

063025 – Remarks to Plan Commission

Scott Rogers, Vice President Governmental Affairs, Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Representing the local business community, housing supply and affordability is one of the top policy priorities of the Chamber. As you know, we have been following and involved in the Century Code Update and have previously provided letters and public comments to the Zoning Policy Advisory Committee.

We support the overall purposes of the code update. There are many provisions that will benefit what we view as the most important goal, that of producing “more housing supply, diversity of choices, and affordability.”

However, there are a few provisions in the final draft that would have a detrimental effect on affordability and warrant being amended. These are the same concerns that you’ve heard from other groups concerned about affordability. They include:

- Amenity standards for multi-family buildings that would increase rents on the most affordable types of housing.
- Anti-monotony standards like garage frontage requirements that essentially mandate aesthetic taste but would inhibit affordability for entry level home buyers.
- Expensive tree preservation standards that could discourage infill development and potentially encourage sprawl, with unintended negative environmental consequences.
- Park impact fees and requirements that are well meaning but should only be considered once the city’s current assessment of its parks portfolio is completed.

It’s important to think of the city as an economic and social system, where every decision can have consequences on other parts of the system. That includes the effect of some of these issues on the critical need to address housing supply and affordability in our community.

Finally, a key thing to remember is that increased housing supply is not the **only** answer to housing affordability, but there is **no answer** to affordability **without** an increase in supply.