

# Village of Saranac Lake Housing Plan



**Drafted by the Housing Work Group  
December 2021**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Implementation Plan.....	8
List of Acronyms Referenced.....	13
Appendices.....	14
▪ Appendix A: Summary of Work	
▪ Appendix B: Real Estate Trends	
▪ Appendix C: Residential Historic Tax Credit Overview	
▪ Appendix D: Public Input on Draft Housing Plan	

### Housing Work Group Members:

Melinda Little, Village Trustee  
Sarah Clarkin, Executive Director Harrietstown Housing Authority  
Patrick Murphy, Director Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce  
Jeremy Evans, CEO Franklin County Economic Development Corporation  
Susan Waters, Adirondack Community Housing Trust  
Jamie Konkoski, Community Development Director  
Rachel Karp, Director Saranac Lake Area Chamber of Commerce

# Introduction

**This plan attempts to propose concrete, viable solutions to housing issues (some of them long-standing) that undermine the Village of Saranac Lake's commitment to building a sustainable community with a wide range of housing options.**

## 1. Background

Community input received during the Village's NYS-funded Downtown Revitalization Initiative in 2019 catalyzed the formation of a Housing Work Group composed of local residents with experience in housing to review available data and make recommendations in the form of a Housing Plan.

Data and best practices gleaned from a variety of resources inform the Housing Plan. Below, a sampling represents the scope of activities explored by the Housing Work Group over a three-year period. See Appendix A for a full summary of work undertaken by the Work Group.

- Determined market profile through various studies
- Identified developer for depot area
- Reviewed housing strategic plans from other communities
- Evaluated need for an updated housing market study
- Collected input from area housing organizations
- Researched land banks
- Canvassed the village on foot to create comprehensive zombie & vacant property list
- Itemized possible incentives for rehab and development
- Inventoried significantly stressed properties (e.g., code violations, tax problems)
- Alerted developers to possible opportunities
- Gathered input via online public survey, stakeholder interviews and focus groups
- Researched potential financing mechanisms, partnerships, and incentives

Most of Saranac Lake's housing issues outlined in the [2010 Tri-Lakes Housing Study](#) are still prevalent, but recent market dynamics have exacerbated them, particularly the availability of long-term rentals.

The predominant issues are:

- Vacant & abandoned properties
- Aging housing stock
- Deferred property maintenance/code violations
- Lack of affordable, quality housing
- Little variety of housing (price points, types)
- Winter parking deficit
- Short-term rental impact on availability of housing for local residents
- Zoning that limits multi-family development

## 2. The Market

Data from the following studies define the character of the local housing market, but changing market dynamics influence them. COVID has stressed the real estate market dramatically since 2020 and created an urgent need for housing solutions.

- Zombie/vacant property inventory
- Saranac Lake Comprehensive Plan
- DRI Strategic Investment Plan
- 2010 Tri-Lakes Housing Study
- NYS Consolidated Plan 2016-2020 (subsequent plan not yet adopted)

The DRI Strategic Investment Plan reported that, as of 2016, the Village of Saranac Lake had a total of 3,080 housing units. Of those, 38% were owner-occupied, 43% were renter-occupied and 19% were vacant. The primary housing type in the Village (nearly 47%) is a single-family, detached home, followed by buildings with 3 or 4 units (13%) and those with 5 to 9 units (12%.)

More than 63% of Village homes were built prior to 1939, some representing architecture unique to Saranac Lake. While these older homes contribute historic character and enhance community identity, they can present challenges related to home renovations, upgrades and utility costs.

The population of the Village is also aging with declining school enrollment.

### Housing Cost

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) affordability guideline is that households spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing with utilities are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording basics like food, clothing and transportation. Thus, affordability depends on the target population. HUD set the 2021 Area Median Income Limits for a family of four at \$72,400 (Essex Co.) and \$66,400 (Franklin Co.) Thus, housing should cost that family no more than \$1,810 monthly and \$1,660 monthly in Essex and Franklin counties, respectively. About 21% of owner-occupied households in the Village spend 30% or more on housing costs. While information for renter-occupied households is unavailable, it can be inferred that the trend likely applies to those households as well.

The United For Alice report shows 43% of Franklin Co. residents qualify as ALICE (an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed.) They earn above the federal poverty level but below a living wage and have little in reserve to deal with unexpected expenses. Many essential workers fall into this category: cashiers, child care providers, health care and service industry employees. As housing costs rise and wages lag behind the cost of living, more professions will fall into this category, especially in our region where locals compete with a second home market that is not characterized exclusively by luxury homes anymore.

The Harrietstown Housing Authority reports that its Public Housing program applications more than doubled in the first half of 2021 over that same period in 2020. In addition, at the time of this writing, 10 households with current Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers are unable to find rentals in the private market. Scarcity of housing results in higher income tenants taking rentals once available to these lower income voucher holders.

### Real Estate Market Trends

The local market was relatively flat in 2018-2019. When COVID allowed people to work remotely, Saranac Lake saw an influx of buyers in 2020-2021, coupled with increased local demand. With low inventory and high demand, real estate sold quickly and prices increased beyond the reach of many local homebuyers. Anecdotal reports from realtors indicate cash sales, competitive bidding and virtual showings without the buyer seeing the property in person.

Statewide, median home prices increased 32% in one year from the second quarter of 2020 to 2021, while the inventory of homes for sale dropped 21%. Statistics from Multiple Listing Service (MLS), a database of real estate sales information, show the average single family home price in Saranac Lake increasing from \$177,993 in 2018 to \$265,681 in 2020. Starter home prices here now average \$230,000 - up from \$145,00 just two years ago. Local realtors suggest that higher prices are the new norm, anticipating a market correction downward of only 7-9% going forward.

Rural and urban communities all across the country are experiencing this imbalance at all levels of the market, which experts describe as a housing “crisis” – far beyond a sellers’ market.

### Housing Needs

Realtors say that the lowest housing inventory and greatest demand is in smaller homes that would appeal to first time homebuyers, small families and down-sizing seniors who prefer to live independently. Employers agree that entry to mid-level professionals earning \$15-22/hr are hard pressed to find long-term, affordable housing. Quality apartments renting for less than \$1,200 are also in short supply within the village. More-affordable housing can be found in outlying areas, but a lack of public transportation or reliable personal transportation is a barrier for some residents. There is also demand for seasonal rentals to house employees in the tourist economy and interns.

### Development Issues

Nationwide, 20-plus years of slow housing starts have left a shortage of new homes for all income levels. Developers are challenged with both a workforce shortage in building trades personnel at all skill levels and pandemic-induced supply chain delays that have inflated materials pricing and stretched delivery schedules. Small developers lack capital for multiple projects, but bank and government financial assistance is limited. With materials and land costs soaring, a modest home build is now \$300,000. In Saranac Lake, this is exacerbated by a lack of vacant land.

The possible Pandora’s box of issues (asbestos, faulty foundations, etc.) diminishes the return on investment for potential buyers wishing to rehabilitate older properties. And the onus of becoming

landlords deters many from buying multi-family homes (especially large cure cottages) despite the rental income potential.

While some employers have considered developing employee housing, no projects are currently planned.

### Short Term Rentals

Nationwide, short-term rentals (STR) are a growing challenge to communities, including Saranac Lake. While STRs are not new to the community, in recent years online reservation providers have facilitated and mainstreamed STRs to a point where many local governments are taking action. STRs provide an income source for property owners, yet they also impact the availability of long-term rental housing for residents and may change the character of neighborhoods.

Data generated on 9/16/21 by Rentalscape (software that scours active online STR listings), shows 117 STR listings at 70 properties scattered throughout all village neighborhoods/zoning districts. Of these, 56 were investment properties or second homes, primarily in single-family houses (51.) The majority of STR properties (43) are locally owned and most owners (67) list a single property. Looking at the date each listing was first available online, there was a sharp uptick in new village STRs (44 since 2019) mostly as investment properties. The number of multi-family structures being used as STRs has also increased within the last 3 years; it's safe to assume these were previously long-term rentals. This may explain, in part, why local residents report greater difficulty over the past few years in finding quality rental units.

### **3. Public Input**

The Housing Work Group completed the Draft Housing Plan in June 2021 with public input collected through November. Input was used to confirm and prioritize the plan's recommended strategies and actions; the public was also invited to identify any housing-related issues not addressed in the draft. Public input (discussion notes, results from polling questions presented during forums, and online survey results) has been compiled in Appendix D. Methods for collecting public feedback included:

- Online survey available from June through October 2021 (67 responses received)
- In-person forums for renters (10 attendees) and homeowners (8 attendees) on September 30, 2021
- Virtual forum for renters and homeowners on October 7, 2021 (9 attendees)
- Roundtable Discussion with Realtors and Developers on October 21, 2021 (10 participants)
- Roundtable Discussion with Employers on October 28, 2021 (11 participants)
- Stakeholder Interviews with representatives from Saranac Lake Central School District, Historic Saranac Lake, and property manager for long-term rentals

#### **4. Key Findings**

- Saranac Lake has long wrestled with many of the housing issues it faces today.
- Solutions demand more resources than the Village has available, so partnerships are crucial.
- Reliable, current market data for the Village is not readily available due to small sample sizes.
- There is a housing shortage of all types and for all income levels, but the greatest need is for residents in the 80-130% Area Median Income range. However, few Federal or State subsidies exist for these developments, so developers focus on high-end housing for better return on investment.
- Problems associated with aged housing stock (high utility costs, rehab surprises, low ROI) are disincentives to investment. New construction is often less expensive than rehab but developable land within the village is very limited, especially lots large enough for multi-family projects.
- Property managers defer maintenance in high-demand markets because apartments are occupied
- A 2020-21 spike in real estate investment has exacerbated a shortage of long-term rentals for area residents.
- Homeownership is beyond the reach of many area residents, especially first-time homebuyers.
- Delay in addressing these housing issues will increase the stressors and, ultimately, can alter the character of the community.
- Many external factors affecting housing supply, price and affordability are beyond the community's ability to influence.
- Lack of housing impacts the local economy and diversity, by limiting employers' ability to attract and keep personnel. Some employees resort to long commutes, living with family or unorthodox solutions like camping.

