GOAL 2: HOUSING

To promote a wide range of housing options that respond to the needs of households, regardless of the income and life stage

The Battle Green Apartments on Worthen Road are part of Lexington's rental housing market.

"I think you travel to search and you come back home to find yourself there."

~ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan, housing has emerged as one of the top areas of concern. Proximity to Route 2 and I-95, providing connections to jobs in Boston and Cambridge, as well as an excellent school system and town services, have made Lexington a sought-after place to settle and raise children. Single-household housing has been and remains the dominant housing type; nearly 90% of the residentially zoned land is reserved for this use. Lexington has one of the highest median household incomes in Massachusetts at $185,686, and also has one of the highest median home values in the state[1]. As of September 2021, the median selling price of a home in Lexington over the previous twelve months was $1.5 million. Lexington has diverse architecture in some neighborhoods, but diversity of sizes and prices is diminishing rapidly.

Goal #2 addresses Lexington's need to provide a range of housing options to enable more diversity in age, income, physical ability, race, religion, and ethnicity. A wider range of housing options will support young families, older adults, recent immigrants, persons of color, persons with disabilities, single individuals, and households with low, moderate, and higher incomes[2]. The strategies in this section aim to produce an array of housing types; to preserve older, smaller, historic homes; to site homes in and around commercial areas and on transit lines; and to align home construction with the town's desire to become resilient, sustainable, accessible, and more welcoming. A major theme of this section is to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive, as detailed in Goal 1, through local housing policies.

A well-balanced supply of housing is important to the quality of life in Lexington because it helps:

- Broaden the ethnic, racial, income, and age diversity within the town's population
- Better serve non-traditional households and those with special needs
- Reduce the town's carbon footprint by offsetting the consumption needs of larger homes with the lower needs of smaller homes
- Enliven the town's commercial areas by mixing residences and businesses

[1] U.S. Census Lexington, Town, Middlesex County, MA https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lexingtontownmiddlesexcountymassachusetts,MA/PST045221

[2] State and federal Fair Housing Law prohibits housing discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, gender, disability, familial status, marital status, sexual orientation, receipt of public assistance (including Section 8), genetic information, and military status. https://www.mass.gov/service-details/overview-of-fair-housing-law

LEXINGTON VOICES

Q&A from a **League of Women Voters** presentation on March 5, 2021:

- *"How can Lexington encourage residential, mixed-use, multi-family housing in commercial areas such as Lexington Center, Bedford Street, Mass. Ave., and Marrett Road which have bus routes, etc.?"*
- *To construct new housing units, like the Avalons, in regions more remote from T routes, something like Lexpress should be considered as a serious long-term service…maybe its own additional route"*
- *"Do 'local preference policies' serve to preserve the racial composition of a community because those not already residing in town are excluded from such a practice (i.e. making it harder for Black and Latino families to move to Lexington?)"*
- *"What about encouraging people to rent out rooms to boarders as a way to help seniors to stay in their homes?"*
- *"Would it be possible to divide a huge house into two or three or four smaller independent units?"*

Over the years, property owners and developers have replaced older, smaller homes with much larger structures.

OVERVIEW OF LEXINGTON'S HOUSING RESOURCES

HISTORICAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Lexington's housing has reflected its many faces over the years: as a farming community, industrial center, and upscale suburb. Lexington grew significantly following World War II. In 1940 the town had 2,688 dwelling units and a population of 13,187; by 1970 the number of units had grown to 8,869 with the population reaching 31,886. By the 1990s, the town was largely built out and addition of new homes on vacant land slowed dramatically. Attempts to encourage desirable patterns in new infill development through zoning mechanisms such as cluster development have had limited success.

Property owners have increasingly turned to tearing down older houses and replacing them with larger ones. In the last ten years, the town issued a total of 821 permits for new homes; 75% of these permits were replacing an existing home. The gross floor area of new homes has increased by an average of 258% from 2,476 square feet to 6,378 square feet.

ADDITIONAL LEXINGTON VOICES

Participants in June 15, 2021 Public Forum were asked how the town could achieve the following:

Provide a range of housing options: *Support co-housing*

- *Provide incentives for developers to create less expensive and smaller dwelling units*
- *Allow for smaller lots, more multi-family and multi-use buildings, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and townhomes by-right*
- *Allow large-scale housing at Hartwell and along bus routes*

Increase the supply of housing for older adults and first-time home buyers:

- *Protect the inventory of single-story homes from being torn down*
- *Increase and encourage multi-unit housing*
- *Increase single floor and accessible housing*
- *Provide incentives for older persons to stay in their present homes*
- *Encourage the building and use of ADUs*

Preserve the existing stock of modest homes by:

- *Allowing "granny houses" to be built behind or next to existing homes*

"There are so many creative, beautiful ways to create denser housing and a variety of housing options besides single-family homes"

EXISTING HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Lexington retains a wide variety of housing from its history, including farmhouses, factory worker housing, country homes for the well-off, and inexpensive starter homes. These homes are built in a variety of popular architectural styles, notably including Mid-Century Modern style homes from the 20th century. Single-household detached houses make up 77% of total dwelling units. Over 75% of all housing has three or more bedrooms. The median price of homes sold in 2021 was $1.5 million.

