

Oberlin Housing Study

FINDINGS

City Council Work Session
February 6, 2017

Cleveland State University
Center for Community Planning and Development

Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs



Purpose of the Study

- Provide data and analysis to support future housing decision-making and planning
- Develop a steering committee and public who can offer informed feedback on housing issues in Oberlin
- Not a decision-making or policy-making process!



Parts of the Study



- 1) Background: process, data, plans/ other studies
- 2) Characterizing Oberlin: housing, residential neighborhoods, population and households, employers and employees
- 3) Community input
- 4) Housing market analysis: Oberlin's position – comparable cities; opportunities and projections; supply and demand
- 5) Recommendations and conclusions

Study Process

- **Steering Committee meeting 1** – May 2016 – Startup/orientation/ issues identification
- **SC Meeting 2** - Halfway data review – August 2016 - demographics/ housing condition/supply
- **Community open house**, September 15, 2016 – community input
- **SC Meeting 3**, October 15 – Market data review/analysis
- **SC Meeting 4** – December 1 – recommendations, programs, code review
- **Draft Report** – December/January
- **Today** – Findings Presentation to Council



Approach

- Data Analysis

- US Census (with limitations)
- Northeast Ohio Multiple Listing Service (NORMLS)
- City and County data
- Others: Employers, College, Kendal, Oberlin Community Services

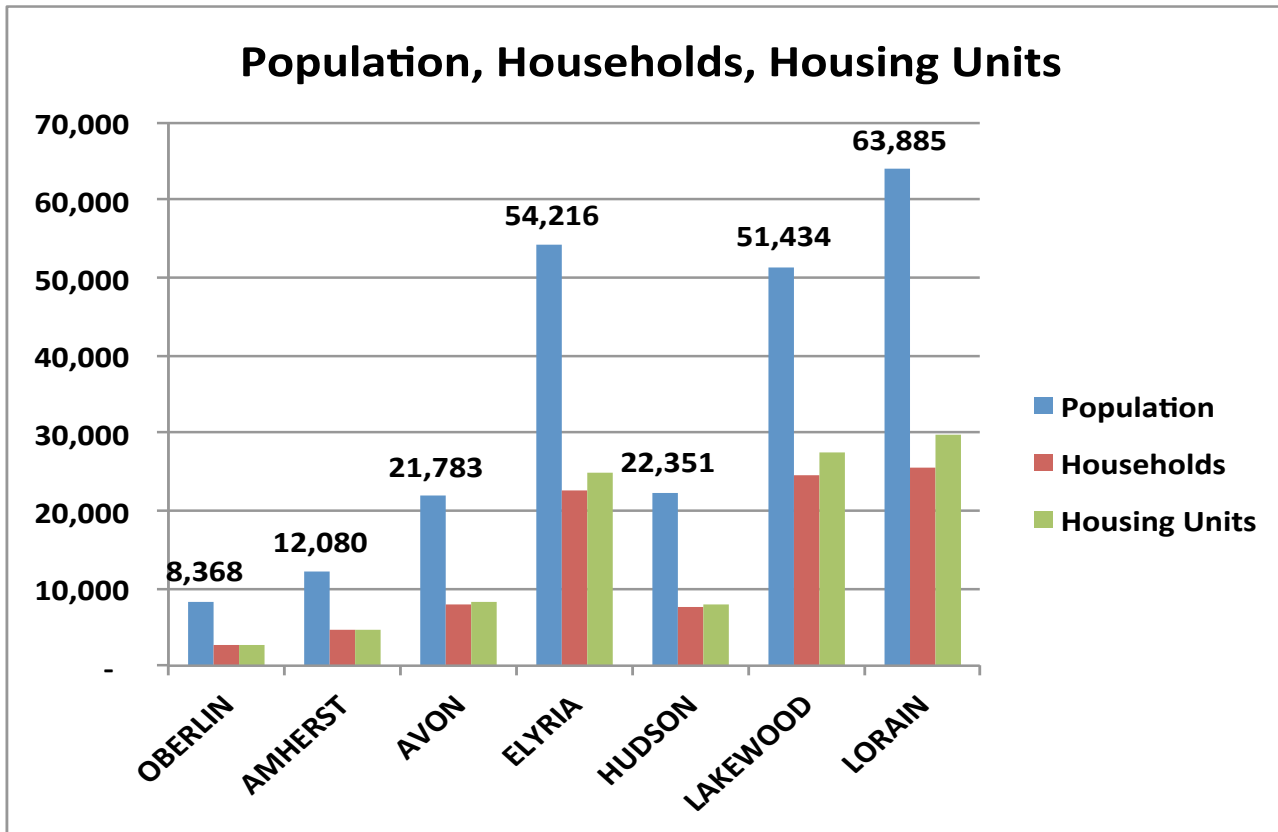
- Comparable Communities

- NEO competitors: Lorain, Elyria, Amherst, Hudson, Avon, Lakewood
- College towns: Middlebury VT (Middlebury C); Ithaca NY (Cornell U-Ithaca C), Hanover NH (Dartmouth C); Tuskegee, AL (Tuskegee U); Lexington VA (Washington-Lee U); Grove City PA (Grove City C)

