

PLANNING FOR HOUSING CHOICES

Overview

The Town of Suffield is preparing a housing plan for the community. This housing plan is required by the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS Section 8-30j).

Addressing changing housing needs and promoting diverse housing opportunities are important for the Town of Suffield and its current and future residents. People's housing needs and desires change over the course of their lives and providing for a diverse mix of housing helps ensure that people of all ages and characteristics will be able to find housing in Suffield to meet their needs.

GOAL

Seek to provide for a variety of housing choices in Suffield for people and households of all ages and characteristics.

“Housing is absolutely essential to human flourishing.

Without stable shelter, it all falls apart.”

Matthew Desmond,
American Sociologist
Princeton University

Park Place



Ellison Street



Brook Hill Village



Reasons For Addressing Housing

State Statutes Require Preparation Of An Affordable Housing Plan

CGS Section 8-30j requires Suffield adopt an affordable housing plan by June 2022:

1. *At least once every five years, each municipality shall prepare or amend and adopt an affordable housing plan for the municipality.*
2. *Such plan shall specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments in the municipality.*

Zoning Authority Requires Consideration Of Housing Needs

Suffield, like all Connecticut municipalities, gets its authority to enact zoning regulations from the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS):

1. *Such regulations shall also encourage the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region in which the municipality is located ... (CGS 8-2)*
2. *Such regulations shall also promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low- and moderate-income households, and shall encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs identified ... (CGS 8-2)*

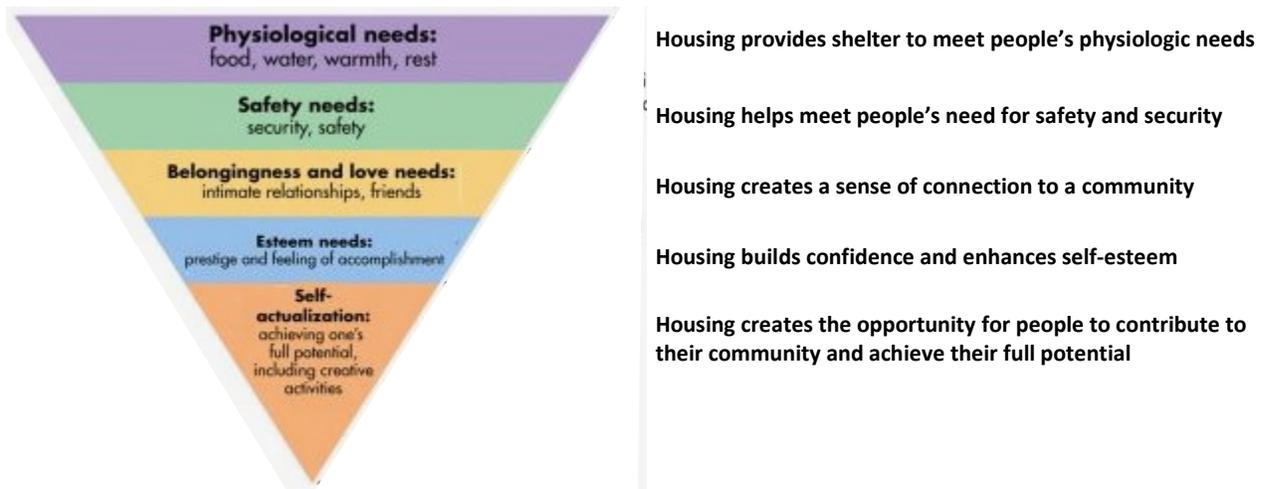
Plan Of Conservation And Development Must Consider Housing Needs

State statutes also require that Connecticut municipalities prepare a Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) at least once every 10 years and the parameters relevant to housing include the following:

1. *In preparing such plan, the commission ... shall consider the ... (2) the need for affordable housing, ... (8) the needs of the municipality including, but not limited to ... housing (CGS 8-23(d))*
2. *Such plan ... shall ... (G) make provision for the development of housing opportunities, including opportunities for multifamily dwellings, consistent with soil types, terrain and infrastructure capacity, for all residents of the municipality and the planning region ... (H) promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low and moderate income households, and encourage the development of housing which will meet the housing needs ... consider allowing older adults and persons with a disability the ability to live in their homes and communities whenever possible. (CGS 8-23(e))*
3. *Such plan may show the commission's ... recommendation for ... the extent and location of public housing projects ... [and] programs for the implementation of the plan, including ...plans for implementation of affordable housing ... (CGS 8-23(f))*

Everyone Needs Housing

Everyone needs housing and for a variety of reasons. In fact, housing plays a part in almost every level of Maslow's "hierarchy of human needs":



And everyone wants housing that is affordable:

- For households earning more than the average income, they generally have the means to find housing that addresses their income and personal needs/desires.
- Households earning less than the average income, however, generally have a harder time finding decent housing they can afford or the cost burden of the housing they can find takes away from other life needs (health, transportation, etc.).

