

**From:** [Wasniewski, Darrin](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Legistar 88735 and 88736  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 15, 2025 11:12:18 AM  
**Attachments:** [25.07 Madison duplex support letterhead.pdf](#)

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from dwasniewski@aarp.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please accept these comments in support of Legistar items 88735 and 88736. Thank you.

Darrin Wasniewski  
Senior Associate State Director- Community Outreach  
AARP Wisconsin

222 W. Washington Avenue  
Suite 600  
Madison, WI 53703

Phone:: 608-286-6303

[Book time with Darrin.](#)



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608-286-6300 | [aarp.org/wi](http://aarp.org/wi) | [wistate@aarp.org](mailto:wistate@aarp.org)  
twitter: @aarpwi | [facebook.com/AARP Wisconsin](https://facebook.com/AARPWisconsin)

15 July 2025

## **AARP WISCONSIN COMMENTS ON LEGISTAR 88735 & 88736**

My name is Darrin Wasniewski and I reside in district 10. This evening, I represent AARP Wisconsin and speak in support of Legistar items 88735 and 88736 which, in our opinion, supports the development of Middle Housing. In our 2023 report, *Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing*, we outline five reasons AARP supports promoting options in housing:

- Diverse housing options for those wanting smaller units and yards.
- Affordability by design when housing costs are spread over more units.
- Smart land use and sustainability because Middle Housing can be focused in areas already supported by city infrastructure.
- Equity and homeownership in instances where smaller units are built, or rental income can help support housing costs.
- Aging in place through downsizing options.

Every few years AARP conducts its Home and Community Preference survey where we ask our members their experience with livability in their homes and communities. From the earlier versions to the most recent in December 2024, our members have expressed an overwhelming desire to remain in their homes, and at least their communities, as they age, but less than half believe that's possible, although 71 percent believe their community is poised to meet their needs as they grow older.

Let's let that sink in for a moment. People wish to stay and they believe their community will meet their needs, but they don't believe their current home or community is equipped to do so due to lack of housing choice. Exploring further we find that sixty percent of respondents indicate that they would consider moving to lower housing costs and be in a place that's easier to maintain. Again, we've built our communities, we've built Madison, in a fashion that limits housing choice.

I shared with our members in a recent e-mail about my experience talking with neighbors in Hill Farms. By all accounts, this is a textbook community to grow older in-walkable streets with access to shopping and groceries, access to BRT for when you need to go further and cannot drive, and a great sense of community. They all recognized these benefits, but they also were aware of a big barrier to making this so. The homes they raised their families in were too large, or not designed for accessibility,

and there are no other choices for them to downsize into while remaining rooted in their community.

In AARP's publication, *Expanding Middle Housing Options- A Guide to Local Middle Housing Regulations*, reviews case studies of communities across the country and provides suggestions for local regulation to promote housing choice. The guide offers principles to keep in mind when developing housing regulations- **Allow broadly, exclude narrowly** and **Distribute equitably to expand opportunity**. We applaud the mayor and staff for developing proposals that capture the spirit of these principles. By allowing duplexes "by-right" across the city and flag lots, where applicable, Madison is working toward providing its residents housing choices.

**From:** [Ryan Clark](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** 2025 Housing Forward Proposals  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025 8:24:28 AM

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As a Madison resident and homeowner, I would like to voice my support for the Housing Forward proposals. I appreciate the efforts to enable homeownership for more people in the city in a time when most recent development have been focused on luxury apartments.

Thank you,  
Ryan Clark

**From:** [noreply](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** [All Alders] Housing Forward  
**Date:** Monday, June 30, 2025 6:55:34 PM

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Recipient: All Alders:

Monday, June 30, 2025 – 6:54pm

Samuel Deetz

he/him

2191 S Wallace St

Wichita, Kansas. 67218 Yes, by email. [samueldetz@gmail.com](mailto:samueldetz@gmail.com) All Alders Housing Forward

Dear Alders,

I would like to express my support for continuing the Housing Forward policies. As part of that, I hope the city would consider removing minimum parking mandates which are the single largest factor preventing more housing construction. While I no longer live in the city, a couple of my friends do and keep me well informed of how difficult it is trying to find housing. My brother moved to Fitchburg in February in order to find a reasonably affordable apartment. This should not be necessary. It must be easier to find housing that is attainable for all income levels and removing all minimum parking mandates is the most important step in getting there. There are a growing number of cities that have done this including La Crosse, Fitchburg, West Allis, and Franklin. I hope you will consider making this change, which will also help to address sustainability, walkability, and numerous other city goals.

