

TOWN OF DOVER HOUSING ROADMAP

May 30, 2026 Community Forum #2 Summary



DODSON & FLINKER
Landscape Architecture and Planning

Overview

On Saturday, May 30, 2026, Dover's Housing Task Force – composed of Town Board Representatives and Town staff – along with consultants from Barrett Planning Group and Dodson & Flinker, hosted the second of three Community Forums for residents to participate in Dover's Housing Roadmap project. This Forum was held in-person at the Caryl Community Center at 4 Springdale Ave in Dover from 9:00am to 12:00pm, with breakfast provided.

The Forum began with a presentation, after which attendees had the opportunity to engage with five engagement stations that asked community members about their housing design and siting preferences, development challenges, and goals. Following the engagement stations, the group reconvened to hear what was shared at each station and to have an open discussion on housing in Dover.

Dover Housing Task Force member Robyn Hunter first welcomed all attendees to this Community Forum and provided background on the goals for the Task Force and the current Housing Roadmap. The presentation then shifted to Judi Barrett of Barrett Planning Group, who shared the project timeline and initial findings from the first Community Forum and from interviews with Town staff and Board representatives.



The presentation then proceeded with a summary of key housing and demographic data in Dover, abridged from the first Community Forum presentation. Barrett then presented a map of Dover, analyzing areas with primary and secondary development constraints to inform future housing development.

After, the presentation turned to Peter Flinker of Dodson & Flinker, who outlined three site scenarios within Dover to test various housing development types: The Town center, the Connors Center, and sites on Junction Street – the basis for the design-oriented engagement stations. Flinker also presented a variety of case studies of housing developments in different rural New England towns that may serve as inspiration for Dover.

During the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions to the presenters. After the presentation, the Forum transitioned to a general, short discussion facilitated by Barrett Planning Group and the Housing Task Force. The Forum closed with concluding remarks and next steps by Town Planner Melissa SantucciRozzi.

This event was publicized online on the Town of Dover's website, *NewsFlash*, and the Housing Roadmap project website (<https://bpg.mysocialpinpoint.com/dover-housing-roadmap>). The project website also hosted a link to register in advance of the event, beginning May 12, 2026. This registration was optional but encouraged by the event's outreach. Additionally, flyers were placed around Town, and the event was shared by Task Force members via email and word-of-mouth.

The presentation section of the Forum was recorded by Barrett Planning Group and later published on the Town of Dover's YouTube account (@TownofDover-02030) and on the Housing Roadmap project website.

Attendance

While the Forum received 17 registrations, an estimated 35 community members attended, which included residents and Town civic leaders.

Station 1: Vision and Goals

Station 1 consisted of a series of boards that sought to clarify a collective housing vision and goals for community members in Dover. One board reviewed the housing goals from Dover's 2022 Housing Production Plan. Attendees placed green stickers to indicate which goals were still relevant, and orange stickers for which ones are now irrelevant (Table 1). Additionally, there was a space to propose new goals, and attendees also had the opportunity to add comments on sticky notes to existing goals.

