

SJC Housing Coordinator Report (09/2024)

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Projects and activities listed below, share what SJC HC has had some level of participation in over the last few months, and to help keep interested parties updated on SJC Housing Eco-System. Activities are based on SJC Housing Plan and overseen by the Human Services Commission (HSC) Executive Committee, and reviewed regularly & publicly at HSC General Membership Meetings. Goals (G), Objectives (O), & (S) from Housing Plan (see attached) are included with project titles.

Projects (Location) (Housing Plan Goal Reference):

Mendon Workforce Housing (Mendon) (G1O2S2&3,O3S1;G2O1S1&S3;G3O1S2)

-Multiple conversations with Village Manger, Builders, Investors, Bankers

-Updated Village Council 09.09.24

-Met with Village Manager & County Commissioner (Update on local projects) 08.28.24

-Presented possible Projects 08.12.24

-Met with Builder 07.26.24

Next Step: Get Renderings for 'Park Property', Follow up with private property & industrial park exchange

Goal: Get workforce housing in Mendon/Increase participation with Industrial Park (5-Duplexes; 20-units)

Sturgis Housing Commission (SJC) (G1,O3S1;G2)

-Discussed utilizing Nonprofit vs SHC entity.

-Strategy session with Exec. Dir. SHC & Housing Development Group 09.12.24

-Presented at SHC Board Meeting/supporting new housing projects 09.12.24

-Meet with Builder/Developer 07.26.24

Next Steps: Purchase rental property; fund tiny home project; start Mendon housing project

Goal: Have multiple housing projects in SJCounty (several units)

Hope United- Homeless Village (Sturgis Township- Grace Point Church) (G1;G2)

-Set dates for travel to Minnesota & Project strategy with Exc.Dir. 08.28.24

Next Step: Visit original Minnesota locations 09.26-28.24

Goal: Community to help homeless grow into greater stability (8-10 units & community amenities, multiple locations)

**Cooliage Housing Development (Three Rivers)*

-Attended & spoke at TRCity Commission Meeting

-Reached out to voting member

-Contacted Superintendent 07.25.24

-Discussed with City Manager & Developer

Next Steps: Provide Letter of support if needed.

Goals: Provide additional rental homes (38 units)

Rooted -Safe House/Centreville (Village of Centreville) (G1O4,G2)

-Checked in with Exec. Director

-Meeting with Exec Dir 07.31.24

Next Steps: Continue to promote capital campaign

Goal: Purchase and furnish a home for foster kids that are transitioning to family or foster care (1 home/multiple rooms), coordinated with DHHS/Renovate unused facility (approx. 16units)/Finnerman Property (24units 2024, 30 units 2025).

**St. Joseph St Lofts- LIHTC (Sturgis)(G1O3S1;G2O1S2)*

Next Steps: Meeting with Project Managers (October)

Goal: Several Units on abandoned property

City of Three Rivers Revitalization (G1O2S2&3,O3S1&S2;G2S3;G3O1S2)

-Met with County Commissioner to update on local projects 08.26.24

-Housing Development Corp Meeting 09.16.24

-Proposed property option to Habitat 09.16.24

-Toured Property with new developer 08.14.24

-TRClean Water Campaign Meeting 08.13.24

Next Step: Get a property approved for 2025 Habitat build. Research Developers for S. Main Property per City Manager.

Goals: Identify areas for removing &/or improving housing/properties. Strategic housing projects.

Affordable Senior Housing- LITHC (Three Rivers) (G1O3S1&S2;G2S3;G3O1S2)

-Discussed financial gap fill for "Old Hospital" Property in TR with Developer 07.23.24

Next Step: Follow up with potential gap funding.

