

29 August 2025

The following document presents updates to the list of keywords used in the Regional Plan Goals, Strategies and Policies and a completely updated version of the Housing Chapter Goals, Strategies & Policies. *Italicized, underlined text* in the keywords document reflect additions made by staff since our last meeting. In the Goals, Policies & Strategies document, text that is underlined was moved from a Policy to a Strategy (and vice versa).

## Goals

- Diversify
- Expand
- Maintain
- Increase
- Incentivize
- **Limit** / Decrease / Reduce
- Transform
- Evolve

## Strategies (will):

- Advance (?)
- Impede
- Align
- Assist / **Provide**
- **Identify** / Explore
- Implement
- Integrate
- Improve
- Participate
- Partner
- Plan
- Preserve
- Concentrate
- Prioritize
- **Promote** / Foster / Encourage
- Discourage / Avoid / Dissuade / Bar
- Evaluate

## Policies (shall, must):

- Allow
- Oppose
- Prevent
- Require
- Support
- Limit
- Employ

# Housing

## Aspiration

Ensure safe, affordable, and resilient housing choices by planning for development in appropriate locations, addressing the diversity of housing needs, and fostering inclusive, connected communities that promote equity and long-term sustainability.

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## Goals, Strategies and Policies

### **Goal 1: Expand housing opportunities in areas with existing infrastructure and services.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 1.1. Concentrate new housing in Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas, and Village Areas.
- 1.2. Promote:
  - a) a mix of housing types in walkable locations that provide access to jobs, services, and transit;
  - b) infill development and the redevelopment of underutilized or vacant properties; and
  - c) public investment and incentives to support development in areas already served by water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure.
- 1.3. Provide technical assistance to municipalities:
  - a) updating zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure transparent and predictable local permitting for housing; and
  - b) by developing model bylaws that facilitate infill housing, adaptive reuse and upper-story residential conversions.
- 1.4. Participate in the Act 250 process to:
  - a) support housing development in appropriate locations; and
  - b) discourage development in areas that conflict with regional housing goals.
- 1.5. Encourage flexible lot sizes, reduced setback requirements, and relaxed parking standards in municipal zoning bylaws to enable infill and small-scale housing development.

#### **Policies:**

- 1.1. Limit the extension of infrastructure into undeveloped, outlying areas to reduce sprawl and protect rural landscapes.
- 1.2. Support:
  - a) the identification and mapping of priority growth areas with existing or planned water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure, including sidewalks, bike paths and fixed-route or on-demand transit;

- b) zoning amendments that allow higher-density residential and mixed-use development in Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas and Village Areas; and
  - c) public infrastructure upgrades in areas targeted for housing growth.
- 1.3. Oppose public funding for infrastructure expansion that facilitates sprawling, uncoordinated development.
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## **Goal 2: Coordinate housing development with transportation alternatives, employment opportunities and essential services.**

### **Strategies:**

- 2.1. Align housing development with transportation access and mobility options, including transit, sidewalks, and bike infrastructure.
- 2.2. Promote:
  - a) partnerships between housing developers and providers of essential services;
  - b) affordable housing and mixed-use development near employment and essential services centers;
  - c) higher-density, transit-oriented residential development near bus stops, park-and-rides and along multimodal transportation corridors; and
  - d) a streamlined municipal permitting process for housing in areas with existing infrastructure.
- 2.3. Provide pre-development support for housing near employment centers, schools, childcare facilities and other essential services.
- 2.4. Improve transportation options that connect homes with jobs, schools and essential services.
- 2.5. Integrate housing and transportation planning across regional and local levels.

### **Policies:**

- 2.1. Support:
    - a) land use patterns that reduce travel distances and enable multimodal access;
    - b) safe routes to schools, jobs, and services through sidewalk, bike lane, and lighting improvements;
    - c) transit investment in areas with existing or planned housing development;
    - d) housing near essential services; and
    - e) mobility hubs and first- / last-mile transportation options in residential areas.
  - 2.2. Employ walkability and transit access as scoring criteria in project reviews and funding recommendations.
  - 2.3. Allow residential uses in commercial, institutional, and employment zones.
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## **Goal 3: Reduce barriers to fair and inclusive housing.**

### **Strategies:**

- 3.1. Identify systemic and local barriers to fair and inclusive housing.

