



MINUTES

Stanton Housing Strategy Workgroup
 January 29, 2025
 5:30 p.m.
 Caucus Room, City Hall

Workgroup Members			
×	Stu Armstrong	×	Susan Richardson
√	Brad Arrowood	√	David Rissmeyer
√	Jill Bader	×	Lou Siegel
√	Philippe Bone	×	Rev. Won Un
√	Lydia Campbell	×	Nehemias Velez
×	Sharon Coplai	×	Susan Venable
√	Jennie Hill	√	Marion Ward
√	Chris Lassiter	×	Alice Woods
√	Dan Layman	√	Olivia Wright
×	Anna Leavitt		

City of Stanton Staff	
√	Rodney Rhodes Director, Community Development
√	Amanda DiMeo Director, Economic Development
√	Rebecca Joyce Housing Planner/Grants Coordinator
√	Meggie Roche Planner – Long Range/Comprehensive

The third meeting of the Housing Strategy Workgroup began at 5:30 p.m. with a welcome from Rebecca Joyce. Ms. Joyce then gave a brief recap of the first two meetings of the Housing Strategy Workgroup and a summary of the planning process to date.

Rodney Rhodes and Meggie Roche gave an orientation on the zoning process for local governments. Ms. Roche highlighted the basic concepts of zoning and its benefits to a community. Mr. Rhodes followed with specific information about the City of Staunton's Zoning Ordinance. Both Mr. Rhodes and Ms. Roche answered questions from the group.

Ms. Joyce led the Workgroup members in a discussion of the latest draft of the Housing Strategies that had been compiled from Workgroup members' input at the last meeting and by email in December. This additional input from Workgroup members is shown in *red italics* in the latest draft of the strategies which is included with these minutes.

Ms. Joyce reviewed the Housing Strategy's Community Engagement Plan. Engagement activities with community members will take place between February – April 2025. The Community Engagement Plan is included with these minutes. As details are confirmed regarding engagement opportunities, Ms. Joyce will notify Workgroup members.

Between this meeting and the March 2025 meeting, Ms. Joyce will create additional sections of the Housing Strategy and will distribute them to the Workgroup members for review and input.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next Workgroup meeting will be held on **Monday, March 31, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the Caucus Room in City Hall.**

City of Staunton Housing Strategy
DRAFT Goals, Strategies, and Implementation Framework

The strategies will be implemented over an 18-month period, May 2025 to October 2026

GOALS

The strategies are centered around three goals:

1. **Produce** Housing
2. **Preserve** Housing
3. **Provide** Housing Stability

STRATEGIES

1. **Produce** Housing
 - a. **CDBG Funds** – Continue to commit CDBG Entitlement program funds for infrastructure projects that assist the City’s housing partners who build affordable housing for persons with low-to-moderate incomes.
(Note: CDBG funds cannot be used for construction of new housing.)
 - b. **Housing Fund** – Research the potential of establishing a dedicated Housing Fund that would supply funding for affordable and workforce housing development and other housing activities. Forming a Housing Fund would provide the financial structure into which contributions could be made by the city, and/or public or private housing partners. A Housing Fund could allow for a consistent level of annual funding to be able to plan and budget for housing programs or projects each year.
 - c. **Community Land Trust/Deed-restricted Homeownership** – Advocate for the creation of more permanently affordable housing by the City’s housing partners through the identification and development of potential housing suitable to be part of a local or the Statewide Community Land Trust Program or through deed restrictions.
 - d. **Accessory Dwelling Units** – Explore the zoning and other requirements needed to encourage additional housing options on existing properties through the addition of Accessory Dwelling Units.

Without robust financing from the City, widespread education programming, pre-established floor plans, and/or a clear relationship to the affordability goal, ADUs as a housing strategy can be difficult to implement (often because people will find it financially prohibitive to develop OR the additional stock created doesn’t necessarily benefit those in need of affordable options).

2. **Preserve** Housing

- a. **CDBG Funds** – Continue to commit CDBG Entitlement program funds to the City’s housing partners for who repair, rehabilitate, and/or make accessible existing homes owned by persons with low-to-moderate incomes.
- b. **Housing Fund** – Research the potential of establishing a dedicated Housing Fund that would supply funding for rehabilitation and repair of existing housing stock, blight removal, and other housing activities. Forming a Housing Fund would provide the financial structure into which contributions could be made by the city, and/or public or private housing partners. A Housing Fund could allow for a consistent level of annual funding to be able to plan and budget for housing programs or projects each year.
- c. **Redevelopment Strategies** – Prepare redevelopment strategies for underutilized properties identified through the Housing Conditions Windshield Survey. The survey will be conducted during the strategy implementation period.
- d. **Landlord Education, Recruitment, and Retention** – In partnership with the City’s housing providers, host a workshop to educate landlords about the benefits of participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The one additional strategy that I have to suggest would fit into the "Preserve Housing" category, and this is consistent with the recommendations from the regional housing study. Specifically, an examination of Land Bank models and consideration of the creation or designation of a Staunton or SAW land bank.

