

Goals and Strategies to Increase Affordable Housing League of Women Voters of Oxford

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Position Statement

The League of Women Voters supports current and future City efforts to increase the availability of housing for moderate and low income households through the following actions.

- Increase housing options for seniors, the disabled, first-time homebuyers, and households that earn their living in Oxford.
- Promote a variety of housing styles and types for rent and for purchase that are integrated within the community.
- Support strategies including public and private partnerships and grants, development agreements, rehabilitation, fee waivers, density bonuses, and an affordable housing trust fund.

Goals & Strategies

Goal #1

Oxford City Council shall renew efforts to uphold the housing affordability goals stated in the *Comprehensive Plan* (1998) that states:

*The housing market must be broadened to provide a full range of housing options. Future owner-occupied housing developments, single-family and multi-family, should fill the gap, providing new housing in the lower-middle to middle income market. At the same time, conditions in the existing housing should be strengthened to assure quality living environments. The *Comprehensive Plan* strategies are:*

- a. Continue to target resources that facilitate affordable housing (such as federal grants)*
- b. Adopt incentives to encourage the development of housing for low-and-moderate income persons (such as waiving building fees).*
- c. Encourage a mix of housing opportunities (such as a variety of price ranges).*

Strategies:

- Develop specific Affordable Housing (AH) decision criteria to be routinely applied during the review of housing developments.

Goal #2**Oxford City Council shall accept as a standard that housing is affordable if rents or mortgage payments consume no more than 30% of the household income.¹**

A more technical definition is in the Oxford Zoning Code:

***AFFORDABLE HOUSING** – Housing with purchase values or rent costs that are less than 30% of the annual household income of a household with an annual income 80% or less of the median income for Butler County as defined on the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s annually published table.^[2]*

Strategies:

- Do not take any action that would diminish the current number of AH units. If units are removed from the housing stock they must be replaced.
 - Encourage or initiate rehabilitation of the Mobile Home Parks (MHP) housing units. These units constitute approximately half of Oxford’s low-income housing units.
 - Involve the current MHP residents in decisions about rehabilitation.
 - Encourage the rehabilitation of housing in the Mile Square suitable for owner occupancy.
1. For example: Affordability for a household with annual income of \$20,000 would be defined as ability to pay a maximum of \$6,000 (30%) per year for housing. A household with a \$30,000 income could pay a maximum of \$9,000 per year or \$750 per month.
 2. Using Zoning Code Def. - 2000 Census Median household income in Butler Co. is \$47,885. (80% = \$38,308). Housing would meet the definition of “affordable” if it cost no more than \$11,492 per year or \$958 per month.

Goal #3**Oxford City Council shall encourage varied and affordable housing throughout the City and not in isolated places.****Strategies:**

- Acknowledge the economic benefits for the community when low and moderate income housing is available.
- Require all new housing developments to include a specified number (a ratio or percentage) of units that meet AH guidelines.

Goal #4**Oxford City Council shall investigate new housing strategies and relevant data to determine the most effective methods for accomplishing the goals stated above.****Strategies:**

- Create Private/Public partnerships: develop ways that the Public or Non-profit sector work together with developers to provide Affordable Housing; for example, tax credit programs.
- Waive zoning and development fees for AH units.
- Provide Density Bonuses: a developer voluntarily agrees he/she will build AH in exchange for being allowed to build more dwellings per acre than he/she would otherwise be allowed.
- Create an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Developers, landlords, non-profits, and public sector and others contribute to a fund for acquisition, development, mortgage assistance, and site preparation costs to create Affordable Housing.
- Require owners of new apartment complexes to contribute a portion of the annual interest they earn from tenants’ security deposits to the Affordable Housing Fund.

League of Women Voters of Oxford Affordable Housing Fact Sheet – March 2006

Oxford's traditional source of affordable housing¹ was converted to student rental

- The typical housing market pattern of having a variety of housing styles and values does not apply to Oxford because of the economic phenomenon of the student rentals.
- Historically, the housing in the Mile Square provided modest homes for first-time homebuyers and small households. In 2003, a City survey determined that only 14% of the housing units in the Mile Square were owner-occupied.

