



OFFICIAL NOTICE & AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Economic Development Committee
DATE/TIME: Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 5:30 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Carol Lukens (C) Chad Henke (VC)
Tom Neal Vicki Tierney
Terry Kilian

- 1 **Public comment on agenda items and reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.**
- 2 **Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).**

November 4, 2025 Regular Economic Development Committee Minutes

3 **Presentations.**

- a. Informational presentation to summarize City of Wausau for Older Adults Report 2025 prepared by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)

4 **Discussion and possible action.**

- a. Approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Wausau and Idaho Housing and Finance Association d/b/a Finally Home!® to establish a partnership for homebuyer education and counseling services.
- b. Extending the life of Tax Increment District Number 7 for affordable housing.
- c. Approval to Proceed with Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Certified Sites Program

5 **Discussion.**

- a. Update on Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Program

6 **Closed Session.**

Adjourn to Closed Session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statute § 19.85(1)(e) for deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session in regard to the sale of 424 Burns Street, Wausau.

Reconvene into Open Session, if necessary, to take action on Closed Session items.

7 **Adjournment.**

Carol Lukens, Chair

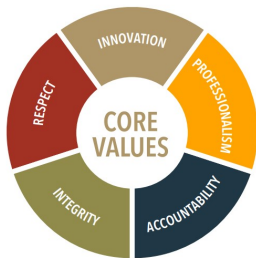
**NOTICE POSTED AT CITY HALL (407 GRANT STREET) AND
TRANSMITTED TO THE OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED NEWSPAPER**

DATE: November 26, 2025
TIME: 3:30 pm
POSTED BY: Michelle Van Krey



This meeting can be viewed on YouTube and Channel 981 on Cable TV

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OFFICIAL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Economic Development Committee
DATE/TIME: Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 5:30 PM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Carol Lukens (C) Chad Henke (VC)
Tom Neal Vicki Tierney
Terry Kilian

Members Present: Carol Lukens, Chad Henke, Tom Neal, Vicki Tierney
Members Not Present:
Members Excused: Terry Kilian
Present 4, Not Present 0, Excused 1

Noting the presence of a quorum, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 05:30 PM.

1 Public comment on agenda items and reading of the City of Wausau Public Comment Statement.

- Resident Marohl spoke regarding the sale of Whitewater Music Hall and expressed concern that the City has been secretive throughout the process.

2 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).

October 7, 2025 Regular Economic Development Committee Minutes

- Motion by **Neal**, seconded by **Tierney**, to approve the previous meeting minutes.
Motion passed 4-0.

3 Discussion and possible action.

- a.** Approve Public Participation Plan for 1300 Cleveland Avenue

Tierney asked about the end process for the project, and Lindman clarified that the goal is non-industrial land use. Tierney reiterated that the neighborhood should have input. Fifrick explained that the City does not want to be overly specific about desired uses, as that could discourage potential developers. Lukens shared Alder Kilian's appreciation for Gatterman's collaboration on the plan, and Henke said he was glad to hear Kilian had provided feedback since her absence had been a concern. Fifrick added that staff are developing a public participation process and have been working with Alder Kilian because the property is in her district. The overall focus remains on establishing a non-industrial use for the site.

- Motion by **Neal**, seconded by **Tierney**, to approve the public participation plan.
Motion passed 4-0.

4 Discussion.

a. Update on N 2nd St RFI

- Fifrick noted RFI has been **re-released**, with responses due **December 19, 2025**. Any proposals received will be brought to the January meeting. Fifrick said Gatterman is working with the sign crew to install larger development opportunity signs on the property.

b. Update on Thomas Street Residential Infill

- Fifrick reported **no significant new updates** at this time and hopes more information will be available for the **December meeting**.

5 Closed Session.

Adjourn to closed session pursuant to 19.85(1)(e) of the Wisconsin Statutes for deliberating or negotiating the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session, in regards to the purchase of property at 130 1st Street, Wausau.

- Motion by **Neal** to adjourn into closed session, seconded by **Tierney**. **Motion carried.**

6 Adjournment.

- Motion by **Neal** to adjourn, seconded by **Tierney**. **Motion passed 4-0.**



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STAFF REPORT

TO: Economic Development Committee

FROM: Carrie Edmondson, AICP, Assistant City Planner

DATE: December 2, 2025

GENERAL INFORMATION

PURPOSE: Informational presentation to the Economic Development Committee to summarize City of Wausau Housing for Older Adults Report 2025 prepared by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)

SUMMARY

Recently, the City contracted with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to prepare a report on housing for older adults. This document serves as an addendum to the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment. There is a rapidly growing number of adults in the 55 and over age group and the report helps us to better identify existing conditions, future needs, and housing goals specific to this age group.

The report does not add units to the findings of the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment. However, it does provide insight about the number of previously identified units that will likely be occupied by those 55 and over.

The development of this plan incorporated stakeholder engagement including feedback from the Economic Development Committee, staff, and interviews with community leaders. The report contains an overview of existing conditions, projected housing demand for older adults, and programs that help to support the various types and styles. Groups are broken up by age, as housing desires and needs vary depending upon where people are in their life.

The report suggests that the City follow the recommendations identified in the 2022 report and adds the following new recommendations:

- 1. Actively recruit developers who specialize in housing for older adults, particularly those with experience with the continuum of care. Enable flexibility for housing styles and services as demand shifts from decade to decade.*
- 2. Work with local healthcare systems, health organizations, educational institutions, and workforce training/upskilling programs to identify existing gaps in housing, care, and staffing needs to identify projects and initiatives that further develop the City's infrastructure and workforce that serves older adults along the continuum of care.*
- 3. Support the development of the City's transit, parks, outdoor facilities/amenities, and other public facilities that contribute to the area's livability for older adults.*
- 4. Support the maintenance, rehabilitation, and upgrading of existing housing stock through City services and programs and outside sources to ensure affordable housing that has the possibility of aging-in-place and telehealth capabilities.*
- 5. Identify and repurpose vacant sites and structures to reduce the cost of all types of housing while allowing for proximity to existing amenities, services, and transit routes to accommodate those who no longer drive.*

This information is valuable as we continue to identify the goals and strategies that best meet the housing needs of our residents. This information will also be beneficial as we develop the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan throughout the coming year.



City of Wausau Housing for Older Adults Report 2025

An Addendum to the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment



Prepared by **North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

210 McClellan Street #210, Wausau, WI, 54402

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Executive Summary

This report was created by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) to supplement the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment in response to the area's rapidly growing population of older adults. The report examines changes in population specifically for the following age groups: 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 and over, and projects demand for various housing styles and types of long-term care that accommodate these age groups. **The projected demand does not add more housing units to the 2022 Assessment, but it provides insight as to how much of Marathon County's housing stock is expected to be occupied by older adults.** In summary, older adults are expected to increase demand for:

- **636 single-family, owner-occupied homes by 2030.**
- **402 renter-occupied housing units by 2040.**
- **771 independent living housing units (predominately renter-occupied) by 2040.**
- **545 additional beds by 2040 for assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing.**

Additionally, demand for telehealth services, aging-in-place features, public transportation, outdoor recreation, community amenities, and more is expected to shift as these older populations increase. Affordability will be a concern as the population of older adults expands, but long-term care in particular is very expensive.

The City of Wausau is especially situated to be attractive for older adults due to its proximity to several healthcare systems, affordability, walkability, transit, outdoor recreation, and one-of-a-kind amenities such as The Landing, a community center for older adults. Therefore, this report recommends that the City continue to follow the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment's overall recommendations to expand and maintain an adequate housing supply for all ages, while adding the following recommendations:

1. **Recruit developers who specialize in a variety housing styles for older adults.**
2. **Work with local healthcare systems, educational institutions, workforce training programs, and other organizations to develop the infrastructure and educate and upskill the workforce required to provide services needed for older adults.**
3. **Invest in transit, parks, outdoor amenities, and other public facilities that contribute to the area's livability.**
4. **Continue to invest and support programs and services that provide maintenance, rehabilitation, and upgrades to existing housing for older adults.**
5. **Identify and repurpose vacant sites and structures for older adult housing.**

Implementing the recommendations and strategies from the 2022 Assessment and this 2025 Report will ensure that older adults can successfully age in the City of Wausau and Marathon County.

Background

The City of Wausau has played an active role in attracting housing development to accommodate increased housing demand, mitigate rising housing prices, improve affordability, and attract workers to replace a rapidly retiring workforce. In 2022, the City, along with 7 other neighboring municipalities and Marathon County, partnered with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) to create the Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment to get a detailed report of the number and price of both owner- and renter-occupied units that are needed to address demand. Included in the Assessment were recommendations, tools, and strategies that reduce barriers to expand the supply of new housing and improve existing housing.

Since then, there has been increased interest in understanding the demand for housing for those aged 55 and over especially as the large cohort of Baby Boomers (b. 1946-1964) is expected to dramatically influence housing needs for older adults in the coming decades. Though this Report is led by the City of Wausau, countywide data is included throughout the document as local housing demand is expected to be influenced by older adults living within a certain radius of the City, especially if the City's walkability and proximity to clinics, churches, grocery stores, and other services increases in desirability. This Report serves as an addendum to the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment, which is available on NCWRPC's website for additional background information.

Existing Plans and Studies

Below is a list of Plans and Studies related to housing for older adults that have been released since the 2022 Assessment was completed. See the Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment for additional plans and studies.

The **City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan 2017** The housing chapter of this plan identified a lack of housing options, blighted properties, higher taxes compared to other nearby municipalities, and homelessness as concerns. This City's overall housing goal is "The City of Wausau will continue to offer equal access to quality, affordable housing."

Additionally, the **Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment 2022** This study highlighted the challenges of inflation, construction costs, workforce availability, retirements, and more that have led to a shortage of housing units and available contractors to renovate existing homes. Based on the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) projections from 2013 based on the 2010 Census, it recommended 4,531 units total by 2040 among the eight municipalities that participated, with over two-thirds of the units needed by 2030. While the projection estimated 898 units for the City of Wausau by 2040, it noted that strong immediate need for housing means that housing built in any of the municipalities helps all of them catch up to demand.

Included in the study is a detailed analysis of cost burden (households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing) and housing gaps (price points where there is a shortage of units relative to number of households who can afford them), followed by a series of strategies, programs, and recommendations that expedite the production of housing while reducing costs.

ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin 2023: “ALICE” Households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) are above the poverty level, but struggle financially. United Way reported that 23 percent of Marathon County households are ALICE households, and another 9 percent are below the poverty level, for a combined 32 percent of the population below the ALICE threshold. While these are lower than the statewide average, an estimated 40 percent of City of Wausau households are below the ALICE threshold, which is second highest in Marathon County.

Centergy Regional Housing Study 2025: While the focus on this housing study is the expansion of workforce housing, it notes similar concerns as housing for older adults such as rising construction costs relative to local incomes and the challenge of attracting developers to Central Wisconsin, where population growth and household incomes are lower than in larger cities.

Housing America’s Older Adults: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University 2023: Though this study is not specific to Central Wisconsin, it provides a detailed breakdown of nationwide housing information related to older adults, which is listed on the following page:

Older Adult Housing Characteristics

- The nation’s median age is increasing.
- Most older adults live in single-family, owner-occupied homes.
- As adults age, they become more likely to live in multifamily settings.
- Older adults relocate less frequently than younger generations.
- Social security is the primary source of income for lower income older adult households.
- Pensions and retirement savings are a greater share of income for higher income older adult households.
- Expanding the variety of housing styles increases housing options for older adults.
- Internet access for online shopping, banking, in-home acute care, telehealth, home health monitoring, and more continues to expand, enabling more older adults to remain in their current homes.
- Demand for care increases with age.
- Homeowners often have higher housing costs when a mortgage isn’t paid off compared to renters, but homeowners, in general, have considerably higher net worth, savings, and household income compared to renters.

Housing Challenges for Older Adults

- Income inequality is increasing, and older adult poverty is expected to increase.
- Income, savings, cost burden, and equity vary by race and ethnicity.
- Mortgage debt for older adults is rising.
- The number of cost-burdened older adults is the highest in decades and increasing.
- The number of unhoused older adults is increasing.
- Unhoused older adults are more likely to report poor health than other adults with housing.
- Public assistance hasn’t kept up with demand.

- A disproportionate number of older adults that are Hispanic, Black, or multi-racial/another race live in inadequate homes (structural, plumbing, and/or electrical deficiencies, etc.).
- Accessible housing that accommodates mobility, vision, hearing, cognition, self-care, or other difficulties has limited availability.
- Modifications that improve accessibility are in demand but are a cost burden.
- Older adults are least likely to have internet access compared to other age groups.
- Transportation is a challenge as older adults are less likely to be able to drive as they age.
- Climate change is increasing the frequency of heat waves, severe storms, wildfire smoke, and other impacts that affect the health and safety of older adults.
- The cost of care often exceeds incomes of older adults, and few older adults can afford long-term care (LTC).
- Public Assistance often doesn't cover enough housing and care costs for lower income older adults.
- High housing and care costs result in what is called the "double burden" on older adults' household budgets.
- Many households have moderate incomes that are too high for public assistance but too low for housing and care. They are referred to as GAPS households (**G**ap between **A**ssisted living and **P**ublic **S**upport).
- Relocation and utilizing home equity helps some GAPS households, but not everyone.

In general, this report advocates for more financial support of various programs that reduce the costs of housing and care for older adults.

Marathon County Comprehensive Plan (Underway) This plan's update is currently underway, and the current draft identifies rising housing costs, constrained supply, housing rehabilitation, homelessness, and senior housing and services as issues in its housing element. The element's objectives are to promote a variety of safe and affordable housing options and enhance community livability by investing in healthy and safe neighborhoods throughout the County.

National Association of Realtors® Research Group 2025 Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report. This report includes over a hundred pages of data that reflects home buyer/renter preferences and seller experiences across all age groups. It is interesting to note that 74 percent of those aged 60 to 69 own a single-family, detached home, but this dropped to 68 percent for those aged 70 and over. Out of the older adult age categories, those aged 70 to 78 had the highest rate of duplex, apartment, or condominium living in 2-to-4 unit buildings, and those aged 79 and older had the highest rate of apartment living in buildings with 5 or more units. Only 6 percent of all buyers and renters over 60 relocated to a downtown area, with over half of them (52 percent) choosing to live in a suburb. Additionally, 20 percent chose a small town, 12 percent chose a resort or recreation area, and 10 percent chose a rural setting.

Households aged 60 or over also had the highest median miles (35) between their previous residence and where they relocated to, compared to 20 or fewer miles for all other age groups. Finally, those aged 60 and over chose homes with a median square footage (1,700 to 1,900) that was higher than

the youngest homebuyers (1,600) but slightly less than those between ages 25 and 59 (2,000). In summary, older adults are moving the farthest when choosing a new home, but they aren't drastically downsizing. Most prefer suburban areas, possibly due to housing availability and cost, which may result in transportation challenges due to their lack of transit and walkability compared to cities.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan 2025 This ten-county regional plan identifies housing issues related to affordability, availability, housing condition, and the need to expand older adult, disability-friendly, and low-income housing. Expanding the number and variety of housing styles is recommended to improve affordability and availability, along with supporting programs that improve existing homes and enable older adults and those with disabilities to live in their existing homes longer.

Though housing for older adults is discussed in many of these existing plans and studies, local stakeholders frequently note the relative lack of detailed information relative to the rapidly increasing older adult population. In response, City of Wausau staff requested a more in-depth approach to older adult housing needs by partnering with NCWRPC to create this report.

Older Adult Housing Trends

Data from the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) is used throughout this Plan in addition to other sources such as the Wisconsin Department of Administration's (DOA) population estimates and projections. The U.S. Census and the ACS are both produced by the U.S. Census Bureau; however, the Census is a count of the American population and housing units conducted every ten years while the American Community Survey is an estimate of the population and housing released on a yearly basis. Census and ACS data is self-reported and has some accuracy issues, but they are the most widely used and detailed data sets used in plans, grants, decision-making tools, and other programs, so they are preferred over other data sources.

It is important to note that DOA released a new set of population projects in late 2024, which showed much slower growth and eventual population decline by 2030 for Marathon County, as opposed to the 2013 projections used in the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment, which were more optimistic. However, the updated projections were based on the 2020 Census, and since then, the County has seen an uptick in population, indicating that Central Wisconsin's relative affordability, healthcare, and high quality of life could continue to draw more transplants as other areas of the country become less affordable, more prone to natural disasters, or experience other livability challenges. Therefore, the demographic data in this section of the Report reflects a "baseline" demand for older adult housing, with additional demand possible based on these factors.

