



Housing Action Plan

The Altoona Housing Action Plan (HAP) is derived in part from the 2009 Altoona Comprehensive Plan, Consensus Statements of the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force, recommended practices from the American Planning Association, and research of current efforts among communities in Wisconsin and elsewhere. The plan is intended to respect and amplify existing City policy priorities, existing or planned resource and staff capabilities, Task Force recommendations, and complementary of ongoing or proposed priorities of collaborating entities such as the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, and others.

The goals and actions are organized into five functional areas the Task Force utilized to present its recommendations: Development Regulations; City Policies; Public Funding; Public-Private Partnerships; Civic.

The intent of this Plan is to focus attention on housing as a core element of community vitality, and serve as formal **goals, strategies** and **actions** to focus activity. Implementation strategies are broken down into four periods: short-range (3-6 months); mid-range (6-12 months); intermediate (12-24 months); and long-range (24-48 months). Overall, the City seeks to identify all available opportunities to improve housing affordability, accessibility and quality in the City in full recognition of the relationship between housing policies and other City goals, and to organize and align City resources and collaborations to action.

Consistency with existing Planning Documents and Policies

The City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2009 and includes many goals and tools that are reasonably consistent, relevant and synergistic with the Task Force findings as well as contemporary best practices. However, there are also goals and policies that are not supportive of the Task Force findings. The adopted City Work Plan includes completing a new Comprehensive Plan in 2019-20. This Action Plan serves to focus implementation toward those complementary and consistent objectives in the current Comp Plan within the context of preparing for generating a new plan over the next 18 months. The following excerpts are directly from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan relating to this HAP.

2.1 Housing

Goal 1: Plan for safe, attractive and affordable housing to meet existing and forecasted housing demands for all Altoona residents.

Objectives:

1. Create attractive and safe neighborhoods to protect the public health and a stable tax base.
2. Ensure that residential developments are built and maintained according to levels deemed safe by industry standards

Policies:

1. The City encourages development of a range of housing types to meet the needs of residents of various income, age, and health status.
2. The City supports infill and redevelopment practices to reinvigorate older portions of the community.
3. The City encourages high quality development that would attract professionals, entrepreneurs and families.
4. The City will maintain a comprehensive building code that requires inspection of new structures and repair of unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions.
5. The City supports programs that maintain or rehabilitate the local housing stock. The City encourages voluntary efforts by private homeowners to maintain, rehabilitate, update or otherwise make improvements to their homes.

2.1 Housing

Goal 2: Maintain housing types and densities that reinforce the traditional character of the City.

Objectives:

1. Design mixed use neighborhoods that provide a range of housing types, densities, and costs.
2. Recognize the importance of environmentally sensitive areas when considering residential development in the City.

Policies:

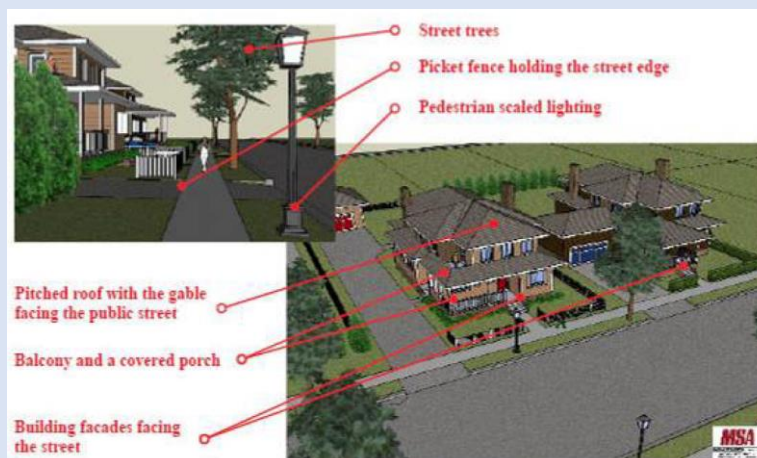
1. The City encourages the integration of varied housing types and lot sizes within the community. This may include a blend of single-family, two-family, multiple family, or senior housing choices within the same development. In general, residential areas of new neighborhoods should feature 60-80% single-family detached homes, 15-25% two-family or duplex housing units, and 5-15% multi-family housing units.
2. In appropriate areas, the City will encourage creative development or redevelopment that includes a mix of residential units, small businesses, and civic spaces.
3. The City will plan for multiple-family developments in parts of the City where streets and sidewalks can handle increased amounts of traffic; there are adequate parks, open spaces, shopping, and civic facilities existing or planned nearby; and utility system and schools in the area have sufficient capacity. Disperse such developments in smaller projects throughout the City, rather than larger projects in isolated area.
4. The City will maintain site and design guidelines for new residences that aim to reinforce traditional neighborhood design principles and protection of environmentally sensitive areas. (Refer to Section 2.8).

