



HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Henry County's policies and partnerships create an environment that is conducive to delivering a diverse housing stock where all residents have access to safe, affordable, and high-quality housing.



How do we help support a housing market that provides options for all residents to have safe, affordable, and high-quality housing?

Housing plays a critical role in Henry County's overall quality of life and its economic vitality, directly influencing issues such as workforce retention, community stability, and the County's future growth potential. A diverse and well-maintained housing stock supports local employers by attracting and retaining skilled workers, while affordable and accessible housing options ensure that residents of all income levels can establish long-term roots in the County. Challenges such as aging housing stock, affordability gaps, and limited new housing development can stall a community's progress.

Public Engagement has made it clear that the private market alone is not producing enough of the housing types that Henry County needs, particularly in the affordable and workforce categories. Market conditions, infrastructure limitations, and financing challenges are discouraging developers from building the types of housing that will most benefit residents. Without public support, these effects will continue to drive up costs, limit economic growth, and create disparities in access to quality homes. These include partnerships with developers, land acquisition, and performance agreements, where public investment is tied to specific housing outcomes that benefit the community. Henry County has been successful at reinventing itself economically and has taken a hands-on approach to economic development. By leading a similar, County-led approach to housing, Henry County can actively shape the local housing market and support long-term economic growth and community stability.



Revitalize Existing Housing Stock



Expand Housing Supply



Improve Housing Affordability & Access

Detailed public engagement results and community data analysis are available in *Part 2 Our Home* and *Part 3 Our Voice*.

How do we help create a housing market that provides options for all residents to have safe, affordable, and high-quality housing?

The County needs more apartments, condos, and townhomes.



Housing in Henry County is affordable.



The County's housing meets the needs of residents of all incomes.



Infill development and adaptive reuse of vacant lots and older buildings can help provide new housing opportunities while preserving the historic character of existing neighborhoods. Two examples include the School Drive Apartments and Fieldale School Apartments. Both complexes repurposed closed elementary schools into a total of 62 new apartment units.



Henry County has already begun taking bold steps increase workforce and affordable housing in the County. The County is currently working on renovating blighted structures into apartment units. Additionally, the County is working on building new affordable homes on underutilized property, in partnership with the Harvest Foundation and the West Piedmont Planning District Commission.



HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS WORK PLAN

How can we revitalize the County's existing housing stock?

- Encourage Community-Led Efforts
- Prioritize Key Areas for Revitalization
- Pursue Funding Programs and Partnerships

Maintaining and revitalizing Henry County's existing housing stock is essential to preserving neighborhood stability and maintaining affordability. Public engagement has underscored the need to address the County's aging housing stock, primarily in terms of property maintenance and the lack of financial resources for home repairs. Many residents expressed interest in grant or loan programs to help with basic repairs such as roofing, plumbing, and weatherization, which can improve overall housing conditions and reduce long-term maintenance costs. Additionally, neighborhood improvement initiatives that include community-led clean-up days, facade improvement programs, and homeowner education efforts can foster a stronger sense of pride and accountability among residents.

Blighted properties – such as derelict industrial properties, abandoned homes, deteriorating structures – and vacant lots – were a recurring concern during Public Engagement. The condition of these properties negatively impacts community appearances, lowers surrounding property values, and deters new investment in the community. Henry County should use a targeted revitalization approach, starting with the prioritization of historic small towns – such as Bassett and Fieldale. These areas not only have symbolic value in their revitalization, but they also present significant opportunities to use incentives such as historic tax credits. By collaborating with private developers, non-profits, and local organizations, the County can work towards repurposing old and underutilized industrial properties for new housing, mixed-use development, or community spaces. Infill development and adaptive reuse of vacant lots and older buildings can also help provide new housing opportunities while preserving the historic character of existing neighborhoods.

#	Actions	Indicator(s) of Success	Type	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party & Partners
HN 1	Support historic revitalization efforts in historic small towns, such as Bassett and Fieldale, through offering local incentives such as façade improvement grants, as well as leveraging federal historic tax credits.	County funding specifically earmarked for housing and/or reutilization efforts; successful utilization of federal historic tax credits for various projects; improvements to facades within historic small towns.	Policy; Capital	Catalyst	\$\$	Building Inspections, Planning Department,
HN 2	Investigate the feasibility, and needed changes in staff capacity, to adopt and enforce the Virginia Property Maintenance Code to ensure enforcement of minimum housing standards, improve neighborhood appearance, and deter neglect of aging structures.	Adoption of regulations; addition of staff or assignment of enforcement duties	Policy	Near Term	\$\$	Building Inspections, Planning Department

*Note: The strategies are not listed in order of priority.

