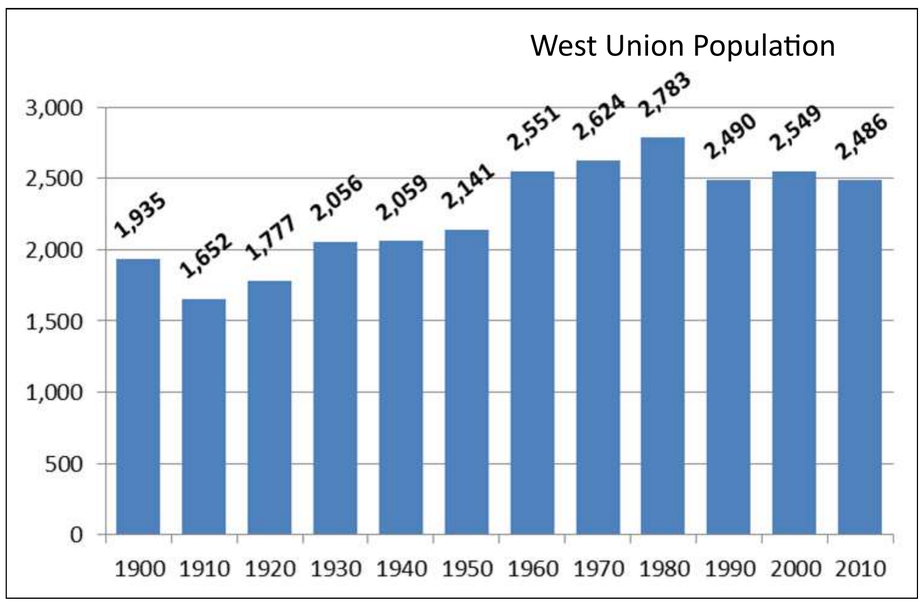
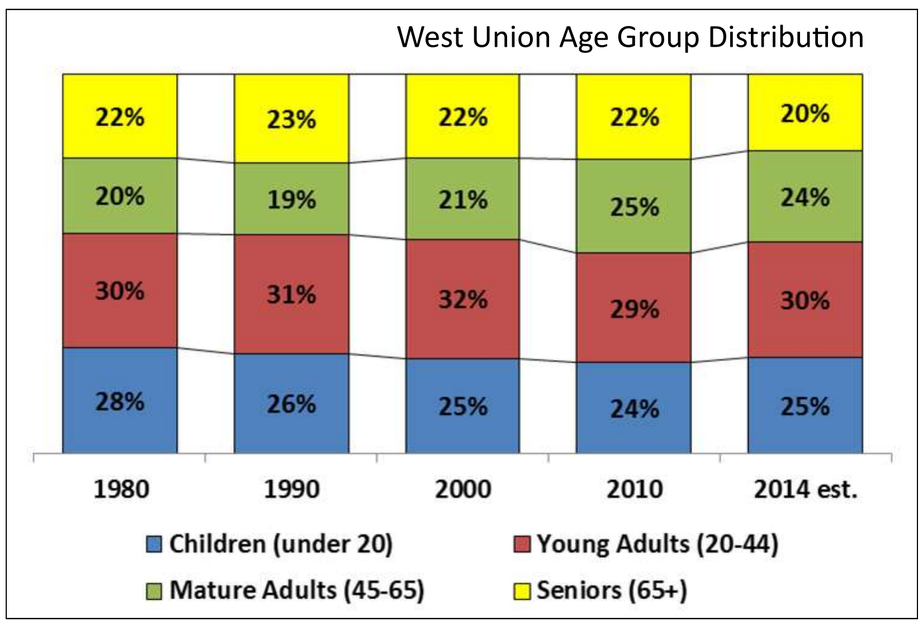
