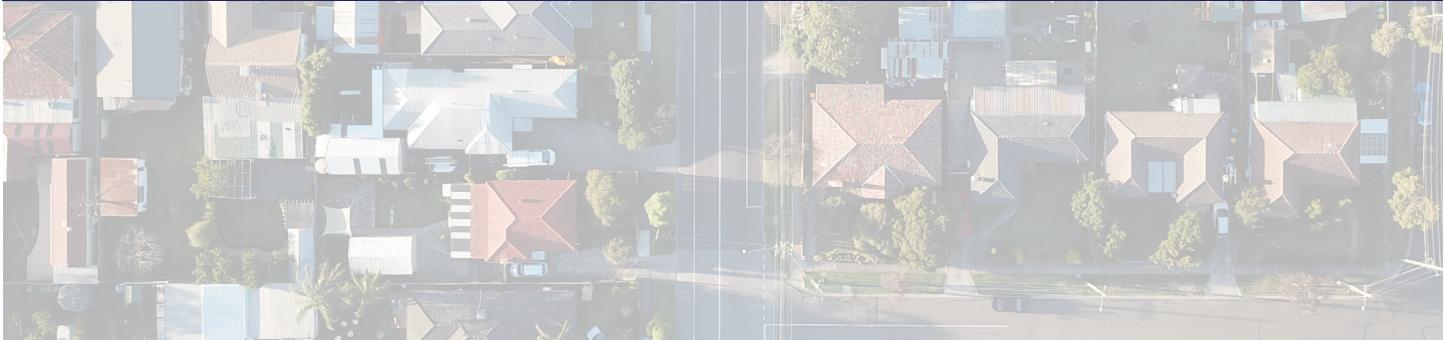




WALLACE COUNTY

Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Summary



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Wallace County: **Sharon Springs, Weskan, and Wallace**

1,529 population (2021)

\$86,200 median home value (2021)

\$56,538 median household income (2021)

2.6% unemployment rate (2023)

Projecting county **population growth**

Established **Four Part Housing Incentive Program** for assistance in demolition, painting, downsizing and incentives to sell vacant homes.

ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

An online questionnaire gathered input on housing needs from approximately **112** Wallace County residents, in addition to the following stakeholders:

Sharon Springs City Council

Harrison Township Board

Wallace County Community Development

Wallace County Appraiser

Wallace County Chamber of Commerce

USD 242 and USD 241

Integrity Ag

Larson Ag

Heartland Trucking

Seaboard Foods

CHS - United Plains Ag

21st Century Bean

Harrison Realty and Auction

HOUSING PRIORITIES

NEEDS

1

Owner-Occupied Housing

2

Renter-Occupied Housing

3

Homeownership and Developer Incentives

ASSETS

Open Space

Safety

Schools

HOUSING CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Wallace County assessed the entire county using property appraiser data.

Primary challenges observed: minor maintenance/repairs, vacant homes, and infrastructure deterioration.

87% of housing stock was built before 1980

Approximately 5% of housing is “unlivable”

65% of housing stock is “Fair-Average”

COUNTY CONTACT

Lissa Sexson

Wallace County Rural Champion

wacokscommdev@gmail.com

COMMERCE CONTACT

Liz Heron

Kansas Department of Commerce

elizabeth.heron@ks.gov

KANSAS
COMMERCE



PART 1: Create a housing committee or partner with relevant stakeholders and organizations

This assessment was completed with input and collaboration by the following individuals:

Wallace County Housing Committee:

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jay Sharp - Sharon Springs City Council
Chrysanne Grund - Harrison Township Board

COUNTY STAFF

Lissa Sexson - Wallace County Community Development

OTHER ENTITIES

JoAnna Basgall - Wallace County Appraiser, Chamber of Commerce
Jeff Montero - USD 242 Weskan Principal
Camille Murphy - Chamber of Commerce member, local business owner
Julie Samuelson
Jayne Pearce
Jonathan Dansel - Integrity Ag
Whitney Larson - Larson Ag
Darren Pletcher, Heartland Trucking

PART 2: Collect and analyze local data

A. Past Housing Initiatives, Infrastructure, and City Services Inventory

1 **PAST HOUSING INITIATIVES**

Identify any housing activity that has taken place in the last five years (including grants/programs, pending applications, private new construction, rental development, etc.). Explain what parties initiated the change. What has it done to improve or worsen the housing issues in your community?

