

Chapter 4

Housing

A. OVERVIEW

Good housing and safe neighborhoods are essential for Fairmont's social and economic growth. The housing situation in Fairmont is no different than that of other municipalities in West Virginia, in that it is driven by economics, politics, and the practices of private businesses, public agencies, and the residents themselves. Housing affects the social fabric of neighborhoods and the strong emotions that people maintain with respect to their immediate environment have an impact on the larger community.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan will analyze projected housing needs and the different types of housing needed, including affordable housing and housing accessible to persons with disabilities; Identify the number of projected necessary housing units and sufficient land needed for all housing needs; Address substandard housing; Identify opportunities for rehabilitating and improving existing housing as well as address the practice of adaptive reuse of buildings for housing and encourage infill housing where appropriate. This analysis will aid the City of Fairmont in making recommendations that will help to preserve, maintain and improve the existing housing stock, address those properties which need attention, strengthen the existing residential neighborhoods, and enhance the development opportunities for new housing.

In recent years the I-79 Corridor, between Morgantown and Bridgeport, has seen positive demographic changes which will continue to affect the housing needs in the Corridor in general and the Fairmont area in particular. The I-79 Corridor has experienced isolated increases in population as well as housing units. These isolated growth areas within the I-79 Corridor are a reflection of future trends that can be expected to spread throughout its entire length. Fairmont must capitalize on this trend and plan for this anticipated growth in population. However, the City of Fairmont must be mindful that many families can be priced out of the new housing market if rapidly escalating prices occur and therefore should strive for affordable housing choices for all citizens regardless of racial, social, economic or physical characteristics. This may be accomplished by encouraging land uses for residential purposes in ways that protect the environment, enhance property values, stimulate visual interest, protect existing neighborhoods, and which affirm community values through an intergovernmental framework and private sector partnerships.

B. GOALS AND ACTIONS

The goal and actions pertaining to housing recognize that the housing stock of the community must be safe, attractive and affordable. It must offer an array of housing choices in both type and price, and practices such as rehab, adaptive reuse and infill are vital to the strengthening of the existing housing stock as well as the future of new housing in Fairmont

Goal:

Ensure that the housing stock of the community is safe, healthy, and diverse, that affordable and attractive housing is available to the existing and future residents of the community.

Actions:

- Promote Fair Housing practices within the City of Fairmont.
- Promote the development of new housing and the preservation of existing housing to meet the needs of present and future residents.
- Ensure that the housing stock is safe, affordable, and serves people of various economic, cultural, racial and physical classes.
- Demand high quality in the design of all new housing by establishing site plan review, architectural standards, modern subdivision requirements and design guidelines.
- Provide safe, clean, and affordable rental housing.
- Identify, secure and remove all vacant, dilapidated and deteriorated structures in the community.
- Support the efforts of non-profit organizations and private sector partners taking on the role of providing housing in the community.
- Continue assistance to those organizations providing housing to the homeless and disabled.
- Maintain commitment to the renewal and revitalization of blighted neighborhoods.

C. EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Households

The number of households in a community is an indicator of the population in the area. An increase in the number of households typically reflects a population increase. Marion County experienced a loss of total households between 1980 and 1990. The municipalities of Fairmont, Clarksburg, and Morgantown also lost households during the same period. The number of households in Bridgeport increased ten percent from 1980 to 1990. From 1990-2000, the number of households in Fairmont and Clarksburg again decreased, while the number of households in Bridgeport and Morgantown increased, as did the households in Marion County.

