

Overview

In 2018 Mayor Tom Barrett pledged to improve affordable housing opportunities for 10,000 households in the City of Milwaukee over ten years.



Mayor Barrett announces the 10,000 Homes Initiative during his 2018 State of the City address

The 10,000 Homes Initiative assists low and moderate income households in neighborhoods throughout the city and includes projects ranging from single family home rehabilitation to large multi-unit housing construction. To achieve the 10,000 homes goal, the city is focused on three key strategies.

KEY STRATEGIES

- Support the development of new affordable housing
- Provide resources to preserve or improve existing housing stock
- Support and prepare individuals for home ownership

The strategies encompass a blend of new and existing housing programs and involve a wide range of partners and funding sources. Each home included in the initiative receives some type of city assistance, with a focus on projects that benefit households with an income of 80% or less of Area Median Income.

Background

The Great Recession and foreclosure crisis from 2007 to 2013 had significant negative impacts on Milwaukee's housing stock and neighborhoods. Since 2009, the city has taken action and collaborated on successful partnerships and programs to address the impacts of foreclosures, preserve and increase home ownership and quality affordable rental housing, and improve city neighborhoods.



Examples of city owned tax foreclosed properties

Millions of dollars in direct public and private support have been directed to Milwaukee's neighborhoods, complementing downtown Milwaukee's ongoing renaissance. Since 2014, the City of Milwaukee alone has sold over 3,000 City-owned properties, reclaiming over \$100 million in taxable value and increasing the city's capacity to fund critical services and infrastructure upgrades.

Milwaukee continues efforts to ensure that new development and investment directly benefit low and moderate income residents throughout the city. With the Mayor's 10,000 Homes initiative, that effort shifts from fighting back against foreclosure and into development and financial support of affordable housing opportunities in every neighborhood.



Approach

Affordable housing is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. Creating affordable housing with a broad impact requires the same strong partnerships and ingenuity that saw Milwaukee through the foreclosure crisis. Research shows that many families can struggle with housing access and affordability, and affordability issues don't follow neighborhood boundaries. The 10,000 Homes initiative focuses on a broader market: families making up to 80% of Area Median Income, or \$65,850 for a family of four. The initiative recognizes the scale of opportunity by focusing on the city's entire Community Development Block Grant area.

The city's approach to achieving the 10,000 housing unit goal includes a combination of both new and existing efforts.

APPROACH

1. Support and strengthen existing programs that are effective in achieving the city's housing goals.
2. Identify and implement new initiatives to address affordable housing needs and opportunities.

1. Building on Existing Efforts

The city is currently engaged in a number of housing programs and partnerships to promote affordable housing and home ownership. These include, for example, programs under the city's STRONG



STRONG Neighborhoods Plan information is shared at a home ownership fair

Neighborhoods Plan, federally funded housing and development programs, initiatives supported by Tax Increment Financing, and the work of the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee.

As the foundation of the 10,000 Homes Initiative, the city reviewed its housing programs and partnerships to: (1) consider the need to adjust or modify programs and guidelines; (2) explore opportunities to leverage additional resources and/or engage additional partners; and (3) evaluate opportunities to build capacity for expansion in existing successful programs.

As a result, several of the city's housing programs were modified in an effort to improve their effectiveness. For example, the city's Compliance Loan Program revised its eligibility guidelines to broaden eligibility for low income homeowners. In addition, post-sale renovation standards for city owned tax foreclosed properties were changed to focus on the restoration of essential services.

Furthermore, the city is evaluating the results of the Milwaukee Employment/Renovation Initiative (MERI), which provides modest grants and \$1 home sales to developers who purchased and renovated city tax foreclosures and provided employment opportunities for unemployed city residents. Using these "lessons learned," the city will determine future opportunities for continuation and expansion of the model in the future.



A worker renovates a Milwaukee Employment/Renovation Initiative home

2. New Initiatives

In addition to existing programs, recent planning and redevelopment efforts have identified new housing needs and opportunities. Milwaukee's *Equitable Growth through Transit Oriented Development* planning study recommends a number of strategies to expand and preserve affordable housing near transit.

Similarly, *A Place in the Neighborhood: An Anti-Displacement Plan for Neighborhoods Surrounding Downtown Milwaukee* recommends policies and programs to ensure that positive change in Milwaukee neighborhoods is equitable and benefits existing neighborhood residents.

