

LYH Chapter 3

TOGETHER

Housing and Neighborhoods

Introduction

A house is more than a structure: it is the place from which an individual can pursue their physical, social, educational, and economic goals and build personal wealth. Similarly, neighborhoods are more than place names and street networks, but incubators of culture, hospitality, and social engagement. Housing patterns and neighborhoods provide Lynchburg with its unique character and serve as an important economic development tool for attracting and retaining well-paying jobs in a variety of industries. As Lynchburg moves forward over the next twenty years, the question we face today is how to *form* our neighborhoods to *function* effectively for all residents and contribute to our livable City *framework*.

This chapter will address the key concepts impacting housing in Lynchburg, including:

- > **Housing and Economic Development** - How housing and economic vitality are directly intertwined.
- > **Supporting Housing** – How housing supply and demand function in Lynchburg, and how encouraging diverse housing can positively address affordability and increase homeownership.
- > **Reimagining Underutilized Properties** – Examines the maintenance and rehabilitation of housing, and how housing supply can be increased through adaptive reuse.
- > **Creating Livable Neighborhoods** – Creating safe neighborhoods and increasing the quality of life for residents.



HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

- > Around half of survey respondents stated that residential areas were attractive overall, but 62% indicated that blight of all types was a problem.
- > Most survey respondents indicated they pay more than 30% of their annual income – the state and federal affordability threshold – on housing expenses.
- > Housing is directly connected to economic development: create housing opportunities to support job growth.
- > A variety of housing types is desirable as this helps form social connections and facilitates relationship building between neighbors.



HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS: FACTORS AND TRENDS

See Appendix A, Community Profile, for additional data related to Lynchburg's housing and neighborhoods.

- > Lynchburg has the highest percentage of cost-burdened residents in the region and has a higher percentage than the statewide average at 27%.
- > About half of Lynchburg's households are owner-occupied.
- > Lynchburg's housing stock is old and continuing to age rapidly. Around 22% of all housing units were constructed in 1939 or earlier.
- > Nearly 60% of Lynchburg's housing units are single-family residential. Townhouses and duplexes comprise around 10% of Lynchburg's housing units.
- > The median home sales price has doubled since 2014, rising from approximately \$125,000 in Q1 of 2014 to over \$250,000 in Q3 of 2023.



Housing and Economic Vitality

Housing investment has a direct and measurable impact on Lynchburg's long-term economic health. The many ways in which housing growth has sweeping economic benefits for communities include the following:

- > **Employee Recruitment and Retention:** A diverse and adequate housing supply is crucial for attracting and keeping employees. Given alternatives, individuals will choose opportunity-rich regions with lower housing costs compared to regions with higher housing costs.
- > **Business Expansion:** Adequate housing supply is one of the key factors for businesses deciding where to locate. A shortage can therefore hinder business growth.
- > **Revenue Generation:** Affordable housing costs increase discretionary income, which boosts local economies and generates additional tax revenue for local government.
- > **Economic Multiplier Effect:** There is a strong multiplier impact of the home building industry: Increased levels of residential construction generate measurable increases in local economic activity. This includes new income, new jobs, and additional tax revenue.
- > **Child and Family Development:** Housing affordability, stability, quality, tenure, and location have been shown to impact child development and opportunities for individuals and households. Housing is the foundation for family wellbeing, and healthy investment in child well-being is ultimately supporting an educated, health, and prepared future workforce.

Supporting Housing

One aspect of ensuring that all residents have access to safe, stable, and attainable housing is ensuring a diverse housing stock. A diverse housing stock is a critical building block toward economic vitality, and ultimately a stronger and more sustainable community.

Housing choice empowers residents to access housing that meets their financial and familial needs, and which is also safe and healthy. Without sufficient housing choice, residents are often forced to spend more than 30% of their annual household income on housing expenses, which is the state and federal affordability threshold. Therefore, the City's goal is not only to attract *more* housing but to attract the *right types* of housing to meet both current and projected demand.