#### **5. Summary of Goals**

Based on available data, input from local housing professionals and employers, as well as housing search experiences shared by local residents, the Housing Group has identified these primary goals:

- Preservation of existing housing stock is crucial to retaining habitable housing units and maintaining the historic character of Saranac Lake.
- Production of new housing, via rehabilitation of existing housing and new construction, is needed to address the demand for quality, affordable homes and apartments.
- Partnerships can augment Village government in meeting housing needs and supporting its policies.
- Creation and enforcement of policies and laws would preserve and encourage quality housing and the character of the Village.

## 6. Key Recommendations

Many things affecting a local housing market are beyond the control of the community (e.g., cost of construction materials) but the Village *can* exercise policies and partnerships that promote its housing goals; this plan focuses on those. The Housing Work Group proposes priority adoption of several recommendations to move forward and avert further decline of Saranac Lake's housing market.

- Establish a permanent Housing Task Force.
- Utilize findings from Rentalscape to create short-term rental policies that generate inclusive opportunities for local wealth-creation while balancing the needs of all members of the community. Public input cited this as a top priority.
- Rehabilitate unoccupied housing units (second on the public input priority list.)
- Prioritize code enforcement through inspections and pursuit of property maintenance code violations.
- Host an online Housing Toolkit with resources for homeowners, tenants, landlords and developers.
- Connect homeowners with available programs to assist with minor repairs.
- Pursue creation of a land bank.

## 7. Conclusion

- To meet the plan's housing goals, the Implementation Plan (see page 8) identifies and prioritizes a coherent package of strategies and actions.
- Progress on the development of quality housing requires an understanding of community needs.
- Partnerships between public and private sector entities are key to identifying and implementing financially feasible opportunities.
- Housing production and policy are not a remedy for all of the housing issues in Saranac Lake. Achieving sustainable housing affordability will require higher household incomes created through economic development planning.
- This plan is a living document meant to act as a 5- to 10-year guide to facilitate and provide a measurable framework to continually facilitate housing and community development programs and policy.
- The action steps and policies proposed in this plan will not eliminate all housing challenges, but could make a significant and positive impact on the quality of life for residents.



# Implementation Plan

## Goals, Strategies, Actions

Goal 1:	Preservation of Housing Promote the preservation and affordability of the existing housing stock by improving the housing conditions.						
Strategy 1.0	Undertake, continue and enhance a range of programs to assist private property owners to maintain & improve the condition of their homes.	Timeline*	Cost	Resource/Funding	Partner Organizations	Priority	Feasibility & Impact
Action 1.0 A	Develop & implement local programs to assist homeowners with <b>minor repairs</b> , accessibility, paint, etc.	Short Range	\$-\$	USDA 504, RESTORE, Cloudsplitter, Adk Foundation SUN Fund, Rebuild Together, Rotary Foundation	HAPEC, AHDC	High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 1.0 B	Housing Rehab Program (kitchens, baths, electric, plumbing, windows, doors, energy efficiency, roofs, siding, structural)	Mid Range	\$\$-\$\$\$	HOME, RESTORE, CDBG loans, SUN Fund, Cloudsplitter, Adk Foundation	HAPEC, JCEO, AHDC	High	Med Feasibility High Impact
Action 1.0 C	Facilitate access to financing & other resources (i.e. materials, labor)	Short Range	\$-\$	Champlain National Bank & other lenders, private sector		Low	High Feasibility Med Impact
Strategy 1.1	Assist the owners of <b>multi-family rentals</b> to improve & maintain the condition of their properties.						
Action 1.1 A	Develop & Implement rental rehab property program which will impact renters at various income levels	Mid Range	\$\$-\$\$\$	HOME, Adk Foundation, SHPO	HAPEC	Med	Med Feasibility Med Impact
Action 1.1 B	Facilitate access to financing & other resources (i.e. materials, labor)	Short Range	\$-\$	Champlain National Bank & others, private sector		Low	High Feasibility Med Impact

\* Short Range: 1-2 years; Mid Range: 2-5 years; Long Range: 5+ years

<b>Goal 2:</b>	<b>Production of New Housing</b> Facilitate and support the development of new mixed-income housing activities.						
<b>Strategy 2.0</b>		<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Resource/Funding</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Feasibility &amp; Impact</b>
Action: 2.0 A	Encourage development of vacant parcels. Support the proposed multi-family housing project in the depot area.	Mid Range	\$\$\$\$	Private financing and investment, LIHTC	Private Developers	High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 2.0 B	Inventory vacant parcels for development of new housing options.	Short Range	\$	Volunteers		Low	High Feasibility Low Impact
Action 2.0 C	Facilitate the development of vacant parcels - Assess existing conditions and best use - Determine willingness to sell -Identify potential buyers/small developers -Market to prospective developers	Mid Range	\$\$ - \$\$\$	Private financing and investment, USDA, LIHTC, HOME	HAPEC; Private Developers; AHDC	Low	Med Feasibility Low impact
<b>Strategy 2.1</b>	Encourage rehabilitation of unoccupied homes.						
Action 2.1 A	Maintain an inventory of vacant and underutilized homes.	Short Range	\$	Volunteers		Med	High Feasibility Low Impact
Action 2.1 B	Revitalize unoccupied, dilapidated buildings for homeownership: -Assess condition & estimate rehab cost -Determine willingness to sell -Cultivate potential buyers/small developers -Market to prospective developers	Mid Range	\$\$ - \$\$\$	HOME, Private financing and investment, USDA	Fuller Center, BOCES, ACHT, HAPEC, AHDC	High	Med Feasibility High Impact
Action 2.1 C	Support creation of a land bank that includes Saranac Lake	Mid Range	\$	NYS	FCEDC, Adk Action	High	Low Feasibility Med Impact
Action 2.1 D	Market low interest construction loans	Short Range	\$	Champlain Bank and others, USDA		Low	High Feasibility Low Impact
<b>Strategy 2.2</b>	Promote the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units for long-term rentals						
Action 2.2 A	Develop an "affordable" ADU program. Market low-interest construction loans for development of ADUs at ~60-120% AMI to ensure affordable middle-income housing.	Mid-Range	\$	Champlain National Bank		Med	Med Feasibility Med Impact

Goal 3:	<b>Create Housing and Community Development Partnerships</b> Encourage and actively pursue innovative partnerships between government and the private sector to achieve local housing goals.						
Strategy 3.0	Identify, develop, support and maintain local organizations for the administration and implementation of housing programs and projects	Timeline	Cost	Resource/Funding	Partner Organizations	Priority	Feasibility & Impact
Action 3.0 A	Establish a new Housing Task Force to track progress, assist with completion of action items, and study best practices & successful strategies for housing development.	Short Range	\$	NA		High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 3.0 B	Funding - actively pursue and leverage private, nonprofit and public funds to facilitate development of workforce housing. Provide administrative and technical assistance to workforce housing developers and support the applications of these developers for loans, grants, tax credits, and other financing sources that facilitate production of workforce housing.	Ongoing	\$	Cloudsplitter/ADK Foundation, Village, County Treasurer, financial institutions, Franklin County Land Bank, ACHT, County IDAs/LDCs, HAPEC, NYSHCR	AHDC, SLLDC	High	Med Feasibility High Impact
Action 3.0 C	Neighborhood Associations - support neighborhood associations in order to improve the aesthetics, safety and overall quality of life.	Long Range	\$	Village, Cloudsplitter/ADK Foundation, Rotary, Kiwanis, North Elba LEAF, SLLDC	SLLDC, Neighborhood Associations	Low	Med Feasibility Low Impact
Action 3.0 D	Establish a village webpage dedicated to housing needs and related actions to address those needs. Information may include: Resources for small developers, renters and homeowners, links to regional housing resources, tax credit information, tenants rights	Short Range	\$	HAPEC, HUD, HCR, HHA, JCEO, Franklin County Community Housing Council, ACAP	SLLDC	High	High Feasibility Low Impact
Action 3.0 E	Explore opportunities for social impact investing** to develop or rehab housing	Mid Range	\$\$\$	ADK Foundation	Northern Forest Center	Med	Low Feasibility High Impact
Action 3.0 F	Identify potential small developers/contractors & provide technical/financial assistance to increase capacity	Short Range	\$-\$	SBDC, Chamber of Commerce, FCEDC, AEDC	SBDC, Chamber of Commerce, FCEDC, AEDC	High	Med Feasibility High Impact

\*\* Lower yield, long-term investment

<b>Goal 4:</b>	<b>Housing Policies &amp; Laws</b>						
	Develop and implement housing policies and laws that support local housing goals						
<b>Strategy 4.0</b>		<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Resource/Funding</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Feasibility &amp; Impact</b>
Action 4.0 A	Prioritize code enforcement issues	Short Range	\$	VSL		High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 4.0 B	Proactively enforce property maintenance code	Mid range	\$	VSL		High	Med Feasibility High Impact
Action 4.0 C	Inspect long-term rentals every 3 years	Long range	\$	VSL	Rental property owners/ managers	Low	Low Feasibility High Impact
<b>Strategy 4.1</b>	Mitigate the impact of short-term rentals on residential neighborhoods						
Action 4.1 A	Utilize Rentalscape to compile short-term rental data regarding: - Number of listings - Ownership - Location of listings - Type, size and occupancy levels of housing offered - Range and average listing prices	Short range	\$	Rentalscape		High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 4.1 B	Resume the gathering of public input about the benefits, issues and impacts of short-term rentals.	Short range	\$	VSL		High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 4.1 C	Complete policy research: examine relevant laws in the village; examine STR regulatory structure in similar communities; analyze enforcement capabilities.	Short range	\$	VSL		High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 4.1 D	Define planning objectives - establish priorities to inform planning objectives and regulatory structure.	Short range	\$	VSL		High	High Feasibility High Impact
Action 4.1 E	Recommend a short-term rental regulatory structure.	Short range	\$	VSL		High	High Feasibility High Impact

