

Chapter 8

Housing

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives in Chapter 2 which focus on housing and residential development patterns are briefly summarized below:

- The *1989 Comprehensive Plan* established a goal in order to provide a variety of housing in growth area districts to be set aside for multi-family housing. Since 1989, townhouses and small lot single family dwellings have been provided such as those in the Talamore residential golf course community development and the mix of single family and twin homes developments along Herman Road, as well as the in-fill of twin homes that have been developed/redeveloped in the R-5 Residential neighborhoods identified as a mix of small lot single and twin family dwellings on the Existing Land Use Plan found in Chapter 7, Land Use, of this Comprehensive Plan Update.
- Provide for a variety of housing types and densities with an emphasis on planned, environmentally sensitive low density neighborhoods. The far north and western sectors of the Township have gradually been planned and developed pursuant to the “environmentally smart” residential communities which focus on positioning home sites on upland buildable portions of a property while avoiding sensitive areas such as wetlands, riparian corridors, steep slopes, and areas of important vegetation and woodlands. These environmental communities also embrace the goals and objectives outlined under Growth Management and Environmental Protection where medium density development has been assigned locations adjacent to major roads with adequate capacities while being in close proximity to municipal services such as schools, parks, open space, police and fire protection, etc. An example of such a land use decision would be the recent zoning in connection with the proposed redevelopment of the Horsham Valley Golf Club along Babylon Road.

Housing Trends

Horsham Township enjoys a wide variety of housing types in the existing housing supply. By the year 2010 Horsham Township ranked 8th in total housing units out of the 62 municipalities in Montgomery County. Township housing is projected to have more than doubled from 1970 through 2010 where the total housing count based on early returns from the U.S. Census Bureau is now estimated to be 10,053. Recent changes to the dynamics of the population in Horsham Township can be best described in the increases to the following age cohorts, 1990-2000:

- Age cohort 5-17 years *increased* at twice the overall rate for Montgomery County.
- Age cohort 35-54 years *increased* at nearly double, which was an increase 50% greater than that for Montgomery County.
- Age cohort 55-74 years *increased* at approximately 22%, which was a very significant contrast to the 3% *decline* for Montgomery County.

In terms of household composition, the largest differences were where Horsham Township had a greater percentage of married couples with children; and in households of older persons age 55 and older. This household composition is manifest in housing types:

- A large percentage of single-family detached and single-family attached dwellings.
- Small dwelling units such as apartments and continuing care units such as those associated with the Abramson Center for Jewish Life.

Figure 3-12 and Figure 3-13 in Chapter 3, Demographics, identify Units in Structure – 2000 and reveal that the percentage of the various housing types in Horsham Township are very similar to the overall mix of housing types in Montgomery County.

Occupied housing units by tenure, Horsham Township is virtually *identical* with the characteristics of Montgomery County:

- Owner occupied is 73.5% and renter occupied is 26.5%.
- Horsham Township's vacancy rate was the 18th lowest of the 62 municipalities in Montgomery County, and at 2.0% was about one-half the County total of 3.8% and was below the overall rate for the DVRPC Pennsylvania region of 2.8% in 2000.

The median age of structure built for Horsham Township was 1975, meaning that one-half of all the dwelling units within the Township are less than 35 years of age. From 2000 through March 2010 use and occupancy permit data indicates that an additional 449 dwelling units were constructed and occupied, consisting of single family detached and single family attached.

Figure 3-20 and Figure 3-21 should be consulted regarding the median value of owner occupied housing in 2000 and the distribution of housing value. When compared to Montgomery County, Horsham Township has a slightly higher distribution of homes in the sectors from \$100,000 to \$499,000. In 2000, the median value of an occupied home was:

- Horsham Township \$167,700
- Montgomery County \$160,700

The median rent for Horsham in 2000 exceeded the County average by approximately 8.5%.

The wide diversity in housing types and values indicates that existing and future residents have the opportunity to choose from a greater mix of housing as their economic, demographic, and physical needs change over time.

With regard to existing housing stock, the popular housing types in the Township provide a wide range of choices for young married couples with children as well as senior and elderly residents.

Residential Neighborhoods

Listed below is a pictorial sample of the many residential neighborhoods in Horsham Township. Horsham has a rich diversity of housing based on density, age, type, size and affordability of dwelling as indicated below. Virtually all dwellings are served by public sanitary sewer and water. Housing sale prices range from a low of approximately \$190,000 to more than \$1 million. Rental communities monthly rentals (excluding studio units) range from as low as \$775 per month for 1-bedroom units to more than \$1,400 for 2-bedroom units.

East of Meetinghouse Road are numerous single family residential neighborhoods with hundreds of homes built in the early 1960s consisting of split level, Cape Cod, and colonial style single family dwellings.





The preceding three photos are typical of single family homes built after World War II in the neighborhoods south and east of Easton Road served by the Hallowell and Blair Mill Elementary Schools and the Keith Valley Middle School. The lot size is approximately one-third of an acre.



