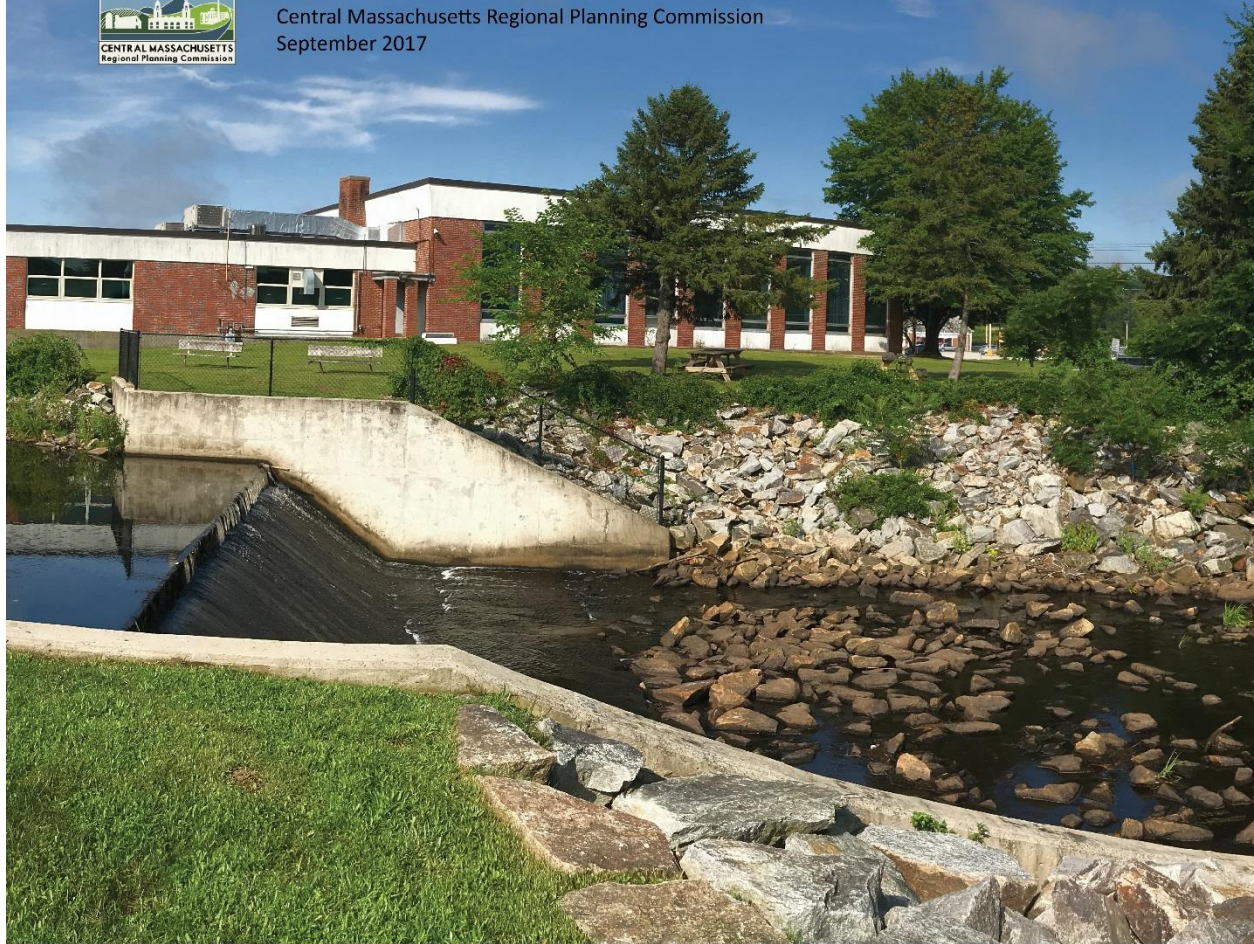




TOWN OF AUBURN COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING PLAN



Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
September 2017



Auburn Housing Plan

September 2017

Acknowledgements

Housing Steering Committee

Denise Brotherton – Previous Board of Selectmen

James Brooks- Healthy Homes Program Manager for City of Worcester.

Ann Weston- Member of the Auburn Housing Authority

Shannon Regan- Staff Assistant to the Town Manager

Michael D’Amore – Resigned from the committee.

Town of Auburn Staff Support

Julie A. Jacobson, Town Manager

Shannon Regan, Staff Assistant to the Town Manager

Matthew C. Benoit, Town Planner/Energy Manager

Consultants

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Jayne Armington, AICP, Principal Planner

Ron Barron, Associate Planner

Emily Glaubitz, Planning Assistant

Karen Sunnarborg Consulting

This Plan was prepared through funding from the State’s Planning Assistance Toward Housing (PATH) Program, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development. The Housing Production Plan component was prepared according to the requirements of the State’s Housing Production Program (HPP), which is a program administered by DHCD and authorized by Massachusetts Chapter 40B to encourage communities to take a proactive approach towards producing affordable housing and meeting their 10% affordable housing goal. This HPP is valid for a five-year period from the approval date by DHCD. Upon expiration, this HPP may be renewed.

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Community Overview	1
Summary of Housing Needs Assessment	2
Demographic and Housing Characteristics Summary	2
Housing Market Summary	3
Summary of Development Challenges	4
Summary of Housing Production Goals.....	4
Summary of Housing Strategies	5
Capacity Building Strategies	5
Zoning Strategies	6
Housing Development Strategies	7
Housing Preservation Strategies.....	7
Introduction	9
Purpose.....	9
Housing Production Plans and MGL Chapter 40B	9
Plan Process.....	10
Plan Methodology	11
Defining Affordable Housing	11
Fair Housing and Housing Discrimination	12
Housing Needs Assessment	15
Community Overview	15
Demographic Characteristics	15
Population and Household Trends	15
Household Types	17
Age	19
Race and Ethnicity	20
Disability	21
Population with Special Needs	23
Income	24

Employment and Education	27
Housing Supply Characteristics	29
Housing Occupancy	30
Housing by Tenure	30
Housing by Structural Type	32
Housing by Number of Bedrooms	34
Housing by Size of Home	35
Age of Housing	36
Senior Housing	38
Income Restricted Housing (Subsidized Housing)	39
Special Needs Housing	42
Housing Market	42
Single Family Home Market	42
Rental Market	50
Cost Burdens by Tenure, Income and Type of Household	53
Development and Building Activity	55
Housing Challenges	58
Regulatory Constraints	58
Zoning Provisions that Address Affordable Housing and Smart Growth	60
Limited Community Infrastructure	64
Environmental Constraints	66
Limited Subsidies	69
Housing Production Goals	71
Housing Strategies	75
1. Capacity Building Strategies	77
1.1 Promote Adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA)	78
1.2 Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund	81
1.3 Continue to Conduct Ongoing Community Outreach and Education	85
1.4 Secure Further Professional Support	86
2. Zoning Strategies	88
2.1 Adopt New Zoning for Multi-Family Housing and Mixed-Use Development	89

2.2	Modify the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) Bylaw	93
2.3	Modify the Accessory Apartment Bylaw.....	94
2.4	Explore Inclusionary Zoning	96
3.	Housing Development Strategies.....	99
3.1	Make Suitable Public Property Available for Affordable Housing	100
3.2	Pursue Partnership Opportunities for Multi-family and Mixed-Use Development.....	103
3.3	Support Small-scale Infill Housing Development.....	106
4.	Housing Preservation Strategies	110
4.1	Continue to Participate in the Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI).....	110
4.2	Establish a Housing Rehabilitation Program	111

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B, requires cities and towns to work toward ensuring that at least 10 percent of their total housing stock qualifies as affordable to households earning at or below 80 percent of the area median income. To help meet this 10 percent goal and take a proactive approach toward the development of affordable housing, the state encourages municipalities to prepare a Housing Production Plan (HPP), which is a specific type of housing plan authorized by MGL Chapter 40B¹ and administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

This Housing Plan, which includes an HPP, was developed by the Town of Auburn Housing Steering Committee, with assistance from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and housing consultant, Karen Sunnarborg (the “Project Team”), as part of the Town’s recent designation as a Compact Community. The project was funded by a Planning Assistance Toward Housing (PATH) Grant from the State’s Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) awarded to the Town of Auburn. It seeks to develop strategies for providing quality housing opportunities to the Town’s diverse population, including seniors, young families and the disabled. It was envisioned as both a Community Compact best practice and as a support for the Master Planning process currently being undertaken by the town.

The plan is organized into three principal components:

1. ***Housing Needs Assessment*** - analyzing the town’s unique demographic and housing characteristics to identify growth trends, market strengths and potential gaps.
2. ***Housing Challenges*** – examining the barriers to developing diverse, affordable housing in Auburn.
3. ***Production Goals and Strategies*** – looking at the town’s vision, goals and specific steps to achieve goals.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Auburn is a primarily suburban community located on the south-west border of the City of Worcester. The town sits at the junction of two major interstates, Routes 90 and 290, as well as a number of major

¹ Section 760 CMR 56.03(4).

state highways. These roads have helped transform Auburn from a largely agricultural economy into a predominantly industrial and retail-based economy. Auburn has a strong commercial/industrial base consisting of diverse sectors, including warehousing, distribution and other industrial companies. Additionally, the town is home to a significant retail sector, anchored by the Auburn Mall, and other service related businesses. Many of these businesses have been located in Auburn for several decades. Auburn has several industrial and business parks, multiple commercial clusters, and a major regional retail shopping mall. Auburn imports labor from other communities to fill jobs created by local industry resulting in a greater day-time than evening population. Housing opportunities consist primarily of single family homes with the owner-occupied rate remaining very high, indicative of a stable residential base.

SUMMARY OF HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The project team analyzed multiple data sources (see Methodology) to assess population, demographic trends and market strength and potential gaps. In general, the housing market is robust, with relatively quick turnover in single family homes and a moderate median price. A slowdown in new construction since 2006 has resulted in a constricted housing supply with most new construction being concentrated in larger, more expensive housing. The principal need is for increased housing options for young families with moderate incomes and for the town's growing retirement-age population.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS SUMMARY

Auburn's population is growing slowly in comparison to the region's population growth. Residents over 65 years old represent the fastest growing age cohort in Auburn. This data point suggests more housing will need to be developed for residents looking to age in place. Working age residents (25-64 years) are projected to experience continued decline compared to other age groups. This decline suggests a lack of housing options suitable for young families and other workers.

Income Characteristics – In comparison to Worcester County and the state, Auburn has:

- Fewer very-low income households, those earning less than \$25,000
- Similar low-to-middle income households, those earning \$25,000 to \$50,000
- More households in the middle-income category, those earning \$50,000 to \$100,000
- Similar higher-income households, those earning \$100,000 or more

Employment and education - The percent of the population with a bachelor's or higher is slightly below the state average at 36%. The unemployment rate in Auburn is 4.9%, which is about on par with state and regional averages. The largest single employment sector is in retail, though the largest growth in jobs was in health care and social service. Auburn is also host to some of the region's most active shopping centers, which, combined, added 40 new businesses between 2005-2015.

Housing Supply – Housing in Auburn is characterized by a large number of smaller, older houses, off-set by a much smaller collection of newer, larger homes. More than 70% of homes in Auburn are 2,000 square feet or less. Of these homes, comparatively few were built after 1990. More than 60% of homes were built before 1970, with 34% built before 1940. Rental units in Auburn tend to be newer with nearly 40% built between 1980-2010, compared to just over 20% of owner occupied units built over this period. Single family, owner-occupied homes comprise 84% of the housing market, while 16% are rental units. Vacancy among owner occupied units is 1.3%, while among rentals it is 6.4%.

Senior Housing – The Auburn Housing Authority has created a number of senior housing units in recent years. Yet even with this increase, there remains a great need for senior housing for the current population and in the future as the population continues to age.

Subsidized Housing - Auburn is at just 3.6% of 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). This percentage is largely attributable to the low rate of housing growth, the clustering of new developments at the high end of the market and the general lack of diversity in the housing stock.

Special Needs Housing – The Auburn Housing Authority reserves a small number of units in senior developments for special needs population.

HOUSING MARKET SUMMARY

The housing market in Auburn is generally robust, especially within the single-family home market, despite a constricted, aging supply.

Affordability – Housing in Auburn is still relatively affordable. The median sales price for single-family homes in 2016 was \$227,500, slightly below most neighboring communities. Between March 2016 and March 2017, 196 houses were on the market for an average of 76 days per unit. The majority of units were listed between \$150,000 and \$300,000. These units were on the market for an average of 64 days, indicating high demand for mid-range single family housing. It should be noted that few of these mid-range units were built in this century. Of the homes constructed between 2010 and 2016, close to 80% were priced above \$300,000.

Rental Market – In 2016, the median rental price for all unit types was \$960/month. The vacancy rate in the rental market was 6.6%, slightly higher than what would be considered acceptable in a healthy market. Prices generally averaged above FY16 HUD (see Rental Market section) fair market rental rate for Worcester Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (see table 23).

Cost Burden - Almost 30% of all households in Auburn qualify as cost burdened. To be “Cost-Burdened” is defined as spending more than 30% of household income on housing.

Building Activity – Building activity sharply slowed since 2006 with 2015 permits only slightly above the recession period low of 20 in 2009.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Continuing a proactive housing agenda to promote affordable housing remains a significant challenge in Auburn for the following compelling reasons:

Zoning – Local zoning provides obstacles to workforce housing development, and current regulations would have to be reformed or in many cases overridden through “friendly” comprehensive permits to overcome these barriers.

Infrastructure – There are still areas of town that are not provided with municipal water or sewer services, making denser development more costly and difficult.

Environmental Constraints – The Town’s hilly topography, brownfield sites and extent of ledge, wetlands and flood prone areas in addition to other environmental constraints limit the amount of land that is buildable and makes development significantly more costly.

Limited Subsidies – Unlike almost half the communities in the state, Auburn has not adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) which provides an important local resource for preserving open space and historic properties as well as subsidizing affordable housing. Consequently, the Town must rely primarily on zoning to create mandates with incentives for providing affordable housing or react to developer proposals. Given few resources, the Town currently has limited staff capacity to oversee the implementation of this Housing Plan.

Community Perceptions – Residents often prefer the status quo to the uncertain implications of new development and Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) push-back from neighbors can block positive developments for years in the event of litigation.

Despite these constraints, the Town has been making progress in planning for new development, including affordable housing.

SUMMARY OF HOUSING PRODUCTION GOALS

The state administers the Housing Production Program that enables cities and towns to adopt an affordable housing plan that demonstrates the production of 0.50% over one year or 1.0% over two-years of its year-round housing stock eligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). If this is accomplished in any calendar year, the town will have 12 months or 24 months, respectively, when it will have the likely ability to deny Chapter 40B comprehensive permit applications that it deems

do not meet local needs, referred to as certification.² Auburn would have to produce at least 34 affordable units annually to meet these annual production goals. The recent redevelopment of the Mary D. Stone and Julia Bancroft Schools into 110 units of senior housing, with 94 units designated as affordable, would allow all 110 units to be classified as affordable housing. These projects will enable the Town to obtain certification under this Housing Production Plan for two years.

It is important to note that the state's subsidizing agencies have entered into an Interagency Agreement that provides more guidance to localities concerning housing opportunities for families with children and are now requiring that at least 10% of the units in affordable production developments that are funded, assisted or approved by a state housing agency have three (3) or more bedrooms with some exceptions (e.g., age-restricted housing, assisted living, supportive housing for individuals, SRO's. etc.).

SUMMARY OF HOUSING STRATEGIES

The strategies summarized below are based on the Housing Needs Assessment, prior planning efforts, interviews with housing stakeholders, and other community input, including the public meetings on June 22, 2017 and September 12, 2017. Some of the strategies reflect a continuation of efforts that have already proven effective in promoting affordable housing in Auburn. *It is also important to note that these strategies are presented as a package for the Town to consider, prioritize, and process, each through the appropriate regulatory channels.*

CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

Specific actions to help build local capacity to address local housing needs are listed below. While these strategies do not directly produce affordable units, they provide the necessary support to implement a proactive housing agenda.

Promote adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA)

Most towns that have made significant progress with respect to affordable housing development have had CPA funding or other ongoing federal funding available to subsidize locally-sponsored or supported initiatives. This funding could be pivotal to Auburn preserving its historical assets and open space while creating greater housing affordability. It is important to note, however, that the level of State funding for CPA communities has decreased significantly over the past years and there are fewer funds allocated into this program by the State.

² If a community has achieved certification within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the comprehensive permit, the ZBA shall provide written notice to the applicant, with a copy to DHCD, that it considers that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, the grounds that it believes have been met, and the factual basis for that position, including any necessary supportive documentation. If the applicant wishes to challenge the ZBA's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to DHCD, with a copy to the ZBA, within 15 days of its receipt of the ZBA's notice, including any documentation to support its position. DHCD shall review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The ZBA shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the DHCD to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

Establish an Affordable Housing Trust Fund

The relative experience of other communities regarding the success of affordable housing initiatives indicates that it is often critical to have accessible funds available to respond immediately and effectively to housing opportunities as they arise.

Continue to conduct ongoing community outreach and education

The Town will continue to engage the community in discussions on affordable housing to present information on the issue needed to dispel myths and negative stereotypes and to help galvanize local support, political and financial, for new housing initiatives. It will also promote educational opportunities to build the capacity of those involved in promoting, producing or managing affordable housing.

Secure further professional support

The Town will consider bringing on the necessary expertise to provide ongoing support to effectively coordinate the implementation of various components of the Housing Plan.

ZONING STRATEGIES

Greater flexibility will be needed in the Town's Zoning By-law and new tools will be required to capture more affordable units and better guide new development to "smarter" locations.

Adopt new zoning for multi-family housing and mixed-use development

There are a number of prime locations in Auburn where higher-density, mixed-use development is appropriate and could be promoted through several zoning approaches including modifications to the existing Mixed-Use Overlay District, Chapter 40R/40S Smart Growth Overlay Districts, or the "friendly" Chapter 40B comprehensive permit process through the state's Local Initiative Program (LIP).

Modify the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) By-law

The Town will explore amending its Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) by-law to mandate the inclusion of some amount of affordable housing, offer density bonuses and include other measures to promote its use. Such zoning provides a more flexible layout that promotes the efficient use of land; lowers the costs of development in roads and infrastructure; decreases municipal maintenance and service costs; and preserves open space, community character and natural resources.

Modify the accessory apartment bylaw

Because of the benefits associated with accessory units, the Town should amend the existing accessory apartment bylaw to make it easier for owners, particularly those with limited incomes who are spending far too much of their income on housing, to create accessory units and to prevent owners from developing illegal ones.

Explore inclusionary zoning

Because the Town does not presently have a local housing subsidy source available to support housing production, inclusionary zoning can become a valuable tool for insuring that affordability is at least created as part of market developments or that the developer pays cash in-lieu of actual affordable units that can be deposited in the proposed Housing Trust Fund to be used to subsidize other affordable housing initiatives.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

To implement this Housing Plan, the Town will need to continue partnering with developers, non-profit and for profit, in the creation of additional affordable units.

Make suitable public property available for affordable housing

While Town-owned property is limited, the Town is pursuing the conversion of two vacant elementary schools to senior housing that will create 110 housing units, almost all affordable to those earning at or below 60% AMI. It will also explore other potential opportunities including tax-foreclosed properties.

Pursue partnership opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development.

With incentives created in the Zoning By-law to promote affordable housing and with the availability of the “friendly 40B” option, the Town will continue to partner with developers to guide new development that incorporates affordable units and smart growth principles.

Explore small-scale infill housing development

There are potential sites that might accommodate a housing unit or small number of units to serve local affordable housing needs such as small starter units, affordable rentals, and special needs housing. However, in the absence of local funding to subsidize such developments or cash-out fees as part of inclusionary zoning, the Town will be reliant on a developer’s ability to obtain state funding to subsidize affordable units, local zoning, and internal subsidies created by market rate units.

HOUSING PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

Housing production is critical, but the Town also needs to provide resources to help preserve existing housing and support the deferred home maintenance needs of lower-income residents, including seniors.

Continue to participate in the Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI)

To address blighting vacant and abandoned properties, the Town will continue to participate in the state Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI) that has thus far brought some residential structures back to full occupancy and productive use.

Establish a Housing Rehabilitation Program

The Town will explore funding options to introduce a program to help qualifying lower income property owners make necessary home improvements to protect their health and safety and stabilize neighborhoods.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The Town of Auburn, incorporated in 1778 as the town of Ward and changed to Auburn in 1837, is governed by the representative town meeting form of government and is located in Worcester County, in central Massachusetts, approximately 50 miles west of downtown Boston. The Town covers an area of approximately 15.7 square miles and is bordered by the City of Worcester and the Towns of Millbury, Oxford and Leicester. Easy access off I-290, I-90, I-395, Routes 12 and 20 makes Auburn a popular destination for shopping, working and living. The Town has a strong bond rating of AA2 from Moody's Investor Services and AA+ from Standard & Poors. Housing opportunities consist primarily of single family homes with the owner-occupied rate remaining very high, indicative of a stable residential base.

Recently, the Town of Auburn was designated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a Compact Community. One of the Best Practices for which the Town received State approval, as well as a State PATH Grant, was to develop a comprehensive Housing Plan that sets forth strategies to provide quality housing opportunities to all population groups, including seniors, young families and the disabled. Specifically, the Town sought to develop a, "community-supported housing plan that accounts for changing demographics, including young families, workforce dynamics, and an aging population."

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) teamed with Karen Sunnarborg on the development of this Housing Plan for Auburn. CMRPC and Karen Sunnarborg sought to develop a comprehensive Housing Plan with two distinct but related components. The first component, prepared by CMRPC, is a Housing Needs Assessment that evaluates Auburn's demographic characteristics and trends and identifies the specific housing needs related to these characteristics and trends. The assessment considers market conditions and the financial feasibility of future development by housing types as well as the need for additional housing services. The second component, prepared by Karen Sunnarborg, is a strategic action plan that outlines specific strategies to address key findings, issues, challenges and opportunities for housing preservation and production. This plan has a particular focus on strategies for developing more multi-family housing options as well as senior housing. The development of this Housing Plan was intended to parallel and be undertaken in conjunction with the Town's Master Plan Update process.

HOUSING PRODUCTION PLANS AND MGL CHAPTER 40B

Under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B, cities and towns must work to ensure that at least 10 percent of their total housing stock qualifies as affordable to households earning at or below 80 percent of the area median income. For those communities that have not reached 10 percent, developers with projects involving the creation of affordable housing can override local regulations by receiving a comprehensive permit from the local zoning board of appeals.

To help meet this 10 percent goal and take a proactive approach toward the development of affordable housing, the state encourages municipalities to prepare a Housing Production Plan (HPP), which is a

specific type of housing plan authorized by MGL Chapter 40B³ and administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development that potentially allows some relief from 40B if the HPP gets approved by DHCD and a certain number of affordable housing units get created in a year.

The HPP program requires communities to 1) complete a comprehensive housing needs assessment that takes into consideration both local and regional housing needs and identifies opportunities and constraints to meeting needs, and 2) develop strategies to enable it to meet its affordable housing needs, including an explanation of how constraints will be mitigated. The HPP must show how the community will meet its annual affordable housing production goal, which is equivalent to 0.5 percent of the community's year-round housing stock. Auburn's annual affordable housing unit production goal is 34 affordable housing units per year. The HPP must be approved locally by the local planning board and Board of Selectmen as well as by DHCD.

This Plan was prepared according to the requirements of the state's Housing Production Program (HPP). The benefits of having a DHCD approved HPP are twofold. First, communities that have a DHCD approved plan and that have produced units that are affordable to low- or moderate-income households totaling at least 0.5 percent of the community's year-round housing stock will be granted a "certification of compliance with the plan" and become temporarily "appeal-proof" from Chapter 40B for 12 months following certification or 24 months following certification if 1.0% of its year-round housing units have been produced as affordable. Second, communities with DHCD approved HPP's are also given preference over non-HPP communities for certain state grant funds.

Additional details on the HPP program, including information on compliance, can be found on DHCD's website: <http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/40b-plan/housing-production-plan.html>.

PLAN PROCESS

The Town of Auburn contracted the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and Karen Sunnarborg Consulting to develop a Housing Plan that is consistent with the state of Massachusetts' requirements under 760 CMR 56.03(4). The Town formed a Steering Committee to advise and review the Housing Plan. The committee met on 3 occasions between March and September, 2017, and held two community outreach events. The first even was a public forum, held at the Auburn High School presentation room on June 22nd, 2017. Around 20 residents attended this forum. At this event, participants were introduced to the planning process and reviewed a summary of data collected as part of the Needs Analysis section. This formed the basic framework for breakout sessions where participants were asked to identify specific goals and strategies for housing production. The second event was held on September 12th before the town of Auburn Planning Board. The town was presented with a summary of the Needs Assessment, Goals and Strategies section; feedback from the committee and public comments were solicited and incorporated into the report.

³ Section 760 CMR 56.03(4).

PLAN METHODOLOGY

Data for this report was gathered from a number of available sources, including:

- 1990, 2000, 2010 U.S. Decennial Census
- 2011-2015 American Community Survey
- Warren Group
- Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training
- Massachusetts Department of Revenue
- Massachusetts Department of Education
- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
- Auburn Housing Authority
- Auburn Assessor's Office
- Auburn Planning Department
- Auburn Building Department
- Auburn Board of Health
- Auburn Public Schools
- Auburn Department of Public Works.
- Public input during community forums
- Housing Steering Committee feedback

DEFINING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing can be considered 'affordable' if the household pays no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Households who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered "cost-burdened" and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care as well as saving for their future. The widely accepted definition typically operates under the following assumptions: (1) housing costs for renters typically include gross rent plus utilities; and (2) a calculation of total housing costs for owner-occupied households include a mortgage payment – consisting of principal, interest, taxes and insurance. A moderately cost-burdened household pays between 30 to 50 percent of their income for housing. Those households paying greater than 50 percent of their income are considered to be severely cost-burdened.

This definition of housing affordability is used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to calculate Area Median Income (AMI) and promote income-restricted housing. The AMI is the median family income for the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes all communities in Worcester County. HUD calculates the AMI annually based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey's (ACS) estimated median family income for the MSA. The Worcester AMI in 2016 was \$79,700.

Affordable housing in Massachusetts usually refers to housing that is reserved for households with incomes at or below 80% of the area median income. This metric is used because DHCD maintains a Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) that lists all subsidized housing developments in a community. This inventory includes units reserved for households with incomes at or below 80% of median under long-term, legally-binding agreements and are subject to affirmative marketing requirements. In 2016, 80% of the area median income for the Worcester MSA was \$65,700 for a family of four.

Table 1: 2016 Area Median Income Limits for the Worcester Metropolitan Statistical Area

Area Median Income	FY 2016 Area Median Income Limit Category	Persons in Household				
		1	2	3	4	5
\$79,700	Low (80%) Income	\$46,000	\$52,600	\$59,150	\$65,700	\$71,000
	Very Low (50%) Income	\$29,150	\$33,300	\$37,450	\$41,600	\$44,950
	Extremely Low (30%) Income	\$17,500	\$20,000	\$22,500	\$24,950	\$28,440

Source: U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016 Area Median Income Limits for the Worcester Metropolitan Statistical Area.

FAIR HOUSING AND HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, commonly referred to as the Fair Housing Act, was enacted with the primary purpose of prohibiting discrimination in transactions involving the rental, sale or financing of a home based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and mental or physical handicap. Massachusetts law includes additional protected classes: marital status, sexual orientation, age, gender identity and expression, military or veteran status, ancestry, genetic information, and receipt of public assistance or rental subsidies.

Under Federal law, state and local governments that receive federal housing funds are not only required to refrain from discriminatory practices, they must also take steps to advance fair housing goals and use their policies and programs to help promote open and inclusive housing patterns (also referred to as “affirmatively furthering fair housing.”) HUD defines “affirmatively furthering fair housing” to include the following:

- Analyzing and eliminating housing discrimination in the jurisdiction;
- Promoting fair housing choice for all persons;
- Providing opportunities for inclusive patterns of housing occupancy regardless of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability, and national origin;
- Promoting housing that is structurally accessible to, and usable by all persons, particularly persons with disabilities;
- Fostering compliance with the nondiscrimination provision of the Fair Housing Act.

KEY FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING STATUTES

- Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended)
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended

KEY STATE FAIR HOUSING STATUTES

- Massachusetts fair housing law (M.G.L. Chapter 151B)
- Massachusetts public accommodation law (M.G.L. Chapter 272, section 98)
- Massachusetts lead paint law (Chapter 111, section 199A)

PROTECTED CLASSES UNDER FEDERAL AND STATE LAW

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Disability/Handicap
- Familial Status; Children
- Marital Status
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Military Status (veteran or member of the armed forces)
- Public Assistance/Housing Subsidy Reciprocity
- Genetic Information
- Ancestry

Governor Patrick's Executive Order 526 (2011), an "Order Regarding Non-Discrimination, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action," provides that "equal opportunity and diversity shall be protected and affirmatively promoted in all state, state-assisted, and state-regulated programs, activities, and services." All state funded programs fall under this Executive Order.

