



VI. HOUSING

Two housing studies with relevance to the comprehensive planning process were completed in 2007 for the City of Oak Forest. The *Oak Forest Housing Policy Plan* was developed in cooperation with the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association to provide a detailed analysis of existing housing trends and future housing needs. It also contains detailed strategies to meet estimated future housing needs. *Uncovering the Hidden Assets of Established Communities: Housing + Transportation Affordability Report* was prepared by the Center for Neighborhood Technology, and reinforces many of the Comprehensive Plan policies related to transit-oriented development detailed in the Sub-Area Plan.

The section immediately following contains selected excerpts from the *Housing Policy Plan*, for ease of reference. The Housing Policy Plan in its entirety is available under separate cover, and is intended to supplement the Comprehensive Plan. The chapter concludes with Housing Goals and Policies developed in response to both the *Housing Policy Plan* and priorities voiced by the community.

HOUSING NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

The *Housing Policy Plan* analyzed Oak Forest's existing housing needs, existing housing stock and future housing needs (to 2030) to provide the city with targets and strategies for achieving a balanced housing stock. In addition, an analysis of the capacity of zoning in Oak Forest was conducted to assess the potential for future housing development under current conditions.





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The housing needs analysis revealed that:

- Oak Forest has a stable rental and owner-occupied market in terms of moderate and middle income housing, but that future demand in both these market segments will not be as strong as it is today.
- Oak Forest needs more rental and owner occupied upscale housing and must create such housing in the future or it will lose upper-income households to other communities.

To address these issues the *Housing Policy Plan* recommends that Oak Forest pursue the following housing preservation and development strategies:

- Further stabilize the moderately priced sector of its housing market by encouraging the ongoing rehabilitation of dwellings in selected neighborhoods.
- Create more rental and owner-occupied housing for high-income households. A meaningful portion of the dwelling units planned for the redevelopment of the Metra Station area at 159th St. and Cicero Ave. can be targeted at upscale households, especially if the planned Metra Station redevelopment is expanded to include the property to the northwest.
- Use tax credits and other government subsidies to create new housing to serve a growing low to moderate income senior population. Consider preserving for moderate income families the existing housing of seniors who decide to move into new senior developments.
- Zone for a variety of housing types. Smaller units, including townhomes and attached housing, can serve the needs of moderate income families. Larger units or high amenity/high density units tend to appeal to higher income households. All these needs can be addressed via mixed-use mixed-income products.
- Create mixed-use zoning along key corridors such as 159th St. and Cicero Ave. Such zoning will permit new residential and commercial development consistent with City plans to enhance these corridors.
- Preserve and rehabilitate existing housing to serve low and moderate income families.
- Establish a design standards overlay for buildings in targeted districts such as the Metra Station area to increase safety and neighborhood aesthetics.





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The targets set in the *Housing Policy Plan* are designed to encourage “balanced housing” in Oak Forest. Balanced housing refers to the need to address the housing needs of everyone living and working in Oak Forest, both currently and into the future. Balanced housing is a theme throughout the plan because Oak Forest, and other communities in the Chicago region, will benefit from encouraging a range of housing types and prices. These benefits include:

- Oak Forest will be more attractive to the business community. To the extent that Oak Forest can provide housing for people, whether moderate or upper income, who work in the City, it will be seen as an attractive environment to current and prospective business owners.
- Oak Forest will be more attractive to key municipal and not-for-profit workers such as policemen, fire fighters, teachers and nurses.
- Neighborhood preservation will be encouraged, as opposed to deterioration. To the extent that a variety of housing types exist in a given area, the more likely the area is likely to prosper. A focus on balanced housing gives the City an opportunity to actively address neighborhoods which are in need of repair and rehabilitation.
- The housing types sought by new residents will be provided. Research, for example, indicates that townhomes, condominiums, and small single family homes appeal to a variety of the fastest growing population segments - seniors, Latinos, singles and childless couples.
- Oak Forest will continue to meet the requirements of the Illinois Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act.

