



**Town of Natick, Massachusetts**  
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James Freas, AICP  
Director

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**TO:** Select Board

**FROM:** Ted Fields, Senior Planner, Community & Economic Development

**RE:** Natick Housing Production Plan, 2021 Update

**Meeting Date:** June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, the Community & Economic Development Department (CED) completed an 18-month process of updating Natick's Housing Production Plan, originally drafted in 2012. This work was commissioned by the Natick Affordable Housing Trust, and was initially undertaken by Barrett Planning Associates. Progress was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and CED took over final revision early this year. CED sent the final draft to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in March for an initial review, which was favorable. DHCD requires the Natick Affordable Housing Trust and Select Board to endorse the Updated Plan so that it can be certified and formally approved by the Commonwealth. The Housing Trust endorsed the Updated Plan at their meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

A DHCD- approved Housing Production Plan allows communities to manage Chapter 40B ("Comprehensive Permit") applications if they cannot meet the law's statutory minimum ("Safe Harbor") for housing affordability. This requires a community having at least 10% of its housing stock compliant with state affordability standards. These plans allow communities that lose Safe Harbor status to achieve temporary Safe Harbor protections if they meet specified production levels of affordable homes. Natick currently enjoys 40b Safe Harbor status, with 10.6% of its housing classified as affordable. However, having the 2021 Updated Housing Production Plan approved by DHCD now will protect the Town if it loses Safe Harbor status as a result of findings of the 2020 US Census. This protection will last for five years from state approval, and will allow the Town to achieve "certification", or temporary Safe Harbor classification, for one year if it develops 70 affordable dwellings, or two years if it develops 140 affordable units. Under 40b Safe Harbor status, sponsors of 40b projects cannot appeal local denials of Comprehensive Permit applications to the state's Housing Appeals Committee.

Staff is seeking Select Board endorsement of the Housing Trust's 2021 Updated Housing Production Plan, so that it can be formally submitted to DHCD for approval.