

## IX Demographics & Housing

Brighton is fortunate in having strong neighborhoods with a high quality of life, and a generally strong, if aging, housing stock. The housing stock has been steadily augmented with new construction, averaging 18 single family homes per year from 1990 to 1999.

For Brighton to remain a strong community, it will be important in the future to maintain the stability and quality of its neighborhoods. One of the keys to accomplishing this is to continue current policies and the enforcement of existing regulations, such as property maintenance regulations and the architectural review of projects. It will also be important to try to ensure that Brighton residents are able to remain in Brighton throughout the various phases of their lives, and that Brighton exhibits a healthy diversity in its population.

### Population

The population and housing information in this chapter provide a snapshot of where Brighton is, where it's been and where it may be headed with regard to those two fundamental characteristics of the town. The statistics provide a starting point for the investigations of the Housing Focus Group report, included in the chapter, and the goals and recommendations that are the outcome of the work of the Focus Group and the Steering Committee.

The 1990 *Master Plan* estimated that Brighton's population would increase slightly between 1990 and 2000, to 35,308. A more recent estimate by the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council predicts a decrease in population over the period, from 34,455 (1990) to 33,188 (2000) (Tables 2&3). U.S. Census estimates of population in 1996 support the G/FLRPC projection. For planning purposes, these changes are small enough that the population can be considered to be stable over the period. Looking forward, over the planning period and beyond, Brighton's population is expected to remain stable through 2030, increasing by roughly 300 over the 30 year period, while neighboring towns are expected to increase at a much slower rate than over the previous two decades, and Rochester is expected to stem somewhat its population decline.

**Table 2: Historical Population Projections w/ Flat Revisions & Minor Civil Division Adjustments**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Monroe County	586,387	711,917	702,238	713,968	727,856	735,708	742,150	747,612
<b>Brighton (T)</b>	<b>27,849</b>	<b>35,065</b>	<b>35,776</b>	<b>34,455</b>	<b>33,188</b>	<b>33,313</b>	<b>33,390</b>	<b>33,435</b>
Henrietta (T)	11,598	33,017	36,134	36,376	37,919	38,779	39,384	39,809
Penfield (T)	12,601	23,782	27,201	30,219	32,803	33,995	34,973	35,802
Pittsford (T)	8,469	18,441	21,052	23,009	24,617	25,473	26,164	26,741
Rochester (C)	318,611	296,233	241,741	231,636	226,307	222,381	219,554	217,490

Source: Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

**Table 3: Historical and Projected Percent Changes in 10 Year Increments**

	'60-'70	'70-'80	'80-'90	'90-2000	'00-'10	'10-'20	'20-'30
Monroe County	21.4%	-1.4%	1.7%	1.9%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%
<b>Brighton (T)</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
Henrietta (T)	184.7%	9.4%	0.7%	4.2%	2.3%	1.6%	1.1%
Penfield (T)	88.7%	14.4%	11.1%	8.6%	3.6%	2.9%	2.4%
Pittsford (T)	117.7%	14.2%	9.3%	7.0%	3.5%	2.7%	2.2%
Rochester (C)	-7.0%	-18.4%	-4.2%	-2.3%	-1.7%	-1.3%	-0.9%

Source: Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council

The 1990 *Master Plan* reported that the average age of the population of Brighton was increasing. This trend continues as well, both in Brighton and nationally — the median age of Brighton's population in 1980 was 35.4, the median age in 1990 was 39.5. Brighton has a higher median age than the county or any of the communities surrounding Brighton: Henrietta - 28.0; Pittsford 37.4; Penfield - 37.3; Rochester - 29.7; Monroe County - 33.0 (data from 1990 U.S. Census).

The major race/ethnic groups constitute a small but significant and growing portion of Brighton's population. People who reported (U.S. Census) their race as either black or asian/pacific islander increased from 4.1% of the population in 1980 to 7.0% in 1990. The

percentage of persons of hispanic origin remained relatively stable over the same period, increasing from 1.0% to 1.3% of the population.

## Housing

The number of households in Brighton changed from 14,706 (1980) to 15,211 (1990), an increase of 505 (3.4%). This compares with an increase of 2,884 (24%) between 1970 and 1980. While the rate of increase in the number of new households has declined significantly, the trend continues to be toward smaller households. The average number of persons per household decreased between 1980 and 1990 from 2.37 persons (1980) to 2.27 (1990). As might be expected, the percentage of non-family households has increased over the same period. In 1990, non-family households constituted 40% of all households in Brighton, versus 34% in 1980.