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS

Households	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Fairmont	9,727	9,063	-6.8	8,447	-6.8
Bridgeport	2,424	2,667	10.0	2,988	12.0
Clarksburg	9,384	7,944	-15.3	7,447	-6.3
Morgantown	9,664	9,588	-0.8	10,782	12.5
Marion County	24,409	22,667	-7.7	23,652	4.3

2. Household size

The average household size for the City of Fairmont declined by 9 percent between 1980 and 1990. A steady decline in the household size over the last ten years has occurred in the I-79 municipalities in north central West Virginia. The decline in household size may be attributed to young people moving out in search of education and employment opportunities, a decline in births, a more mobile middle age population segment, or a higher percentage of single elderly people. All of these factors may have contributed to a reduction in the size of the average family. As illustrated by the chart below, this trend continued from 1990-2000.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Persons/HH	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Fairmont	2.45	2.23	-9.0	2.16	-3.1
Bridgeport	2.72	2.53	-7.0	2.41	-4.7
Clarksburg	2.39	2.27	-5.0	2.20	-3.2
Morgantown	2.85	2.70	-5.3	2.08	23.0

3. Housing Units



The total number of housing units in the City of Fairmont decreased between 1980 and 1990 by 5.2%. The County experienced a lower percent decrease during the same period. A decrease in housing units may be attributed to dilapidated units being abandoned and demolished. Loss of units may also be attributed to the conversion to other uses. Housing units in Marion County have increase during the period between 1990 and 2000 and have actually surpassed the level of those numbers of units in 1980. The number of housing units in the City of Fairmont continued to decline from 1990 to 2000 by 203 units. Housing units also decreased in Clarksburg, while housing units have increased in Morgantown and Bridgeport during this same time period.

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

Housing Units	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Fairmont	10,507	9,958	-5.2	9,755	-2.0
Bridgeport	2,501	2,773	10.9	3,190	15.0
Clarksburg	10,053	9,245	-8.0	8,662	-6.0
Morgantown	10,328	10,422	0.9	11,721	12.5
Marion County	26,217	25,491	-2.8	26,660	4.6

4. Housing Vacancy

There will always be a certain percentage of vacancies in every city's housing stock. This is the result of a fluctuating housing market in a free market economy. Vacancies can be the result of new housing construction awaiting its initial occupancy, units being placed on the market for sale due to a death or relocation, expiration of a lease agreement, and the condition of the property. Property conditions need not imply deteriorated conditions when studying vacancy rates.

As shown in the Table below, vacant housing represented 13 percent of all housing units in Fairmont during 1990. The vacancy rate should be evaluated in terms of owner-occupied and rental units to get a clearer understanding of the tenure pattern. Between 1980 and 1990 the total number of occupied housing units in the City of Fairmont decreased by 1,151 units while Marion County experienced a decrease of 875 units during the same period.

HOUSING UNIT VACANCY

		Occupied	%	Vacant	% Vacant
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Housing Units	Total Units	Units	Occupied Units	Units	Units
Fairmont					
1980	10,507	9,729	92.6	778	7.4
1990	9,859	8,578	87.0	1,281	13.0
2000	9,755	8,447	86.6	1,308	13.4
Bridgeport					
1980	2,501	2,410	96.4	91	3.6
1990	2,773	2,667	96.2	106	3.8
2000	3,190	2,988	93.7	202	6.3
Clarksburg					
1980	10,053	9,371	93.2	682	6.8
1990	9,245	7,950	86.0	1,295	14.0
2000	8,662	7,447	86.0	1,215	14.0
Morgantown					
1980	10,328	9,628	93.2	700	6.8
1990	10,422	9,588	91.9	834	8.0
2000	11,721	10,782	92.0	939	8.0
Marion County					
1980	26,217	24,409	93.1	1,808	6.9
1990	25,491	22,667	88.9	2,824	11.1
2000	26,660	23,652	88.8	3,008	11.2

5. Housing Areas

A. Residence “A” District

Is the most restrictive residential district under the current zoning code of the City of Fairmont. Permits single-family dwellings for occupancy by (1) an individual (2) two or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption, or foster relationship or (3) not more than two unrelated individuals. Does not permit Mobile Homes or Manufactured Homes built to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards specifications.

