



Stow's Housing Goals

**Stow Housing
Production Plan**
March 27, 2024

Agenda

Introductions: *Who's in the room?*

About HPPs: *What is a Housing Production Plan?*

Draft Housing Goals and Strategies: *What goals does Stow have for housing? What strategies will get us there?*

Closing

Who's in the room?

Introductions

Steering Committee

Maureen Crawford, Housing
Authority Member

Mike Kopczynski,
Affordable Housing Trust and
Housing Authority Chair

Cathy Leonard,
Affordable Housing Trust
Member

HPP Ambassadors

Town Staff

Valerie Oorthuys, Planning Director

Michael Slagle, Land Use Planner/
GIS Administrator

MAPC Team

Gloria Huangpu, Community
Engagement Specialist

Casey Williams, Regional Housing
Planner

PollEverywhere Instructions

Join by Web



- 1 Go to **PollEv.com**
- 2 Enter **MAPCPOLL**
- 3 Respond to activity

Join by Text



- 1 Text **MAPCPOLL** to **22333**
- 2 Text in your message

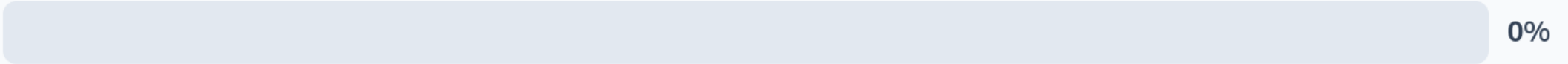


Are you attending in-person or online?

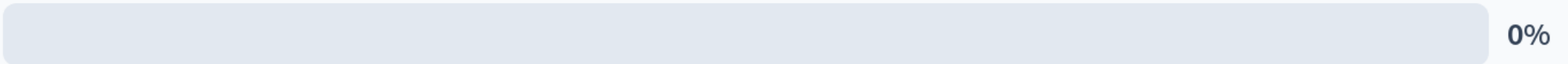
- In-person at Town Building
- Online on Zoom

Are you attending in-person or online?

In-person at Town Building



Online on Zoom



Did you attend the HPP forum on Nov. 7, 2023?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Did you attend the HPP forum on Nov. 7, 2023?

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Yes

0%

No

0%

I'm not sure

0%

How would you describe your living situation?

- I rent my home in Stow
- I own my home in Stow
- I own my home and I own a rental property in Stow
- I do not live in Stow
- Other

How would you describe your living situation?