- Community Input

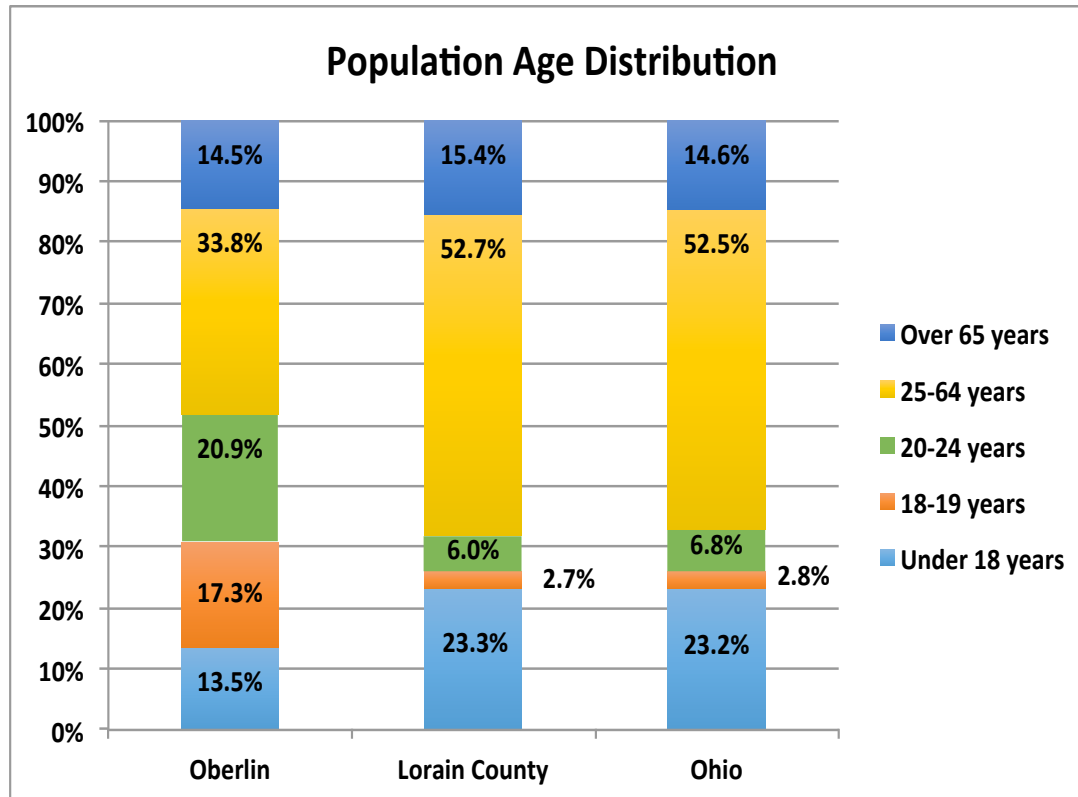
- Steering Committee: 4 public meetings, also in-depth interviews
- Community Open House: map/board conversations, comments, “Ad Libs”
- 37 additional interviews: development, real estate, banking, residents, employers, employees, schools, businesses

City of Oberlin in Context



- About 2900 of population are students (35%); remainder 5,500
- About 2,600 households - most do not include students
- About 2,700 housing units

Population Characteristics



- High college-age population is offset by low child and working-age populations, seniors roughly typical
- Trend of note: African-American population has dropped from 18% to 15% since 2000
- Community anecdotal input notes these trends are partly due to lack of smaller/affordable family housing in good condition

