

Theme A - Growing Successful Neighborhoods

Introduction

Successful neighborhoods are the building blocks of a desirable community, and the logical starting point for a comprehensive plan. Lexington's neighborhoods, and more importantly the neighbors themselves, make up the foundation of the city. Creating diversity within these neighborhoods is key to their long-term sustainability and success. Diversity within housing types, housing affordability, land uses, transportation options, and recreational opportunities is crucial, as is creating welcoming spaces for people of all races, ethnicities, and age groups. *Imagine Lexington* envisions inviting neighborhoods that can serve residents throughout all stages of their lives.

Lexington is undeniably a growing city, and it is vitally important to ensure that this growth results in community. This continued urbanization of what was once considered a small university town needs to be properly managed, and great care should be taken to guarantee existing neighborhoods are enhanced by this growth. Consciously and carefully directed growth and development will strengthen already successful neighborhoods and create vibrant new ones with a high standard of design and a focus on community-building amenities.

Lexington's growth and continued prosperity are the unmistakable signs of a desirable community. That growth is not something to be feared, but rather a unique opportunity to capitalize on forward momentum.

Lexington citizens say...

What makes a successful neighborhood?

"Diversity in people, housing options, and opportunities"

Where are we now?

Lexington's neighborhoods are among the community's strongest assets. The historic downtown areas, the more traditional suburban single-family oriented neighborhoods, and the recent mixed-use developments are all part of the overall landscape. If you were to ask someone what constitutes a "successful neighborhood," you would likely receive a variety of answers based upon each individual's own personal experience. The one consistent theme, however, would be a sense of community or belonging. *Imagine Lexington* seeks to foster this sense of community through new and exciting developments, but also by leveraging the quality attributes of stable existing neighborhoods.

Historically, Lexington's neighborhood development has followed very Euclidian patterns, focusing on the separation of uses in order to minimize potential conflict. This was a traditionally standard practice, which many progressive and developing cities are starting to move past with the implementation of form-based codes, design criteria, and more modern

mixed-use zones. This is not to say that stable, primarily single-family neighborhoods can't be desirable, but as they have been the predominant development product since post-World War II, their continued development at that rate is unsustainable and consumes significant land and resources. More recently, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, are popular among the two fastest growing age groups in Lexington, young professional-aged residents and senior citizens.

Lexington citizens say...

“Young people like to live in town near their friends and businesses where they can socialize. Elders like to be able to walk or ride bikes to the pharmacy or church or to visit grandchildren.”

Lexington's historic utilization of the Euclidean zoning scheme has in many ways contributed to an ingrained wariness of integrating mixed-use zoning and neighborhood-scale business within primarily residential areas. Recent comprehensive plans have called for more neighborhood-scale commercial, but only recently has the zoning ordinance been updated to

accommodate this type of development in an appreciable way. Adaptive reuse and the Form-Based Neighborhood Business (B-1) options have allowed more broad flexibility in smaller-scale commercial development.

In many ways, Lexington's initial attempts at mixed-use zoning were less than successful on the neighborhood level. When Lexington created three new mixed use zoning classifications, they were but a minor shift away from standard Euclidian zoning, and resulted in requirements that made it very difficult to implement on small sites. In turn, the most neighborhood-oriented mixed-use classification has never been used. However, the community conversation that led to the creation of those zones made it possible for the later adoption of the Form-Based B-1. Also, successful larger mixed-use (MU-2 and MU-3 zoned) projects illustrated how these spaces could be desirable on a neighborhood level. Today the public is largely seeking more walkable commercial, and Lexington must continue to expand the available options for this type of development.

As the public perception changes and the demand for units increases, there are increasingly more residential plans that contain at least two housing types. In many cases, multi-family residential is being included in single-family developments. The local demand for multi-family housing has been strong since the last recession. These new market-rate apartments help keep rents low, as older units lower their prices to remain competitive.

This initial shift in demand for alternate development types has started to nudge new urban development toward utilizing elements of best planning practice. *Imagine Lexington* hopes to reinforce this trend to offer a variety of options to Lexington residents. Providing these mixed-use and mixed-housing type developments will supplement the successful existing neighborhoods throughout Lexington and diversify the housing stock.

Vision for Neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOODS



design



density



equity

Three pillars of Imagine Lexington's neighborhood vision



Pillar 1 – Design

As Lexington continues to mature and urbanize, it is important to develop in a way that builds community. Development, which may accomplish goals of infill, density, and utilization of vacant or underutilized property, but is not executed in a way that meets the other goals of the Comprehensive Plan, is not desirable. Allowing this type of development would be a missed opportunity to both grow and enhance the community at the same time.

One of the major shifts in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan was the exclusion of a land use map for the first time. While many were clearly concerned about the absence of this longstanding mainstay from the plan, the Planning Commission thought it important to provide some **flexibility** in the process to allow for innovative development solutions. *Imagine Lexington* will further refine this concept and provide additional **focus** on the policies that will shape the types of developments proposed. Design plays a large role in this and takes on additional emphasis in this Plan. Ensuring context-sensitive design that follows best practices and provides quality opportunities to enjoy greenspace and open space will guarantee successful neighborhoods that stand the test of time and benefit Lexington as a whole.

Throughout the process of completing the small area plans called for in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, it became clear that many neighborhoods are not nearly as opposed to multi-family housing if they believe the design adds something attractive to the neighborhood fabric. As part of the Winburn Small Area Plan, a set of design standards were developed in order to raise the bar and improve upon the housing stock in the area. The standards were drafted to be portable and evergreen to multi-family development throughout Lexington, covering basic concepts that will activate streets and make sites safer for all residents in the neighborhood. They were not aimed at reducing density or dictating construction materials. Developers in the study area on subsequent zone changes found the guidance useful in reassuring the adjacent neighborhoods about what residents should expect to see in the future. These are the types of design guidance *Imagine Lexington* seeks to provide for the entire community.

Lexington citizens say...

“Build owner-occupied, higher-density, multi-family dwellings designed by architects, so these are functional and attractive, worthy of owning.”

As neighborhoods and houses are where people spend the majority of their time, they must be well-designed, and new neighborhoods should be incorporated into adjacent developments in ways that enhance the existing. Commercial developments should support the nearby community in an intentional way; multi-family housing should be designed such that it complements its surroundings; streets should be planned to accommodate all users, starting with the pedestrian first; and single-family housing should minimize the impact of garages and

driveways on the streetscape. New, more compact forms of single-family detached development should be accommodated by the zoning ordinance in order to reflect the fact that, while that type of housing is still a vital component of our housing strategy, it too must evolve.



As important as well-designed living spaces are to residents, it is also necessary to incorporate strong design principles into a wider array of neighborhood amenities. First and foremost, there must be amenities in close proximity to all residents. New developments should provide useable and appropriate greenspace that is not simply an afterthought – or the non-developable remnant of a piece of property. Whether programmed or not, greenspace should be thoughtfully designed for those within the neighborhood as well as those nearby. Neighborhood parks are an important component of a desirable community, and *Imagine Lexington* seeks to bolster the goal of Parks & Recreation to provide all residents a park within a 10-minute walk.

These types of greenspace and parks can often serve as a neighborhood focal point, a concept introduced in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan and carried forward in this one. Residents need common open space where they can congregate and socialize and children can play. These

Lexington citizens say...

“Infill has to be smarter and we have to be more serious about protecting greenspace, creating greenways, parks, and trails inside the USB.”

areas should be safe and highly visible, and integrated within neighborhoods. In the past, schools and public parks have partially fulfilled this goal, however there is clearly a need to create additional spaces so all residents have access to this component of successful neighborhoods. New developments should incorporate these types of focal points.