- 3.2. Provide technical assistance to municipalities developing inclusive zoning and land use practices that expand housing choice.
- 3.3. Improve:
  - a) housing accessibility for people with disabilities and aging populations; and
  - b) housing options for historically underserved populations, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities and low-income households.
- 3.4. Partner with fair housing organizations to train municipal officials, landlords and real estate professionals.
- 3.5. Promote:
  - a) equitable access to housing programs and assistance;
  - b) multi-unit housing in residential zones;
  - c) community land trusts and shared equity/co-op housing to maintain long-term affordability;
  - d) the preservation of affordable housing in high-demand or gentrifying areas;
  - e) housing affordability by developing model zoning overlays that guard against displacement; and
  - f) public education campaigns on tenant rights and anti-discrimination laws.

#### **Policies:**

- 3.1. Oppose:
    - a) single-family-only zoning; and
    - b) exclusionary zoning in municipal plan and zoning bylaw updates.
  - 3.2. Support:
    - a) housing retrofits that improve accessibility and increase opportunities for aging in place;
    - b) transitional and supportive housing for people exiting homelessness or institutional settings; and
    - c) public funding for developments that exceed ADA requirements and include accessible units.
  - 3.3. Require housing assistance programs to be accessible, language-inclusive and targeted to those most in need.
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### **Goal 4: Expand the supply of affordable housing across the cost continuum.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 4.1. Plan for mixed-income and inclusionary housing in growth areas.
- 4.2. Preserve and rehabilitate the existing affordable housing stock.
- 4.3. Provide permit application assistance for new residential developments that meet affordability thresholds.
- 4.4. Provide technical assistance to municipalities and local housing committees addressing housing affordability and availability.
- 4.5. Provide technical assistance to municipalities to ensure zoning bylaw updates:

- a) align development incentives with regional housing priorities; and
  - b) support a diversity of housing types.
- 4.6. Provide technical assistance to municipalities interested in developing short-term rental registries or updating local ordinances addressing the impacts of short-term rentals.
- 4.7. Promote:
- a) financial literacy and homebuyer education programs, including awareness of public housing programs and information on tax initiatives;
  - b) tax increment financing opportunities to facilitate the development of mixed-income housing;
  - c) inclusionary zoning that reserves a portion of units in new developments as affordable; and
  - d) the development of smaller unit sizes to increase housing affordability.
- 4.8. Identify:
- a) nonprofit and private entities engaged in affordable housing development; and
  - b) funding for weatherization, energy efficiency and accessibility improvements in aging or substandard housing.

## **Policies:**

- 4.1. Support:
- a) public investment in housing projects that meet affordability thresholds;
  - b) long-term affordability covenants for publicly funded housing;
  - c) home repair and code improvement programs to maintain housing stock;
  - d) the development of affordable starter homes and modular construction models through local planning and zoning standards;
  - e) the development of permanently affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households;
  - f) nonprofit acquisition of vulnerable properties to prevent displacement; and
  - g) the use of public lands, housing trust funds, tax credits and infrastructure investments for affordable housing in priority areas.
- 4.9. Support municipal applications for federal and state housing funds:
- a) for projects aligned with regional and municipal plans; and
  - b) that increase housing opportunities across the cost continuum.

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## **Goal 5: Diversify housing options to meet needs across household types, use cases and life stages.**

### **Strategies:**

- 5.1. Encourage a range of housing types to meet diverse income levels, use cases and household sizes in all residential zones.
- 5.2. Evaluate:

- a) demographic trends when considering municipal plan conformance with the Regional Plan to ensure local housing needs can be met; and
- b) whether municipal zoning bylaws allow for the development of diverse housing stock.

5.3. Promote:

- a) homes that support aging in place and accessibility;
- b) the development of accessory dwelling units;
- c) compact, clustered housing and infill development that preserve open space and minimize land use through reductions in minimum lot sizes, setback requirements, and parking mandates; and
- d) workforce and middle-income housing within mixed-use developments.

5.4. Improve awareness of the need for intergenerational and multi-household living.

5.5. Align housing variety with evolving regional and community demographics.

5.6. Provide technical assistance to municipalities:

- a) conducting local housing needs assessments; and
- b) updating zoning bylaws to reflect the findings of a local housing needs assessment.

5.7. Provide accessory dwelling unit design plans to promote infill and affordable housing development.

**Policies:**

5.1. Support:

- a) senior housing in walkable, service-rich locations; and
- b) the development of micro-units, cohousing, manufactured homes and modular housing.