Population, Households, and Household Size

Table 1 summarizes a variety of data sources that measure recent population trends, which reflect a relatively slow growth rate for both the City of Wausau and Marathon County between the 2010 and 2020 Census. The City and County Comprehensive Plans indicate that population and household growth was considerably higher in the decades prior to 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, the City and County population and household growth rates were similar, and households grew at a faster rate

than the overall population because median household size is decreasing. Between the 2010 Census and 2023 American Community Survey estimates, the City’s average household size decreased from 2.31 to 2.24 people, and the County’s decreased from 2.49 to 2.40. Therefore, the City and County can expect ongoing housing demand even though they may not appear to have a rapidly growing total population.

Some data sources are available to gauge population change from 2020 to present, though these are estimates rather than the in-depth Census that takes place every decade. Table 1 includes data from the 2023 American Community Survey’s 5 Year Estimates as well as preliminary 2025 Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) estimates. The 2025 DOA estimates are considerably higher than the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, indicating that the population may be growing more quickly than DOA projections suggest. Additionally, the 2023 and 2025 data in Table 1 are useful for understanding how the County’s population growth is at a higher rate than the City’s.

Table 1: Total Population and Households

Source	Population		Households	
	C. Wausau	Marathon Co.	C. Wausau	Marathon Co.
2010 Census	39,106	134,063	16,487	53,176
2020 Census	39,994	138,013	17,420	56,517
2023 ACS 5-Year	39,893	138,067	17,411	56,873
2025 DOA (preliminary)	40,571	140,452	N/A	N/A
% Increase 2010-2020	888	3,950	933	3,341
Net Increase 2010-2020	2.3%	2.9%	5.7%	6.3%
% Increase 2010-2023	2.0%	3.0%	5.6%	7.0%
Net Increase 2010-2023	787	4,004	924	3,697
% Increase 2010-2025	3.7%	4.8%	N/A	N/A
Net Increase 2010-2025	1,465	6,389	N/A	N/A
% Increase 2020-2023	-0.3%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.6%
Net Increase 2020-2023	-101	54	-9	356
% Increase 2020-2025	1.4%	1.8%	N/A	N/A
Net Increase 2020-2025	577	2,439	N/A	N/A

Source: U.S. Census 2010 & 2020; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023; DOA 2025

Since future population projections are based off the 2020 Census, future demand in this report is also based off the 2020 Census. While the data in Table 1 may indicate more housing demand for older adults countywide than in the City’s limits based on population growth alone, Wausau is home to a variety of healthcare facilities and services that older adults depend on. Therefore, this Report recommends older adult housing countywide but focuses especially on the City of Wausau as the hub of older adult lifestyles for the area due to its strategic location.

Economic Data

Table 2 summarizes the income and employment data for the City of Wausau and Marathon County. Both the median household income and per capita income rose more quickly since 2020 compared

to the decade before 2020 for the City of Wausau, and income growth was higher for Wausau residents compared to the County as a whole. Additionally, the unemployment rate has decreased for both the City and County since 2010. While these trends indicate that wages and employment have improved since 2010, inflation and a wave of retirements could mean that the purchasing power of incomes has not risen at the same rate, and there could be fewer people looking for work with a larger retired population. Income is discussed in more detail later in this report when projecting housing demand for older adults because it influences the purchase and rent prices older adult households can afford.

Table 2: Income and Employment Characteristics

		2010	2020	2023	% Change 2010-2023	Net Change 2010-2023
Median Household Income	C. Wausau	\$41,304	\$47,438	\$61,877	49.8%	\$20,573
	Marathon Co.	\$53,471	\$63,029	\$76,185	42.5%	\$22,714
Per Capita Income	C. Wausau	\$23,436	\$29,131	\$35,290	50.6%	\$11,854
	Marathon Co.	\$25,893	\$33,608	\$39,970	54.4%	\$14,077
Total Employed	C. Wausau	19,257	19,242	19,719	2.4%	462
	Marathon Co.	69,980	71,187	72,092	3.0%	2,112
Unemployment Rate	C. Wausau	6.9%	4.2%	4.7%	Rate change: -2.2%	
	Marathon Co.	4.7%	3.0%	2.9%	Rate change: -1.8%	

Source: U.S. Census 2010 & 2020; ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023

Age

Older adults have different housing needs based on income, abilities, and age, which are all discussed in this report. As older adults move to different age categories, housing needs change, with the likelihood of needing a specific type of housing or care arrangement increasing as they get older. To assist with estimating what housing styles will be needed in the coming years, this report breaks down older adults into three categories: those aged 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 and older.

Table 3: Household Characteristics for Older Adults

Age Group	2020 Population		2020 Households		Estimated Household Size		% Owner Occupied 2023		% Renter Occupied 2023	
	City	County	City	County	City	County	City	County	City	County
	55-64	5,130	19,972	2,795	11,010	1.84	1.81	67.3%	82.1%	32.7%
65-74	3,919	14,715	3,085	9,537	1.27	1.54	70.0%	78.9%	30.0%	21.1%
75+	3,324	10,823	2,036	7,005	1.63	1.55	68.1%	77.0%	31.9%	23.0%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023

Since the projections used later in this report are based off the 2020 Census, the population and number of households in 2020 are included in this table along with other data used in the projections. For example, there is no household size available by age, so this table divides the 2020 population by the 2020 number of households with a householder in the associated age category to derive an

estimated household size. The estimated household size is needed because DOA’s population projections are used to estimate housing demand, but DOA has not yet released household projections. Finally, the latest owner and renter occupancy rates are included as they are also needed to determine demand for each type of housing. The use of Table 3’s data in projecting future housing demand is described in detail later in this report.

Overall, the population of older adults is growing in the City of Wausau and Marathon County. In 2020, 18.1 percent of City residents and 18.5 percent of County residents were aged 65 and over. By 2050, DOA’s projections for Marathon County estimate that this will grow to 24.2 percent. As of 2023, the City’s median age is 38 years old, and the County’s is 40 years old.

Ability

A person’s abilities affect what type of housing is most suitable to live in. For example, adults who struggle with Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs, such as cooking, cleaning, budgeting, etc.) often find independent living arrangements ideal, since they can include meals and/or yardwork. This contrasts with adults who struggle with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs, such as eating or getting dressed), who are typically better suited for assisted living, memory care, or skilled nursing facilities. The styles of housing needed to accommodate these activities are described in more detail later in this report. Additionally, the American Community Survey provides information on the number of residents and percent of the overall population who struggle with hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and/or independent living difficulties, which are summarized in Table 4. Note that these difficulties increase in prevalence considerably for those aged 75 and over.

Table 4: Population Experiencing a Difficulty

Difficulty	Age Group	C. Wausau		Marathon Co.	
		Total.	%	Total.	%
Hearing	65-74	283	6.6	1,118	7.5
	75+	432	15.7	2,196	21.6
Vision	65-74	97	2.3	341	2.3
	75+	141	5.1	642	6.3
Cognitive	65-74	273	6.3	539	3.6
	75+	297	10.8	899	8.9
Ambulatory	65-74	870	20.2	1,744	11.7
	75+	870	31.7	2,782	27.4
Self-care	65-74	288	6.7	584	3.9
	75+	278	10.1	1,005	9.9
Independent Living	65-74	475	11	942	6.3
	75+	627	22.8	2,235	22.0

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023

Population Projections by Age

Population projections based on the 2020 Census for Marathon County are provided by DOA. According to DOA, they are based primarily on existing age characteristics and fertility rates rather

than demographic shifts that are harder to predict like an unforeseen influx of inbound moves to the area. Projections for older adult age categories are summarized in Table 5, with each age category's population increases indicated by bold font. Note that the Baby Boomer (born 1946 through 1964) generation is reflected in the "first wave" of population increases in older adults during the 2020s and 2030s, and the Millennial Generation (born 1981 through 1996) is reflected in the "second wave" in the 2030s and 2040s. Among older adults, those aged 55 through 64 are expected to have the largest decrease by 2050.

Table 5: Population Projections for Older Adults (55+)

Age	2020	2030	2040	2050	Net Change 2020-2030	Net Change 2030-2040	Net Change 2040-2050	Total Change 2020-2050	% Change 2020-2050
55-59	10,162	7,800	8,325	8,285	-2,362	525	-40	-1,877	-18.5%
60-64	9,810	8,425	7,360	7,845	-1,385	-1,065	485	-1,965	-20.0%
65-69	8,265	8,860	6,945	7,435	595	-1,915	490	-830	-10.0%
70-74	6,450	8,400	7,395	6,475	1,950	-1,005	-920	25	0.4%
75-79	4,540	6,660	7,335	5,760	2,120	675	-1,575	1,220	26.9%
80-84	3,032	4,515	6,090	5,380	1,483	1,575	-710	2,348	77.4%
85+	3,251	3,655	5,135	6,450	404	1,480	1,315	3,199	98.4%
Total	45,510	48,315	48,585	47,630	2,805	270	-955	2,120	4.7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA)

Demographics Summary

The City of Wausau and Marathon County, like much of the State and Nation, are experiencing a growing population of older adults and a rising median age. As the share of older adults grows while the share of younger adults and children decreases, it will be difficult to fill jobs that support older adults who retire, especially as demand for healthcare services increases with age. The changing needs of an aging population are also expected to impact housing demand dramatically, highlighting the need for estimated housing demand, which is discussed later in this report.

Public Participation

Meeting 1: City of Wausau Community Development Staff

NCWRPC staff met with City of Wausau Community Development Staff and Centergy, Inc. staff review the data in this report and overall project progress so far. At this meeting, it was suggested to expand the report's content beyond just housing and include more information about the types of housing for active older adults as well as where it should be located. Additionally, more direction was given regarding which community leaders to interview to get a sense of how the aging population will affect demand for parks, transit, amenities, and other aspects of older adult lifestyles not directly related to housing. Finally, there was a discussion on ideas related to integrating older adults into the

community, often in multigenerational settings, especially for those moving into the community for the first time.

Meeting 2: City of Wausau Economic Development Committee

NCWRPC staff presented the final report to the City of Wausau’s Economic Development Committee and answered questions from Committee members. Feedback from this meeting was incorporated into this document.

Community Leader Interviews

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Central Wisconsin

ADRC assists older adults, particularly those with limited resources, with finding housing and other resources in the community. ADRC staff members observe that one of the biggest challenges is finding affordable housing for older adults who still live independently because subsidized housing has wait lists and market rate housing is too expensive. Some of these older adults are trying to sell their former house, which can be difficult if they can’t afford repairs that a buyer’s lender or insurer requires to close the sale. There are also limited choices to move into when older adults sell a home they can no longer afford. Additionally, while there appears to be sufficient capacity for long term care facilities, staffing shortages result in them having lower capacities or closing altogether. In general, ADRC does not typically see older adults moving to Wausau specifically for the services it provides older adults, but generally because they lived here in the past or would like to be closer to family. For example, it is common for someone who spent their working years in Wausau to move to Arizona or Florida in their early retirement years followed by a move back to the area after a decade or two. In summary, housing affordability is one of the top challenges for older adults in the Wausau area.

City of Wausau Community Development Staff

The City’s Community Development Department administers programs for income-qualified households to make upgrades to existing homes. While their data is limited regarding this topic, it appears that people are staying in their homes longer, and some aging-in-place upgrades may be covered by the City’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Community Development Staff also referenced the Ramp Up Marathon County and Habitat Critical Home Repair programs that help with these upgrades as well. Ramp Up Marathon County uses volunteers to construct wheelchair ramps in existing homes, and Habitat assists with home maintenance, weatherization, critical repairs, ramp installation, and grab bar installation. Staff also referenced the newest Marathon County LIFE Report, created by United Way, which has four calls to action that likely impact older adults: the need to address increasing demand for mental healthcare, substance misuse, the precarious state of childcare, and demand for expanding public transportation throughout the metropolitan area.

Wausau Community Development Authority (CDA)

The Wausau Community Development Authority's focus is housing households of low and moderate incomes, primarily for those aged 55 and over or those who have a disability. CDA staff noted that Riverview Terrace was formerly an RCAC, but due to changing demand, it was converted into apartments with no services for those aged 62 and over. While meals are no longer served, the kitchen and common area are available for residents to use. In general, this staff member observes that people seem to be staying in their homes longer and are not moving unless they have to when compared to previous generations. Staff also noted that Birchwood Highlands in Weston (which is privately owned, not a CDA property) is a good local example of a facility that provides a continuum of care. Staff also noted that, among people they know personally, many long-term care options are very expensive for most people, and households may also be burdened by short-term rehabilitation facilities. This is because residents are paying for rehabilitation services in addition to their existing home that they plan to move back to.

The Landing at Woodson YMCA Wausau Branch

The Landing is a one-of-a-kind senior activity center for adults with over 5,300 members aged 55 and over. It is housed in the same building as the Woodson YMCA Wausau Branch and allows for convenient access to the YMCA's amenities, such as the walking track, but programming generally occurs in areas separate from areas of the YMCA that are open to all ages. For example, The Landing members have their own wellness center where they can lift weights without having to share with younger adults who may be intimidating to share exercise space with. There is no comparable facility in Wisconsin that offers the amount of programming that The Landing has, and its creation was primarily funded by donors. Due to its success and continued membership growth, it is currently undergoing a 12,000 square foot expansion.

The Landing features a lounge with coffee, billiards, games, and other activities along with additional programmable spaces that house more than 80 programs. These programs include educational events, historical talks, nutrition information, Medicare navigation, poetry readings, plays, scam information, and more. Additional activities take place off-site primarily within a 2-hour radius of Wausau. For example, a shuttle takes members to shopping trips, walking or hiking events, golf outings, orchards, and more, serving over 180 members a day. The Landing also coordinates domestic and international travel for those who would like to travel but are uncomfortable doing so on their own.

Staff at The Landing observe that word-of-mouth from existing members draws members from outside of Wausau, whether they are driving in from other areas in Central Wisconsin for the day or relocating altogether to be able to retire near this facility. Many who relocate are downsizing to an apartment to have lower maintenance obligations and a more active lifestyle. The greater Wausau area is also an ideal size for many older adults, as it is large enough for amenities and major healthcare facilities, but small enough that it lacks traffic and isn't as overwhelming as larger cities. Many older adults retire somewhere else first, especially in Northern Wisconsin, and then find that their preferences and needs change as they get older, making Wausau more appealing. Wausau is

especially appealing for those with adult children and grandchildren in the area, which also attracts older adults to the area.

Finally, The Landing is designed to also integrate older adults into the community with younger generations. For example, the YMCA's childcare students, also housed in the same building, occasionally visit The Landing for trick-or-treating, holiday caroling, and buggy rides through the facility. With the current expansion, a new patio is being built that allows members of The Landing to observe the children's outdoor play areas. Staff mentioned the opportunity to continue expanding programming that facilitates multigenerational interaction. In summary, The Landing is a unique asset that continues to draw older adults to the Wausau area.

Marathon County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry

Marathon County staff report that demand for pickleball courts and paved, accessible walking trails is most common among older adults, and this demand is increasing regionally. Currently, there are nine pickleball courts in Marathon Park and six in Alexander Airport Park in Wausau, with surrounding communities adding more. There is a desire to add several more to Marathon Park and most users also wish to add restrooms since there are not currently public restrooms near existing courts. Funding is a barrier for expanding parks and recreation facilities to meet demand, especially where trails currently exist but are not paved with a solid surface for accessibility.

Walkability is also important citywide, not only within parks, but also to connect destinations to each other. Those who use walking trails generally prioritize safety and accessibility, and lighting and restrooms are often desired near these trails. The River Edge Parkway continues to be expanded on both sides of the Wisconsin River, and there is an opportunity to enhance pedestrian connectivity from this asset to other areas of the City. E-bicycles are also gaining popularity on trails as they allow older adults who might struggle with hills or long distances to be able to ride their bicycles more. There is a City ordinance in line with state statute regulating E-bikes based on their maximum speed.

Finally, gathering areas for older adults are important as studies show that social interaction is an important component of overall health in older adults. There are many picnic shelters in City parks and three of them can be used year-round in Marathon, Riverside, and Sylvan Parks.

Metro Ride (Fixed-Route Transit)

Metro Ride operates several bus routes within the City of Wausau which are anchored by a Transit Center at 555 Jefferson Street. Recent trends reflect a decline in ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a gradual uptick in ridership since then. Many older adults rely on these buses for destinations like grocery stores, but there hasn't been a noticeable shift in demand yet specifically from older adults. Transit demand did shift considerably upon completion of the Community Partners Campus at 360 Grand Ave, which provides some services that older adults rely on. As a result, Metro Ride plans to monitor how demand will change as several large apartment complexes on main transit routes are nearing completion (Westside Commons, Foundry on Third, 700 Grand, and proposed apartments near Riverlife Park).

