



PLANNING & COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

January 5, 2023

Marianne B. Cooley, Needham Select Board Chair  
Adam Block, Needham Planning Board Chair  
Needham Town Hall  
1471 Highland Ave  
Needham, MA 02492

Re: Housing Plan Working Group (HPWG)

Dear Chair Cooley and Chair Block:

The Housing Plan Working Group, established by the Planning Board in October 2021, consisted of 12 members; nine HPWG members were chosen from members of the Planning Board (2 members), the Select Board (2 members), the Board of Health, the Council on Aging, the Finance Committee, the Housing Authority & the School Committee; three HPWG members were citizens at large. The HPWG met monthly and created three subgroups: Zoning, Housing Development and Preservation, and Capacity Building, each of which had several meetings to consider strategies to address the affordable housing crisis in Needham.

The Housing Plan of December 2022 is hereby transmitted to the Select Board and the Planning Board. The HPWG requests each board's approval so that the adoption of this Housing Plan can be reported to the MA Department of Housing and Community Development when the Town submits its action plan to DHCD, which is due by the end of January, 2023. This Housing Plan documents housing needs and sets goals for addressing both the needs of households at or below 80% of area median income and the needs of those at or above median income who experience housing-cost burdens. These goals are presented in Section III. D LONG TERM HOUSING PRODUCTION GOALS (pp 24-29). The Plan presents several recommendations that Town Boards, Committees and Departments should pursue to address the Town's housing challenges over the next ten years. These strategies are presented in Section IV HOUSING STRATEGIES (pp 30-79) and summarized in Appendix 1 Implementation Roadmap (pp 80-82). Numerical targets are not specified for market-rate housing, although targets are set for housing to meet the needs of low-income households and zoning strategies are recommended to comply with the numerical targets of the MBTA Communities law and Guidelines, but the hope is that progress will be monitored both for subsidized and for market-rate housing as the strategies are implemented by the lead entities listed in the Roadmap for each strategy.

At the HPWG's last meeting, on December 22, 2022, when the HPWG approved the Housing Plan with certain changes that have now been included in the Plan, concern was expressed that no committee or department of the Town has been designated to further develop the Housing Plan's vision and goals and monitor implementation. The Housing Plan recommends that the Town's Affordable Housing Trust should have a role in implementing and monitoring the Housing Plan strategies see Section IV. C. CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES (pp 70-75).

In transmitting this Plan to you, the HPWG asks that attention be given to identifying and supporting Town staff, committee volunteers and possible planning consultants who will work to further coordinate and develop planning goals and implement and monitor performance of this Plan over the next 10 years.

Sincerely,

Jeanne S. McKnight, Housing Plan Working Group, Co-Chair  
Natasha Espada, Housing Plan Working Group, Co-Chair