

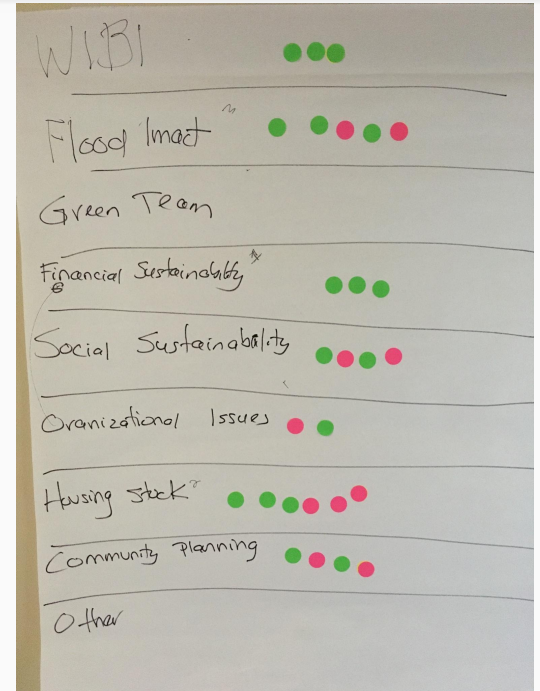
Comprehensive Housing Review: Availability, Affordability, and Blight Remediation

Borough of Lewisburg, PA
June 2022



Why Study Housing?

- Affordable, available, livable housing units are key to a thriving, diverse community
- LN 3-year planning → housing stock
- Fill holes in currently available housing data
- Develop strategies to address unique challenges facing the Borough in maintaining adequate housing stock
- Things will not stay the same if we do nothing

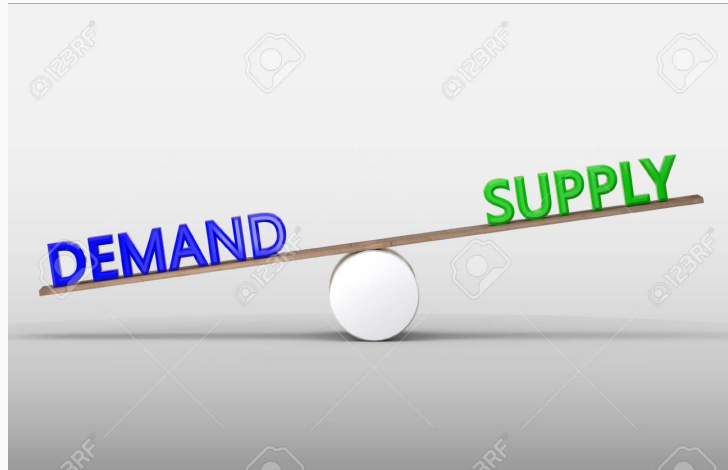


Frequently Asked Questions:

- How many units do we have? How many of them are (student) rentals?
 - ~1543 Total Residential Dwellings (CK-COG 2022)
 - 959 Total Rental Units (62%)
 - 200-210 Student Rental Units
- How often are units inspected for code violations?
 - Once every 2 years
 - Housing paid for with Section 8 vouchers is inspected once every year
 - Student Housing is inspected once every year (in the summer)
- Do we have enough affordable housing?
 - 108 Section 8 vouchers within the Borough
 - In Union County, there are 35 available and affordable units available for every 100 extremely low-income renter households (UCHA, 2022)

Key Issue: Lack of Housing Supply to Meet Demand

Housing is a complex system with many contributing inputs – currently this system does not produce enough housing to meet the needs of the borough



Factors Producing Trend:

Affordability:

- Few avenues for low- and middle-income residents to build equity
- 36% of Borough structures are in the regulatory floodplain, increasing complexity of projects and construction costs
- Developers have few incentives to build middle-income homes (under \$300K)

Availability:

- Zoning regulations restrict or exclude alternatives to single-family homes (multi-family/ ADUs) throughout borough

Student Housing:

- Party houses reduce supply of residential rental units
- Blighted student properties too expensive for non-commercial purchase
- Pre-1980, current Bull Run neighborhood was a mix of students, faculty, locals
- Noise and litter make neighborhood less hospitable to families

Factors Producing Trend (cont.)

Sociological:

- “Not in my backyard” phenomena (NIMBYism)
- Attitude that Lewisburg is built out – “the Borough was virtually fully developed in 1979” (2000 Comprehensive Plan, pg. 3)

Local Complexities:

- Negative Perception of Housing Authority
- Underutilized/developable lands sit without forward movement:
 - No disincentive for vacant properties
 - Unclear or overwhelming pathways for small-scale developers

National Complexities:

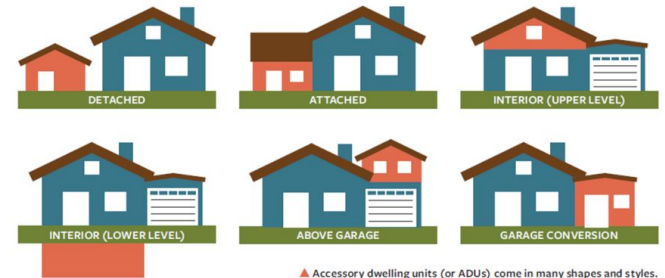
- Affordable housing development is often financially prohibitive

Strategies: Update Zoning, Reduce Barriers to Development, Strengthen Code Enforcement



