



Finney County CHAT Update

A Community Housing Assessment Team

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RDg...
PLANNING • DESIGN

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Finney County

Population Change by Decade

Rural Finney County

| | 2020 Count | 1/10 Undercount | 1/7 Undercount | 1/4 Undercount |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Undercount | | 2,539 | 3,807 | 7,616 |
| Population | 38,470 | 41,009 | 42,277 | 46,086 |
| % Change from 2010 | 4.6% | 11.5% | 15.0% | 25.3% |

Source: Finney County Economic Development Corporation

- » In 2020 over 50% of Finney’s population was composed of racial and ethnic groups that are in racial and ethnic groups that are traditionally at risk for being undercounted
- » The above table illustrates three potential scenarios for estimating the undercount
- » *For planning purposes the 1/4 undercount or 2020 population of 46,086 will be used*

| | Rural Population | Period Population Change | % Change During Decade | Annual Growth Rate |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1970 | 3,885 | | | |
| 1980 | 4,753 | 868 | 22.3% | 2.0% |
| 1990 | 7,573 | 2,820 | 59.3% | 4.8% |
| 2000 | 10,046 | 2,473 | 32.7% | 2.9% |
| 2010 | 8,024 | -2,022 | -20.1% | - |
| 2020 | 15,413 | 7,389 | 92.1% | 6.7% |
| 1990-2020 | | 5,367 | 34.8% | 2.2% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2030 Population Scenarios

Rural Finney County

| Growth Rate | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | Difference | Unit Needs |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|------------|
| 1.00% AGR | 15,413 | 16,199 | 17,026 | 1,613 | 588 |
| 2.0% AGR | 15,413 | 17,017 | 18,788 | 3,375 | 1,232 |
| 4.0% AGR | 15,413 | 17,868 | 20,714 | 5,301 | 1,934 |

Source: RDG Planning & Design

*AGR - Annual Growth Rate

» Generally new growth should happen within or adjacent to cities where infrastructure can be provided in a more efficient and cost effective manner

» Within Finney County there is some potential for growth between Garden City and Holcomb

» Note that demand for rural acreages is acknowledged in this report, however, due to development costs this product can only support a small portion of the overall market

» *If areas outside city limits grew at a 1.0% and it is assumed that average household size remains the same, an additional 588 units would be needed*

Occupancy Changes

Rural Finney County

| | 2010 | | 2019 | | Change 2010-2019 |
|------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | Number | % of Occupied Units | Number | % of Occupied Units | |
| Owner-Occupied | 1,879 | 71% | 1,882 | 74% | 3 |
| Renter-Occupied | 755 | 29% | 670 | 26% | -85 |
| Total Vacant | 306 | | 397 | | 91 |
| Vacancy rate | 10% | | 13% | | |
| Total Units | 2,940 | | 2,949 | | 9 |

» The county's housing stock remains predominately owner-occupied

» The margin of error in vacant units is likely not reflecting occupiable units or units that are unlikely to be made available (used for storage or other family/personal reasons)

Housing Costs

Finney County

| | Median Household Income | Median House Value | Value / Income Ratio | Median Contract Rent | Median Rent as % of Median Income |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Finney County | \$60,798 | \$152,500 | 2.51 | \$611 | 12.1% |
| Ford County | \$51,711 | \$112,500 | 2.18 | \$604 | 14.0% |
| Ellis County | \$52,883 | \$169,100 | 3.20 | \$591 | 13.4% |

| | Median Year Built Owner | Median Year Built Renter |
|---------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Finney County | 1976 | 1978 |
| Ford County | 1972 | 1968 |
| Ellis County | 1972 | 1974 |

» Affordable housing traditionally is 2.5 to 3.0 times a households income

» Finney County’s value to income ratio fall in this range as opposed to Ellis County with higher values and lower incomes (students)

» Ford County’s slightly lower rental rates could reflect an older stock of rentals



