



September 19, 2025

To: Eau Claire City Council  
From: Scott Rogers, Vice President Governmental Affairs

Re: Eau Claire Century Code update and proposed amendments

The Chamber's motto - "Together for Business • Together for Community" - reflects our commitment to build a strong area economy and quality of life in the Eau Claire region. Among our highest current policy priorities is housing – the critical need to address affordability and supply as our community continues to grow. All of the work that has gone into the Century Code Update process these past two years represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity make significant progress in achieving goals to: “Produce more housing supply, diversity of choices, and affordability,” “Improve development process certainties,” and “Reduce exclusionary zoning practices.”

Now, as the process comes to a close this coming week with City Council action on fee schedules, it’s important to keep all of this in mind so that those benefits will actually be achieved. Affordability is significantly affected by the real costs of construction and the costs of complying with regulations. The reality is that any fees charged for the development of housing will ultimately be paid by the buyers and renters who will occupy these homes. Therefore, keeping affordability at the forefront of decisions is essential. Specifically:

- The fee-in-lieu for high value trees should be kept at \$100 per inch as proposed, and no higher.
- Park impact fees should be set at the lowest possible level.

It’s widely recognized that infill housing is better for the environment, more financially productive for the community, efficiently uses existing infrastructure, and lessens pressure on sprawl. Keeping fees as low as possible will help encourage economically- and environmentally-sound infill development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Rogers".

Scott Rogers  
Vice President Governmental Affairs  
rogers@eauclairechamber.org  
715-858-0616

P.S. We arrive at our positions on behalf of the business community through application of the principles in the Chamber’s [Business Issues Agenda](#). Here are its areas which apply to this process:

### *Housing supply and affordability*

The local supply of available and affordable housing impacts our ability to meet the needs of a growing population, as well as affordability for all individuals and families. The Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force found that there is a shortage of housing in our community at all price and income levels. It is important for public policy to encourage increasing the supply of housing and removing barriers to housing development.

- Review, and modify as needed, regulations, policies, and building codes to ensure that they are up to date and do not unnecessarily hamper construction activities or increase costs.
- Update zoning codes and policies to eliminate outdated and arbitrary standards in order to encourage infill development, creation of missing middle housing types, a greater diversity of housing choices, compact growth, efficiency of public resources, and the ability to build the types of housing demanded by the marketplace. It is also important to reduce uncertainty in the development process, develop objective standards that can be adhered to without subjective approval processes, and respect property rights.
- Coordinate housing and transportation policies to maximize the impact of public benefits and resources.

### *Energy and the environment*

Economic growth and environmental progress go hand in hand. Responsible stewardship of our resources can both grow our economy and preserve the planet.

- Compact, infill development provides an opportunity to grow housing and commercial opportunities in an environmentally-responsible fashion, reducing the amount of rural land needed for growth and providing more cost-effective utilization of existing infrastructure.