SCRCOG | South Central Regional Council of Governments

Meeting Notice & Agenda

Executive Committee

DATE November 20, 2024	**LOCATION** SCRCOG Office	**DIAL-IN** +1-929-205-6099	
TIME 9:00 am	**MEETING URL** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81514830649	**MEETING ID** 815 1483 0649	

1   Call to Order
2   Adopt Minutes of October 23, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting (motion)   Pages 2-3
3   Review and Accept Audit Report for FY 2023-2024 (motion)
4   Recommend Proposed FY 2025-2026 SCRCOG Municipal Dues (motion)   Page 4
5   Recommend Adoption of SCRCOG Legislative Agenda (motion)   Pages 5-9
6   Adoption of Regional Housing Strategy (motion)   Attachment
7   Regional Cooperation/Other Business
8   Adjournment

Agenda and attachments for this meeting are available on our website at www.scrcog.org. Please contact SCRCOG for copy of agenda in a language other than English. Auxiliary aids/services and limited English proficiency translators will be provided with two weeks 'notice.

"Necesidades especiales: a las personas con discapacidad auditiva se les proveerá con medios auditivos y/o intérpretes de signos. Igualmente intérpretes para personas que hablan poco inglés, pero será preciso avisar con dos semanas de antelación. Se puede solicitar la agenda en otro idioma que no sea inglés comunicándose con SCRCOG".

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TO: SCRCOG Executive Committee Members
FROM: Mayor Lauren Garrett, Secretary
DATE: October 24, 2024
SUBJECT: SCRCOG Executive Committee Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2024

Present:

Bethany	First Selectman Paula Cofrancesco, *Chair*
East Haven	Mayor Joseph Carfora
Guilford	First Selectman Matthew Hoey
Hamden	Mayor Lauren Garrett, *Secretary*
Madison	First Selectman Peggy Lyons, *Vice Chai*
West Haven	Mayor Dorinda Borer, *Treasurer*

SCRCOG Staff   Laura Francis, Christopher Rappa, Joan Paglinco

NOTE: The October SCRCOG Executive Committee meeting was a hybrid meeting

1. **Call to order**

   Chair Cofrancesco called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. **Adopt Minutes of September 25, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting (motion)**

   Chair Cofrancesco referred to the minutes of the SCRCOG Executive Committee Meeting of September 25, 2024, which were included in the agenda packet on pages 2-3. Motion made by First Selectman Hoey and seconded by First Selectman Lyons. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

3. **Recommend Approval of FY 2024-25 Budget Revision #4 (motion)**

   Finance Director Christopher Rappa explained the budget revision. Motion made by First Selectman Lyons and seconded by Mayor Carfora. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

4. **Recommend Resolution Authorizing Interim Executive Director to Execute Agreement Amendment for Acceptance of CT OPM Parcel and CAMA Improvements Grant (motion)**

   Interim Executive Director Francis explained the resolution. Motion made by First Selectman Lyons and seconded by Mayor Borer The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

5. **Discussion re: SCRCOG Legislative Agenda**

   Interim Executive Director Francis referred to the draft SCRCOG Legislative Agenda on pages 8-11 of the agenda packet. Francis advised that CCM would like the COGs to survey their towns for the economic impact of Veterans Exemption Legislation. First Selectman Lyons requested technical assistance pertaining to affordable housing be added to the agenda.

6. **Grant Consultant Resignation and Grants Program Discussion**

   Interim Executive Director Francis reported SCRCOG Consultants Juliet Burdelski has taken a new position with CTDOT and will have to terminate her consulting contract with SCRCOG.   Francis advised a new job description has been created merging the vacant Project Manager position with a Grant Writing Specialist. SCRCOG also created an RFQ for On-Call Consultants.

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7. <u>Regional Cooperation/Other Business</u>

Interim Executive Director Francis advised SCRCOG has a potential candidate for the Transportation Planner position. The candidate has experience in Urban planning with environmental concentration. Francis also advised SCRCOG has signed a contract with Pam Roach to continue the Solid Waste Management program based on the results of the recent needs assessment

8. <u>Adjournment</u>

First Selectman Lyons made a motion to adjourn at 9:35 a.m.

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Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 SCRCOG Municipal Dues
Preliminary for Municipal Budgeting Purposes

The Preliminary *Municipal Dues* schedule is prepared as a budget indicator to assist local officials in the development of municipal budgets. Dues assessed to SCRCOG municipalities are based on a per capita rate and are rounded to the nearest $100.

Final dues are approved by resolution of the full SCRCOG Board in conjunction with the *FY 2025-26 Operating Budget.*

The proposed dues for FY 2025-26 calls for a one cent increase in the per capita rate (to $0.44). SCRCOG By-Laws prescribe the use of the most current set of Connecticut Department of Health Services' municipal population estimates (July 1, 2023).

Municipality	FY 2024-25 Dues Population [(1)]	Per Capita (rounded to $100) 0.43	FY 2025-26 Dues Population [(2)]	Per Capita (rounded to $100) 0.44	Increase
Bethany	5,288	2,300	5,271	2,300	0
Branford	28,176	12,100	28,031	12,300	200
East Haven	27,804	12,000	27,533	12,100	100
Guilford	22,031	9,500	22,020	9,700	200
Hamden	60,923	26,200	60,014	26,400	200
Madison	17,619	7,600	17,498	7,700	100
Meriden	60,517	26,000	60,111	26,400	400
Milford	52,390	22,500	52,793	23,200	700
New Haven	135,081	58,100	135,319	59,500	1,400
North Branford	13,498	5,800	13,415	5,900	100
North Haven	24,169	10,400	24,295	10,700	300
Orange	14,246	6,100	14,322	6,300	200
Wallingford	44,194	19,000	43,725	19,200	200
West Haven	55,294	23,800	54,790	24,100	300
Woodbridge	9,045	3,900	9,021	4,000	100
Total	570,275	245,300	568,158	249,800	4,500

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SCRCOG Legislative Agenda 2025

Proposed: November SCRCOG Board Meeting

The South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) is a diverse region of fifteen municipalities with a population consisting of approximately 570,000. Geographically, the South Central Region covers a large portion of New Haven County along the coast of Long Island Sound.

This legislative agenda outlines the policy topics of emphasis for the South Central Region. The document synthesizes a broad range of information from member municipalities, the regional delegation, non-profit entities, and other organizations. The agenda is organized by committee and will guide SCRCOG in its testimony on the respective policy areas.

Legislative Priority Items and Policy Areas

Education

- Update Education Cost Sharing Formula

  On October 9th, 2024, the 119K Commission with the Connecticut Conference of Muncipalities (CCM) published their report titled "Young People First." Within this report is action item 7A: "Review and revise the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula". This proposed ECS formula has added factors to the calculation which include an inflation adjustment, increased Economically Disadvantaged weight, increased Concentrated Poverty weight, increased Multilingual Learner weight, and a new Students with Disabilities weight. This adjusted formula would ensure equitable outcomes and access to moder facilities for Connecticut's Kindergarten-Grade 12 student population of roughly 513,000.

Energy and Technology

- Update Energy Efficiency Standards for Products

  Connecticut's energy efficiency standards for products, outlined in Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 16a-48, have not been updated since 2010. Revising these standards could enhance Connecticut's ability to avoid energy waste and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in manners like other states within New England.

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Environment

- <u>Increased State Assistance & Solutions for Solid Waste and Trash</u>

  To enhance local sustainability efforts, the state of Connecticut should increase direct assistance available or provide state solutions for managing solid waste streams. Providing greater support will help communities and municipalities implement more effective waste reduction strategies and improve overall environmental health.

- <u>Private Haulers and Registration</u>

  To alleviate the burden on municipalities throughout Connecticut, the state should take responsibility for overseeing the registration of private haulers. Currently, municipalities are tasked with ensuring that haulers are properly licensed, maintaining accurate records, adhering to state regulations, and complying with waste management policies. This responsibility requires significant administrative effort and oversight, which can be a considerable strain on municipal resources. Shifting this responsibility to the state would streamline the process and reduce the administrative load on local governments.

Government Administration and Elections

- <u>Funding Streams for Election Security Mandates</u>

  Public Act No. 24-148 mandates municipalities install video recording devices at secure ballot drop boxes beginning July 1, 2025. To implement these security measures effectively, adequate funding for both the equipment and data storage is essential; otherwise, municipalities may face significant financial burdens. We urge the state of Connecticut to explore revenue streams or grant opportunities to support local governments in acquiring the necessary security equipment.

Housing

- <u>Continued Support for Affordable Housing</u>

  The state of Connecticut should continue to assist municipalities in supporting the creation of affordable housing. There are various creative ways to promote this construction, but these methods should be implemented without imposing mandates or penalizing municipalities in the process.

- <u>Support for Middle Housing</u>

  The state of Connecticut should assist municipalities in promoting the development of middle housing – defined in Section 8-1a of Chapter 124 as

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including duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, cottage clusters and townhouses – given the crucial need for new construction in this area. Creative approaches should be explored to encourage this development without imposing mandates or penalizing municipalities.

- Study of Short-term Rentals on the State's Housing Market
  In the 2024 Legislative Session the General Assembly passed Public Act No. 24-143, giving municipalities the power to regulate short-term rentals through ordinances. To improve transparency and understanding on short-term rentals, the state could direct the Commissioner of the Department of Housing (DOH) to conduct a study on short-term rentals which will analyze their impact on the housing market, as well as their economic impact and how they may contribute to the displacement of residents.

- Incentives & Technical Assistance for Affordable Housing Development in Municipalities
  To address the significant issue of affordable housing in Connecticut, the state should implement developer incentives to encourage the construction of both affordable and market-rate units. Additionally, it must provide municipalities with comprehensive technical assistance and resources that are readily outlined in existing or future state statutes. This support should be flexible to meet diverse municipal needs, particularly in areas where staffing may be limited. By equipping municipalities with the necessary resources, the state can promote effective collaboration in increasing housing availability.

Human Services

- Support for CCM's "Young People First," Report
  On October 9th, 2024, the 119K Commission with the Connecticut Conference of Muncipalities (CCM) published their report titled "Young People First." This report is a comprehensive plan to tackle the growing crisis of disconnected youth in Connecticut. It is imperative that the State of Connecticut consider adopting and implementing these findings and recommendations to address this pressing issue.