B. Residence “A1” District

The district permits the same restrictive use of single-family dwellings to be occupied by; (1) an individual (2) two or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption, or foster relationship or (3) not more than two unrelated individuals. Does not permit Mobile Homes.



Homes built to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards specifications are permitted by conditional use.

C. Residence “B” District

This district permits residential dwellings with individual units for not more than four families, with families defined as; (1) an individual; (2) two or more persons related by blood, marriage, adoption or foster relationship; (3) not more than three unrelated individuals. Mobile Homes are not permitted in this residential zoning district.

Manufactured homes built to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards specifications are permitted in this district.

D. Residence “C” District

Multi-unit apartment buildings for any number of families, boarding or lodging houses, senior citizens’ housing as well as college fraternity and sorority houses and dormitories are permitted in this district. Approved mobile home parks are permitted in this district, provided they meet the criteria established by the zoning ordinance.

E. Sallyfield Estates

Annexed into the corporate limits of the City of Fairmont in 2000, Sallyfield Estates contains two residential areas for manufactured housing on approximately 85 lots.

F. Mobile Home Parks

There are three mobile home parks in the corporate limits of Fairmont. All three are grand fathered areas having been in use prior to the Mobile Home Ordinance of 1976, or being established prior to being annexed into the corporate limits. Respectively, the mobile home parks located off of Morgantown Avenue and East Park Avenue were created prior to the Zoning Ordinance in 1959, and the mobile home park located off of Stony Road was in existence at the time of annexation in 1999.

6. Housing Unit Types

While the 2000 Census data lists 9,755 housing units in the City of Fairmont, a recently completed (2004) housing study performed by the Fairmont/Morgantown Housing Authority credits the city with an additional 220 units broken down in the following manner:

- A. Single Family Homes – 6,978

- B. Duplexes – 924
- C. 3 or more units – 1,906
- D. Mobile Homes – 167

7. Homeless/Emergency Shelters

A. Scott Place Shelter

North Central WV Community Action operates the local homeless shelter in Fairmont known as Scott Place. The shelter provides a 45-bed facility for men, women, and children. The facility is equipped for handicapped individuals. Funding for the operating costs of the shelter comes primarily through WV Department of Health and Human Resource Emergency Shelter Grant Program, United Way allocations, local church donations, and other local organizations. Donations of food, clothing, furnishings, and other household items are accepted.

Trained shelter workers staff the facility 24 hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year. The shelter provides three meals per day and laundry facilities.

Case management and service plans provide a framework for providing independent living skills, money management, assistance in job training, and seeking permanent housing. Information and counseling are available through Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Some residents work part-time while residing at the shelters. The staff and client work to establish realistic goals in helping the client become self-supporting.

B. Union Mission

Located on Jefferson Street the Union Mission is operated by West Virginia Rescue Ministries and provides year round meals programs, emergency shelter for entire families, addiction recovery programs for men, needed items can be purchased at low rates, work with the elderly, job placement and skills training available.

C. HOPE Inc.

Provides food, clothing, shelter, counseling, 24 hour hotline, advocacy, transportation and other support services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

8. Subsidized Housing

A. Marion Unity Apartments

Located on Quincy Street, units are available to persons 62 and older or, those persons with disabilities. Units are equipped with, Stove/Refrigerator, Air Conditioning, and Laundry Facilities. HUD approved and eligible for subsidy, TDD compliant, the facility affords equal housing opportunities and provides a social worker of staff.

B. Fairmont Arbors

Located at 410 Cleveland Avenue, the Arbors has 120 beds and is 97% occupied. Units are equipped with, Stove/Refrigerator, Air Conditioning, and Laundry Facilities. HUD approved and eligible for subsidy, TDD compliant, the facility affords equal housing opportunities and provides a social worker of staff. .

C. East View Unity Apartments

Located on Jefferson Street, units are available to persons 62 and older or, those persons with disabilities. Units are equipped with, Stove/Refrigerator, Air Conditioning, and Laundry Facilities. HUD approved and eligible for subsidy, TDD compliant, the facility affords equal housing opportunities and provides a social worker of staff.