In the last five years six individuals have built new houses for their own residency. Some of these new houses have brought new working-aged adults into the community with school-aged children who attend a public USD.

No new rental developments have occurred in the last five years.

In May of 2023, Wallace County Community Development released a four-part housing incentive program geared toward current housing stock, including demo assistance, paint assistance, downsizing assistance, and incentives to sell long-term vacant houses. At this time the programs have not been active enough to make assessments on the results.

2 **NEW CONSTRUCTION INITIATIVES**

Has your community currently or previously offered incentives to developers, contractors, and occupants to spur new development? If yes, briefly describe the incentive program and its usefulness in your community.

The May of 2023 release of Wallace County Community Development's four-part housing incentive program includes demo assistance of current dilapidated housing stock, but requires that applicants show intentions to rebuild or sell to another individual/developer with intentions to build.

The Wallace County Housing Advisory Committee did not have historical knowledge of any past incentives to attempt to spur new development.

PART 2: Collect and analyze local data

3 HOME REHABILITATION

Has your community currently or previously had any rehabilitation programs to assist homeowners to repair and improve their older homes? If yes, briefly describe the program and its impact.

As mentioned in #1 and #2, in May of 2023 Wallace County Community Development released a four-part housing incentive program geared toward current housing stock. Specific to repairs and improvement for older homes is the 'Paint the County' incentive. This allows individuals to apply for and receive up to \$500/house or rental for paint and supplies to repaint the exterior of their property. Paint and supplies must be purchased from a Wallace County business.

Outside of this local incentive, Wallace County has access to a Weatherization Assistance Program through the North Central Regional Planning Commission, the How\$mart Midwest Energy benefit, and USDA's Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants.

4 CODE ENFORCEMENT

What is the extent and effectiveness of code enforcement in your community? Is your community without codes?

The city of Sharon Springs, the county seat, does have codes for new builds and specific to mobile homes. In the other communities in Wallace County there are no codes.

5

HOME OWNERSHIP SUPPORT

Are there any incentives or financial support to encourage homeownership in your community (down payment assistance, local employer incentives, etc.)? If yes, how much are they utilized?

Some local business owners offer down payment assistance and financing to employees to assist with purchasing a home.

Traditional lenders also offer financial support to Wallace County in the process of homeownership. Wallace County has one banking institution, Eastern Colorado Bank. As well, residents often work with FSA and Farm Credit of Western Kansas.

At a wider community level there are no current incentives or financial support to encourage homeownership.

PART 2: Collect and analyze local data

6

INFRASTRUCTURE

Describe the infrastructure system (water, streets, sewer, storm drainage, internet service, natural gas distribution and electrical distribution) as it relates to housing needs. Are the operating systems mostly updated and efficient with minimal service interruptions? Are there large updates expected?

Internet Service - There are large updates with internet expected in the City of Wallace area in the very near future. Fiber is currently being laid in Weskan for internet as well.

Water Infrastructure - Each community in Wallace County is operational with their water infrastructure but has recognized issues to address in the near future.

7

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

What are the environmental issues in your community that could affect new housing decisions and locations? Examples include: flood zone, wetlands, railroad tracks, major roadways, brownfields, farmland, forest, endangered species, etc.

Drought is an environmental issue that may affect new housing decisions in Wallace County. Good highway access is seen as a positive environmental issue as Sharon Springs is at the intersection of two major highways.

8

DISASTERS

If applicable, describe any persisting natural disaster impacts on your community's housing. Disaster examples include flooding, tornado, fire, windstorm, etc.

Persisting natural disasters that impact Wallace County include wind, drought, prairie fires, and tornadoes.

PART 2: Collect and analyze local data

9

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

What are the community's homelessness prevention efforts? What assistance does the community provide or need for households near homelessness?

The Wallace County Health Department is the first contact in homelessness prevention.

Wallace County also has a local food pantry organized by the Ministerial Alliance, and is a county served by Harvest America.

10

BASIC SERVICES

Select the services in your community (Select all that apply).

