



## **Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release**

Office of the Town Manager  
Town Hall, 1471 Highland Ave, Needham, MA 02492

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, October 14, 2021

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## **Town of Needham Announces Launch of Housing Plan Working Group to Develop Housing Agenda**

*First Meeting to be Held October 22<sup>nd</sup>*

NEEDHAM – Thursday, October 14, 2021 – To address present and future housing needs in Needham, the Needham Planning Board has created a Housing Plan Working Group. Made up of members of several appointed boards and including Needham residents, the Group is charged with preparing a Housing Plan to strategically address identified priority housing needs.

The Town's last [Affordable Housing Plan](#) was developed in 2007. Since then, the Town has made considerable progress in producing affordable housing, adding 894 new affordable units, and surpassing the state's 10 percent affordability goal. Today, 12.7 percent of the Town's housing stock is considered affordable. The Town has also launched assistance programs to help keep lower income residents in their homes, implemented less restrictive zoning, and established special overlay districts to encourage the development of mixed residential and commercial uses at a denser scale in appropriate locations.

However, demand for housing has continued to rise, and vacancy rates are at just 1 percent with little or no affordability remaining in the private unsubsidized housing stock. These conditions have been exacerbated by substantial teardown activity, involving the demolition of more modest homes, replaced by larger and more expensive ones, further driving up housing prices and eroding housing affordability. The loss of income that many have suffered because of the Covid-19 pandemic is exerting further pressures on existing residents, many of whom are struggling to afford to remain in their homes and community.

The Working Group will collect and analyze information from a wide variety of data sources to help inform the development of a Housing Needs Assessment. That Assessment will be the subject of a community housing workshop where members of the public will be asked to provide their input and feedback. The Working Group will then develop a Strategic Action Plan, subject to public review and input before the final Action Plan is developed.

The Working Group will meet for the first time **Friday, October 22 at 9 am**. Members include representatives from the following Boards and Committees: Planning Board, Select Board, Community

Preservation Committee, Finance Committee, Council on Aging, School Committee, Housing Authority, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, and two citizens-at-large.

To receive updates on Housing Plan Working Group meetings [subscribe to the Housing Plan Working Group Notify Me](#). You may also email [planning@needhamma.gov](mailto:planning@needhamma.gov) using the subject line “Housing Plan Working Group.”

More information can be found on the Town’s [website](#).

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