Under Federal and State law, municipalities must also ensure that municipal policies and programs do not have a disparate impact on members of a protected class. Disparate impact is an important legal theory in which liability based upon a finding of discrimination may be incurred even when the discrimination was not purposeful or intentional. The municipality should consider if the policy or practice at hand is necessary to achieve substantial, legitimate, non-discriminatory interests and if there is a less discriminatory alternative that would meet the same interest.

Examples of municipal policies and programs that would have a disparate impact include:

- Municipal plans or zoning ordinances that prioritize 1-bedroom units or strictly limit number of bedrooms by unit rather than by development or lot
- Single-family or large lot size requirements
- Requirements for unlimited local residency preferences in communities with limited racial/ethnic diversity
- Plans to fund affordable housing for elders only
- Planning or zoning approval processes that mandate or prioritize townhouses
- Prevalent examples of discrimination that affect housing siting, access to housing, or access to housing services in the region include:

- Predatory lending, redlining and active steering towards certain areas of a community based on race/ethnicity, economic characteristics, and familial status.

- Rental discrimination against families with children and particularly against families with young children due to the presence or potential presence of lead-based hazards.

- Linguistic profiling in both the rental and homeownership markets, especially against persons of Latino origin.
- Landlords who refuse to make reasonable accommodations, changes in rules or policies to allow an equal opportunity to use and enjoy housing, or reasonable modifications, structural changes to allow an equal opportunity to use and enjoy housing, for individuals with disabilities.
- Landlords who refuse to accept housing subsidies, such as a Section 8 housing choice rental voucher, as a source of rental payment.

The Project Team contacted the Massachusetts Fair Housing Coalition (MFHC) over the summer of 2017 seeking comment on any discrimination issues that have been reported in Auburn. While the organization only reported two claims of discrimination (one in 2013 and a second in 2015), they did report additional concerns. The extremely low percentage of rental units compared to state averages is likely preventing the working, immigrants and other minorities from setting up residency in Auburn. Given the close proximity to Worcester and concentration of retail and other employment options available in Auburn, it is reasonable to expect the population of non-white, immigrant residents would be much closer to state averages than it is. MFHC cited the lack of affordable housing options as a potential limiting factor to expanding the town's demographic diversity.

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Auburn is an attractive suburban community located in the first ring of communities abutting the City of Worcester. The Town of Auburn is made up of land areas which were once outlying parts of Worcester, Leicester, Sutton and Oxford. These areas were incorporated as the town of Ward in 1778. In 1837 the name was changed to Auburn. Auburn's economic history involves a combination of agriculture and industry. Economic focus in Town has now predominantly shifted to retail trade. Home industries and farming flourished in Auburn in the early 1800s. With the growth of Worcester's factory based industries, Auburn started its transition to a bedroom community whose residents turned to Worcester for employment. The Town's residential population grew substantially between 1930 and 1970, more than doubling in population over 40 years. Agriculture began to decline over the same period, and by the late 1950s there were only four working farms in town. Since the 1970s, Auburn has experienced rapid industrial and business growth. However, the town's population has grown by less than 1,000 residents over this period. Internal and external road improvements have helped to attract industry and retail to the town. Anchored by the Auburn Mall and other retail and service establishments along state route 12 and U.S. Route 20, Auburn is now one of the region's main retail destinations.

Auburn's close proximity to Interstates 290, 395 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, its excellent school system, and wide array of shopping destinations will likely continue to attract residential development. In the past, this development has been concentrated in the central and northern sections of the Town, and has been confined by the steep slopes of the Town's peripheral hills. For the most part, land most suited for development has already been built upon. However, the steeper slopes and forested hills in town may face development pressure if developers can see a reasonable return on investment. Town officials are exploring redevelopment opportunities at former schools and along retail corridors. The town just completed an Economic Development Plan to help guide growth along the town's major corridors.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

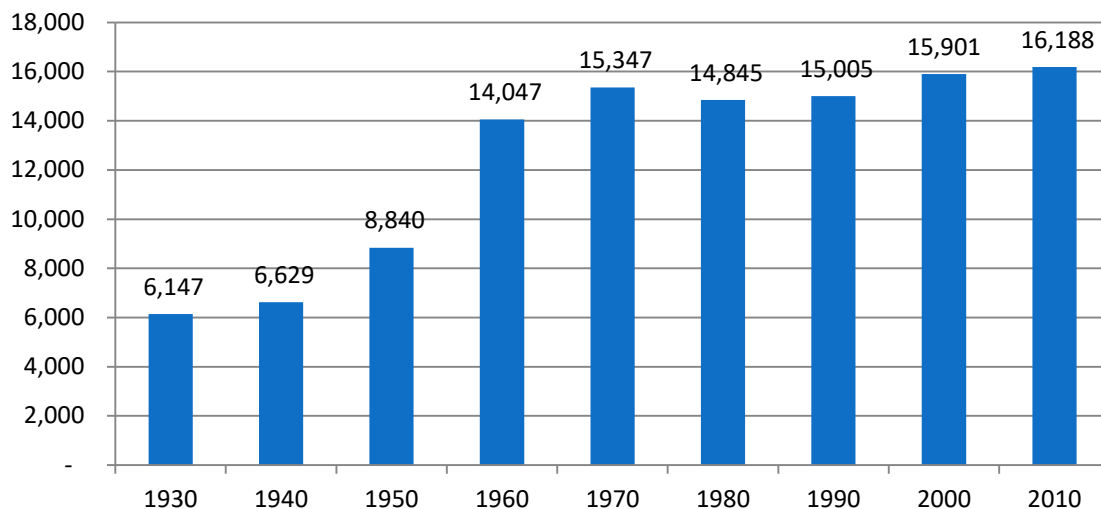
POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

In 2010, Auburn's population totaled 16,188 residents, making it the 12th largest community out of all 60 communities in Worcester County. In terms of population density, Auburn had 1,054 residents per square mile, making Auburn the 9th densest community in Worcester County.⁴ The town's most substantial period of growth occurred between 1930 and 1970. During this period the town's population went from around 6,000 residents to over 15,000 residents. Since then, Auburn's population growth rate has been slow and stable. From 2000 to 2010, for example, the town's population grew by two

⁴ Worcester had the highest population density in the County at 4,820.1 residents per square mile, followed by: Clinton, Milford, Shrewsbury, Fitchburg, Leominster, Webster, and Hopedale.

percent or around 300 residents. Worcester County's population grew only six percent over this period, while the state population grew by three percent.

Figure 1: Auburn Population Growth: 1930-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Population projections predict slow growth for the town over the next 20 years. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's (CMRPC) projections show Auburn with an estimated 16,877 residents by 2020 and 17,814 residents by 2030. Most communities that neighbor Auburn are expected to grow at a faster rate, which is not surprising given that there is little unconstrained developable land left in Auburn. Communities in the Worcester region with growth rates of over 20 percent include: Berlin, Upton, Sturbridge, Uxbridge, Grafton, Holden, Northborough, Northbridge, and Rutland.

Table 3 shows that Auburn's household composition has not changed as dramatically as it has in other communities over the last decade. Auburn household growth was comparable to population growth and its average household size has not decreased substantially. In comparison, household growth typically outpaced population growth in the region's fastest growing communities, reflecting the trend of smaller households. For many communities in the region and state, the number of people living in a housing unit (a household) has been declining as more people choose to live alone, have no children or have fewer children. In these communities, the number of households with children has declined, but in Auburn, this number has remained stable. Similar to many communities in the region, the number of single-person households in Auburn grew by over ten percent from 2000 to 2010.

Table 2: Population Projections for Auburn and Comparison Communities

Municipality	2010	2020	2030	2040	Percent change 2010 to 2040
Auburn	16,188	16,877	17,502	17,814	10%
Charlton	12,981	13,902	14,775	15,380	18%
Grafton	17,765	19,476	21,126	22,390	26%
Leicester	10,970	11,428	11,844	12,048	10%
Millbury	13,261	14,070	14,828	15,319	16%
Oxford	13,709	14,466	15,170	15,601	14%
Sutton	8,963	9,462	9,927	10,213	14%
Worcester	181,045	188,064	194,372	197,196	9%
Regional Total	556,698	587,736	615,363	634,072	14%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission</i>					

Table 3: Population and Household Trends Comparative Summary

	2000	2010	Percent Change
Number of Auburn Residents	15,901	16,188	2%
Number of Auburn Households	6,346	6,542	3%
Auburn Households with Children	1,786	1,784	-0.1%
Auburn Households with individuals age 65 and older	2,029	2,096	3.2%
Auburn Single-person Households	1,634	1,822	12%
Median Age	40.9	43.7	
Average Household Size	2.48	2.45	-1.2%
Average Family Size	3.01	3.02	0.3%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Decennial Census 2000 & 2010</i>			

HOUSEHOLD TYPES

In 2010, just over 65 percent of all households in Auburn were family households, meaning the household consisted of a householder and one or more other people related to the householder by

birth, marriage or adoption.⁵ Approximately 30 percent of all households in town were single-person households and just over ten percent of these households were elderly single- person households. Both measures were comparable to the state as a whole for this time period. Just over five percent of the remaining households were households in which members were not related to one another.

Almost 30 percent of all households in Auburn had children under the age of 18 living with them, which was comparable to the state as a whole in 2010. Six percent of all households consisted of single-parent households. Single-parent households may have more difficulty affording a decent and safe place to live because of the reliance on one income to support the family. Proportionally, Auburn had fewer single-parent households than the state, which was nine percent of all households in 2010. Families with children are a protected class under federal law, and Massachusetts has made it unlawful to discriminate based on marital status.

Table 4: Auburn Households by Household Type, 2010

Households by Type, 2010	Number	Percent of All Households	Percent of Families with Children
Total Households	6,542	100%	N/A
Family Households	4,345	66%	N/A
Family households with own children under 18 years	1,784	27%	100%
Male householder, no wife present with own children under 18 years	132	2%	7%
Female householder, no husband present with own children under 18 years	290	4%	16%
Non-family households	2,197	34%	N/A
Householder living alone	1,822	28%	N/A
Elderly single person households	877	13%	N/A
Other Non-family households	375	6%	N/A
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Decennial Census. Note: Same-sex couple households are included in the family households category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption</i>			

⁵ Same-sex couple households are included in the family households category if there is at least one additional person related to the householder by birth or adoption.

GROUP QUARTERS

People that do not live in a family or non-family household are classified by the U.S. Census Bureau as living in group quarters. Group quarters include facilities such as correctional facilities, nursing homes, and hospitals as well as college dormitories, military barracks, group homes, missions, and shelters. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Decennial Census, less than 1 percent of Auburn residents—149 residents—lived in group quarters. The majority of the people who resided in group quarters (135 residents) lived in an institutional group quarter (correctional facilities, nursing homes, and hospitals) while the remaining 14 residents resided in non-institutional group quarters (college dormitories, military barracks, group homes, missions, and shelters).⁶ It is likely that the Life Care Center nursing home accounted for the 135 residents in the institutional group quarters category.

AGE

The age distribution of a community's population has important implications for planning and the formation of public policies related to housing and community development as different age groups have different demands and preferences. In addition, age is a protected class under State Law. The changing age composition of the town and state as a whole will have an impact on the demand for housing better suited for older households as well as smaller households. Similar to the nationwide trends, the town's population is aging as the Baby Boomer generation nears and surpasses retirement age. The median age of Auburn's population has steadily increased since the 1970s from 30.4 years of age in 1970 to 43.7 years of age in 2010.

Table 5 shows how the population has aged over the last ten years as well as how it's projected to age. From 2000 to 2030, an overall decline in the town's population under the age of 19 is projected. The decline in the residents age 19 and under and of residents in their child-bearing prime years suggests that school enrollment may go down, at least over the next decade. This expectation could change if there is an unexpected increase in new housing growth or a significant turnover in the existing housing stock to families with school-aged children. Auburn Public Schools has reported a small five percent increase of 125 students in its student population from 2001 to 2016. The Superintendent of Auburn Public Schools anticipates stable school enrollment over the next decade, noting though that this could change, should a substantial number of housing units be created in town. Auburn's stable and slightly increased enrollment is in contrast to other school districts in the state that have witnessed declining enrollments over the last decade and a half.

Table 5 also projects an overall increase in the number of residents age 65 and older, suggesting complacency with current housing situations and the potential desire to age in place. A small decline in the number of residents age 25 to 34 years is projected, suggest that there may be insufficient housing options that this age group can afford in Auburn such as starter homes, condos or apartments.

⁶ The 2010 Census does not classify assisted living facilities as skilled nursing facilities. Group quarters includes skilled nursing/nursing facilities only and those residing in assisted living facilities are classified as individual households.

Table 5: Auburn Population by Age

	Census 2000		Census 2010		Projection 2020		Projection 2030	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	15,901	100%	16,188	100%	16,358	100%	16,310	100%
0-9 years	1,918	12%	1,689	10%	1,576	10%	1,489	9%
10-19 years	1,980	12%	2,059	13%	1,846	11%	1,711	10%
20-24 years	571	4%	727	4%	724	4%	659	4%
25-34 years	1,919	12%	1,684	10%	1,718	11%	1,645	10%
35-44 years	2,627	17%	2,277	14%	2,084	13%	2,218	14%
45-54 years	2,369	15%	2,603	16%	2,288	14%	2,174	13%
55-64 years	1,635	10%	2,192	14%	2,371	14%	2,103	13%
65-74 years	1,386	9%	1,366	8%	1,938	12%	2,062	13%
75-84 years	1,122	7%	1,047	6%	1,168	7%	1,550	10%
85+ years	374	2%	544	3%	645	4%	699	4%
Median Age	40.9		43.7		N/A		N/A	
Source: US Census Bureau: Decennial Census, 2000 and 2010 and the UMass Donahue Institute Populations Projections								

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The population of Auburn is primarily White at about 95 percent of the total population. Nearly all racial groups have increased in population from 2000 to 2010 with the exception of Caucasians, which have decreased slightly by less than 1 percent, as well as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders, which have decreased by 25 percent. Hispanics make up about three percent of the total ethnic population in town. The number of Hispanics in town has increased by over 60 percent (260 residents) since 2000, a rate that was faster than Worcester County as a whole, which saw the Hispanic population grow by just over 30 percent this same period.

According to the ACS 2011-2015, an estimated seven percent of Auburn residents over five years of age spoke a language other than English at home. In comparison, nineteen percent of Worcester County's population speaks a language other than English at home. In Auburn, Spanish, French, Polish, and Arabic were identified as the most common languages other than English spoken at home.

Auburn Public School District has also reported greater racial and ethnic diversity since the early 2000s (Table 6). Approximately six percent of Auburn Public School District student's first language was not English and three percent were categorized as English Language Learner students (ELL) for the 2016-2017 school year. The Auburn Public School District reported having ELL students who spoke the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Creole, Greek, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish,

Urdu and Vietnamese. The District now has an ELL tutor at every school whereas, in the past, the District had one tutor that was shared among all the schools.

Table 6: Auburn Public Schools and Worcester Public Schools: Students Whose First Language is Not English or Who are English Language Learners

School Year	First Language Not English				English Language Learner			
	Auburn		Worcester		Auburn		Worcester	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2016-2017	157	6.2	13,641	53.5	84	3.3	8,714	34.2
2001-2002	13	0.5	8,939	34.6	0	0	3,269	12.6
<i>Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education</i>								

DISABILITY

Disability is a protected class under federal law. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a disability as a long-lasting physical, mental or emotional condition. This condition can make it difficult for a person to do activities such as walking, climbing stairs, dressing, bathing, learning or remembering. This condition can also impede a person from being able to go outside the home alone or to work at a job or business. Many residents with one or more disabilities face housing challenges due to a lack of housing that is affordable and physically accessible.

According to the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, an estimated nine percent of the town's population of residents age 18 to 64 (941 people), "working-age residents," reported having one or more disabilities. An estimated thirty-two percent of elderly residents in town (951 people) reported having one or more disability in 2011-2015. An ambulatory difficulty was the most common difficulty associated with the elderly population in Auburn followed by difficulties associated with hearing and independent living. Auburn's elderly population is projected to slightly increase, which could raise the demand for affordable and barrier-free / accessible housing. The percentage of working age and elderly residents with disabilities in Auburn was comparable to that of Worcester County. Statewide, there is a critical need for more accessible housing to meet existing and growing demand. The range of disabilities present requires different types of accessible housing to serve the needs of persons with disabilities. Some communities in the state have put more effort into integrating accessible housing and housing with supportive services into planning for market-rate and affordable housing development.

Table 7: Auburn and Worcester County Population by Estimated Disability Status, 2011-2015 ACS

	Auburn		Worcester County	
	Estimate	Percent with a Disability	Estimate	Percent with a Disability
Total civilian non-institutionalized population	16,257	--	798,977	--
<i>With a disability</i>	1,936	12%	93,924	12%
Population 18 to 64 years	10,013	--	512,342	--
<i>With a disability</i>	941	9%	48,929	10%
With a hearing difficulty	292	3%	8,981	2%
With a vision difficulty	158	2%	6,853	1%
With a cognitive difficulty	404	4%	23,294	5%
With an ambulatory difficulty	328	3%	21,621	4%
With a self-care difficulty	182	2%	8,977	2%
With an independent living difficulty	408	4%	20,207	4%
Population 65 years and over	2,995	--	106,309	--
<i>With a disability</i>	951	32%	35,964	34%
With a hearing difficulty	349	12%	15,602	15%
With a vision difficulty	202	7%	6,568	6%
With a cognitive difficulty	150	5%	8,997	9%
With an ambulatory difficulty	639	21%	22,016	21%
With a self-care difficulty	243	8%	9,156	9%
With an independent living difficulty	427	14%	15,969	15%
Source: US Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015				

POPULATION WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Populations with special needs are considered to be residents who require specialized housing and/or support services. Included in this category, but in no particular order, are:

- people with physical disabilities (discussed in previous subsection)
- elderly and frail elderly
- veterans
- survivors of domestic violence
- youth aging out of foster care and at-risk youth
- people with psychiatric and cognitive disabilities
- people with substance abuse issues
- ex-offenders
- people living with HIV or AIDS
- people who are homeless

In many cases, the needs of these subpopulations overlap, as do the institutions that serve them, although their priorities may differ. Due to lower incomes and the need for supportive services, special needs populations are more likely than the general population to encounter difficulties securing and retaining adequate housing, and often require enhanced support services. These populations often move through temporary placements, to transitional programs, and eventually seek permanent and stable housing options. Municipal level data is not available on these special populations due to the size of the town.

The Auburn Public School District reported that there were five families that self-identified as homeless for the 2016-2017 school year. All five of these families were “doubled up,” meaning the families temporarily shared a household with another family. The District reported that it did not have any students living in a hotel or motel in Auburn during the 2016-2017 school year. The District Superintendent noted that the number of students from homeless families has fluctuated from year to year depending on the family circumstances and regional economic changes.

The Executive Director of the Auburn Housing Authority (AHA) commented that homelessness is a very serious issue in the Auburn area. The AHA is aware that a number of applicants for their housing are homeless and/or are living in shelters.

According the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, there are currently no families on emergency assistance living in one of the six hotels/motels in Auburn or in the region.⁷ In 2013, when the number of homeless families on emergency assistance reached its all-time high, there were 154 families receiving emergency housing assistance in the Central Massachusetts region but none of these families were placed in hotels/motels in Auburn.⁸

⁷ There are six hotel / motels in Auburn with a total of 457 rooms. These hotel / motels are: La Quinta (97 Rooms), Comfort Inn (71 Rooms), Holiday Inn (113 Rooms), Fairfield Inn (82 Rooms), Auburn Motel (12 Rooms), and Hampton Inn (82 Rooms).

⁸ Homelessness affects every community in the state. The causes of homelessness are complex, including both societal factors—such as housing costs that have outpaced income growth and the loss of manufacturing jobs—and individual factors—such as long-term unemployment, domestic violence, chronic illness, and substance abuse. Housing discrimination can also play

INCOME

The ability to exercise housing choice bears a strong relationship to the amount of money a household can afford to spend on housing. Housing that is affordable for low-income and moderate-to-middle-income or “working class” households are major regional and state priorities. Housing that is affordable to lower income households is critical to creating household stability and economic self-sufficiency. Housing that is affordable to working class and middle class households is critical to building and retaining talent and for improving the region’s and the state’s overall economic competitiveness.

Household and family income in Auburn has been stable over the last decade with a slight increase in both median household income and median family income. In comparison, Worcester County and the state of Massachusetts experienced slight decreases in median household income and very slight increases in median family income over this same period. Auburn’s median household income of \$72,000 and median family income of \$90,000 based on 2011-2015 census estimates was higher than those of both Worcester County and the state over this same period.

Table 8: Change in Auburn Estimated Median Household and Family Income, 2000 to 2011-2015
Adjusted to 2015 Dollars

Subject	2000	2011-2015	Percent Increase
Median household income (dollars)	\$71,653	\$ 72,432	1%
Median family income (dollars)	\$84,185	\$ 90,130	7%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 Decennial Census (SF3) and American Community Survey 2011-2015. CMRPC adjusted 2000 dollars to 2015 dollars</i>			

Auburn in comparison to Worcester County and the state had:

- fewer very-low income households, those earning less than \$25,000
- similar low to middle income households, those earning \$25,000 to \$50,000
- more households in the middle-income category, those earning \$50,000 to \$100,000
- similar higher income households, those earning \$100,000 or more

Auburn’s household income distribution by level of income (Table 9) highlights its long-standing history as a middle-class community. However, there still remains a population that lives in Auburn with limited financial (flexibility?). Auburn’s family poverty rate was 2.1 percent in the 2011-2015 ACS census estimates and child poverty was 3.3 percent. Both rates were much lower than that of the regional family and child poverty rates, which were 8.4 percent and 15.7 percent respectively. Over 6 percent of all Auburn residents age 65 years and older had incomes below the poverty level in the 2011-2015 ACS.

a role in perpetuating homelessness. Research has indicated that most people who experience homelessness have a single episode of homelessness and then recover and regain housing stability. The economic recession that started around 2007, including the housing market crisis, further exacerbated homelessness in the region and state. Homeless families who seek housing are directed to the Department of Transitional Assistance intake centers and then are placed temporarily in housing. When no other options are available, families are placed in motels.

This percentage was slightly higher for Worcester County as a whole with over 9 percent of all residents age 65 years and older.

Table 9: Household Family Income by Level of Income, 2011-2015 ACS

Subject	Auburn		Worcester County		Massachusetts	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total households	6,350	6,350	301,176	301,176	2,549,721	2,549,721
Less than \$10,000	227	3.6%	16,884	5.6%	155,390	6.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	225	3.5%	15,402	5.1%	131,036	5.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	373	5.9%	27,438	9.1%	217,314	8.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	641	10.1%	25,411	8.4%	196,102	7.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	603	9.5%	32,820	10.9%	266,140	10.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,211	19.1%	50,786	16.9%	402,960	15.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	956	15.1%	39,228	13.0%	317,568	12.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,314	20.7%	51,137	17.0%	429,874	16.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	493	7.8%	22,308	7.4%	206,541	8.1%
\$200,000 or more	307	4.8%	19,762	6.6%	226,796	8.9%
Median household income (dollars)	72,432	(X)	65,313	(X)	68,563	(X)

Source: US Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015. Income and Benefits in 2015 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars

Students from Economically Disadvantaged Families

A community's percentage of students from economically disadvantaged families can also be used as an indicator of family need. Students are classified as "economically disadvantaged if the student participates in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) foster care program; and MassHealth (Medicaid).

Almost 17 percent of Auburn Public Schools students in grades K-12 (427 students) hail from economically disadvantaged families. Comparatively, the Worcester Public School District reported over 55 percent and the state approximately 30 percent. The Auburn Public Schools Superintendent reported that this percentage has been consistent over the last five years. The Superintendent noted that Auburn Youth and Family Services has been immensely supportive of children and families in need. This organization is partially subsidized by the town and offers counseling, after school care and summer programs. It also has resources available at the Auburn Housing Authority's Pheasant Court development.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

The relationship between educational attainment, employment, and household wealth is well understood. In today's economy, a high school education is the minimum requirement to participate effectively in the job market. The 2011-2015 ACS estimated that 36 percent of Auburn residents had a bachelor's degree or higher. Auburn's educational attainment rate for the population with a bachelor's degree or greater was slightly higher than the regional rate of 34 percent but lower than the state rate of 41 percent.

In 2015, Auburn had labor force of 9,178 residents, of which 8,728 residents were employed, amounting to an annual unemployment rate of 4.9 percent. This rate was the same as the annual unemployment rate for the state that year. The number of jobs in Auburn exceeds that of its labor force, confirming Auburn's position as a regional employment center. Just over 10,500 people worked in Auburn in 2015.

The Retail industry employed the greatest number of people with 2,590 employees, which was a quarter of all employees. Auburn hosts one of the region's shopping malls as well as numerous other shopping and dining destinations that serve residents across Worcester County. The Retail industry as well as the Accommodation and Food Service Industries, however, offer some of the lowest wages of all industries in Auburn. The Manufacturing industry continues to offer some of the highest wages in town with average weekly wages over \$1,500 a week. Six other industries offered average weekly wages over \$1,000 per week.

Auburn has seen steady business growth over the last ten years adding almost 40 new businesses between 2005 to 2015, also adding approximately 80 net jobs. The largest growth was in the Health Care and Social Assistance industry which added 64 businesses and 402 jobs. The Wholesale Trade industry also added over 400 jobs during this period.

The 2011-2015 American Community Survey reports that less than 1 percent of the working population in Auburn uses public transportation to commute to work. An estimated 90 percent of Auburn residents who commute to work drive alone in a car, truck, or van. This is a much higher rate than that of Massachusetts, in which just over 70 percent of residents drive alone to work. An estimated three percent of the working population in Auburn, or 262 residents, work from home.

Table 10: Auburn Business Establishments by Industry Class (2015)

Industry Totals by 2-Digit NAICS Code	Number of Establishments	Average Monthly Employment	Average Weekly Wages	Total Wages
Total, All Industries	650	10,511	\$898	\$490,705,595
23 - Construction	56	859	\$1,285	\$57,394,388
31-33 - Manufacturing	19	654	\$1,546	\$52,562,203
42 - Wholesale Trade	54	1,409	\$1,094	\$80,176,558
44-45 - Retail Trade	131	2,590	\$602	\$81,048,074
48-49 - Transportation and Warehousing	15	243	\$987	\$12,477,833
51 - Information	3	24	\$536	\$668,350
52 - Finance and Insurance	36	379	\$1,373	\$27,056,239
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	21	166	\$938	\$8,098,477
54 - Professional and Technical Services	52	276	\$1,282	\$18,397,785
55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises	3	88	\$1,160	\$5,308,915
56 - Administrative and Waste Services	32	369	\$1,269	\$24,346,640
62 - Health Care and Social Assistance	103	1,273	\$888	\$58,777,989
71 - Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9	90	\$316	\$1,478,666
72 - Accommodation and Food Services	45	1,062	\$330	\$18,226,720
81 - Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	52	369	\$598	\$11,480,097
<i>Source: Massachusetts Department of Labor, Employment and Wages Report (ES-202)</i>				

HOUSING SUPPLY CHARACTERISTICS

The purpose of this section is to review the characteristics and types of housing in town to assess how Auburn's housing stock is responding to changing demographics, affordability pressures and market conditions. Where homes have been built, and will continue to be built, as well as the type and characteristic of housing, is a reflection of land use policies, the strength or weakness of the housing market, mortgage lending practices, housing discrimination, transportation networks, topography, and public infrastructure. Settlement patterns and the built environment are also a reflection of structural issues that were discussed in the first section of this Chapter such as economic security and educational attainment, which taken together, can encourage self-sufficiency, mobility and residents' abilities to obtain and maintain housing. Auburn needs a full range of housing opportunities that are affordable to households of all income ranges, abilities, and racial and ethnic backgrounds to ensure that it remains economically competitive.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

The 2010 U.S. Census showed that there were 6,840 housing units in Auburn. The number of housing units in town grew at a slower rate than the region and the state from 2000 to 2010 at a rate of 4 percent and by approximately 260 units. In comparison, the number of housing units in the county increased by 10 percent and 7 percent for the state during this same period. Approximately 96 percent of all housing units in Auburn were occupied by year-round residents in 2010, while 4 percent were vacant. Auburn's rate of vacant homes in 2010 was lower than the county and the state at 7 percent and 9 percent respectively.

