

Housing in Sauk County



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PUBLIC HEALTH
SAUK COUNTY
Together we thrive



Housing: A Public Health Issue

People spend roughly 90% of their time indoors, with most of that time likely being in their home. If people live in unsuitable housing, they may be at risk of exposure to a number of potential health hazards.

Having access to safe, affordable, good quality housing can have a positive impact on a person's health and well-being. High housing costs, on the other hand, can result in major sacrifices that can negatively impact health.

[Read more](#) about how housing influences health.

Sauk County Team Launches E-news

Where you live has a major impact on your physical and mental health and well-being. All people deserve to live in decent, stable homes at prices they can afford.

Sauk County's newly formed Housing Action Team is addressing the problem that 1 in 4 Sauk County households are stressed by high housing costs (paying 30% or more of their household income on housing).

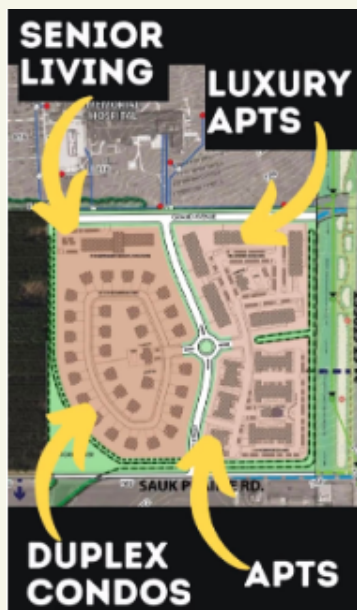
The strategy of the Housing Action Team is to partner with the Sauk County Economic Development Corporation (SCDC) to share opportunities and promising practices in housing development with city, town, and village leaders via this quarterly e-newsletter.

This team meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 1 pm - 2 pm online. To join us or learn more, contact Jodie, Public Health Sauk County Health Educator, at 608-355-4315 or Jodie.Molitor@saukcountywi.gov.

Housing Wins in Sauk County

River Valley Commons has received a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation capacity-building grant for \$50,000 to fund a regional housing plan for the River Valley School District geographic area and to build a coalition to support the housing initiative.

Board president Joy Kirkpatrick shares, "We are really excited to receive this money from WEDC. We have been talking about housing as a need ever since RVC started in 2020. We feel this funding will move us toward more and more affordable housing for the River Valley area."



Sauk Prairie has announced plans for a \$71 million housing development to include affordable, multi-family housing, thanks to the partnership of Sauk Prairie School District. Forty acres of district land were sold to a private developer to help address the housing need in Sauk Prairie. "This is the largest investment in housing in this community's history," said Jeff Wright, superintendent of the Sauk Prairie School District.

This development will include 90 to 114 studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, each designed to address workforce housing with a development agreement that requires the developer to set rent below market rate for ten years.

[Read more](#) on this development

Reedsburg Common Council approved two new housing projects:

- Eight twin homes near Retzlaff Drive and 20th Street. Since twin homes share a structure, construction and maintenance costs may be lower. This can translate to more affordable rent for tenants.
- Nine row houses and one four-plex in the 200 block of South Dewey Avenue.



The row house concept offers economy to the individual owner. With existing land and building costs, the row house provides more space for less money than do other types of dwelling units. Maintenance and operating expenses — heating and care of exterior surfaces (row houses usually have brick facing) — are lower.

To have your municipality's innovative housing solutions featured in our next newsletter, contact Jodie Molitor, Public Health Sauk County.



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Gov. Evers Signs Five Bills to Expand Affordable Housing

Gov. Tony Evers signed five bipartisan bills to help expand access to safe, affordable housing for working families, a critical effort to help support the state's workforce and maintain the state's economic momentum.

The bills involve:

- creating a revolving loan fund program for residential housing, main street housing rehab and conversion from commercial -to-residential,
- modifications to the Workforce Housing Rehab Loan Program, and
- judicial review of local land use decisions.

Read further for the entire release.

WHEDA Tax Credits Awarded

The HTC (Housing Tax Credit) program creates housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households. Populations broadly served through WHEDA's (Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority) HTC program include the elderly, chronically homeless, workforce, individuals, and families.

In Sauk County, the Ho-Chunk Village West and Reedsburg Family projects received nearly \$2.5 million for new construction of family housing.

Read more on how your municipality can apply and for a complete list of 2023 awardees.



HOW LIVABLE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

The AARP Livability Index scores communities across the U.S. on a scale of 0 to 100 based on services and amenities that impact people the most, including affordability and access of housing, security, transportation, environment, civic engagement, inclusivity, and more. Here are some scores around Sauk County. **Read more** for score metrics and how to improve your community's score.

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Sauk City

Building a Bright Future: Balancing Housing Options in Sauk County

By Thomas Cox, SCDC Director

To foster growth and prosperity, it is crucial to ensure a diverse range of housing options. Sauk County has natural beauty, several vibrant communities, and a strong economy. To secure the most promising future, our area needs innovative housing solutions that attract young families. By striking a balance between various housing types, we can create an environment that appeals to a broad demographic, fosters community development and drives sustainable economic growth. Here are some innovative ideas to consider:

- **Affordable Housing Initiatives** allow young families to establish roots in the community. Collaborating with developers and non-profit organizations, our municipalities can facilitate the construction of affordable housing units that meet the needs of growing families. Creative financing options and incentives for developers can be explored to encourage the construction of affordable homes.
- **Mixed-Use Developments** blend residential, commercial, and recreational spaces and foster vibrant neighborhoods. By integrating housing, retail, and community services nearby, young families can enjoy convenient access to amenities and social opportunities. Such developments can revitalize underutilized areas, attract businesses, and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- **Revitalization of Historic Buildings** allows the preserving and repurposing of these structures to add character to the community and offers unique housing options. By converting old structures into modern, family-friendly homes, Sauk County can preserve its heritage while meeting the demands of young families seeking distinctive living spaces. Tax incentives and grants can encourage developers to undertake adaptive reuse projects.
- **Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Housing** coincides with rising environmental concerns and offers an attractive option for young families. Promoting the construction of energy-efficient homes, incorporating renewable energy sources, and encouraging green building practices can position Sauk County as a leader in sustainable living. This approach attracts environmentally-conscious families and reduces utility costs in the long run.
- **Co-Housing and Co-Working Spaces** can foster a sense of community among young families. Providing shared living and working spaces and incorporating shared amenities and communal areas allows families to collaborate, socialize, share child-rearing responsibilities, and support one another.

Sauk County has immense potential to become a beacon for young families seeking a vibrant, affordable, and inclusive community to call home. By embracing a balanced approach to housing, incorporating innovative solutions, and engaging with various stakeholders, we can attract a new generation of residents, revitalize neighborhoods, and ensure a prosperous future for Sauk County. Let us unite our efforts to build a diverse and thriving community that is a model for others.

For more information on incorporating these or other innovative housing solutions in your municipality, contact Thomas Cox - Sauk County Development Corporation.

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