



Town of Newbury 2024-2029 Housing Production Plan

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	2
Background & Purpose	2
Community Overview & Findings	5
2018-2023 Housing Accomplishments.....	6
CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	8
Population	8
Household Trends	13
CHAPTER 3: LOCAL HOUSING CONDITIONS	15
Housing Supply.....	15
Trends in Residential Property Values.....	17
Permitting Activity.....	17
Housing Characteristics.....	18
Housing Affordability	20
Housing Affordability	20
Affordability Gap.....	22
Ownership Affordability by Income	22
Rental Affordability by Income.....	22
CHAPTER 4: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS.....	24
Environmental Constraints.....	24
Infrastructure	24
Regulatory Considerations	26
CHAPTER 5: HOUSING PRODUCTION STRATEGIES	29
Town of Newbury 5-year Housing Production Numeric Goals	29
Housing Production Strategies.....	31
Action Plan Matrix.....	34
2024-2029 Housing Production Plan	36
Housing Production Map	37

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background & Purpose

A Housing Production Plan, or HPP, is a state-guided plan that articulates a city or town's path, goals, and vision towards creating affordable housing in the community. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows communities to use certified HPPs as a way for achieving compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40B if the community has not yet reached the statutory threshold of having 10% of its housing stock designated as affordable.

The Town of Newbury, in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), last created its HPP in 2018. That 5-year plan was due to expire in 2023, and thus this plan began its creation. Following state guidance, this plan offers tools and strategies for how to achieve affordable housing production goals. More than that, however, this plan articulates a strategy for increasing housing of all types in the community. As is shown throughout the plan, Newbury has a need and a desire to diversify its housing stock and create a community where all its residents have access to the housing that best fits their needs.

MVPC has previously spearhead a region-wide Housing Production Plan (HPP) process, co-creating a series of 14 HPPs alongside municipal partners in 2018, in addition to creating the Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Production Plan. As these plans have been in place, the region has implemented strategies aligned with increased housing production including the adoption of inclusionary zoning, increased permitting activity for multi-family development, and proactively pursuing funding opportunities geared towards supporting creation of housing types to meet the needs of residents. Those 14 plans helped guide the region's housing production from 2018-2023—as their expiration dates neared, MVPC launched this HPP update project.

This project has produced targeted guidance documents to enhance housing production throughout the 15 municipalities in the region for the next 5 years. The HPPs consist of comprehensive action plans tailored to the specific needs of each municipality, supported by Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data and informed by public comment gathered during local community engagement events. These action plans communicate each municipality's unique housing-related goals over the next 5 years, and specific action items the municipality plans to undertake to achieve them.

The HPP process allowed for MVPC, community Stakeholder Committees, municipal planning staff, and members of the public to come together and learn from one another about the unique challenges, aspirations, and concerns related to housing in each of the region's communities. As the statewide housing shortage affects each and every community in the

Commonwealth, it is more crucial than ever to understand the individual nuances of community housing development and address the shortage from a place of mutual understanding and commitment.

As part of this process, The Town of Newbury, in collaboration with MVPC, conducted two public engagement events to closely involve Newbury residents in the HPP update process. The first event was a virtual session on September 28, 2023, where participants had the opportunity to review region-wide and local housing data and discuss their interpretations of how this data resonated with their lived experiences. The second event was held in-person on January 29, 2024, where participants provided feedback and insight within a series of discussions representing key housing production strategies that are included in this HPP. Without the valued input and feedback offered by residents, this plan would lack the robust qualitative data necessary to accurately depict the “on the ground” realities of the housing landscape in Newbury and the region.

Acknowledgements

Throughout this update process, a Stakeholder Committee comprised of Town personnel with a vested interest in housing accessibility routinely gathered to build consensus around Newbury’s existing housing landscape and what types of strategies and action items would work most effectively to continue to build a Newbury that includes a variety of housing types with varying affordability. This intensive, thoughtful work would not have been possible without the significant contributions of time and thought from each and every member of the Committee. In addition to this core work, Newbury co-hosted a series of community engagement sessions, one virtual and one in-person, to glean public sentiment around key housing production strategies and simultaneously educate on these types of tools. Thank you to the Newbury community at-large and the Stakeholder Committee for their impactful contributions to this important plan.

Newbury Housing Production Plan Stakeholder Committee:

Kristen Grubbs, Planning Director
Daniel Laroe, Assistant Planner
Martha Taylor, Former Planning Director

Newbury Planning Board – January, 2025:

Woody Knight, Chair
Peter Paicos, Vice Chair
Larry Murphy
Mary Stohn

Scott Kinter

Steve Mangion (Associate Member)

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission:

Ian Burns, Community and Economic Development Program Manager

Kayla Rennie, Community and Economic Development Planner

Lauren Keisling, Community Planner (former)

The Consensus Building Institute (CBI) provided planning, coordination, and facilitation support for the community engagement phase of the regional HPP update process.

The development of this plan is funded through the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) Community Planning Grant, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) Planning Assistance Grant, and through District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds.

Community Overview & Findings

Newbury is a small, coastal community bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Newburyport and West Newbury to the north, Groveland and Georgetown to the west, and Rowley to the south. Newbury retains all of the characteristics of a rural coastal town with large tracts of land as protected open space or not suitable for development because of wetlands, marshland, or lack of infrastructure.

The Town was founded in 1635, with a rich history dating back to the early days of colonial America. Newbury changed gradually through the 18th and 19th centuries, becoming a mill village with a focus on textile manufacturing. The 20th century saw the town's economy shift towards agriculture and clamming. Today, Newbury is a mostly residential community with a few remaining active farms.

The Town of Newbury contains three distinct areas, each with a unique identity. Old Town is located along Route 1A surrounded by the Lower and Upper Greens, with several historic homes and former farmhouses scattered throughout this area. Byfield is the area in the section of Newbury located west of Route 1, centered around Central and Main Streets, where residential neighborhoods and local businesses are clustered along with some remaining farms and agricultural land. The third area of Newbury is located on the barrier island of Plum Island, which also includes land owned by Newburyport, Rowley, and Ipswich. Newbury's portion of Plum Island includes year-round and vacation residences as well as featuring large areas of conservation land owned by the state and federal governments.

Newbury has experienced slight population and household growth over the last several years. From 2010 to 2020, the Town gained about 50 residents. The 2020 population was 6,716 residents.

Homes for sale in Newbury tend to be higher priced than in nearby communities. The average price for all home sales (single family & condominiums) was about \$902,000 in 2023. Roughly 91 percent of Newbury's occupied housing units were owner occupied and nine (9) percent renter occupied, which is typical for the smaller suburban and rural towns in the region.

Newbury has a low homeownership vacancy rate, reasonably high rental prices, and is forecast for a potential decrease of population and households in the coming years. This indicates that Newbury's housing needs may be best addressed through a combination of new housing production of affordable ownership and rental units as well as redevelopment and/or conversion of single-family homes to alternative housing types such as congregate living with supportive services, small-scale multi-family units, and cottage-style or other models for smaller, affordable starter homes. Similar to the rest of the Merrimack Valley region, Newbury is experiencing a demographic shift:

- Newbury's population is projected to decrease by 27% between 2020 and 2050
- Between 2020 and 2050, the following changes to Newbury's age distribution are projected to occur:
 - 13% decrease in population under 20
 - 16% increase 65+ population

The shifting demographics of Newbury indicate a need for a variety of housing types to accommodate an aging population with smaller and more accessible units that accommodate a variety of needs, including both physical and mental disabilities. This shift will also need to accommodate various income levels, as an aging population may indicate a higher proportion of residents on a fixed income. In addition, in order to attract more young professionals and younger, growing families, Newbury will need to focus on increased and diverse options for housing of all types.

2018-2023 Housing Accomplishments

Over the past 5 years, the Town of Newbury has worked diligently to advance its housing production efforts, in accordance with its 2018 Housing Production Plan. Through joint efforts spearheaded by the Planning Department, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Select Board, the following accomplishments have been achieved:

Planning & Policies

- Affordable Housing
 - Engaged in discussions with Habitat for Humanity to begin identifying potential future sites for affordable housing on municipally owned parcels.
- Community Education
 - Conducted several informational sessions for residents to learn more about the new MBTA Communities/3A Law and the Affordable Homes Act and other local housing efforts.
 - Collaborated with the Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition to support monthly public meetings and events, as well as community outreach

Production

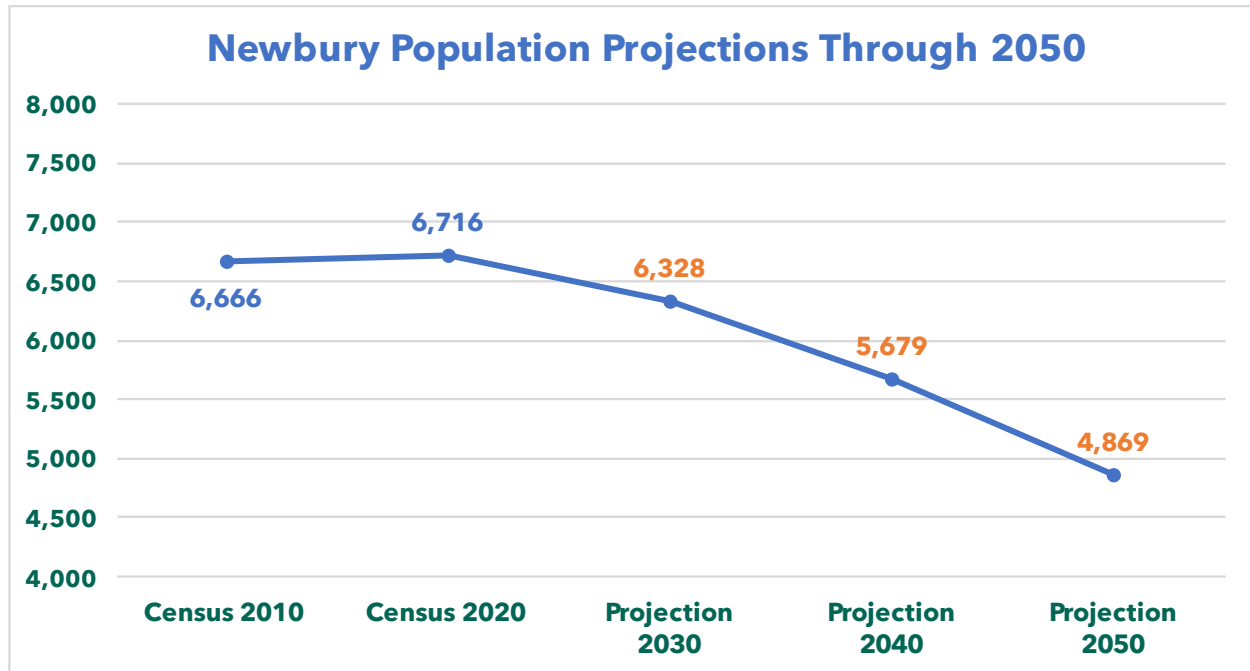
- Passed a Multi-Family Housing Overlay District at Town Meeting in April 2024
- Permitted several new subdivisions, which contributed to increasing the housing stock of Newbury
- Regularly working with developers to permit projects that include diverse housing and other outcomes that best serve the local community, such as preservation of natural resources and public access to open space when possible