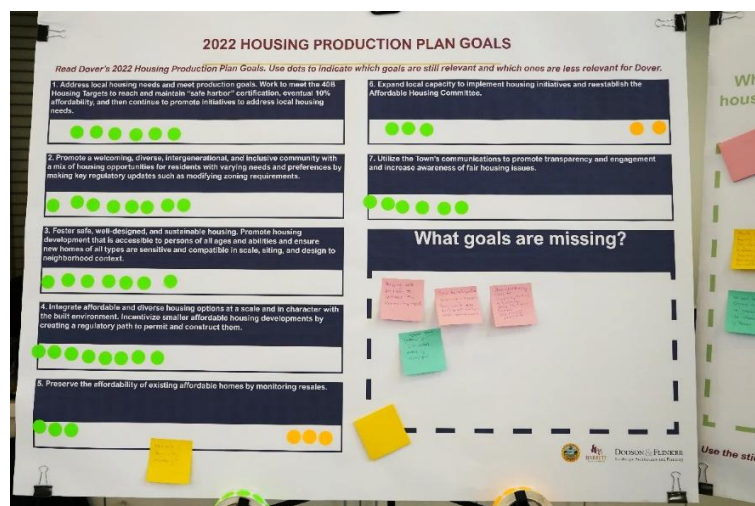


Table 1. Feedback from 2022 Dover Housing Production Plan Goals	
1. Address local housing needs and meet production goals. Work to meet the 40B Housing Targets to reach and maintain “safe harbor” certification, eventual 10% affordability, and then continue to promote initiatives to address local housing needs.	
Still Relevant 6	Less Relevant 0
2. Promote a welcoming, diverse, intergenerational, and inclusive community with a mix of housing opportunities for residents with varying needs and preferences by making key regulatory updates such as modifying zoning requirements.	
Still Relevant 8	Less Relevant 0
3. Foster safe, well-designed, and sustainable housing. Promote housing development that is accessible to persons of all ages and abilities and ensure new homes of all types are sensitive and compatible in scale, siting, and design to neighborhood context.	
Still Relevant 7	Less Relevant 0
4. Integrate affordable and diverse housing options at a scale and in character with the built environment. Incentivize smaller affordable housing developments by creating a regulatory path to permit and construct them.	
Still Relevant 8	Less Relevant 0
5. Preserve the affordability of existing affordable homes by monitoring resales.	
Still Relevant 3	Less Relevant 3
Comments: What value is there in this monitoring?	
6. Expand local capacity to implement housing initiatives and reestablish the Affordable Housing Committee.	
Still Relevant 3	Less Relevant 2
7. Utilize the Town’s communications to promote transparency and engagement and increase awareness of fair housing issues.	
Still Relevant 6	Less Relevant 0
New Goals	
- Housing with services to support the community needs. - How to integrate services needed for multigenerational inclusive communities. - Multi-unit housing close to Needham, Natick, & Wellesley where the train stations are located. - Affordable options, preference on local workers, residents of many years.	

Overall, community members found most of the goals developed in 2022 to be relevant and worth considering for this roadmap. There was some skepticism on Goal 5 on monitoring resale of affordable homes, with a note asking about the value of monitoring. This was discussed with the wider audience later in the Forum. New ideas included supporting housing that would accommodate groups in need as well as integrating services with housing.

The next board features three questions, which attendees could respond to with sticky notes:

1. What is your vision for housing in Dover in 2050?
2. What are the most important objectives for the Housing Roadmap?
3. What kind of housing is missing in Dover?

Table 2 highlights the following responses.

Two key themes that emerge from Question 1 are the desire to retain Dover as a multigenerational community through additional housing options and services, and the need to maintain Dover's rural character while affording greater housing options in town.

The most important objectives community members named for this roadmap include housing that is affordable across generations; strategic development that preserves Dover's rural character and open spaces. There was also interest in developing inclusive participation in this plan, encouraging participation, proactive outreach to those considering selling their homes, and empowering the Town to control future change. Varying opinions existed as to whether the Town Center should be developed more or preserved.

For the question "What kind of housing is missing in Dover?", the most common responses included:

- Senior housing;
- Smaller housing and houses better suited for those seeking to downsize or age in place;
- More multifamily housing and workforce housing;
- Additional rentals and affordable starter homes.

