

**Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020**

Background

In July of this year, the Temple Planning Board discussed ways to engage the community and raise awareness about the affordable housing crisis currently affecting our region and state. We decided to develop a survey with the following goals:

- Discover what kind of housing residents currently have, as well as what types of new housing they may be open to seeing in town, if any.
- Collect some demographic information to provide a “community profile” so we can educate ourselves on what may be most important to our resident’s lifestyles.
- Focus on current zoning ordinances that address Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), Planned Residential Developments (PRDs), and Workforce Housing,
- Educate the community on potential tools we could use to encourage some targeted and alternative types of development rather than making town-wide zoning changes.
- And finally, the Planning Board recognized that not all residents attended the hearings offered last year and may not be able to attend meetings in person or virtually. With this in mind; the survey would provide an opportunity for residents to provide feedback.

A paper version of the survey was mailed to every residence in town, and was also made available online via email alerts and through the town website. We received 173 responses, out of the 605 mailed/emailed, a return rate of about 28.6%. It is important to note that some households filled out multiple surveys (spouses & elders living with family members).

Rural Character (172)

The first section of the survey focused on a resident profile, starting with asking what was most important to residents when they think of “Rural Character” in Temple. The answers included:

Open space and protected conservation areas	146	85%
Farms/Agricultural Lands	143	83%
Access to recreation opportunities (hiking/biking/horseback riding/hunting)	125	73%
Protection of the historic homes/buildings in the village center	113	66%
Little or no new commercial development	89	52%
Smaller Housing Lots with surrounding acreage in its natural state or for agricultural use	65	38%
A pedestrian friendly village district	64	37%
Large residential lots with one house in all areas of town	62	36%
Higher density in the village district/lower density in the agricultural/rural residential district	30	17%
Traditional housing subdivisions	2	1%

Other items of importance:

- Scenic roads, dirt roads or class VI byways
- Senior housing
- Dark skies

**Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020**

- Small businesses in town center
- No garbage dumps on homeowner/farm properties

Respondent Demographics

Of the residents responding to the survey, 86% (149) own their own home in town, and roughly 6% own their own home that also includes a rental unit (10). A total of 16 respondents indicated they live in a rental unit (9%): this includes a single family home (4), a unit that is part of a private residence, or in a multi-family residence. Four respondents selected the “Other” option.

When asked about the age groups of those living in the home, 94 people responded.

Elderly	37	39.4%
Middle/High School/College	28	29.8%
Young Adult	22	23.4%
Elementary Age	21	22.3%
Infant/Toddler	12	12.8%
Pre-School	9	9.6%

Of the residents who completed the survey, 24% indicated they were retired or semi-retired. Professions with the highest percentage of residents in town, according to the survey respondents, were Education (10%) and Healthcare (10%).

Retired	42	24%
Education	18	10%
Health Care	17	10%
Business Admin	15	9%
IT/Tech	14	8%
Sales	13	8%
Engineer/Science	9	5%
Artist/Musician/Writer	7	4%
Legal	7	4%
Automotive	4	2%
Banking/Finance	4	2%
Farming	4	2%
Construction	3	2%
Disabled	2	1%
Government	2	1%
Homemaker	2	1%
Librarian	2	1%
Plumber	2	1%
Real Estate	2	1%
Chef	1	1%
Pilot	1	1%
Veterinarian	1	1%
	172	

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

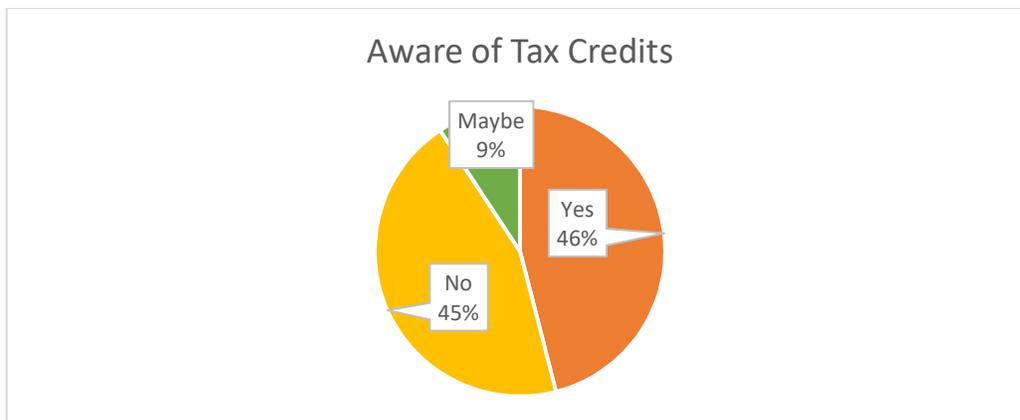
On the question regarding whether or not respondents work from home or commute, over half indicated they commute (52.9%), while 73.2% indicate they work from home either for their home business or for a company based somewhere else. It is difficult to determine if this is due to COVID-19 or if this was true prior to the pandemic. It is important to note that some respondents checked both “work from home” and “commute” options.

