

*City of Biddeford*  
**Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force**  
**May 24, 2022 5:30 PM Biddeford Council Chambers & Zoom**  
**May 24, 2022 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**  
**Topic: Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force**

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/92686837539?pwd=dzRxTVhWa0VpdXVKTWtmZldUNDBTUT09>

Passcode: 190714

Or One tap mobile :

US: +13017158592,,92686837539# or +13126266799,,92686837539#

Or Telephone:

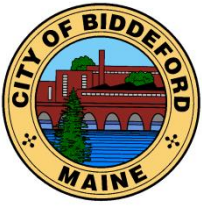
**Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):**

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 646 558 8656 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1  
346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 9128

Webinar ID: 926 8683 7539

International numbers available: <https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/92686837539>

1. **Welcome Members**
2. **Adjustments to the Adgenda**
3. **Consent Agenda**
  - 3.1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 26, 2022  
[042622-Draft.pdf](#)
4. **Discussion**
  - 4.1. Task Force Priorities Discussion  
[12-21-2021\\_Creation\\_of\\_Affordable\\_Housing\\_Comm-Guidelines.pdf](#)  
[Housing Internal Survey Responses.xlsx](#)
  - 4.2. Outreach Strategy  
[Affordable Housing Task Force Outreach Memo.pdf](#)  
[Summary of Results from Com Plan Housing Questions 5-18-22.pdf](#)  
[HOUSING STRATEGIES SURVEY AND COMMENTS JUNE 30 2021.pdf](#)
  - 4.3. Update on Upcoming Items for June Meeting
5. **Public Comments (5 min)**
6. **Adjourn**



# CITY OF BIDDEFORD

---

## Planning and Development Department

### Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

**Date:** April 26, 2022  
**Time:** 5:30 PM  
**Location:** Hybrid Meeting: City Council Chambers & Remote Access Meeting (1MRSA § 403-B permits public proceedings through remote access during the declaration of state of emergency due to COVID-19).

#### Committee Members in Attendance:

Doris Ortiz (Chair), Martin Grohman (via Zoom), Reverend Shirley Bowen, Ciel Caldwell, Dominic J. Deschambault, Seth Harkness (via Zoom) & Ian Garcia-Grant  
Staff Present: James Bennett, Gail Wilkerson (via Zoom) & Nan Whitten

1. Chair Ortiz brought the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.
2. There were no adjustments to the agenda.
3. Consent Agenda:  
MOTIONS: 5:35 PM  
Deschambault: Motion: To Approve Meeting Minutes from 3-29-22  
Caldwell: Second  
Unanimous Approval of Meeting Minutes from 3-29-22.
4. Presentation by Guy Gagnon, Biddeford Housing Authority as follows:
  - Guy is a resident and native to Biddeford
  - The housing crisis is both regional and national
  - The Housing Authority's work is 2 fold: they work with the Section 8 sector and they have branched into development to create more affordable housing through HUD and MSHA.
  - There is a statewide housing waitlist residents and those who work in the community get top priority.
  - The list is fluid but it can take up to 6 years to get a voucher.
  - The voucher holder then needs to find a place and with the lack of real estate and high rents, the housing crisis is worsening.
  - Guy talked about the housing the Housing Authority has created
  - He feels the crisis cannot only be solved by the government but the private sector must assist.
  - He would like the developers to get TIFs and to be offered bonuses for affordable housing, give them a big incentive.
5. Discussion  
5.1-Council Housing Goals

- Jim Bennett (City Manager) presented the 2020 Housing Goals from the Council
- He talked about how people are having to choose between their hometowns and cheap space
- As the Biddeford community changed, so did the market.
- Now Biddeford is more desirable
- There is a gap in housing when people want to go from their starter house to the next house up in Biddeford. There is a shortage of inventory for next homes.

#### 5.2-Affordable Housing TIF

- Mr. Bennett talked about using the TIF program for affordable housing.
- He talked about how as values are going up in the City, our revenues from the State decline.
- He talked about the in process Diamond Match Project
- Mr. Bennett told the Task Force how the COVID situation has made lifestyle changes. Out of state people are buying up the inventory in Maine and driving up the prices.

#### 5.3-Outreach Program

- Danica Lamontagne talked about communications coming from the Task Force. What information do we want and from where do we want it. Each Task Force member spoke on what they are interested in, among the ideas are as follows:

Financial hardship, budget issues, different types of housing lifestyles, nontraditional housing ideas, skewed information, opportunities for people to pull themselves up, using a neighborhood network to get information from those who do not have computers, being committed and giving time, full spectrum of community, diverse approaches, working with builders of all levels and what can we do better.

#### 5.4-Request Extensions

- Chair Ortiz asked the Task Force about the possibility of asking the Council for an extension of 3-4 months to deliver this project.
- Give the Council preliminary actionable suggestions and any items they feel strongly about can go to Council at any time.
- The extension will give the Task Force time to prioritize what has to be tackled and in what order.

**MOTIONS: 7:28 PM**

**Deschambault-Motion-to request 3-4 month's extension from the Council, delivering preliminary results by September 15, 2022 and final results by November 15, 2022**

**Caldwell-Second**

**Unanimous approval to request extension from the City Council.**

#### 5.5-Next Steps

- Give Danica Lamontagne preliminary feedback
- Focus on the housing goal and where to modify it
- Revisit the original charge of the Task Force

- Create definitions and sub categories of terms used by Task Force
- Think and discuss how to keep on schedule
- Meetings are the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 5:30 in the City Council Chambers as well as via Zoom.