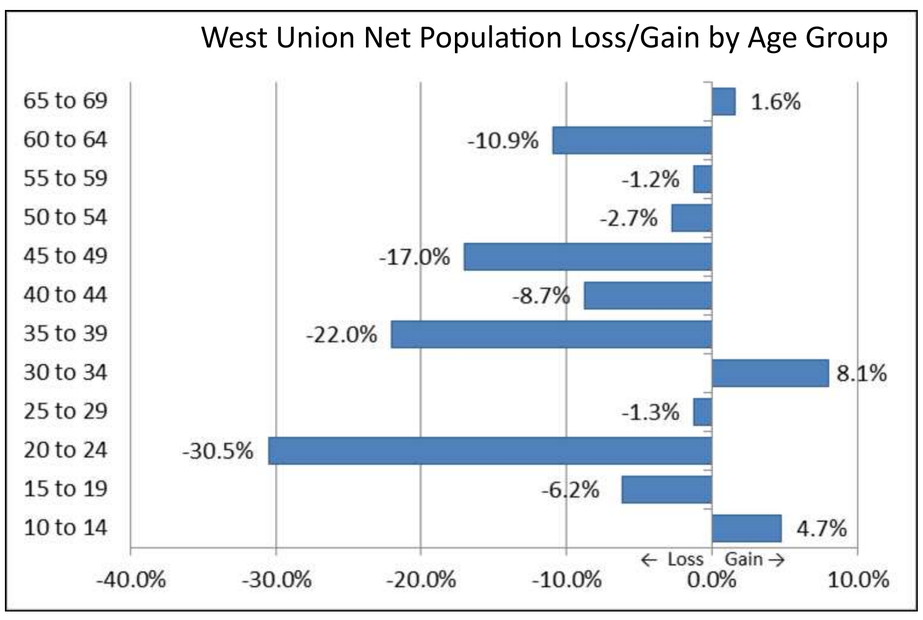
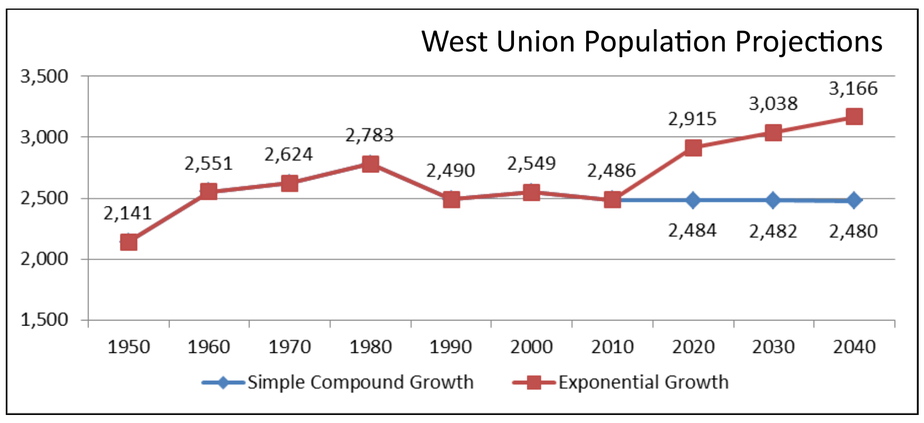
What We Learned

