



Housing



Overview

The City of Fitchburg directly influences the provision of housing through its land use regulations, development standards adopted, and the type of public services provided. The intent of this element is to provide basic information on the housing stock in the City of Fitchburg, analyze trends, and identify any potential problems and opportunities so that taken as a whole, this Comprehensive Plan will accommodate the carried housing needs of the current and future residents.

Existing Conditions

Types of Housing Units

In 2000, there were 8,662 housing units in the City. Single-family units accounted for 46.5% of the total. Multi-family accounted for the most common housing type in the City at 49.4%. Two-family units accounted for 3.4% and mobile homes accounted for 0.7%.

Housing Tenure – Occupancy Status

The number of dwelling units that are available for rent or purchase in a community can represent the difference between a community with intense pressure for housing and inflate housing costs and a community in decline with abandoned homes. The supply of available dwelling units must be sufficient to allow for the formation of new households within the existing population, absorb in-migration of new households, and permit existing households to reform because of a change in size or status. A household consists of an individual or individuals living together in a dwelling unit. Some households consist of one person, a traditional family, unrelated individuals, or any combination of families and individuals.

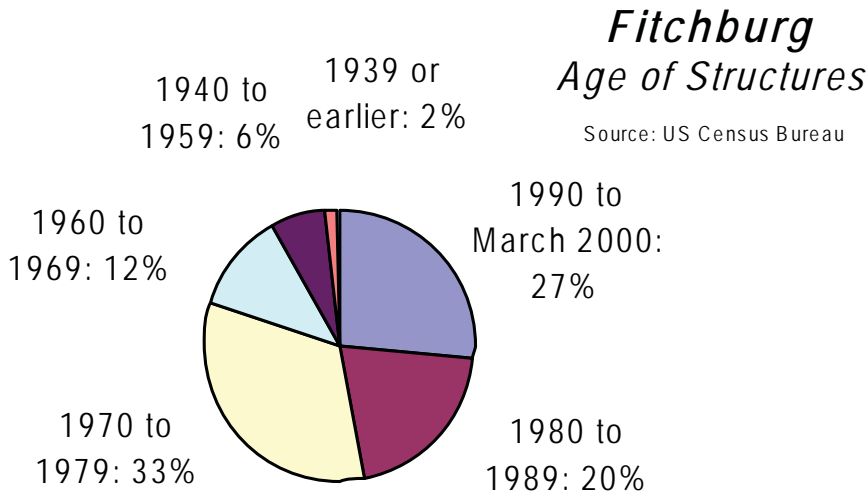
The general rule is that the overall vacancy rate should not exceed three percent (1.5% for owned units and 4.5% for rentals). At this rate, there are generally enough dwelling units to maintain adequate housing choice.

According to the 2000 Census, of the total housing units in the City of Fitchburg, 43% were owner-occupied, 53% were renter occupied, and 4% were vacant. The owner-available vacancy rate for the City was 1.0%, while the renter-available vacancy rate was 4.6%.

Age of Housing Stock

The age of the housing stock in a community is one measure of quality, although one must not assume that as the age of a home increases, its quality declines as well. Age of a building only suggests that as a home gets older it may be necessary to spend more time and money on upkeep and maintenance.

Figure 8 - 1



As of 2000, 53% of the housing stock in Fitchburg was built during the 1970's and 1980's. Another large portion of the structures, 27 %, were built in the 1990's. Approximately 20% of Fitchburg's homes were constructed prior to 1970 (Figure 8 - 1).

Value of Housing Stock

The City of Fitchburg's 2000 median housing value of \$176,000 was higher than the median value for the surrounding municipalities. The median home value has approximately doubled since 1990's value of \$95,200. This increase has mirrored that of other communities throughout Dane County. Figure 8 - 2 offers a breakdown of the housing values within Fitchburg in 1990 and 2000.

Figure 8 - 2: Value of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units (2000)

	1990	2000
Less than \$50,000	57	23
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,199	84
\$100,000 to \$149,999	562	910
\$150,000 to \$199,999	171	948
\$200,000 to \$299,999	161	740
\$300,000 to \$499,999	42	479
\$500,000 or more	7	80

Source: US Census Bureau

Household Size

The overall household size in Fitchburg decreased from 1970 to 1980 falling from 3.54 persons per household to 2.25 (Figure 8 - 3). Since 1980, the household size has been gradually increasing to 2.38 persons per household in 2000. A main contributing factor to the household size in 1970 was a residential construction boom. 2,945 structures were built, which represent 34% of the housing stock in 2000. A large portion of the 2,945 structures built were multi-family apartment buildings. This increased the number of rental households, which typically have smaller household sizes (Figure 8 - 4).