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Judiciary

- Statutory Caps on Damages for Municipal Liability

  The South Central Regional Council of Governments asks that the state enact statutory caps on damages for municipal liability. The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) has outlined areas of focus within their legislative agenda. The following structure was outlined by CCM and the South Central Regional Council of Governments echo these changes:

  1. Capping any municipal negligence claim to $250,000
  2. Amending the highway defect statute for municipalities (CGS 13a-149) to cap damages that are both economic and non-economic at $20,000 per occurrence.
  3. Amending the CGS 46a-60 (CT Fair Employment Practices Act) to cap damages based on employer size, model here:
     a. For employers with 15-100 employees - $25,000.
     b. For employers with 101-200 employees - $50,000
     c. For employers with 201-500 employees - $100,000
     d. For employers with more than 500 employees - $150,000

Planning and Development

- Increased Regional Cooperation

  The Council of Governments plays a vital role in supporting its member municipalities. As new policy challenges arise, there is greater opportunity for collaboration across the region. To maintain a COG's ability to serve as a valuable resource for these efforts, it is crucial for the State to continue providing sufficient funding to Councils of Governments.

- Online Publication of Legal Notices by Municipalities

  To save money and enhance circulation, municipalities should be allowed to publish legal notices online. This shift will reduce costs for municipalities and align with other state agencies that have already begun this transition.

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Public Safety & Security

- Enforcement Against Street Takeovers & Illegal Vehicle Use

  The South Central Regional Council of Governments asks the state to pass House Bill No. 5413 from the 2024 session, aimed at addressing street takeovers and illegal use of ATVs and dirt bikes. Previously proposed legislation provided essential resources to municipalities, including grants for enforcement efforts, enhanced local authority to penalize and address these activities.

Transportation

- Expanded Support for Shore Line East Commuter Rail Services

  To enhance regional connectivity and support economic growth, the state could consider expanding support for Shore Line East commuter rail services. Increasing service frequency and coverage will improve accessibility, reduce traffic congestion, and provide greater convenience for commuters across Connecticut's shoreline.

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SCRCOG Regional Housing Strategy: Executive Summary & Strategies

Executive Summary ● ● ● ● ● ●

The South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG) Regional Housing Strategy is a comprehensive framework designed to address the evolving housing needs within its fifteen-member municipalities: Bethany, Branford, East Haven, Guilford, Hamden, Madison, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Orange, Wallingford, West Haven, and Woodbridge. This plan builds upon the previous regional housing efforts from 2022 and integrates the goals and strategies outlined in the local 8-30j Affordable Housing Plans adopted by each municipality to align regional strategies with local housing goals.

The SCRCOG region, home to approximately 571,298 residents as of 2022, features a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities. Development patterns across the region have led to denser construction in urban areas, while suburban communities have largely remained dominated by single-family homes. This disparity underscores the critical need for a range of housing options that bridge the gap between higher-density multifamily development and lower-density single family homes. As urban areas across the region increasingly bear the burden of supplying the region's housing stock, all communities must look closely at the role they can play in diversifying the region's housing stock to contribute to a more balanced and equitable region.

The Regional Housing Strategy focuses on what SCRCOG and the region's municipalities can do to improve housing supply, affordability, and availability. Through engagement with regional stakeholders, including elected officials, municipal staff and local organizations, the plan identifies strategies and interventions that support specific policies and actions. These efforts aim to promote housing development in suitable locations and identify opportunities for infrastructure investment and zoning changes that could increase housing supply across the region.

During the initial data analysis phase of the study, research found that the number of housing units in the SCRCOG region increased to an estimated 226,154 with most housing units being owner occupied single-family homes. Prior to the Great Recession in 2008, most of the housing permitted were single-family homes. During and following the recession, the number of single-family units permitted declined and have not returned to pre-recession levels. This trend has persisted in recent years despite the high demand in the single-family housing market. Since 2010, rental markets less impacted by the Great Recession continued to see new housing permits and starts. Despite the creation of additional rental units, there remains a number of municipalities in the region that have permitted very few new housing units, which has led to an underproduction of units needed to sustain the regional population and households across income levels.

Research also found that most housing permits and construction activitythat has occured are focused on single-family homes and larger multifamily structures. Permits for residential structures that could support a missing middle typology (two-to four-unit buildings) are not nearly as prevalent today as they once were. Restrictive zoning, high regulatory costs, high building costs (including labor, materials, and land cost), financing constraints, and infrastructure capacity have led to a shortage of housing throughout the SCRCOG region.

With very low vacancy rates and a strong housing market, rental costs across the region have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. A limited housing supply caused many households to remain in rental housing, increasing the level of competition for a limited pool of available units. Rising mortgage rates and high priced homes have moved many households beyond their purchasing capacity keeping the would-be

buyers in rental units for longer. Housing inventory in the region is constrained in part by older adults who own homes but have few options to downsize to. This leads to more renters living in their in their units for longer. The lack of movement in the market creates supply constraints while demand remains high, resulting in rising rents and home sale prices.

In 2021, the Urban Institute conducted a statewide housing study for the State of Connecticut. It found that the state needed roughly 86,000 housing units to address the gap in affordable housing needed for very low-income households. More recently, the National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that the state housing shortage is around 98,000.

In the same study, researchers found that the gap for New Haven County was around an estimated 24,000 units. Based on a similar analytical approach outlined in this study, estimates using ACS 2022 data suggest the gap in SCRCOG is around 24,709.

A key element to housing production is having the land to build housing or the opportunity to redevelop a parcel/building for a residential purpose. To aid in the identification of areas for housing production, this study provides an assessment and score for every parcel of land in the SCRCOG region. The site assessment and parcel analysis was a collaborative effort conducted by RKG and SCRCOG staff. The goal of the analysis was to: (1) Provide an up-to-date and standardized regional zoning database, (2) Assess potential areas throughout the region that could be zoned to include multifamily housing, (3) Identify areas where targeted infrastructure investment could unlock housing opportunities, (4) Identify potential opportunity sites that could benefit from a predevelopment assessment or would score competitively for low-income housing tax credits, (5) Create a communication tool to help local officials, staff, and housing groups identify and justify zoning changes to promote housing production.

The site assessment tool was created to help municipalities and SCRCOG identify the most promising sites for investment of municipal, regional, and state resources. This could involve actions such as predevelopment work, zoning changes, infrastructure investments, or site plan and visualization exercises.

A key objective of this tool is to identify barriers such as restrictive zoning or a lack of public infrastructure that could be rectified to promote housing development. Additionally, with ongoing regional and state efforts to assess existing infrastructure and identify funding opportunities, this tool can be used to evaluate infrastructure and amenities, pinpointing where new projects could enhance capacity for greater density and support housing growth. The analysis results highlight key areas for investment, predevelopment evaluations, and potential zoning changes that could increase density, address the housing production shortage, and help close the affordability gap identified in the regional housing analysis.

To advance housing production and preservation across the region, the SCRCOG Regional Housing Strategy is guided by a set of core principles aimed at increasing the availability and affordability of housing region-wide. These guiding principles focus on producing a greater variety of housing to meet the needs of the workforce, older adults, families, and younger adults to ensure the region can continue to be a welcoming place for all.

To maintain affordable housing options and prevent displacement, this report prioritizes several key strategies. First, focusing on the preservation and strategic redevelopment of existing housing stock is crucial to ensuring safe and affordable housing for residents. Additionally, developing a regional tracking system for affordable housing will help identify opportunities for preservation through extended subsidy or strategic

acquisition. By regionalizing efforts, SCRCOG can better support its member communities through shared resources and coordinated strategies. Building support for housing through education and advocacy will further increase community understanding and acceptance of the need for a range of housing types. Finally, coordinating housing initiatives with infrastructure investments can create new opportunities for housing that align with regional growth and development goals.

The regional housing strategies presented in this document describe specific actions SCRCOG, regional stakeholders and municipal partners can take to encourage and support housing through a variety of approaches. Strategies are grouped by the following categories:

- **Regional Information & Tracking** which involves developing a comprehensive system to monitor housing trends, opportunities, and barriers, providing data-driven insights for decision-making.
- **Collaborative Policy and Regional Partnerships** which focus on fostering cooperation among municipalities, regional organizations, and stakeholders to create unified and standardized policies and leverage shared resources.
- **Resources** which aim to identify, develop and share various documents, guidelines, draft language and models that local municipalities and stakeholders can use to inform RFP processes, zoning updates, data sharing agreements and other educational material.
- **Technical Assistance + Stakeholder Engagement** designed to offer tailored support to municipalities, engage local communities, and build consensus around housing goals, ensuring all efforts are aligned and responsive to the needs of SCRCOG's diverse populations.

Each strategy is intended to be an action item or recommendation that could create or extend existing services by SCRCOG as well as align various regional stakeholders with the regionals member municipalities to support action items and strategies outlined in each municipality's respective 8-30j plan. This document provides a description of the strategy, the expected time frame of execution, action steps, implementation partners, measures of success, and a case study.

Chapter 6

STRATEGIES

1. Regional Information & Tracking

1.1 Improve Data Collection of Existing Affordable Units

Description

One of the key challenges the region will face is preserving the affordability of assisted housing units. There are many forms of housing subsidy in the region's existing affordable stock that have end dates to their contracts and affordability terms. Over the next decade the region will see a decent share of units with expiring subsidies. While many owners will likely renew these contracts, it is important for SCRCOG and member municipalities to monitor existing affordable units as they approach their compliance period to determine where there is a need for reinvestment or to assist owners in developing strategies to renew and maintain affordability. Integral to the success of affordable unit preservation is an accurate inventory of existing units including details regarding quality of those units, types of funding streams and terms.

Both the Connecticut Department of Housing and the National Housing Preservation Database (NHPD) track de-duplicated records of affordable housing units within the region. A challenge identified in the data analysis portion of this study was that there are discrepancies and missing records across the two data sources making it hard for municipalities, local advocacy groups and non-profits to track the current supply of affordable units in the region. To address this challenge, SCRCOG could lead a data collection effort coordinated across member municipalities to collect and verify all of the existing affordable housing units across the region and submit this information to the National Housing Preservation Database. The NHPD standardizes, cleans and provides quarterly updates to its database and offers free use for public sector organizations, which would allow member municipalities to track and manage existing affordable units without the need for internal IT staff.