D. Fairmont Housing Authority

The Fairmont Housing Authority offers 136 apartments in 7 separate developments. Located on the East and West side of Fairmont, each development is different and offers a number of attractive amenities. Units range in size from one bedroom to five bedroom apartments in several styles, Townhouse and Duplex. All developments have several fully handicap accessible units. Families who are at or below 50% of the area median income only pay 30% of their adjusted monthly income for rent.

To be eligible for Fairmont Housing Rental Apartments you must be an adult over the age of eighteen (18) years of age or an emancipated minor. Your household income cannot exceed the following federally established income limits.

# In the family	Annual Income Limits*
1	\$12,950
2	\$14,800
3	\$16,650
4	\$18,500
5	\$20,000
6	\$21,450
7	\$22,950
8	\$24,400
* Based on FY 2001 HUD published income limits	

Fairmont Housing also has an affordable rent structure for families above established income limits. Households above the federal income guidelines may rent an apartment at current market rent.

Bedroom Size	Rent per Month
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1 bedroom	\$322.00
2 bedrooms	\$397.00
3 bedrooms	\$508.00
4 bedrooms	\$587.00
5 bedrooms	\$670.00

The Federal Government requires all applicants to be screened. The screening process include but is not limit to a credit check, landlord references, and criminal background check. Applicants who have engaged in violent, or drug related criminal activities, or who are registered sex offenders are ineligible.

9. Housing Organizations

A. Fairmont Community Development Partnership

The Fairmont Community Development Partner ship (FCDP) is an independent, non-profit, corporation located at 109C Fairmont Avenue. The FCDP’ s mission is neighborhood revitalization through economic development on a block-by-block basis. The FCDP goal is to improve the quality of life in Fairmont, through neighborhood building, and affordable housing through housing preservation and construction.

B. Fairmont/Morgantown Housing Authority

The mission of the Fairmont/Morgantown Housing Authority, located at 103 12th Street, is to provide low and moderate-income families of Monongalia, Marion, Taylor and Preston counties with comfortable and affordable housing. If you are looking to rent or buy, FMHA offers many great housing options which include:

Section 8 Rental Assistance
Fairmont Rental Communities
Lease to Own Home Ownership Program
Homebuyer Mortgage Financing



The Housing Authority is also able to utilize its sister organization, Augusta Development Corporation to develop market rate housing opportunities for the community.

C. Vandalia Heritage Foundation

Vandalia Heritage Foundation has a housing component in their organization to further their overall mission of historic preservation. A local housing project on Benoni Avenue has been programmed with the local historic architecture reflected in the design scheme for the new housing.

D. Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity currently has affiliates in 100 countries worldwide. The Marion County affiliate is headquartered in Fairmont. To date Habitat has built six houses in Fairmont. Families must meet certain qualifications, and provide some sweat equity in order to receive a loan for a Habitat house.

E. North Central West Virginia Community Action

North Central West Virginia Community Action is a social service provider covering nine counties. NCWVCA provides several social services for low and moderate income households like Head Start, and their Summer Lunch programs. Among their housing related programs NCWVCA administers Scott Place emergency Shelter, and also offers a weatherization program to provide low cost repairs for those who qualify to make homes weather-tight thereby lower winter heating costs. NCWCA's two main housing programs are:

HOME Loan Program

Home Ownership Made Easy is a loan program funded by WV Housing Development Fund. This program provides new home ownership opportunities for income-eligible individuals or families who have a steady source of income and a good credit rating. Credit payments are negotiated with WV Housing Development Fund, which lowers the payment to a percentage of the household income. Loans are given over a twenty-year period at 0% fixed rate, with the unpaid balance forgiven at the end of the period