Goals: Get large government grants for building projects in SJC

**Habitat for Humanity/Habitat Building Committee (SJC)*

-Met with Building Committee 07.10.24

Next Steps: See City of TR Revitalization

Goals: Get more affordable Housing in SJC

**Beginning Stages for participation or reaching out*

Grants/Funding (G1O2S3,O3S1;G2O1S1S2;G3O1S2)

-MI Neighborhood & CDBG Webinar 07.25.24

-Regional Housing Partnership Planning Session 09.03.24

-MiNeighborhood Repair Planning Meeting with RHP & local partners 09.06.24

-CDBG Training with MSHDA & Local Partners 09.16.24

-CDBG Strategy with MSHDA & local partner 09.19.24

Next Steps: CDBG Strategy Planning with SACF 09.25.24

Goal: Connect multiple fund sources to entities and organizations to accelerate housing projects & community improvement.

Education/Workforce (G1O2,O3S2;G2O1S1)

-Business After Hours w/ President of Glen Oaks discussed strategy 09.05.24

Next Steps:

Goal: Make sure our students are equipped to serve our county's growing needs for Building Trades/Skilled Labor

Annual Update/Contract:

Recording Video Testimonials 07.24.24

Recording Video Testimonials 07.31.24

Video Planning Session 08.05.24

Video Structuring Meeting 08.13.24

Video Editing Session 08.15.24

Strategy Session with Economic Partner SWMFirst 08.15.24

Strategy Session with Exec. Dir. TRACC 08.19.24

Video Editing Session 08.22.24

Exec HSC Meeting 08.22.24

Meeting with Teresa to discuss contract options 10.01.24

County Commission Meeting 10.15.24

Community Activities

- Ribbon Cutting Cottin Hardware & Lumber 07.27.24

- #GOALS Event 08.01.24

- Coffee & Connections 08.01.24

- Partners Meeting (Branch/SJC) 08.08.24

- Community Carnival (TR) 08.10.24
- Met community member to discuss hoarding clean-up 08.12.24
- HSC Meeting 08.13.24
- Viking Alumni Drop-In 08.14.24
- TRPromise Fund Raiser event 08.16.24
- Discover the Treasures (Langley Bridge) 08.17.24
- SACC Ambassador Meeting 08.20.24
- TRACC Ambassador Meeting 08.21.24
- Veterans Golf Outing (w/SACC Exc. Dir.) 08.23.24
- Golf Outing for Chamber 08.27.24
- Ribbon Cutting @ Armstrong Field 08.29.24
- Coffee & Connections 09.05.24
- SACC Annual Dinner Planning Meeting 09.09.24
- SpotLight video with SACC 09.09.24
- HSC Meeting 09.10.24
- SACC Ambassador Meeting 09.17.24
- Ribbon Cutting & Promotion SurfNet 09.18.24
- TRACC Ambassador Meeting 09.18.24
- Watershed Apartments tour & Promotion 09.18.24

Upcoming opportunities:

- TRACC Annual Dinner 09.25.24
- Guest Speaker at Sturgis Rotary 9.30.24
- Partner Meeting for Branch & St. Joe 10.02.24
- Coffee & Connections 10.03.24
- SACF Annual Meeting 10.03.24
- Community Clean up Day 10.05.24
- SACC Annual Dinner Planning Meeting 10.07.24
- HSC Meeting 10.08.24
- Housing Task Force set-up for Project Connect 10.10.24
- Project Connect 10.11.24
- TRACC Ambassador Meeting 10.16.24
- Speed Networking 10.17.24
- Restart Housing Collaborative Meetings

Speaking Opportunities

TR City Commission Meeting
 Three Rivers Coffee & Connections
 Sturgis City Commission Meeting
 Century 21 Affiliated
 SJCAR & Community Planning Committee
 Constantine Rotary
 Sturgis Rotary
 Sturgis Housing Commission
 County Commission Meeting

Sturgis Neighborhood Program
 Centreville Village Planning Meeting
 Florence Township Planning Meeting
 Adult Services Network
 Habitat Open House
 Area Agency on Aging
 Mendon Village Commission
 Burr Oak Planning Commission

Contacts/Activities/Communication with:

- Allen Edwin (AE)
- Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
- Birch Meadows Senior Care
- Career Tech Education (CTE)
- Cass County Treasurer
- Centreville, Village of
- CommonSail
- Community Action
- Constantine Area Community Foundation (CACF)
- Constantine Rotary
- Constantine, Village of
- EDGE Economic Development
- Florence Township
- Habitat for Humanity (Habitat)
& Construction Committee
- Home Builders Association (HBA)
- Hope United
- Human Services Commission (HSC)
- JMC Companies
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LICS)
- Mendon Housing Initiative
- Mendon Township
- Mendon, Village of
- Michigan Works (MI Works)
- Politician (Local, State, Federal)
- Regional Housing Partnership/Housing Ecosystem
Committee
- Rooted of SJC
- St. Joseph County (SJC)
- SJC Association of Realtors (SJCAR)
- Settled
- Southwest Michigan First (SWMFirst)
- State Rep. Steve Carra
- State Senator Jonathan Lindsey
- Sturgis, City of
- Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce
- Sturgis Area Community Foundation
- Sturgis Bank & Trust (SB&T)
& Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Committee
- Sturgis Housing Commission (SHC)
& non-profit
- Sturgis Neighborhood Program (SNP)
- TekModo
- The Barton Group
- The Lending Lady/#GOALS Team
- Three Rivers, City of
& Housing Development Corp (HDC)
- Three Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce
- Three Rivers Area Community Foundation
- Three Rivers Downtown Development Authority
- Thurston Woods Village
- Veteran Affairs

Chapter 3: Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Overview

This chapter outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies identified in the planning process. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the county's seniors, amenities, and diversity of housing options are central priorities of this plan; the three goals of this plan address those same aspects.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for the St. Joseph County Housing Ecosystem

Goal 1: Maintain a diversity of housing options for all residents of St. Joseph County

Objective 1: The Housing Task Force coordinates the maintenance a comprehensive inventory of the county's housing assets, identifying all existing housing assets by 2022.

Strategy 1: The County's Housing Task Force (HTF) is the central point of information on St. Joseph County's housing ecosystem. This group is empowered to keep the inventory updated, to share information among members, and to assist developers and landlords in making development decisions.

Strategy 2: HTF partners with the county assessor's/GIS office to create an inventory of housing data and assets in St. Joseph County. This inventory is updated annually.

Strategy 3: The Housing Task Force shares this inventory internally, and with local jurisdictions' economic development departments to enable them to provide technical assistance to potential landlords or developers, and to support development on sites with existing infrastructure access, nearby amenities, pre-approved site plans, and preassembled financial incentives.

Objective 2: Countywide institutions prioritize stabilization and collaborate to preserve existing households.

Strategy 1: The County Commission on Aging provides maintenance resources for senior homeowners by collaborating with partners to apply for funding to support maintenance of additional senior households.

Strategy 2: Local units of government in the county collaborate to create a shared system of prioritizing homes that need maintenance investments, and for identifying homes in critical need of preventative repairs and upgrades. These priorities for maintenance and repairs are recorded in the county's inventory of housing assets.

Strategy 3: Local units of government apply to funding sources or find partnerships to provide additional resources to support maintenance and preservation of households in each jurisdiction.

Objective 3: Local units of government work with economic development organizations to support at least one innovative housing construction project in the county every year

Strategy 1: In partnership and with support from the county's EDOs, local units of government and housing stakeholders explore effective programs or incentives that can increase the number of new developments and residents in the county. This could include any of the following initiatives:

- Create a program to offer foreclosed homes to new owners
- Build relationships with developers and bankers
- Evaluate how zoning ordinances or permitting processes may limit development
- Create and test zoning districts that explicitly allow accessory units and tiny homes, or pre-approve certain home types like the barn-do-minium
- Evaluate how zoning requirements may be limiting development already, such as setback, minimum square footage, parking, and other requirements
- Incentivize housing development in locations with existing assets, such as public utilities, near schools for families, near services for seniors, and in underutilized structures.

Strategy 2: Units of government build local capacity to support housing development projects, either through internal capacity-building and hiring, or by supporting organizations such as housing non-profits and churches doing this type of development in the county.