Action Steps

1. **Establish a Regional Task Force**

   Form a dedicated task force comprising representatives from SCRCOG, member municipalities, local housing authorities, advocacy groups and non-profits to oversee the data collection and monitoring process.

2. **Develop a data collection framework**

   Design a standardized data collection template that includes fields for unit quality, funding sources, subsidy types, expiration dates and other relevant fields.

3. **Conduct a comprehensive inventory of affordable housing units.**

   a. Coordinate data collection efforts across all member municipalities led by an appointed collected lead for each community to gather existing records of affordable housing units.

   b. Request data from the Connecticut Department of Housing and NHPD to address discrepancies, fill in information and establish an understanding of what is already being tracked.

4. **Create and Maintain a Centralized Regional Database**

   a. Submit collected data to the NHPD for standardization and inclusion in their database.

   b. Provide links and forward guidance for municipalities to access the database for local level tracking.

   c. Develop data maintenance and download procedure so that SCRCOG can maintain a regional database and/or mapping tool to ensure public accessibility of database.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff should lead this effort with the participation of regional stakeholders.

Measures of Success

a. Successful submission of regional housing inventory to NHPD

b. Development of a regional database that can be used for mapping and an annual housing preservation report.

Case Study

To support affordable housing preservation efforts, Urban-Greater DC and the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) maintain the DC Preservation Catalog. It was initially created by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (an NHPD partner) from national sources, and was then updated monthly using local data.

Source: **http://housinginsights.org/**

1.2 Create an Annual Housing and Risk Assessment Report

Description

An important resource for preserving the existing affordable housing inventory is an annual housing preservation and risk assessment report. Leveraging the data from the data collection and management strategy (1.1), SCRCOG should produce an annual report that gives member municipalities an easily accessible summary of the current affordable housing inventory, progress on additional units, highlight at-risk properties and provide information of new and on-going programs and strategies to support owners in the preservation of affordability.

Some owners in federal subsidy programs will choose to continue providing affordable housing units without any intervention or have existing support to maintain and pursue funding streams. This means the identification of at-risk properties is imperative for prioritizing support to landlords in need. There are many drivers that could increase the likelihood of losing affordable units. Examples include: rents increase to the point where it makes more financial sense to convert units to market rate, proximity to transit, high median rents relative to the region, low poverty rates, low shares of assisted units, and building rehabilitation needs (Housing Connecticut's Future 2021, Tatian, Lo et al.).

To help inform and prioritize local housing preservation strategies included in the annual housing preservation report, SCRCOG should include a set of risk measures to help determine which properties may require interventions for preservation. SCRCOG should also include information on funding sources, partners and non-profits who could assist in a preservation intervention.

Action Steps

1. Create a Data Collection & Management Strategy

a. See strategy 1.1.

2. Develop Risk Assessment Criteria

a. Define Risk Factors: Coupled with the soonest expiration date, identify and define additional risk factors that may indicate a higher likelihood of losing affordable housing units such as high market rents, proximity to transit, low poverty rates, and rehabilitation needs.

b. Incorporate Stakeholder Input: Engage with Stakeholders, including municipalities and housing organizations to refine the risk criteria to locally relevant measures.

3. Produce an Annual Report

4. Engage and Support Member Municipalities

a. Distribute the Annual Report.

b. Organize workshops or webinars for municipal staff and elected officials to explain the findings of the report and how they can use the information to support preservation efforts.

c. Offer technical assistance to municipalities on using the report to inform local preservation strategies and actions.

5. Monitor and Review Progress

a. Develop a system to monitor the implementation of preservation strategies by municipalities and assess their effectiveness over time.

b. Conduct an annual review of the report and the strategies outlined, making necessary adjustments based on feedback from municipalities and stakeholders.

6. Report Findings & Convene Regular Meetings

Present Findings to SCRCOG Board, gather feedback and ensure that the report and key findings are accessible to the public, increasing transparency and awareness of affordable housing issues in the region.

With the capacity to complete the process in strategy 1.1 and 1.2, SCRCOG should organize regular meetings with municipal leaders to discuss findings and work to coordinate and align local efforts with regional housing goals.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff will lead this effort with the participation of regional stakeholders.

Measures of Success

a. Publication of an annual report.

b. Development of a regional database that can be used for mapping and an annual housing preservation report.

Case Study

Using recommendations from the Regional Affordable Housing Study, Montgomery County Council approved funding for a Nonprofit Preservation Fund to lend capital to nonprofit housing developers for preserving affordable units. Progress will be tracked through the region's Data and GIS platform.

Source: **https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/housing/preservation-of-affordable-housing/**

1.3 Housing Centered Regional Dashboard

Description

As the South Central Regional County of Governments continues to advance its mission of fostering cooperative efforts among its member municipalities, the role of SCRCOG as a regional data provider is increasingly vital. By centralizing and sharing critical data, SCRCOG can empower municipalities and regional stakeholders with the tools to make informed decisions, drive regional planning efforts and track progress of longer-term goals across the region.

Many municipalities within the region may have limited staff and resources, making it challenging to collect, manage and provide public access to locally relevant data sets such as zoning layers, environmental characteristics and on-going construction projects. By acting as a central repository and data manager, SCRCOG can streamline data access for the region's stakeholders by providing readily accessible and interactive data sets on a GIS portal and open data platform.

Offering access to tools like the site assessment tool developed in this plan as well as tracking of residential construction starts, infrastructure projects and other planning efforts can help inform neighboring municipalities, developers and stakeholders' choices as they identify opportunities for housing development, zoning revisions and partnerships across the region.

Action Steps

1. **Collect Existing Data from Municipalities**

   a. Conduct a Data Inventory that includes zoning layers, environmental characteristics, ongoing construction projects, and other relevant data. Many of these datasets have been gathered and provided as part of the site assessment analysis for this plan.

   b. Work with municipalities to standardize data formats and ensure consistency in how data is collected, categorized, and stored. This will facilitate easier database management.

   c. Develop formal agreements with municipalities to ensure ongoing data sharing. These agreements should outline the frequency of data updates, access rights, and responsibilities for both SCRCOG and the municipalities.

2. **Develop and Launch the GIS Portal and Open Data Platform**

   a. Collaborate internally with staff and consultants as needed to design a user-friendly GIS portal and open data platform. Ensure the platform is scalable, secure, and accessible to a wide range of stakeholders.

   b. Incorporate the site assessment tool and other planning resources developed as part of the regional housing plan into the platform. Make these tools readily accessible to municipalities, developers, and regional stakeholders.

3. **Establish Partnerships with Other Open Data Sources in Connecticut**

   a. Identify state and regional organizations that manage open data sources, such as the Connecticut State Data Center, CT Data Collaborative, and other COGs in the state.

   b. Engage in discussions with these organizations to establish data-sharing partnerships. Ensure that data sets from various sources are compatible and can be integrated seamlessly into SCRCOG's platform.

   c. Collaborate with partners to promote the importance of regional data sharing, emphasizing its role in enhancing regional planning and development.

4. **Promote and Maintain the Data Platform**

   a. Launch an outreach campaign to inform municipalities, developers, and stakeholders about the GIS portal and open data platform. Offer training sessions to demonstrate the tools.

   b. Establish a routine for updating data sets with municipalities to ensure data remains current and relevant, focusing on residential construction, infrastructure, and zoning.

   c. Regularly assess platform performance and user engagement. Gather feedback to identify areas for improvement and make iterative enhancements.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff and consultants in partnership with municipal GIS staff, assessors and engineers.

Measures of Success

Launch of a Regional GIS Dashboard.

Case Study

The Montgomery County Planning Department created a County-Wide mapping atlas with various map layers and datasets, such as protected areas, zoning, and ongoing projects. They also offer training videos and regularly update the atlas with new data or project results.

Source: **https://mcatlas.org/viewer/**

2. Collaborative Policy and Regional Partnerships

2.1 Support & Educate the Development of a Community Land Trust and Regional Housing Land Bank

Description

The formation of a Community Land Trust (CLT) and a Regional Housing Land Bank (RHLB) addresses the need for more efficient land acquisition and development for affordable housing. Municipal procurement processes can be slow, causing missed opportunities for purchasing land for housing. In addition, many municipalities across the region do not have the capacity to create and operationalize these entities at the local level.

The RHLB would act as a public authority or nonprofit organization focused on acquiring, holding, managing, and redeveloping properties to achieve community goals like affordable housing development and property value stabilization. It would operate with flexibility, facilitating quicker land transactions compared to traditional municipal processes.

The CLT, a nonprofit entity, would hold land permanently for affordable housing, conservation, or other community purposes. It would lease land to homeowners under long-term agreements, ensuring homes remain affordable over time. A regional CLT would work closely with the land bank to acquire and manage properties, gather resources, and monitor housing affordability, effectively integrating into the regional land development and housing ecosystem. Together, these entities would enhance the efficiency of land acquisition and development, support affordable and attainable housing, and operate across the region supporting communities that do not have the capacity to manage such organizations individually.

It should be noted that this strategy describes how SCRCOG could support and encourage the formation of these entities through education and support through coordination efforts amongst interested municipalities and other regional stakeholders. In addition, this strategy seeks to address the production of housing and ownership of land in the long-term. More specifically, CLTs retain ownership of the land to ensure long-term community benefit and RHLBs aquire and dispose of land to address housing needs. Strategy 2.2 discusses how a regional development authority or opting into the state Municipal Redevelopment Authority could be another approach to catalyzing housing production without the longer term ownership and stewardship components that would be involved in this strategy.

Action Steps

1. **Preliminary Planning**

   a. Analyze regional housing needs, affordability gaps, and land use patterns; use what has been studied in this plan.

   b. Engage key stakeholders including municipalities, housing advocates, and community organizations.

2. **Identify regional partners and participating municipalities**

   a. Engage with interested partners and support in coordination of intial discussions and planning.

   b. For interested partners, provide research and educational material to help inform the formation of a CLT and RHLB.