Garden City

Population Change by Decade

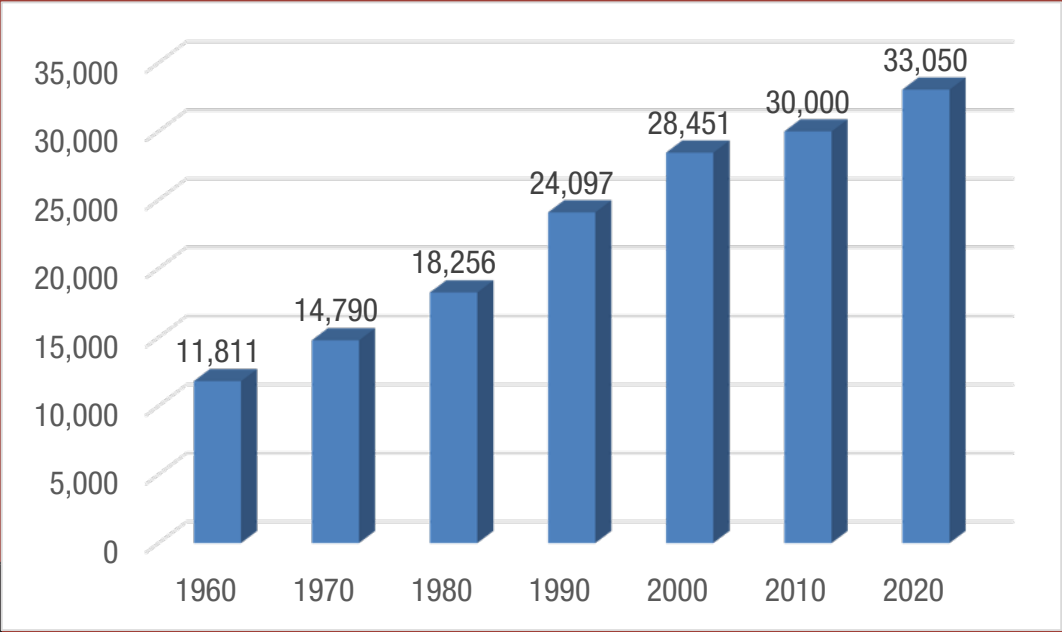
Garden City

» Based on utility bills, job numbers, and other indicators, it is fair to deduce a significant undercount occurred in the 2010 Census.

» Using the factors above, the City estimates the actual population was between 30,000 to 32,000 +/-in 2010.

» Based on construction permits issued by the City, the 2010 population would have been between 29,000 and 30,000;

| | Population | Period Population Change | % Change During Decade | Annual Growth Rate |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1970 | 14,790 | | | |
| 1980 | 18,256 | 3,466 | 23.4% | 2.1% |
| 1990 | 24,097 | 5,841 | 32.0% | 2.8% |
| 2000 | 28,451 | 4,354 | 18.1% | 1.7% |
| 2010 | 30,000 | 1,549 | 5.4% | 0.5% |
| 2020 | 33,050 | 3,050 | 10.2% | 0.97% |
| 2000-2020 | | 4,599 | 13.9% | 0.8% |

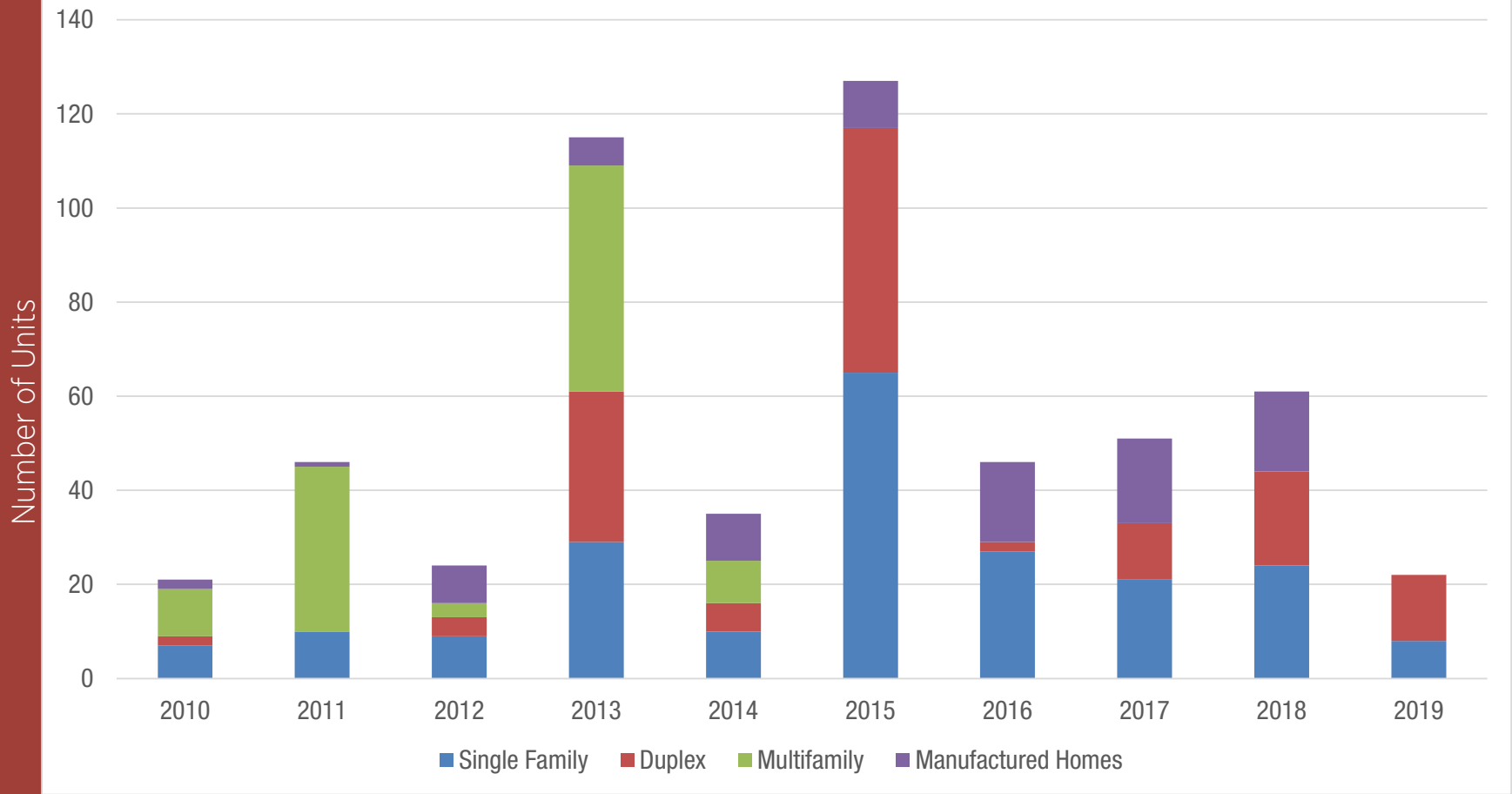
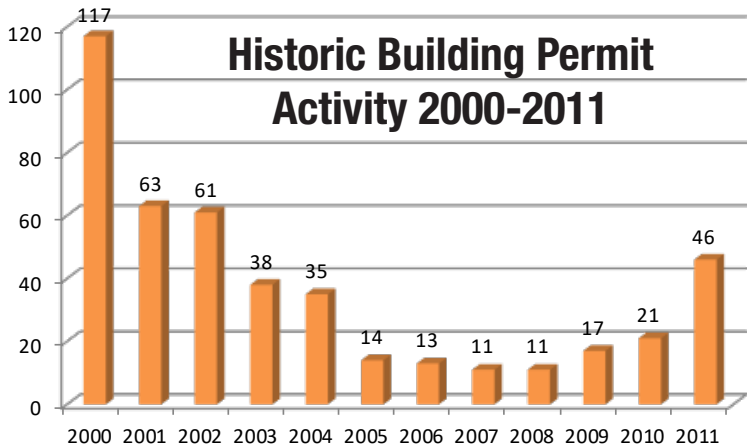


