



ROOTED IN COMMUNITY.
FUELED BY ADVENTURE.

**CITY OF ISHPEMING
W EMPIRE STREET (700 W EMPIRE) DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPER REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

Project Title:

Empire Street Housing Development Opportunity

Issuer:

City of Ishpeming, Michigan

Project Type:

Multifamily Housing Development

Target Development:

Low to Moderate Income Rental Housing

Workforce Housing

Mixed-Income Multifamily Housing

Date Issued:

Friday, August 14, 2026

Due Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Contact:

Randy Scholz

City Manager

City of Ishpeming

citymanager@ishpemingcity.org

906-485-1091 Ext. 204

Submission Deadline: Tuesday, September 8, 2026, by 5:00 pm EST

Submissions due electronically only

The City reserves the right to select, reject, or negotiate with any respondent.

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1. Introduction and Executive Summary

The City of Ishpeming is soliciting Request for Proposals from experienced affordable housing developers for the acquisition and development of approximately 5.5 acres of City-owned property located near Empire Street and Lakeshore Drive in Ishpeming, Michigan.

After a community visioning session in June 2026 with the City Planning Commission recommendation to the city council, the W Empire site was identified as a top priority for housing redevelopment. The City seeks a development partner capable of designing, financing, constructing, owning, and operating a high-quality multi-family housing development that addresses critical regional housing shortages while supporting the City's economic development and workforce attraction goals.

The City recognizes the significant demand for affordable workforce housing throughout Marquette County and the Upper Peninsula. This site presents a rare opportunity to create new housing units within walking distance of downtown amenities, employment centers, schools, parks, healthcare facilities, and public services.

The City is particularly interested in proposals utilizing Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), MSHDA financing programs, low-moderate income housing incentives, and other public-private financing tools.

2. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The W Empire Street site represents one of the most attractive multi-family housing development opportunities currently available within the City of Ishpeming. In addition, this site is zoned multi-family (MR) and within close proximity to key infrastructure.

Key Advantages Include:

- Approximately 5.5 acres available for development
- Walking distance to Downtown Ishpeming

- Municipal water available
- Municipal sanitary sewer available
- Existing electric and telecommunications infrastructure
- Access to public streets
- Nearby employment centers
- Access to schools and public services, including Marq-Tran system
- Strong local and housing demand
- Potential eligibility for state and federal housing incentives

The City intends to partner with a developer capable of delivering a financially feasible project that creates long-term community benefit while increasing the local housing supply.

3. SITE OVERVIEW

Location:

The property is located adjacent to Empire Street within the City of Ishpeming, MI. Approximate Site Area 5.5 Acres.

Land Purchase Consideration

The City recognizes that land acquisition costs can significantly affect the financial feasibility of residential development projects. As part of the proposal evaluation and subsequent negotiations, the City may consider a reduction in the purchase price of the property for proposals that demonstrate a substantial public benefit, including:

- Creation of quality housing.
- Expansion of the City's tax base.
- Efficient utilization of existing public infrastructure.
- Advancement of the City's long-term housing objectives.

Any reduction in the purchase price shall be considered on a case by-case basis and subject to approval by the Ishpeming City Council. Nothing contained in this RFP shall be interpreted as a commitment by the City to reduce the purchase price of the property.

Existing Conditions:

- Vacant and underutilized land
- Municipal utility access available
- Existing roadway access
- Proximity to downtown commercial district
- Suitable for multi-family residential development

Potential Development Capacity:

Depending on final design, density, parking requirements, and financing structure, the site may accommodate:

- 40 or more housing units
- Condo-style apartments

- Stacked flat apartments
- Low to moderate income housing
- Independent senior housing
- Workforce housing at or under 80% Area Median Income

Developers are encouraged to determine the highest and best use based upon own market analysis and financing capacity.

4. COMMUNITY AND MARKET CONDITIONS

Ishpeming serves as a regional employment center within Marquette County's "West End".

Major employers include:

- Healthcare providers
- Educational institutions
- Manufacturing employers
- Hospitality
- Construction and trades
- Government agencies
- Retail and service businesses

The community continues to experience housing shortages across multiple income levels, particularly among workforce households. In addition, there is an aging housing stock, due to former mining homes prevalent in the city.

New rental housing development has remained limited while demand has continued to increase.

5. HOUSING DEMAND AND OPPORTUNITY

Regional Housing Needs:

Marquette County continues to experience:

- Low rental vacancy rates
- Limited new housing construction
- Increasing housing costs and cost of living
- Growing housing demand, particularly in low and moderate income
- Demand for quality affordable housing, according to a 2024 Target Market Analysis

Target Resident Groups:

Potential residents may include:

- Workforce households, e.g. hospitality and trades
- Seniors on fixed income
- Healthcare employees
- Teachers
- Municipal employees
- Construction workers
- Fixed-income households
- Families seeking affordable rental housing

Development of additional multi-family housing is expected to improve workforce retention and support regional economic growth.

6. DEVELOPMENT VISION AND GOALS

The City seeks a development that:

- Expands affordable housing inventory
- Supports workforce attraction and retention
- Creates high-quality housing units
- Integrates with surrounding neighborhoods
- Enhances the City's short and long-term tax base
- Encourages long-term investment
- Utilizes sustainable site design principles
- Maintains professional property management standards

Preferred Outcomes

- Attractive architectural design
- Energy-efficient construction, LEED certification and sustainable/resiliency
- Safe pedestrian connections
- Accessible and ADA housing units
- Long-term affordability commitments
- Quality landscaping and site amenities

7. SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Water Service:

Municipal water service is available to the site.

Sanitary Sewer:

Municipal sanitary sewer service is available.

Stormwater:

Developers shall provide stormwater management systems consistent with City requirements and applicable state regulations.

Road Access:

The site is served by existing public streets and transportation infrastructure.

Utilities:

The City believes sufficient utility infrastructure exists to support development; however, developers shall independently verify all capacities and connection requirements.

8. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OPTIONS

Option A: Workforce Housing Development

- 40 + units
- Mixed-income structure
- Low to moderate income or affordable units (80% AMI)
- Workforce-focused occupancy

Option B: LIHTC Development (Preferred)

- 40+ units
- Low Income Housing Tax Credits
- Long-term affordability requirements
- Senior, Independent, and/or Family-oriented housing

Option C: Senior Affordable Housing

- 40+ units
- Age-restricted development
- Accessible design
- Community amenities
- Supportive service opportunities

Developers may propose alternative concepts that demonstrate financial feasibility and community benefit.

9. AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES**Potential financing sources may include:**

- MSHDA LIHTC Program
- MSHDA Gap Financing
- HOME Funds
- PILOT Program
- Community Development Block Grant Programs
- Brownfield Redevelopment Incentives
- Tax Abatement Programs
- Federal Housing Programs
- Private Activity Bonds
- Conventional Debt Financing

The City is willing to discuss partnership opportunities and local support measures that improve project competitiveness.