HELP Loan Program

WV Housing Development Fund also funds Home Emergency Loan Program. This program provides for emergency repairs to an owner-occupied home. The program addresses repairs such as furnaces, new roofs, and foundations. The minimum loan amount is \$1,000 and the

maximum may go as high as \$10,000 with written approval from WV Housing Development. Applicants who exceed 80% of the median family income will require approval by the Executive Director of the WV Housing Development Fund. Emergency situations dictate the use of HELP funds. Structural or construction problems that threaten the health or safety of inhabitants constitute emergency situations. NCWVCAA does not issue HELP funds for use in the 100-year flood plain or where there has been flood damage. Community Action issues HELP Loans at 3% interest over 8 years. Clients pay whatever the amortized amount is for their loan for that period.

10. Substandard Housing/Blighted Properties

The City of Fairmont through the Planning and Building Inspection Department maintains a database of structures located within the corporate limits that are of substandard condition for human habitation. These structures are classified as being vacant, abandoned, and dilapidated in need of demolition for the health, safety and general welfare of the City of Fairmont. There are currently approximately 85 structures on the list. Led by the Code Enforcement Officer, Building Inspector and Deputy Building Inspector, the City of Fairmont regulates the condition of these structures under the 2000 ICC Property Maintenance Code. Owners of structures found to be in substandard condition are provided notice that the structure is in a state of disrepair and the person or persons responsible are given a timeframe to either bring the structure into compliance with the applicable sections of the Property Maintenance Code or demolish the structure.

Local non-profit organizations such as the Fairmont Community Development Partnership are doing more than their fare share of the work to reduce and eliminate the number of substandard and blighted properties in the city with their Maple/Ogden Gateway Project. The Maple/Ogden Gateway Project not only is addressing the reduction of substandard and blighted housing in this section of the City with the demolition of blighted substandard structures, but the segmented phases of these community development project is yielding new housing units being constructed and rehabilitated.

The City of Fairmont currently operates a revolving loan fund for individuals, organizations and businesses to access for the purpose of demolishing substandard and blighted structures. With funds provided by the West Virginia Housing Development Fund, the City of Fairmont has loaned approximately \$65,000 of a total fund of \$100,000 to individuals and entities for the above stated purpose in the last two years.

11. Rental Housing

- City of Fairmont Rental Registration Program
- Fairmont State University Impact

- Commuter Population
- Apartment Complexes

12. Manufactured Housing

The current City of Fairmont Zoning Code permits manufactured housing in Residence A1, Residence B, and Residence C as a conditional uses. For Residence A1 the following conditions apply:

1. The structure shall be installed on a permanent masonry perimeter foundation that complies with the requirements and conditions established by CABO One and Two Single Family Dwelling Building Code or its successor;
2. All tow bars, wheels, hitches and axles shall be removed upon installation of the manufactured or factory built home upon the permanent foundation;
3. No horizontal dimension of the main body shall have a width of less than twenty-four (24) feet and a length of forty (40) feet;
4. The structure shall contain a minimum of 960 square feet of living space;
5. Pitch of the main roof shall not be less than one foot of rise for each four feet of horizontal run, i.e., 3/12 pitch;
6. All exterior walls coverings shall be wood or masonry finish or its appearance and/or horizontally grooved or lap sided, or its appearance. Unfinished plywood, oriented strand board, or other sheeting materials shall not be installed as a finished siding. The use of flat, vertical or corrugated metal for the exterior walls or roof shall be strictly prohibited;
7. The design and style of the structure shall be in harmony with the neighborhood and consistent with the design, size and style of the surrounding existing homes;
8. The proposed location of the structure is not in a designated historic district or an area that is eligible for an historic designation.
9. All applicable front, side, and rear yard requirements, height restrictions, and lot size requirements are satisfied.

For Residence B the following conditions must be met:

1. The structure shall be installed on a permanent masonry perimeter foundation;
2. No horizontal dimension of the main body shall be less than twenty-four feet;
3. (3) Pitch of the main roof shall be not less than one foot of rise for each four feet of horizontal run, i.e., 3/12 pitch; and
4. Exterior wall covering shall be wood or masonry finish, or its appearance, and/or vertically or horizontally grooved or lap siding, or its appearance.
5. However, use of flat or corrugated metal for the exterior walls or roof covering is

prohibited.