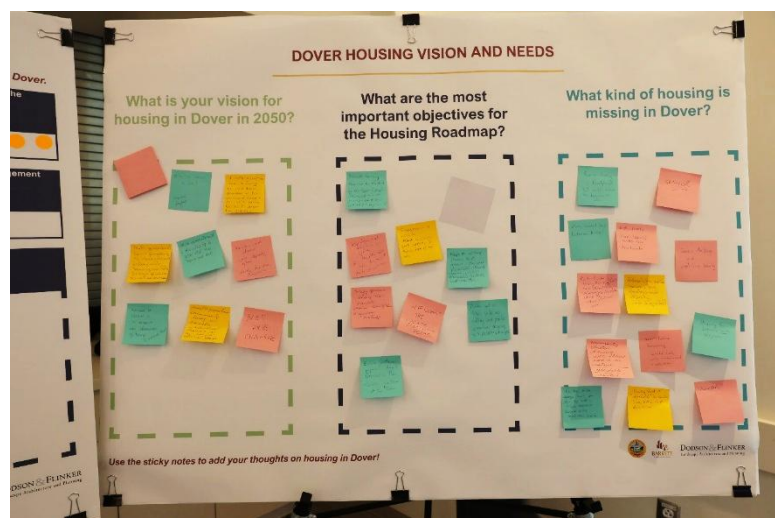


Table 2. Dover Housing Vision and Needs
1. What is your vision for housing in Dover in 2050?
• Similar rural vibe! ○ Agree ○ Agree • A multi-generation town, preserving our rural charm, committed to the environment/preservation, with service business to support the community • Multigenerational town preserving its character and history with housing available for each generation as well as services • Multigenerational – the ability to grow old in a town we love • Maintain rural character while expanding options, develop downtown thoughtfully • We need to control it and respect the character of Dover ○ I second that • Multigenerational community living in smaller individual homes on one larger parcel • Not huge change
2. What are the most important objectives for the Housing Roadmap?
• Provide housing that can be afforded by the types of people who moved here 20 years ago. Our children can't afford to buy here :(! • Maintain rural character and open space, be thoughtful about high density units, develop downtown • Transparency & inclusion. Increase participation & think "out of the box" • Keep the library green and Town green – they are wonderful gathering spaces & help community buildings & are beautiful. • Satisfy affordable housing state mandates, preserve open space, no apartment buildings • Influence the change that will occur • Reach out to folks who are selling and provide alternatives to giving into predatory developers • Ensure whatever proposals don't deteriorate the financial position of the Town
3. What kind of housing is missing in Dover?
• Senior housing & development that enables seniors to downsize & stay • Senior • More modest 2-4 bedroom homes! • Multifamily, small houses/smaller lots, apartments • Senior housing and workforce housing • Multi-unit housing zoning in Dover, near Needham, Wellesley, & Natick where the train stations are • Affordable smaller houses for starters and elderly (including rentals) • I'd love to see designs that you can age with: 1st floor bedroom(s), ensuite baths, covered/close parking • Housing that's "affordable" by smaller size, not a 40B definition • Rentals

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This final element for the first Station included a series of maps. These included maps showing Dover’s zoning, land use, residential structures by the year built, and constrained areas in Dover. On this last map, attendees were able to place stickers on areas of Town that may be more or less suitable for development.



A smaller map series displayed next to these maps showcased various layers of development constraints that, combined, create the “Constrained Areas” map. The chart below explains the factors that were considered for primary constraints, secondary constraints, and substantially developed parcels, also mapped at this station.

Additionally, participants at these maps had access to a map of Dover’s existing water infrastructure to help inform their sticker placement.

Primary Constraints	Secondary Constraints	Substantially Developed Parcels
Absolute Barriers for development • Wetlands • 200-foot buffer from rivers and streams • 70-foot structure setback from wetlands and floodplains • 100-foot buffer from vernal pools • NHESP Priority Habitats • DEP Wellhead Zone I • Open Space protected in perpetuity • 100-Year Floodplains & Regulatory Floodways	Discretionary Barriers for development • Open Space with limited protections • 100-foot buffer from wetlands • Flood zones with a 0.2 percent annual chance of flood hazard • Slope greater or equal to 15 percent grade.	Non-vacant parcels that are less than 2x the minimum zoning acreage allowable in a zone, i.e. it would be difficult with current zoning to build more than what already exists on a lot.

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Green dots representing suitable locations for housing were found in the Eastern half of Dover, along Farm Street (8), Dedham Street (4), around the Town Center (4), as well as some scattered locations. Nearly all suitable locations identified by the dots were in areas neither constrained nor in substantially developed parcels based on zoning. It is also notable that many dots fall on large parcels in Dover, which primarily reflect the “estate” site type and, to a lesser extent, the “woodland” site type. Red dots – signifying where development is unsuitable – on the maps are located on Tisdale Road.