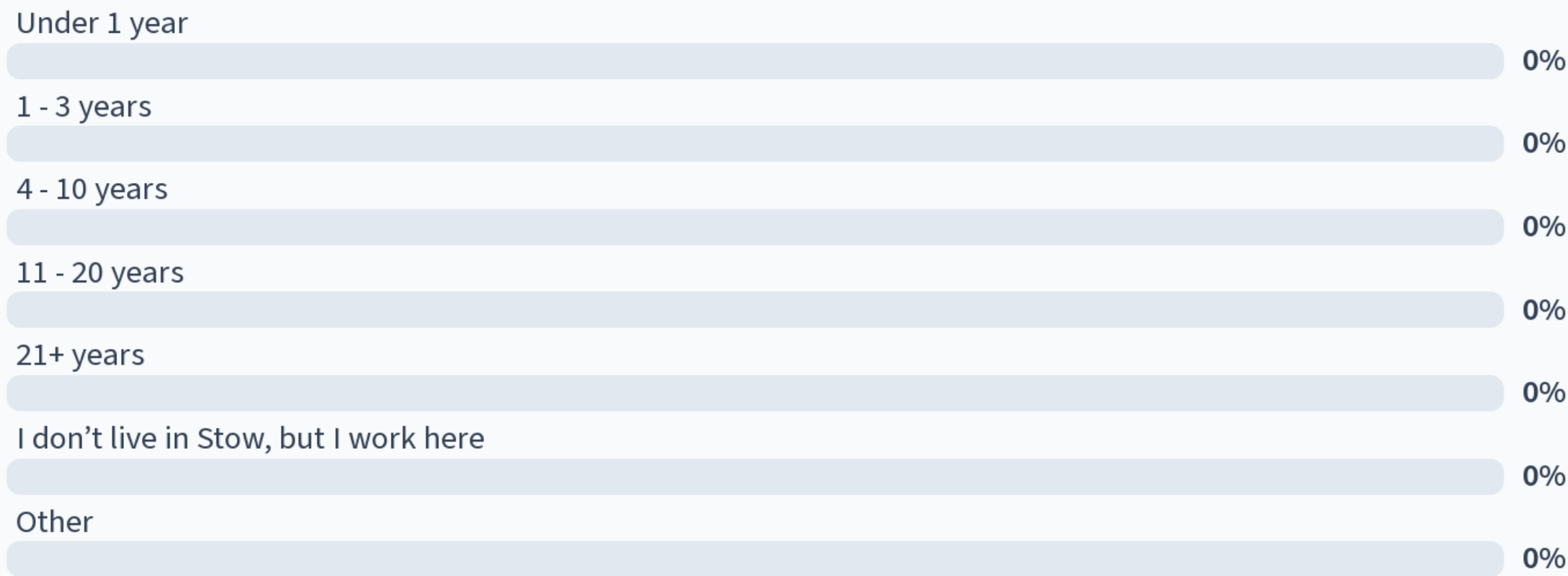


How long have you lived in Stow?

- Under 1 year
- 1 - 3 years
- 4 - 10 years
- 11 - 20 years
- 21+ years
- I don't live in Stow, but I work here
- Other

How long have you lived in Stow?

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What is Stow's Housing Production Plan?

What is a Housing Production Plan?



process for understanding local housing needs



tool to establish affordable housing goals



roadmap of strategies to achieve housing goals

Past Housing Production Plans

2016: Stow's Last HPP

Changes in Local Context

- Population growth
- Additional housing units
- Covid-19 housing affordability crisis

2023-2024: HPP Update

Affordable Housing Goals:

- Provide a variety housing opportunities
- Ensure increases in the present housing mixture
- Encourage the elderly and handicapped to remain in Stow
- Creative approaches to local zoning

Past Housing Production Plans



2016: Stow's Last HPP

Changes in Local Context

- Population growth
- Additional housing units
- Covid-19 housing affordability crisis

2023-2024: HPP Update



We're Here!

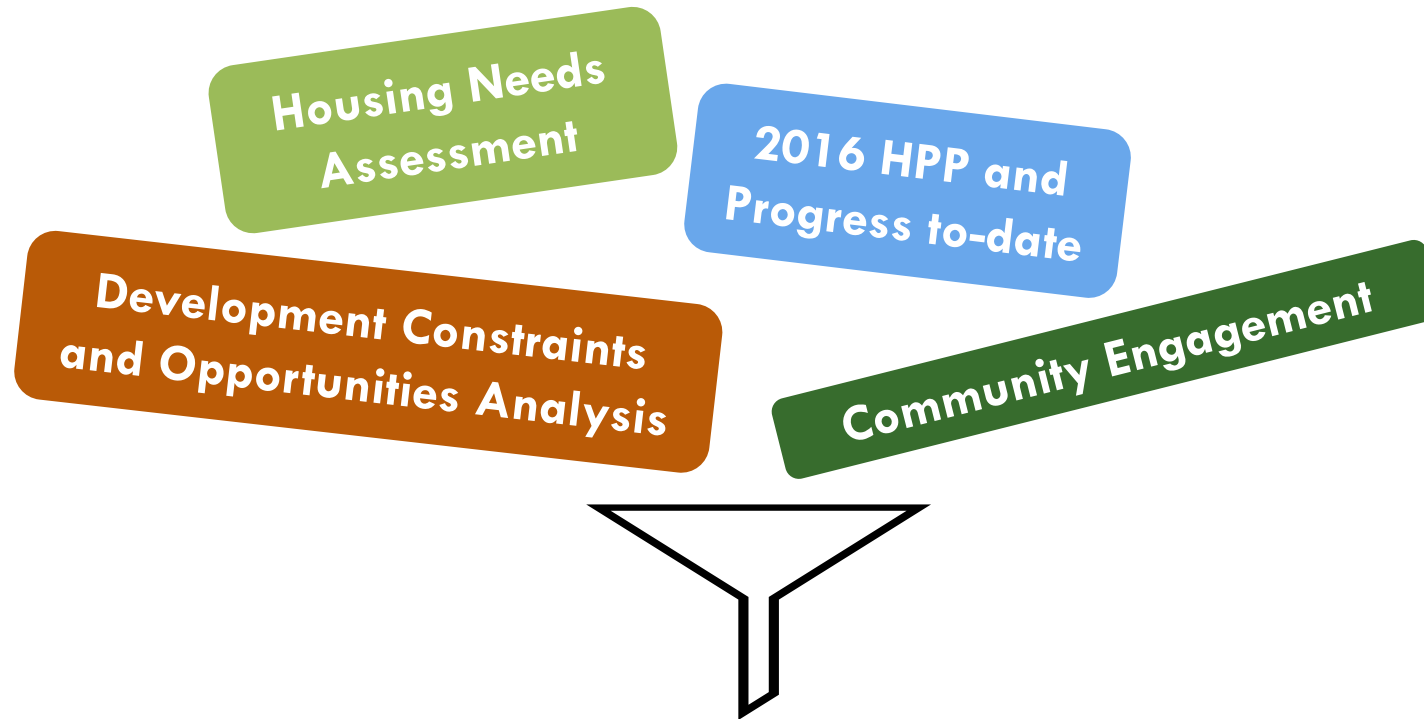
Housing Production Plan Project Timeline