#	Actions	Indicator(s) of Success	Type	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party & Partners
HN 3	Expand access to home repair and rehabilitation programs by leveraging local, state, and federal funding sources such as Community Development Block Grants and weatherization assistance programs. Prioritize assistance for elderly residents and low-income homeowners.	Availability of information, promotional flyers; educational or informational sessions at targeted events	Capital	Near Term	\$	Planning Department, Engineering Department, WPPDC, Housing Agencies
HN 4	Partner with nonprofit housing organizations and local contractors to deliver coordinated rehabilitation efforts that address housing needs.	Increase in variation of housing stock – including type and cost; rehabilitation of identified buildings within designated areas.	Policy	Ongoing	\$ - \$\$	Building Inspections, Planning Department, WPPDC, Local Nonprofits; Housing Agencies
HN 5	Establish neighborhood improvement initiatives that include community clean-up days, homeowner education campaigns, and the use of small-scale incentive programs to foster pride of place and collective investment in community upkeep.	Creation of community group; a track record of at least five successful clean-up days or events.	Policy	Catalyst	\$	Planning Department, Public Information, Local Nonprofits
HN 6	Target blighted or vacant properties for reinvestment or redevelopment through a combination of code enforcement, financial penalties for non-compliance, and partnerships with developers for adaptive reuse and infill housing.	Revitalization of targeted properties; rehabilitation or reuse of existing buildings for new uses.	Policy	Ongoing	\$\$	Building Inspections, Engineering Department, Planning Department



HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS WORK PLAN

How can we expand the overall housing supply?

- Engage Private and Non-profit Developers
- Update Zoning Regulations
- Investigate Incentives to Spur Development

Expanding the housing stock in Henry County is essential to meeting the County's current and future housing demand, while also ensuring that residents have access to diverse, affordable, and high-quality housing options. Public Engagement highlighted concerns about the limited availability of quality and affordable housing. While traditional single-family homes continue to be a strong preference among residents, there is also a growing demand for townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and accessory dwelling units that provide more flexible and affordable options. Often referred to as "missing middle" housing types, these housing types can help bridge the gap between single-family homes and large apartment complexes – offering options for first-time homebuyers, young professionals, and aging residents who wish to stay in the community.

#	Actions	Indicator(s) of Success	Type	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party & Partners
HN 7	Assess and revise zoning regulations, as needed, to ensure a variety of housing types are permitted by-right in appropriate areas – including duplexes, townhomes, and other “missing middle” housing types.	Revised zoning regulations.	Policy	Catalyst	\$	Planning Department
HN 8	Encourage a wider variety of housing types including duplexes, townhomes, cottage courts, and small multi-family buildings, through updates to the zoning ordinance and/or incentives.	Creation of educational materials or information sessions on the benefits of these housing types; creation of incentives for their development.	Policy	Ongoing	\$	Planning Department
HN 9	Support mixed-use and mixed-income developments, within the County's historic small towns, that combine residential units with retail, services, and public amenities to promote walkability and reduce infrastructure costs.	Close coordination with applicants proposing such developments; overall increase in the construction of mixed-use and mixed-income developments.	Policy	Ongoing	\$	Engineering Department, Planning Department
HN 10	Identify priority growth areas with existing or planned infrastructure capacity and proactively invest in water, sewer, road, and broadband improvements to make those locations attractive for housing development.	Identification of growth areas and programming for infrastructure; County funds earmarked for such infrastructure planning and construction.	Capital	Near Term	\$ - \$\$\$	Engineering Department, Planning Department