» Using a base population in 2010 population of 30,000, construction activity over the past decade and natural population change, *the cities 2020 estimated population would be 33,050*

» This calculation may still be low when the potential undercount is considered but is well above the 2020 census county of 28,151

Construction Activity

Garden City



- » Construction activity in Garden City was slow to recover from the national recession after hitting the low point in 2007 and 2008 of 11 new units each year
- » Since 2010 construction activity has seen big swings, including 2015 producing nearly 6 times more housing units than in 2019

2030 Population Scenarios

Garden City

| Growth Rate | 2010 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1% (2010-2020) | 30,000 | 33,050 | 34,837 | 36,720 |
| 0.53% (2000-2010) | 30,000 | 33,050 | 33,938 | 34,849 |
| 0.75%(2000-2020) | 30,000 | 33,050 | 34,311 | 35,621 |
| 0.27% (Construction Activity) | 30,000 | 33,050 | 33,499 | 33,954 |

Source: RDG Planning & Design

- » Over the past twenty years the city has grown at about 0.75% annually and potentially closer to 1%
- » Assuming a 2020 population of 33.050 and an *annual growth rate of 1%, Garden City will reach a population of nearly 37,000 by 2030*
 - » Note, a 1% annual growth rate aligns closely with traditional, healthy mid-size cities

Occupancy Changes

Garden City

| | 2010 | | 2019 | | Change 2010-2019 |
|------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | Number | % of Occupied Units | Number | % of Occupied Units | |
| Owner-Occupied | 5,495 | 60.6% | 5,550 | 59.2% | -201 |
| Renter-Occupied | 3,576 | 39.4% | 3,746 | 40.8% | 159 |
| Total Vacant | 585 | | 614 | | 45 |
| Vacancy rate | 6.1% | | 6.2% | | |
| Total Units | 9,656 | | 9,910 | | 3 |

- » 548 new units were constructed between 2010 and 2019 but some units would have also been lost due to demolition or conversion
- » However, it is unlikely that the city only gained 3 units indicating an undercount
- » The trend toward a higher percentage of renter occupancy is likely correct as this was seen at a national level

The Demand Projection Process



- » **The population forecast, recent construction activity and assumptions about people per household generates a ten-year overall housing demand.**
- » **Distribution of household income in a community is important.**
- » **Income ranges were matched with affordability price points, based on housing costs equal to 30% of adjusted gross income.**
- » **Defined price breakouts for new housing demand, based on the assumption that new construction should ideally be affordable to the existing household income distribution.**

Development Projection

Garden City

| | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| Population at End of Period | 33,050 | 34,837 | 36,720 | |
| HH Population at End of Period | 32,468 | 34,223 | 36,074 | |
| Average PPH | 2.88 | 2.88 | 2.88 | |
| HH Demand at End of Period | 11,274 | 11,883 | 12,526 | |
| Projected Vacancy Rate | 6.2% | 6.2% | 6.2% | |
| Unit Needs at End of Period | 12,018 | 12,668 | 13,353 | |
| Replacement Need (total lost units) | | 30 | 30 | 60 |
| Cumulative Need During Period | | 680 | 715 | 1,395 |
| Average Annual Construction | | 136 | 143 | 139 |

» Construction has not kept pace with demand, evident by the low number of homes for sale and shortage of quality rentals units noted by stakeholders

» There are approximately 1,000 job openings and potentially more. If only *1/3 of those moved to the city and needed housing that would result in 300 units*

» Additionally, *empirical foods will be adding 300 direct jobs with close to 1,000 indirect jobs*

» Significantly increasing construction activity would help the city address a backlog of demand, increase housing quality, and support future growth

Income Distributions and Housing Affordability Ranges

(2019 estimates)

