

070725 – Remarks to City Council

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

Congratulations on being on the home stretch of completing the Century Code Update. The decisions the City Council will make soon about the final code language will have far reaching effects on our community for many years to come.

As the Chamber represents the local business community, we strive for a local economy that is good for all of our citizens. It's a priority to support wise policies that positively address local housing affordability and supply, while maintaining a high quality of life.

Therefore, as you contemplate those final decisions coming up soon, we encourage you to carefully consider a few things:

- It's important to think of the city as an economic and social system, where every decision on one thing can have consequences on other parts of the system.
- The City of Eau Claire's zoning code will only apply within this city. The policies of other governmental jurisdictions surrounding us can be different, and any city policies that inhibit housing or make it too expensive could push development to other places.
- Taken as a whole, infill development is better for the environment, more financially productive for the community, efficiently uses existing infrastructure... it provides more opportunity for increases in supply and improvements in affordability, and lessens pressure on sprawl. Standards inhibiting infill could result in broader net negative consequences for land use and the environment.
- While all of the goals of the Century Code Update are desirable and appropriate, its most critical purpose is to produce more housing supply, diversity of choices, and affordability. Every part of the code should be evaluated and balanced based upon its effect on this critical purpose.
- Encouraging additional housing supply is not the only answer to affordability, but there can be no improvement in affordability and availability of housing without more supply.