

City of Columbus

Housing Market Study 2009-2012



Prepared By
*Northeast Nebraska Economic
Development District*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Table of Contents	i-ii
	List of Tables	iii-v
	COLUMBUS HOUSING MARKET STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I-IV
Section 1	MARKET AREA DEFINITION	
	<i>Columbus’s Market Area Geographic Boundary</i>	1
	<i>Commuting Patterns</i>	2
Section 2	POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS	
	<i>Population</i>	5
	<i>Age Distribution</i>	6
Section 3	ECONOMIC PROFILE	
	<i>Labor Force, Employment Trends, and Projections</i>	11
Section 4	INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY	
	<i>Income Distribution</i>	16
	<i>Poverty Status</i>	17
	<i>Housing Affordability and Cost Overburden</i>	19
	<i>Fair Market Rent</i>	20
Section 5	HOUSING STOCK PROFILE	
	<i>General Housing Characteristics</i>	23
	<i>Value of Housing Units</i>	27
Section 6	HOUSING MARKET DEMAND	
	<i>Housing Needs Estimates</i>	40
	<i>Homeownership vs. Rental Units</i>	41
	<i>Market Absorption Rate</i>	41
	<i>Owner-occupied Housing</i>	41
	<i>Rental Housing</i>	42
Section 7	RESIDENTIAL SITE ANALYSIS	
	<i>Columbus Site Analysis</i>	44
Section 8	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	
	<i>US Department of Housing and Urban Development</i>	46
	<i>Nebraska Investment Finance Authority</i>	47
	<i>State of Nebraska Affordable Housing Program</i>	47
	<i>City of Columbus</i>	48
	<i>USDA Rural Housing Program</i>	49
	<i>Other Housing Programs</i>	50

Section 9	RECOMMENDATIONS	
	<i>Recommendations and Strategies</i>	52
Section 10	ASSUMPTIONS, METHODS USED, AND DATA SOURCES	
	<i>Assumptions and Methods Used</i>	55
	<i>Data Sources</i>	58
Appendix A	Current Housing Stock	
Appendix B	Suggested Sites for Potential Development	

LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Section 1: Market Area Definition

Illustration 1-1	MARKET AREA FOR COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA	1
Table 1.1	COMMUTING PATTERNS TO PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	2
Table 1.2	AVERAGE SELLING PRICE OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES PER COUNTY.....	3
Table 1.3	FAMILY INCOME FOR NEBRASKA AND PLATTE COUNTY, 2006.....	3
Table 1.4	2000 HOUSEHOLD INCOME, COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY	3

Section 2: Columbus/Platte County Population Demographics

Table 2.1	POPULATION TRENDS/PROJECTIONS FOR COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY	5
Table 2.2	BREAKDOWN OF AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR COLUMBUS	6
Table 2.3	BREAKDOWN OF AGE DISTRIBUTION FOR PLATTE COUNTY	6
Table 2.4	AGE 60+ POPULATION IN COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY	7
Table 2.5	PROFILE OF POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS	7
Table 2.6	PROFILE OF HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSING OCCUPANCY, 1990 AND 2000.....	8
Table 2.7	SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN, PLATTE COUNTY BY ACADEMIC YEARS: 1998-2008.....	9
Table 2.8	DISABLED INDIVIDUALS BY AGE AND TYPE OF DISABILITY, 2000	9
Table 2.9	PERSONS BY HOUSEHOLD BY TENURE, 2000.....	9

Section 3: Economic Profile

Table 3.1	LABOR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS; PLATTE COUNTY, 2002-March 2009.....	11
Table 3.2	PLATTE COUNTY TOTAL BEA EMPLOYMENT, AND REAL PERSONAL INCOME BEA DATA 1995 THROUGH 2005: 1000'S OF 2006 REAL DOLLARS.....	11
Table 3.3	TOTAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS	12
Table 3.4	HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME RANGE.....	12
Table 3.5	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER.....	13
Table 3.6	FAMILY INCOMES BY INCOME RANGE	13
Table 3.7	OCCUPATION AND CLASS OF WORKER	14
Table 3.8	POVERTY STATUS BY FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS	14
Table 3.9	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY BY TENURE AND AGE.....	15

Section 4: Income Distribution and Housing Affordability

Table 4.1	INCOME DISTRIBUTION, COLUMBUS; 2000 and 2007.....	16
Table 4.2	INCOME DISTRIBUTION, PLATTE COUNTY; 2000 and 2007	16

Table 4.3	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS EARNING LESS THAN MEDIAN INCOME FOR PLATTE COUNTY AND COLUMBUS; 2000.....	17
Table 4.4	POVERTY STATUS, 1990 AND 2000	18
Table 4.5	POVERTY STATUS, COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY, 2000.....	18
Table 4.6	SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER/RENTER COSTS AS PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, COLUMBUS	19
Table 4.7	SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER/RENTER COSTS AS PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, PLATTE COUNTY	19
Table 4.8	2006 FAMILY INCOME, PLATTE COUNTY AND NEBRASKA.....	20
Table 4.9	2000 HOUSEHOLD INCOME, PLATTE COUNTY AND COLUMBUS	21
Table 4.10	2007 FAIR MARKET RENT BY NO. OF BEDROOMS NEBRASKA AND PLATTE COUNTY	21
Table 4.11	2006 ESTIMATED RENTER HOUSEHOLD INCOME NEBRASKA AND PLATTE COUNTY	22
Table 4.12	WAGE NEEDED TO AFFORD FMR, NEBRASKA AND PLATTE COUNTY.....	22

Section 5: Housing Stock Profile

Table 5.1	HOUSEHOLDS, COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY, 2000.....	23
Table 5.2	HOUSEHOLD SIZE, COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY	23
Table 5.3	HOUSING STOCK PROFILE COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY.....	24
Table 5.4	TENURE BY OCCUPANTS PER ROOM IN COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY.....	24
Table 5.5	STRUCTURES LACKING NEEDED FACILITIES COLUMBUS AND PLATTE COUNTY.....	24
Table 5.6	DISPOSITION OF VACANT HOUSING, 1990 AND 2000	25
Table 5.7	HOUSING VINTAGE AND HOUSING SIZE.....	25
Table 5.8	HOUSING VALUES.....	26
Table 5.9	HOUSEHOLD GROSS RENT BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS.....	26
Table 5.10	INCOME SPENT ON HOUSING.....	27
Table 5.11	VALUE OF OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS.....	27
Table 5.12	AVERAGE SELLING PRICE OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES.....	28
Table 5.13	AVERAGE SALES PRICE AND AREA (IN SQ. FT.) OF PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS PLATTE COUNTY, 2000.....	28
Table 5.14	HOUSEHOLD FORECAST BY TENURE AND INCOME PLATTE COUNTY.....	29
Table 5.15	MONTHLY COST OF RENTER UNITS.....	29
Table 5.16	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS PLATTE COUNTY.....	30
Table 5.17	QUALITY OF MATERIALS AND WORKMANSHIP PLATTE COUNTY.....	30
Table 5.18	CONDITION OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS PLATTE COUNTY.....	30
Table 5.19	RATING CODES AND COUNTS.....	32
Table 5.20	HOUSING STOCK OCCUPANCY AND VACANCY, CITY OF COLUMBUS	32

Section 6: Housing Market Demand

Table 6.1	2015 TOTAL HOUSING DEMAND	40
Table 6.2	OWNER HOUSING MARKET ABSORPTION RATE, CITY OF COLUMBUS	42
Table 6.3	RENTAL HOUSING MARKET ABSORPTION RATE, CITY OF COLUMBUS	43

COLUMBUS HOUSING MARKET STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to assess the housing market for the City of Columbus, Nebraska. The demand for affordable housing was assessed on the basis of extensive analysis of past trends for both the population's socio-economic structure and the housing market. The major findings of this study are as follows:

Section I: Market Area Definition

- The Market Area for the City of Columbus is approximately a 25-mile radius with the Primary Market Area within 10 miles.

Section II: Columbus and Platte County Population Demographics

- The City of Columbus is projected to reach 23,850 in population by 2015. This is an increase of 2,860 residents from 2000.
- The population of Platte County is estimated to be 35,444 by 2015, a gain of 3,782.
- In Columbus from 1990 to 2000, the largest decline in population occurred in the Under 5 age group with a loss of 132 or 8.18%. The largest gain in population occurred in the 45-59 age group with a gain of 1,028 or 39.60%. While the largest gain in population occurred in the 45-59 category, Columbus is still not an aging community. The largest age brackets are still the 5 to 18 and 25-44 groups.
- In Platte County from 1990 to 2000, the largest decline in population again occurred in the Under 5 age group with a loss of 324 or 12.56%. The largest gain in population occurred in the 45 to 59 age group with a gain of 1,636 or 40.42%. Boone County as a whole also has a younger population with the largest age group again in the 5 to 18 and 25-44 groups.
- The racial makeup of Columbus underwent dramatic shifts from 1990 to 2000. The Hispanic population in Columbus saw a large increase with a gain of 1,349 individuals or 707.78% during this time frame.

Section III: Economic Profile

- For Platte County the labor force has seen many changes over the last 7 years. Between 2002 and 2008 the overall labor force saw an increase of 1,316 persons. From 2008 to March of 2009 (the most current data available) another change was seen with a decrease of 1,033 persons in the total labor force.

- The majority of the labor force of Columbus is employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupation (27.6%) and in management, professional, and related occupations (26.4%)

Section IV: Income Distribution and Housing Affordability

- The median household income in the City of Columbus in 2000 was \$38,874 and was estimated to be \$44,880 by 2007 according to the US Census.
- Approximately 6.81% of the population of Columbus, and 7.63% of the population of Platte County earned incomes below the poverty threshold in 2000. This is a slight decrease from the 1990 figures for both locations (7.62% and 8.66% respectively.)

Section V: Housing Stock Profile

- One-unit detached made up the largest percentage of housing units in both Columbus (72.92%) and Platte County (76.66%) in 2000.
- The total number of vacant units in the City of Columbus increased by 44.18% between 1990 and 2000; from 335 units to 483 units. This compares to an increase of only 10.24% countywide.
- The median value of households in Columbus is \$80,300, which compared to the similarly sized communities of Norfolk and Fremont is very consistent.
- Columbus currently has a vacancy rate of only 2.17%. Communities are encouraged to have vacancy rates of 5% to 7%.

Section VI: Housing Market Demand

- In the population information in Section II of this study, it was shown that the number of residents in the City of Columbus is expected to increase in population from 20,990 in 2000 to 23,850 by 2015. In 2000, the average household size was 2.50 individuals. By dividing the estimated 2015 population (minus the projected number of persons living in group quarters) by the average household size, it brings the projected number of households to 9,435. We must then add in the desired vacancy rate of 5% and then subtract the known supply. The overall adjusted supply is 2,197, leaving a demand for 313 new units a year for the next 7 years.

- Also from Section V of the housing study, it is important to note that 65.51% of the Columbus population is in owner-occupied units, while 29.00% of the population is in rental units.
- This study will assume, therefore, that either: 1) 66% of all new homeowners in Columbus by the year 2015 will desire to own a home; or 2) more households living in Columbus will seek to purchase a home rather than continue to rent.
- The preparers of this study recommend a more aggressive market absorption rate due to the extremely low vacancy rate in Columbus and the condition of already existing homes. At absorption rates of 70% and 80%, the following number of homes would be in demand by the year 2015 (shown in Table 6.2). Development beyond the number of units identified for the recommended absorption rates should not commence prior to 90% occupancy or sale of these units.

**Table 6.2: Owner Housing Market Absorption Rate,
City of Columbus**

Units Needed (2015)	207	207
Absorption Rate	70%	80%
Demand (2015)	145	166

Source: NENEDD

- As stated earlier in Section V, the City of Columbus will experience a need for 91 new rental units by 2015 (29% of total needed). For this reason, this study also proposes a more aggressive housing development absorption rate for rental units: 70% to 80% of projected demand. The following table shows the estimated number of rental units that will be in demand for the year 2015. Again development beyond the number of units identified for the recommended absorption rates should not commence prior to 90% occupancy of these units.

**Table 6.3: Rental Housing Market Absorption Rate,
City of Columbus**

Units Needed (2015)	91	91
Absorption Rate	70%	80%
Demand (2015)	64	73

Source: NENEDD

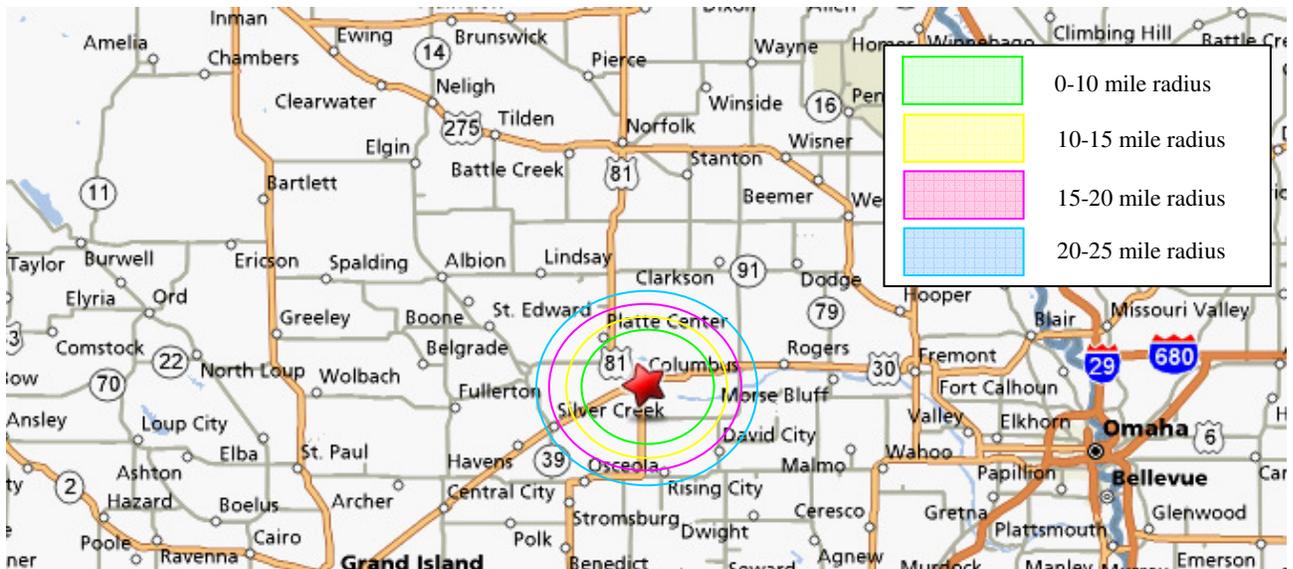
SECTION I: MARKET AREA DEFINITION

The Columbus housing market area was determined based on several factors. These factors include retail trade area, population distribution, tenants' former residences, and general commuting patterns.