Thank you,

Samuel Deetz

**From:** [Vidaver, Regina](#)  
**To:** [Windsor, Liz](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Support for Housing Forward Proposals  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 9, 2025 12:39:38 PM

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Hi Liz,

Can you please add this public comment to legistar?

Thank you!

Regina

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**From:** Tim Gruber <timgruber608@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 8, 2025 10:25 AM  
**To:** Vidaver, Regina <district5@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Support for Housing Forward Proposals

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Alder Vidaver,

I am in support of all three ordinance changes in the Housing Forward proposal. The proposals are one of many needed ways to help keep housing affordable in Madison. I would be happy to speak in support of the proposals at a council meeting if it would be helpful.

Thank you for your support of the proposals.

Tim

**From:** [Jonathan Mertzig](#)  
**To:** [Tishler, Bill](#)  
**Cc:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Housing Initiatives at Common Council this week  
**Date:** Sunday, July 13, 2025 5:03:57 PM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from [jmmertzig@uwalumni.com](mailto:jmmertzig@uwalumni.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alder Tishler and members of the Common Council,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the package of zoning reforms that will be considered at this week's Common Council meeting, specifically, these three measures:

- Facilitating "deep residential lots," often known as "flag lots" [Legistar #88735]
- Allowing duplexes throughout residential districts [#88736]
- Permitting more construction of apartments "by right" in our downtown and denser districts [#88737]

These are sensible incremental improvements to our zoning policies that will increase opportunities for ownership in established neighborhoods, add density where services like transit can be more effectively provided, and allow for more diverse "missing middle" housing stock that meets the needs of many different types of residents. I actually would like to see the city adopt more ambitious reforms--such as allowing larger multiplex homes, not just duplexes, in more places--but this set of proposals is a great start.

Please vote in favor of these policies so that more folks can call Madison their home.

Thank You,  
Jonathan Mertzig

Midvale Heights / District 11 resident  
[jmmertzig@uwalumni.com](mailto:jmmertzig@uwalumni.com)

**From:** [Melinda Morang](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Please support proposals to increase housing density  
**Date:** Saturday, July 12, 2025 1:15:06 PM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from melindamorang@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear alders,

Thank you for the work you do to make Madison run so well. I've met several of you at different events around town, and it impresses me so much that we have such a wonderful collection of dedicated people who also have day jobs who choose to devote their time and energies to making Madison the great city that it is.

Because Madison is a great city, it means we have a shortage of housing, and the problem isn't going to get better unless we can find more ways to increase available housing. I strongly support the three proposals on the agenda for the June 15th meeting.

Allowing duplexes across the city and allowing large lots to be split into flag lots with additional structures is an excellent way to increase density without substantially altering the character of our existing neighborhoods. I can definitely understand why people may feel challenged by all the large new apartment buildings going up, so I think this gentler way of increasing density across all our neighborhoods is much easier to swallow and very effective. It makes sense to have this as an option rather than outright forbidden.

But, we also still need large new apartment buildings to realistically accommodate a growing population without resorting to sprawl, so I'm also in favor of making the process for approving these projects easier.

Please support the three proposals this Tuesday, and thank you again for your service as alders.

Melinda Morang  
District 6



**From:** [Brady P](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Forward Proposals (hurray!)  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 15, 2025 9:15:37 AM

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You don't often get email from bradypelkey@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear local alders,

Hi, my name is Brady. I moved to Madison 3 years ago to be with my partner who grew up here, and I'm now a UW Health employee. I don't know all the details of urban planning, but I care about this city's flourishing, and I also care about my own rent. So I *\*strongly\** and enthusiastically support all measures that will expand local housing availability.