3. **Organize and coordinate regional partnerships to establish CLT and RHLB**

   a. Host regular workshops and roundtable discussions with key stakeholders, including non-profit organizations, municipal representatives, housing advocates, and potential funders, to foster collaboration and align efforts toward the establishment of the CLT and RHLB.

   b. Support formation of an advisory committee consisting of representatives from different stakeholder groups to provide ongoing input and guidance on the development and operation of the CLT and RHLB.

4. **Create and Maintain a Centralized Regional Database**

   a. Research and identify potential federal, state, and private funding sources that align with the goals of the CLT and RHLB. Provide technical assistance to regional partners in preparing competitive grant applications.

   b. Encourage and support joint applications for funding among municipalities and non-profits to increase the competitiveness of funding proposals. This could involve

creating templates and shared resources to streamline the application process.

5. Provide Educational Materials

Continue to engage member municipalities with educational material and communications that provide clear information on the benefits, and potential impacts of the regional CLT and RHLB.

Implementation Partners & Funders

a. SCRCOG will support the identification, engagement, and initial coordination of interested municipalities and non-profits in the creation of a CLT and RHLB.

b. SCRCOG will work in partnership with these entities to identify funding sources, support applications for grants and identify opportunities for investment across the region. If a community land trust is formed, its board will be composed of resident representatives, real estate professionals, and housing specialists, all contributing to the initiative's success.

c. Potential funders could include but are not limited to: The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI's, e.g., LISC), NeighborWorks America, **DOH/CHFA**, Local lenders using Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) funds, HUD CDBG or HOME funds, philanthropic funders, locally derived city and town funding.

Measures of Success

a. Number of affordable housing units created or preserved, resident satisfaction, and the impact on local property values and economic activity.

b. Tracking land acquisition and utilization, diversity of served populations, and the financial stability of the initiatives.

c. Partnerships with local entities and long-term housing affordability are crucial.

d. Regular reporting and community feedback will ensure that the strategy is achieving its goals and benefiting the region effectively.

Case Study

The Metro Atlanta Land Bank Authority (MALBA) website details the organization's role in revitalizing vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Established by state statute in 1990, MALBA is effective in returning properties to productive use and getting them back on the tax rolls. The authority can waive delinquent taxes, resolve title issues, and facilitate property purchases by community development corporations. The City of Atlanta supports MALBA's efforts by dedicating a portion of its CDBG funds to housing revitalization, including funding for the Land

Bank Authority. As of 2020, MALBA managed an inventory of 170 properties within the City of Atlanta, highlighting its ongoing impact on community development.

Source: **https://metroatlantalandbank.org/**

2.2 Support Development of a Regional Redevelopment Authority or Encourage Communities to join the Statewide Municipal Redevelopment Authority

Description

Developing a Regional Redevelopment Authority (RDA) complements the creation of a regional housing land bank and community land trust by adding a critical component for acquiring and redeveloping properties. An RDA can acquire land for affordable and attainable housing development, including through eminent domain—a power not available to land banks or community land trusts. Additionally, RDAs can prepare sites for new development and rehabilitate existing structures, providing a broader scope of redevelopment capabilities. While establishing an RDA may be more complex and time-consuming, potentially requiring state-level changes, it can be pursued alongside the development of other entities like a regional housing land bank and community land trust. This comprehensive approach aims to enhance regional housing stability and support effective community revitalization efforts. In addition to the discussion about creating a regional redevelopment authority, this strategy also includes an alternative approach involving opting into the statewide Municipal Redevelopment Authority which held its inaugural meeting in July of 2024.

Action Steps - Supporting the Creation of an RDA

1. **Conduct a Regional Assessment to Evaluate Needs and Identify Goals of RDA**

2. **Engage Stakeholders**
   a. Engage local government officials, community leaders, and key stakeholders in discussions about the RDA's potential benefits and objectives.
   b. Facilitate formation of an Advisory Committee.

3. **Develop a Strategic Plan**
   a. Help define the RDA's mission, goals, and strategic priorities, including property acquisition, site preparation, and redevelopment.
   b. Suppor development of a timeline for establishing the RDA and initiating key projects.

4. **Support drafting of Legislation and Policies**
   a. Support municipalities preparing the necessary legislative proposals or amendments to authorize the RDA's creation and operation.

   b. Assist development policies and procedures for property acquisition, eminent domain, site preparation, and project management.

5. **Secure Funding and Resources**
   a. Explore potential funding sources, including state and federal grants, public-private partnerships, and local government contributions.
   b. Help create a budget and financial plan to support the RDA's activities and operations.

6. **Establish Governance Structure**
   a. Facilitate establishment of a governing board or commission to oversee the RDA's activities, including appointing members with relevant expertise.
   b. Provide support defining the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes for the RDA's governing body.

7. **Obtain Legal and Regulatory Approvals**
   a. Work with legal advisors to ensure compliance with state and local regulations.
   b. Identify and support obtaining necessary approvals from state and local authorities to formally establish the RDA.

8. **Recruit and Train Staff**
   a. Recruit staff with expertise in property management, redevelopment, and finance to manage the RDA's operations.
   b. Offer training and education on the RDA's functions, legal requirements, and project management.

9. **Develop Operational Procedures**
   a. Provide materials detailing procedures for property acquisition, site preparation, redevelopment, and project oversight.
   b. Facilitate set up systems for tracking project progress, financial management, and reporting.

10. **Launch Initial Projects**
    a. Select and initiate pilot redevelopment projects to demonstrate the RDA's capabilities and impact.
    b. Monitor the progress of initial projects and make adjustments as needed based on feedback and outcomes.

11. Communicate and Report

a.   Share regular reports on the RDA's progress, achievements, and financial status with stakeholders and the public.

12. Plan for Long-Term Sustainability

a.   Support creation of strategies for ensuring the RDA's long-term viability, including securing ongoing funding and building partnerships.

b.   Continuously review and update the RDA's strategic and operational plans to adapt to changing needs and conditions.

Action Steps - Encourage Communities to Join MRDA

a.   Support and educate municipalities on the benefits of opting into the MRDA's assistance.

b.   Leverage site assessment tools and findings from the data analysis from this plan to help municipalities identify zoning changes and sites to fast track for redevelopment with the support of the MRDA.

c.   Provide technical assistance and support to municipalities working with the MRDA where applicable.

Implementation Partners

Local municipalities from SCRCOG, state legislators, Community Development Corporations, non-profits, legal and financial advisors, and community groups, Municipal Redevelopment Authority.

Potential funding sources could include programs and partners such as: Community Development Block Grants, New Market Tax Credits, Connecticut DECD & DOH and LISC as well as through other types of more localized funding sources such as tax increment financing (TIF) and bond financing.

Measures of Sucess

a.   Tracking property acquisition and redevelopment rates.

b.   Number and occupancy of affordable and mixed-income housing units.

c.   Overall improvements to community infrastructure.

Case Study

a.   The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) is a municipal agency dedicated to overseeing urban redevelopment and revitalization projects in Cambridge, MA. Its mission includes managing and facilitating various development initiatives, such as affordable housing projects, commercial developments, and public space improvements. Established in 1956, the CRA has implemented five urban renewal plans, conducted numerous plans and studies, and executed a range of development

and renovation projects. The CRA's commitment extends to promoting social equity and environmental sustainability through its projects and partnerships. Operating as a public real estate entity, the CRA utilizes distinctive public investment tools to foster sound growth and revitalize areas that are deteriorated or underutilized.

Source: **https://www.cambridgeredevelopment.org/**

b.   The Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) is the sole regional redevelopment authority in Massachusetts, serving the housing and community development needs of the twenty-six towns in Franklin County, located in northwestern Massachusetts. FCRHRA plays a pivotal role in providing affordable housing solutions and managing redevelopment projects. It collaborates closely with residents to facilitate access to a broad range of housing resources and works with municipalities to secure and administer grant funding for infrastructure and community development initiatives. RHRA works to improve housing quality and accessibility while fostering economic growth and stability throughout the county.
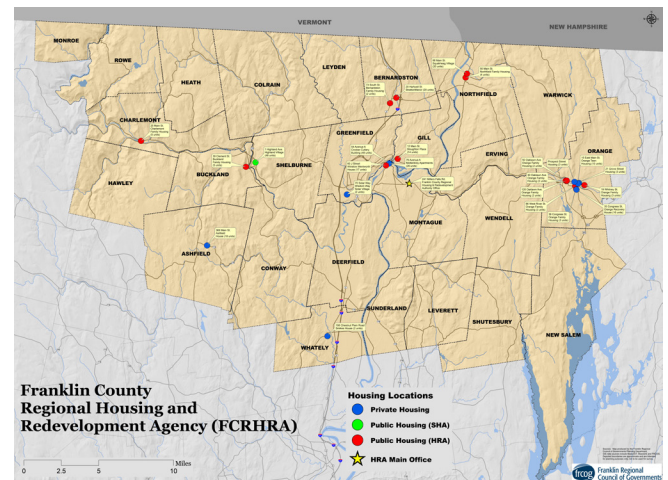
Figure 33: Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Agency Housing Locations

Source: **https://fcrhra.org/about/**

2.3 Educate Municipal Partners on the Benefits of Using Municipal Taxes to Fund Affordable Housing

Description

Affordable housing projects typically require a large capital stack bringing in funding from multiple public-private sources. Resources for affordable housing projects are limited and highly competitive creating the situation where demand for affordable housing quickly outpaces the supply of deed restricted units and housing vouchers. One way of expanding the pool of available funding for affordable housing could be to expand the local option taxes if the ability to add new taxes at the local level were granted by the state legislature. This could include a room and occupancy tax at the local level or dedicating short-term rental registration fees to a local affordable housing fund. Today, the State of Connecticut is the entity which taxes room occupancy for hotels, motels, lodging houses, bed and breakfasts, and short-term home rentals. Municipalities do not have an additional local options rooming tax that could provide funds at the municipal level for a variety of purposes, including a new funding source for affordable housing.

Action Steps

1. Developing Regional Consensus for Action

SCRCOG should collaborate with local elected leaders in each community to gauge the level of support for the development of a legislative policy on lodging taxes.

2. Engage Regional Stakeholders

Once support is garnered at the local level, SCRCOG could support member municipalities in the process of forming a broader coalition of regional stakeholders that could include housing advocates, local housing authorities, the development community, businesses, and residents.