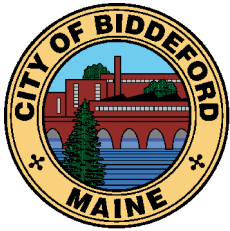
**6. Adjourn:**

- Deschambault: Motion to adjourn 7:34 PM
- Garcia-Grant: second
- Motion carried with unanimous vote

\_\_\_\_\_  
Task Force Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

These minutes are summary and are not intended to be verbatim. Archived meetings are viewable on the City's website: [www.biddefordmaine.org](http://www.biddefordmaine.org).



# Mayor Alan M. Casavant

## City of Biddeford, Maine

acasavant@biddefordmaine.org

### **Creation of Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force**

**Purpose:** To create a short term Task Force to review and make recommendations on the housing issues facing the community. The work of the Task Force shall include:

- a. reviewing the historical housing data;
- b. report on the actual change in affordability within the community over the last five years;
- c. make recommendations on the definition of 'affordable' should mean for Biddeford;
- d. provide an housing inventory within Biddeford;
- e. identify the housing shortages within the community;
- f. provide a forecast of the likely changes in affordable housing over the next five years without any intervention;
- g. identify the current and projected impact on homelessness within the community;
- h. review the current Housing Goals adopted by the City Council and make any recommendations on changes, if appropriate; and
- i. make any recommendation(s) the task force deems appropriate to address the challenges that are identified through the work of the Task Force.

**Task Force Members:** the task force shall consist of nine members. The members shall be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The membership shall consist of a cross section of the City, including the desire to include representatives of the City Council, a citizen that rents within the community, and a person that owns rental property within the community.

**Staffing:** The City Manager shall provide the necessary staffing and support to empower the Task Force to complete their work.

**Time Frame:** the Task Force shall issue a preliminary report to the City Council by June 30, 2022, with a final report issued by August 15, 2022.

205 Main Street, Biddeford, ME 04005 P: 207.286.9385 F: 207.571.0678 [www.biddefordmaine.org](http://www.biddefordmaine.org)

The City of Biddeford is an equal opportunity provider. To file a complaint, write to Diana Depaolo, Human Resource Director, 205 Main Street Biddeford, ME 04005, or call (207) 286-0593.

1. Increase the rate of homeownership from 48% to 51%

2. Preserve or create 90 affordable rental units per year

3. Make all housing units appropriate for families receiving assistance to be lead safe by 2026

4. Ensure that 40% of added or converted rental units are affordable for first-time homebuyers

5. Continue to provide a broad choice of housing options

Response 1

Decrease

Increase

Increase

Increase

Keep the Same

Response 2

Keep the Same

Keep the Same

Keep the Same

Decrease

Keep the Same

Response 3

Keep the Same

Increase

Keep the Same

Increase

Keep the Same

Response 4    Keep the Same Keep the Same            Decrease                            Increase                            Increase

Response 5    Keep the Same Increase                            Keep the Same                            Keep the Same                            Keep the Same

Response 6    Keep the Same Increase                            Increase                            Increase                            Increase

Considering your response to the previous question, please share your thoughts about the Council's proposed 5-year goals for housing in Biddeford:	In your opinion, what are one or two priorities that the Affordable Housing Task Force should focus on?	How much would you spend to help those with Extremely Low Income?	How much would you spend to help those with Very Low to Low Income?	How much would you spend to help those with Moderate Income?	Remaining Budget
We desperately need more rental units!!!	Aggressively increasing access to affordable and low income housing	50	30	20	0
I'd like to learn more about how the council envisions reaching these goals.	Increase the supply of housing in pre-existing residential neighborhoods.	33	33	34	0
Given the market forces driving so many to live in Biddeford, our new and preserved housing goals are demonstrably inadequate. First time home buyers have been largely forced out of the housing market. At the current rate, it seems likely our home ownership to rental ratio will increase, rather than decrease, due to these market pressures, and so our goals need to shift to reflect this reality.	1) Reevaluate what adequate goals for increasing stock of affordable housing should be. 2) Assessing the homelessness crisis and possible short and long term objectives that alleviate the crisis.	45	35	20	0

I have a tough time answering question 2 because affordable is not defined. I support that we need 100's or workforce housing units brought to market

workforce housing first time ownership

10 45 45 0

Biddeford is at a housing identity crossroads. There's a multitude of aging 3 story family housing apartments that just don't offer the type of creature comforts or cleanliness most folks are looking for these days. I'd like to see us maintain a healthy balance of all types of housing for residents of all incomes. I would focus on more 2nd homes for families which frees up first time buyer homes and thus frees up rentals.

30 30 20 20

Less restrictive zoning, new multi-family multi story buildings.

Changing existing zoning which now emphasizes single family half acre lots to promoting new multi-unit, multi-story buildings.

20 30 50 0



## Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force

---

**Meeting Date:** 5/24/2022

**Meeting Time:** 5:30 p.m.

**Submitted by:** Danica Lamontagne, Communications Coordinator

Since the Task Force's last meeting which I attended to gather your preferences about an outreach strategy, I was reminded that the Planning Department has recently completed a myriad of outreach activities of their own about housing in Biddeford as a part of the 2021-2022 Comprehensive Plan update. For your review, I have provided the information provided by the Planning Department from two different Comprehensive Plan surveys which covered housing questions.