View of an older single family circa 1920s (above) in the old Colonial style along Fair Oaks Avenue a short distance from the Easton Road commercial corridor and (below) much newer single family dwellings constructed since 2005 on Roberts Avenue. These are communities of relatively small lots, tree-lined, narrow streets where some new homes are "in-fill" on oversized lots where much older but smaller style homes previously existed.





510 Arbutus Avenue, built 1949



502 Arbutus Avenue, built 1970



428 Prospect Avenue, built 2004

A community of small blocks with narrow tree-lined streets still a part of the original Horsham. These are situated a short distance from Horsham Road across from the Naval Air Station property. This is a neighborhood containing a mix of small lot single family and two-family homes.

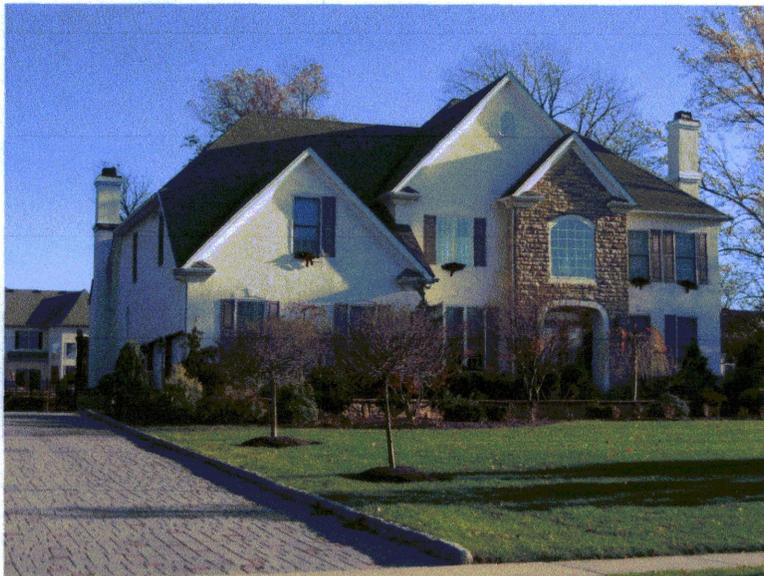


Saw Mill Village is an early planned residential community having a mix of townhouses (single family attached) and multi-family units (generally 4 to 8 units/building) nestled in small residential clusters adjacent to Sawyers Way. This is a community that originated as one of the earlier planned communities within the Township built over a ten year period (circa 1975 to 1985). These communities provide a master plan of linear open space and community recreation while avoiding the floodplain of the Pennypack Creek. This is a community of largely owner-occupied attached dwellings built during the 1980s consisting of various styles of single family attached and multiplex housing. It is likely to be the largest residential community built pursuant to a master plan in Horsham Township.





Low density single family residential neighborhood in the Maple Glen area on Misty Hollow Drive constructed circa 1995 on lot sizes of approximately 25,000 square feet.

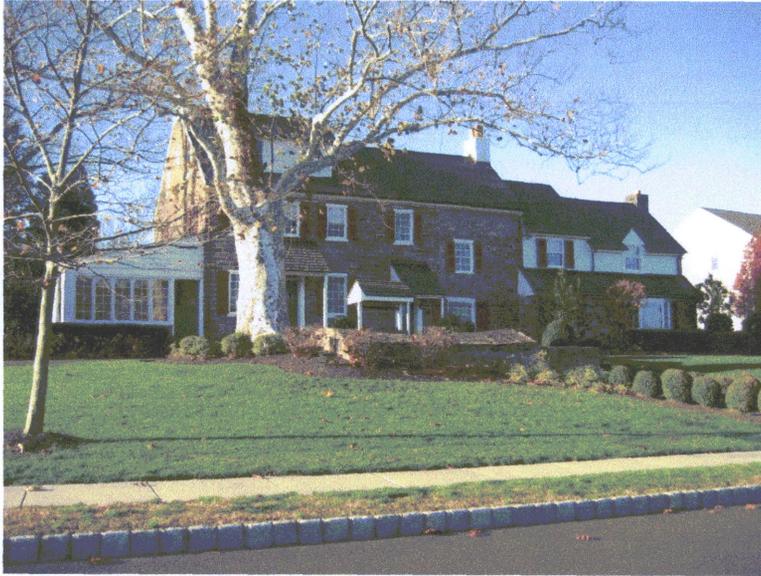


Modern style Colonials built circa 2000 on three-quarter acre lots on Thoreau Drive a short distance from Route 309.



Glen Acres, a more recent residential community at a lower density on lots of between one and two acres in size. This is a 30 lot development of single family homes built in 2003/2004 along Lower State Road in the far westerly edge of Horsham Township.





View of an attractive stone colonial circa 1800 which was preserved and incorporated into the Highgate community. Highgate was developed pursuant to the cluster open space option, which permits both lot averaging in order to work around and avoid existing natural features and includes mandatory preservation of contiguous open space.



View of an attractive home, circa 1997, on a smaller lot clustered along Lady Violet Drive overlooking Cedar Hill Road Park.