EXISTING HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Households comprised of three or more people represent 50% of all households in town. Two-person households account for 31% of households, and 19% of households consist of single persons living alone.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Lexington has one of the highest median household incomes in Massachusetts, estimated in 2019 to be $186,201 per year. This amount falls short of the $281,500 annual household income required to purchase a home at the 2021 median price of $1.5 million. As a result, 23% of homeowners are "housing cost burdened," meaning they spend more than 30% of their monthly gross income on housing. 31% of renters fall into the same category[3]. Many of Lexington's residents are living in housing they cannot afford. According to 2018 HUD Comprehensive Housing

[3] MHP Center for Housing Data "Data Town"; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016-2020 5-year estimates.

Affordability Strategy data for Lexington's low-income residents:

75% of low-income households are cost burdened
67% of low-income renters are cost burdened
83% of low-income owners are cost burdened

Although 11% of the town's housing units are on the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Subsidized Housing Inventory, many of these are market-rate rental units in subsidized housing developments. Only 5.5% (663 total dwellings) are available at below-market prices as many of the units counted on the inventory are actually market-rate because market-rate units are added to the SHI in some developments where more than 24% of the units are affordable. The income restricted units on the SHI are limited to households earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AM). The income restricted units on the SHI are limited to households earning less than 80% of the Area Median income (AMI) and subsidized refers to housing that has price and income restrictions.

SUMMARY POINTS

- While a small amount of vacant land remains available for the construction of new homes, smaller homes are increasingly being torn down to make way for larger ones. Larger homes may increase the amount of impervious surface which can impact stormwater runoff to the surrounding land., placing added stresses on the environment.

- Persons aged 65 and up make up approximately 19% of Lexington's population; by 2030, this number is expected to reach 27%. The town does not have an adequate supply of housing to accommodate this demographic; demand for subsidized housing by persons aged 65 and older is high as indicated by long waiting lists and wait times of more than four years for Federal and state senior housing.

- 23% of Lexington's homeowners and 31% of renters are cost-burdened by housing, spending more than 30% of their income on housing.

- Lexington's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) is slightly above the state's minimum threshold of 10%, but only 5.5% of the housing units are available at below-market prices.

- Homes affordable to lower income renters and for individuals over age 65 have years-long wait lists.

- Lexington's zoning doesn't match its housing needs. Current zoning restricts or prohibits all types of housing other than large single-household homes. Where alternative housing is permitted, it is subject to multiple levels of discretionary review, imposing significant costs. This is especially challenging for non-profit subsidized housing developers.

2019 home demolition on Bedford Street.

Many Lexington residents who commuted to jobs in Boston,

Cambridge, and along the I-95 corridor before the onset of COVID-19 have been working from home; some may continue to do so once the pandemic has abated. This may result in a desire for larger homes. Increased demand for larger homes with access to private and public outdoor space may put further pressure on Lexington's housing prices, as well as public infrastructure including water, storm drainage, and waste water.

Mid-Century Modern homes are found in several neighborhoods.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

How can the town provide more **diverse types of owned and rental housing** for a broader range of household income levels?

How can Lexington expand its supply of **subsidized housing**?

How can **housing desired by older adults**, including accessory dwelling units and one-floor apartments, be developed?

What types of incentives can encourage property owners and developers **to preserve smaller homes**?

What regional measures can be taken to increase the housing supply?

ADDITIONAL LEXINGTON VOICES

(participants in September 21, 2021 LexingtonNext Public Forum on Housing)

When asked "who has difficulty finding housing in Lexington?" respondents listed:

- *Young people and older people;*
- *New young families and families without double incomes; first-time homebuyers*
- *People with mobility challenges and other disabilities*
- *People with low to medium incomes*
- *People of color and LGBTQIA+*

When asked "what types of housing are missing in Lexington?" respondents noted:

- *Everything except large houses*
- *Housing for immigrants (costs and living arrangements)*
- *Small apartment buildings; studio and one-bedroom apartments*
- *Small capes*
- *Townhouses*
- *Smaller cottage-style clustered housing*

ADDITIONAL LEXINGTON VOICES

(participants in September 2021 online survey)

When asked…

- *to identify the most significant challenges of staying in Lexington, 44% of respondents chose the limited supply of single-family housing*

- *to identify the top three areas in need of improvement in Lexington, 75% chose availability of housing*

- *to identify the type of new residential development they would most like to see, 68% chose townhomes, 64% chose senior independent living facilities, and 60% chose mixed-use (commercial and residential)*

(attendees at the October 2021 Re-Discovery Day event)

