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HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

The Housing and Neighborhoods chapter examines the need for a diverse housing stock which will serve all ages and abilities within the community. It explores future opportunities to maintain and enhance the City's neighborhoods and promote responsible stewardship. Aging infrastructure, shifting demographics and future redevelopment will require the City to adapt its policy framework to changing demands.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation for this chapter was created by the Housing and Neighborhoods Task Force in 2015. That group consisted of nine members from a variety of backgrounds including a high school student, an architect, realtors, an investment executive, a commercial developer, a residential developer and an advocate for housing for all. The members were assigned the task of providing policy recommendations to the Fishers 2040 Steering Committee.

Organization

The housing and neighborhoods chapter draws on the Demand Forecasting and Fiscal Sustainability Analysis completed by Policy Analytics in July, 2014; the Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends prepared by the National Association of REALTORS in 2014; and, the Community Preference Survey compiled by the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of REALTORS and the Indianapolis MPO in March, 2013. The highlights of these documents were presented to the task force by staff. This section presents the goals, objectives and action items which were developed by the task force to make Fishers a smart, vibrant and entrepreneurial community.

The Housing and Neighborhoods chapter includes the following components:

Key Findings and Initiatives . Presents the parameters for the recommendations.

Current State of Housing. Provides a snapshot of Fishers housing and neighborhoods currently.

Vision, Goals, Objectives and Actions The task forces synthesis and recommendations for action.



FIVE-YEAR UPDATE

A Housing Subcommittee was convened as part of the five-year update process in 2021 to provide direction for refinements to this chapter including new action items and priority recommendations.

Key Findings and Initiatives

The key findings and initiatives reflect the essential elements needed to design and sustain the innovative housing and enduring neighborhoods.

Connect the Community. Encourage connectivity from neighborhoods to key destinations and between residential neighborhoods.

Promote Sustainability. Promote the use of sustainable practices in new development, redevelopment and the maintenance of property.

Create Sense of Place. Revise the UDO to reflect the changes cited in each policy area to promote creativity, innovation and a strong sense of place.

Enhance PUD Process. Incentivize similar changes to existing PUDs.

Revise PUD Longevity. Add a sunset provision to PUDs moving forward for all developments, so that if the development does not occur within three years, the PUD sunsets and the land returns to its previous zone.

Create Architectural Review Committee. Revise the approval process by adding an Architectural Review Committee to encourage and incentivize creativity in neighborhood design and architectural style.

Offer Architectural Options. Offer a broader menu of options for developers to meet the City's residential architecture standards to invite creativity and innovation.

Incentivize Innovation. Recognize and celebrate innovation with incentive programs, through social media coverage and the presentation of awards.

Revise Open Space Standards. Provide a broader spectrum of options for developers to meet the open space standards including a payment-in-lieu option; incentives to provide less overall open space if the space provided is activated and designing parks that provide multiple functions year round.

Allow for Mixed Use. Establish standards which accommodate mixed use developments.

Promote Reinvestment. Create standards that enable and encourage infill and redevelopment and upgrade infrastructure to current standards as it is repaired or replaced.

Process

In order to develop the recommendations, the members of the 2015 Housing and Neighborhoods Task Force consulted with staff in various City departments including public works, community development, parks and recreation, permits and inspections and engineering. The task force members also met with various consultants such as Policy Analytics, developers, custom builders and production builders. This input was enriched by the discussions of the task force members themselves at the four meetings held during development.



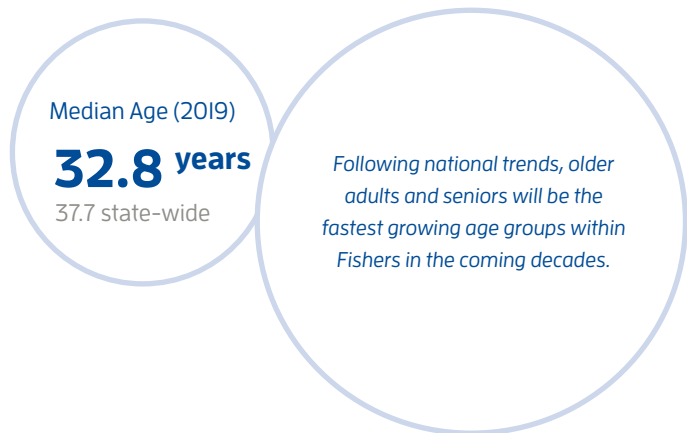
CURRENT STATE OF HOUSING

This section presents an summary of existing conditions, trends, issues and opportunities for housing and neighborhoods. As residents continue to move to Fishers, and the population continues to grow, careful planning to meet a variety of housing needs is critical. In addition, as existing neighborhoods mature, the city must continue to proactively work with residents and neighborhoods to enhance neighborhood vibrancy and character.

