

TOWN OF DOVER HOUSING ROADMAP

March 31, 2026 Community Forum Summary



Overview

On Monday, March 31, 2026, Dover's Housing Task Force – composed of Town Board Representatives and Town staff – along with consultants from Barrett Planning Group, hosted the first Community Forum for residents to kick off the Dover Housing Roadmap project, share key data points, and hear from residents about their housing preferences. The Forum was held as a Zoom webinar from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.

The Forum began with an introduction from Dover Housing Task Force member, Robyn Hunter, who welcomed attendees and provided background on the goals for the Task Force and the current Housing Roadmap. The presentation then shifted to Barrett Planning Group staff, who asked attendees using Zoom's live polling questions about their affiliation with Dover and their knowledge of housing. The presentation then proceeded with a review of key housing in Dover. This included information on the Town's demographics, housing market, local regulations, environmental factors, and local capacity.

Throughout the Forum, participants were able to use the question-and-answer (Q&A) feature. After the presentation, the Forum transitioned to a large group discussion facilitated by Barrett Planning Group and the Housing Task Force.

After this discussion, the community forum ended with presenting information on the next steps and how attendees can stay engaged in the project.

This event was publicized online on the Town of Dover's website *NewsFlash*, the Housing Roadmap project website (<https://bpg.mysocialpinpoint.com/dover-housing-roadmap>), and through Dover's March 2026 email newsletter *Our Town*. Additionally, flyers were also placed around Town and also shared by Task Force members by word-of-mouth. The forum was recorded by the Town of Dover and later published on the Housing Roadmap project website.

Attendance

An estimated 25 community members attended the Community Forum, which included residents, workers, and Town civic leaders.

Live Polling Questions

This forum included six polling questions for attendees:

1. How comfortable are you talking about housing on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very comfortable?
2. What is your affiliation to Dover? (Check all that apply)
 - a. I'm a resident and I rent in Dover
 - b. I'm a resident and I live in a home I or my household owns
 - c. I work here
 - d. I am a non-resident property owner
 - e. My children attend school in Dover
 - f. I visit Dover often
3. What brought you to Dover? (Check all that apply)
 - a. I was raised here
 - b. I moved here to be closer to work
 - c. I wanted to raise a family here
 - d. I wanted to move to Dover from my previous home in another community
 - e. Other
4. What was the median sales price for a single-family home in Dover in 2025?
 - a. Under \$1,000,000
 - b. \$1,000,000-\$1,250,000
 - c. \$1,250,000-\$1,500,000
 - d. \$1,500,000-\$1,750,000 (**Correct Answer**)
 - e. Over \$1,750,000
5. What percentage of the total land area in Dover is zoned for Single-Family Residential?
 - a. 50%-60%
 - b. 60%-70%
 - c. 70-80%
 - d. Over 80% (**Correct Answer**)
6. What do you want to learn more about? (Check all that apply)
 - a. Demographics
 - b. Housing Market
 - c. Environmental Constraints
 - d. Local Regulations
 - e. Other

These questions were optional and asked prior to the Key Data presentation section of the Forum. The live polling questions had 18 respondents total – with fewer responses depending on the question. This is equivalent to 72 percent of all community forum attendees.

Most attendees felt comfortable discussing housing. Attendees were majority homeowners (17),

while a few also shared they worked in Dover (3) or had children in schools in Town (2). Half of respondents first came to Dover to raise a family (7), while three respondents moved from a previous home in another community, and five had other reasons for moving to Dover not mentioned in the poll question.

For question 4, about a third of respondents (4 of 13 total responses) correctly guessed the median sales price for a single-family home in Dover. Two respondents overestimated the sales price, while seven underestimated the sales price. On question 5, six of fourteen total responses correctly guessed the percentage of land area for Dover zoned for Single-Family Residential while eight respondents underestimated this percentage. It is worth noting there was some confusion as this question strictly referred to zoning and did not consider current land use nor conservation easements. Lastly, attendees were interested in further exploring a variety of housing topics, including local regulations (9), demographics (6), and the housing market (6).

Tables 1 through 5 record the responses received for questions 1-3 and 6, with multiple choices counted individually for their respective answers.

Table 1. How comfortable are you talking about housing on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very comfortable?				
1 (Not Comfortable)	2	3	4	5 (Very Comfortable)
2	1	0	1	12

Total Responses: 16.

Table 2. What is your affiliation to Dover? (Check all that apply)	
I'm a resident and I rent in Dover	I'm a resident and I live in a home I or my household owns
0	17
I work here	I am a non-resident property owner
3	0
My children attend school in Dover	I visit Dover often
2	1

Total Responses: 18.

Table 3. What brought you to Dover? (Check all that apply)				
I was raised here	I moved here to be closer to work	I wanted to raise a family here	I wanted to move to Dover from my previous home in another community	Other
1	1	7	3	5

Total Responses: 14.