- Supported efforts to revise the Town’s Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw for Town Meeting to consider in April 2025

CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population



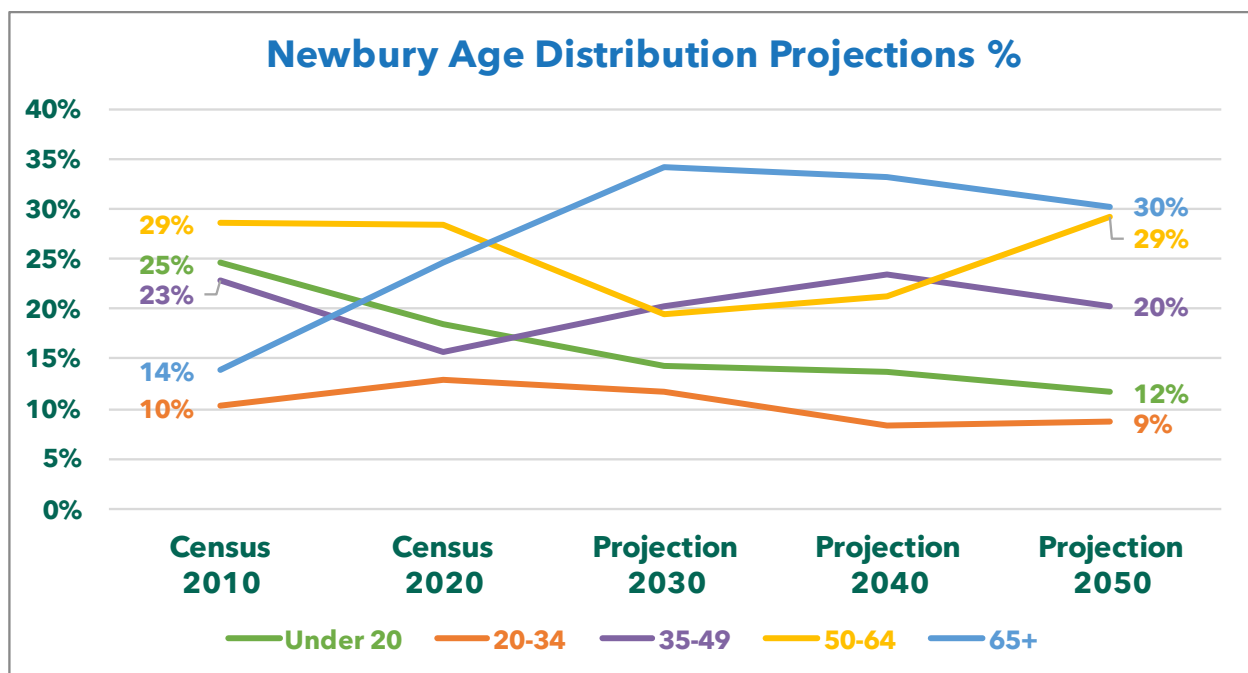
Source: UMass Donahue Institute, *Massachusetts Population Projections*¹

Per the 2020 Census, the Town of Newbury has a population of 6,716 residents. Population projections from the UMass Donahue Institute indicate that between 2020 and 2050, the population is projected to decrease by about 27% percent, from 6,716 to 4,869. This projected decrease over 30 years is moderate, and is estimated based on current birth, mortality, and local migration trends. This projection may hold true if the Town does not attract additional young families in the coming years. However, the population projections for the Merrimack Valley indicate a potential 8% population growth region-wide. With that in mind, Newbury has begun taking steps toward providing opportunities for sustainable growth, which may help combat the projected decrease in population. Promoting and maintaining diverse housing availability is a substantial factor in mitigating out-migration, as well as providing opportunities for new residents looking to move into Town. For example, Newbury recently passed MBTA Communities multi-family zoning, which allows for a variety of new housing types that can

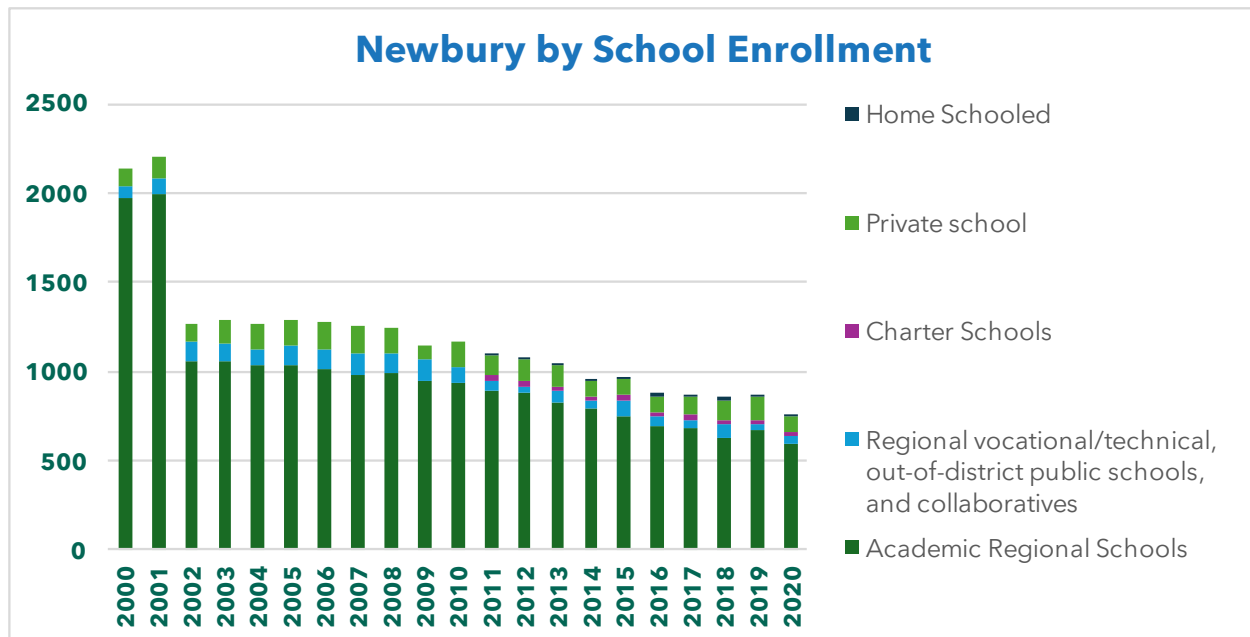
¹ The UMass Donahue Institute's population projections are based on 2020 Census data, with an updated analysis conducted in 2024. For more information on the methodology behind the population projections, the UMass Donahue Institute provides an in-depth explanation of how these projections are calculated [here](#).

accommodate additional residents. The strategies Newbury looks to employ in this plan may be leveraged to encourage additional, sustainable growth for the community.

These projections, combined with changing household compositions (fewer children, more people over 65, and more single-person households), point to the possible need to rethink how the current housing stock is used. This could include seeking opportunities to redevelop existing properties to accommodate changing needs, or to encourage development of housing types that best fit the demographics.



Source: UMASS Donahue Institute, Massachusetts Population Projections, "Age/Sex Details"



Source: MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, School and District Profiles

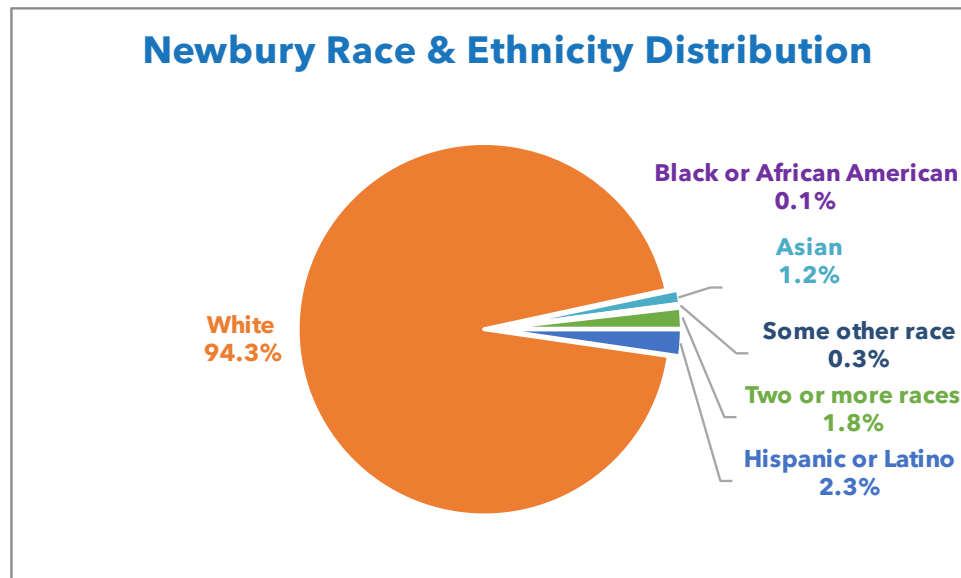
Newbury's age projections show an aging population, suggesting a need for additional housing types suitable for homeowners who are looking to downsize and individuals that are on a fixed income. In some cases, lack of suitable housing may be a factor in the decrease that is projected in certain groups. Most notably, the under 20 age group is projected to decrease from 2020-2050. This decrease correlates with local school enrollment data, which indicates an already-occurring steady decrease in enrollment across all school types in the Town. The decline of school-aged children in the town may be due to a lack of housing available to young families, especially, if older adults do not have options for downsizing in town and decide to stay in their larger homes. Meanwhile, the 65+ age group is projected to be at the highest age proportion of any other group, making up about a third of Newbury's population by 2050. With a significantly aging population, it is crucial that the housing and personal needs of seniors are strongly integrated into the housing production conversation, especially, in regard to the need or desire to downsize into physically and financially accessible housing. The need for supportive services is also an integral factor when considering where senior-friendly housing could and should be located.

