



Enabling Better Places: An Incremental Approach to Coding Reform

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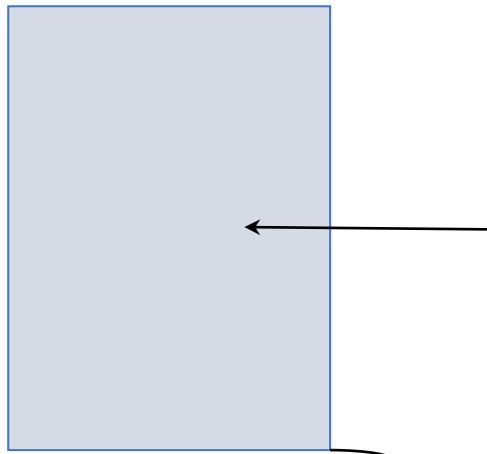
Vermont's beautiful landscapes coupled with their compact and historic villages have made it a desirable place to live and a year-round tourist destination.



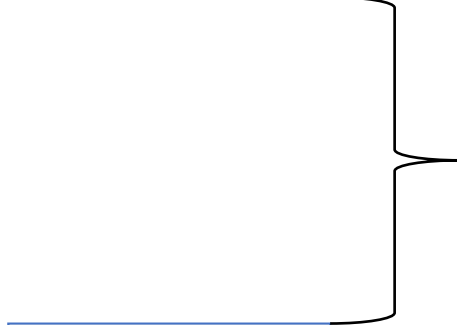
These picturesque and walkable Vermont villages and towns are also powerful economic and social engines.

HOUSING SHORTAGE

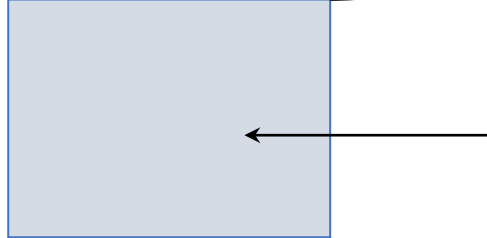
- **Development regulations can:**
 - Drive up the cost of development
 - Slow production (supply doesn't keep pace with demand)
- **Vermont needs to:**
 - Increase the number of units
 - Build more variety of units