The percentage of persons owning the housing unit that they occupy has continued to decline, although the rate of decline has slowed. In 1970, owner occupied housing constituted 66% of the housing stock. This number decreased to 58% in 1980 and to 56% in 1990. This change reflects the increase in apartment units over the period. Forty-four percent of housing units in Brighton are now apartments, primarily in complexes, but there are also significant numbers of mixed-use (commercial/residential) properties in Brighton; there are also significant numbers of rented single family homes.

Brighton has a central location, quality services, and many older, established neighborhoods. Because of these and other reasons, the cost of land in Brighton is relatively high, and the affordability of housing options in Brighton has been and remains an issue. Deerfield Woods, an affordable housing project sponsored by the Greater Rochester Housing Authority and now nearing completion off S. Clinton Ave., has been the only major recent effort at developing affordable owner-occupied housing in Brighton. Apartment developments, when considered in the context of the population segments they generally serve, cannot statistically be considered affordable in Brighton. The 1990 census lists 96.8% of the apartment units in Brighton as having

"high renter cost."<sup>1</sup> Fig. 12 provides a breakdown of census block groups in Brighton in which more than 25% of the housing units are rental, indicating those block groups (1990) that had high Rent/Income Ratios of 85% - 100%, 45% - 60% and 11% - 36% (i.e., the percentage of renters in the block group that paid more than 30% of their incomes for rent). The "1997-1998 Monroe County Rental Housing Market Survey"<sup>2</sup> found that Brighton had the highest average gross rent (rent plus utilities) in Monroe County, at \$752 to \$775 per month (compared to \$649 for the county). Table 4 provides information from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on the income limits, based on family size, that it uses to define the economic bracket of households in the Rochester Metropolitan Region<sup>3</sup>. This information is used to determine eligibility for various assistance programs sponsored by HUD and other government agencies.

Related to the availability of affordable housing is the assurance of fair housing choice. "Fair housing," in a legal sense, refers to the removal of housing choice restrictions among those 9 groups who are afforded protection by federal and state anti-discrimination laws (discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, familial status, age or marital status). Brighton's opportunities to assure fair housing choice are limited. Local government responsibilities are primarily to ensure the fair administration of federal and state funds received and to ensure that zoning codes take regional needs, as well as local needs, into account. Zoning codes may not be written to have the effect of excluding people outside the local community who are in need of housing.

In 1996, the report, *Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in Monroe County*, was commissioned by Monroe County, the City of Rochester, the Town of Greece and the Town of Irondequoit (all of which receive Community Block Grant funds - Brighton receives Block Grant funds through competitive application to the county, and is therefore a sub-sponsor of the report). The report observed existing demographic and housing characteristics in the county related to Fair Housing and analyzed factors that constrained access to housing for minorities. It also outlined existing policies and programs in place intended to promote Fair Housing opportunities. The report serves/will serve as a basis for the development of Fair Housing strategies by the sponsors. It has been the policy of Brighton to encourage and promote Fair Housing opportunities within the town and the region, and Brighton will participate as warranted in the development and implementation of Fair Housing strategies as they are developed.

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<sup>1</sup> "High Rent" is defined by the Census Bureau as an "estimate of percentage of renter-occupied households where the shelter costs are 30% or more of the income."

<sup>2</sup> 1997-1998 Monroe County Rental Market Survey, sponsored Monroe County Department of Planning and Development, City of Rochester Department of Community Development, Rochester Housing Authority, and the Housing Council in the Monroe County Area, Inc.

<sup>3</sup> The Rochester Metropolitan Region includes 6 counties surrounding Rochester - Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans and Wayne.

As the populations of the United States, Monroe County and Brighton have aged, the 1990s have brought several major developments in Brighton designed for senior residents, and others are proposed. St. John's Meadows, on Elmwood Ave., and The Summit at Brighton, off Winton Rd., offer several levels of independent and assisted living options for seniors, and add significantly to the number of housing units tailored to the needs of seniors in Brighton. Another major development is being discussed for the Clover St./Blossom Rd. area.

**Table 4: 1999 HUD Income & Rent Standards for Monroe County**

AREA MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME (effective 1-27-99)		\$50,600						
Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Very Low Income	\$17,700	\$20,250	\$22,750	\$25,300	\$27,300	\$29,350	\$31,350	\$33,400
Low Income	\$28,350	\$32,400	\$36,450	\$40,500	\$43,700	\$46,950	\$50,200	\$53,450
Bedrooms	0	1	2	3	4			
Fair Market Rent (effective 10-1-98)	\$383	\$498	\$606	\$777	\$849			

Source: HUD WWW site - www.hud.gov.

## Housing Focus Group Report

### Background and Approach

The Housing Focus Group was formed to assess needs and make recommendations about housing issues for the Town of Brighton Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Focus Group was tasked with addressing issues related to 1) affordable housing, and 2) senior citizen housing. Membership of the Housing Focus Group included: Julie Potter (Chair), Steve Aronson, Louise Novros, Lou Prieto, Joe Trusz and Gary Valenti.