Housing

Figure 8 - 3: Fitchburg - Overall Household Size

	1970	1980	1990	2000
People per Household	3.54	2.25	2.36	2.38

Source: US Census Bureau

Figure 8 - 4: Fitchburg - Owned and Rented Household Sizes

	1990		People per Household	2000		People per Household
	Households	Percent		Household	Percent	
Own	2496	39.0	2.97	3738	45.2	2.79
Rent	3903	61.0	1.97	4524	54.8	2.05
Overall	6399	100	2.36	8262	100	2.38

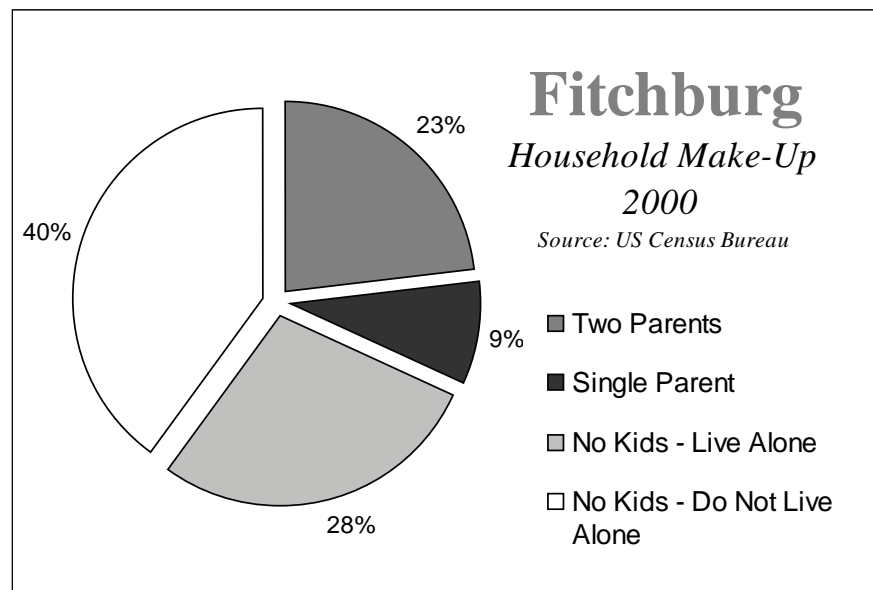
Source: US Census Bureau

Although the number of owner-occupied housing has increased since 1980, the average size of owner-occupied households have been decreasing. From 1990 to 2000, the percentages of owner-occupied households have increased from 39.0% to 45.2%, which the average size decreased from 2.97 persons per household to 2.79 (Figure 8 - 4). This trend of smaller households can be attributed to several factors including an aging population, higher divorce rate, a decrease in the birth rate, as well as individuals postponing marriage until later in life.

Household Characteristics

In 2000, 32 % of the households within the City of Fitchburg had children under the age of 18, while 68 % did not. Nine percent of all households had single parents, while 23 % of the households had two parents. Twenty-eight % of all households have individuals who live alone, while 40 % have occupants that live with at least one other individual (Figure 8 - 5).

Figure 8 - 5



Future Housing Needs

The population of the City over the next 20 years is expected to increase 17% each decade, resulting in a total population of 25,477 in 2010, 30,431 in 2020 and 35,386 in 2030 (Figure 8 - 6). It is anticipated that the average household size will continue to fall. Given the anticipated decrease in household size, the number of households will consequently grow disproportionately faster than the population increase.

Figure 8 - 6: Population Growth

	Census				Projection		
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Fitchburg	4,704	11,973	15,648	20,501	25,477	30,431	35,386
Dane County	290,272	323,545	367,085	426,526	480,573	527,534	554,848

Source: Dane County Regional Planning Commission

By 2030, the number of households in the City should approach 14,843. Between 2000 and 2030, a total of 6,581 new households will form in Fitchburg (Figure 8 - 7).

As the number of households in the community rise, the number of housing units should increase as well. The number of dwelling units available should exceed the number of households in that a certain percentage of the units will be vacant at any point in time. A reasonable vacancy rate allows consumers a choice when newcomers move into an area and when residents create new households or decide to move within the community due to a change in household status, housing requirements, or lifestyle. In addition, more housing units will need to be constructed to replace housing units that are destroyed, demolished, or converted to non-residential uses.

Figure 8 - 7: Household Projections

	2000	2010	2020	2030
Fitchburg	8,262	10,672	12,933	14,843
Dane County	173,484	200,719	222,996	243,222

Source: Dane County Regional Planning Commission

The number of housing units was calculated by applying a vacancy rate to the projected number of households for each of the time periods. For the purpose of this Plan, it is assumed that the occupancy rate will hold fairly steady at about 95 percent over the next 20 years. Although it is likely that some of the existing housing units will be taken out of the housing stock, this amount will likely be insignificant and was not factored in the projections.

Affordability must also be kept in mind when determining future housing needs. A dwelling unit is considered affordable if it costs no more than 30 percent of the total household income.

Survey Results

There is a very strong preference for home ownership by Fitchburg residents. While ninety percent of respondents believe that Fitchburg should promote more owner-occupied single-family homes, they prefer to see a mix of housing types with varying lot sizes. Citizens are in favor of strengthening the jobs-housing balance; that is they would like to see a balance between the development of dwelling units and jobs. Additionally, they prefer a compact development pattern as opposed to a “bedroom community” that only acts as a residential community.