



## **SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT HOUSING ALLIANCE**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN Approved January 11, 2019**

#### **PREFACE**

The Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (“SECHA”) has its genesis in a 2002 study that showed a region in crisis with respect to affordable housing. That study, conducted by the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG), recommended the formation of a regional coalition to address the projected housing shortfall. The group initially formed in response to the study, called the Blue Ribbon Housing Initiatives Panel, was succeeded by SECHA, which in turn incorporated in 2006 and established itself in as a Connecticut, non-stock non-profit corporation in 2007. Since that time, SECHA has operated both with part-time and full-time staff, and today the all-volunteer Board of Directors, with the assistance of SCCOG staff, works to advocate for and to promote the construction of more affordable housing in southeastern Connecticut.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

SECHA promotes awareness of the need for affordable housing in southeastern Connecticut through research, education, technical assistance, and advocacy services.

#### **VISION STATEMENT**

The municipalities of southeastern Connecticut will value and allow for housing that is safe, healthy, and affordable for all residents of the region.

#### **CORE VALUES**

- Everyone should have access to quality affordable housing.
- Just as our community is healthiest when its job base is diverse, a diversified housing stock contributes to a strong and resilient community.
- Those who work in southeastern Connecticut should not have to live elsewhere.
- The challenge of affordable housing is also an opportunity. We must capture this opportunity to improve our community.

#### **OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

SECHA will assist municipalities in achieving their housing goals, provide information to those who will promote affordable housing in our region leveraging our advocacy efforts, and to create an atmosphere in the region where affordable housing is regarded as good for economic development through the following objectives and strategies.

**OBJECTIVE 1:** SECHA will provide information, technical assistance, and education to its community of stakeholders, including elected and appointed officials, developers, financial institutions, and neighborhood residents about housing needs and costs in southeastern Connecticut. SECHA will provide accurate and timely information about the region's affordable housing issues. A better understanding of housing issues and costs may encourage those who are in positions to facilitate the permitting and construction of affordable housing and to acknowledge the benefits of such housing to their municipalities and the entire region.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Regularly prepare a Needs and Opportunities Assessment on the state of housing in southeastern Connecticut.
- Continue to conduct an on-going Public Information Campaign to educate the citizens and institutions about the region's affordable housing needs and opportunities. Disseminate information through press releases, forums, editorial board meetings, local workshops, and meetings or fact-finding sessions with local groups and organizations.
- Integrate timely informational updates about the region's housing needs at [www.seccog.org/secha](http://www.seccog.org/secha).
- Create and publish newsletters providing pertinent housing information.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** SECHA will facilitate and promote the development of affordable housing by raising awareness and support throughout the region's municipalities. SECHA will serve as a clearinghouse of information for developers and local policymakers in order to further the development of affordable housing.

**STRATEGIES:**

- Where warranted, assist towns with Planning and Zoning issues related to affordable housing development proactively or in response to a specific proposal.
- Identify redevelopment opportunities for affordable housing development that also contribute to economic development.
- Conduct research and reach out to realtors, developers, local governments, community service organizations, financial institutions and employers in order to compile an inventory of prospective sites for housing development.
- Serve as a resource for developers, municipal leaders, land use commissioners, and residents.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** SECHA will advocate increasing the supply of affordable housing in southeastern Connecticut by minimizing barriers and optimizing opportunities. SECHA will maintain and expand the involvement of its stakeholders to make the organization more representative of the diversity within southeastern Connecticut.

## **STRATEGIES:**

- Co-Sponsor and/or host housing forums, workshops, and training sessions.
- Advocate for more financial resources for the region by representing the housing needs of southeastern Connecticut to local, state, and federal leaders and funding organizations.
- Collaborate with other non-profit organizations to fill the housing needs gaps that exist.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** SECHA will continue to seek resources to support its activities and to sustain the organization in the future.

## **STRATEGIES**

- Seek grants from foundations, financial institutions, and other public and private sources to fund specific educational and promotional activities.
- Maintain the formal relationship with SCCOG, established by MOA in 2007, to allow for staff assistance and SCCOG member municipality support critical to SECHA's mission and long-term future.

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