

Goals, Policies & Actions

The housing goals, policies, and actions in this chapter provide a framework for addressing Coventry's housing needs while supporting the community's long-term vision. Together, they are intended to increase housing affordability and choice, preserve existing housing resources, direct growth to the appropriate locations, and ensure the Town has the tools and partnerships necessary to implement its housing objectives. To advance these objectives, Coventry's housing strategy is organized around five interconnected goals that address housing production, choice, preservation, growth management, and implementation

Goal 1 – Production & Affordability. Increase the supply of housing affordable to Coventry households across incomes and tenures, with measurable progress toward the 10% Low-and Moderate-Income Housing (LMIH) threshold.

Goal 2 – Housing Choice. Broaden the range of housing types and sizes to serve smaller households, older adults, and residents at all stages, and affirmatively further fair housing.

Goal 3 – Preservation & Quality. Preserve existing affordable housing – deed-restricted, naturally occurring, and manufactured – and maintain a safe, healthy housing stock and stable neighborhoods.

Goal 4 – Location & Infrastructure. Direct higher-density housing growth to areas served by infrastructure and transportation, consistent with the Future Land Use Map, while ensuring that housing development occurs at a scale and density consistent with i character and infrastructure capacity.

Goal 5 – Implementation & Accountability. Maintain the capacity, partnerships, and monitoring needed to carry out and report on the Town's housing goals.

The matrix below organizes the policies and implementation actions associated with each of the five housing goals. Under each goal, policies establish the Town's direction while implementation actions identify specific steps, responsible parties, and timeframes for achieving desired housing outcomes. To support implementation and monitoring, each action is assigned to a primary implementation category. These categories identify the principal strategy through which an action advances the Town's housing goals and provide a framework for tracking progress over time.

Abbreviations:

ELUR: Environmental Land Usage Restriction: a legal mechanism recorded on a property's deed to restrict specific activities or future land uses, usually when a site contains residual contamination (like polluted soil) that has been safely capped or contained rather than completely removed

G1 — Production & Affordability

ID	Action	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Implementation Cat.
Policy 1.1 Prioritize deed-restricted targets when allocating Town resources, land, and regulatory incentives.				
A-1	Adopt LMIH production targets by income level and tenure, evaluate approved and potential pipeline projects against those targets, and identify the most likely avenues for producing rental and ownership units at each affordability level.	Planning Dept. / Town Council	Yr 1	<i>n/a (milestone backbone)</i>
A-2	Create a priority housing opportunity list and conduct feasibility review on shortlisted sites. Screen Town-owned, tax-foreclosed, state surplus, publicly controlled, and willing-owner private sites using criteria such as ownership, sewer and water access, environmental constraints, ELUR status, parcel size, zoning, approvals status, access, and proximity to services. Seek technical assistance to complete site-specific feasibility review for the strongest candidates.	Planning Dept. RI Executive Office of Housing	Yr 1–2	<i>2 – Sites / 4 – Town land</i>
A-3	Support 100%-affordable rental developments by identifying suitable public or private sites, working with the Coventry Housing Authority and/or experienced affordable housing developers to establish site control and evaluate project feasibility. Identify and pursue funding for predevelopment work. For viable public sites consider or a site-specific RFQ/RFP. (see Policy 1.5)	Planning Dept. + CHA CHAC; Housing Network of RI; RIHousing	Pipeline by Yr 3	<i>2 – Sites</i>
A-4	Identify small infill sites that could support deed-restricted affordable units through the comprehensive permit process, using the priority housing opportunity list developed under A-2. Meet annually with CHA and nonprofit developers to review candidate sites, identify ownership or infrastructure issues, and determine whether Town support such as pre-application coordination, technical assistance, or site-specific feasibility work could help advance a small affordable infill proposal.	Planning Commission / Planning Dept. CHA; nonprofit developers	Ongoing	<i>2 – Sites</i>