Oberlin's Housing Share

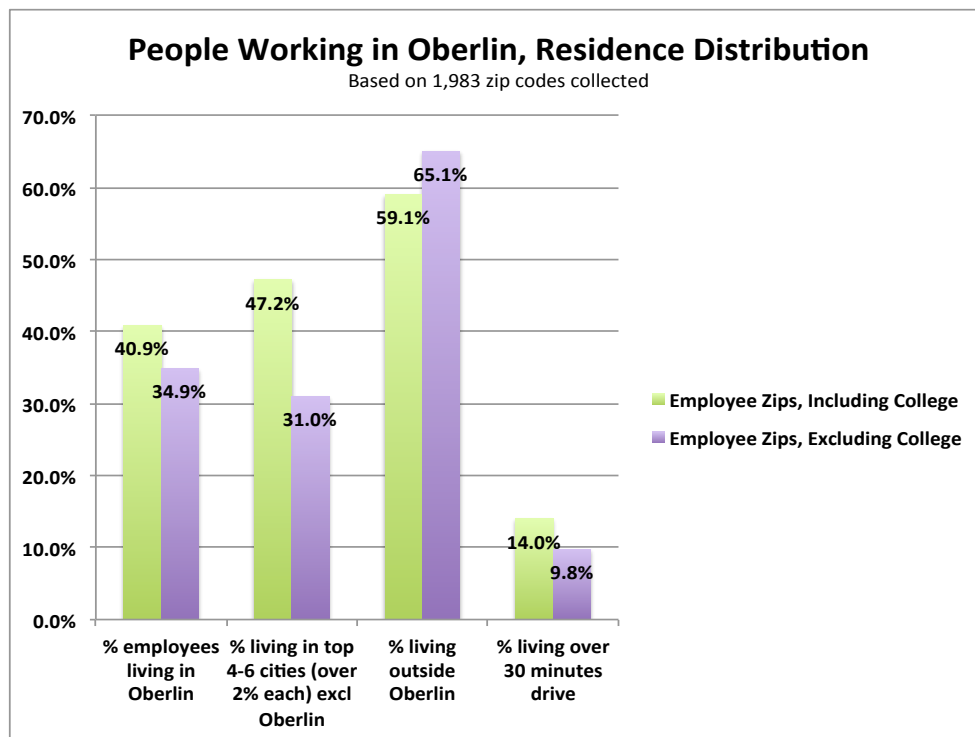
OBERLIN'S SHARE OF LORAIN COUNTY HOUSING, VACANCY AND FORECLOSURE

	Oberlin	Amherst Village	Avon	Elyria	Lorain	Lorain County	Oberlin Share	Lorain/Elyria share
Total Housing Units	2,686	4,761	8,179	24,824	29,745	127,901	2.1%	42.7%
Occupied Housing Units	2,524	4,568	7,953	22,646	25,562	117,134	2.2%	41.2%
Vacant Housing Units	162	193	226	2,178	4,183	10,767	1.5%	59.1%
Vacancy rate	6.0%	4.1%	2.8%	8.8%	14.1%	8.4%		
Sheriff's Sales, 2013-2015	75	98	57	621	759	2,425	3.1%	56.9%
Avg annual foreclosure rate	1.0%	0.7%	0.2%	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%		
Foreclosures initiated, 2013-2015	115	166	99	878	1,071	3,543	3.2%	55.0%

Source: Lorain County Sheriff's Office; ACS 2010-2014 5-year estimates; CCPD

- Oberlin has a very low vacancy rate for housing (6%; 1% if seasonal vacancy excluded)
- Oberlin has 2% of Lorain County's housing units, only 1.5% of County vacant units, 3% of County foreclosures
- Oberlin has higher rental proportion (42%) compared to County (28%) and State (33%)

Employers and Employees

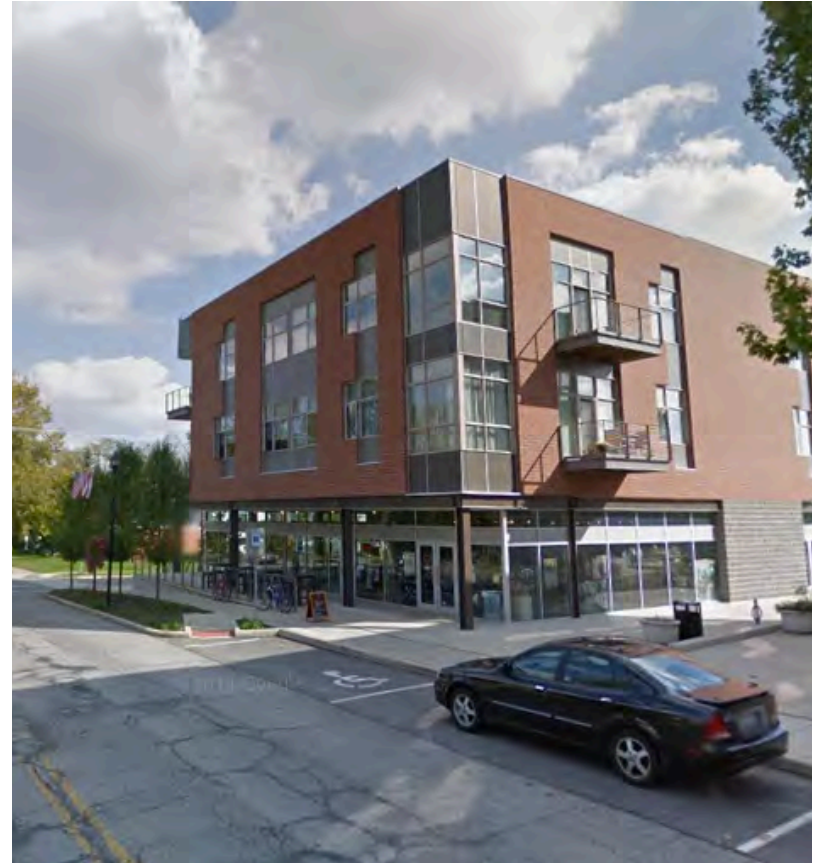


- About 4250 employees are accounted for in the top 17 employers
- Of 1900 zip codes collected, 35-40% (650-750) live in Oberlin

