

Homes for All Project Update

802 Homes & New Developer Training – June 2026

Hello everyone,

As we head into the second half of the year, we wanted to share a few updates from across the Homes for All initiative.

Before we get into it, a quick shout-out to our Vermont partners, including the Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Vermont Treasurer's Office, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Land Access and Opportunity Board, AARP Vermont, Let's Build Homes, and the Vermont General Assembly. Their willingness to support this idea and invest in the tools, training, and partnerships needed to make it easier for Vermonters to build homes in their communities continues to inspire us.

This effort also benefits from the expertise and partnerships of states and organizations working nationally and regionally to advance housing, land use, and community development, including the Congress for the New Urbanism, Pew Charitable Trusts, Urban Land Institute, Center for Public Enterprise, and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, as well as our counterparts across New England. For a small state like Vermont, regional collaboration is essential. By coordinating across state lines on housing design, standards, procurement, and financing, we can help create the scale needed to lower costs, strengthen the market for off-site construction, and make high-quality housing more affordable. Their willingness to share ideas, align strategies, and learn together has strengthened this work and expanded our sense of what's possible.

Finally, we are grateful to the countless professionals, advisors, and volunteers who have generously shared their time, expertise, and thoughtful feedback throughout this effort. The home plans are stronger because of your contributions—and because so many people have been willing to challenge assumptions, work across disciplines, and collaborate to develop practical solutions to Vermont's housing challenges. This has truly been a collective effort, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Stay Connected and Help Spread the Word

Want to keep up with the latest on Homes for All and 802 Homes? [Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for project and plan updates, as well as opportunities to get involved.

If you find this work valuable, please consider sharing it with your networks. The more people we reach—local leaders, builders, manufacturers, lenders, and community partners—the more momentum we can build to move from training and planning to projects.

802 Homes Engagement

Visual Preference Survey – More Than 600 Vermonters Participated

Thank you to everyone who took the time to review the preliminary home designs and share feedback, and to [Seven Days for helping spread the word](#). While not a scientific survey, we were thrilled by the number of responses and the thoughtfulness of the comments.

Participation far exceeded expectations and reinforces that Vermonters want to be part of shaping housing solutions and have strong opinions about what new housing should look and feel like.

Early findings include:

- A strong majority of respondents said they would be comfortable with one of these homes being built in their neighborhood.
- Affordability ranked as the top priority, followed closely by energy performance and operating costs.
- Respondents consistently valued homes that feel familiar, fit naturally into Vermont communities, and make efficient use of space.
- Smaller homes and “missing middle” options performed particularly well when paired with historic design cues.
- Many respondents emphasized long-term livability — including lower utility bills, flexibility over time, and homes that work for people at different stages of life.
- Beyond affordability and energy performance, respondents indicated that the ability to live in a walkable place or stay in their community as they age is more important than other home amenities, such as a large kitchen or guest bedrooms. “Place” and community are important to Vermonters.

Taken together, the results suggest that Vermonters may be more open to infill housing than is often assumed—particularly when homes are well-designed, energy-efficient, and responsive to local context.

AARP Community Challenge Grant — Homes That Work Across Generations

We’re thrilled that 802 Homes received funding from the AARP Community Challenge program to host listening sessions on accessibility and long-term usability.

These conversations will help ensure the catalog plans work as households grow, age, and adapt over time. Topics will include aging in place, universal design principles, accessibility, and everyday functionality.

Upcoming 802 Homes Age-Friendly Housing Workshops:

In Person

Thursday, July 9

6:00–7:30 PM

The Community Room at BCA Studios

405 Pine Street, Burlington

Virtual

Thursday, July 16

1:30–3:00 PM

Monday, July 20

9:30–11:00 AM

[Use this link to register for a workshop.](#)

State and Local Code Officials Review Preliminary Home Designs

The Division of Fire Safety and municipal officials who administer building and life safety codes are reviewing preliminary plan sets as we fine-tune the designs. These discussions are helping us better understand where there is flexibility, where interpretation varies, and where additional guidance or drawings could make approvals easier and more predictable. Ultimately, this upfront work will streamline the plan approval process for developers, builders, and manufacturers using the plans.

Making High-Performance Homes Easier

One of the survey's clearest messages was that building efficiency matters. While affordability ranked highest among priorities, sustainability and operating costs were close behind. In response, DHCD is working with Efficiency Vermont and Vermont's electric utilities to explore ways to make incentive programs more "plug-and-play" for 802 Homes.

The goal is to simplify the process and create clearer pathways for builders, manufacturers, and homeowners to access incentives for "good, better, and best" building performance options. Rather than treating energy performance as an additional layer to navigate later, the aim is to integrate efficiency strategies and incentives into home designs from the outset—making high-performance homes easier to build, finance, and choose.

Local Development Review Process Improvements

DHCD recently concluded a series of work sessions with 802 Homes partner municipalities—Essex Junction, Hartford, and Manchester—to explore ways to improve local permitting processes to create greater predictability and shorten timelines for small-scale housing development. While not formal partners in the initiative, Burlington and Montpelier are also exploring regulatory and permitting changes that would make homes from the 802 Homes Catalog easier to approve and build.