The first document shows responses from a housing-specific, online-only survey that opened in Spring 2021 and accepted responses through June 30, 2021. The survey, which was responded to by 232 people, gauged the community's support for the following housing affordability strategies:

- Change zoning to add affordable units
- Assess fees on new development projects
- Mandate the creation of affordable units
- Limit rent increases in 'flipped' properties
- Expand assistance for low-income residents

The survey also asked for the community's input on strategies to address the supply and condition of housing, the balance between housing and the environment, and homelessness.

The second survey, which was sent to all Biddeford households in Fall 2021 and had nearly 1200 responses, asked residents to rate their levels of concern about housing quality or availability, as well as share their preferred housing type and the barriers they experience in accessing their preferred housing.

With recent data available for several of the topic areas that were of interest to the Task Force members, we proposed an outreach strategy that we believe effectively fills in the gaps of missing information and does not replicate questions asked in previous surveys.

We plan to use CitizenLab, our new civic engagement tool, to supplement the existing data. Our proposed outreach plan uses the following strategies:

- Traditional survey
  - The survey is set up to "flow" differently through questions based on how the respondents identify where they live. Typically, our surveys are targeted at Biddeford residents, but in this case, we felt it was important to gather information from people who do not live in Biddeford right now but may be experiencing barriers that keep them from living here.
- "Idea Board" module – people will be asked to share their creative ideas about affordable housing. Other users can comment on the ideas and up-vote ideas that they support.

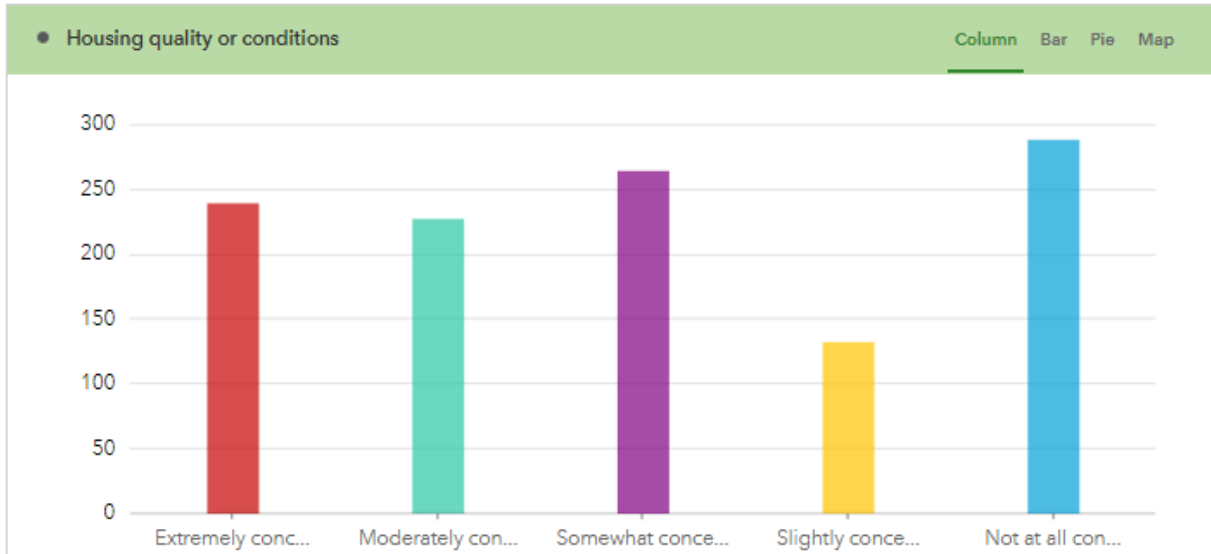
- A separate survey will be emailed directly to our internal developer contacts to collect data about what they experience as the barriers to building affordable housing. The survey also asks for suggestions on how the City could help lessen or eliminate those barriers.

I will look for additional feedback from the committee about what other information you would like to gather that is not covered by the proposed new outreach efforts or the 2021 data.

# City of Biddeford 2021 Comprehensive Plan Survey: Summary of Responses to Questions about Housing Issues

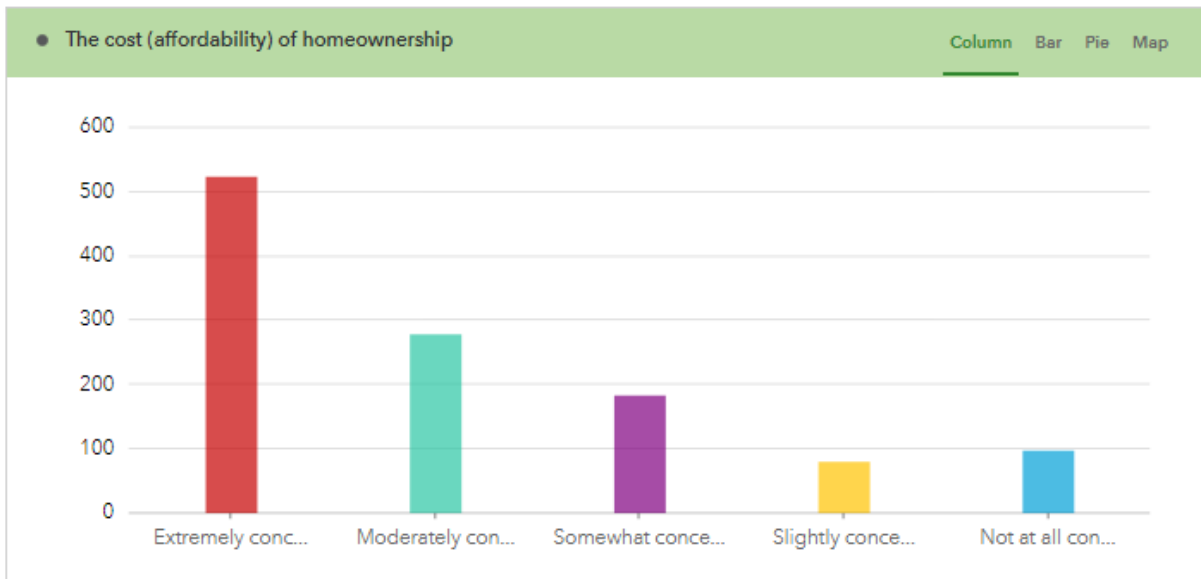
## Housing Quality/Conditions (n=1155)