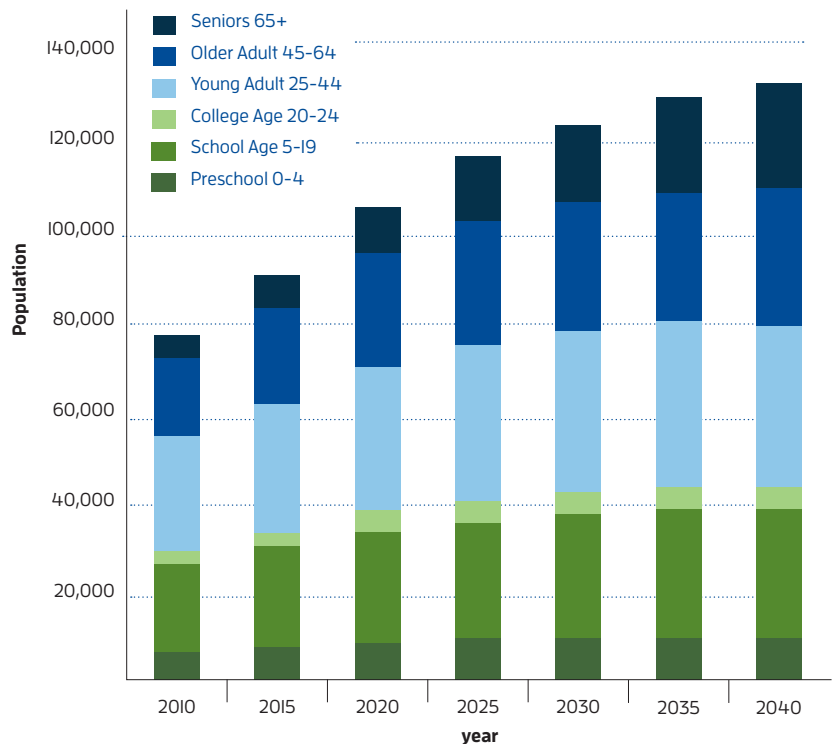
Population by Age

Based on the 2019 American Community Survey, the median age of Fishers' residents is 32.8 years of age. This is younger than the state-wide median age of 37.7 years.

The population forecast by age indicates that Fishers will experience a growth in the proportion of adults over age 65, reflecting national trends. In 2015, this group represented approximately 7.5 percent of the total population. By 2040, the percentage of adults over 65 years of age is forecast to be 17.8 percent of Fishers' population. The aging population has significant implications for housing needs, urban form, infrastructure design and age-in-place initiatives.



POPULATION FORECAST BY AGE



Household Structure

According to the American Community Survey, in 2019, 73.9 percent of households in Fishers reported being a family, which is higher than the state-wide average of 64.7 percent. Also, 26.1 percent of households live alone. The proportion of single-person households mirrors the national trend, as more seniors and millennials live alone. It is anticipated that the variety of housing available in Fishers will continue to evolve, as millennial and baby-boomer generations look for homes that meet their needs.



2019 American Community Survey (US Census)

Education, Median Household Income and Homeownership

Residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher (over age 25)

66.4%

26.5% state-wide

Residents who own their homes

77.7%

69.1% state-wide

Median household income

\$109,454

\$56,303 state-wide

2019 US Census QuickFacts



As demographics change, community preferences about the types of places where people live and work will likely shift. For instance, demand for quality, low-maintenance living options in walkable settings is expected to remain strong.



Housing units built after the year 2000

44%

14% state-wide

Median value of owner-occupied housing

\$264,200

\$141,700 state-wide



Housing Stock

The bulk of the housing stock in Fishers has been built in the past two decades and is in relatively good condition. Reinvestment in renovations and home improvements keep these properties in good repair. Initiatives such as Keep Fishers Beautiful also help with property maintenance. This annual drive is hosted by the city to help residents who are in need of assistance to keep their properties in good repair.

Vacant homes or homes which are not being kept up to municipal standards can be dealt with through enforcement of the Property Maintenance Ordinance. The ordinance was approved in 2014 and provides a mechanism for the City to act, when needed. Fishers does not actively seek out these cases but does respond to complaints by neighbors or by Home Ownership Associations.

Between 2015-2019 the median value of owner occupied housing units was \$264,200 compared to the Indiana median of \$141,700. The median value of homes in Fishers is much higher than the state median. The relatively young housing stock in much of Fishers may partially explain this disparity. Forty-four percent of Fishers' housing stock was built after 2000. By comparison, only 13.6 percent of the housing stock in the state overall was built after 2000.

