

Lend Your Support:

Middle -Income Housing
in Saratoga Springs

The Saratoga Places for All (SPA) Housing Ordinance



It is time for the City of Saratoga Springs to enact legislation that will guarantee more diverse housing opportunities – especially for middle income households.

- The increasing cost of land and housing has been squeezing lower and middle income residents out of the city.
- A diversity of housing types is needed to accommodate a diverse population and thereby secure a key element in the long-term sustainability of the community.
- Voluntary zoning incentives have not worked.

The need for affordable housing is greater than ever:

- 1,596 homeowner household (25%) spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.
- 2,154 renter households (44%) spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

To address these needs it is recommended that the City Council enact essentially the same ordinance that was prepared in 2006 after a year-long study. The ordinance has been tailored specifically to the city's needs, reflecting our housing and development history.

The SPA Housing Ordinance – Saratoga's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance

Inclusionary zoning (IZ) is a type of municipal ordinance that requires new housing projects to include a prescribed proportion of units that are affordable by people with lower to middle incomes. The developer is usually rewarded with a density bonus to compensate for providing the affordable housing. The objective of IZ is to promote income-integrated communities by ensuring that new housing projects, whether involving new construction or renovation, will contain housing for individuals and families having a mix of income levels. This type of ordinance is called inclusionary zoning because it is the opposite of exclusionary zoning—the practice of excluding low-cost housing from a municipality through the zoning code. There are over 400 communities in 17 states that have some kind of inclusionary zoning housing ordinance.

The proposed ordinance should not be viewed as a complete solution to the city's affordable housing needs. It is a long-term program that would be effective in adding more affordable housing units (maybe 20-30 new units of affordable housing annually) as the city grows over time, without requiring substantial government funding.

Key Provisions of the SPA Housing Ordinance

Required number of affordable units:

- Developments with 10 or more units would either dedicate 20 percent of the units for moderate income households or 10 percent of the units for low income households. This provision would apply to units both for rent and for sale, with some variations.
- Rental units would remain affordable for 30 years. Units offered for sale would remain affordable in perpetuity.
- Candidates for occupancy of the affordable units would be screened and monitored by the City and selected by lottery.

Density Bonus:

- In exchange for providing the required proportion of affordable units, the developer could increase the density of a development project by up to 20 percent.
- The Planning Board could relax certain development standards during the approval process.



Developers would commit to the affordability requirements by entering into an “inclusionary housing agreement” with the City. A developer would be exempted from the requirements of the IZ ordinance for unusual conditions. The City would create a special committee to monitor the program and make any recommendations for changing the ordinance.



URGE THE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS TO ADOPT THIS IMPORTANT HOUSING ORDINANCE

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Sustainable Saratoga is a not-for-profit organization that promotes sustainable practices and advocates for smart growth land use principles and procedures. Find out about our principles for smart land use in Saratoga here: <http://www.sustainablesaratoga.org/>