<b>Strategy 4.2</b>	Establish and promote tax incentives to encourage housing redevelopment and reduce vacant properties	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Resource/Funding</b>	<b>Partner Organizations</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Feasibility &amp; Impact</b>
Action 4.2 A	Expand Village housing rehab tax credit program to include multi-family properties and expand the number of participating tax jurisdictions	Med Range	\$	Attorney/legal resources	SLCSD, Town of Harrietstown & North Elba, Counties	Med	Med Feasibility Med Impact
Action 4.2 B	Property vacancy tax - establish a fee schedule for structures and lots purchased with the intent of redevelopment that have sat vacant for a specified period of time.	Long range	\$	Attorney/legal resources		Low	Low Feasibility Med Impact
Action 4.2 C	Promote use of Historic Tax Credits for residential rehab	Short range	\$	State Historic Preservation Office	Historic Saranac Lake	Med	High Feasibility Med Impact
Action 4.2 D	Create a list of properties eligible for historic tax credits and educate realtors about the opportunity	Short Range	\$	State Historic Preservation Office	Historic Saranac Lake	Med	High Feasibility Med Impact
<b>Strategy 4.3</b>	Enact/amend village laws and policies to address barriers to housing redevelopment						
Action 4.3 A	Develop winter parking solutions that address neighborhood needs	Short Range	\$	VSL		Low	High Feasibility Med Impact
Action 4.3 B	Engage stakeholders (e.g. renters, homeowners, developers) to identify barriers to housing redevelopment/rehabilitation	Ongoing	\$	VSL		Med	High Feasibility Med Impact
Action 4.3 C	Review & revise as needed, local zoning codes and policy to support a wide range of housing options, including: - Mix of unit types (e.g. variety of lot sizes, townhomes, row houses, live-work units and multi-family housing). - Mixed income and price ranges: opportunities to include affordable units and market rate units within the same development projects	Mid Range	\$	VSL		Med	High Feasibility Med Impact
Action 4.3 D	Identify additional key data points needed for effective policy discussions.	Ongoing	\$	VSL	HAPEC, NABOR	Med	High Feasibility Low Impact

## List of Acronyms Referenced

Acronym	Description	Website
ACAP	Adirondack Community Action Programs	<a href="https://www.acapinc.org/">https://www.acapinc.org/</a>
ACHT	Adirondack Community Housing Trust	<a href="https://adkhousing.org/">https://adkhousing.org/</a>
AEDC	Adirondack Economic Development Corporation	<a href="https://www.aedconline.com/">https://www.aedconline.com/</a>
AHDC	Adirondack Housing Development Corporation	
FCEDC	Franklin County Economic Development Corporation	<a href="https://adirondackfrontier.com/">https://adirondackfrontier.com/</a>
Fuller Center	Fuller Center for Housing of the Adirondacks	<a href="https://fullercenter.org/adirondacks/">https://fullercenter.org/adirondacks/</a>
HAPEC	Housing Assistance Program of Essex County	<a href="https://hapec.org/">https://hapec.org/</a>
HCR	NYS Office of Homes and Community Renewal	<a href="https://hcr.ny.gov/">https://hcr.ny.gov/</a>
HHA	Harrietstown Housing Authority	<a href="http://www.harrietstownha.org/">http://www.harrietstownha.org/</a>
HOME	New York State HOME Program	<a href="https://hcr.ny.gov/nys-home-program">https://hcr.ny.gov/nys-home-program</a>
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	<a href="https://www.hud.gov/">https://www.hud.gov/</a>
IDA	Industrial Development Authority	
JCEO	Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties	<a href="https://www.jceo.org/">https://www.jceo.org/</a>
LDC	Local Development Corporation	
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credits	<a href="https://hcr.ny.gov/low-income-housing-tax-credit-programs">https://hcr.ny.gov/low-income-housing-tax-credit-programs</a>
NABOR	Northern Adirondack Board of Realtors	<a href="https://www.nadkbor.com/">https://www.nadkbor.com/</a>
North Elba LEAF	Local Enhancement & Advancement Fund	<a href="https://www.roostadk.com/leaf">https://www.roostadk.com/leaf</a>
NYS HCR	New York State Homes and Community Renewal	<a href="https://hcr.ny.gov/">https://hcr.ny.gov/</a>
RESTORE	Residential Emergency Services to Offer (Home) Repairs to the Elderly	<a href="https://hcr.ny.gov/restore-program">https://hcr.ny.gov/restore-program</a>
SBDC	Small Business Development Center	<a href="https://americassbdc.org/">https://americassbdc.org/</a>
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office (tax credit programs for historic homes)	<a href="https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/">https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/</a>
SLCSD	Saranac Lake Central School District	<a href="https://www.slcs.org/">https://www.slcs.org/</a>
SLLDC	Saranac Lake Local Development Corporation	<a href="http://www.saranaclakeny.gov">www.saranaclakeny.gov</a>
USDA 504	Loan/grant program is to help very low-income owner occupants of modest single-family homes in rural areas repair their homes.	
VSL	Village of Saranac Lake	<a href="http://www.saranaclakeny.gov">www.saranaclakeny.gov</a>

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A: Summary of Work Undertaken by the Housing Work Group

- Reviewed Housing data in [DRI Strategic Investment Plan](#) (2019)
- Reviewed [Tri-Lakes Housing Needs Assessment \(2010\)](#)
- Reviewed [Saranac Lake Comprehensive Plan](#) (2013)
- Reviewed the [Strategic Housing Action Plan for the City of Hudson](#)
- Reviewed [NYS Homes and Community Renewal 2016-2020 Consolidated Plan & 2016 Annual Action Plan](#)
- Reviewed [HUD Income Limits](#) for Franklin and Essex Counties
- Reviewed Case Study: [The Role of Public Art and Artist Housing in Downtown Revitalization](#)
- Reviewed [What does the housing market look like post-COVID?](#)
- Consult and site visit with Darren Scott, NYS Homes & Community Renewal re: housing development strategies and resources
- Consult with Joe Czajka from Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, a public policy & advocacy organization that provides technical assistance for planning efforts involving affordable housing
- Consult with Community Preservation Corporation re: funding strategies for housing projects
- Explored the idea of doing a housing market study (scope of work was developed) but decided that the available data and limited sample size would not reveal the desired level of detail.
  - Consulted with Tupper Lake Community Development Director re: joint housing study
  - GAR consultants re: housing study
  - Opted to focus on strategies for: Rehab, Development, Outreach to assess demand > which would inform a grant strategy
- Members of the work group met with HAPEC, Fuller Center of the Adirondack, and Adirondack Foundation
- Discussions with Village Building & Planning Department staff
- Conducted an audit of vacant/abandoned residential properties
- Explored the role of land banks in housing rehabilitation
- Met with a group involved in [housing project in Millanocket, ME](#)



- Meetings and discussions with local small developers involved in and considering multi-family housing rehabilitation and other housing development projects
- Decided to work with Kearney Realty & Development Group to develop new housing
  - Introduction to Kearney Group by Senior Vice President/Regional Director of Community Preservation Corporation and Upstate East Director of Development from NYS Homes and Community Renewal
  - Hosted site visit by Sean Kearney to explore and vet potential sites; eventually confirmed the Depot area as the preferred site
  - Had multiple follow-up call and significantly vetted developer
  - Process included a trip by Mayor Rabideau, Trustee Little and Community Development Director Konkoski to tour another Kearney development in Poughkeepsie
  - Acquisition of property was facilitated by Franklin County Economic Development
- Created a list of priority properties from the audit of vacant/abandoned properties and created profiles for each. Also created a map. Identified the following next steps:
  - Inspection status/code issues
  - Develop cost estimates for rehabilitation
  - Met with potential local developers
- Explored strategies for incentivizing rehabilitation of priority properties, including:
  - Fuller Center rehabilitation programs
  - Feasibility for LDC purchase & rehabilitation
  - Target small developers
  - Potential for Cloudsplitter to provide incentives
  - Tax abatement (Village does have a [tax credit for rehab](#))
  - Low interest construction loans (explored possibility of village partnering with bank to create a funding package)
- Explored regulations for short-term rentals and potential to incentivize long-term rentals
- Reviewed [Regulating Short-Term Rental: A Guidebook for Equitable Policy](#) and [A Guide to Smart AIRBNB Regulation for Local Governments](#)
- Reviewed short-term rental software used by Franklin County
- Discussions with North Elba Community Development Commission re: housing projects and short-term rental regulation
- Presentations for short-term rental services from Granicus, LodgingRevs and Rentalscape

- Prepared and reviewed a draft Housing Tool Kit
- Reviewed list of tax delinquent properties in Village of Saranac Lake
- Met with Champlain Bank regarding construction loans for residential multi-family projects
- Reviewed [Lake Placid Housing Needs Assessment](#) and [Short-Term Rental Assessment](#)
- Community Development Director has participated in multiple discussions regarding housing at REDC Placemaking Work Group meetings
- Identified lack of off-street winter parking as an issue for many multi-family properties and explored alternative parking policies
- Met with Village Development Code Administrator to review a list of vacant properties that are being addressed through code enforcement
- Assessment of 138 Margaret Street conducted and shared with potential developers
- Assessment of 128 Margaret Street conducted and shared with potential developers
- Draft Strategic Plan for Housing
- Participated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual North Country Symposium “Foundations for North Country Resident Recruitment”
- Participated in the NYU APA/NYPF 2021 Joint Planning Conference Webinar Series which included the following presentations: Accessory Dwelling Units as Affordable Housing, Regulating Short-Term Rentals, and Exploring Today’s Housing Crisis and Exploring Solutions
- Participated in a focus group hosted by NYS Homes & Community Renewal to discuss goals for the 2022 NYS Housing Plan
- Participated in a virtual forum hosted by Northern Forest Center: Addressing our mid-level housing gap

---

## Do you have a lead on a long-term rental?

The rental housing crisis in the Adirondacks is hitting home at ANCA. Three of our current staff are acutely affected at this moment – having to vacate their current homes and unable to find long-term housing.