Expressed interest in the development of:

- *affordable housing, including housing for public employees such as teachers, senior housing*
- *diverse housing types*
- *multi-family housing along heavily traveled streets*
- *sustainable housing, including net zero homes with clean heat*

RELATED TOWN OF LEXINGTON GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Select Board Goals:

- Review residential zoning for ways to create new housing opportunities and protect the diversity character of the existing housing stock
    - Research what zoning alternatives other communities have used to broaden housing diversity
- Work with the Planning Department, Community Preservation Committee, Housing Partnership Board, LexHAB, Housing Authority and others to review existing affordable housing stock, identify needed improvements and providing funding
- Explore ways in which LexHAB could be transformed in the future

LEXINGTON'S SYSTEMIC RACISM RESOLUTION

Town Meeting 2020 (Article 8)

"A system of advantages which gives privilege and power to one racialized group over another, intentional or not.

That the town:

1. consider racial and other equity impacts in all decisions and planning processes in order to work toward dismantling systemic racism and white privilege;
2. take action to integrate racial equity tools and concepts into routine operations and policy-making;
3. build capacity to collect, interpret and act on data related to inequities, particularly those related to health, housing, education, policing, representation, and economic and environmental justice; and
4. develop and implement a comprehensive racial equity plan with public input, to include staff training, hiring practices, and public education; all with the goal of making Lexington a truly equitable community."

RELATED TOWN OF LEXINGTON GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Planning Board Work Items:

- 1.H: Review and update the Zoning Bylaw and Map to comply with recent Housing Choice legislation
- 2.H: Review and amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for alternatives to single-family housing
- 5H: Under the direction of the SPRD Ad-hoc Committee, amend the existing SPRD Bylaw
- 6H: Expand options for multifamily housing in eligible locations as permitted by Housing Choice legislation
- 7H: Allow mixed use development in eligible locations as permitted by Housing Choice legislation
- 8H: Allow increased housing in Lexington Center
- 9H: Require inclusionary housing in new residential developments

Abbreviations:

OSRD – Open Space Residential Development (Lexington)
SPRD – Special Permit Residential Development (Lexington)
Housing Choice legislation is also referred to as the MBTA Communities legislation or bill (State legislation)
CPA – Community Preservation Act

GOAL 2: HOUSING

To promote a wide range of housing options that respond to the needs of households, regardless of income and life stage

Objective 2.1. Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town

Objective 2.2. Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing

Objective 2.3. Encourage housing for older persons

Objective 2.4. Protect the exterior of existing historically or architecturally significant homes

Objective 2.5. Preserve homes that contribute to the diversity of housing options

Objective 2.6. Increase the effectiveness of housing efforts

Objective 2.7. Enable flexible use of housing to adapt to changing working and living arrangements

Objective 2.8. Make new and existing housing environmentally sustainable

Objective 2.9. Affirmatively further fair housing

The Implementation Table on the pages that follow identifies Action Steps, Responsible Parties, Potential Partners and other factors to support the implementation of each of the objectives and to help attain the goal.

GOAL 2: HOUSING

Objective 2.1 Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.1.1. Expand housing options in non-residential districts	a. Permit upper-story housing or commercial uses with a housing component in commercial districts while maintaining a strong commercial tax base	Existing zoning districts, including Lexington Center, East Lexington, and Hartwell Avenue Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD**: Planning Board **PARTNERS:** Land Use, Health and Development Department Commercial and industrial property owners Human Services Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Human Rights Committee Housing Partnership Board	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

Objective 2.1 Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.1.2. Allow missing middle[4] housing types in residential neighborhoods	a. Allow missing middle housing types such as accessory dwelling units and multi-family homes in residential districts b. Reduce parking minimums c. Allow creation of multiple dwelling units within existing large homes d. Adopt design guidelines to meld new development into existing neighborhoods			**LEAD:** Planning Board **PARTNERS:** Land Use, Health and Development Department Human Services Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Human Rights Committee Housing Partnership Board LexHAB Historical Commission	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**
2.1.3. Expand options for	a. Meet the requirements of the MBTA Communities legislation for by-right multi-	MBTA bus connections to Lexington		**LEAD:** Planning Board **PARTNERS:**	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[4] **Missing Middle Housing** is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood. For more information, see: https://missingmiddlehousing.com/

Objective 2.1 Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
transit-oriented development (TOD)[5]	family development (for size, capacity and density)[6] • Inform and energize residents about Lexington's responsibility for our fair share of the region's housing needs along with the benefits and advantages of embracing the MBTA Communities multi-family housing law b. Adopt overlay zoning such as Chapter 40R Smart Growth Districts[7] to permit transit-oriented housing	MBTA Communities legislation (MGL c. 40A s. 3A) Massachusetts Housing Partnership Complete Neighborhoods Initiative[8] Smart Growth Overlay Districts (MGL c. 40R) Citizen Housing Planning Association		Land Use, Health and Development Department Human Services Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Human Rights Committee Housing Partnership Board	