10. DEVELOPER SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**Developers shall submit:****Development Team Information**

- Firm history
- Organizational structure
- Key personnel and team

Relevant Experience

- Affordable housing projects
- LIHTC developments
- MSHDA-funded developments
- Comparable multi-family developments

Financial Capacity

- Evidence of financing capability
- Sources and uses assumptions
- Development budget range

Concept Plan

- Site layout
- Building concepts
- Parking plan
- Open space design, amenities
- Preliminary Engineering

Development Schedule

- Entitlement timeline
- Financing timeline
- Construction schedule

11. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

- Affordable housing experience
- Financial capability
- LIHTC and MSHDA experience
- Quality of proposed development
- Long-term ownership strategy
- Community impact
- Development timeline
- Ability to secure financing

12. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND TIMELINE

RFP Release: Friday, August 14, 2026

Developer Questions Due:

14 Days Following Release

Submissions Due:

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Developer Selection:

Following Completion of Review Process by Oct 1

Development Agreement Negotiation:

Following Selection and approval by City Council or Selection Committee, comprised of City Council and staff

13. EXHIBITS AND BACKGROUND MATERIALS**Exhibit A**

Site Location Map

Aerial Photograph

Exhibit B

Zoning Map

Exhibit C

Utility Infrastructure Map

Exhibit D

Housing Market and Demand Analysis

Exhibit F

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (upon request)

EGLE Wetland Survey Part 303 conducted in September, 2026 (favorable determination letter expected afterwards)

Examination of Proposals

Firms should carefully examine the entire RFP and any addenda thereto, and all related materials and data referenced in the RFP. Firms should become fully aware of the nature of the work and the conditions likely to be encountered in performing the work.

Proposal Acceptance Period

Award of this RFP is anticipated to be announced within (30) calendar days from the deadline date; however, all offers must be complete and irrevocable for ninety days (90) following the submission date.

Signature Requirements

All proposals must be signed by an officer or other agent of a corporate vendor if authorized to sign contracts on its behalf; a member of a partnership; the owner of a privately-owned vendor; or other agent if properly authorized by a power of attorney or equivalent document. Signature of the Cover Letter will meet this requirement. Failure to sign the proposal is grounds for rejection. The name and title of the individual/s signing the proposal must be clearly shown immediately below the signature.

Oral Change/Interpretation

No oral change or interpretation of any provision contained in this RFP is valid whether issued at a pre-proposal conference or otherwise. Written addenda will be issued when changes, clarifications or amendments to proposal documents are deemed necessary by MCLBA.

Modification/Withdrawal of Proposals

A firm may withdraw a proposal at any time prior to the final submission date by sending written notification of its withdrawal, signed by an agent authorized to represent the company. The firm may thereafter submit a new proposal prior to the final submission date; or submit written modification or addition to a proposal prior to the final submission date. Modifications offered in another manner, oral or written will not be considered. A final proposal cannot be changed or withdrawn after the submission date, except for modifications requested by the City of Ishpeming after the date.

EXHIBITS AND BACKGROUND MATERIALS

700 W. EMPIRE PARCEL

PORTION OF:

52-51-704-013-00

EXHIBIT A

A1. SITE LOCATION MAP

A2. AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH



EXHIBIT B
ZONING MAP

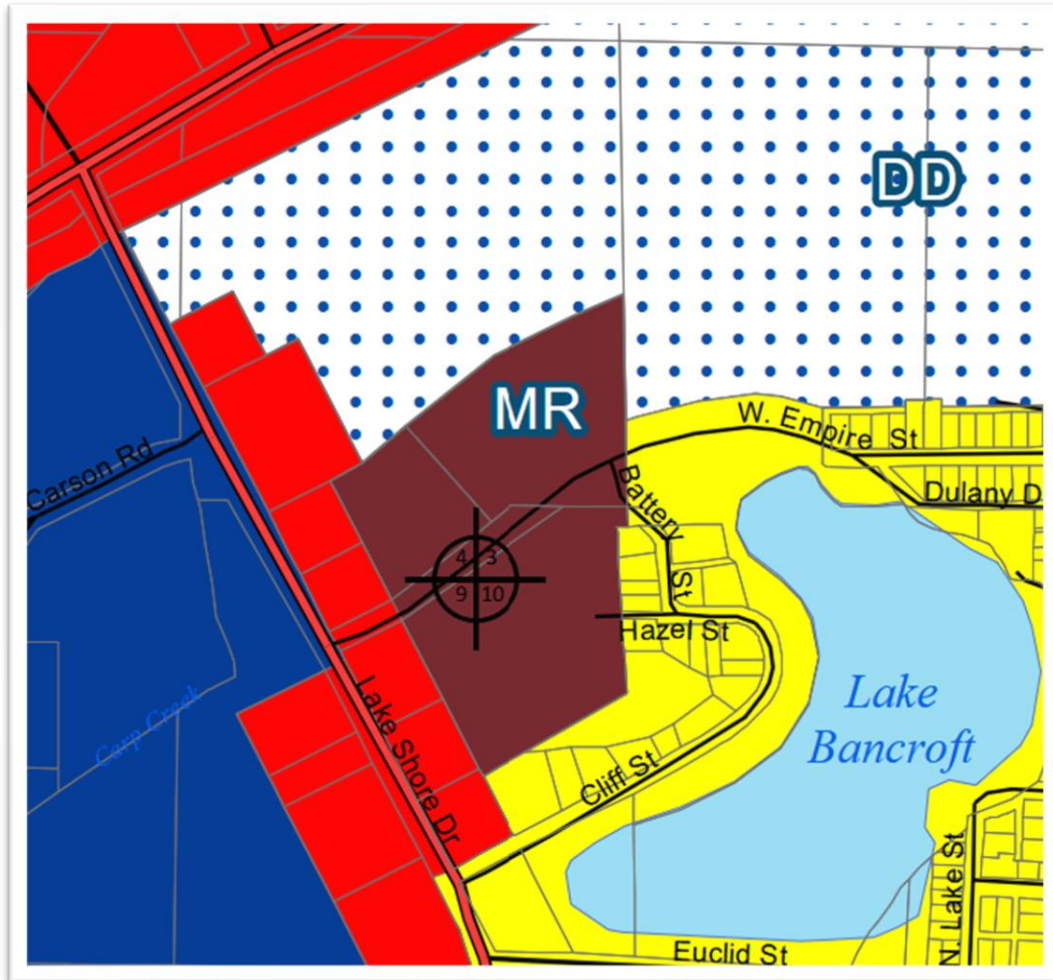
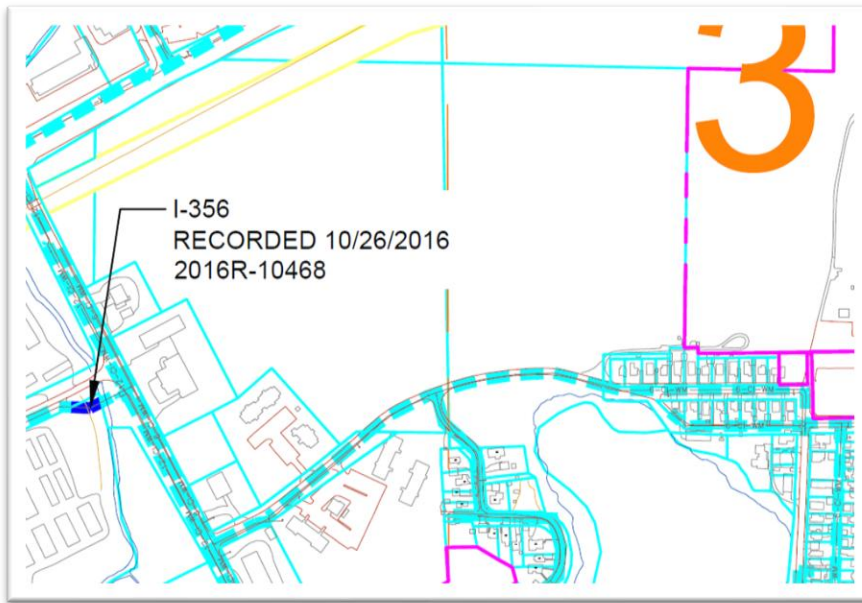