Garden City

| Income Range | # HHs in Each Range | Affordable Range for Owner Units | # of Owner Units | Affordable Range for Renter Units | # of Renter Units | Total Affordable Units | Balance |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------|
| \$0-25,000 | 1,652 | >\$60,000 | 713 | \$0-499 | 950 | 1,663 | 11 |
| \$25,000-49,999 | 2,368 | \$60,000-124,999 | 1,562 | \$500-999 | 2,538 | 4,100 | 1,732 |
| \$50,000-74,999 | 1,843 | \$125,000-199,999 | 2,152 | \$1,000-1,499 | 204 | 2,356 | 513 |
| \$75-99,999 | 1,530 | \$200,000-249,999 | 564 | \$1,500-1,999 | 29 | 593 | -937 |
| \$100-150,000 | 1,304 | \$250,000-399,999 | 451 | \$2,000-2,999 | 25 | 476 | -828 |
| \$150,000+ | 599 | \$400,000+ | 108 | \$3000+ | 0 | 108 | -491 |

* HH = Households

Source: U.S. Census, 2017; RDG Planning & Design

» This analysis evaluates the availability of affordable housing and compares the quantity of housing affordable to each income group

» Due to the undercount in 2010 the numbers in the balance columns is likely undercounted also but the shortages and surpluses are somewhat proportional.

» The shortage of housing for those earning over \$75,000 puts a significant strain on units affordable to those making less than \$75,0000

Comparative Regional Affordability

| | Median Household Income | Median House Value | Value / Income Ratio | Median Contract Rent |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Garden City | \$55,987 | \$149,300 | 2.67 | \$612 |
| Holcomb | \$72,250 | \$146,900 | 2.03 | \$564 |
| Dodge City | \$50,338 | \$109,100 | 2.17 | \$607 |
| Great Bend | \$47,574 | \$95,800 | 2.01 | \$472 |

- » An affordable, self-sustaining housing market, with adequate value or revenues to support market rate new construction, typically has a V/I value between 2.5 and 3.
- » Ratios below 2.0 are significantly undervalued relative to income and make it difficult to support new construction costs
- » Ratios above 3.0 exhibit significant affordability issues
- » Affordable rental units have monthly rents less than 30% of the households monthly gross income

Housing Development Program

Garden City

| | 2025 | 2030 | 2020-2030 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|-----------|
| Total Need | 680 | 715 | 1,395 |
| Total Owner Occupied | 340 | 357 | 697 |
| Affordable < \$200,000 | 187 | 197 | 384 |
| Moderate Market: \$200,000-250,000 | 68 | 72 | 140 |
| Market: \$250,000-350,000 | 58 | 61 | 119 |
| HighMarket: > \$350,000 | 27 | 28 | 55 |
| Total Renter Occupied | 266 | 334 | 600 |
| Low: Less than 500 | 76 | 80 | 156 |
| Affordable: 500-1,000 | 109 | 114 | 223 |
| Market: 1,000-1,500 | 85 | 89 | 174 |
| High Market: \$1,500+ | 70 | 74 | 144 |

Source: RDG Planning & Design

- » This analysis assumes a split of 50% owner-occupied and 50% rental units for the next five years. This is to address needs for variety in the market and allow for more traditional rental options, freeing some demand for conversion of traditionally single-family homes to rentals.
- » Most new construction will cost more than \$200,000, causing demand for lower-cost units to be met either by existing housing units or subsidized construction. Creating more variety in housing types can motivate households to place their \$100,000 home on the market.



Holcomb

Population Change by Decade

Holcomb

| | Population | Period Population Change | % Change During Decade | Annual Growth Rate |
|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1970 | 272 | | | |
| 1980 | 816 | 544 | 200.0% | 11.6% |
| 1990 | 1,400 | 584 | 71.6% | 5.5% |
| 2000 | 2,026 | 626 | 44.7% | 3.8% |
| 2010 | 2,094 | 68 | 3.4% | 0.3% |
| 2020 | 2,522 | 428 | 20.4% | 1.88% |
| 2000-2020 | | 496 | 19.7% | 1.1% |

Source: U.S. Census

- » As noted earlier, over 50% of Finney’s population was composed of individuals in racial and ethnic groups that are traditionally at risk for being undercounted
- » This percentage is much smaller for Holcomb but there is likely a portion of Finney County’s undercount in Holcomb
- » Assuming some undercount has occurred an *estimated 2020 population of 2,522 will be used when projecting future population and housing needs*

2030 Population Scenarios

Holcomb

| Growth Rate | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| 0.5% AGR | 2,522 | 2,586 | 2,651 |
| 1.0% AGR | 2,522 | 2,651 | 2,786 |
| 2.0% AGR | 2,522 | 2,784 | 3,074 |

Source: RDG Planning & Design

» Based on 2020 estimate the city has grown at a rate of nearly 2% annually this past decade

» If this rate continues the city will reach a population of 3,074 by 2030

» If the city grows at a manageable **1% annual rate it will reach a population of 2,786 by 2030.**

Occupancy Changes

Holcomb

| | 2010 | | 2019 | | Change 2010-2017 |
|------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|------------------------|---------------------|
| | Number | % of Occupied Units | Number | % of Occupied Units | |
| Owner-Occupied | 520 | 79.5% | 626 | 93.3% | 106 |
| Renter-Occupied | 134 | 20.5% | 45 | 6.7% | -89 |
| Total Vacant | 26 | | 32 | | 6 |
| Vacancy rate | 3.8% | | 4.6% | | |
| Total Units | 680 | | 703 | | 23 |

Source: U.S. Census

» New construction was primarily focused on single-family development, increasing the number of owner-occupied houses

» The decrease in rentals may have resulted from conversion of rental units to owner-occupancy

» The margin of error in estimating vacant units is often higher in smaller communities

» Although the number of vacant units may not be accurate the very low vacancy rate is likely accurate or even lower

Development Projection Process

Holcomb



- » The population forecast, recent construction activity and assumptions about people per household generates a ten-year overall housing demand.
- » Distribution of household income in a community is important.
- » Income ranges were matched with affordability price points, based on housing costs equal to 30% of adjusted gross income.
- » Defined price breakouts for new housing demand, based on the assumption that new construction should ideally be affordable to the existing household income distribution.