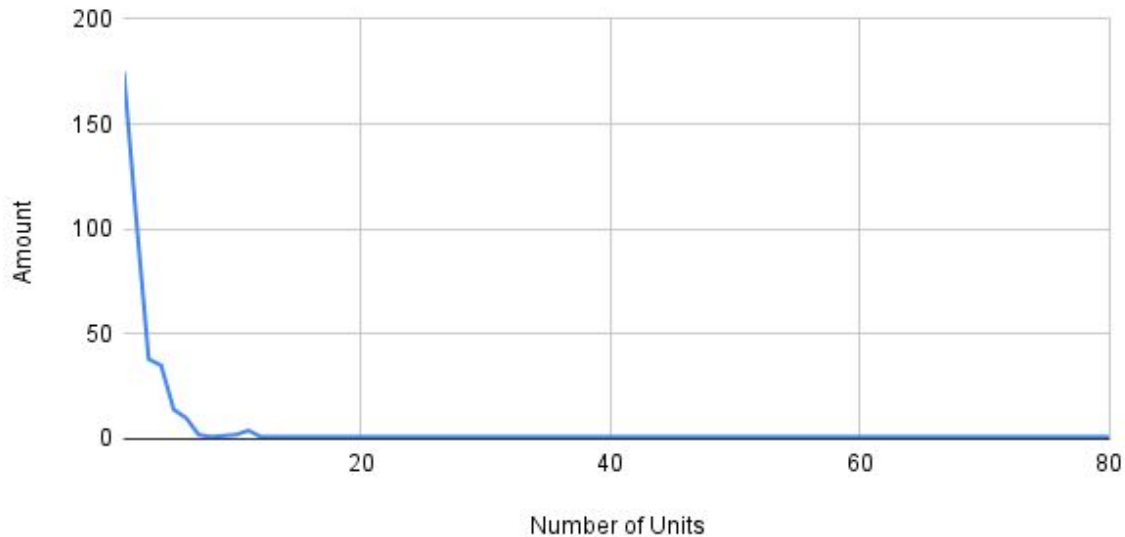
Strategy #1: Implement More Inclusionary Zoning

- Make small changes to Borough Zoning laws to, over time, safely increase the amount and type of residential units within the Borough
 - Eliminate single family-only zoning districts
 - Allow more duplexes, townhouses, and other multi-family units throughout borough
 - Upzone Old School Neighborhood from R-S to RT-1
 - Legalize new Accessory Dwelling Units
 - Allow Mixed-Use buildings in Highway Commercial



Single-Family vs. Multi-Family Units:

Rental Units in Lewisburg, PA (Number of Units/building X Amount)



Strategy #2: Reduce Barriers to Development

- Address minimum lot sizes and setbacks
- Consider density bonus for construction of affordable housing
- Clarify land development process for owner-occupiers and other small-scale infill development
- Partner with established non-profits to develop affordable housing in the Borough, particularly shared-equity approaches that create a pathway to the middle class

Strategy #3: Improve Code Administration and Enforcement

- Learn from other communities by:
 - Changing *who* is getting cited for violations
 - Changing fee structure or adding non-traffic citations for repeat offenders
- Change frequency of student rental inspection
- Increase freeboard to 2 feet (currently 18" above 100 yr floodplain) so new and renovated housing will be more flood resilient



Current State of Property Maintenance Code Enforcement (green tickets):

Fee Structure:

1st Offense	\$25
2nd Offense	\$50
3rd Offense	\$100
4+ Offenses	\$300

Costs to Enforce:

2022 YTD	\$16,691
2021	\$55,223
2020	\$49,552
2019	\$50,394
2018	\$19,304

Violation Fines Collected:

2022 YTD	\$6,675
2021	\$10,875
2020	\$19,575
2019	\$7,050
2018	\$1,100

Current State of Property Maintenance Code Enforcement (green tickets) Part 2:

2020	
# of Violations	516
% 1-time Violators	70% (214)
# of Households that violated multiple times	93 (302 violations)
Most Common Offense	Debris + Garbage
“Winner”	13 violations

2021	
# of Violations	277
% 1-time Violators	69% (119)
# of households that violated multiple times	54 (158 violations)
Most Common Offense	Debris + Garbage
“Winner”	11 violations

Implementation:

Zoning: Borough Work Session → Borough Council → Planning Commission → Borough Council

Code Enforcement: Borough Work Session → Borough Council → Outline New Administrative Enforcement Measures → CK-COG Implementation

ADUs: Borough Work Session → Borough Council → Planning Commission → Borough Council

Further Study: Affordable housing and shared equity development

Questions?

Appendix:

- Purpose
- Members
- Timeline of Activities
- FAQs

Purpose: Identify, research, and communicate effective housing policy that responds to our unique and multifaceted housing issues.

LN Housing Study Group Composition:

Taylor Lightman - Lewisburg Neighborhoods, Director

Debra Sulai - Lewisburg Borough, Council President

Steven Beattie, RLA - Lewisburg Borough, Community Development Manager

Kendy Alvarez - Lewisburg Borough, Mayor

Lynne Ragusea - Lewisburg Downtown Partnership, Executive Assistant

Timeline of Activities:

Nov. - Dec. 2021 - Sharing housing research & online discussion.

Feb. 7th 2022 - First meeting (Problem Identification + Project Scope)

Feb. 22nd 2022 - Meeting with Bruce Quigley of UCHA

March 22nd 2022 - Meeting with CK-COG

April 13th 2022 - Study group meeting to create shared priority list and next steps

April 26th 2022 - Michael Derman formalizes LN Housing Study Group

June 14th 2022 - Lewisburg Borough Work Session Presentation

FAQ

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