- Grocery store
- Public High School
- Public Middle School
- Public Elementary School
- Private school
- Bank
- Medical clinic
- Gas station
- Public library
- Senior center
- Childcare
- Community center
- Other: pharmacy, three restaurants, motel b&b, parks, pool, disc golf course, golf course, hardware store, theater, liquor store, tire shops, coop, implement store, dollar store, merch shops, trash service business

11
OTHER

Other factors or significant events (major employer leaving, COVID pandemic population growth, etc.) not addressed above that are important factors for the housing in your community.

Other important factors to consider when looking at housing in Wallace County include individuals' hesitancy to sell property, low unemployment in the county, the demand for workers, and the inability to house new workers coming to the county.

B. Housing Needs Assessment

The Local Housing Solution's Housing Needs Assessment tool, created in partnership with PolicyMap, provides detailed reports for every U.S. Census community. Each report presents data, maps, and visualizations that describe local demographics and measures of housing affordability, housing stock characteristics, and variations in key housing indicators by race, ethnicity, age, and income. The tool compiles and visually displays public available national data sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Data on population, age, race, disability, and socioeconomic status provides insight on who lives in the community and informs decisions on how to meet diverse needs and allocate resources.

Estimated Population

Q1. Using the current population estimate and change since 2010, how do you predict the population to change over the next 20 years?

- Significantly increase
- Increase
- No change
- Decrease
- Significantly decrease

Q2. Using the data and local knowledge, how do you anticipate population change to impact your community's future housing need?

A combination of factors, including a hesitancy of individuals to sell, an aging housing stock, and few options for starter homes and/or downsizing has made available housing in Wallace County extremely limited.

Wallace County has experienced a population increase of approximately 2% from 2010 to 2020. Wallace County is one of 25 counties in the whole state that grew in population. And one of only 11 counties in the western half of Kansas to gain population in this time frame. Specific to the Northwest Kansas region, Wallace County experienced the 4th greatest population growth, with Finney, Scott, and Greeley gaining more.

Any additional growth in population over the next 20 years in Wallace County will require rehabilitation of aging homes, as well as new development of rental properties and single family housing.

PART 2: Collect and analyze local data

Poverty Level and Trend

Q3. Using the poverty estimate graph and local knowledge, describe how the poverty level in your community could influence your housing needs.

In Wallace County the share of people in poverty increased 1.3% from 10.2 in 2016 to 11.5 by 2021. In 2021, the share of people in poverty in Wallace County was the same as in Kansas and lower than the United States as a whole. The average poverty rate was similar regardless of race/ethnicity. In 2021, the poverty rate among older adults at 7.1% was lower than the overall county poverty rate of 11.5%.

Based on poverty levels, affordable rentals, quality starter homes, and generally wage-appropriate housing is needed in Wallace County.

Share of Population with a Disability

Q4. Using the disability data and local knowledge, describe how the share of population with disabilities in your community could influence your housing needs.

In Wallace County in 2021, the share of population with one or more disabilities was 17.6%, higher than the share for the state of Kansas (13.2%) and higher than the United States as a whole (12.6%)

Based on disability data, as well as an aging population who may increase the already high share of those with disabilities, housing needs should consider single-level and accessibility options, as well as wage-appropriate housing for those living on limited/set incomes.

PART 2: Collect and analyze local data

2. RENTAL AFFORDABILITY

A healthy housing market provides a diverse range of housing options, including rental and market homes affordable to people of different incomes. An examination of the percentage of households that rent their homes, and the characteristics of these renter households (age, income, and cost-burden) can help communities understand the needs of renters and the extent to which policy changes may be needed to help ensure those needs are met. The availability of rental units can encourage young professionals and families to move to a community and eventually settle down to purchase a home.

Q5. How did the share of households who rent in your community change from 2010 to 2020?

- Increase
- Little to no change
- Decrease

Q6. Which age cohorts are MOST likely to rent? (Choose 2-3)

- 15-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

Q7. How has the share of rental households that are moderately or severely cost-burdened changed from 2010 to 2020?

- Increase
- Little to no change
- Decrease

Q8. What is the monthly median rent in 2020?

\$510

Q9. What is the annual median family income in 2020?

\$55,909

Q10. Did the annual median family income keep up with the change in monthly median rent from 2010 to 2020?