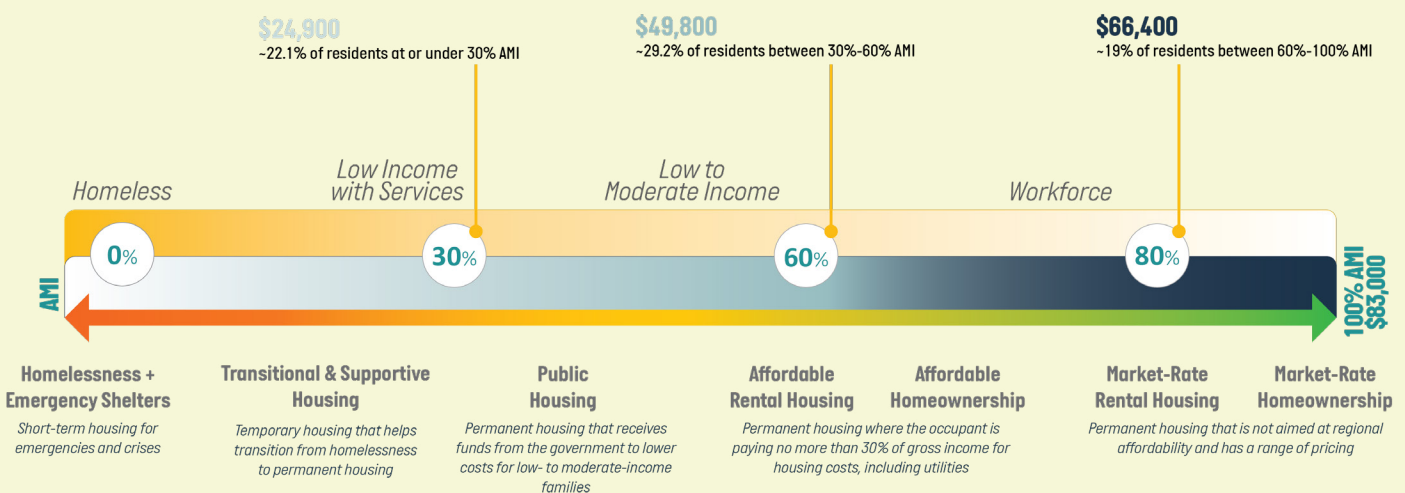


WHAT IS HOUSING DIVERSITY?

The term "housing diversity" refers to a housing supply with a well-balanced selection of different options. Housing diversity can be accomplished through adding types of units other than single-family detached residential, including townhomes, condominiums, duplexes, and triplexes. These types of housing are often referred to as the "missing middle" since they are medium density in nature and many Virginia cities lack significant numbers of these types of units.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Area Median Income (AMI) Limits | Lynchburg AMI: \$83,000

	1-Person Household	2-Person Household	3-Person Household	4-Person Household
30% AMI	\$16,600	\$18,950	\$23,030	\$27,750
50% AMI	\$27,650	\$31,600	\$35,550	\$39,450
80% AMI	\$44,200	\$50,500	\$56,800	\$63,100



The spectrum in the graphic represents area median income (AMI) and what types of housing are needed for those making a certain percentage of AMI. The top numbers identify 30%, 60%, and 80% of Lynchburg's AMI, and the estimated percentage of residents who fall in or around that percentage.



College Students

College-aged individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 currently comprise 27% of Lynchburg’s population. This percentage is projected to decline by 2050, with the 15-19 age group projected to decline just over 2% and the 20-24 age group projected to decline by over 8% [Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service]. As enrollment patterns fluctuate over the timeframe of this Plan, it will be important to remain in regular contact with education officials to better understand the impacts on housing demand.

Individual institutions play a strong role in influencing off-campus housing demand. Liberty University, University of Lynchburg, and Randolph College all require undergraduate students under a certain age to reside on campus, with limited exceptions. This policy is highly beneficial in both enhancing the on-campus student experience and helping free up housing units for full-time City residents. Older undergraduate and graduate students, however, are generally not required to live on campus. These students are more likely to gravitate towards apartments and townhomes due to the ability to easily have roommates and reduce housing costs. Facilitating the development of apartments helps meet

demand and provides opportunities for students to remain in their residence for postgraduate opportunities within the City. This is one aspect of helping prevent “brain drain,” which is an exodus of college graduates and other highly educated workers due to a lack of opportunities, including attainable housing. However, new purpose-built off-campus housing should be directed to areas immediately surrounding the colleges and universities: this not only reduces strain on transportation infrastructure but ensures multi-family units elsewhere in Lynchburg can house long-term City residents.

College-Age Individuals: Population Projections

Year	15-19	20-24
Current	9,688	14,030
2030 [projected]	7,608	11,088
2040 [projected]	8,903	11,251
2050 [projected]	9,468	12,884
Projected % Change (Current – 2050)	2.30%	8.20%

SOURCE: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service



Housing Lynchburg's Workforce

Providing more housing for Lynchburg's workforce is an investment in Lynchburg's long-term economic vitality. Strong housing options are necessary to retain an available, qualified workforce, as well as attract young professionals who might otherwise seek jobs elsewhere. A 2023 study linking housing and economic development noted that in localities in GO Virginia Region 2 – including Lynchburg – a shift towards higher-end construction projects is driving away young professionals due to lack of affordability. Businesses considering expansion have often chosen other regions over this area of Virginia, citing housing for young professionals as one of the deciding factors. However, the 25-29 age group is projected to grow 33% by 2050, indicating that demand for housing will likely be even higher than what is experienced currently. The same study also noted that diminished demand and limited construction of a wide variety of housing choices make it difficult for the region to retain construction and skilled-trade workers.