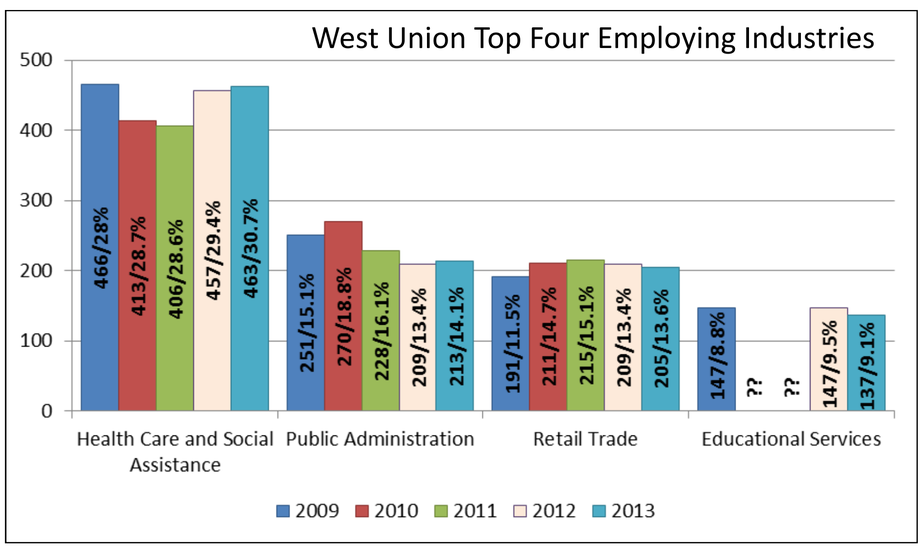
From Data

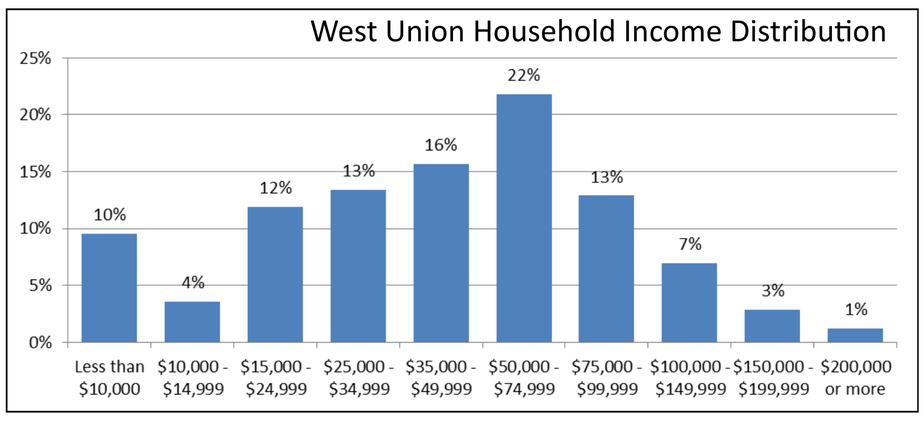




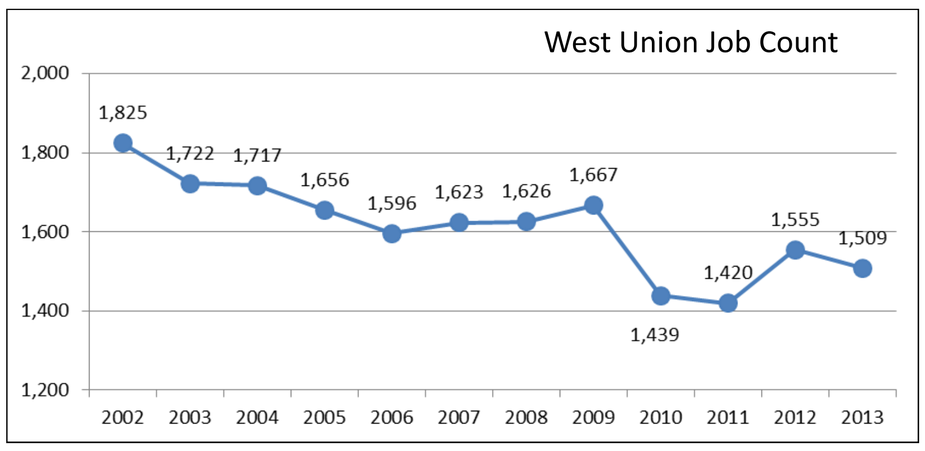


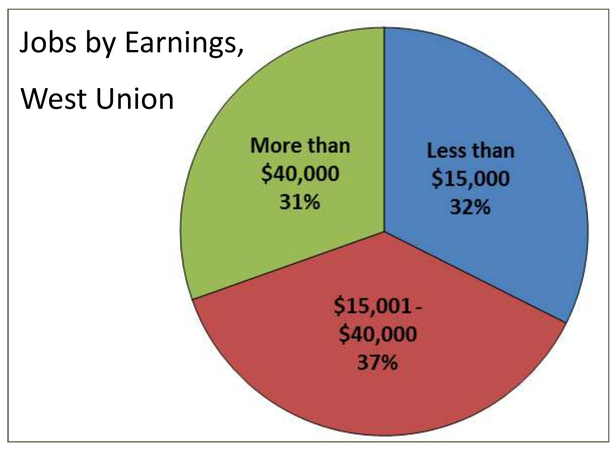




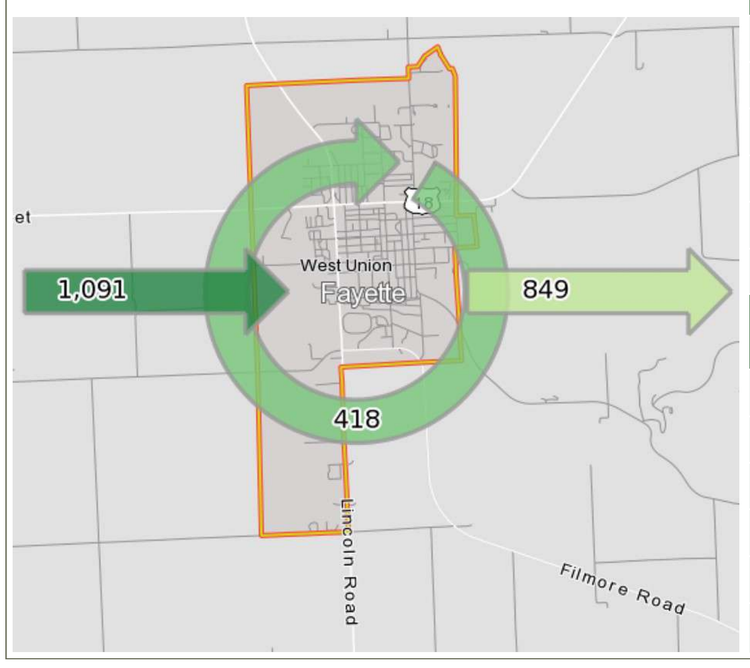


- Population down nearly 11% since 1980
- Well-distributed age grouping
- Newcomers in the 30 to 34 year age range
- Population projections vary, 2014 Census estimates an increase
- Most jobs in the health care and social assistance industry
- Job counts fluctuated between '06 and '09 and are rebounding somewhat after a sharp drop in '10 and '11
- Median Household Income = $44,100