EXHIBIT C
UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE
C1. R.O.W. MAP



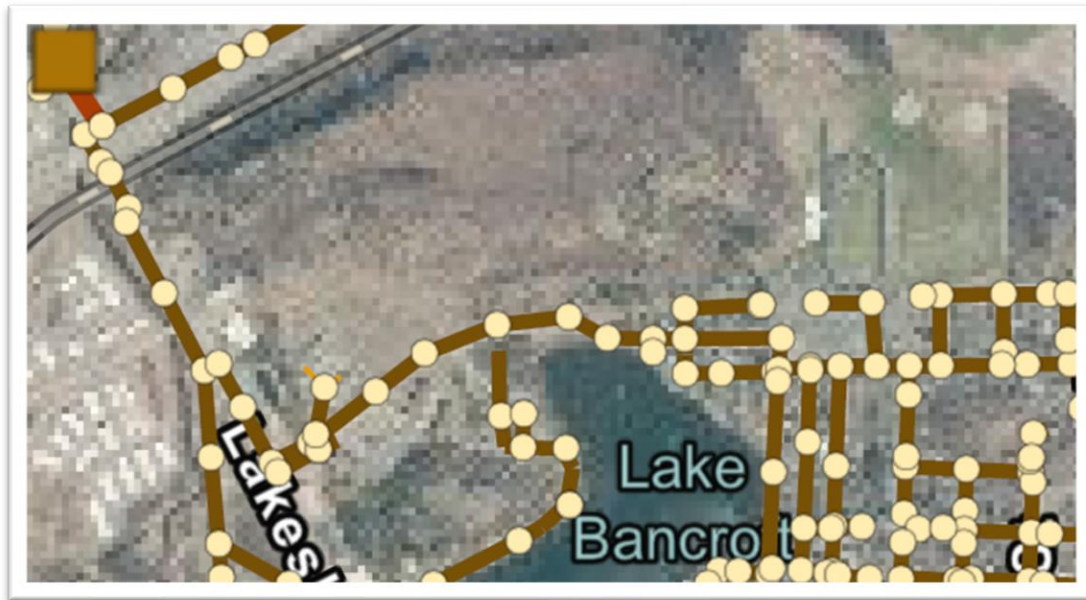
RIGHT-OF-WAY LINETYPE LEGEND:	
	PUBLIC STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY
	CITY OWNED PROPERTY
	SECTION LINE
	SECTION NUMBER

C2. WATER MAP

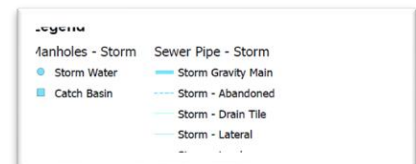
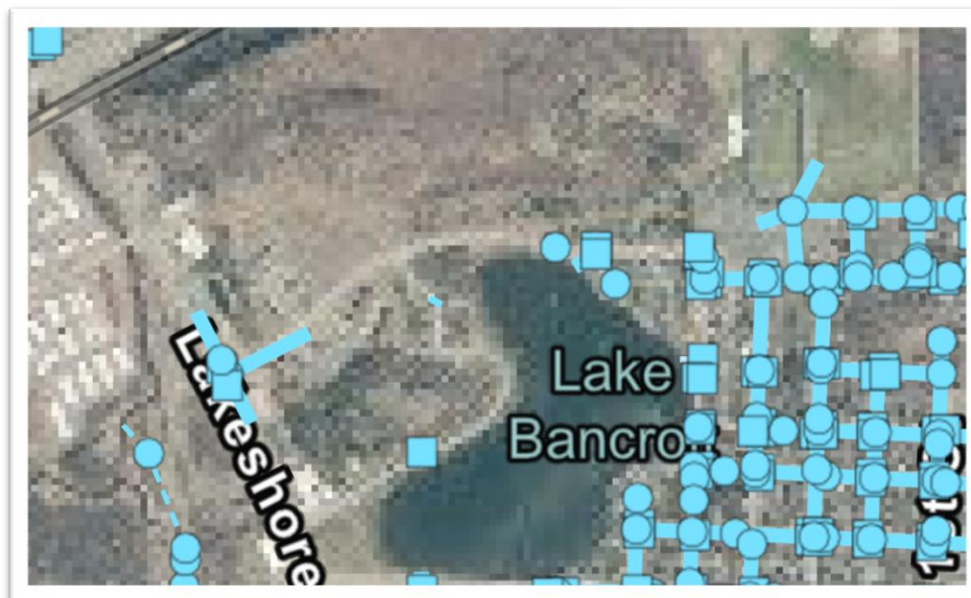
Legend	
	Water Main
	Hydrant
	Valve



C3. SEWER MAP



C4. STORMWATER MAP



June 1, 2024

IRON CORE REGION

Residential TMA Handout

Prepared for the
**Marquette County
Intergovernmental
Housing Task Force**

Coordinated by the
Lake Superior Community Partnership
and
Marquette County Land Bank Authority

Prepared by:



LandUseUSA
UrbanStrategies



Section 1-G

The City of Ishpeming

Market Potential

Capture

- Throughout the City of Ishpeming, build 22 new for-sale units per year over the next five years, including 14 (fourteen) detached houses or cottages; and 8 (eight) townhouses with porches and private entrances (attached formats will depend on sites with vista views).
- In addition, build 16 (sixteen) new for-lease units annually over the next five years, including 4 (four) lofts or apartments; 2 (two) townhouses in a duplex with private entrances; and 10 (ten) accessory dwellings, cottages, and units in small apartment houses.