The sticky notes (from left to right) read:

- Access to public transportation
- Apartment at Town Garage that should be relocated
- Near neighboring towns with amenities & services

Station 2: Design Preferences

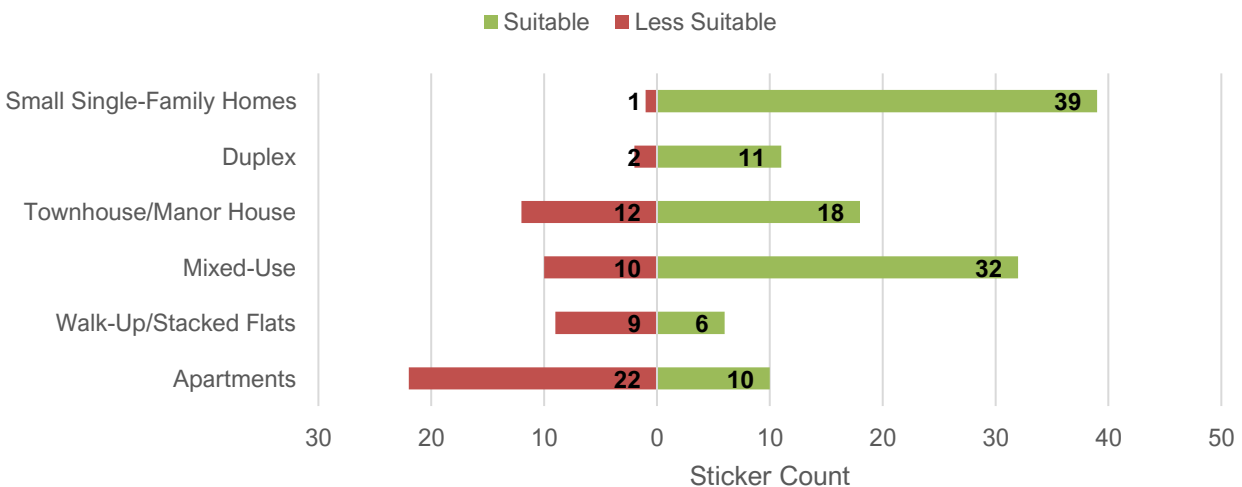
This station sought to understand the housing design preferences of community members by asking them to react to images of different housing types on several boards. Attendees placed a green sticker for which housing styles are suitable, and red stickers for housing styles that are less suitable, in Dover.

This station was split between various boards organized by density:

1. Small Single-Family Homes: Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Cottages.
2. Duplex: 2 Units with Shared Walls
3. Townhouse/Manor House: 3 or more homes with shared walls
4. Mixed-Use: Apartments over ground-floor commercial
5. Walk-up/Stacked Flats: 6-12 homes with a central stair hall
6. Apartments: 22-32 homes with a center hall on each floor.



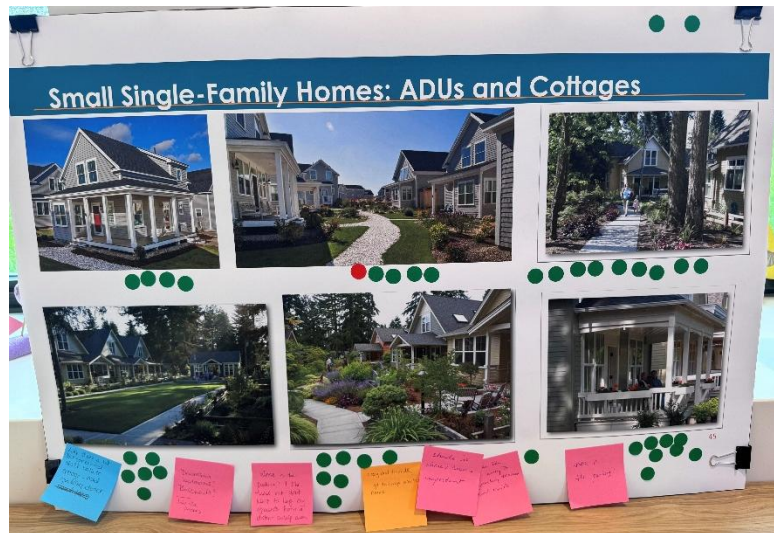
Visual Preference Counts for Housing Design Preferences



Altogether, community members expressed the most interest in single-family homes, mixed-use housing, and townhouse or manor houses while showing the least interest in apartments.

