

Wisconsin Counties Association

2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



9:15 – 10:15 AM

**Addressing the Housing Crisis: Strategies for
Overcoming Shortages**

Addressing the Housing Crisis: Strategies for Overcoming Shortages

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Context

- There is a **nationwide** housing crisis.
 - The United States is currently experiencing a **housing shortage of between 5.5 and 6.8 million units**, with the gap widening every year.
 - **Wisconsin needs 227,000 new housing units** by 2030 to meet demand.
- Housing affordability has reached a historic low.
 - In Wisconsin, nearly **1 in 4 homeowners and just under half of renters are cost-burdened** when it comes to housing.

From *“Housing Affordability A Challenge for Wisconsin Homeowners and Renters”* by Matt Kures, 2022
and the National Association of Realtors.



Context

Median Home Sale Prices are trending upward across the board.

County	2010	2018	2023	% Change in 5 Years
Ashland	\$90,000	\$92,000	\$190,000	+106.5%
Bayfield	\$123,500	\$168,225	\$266,000	+58%
La Crosse	\$138,000	\$189,750	\$280,000	+47.6%
Wisconsin	\$142,700	\$184,370	\$285,000	+54.6%

*Based on data from the Wisconsin Realtors Association: <https://www.wra.org/HousingStatistics/>

Context – Demographics Matter!

- Especially in areas with an aging population, a lack of housing for independent seniors means elder residents stay in their single-family homes longer.

	2010*		2020*		2030**	
	Population	% Over 55	Population	% Over 55	Population	% Over 55
Bayfield	15,114	37.2%	15,088	47%	14,860	55%
La Crosse	112,819	24.1%	118,168	29%	128,120	32.3%
Wisconsin	5,637,947	25%	5,806,975	31%	6,375,910	33.4%

*Based on American Community Survey 5-year Estimates and **WI Department of Health Services Projections



Context – Local Dynamics to Consider

Rural Recreational Gateway Communities and “Vacant” Housing

	2010*			2020*			2022**		
	Units	Vacant	% Vacant	Units	Vacant	% Vacant	Units	Vacant	% Vacant
Bayfield	12,999	6,313	48.6%	13,238	5,806	43.9%	13,243	5,686	42.9%
La Crosse	47,745	2,244	4.7%	50,680	2,575	5.1%	53,746	2,297	4.3%
Wisconsin	2,593,073	318,462	12.3%	2,709,444	331,509	12.2%	2,734,511	309,023	11.3%

*Based on Decennial Census Data and **American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimate



Context

- Affordable housing is more difficult to develop in remote and rural areas.
 - Economy of scale
 - Financing is highly competitive and often dependent on proximity to amenities
 - Not enough workers skilled in construction trades to meet demand
- Housing is a complex issue, years in the making.
 - There is no “silver bullet” to solving the housing shortage, and not every potential solution is replicable everywhere.



Why Counties?

1. In rural communities, the private sector is not meeting the demand for affordable workforce housing.
2. Counties have access to land.
3. Counties can directly impact zoning regulations.
4. No affordable workforce housing means fewer employees in the service industry, public sector, and health care fields.
5. No employees in critical sectors means a stagnant economy.
6. If Counties don't get involved, the housing shortage (and workforce shortage) will only get worse.



So what can we do about it?



Make it someone's job.

It's about capacity. Bayfield County:

- Created the Housing Educator position in partnership with UW-Madison Extension.
- Partially funded a full-time staff position at the Bayfield County Housing Authority for three years.
- Created a Housing Grants Outreach position to promote new and existing programs.



Use a Housing Readiness process.

- A community-driven approach ensures more local support for new development.
- Use local knowledge and market data to start answering some important questions:
 - Who are we trying to serve?
 - How many housing units will meet the need?
 - Where can we build?
 - What can our community bring to the table?
 - What data do we need to attract investment?
- This exercise can move a community from awareness to *action* in the form of a Request for Proposals.