Market rate housing

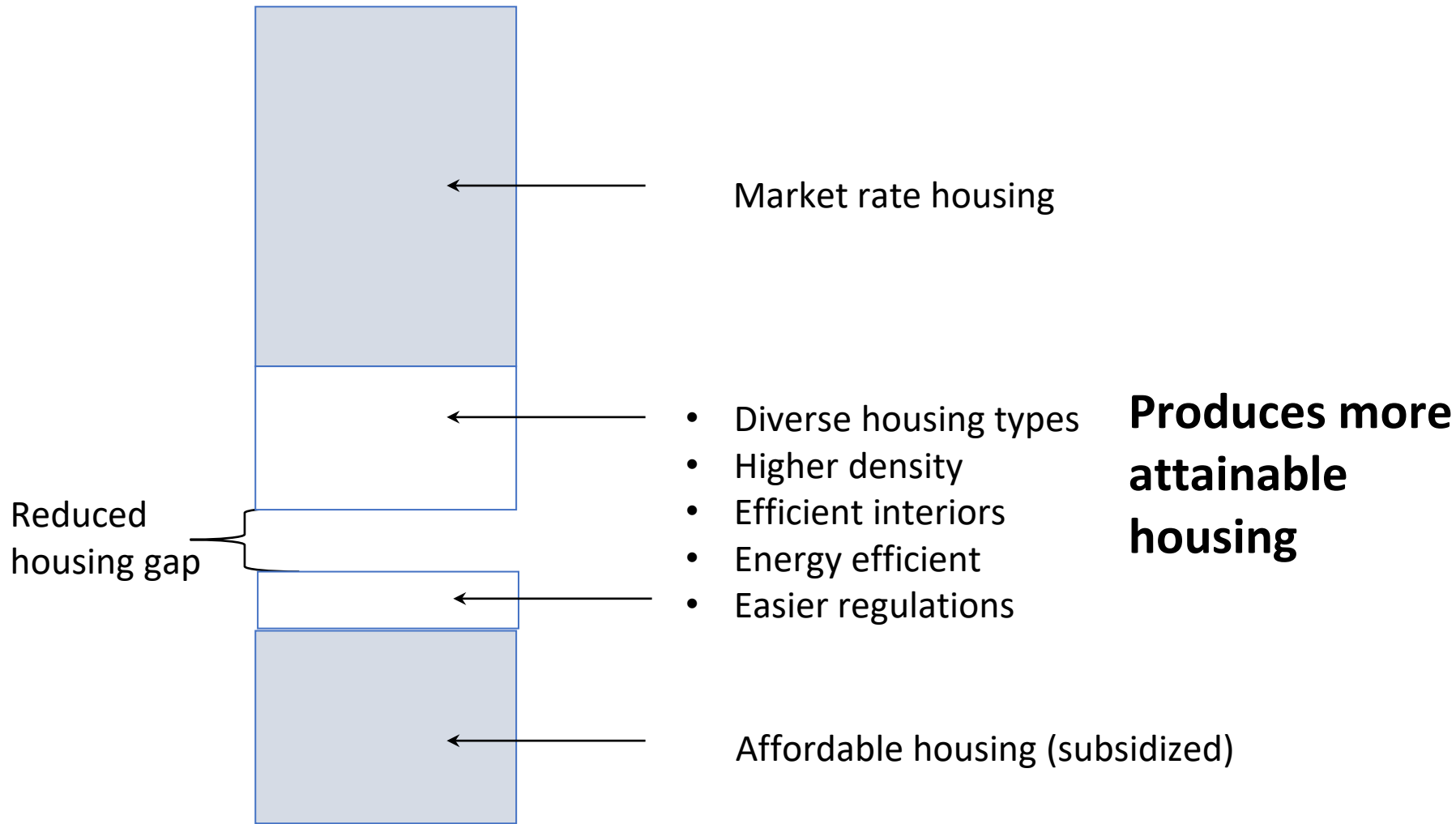


Attainable housing gap



Affordable housing (subsidized)

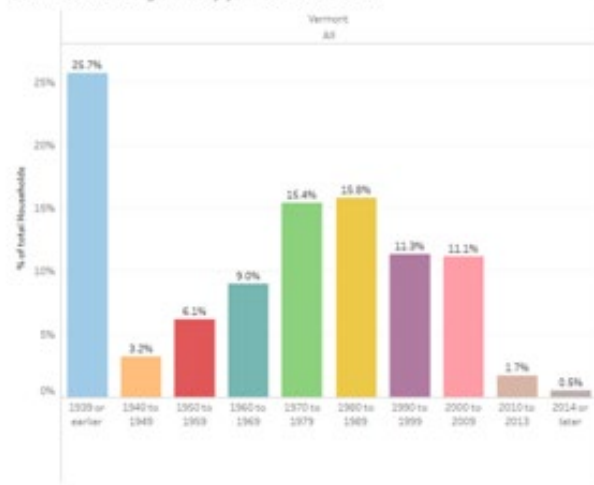




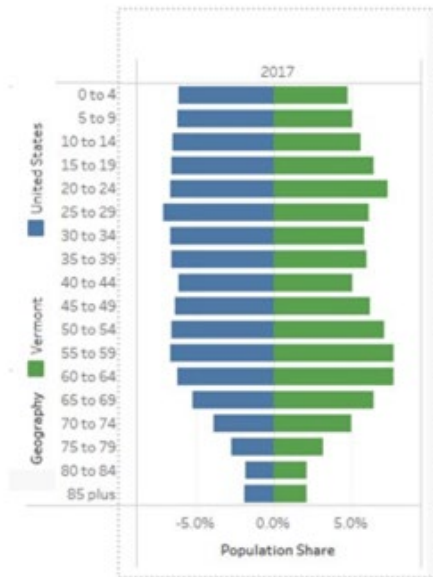
HOUSING CHALLENGES IN VERMONT

Year structure built

Estimated housing units by year structure built

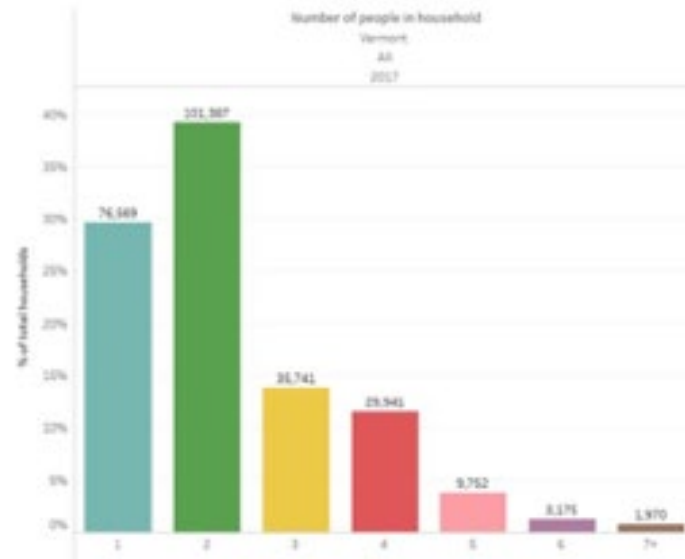


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates (Table B25034, B25036), 2019-2027



Source: [Vermont Futures Project](#)

Estimated households by number of people



Source: [Housing Data](#)

THE COMMON ROADBLOCKS



1. OUTDATED CODES AND ORDINANCES

Current zoning and land-use regulations create significant barriers for these small developments.