It is important to note that this age distribution data is based on projections from trends seen in previous years. There are several factors that determine changes in a community's age distribution. Fluctuations in birth rates, aging populations, and housing turnover rates may affect the age distribution seen in a community. If communities work to develop new housing, it may impact the projected distribution, depending on the types of housing communities are

building. Despite the common belief that housing development may increase population of school aged children, there are several studies that show housing production doesn't necessarily correlate to an increase in school aged children. Based on a 2024 study conducted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) that analyzed school districts across Massachusetts, there is no indication that an increase in housing production correlates with an increase in school enrollment.

"We find that the development of new housing units does not account for the changes in school enrollment in Massachusetts we've seen during our study period between 2010 and 2020. We find no significant association between the change in housing unit development and the change in school enrollment at the district level during this period. This lack of relationship holds at the community type, level too—we still see no clear association between development and enrollment when looking at clusters of similar suburban or urban municipalities. What is apparent, however, is that independent of housing development, school enrollment is changing meaningfully—there are some municipalities that have seen consistent enrollment growth and some that have seen consistent enrollment decline over the study period...The processes driving those changes are more complex than the number of housing units built in a municipality. While it is true that schoolchildren occupying new housing units may cause a marginal change in enrollment, it is one factor among many others."

Source: The Waning Influence of Housing Production on Public School Enrollment in Massachusetts. Metropolitan Area Planning Council. February 2024.



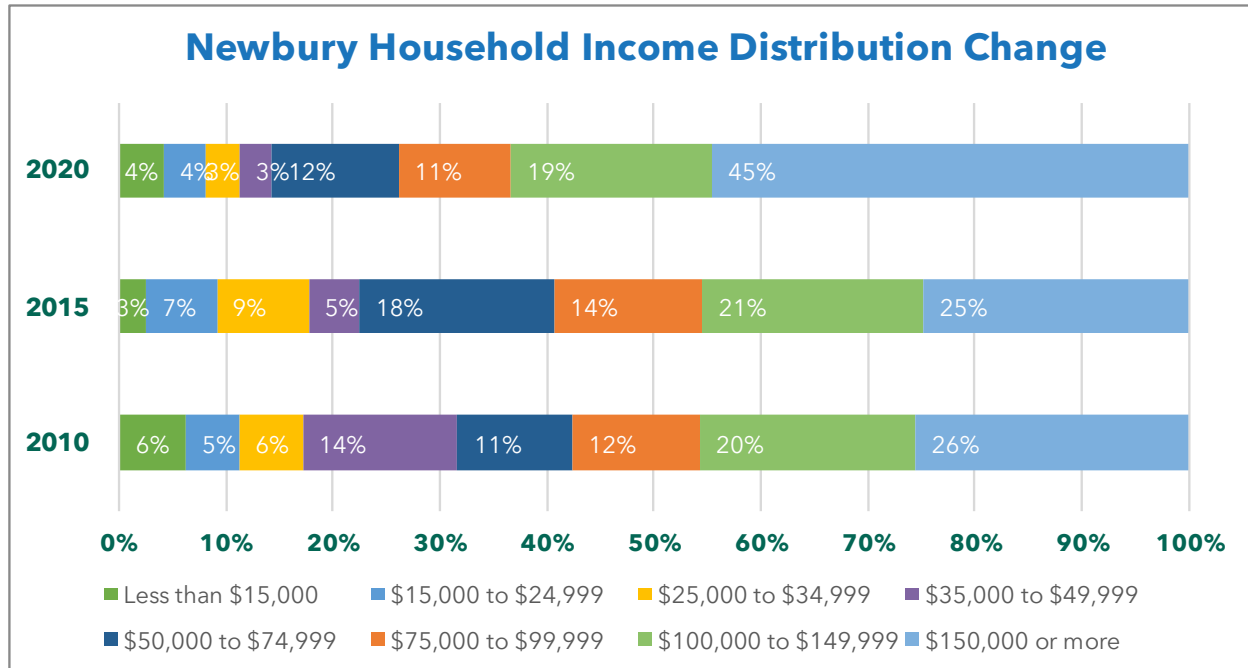
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016-2020 5-year Estimates, Table DP05

Newbury’s race & ethnicity distribution reflects the distribution across most suburban and rural communities in the Merrimack Valley, with 94% of residents identifying as non-Hispanic white. A key factor in cultivating continued diversification of and economic access to the region’s communities is allowing for and developing a range of housing types—financially available to a range of prospective renters and homeowners with variable income ranges. Due to historic trends in local zoning, communities in the Merrimack Valley have been limited in offering this range of housing types. Through recent local planning efforts, however, communities in the region have begun to legalize different housing types to rent and/or to own. This will provide more abundant opportunities to live in these communities. With these efforts, communities like Newbury can work to reverse the trends observed by Llana Barber in her book about Lawrence, MA, *Latino City*. As she writes:

“The emphasis on single-family zoning and the upward spiral relationship between a municipality’s exclusivity, desirability, tax base, and quality of its public services, especially education, continued to render many suburbs off limits to people from urban communities of color even as explicit racial barriers fell in the post-Civil Rights era. Suburban homeownership was affordable for average U.S. Americans in the 1950s in a way that it rarely was by the 1980s, especially in the crowded Northeast, and zoning restrictions often limited the availability of rental housing to cities” (Barber, 2017, p. 26).

Source: Barber, Llana. *Latino City: Immigration and Urban Crisis in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1945-2000*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Household Trends



Source: 2006-2010 ACS Estimates, 2011-2015 ACS Estimates, 2016- 2020 ACS Estimates, Table B19001

Median Income by Tenure, 2020				
Tenure	Newbury	Merrimack Valley Region*	Essex County	Massachusetts
All Residents	\$121,286	\$108,174	\$82,225	\$84,385
Owner	\$137,083	\$127,308	\$112,582	\$110,315
Renter	\$66,518	\$51,875	\$41,553	\$47,842

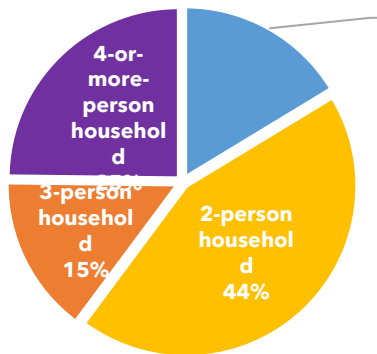
Source: 2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25119. *Note: Merrimack Valley Regional median incomes are the author's calculation of the average of the estimated median incomes of the 15 towns and cities in the region.

According to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), Newbury's housing stock is 91% owner occupied and 9% renter occupied. The median household income for Newbury renters is \$66,518, and the median household income for homeowners was \$137,083. This difference follows a historic wealth disparity between renters and owners state and country-wide. It indicates the importance of preserving naturally occurring affordable rental opportunities for residents, in addition to promoting development of income-restricted affordable units, to meet this need.

Similarly, when discussing access and availability of units that are affordable to residents seeking both owner and rental opportunities in the Town, it is of equal importance to consider available housing types to meet individual needs.

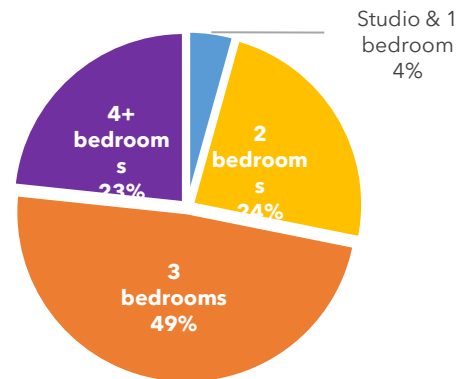
Comparing a community's current housing stock and its current occupancy characteristics may provide insight into possible housing supply gaps, suggesting what types of housing development should be considered if there are sizeable gaps between occupancy counts and bedroom counts within existing structures. These observations are objective, and do not reflect individual housing type preference – for example, a two-person household may be best suited to occupy a 3-bedroom home, based on individual needs, design preference, storage needs, etc. However, these comparisons may provide more quantitative context to identify local needs, such as the desire to downsize within the community, where there potentially are not enough options to do so.

Housing Breakdown by Occupancy



1 or 2 person households make up **60%** of Newbury's homes, while 1- or 2-bedroom homes make up **28%** of Newbury's housing stock.