Residence C permits mobile home parks that meet the following conditions:

1. A minimum of eight mobile home spaces are available;
2. Each mobile home space is a minimum of three thousand square feet in size;
3. All mobile homes and accessory buildings are not located within fifteen feet of one another or a private road/street within the park;
4. All mobile homes and accessory buildings are not located within twenty feet of a park boundary line or public right-of-way;
5. At least two paved off-street parking spaces are available on each mobile home space;
6. A buffer area of maintained shrubbery or a solid screen fence not less than six feet in height is provided between the mobile home park and adjacent residential areas;
7. All private mobile home park roadways are constructed of concrete or asphalt in compliance with West Virginia Division of Highways' Standards for Highway Construction and maintained by the mobile home park owner; The mobile home park owner assumes responsibility for all refuse collection;
8. Illumination for internal streets shall be provided and maintained by the mobile home park owner;
9. Each mobile home must be tied down and have underpinning in accordance with applicable building codes;
10. Two hundred square feet of recreation area shall be provided for each mobile home space; and,
11. Fire protection facilities and water supply for fire protection shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief.

13. Community Initiatives

- Fairmont State University Project
- I-79 Gateway Connector Project

D. BASIC ISSUES

The following section contains a summary of some of the major concerns in regards to the topic of housing in the City of Fairmont and are categorized as: 1) Existing housing; 2) New housing; 3) Elderly housing; 4) Rental housing and 5) Substandard Housing.

EXISTING HOUSING

The existing housing stock in Fairmont is aging. The majority of housing units (nearly 72%) in Fairmont were built before 1960.

NEW HOUSING

New housing starts in Fairmont have been sluggish in recent years, with only 153 new units built between 1995 and 1999. There is also a need for housing in the \$60,000.00 to \$100,000.00 range.

ELDERLY HOUSING

The City of Fairmont has an aging population whose housing needs have changed. The City lacks retirement village, or assisted living options.

RENTAL PROPERTY

The rental properties are inspected biannually, and are only required to meet the minimum standards of the 200 ICC Code. There is a lack of quality multi unit rentals in the city.

SUBSTANDARD HOUSING

The city has over seventy structures listed on its demolition list. These structures are mostly residences that have fallen into disrepair and are unfit for habitation. Many of these structures are substandard lots and could not be rebuilt once they are demolished.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Short Range (2005-2008)

- a. Zoning regulations should be modified and new subdivision regulations enacted to allow greater flexibility for new housing developments and housing units to be constructed in the corporate limits.
- b. Code enforcement measures should be strengthened to address substandard property and the absentee responsible property owner.
- c. The City of Fairmont should seek additional funding from West Virginia Housing Development Fund for their Demolition Loan Program.
- d. The City of Fairmont should continue to support the efforts of the Fairmont Community Development Partnership in the Maple/Ogden Gateway Project through grant application sponsorships.
- e. Other community non-profits should be encourage to partner with the City of Fairmont in applying for grant funding to construct new housing and or demolish substandard housing.
- f. Mobile homes should only be permitted in approved parks and subdivisions.
- g. The City should continue the Rental Registration Program and review and modify any conflicting or cumbersome procedures to improve its effectiveness.

2. Medium Range (2008-2011)

- a. Tax abatement, amortization schedules, and low interest loans from local banks are available for new and existing homes. This is in spite of competition for

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limited resources. The City should partner with community housing organizations to sponsor community workshops that could educate the residents on the methods of financing that are available to them. The private sector should work closely with the City. The private sector can assist with tax credits. Tax credits would make it financially rewarding for people to build or remodel homes.