The Wausau metropolitan area is unique because its major commercial centers are located outside of the City of Wausau, such as Rib Mountain Drive in the Village of Rib Mountain, as well as Schofield Avenue in the Village of Weston. These areas would be in high demand for City of Wausau residents using transit, but transit routes do not go beyond the City’s limits. Since Rib Mountain and Weston do not have fixed route transit, there is currently no connections between the City of Wausau and these destinations. In summary, older adults rely on existing transit, but a large shift in demand has not occurred from that age group specifically yet. But an influx of new apartments and services, along with an aging population, could result in an upcoming change in demand.

Public Participation Summary

Overall, City staff and committees, along with interviewees, recognize a need for more housing for older adults, but there is limited data to assess where the greatest need is. There also hasn’t been a dramatic increase in demand, but data sources indicate that this could change abruptly. Those who live and work in the Wausau area also recognize its high quality of life, affordability, and livability for older adults, which results in a need for information regarding how older adults will influencing housing demand in the coming years.

Figure 1: Third Street in Downtown Wausau



Aspirus Clinic, Woodson YMCA Wausau Branch, and The Landing serve older adults in a walkable neighborhood near shops and housing in Downtown Wausau. Source: NCWRPC

Existing Housing for Older Adults

This section of the Report describes the various styles of housing for older adults, design and operations considerations, and the ages and life situations they are designed for.

Types of Housing for Older Adults

Housing for older adults falls on a spectrum of ability levels that range from fully independent to mostly or fully dependent. Housing descriptions in this section are particularly informed by the City of River Falls Housing Study conducted by Maxfield Research & Consulting along with other studies that were reviewed during the creation of this study. Below is a graphic that depicts this spectrum, with housing units reflecting situations that become more dependent from left to right. Generally, housing consumes a larger share of older adult household incomes as more services are added, but this is partially offset. For example, older adults often sell their previous home and use the proceeds to supplement their income, and the more services that are added, the less likely older adults are to need to pay for a car or groceries separately from housing costs, since meals are often included and many older adults are less likely to drive.

Figure 2: Styles of Housing for Older Adults



Source: Maxfield Research & Consulting, NCWRPC

Housing with No Services overlaps with the general housing market. Examples of services that might be appealing to older adults but aren't necessarily designed specifically for them are proximity to transit, a rentable community room, lawncare and snow removal, or other amenities that could be found in subdivisions or apartments not built specifically for older adults. Occasionally, housing in these categories will have age restrictions, such as 55 and over housing, with or without amenities geared towards older adult living (though age restricted housing is typically occupied by those aged 65 and over).

Housing in these categories can be found in a variety of styles such as detached, attached, owner-occupied, renter-occupied, condominiums, townhomes, and more. In general, people aged 55 and over who live independently or with a friend or family member often occupy these styles of housing, contributing towards demand but not necessarily requiring any unique strategies since developers are already building them. Multifamily buildings have a greater share of occupants over age 70 compared to single family homes due to their lower maintenance configurations.

Active Adult Communities. Housing without services can also feature a variety of amenities geared towards older adults who are active due to the amount of free time retirees have and lack of

limitations some of them have. Historically, amenities like golf courses and tennis courts may have been most commonly associated with older adults who are active. However, this has expanded in recent year to also include co-working/conferencing spaces, podcast studios, shared kitchens, fitness centers, fitness classes, pools, community gardens, walking trails, and even personal trainers or class instructors. This could be a result of earlier retirements and longer life expectancies. For example, an entrepreneur retiring at age 55 may still wish to continue consulting or part-time work in some form, which would drive demand for co-working spaces. Conversely, someone who wants to continue their passion for gardening without having an entire house and lawn to maintain may wish to utilize community gardens.

In general, these communities often feature single-story homes which are sometimes mixed with cafes and other businesses to provide a community feel along with privacy and accessibility. It is expected that, on average, this style of community is only affordable for those in higher income ranges, but some households are still willing to pay for the abundance of activities and amenities. Additionally, providing housing styles of older adults with higher incomes reduces competition for housing in lower income price ranges, freeing up more supply for those with lower or moderate incomes.

Although many of these active adult communities are smaller in scale than traditional retirement communities on golf courses were in the past according to AARP, perhaps the most famous example of active older adult housing developments is also the biggest. The Villages, Florida has extensive amenities spread throughout its Town Squares, which are designed like traditional main streets to encourage social interaction, with plazas that support live music, dancing, and more. Outside of the Town Squares are extensive golf courses and subdivisions, many of which have Homeowner's Association (HOA) fees to pay for lawncare. While a development at this scale is not expected in the Wausau area, similar, scaled-down versions of this type of housing are possible. Overall, not every older adult will be attracted to the same amenities, especially when fees are considered, so it is important to encourage a variety of housing styles, amenities, and prices.

Independent Living (Some Services) is where housing begins to be more designed specifically for older adults' needs, with meals, cleaning, transportation and lawncare being typical examples of optional services, which may be included in rent prices or as an additional fee. Units may be smaller to reduce the amount of upkeep needed and there may be more common areas and/or community programming to encourage socialization. They are more frequently occupied by those aged 75 and older compared to housing with no services and often have ties to a local healthcare organization. Though independent living is traditionally apartment-style, some co-ops and other forms of ownership, though rare, allow for owner-occupied housing with independent living.

Assisted Living is tailored towards those whose health and abilities limit housing choices to far fewer options than in the first two categories. Though most of these units are occupied by those aged 80 or older, younger residents with medical or disability limitations also need these units. Most, if not all meals are provided in these settings along with housekeeping and personal care. These facilities typically have 24-hour staffing or emergency response infrastructure, and they play an important role for those who need assistance at a lower cost and intensity compared to memory care or skilled

nursing facilities. Most of these residents have been living alone prior to relocating to this type of facility.

Memory Care is necessary for those with Alzheimer's/Dementia type diseases. It costs more than assisted living due to the higher staffing and skills needed to support these individuals. This can especially be burdensome for the considerable share of residents who still have a living spouse or partner without Alzheimer's/Dementia who are also paying for their own housing costs outside of these facilities.

Skilled Nursing provides intensive services for those who need assistance 24 hours a day in the areas of medical care, nursing, psychosocial services, and rehabilitation services. Many of these facilities can be covered under a variety of health insurance and/or social programs, which can offset their high costs.

Continuum of Care refers to the way older adults transition between these styles of housing. Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) are housing developments for older adults that are configured to enable them to live in various styles of living arrangements as their needs and preferences change with age. For example, according to AARP, this style of community could allow someone to live in an independent unit initially, then transition to assisted living or skilled nursing care, while remaining in the same apartment complex.

AARP notes that there are currently around 1,900 of these communities nationwide, and they are typically structured to have an entry fee followed by monthly payments. The average entry fee is \$402,000, but they can vary from \$40,000 to over \$2 million. The average monthly payments are \$3,555 with an average increase of 2 percent per year. This indicates that CCRCs are generally expensive for many, if not most households, but they typically have higher occupancy rates than standalone facilities like nursing homes that are not part of a CCRC. Fee structures also vary, with some having all-inclusive rates that are higher, and others having lower fees but fewer services, with the option to add more services later for an additional fee.

Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Skilled Nursing facilities are classified as long-term care facilities. According to the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there are four types of long-term care (LTC) arrangements with the following definitions. Included is the current capacity in Marathon County as of Summer 2025, with a total of 1,890 residents among 94 locations:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Adult Family Home (AFH)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 3 or 4 adults not related to the operator • Care, treatment, and services above basic room and board • Up to 7 hours of nursing care per week per resident • 42 sites serving 168 people 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 5 or more unrelated residents in a community setting • Includes room, board, supervision, and support services • Up to 3 hours of nursing care per week • 36 sites serving 688 people
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Nursing Home</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 5 or more people not related to the operator • 24-hour nursing care • Can include limited, intermediate, and/or skilled nursing services • 8 sites serving 697 people 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Residential Care Apartment Complex (RCAC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent apartment complexes with room and board • Up to 28 hours of supportive care • Personal care • Nursing services • 8 sites serving 337 people

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Services (See Appendix A for a detailed list of sites)

Staffing Concerns

In 2024, Wisconsin Public Radio reported that, according to Forward Analytics, the capacity of Wisconsin’s nursing home and assisted living facilities kept up with the 75-and-over population growth from 2000 to 2020. But there is an expected need for an additional 9,900 workers by 2030 based on the 41 percent growth in the state’s 75-and-over population by the end of the decade. Statewide, this age group will grow by another 24 percent between 2030 and 2040, straining existing housing and healthcare infrastructure. Typically, only 20 percent of the state’s Registered Nurses (RNs), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), and Home Health Aides (HHAs) work with older adults. But the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development projects that there will only be an increase of 12,800 of these occupations by 2030. If staffing needs remain at 20 percent of the total workforce of RNs, CNAs, and HHAs, then the total demand by 2030 would need to be 49,500 workers, which is 36,700 more than how many are expected to enter the workforce.

In 2020, the Wausau Daily Herald reported that Wisconsin had lost 40 nursing homes totaling 6,600 beds over eight years due to closures and downsizing, primarily due to three factors. These factors are low Medicaid reimbursement rates in Wisconsin, state initiatives that favor in-home care, and a shortage of workers in the long-term care industry. This is concerning as the state’s memory care demand is expected to double between 2020 and 2040. Therefore, older adult housing efforts must consider the capacity of the existing workforce and the need for innovative strategies to train and attract more healthcare workers to the area while embracing emerging technology that assists older adults.

Potential Demand from Outside Marathon County

The City of Wausau’s position at the intersection of several major highways surrounded by extensive rural areas and small towns means that there is potential for older adults to relocate to the area as

they age. This is because of its robust medical infrastructure and proximity to services, along with the ability to depend less on personal vehicles in an urban setting as driving becomes more difficult with age. Additionally, adult children of older adults who live in the Wausau area generate demand as older adults often relocate closer to family members who serve as caregivers, and some older adults may return to the area based on a previous connection they have after living in another location.

The City of River Falls Housing Study added 25 percent to all its older adult housing forecasts based on these assumptions to accommodate those moving from outside the market area. River Falls' population grew from 15,000 in 2010 to 16,182 in 2020, for a growth rate of 7.9 percent. Since this is 5 percent higher than Marathon County's population growth rate during the same time, this report subtracts the difference between the two areas' growth rates, which equals 20 percent. The 20 percent potential increase in demand from outside Marathon County is then added to each housing unit projection to create the total demand described later in the report.

Aging-in-Place

According to AARP's 2024 Home and Community Preferences Survey, 75 percent of Americans over age 50 want to remain in their current homes as long as possible, and 41 percent say they will never leave their current home. However, about half of adults are not confident that their community will meet their needs as they age, and 44 percent of those over 50 anticipate having to move at some point in the future.

As a result, there will likely be increasing demand for aging-in-place upgrades such as grab bars, no-slip flooring, ramps, chairlifts, and technology related to safety and security. However, aging houses will incur increasing maintenance costs in addition to these retrofits, so it is expected that housing costs will be increasingly burdensome as older adults age-in-place. When they can no longer maintain their own homes, this could drive demand for a greater variety of alternative older adult housing options or programs and services that assist with maintenance and upgrades of their existing homes.

As starter homes become scarcer in recent years, expanding housing options for older adults has the added advantage of freeing up homes that younger families can renovate at a cost that is lower than new construction while preventing blight that can occur when older adults can't afford to move while struggling to be physically able to maintain their homes. Additionally, smaller homes that are ADA accessible are being built on vacant lots in existing neighborhoods, giving some older adults the option to remain in their neighborhood while downsizing. Some of these homes use modular construction, reducing costs for older adults with limited budgets.

Universal Design and ADA-Accessibility

The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Standards for Accessible Design, along with ADA Title II and Title III regulations, regulate the standards that enable buildings to be accessible to those with disabilities. These regulations apply to new construction and to significant renovations of older buildings, but they often do not apply to residential properties like they do for commercial and public buildings. Therefore, it is important to consider ADA regulations when designing older adult-oriented

housing even in cases where they do not apply, as they can improve the quality of life of residents and increase the likelihood that older adults can remain in their preferred housing as long as possible. Examples include wider doors, wider hallways, and lower countertops to accommodate individuals in wheelchairs.

Community Integration and Multigenerational Interaction

In recent history, a large share of housing for older adults has been in settings where residents have minimal interaction with other age groups. This limits mobility and social interaction, increasing loneliness and exacerbating health concerns among older adults, especially for those who relocated from another community. There is an opportunity to better integrate housing for older adults with amenities such as libraries, parks, community centers, and more to mitigate these concerns.

According to the National Association of Realtors, nearly 3 million children are being raised by their grandparents. This trend could drive some demand for housing units that have a separate space for older adults living with their adult children, or structures like Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that provide a small apartment-like space on the same property as a single-family home. Additionally, there are programs in some communities that match empty nesters with children who need a babysitter, or older children with older adults who need help with yardwork. Proximity to a variety of charitable organizations also increases volunteer opportunities for new residents to help them meet others with similar interests. These are a few examples of programs that facilitate social interaction between age groups.

An example of a development implementing these ideas known as The Varsity at Purdue University. This housing development is geared towards the university's older alumni who can take advantage of the walkability, amenities, and social interaction that being on a college campus offers. Amenities in this development include a event design lab, lecture hall, makerspace, lifelong learning space, an early childhood learning center, a work-share space, dining areas, a bar, gym, aerobics space, a pool and spa, pickleball courts, and an outdoor kitchen and grilling station. The development includes apartments, town houses, villas, and flats for independent living, assisted living, and memory care, allowing residents to move from one housing style to another as their needs change over time along the continuum of care.

Another approach to how the continuum of care is structured is the Belmont Village Senior Living near Miami. This community is considered a new type of community that is described as multiuse, where residents have opportunities to interact with each other as residences are mixed with shops, cafes, libraries, and more, as though it were a miniature city within a city. In this development, residents remain in the same unit even when the level of care changes, so there is no need to move several times as needs change.

Finally, even single-family home communities for older adults, which are often restricted to ages 55 and older, can now be integrated within a larger development. The Rancho Mission Viejo in California is a typical single-family subdivision, but 40 percent of the homes are designated for those aged 55 and over. These homes are scattered throughout the community so older residents can regularly interact with younger families. There are some spaces for those 55 and over, such as a pool, for times

when residents wish to have activities within their age group as well, but also areas open to the entire community, such as a 23,000-acre nature preserve. These developments illustrate various approaches to integrating multigenerational housing in the community, which can inspire design elements of housing in the Wausau area, even if they are less elaborate than these examples.

Older Adult Housing Location and Configuration

Housing for older adults is expected to be located and configured in a variety of styles and settings. For example, Downtown Wausau’s walkability may be desirable for older adults who cannot or prefer not to drive, and others may prefer a quieter, natural setting. Below is a list of pros and cons related to various housing locations:

Downtown Wausau and Surrounding Neighborhoods	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to clinics, walking trails, the Wisconsin River, YMCA/The Landing, businesses, churches, events, stores, and other amenities. • Walkability and transit options. • Potential to grow tax base through redevelopment and utilize existing workforce. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those relocating from rural areas and small towns may not be accustomed to or attracted to an urban setting. • Limited developable land and more likely to require complex redevelopment of an existing site. • Added construction expenses like elevators for taller buildings and exterior materials compatible with historic downtowns.
Suburban Areas and Neighborhoods	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over half of older adults aged 60 and over relocate to suburban areas, indicating a possible preference for a suburban lifestyle. • Proximity to larger commercial centers and big box stores (e.g. Rib Mountain, Weston, etc.). • Potential for more on-site open space, walking paths, outdoor recreation, etc. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car-dependent lifestyle and distance to clinics, businesses, and other services. • Potential need for more new infrastructure than a redevelopment or infill site, raising construction costs. • Limited areas in the City of Wausau to develop this style of housing.
Rural Areas	
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Pros:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, undeveloped sites suitable for master-planned communities, especially for continuum of care facilities. • Quiet setting surrounded by nature may appeal more to those not from larger cities. • Can accommodate styles of long-term care that don’t have high demand for amenities. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to construct multifamily buildings without public water and sewer service. • Possible isolation from a feeling of community. • Distance to transit, businesses, services, etc.

Housing Styles

In addition to housing location, different styles of housing also accommodate different housing preferences and needs. The continuum of care, discussed earlier in the report, describes how housing styles meet older adults' changing needs as they age. But there are also a range of preferences within those styles of housing in terms of the number of bedrooms, whether it's for rent or for sale, and more. According to the National Association of Realtors® Research Group 2025 Home Buyers and Sellers Generational Trends Report, the median number of bedrooms that adults aged 60 and over bought or rented was three and the median number of bathrooms was two. These medians are the same across all age groups, indicating that older adults who buy market rate housing are not necessarily downsizing. This configuration is more typical for a single-family home than an apartment complex or assisted living facility, so there may be an opportunity to provide larger units so older adults have room for guests, hobbies, or other activities.

