

MIDDLETOWN LEADS

WHAT IS MIDDLETOWN LEADS?

Middletown Leads is a weekly newsletter intended to connect the Middletown community by providing information about the civic undertakings of the Town.

COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLANS – THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE & TIME

The State of RI requires that each community review and revise its Comprehensive Community Plan every 10 years. It recognizes that change is inevitable with the passage of time. Thus it requires a progress review every 5 years and allows as many as 4 amendments per year.

MIDDLETOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

The current Community Comprehensive Plan was approved by The Middletown Planning Board on September 10, 2014; it was adopted by the Middletown Town Council On March 2, 2015.

MIDDLETOWN'S PLAN – THE OVERALL VISION

Middletown will preserve its *quality of life* for all generations as a *safe and friendly* community with a *distinctive heritage*, *extraordinary cultural and natural resources*, a *strong local economy* and *fiscally sound government*.

In this and future newsletters, we will explore the various areas addressed by the Comprehensive Plan to see how it addresses the values it has defined as equally important to the community's character:

1. Cultural & Historic Resources
2. Natural & Ecological Resources
3. Recreation, Conservation, & Open Space
4. Economic Development
5. Transportation
6. Housing
7. Facilities & Services
8. Land Use

AREA # 6 – HOUSING

The guiding principles of the Housing area of the Comprehensive Plan are represented in the following Housing Vision Statement:

Residential development in Middletown will be planned and designed in a way that complements our heritage, preserves our natural resources, and enhances the quality of life of our residents. The town will have a balance of housing opportunities for all income levels that allows multiple generations to call Middletown home.

HOUSING – GOALS, POLICIES, & ACTION ITEMS

Recognizing the importance and its responsibility in promoting affordable housing, Middletown developed in 2013 a Ten-Year Affordable Housing Action Plan, which set forth its strategy to increase the town's supply of affordable housing. The stated intent was to review the plan annually to ensure progress is being made. Goals were as follows:

1. Protect the existing supply of affordable housing
2. Promote a balance of housing choices for all income levels and age groups
3. Increase the town's supply of workforce housing
4. Reduce housing costs while promoting more sustainable development
5. Appropriately site affordable housing
6. Meet the state's 10% requirement for low-and-moderate income housing

CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO HOUSING

The Comprehensive Community Plan looks at multiple existing conditions that impact availability as well as new development.

Currently existing housing units include single-family, multi-family, apartment complexes of various sizes, and mobile homes.

Lot size determines density. The west side of town has high-density zoning while the east side is zoned low-density.

Occupancy rates are determined by year-round primary use. The percentage of rentals belonging to seasonal residents has increased substantially.

The majority of homes in Middletown are post-World War II construction.

The cost of the median priced home is out of reach for many. Housing is considered affordable if a family or person pays less than 30 percent of their income on housing-related costs.

The disparity between wages and home prices as well as rents makes it difficult for workers to afford to live in Middletown.

NEXT WEEK -

The February 16, 2019 newsletter will continue to address Housing issues as identified in the Comprehensive Community Plan.

FOOTNOTE

Commentary about Middletown community and municipal affairs may appear occasionally in the following blog: MiddletownLeads@blogspot.com.