Retention

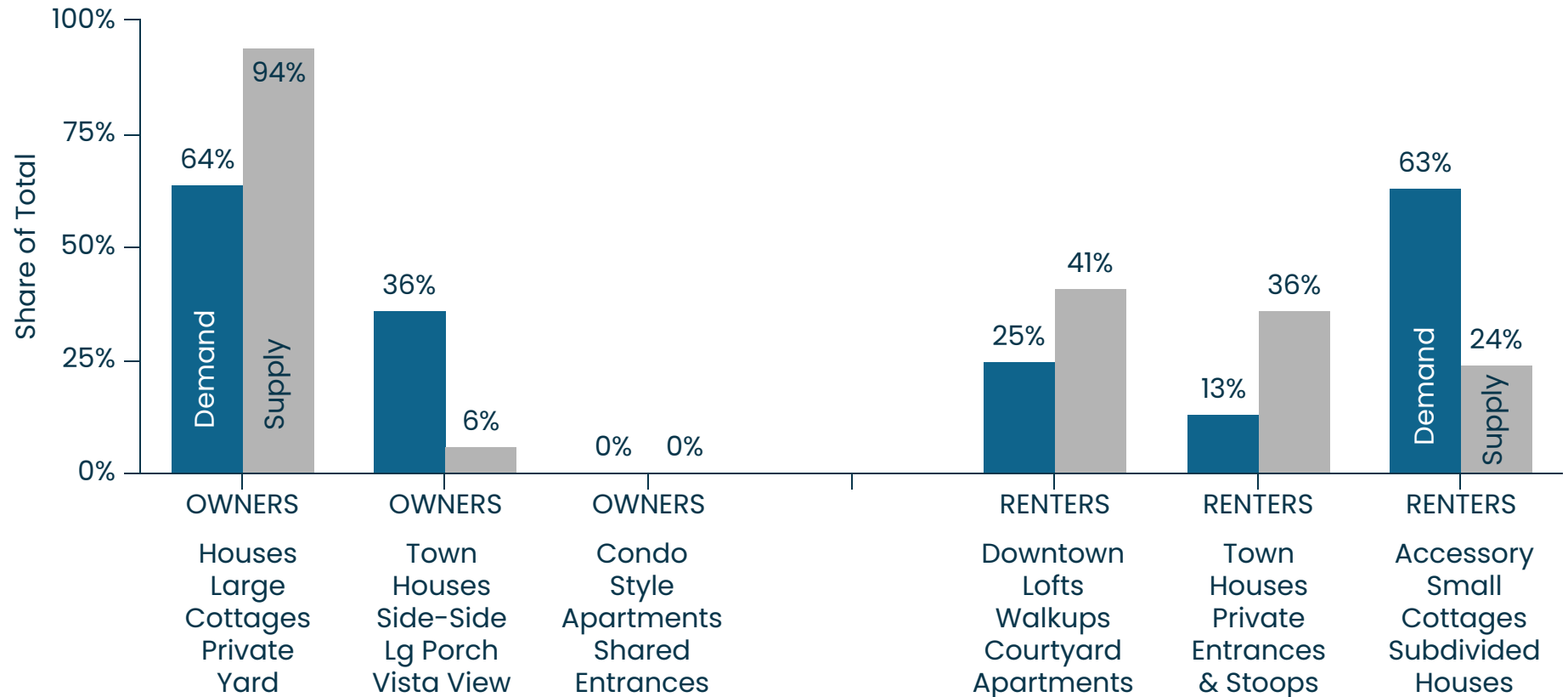
- Whenever they become available, renovate, remodel, or rehab up to 40 existing for-sale units per year over the next five years, including 25 detached houses; 10 (ten) townhouses; and 5 (five) condominium-style apartments.
- In addition, renovate, remodel, or rehab 160 existing for-lease units annually over the next five years, including 25 lofts or courtyard apartments; 20 townhouses; and up to 115 accessory dwellings, cottages, and subdivided houses – whenever they become available.

Interception – Bolster the market potential for new-builds by building an additional +5 (five) for-sale units and +3 (three) for-lease units; and focus on missing housing formats that would most appeal to the migrating households. Those households would otherwise be inclined to bypass the City of Ishpeming for other places in Marquette County.

Maximum – Adding the Capture, Retention, and Interception numbers together yields the maximum market potential for new-builds. This approach assumes that rather than renovating, remodeling, or rehabbing existing units, developers instead build new units for every household migrating either into or within Ishpeming.

The Housing Mismatch | Ishpeming City

Capture with New Builds v. Existing Units | 2025



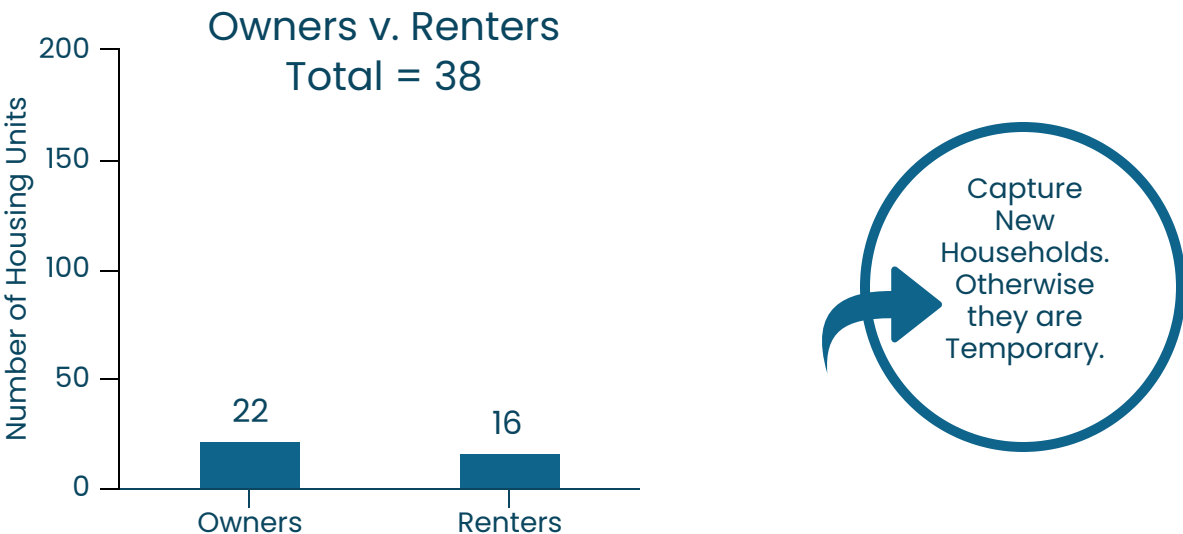
Supply represents all existing housing units as reported by the American Community Survey with one-year and five-year estimates through 2022. Demand is based on the number of new households migrating into the City of Ishpeming each year. All figures are unadjusted for out-migration; internal movership among existing households; vacancies; and new projects that might be in pipeline for future development.



