

NVDA's Housing Target Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the ramifications if a town is unable to meet the assigned housing targets within the stated period?

None. There are no consequences of non-attainment. It's important to remember that these goals are aspirational and exist to convey the scope and scale of need for housing throughout the Northeast Kingdom. There is no punishment for not achieving them. What *is* required is for your community to explore, in the municipal plan, what might be required to actually meet housing targets.

We all agree that these targets are steep and ambitious. NVDA also acknowledges that the pace of housing production is definitely not in line with historic trends. An exploration of this housing tracker (still in early rollout) certainly confirms this.

<https://housingdata.org/profile/home-building/building-permits>

2. What are the implications if a town determines that pursuing this level of growth is not consistent with local priorities, fiscal capacity, infrastructure constraints, or adopted resilience policies? Additionally, how do NVDA and the State envision municipalities balancing these targets against documented concerns related to flood risk reduction, school enrollment trends, municipal operating budgets, service delivery capacity, and physical land constraints?

These aspirational targets are intended to promote and support a more substantive dialog of housing policies in our region's local plans. NVDA welcomes and encourages an examination of these targets in relation to existing land and infrastructure constraints in any community's municipal plan, specifically since *growth should not, in accordance with statewide planning goals, exceed the ability of the community to provide facilities and services*. Furthermore, NVDA believes that regional strategies, particularly in relation to these housing targets, can and should be informed by more granular exploration in local plans. NVDA would use that granularity to inform subsequent updates to our regional plan. Such exploration is essential to any successful implementation, and if a town were to reach a carefully supported decision that these targets were not consistent with local priorities, fiscal capacity, infrastructure constraints, or adopted resilience policies, NVDA would want to see the delta documented in that town's plan. If a town has clearly outlined in their town plan the reasoning behind their inability to meet housing targets, the plan could still receive regional approval. NVDA is committed to working with each of our unique municipalities as we navigate this unprecedented territory together.

3. Why did we not consider proximity to jobs in our allocation of housing targets? Our towns with the largest targets are the six most populous towns which have the most

jobs: St. Johnsbury, Lyndon, Derby, Newport City, Hardwick, Barton. Many residents of the Northeast Kingdom are willing or eager to live in a smaller, outlying community even if it means they have a longer commute. Housing growth over recent decades has not been confined to the six most populous towns, so it is reasonable to expect housing to continue to be built in the smaller towns with fewer jobs available in town.

4. Are housing units that meet the target only brand new units? No, rehabilitated units, single family homes retrofitted into multiple units, or adaptive reuse of non-residential structures also count. In fact, the housing target discussion is meant to spark conversations about how housing units that have been taken off the market could be returned to the market, even if it means improvements to make them inhabitable. Accessory dwelling units are also considered to count towards housing units built.

5. Why are the housing targets so high? NVDA did not create the regional housing targets. Rather, the Vermont Housing Finance Agency created a housing target for each region (the service area of each regional planning commission) of the state and Act 181 required the regional planning commissions (of which NVDA is one of 11) to disaggregate that into a housing target for each of our towns. We conducted our disaggregation based on three factors: local municipal and infrastructure capacity, eligibility for Tier 1B, and the amount of land in centers of development, neighborhoods, and transition/infill areas on our regional future land use map.

6. So what is the number we are supposed to aim for? The housing targets are two sets of ranges. The lower range is based on pre-pandemic growth and housing demand, the higher range is based on pandemic growth and demand. There is not a single number, and past rates of growth and demand are not indicative of what's ahead.

7. Why is Tier 1B eligibility a factor in the disaggregation of housing targets? Towns that are eligible for Tier 1B have adopted an unexpired town plan, zoning regulations, and subdivision regulations. This enables the town to be more prepared for housing construction than other towns that have not conducted such planning and zoning. It reflects the capacity to accommodate higher density housing.