With regard to community facilities, there is an acknowledgement that Parks has facilities, but not programming; and that the Library has programming but lacks a way to provide it for the residents who need it. Schools have ample space, but also lack after-school programming. In

meetings with representatives from Parks and Recreation, Lexington Public Library and Fayette County Public Schools, there was a willingness to explore the sharing of facilities and programming in order to serve a much wider range of constituents and share facilities costs. Innovative solutions, like these that better serve residents and taxpayers should be explored.

In addition to the provision of amenities and destinations for neighborhoods new and old, consideration must be given to the transportation options that allow residents access to them. Thoughtful connections are key, and the need to provide better facilities for pedestrians and bicyclist to put them on par with vehicle drivers is of critical importance. The ability for residents to walk to destinations near their neighborhood is something many people are looking for when choosing a place to live. Wider sidewalks and bike facilities are crucial to the next great neighborhood.

Lexington citizens say...

What makes a successful neighborhood?

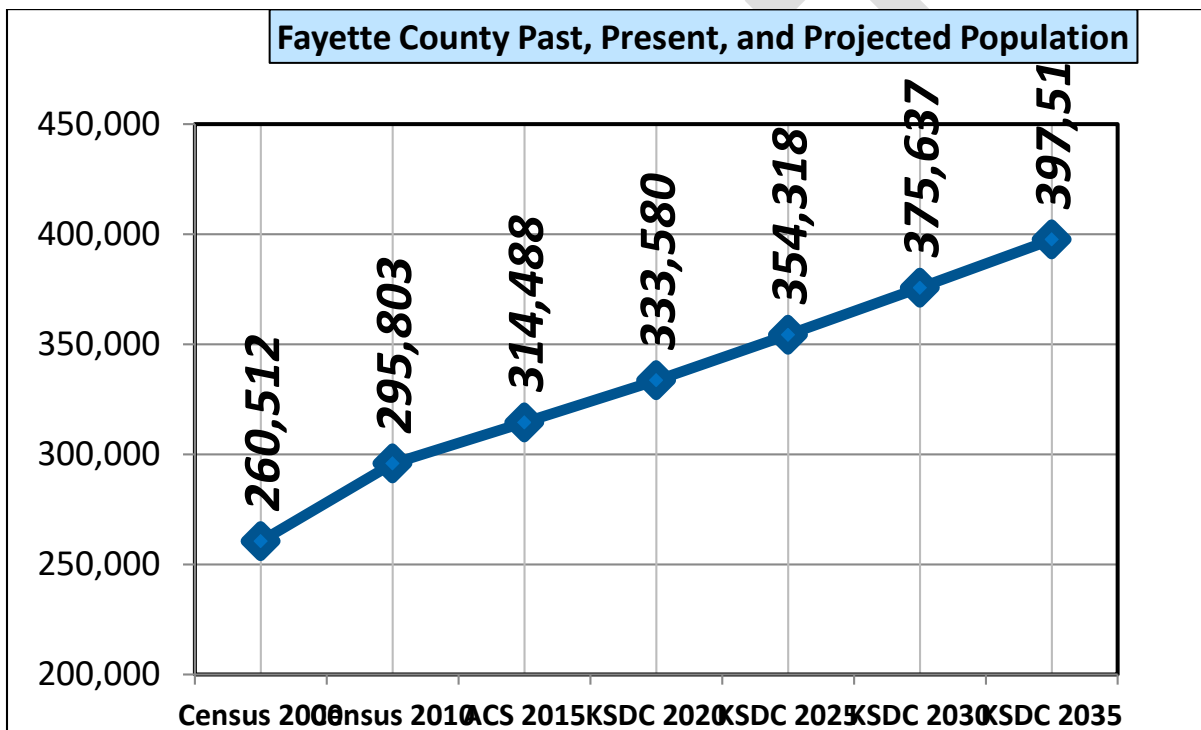
“[It should be] laid out so residents can walk/bike within the neighborhood and to nearby schools and amenities like shops and restaurants.”

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Pillar 2 – Density

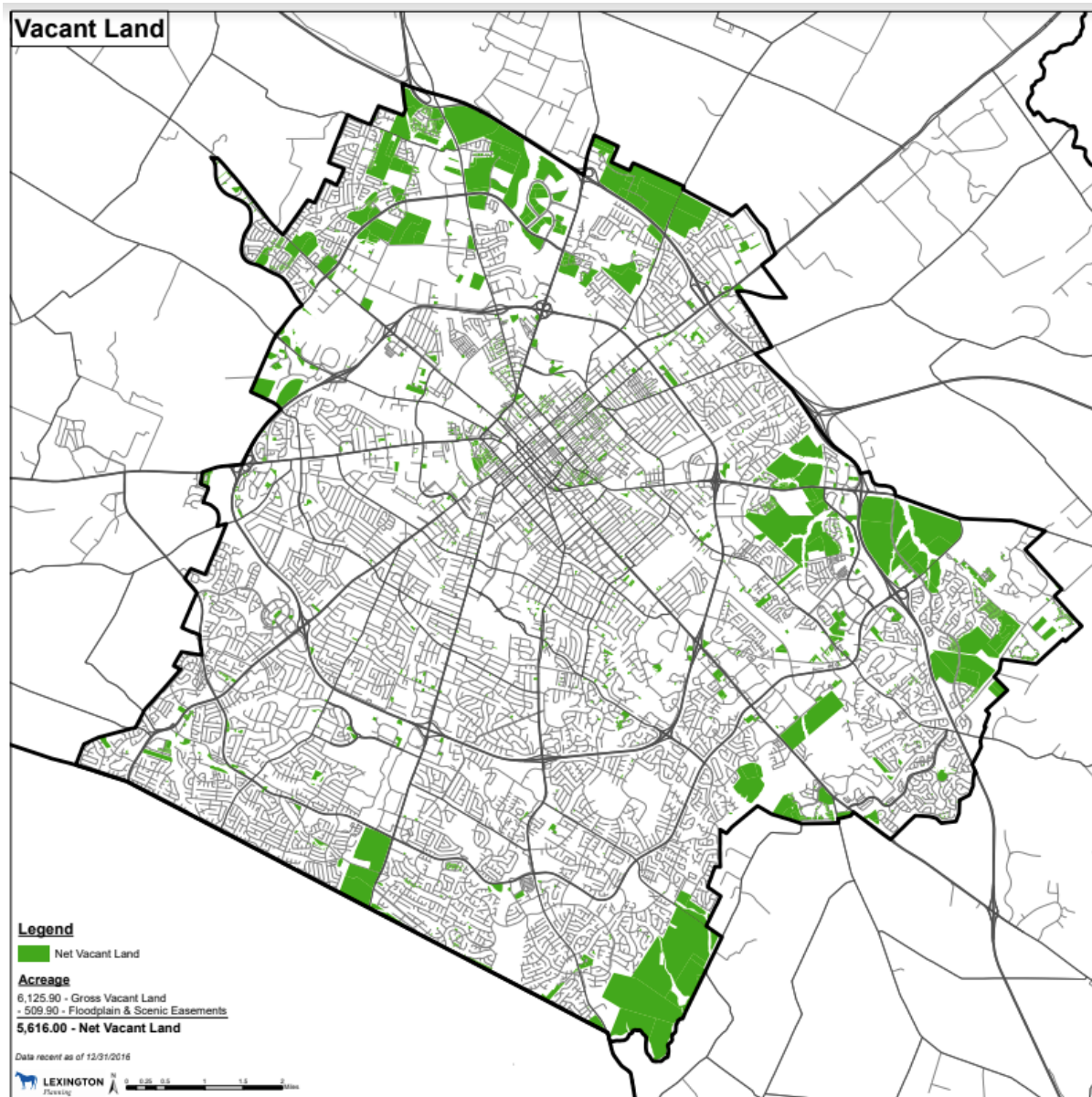


Throughout *Imagine Lexington's* Goals and Objectives extensive public outreach effort, it was clear that the overwhelming opinion of the community is to maintain the Urban Service Boundary in its current location. However, the implications are that development within the Urban Service Boundary must become more compact and efficient as Lexington continues to grow consistently. With roughly 90% of the area within the boundary developed, Lexington must make the most of the remaining 10%, as well as maximize redevelopment efforts.