The primary means of facilitating the provision of housing for all members of the City's workforce is through the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance Evaluation (see following page) displays the various residential uses in Lynchburg's Ordinance, and whether they are permitted, conditionally permitted, or prohibited in the City's residential zoning districts. The second table shows minimum lot size, which essentially dictates the type of residential development that can be built and the density of that development.

Zoning Ordinance Evaluation

House Type	R-C	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	B-1	B-3	B-4	B-5
<i>P = Permitted C = Conditionally Permitted Blank Cell = Not Permitted</i>									
Single-household, detached	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		C
Two-household (duplex)				P	P	C	C		C
Single-household, semi-detached				P	P				C
Single-household, attached (townhouse)				C	P	C	C	P	C
Multi-household Structures*					P	C	C	P	C
Mixed-Use Residential structures					P	C	P	P	P
Modular home	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		C
Manufactured Home	C	C	C						C
Manufactured Home Community				C	C				
Group Home, Small	P	P	P	P	P				
Group Home, Large	C	C	C	C	C				
Dormitory, Sorority, or Fraternity House		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Housing Services**		C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P

	R-C	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4
Minimum Lot Size	10 acres per dwelling	15,000 sq. ft.	10,000 sq. ft.	4,000 sq. ft.	4,000 sq. ft.

SOURCE: City of Lynchburg Zoning Ordinance

** Includes triplexes, fourplexes, and other multi-household dwellings*

*** Housing and custodial services for those who cannot care for themselves. Includes nursing and retirement homes, congregate living, assisted and continuing care living, but excludes rehab uses.*

Lynchburg also provides for both traditional neighborhood development (TND) and planned unit developments (PUDs) conditionally in certain zoning districts. It is best practice to create base zoning districts that specifically address TND and PUDs rather than treating them as individual, conditionally permitted uses. This not only helps facilitate livable communities with a mix of amenities, housing, and open space, but also reduces regulatory barriers to housing development, opening new opportunities for developers. Overall, housing permissions and minimum lot sizes may have the inadvertent effect of preventing more varied housing development by being overly restrictive. For example, the R-3 district is identified as intended for small lot, medium-density residential development, but townhomes are only permitted conditionally, and multi-household structures are prohibited. Modern

housing solutions, such as row housing or small-lot single-family residential development, are not permitted at all. Some housing types are inappropriately permitted; for example, single-family detached in the B-5 district. Amending the Zoning Ordinance to ensure housing types are permitted appropriately will help to increase the City's housing supply, in turn meeting both current and projected demand and reducing costs. That said, any Zoning Ordinance amendments should have an end goal of facilitating context-sensitive development to promote compatibility in scale, density, and character in neighborhoods across the City.

Opportunities to educate the community on what attainable housing is and why it is important are key in building consensus and increasing support for a broader range of housing types. Developing a regional housing

campaign in collaboration with the Central Virginia Planning District Commission (CVPDC) and its member jurisdictions can ensure that messaging related to housing is clear, cohesive, and specifically tailored to the needs and interests of area residents. Maintaining an ongoing regional dialogue to highlight strengths and identify opportunities is also beneficial for accelerating solutions, eliminating duplication of efforts, and increasing community awareness. This also provides opportunities to work with area colleges and universities to discuss planning for student housing demand.

Another important regional coalition is the Lynchburg Housing Collaborative, which includes a variety of public and private stakeholder groups working together to address housing issues. Members include the Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (LRHA), Rush Homes, Miriam's House, Greater Lynchburg Habitat for Humanity, and Lynchburg Community Action Group (LYNCAG). The collaborative recognizes a serious shortage of quality, affordable housing in Lynchburg and supports efforts to increase affordable housing.

Pathways to Homeownership

With 53% of Lynchburg's housing units being renter-occupied and 44% of those renters considered cost-burdened, increasing opportunities for homeownership is a high priority. While homeownership is a meaningful way to build household wealth and stabilize living expenses, the lack of attainable housing options is a barrier to homeownership in Lynchburg. College graduates who are burdened with debt, low-income families and individuals, racial minorities, and other vulnerable populations are less likely to own their homes. Creating pathways to homeownership is an impactful way to ensure the wellbeing of all residents. This can be done through facilitating the provision of more diverse housing types, as having expanded choice in where to live opens more doors for homeownership and allows people to move into different types of homes as they move through different stages of life. Coordination with community partners and service providers to market and implement programs that promote homeownership is also an important best practice to continue. Some of these programs include down payment assistance from Greater Lynchburg Habitat for Humanity and a first-time homebuyers' club hosted by LYNCAG.

Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing is one of the most affordable homeownership options for Virginians; as such, Code of Virginia § 15.2-2223.5 requires that localities address strategies for its preservation in their Comprehensive Plans. This type of housing comprises 1% of Lynchburg's existing housing stock. Lynchburg does not have a separate zoning district for manufactured homes; rather, manufactured homes are permitted conditionally in the R-C, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, and IN-2 districts, and have certain performance standards that must be met. Lynchburg's focus should be on preserving existing manufactured housing communities as high-quality, safe neighborhoods by taking the following steps:

- > Publicize information about weatherization, energy efficiency retrofits, and well/septic upgrade programs.
- > Evaluate and implement methods to phase out or rehabilitate mobile homes constructed before 1976 (when national safety and building standards were implemented), including grant and homeowner assistance programs.



Image Credit | CVPDC

RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM IN HOUSING

Housing is often a regional challenge, especially since Lynchburg serves as the employment and educational epicenter for Central Virginia. Working together with adjacent localities to keep pulse on trends and market conditions will be important to avoid duplication of efforts and address housing in a cost-effective manner.

The Central Virginia Planning District Commission (CVPDC) and Virginia Housing Forward completed a regional housing study in March 2024. This study included numerous policy recommendations for the region; the ones most directly relevant to Lynchburg have been identified and discussed in this element. To read the study, **click here**, or visit <https://housingforwardva.github.io/cvpdc/pdf/cvpdc-housing-study.pdf>.



Housing for Older Adults

Aging in place, or allowing older adults to “live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention]”, is an important part of planning for housing. Currently, adults aged 65 and older comprise 14.4% of Lynchburg’s population. This percentage is projected to increase to 18% in 2030, 16% in 2040, and drop back to 14% in 2050 [Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service]. While the percentage of Lynchburg’s older adults is not expected to grow exponentially, Lynchburg should still be mindful of the need to attract safe and accessible housing for this demographic. Lynchburg can facilitate aging in place through making resources regarding accessibility modifications readily available through the City website. Lynchburg also permits ADUs by-right in low-density residential districts, which is also a beneficial way to provide opportunities for older adults to move in with family members or a caregiver while still maintaining independence.

As an alternative to aging in place or living with family, many older adults prefer to move to a community that provides a spectrum of independence for housing, lifestyle, and healthcare. Lynchburg has several age-restricted communities and senior housing options for those who require or simply desire more supportive

care. Additional development of age-restricted and senior housing options will expand housing and lifestyle options for seniors. These housing options should be near existing amenities such as retail and healthcare. Public transportation stops should also be adjacent or very close to the property to facilitate travel for adults who cannot drive. Evaluating zoning permissions to determine whether these uses should be permitted by-right with appropriate use standards will help facilitate their development in appropriate areas of Lynchburg.

Supporting the Unhoused

Homelessness is a serious problem and is often directly correlated with a lack of attainable housing options. While homelessness has declined in the Central Virginia Continuum of Care (CVCoC) region – the City of Lynchburg and the Counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, and Campbell – over time, there is still a pressing need to ensure homelessness is brief and one-time, especially for children.

Definitively determining the number of individuals who are homeless at any given point in time is difficult due to the transient nature of homelessness and differing definitions from service providers. Regardless of how homelessness is defined, however, there are several housing-based interventions available to Lynchburg. Transitional housing, or temporary housing options

meant to bridge the gap between homelessness and permanent housing, is a major need in Lynchburg. The City's sole homeless shelter closed in early 2024 due to lack of funding; however, local organizations are currently pursuing ways to fill this gap. Transitional housing is not currently addressed in the Zoning Ordinance; this should be added as a use with performance standards in appropriate districts.

Other Housing Tools and Mechanisms

There are numerous other housing programs, tools, and mechanisms that exist to help Lynchburg meet its goal of providing housing across the socioeconomic spectrum. The Lynchburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority (LRHA) owns and operates four public housing locations with a total of 238 units. LRHA also administers two voucher programs: one tenant-based and one unit-based. The wait list is currently closed for the tenant-based voucher program and most unit-based voucher options, indicating a large demand for attainable housing.

Due to high demand and limited resources for voucher programs, any new subsidized units should be established through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program or other tax incentives. This is because the LIHTC program facilitates development of a more diverse array of housing types, can preserve existing multi-family housing stock, and has a demonstrated track record of sparking successful economic investment. LIHTC development can also be paired with historic tax credits as an additional incentive and should be directed toward areas with the greatest access to economic opportunity to create mixed-income neighborhoods and deconcentrate poverty.