QUESTIONS?

Draft Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies

Goal and Strategy Development Methodology



Housing Needs → Housing Goals → Objectives, Strategies, and Actions

Draft Affordable Housing Goals

1. Increase the supply of "A" Affordable housing.
2. Diversify types of housing available in the community, especially smaller homes that promote the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing.
3. Utilize creative zoning and incentives to locate new development in suitable areas of Town.
4. Streamline municipal processes for residents to make alterations to existing homes.

Goal 1: Increase the supply of "A" Affordable housing

While Stow will soon reach the 10% SHI threshold, giving the Town safe harbor from 40B developments, the Town should continue to encourage deed-restricted affordable housing beyond this threshold.

Objectives

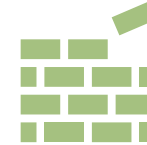
- 1.1. Identify privately and publicly owned parcels suitable for the development of Affordable Housing.
- 1.2. Remove policy, regulation, and zoning barriers to the creation of Affordable Housing.
- 1.3. Preserve the existing Affordable Units that have their affordability restriction expiring to keep the units on the Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Sample Strategies to Increase “A” Affordability



Consider Density Bonuses for Developments with Affordable Units.

Conditions in the Zoning Bylaw could allow for additional units to be built on a site if there are a specified percentage of units that are Affordable.



Consider an update to the Inclusionary Housing bylaw.

Research other Town’s inclusionary bylaws and review with developers whether the percentage of affordable housing required in Stow can be raised while still providing economically feasible housing projects.

Share Your Feedback

Do these draft HPP goals represent your hopes for the future of housing in Stow?

Option 1: Join Online

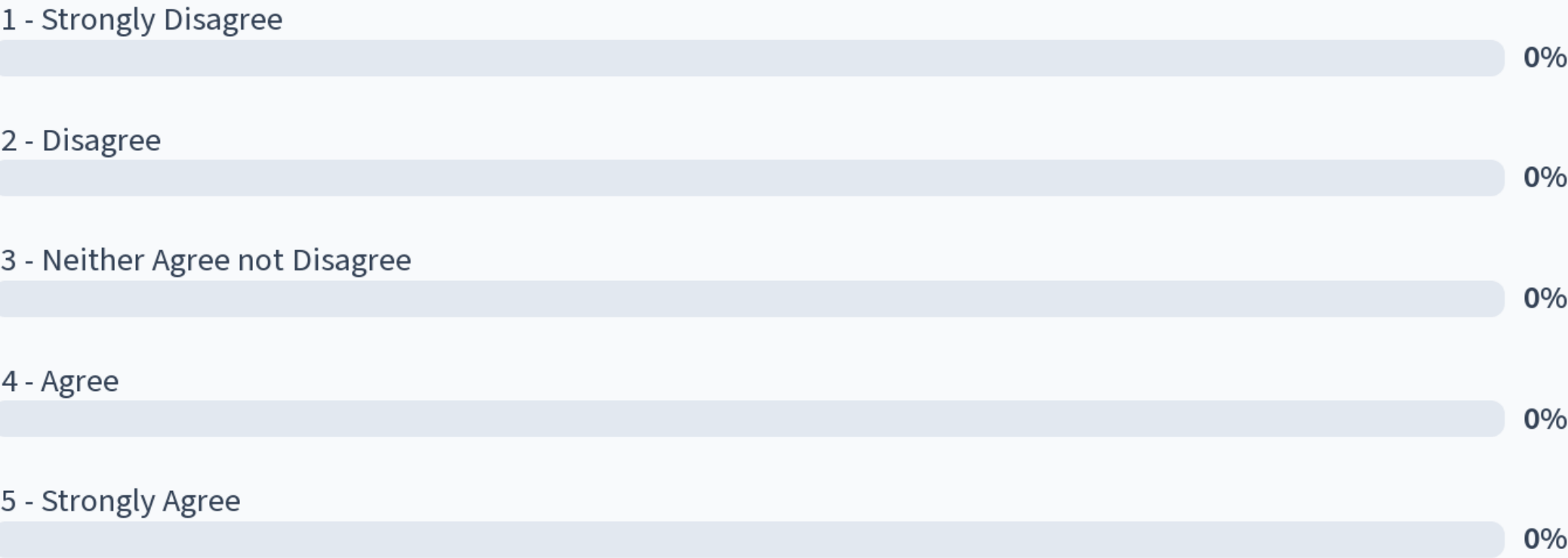
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Goal 1: Increase the supply of "A" Affordable housing