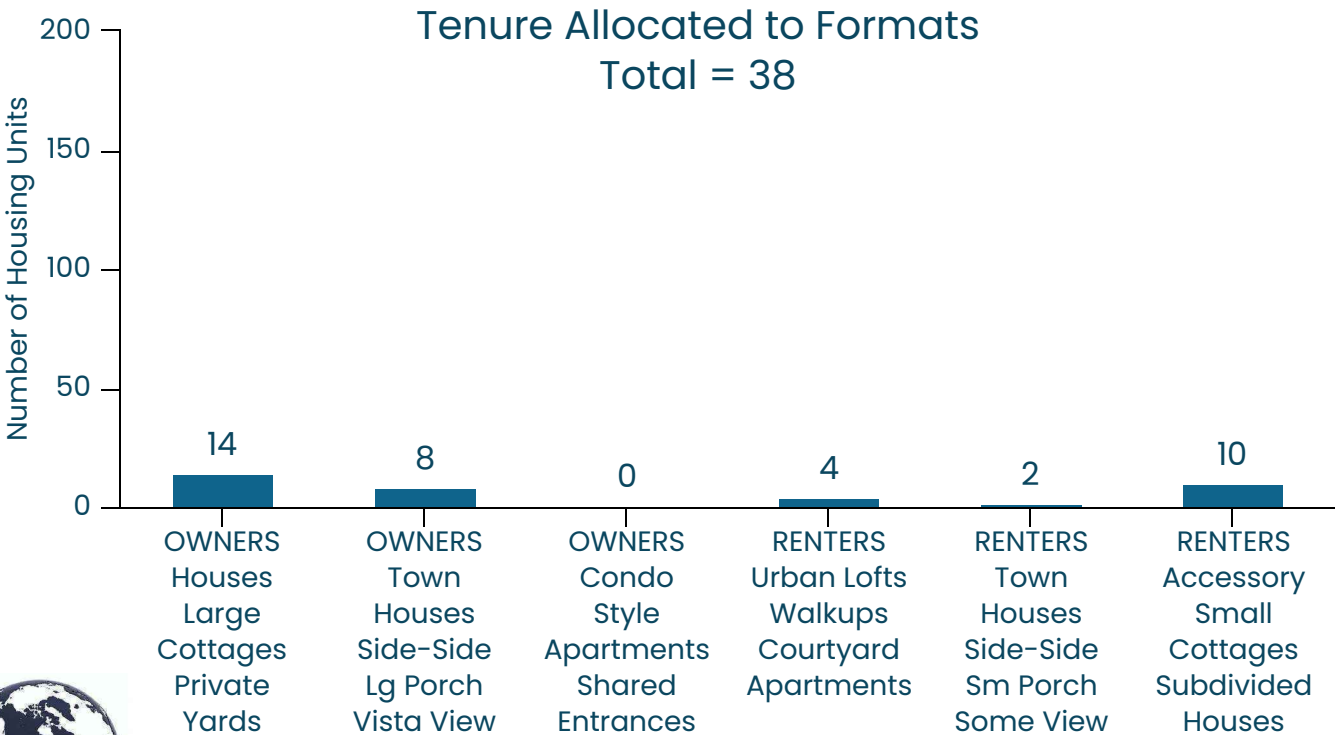
Based on the results of a comprehensive Residential Target Market Analysis and analysis prepared by LandUseUSA | Urban Strategies; 2023.

Annual Market Potential | Ishpeming City

Capture with New Builds | Year 2025



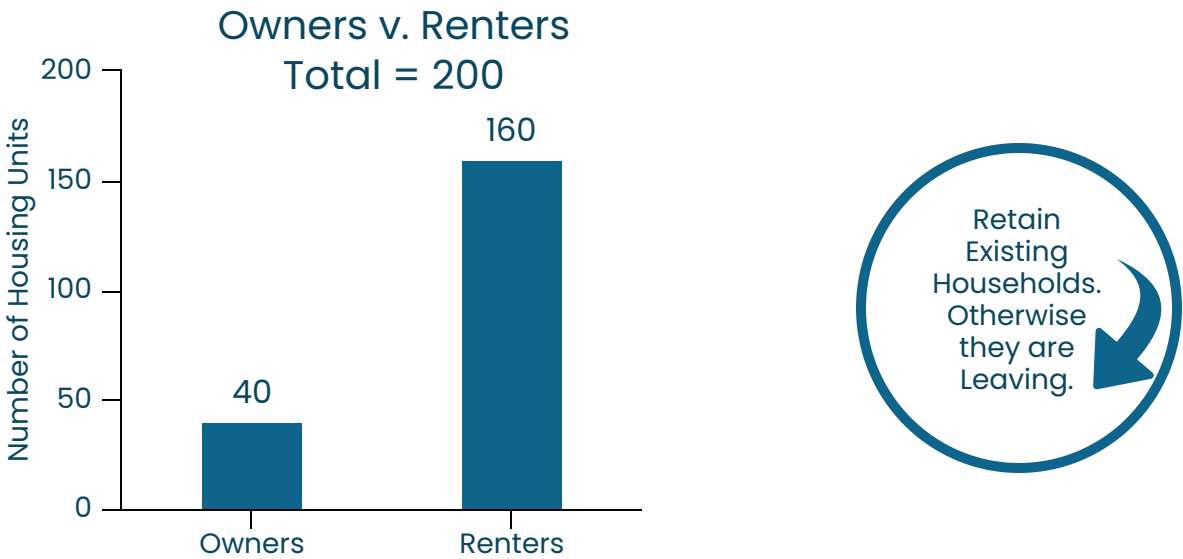
Both charts on this page represent a conservative market potential based on in-migration by new households only, and excluding internal movership by existing households. There is a need to CAPTURE these new households that are moving into the City of Ishpeming by building new housing units every year. All figures are unadjusted for out-migration, current vacancies, and competing developments that might be in the construction pipeline.



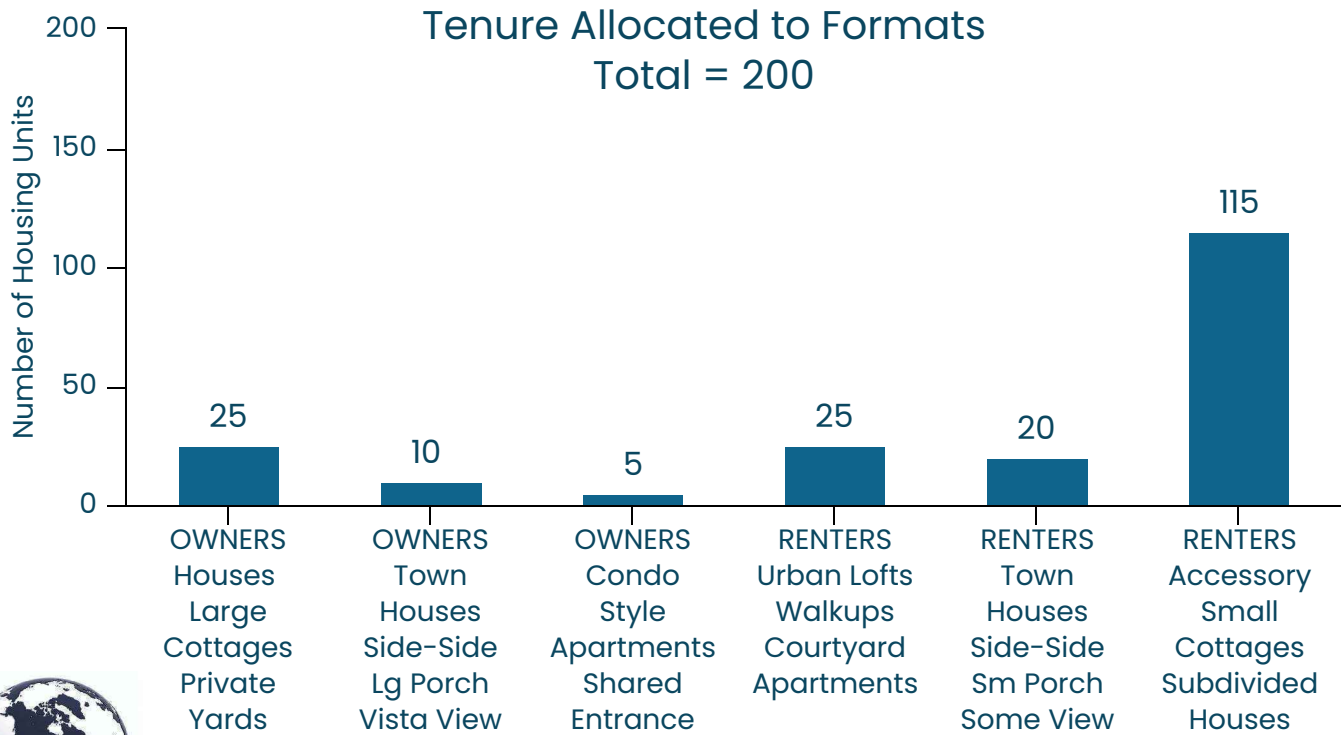
Source: Target market analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUseUSA | Urban Strategies; 2023. Based on the 2022 actual migration of households migrating into the City of Ishpeming.