Responding to the findings of these studies, the city is evaluating several new initiatives. Examples of potential new initiatives include expanding the use of Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) to support affordable housing, the creation of a Strategic Acquisition Fund to finance the acquisition of key properties that can be developed or preserved for mixed income and affordable housing, as well as a campaign to promote home ownership, among others.

Programs and Initiatives

Programs included in the 10,000 Homes Initiative are grouped into three main categories: (1) new housing units created, (2) existing housing units preserved or improved, and (3) individuals assisted in home buying.

The following is a list of programs/initiatives that fall under each of the three categories:

NEW HOUSING UNITS CREATED

- Community Development Grants Administration (CDGA) Funded Affordable Housing New Construction
- City-Supported New Housing Development
- Habitat for Humanity New Construction
- LIHTC-Financed Housing Development
- Westlawn Choice Neighborhood Initiative



The Griot, located in the historic Bronzeville neighborhood, offers affordable housing and is home to the America's Black Holocaust Museum (Photo credit: Core 4 Engineering)

EXISTING HOUSING UNITS PRESERVED OR IMPROVED

- CDGA-Funded Affordable Housing Rehabilitation
- Challenge Fund
- Compliance Loan
- DNS Restoration Agreement
- Essential Services Loan
- Habitat for Humanity Home Rehabilitation
- HACM Section 32 Homeownership Program
- Home Buyer Assistance Loan
- Home Rehabilitation Loan
- Milwaukee Health Department Lead Abatement
- LIHTC-Financed Housing Development
- Milwaukee Employment/Renovation Initiative (MERI) Grant
- Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP)
- Rehab to Rent Program
- Re-Invest in City Homes (RICH) Program
- Rental Rehabilitation Loan
- STRONG Homes Loan
- City tax foreclosure sale to affordable housing developers and entities that renovate or build homes for low-income families
- Tenant Transition to Ownership (T3OP)
- TID Loan



Before and after photos of a home renovated as a part of the Milwaukee Employment/Renovation Initiative

INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED IN HOME BUYING

- Homebuyer Counseling
- HACM Section 8(Y) Homeownership Program

It is important to note that not all homes that receive assistance through the above programs and initiatives are included in the 10,000 homes count. Only housing units that receive city assistance and benefit households with an income of 80% or less of Area Median Income or

benefit households located in the CDBG area are counted (in cases where household income is unknown, only housing units in the CDBG area are counted). In addition, a single housing unit may be impacted by multiple programs or initiatives. For example, in order to participate in the city's Homebuyer Assistance Loan Program, an individual must first complete homebuyer counseling. Likewise, a housing unit that receives lead abatement through the Milwaukee Health Department's lead abatement program may also fall under the Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP) program. In these cases each housing unit is counted only once towards the 10,000 homes goal.

Resources

There are several resources available for individuals who are interested in taking advantage of one of the programs included in the 10,000 Homes Initiative:

Consider purchasing a city owned tax foreclosed property. The City of Milwaukee has many unique opportunities for buyers interested in rehabbing tax-foreclosed properties for home ownership and investment. Properties may be eligible for matching funds to assist buyers with the repair costs through the Homebuyer Assistance Program.



Use the city's Housing Help tool. The City of Milwaukee offers a variety of resources and incentive programs to help current homeowners, home buyers, investors and non-profit organizations. The Housing Help tool allows you to filter available resources tailored to you (city.milwaukee.gov/Strong/HousingHelp)

Get involved. Keep up with the city on social media (city.milwaukee.gov/connect) to learn more and check the city's website (city.milwaukee.gov/Strong/Resources) to see stories and updates about our progress to 10,000 units. Sign up for E-Notify (city.milwaukee.gov/enotify) to learn more about development and purchase opportunities.

Additional Information

To learn more about specific programs included in the 10,000 Homes Initiative or to check on the city's progress, visit the city's STRONG Neighborhoods Plan website (city.milwaukee.gov/Strong/Resources).

Updated housing unit numbers and examples of recent projects and programs will be posted twice a year.

Useful Links

City Houses for Sale

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/DCD/CityRealEstate/CityHouses>

Housing Help Tool

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/Strong/HousingHelp>

STRONG Neighborhoods Plan

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/Strong>

Homebuyer Assistance Program

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/HBA>

STRONG Homes Loan Program

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/DCD/NIDC/STRONGloan>

Compliance Loan Program

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/CLP>

