

HOUSING

Background

One of the unique qualities of the Lake Placid / North Elba area is the fact that it is a resort community where long-term, year-round residents live. It was not created and designed by a corporation, but rather one built by the residents. It was the residents of the community who hosted two Olympics, built sports venues, and continues to draw conventions, World Cup Events, Ironman Competitions, Horseshows, and other activities to the area. It was also the residents who built the homes, the residential neighborhoods, the schools, the churches, the retail stores, services and professional practices.

Meanwhile the housing market in the area has changed. The cost of housing has increased and retirees from outside the region drive up market prices as they retire to the area and more homes are bought as investments. An increased number of second homes and vacation rentals have led to many residential areas turning into "dark neighborhoods", consisting of houses that are empty most of the time.



Service industry workers can no longer afford to live in the area so the gateway corridors are crowded during rush hours with commuters coming and going from as far away as Malone or Ausable Forks. Teachers, accountants, lawyers and others with middle class jobs start their careers in Lake Placid, and then buy a home in an outlying community where they raise their family. Many sons and daughters of long-time residents cannot afford to live in the area and seniors have difficulty remaining independent without their support. Staffing the volunteer fire departments and ambulance corps is increasingly difficult.

This shift in demographics also requires design changes in residential structures to accommodate the ability to age in place. Facilities and services for an aging population have to be provided. Principles of universal design should be considered in any type of construction.

Vacation rentals intensify the use of resident structures and create safety, parking, and quality of life issues. The increased use of housing also places an additional strain on the infrastructure. Electrical and sanitary sewage capacities either become stressed, or increasingly expensive. This leads to a need for energy conservation and the desire to retrofit existing residences and build new residences to higher standards.

Any examination of the housing situation in the area, therefore, uncovers many challenges and opportunities.

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Vision for Housing

The Lake Placid / North Elba community provides a diversity of safe, energy efficient housing opportunities to attract people of all income levels and age groups.

Goals, Objectives and Implementation Measures

Goal #1: Increase the stock and availability of income-based housing in the North Elba/Lake Placid community.

Objective 1: Accurately measure and track changes in the inventory and price of targeted housing stock.

Implementation Measures

- Develop and maintain metrics that describe the number, type and costs of housing units (sales and rental) available for targeted household incomes.
- Coordinate information with the Tri-Lakes Housing Study (2010)

Objective 2: Monitor and adjust the impact of the adoption of the 2012 Land Use Code.

Implementation Measures

- Interview key individuals associated with developments that involve accessory dwellings and income-based housing. Propose appropriate amendments to the Land Use Code.

Objective 3: Increase the opportunity for the private development of income based housing.

Implementation Measures

- Identify municipal or private lands that are suitable for the development of income-based housing.
- Identify foreclosed properties that are suitable for the development of income-based housing.

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Objective 4: Build upon the existing partnership with the Adirondack Community Housing Trust (AHT).

Implementation Measures

- Investigate methods for increasing the North Elba funds currently administered by the AHT.
- Encourage the AHT to pursue funding opportunities for developing income-based housing in the Town of North Elba.

Objective 5: Develop mechanisms that may facilitate the flow of Federal and State housing funds.

Implementation Measures

- Research the advantages and disadvantages of creating a North Elba Housing Trust based upon Title XVIII of the New York State Constitution.
- Identify buildings suitable for rehabilitation that include income-based housing utilizing Federal Tax Credits.
- Develop methods that inform Village and Town officials of potential funding opportunities.

GOAL #2: Ensure that short-term rental housing units meet the health and safety requirements of the uniform code.

Objective 1: Establish a rental permit system for short term home rentals that provides for inspection, posting emergency information, maintaining safety equipment and reasonable occupancy limits.

Implementation Measures

- The Town and Village Boards should establish a joint committee to create a rental permit system for short term home rentals.

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Goal #3: Promote energy efficiency in the construction of new homes and the renovation of the existing housing stock.

Objective 1: Create a one-stop "clearinghouse" with information and guidance about programs available to contractors and homeowners.

Implementation Measures

- Include information on energy efficient construction, renovation and financing as part of the permit process.

Objective 2: Develop methods for financing energy efficient construction.

Implementation Measures

- Investigate the possibility of using special assessment districts, and other methods, to amortize costs more effectively.

Objective 3: Promote energy audits of existing and new housing stock.

Implementation Measures

- Develop a program to inform homeowners of energy leaks through the use of infrared photography.
- Create outreach programs that target specific homeowners with information regarding incentives to participate in existing programs.
- Train Town and / or Village employees to perform energy audits (BPI Certification).
- Provide homeowners with specific information regarding costs and effectiveness of energy upgrades.

Objective 4: Increase incentives for energy upgrades.

Implementation Measures

- Provide technical assistance to homeowners applying for available energy conservation programs.
- Use the Energy Conservation Fund to create a local program similar to the NYSERDA program.

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Goal #4: Provide for the housing needs of an increased senior population.

Objective 1: Increase the housing that meets the requirements of seniors and those with physical disabilities such as building accessibility, location of bathrooms, door widths and height of controls.

Implementation Measures

- Promote universal design principles for the construction of new homes and the renovation of the existing housing stock.
- Create a one-stop “clearinghouse” with information regarding the requirements and benefits associated with utilizing the principles of universal design.
- Create and publish market studies relevant to the development of senior housing.

Goal #5: Increase the availability of subsidized independent housing for seniors.

Objective 1: Place the community in a position where it can successfully compete for grants for the construction of senior housing.

Implementation Measures

- Establish a person / office as lead agency and community contact for the development of senior housing.
- Include a section that underscores the community commitment to independent senior housing in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Identify properties that fit the profile of valued sites as established by the Department of Housing Community Renewal (DHCR).
- Identify landowners and developers that are interested in developing senior housing projects.

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Objective 2: Increase the community resources available for the development of subsidized senior housing.

Implementation Measures

- Explore methods to increase the North Elba Housing fund currently administered by Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT) and develop agreements that allow the fund to be used for subsidized senior housing.

