

Section 4: Housing

Background

The Manheim Central Region has two distinct natures with respect to housing – the first is the urbanized Borough with its quarter acre and smaller lot neighborhoods and multi-unit structures. The other is the suburban, single-family detached or single-family partially attached (twin) home style on one-half to one acre lots that is prevalent in the two townships. In the last ten years, the Region and willing developers have made a significant effort to build on smaller lots in new developments such as Elm Tree in Rapho and Brookshire in Penn Township. Since the 1970s, most housing construction in the Region has been single-family detached dwellings, most of which are owner-occupied. It should be noted that the construction of the 1970s is now approaching forty years in age, increasing maintenance needs and emergency repairs.

Another trend in the Region is the development of senior housing and age-restricted developments. It is expected that this type of housing will remain in demand and continue to grow in the Manheim Region. Senior housing developments are relatively compact compared with the average lot size in the townships; however, they could be more compact, walkable and connected to convenience retail development than recent projects have been. Brookshire and Pleasant View developments are two examples of new senior and age-restricted housing developments in Penn Township. In Rapho, Elm Tree's Four Seasons subdivision is dedicated to age-restricted housing.

According to ESRI, a national vendor of demographic and economic data, the Region's home values increased by about 60% between 2000 and 2008, and these increases have exacerbated the affordability concerns expressed in earlier studies and plans. Despite the recent slowdown in the real estate market, affordability remains a concern. However, the Region remains an attractive location and growth pressure will return as the economy of the area and the nation recover.

The Region has only a small amount of rental housing and demand for more. Predicted growth trends indicate the need to provide housing for seniors and lower-income families, including farm laborers and Auto Auction employees, positions that typically do not pay well. Both the Lancaster County 2006-2010 Consolidated Plan and the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing indicate that there is a need for below market rate rental housing. However, an assessment of the pricing of the Region's rental units indicates that prices are affordable, at least at the median income level. There appears to be no developer response to the perceived need for rental housing, further indicating the current lack of a market for rental units, either market rate or below market rate.

The Land Use Section of this Plan recommends zoning changes to increase the economic feasibility and improve the design of multi-family housing in the Region – regardless of cost or ownership structure. The Housing recommendations focus on ways to encourage the development of new housing units affordable to a wide range of residents and tools maintain investment in older structures and rental housing to support high-quality, moderate-income and rental opportunities. These recommendations seek to broaden housing choices for residents of all income levels and meet the goals and objectives of *Choices*, the Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan Housing Element.

In addition to the guidance provided in *Choices*, the Municipalities Planning Code requires every municipality in the Commonwealth to provide for its fair share of multi-family housing. This provision is generally interpreted as providing a fair share of affordable units. The amount of multi-

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family housing in the Region and each of its municipalities should be generally consistent with the percentage of units that are available county-wide. As seen in **Table 4.1** below, 2000 US Census data reveals that the percentage of housing in the Region that is in multi-family units is about two percentage points lower than the County's percentage. It is expected that with the new multi-family housing development in the municipalities since 2000, the percentage might increase in the 2010 US Census. As discussed in the Land Use Section, it will be important for the municipalities to review their ordinances and ensure that they are permitting multi-family housing as a use-by-right in appropriate areas within the designated growth areas.

Table 4.1: Percent of Total Housing Units that are Multi-family Housing Units

Area	Percent of Housing Units that are Multi-family (2000)*
Penn Township	18.1%
Rapho Township	18.1%
Manheim Borough	15.6%
Region	18.5%
Lancaster County	20.6%
Pennsylvania	20.8%
Nation	22.0%

* Multi-family housing includes three or more units and Mobile Homes

Housing Recommendations

Goal 4.1: Provide high-quality housing choices in appropriate areas to meet the needs of current and future residents, regardless of household size, age, ethnicity or income.

Objectives

- Maintain, preserve and revitalize Manheim Borough's residential and mixed-use neighborhoods
- Provide high-quality rental housing options throughout the Region
- Provide affordable housing options for residents of all ages and income levels to meet the needs of current residents and ensure the Region is able to attract a diverse population in the future.

Strategies

4.1.1. Stabilize older residential housing stock through effective code enforcement, zoning regulations and other programs to encourage ongoing investment

As noted above a significant portion of the Region's housing stock is older, resulting in additional repair and maintenance needs. Each municipality should consider whether changes are needed in its zoning ordinance to encourage ongoing investment in the existing housing stock. This could include provisions for flexibility in setbacks for house

additions or other strategies that would facilitate investment in older structures that may not be in full conformance with current ordinance requirements.

In Manheim Borough the conversion of older, single-family residential structures into multi-family rental units is becoming an issue of concern. The Borough should address this issue by amending its zoning and building codes pertaining to such conversions (as discussed in more detail in the Land Use Element), as well as enforcing those codes more stringently. There are a number of avenues to address this issue, such as permitting, building codes, parking regulations and prohibitions of certain types of conversions.

The Borough should also consider implementing a homeowner rehabilitation assistance program. Such programs are typically funded through Community Development Block Grants and are available to low- and moderate-income home owners. Eligible repairs include those that address structural and safety issues, such as heating and plumbing, roof repair and replacement, reduction of lead paint hazards and repairs needed to bring the property up to code. Assistance can include low to no interest loans as well as forgivable loans, depending on income levels. The City of Lancaster Homeowner Rehabilitation Program is a strong model of such initiatives. A description of this program is included as Appendix B to this Plan

4.1.2. Revise local ordinances and regulations to ensure the provision of adequate workforce housing in the Region

Affordability for owner-occupied units is a concern for the region. Prior to the economic recession of 2008-2009, housing prices had increased across the Region. The increases were not as great as in many parts of the Commonwealth and nation; however, local housing price increases outstripped income gains for most households. While prices decreased somewhat as a result of the economic slowdown, the price reduction was not enough to erase the affordability gap between prices and regional incomes.

There are a number of ways for the municipalities to encourage the development of workforce housing. Each municipality should explore requirements or incentives for building workforce housing. Each municipality should consider the potential for incorporating workforce housing provisions into its development code. Such strategies could include:

- Providing density incentives and other incentives for developments over a certain size to include a specified percentage of the project as affordable housing units or pay a fee in lieu of providing affordable housing units.
- Abating local taxes for development of affordable workforce and senior housing

4.1.3. Develop a rental registration and occupancy license program to facilitate planning for and maintenance of rental housing stock in the Region

A rental registration program requires rental property owners to register their property. It provides good information to the municipality to help inventory its rental units and plan for public safety, infrastructure and maintenance issues. Under such a program, an occupancy license is required for rental units every year to certify that the unit meets basic habitability and safety requirements. The Borough has had the most issues with rental housing and should proceed with adopting a rental registration program. The Townships might want to consider adopting programs as well, in light of the new multi-family rental

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housing projects being built. A regional rental registration program would ease the administrative burden of such a program. The City of Lancaster and Elizabethtown Borough have rental registration programs that can be used as potential models in developing local ordinances in the Manheim Central Region.