

March 6, 2025 11:28 AM

Re: March 6 meeting

I understand your meeting will discuss housing for which I see there is a big emphasis on more housing regardless. While this may be needed it needs to be done strategically. I hope your committee will take into account those more rural communities without services.

The current push for more intensive land use for housing where there is no municipal infrastructure and where land costs are high is counterproductive. Impacts to groundwater from septic systems threaten drinking water, or advanced technology systems in denser developments make it more expensive to build, and maintain for lower income people, which is counterproductive. Even the lower percentage of median housing price is still too high for the really needy to afford especially if it can be marketed at 120% of median and when there is no public transport the cost of buying and running a car is high. The high density percentages allowed, and ADUs almost anywhere, as a bonus are likely to significantly strain the resources of more rural areas. Land Use 2025 urged protection of the areas outside the urban services boundary. Now it seems that is disregarded. Please make sure that is included in any new plan.

Incentives for non profits would be more successful in achieving some affordable housing without increasing the number of higher priced housing. The cost of land near the coast makes sufficient low cost housing impractical without outside funding, hence the bonuses. The older, lower priced houses are not resold often but they do exist and teachers, municipal workers etc do live in them. The density bonus just gives incentive to build more higher priced market priced houses than would normally be allowed. That is only a win for developers not for the people who really need it, and it is a strain for municipalities. It also negatively impacts tourism as the character of the communities will inevitably be altered. Our community achieved our best results with cooperation with non profits at rational densities.

I hope the Land Use Commission will continue to work for protecting the environment when also discussing housing. Creating more walkable neighborhoods with sufficient services and infrastructure would be more useful than scattered intense developments in rural areas. A "one size for all" is not the way to go. Provide some assistance to communities with small staff to work on a reasonable, sustainable option and also consider that there is more affordable housing that is not restricted deemed affordable when assessing percentages.

Sincerely,  
Frances Topping  
Charlestown  
Sent from my iPhone