

Agenda
Ottawa County Housing Commission
West Olive Administration Building – Conference Room F
12220 Fillmore Street, West Olive, MI 49460
Monday, March 9, 2026, 10:00 am



1. Call to Order
2. Establish Quorum
3. Public Comments
4. Approval of the Agenda for the March 9, 2026 Meeting
5. Approval of the [Minutes](#) from the February 17, 2026 Meeting
6. Old Business
 - A. RLF Implementation Update (David deVelder, Senior Lendor, IFF) - *Standing Quarterly Agenda Item*
 - B. Small Footprints Homes Initiative
7. New Business
 - A. Finalize/Adopt the Strategic Planning Session [Action Plan](#)

Motion: To approve the Ottawa County Housing Commission Action Plan 2026
 - B. Draft Bylaws for Advisory Housing Board
 - C. Next Steps/Planning for Transition
8. Public Comments
9. Other Business/Discussion Items
 - A. Next Meeting: April 16, 2026 (10:00 a.m.)
10. Adjournment

UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

OTTAWA COUNTY HOUSING COMMISSION

DATE: February 17, 2026

PLACE: Ottawa County Fillmore Complex, Conference Room F

PRESENT: Ken Brune, Pat Harmon, Klynt Marcusse, Jared Schuitema

ABSENT: Doug Zylstra

STAFF: Stephanie Oesch, Joe Pierce, Paul Sachs, Pam VanderMolen

PUBLIC: Christina Fort, Erin Kamphuis, Barb Koning, Chris Marco

CALL TO ORDER

President Harmon called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was present to do business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

HC 26-13 Marcusse moved to approve the Agenda for February 17, 2026. The motion passed.
UNANIMOUS

HC 26-14 Brune moved to approve the Minutes from February 5, 2026. The motion passed.
UNANIMOUS

BUSINESS

Joe Pierce explained the draft action plan (results of the February 5, 2026 Strategic Planning Session). Pierce facilitated a strategic planning review with the Commission.

Please refer to the OCHC 2026 Action Plan for further detail on the results of the facilitated discussion that ensued for the remainder of this Agenda item. (To be distributed once finalized).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

OTHER BUSINESS/DISCUSSION ITEMS

President Harmon stated that the next Housing Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5. The Commission discussed a potential reschedule. VanderMolen will email the Commission with potential dates for rescheduling the March 5 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

HC 26-15 Brune moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:38 a.m. The motion passed.
UNANIMOUS



The OCHC participated in a facilitated strategic planning exercise on February 6, 2026. The purpose of that exercise was to identify tangible and recommended actions the Commission and the Department of Strategic Impact can pursue to help effectively address the need for additional housing stock in Ottawa County. The result of that exercise is summarized below (with images from exercise and public survey results included at end):

Mission To seek, support and empower housing solutions for current and future County residents

Vision Fostering a collaborative, cross-sector ecosystem that provides a wide range of needed housing options while valuing the use of local tax dollars

Goals and Objectives

1. Reinvent the Housing Commission

- a. **Transition from a statutorily regulated *commission*** to a more nimble and locally responsive “advisory” board
 - i. Composition: 9-11 members appointed by the Board of Commissioners
 1. Two county commissioners representing different constituent bases (one - rural township; one - urbanized community)
 2. Other key representation: local zoning experience, finance/lending, construction, Realtors/brokers, and civic leaders
 3. Existing Housing Commissioners reappointed to serve on new advisory board
 - ii. Ability to establish working subcommittees (and independently make appointments within the advisory board) as necessary to help overcome key, identified barriers to creating needed housing
 1. Subcommittees could comprise of focus areas including, but not limited to, Finance, Land Use and Zoning, Development/Construction, and Community Partners
- b. **Prepare and share Draft Bylaws** (with term expectations) for new Advisory Board with the BOC
- c. **Update MOU with Grand Rapids Housing Commission** in light of new Housing Advisory Board

2. Overcome Local Zoning Barriers

- a. **Support local officials**, staff, and land use planning entities in examining/implementing opportunities where processes and/or ordinances can be enhanced to facilitate the construction of reasonably priced for-sale homes, and rental product (e.g. assess existing requirements involving minimum lot sizes and minimum homes sizes, as well as the allowance of accessory dwelling units and “granny flats”)
- b. **Study/identify opportunity parcels** for development potential in collaboration with local units of government and community stakeholders. Such parcels can include vacant/underutilized sites, including properties owned by public sector entities, nonprofits, churches, for-profits, etc.
- c. **Develop high-level site designs** on *opportunity* parcels to “test fit” against local zoning. Such visuals of possibilities on real-world sites can help to readily identify needed zoning adjustments to facilitate new, needed housing that maintains/respects community character