63% of respondents are somewhat to extremely concerned about *housing quality/conditions*



## Homeownership Affordability

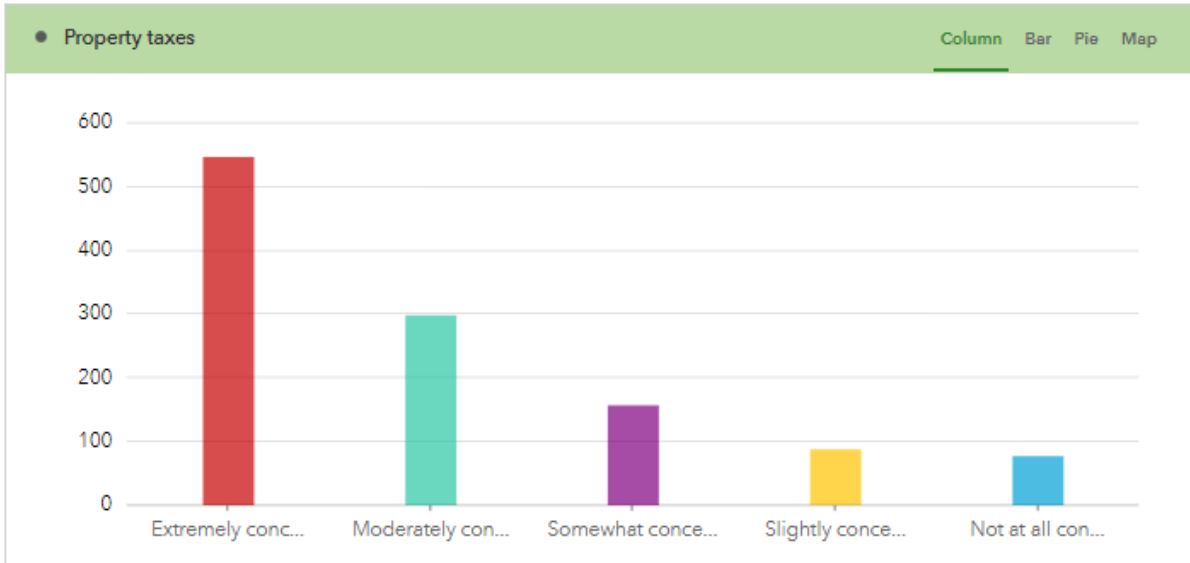
85% of respondents are somewhat to extremely concerned about *homeownership affordability* (n= 1166)



# City of Biddeford 2021 Comprehensive Plan Survey: Summary of Responses to Questions about Housing Issues

## Property Taxes

86% of respondents are somewhat to extremely concerned about *property taxes* (n= 1172)



## Availability of 1- to 2- bedroom housing

69% of respondents are somewhat to extremely concerned about 1- to 2-bedroom unit availability (n= 1156)



# City of Biddeford 2021 Comprehensive Plan Survey: Summary of Responses to Questions about Housing Issues

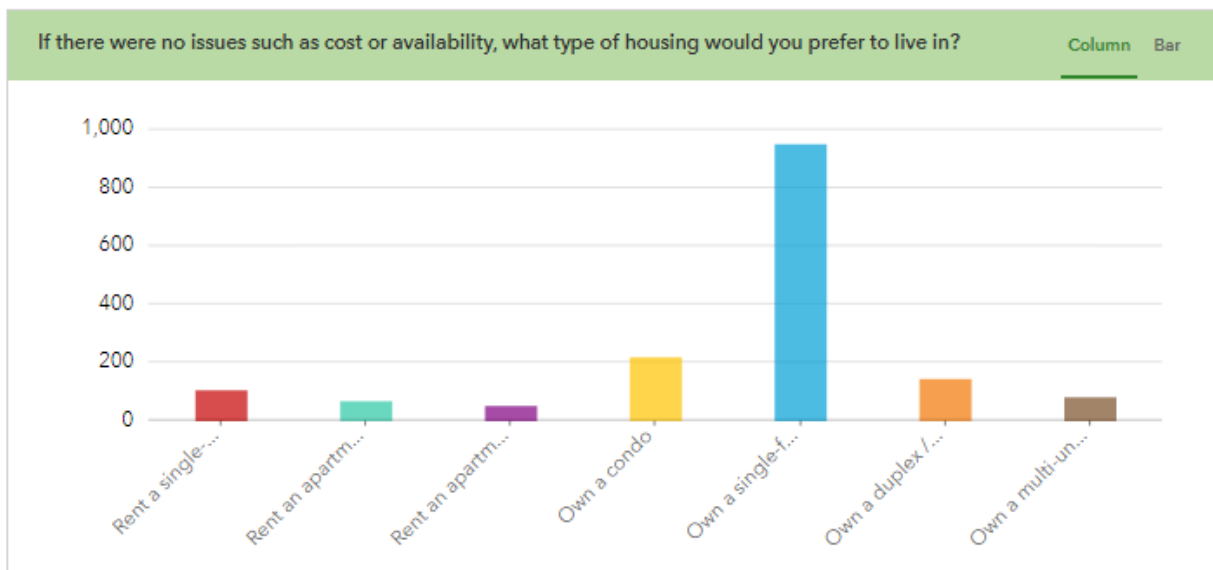
## Availability of 3-bedroom housing

63% of respondents are somewhat to extremely concerned about availability of 3-bedroom housing (n= 1155)