View of a twin home at 35 School Road, built 1986.

These dwellings are a part of the Horshamtowne community in the center of Horsham. A circular spine service road connects dozens of small clusters of dwellings around small cul-de-sacs.



View of a small lot single family at 7 Goldenrod Lane built 1978. This community was developed at a density of four dwelling units per acre.



View of the corner property at Meadowlark Lane which is a part of the development of twin family homes and single family lots at Horshamtowne.



608 and 610 Manor Drive represent condominium style attached homes of 2,660 square feet built in 1997. This community, known as Carriage House Manor, is age restricted and consists of 42 dwelling units located adjacent to the Presidential Business Campus.



View of large single family homes in an environmentally sensitive planned community which overlooks large naturalized stormwater basin at Daventry Way, circa 2001-2004.





Views of remodeled bungalow style homes along Summit Avenue east of Easton Road.



These are fine examples of revitalized homes in the “old Horsham” area originally built circa 1920s, which through upgrades have survived well into the 21st century and remain highly desirable.

Talamore is the first golf course residential community built in Montgomery County. It consists of both public and private open space with a blend of residences in small pods connected by one central collector road. More than 9,000 linear feet of existing perimeter road frontage has been reserved as scenic buffers.



Homes that typify dwellings which comprise the Talamore residential golf course community.



Looking at the Talamore Country Club golf hole adjacent to Welsh Road.



Townhouses along Kingsdown Court which overlook the 16th and 17th golf holes of the Talamore Country Club.

Talamore consists of 390 dwelling units, a regulation 18-hole golf course, club house, and small corporate office in a beautiful landscaped community developed at an overall density of slightly more than 1 dwelling unit per gross acre.

Older neighborhoods adjacent to the original Horsham Village section of the Township are exceptional neighborhoods with the homes built between 1900 and 1935.



Typical of early Horsham are these beautifully restored homes along Roberts Avenue. This is one of the original residential neighborhoods which still flourishes and is located in close proximity to the commercial corridor along Route 611 and adjacent to the Prudential Business Campus.

Apartment/Multi-Family Communities

Apartment/multi-family communities in Horsham Township consist of Dreshertowne Apartments, English Village Apartments, and a small portion of Blair Mill Village. Smaller apartment communities such as the Fair Oaks Apartments and Maple Hill Apartments along Route 611 round out the apartment communities within the Township. All are rental dwellings.



Dreshertowne Apartments

A summary of the apartment mix which comprise three of the larger multi-family rental communities in Horsham Township and their unit mix and rental range (December 2010) is listed below:

Dreshertowne Apartments, located at 310 Saw Mill Lane, consist of

- 108 two bedroom townhomes, monthly rent from \$1,445; and
- 6 three bedroom townhomes, monthly rent up to \$1,630.

English Village Apartments, located at English Village Drive and Route 309, consist of:

- 421 one bedroom with den, monthly rent of \$850 to \$975;
- 132 two bedroom, monthly rent of \$1,145 to \$1,175;
- 40 townhouses, monthly rent from \$1,275.

Maple Hill Apartments, located at 213 Maple Avenue, consist of:

- 4 studios, monthly rent of \$595;
- 55 small one bedroom, monthly rent of \$775;
- 22 large one bedroom, monthly rental of \$795;
- 101 two bedroom, monthly rental of \$850;
- 22 three bedroom, monthly rental of \$1,025.

Special Needs Housing

The senior population (age 65+) is projected to increase at the rate 62% for the period 2000 to 2025. During the same period, the total population within Montgomery County is estimated to increase at approximately 14.3%. Therefore, the senior age 65+ population will increase at rate four times greater than the overall population for Montgomery County. As the senior population consistently grows over the past and future decades their percentage of the population will increase to over 21% of the total population.

In addition to providing apartment style living and forms of townhouse (single family attached) which often appeal to smaller households of older persons and empty nesters, Horsham Township also provides special facilities for the elderly:

- Luther Woods Convalescent Center provides extended stay nursing care to seniors with varying levels of disabilities and has 140 beds, all Medicare certified.
- The Abramson Center currently has a 324 bed skilled nursing facility (297 long-term beds and 27 transitional care beds) and 48 personal care apartments.

In addition, the Abramson Center for Jewish Life also provides the following community programs:

- Abramson Hospice provides care and services to individuals at the end of their life who live on the Abramson Campus or in their homes in the surrounding community. Currently over 50 clients are served by this program.
- Abramson Home Care provides home health care and homemaker services to seniors who need support to live independently at home. Currently, over 60 clients are served by this program.

Sources:

U.S. Census and MCPC adjustment of DVRPC projections; Housing Plan, An Element of the Comprehensive Plan for Montgomery County, March 2004.

Valerie G. Palmieri, Chief Operating Officer, Madlyn and Leonard Abramson Center for Jewish Life.

Jennifer Kuemmerle, Luther Woods Convalescent Center, and Luther Woods Convalescent Center web site.