Another program with proven success is Community Land Trusts (CLTs). A CLT is a successful partnership to support the provision of attainable housing in a community and build generational wealth. A typical CLT is a non-profit organization operated by community members. The CLT owns land and leases the land at affordable prices to residents, who can in turn build and purchase a home on the property for up to 50% less than the market rate. If a resident sells their house, profit is typically limited to ensure that the home in the land trust remains affordable for the next resident. Other benefits of a CLT include preventing blight, promoting neighborhood stability by reducing gentrification, and giving the community greater control over the development happening in their neighborhoods. Considering the need for affordable housing opportunities and a shortage of land for greenfield development within the City, Lynchburg can benefit from working with CLTs to support housing affordability and create successful pathways to homeownership.



Image Credit | Bluestone Town Center/HRHA

LIHTC CASE STUDY

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) have been proven to spark successful economic investment. In addition to funding development where one type of residential use is the focus, LIHTC can also be used to fund development with multiple housing types, which is especially beneficial for meeting housing demand for a broad range of community needs.

One such case study is the Bluestone Town Center in the City of Harrisonburg. This development, upon completion, will introduce around 900 housing units to include single-family detached, single-family attached, senior housing, and multifamily housing. The development will also include pocket parks, neighborhood commercial uses, and walking trails to connect with two City public schools and an existing greenway. LIHTC funding will be applied for in addition to a variety of other funding mechanisms.

This case study demonstrates how LIHTC can be a valuable tool in helping build livable, walkable, and high-quality neighborhoods.

Reimagining Underutilized Properties

One of the largest concerns for Lynchburg's future as stated by the community is vacant and deteriorating structures, which are generally referred to as "blight". Residential blight is not only problematic for safety and aesthetics, but also presents economic issues. Blight can reduce tax revenue, negatively impact property values, and deter outside investment in a community. City resources, such as code enforcement and law enforcement, can also be drained if blight-related issues become more prevalent or increasingly attract illegal activity. Proactively allocating resources to remedy blight is not only an investment in Lynchburg's form and character, but an investment in the long-term economic vitality of the community. A comprehensive blight study is recommended to further identify needed improvements City-wide.

There are several key relationships and takeaways to understand when determining solutions for addressing vacant and derelict properties:

- > Overall, most vacant and derelict structures are concentrated around downtown Lynchburg, where the City's oldest housing is located. Newer neighborhoods, which are mainly located on the periphery of the City, tend to have lower concentrations of these types of structures.
- > Vacant and derelict structures tend to be inversely correlated with household income: the higher the median household income of an area, the lower the concentration of vacant and derelict structures, and vice versa.
- > Vacant and derelict structures are also inversely correlated with owner-occupancy rate: areas with higher percentages of owner-occupied housing tend to have lower concentrations of vacant and derelict structures.
- > Most vacant and derelict structures are located outside designated historic districts.
- > There is a direct correlation between housing age and vacant or derelict structures. Areas with older housing tend to have higher concentrations of vacant and derelict structures.

State code provides Virginia localities with several tools to address blight, including civil penalties, designation of housing rehabilitation zones to provide regulatory flexibility, and adoption of drug blight ordinances. Lynchburg should pursue all of these as a high priority. Other best practice programs the City may wish to consider implementing include:



Vacant Property Disposal: This would allow the City to assemble, market, and sell publicly-owned vacant properties at a reduced price, in partnership with the Economic Development Authority (EDA). Lynchburg can evaluate adding this policy to its current Property Toolkit.



Urban Homestead Program: This program allows low- to moderate-income families to buy vacant or deteriorating properties at greatly reduced rates, with the cost of rehabilitating the property included. Families must meet certain criteria to participate in a program and must agree to use the property as their primary residence for a certain period of time, usually two to three years.



Public-Private Partnerships: Formalizing a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, United Way, and other non-profit organizations focused on housing can help expedite the creation of infill housing.



Safe and Sound Neighborhoods: Piloted in the City of Danville with great success, this program focuses on a holistic approach to revitalizing neighborhoods. In addition to remedying deteriorating properties, the program also provides for increased law enforcement patrol, infrastructure improvements such as sidewalk repairs, and enhanced partnerships with community organizations in the neighborhoods. This is done out of the understanding that community livability and revitalization can only be achieved through a multifaceted, well-organized action plan.

