



Opera Block, Woodsville

Preserving Existing Affordable Units

Municipalities should consider opportunities to maintain and preserve existing housing units, as well as building new housing. Sometimes this involves public intervention in the private market; in such situations, the course of action will be based on the type of units that are most at risk, and the potential the units to be protected for future residential use. Communities may be able to increase their affordable housing inventory by working with developers interested in purchasing and renovating existing units, and obtaining grants and/or subsidies to reduce the rent or sale prices to affordable levels.

Expiring Use Rental Properties

Expiring use properties are rental units that were built with federal and/or state subsidies (such as low cost mortgages, rent subsidies, and loan guarantees) to serve low- and moderate-income tenants, for which the affordability restrictions that accompanied the subsidies are due to expire.

Preserving expiring use properties as affordable housing usually requires coordinating residents, the community, public and private investors, and may also



Eastern Apartments, Concord

Preserving Affordability of Rental Housing

While the development of new affordable rental housing is an ongoing process statewide, New Hampshire's housing affordability problems will not be solved without also maintaining the condition and affordability of our existing housing stock.

The expiration of affordability restrictions often coincides with a need to undertake significant renovations to a property to keep it in good operating condition and to ensure that the tenants have safe and decent places to live. Utilizing funds awarded through the Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Fund from the Public Utilities Commission, New Hampshire Housing worked with the owners of 27 different properties to dramatically improve the properties' energy efficiency, in exchange for extending the terms of housing affordability. The building owners saw improved cash flow as fuel and utility costs declined, and the tenants benefited from better living conditions.

The Eastern Apartment complex was built in Concord in 1945 to provide homes for returning soldiers and their families after World War II. The property was in significant need of renovation, but the buildings were also ideally situated to accommodate the installation of solar photovoltaic panels, which provide energy to pre-heat the domestic hot water supply. In exchange for these renovations and improvements, the development will remain affordable to low-income tenants for an additional 20 years.

require technical assistance throughout the process. Many factors should be considered as you assess what strategy is appropriate, including the building's physical and financial characteristics; current ownership and management; the existing tenants; and the surrounding neighborhood.

Community leaders are often important partners in expiring use projects, and depending on funding sources, state legislators and the Congressional delegation may also play roles – political representatives' involvement has often contributed to the success of housing preservation. The community can play a key role putting together projects that will preserve these at-risk properties, or a percentage of their units. Depending on funding sources, the municipality itself may apply for funding. It is important to know whether and where expiring use properties exist in your community and to monitor their status so the preservation process can begin early.

Preserving Moderately-priced Units

Acquiring properties from owners who have kept rents low and who may have deferred maintenance can enable a community or community-based group to preserve moderately-priced units for existing tenants, or new low- and moderate-income residents.

If the municipality has an appropriate development entity such as a housing authority, it may be able to preserve these important housing resources by purchasing the units. Once the units have been purchased, any necessary repairs and upgrades must be made and the rent or sale price must be kept low enough to be affordable to existing and future residents.

In many New Hampshire communities, the long time property owners provide the greatest percentage of moderately-priced rental housing. It is important to monitor the local housing market, and to know who owns such properties and whether they might be thinking about selling. 🏠