Development Projection

Holcomb

| | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 | Total |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Population at End of Period | 2,522 | 2,651 | 2,786 | |
| HH Population at End of Period | 2,522 | 2,651 | 2,786 | |
| Average PPH | 3.20 | 3.20 | 3.20 | |
| HH Demand at End of Period | 788 | 828 | 871 | |
| Projected Vacancy Rate | 4.6% | 4.8% | 5.1% | |
| Unit Needs at End of Period | 826 | 870 | 917 | |
| Replacement Need (total lost units) | | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Cumulative Need During Period | | 49 | 52 | 101 |
| Average Annual Construction | | 10 | 10 | 10 |

» Based on strong construction activity over the past several years, these targets should be easily achievable.

Income Distributions and Housing Affordability Ranges

(2019 estimates)

Holcomb

| Income Range | # HHs in Each Range | Affordable Range for Owner Units | # of Owner Units | Affordable Range for Renter Units | # of Renter Units | Total Affordable Units | Balance |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------|
| \$0-25,000 | 53 | >\$60,000 | 65 | \$0-499 | 25 | 90 | 37 |
| \$25,000-49,999 | 124 | \$60,000-124,999 | 112 | \$500-999 | 13 | 125 | 1 |
| \$50,000-74,999 | 173 | \$125,000-199,999 | 323 | \$1,000-1,499 | 7 | 330 | 157 |
| \$75-99,999 | 143 | \$200,000-249,999 | 88 | \$1,500-1,999 | 0 | 88 | -55 |
| \$100-150,000 | 143 | \$250,000-399,999 | 29 | \$2,000-2,999 | 0 | 29 | -114 |
| \$150,000+ | 35 | \$400,000+ | 9 | \$3000+ | 0 | 9 | -26 |

* HH = Households

Source: U.S. Census, 2017; RDG Planning & Design

» This analysis evaluates the availability of affordable housing and compares the quantity of housing affordable to each income group

» Most households making over \$75,000 are living in units priced below \$200,000

» Options for empty-nesters and families looking for move-up housing would provide these households with options

Comparative Regional Affordability

| | Median Household Income | Median House Value | Value / Income Ratio | Median Contract Rent |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Holcomb | \$72,250 | \$146,900 | 2.03 | \$564 |
| Garden City | \$55,987 | \$149,300 | 2.67 | \$612 |
| Cimarron | \$68,901 | \$139,600 | 2.03 | \$479 |
| Greensburg | \$40,729 | \$146,700 | 3.60 | \$529 |
| Meade | \$57,500 | \$82,800 | 1.44 | \$446 |

» An affordable, self-sustaining housing market, with adequate value or revenues to support market rate new construction, typically has a V/I value between 2.5 and 3.0

» Ratios below 2.0 are significantly undervalued relative to income. Traditionally this makes it difficult to support new construction but the city's relatively strong home values mitigates this issue

» Ratios above 3.0 exhibit significant affordability issues

Housing Development Program

Holcomb

| | 2025 | 2030 | Total |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Total Need | 45 | 47 | 91 |
| Total Owner Occupied | 22 | 23 | 46 |
| Affordable < \$200,000 | 11 | 11 | 22 |
| Moderate Market: \$200,000-250,000 | 5 | 5 | 11 |
| Market: \$250-350,000 | 5 | 5 | 11 |
| HighMarket: Over \$350,000 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Total Renter Occupied | 22 | 23 | 46 |
| Low: Less than 500 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Affordable: 500-1,000 | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| Market: 1,000-1,500 | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| High Market: \$1,500+ | 6 | 7 | 13 |

- » **This analysis assumes a split of 50% owner-occupied and 50% rental units for the next five years.**
- » **The lack of rental construction the past 10 years coupled with changing lending practices that drive people to live in rental housing longer will increase demand for new quality rental housing.**

Finney County

Total Housing Need

| | 2025 | 2030 | Total |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Rural Finney County | 294 | 294 | 588 |
| Garden City | 680 | 715 | 1,395 |
| Holcomb | 49 | 52 | 101 |
| Total | 1,023 | 1,061 | 2,084 |

- » *To support growth in the next ten years Finney County will need to produce over 2,000 units*
- » While Garden City has traditionally supported the majority of the growth they have a limited number of lots available
 - » Holcomb, areas just out side of Garden City, and new approaches within Garden City will likely have to support some of this development



Opportunities & Challenges

The following section is based on stakeholder interviews completed in 2021.