3. Facilitate the Construction of Needed Housing

- a. **Connect developers (non-profit and for-profit) to opportunity parcels**
 - i. Serve as a thought-partner in examining best use and site design characteristics
 - ii. Provide support as needed and able in navigating local zoning and community priorities
 - iii. Help reduce local administrative barriers to new housing construction from the perspective of the development community
- b. **Leverage local business interest** in supporting workforce housing
 - i. Explore *impact investment* opportunities
 - ii. Encourage local employer advocacy for needed housing development projects
- c. **Curate market demand and public support** for *traditionally sized* homes (i.e. small footprint)
- d. **Support and advocate for fiscally responsible capital stacks** in collaboration with developers and local stakeholders
 - i. Prioritize non-public tax dollar incentives
 - ii. Explore other/creative financial tools (e.g. local lenders, land bank authority, brownfields)
- e. **Pursue demonstration (i.e. showcase) projects** in collaboration with community partners
 - i. Intermixed housing development concepts (large and small footprint)
 - ii. Shared well/septic among multi-unit designs without access to infrastructure
 - iii. Maximize design efficiency (e.g. energy, insulation, materials, layout)
 - iv. Cost- and water-conscious landscape designs
- f. **Explore the implementation of a Home Rehabilitation program** to increase readily available housing stock

4. Foster a Collaborative and Proactive Housing Ecosystem

- a. **Host educational and idea-sharing opportunities** (e.g. roundtables, workshops, expos, listening sessions, best practice demonstration)
 - i. For-profit and non-profit developers
 - ii. Builders/contractors/trade associations
 - iii. Financial institutions
 - iv. Local employers and economic development organizations (Lakeshore Advantage, West Michigan Works!)
 - v. Local housing agencies
 - vi. Local units of government
 - vii. Residents
- b. **Engage and support local agencies** that serve:
 - i. Unhoused populations
 - ii. Eviction prevention
 - iii. Senior citizens
 - iv. Persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities
 - v. Low-income households
 - vi. Young professionals and workforce development



ACTION PLAN 2026



Hands-on Strategic Planning

Led by DSI Special Projects Coordinator Joe Pierce, Housing Commissioners and DSI staff engaged in a strategic planning session on Feb. 6, 2026.