5.2. Support:

- a) home modification programs for older adults and individuals with disabilities,
- b) zoning that allows multi-family housing near transit, job centers, and downtown/village cores,
- c) residential use in commercial districts through mixed-use zoning, and
- d) cooperative housing models with shared infrastructure and amenities

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**Goal 6: Limit housing development in areas with known hazard risk.**

**Strategies:**

6.1. Align regional and municipal planning efforts with the most up-to-date hazard maps and data.

6.2. Discourage new development in high-risk areas, including mapped river corridors, floodplains, and other hazard-prone locations.

6.3. Promote:

- a) voluntary relocation, strategic retreat and buyout programs for existing homes in high-hazard zones; and
- b) risk reduction and increased resilience through the redevelopment and retrofitting of existing housing in vulnerable areas.

6.4. Provide technical assistance to:

- a) municipalities, developers and homeowners to inform them of the risk(s) from natural hazards and how to comply with relevant regulations;
- b) municipalities to plan for a resilient future; and
- c) municipalities to help ensure residents have access to the National Flood Insurance Program and understand related requirements.

**Policies:**

- 6.1. Evaluate FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, the State of Vermont's River Corridor Map and local hazard assessments when considering the conformance of new development and infrastructure proposals with Municipal and Regional Plans.
  - 6.2. Integrate known hazard zones into future land use maps to steer new growth away from high-risk areas.
  - 6.3. Oppose Regional Plan conformance for projects that propose new housing in, or the extension of water, sewer, or road infrastructure into, identified high-hazard areas.
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**Goal 7: Increase the resilience of housing and neighborhoods to climate change.**

**Strategies:**

- 7.1. Avoid siting new housing in high-risk hazard areas.
- 7.2. Promote:
  - a) resilient design and construction standards in new homes;
  - b) undergrounding or hardening utility lines in residential areas; and
  - c) the restoration of wetlands, riparian buffers and floodplains near Downtown Centers, Village Centers, Planned Growth Areas and Village Areas.
- 7.3. Improve the resilience of:
  - a) existing housing to flooding, storms and extreme temperatures; and
  - b) infrastructure serving residential areas.
- 7.4. Provide technical assistance to stakeholders for programs that fund resilience retrofits such as elevating homes, reinforcing roofs, and installing storm windows.
- 7.5. Provide technical assistance to municipalities to consider:
  - a) hazard exposure in siting and prioritizing projects included in their capital improvement plan; and
  - b) resilience upgrades in their capital improvement plan.
- 7.6. Implement nature-based solutions to reduce neighborhood-scale climate risks.
- 7.7. Integrate hazard mitigation goals and climate adaptation strategies into regional housing policies, project evaluations and funding programs.
- 7.8. Align land use regulations with local hazard mitigation plans.

**Policies:**

- 7.1. Ensure resilience planning addresses the needs of vulnerable populations.
- 7.2. Support:



- a) green building certifications that include resilience standards;
  - b) green infrastructure like rain gardens, permeable surfaces and bioswales in housing projects; and
  - c) tree planting and green roofs for urban heat mitigation.
- 7.3. Evaluate resilience as a key consideration for supporting new residential development reliant on public funding.
- 7.4. Support resilience investments in climate-vulnerable, low-income, historically marginalized communities.
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## **Goal 8: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the housing sector.**

### **Strategies:**

- 8.1. Promote:
- a) energy-efficient construction and retrofitting existing housing to improve energy performance and reduce emissions;
  - b) compact, location-efficient housing that minimizes vehicle miles traveled;
  - c) the electrification of homes to speed the transition from fossil fuel heating and appliances;
  - d) rooftop and shared/community solar for residential use; and
  - e) adaptive reuse of existing buildings to reduce construction waste and preserve embedded carbon.
- 8.2. Prioritize:
- a) renewable energy in new and existing housing by including energy efficiency considerations in regional housing project reviews and funding recommendations;
  - b) new housing in walkable neighborhoods, village centers, and areas with existing transit; and
  - c) public investment in housing that lowers total lifecycle emissions.
- 8.3. Provide technical assistance for funding programs that support the installation of electric heat pumps, solar panels, and energy efficient appliances to expand access to rebates and services.

### **Policies:**

- 8.1. Support:
- a) weatherization, insulation, and HVAC upgrades for existing homes—especially for low- and moderate-income households,
  - b) higher residential densities in mixed-use areas to reduce transportation and building emissions;
  - c) net-metering policies that allow households to offset their energy use with renewable generation; and
  - d) the inclusion of emissions reduction and energy efficiency criteria in state and federal housing programs.

8.2. Oppose new residential development in remote locations that require long commutes or high car dependency.

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