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan includes text and graphical policies that generally provide design and character objectives.

2.8 Community Design Principles

Objectives:

1. Maintain site and building design guidelines for all new development, which reinforces traditional neighborhood design and new urbanism principles.





Goal Statement

Support and provide fair and equitable access to safe, quality, healthy and stable housing for people in Altoona.

Development Regulations

Altoona will pursue best practices in development regulations that encourage housing choice and affordability and that support overall community vitality.

Strategies

Short-Range

1. Intentionally consider rezoning and other permit applications within the context of housing choice and affordability goals. [Ongoing]

Mid-Range

2. Identify modifications to zoning standards that may impede investment in existing neighborhoods (short-term fixes within the context of strategy #5).

Intermediate

3. Consider zoning and future land use maps that enable increased infill and redevelopment where appropriate in existing neighborhoods and corridors throughout the City.
4. Investigate regulatory mechanisms to generate affordable housing that are not addressed by the State's statutory prohibition of inclusionary zoning.

Long-Range

5. Conduct a complete re-write of the City's Zoning Title and Subdivision Title to create regulatory flexibility and contextual character standards and are enabling and supportive of housing goals. Manage neighborhood change by transitioning from regulations that focus primarily on use and density and toward form-based standards that considers how a building and site design functions and performs within its neighborhood context.

City Policies

Altoona will pursue public policies that guide development decisions that expand housing affordability, quality and choice.

Strategies

Short-Range

1. Operationalize the housing-related policies in the existing Comprehensive Plan (2009), including neighborhood structure, infill, and community design principles.
2. Create and periodically update an inventory of vacant and underutilized parcels for infill and redevelopment.
3. Consider creation of an advisory group of contributors, at the local, regional or county level, to function in an advisory capacity to coordinate and institutionalize an ongoing policy focus on housing in general and affordable and accessible housing in particular.

Mid-Range

4. Consider policies that require residential projects that receive public benefits from the City (e.g., financing, located in a TID), or is developed on property purchased from the City, shall meet minimum performance criteria including percentage of affordable units, ADA accessibility, universal design, environmental and related benchmarks.
5. Consider adopting a TIF policy that utilizes the affordable housing extension provision (WI Stats § 66.1105(6)(g)) to capture an additional year of increment to fund housing activities.



Intermediate

6. Incorporate housing objectives in the update of the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Develop affordable and attainable housing criteria for use in relevant policies and programs.
8. Consider policies that encourage new developments and neighborhoods to be comprised of a compact mix of uses and housing types with varying sizes and building types in appropriate areas.

Long-Range

Public Funding

Altoona will pursue opportunities to utilize public resources to directly and indirectly assist in the generation of affordable housing units and expand housing choice.

Strategies

Short-Range

1. Evaluate opportunities, mechanisms, and best practices to utilize TIF and other financial mechanisms to support generation of affordable housing and expand choice.

Mid-Range

Intermediate

Long-Range

2. Prepare existing or generate new programs to effectively manage and utilize funds from the capture of the TID closure provision for housing.

Public-Private Partnerships

Altoona will continue and expand regional collaboration around housing and related topics.

Strategies

Short-Range

1. Identify gaps in information and analysis that may be utilized to inform housing-related policy decisions [ongoing].
2. In collaboration with neighboring municipalities and other housing interest groups, create, maintain, and market a clearinghouse or toolkit of housing programs and contact information.
3. Explore creation of a lenders consortium, similar to *La Crosse Promise*, to facilitate reinvestment in key neighborhoods, and improve housing stability for households.
4. Prepare and market appropriate City-owned parcels for development.

Mid-Range

3. Consider supporting the creation of regional support services such as tenant and landlord resource center, and mediation services that may improve housing stability for renters and mitigate risk for landlords.
4. Consider supporting the creation and marketing of training and education programs related to housing, such as:
 - a. Renter, homebuyer, and landlord education programs
 - b. Workshops and training for finance community and developers to pursue LIHTC projects.
 - c. Networking and capacity building events to connect finance, investment, and development communities to facilitate partnerships and generate projects.



