

The City of Zanesville

Community Development Department

401 Market Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701

Phone: (740) 617-4909

Don Mason
Mayor

Matthew A. Schley
Director

December 4th, 2023

Honorable Members of the State Senate Select Committee on Housing.

Originally founded in 1797, Zanesville is one of the oldest cities in Ohio. We share our ancestry with our friends in Marietta, including Colonel Rufus Putnam who was involved in both great, historic communities. Zanesville was also the Capital of Ohio from 1810-1812. While our history is impressive, it leaves our community with challenges that are commonly found in legacy cities throughout the country. Zanesville and other legacy cities are what is considered “built” environments which means that the majority of property within our communities is or has been constructed upon. The challenge that arises from this is that because of small lots sizes, such as 40’ x 120 lots, it is often cost prohibitive to build within the existing neighborhoods.

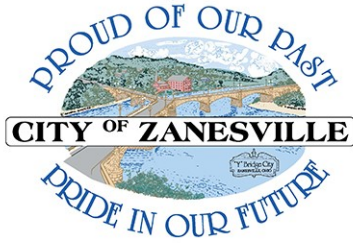
In 2019 and 2023, the City conducted two housing impact studies to better understand the current housing market conditions and develop strategies to address deficiencies. What was discovered is also not unique to Zanesville and common in older cities: an aging housing stock with new home construction being few and far between. Additionally, it was found that the City is not simply lacking in low income housing, but housing across all income brackets including new workforce, growing families and homes meant for a retiring or downsizing families. This deficiency has placed pressure on low income residents as they find themselves priced out of the market for lower quality homes.

In response to this issue, the City has developed numerous strategies with community partners aimed to take a holistic approach to housing development. We are working with housing developers on large sites with multi-unit housing. Those efforts will help with the immediate need for affordable housing.

In order to address the need to rebuild old neighborhoods, the City utilized American Rescue Plan Act funding to fund the renovation of single family homes owned by the Zanesville Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). The CIC will complete two of a projected fourteen rehabilitations by the end of the year with the goal to sell the homes at market rates. Both of these properties, within sight of each other in a blighted neighborhood, would have been demolished prior to implementation of the CIC’s Housing Restoration Program. Saving these two properties will help revitalize the neighborhood, and has already encouraged adjacent property owners to work on their properties.

Even as we invest in renovations to save abandoned houses, we have noticed that real estate investors are taking their cue from the CIC (City) and investing in renovations of nearby properties.

The benefit to utilizing a non-profit development corporation, such as a CIC, is that the CIC is not designed to generate profit nor is it subject to Capital Gains Tax which allows the corporation to sell homes at a reasonable price. The CIC will continue to pursue funding, housing stock, and opportunities for new construction into the future.



The City of Zanesville

Community Development Department

401 Market Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701

Phone: (740) 617-4909

Don Mason
Mayor

Matthew A. Schley
Director

In addition to the CIC, the Habitat for Humanity has also begun constructing and renovating single family homes within the City. Through partnerships with the City, Habitat will have constructed five new single family homes and renovated four homes by the end of 2024. This partnership ensures that nine new housing units will be available for home owners into the future.

The City utilizes every tax incentive available to it; from CRA exemptions to Opportunity Zones. None of the aforementioned programs have achieved the results that have been realized through the CIC and Habitat projects.

We believe funding to non-profit developers for the purpose of construction of market rate housing is imperative to the revitalization of legacy cities throughout Ohio. When the private sector fails to engage, the public sector must act to ensure ongoing stability for our communities. Funding is also needed to rebuild infrastructure such as curbs, sidewalks, parks and streets so that we can revitalize neighborhoods.

In closing, I would like to thank the Members of the Senate Select Committee on Housing for traveling outside of the Capitol of Ohio so that we can express our recommendations.