Discussion

- Why did you select this response?
- What would you change, if anything, about this goal?

Goal 2: Diversify types of housing available in the community, especially smaller homes that promote the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing

Many of the homes in Stow today are large, single-family homes, and recent developments have been growing in size. However, residents hope for Stow to have a mix of different housing types that meet the needs of changing family situations and life stages.

Objectives

- 2.1. Revise the Zoning Bylaw to allow for the development of additional housing types not found in Stow that would be consistent with the character and needs of the Town.
- 2.2. Encourage the development of cottage dwellings, accessory dwelling units, and bungalows that have a small floor area compared to typical single-family homes.
- 2.3. Investigate infrastructure upgrades and installations that could foster the development of housing that meets community goals, such as aging in place and higher density.

Strategies to Support Diverse Housing Development



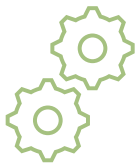
Reconsider the permitting process for duplex units.

- Allowing conversion and creation of duplexes by-right removes permitting barriers to developing this type of housing, could allow the preservation of historic homes, and could provide a more affordable housing option.



Farm Worker Housing.

- Local agriculture is a key part of the identity of Stow. Yet, if farm workers cannot afford to live in Stow, the agricultural economy is at risk.



Consideration of Expanded Infrastructure to Support Housing in Key Areas.

- Further evaluation of municipal infrastructure (water, wastewater, and active transportation connections) could assist in the feasibility of providing greater services to existing neighborhoods or to future development.
- Further community engagement is needed to understand the Town's desire for supporting additional infrastructure.

Goal 2: Diversify types of housing available in the community, especially smaller homes that promote the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing.



Discussion

- Why did you select this response?
- What would you change, if anything, about this goal?

Goal 3: Utilize creative zoning and incentives to locate new development in suitable areas of Town

Residents of Stow both value the access to open space in Town and wish to see housing options connected to more amenities that they currently find in surrounding Towns. The Town should build on existing efforts to ensure it is attracting the types of development that aligns with the community's vision and furthers affordability.

Objectives

- 3.1. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for the construction of dwellings currently not found in Stow, but would be consistent with the Town's needs, goals, and vision.
- 3.2. Integrate "Affordable" and "affordable" housing development with other Commonwealth level laws to foster sustainable development and achieve multiple goals.
- 3.3. Ensure alignment between housing development and existing Town plans, such as the Open Space and Recreation Plan or Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- 3.4 Direct development to areas of Town with existing municipal services and amenities.

What is Section 3A or MBTA Communities Zoning?



A **local zoning tool** for municipalities to guide the development of housing in their community.



The MBTA Communities Act charges communities served by the MBTA (and adjacent communities) with **creating zoning that allows multifamily housing** to be built without needing a special permit. This is called “by right” zoning.



Local standards, like conservation permitting, site plan approval, or design guidelines **still apply**.

How does this zoning tool align with Stow's goals?