Allowing more duplexes, flag lots, and medium housing developments sounds to me like an amazing first step. Thank you for supporting agenda items 6, 7, and 8 at the Common Council meeting tonight! I genuinely do appreciate it a lot.

Thanks,

[Brady Pelkey](#)

**From:** [Mary Pustejovsky](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Forward  
**Date:** Friday, July 11, 2025 8:30:32 AM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from darktownstrutter@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders,

Thank you for your service to the city. I am writing to express my full support of the Housing Forward proposals going to council next week. I have three children and I would love for them to be able to stay in Madison as they become adults. With the occupancy rate for rentals so low and housing prices continuing to rise, I worry that they will not be able to stay (if they want to). These proposals are the common-sense next step in allowing more density in our neighborhoods that allow for more options at any life stage. I would have loved to see a proposal for fourplexes by right but duplexes are good too. I realize these are not magic bullets for the housing crisis we face, but they are an important step forward.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Pustejovsky  
District 11

**From:** [Eric Richards](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda comments RE: Common Council - July 15, 2025  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025 8:24:26 AM

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You don't often get email from erichrichards@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Alders,

As a Madison resident and homeowner, I would like to state my support for the three [2025 Housing Forward Proposals](#) (#88736, #88735, and #88737). These are all excellent ways to incrementally improve the Madison housing situation, and I am excited that there are so many co-sponsors supporting this initiative.

Thanks,  
[Eric Richards](#)  
(he/him)  
419-376-4674  
[EricHRichards@gmail.com](mailto:EricHRichards@gmail.com)

**From:** [srosenblumlarson@gmail.com](mailto:srosenblumlarson@gmail.com)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Proposals  
**Date:** Thursday, July 10, 2025 7:56:37 AM

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[You don't often get email from [srosenblumlarson@gmail.com](mailto:srosenblumlarson@gmail.com). Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

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Hi,

I am writing to urge you strongly to vote in favor of the housing forward proposals that would rezone and simplify building in Madison. We are in desperate need of increased housing stock to avoid worsening the affordability crisis in our city. These changes would be low cost ways to add housing quickly. I am strongly in favor of all three proposals: allowing duplexes or twin homes, allowing lot splitting, and simplifying permits for small and medium sized housing developments downtown.

Thank you,

Simon

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Natalie Rutherford](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Forward!  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025 8:24:23 AM

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You don't often get email from foxrutherford@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi all,

I'm really excited about the proposals for increased housing density in Madison! I remember Alder Evers opposed my parents building an apartment above their garage on Harrison and Vilas back in 2018 so I'm particularly proud of him for coming around to the future!

Please continue to champion policies that will make Madison more affordable for everyone!

Thank you,

Natalie Rutherford  
1114 Hickory St, Madison, WI 53715

**From:** [SANDRA E WARD](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Cc:** [Grace Hasler](#); [president@capitolneighborhoods.org](mailto:president@capitolneighborhoods.org); [Verveer, Michael](#); [Jonathan Cooper](#); [Sabine Droste](#); [patricia morris](#); [stphnsmith@aol.com](mailto:stphnsmith@aol.com); [laurieegre@gmail.com](mailto:laurieegre@gmail.com); [Steve Rubin](#); [Anne Monks](#); [Jeffrey Wills](#); [dory christensen](#); [Paul Quinn](#); [Michael Friedman](#); [Pete Ostlind](#); [district6@cityofmadiosn.com](mailto:district6@cityofmadiosn.com); [Ochowicz, William](#); [giannisaint@hotmail.com](mailto:giannisaint@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** Density proposals 88735 88736 88737 on July 15 agenda  
**Date:** Friday, July 11, 2025 4:15:06 PM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from [sward@wisc.edu](mailto:sward@wisc.edu). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

The Tree Preservation and Planting Committee (TPPC) is a standing committee of Capitol Neighborhoods Inc (CNI). The TPPC aims to support a healthy, vibrant urban landscape by advocating for the preservation and care of the existing and future tree canopy in Madison.

