
Town of Hamilton Housing Vision Forum: Housing Assets, Resources, Challenges, and Opportunities

November 8, 2012, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Prepared for:

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Hamilton Housing Forum
Thursday, November 8, 2012
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Agenda

Time	Item
7:00 – 7:10 pm	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Production Plan Update Project Overview
7:10 – 7:15 pm	Agenda Overview and Polling
7:15 – 7:55 pm	Housing Needs and Demand in Hamilton and the Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population and Household Characteristics, Existing Housing Stock, Income and Affordability • Q & A
7:55 – 8:05 pm	Implementing a Housing Production Plan - Preview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual production goal • Strategies for affordable housing development • Overview of affordable housing development tools and strategies used in Hamilton
8:05 – 8:50 pm	Housing Assets/Resources, Challenges, and Opportunities
8:50 – 9:00 pm	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection • Implementation Strategies • Plan Review and Approval <p><i>Please complete a comment form – thank you!</i></p>

Meeting Summary

On November 8, 2012, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) facilitated a public meeting in the Town of Hamilton to create a vision for future residential development as part of updating the Town's Housing Production Plan. 20 people attended the meeting, which was held at the Hamilton Council on Aging.

Kristine Cheetham, Planning Coordinator for the Town of Hamilton Planning Board welcomed participants and opened the meeting. Jennifer Raitt, Chief Housing Planner facilitated the meeting. The housing needs analysis presented was prepared by Clayton Martin, Research Analyst from the MAPC Data Services department.

The meeting began with an overview of MAPC, the MetroFuture Regional Plan, and the progress Hamilton has made guiding affordable housing development in town since the adoption of the last Housing Production Plan. This was followed by an overview of M.G.L. Chapter 40B and an overview of housing production plans. Next MAPC presented its analysis of housing needs that included data points of demographic characteristics, household characteristics and existing housing stock, and income and affordability, which helped outline housing needs in Hamilton in the context of trends in a subregional study area, the MAPC region, and the state.

The next part of the evening was a facilitated discussion to identify housing assets/resources, barriers, and opportunities for affordable housing development in the town. Participants brainstormed ideas falling into each of the three categories mentioned. Ideas were recorded on flipchart paper. Facilitators also mentioned that a Housing Opportunities Survey was going to be administered for seniors to learn more about their specific housing needs. This content will also be considered in developing the possible housing development opportunities list and implementation strategies section of the Housing Production Plan update.

The following is a summary of comments emerging from the meeting.

Based on the data shared, what do you think Hamilton's housing goals should be?

- Capitalize the Trust; particularly in early stage projects (e.g. providing funding for due diligence, site assessment), and use it to leverage additional capital
- Determine if owners of Asbury Grove would consider working with Town and determine if a waiver is possible for the religious requirement. Perhaps use eight houses in rear of property that are not habitable in winter, address septic issues and separate from religiously affiliated units.
- Pursue opportunities for downsizing (e.g. condos versus single families e.g. Willowdale)
- Ensure that seniors (55+) can stay in Hamilton; connect to assisted living and independent living opportunities
- Create TOD, develop downtown, and attract commuters
- Make aging in place a necessity and make homes adaptable (e.g. widen doorways) (see Saugus, Peabody for reference)
- Count existing inventory and "lock it in" (try to apply deed restrictions); formalize existing affordable units
- Revisit previous housing production plan; learn from success/failures; don't reinvent the wheel
- Set a realistic production goal for Hamilton. The 10% minimum goal under 40B is not realistic. Focus instead on interests of Hamilton residents

- Establish ways to protect Hamilton against 40B

What are the ways in which Hamilton is doing well achieving housing goals? What resources, organizations, or models are assets and worth replicating in the future?

- The creation and work of the Affordable Housing Trust
- The adoption of bylaws for inclusionary and senior housing
- Voting for the Community Preservation Act and the subsequent funding available for community housing (\$40K – \$50K for affordable housing; \$150K from CPA)
- Membership in the North Shore HOME Consortium (HOME funds)
- The creation of the Hamilton Development Corporation (similar to an Economic Development Investment Corporation)
- Permitting for accessory apartments over the past year (possibly four units)
- Working with Harborlight Community Partners, Inc.
- Commitment to a Housing Production Plan

What are the barriers to Hamilton achieving housing goals?

- Not building enough housing
- There is not any allowance for multifamily housing and not just for people age 55+
- Lack of housing diversity – there is only single family housing
- Zoning (e.g. Willow St. overlay)
- Need to focus on type of housing (elderly versus family versus low-income)
- Septic issues
- Lack of state funding for small projects which increase the need for local and private equity into smaller scale development projects

Are there specific housing opportunities that exist for redevelopment, preservation, or new housing? New partnerships, resources, and support?

- The existing Carriage Junction project (perhaps the Town should expand the affordable component or provide relief to the developer)
- Develop a cottage housing by-law because this housing type and scale may have more support. The Town has been working with a group from Arlington on this concept
- Push forward more accessory apartments