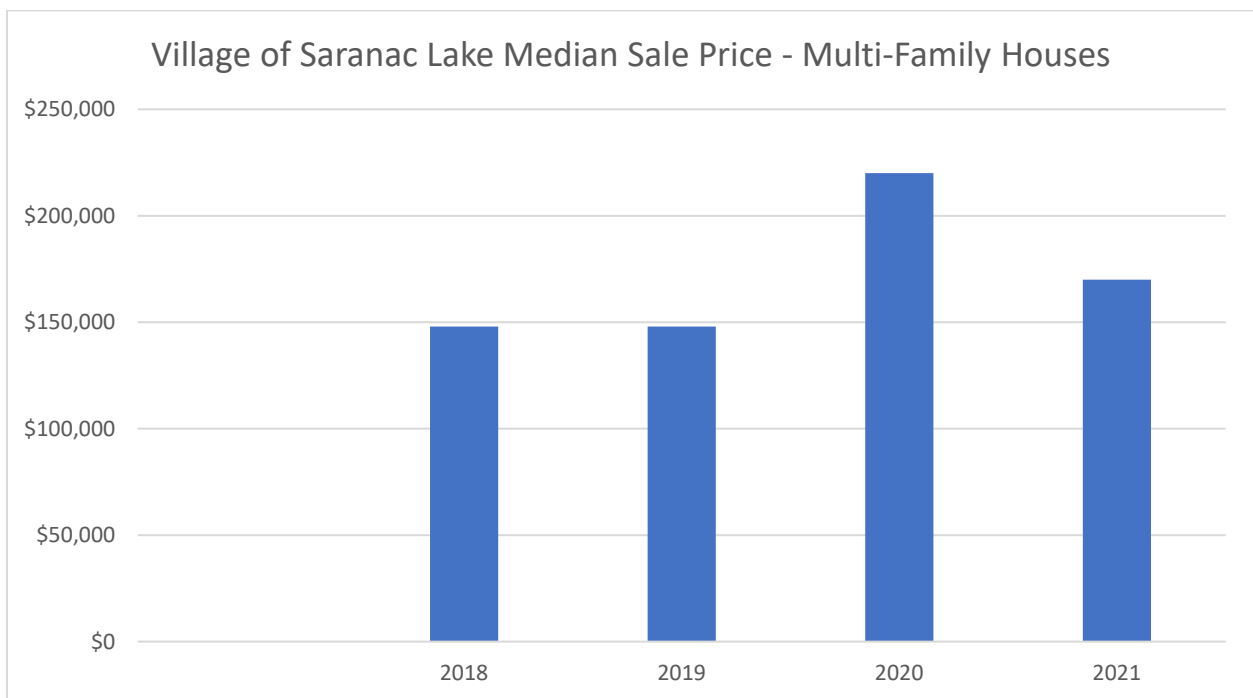
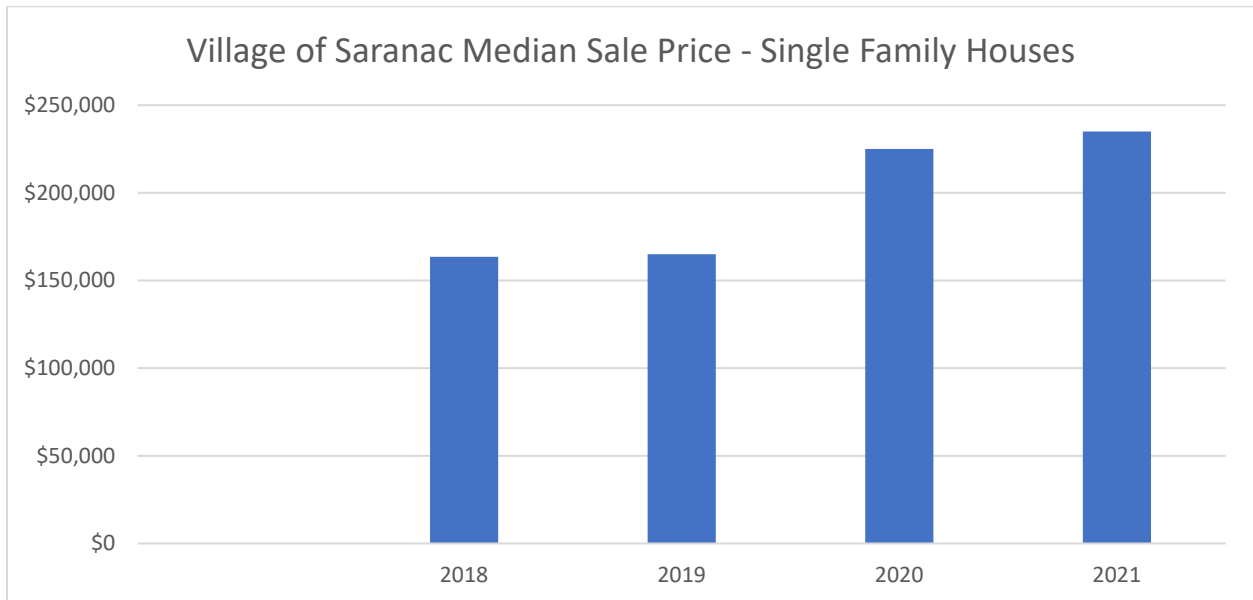
**We could use your help.** If you have any leads on rentals in Saranac Lake or surrounding communities, please contact us at [anca@adirondack.org](mailto:anca@adirondack.org).

For more information and insight, read Executive Director Kate Fish's [letter to the editor](#) in and Lexi Subra's recent [piece](#) on the topic.

[Read more](#)



# APPENDIX B: Village of Saranac Lake Real Estate Trends



Source: MLS

## HELEN HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT FACT SHEET



D'Aigneau Cottage, 1983. Historic Saranac Lake Collection

### **Do you live in a cure cottage?**

Cure Cottages are a specific building type that developed in Saranac Lake for the treatment of tuberculosis. The main feature of a cure cottage is a cure porch, where TB patients sat outside to breathe the fresh air. The Helen Hill National Register District was created in 2015 to encourage preservation of the neighborhood's many cure cottages.

### **What is the National Register of Historic places?**

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of properties deemed worthy of preservation for their historical significance.

### **What does the National Register mean for homeowners?**

Property owners may be eligible for a historic preservation tax credit to help support the cost of home repairs. The National Register does not restrict homeowners from making changes to their properties.

### **How does the tax credit work?**

To be eligible, you must own and live in the house. The repair costs must exceed \$5,000, and you must spend at least 5% on exterior work. All the work must be approved by the Division for Historic Preservation before you begin.

### **How to find out more?**

Contact Historic Saranac Lake at (518) 891-4606

or email [mail@historicsaranaclake.org](mailto:mail@historicsaranaclake.org)

Learn more at [historicsaranaclake.org/architectural-preservation.html](http://historicsaranaclake.org/architectural-preservation.html)

# APPENDIX D: Public Input on DRAFT Housing Plan

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	D-1
Renter & Homeowner Forum Notes from 9/30/21 .....	D-2
Homeowners .....	D-2
Renters .....	D-4
Renter & Homeowner Virtual Forum Notes from 10/7/21 .....	D-5
Breakout Group A Notes .....	D-5
Breakout Group B Notes .....	D-7
Realtor & Developer Roundtable Discussion Notes from 10/21/21.....	D-8
Employer Roundtable Discussion Notes from 10/28/21 .....	D-9
Stakeholder Interview with Historic Saranac Lake – Historic Tax Credits .....	D-12
Stakeholder Interview with Saranac Lake Central School District .....	D-13
Stakeholder Interview about Long-Term Rentals .....	D-14
Results from Polling Questions .....	D-16
Renter & Homeowner Forum 9/30/21 .....	D-16
Renter & Homeowner Virtual Forum 10/7/21.....	D-19
Online Housing Survey Results .....	D-21

## Introduction

The Housing Work Group completed the Draft Housing Strategic Plan in June 2021 and posted it, along with public input opportunities, on the project webpage. A press release and social media posts then publicized these public input opportunities. The work group analyzed all comments and survey responses to determine which strategies to prioritize and to identify any issues not adequately addressed in the draft plan. Based on public input, these actions were added to the final plan: promotion of Historic Preservation Tax Credits for residential rehabilitation projects and providing technical and financial assistance to increase the capacity of small developers. The vast majority of public comments were in support of mitigating the impact of short-term rentals and encouraging rehabilitation of unoccupied homes, so the timeline and priority status for each action now reflect public priorities. The final Introduction includes additional information about the housing market and refinement of key findings and recommendations.

# Renter & Homeowner Forum Notes from 9/30/21

## Homeowners

About 8 attendees

### 1. Which **STRATEGIES** do you think are most likely to improve housing for homeowners in Saranac Lake? Which strategies did you place a sticker next to?