Table 5. What do you want to learn more about? (Check all that apply)				
Demographics	Housing Market	Environmental Constraints	Local Regulations	Other
6	6	4	9	2

Total Responses: 13.

Large Group Discussion

In this segment of the forum, attendees discussed the following questions:

1. What kind of housing is missing in Dover?

For the first question, community members discussed a range of missing housing types in Dover. One community member shared how they found multifamily and smaller, affordable units missing in Dover. There was a challenge in Dover for families whose children were raised in Town but who later on could not afford a single-family house. One suggestion for this issue was creating opportunities to convert single-family homes into multi-family homes. Other community members cited a need for elderly housing as well as housing for the Town's workforce, who may not be able to afford living nearby and otherwise commute to Dover.

Another community member recognized the limited water supply in Dover and the concerns they had about higher housing density in Town. In response to this, another community member suggested Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) could be better accommodated, given Dover's water resources. A resident also expressed the need for creative solutions to balance Dover's housing needs and its rural character.

During the discussion, the need for commercial and third spaces was also considered. One resident shared an anecdote of a 13-year-old who wished for more third spaces to spend time with friends. There was also interest in having a restaurant, and an acknowledgment that in the 20th century Dover had more commercial activity, including a tavern.

Another community member stressed the need for more communication and interactivity during community meetings to facilitate better discussion on housing. There was also a question about whether Dover had adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which the Town had not when CPA was brought up years earlier.

2. Are there examples of housing in other communities that you like and consider appropriate for Dover? Why?

One community member appreciated the previously mentioned proposal to condo-ize larger homes, which would support the preservation of Dover's character while addressing the problem of housing cost.

Another resident suggested applying some lessons from "Blue Zones" to strengthen the overall quality of life and community of Dover. Perhaps there could be models from rural areas – such as in Vermont – on approaching housing through community-building and integrating sustainability or renewable energy. Brainstorming ideas could support Dover in finding the right housing styles without compromising access to natural resources.

The Town Administrator, Michael Blanchard, then suggested to attendees that if they do not have an answer to this question currently, to look at what they like in other communities when they visit friends or family and keep those observations in mind for a future discussion.

3. What is special about Dover today? What should be preserved?

Nearly every community member brought up their love for Dover's open spaces. Dover's rural character made the town special, and one resident specifically noted its farmland, farm animals, and horses as cherished despite Dover's decreasing agricultural production. Dover's woodlands were also seen as invaluable.

Another resident appreciated the network of trails that serve walkers, runners, and bikers. This network allows residents to explore Dover's open space across acres and make a big loop. To that end, there was an interest in keeping the network intact and reducing the risk of fragmentation in new development.

4. What do you think should change?

On what should change, one resident saw the Town center as a lost opportunity. While the community center is a great addition, the center could be more welcoming through smaller lot sizes, like at Dover Farms. Other examples brought up included the historic village center of Marblehead, Nantucket Village, and Marion Village, where smaller lots and homes made these spaces more amenable to walking and shopping. This community member saw the Task Force as having a role in informing what housing would work best in the Town center and supporting the

next master plan in integrating housing with a new vision for the Town center.

Another community member spoke more broadly of having opportunities to build a stronger community and, like Marion, create a Town where residents can walk to coffee, dinner, and outdoor recreation. Other ideas to this end included bringing in a pharmacy or gift shop to Dover.

Other residents brought up the need for opportunities to age in place for Dover's aging and older population, as well as the desire for a historic district in Dover – possibly on Main Street or Farm Street – to preserve the Town's character.

5. What do you appreciate from other communities that you wish you had in Dover?

A restaurant was discussed as an asset that community members wanted in Dover, or a place to meet neighbors or community members, especially for those without children at Dover schools. In response, one community member shared, anecdotally, the difficulties of setting up a restaurant in Dover in comparison to towns like Wellesley, Medfield, and Westwood. These challenges included a limited four-day workweek for the Town government, the lack of municipal services, limited parking, an aging water system, and the incompatibility of having a septic system for an establishment like a restaurant. The focus should therefore be on Dover to support more infrastructure to enable elderly housing, community housing, restaurants, shopping, and other uses. Marion was seen as a possible model for how an institutional leader – such as Tabor Academy – facilitated the growth of the Town's center.

Question & Answer

Questions from the Q&A feature were answered within the feature or also periodically addressed verbally during the group discussion. Questions were asked on the single-family zoning live poll question, and the difference between a “mansion” and an “estate.”

Another question related to whether Dover has a designated historic district and if it impacts demolition and construction. Town Planner Melissa SantucciRozzi, replied that Dover does not have such a district but does have a demolition delay bylaw. Additionally, should the Historic Commission determine a structure to be of historic significance, there would be a one-year delay.

One attendee was frustrated with the webinar format of the meeting and the overly formal structure, which severely restricts group discussions among attendees that could have led to more organic conversations and livelier ideas around housing.