



**Southwest Missouri
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**2024 Comprehensive
Housing Study & Needs
Analysis for Greene
County, Missouri**

**November
2024**

ozarkgreenways.org



Presented by



POINTS
CONSULTING

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1. Executive Summary & Introduction

Executive Summary

Housing Situation

Many communities struggle with housing availability due, in part, to scarcity of land and the necessity to meet other non-residential community needs. In Ash Grove, Fair Grove, and Walnut Grove (or “the Groves”), the relatively large amount of property available for in-fill, redevelopment, or city expansion can be counted a major asset as these communities seek to improve their housing conditions. The largely rural, rolling hills of northern Greene County paired with remarkably affordable home costs could serve as an attractive home for many households if only there were more units to house them. This topic does seem to be a high priority for members of each community where via community Comprehensive Planning efforts housing is held up as one of most significant developments they’d like to see occur within the next 20 years.

Through Comprehensive Planning efforts, many properties were identified that could be used for residential development. In fact, Ash Grove has between 40-50 vacant properties, along with 50-60 in Fair Grove, and about 10 in Walnut Grove. Multiple properties are large enough to be used for 100-unit developments or more, and action is being taken on this front in Ash Grove. A large property in Northwest Ash Grove is planned to be developed for around 120 single-family units. The volume of vacant property to be developed is highly complementary to community wishes to grow by primarily in-fill development.

In total, there are approximately 1,500 housing units across the Groves. Of these, only about 8% are subsidized and 92% are market-rate. Housing is not frequently developed, at scale, in the Groves and what exists is not very diverse in terms of size and density (both important factors affecting affordability). Single-family detached owner-occupied homes compose a large percentage of housing stock in the Groves, but Walnut Grove does have a slightly higher share of both denser housing and rental housing.

In terms of share of single-family detached housing, rates are 84% for Ash Grove, 90% for Fair Grove, and 76% for Walnut Grove. In terms of owner-occupancy Ash Grove at 62%, 73% at Fair Grove, and 65% in Walnut Grove. By comparison, each community is more single-family oriented than Missouri and the United States, at large, where 62.5% and 71.9% of housing is single-family detached, respectively. Three- or four-unit buildings make up the second highest share of housing stock in the Groves (most of which is in Walnut Grove). By comparison, larger multi-family apartment buildings are the second most common type for Greene County.

Even in markets with slow to limited growth, such as the Groves, new housing units are needed to replace those that fall into disrepair and because occupancy per household is generally declining (meaning that more units are needed to house the same number of people). However, housing production in Greene County has been minimal since the Great Recession, outside of the communities of Springfield and Republic. In 2005, housing permits in unincorporated Greene County and the Groves peaked at 1,400 permits. Since 2009, only about 400 permits have been issued per year, with single-family homes dominating. From 2014 to 2023, there were 4,500 housing units permitted in Greene County (outside of Springfield and Republic). Of those units, less than 1% were in Ash Grove, 2% were in Fair

Grove, and less than 1% were in Walnut Grove. These data point to an extreme limitation of new housing units in these communities.

In the wake of COVID and the recent inflationary upward spiral home prices have also increased in the Groves. Though not as sharply escalating as other markets, Zillow's "typical home value" model indicates that homes in the Groves have each increased by 11%+ in the last five years. Homes "on the market" indicate even steeper price increases. In May of 2024, the median home in Ash Grove sold for \$225K, along with \$256K in Fair Grove, and \$215K in Walnut Grove. These median sales prices were 29% higher in Ash Grove compared to two years prior, along with 17% higher in Fair Grove, but 14% lower in Walnut Grove.

Despite home value increases in recent years, the Groves possess values that are relatively affordable, compared to Greene County and the nation. PC estimates conclude that 36% of households in Ash Grove would be unable to affordably purchase a home at the time of this assessment. Similar percentages of households occur in Fair Grove and Walnut Grove at 40% and 38% respectively. Whereas in Greene County in general, 54% of households would be unable to affordably purchase a home.

Though in prior generations owning a home was considered the norm, due to macroeconomic changes as well as shifts in consumer preferences, demand for rental units has increased. Urban areas, such as Springfield, can rely on the private sector to address the need but in more rural communities this is not the case. In such acute shortage markets, prices can spike significantly.

Though data on rental costs are limited by small sample sizes, our closest estimates indicate that the average rental price of a two-bedroom apartment in Greene County is about \$1,000 per month. Exact estimates of rental prices are not available, but it is clear that rental prices for two-bedroom units have increased: in Ash Grove have by 16% since 2014, 16% in Fair Grove, and 33% in Walnut Grove. Additionally, production of rental units has been relatively nonexistent since 2012. Renter-occupied units have increased to 250 on the market in Ash Grove since 2012. But renter-occupied units have stayed about the same in Fair Grove and Walnut Grove, averaging around 150 units and 100 units on the market, respectively, since 2012.

Though owner-occupied home values are relatively affordable, renters may not be feeling the same financial relief. According to the US Census Bureau, 49% of renters in Ash Grove are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. By contrast, 35% of renters in Fair Grove are cost-burdened to some degree, and 51% of renters in Walnut Grove are cost-burdened to some degree. Only Fair Grove renters are cost-burdened to a lesser degree than at the county or national levels. These metrics are worse for renters that are considered low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income. Some would argue that these metrics point to the need for more subsidized housing, but it is also the case that increasing supply of anything typically decreases the cost as more competition is brought to the market.

Demographics

The population of Greene County has grown by approximately 12% since 2010 and is expected to increase slightly over the next 20 years. Year by year population estimates jump up in down for small geographic areas but over an extended period trends are clearer to see. Fair Grove has grown the most at 14%, while Ash Grove has grown 3% Walnut Grove's population has remained unchanged.

Age is a key factor in the type of housing required as older populations typically have more space per person than younger populations. Younger populations often need to sacrifice unit size and lot size or even owning a home at all, for budgetary reasons as well. The median age across the Groves varies, with some communities older and others younger than the national average. Ash Grove's median age is 38, Fair Grove's is a shockingly youthful 29, and Walnut Grove's is 48. Ash Grove is marginally younger than the country as a whole, while Fair Grove is significantly younger and Walnut Grove is significantly older.

In terms of median household income, Greene County, Ash Grove, and Walnut Grove are each about \$20K lower than the nation. But Fair Grove boasts a median household income equivalent to the nation at \$79K. These incomes are correlated strongly with poverty rates, where Ash Grove and Fair Grove have populations in poverty below the national level. About 11% of Ash Grove's population is under the poverty level, along with only 5% in Fair Grove, and 16% in Walnut Grove, while 15% of Greene County's population in general is under the poverty level.

Economy

Greene County's economy has grown steadily over the last decade, with employment rising above pre-pandemic levels in 2022. In fact, total employment in Greene County has grown by about 20% since 2010. Though this rate is slightly slower than nearby Polk and Webster Counties, it is on par with national employment trends. On a positive note, the number of businesses being established in Greene County has grown by 35% since 2010, greater than the nearby counties and the nation. Total wages earned in the county also rebounded after the pandemic.

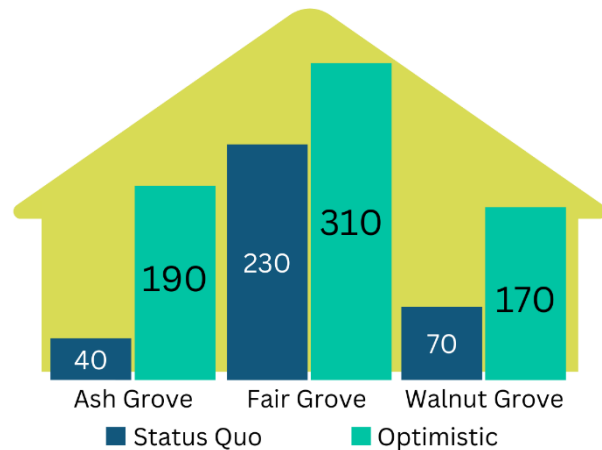
As of 2023, the annual rate of unemployment in Greene County was 2.6%, lower than the national average and superior to Polk and Webster Counties. Though positive news for the workforce, this exceptionally low rate could also indicate a market that is too "tight" and therefore is limiting employers' ability to hire. Frequently such conditions are correlated with a housing shortage, as without housing workers simply do not arrive in such communities. This possibility was reinforced via PC's community engagement work where the connection between housing shortages and workforce shortages were often underlined by community members. This low unemployment rate is also driven, in part, by different industry mixes between the county and the Groves. The highest industry by employment in Greene County is healthcare, likewise in Fair Grove. However, manufacturing is the largest industry by employment in Ash Grove, along with retail trade in Walnut Grove.

Housing Needs Forecast

Points Consulting's housing needs forecast for Greene County and the Groves presents two growth scenarios (status quo and optimistic), reflecting potential shifts in community growth and housing typologies. To complete our housing forecast for the Groves, PC first had to forecast demand for Greene County. Depending on the scenario, the additional demand for units in Greene County lands between 23,800 and 28,600 additional housing units between 2024 and 2044.

More germane to the Groves, the Status Quo scenario predicts that Ash Grove may need an additional 40 housing units by 2044, along with 230 additional units in Fair Grove, and 70 additional units in Walnut Grove. The Optimistic scenario projects that Ash Grove will need 190 new housing units by 2044. Additionally, Fair Grove will need 310 new housing units by 2044 and 170 new housing units in Walnut Grove by 2044, in the Optimistic forecast scenario.

Housing needs forecasts for the Groves included housing type forecasts that utilized target housing type distributions. Ash Grove's current housing stock is characterized by 84% of it being designated to single-family, detached homes, along with 90% in Fair Grove and 75% in Walnut Grove. Each housing type forecast maintains a focus on single-family, detached homes, but redistributes different amounts to middle density housing types. Expanding the variety of housing types in each community to include townhomes, more duplexes, more triplexes or quadplexes, and others will enhance the attractiveness of the Groves and increase housing affordability.



Housing Units Needed by 2044

Recommendations

The PC team compiled a list of practical steps and strategies for Greene County and the Groves leadership and staff could pursue to improve production of housing units and/or drive down the cost of housing. The proposed solutions are not restricted just to planning activities and hopes for grant funding, nor are they exclusively reliant on the private sector to fill the gap. Planning, ambitious action, and a welcoming attitude are all critical features to stimulating the market and improving affordability.

These recommendations include options for Development & Redevelopment, Planning & Zoning, and strategies to Amplify Supply & Demand. Whenever possible, recommendations are accompanied by examples of other communities who have successfully implemented them, and resources to assist implementing them.

Introduction

This Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) examines the housing market within Greene County and the cities of Ash Grove, Fair Grove, and Walnut Grove (The Groves). A healthy housing ecosystem is characterized by a housing market in equilibrium, where the housing supply meets the housing demanded by the community. Current levels of housing units, vacant and developable parcels, employment levels, and income levels are essential to measuring the supply and demand of the housing market. To ensure a balanced market in the future, population and housing forecasts are used to measure future demand. This section outlines the scope of work, shows a regional contextual overview, and defines data collection & geographic areas of the study. In the following sections, both quantitative and qualitative data is examined to effectively measure the housing market of each community.

The report is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1 – Executive Summary & Introduction:** key highlights from the assessment
- **Chapter 2 – Gaps & Barriers Analysis:** affordability gaps for renting and homeownership residents
- **Chapter 3 – Forecast & Recommendations:** population and housing needs projection, along with policy recommendations
- **Chapter 4 – Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends:** overview of underlying socioeconomics affecting housing demand and affordability characteristics
- **Chapter 5 – Housing Trends:** overview of housing for both owners and renters, including affordability dynamics
- **Chapter 6 – Community Engagement Summary:** summary of overarching themes from Points Consulting’s discussions with community leaders and developers and a summary of findings from the community townhalls
- **Chapter 7 – Land Banking Opportunities in Missouri:** an overview and discussion of recent legislation passed regarding land banking in the state and the opportunities it presents
- **Chapter 8 – Literature Review:** overview of relevant planning documents in the geographic area and how they may impact housing.

Regional Contextual Overview

In addition to PC’s housing needs assessment each of the Groves are undergoing comprehensive planning updates. Under the facilitation of SMCOG this process included community engagement efforts such as surveys and community input sessions. The comprehensive plans provide greater context for our needs assessment, including community desires for the housing situation and growth over the next 20 years. Some information relevant to housing and land use is highlighted here to compliment this study.

Ash Grove

Residents of Ash Grove promoted the idea of development via infill of vacant community properties, while maintaining and improving existing residential and commercial structures. Around the topic of “missing middle” housing, four out of every five survey takers expressed an interest in more duplexes while also recognizing that duplexes and multi-family housing (MFH) types are not well supported in current Ash Grove zoning code.

There were several additional noteworthy findings from the community survey related to housing. Rural communities often favor low-density housing but those involved in the

Comprehensive Plan are clearly in favor of a greater variety of housing types. On the topic of what types of housing are lacking, responses included:

- Single-family housing (SFH) at only 1% of respondents
- Multi-family housing (MFH) at 19% of respondents
- Duplexes or two-units homes at 20% of respondents
- Small homes/tiny homes at 43% of respondents.

Additionally, 47% of respondents indicated they were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with housing conditions. This matches up with community members supporting the rehabilitation of older housing units or demolishing them in favor of new ones. Though only about 20% of respondents were somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the affordability of housing. This points to an overall feeling that housing is relatively affordable in Ash Grove. A majority, 62%, of respondents see the community growing moderately, with more families and businesses moving in.

Future land use scenarios were projected for Ash Grove in the comprehensive planning update. One of these scenarios projects Ash Grove experiencing moderate growth with new households moving in, but the town desires to maintain the small-town feel while accommodating the growth. If this scenario plays out, the comprehensive update concludes that updating land use and zoning regulations would be most useful to manage the pace and style of growth. Another scenario sees many vacant properties being scattered across Ash Grove, which cause blight and may reduce the town's appeal. To address this issue, it was concluded that implementing incentives for developers to repurpose vacant or under-utilized properties and focus on mixed-use developments would be beneficial. Encouraging mixed residential and offering a variety of housing types would contribute to a solution as well.

The comprehensive planning update included goals and objectives for housing, particularly relevant to PC's assessment. The first housing goal is to improve the quality of existing houses and neighborhoods. Objectives to meet this goal include:

- encouraging the development of vacant and dilapidated properties, and
- encouraging upkeep and maintenance of existing residences.

The second housing goal is to increase housing variety. The objectives to accommodate this goal include:

- to incorporate housing development guidelines to meet the demands of a growing population with different needs, and
- to encourage innovative housing solutions to stand apart from similar communities.

Fair Grove

Residents of Fair Grove who participated in the effort would prefer the community to grow moderately, focusing on attracting new businesses and welcoming new households. They would also like for growth to occur through infill development rather than adding new land to the city limits and expanding outward. Additionally, residents feel more positively now about housing affordability than they did during the 2017 Comprehensive Plan update.

It is clear that Fair Grove residents feel residential development is important, as 38% of respondents indicate it is the most important type of new development compared to 31% for medical and healthcare facilities, or just 18% for parks and recreational trails. An additional 26% of respondents ranked it as the second most important type of new development.

Displaying a clear break from the diverse housing interests of Ash Grove, Fair Grove residents would prefer to retain a primarily single-family mix of housing. When asked which types of housing they felt were lacking residents of Fair Grove responded as follows:

- Duplexes or two-units at 15% of respondents
- MFH, including triplexes, quadplexes, and apartments at 24% of respondents
- SFH at 40% of respondents.

This is perhaps a surprising result, given that approximately 90% of housing units in Fair Grove are already single-family homes (comprehensive plan update citing US Census Bureau). However, survey results also indicate that a significant share of the population also feel MFH developments are lacking. Additionally, recognizing one of the strengths of their current market, 95% of respondents are very satisfied with the affordability of housing.

Future land use goals and objectives were included for Fair Grove's comprehensive plan update. The first goal is to ensure well planned development for current and future land uses within the community. The objectives that would accommodate this goal are:

- establishing clear land use policies and
- ensuring continuous oversight and engagement throughout the comprehensive plan's implementation.

The second goal is to minimize environmental degradation of existing and future development. Objectives to achieve this goal are:

- to promote infill development that is appealing and consistent to Fair Grove's community character, and
- to encourage revitalization of underused sites and improve water management to protect and support community growth.

A few housing scenarios could play out for Fair Grove over the next 20 years, according to the comprehensive plan update. The first scenario is that Fair Grove has almost exclusively single-family detached housing, leaving little to no housing variety within the community. This is something that could potentially restrict new families and therefore new businesses from moving in through increased housing prices. The second scenario is that Fair Grove is in need of diversification of the housing stock and needs to ensure that it is appealing for developers to develop a greater variety of housing within the city. Allowing some greater housing variety will encourage developers

The plan also includes housing goals and objectives specific to Fair Grove. The first goal is to preserve existing low-density development, as desired by residents. The objectives to assist in reaching this goal are:

- to protect low-density residential areas from high-density development, and
- to preserve the character of Fair Grove's neighborhoods.

The second goal is to improve housing variety to encourage growth. The objectives accommodating the goal are:

- to encourage distribution of MFH and higher densities, and
- to ensure the development of diverse housing types.

Walnut Grove

One of Walnut Grove citizens' primary interests is in addressing dilapidated homes and structures, while also creating lots ready to build upon. Growth here is likely to occur through infill, rather than by adding more land and expanding. Sentiments of the city and residents reflect the desire to attract housing developments tailored to families.

In terms of the affordability of housing, 60% of survey respondents indicate that they are somewhat or very satisfied with the affordability of their housing situation. However, only 40% of survey respondents are satisfied with the overall availability of affordable housing within the city. Walnut Grove parallels Fair Grove in its prioritization of single-family homes. When asked about their preferred home types to be built in the city:

- SFH was favored by 50% of respondents
- Duplex or two-units were favored by 14% of respondents
- MFH, including apartments, triplexes, and quadplexes, were favored by 14% of respondents.

Sentiments of city growth are similar to both Ash Grove and Fair Grove. Walnut Grove survey respondents would prefer the city to grow moderately, with more families and businesses moving in. Additionally, 63% of respondents would like to see the city grow by infill, developing vacant properties within city limits. Residential was the most favored type of new development as well, with 55% of respondents ranking it as the first or second most important type of new or redevelopment.

Walnut Grove's comprehensive plan update includes one future land use goal and one housing goal. The future land use goal is to ensure ongoing management and regular evaluation of land use policies to reflect community-driven recommendations and evolving needs. The objectives accompanying this goal are:

- to establish a system for regularly monitoring and reviewing land use changes in collaboration with community stakeholders, and
- to ensure well-planned development for current and future land uses.

The housing goal is to balance the integration of new housing types with the preservation of historical and architectural integrity in established neighborhoods. The objectives to assist achieving this goal are:

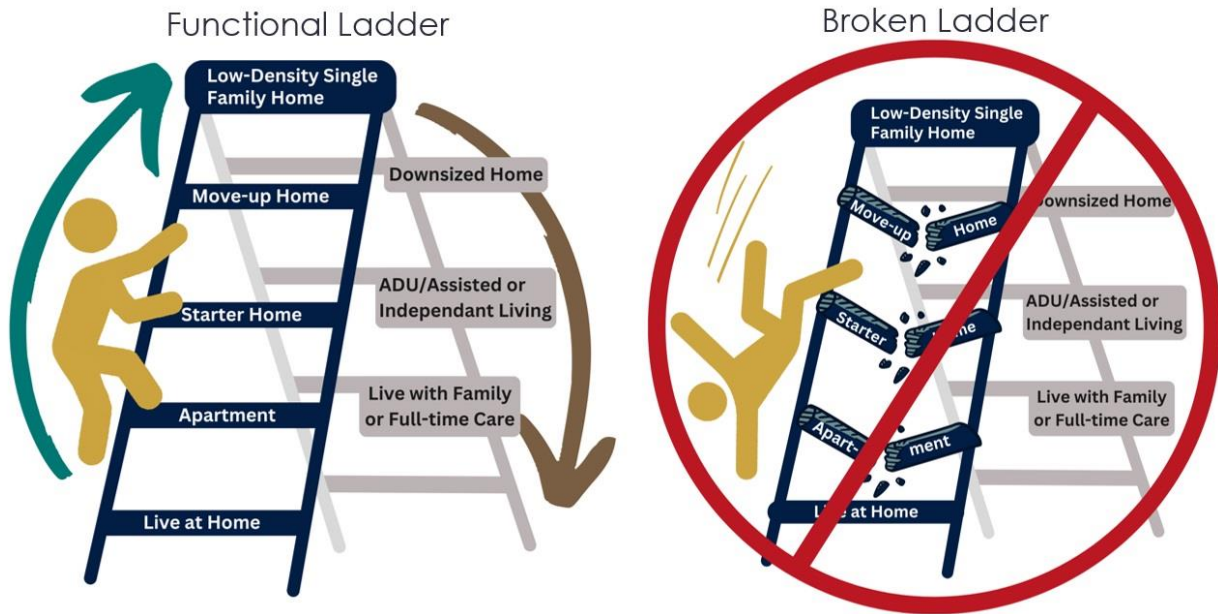
- to simplify and modernize zoning codes to allow for more flexible housing development, and
- to preserve existing neighborhood character while supporting growth.

Housing Ladder

The Housing Ladder (Figure 1.1) is a useful tool to describe a healthy housing ecosystem. In a functional ladder, a person progresses through the rungs as they go through life. As stages of life change, so do housing needs. If any of the rungs of the ladder are missing or broken, the whole system crumbles. Part of this study's goal was to assess where there are missing or broken rungs in the housing ladder in Greene County, and the Groves.

Figure 1.1: The Housing Ladder

The Housing Ladder



Source: Points Consulting

Scope of Work

The scope of work includes the following:

- Project Initiation & Administration
- Document & Ecosystem Review
- Data Collection
 - Demographic Analysis
 - Industry and Workforce Analysis
 - Existing Housing Stock
 - Affordability and Access
 - Planned Developments & Land Banks
- Recommendations, Strategies, & Housing Needs Forecast
- Comprehensive Report & Presentation

2. Gaps & Barriers Analysis

Affordability Gaps

Renter Challenges

Table 2.1 Summarizes key statistics on home cost-burden for the region compared to Missouri and the nation, while the series of charts (Figures 2.1-2.4) provide more detail by various income levels and housing situations.

The statistics used for the affordability analysis are derived from a mix of data sources, including American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year, which averages data from 2018-2022, and U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 2016-2020. Given the drastic changes in both home costs and wages between 2020-2022, it would be preferable to use more recent statistics but, unfortunately, these are the best data available for small geographic regions. To counter the delay in data, wherever feasible, Points Consulting has adjusted these statistics to represent the current number of households estimated to be in cost-burdened housing situations. Firstly, some level of explanation is required on how government agencies classify cost burden by household.

- Severely cost-burdened means households that spend 50%, or higher of their household income on housing costs¹
- Cost-burdened means households that spend between 30-50% of their household income on housing costs

The data show mixed results when it comes to cost burden for renters of The Groves. Some renters are better off than the average American and those at the state level, and some are worse off. Specifically, less than 15.0% of renters are severely cost-burdened in Ash Grove and Fair Grove, but that percentage rises to nearly 40.0% for renters in Walnut Grove. By contrast, only 20.4% of renters in the State of Missouri are severely cost-burdened along with 23.3% nationally. Fair Grove renters seem to be the best off with only 34.6% of renters experiencing any cost burden, compared to 49.0% of Ash Grove renters and 51.1% of Walnut Grove Renters.

