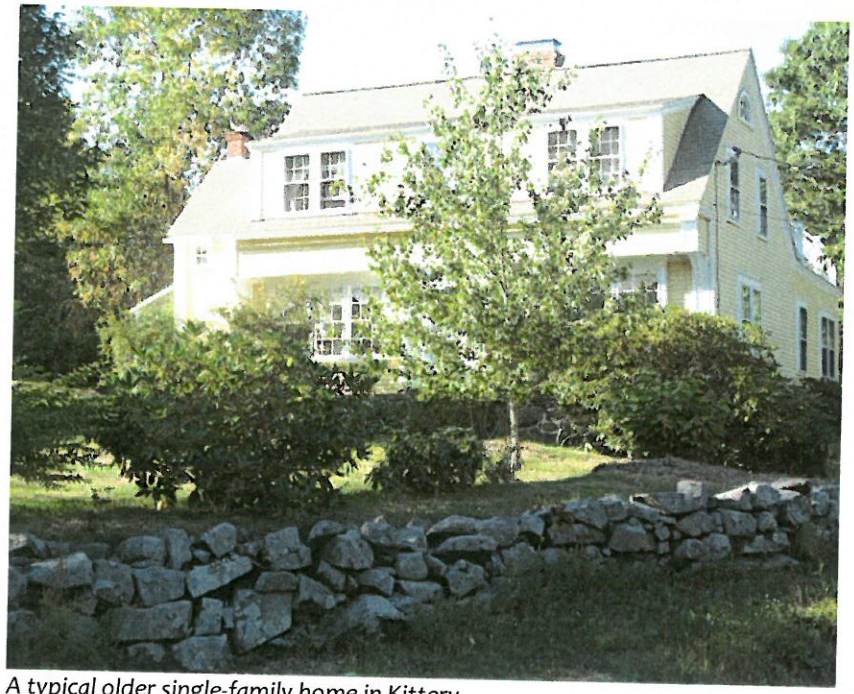
HOUSING



A typical older single-family home in Kittery.

A community is like a ship: everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm.

- Henrik Ibsen[1]

We live in the present, we dream of the future, but we learn eternal truths from the past.

-Madame Chiang[2]

[1] Henrik Ibsen was a 19th-centrury Norwegian playwright, poet, and theater director.

[2] Madame Chiang was a famous Chinese educator and reformer.

TOPIC AREA 4: HOUSING

State Goal:

To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PROVIDE A RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFECYCLE AND TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS WITH A RANGE OF INCOMES.

Housing is an essential component of day-to-day life for every man, woman, and child. It can be a source of pride and happiness, but can also be a source of concern particularly for those residents who are living in housing that is unaffordable. As the overall cost of living continues to escalate at a rate higher than many people's income, choices are being forced upon us to cut costs where we can without detrimentally impacting our quality of life. In many cases, it is challenging for residents to make changes when it comes to housing.

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, residents of Kittery showed interest in looking for ways to expand housing choices in town. Many residents expressed their desires for supporting additional affordable housing development, ensuring employees who are in Kittery for short-term employment have an affordable place to live, and looking for ways to support seniors who want to downsize but still remain in the community.

Topic area #4 of the comprehensive plan focuses on creating housing at different price points, in a variety of locations, and of different styles and sizes to support Kittery residents.

ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

- Kittery's median home value for owner-occupied housing is lower than surrounding communities, but **the median month rent for renter-occupied units is higher**.
- Kittery's housing stock is **relatively new** compared to surrounding communities. Seventy-four percent of housing units were constructed after 1940.
- Since 2005, a majority of the new housing built has located north of Spruce Creek to the east of Route 1, and in the area north of Route 101 and west of Route 1. These were areas the previous comprehensive plan **designated as limited to no growth.** The predominate development pattern in these areas has been single-family subdivisions with houses on large lots.
- Multi-family developments are dominated by buildings that have fewer than nine units, highlighting the fact that **multi-family developments of size and scale** are not being built in Kittery.
- The dimensional requirements in Kittery's zoning are designed in such a way as to discourage multi-family buildings of size and scale in some of the key areas residents would like

to see them. This is true of the **mixed-use overlay district along Route 1** which has very high lot size and square foot per dwelling unit requirements.

- While many new single-family homes have high price points and tax bills, **the more compact development pattern** found in locations like the Foreside actually produce more property taxes per acre than homes in places like Gerrish Island.