PLAN SUMMARY

Fishers housing and neighborhoods are designed to create enduring places which offer a range of housing choices and sustain well maintained neighborhoods that retain property values over time.

Purpose

The following goals , objectives and action items were developed by the task force to address the questions assigned to them. The task force presents five goals. They cover key themes of connectivity, creativity, diversity, sustainability, redevelopment, innovation and stewardship.

Goals

- 1. CONNECTED**- To create vibrant neighborhoods that are well connected to key destinations.
- 2. INNOVATIVE** - To encourage, enable and sustain purposeful, innovative open spaces in residential neighborhoods and mixed use developments.
- 3. RESILIENT** - To promote a resilient community through the development of enduring housing, neighborhoods and residential open spaces.
- 4. ACCESSIBLE** - To create a community that is financially, socially and physically accessible.
- 5. SUSTAINABLE** - To create enduring sustainable neighborhoods.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

FIVE-YEAR UPDATE All actions were assessed and updated in 2021. The status of each action is noted with an icon.



Underway (started, but not yet complete)

Future (not started)

Future, then maintenance



Complete



New (Actions added during the 2021 update)



Maintenance (currently occurring on a repeating basis)

Goal I: Connected

To create vibrant neighborhoods that are well-connected to key destinations.



Objective 1.1 To achieve and integrate neighborhoods connectivity, removing barriers and upgrading existing connections.

Status (as of June 2021)

1.1.1. Integrate housing with safe and convenient access to key destinations such as employment nodes, schools and parks for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Ensure that homes located in mixed-use environments properly integrate design features that promote walkability and decreased dependence on automobiles.



1.1.2. Require the developer to provide the complete network of sidewalks required by the UDO or PUD, to be installed no later than two years after construction started.



1.1.3. Implement the infrastructure priorities of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Transportation Plan to ensure connectivity is a priority in all new developments, redevelopment projects and when upgrades are completed in existing developments.



1.1.4. Revise the standards in the UDO to ensure neighborhoods and mixed use developments are required to provide connections to the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



Goal 2: Innovative

To encourage, create, and sustain innovative housing options, neighborhoods, and mixed use developments.



Objective 2.1 To offer a broader range of residential open space options to encourage innovative, purposeful functionality.

Status (as of June 2021)

<p>2.1.1. Ensure open spaces are designed to fulfil purposeful functions within the context of the specific neighborhood, the community and the region.</p>	
<p>2.1.2. Require purposeful elements such as storm water management, tree preservation, recreational amenities, art installations, gardens, native plantings and/or linear trails.</p>	
<p>2.1.3. Introduce a design award program to recognize, celebrate, and incentivize innovation in the design and/or redesign of housing and neighborhoods. Utilize city media channels to recognize innovation and promote civic pride.</p>	<p>Rephrased to combine several related actions</p>
<p>2.1.4. Provide an option to lower the overall percentage of open space required in a specific development if it is activated with multiple elements such as public art, recreational amenities, environmental best practices and facilities which promote social interaction for all ages and abilities.</p>	
<p>2.1.5. Assess whether it would be appropriate for select commercial developments to contribute to the City's open space network.</p>	
<p>2.1.6. Require developers to identify the functions the open space will fulfill and how the design achieves each function. City staff will work with the developer to ensure these functions are met.</p>	
<p>2.1.7. Update the existing UDO standards to offer a broader range of options for how the City's residential open space requirements may be met.</p>	
<p>2.1.8. Add a payment-in-lieu option when the City determines there is ample open space in close proximity to the new development.</p>	
<p>2.1.9. Celebrate innovative residential open spaces in the City's social media publications to incentivize creativity.</p>	<p>Combined with 2.1.3</p>
<p>2.1.10. Revise the UDO to encourage landmark local building materials and the integration of art within new developments.</p>	

Objective 2.2 (new) Be a leader in identifying and addressing housing needs.

<p>2.2.1. Form a housing task force that analyzes housing needs in the City of Fishers and broader housing trends, and makes recommendations to address needs and opportunities.</p>	
<p>2.2.2. Evaluate current method of plan review and explore how to improve the system to encourage innovative housing and neighborhood design.</p>	

Goal 3: Resilient

To promote a resilient community through the development of enduring housing, neighborhoods and residential open spaces.



Objective 3.1 To promote vibrant neighborhoods by enabling strategic reinvestments in infrastructure, educating the public about responsible stewardship, incentivizing property maintenance and nurturing civic pride.

