

Frequently Asked Questions

Village of Wausaukee - High School Hill Workforce Housing Project

In early 2024 the Village of Wausaukee received funding assistance from inVentureNorth as part of the WEDC's Thrive Rural Wisconsin Program to evaluate and plan for new workforce housing on the High School Hill site. Below are a list of frequently asked questions along with the best responses available at this time.

1. Will low-income housing be developed on the High School Hill site?

No, this will NOT be low-income housing, it will be "workforce" housing. The grant funding for this project is targeting moderate income working persons and families. This is defined as households making between 60% and 120% of the County's Median Household Income (MHI). The County MHI in 2023 was \$58,544, making the range for a family of four between \$51k and \$102k. While there may continue to be needs for low-income housing in the Village, we have often relied on non-profit organizations such as NEWCAP to address those needs.

2. How is the Village going to ensure that new homes on the site are "affordable"?

Housing construction costs have increased greatly since 2020 due to material and labor costs, continued supply chain issues, as well as reacting to the overall tight market. This is not unusual, as many communities across the state and nation are grappling with this issue. Costs will ultimately depend on a number of factors including home size, quality of finishes, and amenities, as well as the costs associated with lot size, lot frontage, and the installation of utilities. Developing concept plans which factor in all of these potential costs will help to make the new housing units affordable to the targeted population.

3. How is the Village funding this project?

The Village received a \$25,000 grant from inVenture North through the WEDC's Thrive Rural Wisconsin Program to initiate this planning process. Cedar Corporation was hired to prepare several concept plans, develop project cost-estimates, created a funding strategy, and review/suggest modifications to the Village's development regulations which may ultimately facilitate construction of new workforce housing. In addition, the Village recently received a federal grant award of \$1.6M through support from Rep. Tammy Baldwin's office which will be dedicated to covering a large portion of the costs associated with the construction of new streets and utilities within the proposed development. While those funds may not cover the entire project cost, they can certainly be leveraged as a major incentive to an outside developer.

4. How does the Village intend to develop the site once the Concept Plans are finalized?

Once a concept plan and funding strategy are approved, the Village will examine its options for moving the project forward. Right now, a number of possible options exist ranging from the Village being the "developer" (selling individual lots to builders), to promoting the site to the private development community for purchase. If the latter is chosen, a formal developer's agreement will be drafted to ensure the Village has adequate control during the site development process.

5. Will incentives be needed to attract a developer to this site?

Nearly any housing project across the State has required communities to provide incentives in order to lower the development costs and afford the developer an opportunity to make a reasonable profit. The Village of Wausaukee will not be any different, but it does have two incentives it can provide immediately: value of the property itself, and the \$1.6M grant for infrastructure. These two items are viewed as potential major contributions, and it is hoped that additional funds (from the TIF District for example) will not be required.

For more information or to share your concerns about this project, please contact Sara Pullen at (715) 856-5341 or via e-mail at clerk@villageofwausaukee.com