

Town of Stonington

Affordable Housing Plan



Planning and Zoning
Commission
May 3, 2022

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerned citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

The Stonington Affordable Housing Plan

The following are the specific policies, programs and strategies to guide analysis and implementation to provide more Qualified Affordable Housing in the town.

Removing Regulatory Impediments – Recommended Modifications of Land Use Regulations

Accessory Apartments

- Consider reducing the minimum of 2,000 square foot total area provision from the existing regulation to expand the opportunity for accessory apartments in smaller single-family residential properties.
- Consider creation of a Qualified Affordable Accessory Apartment provision that encourages such units to be deed-restricted to maintain affordability. Such a provision could be voluntary for the applicant and requirements for Qualified Affordable Units should be following affordability requirements of CGS 8-30g.
 - To encourage and incentivize homeowners who are applying for accessory apartments to utilize the qualified affordable provision, the zoning provision could be paired with the recommendations below for an affordable housing tax abatement program.

Duplex Units

- Consider allowing duplex units on minimum lot sizes that are the same as the minimum lot sizes for single-family residential units in the zoning districts where duplex units are allowed.
 - For example, if the minimum lot size for a single-family house is 10,000 square feet, then the minimum lot size for the duplex unit should also be 10,000 square feet.
- In addition to duplex housing units, consider allowing semi-detached single-family housing with a zero-lot-line provision. This would allow two-unit or townhouse units to be developed on individual lots but designed where the property line splits the wall separating the units.
 - Such a provision would require a reduction in the minimum lot size and zero side-yard provision to accommodate such a form of development.

Multi-Family in Residential Zones

- Consider allowing multi-family residential uses in the residential zoning districts that are served by adequate public sewer and water or feasible community wells or subsurface septic systems.
- Consider allowing multi-family residential uses in commercial zoning districts.

Residential Mixed-Use (Section 6.6.21)

- Review the unit maximums.
- Review the lot area requirements per unit and allow coverage and parking to constrain unit yield.
- Review minimum percentage of commercial use requirement to better allow market demand to determine the mix of uses.
- Consider allowing Residential Mixed Use in additional commercial zoning districts with public water and sewer.
- Consider reducing the building size in the “Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings” provision (Section 6.6.14) and consider permitting flexibility in allowable densities under this section in the PV-5 zone to encourage redevelopment of existing buildings.

Lot Size and Non-Conforming Use and Bulk

- Study and analyze the RH-10 zoning district possibly add a provision to allow investments and renovations that modernize the housing stock regardless of the non-conforming status of properties.

Efficient Permitting and Permitted Use

- Conduct a comprehensive review of uses allowed by zone.

Inclusionary Zoning

- Consider creating an inclusionary zoning provision that requires all residential developments of a certain size to provide a minimum percentage of the units as Qualified Affordable Housing.
- Consider analyzing the appropriateness of a Fee In Lieu of Affordable Housing.
- Consider creation of a Qualified Affordable Housing provision to be utilized with the Neighborhood Development District.

Providing Incentives – Housing and Affordable Housing Incentive Programs

The following are specific recommendations for incentives to create housing and affordable housing in Stonington.

Property Tax Abatement

- Create an Affordable Housing Commission to study a possible Affordable Housing Tax Abatement policy. Such a policy could include offering tax abatements to owners of existing naturally occurring affordable multi-family housing units who deed restrict units as Qualified Affordable Housing.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts

Tax Increment Financing utilizes the anticipated future increases in property taxes to pay for current and needed improvements (typically infrastructure improvements) or to repay debt issued for such improvements. Connecticut state law (CGS Section 7-339cc – Section 7-339kk) authorized local municipalities to create Tax Increment Districts for the utilization TIF in a manner that geographically targeted.

- Create an Affordable Housing Commission to study possible TIF Districts as a possible mechanism to pay for current and needed improvements.

Housing Trust Fund

- Create an Affordable Housing Commission which will study the possible creation of a Housing Trust Fund, as well as ways to finance, manage and distribute funds following the Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 98, Section 7-148(c)(2)(K) (and Chapter 124, Section 8-2i. Inclusionary Zoning).