Vacancy status has long been used as a basic indicator of the strength or weakness of a housing market and its stability. It shows demand for housing, identifies housing turnover, and suggests the quality of housing for certain areas. There are five reasons that a house gets categorized as vacant by the U.S. Census Bureau; the house is (1) for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use; (2) for rent; (3) for sale; (4) rented or sold, but not occupied; or (5) "other" vacant units.

A comparison of 2010 housing occupancy data for Auburn to 2010 housing occupancy data collected for the county and state does not suggest that the town experienced a significant vacancy problem around 2010 unlike some communities in the county and state.

Table 11: Auburn Housing Occupancy and Vacancy Status

Housing Occupancy	2010		2011-2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total housing units	6,840	100%	6,720	100%
Occupied housing units	6,542	95.6%	6,350	94.5%
Vacant housing units	298	4.4%	370	5.5%
For rent	81	1.2%	70	1.0%
Rented or sold, not occupied	9	0.1%	0	0.0%
For sale only	57	0.8%	72	1.1%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	32	0.5%	27	0.4%
All other vacant	97	1.4%	153	2.3%
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1	(X)	1.3	(X)
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	6.6	(X)	6.4	(X)
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Decennial Census and American Community Survey 2011-2015</i>				

HOUSING BY TENURE

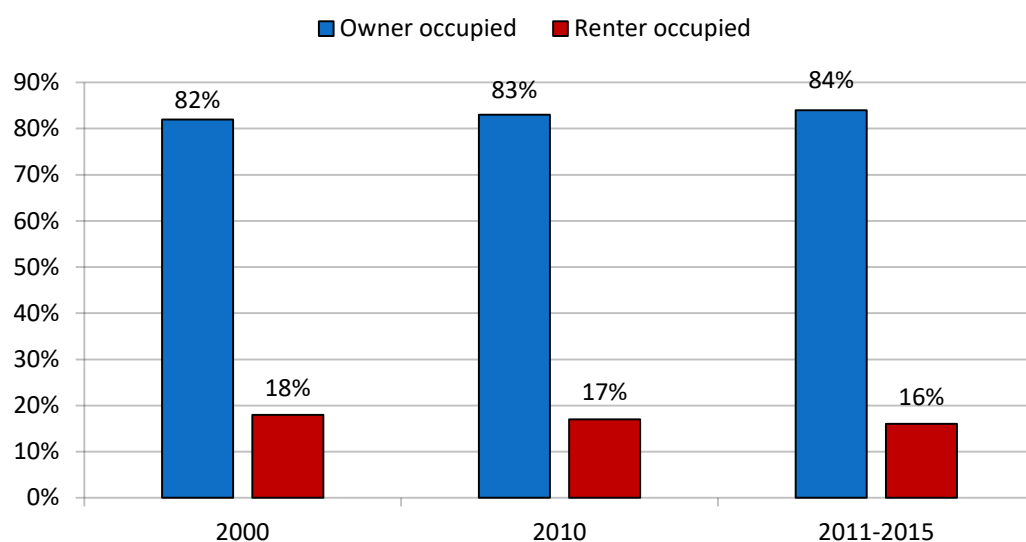
Analysis of homeownership levels and renter opportunities is a basic feature of a housing assessment. Data on owner-occupancy and renter-occupancy is used to aid in the distribution of funds for government programs, including mortgage insurance and public housing programs. It also allows planners to evaluate the overall viability of housing markets, to assess the stability of neighborhoods and to aid in the planning of housing programs and services.

With an estimated owner-occupancy rate of 84 percent and renter occupancy rate of 16 percent according to the ACS 2011-2015, Auburn had a similar share of owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes to other smaller towns in the comparison area. The 2011-2015 ACS estimated that over 85 percent of all owner-occupied homes in Auburn consisted of detached single-family homes.

Housing Assessments typically point to a need for more rental opportunities if a community has more than 70 percent owner-occupied homes because this indicates that rental options for young, old, or transitional populations such as recent divorcees and new employment recruits may be limited. Auburn's comparatively low number of rental opportunities is one reason that the town may want to consider encouraging addition rental opportunities through zoning or affordable housing initiatives.

Figure 4 shows that renter-occupied housing, as a percentage of all housing units, has slightly decreased over the last ten years while owner-occupied housing slightly increased. The number of renter-occupied units increased by only nine units from 2000 to 2010 while the number of owner-occupied units increased by almost 190 units.

Figure 2: Occupancy Status of Auburn Homes by Tenure



Source: U.S. Decennial Census and 2011-2015 ACS

Overall, there continues to be a statewide concern about the lack of housing production, including that rental housing production, outside of the state's major cities. Most communities in the County saw limited growth in rental housing or a loss of rental units from 2000 to 2010. As a percentage of all

occupied housing units, the County and the State's share of rental units decreased over this period. Overall, Worcester County only gained 935 rental units from 2000 to 2010.

HOUSING BY STRUCTURAL TYPE

This Assessment reviews Auburn's housing by structural type through two data sources: The American Community Survey(ACS) and Auburn Parcel Inventory from the Auburn Assessor's Office. The ACS Estimates are useful for their comparative value of Auburn to other communities, the county and state, but, as estimates, the numbers may over report or under report the types of residential uses in town. For example, the ACS estimates that there are 105 rental units in town within residential structures of 50 or more units, however, there is no such development in Auburn. The Assessor's Office Parcel Inventory provides a more accurate description of the types of uses in town. One limitation of the Parcel Inventory is that it does not track tenure so the ACS is used to estimate the number of rental units by structural type.

The ACS estimates that over 75 percent of homes in Auburn consist of single family detached homes, which was a far greater percentage than of Worcester County and the State (Table 12). In comparison to the County and State, Auburn has far fewer housing units in structures with three or four units, which is a building type often found in more urbanized areas. Auburn also had far fewer housing units in structures with 20 or more units. Auburn had a greater percentage of mobile home units than the County and State.

Table 12: Housing Units by Structural Type, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

	Auburn		Worcester County		Massachusetts	
Structural Type	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	6,720	6,720	328,627	328,627	2,827,820	2,827,820
1-unit, detached	5,154	77%	184,395	56%	1,474,897	52%
1-unit, attached	280	4%	19,800	6%	148,269	5%
2 units	281	4%	28,558	9%	290,860	10%
3 or 4 units	203	3%	39,183	12%	305,406	11%
5 to 9 units	238	4%	19,077	6%	166,495	6%
10 to 19 units	66	1%	12,486	4%	121,415	4%
20 or more units	192	3%	22,263	7%	295,922	11%
Mobile home	306	5%	2,828	1%	23,935	1%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0%	37	0%	621	0%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015						

Table 13 reviews these housing estimates by structural type and tenure. It suggests that the majority of Auburn's single family detached homes, single family attached homes and mobile home units were owner-occupied while the majority of housing units in structures with three or more units were renter-

occupied. Approximately 40 percent of two-family homes were owner-occupied compared and 60 percent of these homes being renter-occupied.

Table 14 looks at Auburn’s housing stock by tax classification through the Auburn Parcel Inventory. This information suggests that Auburn would benefit from additional rental opportunities because it can be inferred that most of the town’s rental housing consists of single-family homes, which are generally the most expensive type of rental housing. The Inventory shows that there are more housing units in condominiums, two-family homes, and mobile homes that what is estimated by the ACS, however there are fewer housing units in structures with three or more units. There are also 25 condominium developments with more than 400 total condominium units. One of these, Windmill Estates, was recently permitted. There are six apartment developments with eight or more housing units (Table 15). Overall, there is surprisingly little housing variety in town.

Table 13: Auburn Housing Units by Structural Type and Tenure, 2011-2015 American Community Survey

	Owner-occupied housing units:			Renter-occupied housing units:		
Structural Type	Units	% by All Owner-Occupancy	% by Structural Type	Units	% by All Renter-Occupancy	% by Structural Type
Occupied housing units	5,326	100%	100%	1,024	100%	100%
1, detached	4,644	87%	94%	303	30%	6%
1, attached	210	4%	80%	53	5%	20%
2	120	2%	43%	161	16%	57%
3 or 4	14	0%	9%	145	14%	91%
5 to 9	83	2%	39%	128	13%	61%
10 to 19	0	0%	0%	66	6%	100%
20 to 49	10	0%	45%	12	1%	55%
50 or more	16	0%	13%	105	10%	87%
Mobile home	229	4%	82%	51	5%	18%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	n/a

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015. Note: Margin of Error was relatively high for these estimates.

Table 14: Auburn Housing Units by Tax Parcel Classification Code
FY 2017 Town of Auburn Assessor’s Database

Category	Number of Parcels	Number of Residential Units
Mixed Use parcels with residential units	62	Unknown
Single Family	4,902	4,902
Single Family Waterfront	133	133
Condominium Complexes	25	N/A

Condominiums	N/A	415
Mobile Home	9	376
Two Family	205	410
Two Family Waterfront	7	14
Three family	30	90
Multiple Houses on one parcel	27	Unknown
Multiple Houses on one parcel (waterfront)	3	Unknown
Four Family	6	24
Apartments: 4-8 units	3	20
Apartments: 8+ units	6	100
Assisted Living	2	180
Nursing Home	1	1
Housing Authority	5	190
Other Non-profit housing	5	4+

*Source: Town of Auburn Assessor's Office, FY 2017 Parcel Inventory (with input from Assessor, Office of Town Manager, Board of Health and Housing Authority). *Note: Other Non-Profit Housing includes group homes that maintain bedrooms instead of separate housing units.*

Table 15: Auburn Apartment Buildings with 8 or more units

Location	Name (if known)	Number of Units	Year Built
468 Oxford Street N		8	1984
17 Arlington Street		12	1968
192 Auburn Street		12	1900
151 Leicester Street	Lestwood Garden	24	1965
Temple Street	Auburn Gardens	11	1964
Whitney Circle	Auburn Gardens	33	1964

Source: FY 2017 Town of Auburn Assessor Database

HOUSING BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

An inventory of Auburn's housing stock by number of bedrooms, using ACS estimates, can be used to determine any housing deficiencies in town such as not having enough one to two bedroom homes (rental or ownership) for smaller households or three bedroom rental units for larger families.⁹

⁹ The state's leading housing agencies—DHCD, MHP, MassHousing, MassDevelopment and CEDAC—recently approved an interagency agreement requiring that at least ten percent (10%) of new affordable units funded, assisted or approved by a State Housing Agency shall have three (3) or more bedrooms.

Table 16 suggests that Auburn has a healthy variety of ownership options by bedroom type, but Auburn could use slightly more rental housing with three or more bedrooms for a better balance and variety of rental housing options.

Table 16: Auburn Housing Stock by Bedrooms and Tenure

	Owner occupied	Renter occupied
	100.1%	100.0%
No bedroom	0.0%	5.7%
1 bedroom	2.8%	33.1%
2 bedrooms	21.5%	34.8%
3 bedrooms	52.8%	19.4%
4 bedrooms	19.5%	6.7%
5 or more bedrooms	3.5%	0.3%
<i>Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015</i>		

HOUSING BY SIZE OF HOME

Auburn's stock of single family homes tend to be on the smaller side, which is not surprising given that the town's greatest period of residential development occurred between 1930 and 1970. Over 50 percent of Auburn single family homes range in size from 1,000 to 1,500 square feet between. Newer homes in Auburn, those built in 2010 or later, tend to be large. Of the 92 single family homes built from 2010 through 2016, over 50 percent ranged in size from 2,000 to 3,000 square feet and 10 percent of the newer homes had square footage of 3,000 square feet or more.

A housing issue identified by some throughout this planning process is that there are few options for upper middle income households to "buy-up" in Auburn. There are particularly fewer overall homes with square footage of 2,000 square feet or more. Housing production over the last several years seems to be recognizing this market demand, and developers have been building larger homes in town which is discussed later in the report.

Table 17: Auburn Single Family Homes by Size, Age and Assessed Value

Size Category (Square Feet)	Number of Homes	Percent of all Homes	Number of Homes built after 2009	Percent of all homes by Size Category	Average Assessed Value of all homes
Under 500	1	0%	0	0	\$85,400
500-1,000	562	11%	1	0%	\$ 165,061
1,000-1,500	2,579	51%	14	1%	\$208,303
1,500-2,000	1,069	21%	21	2%	\$260,216
2,000-2,500	508	10%	35	7%	\$330,228
2,500-3,000	223	4%	12	5%	\$390,123

3,000-4,000	78	2%	8	10%	\$472,251
4,000-5,000	14	0%	1	7%	\$617,607
Over 500,000	1	0%	0	0%	\$755,900
Total Homes	5,035	100%	92	N/A	\$301,357

Source: Town of Auburn Assessor's Office, FY17 Parcel Inventory

AGE OF HOUSING

Well-maintained older homes are an important part of a community's local history and help preserve historic character. The ACS estimates that 20 percent of Auburn homes were built before 1940 and the Parcel Inventory identifies that about 20 percent of single-family homes were built before 1940. Auburn does not have any National Register or Local Historic Districts, but historically significant areas include Auburn Center, Packachoag Hill, Pondville, West Auburn, Stoneville, and Drury Square.

The age of housing is used as an indicator to assess a variety of housing characteristics such as the numbers of units with potential rehabilitation and maintenance needs, which may not be accessible for people with disabilities, with potential lead-based hazards, and with potential energy inefficiencies.

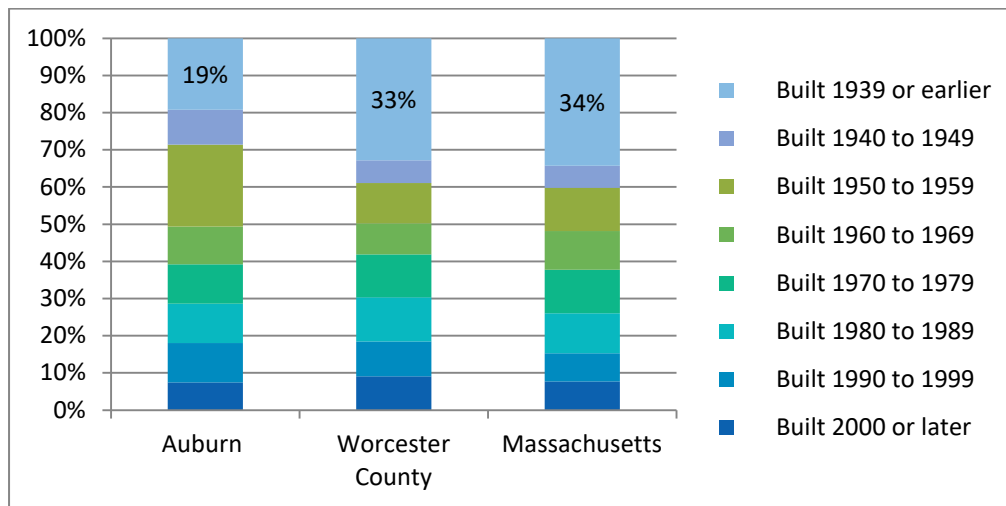
Older homes may present the following challenges:

- Increased need for maintenance and repairs;
- Some have poor past maintenance and repair history, resulting in a deteriorated state that requires costly rehabilitation;
- Design of many older homes are not well-suited for people with mobility impairments and can be expensive to retrofit;
- Outdated and inefficient heating, cooling, and insulation systems that result in higher associated utility costs; and
- Outdated materials and products that present personal health risks such as lead paint, asbestos, and lead pipes.

With less than 20 percent of homes built before 1940, Auburn's housing stock is relatively new, as compared to the state and county, in which over 30 percent of existing homes were built before 1940. However, like the county and state, Auburn has seen little overall housing production since 2000, and particularly since 2010. This lack of housing production is consistent with the downturn of the housing market that started in the late 2000s as well as the dwindling supply of ready-to-build lots in town. An estimated 7 percent of homes in Auburn were built in 2000 or later, with housing production at the county and state levels only slightly higher at an estimated 10 and 9 percent respectively. Approximately half of Auburn's homes were built between 1940 and 1980.

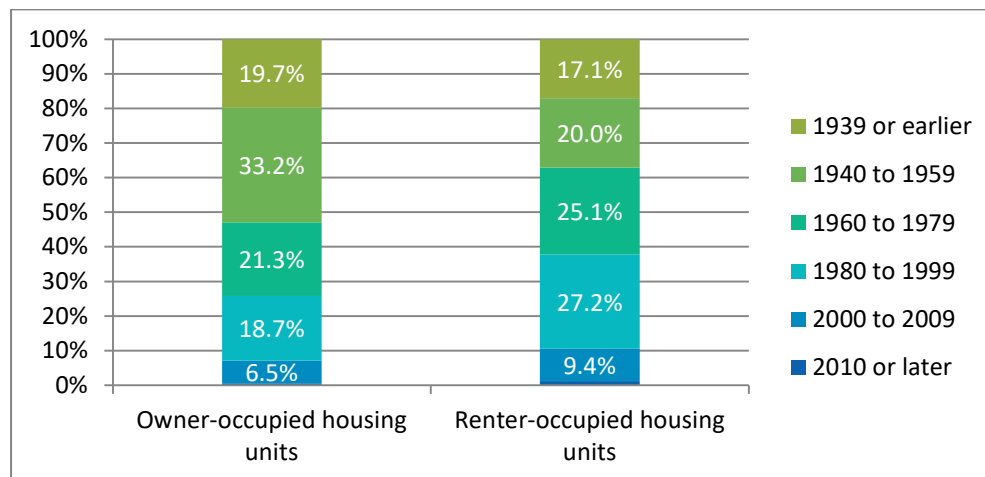
Unlike some communities where rental housing stock is disproportionately older or newer, the age of Auburn's rental stock is balanced and if not slightly newer than that of Auburn's stock of owner-occupied homes. Over 35 percent of all rental units in Auburn were built in 1980 or after.

Figure 3: Auburn Housing Units by Estimated Year Built, 2011-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015

Figure 4: Auburn Housing Units by Estimated Year Built and Tenure, 2011-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015

Table 18: Auburn Single Family Homes by Age

Age of Home	Number of Homes	
Before 1900	117	2%
1900 to 1940	1,045	21%
1940 to 1970	2,311	46%
1970 to 1990	797	16%
1990 to 2010	669	13%
2010 and later	94	2%
Total Homes	5,033	100%
<i>Town of Auburn Assessor's Office, FY 17 Parcel Inventory</i>		

SENIOR HOUSING

Seniors are a growing part of the population and many will need smaller, affordable and barrier-free / accessible housing. There are a few senior housing options in town, with varying levels of care ranging from independent or active senior living to very dependent, 24/7 care settings. Models for housing our senior populations are also constantly evolving. Some elderly residents prefer to age in place and models for meeting these desires are evolving too. Auburn may want to consider creating incentives or mandating that all or a high percentage of units in these developments include universal design, accessible, and/or other adaptable features. Over the past few decades many units have been created in these types of development with stairs and other features that are inaccessible to people with mobility impairments. The Executive Director of the Auburn Housing Authority and the manager of the Kateri Tekawitha Housing Residence noted that additional housing options for the senior population is much needed in Auburn as well as elsewhere in the region.

Auburn senior housing options include:

- 150 units of state or federally-aided, income-restricted rental housing managed by the Auburn Housing Authority, including twelve handicap accessible housing units
- 30 units of federally-assisted income-restricted rental housing at the Kateri Tekawitha Housing residence, including three handicap accessible units.
- 53 mobile home units (owner-occupied) at the Whispering Pines development on Washington Street.
- Potter Farm Estates is an age-restricted development for adults age 55 years and older. The development was permitted in the late 1990s and includes approximately 65 single-family homes. Units in this development have sold in the high \$200,000 according to Zillow.
- Windmill Estates is an age-restricted development for adults age 55 years and older at 46 Prospect Street. This project was recently approved and will result in thirteen duplexes for a

total of 26 condominiums at build-out. The developer anticipates the asking price for the homes to be at least \$300,000.¹⁰ This project was permitted as an open space residential development and will include approximately 3.33 acres being set aside for open space under the town's regulations.

- Brookdale Senior Living Community (assisted living) on Washington Street. It consists of two communities. The Lodge has 108 apartments ranging from studios, larger alcove studios, and one and two-bedroom apartments. The Woods is the slightly smaller community with 79 studio, alcove and one-bedroom apartments. Brookdale offers two levels of care options — Assisted Living and Memory Care—in each of its two buildings.
- The Life Care Center Auburn nursing home.

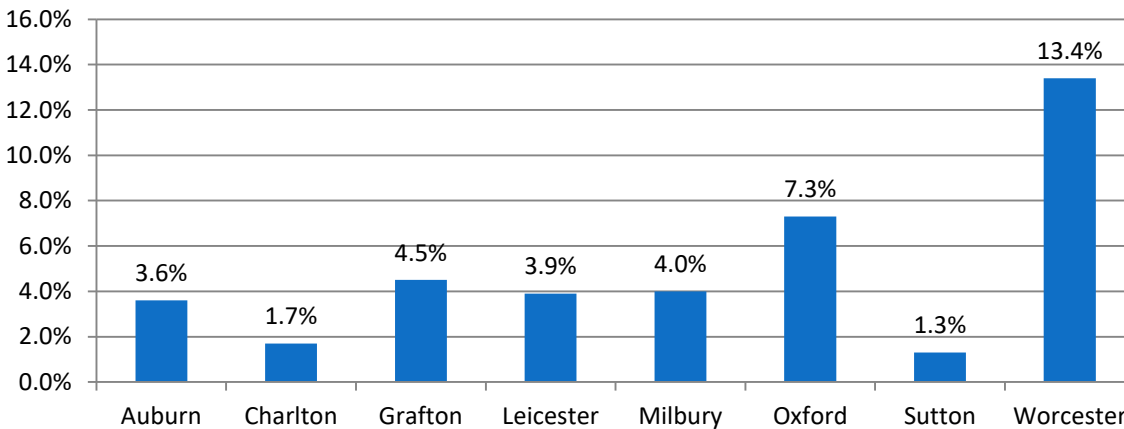
INCOME RESTRICTED HOUSING (SUBSIDIZED HOUSING)

Over 240 housing units in Auburn are restricted for occupancy by lower-income households. There are two forms of income-restricted housing: public and private. Public income-restricted housing is managed by the Auburn Housing Authority (AHA), a public housing authority established by state law to provide affordable housing for low-income people. Private income-restricted housing is owned and operated by both for-profit and non-profit owners who receive subsidies in exchange for renting to low- and moderate-income people.

The number of income-restricted housing units in Auburn is far below the state's 10 percent Chapter 40B affordable housing goal for the town. Chapter 40B, the Comprehensive Permit Law in Massachusetts, sets the goal for each community in the state to have a minimum of 10 percent of their year-round housing stock affordable for households earning at or below 80 percent of the area median income. As of April 2017, 3.6 percent (242 units) of Auburn's total housing inventory was subsidized for households of low- to moderate-incomes. Auburn would need 439 additional affordable housing units in order to meet its 10 percent affordable housing goal without consideration of future growth. Out of Auburn's neighboring communities, only Worcester surpassed the 10% state goal with over 10,000 income-restricted units.

¹⁰ "Work to Begin on 55+ Condominium Project," Telegram and Gazette, March 31, 2016.

Figure 5: Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of December 5, 2014



Source: Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development

Table 19 describes the current properties that appear on the DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), which lists all housing units that qualify as affordable under Chapter 40B. All of Auburn's units are rental units and are affordable in perpetuity. The Auburn Housing Authority (AHA) manages 190 units of public housing for low-income households. Their portfolio consists of 150 units for elderly and disabled residents and 32 units for families. Alternatives Unlimited manages the group home at 14 Maple Drive but the home is owned by the AHA.

The AHA reported substantial waits for all of its units, with over 200 applicants for each bedroom size. The AHA does not administer any rental subsidy vouchers such as Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. The Executive Director of the Housing Authority noted that the AHA does not have any expansion plans nor has it looked for additional property in Auburn due to a lack of additional funds that would allow them to purchase property, build and then operate such a development. The Executive Director noted that the lack of affordable housing for elderly residents and families is an issue facing town residents. Auburn Family Youth & Services, a nonprofit resource that offers counseling, after school care and summer programs for a fee is located at AHA's 21 Pheasant Court development. There is also a Food pantry available on site Tuesday mornings.

The Kateri Tekakwitha Senior Housing Residence opened in 2012 with 30 one-bedroom apartments for elderly residents age 62 and above. The project was funded through HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program and residency is restricted to persons who earn 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less. The facility is managed by Maloney properties. The Residence offers three handicap accessible apartments. The Residence reported a waiting list of 67 applicants in mid-April and the manager of the Residence expects the wait list to be around 90 applicants by the end of the year. Three of the current applicants are seeking a handicap accessible unit. The Residence does not give preferential or priority status to applicants. Residents and applicants on the wait list include Auburn residents as well as residents from all over the state and country.

Table 19: Income Restricted Housing Units in Auburn, 2017

Name	Location	Management	Type	Units	Bedrooms	Handicap Equipped Units
Stoneville Heights	200 Oxford St.	Public	Federally assisted elderly/disabled housing	60	One bedroom units	6
Pakachoag Village	Pakachoag Street	Public	Federally assisted and State aided elderly/disabled housing	90	One bedroom units	6
Pheasant Court	Pheasant Court	Public	State-aided family housing	20	2, 3 and 4 bedrooms	2
Pine Brook Court	Marie Street	Public	Federally-assisted family housing	12	2 and 3 bedrooms	None
Auburn Heights	14 Maple Drive	Public	DMH group home	8	N/A	Unknown
DMH	Confidential	Public	DMH group home	8	N/A	Unknown
DDS Group Homes	Confidential	Public	DDS group homes	20	N/A	Unknown
Kateri Tekawitha Housing	6 Wyonma Drive	Private	Elderly	30	One bedroom	3
Source: Massachusetts DHCD with feedback from the Auburn Housing Authority						

Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester oversaw the construction of a duplex at 4 Homestead Avenue that was completed in late 2016. The single-family home previously on the lot was demolished in order to build a brand new duplex. Bank of America donated 4 Homestead Ave to Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester as part of an initiative to avoid abandoned, vacant homes. The duplex was sold to two families who demonstrated a need for housing, ability to partner with Habitat and ability to pay a mortgage. These families had an income of 30-60% of the area median income, attended homeownership and budgeting classes, and contributed 400-500 hours of sweat equity. Habitat provides a 0%-interest mortgage. This duplex does not currently appear on DHCD's Inventory.

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING

Special needs housing typically refers to housing units specifically designed for populations with special needs such as: people with psychiatric and cognitive disabilities; veterans; survivors of domestic violence; youth aging out of foster care and at-risk youth; people with substance abuse issues; ex-offenders; people living with HIV or AIDS; and people who are homeless.

In Auburn, there are three organizations that operate group homes and one organization that owns a duplex for individuals with physical, developmental and intellectual disabilities. It should be noted that there are likely individuals with developmental disabilities who live independently in town with DDS assistance.

HOUSING MARKET

The extent to which housing is affordable matters greatly to any community. Housing is a basic human need and one of the most significant expenditures for any household. Massachusetts has become an expensive place to live. While single family home prices and rents are more affordable in the greater Worcester area than the more eastern parts of the state, prices in the greater Worcester area, including prices in Auburn, are still more expensive than in many areas of the country.

SINGLE FAMILY HOME MARKET

The Auburn Assessor's records show that the town had 5,035 single family homes in 2016. The average assessed value for a single-family home that year was \$301,357. Overall, the average home value ranged considerably, depending on the size of the home. Table 20 suggests that there are affordable housing options remaining in the private housing market. The average assessed value for home sized between 1,000 and 1,500 square feet was \$208,303 and homes in this size range account for 50 percent of Auburn single-family homes. The average assessed value of the smallest homes in Auburn, with 1,000 square feet or less, was \$165,061 and homes in this range account for just over 10 percent of all Auburn single-family homes. A housing issue identified by some throughout this planning process is that there are few options for upper middle-income households to "buy-up" in Auburn. There are particularly fewer overall homes with square footage of 2,000 square feet or more. Housing production over the last several years seems to be recognizing this market demand and developers have been building larger homes in town.