The Housing Focus Group met three times during Fall 1999 to learn from subject matter experts, discuss issues and make recommendations. On October 14, the Focus Group met with Mike Bierley from The Highlands at Pittsford (Strong Health) and Fran Weisberg from Lifespan to discuss senior housing issues. Affordable housing issues were addressed at the October 21 meeting with Susan Barclay and Julie Everitt from Housing Opportunities, and with Amy

Casciani and Keith Scholes from Rural Opportunities. The Focus Group met again on November 10 to discuss findings and recommendations for this report.

### Affordable Housing Findings and Recommendations

Recent demographic studies show that the town has a relatively stable population, but that the population in neighboring towns is experiencing slow to moderate growth. Non-caucasian ethnic groups are a small but growing portion of the population. Within the town, there is a trend towards smaller households, and also a declining rate of homeownership.

According to Housing Opportunities, there is a pressing need for quality affordable housing in the Rochester area. In 1998, Brighton had an average gross rent of over \$750/month - the highest in Monroe County. The median single family home in Brighton sold for \$111,000 in 1998. The relatively high cost of land in Brighton is an acknowledged impediment to development of new affordable housing. The Deerfield Woods subdivision, with homes in the \$80,000 range, may represent what can be realistically achieved with newly-developed, affordable owner-occupied housing.

Affordable rental and owner-occupied housing supports the town's goal of achieving a demographically diverse community. Availability of affordable housing enables people to live, work and retire in the town.

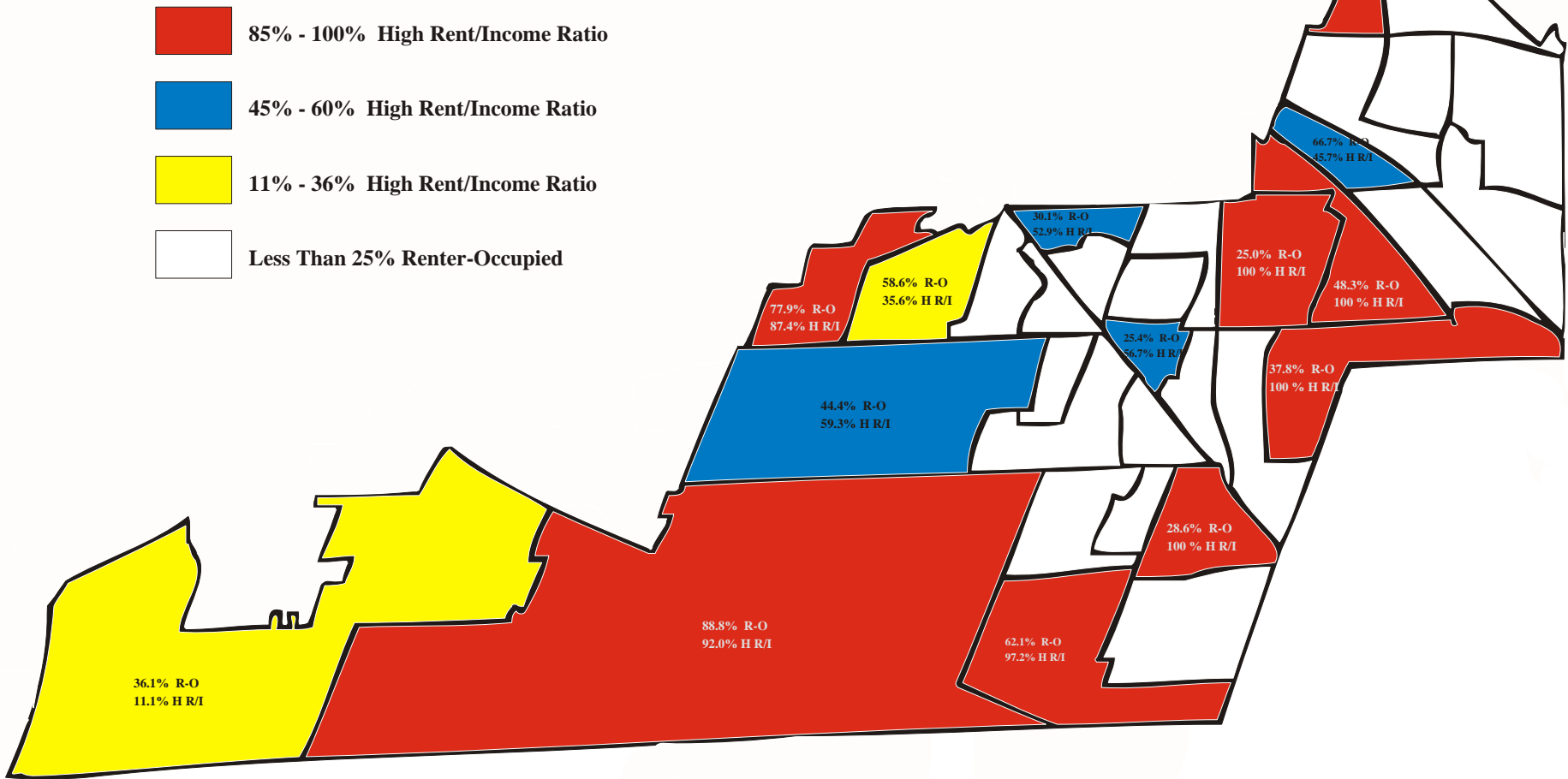
*Recommendation #1: Brighton should strive to achieve a balance in the type and cost of residential development for its citizens. Support of affordable housing options in the community is an important element of achieving this goal.*

