

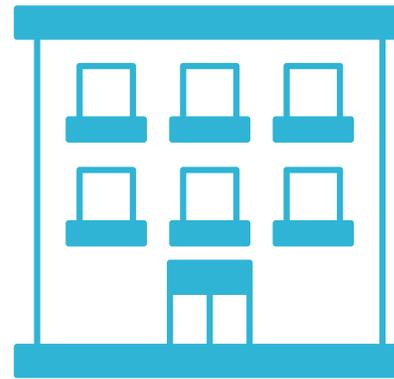


HOUSING

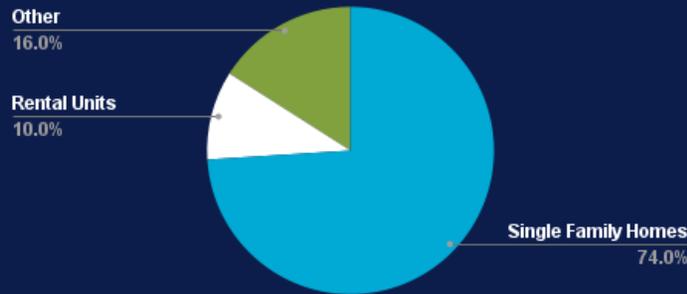


Our Vision for Housing

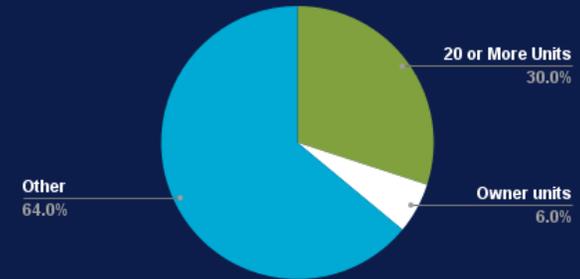
Safe, accessible, and affordable housing is a key foundation to sustaining our community and ensuring all who wish to live, grow, and thrive in Amesbury have a place to call home. By allowing and encouraging a range of housing types, Amesbury will help foster a continuum of housing choices for residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Using policies, incentives, funding, and creative partnerships, the city will work toward reducing inequities and creating pathways for households to feel secure.



GOAL: Expand housing choices in Amesbury by allowing units and buildings of varying sizes that accommodate a wider range of household types.



74% of owner units are single family homes compared to 10% of rental units



30% of rental units are buildings with 20 or more units compared to 6% for owner units.

Some action items to help us achieve this goal will include:

- Update and adopt a new Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance that reduces barriers to property owners in building smaller units in Amesbury.
- Adopt zoning that allows Amesbury to comply with the MBTA Communities Act and create districts that allow multifamily housing as-of-right.
- Draft and adopt changes to key housing production areas such as the East End district, Gateway Village district, Golden Triangle, and Lower Millyard that will allow a range of housing options and reduce barriers to housing production.
- Prioritize city-owned or purchased land for housing. Leverage disposition or a long-term lease to encourage creative housing solutions such as clustered starter homes, a senior cohousing community, or exploring a community land trust model.

GOAL: Leverage funding, regulations, policies, and partnerships to expand the availability and improve the quality of housing to low- and moderate-income households.



Amesbury has established and funded a Housing Trust and will continue to adopt new ways to support low income residents.

Some action items to help us achieve this goal will include:

- Update and adopt a new Inclusionary Zoning ordinance that regulates the inclusion of affordable housing as part of qualifying residential developments.
- When appropriate, pursue the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) to establish a reliable and recurring funding source for affordable housing.
- Evaluate the feasibility of reducing or eliminating permitting fees for affordable housing which could include filing and review fees, building permit fees, and utility connection fees. Consider working with the Housing Trust to create a program for offsetting fees.
- Seek opportunities to provide housing-related training to elected and appointed boards and committees to encourage continued learning about changing rules and regulations, fair housing laws, and best practices in housing.
- Evaluate the feasibility of instituting a rental registry program in Amesbury that would require annual registration and periodic inspections of rental units as tenants change or after a certain period of time.

GOAL: Provide safe, affordable, and accessible housing options for older adults to help them remain a part of the community.



Between 2011 and 2021, the largest population growth cohort was residents ages 65+ with a population increase of 48%. Senior housing and universal design features that can accommodate a wide range of disabilities and co-living should be able to accommodate these residents.

Source: At Home in Amesbury - R.K.G.

Some action items to help us achieve this goal will include:

- Encourage all new housing, particularly multifamily housing and age-restricted housing, to follow Universal Design Standards for accessibility.
- Modify the zoning ordinance to allow for new models of housing that may help older adults remain in Amesbury. This could include housing co-ops, co-living, cluster developments, or single-family conversions to multi-unit structures.
- Create an adaptive modifications program that would provide no interest loans or forgivable grants to low-income older adult households for accessibility modifications to their homes.
- Investigate new or expanded programs to reduce the property tax burden on older adults in Amesbury. This could include options like expanding the senior work off program or instituting a property tax exemption for older adult homeowners who meet certain income criteria.

GOAL: Foster partnerships with housing and service providers to address housing needs for those who may be underhoused, experiencing homelessness, or under threat of eviction.



As housing prices continue to rise, Amesbury recognizes the need for resources for residents in financial need. Beyond collaborating further with The Pettingill House and the Housing Trust, Amesbury will expand access to local emergency services and shelters.

Some action items to help us achieve this goal will include:

- Ensure city departments coordinate approaches and resources to address housing challenges for those experiencing homelessness or under threat of eviction.
- Work with surrounding communities and the regional planning agency to conduct an annual housing fair with the intent of providing housing-related information, programs, and assistance to area residents.
- Engage the Massachusetts Attorney General's office to offer annual workshops or training on fair housing and tenants rights, laws, and protections.
- Develop and fund a local emergency rental assistance program that can help low-income households cover rent, mortgage, or utilities in the case of an unexpected financial crisis.
- Partner with the Amesbury Housing Authority to identify opportunities to partner on the creation of, or improvements to, public housing.

GOAL: Promote housing in Amesbury as a way to attract and retain younger adults, bolster the local workforce, and encourage economic development.



Amesbury is an up-and-coming town and is a desirable place to live as compared to towns around Amesbury increasing in price. Some of the desirable characteristics include being an MBTA community, the proximity to natural amenities, open green space, and the uptick in young residents looking to buy real estate in Amesbury coming from the Greater Boston Area. By 2030, the City of Amesbury will utilize communication strategies, review zoning laws and facilitate employer/resident relationships to encourage young adults to remain in Amesbury.

Some action items to help us achieve this goal will include:

- Review existing zoning in and around the downtown area to remove barriers to developing mixed use and multifamily housing attractive to younger adults and smaller households.
- Implement a local First Time Homebuyer program for those looking to purchase their first home in Amesbury.
- Include housing as part of any city marketing material or economic development initiative.
- Regularly engage with area employers to understand the housing needs and desires of younger workers who may want to both live and work in Amesbury.

Resources and Existing Plans

- [2004 Master Plan](#)
- [Amesbury Housing Timeline](#)
- [The State of the Nation's Housing 2022](#)
- [Amesbury Existing Conditions - RKG](#)
- [Inclusionary Zoning in Amesbury](#)
- [Accessory Dwelling Units in Amesbury](#)
- [MBTA Communities Act](#)

Community Input

- [Housing Questions and Summary of Interviews](#)