Table 20: Auburn Single Family Homes by Assessed Value and Size

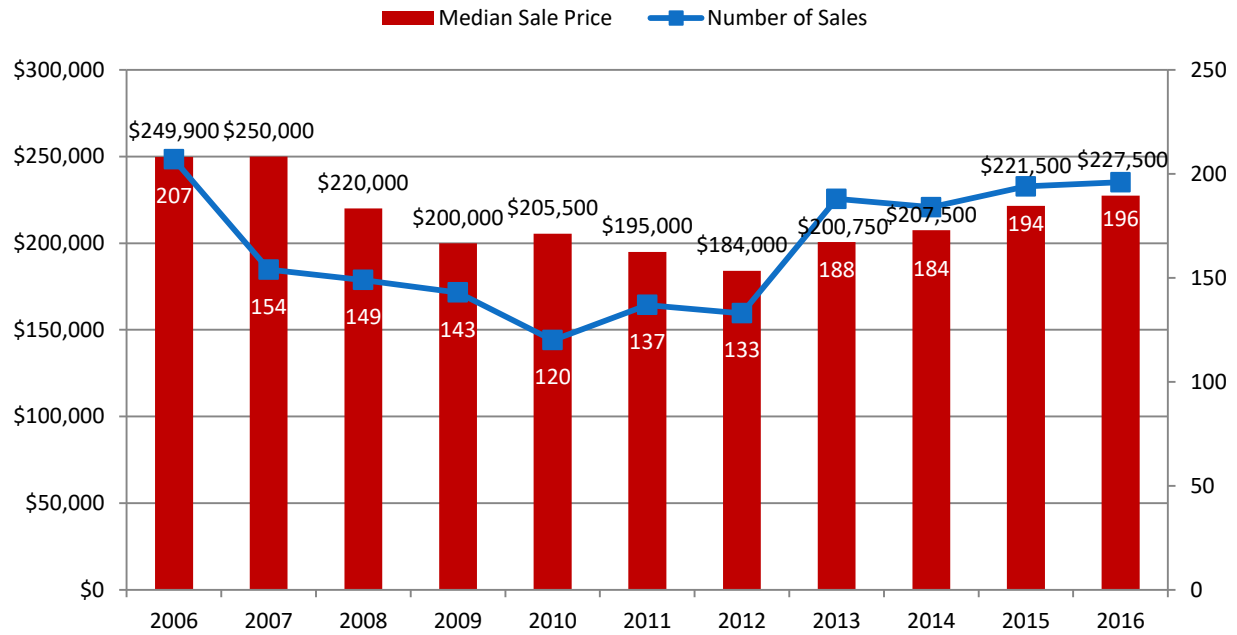
Square Feet	Number of Homes		Average Assessed Value	Homes Built after 2010	% Within Size Category
Under 500	1	0%	\$ 85,400	0	0%
500-1,000	562	11%	\$165,061	1	0%
1,000-1,500	2,579	51%	\$208,303	14	1%

1,500-2,000	1,069	21%	\$260,216	21	2%
2,000-2,500	508	10%	\$330,228	35	7%
2,500-3,000	223	4%	\$390,123	12	5%
3,000-4,000	78	2%	\$472,251	8	10%
4,000-5,000	14	0%	\$617,607	1	7%
Over 500,000	1	0%	\$755,900	0	0%
Total Homes	5,035	100%	\$301,357	92	N/A
<i>Source: Town of Auburn Assessor's Office, FY17 Parcel Inventory</i>					

The median sales price for a single family home in Auburn decreased by approximately 9 percent from 2006 to 2016 from \$249,900 in the year 2006 to \$227,500 in the year 2016. Median sale prices for single family homes were at their highest from 2006 to 2007, after which they began to decline. Auburn also saw a similar decline in the number of building permits issued annually after 2007. It should be noted that short sales have brought down the median sales price, meaning the median price confronting buyers for market rate homes was likely higher than what is shown. Foreclosure deeds have accounted for nine to twenty percent of single home sales during this period. Overall, the annual number of petitions to foreclose has decreased since 2009 although there was a spike in 2015.

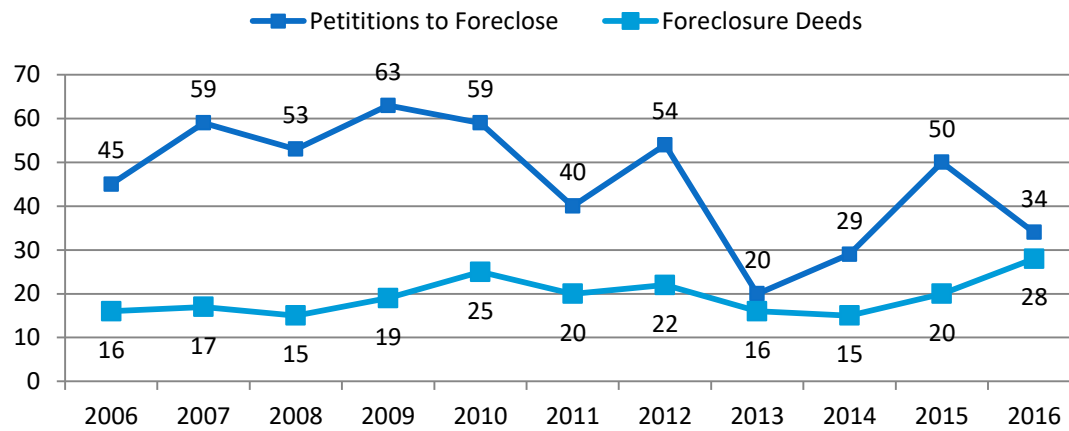
During this ten year period, single family homes sales were at its highest in 2006 at just over 200 sales for that year. The total number of sales per year began dropping after 2006, bottoming out at 120 sales in 2010 before swiftly increasing to almost pre-recession levels. In 2015 and 2016 an average of 195 single family home sales took place.

Figure 6: Auburn Single Family Home Median Sale Prices and Sales by Year



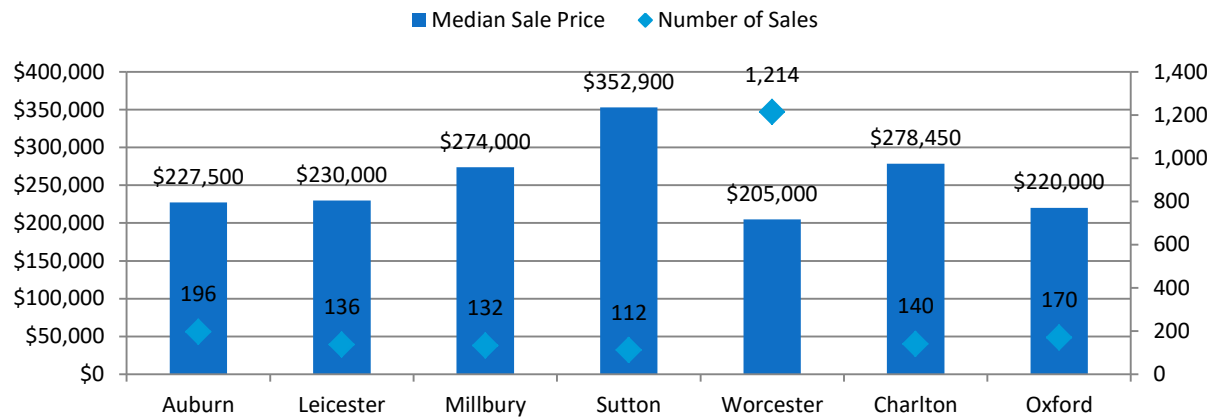
Source: Warren Group. Note: Prices are not adjusted to 2016 dollars (not inflation adjusted).

Figure 7: Auburn Petitions to Foreclose and Foreclosure Deeds for Single Family Homes, 2006-2016



Source: Warren Group

Figure 8: Single Family Home Median Sales Price and Number of Sales for Auburn and Comparison Towns in 2016



Source: Warren Group

Comparatively, Auburn's home prices are affordable. Out of the 40 communities in the Central Massachusetts planning region, Auburn had the 27th highest median sale price for single family home in 2016. Westborough had the highest median sale price for a single-family home that year at \$457,000 followed by Northborough at \$417,000. New Braintree had the lowest median sale price for a single-family home that year at \$169,000 followed by Southbridge at \$175,000. In terms of single family home sales, Auburn ranked fifth in the region in 2016 with 196 sales. Worcester had the highest number of sales that year at 1,214 sales followed by Shrewsbury at 354 sales.

Analysis of recent real estate sales data for Auburn shows that approximately 50 percent of the single-family homes that sold from March 20, 2016 through March 20, 2017 were priced between \$200,000 and \$300,000. Approximately 25 percent of single family homes sold below \$200,000. Over 15 percent of homes sold between \$300,000 and \$400,000. There were two auction listings during this period of analysis and these were not included in the calculations.

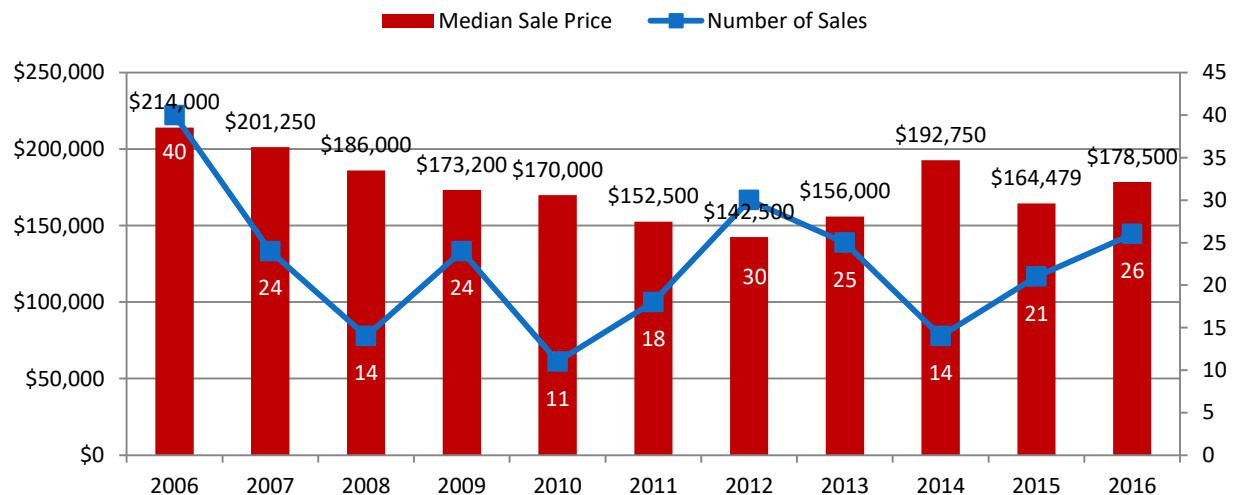
Table 21: Auburn Single-Family Homes and Condominiums Sold From 3/20/16 through 3/20/2017

Price Range	Single Family Homes		Condominiums	
	# of Listings	Average Days on Market	# of Listings	Average Days on Market
\$50,000-\$99,999	1	324	3	53
\$100,000-\$149,999	10	113	4	62
\$150,000-\$199,999	42	75	14	73
\$200,000-\$249,999	58	58	3	34
\$250,000-\$299,999	39	61	1	55
\$300,000-\$349,999	28	72	0	0

\$350,000-\$399,999	5	211	0	0
\$400,000-\$449,999	5	143	0	0
\$450,000-\$499,999	2	50	0	0
\$500,000-\$599,999	4	192	0	0
\$600,000-\$699,999	2	124	0	0
Total Properties	196	Av. 78 days	25	Av. 63
<i>Source: Multiple Listing Service, Total Market Statistics for Single Family Homes Sold from 3/20/2016 through 3/20/2017. Note: Two auction listings are not included in this report's calculations.</i>				

Auburn Assessor records shows that the town had 414 condominium units in 2016. The median sales price for a condominium in Auburn fell by 17 percent from 2006 to 2016 from \$214,000 in the year 2006 to \$178,500 in the year 2016. Similar to the decline in single family home prices, the median sale prices for condominiums steadily decreased from 2006 to 2012, bottoming at \$142,500 that year. Sale prices have risen since then but are still not at the pre-recession levels. Condominium sales were also at its highest in 2006, declining thereafter.

Figure 9: Auburn Median Condo Sale Prices and Sales by Year



Source: Warren Group. Note: Prices are not adjusted to 2016 dollars (not inflation adjusted).

Comparatively, Auburn's condominium prices are also affordable. Out of the 28 communities in the Central Massachusetts planning region with condominium sales, Auburn had the 19th highest median sale price for a condominium in 2016. Berlin had the highest median sale price for a condominium that year at \$375,000 followed by Westborough at \$360,000. Southbridge had the lowest median sale price for a condominium at that year at \$81,000. In terms of the number of sales, Auburn ranked 13th in the region in 2016 with 26 condominium sales. Worcester had the highest number of sales that year at 265 sales followed by Shrewsbury at 118 sales.

Auburn had a homeowner vacancy rate of 1 percent in 2010, suggesting a robust housing market around that year as any rate below 5 percent is considered to represent tight market conditions. Local realtors have also confirmed a robust resale market, noting that there is not enough on the market to satisfy demand and that they have seen slight price increases. They believe the market is strong town-wide. People are attracted to Auburn for its easy highway access, proximity to major employment centers, excellent school system, and shopping.

The newer homes in town tend to be more expensive. Over forty percent of homes built from 2010 through 2016 had assessed values between \$300,000 and \$400,000. Less than 15 percent of homes built during this period were valued below \$250,000 and about a quarter were valued over \$400,000. These newer homes also tend to be larger. Almost 40 percent of these homes had between 2,000 and 2,500 square feet of living space, about 10 percent had between 2,500 and 3,000 square feet and another 10 percent had over 3,000 square feet of living space. One developer interviewed for this Assessment doubts the town will see new single-family homes built and sold for less than \$400,000 because of regulatory and environmental constraints, which would challenge meeting the needs of existing upper middle income households who would like to “buy-up” and remain in Auburn.

Table 22: Single Family Homes Constructed from 2010 through 2016 by Assessed Value

Assessed Value of Home	Number of homes	Percent
\$50,000-\$99,999	0	0%
\$100,000-\$149,999	0	0%
\$150,000-\$199,999	2	2%
\$200,000-\$249,999	6	7%
\$250,000-\$299,999	12	13%
\$300,000-\$349,999	20	22%
\$350,000-\$399,999	19	21%
\$400,000-\$449,999	17	18%
\$450,000-\$499,999	6	7%
\$500,000-\$599,999	8	9%
\$600,000-\$699,999	2	2%
Total Properties	92	100%
<i>Source: Town of Auburn Assessor's Office, FY17 Parcel Inventory</i>		

Homeownership Market Conditions

Despite the drop in home values that occurred after the housing market / economic downturn started in 2007, homeownership will continue to be a challenge, and in most cases, beyond the means of lower income households, especially with rising utility costs.

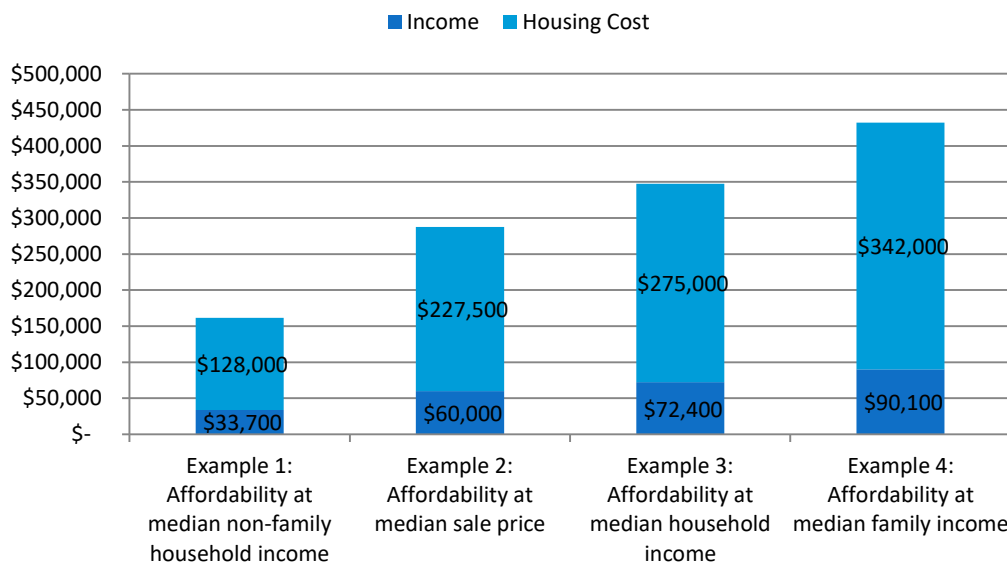
- Tighter lending requirements and uncertainty continue to keep many buyers out of the market.
- Household incomes have also not kept pace with increased housing costs and younger households are increasingly saddled with college debt.
- Purchasing a home requires a larger initial outlay due to more stringent mortgage financing terms and conditions such as the requirement of down payments equaling 20% of the purchase price rather than the 5%-10% or less that had become common.
- New homebuyers will likely need programs offering down payment assistance, more affordable homes developed with financing that includes grant funding and reduced cost financing such as the ONE Mortgage Program administered by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

BUYING A SINGLE-FAMILY HOME IN AUBURN

Although Auburn and the Worcester area have historically been cheaper places to live than the eastern part of the state, the dramatic increase in housing prices in the late 1990s to early 2000s affected the ability of many households to buy a home. The general rule of thumb is that housing is ‘affordable’ if the household pays no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Households who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered “cost-burdened” and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care as well as saving for their future and that of their families.

Figure 12 portrays the annual household income needed to afford to purchase a home at varying price points. The housing cost takes into consideration Auburn’s 2016 tax rate, an estimate of homeowners insurance, mortgage principal and interest, and assumes a 20 percent down payment. Considering the median household income for Auburn in 2011-2015 was approximately \$72,400, that translates into \$275,000 of purchasing power. Positively, more than half of the homes sold in Auburn in 2016 had a sale price of less than this amount. Without adequate funds for a down payment or a strong credit history, characteristics that could lessen their ability to secure a mortgage, homeownership in Auburn though is likely to still be unaffordable for lower income families.

Figure 10: Annual Income Needed to Afford to Purchase a Single-Family Home in Auburn



Source: Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission with data from the Warren Group and the American Community Survey 2011-2015 as well as methodology from Massachusetts DHCD.

For existing Auburn homeowners, the 2011-2015 ACS estimates that 29 percent of Auburn homeowners with a mortgage spent more than 30 percent of their household income on housing-related costs and are therefore “cost-burdened.” The share of Auburn cost-burdened households with a mortgage was slightly lower than the share of households in Worcester County which saw rates of 32 percent of their households over this same period. For Auburn households without a mortgage an estimated 17 percent

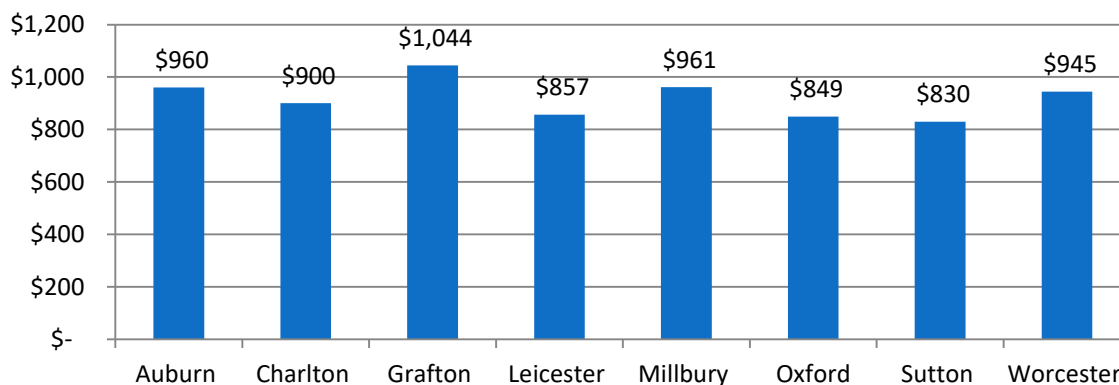
spent more than 30 percent of their household income on housing-related costs. This, again, was lower than the share of households without mortgages in Worcester County who spent more 30 of their incomes on housing related costs at rates of 20 percent over this same period.

RENTAL MARKET

The ACS 2011-2015 estimated the median gross rent for Auburn at \$960, which was lower than the median gross rent for the state (\$1,102) and that of Grafton (\$1,044), but higher than the rest of the communities in the area. Gross median rents are useful for making broad comparisons to the county, state or nation, but more detailed information, such as rent by bedroom type is needed to have a more accurate picture of the local rental market. To understand current market rental rates, local data was gathered from Zillow, Trulia, Craigslist, HUD Fair Market Rents as well as from two property management companies that rent units in Auburn. Zillow, Craigslist and Trulia showed few available rentals during our research period of March and April 2017. Those that were being marketed through these online sites tended to be single family home rentals with three bedrooms (8). Both interviewed property management companies said that units get rented very quickly. The company that oversees Auburn Gardens (44 two-bedroom units) noted that they have, at times, a waiting list for their units. The company also noted that, from what they have observed, many of their tenants chose to live in Auburn because of its interstate access.

Auburn had a rental vacancy rate of 6.6 percent in 2010. A healthy rental housing market is generally considered to have vacancy rates of less than 5 percent, not much lower than Auburn's 6.6 percent level. The county and state also had rental vacancy rates in 2010 that were higher than this range at 7.7 percent and 6.5 percent respectively. However, this data may just be indicative of a pricing and product mismatch.

Figure 11: Median Gross Rent, 2011-2015



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: American Community Survey 2011-2015

Table 23: Asking Rents for Auburn Units and Fair Market Rents for the Worcester MSA.

	Studio	1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3-bedroom	4-bedroom
Asking Rents from Zillow,		\$750-\$975	\$800-	\$1,200-	\$2,000

Trulia, Craigslist			\$1,500	\$1,795	
Property Management Company #1 (Auburn Gardens)			\$1,095-\$1,295		
Property Management Company # 2			\$1,000	\$1,500	
FY 2016 HUD Fair Market Rent for Worcester MSA	\$708	\$841	\$1,062	\$1,318	\$1,482
<i>Source: Zillow, www.zillow.com; Trulia, www.trulia.com; Craigslist, www.craigslist.com; 2011-2015 American Community Survey; and HUD.</i> <i>Note: Hot water, at a minimum, was included for all advertised online rentals. Some of the above advertised rents included all utilities. Heat and hot water are included in the rents for those rented by the two Property Management Companies.</i>					

RENTING IN AUBURN

Using the guideline that a household should pay no more than 30 percent of its annual pre-tax income on housing, the table below identifies the annual household income needed to affordably rent a home using various levels of income. A household earning the median household income of \$72,400 would have choice. However, lower-income households, often the households most in need of rental housing, would have limited choices in finding a safe and affordable place to live. For example, a three-person household earning \$30,000 could afford an estimated monthly rental of \$575, assuming they are paying no more than 30% of their income on housing and pay utility bills that average \$175 per month (or a monthly rent of \$750 if all utilities are included). There were not any 2 bedroom units available in Auburn in this price range according to the recent survey of rents shown in Table 23. Rental affordability in Auburn is a concern. The ACS 2011-2015 shows that over half of existing renter households in Auburn spend more than 30 percent. It is also a regionwide and statewide concern. Half of all renter households at the county and state levels are also cost burdened.

Table 24: Affordable Monthly Rent at Various Household Income Levels

	Household One	Household Two	Household Three	Household Four	Household Five	Household Six
Annual Income	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$60,000	80,000
30% of Monthly Income	\$300	\$500	\$750	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$2,000
Estimated Utility Cost	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$175
Affordable Monthly Rent	\$125	\$325	\$575	\$1,075	\$1,325	\$1,825
<i>Source: Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission, 2017</i>						

Rental Market Conditions

Initial costs of renting an apartment, including first and last month's rent, security deposit, and, for some, broker fees, can be expensive and preclude some lower income households from affording to rent a home. Rents have risen in the region, despite the economic downturn and the recovering economy, because of increased demand with a stagnant supply. Reasons for an increased demand in the rental market include:

- the desire to remain a renter because of the financial uncertainty of owning a home (as shown by the foreclosure crisis);
- inability to afford to buy a home because of the initial expense to enter the homeownership market, which requires 20% down on the purchase and tighter lending requirements, including higher credit scores;
- significant individual debt (such as the case now for emerging college-graduates), which prevents entrance into the homeownership market (*as well as many rental opportunities*); and the loss of one's home as a result of the foreclosure crisis, which drove homeowners into the rental market.

COST BURDENS BY TENURE, INCOME AND TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

HUD provides additional data on housing affordability problems by tenure, type of household and income level through its CHAS Report. This report is summarized below, based on 2013 estimates from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the most recent figures available. The CHAS Report highlights the following housing affordability issues:

- Almost 30% of all households (1,707) were spending too much for housing and just over 10% were cost burdened.
- More than 2,240 households or 36 percent of all households earned at or below 80% of median family income (MFI) and might qualify for housing assistance based solely on income.
- Over half of all those earning at or below 80% MFI were spending too much for housing, including almost 30 percent who were spending more than half of their income on housing.
- There were 636 households earning at or below 80% MFI who were spending 50% or more of their income on housing, including 110 renters and 509 owners.
- Even some earning more than 80% MFI were experiencing cost burdens including 452 households, 97 percent of which were owners. Approximately 10% of these households were severely cost-burdened, all of whom were owners.
- Of the 514 households earning at or below 30% MFI, 395 or more than three-quarters were spending too much for housing, 58% spending more than half of their income on housing costs. Of the 340 owners in this income range, 285 had cost burdens with 225 spending more than half of their earnings on the expense of housing. Of the 174 renters in this category, 110 had cost burdens (63%) with 75 (43%) spending more than half of their earnings.
- Almost 90% of the renters earning between 30% and 50% MFI experienced cost burdens with a little over 10% spending at least half of their income on housing.
- More than 60% of 565 owners with incomes in the 30% to 50% MFI range were spending too much, over 30% spending more than half their income on housing costs.
- Of the 960 households earning between 50% and 80% MFI, 338 or one-third were spending too much for housing, with just over 10% spending more than half of their income on housing costs. Of the 770 owners in this income range, 293 had cost burdens with 109 spending more than half of their earnings on the expense of housing. Of the 190 renters in this category, less than one-quarter (45 households) had cost burdens.
- More than half of elderly renters and one-third of elderly owners were paying too much for their housing.
- Of the 194 small family renter households, 65 were cost-burdened and zero were severely cost burdened. One-third of the burdened households earned between 30% and 50% MFI and another one-third earned 100% or more.
- There were 495 large family households, 430 of which were owners and 65 renters. Zero of the renter households had cost burdens and 82 of the owner households had cost burdens.

Table 25: Cost Burdens by Tenure, Income and Type of Household, 2013

Type of Household	Households Earning <30% MFI/# with cost burdens **	Households Earning > 30% to < 50% MFI/# with cost burdens **	Households Earning > 50% to < 80% MFI/# with cost burdens **	Households Earning > 80% and < 100% MFI /# with cost burdens **	Households Earning > 100% MFI/ # with cost burdens **	Total
Elderly Renters	105/10-45	134/94-25	70/10-10	15/0-0	39/0-0	363/114-80
Small Family Renters	4/0-0	65/55-0	30/10-0	25/0-0	70/0-0	194/65-0
Large Family Renters	0/0-0	0/0-0	0/0-0	0/0-0	65/0-0	65/0-0
Other Renters	65/25-30	4/4/2000	90/15-0	55/4-0	50/0-0	264/48-30
Total Renters	174/35-75	203/153-25	190/35-10	95/4-0	224/0-0	886/227-110
Elderly Owners	230/50-135	355/145-60	460/75-50	210/15-0	480/30-15	1,735/315-260
Small Family Owners	60/0-50	95/10-60	165/35-40	190/60-10	2,030/155-4	2,540/260-164
Large Family Owners	0/0-0	20/10-0	45/4-4	35/20-4	330/40-0	430/74-8
Other Owners	50/10-40	95/4-55	100/70-15	75/55-0	330/30-10	650/69-120
Total Owners	340/60-225	565/169-175	770/184-109	510/150-14	3,170/255-29	5,355/818-552
Total	514/95-300	768/322-200	960/219-119	605/154-14	3,394/255-29	6,241/1,045-662

Source: U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), SOCDs CHAS Data, American Community Survey, 2013

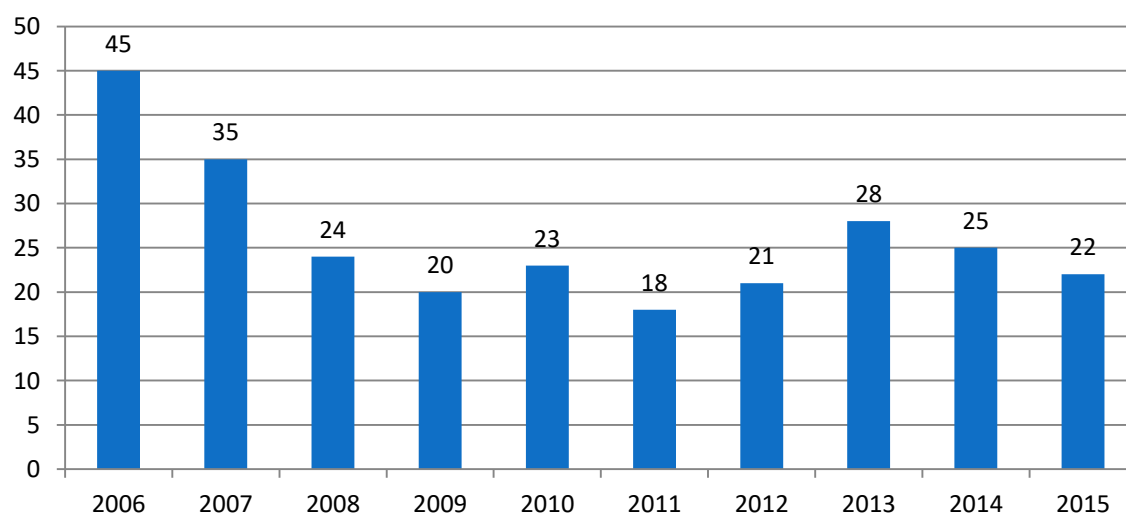
** First number is total number of households in each category/second is the number of households paying more than 30% to 50% of their income on housing (with cost burdens) – and third number includes those that are paying more than half of their income on housing expenses (with severe cost burdens). Small families have four (4) or fewer family members while larger families include five (5) or more members. The “Other” category, for both renters and owners, includes non-elderly and non-family households. Median family income (MFI) is used in this report but is the equivalent of area median income (AMI).

DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING ACTIVITY

Auburn building permit activity ranged considerably over the last ten years, reflecting the effects of the economic recession that started in 2007. The greatest volume of issued permits occurred from 2006 to 2007 with a total of 80 permits issued during those two years. Since then, the level of building permit activity has dropped considerably, ranging from 18 to 28 permits a year. In comparison to its surrounding communities, Auburn's level of permit activity from 2006 through 2015 was moderate. Worcester, Grafton, and Charlton issued more permits for single family homes than Auburn in these ten years while the remaining towns permitted less. Like Auburn, all these communities saw the level of permit activity drop after 2007 which coincides with the recession.

According to HUD's data, all Auburn building permits issued from 2006 through 2015 were for single family homes (Figure 12). Worcester was the only community in Auburn's comparison area with building permits issued for units in a multifamily structure of five or more units. From 2010 to 2014 Worcester issued between zero to 16 building permits a year for units in a multifamily structure of five or more units. However, the City of Worcester issued over 130 permits in 2015 for units in a multifamily structure of five or more units.

Figure 12: Auburn Single-Family Home Building Permits Issued by Year*



Source: HUD SOCDS Building Permits Database. *Note: these numbers are higher than those reported directly from the building department which noted 13 in 2012, 17 in 2013, 16 in 2014, and 17 in 2015.

This Assessment also examined development and subdivision activity since 2010. Housing development since 2010 has occurred both in the form of "Approval Not Required" (ANR) lots and subdivisions. Development of individual house lots along existing public ways requires only the submittal of an ANR plan to the Planning Board. Nine subdivisions have been filed since 2010. Table 27 shows "Active" subdivisions in town. Since 2010, approximately 51 lots have been created through the ANR process.

Table 26: Single Family Home Building Permit Activity for Auburn and Comparison Towns

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Totals
Auburn	45	35	24	20	23	18	21	28	25	22	261
Charlton	62	30	25	28	23	16	13	47	32	27	303
Grafton	142	56	30	31	43	56	38	85	62	52	595
Leicester	47	22	16	24	24	17	14	15	21	19	219
Millbury	14	16	7	3	12	6	7	9	24	33	131
Oxford	39	22	9	8	11	8	4	10	10	13	134
Sutton	34	24	15	11	18	18	18	24	23	34	219
Worcester	292	214	61	110	99	64	44	53	88	43	1,068
Totals	675	419	187	235	253	203	159	271	285	243	2,930
<i>Source: HUD SOCDs Building Permits Database</i>											

Table 27: Auburn Active Subdivisions

Name	Address	Approved	Lots	Status	Notes
Bryn Mawr Estates	Briarcliffe Rd Amherst Road	1966, 2004, 2009	13	In Progress	9 lots remaining
Camden Woods	Camden Drive	2005	17	In Progress	Houses and road finished in 2013. Open space still needs to be deeded
Stoneville Estates	88 Wallace Ave	2007	9	unknown	No activity. Bond never secured, no timetable in conditions of approval,
Southold Meadow	Southold Road	2010	13	Endorsed	No activity. Bond secured in 2011, expires Dec 2017.
Whitetail Run	25 Brook Street	2012	10	In Progress	Bond Secured in 2013, expires November 15, 2018
Claire Drive Extension	Claire Drive	2012	3	Endorsed	Bond Secured in 2013, expired November 15, 2015
Deer Run Estates	Paul Revere Road	2012	7	Completed	Completed in 2015
Pakachoag Farms	71 Curtis Street	2015	7	Approved	No activity. Bond not yet secured, plan not endorsed.
Hamlet Estates	127 West Street	2015	5	Approved	No activity. Covenant expires December 2021.
Windmill Estates	46 Prospect Street	2016	12	In Progress	24 units 12 lots. Covenant expires December 2021.

Reserve @ Ashworth Hill	18 Blaker Street	2017	4	Approved	Bond not yet secured, plan not endorsed. Must endorse plan before April 2019.
-------------------------	------------------	------	---	----------	---

Source: Auburn Planning Department, May 2017

The Auburn Planning Department anticipates moderate housing growth over the next several years. In the past, this development has been concentrated in the central and northern sections of the Town, and has been confined by the steep slopes of the Town's peripheral hills. The land most suited for development has already been built upon. To some, Auburn is almost built-out. However, one developer who was interviewed for this assessment believes that there is a significant amount of developable land remaining, particularly in the Rural Residential district, noting that this land may just need to be rezoned for a reasonable return on investment to be achieved.

Recent plan review, development, and building activity include a six-unit multifamily building at 404 Oxford Street approved in January 2017. A duplex at 4 Homestead Ave whose construction was overseen by Habitat for Humanity and that was permitted under Chapter 40B was completed in December of 2016. The ZBA has approved several accessory apartments in the past two years. The Planning Board has also approved several special permits for the development of hammerhead lots over the last several years. The Planning Board is currently reviewing a 40-lot preliminary subdivision at 347 Rochdale Street. An applicant is seeking ZBA approval for ten two-family dwellings through the special permit process on Hampton Street/Eaton Avenue (on ANR lots approved in the 1960s).

Town officials are exploring redevelopment opportunities at the two former schools that have been returned to the town as well as along its retail corridors. Residential uses may be targeted for these areas. Drury Square is one area targeted for mixed use development. A Chapter 40B subdivision with over 250 units of housing has been rumored but no active applications to the State have been confirmed. Auburn's close proximity to Interstates 290, 395 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, the excellent school system, and easy access to regional shopping destinations will continue to make Auburn an attractive place to live.

HOUSING CHALLENGES

The Town of Auburn is committed to encouraging sustainable growth and development, including the production and preservation of affordable housing. It is also cognizant of the importance of promoting such growth within the context of preserving natural resources, economic health, and quality of life. It will continue to be a great challenge for the community to create enough housing choices to address the wide range of housing needs in light of the following constraints:

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

As is the case in most American communities, a zoning by-law or ordinance is enacted to control the use of land including the patterns of housing development. Auburn is divided into 15 different Zoning Districts, including five (5) Residential Districts that comprise approximately 83% of the community's total land area. Zoning also includes two (2) Business Districts, three (3) Industrial Districts, and five (5) Overlay Districts.¹¹ One of the Overlay Districts, the Mixed-Use Overlay District (MD), promotes mixed residential and commercial uses.

As shown in Table 1 and Figure 1, zoning requirements vary considerably by District. The smallest lots are allowed in the RA district, areas of town that were largely developed prior to the adoption of zoning. Generally, to the east and west from the RA Districts are the RB districts with larger minimum lot size requirements of 20,000 square feet or almost a half-acre. The RA and RB Districts combined comprise about 40% of the town's land area and have access to municipal water and sewer services.

The RC and RR Districts have significantly larger minimum lot size requirements of 40,000 and 60,000 square feet, respectively. Some parts of these Districts rely on on-site septic systems and wells. These Districts include approximately 43% of Auburn's land area.

¹¹ Two of the Overlay Districts, the Floodplain and Aquifer, are technically combined into one Aquifer & Watershed Protection Overlay District that contains three zones. Zone II is the "Aquifer" and Zone III is the "Floodplain". The third zone, Zone I, is inexplicably missing from all town maps, and the Town and Auburn Water District should work with Northeast GeoScience to rectify this problem. Additionally, none of the Overlay Districts are shown on the zoning map. A Zoning Overlay Map was included in the 2006 Master Plan, but is not available for edits in GIS and needs to be recreated from scratch.

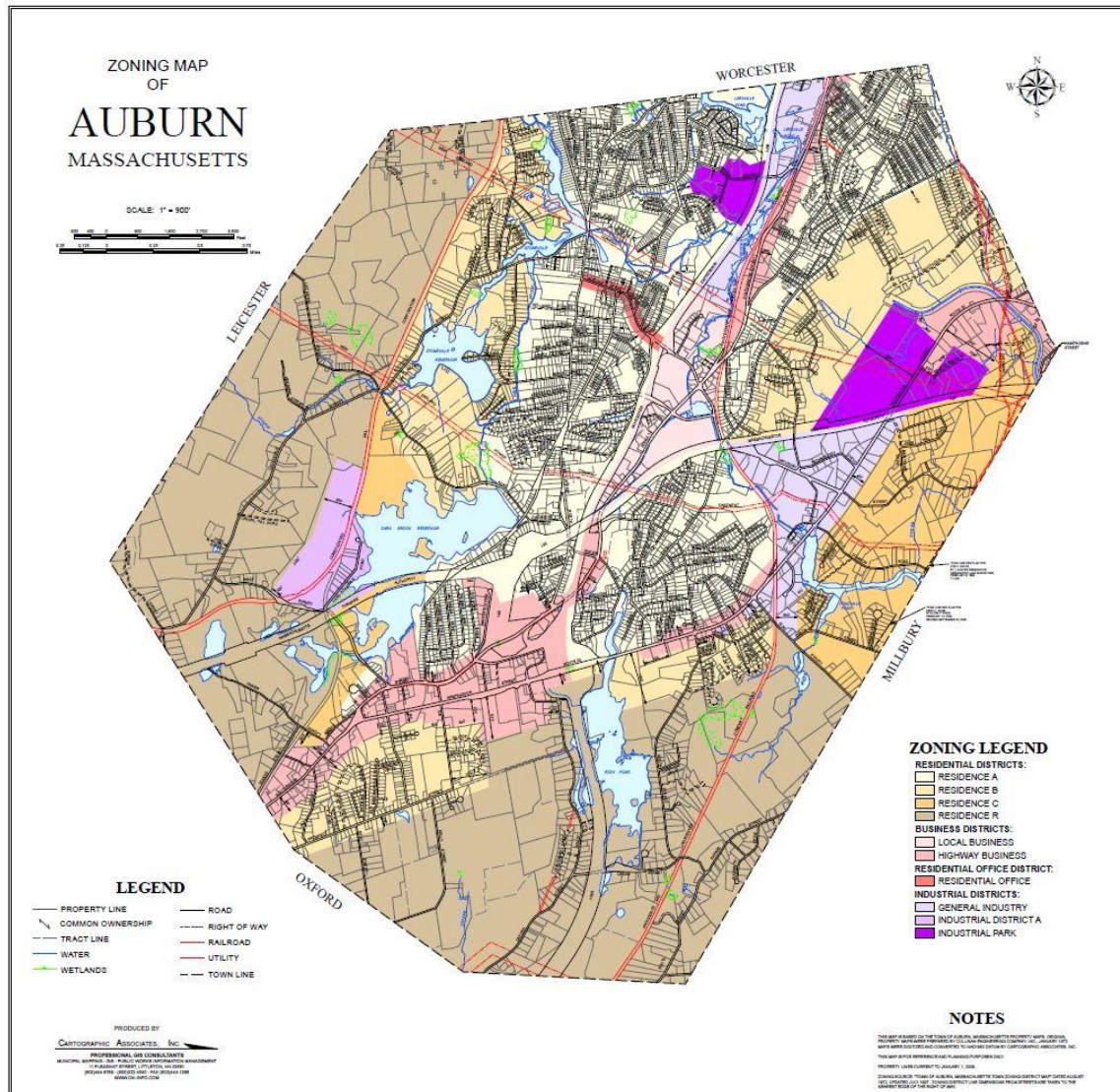


Figure 1: Zoning Map

There is also a small Residence Office (RO) District where small-scale commercial activities are allowed. This District follows Auburn Street between I-290 and Oxford Street North with dimensional requirements that generally follow those of the RA Districts.

Because affordable housing typically relies on economies of scale that come with greater density, the large-lot zoning that is required in about half of the Town’s residential area and significant setback and frontage requirements, while protecting the environment, make it extremely challenging to build such housing without waivers of existing requirements through the Chapter 40B process or other special local zoning provisions. As the town continues to grow, it will reasonably explore the extension of some water and sewer services to appropriate areas to make somewhat denser development possible.

While single-family detached homes are allowed in all residential districts, two-family dwellings are allowed by Special Permit in the RA, RB, RC and RR Districts and by Site Plan Approval in the RO District. Townhouses and other multi-family structures are not allowed in the RC and RR Districts where zoning of almost an acre or acre and a half is required for each building lot, also by Special Permit.

Table 1: Dimensional Regulations

Requirements	RA 1-Family/ 2-Family or MF	RB 1-Family/ 2-Family or MF	RC 1-Family/ 2-Family	RR 1-Family/ 2-Family	RO 1-Family/ 2-Family
Minimum Lot Requirements					
Area, square feet	10,000/19,000	20,000/29,000	40,000/49,000	60,000/69,000	10,000/19,000
Frontage, feet	100/100	100/100	160/160	180/180	100/100
Minimum Yard Requirements					
Front, feet	20/20	30/30	40/40	40/40	20/20
Side, feet	10/10	10/10	20/20	20/20	10/10
Rear, feet	10/10	10/10	20/20	20/20	10/10
Maximum Height					
Feet	25/25	25/25	25/25	25/25	25/25

Source: Auburn Zoning Bylaws, Table 1 of Section 5.4.

ZONING PROVISIONS THAT ADDRESS AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SMART GROWTH

Despite these zoning constraints, Auburn’s Zoning Bylaws include the following provisions that promote some affordable housing, smart growth development, and a greater diversity of housing types:

Accessory Apartments

Accessory apartments are described in the Zoning Bylaws as “a separate housekeeping unit, complete with its own sleeping, cooking and sanitary facilities, that is substantially contained within the structure of a single-family dwelling, but functions as a separate unit, including ingress/egress to the unit without requiring passage through the primary dwelling unit.”¹² While these units cannot be included in the Subsidized Housing Inventory, they do tend to provide more affordable market rentals to small households as well as a number of other important benefits including the following which are listed in the Zoning Bylaw:

¹² Auburn Zoning Bylaws, Section 9.3.12.1.

- Provide older homeowners with a means of obtaining, through tenants in accessory apartments, rental income, companionship, security and services, and thereby to enable them to stay more comfortably in homes and neighborhood they might otherwise be forced to leave;
- Add inexpensive rental units to the housing stock to meet the needs of smaller households, both young and old;
- Protect stability, property values, and the residential character of a neighborhood by ensuring that accessory apartments are installed only in owner-occupied houses and under such additional conditions as may be appropriate to further the purposes of this bylaw; and
- Legalize conversions to encourage compliance with the State Building Code.¹³

These units are allowed through a Special Permit of the Zoning Board of Appeals based on the following major requirements:

- The accessory unit must comply with applicable zoning requirements for the District as well as the State Building Code.
- The accessory apartment must be designed so that the appearance of the building remains that of a single-family residence to the greatest extent possible.
- The addition does not increase the floor area or volume of the original building by more than 20% and will not alter the character of the building.
- The unit must be no greater than 700 square feet or have more than one bedroom.
- At least one off-street parking space must be provided for the accessory unit.
- A registered Sanitarian or Professional Engineer must certify that the improvements comply with Title 5 requirements.

Since the bylaw was adopted in 2012, there have been 15 accessory apartments approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Open Space Residential Development

Auburn's Zoning Bylaws also includes an Open Space Residential Development bylaw "to encourage the preservation of common land for conservation, agriculture, open space and recreational use; to preserve historical or archaeological resources; to protect existing or potential municipal water supplies; to protect the value of real property; to promote more sensitive siting of buildings and better overall site planning; to promote better utilization of land in harmony with its natural features and with the

¹³ Auburn Zoning Bylaws, Section 9.3.12.2

general intent of the zoning bylaw through a greater flexibility in design; and to allow more efficient provision of municipal services”.¹⁴

While this particular bylaw does not incorporate mandates or incentives for providing affordable housing as many other such bylaws do, it nevertheless promotes “smart growth” principles and provides a good alternative to traditional subdivisions that promote sprawl. These units are processed through a Special Permit of the Planning Board under the following major requirements:

- Minimum parcel size of six (6) acres.
- The base number of units is based on what is allowed under a conventional subdivision.
- Units must conform to the height, frontage, side and rear yard requirements and other limitations included in Table 2. Requirements for un-sewered areas are more restrictive with minimum lot areas per structure ranging from 30,000 to 40,000 square feet, frontages per structure from 100 to 125 feet, front setbacks of 30 to 40 feet, and side and rear setbacks of 15 to 20 feet.
- Maximum number of units per structure is eight (8).
- The minimum width of open land between any group of lots and adjacent property is 20 feet in the RA and RB Districts, 40 feet in the RC and RR Districts, and 100 feet between each group of clustered buildings.
- At least 30% of the parcel in the RA and RB Districts and 40% in the RC and RR Districts must be open space exclusive of land set-aside for roads and parking. This open space and other facilities that will be held in common ownership must be conveyed to an entity approved by the Planning Board and deed restricted in perpetuity as open space. In general, natural resource land not suitable for public use will be conveyed to the Town or a trust while the land that will be principally used by the residents will be conveyed to a homeowners’ association that will also be responsible for ongoing maintenance.
- No other uses other than residential or recreational will be allowed.
- An optional density bonus is provided if the parcel is sewerred and the number of units is not increased by more than 25% over what would be permitted if the developer provides traffic or pedestrian improvements, landscaped open space of an unusually large part of the tract, and/or off-premises improvements in the public interest. This density bonus may include a decrease of the minimum lots size or an increase in the number of lots.

¹⁴ Auburn Zoning Bylaws, Section 4.2.1

Table 2: Dimensional Regulations – Open Space Residential Development (OSRD)

Requirements	RA Sewered 1-Family/ 2-Family or MF	RB Sewered 1-Family/ 2-Family or MF	RC Sewered 1-Family*	RR Sewered 1-Family*
Minimum Lot Requirements				
Area, square feet	10,000/10,000 Per unit	15,000/10,000 Per unit	30,000	30,000
Frontage, feet	100/100	100/100	75	100
Minimum Yard Requirements				
Front, feet	30/30	30/30	40	40
Side, feet	15/15	15/15	20	20
Rear, feet	15/15	15/15	20	20
Maximum Height				
Feet	25/25	25/25	25	25

Source: Auburn Zoning Bylaw, Table 2 of Section 5.4.

*Two-family and multi-family units are not permitted

Since 2005, eight (8) active subdivisions have been approved, and of these 3 are OSRD's that are currently under construction. The remaining five (5) were approved under conventional plans, one (1) of which is currently under construction.

Mixed Use Development Overlay District (MD)

The Town has adopted a Mixed-Use Development Overlay District “to permit a mixture of residential, open space and commercial uses, and a variety of building types” through a Special Permit of the Planning Board.¹⁵ The Mixed-Use Overlay District is essentially the BJ's and Home Depot parcel along with the Town-owned Granger Cliffs and parts of Oxford Street South. These provisions have not been exercised since the adoption of the bylaw following its recommendation in the 1987 Master Plan.

Once again, while there are no mandates or incentives for including affordable housing, this type of zoning also complies with “smart growth” zoning principles that direct denser development to appropriate locations and offer a greater diversity of housing opportunities. This zoning limits apartments to floors above the ground floor, however in areas where the multi-use project abuts a residential zone, apartments are also allowed on all floors on the side of the parcel facing the residential zone. Other requirements include:

¹⁵ Auburn Zoning Bylaws, Section 4.4

- There are no minimum square foot requirements for both new construction and expansion.
- In new construction projects, at least 10% of the land must be set aside as permanent usable open space, conveyed to the Conservation Commission or a nonprofit conservation organization or trust.
- Projects that abut a residential district should be set back at least 30 feet from the adjacent residential property lines.
- There is a building height limitation of 70 feet.
- Parking requirement of 1.5 spaces per unit.

Mitigation Measures: The Town of Auburn is in the process of conducting a comprehensive review and update of its Zoning Bylaws through its Zoning Bylaw Review Committee. Recommendations in this Housing Plan will inform this process to further promote affordable housing, a greater diversity of housing types, and smart growth development including adopting new zoning for multi-family and mixed-use development, modifying the OSRD and accessory apartment bylaws, and exploring inclusionary zoning (see strategies 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

Additionally, in 2015, the Town of Auburn received a technical assistance grant from CMRPC and Mass Audubon for the purpose of analyzing and updating the Town's Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw as well as the Planning Board's Subdivision Rules and Regulations. The report was produced in April 2016 and contains several recommendations that promote low impact development best practices, including some revisions to the OSRD bylaw to guide developers towards OSRD's rather than conventional development under standard zoning regulations. One recommendation is to remove the Special Permit requirements to make an OSRD an as-of-right use. If completed, the Planning Board would revise its regulations to ask developers to bring two designs, OSRD and conventional, to preliminary subdivision review. This Housing Plan suggests that the OSRD bylaw also include mandates for the inclusion of some amount of affordable housing as well as density bonuses for this inclusion (see strategy 2.2).

LIMITED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewer Services

Auburn provides public sewer services to about 85% of the Town's roads. Areas that are not covered include those in the more rural districts where the typically hilly terrain increases the costs of construction, including costly sewer pump stations. The Town's sewage is treated at the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District treatment plant on the Worcester/Millbury line that serves eleven (11) communities. The plant was constructed with excess capacity to meet future demand, but EPA and DEP concerns about nitrogen and phosphorus levels required the plant to upgrade its equipment to meet new standards. This work was completed in 2009. Auburn has also made

improvements in its pumping stations and water mains over the years. Another issue has been the increasing Infiltration/Inflow (I/I) into the system as a result of high storm water runoff during various times of the year, the summer in particular. These higher flow periods challenge the existing system and call for stricter drainage requirements in relationship to new development as well as the continued replacement of older mains.

Water Services

Auburn's water system technically includes four (4) water suppliers that provide water to various areas of Auburn including the Auburn Water District, Woodland Water District, the Elm Hill Water District and the City of Worcester. The three (3) Water Districts are public, political subdivisions of the Commonwealth as they were created by various acts of the state legislature and obtain all of their revenue from the sale of water.

The Auburn Water District serves about 80% of the community that involves approximately 11,000 residents. It is a private entity that is independent of Town government with its own sources of water (wells). The Woodland Water District is small, serving approximately 500 residents in the Woodland Street area, and buys all of its water from the City of Worcester. In 2004, the Auburn Water District took over Woodland's operations but it remains a separate public water supplier.

The Elm Hill Water District serves residents on Pakachoag Hill in North Auburn, also serving a number of businesses on or in proximity of Southbridge Street near the Worcester City Line. It also purchases its water from the City of Worcester.

There are areas in the Auburn Water District area that are not currently being served as they are located above the level of the District's existing water storage tanks. To serve these areas (including areas south of Prospect Street and on or near Crawl Hill in the Rochdale Street area), it would be necessary to extend the water mains and construct booster stations and additional water storage tanks that would need to be located in the higher elevations to provide adequate pressures per MassDEP requirements – a very costly enterprise. There is another area south of South Street near the Oxford Line that is also unserved by a water system. See Attachment 3 for the Water Services Map. It should be noted that there have been instances where developers who were interested in building larger-scale, multi-family housing in these sections of town withdrew their permit applications given the time and cost implications of providing water.

Another water issue relates to high salt and resulting rust content in the water system that has evolved largely based on the run-off and spills from Auburn's network of highways, including its tangle of highway access ramps. This has raised concerns from residents about water quality.

Transportation

Auburn has very good highway access given that the interstate highways of I-90, I-290 and I-395 are all located in the central area of town. Route 20 is also a critical regional highway. While this access has spurred economic development activity and is convenient for commuters, because these highways were built separately, they have created an extensive tangle of ramps that divides the community.

While not connected to passenger rail service, the town is served by three fixed bus routes via the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority (WRTA), which connect with the passenger rail service in Worcester. Also, the Auburn Council on Aging contracts with the WRTA for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and demand-response transportation services. In addition, the Council on Aging has a daily scheduled service that provides transportation for local services such as grocery shopping, hairdressing and medical appointments.

WRTA weekday service frequency is 3 trips per hour along Auburn route segments, and up to 4-5 bus trips per hour in the immediate vicinity of the Auburn Mall. The Auburn Mall continues to be a significant trip generator - both for employment and for shopping trips. Fiscal Year 2017 ridership numbers show that Route 27 ranks among the top three WRTA fixed routes, across all day types and performance indicators.

Mitigation Measures: In regard to water services, the Town is always looking for new sources of water to serve future developments and provide redundant sources should Auburn lose a major well source.

As for transportation issues, Penrose Development, the selected developer of the conversion of two Town-owned schools to elderly housing, will be working with WRTA to potentially extend bus service to areas in proximity of the schools. This Plan also proposes strategies for guiding development that are closer to highway access and bus routes including new zoning and partnership opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development in appropriate locations (see strategies 2.1 and 3.2).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

Auburn is located in the state's central upland, known as the Worcester Plateau, which is dominated by relatively hilly terrain with wooded slopes. These areas and other natural assets enhance the community's scenic beauty, recreational areas, and general quality of life, surrounding and interspersed with the community's developed areas.

Some of the environmental issues that are of particular concern and/or a constraint to further development include:

- The prevalence of wooded slopes with grades greater than 8% to 10% makes many vacant parcels difficult and costly to develop. An estimated 30% of the Town's area involves slopes of at least 30%.
- About 1,200 acres of land are located in 100-year flood zones.

- Almost 600 acres are located in wetlands including marshes, wet meadows, ponds, bogs and swamps. These areas are critical to maintaining and purifying the water supply, limiting problems related to flooding and storm water run-off, offering recreational opportunities, and providing important wildlife habitats.
- Local conservationists have identified 64 potential vernal pools in Auburn that provide special habitats for wildlife, amphibians and invertebrate animals in particular.
- The Town still includes extensive areas of forests and other sparsely developed woodlands that also serve as important wildlife habitats. The continuing loss of these habitats has resulted in declining wildlife populations. These areas also provide important buffer zones, noise absorption, water and air quality protection, temperature control, as well as scenic and recreational opportunities.
- Auburn has a number of rare, threatened, and endangered plant species including the Hemlock Parsley, Bristly Buttercup, Great Laurel, and Barren Strawberry as well as animal species such as the Spotted Turtle, Wood Turtle, Eastern Box Turtle, Triangle Floater (a mussel) and Hessel's Hairstreak (a butterfly). Incursions into their existing habitats further threaten their survival.
- Auburn contains 192 brownfield listings that include contaminated sites that require some remediation in order to be developed. Given the presence of the interstate highways in the community, problems associated with chemical spills are also a significant danger.
- Storm water run-off also poses environmental concerns, particularly in areas of town where the run-off from unpaved roads is channeled into the Town's surface water including aquifer recharge areas. Because certain areas of town still rely on septic systems, these areas are also prone to groundwater contamination.

Mitigation Measures: The Town continues to be involved in efforts to preserve its natural resources. In addition to acquiring open space, the Town adopted special zoning including the establishment of a Floodplain Overlay District to protect property as well as vegetation, fish and wildlife in particular flood prone areas; an Aquifer and Watershed Protection Overlay District to protect the Town's water supply; and the Mixed-Use Development Overlay District (MD) and Open Space Residential Development bylaw to promote "smart growth" development principles. The Floodplain District is otherwise known as the Aquifer Zone III recharge area. While current bylaws offer protection to these areas, they are severely outdated (1998). The Zoning Bylaw Review Committee and the Auburn Water District are working together to draft revisions for the May 2018 Town Meeting.

The Town will also be beginning to incorporate strategies that were recommended as part of the 2016 Low Impact Development Best Practices Study by CMRPC and Mass Audubon. These strategies could include measures such as reducing the required road width of subdivisions, eliminating mandatory sidewalks on both sides of new roads, and promoting green infrastructure such as rain gardens and natural swales instead of open detention basins and underground recharge chambers. This Housing Plan also includes strategies for better promoting redevelopment, accessory apartments, housing in combination with open space, and housing preservation approaches to limit significant disruption to the environment.