- 37% of jobs pay between 15 & 40k, 31% over 40k
- Over 1,000 people commute in to the city for work, over 800 leave for work
- Nearly 60% of the city's workforce lives in Fayette County





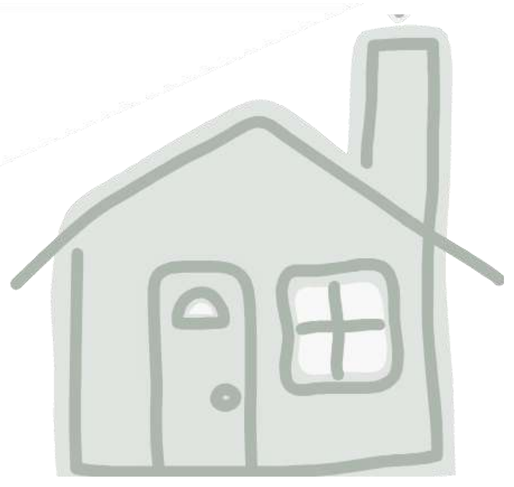
Commuting in and out of West Union



Where are West Union's workers going?	
Stay in West Union	33.0%
Fayette	4.7%
Postville	4.3%
Waterloo	4.1%
Decorah	3.6%
Oelwein	1.7%

Where are workers in West Union coming from?	
Already in West Union	27.7%
Elgin	3.3%
Clermont	3.2%
Fayette	1.9%
Oelwein	1.8%
Hawkeye	1.7%

What We Learned

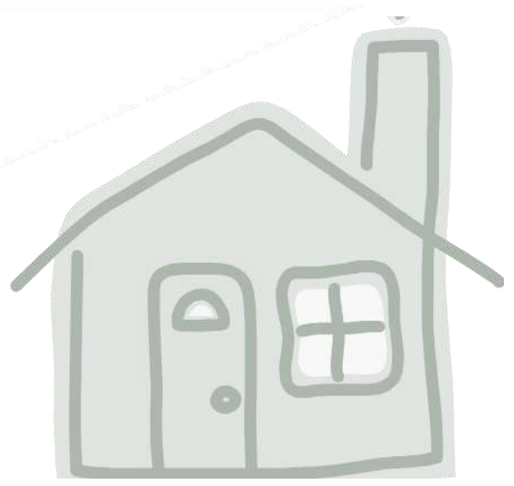


From Resident Surveys...

