



Chapter 7

Housing

Housing Supply

The Municipalities Planning Code requires that the comprehensive plan update include a strategy to meet the housing needs of individuals and families anticipated to reside in the municipality. The plan may include conservation of existing housing, rehabilitation of declining units and provisions to accommodate new housing with a range of dwelling types at appropriate densities for households of all income levels. Where a community is substantially developed and has good amount of diversity in its existing housing stock, as in the case of Springfield, the analysis revolves around meeting future demand and maintaining the current diversity of housing types.

Housing Diversity

The number of multifamily housing units in Springfield increased by 26 percent between 1990 and 2010 and now represents more than 13 percent of all housing units. The number of new single family attached dwelling units increased by 14 percent during the same period and represents over 10 percent of housing units. However, during the same time period the number of single-family detached homes remained unchanged. As a result, it's percentage of the residential total decreased from 78.8 percent to 57.8

percent. This decrease in the percent of single-family detached housing is further evidence of the township's housing diversity.

Future Demand

The population projections along with the community's age profile and average household size are used to determine the number of future housing units needed. Although Springfield's population is expected to grow slowly in the coming decades, the average household size and vacancy rate is expected to remain fairly steady.



Figure 7.1

2020 Housing Unit Demand

2010 Total Population	2010 Household Population	2010 Group Quarters Population	2010 Total Households	2010 Average Household Size	2020 Population Projection*	2020 Projected Total Households	New Units Needed By 2020
19,418	18,481	937	7,550	2.45	19,584	7,601	52

Sources: *2007 DVRPC Population Projections; US Census Bureau; MCPC.

*Trends***Household Size**

The overall trend in the average household size has been decreasing since the 1970s in the township as well as the region, the state and nationally. This decrease may be attributed in part to deferred marriage, fewer children, divorce or death of a spouse, children leaving home, as well as, the trend of more single people purchasing homes on their own. While Springfield's population is expected to grow slowly in the coming decades, the average household size did increase slightly between 2000 and 2010. While one- and two-person households combined still make up over fifty percent of all households Figure 7.2 shows there was a decrease in two-person households and an increase in one-, three-, four- and six-person households.



Figure 7.2

Comparing Household Size 2000 – 2010

Household Size	2000		2010		Difference 2000 - 2010
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	
1 person	2,011	26.90%	2,070	27.40%	59
2 person	2,638	35.30%	2,517	33.30%	-121
3 person	1,178	15.80%	1,278	16.90%	100
4 person	84	1.10%	105	1.40%	21
5 person	30	0.40%	41	0.50%	11
6 person	4	0.10%	13	0.20%	9
7 person	2	0.03%	2	0.03%	0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



Home Ownership

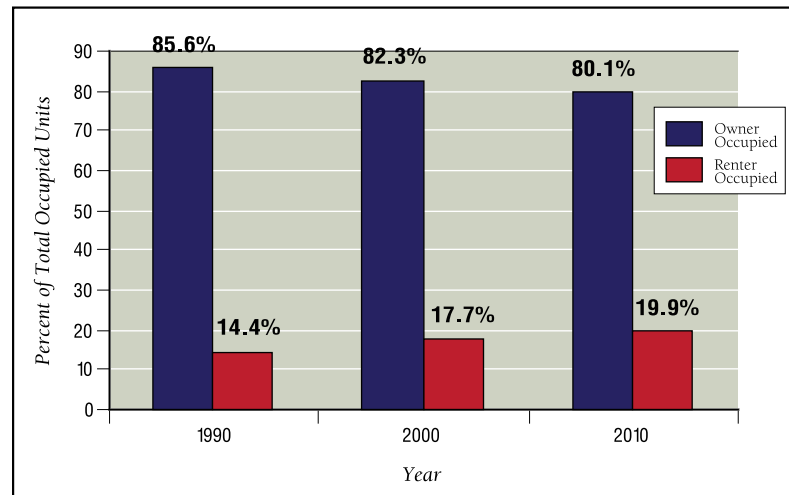
Home ownership is typically strongest in stable communities that have a large percentage of single-family detached homes. While the total number of occupied units has increased, the balance between owner occupied and renter-occupied units is an important indicator. And while the overall owner occupancy remains above 80 percent for Springfield, Figure 7.3 does show a 5.5 percent decrease in the number of owner occupied homes and similar increase in renter occupied units between 1990 and 2010. Although there is no direct way to limit the number of rental units in the township, Springfield should continue to strictly enforce its program of use and occupancy permits and consistently enforce the building code across all districts.

