

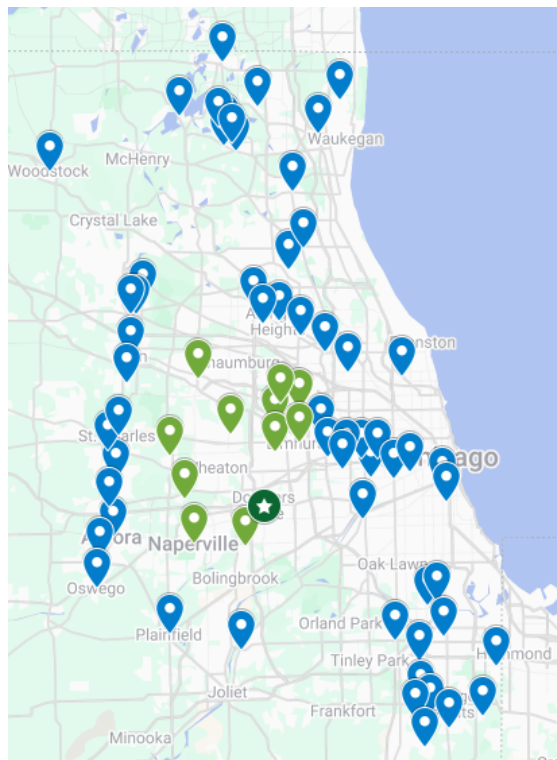


Homes for a Changing Region

Village of Downers Grove Attainable Housing Study



Background



Worked with 70 communities since 2007 to develop tailored strategies that address local housing needs.

Program Team



Nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization serving the Chicago region's 275 municipalities.



Housing and community development consulting firm bringing a combined 45 years of experience.

Process



Key Findings



Downers Grove seniors need more downsizing options in order to remain in the community

- Between 2000 and 2020, the community gained approximately 3,300 residents age 65 and older
- 20% of survey respondents age 65+ said their home will not meet their future needs, most often citing costs and maintenance.



Downers Grove has a shrinking supply of starter homes for first-time homebuyers

- The median home sale price in Downers Grove rose from \$261,250 in 2012 to \$466,000 in 2025, or 6% per year.
- Over two-thirds of survey respondents agreed that Downers Grove needs more housing for first-time homebuyers.



Many renters in Downers Grove face challenges affording their housing

- Over 1,000 renter households (22% of all renters) spend over half their income on housing.
- The median rent in apartment buildings built before 1980 rose by 5% per year over the past decade.



Cost of living in nearby communities impacts local workers and key employers

- Employers in manufacturing and healthcare cited difficulties with recruitment and retention due to cost of living in nearby communities.
- An income of \$50k is needed to afford the median rent in most nearby communities, and \$120k is needed to afford the median sale price.

Expert Panelists



Ellen Johnson
City Planner
St. Charles



Nora Boyer
Retired Housing Planner
Arlington Heights



Dylan Rumsey
Senior Designer
Opticos Design



Richard Koenig
Executive Director
Housing Opportunity
Development Corporation

How municipalities have utilized Housing Commissions, Inclusionary Housing Ordinances, and Housing Trust Funds to build housing at a mix of price points

Adding housing for empty nesters and first-time homebuyers

Policy-setting for affordable housing development

Recommendations



#1: Further Cultivate Housing Leadership, Civic Engagement, Outreach, and Education

Using a Housing Commission to sustain momentum and attention on housing.

Working with employers, nonprofits, multifamily property owners, and faith-based organizations.

#2: Maximize and Leverage Resources to Improve and Support Existing Downers Grove Properties and Residents

Connecting residents with area nonprofits.

Coordinating with county and state agencies that support housing efforts.

Considering a rental inspection program.

Establishing a demolition tax to generate revenue for local housing efforts.

#3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Allowing multifamily and mixed-use developments in transit corridors and select commercial districts.

Updating Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations.

Allowing Missing Middle Housing in select areas.

Exploring an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Recommendation #1: Further Cultivate Housing Leadership, Civic Engagement, Outreach, and Education

Strategy 1.1: Establish a Housing Commission to Support the Village Council



Uses of a Housing Commission

- **Adds capacity** to the Village Council and Planning and Zoning Commission.
- **Evaluates** potential housing policies and programs.
- **Provides oversight** to local housing policies and programs.
- **Offers recommendations** to the Village Council when housing policies and programs may need adjustment.