Lexington citizens say...

“Protecting the urban service boundary and maintaining our irreplaceable farmland. Our city is unique because of the beautiful farms surrounding our vibrant city. By maintaining the urban service boundary, we can maximize urban "infill" and neighborhood redevelopment.”



With this more compact development pattern comes inherent benefits to the community, beyond simply the preservation of agricultural land. These developments provide for more efficient use of infrastructure, more walkable spaces, enhanced transit opportunities, affordable housing opportunities, and numerous environmental benefits as well. Though these principles of efficient use of land and sustainable development patterns should be implemented across Lexington, it should be noted that the majority of the redevelopment and infill efforts are recommended to be located along major commercial corridors, downtown, and targeted transitional areas. This plan does not advocate for the dismantling of stable single-family neighborhoods, but rather creating a more complete community.

A complete community is one that meets people’s needs for everyday living, to include a mix of housing (with regard to type and affordability), local services, community infrastructure, jobs, schools, and recreation/open space for the residents. Complete streets, efficiency of land use, livability and sustainability (now and for future generations) are its main characteristics. A complete community is, in effect, a mixed-use development on a community-wide scale that helps to create a sense of place.

This compact development reduces costs for buildings and infrastructure as communities can use the same roads, water, sewers and utilities to serve both existing and new development rather than providing new infrastructure. Provision of services such as fire and police protection is also more effective and efficient. Compact development also has economic benefits; it has been documented in several instances that compact development increases tax revenue (i.e., generates more income per acre) for communities that develop at higher densities.

Research has shown that the projected the largest demographic of population increase of 80,000 new residents will be young professionals and senior citizens. It is important to note that national data indicates that housing preferences for these two age group include products that are walkable and require limited maintenance. Providing developments that support these land use patterns will ensure Lexington remains responsive to the future needs of these populations.

While many in the public have promoted maintaining the Urban Service Boundary throughout the *Imagine Lexington* process, a disconnect appears to be present in the implementation of the types of compact development required to so. Infill development, which occurs when vacant land is developed within the Boundary, is often met with resistance from adjoining neighborhoods, citing traffic, density, and degradation of greenspace as some of the many reasons for doing so. While many of the concerns are legitimate, this Plan seeks to correct those issues through design – again ensuring that new development enhances existing neighborhoods. As Lexington continues to improve in this area, and as Planning fortifies and improves education about infill and redevelopment policies, residents should gain a better understanding of how these policies help to meet the vision of the community on a number of levels.

Lexington citizens say...

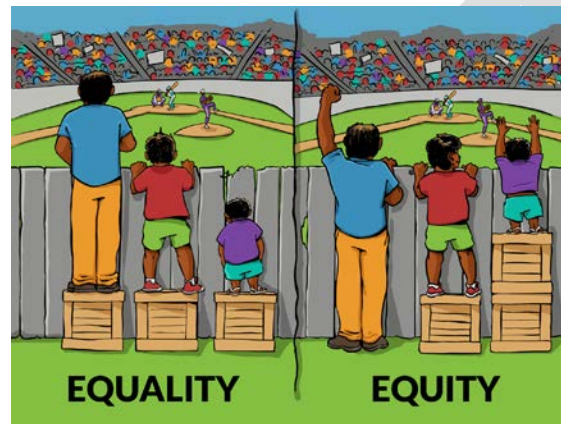
What makes a successful neighborhood?

“Diversity of home sizes and an architectural identity that reinforces good design and community engagement.”

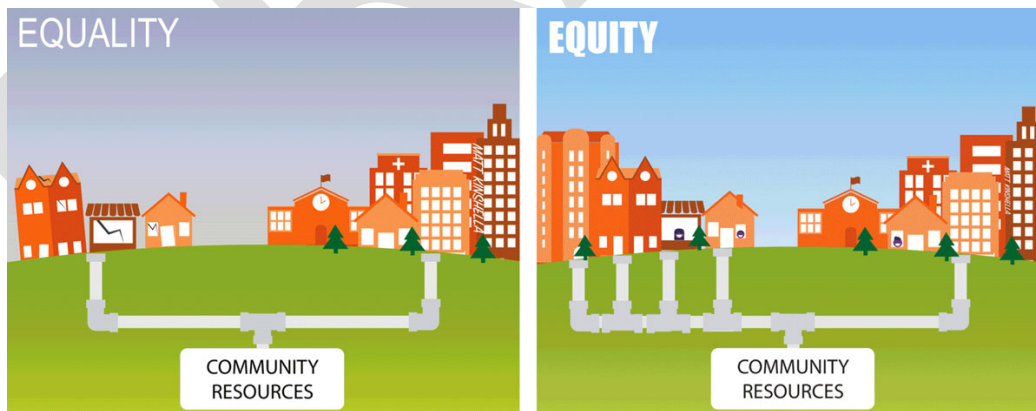


Pillar 3 - Equity

Equity and equality sound similar, but are very different concepts. Equality means sameness, while equity refers to access and opportunity. It is not the goal of the Comprehensive Plan to provide equality in housing, such that all residents would have the same size house, or purchase a home instead of renting. To the extent that public policy can eliminate the opportunity gap for Lexington's underprivileged, it is time to address the issue, with full acknowledgement that the private market does not typically accommodate that need unless incentivized or regulated.



Inequity in communities exists for numerous reasons, many of which are outside of Planning's regulatory sphere. There is much that can be done, however, through day-to-day review of zoning applications, if equity is given as much weight as design and density.



Lexington is a very desirable place to live. The unfortunate byproduct of this desirability is that housing becomes less and less affordable as demand pressures intensify. Over 60% of Lexington's housing stock is comprised of single-family detached, the most expensive housing type available. This is an indicator that equity in housing is an issue in this city which, if not addressed, will fuel the wealth gap and exacerbate historically rooted segregation.

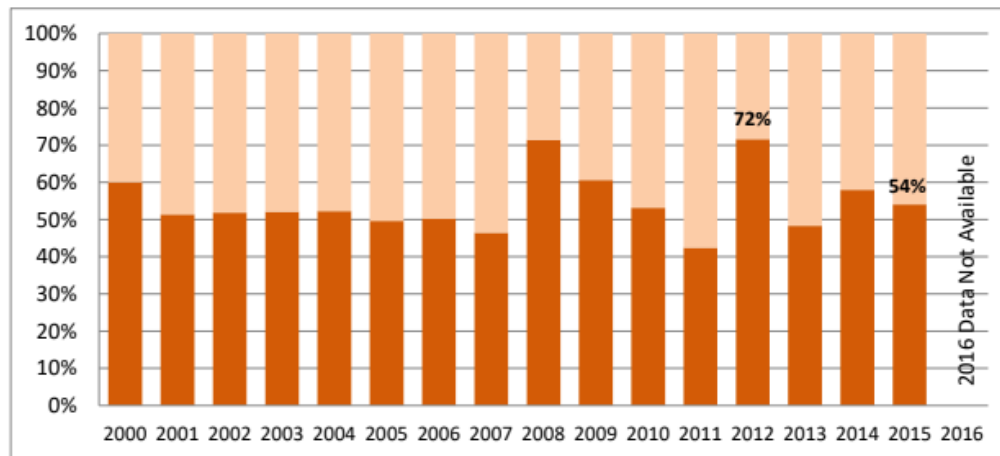
Median Residential Sales Prices* by Year, Type				
Year	Single Family Detached	Duplexes	Condos	Townhouses
2011	\$152,437	\$117,900	\$135,000	\$124,450
2012	\$159,900	\$140,000	\$128,251	\$131,000
2013	\$159,000	\$126,000	\$150,000	\$119,000
2014	\$162,000	\$112,000	\$133,000	\$133,000
2015	\$168,000	\$120,000	\$130,000	\$129,000
2016	\$175,000	\$131,000	\$132,000	\$125,000