Figure 7.3

Comparing Housing Tenure 1990 – 2010

Tenure Type	1990	2000	2010
Owner Occupied	6,063	6,148	6,044
Renter Occupied	1,019	1,323	1,506
Total Occupied HH	7,082	7,471	7,550

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



Neighborhood Conservation

The practice of infill housing development continues to be a trend in the established neighborhoods of Springfield Township. Infill housing construction through subdivision or the through tearing down and rebuilding existing homes made up 76 percent of the housing construction activity between 2000 and 2012. Typically, a developer purchases an oversize lot, subdivides the parcel into one or more building lots, and constructs a new home(s). In other cases an existing building is raised and reconstructed sometimes due to fire damage. In most cases the new building footprint is expanded to the maximum size and height permitted in the zoning



district, which may or may not reflect homebuyer preferences. While it is true that many homebuyers desire larger spaces to accommodate family rooms, home offices, master suites walk-in closets, outdoor decks and patios and multi-car garages these larger dwellings often require removal of mature trees for their large footprint leaving neighbors feeling a sense of loss of privacy and overcrowding. New dwellings may be out of scale with the existing dwellings and the architectural character may be unharmonious with the neighborhood.

Figure 7.4

Infill Housing Construction 2005 – 2010

Subdivisions			Teardowns		
Subdivisions	Number of New Dwellings Constructed After Subdivision	Average Size of New Dwelling (Square Feet)	Teardowns (4 out of 11 Dwellings Were Damaged By Fire)	Number of New Dwellings Constructed	Average Size of New Dwelling (Square Feet)
18	12	3,639	11	9	4,418

Source: Springfield Township.



Property Maintenance

Housing maintenance and improvements are essential to having a healthy housing stock and ensuring that the existing units will continue to meet the needs of current and future residents. Nearly 88 percent of the township's housing was constructed prior to 1970. Updated building codes and safety standards as well as thorough code enforcement of properties must be ongoing to discourage potential hazard conditions and substandard housing. Property owners must maintain sidewalks, curbs and driveways within the right-of-way. The township presently uses its occupancy permitting process and building inspections to implement this goal and follows the standards of the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code Act. These permits are



required for all new construction, major additions, certain renovations, and when a property changes its use. To take a more comprehensive approach to maintaining its housing stock, the township has adopted other local amendments that now require the owner of all Real Property to apply for a Statement of Certification prior to conveying their property to another individual and this process may require a home inspection. In addition, the township now requires all new owners of real property to register their deed with the township.

Minimizing Multifamily Conversions

The township has zoning regulations in place to control conversion of single-family dwellings into multiple dwellings. A special exception approval is required from the township Zoning Hearing Board to create a conversion in a residential district. No major alterations to the building exterior can be made and the minimum size of the lot area must be increased for each additional dwelling. When it is carefully regulated multifamily conversion can expand the supply and diversity of housing without dramatically changing the character of the neighborhood.

Households and Group Quarters

Less than 5 percent or 937 residents live in group quarters whereas, slightly more than 95 percent or 18,201 residents live in households (Figure 7.5). Group quarters include all residents not living in households in two general categories: institutional and non-institutional. In Springfield, nursing homes and juvenile facilities are considered institutional group homes while housing associated with religious organizations are considered non-institutional group homes. Between 2000 and 2010 Springfield residents living in group quarters of all types declined by nearly 30 percent, those living in institutional group quarters declined by 14.52 percent, and those residing in religious and other group homes, decreased by nearly 69 percent. If the sharp decline in religious group quarters population is an indicator of potential disinvestment in an existing institutional district of the township, the future land use and zoning regulations of the district should be considered.