Lynchburg's Property Toolkit

The City's Property Toolkit has been a successful and comprehensive program to track and address vacant property and blight. This toolkit refers to City Ordinances that help address blighted properties, with the ultimate goal of preserving safe and affordable housing in both the rental and sales markets, including the rehabilitation of substandard housing. The City's Neighborhood Services division manages several programs as part of this toolkit, including rental inspections, the Vacant Building Registration Program and the Derelict Program. Tax delinquent sale, where the City can auction real estate property after numerous attempts to collect delinquent taxes are unsuccessful, has also been valuable through transferring property to new ownership rather than letting it sit for years without generating valuable tax revenue. The third component of this toolkit is the pending establishment of a Housing Trust Fund to produce and preserve affordable housing, and remove barriers for redevelopment. This tool could be used to supplement funding for blight removal, rehabilitation, or pre-development costs.

Historic Districts and Properties

Lynchburg's historic districts were consistently cited by the community as some of the City's most valued assets. These districts and their associated structures significantly enhance overall quality of life as they preserve history, add to City character, and reinforce a unique identity and sense of place.

One of the issues associated with deteriorating properties in designated historic districts is that these districts have more rigorous requirements for external appearance. This is a challenge for property owners who may not have the expertise or financial resources to maintain their home in accordance with architectural standards, or for property owners who are simply unwilling to keep up with standards, resulting in demolition by neglect.

Lynchburg has a rehabilitation/renovation program, which functions by granting a real estate tax exemption for properties under rehabilitation and renovation equal to the difference between the assessed values before and after the work is completed. The program is based on the age of the structure and is applicable to residential, multi-family, commercial, and industrial properties, along with damaged or destroyed buildings with varying requirements. The program allows up to a 15% enlargement of the structure as well. In 2018, City Council approved an infill policy extending these real estate tax exemptions to new construction within the Arts & Cultural Rehabilitation, Redevelopment, and Conservation Districts with some areas eligible for up to a 50% exemption based on cost. Lynchburg should extend this geographic-based criteria to apply to all designated historic districts, regardless of the age of the structure. This provides additional options for rehab and repair, especially to address adaptive reuse projects, infill, or other newer construction in these districts.

Housing Rehabilitation

Most of Lynchburg's housing stock was constructed before 1970 and the average age of the housing stock is 70 years old. When properly maintained, Lynchburg's aging housing stock is a valuable community asset and preserves the community's rich history and culture. However, older dwellings that are not maintained can risk becoming structurally compromised, threatening the health and safety of their residents. Additionally, residents who seek to age in place in their current homes need to have available avenues to retrofit their homes accordingly. Older residents, along with children, are also more susceptible to health and safety problems presented by substandard housing, such as lead and mold exposure.



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

Creative placemaking is the practice of enhancing a neighborhood's quality of life through arts, culture, and intentional community development to reflect the character and culture of the surrounding neighborhood. Creative placemaking is not only beneficial in its ability to be a community-driven solution to blight, but also helps the arts community flourish and build stronger bonds between neighbors. According to the Center for Community Progress, 83% of creative placemaking projects on vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated properties serve to build community among residents. Creative placemaking projects include, but are not limited to murals, little free libraries, performance events, and urban gardens.

There are many state and federal programs available to help renters and homeowners alike repair and improve housing, and to assist with homeownership. Additional programs provide tax credits for landlords who improve housing and provide affordable housing. As the cost of maintaining and operating aging homes impacts affordability, spreading awareness of these assistance programs is critical in helping reduce cost and promote energy-efficient investment.

Housing Assistance Programs

#	Available Program	Organization	Link
1	Essential Home and Accessibility Repair Program (EHARP)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	dhcd.virginia.gov/eharp
2	Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation Program (IPR FLEX)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	dhcd.virginia.gov/ipr
3	Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	dhcd.virginia.gov/wx
4	Weatherization Deferral Repair (WDR)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	dhcd.virginia.gov/wdr
5	Livable Home Tax Credit (LHTC)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	dhcd.virginia.gov/lhtc
6	Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants	USDA Rural Development	rd.usda.gov/programs-services
7	Virginia Housing Plus Second Mortgage	Virginia Housing	virginiahousing.com/homebuyers/plus-second-mortgage
8	Down Payment Assistance Grant	Virginia Housing	virginiahousing.com/partners/lenders/down-payment-assistance-grant
9	Virginia Housing Accessibility Grants	Virginia Housing	virginiahousing.com/renters/accessibility-grants
10	Housing Tax Credit Program	Virginia Housing (Sponsored by U.S. Treasury Department)	virginiahousing.com/partners/rental-housing/rental-housing-tax-credits
11	Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM)	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	hud.gov/program_offices/housing/sfh/hecm
12	Lead Hazard Reduction Program (LHR)	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/lhr

Infill Development and Adaptive Reuse

Infill development allows for new housing to be constructed on vacant or otherwise underutilized property. Infill is beneficial in providing an opportunity to introduce small-scale multi-family housing, such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, that is often more cost-effective for both a developer and a resident but retains neighborhood character.