Opportunities and Challenge



- » **Market Not Keeping Up with Demand**
- » **Lack of Lots**
- » **Empty-nester & Retiree Housing**
- » **Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not**
- » **Continue to Expand Partnerships**
- » **Embrace Innovation**

Opportunities and Challenge



» ***Market Not Keeping Up with Demand***

» Lack of Lots

» Empty-nester & Retiree Housing

» Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not

» Continue to Expand Partnerships

» Embrace Innovation

The 2008 CHAT cited several major housing needs, of which rental development appeared the most immediately critical. These rental needs persist and have extended to the for sale market. The Pandemic resulted in fewer people putting their homes on the market, record low interest rates spurring a desire to buy, and a shortage in building materials and costs slowed production. These shortages have only further increased the challenge of housing a growing workforce and ensuring that all residents have safe and affordable housing.

Opportunities and Challenge



» Market Not Keeping Up with Demand

» ***Lack of Lots***

» Empty-nester & Retiree Housing

» Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not

» Continue to Expand Partnerships

» Embrace Innovation

Over the past ten years the RHID tool has been successfully used in Garden City to develop buildable lots. These lots have generally met the need for the three to four bedroom single family detached home. At the same time most infill lots have been built upon. This has resulted in a lack of lots and especially in variety of lots offered. This makes it more challenging to build smaller homes, single-family attached, and townhome units. Additionally, the number of lots produced in the last decade will not support the demand for over 1,600 additional units.

There are growing opportunities in Holcomb and adjacent to Garden City in the County. Future demand will require new lots in a variety of locations and sizes essential to creating a more balanced and healthy housing market.

Opportunities and Challenge



» Market Not Keeping Up with Demand

» Lack of Lots

» ***Empty-nester & Retiree Housing***

» Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not

» Continue to Expand Partnerships

» Embrace Innovation

The lack of lot variety and therefore unit variety most directly impacts empty-nesters and retirees who are looking to downsize. These households often live in the starter homes appropriate to young families but they remain in the homes because they see no other alternative. Over the coming years this population will only continue to grow and as they retire they will leave job vacancies but often not a home vacant. Additionally, the housing products they demand, lower-maintenance and community centered, are often appealing to young professionals looking to move out of the traditional multi-family structure.

Opportunities and Challenge



- » Market Not Keeping Up with Demand
- » Lack of Lots
- » Empty-nester & Retiree Housing
- » *Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not*
- » Continue to Expand Partnerships
- » Embrace Innovation

Over the past decade Garden City has tried many different programs and strategies to encourage new housing development. Some programs have been very successful like RHIDs and changing USDA requirements. At the same time other programs that have encouraged specific price point homes or reinvestment in older housing have not been as successful. These programs should be retooled based on the lessons learned. Programs such as the Neighborhood Revitalization Program should be updated and the focus put on new construction or investor driven rehab where a rebated is more appealing.

Opportunities and Challenge



- » Market Not Keeping Up with Demand
- » Lack of Lots
- » Empty-nester & Retiree Housing
- » Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not
- » *Continue to Expand Partnerships*
- » Embrace Innovation

Neither cities or Finney County Economic Development can solve the housing issues on their own. Partnerships will be essential, and continuing to bring the county, Garden City Community College, and major employers to the table will be essential to solving a multi-pronged problem. A non-profit was proposed in the previous housing study and may still be essential to the preservation of existing affordable housing. Employers roles may vary based on their level of comfort but assisting in housing will be essential to attracting and retaining a necessary workforce. Training the next generation of workers for the building trades is beginning to happen but the next step may be finding incentives that keep them in the community following their training. Ultimately the housing issue has many aspects and will need to be addressed from different angles with different expertise.

Opportunities and Challenge



- » Market Not Keeping Up with Demand
- » Lack of Lots
- » Empty-nester & Retiree Housing
- » Continue Whats Working & Retool What Is Not
- » Continue to Expand Partnerships
- » ***Embrace Innovation***

In the past year we have learned that thinking about new ways of approaching problems can make us all better at what we do for our communities. As we move forward the labor shortages and cost of materials create a great opportunity to innovate and think about housing production in new ways. Traditional stick built on site approaches may have to evolve. Modular construction, 3D printing, and innovations in materials should be encouraged and not overly limited by a community's building codes. Not all of these techniques may work but pilot projects should be encouraged and adjusted to work in the Finney County market.



Directions Forward

The following section is based on an analysis of the current market trends, and stakeholder group discussions completed in 2021.

Strategic Objectives

Garden City and Holcomb have made progress in addressing the housing issues identified by the 2008 CHAT. These included significant new development projects, downtown adaptive reuse, and upticks in typical rental rates that have increased the feasibility of market-rate new construction and downtown rehabilitation. Garden City Community College has established a new building trades program in partnership with the school district, the City of Garden City has waved fees and established other programs, and the County is looking at a new sewer district.

Despite all of this work the undersupply in housing remains. Record low numbers of homes for sale are leaving many out of the ownership market. At the same time new residents looking to rent cannot find the units that are appropriate to their stage of life. In addition, existing vacant positions and potential employment growth are being held back by both a labor and housing shortage and only add further stress to the regional housing market.

Strategic Objectives

As the area continues to address housing challenges, we recommend the following strategic objectives:

- A. Expand the ***variety of housing products*** to include units appealing to empty-nesters and younger households.
- B. ***Add lots in a variety of locations and sizes*** to accommodate a wider range of housing types and ensure that zoning supports new innovative approaches.
- C. Use strategic ***rehabilitation and housing conservation*** focuses that will both conserve housing stock and preserve moderate priced housing.
- D. Continue to ***expand strategic partnerships*** that will help address both housing and workforce needs .

