

Residential Development Endorsement Guidelines

The numbers, types and costs of homes and apartments in the Monadnock Region do not match other economic trends in the Region. Extremely low vacancy rates and high costs threaten the economic prosperity of the Region and the many individuals and families struggling to find housing to match their economic standing and lifestyle. New families from among us and elsewhere cannot find housing that does not require long commutes and rent or mortgage payments beyond their means. The ongoing housing shortage creates scarcity of employees at all employment levels within the Region's businesses and industries – a condition which can lead to loss of business and industry and a general decline the Region's economy.

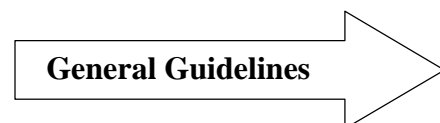
At the same time, in the face of continued growth and change, residents and municipal governments work tirelessly to preserve the character of the Region and each town, and control public expenses for services and facilities.

Today some of our most cherished images of the American Dream at odds: home ownership; vibrant Main Streets, neighborhoods and public schools; economic prosperity; and the New England village nestled in the countryside of fields and forest.

“Heading for Home, A Regional Housing Coalition” works to promote the production and maintenance of housing to meet the needs of all of the Region's residents today and the future. Heading for Home is a grass-roots coalition of businesses, community services, local government who are concerned about the immediate and long-term effects of the housing shortage. Heading for Home seeks to help municipal governments and the development community ensure that new housing can be a positive change for each community.

Heading for Home provides these Residential Development Endorsement Guidelines for the benefit of the developer and the community – to promote thorough consideration of the options for the design and siting of new housing.

The Guidelines are intended to indicate the degree to which local regulations and individual development projects 1) are consistent with New Hampshire's Smart Growth Principals, and 2) address the Monadnock Region's housing needs in terms of the types, costs and locations of new housing.



Heading for Home Residential Development Endorsement Guidelines

General Guidelines

Heading for Home supports the development of moderate-to-higher-density housing because it provides the best combination of affordability and preservation of open space. The following are benefits available from well-designed and appropriately located moderate-to-higher-density housing development:

- Support a vibrant economy by enabling employers to attract and retain employees
- Ensure open space for community character and ecological well-being
- Provide a diversity of housing types for residents of varying ages, income levels and abilities
- Maintain the integrity of historically significant buildings and town centers
- Promote adaptive re-use of existing structures
- Preserve existing housing in villages and downtowns
- Collaborative design (with neighbors and town)
- Avoid air pollution, solid waste, energy consumption, and other environmental impacts
- Promote accessibility for pedestrians and bicycles

At the request of a developer or municipal Planning Board, Heading for Home will provide a written review of plans for residential developments using the following eight guidelines:

1. Promote Affordability

The housing shortage is particularly acute for low-and moderate-income wage earners. A typical low-income household earning \$30,000 per year can afford a two-bedroom apartment costing \$700 a month including utilities which is approximately 15% below today's market rent. According to HUD guidelines, jobs that pay "low income" wages include day care teachers, fire fighters, secretaries, bank tellers and car mechanics.

Mixed-cost housing developments can ensure market-rate housing at affordable prices.

"Affordability" for these purposes shall be:

Low Income Housing: Housing affordable to households at or below 35% of the Area Median Income. (This category includes housing for the working homeless.)

Rental Housing: Housing affordable to households with incomes up to 80% of the Area Median Income.

Ownership Housing: Housing affordable to households with incomes up to 120% of the Area Median Income.

2. Promote Quality Community Design

Residential and mixed-use developments should be designed to maintain, enhance or create livable streets, neighborhoods and public spaces oriented to the pedestrian. Projects should generally be small- to medium-scale and appropriate to the size of the community. A variety of housing provides a healthy mix of residents from varying age groups, income levels and household types. Developments should aim to integrate work, shopping, entertainment, and recreation.

3. Promote Quality Construction

Construction should minimize operational and maintenance expenses over the life cycle of housing. Construction of units should be of high quality, sound and solid, and energy efficient. Structures should provide reasonable amenities, including good in-door environmental quality (e.g. adequate lighting, air quality, and ventilation, minimal odors and noise, maximum privacy and effective moisture management).

4. Discourage Sprawl and Encourage Compact, Mixed-Use Development

We can and should protect valuable open space and farmlands by directing compact, higher density “in-fill” development around existing infrastructure, developing “new town” centers, or by promoting adaptive re-use of underutilized buildings. In rural areas, the emphasis should be placed on clustering housing in appropriate landscapes, and using environmentally sound design principles, including Open Space Residential Development (OSRD), Soil-Based Lot Sizing within OSRDs, and Planned Unit Developments.

5. Promote Pedestrian and Bicycle Access, and Minimize Vehicle Miles Traveled

Wherever possible, housing developments should be located near existing and planned centers of employment, services, shopping, and education; near existing or planned public transportation service; park & ride lots; and safe, convenient pedestrian and bicycle paths.

6. Promote Economic Development and Sustainability

Adequate workforce housing encourages the location and expansion of business and industries within the Region.

7. Provide Larger Community Benefits

A new housing development should include additional benefits to the community, possibly including a conservation easement, community center, day care center, public access or provision of resident support services.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA

1. Physical Setting, Density, Design

- In-fill development within the existing infrastructure of a city or town or adaptive reuse of an underutilized property
- Rural location with clustered development, environmentally sensitive design, protection of open space and natural communities
- Development of new village centers
- Development of new high-density neighborhoods
- In cluster or conservation developments, lot sizes to be determined by Soil-Based Lot Sizing methodology
- Quality design and construction
- Sustainable development
- Compatibility with the setting, complementing and enhancing the existing neighborhood
- Promotion of social interaction, pedestrian-friendly design, innovative parking arrangements, and other principles of urban village design
- Proximity to existing and planned public transit
- Mixes use of residential and commercial properties (stores, restaurants, services)
- Provides a safe living environment

2. Affordability

- Mixed-cost housing developments ensure market-rate housing at affordable prices. “Affordability” for these purposes shall be:

Homeless Housing: Housing affordable to households at or below 35% of the Area Median Income. (This category includes housing for the working homeless.)

Rental Housing: Housing affordable to households with incomes up to 80% of the Area Median Income.

Ownership Housing: Housing affordable to households with incomes up to 120% of the Area Median Income.

The Review Team should be able to address each of the following (as applicable):

A. Site Selection

1. Distance to Town Center
2. Service by, or access to, public or community water and sewer systems
3. Accessibility for pedestrians within and to-and-from the site
4. Accessibility to public transportation (or its potential)
5. For sites outside a town center, degree to which the proposal plans to minimize impact on important natural resources identified in local or regional plans, including water quality, prime agricultural land, critical habitat or ecologically sensitive areas and identified scenic areas

B. Site Use

1. Range of housing choices
2. Unit sizes and unit costs
3. Degree of inclusion of workforce/affordable housing
4. Use of methods to ensure long-term affordability
5. Inclusion of housing that can serve a mix of demographics and needs
6. Incorporation of compatible commercial spaces
7. For larger projects, uses other than housing such as community spaces

C. Project Design

1. Density
2. Building heights
3. Scale of building and unit sizes as measured in square footage
4. Circulation plans relating to impact of cars, bikes and pedestrian access and movement
5. project amenities
6. Incorporation of energy saving equipment, materials, methods and design
7. For rural areas, use of site design employing cluster developments or PUD

Other

Please add any other information you feel would be helpful