Commute	73	52.9%
Work from Home for a Company based somewhere else	52	37.7%
Work from Home/Own Home-Based Business	49	35.5%

Commute times and distances covered a wide range, with the majority working in our region. Ten respondents indicated they commute to MA, and 9 different respondents indicated they commute farther than 21 miles or more than 1 hour.

Hillsborough/Cheshire Counties	55	68.8%
Massachusetts	10	12.5%
21+ Miles/1+ hours	9	11.3%
8-20 Miles/Less than 1 hour	8	10%

We asked respondents to indicate if they were aware of the tax credits offered to senior citizens, veterans, and persons with a disability (161 Responses).



Protecting Farmland and Access to Local Food Sources is becoming more and more important. We asked respondents to indicate if they grew their own food, raised animals, or had horses.

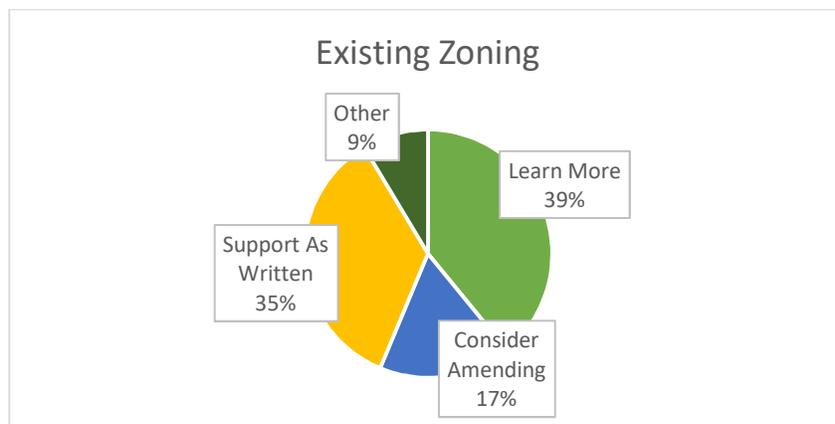
	Yes	Personal Use
Grow Produce	59.1% (101)	99% (100)
Raise Animals	75.4% (129)	95.3% (41)

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

On the question of horses, 13 respondents indicated they own/stable a horse in Temple (7.7%). Of those responding, 8 have 1-2 horses, 2 have 3-4 horses, 1 has seven horses, and 1 has 10 horses. The other respondent indicated they are planning to have one at some point in the future.

Existing Zoning Regulations (151 Responses)

The next section of the survey focused on existing zoning regulations and resident’s familiarity and support of the existing ordinances as written. We defined and shared links to the zoning ordinances for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU’s), Workforce Housing, and Planned Residential Developments (PRDs). Not every survey respondent answered this question, and some wrote comments rather than selecting one of the options offered.



The survey did not offer “I do not support the existing zoning” as an option. Several respondents used the “Other” text space to indicate their lack of support. Other comments included:

- Change the requirement of lot size limits for ADU’s
- I support ADU’s. The Workforce Housing Ordinance has never been used and should be scrapped. The PRD ordinance should be tightened to prevent abuse that has been allowed to take place.
- PRD’s should be limited to developments with 5 plus houses and the required open space should be more clearly defined, not just used as a buffer.