## Preferred Type of Housing (if cost were not a limiting factor)

By far, the majority (82%) of survey respondents would prefer to *own a single family home* (n=1164)



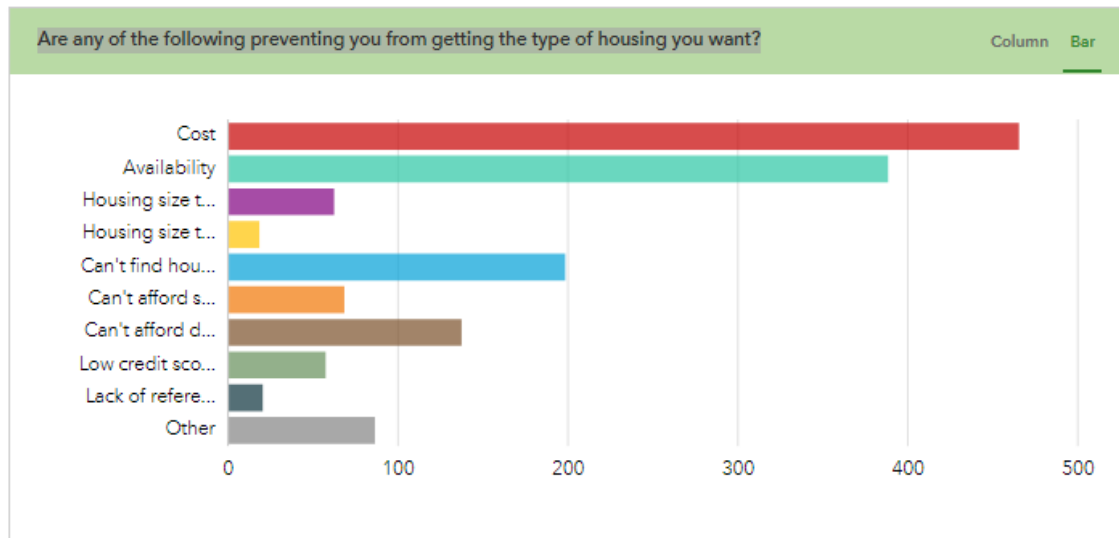
## City of Biddeford 2021 Comprehensive Plan Survey: Summary of Responses to Questions about Housing Issues

### Factors Impeding the Attainment of Desired Housing (n=620)

75% of respondents noted *cost* was a limiting factor

63% cited *availability*

32% said they *could not find the housing they desired*



### Factors Important in the Search for Rental or Owned Housing

99% of respondents cite *housing quality/conditions* (n=1119)

98% of respondents cite *monthly rent or mortgage costs* (n= 1112) and *neighborhood conditions* (n=1120)

97% of respondents cite *energy efficiency* (n= 1114) and overall *energy costs* (n=1127)

### Support of New Housing Development in City's Growth Areas

92% of respondents support development of *senior/elder housing* (n=1143)

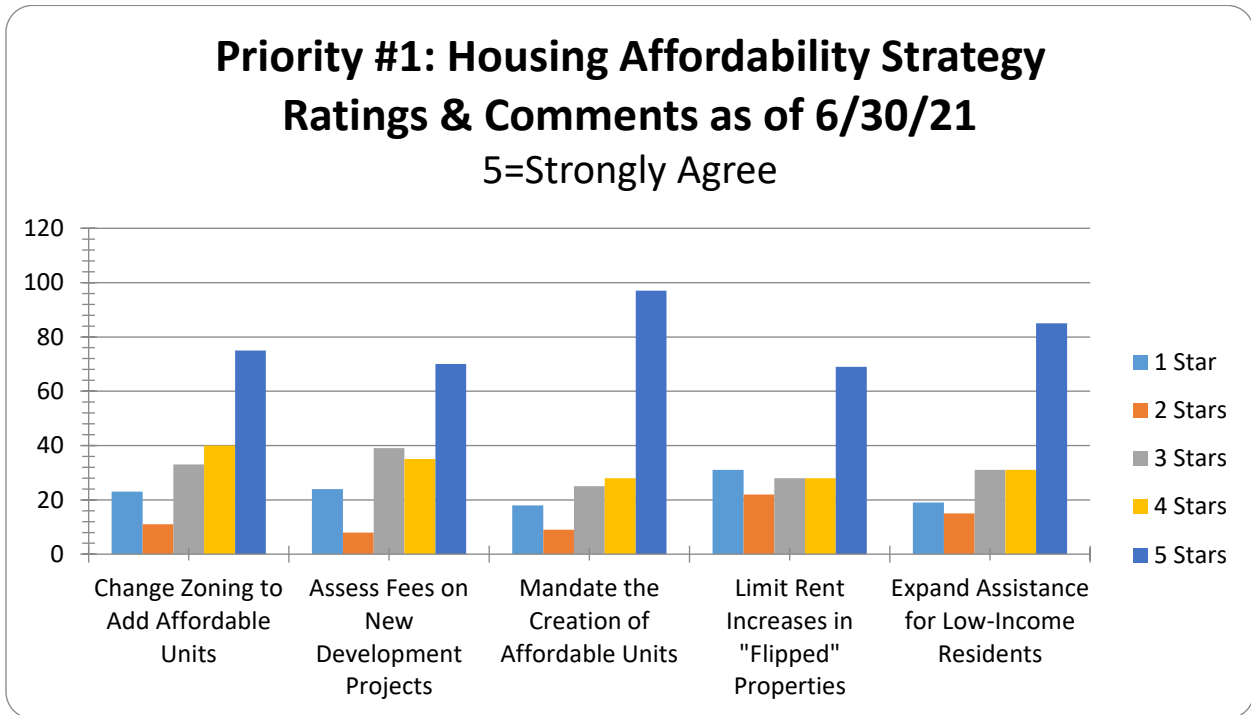
91% support development of *single family homes* (n=1139)

