

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Huntington, Vermont,
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PREPARED BY

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PREPARED FOR

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(Huntington Living
Community Housing/
Huntington Green)

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INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

In 2011 a group of volunteers in Huntington convened a committee to pursue the feasibility of developing senior housing apartments in two existing houses in Huntington village. This effort followed the work of a previous Elder Housing Committee in Huntington which sought out available land to purchase for the purpose of building senior housing. The previous committee was dissolved after exhausting all available options of land parcels suitable for such a project.

The latest effort came about after two houses, close to basic services, became available for sale in the village center, a desirable location for senior housing. Both efforts are aligned with the existing Huntington town plan which supports the development of more services, including housing, for elders in the town of Huntington.

The current committee, aka Huntington Green, working under the umbrella of an existing non-profit, Huntington Historical and Community Trust, was awarded a \$15,000 feasibility grant from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board in early 2012. In May, Huntington Green hired Meg Pond of Stepping-Stone Associates, Grand Isle, Vermont, to perform financial analysis and consultation including a Housing Needs Assessment for Huntington, Vermont, with a particular focus on the housing needs of seniors. Huntington Green expects to complete the feasibility study by the end of 2012, at which time a decision will be made as to next steps.

The goal of this assessment is to examine the context and need for affordable housing, in particular rental housing for seniors, by collecting and analyzing demographic, economic, and other relevant data about living in the town of Huntington. This assessment roughly follows the template of the Vermont Housing Needs Assessment Guide prepared by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont and the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, focusing on the needs of seniors in rental housing.

The consultant utilized a number of sources in the course of this assessment, including the 2010 US Census, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, the 2000 US Census, Housingdata.org, Economic & Labor Market Information from the Vermont Department of Labor, the Vermont Department on Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, and the Multiple Listing Service, as well as discussions with various townspeople and housing professionals.

The study has a number of limitations to consider when reviewing the findings:

- The 2010 Census SF-1 report and the 2005 – 2009 American Community Survey are the cornerstones of the data used in this assessment. There are often large discrepancies between the two data sources; thus, in spite of

efforts made by the consultant to adjust the differences where possible, it is important to acknowledge the limitations, especially at the community level, of the data presented.

- In the case of Huntington, because of the town's small size, sometimes the numbers are too small to make solid predictions of future trends.
- The study was performed at one point in time and assumes that relatively stable conditions will prevail over the foreseeable future.
- The assessment is not intended to be a market study determining the need for and interest in a specific affordable rental housing site for seniors in Huntington.

SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS

2010 Census	Huntington	Chittenden Co.	Vermont
Population 2010	1,938	156,545	625,741
Households	753	61,827	256,442
Average Household Size 2010	2.57	2.37	2.34
Total Housing Units 2010	821	65,722	322,539
Owner-occupied Units	668	40,310	181,407
Renter-occupied Units	85	21,517	75,035
Vacant Housing Units	68	3,895	66,097
For Seasonal and Recreational	37	1,779	50,198
For Rent	2	806	5,635
For Sale Only	10	587	3,598
Average Price of Primary Residences Sold 2011	\$317,264	\$278,285	\$223,496
Median Year All Housing Structures Built	1977	1972	1968
Median Year Owner-Occupied Structures Built	1979	1975	1971
Median Year Rental-Occupied Structures Built	1961	1963	1953
Median Household Income 2005-2009	\$64,688	\$59,634	\$51,284
Median <i>Homeowner</i> Household Income 2005-2009	\$67,986	\$77,130	\$62,105
Median <i>Renter</i> Household Income 2005-2009	\$27,250	\$32,169	\$29,561
Median Household Income for Family of	\$75,700	\$75,700	\$66,700

Four (HUD) 2011			
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2010 Census	Huntington	Chittenden Co.	Vermont
Annual Average Wage (VT DOL)	\$29,452	\$46,216	\$39,430
Employed Residents 2010	1170	86,450	338,300
Unemployed Residents 2010	50	4,600	22,500
Unemployment Rate 2010	4.4%	5%	6.2%

SOURCE: US Census 2000 and 2010; Vermont Housing Data

ENROLLMENT HUNTINGTON STUDENTS

<i>School</i>	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
<i>Brewster Pierce</i>								
Preschool	21	18	20	21	19	16	24	22
K-4	128	121	108	111	122	118	116	124
<i>Camel's Hump 5-8</i>	111	106	107	102	95	98	98	95
<i>Mt. Mansfield UHS 9-12</i>	101	108	92	96	108	106	110	107

SOURCE: Chittenden East Supervisory Union

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The population of Huntington surged for about three decades beginning with the 1960 census and ending with the 1990 census. The town had a total population of

- 518 people in the 1960 census;
- 748 in the 1970 census;
- 1,161 in the 1980 census;
- 1,609 in the 1990 census;
- 1,861 in the 2000 census and
- as of the 2010 Census had 1,938.