3. **Provide** Housing Stability

- a. **CDBG Funds** – Continue to commit CDBG Entitlement program funds under the Public Services category to nonprofit organizations that provide services that directly or indirectly increase persons with low-to-moderate incomes ability to find housing or thrive in their current housing situation.
- b. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Fair Housing** – Ensure that any housing activities that the City implements considers all of the members of the community and how to create equity as these housing activities are planned. Activities should provide opportunities that support the diverse community that is the City of Staunton. Provide education to elected officials, stakeholders, and citizens about Fair Housing requirements so there is awareness and action.

Please send to Chair of City’s DEI Commission for review and to approve wording.

- c. **Housing Fund** – Research the potential of establishing a dedicated Housing Fund that would supply funding for services that provide the stability people need to find housing or thrive in their current housing situation as well as other housing activities. Forming a Housing Fund would provide the financial structure into which contributions could be made by the city, and/or public or private housing partners. A Housing Fund could allow for a consistent level of annual funding to be able to plan and budget for housing programs or projects each year.
- d. **HUD-certified Housing Counselor** – Work with local housing providers, regional organizations, or housing providers from other areas to install a HUD-certified housing counselor who provides consistent counseling services to the City.

The place I thought I could apply my feedback best would be regarding the HUD counselor. I have looked in to becoming HUD certified, but unfortunately there are a lot of roadblocks to it. First and foremost is that from what I understand, you cannot just be a HUD certified counselor. The counselor has to work at a HUD certified agency. Our Habitat is a HUD certified agency, which is why I started looking in to it.

A HUD certified counselor also has to serve a certain number of individuals and households each year, which our Habitat (and myself) unfortunately do not have the time and/or resources to do so. I will reach out to my contact at Virginia Housing to see if possibly they can either attend one of our meetings or we can set up one on our own to see exactly how we can get one closer than Piedmont.

- e. **Community Housing Advocate Training** – In partnership with the City’s housing providers, host a workshop for interested persons who are considered “trusted members” of the community to educate them on housing concepts, services, and resources providing them with the basic knowledge they need to become “Community Housing Advocates”.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK*

In order for the proposed strategies to be successful, the following activities will also occur during the 18-month implementation phase from May 2025 to October 2026.

1. Housing Commission

City Council will determine if they would like to proceed with the formation of a Housing Commission who would continue to help shape housing policy and programs for the City beyond the Staunton Housing Strategy’s Implementation Phase.

2. Housing Conditions Windshield Survey and Assessment

The City will apply for grant funding to conduct a survey that will examine the condition of the City’s housing stock, assess local needs, and offer recommendations to bridge gaps in workforce and housing for persons with low-to-moderate incomes.

3. Housing and Housing Stability Services Grant Resources Guide

A resource guide will be compiled listing federal, state, and non-governmental grant opportunities available for the City and its partnering organizations that address housing issues and supportive services that provide housing stability.

** 2026 Capital Improvement Plan Funding Request*

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) lays out the financing, location, and timing for capital improvement projects over several years. A capital improvement plan typically consists of one or more capital improvement projects, which are financed through a capital budget. CIPs are important tools for local governments, allowing them to plan strategically for community growth and transformation.

It is the task of the Housing Planner to shepherd the City of Staunton Housing Strategy and associated housing projects through completion, along with appropriate city staff as needed. Valuable input from stakeholders and the City’s partnering organizations will also inform the implementation process.

During the implementation phase, quarterly progress reports will be posted on the Housing Strategy page of the City’s website to update stakeholders and community members of activities and accomplishments.

STRATEGY MATRIX

Strategy Topic	Produce Housing	Preserve Housing	Provide Housing Stability
CDBG Funds			
Housing Fund			
Community Land Trust / Deed Restricted Homeownership			
Accessory Dwelling Units			
Redevelopment Strategies			
Landlord Education, Recruitment, Retention			
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Fair Housing			
HUD-certified Housing Counselor			
Community Housing Advocate Training			

City of Staunton Housing Strategy Community Engagement Plan

Community Engagement Activities will occur between February and April 2025.

February 2025

- Virtual input session for housing stakeholders.
- Virtual input session for community members.
- Community survey postcards printed and online survey created.

March 2025

- Evening community input session held at a location TBD.
- "Housing 101" presentation for the public at the Staunton Public Library on a Saturday.

February - April 2025

- Housing Strategy "mini" presentation available for interested civic groups and other organizations.
- Community survey postcards distributed at presentations and online survey is live on City of Staunton website.

Community Survey Postcard

Front of Postcard:

The City of Staunton is currently developing its first Housing Strategy. The purpose of a local housing strategy is to comprehensively describe the approach a community plans to take to meet its housing objectives. If you would like to provide your input, please answer the questions on the other side. More information about the Housing Strategy can be found on the City's website. The Housing Strategy will be completed in the Spring of 2025.

Back of Postcard:

- What is your greatest concern about housing in the City of Staunton?
- What types of housing or housing-related services would you like to see more of in our community?
- *On a scale of 1 to 10 how secure do you feel about your housing situation?*