Some housing discussions focus mainly on the social responsibility related to addressing housing and housing affordability (equity, desegregation, etc.).

However, housing and housing affordability are also important to the local and regional economy. Research consistently shows that attractive, well-planned housing that is affordable to a range of socio-economic and age groups:

- Provides *housing for essential employees* (in areas such as emergency services, health care, education, government, retail, etc.),
- Helps retain and attract existing businesses,
- Increases jobs and consumer spending in the surrounding economy, and
- Helps people stay in a community they love through whatever circumstances they may find themselves in.

Proposed Approach

Scope of Work

1 Scoping / Researching

1. Meet with the Director of Planning and Development (and any other relevant officials) to discuss/confirm the overall goals of the project. (1 meeting)
2. Meet with the Planning and Zoning Commission (or other Town entity which will be the adopting agency) to discuss/confirm the overall goals of the project. (1 meeting)
3. Review existing plans, studies, and documents to identify impediments to affordable housing development:
 - a. Land Use Regulations (Zoning, Subdivision)
 - b. Plan of Conservation and Development
4. Conduct a housing needs assessment / overview
 - a. Housing supply (rental and sales) including Existing “affordable housing” (naturally occurring, assisted, deed-restricted, Housing Authority, etc.)
 - b. Demographic patterns
 - c. Socio-economic trends / housing trends
5. Undertake public engagement to get community input prior to development of the plan. (*format and timing* of public engagement to be coordinated with the Director of Planning and Development)
6. Prepare a summary report including
 - a. A housing gap analysis based upon existing housing supply and housing demand and considering housing type
 - b. Possible housing opportunity areas based on:
 - Enhancing factors - infrastructure, capacity, transit, etc.
 - Detracting factors – natural resources, development constraints, etc.
7. Discuss summary report of issues with the Director of Planning and Development (1 meeting)

2 Organizing / Strategizing

1. Prepare a summary report outlining possible strategies to address issues including:
 - a. Inclusionary zoning techniques,
 - b. Additional housing types,
 - c. Accessory dwelling units,
 - d. Subdivision Regulations
 - e. Zoning Regulations,
 - Section IV.N. Housing Opportunity District,
 - Section V.C. Affordable Housing of the Zoning Regulations.
 - f. Real property tax, including incentives for long-term affordable housing.
2. Prioritize strategies which would be effective for Suffield to encourage affordable housing and potential “best practices” applicable to a town like Suffield
3. Discuss material with Director of Planning and Development (1 meeting)
4. Revise strategies report, if needed

On-Line Survey



Audience Discussion



ZOOM Meeting



Working Groups



3 Preparing / Adopting

1. Prepare draft affordable housing plan including:
 - a. A list of goals, policies, and action items to increase the amount of affordable housing in Suffield
 - b. Identification of
 - Existing and pending affordable housing projects in Suffield.
 - Areas/parcels identified as potentially able to support a variety of housing density (including a description of the methodology used in selecting parcels).
 - c. Recommendations revisions to existing Town regulations and/or policies
 - d. Recommendations creation of new Town regulations and/or policies
 - e. An implementation table.
2. Discuss draft affordable housing plan with Director of Planning and Development (1 meeting)
3. Revise draft affordable housing plan, if needed
4. Seek public input / feedback on draft affordable housing plan through either:
 - a. On-Line Survey
 - b. ZOOM meeting or in-person meeting (1 meeting)
5. Finalize Affordable Housing Plan with Planning and Zoning Commission (or other Town entity which will be the adopting agency)
6. Issue proposed Affordable Housing Plan
7. Present the Affordable Housing Plan at a public hearing on adoption in accordance with CGS 8-30j (1 meeting)

Draft Housing Plan



Plan Presentation



Conceptual Schedule

Although there are some uncertainties caused by COVID-19, it is anticipated that the project will start in March 2021, the draft Affordable Housing Plan will be ready for review by June, and (due to the summer months) the overall Scope of Work will be completed by October.

Public hearing on adoption per CGS 8-30j will be scheduled with the Town given pandemic issues and summer months.