Similarly, adaptive reuse is the retrofitting of an abandoned structure for a new purpose. Adaptive reuse is a win-win situation: it eliminates blight while providing an opportunity for development that meets community needs and promoting density. In Lynchburg, adaptive reuse should be complementary to the surrounding neighborhood, with emphasis on mixed-use development in appropriate contexts. This not only facilitates a stronger return on investment but provides desirable amenities and housing opportunities to the community.

Adaptive reuse is most likely to be successful in Downtown and the surrounding historic neighborhoods, where older, vacant structures are more common. There is additionally significant potential in vacant or semi-vacant shopping centers around Lynchburg; for example, The Plaza at Lakeside Drive and Memorial Avenue. When adaptive reuse projects are pursued, careful planning should occur to ensure that any aging infrastructure is upgraded or replaced to alleviate safety concerns. Zoning Ordinance updates may help facilitate this process.

As infill, adaptive reuse, and new construction advance, it will be critical to ensure that water, sewer, and transportation infrastructure is well-maintained to properly service increased demand (see chapter 4). Development regulations, such as buffering and setbacks, should also be reviewed to ensure a balance between facilitating redevelopment while fostering compatible land uses and zoning transitions.



A quadplex in the City of Staunton provides additional housing while preserving existing neighborhood character.



An adaptive reuse project in Spotsylvania County transformed an abandoned factory into lofts.



A historic structure in the City of Fredericksburg is retrofitted to provide a neighborhood commercial use and upper-story housing.

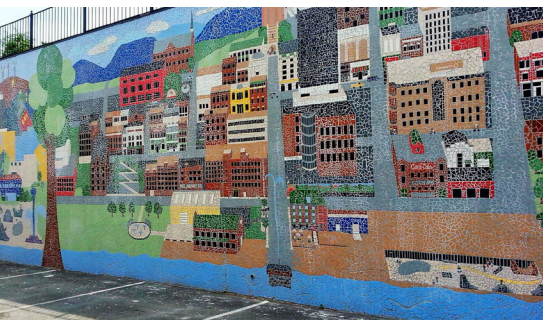


Creating Livable Neighborhoods

Housing conditions directly relate to the wellbeing of their inhabitants. To increase community wellbeing, it will be important for Lynchburg to continue its efforts to nurture livable neighborhoods. Livability refers to the factors that contribute to a high quality of life in residential communities, including but not limited to:

- > Access to alternative transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- > Integration of green space and the natural environment into residential areas
- > Ease of access to employment, education, and healthcare
- > Low crime rates
- > Civic and institutional engagement
- > Social connectivity and vibrancy

Fostering livability can be a key strategy for supporting future economic development. Livable communities, as characterized by the above qualities, have been correlated with increased residential property values and decreased costs of maintaining infrastructure due to a smaller footprint of infrastructure needed to serve the community. Lynchburg can continue to ensure that its Zoning Ordinance requirements – specifically, community design and use performance standards – support high-quality, livable, and responsible development. These also have safety benefits. Many principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design [CPTED; see Chapter 5 for additional details] include the elements that create livable neighborhoods, such as landscaping, street lighting, and public spaces.



LIVABILITY IN THE HILL CITY

According to AARP's Livability Index, a nationally trusted resource for identifying how livable a community is when compared to the rest of the country, Lynchburg is ranked in the top half of U.S. communities for overall livability. Lynchburg is best at transportation convenience, safety, and options; clean air; and clean water. Lynchburg needs to improve on inclusion, opportunity, and civic involvement. You can learn more about livability by **clicking here** or visiting <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/search/Lynchburg%20city,%20Virginia,%20United%20States>.



Livability is also often facilitated through mixed-use, mixed-income development where residents have equal and easy access to amenities. This also provides opportunities for social engagement, in turn facilitating a safe community through the concept of “eyes on the street”. Walkable, dense, mixed-use neighborhoods are also highly beneficial in a city like Lynchburg where steep slopes limit the amount of land available for development.

A key aspect of fostering livable neighborhoods is involving residents early and often in planning processes. Lynchburg has developed small area plans for many of its neighborhoods over the past several years, all of which have relied on community engagement to some degree. Continuing to give residents a direct stake in the future of their neighborhood serves to not only empower residents but ensures that any future land use interventions are specific and directly proportionate to the demonstrated need.

