



## **Regional Leadership and Coordination Workgroup**

**Update: April 16, 2024**

### **Alternative Housing Solutions**

The Regional Leadership and Coordination workgroup continues to monitor legislative progress, supporting their overall work to reduce regulatory barriers to affordable housing.

Driven by a housing crisis compounded by minimal affordable housing, low rental vacancy rates, and the stark contrast between a living wage and minimum wage, the workgroup was tasked with exploring alternative housing solutions to bridge the gap between the housing that the State currently has and the housing that the State needs.

New Hampshire's current solutions include multifamily housing, employee-assisted housing, vacated dorms, vacant commercial property, and hotels. These are not ideal long-term solutions that provide residents with access to services and stability and encourage a progression into a more permanent housing solution. Furthermore, given the current housing shortage, interim/temporary housing should not be considered a substitute for the "housing first" model for individuals experiencing homelessness but rather a bridge to the permanent housing solutions explored below.

Our initial analysis of the housing landscape has identified alternative housing solutions that fall into one of the following five categories, with Interim Housing Communities representing the only temporary option.

- 1. Manufactured Homes:** A residence built in a factory to HUD standards and then moved to a permanent location.
- 2. Interim Housing Communities:** These are temporary housing developments that support individuals experiencing homelessness. As referenced above, this is not a permanent housing solution.
- 3. Off-site Construction:** Building structures, including modular homes, multi-family units, and components designed and manufactured off-site before being assembled in a permanent location.
- 4. Digital Fabrication:** Using large-scale 3D printers, this option efficiently and quickly builds housing structures out of materials such as concrete and wood.
- 5. Tiny homes/Cottages:** These are permanent residences on foundations typically under 500 feet in square footage.

As we continue to pull together options, we are examining benefits, challenges, costs, and regulatory considerations. We are also researching what our neighboring states are doing and their successes.

For example, this January marked the first anniversary of Burlington, Vermont's pod community that opened in early 2023 to alleviate the pressure on the city's existing homeless shelters with additional temporary housing options. The initiative has provided the city with more shelter and critical support services. Conversely, however, residents surrounding the pod community have noticed increased loitering, crime, and drug use outside the parameters of the development. It is also important to note that any housing provided for longer than 180 days would be required to meet life safety codes, including the state fire and building codes.

As this program enters its second year, the workgroup is actively monitoring its evolution.

The workgroup has a clear plan of action for the coming months. We will continue our investigative process, conducting interviews with stakeholders and gathering research. This will culminate in a comprehensive overview of alternative housing solutions, which we aim to share with the Council in June.

### **Housing Development Training and Support for New Developers of Under 20 Units**

The Workgroup's immediate work also includes researching housing development training options and support for developers of properties under 20 units. Initial conversations within the group have identified the following similar initiatives in other states:

1. [The Vermont Homes for All Toolkit](#)
2. [Build South Bend, Indiana](#): Pre-Approved Building Plan Sets

We have preliminarily defined our target audience to include the following:

- Individuals with limited development experience
- Individuals who want to add to the housing stock
- Individuals who wish to build an investment
- Property owners with modest development potential
- Property owners interested in a sub-division of their property
- 'Small town' leadership (planning board chairs, town & city managers, select boards, building inspectors)
- Smaller commercial lenders
- Conservation groups

As our analysis continues, we will lean on professional associations such as the Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire, the NH Home Builders Association, and the Associated Builders & Contractors of New Hampshire/Vermont to inform our research. We plan to continue exploring existing training and support options, defining what support New Hampshire's small-scale developers need most, evaluating regulatory barriers, compiling unique attributes that define NH's housing landscape, and

highlighting appropriate housing solutions. The Workgroup hopes this work culminates in a recommendation informing the Council's upcoming strategic plan.

If you have insight or any questions, please contact workgroup co-chairs Med or Jen at the email addresses linked below.

Thank you,

[Medard Kopczynski](#) and [Jen Czysz](#)