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MAYOR



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January 8, 2026

Timothy J. Jordan, President
Haverhill City Council
4 Summer Street
Haverhill, MA 01830

Dear President Jordan and Members of the Haverhill City Council,

I am forwarding for your approval the amended Haverhill Housing Production Plan.

It is important to emphasize that the Housing Plan is an *aspirational* document, providing general guidance for housing policies that align with City needs, priorities and standards and character of our neighborhoods. While the Plan lists potential locations where the City may wish to recommend additional housing, it does not mean that any housing must or will be located in these targeted areas.

The Housing Production Plan is *not* a mandate to create any housing units. Rather, the Plan provides another 'tool in the toolbox' for the City to use in pursuing future opportunities.

As you may recall, the Housing Production Plan is a Five-Year plan that will be filed with the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC). Having an Approved Housing Plan on file with the State provides multiple benefits to the City for being in compliance.

These benefits include:

- The ability to be designated by the Commonwealth as a 'Housing Choice' community. This designation gives the City preference and bonus points in many State grant applications, including grant programs that are not particularly housing-related.

-Qualifying for lower interest rates on State Revolving Funds (SRF) loans for our Water Department, which has the potential to save ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

-‘Safe Harbor’ from Chapter 40B regulations, which may be needed over the next half decade to protect the City from being forced to accept a 40B project without any City input or mitigation. Having an Approved Plan would help the City to control its own destiny in terms of future housing production.

As you may recall, this Plan was originally presented earlier in the year and sent to the City’s Council’s Planning and Development Committee for further study. The City, working with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), took a good deal of community input and made further refinements.

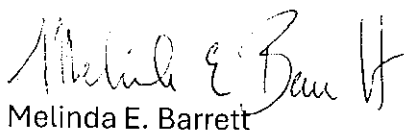
These refinements and additional recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- allowing triple-deckers to be approved ‘by right’ without a Special Permit from the City Council
- reviewing all City-owned land to see if it may be suitable for residential development
- creating a ‘Starter Home District’ in accordance with new State law
- enhancing First-Time Homebuyer programs and opportunities
- promoting more housing for seniors
- expanding tax discounts for elder residents to keep them living in their homes, and other items and ideas as well.

Multiple City departments, including the Mayor’s Office, the City’s Economic Development and Planning, Community Development, and Building and Inspectional Services departments have worked closely with the MVPC staff in developing and refining this Plan. There will be representatives of the MVPC and these City departments available to highlight the changes and to answer questions about the Housing Plan before and during the next City Council meeting.

I recommend approval of the Housing Plan as currently presented,

Thank you,



Melinda E. Barrett

Mayor