

# SUMMARY OF DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGIES

## 1. Pursue further opportunities for Transit-Oriented Development

- Tap additional resources to further develop housing in commercial areas and near transportation.
- Consider state supported district-wide strategies including 40R and/or 40S.

In the context of good city 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. Unlike zoning in many communities, Beverly's Zoning Ordinance does allow multi-family development and mixed-use development in a number of zoning districts. There are additional resources that might be tapped to continue to promote such development that should be explored.

## 2. Adopt rezoning of the Bass River Area

- Create more compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development in this area including economic development activities, waterfront access and housing.

The City of Beverly received a grant to prepare a vision and Action Plan for the redevelopment of the Bass River Industrial District and adjacent downtown. In concert with MAPC and a Working Group, the City has developed a vision and recommendations for creating more compact, mixed-use, Transit-oriented development in the area, including economic development activities, waterfront access and housing.

## 3. Conduct ongoing community education and outreach

- Provide ample opportunities for community input on new housing initiatives.
- Build support for new housing initiatives.

A core objective of this planning process was to build a public process to serve the dual purposes of, first, informing the community of housing needs and how the City's housing policy is responsive to those needs, and second, building a strong constituency supportive of creating new affordable housing opportunities. Continued and strategic efforts to inform residents and local leaders on housing issues and new initiatives builds support by generating a greater understanding of the benefits of affordable housing, reducing misinformation and dispelling negative stereotypes.

## 4. Operationalize and capitalize the Affordable Housing Trust Fund

- A dedicated fund to support local housing initiatives.
- Secure additional funds beyond inclusionary zoning payments.

The City is in the process of establishing a Municipal Affordable Housing Trust pursuant to MGL Chapter 44, Section 55C that will manage funding from the payments that have accumulated from the City's inclusionary zoning ordinance as well as other sources of funding, accruing to nearly \$1 million by end of fiscal year 2017. Opportunities to further capitalize the Fund will be important to support the implementation of this Housing Plan.

## 5. Modify the accessory apartment ordinance

- Amend zoning to better promote these small rental units, help reduce cost burdens and prevent illegal units.

The City has zoning that allows accessory apartments but under very restrictive provisions. Because these units provide a range of public benefits, the City should amend the existing ordinance to better promote the creation of such units and to prevent owners from developing illegal units, eliminating the requirement that accessory units be restricted to family members in particular.

## 6. Reintroduce the Housing Rehabilitation Program

- Provide assistance to improve local housing occupied by low- or moderate-income owner-occupants or tenants.
- 81 properties and 117 units were rehabilitated in the Gloucester Crossing neighborhood between 1998 and 2005.

There remains a significant need for resources to help homeowners maintain their property, particularly given the prevalence of older, historic housing in many Beverly neighborhoods with significant levels of health and safety violations and occupancy of low- or moderate-income owners or tenants. The City operated a Housing Rehabilitation Program in the past and should continue to apply to the state for funding or invest local funds to reintroduce the Program.

## 7. Explore modifications to the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance

- This zoning has been effective, producing 69 affordable units and almost \$1 million in payments.
- Opportunities remain to modify the ordinance to better address housing goals.

The Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance has proven to be effective, producing 69 affordable units and payments in-lieu of units approaching \$1 million that can be invested in other affordable housing initiatives. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to modify this zoning to better address housing goals.

## 8. Monitor and intervene as appropriate on expiring use projects

- There are a handful of developments where affordability restrictions are due to expire in the near term.
- Insure that units remain affordable for as long as possible.

There are a handful of developments where affordability restrictions are due to expire in the near term and the City should reach out to owners to insure that units remain affordable for as long a period as possible.

## 9. Fund other housing preservation initiatives

- Address a wider range of housing preservation needs by adding targeted initiatives to the proposed reintroduction of the Housing Rehab Program, such as:
  - Emergency assistance for seniors
  - Loan program for accessory apartments
  - Substantial rehab program

It is not only important to find ways to correct housing code violations but to also improve older structures that are the foundation for preserving the historic character of the City, stabilizing both

families and neighborhoods. In addition to reintroducing the Housing Rehab Program, Beverly should consider extending its focus beyond this moderate rehab effort to address a wider range of housing preservation needs by adding some potential derivations to the Program.

## 10. Make suitable public property available for affordable or mixed-income housing

- There are precedents for the residential development of City-owned property that includes affordable housing (McKay School).
- Identify additional properties to take further proactive measures to address local housing needs.

There is a precedent for the residential development of City-owned property that includes affordable housing. The development of the McKay School into 24 rental units, including 4 affordable ones, is a recent example. The contribution or “bargain sale” of land or buildings owned by the City but not essential for municipal purposes could enable Beverly to take further proactive measures to address local housing needs based on the City’s housing priorities as prescribed by this Housing Plan.

## 11. Support small-scale infill housing development and conversions

- Spread affordable housing production throughout the community.
- Design development to be harmonious with the existing neighborhood.

While many suggest that the City should focus its housing development efforts near transit, the downtown, and waterfront areas; there has also been some strong sentiment towards spreading the impacts of new affordable housing production throughout the community so as to limit the burden on any one particular neighborhood. Such development can be designed to be harmonious with the existing built environment. There are potential sites that might accommodate a housing unit or small number of units or even conversions of existing properties to serve local affordable housing needs, particularly small starter units, affordable rentals, and special needs housing.

## 12. Help preserve Beverly Housing Authority (BHA) inventory

- Advocate for additional state and federal funds to finance needed capital improvements, and explore opportunities to redevelop antiquated existing BHA projects.

The City should work with the BHA to advocate for additional state and federal funds to finance needed capital improvements to preserve this important housing inventory. Another consideration is the redevelopment potential of existing BHA projects that are antiquated, do not take best advantage of the existing parcel, lack energy efficiencies and further lack handicapped accessibility and other amenities for residents.

## 13. Modify zoning to encourage more housing diversity in more areas

- Enable the development of various housing types in more districts including two-family dwellings, bungalow/cottage housing, live-work space, senior/assisted living, and co-housing for example.

Beverly’s Zoning Ordinance does allow multi-family housing in particular districts, typically near the downtown and commercial areas where higher density is more appropriate, and also permits a wider range of housing types than most communities. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to potentially expanding various housing types to more districts including two-family dwellings, bungalow

or cottage housing in pocket neighborhoods, live-work space, senior/assisted living, and co-housing for example.

#### 14. Continue to partner with local institutions

- Continue to work with important local institutions on ways to partner on new housing opportunities.

Beverly is home to a number of important institutions that help drive the local economy, providing significant numbers of jobs and attracting thousands from outside the city. They nevertheless also rely on City services and pay little in the way of taxes. Moreover, employees and students also compete in the local housing market, helping to drive up housing prices. Local officials should review priority initiatives and consider ways that local institutions can invest in them, including efforts to capitalize the Housing Trust Fund, providing a wider range of community housing opportunities for students and employees.