



Project Location: 254 S. Chestnut Street, Ellsworth, WI 54011

REVITALIZATION OF 254 S. CHESTNUT STREET

We are looking for your assistance in revitalizing a blighted and undertaxed property in Ellsworth into much needed middle housing to benefit all of Pierce County. The Village of Ellsworth has initiated the process by entering into a purchase agreement for the property located at 254 S Chestnut Street (known as the “Old Junior High”) in the amount of \$25,000.

The next steps in the process to develop this property include, but are not limited to, preparing demolition plans and specifications, asbestos, and hazardous materials inspection, and demoing the current structure. It is in this aspect of the project that we are requesting financial assistance via county ARPA funds.

**Estimated cost
of demolition
is \$943,530.**

*There is no supplemental
funding available at this time.*



The Ellsworth area, as well as all of Pierce County, is challenged by a lack of housing of all kinds. Our county employers are especially challenged by the lack of middle housing/workforce housing. Investing in this project will address several needs simultaneously and benefit the County in several ways.

The 2.35 acres that make up 254 S. Chestnut Street currently generates \$761.77 in taxes for the County and houses zero residents. **Your investment in the project will lead to a return via increased tax base, increased spending in the local economy, and new residents welcomed to our community.**

REVITALIZATION OF 254 S. CHESTNUT STREET



SITE PLAN 1ST FLOOR

JUNIOR HIGH SITE REDEVELOPMENT*

Redevelopment of the project would be a long-lasting, tangible investment into the community leading to an increase in tax base and economic impact.

Based on a multi-unit development of approximately 26 units (i.e., townhomes, fourplexes), the project would generate:

\$5-5.8 million
in additional tax value within
Pierce County

\$98,000-120,000
in additional annual tax base

\$2.9 million
of additional household
spending infused into our
local economy

* Conceptual drawing from
Design Ellsworth
recommendation in 2018.

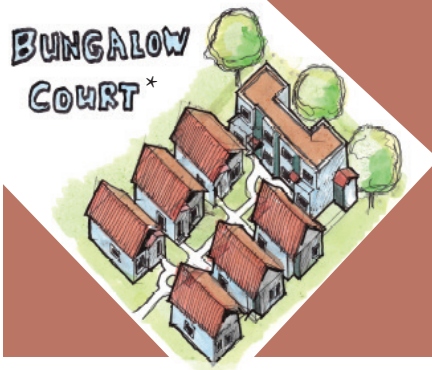
The Village of Ellsworth is currently in the process of updating its **Comprehensive Plan**. As part of that process, in January 2022 a community survey was completed. Out of the 628 respondents who were asked about what type of housing was needed in Ellsworth the survey revealed that:

56%
felt that single-family housing
is needed

38%
felt that townhomes/
duplexes were needed

42%
felt that affordable housing
is needed

5%
felt that no new housing
was needed



When asked where Ellsworth should focus its resources over the next 5-10 years:

65%
ranked 'increasing housing
availability and options' as
Very Important or Important.

The goal of the project would be to serve the needs of our local workforce with an average annual household income of up to **\$112,000**. This population is made of our local civil servants, police officers, teachers, health care workers, entry-level professionals, and production workers. Our local employers are challenged to recruit and retain their workforce and grow their businesses due to a lack of housing for their workers.

The blighted property and building is and has been a public health and safety issue in the community. After years of deterioration, it is now beyond salvage due to broken windows, holes in the roof, water intrusion, etc. The failure to maintain the property has led to it becoming a danger to others accessing it and an eye sore to the community and neighborhood.

Pierce County's support with the demolition will eliminate the threat to the community and restore a sense of pride among residents. With a property that is ready for development, we can bring much-needed housing opportunities to the area.

The Village of Ellsworth Board thanks you for your consideration of the project and would welcome you as a partner at this stage in the process. Together, we can be leaders and problem-solvers of our community's housing challenges. By revitalizing this property, everyone wins and new residents have a place they can be proud to call home.



Letters of Recommendation



May 17, 2022

To: Pierce County Board of Supervisors

From: Kim Beebe, Executive Director
Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce

The Ellsworth area is in the midst of a housing crisis. Our business members have seen it coming for some time. However, as with so many challenges in our community, the events of the past two years have made a bad situation worse. The stars have finally aligned, and we have an opportunity for a workforce housing development that checks all the boxes!