[5] **Transit Oriented Development** is compact, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development centered around high-quality transportation systems. For more information, see: http://tod.org/

[6] To comply with the MBTA Communities legislation provisions in M.G.L. c. 40A section 3, Lexington must provide zoning that permits a minimum of 1,231 dwelling units in districts with a gross density of at least 15 dwelling units per acre. See: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities#how-mbta-communities-can-comply-in-2022-

[7] The **Smart Growth Zoning Overlay District Act chapter 40R** (the Act), encourages communities to create dense residential or mixed-use smart growth zoning districts, including a high percentage of affordable housing units, to be located near transit stations, in areas of concentrated development such as existing city and town centers, and in other highly suitable locations. See: https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titlevii/chapter40r

[8] The **Complete Neighborhoods Initiative** was created to complement the MBTA Communities legislation, by providing technical assistance to interested cities and towns. For more information, see: https://www.mhp.net/community/complete-neighborhoods-initiative

Objective 2.1 Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
				LexHAB	
2.1.4. Update lot frontage and area requirements and provisions for nonconforming lots[9] to permit desirable housing	a. Reduce minimum lot frontage and area requirements to match historical development patterns b. Allow housing, meeting Town goals on nonconforming lots without going through the Comprehensive Permit, Special Permit, or Variance process	Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD:** Planning Board **PARTNERS:** Land Use, Health and Development Department Human Services Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Human Rights Committee, Housing Partnership Board LexHAB	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**
2.1.5. Limit the size of homes on smaller lots	a. Research, identify, and study communities that have adopted strategies to manage the impact of large homes on established neighborhoods	Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD:** Planning Board **PARTNERS:**	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[9] **Nonconforming lots** are those that don't conform to current zoning requirements. Some were undersized when minimum lot sizes were established upon the adoption of the zoning bylaw. Under State law, nonconforming lots were not intended to allow as much building as a "conforming" lot, that is, a lot that is large enough to meet the zoning bylaw.

Objective 2.1 Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
	b. Further limit the gross floor area of homes on smaller lots, including nonconforming lots			Land Use, Health and Development Department Human Services Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Human Rights Committee, Housing Partnership Board LexHAB	
2.1.6. Allow housing development on municipal properties	a. Implement a process to develop housing, meeting the town's housing goals, such as subsidized housing, on underutilized municipal properties • Identify municipal properties that could support housing			**Land Use, Health and Development Department** **Partners: Planning Board Select Board Housing Partnership Board**	

Objective 2.1 Produce a range of housing types in a variety of locations throughout the town					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.1.7. Encourage small-scale housing developments that meet the Town's housing goals	a. Amend the Special Permit Residential Development provision of the Zoning Bylaw to encourage development consistent with the town's housing goals through dimensional flexibility (e.g., setbacks, area, frontage), additional housing types, and by-right zoning b. Consult with developers and private market participants to understand realistic requirements for scale and density and to determine potentially suitable locations	Zoning Bylaw (including SPRD and OSRD provisions)		**LEAD**: Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Planning Board Council on Aging Special Permit Residential Development ad-hoc Committee	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.2.1. Assess the subsidized housing needs of the Town	a. Prepare a Housing Needs Assessment for Lexington, which examines demographic and economic data, housing inventory and tenure, local policies and regulations, the availability of and adequacy of services, area and local stakeholder input and recommends strategies to meet goals for missing housing types b. Assess the inventory of town-owned properties for their capacity to accommodate construction of subsidized housing c. Develop and implement a Housing Production Plan for subsidized housing consistent with Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD's) Chapter 40B regulations (Year 4 or 5)	Metropolitan Area Planning Council's 2014 ***Housing Production Plan for Lexington*** WestMetro HOME Consortium 1996 Open Space Land Acquisition list		**LEAD**: Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Planning Board Conservation Commission Regional Housing Service Organization (RHSO) LexHAB Housing Partnership Board Human Services Department Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer, Human Rights Committee Recreation Department	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.2.2. Establish an affordable housing trust and a community housing development corporation[10]	a. Adopt the provisions of M.G.L. c. 44, s. 55C and a local bylaw to establish an Affordable Housing Trust[11] • Develop an action plan for the affordable housing trust that identifies priorities and steps to help achieve goals • Enable the affordable housing trust to provide rental and first-time home-buyer assistance b. Support the incorporation of an independent nonprofit housing development corporation c. Study communities that work with both an affordable housing trust and established local non-profit partners to understand the division of roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for collaboration	M.G.L. c. 44, s. 55C Massachusetts Housing Partnership's ***Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Guidebook***[12] Massachusetts Housing Partnership's training for affordable housing trust members Housing trusts in other Massachusetts communities: Sudbury, Stow, Carlisle	Community Preservation Act	**LEAD**: Affordable Housing Trust Study Committee Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Housing Partnership Board LexHAB Regional Housing Service Office (RHSO) Human Services Department Community Preservation Committee	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[10] Establishment of a municipal affordable housing trust and a housing development corporation are expected results from the Affordable Housing Trust Study Committee. For more information about establishing housing trusts, see: https://www.housingtoolbox.org/local-tools/creating-a-housing-trust-fund