- Nearly 50% own property free and clear
- Over 40% have lived in the same home for over 20 years
- Over 30% of respondents have householders who work outside of West Union
- 44% of those seeking housing find limited numbers of affordable homes for sale – and 42% say the available affordable homes are too small or of poor quality
- 42% feel that too much poor dilapidated housing is a major problem
- 29% indicate a major problem in too much vacant/abandoned housing
- 66% have no desire to move – 44% would like to move (3 to 5 years was the most often given response)
- Only 16% have tried to move in the past year
- 80% want to own their next home
- 95% of respondents said they would be looking for a garage with their new home, 90% want energy efficiency, 77% want a one-story
- 92% satisfied or very satisfied with their current housing situation
- 42% have no garage (13%) or just one stall (29%)
- 73% say the size of their home is "just right"
- 45% of respondents receive retirement income
- 39% have investment income
- 57% have income from a salary or wages
- When asked to rate the following aspects of their living environment, respondents said:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
House structural condition	35%	40%	19%	7%	0%
Exterior appearance of home	32%	42%	19%	5%	2%
Yard/lot size	49%	30%	11%	9%	1%
Adequate heating	57%	29%	10%	2%	2%
Sanitation and safety	50%	38%	9%	3%	1%
Security from crime	34%	36%	22%	4%	4%
Quality of neighborhood	50%	21%	19%	7%	3%
Distance from work	51%	27%	13%	7%	3%
Occupancy costs	28%	38%	23%	9%	2%

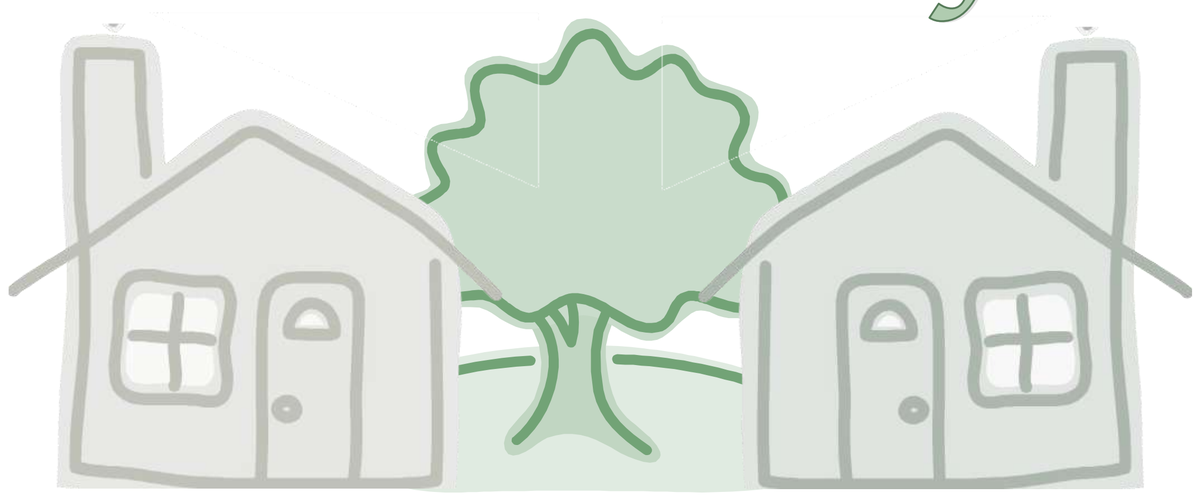
What We Learned



From Real Estate Agents...

- 50% believe the market is worse, 50% say it is better or the same than one year ago and five years ago
- Most say the demand is less than the supply
- Most agree that prices have remained steady
- A lack of qualified buyers is the factor having the most impact on the market – followed by the manufacturing economy
- Most noted too much inventory in the $50 to $100k price range – and too little in the $100 to $150k price range
- Most felt that the days on the market is somewhat longer than the national average – and indicated it to be about 6 months
- Out of town buyers look for good schools and the availability of shopping, dining and social opportunities
- Buyers want a two car garage and a roof in good repair
- Buyers also look for newer windows and more open floor plans
- Barriers for buyers include poor credit and an inability to come up with a down payment
- Quality of life makes (or breaks) the sale!
- May have a shortage of decent rental property
- Jobs don't pay enough to support home-buying

