



Regional Housing Strategy

Lower Cape Subregional Stakeholder Working Group

Meeting 1 Summary: April 26, 2023

The first Lower Cape subregional meeting for the Regional Housing Strategy was held on April 26, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information and data on housing challenges on Cape Cod, an overview of the Regional Housing Strategy, and to discuss elements of a successful strategy, which will help to define regional recommendations.

Following introductions, Cape Cod Commission staff provided an overview of the Regional Housing Strategy and its elements. Meeting participants were asked to provide input on how they would define a successful regional housing strategy, their vision for housing in the region, and initial ideas on possible strategies to address the region's housing challenges. Key themes emerged from the conversation including the need for more housing types, funding challenges, addressing multiple regional challenges, and regionalization to support municipalities.

NEED FOR MORE HOUSING TYPES

Meeting participants noted the need for more varied types of housing, particularly missing middle housing, that can serve people at all income levels. This would allow for more mobility among current homeowners who may want to downsize and other people looking for a new or larger home. Additionally, a mix of housing would support a more diverse economy and year-round population. Participants noted that one of the key obstacles to developing more of a mix of housing types is current zoning bylaws. More mixed-use zoning in appropriate areas may be one way to encourage more different types of housing. Different models for housing, such as co-housing, might also be worth exploring as strategies for the region.

Participants also discussed the need to increase both rental and home ownership opportunities and, while housing for year-round residents is critical, it is also important to address the housing needs of the influx of seasonal workers.

FUNDING CHALLENGES

Funding challenges were also a significant topic of discussion among meeting participants. Not only is building housing expensive as construction costs have risen, it was noted that current programs that provide financial support for housing development are not suited for the region and its needs. For example, it was mentioned that there is a need to support people earning above 80% area

median income (AMI), possibly up to 200% in some cases, but there is little funding available above 80% AMI. Having the strategy identifying new and innovative ways of funding housing development and redevelopment would be beneficial.

ADDRESSING MULTIPLE REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Participants discussed the need to ensure housing development and redevelopment also addresses environmental concerns and constraints in the region, such as water quality. Additionally, promoting denser housing in areas with sewer that are also more walkable could address multiple regional challenges including climate change and infrastructure needs. Participants also noted that redevelopment will be important in both addressing the region's housing needs while protecting its sensitive resources.

REGIONALIZATION TO SUPPORT MUNICIPALITIES

Meeting participants discussed the need for more regional initiatives and efforts to address housing challenges. This included having a better understanding of what is being built across the region to complement rather than duplicate efforts. It was also noted that it is important to understand where there might be opportunities that span town boundaries. Participants also noted that in advocating for greater and more targeted support from the state, doing so as a region would be more effective. Pooling funds at the regional level may also result in more efficient and effective initiatives. A regional housing services office was put forth as one idea for advancing housing efforts across the Cape.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Other considerations for development of the regional housing strategy that participants raised during the meeting included:

- Education will be critical in implementing and advancing the strategy and the region's housing goals.
- A repository of model bylaws that would address different scales of development would be helpful for municipalities in making zoning changes.
- A successful strategy will include actions that can be implemented immediately.
- It is important to understand how the second homeowners intersect with the region's housing.
- Housing is only one aspect of the cost of living in the region; other things like expensive childcare also put stress on families looking to live here.

The Lower Cape Subregional Stakeholder working group will meet again on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 1:00 pm.

Meeting 1 Agenda

1. Introductions: Cape Cod Commission (Commission) staff will facilitate the introduction of participants.
2. Setting the Baseline: Commission staff will provide a brief overview of some key information and data points that illustrate the housing challenges facing the Cape Cod region.
3. Overview of the Regional Housing Strategy: Commission staff will provide an overview of the components of the Regional Housing Strategy for Cape Cod.
4. Defining Success: Participants will identify and discuss how they envision what a successful implementation of the Regional Housing Strategy for Cape Cod would look like including outcomes.
5. Example Strategies: Participants will discuss examples of potential strategies, tools, and resources that could help address housing challenges on Cape Cod.
6. Next Steps: Commission staff will discuss next steps for participants, including future meeting dates.

Meeting 1 Participants

Stakeholder Participants

- Art Bodin, Harwich Housing Committee
- Brianna Powell, Town of Harwich
- Cyndi Williams, Harwich Chamber of Commerce
- Donna Kalinick, Town of Brewster
- Elizabeth Harder, Town of Harwich
- Gloria McPherson, Town of Chatham
- Jill Scalise, Town of Brewster
- John Pappalardo, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance
- Katie Donovan, Town of Chatham
- Kim Bourgea, Harwich Ecumenical Council
- Marsha Allgeier, Town of Orleans
- Mary Cavanaugh, Chatham Chamber of Commerce
- Michael Lach, Harwich Conservation Trust
- Peter Lombardi, Town of Brewster
- Ryan Christenberry, Town of Chatham
- Susan Bridges, Brewster Ponds Coalition
- Brendan Lowney, Harwich Affordable Housing Trust
- Jillian Douglass, Brewster Housing Partnership / Town of Barnstable



Cape Cod Commission Staff Present

- Kristy Senatori, Executive Director
- Erin Perry, Deputy Director
- Chloe Schaefer, Chief Planner
- Heather McElroy, Natural Resources Program Manager
- Cory Murray, Community Development Planner
- Sarah Colvin, Communications Manager