Oberlin's Housing Market

***Key: “The Oberlin Lifestyle”:
small, friendly, progressive,
walkable, sustainable,
convenient, arts/culture***

- People who grew up in Oberlin
- Oberlin College grads (all ages)
- Oberlin College faculty/staff, current and retiring
- People who work here
- Outside “globals” and empty nesters
- Possibly mainstream families in growth area to the south, willing to commute in exchange for lifestyle (will demand return over time?)(can Oberlin lifestyle be provided?)



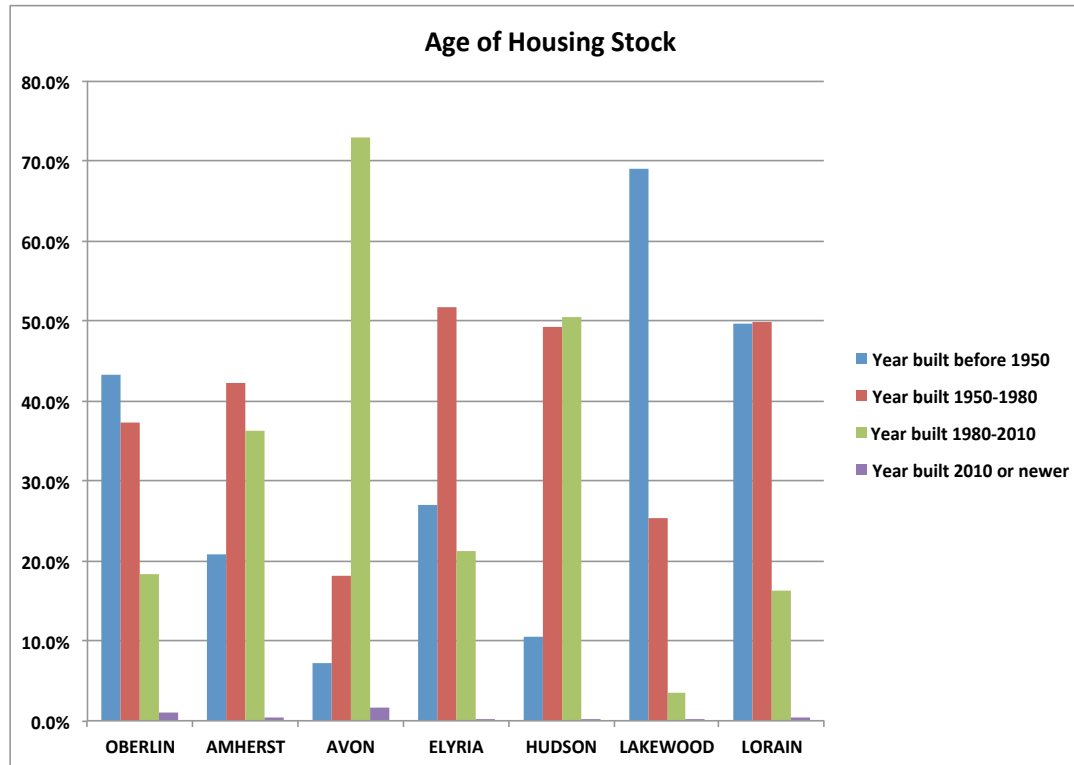
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1. Develop comprehensive rehabilitation and maintenance program

- Housing condition 2013: about 27% “B-F”, 7% “C-F”
- Rehab pace: about 10 major renovations in 2015
- Housing violations: backlog is growing
- Community input: *“There is a shortage of starter homes/rentals that are in a condition I would want to raise my family in”... “I can find better quality starter homes for the same price in Lorain and Elyria”.*