LIMITED SUBSIDIES

State and Federal financial resources to subsidize affordable housing preservation and production as well as rental assistance have suffered budget cuts over the years making funding more limited and extremely competitive. Levels of future funding are questionable and concerning, particularly in regard to initial federal announcements of budget cutbacks. Moreover, as housing prices continue to rise, deeper subsidies are required to fill the gaps between what housing costs to develop and what residents can afford.

Unlike more than 160 communities in Massachusetts, Auburn does not have an important local resource for subsidizing affordable housing – the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Under CPA, at least 10% of the funding raised through a local property surcharge and additional funding through the statewide CPA Trust Fund, must be directed in support of efforts to preserve and produce affordable housing, with at least another 10% allocated for open space preservation and recreation as well as historic preservation. The Town could benefit from funding support for all of these activities, although the level of State funding for CPA communities has been reduced significantly over the past several years.

Mitigation Measures: This Housing Plan includes a recommendation to explore the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in Auburn and to apply for CDBG funding to introduce a Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program (see strategy 4.1) with additional part-time professional support for their administration (strategy 1.4). Additional housing resources are also recommended including payments in-lieu of actual affordable units through inclusionary zoning (strategy 2.4). The Plan also includes strategies for working in close partnership with developers to obtain other regional, state and federal funding to support housing development efforts with potential use of programs such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Chapter 40R/40S, the Starter Home Program, and Community Scale Housing Initiative (see development strategies).

Community Perceptions

Residents in most communities are concerned about the impacts that any new development will have on local services and the quality of life, and many may also have negative impressions of affordable housing in general. It is not unusual for the very term “affordable housing” to carry with it a negative connotation or stigma. Therefore, local opposition to new affordable developments is more often the norm than the exception in most communities. Residents often prefer the status quo to the uncertain implications of new development and “Not in My Backyard” (NIMBY) push-back from neighbors can block positive developments for years in the event of litigation.

Mitigation Measures: Auburn will pursue ongoing community education to inform local leaders and residents on the issue of affordable housing to help dispel negative stereotypes, provide up-to-date information on new opportunities, and to garner political support (see strategy 1.3). It will be important to continue to be sensitive to community concerns and provide opportunities for residents to not only obtain accurate information on housing issues, whether they relate to zoning or new development, but have opportunities for real input.

Limited Developable Property

A perception persists that there is limited availability of land for development. This sentiment was echoed by participants in the June 22nd Public Housing Forum that was sponsored by the Town. It may reflect concerns about finding appropriate locations for development as well as the higher development costs that are involved in building housing on remaining vacant lots that likely come with challenging topography.

Nevertheless, the buildout analysis that was conducted by the state estimated that there were 3,411 available acres that remained undeveloped in Auburn's residential districts that translated into 2,053 buildable lots based on current zoning and environmental constraints. Since that time only about 260 units of housing has been developed, still leaving about 1,900 buildable lots. Because this analysis was completed some time ago (about 2000), it may be useful for the Town to recalculate this buildout analysis at some point in the future particularly in light of new zoning and redevelopment opportunities.

Mitigation Measures: Given limitations, it will be important for the Town to make the best use of existing development opportunities through redevelopment activities (see strategies 2.1, 3.1 and 3.2), the potential inclusion of special wastewater treatment facilities or even the sewerage of appropriate additional areas of town to facilitate higher density development, or other rezoning efforts. Any extension of sewer and water services would be a massive undertaking by the town however given the high costs involved in extending to underserved areas that comprise places with the highest elevations in town. Such efforts would likely require one or two new water towers in addition to new infrastructure.

School Capacity

Population projections suggest an overall decline in those residents under the age of 19. The decline in these residents, as well as those younger adults in their child-bearing years, suggests that school enrollment may go down, at least over the next decade. Auburn Public Schools has reported a small 5% increase of 125 students in its student population from 2001 to 2016. The Superintendent of Auburn Public Schools anticipates stable school enrollment over the next decade, noting though that this could change should a substantial number of new housing units be created in town.

Mitigation Measures: Most of the units produced through this Housing Plan would include one and two-bedrooms given the greater focus on multi-family and mixed-use rental development and at least 10% with three-bedrooms. More than half of the 214 units included in housing production goals are targeted to seniors. These units are unlikely to cause any significant problems in the town's current school capacity.

HOUSING PRODUCTION GOALS

This Housing Plan was prepared to meet state requirements under Housing Production which is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in accordance with regulations that are meant to provide municipalities with greater local control over housing development. Cities and towns are required to prepare and adopt a Housing Production Plan that demonstrates the production of an increase of at least 0.5% of its year-round housing stock eligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory, the equivalent of 34 units in the case of Auburn.¹⁶ If DHCD certifies that the locality has complied with its annual goal or that it has produced at least 1.0% of its year-round housing (the equivalent of 68 units for Auburn), the Town could, through its Zoning Board of Appeals, potentially deny what it considered inappropriate comprehensive permit applications for one or two years, respectively, without the developer's ability to appeal the decision to the state.¹⁷

Using the strategies summarized in the next section of this Plan as well as the priority needs established in the Housing Needs Assessment, the Town of Auburn has developed a Housing Production Program that estimates affordable housing activity over the next five (5) years. The projected goals are estimates at this time and there is likely to be a great deal of fluidity in these estimates from year to year although the Town is already moving ahead with the conversion of two schools into affordable rental housing with a projected permitting date in 2018. The goals are based largely on the following criteria:

- At a minimum, at least fifty percent (50%) of the units that are developed on publicly-owned parcels should be affordable to households earning at or below 80% of area median income (AMI). The rental projects will also target some households earning at or below 60% AMI with lower income tiers as well depending upon subsidy program requirements. Some local housing initiatives will also produce units for those who earn above 80% AMI but are still priced out of the local housing market, although these units cannot count as part of the Subsidized Housing Inventory nor production goals.
- Projections are based on no fewer than four (4) units per acre, averaging about eight (8) total bedrooms. However, given specific site conditions and financial feasibility, it may be

¹⁶ Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B, 760 CMR 56.00.

¹⁷ If a community has achieved certification within 15 days of the opening of the local hearing for the comprehensive permit, the ZBA shall provide written notice to the applicant, with a copy to DHCD, that it considers that a denial of the permit or the imposition of conditions or requirements would be consistent with local needs, the grounds that it believes have been met, and the factual basis for that position, including any necessary supportive documentation. If the applicant wishes to challenge the ZBA's assertion, it must do so by providing written notice to DHCD, with a copy to the ZBA, within 15 days of its receipt of the ZBA's notice, including any documentation to support its position. DHCD shall review the materials provided by both parties and issue a decision within 30 days of its receipt of all materials. The ZBA shall have the burden of proving satisfaction of the grounds for asserting that a denial or approval with conditions would be consistent local needs, provided, however, that any failure of the DHCD to issue a timely decision shall be deemed a determination in favor of the municipality. This procedure shall toll the requirement to terminate the hearing within 180 days.

appropriate to decrease or increase density as long as projects are in compliance with state Title 5 and wetlands regulations. Because development opportunities are limited, the Town should make sure that new development makes good use of designated development parcels.

- Because housing strategies include development on privately owned parcels, production will involve projects sponsored by private developers through the standard regulatory process or possibly the “friendly” comprehensive permit process. The Town will continue to work with these private developers to fine-tune proposals to maximize their responsiveness to community interests and to increase affordability to the greatest extent feasible.
- The projections involve a mix of rental and ownership opportunities. The Town will work with developers to promote a diversity of housing types directed to different populations with housing needs including families, seniors, single occupants and individuals with special needs to offer a wider range of housing options for residents.
- Handicapped accessibility and/or supportive services in at least 10% of all affordable units created in family housing and 20% of all units in affordable senior/single-person housing.
- The state’s subsidizing agencies have entered into an Interagency Agreement that provides more guidance to localities concerning housing opportunities for families with children and are now requiring that at least 10% of the units in affordable production developments that are funded, assisted or approved by a state housing agency have three (3) or more bedrooms with some exceptions (e.g., age-restricted housing, assisted living, supportive housing for individuals, SRO’s. etc.).

Table 1: Auburn Housing Production Goals

Strategies by Year Name/Housing Type	Affordable Units < 80% AMI*	Market Units or Ineligible SHI Units	Total # Units
Year 1 – 2018			
Public property development/Mary D. Stone and Julia Bancroft Schools/"Friendly 40B/ Senior rental housing	110**	16	110
<i>Subtotal</i>	110**	16	110
Year 2 – 2019			
Covered under Year 1 certification for 2 years			
Year 3 – 2020			
Covered under Year 1 certification for 2 years			
Year 4 – 2021			
Private development/mixed-use development thru 40R, 40B or MUOD/rental	35**	26	35
Public property development – tax title property /two-family, owner-occupied dwellings/mix of rental and ownership	4	0	4
Accessory apartments/rental	0	2	2
<i>Subtotal</i>	39	28	41
Year 5 – 2022			
Private property development/mixed-use development thru 40R, 40B or MUOD/rental	45**	34	45
Private property development/inclusionary Zoning or OSRD/starter housing/ownership	2	18	20
Private development/"Friendly 40B"/pocket neighborhood infill housing/ownership	2	6	8
Private development/special needs group home/rental	5	0	5
Housing Preservation/Housing Rehab Program/ownership	10	0	10
Accessory apartments/rental	0	2	2

<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>90</i>
Total	213	104	241

* AMI = Area Median Income for the Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MA-NH HUD Metro Area

** All units in a Chapter 40B rental developments or in a 40R district where zoning specifies an affordability threshold of 25% for rental projects are eligible for inclusion in the SHI even though only 20% (with affordability at 50% AMI) or 25% (with affordability at 80% AMI) are required to be actually affordable.

HOUSING STRATEGIES

The strategies outlined below are based on input from a wide variety of sources including:

- Interviews with local and regional stakeholders,
- Prior planning efforts,
- Priority housing needs identified in the Housing Needs Assessment,
- Discussions of the Master Planning Subcommittee on Housing that coordinated the preparation of this Housing Plan,
- Public housing forums,
- The experience of Auburn to date including past and current housing initiatives, and
- Effective housing activities in other comparable localities in the area and throughout the Commonwealth.

The Town sponsored public meetings on June 22, 2017 and September 12, 2017 which also provided important input into this Housing Plan, allowing local leaders and residents to weigh-in on priority housing strategies. The June meeting included a presentation and discussion of the key findings from the Housing Needs Assessment as well as work through breakout groups, with each group identifying

It should be noted that housing can also be considered an excellent economic development engine. Not only does new housing development translate into jobs and additional business through the sale of construction materials, but housing incorporated into commercial areas or special districts brings new business and vitality to a local economy. Moreover, the improvement of substandard or underutilized properties in any neighborhood raises perceptions of community stability, values and actual jobs.

strategies for the Town to include in this Plan. At the end of this meeting, all participants voted on which priority strategies identified by each group held the most promise for promoting affordable housing in Auburn, and these are largely included in this Plan. A summary of the results of this meeting is included as Attachment 3.

The strategies included in this Plan are grouped according to those that help build local capacity, modify zoning, create development opportunities to produce affordable housing, and preserve existing housing. They are also categorized according to priority – those higher priority actions to be implemented within Years 1 and 2 and those of more moderate priority for Years 3 to 5. A summary of these actions is included in Attachment 1.

The strategies also reflect state requirements that ask communities to address all of the following major categories of strategies to the greatest extent applicable.¹⁸

- *Identification of zoning districts or geographic areas in which the municipality proposes to modify current regulations for the purposes of creating affordable housing developments to meet its housing production goal;*
 - Adopt new zoning for multi-family and mixed-use development (strategy 2.1)
 - Pursue further opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development (strategy 3.2)
- *Identification of specific sites for which the municipality will encourage the filing of comprehensive permit projects;*
 - Make suitable public property available for affordable housing (strategy 3.1)
 - Explore small-scale infill development through “friendly 40B” (strategy 3.3)
- *Characteristics of proposed residential or mixed-use developments that would be preferred by the municipality;*
 - Adopt new zoning for multi-family and mixed-use development (strategy 2.1)
 - Pursue further opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development (strategy 3.2)
 - Explore small-scale infill development (strategy 3.3)
 - Modify the Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw (strategy 2.2)
 - Modify the accessory apartment bylaw (strategy 2.3)
- *Municipally owned parcels for which the municipality commits to issue requests for proposals to develop affordable housing.*
 - Make suitable public property available for affordable housing (strategy 3.1)
- *Participate in regional collaborations addressing housing development*
 - Participate in regional housing services or Affordable Housing Trust Fund coordinated by CMRPC (strategy 1.2 and 1.4)

It should be noted that a major goal of this Plan is not only to strive to meet the state’s 10% affordability threshold under Chapter 40B, but to also serve the wide range of local housing needs. Consequently, there are instances where housing initiatives might be promoted to meet these needs that will not necessarily result in the inclusion of units in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (examples potentially include the promotion of accessory apartments and mixed-income housing that includes lower than market rate prices for those earning above 80% AMI). The Town will also encourage developers to incorporate universal design and “visitability” standards, particularly given the increasing number of

¹⁸ Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40B, 760 CMR 56.03.4.

seniors in the community. Development strategies that also provide high performance, sustainable building measures to significantly reduce energy consumption will also be promoted.

Within the context of these compliance issues, local needs, existing resources, affordability requirements and housing goals, the following housing strategies are proposed. *It is important to note that these strategies are presented as a package for the Town to prioritize and process, each through the appropriate regulatory channels.*

1. CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

Auburn is a relatively small community and, unlike many cities, does not have substantial annual state or federal funding available to support local housing initiatives on an ongoing basis. Nevertheless, the Town has some local structure in place to coordinate housing activities that includes the following components:

The *Town Planner*, as staff to the Planning Board, provides professional support to guide the Town's land use decisions with respect to physical development, including affordable housing and historic preservation.

The *Auburn Housing Authority (AHA)* manages 190 units of public housing, 150 federally-assisted units for the elderly and younger disabled (60 units at Stoneville Heights and 90 units at Pakachoag Village) and 32 units for families (20 state-assisted units at Pheasant Court and 12 federally-assisted units at Pine Brook Court). AHA also owns a group home with ongoing service support provided by the Alternatives Program for eight special needs tenants with developmental disabilities.

Regional housing development and service entities may be operating in the area that have built considerable capacity in producing and preserving affordable housing as well as providing services to those with special needs. These organizations can serve as excellent partners in implementing the strategies that are included in this Housing Plan.

This *Housing Production Plan* will also boost the Town's capacity to promote affordable housing as it provides the necessary blueprint for the next five (5) years, prioritizing affordable housing initiatives based on documented local needs and community input. The Plan will also serve as a comprehensive reference on housing issues in Auburn.

The following strategies are proposed to further build local capacity to implement the components of this Housing Production Plan through resources to subsidize implementation and a new structure to effectively coordinate housing activities.

1.1 PROMOTE ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (CPA)

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Current Status: As noted in an earlier section of this Plan, a major constraint to promoting greater housing affordability, diversity and sustainability in Auburn is the lack of local subsidy funds. Consequently, this Housing Plan recommends that the Town embark on a process to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA). CPA funds will not only provide a vital resource to support housing, but will also address other important local issues such as open space, recreation and historic preservation. Without this funding, the Town will be limited to pursuing affordable housing development through donated municipal property, zoning or reacting to proposals from the development community.

The Community Preservation Act (CPA)¹⁹ establishes the authority for municipalities in the Commonwealth to create a Community Preservation Fund derived from a surcharge of 1% to 3% of the property tax, to be matched by the state based on a funding commitment of approximately \$36 million annually.²⁰ Once adopted, the Act requires at least 10% of the funding raised to be distributed to each of three categories – open space/recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing – allowing flexibility in distributing the majority of the money to any of these uses as determined by the community. Also, CPA allows communities to target funds to those earning up to 100% of area median income although those units directed to households earning more than 80% AMI cannot be included in the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) or part of annual housing production goals.

As part of adopting CPA, communities can decide whether to accept up to four different exemptions to the CPA surcharge including:

- Property owned and occupied by a household defined as low-income (earning up to 80% AMI) or a low- or moderate-income senior (age 60 or over earning up to 100% AMI);
- Class three, commercial, and class four, industrial, properties with classified (“split”) tax rates (few communities have adopted this exemption);
- The first \$100,000 of the taxable value of residential property; and
- The first \$100,000 of the taxable value of class three commercial properties or class four industrial properties.

¹⁹ Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B.

²⁰ The state has established a special trust fund by imposing a surcharge on documents recorded at the Registry of Deeds or Land Court.

Since its enactment in 2000, CPA has had a significant impact on affordable housing, historic preservation, open space preservation and recreational activities across the Commonwealth, now adopted in 172 communities, including the following contributions:

- Raised \$1.75 billion for over 9,000 local preservation projects;
- Supported or created more than 10,600 units of affordable housing;
- Preserved more than 26,000 acres of open space;
- Supported over 1,700 outdoor recreation projects; and
- Supported more than 4,400 historic preservation projects.

These CPA communities include the Central Mass towns of Grafton, Mendon, Millis, Harvard, Hudson and Upton among others. Northbridge is pursuing the passage of a 1% surcharge with the \$100,000 value exemption that will be voted on in May of 2018.

Adopting CPA does not have to place significant burdens on residents. Table 1 provides some examples of the amount of the per unit annual surcharge based on a range of house values and exemptions. For example, if Auburn was to adopt the exemption of the first \$100,000 of property value and the 3% surcharge on the median single-family property of about \$233,000, the annual cost would be \$73.18, the equivalent of \$6.10 per month. The 1% surcharge would mean an annual payment of \$24.39 and a monthly one of only \$2.03.

Table 1: Estimated CPA per Property Expenditures

Property Assessment	1% Annual Surcharge	2% Annual Surcharge	3% Annual Surcharge
\$200,000	\$36.68	\$73.36	\$110.04
\$200,000 with \$100,000 exemption	\$18.34	\$36.68	\$55.02
\$300,000	\$55.02	\$110.04	\$165.06
\$300,000 with \$100,000 exemption	\$36.68	\$73.36	\$110.04
\$400,000	\$73.36	\$146.72	\$220.08
\$500,000	\$91.70	\$183.40	\$275.10
\$600,000	\$110.04	\$220.08	\$330.12
\$700,000	\$128.38	\$256.76	\$385.14

Based on the FY 17 residential tax rate per thousand of \$18.34.

While more towns are passing CPA, 11 in the past year including Boston, recent Senate legislation passed to increase Registry fees by \$25.00 that would provide a higher match to all participating communities. The average state commitment over the past eight years has been 31.2% of the local share. It should be noted that state matching funds vary from year to year, but those communities opting for the higher surcharge levels fare much better in the formula for matching funds.

Most towns that have made significant progress with respect to affordable housing development have had CPA funding available to subsidize locally-sponsored or supported initiatives. They have also been able to build local capacity to coordinate such activities through a professional staff person or consultant. This funding could be pivotal to Auburn preserving its historical assets and open space while creating greater housing affordability.

Next Steps: The Town should contact the Community Preservation Coalition, an alliance of open space, historic preservation and affordable housing organizations that work with municipalities to help them understand, adopt and implement the Community Preservation Act. Representatives of the organization can be available to attend local meetings to explain CPA, its benefits, and its track record in comparable communities. The Coalition also has an excellent website at www.communitypreservation.org.

CPA approval can be obtained through the following two methods:

- *Legislative Body Action:* Under this option, a majority of Town Meeting members must approve a specific proposal to adopt CPA that is followed by a ballot question of local voters at the next regularly-scheduled municipal or state election.
- *Ballot Petition:* If Town Meeting does not accept the Act and approve the surcharge, the voters may file a ballot question petition to have the question seeking acceptance of CPA (including the surcharge amount and any exemptions) placed on the ballot at least 90 days before a regular municipal election or 120 days before a regular state election.

Required Resources: Local leaders and volunteers to seek support and approval of CPA in Auburn. Once approved, the Town would need to appoint a Community Preservation Committee to oversee the management of the Community Preservation Fund. It would be advisable for this Committee to have some staff support which can be covered by CPA administrative funding.

1.2 ESTABLISH AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Current Status: Discussions with other communities regarding the success of their affordable housing initiatives indicate that it is often critical to have accessible funds available to respond immediately and effectively to housing opportunities as they arise. Also, many of the state subsidy sources require local contributions either through local funds, donation of municipally-owned property, or private donations. In order to receive donations and avoid paying taxes, it is useful for each locality to have a dedicated housing fund that offers communities greater ability to support the development of affordable housing.

The state enacted the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund Act on June 7, 2005, which simplified the process of establishing housing funds that are dedicated to subsidizing affordable housing. The law provides guidelines on what trusts can do and allows communities to collect funds for housing, segregate them out of the general budget into an affordable housing trust fund, and use these funds without going back to Town Meeting for approval. It also enables trusts to own and manage real estate, not just receive and disburse funds. The law further requires that local housing trusts be governed by at least a five-member board of trustees. Per statute, the chief elected official must be one of the members of the Trust. While the new trusts must be in compliance with Chapter 30B, the law which governs public procurement as well as public bidding and construction laws, most trusts opt to dispose of property through a sale or long-term lease to a developer so as to clearly differentiate any affordable housing development project from a public construction one.

Community Models for Capitalizing the Housing Trust

Some communities have decided to commit Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding on an annual basis to Housing Trusts without targeting the funding to any specific initiative. For example, the Towns of Grafton and Sudbury have been directing 10% of their annual CPA allocation to their Trust Funds. The Trusts are also encouraged to apply for additional CPA funds for specific projects. Scituate's Town Meeting funded its Housing Trust with \$700,000 of Community Preservation funding from its community housing reserves. The Town of Harwich has committed lease payments from its cell tower as well as sale proceeds of a Town-owned property (fetching more than a million dollars) to its Housing Trust Fund. Towns with inclusionary zoning bylaws that allow cash in-lieu of actual affordable units have also used these funds to capitalize their Housing Trusts, and other communities have obtained funding from developers through negotiations on proposed developments.

Next Steps: Housing Trusts require Town Meeting approval. Here is an example of typical warrant language:

“To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 55C, and to establish a trust, to be known as the Auburn Affordable Housing Trust Fund, whose purpose shall be to provide for the continued preservation and creation of affordable housing in the Town of Auburn for the benefit of low- and moderate-income households, substantially in a form which is on file with the Town Clerk and available for inspection.”

In this case draft language of a Declaration of Trust would be available for review but not in itself formally approved by Town Meeting.

Some towns have adopted more detailed language regarding the Trust’s powers and membership in the warrant article by preparing the warrant article and draft language for an accompanying chapter in the Town’s General Bylaws. This bylaw effectively becomes the Declaration of Trust that is subsequently executed by the Board of Selectmen.

The warrant language highlighted above offers the Town greater flexibility for establishing and amending the Housing Trust as the Declaration of Trust can be more easily modified by the Trustees as needs arise instead of having to return to Town Meeting to enact changes. For example, the Town of Williamstown chose to pursue Town Meeting approval of their bylaw in 2012, and subsequently returned to Town Meeting in 2015 for revisions. On the other hand, Wenham’s Annual Town Meeting approved the above warrant language on May 2, 2009, and the Board of Selectmen subsequently executed the Declaration of Trust on May 27, 2009. They will not have to return to Town Meeting for approval of any amendments.

The following steps should be followed when establishing an effective Affordable Housing Trust, the required steps as noted:

- *Certification of Bylaw and Submission to the Attorney General* – If the Town goes through the bylaw approval process at Town Meeting, the Town Clerk is required to certify the bylaw and submit it to the Attorney General within 30 days of the adjournment of the Town Meeting at which the bylaw was adopted.
- *Appoint Trustees* – The Chair of the Board of Selectmen is required to appoint members to the Housing Trust. At least five (5) members must be appointed, including a member of the Board of Selectmen. (Note: The Trust could also incorporate all members of the Board of Selectmen, potentially with another two or so at-large members who have an interest and/or experience in affordable housing issues as has been done in Chatham and Brewster for example.) The Board of Selectmen can also appoint the Town Manager as an additional member.
- *Prepare a Declaration of Trust* – While not required under the statute, a Declaration of Trust is recommended as it provides a recorded notice of the Trust’s establishment and its powers, including the authority to hold and convey real estate if determined to be appropriate. Town Counsel should review the Declaration prior to it being recorded at the Registry of Deeds. If the

Town took the route of approving a bylaw as part of the warrant article at Town Meeting, the bylaw would effectively become the Declaration of Trust.

- *Organize the Trust* – Once established, the Trust should determine its meeting schedule, designate officers, establish an account to hold the funding (separate bank account of municipal account), and review procedures.
- *Secure Staffing* – The Housing Trust would be staffed primarily by the Town Planner or Town Manager until additional professional housing support can be obtained (see strategy 1.4).
- *Prepare Housing Guidelines* – It would be useful for the Housing Trust to prepare guidelines regarding the specific terms and conditions for allocating Housing Trust Funds including a summary of eligible activities, funding requirements, selection criteria, etc.
- *Prepare an Action Plan* – While not required, the Housing Trust could also prepare an Action Plan to clarify the expected actions of the Trust by the types of projects it has the capacity to undertake and the kinds of projects that will best serve local housing needs. The Plan can also

It should also be noted that CMRPC is exploring the development of a regional affordable housing trust, and its Regional Services and Municipal Collaboration Department is able to offer capacity to facilitate regional housing planning with surrounding communities. The Town should follow-up with CMRPC on this potential development.

prioritize short and long-term goals and current and projected annual budgets. This Housing Plan should provide important guidance on priority actions.

- *Capitalize the Housing Trust Fund* – Once operational, the Housing Trust should explore specific opportunities for capitalizing its Fund including but not limited to Community Preservation funding, if adopted (some communities direct at least 10% of the annual CPA allocation to their Housing Trust), potential inclusionary zoning fees, negotiated fees from developers, donated property or funding, etc.

It is advisable that the Town supplement its formal request to establish a Housing Trust with further information to

educate residents and other local leaders on the benefits of the Trust. Detailed information on forming a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund is included in a guidebook prepared by the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.²¹

Besides serving as the fiscal agent for the established Fund, the Housing Trust could also become the municipality's entity for overseeing affordable housing issues including coordinating the implementation of this Housing Plan.

Required Resources: If the Town passed CPA, it would be able to further capitalize the Housing Trust Fund, ideally in an amount at least equivalent to the minimal annual allocation for affordable housing or 10%. This funding would also require Town Meeting approval. Other opportunities to capitalize the Housing Trust should also be explored including donations (funding and property), negotiations with

²¹ Massachusetts Housing Partnership, "Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Guidebook: How to Envision, Shape, Get Support and Succeed with Our Community's Local Housing Trust", November 2009.

developers, cash in-lieu of affordable units through proposed inclusionary zoning provisions (see strategy 2.3), special fundraisers, grants, etc.

1.3 CONTINUE TO CONDUCT ONGOING COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2 AND ONGOING

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST AND OTHER SPONSORS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES

Current Status: Because most of the housing strategies in this Housing Plan rely on local approvals, including those of Town Meeting, community support for new initiatives has and will continue to be essential. Continued and strategic efforts to educate and inform residents and local leaders on the issue of affordable housing and specific new initiatives build support by generating a greater understanding of the benefits of affordable housing, reducing misinformation, and dispelling negative stereotypes. These outreach efforts are mutually beneficial as they provide useful information to community residents and important feedback to local leaders on concerns and suggestions.

Next Steps: The presentation of this Housing Plan offers an important opportunity to bring attention to the issue of affordable housing, providing information on housing needs and proposed strategies that can help attract community support for affordable housing initiatives. Interviews have been conducted with key housing stakeholders and public meetings have been held with local leaders and residents to get input into this Housing Plan including a housing workshop on June 22, 2017 and another hearing on September 12, 2017.

Tapping into social media to attract attention to local and regional housing issues and initiatives is another way to disseminate important information to residents, younger residents in particular.

Other education opportunities should continue to be pursued including special forums on all new housing initiatives, housing summits, public information on existing programs and services, enhanced use of public access television, an expanded website, and educational opportunities for board and committee members as well as professional staff.

There are also several educational opportunities that are available to boost the effectiveness of local businesses which the Town needs to publicize. These include:

- *Business Roundtable* – The Town of holds a Business Roundtable meeting that meets every three months to help promote economic development activities in the community. Since housing is an effective economic development engine and mixed-use development is a local priority, the participation of residential builders and developers in these meetings would be helpful.
- *Worcester Builder Training* -- The City of Worcester is introducing efforts to build the capacity of smaller builders and developers with support from the Central Mass Builders and Remodelers Association. Specialized training and workshops will be held on a wide range of topics to support the capacity and growth of these small businesses. Participation of Auburn contractors is welcome.

