

Draft Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Create a Variety of Housing Options

Goal: Promote a diverse and balanced housing supply

Objectives

- **Objective 1.1:** Expand “Middle” housing options (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, courtyard apartments, and Accessory Dwelling Units) within existing neighborhoods and new subdivisions.
- **Objective 1.2:** Maintain a balanced ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing units to support a diverse workforce.
- **Objective 1.3:** Direct high-density residential developments toward urban corridors with existing utility capacity and proximity to parks and commercial centers.
- **Objective 1.4:** Continue revitalization of housing in downtown

Policies

- **Policy 1.A (Zoning Flexibility):** Update the local zoning code to permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by-right on single-family lots, provided they meet clear design guidelines.
- **Policy 1.B (Infrastructure Alignment):** Direct large-scale residential subdivisions to areas within the current municipal boundary, adjacent lands to the city’s municipal boundary, or identified service areas where public water, electric and sewer can be efficiently extended.
- **Policy 1.C (Mixed-Use Integration):** Encourage upper-story residential units above commercial storefronts in the downtown business district.
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Goal 2: Preserve Historic Character & Neighborhood Integrity

Goal: Protect and maintain the architectural character and structural integrity of Columbus’s older residential neighborhoods, including its established historic districts, while ensuring they remain functional for modern living.

Objectives

- **Objective 2.1:** Reduce the degradation of the city's older housing stock by promoting proactive maintenance and neighborhood rehabilitation.
- **Objective 2.2:** Ensure that new infill development matches the scale, setbacks, and architectural rhythm of adjacent historic structures.
- **Objective 2.3:** Increase community awareness and utilization of historic preservation tax credits and housing repair programs.

Policies

- **Policy 2.A (Infill Design Guidelines):** Implement clear architectural and design guidelines for context-sensitive infill development in the city's historic neighborhoods through a neighborhood resource guidebook.
 - **Policy 2.b (Downtown Revitalization):** Promote and partner with developers on upper story redevelopment utilizing financial tools like the Community Development Investment grant and Restore Main Street loan program
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Goal 3: Improve Housing Affordability & Workforce Accessibility

Goal: Support the creation and retention of housing options that are affordable to the local workforce, young professionals, families, and seniors on fixed incomes.

Objectives

- **Objective 3.1:** Reduce the number of Columbus households that are "cost-burdened" (spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs).
- **Objective 3.2:** Provide diverse housing alternatives that allow older residents to "age in place" or downsize without leaving the Columbus community.
- **Objective 3.3:** Leverage state, federal, and private public-private partnerships to incentivize affordable housing creation.

Policies

- **Policy 3.A (Dimensional Modifications):** Modernize zoning standards to lower baseline minimum lot sizes, widths, and street width requirements, directly reducing infrastructure costs per housing unit.
- **Policy 3.B (WHEDA Partnership):** Partner with the *Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)* and private developers to utilize Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) for mixed-income developments.
- **Policy 3.C (Program Promotion):** Actively promote the *Southern Housing Region Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)* to help low-to-moderate-income homeowners fund critical structural repairs.

- **Policy 3.D (Program Creation):** Explore opportunities to fund and implement a Columbus Housing betterment fund to support rehabilitation of housing for low to moderate incomes and older housing stock.
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Goal 4: Optimize Parking & Sustainable Neighborhood Design

Goal: Promote modern neighborhood layouts that reduce excessive infrastructure costs, emphasize walkability, and prioritize green spaces over surface parking.

Objectives

- **Objective 4.1:** Right-size residential parking requirements to prevent over-building pavement and excess stormwater runoff.
- **Objective 4.2:** Design new neighborhoods with highly interconnected street networks, sidewalks, and trail systems that link to schools and downtown.

Policies

- **Policy 4.A (Parking Maximums):** Transition from rigid parking minimums to flexible parking standards and maximum thresholds to optimize residential parcel layouts.
- **Policy 4.B (Subdivision Multi-modal Standards):** Require all new residential development plats to feature complete sidewalk infrastructure, street trees, and, where applicable, dedicated bike lane connections.
- **Policy 4.C (Code enforcement):** Actively enforce the property maintenance code to discourage housing and property decline.

Goal 5: Housing Growth and Redevelopment

Goal: Maintain the existing housing type mix for the next 20 years

Objectives

- **Objective 5.1:** Coordinate the future land use map to reflect the current housing type mix
- **Objective 5.2:** Support communication and implementation of the uniform dwelling code

Policies

- **Policy 5.A (Growth):** Use a balanced approach of both infill, redevelopment, and outward expansion

- **Policy 5.B (Timing):** Implement tools for steady phased growth throughout the next 20 years