Figure 7.5

Household and Group Quarters Population 2000 – 2010

Population Type	2000		2010		Change 2000 - 2010	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total	Number	% Change
Household Population	18,201	93.2%	18,481	95.1%	280	1.50%
Group Quarters Population	1,334	6.8%	937	4.8%	(397)	- 29.80%
Institutional	961	4.9%	820	4.2%	(141)	-14.52%
Noninstitutional	373	1.9%	117	0.6%	(256)	- 68.62%
Total Population	19,533	100.0%	19,418	100.0%	(115)	- 0.50%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.



Special Needs Housing

Seniors

Springfield Township residents age 65 and older made up over 20 percent of the population in 2010. Residents who are presently age 45 to 64 make up another 30 percent of the total population and represent future retirees. Older residents tend to age in place so they can stay close to family, friends, their place of worship, and continue living in the community they call home. Some older residents will want to downsize from their single-family homes and move to housing with easier access, home maintenance services, and other amenities, while others will want to remain in their existing homes as long as possible.

Springfield has traditionally had a high rate of homeownership which is typical for communities that have mostly single-family detached housing. While the rate of homeownership is expected to remain high in Springfield, older residents that want to age in place but are living with varying degrees of independence will need new choices available in the future. To accommodate these aging residents, the township will need to allow greater flexibility in its housing standards.

Flexibility can be accomplished through adapting existing housing units with universal design features or by developing new housing types that offer first floor master bedroom suites or one-level living units. Other universal design features include: entryways without stairs; first floor master bedroom suites; bathrooms equipped with grip bars and shower seats; wide doorways and hallways that accommodate wheelchair access; nonskid floor surfaces; door handles with levers rather than knobs; and easy-toggle light switches.

New housing types that are developed should consider alternative modes of transportation as the aging baby boomers begin to drive less. Housing that is located near shopping, medical and other professional services, as well as convenient and affordable transportation, will make it that much easier for aging baby-boomers to remain in the community. Senior housing has been and will continue to evolve with varying degrees of services and amenities. The main types of senior housing are listed below. Figure 7.6 identifies some of the existing facilities that are located in and around Springfield Township.

Assisted Living Facilities provide 24-hour personal care or supervision in matters such as meals, bathing, dressing, financial management, and assistance with administering prescription medication. These facilities are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC) are facilities that offer a variety of independent living arrangements for residents together with medical and nursing facilities, full dining accommodations, and educational, social and recreational activities. CCRC are issued a Certificate of Authority by the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance.



Nursing Homes and Long Term Care facilities are licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and provide 24-hour skilled and intermediate nursing care. Saint Joseph's Villa, Fairview Care Center, Green Acres Ivy Hill Rehabilitation, Genesis Harston Hall, and Integrative Health Services are examples of a long term care/skilled nursing facility located in Springfield Township. While technically, nursing homes are considered to be community facilities, they are shown here to illustrate their place on the spectrum of types of services for the elderly. Combined, these facilities provide 952 licensed beds.

Independent Living Facilities are typically multifamily housing that provides minimal services. Some independent living communities are designed as single family detached or attached dwellings, or a combination.