Establish a Housing Commission that would help advise and track the progress of the strategies recommended in this study.

Use a Housing Commission to keep the community educated, informed, and engaged on housing strategies being considered and implemented.

Next Steps

Recommendation #1: Further Cultivate Housing Leadership, Civic Engagement, Outreach, and Education

Strategy 1.2: Convene Employers, Faith-Based Organizations, Multifamily Property Owners, & Nonprofits to Engage Their Support of this Attainable Housing Study

Employers

Understand needs of employees.

Possess land, capital, and a growing interest in housing.

Faith-Based Organizations

Several were vocal during the housing study process.

Have partnered with municipalities and developers in other communities.

Nonprofits and Multifamily Property Owners

Several are already providing services or housing.

Could be further engaged to advance housing solutions.

Next Step

Identify local employers, faith-based organizations, key nonprofits, and multifamily property owners to engage in addressing challenges identified in this study.

Recommendation #2: Maximize and Leverage Resources to Improve and Support Existing Downers Grove Properties and Residents

Strategy 2.1: Connect Property Owners With Nonprofit Programs to Maintain the Affordability, Accessibility, and Quality Of Downers Grove's Existing Housing Stock



First Time Homebuyer Program
Housing counseling and down payment assistance.



Older Adult Home Modification Program
Coordinates home modifications with a nurse and occupational therapist, at no cost.



Home Repair & Accessibility Program
Up to \$50,000 for health and safety repairs for income-eligible homeowners.



Opportunity Investment Fund
Below-market financing for preserving affordably priced rental housing in higher-cost markets.



Senior Handyman Program
Connects seniors with trusted handymen for work at little or no cost.

Multifamily Energy Savers Program
Free energy assessment followed by grants, rebates, and low-cost financing.

Next Steps

Promote housing resources through the Village's newsletter, social media, utility bills, and other outreach efforts.

Contact the North West Housing Partnership to discuss what local funding would be needed for the organization to provide its Senior Handyman Program in Downers Grove.

Recommendation #2: Maximize and Leverage Resources to Improve and Support Existing Downers Grove Properties and Residents

Strategy 2.2: Coordinate with DuPage County, DuPage Housing Authority, and the Illinois Housing Development Authority on Public Sector Funding Opportunities



Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding

Can be used to support affordable housing efforts.

HOME Funding

Used to build, buy, or repair affordably priced housing.

Rental Assistance

Can be tied to a development, helping with financing.

Federal Tax Credits for Affordable Housing Construction

Support from a municipality factors into developers' applications for this highly competitive funding.



Heart's Place, Arlington Heights

- 18 apartments for people with disabilities.
- Used financing from both the Illinois Housing Development Authority and Cook County Housing Authority.

Next Steps

Meet with staff at DuPage County and the DuPage Housing Authority to explore how their organizations' allocation of federal dollars can help advance strategies within this study.

Monitor funding resources available through the Illinois Housing Development Authority.

Recommendation #2: Maximize and Leverage Resources to Improve and Support Existing Downers Grove Properties and Residents

Strategy 2.3: Consider Whether a Rental Inspection Program is Needed

Village of Addison Rental License and Inspection Program

Ensures proper maintenance, health, and safety.

Village inspections are funded by annual license fees.

Uses an incentive approach that bases inspections on performance. Properties rated:

- *Very Good* are exempted from the license fee and inspection the following year.
- *Satisfactory* must rectify code violations and pay for a license fee the following year.
- *Unsatisfactory* require a semi-annual reinspection and are responsible for its cost.



