

Watertown Affordable Housing Trust Strategic Plan for 2026

Watertown's Housing Plan (2021-25) contains six goals and 25 strategies. In order to establish its priorities, this strategic plan identifies the Watertown Affordable Housing Trust's primary initiatives for the coming year:

- (1) The Trust's highest priority continues to be promoting a pipeline of projects eligible for federal/state funding. This will require identification of feasible sites, affordable development partners, and local funding sources. These projects may be 100% affordable or be sufficiently mixed income to qualify for federal/state funding.
- (2) The Trust will continue to assist the Department of Community Development and Planning on a consultant-conducted study to assess and propose incentives to increase/deepen affordable housing production. Once the study is completed, the Trust will work with DCDP to evaluate and implement the study recommendations.
- (3) The Trust will finalize and adopt a Housing Plan for 2026-2030. The Trust may revisit the 2026 Strategic Plan once the new Housing Plan is adopted.
- (4) The Trust will consider applying to the Community Preservation Committee for a grant that would create a reserve for the Trust to enable site control at such time that a suitable affordable housing location is identified.
- (5) The Trust will continue to assist DCDP in drafting more detailed zoning language allowing accessory dwelling units.

The Trust's work in 2026 will also include continuing responsibilities, such as reviewing project proposals that include inclusionary zoning units, Watertown's participation in the WestMetro HOME Consortium, consideration of ways to support affordable housing projects by others (e.g., the Watertown Housing Authority), and additional policy recommendations as needed.

FY27 (HM26) Annual Action Plan Template – HOME - WATERTOWN

Public Participation:

1. Update local approval meeting.

Community	Type of Outreach	Summary of Response	Summary of Comments	Summary of Comments not accepted
Watertown	Public Meeting	Meeting of the Watertown Affordable Housing Trust on 1/20/26	Housing Trust reviewed and approved the FY27 Annual Action Plan	

2. Please make any necessary updates to the local citizen participation process for HOME.

The Watertown Affordable Housing Trust uses email to announce its meetings and agendas. The Watertown components of the FY26 (FFY25) Annual Action Plan were reviewed and approved by the Trust on January 21, 2025.

AP-15 Expected Resources

1. Explain how federal funds will leverage additional resources (private, state, and local funds)
 - If your community has a FY27 HOME project (or an ongoing project) describe specific matching funds for that project(s)
 - If your community does not have a FY27 HOME project or an ongoing project describe general sources of matching funds (CPA, municipal funds, Housing Trust, MVRP vouchers, etc.)

2. If appropriate, describe publicly owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan.

FY27 Narrative:

The Watertown Square planning process in 2024 identified two publicly owned sites for affordable or mixed-income housing. First, there are municipally owned parking lots behind the city's public library and fire station on Main Street. Second, there is a state-owned site, Watertown Yard, used for bus services, repairs, and commuter parking.

During 2025, the City acquired a property on Waltham Street that is a potential site for a combined senior center/senior affordable housing project, or a standalone affordable housing project.

AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives

1. Add HOME projects or programs that are expected to be complete and closed out in IDIS between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. This may be different than the projects included in the FY27 (HM26) Budget.

Name of Goal	Description of Project/Program that falls under Goal	Outcome Expected in FY27 (quantity)	Type
Tenant Based Rental Assistance			Households Assisted
Rehabilitation of Existing Units			Rental Units Rehabbed
			Homeowner Units Rehabbed
Production of Affordable units			Rental Units constructed
			Homeowner units added

AP-55 Affordable Housing

1. Update your community's efforts to support the development and preservation of affordable housing. **(Please be concise – IDIS has a character count limit)**

FY27 Narrative:

Since September 2022, when the Watertown Affordable Housing Trust officially replaced the Housing Partnership, its focus has been on creating the pipeline of affordable or mixed-income projects. The Trust has been in contact with the owners of several potential sites and is continuing to look for its first affordable housing site. Meanwhile, the Watertown Housing Authority (WHA), in partnership with the developer, Preservation of Affordable Housing, has made significant progress on redevelopment plans for Willow Park, a WHA property. The project was granted \$400,000 for pre-development activities by the Affordable Housing Trust and awarded \$6 million for construction costs by the City Council.

AP-60 Public Housing

1. Describe actions planned during the next year to address the needs of public housing.

FY27 Narrative:

The Watertown Housing Authority (WHA) is expected to begin Phase II of its plan to make major building additions/site improvements to the McSherry Gardens 40-unit complex. Phase I included handicap-accessible living and community spaces and new kitchens and floors in one building (eight units), as well as site improvements. In December 2023, the WHA received an ARPA award from the city (\$1.6 million) for Phase II. This phase, which would replace the kitchens and floors in the remaining 32 units and make bathroom, electrical and safety upgrades throughout the complex, is anticipated to start in late FY26 or early FY27.

In December 2025, the City Council approved up to \$1.5 million in community preservation act funding to build the 103 Nichols Avenue group home. The WHA's proposed five-bedroom group home would be affordable at 60% Area Median Income for individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition to local funding, the WHA has applied for state funding. Zoning approval for this group home was obtained by the WHA in January 2025.

The WHA obtained zoning approval of a major redevelopment of its Willow Park development in May 2025 and is seeking state funding approval in the winter 2026 round. The existing complex consists of 60 units in six three-story buildings. The project will replace the 60 existing units at the same affordability levels (with tenants having a right to return and receiving assistance with temporary relocation) and add 78 affordable units.

2. Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership:

FY27 Narrative:

The Watertown Housing Authority has an active Local Tenant Association (LTO) and Resident Advisory Boards (RABs) in family and elderly developments. The Authority communicates all capital needs and operational issues to all the resident groups. In 2022, the Authority completed a state-of-the-art learning center located at Lexington Gardens for its family residents. During FY27, the WHA will continue to use the learning center to help families move out of public housing. Programming will include enrichment for children and training for adults to lower their debt, improve their credit score, and increase overall household income. The Willow Park redevelopment plans

also include a new learning center.

AP-75 Barriers to Affordable Housing – 91.420, 91.220(j)

1. Actions it planned to remove or ameliorate the negative effects of public policies that serve as barriers to affordable housing such as land use controls, tax policies affecting land, zoning ordinances, building codes, fees and charges, growth limitations, and policies affecting the return on residential investment:

FY27 Narrative:

Watertown completed a rezoning process for the Watertown Square area in November 2024 to create a by-right district for multifamily housing, provide density bonuses for affordable developments, and lower parking requirements.

In December 2025, the city approved the first development in the new by-right district (a 40-unit mixed use building, with six affordable units). The city's development pipeline includes a second project in the by-right district (a proposed 153-unit mixed use building, with 23 affordable units).

The city commissioned a study in 2025 to explore incentives for more and/or deeper affordability. This report is expected in early 2026 and will lead to consideration of any recommended incentives.

If the City is planning on changes to Watertown's guidelines for resale or recapture of HOME funds when used for homebuyer activities, please notify me. Otherwise, Newton will continue to use guidelines that were in place last year.