88% support development of *duplexes/2-family homes* (n=1136)

80% support development of *condos* (n=1132)

74% support development of *multifamily (3+ unit) housing* (n=1127)

**City of Biddeford Housing Survey 2021, N=204**  
**Results by Housing Priority Rating and then by Strategies to Address Each Issue.**



- Sadly, my partner and I are leaving Biddeford in June. We were hoping to buy a small multi-unit home for owner occupancy here. We have been renters here until now. Unfortunately, the prices rose quickly beyond what we could afford. We did find a nice two-unit in Auburn that we could afford. With the home prices rising at such a dramatic pace, you will find that the current population will be quickly supplanted. The blue collar workers the city needs will be priced out without affordable housing.
- As a long-time landlord participant in the Section 8 program, I have been disappointed to see the waitlist grow while moneys are channeled to large corporations like Avesta Housing. These housing dollars would be better spent being routed through existing housing stock and used for rehab and improvements.
- I bet housing costs would be lower if we avoided two car garages.
- Where is the data about the why of the trends? Are people moving out because rents are going up faster than the tenants can afford it?
- We need more affordable housing for seniors, the disabled, and anyone who simply cannot pay market rent.
- Provide rights to tenants who have lived here for decades, and are mostly TAW to protect them when an investor comes in and raises their rents simply because they bought a property at historically high prices. There are two rental paths in Biddeford right now; those who rent from long-term property owners, and those who rent from newly-invested LLC property owners.
- Create a city program that allows renters to buy into a rent-to-own option for their property.
- Emphasis on owner-occupied MFs.
- There really isn't anything affordable or accessible for people that do not already own any property or real estate. Access to home ownership should be expanded under the USDA RD program with Biddeford working with the strict criteria that makes a home-buyer eligible. Many houses need too much work for RD, or they are too expensive for the dictated budget of the RD applicant. There needs to BE more home availability for RD applicants. OR rather 100% financing mortgage loans.
- Focus should be in housing that is affordable for those who have grown up in the area and want to stay here. Plus those who have lived long term in the community.

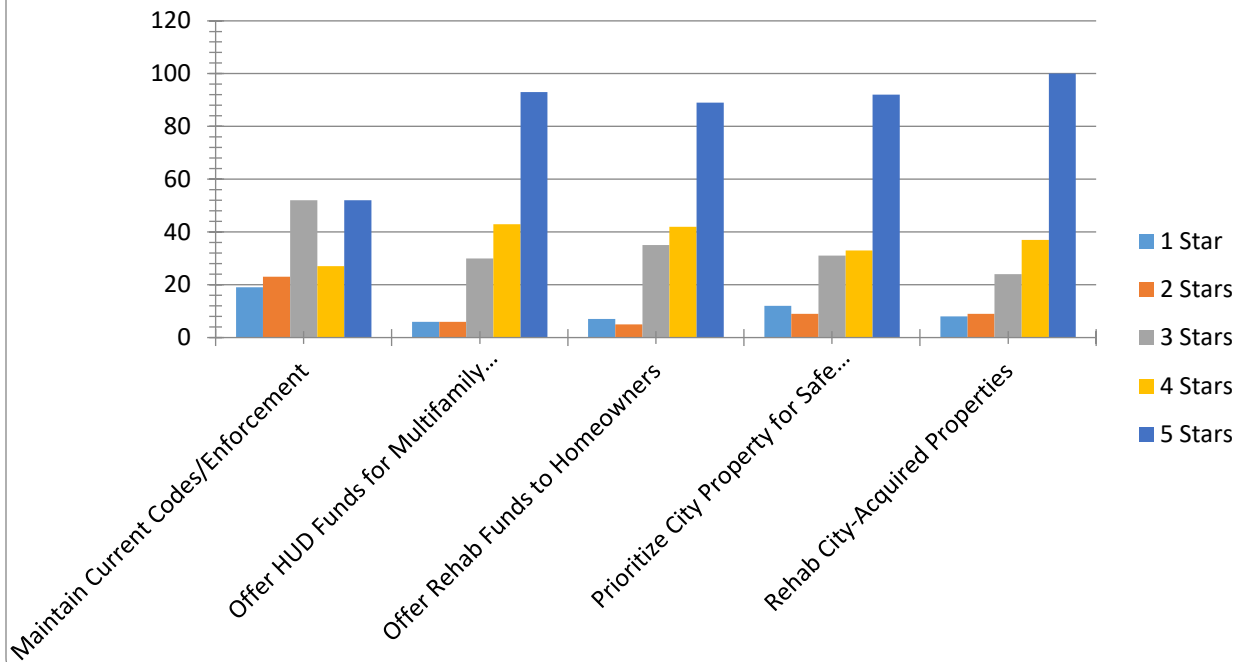
**City of Biddeford Housing Survey 2021, N=204**  
**Results by Housing Priority Rating and then by Strategies to Address Each Issue.**