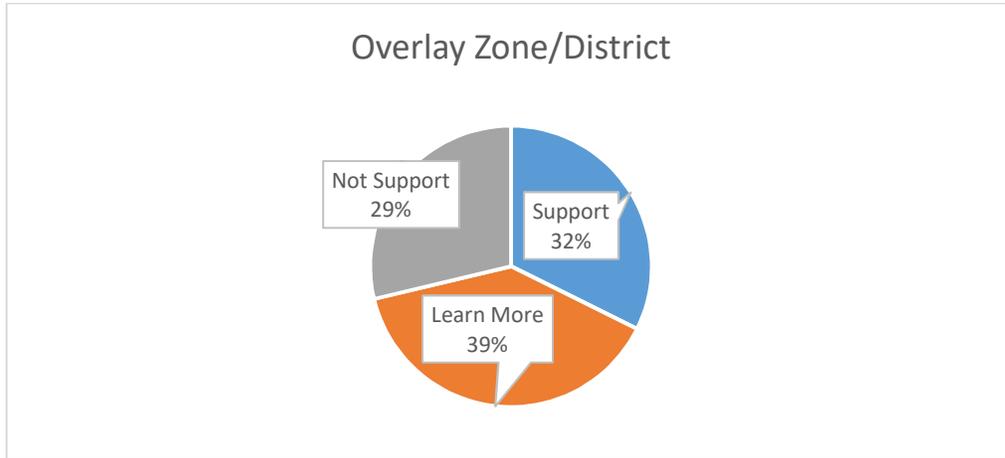
Affordable Housing (167 Responses)

Next, the survey introduced some tools that are available to us to target areas in town that could be used to control where/when/how housing development might occur. These included:

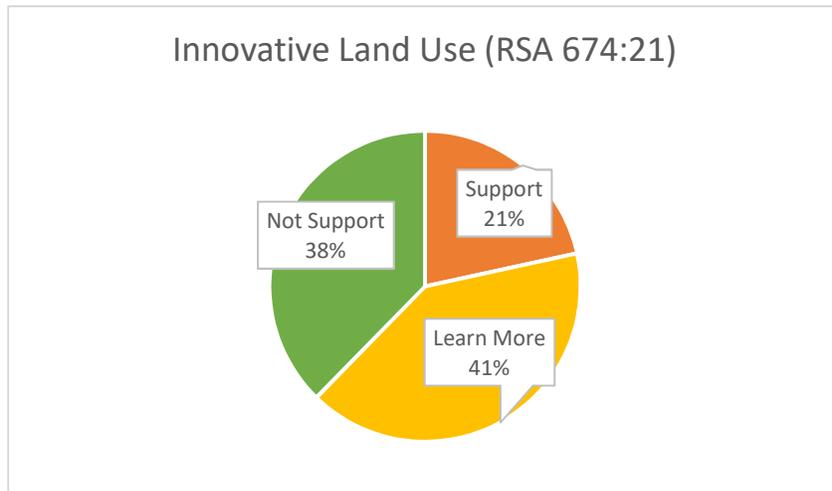
An overlay district is a zoning district which is applied over one or more previously established zoning districts, establishing additional or stricter standards and criteria for covered properties in addition to those of the underlying zoning district. Communities often use overlay zones to protect special features such as historic buildings, wetlands, steep slopes, and waterfronts. Overlay zones can also be

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

used to promote specific development projects such as mixed-use developments or affordable housing.

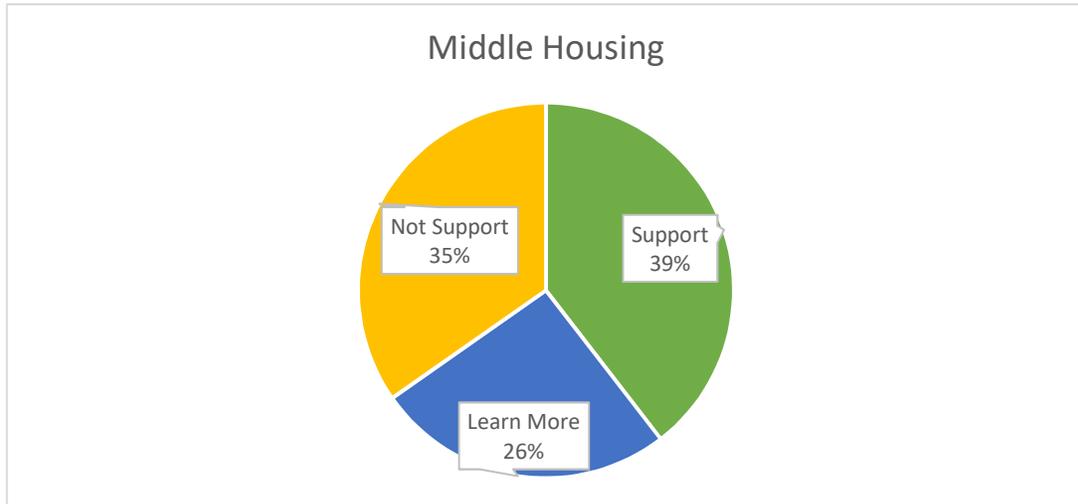


Innovative Land Use (RSA 674:21) controls may include, but are not limited to timing incentives, phased development, intensity and use incentive, transfer of density and development rights, planned unit development, cluster development, impact zoning, flexible and discretionary zoning, environmental characteristics zoning, inclusionary zoning, impact fees, and village plan alternative subdivision.