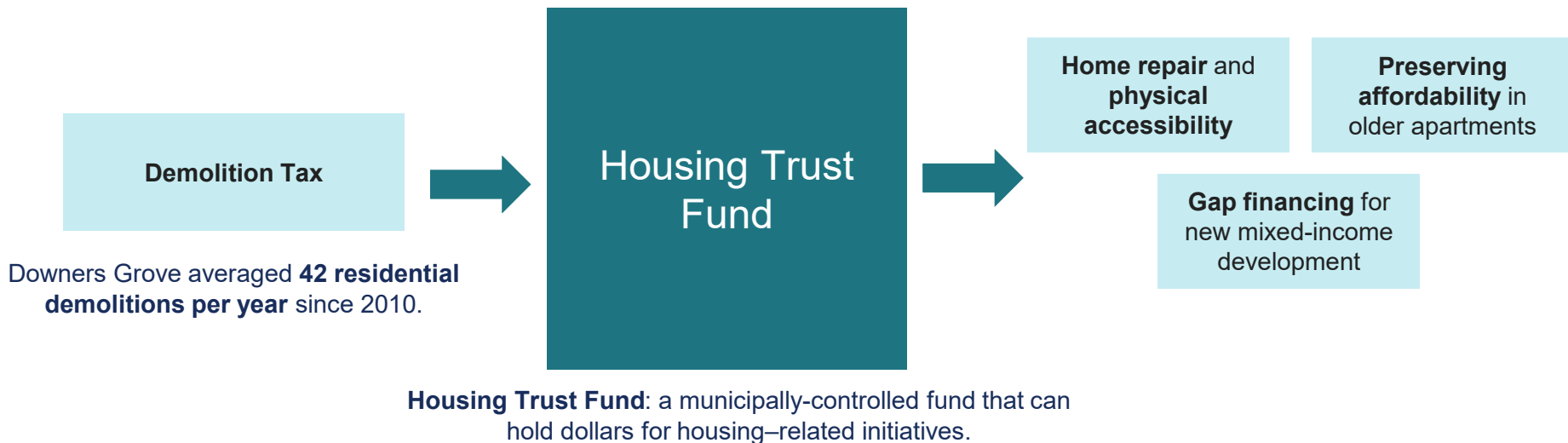
Engage the Village of Addison and/or other communities with rental inspection programs to learn more about their programs' design, costs, and benefits.

Consider whether the Village should establish a similar program.

Next Steps

Recommendation #2: Maximize and Leverage Resources to Improve and Support Existing Downers Grove Properties and Residents

Strategy 2.4: Establish a Demolition Tax to Discourage Teardowns and Generate Income for Local Housing Priorities



Next Step

Consider establishing a demolition tax to discourage teardowns and generate income for local housing priorities.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.1: Allow for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Development in Transit Corridors and Select Commercial Districts

To further support a mix of housing types and the Village's vision for a transit-oriented district in the **Fairview Station Area**, the Village could consider the following zoning changes:

Zoning District	Where It Is Applied	Current Uses Allowed	Potential Change
Fairview Core	Closest to the Fairview Metra station.	Mixed-use development is allowed with special use approval.	Allow mixed-use development by right rather than requiring special use approval.
Fairview Business	West of Douglas Road and along Rogers Street.	Multifamily development is allowed with special use approval.	Allow multifamily development by right rather than requiring special use approval.
Fairview Transition	Between the business district core and surrounding lower-density neighborhoods.	Townhomes, duplexes, and Accessory Dwelling Units are allowed by right. Multifamily development is allowed with special use approval.	Expand by-right housing options to include additional Missing Middle Housing (e.g., triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and small multiplexes).

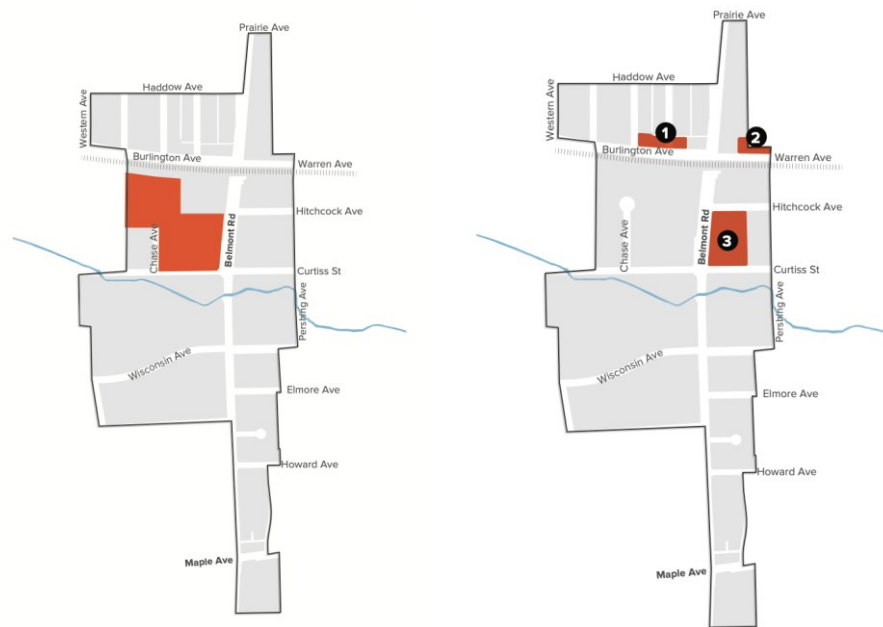
Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.1: Allow for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Development in Transit Corridors and Select Commercial Districts

