June 9, 2025

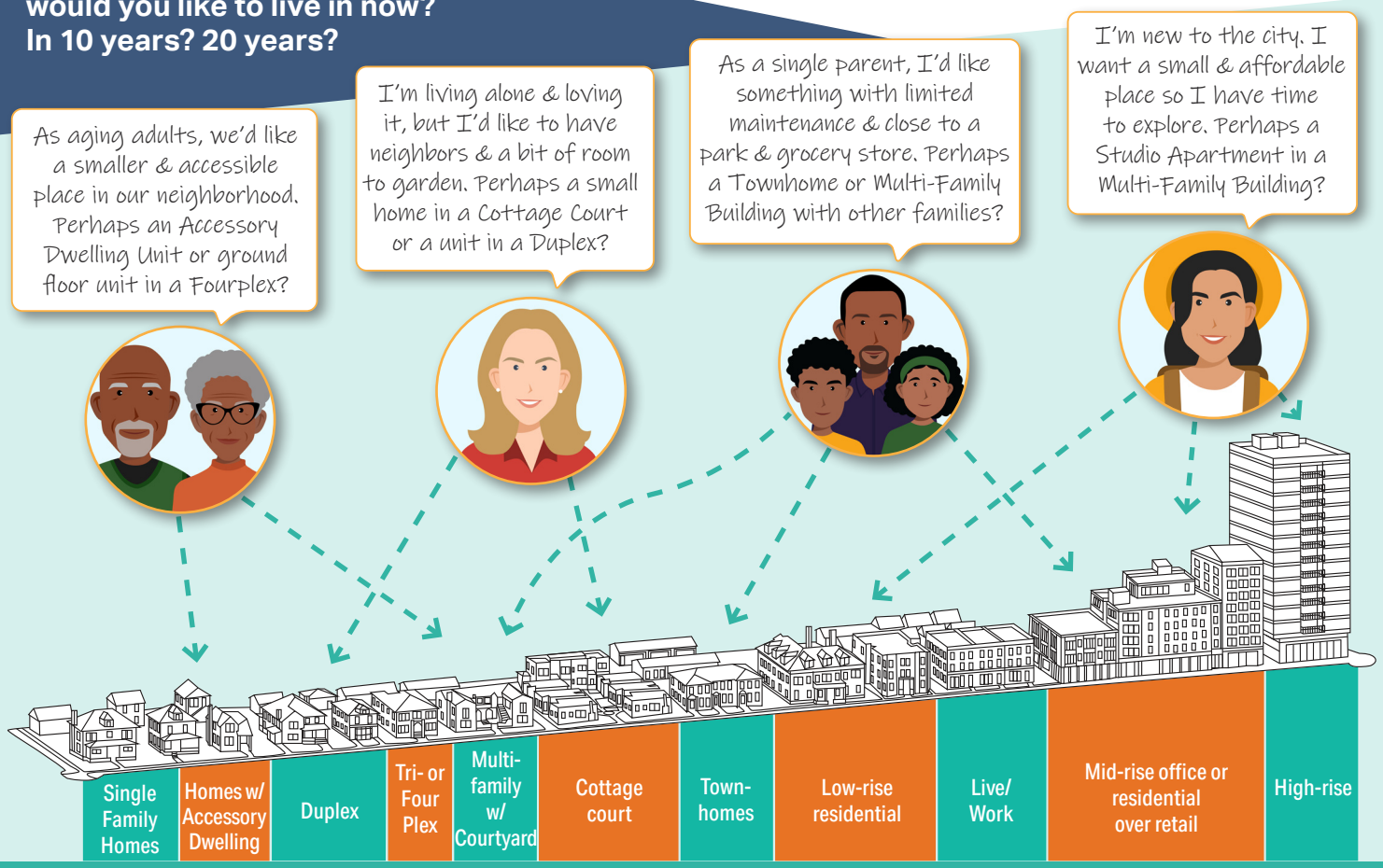
HOUSING ELEMENT
City of Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan

The types of housing that work best for us change throughout our lives, and Milwaukee needs more housing for its current population. Yet, in many Milwaukee neighborhoods, the rules for building housing limit certain types. The City of Milwaukee is updating policies and regulations for housing development to encourage more housing types and choice across city neighborhoods.

