

FIGURE 16.10: 2000 HOUSING BY TYPE AND TENURE

Numbers shown are for units occupied on date of census; “total” numbers will therefore differ from number of housing units shown elsewhere in this chapter, as those figures include vacant units. Percentages indicate proportion of units included in that column such that each column totals to 100.0%.

TYPE OF HOUSING UNIT	UPPER PROVIDENCE			DELAWARE COUNTY		
	owner occupied	renter occupied	TOTAL	owner occupied	renter occupied	TOTAL
Single-family detached	2,653 86.6%	77 7.6%	2,730 67.0%	88,903 60.0%	4,739 8.2%	93,642 45.4%
Single-family attached (i.e, twin, townhouse, row)	363 11.8%	50 5.0%	413 10.1%	53,000 35.7%	11,529 19.9%	64,529 31.3%
Multi-family	44 1.4%	883 87.4%	927 22.8%	5,874 4.0%	41,635 71.7%	47,509 23.0%
Mobile home	5 0.2%	0	5 0.1%	504 0.3%	109 0.2%	613 0.3%
Other	0	0	0	12 < 0.1%	15 < 0.1%	27 < 0.1%
TOTAL	3,065 100.0%	1,010 100.0%	4,075 100.0%	148,293 100.0%	58,027 100.0%	206,320 100.0%

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the impression that most of the housing in the Township is in the form of single-family detached homes is supported by these data. Two-thirds of the homes in Upper Providence are single-family detached houses, while fewer than half of the homes in the County are. The great majority of these homes are owner-occupied. Renters dominate the multi-family buildings. It is interesting that the Township is nearly the same as the County in the proportion of housing units provided in multi-unit buildings, although the Township has a much smaller proportion of townhouse-type dwellings. The number of mobile homes is negligible at both the Township and County level.

Conclusions, Analysis, and Planning Implications

Upper Providence Township is among the more affluent of the forty-nine Delaware County municipalities. This conclusion is supported by data for both income and housing value: Township residents enjoy the sixth-highest per capita income in the County and the eighth-highest median home value. The Township ranks ninth for both median household income and median family income.

The population is growing less rapidly than it did during the 1960's and 1970's, but the eight percent increase between 1990 and 2000 is impressive - and is more than ten times the County growth rate for the same period.

The data for age and household composition show the effects of both smaller families and

“empty nesters.”

The ethnic composition of the population is predominately white, but it is becoming more diverse.

As a group, the residents have a high level of educational attainment. Over half of the working population is in management and the professions.

Despite high incomes, housing affordability may become an issue. While this may not affect the real estate market or vacancy rate, it may reduce the number of persons available to do jobs with low or moderate wages.

The relatively high cost of housing will make it increasingly difficult to provide affordable housing: the market provides no incentive for the construction of new affordable units, and the supply of existing affordable homes is endangered as they may be demolished and replaced with more expensive housing.

Largely as a result of the preceding point, it appears that most new Township residents have incomes above the current median. While this is encouraging in that it shows that the Township is a highly desirable neighborhood, it again raises the concern that persons of more moderate means are priced out of the market. In this case, “moderate” does not mean just minimum-wage workers, but also mid-level managers and professionals like police officers and school teachers. Many communities attempt to encourage the construction of affordable housing by permitting relatively high residential density in appropriate areas. Given the lack of developable land in Upper Providence, this is not practicable.

Mobile home parks (or individual manufactured homes on single lots) provide another option for affordable housing. Again, the lack of developable land and the high cost of land generally suggest that this is not a workable approach for Upper Providence.

It appears that housing for most low- and moderate-income households is provided by the rental market. Many Township residents may be surprised to learn that nearly a quarter (24.8%) of the housing units in the Township are rentals. This may seem high, but it is slightly below the proportion as for the County as a whole: 28.1%.

A strong housing market is likely to lead to pressure to redevelop properties that are already built upon as well as to build on environmentally constrained properties previously deemed unsuitable for development.

Another effect of a strong housing market with rising prices is that developers will tend to build new homes to the limits permitted by development regulations (e.g., minimum lot size, maximum building coverage, etc.). This suggests that the Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations should be reviewed to be sure that the development permitted is consistent with what is actually desired, as expressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

Since the Township is such a desirable residential area, factors other than convenience to employment are likely to dictate the housing choices that bring new residents into the Township. This has significance in that traffic is likely to continue to be a serious issue affecting quality of life in the Township.

The high proportion of single-family detached homes is as would be expected in a suburban community such as Upper Providence. The Township has a relatively small supply of attached homes, such as townhouse units.

The housing type combined with relatively high median age and relatively low proportion of families with children suggests that household composition could change in the near future: as older, childless families leave the Township, the type of housing available suggests that they will be replaced by younger families with children. This will result in higher population and additional burdens on public services and the school district, even if no new homes are built.