A-5	Have the Coventry Housing Authority (CHA) assess whether its existing properties could support additional affordable units, either by building more units on underused portion of a site, or through federal programs that allow public housing agencies to rebuild or expand their properties.	CHA Planning Dept.; HUD; RIHousing	Yr 2	2 – Sites
A-6	Conduct landlord education and engagement for voucher acceptance (CHA lead), paired with tenant-facing education on code-complaint pathways and RI tenant protections (WestBay).	CHA WestBay Community Action; Planning Dept.	Yr 2, ongoing	n/a
Policy 1.2 Support entry-level and long-term affordable homeownership, including shared-equity models.				
A-7	Advance affordable homeownership. Evaluate and begin pursuing the homeownership tools available to the Town: deed-restricted for-sale units through the comprehensive permit and inclusionary process; potential use of town-owned and tax-title land in partnership with a regional homeownership nonprofit (e.g., NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley or others). Also create a Town website resource providing links to residents to programs they may qualify for (USDA 502/504, RIHousing first-time buyer and repair assistance).	Planning Dept. RIHousing; USDA RD	Yr 2–4	3 – Characteristics
A-8	Use the housing affordability analysis completed for this Housing Plan to document the gap between local wages, household incomes, and current housing costs. Convene the Economic Development Commission and major employers to review whether employer-assisted housing tools could support recruitment, retention, or local homeownership, including down payment or closing-cost assistance, homebuyer education, employer matching contributions, land partnerships, or support for deed-restricted affordable homeownership projects.	Town Manager's Office Planning Dept., EDC; major employers	Yr 2–3	n/a
Policy 1.3 Encourage the inclusion of affordable units in larger residential and mixed-use developments, including through the Town's review role at the Centre of New England region.				

A-9	Negotiate LMIH commitments on a case-by-case basis for major residential and mixed-use developments where the Town has discretionary leverage, such as zoning relief, public land, development agreements, or other local approvals.	Planning Dept. Town Council; developers	Yr 1, ongoing	2 – Sites / 5- Regional
A-10	Continue to monitor whether Rhode Island's inclusionary zoning framework is financially and legally workable in Coventry. If feasible, identify the districts, project-size thresholds, affordability levels, and incentives where IZ could support local LMIH production; if not feasible, evaluate voluntary or incentive-based alternatives such as density bonuses, parking reductions, fee relief, expedited review, or smaller negotiated affordability commitments.	Planning Dept.; Planning Commission, Town Solicitor, Town Manager	Yr 2–3	3 – Characteristics
Policy 1.4 Seek and leverage state, federal, and private funding to close feasibility gaps in affordable housing projects.				
A-11	Support affordable housing developers, CHA, nonprofit partners, and property owners in applying for state, federal, and private housing funds for priority projects, including by providing letters of support, confirming consistency with the Housing Plan, coordinating local approvals, identifying local infrastructure needs, and considering local gap-funding or land-disposition support where appropriate.	Planning Dept. RI Dept. of Housing; RIHousing	Yr 1, annual	n/a
G2 – Housing Choice				
ID	Action	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Implementation Cat.
Policy 2.1 Promote smaller and more diverse housing types – ADUs, duplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, small multifamily – in areas designated for growth, to serve smaller households and residents at different life stages.				
A-12	Evaluate options and considerations for allowing missing middle housing types (duplex, triplex, townhouse, cottage court) by right in sewerer R-20 and High Density Sewered Residential (HDSR) areas.	Town Council Planning Commission; Planning Dept.	Yr 2	1 – Zoning
A-13	Develop a homeowner guide to the ADU process, including how to evaluate whether an existing septic system can support the ADU and what upgrades may be needed.	Planning Dept. Building Official; DEM	Yr 1–2	n/a

A-14	Adopt updated dimensional standards for designated growth areas, to be adopted alongside the HDSR rezoning described in Policy 4.1.	Planning Commission	Yr 2	1 – Zoning
Policy 2.2 Encourage housing that is accessible, adaptable, visitable, and better suited for aging in place.				
A-15	Evaluate options for encouraging new housing that exceeds minimum accessibility requirements, including incentives, review preferences, or municipal land disposition criteria for developments that include accessible, adaptable, or visitable units suited to older adults and people with disabilities.	Planning Dept. Planning Commission	Yr 3–5	3 – Characteristics
Policy 2.3 Support the development of housing for older adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, and residents needing supportive services.				
A-16	Verify ordinance conformity for group homes and supportive housing under state and federal law.	Planning Dept. Town Solicitor	Yr 1	n/a
Policy 2.4 Ensure Town regulations, programs, and decisions comply with state and federal fair housing law.				
A-17	Provide fair housing information for municipal boards, staff, property owners, and property managers, with attention to local preference, voucher and source-of-income protections, reasonable accommodation, accessibility, and affordable housing outreach and selection practices.	Planning Dept. CHA	Yr 1–2	n/a
G3 — Preservation & Quality				
ID	Action	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Implementation Cat.
Policy 3.1 Prioritize retaining existing deed-restricted units, engaging owners well before affordability restrictions expire.				
A-18	Maintain a list of deed-restricted affordable units whose affordability restrictions are set to expire within the next 10 years and contact property owners at least three years before each restriction expires to discuss renewal options.	Planning Dept. RIHousing; CHA	Annual	n/a
Policy 3.2 Treat naturally occurring (non-deed restricted) affordable housing and manufactured-home communities as essential affordable stock, and weigh impacts on their residents in land use and infrastructure decisions.				