Middle Housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units - compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes - located in a walkable neighborhood. These building types, such as duplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and courtyard buildings, provide diverse housing options and would be built to look like single family houses. These could be in a development or PRD.

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020



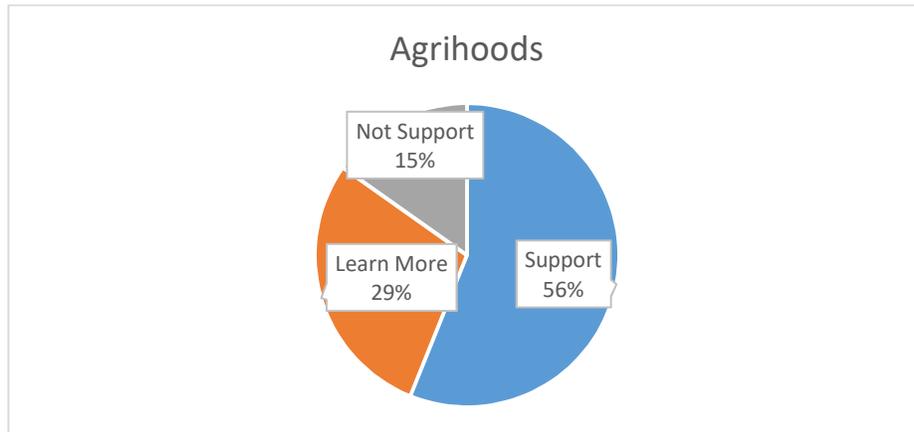
A couple of additional “Smart Growth” development concepts were introduced, to see if the community might be open to them.

Walkable communities (171 Responses) can be incorporated into any new initiatives. Walkable communities encourage pedestrian activity, expand transportation options, and have safe and inviting pedestrian infrastructure accessible that serves people of all ages and abilities. This may include bike paths, equestrian paths, walking trails, and hiking trails connecting neighborhoods to the village, school, library, farms, etc.

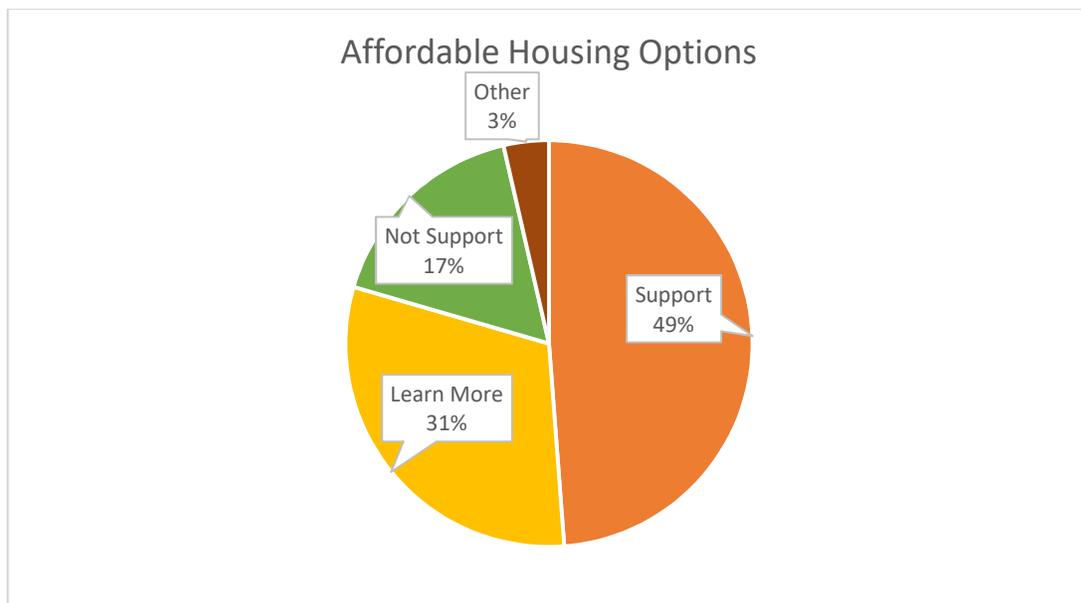


An Agrihood (171 Responses) is a housing development centered on community farming. The farm acts as the central meeting place, where residents come together, socialize, and learn. Agrihoods are designed to incorporate parks, trails, gardens, and protected open space.

**Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020**



Finally, given all of the preceding information regarding tools and alternative development concepts, the survey asked respondents if they might be open to exploring any of these options further. The question had an additional space for “Other” and was often used for comments (166 Responses).



“Other” Comments:

- Imposing restrictions on landholders would devalue property. Let’s use incentives rather than restrictions.
- Your terms are confusing and I don’t know how to answer “middle housing” or “alternative community focused neighborhoods”.
- There are some among us whose appreciation of nature and personal sensibilities require solitude. From among them have come many philosophers, religious thinkers and writers, prominent scientists, heretics and poets. None from Temple? Don't be so sure. The last thing

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

any committed introvert wants is to talk with his neighbors. We have a beautiful little gem of a town here. Let's not screw it up.

Other Feedback for the Planning Board focused on some key areas:

Planning/Zoning Specific:

- Abolish shared driveways, restrict commercial zoning on 101.
- Accommodations keeping in mind the disability population could also be factored in.
- Any land use should be based on the land capability for that use. Contact the USDA, Natural Conservation Service for assistance in determining the suitability of land for a specific use.
- Review the Open Space Plan for Temple.
- Aging people need smaller, one story homes.
- Detailed economic analysis must be done as part of the affordable housing analysis. Additionally, senior housing should be included in this planning/discovery phase of activities. Also, Planning Board should consider a town housing authority as a means to develop and manage senior housing.
 - Do a Needs assessment
- I would support overlay districts for special features, not development. Raising the appraised values of "middle-end" homes seems counter intuitive to ensuring affordable housing.
- Impact Fee on new homes.
- It's my impression that although the PRD is supposed to "promote a wide range of housing opportunities for people in "various...economic circumstances" there is no incentive or requirement for a developer to provide for that as far as I can tell. This makes workforce housing the only realistic way to insure affordable housing and from comments at one public board meeting it was suggested that developers are generally not interested, given the regulations. If that's true how can Workforce Housing be implemented? Is there yet another way to insure affordable housing? What a tough nut to crack.
- More dirt roads. They are good for walking, riding horses, herding geese and discouraging any more people from moving in to town. They also slow down the traffic and make it easier to get your tractor to town without having to take the chains off.
- Municipal water and sanitary sewer.

Commercial Development/Local Businesses

- Commercial development on a small scale should be allowed along Route 101 where feasible. Also, (encourage) home based businesses, even those requiring an addition to the property (building) for use by the small business.
- Bringing more businesses to the 101 area of Temple.
- Ensuring current areas used for business are kept tidy and comply with all planning and zoning rules and guidelines.

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

Community Initiatives:

- A place for our children (K-12) to play, gather, socialize in a safe manner.
- Grants for putting land into conservation.
- I would like to see Temple invest in more shared public facilities like outdoor shelters for socializing, public gardens and improvements to the Town Common that make it more useful and attractive.
- Making the village a little nicer for those who need that. Prepare a walking guide of Temple based on its unique history. We have lost track of much that has happened here and some of it is pretty interesting. The day to day lives of people who lived here in the first one hundred years of our town were very different from our own. Could we find a way to educate one another about this?
- More sidewalks in and around town or a bike path.

General Comments:

- “Good ideas” are dependent on who implements them.
- I don’t really understand what these different zoning options mean. There is a need for some public education. I do support the broader goals of having walkable neighborhoods and I’m a huge fan of community gardens/farms and eco-villages and would love to live in one myself. I just don’t understand what policies would promote that. Thank you for your interest.
- I appreciate your work, but I feel that you are taking on more alternatives all at once than are reasonable or workable to consider. Maybe you could propose one new option at a time to us.
- I believe we all want to preserve Temple's character and rural setting, but we must make it more accessible to younger families and retired, fixed-income elderly in order to do so. It is not affordable for either of these groups currently, so as the elderly leave to find more affordable housing few new families are coming in to replace them. Our population and tax base will shrink until the town is no longer sustainable.
- Less emphasis on what builders want to do, more on what residents want.
- If we allow an increase in the number of residences, the population will invariably increase. As the population increases, the rural character of the town will inevitably change – for the worse in my view. The more people you have the less often one can take an afternoon walk along a quiet country road without encountering other people, the less often one can go wildlife watching and expect to view undisturbed wildlife. Some people truly enjoy periods of solitude, times for quiet reflection in the outdoors, a walk alone quite certain that no one else will be encountered. I enjoy solitude greatly and own enough land that I can assure my own solitude by posting it. I have never posted it because I do wish to share what I have with some others. But there is a limit. When the day comes that I can no longer walk anywhere I want on my property with the reasonable assumption I will not encounter anyone else that is the day I will post my land. This will change the quality of life for those who use it now, undisturbed. I pay taxes that in some measure supports the enjoyment of others. It is possible to love the land to death and that is a part of what we are talking about here. Having places where we can go, near to home, with a high probability of encountering no other person is something of real value. If this is not of

