



NEWS RELEASE

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Tomah Shows Developers 11 Sites Ready for New Housing and Investment

City, Chamber, WHEDA and Tomah Health host development tour as the city works to close a gap of 400 to 700 housing units by 2030

TOMAH, Wis. The City of Tomah hosted 36 developers, builders, lenders and real estate professionals on Wednesday, September 30, for the Fall 2026 Development Sites Tour, a daylong look at 11 sites ready for new housing, downtown redevelopment, and commercial and industrial growth.

The City organized the tour with the Greater Tomah Area Chamber of Commerce. The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) served as state sponsor and provided tour refreshments. Tomah Health hosted the morning program at its Professional Development Center and sponsored lunch, and the School District of Tomah provided the bus.

Tomah needs housing to match its jobs. The City's 2022 Housing Study found that only 25 percent of the people who work in Tomah live in the city, compared with more than half countywide, and that Tomah needs 400 to 700 additional housing units by 2030. Employers including Mars Petcare, USEMCO, Toro, Cardinal Glass and Walmart operate here, and Fort McCoy has advised surrounding communities to prepare for continued growth.

"We have the jobs. What we do not have is enough places to live," said Mayor Paul Dwyer.

"Somebody is going to build those homes. We told the developers in that room we would like it to be them."

Derek Daly, CEO of Tomah Health, delivered the keynote. Charlie Handy, the City's Economic Development and Zoning Director, served as master of ceremonies. After a presentation on the City's development projects, participants toured the sites by bus and returned for a debrief with City staff on what developers need to move projects forward.

The tour included both sites in the two requests for proposals the City released on September 1 for residential development on City owned land, both proposals are due on October 15th. Developers also heard about two new tools. 2025 Wisconsin Act 235, which took effect October 1, allows

Wisconsin cities to use tax increment financing for owner occupied homes, and the City intends to use it. The City is also rewriting its zoning code to make modular and manufactured homes easier to build, with completion expected early next year.

“In a city this size, a developer talks directly to the people who make the decisions, and we decide fast,” said Steve Sarvi, City Administrator. “We asked every developer on the bus to tell us what stands in the way of building here. That is the part we can fix, and our staff is following up with each participant who asked us to.”

“There are a lot of hoops to jump through as far as local state and federal permits to develop nowadays. The City staff was excellent to work with and really helped us with those. We actually got our permits a lot faster than expected.” said B.J. Rice, a local builder.

Developers who could not attend can request the tour packet and site information from the City’s Economic Development and Zoning office at 608-374-7511 or chandy@tomahwi.gov, or www.tomahwi.gov/ed

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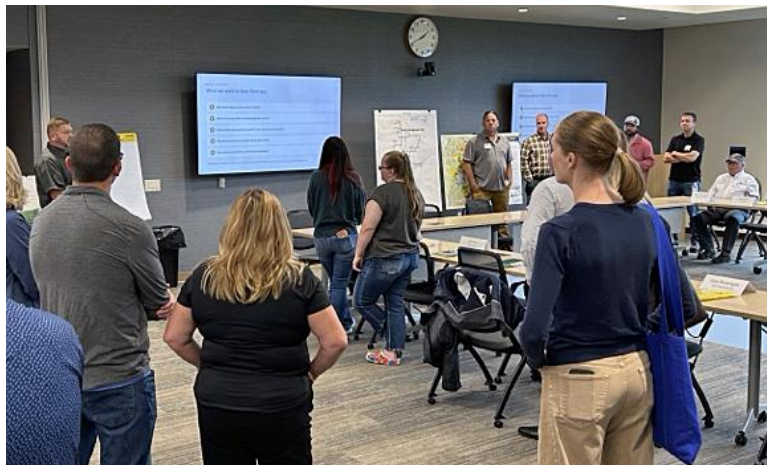


Photo courtesy Eric Prise, Tomah Health

About the City of Tomah

Tomah is a city of about 9,600 residents in Monroe County, Wisconsin, where Interstates 90 and 94 meet. The city is served by Amtrak passenger rail and an airport and sits near Fort McCoy. Information on development sites and incentives is available from the City’s Economic Development and Zoning office at 608-374-7511.