A-19	Maintain a park-specific manufactured home community status table for Coventry's five manufactured home communities, distinguishing among privately owned unrestricted parks, RIHousing-underwritten parks, and resident-owned parks. For Westwood Estates and Leisure Village, track ownership and management contacts, resident contacts where available. Evaluate infrastructure or utility concerns in relation to Action XX. Update the table annually and use it to guide Town outreach, RIHousing coordination, resident referrals, infrastructure/code coordination, and early response when risks are identified.	Planning Dept. Building Official; Tax Assessor.	Yr 2–3	1 – Zoning / 3
A-20	Pursue formal designation of homes in the Sherwood Valley manufactured home community as low- and moderate-income housing (LMIH) units counting toward the Town's 10% affordability goal, working with the Community Housing Land Trust as the long-term affordability monitoring agent.	Planning Dept.	Yr 1	
A-21	Continue coordination on the OWTS upgrade underway at Sherwood Valley, working to leverage all available funding sources (e.g. CDBG, RIHousing)	CDBG Program Manager Planning Dept, Building Official	Yr 1	
A-22	Identify infrastructure improvement needs in the Town's manufactured-home communities —OWTS, water, drainage, private roads, fire access — and coordinate with owners, residents, RIHousing, and other partners to pursue similar upgrade projects and funding where conditions warrant.	Planning Dept.	Yr 2-5	
Policy 3.3 Support opportunities to secure existing unrestricted affordable housing, including conversion of naturally occurring affordable rental stock to deed-restricted LMIH and support for resident ownership or LMIH designation of manufactured-home communities.				

A-23	Adopt a manufactured home community preservation response protocol tied to the five-park status table in A-20. For privately owned unrestricted parks, the protocol should identify steps for early resident outreach, owner contact, referral to the Cooperative Development Institute / ROC USA, community development financial institutions, legal, and other preservation partners, and municipal support such as letters, data, infrastructure coordination, or funding referrals if residents pursue acquisition or another preservation strategy.	Planning Dept. Park residents; CDFIs; RIHousing; monitoring agent	Adopt Yr 2; triggered	n/a
A-24	Support acquisition and deed-restriction of existing naturally occurring affordable rental stock by qualified owners. Use the rental stock profile developed under A-23 to identify candidate properties, and provide Town support including letters of support, local approvals coordination, and consideration of gap funding through a municipal affordable housing trust if established.	Planning Dept. CHA, Nonprofit or for profit developers	Yr 2-5	
Policy 3.4 Promote the maintenance, rehabilitation, and reuse of the existing housing stock as a primary means of providing safe, healthy housing.				
A-25	Create and maintain a Housing Repair Resources page on the Town website, with a printable handout available through Planning, Human Services, Code Enforcement, the Building Official, and the Senior Center. The page should list current repair resources for general home repairs, lead hazard reduction, aging-in-place modifications, septic repair, sewer-connection costs, and code-related rehabilitation, including eligibility rules, contact information, and application links for programs administered by Westbay Community Action, RIHousing, RIIB, CDBG program administrators, and other relevant partners. When the CDBG Program Manager, Code Enforcement, Human Services, or Planning staff identify a household or small property owner with repair needs, staff should provide the resource sheet and, where appropriate, make a direct contact to the relevant program administrator.	CDBG Program Manager, Planning Dept. Westbay Community Action; RIHousing; RIIB;	Stand up by Yr 3	n/a