Goals of the Housing Element:

- Increasing housing supply and the variety of housing types within the city of Milwaukee
- Supporting new housing that creates walkable urban neighborhoods
- Increasing transit options and access to jobs
- Providing more affordable, quality housing choices for all Milwaukeeans

What type of housing would you like to live in now? In 10 years? 20 years?



Housing comes in many diverse types!

Learn more & sign up for email updates at:

engage.milwaukee.gov/GrowingMKE

@MilwaukeeDCD

City of Milwaukee | DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

GrowingMKE@milwaukee.gov
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What is the Housing Element?

The Housing Element is the result of a citywide planning initiative to support Milwaukee's evolving housing needs.

- Sets a **collective vision for housing** in Milwaukee through an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Includes **policies and recommendations for housing & neighborhoods,** including recommendations for updates to Milwaukee's Zoning Code.

How does this Plan impact me & my neighborhood?

Limiting the types of housing within neighborhoods impacts affordability, walkability, climate change, the ability to age in place and keep communities together, access to resources, and more.

There are two main strategies to encourage additional types of housing in more neighborhoods. Based on data from similar cities and building costs, change is expected to occur slowly over time.

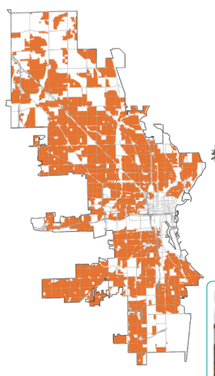
Wait, what is a Zoning Code?

Zoning is the set of rules made by local governments to control how land is used and developed. Each community has its own zoning code. The City of Milwaukee's Zoning Code includes a zoning map and written rules (the zoning text). Every property in Milwaukee is assigned a zoning classification. Zoning rules decide things like what can be built on a property, how tall buildings can be, and where buildings can be put on the land.

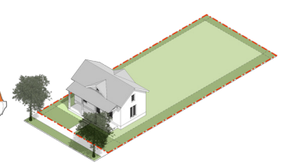
In the city of Milwaukee, the neighborhoods with the most types of housing were developed before the City adopted its first zoning code in 1922. The changes recommended by the Housing Element will allow for more housing types to be developed in more neighborhoods.

Near-term Strategy 1: Update the Zoning Code to allow more types of neighborhood-scale housing in more neighborhoods.

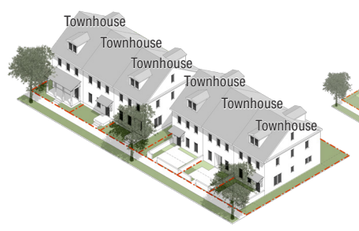
In all residentially zoned areas, allow:



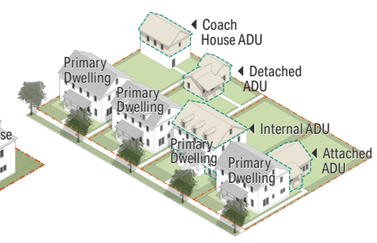
Detached Houses



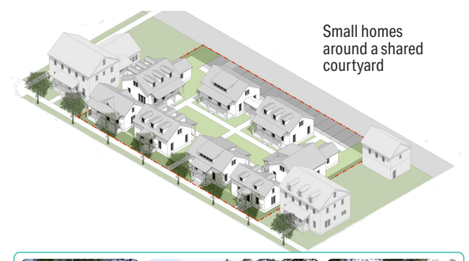
Townhouses



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

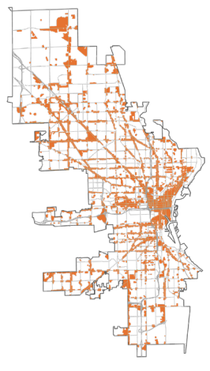


Cottage Courts

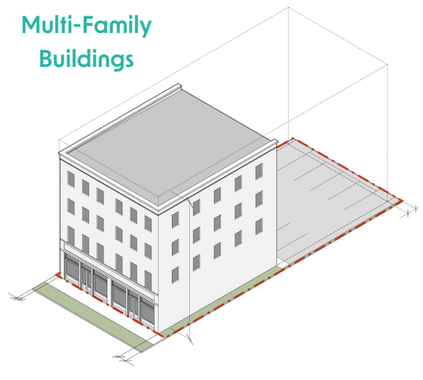


Near-term Strategy 2:

Adjust the Zoning Code to remove barriers to new housing on business corridors & in multi-family zoning districts. Rely on height limits, setback requirements, & design standards instead of mathematical equations to control the number of housing units.



Multi-Family Buildings



Applies to zoning districts that already allow larger multi-family buildings

7 Key Priorities

Increased Housing Choice & Access

Increasing variety of housing types and supply will help create a better city for all Milwaukeeans.

Repairing Homes & Neighborhoods

Repair can significantly enhance the quality and stability of neighborhoods.

City Commitment to Intergovernmental Collaboration & Legislative Advocacy

To help increase funding for affordable housing, support homeownership programs, increase accountability for landlords, and to enact legislation to protect tenant's rights.

City Commitment to Homeownership

Supporting households achieve homeownership, helping existing homeowners repair their homes, building new affordable homes, and deploying innovative homeownership strategies for a variety of housing types.

City Commitment to Anti-Displacement

Ongoing tracking and programs to help households buy and retain homes, advocating for legislative measures to provide additional resources, and collaborating with community partners.

Economic Resilience

New tax base from new development will spread the costs of City services across a larger group of taxpayers, helping stem future property tax increases or service cuts.

Walkable Neighborhoods

More housing development near commercial districts and transit corridors creates vibrant walkable environments – increasing quality of life for all.

New name reflects updates in the Plan

GROWINGMKE → HOUSING ELEMENT

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Project Timeline

Summer/ Fall 2023 Part 1. Check-in & Set Goals	Winter 2023 Part 2. Draft Recommendations	Spring/ Summer 2024 Part 3. Draft Plan	Fall 2024/ Winter 2025 Part 4. Additional Outreach	2025 Adoption Process	2025+ Implementation
Outreach and discussions around the state of housing in Milwaukee and impacts of zoning	Outreach about the Draft Recommendations	Outreach for feedback on the April 2024 Draft Plan, updated draft plan (July), and public hearing at *City Plan Commission*	Additional outreach on the updated July 2024 Draft Plan	Updated Plan released, public hearings before *City Plan Commission + Zoning, Neighborhoods & Development* Common Council Committee	Staff will work on implementation, including updates to the Zoning Code which will need to be adopted by the Common Council

Public Engagement Process

Growing MKE sought out and received an abundance of feedback from neighborhood organizations, developers, property owners, residents, and community members. The feedback received through in-person engagement and surveys has helped shape the Growing MKE Plan.

- 10 Community Open House public meetings
- 6 Webinars with Q&A
- 35 "Office Hour" events at Milwaukee Public Libraries throughout the city
- 24 focus groups & community meetings with neighborhood groups & local developers
- 20 pop-up events at senior centers, farmers' markets, & other community events
- 4 Community Advisory Committee meetings
- 4 Technical Advisory Committee meetings
- 2 community-wide surveys
- 3,200+ online views of meetings & recordings
- 2,350+ residents directly engaged at in-person & online meetings + events
- 9,400+ visitors engaging online engage.milwaukee.gov/GrowingMKE
- Multi-lingual outreach materials throughout the process & Community Open House meetings in English, Spanish & Hmong

2025 Plan Available

engage.milwaukee.gov/HousingElement

Visit the website to:

- View the Plan and additional information
- Access past meeting materials & videos
- Find answers to frequently asked questions

What's in the Plan?

- Summary + Why
- Goals & Policies
- Commitments to Support Milwaukee's Housing System
- Recommendations

Please share this information with your family, friends & neighbors!