

Seeking Your Views about Housing Development in Lyme

Chapter 1 of Lyme's master plan begins with a vision for the future of Lyme:

...to maintain and enhance its rural character, scenic vistas, environmental quality, educational excellence and traditional Village areas, while strengthening its sense of community, offering opportunities for a variety of housing types and office, retail and service uses that meet the needs of Lyme residence, promoting a responsive local government and providing recreational opportunities for all.

This vision reflected the general consensus of Lyme residents and was based on the 2006 community attitude survey as well as the results of neighborhood meetings and forums. At the time of that survey housing and development were not considered a priority. Lyme's rate of growth and development was ranked as "about right" by 48%, "too rapid" by 19% and "too slow" by 17% of respondents.

For reference, there are approximately 750 residential properties (825 households) in Lyme, mostly single family, with a median appraised value of \$473,000. The median sale price of homes over the last 3 years is \$570,000 (the average is \$743,000).

Since that vision statement was written a national housing crisis has affected the state of New Hampshire and our town. There are many reasons for the housing shortage both nationally and locally. Over the last few months, the Lyme Planning Board has held several public forums on housing to educate ourselves regarding housing needs and barriers. The board aspires to address housing needs while maintaining the small-town rural character and aesthetic beauty of Lyme; but, also, we aspire to be responsive to the attitudes of the residents of the town.

We offer this twenty question survey which we believe will inform us about current community attitudes towards housing development. We provide a [map of Lyme and a description of the existing Zoning Districts](#) (opens in a separate tab/window) to help you visualize our town.

The survey is available online at bit.ly/LymeHousingSurvey2025 Additional paper copies are available at the Library. Every adult household member should feel free to answer. Paper versions can be returned to: Lyme Planning Board P.O. Box 126, Lyme; there are drop boxes at the Library and the Town Offices. Please choose the paper OR online version.

PLEASE RETURN BY NOVEMBER 25th.



We are eager to hear from you. Thank you.

Members of the Lyme Planning Board

Rich Menge, Chair	Hebe Quinton, Alternate
Tim Cook, Vice Chair	Rich Brown, Alternate
Nat Niles	
Vicki Smith	
David Kahn, Select Board Representative	

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 Not shared

Start of the survey - refer to the [map of Lyme and a description of the existing Zoning Districts](#) (opens in a separate tab/window)

1. The Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) has published guidance for its 27 member municipalities concerning each community's fair share of housing development between 2020 and 2040. For Lyme, their guidance was 145 new units. This would mean that between now and 2040, Lyme would need to add about 9 new housing units per year. We know from our permit records that the town currently adds about 2 units per year so this would mean a greater than 4-fold increase in housing development in the town.

How do you feel about this rate of growth? Please check the one choice below which best describes the level of housing development you are comfortable with.

- No increase (2 new units/year)
- 2-fold increase (4 new units/year)
- 3-fold increase (6 new units/year)
- 4-fold increase (8 new units/year)
- 5-fold increase (10 new units/year)



2. Currently, the zoning ordinance only allows duplexes (two dwellings) and multi-unit dwellings through modifications to an existing building. An **existing building** can be converted to a maximum of 6 dwelling units. In other words, multi-unit dwellings may not be constructed from scratch.

Should multi-unit dwellings be allowed as **new construction**?

	Yes	No
Duplexes?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buildings with 3 to 6 dwelling units?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buildings with 7 to 15 dwelling units?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



3. **Attainable** and **affordable housing** are two separate issues, but both are related to median income for an area. The median household income for Grafton County is \$108,000/year (\$9,000/month).

Attainable housing is intended to serve households earning 80 to 120% of the area median income. Housing costs are defined as not exceeding 30% of the household income for housing-related expenses including utilities, insurance, rent or mortgage and property taxes. Attainable housing would range from \$2160 to \$3240 per month.

Affordable housing applies to households earning less than 80% of County income. For Lyme, affordable housing is considered to be approximately \$2160/month.

	Yes	No
Do you think Lyme needs more attainable housing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think Lyme needs more affordable housing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. If you believe Lyme should have more affordable and attainable housing, do you have any ideas about making housing more attainable and/or affordable?

Your answer



5. If the pace of housing development in Lyme is increased, the location of the new housing units is of significant importance. Please take a moment to examine the [map of Lyme and a description of the Zoning Districts](#) (opens in a separate tab/window).

