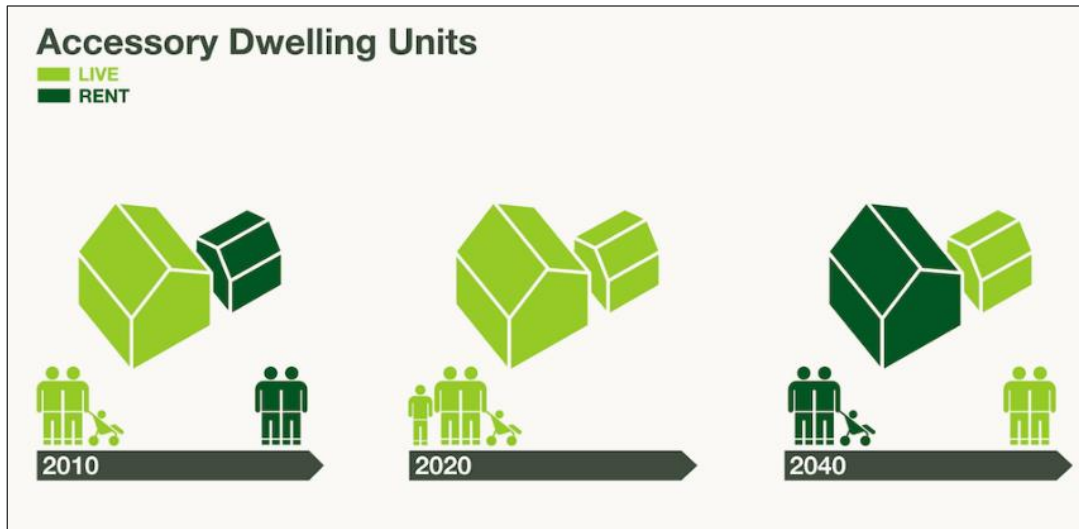


# Regulatory Solutions

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UPDATES YOU CAN MAKE TO ZONING,  
SUBDIVISION & OTHER DEVELOPMENT BYLAWS

# Allow for a variety of housing options



*Designed by Paste in Place*

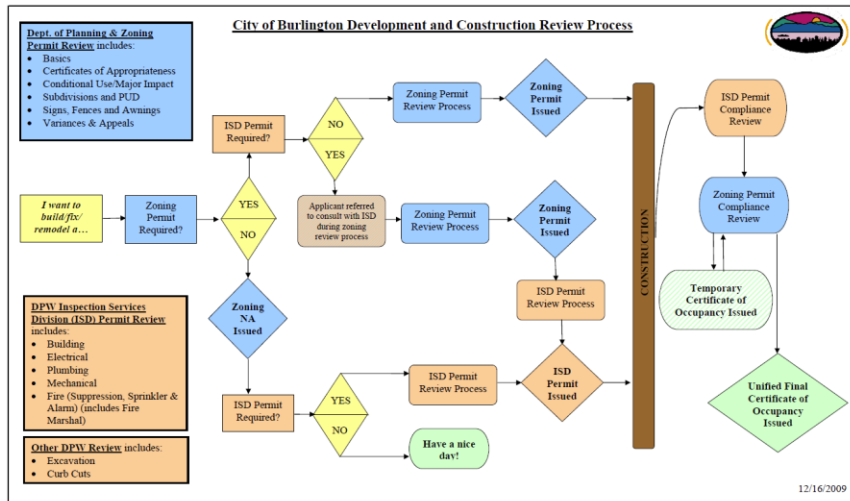
Enable a variety of housing types for all stages of life and incomes.

**Basic:** Make sure zoning allows for mobile homes and parks, multi-family and accessory dwelling units and group homes.

**Intermediate:** Update the use tables to reduce restrictions on all housing types

**Advanced:** Allow multi-family housing development as a permitted use

# Simplify Zoning/Subdivision Review Processes



Make the review process for the right types of housing projects in the right locations shorter and easier:

**Basic:** Host pre-application meetings

**Intermediate:** Administrative approval for simple projects

**Advanced:** Shorter review times for desired housing projects



# Density and Dimensional Requirements

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Duxbury – measuring village setbacks for a zoning update

Update your density and dimensional requirements:

**Basic:** Measure the real world to right-size densities, setbacks and other dimensions matching (Village Character Assessment)

**Intermediate:** Separate lot size from density (dwelling units/per acre vs. minimum lot size)

**Advanced:** Consider whether “density” makes sense and can be replaced by better regulating building form or size (lot coverage, height or floor-to-area ratio)

# Village Character Assessment: Hyde Park

## Hyde Park Village Structures and Lots

LPC conducted a geographic analysis to determine nonconforming structures and lots (do not conform to the current zoning regulations) within Hyde Park Village. The analysis examined nonconformances to the following zoning conditions: minimum lot size, minimum of width, road center setbacks, lot rear and side setbacks. The analysis was done by visual coordination of current, rear a, masonry and setback overlays, and by creating the parcel overlay by lot size and lot width. Detailed rule coding is available upon request. Note that the results are general, and do not take other nonconformances such as wet areas into account. As such, these results should be used for planning purposes only, not to regulate the property.