Objective 4: Housing stakeholders are involved in resiliency and emergency preparedness planning to ensure that the housing ecosystem can recover from shocks

Strategy 1: The Housing Task Force is listed as a resource in the County Sheriff Emergency Manager's pre-disaster mitigation plan annex, and can provide data on the housing ecosystem to inform disaster preparedness.

Goal 2: Increase available housing in the county for those who most need options with less maintenance, for the long-term health of the entire community

Objective 1: Stakeholders in government and community service organizations work to ensure that seniors who own homes have the resources they need to maintain their quality of life and their homes' value.

Strategy 1: The county's grant writer and the Commission on Aging work together to explore new funding streams for volunteer and/or county-supported maintenance programs that are targeted specifically for senior residents in farmhouses and single-family homes. Ideas for such programs include:

- Expand the Sturgis Neighborhood Program, Three Rivers rehabilitation agreements, COA home repair and care program, and/or Habitat for Humanity program countywide.
- Support workforce development and apprenticeship programs that increase employment opportunities for general contractors, plumbers, electricians, and other occupations critical to the health of the county's housing ecosystem. Identify corporate and employer sponsors for these workforce development programs, especially those targeted to youth.
- Create a program for the county to recommend or manage local/retired contractors who can provide low-cost or subsidized maintenance services to senior homeowners
- Recruit sponsorships and donations to create a tool lending library that can help neighbors access the resources they need to maintain their homes
- Explore programs that provide creative solutions to multiple housing issues at once – such as matching senior households in need of maintenance or income with individuals and families who need rental opportunities in the county; creating incentives for familial return migration; or allowing multi-generational housing (re)developments.
- Increase local education on homeownership and financial coaching opportunities for residents who are renters and/or potential new homeowners.

Strategy 2: Housing stakeholders build a relationship with St. Joseph EDGE to identify opportunities to increase the number of low-maintenance housing developments like townhomes, quality mobile home parks, condominiums, and duplexes for seniors in St. Joseph County. At the annual meeting, the economic development organization helps identify opportunities for creative reuse of existing buildings for multi-senior housing (like the COA remodel of the former Three Rivers Inn), and employers who may be willing to invest in workforce housing developments.

Strategy 3: Local planning commissions and chambers of commerce are encouraged to identify opportunities to increase the number of rental options in their jurisdictions through zoning, partnerships, and affordable housing development projects. This could include:

- Reuse of existing, unfinished subdivisions with smaller homes (and no basement)
- Duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes
- Expanding high-quality senior manufactured home parks like Kline's Resort
- Expanding rental options for seniors on fixed incomes
- Expanding rental options for workers with limited incomes
- Ensuring efficient and effective zoning for rental housing options remain in place
- Exploring partnerships with local employers to guarantee rental income for residential development projects

Goal 3: Collaborate to better promote the county's amenities to potential residents

Objective 1: Local units of government participate in collaborative efforts with chambers of commerce to promote existing amenities

Strategy 1: Local units of government will work with area chambers of commerce to develop a collaborative marketing strategy, such as a website, placemaking, or items for realtors' welcome packet, during its QOL planning process.

Strategy 2: In County QOL planning process, the County government should identify new amenities that partners, entrepreneurs, Southwest Michigan First!, and chambers of commerce could invest in to complement the amenities that already exist, such as restaurants, recreational opportunities, and tourism businesses.

Objective 2: Local jurisdictions agree that broadband is a necessary amenity, and commit to the shared goal of improving broadband access in the county's underserved areas.

Strategy 1: Local units of government help identify priority areas for investment, and support short and medium-term opportunities to expand reliable and affordable broadband access, with a speed target of at least 100/10 Mbps download/upload for all communities in St. Joseph County by 2025.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the goals, objectives, and strategies that will be needed to sustain and grow the county's housing ecosystem in the next 10 years. The next chapter, the Plan of Action, goes into more detail about steps that stakeholders can take immediately and over the next five years to ensure that this plan remains relevant and useful.