Table 2.1: Renters' Housing Cost Burden by Region

Region	Number of Renting Households	Severely Cost-Burdened	Cost-Burdened	Severely or Cost-Burdened	Not Cost-Burdened
Ash Grove	251	14.7%	34.3%	49.0%	40.6%
Fair Grove	156	7.7%	26.9%	34.6%	57.1%
Walnut Grove	92	39.1%	12.0%	51.1%	48.9%
Greene County	56,711	23.2%	22.3%	45.5%	47.2%
Missouri	796,470	20.4%	21.3%	41.6%	50.5%
United States	44.24M	23.3%	23.2%	46.4%	46.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 5-Year Estimates

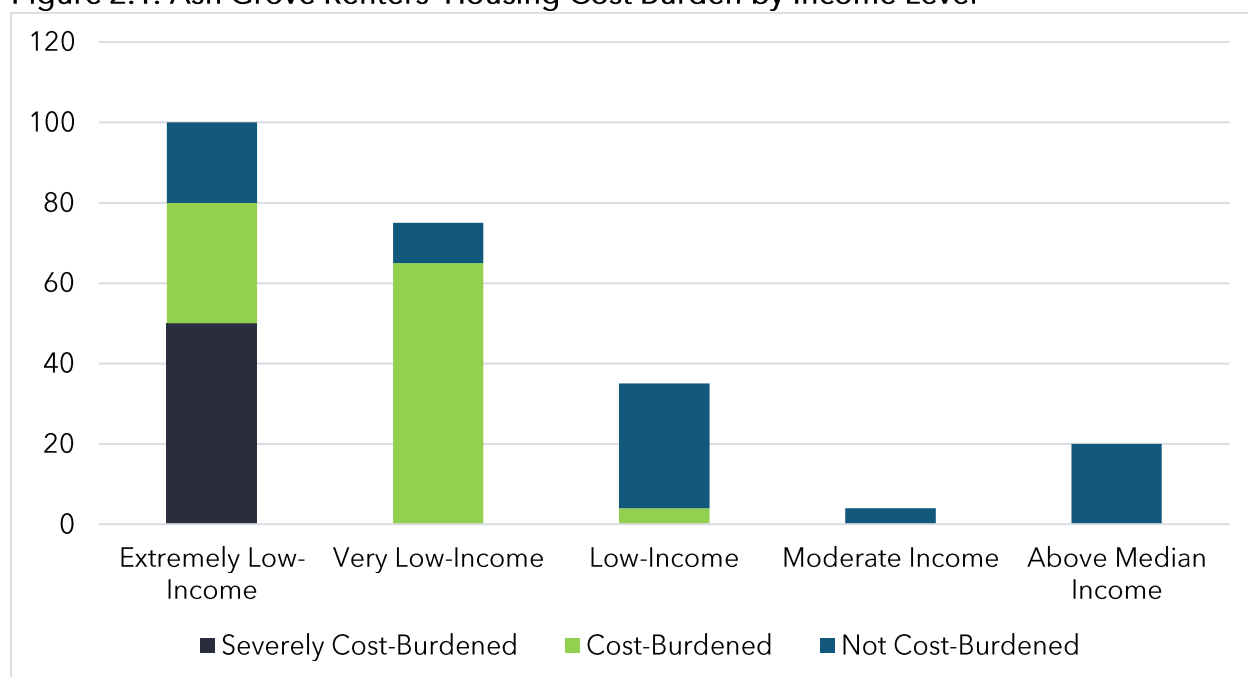
¹ By HUD definitions, "housing costs" include just rent or mortgage but not utilities such as water, sewer, refuse removal, and internet, which are generally excluded from rental costs in most leases. In short, if the amounts households pay to other housing-related costs were included the cost-burdened statistics would be driven even higher than what is published here.

Several other data sources measure affordability issues by various area median income (AMI) levels. Note that since these are from an older dataset, the number of renters may be slightly out of date. Figures 2.1-2.4 display the three cost-burdened categories according to five AMI levels, which include:

- Extremely low-income: less than 30% of AMI
- Very low-income: 30 to 50% of AMI
- Low-income: 50 to 80% of AMI
- Moderate income: 80 to 100% of AMI
- Above median income: 100%+ of AMI

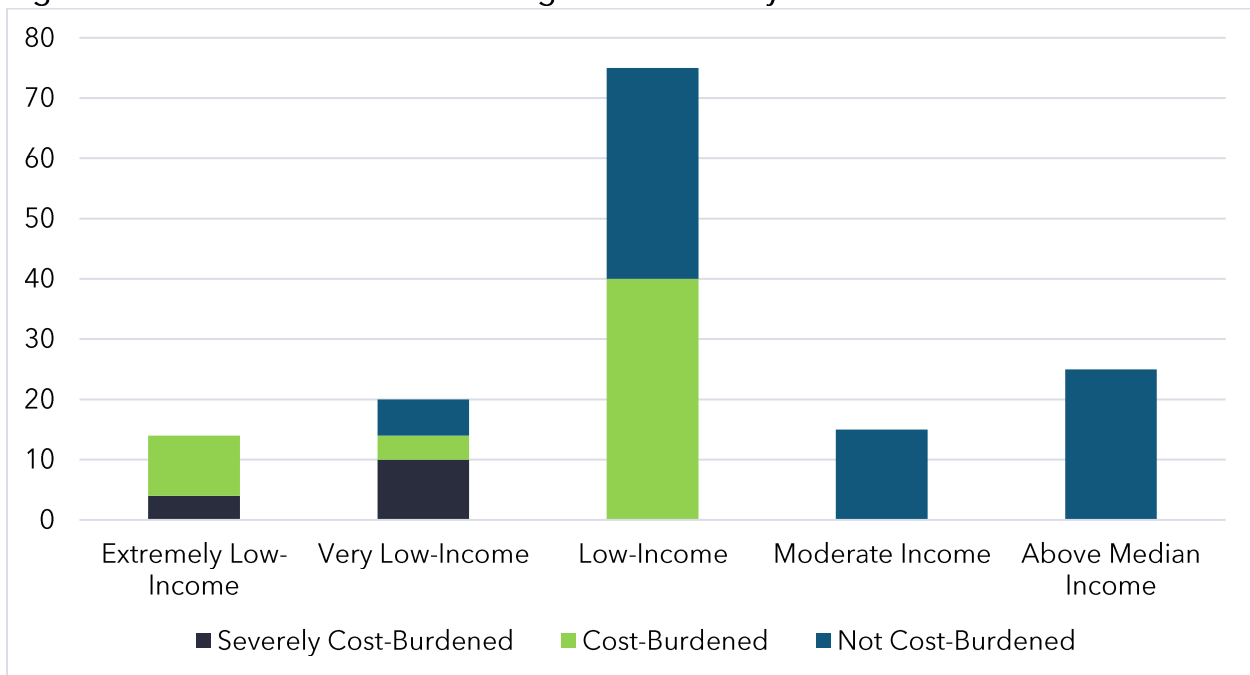
As the data shows, the lowest income cohorts are the most likely to be cost-burdened. In Ash Grove 59.4% of low-income, renting households are cost-burdened to some degree, along with 74.4% in Fair Grove and 67.9% in Walnut Grove. These measures point to the fact that more affordable and permanent supportive housing is needed within the region. Of households in the low-income category, 11.4% are cost-burdened in Ash Grove, along with 53.3% and 26.7% of low-income households in Fair Grove and Walnut Grove, respectively. However, when going down to the next two income levels the numbers change drastically. Of very low-income and extremely low-income households, 83.3% are cost-burdened in Ash Grove, 85.0% are cost-burdened in Fair Grove, and 88.6% are cost-burdened in Walnut Grove.

Figure 2.1: Ash Grove Renters' Housing Cost Burden by Income Level



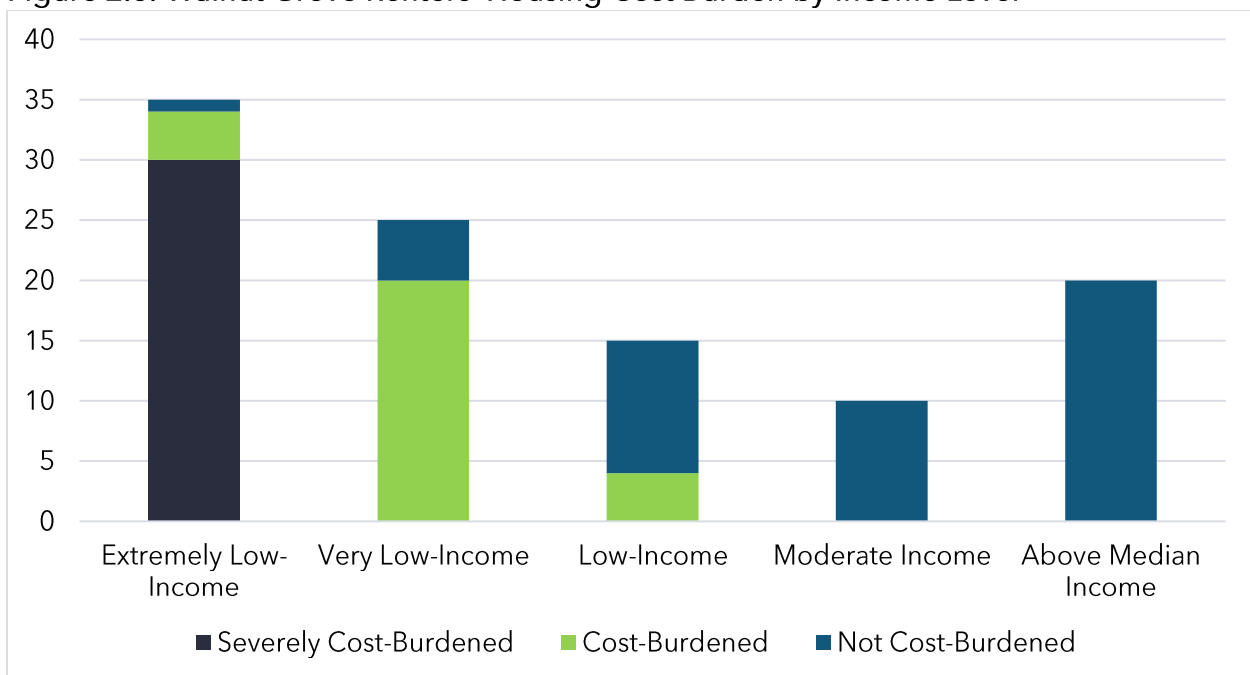
Source: Housing & Urban Development, Comprehensive Affordability Strategy Data, Table 7, 2016-2020

Figure 2.2: Fair Grove Renters' Housing Cost Burden by Income Level



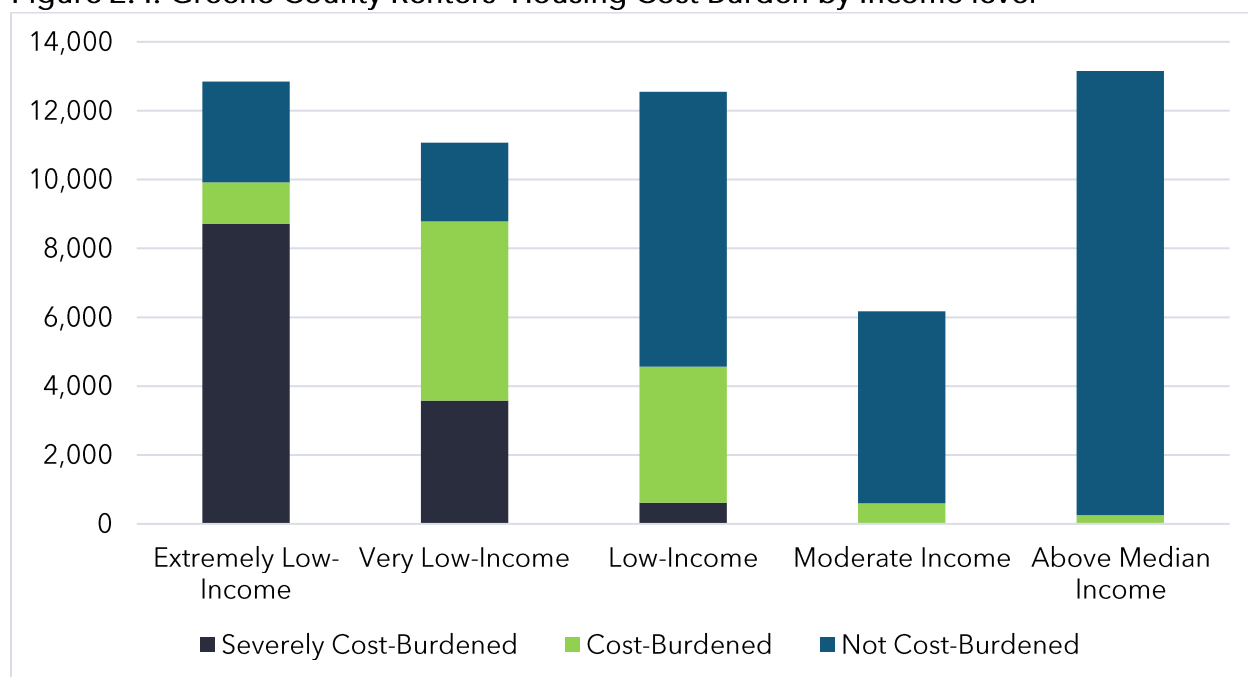
Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Affordability Strategy Data, Table 7, 2016-2020

Figure 2.3: Walnut Grove Renters' Housing Cost Burden by Income Level



Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Affordability Strategy Data, Table 7, 2016-2020

Figure 2.4: Greene County Renters' Housing Cost Burden by Income level



Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Affordability Strategy Data, Table 7, 2016-2020

Home Ownership Challenges

There are also many home-owning households that are cost-burdened. Of homeowning households in Greene County, 6.1% are severely cost-burdened and another 9.0% are cost-burdened to a lesser degree. Additionally, 14% of homeowning households are cost-burdened in Ash Grove, along with 6.3% in Fair Grove, and 11.3% in Walnut Grove.

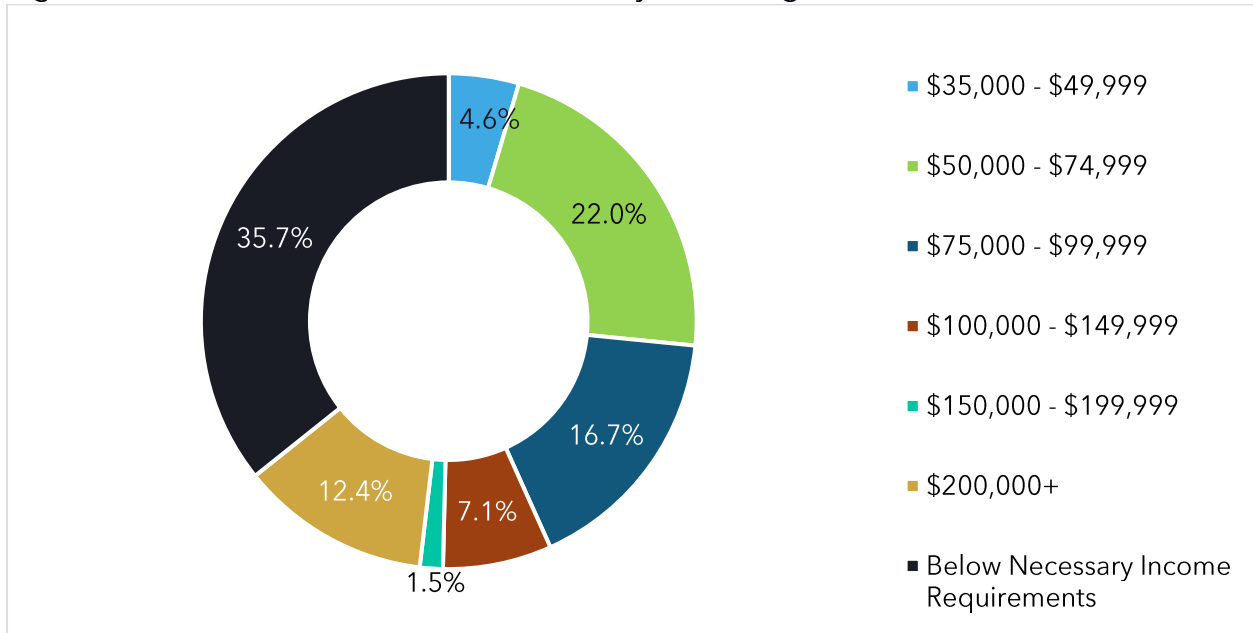
The prior statistics include many homeowners who may have purchased years ago when home prices were lower. The situation is more foreboding among households who are looking to purchase a new home. Points Consulting developed estimates using current income levels, average current mortgage rates as of June 2024, and home prices in Ash Grove, Fair Grove, Walnut Grove, and Greene County as of May 2024. Assuming a household with an average credit rating on a conventional 30-year mortgage, the majority of households in The Groves are able to compete in the home purchase market. However, most households in Greene County overall are left on the sidelines.

Purchasing an average-priced home would require \$42.5K in household income to afford the mortgage in Ash Grove and Walnut Grove, and around \$62.5K in Fair Grove and Greene County. As shown in Figures 2.5-2.8, this excludes about 35.0% to 40.0% of households in The Groves, and 53.8% of households in the county. All households in the income brackets above \$75K can afford an average-priced home in Fair Grove and Greene County, whereas all households above \$50K can afford an average-priced home in Ash Grove and Walnut Grove.

Compared to the county, even newly constructed homes are relatively affordable for households in The Groves. Data for new home estimates include median home prices from MLS, which range from \$219K to \$275K in The Groves and Greene County. New homes are more likely to be sold and therefore influence MLS prices more heavily. Zillow's ZHVI measures the value of all home values (including those of older homes) in a geographic area,

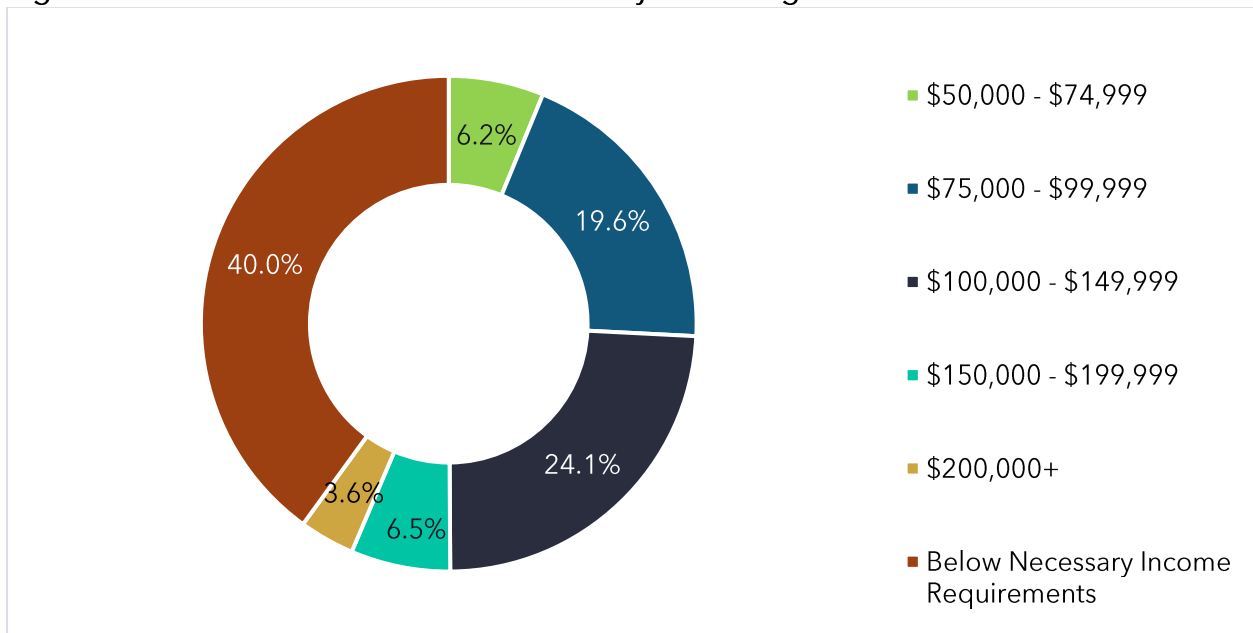
and these values fall into the same price range as the median sold home. This means that the same affordability standards are true for new homes as older ones. Nevertheless, while there is some level of relative affordability in The Groves, they are in the vicinity of the metropolitan area of Springfield. As home prices continue to rise, households may look to nearby areas with more affordable homes. This can lead to increased demand for homes in The Groves and, in turn, higher prices.

Figure 2.5: Households that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home in Ash Grove



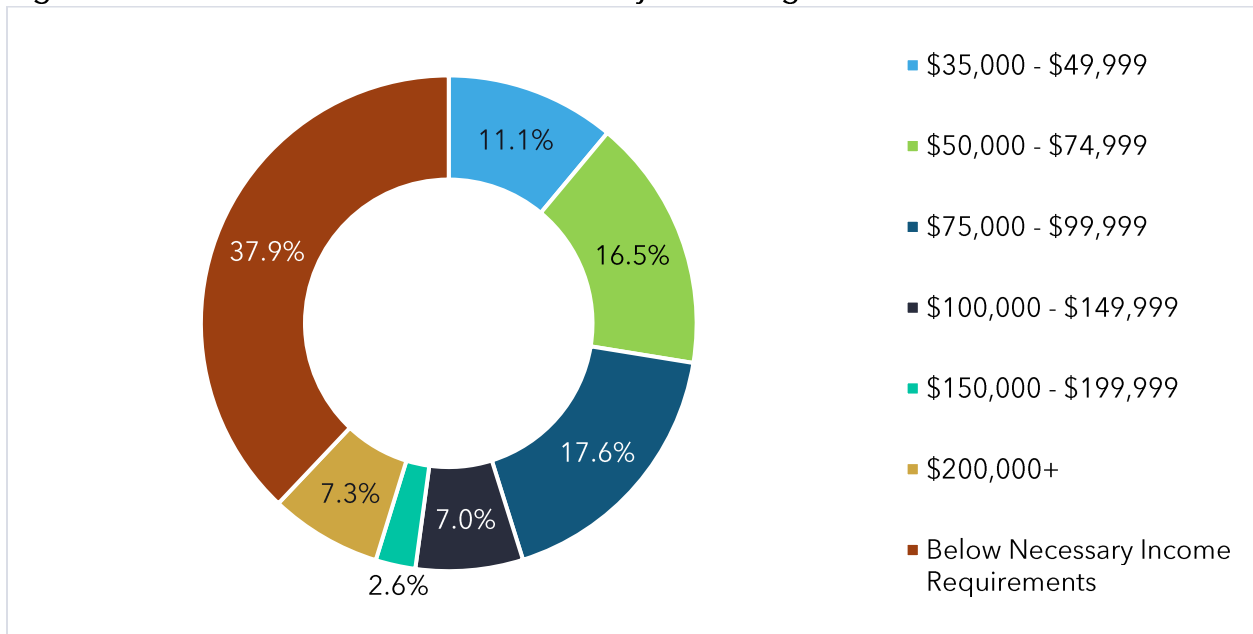
Source: Points Consulting Using Esri Business Analyst, MLS, and Realtor.com, 2024

Figure 2.6: Households that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home in Fair Grove



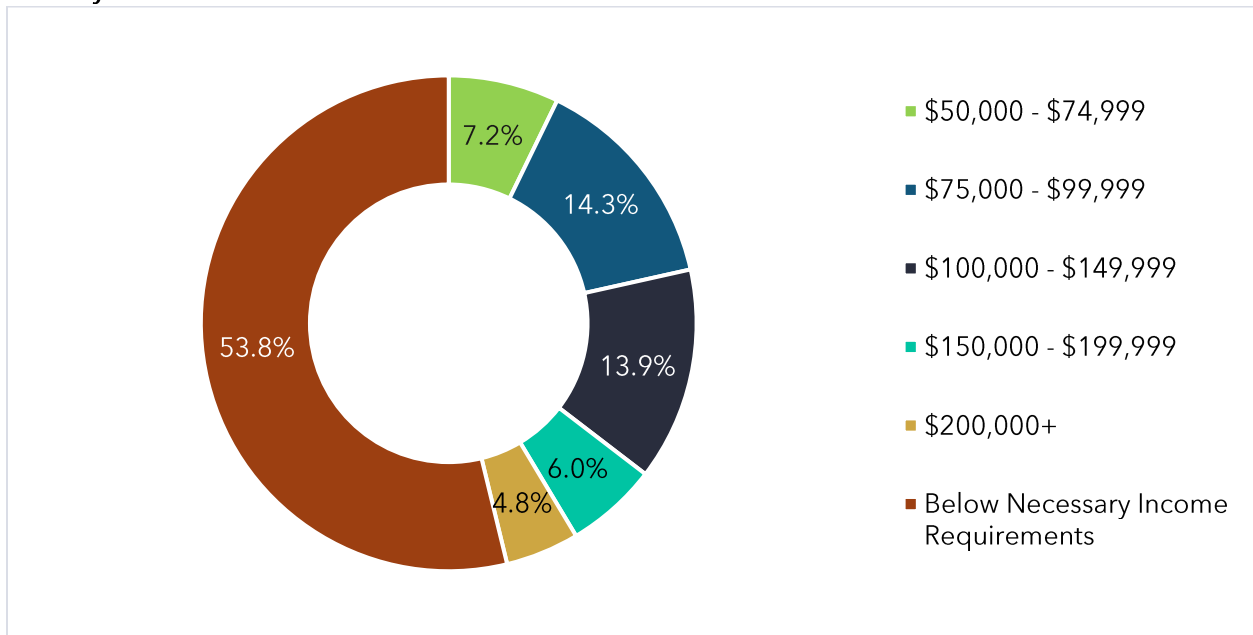
Source: Points Consulting Using Esri Business Analyst, MLS, and Realtor.com, 2024

Figure 2.7: Households that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home in Walnut Grove



Source: Points Consulting Using Esri Business Analyst, MLS, and Realtor.com, 2024

Figure 2.8: Households that Can Afford to Buy an Average-Priced Home in Greene County



Source: Points Consulting Using Esri Business Analyst, MLS, and Realtor.com, 2024

3. Forecast & Recommendations

Detailed below are population and housing needs forecasts for Greene County and the Groves. Additionally, two different forecast scenarios were completed for each jurisdiction: Status Quo and Optimistic. While methods differ between the county's forecast and the Groves' forecasts, the Status Quo forecasts are generally based on historic growth rates remaining largely the same in each jurisdiction. However, the Optimistic forecast assumes PC recommendations are implemented and result in positive community outcomes, specifically along the lines of how the community's desire to grow with families and businesses moving in.

