



## HOUSING Draft Text (April 11, 2023)

### Goal

Hanover County will work collaboratively with the private sector to create communities that offer and maintain quality housing options, enabling residents to remain in the County as their needs and circumstances change.

### Why It Matters

This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance regarding policies and programs that can help provide quality and diverse housing options in appropriate locations.

Everyone needs access to safe housing options that meet their needs. During the public engagement process, stakeholders expressed interest in accommodating quality and diverse housing options at appropriate locations. Not only could this mean building new housing at appropriate locations and densities designated on the General Land Use Plan (Chapter XX), but investing in existing housing stock in established neighborhoods. While the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of housing stock is primarily driven by the private sector, public-sector partnerships and policies can influence the provision of quality housing.

One of the guiding principles identified during the public engagement process is to provide quality and diverse housing at appropriate locations.

### Measuring Our Progress

- Number of residential projects approved with varied housing options.
- Number of Units Participating in the Residential Rehabilitation Tax Exemptions

### Quick Facts

- As of 2021, Hanover County has approximately 42,400 housing units:
  - 87.6% (37,137 units) are single-family detached homes
  - 4.4% (1,846 units) are townhouses/single-family condominiums
  - 7.0% (2,988 units) are multi-family properties
- About 70% of all housing units were built before 2000.
- Approximately 69% of the County's housing units are within the Suburban Service Area (SSA) (including the Town of Ashland), with the remaining 31% located in rural areas.
- The median home price has increased to more than \$400,000. Between March 2020 and June 2022, there has been a 32% increase in the median home price in the County.

- From the end of Q3 2021 and Q3 2022, average asking rents in Hanover County grew significantly from \$1,272 to \$1,492, which is a 17% increase. During that same period, the vacancy rate for rentals dropped below 1%.

<b>Existing County Housing Initiatives Spring 2023</b>	
<b>Tax Relief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential Rehabilitation Tax Exemptions</li> <li>• Property Tax Exemptions for Seniors</li> </ul>
<b>Zoning + Housing Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessory Family Housing Unit (for family members with a Special Exception Permit)</li> <li>• In RS zoning district, if workforce housing is provided, additional open space, single-loaded streets, or streetlights are not required.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Partnership for Housing Affordability</li> </ul>
<b>Community Services Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Choice Vouchers</li> <li>• State Rental Assistance (SRAP) for Residents with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Item: Creation of a Local Housing Task Force + Development of a County Housing Plan</li> </ul>

### **Focus Areas**

Vibrant communities provide a range of safe, high-quality housing options that meet the needs and preferences of all residents. Providing a diverse stock of housing, consisting of a range of styles, sizes, prices, and locations, will allow the County to meet the needs and preferences of its residents, and to be more resilient to changes in the housing market. Not only can the County’s housing needs be met through new construction, but by encouraging reinvestment in existing homes.

Emerging trends and challenges are listed below:

- ***Aging Housing Stock***

A significant portion of the County’s housing stock consists of older construction. About 70% of housing units were built before 2000. Older homes are often less energy-efficient than new construction and may not offer the amenities or layout today’s homebuyers are looking for. Encouraging reinvestment in aging housing stock can help stabilize older neighborhoods, reduce demand for new housing in other areas, and provide residents with lower cost housing options. If maintained, some of the older housing stock can serve as quality affordable housing.

- ***Aging Population***

Hanover County has seen the second-highest growth in senior households in the region, rising 36% since 2010. As the County’s population ages, there may be more demand for low-maintenance, one-level living that allows residents to age in place. There may also be a greater need for home repair and rehabilitation assistance, as older residents with limited incomes and/or physical disabilities may be unable to maintain aging homes

without help. Encouraging the provision of greater housing options will allow older residents to stay within the County as they age.

- ***Rising Housing Costs***

Housing cost continue to rise, making it difficult for some segments of the workforce to find housing that meets their needs at a cost they can afford. Both home prices and rents have increased rapidly in recent years, with the median home price surpassing \$400,000 and average asking rents increasing to nearly \$1,500 in 2022. During the public engagement process, 31% of participants indicated that lack of affordable housing options is a critical issue that the County is currently facing. In Hanover County, *workforce housing* refers to housing that households earning 80% AMI (area median income) can afford without spending more than 30% of their gross income on rent/mortgage, utilities, and other housing-related expenses.

- ***Housing Options***

As of 2021, Hanover County has approximately 42,400 housing units. Most of these options (87.6% or 37,137 units) are single-family detached homes. Townhouses/single-family condominiums make up 4.4% of the housing stock (1,846 units) and multi-family properties make up 7.0% of the housing stock (2,988 units).

Manufactured homes are a housing option in Hanover County that are generally more affordable. Modern manufactured homes are safe, energy-efficient, and built to high-quality standards. There are two manufactured home communities that are outside of the Town of Ashland along U.S. Route 1 (Colonial Estates: 115 units and Kosmo Village/Stoney Run Village: 92 units). Manufactured homes are also allowed by-right in the A-1 and AR-6 zoning districts.

Having a variety of housing options can allow residents to remain in their community as their needs change. For example, older residents may want low-maintenance, accessible housing options near services. Between 2016 and 2020, the County saw a decrease in households with children; smaller households may be interested in smaller housing options.

## **Overall Objectives and Strategies for Housing**

### ***Objective HN.1: Raise awareness of local housing challenges.***

- **Strategy HN.1a:** Educate community members on existing County programs related to housing, including the residential rehabilitation tax exemption program, property tax exemptions for seniors, and services offered by the Community Services Board.
- **Strategy HN.1b:** Work with social services agencies and non-profit organizations to evaluate housing needs, including homelessness.
- **Strategy HN.1c:** Collaborate with regional entities to identify housing needs and tools that can be used to address those needs.

***Objective HN.2: Encourage the private sector to provide high-quality housing options at appropriate locations that meet residents' needs as their abilities and circumstances change.***

- **Strategy HN.2a:** Review zoning regulations applicable to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to determine how that housing type can accommodate multi-generational families and be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Strategy HN.2b:** Investigate policies and programs that could incentivize the provision of workforce housing and/or universally-accessible units as part of new, large-scale residential and multi-use developments (expedited permitting, reduced permit fees, reduced utility connection fees, etc.).
- **Strategy HN.2c:** Investigate ways that the County could partner with non-profits to support the construction of context-sensitive workforce housing at appropriate locations, including the use of surplus County-owned land.
- **Strategy HN.2d:** Develop zoning standards applicable to manufactured home communities to provide additional opportunities for quality affordable housing, as the current zoning ordinance does not provide adequate guidance regarding the design of these communities.

***Objective HN.3: Support continued investment within established residential neighborhoods***

- **Strategy HN.3a:** Promote the residential rehabilitation tax exemption program to encourage the renovation of older residential structures.
- **Strategy HN.3b:** Investigate ways the County could partner with non-profits to support home repair programs to improve the condition of older residential structures.