

# Yarmouth Affordable Housing Strategy

Drafted by Yarmouth Housing Collaborative for Yarmouth Town Council  
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**Introduction, Intention and Commitment:** Work together to build income restricted/deed restricted housing units for our community.

Like nearly all Maine towns and cities, Yarmouth faces the challenge of offering home rental and ownership opportunities for people across the economic spectrum including work force housing, first time buyers, and senior housing. The **Yarmouth Affordable Housing Strategy** spans 5 years using a multipronged approach:

- **Developing New Affordable Housing (rentals and ownership)**
  - **Who:** Town Council, town staff, Planning Board, Local Development Corp, Yarmouth Housing Collaborative, Yarmouth Senior Housing, developers, housing professionals, and local contractors.
  - **Goal:** This plan is a pathway to 50-100 units over the next 5 years (combination of rentals and ownership).  
This paper addresses this component of the town strategy. The Town Council takes the lead.
- **Revising zoning codes and making other recommendations to the Town Council**
  - **Who:** Affordable Housing Committee and Yarmouth Planning Board
- **Development of ADUs**
  - **Who:** Private property owners
- **Additional Actions from the Affordable Housing Summit - TBD**

**Ensure accountability**, in order to ensure and maintain rigorous oversight and accountability, we recommend structured quarterly reviews be conducted by the Town Council with key stakeholders, ensuring the Council's active engagement and responsibility in meeting the established timelines and objectives.

## NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

### **Site Selection / Identification:**

Development will need to happen concurrently (not sequentially) to build momentum and produce results – 55-100 units in a reasonable time frame – with projects each realistically spanning 2-3+ years.

This work begins with 4 sites. In addition to being owned by the town, this is why these sites made the list:

1. **Town Hall Site**
  - **Potential development:** 10-12 rental units, mixed use town offices and 1-bedroom workforce housing
  - **Why is it suitable:**
    - Central location
    - Flat plot of land
    - Mixed use opportunity – supports town government needs.

## 2. 52 North Road

- **Potential development:** 20-50 rental units, senior and workforce housing
- **Why is it suitable:**
  - 2 acres – large lot
  - Flat plot of land
  - Walkable to Hannaford / bus stop, .6 miles)

## 3. 121 West Main (front ½ acre)

- **Potential development:** 10-18 rental units, mix of senior and workforce housing.
- **Why is it suitable:**
  - Walkable to town center (.7 miles to Town Hall/bus stop)

## 4. 181 Sligo Road (34 acres near Yarmouth Water District)

- **Potential development:**
  - 15-20 units, workforce home **ownership**,
  - Cluster housing (shared parking and greenspace),
  - Small homes ~900 sq feet, ~\$325K/home
- **Why is it suitable:**
  - Walkable to town center (1.1 miles)
  - Town commissioned wetland delineation survey appears to indicate there is sufficient upland areas suitable for residential development.

**Note:** We looked at 15 other locations and talked to many private property owners. We found these four sites to be the best choices because they appear to be the most practical and feasible for residential development in the immediate or near term. It is important to note that there are additional town owned parcels that hold potential for residential development but require further planning and discussion before we would recommend adding them to the list.

### **Conduct Site Feasibility Assessment to Catalyze Affordable Housing Development**

#### **Site Feasibility Assessment:**

Understanding that there is already a feasibility study underway for the Town Hall site, we recommend that the Town issue an additional RFP encompassing the remaining 3 sites. This assessment will provide crucial insights for each location, encompassing:

- Boundary analysis
- Identification of natural resource challenges
- Existing utilities identification
- Overall feasibility for the proposed use

#### **Cost and Funding Strategy:**

The cost for this assessment is estimated to be between \$2,000 to \$5,000 per site, totaling up to \$15,000 if design work is not included. The cost might be closer to \$20K if design is included in the RFP.

#### **Project Approval and Prioritization – order of development of sites:**

The Town Council reviews the feasibility assessments and, with town staff support and other input as requested, the Town Council approves sites for development and sequences their development.

#### **Key Factors for Consideration:**

- The Town Hall site is proposed as the initial development project. It is advisable to prioritize this site, subject to feasibility, due to the town's immediate requirement for additional office space.
- In determining the order of development for the remaining sites, the following criteria should be carefully considered:

- The relative ease or complexity of development at each site.
- The scale and scope of the proposed projects.
- The specific demographic groups each project aims to serve.
- The level of support anticipated from the town community.
- The strategies and avenues identified for funding each project.

**RFP – Developer Selection Process:**

The Town Council, in conjunction with town staff, will oversee the process of selecting a developer for each project. It is envisaged that the commencement of the four projects will be staggered, allowing for their simultaneous development. The selection process will involve specific criteria, including the submission of a detailed design concept for each project.

To help spur developer interest in the Yarmouth projects, the Town Council can establish a fund to assist developers in the early project stages. Developers could apply to the fund for grants to help cover preconstruction costs. This would be a great benefit for some of the smaller developers who must front their own money before funding drops in.

**Formation and Leadership of Development Teams:**

The Town Council will determine the appropriate leadership structure to guide each developer throughout the project lifecycle. Potential leadership could comprise members from the Town Council, town staff, the LDC, or the Yarmouth Housing Collaborative (YHC)

The developer's team will be expected to encompass a comprehensive range of professionals, including:

- Builders
- Architects
- Engineers
- Landscapers
- Legal Counsel
- Other relevant experts as required.

The developer will be responsible for the entire project lifecycle, which includes:

- Design conceptualization and development
- Securing funding
- Obtaining necessary approvals
- Overseeing construction, inclusive of the selection of local contractors
- Lease-up or Sale of Units to the residents/homeowners
- Transition to stabilized operations

**Determination of Site and Project Ownership:**

Concurrent with the development process, the Town council will decide the ownership of each site and project. This may include the town itself, the developer, or another entity such as the LDC, YHC, or a newly established entity created specifically for this purpose.

**Site Maintenance and Management:**

The chosen site owner will be responsible for appointing a property manager to oversee the site. This includes ensuring successful occupancy and adherence to affordability restrictions, which are expected to be maintained for a duration of 30 to 45 years.