



Mayor's Advisory Commission on Housing 2025 Progress Report & 2026 Outlook

2025: A Year of Foundational Progress

Since the first meeting of the **Mayor's Advisory Commission on Housing** on April 24, 2025, the City of Carmel has moved with focus and intention to evaluate housing inventory and regulations, and to assess evolving community needs. The foundation of our work rests on the [Findings and Recommendations Report](#) of the Mayor's Housing Task Force, which convened in 2024.

Key Milestones In Progress:

- **Strategy & Vision Plan:** Extensive data gathering to shape the long-term housing roadmap.
- **Missing Middle Study:** Collaboration with **Opticos Design** to actively review zoning barriers to facilitate "Middle Housing" (house-scale buildings with multiple units that fit comfortably into walkable neighborhoods, offering a much-needed variety of smaller and more affordable housing options).
- **Data & Transparency:** Initiatives to publish maps and quantitative inventory data are underway to improve community communication.

See the 2024 Housing Task Force Recommendations: Progress Tracker on pages 4-5.

The Data Story: Carmel's Current Landscape

The following data highlights the gap between current inventory and changing demographic needs.

Housing Inventory & Zoning

The current market is heavily weighted toward large, single-family detached homes, which aligns with historical zoning practices but presents challenges for first-time buyers and retirees.

- **Zoned Land:** 89.2% of land permits residential, but 76.8% is restricted to **Single Family Only**.
- **Typical Home:** 69.6% of inventory is detached single-family; over half of all dwellings (51.2%) have 4+ bedrooms, and 72% are 2+ stories.

Sources: Carmel Department of Community Services, U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Affordability & Market Price

With a median household income of **\$141,505**, a sustainable monthly housing cost is approximately **\$3,500** or a sales price in the **\$450,000-\$550,000*** range. However, recent inventory shows a clear shortage of entry-level housing options. These attainable homes are essential for attracting and retaining young professionals, retaining seniors looking to downsize, supporting workforce needs, and creating pathways for first-time homeownership—key factors in sustaining Carmel’s long-term economic vitality.

- **Over \$600,000:** 46.2% of inventory.
- **\$300,000 - \$600,000:** 46.7% of inventory.
- **Under \$300,000:** Only 7.1% of inventory.

**Sales price range assumes principal, interest, taxes, insurance, 6.5-7% interest rate and 20% down payment.*

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024 ACS 5-Year Estimates, MIBOR Realtor Association

The Cost Burden

Housing is considered "affordable" when it consumes less than 30% of household income.

- **Renter Households:** 42.6% are cost-burdened.
- **Owner Households with mortgages:** 15.5% are cost-burdened.
- **Total Impact: 7,483 of 28,782 (26%) households** in Carmel currently exceed the 30% affordability threshold.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Strategic Focus: "The Missing Middle"

A primary goal for 2026 is facilitating **Missing Middle Housing**— house-scale buildings with multiple units that fit comfortably into walkable neighborhoods, offering a much-needed variety of smaller and more affordable housing options.

- **Potential Targets:** Duplexes, Fourplexes, Courtyard Buildings, and Cottage Courts.
- **Benefits:** Offers neighborhood-sensitive design while expanding affordable options for a wide range of households, including retirees looking to downsize, middle-income earners, young couples, millennials starting careers or families, single professionals, couples without children, single-parent households, and workforce households such as teachers, police officers, firefighters, healthcare workers, and government employees. It also supports intergenerational living.

2026 Outlook: The Road Ahead

The coming year focuses on transitioning from data gathering to policy implementation.

Upcoming Deliverables:

- **March 26, 2026:** Presentation by **Opticos Design** on Missing Middle Housing in Carmel.
- **Zoning Reform:** Active assessment of current regulations to identify and remove barriers to diverse housing types.

Call to Action: Indiana House Enrolled Act 1001

The Commission is monitoring and evaluating state-level efforts (HB 1001) to increase housing supply and affordability. Carmel's strategy is to **proactively lead** by:

1. Maintaining **local jurisdiction** over design and form to protect neighborhood character.
2. **Decreasing barriers** in building needed housing types to reduce timelines and costs.
3. Ensuring housing diversity meets **underserved market needs** through prudent, locally sensitive planning.

Learn More about the Commission

Visit the Carmel Mayor's Advisory Commission on Housing webpage

(<https://www.carmel.in.gov/183/Mayors-Advisory-Commission-on-Housing>) to find:

- An overview of the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Housing and its purpose
- Information on Commission members and meetings
- Key housing topics being studied
- Links to housing reports, resources, and related materials

2024 Housing Task Force Recommendations: Progress Tracker

Following the **September 2024 Findings and Recommendations Report**, the City has transitioned from study to implementation through the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Housing. Below is the status of the 13 primary recommendations as of the **January 22, 2026** Commission meeting.

Status	Recommendation	2025/2026 Activity & Progress
 Completed	1. Establish Advisory Commission	Executive Order SF-2024-21 created the permanent Commission; first meeting held April 24, 2025.
 In Progress	2. Develop a Housing Strategy & Vision Plan to guide Carmel's housing future by defining needs, setting clear goals, and strong community participation.	Extensive data gathering and demographic analysis concluded in late 2025. Policy goals and recommendations will begin in 2026.
 In Progress	5. Facilitate Missing Middle	Study with Opticos Design is active; progress and community presentation scheduled for March 26, 2026 .
 In Progress	8. Zoning Assessment	Reviewing regulations to identify barriers to diverse housing types (ongoing).
 In Progress	10. Maps & Data Publishing	Developing public-facing inventory dashboards and goal-tracking maps.
 In Progress	12. Infill & Redevelopment of underutilized commercial and parking lots	Priorities include the CNO campus and the US-31 Corridor. Residential examples to be developed with the Missing Middle Housing Study.

Status	Recommendation	2025/2026 Activity & Progress
 In Progress	13. Collaboration	Active coordination with local, regional and state partners regarding housing supply.
 Ongoing	7. Green Space Acquisition	Integrated as a permanent strategy for all new city-led development initiatives.
 Ongoing	3. Protect Existing Single-Family Neighborhoods	Ongoing efforts as developments and subarea plans are proposed and reviewed. Prioritized for inclusion in the Strategy & Vision Plan (see recommendation 2).
 TBD	4. Build upon the Comprehensive Plan	Review and evaluate existing housing policies, draft additional policies, if needed. Prioritized for inclusion in the Strategy & Vision Plan (see recommendation 2).
 TBD	6. Apartment Strategy	Future policy development for single-use and mixed-use multi-family developments.
 TBD	9. ADU Committee	Exploring the establishment of a committee for Accessory Dwelling Units.
 TBD	11. Housing Repair Program	Feasibility study and funding source identification pending.