The rate of increase slowed appreciably in the 2000 census and for now appears to have settled into a slower rate of growth.

Huntington is home to 821 housing units of which 753 are occupied units. Of those occupied, 89% are homeowners and 11% are renters. (See Population Table, page 11) These are typical rates for a small, rural Vermont community.

There was an increase of 61 households between the 2000 census and the 2010 census. This is a large increase for a town the size of Huntington, representing an 8% change. Within this increase, 51 households lived in owner-occupied units, and 10 households lived in renter-occupied units.

The population of seniors does not trend census-to-census consistently with Chittenden County, a factor possibly due to the small numbers (and thus anomalies) at the town level. As of the 2010 census, there were 258 people residing in the town age 55 and over compared to 129 in the 2000 census, a huge increase of 100% in this age group. This compares with a 45% increase at the county level and 105% at the state level. And in the 2010 census the town's 65-and-over population had grown from 67 in 2000 to 82, an increase of 22%. This is less than the county rate (31% increase) but is roughly the same as the state rate (19% increase). According to the 2010 Census, there were 5 people 65-and-older who were renting, and 77 people 65-and-older who were living in owner-occupied units. (See Population Table, page 11)

The median household income for a family of four in Huntington (HUD 2011) was \$75,700. This figure is based on the Burlington/South Burlington MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) because Huntington is within the MSA's jurisdiction. County and town/village figures are identical, because HUD calculates values only for the MSA in which this community is located. *Household* income is often higher than *median* income because the average household often has more than one worker.

In Huntington, roughly 112 people in 27 families are living below poverty level (2006-2010 ACS 5-year Estimates and Vermont Housing Data, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission). Of those, 19 people are 65 or older. Given the differences in data sets, and the size of the numbers, we cannot make a reliable projection of how many of these 19 residents are living alone or as a part of other households.

Most of the labor force in Huntington must commute to somewhere outside of town. In 2010 there were 1,170 employed people in Huntington according to the Vermont Department of Employment and Training, of which 85% worked outside of Huntington and 14% worked outside Chittenden County. In a different set of data, there were 164 employed people working in Huntington, most employed in construction, service, and professional/technical related jobs. These 164 positions were employed by 42 establishments in Huntington and received \$5,225,731 in total wages and an average wage of \$31,864. (Vermont Department of Labor, 2011).

RENTAL HOUSING

There were 85 rental households out of 753 total households in 2010, or approximately 11% of the households. Whereas there may be some landlords who have renters with Section 8/subsidized vouchers, there is no rental housing within Huntington that is designated as subsidized or affordable housing.

Historically, a lower-income renter in Vermont has had two paths to securing a rental subsidy: one is through a voucher or certificate that the resident applies for through the local or state housing authority, and the other is through application to housing developments that have project-based subsidies. More specifically in today's subsidized rental market, there are essentially five types of funding:

- (1) Section 8 (resident voucher and project-based);
- (2) Rural Development (project-based);
- (3) HUD 202 (project-based), and
- (4) HOME (project-based)
 - Under these 4 programs above renters pay 30% of their income for rent and utilities and the federal government pays the difference. And
- (5) (Low Income Housing) Tax Credits where renters pay 100% of a reduced rent for rent and utilities.

New Tax Credit units outnumber all other new subsidized units many times over, given the cutbacks in federal funding.

For example: A Huntington resident age 62 and older in 2012 with an annual income of no more than \$32,220 would pay a Tax Credit rent of approximately \$863 for a one-bedroom unit, utilities included. With a rent of \$863, a senior with an income of \$32,220 would be “rent burdened”, paying greater than 30% of

their income for their rent and utilities. ($\$32,220 / 12 \text{ months} \times 30\% = \806) It is not unusual for a renter in Vermont to pay greater than 30% of their income toward their housing costs, but it does place undue stress and instability on households that do. In addition, the HOME program does not allow residents receiving their subsidies to pay greater than 50% of their income on housing. Thus, a single senior in Huntington would have to have an income of no less than \$20,712 in order to pay no more than 50% of their income toward housing costs based on a rent of \$863.