- Mixed income housing developments. Not all or nothing, but everything. Better for economic stability. In fact gov't supported housing fared better during recession for landlords.
- Seniors who sell homes may want a condo vs an apartment. The 55 plus condos are more expensive than median home values. Plus a association fee. Selling a median home and renting a median apartment will last maybe 10 years then what? The median is where folks get no assistance until they become poor. Would it not be better to subsidise the construction of affordable condos for the median vs needing to provide subsidised monthly rent for life?
- Create lower cost rental units in Biddeford's core utilizing existing building spaces and encourage builders to develop affordable housing in smaller parcels near the city while avoiding remaining larger green space parcels if possible.
- Most apartments require the same qualifications as a lending company does for a mortgage. While those who fit into the levels of poverty do manage some level of protection (with low income housing) the rest of us must somehow be able to qualify for a mortgage to rent. If we qualified for a mortgage, we would get a house. How are we supposed to get an apartment if we don't qualify for low income housing and are still in the recovery stage of credit?
- We need a cap on rental rates. especially with minimum wage increases as they come along- the landlords will just start money grabbing by way of bigger rent hikes.
- What affordability is differs for everyone. For example, there are a growing number of traditional and non-traditional college students finding themselves needing non-dorm housing. Dorms are unstable as they can close and leave students with nowhere to go. Stable, affordable housing in Biddeford needs to be mindful of residents (who do and will continue to contribute to the community) who are not members of the highest tax bracket. Many folks don't even make \$1500 a month.

**City of Biddeford Housing Survey 2021, N=204**  
**Results by Housing Priority Rating and then by Strategies to Address Each Issue.**

**Priority 2: Housing Condition Strategy Ratings  
 & Comments as of 6/30/21**

5=Strongly Agree

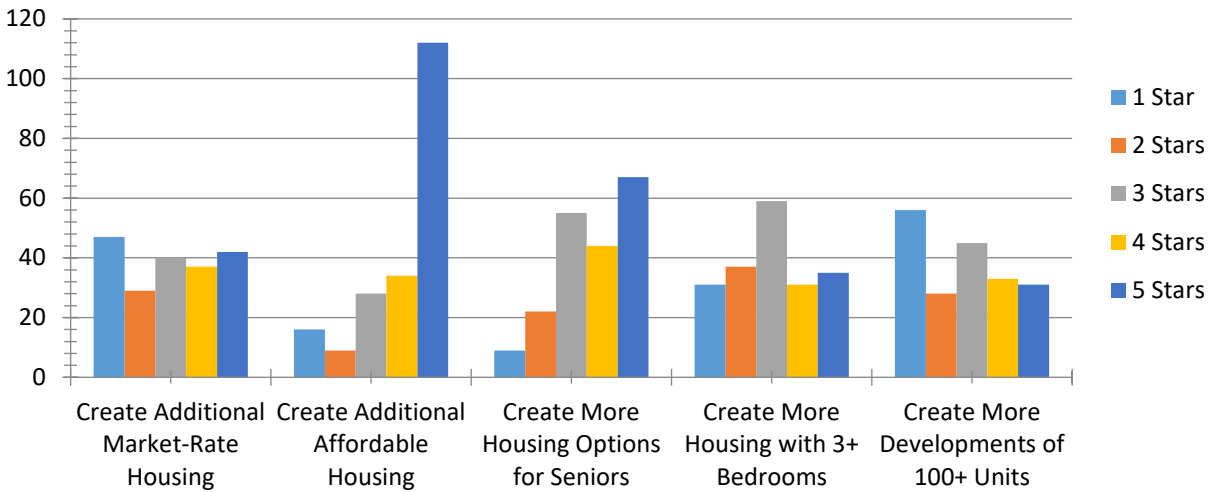


- Code enforcement of 3+ unit properties has incentivized house sales of owners who can't afford the costs associated with upgrading sometimes incredibly unrealistic violations. Do new buyers even know they have these outstanding violation lists sitting at the city?
- Landlords need to maintain their property properly. Encourage to revitalize the yards, vacant houses in serious need of repair need to be taken down.
- I think the landlords should be held accountable for not taking care of their buildings. We have too many slummy places. Fine them or put a lien on their properties if they can't keep them nice.
- Would be in favor of public private partnerships and / or incentives for building owners to improve properties.
- Provide tax credit incentives for properties actively improving.
- Ask renters to fill out surveys on landlords
- Rebates or tax credits for home improvements on houses older than a certain date. My house is from 1950. Trying to stay up to date with maintenance and structural improvements (gutters, foundation, rotten trim, siding etc.) is difficult when making just enough money to pay the mortgage and bills.
- Require landlords to maintain property if tenants complain.
- Provide resources for those who have difficulty maintaining property in safe condition.
- A city-lead group to work with property owners to help secure funding, private, public or grants, to upgrade and renovate housing.
- Many people who are renting have been in their apartments well beyond lease terms. I am one of these people in question. My landlord has not been keeping up with repairs, and now wants to evict me so he can do those repairs. I have heard this story repeatedly. Why should we have to be evicted when the landlord is failing to do their job? Where is the protection for good tenants? We should have some level of guarantee that a landlord will fix the apartment without evicting us.