No, the median family income did not keep pace with the monthly median rent from 2010 to 2020 in Wallace County. While the monthly median rent in Wallace County rose from \$411 in 2011 to \$509 in 2021, a growth of 23.8%, the annual median family income in Wallace County statistically rose only from \$55,227 to \$55,909, a growth of 1.2%.

Analysis: Rental Affordability

Q11. Using the data and local knowledge, what are the rental housing needs in your community?

The rental housing needs in Wallace County include available and wage-appropriate options for young individuals and families looking to return to Wallace County after their post-secondary education. As well as rentals available to newly retired and/or those looking to downsize.

3. HOMEOWNERSHIP AFFORDABILITY

Q12. How did the homeownership rate change in your community from 2010 to 2020?

- Increase
- Little to no change
- Decrease

Q14. What is the median home value in 2020?

\$86,200

Q15. What is the median family income?

\$55,909

Q16. Did the annual median family income keep up with the change in median home value from 2010 to 2020?

No. The median home value outpaced the rise in median family income in Wallace County.

Median home values in Wallace County have risen \$21,100 since 2011. As of 2021, a median home value in Wallace County was \$86,200 (increase of 32.4% since 2011 from \$65,100). During the period between 2011 and 2021, median family income in Wallace County has grown from \$55,227 (2011) to \$55,909 (2021), a growth of 1.2%.

Q17. Which home values are MOST prevalent in your community? (Choose 2-3)

- Less than \$60,000
- \$60,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 - \$199,999
- \$200,000 - \$299,999
- \$300,000 - \$399,999
- \$400,000 - \$499,999
- \$500,000 - 749,999
- \$750,000 - \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 or more

Q18. Which home values are LEAST prevalent in your community? (Choose 2-3)

- Less than \$60,000
- \$60,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 - \$199,999
- \$200,000 - \$299,999
- \$300,000 - \$399,999
- \$400,000 - \$499,999
- \$500,000 - 749,999
- \$750,000 - \$999,999
- \$1,000,000 or more

Q19. Are owner households more moderately or severely cost-burdened?

- Moderately Cost-Burdened
- Severely Burdened
- Same

Analysis: Homeownership Affordability

Q20. Using the data and local knowledge, what are the owner-occupied housing needs in your community?

Based on the decrease in homeownership in Wallace County between 2010 to 2020, down payment assistance may be an option to bring homeownership within reach of low- and moderate-income households.

Based on the community survey, \$100,000 - \$200,000 homes appear to be the price range of interest/need in Wallace County, with some willing to pay larger amounts for a new build.

Homeownership is highest in the eldest age group (90% ownership in 85+ years age group) indicating very few households are choosing to downsize or move into assisted living or other arrangements as they age in Wallace County. This homeownership stat is supported further by the Comparison of Counts of Small Units and One- to Two-Person Households, which states: In 2021, there were 48 studio or 1-bedroom units and 490 one-and two-person households in Wallace County (74.0% of all households). Further indicating, even if elderly wanted to downsize, there are not many options to do so. Therefore smaller homes and/or duplexes are seen as an owner-occupied housing need as the population of Wallace County ages.

4. DEDICATED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Analysis: Dedicated Affordable Housing

Q21. Does your community have subsidized housing? If yes, when is it expiring?

Yes. There are 12 rental units available for dedicated affordable housing. Restrictions on these units are set to expire by 2030. Local knowledge indicates these units will remain within the subsidized inventory as the City of Sharon Springs will likely elect to renew their rent subsidy contracts.

Q22. Describe how the subsidized housing and expiration dates impact your community's housing needs.

Local knowledge indicates these units will remain within the subsidized inventory as the City of Sharon Springs will likely elect to renew their rent subsidy contracts in 2030, assuring the continued availability of Federally Subsidized Housing Units.

5. ALIGNMENT OF HOUSING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Q23. Is crowded housing high in your community?

No

Q24. If yes, is the crowded housing more severe in owner or rental households in your community?

- Owner
- Renter
- Same
- N/A

Analysis: Alignment of Housing Supply and Demand

Q25. Using the data and local knowledge, how does the share of crowded housing impact your community's overall housing need?