- b. A Landlord Association should be developed to establish standard leases, tenant screening, tenant selection, and eviction procedures. Landlords should be trained to properly manage their properties, keep better records, and write better lease agreements.
- c. The City's Building Department should continue to maintain a detailed inventory of housing conditions and identify those structures that are deteriorating or are dilapidated.
- d. The City of Fairmont should work through the West Virginia Code Officials to improve the existing housing code. Violators of the housing code should be identified, as soon as possible, so that costly repairs and visual blight may be minimized.
- e. The Economic Adjustment Strategy (1996) identifies the need for good quality housing in the \$70,000-90,000 price range. Several buildings in the Downtown should be analyzed through a feasibility study to determine which buildings could be converted to house upscale condominiums (\$80,000 to \$100,000).
- f. Public resources should be allocated for housing in a manner which gives priority to the rehabilitation of neighborhood housing. New construction in older neighborhoods should be used to stimulate revitalization.
- g. Efforts should be undertaken to market Fairmont's neighborhoods and school systems to prospective residents, real estate brokers, financial institutions, and developers through a partnership with neighborhood organizations. For example, Fairmont is only twenty-five minutes from Morgantown. Housing costs in Fairmont are considerably lower than that in Morgantown. Fairmont should consider marketing potential households in the Morgantown area.
- h. In order to attract new retirees into the area the City, along with the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, should prepare a promotional packet to include a neighborhood profile of demographics, housing stock (type, availability, and cost), local stores and public services, as well as local, civic, and business organizations. This material should be distributed to prospective homeowners and realtors in the area.
- i. Major clean-up efforts should be conducted on all the gateways leading to housing developments and traditional neighborhoods such as Pennsylvania Avenue at the Bellview entrance.



- j. The City of Fairmont should continue to support Fairmont State University in its efforts to provide quality student housing.

3. Long Range (2011-2015)

- a. A Livability Code should be prepared and introduced to evaluate residential units within the City. The enforcement of a Livability Code would ensure that all residents meet minimum living standards. The purpose of a Livability Code is to establish minimum property maintenance standards for basic equipment and facilities including lighting, ventilation, heating, and sanitation for residential structures and premises. The Minimum Livability Code applies to residential structures for human habitation. It would not apply to owner-occupied single family housing units.
- b. The effectiveness of the Livability Code depends on having the necessary number of building inspectors to enforce it. The City's Building Department is not adequately staffed to aggressively pursue violators of the Code and ensure continued compliance with the Code.
- c. Efforts should be undertaken to market Fairmont's neighborhoods and school systems to prospective residents, real estate brokers, financial institutions, and developers through a partnership with neighborhood organizations. For example, Fairmont is only twenty-five minutes from Morgantown. Housing costs in Fairmont are considerably lower than that in Morgantown. Fairmont should consider marketing potential households in the Morgantown area.
- d. The City should actively promote the development of medium- to high-density mixed-income housing in proximity to major centers of employment and recreational or entertainment activity.
- e. The City should integrate housing into the overall design of large-scale employment centers. This practice will help reduce the need to travel. Homes built within or immediately adjacent to the workplace not only reduces vehicle miles of travel, it also presents opportunities for workers to walk or bike to work. Flexibility in zoning should be provided to permit such large-scale, mixed-use development.
- f. The demand for retirement homes is increasing as this stratum of society continues to grow in number. National statistics reveal that the number of seniors over the age of eighty-five is expected to double in the next two decades. There are a large number of retired persons in the Fairmont community. Marion County ranks within the top three counties in the State of West Virginia in terms of its retired population and ranks eleventh in total population. Senior citizens have more per capita income than people in any other age group. Senior citizens also are maintaining their independence in communities longer and have a willingness

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to contribute to their community. Retirees prefer one floor patio homes with two bedrooms. This should be taken into consideration for future residential developments.

- g. Fairmont should continue to promote itself as a community for all ages; focusing on; good quality of life, low cost of living and crime rate, large number of churches, and hospitality.