[11] M.G.L. c. 44, S. 55C permit a city or town to establish a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund, for the purpose of providing for the creation and preservation of affordable housing for the benefit of low- and moderate-income households and for the funding of community housing. For more information, see: https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleVII/Chapter44/Section55C

[12] https://www.mhp.net/writable/resources/documents/municipal_affordable_housing_trust_guidebook.pdf

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
				Capital Expenditures Committee	
2.2.3. Develop new funding sources for subsidized housing beyond Community Preservation Act resources	a. Approve a "home rule" petition to the Legislature to allow transfer fees on very expensive homes[13], for example as advanced by the Local Option for Housing Affordability Coalition[14] b. Direct all or part of Lexington's short-term rental tax revenue, and any other special revenue funds, to the Affordable Housing Trust, once established, for the production of subsidized housing[15] c. Continue to pursue the two special acts of the legislature authorized by Town Meeting in 2020 and 2021 for a linkage fee on teardowns and a commercial development surcharge to support subsidized housing (H3891 and H4314) or other development surcharges and impact fees on commercial and market-rate residential developments		Real estate transfer fees Short-term rental fees Development surcharges Impact fees Linkage fees	**LEAD:** Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Housing Partnership Board LexHAB Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) WestMetro HOME Consortium	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[13] Somerville was the first municipality in Massachusetts to submit such a petition to the Legislature. See: https://www.somervillecdc.org/news/what-is-a-home-rule-petition/

[14] https://www.realestatetransferfee.org/

[15] Lexington's short-term rental tax was adopted at a Special Town Meeting in 2020.

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.2.4. Support builders using Federal and state subsidies, partnerships with regional financial institutions, and related mechanisms	a. Commit local resources to projects for which applicants have applied or are applying for Federal and state subsidized housing funds[16] b. Work with the Planning Office, Community Preservation Committee, Housing Partnership, LexHAB, Housing Authority, and others to identify and fund needed improvements to housing units	Federal and state housing development financial assistance programs	Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (Federal)[17] HOME Investment Partnership Program (Federal)[18] Local Initiative Program (State)[19] Affordable Housing Trust Fund (State)[20] Regional financial institutions MacArthur and other private foundations	**LEAD**: Planning Office **PARTNER:**	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[16] Investing local funds can (and usually does) increase a project's competitiveness for state housing subsidies and affordable housing programs offered by financial institutions and private foundations.

[17] The **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC)** is a federally authorized program for non-profit and for-profit developers to promote the construction and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing. For more information, see: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/low-income-housing-tax-credit-lihtc.

[18] https://www.mass.gov/service-details/home-investment-partnerships-program-home

[19] https://www.mass.gov/service-details/local-initiative-program

[20] https://www.mass.gov/service-details/affordable-housing-trust-fund-ahtf

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
			Community Preservation Act		
2.2.5. Develop new strategies for acquiring and developing subsidized housing	a. Adopt the policy presented by the Housing Partnership Board's Land Acquisition Proposal Subcommittee in February 2022 to review all town real property acquisition opportunities for subsidized housing along with other uses from the beginning of discussions until a final decision is made • Develop a policy to guide decisions on use of acquired land, based on measurable criteria and need b. Develop a list of properties for acquisition for subsidized housing and other municipal uses, modeled after the 1996 Open Space Land Acquisition list c. Use tools such as a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) to identify property owners or developers who would be willing to work with the town on a subsidized or mixed-income development plan in exchange for town support (e.g., zoning changes, financial contributions, etc.) d. Develop a policy that requires the town to set aside portions of open space acquisitions for construction of affordable housing, provided the land is developable; unless the open space value is determined to be so high based on specific measurable criteria, i.e. for flood control, rare or endangered species habitat, a strategic connection or trail link, as to outweigh the need for affordable housing.	Inventory of potential open space acquisitions ***Open Space and Recreation Plan*** (2017)	Community Preservation Act	**LEAD**: Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Conservation Commission Open Space Acquisition Committee LexHAB Housing Partnership Board	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
	The weighted criteria should be based on need[21]. e. Construct subsidized housing on the former Leary property on Vine Street				
2.2.6. Adopt housing policies that foster the development of subsidized housing	a. Develop an ***inclusionary zoning*** policy that requires developers of new market-rate housing to provide housing for lower-income residents[22] • Educate residents about inclusionary zoning to build public support • Establish expectations for developers • Set a policy that subsidized housing shall be indistinguishable from market-rate housing, dispersed throughout development projects, equitable, and affordable in perpetuity • Add perpetual inclusionary zoning requirement in all special permit residential developments	Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD**: Planning Board **PARTNERS:** Land Use, Health and Development Department Town Counsel LexHAB Housing Partnership Board Developers	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[21] As described in the narrative, only 663 (5.5%) housing units in Lexington are on the affordable housing subsidized inventory and the number of units has not increased since 2011.