Annual Market Potential | Ishpeming City

Retain with Rehabs | Year 2025



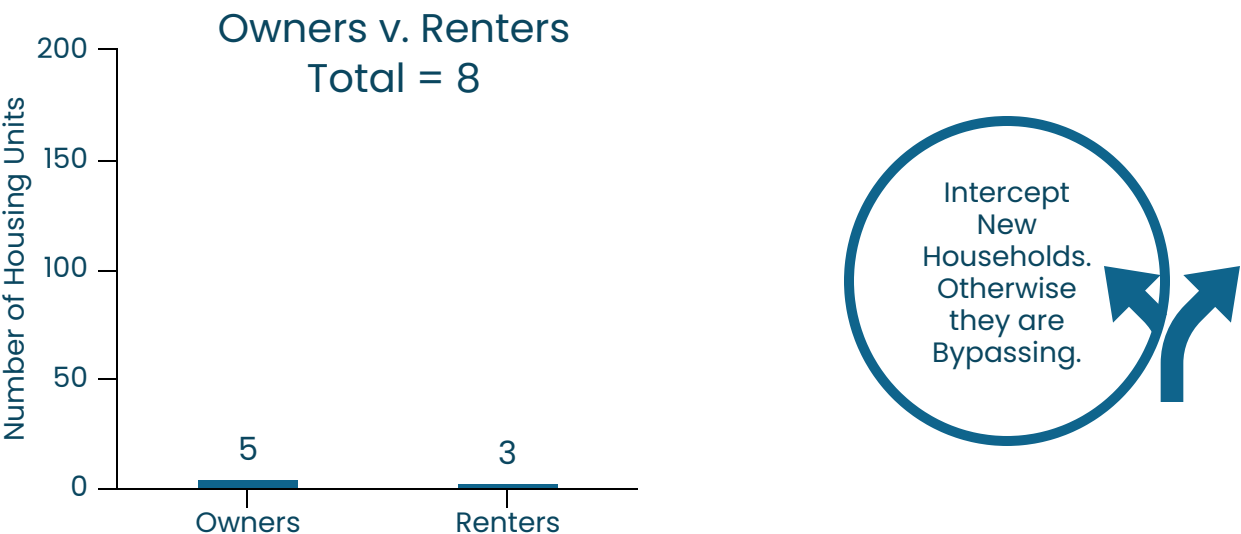
Both charts on this page represent a conservative market potential based on internal movership by existing households only, and excluding in-migration by new households. There is a need to RETAIN these existing households that are moving within the City of Ishpeming by rehabbing outdated units every year. All figures are unadjusted for out-migration, current vacancies, and competing developments that might be in the construction pipeline.



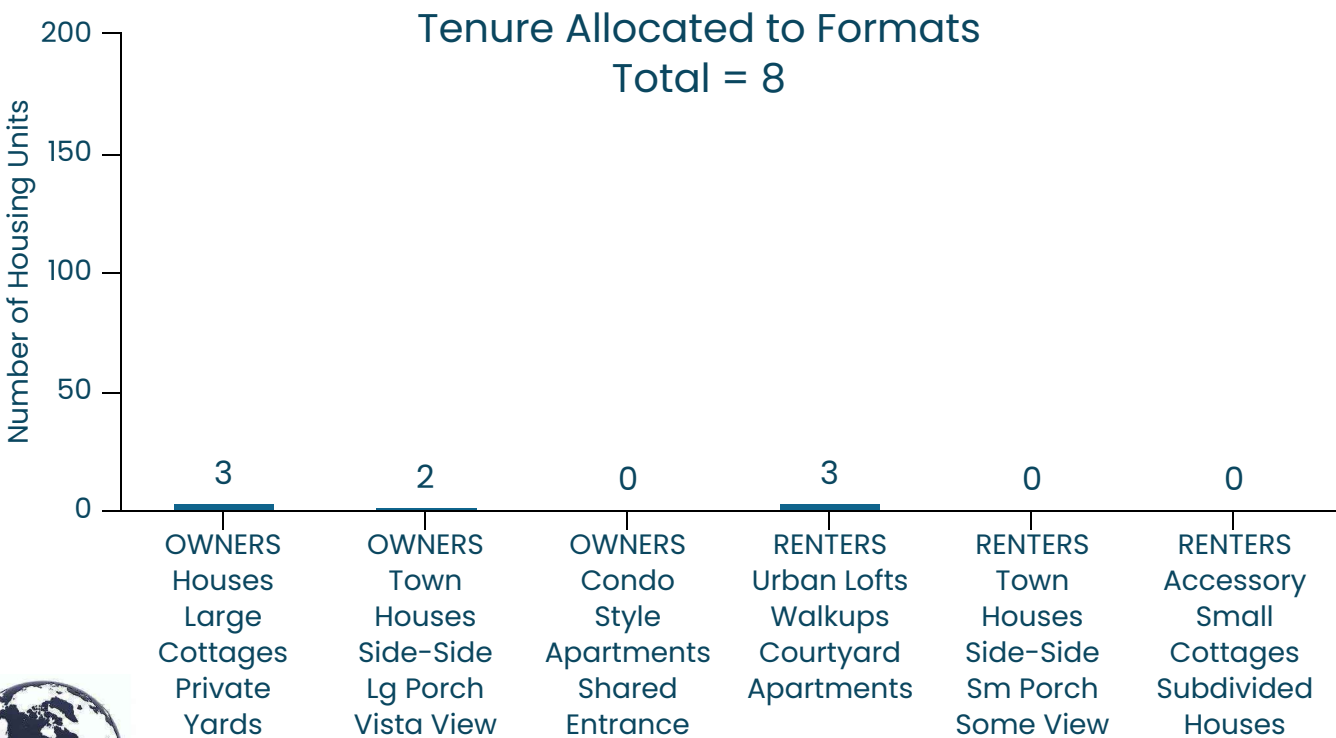
Source: Target market analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUseUSA | Urban Strategies; 2023. Based on the 2022 actual migration of households moving within the City of Ishpeming.

