

HOUSING INVENTORY AND PROJECTION

Number and Type of Housing Units

The 1990 census estimated that 10,588 housing units existed on April 1, 1990, as indicated by Table 15 and other tables. Table 16 reports that 307 new housing units have been authorized by building permit during the years 1990-2000. The town has been averaging somewhat under 2 demolitions per year, according to the Union County Data Book, thus about 17 units have been lost during the 1990's. The result of these additions and subtractions results in an estimated 10,853 housing units in the Town of Westfield at the end of 1999. The 2000 Census has reported 10,819 housing units in Westfield.

Table 15 indicates the type of housing units in 1990. As with many suburban communities, the predominant housing unit type is single family detached housing, almost 80% of the total in 1990. Multi-family housing units comprised almost 18% of the total and single family attached housing units comprised 2.5% of all units in the Town. These percentages are still fairly representative, although the exact numbers have changed slightly since 1990, due to the higher percentage of multi-family units constructed since that time, as indicated on Table 16.

Size of Housing Units

The average housing unit in Westfield is larger than typical for the County or State. Table 17 shows, for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey, the number of rooms contained in housing units in 1990. The average rooms per unit in Westfield was 7.1, greater than the 5.7 rooms per unit for the County and State. The table also indicates that the Town contains a lower percentage of units with 0 to 6 rooms than either the County or State, and a higher percentage of units with at least 7 rooms.

Age of Housing Units

Table 18 indicates that a majority of Westfield's housing stock was constructed prior to 1950. This reflects the Town's development history as a rail-oriented suburb, the pattern of suburban development prevalent in the year's before the 1950's. In the decade between 1950 and 1960, 26% of the Town's current housing was built, and since 1960 only 21.1%.

Condition of Housing Units

The condition of housing units in the Town of Westfield is generally good. Limited data from the 1990 U.S. Census, provided in Table 19, indicates that only 13 housing units (0.12% of the 1990 total) lack complete plumbing facilities and that only 25 units (0.24% of the total) lack complete kitchen facilities (there may be some overlap in these two categories).

Value of Housing Units

Westfield's housing stock is of high value, being higher than the average value throughout both Union County the State of New Jersey. Table 20 compares the 1990 purchase value of various housing types for Westfield, Union County and New Jersey. In 1990, the average value of a single family detached home in Westfield was over \$289,000, compared with \$207,000 for the County and \$194,000 for the State. Similarly, the average value of single family attached units was over \$177,000, compared with \$150,000 for the County and \$121,000 for the State. Multi-family units also show this pattern. The 1990 average value in Westfield was over \$187,000, versus \$170,000 for the County and \$164,000 for the State.

Table 21 compares 1990 rental values for the Town, Union County and the State. Units in Westfield with rents over \$750 comprised 50% of all rental units, as compared with less than 14% in the County, and 14% throughout the State. The median rent figures show similar results, with Westfield's \$753 median rent being greater than the County (\$530) or the State (\$521).

These housing values are obviously due to several factors. Location, of course, is important, as the Town is located close to employment centers and transportation routes, in an area of high demand and limited supply. The high quality of the homes and residential neighborhoods further enhances the housing values. The high values are also due to the condition of the units, as evidenced by the figures in Table 4 discussed above.

Occupancy Characteristics and Type

Housing in the Town of Westfield generally exhibits low vacancy rates. Table 22 compares 1990 occupancy and vacancy rates for various housing types in Westfield, Union County and New Jersey, based upon U.S. Census information. Summary data for 2000 are also presented in the table. The overall vacancy rate in Westfield in 2000 (1.8%) was lower than existed in the County (3.5%) and State (7.4%) as a whole. The 1990 vacancy rates were higher for all three jurisdictions. The 1990 data also indicated that within the individual unit types, single family detached units had a vacancy rate of only 1.7%, with the County having a similar

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rate and the State having a much higher rate. Single family attached units had a vacancy rate of 6.1%, which was the same as the County rate but lower than the rate exhibited by the State. Multi-family units averaged a vacancy rate of 9.4% in the Town, which was higher than the rate in the County but less than the rate in the State as a whole.

Table 23 compares the occupancy characteristics (owner versus renter occupancy) by housing type for Westfield, Union County and the State in 1990. Summary data are also presented for 2000. Overall in 1990 and 2000, the renter occupancy rate in Westfield was roughly half of that in the County or State as a whole. The detailed data from 1990 indicate that renter occupancy of single family detached housing units in Westfield (5.0%) was comparable to the County (5.2%) and somewhat lower than in the State (7.2%). Single family attached housing had a fairly high rental rate (34.9%) in Westfield, which was lower than the County rate (35.9%), but higher than the State renter occupancy rate (28.4%). Renter occupancy of multi-family units (79.7%) was comparable to the rates in the County (80.0%) and State (79.1%).

Housing Projection

The N.J. Department of Labor reports that 307 new dwelling units were authorized by building permits in Westfield during the years 1990-2000, as indicated in Table 16. This included the 131-unit low-income senior citizen housing project discussed in the housing element, the Sunrise assisted living project on Springfield Avenue, the development of the Clarence Street area for single family homes, and numerous small subdivisions and infill developments.

Data from the Union County Data Book indicates that from 1981 to 1995, 26 residential demolitions were authorized by building permit. All of these demolitions, however, occurred after 1986. Thus, for the nine year period of 1987-1995, an average of 2.9 demolitions per year have been authorized.

Although some continued development is expected, the rate of new housing construction is expected to decline due to the shortage of vacant developable land. The future increase in housing units is likely to result from minor subdivisions of existing properties and from conversions of existing structures to accommodate additional units. Over the next ten years, a net increase of perhaps 10 units per year, or 100 total units, is a reasonable expectation. These are most likely to be one-family dwelling units.

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