Figure 7.6

Senior Housing Facilities

Municipality	Development Name	Location	Acres	# Units	Unit Type	Year Built	Comment
Springfield	Bethlehem Village	100 Wissahickon Avenue	7	100	MF	1984	Income Restricted
	Springfield Residence	551 East Evergreen Avenue	4	119	MF	1975	CCRC
Abington	Redeemer Village	1551 Huntingdon Pike	16	200	MF	1972	
	Rydal Park	Susquehanna Road at the Fairway	22	322	MF	1975	CCRC
	Walnut Hill	Huntingdon Pike at Meetinghouse	32	28	SFD/SFA	2005 – 07	
Cheltenham	Parkview	990 Ashbourne Road	3	75	MF	2006	Income Restricted
	Wyncote Church Home	West Church Road	5	25	MF	1992	CCRC
Upper Dublin	Dublin Terrace	Limekiln Pike at Dreshertown	17	192	MF	2010 – Present	Under Construction
	Fort Washington Estates	1264 Fort Washington Avenue	11	91	MF	1972	CCRC
Whitemarsh	Masonic Village at Lafayette Hill	801 Ridge Pike	10	98	MF	1976	CCRC – 85 Units Proposed To Be Added
	The Hill at Whitemarsh	Flourtown and Thomas Roads	96	226	SFD/SFA, MF	2007	CCRC

Source: Montgomery County Planning Commission, 2010; MF = Multifamily; SFD = Single-Family Detached; SFA = Single-Family Attached; CCRC = Continuing Care Retirement Community.

Housing for the Homeless

Springfield Township takes part in a countywide approach to addressing the issues and needs of the homeless population. The Continuum of Care Consortium has conducted an in-depth analysis of the homeless which has resulted in a single point of contact for assessment and referral to 12 shelters and other services operating countywide. The program, Montgomery County Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program, targets seven priority at risk or homeless populations: households with some income that could be stabilized with some support; households that can located in permanent housing; those timing out of transitional housing; victims of domestic abuse; households being served by emergency tenant-based rental assistance; households who are homeless for the first time; and those holding housing vouchers (formerly Section 8) at risk of eviction.



Zoning

Workforce Housing

The cost of first time homeownership remains a challenge for many in the region. Attractive, affordable and convenient places to live are needed. Many healthcare workers, teachers, police officers, childcare workers, municipal employees and retail workers who are seeking to buy their first home may no longer be able to reside in or near their place of employment due to rising cost of housing in the region. Historically, workforce housing may have been provided or subsidized through the private sector or public-private partnerships. Today this type of housing is aimed at middle and moderate income households making 80 to 100 percent of an area's median income. These workers tend to earn too much for traditional housing subsidies, but not enough to afford market-rate homes. In Springfield Township this includes households making between \$53,780 and \$67,226 annually (based on 1999 income).



Home-Based Business

A business or commercial activity administered or conducted as an accessory use which is clearly secondary to the use as a residential dwelling and which involves no customer, client or patient traffic is permitted in all zoning districts that permit residential uses. The home-based business activity must be compatible with the residential use of the property and the surrounding residential uses, cannot occupy more than 25 percent of the floor area, and may only employ family members. No outside appearance of a business is permitted including display or sale of retail goods, activity or process, parking, signage, lighting or solid waste generation. With growing access to reliable internet service and frustration with long and congested commuting to work, more people are interested in working from home. Coupled with resident's



interest in aging in place and needing more convenient access to goods and services, certain locations in the township may be appropriate for expanding the practice of home-based businesses.

Conservation Subdivisions and Green Building Practices

Buildings have an enormous impact on the people who inhabit them and the natural environment. Springfield adopted zoning in the 1990s that was envisioned to provide for continued housing to meet the needs of future residents while also conserving open space and natural resources. The AAA residential overlay was a precursor to what is now commonly called conservation subdivision. Within the tract conservation areas should include the most sensitive natural resources, avoid fragmentation of the natural resource areas, and be designed to connect with larger natural and recreational resource areas outside of the tract under development (e.g. stream corridors, forested buffers, parkland).



Illustrative example

Green Building Concepts

The green building concept encompasses a host of strategies that emphasize environmentally sensitive building practices that minimize or reduce the environmental impacts of building construction as well as the long-term operational aspects associated with buildings. Green building practices recognize the interdependence of the natural and built environment and seek to minimize the use of water, energy and other natural resources and to provide a healthy and productive indoor environment.

- **Smaller May Be Better** – A smaller, well-constructed house lasts longer, uses fewer resources and is more energy efficient to operate.
- **Energy Efficiency** – Increase level of insulation, use high performance windows and doors, and tight construction.



