

# Greene Planning



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## Greene County Housing Action Plan

### Greene County Existing Housing Conditions

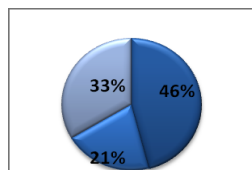
The Greene County Legislature, through the Department of Planning and Economic Development, encourages our communities to examine ways to provide for a healthy housing mix to address needs in the Greene County housing market. A snapshot of existing housing conditions is described in this newsletter.

#### Rising Housing Prices

- Since 2000 Greene County's median housing price has increased 122.8% from \$78,313 to \$174,500. *Source: Economic Report of the Hudson Valley Annual 2006 by Marist College*
- Average asking price for homes in 2007  
*Source: Greene County Real Property Tax Service:*
  - Historic River Towns - \$195,223
  - Valley Towns - \$170,927
  - Mountaintop Towns - \$300,113

#### Incomes in Greene County

- Median Family Income (MFI) in Greene County has increased from \$42,200 in 2000 to \$54,300 in 2007. *Source: U.S. HUD <http://www.huduser.org/datasets>*
- MFI Incomes only increase by 3.4% from 2000 to 2007 after inflation.
- 46% of residents are below 80% of Greene County median income.
- 21% of residents are between 80% to 120% of Greene County median income.
- 33% of residents are above 120% of Greene County median income.



### Housing Affordability

- One way to determine the affordability of homeowner units is to compare the median value of homeowner units and median household income of the community.
  - A ratio of 2 to 1 or less is considered "affordable."
  - In 2000, the housing affordability ratio for Greene County was 2.52, slightly higher than ideal.
  - In 2007, the housing affordability ratio increased to 4.53.

### Rental Market

- Current average rents are higher than the Fair Market Rents (FMRs).\*
- Subsidized housing accounts for less than 3% of the County's total housing units.
- Based on the current average asking rental price, a minimum income of \$33,680 would be required by a household to afford a typical two-bedroom unit at 30% of income.
- Nearly 40% of Greene County households have incomes below \$33,680 and would have to spend more than 30% of income on rent.
- In order to afford the average one-bedroom rent of \$584, a person would need to make at least \$11.23 per hour, or \$23,360 per year. This calculation assumes you will spend no more than 30% of your income on rent (the generally accepted standard of affordability).
- In order to afford the average two-bedroom rent of \$857, a person would need to make at least \$16.48 per hour, or \$34,280 per year. This calculation assumes you will spend no more than 30% of your income on rent.

\* FMRs are gross rent estimates (shelter rent plus cost of all tenant-paid utilities, except telephones, cable, or satellite television service, and internet service) as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development



## Senior Housing

- The Greene County Department of Aging completed a Needs Assessment of Senior Housing in the fall of 2007.
- The Needs Assessment found a strong demand for affordable housing for low income seniors as well as for seniors whose income made them ineligible for many of the subsidized senior projects found in Greene County. Waiting lists for senior housing are one to two years long.
- Many seniors want to remain in their own community. Currently only six out of fourteen Greene County towns have some form of senior housing.
- There are two nursing homes and three adult care facilities in Greene County. All are located in the Historic River Towns area of the County.
- Survey results completed as part of the Needs Assessment show that major difficulties are being faced by older residents in maintaining their homes (housekeeping activities, simple home maintenance, lawn care, and snow removal).
- Most seniors also had problems with stairs, with over half of the respondents having problems of going up and down stairs.
- Seniors need assistance with understanding and completing health insurance forms.
- One-third of seniors reported loneliness and depression.
- Transportation continues to be a problem for seniors.
- Over 25% of respondents indicated a need for income assistance.

## Barriers to Housing

- Greene County's physical and environmental features present a significant obstacle to the development of housing
- Potential obstacles to the development of housing in the County include:
  - Natural features of the Catskill Mountains
  - New York City Watershed Agreement
  - Wetlands
  - Flood prone areas
  - Steep slopes
  - Soils
  - Infrastructure
  - Stormwater management
  - Current Zoning regulations
  - Public Perceptions



## Housing Vacancy

- Greene County has a considerable number of vacant units – 31% in 2000 – which indicate a significant second homeowner population, as “weekender” houses are considered vacant by the Census Bureau.
- The generally accepted standards for measuring availability in a healthy housing market are vacancy rates in the area of 1% for purchase housing and 5% for rental units
- Excluding seasonal and recreation units, the vacancy rates for homeownership and rental units in 2000 are:
  - Historic River Towns – 2.5% (for-sale) and 8.6% (rental)
  - Valley Towns – 3.0% (for-sale) and 7.0% (rental)
  - Mountaintop Towns – 7.3% (for-sale) and 26.7% (rental)

## Workforce Housing

- Greene County completed a Countywide Economic Development Plan in 2007 for which housing, particularly workforce housing, was identified as an important aspect in the development of this plan.
- Workforce housing is affordable for the key occupations and employees needed in every community, including teachers, nurses, police officers, fire fighters and many other critical workers.
- The majority of single-earner households and about half of two-earner households in Greene County (based on current annual average salary) would not be able to afford homes at current prices based on 30% of median income going to housing.

This is one in a periodic series of technical guides

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