- *Worcester Landlord Training* – The City of Worcester is also embarking on an effort to provide training and workshops for landlords to help them better manage their properties. A Landlord Summit to kick-off this effort is scheduled for October 22nd and Auburn landlords are welcomed.

Required Resources: Staff time of the Town Planner or proposed housing professional (see strategy 1.4). There may also be some expenses related to written materials/brochures as well as refreshments and marketing for events and meetings.

1.4 SECURE FURTHER PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Current Status: If the Town of Auburn wants to assume a more proactive role in promoting affordable housing and effectively implement strategies included in this Housing Plan, it should augment its capacity to coordinate these activities. Based on current job responsibilities, the Town Planner has limited capacity to assume significant additional duties. Moreover, those communities that have made notable progress in implementing their Housing Plans have largely done so with ongoing professional support, however municipalities have handled this need differently as described below.

Community Models for Securing Professional Expertise

- Marshfield issued a Request for Proposals for a Housing Coordinator position and hired a full-time person and then split this position between two consultants.
- Bourne hired a part-time consultant and has increased the number of hours over the years as programs and responsibilities increased.
- Grafton has an Assistant Planner on board to assume many of these housing-related functions.
- The communities of Acton, Bedford, Burlington, Concord, Lexington, Sudbury, and Weston are collaborating through the operations of the Regional Housing Services Office (with Concord as the Host Community) to provide assistance in planning, permitting, monitoring, maintaining, and increasing their inventory of affordable housing.
- Chatham has relied heavily on its effective Housing Authority for program support related to affordable housing.
- Needham hired a part-time person with considerable housing expertise who operates much like a consultant.

Most of these communities are accessing CPA funding to support these positions, and the adoption of CPA may be critical to funding a part-time housing staff person or consultant.

This professional support can also be helpful in insuring that affordable units produced through this Plan get counted as part of the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), applied through the Local Initiative Program (LIP) administered by the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) if another state or federal housing subsidy is not tapped. In addition to being used for "friendly 40B" projects, LIP is the vehicle for counting affordable units as part of a Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory that are being developed through some local action including:

- Zoning-based approval, particularly inclusionary zoning provisions and special permits for affordable housing;
- Substantial financial assistance from funds raised, appropriated or administered by the Town; or
- Provision of land or buildings that are owned or acquired by the Town and conveyed at a substantial discount from their fair market value.

Some of the important tasks for insuring that the affordable units, referred to as Local Action Units (LAU's), meet the requirements of Chapter 40B/LIP can be time-consuming and require technical knowledge and experience. Moreover, while the affordability restrictions for units produced through the Local Initiative Program (LIP) will be monitored by DHCD, it is still the premise of LIP that the municipality and DHCD work together to create affordable housing and fulfill the obligations of the affordability restrictions.

The Town could benefit from a number of services including public education; grant writing; outreach to establish relationships with developers, lenders, funders, service providers, etc. to promote community housing efforts; and overall coordination of the implementation of this Housing Plan, providing necessary professional support as needed

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) has been attempting to establish a regional housing services approach that would be comparable to the models created in the Metro West and North Suburban areas of Boston through the Regional Housing Services Office and the Metro West Collaborative Development's work serving a collaboration of communities including Hudson, Stow, Littleton and Boxborough. These collaborations share housing consultants which provide a menu of services that municipalities can buy into including creating a database of SHI units, monitoring SHI units, supporting new program and project development, etc. CMRPC is trying to identify a lead community to administer the collaboration.

Next Steps: Town representatives should monitor CMRPC's efforts to develop a regional housing services collaborative. If such a regional effort became operationalized, Town representatives should meet with CMRPC to discuss how Auburn might benefit and participate.

If this regional approach does not come to fruition, and if appropriate funding can be identified, the Town Manager should develop a Scope of Services for a part-time housing consultant/housing coordinator and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit interest from qualifying professionals or organizations to undertake these services. The other option would be to hire a part-time staff person with some affordable housing expertise. The amount of funding would be based on the Scope of

Services/job description but likely less than \$30,000 annually. This position would be eligible for CPA funding and Affordable Housing Trust Funding, if approved.

It should also be noted that other consultants could be brought on at an as needed basis to handle specific activities including environmental engineers for predevelopment work, appraisers, surveyors, lawyers, etc.

Resources Required: If the Town decides to join the regional collaborative or bring on a housing professional, it will need funding, potentially with CPA or Housing Trust funds if approved, or as part of the general budget. Fees will vary according to the scope of services although initially the Town might set-aside funding of approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000. This amount can be revisited on an annual basis, potentially increasing in relationship to the scope of work.

2. ZONING STRATEGIES

As with most communities, Auburn's Zoning Bylaw includes exclusionary provisions that constrain the development of affordable housing. This creates the likely need for regulatory relief for many residential developments that include affordable units, possibly through the "friendly" comprehensive permit process if not through normal regulatory channels. The Town has a Zoning Review Committee that has been involved in updating its Zoning Bylaw from time to time, as it is important to consider modifications that keep the Bylaw up-to-date with market conditions and better guide development with public benefits under "smart growth" principles.

It should also be noted that changes to Chapter 40B regulations expand the items that a subsidizing agency must consider when determining the appropriateness of a site for eligibility through the comprehensive permit process and includes information provided by the municipality or other parties regarding *municipal actions previously taken to meet affordable housing needs, including inclusionary zoning, multi-family districts and 40R overlay districts*.²² Therefore, a community's progress in reforming its land use provisions to promote affordable housing and smart growth will likely have a meaningful impact on the determination of project eligibility/site approval for comprehensive permit projects.

The Town of Auburn should consider the following zoning-related strategies to promote the production of additional affordable units and to direct new development to appropriate locations. These actions can be considered as tools that the Town will have available to promote new housing opportunities, each applied to particular circumstances. These strategies enable new affordable unit creation that is more responsive to local needs and priorities, including units that might not meet all requirements to be included in the SHI. Estimates of units that might be produced through these regulatory tools are incorporated under Section 3 – Housing Development Strategies.

²² Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40B, Section 56.04.

2.1 ADOPT NEW ZONING FOR MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PLANNING BOARD IN COORDINATION WITH THE PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: Auburn has made some progress towards the development of multi-family housing. For example, almost all of the 256 affordable units that are part of Subsidized Housing Inventory are in multi-family dwellings. Also, about 19% of the community's total housing units are in townhouses or multi-family structures. There are also 62 mixed-use properties that include residential units.

To better promote mixed-use development, the town adopted a Mixed-Use Overlay District (MUOD) which largely includes the BJ's and Home Depot parcel along with the Town-owned Granger Cliffs and parts of Oxford Street South. While these provisions were adopted about 30 years ago, no units have been created through the bylaw. It should also be noted that while the Town created special zoning for the Auburn Mall area, residential uses are not allowed.

As shown in the Economic Development Map included as Attachment 4, there are a number of prime locations in Auburn where higher-density, mixed-use development is appropriate. These include Drury Square, the Auburn Mall, the Village Center, and the former Yankee Drummer site.

Next Steps: To better promote multi-family development, including mixed-uses, the Planning Board should modify existing zoning through the following approaches:

Modify MUOD Requirements

The key provisions for Auburn's Mixed-Use Overlay District are summarized under Regulatory Constraints of the previous section. Because this zoning has not produced any units to date, the Planning Board should consider alternative provisions that might better result in new development and redevelopment efforts. Provisions should also include mandates and incentives for the inclusion of affordable units.

Model: Berlin Village Overlay District

In 2010 Town Meeting voted to create a Village Overlay District on land around the rotary in South Berlin, and adopted zoning regulations and a Village Development Plan to guide development of a mixed-use village center. The Riverbridge development was permitted under this by-law that will include 84 rental units, 25% or 21 of which will be actually affordable to those earning at or below 50% AMI, but all of which will count as part of the SHI through the "state's Local Initiative Program (LIP). Homewood Suites and a

day care center were early to sign-on to the development. The Town also received a \$1.5 million MassWorks Infrastructure Program grant for the area.²³



Figure 13 Riverbridge Mixed-use Development in Berlin

Adopt Chapter 40R/40S Smart Growth Zoning

The State Legislature approved the Chapter 40R zoning tool for communities in 2004 in recognition that escalating housing prices, beyond the reach of increasing numbers of state residents, were causing graduates from area institutions of higher learning to relocate to other parts of the country in search of greater affordability. The statute, which enables communities to establish Smart Growth Overlay Districts, defines 40R as “a principle of land development that emphasizes mixing land uses, increases the availability of affordable housing by creating a range of housing opportunities in neighborhoods, takes advantage of compact design, fosters distinctive and attractive communities, preserves open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas, strengthens existing communities, provides a variety of transportation choices, makes development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective and encourages community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.”²⁴

Of particular importance are smart growth development measures where the integration of more housing, including some affordable housing, provides a number of important benefits:

- Reduces the reliance on the automobile as more residents live within walking distance to goods and services, which is particularly important in the context of an aging population;
- Brings customers in closer proximity to businesses even into the evening hours and enlivens the area;
- Directs growth to areas that are more appropriate for some increases in density;

²³ The original zoning included provisions for a Continuing Care Retirement Community, also with affordability requirements, but the inclusion of these units has been eliminated from planned development.

²⁴ Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40R, Section 11.

- Provides another income stream to property owners who create housing above their businesses; and
- Offers opportunities for the creation of diverse housing types such as artist live-work space, smaller apartments for the growing number of smaller households, multi-family housing, etc.

The key components of 40R include:

- Allows local option to adopt Overlay Districts near transit, areas of concentrated development, commercial districts, rural village districts, and other suitable locations;
- Allows “as-of-right” residential development of minimum allowable densities;
- Provides that at least 20% of the units be affordable;²⁵
- Promotes mixed-use and infill development;²⁶
- Provides two (2) types of payments from the state to municipalities (one based on the number of projected housing units in the District and another for each unit that receives a building permit); and
- Encourages open space and protects historic districts.

The state also enacted Chapter 40S under the Massachusetts General Law that provides additional benefits through insurance to municipalities that build affordable housing under 40R that they would not be saddled with the extra school costs caused by school-aged children who might move into this new housing. In effect, 40S is a complimentary insurance plan for communities concerned about the impacts of a possible net increase in school costs due to new housing development in 40R Districts.

More than 40 communities have created 40R Smart Growth Overlay Districts and others are in the process of being established. For example, Natick not only is expecting the two forms of subsidy provided directly by 40R as well as protection from added school costs from 40S, but also received significant state funding for its new high school as described below.

Model: 40R in Natick

Natick has been able to access \$1,434,000 in state funding to support new local development priorities including the building of a new high school and the redevelopment of former Natick Paperboard Factory site into 138 apartments and 12 townhouses by adopting a Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay District. The state gave the town \$820,000 towards the costs of its new high school because it was awarded an extra percentage point towards state funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority due to its approval of a Chapter 40R district. It has also received \$200,000 from the state as an incentive

²⁵ If the zoning encourages affordability of up to 25% of units, all units in rental developments can be included in the SHI and towards housing production goals.

²⁶ Infill development is the practice of building on vacant or undeveloped parcels in existing neighborhoods, especially urban and suburban neighborhoods.

payment for creating the 40R district and expects to receive another \$414,000 as housing development moves forward. Moreover, the Town is eligible for receiving additional state support from Chapter 40S that provides insurance to towns that build affordable housing under 40R that they would not be saddled with the extra school costs caused by school-aged children who might move into the new housing.

It is also worth noting that the Towns of Easton and Reading were able to avoid what they considered inappropriate Chapter 40B developments, largely by the state's recognition that these towns had in good faith been proactively promoting affordable housing by creating 40R districts.

The Auburn Planning Board should assess benefits and opportunities for adopting a Smart Growth Overlay District through 40R/40S. Representatives from DHCD are available to attend meetings and discuss the Program including how communities comparable to Auburn have used and benefited from this zoning.

The formal required steps involved in creating the 40R Overlay District are as follows:

- The Town holds a public hearing as to whether to adopt an Overlay District per the requirements of 40R;
- The Town applies to DHCD prior to adopting the new zoning;
- DHCD reviews the application and issues a Letter of Eligibility if the new zoning satisfies the requirements of 40R;
- The Town adopts the new zoning through a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting subject to any modifications required by DHCD;
- The Town submits evidence of approval to DHCD upon the adoption of the new zoning; and
- DHCD issues a letter of approval, which indicates the number of projected units on which its subsidy is based and the amount of payment.

Allow Residential Uses in the Auburn Mall Area

Some communities have successfully integrated housing in their commercial areas including Legacy Place in Dedham, the Natick Mall, and Northborough Crossing for example (see strategy 3.2 for more information on Northborough Crossing). Based on Auburn Mall's excellent highway access, such housing is likely to attract interest from commuters, young professional and empty nesters in particular.

Besides tweaking existing zoning to allow for this use, the Town might consider Chapter 40B.

Chapter 40B can be an excellent tool for undertaking this permitting, particularly the "friendly 40B" process that involves the Town and developer agreeing on the basic terms and conditions of the development and jointly submitting a comprehensive permit application to the state through its Local Initiative Program (LIP).

Required Resources: Donated time of members of the Planning Board to prepare the necessary zoning with time from the Town Planner and potential input/advocacy from the proposed Housing Trust. It will be important for the Town to hire a consultant to assist the Town Planner with any planning and implementation associated with Chapter 40R as design guidelines are important in its adoption as units are approved by-right. The state's Planning Assistance toward Housing (PATH) Program could cover consultant fees as could CPA funding, if adopted.

2.2 MODIFY THE OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (OSRD) BYLAW

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 3 TO 5

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PLANNING BOARD WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: Section 4.2 of Auburn's Zoning Bylaws includes provisions related to Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) that promotes "smart growth" principles by allowing more compact development on part of a parcel in exchange for the preservation of open space on at least 30% of the parcel in the RA and RB Districts and 40% in the RC and RR Districts (see details regarding requirements in the Housing Challenges section of this Plan). Permitting under this bylaw was approved for three developments that are currently under construction, all involving single-family homes.

Such bylaws, also referred to as cluster development or flexible zoning, are being promoted in other communities as well as a better alternative to the conventional subdivision that has been identified as promoting suburban "sprawl." In an effort to better promote such zoning, Auburn applied and received a technical assistance grant from CMRPC and Mass Audubon for the purpose of analyzing and updating the Town's Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw as well as the Planning Board's Subdivision Rules and Regulations. The report was produced in April 2016 and contains recommendations that promote low impact development best practices, including some revisions to the OSRD bylaw to guide developers towards OSRD's rather than conventional development under standard zoning regulations.²⁷

Next Steps: This Housing Plan suggests that any revisions to the OSRD bylaw also include mandates for the inclusion of some amount of affordable housing as well as density bonuses for this inclusion. It should be noted that this type of zoning can also be used to promote small clusters of cottage-style or bungalow homes that typically surround a common green space. Such small pocket neighborhoods can provide needed starter housing as well as opportunities for empty nesters looking to downsize and can be promoted through an amended bylaw.

²⁷ Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and Mass Audubon, "Bylaw Review of Local Land Use Standards in Relation to Low Impact Development Standards Best Practices," April 21, 2016.

In amending the bylaw, the Planning Board might review and consider provisions in model by-laws. Such model bylaws have been produced by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts Audubon, and others in the Green Neighborhood Alliance, and adopted by a number of Massachusetts communities. Several examples are offered on the Citizen Planner Training Collaborative website (www.umass.edu/masscptc/examplebylaws.html) and the state's Smart Growth Toolkit (www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/SG-bylaws.html).

Required Resources: Donated time of the Planning Board with support from the proposed Housing Trust (see strategy 1.2) as well as staffing from the Town Planner or proposed housing professional (see strategy 1.4).

2.3 MODIFY THE ACCESSORY APARTMENT BYLAW

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 3 TO 5

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PLANNING BOARD WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: Accessory apartments are allowed in the Town's Zoning Bylaw by Special Permit under limited conditions. Such conditions include that any additions involved in creating the accessory unit do not increase the floor area or volume of the original building by more than 20% and that the unit have no more than 700 square feet of living space.

Also referred to as accessory dwelling units, granny flats and in-law apartments, these units are sprinkled throughout cities and towns in finished basements, above-garage studios, rehabbed carriage houses, and other outbuildings on parcels generally zoned for single-family homes. Some exist illegally in almost all communities with potential health and safety problems. While it is likely that these accessory units cannot be counted towards the Town's 10% affordability goal or production goals,²⁸ they nevertheless help meet a number of public policy objectives including:

- **Provide homeowners with additional income, which is particularly important for elderly homeowners, single parents, and others who are spending too much of their income on housing and for whom such income may be critical to remaining in their homes. Also, without the flow of income from the rent of an accessory apartment, some young families or moderate-income households might not be able to afford homeownership.**

²⁸ Because of changes to the state's Local Initiative Program (LIP) in 2008, all affordable accessory units must be affirmatively marketed based on a state approved Affirmative Fair Housing Marketing and Resident Selection Plan. This would involve the Town or other designated entity establishing and maintaining a waiting list of qualified households applying to rent any affordable accessory units, referred to as a Ready Renters List, and precludes units that are currently occupied or where owners select their own tenants, including family members. The accessory units would also have to be deed restricted.

- Offer appropriately sized units for the growing number of smaller households.
- Provide a fairly inexpensive means of increasing the supply of year-round rental units at lower cost than new construction and without significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood. The creation of accessory units does not require additional Town services such as new streets or utilities and involves little or no loss of open space.
- Potentially provide companionship, security and services for the homeowner.
- Offer good opportunities for keeping extended families in closer contact and have often been referred to as “in law” apartments.
- Generate increased tax revenue in a locality because accessory units add value to existing homes.
- Offer a way of preserving historic properties given the added income to properly restore and maintain such structures.

Since the bylaw was adopted in 2012, there have been 15 accessory apartments approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Next Steps: The Town should amend the existing accessory apartment bylaw to make it easier for owners, particularly those with limited incomes who are spending far too much of their income on housing, to create accessory units and to prevent owners from developing illegal ones. Such measures might include:

- Consider preparing a hybrid bylaw that includes a two-tier approach to approvals (by-right and Special Permit). The by-right units must meet more restrictive requirements. Such zoning has been approved in Lexington and Newton for example, and both communities recently amended this zoning to relax requirements and better encourage the creation of these units.
- Allow accessory units in detached structures and more significant additions.
- Promote accessory apartments in commercial structures.
- Ensure that the Zoning Board of Appeals exacts no conditions as part of the Special Permit that the units be occupied by family members or other relatives.
- Consider implementing an amnesty period for illegal apartments to obtain appropriate permitting.
- If passed, provide CPA (see strategy 1.1) or proposed Housing Trust funds (see strategy 1.2) to implement a zero percent interest, deferred payment loan program to support the costs of creating the accessory unit that meets all health and safety codes (also see strategy 4.2).
- If there is some concern about the tenant income and rent levels, the Wellfleet model²⁹ for incorporating affordability without deed riders or tenant selection through a Ready Renters List might be considered.

²⁹ Wellfleet’s Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units (AADU) does not require deed restrictions nor does it include mandates for tenants to be selected from a pre-qualified Ready Renters List, and consequently the units, although affordable based on specified income and rent limits, are ineligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Required Resources: Donated time of the Planning Board with potential support from the proposed Housing Trust (see strategy 1.2) as well as staffing from the Town Planner or proposed housing professional (see strategy 1.4).

2.4 EXPLORE INCLUSIONARY ZONING

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 3 TO 5

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PLANNING BOARD IN COORDINATION WITH THE PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: Inclusionary zoning is a zoning ordinance or bylaw that requires a developer to include affordable housing as part of a development or under some conditions to contribute to a fund for such housing. This mechanism has been adopted on a community-wide basis by more than one-third of the municipalities in the state, most of which are reaping the rewards of these actions through the creation of actual affordable units and/or cash contributions to the locality for investment in affordable housing production. There are a variety of bylaws that have been adopted in localities throughout the state and requirements vary considerably as demonstrated in Table 2.

Because the Town does not presently have a local housing subsidy source available to support housing production, inclusionary zoning can become a valuable tool for insuring that affordability is at least created as part of market developments or that the developer pays cash in-lieu of actual affordable units that can be deposited in the proposed Housing Trust Fund (see strategy 1.2) and used to subsidize other affordable housing initiatives.

Table 2: Summary of Inclusionary Zoning Requirements in Other Communities

Municipality	Required Percentage of Affordable Units	Minimum Project Size	Payment-in-lieu of Affordable Units
Amherst	Based on project size Ranges from 7% to 12%	10 Units	No ³⁰
Arlington	15%	6 Units	Yes
Barnstable	10%	10 Units	Formed a committee to study
Belmont	10%, 12.5% or 15% depending on project size	2 single-family or two-family homes	Yes
Berlin	15%	6 units	No
Brookline	15%	6 Units	Yes
Cambridge	15%**	10 Units	Yes
Duxbury	10%	6 Units	Yes
Hopkinton	10%	10 Units	Yes
Medway	10%	6 Units	Yes
Newton	15%	4 Units*	Yes
Somerville	12.5% to 20% depending on location	6 Units*	Yes
Tewksbury	15%	4 Units*	Yes
Watertown	12.5% to 15%	6 Units	Yes
Wellesley	20%	5 Units	Yes
Yarmouth	20%	5 Units	Yes

*Zoning indicates that the calculation of a fractional unit of 0.5 or more shall be regarded as a whole unit. With a 12.5% to 15% affordability requirement, the 0.5 threshold occurs with four (4) total units.

³⁰ A cash in-lieu fee was recommended as part of the Housing Production Plan that the Town approved in 2013.

** Considering increasing the percentage to 20%.

Watertown recently amended its inclusionary zoning for the third time to better capture units and in-lieu payments as market conditions continued to strengthen, correlating requirements with the size of the development. They also identified a good formula for the in-lieu payments, basing them on DHCD's cost limits for the Low-Income Tax Credit Program. Given relatively lower market values in Auburn, the town might consider somewhat lower threshold requirements such as the 10% percentage of affordable units and the minimum project size of 10 units. It will be very important to include the density bonus and payment in-lieu incentives in the bylaw.

Many communities also allow density bonuses in connection with their inclusionary zoning bylaws. Studies on inclusionary zoning indicate that mandatory provisions coupled with strong incentives are most effective in promoting affordable housing. It is important to provide sufficient incentives to developers to make sure that the incorporation of affordable units will be financially feasible. Incentives also reduce the risk of litigation from developers who might claim that the mandatory inclusion of affordable units involves a "taking" of their property rights. In fact, inclusionary zoning can be legally vulnerable if requirements make it impossible for the developer to earn a reasonable return on the project as a whole. Consequently, it would be prudent for the Town to add incentives to cover these legal questions and ensure that the zoning works economically.

Model: Watertown Affordable Housing Requirements (Inclusionary Zoning)

Watertown recently modified its affordable housing/inclusionary zoning requirements to better promote such units and to strengthen provisions given dramatic increases in housing prices that have been eroding the community's more affordable private housing stock. The rent and ownership price requirements are as follows:

Total Project Size	Affordable Units	Rental Price	Ownership Price
1 to 5 Units	0	NA	NA
6 to 19 Units	12.5%	80% AMI	80% AMI
20+ Units	15.0%	No less than 5% of the total units at 65% AMI 10% of total units at 80% AMI	80% AMI

Source: Watertown Zoning Bylaws, Section 5.07.

The bylaw allows the developer to pay cash-in-lieu of actual units into the Town's Affordable Housing

Fund. The payment is based on DHCD's annual Qualified Allocation Plan for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit for the HUD designated area adjusted for the type of project and number of units. For Auburn, this would range from \$279,000 to \$319,000 per unit in 2017.

Next Steps: The Planning Board should explore model bylaws and prepare a zoning amendment that is best suited to supporting affordable housing in Auburn. The Planning Board should prepare, adopt and present the bylaw to Town Meeting for approval. Ideally the adoption of this bylaw would lead to the production of actual housing units, but may also deliver payments in-lieu of actual units to help capitalize the proposed Housing Trust Fund.

The Executive Office of Environment and Energy's Smart Growth Toolkit includes a model inclusionary zoning bylaw that highlights key local decisions and makes some commentary for consideration throughout (www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/pages/SG-bylaws.html). The Citizen Planner Training Collaborative website has a model bylaw with commentary and some policies as well (www.umass.edu/masscptc/examplebylaws.html).

Resources Required: The research and preparation of the bylaw could be performed by the Town Planner, potentially with input from a housing consultant or the proposed housing support (see strategy 1.4). If the Town decided to hire a consultant, the fee should not be more than \$5,000 and could potentially be covered by state technical assistance funding such as DHCD's Planning Assistance toward Housing (PATH) Program.

It will be important to also ensure that all affordable units produced through the bylaw get counted as part of the Subsidized Housing Inventory, applied through the Local Initiative Program (LIP) administered by DHCD if another housing state of federal subsidy is not used. The monitoring of projects to ensure continued affordability based on use restrictions would be the responsibility of a designated monitoring agent, DHCD in the case of LIP units, however towns also have a role in the monitoring process. The professional support that is recommended as part of strategy 1.4 would be extremely helpful in overseeing these compliance activities.

3. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The following strategies, sometimes in combination, provide the basic components for the Town to produce new affordable housing. Because Auburn does not have a local housing subsidy source at present, such as CPA or a Housing Trust Fund, it is important for the Town to partner with capable developers, non-profit and for profit, which will be able to access other sources of financing. Potential state subsidy programs; projects where the internal subsidies from the market units can accommodate the affordable ones, like the "friendly 40B" process through the state's Local Initiative Program (LIP); or

existing zoning with inclusionary provisions will be key to realizing new affordable units until the passage of CPA.

The Housing Needs Assessment indicated that there are few options available for middle or upper middle-income households to “buy-up” in Auburn as there are limited numbers of homes with square footage of 2,000 square feet or more. Some consideration should be given to integrating some of these larger homes in development projects. In fact, these larger homes could potentially help subsidize those that are targeted to the below 80% of area median income market, the primary focus of these housing strategies. For example, this might occur through inclusionary zoning (likely payments in-lieu of units) if adopted (see strategy 2.4).

3.1 MAKE SUITABLE PUBLIC PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: BOARD OF SELECTMEN IN COORDINATION WITH THE PLANNING BOARD OR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS AND PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: The contribution or “bargain sale” of land or buildings owned by the Town but not essential for municipal purposes will enable Auburn to take further proactive measures to address local housing needs. The Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the sale or long-term lease of two former elementary school properties, the Mary D. Stone and Julia Bancroft Schools, which were closed in the fall of 2015 when the new Middle School opened. These two projects are pivotal to this Housing Plan as they will enable the Town to obtain certification under Housing Production Requirements in 2018 for a two-year period.

The Town received several qualified proposals and selected Pennrose Properties, LLC. as it not only had the best proposal but also offered additional amenities. The Pennrose proposals included the following key components:

- Provide an anticipated total of 110 affordable and market rate senior housing units. Each building will include 55 units with a mix of studios (only for Mary D. Stone), one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units. Eight of the units will be market rate, the remainder marketed to those earning at or below 60% AMI.
- Retain the existing facades to preserve some of the historic character of each building while demolishing later additions and replacing them with three or four-story structures.
- Offer resources to improve and maintain the playgrounds located behind each property.
- Provide financial resources to offset consulting and legal costs incurred by the Town to transfer the deeds.

- Offer the Town the use of their meeting and conference room facilities at no charge when available.
- Agreed to enter into discussions with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) to potentially coordinate a paratransit transportation service for residents.
- Create outdoor areas on the site and coordinate services with local providers for residents.

Total projected developments costs are \$17,507,528 for Mary D. Stone and \$17,940,117 for Julia Bancroft. The conversions will be financed by Low Income Housing Tax Credits as well as other public and private funds.

Next Steps: It will be important for the Town to work effectively with Pennrose Properties on the development of the Mary D. Stone and Julia Bancroft Schools. The projected development schedule is included in Table 3. It will be particularly important for the Town to be supportive of the developer's applications to DHCD for approval to submit the comprehensive permit application to Auburn's Zoning Board of Appeals through the state's Local Initiative Program (LIP), also referred to as the "friendly 40B" process, as well as approvals for financing under the Local Income Housing Tax Credits and other state financing programs.

In regard to potential future developments on Town-owned property, the Board of Selectmen, in coordination with the Planning Board and proposed Housing Trust, should work with other Town boards and committees, such as the Open Space and Recreation Committee, to review the inventory of Town-



Benfield Farms

owned property and determine which parcels, if any, might be appropriate for affordable housing. After some initial feasibility analyses, the Town could use the same approach as it has conducted for the Mary D. Stone and Julia Bancroft schools by declaring these parcels surplus and conveying them to a designated developer following Town Meeting approval of this conveyance and a Request for Proposals process.