Population Forecast

Over the past decade, Greene County has experienced consistent population growth. Assuming this trend would continue, PC estimates the county to grow by over 23,000 (Table 3.1) residents over the next 20 years, cumulatively growing by about 7.7%. A higher estimate, assuming slightly higher, but slowly diminishing growth rates, results in Greene County growing by over 33,000 residents over the next 20 years. This reflects a cumulative growth rate of 10.9%.

As previously mentioned, the methodology differs between the county-wide forecast and the forecasts for the Groves. The Status Quo forecast for Greene County was completed by forecasting the resident population by age cohorts over the next 20 years. The Optimistic forecast assumes a constant rate of growth, which relates to diminishing total population growth over time.

Table 3.1: Population Forecast, Greene County

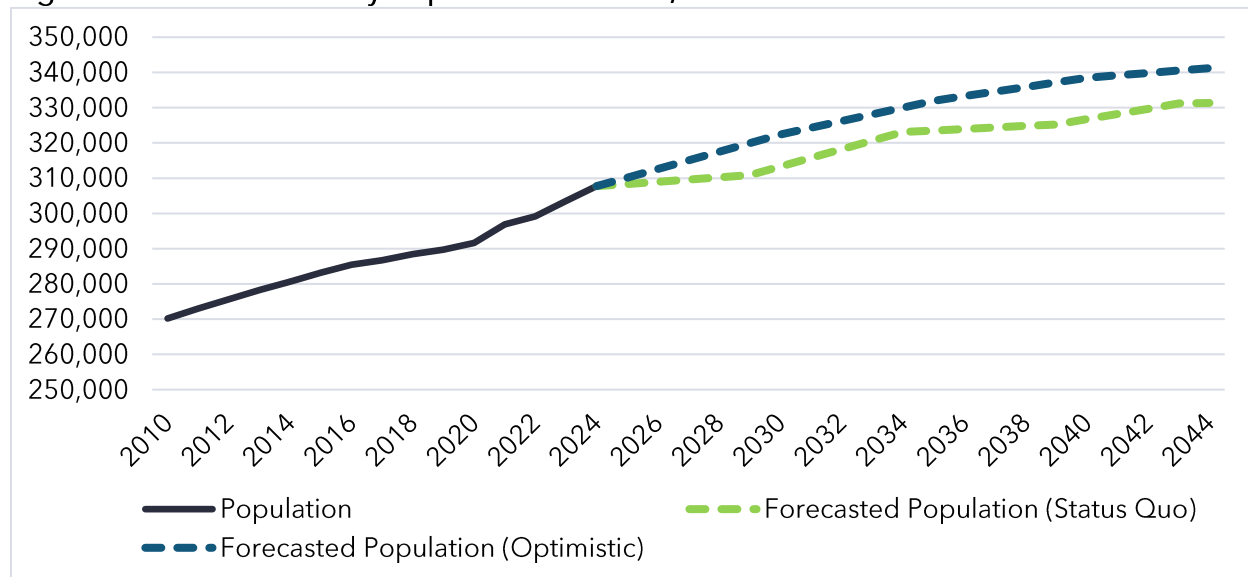
Year	Population Status Quo	New Residents
2024	307,752	--
2028	310,223	2,471
2032	318,190	10,438
2036	323,953	16,201
2040	326,726	18,974
2044	331,334	23,582
Optimistic		
2024	307,752	--
2028	317,465	9,713
2032	326,218	18,466
2036	333,270	25,518
2040	338,499	30,747
2044	341,210	33,458

Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Figure 3.1 depicts Greene County's forecasted growth from 2024 to 2044, along with the historic population since 2010. The Status Quo forecast being based on age cohorts is reflected in a lower overall growth rate. This reflects an overall demographic trend in the US of an aging population and declining fertility rates. Thus, the population growth is slower in

this scenario compared to historic averages. Meanwhile, the Optimistic scenario assumes a constant rate of growth applied to the historic trends. A relatively simplistic model for growth, but an achievable outcome if Greene County becomes an area where more people overall want to live. This could be due to relatively more affordable housing compared to the nation.

Figure 3.1: Greene County Population Forecast, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting, 2024

The Groves

Due to the rural, small-town nature of the Groves, less accurate data is available to complete the population forecasts. To remedy this problem, the project team forecasted scenarios based on different growth rate scenarios, rather than based on age cohorts. The cohort method fails to take into account future migratory factors, which is how the Groves may grow over the next 20 years. The Status Quo forecast for the Groves assumes current growth rates, combining historic and current Census estimates (2022 5-year ACS estimates) with Census forecasts. The Optimistic forecast for the Groves assumes land use changes and housing recommendations make the Groves more attractive to young families and businesses, who will then migrate to the cities.

Under Status Quo growth rates, Ash Grove is projected to decline slightly from 2022 to 2044. Though in the Optimistic forecast, Ash Grove is projected to grow by nearly 200 residents by 2044 (Table 3.2). Inconsistent population numbers historically for Ash Grove cause these inconsistencies, shown in Figure 3.2.

Fair Grove is projected to grow the most by new residents in each scenario. In the Status Quo scenario, Fair Grove is projected to grow by 433 residents. Meanwhile, the Optimistic forecast projects Fair Grove to grow by 633 residents. Fair Grove's population has been the most consistent over the last 3 years, shown in Figure 3.3.

Walnut Grove hosts the smallest population of the Groves. A period of population decline was experienced here from 2012 to about 2017, impacting the forecasts (Figure 3.4). The Status Quo forecast projects a growth of approximately 40 residents for Walnut Grove by 2044. However, with land use changes and housing becoming more attractive, the Optimistic forecast projects a growth of 241 residents by 2044 for Walnut Grove.

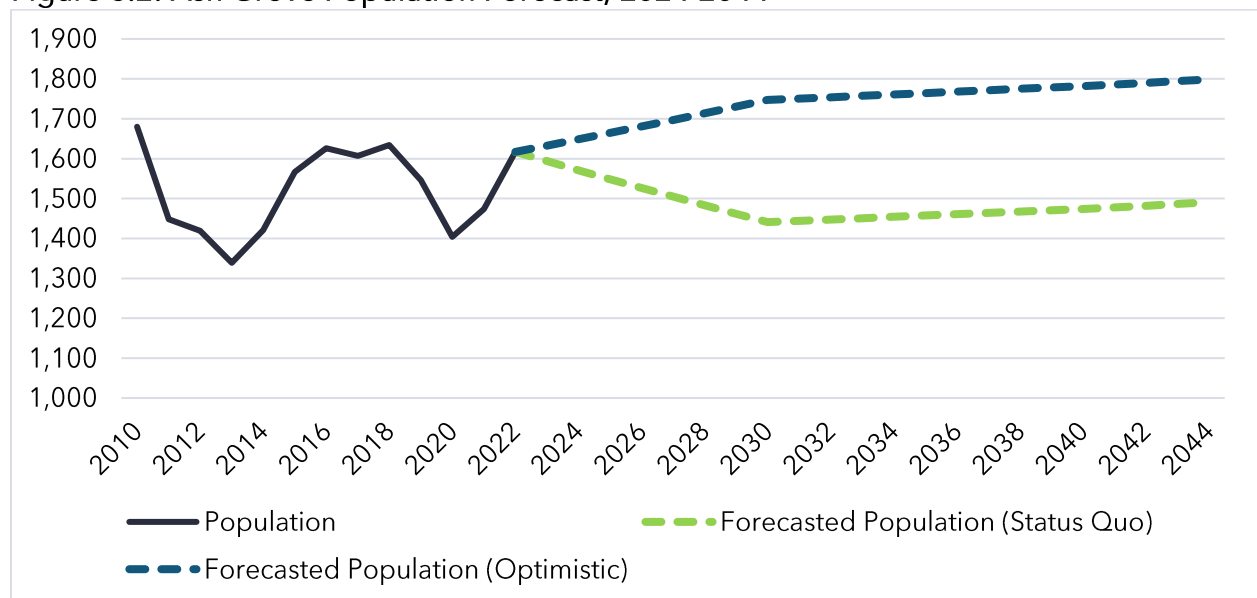
An important note to make about our population forecast for The Groves lies with the methodology used to construct it. With The Groves undergoing Comprehensive Planning updates at the same time as our housing study, we felt that having multiple versions of a population forecast in documents completed almost simultaneously would have been more confusing than helpful. As a solution, PC used the population forecast from each updated Comprehensive Plan and US Census Bureau Decennial Census estimates to extrapolate values for our population and housing forecasts. Discrepancies exist between Census American Community Survey estimates and Decennial Census estimates due to methodological differences. So, our 2022 estimates do not match 2022 five-year estimates from the American Community Survey. The margin of error is likely due to the rural nature and small populations of The Groves. Additionally, average household size was not considered in population estimates but were utilized for housing estimates.

Table 3.2: Population Forecast, The Groves

City	2022	2032	2044	New Residents '22 - '44
Status Quo				
Ash Grove	1,617	1,448	1,490	(127)
Fair Grove	1,616	1,802	2,049	433
Walnut Grove	656	675	697	41
Optimistic				
Ash Grove	1,617	1,754	1,798	181
Fair Grove	1,616	1,995	2,250	633
Walnut Grove	656	782	897	241

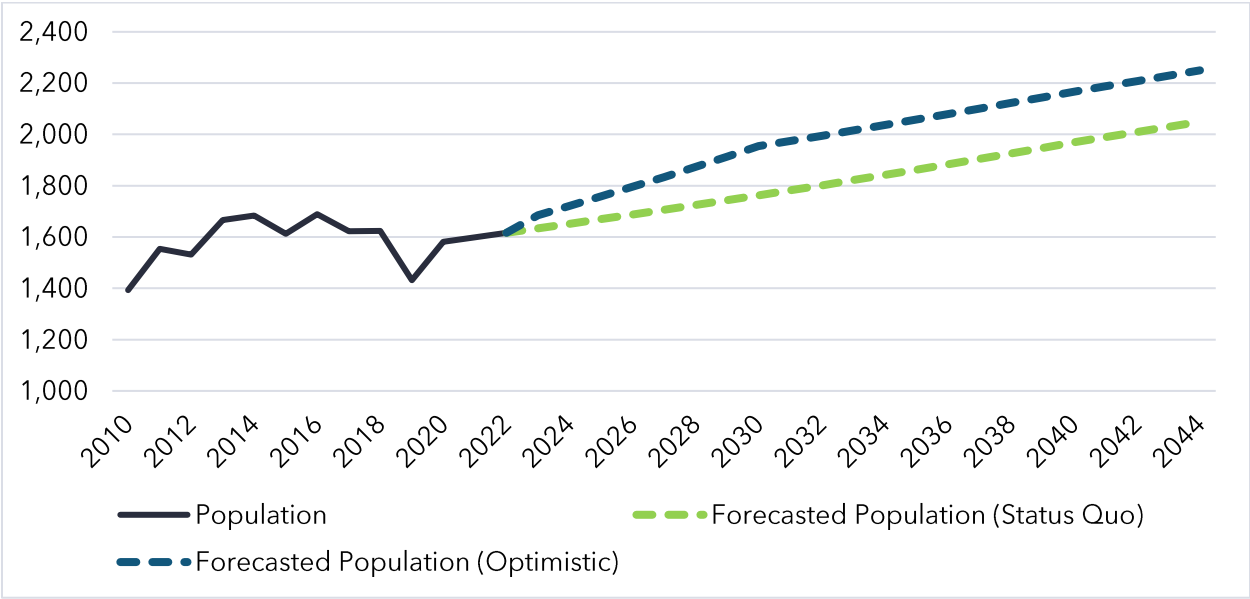
Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Figure 3.2: Ash Grove Population Forecast, 2024-2044



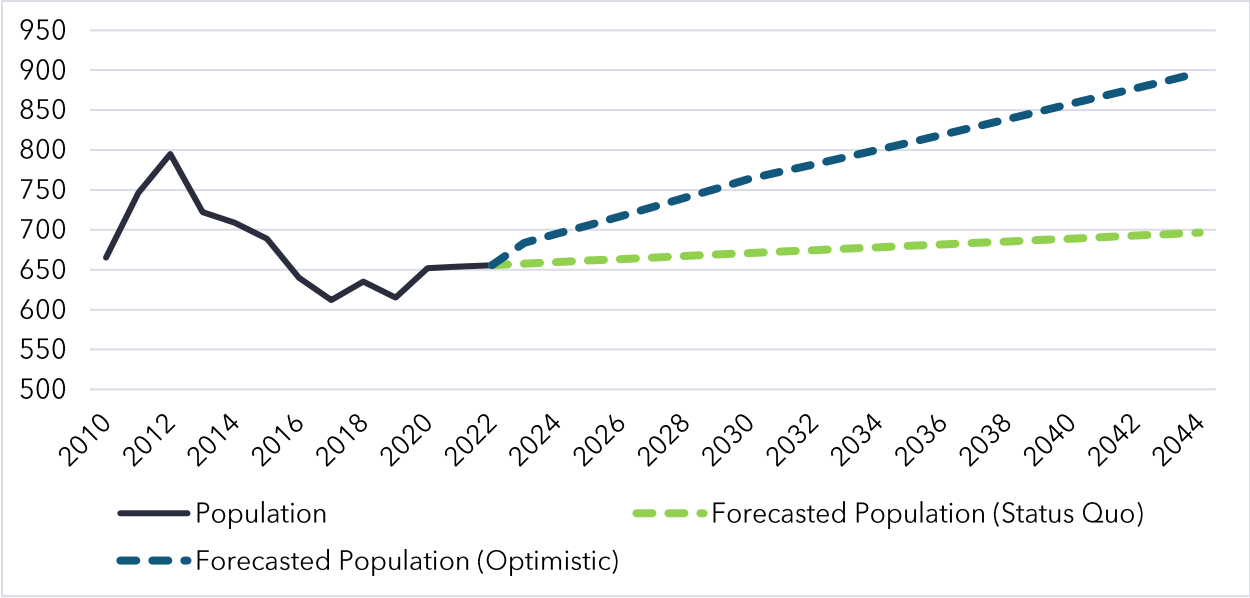
Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Figure 3.3: Fair Grove Population Forecast, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Figure 3.4: Walnut Grove Population Forecast, 2024-2044

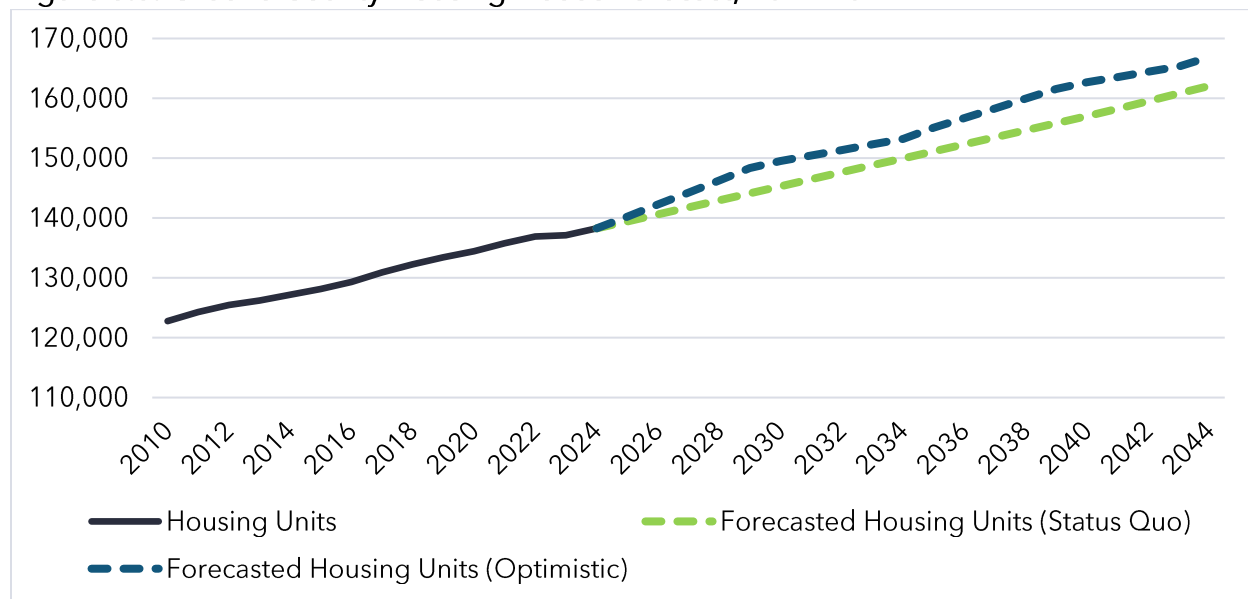


Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Housing Forecast

The housing forecast presented by PC is a housing needs forecast. This reflects the number of housing units that are needed by the community based on its population forecast. As of 2024, there are just over 138,000 housing units in Greene County. In the Status Quo forecast scenario, an estimated 162,074 housing units will be needed in the county by 2044 to accommodate its population. The Optimistic forecast projects slightly more housing units will be needed by 2044, specifically 166,905 housing units.

Figure 3.5: Greene County Housing Needs Forecast, 2024-2044



Source: Points Consulting, 2024

The Groves

Like the housing forecast for Greene County, the housing forecasts for the Groves are housing needs forecasts built upon the population forecasts. With the Groves being a greater beneficiary to our study, we broke down each housing needs forecast into housing types by distribution percentages. For each community, PC recommends to build a greater variety of housing types, which is layered into the housing needs forecasts.

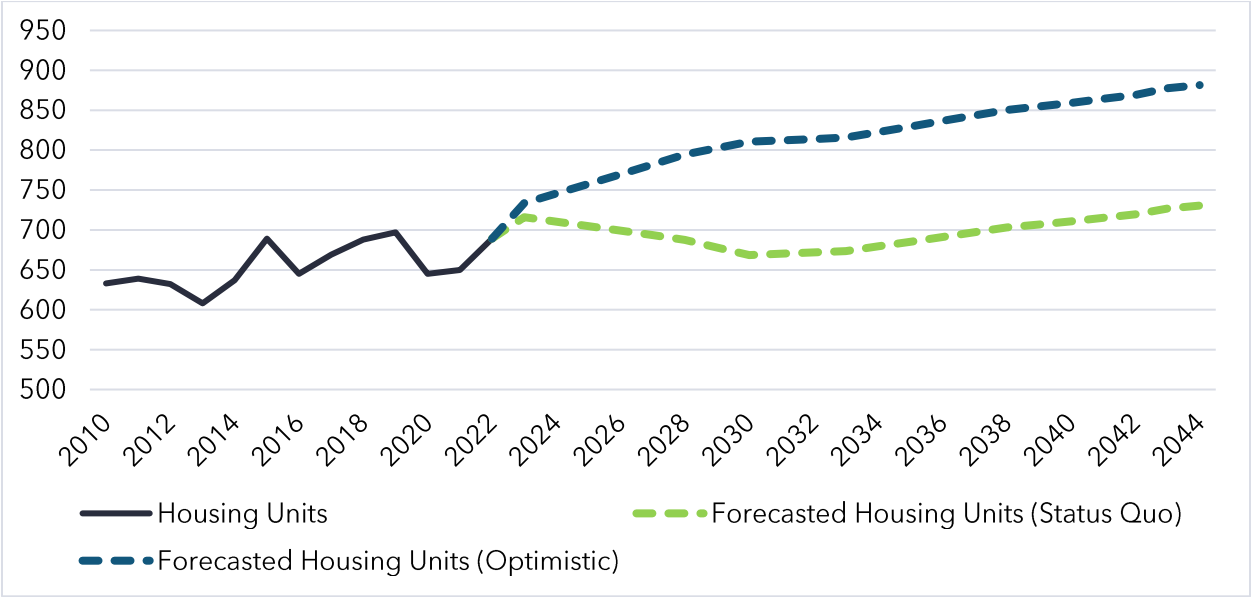
To determine the breakdown of housing units by type, PC utilized US Census Bureau definitions of housing types and units in structure. According to the Census Bureau, "units in structure" data are presented in terms of the number of occupied housing units in structures of the specific size, not in terms of residential structures.² Put simply, eight housing units in the "high density (10 or more units)" housing type refers to eight occupied housing units in a structure that hosts 10 or more total units.

Ash Grove's housing needs forecast is illustrated in Figure 3.6. While the housing needs forecast was built upon the population forecast, which predicts Ash Grove's population to decline over the next 20 years (in the Status Quo forecast), PC recognizes that there are multiple potential housing developments in the city. To account for this, the housing needs forecast for Ash Grove was adjusted to ensure that it did not predict a decline in new housing

² US Census Bureau, "Subject Definitions," <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html#tenure>.

units needed. In fact, the Status Quo forecast predicts a need of 731 total housing units in Ash Grove by 2044. This reflects an increase of 42 units from 2022. The Optimistic forecast projects a need of 882 housing units by 2044, an increase of 193 units from 2022.

Figure 3.6: Ash Grove Housing Needs Forecast, 2022-2044



Source: Points Consulting, 2024

The housing type forecasts were based on the overall housing needs forecasts for each community and target distribution percentages for those housing types. As of 2022, 84% of Ash Grove’s housing units are single-family, detached homes (SFH detached). This rate is significantly higher than national averages and is indicative of a low variety of housing types.

Table 3.3: Housing Type Forecast, Ash Grove

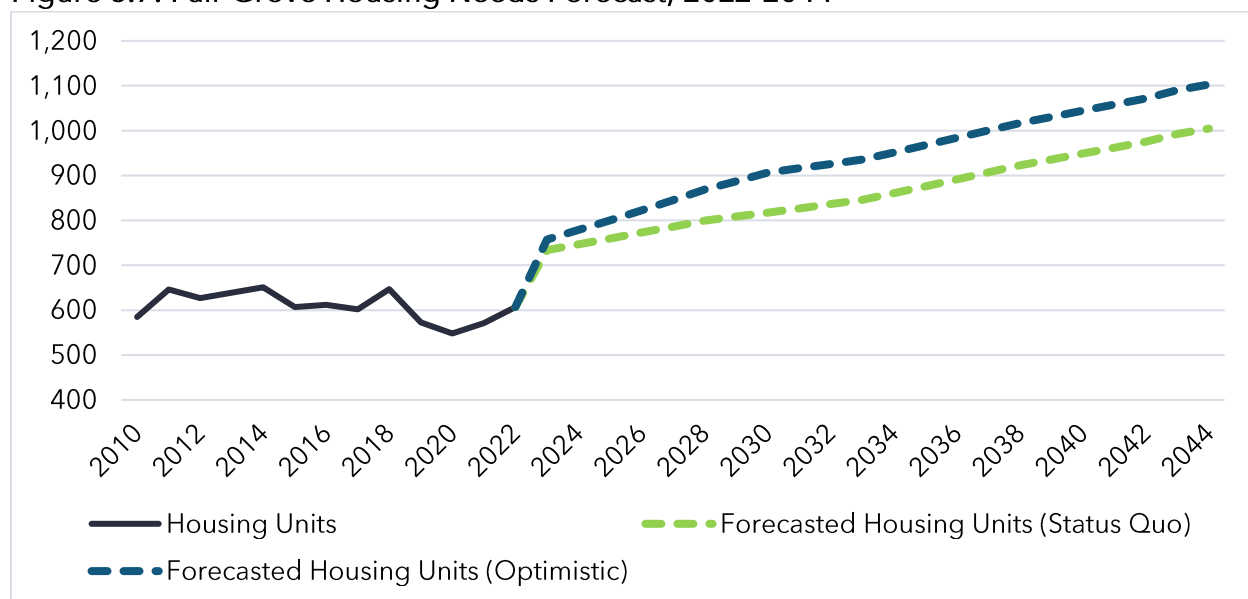
Unit Type	2022 Units	2022 Distr.	2044 Units	2044 Distr.	New Units Needed
Status Quo					
SFH Detached	579	84.0%	599	82.0%	20
SFH Attached	15	2.1%	24	3.3%	10
Middle Density (2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, Mobile Homes)	87	12.7%	96	13.2%	9
High Density (10 or more units)	8	1.2%	11	1.5%	3
Total	689	100.0%	731	100.0%	42
Optimistic					
SFH Detached	579	84.0%	723	82.0%	144
SFH Attached	15	2.1%	29	3.3%	15
Middle Density (2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, Mobile Homes)	87	12.7%	116	13.2%	29
High Density (10 or more units)	8	1.2%	13	1.5%	5
Total	689	100.0%	882	100.0%	193

Source: Points Consulting, 2024

SFH detached is the most expensive housing type that exists in the US and keeping this share of the housing type will not significantly decrease the cost of housing. Additionally, a greater variety of units will make Ash Grove more attractive to families, offering more choices for them to choose from, along with increasing the affordability of housing. PC realizes that this is the most likely housing type to be developed, by community preference, but the 2044 target distributions redistribute 2 percentage points of this housing type to primarily middle density units, like townhomes, duplexes, or triplexes (Table 3.3).