Columbus's Market Area Geographic Boundary

Illustration 1.1 graphically displays the Effective Market Area for Columbus, Nebraska. The primary market area for Columbus is defined as an area covering all of Platte County and a portion of Boone, Colfax, Nance, Polk, and Butler counties. The illustration shows four concentric circles that depict the various market areas that are most likely to influence Columbus's economic situation. The innermost ring represents a radius distance of zero to ten miles; the innermost-center ring radius is from ten to fifteen miles. The outermost-center ring includes a radius of fifteen to twenty miles. The outermost ring extends from twenty to twenty-five miles.

Illustration 1.1: Market Area for Columbus, Nebraska



Source: NENEDD

Population movement in a geographic area occurs for multiple reasons. Residential mobility or short distance residential changes, and the spatial and temporal movement patterns they represent are analyzed below. Residential mobility and commuting patterns can explain the activities of the area population as they relate to housing. Data about area movement provides a relaxed perspective of geographical area as opposed to rigid pre-imposed boundaries (i.e. city limits, county/state lines, natural barriers such as rivers, etc.). Analysis of prior movements of a population provides a “snapshot” of complex behaviors.

Commuting Patterns

A lack of affordable and quality housing reduces the personal choices available. Consistent with the “proximity-to-location assumption” the commuting patterns of laborers in Platte County indicate a desire to live as close to their place of employment as availability and affordability allows. In essence, personal considerations are merely selection by process of elimination. Commuting patterns for work and residential mobility are interconnected. The availability of quality housing affects lifestyle behaviors as does the lack of housing. The data provides a reasonable inference that the distance to work is relevant. Table 1.1 identifies both those persons commuting to Platte County for employment and those living in Platte County but working elsewhere. Platte County has an extremely high number of persons commuting into the county. This high number may indicate either a lack of available housing, or a lack of adequate or affordable housing. This study will explore both of these options thoroughly.

Table 1.1: Commuting Patterns to Place of Employment

Commuting to Platte County		Commuting from Platte County	
Colfax	930	Colfax	568
Butler	824	Madison	228
Polk	491	Boone	72
Nance	343	Nance	55
Madison	309	Butler	51
Boone	288	Polk	44
Merrick	206	Lancaster	39
Dodge	65	Douglas	34
Stanton	53	Dodge	27
Lancaster	48	Buffalo	24
Wayne	34	Merrick	24
Douglas	32	Knox	18
Hall	26	Saunders	15
Pierce	26	Seward	11
Buffalo	24	Washington	11
York	24	Sarpy	11
Washington	18	Hall	10
Saunders	18	Cuming	7
Antelope	16	Jefferson	6
Seward	12	Stanton	6
Cuming	10	Lincoln	5
Custer	9	Nemaha	4
Hamilton	9	Wayne	2
Kearney	9	Adams	2
Holt	8	Brown	2
Knox	7	Greeley	1
Lincoln	6		
Cedar	6		
Wheeler	5		
Cheyenne	4		
Phelps	4		
Sarpy	4		
Rock	3		
Boyd	3		
Dixon	3		
Valley	3		
Furnas	2		
Greeley	2		
Clay	2		
Richardson	2		
Pawnee	2		
Logan	2		

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

The Columbus Housing Market Area opportunity depends upon the availability of quality housing stock compared to the surrounding “commuting corridor” communities. Platte County heavily outweighs its surrounding counties when it comes to the selling price of single-family homes. Madison County was included to show the average selling price in a county of comparable size to Platte.

Table 1.2: Average Selling Price of Single-Family Homes per County*

	1994	1995	1997	1998	1999
Boone	\$28,507	\$32,488	\$37,288	\$46,692	\$42,932
Butler	\$30,979	\$34,517	\$40,474	\$50,244	\$50,987
Colfax	\$32,769	\$36,505	\$41,424	\$48,182	\$50,766
Nance	\$23,010	\$24,588	\$29,127	\$30,053	\$42,654
Platte	\$65,412	\$64,418	\$74,012	\$78,012	\$80,569
Polk	\$29,876	\$33,801	\$37,473	\$48,020	\$47,350
Madison	\$59,072	\$72,789	\$72,789	\$75,224	\$74,839

* Data not available for 1996
Source: Nebraska Databook

From the above chart Boone, Butler, Colfax, Nance, and Polk Counties all have a substantially lower average selling price for single-family homes than Platte County. Both Madison and Platte Counties have a much higher average selling price for single family homes. In 1999, the average selling price of a single-family unit in Platte County was \$80,569, compared to \$42,654 in Nance County.

Table 1.3: Family Income for Nebraska and Platte County, 2006*

Location	Area Median Income (AMI)			Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost by % of Family AMI			
	Annual	Monthly	30% of AMI	30%	50%	80%	100%
	Nebraska	\$59,530	\$4,961	\$17,859	\$446	\$744	\$1,191
Platte County	\$58,800	\$4,900	\$17,640	\$441	\$735	\$1,176	\$1,470

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition - Out of Reach 2006
*Data not available for City of Columbus

Table 1.3 shows median income levels estimated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as the maximum cost of owning a home (using 30% as a guideline for the maximum cost of housing). As the table indicates, a family with income equal to 100% of the estimated family median income for Platte County should be able to afford monthly housing costs of \$1,470 in 2006; a family with income equal to 80% of median income can afford housing costs of \$1,176 per month.

Table 1.4: 2000 Household Income, Columbus and Platte County

	Annual	Monthly	30%	50%	80%	100%
Columbus	\$38,874	\$3,240	\$292	\$486	\$778	\$972
Platte County	\$39,359	\$3,280	\$295	\$492	\$787	\$984

Source: NENEDD and US Census Bureau

Table 1.4 uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau to calculate the maximum affordable housing cost by percentage of household income in 2000 for Columbus and Platte County. Using the respective median household income for Columbus and Platte County, the table shows the maximum mortgage amount that would be affordable to a household earning various percentages of the median income. A household earning 80% of the median income can afford to spend \$778 in Columbus.

With the average selling price in Columbus being \$80,300 in 2000 and using a 30-year mortgage with an average fixed interest rate of 5.17%, the monthly total mortgage costs including principal and interest would be \$440. Adding in base utilities of approximately \$200/month, the total monthly housing cost is estimated to be \$640. Based on Table 1.4, households in Columbus earning at least 50% of the median family income would not be able to afford to own a house in Columbus without some sort of financial assistance. A family earning 70% of the median family income should be able to afford a home.

SECTION II: POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

This study will analyze the population of the City of Columbus and Platte County to determine current and future housing demand of city residents. The most accurate representation of housing demand can be determined by examining the changes in the population of the community and its characteristics, as well as several economic factors that may have an impact on present and future demand. This study also recognizes that the migration of people to and from areas outside the City of Columbus, but within the market area, will have an impact on housing demand for the city. This study, therefore, will present comparable data for both the City of Columbus and Platte County, in an effort to paint a general picture of population and economic growth in the market area.

In order to set housing goals and strategies best suited for the community of Columbus, it is first important to project future demand for housing. The most appropriate first step in that analysis is to examine population growth trends.

Population

Population trends and projections for the City of Columbus and Platte County are identified in Table 2.1. In Columbus, there was a gain of 7.75% of the population between 1990 and 2000. Platte County also experienced an increase in the population with a growth of 6.18% from 1990 to 2000.

Table 2.1: Population Trends/Projections for Columbus and Platte County

	Year	Population	Total	
			Change	Percent
			(from previous decade)	
Columbus	1990	19,480	--	--
	2000	20,990	1,510	7.75%
	2015 Proj.	23,850	2,860	13.63%
	2020 Proj.	25,033	1,183	4.96%
Platte County	1990	29,820	--	--
	2000	31,662	1,842	6.18%
	2015 Proj.	35,444	3,782	11.94%
	2020 Proj.	37,201	1,757	4.96%

Source: NENEDD and Nebraska Databook

Utilizing population projections for the City of Columbus, it is estimated that they will experience a gain of 2,860 residents by 2015, and a gain of another 1,183 more by 2020.

Platte County population projections show that the county is also expected to see an increase in population with a gain of 3,782 by 2015 and a gain of another 1,757 by 2020.

Age Distribution

The population per age category for the City of Columbus and Platte County is identified in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3.

Table 2.2: Breakdown of Age Distribution for City of Columbus; 1990 to 2000

	1990	% of total 1990 population	2000	% of total 2000 population	Total change 1990 to 2000	Total percent change 1990 to 2000
Under 5 years	1,614	8.29%	1,482	7.04%	-132	-8.18%
5 to 18	4,382	22.49%	4,733	22.50%	351	8.01%
19 to 24	1,320	6.78%	1,380	6.56%	60	4.55%
25 to 44	5,956	30.57%	5,937	28.22%	-19	-0.32%
45 to 59	2,596	13.33%	3,624	17.22%	1,028	39.60%
60 to 64	801	4.11%	840	3.99%	39	4.87%
65 to 74	1,511	7.76%	1,405	6.68%	-106	-7.02%
75 to 84	929	4.77%	1,207	5.74%	278	29.92%
85+	371	1.90%	432	2.05%	61	16.44%
Total	19,480	100.00%	21,040	100.00%	1,560	8.01%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 2.3: Breakdown of Age Distribution for Platte County; 1990 to 2000

	1990	% of total 1990 population	2000	% of total 2000 population	Total change 1990 to 2000	Total percent change 1990 to 2000
Under 5 years	2,579	8.66%	2,255	7.12%	-324	-12.56%
5 to 18	7,057	23.67%	7,425	23.45%	368	5.21%
19 to 24	1,966	6.59%	1,994	6.30%	28	1.42%
25 to 44	8,967	30.07%	8,721	27.54%	-246	-2.74%
45 to 59	4,048	13.57%	5,684	17.95%	1,636	40.42%
60 to 64	1,244	4.17%	1,206	3.81%	-38	-3.05%
65 to 74	2,168	7.27%	2,175	6.87%	7	0.03%
75 to 84	1,310	4.39%	1,644	5.20%	334	25.50%
85+	481	1.61%	558	1.76%	77	16.01%
Total	29,820	100.00%	31,662	100.00%	1,842	6.18%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

In Columbus from 1990 to 2000, the largest decline in population occurred in the Under 5 age group with a loss of 132 or 8.18%. The largest gain in population occurred in the 45-59 age group with a gain of 1,028 or 39.60%. While the largest gain in population occurred in the 45-59 category, Columbus is not an aging community. The largest age brackets are the 5-18 and the 25-44.

In Platte County from 1990 to 2000, the largest decline in population again occurred in the Under 5 age group with a loss of 324 or 12.56%. The largest gain in population occurred in the 45 to 59

age group with a gain of 1,636 or 40.42%. Platte County as a whole also has a younger population with the largest age group again in the 5-18 and 25-44 groups.

Table 2.4: Age 60+ Population in Columbus and Platte County; 2000

	Columbus	Platte County
60 to 64	840	1,206
65 to 74	1,405	2,175
75 to 84	1,207	1,644
85+	432	558
Total	3,884	5,553

Source: US Census Bureau and NENEDD

In the City of Columbus, the total number of persons 60+ is 3,884, which makes up 18.46% of Columbus’s total population

Platte County’s 65+ population is 5,553 or 17.54% of the entire county’s population.

The data in Table 2.4 is very important to consider when making decisions based upon future housing demand. Many rural communities in Northeast Nebraska are seeking elderly housing options due to their aging populations. The City of Columbus is an exception to the rule as the elderly are not the population group expected to see the largest growth in the future. However, it is still important to consider this age group when developing future housing options for the entire community. Since Columbus is the largest community in the area, many small towns that do not offer their own elderly housing rely on it to meet this particular need.

Table 2.5: Profile of Population Characteristics

Subject	Columbus			Platte County		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
Total Population	19,480	20,990	7.75%	29,820	31,662	6.18%
Male	9,297	10,257	10.33%	14,645	15,751	7.55%
Female	10,183	10,733	5.40%	15,175	15,911	4.85%
Race						
White	19,116	19,320	1.07%	29,268	29,211	0.19%
Black	40	88	120.00%	54	103	90.74%
AI or AN	40	31	-22.50%	61	43	-29.51%
Asian, NH, & OPI	60	103	71.67%	74	135	82.43%
Some other race	57	99	73.68%	108	160	48.15%
Hispanic (of any race)						
Hispanic or Latino	167	1,349	707.78%	255	2,010	688.24%

Source: US Census Bureau and NENEDD

In the City of Columbus, population increased by 7.75%, from 19,480 in 1990 to 20,990 in 2000. Platte County also saw an increase in population with a gain of 6.18% or 1,842 individuals from 1990 to 2000.

Sex and Race saw dramatic changes in the both the city and the county from 1990 to 2000. The male population saw the

largest change with a gain of 10.33% in Columbus and 7.55% gain in Platte County during that time frame. The Hispanic population in both areas also saw a large increase with a gain of 707.78% in Columbus and 688.24% in Platte County.

Recognizing changes in the ethnic and racial makeup of the community is an important step in assessing the housing needs of a community. Policymakers must carefully examine the potential for distinct cultural attitudes and assumptions, as well as for special needs of those groups, without relying on generalizations or stereotypes. In the process of formulating policy, it is important to identify which trends are indeed linked to heritage and culture, and which are linked more accurately to a given social or economic situation. City leaders and officials are challenged, then, to make decisions based on established trends and their antecedents, while respecting the various possible individual needs of every citizen.

Table 2.6: Profile of Households and Housing Occupancy; 1990 and 2000

Subject	Columbus			Platte County		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
Persons Living in Group Quarters	250	231	-7.60%	342	326	-4.68%
Institutionalized	208	226	8.65%	208	226	8.65%
Non-institutionalized	42	5	-88.10%	134	100	-25.37%
Average Household Size	2.57	2.50	-0.07	2.69	2.59	-0.10
Total Housing Units						
Total Housing Units	7,812	8,784	12.44%	11,716	12,916	10.24%
Occupied Housing Units	7,477	8,301	11.02%	10,954	12,076	10.24%
Owner-occupied Housing Units	5,274	5,754	9.10%	8,038	8,850	10.10%
Vacant Owner-occupied Units	43	101	134.88%	72	180	150.00%
Renter-occupied Housing Units	2,203	2,547	15.62%	2,916	3,226	10.63%
Vacant Rental Units	123	198	60.98%	175	263	50.29%

Source: US Census Bureau

As Table 2.6 shows, the total number of housing units in the City of Columbus changed from 7,812 in 1990 to 8,784 in 2000, an increase of 12.44%. Average household size changed from 2.57 to 2.50 over the same period. In 2000 the number of persons living in group quarters changed from 250 in 1990 to 231, a decrease of 7.60%.