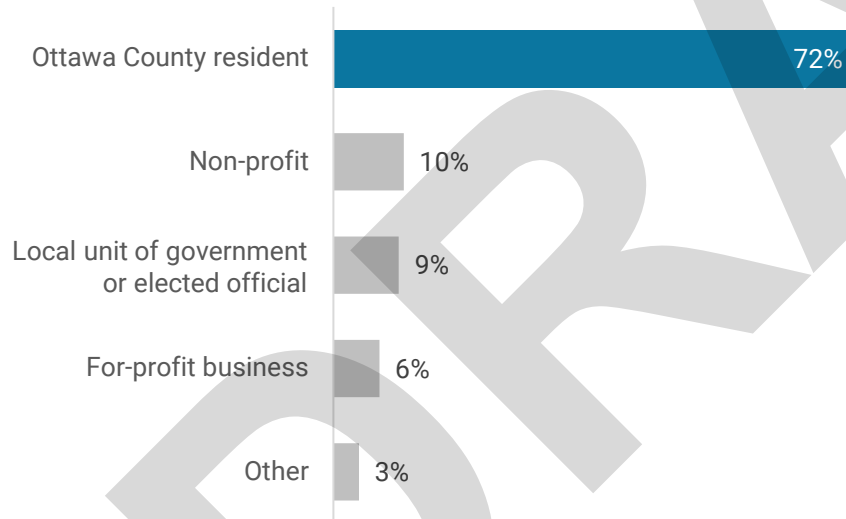
Ottawa County Housing Commission

2026 Housing Survey Results

Total survey respondents: **718**

Number of emails collected: **171**

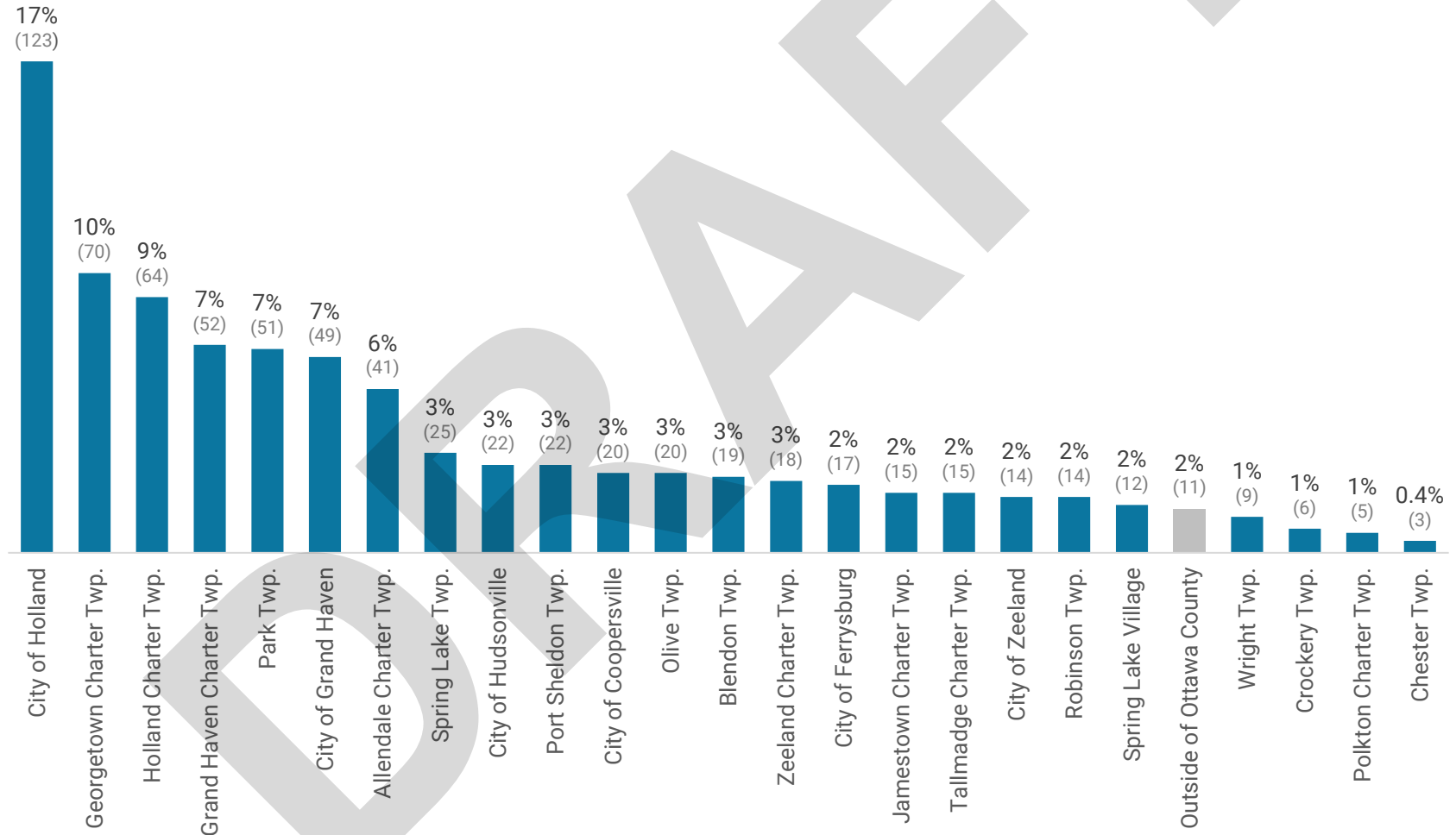
72% of survey respondents said that the category “**Ottawa County resident**” best describes them