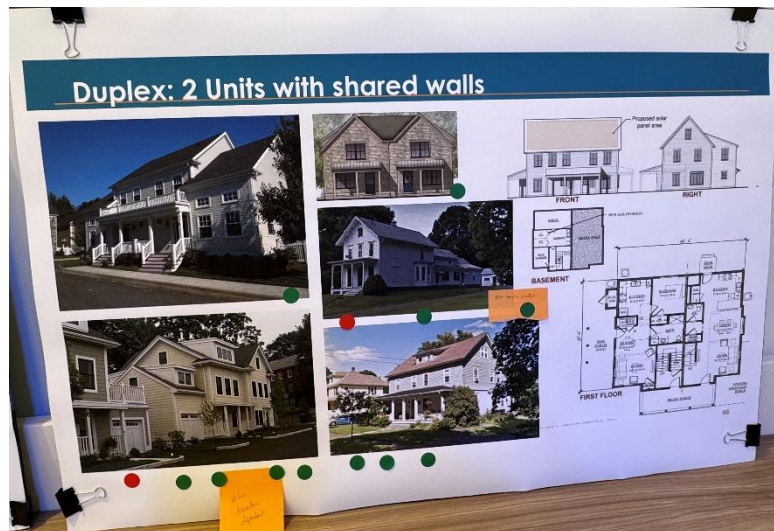
1. Small Single-Family Homes

This category of housing, the least dense, received the most favorability across different designs, with only one red sticker placed on this board. Community members enjoyed the porches, cozy and friendly atmosphere, and shade. One comment mentioned the cost of garden maintenance, while several inquired about where parking would lie next to these homes.



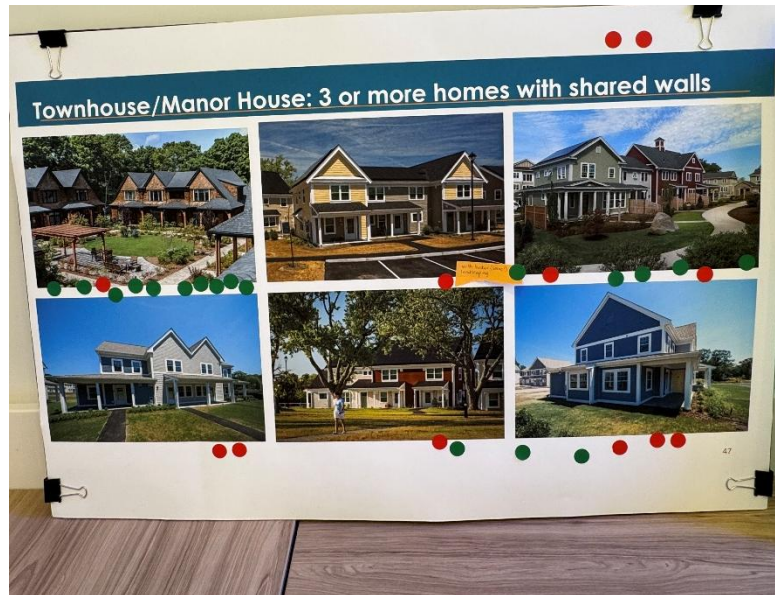
2. Duplex

This category of housing was seen as less suitable compared to the small single-family homes, although two comments on the board suggested that location was important to this housing typology, with one comment suggesting duplexes would work well in the Town Center. This housing type also saw the least participation total.



3. Townhouse/Manor House

Townhouses or Manor homes had both more positive and negative responses compared to duplexes, with one design especially standing out. One comment wished for better landscaping than that of one of the examples.



4. Mixed-Use

Mixed-use development had the next greatest suitability rating for Dover after single-family homes. Community members favored visually small-scale mixed-use developments, with three comments suggesting this for the Town Center, possibly by Dover Market. Another comment wondered about parking for this type of housing.