Annual Market Potential | Ishpeming City

Intercept with New Builds | Year 2025



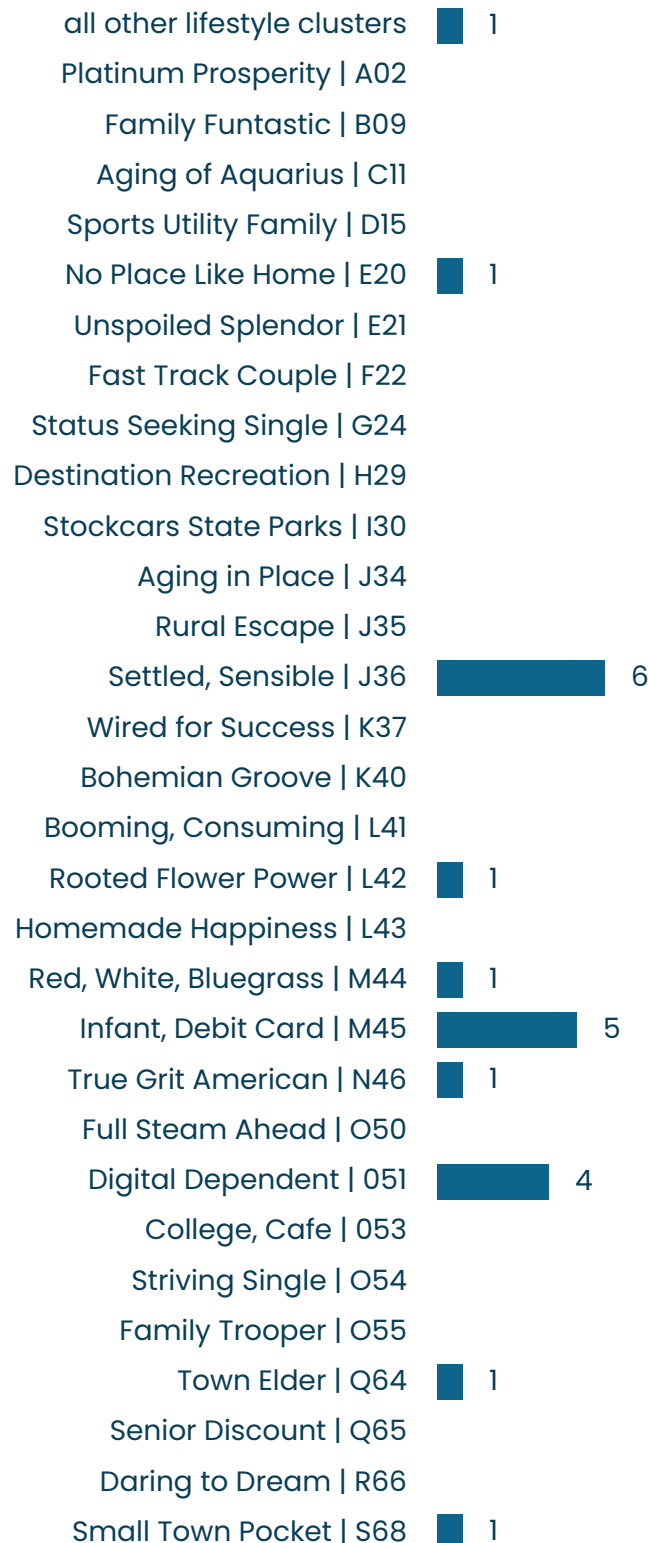
Both charts on this page represent an upside potential based on the interception of other households that are on the move but currently bypassing the City of Ishpeming. There is an upside potential to INTERCEPT these households by building new housing formats that are under-represented in the market. All figures are unadjusted for out-migration, current vacancies, and competing developments that might be in the construction pipeline.



Source: Target market analysis and exhibit prepared by LandUseUSA | Urban Strategies; 2023. Based on the 2022 actual migration of households moving into Marquette County but bypassing the City of Ishpeming.

Annual Market Potential | Ishpeming City

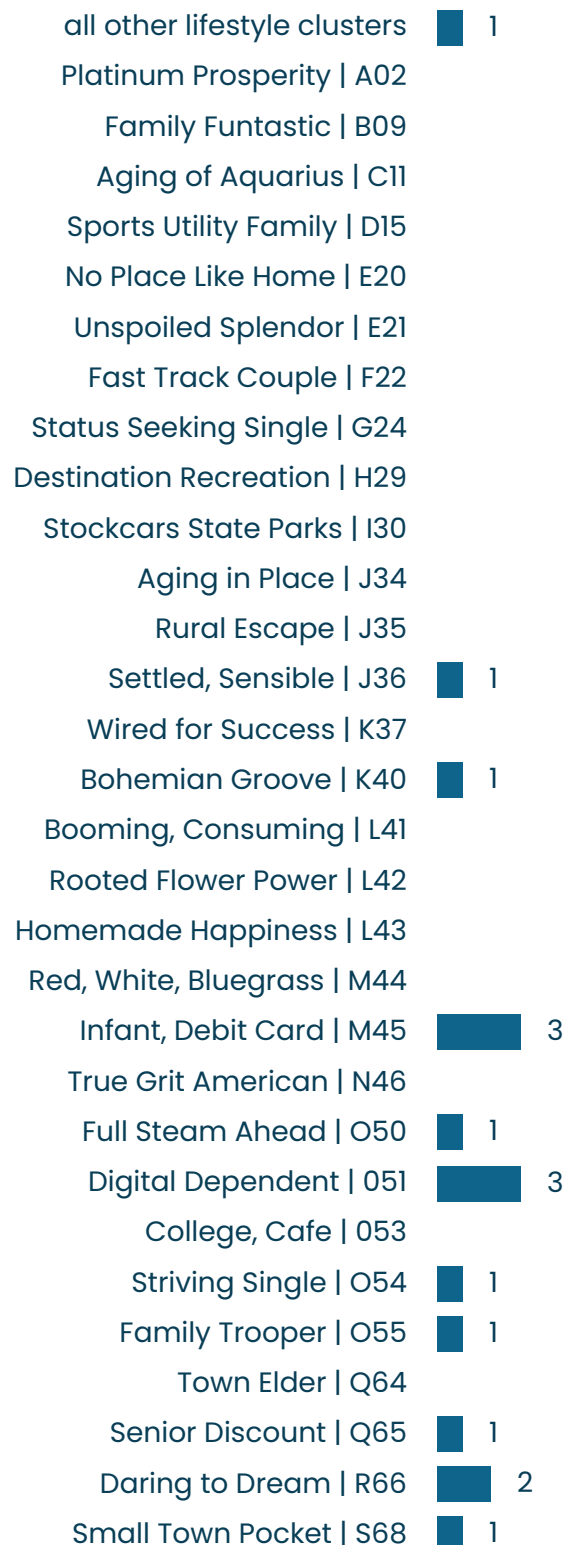
Capture of New Owners | Year 2025



Total = 22
Annual Capture
Owner Households
...
Excludes Retention
and Interception