*Excludes: foreclosures, quit claims, related party transfers, multi-parcel transfers, family members, partial sales
Data Source: Fayette PVA

As the demand for housing in traditionally minority and disadvantaged communities becomes stronger and more desirable, there will be serious issues caused by the gentrification of those neighborhoods for the existing residents. An equitable housing policy is not suggested to predict where this will occur, but to mitigate the effects and make sure that there are places for residents to live within the community they know so well. Lexington's housing policies can and should address the displacement caused by the market forces of gentrification. Because government is unlikely to accurately predict where future areas of gentrification will occur, efforts are best focused on having a plan to provide housing to everyone, in all areas of the city. Ensuring an adequate supply of units, and more importantly, a more than adequate opportunity for new housing to be constructed by way of liberal zoning regulations as they relate to allowable densities should sufficiently blunt the effects of market driven gentrification.

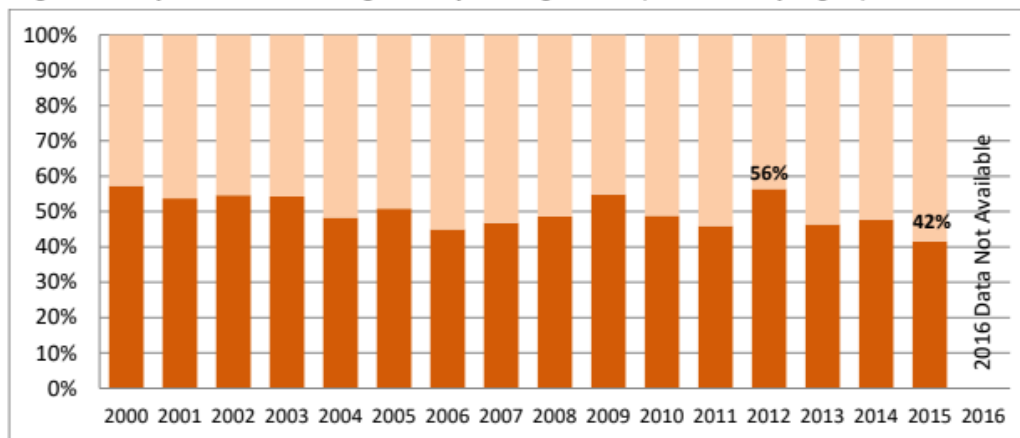
Lexington's proportion of single-family detached homes relative to the overall mix of housing is larger than in other urbanized cities of similar size. In these areas, the suburbs outside of the city limits have absorbed more and more of the single-family detached homes, and the city itself has provided less new housing of this type relative to the overall mix. This is not unlike the single-family developments appearing in Jessamine, Scott, and Lexington's other adjacent counties. Fayette County's proportion of overall residential building permits has remained fairly consistent over the years, yet the proportion of single-family building permits has decreased. This trend is expected to continue, as Lexington is just beginning to see increased densification of its urban core and arterials. It is important to note that this does not indicate a cessation in the production of single-family detached housing, but rather an emphasis in the production of other housing types. (See Housing Study tables below)

Figure B-4: Fayette's Portion of All Building Permits (Seven-County Region)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure B-5: Fayette's Portion of Single-Family Building Permits (Seven-County Region)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Providing this mixture of housing types, diversifying housing stock, and producing increasingly more units will result in greater housing affordability across the board as Lexington evolves and matures as a city. This will require that townhouses, condominiums and multi-family dwelling units replace single family detached as the *primary* housing type of new construction. This is not the death knell of a great city; dying cities do not have the problem of where to house new residents. Rather, dying cities are trying to find new residents. Lexington's urbanization is the sign of a vibrant, attractive city that is growing responsibly and in a manner that the local government can afford to provide adequate public infrastructure. Providing options for residents, both current and future, will address equity in Lexington and ensure it continues to grow and prosper.

Lexington citizens say...

"[Lexington needs] more affordable housing spread out though the entire city with services and public transportation.

Equity policies will not only address housing, but also transit and code enforcement, all policy areas where public investment will yield the greatest impact. Equity also includes the ability of the community to provide at-risk citizens with access to the services they need: essential community facilities, age-friendly residential options, and walkable commercial areas. The everyday community assets many take for granted are completely unavailable to a substantial number of residents, and planning policy should address these issues where possible. In many cases, this will require Planning to evaluate zone change applications in a way that ensures that equity is just as important as density and design. In other cases, where groups like the Community Land Trust and Office of Homelessness are better equipped to make a meaningful impact, this plan seeks to create policies that will support and call attention to their respective missions.

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Design Policies

Design Policy #1

Utilize a people-first design, ensuring that roadways are moving people efficiently and providing pedestrian infrastructure that is context sensitive to the vehicle environment and land uses.

This requires the provision of transit/transportation infrastructure that places pedestrians, bicycle riders and mass transit users on the same level as automobiles. Mass transit infrastructure should be considered essential. Proposed developments on current transit lines or future expected routes should enhance existing infrastructure to accommodate the new or increased ridership. Shelters and seating options should be scaled, added or improved accordingly. Development should provide direct pedestrian and bicycle linkages to transit. Pedestrian infrastructure should include wide sidewalks on both sides of streets and separated bike lanes wherever possible.

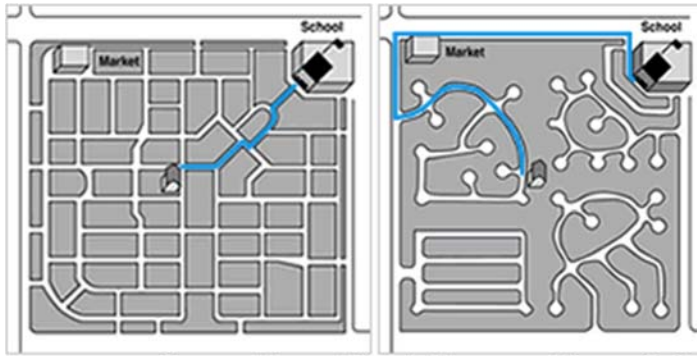
Design Policy #2

Ensure proper road connections are in place to enhance service times and access to fire and police services for all residents.

There is often opposition to connecting roads between developments, as residents believe that the increased traffic will negatively affect their property. However, it is important to note that there are many benefits to the increased connectivity that further the health, safety, and welfare of the community

“Providing a strong connected network of roads and pedestrian facilities can help distribute traffic, reduce travel distances and times, improve routing for transit and reduce walking distances. Good connectivity also provides better routing opportunities for emergency and delivery (solid waste, recycling, mail) vehicles. All of these effects can play a positive role in reducing congestion on the street network.”

<https://transportation.ky.gov/Congestion-Toolbox/Pages/Connectivity.aspx>



Transportation and Growth Management Oregon Guide for Reducing Street Widths

Design Policy #3

Multi-family residential developments must comply with the Multi-family Design Standards in [Appendix 1](#).

In the Winburn Small Area plan, design standards were created in order to address neighborhood concerns and to ensure that many of the problems historically created through poor design would not be repeated in the future. Special attention was paid during the creation of the standards to ensure that new multi-family developments will be properly oriented for pedestrians and site safety, and will create a strong sense of place. The design standards were developed with the intention of being portable for inclusion in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The same design principles that create desirable multi-family development in Winburn, also apply throughout Lexington.



Multi-Family Design Standards
Version July 11, 2016

Prepared for: LEXINGTON
Prepared by: [Logo]



Multi-Family
Design Standards

Design Policy #4

Provide development that is sensitive to the surrounding context.

