

FIGURE 16.9: HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The last column on the right shows the ratio of median housing value to median household income. This is provided as an indicator of housing affordability. Most experts agree that a household can afford a house that costs between 2.5 and 3.0 times its annual income. Hence a number in this column that falls in this range indicates that a median-income household can afford the median-priced home. Phrased another way, it means that approximately 50% of the homes in the community are affordable to a median income household - although there is no assurance that they could afford 50% of the homes actually on the market. If this number is higher than 3.0, then the community in question may have a housing affordability issue.

	1990 Total Housing Units	2000 Total Housing Units (% change)	2000 Owner- Occupied Units	2000 Median Housing Value (county rank)	Housing Affordability Ratio
UPPER PROVIDENCE	3,861	4,299 + 11.3%	3,081 71.7%	\$227,200 (8)	3.19
Edgmont	1,265	1,515 + 19.8%	1,123 74.1%	\$317,000 (2)	3.01
Marple	8,433	8,797 + 4.3%	7,221 82.1%	\$183,600 (12)	2.56
Media Borough	3,023	2,966 - 1.9%	1,160 39.1%	\$138,500 (16)	2.39
Middletown	4,482	5,641 + 25.9%	4,255 75.4%	\$189,300 (11)	2.44
Nether Providence	5,045	5,125 + 1.6%	4,409 86.0%	\$182,500 (13)	2.33
Newtown	4,433	4,690 + 5.8%	3,675 78.4%	\$209,700 (10)	2.54
Delaware County	211,024	216,978 + 2.8%	148,384 63.4%	\$128,800 (n/a)	2.09

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The housing information supports the other findings indicating that Upper Providence is a relatively affluent community in Delaware County. Note that Upper Providence and Edgmont Townships both exhibit high rates of growth in combination with high housing values, thereby indicating a “hot” real estate market, although this is not necessarily a long-term trend. As

noted in the preceding paragraph, the housing affordability ratio of more than 3.0 suggests that affordability either is or may shortly become an issue. While the situation does not appear to be extreme, Upper Providence is the least affordable community of those shown on the chart. Note also that all of these communities are less affordable than the County as a whole.

The basic forms of housing identified by the Census Bureau for data collection purposes are single-family detached, single-family attached (i.e., “twin” houses, town houses, and row homes), multi-unit buildings, mobile homes, and “other,” which includes non-traditional housing such as boats and RV’s used as permanent residences. On the date of the census, 4,075 of the Township’s 4,299 existing housing units were occupied. Of these, 3,065 (75.2%) were owner-occupied and the remaining 1,010 (24.8%) were occupied by renters. Additional details on housing types and tenure are shown below with figures for Delaware County provided for comparison.