As of 2021, the share of households reporting living in a severely crowded home in Wallace County was 0.0%. Crowding is not seen as impacting the community's housing needs.

6. HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

Q26. When was the majority of the homes in your community built? (Choose 1-2)

- Pre-1940
- 1940 - 1969
- 1970 - 1979
- 1980 - 1989
- 1990 - 1999
- 2000 +

Q27. Describe the age of your community's housing stock and how that impacts your community's housing need.

The median year a housing unit was built in Wallace County is 1961 (1979 for the U.S. as a whole). In Wallace County, 35.1% of the housing units were built before 1940.

“Aging housing stock” is defined as homes built before 1980, and if not well-maintained, is associated with issues such as energy efficiency and high renovation costs. 87% of all housing units in Wallace County were built before 1980.

The age of the housing stock in Wallace County indicates a need for demolition and renovation assistance.

Additionally, new housing needs to be built to just maintain the current population, as well as accommodate any additional population growth.

Q28. Describe the areas in or near your community with moderate to high flood risk.

There are no specific areas of Wallace County that are seen to be at moderate to high flood risk.

Q29. Describe how this impact housing investment in your community.

Flood risk is not seen as an impacting factor to housing investment in Wallace County.

7. HOUSING STOCK FOR OLDER ADULTS

Q30. How did the total share of senior households in your community change from 2015 to 2020?

- Increase
- Decrease
- No change

Q31. Which age cohort is more prevalent in the total share of senior households in your community?

- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 +

Q32. What is the potential housing need for new services or housing types for older adults?

Potential housing needs for older adults include single-level, accessible, affordable, smaller homes.

Analysis: Housing Stock for Older Adults

Q33. Considering the share of senior households and the largest senior age cohort in your community, how does this impact your community's housing needs?

31% of all Wallace County households are headed by a senior, with the 65-74 age cohort being most prevalent in the total share of senior households in your community.

The Comparison of Counts of Small Units and One- to Two-Person Households states: In 2021, there were 48 studio or 1-bedroom units and 490 one-and two-person households in Wallace County (74.0% of all households). Indicating, even if elderly wanted to downsize, there are not many options to do so currently.

Wallace County has a growing number of households over the age of 55+. When these households remain in Wallace County after retirement they create an opportunity for both a new employee and a housing unit to accommodate that new employee. Providing alternative housing for this aging demographic may free up housing for new employees in Wallace County. Additionally, there is a need for low maintenance housing options. These units can often serve two markets – the empty-nesters and retirees and the youngest households looking to “try-out” a community. Smaller homes and/or apartments/duplexes are seen as a housing need for Wallace County.

C. Stakeholder Interviews

The housing committee interviewed **FIVE** of the largest employers in the area and **ONE** local realtor to provide insight on the current and future housing needs.

QUESTIONS	USD 241 2023	USD 242 2023
Number of employees	50	29
Employee wage range	\$25,000 - \$100,000	\$9.50/hr - \$110,000/yr
Number of new jobs created in the last year	0	1
Number of new jobs expected to be created in the next year	0	1
Number of existing jobs that are unfilled because a lack of adequate housing	2	2
Is housing an issue for employee recruitment?	Yes	Yes
Number of employees living in the community but who have inadequate housing and are seeking better living conditions.	5	1
How many employees commute over 60 miles or over an hour for work?	0	0
Is the business planning an expansion or reduction in the workforce?	No	No

C. Stakeholder Interviews continued

QUESTIONS	CHS - United Plains Ag 2023	Seaboard Foods 2023
Number of employees	21	197
Employee wage range	\$18 - \$30/hr	\$15.50/hr - \$26/hr
Number of new jobs created in the last year	3	13
Number of new jobs expected to be created in the next year	2	10
Number of existing jobs that are unfilled because a lack of adequate housing	3	7
Is housing an issue for employee recruitment?	Yes	Yes
Number of employees living in the community but who have inadequate housing and are seeking better living conditions.	4	10
How many employees commute over 60 miles or over an hour for work?	2	50
Is the business planning an expansion or reduction in the workforce?	Expansion	No

C. Stakeholder Interviews

QUESTIONS	21st Century Bean 2023
Number of employees	26
Employee wage range	\$30,000 - \$50,000
Number of new jobs created in the last year	0
Number of new jobs expected to be created in the next year	0
Number of existing jobs that are unfilled because a lack of adequate housing	0
Is housing an issue for employee recruitment?	No
Number of employees living in the community but who have inadequate housing and are seeking better living conditions.	4
How many employees commute over 60 miles or over an hour for work?	20
Is the business planning an expansion or reduction in the workforce?	No

Analysis: Largest Employers

Using this data and local knowledge, what are the common trends for housing needs for the largest employers in the region? Are there anticipated future housing needs for the workforce? If so, what price range and housing type are needed?

