Americus / Sumter County Housing Needs Assessment

University of Georgia
Housing and Demographics Research Center
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Introduction

- Purpose: Describe the housing problems, needs, demands and preferences of the workforce and public housing residents in Sumter County
- Senior college students were surveyed to determine where they plan to live after graduation
- In Partnership with:
  - UGA Archway Partnership
  - Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) team
  - UGA Survey Research Center
Methodology

- Worked with GICH team to develop questionnaire
- Archway and GICH team worked with employment representatives to recruit participants and implement survey
- Self-administered paper and pencil or online survey
- UGA Survey Research Center – data entry and tabulations
- Surveys completed in February 2011
• 1,180 questionnaires returned from 16 employment establishments
  ◦ 23% of employee population (5,100)
  ◦ Missing data doesn’t seem to be an issue

• 100 questionnaires returned from public housing residents
  ◦ 10% of total residents (1,000)

• 76 questionnaires returned from students
  ◦ 1.5% of students (5,000) – students only surveyed on-line
• 79% live in Sumter County
  • 15% of those live in Americus
• Employees commute from 22 other counties. Most from Schley and Lee.
• 60% of those not living in Sumter County don’t live there because they’ve always lived in their hometown.
• 8% said quality of schools was a problem
• 6% said the homes were too expensive
• 68% female
• 63% white
• 44 years old – mean age
• 65% married
• 50% Bachelor’s degree or higher
• $37,500 mean respondent income
• $62,000 mean household income

Demographics & Income
Household Type & Size

Average household size – 2.8
Housing Type & Ownership

71% homeowners

- Single family house: 72.2%
- Condo/townhouse: 10.6%
- Apartment: 7.7%
- Single-wide: 4%
- Double-wide: 3.3%
- Other: 2.2%
26% not satisfied with current housing
  ◦ Too small, poor quality, or lack of ownership
26% home in need of repair
  ◦ Most indicated problems with H/AC or plumbing
37% need or want to move

60% or 706 respondents had some sort of housing condition or preference issue (not satisfied or need of repair or want to move)
• 48% cost burdened – housing expenses are more than 30% of gross income

• 38% home needs energy efficiency update
Housing Issues & Household Type

- Couple No Child: Sample 5, Not Satisfied 9.5, Needs Repair 5, Wants to Move
- Couple with Child: Sample 5, Not Satisfied 9.5, Needs Repair 5, Wants to Move
- Extended Family: Sample 5, Not Satisfied 9.5, Needs Repair 5, Wants to Move
- Other: Sample 5, Not Satisfied 9.5, Needs Repair 5, Wants to Move
Housing Issues & Housing Type

- Single family home: 72.2%
- Apartment: 7.7%
- Single-wide: 3.3%
- Double-wide: 10.6%
- Other: 6.2%

- Sample
- Not Satisfied
- Needs Repair
- Want to Move
Housing Issues & Household Income
37% - need or want to move (415)

- Most common reasons: Upgrade quality or find a larger home.
- 68% most likely choose a mid-size home with 3 or 4 bedrooms.
- ¾ of these plan to buy - average amount want to spend $112,300
- ¼ want to rent – average amount want to spend $460
- 55% not currently looking; 29% actively looking; 16% can’t find what they want
Looking for a new home
- Price: 51.7
- Move-in condition: 14.6
- Home size: 13.9

Choosing a community to live
- Quality of schools: 60.5
- City services: 15.8
- Shopping/restaurants: About 5% each

Plans to Move - Most Important Factor
Housing Issues & Want to Move

- Needs Repair: 25.6%
- Not satisfied: 25.8%
- Renter: 24.6%
- Energy efficiency: 38.4%

Sample vs. Want to move
Nearly 20% of respondents offered additional comments about housing in Americus/Sumter County. Common themes:

- Poor economy, uncertain housing market, and many homes for sale are delaying plans to move or make needed home repairs.
- Many people feel Americus needs to attract new industry and businesses for needed new jobs.
- Homes are too expensive for a small town and many are in need of repair.
- People like living in Sumter County, but some stated there are few options for entertainment, recreation, restaurants, and shopping.

- Quite a few respondents indicated that property taxes are too high.

- Numerous respondents indicated their current home needs (major) repair work, improvements to modernize, and/or upgrades for energy efficiency.

- Quite a few indicated their home was too small.
- Although some people feel that the housing situation in Sumter County is fine, many respondents feel there is a need for (modern/new) affordable homes in safe, quality neighborhoods. Affordable homes are old and outdated and many times in undesirable areas.

- There is a need for high quality home rentals or apartments for families. Many people stated that most homes for rent and apartments are poorly maintained, and the rent for the others is too high.
• A number of respondents expressed concerns related to fair housing issues and about the quality of the schools.

• A common feeling is that Americus has too many public housing units, and some of the housing stock is in poor condition.
• 93% women
• 97% black
• 39 years old - mean age
• 60% single parents with children
• 26% lived alone
• 60% at least a high school diploma/GED
• $7,700 – average respondent income
• $9,200 - average household income
More than 40% - not satisfied with their current housing situation. The most commonly cited reasons were: poor neighborhood, poor quality, too small, and lack of ownership.

Haven’t purchased a home because they couldn’t qualify or other economic reasons (43%) and housing in price range not available (29%).
53% want to move

Nearly 60% of those want to rent

Top reasons for wanting to move include: upgrade quality, find larger home, and live in a different community.

Mid-size single family and manufactured homes are the housing types they would most likely chose.
• 78% female
• 55% black
• 20 - average age
• Most are happy with their current housing situation
• Only a few indicated having any housing condition problems
• 66% do not plan to live in Americus when they graduate, even if there was a desirable job available.
• Most common reasons: lack of shopping/restaurants, nothing for young people to do, and just want to live somewhere else.
• 36% want to live in Atlanta; 11% Warner Robins and 8% Athens
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