Context-sensitive development is compatible and complementary to adjacent neighborhoods and communities. It enhances the existing neighborhoods through land uses and development patterns that are sensitive to the nearby built and natural environments. This does not mean all developments should be homogeneous or separated from each other, but rather they should be connected in a meaningful way that creates a unified neighborhood with a sense of place.

These connections can be made through providing complementary uses (neighborhood-serving retail, places of employment, community greenspaces and open areas, and other neighborhood focal points), as well as physical multi-modal connections. The connection of uses should be done through an appropriate scale that makes them accessible and not out of place or intrusive. Intensity step-downs and buffers (where necessary) should be used to ensure compatibility.

Lexington citizens say...

“Concentrated urban environments have their own value. A dense urban center and self-sufficient neighborhoods enable more people to use walking, biking, and public transportation in their daily life. This improves public health (something Lexington has been criticized for in the national press), decreases pollution, and increases quality of life for people across the socioeconomic spectrum.”

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TABLE 1-2 Benefits of context-sensitive site planning and design.

Society	Enhances pedestrian/bicyclist mobility and safety
	Creates opportunities for active living
	Promotes a sense of community
	Creates attractive surroundings
	Increases neighborhood safety
	Improves access to public services
	Minimizes negative impacts on surrounding properties
	Protects cultural and historic resources
Economy	Attracts visitors, tourists, and investment
	Increases property value
	Creates marketable “experiences”
	Speeds real estate sales and rentals in tight markets
	Attracts high-skilled employees and employers
	Reduces commuting times
Environment	Uses land efficiently
	Conserves energy
	Protects biodiversity
	Reduces air and water pollution
	Protects ecosystem processes and reduces urban heat islands

Site Analysis: A contextual Approach to Sustainable Land Planning and Site Design, James LaGro

Design Policy #5

Provide pedestrian friendly street patterns and walkable blocks to create inviting streetscapes.

Street design matters. Creating a neighborhood environment that is not only “able to be walked,” but is actually inviting and walkable is vital to creating a safe way for people to move from place to place. When designing the street facilities, developers should, “consider how to keep people walking separate from people driving vehicles; keep traffic speeds low; ensure sidewalks and curb ramps are accessible to people with disabilities; and clarify where each road user should be expected to travel.”

Traffic speeds dramatically affect a pedestrian’s actual and perceived sense of safety as well as the quality of life in neighborhoods. Likewise, speeding is a common concern for residents. Pedestrians struck by a motor vehicle traveling at 40 miles per hour are fatally injured 65 percent of the time. Speeds at 30 mph reduce the risk of death to 18 percent. Only 6 percent of pedestrians struck by vehicles traveling at 20 mph are fatally injured. It is important, therefore, to reduce vehicle speeds in high pedestrian activity areas, such as neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools and parks.

Vehicle speeds are heavily influenced by roadway design regardless of the posted speed limit. Narrow, curvilinear street with on-street parking and street trees help to slow traffic and create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Residential streets that are overly wide and straight and lack a vertical edge, such as trees or buildings, enable fast moving traffic. It is also important to consider land uses and their relation to the streets within the neighborhood. Thoughtful attention should be given to ensuring there is a people-first building orientation, and pedestrian oriented uses activating the ground level.

Lexington citizens say...

“Provide access to services and business WITHOUT the use of a car or public transportation. Easy access in and out of neighborhoods.”

Placemaking and walkability are important to the success of Lexington and its neighborhoods. A variety of best-practice reviews show that property values tend to be higher in more walkable neighborhoods that contain a mix of

nearby destinations connected by pedestrian-friendly streets. Additionally, research shows that this type of development is particularly desirable for the senior and young professional-aged populations that comprise the majority of Lexington’s future growth.

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

Design Policy #6

Adhere to the recommendations of the Lexington Area MPO Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan, adopted in 2018.

The 2018 Bike/Pedestrian Plan, called ConnectLex, envisions “a network of high quality walkways and bikeways that connects communities and fosters economic growth and regional collaboration. People of all ages and abilities will have access to comfortable and convenient walking and biking routes, resulting in true mobility choice, improved economic opportunity, and healthier lifestyles. Across the region, a culture of safety and respect is cultivated for people traveling by foot or bike, whether for transportation or recreation.” The plan identifies a multitude of bicycle and pedestrian projects that should be addressed throughout the duration of this Comprehensive Plan.

Design Policy #7

Design car parking areas so as not to be the primary visual component of the neighborhood.

New residential development should minimize the visual appearance of parking lots on streets in order to preserve that space for use that will activate the front yards and sidewalks for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Design Policy #8

Provide varied housing choice.

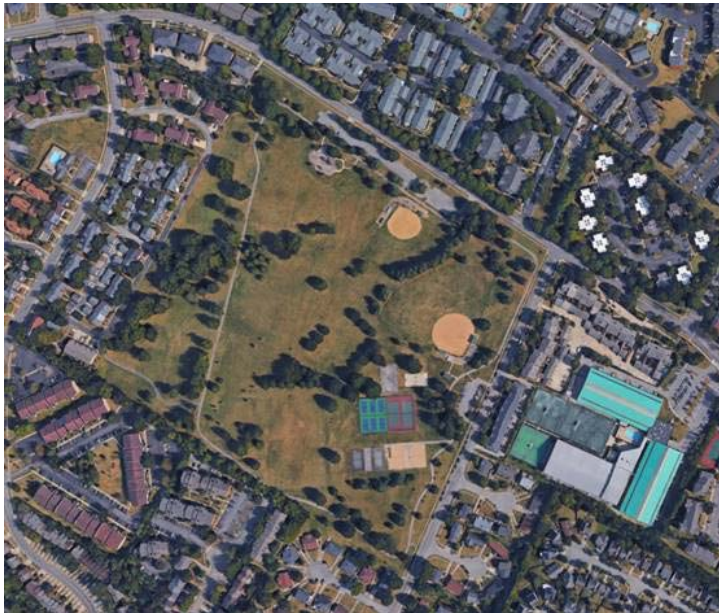
By providing housing choices within a neighborhood, residents of a community have greater options of where to live, particularly when the components of housing choice include access to jobs and schools, affordability, and housing type. Diverse neighborhoods feature townhomes, apartments and condominiums and duplex housing adjacent and mixed with single-family homes. They provide the opportunity for more personal interaction and security. The added population of higher-density residential development increases the viability of neighborhood-serving commercial development as well.



Townley Center

Lexington citizens say...

“Mix residential, office and retail and also mix income levels and sizes of homes.”



Kirklevington Park Area

Design Policy #9

Provide adequate greenspace for all neighborhoods within walking distance.

Greenspace is key to successful neighborhoods. It has the benefits of improving air quality, providing social interactions, and improving public health. An interconnected and accessible greenspace system consisting of vibrant and attractive public spaces, healthy natural areas and plentiful recreation opportunities create neighborhoods where people want to live.

Lexington citizens say...

“We appreciate being close to parks, the arboretum, etc., and have a wealth of nature in our specific neighborhood, but wish those resources were more accessible to walk to.”

Over the years, greenspace has evolved far beyond the definition of rural landscapes. Greenspace encompasses public parks, trails, boulevards, activity lawns, schoolyards, public plazas, amphitheaters, stormwater basins, arboretum, cemeteries, etc. Based

on the input from the [Greenspace Survey](#) in 2016, people have a strong desire for accessible greenspace. People have a preference to reside close to greenspace that they are able to walk to.

Since 2007, when green infrastructure was introduced in the Comprehensive Plan and has continued to play a strong role in protecting Lexington’s culture landscape and urban forms. At the same time, it was a sustainable tool for stormwater management and has been incorporated into the Stormwater Manual as a requirement in 2016. Nevertheless, green infrastructure has become an important part of the greenspace system.

