Creating

A+ homes
Chester County

Attractive
Affordably-priced
Adaptable
Aging-friendly
Accessible

Attractive+

Designed, constructed, and maintained to be compatible with local community character.

Affordably-priced+

Available at attainable sale and rental prices; no more than 30% of household income should be spent on housing related costs.

Accessible+

Connected to jobs, services, transit, amenities, and important community facilities.

Adaptable+

Able to evolve with market forces, changing demographics, buyer and renter preferences, and environmental conditions.

Aging-friendly+

Able to meet the diverse needs of seniors.

WHY do we need A+ homes Chester County?

DATA & TRENDS

⬆Population Growth
146,000 new residents are anticipated in the county by 2045, a nearly 30% increase from 2015, requiring 55,000 new homes.

⬆Aging Population
The senior population is anticipated to almost double by 2045, an increase from 65,000 in 2015 to 129,000 in 2045.

⬆Single Person Household Growth
67,000 single person households are anticipated in the county by 2045, an increase from 42,000 in 2015.

⬇Housing Type Deficiencies
The county's existing housing stock – primarily single-family homes – is unable to meet the needs of the growing and diversifying population.

⬆Cost of Homes
The county consistently has high median housing prices - $340,000 in 2018.

⬇Incomes Not Keeping Pace
Between 1990 and 2010 median household income increased by 6% while median housing cost increased by 25% (after adjusting for inflation).

IMPLICATIONS

Changing Household Needs
Senior households and single person households typically desire smaller homes with less maintenance.

Changing Household Desires
Many searching for a home are prioritizing access to services, jobs, and amenities, which is reflected by development in the county's urban centers.

Starter Homes
First time homebuyers and renters struggle to find affordable homes in the county.

Business Community
Businesses are having trouble attracting and retaining employees due to high housing costs.

Environmental Sustainability
Smaller footprint homes in proximity to public transportation limits greenfield development while decreasing vehicle emissions.

HOW do ![A+ homes Chester County] affect...

Environment?

+ Compact development limits greenfield development.

+ Homes near public transportation and jobs decrease vehicle miles traveled and emissions.

+ Compact infill development can make the cleanup and remediation of contaminated sites financially feasible.

+ Apartments use less energy than single-family detached homes (U.S. EIA).

Economy?

+ Increased apartment growth often has a net positive fiscal impact – even higher than non-residential uses (West Chester University).

+ New housing provides increased tax revenue and construction jobs.

+ New residents support existing businesses and attract new business growth.

Schools?

+ On average, higher density homes with two or fewer bedrooms add less new school-aged children per unit than detached single-family homes (DVRPC).

Neighborhood Character?

+ A diversity of home types – apartments, cottages, twins, townhouses – can add to the character of an area and create special places, as many of the county's boroughs exemplify.

+ The density of homes can be adjusted and mitigated to complement existing neighborhoods, such as through a mix of home types and creation of green space.

Open Space?

+ A diversity of homes, along with appropriate planning and zoning, can support the retention of open space. If the county's forecasted 55,000 new homes were on one acre lots, they would consume 66,000 acres of greenfields. If these homes included apartments, townhouses, and redevelopment, 51,000 acres of greenfields could be protected.

Traffic?

+ Municipalities can decrease the amount of new automobile traffic by encouraging compact residential development near public transportation and jobs, and expanding and improving the multi-modal network.

HOW do we create A+ homes?
Chester County

Decrease housing development costs

Utility costs, permitting fees, and long development review processes can drive up the cost of housing, making A+ homes financially infeasible. Municipalities should encourage homes that utilize existing utilities (ADUs, residential conversions, in-fill, and adaptive reuse) and evaluate their review processes and fees.

Address community concerns

Lack of comfort and familiarity with A+ homes may lead to pushback from residents. Municipalities can create public education initiatives.

Decrease footprint

On average, smaller homes are more affordable than larger homes and can be part of a neighborhood in various forms, such as an apartment, a cottage, or a twin. Municipalities can allow for a diversity of home types to encourage smaller footprint homes.

Create partnerships

Partnerships at the local community level between the municipality, non-profits, business community, and developers can advance A+ homes that address community needs. Working within the community, across sectors, can achieve multiple benefits.

Update policies and regulations

Local governments can create supportive policy and innovative regulations. The Chester County Planning Commission provides case studies, reports, and tools to assist municipalities in implementing:

- Accessory Dwelling Units
- Adaptive Reuse
- Affordable Housing
- Affordable Housing Bonuses
- Age Restricted Housing
- Aging in Place
- Housing Diversity
- Housing Rehabilitation
- In-fill Development
- Mini-homes
- Mobile Home Parks
- Residential Conversions
- Universal Design

Learn more:

chesco.org/planning/HousingTools
chescoplanning.org

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Chester County Planning Commission

Landscapes3 — Implementing Chester County's Comprehensive Plan