Our warming climate is a threat to the well-being of all of us regardless of age, demographics or ethnicity. We are therefore concerned that the 3 density proposals before you (88735, 88736, and 88737) are a potential threat to the city's tree canopy.

The committee realizes the critical need for housing in Madison. We also believe that density and the urban landscape and in particular mature canopy trees are vital to placemaking (giving Madison a unique and welcoming place for all). Mature trees are key to supporting healthy air, reducing water runoff, lowering urban temperatures as well as many other known benefits.

As you address the recommended zoning changes, we ask that you consider two issues of concern: the increase in impermeable surfaces as additional units are built on existing land and the loss of mature trees on private property as ADUs and division of properties is increased. We urge you to contemplate ways to encourage owners to save trees while also building more housing. Yes, support more density, but do so with an eye to protecting the tree canopy.

Please consider:

- Locating driveways for ADU's in a manner to avoid removal of canopy trees (say above a certain diameter)
- Requiring maximum lot coverage areas for new ADU lots that allow areas large enough for a canopy tree
- Requiring lot line setbacks for ADU's (With the proposed zoning changes much rear yard space will be gone. What is left for trees on the ADU lot?)
- Additional tree planting requirements in exchanges for subdividing a lot

Thank you for your attention,

Sandra Ward and Grace Hasler

Co-chairs TPPC

**From:** [Craig Weinhold](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#)  
**Subject:** Housing Forward comments (agenda items 6-8)  
**Date:** Monday, July 14, 2025 1:34:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [Madison Housing Insights from building permits in four graphs \(July 14, 2025\).pdf](#)

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I applaud the City's Housing Forward proposals. However, they continue to ignore the ELEPHANTS IN THE ROOM:

**RENT VERSUS OWN:** Nearly 90% of the housing units built in 2021-2024 were RENTAL units. That's up from 75% over the four years prior. This is an existential question: does Madison want roots or transience?

**COST OF CONSTRUCTION:** Construction skyrocketed in 2020. Even if you gave a free piece of land to a median-income household, they could not afford to build a single-family house on it. Their only path to ownership is to build a small multi-tenant and rent out the extra units.

I've been analyzing City **Building Permits** and there's a lot of interesting trends there. I've attached a PDF with some that Alders might be interested in. If you have any questions, feel free to email me.