Regional parks such as Masterson Station and Kentucky Horse Park are functional for large events with a big venue while people also desire neighborhood pocket parks they can enjoy and gather on a regular basis. As shown from [Your Parks Our Future](#) city survey by LFUCG Parks and Recreation, the recreational greenspace that made the priority list are walking & hiking trails, natural areas/nature parks, small neighborhood parks, paved bike trails and indoor swimming pools. Successful neighborhoods such as Gratz Park, Bell Court, Woodland Park, Ashland Park and Downtown are all recognized by their accessible greenspace, inevitably contributing to the overall Bluegrass identity. Indicative of Lexington’s roots, settlement patterns for these older neighborhoods are characterized by narrower interconnected streets and sidewalks and structures oriented towards the street or park, which create a vibrant relationship with the public domain.

In the on-going *Your Parks Our Future*, Parks is planning to take a systematic approach and meet ambitious goals. The Strategic Plan recommended to increase the population served within a ten-minute walk of a Neighborhood Park (or larger) from the current 40% to 65% and to increase the population served within a five-minute drive of a Community Park (or larger) from the current 70% to 85% through development of existing parkland and new parks in growing areas.

Design Policy #10

Provide neighborhood focal points accessible to all residents

Neighborhood focal points can be a gathering space such as a park, greenspace, a shopping center, a community center or public square. To the extent possible, new residential development should be developed with new focal points in mind by allowing for easy, multi-modal access from the neighborhood instead of development that turns its back on the community hub.

Lexington citizens say...

“Need varied ‘place-making’ attractions and activities for all ages; arts, entertainment venues, brew-pubs, varied restaurants; a distinctive character or brand.”

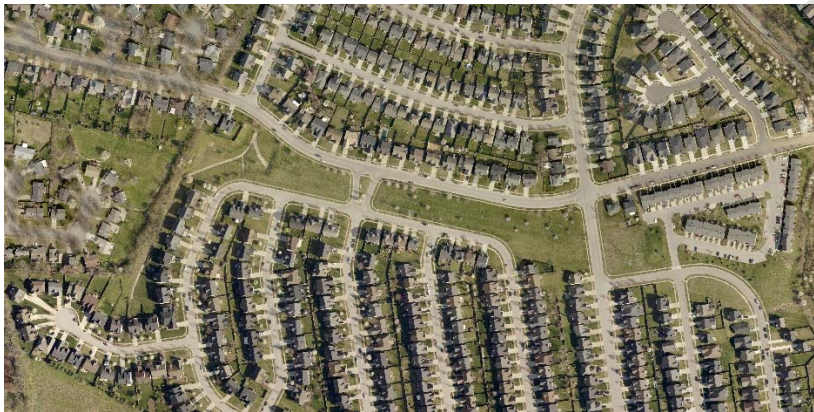
Design Policy #11

Single loaded streets should be utilized in order to establish clear public access to neighborhood focal points.

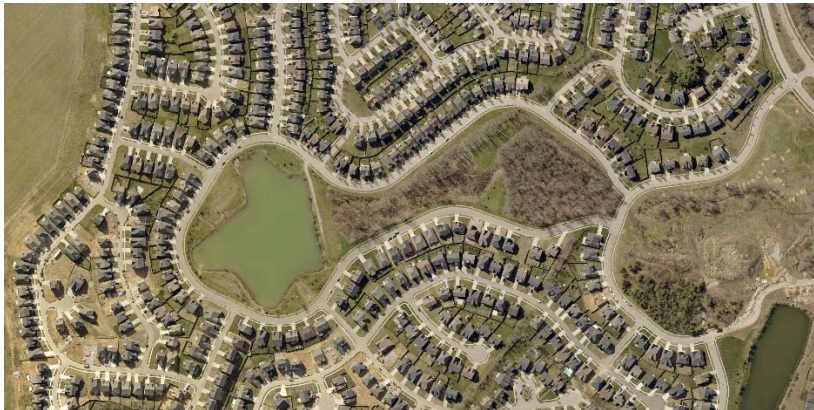
Even passive greenspace requires clear, visible access in order to fulfill the needs of a neighborhood. A focal point should be clearly delineated from private lots in order to be welcoming to all residents. Development of focal points on single loaded streets removes any opportunity for them to be tucked away unsafely in the backyards of private homes.



Castlewood Park



Wyndham Hills Drive



Willman Way

Design Policy #12

Support neighborhood level commercial areas.

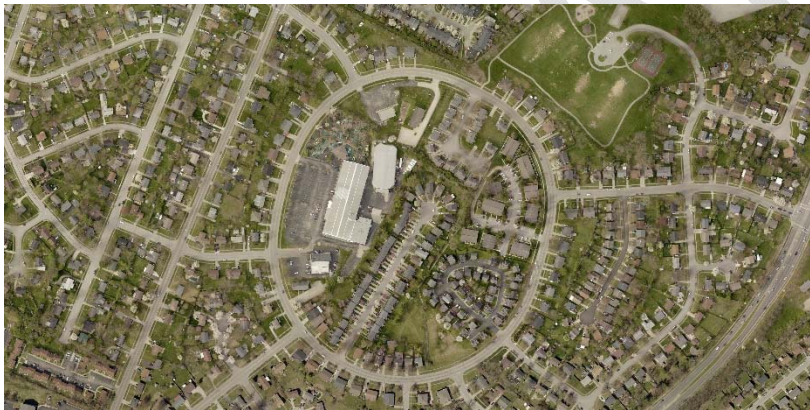
In many neighborhoods developed decades ago, the commercial areas designated to serve as neighborhood focal points have become poorly utilized or have slowly deteriorated and need additional investment. Proactively rezoning these sites from Neighborhood Business (B-1) to Commercial Center Zone (B-6P) would afford new flexibility at a neighborhood scale. Providing opportunities to increase residential density and professional/commercial intensity that could

spur economic investment is an important step that the Government could take. Using that opportunity to re-establish a new or better community focal point.

By also better integrating multi-modal access to all commercial development from adjacent neighborhoods, they can transform in to continually active areas, becoming the neighborhood focal points that their communities need them to be and also creating better access to goods and services.



Buckhorn Plaza



Eureka Springs



Oxford Circle

Design Policy #13**Provide connections to all stub streets into proposed developments and maximize street connections.**

Connectivity is a critical way to minimize traffic impacts on a single street. A full street system with multiple routes to neighborhood destinations is unquestionably a best planning practice. Dispersing the traffic of an entire area onto multiple collector and local streets makes every street in a neighborhood desirable and none too overburdened.

In Planning's continued efforts to improve on public outreach and education, additional revisions to the subdivision regulations should be undertaken to require signage at all future stub streets that will alert all residents of a neighborhood that future connections will be made, and how to discuss the timing and impacts with staff.

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Density Policies

Corridor Density

Density Policy #1

The highest density of our residential development should be directed to our major corridors and downtown.

Given Lexington's ever-increasing population, the community's expressed desire to create exciting walkable places, and the goal of preserving valuable agricultural land, density is very important. However, exceedingly high density is not appropriate everywhere throughout Lexington, and as stressed in the "Design" vision and policies, the form in which that density takes matters.

This plan intends to direct the highest density/intensity development to the major corridors and downtown area to bolster the viability of an enhanced transit service. This also ensures that this the bulk of intense development within Lexington occurs away from existing stable neighborhoods. Where corridor development and stable neighborhoods merge, transitions and step-downs should be taken to mitigate intrusion. Corridor development should also include multimodal connections to adjacent developments and neighborhoods, incorporating them into the context of the neighborhood.

Gap Residential Density

Density Policy #2

Infill residential can and should aim to increase density while enhancing existing neighborhoods through context sensitive design.