3. Create Educational Material

Develop educational materials on the reasons a local lodging tax could be beneficial to municipalities in the region and across the state. Share the materials with stakeholders through a wide array of media including print, social media and digital media outlets.

4. Conducting an Impact Study

SCRCOG should hire a consultant to conduct an impact study to look at the potential revenue from the local lodging tax compared to the added cost to hotel patrons and/or short-term rental tenants.

5. Advocating for Legislative Action

Through education and supporting informational materials SCRCOG could support the advocacy effort toward a campaign to raise awareness with the local delegation on the importance of local funds for affordable housing. This can then be scaled to the state level to ensure buy-in from state legislators.

Implementation Partners

To develop an advocacy campaign for the creation of a local lodging tax buy-in and support from local municipalities in the region, elected leaders at the local level, and the legislative delegation representing SCRCOG communities is critical. SCRCOG would also need to engage with housing advocates, businesses, and residents who can help with writing letters, testimonials, and calling their elected leaders to advocate for this new funding source.

Measures of Success

a. Number of municipalities engaged in the effort

b. Number of advocates and groups engaged in the effort

c. Number of state representatives and senators who are willing to sponsor and support the effort.

Case Study

a. The City of Portland, Oregon passed a lodging tax from short term rentals which was estimated to add $1.2M in additional funding for the city to implement affordable housing. The city directed these new funds to their existing Housing Investment Fund (HIF) which used the nexus between the lack of affordable housing and the loss of year-round housing to short-term rentals/investment properties. The fund would then be used for gap financing for affordable housing development, low-interest rate loans, and other affordable housing priorities in the city.

Source: **https://www.portland.gov/revenue/transient-lodgings-tax**

2.4 Expand Service Areas for Municipal Water and Sewer

Description

Several communities in the SCRCOG region have limited water and sewer service within their boundaries or no service at all, instead relying on wells and on-site sewer treatment such as septic systems. The lack of water and/or sewer capacity limits a municipality's ability to support new residential development, particularly a more intensive form of residential development such as multifamily housing. Although these communities have developable sites that would be well-suited for multifamily housing, the lack of water and/or sewer infrastructure creates health, safety, and public welfare constraints limiting the feasibility of developing the sites. If the site is large enough a developer could bring in on-site treatment solutions such as a package plant for sewer, but these options are very costly and require on-going monitoring and maintenance over the life of the development.

This strategy recommends municipalities in the SCRCOG region continue to work together to look at the potential for expanding water and sewer service areas into communities with limited or no availability of water and/or sewer services. Collaboration among SCRCOG municipalities already exists through partnerships such as the Regional Water Authority (RWA), which provides water to 15 municipalities in the region. The Greater New Haven Water Pollution Control Authority (GNHWPCA) manages sewer services across several municipalities in the region including New Haven, East Haven, Hamden, and Woodbridge. There is precedent for working together and expanding services to new parts of the region. Infrastructure has been identified as one of the primary barriers to advancing multifamily housing construction in some communities.

Part of this strategy could also involve conducting a feasibility study to explore the viability of the region's municipalities forming or joining a new or existing waste authority. Based on the findings of this study, coupled with the findings of the site assessment and parcel analysis in this study, the consultant could draft legal language and a technical framework for priortizing and implementing its recommendations.

Action Steps

1. Determine Service Area Expansion Opportunities

SCRCOG should work with member municipalities and service districts to identify locations where infrastructure extensions could be leveraged to enable new housing opportunities. Also SCRCOG could hire a consultant to assess the feasibility and impact on current ratepayers.

2. Study the Cost and Feasibility of Expanding Service

SCRCOG, in partnership with affected municipalities and service districts, could hire a consultant to study the cost, feasibility, capacity, and infrastructure needs for expanding water or sewer services. The study should address the impact on existing systems and treatment plants.

3. Identify Project Costs and Potential Funding Sources for Expansion Project(s)

The consultant study should identify project costs as well as potential funding sources available to pay for the expansion project.

4. Approval of the Project

Once expansion projects have been identified and studied and cost estimates have been established, the service district board would need to vote to approve the project.

5. Investigate the Possibility of Creating New Service Districts

If there are parts of the region that cannot be served by existing water and sewer districts, SCRCOG could work with member municipalities to investigate the possibility of creating new service districts.

Implementation Partners

This strategy would require close coordination between the service districts in the region, the member municipalities that are part of the service district/board, and the municipalities that would like to have service expanded in their community. While SCRCOG could serve as the initial convener of a group to discuss the possibilities of service expansion, it will ultimately be up to the service district and its representatives to determine the feasibility, cost, and desirability of expanding service beyond the current district boundaries.
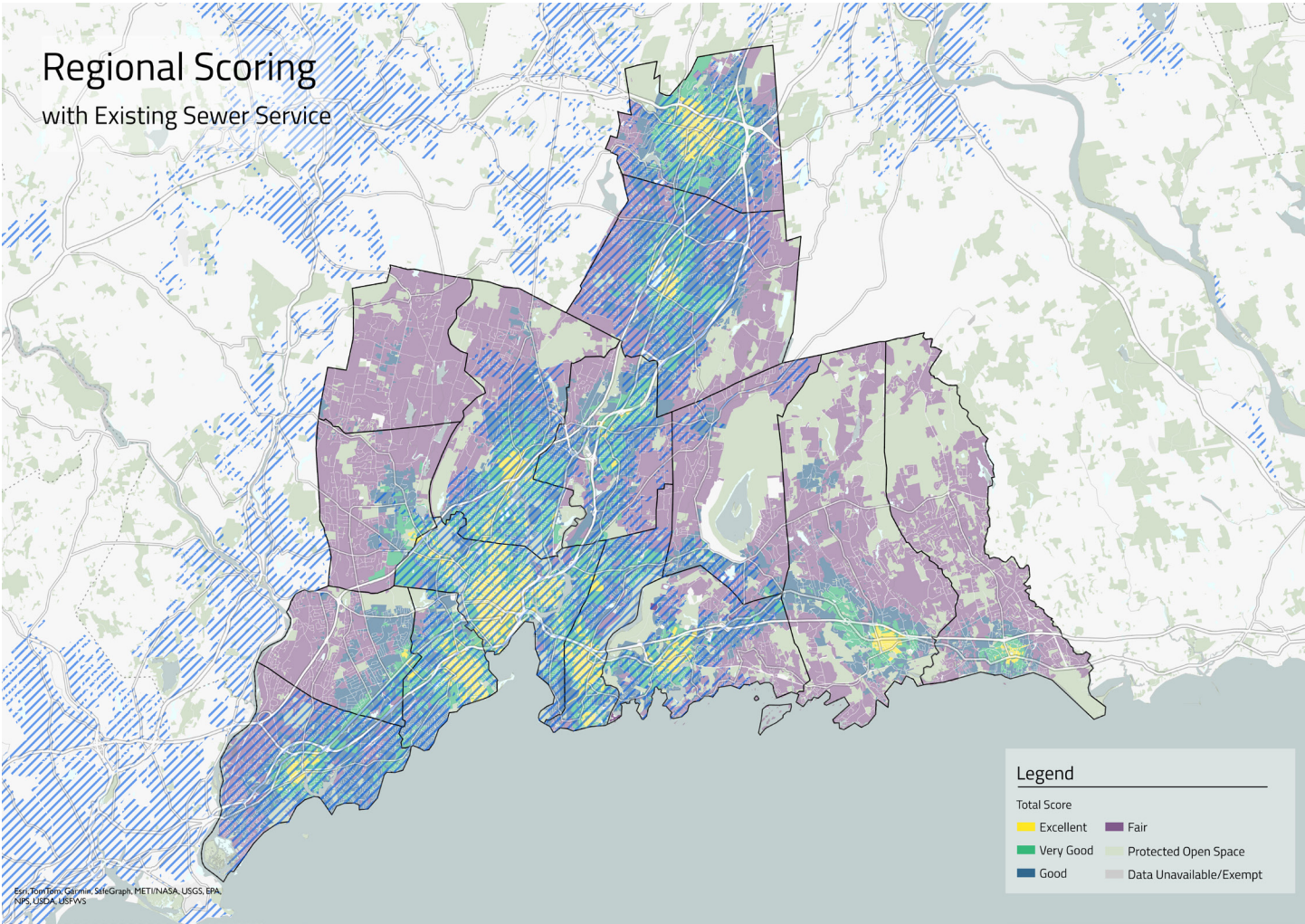
Measures of Success

a. Linear feet of new water and/or sewer lines installed in the region

b. Acres of newly approved/serviced area in the region

c. Number of housing units built and served by the new expansion projects.

Case Study

New Haven, East Haven, Hamden, and Woodbridge comprise
the municipalities that are part of the GNHWPCA regional water
pollution authority. The authority was created in June 2005 with state
approval in July 2005 to operate a wastewater system including a
treatment plant to service the four municipalities. The system has a
treatment capacity of 40 million gallons of wastewater per day and
all wastewater system assets in the municipalities were acquired by
the authority once established. The authority is now responsible for
the operation and maintenance of 555 miles of pipelines, 30 pump
stations, and the water treatment plant.

Source: **https://gnhwpca.com/about-gnhwpca/**

Regional Scoring with Existing Sewer Service

Legend — Total Score: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, Protected Open Space, Data Unavailable/Exempt

2.5 Technical Assistance for Establishing TIF Districts

Description

Connecticut Public Act No. 15-57 enables municipalities to establish tax increment financing (TIF) districts, leveraging future property tax revenue from development projects to issue bonds for public improvements and stimulate economic and community revitalization. TIF is a financing method that uses future property tax revenue from a development project within the TIF district to pay for costs associated with that development. Eligible expenditures can include both public and private costs. Eligible expenditures can include a wide range of public infrastructure improvements, project development costs, land assemblage, remediation costs, administrative expenses, and more.

Establishing a TIF district is a locally driven process where the state's legislation enables municipalities to establish a TIF using the local legislative process. In some cases, municipalities may not have the time, resources, or capacity to undertake an analysis of establishing or expanding a TIF district. In these cases, it could be helpful if SCRCOG had in-house resources to help municipalities through the process of evaluating and establishing districts with an emphasis on municipalities that would like to leverage TIF for housing purposes.