Of the total occupied housing units in the City of Columbus in 2000 (8,301), homeowners comprised 5,274 and renters 2,203. The number of vacant units, both owner-occupied and renter-occupied, is substantially lower than the preferred 5-7%. This is something that city officials will need to consider when planning for the future.

Table 2.7: School Age Children, Platte County by Academic Years: 1998-2008

Fiscal Year	Ages			Total
	5-10	11-14	15-18	
1998	3,114	2,199	2,162	7,475
1999	2,976	2,191	2,178	7,345
2000	2,951	2,112	2,100	7,163
2001	2,655	2,043	2,146	6,844
2002	2,765	2,059	2,273	7,097
2003	2,678	2,027	1,933	6,638
2004	2,618	1,953	1,944	6,515
2005	2,666	2,039	2,006	6,711
2006	2,663	1,970	2,073	6,706
2007	2,674	1,930	2,083	6,687
2008	2,738	1,916	1,936	6,590

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

The number of school aged children in Platte County changed dramatically from 1998 to 2008 with a loss of over 885 students. From 2002 to 2003 alone the number of school age children dropped by 459 or 6.47%. These numbers are very important to consider. While some decline is due to shrinking family sizes, this large of a number indicates that while individuals are working in Platte County, they are choosing to live with their families in outlying counties and commute to work instead.

Table 2.8: Disabled Individuals by Age and Type of Disability; 2000

Age	5-15	16-64	65+	Total
Type of Disability	Platte County			
Sensory Disability	58	353	482	893
Physical Disability	34	714	846	1,594
Mental Disability	184	518	313	1,015
Self-care Disability	49	225	325	599
Go-outside-home Disability	--	778	787	1,565
Employment Disability	--	1,900	--	1,900
Total Persons with a disability	325	4,488	2,753	7,566
Type of Disability	Columbus			
Sensory Disability	50	232	329	611
Physical Disability	27	480	591	1,098
Mental Disability	112	421	234	767
Self-care Disability	40	166	262	468
Go-outside-home Disability	--	543	548	1,091
Employment Disability	--	1,340	--	1,340
Total Persons with a disability	229	3,182	1,964	5,375

Source: US Census Bureau

Platte County had 7,566 total persons with disabilities in 2000. Of these, physical disabilities made up the largest percentage at 21.07%.

The City of Columbus had 5,375 individuals with disabilities in 2000. Of these, the majority suffered from physical disabilities. This is another important sector of the population to consider when looking at new housing to help accommodate their particular needs.

**Table 2.9: Persons by Household by Tenure;
2000**

Persons Per Household	Platte County	Columbus
Total Households	12,076	8,301
Owner Occupied		
1-person household	1,674	1,136
2-person household	3,287	2,129
3-person household	1,366	889
4-person household	1,255	849
5-person household	818	503
6-person household	340	193
7 or more-person household	110	55
Average Household Size	2.77	2.74
Renter Occupied		
1-person household	1,430	1,220
2-person household	774	637
3-person household	467	347
4-person household	309	195
5-person household	148	86
6-person household	45	30
7 or more-person household	53	32
Average Household Size	2.11	1.95

Source: US Census Bureau

There are 5,754 owner-occupied housing units in the City of Columbus, with an average of 2.74 persons per household. Of these owner-occupied households, there were 2,129 two-person households. The 2,547 renter-occupied units had an average of 1.95 persons per household. This compares to a countywide average of 2.77 for owners and 2.11 for renters. Of the renter households, 1,220 were one person households.

SECTION III: ECONOMIC PROFILE

The following statistical and narrative information identifies the economic profile of Platte County, including the City of Columbus. Included in this analysis is a review of relevant labor force data and annual employment trends and projections. The major employers in Columbus are also identified.

Labor Force, Employment Trends, and Projections

Table 3.1: Labor Force and Employment Trends, Platte County; 2002 – March 2009

	2002	2005	2008	March '09
Labor Force	17,234	17,216	18,342	17,610
Unemployment	754	643	546	847
Rate of Unemployment	4.4	3.7	3.0	4.8
Employment	16,480	16,573	17,796	16,763
Total Change in Employment	--	93	1,223	-1,033
% Change in Employment	--	0.56%	7.38%	-5.80%

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

Labor force and employment trends for Platte County are identified in Table 3.1. Between 2002 and 2008 there was an increase of 1,316 persons employed in the county. From 2008 to March of 2009 (the most current data

available) a large decrease occurred with a drop in employment of 1,033.

Table 3.2: Platte County Total BEA Employment, and Real Personal Income
(BEA Data 1995 through 2005: 1000's of 2006 Real Dollars)

Year	Earnings	Social Security Contributions	Residence Adjustment	Dividends, Interest, Rents	Transfer Payments	Personal Income	Per Capita Income	Total BEA Employment	Average Real Earnings Per Job
1995	663,863	71,201	-53,382	167,255	90,609	797,144	25,608	22,292	29,780
1996	722,699	73,277	-57,823	170,886	95,534	858,019	27,456	22,929	31,519
1997	737,503	76,652	-62,996	178,782	97,053	873,691	27,780	23,016	32,043
1998	740,089	77,865	-65,844	191,519	101,324	889,223	28,105	22,671	32,645
1999	749,726	78,844	-69,366	188,345	105,976	895,837	28,387	22,617	33,149
2000	748,241	79,875	-75,625	202,215	108,741	903,696	28,659	22,987	32,551
2001	735,073	78,069	-68,709	198,032	114,118	900,444	28,585	22,568	32,571
2002	732,922	78,355	-68,209	197,258	117,838	901,454	28,829	22,178	33,047
2003	763,546	78,268	-69,274	192,626	119,969	928,600	29,736	21,881	34,895
2004	769,500	77,489	-67,012	170,927	120,853	916,779	29,326	22,012	34,958
2005	782,409	81,998	-72,035	175,397	123,507	927,280	29,353	22,732	34,419

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

Total real personal income in 2005, comprising all wage and salary earnings, proprietorship income, dividends, interest, rents and transfer payments, was \$927,280,000, a change of 0.09 percent between 2004 and 2005. Real per capita income was \$29,353 that same year; this compares with a statewide average real per capita income of \$33,870.

Table 3.3: Total Business Establishments

Year	Nebraska	Platte County
1995	47,128	959
1996	47,607	977
1997	48,588	973
1998	48,655	992
1999	48,968	998
2000	49,623	993
2001	49,710	997
2002	50,259	1,001
2003	50,359	996
2004	50,928	999
2005	51,440	1,026

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

The total number of business establishments in Platte County grew by 67 between 1995 and 2005, for a total change in business establishments of 6.97%. This compares to the total statewide change in business establishments of 4,312 or 9.15% during the same time period.

Households are defined as all people who occupy a housing unit. Household income includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years old and over in the household, whether they are related to the householder or not. Further, because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income. Households in the City of Columbus with a household income of less than \$10,000 comprised 3.22% of all owner-occupied households and 18.65% of all renter-occupied households in 2000. This compares to a county average of 4.50% of owner-occupied households and 16.80% of renter-occupied households.

Table 3.4: Households by Income Range

Income Range	Platte County				Columbus			
	Owner-occupied		Renter-Occupied		Owner-occupied		Renter-Occupied	
	Households	Percent	Households	Percent	Households	Percent	Households	Percent
Less than \$10,000	399	4.50%	542	16.80%	185	3.22%	475	18.65%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	487	5.50%	334	10.35%	296	5.14%	293	11.50%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	429	4.85%	359	11.13%	282	4.90%	269	10.56%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	620	7.01%	353	10.94%	396	6.88%	274	10.76%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,297	14.66%	659	20.43%	826	14.36%	540	21.20%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,696	19.16%	470	14.57%	1,112	19.33%	352	13.82%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2,369	26.77%	402	12.46%	1,649	28.66%	277	10.88%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	860	9.72%	72	2.23%	564	9.80%	51	2.00%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	478	5.40%	30	0.93%	318	5.53%	16	0.63%
\$150,000 or more	215	2.43%	5	0.16%	126	2.18%	0	0.00%
Total	8,850	100.00%	3,226	100.00%	5,754	100.00%	2,547	100.00%

Source: US Census Bureau

According to the 2000 Census, the median household income (MHI) for all households in the City of Columbus was \$38,874. This compares to a countywide MHI of \$39,359. However, this income data varies significantly by age. The median household income for those under 25 years of age in Columbus was \$25,000. Those householders aged 45 to 54 had a median household income of \$54,583. Those 75 years or more had a median household income of \$20,525. These compare to countywide medians of \$37,303, \$53,073, and \$20,603, respectively.

Table 3.5: Median Household Income by Age of Householder

Age	Platte County	Columbus
Under 25 years	25,720	25,000
25 to 34 years	37,303	37,273
35 to 44 years	47,878	47,863
45 to 54 years	53,073	54,583
55 to 64 years	44,545	46,518
65 to 74 years	29,130	30,109
75 years and over	20,603	20,525
Total	39,359	20,525

Source: US Census Bureau

The Census Bureau defines a family as a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Median family income includes the income of all members 15 years old and over related to the householder. Median family income is usually higher than median household income.

Table 3.6: Family Incomes by Income Range

	Platte County		Columbus	
	Families	Percent	Families	Percent
Less than \$10,000	282	3.31%	169	3.02%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	379	4.45%	239	4.27%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	254	2.98%	129	2.30%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	501	5.88%	312	5.57%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	617	7.24%	407	7.26%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	704	8.26%	476	8.50%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	473	5.55%	272	4.85%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	657	7.71%	425	7.59%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	692	8.12%	504	9.00%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	1,217	14.28%	803	14.33%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	1,225	14.37%	879	15.69%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	836	9.81%	545	9.73%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	359	4.21%	247	4.41%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	118	1.38%	74	1.32%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	95	1.11%	63	1.11%
\$200,000 or more	113	1.34%	59	1.05%
Total Families:	8,522	100.00%	5,603	100.00%
Median Family Income	47,776	--	48,669	--

Source: US Census Bureau

Platte County's median household income was \$39,359, but the median family income was \$47,776. The median household income in the City of Columbus was \$38,874 and the median family income was \$48,669 in 2000. Families in Columbus with a family income less than \$10,000 comprised 3.02% of all families in the city. This compares to a county average of 3.31%. The income range that made up the highest percentage of Columbus's population was the \$60,000-\$74,999 group at 15.69% with the \$50,000-\$59,999 group coming in next at 14.33%.

Table 3.7: Occupation and Class of Worker

Subject	Platte County	% of Platte County Employed	Columbus	% of Columbus Employed
Population 16 years and over	23,680	100.00%	15,828	100.00%
Employed Civilian Population 16 years and over	16,240	68.60%	10,852	68.60%
Occupation				
Management, professional, and related occupations	4,627	28.5%	2,862	26.4%
Service occupations	2,020	12.4%	1,402	12.9%
Sales and office occupations	3,604	22.2%	2,516	23.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	315	1.9%	132	1.2%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	1,368	8.4%	942	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	4,306	26.5%	2,998	27.6%
Class of Worker				
Private wage and salary worker	13,079	80.5%	9,008	83.0%
Government workers	1,504	9.3%	1,097	10.1%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	1,543	9.5%	716	6.6%
Unpaid Family Workers	114	0.7%	31	0.3%

Source: US Census Bureau

The employed civilian population 16 years and over comprised 10,852 persons, or 68.60% of the total population 16 years and over in the City of Columbus, according to the 2000 Census. Those in management, professional, and related occupations comprised 2,862 persons, or 26.4%, compared to 28.5% countywide. Further, private wage and salary workers comprised 83.0% of the workforce in Columbus compared to 80.5% countywide.

Table 3.8: Poverty by Families and Individuals in Platte County and Columbus

Poverty Status	Platte County	Columbus
Families below poverty level	457	251
Percent below poverty level	5.4%	4.5%
With related children under 18 years	349	223
Percent below poverty level	7.7%	7.4%
With related children under 5 years	193	141
Percent below poverty level	10.9%	11.7%

Source: US Census Bureau

The 2000 Census poverty statistics indicate that 1,429 individuals in the City of Columbus were living in poverty. There were 251 families in poverty the majority of which had related children under the age of 18 years.

Table 3.9: Households in Poverty by Tenure and Age

Subject	Platte County	% of Platte County	Columbus	% of Columbus
Owner occupied:				
Income in 1999 below poverty level:	420	100.00%	178	100.00%
Householder 15 to 24 years	24	5.71%	18	10.11%
Householder 25 to 34 years	62	14.76%	43	24.16%
Householder 35 to 44 years	61	14.52%	20	11.24%
Householder 45 to 54 years	74	17.62%	22	12.36%
Householder 55 to 59 years	34	8.10%	16	8.98%
Householder 60 to 64 years	22	5.24%	0	0.00%
Householder 65 to 74 years	65	15.48%	20	11.24%
Householder 75 to 84 years	50	11.90%	19	10.67%
Householder 85 years and over	28	6.67%	20	11.24%
Renter occupied:				
Income in 1999 below poverty level:	569	100.00%	476	100.00%
Householder 15 to 24 years	118	20.74%	105	22.06%
Householder 25 to 34 years	129	22.67%	100	21.01%
Householder 35 to 44 years	113	19.86%	92	19.33%
Householder 45 to 54 years	54	9.49%	45	9.45%
Householder 55 to 59 years	26	4.57%	20	4.20%
Householder 60 to 64 years	4	0.70%	0	0.00%
Householder 65 to 74 years	42	7.38%	37	7.77%
Householder 75 to 84 years	75	13.18%	69	14.50%
Householder 85 years and over	8	1.41%	8	1.68%

Source: US Census Bureau

There were 178 homeowners and 476 renters in poverty in the City of Columbus, or 3.09% of homeowners, and 18.69% of the city’s total renters. This compares to 4.75% of the homeowners and 17.64% of the renters in poverty countywide. In Columbus, householders in their prime working years, 25 through 44, comprised 63 (1.09%) homeowners in poverty and 192 (7.54%) renters in poverty. In comparison, there were 39 (0.68%) homeowners aged 75 and over in poverty and another 77 (3.02%) renters over 75 years of age in poverty.