Intermediate

5. Consider creating proactive infill and redevelopment programs such as:
 - a. Creation of prioritized redevelopment areas and implementation programs to facilitate higher density in appropriate nodes and corridors well served by transit, infrastructure and amenities.
 - b. Undertake targeted land assembly activities to prepare sites for infill and redevelopment with the purpose of reducing barriers to generating additional housing supply, affordability and choice in existing neighborhoods.

Long-Range

Civic Opportunities

Altoona will embody effective and sustainable civic engagement that achieves a healthy housing market that provides quality, affordable options.

Strategies

Short-Range

1. Continue to support the evolving work and inclusive convening role of the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force.
2. Support a collaborative and sustained engagement and educational campaign regarding the importance of affordable housing and the urgency of improving supply and quality to counter “NIMBY” reactionism, supporting a culture of “YIMBY”.
3. Support a community-wide housing survey to address local gaps in data and gain insight into preferences and sentiment.

Mid-Range

4. Energize and connect local housing groups (e.g., Habitat for Humanity) into the affordable housing conversation.

Intermediate

Long-Range

5. Consider supporting the creation of community land trusts, housing cooperatives and other models to building wealth through ownership and neighborhood reinvestment.

RESOLUTION NO. 5A-19

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ALTOONA HOUSING ACTION PLAN

WHEREAS, the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force recently completed an inclusive year-long study and concluded that our region suffers from a lack of supply of housing of nearly every type, particularly housing that is attainable and affordable to low- to moderate income persons; and,

WHEREAS, City of Altoona elected officials, staff, and community partners lead and contribute to the Task Force investigation and ongoing work in collaboration with the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, all sectors of housing finance and construction, persons with lived experience encountering barriers to housing, and many additional partnering and contributing people, agencies, organizations and businesses; and,

WHEREAS, City of Altoona commends the tremendous effort and collaboration created by and directed through the Task Force and encourage the continued work of that body; and,

WHEREAS, the number and percentage of families in the region experiencing very-low income, low-income and moderate-income with unmet housing needs are growing. The United Way of Wisconsin ALICE study revealed in 2016, 42% of households in Eau Claire County are struggling to afford basic needs; and,

WHEREAS, many of the factors identified as driving the lack of supply of affordable housing are the result of national trends, however, the Task Force identified strategies and tactics informed by current best practice to improve conditions in this region; and,

WHEREAS, focusing on housing enables an expanded conversation and effort toward improving the lives of all people, and the social and environmental sustainability of our community through linked factors such as neighborhood structure and investment, transportation, and building performance; and,

WHEREAS, housing quality, community design and the built environment are key social and physical determinants of personal and public health; and,

WHEREAS, the supply, quality, diversity and affordability of housing is a significant factor in current and long-term economic well-being of the City and region; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Altoona recognizes the importance of continuing to proactively facilitate the development of housing that is affordable and accessible to all people regardless of background, income or other life situation; and,

WHEREAS, housing is a regional challenge that requires collective action toward solutions to achieve desired outcomes and that this Housing Action Plan represents the City's intentional and focused approach to housing; and,

WHEREAS, City of Altoona has recently acquired the property at 1511 Devney Drive with the significant efforts of Mayor Pratt, Cody Filipczak and many supporters to add affordable housing to City, displaying the potential of focused collaborations and partnerships; and,

WHEREAS, City of Altoona policy and ordinances do not change through adoption of the Housing Action Plan or as a result of this Resolution but these serve as public statements and direction to staff to proceed with researching and proposing policies and projects illustrated therein; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALTOONA DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:

Section 1

The City Council adopts the *Altoona Housing Action Plan* as the official direction to staff regarding further development of housing policy and projects for Council consideration, with the intent of implementing the Action Plan recommendations as funding and resources allow.

Section 2

The City Council, by this resolution, affirms that safe, affordable and attainable housing is a right of all people, a priority of the City of Altoona, and encourage all developers of housing proposed in the City and region to include options and approaches for addressing the diversity of housing needs, especially attainable and affordable to low- and moderate-income people, as set forth in the City's Comprehensive Plan and other documents that guide the City's development policies and objectives.

The above resolution has been authorized by the governing body of the City of Altoona Resolution No. 5A-19 , dated this 9th day of May, 2019.

CITY OF ALTOONA

SIGNED: *Brendan Pratt*
Brendan Pratt, Mayor

ATTEST: *Cynthia M Bauer*
Cynthia Bauer, City Clerk