A consensus among many Wallace County employers is that housing is an issue for employee recruitment and retention. One particular Wallace County employer expressed that the current labor shortage is a 'business-killer' and that housing was one of the main issues with hiring additional labor. There are current and future needs for workforce housing in Wallace County.

Based on the 2022 Kansas Wage Survey, Wallace County median wage reported was \$17.52/hr

C. Stakeholder Interviews continued

Analysis: continued

and \$36,441/year. At that income level, using the 28/36 Rule to consider the amount of debt an individual or household should assume, the maximum monthly house payment an individual could make would be about \$850. At a 6% interest rate and a 30 year mortgage, the total loan amount for a house would be approximately \$141,000. Individuals in this scenario may be interested in renting, purchasing and/or building smaller, one- and two-bedroom houses.

Considering Wallace County's 2021 median family income of \$56,538 allows the housing potential price to increase. Utilizing the same 28/36 Rule, the maximum monthly house payment a family could make would be about \$1,300. At a 6% interest rate and a 30 year mortgage, the total loan amount for a house would be approximately \$216,000. Families in this scenario may be interested in renting, purchasing and/or building larger two- to five-bedroom houses.

QUESTIONS	REALTOR #1: Tom Harrison, Harrison Realty and Auction
What HOUSING TYPE was ranked the highest need?	Senior Apartments and Senior Care Facilities
What HOUSING TYPE was ranked the lowest need?	Student Housing
What HOUSING STYLE was ranked the highest need?	Apartments, Duplexes, Detached Homes, and Manufactured Housing
What HOUSING STYLE was ranked the lowest need?	Condominiums
Takeaways or comments	

D. Regional Housing Analysis

List the “Housing Opportunities & Challenges” for your region (located at the end of each region chapter).

- Aging Population
- Strong Demand for Rental Housing
- Need for Low Maintenance Options
- Housing Demand driven by:
 - A large number of unfilled jobs
 - The need to replace aging housing units
 - The need for newer rental housing
 - An aging population that is seeking lower maintenance options

Describe how these regional housing challenges continue to impact your community’s housing.

Many of the challenges/opportunities impacting Northwest Kansas as a region are also visible in Wallace County.

E. Housing Physical Condition Assessment

Describe the focus area of your housing assessment (entire community, neighborhood, etc.) and information collected.

Wallace County chose to assess the entire county in our Housing Assessment Tool. Much of this decision was based on readily available data, and the inaccuracies we found when considering the small populations of specifically two of our communities -- Wallace (pop. 45) and Weskan (pop. 103).

Specific to the Housing Physical Condition Assessment, county appraiser data was used to assess housing conditions in the least subjective manner available. From that data, approximately 5% of all housing in Wallace County is considered 'Unlivable'. With most Wallace County housing (65%) falling within mid-range conditions of 'Fair - Average Minus - Average'.

Most of the 'Unlivable' housing is found in Sharon Springs.

Most houses in Wallace County have 2- to 3-bedrooms, each category with 39% and accounting for 78% of all housing.

What are the primary housing challenges observed from the physical condition assessment? (Select 1-3)

- Minor maintenance or repairs
- Trash or vehicles in yard
- Deteriorated homes (2 major structural problems)
- Dilapidated homes (3 + major structural problems)
- Vacant homes
- Neighborhood development (lack of lighting, streetscape)
- Infrastructure deterioration (streets, sidewalk)
- Other:

If collected, is there a higher concentration between owner- vs. rental-occupied units deteriorated or dilapidated?

Not Collected.

Are there neighborhoods or parts of town with higher concentrations of deteriorated or dilapidated homes?