Up until the 2000s, condominiums were especially popular with older adults as they allowed for homeownership with minimal maintenance while also appealing to first-time homebuyers due to their lower price. But, according to the Urban Institute, condominiums are being built at the lowest rate in the past 50 years. They report that condominiums are still more affordable than single-family homes, and demand for them has not necessarily decreased. But lending is more difficult for both developers and potential condominium occupants because lenders require developers to sell units quickly, but those with smaller budgets who prefer condominiums often cannot get approved for a mortgage as easily, especially since condominiums do not qualify for Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans unless the development itself meets very specific criteria related to the development's occupancy rates and financial status of its residents.

The need for a homeowner's association (HOA) to maintain a condominium's common areas also leads to liability concerns and housing costs that are not covered by a mortgage. Finally, the perceived higher risk of condominium development means financing and insurance costs are higher than in other styles of housing. Therefore, it is not expected that there will be a substantial increase in new condominium construction unless various policy changes or lending practices occur.

Currently, most housing development occurs in single-family homes, two-family homes, and multifamily apartments due to influences like building codes, construction costs, housing demand, and more. Some new townhome developments have occurred in Central Wisconsin in the past few years, but they remain relatively rare. Developers sometimes provide a variety of owner- and renter-occupied housing in a "planned neighborhood" style development, with the goal of having starter homes, "move-up" homes, and downsizing options near each other so households can live in different housing styles throughout their life while being able to stay in the same neighborhood. This approach can also be applied to infill sites, where development can provide a housing style that either complements surrounding houses or provides a new style of housing that is missing from a neighborhood.

Technology

The healthcare industry is embracing various technologies that enables more services in remote places, such as Telehealth. These systems use secure internet connections to provide appointments in locations that minimize the need for patients to travel long distances to receive care. This is particularly useful for those who need to see a doctor prior to refilling a long-term prescription as it saves time and transportation expenses. New residential construction should consider the broadband infrastructure and space programming needs that will enable residents to utilize telehealth and other emerging technologies in the future.

Transportation

As people age, the ability to depend on cars as a primary form of transportation becomes more limited, and this can be especially pronounced the farther an older adult's home is from places like grocery stores, churches, clinics, and other services. The City of Wausau has the advantage of being an urban community with transit and walkable neighborhoods, and this feature may attract those from more rural or suburban areas who desire better proximity to services.

According to the 2025 North Central Wisconsin Regional Comprehensive Plan, most transit systems have decreased considerably in ridership since the COVID-19 pandemic. Wausau's transit system's ridership was 341,157 in 2022 compared to 633,638 in 2012, meaning that ridership has been nearly cut in half in just a decade. It is important to evaluate how existing transit services can be enhanced or modified to meet increased demand from an aging population despite recent lower rates of ridership-generated revenue.

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Central Wisconsin has a directory of paratransit, taxi, and/or shared ride programs for older adults and those with disabilities that helps supplement the City's transit system as it accommodates a greater variety of locations and schedules, which are especially important when appointments don't always align with bus routes and schedules. In summary, increasing transportation options through transit, paratransit, and pedestrian infrastructure provides older adults with limited mobility more independence and lower financial burden.

Affordability

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as having monthly costs that do not exceed 30 percent of monthly income for both owner- and renter-occupied housing. According to the River Falls Housing Study, many older adults may spend between 40 to 50 percent of their income on housing with no services to meet their needs, and this amount generally increases with age and the type of services needed. For the workforce, most income comes from employment; however, an older adult household's financial position varies greatly based on social security, retirement savings, housing proceeds, and other sources of income.

Table 6 below from the 2025 Centergy Regional Housing Study compares household income to rent or purchase prices using a 30-year mortgage with a 7 percent interest rate and a 10 percent down payment based housing costs being limited to 30 percent of income. For owner-occupied units,

taxes, and private mortgage insurance are included along with the monthly principal and interest payment. For all units, maintenance and utilities are not included. Though savings, down payment, credit score, and other factors all affect what a household can afford, this is a consistent way to assess the distribution of housing prices and household incomes across all income categories.

Table 6: Estimated Maximum Monthly Rent and Purchase Prices Based on Income

Income	<\$10,000	\$10,000 - \$24,999	\$25,000 - \$34,999	\$35,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 - \$74,999	\$75,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,999	Over \$150,000
Monthly Rent	< \$250	\$250 - \$599	\$600 - \$899	\$900 - \$1,249	\$1,250 - \$1,499	\$1,500 - \$2,499	\$2,500 - \$3,499	\$3,500 and over
Purchase Price	<\$25,000	\$25,000 - \$79,999	\$80,000- \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$300,000 - \$399,999	\$400,000 or more

Source: Source: UW Credit Union Mortgage Qualifier & Google Mortgage Calculator

Net Worth and Housing Equity

Older adults may derive their income from a variety of sources, such as social security, pensions, retirement savings accounts, brokerage accounts, and more. They may also continue working past the typical retirement age out of necessity or to supplement these other income sources. Therefore, income sources for these age groups can be more diverse than a worker in their 20s or 30s who typically earns most income from one paycheck. This impacts not only the housing budget for older adults, but also what leases or financial products they will be approved for, as they often have more assets and smaller paychecks compared to younger adults. Since many older adults have considerable equity tied to a home they own, and may even have a paid off house, they can utilize this equity to expand their housing budget if they choose to relocate.

Using this approach, an older adult household earning \$35,000 per year that plans to sell a home and downsize appears to only be able to afford \$900 in rent per month without spending more than 30 percent of income on housing. According to the Wisconsin Realtors Association, the median home sale price in June 2025 for Marathon County was \$300,000. If this household sells a paid-off home at this price and puts it into an interest-bearing account, withdrawing just 4 percent of the balance per year results in an additional \$12,000 per year or \$1,000 per month in income. With a combined income of \$47,000, the household can now afford up to \$1,200 per month in rent because of the house’s proceeds. If this household decides to buy another home instead of renting, the proceeds can be used for a larger down payment on a more expensive house or to purchase a smaller, less expensive house without needing a mortgage. Note that capital gains tax, closing costs, and other moving expenses will impact the overall proceeds from the home sale.

Many older adults do not have significant savings or equity, and life expectancy varies. Due to the variability in financial positions and ages, it is difficult to estimate housing affordability using factors beyond the Census-reported annual income for these households. Census defines income as the combined total of all cash income sources, but it doesn’t reflect non-cash benefits such as food stamps or housing vouchers. Additionally, Census data is self-reported, so some older adults may not be reporting all sources of income. But Census data is the most comprehensive data set

available, so it is used in this report to calculate housing affordability. Table 7 displays income distribution for households with a household aged 65 or over, which highlights the need for a variety of housing styles and prices as almost 75 percent of City of Wausau households and 70 percent of Marathon County households with older adults earn less than the County’s median household income, which is slightly over \$75,000.

Table 7: Household Incomes and Housing Affordability for Households aged 65 and Over

Household Income	Monthly Rent	Purchase Price	C. Wausau		Marathon Co.	
			Total	%	Total	%
<\$10K	< \$250	<\$25K	228	4.5%	621	3.8%
\$10K - \$24.9K	\$250 - \$599	\$25K - \$79K	941	18.4%	2,322	14.0%
\$25K - \$34.9K	\$600 - \$899	\$80K-\$99K	868	16.9%	2,587	15.6%
\$35K - \$49.9K	\$900 - \$1,249	\$100K - \$149K	729	14.2%	2,292	13.9%
\$50K - \$74.9K	\$1,250 - \$1,499	\$150K - \$199K	1,047	20.4%	3,717	22.5%
\$75K - \$99.9K	\$1,500 - \$2,499	\$200K - \$299K	469	9.2%	2,137	12.9%
\$100K - \$149.9K	\$2,500 - \$3,499	\$300K - \$399K	504	9.8%	1,772	10.7%
Over \$150K	\$3,500 and over	\$400K +	335	6.5%	1,094	6.6%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023

Other financial tools may be needed for older adults to afford their housing situation. Long-term care is particularly expensive, often exceeding household income. For example, it may be prohibitively expensive for a couple where one partner wants to remain in an existing home while the other needs to move into a memory care facility. In this situation, a new mortgage could be placed on the existing home to help pay for the memory care facility without selling the home. Additionally, assets may be factored into what a household pays for long-term care, especially if Medicaid (known as BadgerCare Plus in Wisconsin) is involved, so home equity often influences housing costs for these facilities. Finally, a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM), a type of reverse mortgage, is available for those aged 62 and over, but they are considered a high-risk product due to the reduction in home equity over time or potential to lose a house altogether. The National Institute on Aging, which is part of the National Institutes of Health, has an extensive website describing various approaches older adults can use to pay for long-term care.

Summary

Most older adult households in the City of Wausau and Marathon County earn less than \$75,000 per year, limiting housing choices for existing housing units. Affordability becomes even more challenging as independent living, assisted living, and long-term care housing styles typically consume a much greater share of income as services and care are added. Using the limited data available, the next section of this report estimates the total housing demand driven by older adults in the coming decades to ensure their ability to continue living in the community.

Projected Housing Demand for Older Adults

This section of the report estimates how many of each type of housing is needed based on population projections along with affordability considerations. **All projections are countywide totals for Marathon County** because municipal population projections from DOA are not broken down by age cohort. The projected need does not add demand to the projections in the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment because updated population projections from the DOA in 2024 forecast a lower population than the ones that were available for the 2022 Assessment. Updated household projections are also not currently available, so this study does not provide updated overall housing unit projections to replace those in the 2022 Assessment. Since older adults are only a portion of the overall population that drives housing demand, the projected demand estimates the share of housing occupied by these households.

Housing with No Services

Housing with no services generally overlaps with the overall housing market because, while there are some characteristics older adults may desire (for example, a one-story home or a walkable neighborhood), the same kinds of housing units could be rented or purchased by the overall population. The projected need for housing without services in this report does not add more units to the projected need in the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment. Rather, it estimates the number of units that are expected to be occupied by older adults, which often overlaps with housing units that younger families desire, such as compact dimensions, affordable prices, and low-maintenance design.

Tables 8 and 9 on the following page project the expected change in demand for housing without services by adding the varying demand characteristics for three age groups: 55 to 64, 64 to 74, and 75 and over. These projections use DOA's population projections and divide them by the average household size for households in these age groups while maintaining the current owner- and renter-occupancy rates found in Tables 3 and 5. It also uses the current percentage of households in each income category in Table 7 in Marathon County to identify which prices are in demand and adds 20 percent to the number of units to account for Wausau's ability to attract those from surrounding rural counties that have more limited access to the services and institutions older adults rely on.

In summary, there is a projected increase in 636 homeowner households between 2020 and 2030, followed by a decrease of 649 owner households from 2030 through 2050. Additionally, there is a projected increase of 354 renter households with older adults between 2020 and 2030, followed by another 48 renter households between 2030 and 2040. This trend is also followed by a decrease of 200 renter households with older adults between 2040 and 2050. The projections reflect several patterns that are already being observed:

- Most older adults continue living in owner occupied homes
- Older adults become more likely to rent as they reach the highest age groups
- Decreased demand after 2040 reflects the Baby Boomer generation (b. 1946-1964) being larger than Generation X (1965-1980).

While it may seem counterintuitive to encourage more housing suitable for older adults when there is an expected decline of them in just 20 years, these are the housing categories that all generations can live in. Expanding the supply of this housing helps meet overall demand for all age categories while moderating prices and replacing aging housing units that are lost to demolition, fire, natural disaster, aging past its useful life, or other events.

Table 8: Projected Change in Demand for Owner Occupied Housing Occupied by Older Adults

Purchase Price	Change in Demand		
	2020-2030	2030-2040	2040-2050
<\$25K	24	-5	-20
\$25K - \$79K	89	-18	-73
\$80K-\$99K	99	-20	-82
\$100K - \$149K	88	-17	-72
\$150K - \$199K	143	-28	-118
\$200K - \$299K	82	-16	-68
\$300K - \$399K	68	-13	-56
\$400K +	42	-8	-35
Total	636	-126	-523

Source: DOA, 2020 Census, & NCWRPC

Table 9: Projected Change in Demand for Renter Occupied Housing Occupied by Older Adults

Monthly Rent	Change in Demand		
	2020-2030	2030-2040	2040-2050
< \$250	13	2	-8
\$250 - \$599	50	7	-28
\$600 - \$899	55	7	-31
\$900 - \$1,249	49	7	-28
\$1,250 - \$1,499	80	11	-45
\$1,500 - \$2,499	46	6	-26
\$2,500 - \$3,499	38	5	-21
\$3,500 and over	23	3	-13
Total	354	48	-200

Source: DOA, 2020 Census, & NCWRPC

Independent Living

A relatively small share of older adults who don't need assistant living will benefit from independent living that offers some services. According to the Maxfield Research & Consulting's assessment of the Summary Health Statistics for the U.S. Population: National Health Interview Survey by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1.5 percent of those aged 65 to 74 and 13 percent of those aged 75 and over need independent living.

Table 10 below summarizes the demand for Independent Living Housing units using the same methodology used to project housing units in Tables 8 and 9, but only for the percentage of the population mentioned in the previous paragraph. Only rental units are projected since owner-occupied independent living, while possible, is rare. Overall, there is a total increase in demand for 430 units between 2020 and 2030 followed by an increase of 341 units between 2030 and 2040. This is followed by a slight decrease of 102 units between 2040 and 2050.

Table 10 Projected Change in Demand for Independent Living Occupied by Older Adults

Monthly Rent (30% of Income)	Monthly Rent (65% of Income)	Change in Demand		
		2020- 2030	2030- 2040	2040- 2050
< \$250	< \$540	16	13	-4
\$250 - \$599	\$540 - \$1,299	60	48	-14
\$600 - \$899	\$1,300 - \$1,949	67	53	-16
\$900 - \$1,249	\$1,950 - \$2,699	60	47	-14
\$1,250 - \$1,499	\$2,700 - \$3,249	97	77	-23
\$1,500 - \$2,499	\$3,250 - \$5,399	55	44	-13
\$2,500 - \$3,499	\$5,400 - \$7,549	46	37	-11
\$3,500 and over	\$7,550 and over	28	23	-7
Total		430	341	-102

Source: DOA, 2020 Census, & NCWRPC

Note that these rental prices in the first column are considered a "base price" before services are added, while ensuring housing doesn't exceed 30 percent of income. In most cases, Independent Living consumes a greater share of income than 30 percent because other household expenses, such as meals, are bundled into the total price. According to the River Falls Housing Study, independent living costs are typically closer to 65 percent of a household's income, which is depicted in the second column for reference. Therefore, actual rent prices are expected to be much closer to the second column, but they are more inclusive of a variety of household expenses that are usually paid separate from housing. Services included in Independent Living vary by location and prices are expected to vary as a result.

Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Skilled Nursing

Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Skilled Nursing are three categories of housing that comprise Long Term Care (LTC). While assisted living often accommodates older couples living together if only one partner requires the services that assisted living provides, memory care and skilled nursing facilities typically only house individuals who need that level of care, while a partner remains in the couple's existing housing unit. Data regarding occupancy and rent rates is difficult to obtain for these facilities due to privacy concerns. Therefore, the projected demand for these facilities is based on capacities listed in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) directory for facilities that accommodate long-term care.

Adult Family Homes (AFHs), Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRFs), Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCACs), and Nursing Homes are the four types of long-term care facilities defined by DHS, which are described earlier in this report. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 94 percent of the long-term care population was over age 65. To project future demand, the current number of beds for each type of facility per capita for the existing population aged 65 and over is multiplied by the future population projections from DOA. An additional 20 percent is added to each capacity total to account for potential demand from outside Marathon County.

Table 11: Projected Change in Demand for Long Term Care Facilities

LTC Facility	2020 Capacity	2020 Per Capita 65+	2030	2040	2050
AFH	168	0.007	43	5	-9
CBRF	688	0.027	177	22	-38
Nursing Homes	697	0.027	179	22	-38
RCAC	337	0.013	86	11	-18
Total	1,890	0.074	485	60	-104

Source: DHS, DOA, & NCWRPC

Based on current rates, there will need to be an additional 485 beds among the four types of long-term care facilities between 2020 and 2030, and an additional 60 beds between 2030 and 2040. This reflects a "status quo" approach that assumes the current rate of people who need long term care facilities remains constant. Changes in technology could reduce demand and keep older adults in their homes longer, but unforeseen trends like this are too difficult to project with existing data.

Costs associated with long-term care vary greatly, with a general rule that costs increase with increased age and needs. The River Falls Housing Study indicates that older adults often spend 80 to 90 percent of their income on assisted living, and many sources indicate that memory care costs are even higher. For skilled nursing facilities, AARP indicates that costs are 246 percent of income in Wisconsin, on average. In general, costs for long-term care can be paid for using a variety of programs such as Medicare, Medicaid (Badger Care), Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Social Security Administration Programs, and other public and private assistance, financing, insurance, and/or other

programs. It is unlikely that a municipality or county has additional tools to reduce these costs, but reducing development barriers and timelines assists with keeping construction costs down.