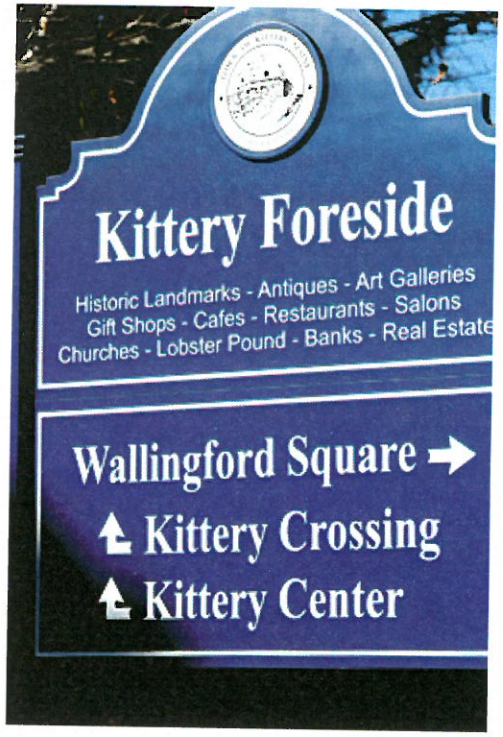
- Develop a housing production plan to dive deeper into the housing supply and demand in Kittery, and develop specific strategies that target gaps in the housing supply.

- Create an entity such as a housing committee or a housing trust in Kittery to focus on issues of housing, and more importantly affordable housing.

- Consider ways to incorporate housing, particularly affordable and workforce housing, as part of any redevelopment scenario on the Water District parcel.

- Encourage new housing development to locate in areas that are already served by public utilities and are connected to the existing transportation network.

- Adopt an inclusionary zoning bylaw to ensure that new development over a certain size threshold either sets aside affordable units as part of the development, or pays a fee in lieu of creating units. The Town can use the fees paid to subsidize units, or help create new affordable units in Kittery.



- Create a local tax incentive program for year-round senior residents (age 65 and over) to receive assistance with property taxes. The program could be similar to a circuit breaker or Maine's Property Tax Fairness Credit.

- Work with local employers to determine if and how employer-assisted housing strategies could be put in place to support lower-income hourly employees, as well as seasonal employees.

- Encourage the use of Kittery's existing cluster development bylaw through zoning incentives such as a density bonus. This can be particularly salient in locations served by sewer or for a development with an on-site sewer package plant.

- Ease the permitting requirements for developers and property owners who wish to utilize the Town's cluster zoning.

- Modify existing zoning to reduce the minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirements in zoning districts and locations where the Town wishes to direct new multi-family housing development.

- Create an overlay district along Route 1 to provide property owners in and around the Outlet Malls with options for incorporating mixed-use and housing as part of any future redevelopment scenario.

- Relax the regulatory standards for accessory dwelling units such that a new accessory structure could be constructed to provide alternative housing types in Kittery.

- Explore zoning that would provide for new housing types and ownership models such as tiny houses and co-housing.

KITTERY VOICES: RESIDENTS' THOUGHTS REGARDING HOUSING

Residents of Kittery have voiced the following opinions, concerns, and ideas about the housing in town, and in particular, the following "burning question:"

"What should the Town do to support housing that is affordable to lower and middle-income households?"

"Where are appropriate locations to encourage new housing development to support this goal?"

"Any place you have existing construction that is not being used."

"Incentivize development through tax incentives. Outlets, Route 1 Corridor, and the Water District site."

"We need to keep Kittery alive and young people need to be able to afford to live here."

"Housing closer to the Foreside would be best. Lower the property taxes for landlords that offer lower rents for people of lower income."

"Housing north of Route 1 and west of I-95."

"Density bonuses for affordable housing is a good place to start. I think the area north of the malls may be suitable although better highway access would help."

"Land is hard to come by, but affordable housing should be made available."

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND RETAIN RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF INCOMES

For Kittery to continue to thrive, the town must be able to attract new people to backfill jobs and housing that are being left by older generations. For this to happen, the Town needs to encourage and support housing at a variety of price points with different designs, styles, and sizes. Younger residents tend to look at location, amenities, price, and design as critical factors when deciding where to live and how much to pay. The success of the Foreside speaks volumes about what younger individuals, couples, and families are looking for.

Specific strategies include:

- 4.1.1 Undertake a housing plan with strategies to better understand the housing supply and demand, and achieve affordable housing goals.
- 4.1.2. Adopt inclusionary zoning as a way to create more affordable housing in Kittery.
- 4.1.3. Update zoning regulations to encourage multi-family housing where appropriate.
- 4.1.4. Provide tax incentives or zoning relief for developers who create housing in desirable locations at a variety of price points.