SECTION IV: INCOME DISTRIBUTION AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The income section of this market study is important in determining the number of households within the market area that have the capability to afford the cost of purchasing or renting the existing units available or the units that might become available due to future owner or rental housing development.

Income Distribution

The following tables identify income levels and income distribution for Columbus and Platte County.

Table 4.1: Income Distribution for Columbus; 2000 and 2007

	2000	2007 (est.)
< \$15,000	1,268	1,008
\$15,000-\$24,999	1,227	1,347
\$25,000-\$34,999	1,355	1,153
\$35,000-\$49,999	1,481	1,457
\$50,000-\$74,999	1,954	2,018
\$75,000-\$99,999	606	879
\$100,000-\$149,999	331	713
\$150,000 or more	126	270
Median Household Income	\$38,874	\$44,880

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 4.2: Income Distribution for Platte County; 2000 and 2007

	2000	2007 (est.)
< \$15,000	1,787	1,255
\$15,000-\$24,999	1,764	1,791
\$25,000-\$34,999	1,947	1,527
\$35,000-\$49,999	2,198	2,056
\$50,000-\$74,999	2,789	3,183
\$75,000-\$99,999	919	1,340
\$100,000-\$149,999	509	1,123
\$150,000 or more	222	364
Median Household Income	\$39,359	\$47,937

Source: US Census Bureau

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 identify the income distribution for Platte County and Columbus from 2000 and 2007.

As of 2000, the majority of the population of Columbus had household incomes between \$50,000 - \$74,999. The median household income for the city was \$38,874 in 2000. In 2000 in Platte County, the majority of the population also earned \$50,000 - \$74,999 which is indicative of Columbus having the majority of the jobs in the county.

Table 4.3: Number of Households Earning Less than Median Income for Platte County and Columbus; 2000

	Median Income	80% of Median Income	50% of Median Income	30% of Median Income
Platte County	\$39,359	\$31,487	\$19,680	\$11,808
Percent of Households at or below	51.36%	39.94%	21.19%	9.53%
Columbus	\$38,874	\$31,099	\$19,437	\$11,662
Percent of Households at or below	50.86%	40.74%	21.71%	9.79%

Source: NENEDD

As indicated in Table 4.3, 51.36% of the population of Platte County, and 50.86% of the population of Columbus earn incomes less than the median income for the two respective political divisions. These numbers are not significant; however, unless it is considered that another 21.19% of Platte County’s population and 21.71% of Columbus’s population do not earn even 50% of the median income. Moreover, another 9.53% of Platte County’s and 9.79% of Columbus’s population earn less than 30% of the median income.

This analysis suggests that a significant percentage of both Platte County and Columbus residents will continue to earn less than the median income. This trend, when coupled with the decreasing buying power of future median incomes, shows the potential for a number of households to experience housing cost overburden now and in the future. It is also evident that a number of households in the Columbus area would be eligible for, and benefit from, public assistance programs, such as down payment assistance or housing rehabilitation subsidy programs.

Poverty Status

The U.S. Bureau of the Census calculates the number of individuals and families whose household income falls below poverty thresholds based on the income, family size, and number of children of each household. Poverty thresholds are revised annually using Consumer Price Index data.

Table 4.4, however, shows the data that was available from the 1990 and 2000 Census records.

Table 4.4: Poverty Status; 1990 and 2000

	Nebraska	Platte County	Columbus
1990			
Total Population	1,578,385	29,820	19,480
Number below the poverty level	170,616	2,583	1,485
Percent	10.81%	8.66%	7.62%
2000			
Total Population	1,711,263	31,662	20,990
Number below the poverty level	161,269	2,415	1,429
Percent	9.42%	7.63%	6.81%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 4.4 demonstrates that in both 1990 and 2000, Platte County had a lower percentage of persons living below the poverty line than the state of Nebraska. Columbus also had a lower percentage of persons below the poverty level than the state and the county as a whole. Although there was a decrease in persons below the poverty level in Platte County from 1990 to 2000, it still accounted for 7.63% of the population. Columbus also saw a decrease in the number below poverty during the same time frame.

Table 4.5: Poverty Status, Columbus and Platte County; 2000

Persons with poverty status	Columbus	Platte County	Nebraska
Under 18 years	471	851	54,477
Percent	2.28%	2.72%	3.28%
18 years and older	958	1,564	106,792
Percent	4.63%	5.01%	6.43%
Total persons below poverty level	1,429	2,415	161,269
Percent	6.91%	7.73%	9.71%
Total persons	20,684	31,245	1,660,527

Source: US Census Bureau

As seen in Table 4.5, approximately 6.91% of the population of Columbus, and 7.73% of the population of Platte County earned incomes below the poverty threshold in 2000.

Housing Affordability and Cost Overburden

There is a direct link between the level of income of an individual or family and the percentage of gross income he or she spends on housing. In general, the lower a person's income, the greater the percentage of income spent on housing will be. It is generally understood that a family or individual that spends more than 30% of his or her income on housing experiences housing cost overburden. Because of this, it is also generally understood that low-income families and individuals do not own their own housing units; rather they rent living units from various sources or property owners.

The following tables show a breakdown of the number of owner and renter households that spend specific selected percentages of their income on housing for both Platte County and Columbus.

Table 4.6: Selected Monthly Owner/Renter Costs as Percentage of Household Income, Columbus

	Housing Units with a Mortgage		Housing Units Without a Mortgage		Renter Households	
	Number of Households	Percentage of Population	Number of Households	Percentage of Population	Number of Households	Percentage of Population
Less than 15%	1,114	34.29%	1,471	77.22%	633	24.91%
15 – 19%	780	24.01%	197	10.34%	411	16.17%
20-24%	610	18.78%	85	4.46%	405	15.94%
25-29%	277	8.53%	55	2.89%	203	7.99%
30-34%	187	5.76%	33	1.73%	166	6.54%
35+	276	8.48%	61	3.20%	601	23.65%
Not computed	5	0.15%	3	0.16%	122	4.80%
Total Households	3,249	100.00%	1,905	100.00%	2,541	100.00%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 4.7: Selected Monthly Owner/Renter Costs as Percentage of Household Income, Platte County

	Housing Units with a Mortgage		Housing Units Without a Mortgage		Renter Households	
	Number of Households	Percentage of Population	Number of Households	Percentage of Population	Number of Households	Percentage of Population
Less than 15%	1,433	33.18%	2,062	74.33%	802	26.03%
15 – 19%	1,067	24.63%	286	10.31%	527	17.10%
20-24%	794	18.33%	134	4.83%	449	14.57%
25-29%	375	8.66%	81	2.92%	234	7.59%
30-34%	256	5.91%	51	1.84%	191	6.20%
35+	400	9.23%	131	4.72%	671	21.78%
Not computed	7	0.15%	29	1.05%	207	6.73%
Total Households	4,332	100.00%	2,774	100.00%	3,081	100.00%

Source: US Census Bureau

The previous two tables show the percentage of both owner and renter households in Columbus and Platte County that utilize more than 30% of their income on housing costs. In Columbus, housing units with a mortgage saw the largest number of residents spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

In Platte County, housing units with a mortgage saw the largest number of residents spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs. At 4,332 households, this is much higher than units without a mortgage at only 2,774 households and rental units at 3,081 households.

Over 30% of Columbus’s rental units pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs. With such a large percentage of renter households experiencing cost overburden in rented dwelling units, this has a significant negative impact on their capacity to eventually move into self-owned housing units. While spending more per month on rental housing costs, a smaller percentage of such households’ income can be put toward savings for a future down payment. Moreover, such a household would find it difficult to incur the added expenses of owning a home, such as the cost of upkeep or larger utility payments. These factors should be noted while developing housing strategies for the community of Columbus.

Fair Market Rent

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), based in Washington D.C., estimates the level of income needed for the average household to be able to afford suitable housing. Their most recent study, released in 2006, provides the most up-to-date information pertaining to housing cost overburden.

The NLIHC uses estimates of the median area income for owner families and renter families from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Using these estimates and Fair Market Rent (FMR) estimates from HUD, the NLIHC calculates the level of income needed to afford adequate housing. HUD publishes Fair Housing Market for housing units in states and counties across the nation. FMR is a gross estimate of the fair cost of shelter rent, plus utilities, based on the level of income and housing demand of a region. Table 4-8 shows data for Nebraska and Platte County from the 2006 NLIHC study.

Table 4.8: 2006 Family Income, Platte County and Nebraska*

	2006 Median Family Income (HUD est.)		Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost by Percent Median Family Income			
	Annual	Monthly	30%	50%	80%	100%
Nebraska	\$59,530	\$4,961	\$446	\$744	\$1,191	\$1,488
Platte County	\$58,800	\$4,900	\$441	\$735	\$1,176	\$1,470

Source: NLIHC

*Data not available for City of Columbus

Table 4.8 shows median income levels, estimated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as the maximum monthly cost of owning a home (using

30% as a guideline for the maximum cost of housing). As the table indicates, a family with income equal to 100% of the estimated family median income for Platte County should be able to afford monthly housing costs of \$1,470 in 2006; a family with income equal to 80% of median income can afford housing costs of \$1,176 per month.

Table 4.9: 2000 Household Income, Platte County and Columbus

	2000 Median Household Income		Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost by Percent Median Household Income			
	Annual	Monthly	30%	50%	80%	100%
Columbus	\$38,874	\$3,240	\$292	\$486	\$778	\$972
Platte County	\$39,359	\$3,280	\$295	\$492	\$787	\$984

Source: US Census Bureau and NENEDD

Table 4.9 uses data presented previously in this chapter to calculate the maximum affordable housing cost by percentage of household income in 2000 for Columbus and Platte County. Using the respective median household income for Columbus and Platte County, the table shows the maximum rent that would be affordable to a household earning various percentages of the median income. A family earning 80% of the median income can afford to spend \$778 in the City of Columbus.

Table 4.10: 2007 Fair Market Rent by Number of Bedrooms, Nebraska and Platte County*

Bedrooms	Nebraska	Platte County
Zero	\$439	\$430
One	\$487	\$431
Two	\$609	\$517
Three	\$807	\$754
Four	\$890	\$777

Source: NLIHC

*Data not available for City of Columbus

The table shows fair market rent estimated by HUD. Combined with the data provided in Table 4.9, one can see that a renter household earning 100% of the estimated median renter household income in Platte County should have the capacity to pay full market rent for a three- or four-bedroom apartment. Likewise, a household earning 80% of the median income for either Columbus or Platte County should be able to afford a three or four bedroom apartment in Platte County.

More useful in guiding policymaking is an estimate of the number of households in Columbus and Platte County that do not have adequate income to afford fair market rent for the region. Previously in this chapter, it was found that 21.19% of the population of Platte County and 21.71% of Columbus earn less than 50% of the median income for each area. In addition, another segment of the population – 9.53% of Platte County households and 9.79% of Columbus households – make less than 30% of the median income.

With these percentages in mind, it is possible to calculate the percentage of households in Columbus and Platte County that do not have the capacity to afford fair market rent.

Fair market rent is not available specifically for Columbus. This study assumes, however, that fair market for the City of Columbus for a two-bedroom apartment would be around \$563 (an average between the fair market rent for a 2-bedroom for Nebraska and Platte Center).

For households earning less than 50% of the median income for the City of Columbus, renting a two-bedroom apartment would be prohibited by cost, seeing the maximum amount available to be spent on housing for a household with earnings equivalent to 50% of the median income is \$486. The cost for one and zero-bedroom apartments in Columbus would be obtainable for a person making 50% of the median income.

For households earning less than 30% of the median income, fair market rent for any size apartment is too costly. The cost of a one-bedroom apartment in Columbus would fall between \$431 - \$487. The maximum affordable monthly rent for a household with income less than 30% of the median income is \$292 for Columbus and \$295 for Platte County. At fair market rent, a household in this income category would have to spend more than 30% of their income on monthly housing costs, and thus experience housing cost overburden. As seen previously in this chapter, 30.18% of renter households in Columbus, and 27.98% of renter households in Platte County already fall within this category.

**Table 4.11: 2006 Estimated Renter Household Income
Nebraska and Platte County**

	2006 Median Renter Household Income (NLIHC est.)		Maximum Affordable Monthly Housing Cost by Percent of Median Renter Income			
	Annual	Monthly	30%	50%	80%	100%
Nebraska	\$31,910	\$2,659	\$239	\$399	\$638	\$798
Platte County	\$31,185	\$2,599	\$234	\$390	\$624	\$780

Source: NLIHC

* Data not available for City of Columbus

Table 4.11 estimates the median income of the average renter family in Nebraska and Platte County. As the data in the table demonstrates, a renter household with combined income equal to 100% of the median renter household income should be able to afford renter-housing costs of \$780 in Platte County. These figures are given based on the assumption that renter households generally generate less income than owner households do.

Table 4.12 below shows the hourly wage required to afford 100% of Fair Market Rent for one-bedroom and two-bedroom units in Nebraska and Platte County. The table shows that the minimum wage in 2006 of \$5.15 per hour does not supply adequate income to afford fair market rent in Nebraska or Platte County, nor would the current minimum wage of \$6.55.

Table 4.12: Wage Needed to Afford FMR, Nebraska and Platte County*

	Hourly Wage Needed at 40 hours per week		As Percent of Federal Minimum Wage (\$5.15/hr)	
	One-Bedroom FMR	Two-Bedroom FMR	One-Bedroom FMR	Two-Bedroom FMR
Nebraska	\$9.36	\$11.71	182%	161%
Platte County	\$8.29	\$9.94	227%	193%

Source: NLIHC

* Data not available for City of Columbus

SECTION V: HOUSING STOCK PROFILE

General Housing Characteristics

This chapter of the housing study utilizes information gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau and NENEDD field studies to portray the size and shape of the present housing stock in Columbus and Platte County. This section takes into account the many types of housing available to area residents, as well as the diverse characteristics of the inhabitants of those housing facilities.

Table 5.1 shows general housing characteristics for the City of Columbus and Platte County for 2000. Table 5.2 shows similar data for Columbus and the previous decade. Table 5.1 shows that the average number of persons per household in Columbus was 2.50 and 2.59 in Platte County in 2000.

The number of renter-occupied units versus owner-occupied units in both Columbus and Platte County are substantially lower, as is the number of family versus non-family households.