Other forms of Care

Home Health Agencies and Personal Care Agencies assist older adults with the needs described in some of the residential facilities listed above, but they do not provide housing. Additionally, hospice care is geared towards those diagnosed with a terminal illness, but the care is typically administered in the patient's residence. There may be other forms of home-based care that embrace emerging technology which reduce healthcare costs and avoid the need for older adults to relocate, which could help address demand in the coming years. Even though these forms of care occur in existing homes, it is important to acknowledge these services and the expected increased demand for them, even though they do not provide housing facilities and staffing them is expected to be a challenge.

Summary of Projected Housing Need for Older Adults

The 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment summarizes the total number of housing units needed by 2040. This report does not project additional demand to those totals, but instead provides a snapshot of the share of housing that will be occupied by older adults and what their needs are. In summary, the share of owner- and renter-occupied housing occupied by older adults in Marathon County is projected to increase dramatically by 2030, with some additional demand between 2030 and 2040. Independent living and long-term care options are also expected to increase in demand through 2040, followed by a decrease by 2050 for all older adult housing types.

Cost burden is a concern, especially as older adults age and require more services and care, and there are concerns that healthcare workforce and infrastructure will struggle to keep up with the demand for long-term care. Construction costs are also high, challenging the ability of new housing being affordable for local incomes, especially as retirees generally have lower incomes than the workforce.

Though the number of older adults is expected to decrease after 2040, the currently constrained housing supply will benefit from the addition of new housing units, which will help replacing aging housing units that are at the end of their useful life. Expanding housing supply also improves options and affordability for all ages and incomes, helping the area attract and retain a workforce to replace the large share of workers who are currently retiring. Finally, expanding housing options for older adults within the City of Wausau maximizes its access to clinics, hospitals, transit, shopping areas, churches, and other services and organizations that enable older adults to thrive, positioning the City as a "hub" that will attract older adults from surrounding areas.

Programs

The 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment lists the programs and strategies that can be used to reduce the cost of all types of housing, and potential future programs and strategies are currently being discussed at the state and federal level. For programs that help older adults pay for housing, The National Institute on Aging, which is part of the National Institutes of Health, describes various approaches older adults can use to pay for long-term care. Examples include but are not limited to Medicare, Medicaid (Badger Care in Wisconsin), Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Social Security Administration Programs, and other public and private assistance, financing, insurance, and/or other programs. There are also various nonprofits in the Wausau area that can assist older adults, especially for those with low incomes.

Programs administered by the City of Wausau include:

Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8): These subsidies are used to limit rent and utilities to 30 to 40 percent of income for qualifying households utilizing privately-owned rental housing participating in the program.

Subsidized Housing: Rent is limited to 30 percent of income for qualifying households. Properties include Riverview Terrace (36 units), Riverview Towers (149 units), and Scattered Sites (46 units).

Homeowner Rehabilitation: Low interest loan programs for necessary home improvements.

Down Payment Assistance: Low interest loans that assist with down payments and closing costs.

Rental Rehabilitation: Low interest loans for landlords to renovate properties.

Programs not included in the 2022 Assessment include:

The HUD Section 232 Loan Program provides mortgage insurance for residential care facilities. Nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and board and care are all examples of this type of housing, and a project may include more than one type. Section 232 may be used to finance the purchase, refinance, new construction, or substantial rehabilitation of a project. A combination of these uses is acceptable, such as refinancing an existing nursing home while constructing an addition that houses a assisted living facility. This loan is administered by the Office of Residential Care Facilities.

The 2023 Wisconsin Bipartisan Housing Legislation Package has three loan programs for developers:

- Infrastructure Access Loan covers the costs of installing, replacing, upgrading, or improving public infrastructure related to workforce housing or senior housing.
- Restore Main Street Loan covers the costs of improving or restoring workforce housing units.
- Vacancy-to-Vitality Loan covers the costs of converting vacant commercial buildings to workforce housing or senior housing.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

- Site Assessment Grants fund environmental assessment and demolition activities on eligible abandoned, idle or underutilized commercial or industrial sites with suspected soil or groundwater contamination.
- Brownfields Grants fund the redevelopment of former commercial and industrial sites that have been adversely impacted by environmental contamination so they can become suitable building sites.
- Idle Sites Redevelopment Grants support the redevelopment of large former commercial, industrial, and institutional sites that have been idle, vacant or underutilized for a period of five years. Grant funds can be used for building rehabilitation or demolition, environmental remediation, or infrastructure improvement.
- Community Development Investment Grants provide financial support for shovel ready projects in downtown areas that benefit the community, especially mixed-use development.
- Historic Tax Credits allow eligible buildings to receive a state income tax credits for rehabilitation expenditures, even if they are income-producing properties. Properties must work with the Wisconsin Historical Society to meet guidelines.

Focus on Energy is a statewide program that provides rebates for upgrades like weatherstripping, efficient water heaters, heat pumps, and other housing-related repairs based on income level.

The Housing Supply Action Plan 2022 has the goal of reforming zoning and land use practices as well as creating new financial tools to make housing more affordable and rapidly expand its supply. Transportation funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), CDBG, HTC, HOME, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and other Department of Transportation (DOT) and Economic Development Authority (EDA) programs will be used strategically to promote new housing development and revitalization in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Additionally, the plan addresses supply chain and labor issues.

NCCAP is a community action agency that assists with housing through programs that include downpayment assistance, weatherization funding, home energy assistance, homelessness programs, emergency food and shelter, and assistance with rental housing development.

United Way is a nonprofit that advocates for health, education, and financial stability for all the Region's residents through its Marathon County Chapter. United Way assists those with housing instability with various programs and resources.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Programs, which include the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) programs that reduce risks from natural disasters. Examples include moving structures out of a floodplain or technical assistance for hazard mitigation planning.

Conclusions

Based on the studies researched to create this report, the data collected and analyzed, and input from stakeholder interviews, this report has the following conclusions regarding housing for older adults in the City of Wausau and Marathon County:

- Around 75 percent of City of Wausau households and 70 percent of Marathon County households with older adults earn less than the County's median household income, which is slightly over \$75,000, indicating that older adult households, in general, have more limited incomes and ability to afford housing.
- Existing data regarding housing for older adults is limited and difficult to access due to privacy concerns, such as wait lists for nursing homes, vacancy rates, and other metrics.
- Older adults are living longer and remain in single-family, owner-occupied homes longer than previous generations.
- A large shift in older adults downsizing to smaller, lower-maintenance homes, apartments, and long-term care facilities has not yet occurred but is expected to occur in the next decade. Demand is then expected to taper off through 2050.
- Future development for older adults will need zoning and structural flexibility to respond to the rapidly growing demand, followed by decreasing demand. For example, if skilled nursing facilities are in high demand in the 2030s and 2040s, it may need to be converted to market rate apartments if demand decreases by the 2050s.
- Even though older adults are generally not yet shifting to smaller homes or renting apartments, mortgage and overall debt for older generations is increasing, leading to concerns about affordability.
- A portion of the older adult population earns too much to qualify for financial assistance for housing, but they don't earn enough to easily afford the cost of living.
- Cost burden is a concern across all age groups, with the 2022 Wausau Metro Housing Assessment identifying 24 percent of households spending between 30 and 50 percent of their income on housing and another 9 percent spending over 50 percent.
- The wide variety of older adults' savings, investment accounts, net worth, housing equity, social security income, and other financial characteristics affect housing affordability, with income disparities continuing to grow between socioeconomic classes.
- Housing preferences and the need for assisted living and long-term care increases as older adults age, particularly for those aged 75 and over.
- Housing preferences are primarily determined by a housing unit's affordability and ability to accommodate varying medical needs, with long-term care being particularly unaffordable for many.
- Providing more housing options may help older adults find more affordable housing with lower maintenance requirements, which also frees up larger housing stock that is currently limited for families with children.

- Housing preferences are also influenced by the surrounding community’s assets, such as proximity to healthcare and shopping, access to transit, and presence of amenities such as outdoor recreation and social spaces.
- Wausau’s reputation for having large city amenities with small town affordability and livability is expected to drive demand from older adults moving from surrounding areas that are more remote. It could also appeal to those coming from larger cities or more expensive areas.
- Many older adults from the Wausau area retire to other places like Wisconsin’s Northwoods or the sunbelt, only to return to area as their needs and preferences change, such as the proximity to grandchildren or better access to healthcare.
- The Landing at Woodson YMCA Wausau Branch is a one-of-a-kind amenity for older adults in Wisconsin and is perhaps one of only a few facilities of its kind in the nation, due to its size, popularity, and variety of activities. This contributes to Wausau’s appeal for older adults.
- There is potential for older adult housing that contains a variety of amenities within its own development; however, it will likely be limited to accommodating only higher income older adults.
- Support for continued funding of the City’s parks, bicycle-pedestrian infrastructure, and transit will be needed to ensure that older adults can remain in the community as their mobility changes.
- The Villages of Rib Mountain and Weston have major commercial corridors, but a lack of transit to these areas is a barrier for City of Wausau residents who would like to shop there.
- The variety of activities in demand for older adults, such as pickleball or coworking space, has diversified compared to past
- There are statewide concerns about healthcare infrastructure and staffing keeping up with a growing older adult population, but emerging technology, in-home care, and aging-in-place practices may help offset some of these concerns.
- This report uses the limited data that is available along with the State of Wisconsin’s official population projections to estimate the demand for housing that older adults will influence.
- Projections in this report do not add units to the projections in the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment, but they reflect the share of housing types expected to be needed for older adults.

In summary, the City of Wausau and Marathon County are expected to see increased demand for housing that accommodates the various needs, abilities, and incomes of older adult households, with housing and healthcare affordability continuing to be ongoing concerns. The City must actively work to attract developers with experience developing housing for older adults while partnering with area organizations to ensure the community’s infrastructure and amenities continue to support older adults.

Recommendations

Below is a summary of the increase in demand for housing for older adults. Note that demand for single-family homes occupied by older adults decreases after 2030, and demand for all other housing styles for older adults decreases after 2040. This coincides with Marathon County’s overall population projections, which estimate a total population decrease of 5.5 percent between 2020 and 2050 according to DOA’s most recent population projections, released in 2024. For the eight municipalities in the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment, the decrease is projected to be 4.6 percent, though some communities individually are projected to continue growing despite a combined decline. This report recommends utilizing the projected housing demand in Tables 12 and 13 to evaluate whether the City’s housing stock is capable of meeting the needs of older adults.

Table 12: Summary of Housing Demand for Older Adults

Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied			Independent Living (For Rent)		
Purchase Price	2030	Monthly Rent	2030	2030-2040	Rent (30% of Income*)	2030	2030-2040
<\$25K	24	< \$250	13	2	< \$250	16	13
\$25K - \$79K	89	\$250 - \$599	50	7	\$250 - \$599	60	48
\$80K-\$99K	99	\$600 - \$899	55	7	\$600 - \$899	67	53
\$100K - \$149K	88	\$900 - \$1,249	49	7	\$900 - \$1,249	60	47
\$150K - \$199K	143	\$1,250 - \$1,499	80	11	\$1,250 - \$1,499	97	77
\$200K - \$299K	82	\$1,500 - \$2,499	46	6	\$1,500 - \$2,499	55	44
\$300K - \$399K	68	\$2,500 - \$3,499	38	5	\$2,500 - \$3,499	46	37
\$400K +	42	\$3,500 and over	23	3	\$3,500 and over	28	23
Total	636	Total	354	48	Total	430	341

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023, DOA Population Projections 2024, & NCWRPC.

*See Table 10 for rent prices at 65 percent of income, which is the average for Independent Living.

Table 13: Summary of Long-Term Care Demand

Facility	2030	2040
AFH	43	5
CBRF	177	22
Nursing Homes	179	22
RCAC	86	11
Total	485	60

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023, DHS 2025, DOA Population Projections 2024, & NCWRPC

To enable housing to meet projected demand, this report recommends continuing to pursue the top recommendations from the 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment:

1. Amend zoning ordinances that enable a greater variety of housing units and prices.
2. Amend subdivision ordinances to allow for smaller lot sizes.
3. Reach out to developers, agencies, and nonprofits to increase housing supply.
4. Educating the community about the housing market.
5. Updating municipal planning documents.

Additional recommended action items requiring a higher level of effort and funding from the 2022 Assessment include:

1. Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
2. Bonds, cash incentives, and/or other financial products.
3. Land banks, land trusts, housing trust funds, rent-to-own programs, and other local strategies.
4. Financial program administration.

Finally, recommendations specific to older adult housing are listed below:

1. Actively recruit developers who specialize in housing for older adults, particularly those with experience with the continuum of care. Enable flexibility for housing styles and services as demand shifts from decade to decade.
2. Work with local healthcare systems, health organizations, educational institutions, and workforce training/upskilling programs to identify existing gaps in housing, care, and staffing needs to identify projects and initiatives that further develop the City's infrastructure and workforce that serves older adults along the continuum of care.
3. Support the development of the City's transit, parks, outdoor facilities/amenities, and other public facilities that contribute to the area's livability for older adults.
4. Support the maintenance, rehabilitation, and upgrading of existing housing stock through City services and programs and outside sources to ensure affordable housing that has the possibility of aging-in-place and telehealth capabilities.
5. Identify and repurpose vacant sites and structures to reduce the cost of all types of housing while allowing for proximity to existing amenities, services, and transit routes to accommodate those who no longer drive.

Overall, the City of Wausau, its neighboring communities, and Marathon County are recommended to monitor the emerging demand for older adult housing as economic conditions, technology, and workforce characteristics continue to evolve. More information regarding best practices for creating and maintaining housing for older adults as well as the community infrastructure needed to support them is expected to be released as the nation's population continues to age. Therefore, this report recommends that the City continue to work with Centergy, Inc., North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC), Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), and other local regional, state, and federal partners to monitor the latest trends and opportunities for housing older adults.

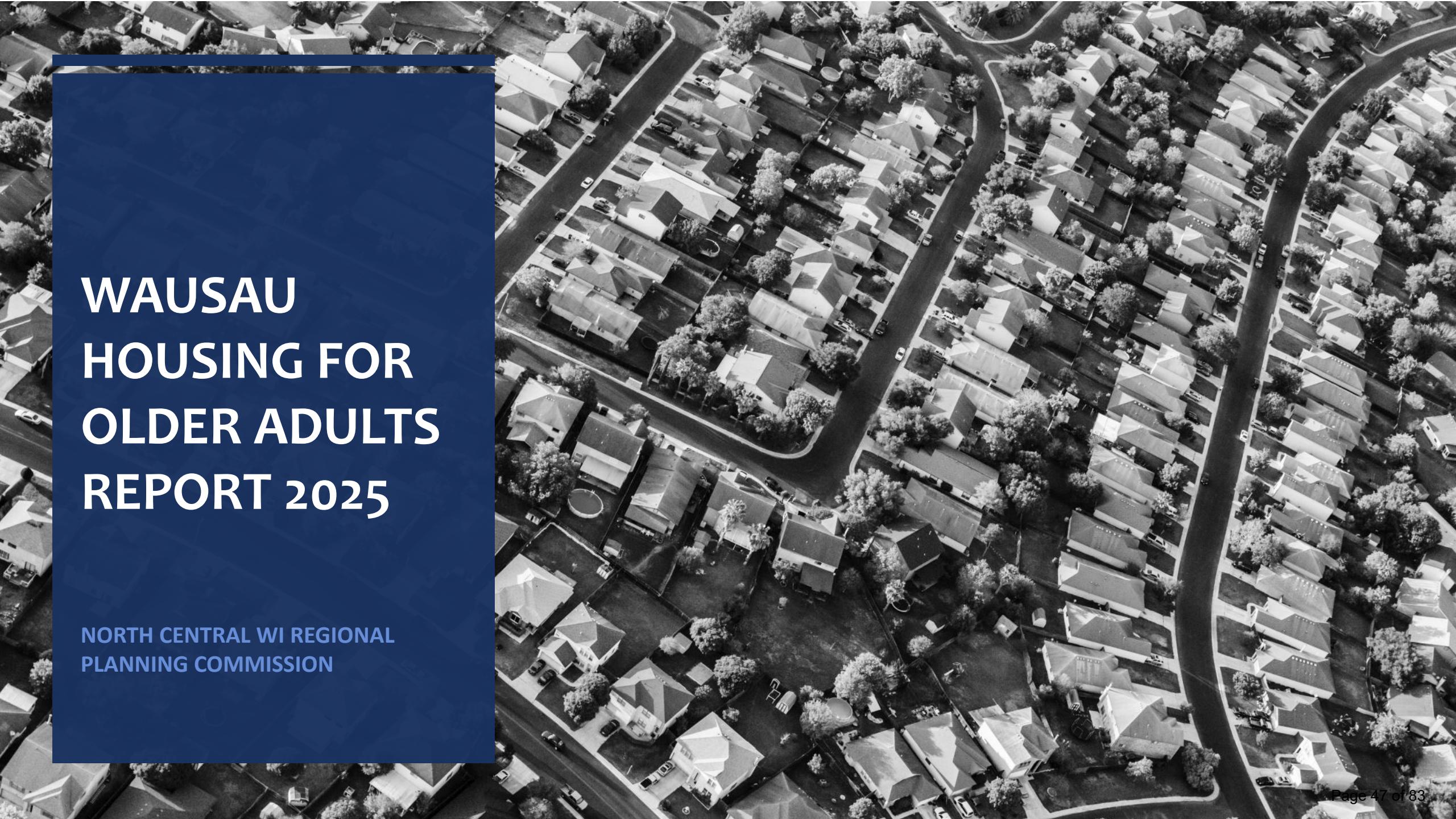
Appendix A: Existing Known Housing for Older Adults