Bedrooms per Housing Unit



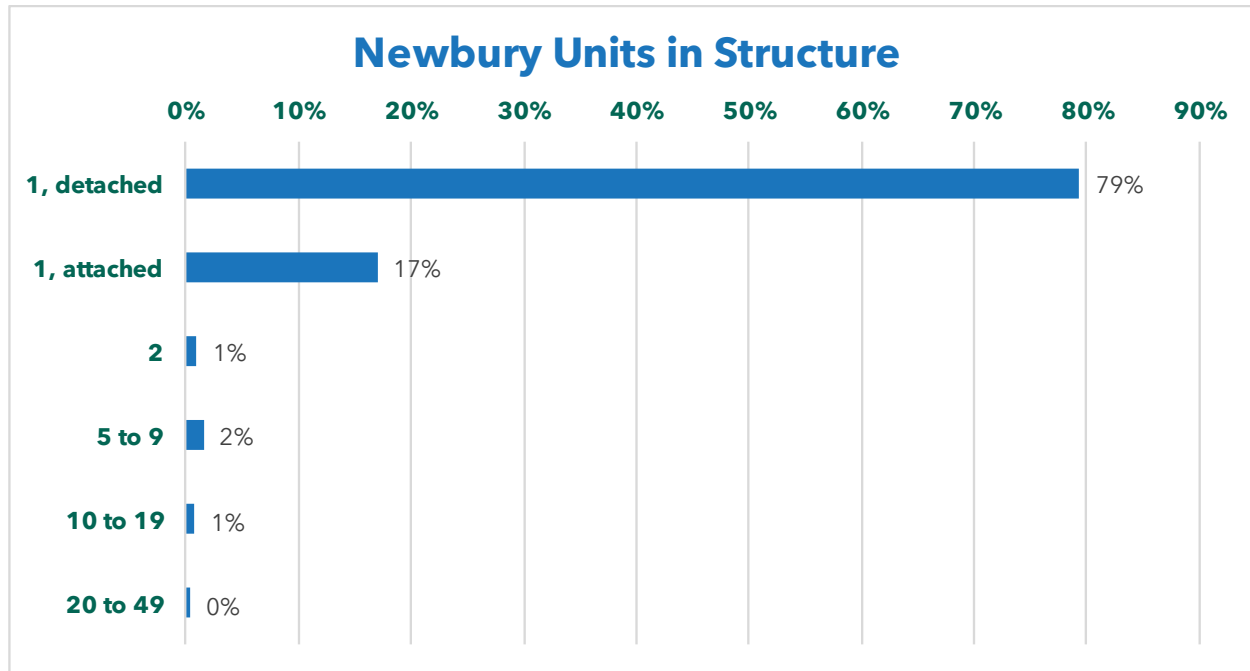
3 or more person households make up **40%** of Newbury's homes, while 3 or more-bedroom homes make up **72%** of Newbury's housing stock.

Source: 2016-2020 ACS Estimates, Tables S2501 & B25041

As is commonly seen in surrounding communities, Newbury appears to have a lack of one- or two-bedroom units and an excess of three- or four-bedroom units. One or two-person households comprise 60% of Newbury homes, while one- and two-bedroom units comprise 28% of the Town's total housing stock. On the other end, three or more-person households comprise 40% of homes, while the majority of the Town's housing stock is three or more-bedroom units, at 72%. These figures may suggest a gap in the availability of housing that matches the need, sometimes called "right-size" housing. The Town could address the need for a better match of housing sizes by encouraging the development of smaller housing units consisting of studio, one, and two-bedroom units.

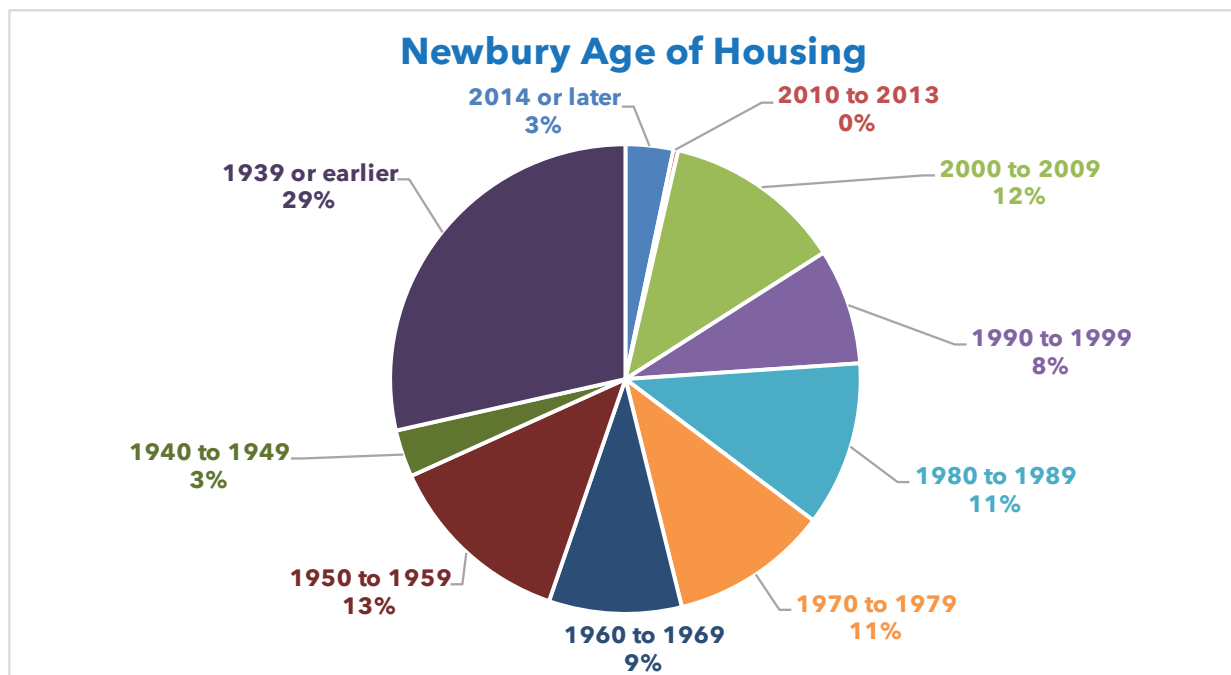
CHAPTER 3: LOCAL HOUSING CONDITIONS

Housing Supply



Source: 2016-2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25024

As of the 2020 American Community Survey, almost 80% of all housing units in Newbury are detached single-family homes. 17% of the Town's housing stock is single family attached units, which includes townhouses. When compared to the rest of the Merrimack Valley region, Newbury's housing stock has higher proportions of single-family units and lower proportions of multi-family units. Given the aging population and the apparent gap in availability of smaller units (discussed above). A key strategy of this plan is to create pathways for the creation of smaller units in multi-family developments. There are several approaches Newbury could take to encourage these housing types, including revising zoning ordinances to allow for increased density bonuses or reduced minimum unit sizes. This may encourage developers to incorporate a mix of unit sizes, including studios and one-bedroom apartments. The Town could also collaborate with non-profit developers to facilitate the development of smaller, affordable housing units.



Source: 2016-2020 ACS Estimates, Table B20534

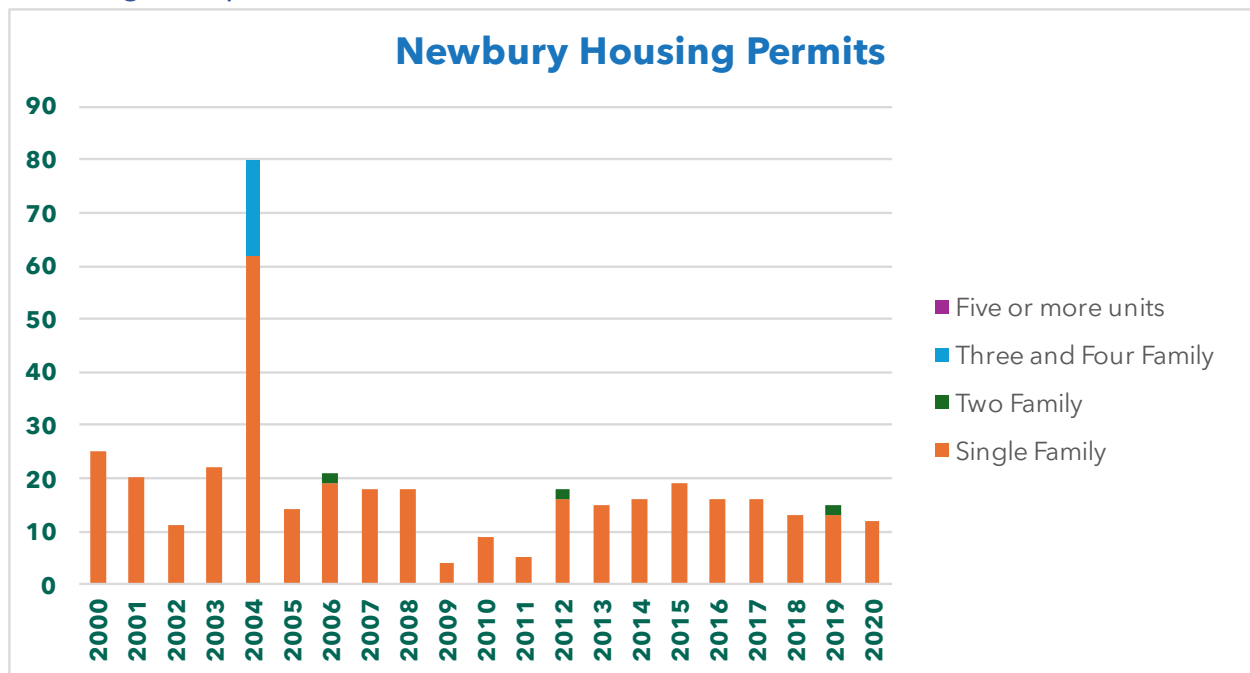
The age of housing is an important factor to consider in planning for future growth, as the preservation of existing housing stock is critical to the overall wellbeing of the Town's form, function, and of its residents. Newbury, similar to other small towns in Massachusetts, is known for its quintessential New England aesthetic, where much of this character is exhibited by its housing stock. Almost half of the Town's housing stock was built before 1960, which is typical for many communities in the Merrimack Valley region. Over the course of the next 50 years, the Town saw steady housing production and growth. This trend in housing production during this period is similar to the historic trends seen in other suburban towns throughout Massachusetts, as families began moving out of cities to settle in the bedroom communities outside Boston. In the past decade, Newbury saw a significant slowdown in housing construction with only 3% of the community's housing stock being built after 2010. The steady decline in new housing units being built aligns with the region-wide trends observed in other small towns across the Merrimack Valley, where there has been a significant slowdown in housing production compared to historic trends.

Trends in Residential Property Values

A review of trends in residential property values provides some perspective on housing costs in the local real estate market. Data from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) and other sources can offer insights about residential assessed values, average single-family home values, tax rates, and tax bills for each municipality in the Commonwealth.

