



For Immediate Release

Aug. 31, 2018

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New Single Family Housing Permits increase in Williston

New housing construction is on the rise in Williston, but it's still not at the level city leaders had hoped.

Williston's Director of Development Services announced earlier in 2018 that the city would need up to 500 single family homes per year for the next 11 years to meet estimated demand. Mark Schneider explained the city is basing its housing goals on the 2016 NDSU Statewide Housing Needs Assessment – Population and Housing Forecast which estimated Williams County to grow by 68 percent through the year 2029.

"Determining a firm goal is difficult; but there appears to be a large need for single family homes, and we are certainly falling short on getting the job done," said Scheider.

As of July 31, a total of 83 housing permits had been issued countywide; 34 within Williston's city limits and 49 outside of the city. While that's a long way off from the goal; it's a solid year, said Schneider.

"I believe we will be close to 100 countywide this fall," he said.

New housing construction hit a record high in 2014 with 333 permits followed by 2011 with 310. The past three years have been slower with 76 permits in 2015, 22 permits in 2016 and 25 in 2017. So far in 2018 Williston has seen an increase of 26% over last year.

Williston realtor Carla Kemp agrees there is a strong need for more single family homes in Williston. She said helping young families search for their dream home can sometimes be challenging.

"Single family housing between \$200-300,000 is in high demand. Currently

there are only 25 homes available in this category. Of those listings, none are new construction, several are modular or manufactured homes on acreage lots (not located within the city limits) and 12 are 1700 square feet or smaller. That is tight space for an active family of 4-5 and all their belongings.”

Trying to develop more housing in Williston however, almost always circles back to the high costs of infrastructure, labor, land and more. So the city is seeking new solutions to the problems.

“I think we need to create some type of assistance only because of our special situation in Williston; where nothing is impossible but everything is impossible,” said Schneider. “If you want to build the town we have to help from offering financial incentives that are really creative for builders, developers and buyers to offering summer internship programs via the high school or college.”

Williston Economic Development Executive Director Shawn Wenko agrees the city needs to consider ways to attract home builders and workers as the shortage is limiting growth.

“One sector we get asked about the most is additional retail options. We work hard to market to retailers that complement the retail opportunities that currently exist,” said Wenko. “This revolves back to the discussion on housing. Developers will tell you that ‘Retail follows Rooftops’; additional occupied housing units will bolster Williston’s position in this market.”

Schneider said one long range solution could be building new homes at the Sloulin Field Redevelopment.

“If we really have the same need to build in three years the city could create affordable lots in the Sloulin Field,” said Schneider.

As the city continues to experience growing pains, Kemp concludes it’s still a great place to settle down.

“Williston is a vibrant, young and wealthy community overall with much opportunity to be had. I’m very excited to be party of Williston’s growth,” she said.