Fair Grove's housing needs forecast is shown in Figure 3.7. The Status Quo forecast predicts a need of 841 total housing units in Fair Grove by 2044. This reflects an increase of 234 units from 2022. The Optimistic forecast projects a need of 923 housing units by 2044, an increase of 316 units from 2022.

Figure 3.7: Fair Grove Housing Needs Forecast, 2022-2044



Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Fair Grove boasts a rate of 90.4% of its housing stock being SFH detached. If this rate were to continue through 2044, housing would likely become more expensive rather than more affordable. The outcome of increased housing costs would also not make the community more attractive for families to move to. Businesses would also turn away as they would see that they could not meet labor requirements as workers would not be able to afford housing in the area. PC's housing type forecast redistributes 7 percentage points of this housing type across:

- SFH, attached housing, such as townhome development
- Middle density housing, like duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and manufactured housing
- High-density housing, like apartments.

A greater variety of housing types would similarly make Fair Grove more attractive for families. More options for homes and greater affordability would attract the type of people the community desires.

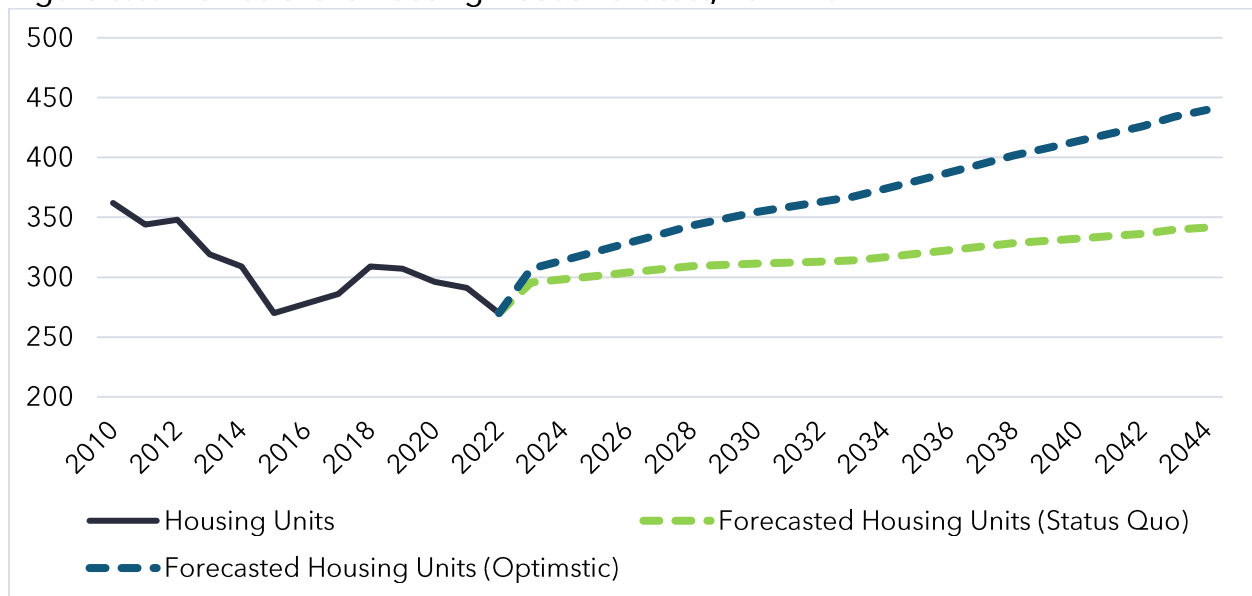
Table 3.4: Housing Type Forecast, Fair Grove

Unit Type	2022 Units	2022 Distr.	2044 Units	2044 Distr.	New Units Needed
Status Quo					
SFH Detached	549	90.4%	701	83.4%	152
SFH Attached	0	0.0%	25	3.0%	25
Middle Density (2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, Mobile Homes)	58	9.6%	98	11.6%	39
High Density (10 or more units)	0	0.0%	17	2.0%	17
Total	607	100.0%	841	100.0%	234
Optimistic					
SFH Detached	549	90.4%	770	83.4%	221
SFH Attached	0	0.0%	28	3.0%	28
Middle Density (2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, Mobile Homes)	58	9.6%	107	11.6%	49
High Density (10 or more units)	0	0.0%	18	2.0%	18
Total	607	100.0%	923	100.0%	316

Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Walnut Grove's housing needs forecast is depicted in Figure 3.8. The Status Quo forecast predicts a need of 342 total housing units in Walnut Grove by 2044. This reflects an increase of 72 units from 2022. The Optimistic forecast projects a need of 440 housing units by 2044, an increase of 170 units from 2022.

Figure 3.8: Walnut Grove Housing Needs Forecast, 2022-2044



Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Walnut Grove has the lowest percentage of its housing stock designated to SFH detached. While this is relatively better than Ash Grove and Fair Grove, it is still high compared to the national average. Walnut Grove is also the oldest community of the Groves, which means it could benefit from middle density housing that is designated for older individuals. This could

take the form of senior living developments or accessory dwelling units. In this context, the target distribution would redistribute 6 percentage points from this housing type across mainly middle density housing units and SFH attached.

Table 3.5: Housing Type Forecast, Walnut Grove

Unit Type	2022 Units	2022 Distr.	2044 Units	2044 Distr.	New Units Needed
Status Quo					
SFH Detached	205	75.9%	239	69.9%	34
SFH Attached	7	2.7%	14	4.2%	7
Middle Density (2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, Mobile Homes)	52	19.2%	76	22.2%	24
High Density (10 or more units)	6	2.3%	13	3.8%	7
Total	270	100.0%	342	100.0%	72
Optimistic					
SFH Detached	205	75.9%	307	69.9%	102
SFH Attached	7	2.7%	18	4.2%	11
Middle Density (2, 3 or 4, 5 to 9, Mobile Homes)	52	19.2%	97	22.2%	46
High Density (10 or more units)	6	2.3%	17	3.8%	11
Total	270	100.0%	440	100.0%	170

Source: Points Consulting, 2024

Recommendations

The following recommendations are those deemed by PC to be the most worthy of consideration for improving the amount of housing and the cost of housing with the Groves. Rather than providing individual recommendations, these concepts focus on strategies that the Groves can address collectively though in some cases a particular concept may be slightly more applicable to one

In many settings, a "Housing Action Plan" follows upon a Housing Needs Study to flesh out the exact schedule and timeline for addressing the needs identified. This group of recommendations should be considered a step in the direction of implementation, but admittedly this does not qualify as a fully fleshed out action plan.



The concepts are divided into three groups:

- **1: Development & Redevelopment:** strategies for increasing housing development by leveraging public sources with either public or privately owned assets
- **2: Planning & Zoning:** Planning ahead to add more capacity and/or altering land use rules to permit more diverse housing options.
- **3: Amplify Supply & Demand:** Connecting private and non-profit entities with the needs of the Groves

1. Development & Redevelopment

1.1 Pursue State Grants to Assist with Affordable Housing Incentives:

Due to budgetary constraints for The Groves, traditional incentives to lower development costs, like fee waivers, may be difficult to implement. However, pursuing funding from state sources to handle hidden costs can act as incentives as well. Funding from state grants can assist with handling legitimate costs, such as infrastructure development and maintenance, or could go as far as assisting with a larger development project.

One way to utilize grants to incentivize affordable housing, or just housing revitalization in general, is by using the funding to acquire and assist with rehabilitation of homes in the community. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) is a grant program through the Missouri Department of Economic Development's (DED) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.³ Grants through this program are awarded to Missouri communities to assist in the acquisition, rehabilitation and resale of foreclosed homes to income qualifying persons/families. The NSP is a realistic grant for The Groves because households in the moderate- and middle-income ranges are eligible for homes being resold.

This grant could be utilized to acquire and fund rehabilitation of homes. Larger grant amounts could go towards multiple homes and would pay for contractors redeveloping the homes. Springfield is the closest community to have success pursuing this grant, but Cape Girardeau is a southeastern Missouri community that has also had success.

Other CDBG grants are available to leverage as incentives as well, specifically geared towards infrastructure. Communities that are looking to improve water and wastewater systems can pursue the CDBG water/wastewater grant.⁴ Affordable housing developments often require proper infrastructure, and using this grant to reduce costs to developers or expand infrastructure to other planned developments would be beneficial. Ash Grove has done work in this area already, and this grant funding opportunity would assist Fair Grove and Walnut Grove.

Competitive CDBG grants also offer infrastructure assistance. Specifically for community facilities, general infrastructure, and even demolition.⁵ This funding would also go towards

³ Missouri Department of Economic Development, Community Development Block Grants, "Neighborhood Stabilization Program," <https://ded.mo.gov/programs/community/community-development-block-grants-neighborhood-stabilization-program>.

⁴ Missouri Department of Economic Development, Community Development Block Grants, "Water/Wastewater," <https://ded.mo.gov/programs/community/community-development-block-grants-waterwastewater>.

⁵ Missouri Department of Economic Development, Community Development Block Grants, "Competitive Cycle," <https://ded.mo.gov/programs/community/community-development-block-grants-competitive-cycle>.

covering hidden infrastructure costs that developers may incur. If there was a desirable development location outside of the installed infrastructure of any of the Three Grove communities, these funding sources could go towards expanding it and encouraging development.

1.2 Develop and Maintain a List of Blighted and/or Undeveloped Properties to be Leveraged for Redevelopment and/or Land Banking:

A necessary first step to addressing issues with blighted and undeveloped homes is taking inventory of them. Many neighborhoods can 'tip' either direction – towards further dilapidation, or towards revitalization. What they need is a push in the right direction. Identifying specific targets to focus on for blight elimination efforts is required to begin the process of tipping neighborhood towards sustained reinvestment.

This strategy would require a fair amount of up-front work to complete the work of identifying target neighborhoods. It would then require partnerships with funders, neighborhood stakeholders, and organizations with real estate development skill sets. In the best-case scenario, marketing proposed revitalization efforts to households in the area will spur market demand and likely attract investors to join the party. A well-run program will leverage investment and generate a healthy tax return and benefits, all of which can and should be documented.

A few communities have successfully implemented blight demolition and reinvestment programs. Riverside, Missouri's blight removal and reinvestment program allows partnerships with private property owners to remove blighted structures and encourage reinvestment in the property.⁶ Up to \$8,000 are available for demolition, and up to \$4,000 are available for blight removal, along with reinvestment bonuses. Centralia, Missouri, has a similar program, offering up to \$3,000 for blight removal and reinvestment.⁷ In both cases, property owners would need to apply for and document their blighted property. Even if the application is not approved, this is a way to catalogue the blighted property for future evaluation and potential reinvestment.

Tools that can be used to start a similar project in The Groves include sources such as Regrid and Attom,⁸ two online databases of parcel/property data that provide information on foreclosures, real estate values, owner contacts, and more. Cross referencing these sources with in-person tours of potential target properties, can lay the groundwork for a list of tipping neighborhoods. PC recommends keeping this list of blighted properties up to date by maintaining it regularly, which will direct renovation and/or acquisition efforts. These efforts may fall to local housing authority, affordable housing entities such as Habitat for Humanity, or even for-profit developers if the needs, benefits, and incentives are clearly marketed. Another option is to set up a Land Banking Organization to implement revitalization efforts, a process further detailed in Recommendation 1.4.

1.3 Encourage Restoration of Historic Buildings for Adaptive Reuse:

Each of The Groves have downtown buildings that are not currently in use but could be rescued and revitalized to support housing. Without being rehabilitated, the buildings will slowly decay and have more negative impacts on the community than positive. Qualified

⁶ Riverside, MO, Building Codes/Enforcement, "Blight Removal & Reinvestment Program,"

⁷ Centralia, MO, Building Demolition, "Blight Removal and Reinvestment Grant Program," <https://www.centraliamo.org/administration/page/building-demolition>.

⁸ Regrid <https://regrid.com/>, and Attom <https://www.attomdata.com/>.

historic buildings are eligible for tax credit incentives. Taking action to save these buildings will improve downtown vibrancy and development as well, further explored in Recommendation 2.4.

Both federal and state historic preservation tax credit programs exist. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program was initiated in 1977 and provides a 20% tax credit for projects that preserve and restore qualified historic buildings.⁹ Since inception, the program has leveraged nearly \$132 billion in private investment to preserve over 49,000 properties.

The Missouri Historic Tax Credit Program was created in 1997 and provides a 25% tax credit of approved costs to qualified historic buildings.¹⁰ The dollar-for-dollar reduction on state tax liability have driven over \$10 billion in private investment before credits were issued for over 3,700 projects in 72 communities through 2020. The state tax credit program has also proven to create temporary construction and permanent jobs.

The Groves can package infrastructure grants with developer recruitment to encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings. In addition to increasing downtown vibrancy, signs of rehabilitation raise the overall level of demand for development in the downtown communities. The historic buildings can also be adapted to be reused for loft apartments, a large apartment type with open space and few interior walls.¹¹ From PC's onsite visit, the buildings could host 2-6 loft units per building. This type of redevelopment follows the path of infill rather than expanding too quickly as well.

1.4 Activate Land Banking Organization for Greene County:

A land bank is a government entity that has been granted the authority to acquire properties, clear up any title issues associated with them, renovate/demolish as need be, and make them ready to be put back into productive use. Missouri recently passed a bill to allow more areas of the state to set up land banks or land bank agencies.¹² PC recommends Greene County create a land bank agency. The agency would be able to acquire properties that are tax-delinquent or abandoned. Acquisition of properties can be done in many ways, such as purchase or via foreclosure.

The land bank would hold the property until it can be repurposed or sold, and would have the power to enter into contracts for property's management,



Blight in Walnut Grove (via Google.earth.com)

⁹ National Park Service, Historic Preservation Tax Incentives, "Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties," <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/index.htm>.

¹⁰ Missouri Preservation, "Missouri Historic Tax Credit Program 25% Tax Credit," <https://preservemo.org/we-advocate/tax-credit-advocacy/impacts-on-missouri-historic-tax-credit-program/>.

¹¹ Apartments.com, "What is a loft apartment?" <https://www.apartments.com/blog/what-is-a-loft-apartment>.

¹² Missouri Senate, HB 2062, "Current Bill Summary," https://www.senate.mo.gov/24info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=4111777.

improvement, or otherwise. It could also enter into partnerships with developers and non-profits.

The properties acquired by land banks must be sold, cleared, or put to public use after eight years. The land bank may also establish future use requirements to ensure that the property will be used for such community goals as affordable housing, or other uses that will benefit the community. Ideally, the use of land banks can include attracting investment, clearing away blighted homes, providing affordable housing, and generating tax revenues.

Funding for a Land Bank or Agency can come from several sources, including but not limited to:

- grants or gifts from political subdivisions, state or federal government, or other public or private sources
- selling its properties
- income from investments or other lawful assets and activities

In Ash Grove, the city has already been acquiring properties and facilitating private development without the existence of a land bank. There are cases in other parts of the state and country where land banks have targeted neighborhoods with high percentages of tax delinquencies for acquisition, then bundled up multiple parcels in those neighborhoods and sold them to developers. If Greene County establishes a land bank agency, then The Groves will need to work closely with the county to best apply the agency's tools. While the opportunities for such an agency are abundant, the difficulty comes with finding a group with the capacity to focus on initiatives in The Groves.

1.5 Concentrate Development Resources for a Higher Density Project:

Higher density housing projects can often be favored by developers because it allows them to lower the cost of development per housing unit. Lower density, single-family developments are more typical of the area, but a higher density project can take different shapes. Instead of apartment buildings, a development could include townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, or condos. These are all "middle density" housing types that are still "higher" density than typical, single-family homes. PC recommends concentrating all resources available to the communities to create a higher density housing project to diversify housing types available within the community.

While the cities themselves may not have all the resources needed to support a higher density housing project, they can play an important role in the process: matchmaking between landowners and developers. GIS maps indicate where vacant and developable properties are, and if a city is interested in encouraging this type of a development, then resources could be concentrated to one of the developable properties.

Of course, this it will require interest from both landowners and developers. But there are several spots in each community where members providing feedback to comprehensive plan updates would support such developments. "Possibility maps" for each community are displayed in Appendix A. Parcel 2 in Figure A.1 (Ash Grove's possibility map) shows a large parcel in Northwest Ash Grove. This parcel is considered favored for single-family housing, but a parcel of such size can accommodate multiple types of developments. There are also multiple properties on the northside of Ash Grove that could accommodate middle density developments.

For a higher density, multi-family development, the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) offers programs for affordable housing. Through the MHDC, the Missouri Housing Trust Fund (MHTF) offers funds for both nonprofit organizations and for-profit developers to provide income qualified housing.¹³ MHDC's multi-family program offers similar assistance for affordable developments at different qualified income levels.¹⁴ Per Esri Business Analyst, 33% of Ash Grove's households earn less than \$35,000 per year, along with about 18% in Fair Grove and 29% in Walnut Grove. All households earning below this threshold is below 50% of the AMI for Greene County (\$81,500). These households represent those that are eligible for affordable housing from these programs. The multi-family program is also eligible to a certain percent of households earning 60% of the AMI.

2. Planning & Zoning

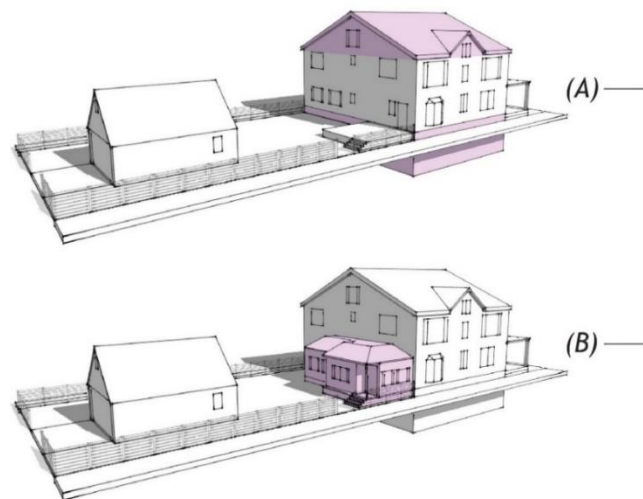
2.1 Consider Increasing Allowances on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):

Accessory dwelling units are trending in cities seeking to achieve infill development without significant changes to community character and density. ADUs increase density by adding a unit on an existing lot, but do not create more dense housing developments. They can offer a more affordable way of building than new units on undeveloped parcels, as the utilities and street infrastructure are already in place on and around these parcels (separate electrical meters are the norm for detached ADUs, but separate meters for water/sewer is typically decided by how each municipality regulates the units). ADUs can also combat increasing housing costs as they provide an alternate source of income for homeowners to rent out space.

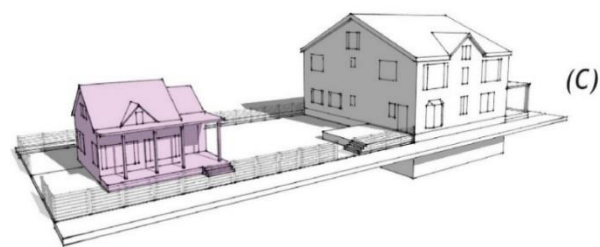
ADUs are also proving to be popular among seniors who wish to "age-in-place" rather than sell their home. Live-in family members or caretakers could live in the property in their own dwelling unit. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (Figure 4.5), nearly one third (31.6%) of Ash Grove's population is over the age of 55, along with 43.1% in Walnut Grove, the

Figure 3.3: Attached and Detached ADUs

1. Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)



2. Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)



Source: City of Boulder Website,
<https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/accessory-dwelling-units>.

¹³ Missouri Housing Development Commission, "Missouri Housing Trust Fund," <https://mhdc.com/programs/community-programs/missouri-housing-trust-fund-mhtf/>.

¹⁴ Missouri Housing Development Commission, "Multifamily Rental Production," <https://mhdc.com/programs/multifamily/>.

interest in using ADUs for this purpose is likely to increase significantly over the next twenty years.

ADUs are not explicitly allowed in current zoning codes, and a change may be necessary to allow this housing type. Many in the communities note that there is a lack of market rate rentals and starter homes for young families, ADUs can address these issues as well. Attached ADUs may be easier to pass through in zoning changes, but detached ADUs should be considered as well to assist with housing challenges.

2.2 Reduce Minimum Lot Areas:

Minimum lot areas require a property to have a certain number of square feet per lot to be permitted to build a dwelling unit, and have the potential to restrict the future housing supply. PC recommends reducing minimum lot areas in all residential zones for The Groves.

Excluding Greene County's agricultural residence and rural residence districts, the average minimum lot area required for a dwelling unit is approximately 8,000 square feet (for parcels that are served by public water and sewer). This is not so far out of the ordinary as Greene County's zoning code is meant for unincorporated areas where large lots are the norm and dense development is unlikely to occur. However, the average minimum lot are required for a dwelling unit in each of The Groves is near the threshold for the county's zoning, and even exceeds it in Ash Grove's case (average of 9,500 square feet required for a dwelling unit across residential zones).

Large minimum lot sizes are also correlated with building larger homes, and larger homes are significantly more expensive. Reducing minimum lot sizes will allow for more infill opportunities, allow for smaller homes, and will ensure current land supply can accommodate more housing in the future. Greater infill opportunities align with desires of residents in the communities in that they don't want to expand too much and create urban sprawl. Smaller homes will ensure greater affordability of starter homes for young families. Ensuring land supply being able to accommodate more housing will ensure a supply restriction does not occur in the future, protecting the relative housing affordability of The Groves seen now. *While the right of citizens to build large homes should be preserved, PC believes that builders should also be free to construct smaller units.*

2.3 Allow "Missing Middle" Housing Types in Single-Family Zones:

Currently, single-family zoning districts in The Groves are quite restrictive in terms of density and housing types that may be built on them. Ash Grove specifically does not explicitly note permitted housing units besides what is written in the "Intent" description of the districts. However, single-family districts like R-1-13 in Ash Grove and R-1 in Fair Grove make up the vast majority of residential land in each city (zoning maps are unavailable for Walnut Grove). The combination of most residential land being exclusively R-1 and low density has the potential to push housing prices higher through supply restrictions.