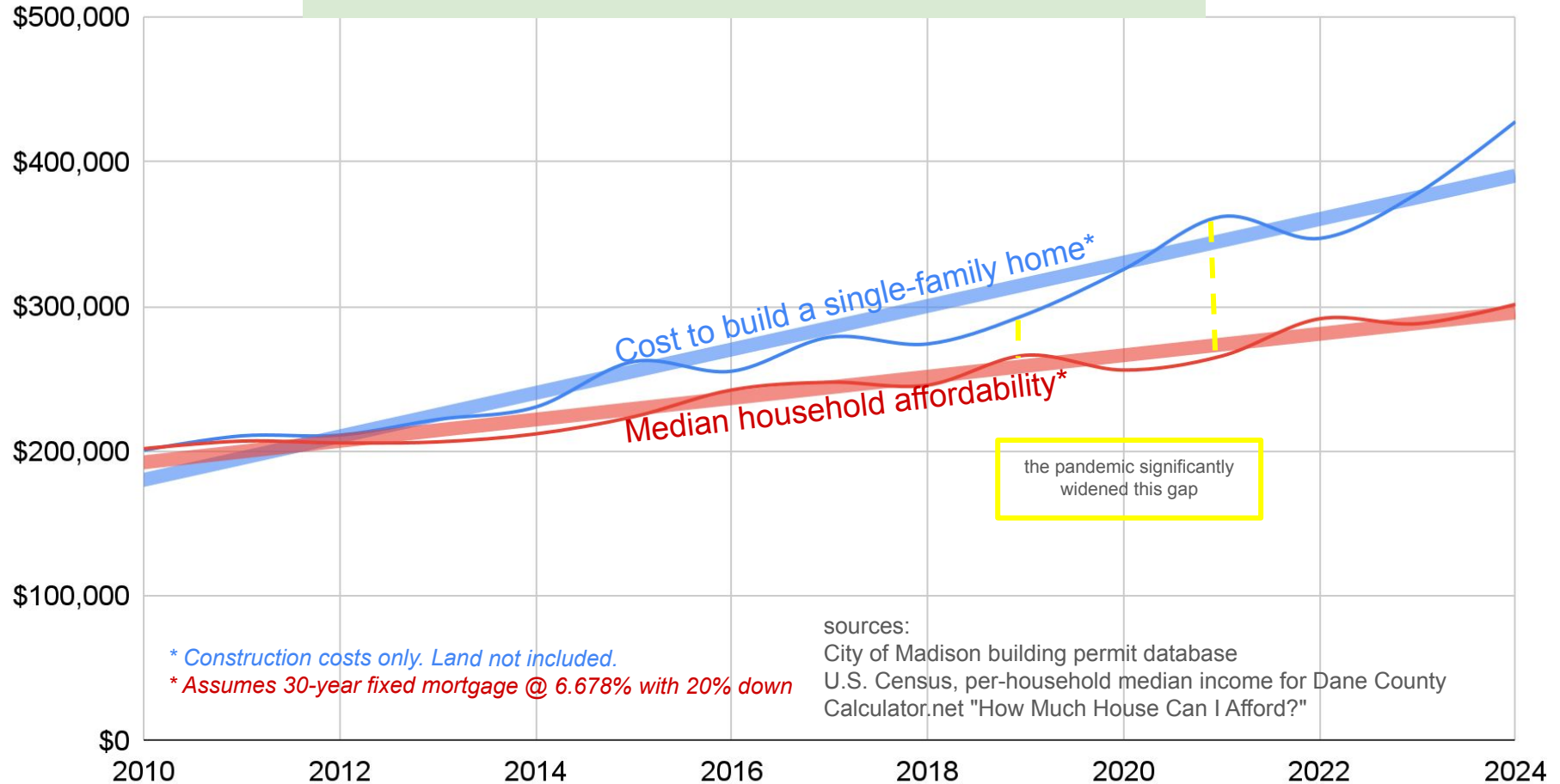
-Craig Weinhold [cweinhold@gmail.com](mailto:cweinhold@gmail.com)

