



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Josh Hanford, Commissioner

Department of Housing and Community Development

802-595-1385, josh.handford@vermont.gov

‘Great Neighborhoods’ Partners to Convene with National Livable Design Experts on Zoning Study

Six Vermont Communities Chosen as Case Studies for the Incremental Code Reform Initiative

MONTPELIER, VT — The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will join with the international nonprofit [Congress for the New Urbanism](#) (CNU), along with other partners to work on the [Zoning for Great Neighborhoods](#) initiative. The project aims to help Vermont cities and towns address regulatory barriers to providing housing choices close to town and activity centers for more Vermonters.

A public briefing on the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods initiative will be held at 9:30 am on Monday, November 4, at the Vermont Association of Realtors. Media is encouraged to attend. Attendance information is at the end of this release.

With help from CNU and Vermont’s regional planning commissions the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods work will result in model regulations and other tools that can smooth the way for a wider range of affordable, attractive, and energy-efficient homes in walkable neighborhoods, such as those now in demand by young and old alike.

Municipalities of Middlesex, Ludlow, Vergennes, Fairfax, Castleton, and Brattleboro were selected to serve as case studies for the project.

“These places all have homes within walking distance of the shops and services in the kinds of historic villages and downtowns that we have throughout Vermont,” said Josh Hanford, Commissioner of Vermont Department Housing and Community Development. “The case study municipalities are interested in updating their zoning regulations to make it easier to create more of the types of homes that now are in demand. Like most municipalities around the state, there’s a mismatch between the need for smaller homes, and the current zoning regulations originally adopted in the 1960’s and 70’s that favor single family homes on large lots.”

“We are excited to work with the Vermont team,” said Mallory Baches of CNU. “It’s a chance to show how flexible place-responsive code reform can be. We’ve been working with the state and case study hosts to see how incremental code reform can add value to Vermont’s traditional development pattern, while helping cities and towns meet the demands of today’s residents.”



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“Only 30% of Vermont households now have three or more people, and yet the most common type of home is still a single family detached with three or more bedrooms,” said AARP-VT Director of Outreach, Kelly Stoddard Poor. “Half of Vermont’s population is now over the age of 55, and many are eager to downsize. At the same time, millennials are struggling to find the smaller homes they can afford, especially in walkable villages and downtowns.”

“We can start to fix the mismatch between people’s needs and the existing housing stock by making sure our zoning regulations easily allow the kinds of homes we need, and that people want,” said Stephanie Corey, President, Vermont Association of Realtors. “The goal is for regulations that allow a variety of new units that help revive our historic neighborhoods and offer a range of home prices Vermonters young and old can afford.”

Business leaders also recognize the importance of right-sizing Vermont’s housing stock for potential new Vermonters.

“The lack of suitable, ready-to-move-into homes is a recruiting challenge for many Vermont businesses,” said Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. “Homes that are appropriately priced, located and sized are needed statewide and that gap is a major economic development concern as business decisions about whether to locate, expand or remain in Vermont.”

“Too many Vermonters continue to struggle to find housing that is affordable and meets their needs in the places they want,” said Jen Hollar, Director of Policy for the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. “In addition to funding new homes, VHCB is committed to exploring policy levers that can be pulled to allow more housing in locations that benefit both residents and their communities. We’re pleased to support this effort to provide municipalities with tools to increase housing options and affordability.”

WHEN: November 4th, 2019 at 9:30 – 10:15 am

WHERE: Vermont Realtors Association Office, 148 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont

WHAT: Public and media briefing on Zoning for Great Neighborhoods Initiative

WHO: The project is led by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development and in partnership with the Congress for the New Urbanism. State and other National Partners include the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, AARP-VT, and the Vermont, Green Mountain and National Association of Realtors.

For more information, please visit <https://accd.vermont.gov/content/zoning-for-great-neighborhoods>.

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