Action Steps

1. **Evaluate the Feasibility of Offering TIF Services with Existing Staff**

   SCRCOG should evaluate the skillset and knowledge base of current staff to determine the feasibility of offering technical assistance for TIF requests in-house. If those skills exist, SCRCOG should evaluate the current capacity of existing staff members to determine if additional work can be absorbed or if workload needs to be shifted across other staff members.

2. **Determine the Cost of Services**

   If the current staff is unable to support the new program in-house, SCRCOG should seek assistance through an on-call RFQ process, hiring consultants that member municipalities can access via the TIF technical assistance program. Once requests are placed, approved consultants can submit price proposals, and SCRCOG can select the appropriate consultant. The RFQ process can include requests for price ranges or hourly rates to assess the potential cost of services.

3. **Market the New Program to Member Municipalities**

   Once the program is established, SCRCOG should market the new technical assistance offerings to member municipalities.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG and member municipalities.

Measures of Success

a. Number of new TIF districts established

b. Number of TIF districts expanded

c. Number of new housing units created in TIF districts that received SCRCOG support

Case Study

a. The Town of Windsor, Connecticut created a Tax Increment Financing Policy guide outlining the local legislative process, what TIF can and cannot be used for, and a discussion of Credit Enhancement Agreements. The guide is used to set policy but also educate property owners on the value of TIF and how it can be used in town. This could serve as an example for SCRCOG for how to set up a municipal TIF guide if member municipalities do not already have something similar.

   Source: **https://townofwindsorct.com/app/uploads/sites/11/2023/01/Windsor-TIF-POLICY-Adopted-6.6.22-1.pdf**

b. The Connecticut Main Street Center commissioned the creation of a short TIF Guidebook in 2017 that provides a description of the program, how it can be used, how revenues and expenditures are calculated, and how to manage a TIF district once established. This could also be a resource for SCRCOG to use or build upon for the region as part of the TIF program.

   Source: **https://www.oldsaybrookct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif10491/f/uploads/tif_guidebook-final.pdf**

c. MassDevelopment, a quasi-public agency in Massachusetts, supports state and local entities with real estate planning and development. It offers technical assistance related to the establishment and evaluation of District Improvement Financing districts (what TIF is called in Massachusetts). Their technical assistance program provides quick studies on the feasibility of establishing DIF districts, potential revenue streams from new development, and an assessment of public improvements that could be funded by the new district.

   Source: **https://www.massdevelopment.com/products-and-services/real-estate/planning-and-predevelopment/**

2.6 Linking Land Use, Housing, and Transportation Funding

Description

As mandated by federal law, SCRCOG and its members must adopt an updated Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) every year covering a period of four federal fiscal years. The main purpose of the TIP document is to plan and program major transportation projects in the region to address issues around capacity, congestion, safety, and community improvements. The TIP document approved at the regional level should be submitted to the state for integration into the statewide TIP, making projects eligible for state and federal funding and potentially prioritizing them for design and construction over time.

Some Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), such as SCRCOG, have adopted scoring systems for local and regional transportation improvement projects, prioritizing those that align with regional vision and goals. SCRCOG's Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) of 2023-2050 emphasizes linking land use with transportation to support community revitalization, expand housing, and focus development around key transportation nodes and corridors. To strengthen the connection between transportation and housing, SCRCOG could implement a project scoring system that awards points based on the goals outlined in the MTP so there is alignment between the regional vision and transportation funding. One category for points could be centered around the advancement of housing and mixed-use development where the transportation investment unlocks new development or improves the safety and access to areas of new development/redevelopment.

Action Steps

1. Discuss the Idea of Creating a Scoring System for TIP Projects

SCRCOG should pull out the goals from the MTP and determine if and how they can be translated into scoring metrics to link the region's transportation vision and implementation projects. SCRCOG should also pull together a set of case studies from other MPOs around the country that have implemented similar processes.

2. Develop the Scoring Criteria

If the board and member municipalities agree, SCRCOG should proceed with developing the scoring criteria. The first step would be determining the metrics that can be tied to the goals in the MTP and any other planning/policy documents that have linkages between goals for the region and transportation improvement projects. These could be related to land use, economic development, housing, transportation and accessibility, equity, and resiliency. After determining the linkage between goals and metrics, SCRCOG will need to assign score ranges for each metric and/or weights if some metrics and goals are more important to the region than others.

3. Ensure Data is Available for Accurately Scoring Metrics

Having measurable data on traffic counts, crash incidents, future land use plans, population, and employment in an area should be tied to the specific metrics as much as possible. This also recognizes some metrics may be more qualitative such as the impact on quality of life measures.

4. Utilize the Scoring Criteria to Inform Future TIP Decisions

After the metrics, numeric score ranges/weights, and data measures are established, SCRCOG should utilize the system to score the current TIP projects to see how it works and what projects rise to the top. This draft evaluation should be presented to the board for review and feedback.

Implementation Partners

This strategy would involve SCRCOG staff and the MPO's board to evaluate the feasibility and weighting of a project scoring system. Once finalized, this system should be communicated to all member municipalities to ensure they understand how project concepts may be affected by the new prioritization methods.

Measures of Success

a. Number of projects that are funded/prioritized and the scores associated with those projects. Not every project funded will have the highest score as projects may have merit beyond the score received.

b. Keep track of projects funded and their scores to see how many projects in the top 10% or 20% of ranked scores are programmed in each year of the TIP.

Case Study

a. The Boston MPO completed an update of their TIP scoring criteria in January 2021 tied to the region's Long Range Transportation Plan, Destination 2040. Criteria include safety improvements, expanding multimodal mobility, increasing equity, supporting environmental sustainability, enhancing economic development, and supporting the modernization of the transportation system. The criteria are then applied to projects across the MPO's six funding categories. More information can be found about the Boston MPO's TIP and process **here.**

Source: **https://www.bostonmpo.org/tip**

Case Study

b. The Atlanta Regional Council (ARC) has an extensive scoring system for TIP projects which is also tied to their Livable Centers Initiative (LCI). The LCI conducts studies in various municipalities and counties to improve housing, economic, and transportation outcomes. If a project is in the LCI Plan's implementation table and it advances affordable or workforce housing directly, it can receive points. If it supports transit-oriented development, it can receive points. This extensive list of criteria could provide SCRCOG with a good starting point for developing regionally specific criteria for its TIP process.

Source: **https://cdn.atlantaregional.org/wp-content/uploads/tip-cookbook-2021.pdf**

3. Resources

3.1 Model Zoning Bylaws/Draft Inclusionary Zoning Language

Description

As SCRCOG continues to advance its mission of supporting sustainable development and enhancing regional planning, a crucial step is providing model zoning bylaws and draft Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) language. These resources are designed to create a standardized and comprehensive framework that can improve affordable housing options and streamline zoning regulations across the region. Model zoning bylaws offer municipalities a detailed and adaptable template to develop or revise their zoning regulations. These bylaws include specific rules for land use, development densities, building heights, and setbacks, which can be customized to meet the unique needs of individual communities. In addition to these core elements, model zoning bylaws often come with supplementary resources, such as implementation guides, that assist municipalities in applying and enforcing the new standards effectively.

The draft IZ language would complement these bylaws by providing a set of standardized guidelines for promoting affordable housing in new developments. This language typically includes requirements for a percentage of units to be designated as affordable, criteria defining what constitutes affordable housing, and various options for developers to meet these requirements. Developers may choose to provide affordable units on-site, develop them off-site, or contribute financially to an affordable housing fund. The IZ language serves as a practical tool that municipalities can adopt to ensure new projects contribute to broader housing equity goals, making affordable housing a key component of regional development strategies.

In addition to draft zoning and model inclusionary zoning language, SCRCOG could also provide support and template language for the state's Incentive Housing Zones program. This Statue provides incentives to municipalities that create Incentive Housing Zones in locations that meet eligibility requirements such as near transit, and in locations that have infrastructure capacity. The Incentive Housing Zone program has several requirements as well as other considerations such as dimensional standards in underlying zoning districts. Following the same framework as the aforementioned draft zoning bylaws and inclusionary zoning language, SCRCOG could create model language for member municipalities to borrow for the creation of Incentive Housing Zones.

Action Steps

1. **Develop Model Bylaws and IZ Language**

   a. Create comprehensive model zoning bylaws that include specific provisions for affordable housing requirements, density bonuses, and flexible development options, ensuring they address regional needs and best practices.

   b. Develop clear and detailed IZ language specifying the percentage of affordable units required, affordability criteria (e.g., percentage of AMI), and any off-site or in-lieu payment options.

2. **Engage Stakeholders**

   Organize meetings with municipal officials and other stakeholders to present drafts and gather feedback.

3. **Review and Refine**

   Incorporate feedback to finalize the model zoning bylaws and IZ language, ensuring clarity and alignment with regional goals.

4. **Support Adoption and Implementation**

   a. Offer workshops and training sessions for municipal staff, planners, and developers on the new bylaws and IZ language.

   b. Help municipalities navigate the adoption process, including drafting local ordinances and obtaining necessary approvals.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG and member municipalities' planning and zoning departments, elected leaders, private developers, legal experts, community and business groups, and local advocacy organizations.

Measures of Success

a. Adoption and implementation rates are critical, including the percentage of municipalities that have adopted the new guidelines and the speed of their implementation.

b. Number of new affordable housing units created and the proportion of these units relative to total new construction.

Case Study

a. The Massachusetts Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) bylaw provides a framework for increasing affordable housing by requiring developers of certain residential projects to include a percentage

of affordable units or contribute to an affordable housing fund. The bylaw sets affordability criteria, ensuring that units are priced for households earning below a specified percentage of the area median income (AMI). It offers incentives such as density bonuses and relaxed zoning requirements to encourage compliance. Developers can fulfill their obligations by providing affordable units on-site, developing them off-site, or making financial contributions. The bylaw also includes mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing compliance to ensure that affordable units are maintained and rented to eligible households. This approach integrates affordable housing into new developments, fostering community diversity and addressing local housing needs effectively.

needs and regulations. Zoning serves as a crucial regulatory tool that can either facilitate or hinder the development of diverse housing types in alignment with a community's vision.