Please rank the locations as shown on the zoning map as to where you feel is most appropriate to locate **new housing units** (8 is MOST appropriate; 1 is LEAST appropriate):

	8-MOST Appropriate	7	6	5	4	3	2	1-LEAST Appropriate
Lyme Common District	<input type="radio"/>							
Lyme Center District	<input type="radio"/>							
Lyme Commercial District	<input type="radio"/>							
Rural District	<input type="radio"/>							
East Lyme District	<input type="radio"/>							
Holts Ledge District	<input type="radio"/>							
Mountain and Forest District	<input type="radio"/>							
Wherever single- family dwellings are allowed	<input type="radio"/>							



Nowhere	<input type="radio"/>							
Other	<input type="radio"/>							

6. If you chose Other, please describe those good locations for housing:

Your answer

7. The Town of Lyme's Commercial District is shown on the zoning map. Housing is allowed in this district.

What forms of housing should be located in the Commercial District? Check as many as you wish:

- Minimal or no housing
- Single family home
- Duplex (two family)
- 3- 6 dwelling units in a building
- 7-15 dwelling units in a building
- 16-30 dwelling units in a building



8. Where would you consider an appropriate location for **multi-unit** housing in Lyme? Check as many locations as you wish:

- Lyme Common District
- Lyme Center District
- Rural District
- East Lyme District
- Holts Ledge District
- Mountain and Forest District
- Wherever single-family dwellings are allowed
- None of the above
- Other:

9. Another way to increase density is “in-fill” housing in existing neighborhoods. This creates a village or neighborhood feel by concentrating new housing in areas that are already developed. These could be four units in an existing structure, four town house units each with a ground level front door, or four units in a new structure. Would you support “in-fill” in the Lyme Common district by allowing up to four dwelling units on a lot?

- Yes
- No



10. The Lyme elementary school has enjoyed relatively steady enrollment for the last 30 years. The school administration has indicated that the elementary school could probably accommodate 30 additional students without having to pursue building expansion. School expansion would be challenging and costly. The 2024 census was 282 students, 189 who are in the K-8 school. If the K-8 population number is divided by the total number of Lyme households the result is 0.23 students per household. In fact, 80% of Lyme households have no children. As shown below, if housing growth in Lyme were to proceed at the rate recommended by the Regional Planning Commission (9 new homes per year), and those new households matched Lyme's current demographics. the capacity of the Lyme elementary school would be met in the next 15 years.

- By 2030, 45 new households created (total):
10 estimated additional elementary school students (total)
- By 2035, 90 new households created (total):
21 estimated additional elementary school students (total)
- By 2040, 135 new households created (total):
31 estimated additional elementary school students (total)

Given this as background do you feel that the capacity of the Lyme school and the limited potential for expansion at the current site should be considered a limiting factor for housing development?

- Yes
- No

11. Please feel free to explain your answer:

Your answer



12. Which of the following housing initiatives are important to you? Please choose no more than three.

- Helping people stay in their current housing
- Creating housing with a mix of price ranges
- Creating housing with shared amenities such as common space, building maintenance, snow plowing and lawn mowing
- Encouraging more housing options/choices/types town-wide
- Preservation of existing affordable housing
- Ensuring that new housing is sustainably built (e.g., environmentally responsible, energy efficient, and resource-efficient design and materials)
- Encouraging mixed-use development with retail on the ground level and residential space on upper floors
- Encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Attracting younger residents and families with children
- Helping people stay in the community as they age
- "In-fill" development – adding additional units on a parcel (ADU's or separate buildings)
- None of the above
- Other:

Please tell us a little about yourself (optional):



13. How long have you lived in Lyme (check one):

- Less than 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 10 to 20 years
- More than 20 years

14. Do you plan to move out of Lyme in the next 5 years?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

15. Please feel free to explain your answer:

Your answer

16. How old are you (voting age adults only, check one):

- 18 to 45 years
- 46 to 65 years
- Over 65 years



17. Do you hope to buy/rent a smaller house?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe in the future

18. Please feel free to explain your answer:

Your answer

19. Do you currently:

- Own your own home
- Rent
- Live with friends/relatives

20. Are there any other thoughts you wish to share with us?

Your answer

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