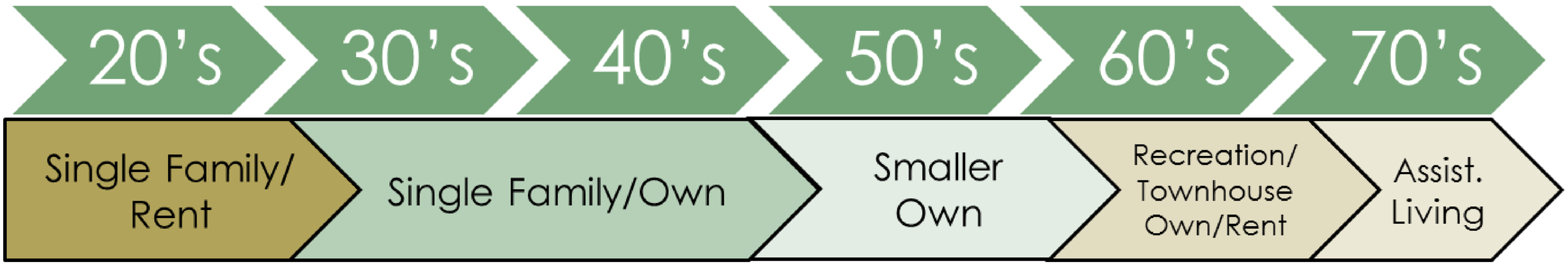
Take a sheet and share your ideas...

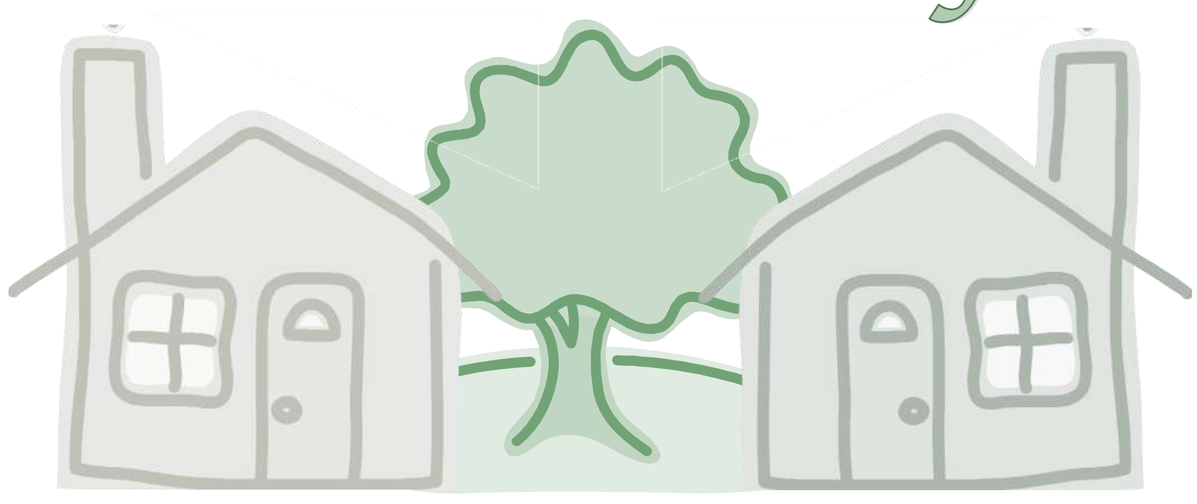


What We Learned

From the Housing Committee...

- People are fixing up their houses recently – perhaps because the cost of a new home is too high and fixing up an existing home is the only option
- Student loan debt is preventing younger people from saving for a down payment – or having the ability to squeeze another monthly payment out of their budget
- Many potential homebuyers have poor credit histories
- Bank lending regulations will be tightening even more in the coming months
- There is a lack of suitable housing in the $100k to $150k range
- The 34% of homeowners in the "over 65" age range may be an opportunity for newer maintenance-free housing, and allow for movement along the continuum of residential dynamics:



- We need to improve the quality of life in order to attract people – and subsequent housing improvements. Movie theater? More retail options?
- To encourage rehab or construction, develop incentives for homeowners and contractors

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