- More to be done to encourage the rehab of unoccupied homes, lots of homes in disrepair. Concerns that these homes could be bought up by people out of state (turned into Airbnb). Can the village do more to ensure the homes stay in local hands?
- Are there more opportunities for village to explore/aid micro-loans to homeowners for repairs? Is there a non-profit that could spearhead that initiative?
- Concerns about “outside” developers coming in and purchasing homes, encourage rehab of unoccupied homes.
- Concerns of someone who buys and using “funds” for long-term rental and then changing to short term rentals.
- Vacant homes are a big problem...deluge of supply, and since they are vacant, it will bring it down even further because they are not being lived in.
- Flexibility (in code & code enforcement) for homeowners (live-in people) who are trying to repair old homes.
- Rising home prices – will this affect people from being able to stay/live in the village.
- Challenges of finding a contractor/skilled labor; getting qualified people and in a reasonable time. Contractors that we currently have are stretched thin. Getting it done and in a timely manner can be challenging.

How do we address the problem of lack of contractors?

- Encourage and support BOCES and vocational programs.
- Could there be a “co-op” for housing needs (electricians, plumbers, etc.)
- Labor shortages affecting the contracting world as well. Not many unionized contractors, and that is needed to do lots of projects.
- Workforce housing
  - There is a teacher that drives an hour plus because they can’t find housing.
  - When the population of Saranac Lake was at its height (around 10,000 people), we were able to house everyone. Why can’t we accommodate everyone now that it’s 5,000 people?

**2. Looking at your top 3 strategies, which ACTIONS listed in the plan would be most likely to improve housing for homeowners in Saranac Lake?**

- Regulating short-term rentals.
- Regulating short-term rentals & investing & improving the vacant homes. Add rental housing (like the Lofts).
- Build more apartments and townhouses

Follow up question – where should we build housing?? Demolition is expensive and village has few vacant parcels for medium to large developments.

- Pizza Hut, Chinese Restaurant. These areas are zoned commercial – no housing allowed.
  - Demolition is expensive. Is demotion something the village can help with? Is there grant money that can help with this?
- Madden’s storage on La Pan Hwy
- Could there be a financial incentive for businesses to re-locate (into some of these vacant sites)?
- AMA property – could some of this space be used for housing?
- Think small – i.e., Section 8 housing on Helen Hill. Could we have a strategy to do a number of these – maybe with current vacant homes.
- Are Tiny Homes an option for the housing issue – code issues with village/APA?

Emphasis on short term rentals – not having a developer, realtor, LLC – limit the number of rentals that can be owned by one person or organization. Whereas it should be encouraged by “owner occupied”.

**3. Is there an action(s) that is NOT listed in the plan that would be most likely to improve housing for homeowners in Saranac Lake?**

- Appropriately regulating short-term rentals
- Clearinghouse of resources, including grants
- Energy-efficient modular housing

**4. Are there any housing issues affecting homeowners that are NOT addressed in the draft plan?**

- Zoning – review and assessment (i.e., Lake Flower Ave corridor – many vacant parcels) – could some zoning laws be changed/adjusted. Do Zoning laws affect other areas that are potential housing locations?



- Need for small houses/cottage can be good for seniors and starter housing. Townhomes might be fitting for this situation as well. (Some seniors don't want to live in aggregate housing, larger complexes like DeChantal).
- There is a gap in the housing market between cheap dilapidated houses and very expensive homes (\$500,000+)

## Renters

2 attendees, plus some home owners

**1. Which STRATEGIES do you think are most likely to improve housing for renters in Saranac Lake? Which strategies did you place a sticker next to?**

- Development/rehab of vacant parcels
- Focus on multi-family
- Code enforcement needs to be enforced – resources for tenants when problems happen (increased knowledge that there is the ability to report to village).
- Education about tenants' rights
- How do we balance the safety/quality of units while also struggling with the number of units? I.e., If we say these units are uninhabitable then people are out of a place to live even if it was substandard.
- Are there incentives to allow landlords to be able to upkeep/upgrade the spaces. – Rental rehab programs – incentives make the landlord obligated to bring things up to code – and we have many old buildings which often end up with more problems and so many people choose to not participate in these programs.

**2. Looking at your top 3 strategies, which ACTIONS listed in the plan would be most likely to improve housing for renters in Saranac Lake?**

Could DeChantal age requirements be lowered since they have vacant apartments?

**3. Is there an action(s) that is NOT listed in the plan that would be most likely to improve housing for renters in Saranac Lake?**

- Rent control/rent stabilization
- Demolition of current places – buying out those property owners so then can be rehabbed. (Strategy 2.1.C is this) - big barrier again with this is cost of demolition and disposal. Asbestos removal in many of older places is a big barrier.

**4. Are there any housing issues affecting renters that are NOT addressed in the draft plan?**

- Tenants Rights? Who's responsible for enforcement?
- Inventory of long-term rentals? \*\*

- Second homes? Should/could this be inventoried? Inventory of STRs (identify if owner-occupied)
- Limit the number of STRs that can be owned by an individual and give preference to owner occupied STRs.
- Tiny Homes – could this be a solution
- Short term rentals may also be affecting/limiting the diversity of people coming to the area.
- Social impact investing should be addressed
- Is there a way to create housing in Lake (e.g. Harristown Business Park) by changing the rules? Adopt zoning or create a hamlet?
- Provide incentives for business to relocate in order to free up land to develop housing (e.g., Maddens storage on La Pan Hwy)

## Renter & Homeowner Virtual Forum Notes from 10/7/21

### Breakout Group A Notes

***Question #1: Which STRATEGIES do you think are most likely to improve housing for homeowners/renters in Saranac Lake? Which strategies did you place a sticker next to?***

---

Strategy 2.0 is really important. There isn't enough land for a lot of single-family dwellings. Should stress development of multi-family dwellings on sites.

Do we know the number of abandoned/vacant structures? Vacant lots? We should rehab what's already here.

Strategy 2.1 is important. Rehab of existing buildings is the most eco-friendly approach. There is a tie between eco-friendly development-sustainability-architectural history. It's good branding. The structures in the Village are unique; nothing like them anywhere in the country. Available resources, e.g., Historic Saranac Lake, tax credits.

Strategy 4.3 is important. We should prioritize what can be done sooner versus what can be done later. Enact laws/regulations. Strategy 4.1. is important. Would like to see a cap on the number of short-term rentals. Supports more proactive code enforcement and incentivization of long-term rentals.

**Question #2: Looking at your top 3 strategies, which ACTIONS listed in the plan would be most likely to improve housing for homeowners/renters in Saranac Lake?**

---

Action 2.1 C. Believes establishment of Franklin County Land Bank is important – address vacant and abandoned properties.

**Question #3: Is there an action(s) that is NOT listed in the plan that would be most likely to improve housing for homeowners/renters in Saranac Lake?**

---

The Village, its rules/regulations, and surrounding areas are linked.

Affordable housing and housing for workforce are issues that apply region-wide. School district is an example. Village is the center for many – not just those who live in it. Should look at potential for development outside Village, e.g., Town of North Elba, Tupper Lake.

**Per Additional Question Posed During Intro: What is affordable housing?**

---

That varies based on demographics. What is affordable to a young professional is not affordable to a college student is not affordable to a single parent. Need to provide a range of housing that is affordable to a diversity of households.

Affordable housing is housing that costs 30% or less of one's income.

What's affordable should be tied to one's capabilities and not defined by a developer.

**Question #4: Are there housing issues affecting homeowners/renters that are NOT addressed in the draft plan? If so, how might those issues be addressed?**

---

Tenants' rights. Rent control. Landlords' rights. Need to help people stay in their homes.

A clearinghouse for information

Resources for short-term emergency housing, e.g., shelters, lose house to fire, short-term displacement.

**Post-Break Out Points**

---

Frequency of Franklin County tax sales? Impacting availability of housing in Saranac Lake?

Move-Over Housing. Efforts to better enable people to age in place.

## Breakout Group B Notes

**Question #1: Which STRATEGIES do you think are most likely to improve housing for homeowners/renters in Saranac Lake? Which strategies did you place a sticker next to?**

---

---

GOAL 2 – produce new housing.

**Question #2: Looking at your top 3 strategies, which ACTIONS listed in the plan would be most likely to improve housing for housing for homeowners/renters in Saranac Lake?**

---

---

Tax incentives

2.1 (rehab unoccupied homes) - Discussed strategies employed by Northern Forest Center and their potential work in north country communities, but no plan for SL. Needs not viewed as significant compared to other communities (assumed we have capacity to address on our own?)

**Question #3: Is there an action(s) that is NOT listed in the plan that would be most likely to improve housing for homeowners/renters in Saranac Lake?**

---

---

Re: STRs- How do we encourage owners to prioritize long-term rentals; what incentives could be provided for LTRs?

**Question #4: Are there housing issues affecting homeowners/renters that are NOT addressed in the draft plan? If so, how might those issues be addressed?**

---

---

### **Questions Requiring Follow-Up**

Action 4.2A: What happened with village incentive programs. Did not seem to be fully utilized. Do we know why? Worth revisiting?

We discussed renovation large historic structures through the use of angel investor or non-profit funds to break large houses into apartment. great utilization of tax credit to create housing type that's lacking.

Discussed potential for partnership with employers to create housing.

PSC tried but did not have much success; summer dorms are limited to current students and alumni. Distance/transportation is a challenge.

Trudeau has some housing (rent or own?) – potential partnership if they have vacancies?

Adirondack Health used to rent some apartments for temporary workers. Not sure of current status.

# Realtor & Developer Roundtable Discussion Notes from 10/21/21

## Local Context/Needs

### 1. Real Estate

Inventory is low and demand is high from both locals and those looking to move into the area. This applies to all points.

Bubble? Projections are all over. The bubble is not likely to burst. 7-9% downward price adjustments predicted. Higher prices are likely here to stay.