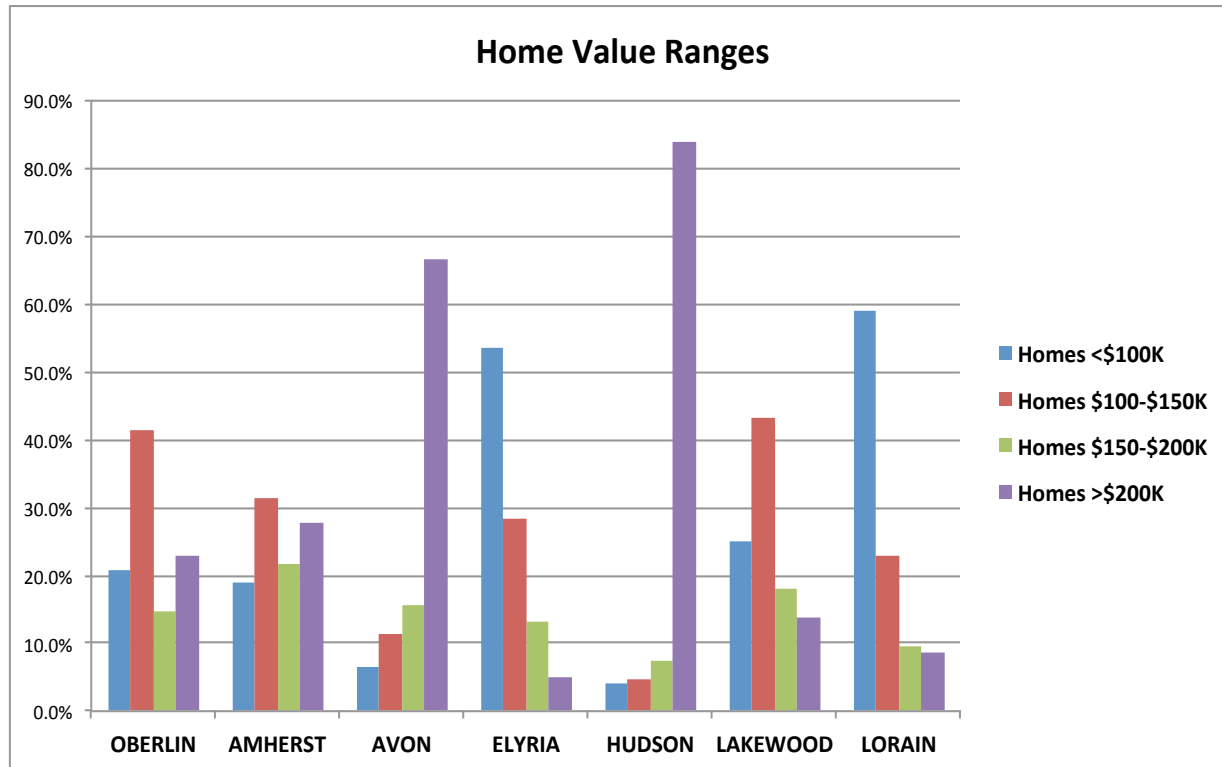
Age of Housing Stock



Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-year estimates

- Over 50% of the housing stock was over 50 years old in 2010 (1300 units).
- By 2040, 82% of the housing stock (existing in 2014) will be over 50 years old (2200 units).
- At 36% built before 1939 and 64.8% built before 1969, Oberlin's housing stock is substantially older than the typical in Lorain County (15.7% and 51.2% respectively), and the state of Ohio (20.9% and 54.3%).

Starter Homes



- Oberlin has a good share of lower-cost and smaller homes (20% under \$100K,)
- Existing homes can be a base to meet starter/affordable home needs if renovated

Housing Rehabilitation



- Continue and expand current rehabilitation programs
- Cleveland Restoration Society Heritage Home Program
- Nonprofit-led rehab and resell programs
- Oberlin's share of county programs
- “Brag Your Rehab”, social events, social media
- Tool lending libraries, workshops and how-tos

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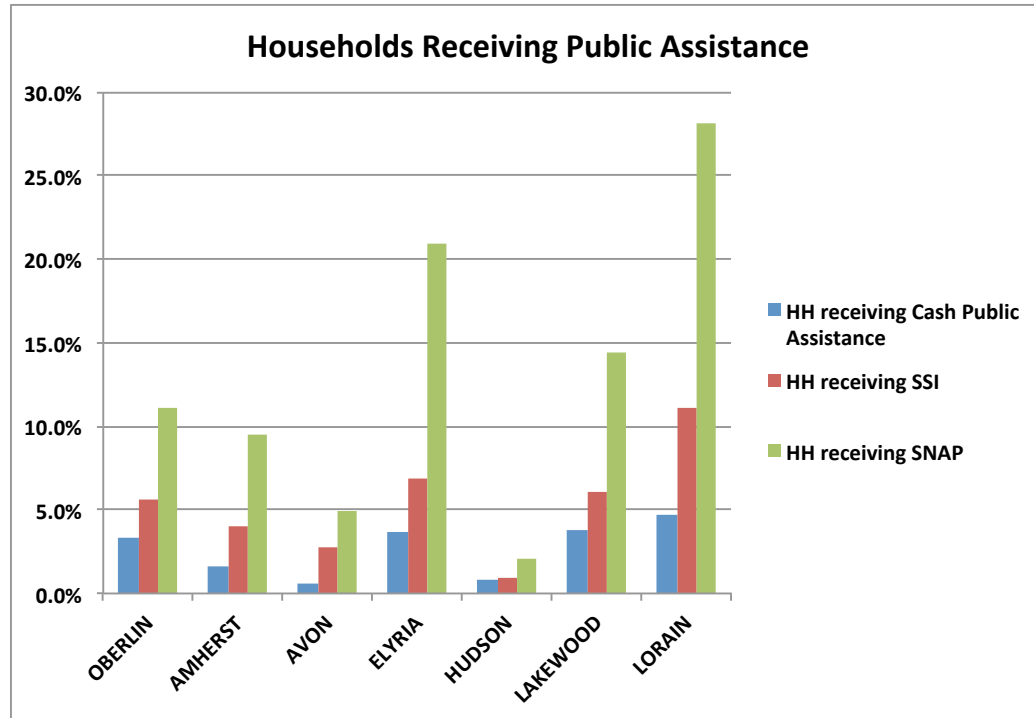