Name	Community	Type	Capacity
Andrea Street CBRF	V. Weston	CBRF	8
Applegate Reflections	C. Wausau	CBRF	8
Cady Home West	C. Wausau	CBRF	8
Cady Home West 2	C. Wausau	CBRF	8
Care Partners Assisted Living	V. Weston	CBRF	16
Cedar Creek Manor I	C. Mosinee	CBRF	16
Cedar Creek Manor II	C. Mosinee	CBRF	16
Chadwick St CBRF	V. Weston	CBRF	8
Clarity Care Fern	C. Marshfield	CBRF	8
Clarity Care Villa	C. Marshfield	CBRF	8
Copperleaf Assisted Living	C. Marathon City	CBRF	25
Copperleaf Assisted Living	C. Schofield	CBRF	25
Copperleaf Memory Care	C. Schofield	CBRF	22
Dimensions Living	C. Wausau	CBRF	19
Evergreen Park Assisted Living	V. Kronenwetter	CBRF	7
Mountain Terrace Senior Living	C. Wausau	CBRF	35
NCHC Adult Crisis Stabilization	C. Wausau	CBRF	16
North Central Health Care Crisis	C. Wausau	CBRF	16
Oak Heights Assisted Living	V. Kronenwetter	CBRF	8
Our House Assisted Care	C. Wausau	CBRF	20
Our House Memory Care	C. Wausau	CBRF	20
Pine Meadows 1	V. Weston	CBRF	14
Pine Meadows 2	V. Weston	CBRF	14
Pine Meadows 3	V. Weston	CBRF	11
Pine Meadows 4	C. Mosinee	CBRF	16
Pride TLC Therapy & Living	V. Weston	CBRF	60
Primrose Memory Care	V. Weston	CBRF	32
Spring Crest	C. Wausau	CBRF	8
Steves Home	C. Wausau	CBRF	6
Stone Crest Residence	C. Wausau	CBRF	16
Sylvan Crossings	C. Wausau	CBRF	21
Vitacare Living	V. Stratford	CBRF	15
Waterford	C. Colby	CBRF	48
Wellington Place	V. Rib Mountain	CBRF	30
Weston Memory Care	V. Weston	CBRF	70
Willow Haven	C. Mosinee	CBRF	10
Acorn Hill Senior Living Community	C. Mosinee	RCAC	29
Applegate Terrace	C. Wausau	RCAC	53

Athenian Living	V. Athens	RCAC	30
Gardens Apartments	C. Wausau	RCAC	26
Mountain Terrace Senior Living	C. Wausau	RCAC	41
Primrose Retirement Community	C. Wausau	RCAC	68
Renaissance Weston	V. Weston	RCAC	80
Terrace Court Assisted Living	C. Wausau	RCAC	10
Bedrock HCS at Abbotsford LLC	C. Abbotsford	Nursing Home	78
Three Oaks Health Services	C. Marshfield	Nursing Home	75
Amethyst Health of Wausau	C. Wausau	Nursing Home	80
North Central Health Care	C. Wausau	Nursing Home	159
Wausau Manor Health Services	C. Wausau	Nursing Home	68
Wood Aven Health and Rehabilitation	C. Wausau	Nursing Home	82
Pride TLC	V. Weston	Nursing Home	25
Rennes Health and Rehab Center	V. Weston	Nursing Home	130
Acorn Hills Assisted Living	C. Mosinee	LIHTC/HTC	29
Airport Park Apartments*	C. Mosinee	LIHTC/HTC	2
Allen Court Project	V. Athens	LIHTC/HTC	13
Atrium Lofts	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	58
Birchwood Highlands Apartments	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	71
Birchwood Highlands Apartments Phase 2	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	42
Birchwood Highlands Phase 3	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	39
Birchwood Highlands III Phase 3A	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	31
Birchwood Highlands III Phase 3B	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	31
Campus Park*	V. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	8
301 Caroline Project*	V. Athens	LIHTC/HTC	7
Cedar Creek Apartments	V. Rothschild	LIHTC/HTC	48
Cedar Creek Senior Housing II	V. Rothschild	LIHTC/HTC	98
City Walk*	V. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	48
Colby-Abbotsford Senior Village	C. Colby	LIHTC/HTC	24
Colby Cottages	C. Colby	LIHTC/HTC	56
East High Apartments	V. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	54
Elementary School Apartments	V. Schofield	LIHTC/HTC	72
Federal Building Lofts	V. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	21
700 Grand	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	50
Indianhead Cottages	C. Mosinee	LIHTC/HTC	24
Island Place*	V. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	124
Kannenber Plaza	V. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	106
Marathon County Housing Scattered Sites	V. Rothschild / C. Schofield	LIHTC/HTC	36
Northwest Territories Apartments	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	12
North Meadows East*	V. Stratford	LIHTC/HTC	8

North Meadows West*	V. Stratford	LIHTC/HTC	8
Pinecrest Apartments*	C. Mosinee	LIHTC/HTC	2
Riverview Towers	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	149
Sturgeon Bluff Apartments	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	104
Terrace Heights Apts	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	50
Th Two Partnership*	V. Edgar	LIHTC/HTC	8
The Pines at Mount View	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	46
Thomas Hills Apartments	V. Edgar	LIHTC/HTC	8
Trolley Quarter Flats	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	40
Village Square*	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	33
Wausau East Townhomes	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	24
Weston Pines Apartments*	V. Weston	LIHTC/HTC	71
Westside Commons	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	54
Wilson Place*	C. Wausau	LIHTC/HTC	15
Alvin O'Konski Manor	C. Wausau	Impact 7/HUD	20
Donald Sykes Villa	V. Stratford	Impact 7/HUD	20
Harry & Velma Hamilton Villa	C. Wausau	Impact 7/HUD	40
Riverview Terrace	C. Wausau	Housing Authority	36
Riverview Towers	C. Wausau	Housing Authority	149
Wausau Scattered Sites	C. Wausau	Housing Authority	46
Marathon County Scattered Sites	Various	Housing Authority	140
City of Wausau Section 8 Vouchers	C. Wausau	Housing Authority	400

Notes: This list excludes Adult Family Homes (AFHs) which are scattered throughout the county and generally have much lower capacities for each site. A directory of AFHs can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) website. Countywide, there are 42 AFHs serving 168 people. Additionally, not every LIHTC/HTC site is older adult-specific, but many of them have most of their units as being designated for older adults. Many LIHTC/HTC sites are also no longer monitored due to their age, so it is unknown whether their rents are affordable for lower incomes (there is a higher likelihood that they are relatively affordable given that these properties are over 30 years old).



WAUSAU HOUSING FOR OLDER ADULTS REPORT 2025

NORTH CENTRAL WI REGIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION

BACKGROUND

-
- 2022 Wausau Metropolitan Housing Assessment
 - Region: 4,531 new units by 2040
 - Wausau: 898 by 2040
 - City helps meet regional demand
 - Strong interest in learning more about housing needs as population ages
 - Little data/info available
 - Affordability and staffing biggest concerns

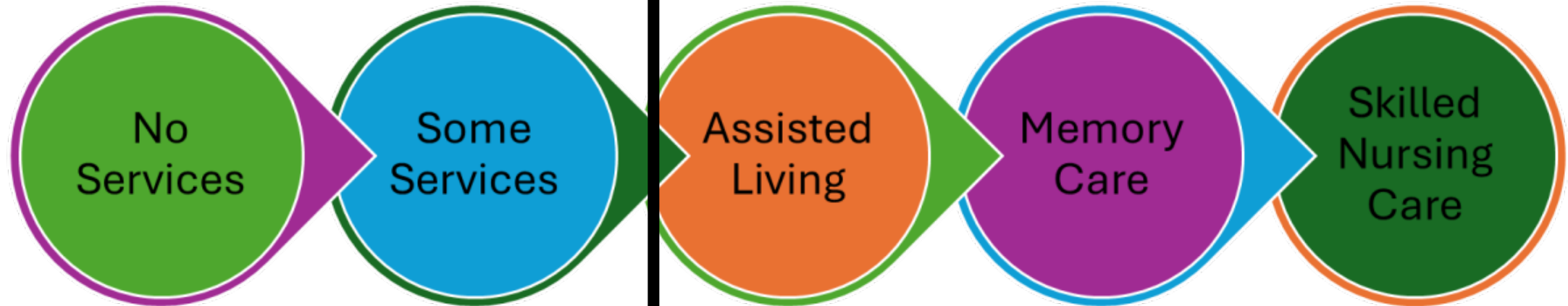
APPROACH

- Focus on age groups- needs differ by age:
 - 55-64
 - 65-74
 - 75+
- Projections do not add to 2022 study
 - Estimated housing occupied by older adults
 - 2024 DOA estimates are lower than those used in 2022 study
 - No new DOA Household (HH) projections yet

DEMOGRAPHICS (MARATHON COUNTY)

Age	2020	2030	2040	2050	Net Change 2020- 2030	Net Change 2030- 2040	Net Change 2040- 2050	Total Change 2020- 2050	% Change 2020- 2050
55-59	10,162	7,800	8,325	8,285	-2,362	525	-40	-1,877	-18.5%
60-64	9,810	8,425	7,360	7,845	-1,385	-1,065	485	-1,965	-20.0%
65-69	8,265	8,860	6,945	7,435	595	-1,915	490	-830	-10.0%
70-74	6,450	8,400	7,395	6,475	1,950	-1,005	-920	25	0.4%
75-79	4,540	6,660	7,335	5,760	2,120	675	-1,575	1,220	26.9%
80-84	3,032	4,515	6,090	5,380	1,483	1,575	-710	2,348	77.4%
85+	3,251	3,655	5,135	6,450	404	1,480	1,315	3,199	98.4%
Total	45,510	48,315	48,585	47,630	2,805	270	-955	2,120	4.7%

CONTINUUM OF OLDER ADULT HOUSING



Long-Term Care (LTC)

Residential Care Apartment Complex (RCAC)
Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF)
Adult Family Home (AFH)
Nursing Homes

RESEARCH/INTERVIEWS

70% of County/ 75% of City households earn under \$75,000

People are living longer, staying in homes longer

A dramatic shift in housing hasn't occurred yet

Debt for older adults is increasing

Growing gaps between savings, investments, etc.

75+ most likely to need apartments, long-term care

People who retire in a destination (Northwoods, sunbelt) often return to Wausau later in life



RESEARCH/INTERVIEWS

Challenges:

- Affordability and staffing are biggest concerns
- Commercial areas (Rib Mtn, Weston) not connected by transit)
- New housing is expensive to construct
- Some earn too much for public assistance but not enough afford necessities
- Demand for older adult housing/services will rapidly increase, then rapidly decrease
- Condos no longer feasible
- Surrounding rural areas may increase demand in Wausau
- Dual cost burden (house and LTC at same time)

Opportunities:

- The Landing (YMCA) is recognized nationally
- Healthcare systems, walking trails, parks, pickle ball, etc.
- Emerging trends in older adult housing
- Wausau has bigger-city amenities, small city livability
- Wausau is more affordable than other places
- Mix of urban, suburban, and rural lifestyles in Marathon Co.
- Existing transit options, walkability, etc.
- Aging-in-place, technology, multigenerational housing/programs

PROJECTED HOUSING DEMAND

- **Countywide totals for Marathon County** (City age projections not available)
- Based on “status quo” using current trends for households 55-64, 65-74, & 75+
- Each projection increased by 20% to reflect outside demand
- Categories:
 - Owner/Renter Occupied Housing (current occupancy rates, HH size, and income distribution)
 - Independent Living (1.5% of those aged 65-74, 13% of those aged 75+)
 - Long-term care (based on current beds to population over 55 ratio)

OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING

Purchase Price	Change in Demand		
	2020-2030	2030-2040	2040-2050
<\$25K	24	-5	-20
\$25K - \$79K	89	-18	-73
\$80K-\$99K	99	-20	-82
\$100K - \$149K	88	-17	-72
\$150K - \$199K	143	-28	-118
\$200K - \$299K	82	-16	-68
\$300K - \$399K	68	-13	-56
\$400K +	42	-8	-35
Total	636	-126	-523

Monthly Rent	Change in Demand		
	2020-2030	2030-2040	2040-2050
< \$250	13	2	-8
\$250 - \$599	50	7	-28
\$600 - \$899	55	7	-31
\$900 - \$1,249	49	7	-28
\$1,250 - \$1,499	80	11	-45
\$1,500 - \$2,499	46	6	-26
\$2,500 - \$3,499	38	5	-21
\$3,500 and over	23	3	-13
Total	354	48	-200

INDEPENDENT LIVING

Monthly Rent (30% of Income)	Monthly Rent (65% of Income)	Change in Demand		
		2020-2030	2030-2040	2040-2050
< \$250	< \$540	16	13	-4
\$250 - \$599	\$540 - \$1,299	60	48	-14
\$600 - \$899	\$1,300 - \$1,949	67	53	-16
\$900 - \$1,249	\$1,950 - \$2,699	60	47	-14
\$1,250 - \$1,499	\$2,700 - \$3,249	97	77	-23
\$1,500 - \$2,499	\$3,250 - \$5,399	55	44	-13
\$2,500 - \$3,499	\$5,400 - \$7,549	46	37	-11
\$3,500 and over	\$7,550 and over	28	23	-7
Total		430	341	-102

LONG-TERM CARE

LTC Facility	2020 Capacity	2020 Per Capita 65+	2030	2040	2050
AFH	168	0.007	43	5	-9
CBRF	688	0.027	177	22	-38
Nursing Homes	697	0.027	179	22	-38
RCAC	337	0.013	86	11	-18
Total	1,890	0.074	485	60	-104

SUMMARY OF DEMAND

- 636 single-family, owner-occupied homes by 2030.
- 402 renter-occupied housing units by 2040.
- 771 independent living housing units (predominately renter-occupied) by 2040.
- 545 beds by 2040 for assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing.

REVIEW: 2022 RECOMMENDATIONS

Highest Priority

- Amend zoning ordinances that enable a greater variety of housing units and prices.
- Amend subdivision ordinances to allow for smaller lot sizes.
- Reach out to developers, agencies, and nonprofits to increase housing supply.
- Educating the community about the housing market.
- Updating municipal planning documents.

Second Priority

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- Bonds, cash incentives, and/or other financial products.
- Land banks, land trusts, housing trust funds, rent-to-own programs, and other local strategies.
- Financial program administration.

Ongoing: monitor emerging state/federal/local programs and partnerships

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recruit developers who specialize in housing for older adults, especially continuum of care. Enable flexibility as demand shifts.
2. Work with healthcare systems, health organizations, schools, and workforce training/upskilling programs to address housing, care, and staffing needs.
3. Development transit, parks, outdoor facilities/amenities, and other public facilities.
4. Support the maintenance, rehabilitation, and upgrading of existing housing stock through City services along with aging-in-place and telehealth capabilities.
5. Identify and repurpose vacant sites and structures.

QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Sam Wessel, AICP

NCWRPC

715-849-5510 ext. 303

swessel@ncwrpc.org



DATE: November 4, 2025
TO: Economic Development Committee
SUBJECT: Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between Idaho Housing and Finance Association d/b/a Finally Home!® & City of Wausau, Development Department

PURPOSE

To request approval to establish a partnership with, Idaho Housing and Finance Association d/b/a [Finally Home!®](#) to provide homebuyer education and counseling services to Wausau area residents.

BACKGROUND

The City of Wausau became a HUD Certified Housing Counseling Agency after a local nonprofit that formerly partnered with the City to provide homebuyer education and counseling for down payment assistance clients discontinued services locally. This ensured program participants could continue receiving these resources locally and at no cost.