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

value to some person, he or she will seek the company of others. We have cities and large towns full of those who enjoy public gatherings, skating rinks, and sports events. Temple offers few opportunities for employment and most nearby towns offer somewhat more. Why destroy our beautiful and very rural home because of some ill-considered nonsense that all towns should make room for more people? I think Temple is beautiful as it is. It does not suit everyone and should not seek to do so. It is a beautiful place to be, to live, to walk alone reasonably sure you will continue to be alone. There is money to be made in subdividing land and selling house lots. There are far more people who love money than there are who love open land or solitude. Open land, uncluttered, undeveloped and left mostly alone has real value to artists, poets, iconoclasts and eccentrics - people with the very sensibilities and characteristics that draw people to those places of natural beauty where eccentrics are free to pursue their own notions of joy without the company of many others.

Conclusion:

It is likely that the current pandemic we are experiencing had some effect on the results gathered from the survey, as more and more people are working from home and looking for local activities and opportunities for social engagement and recreation. This is an opportunity for the community to come together to discuss what is most important to us and how we can support one another in the future.

It is clear that outdoor space is important to our residents. Dirt roads, trails, and outdoor spaces are great assets in our community. A lot of people get out to experience nature, farm/garden on their property, and enjoy being out with their animals and/or the solitude. To the Planning Board, this means protecting soil quality and aquifers, buffers, and closely examining “open space” zoning as a priority.

A possible initiative for the town is exploring “Agrihoods”. This has been raised at Planning Board meetings in the past, and there is a wide range of information available to assist in reviewing and/or developing zoning ordinances that would support this kind of development. The Planning Board will likely explore this further.

As far as existing zoning, many respondents indicated they would like more information. Education on current zoning, like ADU’s and PRD’s is desired. In addition, economic impact studies and regional housing needs assessments would also be helpful.

ADU’s are a low impact, affordable option for many residents. The Planning Board can share helpful tips around ADU development.

Another area of interest worth mentioning is the desire for senior/inclusive housing in town. This has come up before at other meetings, and several respondents mentioned it on their surveys.

It is clear that collaboration with other town committees and boards will be needed to address all of the ideas gathered from the survey.

Focusing on improvements on the Town Common and in the Village Center was mentioned several times. Respondents would like to see more usable outdoor space in the village for gathering (safely), with one respondent also expressing their wish for a historical “walking guide” of Temple. These would

Temple Planning Board
Affordable Housing Community Survey
2020

both require collaboration with other town committees and boards as well as the community at large. Assistance and expertise is available through Plan NH for a “Charrette” if there is broad support.

Some boards are already working on related initiatives. For example:

The Land Use Committee here in Temple is currently looking at all town owned property. Proposed recommendations will be presented to the Select Board and Town residents in the near future. Three Planning Board members currently sit on this committee.

The Conservation Commission is planning to update the Natural Resources Inventory in 2021. It was last updated in 2003. The Planning Board looks forward to reviewing those results. The Conservation Commission is also improving and mapping all of the trail systems in town.

The Planning Board will discuss prioritizing an update to the Open Space section of the Temple Master Plan. It was last updated in 2008 by a committee that included members of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and other committed volunteers from the community.

The Select Board is reviewing the Tax Credits available to seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities. These credits could assist existing homeowners with costs related to adapting living areas so that residents can “age in place” and/or stay in their homes.

The Planning Board recognizes that there are no easy answers to the challenges of providing affordable housing in our rural community. This will be an ongoing conversation with continued engagement of the residents of Temple.

The Planning Board thanks all residents who responded to this 2020 Community Survey and appreciates the suggestions and feedback. We look forward to working with you in the future.