Source: **https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/rhs-model-bylaws**

Figure 34: Inclusionary Housing Policy by Cape Cod Commission

Source: **https://progov21.org/Download/Document/P72K73**

b. The Cape Cod Commission has created a set of model bylaws aimed at enhancing housing opportunities across the region. These model bylaws provide a flexible framework for communities to adapt their zoning regulations, supported by explanatory guides and Word versions to ease customization. It is recommended that towns consult with legal counsel when making zoning amendments to ensure alignment with local

3.2 Model RFP for Development Types

Description

A model Request for Proposals (RFP) for housing development types outlines a structured approach to solicit and evaluate proposals for various housing projects. It specifies the objectives of increasing affordable and diverse housing options, details the scope of the development including required housing types, affordability criteria, and design standards. The RFP includes submission requirements such as developer qualifications, project concept, and budget, as well as evaluation criteria to assess alignment with community goals. By providing clear guidelines and evaluation metrics, the model RFP aims to attract high-quality proposals that address local housing needs and contribute to effective housing strategies.

Action Steps

1. Form a Task Force

Assemble a team including SCRCOG staff, local municipal representatives, housing experts, and developers to oversee the development of the model RFP.

2. Research

Study existing RFPs and best practices from similar housing initiatives to understand effective criteria, requirements, and processes.

3. Draft RFP

a.   Define qualifications and experience required for developers.
b.   Specify what developers need to submit, such as project descriptions, financial plans, and timelines.
c.   Establish criteria for assessing proposals, focusing on community impact, innovation, and alignment with local goals.
d.   Detail the submission deadlines, review procedures, and selection process.

4. Consult Stakeholders

Review the draft with local stakeholders, including municipal leaders and community organizations, to gather feedback and ensure alignment with local needs and priorities.

5. Distribute and Implement

After finalizing the RFP document, distribute the RFP to member municipalities for their future housing projects.

6. Organize and Host Developers' Conference to highlight development opportunties.

Implementation Partners

This effort should be led by SCRCOG staff in partnership with municipal staff and private sector developers.

Measures of Success

a. Number and quality of proposals
b. Developer feedback
c. Diversity of respondents
d. Number of projects initiated and completed
e. Number of affordable housing units created
f. Impact on local housing markets
g. Resident feedback

Case Study

a. This Request for Proposals (RFPs) template is from the Housing Toolbox and is a comprehensive document designed to guide municipalities and organizations in crafting RFPs for affordable housing projects. The template provides a structured approach to developing RFPs, ensuring that key aspects of project planning, execution, and evaluation are addressed.

Source: **https://www.housingtoolbox.org/assets/files/resources/mhp-rfp-template.pdf**

b. The "Draft Developer RFP for Partnership to Expand Housing Opportunities Program" from Massachusetts outlines the criteria for developers to propose collaborations on affordable housing projects. It includes standards for project descriptions, financial plans, and timelines, with a focus on community impact, innovation, and benefits for evaluation.

Source: **https://www.mass.gov/doc/draft-developer-rfp-for-partnership-to-expand-housing-opportunities-program-0**

3.3 Strategy Briefs for Local Municipalities

Description

Strategy briefs for local municipalities provide concise, actionable guidance on addressing housing needs and challenges within the community. These briefs typically outline strategic goals, policy recommendations, and implementation steps tailored to local contexts, focusing on enhancing housing affordability, diversity, and accessibility. They offer insights into best practices, data-driven approaches, and potential partnerships to support effective housing solutions. By summarizing key strategies and actionable items, these briefs could help municipal leaders make informed decisions and coordinate efforts to improve housing outcomes and promote sustainable community development.

Action Steps

1. Define Objectives

Define the main goals of the regional housing strategy, such as increasing affordable housing stock, improving housing quality, or promoting sustainable development.

2. Gather Data

Conduct thorough research to understand local housing conditions, including data on housing affordability, vacancy rates, population growth, and market trends. Utilize existing reports, census data, and local studies.

3. Formulate Recommendations

Craft detailed policy recommendations based on the identified areas of intervention.

4. Draft and Final Briefs

Prepare initial drafts of the strategy briefs for review. Adjust briefs based on feedback from stakeholders.

5. Distribute and Present

Distribute the finalized strategy briefs to local municipalities and other relevant parties. Organize presentations, workshops, or briefings to explain the contents of the briefs.

Implementation Partners

This effort should be led by SCRCOG staff in partnership with local municipalities, nonprofit organizations, private sector developers, consultants, community groups, and residents.

Measures of Success

a. Number of briefs produced

b. Number of presentation given related to the briefs

Case Study

The "Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust (MAHT) Guidebook" provides comprehensive guidance on utilizing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to support affordable housing initiatives in Massachusetts. The guidebook outlines the purpose and eligibility criteria for funding, details the application process, and describes the types of projects that can be funded, such as new construction, renovation, and home-buyer assistance. It also includes best practices for managing and implementing funded projects, along with strategies for leveraging additional resources and ensuring long-term affordability. The guide aims to help municipalities, developers, and organizations effectively navigate the funding process and achieve successful housing outcomes.

Source: https://www.mhp.net/assets/resources/documents/MAHT-Guidebook_2018.pdf

3.4 Design Guidelines and Zoning Best Practices

Description

Design Guidelines and Zoning Best Practices provide a framework for shaping the physical and regulatory aspects of housing development across the region. This strategy aims to ensure that new housing projects align with regional goals for sustainability, community integration, and aesthetic quality. It includes clear design standards for building aesthetics, scale, and functionality to promote cohesive and vibrant neighborhoods. Additionally, it outlines zoning best practices to streamline approval processes, support diverse housing types, and enhance affordability. Categories of guidelines and best practices could include:

- **Accessory Dwelling Units** (ADUs) are secondary housing units built on the same property as a primary residence, typically including options like basement apartments, garage conversions, or detached units. ADUs are an effective solution for addressing housing shortages because they increase the available housing stock without requiring new land development.

- **Multi-family housing by-right** broadens housing options beyond single-family homes and improves affordability by offering a range of multifamily choices, all while reducing regulatory barriers. These units—ranging from small duplexes and triplexes to large apartment complexes or high-rise buildings—can include apartments, condominiums, or townhouses, each accommodating different household sizes.

- **Mixed-use development by-right** allows developers to integrate residential, commercial, and sometimes industrial uses into a single project without requiring additional zoning approvals. This approach facilitates the creation of vibrant, multi-functional neighborhoods where people can live, work, and shop in close proximity.

- **Form-based Code** regulates the design and appearance of buildings and public spaces to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods. Unlike traditional zoning, which focuses on land use, form-based codes set standards for building height, scale, and street frontage to create cohesive, pedestrian-friendly environments.

- **Transit Oriented Development** (TOD) Overlay is a zoning tool that encourages higher-density, mixed-use development near transit stations and corridors. By focusing on areas well-served by public transportation, TOD Overlays promote the integration of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, making it easier for residents to access transit options and reduce reliance on cars.

Action Steps

1. **Development Model Guidelines**

   a. Develop initial drafts of design guidelines and zoning best practices based on research, best practices from other regions, and stakeholder input.

   b. Address critical areas such as land use, building aesthetics, sustainability, transportation, and community integration.

   c. Ensure the guidelines align with regional plans, goals, and regulatory requirements.

2. **Community engagement**

   Continue to host public meetings, workshops, and forums to gather input from residents and stakeholders on draft guidelines.

3. **Review and refinement**

   a. Establish a review committee to evaluate draft guidelines and make recommendations for improvement.

   b. Prepare the final version of the guidelines, ensuring clarity, comprehensiveness, and alignment with objectives.

4. **Adoption and Implementation**

   a. Assist municipalities in integrating the guidelines into their existing zoning codes and planning documents.

   b. Communicate the adoption of the guidelines to stakeholders and the public, highlighting the benefits and expected outcomes.

5. **Training and Capacity Building**

   Develop and deliver training sessions on the use and implementation of the guidelines. Organize workshops and seminars to address specific aspects of the guidelines and best practices.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff, consultants, and member municipalities.

Measures of Success

The number of communities that utilize the model bylaws to modify their own bylaws.

Case Study

The "Design Guidelines for Multifamily Housing," issued by the Cape Cod Commission, offer an in-depth framework for the development of multifamily residential projects in the Cape Cod region. Divided into two primary sections: building typologies and place types. They are designed to ensure that new multifamily developments seamlessly integrate with their surroundings, enhance the local character, and meet high design standards. Aimed at developers and planners, these guidelines provide essential direction for creating multifamily housing that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing, while supporting regional objectives for sustainable and context-sensitive growth.

Source: **https://capecodcommission.org/our-work/mf-design-guidelines**

4. Technical Assistance and Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Establish Regional Housing Services Office

Description

The SCRCOG region has identified a clear need for a Regional Housing Services Office, highlighted during municipal and stakeholder meetings. This proposed office would offer vital support for monitoring and compliance of deed-restricted units and provide technical assistance for administering or utilizing both existing and new programs aimed at enhancing affordable and attainable housing.

A successful model for this initiative is the Shared Regional Housing Services (SRHS) program in Barnstable County, which is funded through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for a two-year pilot period (ending June 2025). This program is developing an affordable housing database, creating universal templates for deed restrictions, monitoring checklists, and local preference documentation, and providing direct technical assistance to Cape Cod towns. It helps with tasks such as reviewing proposals, preparing housing production plans, maintaining affordable units, and coordinating deed restriction updates.

Establishing a similar office for the SCRCOG region with stable, long-term funding would offer a significant resource for municipalities, improving their capacity to manage affordable housing programs. It is crucial that the office remains flexible to adapt to evolving needs and supports communities with various funding and financing sources as they change over time.

Action Steps

1. **Develop a Strategic Plan for Creating the Office**

   Define the objectives and scope of the Regional Housing Services Office as well as which municipalities would like to take part in this effort. Outline key services and functions, such as monitoring deed-restricted units, providing technical assistance, and managing affordable housing programs.

2. **Secure Funding Resources**

   Explore initial funding sources, including state and federal grants, and local contributions. Develop a budget and financial plan to support the office's establishment and ongoing operations.

3. **Establish Governance and Staffing**

   a. Create a governance structure, including a steering committee or advisory board with representatives from member towns.

   b. Recruit and hire qualified staff or designate existing personnel to manage and operate the office.

