

III. HOUSING PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

The housing strategy was designed to increase affordable housing opportunities with increases in production, retention of existing units, and programs and policies that support these goals. These recommendations were developed through an analysis of available housing data and statistics, current housing issues facing the community and from the applicable goals of the Housing Element of Franklin's Community Development Plan and "*Affordable Housing Strategy and Development Action Plan*".

1. Availability of Developable Land and Using Zoning "By Right" as a Tool

Given that the availability of developable land area for residential housing is decreasing(see pg. 13), there exists a need to discourage spall and to encourage developments that include a mixture of uses within an area. The Town has been systematically rezoning and adding zoning by right categories that will decrease the impact on the environment by utilizing existing high traffic areas in more economic and environmentally friendly ways and that will at the same time encourage a new variety of affordable housing and economic opportunities.

Rezoning and New Zoning, Fiscal years 2003 to date: (ex. 03-511 is Bylaw adopted in 2003 and numbered 511.):

03-511: added to the Zoning Chapter 185, a "Neighborhood Commercial" District that would complement existing neighborhoods and encourage environmentally friendly and family friendly retail and residential developments allowing for pedestrian areas, and encouraged heavily planted low visibility parking and lighting.

04-550: added a Senior Village Overlay District that offered density bonuses and required 15% affordable units.

05-574: added a provision for "Family Needed Temporary Apartments".

05-558: rezoned 65 +/- to encourage Industrial, Business, Rural Residential, General Residential VI, and Single Family IV to be aligned around Rt. 495 thereby encouraging and making the development of the area less cumbersome.

05, 06, 07: Rezoned areas around heavily traveled and commercially connected areas to encourage commercial/industrial/office developments and more rural areas for residential. These areas are around Rt 495, down Rt. 140 through the center of Franklin out Washington Street and Lincoln

and Pond Streets. Allowed for retail below and housing above, particularly in the downtown area.

09-637: added a Home Occupation Business and Home Professional Office definitions to Zoning.

10-640; rezoned for Biotechnology development to increase jobs creation and residential need.

Additionally, in order to encourage housing affordability, the availability of water and sewer connections to a municipal source is key. The Legislative body of the Town has approved over 25 Water and/or Sewer Connection applications, where they were not zoned to allow residential development for one structure up to 100 structures in areas that would not be economically feasible without the availability.

2. Municipal Affordable Housing Trust

The most important step that the Town of Franklin can take to improve housing is to establish a group of committed local people to lead the housing program – a housing task force. The task force would help solve housing issues with locally administered input and programs and would examine housing supply and policies. It would be responsible for the following actions:

- Coordinate goals and efforts,
- Seek funding opportunities,
- Provide outreach for tenants,
- Establish supply and demand for housing,
- Identify target areas for housing development, and
- Maximize utilization of resources.

The Town Council should appoint members. It should include a broad range of housing groups such as the Franklin Housing Authority, developers, and the Franklin Downtown Partnership.

In order to successfully implement actions, the task force will need to identify all stakeholders and coordinate goals and objectives as well as focus on implementation strategies. From a functional standpoint, the task force will need to have a budget, expenses, and seek housing funds and grants to support its operation and actions.

3. Ensure Compliance with the Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing Plan attached to this document as Exhibit 1.

The Town of Franklin is at 10.4% Subsidized Housing Inventory. The Town will explore innovative ways to increase the supply of affordable housing development to continue to exceed the state's goal of 10% subsidized housing.

A. Methods to be utilized include:

- Monitor and track all housing projects.
- Explore a variety of housing opportunities to increase affordable housing units.
- Update housing plan every 5 years.
- Support lower cost housing that is affordable in perpetuity.
- Explore methods for preventing the expiration of affordable units.

B. The Town will work through the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust to ensure the creation of a variety of housing options to reflect the needs of the community. The Trust will prioritize types of development, units, numbers of bedrooms, and locations.

4. Franklin encourages the continuing development of affordable housing opportunities for low, moderate, and middle-income households, seniors, and the disabled through the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust resources.

- The Trust has instituted a down payment assistance program where an eligible household can purchase an existing home.
- Franklin gave the Housing Authority a parcel of land for 10 units of housing for the disabled and sold 5 acres to a non-profit for the production of low income senior housing.
- Continue to support zoning incentives to encourage low, moderate, and middle-income housing in multi-family developments and residential subdivisions.
- Continue to support the work of the Housing Trust to identify and develop affordable housing opportunities for a variety of different income levels.
- Assist affordable housing goals by supporting programs and policies that directly seek related funding and programs.
- Provide financial incentives through grants from the Housing Trust to encourage reuse of existing housing stock.
- Pursue funding programs available for assisting with housing efforts.

- Utilize Town owned tax-title properties for development of low, moderate, and middle-income housing units.

5. Encourage development of multifamily housing.

The Town will encourage development of multi-family housing at appropriate locations in Franklin and encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings for future residential use, particular downtown redevelopment areas. The Town will work towards the redevelopment of the Town's older sites for a mixture of uses, including lower cost housing for families and the elderly. Methods include:

- Providing financial incentives through the planning and permitting process;
- Addressing development impacts;
- Identifying downtown/mixed use development sites that would be appropriate for redevelopment; and
- Working with property owners to create mixed use developments through incentives such as density bonuses or tax incrementing financing.
- Utilize Town owned tax-title properties for development of low, moderate, and middle-income housing units.

6. Increase housing opportunities for seniors and the elderly.

- Encourage affordable housing for the elderly through alternative residential programs such as life-care, assisted, or congregate living arrangements.
- Evaluate different programs for providing elderly housing.
- Explore expanding the number of rental opportunities for senior and elderly residents.
- Encourage development of housing units that can easily be adapted or modified for handicap accessibility as needed.
- Other options to improve elderly housing include utilizing town-owned land for housing sites and utilizing the senior center for outreach and counseling.