In areas where the preservation of the existing neighborhood design characteristics is of high importance, infill residential should apply the recurring building patterns of the area. It is wholly possible to add residential units while matching the consistent rhythm of existing development so that the new seamlessly blends in with the old. Significant contrasts in scale, massing and

design should be minimized while attempting to not impact the density of a proposed development.

Density Policy #3

Create opportunities for additional neighborhood supportive uses, especially in areas where services are lacking.

Ideal neighborhoods include not only a mixture of housing types, but also a mixture of uses including neighborhood-serving businesses and opportunities for work and leisure. Incorporating more of these uses into existing neighborhoods as well as new developments should be encouraged. Not all commercial development proposals near residential neighborhoods should be considered supportive, but those that also respond to the “Design” and “Equity” policies, and provide a clear neighborhood need can be. Additionally, commercial development near residential neighborhoods should not be rejected because it might generate activity near that neighborhood. Vibrant neighborhoods include a range of uses.

Previous efforts to grow neighborhood-scale commercial areas came at a time where traditional anchor retailers were continually closing smaller stores to concentrate their efforts on larger big-box style footprints in higher traffic areas. Competition among retailers nationally meant that scale was the driving factor, and neighborhood business zones were no longer suitable for their needs. The loss of anchor tenants reduced the overall viability of the commercial spaces. Given the shifting nature of retail in an e-commerce era, businesses must reimagine the way they are meeting the needs of the neighborhood.

Today’s successful neighborhood commercial has a much stronger sense of place, where residents of the area prioritize convenience over cost. Restaurants, personal services, boutique shopping with integrated community social spaces are the hallmarks of successful small-scale commercial areas like Romany Road and the ever-evolving Southland Drive. Redevelopment of existing commercial centers should focus primarily on creating a space for people to spend time, and smaller spaces for people to shop and work. Including new residential units can in turn complement the space and provide a transition to the surrounding neighborhood.

Density Policy #4

Generally, locate high-density areas of development along higher capacity roadways (minor arterial, collector) to facilitate future transit enhancements.

This plan recommends the highest density development should be concentrated toward the major corridors and downtown to facilitate transit-oriented development that would begin to support Bus Rapid Transit opportunities. In a similar fashion, where high density apartment development occurs outside of those areas it should be generally focused toward the minor arterials and collectors so that they can be more easily served by future transit service. Additionally, reducing the number of automobile trips on local streets lowers associated infrastructure maintenance costs. As most parks and schools are located on collector and

minor arterials, this places the higher density units, which lack private open space, closer to community gathering places.

Density Policy #5

Provide affordable and/or compact residential options through Accessory Dwelling Units

An ADU is defined as a second, smaller detached dwelling on the same property, or one that is attached to an existing single-family house, such as a basement or over-the-garage apartment. As Lexington continues to grow, ADUs can play a role in meeting the overall housing demand.

ADUs are not a new idea, and examples of them can be found throughout the United States. Old alley apartments in DC, or the carriage houses in fine old Seattle homes have been around for a long time, but they fell out of favor in the middle of the 20th century. Now they are an increasingly popular and important housing option in urbanizing cities today. Where Lexington has traditionally had a significant portion of its development controlled by a handful of developer/builders, ADUs essentially create a whole new market (a 'cottage' industry, if you will) for small builders to construct a housing product the community needs. There is tremendous opportunity to *enhance* existing neighborhoods by building new context sensitive ADUs. In areas where property values have increased dramatically and teardown/rebuilds have started to shift the appearance of the neighborhood, the creation of an accessory dwelling unit could make retention of existing principal structure more economically viable. Cities and neighborhoods are always changing and evolving. They are either improving or declining. *Enhancing* existing neighborhoods means not preserving them exactly as they have always been, it means steering their evolution in a way that benefits those residents, while making it accessible to as many people as possible.

Density Policy #6

Allow and encourage new compact single family housing types.

Lexington needs more housing of all types as our population continues to grow. The 2017 Housing Demand Study shows that single-family residential options continue to be popular and will be for the foreseeable future. However, the paradigm for providing these single-family homes is shifting from the larger suburban model lots to a more compact and urban form of single-family home, such as townhomes, fourplexes, and others.

One way to provide for this type of development would be amending the regulations to allow group residential developments that include single-family housing. This compact type of development allows for shared common space and reduced maintenance, which are ideal for the senior and young-professional aged populations. Compact lots mean less time and money for maintenance, more opportunities for social interactions in shared open spaces, more economic efficiency for infrastructure services, and safer neighborhoods. Other innovative and new solutions that incorporate efficiently designed single-family housing as a component of an overall development should be explored as well.

Table C: Total Incremental Units Required in 2025

	Owner-Occupied	Rental	Total
Condominiums	1,020	-	1,020
Townhomes/Duplexes/Single Family Homes	12,170	2,935	15,105
Multi-Family Structures	-	6,335	6,335
Other (Mobile homes, RV, etc.)	190	130	320
TOTAL	13,380	9,400	22,780

Source: Urban Partners

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Equity Policies

Equity Policy #1

Meet the demand for housing across all income levels.

This Comprehensive Plan does not seek to be antagonistic towards growth, on the contrary, growth is important and Lexington should encourage intense (re)development in the most appropriate areas to provide housing for all. Lexington must provide overall housing affordability, primarily through abundant supply of new construction that puts a downward pressure on rents of existing units.

Table 21: Owner Purchased Homes by Income Segments and Housing Price Ranges (2011 to 2016)

Sub-Market	Lower Priced Homes	Affordable (40%-60% Median Income)	Affordable (60%-80% Median Income)	Total Affordable	Workforce (80%-120% of Median Income)	Higher Priced Homes	All Sales
	>\$85,000	\$85,000 - \$127,499	\$127,500 - \$170,000	Below \$170,000	\$170,001 - \$255,000	Above \$255,000	
Downtown	9	13	28	50	58	65	173
In-Town Central	49	94	159	302	282	357	941
In-Town North	327	347	231	905	227	286	1,418
In-Town South	223	594	871	1,688	669	1,074	3,431
East	194	683	1,155	2,032	1,629	1,765	5,426
North	157	616	372	1,145	180	91	1,416
Northwest	9	431	928	1,368	533	67	1,968
Southwest	1	5	65	71	72	257	400
South	6	246	877	1,129	1,250	941	3,320
Southeast	231	1,055	967	2,253	1,100	823	4,176
Other	6	12	30	48	76	100	224
Total	1,212	4,096	5,683	10,991	6,076	5,826	22,893
Total %	5.3%	17.9%	24.8%	48.0%	26.5%	25.4%	

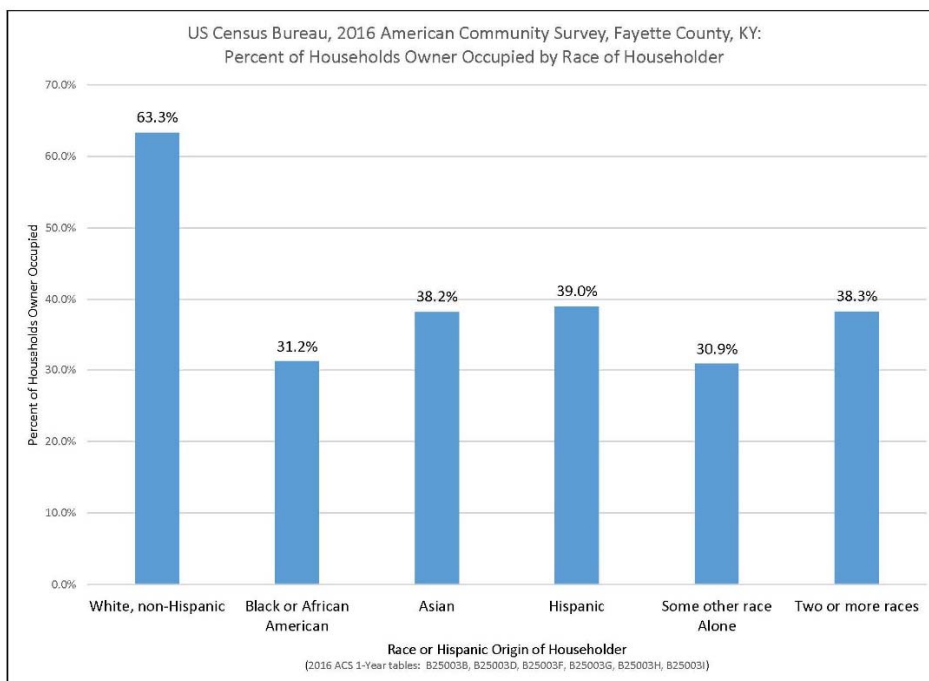
Source: Fayette County PVA, Urban Partners

Equity Policy #2

Provide affordable housing across all areas, affirmatively furthering fair housing, complying with HUD guidance.