The program operates solely with CDBG funds and receives no additional financial support. HUD requires certified agencies to counsel at least 30 clients annually to maintain certification. To qualify for housing counseling specific funding, the City would need to expand program capacity, which is challenging two staff members, one of whom is HUD-certified.

Furthermore, HUD compliance requirements are extensive. Client files must remain open for 60 days post-session for follow-up. Most clients seek counseling only to obtain a certificate for a substantial down payment assistance grant, often requesting sessions within 15 days of closing. This creates time constraints and limits meaningful engagement.

Counselors must also complete 30 hours of continuing education every three years, and HUD requires use of a Counseling Management System, adding administrative burden, reporting, and audit requirements.

[Finally Home!®](#) is a nationally recognized program operated by Idaho Housing and Finance Association. It aligns with the City's housing goals through high-quality, accessible education. It also meets national industry standards, is regularly updated, and is available in both English and Spanish.

Through this partnership, [Finally Home!®](#) would:

- Create a dedicated partnership page for Wausau clients,
- Provide quarterly usage reports, and
- Issue coupon codes for City program participants and invoice quarterly.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no cost to establish or maintain the partnership. The City would pay only for eligible program participants, resulting in **cost savings** to the CDBG program. Eliminating direct counseling operations removes the \$3,500 annual cost of the Counseling Management System and reduces staff time on HUD compliance, allowing reallocation to other priorities..

Future costs would be \$50 per participant; with typical participation of 20–30 clients per year, this remains well below the 70-client break-even point.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval to establish a partnership with Idaho Housing and Finance Association d/b/a [Finally Home!®](#) to provide homebuyer education and counseling for City of Wausau housing program participants.



Finally Home!: An In Depth Look



Finally Home!®

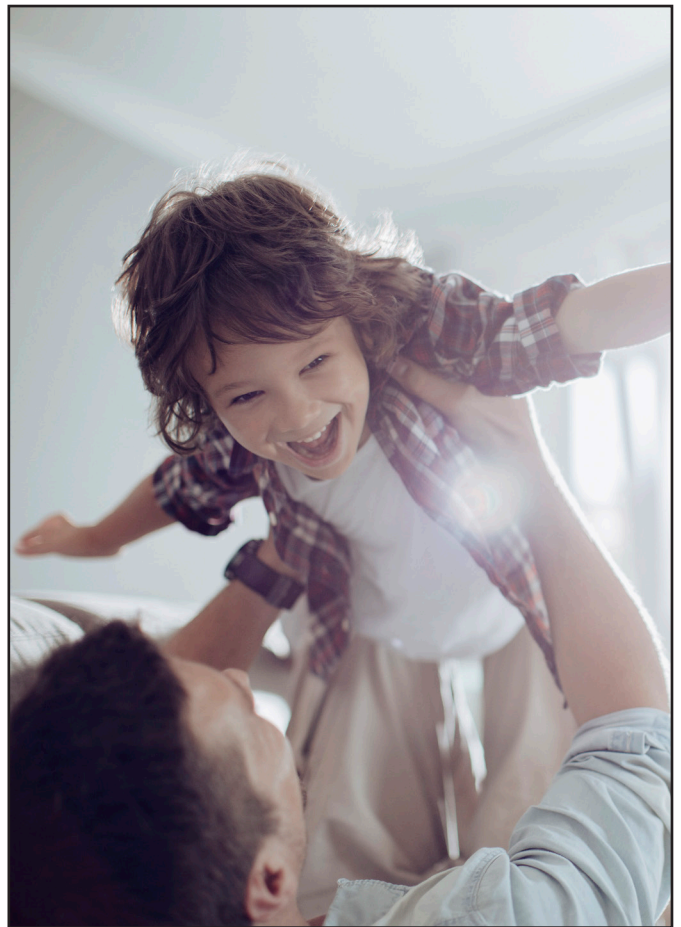
Homebuyer Education Features

- Interchangeable **English-to-Spanish** content.
- Each student is provided with a **complimentary text-book** that can be used as a reference for the buyer throughout the home-buying process and into home-ownership. This is provided in print or electronic formats, but is not necessary to complete the course.
- **Chat tool** that is monitored by HUD-certified housing counselors. If at anytime during the course the student has questions or needs assistance, they can reach out using the chat feature.
- **Certificate available** upon completion provided by a HUD-approved housing counseling agency.
- HUD-certified counselors provide program support.
- Curriculum is **regularly reviewed and updated**.
- The course is fun and interactive.
- **Section and chapter quizzes** help the student assess their knowledge and ensure participants are engaged during the course.

Homebuyer Education Benefits

Completion of the course may provide borrowers value-added incentives such as:

- Down payment and closing cost assistance.
- Programs that accept higher debt ratios.
- Lower mortgage insurance premiums.
- Using a forgivable loan at closing.
- **Free housing advice for the life of the loan.**



The Fantastic FOUR

- **FLEXIBLE.** The **desktop and mobile-friendly course is available online** so that borrowers can log in and work at their own pace.
- **FRIENDLY.** Customer support is available to answer questions and troubleshoot any technical issues for borrowers and our partner organizations Monday through Friday from **7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MT** by **phone, chat, and email.** **8:30 am - 6:00 PM CST**
- **FRESH.** In addition to the pre-purchase content, **graduates have free access to post-purchase education** through our Finally Home! Homeowner's Toolkit. This includes fresh information about preventing delinquency, preparing for natural disasters, home maintenance, and much more.
- **FOREVER.** We offer **free personalized life-of-loan counseling and referrals** to those who seek unbiased advice about buying or staying in their homes.

History

The program was created more than 25 years ago to empower first-time buyers, help them navigate the home-buying process, and become successful homeowners. The original curriculum was created by IHFA in consortium with several other organizations and industry experts. After many hours of volunteer time and the input of a diverse group of people and organizations throughout the state, Finally Home! was created and the homebuyer education program became a reality.



The original program launched in 1999, and is offered at class sites across Idaho on a monthly basis. In 2004, the first online version of the Finally Home! course was introduced. The online course was originally developed to provide education to those living in rural areas that were too far from live class sites. With the advancement of technology and the increased demand for online education, the online course has been revamped and modernized into its current program. **Finally Home! online, now offers homebuyers NATIONWIDE** the ability to take a comprehensive homebuyer education program. This industry-leading online course is ideal for **ALL** first-time homebuyers.

The online program was designed by, and is administered by, Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA). IHFA is the state housing and finance agency in Idaho and has been a HUD-approved housing counseling agency for many years. IHFA is unique in that, not only do we sub-grant HUD-housing counseling funds, we are also a direct housing counseling provider with multiple housing counselors on staff. Finally Home! support staff are HUD-certified counselors who can provide both technical assistance and/or counseling assistance, when needed.

Finally Home! exceeds the National Industry Standards for Homeownership Education and Counseling and is regularly reviewed for accuracy and changes in this fluid housing market. IHFA has adopted the National Industry Standards.

Housing Counseling

The Finally Home! program offers students the opportunity to connect with a HUD-certified counselor. We have different means for this:

1. During the course, we ask students if they would like to be connected to a counselor to learn more and potentially receive one-on-one pre-purchase counseling. If they select yes, the system sends our counseling staff a message and a counselor **will reach out to the person within twenty-four hours.** If the student determines they would like counseling services, we either provide it to them or give them the option to contact a local HUD-approved housing counseling office in their area. If they choose an office in their area, we provide them with a list of agencies they can contact.

2. **We have the ability to place a one-on-one counseling requirement within the system.** For this workflow students working with an agency that requires counseling are prompted to reach out to complete their one-on-one counseling component. Upon completion, students will receive a Finally Home! certificate of completion as well as a counseling certificate. This workflow can be set up for any HUD-approved housing counseling agency that would like to collaborate with us. If you would like Finally Home! to provide the counseling we can do that too.

3. During the course, we provide a section specific to housing counseling. This section covers the types of services that are available, as well as how counseling may benefit the client now or in the future. We provide resources to find local HUD-approved offices.

4. Since IHFA provides all types of housing counseling services, **we are able to promote life-of-loan counseling for anyone taking the Finally Home! course.** If a student needs pre-purchase one-on-one counseling, we are able to provide that service. If that same student comes back anytime in the future and needs some other form of housing counseling services, our counselors are here to assist.

Course Length

The Finally Home! course curriculum was originally designed for a live class lasting eight hours. In 2012, we did significant research on **class length and determined that six hours was sufficient for our live classes to cover all material in the textbook and cover all criteria outlined in the National Industry Standards for Homeownership Education Guidelines.** The curriculum used in our live classes is the same as the one used for Finally Home! online.

We have conducted in-house time studies on the Finally Home! online course and have determined that the class should take a student six hours to complete. **We still have an optional eight hour counseling component for those who require it. This workflow will ensure that the partner's clients reach the 8-hour education and/or counseling requirement. (See #2 under Housing Counseling.)**

Homeowner Education

The benefits keep coming even after borrower's become homeowners. Graduates of the course gain free access to our Homeowner's Toolkit, which is frequently updated with real-world tips for home maintenance, refinance, insurance, budgeting, and much more. **See toolkit details [here](#).**

Financial Basics

Finally Home! students can dive deep into our **free financial literacy in preparation for purchasing, or wherever they are on their financial journey.** This course expands on certain subjects covered in Homebuyer Education, as well as topics like taxes, insurance, and retirement. **See Financial Basics details [here](#).**



See for yourself

To access the course:

1. Go to finallyhome.org.
2. Select Register.
3. Select your state and follow the prompts.
4. At the shopping cart there will be a box that reads, "Apply Referral or Gift Code".

5. ~~Enter the coupon code.~~
6. Hit apply and proceed to checkout.

Please note that the coupon code can be used five times. Multiple reviewers may access the course simultaneously.



Videos

This [video](#) geared toward lending and REALTOR® partners gives a nice overview of the program.

[Video](#) introduction for students, also located on landing page of our website.

Memorandum of Understanding Between
Idaho Housing and Finance Association d/b/a Finally Home!®
&
City of Wausau, Development Department

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describes and confirms an agreement (“Agreement”) which is entered into this ___ day of ___, **2025** (“Effective Date”), by and between **IDAHO HOUSING AND FINANCE ASSOCIATION** (“IHFA”), an independent public body corporate and politic of the State of Idaho, doing business as **Finally Home!®**, having its principal business address at 565 W Myrtle Street, Boise, Idaho 83702-7675 and **CITY OF WAUSAU** (“CITY”), a municipal corporation and separate body corporate and politic, having a principal address of 407 Grant Street, Wausau, WI 54403.

The purpose of this Agreement is to formalize and set forth the terms and understanding between IHFA and CITY for providing Finally Home! Homebuyer Education as well as pre-purchase one-on-one housing counseling, only so long as and for a period for which grant funds are available to IHFA to cover the costs of pre-purchase housing counseling.

WHEREAS, to enhance program consistency and support homebuyers, CITY desires to partner with a HUD-approved housing counseling agency to provide online homebuyer education; clients required by CITY to also complete pre-purchase housing counseling may choose also to participate in housing counseling provided by IHFA, so long as grant funds are available to IHFA, thus eliminating the need for the City to maintain HUD Housing Counseling certification; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and promises herein contained, the parties agree as follows:

1. DEFINITIONS

Idaho Housing and Finance Association (IHFA) – an independent public body corporate and politic of the State of Idaho, and HUD-approved housing counseling agency that offers homebuyer education and housing counseling to homebuyers through their Finally Home! Education and Counseling program.

Finally Home! a trademark registered by IHFA – program owned and operated by IHFA to provide homebuyer education.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Agreement is to formalize and set forth the terms and understanding between IHFA and CITY for providing Finally Home! Homebuyer Education as well as pre-purchase one-on-one housing counseling, only so long as and for a period for which grant funds are available to IHFA to cover the costs of pre-purchase housing counseling.

3. OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

a. City Responsibilities

- (i) CITY acknowledges that it will use IHFA’s online homebuyer education platform and that the Finally Home! program, as a whole, explicitly belongs to and is operated by IHFA.
- (ii) CITY will use the provided product/partner specific URL in order to market the program to potential class participants.

- (iii) CITY will use the Finally Home! Promotional Toolkit provided by Finally Home! in its marketing efforts. All marketing of the program must include either the Finally Home! logo or be attributed to Finally Home!.
- (iv) CITY acknowledges that IHFA makes every effort to provide accurate and complete information through the Finally Home! Homebuyer Education Program and that Finally Home! assumes no liability for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product, resource or process disclosed within the course or by its instructors, counselors, or staff.
- (v) CITY acknowledges that class participants will pay \$70 per online registration for Finally Home! Homebuyer Education directly to IHFA through the Finally Home! platform. Finally Home! may from time to time, in its sole discretion, offer promotional pricing without notice to CITY.
- (vi) CITY, at its sole option, may purchase coupon codes to cover the cost of the course for class participants who use the code while registering for the course online. The price of each coupon code, for use by one participant, for Finally Home! Homebuyer Education is \$50.
- (vii) CITY, as it determines that its program applicants require housing counseling in addition to Homebuyer Education, may, at its sole option, refer eligible applicants to IHFA for pre-purchase housing counseling. Program applicants will need to complete Finally Home! Homebuyer Education prior to beginning pre-purchase one-on-one housing counseling services. CITY acknowledges, however, that the continuation of this service (one-on-one, pre-purchase housing counseling), free of charge to the class participant and at no cost to the CITY, is contingent upon the availability of grant funding and that in the event such funding is reduced, suspended, or terminated, IHFA will no longer be required to offer this housing counseling service.

b. IHFA Responsibilities

(i) IHFA agrees to provide the following:

- a. Online homebuyer education through its Finally Home! Homebuyer Education Program;
 - b. Partnership page through which CITY class participants can register directly online. This page is template based but will include customized text from CITY. The partnership page is hosted and managed by IHFA and can be accessed at <https://finallyhome.org/partners/wausauwi/>; (Activated Upon Signed MOU)
 - c. Customer service support to class participants/borrowers via email, chat, and phone;
 - d. Pre-purchase housing counseling services to eligible participants contingent upon availability of funding.
- (ii)** IHFA periodically upgrades the online course. Finally Home! will make every effort possible to provide uninterrupted service during upgrades. It is, however, understood that interruption may occur from time to time.
- (iii)** IHFA shall provide CITY with a quarterly report for all class participants who accessed and paid for the Finally Home! Homebuyer Education course through the affiliated partnership page and or for those who used a CITY-issued coupon code to purchase the course. The report will include name, address, and email address. The quarterly reporting shall begin in the fourth month, following the first quarter the Agreement is in effect.
- (iv)** The provision of housing counseling services by IHFA to any CITY program participant is contingent upon the availability of funding for such purpose. In the event that such funding is reduced, suspended or terminated, IHFA reserves the right to suspend or terminate the provision of housing counseling services to CITY program participants. IHFA agrees to provide written notice 30 days in advance of the date that the IHFA's proposed action will become effective. IHFA will thereafter

have no further obligation to provide pre-purchased housing counseling services free of charge to CITY program participants. that such funding is reduced, suspended or terminated, IHFA reserves the right to suspend or terminate the provision of housing counseling services to CITY program participants. IHFA agrees to provide written notice 30 days in advance of the date that the IHFA's proposed action will become effective. IHFA will thereafter have no further obligation to provide pre-purchase housing counseling services free of charge to CITY program participants.

4. TERM

This Agreement shall commence on the Effective Date and shall continue in effect indefinitely unless and until terminated by either party upon thirty (30) days' prior written notice to the other party. The parties acknowledge and agree that the terms of this Agreement may be renegotiated at any time upon mutual written consent, including, but not limited to, instances where there is a reduction, suspension, or loss of funding associated with the services contemplated herein.

5. INVOICING AND PAYMENTS

Participants who access the partnership page without registering as part of a City program will pay the standard \$70 course fee directly to IHFA at registration. Participants completing the course as a requirement of a City program will receive a discount coupon that allows them to register at no cost. IHFA will invoice the City of Wausau for all students that registered and paid for the course using the coupon code assigned to City of Wausau, Development Department on a quarterly basis. The first invoice will be issued in the month following the first quarter this Agreement is in effect. Invoiced amounts will be due and payable within 30 days of receipt by CITY and shall be accompanied by the quarterly reports verifying the number of coupon codes used for that quarter.

Invoices will be paid by check made payable to:

Idaho Housing and Finance Association

Attn: Finally Home! | PO Box 7899 | Boise, ID 83707-1899

6. ENTIRE AGREEMENT

This Agreement and Attachment A hereto, taken together, constitute and contain the entire agreement of the parties and supersede any and all prior agreements, negotiations, correspondence, understanding, and communications between the parties, whether written or oral, respecting the subject matter hereof. Changes, amendments, or addendums may only be made with the written mutual consent of both parties.