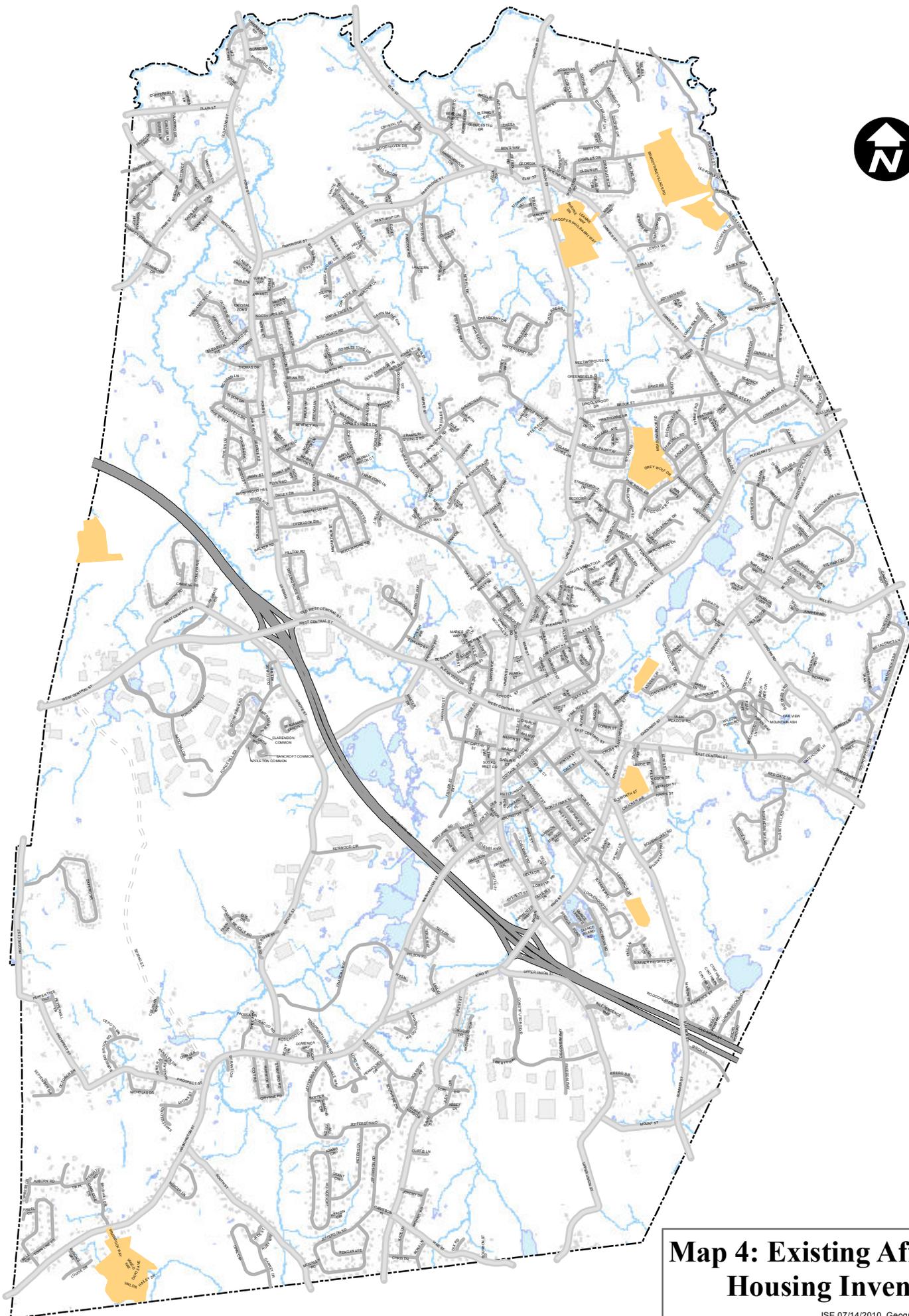
7. Amend the zoning by-laws to allow:

“Assisted living” and other elderly housing facilities in residential and certain commercial zones, and

Greater densities for housing reserved for the elderly residents.

8. Maintain an inventory of existing housing facilities.

The Town will maintain an inventory of existing housing facilities that details the location of existing affordable housing facilities, 55+ senior developments and 40B housing developments within Franklin (*Map 4: Existing Affordable Housing*).



Map 4: Existing Affordable Housing Inventory

JSE 07/14/2010 Geographic Information Systems
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9. Identify areas where there is potential for development of affordable housing.

The focus area for potential housing development is centered around the Downtown area with a focus on providing multi-bedroom housing units.

- Provide housing opportunities in the Downtown area where mixed-use and infill development opportunities are available. This area provides the most services and has a housing stock that is generally affordable and can more easily be converted to affordable housing.
- Allow housing conversions in the Downtown area to allow multi-bedroom housing-units.
- Consider a multi-family zoning around the central business district by-right rather than requiring a special permit.
- School land that is owned by the Town of Franklin should be evaluated for residential uses. Housing at schools could be used for teachers and other municipal workers. Renting or leasing to these people may require specific eligibility conditions such as income limits and residency terms.
- Retain, support, and expand existing affordable housing sites that are scattered throughout Franklin.

CONCLUSION

The Town of Franklin has postured itself as a key player and stakeholder in the creation of housing consistent with the above stated policy, goals and objectives. The Town reaffirms its commitment to ensure that a variety of housing opportunities exist to meet the diverse needs of its existing and future citizens. The Town looks forward to working with a broad coalition of public and private entities to achieve its affordable housing goals.