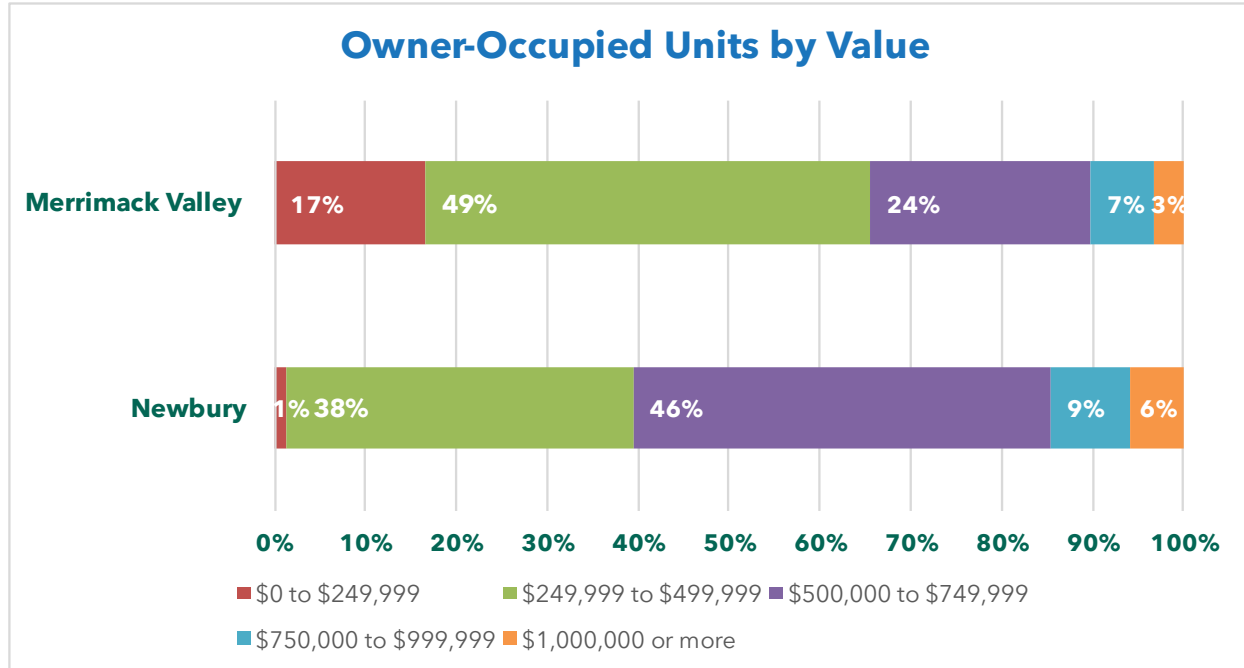
In FY23, the total assessed value of all residential parcels in Newbury was \$2,119,375,719, and the average assessed value of a single-family home was \$745,282. Since the last iteration of the Town's HPP in 2018, the single-family assessed value has risen 55%.

Permitting Activity

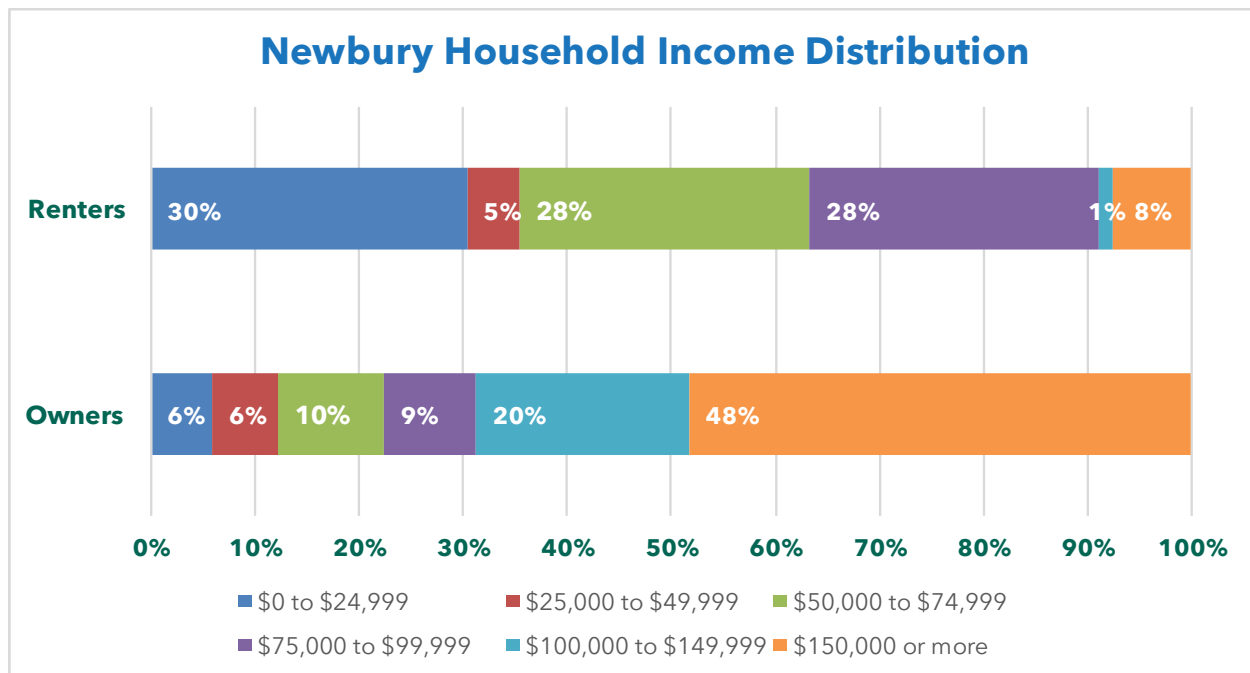


Over the last two decades, permitting activity in Newbury remained steady in the total permits issued per year and by building type. However, in 2004 Newbury saw a significant increase in housing permits for both single-family homes as well as three and four family homes. The years following matched historic trends of housing production in Town, with a relatively steady number of single-family homes and duplexes being permitted over the past 10 years.

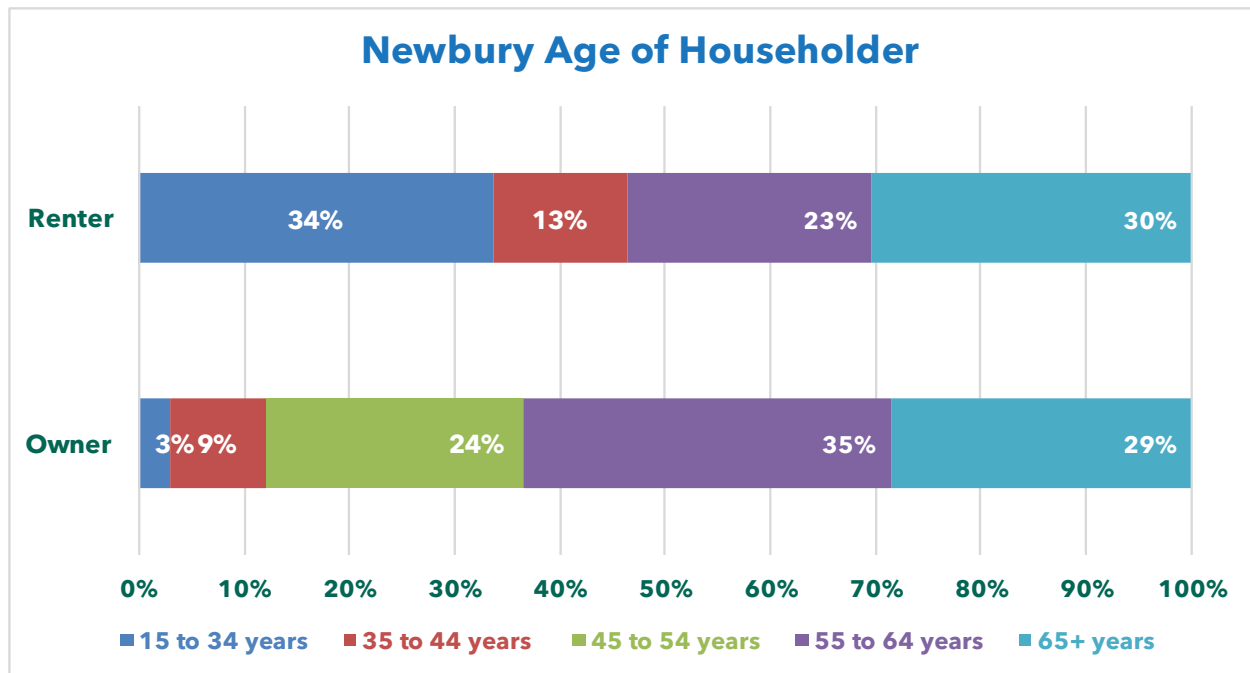
Housing Characteristics



Source: 2016-2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25118



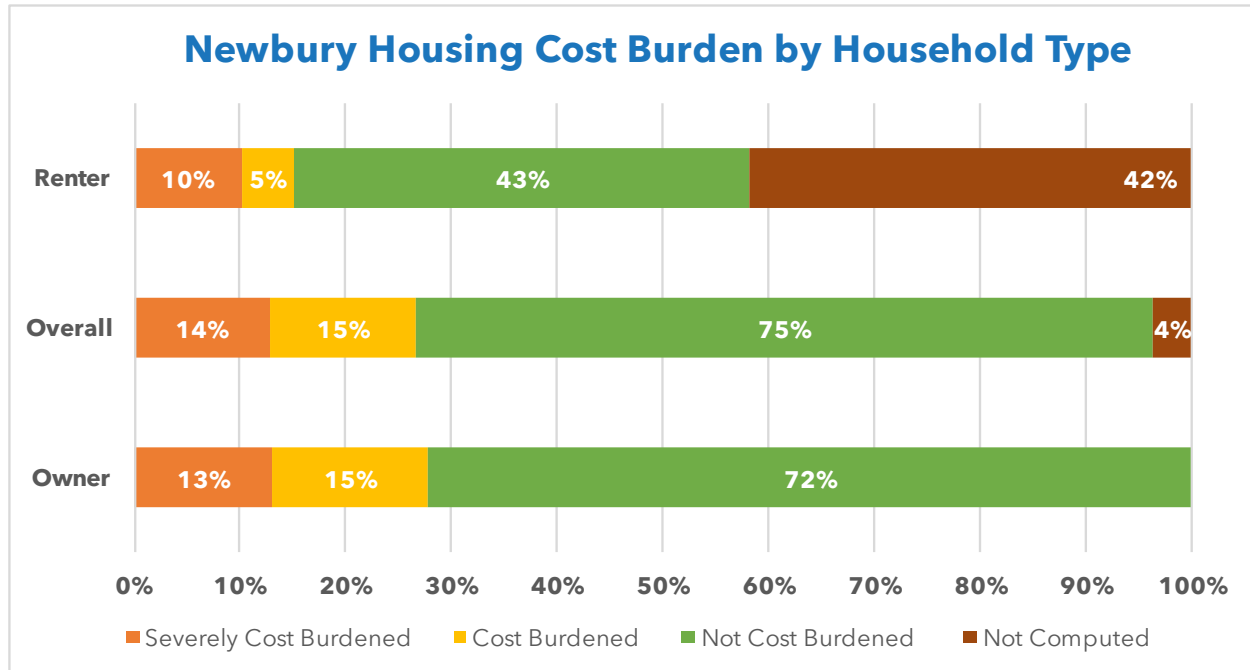
Source: 2016-2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25118



Source: 2016-2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25007

Owner occupied units in Newbury have higher household incomes than renters, as is on trend historically and across the state and region. In Newbury, almost half of all owner-occupied units meet or exceed \$150,000 in annual household income, with the next largest proportion in the \$100,000-\$149,999 range. This differs greatly from renter-occupied units, where approximately one-third of renter households make \$50,000 or less. This difference indicates a significant disparity in the overall income distribution of renters versus owners, a crucial difference that impacts renters disproportionately when housing costs continue to rise. Due to Newbury's small renter population, and thus small sample size for this data, we can expect there to be some margin of error in these numbers. Despite the margin of error, the trend still holds true that renters in Newbury have significantly lower household incomes than homeowners.