Lot Variety



Over the past decade *Garden City has used the RHID to address the lot supply issue. However, there is still not enough supply to meet demand through 2030.* Additionally, most of these lots have focused on single-family detached homes. Many of these easier locations have been developed in Garden City and areas adjacent to the Garden City and in Holcomb will need to play a bigger role.

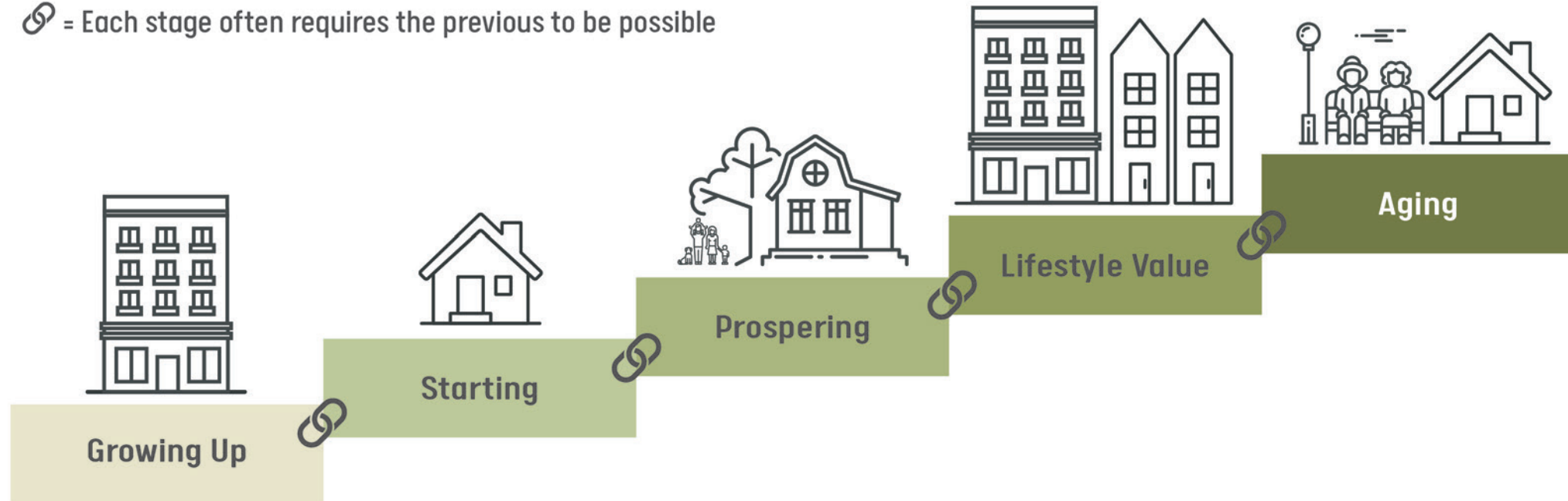
The *new sewer district in the county* will be an important part in addressing the lot supply issue. This development should be carefully master planned to create a true neighborhood connected to jobs, services, and entertainment and not just an isolated subdivision.

Lot variety will also need to be addressed. The lack of variety has limited the variety of housing products that can be built. Participants noted some interest in building smaller footprint housing that are naturally more affordable and can fill some of the starter home demand. At the same time attached and lower maintenance options can be very appealing to empty-nesters living in housing that is affordable to young families.

Housing Variety

Housing Stages

🔗 = Each stage often requires the previous to be possible



A healthy housing market provides options at every stage of life.

Housing Variety



Approximately 46% of all owner-occupied units are occupied by households over the age of 55. The overwhelming majority of these units are single-family detached homes that are priced below new construction costs. Offering an alternative to only 10% of these households would result in over 370 housing units entering the “for sale” market.

To produce these units and even more traditional rental options, appropriate lots and zoning adjustments should be addressed. Housing rehab programs may also be needed to ensure that existing homes are improved and maintained as safe and affordable units.

Housing Variety

Over the last several years there has been a growing emphasis on the impact that zoning can have on the ability to produce affordable housing and the variety of housing needed to support a healthy market. In the second half of the 20th Century ordinances favored the construction of single-family detached housing. Items that should be reviewed in the Garden City ordinance include:

- » The lack of a clear **medium density residential district** that allows smaller lot single family attached and detached. The smallest lot size for a single-family unit is 5,000 sq. ft. unless in a much high density district or requesting the application of an overlay district, both of which can garner opposition from neighbors concerned about density.
- » **Parking requirements** can add cost and make it more challenging for smaller sites, reducing the number of units and feasibility of a project.
- » Residential is not an allowed use in any **commercial district** except for downtown. Retail is changing and many of the mid- to large-box retailers that have closed over the past five years are unlikely to return. These sites can be the ideal location for higher density residential developments. These sites are less likely to experience neighborhood opposition and have easier access to transit and service related jobs.

Housing Variety - Case Studies



Historically attached units seamlessly fit into single family neighborhoods



Small Lot Single-Family Detached with alley loaded garages



Infill development on a former Wal-Mart site



Cottage Court Single-Family Detached with shared maintenance

Housing Partnership

The 2008 CHAT recommended a housing partnership that included a housing development organization such as a CHDO and a Lending Consortium that pools resources to provide interim financing for important regional housing projects. The need for partnerships remains critical with the focus shifting slightly.