Since most housing developments utilize many funding sources, often the requirements are layered and can impact Tax Credit units as well. It's a complicated and nuanced system with the overall objective being to support as many rental households in Vermont with as much long-term stability and security as possible.

According to 2006-2010 ACS 5-year estimates, there are 107 householders in Huntington age 65 and older:

- 5 have incomes between \$0 - \$14,999;
- 3 have incomes between \$15,000 - \$19,999;
- 9 have incomes between \$20,000 - \$24,999;
- 18 have incomes between \$25,000 - \$29,999; and
- 10 have incomes between \$30,000 - \$34,999.

Roughly therefore, the eight lowest income householders with incomes less than \$19,999 would have to pay greater than 50% of their income for a 1 bedroom \$863 unit, and therefore would not be eligible for the units unless they had Section 8 vouchers, or received other sources of support in order to be able to pay the \$863 rent. The householders with greater than \$20,000 annual income ($9 + 18 + 10 = 37$ householders) would qualify for both the income ceiling and floor of the \$863 Tax Credit unit. Some of these householders are currently homeowners, and some are renters. These are only estimates but provide an understanding of the potential pool of applicants in Huntington for a future affordable housing development.

Tenure in the 85 rental households tends to be a much shorter timeframe than for homeowners. Most (68%) of renter households moved in during 2005 or later. This is a higher rate than at the county (54%) and state (49%) levels, and indicates more turnover in the rental sector than in the rest of the county and state. In 2011, eight permits for apartments and accessory dwellings were issued, adding future rental inventory in the town.

Most (75%) of Huntington's rentals are in single-family units, a much greater rate than in the county (18%) and state (26%). This is probably reflective of two factors: (1) high numbers of multi-family buildings in Chittenden County compared to the rest of the state; and (2) very few multi-family structures in Huntington. At the time of writing this

report, there were no apartments available to rent listed on-line, including the *Burlington Free Press* and *Seven Days*.

Sixty-two percent of renters live in one- and two person households. Thirty-one percent of the town's renters live alone. (2010 Census) In comparison with the rest of the county and state, renter households in Huntington have a median income (\$27,250) that is generally lower than that of the county (\$32,169) and the state (\$29,561). (Vermont Housing Data)

As in most other areas of Vermont, high rents affect the poor the most. Annual average wage for residents in Huntington was \$29,452. To afford an average two-bedroom apartment in Huntington based upon 2011 HUD Fair Market Rents using no more than 30 percent of household income, a renter would need to earn approximately \$47,880 a year. (Vermont Housing Data) It is easy to deduce that one would need more than one income to afford to rent an apartment at these rates and not be rent-burdened.

There are subsidized rental developments serving elders and persons with disabilities in Middlebury (Middlebury Commons), Hinesburg (Kelley's Field), Richmond (Richmond Terrace), Vergennes (Valley View 1 & 2), Bristol (Pleasant Hills) but none in Huntington per se. There is also a development for elders in Lincoln that has affordable rents. Vacancies in these developments are rare due to the ongoing need for affordable rentals and the precious financial value of the subsidies that go with these units. Furthermore, residents tend to stay until they must move; some residents in these developments have been there for over 20 years.

In nearby communities there are several affordable mobile home parks with a few rental units in Starksboro, Monkton, Hinesburg, and Bristol. These parks do not have rent subsidies, but they are owned by non-profit affordable housing organizations with missions sympathetic to the residents' wellbeing.

HOMEOWNERSHIP

Although homeownership is not the focus of this assessment, 668 of the 753 households were homeowners according to the 2010 Census. The homeownership rate in Huntington is 89%; this is far higher than the 65% homeownership rate for Chittenden County, and the 71% statewide rate, but is in the range for small towns in Vermont. Tenure in owned-homes in Huntington loosely tracks tenure length in Chittenden County and the state with most (62%) homeowners living there since before 2000.

In 2010 three single-family/permanent (owned, not rental) units were permitted; in 2011 five single-family units and eight permits for apartments and accessory dwelling units (of these, one existing structure was being converted into four separate apartments) for a total of 13 permits; and to date in 2012, two permits for single-family/permanent (owned, not rental) units and one for an accessory apartment.