[22] ***Inclusionary zoning*** is a planning tool intended to ensure economic diversity and inclusivity in the housing market. Inclusionary zoning policies can include both mandatory requirements or voluntary incentives for the inclusion of affordable, deed-restricted housing units in new or renovated developments. For more information, see: https://www.planetizen.com/definition/inclusionary-zoning

Objective 2.2 Increase and preserve the supply of subsidized housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
	b. Make the subsidized housing units at Katahdin Woods permanently affordable				
2.2.7. Address barriers to subsidized housing, especially for nonprofit developers	a. Adopt guidelines for permit review boards, committees, and commissions to streamline the permitting for developing or rehabilitating subsidized housing b. Dedicate Town funds to offset the cost of preparing professional plans (e.g., civil engineering, stormwater, etc.) and the cost for professionals to make presentations to boards and committees hearings for permit approval for non-profit subsidized housing developers c. Waive permit application fees for review of nonprofit subsidized housing developments d. Provide financial support and incentives to create subsidized housing		CPA; Town Budget; private, state and federal grants	Planning Board Select Board Land Use, Health and Development Department Chief Equity Officer	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

Objective 2.3. Encourage housing for older persons.					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.3.1. Create accessible housing	a. Hold a panel presentation open to the public with architects, landscape architects, and disability policy professionals, experienced with universal design, and educating the community about the benefits of universal design	Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design		**LEAD:** Committee on Disability **PARTNERS:**	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)** **and**

Objective 2.3. Encourage housing for older persons.					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
	b. Adopt site plan review standards to encourage or require universal design in new developments, consistent with Architectural Access Board regulations, using Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design[23] and inclusive design principles of the Institute for Human Centered Design[24] as guides	Institute for Human Centered Design Architectural Access Board State Building Code		Land Use, Health, and Development Department MAPC Building Office Planning Board Council on Aging	**ON-GOING (Continue to Support)**

[23] https://www.ada.gov/2010ADAstandards_index.htm
[24] https://humancentereddesign.org/

Objective 2.4 Protect the exteriors of existing historically or architecturally significant homes					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.4.1. Establish additional Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs)[25]	a. Establish additional **Neighborhood Conservation Districts** as a tool to guide integration of new housing into neighborhoods with a distinct architectural character b. Provide public education about NCDs: • Their purposes • How they are created • How they can be used as flexible tools for development/redevelopment c. Work with neighborhoods interested in preserving unique styles	NCD Bylaw Existing NCDs in Lexington		**LEAD:** Land Use, Health and Development Department Planning Board **PARTNERS:** Neighborhood Conservation District Commissions	**#2: INTERMEDIATE (Years 5-10)**

Objective 2.5 Preserve homes that contribute to the diversity of housing options					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.5.1. Create incentives to preserve smaller homes	a. Consult with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	Zoning Bylaw Demolition Delay Bylaw		**LEAD**: Building Office Historical Commission Planning Board **PARTNERS:**	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[25] **Neighborhood Conservation Districts** (Chapter 78, Section 78-3, Town of Lexington Zoning Bylaw). Adopted in 2016 through a vote of Town Meeting, this Bylaw recognizes that "Lexington contains unique and distinctive neighborhoods and areas which contribute significantly to the overall character and identity of the town and which are worthy of preservation and protection. The town aims to preserve, protect, and enhance these neighborhoods through the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation Districts."

	and other jurisdictions to identify communities that have imposed workable incentives to discourage demolition of smaller dwellings or expansion of smaller dwelling units b. Add or expand property tax relief programs c. Support older adults financially in making home modifications d. Provide financial and practical support to older adults for the maintenance of their property			Land Use, Health, and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Massachusetts Housing Partnership Historical Commission DHCD MAPC	

Objective 2.6 Increase the effectiveness of housing efforts					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.6.1 Update housing policy responsibilities	a. Expand the charge of the Housing Partnership Board to: • Assess housing policy options and incentives from surrounding communities • Relay information about housing policy to relevant town departments, boards, and committees • Advocate for housing in Lexington through policy, funding, public education, negotiating with developers, staffing, and advising elected officials b. Hold a housing policy "roundtable" regularly, involving all of the town's housing players, e.g., the Housing Partnership Board, Housing Authority, LexHAB, Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO), any future Affordable Housing Trust, and Town staff c. Exchange ideas and concerns with low-income housing advocates from the neighboring communities	Housing Partnership Board Charter		**LEADS**: Select Board Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Housing Partnership Board Lexington Housing Authority LexHAB Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) Human Services Department Council on Aging Commission on Disability Human Rights Committee Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

