

DRAFT CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES

G. Housing

State Goal: To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens. (Growth Management Act)

Local Goals: To provide a diversity of housing to meet the needs of a wide range of residents.

To assure that as new housing is built in the City, there continues to be a supply of affordable housing available to meet the needs of lower and moderate income households.

To maintain the existing housing stock in the City and assure that it provides safe and sanitary housing.

Pursuant to these goals, the City's policies with respect to housing are:

1. The City should continue to provide for the construction of both single family and multifamily housing in a variety of locations at densities that are appropriate for the type of housing and the location. The Future Land Use Plan outlines these areas.
2. To further refine Policy 1, the City should consider an array of methods to attract and construct housing that is not single-family detached. These methods include but are not limited to: public-private partnerships, allowing micro-apartments and adopting form-based code zoning in certain areas of the downtown.
3. The City should continue to allow housing for the elderly to be built at higher densities than other types of housing in recognition of the lower impact that this type of housing has on the community.

4. The City should continue to work with nonprofit organizations and private developers to expand the supply of housing that is affordable to lower and moderate income households. The City should consider offering economic and/or regulatory incentives for such affordable housing developments and, if appropriate, continue using contract zoning and similar techniques to allow case-by-case consideration of proposals for new affordable housing. Another approach to consider is introducing form-based zoning for some downtown neighborhoods.
5. To assure that existing downtown neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area remain desirable places to live, the City should continue to balance the construction of or conversion to multifamily housing with the predominantly single and two family pattern of existing development in some older neighborhoods. In addition, the City should consider ways to ensure that certain existing currently non-conforming neighborhood markets can remain in their established residential neighborhoods while protecting the neighborhoods from other commercial uses that are incompatible.
6. The City should continue to work to maintain and upgrade the City's older housing stock and downtown neighborhoods. The City should continue to seek state funding to provide financial assistance to property owners to maintain and improve their property and to upgrade the infrastructure such as weatherization and similar programs. The current efforts of the Code Enforcement Office and Fire Department to regularly inspect multifamily buildings should continue. In addition, the City should actively enforce City codes in these neighborhoods to assure that the quality of the housing stock does not diminish and that any problem properties are addressed in a timely manner.
7. The City should consider relaxing or re-writing the standards for parking and other regulations governing housing development in downtown neighborhoods to ensure that these requirements do not adversely affect development proposals.

CHAPTER EIGHT: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Policy Reference	Activity	Primary Responsibility
G.5. G.6	Continue to seek state funding to provide financial assistance to owners of older homes for maintenance and energy efficiency while allowing these owners the flexibility to convert a large older home into two or more units, especially when the building's outside appearance will remain largely unchanged.	City Council, P&DD
G.7.	Consider relaxing parking standards and certain other dimensionally-related regulations - either through form-based code or by amending existing performance standards - governing housing development in the downtown and certain downtown neighborhoods.	Planning Board, P&DD
G.4.	Consider offering economic and/or regulatory incentives for affordable housing developments. Explore inclusionary housing ordinance options.	City Council, P&DD
G.2	<p>Explore alternative ways to amend ordinances to introduce additional housing in the downtown and downtown neighborhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow small or micro-apartments downtown which may appeal to both younger and older people • Permit the conversion of an accessory building such as a carriage house, barn or garage into a single apartment • Offer incentives to turn underutilized upper building stories into apartments • Adopt form-based code in certain downtown areas to allow flexibility and streamline permitting 	Planning Board, P&DD
G.3	Continue to encourage housing for the elderly that is integrated into the fabric of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods through form-based code, contract zoning or by relaxing performance standards in certain areas.	Planning Board, P&DD

Policy Reference	Activity	Primary Responsibility
G.5	Consider using form-based code to allow the existing neighborhood fabric to be a driver of what uses are allowable in certain downtown neighborhoods e.g. existing small neighborhood stores could made conforming under carefully constructed form-based code.	Planning Board, P&DD