The Groves should consider explicitly allowing duplexes in single-family residential zones. Some communities ease into such situations by only allowing duplexes on corner lots or only on lots above a certain square footage threshold, for example. Twin homes, currently unaddressed in the zoning code, are another version of attached middle density housing that could be suitable. The primary difference between twin homes and duplexes is that parcels

Figure 3.4: Duplex Rendering



Source: Nationwide Homes, <https://nationwide-homes.com/model/bridgewater-duplex/>.

containing duplexes are split through a shared partition upon the same parcel, whereas twin homes contain multiple units in one building but two separate parcels.¹⁵

In addition to duplexes, The Groves should consider allowing triplexes and quadplexes on lots above a certain number of square footage. Townhouses are also a version of attached middle density housing that can be an option for

slightly higher densities. Marginally increasing density with these attached “middle housing” options will help bring the cost of purchasing or renting down for younger families that want to live in communities. Both community surveys in Ash Grove and Fair Grove indicate that residents want to grow moderately by infill development and attracting families and businesses to the area. Middle density housing addresses both of these points.

The future land use map for Ash Grove also has some “transitional residential” areas that we recommend to be mixed-use. This will allow for a blend of housing types, adding appeal for families looking to join the community.

Figure 3.5: Townhouse Rendering



2.4 Consider Downtown Redevelopment Planning for The Groves:

In small communities, a bustling downtown is the heartbeat by which the health of the community can be measured. People want things to do, places for kids to play, and areas to socialize. Throughout PC’s public engagement, residents expressed a desire for a stronger sense of community. Revitalizing downtown in The Groves can help with this, as it provides a

¹⁵ Realtor.com, “What is a twin home? It’s not just another word for ‘duplex,’” <https://www.realtor.com/advice/buy/twin-home-different-duplex/>.

town "center" where the community can come together. It could also aid with population retention and housing as The Groves become more desirable places to live and invest.

A revitalized downtown in a rural community can organize and take advantage of both local mixed-use market demand as well as regional demand. Take the city of Woodbine, a small farming city in Harrison County, Iowa. Woodbine is home to about 1,600 people. The city had experienced a population decrease of about 6.7% by 2022 since the 2010 Census. Like so many other rural communities in the U.S., Woodbine lost both businesses and community wealth during the past decade. Motivated to act, the broader community spurred into action, with the local Chamber of Commerce transitioning into the Woodbine Main Street program.

One of the more important facets of Woodbine's efforts to improve the economics of their downtown was the restoration of upper-level housing in the downtown area. To date, more than \$10 million has been invested in downtown Woodbine through public and private sources. Over 28 buildings have been rehabilitated. Additionally, over 36 upper-story units were added to the downtown district, increasing the taxable value of the district's three block footprint by \$2.5 million.

Part of success in Woodbine is due to its participation in Main Street Iowa, a state-sponsored program designed to further develop Iowa's downtowns through technical assistance and financial resources, including training workshops, design and business assistance, and seed funding. In addition to Main Street participation, Woodbine had a local developer that helped mentor its early projects. They ultimately used the knowledge gained from working with the developer-mentor to tackle later projects themselves.

Unique new partnerships would be required to pull off a similar project for The Groves, but this can be effective in undertaking difficult and complex redevelopment assignments. Developing and growing local capacity is critical to taking on seemingly impossible projects, especially in smaller rural communities. This will take time, and would likely involve taking advantage of a local or outside development expert. The state's accredited Main Street



Downtown Ash Grove (photo from PC's Community tour)



Woodbine's success, by the numbers.

program, Missouri Main Street Connection,¹⁶ is a critical resource for seeking out important technical assistance and access to seed capital for such an initiative. The Missouri Department of Economic Development also offers community development block grants specifically for Missouri communities to engage in revitalization efforts to renew downtown areas, and restore them to former prominence as a center of community activity.¹⁷

2.5 Pursue a Grant Writer:

Grants are an excellent resource to be able to utilize when planning for development or being able to incentivize development. Many of our recommendations include incentivizing development by the private market, and using grants to do so. SMCOG offers free grant writing services to participating jurisdictions, but their staff are limited. As a result, grant writing has been noted by some in the community as a weak point.

Ash Grove specifically has noted that they don't have anyone skilled at applying for grants, and the situation is likely similar in the other communities. PC recommends recruiting a contract grant writer that can be shared by The Groves. Creating a staffed position for such a worker may be too complicated and expensive but could be greatly advantageous during planning processes.

A contract grant writer would be able to assist with applying for specific funding to be used to incentivize developers, such as infrastructure funding grants. With a prevalence of dilapidated homes and grant funding available to assist with the problem, a grant writer could also assist in bids for addressing that issue. Additionally, if one of the cities owns a property that they want developed, they could contract the grant writer to assist developers in writing grants for funding to develop that property. This would be particularly beneficial when attempting to develop affordable housing, at all income levels.

Even if a contracted grant writer wouldn't be feasible, increasing overall grant support (i.e. writing/review) capacity for each municipality and SMCOG is recommended. Authorization and approval of grants come from municipalities but grant writers could also be volunteers in the communities. Ash Grove citizens have voiced they'd be happy to help applying for grants by preparing documents for the city to review and utilize.

3. Amplify Supply & Demand

3.1 Recruit Developers to Build More Housing:

Planning for housing with possibility maps and future land use maps is one thing, but building that housing is another. Developers in Southern Missouri will need to be recruited to The Groves to address some of the housing shortages being experienced by the communities. To do this, developers need to be shown the data and information so that they know they can benefit from developing there.

Based on our population forecast, we expect Greene County's population to grow between 23K and 33K (Table 3.1) people in the next 20 years. All of these people are going to have to live somewhere, and city living is becoming increasingly expensive for families. A proportion of this population growth will find it unaffordable to live in Springfield, and will turn to other

¹⁶ The Missouri Main Street Connection provides guidance on how to start the journey towards large-scale downtown revitalization, <https://momainstreet.org/>.

¹⁷ The Missouri Department of Economic Development offers community development block grants, <https://ded.mo.gov/programs/community/community-development-block-grants-economic-development>.

cities for affordability. The Groves have relative housing affordability, according to our homeowner affordability model (Figures 2.5-2.8). Some will eventually move to The Groves for this affordability, and with the rural, small town feel it will likely be families.



Using this information as a basis, PC recommends building infographics and flyers with a 1-2-page summary of the levels of demand. Using the information in this report will be most beneficial for the communities and developers. Additionally, maintaining a coordinated list of properties that could potentially be developed based on what property owners indicate to the cities will be instrumental. SMOG, or another local development organization, can maintain this list and manage the infographics and flyers. To bring this opportunity together, a local contact within each city, or perhaps at SMOG, will be needed for developers to contact if they are interested.

3.2 Capitalize on MHDC Homebuyer Assistance Programs to Keep and Pull Back Younger Residents:

Just growing the population is not necessarily the desire for The Groves as it could capture Springfield commuters that may not be as invested to the communities. But community feedback from the comprehensive planning updates indicated that young families and other folks that have ties to the communities would be welcomed. There are a few tools available to The Groves that could be useful in this endeavor, such as homebuyer assistance and private sector partnerships.

In addition to housing development assistance, the Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) also has homebuyer assistance programs. MHDC's "First Place" program offers down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.¹⁸ First-time homebuyers are typically younger couples and families that are looking for their first home, and usually have limited savings. This program offers mortgage financing with interest rates that are lower than regular market rates and the option for cash assistance to be used for down payment and closing costs. MHDC's "Next Step" program offers

Figure 3.6: French Lick, IN MakeMyMove Programs

	
<p>Springs Valley Meadows is Recruiting Nurses \$5,500</p> <p>\$5,000 stipend</p> <p>1 annual pass to Indiana Department of Natural Resources state parks</p> <p>A free Springs Valley Bank & Trust checking account with a \$250 bonus</p> <p>Quarterly Mover Events - hikes, beach days, winery tours, and more!</p> <p>Plus 4 more benefits</p>	<p>Move to French Lick \$5,500</p> <p>\$5,000 stipend</p> <p>1 annual pass to Indiana Department of Natural Resources state parks</p> <p>A free Springs Valley Bank & Trust checking account with a \$250 bonus</p> <p>Quarterly Mover Events - hikes, beach days, winery tours, and more!</p> <p>Plus 4 more benefits</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Apply Now</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Apply Now</p>

Source: French Lick, IN, MakeMyMove, Pop 1,700
<https://www.makemymove.com/moving-living/french-lick-in>.

¹⁸ Missouri Housing Development Commission, "First Place Program," <https://mhd.com/services/homebuyer-programs/first-place/>.

similar assistance to potential first-time and repeat homebuyers outside of First Place's income limits.¹⁹

A potential private partner that Greene County or The Groves could pursue is MakeMyMove. This organization partners with local communities to recruit remote workers and families to find welcoming communities for them to move to.²⁰ Local governments typically offer signing bonuses, networking opportunities, and other incentives for people to move to the community. Greene County or The Groves could partner with the organization to help target people with connection to the community to move back and enhance the future of the community.

The homebuyer assistance programs and a potential private partner, combined with the relative affordability of housing in The Groves can be brought together to attract the target demographic. Using the information from MHDC and the affordability from our model, PC recommends putting together a targeted educational/marketing campaign for the particular audiences the communities would welcome.

3.3 Connect with Local Affordable Housing Partners:

While there are a handful of affordable housing projects currently active in The Groves, it is important to continue to ensure that affordable housing is available at all income levels. Affordable housing partners in the area include Habitat for Humanity of Springfield, Missouri and the Housing Authority of Springfield.²¹ Both organizations provide affordable, low-income housing, while Habitat of Springfield offers other programs as well. PC recommends reaching out to these organizations in an effort to see if there are opportunities to partner. Each organization is Springfield focused, but could do projects in The Groves as well.

Habitat of Springfield has several programs available that may mesh better with The Groves values. They offer homebuyer assistance, a home preservation program, and a neighborhood revitalization program.²² They are known for building affordable housing developments, but they offer more for their partner families as well. Habitat offers "Tools for Life" classes that cover topics ranging financial education, health, and handling emergencies. All classes that would contribute to a better equipped community in each of The Groves. Partnering with Habitat on this program alone could be beneficial as well, especially for first-time homebuyers.

¹⁹ Missouri Housing Development Commission, "Next Step Program," <https://mhdc.com/services/homebuyer-programs/next-step/>.

²⁰ MakeMyMove, <https://www.makemymove.com/>.

²¹ Housing Authority of Springfield, "Public Housing Options," <https://www.hasproperties.net/lower-income-families>.

²² Habitat for Humanity of Springfield, Missouri, "Programs," <https://habitat.springfieldmo.org/programs/>.

4. Demographic & Socioeconomic Trends

Trends in Population Growth

Missouri's population has grown consistently since 2010 but only at a pace (4.1%) approaching half that of the nation's growth rate (9.6%). To understand the economic landscape and factors impacting local housing markets, we must consider comparative changes in population and demographics. Greene County has grown at a rate almost three times faster than Missouri's, but its compound annual growth rate over the last five years (0.41%) has only slightly beaten the nation's (0.38%). While metro counties have grown faster than nonmetro counties in both the nation and in Missouri, the pace of Missouri's metro counties' growth still lags behind that of U.S. metro counties.²³ Notably, during the 2010 - 2024 timeframe, Greene County's population surpassed the City of St. Louis's population.²⁴

The fastest growing area in Table 4.1 is the City of Republic, MO, which experienced a percent growth of three times that of Greene County and Webster County, and four times that of neighboring Springfield, MO. Of the Three Grove cities, only Fair Grove has exceeded a percentage growth larger than the state's. Ash Grove (3.1%) has grown since 2010, but not over the last five years (-0.38% CAGR). Both the populations of Walnut Grove and Ash Grove are projected to remain essentially flat over the next five years.

Table 4.1: Population Change, 2010-2024

Area	2010 Population	2024 Population	Numerical Change	% Change
Ash Grove	1,472	1,517	45	3.1%
Fair Grove	1,393	1,586	193	13.9%
Walnut Grove	665	665	0	0.0%
Springfield	159,532	172,818	13,286	8.3%
Republic	15,052	20,421	5,369	35.7%
Greene County	275,174	307,752	32,578	11.8%
Polk County	31,137	32,624	1,487	4.8%
Webster County	36,202	40,510	4,308	11.9%
Missouri	5.98M	6.2M	243,650	4.1%
United States	308.7M	338.4M	29.7M	9.6%

Source: US Census Bureau and Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Table 4.2: Population Growth Over Time

Area	CAGR Past 5 Years	2024 Population	CAGR 5-Years
Ash Grove	(0.38%)	1,517	0.12%
Fair Grove	2.06%	1,586	(0.15%)
Walnut Grove	1.58%	665	0.06%
Springfield	0.68%	172,818	0.25%
Republic City	4.68%	20,421	0.90%

²³ White, Mark C., "Population Trends in Missouri and Its Regions", University of Missouri, May 2021, <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/mx55>

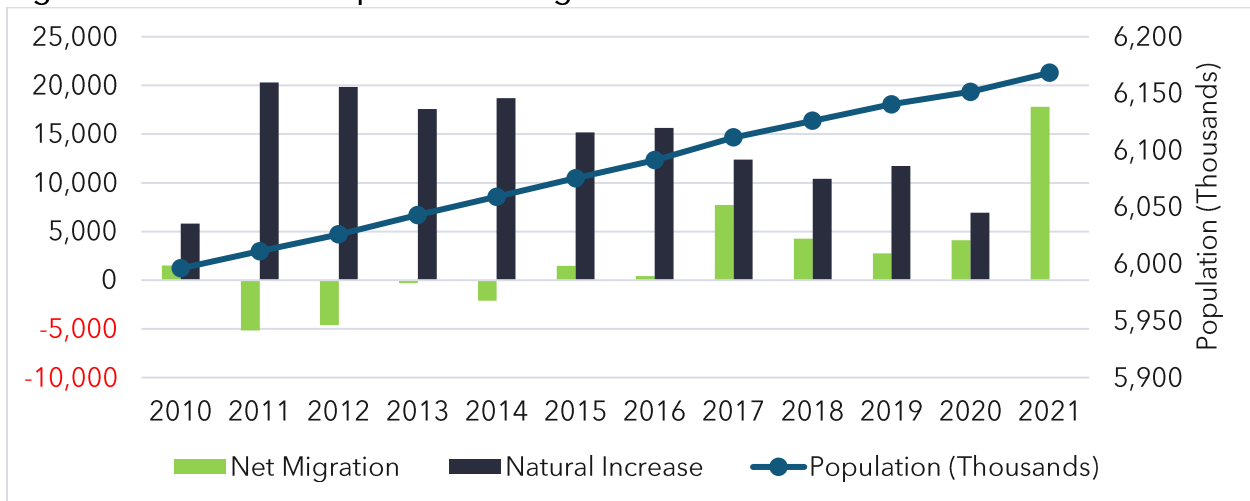
²⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, ACS

Greene County	1.21%	307,752	0.41%
Polk County	0.55%	32,624	0.52%
Webster County	0.94%	40,510	0.77%
Missouri	0.41%	6.2M	0.17%
United States	0.83%	338.4M	0.38%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019, 5-Year ACS and Esri Business Analyst, 2024

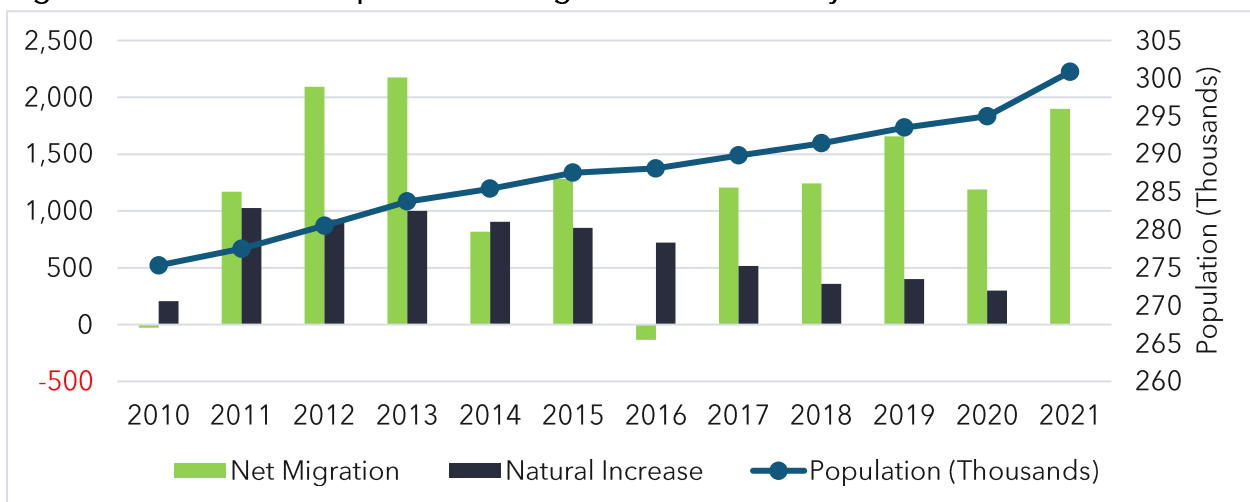
Population growth is driven by three primary factors: births, deaths, and migration. Figure 4.1 and 4.2 display the changes in those three factors from 2010 to 2021 for Missouri and Greene County. They show that while Missouri experienced negative net migration in 2011 and 2012, Greene County experienced a large positive net migration influx that continued until 2016. Interestingly, only Webster County has experienced relatively stable natural increases from 2010 - 2021, while Greene County's and Missouri's have been in decline since 2014.

Figure 4.1: Sources of Population Change in Missouri



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS

Figure 4.2: Sources of Population Change in Greene County

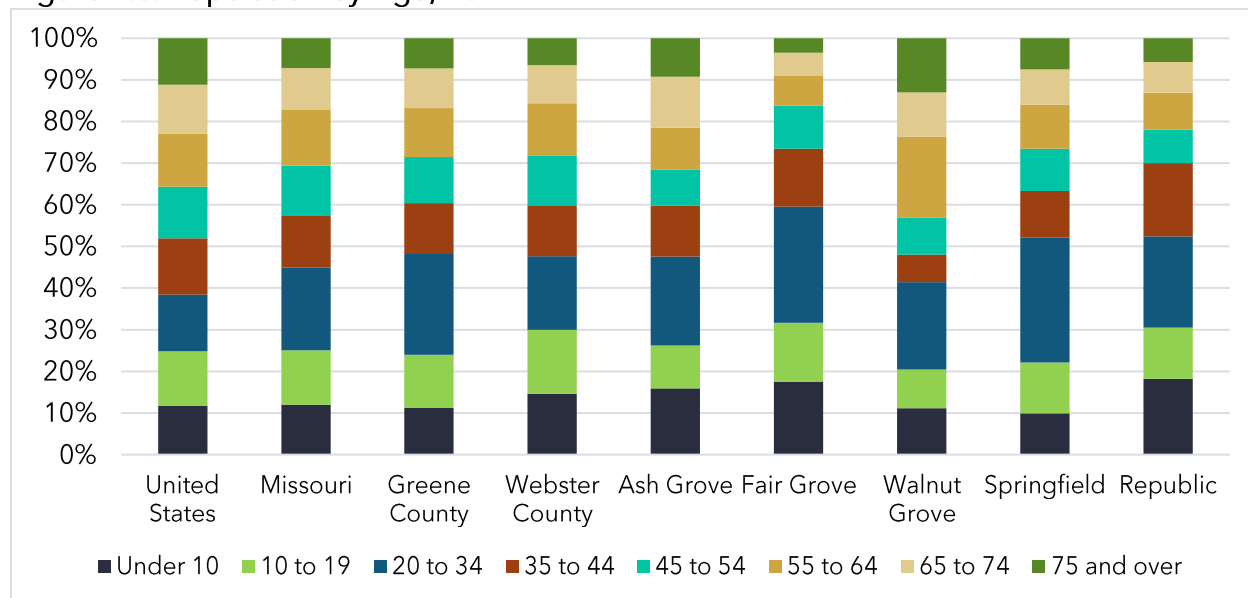


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS

Regional Demographic Data

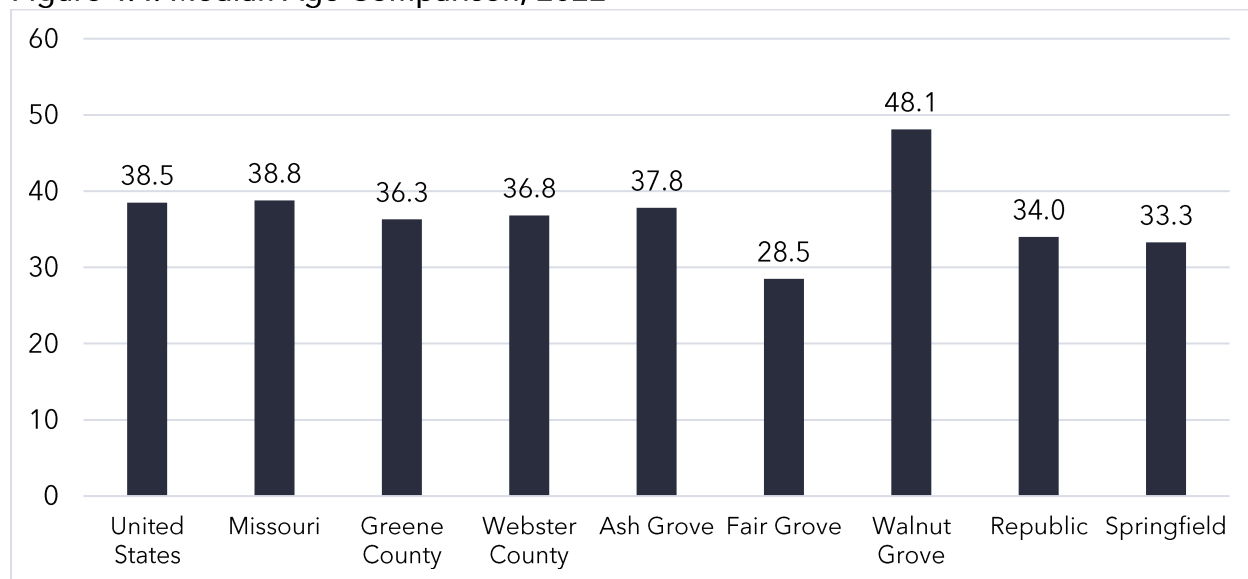
While the population of Ash Grove has a median age comparable to the nation and state, Fair Grove's median age is about a decade younger, whereas Walnut Grove's is nearly a decade older (Figure 4.4). Missouri, Greene County, and The Groves all have higher percentages of 20-34-year-olds (by between 6 and 16 percentage points) than the nation, and this is the largest age demographic for each. As Figure 4.5 indicates, the only region in this study with an older population than the nation is Walnut Grove with 43.1% of its population above the age of 55.

