

## Plan Commission Considers Future Housing Needs & Opportunities

*August 8, 2005.* The focus of tonight's meeting was the Housing Element. However, before looking at that chapter, Adam Sayre of OMNNI Associates presented a draft survey instrument for the Plan Commission to review. It is hoped that the survey can be finalized in September, distributed in October, and tabulated before the end of the year. During the meeting the Plan Commission agreed that the survey should be mailed to every household in the Town. Mr. Sayre highlighted the major sections of the survey and discussed a few alternative question options. At the September Meeting, the survey will be reviewed in more detail before OMNNI finalizes it for distribution.

At this point in the meeting, Amy Emery facilitated a presentation of the draft Housing Element. The presentation focused first on the values, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and visions identified by Town Residents at the last several meetings that relate to housing. Using this information as a starting point, Ms. Emery highlighted some of the key aspects of the chapter:

- *Vision for 2025*
- *Profile of Existing Housing Conditions*
- *Future Housing Needs (based on population trends and projections)*
- *Housing Issues and Concerns*
- *Goals, Objectives and Policies*

A complete copy of the chapter is available on this project web site for review. The chapter reveals that **1,300 new housing units are anticipated by the year 2025**. To address this growth in the housing supply two central recommendations are provided in the chapter: infill housing and conservation subdivisions.

The development of *infill housing*, which may also be referred to as alternative housing or higher density housing (e.g. townhomes, condominiums, apartments, senior housing), is recommended adjacent to commercial areas to act as a buffer between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods. Infill housing is suggested as a strategy in response to resident comments expressing a need to provide additional senior housing choices, maintain an affordable housing supply, improve walkability, and also to preserve rural character. By providing some areas of higher density housing in the Town, additional housing units can be built without consuming vast areas of farmland, woodlands, and other natural spaces.

*Conservation subdivisions* were recommended as a development technique to be considered, primarily east of STH 55. This approach is similar to the recently proposed Rueben Ridge Subdivision. In this type of single-family residential development homes are clustered together leaving open space areas that remain as natural spaces, or perhaps even farmland. This approach provides farmers and other landowners with an option for development that still respects the character of the area. Conservation subdivisions can also serve as a transition area between the urban development in Kimberly, Combined Locks, Kaukauna and Appleton and the outlying rural, farm areas in Calumet and Brown Counties.

The Plan Commission will continue to review the draft chapter over the next month. At the next meeting, time will be spent reviewing the goals, objectives and policies provided at the end of the Housing Element in more detail.

All residents are welcome to attend any planning meeting. The next meeting will be held on September 12, 2005 at the Town Hall. During the meeting, the Transportation Element will be the primary focus of discussion.