Housing Maintenance Programs

- Funding to support a comprehensive program
- Rental registration
- Periodic exterior inspections
- Landlord agent designation
- Foreclosure and vacancy registration
- Workshops and how-tos, repair cafes
- Volunteers for senior maintenance help
- “Grandma’s front porch” funds for small repairs
- Tenants education and advocacy



2. Provide affordable housing



- Oberlin is in the mid-range for public assistance (11.1% SNAP) and students eligible for free lunch (50%)

Other measures of lower-income households

Item	Count	Source/Comments	
Non-senior Renter Households	468	HH with less than 60% AMI (2014); ACS 2010-2014 5-year estimates; approx. \$37,560	
Non-senior Owner Households	258		
Senior Renter Households	225		
Senior Owner Households	209		
Households receiving SNAP	279	ACS 2010-2014 5-year estimates	
Unique households participating in food programs	533	100%	Oberlin Community Svcs
Senior households	110	21%	CCPD Estimate
Non-senior households	423	79%	CCPD Estimate

Source: As noted

- Current supply: 101 Senior (51 LMHA, 50 Concord Manor); 53 LMHA non-senior (note also 35 Section 8 vouchers)

3. Provide senior housing at all income levels

Demand/Supply	Count	Comments
Senior-led HH Renters in higher price range	39	Over \$100,000/year
Senior-led HH Owners in higher price range	91	
Kendal units available	223	Includes continuous care
Senior-led HH Renters in mid-range	116	Moderate income - \$37,560-100,000
Senior-led HH Owners in mid-range	301	

ACS 2010-2014 5-year estimates; CCPD

- Input: Seniors desire design for community; one-story units; proximity to services; ease of mobility in all seasons
- Moderate income of special importance – no suitable housing now

Supply and Demand Summary

TOTAL DEMAND BY TYPE	No. Units
Affordable nonsenior housing (rental)	468
Affordable nonsenior housing (for sale)	258
Senior housing - lower income (rental)	209
Senior housing - lower income (for sale)	115
Senior housing - middle income (rental)	116
Senior housing - middle income (for sale)	301
Senior housing - higher income (rental)	39
Senior housing - higher income (for sale)	91
New Mainstream housing (for sale)	42
New Higher-end housing (for sale)	42
Total all types	1,681
Total excluding affordable family housing - could be met by existing lower-cost homes	955
TOTAL SUPPLY BY TYPE	
Market Rate Rentals	384
Single family homes rented by the bedroom	60
LMHA for Seniors	51
Section 8 Project-Based for Seniors (Concord Manor)	50
LMHA for families	53
Homes under \$80,000 value	200
Total All Types	798
Total excluding existing lower-cost housing	214

Source: ACS 2010-2014 5-year estimates; CCPD

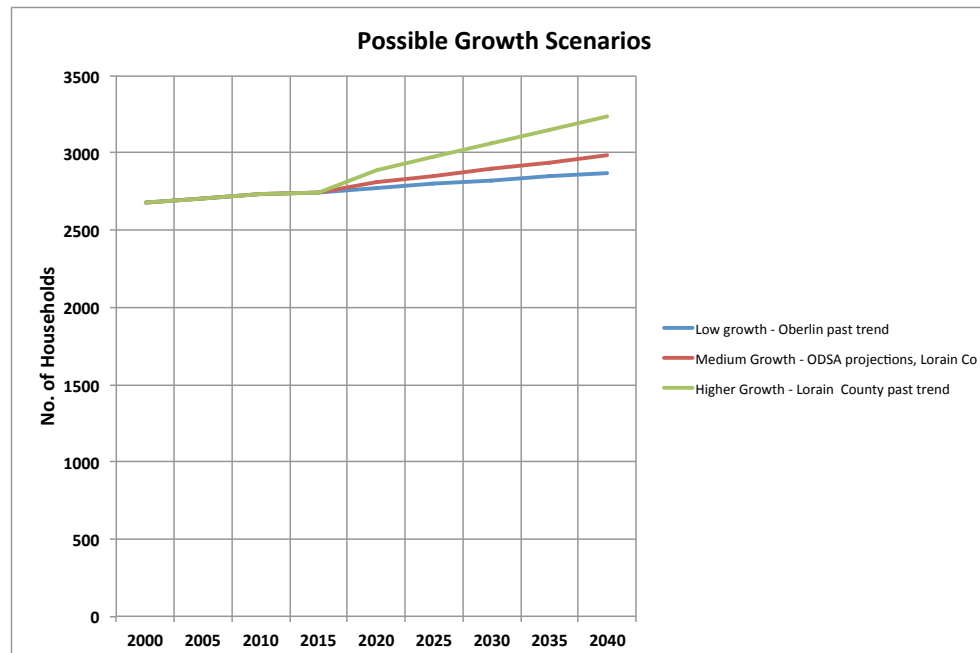
- Existing housing, if renovated, can help to meet family affordable housing need
- Mainstream for-sale housing assumes current pace (5 per year)