Belmont Station Area:

- Several sites with potential for mixed-use or multifamily development.
- These sites are currently zoned for light manufacturing or general retail.

The Village could **consider creating new zoning districts** for the Belmont Station area, similar to those adopted for the Fairview Station area.



Opportunity Sites in the Belmont Station Area with Potential for Mixed-Use or Multifamily Development.

Source: Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.1: Allow for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Development in Transit Corridors and Select Commercial Districts



At approximately 74 acres, redevelopment of **The Grove** represents one of the Village's most significant opportunities to leverage existing infrastructure to help address local housing needs.



In St. Charles, the long-vacant 27-acre St. Charles Mall was redeveloped into **Prairie Centre**: a mixed-use neighborhood with 670 housing units, including 75 affordable senior apartments, alongside commercial and mixed-use buildings.

Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan recommendations for The Grove:

- Engagement with Stakeholders
- Conduct a Suitability Analysis
- Offer Zoning Incentives
- Leverage Excess Parking for New Uses
- Zoning Updates to Encourage Mixed-Use Development
- Conduct a Gap Analysis
- Consider Local Incentives
- Consider Other Incentives and Related Practices
- Consider State and Federal Programs

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.1: Allow for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Development in Transit Corridors and Select Commercial Districts

Ogden Avenue and Butterfield Road:

- Contain several sites with potential for mixed-use or multifamily development.
- Are almost entirely zoned *B-3 General Services and Highway Business*, which allows multifamily development as a special use but does not permit mixed-use development.

Potential adjustments that may be considered:

- **Updating uses allowed** to permit mixed-use and multifamily development by right.
- **Removing Floor Area Ratio (FAR)** regulation and instead regulating by height and setbacks.



Ogden Avenue and Finley Road



Multiple Sites Along Ogden Avenue



University Plaza on Butterfield Road

Opportunity Sites Along Ogden Avenue and Butterfield Road with Potential for Mixed-Use or Multifamily Development.

Source: Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.1: Allow for Multifamily and Mixed-Use Development in Transit Corridors and Select Commercial Districts

Next Steps

Use the Village's Planning and Zoning Commission to consider zoning amendments to implement the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan:

Modify zoning districts for the **Fairview Station area** to enable desired housing types by right rather than with special use approval.

Create new zoning districts for the **Belmont Station area**, similar to those created for the Fairview Station area.

Implement the strategies recommended by the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan for **The Grove** to facilitate redevelopment.

Consider adjustments to the B-3 General Services and Highway Business zoning district, which is applied along **Ogden Avenue and Butterfield Road**, to allow for increased housing supply in a manner that addresses local needs and strengthens these business districts.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.2: Update Regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units:

- Are a **second, smaller home** located on the same property as a single-family home.
- **Have their own** entrance, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, and living area.



An **internal ADU**, with a side entrance, that made use of an underutilized main-floor bedroom.



A **detached ADU** with a zero-step entry built for an aging parent who sold the primary house to his son.



A **coach house ADU**, a type of ADU located above a rear garage, with design features that complement the single-family home.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.2: Update Regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units

Recommended Changes to ADU Regulations in Downers Grove:

Regulation	R-1 through R-4 Zoning Districts	Fairview Transition Zoning District	Recommended Change
Type of ADU allowed	Only internal ADUs.	Internal or detached ADUs.	Allow internal, detached, and coach house ADUs.
Occupancy	The ADU must be occupied by a family member. Either the ADU or primary house must be occupied by a person age 62+ or with a disability.	The ADU must be occupied by a family member.	Remove requirements related to family relation, age, or physical ability.
Permitted	As a special use.	By right.	By right.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.2: Update Regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units

Next Steps

Utilize the Village's Planning and Zoning Commission to consider, and recommend to the Village Council, updates to ADU regulations to:

Allow greater flexibility in their **form and use**.