Lowest inventory for 1<sup>st</sup> time home buyers. Previous price was \$140-150k. Prices now start at \$230k. Very low inventory.

Easier to sell without a realtor now because homes are selling fast. Direct sales are more common now because they are less work (only need to show the home 2-3 times).

What don't we have that some buyers are looking for?

- Condos – generate the most interest from 2<sup>nd</sup> home buyers; less appealing to 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers. Condos are more of a downsizing option later in life.

Multi-family properties are staying on the market the longest.

- Hesitation to become a landlord due to restrictions on evictions
- 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers hesitant because of all that goes along with being a landlord (e.g., maintenance, unwanted tenants)

Is there a way to determine the number of long-term rentals in the village?

- Use the tax rolls – identify multi-family properties and try to figure out how many apartments are in each building. Determine what % have leases vs. vacant. This method would leave out ADUs and houses that being rented.

A lot of people want to be in the village and be close to stuff but more people want to be outside the village to avoid village taxes.

### 2. Development

Remodel can be difficult because it has to be brought up to code which can be expensive.

- Renovations especially difficult for 1<sup>st</sup> time buyers. It is expensive to renovate to expected quality
- Prices for materials are coming down, but only a little. Prices are higher than ever before (trickle down due to supply chain issues). This is a hindrance for rehab.

Demographics are shifting – aging population, declining school enrollment

Incentive for development/redevelopment?

- Historic Tax Credits
- Affordable housing tax credits
- Tax abatement for new construction (e.g., if you invest at a certain level, you don't get assessed on those improvements for 10 years)
- 0% interest loans to help with upfront costs (partner with bank for underwriting\_
- List of available properties (some experienced developers will use a real estate agent that knows the market)

Taxes are high in the village

It is capital intensive for small developers to renovate multiple small properties.

- Not many large multi-family projects in the village

Cost of building a modest new house is at least \$300k due to cost of materials now.

### **Potential Solutions**

#### **Top Strategies:**

Tax incentives for rehab

Historic tax credits

### **Housing Needs**

1. Is the existing condition of the available housing stock (single and multi-family) deterring potential buyers? If so, what kinds of repairs are needed to make the housing more attractive to potential buyers?

## Employer Roundtable Discussion Notes from 10/28/21

### **Local Context**

#### **1. Why type of housing are incoming workers looking for?**

- Moderate income, entry to mid-level professionals, single family homes, decent apartments
- Middle-income

- Long-term rentals that are affordable (reception starts at \$16-23/hour; nurse \$65-80k; doctors much higher – student debt)
- Seasonal employees tend to be young – looking for small, furnished apartments
- People are disappointed with what they get for \$1200/month
- Hotel staff looking for long-term, affordable, quality long-term rentals (workers make \$15-22/hour)
- Hard for people to move here; hard to find an affordable house to buy, especially for folks making \$15-22/hour
- Smaller houses at affordable prices, which is harder to find – potential for tiny homes?

**2. Who is having a difficult time finding housing? What kinds of workers?**

- See above (entry-level workers to mid-level professionals)
- Seasonal workers
  - i. Hotel would be interested in seasonal (summer) housing for 5-15 employees
  - ii. Other employer would be interested in seasonal (summer) housing for 3-4 employees

**3. Do any employers own or help secure housing for:**

- New employees? No
- Seasonal (summer or academic year) employees? No

**4. Do you have an established relationship/business partnership with a specific landlord or group of landlords?**

- PSC will rent dorms for the summer, but only to current students, recent grads, or AWI staff
- Part of the problem is lack of supply
- ADK Health – no relationship with specific landlords, but do work informally with certain realtors (not just in Saranac Lake)

**5. Do any employers include housing as part of the compensation for seasonal (summer or academic year) employees?**

- If so, is the housing rented or owned by the employer?

- not yet, but is considering purchasing housing; it's not cost effective to own housing to rent in summer for employees at below market value and then attempt to recoup costs through winter months with rentals to non-employees
- Hotel would potentially be interested in purchasing housing for employees; hotel rooms are provided for some employees until they can get settled in an alternate long-term place
- Hudson Headwaters – not doing it now, but they are looking to build resident housing in Queensbury; would be interested in partnering with Adk Health to build resident housing
- Mercy Center – some rooms used for contract employees who work a few days and then go back home
- Challenge: too expensive to build new housing for the type of employees that need it
- Incentive: financial incentive may entice employers to invest in housing for employees

#### **6. Where do employees want to live?**

- Entry-level employees want to live close to work place (hospital) due to transportation; doctors would prefer to live in more remote locations, usually outside the village.
- Hotel/hospitality – want to live close to the village; in village or just outside due to transportation cost

#### **7. Have you lost employees or new hires because of housing challenges?**

- Yes
- Some folks have to commute long distances which poses quality of life challenges
- Less diverse seasonal employees
- HSL – almost lost staff; lived in campground for a period of time and only found a place due to local connections
- Adk Health – example of respiratory therapist who travels with camper to work in SL

### **Potential Solutions**

#### **8. Which STRATEGIES do you think are most likely to improve housing in Saranac Lake?**

- Need to increase inventory; given the shortage of housing few landlords are willing to make improvements because they know they will be able to rent the place without improvements



- 4.3 – amend zoning. Speaker at Common Ground Alliance said this is key to addressing housing
- Lack of housing non-profits/organizations to address local needs; lack of capacity to take advantage of HCR funds

**9. Looking at your top 3 strategies, which ACTIONS listed in the plan would be most likely to improve housing in Saranac Lake?**

- Promote ADUs
- Get organizations to collaborate

**10. Is there an action(s) that is NOT listed in the plan that would be most likely to improve housing in Saranac Lake?**

- Educate realtors about historic tax credits

**11. Are there any housing issues that are NOT addressed in the draft plan?**

- If so, how might those issues be addressed?
- Cost of transportation combined with housing costs
- Lack of public transportation
- Transportation challenges – some employees travel from far away; others walk or bike
- Village tax STRs because they take away inventory of long-term rentals
- Inspection of STRs
- Housing shortage is a national problem, not specific to Saranac Lake. We have not been building enough housing stock for the past 20 years

## Stakeholder Interview with Historic Saranac Lake – Historic Tax Credits

- 20% tax credit available for interior and exterior renovation of historic home
- Must follow Secretary of Interior Standards for anything that is original in order to receive the credit
- Not all work has to be historic preservation – covers all rehab
  - No vinyl siding or replacement vinyl windows
- Eligibility

- Minimum investment: \$5,000
- Some portion of the project must be on exterior
- Home must be listed on the National Register
- Work must be pre-approved by SHPO
  - Need 1 contractor to provide an estimate
- Homeowner needs to document everything with photos (pre and post)
- Cannot do the work yourself – must hire a contractor OR only get credit towards materials
- HSL can be a resource for homeowners wishing to use tax credits or for real estate agents looking to sell historic homes

Federal credit for commercial historic preservation projects is now 30% and state credit is 20% for a combined credit of 50% of renovation costs. There is a formula for determining if project is eligible for tax credit which is different from the residential credit.

## Stakeholder Interview with Saranac Lake Central School District

1. What are the most significant housing challenges facing the Saranac Lake Central School District?

- Availability of units
- Access to housing
  - No centralized mechanism through which people can find housing
  - Word of mouth is prevalent and not accessible to newcomers

Within your constituent groups (families, faculty, etc.) who is having the most difficulty finding housing?

- Employees - first and foremost
- Families

What are the barriers preventing that group(s) from finding housing?

- Land availability to build new
- APA regulations and ability to move forward on projects
- Building season is so short
- Finding contractors to do the work

For the Saranac Lake Central School District, how do housing issues rank in importance among other issues present in the district?

- Housing is #1: high priority & high impact, especially in hiring
- Applicants declined employment offers due to price, availability or condition of housing. (Successful applicants found unconventional solutions like staying with relatives.)

### **NOTES:**

There is a United Way program for car ownership in which Community Connections of Franklin Co. (CCFA) is the co-signer and people pay directly to the bank.  
 Could this model work with a housing focused non-profit?

JCEO and CCFA both offer a variety of family support programs and have a presence on campus. CCFA helps families in their housing search, back rent payments, completion of subsidized housing applications, etc.

Housing condition: Newly vacated substandard apartments are never empty long enough to repair and update them.

Preserving and increasing middle income housing is important for attracting and retaining workers.

## Stakeholder Interview about Long-Term Rentals

### **1. Is there a way to determine the number of long-term rentals in the village?**

- Rough estimate based on local knowledge is 4000-4500 – seems high
- Census indicates 2913 housing units in Village of Saranac Lake; 2417 occupied and 496 vacant (2020 Census)

### **2. In the village, what is the average rent (or range?) for studio, 1BR, 2BR, 3BR apartment/house?**

- Studio \$500-600
- 1BR \$650-850
- 2BR \$850-1000
- 3 BR \$1000-1100
- House average \$750-1200 up to \$2000
- Rents are variable depending how long a tenant has occupied the unit; tenants who have occupied units for a longer period tend to have lower rents compare to tenants who started renting more recently.

### **3. Vacancy rates - how many long-term rentals are currently occupied vs. unoccupied?**

- Vacancy rates are fluid based on job satisfaction and deficiencies within units. Most units are occupied at this time. If a unit becomes vacant, it usually filled within the month by someone on a wait list. Primary reason for people moving is that they relocated for a new job and the job is not what they had in mind. Next most common reason for moving is deficiencies within the unit.

#### **a. How many of the unoccupied rentals are habitable?**

- i. All of the habitable rentals are occupied. Estimate that 10-15% of multifamily units are unoccupied because of the cost of making repairs – no return on the investment.

#### **b. Why are they unoccupied? Are there deficiencies? What are they?**

- i. If a unit is unoccupied, it is because the previous tenant destroyed the unit or there is damage that needs to be repaired. Most common deficiencies that make people want to move are roof leaks or annoying neighbors.