Table 5.1: Households, Columbus and Platte County

	Columbus	Platte County
Total Population	20,990	31,662
Number of housing units	8,784	12,916
Number of households	8,301	12,076
Number of persons in households	20,740	31,334
Family households	5,562	8,461
Non-family households	2,740	3,615
Married couple family households	4,732	7,344
Female householder	642	842
Average persons per household	2.50	2.59
Average persons/family household	3.09	3.14
Person in group quarters	231	328
Renter Occupied Units	2,547	3,226
Owner Occupied Units	5,754	8,850

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 5.2: Household Size, Columbus and Platte County

	Columbus		Platte County	
	Number of Households	Percent	Number of Households	Percent
One-person	2,356	28.38%	3,104	25.70%
Two-person	2,766	33.32%	4,061	33.63%
Three-person	1,236	14.89%	1,833	15.18%
Four-person	1,044	12.58%	1,564	12.95%
Five-person	589	7.09%	966	8.00%
Six-person	223	2.69%	385	3.19%
Seven or more	87	1.05%	163	1.35%
Total	8,301	100.00%	12,076	100.00%
Median rooms, Occupied only	5.7	--	6.0	--
Median rooms, Owner-occupied	6.6	--	6.6	--
Median rooms, Renter-occupied	4.2	--	4.0	--

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 5.2 shows the various household sizes for Columbus and Platte County.

One and two-person households make up the majority of housing units in Columbus. In Platte County, two-person makes up more of households than one-person. This chart demonstrates the growing number of smaller families in Columbus and Platte County, indicating that families are not as

large as they have been in the past.

One-unit detached made up the largest percentage of housing units in both Columbus and Platte County in 2000. Only 27.08% of all remaining housing units were not one-unit detached in Columbus.

In Platte County, 2-4 units made up the second largest number of housing units with mobile homes also making up a large percentage of the total housing stock profile.

**Table 5.3: Housing Stock Profile
Columbus and Platte County**

	Columbus	Platte County
Total Housing Units	8,784	12,916
One-unit detached	6,405	9,901
One-unit attached	137	182
2-4 units	862	908
5-9 units	418	433
10+ units	674	683
Mobile home	282	801
Boat, RV, van, etc.	6	8
Median no. of rooms	5.6	5.9
Occupied housing units	8,301	12,076

Source: US Census Bureau

**Table 5.4: Tenure by Occupants per Room
in Columbus and Platte County**

	Columbus	Platte County
Owner-occupied:	5,754	8,850
0.50 or less	4,458	6,807
0.51 to 1.00	1,170	1,842
1.01 to 1.50	83	135
1.51 to 2.00	37	48
2.01 or more	6	18
Renter-occupied:	2,547	3,226
0.50 or less	1,827	2,277
0.51 to 1.00	594	787
1.01 to 1.50	50	72
1.51 to 2.00	44	56
2.01 or more	32	34

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 5.4 shows the average number of persons per room by tenure in Columbus and Platte County. In 2000, Columbus had 50 renter- and 83 owner-occupied units with households members too numerous for available living space (defined as more than 1.01 persons per room or severe overcrowding) and 76 renter- and 43 owner-occupied units with 1.51 or more occupants per room which is defined as extreme overcrowding. Platte County had 135 owner-occupied units and 72 renter-occupied units that were severely overcrowded and 66 owner- and 90 renter- occupied units that were extremely overcrowded.

**Table 5.5: Structures Lacking Needed Facilities
Columbus and Platte County**

	Columbus	Platte County
Lacking plumbing	17	38
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	81	94
No telephone service	187	263
Total	285	395

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 5.5 shows the number of houses or living units in 2000 that did not have complete plumbing facilities, kitchen facilities, or telephone service for Columbus and Platte County. According to the data in the table, 285 total homes in Columbus lacked complete plumbing, kitchen

facilities, or telephone service.

Table 5.6: Disposition of Vacant Housing in Platte County and Columbus; 1990 and 2000

Vacancy Status	Platte County			Columbus		
	1990	2000	% Change	1990	2000	% Change
For rent	175	263	50.29%	123	198	60.98%
For sale only	72	180	150.00%	43	101	134.88%
Rented or sold, not occupied	N/A	59	N/A	N/A	38	N/A
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	239	230	-3.77%	70	112	60.00%
Other vacant	276	108	-60.87%	99	34	-65.66%
Total Vacant	762	840	10.24%	335	483	44.18%

Source: US Census Bureau

The total number of vacant units in the City of Columbus increased by 44.18% between 1990 and 2000; from 335 units to 483 units given the data available. This compares to an increase of 10.24% countywide. Vacant rental units saw a change from 123 units to 198 from

1990 to 2000 and for sale units went from 43 to 101 during the same time period for Columbus.

Table 5.7: Housing Vintage and Housing Size in Platte County and Columbus

Subject	Platte County	% of Platte County	Columbus	% of Columbus
Total Housing Units	12,916	100.00%	8,784	100.00%
Year Structure Built				
1999 to March 2000	173	1.34%	67	0.76%
1995 to 1998	560	4.34%	341	3.88%
1990 to 1994	980	7.59%	742	8.45%
1980 to 1989	1,401	10.85%	961	10.94%
1970 to 1979	2,690	20.83%	1,752	19.95%
1960 to 1969	1,689	13.08%	1,301	14.81%
1940 to 1959	2,593	20.07%	2,111	24.03%
1939 or earlier	2,830	21.90%	1,509	17.18%
Number of Rooms Per Dwelling Unit				
1 room	129	1.00%	99	1.13%
2 rooms	333	2.58%	284	3.23%
3 rooms	899	6.96%	749	8.53%
4 rooms	1,914	14.82%	1,472	16.76%
5 rooms	2,374	18.38%	1,646	18.74%
6 rooms	2,053	15.90%	1,278	14.55%
7 rooms or more	5,214	40.36%	3,256	37.06%
Median (rooms)	5.90	--	5.60	--
Bedrooms				
No Bedrooms	179	1.39%	127	1.45%
1 Bedroom	1,142	8.84%	1,019	11.60%
2 Bedroom	3,528	27.34%	2,572	29.28%
3 Bedroom	4,844	37.50%	3,170	36.08%
4 Bedroom	2,533	19.60%	1,557	17.73%
5 or more Bedrooms	690	5.33%	339	3.86%
Total	12,916	100.00%	8,784	100.00%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

Almost 22% of the total housing units in Columbus were constructed in 1939 or earlier. Another 20% were constructed between 1940 and 1959. With only 24.12% of the units being constructed after 1980, the City needs to keep in mind that the majority of homes in Columbus are aging and are going to be in need of minor to substantial repairs and upgrades.

Table 5.8: Housing Values

Subject	Platte County	Columbus
Median Value for Owner-Occupied Units	\$80,800	\$80,300
Median Selected Monthly Costs		
Mortgage	757	752
No Mortgage	257	256
Median Contract Rent (\$)	363	375
Median Gross Rent (\$)	429	429

Source: US Census Bureau

Compared to the similarly sized communities of Norfolk and Fremont, the median value of owner-occupied units in Columbus is fairly consistent at \$80,300. Fremont, being the largest community, has the highest median value at \$87,100, and Norfolk, which falls in between Columbus and Fremont

in size, has a median value of \$83,000.

As Table 5.9 shows, there were 1,134 or 44.63% two-bedroom occupied rentals in the City of Columbus. This compares to 43.85% countywide. Of the two bedroom units in Columbus, the majority paid \$300 to \$499. The same was true countywide.

Cost overburden is defined as spending more than 30 to 50 percent of household income on housing. A severe cost burden is encountered if more than 50% of income is spent on housing.

Table 5.9: Household Gross Rent by Number of Bedrooms

Platte County	Zero Bedrooms	One Bedroom	Two Bedrooms	Three or More	Total
With cash rent	114	787	1,303	713	2,917
Less than \$200	6	117	71	6	200
\$200 to \$299	14	217	46	41	318
\$300 to \$499	35	387	766	253	1,441
\$500 to \$749	29	40	375	372	816
\$750 to \$999	0	2	25	41	68
\$1,000 or more	30	24	20	0	74
No cash rent	4	11	48	101	164
Total	118	798	1,351	814	3,081
Columbus					
With cash rent	105	741	1,112	495	2,453
Less than \$200	6	115	68	0	189
\$200 to \$299	14	205	31	12	262
\$300 to \$499	33	359	628	132	1,152
\$500 to \$749	22	38	345	310	715
\$750 to \$999	0	0	23	41	64
\$1,000 or more	30	24	17	0	71
No cash rent	0	7	22	59	88
Total	105	748	1,134	554	2,541

Source: US Census Bureau

As Table 5.10 shows, 424 renters in Columbus, or 16.69% of all renters, spent 30% to 49.9% of their household income on gross rent during 2000. 343 renters or another 13.50% also spent 50% or more of their income on housing, thus experiencing severe cost overburden. This compares to a countywide average of 15.55% and 12.43% respectively.

Further, 349 homeowners or 10.74% of the City's homeowners with a mortgage, spent 30% to 49.9% of their household income on housing and another 114 spent 50% or more on housing.

There were 64 householders without a mortgage that spent 30% to 49.9% of their income on housing costs. Thirty households without a mortgage spent more than 50% of their income on housing costs in the City of Columbus.

Table 5.10: Income Spent on Housing

Income Range	Specified-Renter Occupied Unit		Specified Owner-Occupied Units			
			Housing units with a Mortgage		Housing units without a Mortgage	
	Households	Percent	Households	Percent	Households	Percent
Platte County						
Less than 29.9%	2,012	65.30%	3,669	84.70%	2,563	92.39%
30% to 49.9%	479	15.55%	482	11.12%	117	4.22%
50% or more	383	12.43%	174	4.02%	65	2.34%
Not computed	207	6.72%	7	0.16%	29	1.05%
Total	3,081	100.00%	4,332	100.00%	2,774	100.00%
Columbus						
Less than 29.9%	1,652	65.01%	2,781	85.60%	1,808	94.91%
30% to 49.9%	424	16.69%	349	10.74%	64	3.36%
50% or more	343	13.50%	114	3.51%	30	1.57%
Not computed	122	4.80%	5	0.15%	3	0.16%
Total	2,541	100.00%	3,249	100.00%	1,905	100.00%

Source: US Census Bureau

Value of Housing Units

Table 5.11: Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units, 2000		
	Columbus	Platte County
No. of Owner Occupied Units with specified value	5,154	7,106
Less than \$50,000	513	835
\$50,000- \$99,999	3,285	4,264
\$100,000- \$149,999	907	1,265
\$150,00-\$199,999	256	414
\$200,000- \$299,999	162	268
\$300,000 +	31	60
Median value	\$80,300	\$80,800

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 5.11 gives a detailed breakdown of the cost for homes in Columbus and Platte County in 2000, as well as the median value of homes for both political regions. The median value for the homes in Columbus was \$80,300 and in Platte County \$80,800.

In Columbus, 513 or 9.95% of the homes are valued at less than \$50,000. In Platte

County, 835 or 11.75% are valued in the same price range.

Table 5.12: Average Selling Price of Single-Family Homes										
	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1997	1998	1999
Nebraska	\$50,179	\$52,921	\$53,971	\$54,541	\$64,498	N/A	\$66,533	\$84,401	\$90,971	\$85,072
Platte County	\$44,229	\$51,137	\$52,836	\$56,138	\$60,954	\$65,412	\$64,418	\$74,012	\$78,012	\$80,569

Source: Nebraska Databook

Table 5.12 identifies the average selling prices of single-family homes in Nebraska and Platte County from 1985 to 1999. (The most recent data available.) As Table 5.12 indicates, the average selling price in Platte County has remained below the statewide average from 1985 through 1999 aside from 1992 and 1994 when data was unavailable, but the county as a whole has risen fairly consistently from 1985 on.

**Table 5.13: Average Sales Price and Area
(in Sq. Ft) of Property Transactions
Platte County**

Vintage	Average Sales Price (\$)	Average Floor Area Sq. Ft.	Price Per Sq. Ft. (\$)
Before 1930	\$60,513	1,343	45.06
1931-1960	\$75,885	1,114	68.09
1961-1970	\$95,887	1,326	72.32
1971-1980	\$111,267	1,399	79.52
1981-1990	\$134,969	1,500	90.01
1991-2000	\$169,618	1,647	102.96
2001-2006	\$186,484	1,700	109.68
Average	\$95,749	1,333	71.84

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

According to the Department of Property Assessment and Taxation (PA&T) the average selling price for single-family homes was \$60,513 before 1930 in Platte County. Single-family homes built during the same time frame averaged 1,343 square feet at \$45.06 per square foot. Single-family homes constructed between 2001 and 2006 cost around \$186,484 and had an average of 1,700 square feet at \$109.68 per square foot.

**Table 5.14: Household Forecast by Tenure and Income
Platte County**

Year	0-30% MFI	31-50% MFI	51-80% MFI	81-95% MFI	96%+ MFI	Total
Homeowners						
2000	497	755	1,667	838	5,092	8,849
2005	503	764	1,687	848	5,152	8,953
2010	522	793	1,753	881	5,354	9,303
2015	546	829	1,831	920	5,591	9,716
2020	571	867	1,915	962	5,849	10,164
2025	600	912	2,015	1,012	6,152	10,691
2030	633	962	2,126	1,068	6,491	11,280
Renters						
2000	599	547	873	360	848	3,227
2005	581	531	848	349	824	3,133
2010	583	532	850	350	826	3,141
2015	588	537	857	353	833	3,168
2020	594	543	867	357	842	3,202
2025	605	552	882	363	856	3,258
2030	618	564	901	371	875	3,327

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

The household forecast indicates a decrease in homeowners in Platte County from 8,849 in 2000 to 11,280 in 2030. Renters are also anticipated to see an increase from 3,227 in 2000 to 3,327 by 2030. Homeownership from the year 2000 to 2030 is expected to change by 207 households for homeowners having incomes from 31-50% of MFI and 459 for those at 51-80% of MFI. Rental demand from the year 2000 to 2030 in the county is expected to increase by 17 households for renters having incomes from 31-50% of MFI and 28 for households from 51-80% of MFI.

Table 5.15: Monthly Cost of Renter Units

	Columbus	Platte County
Total No. of Renter Occupied Units with specified cash rent	2,541	3,081
Less than \$200	189	200
\$200 – \$499	1,414	1,759
\$500 – \$749	715	816
\$750 – \$999	64	68
\$1,000 +	71	74
No cash rent	88	164
Median rent	\$429	\$429

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 5.15 shows the number of renter units per monthly cost for both Columbus and Platte County. Only 7.44% of renters in Petersburg pay less than \$200 per month in rent. In Platte County, the majority of renters pay \$200-\$499 per month in rent.

When comparing the number of renter occupied units in Columbus and Platte County, Columbus makes up 82.47% of the total rental units in Platte County.