Objective 2.6 Increase the effectiveness of housing efforts					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.6.2. Support Town housing efforts	a. Create the housing officer/housing planner position proposed by the Housing Partnership Board and Town staff to provide staff resources to assist with housing advocacy and administration b. Evaluate the effectiveness of existing housing programs, including an assessment of: • existing housing administration practices, staffing, and organization • how well existing housing policy and zoning and other regulations address racial and disability equity, and • how well the U.S., state and local housing policy is communicated to the public c. Upgrade technology and tools required to: • model future housing • facilitate the permit application process • convey information to the public	[26] Massachusetts Housing Partnership Citizen Housing Planning Association Consulting Planners of Massachusetts		**LEAD:** Planning Board Housing Partnership Board Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer Committee on Disability Housing Officer/Housing Planner (proposed new position)	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)** **and** **ONGOING (Continue to Support)**
2.6.3. Educate the community about housing	a. Provide real estate agents with ready-to-use information about available housing options b. Increase awareness about the connection between affordable housing and diversity • Collect research on connection between affordable housing and				

[26] The Edward J. Collins Center, based at UMass Boston, provides consulting services of this type. See: https://www.umb.edu/cpm

Objective 2.6 Increase the effectiveness of housing efforts					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
	diversity of population and create an online resource on the town's web page • Collect stories from persons looking for affordable housing in Lexington and post videos to increase awareness, promote understanding				

Objective 2.7 Enable flexible use of housing to adapt to changing working and living arrangements					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.7.1 Support the creation of alternative housing models	a. Remove barriers to construction and use of congregate housing, single-room-occupancy housing, co-housing, and related models in the Zoning Bylaw (including the Congregate Living Facility provision), regulations, and permitting process • Consult with organizations that develop and manage congregate housing, single-room-occupancy housing, co-housing, and related models to understand opportunities and challenges[27] • Identify potential locations for congregate housing, co-housing, and single-room occupancies (SRO)within the town	Executive Office of Elder Affairs CoHoUS Precedents in surrounding communities (e.g. Acton)		**LEADS**: Land Use, Health and Development Department Housing Partnership Board **PARTNERS:**	**#2: INTERMEDIATE (Years 5 - 10)**
2.7.2. Support the creation of accessory dwelling units	a. Remove barriers to construction and use of accessory dwelling units from the Zoning Bylaw (including the Accessory Apartments provisions), regulations, and permitting process	Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD:** Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Planning Board Zoning Board of Appeals	**#2: INTERMEDIATE (Years 5 - 10)**

[27] Currently, as many as sixteen co-housing communities exist in Massachusetts; the first was established in Cambridge in 1973. For more information about these communities, as well as guidance about creating co-housing, see CoHoUS: https://www.cohousing.org/create-cohousing/create-it/. For information on congregate housing in Massachusetts, contact the Executive Office of Elder Affairs: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/congregate-housing-eligibility.

Objective 2.7 Enable flexible use of housing to adapt to changing working and living arrangements					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.7.3. Support the creation of "live/work" spaces (properties that combine residential and non-residential uses)	a. Remove barriers to creation and use of live/work spaces from the Zoning Bylaw (including the Home Occupations provision), regulations, and permitting process • Identify potential locations for live/work spaces within the town	Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD:** Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Planning Board	**#2: INTERMEDIATE (Years 5 - 10)**

Objective 2.8 Make new and existing housing environmentally sustainable

Strategies	Potential Actions	Existing Resources	Funding	Lead & Partner(s)	Phasing
2.8.1. Encourage healthy, resilient, energy-efficient housing	a. Adopt the new Municipal Opt-in Specialized Stretch Energy Code b. Establish incentives for developers of new buildings to: • reduce impervious surfaces • incorporate electric space and water heating systems, including air-source and geothermal heat pumps • incorporate renewable energy generation and storage systems • incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure • Incorporate sustainable design principles to keep operating costs down for residents and contribute to meeting the town's net zero goals c. Advocate for legislation or the energy code to phase out use of fossil fuels in new housing and major renovations[28] d. Inventory existing housing with on-site fossil fuel use, and create incentives to retrofit them to phase out on-site fossil fuel use, increase efficiency, and improve air quality e. Encourage housing owners to take advantage of available state-funded programs to help with electrification and resiliency. f. Eliminate fossil fuel use in subsidized housing	***Sustainability Action Plan*** ***Getting to Net Zero Plan*** American Institute of Architects (AIA) American Planning Association (APA) Rocky Mountain Institute		**LEADS**: Land Use, Health and Development Department Sustainability and Resilience Officer **PARTNERS:** Planning Board Sustainable Lexington Committee	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[28] In December of 2021, New York became the largest city in the country to agree to phase out fossil fuels in all new building construction after the city council passed a bill that bans those buildings from hooking up to gas. A climate change bill passed in July 2022 allowing 10 Massachusetts community to pilot a ban on fossil fuel for new construction (H. 5060) https://www.mma.org/legislature-passes-climate-and-clean-energy-bill/