Ensure compatibility in size, height, and design.

Offer more predictability through a **by-right allowance** rather than special use approval.

Recognize the lower demand for **off-street parking** for ADUs.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

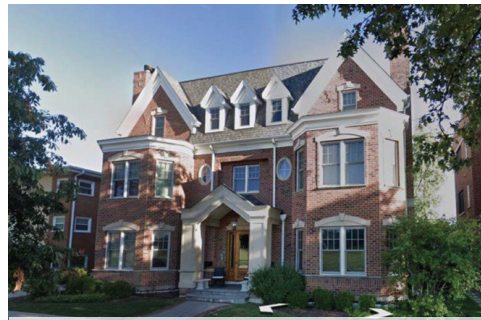
Strategy 3.3: Allow for Development of Missing Middle Housing in Select Areas

Missing Middle Housing:

- **House-scale buildings** with multiple units.
- **Integrates well** into existing neighborhoods.
- **First-floor homes** can be physically accessible.



Duplex in Geneva



Fourplex in LaGrange



Fourplex in West Dundee

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.3: Allow for Development of Missing Middle Housing in Select Areas



Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.3: Allow for Development of Missing Middle Housing in Select Areas

Next Steps

Review zoning regulations in municipalities that allow Missing Middle Housing in select areas, including Northbrook, Geneva, Warrenville, Bensenville, and Oak Forest.

As part of the ongoing Zoning Ordinance update, **use the Village's Planning and Zoning Commission** to consider:

Where in the community would be most suitable to allow Missing Middle Housing.

What types of Missing Middle Housing could be allowed in those areas.

Whether to create a new zoning district for Missing Middle Housing, **update the Village's R-6 Residential Apartment/Condo zoning district**, or **amend selected existing zoning districts** to permit different types of Missing Middle Housing.

How "test fits" can evaluate whether various regulations such as parking requirements would enable or prevent development of various Missing Middle Housing types.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.4: Explore an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to Leverage Private Sector Activity and Generate New Housing at a Mix of Price Points

An Inclusionary Housing Ordinance:

- **Leverages the private market** to add affordable homes in otherwise market-rate developments.
- **Must be tailored** to the local housing market **and adjusted** over time.



Prairie Center, St. Charles: 595 market-rate apartments and 75 affordable senior apartments.



555 Roger Williams Ave, Highland Park: 30-unit mixed use building with 5 affordable apartments.



Albion at Highland Park, Highland Park: 161 apartments, 17 of which are affordable.



1st Street Development, St. Charles: 5 mixed-use buildings, including 16 affordable apartments.

Inclusionary Housing Examples within the Chicago Region

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.4: Explore an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to Leverage Private Sector Activity and Generate New Housing at a Mix of Price Points

In the Chicago region, **suburban municipalities with Inclusionary Housing Ordinances** include Arlington Heights, Evanston, Highland Park, Lake Forest, Northbrook, Oak Park, St. Charles, Morton Grove, and Skokie.

To be successful, **Inclusionary Housing Ordinances** should reflect local market conditions.

Affordability Requirements

- **Size of development** the ordinance applies to.
 - **% of homes** in a development.
 - **Level of affordability.**
- **Fee in lieu** of providing affordable homes.



Cost Offsets or Incentives

- **Extra market-rate home** for each affordable home provided.
- **Fee waivers** for affordable homes provided.

Standard components of an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Recommendation #3: Implement Recommendations from the Guiding DG Comprehensive Plan that Provide for Additional Housing Opportunities

Strategy 3.4: Explore an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to Leverage Private Sector Activity and Generate New Housing at a Mix of Price Points

Next Steps

Arrange for Commissioners and Village Council members to **tour sites created through Inclusionary Housing Ordinances**.

Engage a consultant to shape and introduce an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance that is **tailored to Downers Grove** and facilitate a transparent process with the community.

Questions?



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