**Table 5.16: Total Residential Property Transactions
Platte County**

Housing Type	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Single Family	418	430	465	415	404	415	400	417	3,364
Mobile Home	12	3	6	3	5	6	9	9	53
Townhome	5	10	7	5	4	6	2	2	41
Missing	4	4	6	7	3	15	9	7	55
Duplex	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	5
Total	439	449	485	431	416	442	420	436	3,518

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

The PA&T database provided residential property transactions from 1999 to 2006. During these years, there were a total of 3,518 property transactions in Platte County. Of these, 3,364 were single-family transactions.

**Table 5.17: Quality of Materials and Workmanship
Platte County**

	Before 1930	1931-1960	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-2000	2001-2006	Missing	Total
Low	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Fair	128	124	5	17	10	20	1	1	306
Average	686	817	338	416	210	119	75	7	2,668
Good	9	31	17	79	83	102	34	0	355
Very Good	1	1	3	5	3	11	1	0	25
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	831	974	363	517	306	253	111	9	3,364

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

The PA&T data also has descriptions of buildings. Quality refers to the grade of materials and workmanship used in the original construction of the dwelling. Of the 831 single-family home transactions concerning units built before 1930, seven were of low quality and 128 of fair quality. Conversely, of the 24 homes built from 2001-2006, none were of low quality, one was of fair quality, and the rest were average or above.

**Table 5.18: Condition of Residential Dwellings
Platte County, 2000**

	Before 1930	1931-1960	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-2000	2001-2006	Missing	Total
Worn Out	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Badly Worn	70	23	4	8	5	3	0	1	114
Average	721	869	319	424	198	126	32	8	2,697
Good	37	81	38	81	101	111	74	0	523
Very Good	2	1	2	4	1	12	5	0	27
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	831	974	363	517	306	253	111	9	3,364

Source: NIFA Nebraska Profile

In regard to the condition of residential dwellings, of the same 831 single-family homes built before 1930, 71 of the homes were worn out or badly worn, and 721 were in average condition.

NENEDD completed a windshield assessment of all the homes in the City of Columbus and the immediate area. When homes are listed on the market, potential homebuyers tend to assess the outside of the home first and then decide whether to pursue setting up an appointment to look at the interior. If the outside of the home has substantial visible deterioration, most homebuyers will not continue the process. While the outside of the home is usually the part that homeowners fix up last, it is the most visible to potential buyers and therefore can deter a potential purchaser without ever seeing the work completed on the inside. Homes were rated based on the following criteria:

Dilapidated: In need of more than one major repair, for example, to the roof, foundation, windows, and/or siding, etc. Severe visible damage to the foundation automatically leads to a classification of dilapidated. Usually considered to be beyond rehabilitation.

Poor: Had visible signs of deterioration, especially to the windows, siding, roof, and porch. Asbestos shingles/siding automatically leads to a classification of poor. Could be rehabilitated, but substantial cost would be involved.

Fair: Usually had one sign visible of deterioration to the windows, siding, roof, etc. Not a significant amount of damage, but some work would be required to list the home for top dollar.

Good: Home had no substantial signs of deterioration. However; cosmetic flaws were visible, such as outdated fixtures or very minor paint damage. Would require very little to no cost to sell the home for top dollar.

Excellent: Home shows absolutely no signs of deterioration. No cosmetic flaws were visible. Only a very small percentage of any community will fall into this category.

At no point were unattached garages, sidewalks, driveways, or landscaping used to help assess the home. Homes were slightly subject to the area they were in. A home in one area could be listed as fair, whereas if they were located in another area would be a poor. It is also assumed that all homes could be lowered one ranking based on the condition of the home inside. However; it is not assumed that they could move up one ranking as the quality of the outside of the home was severe enough to already put them in the category they were listed in.

Table 5.19: Rating Codes and Counts

Condition	Count
Dilapidated	177
Poor	897
Fair	3,449
Good	2,390
Excellent	696
Total	7,609

Source: NENEDD

The majority of single-family units in Columbus were given fair to good ratings. However, approximately 12% of the units had a rating of poor and another 2% had a rating of dilapidated.

The map showing the condition of the current housing stock within the City of Columbus is located in Appendix A.

Table 5.20: Housing Stock Occupancy and Vacancy, City of Columbus

		Including Both Poor and Dilapidated Homes	Including Only Dilapidated Homes
<i>i</i>	Columbus 2000 Housing Stock	8,784	8,784
<i>ii</i>	Columbus 2000 Year-round Stock (i-x)	8,669	8,669
<i>iii</i>	Housing Permits Issued since 2000	447	447
<i>iv</i>	Single-family	440	440
<i>v</i>	Multi-family	7	7
<i>vi</i>	Number Demolished since 2000	95	95
<i>vii</i>	Total Housing Stock 2000 (<i>i + iv + v - vi</i>)	9,136	9,136
<i>viii</i>	Owner	5,754	5,574
<i>ix</i>	Renter	2,547	2,547
<i>x</i>	Seasonal Housing (<i>est.</i>)	115	115
<i>xi</i>	Unsuitable Housing Stock (<i>see Table 5.20</i>)	1,074	177
<i>xii</i>	Year-round 2000 Housing Stock (<i>vii-x-xi</i>)	4,565	8,804
<i>xiii</i>	Vacant Living Units	483	483
<i>xiv</i>	Suitable Vacant Year-round (<i>xiii-x-xi</i>)	-706	191
<i>xv</i>	Year-round Vacancy Rate (<i>xiv / xii</i>)	-15.47%	2.17%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, City of Columbus, and NENEDD

An overall year-round vacancy rate of -15.47% or 2.17% depending on which figures are used is too low for the City of Columbus. Communities are encouraged to have a vacancy

rate of between 5% and 7% of livable housing units. This standard range for vacancy rates ensures that potential buyers and renters will have an adequate selection of homes to choose from. Both poor and dilapidated homes are considered unacceptable for listing on the housing market, particularly for attracting new buyers. These new buyers or renters might include individuals or families moving to Columbus from outside the market area. In addition, housing demand might be created by individuals or families seeking to move to the Columbus area from other parts of the market area (in this case, Platte County and Northeast Nebraska). New buyers will not be interested in purchasing homes requiring \$20,000-\$25,000 of repairs just to make them suitable for living. If houses in poor condition are not included in the above equation, and assuming that new buyers will be willing to put the rehabilitation funds into them to make them acceptable, then Columbus still does not have a suitable vacancy rate at only 2.17%. Since the majority of jobs in Columbus are manufacturing, they tend to be decent paying jobs. A person having to live in sub par housing because there are no other options available is unacceptable and will begin to have a negative impact on the community over the next few years.

Existing Rental Unit Comparables

Comparable #1

Location: 2481 E. 5th Avenue

Number of Units: 24

Type: Gov't subsidized based on income

Rent: \$0 - \$650/month

Constructed: 1990

Bedrooms: 1, 2, and 3

Bathrooms: 1

Utilities: Water/Sewer
Garbage

Amenities: Laundry Facilities on-site
Window Blinds

Comparable #2

Location: 3717 27th Street

Number of Units: 62

Type: Multi-family, Gov't subsidized

Rent: \$439-667/month (based on income)

Constructed: 1971

Bedrooms: 1, 2 & 3

Bathrooms: 1

Utilities: All except
phone/cable/internet

Amenities: Laundry Room
Computer Room
Stove/Refrigerator/
Garbage Disposal
Window A/C

Comparable #3

Location: 3914 25th St.

Units: 26 (16 are handicap units)

Type: Gov't subsidized, elderly/frail

Rent: 30% of adjusted income

Constructed: 1989

Bedrooms: 1

Bathrooms: 1

Utilities: Garbage
Electricity
Water

Amenities: Laundry Room
Activity Room
Hair Salon
Emergency Call System
Elevator
Stove/Refrigerator
Cable Hookups

Comparable #4

Location Columbus, NE

Units: 48

Type: Gov't subsidized, low-income

Rent: \$408-\$686/month (based on
income)

Constructed: 1990

Bedrooms: 1, 2 & 3

Bathrooms: 1

Utilities: Garbage
Water

Amenities: Laundry facilities on site
Window coverings

Comparable #5
Location: 3810 25th Street
Units: 24
Type: USDA Subsidized for elderly & handicap
Rent: Income based
Constructed: 2001
Bedrooms: 1
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: All except phone/cable
Amenities: Community room
Window coverings
Off street parking

Comparable #6
Location: 3516, 3518 & 3522 25th Street
Units: 24
Type: Gov't subsidized, low-income
Rent: Income based
Constructed: 1989
Bedrooms: 1 & 2
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: Water/Sewer
Garbage
Amenities: Window Coverings

Comparable #7
Location: 1304 8 St.
Units: 1
Type: Single Family house
Rent: \$350/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: None
Amenities: Garage

Comparable #8
Location: 2409 20th St.
Units: 1
Type: Single Family Sub by Columbus Housing Authority
Rent: \$675/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: None
Amenities: Garage
Fenced yard

Comparable #9
Location: 1222 3rd St.
Units: 1
Type: Single Family house
Rent: \$675/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Utilities: None
Amenities: Double garage

Comparable #10
Location: 471 21st Ave.
Units: 2 (Duplex)
Type: Single Family
Rent: \$550/month & \$500/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: Water/Sewer
Lawn care/Snow removal
Amenities: Attached Garage
Underground sprinklers

Comparable #11
Location: 2768 26th Ave.
Units: 1
Type: SSI Family house
Rent: \$850/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Utilities: None
Amenities: Garage
Underground Sprinklers

Comparable #12
Location: 2711 28 St.
Units: 1
Type: Single Family
Rent: \$800/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Utilities: None
Amenities: Garage
Fence
Underground Sprinklers

Comparable #13
Location: 2654/2456 46th Ave.
Type: Duplex
Rent: \$500/\$600/month
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: Garbage
Water/Sewer
Lawn Care/Snow Removal
Amenities: Garage

Comparable #14
Location: 2515 9th St.
Units: 2
Type: Duplex
Rent: \$500/\$700
Constructed: Unknown
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 1
Utilities: Water/Sewer
Garbage
Lawn Care/Snow Removal
Amenities: None

Comparable #15
Location: Columbus, NE
Units: 60
Type:
Rent: \$640-\$740/month
Constructed: 2003
Bedrooms: 1 & 2
Bathrooms: 1 & 1.5
Utilities: Garbage
Water
Cable
Electric
Amenities: Washer/Dryer hookups
Garage (\$45 cost)
Beauty Shop
Laundry Room

Comparable #16

Location: 1305 8th St.

Units: 60

Type: Elderly

Rent: Income Based

Constructed: 1981

Bedrooms: 1

Bathrooms: 1

Utilities: All

Amenities: Laundry Facilities on site
Cable (\$30 per month)

Single-Family Comparables

Comparable #1

Location: 1823 14th Street

Price: \$39,900

Beds: 3

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1900

Square Footage: 1,214

Amenities: Central AC

Comparable #2

Location: 1317 16th Street

Price: \$49,900

Beds: 2

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1900

Square Footage: 912

Amenities: Basement, Central AC, Stove,
Refrigerator

Comparable #3

Location: 3717 13th Street

Price: \$54,900

Beds: 2

Baths: 1

Year Built: N/A

Square Footage: 638

Amenities: 1-car garage, Basement,
Central AC, Stove, Refrigerator

Comparable #4

Location: 1657 40th Ave.

Price: \$65,000

Beds: 2

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1920

Square Footage: 960

Amenities: Basement, Central AC, Stove,
Refrigerator

Comparable #5

Location: 2317 9th Street

Price: \$69,900

Beds: 4

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1900

Square Footage: 879

Amenities: Finished Basement,
Dishwasher, Disposal, Stove, Central AC

Comparable #6

Location: 3704 16th Street

Price: \$72,000

Beds: 2

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1920

Square Footage: 760

Amenities: Basement, Garage/Carport,
Central AC

Comparable #7

Location: 3520 16th Street

Price: \$78,500

Beds: 2

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1895

Square Footage: 987

Amenities: Basement, 1-Car Garage,
Central AC, Underground Sprinklers,
Fenced Area

Comparable #8

Location: 2510 5th Street

Price: \$88,900

Beds: 3

Baths: 2

Year Built: 2000

Square Footage: 1,232

Amenities: Basement, Central AC, Stove,
Refrigerator

Comparable #9

Location: 1571 21st Ave.

Price: \$92,900

Beds: 3

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1905

Square Footage: 1,666

Amenities: Basement, Central AC,
Dishwasher, Disposal, Stove,
Refrigerator, Fireplace(s)

Comparable #10

Location: 757 12th Ave.

Price: \$99,000

Beds: 2

Baths: 2

Year Built: 1970

Square Footage: 1,050

Amenities: Attached 1-Car Garage, 50%
Finished Basement, Central AC, Stove,
Dishwasher, Disposal

Comparable #11

Location: 13 Firefly Duncan Lakes

Price: \$101,900

Beds: 2

Baths: 1

Year Built: 1997

Square Footage: 1,152

Amenities: Dishwasher, 1-Car Garage,
Fireplace(s), Stove, Fridge

Comparable #12

Location: 3808 21st Street

Price: \$109,900

Beds: 3

Baths: 2

Year Built: 1967

Square Footage: 1,084

Amenities: Full basement, Stove,
Attached 1-Car Garage

SECTION VI: HOUSING MARKET DEMAND

The purpose of this chapter of the housing study is to use information gathered in previous chapters to determine future housing demand for Columbus. Since the population of Columbus is expected to increase in the coming years, the first step is to determine the number of units that will be in demand to satisfy the needs of existing individuals in the community and what type of housing will be needed to attract new residents. The second step is to determine what types of units would be most suitable for all residents of Columbus.

Housing Needs Estimates

Table 6.1: 2015 Total Housing Demand	
Market Supply/Demand Analysis	
Estimated 2015 population	23,850
Group Quarters (Persons)	262
Average Household Size	2.50
Number of Households	9,435
5% Vacancy Rate	472
Known Supply	8,784
Estimated Total Demand	1,123
Substandard Units	1,074
Adjusted Supply	2,197
Existing Gap	-313

Source: US Census Bureau and NENEDD
 (1) 2000 data adjusted according to current estimates
 have been constructed since 2000.

In the population information in Section II of this study, it was shown that the number of residents in the City of Columbus is expected to increase in population from 20,990 in 2000 to 23,850 by 2015. In 2000, the average household size was 2.50 individuals. By dividing the estimated 2015 population (minus the projected number of persons living in group quarters) by the average household size, it brings the projected number of households to 9,435. We must then add in the desired vacancy rate of 5% and then subtract the known supply. The overall adjusted supply is 2,197, leaving a demand for 313 units a year for the next 7 years.