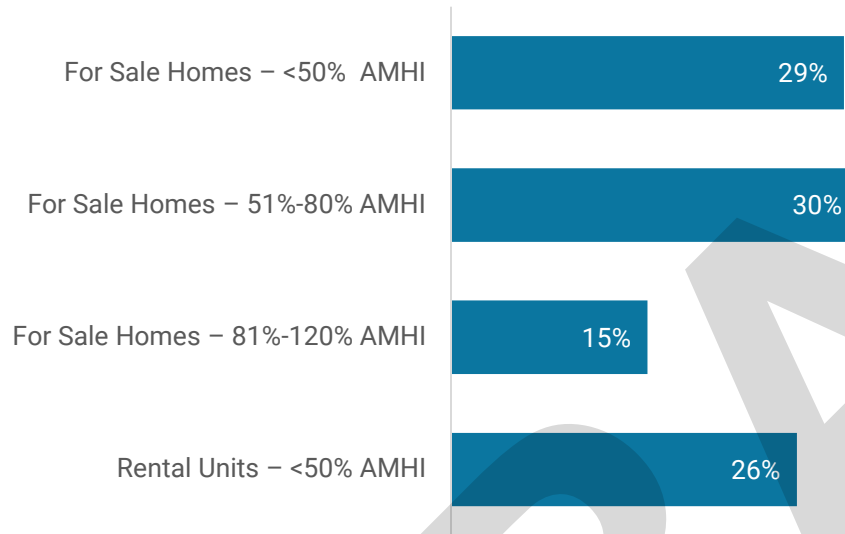
Other respondents included former Ottawa County residents, participants from the Allegan portion of the City of Holland, participants from religious organizations, and more

98% of respondents live in Ottawa County

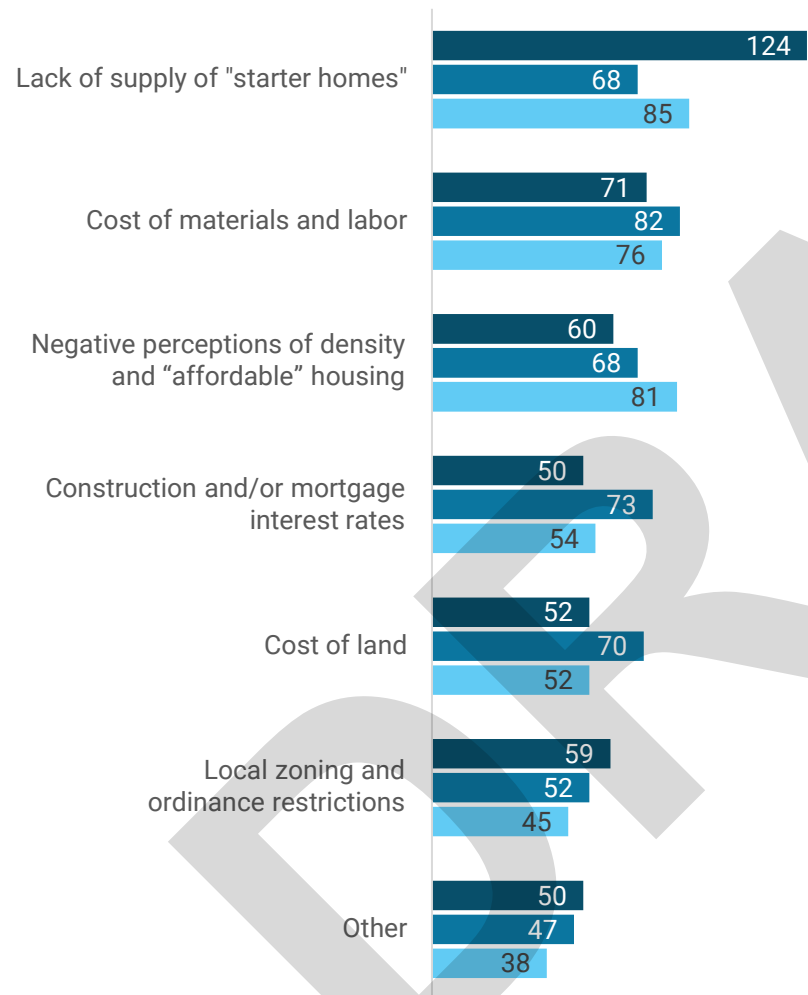
All Ottawa County cities and townships had residents participate in the survey



Between 15% and 30% of respondents identified each of the off-track housing categories as the **greatest housing need** in Ottawa County



Top seven **challenges/barriers** to creating housing needs options
by total number of **1st place**, **2nd place**, and **3rd place** votes:



Respondents added a range of barriers using the "other" option, including the growth of short-term rentals, bureaucratic hurdles, and a political climate that makes policy change difficult.