Figure 4.3: Population by Age, 2022



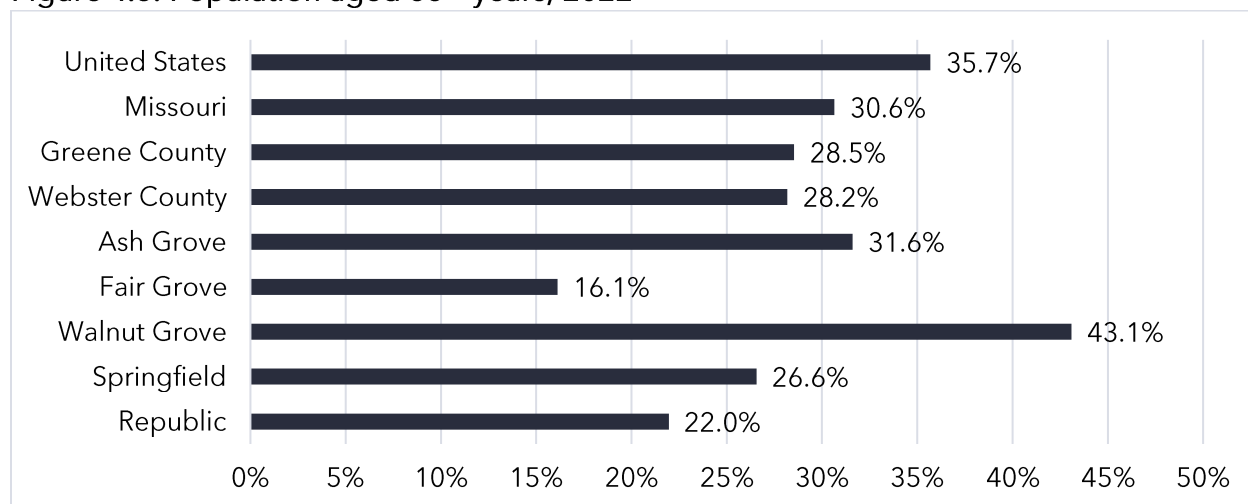
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S010

Figure 4.4: Median Age Comparison, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S0101

Figure 4.5: Population aged 55+ years, 2022

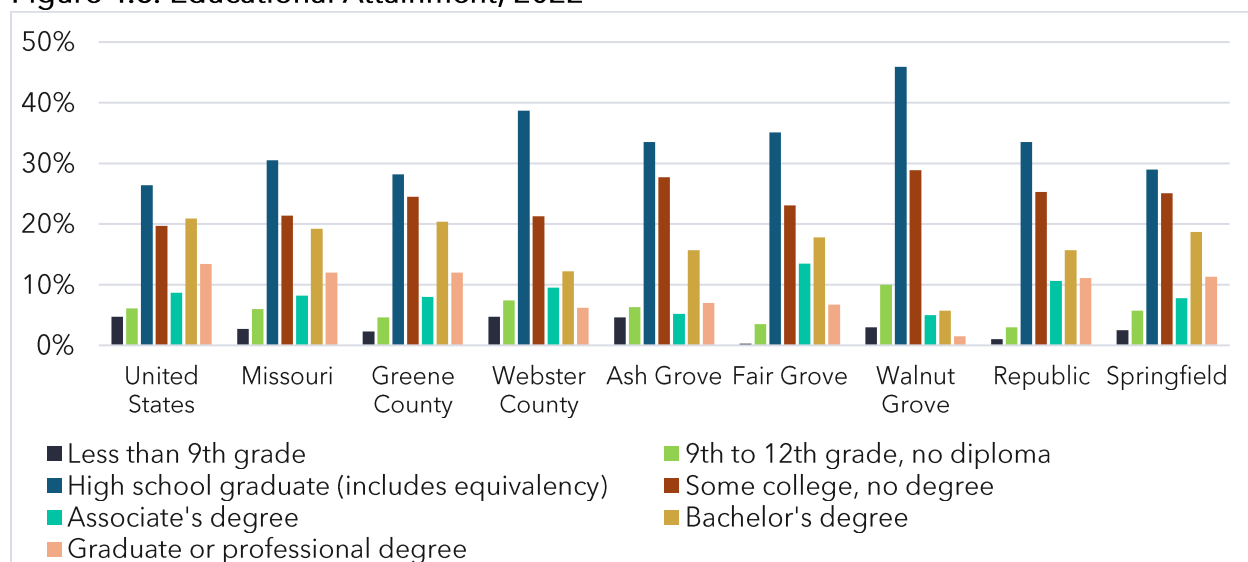


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S0101

The levels of educational attainment in Greene County and The Groves are compared to other geographic areas in Figure 4.6. As shown, Walnut Grove jumps out as having the highest percentage of its population aged 25+ with high school level education, but not any higher, at 45.9%. Fair Grove and Ash Grove also have higher shares of their population in this educational category, at 35.1% and 33.5% respectively. Overall, educational attainment is relatively lower in The Groves, compared to the nation, the state, and the county.

At the national level, 34.3% of the U.S. population (aged 25+) has an educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher. This percentage is similar in Greene County at 32.4%. Higher levels of educational attainment are typically accompanied by higher income levels as well. Lower levels of educational attainment in The Groves will drive a need for lower skill jobs. Ash Grove's percentage of 25+ individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher is 22.7%, along with 24.5% in Fair Grove, and 7.2% in Walnut Grove.

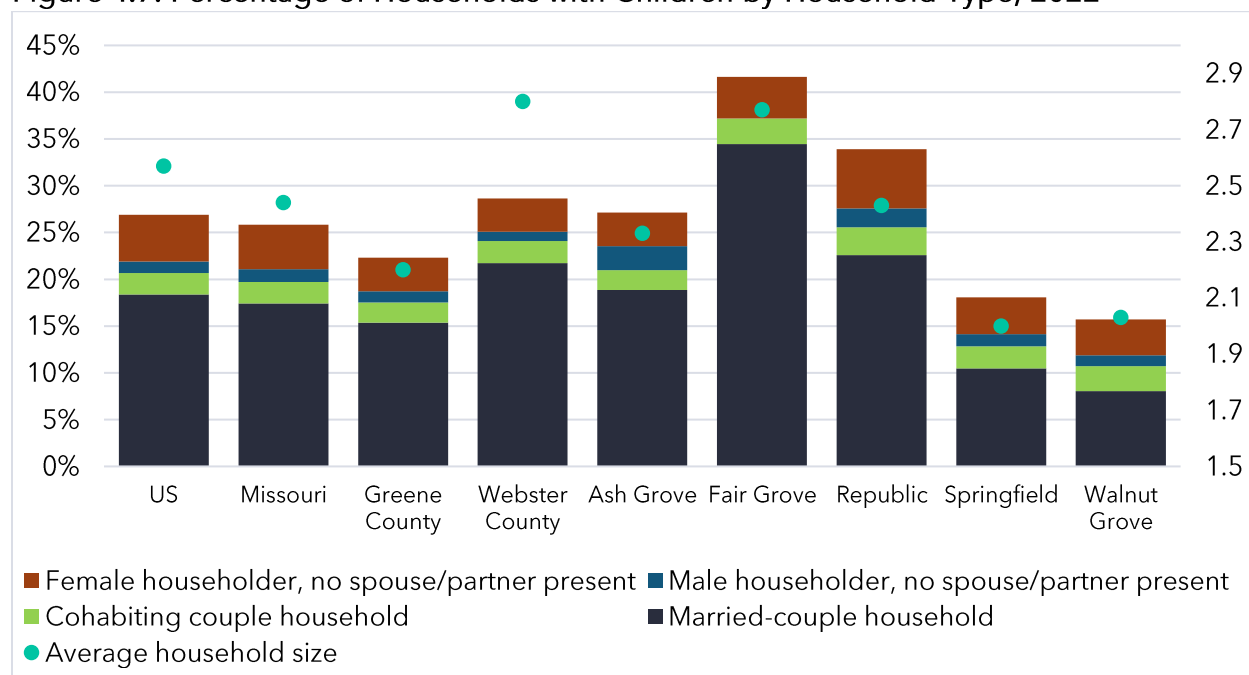
Figure 4.6: Educational Attainment, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S1501

Looking at households with children provides another perspective on the issue of housing affordability, as households with children have a very different set of fixed and variable expenses than other households do. As seen in Figure 4.7, Greene County has a smaller proportion of households with children when compared to the U.S. and to Missouri. The large city of Springfield and the small city of Walnut Grove have lower proportions of households with children than the U.S. and the state. Springfield's size and low proportion of households with children is likely pulling Greene County's proportion down. Ash Grove's and Fair Grove's proportions are higher than the U.S. and Missouri. Fair Grove stands out both in terms of its much higher proportion of households with children (41.6%) and its percentage of households with children being in married households (34.5%) than the U.S. (18.4%) and Missouri (17.4%). Republic is the other such standout.

Figure 4.7: Percentage of Households with Children by Household Type, 2022



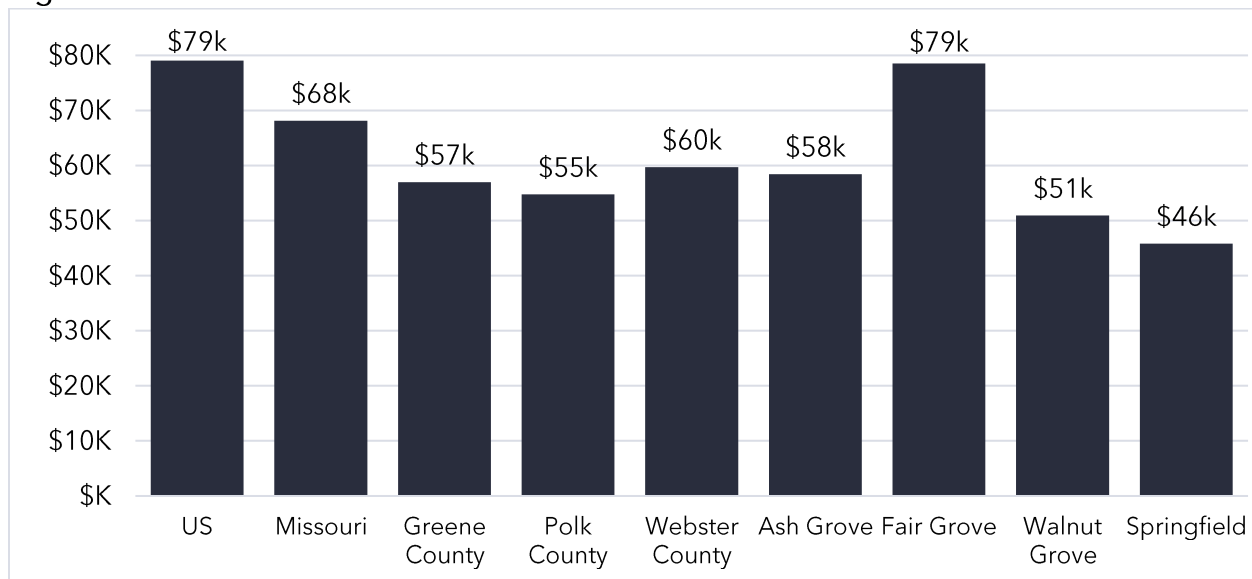
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table DP02

When assessing housing affordability in any market, it's crucial to know that market's median household income (MHI). The MHI provides insight into local purchasing power what determines a "high" versus "low" price in the market.

With that backdrop, Greene County's MHI is \$22,000 below the national median, and \$11,000 below the state's median. Those differences reflect the lower cost of living in the area. Fair Grove is the only city in Figure 4.8 with a median household income matching that of the nation. Ash Grove's MHI is very close to the county's, while Walnut Grove's 12% lower. The largest share of reported incomes were in these ranges:

- Greene County: 17.3% in the \$50,000 - \$74,999 range
- Ash Grove: 22% in the \$50,000 - \$74,999 range
- Fair Grove: 24.1% in the \$100,000 - \$149,999 range
- Walnut Grove: 20.1% in the \$35,000 - \$49,999 range

Figure 4.8: Median Household Income



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

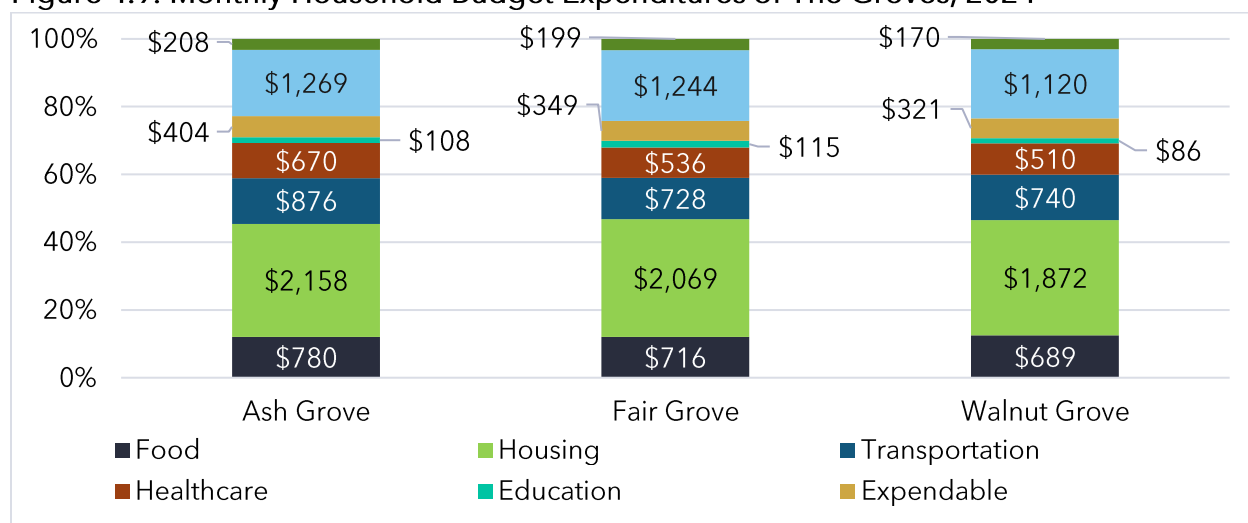
Table 4.3 and Figure 4.9 show monthly household budget expenditures. Households in Greene County and in each of The Groves spend less on housing than households throughout the state, by approximately \$100 - \$400 per month. Walnut Grove households spend the lowest monthly amount on housing of this group. The rest of the spending categories are generally lower than seen in the state numbers, but do not deviate notably from them – with the exception of Healthcare expenditures being about \$100 per month lower in Greene County. Healthcare expenditures take up a larger share of monthly expenditures for Ash Grove households as well, at 10.4%.

Table 4.3: Percentage of Monthly Household Expenditures, 2024

Expense Category	Missouri	Greene County	Ash Grove	Fair Grove	Walnut Grove
Food	12.3%	12.4%	12.1%	12.0%	12.5%
Housing	34.9%	35.3%	33.3%	34.7%	34.0%
Transportation	12.7%	12.5%	13.5%	12.2%	13.4%
Healthcare	9.0%	8.7%	10.4%	9.0%	9.3%
Education	1.8%	1.9%	1.7%	1.9%	1.6%
Expendable	5.9%	5.9%	6.2%	5.9%	5.8%
Miscellaneous Household	20.2%	20.1%	19.6%	20.9%	20.3%
Travel	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.3%	3.1%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

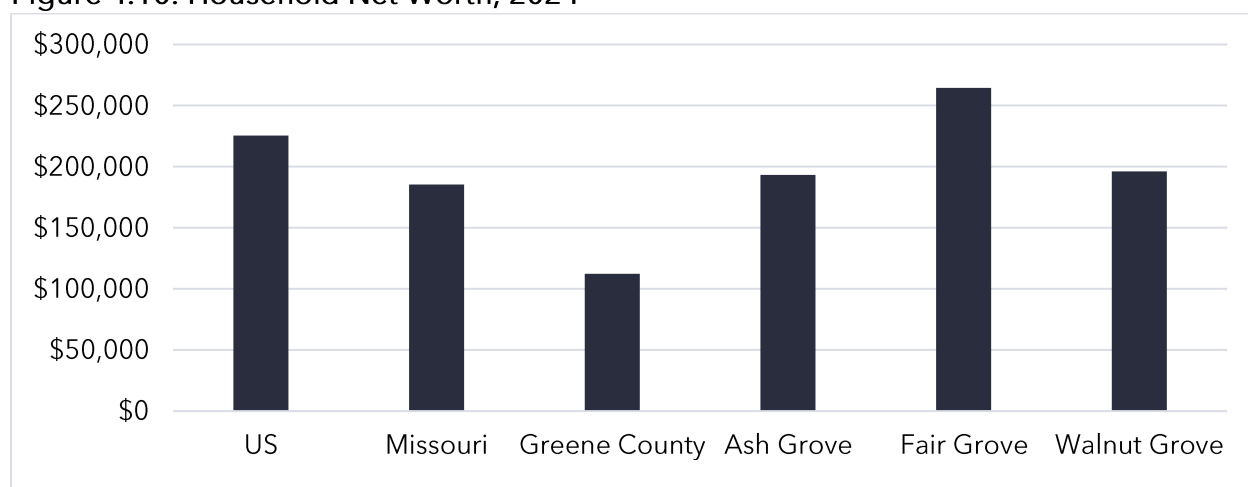
Figure 4.9: Monthly Household Budget Expenditures of The Groves, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst 2024

Net worth takes all of a household's financial positions into account, including assets, debts, and obligations. Figure 4.10 compares the household net worth for the various jurisdictions, where we see that Fair Grove fares well compared to the rest. No other places in this group match the U.S. household net worth. Ash Grove and Walnut Grove households have a 4% and 6% net worth advantage over the state statistic and exceed Greene County households by 72% and 75% respectively. With household debt being a factor in qualifying for a mortgage, this look at net worth illustrates the areas where households are more likely to find it challenging to get approved for a mortgage.

Figure 4.10: Household Net Worth, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Using the national average as a benchmark, we can compare cost of living differences. Values over 100 indicate goods or services that are more expensive than the national average, and vice versa for values below 100. Each of the regions compared in Table 4.4 has a lower overall cost of living than the national average, with The Groves 16.1% lower (83.9). Housing is slightly more expensive in Walnut Grove. Groceries are slightly more expensive in Fair Grove. Healthcare sneaks above the national average in The Groves, but is not as high as

Missouri's, which is 4.3% higher than the national average. Utilities are significantly cheaper in Fair Grove compared to the other Groves and to Greene County, while transportation is significantly more expensive in Ash Grove than in the other localities. In neighboring counties Polk and Webster, the costs of housing are the lowest of all the places compared.

Table 4.4: Cost of Living Comparison

Region	Overall	Housing	Grocery	Health	Utilities	Transportation
Ash Grove	83.9	62.6	94.2	100.5	101.4	98.4
Fair Grove	83.9	60.2	97.4	100.5	89.5	85.2
Walnut Grove	83.9	64.3	95.4	100.5	101.4	85.6
Greene County	83.9	62.5	96	100.5	97.8	85.4
Polk County	81.8	50.7	96.1	100.4	100	93.3
Webster County	84.8	57.4	95.7	100.5	93.1	100.2
Missouri	85.6	66.5	94.9	104.3	98.5	86.2
United States	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Sperlings Best Places, Cost of Living Comparison, 2024

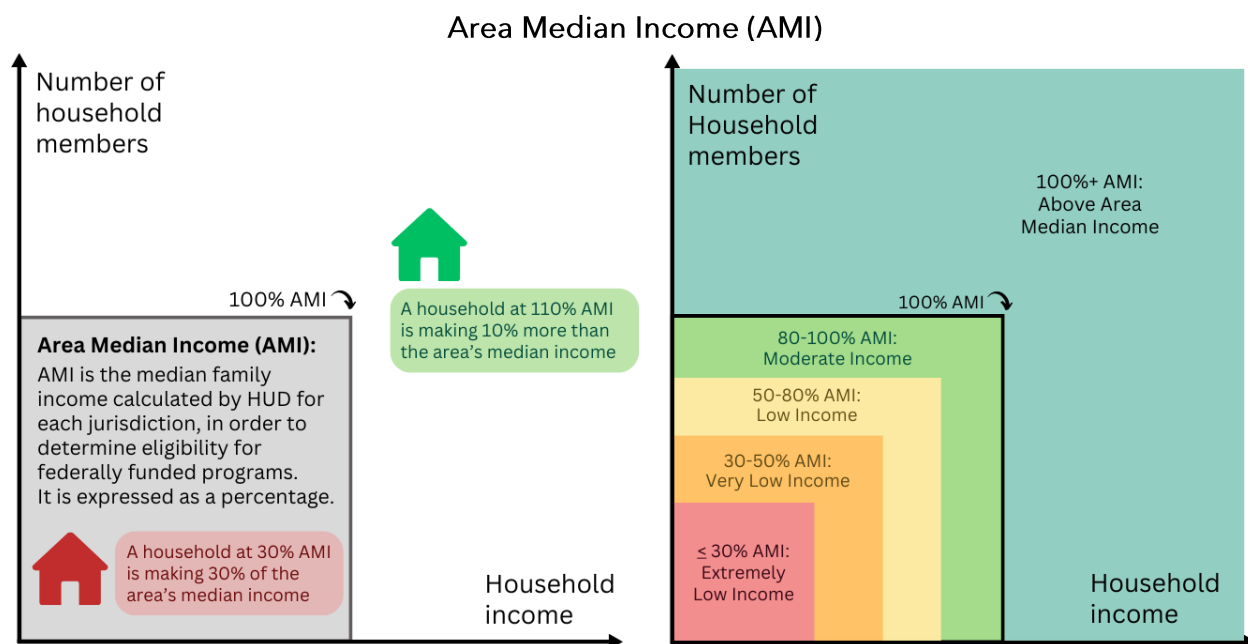
Underserved Populations

Many of the population cohorts can pay for themselves when it comes to housing needs, but more vulnerable populations require particular attention as they are less likely to have the financial or social assets to afford market-rate housing. In this section, Points Consulting outlines a variety of such audiences in the region.

Low Income Population Groups

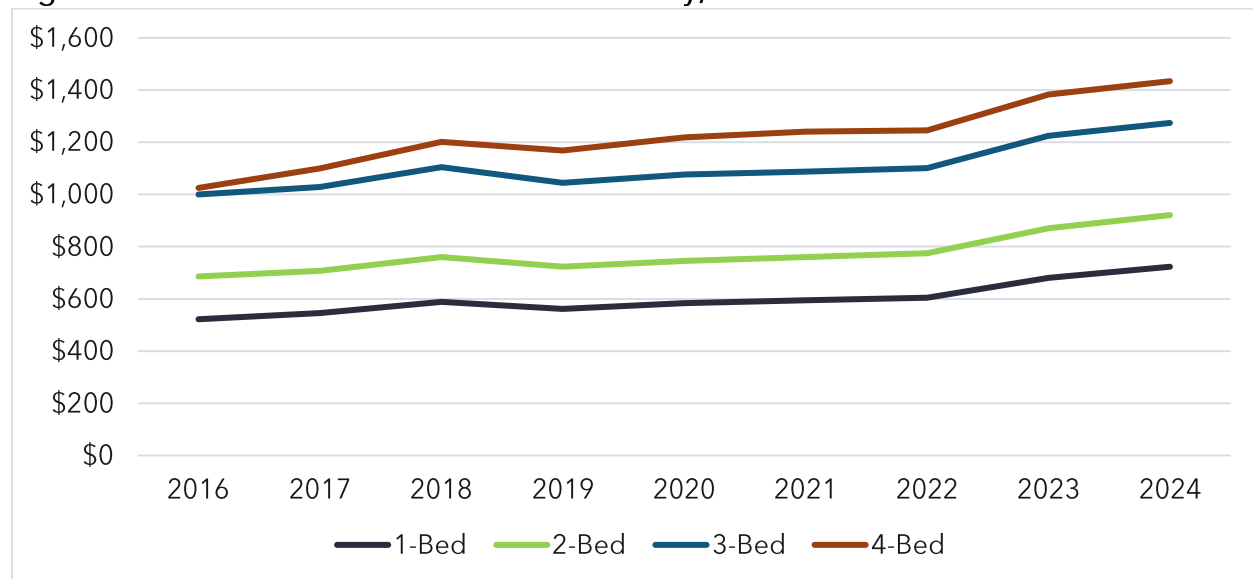
A household's level of income is typically determined by the Area Median Income (AMI) developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). AMI is used to determine Fair Market Rents (FMRs) and income limits for HUD programs.

Figure 4.11: Area Median Income Definitions



Source: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Figure 4.12: Fair Market Rents for Greene County, 2016-2024²⁵



Source: HUD Fair Market Rent Documentation System, 2016-2024

Table 4.5 and Figure 4.13 show owner-occupied low-income households in Greene County by family composition. For owner-occupied households, Elderly Living Alone families make up the highest share of low-income households, followed by Small Families. Large Families make up the lowest share of low-income households.

Meanwhile, Table 4.6 and Figure 4.14 show renter-occupied low-income households in Greene County by Family composition. In contrast to owner-occupied low-income households, Other families make up the highest share of low-income renting households. This would include individuals living together not in a traditional family structure, like roommates or friends. Similarly, Small Families make up the second highest share of low-income renting households, while Elderly Families make up the lowest share.

In terms of homeownership, affordable housing should include smaller, downsized homes for Elderly Families and starter homes for Small Families. For renters, affordable housing should include middle density options, like townhomes or duplexes, for Other families, and starter homes for Small Families.