US Census	Owner Occupied	Rental
Midwest Region 2005	73%	27%
Oxford 1990	35%	65%
Oxford 2000	33%	67%

New construction did not replace the units lost to student rentals

- As Mile Square owner-occupied, affordable homes were converted to rental property, the private sector did not replace those houses with new affordable houses. Oxford's housing supply of entry-level homes dwindled.
- 45% of Oxford housing units were built between 1960-1980. 30% of the units were built after 1980. Much of the newer housing is valued over \$250,000 or rented to students.
- According to the US Census, the median housing values increased more than 60% in 10 years. Therefore the average housing value increased more than \$5,000 per year.
- A local real estate broker stated the median sale price of houses sold through agents in 2004 was \$175,000

Year	Oxford Median Housing Value	Source
1990	\$85,100	US Census
2000	\$139,400	US Census

- Between 2000-2005:
22 houses were sold with a value less than \$100,000
147 houses were sold with a value of \$100,000-\$150,000
- Oxford's average lot costs \$40,000.
- The Federal Government has recognized the seriousness of the lack of affordable housing in Oxford. Most of Oxford qualifies for the Federal designation of a "Difficult to Develop Area". Therefore, developers can participate in a Federal program to get reduced taxes by building affordable units.

Note 1. "Affordable Housing" is defined in the accompanying document *League of Women Voters of Oxford Goals & Strategies to Increase Affordable Housing*. December 2005.

Wages vs. Housing Costs

- There is a “disconnect” between LOCAL WAGES and HOUSING COSTS. Many people who work here do not live here. Although that choice can be due to a variety of factors, often the lack of affordable housing is the reason.
- Apartments and houses of an appropriate size for small households, first time homebuyers, and families with moderate and low incomes are priced too high compared with local prevailing wages.
- Commuting is an inefficient use of time, gas and other resources. Wages earned in Oxford end up being spent in other jurisdictions.

Employer	Where Employees Live (approx.)
Square D	15% live in 45056
McCullough-Hyde Hospital Full or Part-time workers who qualify for pension program	30% of live in 45056
Miami University Classified & Unclassified Staff, Full-time, Oxford campus	40% live in 45056
Miami University Continuing Faculty & Senior Administrators, Oxford campus	65% live in 45056
City of Oxford	50% live in City of Oxford
Talawanda School District	61% live in School District

Estimates based on LWV interviews 2005. Kroger and WalMart chose to not share employee information.

Low Income Housing

- There are two main types of low income housing in Oxford: the mobile home parks (MHP) on College Corner Pike and apartment complexes such as Parkview Arms, Talaford Manor, and Indian Trace.
- Persons who are disabled, elderly, or have very low incomes often occupy these housing units. 30% of households receiving financial assistance from The Family Resource Center rely on disability payments as their primary income.
- Persons receiving a Federal or State housing subsidy occupy 3% of Oxford s housing. Interviews with apartment managers reveal that the demand for low cost housing exceeds the supply. Most managers do not keep a waiting list. However, there are many request and units are re-occupied quickly after a vacancy.
- There are approximately 184 housing units with Federal or State subsidies.
- There are approximately 260 housing units in the mobile home parks.
- The LWV in collaboration with The Family Resource Center has compiled a study of the Mobile Homes Parks. A summary table is on the next page. The surveys and data were collected over the past 2 years and included interviews with managers of the parks and with social service workers, visual surveys, US Census, and a door-to-door survey. Data collection in the parks is difficult due to resident turnover and because census boundaries do not match property lines. The LWV has a high level of confidence in the attached data sheet because of the long term of this study, the practical knowledge of people familiar with the parks, and the variety of resources compiled.

The League of Women Voters of Oxford Affordable Housing Study was conducted by Sondra Engel, chair, Mary Jo Clark, Steve Dana, Jane Gaitskill, Sallie Killian, and Bernadette Unger. www.oxford.oh.lwvnet.org

**Mobile Home Parks (MHP)
using and Population Estimates
Miami MHP and Oxford MHP - College Corner Pike
League of Women Voters of Oxford
December 2005 All numbers approximate**

Total Number of Mobile Homes Occupied or temporarily vacant *	260
Total Number of Persons	850-900
% Owner-Occupied Mobile Homes	80%
% Mobile Homes w/ children	45%
Average household size **	3.40 <i>survey 2005</i> 3.25 <i>survey 2003</i>
Avg. # of children in households w/ children	2
Average monthly rental households consider they can afford	\$275
% Households that would like to move	50%

* There are 10 long-term vacant lots or empty trailers that are unlikely to be occupied. At any given time there are 8-10 trailers that are temporarily empty awaiting new tenants.

** Household size varies widely. 2005 survey:

1-2	persons in household	35%
3-4	persons in household	40%
5-5+	persons in household	25%

This data is a compilation of surveys and data collected over the past 2 years including interviews with managers of the parks (2003 & 2005) and social service workers, census data, visual surveys and a door-to-door survey (conducted by FRC staff Summer of 2005). This report was compiled by Bernadette Unger and Mary Jo Clark for the LWV 2005 Affordable Housing Study. All numbers are approximate.