4. **Develop Operational Infrastructure**

   a. Set up the physical office space and acquire necessary technology and tools.

   b. Create standardized procedures and templates for housing documents, monitoring checklists, and compliance reports.

5. **Develop Operational Infrastructure**

   Implement initiatives to test and refine the office's services and processes.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff, municipal representatives, and possible consultants.

Measures of Success

a. Number of affordable housing units created or preserve

b. Compliance rates for deed-restricted units

c. Total funding secured

Case Study

a. The "Updated Implementation Plan" for Barnstable County's Shared Regional Housing Services (SRHS) program outlines a comprehensive strategy to enhance affordable housing efforts across Cape Cod. It focuses on centralizing support services to improve efficiency and effectiveness, including developing a regional affordable housing database, creating standardized templates for housing-related documents, and providing technical assistance to local municipalities. The plan details actions for monitoring and maintaining affordable units, coordinating updates to deed restrictions, and managing housing proposals. Funded initially through the American Rescue Plan

Act (ARPA) for two years, the document also addresses the need for sustainable long-term funding and the importance of collaboration among municipalities and county staff to ensure the program's success and adaptability.

Source: **https://www.capecod.gov/wp-content/ uploads/2023/06/Updated-Implementation-Plan.pdf**

b. The Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) is a collaborative effort established in 2011 through an Inter-Municipal Agreement comprising the towns of Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, Maynard, Natick, Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston. Assisted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), the RHSO was created to enhance affordable housing management and support across these communities. The office provides a range of services including proactive monitoring, program administration, project development, and resident assistance. Hosted by Concord, which serves as the Lead Community, the RHSO operates with staff employed by Concord. Recognized for its innovative approach, the RHSO received the Kenneth Pickard Municipal Innovation Award from the Massachusetts Municipal Association in 2011. The RHSO centralizes housing functions to streamline processes, ensure consistency, and improve resource efficiency for its member towns.

Source: **https://www.rhsohousing.org/**

4.2 Expand Municipal Services Offered by SCRCOG

Description

SCRCOG offers a number of services to member communities through its Municipal Services program including energy initiatives, municipal grant resources, group purchasing, and solid waste and recycling initiatives. Given the focus of this program on technical assistance to municipal departments, there could be room for expanding the services offered under this program to incorporate housing-specific focus areas. Ideas for expanded services could include assistance with drafting and facilitating RFQ/RFP processes for the disposition of public land for housing where SCRCOG staff could help draft the RFQ/RFP document, publicize the opportunity to developers, assist with questions and answers, and help the municipality score responses and conduct interviews.

SCRCOG could also expand their grant writing opportunities to focus more on funding sources that would help unlock housing opportunities in the region. SCRCOG's website already contains many resources for grant writing and grant opportunities, as well as direct access to SCRCOG's grant writing consultants and staff. There could be additional opportunities to focus on state and federal grants directed at advancing affordable housing.

Lastly, some of the other strategy ideas listed in this plan could fall under the purview of the Municipal Services program such as creating shared regional services for property assessments, code enforcement, and building inspections. Staff under this program could also assist with exploring the feasibility of setting up a regional redevelopment authority or creating a regional housing services office.

Action Steps

1. Discuss Expansion of Municipal Services with Member Municipalities

SCRCOG should meet with member municipalities to determine which housing-related shared services and technical assistance would be most helpful. These discussions will help SCRCOG prioritize the programs and the level of service needed in the region.

2. Determine the Cost of Expanding Services

Once priorities and level of interest in each service area are identified, SCRCOG staff should begin the process of costing out the provision of services. This could include the cost of hiring new staff under the Municipal Services program or hiring consultants to conduct the studies for shared services.

3. Hire Staff and/or Consultants to Undertake Studies and Services

After determining the potential uptake of services by member municipalities and the potential cost associated with offering the different shared service programs, SCRCOG should identify the resources to hire new staff, expand staff roles, and/or hire consultants to assist with the tasks under this strategy.

4. Convene Regular Meetings with Member Municipalities

SCRCOG should organize regular meetings with member municipalities to discuss local needs and faciliate broader discussions on the regional goals that can be supported by the expansion of SCRCOG municipal services. These meetings should serve as an opportunity for municipal leaders to discuss the progress of ongoing projects and identify opportunities for partnerships and futher discussions related to coordination and capacity needs that can be supported by the expansion and prioritization of these expanded municipal services.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG, consultants, and member municipalities.

Measures of Sucess

a. RFQ/RFPs issued for housing

b. Number of shared positions created in the region

c. Number of inspections conducted by employees as part of the shared services program

Case Study

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the regional planning agency for the Greater Boston region, houses a department focusing on municipal collaboration. Staff within this department engage directly with the 101 cities and towns across the MAPC region on shared services such as joint fire and police dispatch, vehicle procurement, electric vehicle infrastructure, and homeland security infrastructure.

Source: **https://www.mapc.org/public-works-collective-purchasing-program/**

4.3 Continue/Expand Education Materials

Description

Developing and providing educational materials and resources is crucial for advancing housing initiatives as it equips stakeholders with essential knowledge and practical tools to address local housing challenges effectively. By offering clear, accessible information about housing needs, policies, and best practices, these resources empower community members, organizations, and policymakers to make informed decisions and collaborate more efficiently.

Educational resources for addressing housing solutions come in various formats, each designed to convey essential information effectively. Fact sheets provide concise summaries of specific housing topics and data, guides and toolkits offer detailed, step-by-step instructions and best practices, and case studies showcase successful projects with valuable insights. Infographics present complex data in a visually engaging way, videos and webinars deliver dynamic, interactive content, and brochures and flyers summarize key information and promote housing initiatives. These are just a few examples of educational resources that can provide valuable information on different housing solutions that can be tailored specifically to the SCRCOG region.

Action Steps

1. **Formulate Content Strategy**

   a. Determine the types of educational materials to be developed (e.g., fact sheets, guides, infographics).

   b. Outline the key topics and messages to be covered, ensuring they address the identified needs and objectives.

3. **Develop Content**

   a. Research and compile accurate data, case studies, and best practices relevant to the region.

   b. Write and design educational materials, focusing on clarity, relevance, and engagement.

3. **Design and Production**

   a. Create visually appealing designs for each type of material, including infographics, brochures, and flyers.

   b. Develop multimedia content such as videos and webinars, ensuring high production quality.

4. **Distribute Materials**

   a. Develop a distribution plan that includes online platforms, local events, and direct outreach to stakeholders.

   b. Ensure materials are accessible to diverse audiences, including those with different levels of technical expertise.

5. **Design and Production**

   a. Use various communication channels, such as social media, newsletters, and community meetings, to promote educational resources.

   b. Engage with local media and partner organizations to broaden the reach and impact of the materials.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff, consultants, non-profit partners, municipal staff.

Measures of Sucess

a. Usage statistics and participation rates

b. Evaluating feedback and changes in knowledge or behavior

Case Study

a. The "Fair Housing Month 2023: Explore Education and Outreach Resources" page on HUD Exchange offers a range of tools and materials to promote fair housing practices. It includes educational content, fact sheets, training modules, and outreach strategies to raise awareness, support compliance with fair housing laws, and foster inclusive environments.

   Source: **https://www.hudexchange.info/news/fair-housing-month-2023-explore-education-and-outreach-resources/**

b. The "Housing Solutions Fact Sheet," offers a concise overview of various strategies and approaches for addressing housing challenges in the San Diego region. This fact sheet outlines key housing solutions, including policy recommendations, development incentives, and community engagement initiatives aimed at increasing affordable housing availability and improving housing equity. It serves as a practical resource for policymakers, developers, and community members to understand and implement effective measures to tackle local housing issues and support sustainable development.

   Source: **https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/cc-fact-sheet-housing-solutions.pdf**

4.4 Support for Pre-development Activities

Description

The SCRCOG parcel scoring tool revealed the need for pre-development activities to prepare sites for housing development across the region. Some of the biggest barriers besides infrastructure are pre-planning and community engagement as well as the lack of zoning that would allow/incentivize housing development. To help municipalities prepare sites for housing development, SCRCOG staff could work with member municipalities to fund and undertake pre-development activities such as planning for housing in areas, corridors, or sites. Conducting community engagement and education on the benefits of housing or mixed-use in these areas of the community. There could also be grant writing services offered to apply for infrastructure funding to extend water and/or sewer service. Lastly, there could be more technical studies such as market analyses, highest and best use analyses, or TIF analyses to understand the potential of housing sites and prepare them for external marketing to the development community.

Action Steps

1. Identify Technical Assistance Funds

The first step in this process is to identify a pot of funding that could be established or set aside for the distinct purpose of helping with pre-development work related to housing.

2. Identify Areas of Technical Assistance and Create an Application Process

It will be important for SCRCOG staff to identify the areas of technical assistance that are of the highest value and importance to member municipalities and technical assistance that is consistent with the organization's mission and capabilities. There may be some pre-development activities that SCRCOG cannot or should not undertake. Once the areas of technical assistance are determined, SCRCOG can put together a short application to solicit ideas and projects from municipalities. This application could also be used to score ideas or prioritize ideas if limited funding is available or requests exceed available funds.

3. Procure a Bench of On-Call Consultants

There may be some areas of technical assistance that is beyond the staffing capacity or expertise of SCRCOG staff. For that, SCRCOG may consider issuing an RFQ for consultants who could serve as on-call experts. This is very common practice in regional planning agencies across the country when they need specific assistance and it is more practical to bring on an outside consultant for a short time.

4. Match Applications with Staff/Consultants

Once applications are received from member municipalities, SCRCOG can choose to score them or prioritize them based on a set of criteria or available funding. For applications that move forward, SCRCOG should meet with the applicants to draft an actual scope of work and budget. If outside consultants are required, they should be part of the scoping and budgeting process as well.

Implementation Partners

SCRCOG staff, member municipalities, and consultants.

Measures of Success

a. Number of predevelopment studies funded and executed

b. Number of housing units unlocked as a result of these studies

Case Study

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission is using their District Local Technical Assistance funds to work with their member municipalities on housing-related projects such as advancing locations for housing, creating new zoning, investigating and applying for incentive programs through the state, and identifying infrastructure challenges for specific properties.

Source: **https://www.mapc.org/get-involved/legislative-priorities/district-local-technical-assistance-dlta/**