**City of Biddeford Housing Survey 2021, N=204**  
**Results by Housing Priority Rating and then by Strategies to Address Each Issue.**

**Priority # 3: Housing Supply Strategy Ratings  
 & Comments as of 6/30/21**

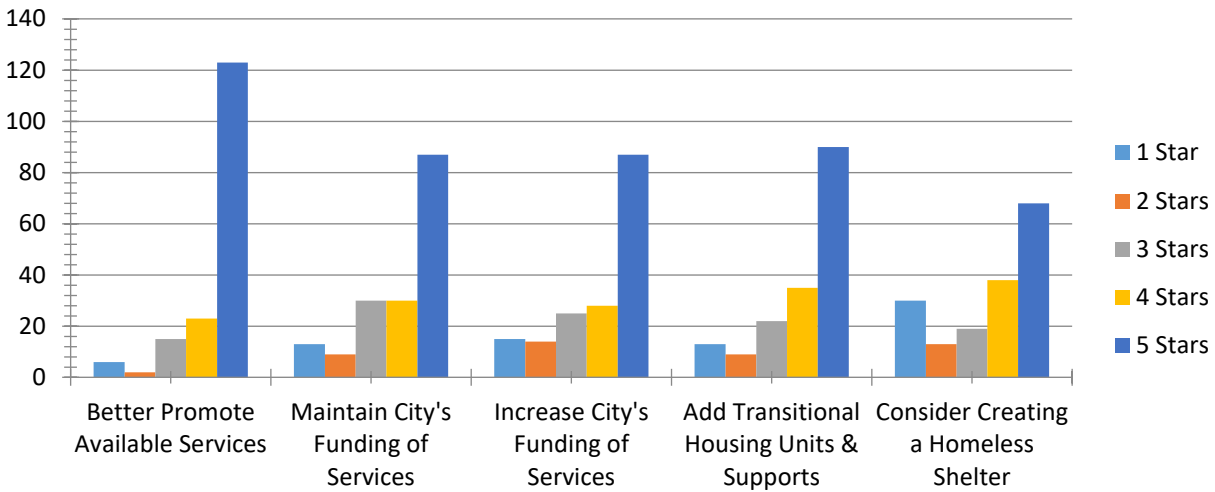
5=Strongly Agree



- Let's not be building any housing in City Parks
- Housing conditions survey would be helpful to understand scope of conditions of housing. Lead paint programs are good but CDBG funds could be used to improve other aspects of owner-occupied units that need structural or building envelope fixes.
- Limit the # of properties/investments one entity/person can have and make a conscious effort to diversify who is buying property in Biddeford. Prevent Biddeford from having 2-3 monopoly investors. (i.e, Joe Soley in Portland; Doug Sanford in Biddeford)
- Give residents Parking Passes for the public lots. Only 4 years ago was off-street parking not something to be considered when looking for housing. The cost is unfair to long-term residents who struggle with the monthly cost relative to income.
- If rents continue to rise without an increase in construction of affordable housing, homelessness will assuredly increase. I live in town and it is common to find individuals sleeping in rotary park, front lawns, etc. Rents will of course increase as investors continue to buy multi-units at dramatically inflated prices. Long-term tenants will be displaced for renters who can make the landlord's investments worthwhile. This is where the government steps in to alleviate mass homelessness.
- Multi Family housing that is affordable for the median income in the town NOT the county. Multi family housing is a good use of space and is more constructive for a sense of neighborhood community. Green space being a part of each.
- We should continue renovating the mills, as well as consider buying out larger properties that have been vacant for years. (The lot at the end of Adams St, for example.) We don't have enough housing, and we should probably consider looking to how denser populations build. Isn't it taller buildings? We should also place a priority on those who work in Biddeford, at least until we can guarantee our own population is taken care of.
- More Single-Family homes with yards, neighborhoods on side-streets, etc.

**City of Biddeford Housing Survey 2021, N=204**  
**Results by Housing Priority Rating and then by Strategies to Address Each Issue.**

**Priority # 4: Homelessness Strategy Ratings  
 & Comments as of 6/30/21**  
 5=Strongly Agree



- Open a homeless shelter.
- Provide rent control or subsidies for tenants that may have lived in their homes for 10-30 years and suddenly get their rents raised simply because an investor comes in at the height of this housing market, and the tenants now need to cover their risky investment.
- Identify those who are homeless, identify reason why they are homeless, help to address reason why they are homeless
- Having a shelter for overnight sleeping, facilities such as showering, grooming, laundry, access to lockers. Committing to more affordable housing.
- It is time for the city to stop pushing the issue of homelessness off to other communities like Portland. City officials need to consider real solutions to address homelessness, such as a shelter for these vulnerable members of our community.
- Continue to work with non-municipal organizations and charitable agencies to provide adequate shelter and services.
- The skyrocketing rent is the problem. Biddeford wants very badly to be Portland, but we aren't. Our area is not worth the rent we allow people to charge while we chase some stupid dream of being the next big city hub.
- The city needs to start protecting good tenants. Credit scores aren't the be-all/end-all. They shouldn't even be allowed for apartments that aren't condos or the restored mills (higher end). Tenants should be protected from landlords evicting them simply because they need to make a repair. Average apartment costs should be reasonable for somebody who works 35+ hours a week. If housing were affordable and had less barriers to entry, then it would be better. More (affordable) apartments too.
- There needs to be a shelter or outreach program to counteract homelessness. We can't just live and work around it, we need to eliminate it wherever possible.
- For homeless and low income people, I'd like to see the development of "mini house" neighborhoods. A lot of people do not want, need, or can afford "full size" houses. And mini houses are better than mobile homes and mobile home parks.