



ARE YOU READY?

HOUSING READY COMMUNITIES CHECKLIST
Leelanau County Housing Action Committee – June 8, 2019

INTRODUCTION

This checklist is designed to help communities evaluate their own standards, strategies, plans, and ordinances to ensure they are designed in a way that meets local needs for workforce housing. Many communities have successfully encouraged workforce housing by including some or all of the following elements in their planning documents and zoning ordinances.

Leelanau County and all of northwestern Michigan is experiencing a well-documented housing shortage – particularly rental housing – that is affordable to a broad range of income levels. The short supply of available housing leaves many families with few choices but to live in deteriorating, inadequate, unsafe, or unaffordable homes. Conversely, families and young people may choose to live elsewhere, limiting our workforce and harming businesses. Businesses struggle to find employees who can afford to live in the County and often lose employees to businesses where more affordable housing options are available. Quality housing means quality employees.

Without spending significant resources, local governments and communities can help by ensuring that a variety of housing options are available throughout the County that meet the needs of all income levels. Local and county governments can work in partnership with developers and community organizations and businesses to support housing goals and smart, sustainable projects.

What is Workforce Housing?

We encourage each community to create its own definition of workforce housing as appropriate. However, generally speaking, workforce housing means housing our workers can afford – our teachers, our restaurant employees, our firefighters, our electricians, those making around the County's median income. Nearly all experts agree that a household's housing costs should not exceed 30% of its income. Therefore, workforce housing commonly refers to housing that costs less than 30% of the area's median income. Current local median income data can be found at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html#2018>.

Planning Commissioners Role.

Planning commissioners are responsible for making decisions about zoning and development in villages and townships in Leelanau County. This means planning commissioners are essentially the 'gate keeper' for directing and determining what type, how much, and where workforce housing is built in your community. No other zoning authority in the county regarding these issues exists, so whatever regulations the planning commission creates are final. Communities can consider zoning changes that invite and allow for more housing to be developed.

If we want to attract workforce housing development to our communities, we should ask ourselves this question: Are our policies and procedures fair, timely, and predictable enough for a developer to begin a dialogue and consider developing housing in our community? Without proper regulations and policies, developers are forced to pursue expensive, time consuming rezoning or variance requests interfering with project schedules, creating project uncertainty, and often litigation or abandonment of their project. Together, we can create housing that suits our communities needs while preserving the local character that makes Leelanau County such a desirable place to live.

Let's Work Together!

*Housing is an issue that impacts each and every household and business in Leelanau County. Thank you for working together to ensure that the next generation of Leelanau County residents have a place to call home. **We're here to help!** Please contact the Leelanau County Housing Action Committee for technical assistance, help with zoning reviews, or questions or suggestions with the checklist. We hope it helps!*

Leelanau County Housing Action Committee: housing@co.leelanau.mi.us or (231) 256-9812

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Y N Has your community expressed an interest or need for more housing options?
2. Have the following stakeholders participated in discussions regarding the need for workforce housing?
 employers school districts families local residents
 developers landowners nonprofits other jurisdictions
3. What methods have been used?
 questionnaire/survey public comment online options public meeting(s)
 presentation of options with discussion focus groups other _____
4. Y N Has your community conducted an analysis of your current housing supply including the percentage that is affordable for low- to moderate-income families in the workforce?

PLANNING STRATEGIES

Has your community considered or implemented:

1. Y N a Master Plan that advocates for housing that meets the needs of all residents
2. Y N setting a goal for an amount of workforce housing needed (as a number of units or as a percentage of total housing) and developed a method to track progress
3. Y N mapping priority development areas in and adjacent to villages and settlements where workforce housing is to be included with other housing types
4. Y N “pre-permitting” selected sites within the designated priority development area(s)
5. Y N becoming “Redevelopment Ready Certified” to access Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) financing, resources, and marketing?

ZONING STRATEGIES

Does your community’s zoning ordinance include/allow the following:

1. Y N an established, simple, and easily accessible process to develop workforce housing
2. Y N lot splits
3. Y N single family homes to be converted to multi-family units
4. Y N expanded boundaries of high density residential districts
5. Y N a mixture of densities and dwelling types that are allowed by right (preferably) or by special use, especially in priority development area(s), including:
 - a. Y N multi-family housing (townhomes, condos, apartments, duplexes, multiplexes, etc.), with the same/similar lot dimension requirements as single-family homes when practical
 - b. Y N small minimum dwelling size (450 sq. ft. or less is suggested) for all housing types
 - c. Y N zero lot line homes
 - d. Y N dormitory housing in certain districts under defined conditions

- e. Y [] N [] mixed-use buildings that allow housing in commercial districts
 - f. Y [] N [] accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
 - g. Y [] N [] cottage developments
6. Y [] N [] “long-term rental” and “short-term rental” are defined
 7. Y [] N [] an ordinance that regulates short-term rentals, including limiting or prohibiting short-term rentals of non-owner occupied homes in districts targeted for workforce housing
 8. Y [] N [] a residential rental ordinance
 9. Y [] N [] Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
 10. Y [] N [] form-based zoning in districts that have been designated as priority development area(s)
 11. Y [] N [] encourage or incentivize energy efficiency and sustainability to maintain affordability
 12. Y [] N [] overlay districts to delineate priority development area(s) for workforce housing

Does your community allow incentives for workforce housing including:

1. Y [] N [] density bonus when retaining open space
2. Y [] N [] density bonus when a percentage of units are set aside for workforce housing
3. Y [] N [] reduced number of parking spaces required
4. Y [] N [] reduced utility hookup fees
5. reduced minimum dwelling and lot width and size for:
 - [] below market-rate housing [] districts targeted for workforce housing [] in-fill development
6. Y [] N [] height bonuses if residential is incorporated in a mixed-use building
7. Y [] N [] emphasizing incentives in priority development area(s)

Has your community considered the following regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs or “Grannie Flats”):

1. Y [] N [] minimal restrictions on ADU height, dwelling size, lot area, ratio of ADU size to primary residence size, maximum number of bedrooms/occupants, and parking
2. Y [] N [] ADUs for long-term rentals allowed by-right
3. Y [] N [] one attached and one detached ADU is allowed on same property
4. Y [] N [] limit or eliminate short-term rental of ADUs in districts targeted for workforce housing

FUNDING & FINANCING

Has your community considered or implemented:

1. utilizing the following to provide financing for developers and buyers when banks won’t lend:
 - [] Opportunity Resource Fund [] Michigan Housing Trust Fund Allocation Plan [] other _____
2. Y [] N [] providing tax incentives for making major repairs to workforce housing

3. utilizing the following to acquire land or fund the development of workforce housing:
- Leelanau County Land Bank Brownfield Redevelopment Authority tax increment financing
- housing tax exemption Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) private/government grants
- private land trusts local investment groups private and public donations
- other _____

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Has your community considered or implemented:

1. Y N partnerships with nonprofits, businesses, schools, and private developers to advance workforce housing development?
2. Y N working with partners such as Leelanau County and Housing North to market housing development opportunities?
3. Y N whether your current infrastructure supports increased housing density?
4. identifying factors that limit density:

parking roads soil conditions Brownfield(s)

septic/sewer other _____
5. Y N opportunities to rehab deteriorated, abandoned, or unused buildings or properties for workforce housing?
6. Y N a transparent, easy to follow “developer’s checklist” of zoning and other requirements that must be met before a project is launched?
7. Y N forms and permits that are simple, easy to access, and make the development process as transparent and efficient as possible?



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