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#	Actions	Indicator(s) of Success	Type	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party & Partners
HN 11	Partner with private developers through performance-based agreements that exchange public incentives for the delivery of specific housing outcomes, such as workforce housing or affordable rental units.	Increase in housing access (number of tenants) for target populations; High compliance rate of developers who meet all metrics of signed agreements.	Policy	Ongoing	\$\$	Planning Department
HN 12	Leverage opportunities (such as partnerships, incentives, or facilitation of access to publicly or privately held land) to support housing development through long-term lease arrangements, financial incentives, or joint ventures with non-profits or mission-driven developers committed to creating affordable and workforce housing.	The implementation of at least 3 financial incentives or cost-saving mechanisms (e.g., fee waivers, expedited permitting, or infrastructure support) provided to developers. Significant resources leveraged through partnerships or coordinated access to land, enabling reinvestment into additional housing initiatives or related public programs	Policy; Capital	Ongoing	\$\$	Planning Department
HN 13	Promote adaptive reuse of underutilized former industrial structures for new housing, using regulatory flexibility and financial incentives to facilitate redevelopment.	Creation of incentives for adaptive reuse of buildings; implementation of fast-tracked or otherwise incentivized permit processes.	Policy	Ongoing	\$\$\$	Engineering Department, Planning Department



HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS WORK PLAN

How can we improve housing affordability and access?

- Pursue Public-Private Partnerships
- Promote Mixed-Income and Mixed-Use Development
- Support Housing Stability Programs

Ensuring affordability and access to housing in Henry County requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses both homeownership and rental opportunities, while also encouraging new development to meet the needs of residents across income levels. Public Engagement reinforced concerns about the rising cost of housing and the challenges many households face in finding affordable options. For lower-income families, seniors on fixed incomes, or young professionals, the limited availability of affordable homes creates barriers to stability and economic mobility. A combination of homeownership programs, rental assistance, and incentives for new development can help bridge these gaps and create a more inclusive housing market.

"Affordable" housing refers to homes that are reasonably priced for people earning around the average income in a given area. It's not limited to government-subsidized housing — it also includes privately owned homes that are income-restricted or naturally lower in cost, such as older or smaller units. The goal is to ensure that people don't have to spend more than about 30% of their income on housing, making it possible for a wide range of workers and families to live in the communities where they work. Mixed-income housing, where affordable units are integrated into market-rate developments, ensures that affordability is distributed across neighborhoods rather than concentrated in specific areas. Public-private partnerships play a critical role in making these projects viable, and incentivizing this type of development is essential to increasing the supply of affordable units. Developers often face financial and regulatory barriers that discourage the construction of affordable and workforce housing, and the County should consider using tools such as density bonuses, reduced permitting fees, or tax refunds to encourage the production of housing that meets community needs.

Ensuring that new housing is integrated with transportation and community amenities is also essential for long-term success, particularly for buyers with affordability constraints. Residents have expressed the need for housing that is well-connected to jobs, schools, and commercial centers while also supporting walkability and access to public transit. Mixed-use developments that combine residential units with retail, dining, and community spaces can help create more vibrant neighborhoods and reduce reliance on cars for daily needs.

#	Actions	Indicator(s) of Success	Type	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party & Partners
HN 14	Use tools such as financial incentives, reduced permit fees, infrastructure cost-sharing, or other financial incentives to encourage the construction of affordable workforce housing.	Implementation of reduced fees for target applications; construction of at least one needed or pivotal infrastructure project through cost-sharing.	Capital	Catalyst	\$-\$\$	Planning Department; Engineering Department; Administration
HN 15	Partner with local financial institutions and housing partners to spread awareness of homeownership programs which provide down payment assistance and first-time homebuyer support.	Increase in homeownership rate; creation of brochures or other material to be distributed at County events; successful sessions or events to discuss programs	Policy	Near Term	\$	Planning Department; Public Information

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#	Actions	Indicator(s) of Success	Type	Time Frame	Cost Estimate	Responsible Party & Partners
HN 16	Consider the adoption of affordable housing and density bonus regulations to ensure the integration of affordable units within market-rate developments.	Creation of regulations, or amendments to existing regulations, to provide for these housing development tools.	Policy	Medium Term	\$	Planning Department
HN 17	Consider capacity and availability to partner with regional entities to assist with gap financing, low-interest loans, or predevelopment support for projects that meet the County's housing goals.	Creation of program(s) to provide financial assistance; allocation of private/public funding to the program.	Policy; Capital	Near Term	\$\$	Planning Department, WPPDC; Harvest Foundation

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