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) is a legal requirement that federal agencies and federal grantees further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act. HUD's AFFH rule provides an effective planning approach to aid program participants in taking meaningful actions to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities that are free from discrimination. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all housing and urban development activities and programs.

Specifically, Lexington will seek to promote affordable housing throughout the community. Access to safe, affordable housing should exist in all neighborhoods. However, this plan shall also continue to support significant investment in existing low-income areas so as not to shut out distressed areas from further public investment or speed up the economic displacement of low-income residents due to traditional market forces.



2016 ACS 1-Year Estimates, tables:
B25003B, B25003D, B25003F, B25003G, B25003H, B25003I

Equity Policy #3

Add residential opportunities by proactively up-zoning areas near transit for populations who rely solely on public transportation.

In transit opportunity areas identified in subsequent corridor studies, the government should consider up-zoning properties to allow and encourage more intense uses that support transit. Where neighborhoods already exist along these corridors, appropriate transitions and step-downs should be used, but should not otherwise deter development of additional housing. To avoid adverse effects on low and medium density neighborhoods, transit-oriented development should be accommodated as much as possible on commercially zoned land along

Lexington citizens say...

“A successful neighborhood allows residents to thrive. This means access to healthy food, safety, good schools, and amenities like library branches, restaurants, and parks.”

major arterials. B-6P zoning should be considered along these major arterials.

Equity Policy #4

Preserve and enhance existing affordable housing through the land bank, community land trust and vacant land commission.

Previous Comprehensive Plans laid the groundwork for the currently existing program infrastructure to serve our affordable housing needs. Subsequent steps need to address the ongoing funding and identify methods for making sure these programs reach the critical mass of assets needed to become self-sufficient.

Equity Policy #5

Protect affordable housing tenants through improved code enforcement policies.

A rental property registration program to proactively address substandard housing conditions would help alleviate the current culture where residents are wary of contacting Code Enforcement to report violations for fear that they may lose the roof over their head. Louisville, Covington, and Erlanger all have all taken this proactive approach to this serious issue.

The goal of this approach is to identify problem properties and utilize random inspections to keep landlords from delaying maintenance or poorly managing their units. Cities both large and small across the country use rental registration programs and their tangible successes are well documented. As Lexington moves towards becoming a larger metropolitan city, it is incumbent upon the government to ensure all residents are afforded the opportunity to live in safe, code

compliant homes. A comprehensive, equitable housing policy must address existing housing as well as new construction.

On the landlord/property owner side, there are additional benefits as well. In preliminary meetings with housing stakeholders, the most important factor stated in whether a developer with a proven track record of strong property management would make a purchase in a given area, was the upkeep and maintenance of that neighborhood by other landlords. They felt it was impossible to overcome the inertia of neighborhood decline without other good faith actors. A proactive approach to code enforcement, driven by random inspections will ensure that it's possible to invest in all areas where a return can be achieved by making neighborhoods *more* desirable.

<https://law.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2015/07/2013-07-ECDC-An-Analysis-of-Rental-Property-Registration-in-Austin.pdf>

Equity Policy #6

Provide flexibility for senior housing through Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessible Dwelling Units (ADUs) provide significant opportunities for older residents to age in place. They allow them to retain their properties through subsidizing their incomes with rental revenue while they continue to inhabit the property. When attempting to address the senior housing need in Lexington, it is important to provide a myriad of opportunities, allowing a variety of solutions. ADUs will inevitably provide a small percentage of the needed units, but for many who take advantage of them, it could be the difference between staying in their homes, or having to sell them.

Planning should continue to look for community partners to assist in implementing this policy, and the Senior Services Commission has already taken an active role in its development. The goal is to provide an Accessory Dwelling Unit manual to provide reassurance to existing neighborhoods about how the program would operate, as well as guidance to prospective builders. This would ideally include proposed models that are both contextually designed and cost effective. Streamlining the permit process and reducing the administrative cost in order to make ADUs and attractive housing option for homeowners, should be important considerations.

Equity Policy #7

Community facilities should be well integrated into their respective neighborhoods.

Education:

School sites should be appropriately sized for the needs of the community, designed to be an integral part of the community, rather than sequestered and closed off. Ensuring neighborhood access to these sites is important so they can act as community-building entities.

Healthcare, social services:

Neighborhood-level healthcare and social service options are important, especially for areas where there is a low level of automobile ownership. While it is vitally important to preserve access and opportunity to these facilities in all areas, it is also critical that they be good neighbors to the neighborhoods they serve. The city, service providers and neighborhoods should work together to ensure that those in need of services have adequate transportation to and from facilities, and that public safety in the respective areas be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Greenspace, focal points etc.:

Parks, greenspace, and neighborhood focal points should be available to all neighbors. Steps should be taken to provide adequate access during their creation, and opportunities for retrofit access should be explored to address inadequate access to current sites.

Equity Policy #8

Housing developments should implement Universal Design principles on a portion of their units.

In order to support aging in place and recognize the increasing senior housing need, Universal Design principles should be incorporated into neighborhood developments where possible. Seven Principles were developed by a diverse group of professional designers to create environments that are easily accessible, understood, and used by as many people as possible.

These principles include:

1. Equitable Use – The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. Flexibility in Use – The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. Simple and Intuitive Use – Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. Perceptible Information – The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities.
5. Tolerance for Error – The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. Low Physical Effort – The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use – Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user’s body size, posture, or mobility.

<http://universaldesign.ie/Home/>

Additionally, the creation of an age-friendly development plan should be explored in order to address inequities in both public and private facilities and to raise awareness about the opportunities to improve. The city of Pittsburgh has developed a model program that Lexington should look to emulate.

https://www.swppa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AgeFriendlyPGH_ActionPlan.pdf

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Note: Supporting documents distributed to the Planning Commission during the work session can be accessed [here](#).



Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government
SENIOR SERVICES COMMISSION

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March 26, 2018

Dear Members of the LFUCG planning staff:

As members of the Mayor's Senior Services Commission and the Executive Committee for Age Friendly Lexington, we are sharing our thoughts and recommendations regarding the housing theme in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan.

As you know, the percentage of seniors in our community is growing rapidly, and is expected to reach nearly 40% in the next two decades. The demographic and their family caregivers have housing needs not presently being met.

The following are recommendations based on research and discussions:

- Create a diversity of housing types including duplexes, four-plexes, multi-generational and shared housing models;
- To meet the needs for seniors and persons with disabilities there needs to be intentional planning for accessible, affordable and safe housing;
- Plan the affordable, accessible and safe housing in close proximity to essential service and public transportation;
- Consider zoning to allow Accessory Dwelling units to accommodate the needs of caregivers and the burgeoning aging population;

Thank you for the considerations of these recommendations if we can be of any assistance please let us know.