

Keys to the Valley – Municipal Policy Review



To further your community’s vision for current and future homes, this municipal policy review will support your effort to evaluate the current content and functioning of municipal regulations.

AUDIENCE: It is intended to provide for common understanding among municipal staff, volunteers, elected officials, and engaged citizens.

SUMMARY: This review requires that you identify existing goals within your community’s Master Plan, or other visioning documents. Within the context of these goals, you will rate your regulations (REGS) to reflect current code and work in progress; followed by implemented achievements (CUR) to reflect whether the needs of the community are being addressed and methods are working as intended; and lastly other contributing factors (OTH) to include additional influences, such as state or federal requirements or limitations. You can rate each item as **fully met**, **partially met**, **not met** and **not considered**. Through this you will see how

1. you have met your goals
2. you still need to do the work
3. your regulations are not adequately meeting their intended targets
4. new goals need to be set

This document is a guide and should be adjusted to meet your community’s needs. It can be revisited periodically to assess progress in meeting your community’s vision.

Once completed and discussed with your community, complete the following in regards to your community’s homes:

Celebrate - 3 Accomplishments

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Low Hanging Fruit - 3 Short Term Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Need the Toolbox - 3 Long Term Goals

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

HOMES FOR NOW AND TOMORROW - MUNICIPAL POLICY REVIEW					
OPPORUNITY OR BARRIER TO LOCAL TARGETS	VISION & MASTER PLAN	REGS	CUR	OTH	COMMENTS
HOME TYPES AND DENSITY:					
<i>Example</i>	<i>Give option to attend meetings virtually</i>				Implemented as part of state emergency order
D1.Is adequate density allowed or incentivized?					
a. In rural areas via maximum density standards or planned unit development?					
b. In the village or downtown?					
c. Are dimensional standards realistic (e.g. setbacks, minimum lot, lot width, building height)?					
D2.Are a variety of housing types allowed? Is the associated permitting process streamlined?					
a. Single-unit homes					
b. Manufactured homes					
c. Accessory dwelling units					
d. Tiny homes with wheels					
e. Tiny homes without wheels					
f. Duplex, Triplex, Quadplex					
g. Multi-unit (>4) homes					
h. Cottage/bungalow court					
i. Live/work units					
j. Vertically Mixed Use Buildings					
k. Townhouses					
l. Co-housing					
m. Assisted living facility					
n. Conversion to create more units					
o. Supportive housing					
p. Group Homes					
q. Other – (Write in)					
D3.Are homes incentivized for a diverse resident base? Providing:					
a. Below market rates. For example, lower taxes for extra unit allowances for affordable housing.					
b. Physically accessible features.					
c. Are there minimum or maximum living area requirements?					

RATING KEY BY LOCAL TARGET (LT): ● - FULLY MET ● - PARTIALLY MET ● - NOT MET ● - NOT CONSIDERED

DOCUMENT KEY: ✕ REGS – LOCAL REGULATIONS (E.G. ZONING, SUBDIVISION, SITE PLAN REVIEW)
 ✕ CUR – CURRENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION & RESIDENT EXPERIENCE ✕ OTH – OTHER (E.G. STATE, FEDERAL REGULATIONS)

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HOMES MAINTENANCE, CONDITION & LOT DESIGN:					
M1. Are structures safely and appropriately built and maintained?					
a. Are existing regulations clear and adequate to maintain aesthetically pleasing and safe housing exteriors?					
b. Is there a method to bring non-conforming units into compliance with current regulations?					
c. Are there inspections of rental properties? Are they adequately keeping rentals safe?					
d. Are there any educational services available to property owners in maintaining healthy housing and adequate financing?					
e. Is there tracking of inspections, complaints and other relevant data to evaluate the condition and safety of existing stock?					
f. Are there issues with lead paint contamination? If so, are these being adequately addressed?					
M2. Are there architectural requirements (e.g. vertical/horizontal facade articulation, dimensioned building element, or prescriptive style requirements) for individual buildings?					
M3. Are there minimums or maximums on building/façade height?					
M4. Are accessible design features such as wheelchair compliance required or recommended in new developments or major renovations? These may include features that allow easy changes to achieve accessibility.					
M5. Are resilient design features such as shade trees, energy efficiency, solar installation or flood-proofing required or recommended in new developments or major renovations? These may include features that allow easy changes to achieve a new function.					

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PROCESS:					
P1. Is the permitting process well-defined and easy to navigate?					
P2. Is the development review process for small/infill development (e.g. properties ≥ 1ac) reasonable in time and number of steps?					
P3. Is administrative review always being applied where appropriate?					
P4. Does the process promote dialogue with current residents?					
P5. Are the fees reasonable to diverse incomes?					
P6. Do municipal boards and staff have a trusting and functional relationship?					

INFRASTRUCTURE:					
I1. Are there municipal stormwater regulations?					
a. Have these stormwater regulations proven reasonable, not a barrier to new housing units?					
I2. Is there an existing (or planned) public or community water/sewer system?					
a. Does this system have capacity sufficient for new developments?					
b. Are there incentives for new units along water/sewer lines?					
c. Are there land use regulations linked to the presence or lack of sewer service?					
d. Are connection fees economically appropriate, not acting as a barrier to development?					
e. Are all walkable places served by public sewer systems? If not, is this lack of infrastructure reasonable, not acting as a barrier?					
I3. Is there allowance for Planned Unit Developments to install community water and septic systems?					
I4. Is there sufficient broadband for optimal use of existing structures?					
a. Does broadband adequately allow for new homes across the community?					
b. Are there controls or incentives for new units within existing broadband service areas?					

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TRANSPORTATION:					
T1. Are parking requirements reasonable? Are they adaptable to changes in demand?					
a. Are there flexible parking “minimums” to reflect current and projected parking demand?					
b. Are there parking “maximums” required for new development?					
c. Is shared parking allowed between developments?					
d. Are on-street parking spaces counted for minimum number of spaces for a development?					
e. Are there on-site parking location requirements, e.g. is parking required to be located behind buildings?					
T2. Are there incentives to encourage development that enhances the viability of public transit?					
a. Within ¼ mile of downtown and village centers?					
b. Minimize distance between buildings and public transit stops, providing direct access to sidewalks.					
c. Public transit checklist associated with site plan review?					
T3. Are their provisions or plans for walkable neighborhoods in the community?					
a. Do regulations require new developments to be connected to pedestrian trails and sidewalks?					
b. Is there access to open space, trails and parks from downtown and village centers?					
T4. Is safe bicycle travel encouraged?					
a. Is there a requirement for new developments to provide bicycle parking in addition to vehicle parking?					
b. Is there a policy to provide bicycle accessibility and infrastructure at all public facilities?					
T5. Does the municipality have a “complete streets” policy to provide for multi-modal access?					
a. Are there local road design guidelines incorporating pedestrian and bike travel considerations? i.e. unbroken routes; connection w/public transit stops; vegetated buffers between pedestrians/bikers and motorized vehicles; lighting; traffic calming in villages; safe crossings.					

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES:					
C1. Are larger subdivisions and developments required to have open space and trails for conservation or physical activity with a mix of shade and sun, seating and drinking water?					
C2. Are prime conservation lands and agricultural soils protected from development?					
C3. Is there review of historic districts or landmarks?					
a. Are there material and/or methodological requirements associated with the regulation(s) that have inhibited (re)development?					
b. Is change-of-use permitted for historically protected properties?					
C4. Are residential accessory activities encouraged (e.g. vegetable gardens, rooftop solar panels, clotheslines)?					

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