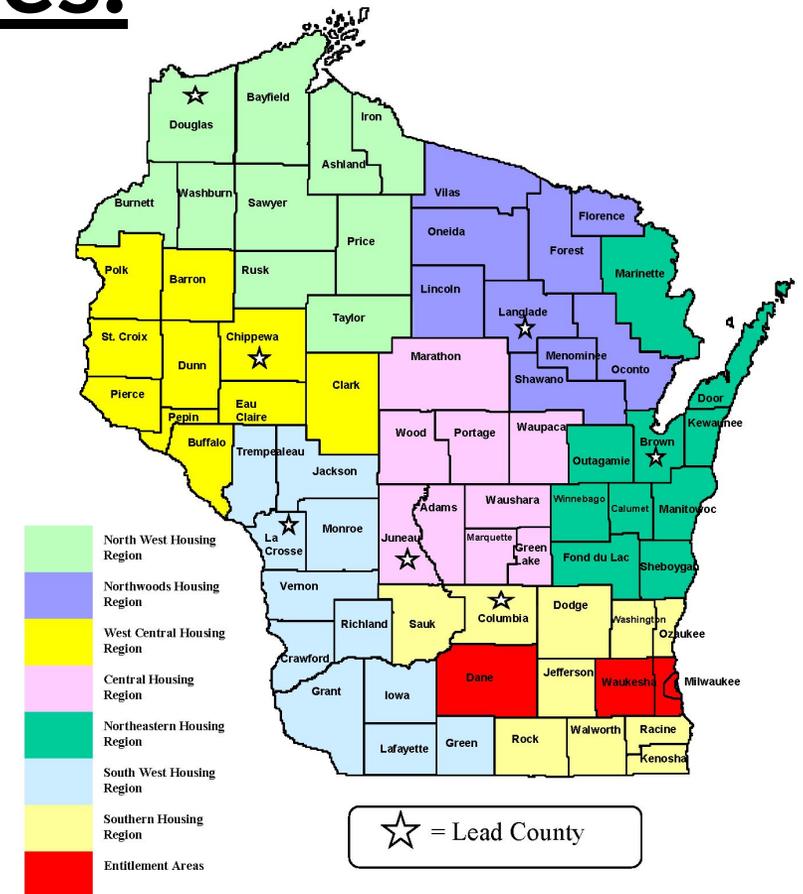


Promote existing opportunities.

Identify available resources and spread the word!

- CDBG Revolving Loan Funds
- Weatherization Programs
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Veterans Rental Assistance
- USDA-RD Section 502 Loans

CDBG HOUSING REGIONS



Review and update your zoning code.

- Zoning requirements are estimated to make up 25-30% of overall development costs.
- There are some common changes to consider:
 - Minimum lot sizes
 - Setback requirements
 - Single-family zoning
 - Infill and density
 - Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Permitting process



WHEDA Fund Eligibility

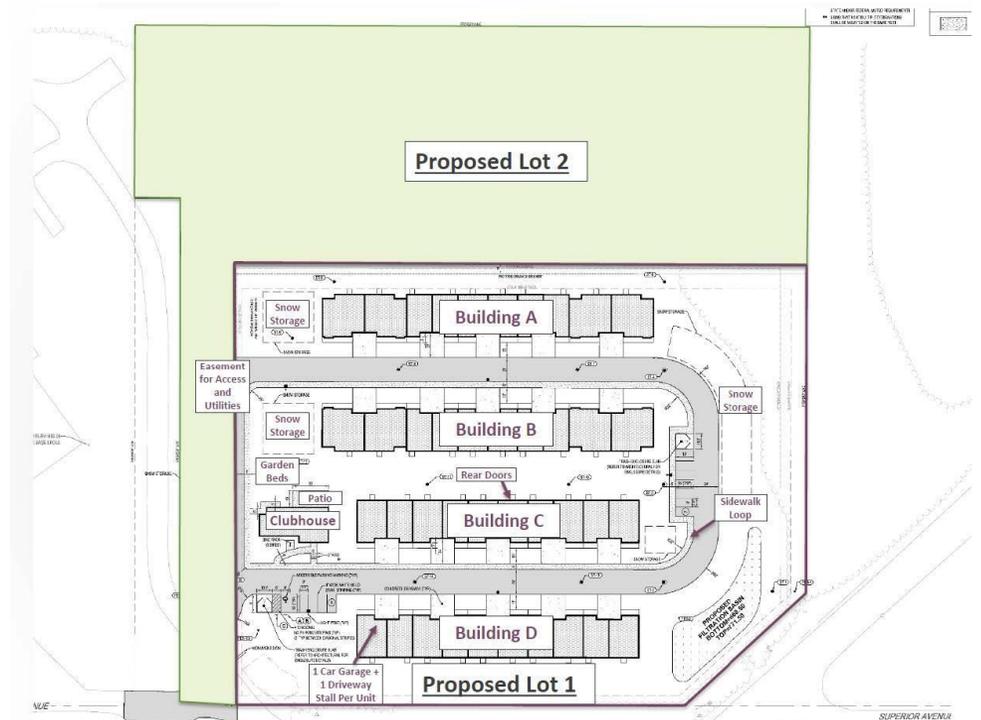
- Local government must have:
 - Made **changes to zoning ordinances** to increase density, expedite approvals, and reduce development costs (on or after January 1, 2023).
 - **Updated the housing element of the comprehensive plan** within the last 5 years.
 - All other development funding must be secured, and all necessary permits and approvals have been obtained.