Objective 2.8 Make new and existing housing environmentally sustainable					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
2.8.2. Mitigate environmental disturbances	a. Adopt land clearing and grading regulations, avoiding conflicts with subdivision regulations and other bylaws or requirements. • Discourage major regrading of land • Discourage removal of mature trees • Enhance stormwater runoff mitigation b. Update bylaws to encourage Low Impact Development (LID)[29]	***Sustainability Action Plan*** ***Getting to Net Zero Plan*** Mass. Audubon ***Bylaw Review for LID and Climate-Smart, Nature-Based Solutions***[30]		**LEAD:** Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Sustainable Lexington Committee **Conservation Commission** **Engineering Division**	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**

[29] Low Impact Development (LID) See: https://www.epa.gov/nps/urban-runoff-low-impact-development

[30] https://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/policy-advocacy/shaping-climate-resilient-communities/publications-community-resources/bylaw-review

Objective 2.9 Affirmatively further fair housing

Strategies	Potential Actions	Existing Resources	Funding	Lead & Partner(s)	Phasing
2.9.1 Provide training in Fair Housing[31]	a. Create an annual program (in April, National Fair Housing Month) with training for public officials (including members of the Select Board, Planning Board, and School Committee), real estate agents, housing managers, and the general public about Fair Housing laws, impediments, and effective ways to counter housing discrimination	Housing Partnership Board Land Use, Health and Development Department HOME Consortium		**LEAD**: Human Rights Committee Metro West Fair Housing Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) **PARTNERS:** Human Services Department	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**
2.9.2. Eliminate polices or practices contrary to fair housing	a. Reduce or eliminate "local preference" policies for access to subsidized housing that give preference to local residents while excluding non-residents, including METCO families and Town employees b. Create a policy that subsidized housing is indistinguishable on the exterior from market rate housing and protective of the privacy of the residents c. Review zoning and policies for discriminatory effects, including exclusion of children	Planning Board Rules & Regulations Select Board Planning Board Housing Partnership Board General Bylaws Zoning Bylaw		**LEAD:** Planning Board Land Use, Health, and Development Department Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) **PARTNERS:**	**#2: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 - 5)**

[31] The **Fair Housing Act**, also known as the Civil Rights Act of 1968, was passed in order to address housing discrimination, including the attempted segregation of neighborhoods. While the Act has resulted in protecting many individuals and families from housing discrimination based on race, religion, sex, color, familial status, national origin, disability and other factors, discrimination still occurs. More on the Fair Housing Act: https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-1

Objective 2.9 Affirmatively further fair housing					
Strategies	**Potential Actions**	**Existing Resources**	**Funding**	**Lead & Partner(s)**	**Phasing**
				Local real estate professionals Local residential landlords Chief Equity Officer	
2.9.3. Ensure that new housing policies are consistent with the town's diversity, equity and inclusion, and anti-discrimination goals	a. Perform an equity audit of housing and development policies and practices	American Planning Association Metropolitan Area Planning Council		**LEADS:** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer Human Rights Committee Commission on Disability Land Use, Health and Development Department **PARTNERS:** Select Board	**#1: IMMEDIATE (Years 1 – 5)**
2.9.4. Provide homebuyer resources and technical assistance	a. Promote and provide first-time homebuyer resources and technical assistance to under-represented groups b. Establish a program to provide financial assistance, such as down payment and mortgage assistance, to under-represented groups		State programs	**LEADS:** Chief Equity Officer Land Use, Health, and Development Department	**#2: INTERMEDIATE (Years 5 - 10)**

ENDNOTES

1. **Accessory Dwelling Units** can provide many benefits, as described in the American Association of Retired Persons' guide to Accessory Dwelling Units, ***The ABCs of ADUs***. Some of these include:

1. Providing homeowners with more options:
   - ~ Downsizing while staying on your property and live in the ADU
   - ~ Housing a caretaker on your property
   - ~ Housing your children or parents
   - ~ Gaining an extra source of income by renting out an ADU
2. Providing less-expensive housing choices:
   - ~ Costing less than a new single-family home on a separate lot, thus providing options for low- and moderate-income residents
   - ~ Helping seniors stay in their community and "age in place" by renting out their ADU or downsizing the living in it themselves
   - ~ Providing smaller housing options to meet the growing needs of empty nesters, smaller families, and young adults
   - ~ Helping make it easier for people who work in town to live in town, including teachers, firefighters, and nurses (to name a few)
3. Having a low impact on the environment and neighborhood:
   - ~ No development of open space
   - ~ No large, new construction projects
   - ~ No new infrastructure needed
   - ~ Gentle density designed and maintained by homeowners
   - ~ More compact, infill development promotes more walkable, car-lite neighborhoods

For more information, see: http://www.aarp.org/ADUs