Meet Local Housing Need

- Allows for more housing choices within the community
- Supports the creation of affordable housing



Support the Local Economy

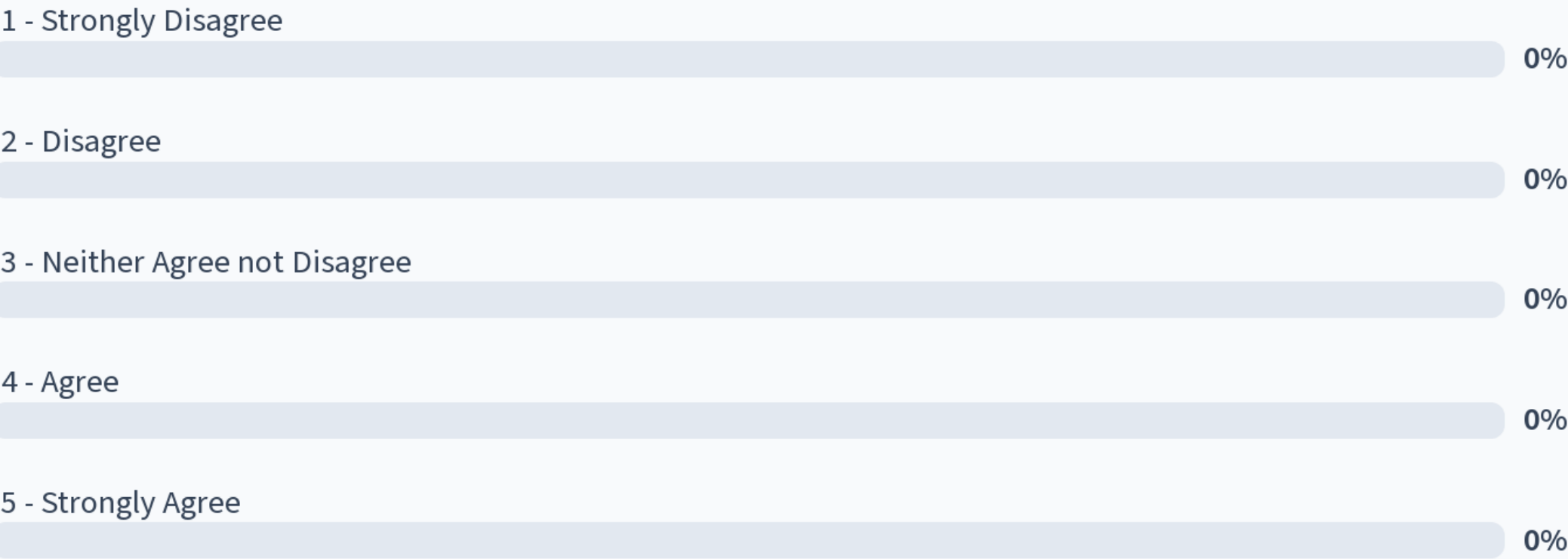
- Creates a greater sense of place to support retail
- Increases spending power for existing and new businesses



State Funding

- Eligibility for housing choice, capital grants, and MassWorks
- Considered in other state discretionary funding decisions

Goal 3: Utilize creative zoning and incentives to locate new development in suitable areas of Town.



Discussion

- Why did you select this response?
- What would you change, if anything, about this goal?

Goal 4 - Streamline municipal processes for residents to make alterations to existing homes.

Beyond the cost of housing, the Town can also encourage affordability as residents make alterations and upgrades to their homes. The Town can ensure the processes that homeowners must follow are simplified and clear to reduce the burden on residents.

Objectives

- 4.1. Educate residents and landlords about existing services and financing opportunities offered by the Town, Commonwealth, utility providers and other mission-driven enterprises that are available.
- 4.2. Improve channel of communication between the Town and residents and landowners prior to the permitting process.
- 4.3. Improve the processes for residents to modify their homes to allow them to age in place, including accessibility and energy efficiency modifications.

Strategies to Support Alterations to Existing Homes



Creation of a Permitting Information Hub.