2. REQUIRING EACH DEVELOPMENT TO COVER PUBLIC GOODS

Requiring smaller developments to individually fulfill regulations such as open space, parking, street improvements, and stormwater is prohibitively expensive and disincentivizes density.

3. LONG-STANDING PERCEIVED SCARCITY

Communities are often fearful of proposing increased density due to perceived scarcity of resources such as road capacity and good schools.



The Project for Code Reform

Coding solutions that enable great places

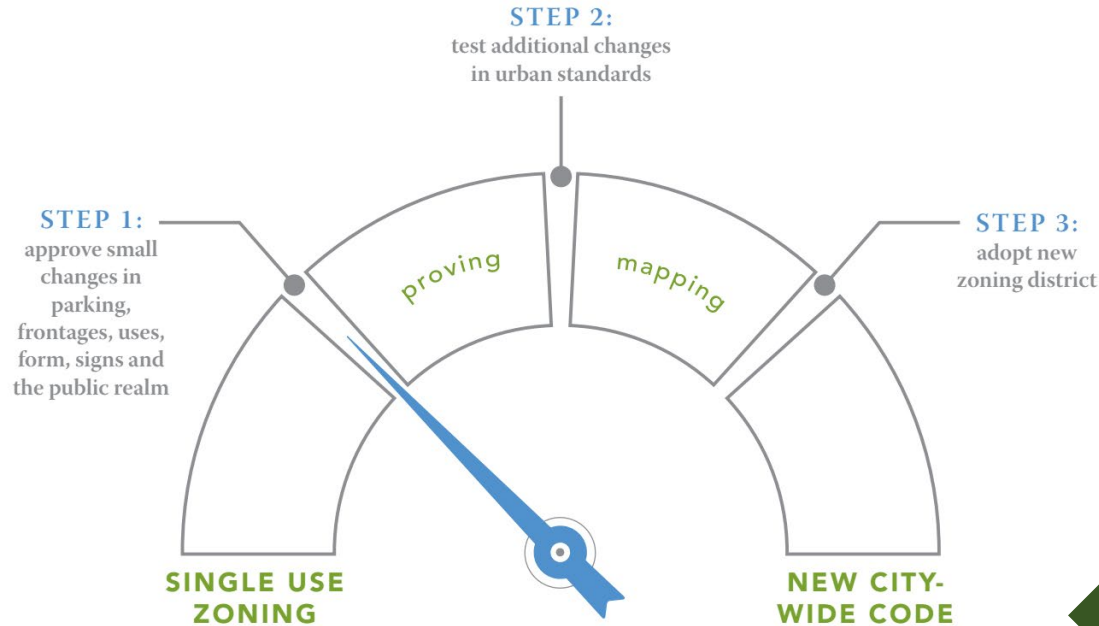
Why aren't more cities implementing placemaking strategies, which are proven to expand economic activity, increase mobility, protect the environment, and create more equitable places?

In many cases, it's because a municipality's zoning codes and ordinances make it illegal to create the type of vibrant communities that support jobs, foster economic development, and are attractive places for people to live, work, and play that residents and local leaders are seeking.

A wide-angle photograph of a bustling city street at dusk. The street is filled with pedestrians of various ages walking towards the camera. On the left, there are trees and buildings with warm interior lights visible through the windows. On the right, a large, ornate historic building with many windows and a clock tower in the distance is visible. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting sunset. A red canopy tent is set up on the right side of the street. The overall atmosphere is lively and community-oriented.

“Do the biggest little thing...”

“What can we do *now* to let better development happen...



ARC OF ENGAGEMENT

...rather than keeping everything broken until we can do this?”

Process

- **Research**
 - Understanding state based opportunities and constraints
 - Hearing directly from localities
- **Analysis**
- **Recommendation**
 - Translating to code that responds to local conditions
- **Documentation**
 - Develop guidance materials for accessibility
 - Ground truthing with localities
- **Training and Education**

SCHEDULE

Kickoff Meeting: July 10, 2019

Code Reform Workshop: November 4-8, 2019

Monday: Case study community discussions

Tuesday-Wednesday: DHCD and CNU Team work to develop code reform changes

Thursday: CNU Team presents suggested code reform recommendations at public presentation

Friday: CNU Team incorporates comments received during public presentation

First Draft of Recommendations: January, 2020

Review Meeting: February 14, 2020

Final Draft of Recommendations: March 31, 2020

Case Study Communities



Brattleboro



Fairfax



Middlesex



Castleton



Ludlow



Vergennes



Do the Biggest Little Thing...

