



For Immediate Release

Contact: Amy Snow-Buckner
Sabo PR, 616.560.1655

City of Grand Haven and Housing Next Break Down Barriers to Housing Accessibility

City Celebrates New Zoning Ordinance and First-of-Its-Kind Housing Development

Grand Haven, Michigan, DATE – The City of Grand Haven – in partnership with Housing Next – has reduced barriers to the creation of housing at all price points with recent updates to its zoning ordinance and approval of a first-of-its-kind housing development in West Michigan.

The new zoning ordinance – approved by the Grand Haven City Council earlier this month – is aimed at improving housing choice and supply across the city, promoting greater mobility choices for residents, providing more equitable access to wealth creation and streamlining the zoning approval process for developers, among other key changes.

The Comstock Street housing development is a unique partnership between the City, nonprofit developer Michigan Community Capital, the Ottawa County Land Bank and the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation to ensure new homes are affordable for households that earn less than 80% of the area median income, or AMI.

“We’re proud of the work we’ve done – and continue to do – to help make sure Grand Haven can offer enough housing for all income levels,” said City Manager Pat McGinnis, a member of the City’s Affordable Housing Task Force that provided [recommendations](#) for the new zoning ordinance. “The new zoning ordinance and housing development are great examples of the commitment of the City Council, City staff, community members and other partners to make this happen. We want Grand Haven to be a great place for anyone who wants to live here.”

The new zoning ordinance is a result of the City Council’s commitment in 2017 to begin addressing the cost of housing and the role local government can – and should – play in ensuring the availability of housing options for all income levels. The three-year zoning ordinance effort included the creation of the Affordable Housing Task Force, of which [Housing Next](#) was an active member, and robust community engagement during which residents and other stakeholders provided feedback on the proposed changes. The new ordinance also reflects goals of the City’s [master plan](#), which also is the result of community engagement.

Housing Next also helped to secure funding for zoning consulting services, helped to draft the new ordinance and provided resources and input throughout the process.

“Housing Next is committed to partnering with local governments, developers and nonprofits to create public policy and opportunities that support housing affordability,” said Ryan Kilpatrick, executive director of Housing Next, which is a pilot program of the Greater Ottawa County United Way. “We are proud to work

with the City of Grand Haven – a leader in this space – to facilitate more housing that meets residents’ needs and helps to keep the community thriving.”

The new ordinance:

- Adds accessory dwelling units – secondary housing units on a single-family residential lot – and two-plus unit dwellings to more districts with a streamlined review process to improve housing choice.
- Reduced minimum lot size and dimensional standards to allow for more housing supply in established neighborhoods.
- Requires bicycle racks in all commercial developments to promote greater mobility choice.
- Establishes pop-up shop regulations to encourage small-scale entrepreneurship and more equitable access to wealth creation.
- Provides accommodations for electric vehicles to support sustainability.
- Streamlines the zoning approval process and makes it more user-friendly.
- Offers optional work sessions for commercial land uses and planned developments to support developers.
- Increases the zoning administrator’s authority to approve minor changes and improve efficiency for builders and developers.
- Requires all parking lots use low-impact development methods and stormwater best management practices to support sustainability.
- Establishes community garden regulations to enhance community building.
- Allows for the requirement of a health impact assessment for development in sensitive areas.
- Reduces parking requirements to allow for shared use and proximity to public parking.

The Comstock Street development will include approximately 32 single-family housing units on 7.58 acres of vacant land on the north side of Comstock Street in Grand Haven. The land was owned by the City and transferred to the Ottawa County Land Bank Authority last fall to prepare the site for redevelopment. Michigan Community Capital will buy the property later this year. The project will serve households that earn between 60% and 100% AMI. In Ottawa County, that is between \$35,160 and \$83,600 a year.

About half of the homes will be sold to households that earn between 60% and 80% AMI. These homes will be sold at approximately 75% of the appraised value and will be on a 99-year ground lease with the City’s newly created community land trust. There will be restrictions on the resale, which will ensure long-term affordability of these homes. The remaining homes will be sold at market rate without any income or resale restrictions.

The neighborhood will have a mix of homes that range in size to support various incomes and household sizes. Housing types will be a mix of:

- 840-square-foot one-story with two bedrooms and one bathroom.
- 1,087-square-foot one-story with three bedrooms and two bathrooms.
- 1,421-square-foot two-story with three bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms.

Housing Next partnered with the City to identify Michigan Community Capital as the lead nonprofit developer for the project and provided guidance on target market and preferred home prices. It also helped to facilitate the transfer of land ownership and brownfield redevelopment eligibility and worked closely with the City in the creation of the community land trust.

“To prosper, all people and all places need housing for all income levels,” Kilpatrick said. “I applaud the City of Grand Haven and all of the partners involved in this project for recognizing this and acting on it in a way that will have a lasting impact in this community for generations to come.”

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