According to the City of Columbus, 440 single-family units and 7 multi-family unit

Homeownership vs. Rental Units

Also from Section V of the housing study, it is important to note that 65.51% of the Columbus population is in owner-occupied units, while 29.00% is in rental units. This study will assume, therefore, that either: 1) 66% of all new homeowners in Columbus by the year 2015 will desire to own a home; or 2) more households living in Columbus will seek to purchase a home rather than continue to rent.

Based on these assumptions, this study presumes that, of the additional 313 housing units needed per year through the year 2015, considering all factors given above, 207 (66% of total needed) should be intended for habitation by an owner. Ninety-one units (29% of total needed) should be rental units and the remaining 5% or 15 units contribute to the overall needed vacancy rate of the community.

Market Absorption Rate

Determining the appropriate market absorption rate for a community depends greatly on the approach the municipality would like to take in developing new housing for its citizens. While encouraging and administering new housing development within its jurisdiction, policymakers must be aware of the impact that new development can have on the already existing housing market. This applies to every segment of the housing market, including single-family homes, rental units, and subsidized units. Special care must be taken to ensure that too many new homes are not developed to prevent saturation of the housing market. It is key to keep in mind a target vacancy rate of 5%-7%. Exaggerated housing vacancy rates can have a negative impact on the value of, and demand for, the already existing housing stock.

With this in mind, policymakers may choose an aggressive or more conservative housing development strategy, with reference to the number and types of new homes to construct. The full range of perspectives and expectations of housing experts and policymakers about housing development may range from the conservative to the aggressive stance, but, in general, housing strategy is formulated with one common goal: to direct, or coordinate, the development of the appropriate number and types of housing that will be best suited to the needs of all segments of the community.

With this in mind, it is important to state that a typically conservative market absorption rate would be 50%-60% of the total living units needed within a given time period. A more aggressive absorption rate would be 70%-80% of total need. This study will recommend different levels of housing development activity depending on the type of housing unit in demand, that is, renter or owner.

Owner-occupied Housing

The preparers of this study recommend a more aggressive absorption rate due to the extremely low vacancy rate in Columbus and the condition of already existing homes. At absorption rates of 70% and 80%, the following number of homes would be in demand

by the year 2015 (shown in Table 6.2). Development beyond the number of units identified for the recommended absorption rates should not commence prior to 90% occupancy or sale of these units.

Table 6.2: Owner Housing Market Absorption Rate, City of Columbus

Units Needed (2015)	207	207
Absorption Rate	70%	80%
Demand (2015)	145	166

Source: NENEDD

An aggressive market absorption rate should be followed in order to quickly increase the available housing stock and the quality of the housing stock in the community. According to local real estate experts, the average selling price in Columbus is in the \$100,000 - \$132,000 range. This is also the range that they felt more housing units were needed in.

In addition, the needs of modern middle-class families have evolved. It is not uncommon to find households whose heads are both employed full-time. These kinds of households, especially those where children are present, have less time and money to invest in an older home that might require more upkeep than a newer home. These types of homebuyers seek convenience of time and money when looking for a home. Likewise, more households are run by a single parent, which puts similar strains on time and financial resources.

It is also important to note that the expectations of younger, first-time homebuyers exceed those of previous generations. The first-time homebuyer wants, at a minimum, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and a double-car attached garage.

From the surveys returned from both the financial institutions and the realtors, the opinion is that a housing shortage exists in Columbus. The low number of vacant units, indicate that there is a demand for single-family units in the City.

With the construction of new housing within the community, it is recommended that the City of Columbus and Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District continue to work together to promote the strongly utilized down payment assistance program to aid potential buyers.

Rental housing

As stated above, the City of Columbus will experience a need for 91 new rental units. Due to the very low vacancy rate in the community, this study also proposes a more aggressive housing development absorption rate for rental units: 70% to 80% of projected

demand. The following table shows the estimated number of rental units that will be in demand for the year 2015. Again development beyond the number of units identified for the recommended absorption rates should not commence prior to 90% occupancy of these units.

**Table 6.3: Rental Housing Market Absorption Rate,
City of Columbus**

Units Needed (2015)	91	91
Absorption Rate	70%	80%
Demand (2015)	64	73

Source: NENEDD

Workers and families newly arrived in Columbus will represent multiple segments of the population, with various needs based on culture, heritage, family size, age, physical capabilities, and income.

SECTION VII – RESIDENTIAL SITE ANALYSIS

An analysis of potential areas and sites available for construction of future housing in the City of Columbus was conducted. The type of housing development proposed for these sites should be guided by existing codes and ordinances, the amount of land available for development, and the compatibility of the proposed residential use with existing adjacent uses.

There are currently no planned developments under construction in Columbus. The five units that have been constructed since 1996 have been throughout the community.

The Housing Market Study identifies the need for additional housing in the City of Columbus in the next six years; an estimated 145-166 single-family units and 64-73 multi-family unit will be needed. Factors involved in the formulation of decisions relating to the location of residential development include terrain; proximity to major thoroughfares with direct connection to employment and recreational areas; choice in residential densities, with high densities in close proximity to permanent open spaces, nearest thoroughfares and community-serving shopping centers; with lowest densities located in areas between major transportation routes.

Certain environmental criteria that should be avoided in selecting a site for housing development:

- floodplain/wetland locations, which require a lengthy public review process and consideration of alternative sites in the area.
- sites in or adjacent to historic districts, buildings or archeological sites; which may mean expensive building modifications to conform to historic preservation requirements and a lengthy review process.
- sites near airports, railroads, or high volume traffic arteries, which may subject residents to high noise levels, air pollution, and risk from possible aircraft accidents.
- sites near tanks that store chemicals or petrochemicals of an explosive or flammable nature.
- sites near toxic dumps or storage areas.
- sites with steep slopes or other undesirable access conditions which may make them undesirable for use by the elderly or handicapped.

Columbus Site Analysis

Future housing development in Columbus should be carefully evaluated and planned to meet the needs of both current and potential residents. The City of Columbus does have City zoning that restricts development of housing in parts of the community. The City has some areas where in-fill housing could be developed; however the lots tend to be smaller than most modern houses need and many of them have substandard housing already on them that would result in costly demolition expenses.

For a potential subdivision, it is recommended that the City of Columbus develop in any of the three highlighted areas on the map shown in Appendix B. All the areas are large enough to

accommodate numerous houses and all have potential access to both sewer and water. The potential sites are all zoned Rural Residential and have housing divisions in close proximity.

Development in the Rural Residential Area is intended as follows:

Very low density residential environments, accommodating developments that merge urban living with rural life and institutions which require a residential environment. Permits limited agricultural uses within these settings. The district's regulations assure that density is consistent with the carrying capacity of infrastructure.

Both single-family detached and manufactured homes are permitted uses within the Rural Residential District.

SECTION VIII: POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The following information identifies funding sources available to address the housing demand in Columbus. The strategic combination of two or more sources can assist in meeting both the first mortgage and subsidy or gap financing requirements of proposed housing projects. Included with the identification of some of the sources is the estimated percentage of subsidy provided with the use of each source.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD Section 202 Program

Provides a direct loan to a non-profit developer for development of elderly housing. The program would meet all required subsidy, for development. The HUD Section 202 Program provides 100 percent financing with capital advances to finance the construction, rehabilitation, or acquisition with or without rehabilitation of structures that will serve as supportive housing for very low-income elderly persons, including the frail elderly.

HUD Section 811 Program

Provides a capital advance to a non-profit developer for development of housing for persons with disabilities. The program offers 100 percent financing with an operational subsidy.

Mortgage Insurance

The HUD 221(d)(3) or 222(d)(4) provides up to 100% mortgage insurance for non-profit development ((d)(3)) and 90% mortgage insurance coverage for profit-motivated developers ((d)(4)). Permanent financing can be provided via the public funds (i.e. CDBG, HOME) and/or conventional financing.

Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)

Low-Income Tax Credit Program

The program promotes development of affordable rental housing for low-income individuals and families. It is dollar to dollar against federal income tax liability of the owner of the low-income housing project.

CROWN Program

CROWN (Credits to Own) is a lease-to-own housing program developed to bring home ownership within reach of very low-income households while assisting local governments in revitalizing their neighborhoods. The objectives of the program are to:

- Construct housing that is decent, safe, and permanently affordable for low-income residents;
- Develop strong public/private partnerships to solve housing problems;
- Offer renters a real plan to own a home; and
- Restore unused, vacant, in-fill lots to become a neighborhood asset.

CROWN utilizes the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program as one financing tool. Other sources of financing may be HOME funds, Affordable Housing Trust funds, Federal Home Loan Bank funds, local government grants and loans, and traditional development financing sources.

CRANE Program

The Collaborative Resource Allocation for Nebraska (CRANE) program is a strategic allocation process between NIFA and other collaborating resource providers to accomplish difficult projects.

The focus and primary purpose of the CRANE program is to encourage the development of affordable housing through long-term, coordinated job creation/enhancement, housing development and community development strategies in Nebraska.

Together, NIFA and other collaborating resource providers work with communities and neighborhoods, who have joined with for-profits and non-profits, that commit to participate in the CRANE Program.

NIFA Single Family Mortgage Program/Homebuyer Assistance

The First Home and First Home Plus programs provides funding for mortgages made to homebuyers throughout the state at a less than current market interest rate.

The Homebuyer Assistance mortgage provides down payment and closing cost assistance is provided by NIFA in an amount currently equal to 4.25% of the first mortgage amount. The borrower is required to execute a second mortgage for the amount of the assistance. The second mortgage bears no interest and repayment is required only if the borrower pays off the first mortgage prior to the expiration of 11 years.

State of Nebraska Affordable Housing Program

The Affordable Housing Program is funded with resources for two U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs, the Community Development Block Grant Program, the HOME Investment Partnerships program, and the state-funded Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

State of Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Funds

The Affordable Housing Trust Funds provide assistance to eligible recipients for acquisition, rehabilitation, construction and production of affordable housing to increase the supply of decent, safe and sanitary housing for low to moderate income Nebraskans. Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Funds can be used for housing rehabilitation, new construction of single-family and multi-family units, and technical assistance to nonprofit housing development.

Nebraska Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Both Community Development and Housing Development programs provide financial assistance for both owner and rental housing rehabilitation and gap financing for first time homeowners (administered by the Department of Economic Development). Depending upon the case, CDBG funding could provide up to 100% of the needed gap financing for a particular housing project.

Regional Homeowner Program

Funds are awarded for housing activities in two categories: Housing Rehabilitation, including owner-occupied housing rehabilitation for applications serving four (4) or more communities; or Homeownership Opportunity Program, including down payment assistance for low income homebuyers (this includes assistance related to newly constructed, rehabilitated housing, and existing housing).

Homeownership Subdivision Development

Funds may be used for infrastructure or development subsidies as it relates to new construction and down payment assistance. Eligible applicants are non-profit 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4), a governmental sub-division, a local or regional housing authority.

Housing Pre-development Loans

NAHTF and HOME CHDO funds will be used to assist organizations with the following expenses to determine the feasibility of a specific housing project: feasibility studies (determining marketability of intended projects); financial commitment fees; fees for architects, attorneys, engineers, and other development team members; costs to obtain option to buy property; title clearance costs. Eligible applicants are local regional non-profit 501 (c)(3) or 501 (c)(4) housing or related service organizations, local units of government, Public Housing Authorities, and state-designated Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOS).

Community Development Assistance Act (CDAA) –

The Community Development Assistance Act encourages financial support by businesses to community betterment by empowering the Department of Economic Development to distribute a 40% State tax credit to businesses, corporations, insurance firms, or financial institutions which make eligible contributions of cash, services, or materials to approved community betterment projects

City of Columbus

Development Assistance

The City of Columbus could provide assistance to developers in the form of site preparation, development of off-site improvements, and buy down the cost of land. This assistance could provide up to 20% of the needed development cost,

buy down, or subsidy. The City could utilize the sources of the Community Development Block Grant and/or tax increment financing to cover the costs of these improvements.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is primarily designed to finance the public costs associated with a private development project. Essentially, the property tax increases resulting from a development are targeted to repay the public investment required by the local government to redevelop substandard and blighted areas in a community.

USDA Rural Housing Programs

USDA Direct Home Ownership Loan

Provides loans in rural areas that assist very-low and low-income applicants to purchase, construct, repair or rehabilitate, or relocate a single family home. For manufactured housing, only new construction is permitted.

USDA Guaranteed Home Loans

Provides loans in rural areas that assist moderate to low income applicants to purchase, construct, repair or rehabilitate, or relocate a single family home. For manufactured housing, only new construction is permitted. Loans are made by local approved lenders with USDA Rural Development issuing a guarantee on the loan. Funds for repairs can only be included with the purchase of an existing home.

USDA Rural Home Repair Loans and Grants

Provides funds for necessary repairs to owner-occupied homes in rural areas (i.e. roof, windows, plumbing, electrical, heating, etc.). Applicants include very low-income owner-occupants. To qualify for a grant, the homeowner must be 62 years of age or older and be unable to repay a loan. Applicants for a loan must have acceptable credit history, adequate repayment ability and be unable to obtain the needed credit from commercial sources.

Rural Housing Site Loan

The purpose of the program is to purchase land and develop sites, including the construction of essential streets, utility lines etc., which will be sold on a non-profit basis to very-low, low and moderate-income households.

USDA 515 Rural Renter Housing Loans

These loans are used for construction or rehabilitation of apartment-housing units. Eligible applicants for these loans are individuals, non-profits, housing authorities, partnerships, and corporations. They must also qualify by meeting credit tests, legal capacity, credit history, and financial and management capacity requirements.

Other Suggested Housing Development Concepts/Programs

Local Employer Assistance

It is a common occurrence today, within many cities in the nation, to provide affordable housing. Major local employers are becoming directly involved in housing development. Major employers in Snyder could be approached to provide assistance in the development of several proposed housing projects. The following options are available to local employers for their involvement in housing:

- a) Credit Enhancement – Provides a letter of credit for all, or a percentage of, the mortgage amount to serve as a mortgage guarantee.
- b) GAP Financing – Provides GAP financing to cover the unfunded portion of development costs, as a deferred loan to the developer.
- c) Mortgage Interest Rate Subsidy – Provides a buydown of the development mortgage interest rate.
- d) Purchase Bonds – Makes a commitment to purchase either/both taxable/tax exempt bonds utilized to finance housing development.