5. Walk-Up/Stacked Flats

Like Duplexes, Walk-Up or Stacked Flats had limited participation on the boards themselves. That being said, more community members saw them as less suitable for Dover than suitable. The comments suggested that this housing type is location-dependent, with the Town Center being the most appropriate option. One comment specified that this type of housing could be appropriate for senior, one-floor residences.



6. Apartments

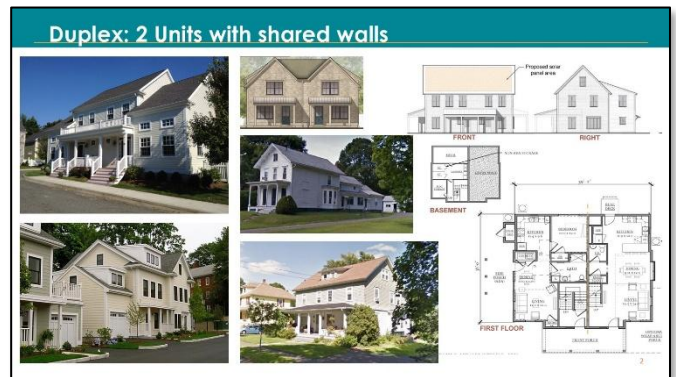
While no specific comments were made for this housing type, apartments were seen as less suitable for Dover, though a sizable contingent of attendees (10) also found them appropriate for the Town.



Design Stations

Each Design Station started with a base map at a scale of 1"=40". Guided by a facilitator, participants were asked to analyze the site and identify opportunities for housing and other uses, and then to experiment with adding new housing in various areas. In addition to the base map, a series of scale models were provided representing six different building types, as showcased in Station 2 (see page 13). Using the scale model pieces, participants were able to compare the size and shape of potential new buildings to any existing buildings and explore how they might fit in different locations. Each group rotated through the stations in turn, testing ideas for housing in different areas, and commenting on the ideas proposed by previous groups. The results were recorded with notes and photographs.

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Building Type Sheets (above) illustrate a range of forms and styles, with a focus on traditional New England architecture. Scale model pieces were provided for each building type that could be manipulated to explore various arrangements of buildings on each site (right, showing the library in the foreground).



Station 3: Design Station – Town Center

This station featured a large map of Dover’s town center with 3-D models of existing buildings in the area. This site extended West-East from the Dover Church to the Police Station, and North-South from Haven Street to the intersection of Centre Street and Whiting Road.

Participants noted important landmarks like the Town House, Library, Caryl Community Center, the Dover Market, the Charles River School and the Churches. They spoke about the importance of these existing uses to the life of the town, and the opportunity to provide more housing in the Village Center to take advantage of having so many resources within walking distance.

Participants were asked to identify potential areas within the Town Center for redevelopment for housing and other uses. They also explored options for redevelopment of the Dover Market and other structures for housing and/or mixed commercial and residential use.





Potential Redevelopment on Whiting Road

Participants agreed that the Dover Market and other properties along Whiting Road offer an opportunity for redevelopment as mixed-use buildings with commercial use on the ground floor and apartments on the upper floors. Rebuilding structures closer to the road could allow for parking to be consolidated behind the buildings, allowing for a more attractive streetscape. One person questioned whether people would like to park in the rear of stores, and it was agreed that people would get used to it and function well once they knew where the parking is. Short term parking along the street could also be provided in front of the stores for

quick visits. One concern was raised about on-street parking making it hard for drivers to see pedestrians crossing the street, and conversely for pedestrians to see oncoming cars. The group discussed how bump outs and median dividers can help provide safe, visible areas for pedestrians to see and be seen as they cross the street.

In the photo on the right, new buildings are arranged along the edge of Whiting Road, with parking placed in a continuous lot to the rear along the former railroad tracks. Parking could also be shared with the parking lot at the Caryl Community Center, at right in the photo. Existing buildings could be preserved or replaced in this scenario. One participant noted the historic value of the old fire station in the center of the block and suggested it should be preserved and redeveloped as part of the plan.



Alternatives for Dedham Street Frontage

Some participants noted potential space for housing along Dedham Street, possibly including the American Legion property and extending north along the edge of the library parking lot. One participant pointed out that putting housing next to the library is a great idea. If you're an older person and do not need to drive, you can walk to the library, post office, and community center. This would help to keep seniors from being isolated in the community.