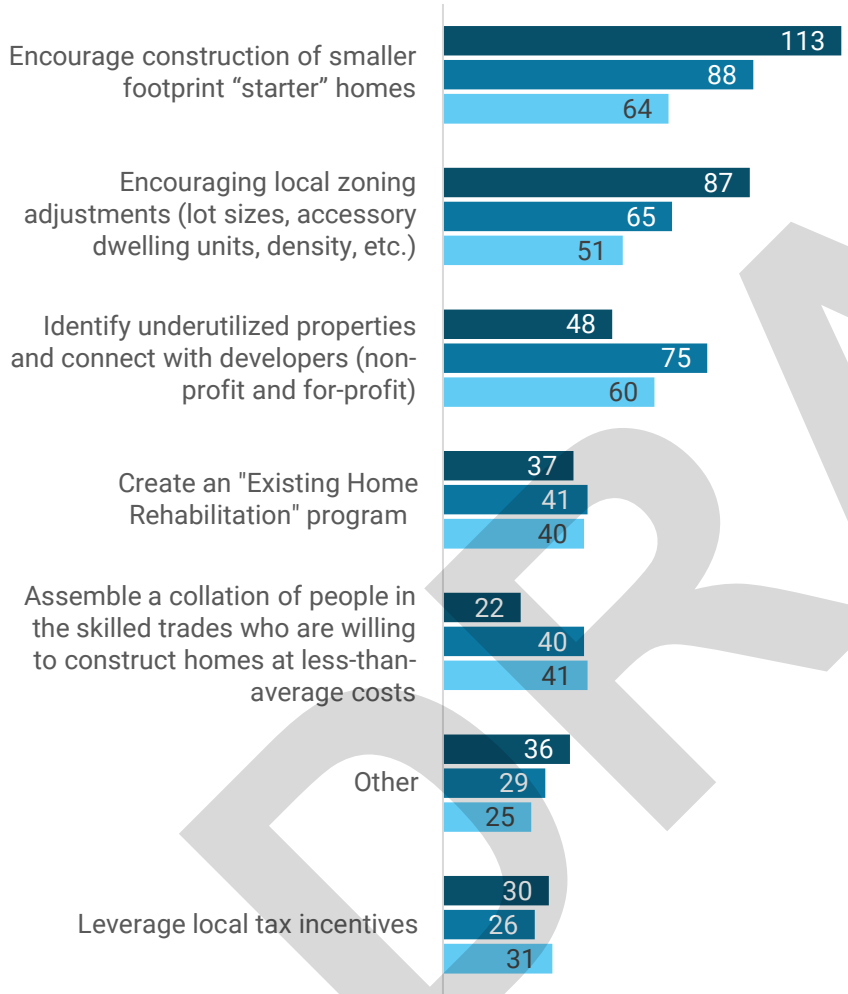
High development costs, infrastructure limitations, and low wages reduce both supply and access, while an overemphasis on rental housing and limited builder interest in affordable homes further constrain options.

Transportation challenges, concerns about property taxes, and countywide groundwater sustainability add additional complications.

There is also a shortage of housing for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities, too few opportunities for low-income residents to provide input, and heavy competition from investors purchasing homes or converting them to rentals.

Stigma, NIMBYism, and the poor quality of existing affordable homes were also identified.

Top seven **opportunities** to create more housing options by total number of **1st place**, **2nd place**, and **3rd place** votes:



Respondents offered numerous strategies that often center on:

- creating more homes for seniors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- expanding funding for nonprofit developers through grants
- increasing low-interest loans
- additional philanthropic support
- removing unnecessary bureaucratic barriers that slow projects down.

They also emphasize addressing:

- cultural resistance to affordable housing
- designing mixed-use and amenity-rich community spaces
- increasing affordability through rent caps and more dedicated affordable units
- revitalizing existing housing to preserve and improve what already exists.

Other ideas respondents shared for improving affordable housing include expanding co-ops and land trusts, exploring alternative construction methods such as prefab, manufactured, mobile, and modular homes. People also suggested giving nonprofits more authority and resources, learning from successful approaches in nearby communities like Muskegon and Kent, and offering additional incentives to encourage development. Reusing blighted or underutilized properties, protecting farmland from unnecessary development, and preventing landlords from requiring tenants to earn three times the rent were also highlighted as ways to broaden access and strengthen housing options.

All open responses shared by respondents are available in the Appendix, as well as a full list of the “other” options that respondents provided.