Housing Affordability



Source: 2016- 2020 ACS Estimates, Table B25070, Table B25091

Housing Affordability

Per the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), household cost burden is defined as “...a household that spends more than 30 percent of its gross income on housing costs, including utilities. A household is severely cost burdened if it spends more than 50 percent of its income on housing.” Approximately 29% of all residents residing in Newbury are cost burdened, while 15% of renter households in Newbury are cost burdened. It is important to note that, likely due to the small sample size of renter households in Newbury, there are a significant percent of households with cost burden listed as “not computed.” This may be due to a few ACS respondents not completing this section of the survey. Out of cost burdened residents, there is a similar distribution of renters that are cost burdened, where they are paying 30% or more of their monthly gross income on housing costs, and severely cost burdened, where 50% or more of this monthly income is dedicated to housing costs. The percentage of cost burdened owner households is significant as well, with approximately 1 out of 4 homeowners paying a significant portion of their income on housing expenses.

These figures demonstrate that a sizeable portion of the Newbury community is confronted with high housing costs, which could have several personal and community-wide implications. If residents continue to experience ever-increasing housing costs, individuals and families with limited financial resources may struggle to afford and maintain access to suitable housing, in

addition to experiencing limitations in economic mobility and wealth accumulation. High housing costs carry significant economic development implications, particularly concerning the local workforce. As housing expenses escalate, and a greater share of monthly income is dedicated to meeting these costs, the likelihood increases that workers are unable to reside directly within the community where their employment is based. This dynamic can have negative effects on local economic development, including commuting challenges and overall workforce stability. Understanding the impact of cost burden among homeowners and renters alike is crucial for policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders to develop targeted strategies that promote housing affordability and economic well-being for a broader segment of the population.

Population in Households Below Federal Poverty Thresholds by Age

Age of Householder	Newbury		Merrimack Valley		Essex County		Massachusetts	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
Total Population	7,039	100%	349,866	100%	770,223	100%	6,637,329	100%
Total in Poverty	577	8%	36,677	10%	78,089	10%	653,454	10%
Under 5 years	15	3%	3,047	8%	6,778	9%	47,069	7%
5 to 17 years	104	18%	8,237	22%	15,691	20%	117,012	18%
18 to 34 years	93	16%	8,055	22%	16,840	22%	183,304	28%
35 to 64 years	257	45%	11,992	33%	26,087	33%	207,736	32%
65 years+	108	19%	5,346	15%	12,693	16%	98,333	15%

Source: 2020 ACS Estimates, Table B17001²

² Earlier in the document, Newbury's population was stated to be 6,716 residents based on U.S. Census data from 2020. This table is derived from 2020 ACS Estimates, which examine data aggregated between 2016-2020. These estimates produce a margin of error, which is why the population number in this table does not match the population number referenced in other areas of this document.

Affordability Gap

As cited in the previous HPP, housing sale prices in Newbury continue to increase significantly and are out of reach even for median-income households. According to Redfin home sale data, the 2023 average sales price in Newbury was \$902,200. Newbury households making the median household income of \$121,286 could afford to purchase a home up to \$440,000 with a \$40,000 downpayment. However, the median sales price of \$902,000 requires an annual gross household income of about \$231,000 with a 10% down payment, when factoring in costs for taxes and insurance and current interest rates of about 7.5%.

As shown in the table below, there is a difference between homeowners' median income and the price of a home, creating a homeowner affordability gap. This gap is defined as the difference between the median sales price for Newbury and the 'affordable price' (household paying no more than 30 percent of annual income on housing).

Income (Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH – HFMA)*	Median Sales Price Newbury	Affordable Price	Gap
80% of Median = \$118,450	\$902,000	\$405,000	\$497,000
100% of Median = \$121,286	\$902,000	\$525,000	\$377,000

*Based on 4-person household; 2023 HUD Income Limits

Source: Bankrate.com Housing Affordability Calculator; Author's Calculations

Ownership Affordability by Income

As seen in the above table, a household of four in Newbury with 80 percent AMI could afford to purchase a home up to \$405,000, with a downpayment of \$40,000. However, the average sales price for a single-family home in Newbury in 2023 was \$902,200 according to Redfin market data, meaning a household would have to make about \$231,000 per year to afford a home at the median sales price. At the Newbury Median Household Income of \$121,286 a household could afford a home up to \$440,000 with a \$44,000 downpayment.

Rental Affordability by Income

A two-person household with extremely low income (less than or equal to 30 percent AMI) can afford a gross rent of up to \$834 per month for a one-bedroom unit in the Boston HMFA. A two-person household with very low income (greater than 30 percent and less than or equal to 50 percent AMI) can afford a gross rent of up to \$1,391 per month for a one-bedroom unit, and a two-person household with low-income household (greater than 50 percent and less than or equal to 80 percent) can afford a gross rent of \$2,221 per month for the same unit size. A household with the HMFA Area Median Income can afford a monthly gross rent of \$3,733.

Source: HUD Affordable Housing Program Income and Rent Limits 2023

Newbury Income Distribution by HAMFI*	Owner	% of All Households	% of Owners	Renter	% of All Households	% of Renters	Total
<= 30% HAMFI	140	5%	6%	70	3%	30%	210
>30% to <=50% HAMFI	130	5%	5%	10	0%	4%	140
>50% to <=80% HAMFI	325	12%	14%	65	2%	28%	390
>80% to <=100% HAMFI	180	7%	7%	65	2%	28%	245
>100% HAMFI	1,625	62%	68%	20	1%	9%	1,645
Total	2,405			235			2,640

*HAMFI: HUD Area Median Family Income. This is the median family income calculated by HUD for each jurisdiction, in order to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs. HAMFI will not necessarily be the same as other calculations of median incomes (such as a simple Census number), due to a series of adjustments that are made (For full documentation of these adjustments, consult the [HUD Income Limit Briefing Materials](#)). If you see the terms "area median income" (AMI) or "median family income" (MFI) used in the CHAS, assume it refers to HAMFI.

Source: CHAS Cost Burden Data, Based on 2016-2020 ACS

Referencing HUD Area Median Family Income (HAMFI) figures, of all Newbury households, 28% earn 80% AMI or below, regardless of tenure type. The highest percentage of households making 80% AMI or below are renters, with 61% of renters falling within the income category of less than or equal to 80% AMI.

CHAPTER 4: HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

Environmental Constraints

The Town of Newbury is situated along the eastern coast of the Merrimack Valley region, within the Parker River watershed and the Great Marsh. The Town has a landscape of woods, wetlands, agricultural land and salt marsh, featuring gently rolling terrain towards the barrier beach of Plum Island and the Atlantic Ocean.

As a low-lying coastal community, flooding is considered a high risk in Newbury. Significant portions of the Town are located in flood hazard zones, which are especially at risk with rising river and ocean levels. In recent years, access to Plum Island for island residents and visitors has become threatened due to the limited accessibility resulting from flooding. With sea levels continuing to rise due to climate change, along with increasingly intense storm events, flooding will continue to be a major threat to residents in Newbury. The Town's 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan's Flooding Vulnerability Assessment states:

A GIS analysis of the Town's most recent (2024) FIRM flood hazard areas by MVPC has determined that a total of 7,825 acres (12.3 sq. mi.) of land area and salt marsh in Newbury is located within the 100-year floodplain and thus is vulnerable to flooding. An additional 182.6 acres (0.3 sq. mi.) lies within the 500-year floodplain. Together, these two flood zones constitute forty-eight percent (48%) of the total area of the community. Among the communities in the Merrimack Valley region, Newbury has the highest percentage of land area within the floodplain. Future development of open space within Newbury could increase the impervious surface cover and stormwater runoff volumes in the two flood zones, thereby exacerbating the existing flooding problems.

When considering sites for future housing development, the Town will consider the risks associated with increased flooding. Strategies to alleviate risks include minimizing new impervious surfaces through "green infrastructure" and assuring that stormwater management best practices are followed.

Infrastructure

Transportation

The Town of Newbury is connected to the rest of the Merrimack Valley region through interstate access and state roads. Interstate 95 runs through Byfield on the eastern side of Town, while Route 1 is located through the center of Town leading towards the Newburyport Commuter Rail station. Both of these roads are major thoroughfares through Newbury and connect the Town with surrounding communities and commercial corridors.

While there are currently no fixed bus route services provided through MeVa (Merrimack Valley Transit), Newbury continues to explore opportunities to expand service into the Town. MeVa does provide a Ring & Ride service to residents of Newbury, which allows them to connect to existing fixed bus routes as well as other destinations throughout the region. The Newburyport Commuter Rail Station is also located directly over the northern border of Newbury, which may help connect residents to Boston and other communities along the rail line.