Status (as of June 2021)

<p>3.1.1. Upgrade infrastructure in older neighborhoods to current standards when infrastructure is repaired or replaced as outlined in the City's capital improvement plan and, as immediate needs arise.</p>	
<p>3.1.2. Revise the standards in the UDO to ensure the use of quality building materials and construction practices.</p>	
<p>3.1.3. Assess existing housing stock and neighborhood infrastructure in older residential areas to determine priorities for municipal investment in repair, upgrade and/or replacement of aging infrastructure.</p>	
<p>3.1.4. Conduct outreach with residents and Home Owners Associations to inform and encourage maintenance of detention ponds, trails and both green and gray infrastructure.</p>	
<p>3.1.5. Incentivize civic pride through awards and City recognition.</p>	<p>Combined with 2.1.3</p>
<p>3.1.6. Research the creation of a revitalization incentive or credit that can be provided to homeowners reinvesting in their homes, neighborhoods and in our community.</p>	
<p>3.1.7. Establish a committee to focus on the architecture standards of new construction homes and make recommendations for a revised residential standards to achieve high quality, long-lasting building.</p>	
<p>3.1.8. Establish a committee to focus on commercial construction and redevelopment standards for our community and make recommendations on how to employ these standards through economic development, incentives and/or zoning changes. Work with developers and home builders to construct "right-sized" homes at attainable prices, both for-sale and for-rent.</p>	
<p>3.1.10. Work with HOA's, homeowners, and landlords to identify needs in existing neighborhoods and create programming or resources for maintenance and revitalization of neighborhoods.</p>	
<p>3.1.11. Form a rental and landlord registry to help monitor property conditions to make sure that rental properties are being properly maintained.</p>	
<p>3.1.12. Maintain a real-time inventory of rental homes along with key property information (such as name of the owner, current mailing address, history of violations, etc.).</p>	

Objective 3.1 Continued

Status (as of June 2021)

3.1.13. Evaluate the feasibility of instituting an incentive to de-convert single-family rentals into homeownership (e.g., a tax abatement for older homes requiring a minimum monetary threshold in repairs that may be jointly marketed and administered with a grant program for home repairs for owner occupied homes, incentives for home purchase cost for public safety employees, teachers, and veterans).



Goal 4: Accessible

To create housing and neighborhoods that are financially, socially and physically accessible to the community.



Objective 4.1 To promote vibrant neighborhoods by enabling development, redevelopment and infill projects that sustain and enrich them.

Status (as of June 2021)

4.1.1. Integrate a variety of housing including affordable, senior living, apartments and single-family housing into redevelopment and infill development sites to enrich the diversity of housing choices in walkable, amenity-rich neighborhoods with design features that are suitable for senior living (such as one-level living, common or no-maintenance arrangement, walking distance to shops/services/outdoor recreational facilities).



4.1.2. Review the standards in the UDO to ensure they encourage a diversity of redevelopment, mixed use development and infill. Consider appropriate targeted revisions.



4.1.3. Integrate universal design principles into development, whenever possible, and encourage options for aging in place, such as wide doorways, no step entryways and single story living. Work with social service providers and housing development organizations to provide homes for senior and low-to-moderate income households with disabilities and special needs.



4.1.4. Create well connected neighborhoods with links to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, employment nodes, schools and other key destinations.



4.1.5. Institute sensible building and zoning regulations for accessory dwelling units for households interested in intergenerational living arrangements.



GOAL 5: Sustainable

To create enduring sustainable neighborhoods.

Objective 5.1 To encourage neighborhoods that are physically, economically and environmentally sustainable that will endure for future generations.



Status (as of June 2021)

<p>5.1.1. Review the standards in the UDO and in other City ordinances to ensure lasting, sustainable building materials are required. Identify and revise any standards that don't meet this goal.</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>5.1.2. Explore incentives to encourage timely property maintenance.</p>	<p>☰</p>
<p>5.1.3. Revise the UDO to encourage the use of low impact development (LID) practices in the design, construction and maintenance of residential neighborhoods, redevelopment sites and in mixed use areas.</p>	<p>☰</p>
<p>5.1.4. Celebrate entrepreneurial developers and builders who introduce innovation in Fishers' housing sector and in the City's neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Combined with 2.1.3</p>
<p>5.1.5. Develop a set of best practices the City should pursue to conserve and protect Fishers' natural systems.</p>	<p>☰</p>
<p>5.1.6. Monitor emerging trends in energy technologies to assess whether new products or practices could help to optimize resource management in Fishers.</p>	<p>⋮</p>
<p>5.1.7. Revise UDO to encourage connectivity of natural areas and open space and recreational amenities to neighborhoods.</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>5.1.8 Revise the UDO to promote green building practices to maximize energy efficiency, waste reduction, pollution prevention and occupant health.</p>	<p>✓</p>

