

## Housing and Neighborhoods

Bloomfield Township is a community with well-established, attractive and high-quality neighborhoods and residences. The vast majority of the Township's housing stock was constructed during two decades of strong growth beginning in the 1950s. Distinct neighborhoods were created with period design. Mature trees line many streets and some neighborhoods, such as Bloomfield Village, have sidewalks. The numerous lakes in the western portion of the township provide lakefront residential living options with an atmosphere of larger lots, winding roads and varying topography.

The preservation and enhancement of the variety of housing styles and living options for area residents is essential to its identity and charm. With more than half of the Township's land base occupied by single family residential homes and an aging population base, the Township is focused on maintaining a top quality residential living environment by accommodating the various needs and housing options for the future needs of its community.

### Population Trends and Projections

The population of Bloomfield Township has not seen a dramatic change in population since 1970. Current population estimates show a total of 41,863 residents in 2005, about 900 people fewer than in 1970. However, the number of housing units has continued to increase, with an estimated 17,645 housing units in 2005, up 1,087 from 1990 counts.



Growth in housing units, despite a relatively constant population base, is a reflection of the reduction in overall household size and the aging of the population. Nearly 68% of the total household types in Bloomfield Township are categorized as "non-family" or "family without children" in the 2000 census.

The first baby boomers are turning 60 years of age. This is mirrored in the age structure of Township residents, with the 65+ age bracket anticipated to double in size by 2030. The aging of the population suggests the need to provide a broader housing mix to accommodate the lifestyle options of the retirement age group.

At the same time, the Township's long term vitality suggests the need to provide housing desired by new younger residents. Once in place, these younger residents will have a large selection of single family homes to choose from when they are ready to start families. They can move up into the single family residences that senior citizens are moving from,

trading places in the condo and single-family marketplaces. Townhouses and condos appeal to both generations, although younger residents are likely to find the mixed use concepts proposed more attractive.

**Housing Trends**

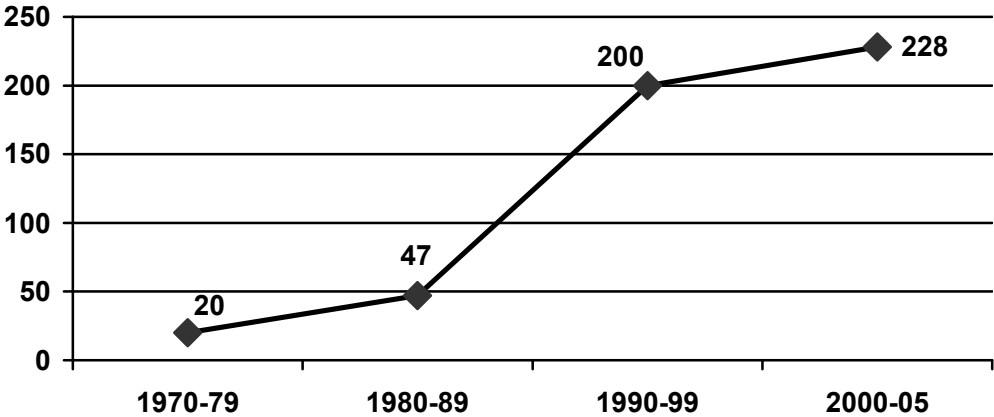
According to the 2006 *Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment*, about 70% of the housing stock in Bloomfield Township is more than 26 years old. This is much older than the housing in surrounding Oakland County townships and reflective of a built-out community.



A common housing development activity to overcome the lack of available land in Bloomfield Township is the demolition of existing single family homes and the development of larger homes on either one or more lots. The amount of demolished unit permits has seen a dramatic growth in the past five years

with more demolition permits issued between 2000 and 2005 than during the entire previous decade (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – Number of Permits Granted for Demolition of Residences**



**Household Type and Size.** When compared to Oakland County and the state, Bloomfield Township has a higher percentage of family households, but a smaller average family size indicative of an “empty nester” community.

**Figure 2 - Household Comparison**

	Family Households	Non-Family Households	Average Household Size	Average Family Size
Bloomfield Township	76%	24%	2.53	2.97
Oakland County	67%	33%	2.51	3.09
Michigan	68%	32%	2.56	3.10

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**Existing Conditions**

In comparison with other communities within Oakland County, Bloomfield Township has the sixth highest median housing value at \$342,400.



Housing stock in the Township is generally of exceptional quality. Although the housing stock is substantially older than surrounding communities, waterfront homes and strong neighborhood associations have enhanced the Township’s ability to maintain such high property values within Oakland County.

However, with a majority of the housing stock constructed during the 1950s and the 1960s, the age and condition of some less well-maintained homes may be deteriorating. It is typical for communities with housing of this age range to experience numerous applications for improvement and expansion – this is also true of Bloomfield Township.

**Neighborhood Associations**

A strong influence on the overall character of the Township is the existence of more than one hundred homeowner associations. The associations take on many different roles reflecting the personality of the neighborhood and residents, ranging from design review and maintenance to social functions.