... to reflect the character of Vermont communities

ADJUST DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS



Adjust Dimensional Standards

Stage 1 – Short-Term Fixes

1. Match minimum lot sizes to local patterns
 2. Remove maximum lot coverage requirements
 3. Remove artificial density caps
 4. Align other dimensional standards with the existing pattern
 5. Remove requirements that forbid a second building on the lot
 6. Remove building articulation requirements
- 

Adjust Dimensional Standards

Stage 2 – Mid-Term Fixes

1. Reexamine “nonconforming” provisions
2. Consider supplementing minimum front setbacks with maximum front setbacks
3. Add character-based frontage requirements



REASSESS PARKING REQUIREMENTS



Reassess Parking Requirements

Stage 1 – Short-Term Fixes

1. Reduce the number of on-site parking spaces required for specific uses
2. Require that parking spaces be placed behind building



Reassess Parking Requirements

Stage 2 – Mid-Term Fixes

1. Eliminate parking minimums
2. Allow on-street parking in certain areas



ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY USE RESTRICTIONS



Eliminate Unnecessary Use Restrictions

Stage 1 – Short-Term Fixes

1. Eliminate unnecessary use restrictions on desirable housing types
2. Avoid artificial determinations of acceptable family composition



Eliminate Unnecessary Use Restrictions

Stage 2 – Mid-Term Fixes

1. Do not require unnecessary subdivision of land



OPTIMIZE ADU REGULATIONS



Optimize ADU Regulations

Stage 1 – Short-Term Fixes

1. Allow owner to occupy smaller unit
1. Increase permitted unit size





60% width





≥ 40'

Optimize ADU Regulations

Stage 2 – Mid-Term Fixes

1. Minimize parking requirement



REFINE STREET STANDARDS



REFINE STREET STANDARDS

Stage 1 – Short-Term Fixes

1. Add on-street parking wherever possible

1. Develop (context appropriate) public realm standards



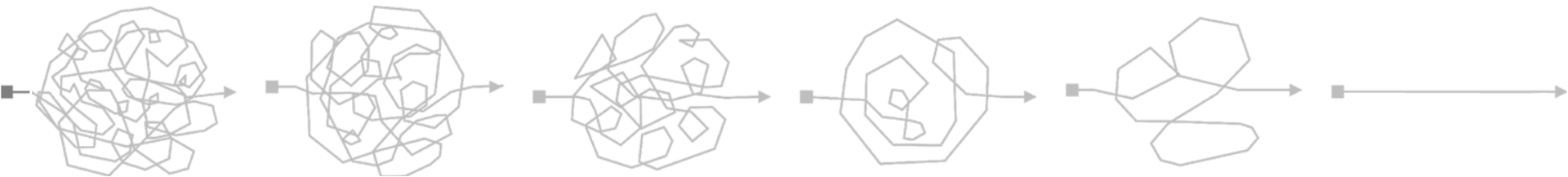
REFINE STREET STANDARDS

Stage 2 – Mid-Term Fixes

1. Stormwater management options
2. Reduce travel lane width
3. Right-size the number of travel lanes
4. Implement complete street principles
5. Provide connections where possible



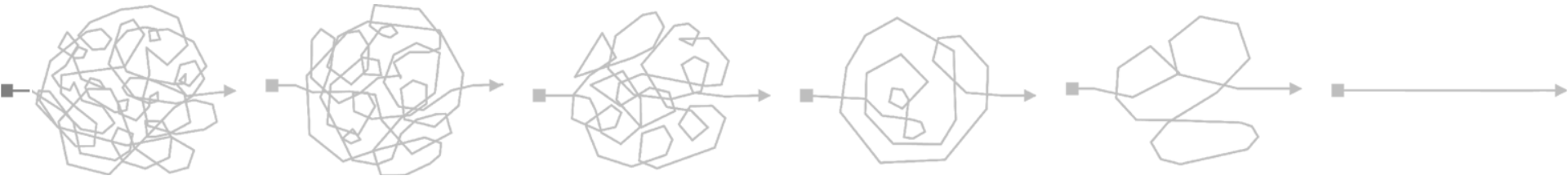
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Stage 1 – Short-Term Fixes

1. Allow more housing types by reducing requirements for conditional-use approval and discretionary site plan review
2. Simplify application requirements for small-scale development
3. Where practical, make staff responsible for site plan review



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

Stage 2 – Mid-Term Fixes

1. Avoid over-reliance on complex PUD approval processes
2. Consider allowing limited deviations from certain zoning standards