Granting ARPA funds per the Village of Ellsworth's proposal would help to transform the blighted property at 254 Chestnut Street into an asset that is functional and befitting of the surrounding neighborhood. Unlike new development, this project would take advantage of current infrastructure accessible to the property, affordably creating much-needed workforce housing options, raising surrounding property values, adding tax-base, and supporting economic development.

Speak with any of our local employers and they will share their challenges. They are unable to recruit the talent they need due to lack of housing. The nearest housing options are 30-40 miles from Ellsworth. There comes a point where despite pay, benefits, and working conditions, employees begin to consider job opportunities closer to their homes. The expensive and burdensome hiring cycle begins again. I know Pierce County can relate; many directors within the county are experiencing the same challenges.

The chamber office receives multiple calls each week from those who are newly employed inquiring about area rentals and properties. Quality rentals are non-existent. Homes suitable for first time home buyers and young couples just starting out are sold before they hit the market. Current market conditions make building out of reach for many. Developers are unable to make a development profitable in our small market.

The Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce supports the Village of Ellsworth's proposal and would encourage the board to consider the ongoing long-term benefits that would result from this investment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kim Beebe'.

Kim Beebe, Executive Director
Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce

DISTRICT OFFICE

300 Hillcrest Street | PO Box 1500 | Ellsworth, WI 54011
715-273-3900 | Fax 715-273-5775
www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us

May 16, 2022

To: Pierce County Board of Supervisors

From: Barry Cain, Superintendent
Ellsworth Community School District
Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Member

Please accept this letter in support of the Village of Ellsworth's ARPA funds proposal for the purpose of the demolition and reclaiming of the 254 Chestnut Street property.

The Village of Ellsworth's proposal provides the opportunity to address a long term issue while also promoting much needed residential development and an expanded tax base for both the Village of Ellsworth and Pierce County as whole. With this, the ARPA funds will go well beyond the funding of a one-time need as the benefits of the associated development will provide long term economic development through the development of the specific property, increased housing opportunities, and increased property values of surrounding properties.

This property was once the property of the Ellsworth Community School District. At the time of the sale of the property, the previous board chose to sell the property to private ownership rather than spend taxpayer funds for the demolition of the property. There was a general feeling in the community at the time that this was the best decision to make. Unfortunately, the property has become a liability for the community rather than an economic benefit.

This type of project truly represents the intent of the ARPA funds while providing all involved the opportunity to make substantive change. I wholeheartedly support this proposal and look forward to the many benefits that will result.

Thank you for the consideration of this quality proposal.

Sincerely,

Barry Cain
Superintendent
Ellsworth Community School District
Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Member

ELLSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

323 Hillcrest Street | Ellsworth, WI 54011
715-273-3904 | Fax 715-273-6824

ELLSWORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

312 West Panther Drive | Ellsworth, WI 54011
715-273-3908 | Fax 715-273-6834

HILLCREST ELEMENTARY

350 South Grant Street | Ellsworth, WI 54011
715-273-3912 | Fax 715-273-6838

PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY

W7375 170th Avenue | Hager City, WI 54014
715-792-5285 | Fax 715-792-2068

LINDGREN EARLY LEARNING CENTER

N3470 U.S. Hwy. 63 | Hager City, WI 54014
715-792-2424 | Fax 715-792-5420

The Ellsworth Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.

“Cheese Curd Capital of Wisconsin”



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Ellsworth, WI 54011

Phone: 715.273.4311
Fax: 715.273.5318

June 15, 2022

Pierce County Board of Supervisors
Pierce County Courthouse
414 W Main St
Ellsworth, WI 54011

Dear Board of Supervisors,

As a major Pierce County employer, I would like to express my wholehearted support of the Village of Ellsworth's ARPA funds request and stress the critical need for workforce housing that is included in the proposal. My emphatic endorsement is a result of the challenges area employers, including Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, are experiencing due to the shortage of housing in our community.