Population and Household Trends 2000-2010

<i>Huntington</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>% Change</i>	<i>% Change Chittenden County</i>	<i>% Change Vermont</i>
<i>Total Population</i>	1,861	1,938	4%	7%	3%
<i>Total Households</i>	692	753	9%	10%	7%
<i>Renter Households</i>	75	85	13%	12%	6%
<i>Homeowner Households</i>	617	668	8%	8%	7%
<i>Total 15-24 years old Households</i>	13	10	-23%	9%	-2%
<i>Total 25-44 years old Households</i>	352	273	-22%	-16%	-19%
<i>Total 45-54 years old Households</i>	198	220	11%	16%	8%
<i>Total Age 55+ Households</i>	129	258	100%	45%	105%
<i>Total Age 65+ Households</i>	67	82	22%	31%	19%

SOURCE: US Census 2000 and 2010; Vermont Housing Data

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

Huntington's demographics are largely reflective of those in surrounding communities: in the 2010 census there was a dramatic decline in younger households (age 25-44 age group), a steady increase in seniors, and a very high level of homeownership. With only 11% of the town's housing inventory being rental, the options for people not being able to afford or choosing not to purchase a home will remain few unless more rental units are created. In 2011 eight rental units were permitted, all within existing structures (4 of the units were a conversion of an existing structure, and 4 of the units were accessory apartments). The ability to convert space to accessory apartments is a creative strategy for all communities, but in particular for small communities like Huntington given constraints on sewer and septic capacities and other infrastructure issues.

The federal guideline for housing affordability is that a household should pay no greater than 30% for housing costs (rent plus utilities, or mortgage, taxes, and insurance). For example: The annual average wage in Huntington (Vermont DOL) in 2010 was \$29,452. Under the 30% housing affordability guideline, a household with \$29,452 in earnings could afford to pay \$736 for an apartment including utilities. However, the income needed to rent a one-bedroom apartment at HUD's Fair Market Rents in Huntington is \$38,160, an annual income discrepancy of \$8,708 for this example.

Younger households in town (age 25 to 44) went from 352 in 2000 to 273 in 2010, a loss of 22%. This outpaces the rate of the county (16% loss) and the state (19% loss).

The impact of the baby boomers will continue to unfold, with the largest pressing need being housing for seniors. Most seniors desire to age in place, and increasingly social policy is somewhat supportive of that approach, through services such as Meals on Wheels, case management through Champlain Valley Agency on Aging (CVAA) and the State of Vermont program called Choices for Care where persons needing help with their daily living receive regular support at home. Appropriate housing that is safe, affordable, and, where possible, adaptable to the needs of the resident is becoming a critical need in most communities. Huntington does not have any subsidized inventory for lower income renters, and subsidies for future development from the state and federal government are becoming increasingly scarce. At the time of writing this report, approximately 19 residents in Huntington 65 years and older are living below the poverty level. The funding sources for new affordable housing usually carry restrictions on resident income, both limiting it to no more than 50 or 60% of the area median income, and also requiring that the resident have enough income to pay the below market rate rents. In creating any new affordable housing for seniors, it will be important to determine that there are adequate numbers of seniors who meet both the ceilings and floors on income.

**Summary of Activities and Plans for Huntington Green:
Providing affordable, independent, senior housing in Huntington, Vermont**

Update June 4, 2012

Vision: Huntington Green has 12 independent living senior apartments within the village district of Huntington. They provide Huntington’s older residents the opportunity to age in place in their community within reach of neighbors and local services such as the Post Office, local store and library. Huntington Green links to other necessary area services such as transportation, wellness clinics, area agency on aging and recreation/activities that enhance the independence and quality of life of the residents.

Goal: Provide 12 units of affordable independent rental units in or near the lower village or village center, carrying no debt into the operations