FHLB Affordable Housing Program

Administered through the Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Topeka; this program makes low-interest loans to families with incomes at or below 80% of the median income for the area. Its goal is to finance home ownership or the purchase, construction, or rehabilitation of rental housing in which 20% of the units are occupied and affordable to very low-income households. These funds are available through the Federal Home Loan Bank's member institutions in Nebraska, and are loans on a competitive basis with semi-annual application dates. This program can be combined with others (ie – State CDBG, low-income tax credit, etc.) to absorb the previously discussed subsidy requirements for both renter- and owner-occupied housing projects.

Home Investment Partnership Act Funds (HOME)

Authorized by the Title II, Section 215 of the NAHA to primarily leverage other affordable housing financing in order to develop rental projects owned, sponsored, or developed by community-based, non-profit housing development organizations; other local/regional government entities; and non-profit housing development organizations, and limited-profit builders.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

The intent of the CSBG is to provide a range of services and activities through grants to have a measurable and potentially major impact on causes of poverty in the community or those areas of the community where poverty is a particularly acute problem.

Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)

Is intended to encourage depository institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, consistent with safe and sound banking operations

SECTION IX: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations and Strategies

The following housing strategies address multiple issue areas of population, housing type, location, development financing, and the promotion and organization of affordable housing programs in the City of Columbus.

Recommendation #1

Local housing development efforts should work to meet the housing needs of all population groups. The City of Columbus should strive to ensure that all individuals, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation, religion, or income level, have equal access to housing opportunity.

- A mixed variety of affordable housing choices should be available to low-to-moderate income families. These might include various sized rental apartment housing, single-family homes, mobile homes, or duplexes.
- The City of Columbus should encourage housing developers to recognize the evolving needs of senior citizens as this age group grows in number throughout the county. Congregate or institutionalized living remains a necessity for many elderly, however, current trends show a preference for housing built for ease and convenience of time and upkeep. City officials should work with housing developers to evaluate constantly these preferences and the needs of future elderly generations.

Recommendation #2

It is recommended that the City of Columbus assist in the development of affordable housing to help reduce the numbers living in substandard and dilapidated housing.

- The City of Columbus should work on demolishing severely dilapidated homes and replacing them with affordable quality homes. The lack of both rental and owner-occupied housing results in persons having to reside in less than desirable homes in order to just have a place to live.

Recommendation #3

The City of Columbus should continue to strengthen public and private partnerships to ensure the successful development of affordable housing opportunities.

- The City of Columbus should consider implementing a community-wide housing authority that is responsible for keeping track of all housing information in the community (including available rental units, realtor and landlord information, etc.) and will assist new residents in obtaining housing. This housing authority would also

help in directing both private and public housing agencies in future growth of the community.

Recommendation #4

Continue to seek and utilize grants, low-interest loans, public and private sources of funds for both fixed financing and gap financed housing initiatives. Working to balance contributions from both public and private entities is mutually beneficial and provides for the most effective long-term planning of housing development for the community.

- There are many federal and state funding sources that should be pursued in developing affordable housing in the city.

Recommendation #5

The City of Columbus should continue the use of Nebraska Community Development Law – Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for redevelopment of blighted and substandard residential areas.

- The use of TIF can reduce the cash requirements for affordable housing an estimated 20-30%, while ensuring proper development of necessary infrastructure systems.
- The most effective use of TIF as it relates to affordable housing projects is the acquisition of property and development of streets, water, and other infrastructure.

Recommendation #6

The City should strive to keep current all ordinances related to housing, as well as building permits and inspection procedures, in order to ensure safe housing for all citizens of the community.

- Housing development is an integral part of the comprehensive development plan. Economic development activities both affect and are affected by housing needs and conditions. All zoning ordinances should be periodically updated to reflect the changing structure and needs of the community.
- All potential housing developers should find the city's record of the building permit and inspection process easy to access and understand. Likewise, residents of Columbus should have fair access to all ordinances, restrictions, codes, and standards related to housing. Readability and ease of understanding of all housing codes and regulations are key to ensuring continued maintenance of these standards.
- Utilizing a full-time building inspector will insure that all building codes are being enforced and that they are kept current and accurate.

Recommendation #7

The City of Columbus should strive to conserve and upgrade the existing housing stock in the community. Housing rehabilitation programs through NED, Inc., USDA-RD, and HUD should be utilized to enhance the condition of Columbus's existing housing stock.

- The City of Columbus should remain involved in facilitating owner-occupied rehabilitation programs in the community. The distribution of public funds available to assist homeowners in upgrading the condition of their homes often relies on an aggressive awareness or marketing campaign.

Recommendation #8

The City of Columbus should continue promoting and applying for down payment assistance programs to provide homeowner opportunities to low- and moderate-income persons in the community.

- The City of Columbus should maintain involvement in the down payment assistance program. This program is strongly utilized in the community and continuation is important to continue providing homeownership opportunities to low- and moderate-income persons.

SECTION X: ASSUMPTIONS, METHODS USED, AND DATA SOURCES

Assumptions and Methods Used

The assumptions used throughout this study were deduced or reasoned primarily by the preparers of this study, the Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD). Assumptions and methods used throughout this study were based upon generally accepted practices, assumptions, and methods commonly used throughout the United States relating to community planning, community housing analysis, and community housing development. Those can be summarized as follows.

□ **Method used for determining the Consumer Price Index (CPI):** The consumer price index is a measure which is used to track the change in prices for common household goods over time. The consumer price index is developed using a “market basket” approach, where researchers determine the cost of a particular set of goods and services every year. This cost is then compared against the cost of goods and services from other years.

To determine the percentage change in prices between two years, the following formula is used: Percentage change between Year A and Year B = CPI for Year B divided by CPI for Year A. The CPI can also be used to compare dollar amounts between years using "constant dollars." Constant dollars are dollars which are adjusted for inflation. For example, if you know the price of an item in YEAR A, and would like to know what that item would have cost in YEAR B, adjusting for inflation, you would use the following formula: Unknown price in Year B dollars is equal to the known price in Year A dollars multiplied by the number reached when the Year B CPI is divided by the Year A CPI.

The actual values of the CPI are determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. There are actually several Consumer Price Indexes, depending on the particular “market basket,” including the set of consumers involved, and geographical factors. Two of these CPIs are used most frequently. In the 1996 Green Book, the House Committee on Ways and Means explained the difference between the two indexes as follows:

Prior to 1983, the CPI measured housing prices using a procedure that included changes in the asset value of owned homes. Because the asset value of houses was growing so much faster than the consumption value, the inflation rate that included asset values was excessive.

In 1983 the Bureau of Labor Statistics began using a rental equivalence approach to measure the value of housing. The official CPI-U inflation rate is based on the asset value of housing prior to 1983 and rental equivalence in 1983 and later. To provide a consistent time series, the Bureau constructed an experimental series, the CPI-U-X1, for 1967-82 based on rental equivalence. The general effect of using the CPI-U-X1 is to lower inflation in past years which in turn has the effect of lowering poverty thresholds for those years. A lower threshold means that fewer people are poor. As can be seen by comparing the first two columns in table H-7, adjusting the poverty threshold using the

CPI-U-X1 reduces the official poverty rate by an average of about 1.5 percentage points (11 percent or 3.4 million persons) per year between 1979 and 1994.

The American Institute for Economic Research (AIER) has developed a CPI calculator that automates this second calculation and illustrates the process of inflating and deflating dollar amounts from year to year. While it is possible to gather all of the data available about the consumer price index and calculate the numbers for oneself, the preparers of this study determined that the conversion program available at <http://www.aier.org/research/cost-of-living-calculator/> would be sufficiently accurate for our purposes.

□ **Method used for determining population, income distribution, age distribution, racial makeup, and number employed projections:** Methodologies for creating estimates vary from data provider to data provider. A data provider should have a well-developed, documented methodology. This methodology should incorporate post-census, small-area input. For example, a data provider can track neighborhood level growth and decline through the annual acquisition of current-year small-area data from across the nation. Sources could include local government data, consumer database counts, and postal delivery statistics. The data provider also could use Census Bureau estimates and other federal data that provide totals for larger areas such as cities, counties, and states. These independent estimates could be used as control totals for the small-area estimates.

A data provider should be constantly improving its methods for creating demographic estimates, such as implementing procedures for estimating impacts of events such as military base closings, fires, floods, and hurricanes; providing estimates to local agencies for verification of accuracy and feedback; introducing increased detail for age breaks in population estimates; and evaluating and adding new data sources.

The best demographic data estimation methods are only as good as the data used as input. A data provider should use numerous sources. These sources may include city and regional planning agencies, special census results from the Census Bureau, and data from reputable companies that conduct market research. The data provider also should supply information on how the data from each source is used in the demographic estimation process. For example several of our providers of projection figures utilize such sources as Nebraska State Data Center, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha; and U.S. Bureau of the Census, and Claritas' Inc. to compute projection figures.

The opportunity to evaluate the accuracy of estimates comes once every 10 years – when the new decennial census data become available. A data provider should conduct such an evaluation to substantiate the accuracy of estimates. For example, when the year 2010 Census data become available, data providers should check the accuracy of their year 2010 estimates against these census data, and make the results available.

Rapid population growth and household growth at the tract and block group level can take place over a year. This growth can have a significant effect on a market. A data provider should have its demographers thoroughly investigate small geographies where

post-2000 input data (from local sources) indicate an exceptional change in growth, i.e., a growth rate beyond an established threshold.

The providers of the projection figures used in this study include Claritas Connect, Inc. at www.claritas.com, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development – Nebraska Databook at <http://www.neded.org/content/view/428/714/>, the Nebraska Department of Labor at <http://www.dol.state.ne.us/nstars/webnstars/>, NIFA Nebraska Profile <http://www.nifa.org/programs/>, and NENEDD.

□ **Method used for determining income levels required to afford Fair Market Rent:** Fair Market Rent (FMR) is a gross estimate of the fair cost of shelter rent, plus utilities except telephone, based on the level of income and housing demand of a region. In general, the FMR for an area is the amount that would be needed to pay the gross rent (shelter rent plus utilities) of privately owned, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of a modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities.

HUD sets FMRs to assure that a sufficient supply of rental housing is available to program participants. To accomplish this objective, FMRs must be both high enough to permit a selection of units and neighborhoods and low enough to serve as many families as possible. The level at which FMRs are set is expressed as a percentile point within the rent distribution of standard quality rental housing units. The current definition used is the 40th percentile rent, the dollar amount below which 40 percent of standard quality rental housing units rent. The 40th percentile rent is drawn from the distribution of rents of units which are occupied by recent movers (renter households who moved into their unit within the past 15 months). Newly built units less than two years old are excluded, and adjustments have been made to correct for the below market rents of public housing units included in the data base.

HUD uses similar procedures to calculate FMRs, whether they are based on AHS metropolitan area surveys, decennial Census data, or RDD surveys. The main difference is in the way *base year* FMR estimates are developed from each of the sources of survey data. The procedures used to calculate FMRs and the differences in the base year estimates are explained below. Figure 1 provides a flow chart and Figures 2 through 4 provide numerical examples of the procedures keyed to the numbered steps associated with the different types of base year FMR estimates: AHS, Census, and RDD.

HUD uses the RDD technique to obtain random samples of one- and two-bedroom units occupied by recent movers. One-bedroom rents are increased by the Census two-bedroom to one-bedroom ratio to convert them into two-bedroom-equivalent rents.

RDD surveys exclude public housing units, newly built units, seasonal units, units owned by relatives, and units not rented for cash. The surveys do not specifically exclude substandard units because there is no practical way to determine housing quality from telephone interviews. A HUD analysis conducted to address this issue has shown that the slight downward RDD survey bias caused by including some substandard units is almost

exactly offset by the slight upward bias that results from surveying only units with telephones. Additional research on this topic is underway.

On average, between 8,000 and 12,000 telephone numbers need to be contacted to achieve the target survey level of at least 200 interviews of eligible recent movers. The RDD surveys have a high degree of statistical accuracy. There is a 95 percent likelihood that the 40th percentile recent-mover rent estimates are within 3 to 4 percent of the actual 40th percentile rent, and virtually all of the estimates are within 5 percent of the actual 40th percentile value.

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) at <http://www.nlihc.org/oor/oor2006/area.cfm?state=NE> estimates the level of income needed for the average household to be able to afford fair market rent. Their most recent study, released in 2008 used Fair Market Rent estimates and 2008 median family, median household, and median renter household income estimates provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to determine maximum affordable monthly housing cost affordable at various percentages of income levels.

□ **Method used to determine the number of housing units by type, total number of housing units, and quality of housing units rated by condition:** A city-wide field study was conducted by NENEDD. Utilizing a City of Columbus map as a guide, NENEDD conducted a sight, or sometimes referred to as “windshield,” survey of the exterior of every housing unit. Each housing structure was counted, and each structure was rated for condition, i.e., excellent, good, fair, poor, or dilapidated. A full description of the methods used for determining condition is outlined in Section V of the study.

Data Sources

Data used for charts, graphs, illustrations, and tables throughout this document have typically been cited for source immediately after each. Data and information used for textual information have typically been cited within the text. Below is a comprehensive list of the sources used and a brief description of the type of data and/or information supplied by each entity.

Claritas Connect, Inc.

income projections, income data, past, current, and projected age distributions, past, current, and projected racial makeup

Columbus Area Real Estate and Lending Agents and Property Managers

average selling price of housing units, housing options, occupancy and vacancy rates in existing multi-family projects, comparable rental units, comparable owner units, expected market absorption, effect on market area

Columbus, City of

housing units demolished, new housing projects, potential site location

National Low Income Housing Coalition

affordable housing costs by income, fair market rent

Nebraska Public Power District

major employers, annual employment

Nebraska, State of/Department of Economic Development - Nebraska Databook

county population projections

Nebraska, State of/Department of Labor

labor force, employment, unemployment rates, labor force projections, employment projections, employment by industry

Nebraska, State of/Department of Revenue

average selling price of housing units, number of sales

Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District

analyses, comparisons, conclusions, summaries, calculations, projections, compilations, assumptions, methods used, maps, occupancy and vacancy estimates, compilation of data sources

University of Nebraska-Lincoln /Bureau of Business Research

labor force, employment, unemployment rates

U.S. Department of Commerce/Bureau of Census

poverty thresholds, incomes, poverty status, owner/renter costs, demographic information, household information, housing characteristics, housing stock profile, housing unit values, occupancy and vacancy estimates, commuting patterns

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

estimated median family income, fair market rent

U.S. Department of Labor/Bureau of Labor Statistics

Consumer Price Index