# **Madison Housing Insights from building permits in four graphs**

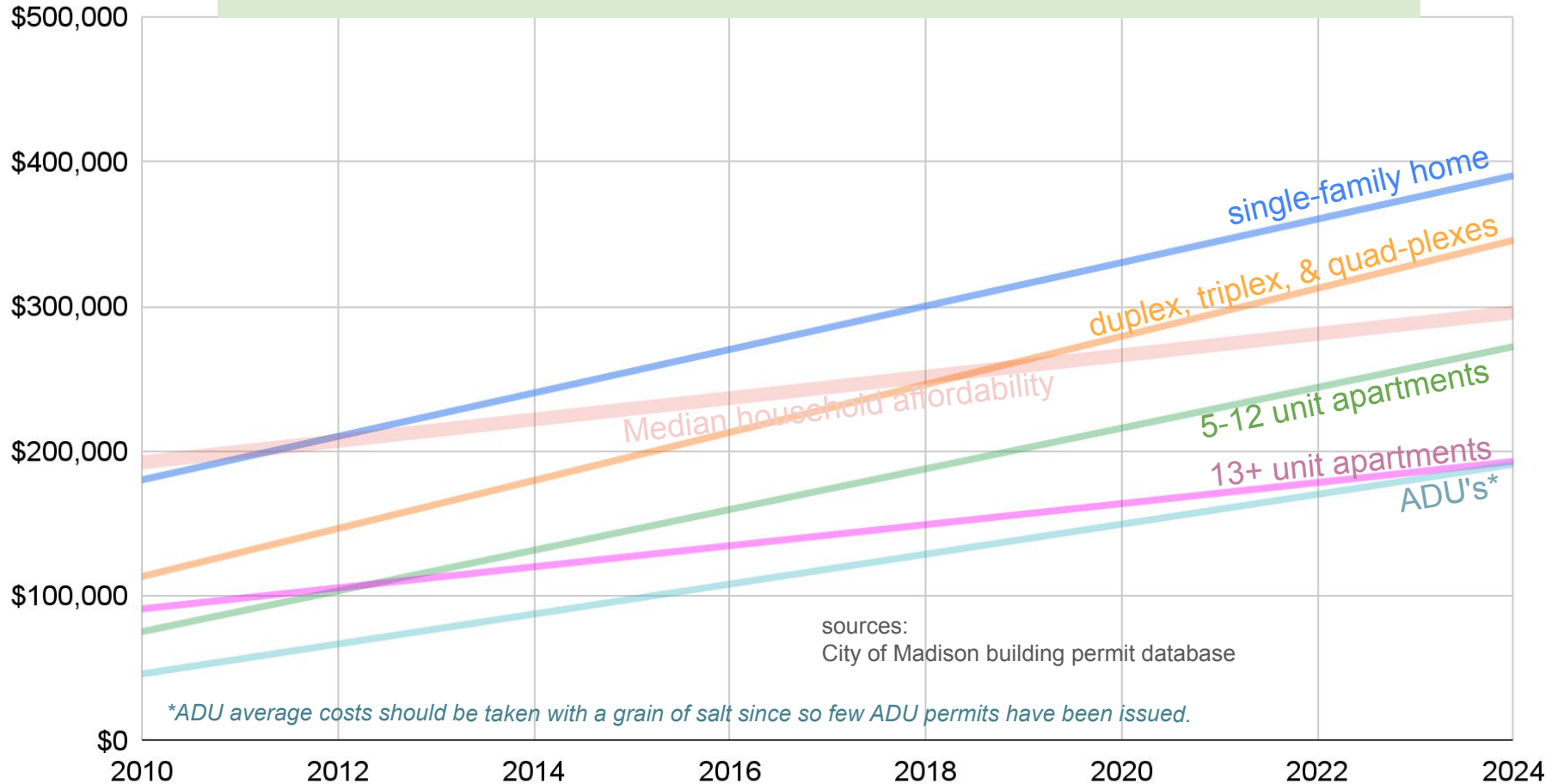
analysis 7-14-2025 by Craig Weinhold [cweinhold@gmail.com](mailto:cweinhold@gmail.com)