**c. What is needed to stimulate the production of new housing?**

- i. Help with upfront costs/ increased capacity of local developers

**d. What are the challenges/barriers to housing redevelopment/rehabilitation?**

- i. Money, age of housing, and getting units up to code. Given the prevalence of “surprises” when renovating older housing stock there is often not enough return on the investment. Lack of labor or contractors for rehab/construction is also a challenge.

**4. Why isn't there more public advertising of available rentals?**

- Not many rentals available. The supply is low and the demand is high so most landlords do not need to advertise. One manager had 15 people on their wait list all summer. This includes locals looking to move within the community and people looking to be relocated from outside the area. Property managers use their own websites to advertise. Some agents use Craigslist and social media. There is some hesitancy to use social media because it is not uncommon for people to respond with negative and critical comments which makes the owners feel attacked.

**Housing Needs**

**5. Who needs long-term rentals in Saranac Lake? Who is having the hardest time finding rentals?**

- People who don't know the area and are trying to move here. This includes people at all income levels looking to move to Saranac Lake for jobs (e.g., ORDA, Aldi, St. Joe's, Adirondack Health, etc.). The village does not have any high-end rentals for higher income earners.

**6. Is the existing condition of the available housing stock (single and multi-family) deterring potential buyers? If so, what kinds of repairs are needed to make the housing more attractive to potential buyers?**

- The greatest barrier is cost for 1<sup>st</sup> time home buyers. Cost jumped dramatically in last few years so people looking to buy are forced to remain in rentals, which contributes to the shortage of rental units.

**7. Do you think STRs are currently, or have the potential, to impact the availability of long-term rentals?**

- Some long-term rentals are being converted to STRs; support expressed for permit process that may not allow every unit to become an STR.

## Potential Solutions

### **8. Which STRATEGIES do you think are most likely to improve rental housing in Saranac Lake?**

- Rehab unoccupied homes, grants or low-interest loans to help with upfront costs combined with tax incentives

### **9. Is there an action(s) that is NOT listed in the plan that would be most likely to improve housing in Saranac Lake?**

- The problem is that we haven't been building enough housing units since the 80's.
- Wages are a problem. There is a bottleneck of renters. Some are stuck in rentals but want to buy a house. They either can't find a home they can afford or can't qualify for financing because of income or job history.
- Shortage of rentals is causing rents to rise. Subsidies are not keeping up with rents. Some tenants looking to use vouchers cannot find a unit because the rents are too high so the Public Housing Authority can't approve the unit. At the time a family initially receives tenant-based assistance for occupancy of a dwelling unit, and if the gross rent of the unit exceeds the payment standard, the PHA may not give approval for the family if the family share exceeds 40 percent of the family's monthly adjusted income [24 CFR 982.305(a)(5)].

## Results from Polling Questions

Renter & Homeowner Forum 9/30/21

**The DRAFT Housing Strategic Plan includes nine strategies for addressing housing needs in Saranac Lake. Please select the 3 strategies that you think are most important for addressing housing needs/issues in the village.**

Undertake/continue/enhance a range of programs to assist private property owners to maintain & improve the condition of their homes. (1 vote)

Assist the owners of multi-family rentals to improve & maintain the condition of their properties. (2 votes)

- Additional comment: Require multi-family property owners to keep properties as LTR to receive assistance

Encourage development of vacant parcels (2 votes)

Encourage rehabilitation of unoccupied homes. (5 votes)

Promote the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units. (1 vote)

Identify/develop/support/maintain local organizations for the administration and implementation of housing programs & projects. (2 votes)

Prioritize code enforcement issues. (2 votes)

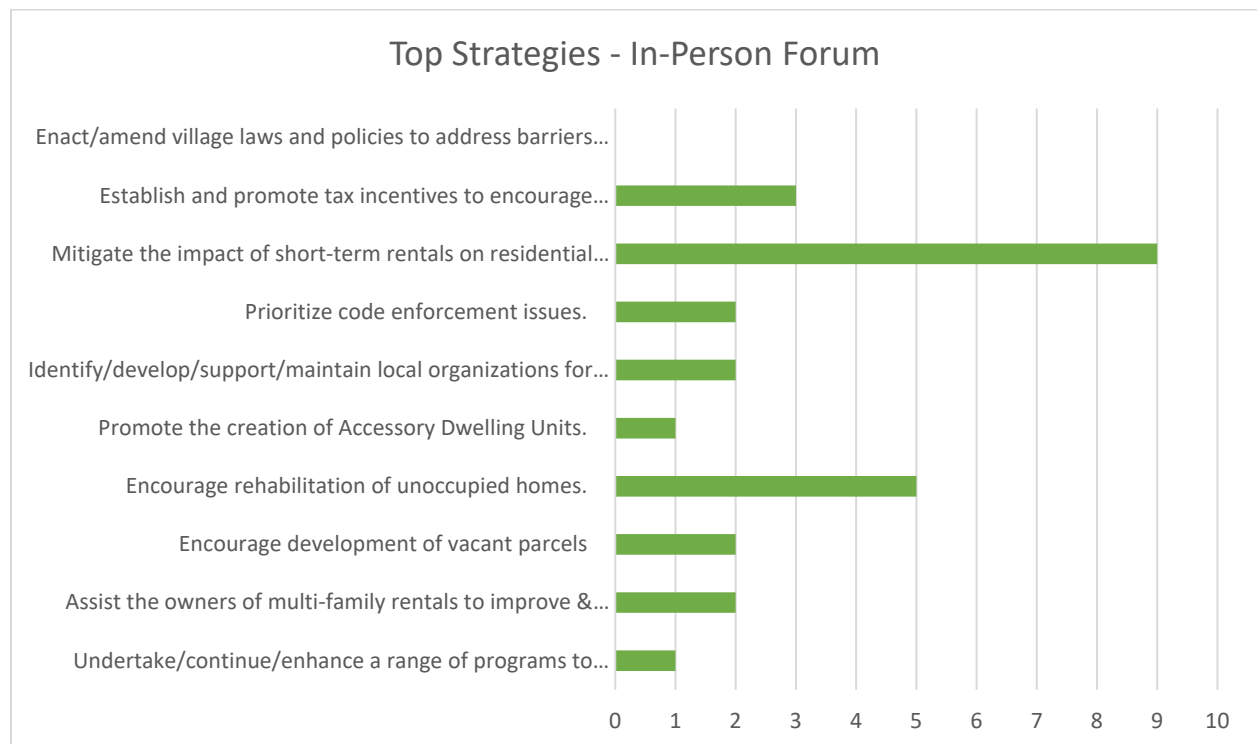
Mitigate the impact of short-term rentals on residential neighborhoods. (9 votes)

- Additional comments: (1) We need HARD CAPS on the # of larger commercial STR's, as well as having owners live full time in the properties. This type is distinct from homeowners who rent a room or two short-term. (2) Regulation of STR's should, to some extent, be income based.

Establish and promote tax incentives to encourage housing redevelopment and reduce vacant properties. (3 votes)

Enact/amend village laws and policies to address barriers to housing redevelopment. (0 votes)

Other (please explain on a sticky note): (1) Tax incentives to rent long term rather than AirBnBs. (2) Devise effective ways to control/limit and regulate runaway housing prices for homes and apartment buildings, including the # and type of STR's- so that middle-class and working class and economically disadvantaged SL residents are not priced out and forced to move out of the Village. (3) Tax LLCs that own residential properties. (4) Require developers/builders of ANY high-income homes/apartment buildings to build in a significant percentage of low-income and middle-income dwellings.



**What types of housing do you think the Village of Saranac Lake Needs Most? Choose up to 3 types of housing.**

Small/Cottage homes (4 votes)

Traditional single-family (2 votes)

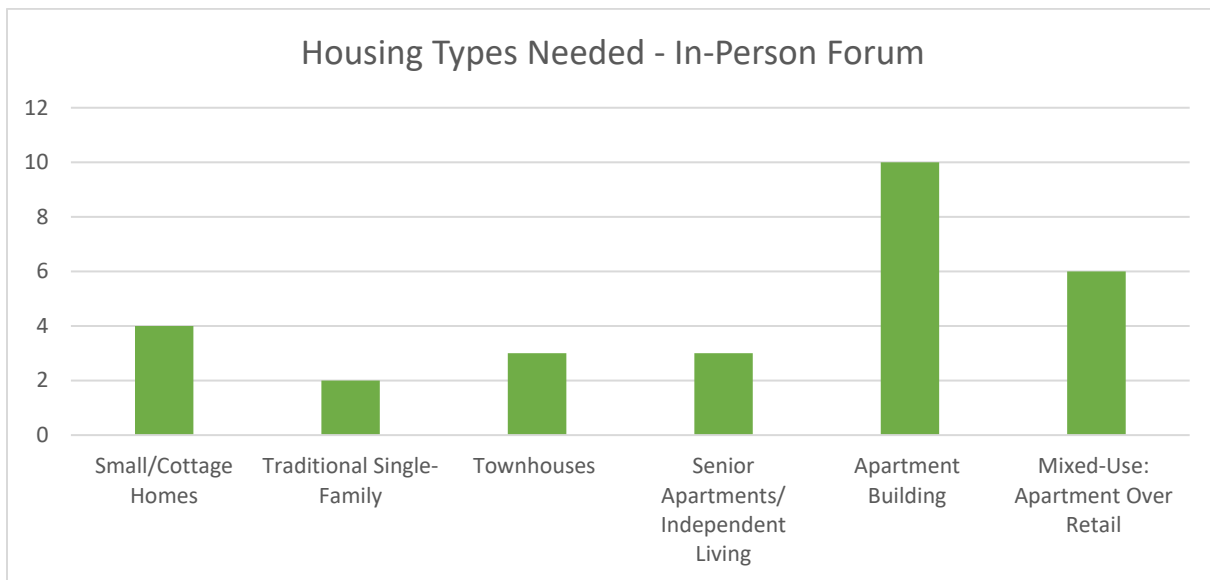
Townhouses (3 votes)

Senior Apartments/Independent Living (3 votes)

Apartment Building (10 votes)

Mixed-use: apartment over retail (6 votes)

Other (explain on a sticky note): (1) Co-op home parks (tiny homes manufactured). (2) We should, as a village, look into small and especially tiny homes and mobile homes as a way to create truly affordable housing. (3) Tiny homes mobile home communities. (4) Tiny homes close together in a community such that aging people can live independently but with close and caring neighbors. (5) Tiny homes. Upscale locally manufactured homes. (6) Why consider apartments over retail if we already have several vacant storefronts?



