

Get involved: An advocate's guide to housing in Portsmouth

To get a digital version of this resource document with live links, please contact: portsmouthhousingadvocates@gmail.com

Activity	Time commitment	Goal	Factors
Identify and follow key local housing projects	Low/medium	Get projects on your radar	Sources: media and land use board meetings , housing update newsletters (contact portsmouthhousingadvocates@gmail.com)
Email the City Council (all councilors)	Low	Advocate for specific actions, support elected officials balancing negative voices	If you check the box, your email will also go into the public record (recommended) and be included in the packet for the next Council meeting.
Write a postal letter to City Council	Low	Advocate for specific actions	Letters mailed to City Hall are included in the packet as letters, not just in a list of emails.
Attend key City meetings (in person or Zoom)	Low/medium	Show visible support and advocate for housing-related projects	Housing Blue Ribbon Committee Planning Board Historic District Commission Zoning Board of Adjustment Short prepared statement is fine. Zoom can be voice-only. Don't need to stay for entire meeting
Contact specific Councilors	Low	Lobby for specific initiatives, motions etc. over coffee, develop relationships	This can be very effective. Councilors love residents who show up and care about important issues.
Apply for membership on land use boards	High	Contribute to decisions land use boards make based on zoning and relevant laws.	Some relevant experience required, demanding.
Contact specific City staff	Low	Education, share resident perspective, develop relationship	City staff are usually very happy to meet with residents in informal one-on-one meetings. Staff follow the Council's guidance, but it works the other way too.

Write a Letter to Editor for Seacoastonline	Low	Reach a wide audience, build awareness, and support initiatives.	Also introduce yourself to Howard Altschiller, executive editor, stick to the LTE guidelines.
Write a Guest View for Seacoastonline	Medium	Reach a wide audience, build awareness, and support initiatives.	Direct to executive editor, Howard Altschiller. Same as above, with larger impact.
Stay up to date with latest news and inform others. Connect with neighbors, build awareness, inform, spread advocacy, create affinity groups	Low/medium	Mostly social. If you're informed, you can inform others.	Can be just part of your daily life, taking opportunities when you see them. Follow print and social media, and city newsletter for housing-related projects
Advocate for the missing voices (typically, renters)	Low/medium	Land use boards never hear from residents who benefit most from rental unit projects	Need to identify projects early to make sure renters' perspectives/needs are represented.
Connect prospective residents with home sharing (see Maine initiative)	Low	Really house people!	Maine is already doing this. A potentially interesting approach when people find themselves "overhoused."
Volunteer with advocacy organizations	Low/medium	Contribute your skills to a group of like-minded volunteers.	Home-for-All Workforce Housing Coalition Gather
Participate in related City activities, such as development of new City Master Plan (2025)	Low/medium	Ensure housing is addressed in major policy documents.	The upcoming update of the City's Master Plan will be a great opportunity to bake in housing priorities for the next decade. Follow the city newsletter.
Identify the resources you will need to support whatever you decide to do, i.e. verify facts, know what to write/say etc..	Low/medium	Verify facts, knowledge of important messaging.	There are unlimited resources out there regarding many aspects of housing. We can provide leads and references, depending on your needs. Clearinghouse/info hub at portsmouthhousingadvocates@gmail.com