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**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**Assembly GOP introduces workforce housing package**

In early October republican members of the state assembly introduced a package of bills to encourage the remodeling and construction of more workforce housing units in Wisconsin. The package of bills was introduced, and several bills quickly moved through the assembly housing committee after being slightly altered after the public hearing on October 12.

Below is a link to each bill was asking members of the state assembly to support with a summary of how they will be helpful.

* [Assembly Bill 603](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/amendments/ab603/asa1_ab603.pdf) would create shovel ready workforce housing development sites where impact fees would be capped at $5000. WBA was able to add a provision to this bill that would also require a needs assessment be done to assure water and sewer hookup fees correspond with the cost to install those facilities.
* [**Assembly Bill 605**](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/proposals/ab605.pdf) would require a municipality who receives funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to use at least one million dollars or at least 10 percent of the funds received to pay for workforce housing infrastructure, low or no interest loans for the remodeling of workforce housing units, low or no interest loans for new workforce housing units, and the redevelopment of vacant commercial sites like shopping malls.
* [Assembly Bill 606](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/amendments/ab606/asa1_ab606.pdf) creates a sales tax exemption for new or remodeled workforce housing units. This tax exemption for materials would drive down the cost of a newly constructed or remodeled workforce homes.
* [**Assembly Bill 607**](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/proposals/ab607.pdf) allow the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority to make low or no interest loans for structural improvements or the removal of lead paint from homes. If passed this bill would allow families to pay for needed improvements to homes that they may not normally be able to afford.
* [**Assembly Bill 608**](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/proposals/ab608.pdf) would require municipalities to provide at least one district where multifamily housing could be built and permit residential use at a density of at least 16 residential units per acre in commercial districts “by right, not subject to any conditional or special use permits".

AB 608 would also establish a 90-day expedited process for the approval of workforce housing projects and approval of any proposed workforce housing project that is consistent with local comprehensive plans and zoning.

Passage of both provisions would require that multifamily is always an option to be built in a community and allow for a quicker review and approval of workforce housing units.

* [**Assembly Bill 609**](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2021/related/proposals/ab609.pdf)allows for the creation of local housing investment funds by using increases from designated property by subtracting the base value from the equalized value of the taxable property.

Money in the local housing investment fund can then be used to increasing the supply of housing available for persons with moderate income, including providing financing for new workforce housing units, and funding infrastructure costs related workforce housing.

One additional point, all the above-mentioned bills have been altered so they use the same definition for workforce housing. The definition of workforce housing was created in consultation with a University of Wisconsin professor who has studied the topic of workforce housing shortage in Wisconsin.

The new definition of workforce housing is:

*“Housing to which all of the following apply: a. Housing costs, as defined under s. 16.301 (3) (a) and (b), do not exceed, or are not expected to exceed, 30 percent of the household's annual income. b. For housing intended to be rented, initial occupancy by individuals whose annual household income is 60 percent of area median family income to 100 percent of area median family income in the county in which the housing is located, as published annually by the federal department of housing and urban development. c. For housing intended to be occupied by the owner, initial occupancy by individuals whose annual household income is not more than 120 percent of area median family income in the county in which the housing is located, as published annually by the federal department of housing and urban development.”*

These bills are expected to be voted on by the full state assembly the week of October 25. It is likely that once these bills move to committees in the state senate the process will slow down and changes in some, or all of the bills, may be necessary prior to them moving the floor of the state senate for a vote.