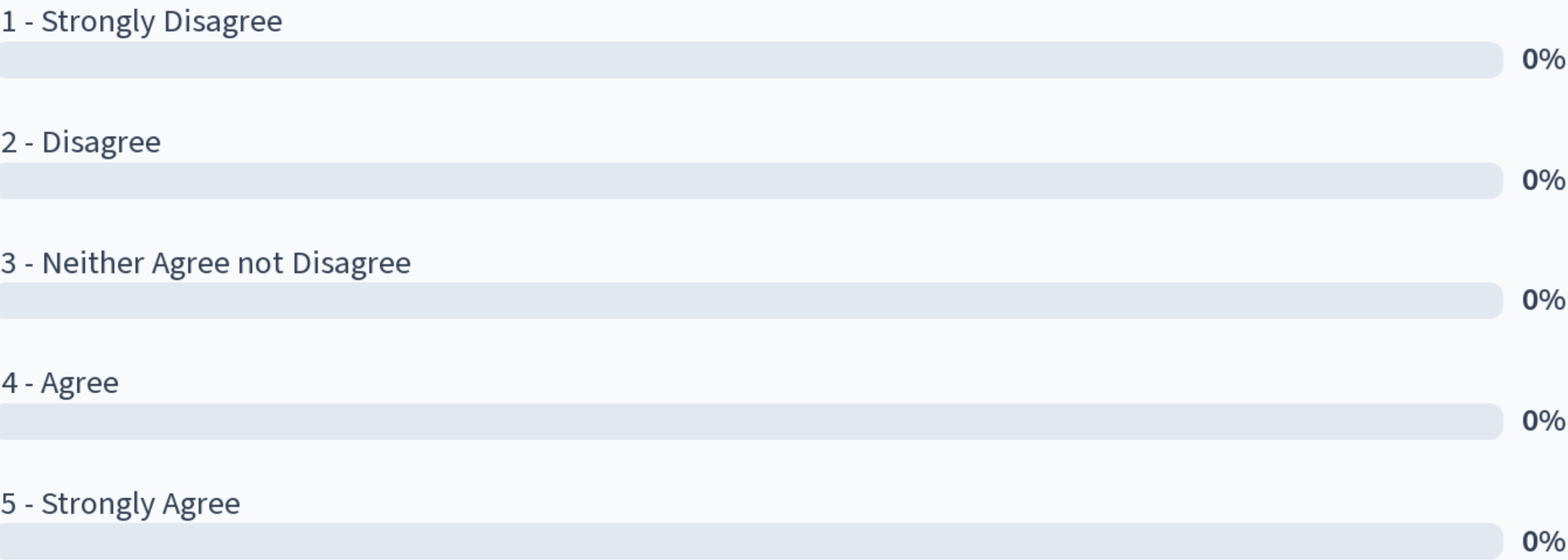
- The hub could present permitting information in plain language, provide links to necessary rules and regulations, and direct people to the right board, committee, or department.
- Links on the Town website can direct residents to available financing opportunities to make upgrades attainable.



Consider Allowance of Energy and Accessibility Structure Extensions in Setbacks.

- Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw could offer flexibility to property owners who want to make energy and accessibility upgrades. For example, equipment for a heat pump or an ADA compliant ramp could be allowed within property line setbacks.

Goal 4: Streamline municipal processes for residents to make alterations to existing homes.



