



Regional Housing Strategy

Mid Cape Subregional Stakeholder Working Group

Meeting 2 Summary: May 23, 2023

The second Mid Cape subregional meeting for the Regional Housing Strategy was held on May 23, 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on stakeholder engagement and outreach, receive feedback on a definition of attainable housing, and to review example strategies to address defined housing challenges.

Following introductions, Cape Cod Commission staff provided an update on stakeholder engagement including a summary of key themes from prior meetings as well as preliminary results from the housing preference survey. Meeting participants were asked to provide input on defining attainable housing, based on their own experience and from examples around the country. Commission staff then provided an overview of strategies to address housing challenges that have been utilized across the country and asked participants to provide their thoughts on strategies that best address the housing challenges on Cape Cod.

DEFINING ATTAINABLE HOUSING

Participants noted there could be more clarity around the population that “attainable” is for. One suggestion was to define all of the following terms in order to differentiate between them: Affordable housing, attainable housing, and workforce housing using MassHousing’s already established definition. Some participants, but not all, felt that it may be necessary to keep a numerical figure in the definition (such as 30% of income) as a way to set goals and to use those numbers to advocate for the region. Without a numerical definition, some participants commented that it may be hard to track progress on a local, as well as regional, scale.

Participants noted that the term workforce is challenging because many people in Affordable housing work. It was also noted that attainable housing should incorporate or consider more than just income and employment. Self-employed, retired, and stay-at-home parent populations all need attainable housing as well.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS DEFINED CHALLENGES

Commission staff provided an overview of some example strategies other places are using that can address one of four key housing challenges in the region: it isn’t allowed or it’s too complicated to build housing other than single-family homes, it’s too expensive to build housing, it’s too expensive to secure or maintain housing, and it’s hard to find and keep year-round rental housing.

It was noted that it is too difficult for the layperson to figure out the process of permitting and financing accessory dwelling units (ADUs). A tool for homeowners to create ADUs would be helpful. Additionally, providing a one-stop-shop for local developers to help guide them through the permitting process could be useful for smaller local developers.

Participants showed interest in strategies that helped to preserve or encourage year-round housing and housing for local employees, including converting short-term rentals into long-term rentals. It was mentioned that shared housing, such as dormitories, could be helpful in providing more affordable housing options, as well as the use of modular construction. Participants also noted interest in the ways deed restrictions may be able to help address some of the housing challenges.

It was also noted that many of the strategies will need to be combined and used together to be successful, rather than being utilized individually.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

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

- Housing and homelessness was identified as a primary issue in Cape Cod Healthcare's recent Community Health Needs Assessment.
- The region should look to foster a community housing development organization.
- It is challenging to use low-income housing tax credits for mixed-use projects, but those are important in providing new housing opportunities.
- It is important to think of other critical regional issues as well, such as environmental quality and water capacity and infrastructure.
- Regionalization will be crucial to implementing many strategies and providing support to the towns.
- A regional and central database for registering short-term rentals, with regional monitoring, would be helpful.
- It will be important to clarify both the perceived limitations and the actual limitations or challenges to building housing in the region.
- There is a huge need for programs to help homeowners rehabilitate and maintain their homes.
- Projects built under 40B can be positive collaborations; they are not always antagonistic.
- Having an inventory of properties that are ripe for housing and mixed-use development or redevelopment, such as large parking lots or commercial developments, would be helpful in advancing such projects.

Meeting 2 Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach: Cape Cod Commission staff will provide an update on the stakeholder engagement process for the Cape Cod Regional Housing Strategy, including a summary of key themes from prior stakeholder meetings and preliminary results from the housing preference survey.
3. Defining Attainable Housing: Cape Cod Commission staff will share examples of how attainable housing has been defined in other housing plans from around the country and facilitate a discussion on defining attainable housing for Cape Cod.
4. Strategies to Address Defined Housing Challenges: Cape Cod Commission staff will provide an overview of strategies to address housing challenges that have been utilized from across the country that could be impactful on Cape Cod and seek feedback on strategies to address housing challenges that are appropriate for Cape Cod.
5. Next Steps: Commission staff will discuss next steps for participants, including future meeting dates.

Meeting 2 Participants

Stakeholder Participants

- Karen Greene, Town of Yarmouth
- Wendy Ohlson, Yarmouth Housing Authority
- Bob Whritenour, Town of Yarmouth
- Wendy Northcross, JFK Museum
- Jillian Douglass, Town of Barnstable
- James Kupfer, Town of Barnstable
- Maggie Spade-Aguilar, Town of Dennis
- Chris Lawson, Cape Cod Healthcare
- Mary Waygan, Town of Yarmouth

Cape Cod Commission Staff Present

- Kristy Senatori, Executive Director
- Erin Perry, Deputy Director
- Chloe Schaefer, Chief Planner
- Liz Kellam, Community Design Planner
- Cory Murray, Community Development Planner
- Sarah Colvin, Communications Manager