The efforts will inform upcoming updates to the State Planning Manual and the 802 Homes Catalog. These resources will show how communities statewide can become “development-ready” by updating their permitting processes and local bylaws to support housing growth. Recommendations will focus on by-right permitting for small-scale development, dimensional standards appropriate for traditional neighborhoods and infill, and clarity in the development process.

New Supports for Predevelopment Work

One of the recurring challenges we hear from communities and emerging developers is that promising projects often stall long before construction begins. Site evaluation, concept design, feasibility analysis, permitting, and financing all require time and resources—and too often, predevelopment costs keep projects from moving forward.

In response, the Land Access and Opportunity Board (LAOB) is partnering with the Vermont Community Loan Fund to launch new funding programs that support predevelopment activities for 802 Homes and other small-scale housing development efforts. More details will follow as these programs develop and launch. We commend our partners for finding a way to fill this critical gap between planning and production.

Small-Scale Developer Training Updates

Building homes requires more than plans—it requires people ready to take projects from idea to reality.

Through the Homes for All initiative, DHCD and the LAOB continue to support training and technical assistance to help small-scale and emerging developers build the skills, networks, and confidence needed to deliver housing in Vermont communities.

Recent training sessions in Middlebury and Brattleboro brought together participants from across the state to explore topics such as project feasibility, financing, site selection, local approvals, and development fundamentals. We continue to hear strong interest from individuals and organizations looking to move from “I’ve thought about doing a project” to “I’m ready to take the next step.” Those ready to take the next step can access workshops, one-on-one technical assistance, and peer learning opportunities, and register for upcoming events at www.landaccessvt.org.

The first six-week Developer Academy recently concluded with 14 participants and prospective developers working through their own projects alongside expert trainers. The course covered topics including site selection, structuring a development business, identifying financing, preparing pro formas, and pitching projects to lenders and investors. Two additional Developer Academy cohorts are now open for registration, running July 28–September 1 and October 6–November 10.

- Starting July 28 - <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/incdeva/2070072>
- Starting Oct 6 - <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/incdeva/2070127>

DHCD will also host a final in-person Small-Scale Developer Workshop on September 23 in Lyndon. Register here - <https://buytickets.at/incdeva/2026303>

Off-Site Housing Accelerator and Regional Market Building

The Governor has signed legislation authorizing the Office of the State Treasurer to explore market interventions that increase housing production and strengthen Vermont's off-site construction ecosystem.

DHCD and partners continue to meet directly with manufacturers, suppliers, and industry leaders to identify where targeted public action could help expand production and reduce costs over time. Potential tools include bundled purchase commitments, production financing, loan loss reserves, and mechanisms that provide greater certainty for manufacturers and developers.

The Treasurer's Office expects to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to developers and off-site manufacturers later to determine which strategies and investments would most effectively make off-site construction more mainstream.

The message we continue to hear is that market scale and predictability matter. To help achieve that scale, Vermont is also working with New Hampshire and Maine—with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Urban Land Institute, and the Center for Public Enterprise—to explore regional collaboration on off-site construction.

Recent discussions have focused on sharing pre-vetted plan sets, such as the 802 Homes Catalog. Rather than each state solving the same problems independently, common regional designs and standards can lower costs, simplify approvals, and help manufacturers achieve the scale needed to reduce costs.

Looking Ahead

Exploring More Predictable Permit Pathways

As directed by Act 152, DHCD will convene stakeholders in July to examine how municipal appeals and discretionary review affect housing delivery.

The effort will explore policy, procedural, and technical options to improve predictability and efficiency while preserving meaningful public participation and legitimate local interests.

Given the extensive upfront technical review, public engagement, and plan standardization, one of the ideas the group will explore is ways to streamline approvals for the 802 Homes Catalog while respecting community values.

More to come as stakeholder conversations begin in July. The final report is due to the General Assembly on January 15, 2027.

Federal Housing Bill

The U.S. Congress passed the [21st Century ROAD to Housing Act](#), which aligns closely with Vermont's housing policy modernization efforts, including [Zoning for Great Neighborhoods](#), [Vermont Housing Improvement Program \(VHIP\)](#), the [HOME Act](#), [Act 181](#), [Move-In Vermont](#), and [Homes for All/802 Homes](#). Several provisions reflect and reinforce ongoing work, including support for local bylaw modernization, pre-approved housing plans, repair programs to improve the existing housing stock, streamlined review for infill development, expanded support for modular and off-site construction, and financing innovation. If enacted, the legislation may create opportunities for Vermont to pursue funding for pilot initiatives and demonstration projects.

Help Us Name Individual Home Plans

One idea we're exploring is inviting Vermonters to help name the homes in the catalog.

Rather than keeping our descriptive house plan names like "Back-to-Back Duplex" and "Intergenerational Triple Decker," we'd love to create memorable, Vermont-inspired names that build a stronger sense of public ownership of the project.

We're imagining pairing the naming effort with another round of public feedback and voting—not only to keep people engaged, but also to continue learning which designs resonate most and why. Winners will receive a print of the plan and recognition at launch.

Stay tuned for more!