**What is the most significant housing challenge facing Saranac Lake? Write your response here.**

- Lack of new, multi-family housing projects
- Affordable housing (both apartments and single-family homes) for low-income and mid-income residents or would be residents
- Affordable small independent homes for residents making less than \$50K - \$80K a year. Especially those that really want to live here and already contributed to the community
- Rapid growth of STR's outpacing new development

- The need to control, limit and regulate runaway housing prices- homes and rentals (including the # and type of STR's) so that the middle and working class and economically disadvantaged SL residents aren't priced out and forced to move elsewhere
- Rehabbing and occupying deteriorated or vacant housing. Getting STR's under control
- STR's and developers/absentee property owners and LLC's/corporations controlling housing stock
- The aging housing stock and lack of available and reliable contractors to keep houses and housing units in good repair
- Lucrative STR market could drive up assessed values for folks that are doing all they can to maintain their 100-year-old homes.
- Low supply, no new-ish homes
- Obviously affordable, decent, and available housing for the common man and woman.

### Renter & Homeowner Virtual Forum 10/7/21

**The DRAFT Housing Strategic Plan includes nine strategies for addressing housing needs in Saranac Lake. Please select the 3 strategies that you think are most important for addressing housing needs/issues in the village.**

Undertake/continue/enhance a range of programs to assist private property owners to maintain & improve the condition of their homes. 20% (6 votes)

Assist the owners of multi-family rentals to improve & maintain the condition of their properties. 30% (9 votes)

Encourage development of vacant parcels 30% (9 votes)

Encourage rehabilitation of unoccupied homes. 60% (18 votes)

Promote the creation of Accessory Dwelling Units. 20% (6 votes)

Identify/develop/support/maintain local organizations for the administration and implementation of housing programs & projects. 20% (6 votes)

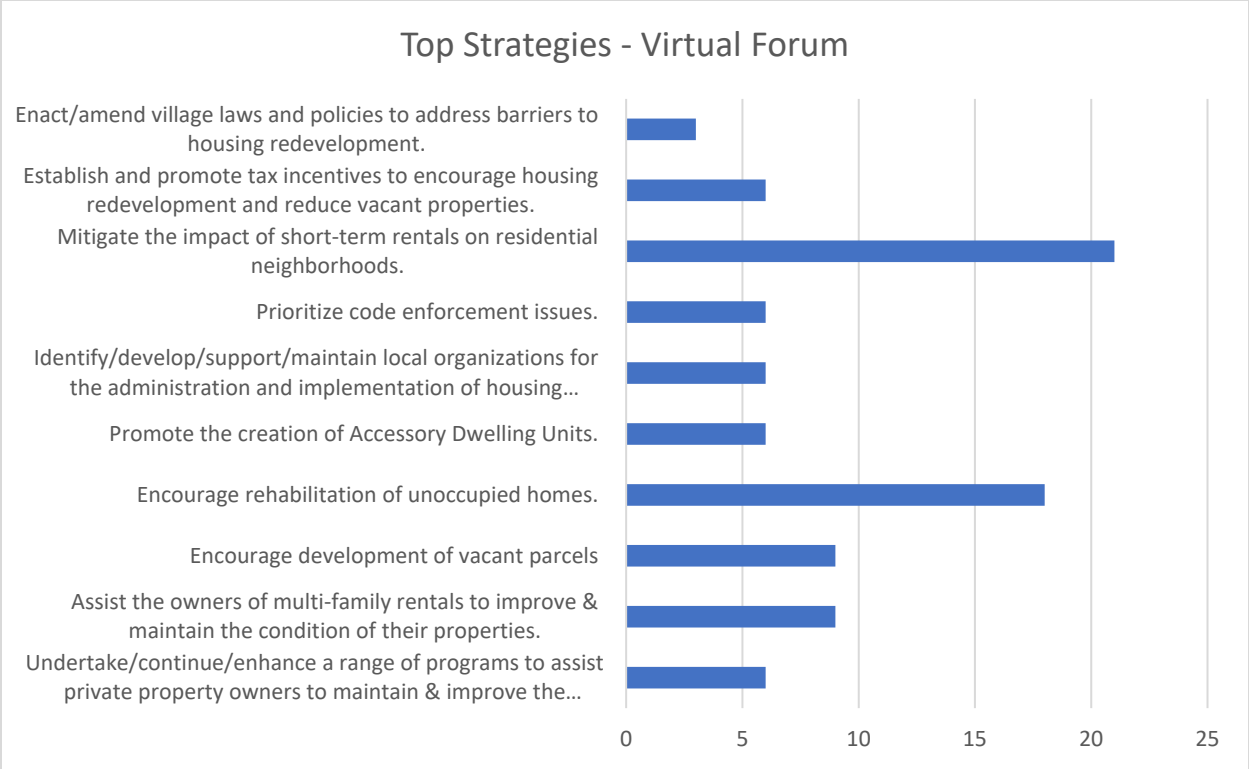
Prioritize code enforcement issues. 20% (6 votes)

Mitigate the impact of short-term rentals on residential neighborhoods. 70% (21 votes)

Establish and promote tax incentives to encourage housing redevelopment and reduce vacant properties. 20% (6 votes)

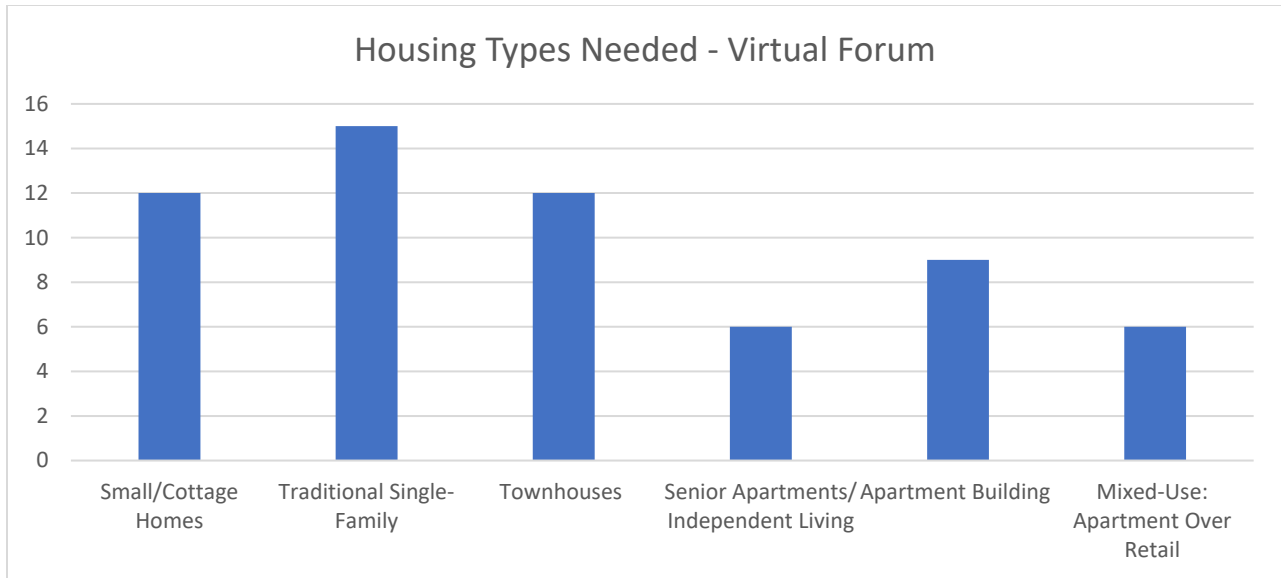
Enact/amend village laws and policies to address barriers to housing redevelopment. 10% (3 votes)





**What types of housing do you think the Village of Saranac Lake Needs Most? Choose up to 3 types of housing.**

- Small/Cottage Homes 50% (12 votes)
- Traditional Single-Family 63% (15 votes)
- Townhouses 50% (12 votes)
- Senior Apartments/ Independent Living 25% (6 votes)
- Apartment Building 38% (9 votes)
- Mixed-Use: Apartment Over Retail 25% (6 votes)



**What is the most significant housing challenge facing Saranac Lake? Write your response here.**

- A wild west of short-term rentals coupled with an antiquated village development code is the most significant challenge facing Saranac Lake. This causes an affordable housing crisis and an inability to take on rehabilitation of old housing stock.
- Affordable housing is desperately needed and short-term rentals need to be controlled. It would be nice to see existing vacant houses rehabbed and sold to young professionals and/or families.
- Affordability.
- Lack of developers for rehab or new builds
- Many of our existing larger single-family homes are hard to maintain and don't match current household size/needs. As a result, these places are often in disrepair and hard to match with the needs of families, etc.
- Deferred maintenance of old housing stock

## Online Housing Survey Results

The Online Housing Survey was open from June 11 through October 30, 2021. 67 individuals completed the online survey. Survey Monkey was used to create the online survey. The exported responses are included on the following pages.