Take a lead role in new development.

No one is coming to save you.

- Show that your community is proactive about addressing the issue. Gather data.
- Think about what your community can bring to the table.
- Build a parcel inventory.
- Remember - not every idea will work out, but incremental development is a step in the right direction!

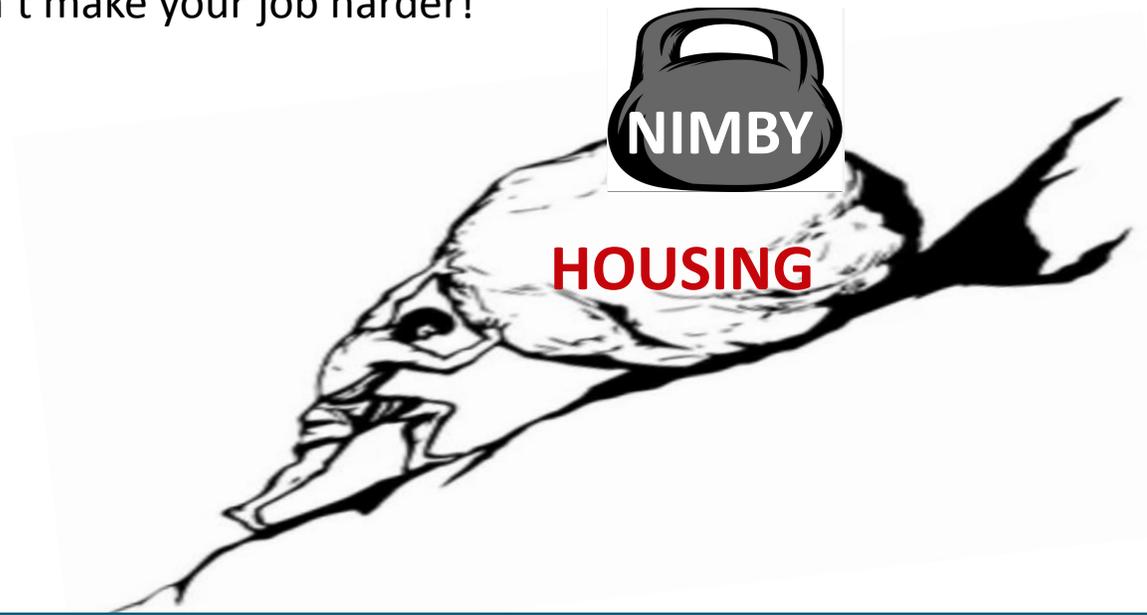


Take a lead role in new development.



Ask for community input early and often.
Keep residents informed as things progress.

Don't make your job harder!



Advocate for housing-forward policy changes

At the County level:

- Deed restrictions to prohibit short-term rentals for ten years after foreclosure sale
- Requirement for new construction on buildable lots where appropriate within 24 months of purchase



Resolution No. 2023-69

Regarding Tax Delinquent Land Sales with Residential Covenant Requirements and Short-Term Rental Restriction