*Recommendation #2: Brighton should continue to cooperate with other governments and housing agencies within the region in promoting an equitable distribution of affordable housing.*

Although market-rate rental property developers often prefer to develop larger projects, the community more readily accepts affordable rental housing developments when the development is relatively small. New affordable rental housing can be achieved through small affordable developments or through 20% set-asides in larger market-rate developments. Key considerations in successful siting of affordable rental housing include: existing multi-family zoning, near public transportation, availability of public infrastructure, and proximity to entry-level jobs. Developers of affordable rental housing indicate that predictable and steady property taxes are critical to enable rents to be affordable. Payment-in-lieu-of-taxes is an important tool the town can use to help assure the success of an affordable housing development.

Trends in affordable owner-occupied housing have shifted beyond new affordable developments with special financing for first-time homeowners to include scattered lot development or improvement of existing but run-down housing stock, combined with financial counseling and access to affordable mortgage products. As with affordable rental housing, affordable homeowner housing works best in a mixed-income community.

### Census Block Groups With Greater Than 25% Renter-Occupied Households



Source: 1990 Census

Fig. 12

The two greatest obstacles to affordable housing in Brighton are 1) the limited amount of undeveloped land, and 2) the high cost of land.

*Recommendation #3: Brighton should encourage the development of affordable rental and owner-occupied housing, preferably within mixed-income communities. Available tools to support this effort include: payments-in-lieu-of-taxes, set asides, incentive zoning and other incentive mechanisms.*

*Recommendation #4: The town should encourage the use of planned residential development and planned unit development floating zones that allow for higher density, in order to facilitate affordable housing development.*

#### Senior Citizen Housing Findings and Recommendations

The median age of the Brighton population has been increasing. Brighton has a higher median population age compared to any of the surrounding communities. As baby-boomers get older, the median age of the town's population can be expected to increase further. Information from Lifespan indicates that 12.4 % of the county's population was over 65 in 1990. This percentage is expected to increase to 35% of the population by 2010. Over 25% of seniors currently live alone. Many senior citizens have fixed incomes lower than the median town income. The fastest growing segment are people 85 years and older; this population segment particularly needs assistance with acts of daily living. Studies indicate that whenever possible, people want to stay in their own home and in their own community.

In response to these demographic trends and the perceived need for senior housing, several major senior housing developments have been built in Brighton and the neighboring towns in the past few years. Additional senior housing developments have been proposed in the town and adjoining communities. These developments include independent living, assisted and assistive living arrangements that may be market-rate, entry-fee or life care communities. The majority of these developments are targeted at seniors with relatively high-income levels. There are markedly fewer housing options available for moderate-income seniors.

*Recommendation #5: Brighton should encourage organizations willing to develop moderate-income senior housing. This may include requiring or providing incentives for percentage set-asides for low-to-moderate income units. The same planning tools and mechanisms for affordable housing are appropriate here.*

The key housing issue for senior citizens is affordable, secure housing with supportive services. Accomplishing this may be as simple as modifying existing homes with assistive devices, such as accessibility ramps or alarm systems. Or, it may entail providing services to help a senior take out the trash or providing transportation to the market or doctor's office. Based on the information obtained, senior housing issues relate as much to human services needs as to the need for new development.

*Recommendation #6: Brighton should encourage, and seek to partner with, organizations providing services that allow seniors to "age in place."*

Some developments tax town services in ways that initially were not fully understood. Both the developer and the town often underestimate service demands. Presentations by the town ambulance and fire protection services indicate that senior housing developments have higher rates of service calls than ordinary residential developments. (Certain commercial and institutional developments have similar issues.) The town needs to carefully evaluate the way in which senior housing and other special developments impact town services, to ensure that appropriate service provisions are made.