Annual Market Potential | Ishpeming City

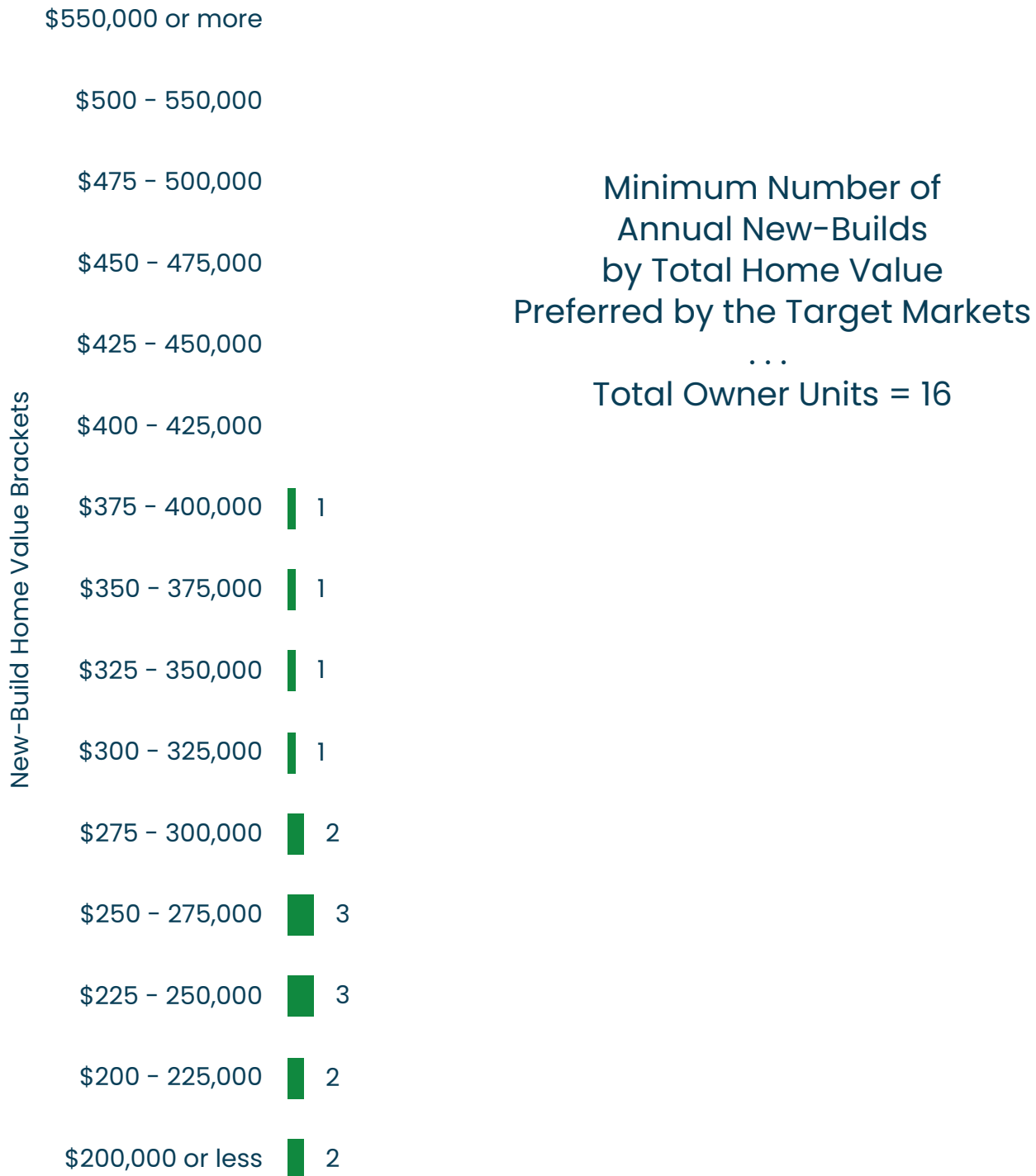
Capture of New Renters | Year 2025



Total = 16
Annual Capture
Renter Households

...
Excludes Retention
and Interception

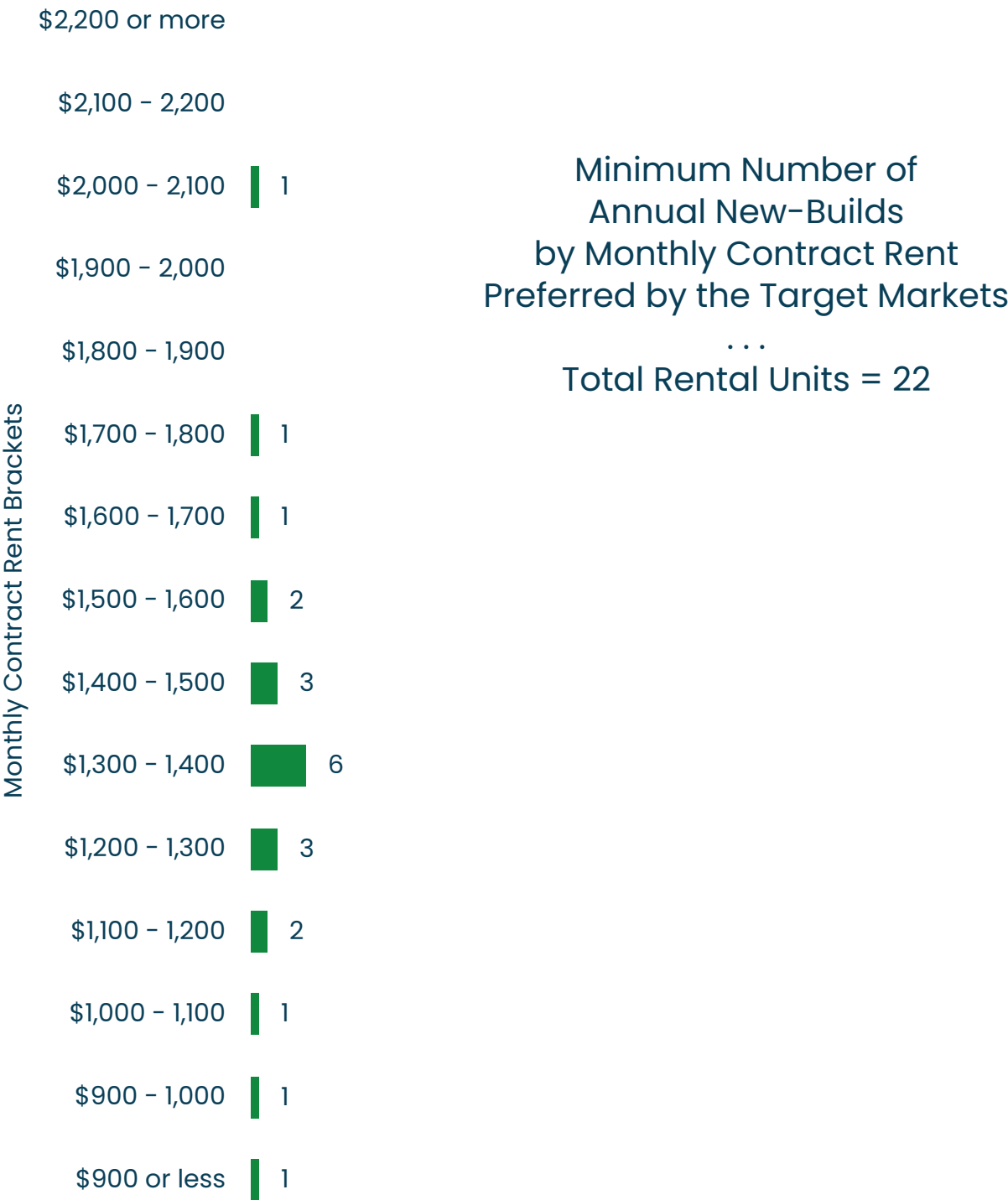
Home Value Tolerance | Ishpeming City Capture with New-Builds | Year 2025



Based on the results of a Target Market Analysis and study of households moving into the local market. Analysis & exhibit prepared by LandUseUSA | Urban Strategies; 2023.



Monthly Rent Tolerance | Ishpeming City Capture with New Builds | Year 2025



Based on the results of a Target Market Analysis and study of households moving into the local market. Analysis & exhibit prepared by LandUseUSA | Urban Strategies; 2023.