- **Renewable Energy** – Incorporate passive solar heating, natural light and natural cooling mechanisms. Consider geothermal heating and cooling, solar water heating and photovoltaics.
- **Optimize Material Use** – Minimize waste by designing for standard ceiling heights, and building dimensions. Simplify building geometry.
- **Recycling** – Provide for storage, and processing and recycling of building materials.
- **Design for Adaptability** – Use classic or timeless architectural styles for long term adaptability to other uses. Consider home office needs with layout and wiring.
- **Design for Durability** – Use quality construction materials for a long life.



Land Use and Site Planning

- **Reuse Older Buildings** – Adaptive reuse of existing buildings is the most sustainable construction.
- **Encourage Infill and Mixed-Use Development** – Encouraging mixing of residential and commercial development to increase walkability and reduce automobile dependence.
- **Minimize Automobile Dependence and Design for Multimodal Access** – Locate buildings to provide easy access to public transit, bicycle paths, and pedestrian access to basic services.
- **Maximize Site Resources** – Conduct a thoughtful site evaluation, including sun angle, soils, vegetation, stormwater management, and important natural areas and let this information guide design to make the best use of solar orientation, vegetation for natural cooling, and wind protection.



- **Locate Development to Minimize Environmental Impacts** – Cluster buildings and minimize road construction to preserve environmentally sensitive open spaces and wildlife habitats.
- **Reduce Impervious Surfaces** – Design landscapes to absorb stormwater. Use pervious surfaces and incorporate grass swales, underground infiltration and rain gardens which are natural filters for stormwater.
- **Design Low Maintenance Landscapes** – Landscapes with drought-tolerant native and noninvasive plants.
- **Protect Trees and Topsoil During Sitework** – Keep heavy equipment and supplies out of root zones and avoid major grade changes during construction by fencing the “drip-line” of trees.
- **Choose Low Maintenance Building Materials** – That will require less painting, re-treatment, and waterproofing.



Operational Efficiency

- **Install Water-Efficient Equipment** – Water-conserving toilets, showerheads and faucets not only reduce water use—they place less demand on sewage treatment plants. Reducing hot water usage saves energy.
- **Install High-Efficient Lights and Appliances** – Compact fluorescent and LED lighting and high-efficiency appliances offer both economical and environmental advantages of their conventional counterparts.



- **Install High-Efficiency Heating and Cooling Systems** – They save money and produce less pollution during operation.



Indoor Air Quality

- **Avoid Materials That Create Indoor Pollutants** – Solvent-based finishes, adhesives, carpeting, particleboard, and many other building products release formaldehyde and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air. These affect worker's and occupant's health and contribute to smog and ground-level ozone pollution.
- **Avoid Potential Health Hazards Such as Radon, Mold and Pesticides** – Follow recommended practices to minimize radon entry into buildings and provide for future mitigation. Use design methods that avoid moisture problems which could cause mold and mildew growth.

Housing Goals

Encourage a range of housing types that will meet the needs of the township's residents of various ages, incomes, lifestyles and special needs. Promote residential development that is consistent with established development patterns. Encourage active lifestyles through environmentally sustainable residential neighborhood and commercial district design.

Objectives

1. Preserve the character and integrity of neighborhoods that give the township its distinctive character.
2. Permit a variety of housing options to allow existing residents to remain in the community as they age and encourage development of housing that targets first-time homebuyers.
3. Encourage environmentally responsible upgrades to properties that promote stormwater best management practices, water conservation devices, low-flow and tank-less water heaters, and use of renewable energy sources such as geothermal heating and cooling and solar powered electric service and hot water heating.
4. Encourage infill development and modifications to existing properties in commercial districts to accommodate affordable housing in the community.
5. Encourage adaptive reuse of selected vacant commercial properties or buildings for residential uses.
6. Enhance and beautify neighborhoods with improved streetscapes including sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping.
7. Create a systematic enforcement of property maintenance to help preserve neighborhood conformity and elevate property values.