Table 4.5: Composition of Low-Income Owner-Occupied Households in Greene County

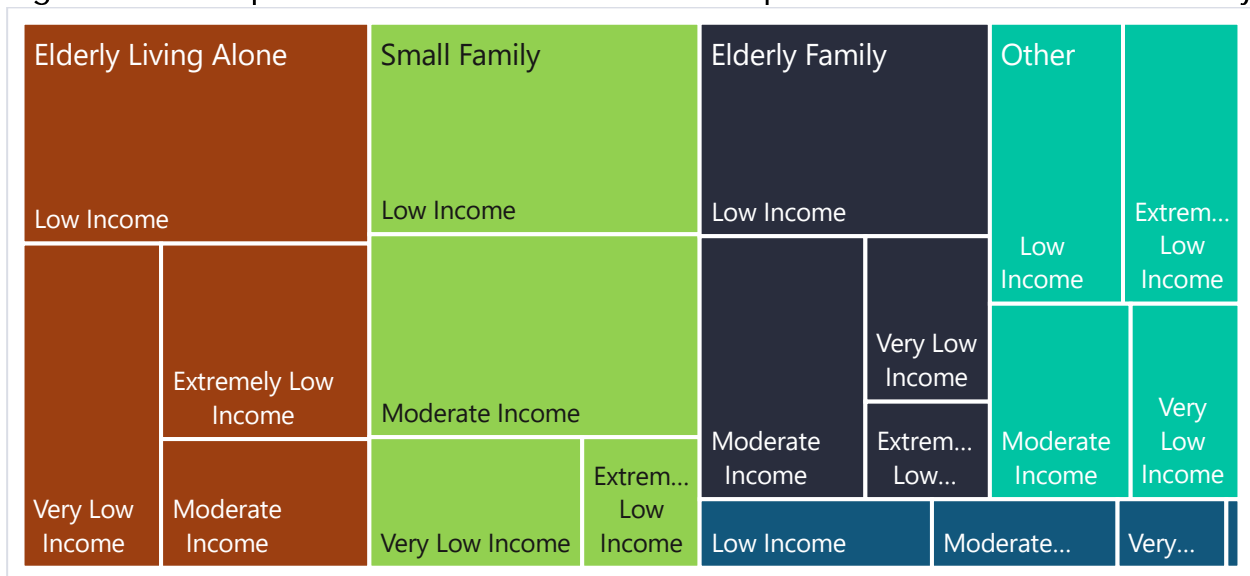
Family Composition	Income Level	Households	Percent of Total Occupied Housing Units
Elderly Family	Extremely Low Income	530	0.42%
Elderly Family	Very Low Income	900	0.71%
Elderly Family	Low Income	2,705	2.12%
Elderly Family	Moderate Income	1,905	1.49%
Small Family	Extremely Low Income	670	0.53%
Small Family	Very Low Income	1,215	0.95%

²⁵ Greene County, Missouri is part of the Springfield, MO HUD Metro FMR Area, which consists of Greene, Christian, and Webster counties (MO). All FMR information here applies to the entirety of the Springfield, MO HUD Metro FMR Area.

Small Family	Low Income	3,050	2.39%
Small Family	Moderate Income	2,925	2.29%
Large Family	Extremely Low Income	40	0.03%
Large Family	Very Low Income	325	0.25%
Large Family	Low Income	695	0.54%
Large Family	Moderate Income	555	0.44%
Elderly Living Alone	Extremely Low Income	1,780	1.40%
Elderly Living Alone	Very Low Income	1,965	1.54%
Elderly Living Alone	Low Income	3,345	2.62%
Elderly Living Alone	Moderate Income	1,170	0.92%
Other	Extremely Low Income	1,430	1.12%
Other	Very Low Income	930	0.73%
Other	Low Income	1,635	1.28%
Other	Moderate Income	1,200	0.94%

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data, 2016-2020, County Level

Figure 4.13: Composition of Low-Income Owner-Occupied Households in Greene County



Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data, 2016-2020, County Level

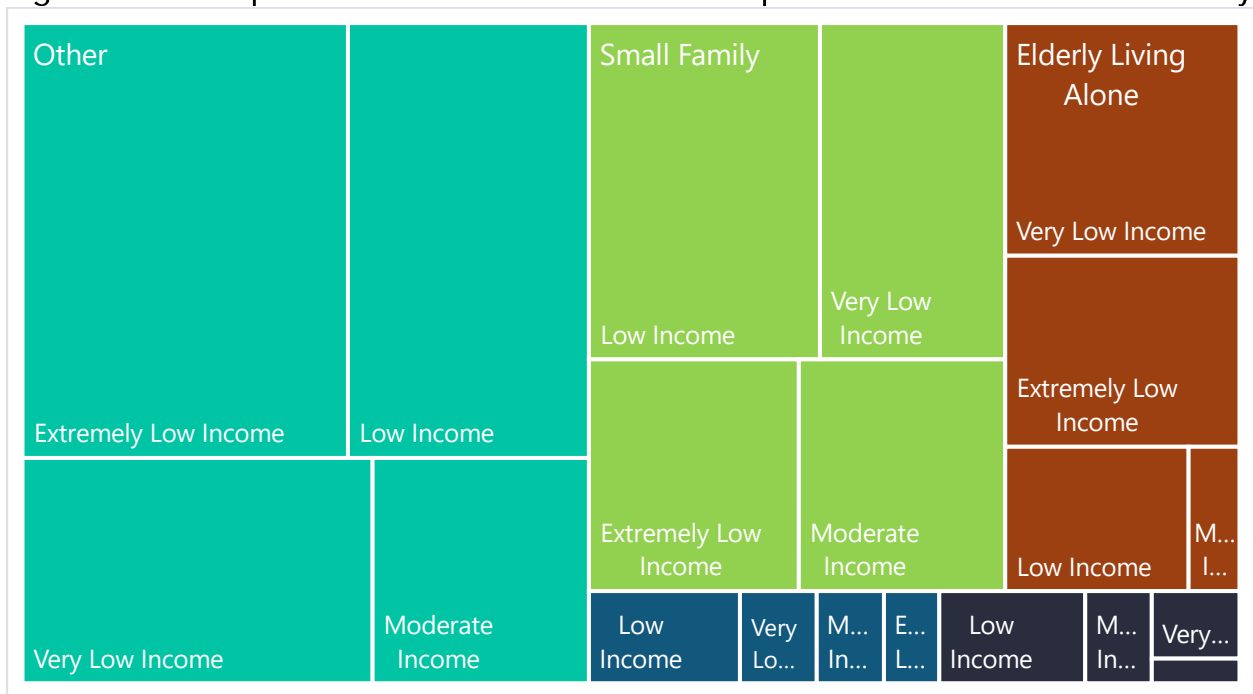
Table 4.6: Composition of Low-Income Renter-Occupied Households in Greene County

Family Composition	Income Level	Households	Percent of Total Occupied Housing Units
Elderly Family	Extremely Low Income	115	0.09%
Elderly Family	Very Low Income	315	0.25%
Elderly Family	Low Income	715	0.56%
Elderly Family	Moderate Income	325	0.25%
Small Family	Extremely Low Income	2,580	2.02%
Small Family	Very Low Income	3,305	2.59%
Small Family	Low Income	4,125	3.23%
Small Family	Moderate Income	2,535	1.99%

Large Family	Extremely Low Income	270	0.21%
Large Family	Very Low Income	375	0.29%
Large Family	Low Income	740	0.58%
Large Family	Moderate Income	330	0.26%
Elderly Living Alone	Extremely Low Income	2,375	1.86%
Elderly Living Alone	Very Low Income	2,895	2.27%
Elderly Living Alone	Low Income	1,405	1.10%
Elderly Living Alone	Moderate Income	390	0.31%
Other	Extremely Low Income	7,510	5.89%
Other	Very Low Income	4,185	3.28%
Other	Low Income	5,560	4.36%
Other	Moderate Income	2,585	2.03%

Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data, 2016-2020, County Level

Figure 4.14: Composition of Low-Income Renter-Occupied Households in Greene County



Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data, 2016-2020, County Level

Population in Poverty

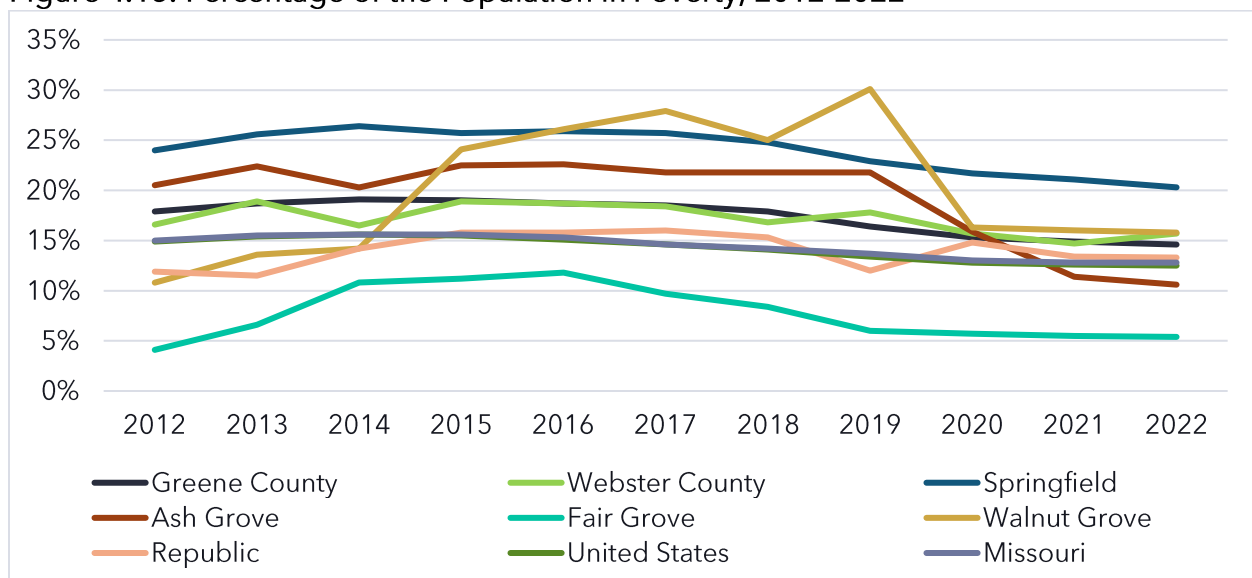
Greene County has a higher percentage of people in poverty than the state and nation. Springfield and Walnut Grove both have a higher percentage of people in poverty than the county, state, or nation at 20.3% and 15.8% respectively. Ash Grove and Fair Grove, however, do not follow this trend with comparatively lower 5.4% and 10.6% of their population in poverty respectively (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Population in Poverty, 2022

Area	Population in Poverty	Percentage in Poverty
Greene County	41,987	14.6%
Webster County	5,967	15.7%
Springfield	32,217	20.3%
Ash Grove	163	10.6%
Fair Grove	87	5.4%
Walnut Grove	82	15.8%
Republic	2,469	13.3%
United States	40,521,584	12.5%
Missouri	766,582	12.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S1701

Figure 4.15: Percentage of the Population in Poverty, 2012-2022

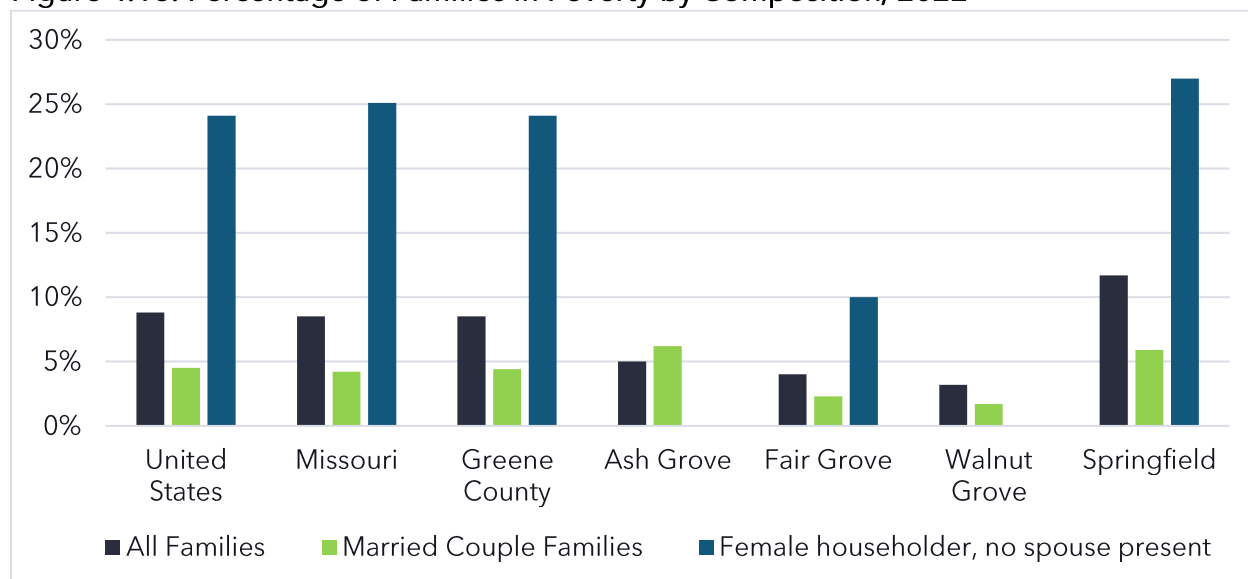


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S1701

Poverty levels can vary greatly based on demographic cohort, as Figure 4.16 demonstrates. The poverty rate for female householders who have no spouse present are the highest composition compared to others seen across each region. Nationally, around 80% of single-parent households are headed by single mothers, and almost a third of these live in poverty.²⁶

²⁶ "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2022", U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2022/demo/families/cps-2022.html>

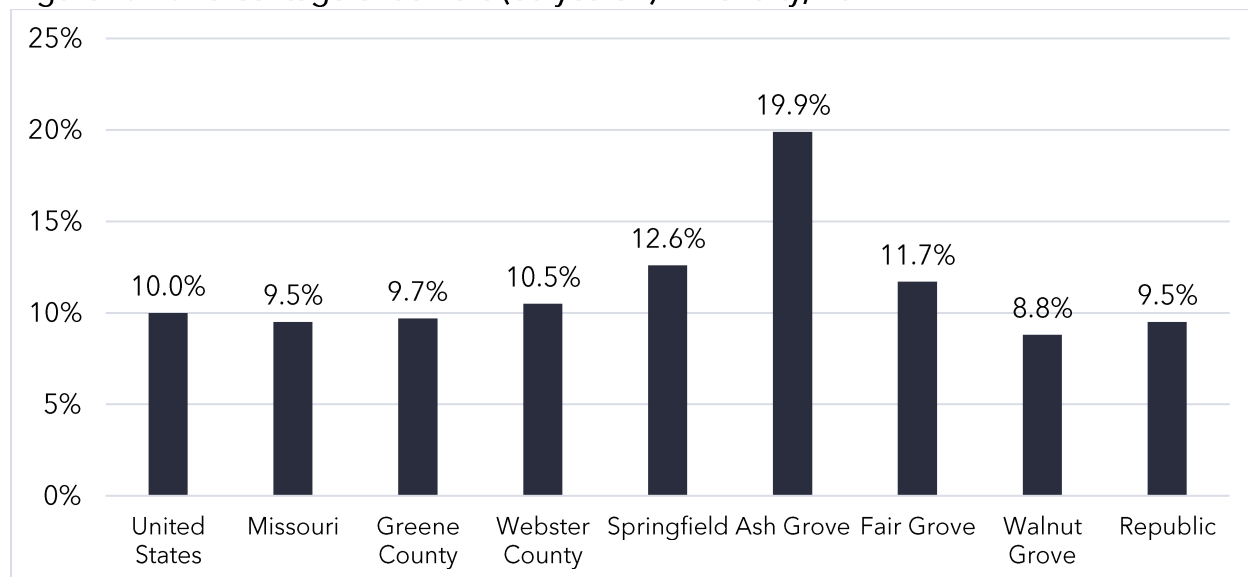
Figure 4.16: Percentage of Families in Poverty by Composition, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S1702

Ash Groves stands out for having nearly double the percentage of seniors in poverty in 2022 than the nation and other areas of comparison. Springfield and Fair Grove also have a higher percentage than the nation, state, and county, all of which are within one percentage point of each other. Walnut Grove has the smallest percentage of seniors in poverty of the Greene County communities at 8.8%.

Figure 4.17: Percentage of Seniors (65 years+) in Poverty, 2022



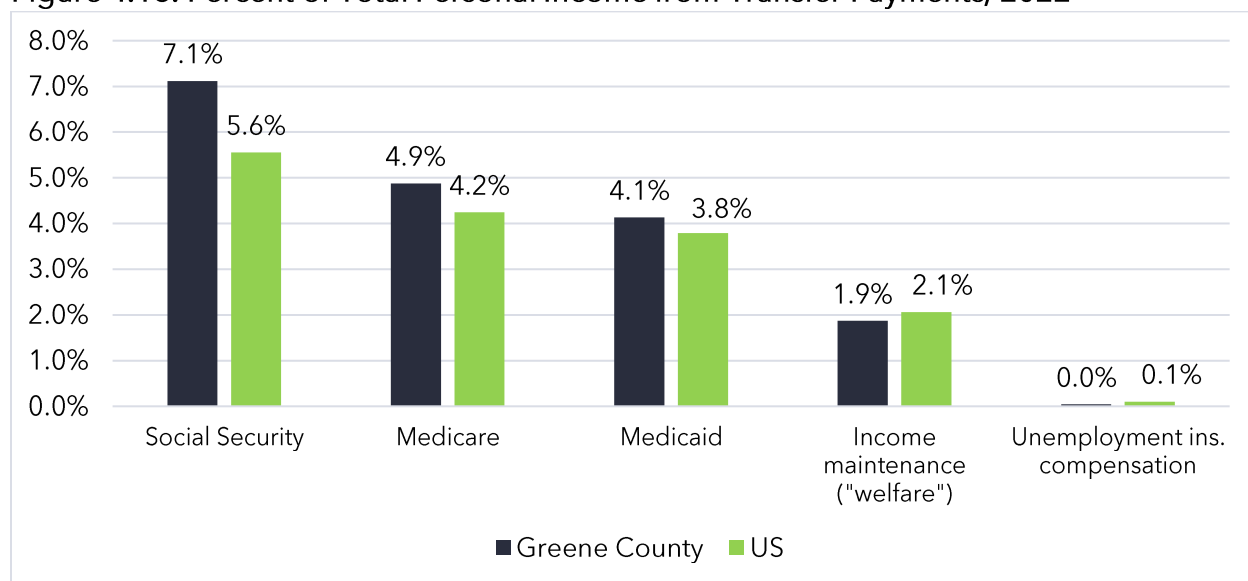
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S1701

Transfer Payments

Figure 4.18 displays the percentage of Greene County's income from transfer payments compared to the U.S. The county's age related transfer payments (Medicare and Social Security) totaled 12.0% of income (as opposed to 9.8% for the nation). Hardship related

payments (Medicaid, Welfare, and unemployment compensation) totaled 6.0% of income for both county and nation.

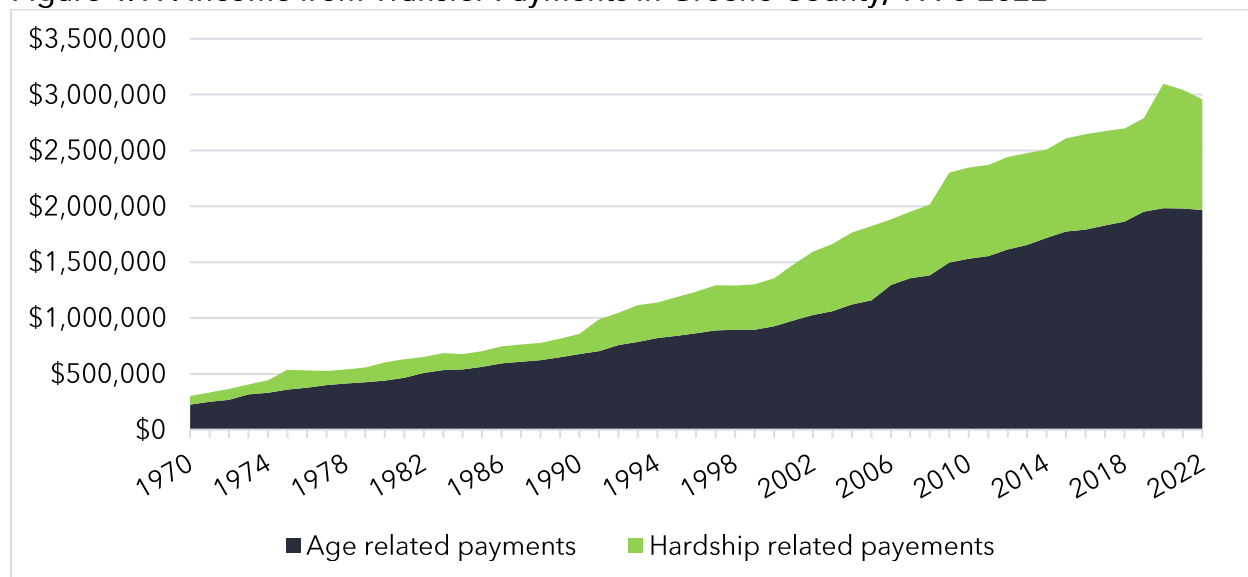
Figure 4.18: Percent of Total Personal Income from Transfer Payments, 2022



Source: Headwaters Economic Profile System, 2022

Total income from transfer payments in Greene County since 1970 is shown in Figure 4.19. As illustrated, not only does Greene County have higher shares of age-related transfer payments than the country, but they have been increasing faster after the turn of the century. This is characteristic of an aging population, a theme the whole nation is facing.

Figure 4.19: Income from Transfer Payments in Greene County, 1970-2022



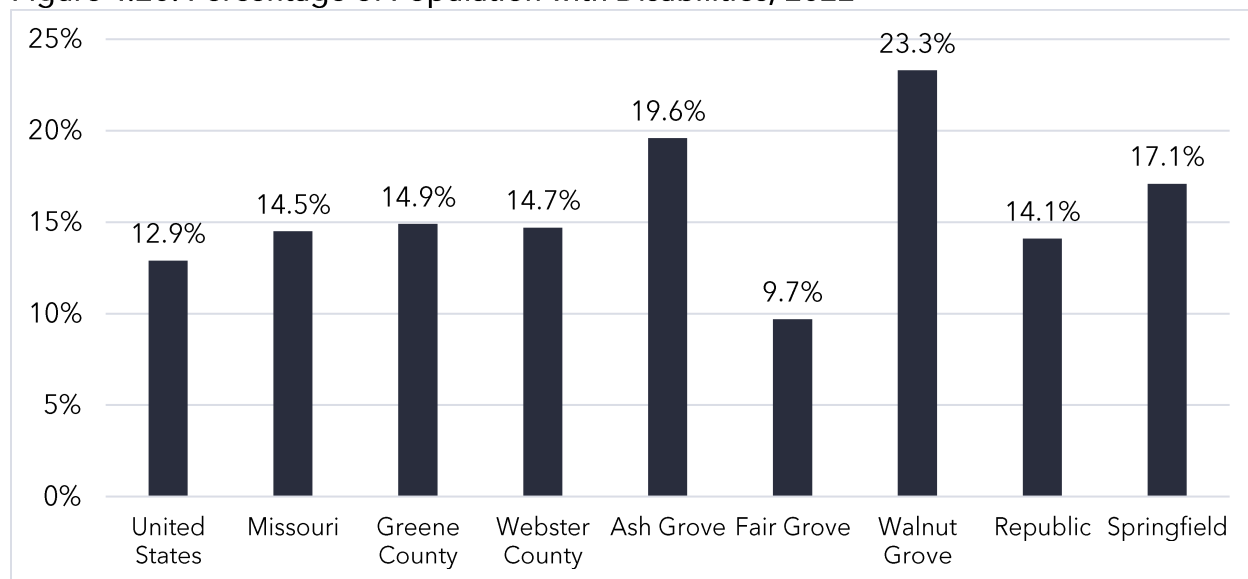
Source: Headwaters Economic Profile System, 2022

Disabled Population

Missouri has a higher percentage of individuals reporting having a disability than the nation, and this trend persists into Greene County and its communities (excluding Fair Grove). Ash

Grove and Walnut Grove have higher percentages of persons reporting having some form of disability than either the county or state, but also larger margins of error due to smaller sample sizes. Different housing types, such as single story or those with accessible ramps, will be needed to serve this population.

Figure 4.20: Percentage of Population with Disabilities, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S1810

Veteran Population

Veterans have faced hardships in the housing market dating back to the first world war. It can be difficult for some veterans to reintegrate to the economy after serving. This can lead to higher levels of poverty, directly leading to affordability issues for this group. Additionally, veterans may face health issues after serving, exacerbating the difficulties of economic reintegration. For these reasons, ensuring there are affordable housing options is important.

Missouri has a higher percentage of veterans than the nation, as do The Groves. However, Greene County as a whole is comparable to the nation with veterans making up 6.7% of its population. Springfield, at 5.9%, has a lower percentage of veterans than the nation.