4. Develop a consensus on the future

Growth Scenarios

		Added							
	EXISTING					2030-	2035-	TOTAL	TOTAL
Growth Scenarios	2010	2010-2015	2015-2020	2020-2025	2025-2030	2035	2040	ADDED	2040
Low growth - Oberlin past trend	2,730	14	32	23	23	24	24	140	2,870
Medium Growth - ODSA projections, Lorain Co	2,730	14	67	42	42	43	43	251	2,981
Higher Growth - Lorain County past trend	2,730	14	146	85	85	90	90	510	3,240

Source: US Census, CCPD projections



- Three growth scenarios from 140 to 510 new households through 2040

Development potential

Smaller infill parcels

Size	Street Frontage	Landlocked
.20-.5 acres	124	36
.5-1.0 acre	44	12
1.0-3.0 acre	9	4
Total lots .2-3 acres	177	52

Source: Lorain County Auditor, CCPD

- Oberlin has plenty of room for infill (at least 177 sites) and new development (up to 400 acres, 1500 units within City limits)
- Question: what does the City desire?

Larger Parcels

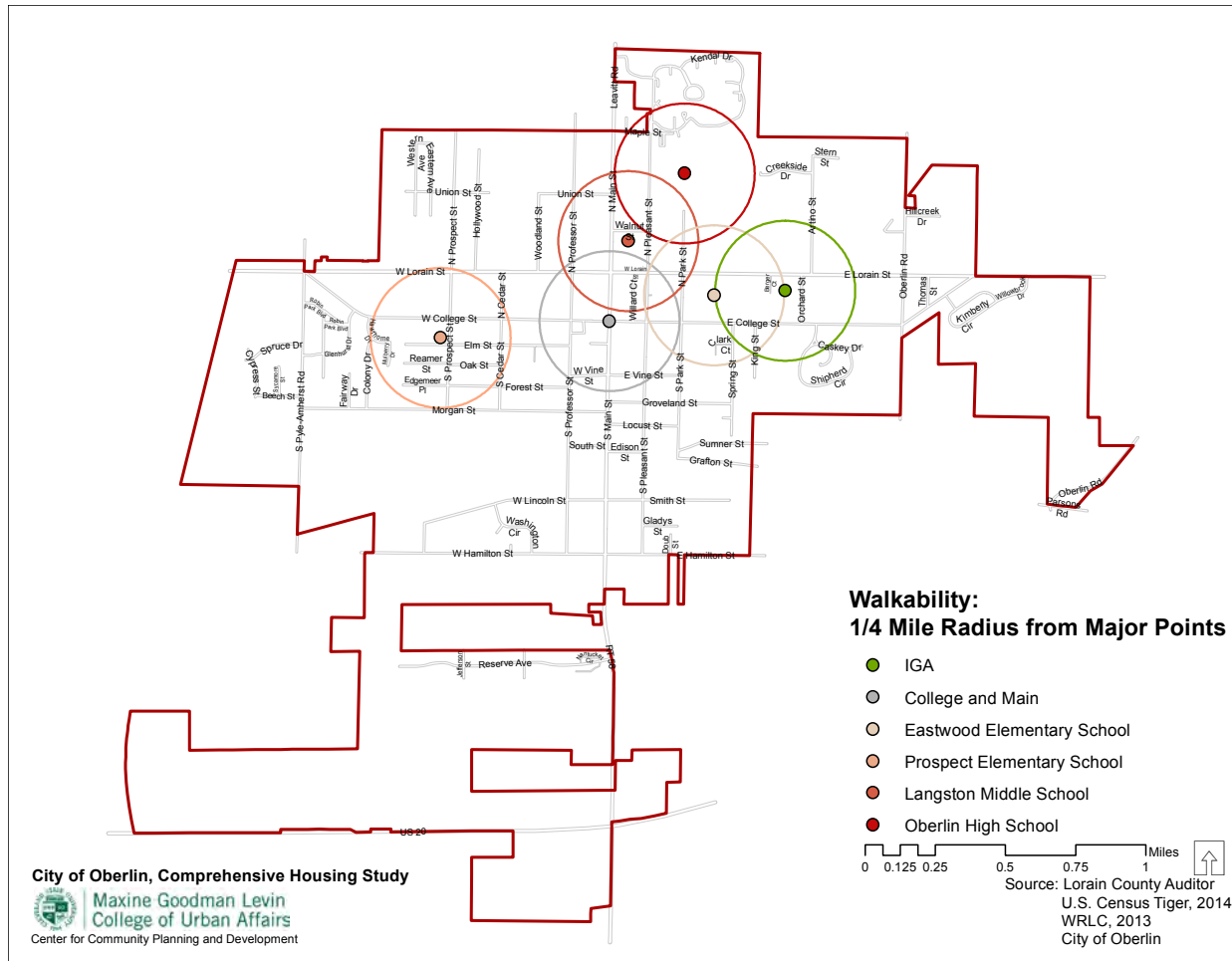
Land use classification	Area (Acres)	Zoning or equivalent	Lot size (SF)	Total Potential Units
Area in the City				
Infill over 3 acres	57	R-1A	15,000	132
Infill over 3 acres	70	R-1B	11,250	217
Total Infill	127			349
Cluster residential	23	---	4,000	200
Med/high density residential	158	R-2	5,000	1,101
Low density residential	203	PUD	43,560	162
Additional Potential Acres/Units in City	384			1,464
Additional Area in Pittsfield Annexation Agreement				
Cluster residential	15	---	4,000	131
Med/high density residential	125	R-2	5,000	871
Low Density residential	321	PUD	43,560	257
Total Potential Additional Units	461			1,259