In one of the schemes (bottom left), new townhouses were arrayed between the parking lot and Dedham Street, preserving that portion of the open space closest to the street as a public park. There appears to be enough space west of the library building and parking lot for some additional homes. In a second alternative (bottom right), participants suggested using small single-family cottages instead of attached townhouses. This would likely result in fewer total units but would have a more informal, small-town character.



Redeveloping the Town Garage Site for Housing

Another idea raised by participants was the potential for relocating the Town Garage and redeveloping the site for housing and possible mixed, commercial uses. One person asked whether you really need the DPW facilities in the town center - why not move them to a less congested spot and redevelop the property for housing and other uses? This would reduce the impact of trucks and equipment on the center and provide a lot of space for uses that may otherwise better fit with the desired pedestrian character of the village. As shown in the photo on the right, the existing town garage building could be removed and replaced with parking, with townhouses lined up along the former railroad. A larger apartment building could be tucked at the northern end of what is now parking and storage for the town garage. This is probably the largest single redevelopment opportunity in the Village Center. The layout depicted here could have 20-30 townhouses and 25-30 apartments, and includes 80 parking spaces.



Additional individual comments included:

- Like the cottage style, but wouldn't support large apartment buildings. Like the idea of having housing close to the center for seniors and young people - though the library would hate the idea of losing their green space.
- Apartments in the downtown would be great! And perhaps the library would support the tradeoff if it meant more people living downtown to use the library.
- Need to build the rail trail. As part of that effort, rework the corner between Springdale Ave and Dedham Street for parking. Dover doesn't need to duplicate roadways represented by Hawthorne Lane and Railroad Ave, and there is ample space there for a parking lot.
- Police and fire staff need housing, as well as places to gather. This should be considered as part of the redevelopment plan for the center.

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- Should consider making part of the center a pedestrian zone- too many crisscrossing roads!



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Station 4: Design Station – Estate

The “Estate” station used a map of the Connors Center parcel in Dover, intended to generally represent estate-style parcels in Dover that typically have large lot sizes with a main building set back from the main street.

At this station, community members signaled interest in housing that makes efficient use of the space. Most commonly, this meant building close to the street and building in such a way as to maximize contiguous open space. Community members were concerned about building near existing abutters, such as near Greystone Road, wetlands, and the Charles River.

Overall, cottage court-style developments and townhouses were popular housing types proposed for this site. Minimal interest also existed for apartments in a parcel such as this, with the intent of preserving the remaining land for open space.





For parcels like these, senior housing was seen as a particular opportunity to explore, with inspiration from developments in Sherborn, Holliston, and Fox Hill Village in Westwood. One proposal suggested an incremental approach to housing development, with 12 cottages for the first phase out front, then another 12 built later on and adjacent to the first phase. Lastly, there was a question as to the utility of developing on an estate site if plans are made to redevelop the Town Center.

Station 5: Design Station – Woodlands

The final design station focused on a series of parcels on Junction Street South of the Dover-Sherborn High School campus and North of the Dover-Medfield Town Border. This station is representative of smaller, wooded areas of Dover with currently minimal or no development.

Community members, as with the Estate station, expressed a desire to build away from existing assets such as the high school, and to preserve natural features, like the woods, towards the back of the site. Contrary to the Estate station, however, some community members preferred housing out of sight from Junction Street.



In terms of housing types, cluster housing was a popular proposal, with cottages or other types of housing placed near the road. Duplexes were also considered, and direct access to covered parking was another amenity desired for this site to prioritize accessibility.

Senior housing was also of interest at this station. For this, access to nearby senior services is an important factor, and one community member suggested that perhaps senior housing was better suited to the Town center, which already hosts a variety of existing amenities and services. Lastly, there was a concern about the high water table within this site, which could preclude development at this site.



Large Discussion

After spending time interacting with the different stations, the attendees reconvened as one group and listened to the ideas that facilitators heard at each station. A broad discussion about housing followed, where community members brought up questions about State housing requirements, details about specific housing typologies, and the desire for more commercial activity in Dover, among other ideas.