The types of housing found in most neighborhoods are typically uniform in design and age, even where there is a variety of housing styles and

housing values. For example, Bloomfield Village occupies approximately one square mile of land in the southeastern portion of the township and is home to 1,000 dwellings. Design review was a high priority and remains so today, with recommendations for preferred architectural design.



Historic architecture and other features keep neighborhoods distinct and interesting. Identifying and preserving these elements should be a high priority, one each homeowner association should be equally concerned with.

### **Housing Preservation and Maintenance**

The protection of the distinct residential neighborhood character should include the day-to-day maintenance of housing units by individual homeowners. The Township’s zoning and building standards should reflect the high aspirations of its residents. To ensure the preservation and maintenance of existing housing by property owners, Bloomfield Township should use a variety of basic strategies and programs to improve the appearance and value of existing neighborhoods, as described below.

- **Codes and Ordinances.** The Township should review its building codes and ordinances to determine the extent of updates needed to ensure that new and redeveloped residences remain diverse in design with the ability to modernize, while staying relatively consistent with the size, scale and setbacks of other residences within established neighborhoods. New building and expansions may require the prior sign-off of the local homeowner association, where one exists. Efforts should be extended to both owner and renter-occupied properties.
- **Enforcement Practices.** The Township should review its enforcement policies and procedures to identify ways in which to improve regulatory enforcement of existing laws. This review should include an analysis of the Township’s violation management procedures and penalty structure.
- **Infrastructure Maintenance.** A well-maintained infrastructure is very important to perceived neighborhood quality. Broken sidewalks, streets with potholes and broken curbing, unkempt street terraces, and similar factors portray images of declining property values and reflect negatively on the community as a whole. Therefore, “surface infrastructure” should be regularly inspected and, improved as necessary.

## **In-Fill Development and Redevelopment**

Many neighborhoods are experiencing in-fill development on vacant lots or on underused lots. As noted earlier, demolition permits are on the rise as residents continue to tear down and build new. As new structures are built it is important to respect the character of the neighborhood, as well as explore alternative means of home ownership. The following recommendations will help to guide in-fill development and to ensure new construction is compatible with the strong neighborhood framework.



- In-fill development should relate to the surrounding homes in terms of scale.
- Building materials should be high-quality such as wood or brick, and stone. The intent is to ensure new construction is durable and timeless. Town houses should attempt to emulate the characteristics and style of single-family homes at the same time, work to achieve its own unique design theme. Features such as front porches, peaked rooflines, dormer windows, bay windows, and gables which face the street, should be encouraged.
- New housing developments within proposed mixed use areas should encourage design flexibility that allows clustering and attaching residential units for a walkable living environment where residents can access commercial and food services within close proximity to their home. Providing residential living that is accessible to older residents, such as elevator lifts and ease of parking should be considered through zoning regulations and site plan review. This type of housing would provide options for both seniors and young singles or small families who lack other options in the Township but seek local living opportunities.

## **Streetscape Enhancements**

Where streetscape enhancements are needed, the following elements are important:

- The public streetscape within neighborhoods consists of a number of elements: the roadway, sidewalks, street trees and street lighting. These components must be included in all development and redevelopment projects.

- Street trees are desired in the rights of way or near the street along the front property line to enhance the appearance of the roadway, provide shade, and to alert a driver that he/she is in a residential area and should slow down. Sidewalks or non-motorized pathways need to be provided along all streets and should be at least five feet wide. Improving and reconstructing neighborhood roadways should maintain the street tree environment and tree replacement should be required.

**Implementation Housing and Neighborhood Recommendations**

Implementing the recommendations will require the orchestration of multiple activities to assure that it meets the intent of the plan. The actions listed below will further the housing goal to protect and enhance the high quality physical and social environment of each distinct residential neighborhood.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Update standards to ensure that new and redeveloped residences are architecturally diverse and of high quality, and are consistent with the scale and setbacks of other residences within the neighborhood or nearby established neighborhoods.	Short term	PBD
Examine ways to assure the installation, maintenance and replacement of trees in rights of way.	Short term, Ongoing	PBD
Strengthen the livability of neighborhoods through improved safety, reinvestment and community involvement.	Ongoing	PBD, PD
Encourage individual private property owner pride and initiative in keeping neighborhoods strong through continued public education efforts.	Ongoing	PBD, HA
Continue to support active homeowner associations in the Township.	Ongoing	All
Increase homeowner association participation by encouraging their role in architectural review within their neighborhoods and the addition of a sign-off requirement for any improvements to residences/properties within their association area.	Short term	PBD, HA
Explore alternative residential ownership options for the empty nester segment, such as condominium and town home ownership.	Midterm	PBD
PC= Planning Commission, PBD= Planning & Building Department, DPW=Department of Public Works, HA=Homeowners Association *To a greater or less extent the Township Board may be involved in all of the above implementation.		