Livability Initiatives

Since 1975, Lynchburg has received annual allocations for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program as an entitlement jurisdiction through HUD. In 1994, the HOME Investment Partnerships Program began, and the City was designated as a participating jurisdiction.

As an entitlement jurisdiction, the City is required by HUD to submit a Consolidated Plan every five years. Consolidated Plan preparation is intended to be a collaborative process whereby the community establishes a unified vision for community development

actions. The current Consolidated Plan was adopted in July 2020 and states the following housing goals:

- > Support initiatives to increase permanent affordable housing in the rental market. Increase the number of owner-occupied units. Emphasis to be placed on mixed income and inclusive communities.
- > Support the preservation of affordable housing in both the rental and sales markets, including the rehabilitation of substandard housing.
- > Support the improvements to public facilities and infrastructure.

Other non-housing related goals include the following:

- > Support efforts for the removal and redevelopment of dilapidated and condemned structures to eliminate neighborhood deterioration, blight, and blighting influences.
- > Support efforts for the identification and remediation of rental housing in substandard conditions.
- > Support neighborhood partnerships that facilitate self-sufficiency and enable families and individuals to maintain their housing, remain in their neighborhoods, and age in place.

When put towards their highest and best use, as guided by Consolidated Plan goals, CDBG funding can be a powerful catalyst for community growth and investment, ultimately enhancing livability and quality of life across the City.

GOAL STATEMENT >>> Support a variety of high-quality, safe, and attainable housing options as a means of encouraging economic growth and enhancing neighborhood livability.

Objective: Facilitate the development of high-quality housing options that are attainable to the full spectrum of Lynchburg's workforce.

- > Amend the Zoning Ordinance to ensure all residential dwelling types are permitted appropriately.
- > Work with local and regional service providers and partners to provide education about local, state, and federal homeownership programs available to City residents.
- > Support the ongoing efforts of the Lynchburg Housing Collaborative; engage anchor health and education institutions to join the Collaborative.
- > Work with the Central Virginia Planning District Commission (CVPDC) and its member jurisdictions to develop a regional housing education campaign.
- > Develop a functional housing trust fund within five years of Plan adoption, using similar communities in Virginia and the Southeast U.S. as models.
- > Support Community Land Trust (CLTs) partnerships with regional and private partners to facilitate the development of workforce housing options.
- > Support the Central Virginia Continuum of Care (CoC)'s implementation of strategies – including housing-based solutions – to eliminate homelessness in the region.

Objective: Proactively address vacant and deteriorating properties through implementing rigorous code compliance procedures.

- > Adopt a drug blight ordinance in accordance with Code of Virginia § 15.2-907 to address blight associated with illegal drug use or other confirmed criminal activity.
- > Avoid demolition of properties, especially in designated historic districts. Pursue rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, or creative reuse instead; review the Zoning Ordinance to identify barriers to rehabilitation and amend as necessary.
- > Support the use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to develop a variety of attainable and attractive housing options.
- > Amend the Code of Ordinances to designate housing rehabilitation zones in neighborhoods of greatest need, in accordance with Code of Virginia § 36-55.64.
- > Expand the City's rehabilitation/renovation program to apply to all designated historic districts.
- > Continue implementation of Lynchburg's Property Toolkit, including regular monitoring.
- > Work with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to dispose of City-owned vacant or underutilized properties, with the goal of repurposing them for infill or adaptive reuse.
- > Develop a blight abatement plan to specifically identify solutions for deteriorating properties in designated historic districts.

Objective: Enhance quality of life through ensuring all of Lynchburg's neighborhoods are livable.

- > Work with local non-profit and voluntary organizations to provide assistance with property maintenance violations for individuals who are elderly or who may not be able to afford to maintain their property
- > Publicize information about weatherization, energy efficiency retrofits, accessibility modifications, and well/septic upgrade programs through a targeted advertising campaign.
- > Evaluate and implement methods to rehabilitate or replace mobile homes constructed before 1976, including grant and homeowner assistance programs.
- > Engage neighborhood residents early and often in any small-area or neighborhood-level planning interventions.
- > Continue to develop and implement neighborhood plans.
- > Direct development of transitional housing, age-restricted communities, and multi-family housing within a half-mile of transportation, retail, and healthcare services.
- > Amend the Zoning Ordinance to facilitate additional traditional neighborhood development (TND) and planned unit developments (PUD).
- > Support creative placemaking efforts as a means of addressing deteriorated properties and building community.
- > Review and amend development regulations, particularly buffering and setbacks, as needed to ensure a balance between facilitating redevelopment and compatible land uses.
- > Enhance neighborhood livability through beautification, upkeep, and high-quality service delivery.
- > Use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the highest-priority goals as identified in the Consolidated Plan.

