

Barriers to Accessible Housing in Cheyenne, WY

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Prepared for:
The City of Cheyenne, WY

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Executive Summary

Report Contents

Barriers to Accessible Housing in Cheyenne takes a straightforward approach to continue the City of Cheyenne's push to address housing concerns for present and future residents. The City has several organizations taking interest in alleviating housing pressures in the community, and others are being created or utilized to tackle the issue head-on. This report is intended to guide the Planning & Development Department and their various stakeholders in understanding what barriers might exist for the housing development in Cheyenne to be more affordable and diverse for residents of all backgrounds, but also to account for abnormally large population growth in the coming years in light of a multi-million-dollar investment from the federal government into the local F.E. Warren Air Force Base. Four potential barriers were identified in early correspondence with city staff and subsequent field visits to Cheyenne. Questions were raised as to how the community feels about housing, if development trends are too siloed in any one direction, how land use could benefit housing development, and if there were regulations that were actively impeding accessible housing development. Recommendations at the end of the report will be in response to the findings of each area studied.

City staff and stakeholders interviewed indicated that residents have been concerned about issues regarding housing following the last several years where housing costs have grown at rates far outpacing wages earned, something further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. To understand community perceptions better, this report provided a community outreach strategy for the Planning & Development department to gauge resident opinion, but also to involve them in the process for developing plans and regulations for easier access to housing. A preliminary survey for this report was completed in April of 2022 and yielded consistent results from the concerns presented by staff. It was found that Cheyenne residents are concerned about housing access in their community and are in support of broader action to address this issue.

In researching the applicable plans and regulations in place for Cheyenne, it was found that there is a plenty of existing support for a wide variety of housing for residents, primarily in regulations that allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and design-oriented form-based codes. An audit of the city's Unified

Development Code was completed as a part of this analysis of planning tools, and it was found that there are a number of density-related restrictions that if removed could expand urban density and make infill development more viable. With the completion of other plans and studies in and around Cheyenne, such as the Transit Study for the Metropolitan Planning Organization, cross-cutting themes could be prioritized so the Unified Development Code and PlanCheyenne could be benefitted by increased transit opportunities.

Because housing development is largely dependent on the private entities in charge of planning, design, construction, and maintenance of new housing stock, this report analyzed the types of units the city has seen constructed since 2016 and elaborated on the input provided by one of the city's more active developers. The city has seen relatively stable single and two-family housing development, and inconsistent, fluctuating multi-family development over the last five years. It was identified that local developers must take on the projects that add the best number of units for the community for the right price. Development of sprawling, single-family subdivisions is often not the preference, certain regulations around density and parking make it difficult for developers to propose and follow through with infill and higher density development. Other potential housing types that would not be grouped with a large multi-family apartment building or a new single-family subdivision in ADUs and missing middle housing are looked at from a practical standpoint to recommend priorities for additional housing options alongside Cheyenne's discussed development trends.

Further research and analysis into land use in Cheyenne attempts to make sense how of long-range planning attempts to be cognizant of development constraints and how future development can be programmed into areas with existing municipal services. PlanCheyenne has identified areas of future population growth that are potentially pushing the limits of the city's Urban Service Boundary. From a municipal standpoint, the importance of establishing and maintaining adequate city services affect issues such as annexation and how it is to be administered, as well as how infill development can often relieve the difficulties of considering access to service on periphery subdivision proposals. The city's establishment of an Urban Renewal Authority in 2021 will ideally be a conduit to redevelopment of

urban areas and if paired with planning for infill and missing middle housing units, areas closer to downtown can see more productive uses and economic activity with more accessible housing planned.

Findings & Recommendations

The report revisits the analyses completed in looking at the four potential barriers to accessible housing in Cheyenne. The graphic below depicts the lessons learned for each potential barrier, as well as the recommendation offered to the city for addressing



its current and future housing needs. Overall, it was found that the city is in a critical position to utilize their regulatory tools and planning organizations to spearhead planning for accessible housing. Involving residents, local developers, and integrated stakeholders such as the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Urban Renewal Authority, developing and implementing a housing plan or strategy that are considerate of the broad range of affordability and diversity issues is the paramount recommendation made to the city as a conclusion of this report.

Eliminate Requirement That Property Owners Must Live On-Site if there is an ADU
Art. 5.7.3.c

Reevaluate Residential Parking Standards
Table 6-2

Phase 1

Preliminary Outreach

Completion of two initial surveys to help inform PDD on how to proceed in addressing its housing crisis.

Phase 2

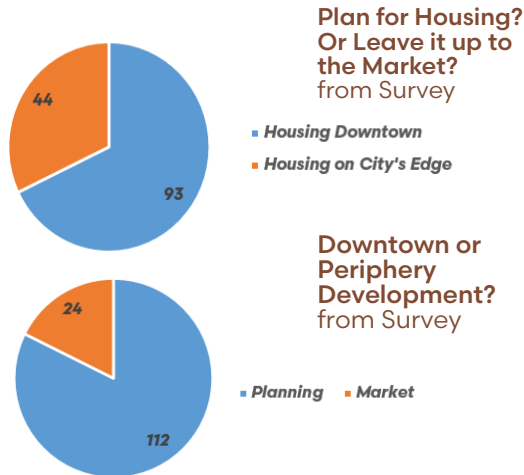
Consensus Building

Informed by Phase 1, PDD should facilitate engagement with a wide range of residents and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive housing strategy.

Phase 3

Planning for Housing Engagement

Using best practices and lessons learned thus far, engagement for future housing planning is crafted based on the City's long-range housing initiatives.



Top Concerns of a Local Developer (AVI Cheyenne)

Parking Regulations

Development Costs

Difficulty Building Density

Findings & Recommendations

Residents are in favor of strategically planning for housing in their community.
Complete all three phases of the Community Outreach Strategy.

Cheyenne sees a wide variety of housing development and developers support density.
Coordinate with the development community to help incentivize the addition of housing units.

Plans & regulations generally support density and the development of diverse & accessible housing.
Amend the UDC to remove density thresholds and simplify review requirements.

Sprawl is possible, but Cheyenne has a strong downtown core suitable for infill development.
Complete all three phases of the Community Outreach Strategy.

Cheyenne should look to complete and implement a housing plan or strategy to guide its housing development in light of future growth and cost factors.