The charts on the next page are taken from the *Housing Policy Plan*, and detail the housing targets the City should consider in order to achieve balanced housing as 2030 approaches. The complete analysis conducted to determine these targets is described in the *Housing Policy Plan*. Meeting these targets would require an average of 37 ownership units and 26 rental units to be added to the City's housing stock each year between 2008 and 2030, for a total of 63 new housing units per year. This is roughly in line with recent trends, with approximately 60 residential building permits issued in both 2005 and 2006. More detail on recent housing construction and sales in Oak Forest is available in the May 2007 *Background Report*.



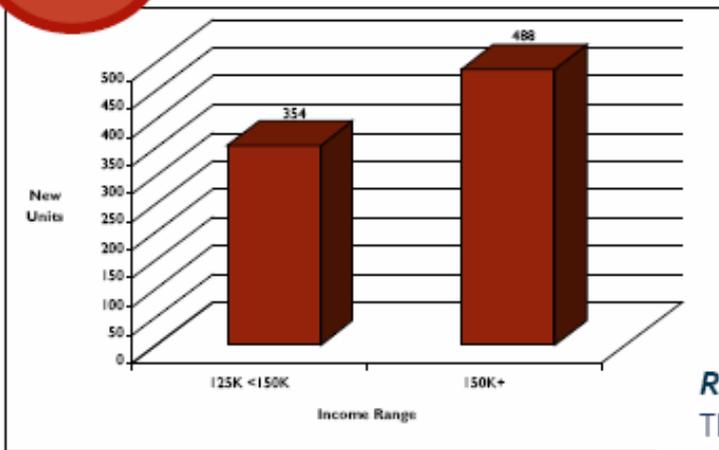


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Ownership Housing Targets by Income Group

The following recommendations are based on the 2030 forecast and the ownership housing goals for Oak Forest. The City does not need to target housing in the ranges which are not shown.

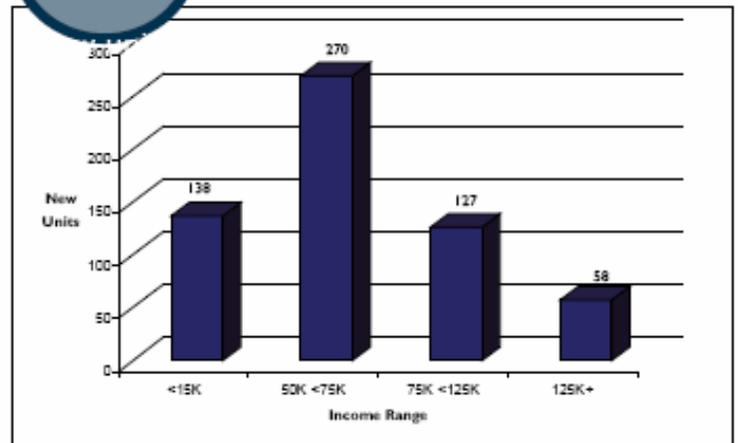
842
new units



Rental Housing Targets by Income Group

The following recommendations are based on the 2030 forecast and the rental housing goals for Oak Forest.

593





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GOALS AND POLICIES

The housing goals and policies provide guidance for maintaining, enhancing and diversifying Oak Forest's City-wide housing stock, in conjunction with the more detailed guidance provided within the *Housing Policy Plan*.

HOUSING GOAL # 1

Provide a housing inventory and living environment which supports local lifestyle preferences, and maintains the overall quality and character of the City.

Policies

1. Promote investment in existing properties and compatible infill development to conserve and enhance the character of existing single family neighborhoods.
2. Facilitate construction of a wider range of housing types- including high-end condominiums and rental units, townhouses, and senior housing- to fulfill un-met market niches within the City.
3. Focus new housing in areas that are accessible to public transportation (Metra and/or Pace).
4. Protect residential areas from the impact of incompatible adjacent land uses through appropriate zoning and subdivision regulations, such as landscaping and screening requirements.
5. Preserve sound existing housing through regular and active code enforcement and preventative maintenance.
6. Utilize code enforcement and the "crime-free rental" program to stabilize existing rental housing areas, reduce overcrowding, and prevent deferred maintenance.
7. Amend residential district zoning regulations as needed to promote the City's residential development goals and long-range land use plan, and to minimize non-conformities in existing neighborhoods.
8. Integrate public open spaces in new residential development and redevelopment areas to provide a visual amenity and serve the needs of nearby residents, as opportunities arise.