Source: Oberlin- Pittsfield Twp annexation agreement; Lorain Co auditor; CCPD

Assumes 20% inefficiency due to lot layout, roads, etc

Where areas are not zoned, lot sizes are assumed based on conventional planning densities

Walkability and density



- Even at ½ mile radius, many areas of town are not walkable to key amenities
- Bikeability affected by safety issues on roads especially in south and growth areas
- Connectivity will be key to “Oberlin lifestyle”

5. Leverage nonprofit capacity to support housing strategies

- Comparable college towns all have nonprofit capacity
- Four at the County level (Ithaca, Lexington have their own)
- One has a Community Land Trust (Addison County, Middlebury) that owns land, long-term lease on homes
- Key to sale, transfer and renovation/resale programs, rehab programs, brokering of financing “stacks”, education/technical assistance to owners/renters; housing development and management; volunteer, donor, other nonprofit and foundation relationships
- MUST be scaled to fit small town capacity – possible County-level or regional partnerships? Lexington VA is similar size to Oberlin, has their own

6. Implement development/zoning opportunities

- More specific PDD code criteria
- Alternative housing choices
- Multi-family housing
- Housing management

Alternative Housing Models

- “Granny pods” or “Med-cottages”: temporary accessory dwelling units for family members
- Community land trust
- Co-housing
- Limited equity cooperatives
- Cottage development or pocket neighborhoods
- Tiny homes clusters (on permanent foundations)



7. Implement green building and sustainability opportunities

- Compact development: walkability, transportation options, density, mixed uses, trails
- Design guidelines, historic preservation

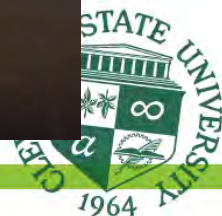


Sustainability Codes and Ordinances

- Incentives for green building
- Choosing a green building standard
- Urban agriculture and composting
- Natural meadow “tweaks”
- Provisions for small solar, small wind, and small geothermal



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Sustainability Codes and Ordinances



- Ensuring long term tree canopy
- Stream and wetlands setbacks
- Floodplain regulations with higher standards
- Encouraging green infrastructure
- Reduced parking ratios based on use studies



8. Focus on design quality and community



The Cottage Company

- Community-oriented design
- Design guidelines
- Historic preservation and compatibility

9. Develop marketing/communications strategies

- Attracting the market:
Oberlin grads/faculty/staff,
“globals”, Oberlin
hometowners, employees
- Defining identity and brand
- Enhancing attractiveness:
walkability, convenience,
small town community,
sustainability, arts and
culture (refined through
identity work)



Oberlin College

10. Collect data to understand trends

- Building and rehab permits
- Oberlin grad/faculty/staff residents
- Overall, children, African American, low-income, and senior population/household shares; renter/owner; vacancy
- Employee residents
- Maintenance condition and complaints
- Sales and home value trends (County, NORMLS)
- School district report cards, open and resident enrollment



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Next Steps



- Draft report edits
- Formatting, printing and delivery

CAVEATS!

- Data for small populations has large margins of error
- Peoples' choices vary, and cannot be absolutely predicted, only estimated
- Growth scenarios vary and can be greatly affected by the larger regional economy, which can be unpredictable
- Housing and real estate is cyclical



Questions?

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