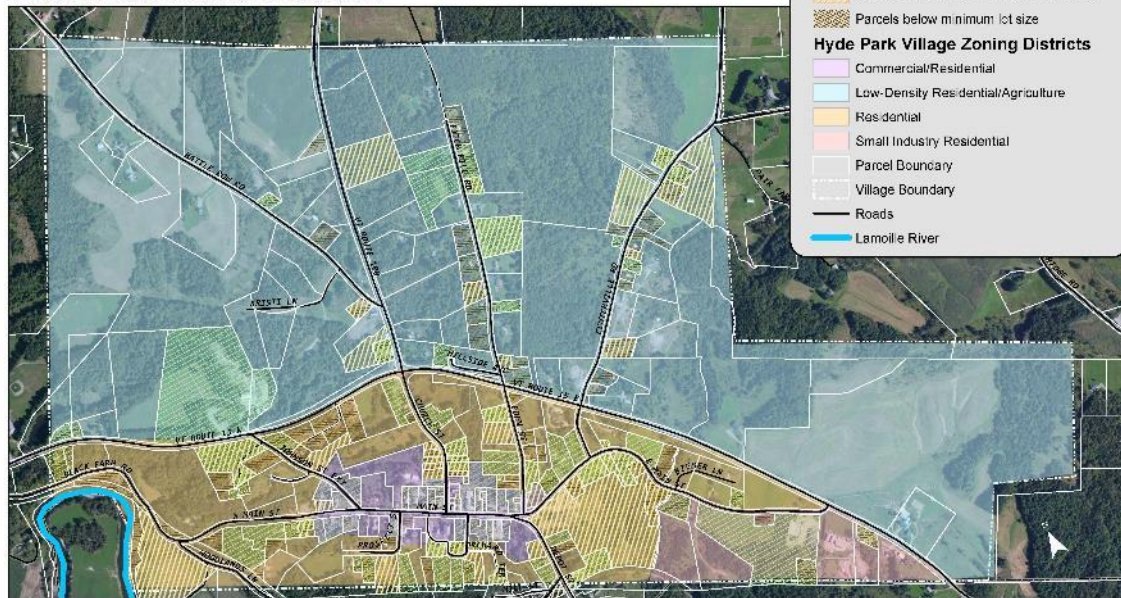
There are a total of 27 nonconforming occurrences, of which 25 are due to lot setback violations, 22 to road center setbacks violations, and 127 to parcels below the minimum lot size. A total of 108 out of 228 (47%) of parcels in the village do not appear to conform to the current zoning bylaws.

### Nonconforming Structures and Lots

- Structures within side/rear setback
- Structures within the road center setback
- Parcels below minimum lot size

### Hyde Park Village Zoning Districts

- Commercial/Residential
- Low-Density Residential/Agriculture
- Residential
- Small Industry Residential
- Parcel Boundary
- Village Boundary
- Roads
- Lamoille River



## Analyzed the Non-conforming Lots in the Village

63% of parcels in the village lots and structure did not conform to setback and/or minimum lot size requirements in zoning.

Preserving historic character of Village = Major Goal.

Zoning required new development to have a “suburban” character.

# Reduce parking requirements

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Especially in walkable places, reduce parking requirements.

**Basic:** require 1 parking space or less for each accessory apartment, 1 to 2 bedrooms on a bus line with regular service, or where on-street parking is available. OR consider allowing tandem or stacked parking.