Approximately 5% of all housing in Wallace County is considered 'Unlivable'. Most of the 'Unlivable' housing (69%) is found in Sharon Springs.

What are the key takeaways from the housing condition assessment?

Key takeaways from the housing conditions assessment include considerations of the age of the Wallace County housing stock, and how that may affect housing conditions. "Aging housing stock" is defined as homes built before 1980, and if not well-maintained, is associated with issues such as energy efficiency and high renovation costs. 87% of all housing units in Wallace County were built before 1980.



PART 3: Community engagement

Public input and ongoing engagement are essential components of the planning process to ensure the identified housing needs, goals, and actions reflect the needs and desires of your residents. Integrating their input through the planning process increases support for implementation and can reveal new stakeholders to further address housing needs.

1. Describe your community engagement method and target audience? Approximately how much of the community did you engage?

The Wallace County Housing Advisory Committee conducted an online questionnaire utilizing Google Forms. 112 responses were received through this form.

2. What are the identified housing needs and concerns by community residents?

52% of respondents indicated the maximum dollar they would spend to buy a new house would be between \$100,000 and \$200,000. When asked about building rather than buying, the maximum dollar indicated jumped to \$150,000 - \$300,000 for 57.5% of respondents.

LOCATION:

31% of respondents indicated their ideal area to build or buy a home in Wallace County was Sharon Springs. 16% indicated Weskan.

54% of respondents indicated their ideal Wallace County location to build or buy a home was “in the county” but only five or fewer miles outside of town. 33% preferred 5-10 miles outside of town. Only 7% of respondents considered 15+ miles outside of town as ideal.

PROPERTY SIZE:

41% of respondents indicated their ideal Wallace County property size to be 1-5 acres. 30% indicated 5-10 acres as ideal. 27% indicated a few lots in town as being ideal.

OVERALL IMPRESSION:

87% of all respondents indicated their overall impression of housing is that Wallace County needs more.

REHABILITATION:

51% of respondents indicated 1-4 houses in their immediate neighborhood being in need of rehabilitation.

WHAT WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL?

79% of respondents indicated they thought mid-sized 3-bedroom houses would be successful in Wallace County. 50% of respondents thought small 1- or 2-bedroom houses would be successful.

SUPPORT:

61% of respondents said they would support grants or low-interest loans to housing developments.



PART 3: Community engagement continued

3. What are the identified housing needs and concerns by builders and/or developers? (or N/A if not applicable)

N/A

4. What are the key takeaways from the community engagement initiative?

Key takeaways from the community engagement initiative is that many see any new housing, regardless of specific location or property size as being needed.

PART 4: Final assessment of data, input and setting priorities

Once the housing committee thoroughly reviews the community's data and public input, the committee pulls it all together to establish a clear assessment of the local housing needs. This is the opportunity to set clear objectives and priorities for housing in a community.

HOUSING NEEDS

OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING:

Owner-occupied housing is needed in Wallace County in order to capitalize on the job-availability and quality of life factors available. Population in a rural space oftentimes determines the wealth of the county and thereby the services available. Wallace County hit a record low in population in 2010. By 2020, Wallace County had grown by approximately 2%, the fourth largest growth by county in that time frame in all of Western Kansas. Considering the age of the Wallace County housing stock, in order to support any additional growth in population, we must rehabilitate vacant properties and/or build new. Owner-occupied housing assures more permanent placement of individuals and families and allows them to 'sink roots'.

1

RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING:

There is a need for low maintenance housing options. These units can often serve two markets – the empty-nesters and retirees and the youngest households looking to "try-out" a community. Smaller homes and/or apartments/duplexes are seen as a housing need for Wallace County.

2

Renter-occupied housing is needed in order to capitalize on the job-availability in Wallace County and nearby areas. There is a severe labor shortage in Northwest Kansas currently. Renter-occupied housing allows individuals and families to 'try-out' the community.

Wallace County has a growing number of households over the age of 55+. When these households remain in Wallace County after retirement they create an opportunity for both a new employee and a housing unit to accommodate that new employee. Providing alternative housing for this aging demographic, such as a rental, may free up housing for new employees/people in Wallace County.