A-26	Complete a targeted profile of Coventry's older and lower-cost housing stock. Use a windshield survey of visible exterior conditions, Tax Assessor records, owner mailing addresses, code and minimum housing complaint history, building and repair permits, and available RIDOH rental registry and lead compliance data. Use the profile to identify occupied properties that may benefit from repair resources, lead hazard reduction, septic or sewer assistance, or aging-in-place modifications. Identify vacant or abandoned properties separately for potential inclusion on the Town's priority site list.	Planning Dept. CDBG Program Manager, Tax Assessor; Code Enforcement	Yr 2	2 – Sites (<i>partial</i>)
Policy 3.5 Support residents experiencing homelessness or housing instability by maintaining local response protocols and coordinating with regional and state housing systems.				
A-27	Establish a local housing instability response protocol for Town staff who may encounter residents at risk of homelessness, including Human Services, Planning, Code Enforcement, CDBG Program Manager, Public Safety, the Senior Center, and the School Department's McKinney-Vento liaison. The protocol should identify local contacts, regional service providers, Continuum of Care and coordinated-entry contacts, emergency assistance resources, housing search resources, and repair or code-related assistance where housing conditions are contributing to instability. Update the protocol annually with WestBay Community Action and state partners.	Planning Dept. Human Resources (Wellness Committee) RI CoC; WestBay Community Action	Yr 1, ongoing	5 – Regional
G4 — Location & Infrastructure				
ID	Action	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Implementation Cat.
Policy 4.1 Encourage mixed-use development that includes housing along the Route 3 and Sandy Bottom Road.				
A-28	Investigate rezoning the Route 3 and Tiogue Avenue corridors to allow mixed-use development that includes housing, including residential units above ground-floor commercial space allowed by right in the General Business (GB) district.	Town Council Planning Commission; EDC; RIPTA	Yr 3–4	1 – Zoning

A-29	Separately, adopt Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) provisions for the RIPTA Route 13 bus corridor (Tiogue Avenue / Washington Street) requiring a minimum density of 10 units per acre and that at least 10% of units be affordable to households at 80% AMI or below.			
A-30	Include a housing component in the village small-area studies (Summit Village and the intersection of Phillips Hill Road and Route 117)) committed in the Land Use element, and use findings to amend Village Commercial district regulations.	Planning Dept. Planning Commission	Per study schedule	3 – <i>Characteristics</i>
Policy 4.2 Maintain low densities and promote conservation development in rural areas of Coventry, using tools such as Residential Cluster Development and Transfer of Development Rights to protect rural character without reducing town-wide housing capacity.				
A-31	Review and update Coventry's Residential Cluster Ordinance. First, evaluate whether the existing cluster provisions have been used and identify any barriers to their use. Based on that review, amend zoning and subdivision standards so that new residential development in unsewered areas preserves contiguous open space, limits unnecessary road and infrastructure extensions, protects rural development patterns, and maintains townwide housing capacity.	Town Council Planning Commission; Conservation Commission.	Yr 3–5	3 – <i>Characteristics</i>
G5 — Implementation & Accountability				
ID	Action	Lead / Partners	Timeframe	Implementation Cat.
Policy 5.1 Monitor housing production, affordability, and LMIH progress, and report annually to the Town Council and public.				
A-32	Develop an annual housing report covering building permits issued, new housing units approved or constructed, the Town's LMIH unit count, voucher utilization where available, eviction filing trends, and progress toward the production targets adopted under Policy 1.1.	Planning Dept. HousingWorks RI; RIHousing; Housing Network of RI	Annual + Yr 5	<i>n/a / 5 (roundtable)</i>
Policy 5.2 Foster ongoing partnerships with the Coventry Housing Authority, Coventry Housing Associates, nonprofit and for-profit developers, RIHousing and regional entities.				

A-33	Convene or participate in regular housing coordination discussions with municipalities affected by Center of New England–area growth, infrastructure constraints, and regional housing demand, including West Warwick, Warwick, East Greenwich, and West Greenwich. Coordination should focus on housing pipeline tracking, infrastructure timing, transportation access, affordable housing opportunities, and potential displacement or preservation issues affecting lower-cost housing.	Town Council AHAC; Planning Dept.	Yr 1	<i>n/a</i>
A-34	Evaluate opportunities for regional housing collaboration with other Kent County municipalities, such as: joint applications for state and federal funding; shared administration of housing rehabilitation programs; sharing the cost of monitoring agents for manufactured-home affordability credits (Policy 3.3); and a recurring meeting of Kent County planners on housing coordination.	Planning Dept Warwick; West Warwick; East Greenwich; West Greenwich; AHAC	Yr 2-3	<i>5 – Regional</i>
Policy 5.3 Reassess strategies and update this Housing Chapter when monitoring shows targets are not being met.				
A-35	Conduct a Year 5 implementation check-in and update. Review progress against production targets, evaluate which actions are producing results, identify underperforming strategies, update housing demand and LMIH data, and recommend revisions to the Town Council.	Planning Dept Town Council	Yr 5	<i>na</i>