Newbury continues to focus on developing the Border to Boston Trail, which will connect Byfield in one direction to Georgetown and in the other direction to the Newburyport Commuter Rail Station and Newburyport Clipper City Trail. The Town has also enhanced and created bike lanes to the extent possible throughout the town. Newbury is currently underway with a Feasibility Study for Resiliency Improvements to Plum Island Turnpike, working with Newburyport and the Parker River Wildlife Refuge/US Fish & Wildlife Service. This project, funded by a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant, will include recommendations that address the flooding vulnerabilities as well including improvements for multi-modal access to the island.

Sewer and Water

Public drinking water in Newbury is provided in multiple ways: through the Byfield Water District, the City of Newburyport Water Department, or private wells. Public sewer service is provided to Plum Island and sections of Old Town through the Newburyport Wastewater Treatment facility. The Governor's Academy operates a private wastewater treatment plant for its facilities. Throughout Byfield and other areas in town, households and businesses rely on individual on-site septic systems for wastewater disposal.

The patchwork of water and wastewater infrastructure in Newbury results in multiple constraints on housing development. In Byfield in particular, which has no access to Newburyport's wastewater treatment, housing is limited through the Title V requirements for septic systems. The Parker River Watershed, which provides water to the Byfield Water District and private wells, has faced extreme drought conditions and water restrictions in recent years. The City of Newburyport also is focused on the resiliency of its infrastructure, with efforts underway to address both future water supply and wastewater treatment in the face of vulnerabilities from increasing sea level rise, flooding, and drought. Development on Plum Island is constrained by an Administrative Consent Order to Newbury and Newburyport from the MA Department of Environmental Protection in 2000, when public water and sewer were brought to the island. The resulting Plum Island Overlay District ("PIOD") includes restrictions on the number of bedrooms allowed on each lot on the island. All of these different issues for the provision of water and wastewater will come into consideration with any future housing development.

Regulatory Considerations

Residential Zoning

Newbury has several different residential zoning districts, each having different uses or dimensional parameters. Most land area in town is zoned for single-family detached structures as well as two-family residences (or duplexes). Accessory dwelling units are currently allowed by special permit, and will be allowed by right throughout town in the future, pursuant to the MA Affordable Homes Act.

Multi-family housing up to four units is allowed by special permit in certain zoning districts, and multi-family by right is allowed in the recently adopted MBTA Communities Multifamily Overlay District (MCMOD). The Plum Island Overlay District, mentioned earlier, includes constraints on residential development on Plum Island.

The Town's site plan review regulations allow the permitting boards to ensure that new development addresses public safety, traffic, public access, health, and open space and environmental protection to preserve and improve public benefits and safety for all current and future residents.

The following zones allow for residential development of various types and densities throughout the Town:

Residential Districts

Residential/Agriculture (R-AG) is a low-density residential district that makes up almost the entirety of the town. This district mainly allows for the development of single-family detached homes as well as two-family homes or duplexes. Multi-family housing is not permitted in this zoning district. Minimum lot sizes range from 40,000 SF for single-family homes, 60,000 SF for two-family homes or duplexes serviced by public water and 80,000 SF for two-family houses in all other areas. This district encompasses almost the entire Town of Newbury, except where the other districts are.

Parker River Residential (PR) is a residential district that only allows single-family residences, along with attached accessory apartments. The minimum lot size for this district is 40,000 SF and is located east of High Road, along the northern bank of the Parker River.

Residential-Limited Business (R-LB) is intended to allow single and two-family houses as well as accessory attached apartments. The minimum lot size for this district is 80,000 SF and it is located in one area of town along Orchard Street.

Business Districts

Byfield Village Business (BVB) is a zoning district that allows commercial uses, along with some residential uses. Single-family and two-family homes are allowed by-right in this district. The minimum lot size in this district is 10,000 SF and is mainly located north of Central Street.



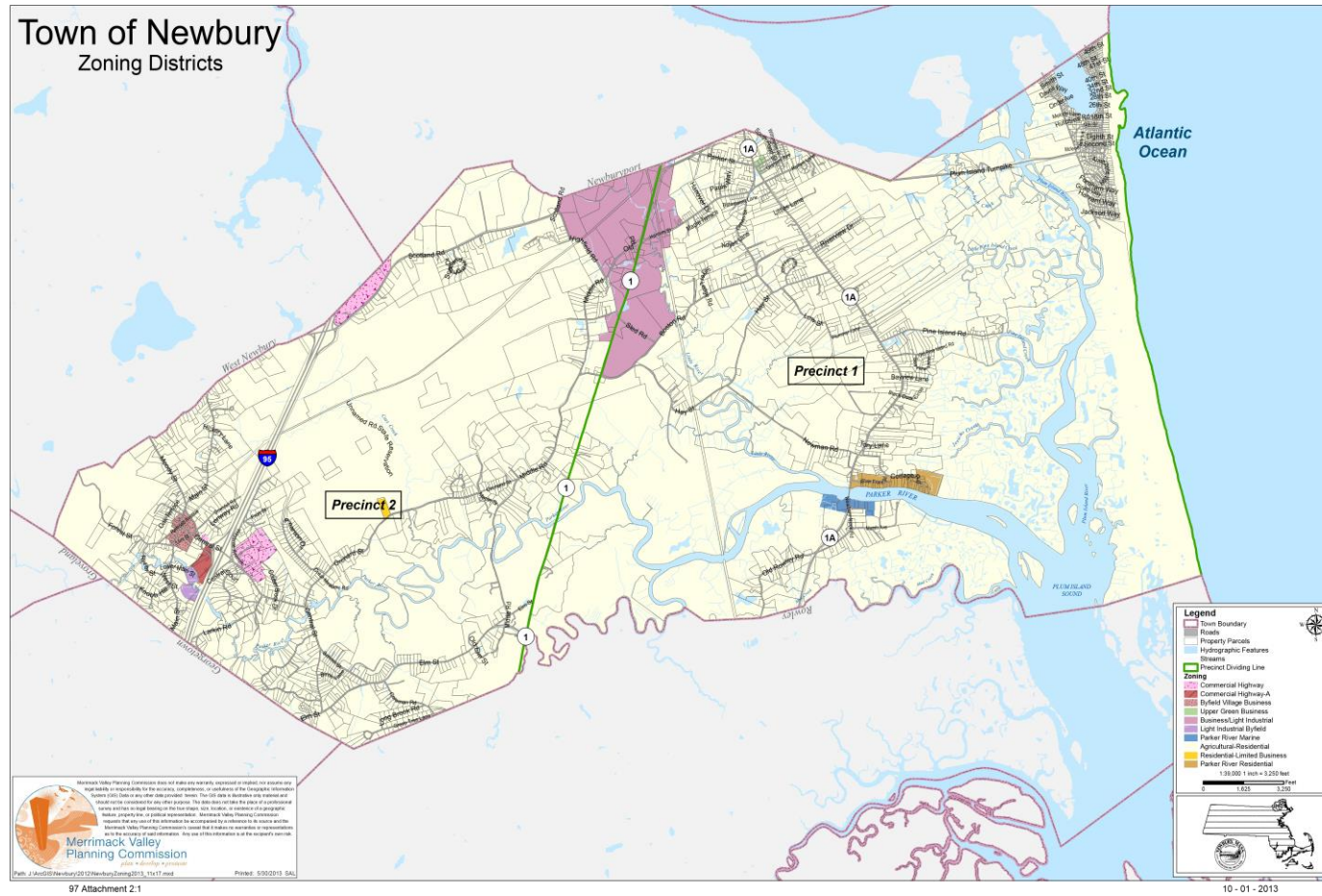
Light Industrial Byfield (LIB) is a zoning district that allows commercial uses, along with some residential uses. Single-family and two-family homes are allowed by-right in this district, along with a single-family residence as an accessory use for the owner of the commercial business. The minimum lot size in this district is 40,000 SF and is mainly located east of Main Street, south of the Parker & Little Rivers.

Upper Green Business (UGB) is a zoning district that allows commercial uses, along with some residential uses. Single-family and two-family homes are allowed by-right in this district. The minimum lot size in this district is 20,000 SF and is mainly located east of High Street.

Parker River Marine (PRM) is a zoning district that allows commercial uses, along with some residential uses. Single-family and two-family homes are allowed by-right in this district. The minimum lot size in this district is 40,000 SF and is mainly located east and west of Newbury Neck Road, along the southern bank of the Parker River.



Zoning Map



CHAPTER 5: HOUSING PRODUCTION STRATEGIES

Town of Newbury 5-year Housing Production Numeric Goals

Year	0.5% Increase				1.0% Increase			
	Additional Affordable Units - 0.5%	Number of Total Affordable Units	Total Units	Percent Affordable	Additional Affordable Units - 1%	Number of Affordable Units	Total Units	Percent Affordable
Current		97	2,809	3.45%		97	2,809	3.45%
2024	14	111	2,920	3.95%	28	125	2,934	4.45%
2025	14	125	3,045	4.45%	28	153	3,087	5.45%
2026	14	139	3,184	4.95%	28	181	3,268	6.44%
2027	14	153	3,337	5.45%	28	209	3,477	7.44%
2028	14	167	3,504	5.95%	28	237	3,714	8.44%

The goal for each city and town in Massachusetts, as defined by MA General Law Ch. 40B, is to have 10% of its housing stock designated as affordable and listed on the State's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). Until that 10% is reached, a community can use a certified Housing Production Plan to demonstrate its progress towards that 10% goal and allow the community more control over local development. As explained in the introduction, this Housing Production Plan can be certified by the state if the Town adds affordable housing units at a rate equal to 0.5% or 1% of its current housing units annually. At the 0.5% rate, the HPP will be certified for one year, which would allow the town's Zoning Board of Appeals to deny a comprehensive permit to a development application under M.G.L. 40B. At the 1% rate, the HPP will be certified for two years.

The Town of Newbury currently has 97 subsidized housing units listed on the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) as of June 2023. This number represents 3.45% percent of the total year-round housing units as reported by the 2020 U.S Census. Therefore, the Town is 183 SHI-qualifying affordable housing units shy of the 10 percent affordable housing goal.

Over the next five years and beyond, the goal is for Newbury's continuously updated HPPs to become "certified" on a recurring schedule, to keep on track towards achieving the 10% 40B minimum. Provided the Town takes a proactive approach to housing development, it may be possible for the Town to achieve certification in at least one of the next five years.