- A. ***Development of a non-profit*** that can assist in the preservation of existing affordable housing. New housing can never be built at price points comparable to the existing housing stock and nearly 60% of all structures in Finney County were built before 1970.
- B. Continued expansion of ***partnerships to include employers***. Employers will have different comfort levels but addressing their workforce needs will have to include housing.

Non-Profit Developer - Case Study



Purchase Rehab Resale

Over a five year period NeighborWorks Northeast Nebraska implemented a highly successful Purchase-Rehab-Resale program in Columbus, NE. Under the program, repairs can range from \$2,000 to \$25,000. Following completion of the repairs the home is sold to the qualifying household often with down payment assistance of 20% of the final purchase price, up to \$20,000. *For Columbus this has resulted in 140 homes rehabbed homes as owner-occupied units, often by first time home buyers.*

Housing Rehab



There are currently no housing rehab programs through the city or if there are they are not easily found through a quick internet search. Programs should be developed or advertised more that focus on:

- » Basic repair and maintenance and the avoidance of band-aid projects**
- » Improving the energy efficiency of units and lower overall cost of housing**
- » Rehab of both owner and renter occupied units**

This should combined with continued enforcement of existing codes and the funding necessary for enforcement.

Housing Rehab



When the NRP program was established many thought that it would encourage rehabilitation and reinvestment. Market economics have resulted in it being a program that has been successful in encouraging reinvestment in neighborhoods through new construction by investors but the rebate is less appealing to those looking to rehab existing housing.

- » The existing NRP program should be updated and focused on targeted areas of the city.**
- » New programs, like the Downtown RHID, should be leveraged to convert the remaining and hardest opportunities in the Downtown.**

Housing Rehab - Case Study



Rural Housing Incentive Districts: Upper Story Program

- » Garden City has successfully convert most of the easy upper story spaces to residential units. The remaining opportunities are more challenging due to size or condition. The new RHID Upper Story Program may be solution.
- » Similar to the general RHID of previous years, the Upper Story RHID program applies to cities with a demonstrate housing shortage that is impeding economic opportunity. The RHID *Upper Story program can help reimburse a variety of cost from roofing and HVAC to removal of hazardous materials and plumbing* by allowing the city, county or developer capture the incremental increases from the property tax. The RHID can be used to purchase a building and can have commercial activity on the first floor, but RHID funds can only be used for the residential component of the building.

Partnerships



Partnerships will continue to be essential to addressing the County's housing needs. Maintaining and expanding these should focus around:

- » Greater involvement of employers in housing**
- » Workforce development of those in the building trades**
- » Pool necessary gap financing**

Housing Conservation & Partnerships - Case Study



Homeward Housing Trust Fund

Homeward, Inc is an organization of eight rural Iowa electric cooperatives that provides a variety of housing assistance programs.

The Homeward Housing Trust Fund provides a pool of funding in the form of grants and loans to households making a certain percentage less than the area median income. These include minor home repairs for households under 30% area median income and home improvement grants for households under 80% of the area median income. Improvements include structural repairs, utility repairs, energy-efficiency, and similar improvements with a grant amount up to \$3,500 and loan amount up to \$3,500.

Since being created in 1996 the program has assisted over 1,800 rural households with over \$6 million for down payment and improvement loans. Funding for the program comes primarily from a Housing Trust Fund grant.

<http://www.homewardiowa.com/content/trust-fund-grants-loans>

Workforce Development



The workforce shortage within the building trades is a national issue, therefore finding ways to retain those trained in this field will be important.

Garden City Community College has established a successful building trades program and extended the program to the local school district. However, there is no guarantee that graduates remain in the areas. Community leaders should consider:

- » ***Sponsorship of students*** that within this program the requirement that they remain in Finney County after completing their program
- » Outreach to current trade businesses to assist with ***succession planning***
- » Greater ***encouragement of students*** into these programs

Employer Assistance



Employers can play an important role in addressing housing needs through a variety of initiatives:

- » **Funding of housing development programs that target income ranges of their employees.**
- » **Donation of excess property for housing development.**
- » **Sharing the risk of new developments, such as pledging to rent a unit or cover rents if units are not filled.**
- » **Direct development of rental housing or subdivisions.**

Every employer may have a different comfort level but traditional programs like moving costs and down payment assistance have little impact when the unit is nearly impossible to find.

Employer Assisted Housing - Case Study



The Colfax County School District adopted a Workforce Housing Initiative Pilot Program (WHIPP) to reinforce their commitment to the philosophy that employees should reside within the community they work. This philosophy recognizes the mutual benefits to the organization (increased retention), the community (additional residents), and the employee (increased stability and decreased transportation costs). In addition, to developing new single family homes, the WHIPP offers the following incentives to employees to rent or buy the new housing units:

» Eligibility for a \$1,000 bonus to employees moving into the district and the following:

» Home renter subsidy of \$1,000 annually for a maximum of five years; or

» Home owner subsidy:

» \$2,000 annually for a maximum of five years; or

» Lump sum subsidy of \$10,000 for downpayment and closing costs on a WHIPP approved home

Funding is budgeted annually by the school district for the program.

<http://www.livene.org/nifa/resources/?item=10688>