PART 4: Final assessment of data, input and setting priorities

HOUSING NEEDS

HOMEOWNERSHIP AND DEVELOPER INCENTIVES:

Homeownership allows individuals and families to ‘sink roots’ in a place. Homeownership incentives such as down payment and closing cost assistance helps low- and moderate-income families overcome one of the most common barriers to homeownership—accumulating sufficient savings to make a down payment and pay for closing costs on a mortgage. Many families can afford a monthly mortgage payment, but lack sufficient savings for these initial expenses, which can be up to 30 percent of the sales price. Homeownership incentives such as down payment and closing cost assistance programs can help families who lack savings become successful homeowners.

3

The housing development process can be particularly challenging. Wallace County may find that additional incentives are required to encourage the creation of wage-appropriate housing units.

HOUSING ASSETS

OPEN SPACE:

1

Indicated on the community housing survey and repeatedly in community conversations, one of the greatest assets of Wallace County is its ‘nothing-ness’, its wide open spaces and the sense of freedom it gives people. Commutes are generally short and you rarely have to deal with traffic. The air is clean. The horizon and sense of opportunity is expansive.

SAFETY:

2

Safety in Wallace County is a great asset. There is little-to-no crime. Law enforcement is known by name, as well as EMTs and members of the fire department. Kids are able to play freely within neighborhoods with little worry of harm.

SCHOOLS:

3

Wallace County has two accredited PK through 12th grade USDs. The student to teacher ratio in both are great and they routinely are acknowledged at the state level for their quality of education.

FINAL QUESTIONS

Are there specific regions or neighborhoods in your community that needs concentrated effort?

Sharon Springs is the county seat and most populous town in Wallace County. The community survey respondents reported the greatest interest to build/buy housing in and around Sharon Springs. Additionally, the majority of housing units deemed 'Unlivable' by the Housing Conditions Assessment were found in Sharon Springs. Therefore, by those data points, Sharon Springs may be a specific area that needs concentrated effort.

However, Wallace County is a very small, rural space with a total county population of approximately 1500 people. Any efforts put towards areas of the county outside of Sharon Springs would also be productive in the overall housing shortage in Wallace County and in Northwest Kansas.

Describe the community's timeline for addressing the priorities.

Efforts are currently being made to address the current aging housing stock. In May of 2023, Wallace County Community Development released a four-part housing incentive program geared toward current housing stock, including demo assistance, paint assistance, downsizing assistance, and incentives to sell long-term vacant houses.

Future efforts include specifically incentives geared towards homeownership and developers. The aim is to begin these efforts immediately.

Identify the local stakeholders who will be involved in addressing priorities.

Wallace County Community Development
Wallace County Commissioners
Wallace County Businesses
Wallace County Chamber of Commerce
Sharon Springs City Council
Weskan Township
City of Wallace

What are the largest obstacles in addressing the priority areas?

Some of the largest obstacles in addressing the Wallace County housing priority areas are bridging the public/private sectors to make moderate income housing projects happen, broaching incentives for developers that may entail property tax abatements, finding developers ready and willing to invest/build, and finding available land.

OCCUPANCY	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Owner-occupied housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renter-occupied housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Temporary housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOUSING TYPE	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Entry-level single-family housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mid-level single-family housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High-level single-family housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large, lot acreage housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Townhomes / row houses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Duplexes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Multi-family apartments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Condominiums (condos)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manufactured / mobile homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Senior (independent) housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Senior care facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Downtown housing (above commercial)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
POPULATION	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Young professional housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Family housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Senior housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Workforce housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disabled housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low-to-moderate income housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Moderate income housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High income housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homeless housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Former incarcerated housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HOUSING INITIATIVES	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
New construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Infill development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demolition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Homeownership incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Developer incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Code enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homelessness prevention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brownfield development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

HOUSING FACTORS	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Affordability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Historic homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing type variety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing price variety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Aging housing stock	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Construction costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Worker shortage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vacancy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Flood zones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

INFRASTRUCTURE / AMENITIES	HOUSING ASSET	NEUTRAL	HOUSING NEED
Water distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stormwater drainage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sanitary sewer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sidewalks / trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Streets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks / open space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliable internet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
City services (library, pool, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency / safety (fire, police)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail / restaurants	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs / employment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proximity to urban areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>