**Intermediate:** Allow shared parking for mixed use properties, or projects located near transit, or where on-street parking is available

**Advanced:** Eliminate parking minimums for all housing development

# Other Zoning Approaches

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- **Waivers:**
  - Allowed under 24 V.S.A. § 4414 (8) – must include:
    - Specific standards in conformance with the town plan and statewide goals
    - Define the process for review and appeal
- **Adaptive Reuse:**
  - Allow multifamily units in pre-existing larger structures like barns or old commercial structures (without allowing all over a district)
- **Ensure Affordable Options Exists**
  - Reduce Impact Fees
  - Density Bonus
  - Inclusionary Zoning



# Non-Regulatory Solutions

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PROMOTE HOUSING BEYOND BYLAWS

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# Non-regulatory tools to support housing

- Make town land available for housing development
- Ensure sewer, water, sidewalks and other infrastructure is available
- Work with Community Land Trusts and other housing non-profits to obtain grants for housing projects
- Create partnerships with healthcare and senior services to develop senior housing options
- Reduce fees/other costs

**Statutory Authorization:** 24 V.S.A. Chapter 113, Chapter 117 §§4432, 4433  
**Type:** NONREGULATORY  
**Related Topic Areas:** Community & Economic Development; Housing Regulations

## Housing Programs 13

### Overview

**H**ousing—and affordable housing in particular—is in short supply in many parts of the state. It's becoming difficult for an increasing number of Vermonters, including renters and first-time home buyers, to find suitable places to live near jobs and services. Many local employees—for example, municipal workers, teachers, and health-care and service providers—cannot afford to live in the communities where they work. Long commutes are common and, with rising fuel prices, increasingly costly. The lack of affordable housing also affects job recruitment and retention.

Over much of Vermont's history, local governments were solely responsible for the care and housing of the poor, giving rise to a statewide system of locally funded "poor farms." These establishments housed transients and indigent, elderly, and disabled individuals who could not support themselves. Poor farms were never pleasant places to live but were viewed at the time as a humane and cost-effective way to address very real housing needs. The local poor farm system was phased out beginning in the 1930s under federal and state relief programs and was eliminated by the state in 1967 with the passage of the Social Welfare Act. The last poor farm, in Sheldon Springs, closed in 1968.

Interest in improving local housing then took other forms. Beginning in the 1950s, several larger Vermont municipalities undertook, with federal assistance, sometimes controversial urban renewal projects to relieve neighborhood slums and blight. Soon after state-enabling legislation went into effect in 1961, local housing authorities were created to access federal housing funds. Public housing programs, until very recently, focused on providing safe and sanitary housing for low-income tenants, including the elderly and disabled. Market rate housing development was left to the private sector, subject to state and local regulation.

Vermont's housing market has gone through several boom and bust cycles, generally following national trends. As a result, planning has had to address both housing shortages and the impacts of residential development on local communities. Affordable housing development and growth management are not mutually exclusive, as evidenced in the creation of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund in 1987.

Municipal plans adopted under the Vermont Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117) are required to include a section on housing that recommends a program for

**Housing programs, such as community land trusts and dedicated funding sources, can be critical to building housing on infill sites within older neighborhoods, where the complications of permitting and construction can reduce interest from the private sector. Once neighborhoods start to turn around, developers will often jump in to build additional units.**

#### Affordable Housing Definition

24 V.S.A. §4303

Housing that is owned or rented by its inhabitants, whose gross annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the county median income, or 80 percent of the standard metropolitan statistical area income (where applicable), as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the total annual cost of housing is not more than 30 percent of the household's gross income. Housing costs for homeowners include principal, interest, taxes, insurance, and condominium association fees. For renters, costs include rent, utilities, and association fees.

Information Manual: Housing Programs - 2007 - www.vpic.info  
VERMONT LAND USE EDUCATION & TRAINING COLLABORATIVE  
13-1

# Resources

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MORE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

# Resources

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- TRORC's A Home for All:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0vrZvwOeDQ>
- VHCB's Voices of Home:  
<http://www.vtaffordablehousing.org/voices/>
- VHFA's Housing Toolbox:  
<http://www.housingdata.org/toolbox/steps-for-municipalities>
- VHFA's Regulatory Tools:  
<http://www.housingdata.org/download/Policy%20Tools%20Matrix.pdf>
- A Matter of Place – Fair Housing Documentary:  
<https://vimeo.com/77785957>
- Mad River Valley Affordable Land Initiative:  
<http://www.mrvpd.org/Housing.php>
- Working Bridges of United Way  
<https://www.unitedwaynwvt.org/Working-Bridges>
- “Not very many options for the people who are working here”. [Rural Housing Challenges Through the Lens of Two New England Communities](#), A White Paper: University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy, 2017.
- DHCD Mobile Home Park Guidance for Municipalities:  
<http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/DHCD%20Mobile%20Home%20Park%20Guidance.pdf>



# Homes for All - NRPC

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Taylor Newton  
Senior Planner  
Northwest Regional Planning Commission  
[tnewton@nrpcvt.com](mailto:tnewton@nrpcvt.com)  
(802) 524-5958