TOPIC AREA 4: HOUSING
OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES:

OBJECTIVE 4.1. ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND RETAIN RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF INCOMES

- 4.1.1. Undertake a housing plan with strategies to better understand the housing supply and demand, and achieve affordable housing goals.
- 4.1.2. Adopt inclusionary zoning as a way to create more affordable housing in Kittery.
- 4.1.3. Update zoning regulations to encourage multi-family housing where appropriate.
- 4.1.4. Provide tax incentives or zoning relief for developers who create housing in desirable locations at a variety of price points.

OBJECTIVE 4.2. SUPPORT ELDERLY RESIDENTS' ABILITY TO AGE IN PLACE

- 4.2.1. Create a tax incentive program to lower property taxes for senior residents.
- 4.2.2. Update zoning regulations to allow for different housing types that meet the needs of today's senior residents.
- 4.2.3. Provide incentives for developers to take advantage of Kittery's cluster zoning bylaw.
- 4.2.4. Ensure any new developments restricted to seniors is within a safe walking distance to nearby amenities and/or supported by a local public transit option.

4.2. SUPPORT ELDERLY RESIDENTS' ABILITY TO AGE IN PLACE

The social fabric of a community relies on the ability to retain a rich culture and sense of history by supporting residents who have lived in town for decades. With rising housing costs and a general increase in the cost of daily living, seniors on a fixed income are finding it harder and harder to stay where they are. In Kittery, options are limited for where seniors can live and continue to stay connected to the community. As the share of Kittery's population over the age of 65 continues to grow, the Town will need to encourage the integration of senior housing options to ensure residents can age in place.

Specific strategies include:

- 4.2.1. Create a tax incentive program to lower property taxes for senior residents.
- 4.2.2. Update zoning regulations to allow for different housing types that meet the needs of today's senior residents.
- 4.2.3. Provide incentives for developers to take advantage of Kittery's cluster zoning bylaw.
- 4.2.4. Ensure any new developments restricted to seniors is within a safe walking distance to nearby amenities and/or supported by a local public transit option.

= Ripe Apple

HOUSING AND THREE KEY PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Environmental Stewardship	• Developing housing in locations that are already served by public utilities and an existing transportation network will help cut down on greenfield development in Kittery.
Health & Wellness	• Co-locating housing and employment opportunities and connecting them with a sidewalk and bike network will provide healthy transportation choices that make it easier to get around without a car.
Economic & Social Vitality	• Encouraging a mix of housing types and price points will provide options to Kittery residents who want to stay in town, and age in place. This will help preserve the social fabric of the town. • A mix of housing types and price points will encourage businesses to locate and stay in Kittery because their employees can find housing that meets their needs at a price point that matches with their household income.

STATE CRITERIA FOR HOUSING

The State Planning Office establishes the criteria for reviewing community comprehensive plans for consistency with the goals and guidelines of the ***Growth Management Act (30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312 - 4350)***. The objectives and strategies for Topic Area #4 were reviewed to ensure that Kittery's Implementation Plan incorporates these minimum policies and strategies required to address the state housing goals.

D. Policies - Minimum policies required to address state goals:

(1) To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.

(2) To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.

(3) To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

E. Strategies - Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

(1) Maintain, enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to encourage the development of affordable/workforce housing.

(2) Maintain, enact or amend ordinances to allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.

(3) Create or continue to support a community affordable/workforce housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.

(4) Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(3)(M) and where manufactured housing is allowed pursuant to 30-A M.R.S.A. §4358(2).

(5) Support the efforts of local and regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

(6) Seek to achieve a level of at least 10% of new residential development built or placed during the next decade be affordable.

* Existing Resources are examples and are not intended to represent a complete list

TOPIC AREA 4: HOUSING

GOAL STATEMENT: to provide a range of housing types to meet the needs of individuals throughout their lifecycles and to support residents with a range of incomes.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND RETAIN RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF INCOMES						
Strategy	Existing Resources*	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.1. Undertake a housing plan		Create a scope and request for proposals to undertake a comprehensive town-wide housing plan. Plan should include an in-depth analysis of housing supply, demand, and strategies to encourage a variety of housing types and price points. Explore possibility of local regional planning commission undertaking the study on behalf of the Town. Create and implement prioritized list of strategies for housing.	Municipal Funds, or Request to Regional Planning Commission		LEAD: Planning Board, Planning Department PARTNERS: Town Manager	1

* Existing Resources are examples and are not intended to represent a complete list