To produce 0.5 percent of its total units annually as SHI units, Newbury will need to add an additional 14 SHI-eligible housing units each year. In order to produce one (1) percent of its total units annually, the Town will have to produce 28 SHI units annually. It may be a challenging task to reach either of these goals every year during the five years of this plan, but it is possible to achieve certification in at least one of those five years.

Housing Production Strategies

Based on the local needs, existing resources, and development considerations, the following recommended strategies have been developed through conversations with residents, town committees, and town staff. These strategies are aimed to help the Town direct and leverage funding, resources, and capacity to best meet the community's housing needs.

While some of the strategies do not directly create affordable units, they do serve as a foundation for achieving housing goals, including the creation of a more diverse housing stock in Newbury.

➤ **Strategy 1: Review and modify existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw with updated ADU best practices.**

- Newbury has had an Accessory Apartment Bylaw for both new and existing construction since 2006. The bylaw has allowed for attached ADUs by right and detached ADUs with a Special Permit on single family lots. Newbury is examining the Town's current bylaw to expand regulations in alignment with the state's Affordable Homes Act, which would allow additional flexibility for homeowners looking to create an accessory unit on their property. The revised bylaw will include allowing detached ADUs by right and allowing renters outside of the homeowner's family to occupy the accessory unit or primary dwelling. The Town intends to amend the bylaw to help residents diversify their housing options.
- Newbury will explore opportunities to incentivize the inclusion of ADUs on the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI). The Town of Merrimac currently specifies provisions where an ADU would be able to be counted towards the affordable housing stock listed on the SHI. Merrimac's bylaw stipulates that low- or moderate-income households are able to reside in an accessory unit, provided that the unit meets the requirements of the Local Initiative Program to be listed on the SHI. Newbury currently has 3.45% of its total housing stock listed on the SHI, which is well below the 10% minimum required to reach Safe Harbor Status. The Town may look to incorporate this strategy as a way of increasing the number of housing units in Newbury that qualify for the SHI list. Newbury continues to support the production of ADUs as a method of increasing the number of housing units that are considered more affordable for residents.

➤ **Strategy 2: Develop and adopt an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) bylaw.**

- Newbury is interested in adopting Inclusionary Zoning to encourage future development of affordable housing, including bylaw amendments that would require any new housing development to provide a certain percentage of affordable housing units. The IZ bylaw could also include a component for a developer to provide a payment in-lieu of creating an affordable housing unit. Newbury currently does not have an Affordable Housing

Trust, however this would be a key element of successful Inclusionary Zoning. In the case where a payment in-lieu structure is established, those funds could be transferred to the Affordable Housing Trust to develop affordable housing.

- Newbury has already begun taking the first steps towards creating an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw through a Community One Stop grant in partnership with MVPC. The goal of this grant is to work with town staff and the Planning Board to research and develop an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw that reflects the needs of the Town.

➤ **Strategy 3: Establish an Affordable Housing Trust (AHT).**

- An Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) would allow the Town to have additional flexibility on spending funds towards creating and/or preserving affordable housing. As mentioned above, if Newbury develops and adopts an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw, any payments in-lieu provided from new housing developments would build up an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which could then be utilized by an Affordable Housing Trust Board towards the creation of new affordable housing, or other programs which could help support housing initiatives.
- Through an Affordable Housing Trust, Newbury can develop several housing programs to provide support for homeowners and renters. Several AHT's across the region have funded programs such as direct rental assistance, rehabilitation loans, and first-time homebuyer grants. Creating an AHT would allow the Town to explore the feasibility of establishing these programs to help residents with their housing needs, along with creating new affordable housing units. The Town may wish to undertake initial first steps towards creating an Affordable Housing Trust, which may include gathering an advisory committee of residents to explore the topic. [The Massachusetts Housing Partnership \(MHP\) also created a helpful guide for communities to learn about the process it takes to establish an Affordable Housing Trust.](#) It covers essential steps municipalities can take to establish AFTs, including researching existing AFTs, drafting bylaws, forming the trust, and securing funding. Along with assistance from MHP, there are also technical assistance grants available through the Community Compact Cabinet to help communities through the process of establishing an AFT.
- There are several funding sources Newbury could explore in order to support an Affordable Housing Trust, including but not limited to allowing payments in lieu as part of Inclusionary Zoning or adopting the Community Preservation Act to create new revenue for Affordable Housing.

➤ **Strategy 4: Create housing that meets the needs of all current and future residents.**

- A concern heard from many residents during community engagement sessions is the lack of “right-sized homes” in the community. This commonly refers to housing units,

either detached single-family homes or attached single-family homes such as in a condominium development, that are ownership units containing 1, 2, or 3 bedrooms. If detached, these units are typically on smaller lots.

- One way to address this would be for the Town to adopt a “Starter Home District” pursuant to [MA General Law Chapter 40Y](#). The State’s Department of Housing and Livable Communities is expected to promulgate regulations under this section to guide communities in their adoption of these districts. The Town should consider adopting a 40Y district locally after reviewing the state regulations.
- According to the State’s definition, a starter home is considered to be a single-family home under 1,850 square feet. In a starter home district, single-family homes are allowed by-right at a minimum density of 4 units per acre. Accessory Dwelling Units up to 600 square feet are also allowed on the same lot as the starter home. The requirements also specific that in each starter home zoning district, at least half of the starter homes must contain at least three bedrooms.
- Newbury also seeks to encourage duplex or small-scale multi-family housing development to increase the number of smaller-sized units available for rent or homeownership. This may include allowing the conversion of larger single-family homes into multi-family units, which would provide additional housing units without altering the existing character of a neighborhood.
 - Towns like West Newbury allow duplexes town-wide by right, which may be an option Newbury wants to explore.

➤ **Strategy 5: Conduct ongoing community education on housing development options and challenges.**

- During community engagement sessions and discussions with residents during development of this Plan, there was a clear desire to continue the dialogue around housing challenges in Newbury and help both local officials and residents learn more about how the Town can tackle those challenges. Overall education on housing needs with residents is an ongoing task, and the Town should consider ways to keep local boards and residents up to date with information.
- There are several state programs available from various organizations that may assist with community education around housing. Newbury planning staff and residents are currently participating in the Greater Newburyport Housing Choice Coalition, which received start-up funding through the Citizens’ Housing & Planning Association (CHAPA) [Municipal Engagement Initiative \(MEI. The Coalition’s work is ongoing and Newbury seeks to expand its involvement.](#) The Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP) also offers [technical assistance](#) that encompasses a variety of resources for communities to

assess their housing needs. These housing engagement services have been successful in several Massachusetts' communities in helping towns create ADU bylaws, Affordable Housing Trusts, as well as Inclusionary Zoning bylaws.

- The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission continuously conducts community engagement efforts through its various programming. Through the use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds, MVPC is able to work with communities across the Merrimack Valley to conduct community education forums and discussions. There have been several recent opportunities for community engagement, including housing forums in both [Haverhill](#) and [North Andover](#). In the past year, MVPC has continued to conduct community engagement sessions throughout the Housing Production Plan update process.
- Along with educating the general public on issues related to housing, it is also crucial to ensure that local town boards are informed on these issues. There are several community engagement tools available specifically for municipal board members, including [training manuals](#) directly offered from the MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. [The Citizen Planner Training Collaborative](#) also provides several informational resources for board members, as well as ongoing training opportunities.

Action Plan Matrix

Housing Strategies			
Strategies	Time to Complete	Strategy Implementer(s)	Key First Steps and Funding Options
Review and modify existing Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw with updated ADU best practices.	1 year	Planning Board, Select Board, Town Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Community Planning Grant received with MVPC to draft changes to the Town's ADU bylaw.
Develop and adopt an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) bylaw	1 year	Planning Board, Town Staff, MVPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw guidelines with Planning Board, including a payment-in-lieu option to transfer funds toward an Affordable Housing Trust • Implement the Community Planning Grant received with MVPC to draft a potential IZ bylaw for adoption at town meeting. • Explore opportunities to expand direct financial support to homeowners and renters through the development of downpayment assistance and rental assistance programs.
Create an Affordable Housing Trust and implement strategies to develop affordable housing	2-3 Years	Select Board, Town Staff, MVPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult MHP's guide on creating an Affordable Housing Trust

Investigate models for the creation of “right-sized homes” and other housing types that meet the needs of current and future residents	2-3 years	Town Staff, Planning Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the 40Y statute to learn basic requirements, including review of incentive payments under chapter 40R the town could be eligible for Upon release of state regulations in 2024, review regulations and discuss with the planning board the desire to implement a 40Y district. Look into allowing small scale multi-family in existing structure, or allowing duplexes by-right on more lots.
Conduct ongoing community engagement on housing development opportunities and challenges	Ongoing	Town Staff, Planning Board, MVPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with Planning Board the potential need for community education, especially ahead of town meeting votes on potential bylaw amendments Explore resources available through CHAPA and MHP Explore resources available through MVPC

2024-2029 Housing Production Plan

Housing Site List							
Site Name	Housing Type	Development/ Zoning Type	Status	Tenure	Affordability	Affordable Units	Total Units
Newbury North A	Mixed Use Multi-Family	MBTA Communities	Conceptual		Mixed – Min. 10% Affordable		
Newbury North B	Mixed Use Multi-Family	MBTA Communities	Conceptual		Mixed – Min. 10% Affordable		
Newbury South A	Mixed Use Multi-Family	MBTA Communities	Conceptual		Mixed – Min. 10% Affordable		
Newbury South B	Mixed Use Multi-Family	MBTA Communities	Conceptual		Mixed – Min. 10% Affordable		
Byfield Village Center	Mixed-Use Multi-Family	Infill/Reuse & Potential for Conversions	Conceptual	Mixed	Mixed		
55 Pearson Drive	Single-Family	Open Space Residential Development	Under construction	Ownership	Mixed	6	18
Byfield Elderly Housing	Senior Housing	Up-zoning / Infill opportunity	Conceptual				
Scotland Road Parcels	Multi-Family		Conceptual				
3 Newburyport Turnpike	Mixed-Use Multi-Family		Under Construction	Rental	Market Rate		12



Housing Production Map

This map represents potential areas for multi-family housing development in the town over the course of the next 5 years. Many of these sites are conceptual, and some locations would require zoning changes authorized by town meeting to accommodate new SHI units.