7. SEVERABILITY

If, for any reason, a court or other body of competent jurisdiction finds, or the parties mutually believe, any provision of this agreement or portion thereof, to be invalid or unenforceable, such provision will be enforced to the maximum extent permissible and the remainder of this agreement will continue in full force and effect if the resulting agreement affects the original intent of the parties. The parties shall negotiate in good faith toward an enforceable substitute provision that most nearly achieves the intent and effect of the invalid or unenforceable provision.

8. ASSIGNMENT

Neither this agreement, nor any rights or obligations hereunder, may be assigned by either of the parties hereto, voluntarily or by operation of law, to any third party without prior written consent of the other party hereto. Subject to the foregoing, this agreement will inure to the benefit of and be binding upon the parties hereto and their successors and assigns.

9. AMENDMENT

This agreement may not be amended, except upon the written agreement of both parties.

10. FORCE MAJEURE

Except with respect to the payment of money, neither party will be liable or responsible in any manner to the other for failure or delay to fulfill any of its obligations under this agreement when the failure delay is due to fires, strikes, acts of God, legal acts of public authorities, delays or default caused by the fault of public carriers, or for any other cause which cannot be reasonably forecasted or provided against. However, any negligence including gross negligence by either party is considered reasonably forecasted for purpose of this section. Such negligence by either party does not exclude liability of that

11. MUTUAL INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

The parties hereby agree to indemnify and hold each other, their members officers, directors and employees, harmless for all third- party losses, damages, liabilities, obligations, judgements, causes of action, costs, and expenses (including reasonable attorney fees) arising directly or indirectly out of this agreement. Except for damages arising from a party’s gross negligence, willful misconduct, or indemnification obligations, neither party shall be liable to the other party whether in contract, tort (including negligence), warranty or otherwise, for any indirect, incidental, special, consequential, exemplary or punitive third-party damages (including, without limitation, loss of profits), arising out of or relating to this agreement.

12. NOTICES

All notices required to be made under this agreement will be sent via certified or registered mail, or competent overnight courier, return receipt requested, to the following address listed at the top of the agreement. Such notices shall be deemed effective when received, or if not received by reason of some fault of the addressee, when tendered.

This Agreement is effective upon the date first above written.

Mayor Doug Diny, City of Wausau

Date

Clerk Kaitlyn Bernarde, City of Wausau

Date

Representative, IFHA

Date



Finance
Randy Fifrlick, Development Director, Patrick Gatterman, Economic
Development Manager, MaryAnne Groat, Finance Director

DATE: December 2, 2025
TO: Finance Committee
SUBJECT: Extending the life of Tax Increment District Number 7 for affordable housing.

PURPOSE

To discuss the 1 Year housing extension or termination of Tax Increment District 7

BACKGROUND

The attached PowerPoint summarizes state law requirements, key financial data, and the options available to the common council.

FISCAL IMPACT

The 2026 increment is \$1,966,623

RECOMMENDATION

The council has three options available:

1. Close the district and free up \$355,108 in levy and \$69,343 in shared revenue.
2. Authorize a one-year housing extension, which funds \$1,966,623 for housing and \$69,343 for the 2027 operating budget
3. Authorize a one-year housing extension, which funds \$1,966,623 for housing, and authorize a \$355,158 one-time transfer from reserves for the 2027 budget.

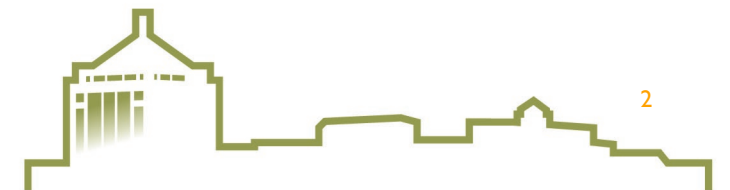
The closure of TID #7 will generate \$424,502 in additional funds, which is about \$3.8 firefighters.

CITY OF WAUSAU TID 7 HOUSING EXTENSION



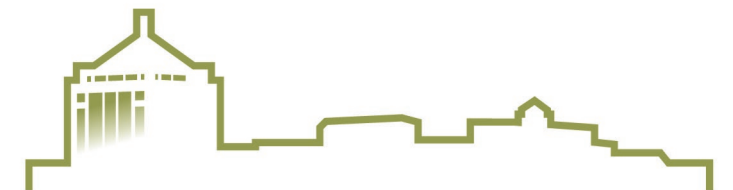
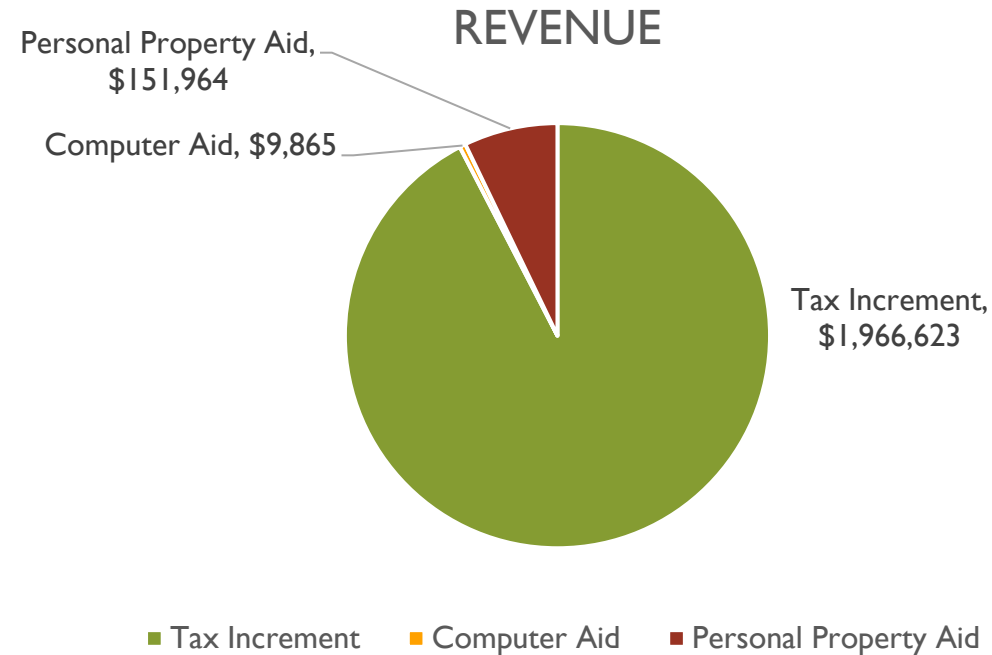
STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

- EXTEND THE DISTRICT ONE YEAR (2027) FOR HOUSING
- 75% OF THE INCREMENT USED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING: DEFINED AS HOUSING THAT COSTS A HOUSEHOLD NO MORE THAN 30% OF THE HOUSEHOLD'S GROSS MONTHLY INCOME
- 25% ON OTHER HOUSING
- ADOPT A RESOLUTION DESCRIBING THE USE OF THE FUNDS – MUST BE APPROVED BEFORE 1/10/2026



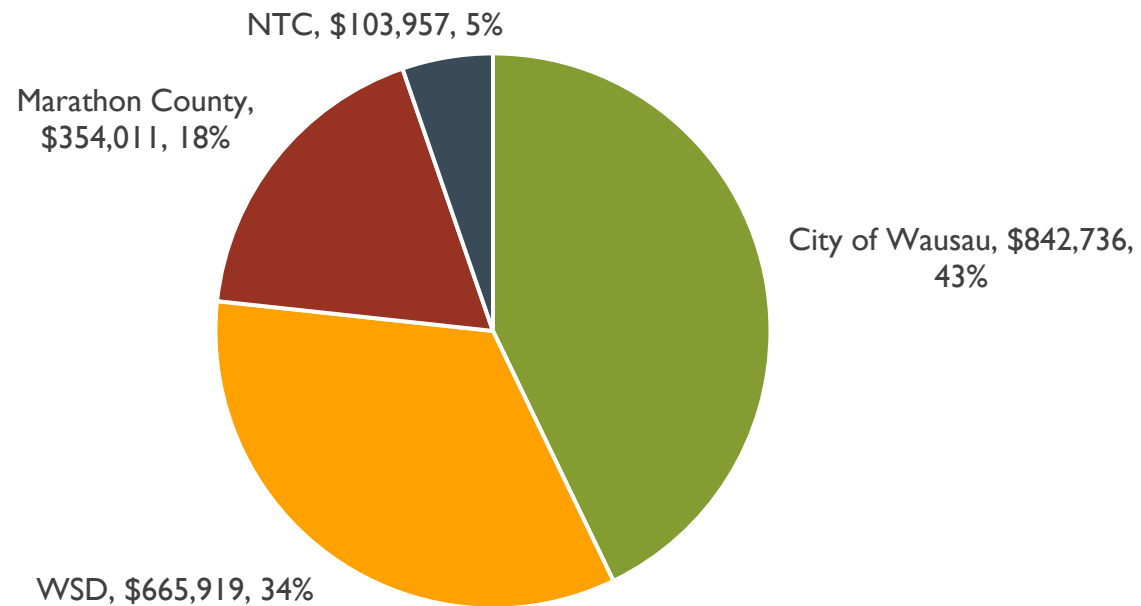
TID 7 2026 INCREMENT AND OTHER REVENUE

- 2026 REVENUE IS DONATED TO TID 12 TO OFFSET DEFICITS ON THE MALL REDEVELOPMENT.
- TOTAL REVENUE \$2,128,452



2026 INCREMENT \$1,966,623

Share of Increment



Assessed Total Tax
Rate Impact \$.45

TID 6 & 7 ONE YEAR EXTENSION TENTATIVE USES

TID 6 \$3,873,301

- Westside Commons \$650,000
- 700 Grand Avenue Apartments \$1,900,000
- Thomas Street Infill
- N 2nd Street

TID 7 \$1,966,623*

- MBX Redevelopment
- 1300 Cleveland Avenue

* 2026 budget – 2027 unknown till next year

CLOSURE IMPACT TO THE CITY BUDGET – EXAMPLE BASED ON 2026

	EXISTING	1 YEAR EXTENSION	AFTER CLOSURE **
TID INCREMENT	\$1,966,623	\$1,966,623	\$355,158
PERSONAL PROPERTY AID	151,964	*	65,117
COMPUTER AID	9,865	*	4,227
TOTAL	\$2,128,452	\$1,966,623	\$424,502

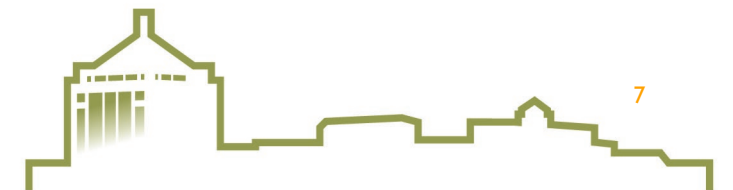
* Only the TID increment is available for the one-year extension. State Aids will be distributed to all govt entities at closure. City share is \$69,343

** After closure based upon 2026 budget, the following increment will be available for the 2027 Operating budget.

COUNCIL 2027 BUDGET POTENTIAL OPTIONS

3.8 FIREFIGHTERS

1. Close TID 7 – approximately \$424,502 available for operating budget (firefighters)
2. Keep TID 7 open for affordable housing - \$1,966,623 available for housing, \$69,343 available for operating budget.
3. Keep TID 7 open for affordable housing and authorize one-time transfer from reserves of \$355,158 for the operating budget (firefighters) since funds will be available for the 2028 and ongoing budgets when TID closes. With the state aids \$424,502 available for the 2027 operating budget and beyond.





MEMO

TO: Economic Development Committee
FROM: Patrick Gatterman, Economic Development Manager
DATE: 12/02/25
RE: WEDC Certified Sites

The WEDC Certified Sites Program is a strategic economic development tool that certifies industrial-ready sites in Wisconsin by ensuring a property meets rigorous standards around size, ownership, zoning, infrastructure, utilities, environmental readiness, and documentation. For communities, it's a way to signal to investors "we're ready" and thereby improve chances of large business location or expansion projects.

It's essentially a site readiness / pre-certification process. WEDC through the program sets out standards, due-diligence and documentation so that a property is "shovel-ready" and attractive for industrial or large-scale business investment.

The City is looking to certify a combined 99.5 acres on Innovation Way in the Business Campus. These sites include 4 City-owned parcels of which one was previously WEDC Certified.

The role of the City of Wausau is to provide due diligence in the form of site preparation including phase I environmental assessment, threatened/endangered species survey, archeological/historical investigation, geotechnically, and an ALTA Survey.

These services will be required to be done through contractors of which WEDC will provide a grant to cover a portion of the total costs (50%), of which we have already been awarded. The City will utilize TID 11 to cover the Cities portion. Total costs are estimated at \$50,000.

The program requirements also include several mapping products which can be done in-house by our engineering department at no cost.

WEDC will provide worldwide marketing for the site on several platforms that developers look for. Every year WEDC selects up to 3 municipalities to specifically work with a Site Selector.

A Site Selector Company is scheduled to visit Wausau on February 18th, 2026. This meeting will be structured as if a company was interested in the site. Following the meeting, the Site Selector company will provide guidance and suggestions on how to best market the site.





Planning, Community and Economic Development

MEMO

TO: Economic Development Committee Members

FROM: Tammy Stratz, Community Development Manager

DATE: November 20, 2025

RE: Commercial Rehabilitation Loan update

At the November 2024, the Economic Development committee approved the updated Commercial Rehabilitation Loan program policy allowing staff the authority to underwrite, approve/deny applications, and close on approved applications. The policy also states that staff will report to the Economic Development committee semi-annually. Prior to this report, staff had not received any applications; therefore, having nothing to report.

In September 2025, staff received two applications:

1. Christopher Gardipee, new owner of 4302 Stewart Avenue, of which he purchased the building to expand his automotive repair services to a second location. His application requested funding to assist with updating the façade of the building, new signage and upgrading the existing unpaved parking lot. After loan processing/underwriting for just over a month, a loan in the amount of \$98,800 was approved. This represents 9.5% of the total project costs. Staff worked with the Attorney's office for the loan document preparation and closed this loan on November 15, 2025.
2. Kent Olson, AOK Property LLC, owner of Olson Tire & Auto located at 601 Forest Street applied to enhance/renovate the old Subway restaurant into a new restaurant – Sourdough & Co. that they will own and manage themselves. His application requested funding for exterior upgrades, roof replacement, exterior lighting and awning updates. After application processing/underwriting a loan approval was given in the amount of \$62,020. This represents 30% of the total project costs. As above, staff worked with the Attorney's office and also closed on November 15, 2025.

As an overview of our Commercial Loan inventory, the City currently has eight (8) loans in repayment (not counting the two above). Six are making payments as agreed, one is making interest only payments based on a requested payment modification, and one is extremely delinquent. Late fees are being assessed on this delinquency, and we have been working with our Attorney's office on how to rectify the situation. However, we have not had much success.

After the above two loans are closed, there will be approximately \$26,000 left in our revolving loan fund. In addition, between \$3,000 - \$3,200 a month is being received in monthly payments.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me directly at 715-261-6682 or e-mail me at tammy.stratz@ci.wausau.wi.us. Thank you.



PROPERTY DISPOSITION for REDEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

Applicants **must** contact the Development Department **prior** to submitting an application. Some properties may have income eligibility requirements or other conditions that should be discussed in advance. Failure to do so may delay or affect your application. Contact us at 715-261-6680 or wausaudevelopment@wausauwi.gov.

APPLICANT NAME: Sharon Schlicht

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 424 Burns St.

APPLICANT TYPE: *Choose One* INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATION EIN#: _____

APPLICANT ADDRESS: 418 Burns St

PHONE NUMBER: Redacted

EMAIL ADDRESS: Redacted

PROPOSED USE: *Choose One* RESIDENTIAL (*owner-occupied/rental/other*) COMMERCIAL

BRIEFLY, TELL US ABOUT YOUR PROPOSAL.

Please submit any materials that support your project (e.g., drawings, financing, contractor info, income details, etc.).

Add to existing property.
Only portion as discussed
Subject to survey by city

PROPOSED TIMELINE: Feb. 2026

PROPOSED OFFER: \$6500.00

Applicant Certification & Signature Acknowledgment

By signing below, I certify that all information in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that false or misleading information may result in denial of assistance or other penalties

I affirm that I am legally eligible to purchase property in the U.S. and not subject to any restrictions that would prevent this.

I may sign this application electronically or with a handwritten ("wet") signature. If signing electronically, I acknowledge that under the E-SIGN Act, a valid electronic signature holds the same legal weight as a handwritten one. A valid e-signature must be authenticated and show clear intent, such as submission through a secure system or identity-verified platform.

Applications **must include** a copy of the applicant's driver's license (*individual*) or Tax ID# (*organization*) to be considered complete.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: Sharon Schlicht DATE: 11-24-25