TOPIC AREA 4: HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 4.1: ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND RETAIN RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF INCOMES						
Strategy	Existing Resources*	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.2. Create a housing committee or housing trust.	Look to other towns in the area that have housing committees or housing trusts.	Create a Housing Committee or Housing Trust to oversee the implementation of the housing plan.	None Required		Town Council, Town Manager, Planning Department	1
4.1.3. Adopt inclusionary zoning as a way to create more affordable housing in Kittery.	Title 16 Land Use and Development Code for Kittery.	Research existing successful inclusionary zoning policies in Maine. Create a working group to help shape Kittery's inclusionary zoning policy. Group should include local housing developers. Create a working group to help shape the policy. Group should include input from local housing developers. Adopt inclusionary zoning policy.	None Required if Completed by Staff	See Strategy 4.1.2 on the creation of a housing committee.	Town Council, Planning Board, Planning Department	1

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OBJECTIVE 4.1: ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND RETAIN RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF INCOMES						
Strategy	Existing Resources*	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.4. Update zoning regulations to encourage multi-family housing where appropriate.	Title 16 Land Use and Development Code for Kittery.	Determine which zoning districts/locations residents would support additional multi-family housing being developed in. Encourage development where public utilities and existing transportation infrastructure already exist. Provide property owners in the area around the Route 1 Outlet Mall with options to redevelop commercial properties with housing and/or mixed use via an overlay district. Draft use and dimensional requirements that encourage multi-family and mixed-use development where appropriate. Change allowable uses to provide for new housing types such as microunits or co-housing.	None Required if Completed by Staff	See strategy 4.1.5. for financial/regulatory incentives.	Planning Board, Planning Department	2

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TOPIC AREA 4: HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 4.1: ATTRACT YOUNG FAMILIES AND RETAIN RESIDENTS WITH A VARIETY OF INCOMES						
Strategy	Existing Resources*	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.5. Provide tax incentives or zoning relief to create housing in desirable locations at a variety of price points.		Build in incentives to encourage the use of the cluster bylaw. Consider using the Water District site to catalyze a public/private partnership that achieves the Town's housing goals. Ease permitting fees or time lines for developers who provide housing that meets the Town's goals. Consider a tax incentive for developments that meet the Town's housing goals. Use inclusionary zoning fees (if any are generated) to help subsidize affordable units in existing or new development.	None Required if Completed by Staff		Town Council, Planning Board, Town Manager, Assessor, Tax Collector, Planning Department	3

* Existing Resources are examples and are not intended to represent a complete list

TOPIC AREA 4: HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 4.2: SUPPORT ELDERLY RESIDENTS' ABILITY TO AGE IN PLACE						
Strategy	Existing Resources*	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.2.1. Create a tax incentive program to lower property taxes for senior residents.		Create a program similar to a circuit breaker, senior work-off program, or Property Tax Fairness Credit.	None Required if Completed by Staff	Program is envisioned to help lower property taxes for seniors through an abatement or a volunteer work-off program.	LEAD: Town Council	2
4.2.2. Update zoning regulations to allow for different housing types that meet the needs of today's senior residents	Title 16 Land Use and Development Code for Kittery.	Update zoning to allow for new housing types such as co-housing or tiny houses. Explicitly note under allowable uses by zoning districts where assisted living is allowed and encouraged. Relax the regulatory standards for accessory dwelling units such that a new accessory structure could be constructed to provide alternative housing types in Kittery.	None Required if Completed by Staff		LEAD: Planning Board, Planning Department	1

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OBJECTIVE 4.2: SUPPORT ELDERLY RESIDENTS' ABILITY TO AGE IN PLACE						
Strategy	Existing Resources*	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.2.3. Provide incentives for developers to take advantage of Kittery's cluster zoning bylaw.	Title 16 Land Use and Development Code for Kittery.	Design density bonuses for developers who utilize the cluster bylaw, particularly in locations that are served by sewers or have on-site wastewater treatment.	None Required if Completed by Staff		LEAD: Planning Board, Planning Department	1
4.2.4. Ensure any new development restricted to seniors is within a safe walking distance to nearby amenities and/or supported by a local public transit option.	Title 16 Land Use and Development Code for Kittery.	Ensure site plan review process includes a review of transportation connectivity. Encourage larger-scale senior housing development to include transportation demand management solutions to increase travel options for seniors. Encourage the integration of new senior housing options into mixed-use or housing developments in close proximity to daily needs amenities like retail, restaurants, town services, grocery stores, etc.	None Required if Completed by Staff	See Goals and Strategies from the Transportation Section of the Comprehensive Plan.	LEAD: Planning Board, Planning Department	1

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ENDNOTES

Portsmouth, NH. Article highlighting a discussion regarding inclusionary zoning and affordable housing.
http://www.seacoastonline.com/news/20160511/portsmouth-panel-seeks-affordable-housing-solutions

Portland, ME. Link to their housing committee as an example.
http://www.portlandmaine.gov/582/Housing-Committee

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