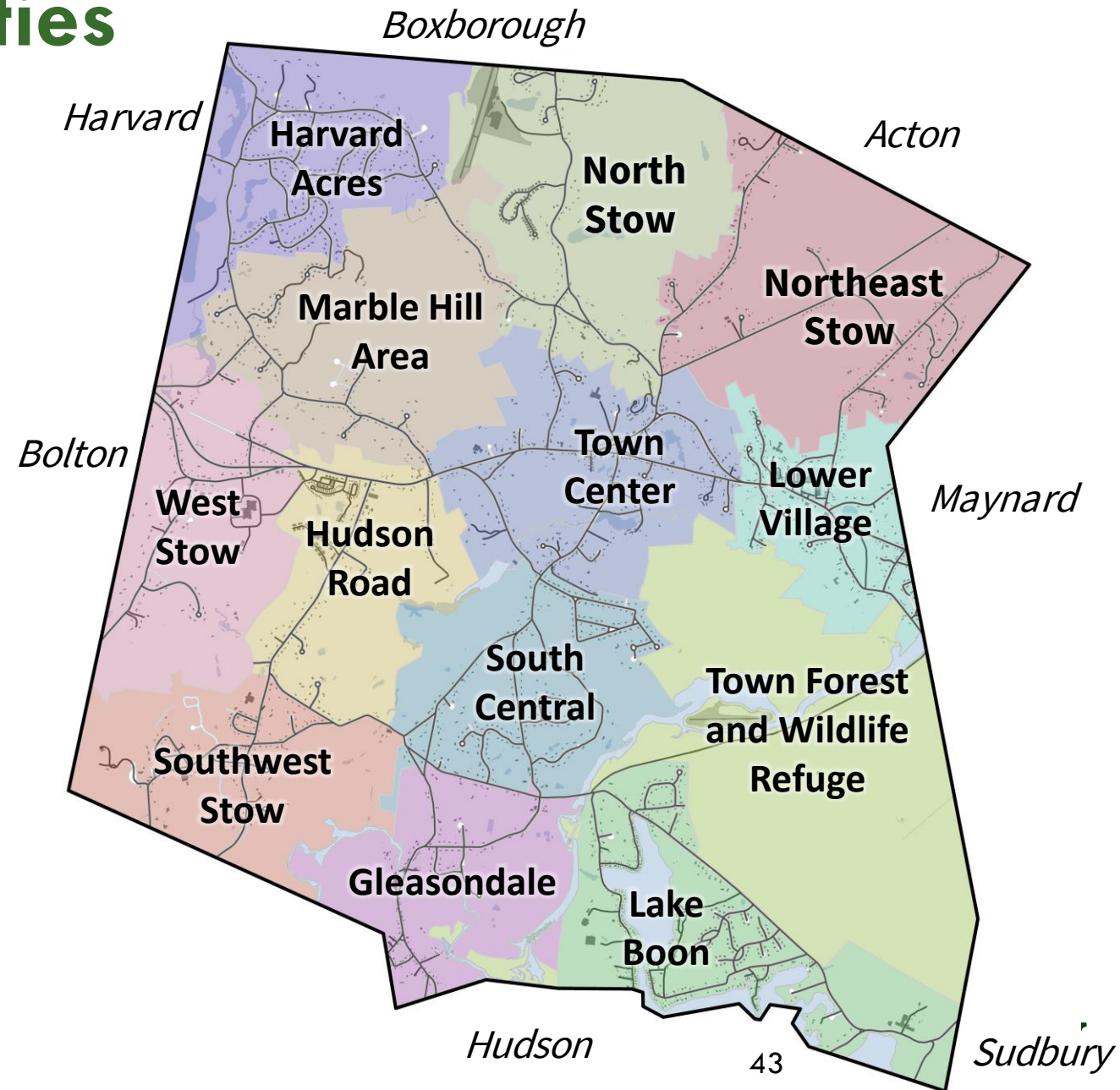
Discussion

- Why did you select this response?
- What would you change, if anything, about this goal?

QUESTIONS?

Development Opportunities

- Map broken up into Planning Neighborhoods (*based on geography or local name*) for tonight's discussion purposes.
- Each Planning Neighborhood could accommodate more housing – one size doesn't fit all!



Development Opportunities

Where do you think
future housing should
be built in Stow?

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Rank which of these areas of Town is most appropriate for affordable housing development.



Town Center

Lower Village

Gleasondale

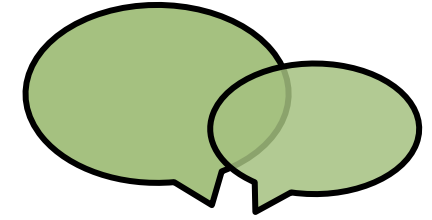
Southwest Stow

North Stow

North East Stow (near South Acton MBTA Station)

SEE MORE

Discussion: Neighborhood rankings



- Are you surprised by the ranking results?
- What types of housing would be most appropriate to each?
- In your ideal world, what would housing in this neighborhood look like?

Rank the importance of these considerations when it comes to location of housing development.

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Close to resources and amenities (shops, restaurants, library, community center, etc.)

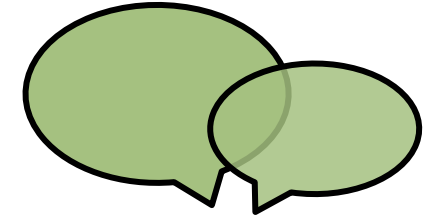
In walkable neighborhoods

Town-owned properties

Privately-owned, large undeveloped parcels

Other

Discussion: Development site consideration



- Are you surprised by these results?
- Can you think of specific locations in town that exemplify these features?

Next Steps

Housing Production Plan Project Timeline



Follow the Town website for updates: mapc.ma/stowhousing

Thank you!

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