This is not a sudden issue; however, the situation has become a critical one for our business community. At Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, the lack of middle housing has limited our organization's ability to grow. Recruiting and retaining talent without sufficient and suitable housing stock has led to continued hiring challenges and turnover issues. Sixty percent of our Ellsworth facility employees reside outside of the 54011 zip code, and many reside out of Pierce County. This is not by choice; it is due to the lack of rentals and starter homes in Ellsworth and the surrounding communities.

Our employees are living in River Falls, Menomonie, Durand, and further out, which is the closest that they are able to find suitable and affordable housing. They are commuting to work every day, although with current gas prices I wonder how long that will last. It is time consuming and expensive to invest time and training into these workers, only to lose them because they are not able to find a place to live.

Just having an address is not enough. Safe, clean, and comfortable housing is a necessity in our community. Available rental stock and worker housing is extremely limited in Ellsworth and the surrounding areas and often available properties are in poor condition.

By addressing this urgent need, ARPA funds would be well spent on an important investment into the economic sustainability of our local business, generation of additional tax base, spurred spending to boost the local economy, and enhanced quality of life for neighborhood residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Bauer", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Paul Bauer
CEO/Manager



6.16.2022

Dear Village President Beissel and Pierce County ARPA Committee,

I am writing to express my support for the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds to pay for the demolition of the old junior high building in Ellsworth. I understand that the Village has an approved purchase agreement on the property and that the long-term plan is to redevelop that property into affordable and high-quality workforce housing.

Ellsworth is in desperate need of housing opportunities for young families and single professionals. Workforce housing offers more opportunities to recruit talent to serve Pierce County, including nurses, teachers and police officers.

There is strong evidence characterizing housing's relationship to health. Housing stability, quality, safety, and affordability all affect health outcomes, as do physical and social characteristics of neighborhoods.¹

Access to healthy and affordable housing is an urgent local public health issue. In our most recent community health needs survey for Pierce and St. Croix County, affordable housing was ranked as the second top community challenge behind mental health issues. Stakeholders from diverse organizations around the two counties gathered in February this year to evaluate the survey and other public health data and agreed- affordable and healthy housing access is a top concern in our communities.

We need community leaders to support policies and allocate funding in such a way as to respond to this urgent public health need. Ensuring access to affordable housing options in safe and thriving communities like Ellsworth will strengthen our local workforce, tax base, and health outcomes.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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AZ 511yuei
Health Officer

¹ "Housing and Health: An Overview Of The Literature, " Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, June 7, 2018.
DOI: 10.1377/hpb20180313.396577

TALK TO US

Phone: 715-273-6755
Fax: 715-273-6854
www.co.pierce.wi.us

VISIT US

412 W Kinne St
Ellsworth, WI 54011

OUR MISSION

To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards



Ellsworth Area Ambulance Service

151 South Plum Street
Ellsworth, Wisconsin 54011

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing in support of the Village of Ellsworth's initiative to restructure the area formerly occupied by the Ellsworth Junior High School.

The former Junior High School presents unique challenges and safety hazards to our community. Given the age of the building, it is undoubtedly littered with asbestos, rodents and risks. I am aware that there has been significant environmental damage to the building that leads me to believe that it is not structurally sound. The windows and doors are compromised allowing for trespassing and possible entrapment. The state of disrepair that this building is in has allowed for adventurous individuals to climb up and on top of the building. As far as I'm aware, there is no fire suppression system, nor burglar or fire alarms to alert authorities of problems. This building creates hazards not otherwise found in the area.

In the event of an emergency in this building I could not, in good faith, allow my crews to enter and assist due to the risks posed to my staff. Any emergency there would require a multitude of resources to assure responder and public safety. Any response into this building would tie up fire, EMS and law enforcement resources for hours, thus depleting the county of available resources.

While it is understood that the Village of Ellsworth will be the larger beneficiary to any redevelopment of this property, I firmly believe that Pierce County will see sizable benefits as well. Redevelopment of this site would benefit many people in Pierce County by expanding access to housing and by potentially bringing new families into the county. As new people move into the county they will likely shop, recreate and enjoy all that the county has to offer.

Revitalization of this property will decrease risk, increase public safety and allow for growth in the Village, as well as the county.

Thank you for considering the Village of Ellsworth's request for allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funds to support their goal to rejuvenate the area of the former Ellsworth Junior High School.

Sincerely,

Jessi Willenbring, Director

Ellsworth Area Ambulance Service