# Housing Affordability



# Average per-unit Cost of Construction



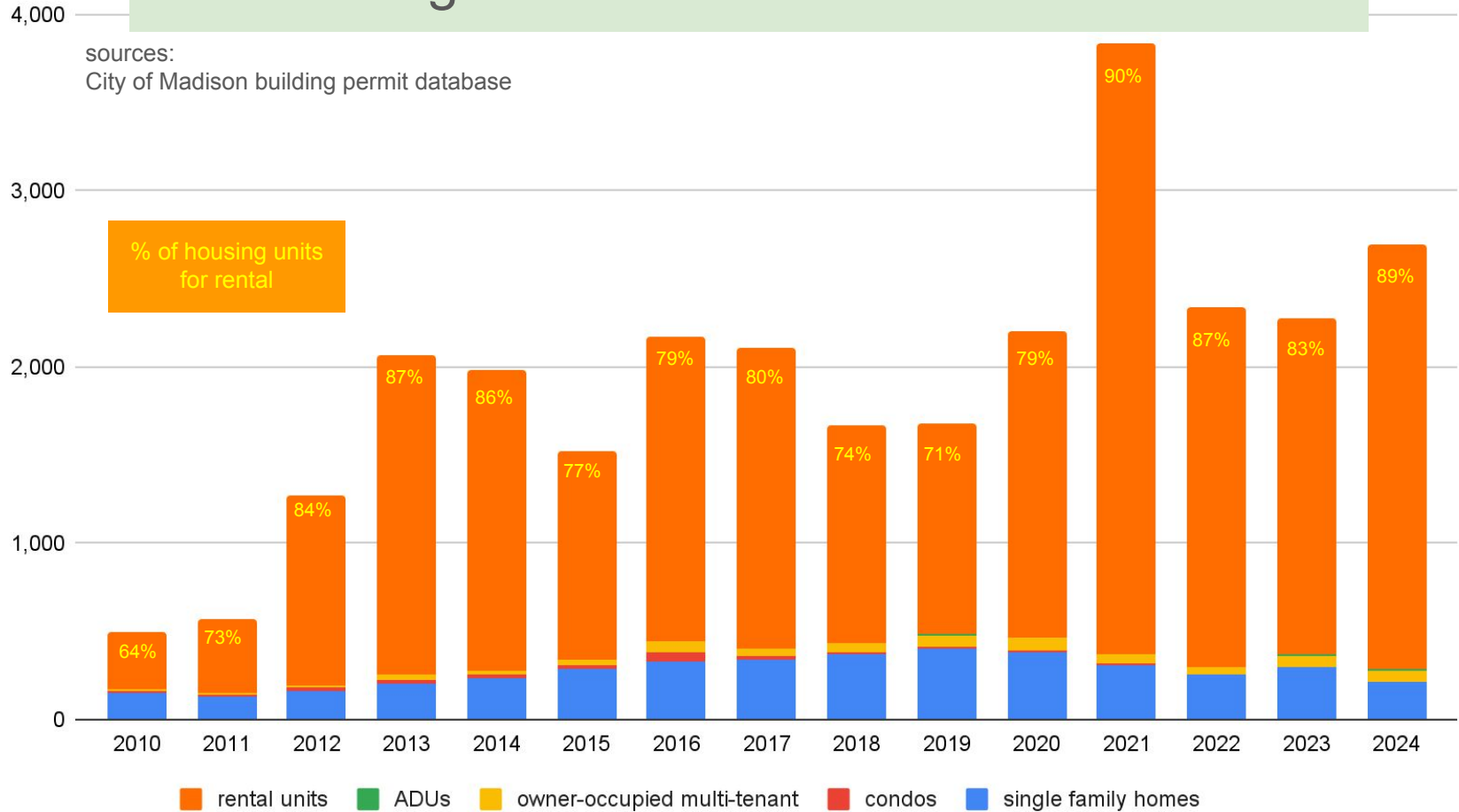
# Housing construction: Rent versus Own

sources:

City of Madison building permit database

Housing Units permitted

% of housing units  
for rental



# Breakdown of Owned properties + ADU detail

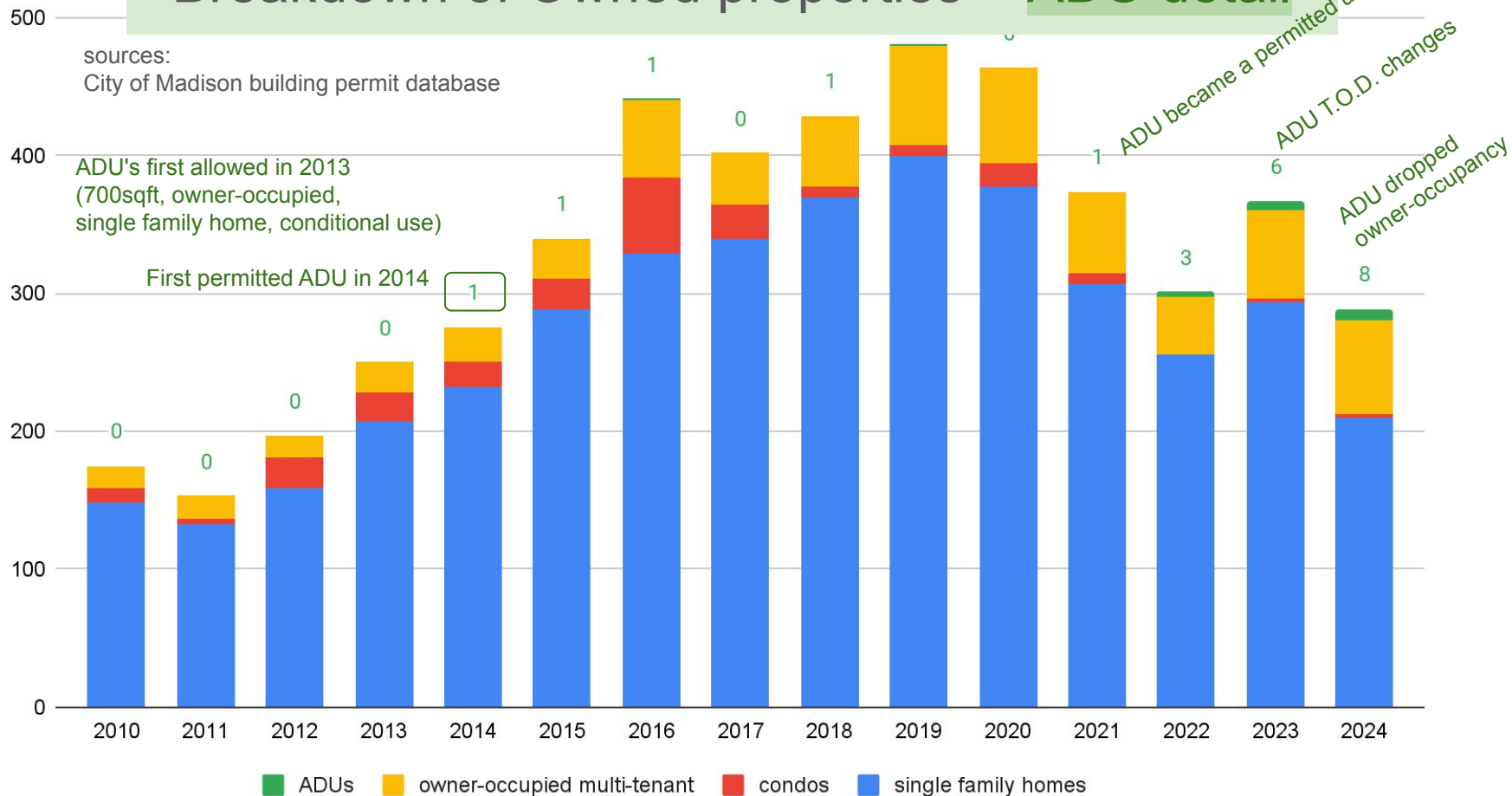
sources:  
City of Madison building permit database

Housing Units permitted

ADU's first allowed in 2013  
(700sqft, owner-occupied,  
single family home, conditional use)

First permitted ADU in 2014

ADU became a permitted use  
ADU T.O.D. changes  
ADU dropped owner-occupancy



# Observations / Takeaways

Construction costs surged with the pandemic but are beyond the City's control.

Owner-occupied single-family housing is now increasingly out-of-reach for the average household.

Owner-occupied multi-tenant is a viable way to achieve home ownership (including single family homes w/ADUs)

But don't get too excited about ADUs. High construction costs (\$135-300k) have limited their appeal.

Condo and townhouse projects all-but-disappeared with the 2008 recession. The small handful of recent projects have been luxury with construction costs of \$300-400k and sale price of \$500-750k (e.g., Barracuda on Henry St).

## Author's suggestions for the City:

- Incentivize development of **non-luxury condos & townhouses** over rentals.
- Incentivize **owner-occupied multi-tenant** development, including ADU's.
- Define a class of **small property owners** that requires non-professional local ownership of no more than 8-12 housing units. Whenever the city wants to strike out an "owner-occupied" clause from zoning, consider rewriting it to apply to this "small property owners" class instead.
- Consider revisiting **short-term rental rules**. Homeowners would be more willing to embark on ADU's and multi-tenant remodeling if there was a potential for short-term rentals.