THE BASICS -	Phase 1 Planning and Feasibility ~ 10/1/11 ~ 9/30/12	Phase 2 Further Planning from ~8/12 to ~10/14	Phase 3 Implementation – Operations ~11/14 – ~11/17
<p>Strategies: Find land</p> <p>Build or renovate 12 units</p> <p>Seek funding to plan and implement</p> <p>Learn about housing development issues/processes and financing resources (with assistance)</p> <p>Organizational capacity: further develop Board; decide next legal-financial steps; umbrella sponsorship while developing 501 C 3 and doing further planning</p> <p>Develop partnership with town – connect with other planning efforts in town and nearby areas</p>	<p>Strategies: Review 3 properties in village – decisions by 6/30/12</p> <p>15000 Feasibility grant request to Vermont Housing and Conservation Board</p> <p>Grant awarded to Huntington Historical and Community Trust (as the sponsoring 501 C3 organization for our work): letters of intent site evaluation - planning including waste water and architectural designs; survey of town residents’ needs-interests; financial evaluation planning To date – spent 8912 of 15000.</p> <p>Cindy Reid, Lisa Ryan, Meg Pond – learning more on: financing requirements, processes, timelines, town partnership, maze of resources drying up & very competitive</p> <p>Housing Needs Assessment and map of financing resources: Meg Pond, DC</p> <p>Planning Grant and more: need site control, town partnership, include est budget each phase</p>	<p>Strategies: Develop ongoing relationship with reps from SB and PC and town administrators</p> <p>Site visit with Lisa Ryan and related agency resources to discuss planning, implementation grants/resources – with town and HG representatives, develop letter of agreement between town and HGI (include legal responsibilities and work plan)</p> <p>Acquire site control for land or land/properties</p> <p>Use data from Phase I – feasibility work; have site control & town partnership - apply for Planning Grant (PG)</p> <p>PG focuses: renovations/ construction plans, accessing development consultant to pursue financing using pathways shown in Feasibility grant work & new resources.</p> <p>Continuously re-estimate budget by phase for whole project</p>	<p>Strategies: Continue Partnership with town, solidify joint work plan, HG identify resources for financing</p> <p>Accounting system established to handle multiple sources of funds; reporting responsibilities clear.</p> <p>Re-Affirm Budget for Acquisition, Construction or Renovation and Operation/Occupancy</p> <p>Seek/write implementation grants, understanding all requirements of funding sources</p> <p>Development Consultant (DC) seeking resources, doing work plans, facilitating public hearings, permitting processes.</p> <p>Clerk of the Works on board if not the DC.</p> <p>Create waiting list of potential residents</p> <p>OTHER ----</p>

In a survey (Spring 2012), funded by the Feasibility grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, we received 10% return on surveys submitted to residents (76 of approximately 750 homes) and 97% agree that affordable senior housing is necessary in Huntington. According to respondents, the most important feature of this housing project would be proximity to town services (41%) and the second most important feature would be low rent/affordability (20%). 32 respondents said they would be interested in living in this project either for themselves or a relative, and of the 19 respondents who have a relative interested, nearly half would be ready to move in between 2015-2020.

Big Next Steps –

- A Housing Needs Assessment for Huntington: Meg Pond, development consultant
- A graphic/map showing potential financing sources and requirements: Meg Pond
- Projected budget for a 12 unit project and its components: Planning, Acquisition – Renovation and Operations
- Site(s) and site control
- Partnership with Town – who, what committees, when etc.
- Continued exploration of financing resources (planning grant and other)

Other

Summary of surveys

Surveys were distributed in the town's newspaper TIMES INK to Huntington residents. For those residents who do NOT receive the newspaper, surveys were mailed. Shortly after the paper came out, town meeting day was held and we provided surveys, a basket for completed ones, and had a board member man the table during the morning before the meeting, during and at lunch time encouraging people to turn in their surveys. Surveys were also distributed at the general store (Beaudry's), the post office, the library and town office as well as 1 senior meal at CCH.

As of 3/23/12 -- 67 surveys have been returned – (some respondents filled in 1 survey but gave data for themselves AND a relative making the total 69).

Of those 97% agree that Huntington needs senior housing, only 2.9% (2 residents) responded that the town did not. Their remarks were that 1) we weren't in a big enough urban area for needed services and 2) we need to focus on helping seniors stay in their homes, providing transportation & help to get meals.

UPDATE as of 6/3/12:

We now have received 76 surveys and all tabs/survey excel sheets have been updated.

Categories of respondents in order of most popular:

- Yes, senior housing is needed and I may be interested in the future: 32
- Yes, senior housing is needed and my relative is interested: 19
- Yes, senior housing is needed but neither I, nor my relative is interested: 19
- Yes, senior housing is needed but respondents left blank whether they or a relative is interested: 2
- Yes, senior housing is needed & relative is a maybe: 2
- Senior housing MAY be needed: 2
- No, senior housing is not needed in Huntington: 2