The Town may also decide to acquire privately-owned sites at some time in the future for the purposes of developing some amount of affordable housing, potentially including other uses such as protecting open space, preserving historic properties, and/or creating recreational opportunities. CPA funding, if approved, is an important resource for such acquisition. For

example, the Towns of Carlisle and Falmouth acquired land for affordable housing development including open space preservation and other public benefits.

Model: Benfield Farms in Carlisle

The Town of Carlisle issued a Request for Proposals to develop 26 units of senior rental housing on a Town-owned site it acquired by bonding a portion of its Community Preservation funding. Most of the parcel was preserved as open space with the development of some athletic fields on a portion of the property projected for the future. The Town provided the land for a nominal amount and approved \$425,000 in CPA funding to support costs related to infrastructure and an additional allocation to further subsidize the development. The Town selected the non-profit organization Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH) as the developer. The design includes a three-story main house connected to a two-story barn that incorporates green building, energy efficiency, sustainability and universal design standards.

Because the development of the two schools focuses on the housing needs of seniors, the Town will have to ensure that the housing needs of families and non-elderly individuals are also addressed through housing production efforts.

While the Town has very limited property that it has determined might be suitable for housing or mixed-use development, additional smaller sites may become available (potentially even from tax foreclosures) as well to build affordable new starter homes, housing for empty nesters, or housing for special needs populations on an infill basis. For example, the Towns of Bourne and Yarmouth both developed single-family homes on publicly-owned infill sites for first-time purchasers. The Towns of Yarmouth and Barnstable, for example, also acquired such property through a non-profit organization and Housing Authority, respectively, for rental housing.

Model: Small Home Development in Yarmouth

In 1989, Yarmouth's Town Meeting voted to transfer title of 16 acres on Brush Hill Road to the Yarmouth Housing Authority (YHA) for the nominal amount of \$1.00 for the purposes of building affordable housing. At that time, the YHA had planned to develop 12 units of family rental housing, however, all development projects were halted in 1991 due to state budget problems.

In 2000, the Housing Authority issued an RFP for four house lots that were subsequently developed by the winning respondent, a local non-profit organization, Our First Home, Inc. (OFH), which obtained the regulatory approvals for the subdivision plans on YHA's parcel and built the road into the subdivision. The YHA issued another Request for Proposals to develop two of the other lots as affordable housing for special needs populations. The regional nonprofit housing organization, the Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC), was the successful respondent, and the organization subsequently secured the necessary financing from HUD. In 2006, the YHA issued another RFP to develop the remaining six lots,

conveying the lots for a discounted price of \$5,000 per lot. The Town once again selected the non-profit Our First Home, Inc. as the developer through an RFP and the homes were fully occupied a year later.

The Town will also have to ensure that all affordable units that are produced are eligible for inclusion in the Subsidized Housing Inventory and work with the developer to provide the state with all of the appropriate documentation. The Town should also receive annual monitoring compliance reports from the monitoring agents to confirm that affordability requirements are being enforced. Moreover, the Town should make sure that it receives the cost examination report following project completion to make sure that developments follow LIP cost guidelines.

Required Resources: Donated time of permitting entities and potentially the proposed Housing Trust to help coordinate the development process. Resources would be helpful in providing gap fillers to subsidize some of the financing which might become available through adoption of CPA (see strategy 1.1.) and/or an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (see strategy 1.2). This strategy would also involve the proposed housing professional (see strategy 1.4), Town Planner and Town Manager, who will coordinate any necessary testing, prepare Request for Proposals, coordinate the developer selection process and ensure that all affordable units will be eligible for inclusion in the SHI.

Projected # Affordable Units Produced: 114 units (see Table 1 under Housing Production Goals)

3.2 PURSUE PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR MULTI-FAMILY AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PLANNING BOARD WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: In the context of good town planning and smart growth, the likely location for denser development - certainly for providing housing for smaller households and seniors - is in commercial areas and near transportation and services. Auburn's Zoning Bylaw allows mixed-use development in the Town's Mixed-Use Overlay District although this bylaw has not produced any units of housing to date.



As shown in the Economic Development Map included as Attachment 3, there are a number of prime locations in Auburn where higher-density, mixed-use development is appropriate. These include Drury Square, the Auburn Mall, the Village Center, and the former Lowe's site.

Next Steps: The Town should further assess the benefits of allowing mixed-use development and higher density housing in designated districts with specific criteria and amend the Zoning Bylaw accordingly. The zoning changes, including potential changes to the Mixed-Use Overlay District and adoption of 40R/40S (see strategy 2.1) as well as the willingness to explore other types of financing, should attract interest from developers and make new or redeveloped

mixed residential and commercial development economically feasible. As such development

opportunities arise, it will be important for the Town to work constructively with developers to make sure that projects reflect community needs and priorities. **This type of development will not only address housing needs but generate considerable economic development benefits as well.**

30 Haven Street

The Town will need to partner with capable development entities, whether for profit or non-profit, to realize new development opportunities through the following options:

Chapter 40R Smart Growth Overlay District

The possible adoption of a 40R Smart Growth Overlay District would provide additional incentives and resources to make development more attractive and feasible. The zoning for these districts is described in strategy 2.1 and should become a priority for the Town to pursue in the joint implementation of housing and economic development goals. This zoning might be particularly helpful in promoting development activities in Drury Square and the former Yankee Drummer/Lowe's parcel.

MODEL: 30 HAVEN IN READING

The 30 Haven rental development in Reading is a result of the Town's 40R Smart Growth Overlay District, including mixed commercial spaces and 53 one- and two-bedroom units. Based on 40R affordability requirements, at least 20% of the units are affordable to those earning at or below 80% of area median income, or eleven (11) units. In close proximity to the MBTA commuter rail station, the development also includes convenient amenities such as assigned parking, a fitness room, roof deck access, a guest room for visitors, and a community living room. 30 Haven was also designed to integrate long-term environmental sustainability and is a LEED certified residential community.

Existing Mixed-Use Overlay District (MUOD)

Auburn has an existing Mixed-Use Overlay District (MUOD) that is essentially the BJ's and Home Depot parcel along with the Town-owned Granger Cliffs and parts of Oxford Street South. These provisions have not been exercised since the adoption of the bylaw following its recommendation in the 1987 Master Plan. This Housing Plan recommends that the Town amend this zoning to better incentivize its use including the integration of affordable housing (see strategy 2.1).

District Improvement Financing (DIF),³¹ Urban Center Housing Zones and Tax Increment Financing (TIF)³² are additional financial tools that might also serve as incentives for promoting mixed-use development in Auburn, including in the MUOD.

Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Process

Another option would be use the Chapter 40B comprehensive permit process to waive local zoning to develop housing in the context of additional or existing commercial development. This approach has been used in a number of communities such as Northborough as described below.

³¹ The District Improvement Financing Program (DIF) is administered by the state's Office of Business Development to enable municipalities to finance public works and infrastructure by pledging future incremental taxes resulting from growth within a designated area to service financing obligations. This Program, in combination with others, can be helpful in developing or redeveloping target areas of a community, including the promotion of mixed-uses and smart growth. Municipalities submit a standard application and follow a prescribed application process directed by the Office of Business Development in coordination with the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council.

³² The Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing Zone Program (UCH-TIF) is a relatively new state initiative designed to give cities and towns the ability to promote residential and commercial development in commercial centers through tax increment financing that provides a real estate tax exemption on all or part of the increased value (the "increment") of the improved real estate. The development must be primarily residential and this program can be combined with grants and loans from other local, state and federal development programs. An important purpose of the program is to increase the amount of affordable housing for households earning at or below 80% of area median income and requires that 25% of new housing to be built in the zone be affordable, although the Department of Housing and Community Development may approve a lesser percentage where necessary to ensure financial feasibility. In order to take advantage of the program, a municipality needs to adopt a detailed UCH-TIF Plan and submit it to DHCD for approval.



Model: Northborough Crossing

The Town of Northborough recently permitted 382 housing units through the Chapter 40B comprehensive permit process, developed by Avalon Communities. The project, called Northborough Crossing, is located at the junction of Routes 20 and 9, also involving a 650,000 square foot open-air retail center anchored by a Wegmans.

Required Resources: Donated time from members of the Planning Board and proposed Housing Trust as well as from the Town Planner and potentially some additional professional support (see strategy 1.4).

Projected # Affordable Units Produced: 80 units (see Table 1 under Housing Production Goals)

3.3 SUPPORT SMALL-SCALE INFILL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 3 AND 5

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: PLANNING BOARD IN COORDINATION WITH THE PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: There are potential sites that might accommodate a housing unit or small number of units to serve local affordable housing needs. However, in the absence of local funding to subsidize such developments or inclusionary zoning, the Town will be reliant on a developer's ability to obtain state funding to subsidize any affordable units. *The potential adoption of CPA, as recommended in strategy 1.1, will offer the Town the resource necessary to financially support these small-scale projects.*

As reported by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, "Urban planners and public officials are focused on developing housing types that restore the 'missing middle' – row houses, duplexes, apartment courts, and other small to midsize housing designed at a scale and density compatible with single-family residential neighborhoods." The "missing middle" concept grew out of the New Urbanism movement "to inject more moderately-priced housing into residential neighborhoods, from shrinking or subdividing lots to adding accessory dwelling units (ADUs), to expanding legal occupancy in homes."³³ It suggests

³³ Ibid.

housing types that “typically have small to medium-size footprints with a body width, depth, and height no larger than a single-family home. They can blend into a neighborhood as compatible infill, encouraging a mix of socioeconomic households and making more effective use of transit and services.”³⁴

Habitat for Humanity of Metro West/Greater Worcester is always searching for donated Town-owned or private property on which to build ***infill starter housing***, typically building on vacant lots in existing neighborhoods. There is a precedent for Habitat development in Auburn with a duplex built at 4 Homestead Avenue, a property that was donated by the Bank of America.

Other non-profits also continue to look for donated public and private land on which to build. Such development might also be conducive to scattered Town-owned infill parcels or tax title properties. The owner-occupied, two-family house is also an excellent prototype for providing starter homes with the added benefit of the income that comes with a rental unit.

There are also effective models of ***small clustered development or pocket neighborhoods*** that can incorporate several income tiers to meet housing needs. Such developments can also incorporate the co-housing concept that includes some shared facilities. A couple of examples are offered below.

Model: Small 40B Infill Townhouse Development – Junction Place in Needham

Junction Place is a condominium project in Needham comprised of 5 attached townhouse units across from a commuter rail station. The project was developed on a site with less than 12,000 square feet by a private developer. All of the townhouses were sold at below market prices to eligible families through a lottery. Two of the homes were sold for \$165,000 to families earning up to 80% of the area median income while the remaining three sold for \$310,000 to families earning up to 150% of the area median income. Each of the units contains approximately 1,512 square feet including 3 bedrooms, 2½ bathrooms, a laundry room with a washer and dryer, a one-car garage and an outside parking space.

³⁴ Ibid.

Model: Jenney Way in Edgartown

In partnership with the South Mountain Company, the Island Housing Trust (IHT) developed a 2.53-acre property in Edgartown that was purchased from the Jenney family for a substantially discounted price, resulting in nine subsidized single-family houses. This “pocket neighborhood” of houses was built to high performance building standards and four of the houses with solar electric systems achieved LEED Platinum Certification (the highest standard for Leadership in Environmental Design awarded by the U.S. Green Building Council). The nine single-family houses were sold and the land ground leased under the Island Housing Trust with resale restrictions to income qualified households earning at various income tiers. Grants from the Island Affordable Housing Fund, CPA funds, and the Cape Light Compact helped fund the land purchase and construction costs.

The state has recently created a couple of new housing programs that could provide financing for such small-scale development.

State legislation was recently enacted to implement a Starter Home Program as part of the Governor’s Economic Development Bill. This was accomplished by modifying the existing Smart Growth Zoning and Housing Production law of Chapter 40R to include \$25 million in new funding over five years for cities and towns that create new starter home zoning districts. DHCD is amending the 40R regulations but the new districts must be a minimum of three acres, restrict primary dwelling size to 1,850 square feet of heated living area, require that 50% of the primary dwelling units contain three bedrooms, allow a minimum of four units per acre by-right, and provide 20% affordability for those earning up to 100% AMI. This might become a helpful resource for Auburn, particularly for addressing the housing needs of families.

The state has also introduced the Community Scale Housing Initiative (CSHI), a small-scale production program to address non-metro communities’ need for smaller-scale housing that responds to local housing needs and density requirements. These projects, because of their small size, are not a good fit for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. Generally, projects that can leverage some debt by having a few higher income units and a gap filler like the Community Preservation Act funding (CPA) are in the best position to utilize such a program. This new initiative provides \$10 million in funding.

Organizations that support **special needs housing** are active in the Greater Worcester and Blackstone Valley area and are likely to have a continuing interest in developing group homes or other special facilities in the community if opportunities arise. Existing special needs housing includes 20 units sponsored by the state’s Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and 14 units through the state’s Department of Mental Health (DMH). Another group home for eight special needs residents is owned and managed by the Auburn Housing Authority with services provided by the Alternatives Program. Another 13.5% of all units in the AHA’s elderly housing developments are targeted to younger disabled individuals, or about 20 units.

As documented in the Housing Needs Assessment, these units are important but insufficient to meet the community's increasing needs for more handicapped accessible and service-enriched housing units given the numbers of residents with disabilities and the aging of the population. The Town should support additional opportunities to work in partnership with local, regional and state entities that provide such housing.

Models: Milton and Needham Special Needs Development

Work, Inc. built special needs housing for five disabled young adults in a state-of-the-art facility for which the Town committed a significant amount of HOME Program funding. Needham, working with the Charles River Association for Retarded Citizens, committed \$220,000 in CPA funding and \$280,000 in HOME funds to build a group home in a high-end, single-family residential neighborhood for five severely-disabled residents. This facility resembles the large single-family houses in this upscale area, and received no opposition from neighbors.

Next Steps: As is the case with the other development strategies, without CPA or a capitalized Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Auburn is limited in its capacity to promote affordable housing. Most effective development models rely on the municipality providing some level of a "gap filler" to cover a portion of the difference between the total costs of development and what qualifying lower income occupants can afford, leveraging other public and private financing. Nevertheless, opportunities for development can still be realized through donations of public property (see strategy 3.1); inclusionary zoning, if adopted; Chapter 40B; or other state and federal subsidy programs such as the Starter Home and Community Scale Housing Initiative described above.

In addition to enacting strategies regarding capacity-building and new zoning as recommended in this Housing Plan, the Town should be welcoming of new development proposals. It needs to work with developers to not only help ensure that the project meets local needs and priorities to the greatest extent feasible, but be supportive in other ways, including overseeing a smooth permitting process and advocating for the project on a neighborhood and town-wide level.

Required Resources: Donated time from representatives of Town Boards and Committees, the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals in particular, as well as staff time from the Town Planner and proposed housing professional (see strategy 1.4). Ideally, the Town would adopt CPA and inclusionary zoning to provide important new housing subsidies to support new development or redevelopment efforts.

Projected # Affordable Units Produced: 9 units (see Table 1 under Housing Production Goals)

4. HOUSING PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

In addition to creating new housing opportunities, this Housing Plan recommends that the Town also focus on the need to preserve existing housing by restoring vacant and abandoned properties to productive use as well as correcting code violations in properties occupied by low- and moderate-income residents.

4.1 CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABANDONED HOUSING INITIATIVE (AHI)

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 1 TO 2

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: BOARD OF SELECTMEN IN COORDINATION WITH THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Current Status: Auburn has experienced some housing foreclosure and even abandonment, presenting some challenging conditions in neighborhoods. Vacant and abandoned property not only creates eyesores, but also attracts crime, presents health and safety hazards, and reduces property values. To address these blighting properties, the Town of Auburn has been participating in the state Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI) that has to date assisted at least five structures back to full occupancy and productive use.

Using the enforcement powers of the State Sanitary Code, the Attorney General's Office has worked closely with municipalities such as Auburn to encourage delinquent owners of abandoned residential property to make the necessary repairs. If the owner refuses to undertake the required work, the AG's Office will petition the relevant court to appoint a capable receiver to bring the units up to code.

Next Steps: The Town will continue to maintain an inventory of vacant and abandoned properties and provide the relevant information to the AG's Office. The Town will also continue to work in partnership with the AG's office to help file petitions with the court and potentially identify receivers for court appointment.

Required Resources: Town Administration and Board of Health will continue to take the lead in interfacing with the AG's Office on this Program. Involves staff time from the Department of Development and Inspectional Services, the Town Manager and Board of Health.

Projected # Affordable Units Produced: Participating units are unlikely to be eligible for inclusion in the SHI unless they were already included or the Town negotiates deed restrictions with owners and meets other state requirements.

4.2 ESTABLISH A HOUSING REHABILITATION PROGRAM

TIMEFRAME: YEARS 3 TO 5

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: TOWN MANAGER IN COORDINATION WITH THE PLANNING BOARD AND PROPOSED HOUSING TRUST

Current Status: As noted in the Housing Needs Assessment, about half of Auburn's housing units were built prior to 1980 and thus many are likely to have deferred maintenance needs including some health and safety violations. Many of these properties are also likely to include some amount of lead-based paint that is particularly hazardous to young children. Other outstanding repair needs might include septic system improvements in the unsewered pockets of town, home modifications for those with disabilities, and support for creating accessory dwelling units (see strategy 2.3).

Many communities in the state receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to support a Housing Rehabilitation Program. Such programs provide important subsidized financing to low- or moderate-income owner-occupants earning at or below 80% AMI or investor-owners and non-profit organizations that rent to low- or moderate-income households to make much-needed repairs to their properties. Program assistance is typically offered at a 0% interest rate with loan conditions dependent on income and ownership status. Loan payments are generally deferred until the sale of the property and forgiven after a term of 15 years. Deed restrictions are placed on the property for this 15-year term of the loan.

Next Steps: The Town should apply to DHCD for CDBG funding to support the introduction of a Housing Rehabilitation Program. DHCD has been revisiting some of its criteria for allocating this funding, and Auburn may find itself in a competitive position to receive financial support.

Required Resources: This work could become part of the Scope of Services for the professional support recommended in strategy 1.4. Otherwise, approximately \$5,000 in funding to support a housing consultant to apply for the CDBG funding would be required. Based on an average per unit loan amount of approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000, the Town would need at least \$250,000 to initiate the Program with about ten participants. Any payments in-lieu of units through the passage of inclusionary zoning could also be applied to such a program.

Projected # Affordable Units Produced: 10 units but requires the Town securing CDBG funding or having other funding available through inclusionary zoning or negotiated fees for example. Such units will likely have 15-year deed restrictions that will make them eligible for inclusion in the SHI.

Attachment 1

Summary Table of Housing Strategies

Summary of Housing Strategies	Priority for Implementation		# Affordable Units	Responsible Parties**
	In Years 1-2	In Years 3-5		
1. Capacity Building Strategies				
1. Adopt CPA	X		*	BOS, Town Meeting
2. Establish and capitalize an Affordable Housing Trust Fund	X		*	BOS, Town Meeting
3. Continue to conduct ongoing community outreach and education	X		*	Proposed HT + other sponsors of initiatives
4. Secure sufficient professional support	X		*	Town Manager, Town Meeting
2. Zoning Strategies				
1. Adopt new zoning for multi-family and mixed-use development	X		*	PB/proposed HT

2. Modify OSRD bylaw		X		PB/proposed HT
3. Modify the accessory apartment bylaw		X	*	PB/proposed HT
4. Explore inclusionary zoning		X	*	PB/proposed HT
3. Development Strategies				
1. Make suitable public property available for affordable housing	X		114	BOS/PB or ZBA/ proposed HT
2. Pursue partnership opportunities for multi-family and mixed-use development	X		80	PB /proposed HT
3. Explore small-scale infill development and conversions		X	9	PB/proposed HT
4. Preservation Strategies				
1. Continue participating in the Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI)	X		*	BOS/BOH/Town Manager
2. Establish a Housing Rehabilitation Program	X		10	Town Manager, proposed HT

* Indicates actions for which units are counted under other specific housing production strategies, have an indirect impact on production, do not add to the Subsidized Housing Inventory, or cannot be counted towards production goals.

****Abbreviations**

Board of Selectmen = BOS

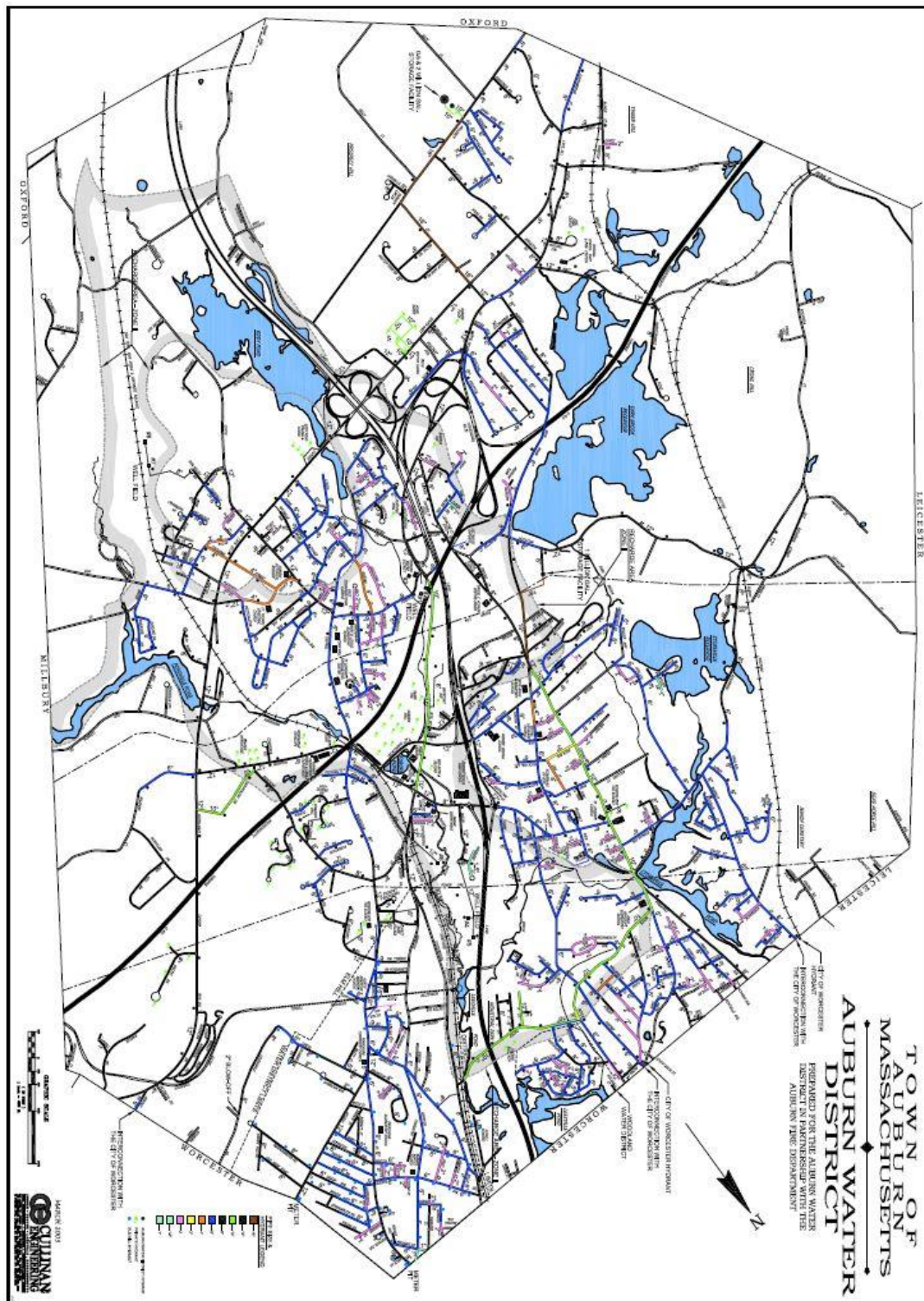
Planning Board = PB

Zoning Board of Appeals = ZBA

Proposed Housing Trust = HT

Board of Health = BOH

Water Services Map



Attachment 3

Summary of June 22, 2017 Community Housing Forum

The Affordable Housing Subcommittee of the Auburn Master Plan Committee sponsored a Community Housing Forum on June 22, 2017 at the Auburn High School's Presentation Room to present key findings from the Housing Needs Assessment. Following a welcome and introductions from Julie Jacobson, Auburn's Town Manager, the Lead Consultant, Ron Barron from the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), provided a PowerPoint presentation on the highlights of the recently prepared Housing Needs Assessment and facilitated a brief question and comment period.

Karen Sunnarborg, another project consultant from Karen Sunnarborg Consulting, provided participants with instructions for proceeding to Breakout Group Brainstorming. The purpose of the Breakout Groups was to obtain input from participants on their vision for community housing as well as priority actions for fulfilling this vision and addressing local housing needs. Each group was asked to identify a Facilitator to keep the group on track in fulfilling the assigned tasks within allotted timeframes and a Recorder to document key comments from each group member.

Visioning

Each group member was asked in turn to complete three questions, resulting in the following comments:

The Town's greatest challenge related to preserving and producing housing affordability and diversity is _____

- Perceptions/stigma of affordable housing and Chapter 40B (need to put a face on those who need affordable housing in town)
- Lack of information and education on the issue
- Difficulties in obtaining community support for affordable housing/neighborhood opposition
- Limited infrastructure to support larger homes and development
- Inadequate public transportation (residents reliant on cars)
- Getting utilities to development sites
- Zoning constraints
- High costs

- Difficulty in finding locations to build housing
- Qualifying occupants who need affordable housing and avoiding abuse
- Insuring accessibility in terms of both location and modifications for people with disabilities
- Maintaining health standards (i.e., no smoking)

An appropriate housing goal (something aspirational to strive for in the years ahead) for the Town to achieve is to :Provide more diverse housing stock for different demographic populations

- Encourage sustainable housing options to reduce costs
- Reduce cost burdens by lowering housing costs as a percentage of income
- Increase affordable housing options for the more vulnerable, lower income residents
- Encourage development that is walkable to goods and services
- Prioritize housing in areas that have better bus/transit access
- Encourage mixed-use zoning for mixed housing and commercial uses
- Create more special needs units including assisted living options
- Prioritize unit availability for Auburn residents
- Create a community in which residents feel safe
- Promote more diverse business opportunities
- Be more proactive with respect to failing retail centers
- Provide more affordable rental apartments
- Expand numbers of mid-priced homes
- Change zoning

The best locations for new housing development include :

- Drury Square Village District
- Stoneville Village
- Auburn Plaza
- Kelly Farm area
- Along bus routes (such as Southbridge, Auburn and Oxford Streets)
- Prospect Hill
- Small one to two-unit affordable homes in neighborhoods

Prioritizing Actions and Voting

Each member of the Breakout Groups was then asked in turn to identify the two most important actions or strategies for the Town to implement to address priority housing needs. They were then asked, also in turn, to identify their top three preferences based on the full list of proposed actions created by the group. The full group was then informed to select the top three actions that received the most support as well as the next three in order of priority importance and agreement.

Representatives from each group then presented the priority actions to all participants. Following these presentations, all participants voted on their preferred actions with five stickers which they could place on one item or spread among strategies. They also had one negative sticker that they could use to record opposition to a particular action.

This prioritizing and voting process produced the following actions and number of votes:³⁵

Regulatory Strategies

- Explore adding a requirement for producing a minimum number of affordable units in new development (inclusionary zoning) and create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund for fees in-lieu of units (17 votes)
- Modify zoning to create mixed-use development (11 votes)
- Streamline permitting (6 votes)
- Make it easier to permit accessory dwelling units (2 votes)
- Limit (stop) the creation of private roads (1 vote)

Financing Strategies

- Create a toolbox of incentives for affordable housing such as a special lending pool from banks (4 votes)
- Explore adoption of the Community Preservation Act (3 votes)

Regional/Town Programs and Services

- Provide community outreach/education on affordable housing (14 votes)
- Increase/enhance public transportation options (4 votes)
- Extend water and sewer services to new development as part of permitting considerations
- Reach out to property owners concerning their long-term intentions for their properties
- Create an economic development staff position

Development Opportunities

- Prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) to develop affordable housing on foreclosed properties (2 votes)
- Increase Auburn Housing Authority inventory (2 votes plus 1 negative vote)
- Evaluate vacant properties

Participants were informed that the Town will be working with the Consultants on the next sections of the Community Housing Plan including the identification of challenges, goals, locations and priority actions that were discussed during the forum. After the draft is prepared, the Town will conduct

³⁵ This list includes those top priority actions provided by the individual groups as well as other strategies that received votes from participants.

another public meeting to present the highlights of the Community Housing Plan for further input from local leaders, housing stakeholders and residents.

Economic Development Map