WHEREAS, there is a housing shortage in Bayfield County; *and,*

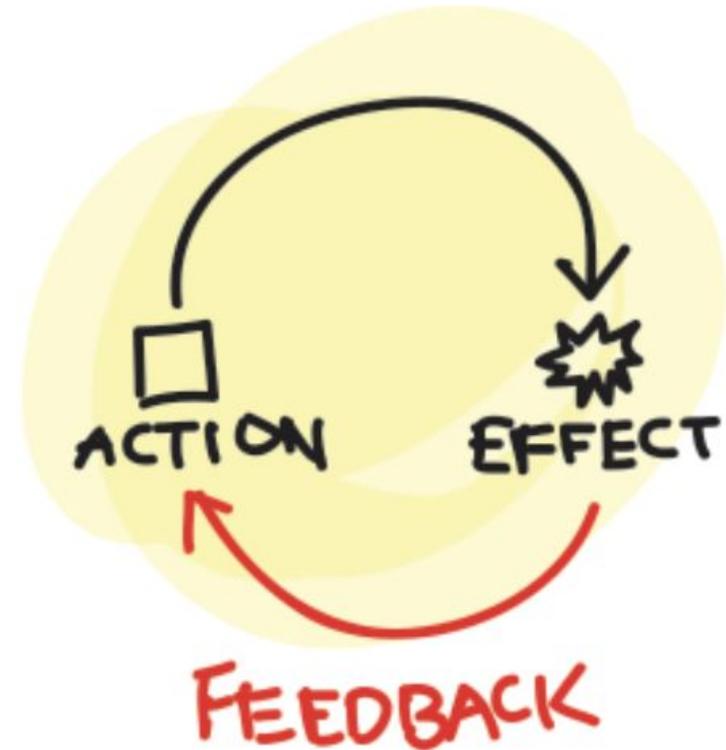
WHEREAS, Bayfield County wants to be proactive in encouraging new homestead properties; *and,*



Advocate for housing-forward policy changes

At the State and Federal Level:

- Work with your legislators and government agencies to understand what programs are out there.
- If a program doesn't work for your community, TELL THEM WHY.
- If you have an idea for a better policy, SHARE IT WITH THEM.



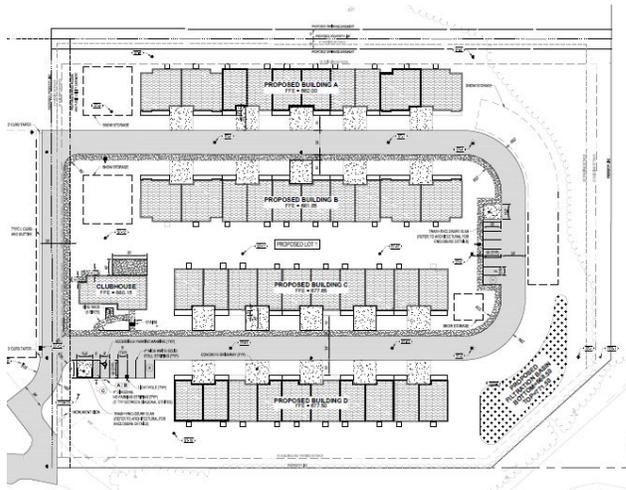
Innovate!

Explore new approaches to financing, construction techniques, and development partnerships.

- Community Land Trusts or Land Banks
- Local Housing Funds
- Alternative materials/construction
- Leverage workforce development opportunities
- Prioritize climate-resilient, durable housing
- Partner with service providers and employers



So how are things going now?

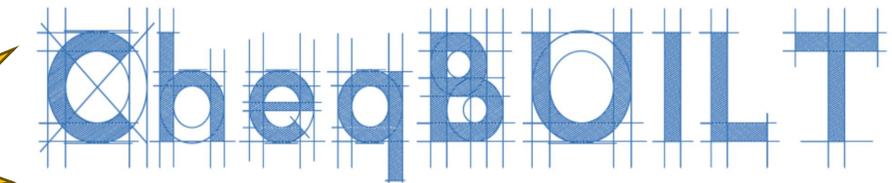


40-unit development breaking ground Spring 2025, with 10-20 unit Phase 2 RFP out for responses now (City of Washburn)



Housing for independent seniors in pre-development (Town of Bell)

- Tripled the number of CDBG applications since last year
- Leveraged millions of new dollars for housing development
- Comprehensive zoning overhaul scheduled for this fall
- Additional County-owned parcels identified for new development



chequamegon bay united impact land trust



About that Community Land Trust...

cheqBUILT

chequamegon bay united impact land trust



- A nonprofit, community-based organization.
- Removes land from the speculative real estate market to build an inventory of perpetually affordable homes.
- A resale formula allows for limited equity.
- A one-time investment stays with the home.
- CLT homes can't be used as a vacation homes or short-term rentals.

Housing Continuum



Community Development

Remember:

The housing shortage didn't happen overnight.

Addressing the housing shortage will take time.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

You've gotta start somewhere!

If you don't, who will?



Questions?

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