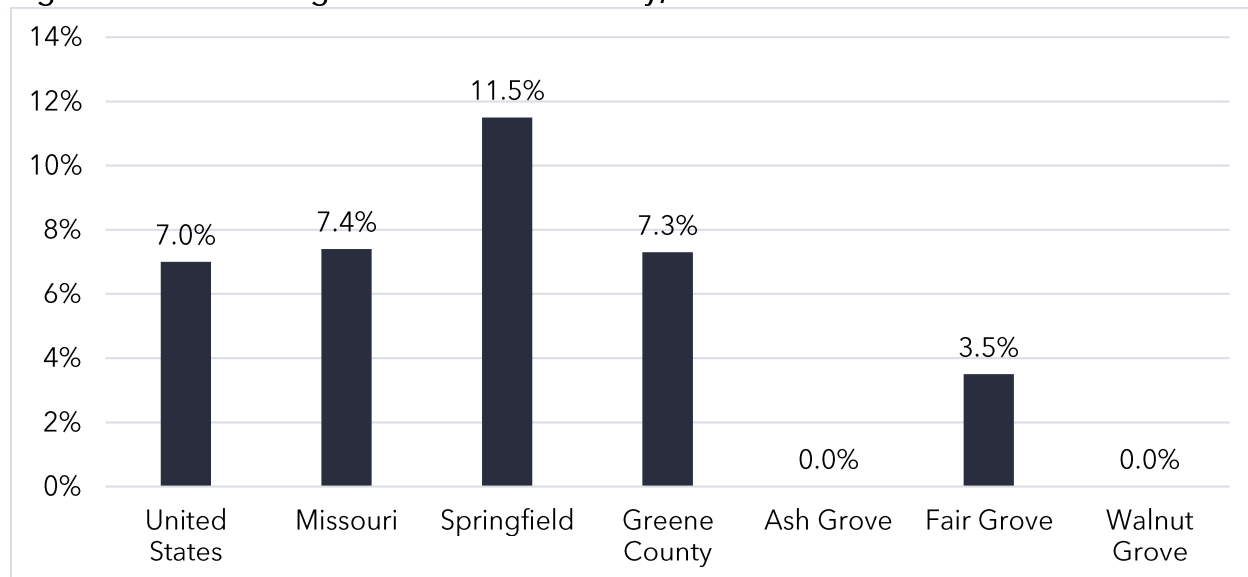
Table 4.8: Veteran Population, 2022

Area	Veterans	Percentage of Veterans
Greene County	15,784	6.7%
Webster County	3,176	11.1%
Ash Grove	82	6.9%
Fair Grove	85	7.6%
Walnut Grove	34	8.1%
Springfield	8,187	5.9%
Republic	906	6.8%
Missouri	361,097	7.6%
United States	17,038,807	6.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S2101

While The Groves had few reported veterans in poverty in 2022, Springfield had a higher percentage of veterans in poverty than either the county, state, or nation at 11.5% (Figure 4.21). With Springfield skewing the percentage for Greene County overall, this demographic group seems to be better off in The Groves than in other parts of the country.

Figure 4.21: Percentage of Veterans in Poverty, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S2101

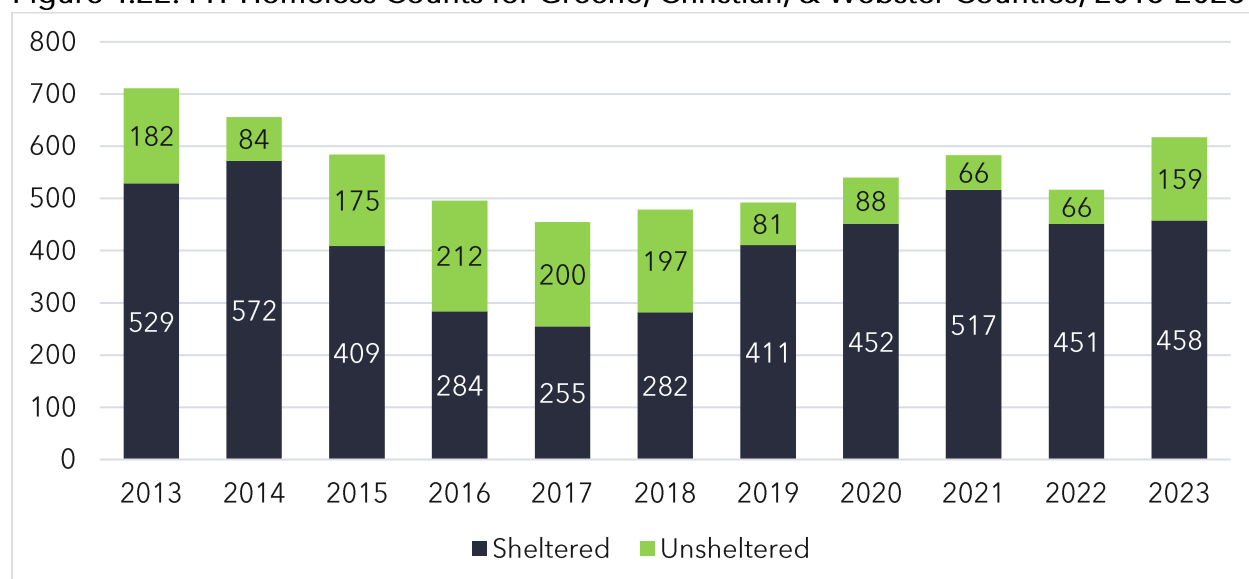
Homeless

Homelessness is notoriously difficult to quantify, especially for specific areas or cities that are not identified as metros. Additionally, homelessness is generally not something that individuals are eager to disclose. Therefore, as with any community, the actual state of homelessness is likely more widespread than any statistical analysis indicates.

Most efforts to tabulate homelessness are conducted using the HUD Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, which is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January each year. The City of Springfield and counties of Greene, Christian, and Webster comprise one Continuum of Care (CoC) for which this PIT Count is conducted, called the Ozarks Alliance to End Homelessness (OAEH).²⁷ As the PIT Count is based on data from a single day each year, it does not reflect the true number of people experiencing homelessness over time. It should also be noted that tactics for counting homeless populations have likely improved over time as well, resulting in higher numbers reported. Nevertheless, 2023 marked the highest number of homeless individuals reported for this tri-county region since 2015, with a total of 617 (458 sheltered and 159 unsheltered).

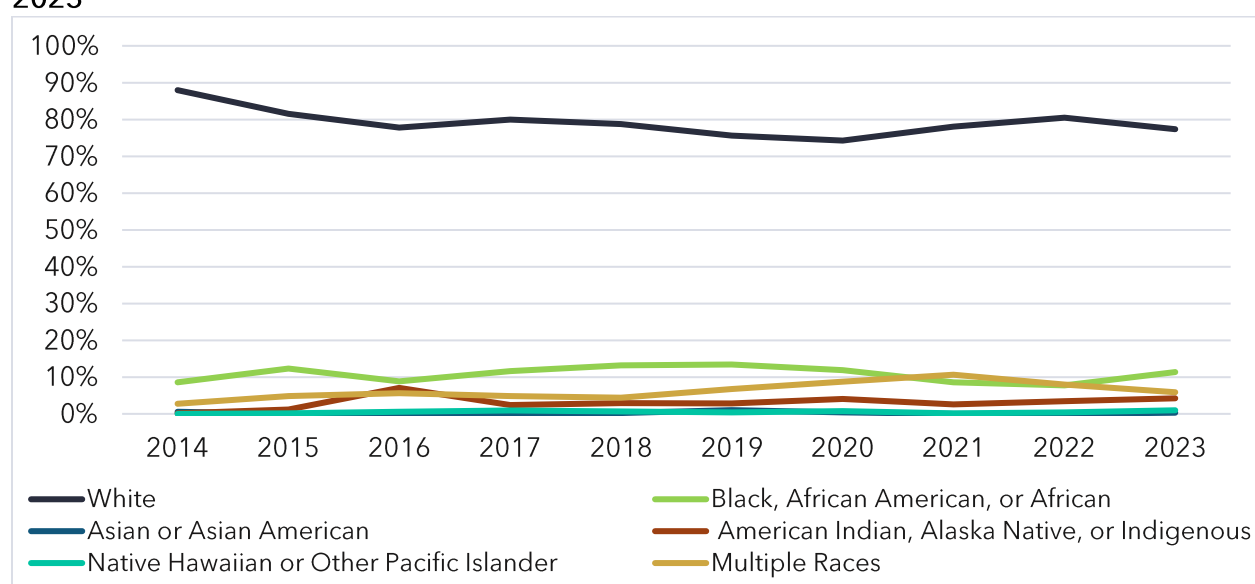
²⁷ OAEH CoC, facilitated by Community Partnership of the Ozarks, <https://cpozarks.org/programs/ozarks-alliance-to-end-homelessness/>.

Figure 4.22: PIT Homeless Counts for Greene, Christian, & Webster Counties, 2013-2023



Source: HUD 2007-2023 PIT Estimates by CoC

Figure 4.23: Demographics of Homeless in Greene, Christian, & Webster Counties, 2014-2023



Source: HUD 2007-2023 PIT Estimates by CoC

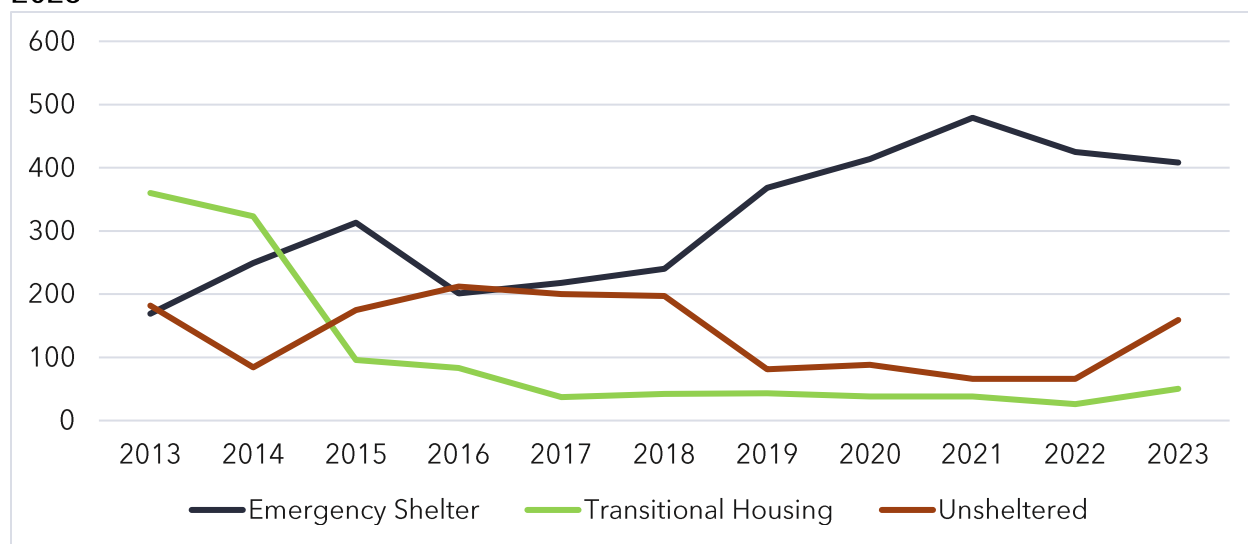
Table 4.9: Demographics of Homeless in Greene, Christian, & Webster Counties, 2015-2023

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
White	476	386	364	377	372	401	455	416	477
Black, African American, or African	72	44	53	63	66	64	50	40	70
Asian or Asian American	0	0	1	1	5	2	0	0	2

American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	7	35	11	14	14	22	15	18	26
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	3	4	3	2	4	1	2	6
Multiple Races	28	28	22	21	33	47	62	41	36

Source: HUD 2007-2023 PIT Estimates by CoC

Figure 4.24: Shelter Type of Homeless in Greene, Christian, & Webster Counties, 2013-2023



Source: HUD 2007-2023 PIT Estimates by CoC

Economic Drivers

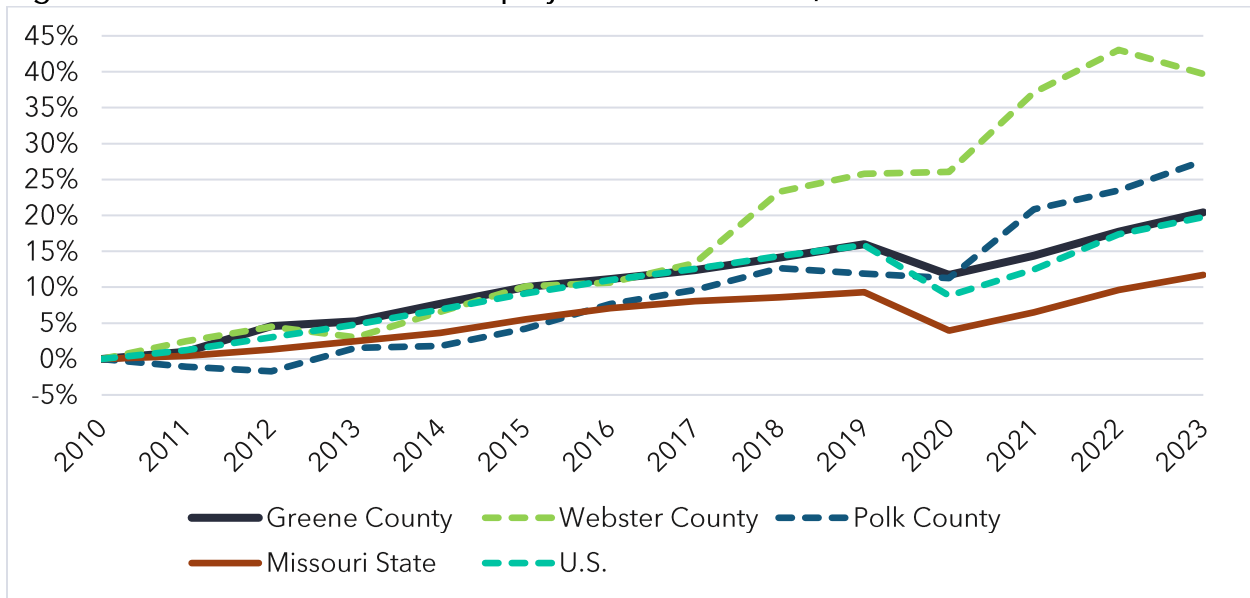
Labor Force, Earnings, and Establishments

Since 2020 pandemic levels, labor force indicators for Greene County have recovered, with Annual Employment Growth Rate being the only indicator in this group that still lags behind the value its 2019 trajectory would have predicted. Missouri leads the geographies of comparison in Establishment Growth Rate but is last in Annual Employment Growth Rate and Annual Wage Growth Rate.

Greene County kept pace with the U.S. in Cumulative Annual Employment Growth Rate, and notably slowed down less than the nation and the state during the 2020 shutdown. As a sign of health for the labor force, the county's Cumulative Annual Establishment Growth Rate is at 35%, falling between that of the U.S. (33%) and Missouri (42%) and exceeding Polk and Webster Counties. With 2017 - 2022 job increases of over 8% in a variety of different sectors,²⁸ it's likely that the growth in private establishments is not too concentrated in any one sector. Such expansion across sectors partly explains the steepening wage growth.

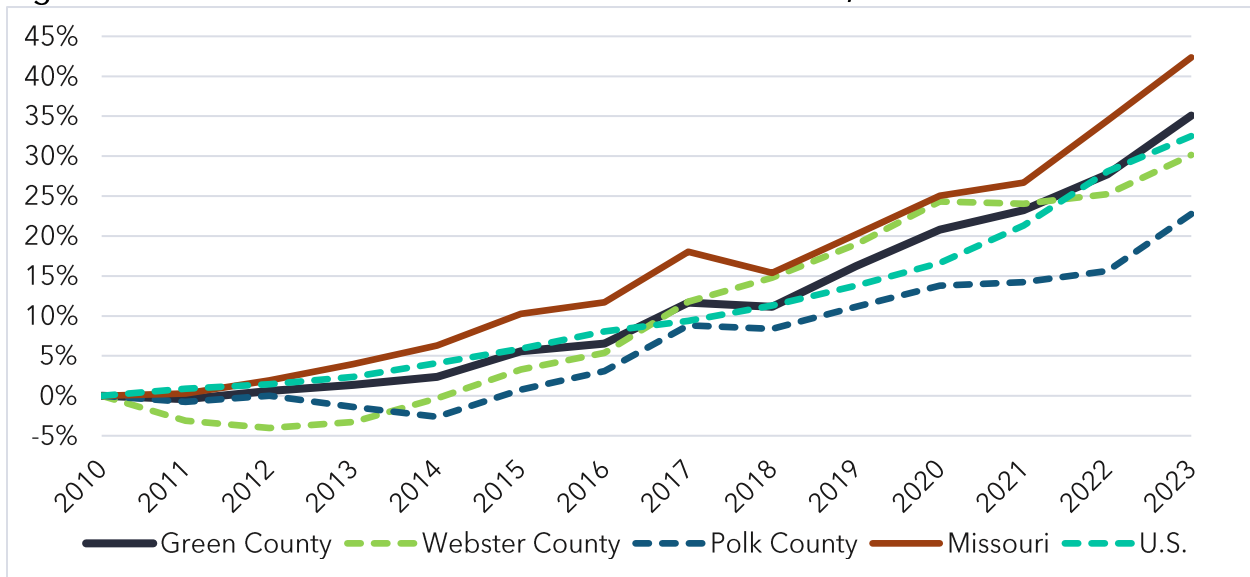
²⁸ Points Consulting analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2022, 5-year ACS, Table S2403.

Figure 4.25: Cumulative Annual Employment Growth Rate, 2010-2023



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

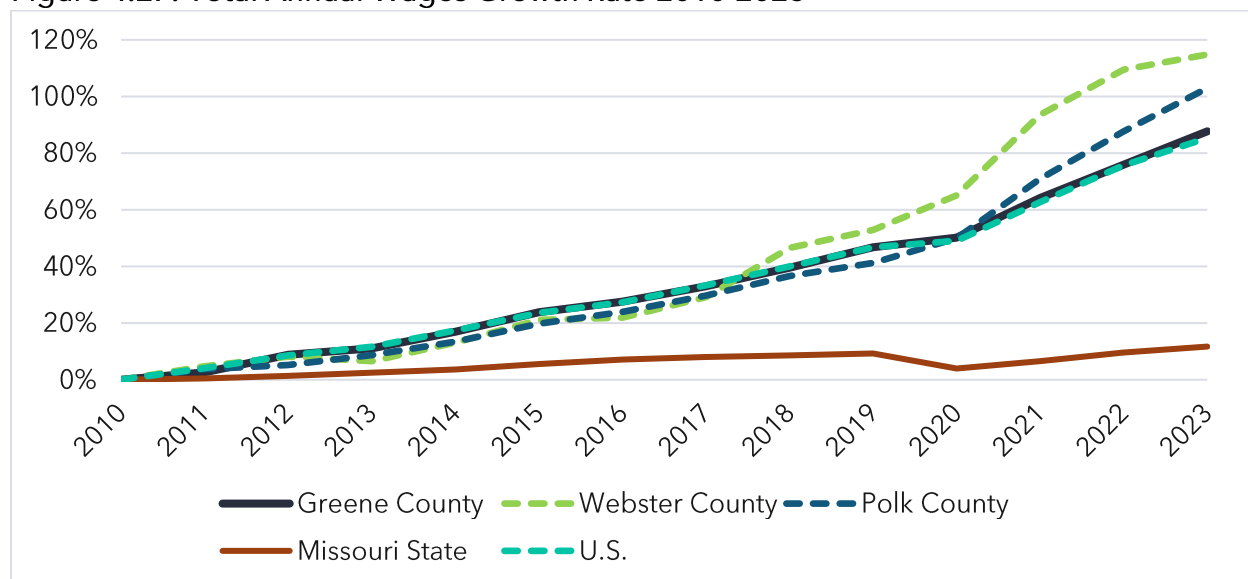
Figure 4.26: Cumulative Annual Establishments Growth Rate, 2010-2023



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

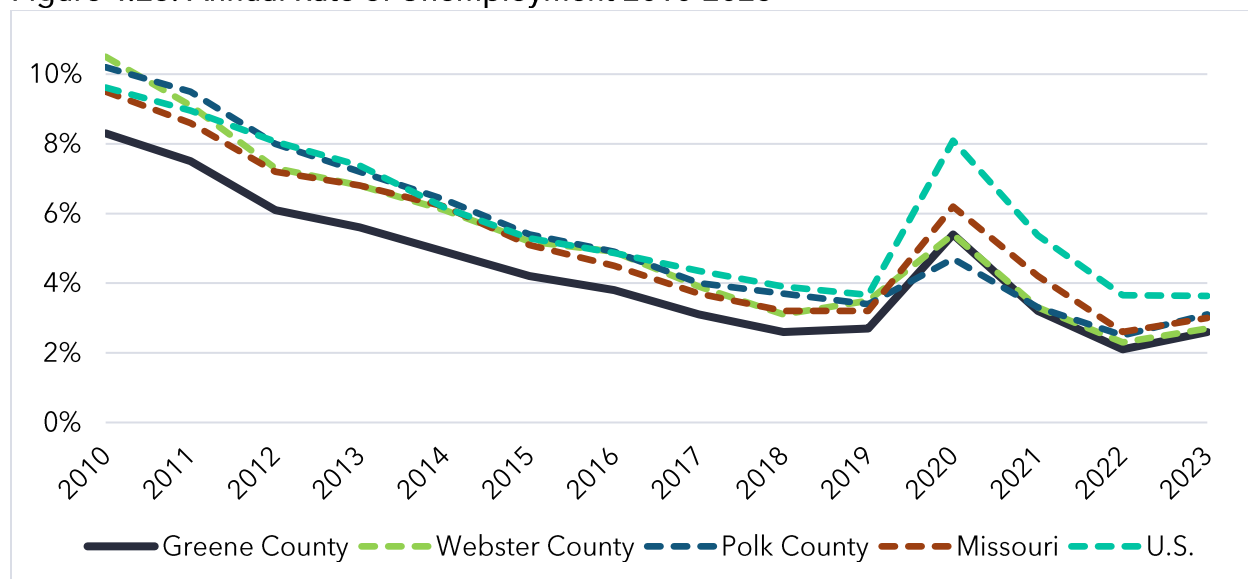
In terms of the Annual Wage Growth Rate, Greene County (88%) slightly surpassed the U.S. (85%) and outperformed the state (12%) by seven times, but was outpaced by Polk (103%) and Webster (115%) Counties. From 2010 - 2023 Greene County and Missouri have consistently had better unemployment rates than the U.S., Polk County, and Webster County. Wages have grown faster than employment and faster than establishments, especially since 2020, indicating that workers are in-demand.

Figure 4.27: Total Annual Wages Growth Rate 2010-2023



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Figure 4.28: Annual Rate of Unemployment 2010-2023



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

A more granular look at Economic Drivers reveals that from 2017 - 2022 Greene County gained 32.9% more transportation and warehousing jobs, 25.4% more professional, scientific, and technical services jobs, and 20.7% more agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting jobs. Those increases occurred in sectors that were already significant parts of the county's overall employment picture in 2017, with job counts at that time of over 6,700, 7,000, and almost 700, respectively. Greene County's biggest job losses came in the information (-943) and wholesale trade (-2,054) sectors. Overall, the county experienced a job gain of 5.1% between 2017 and 2022, while Missouri's gain was 3.1%.²⁹

²⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Employment and Earnings by Industry

As of 2020 in the wider context of the Southwest Missouri Region, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (31.1%) and Accommodation and Food Service (23.6%) were the industries with the largest projected employment growth, a sign of Branson, MO's pull in the region. Transportation and Warehousing (16.8%) and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (14.9%) followed.

Table 4.10: Southwest Missouri Employment Projections by Industry 2020 - 2030

Industry	2020	2030	Numeric Change	% Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	24,393	25,291	898	3.7%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4,108	4,360	252	6.1%
Utilities	11,681	11,088	-593	-5.1%
Construction	126,383	139,781	13,398	10.6%
Manufacturing	266,445	276,673	10,228	3.8%
Wholesale Trade	120,092	128,880	8,788	7.3%
Retail Trade	291,843	284,505	-7,338	-2.5%
Transportation and Warehousing	104,504	122,037	17,533	16.8%
Information	45,133	47,311	2,178	4.8%
Finance and Insurance	138,373	143,736	5,363	3.9%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	37,494	40,192	2,698	7.2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	161,311	185,273	23,962	14.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	61,989	59,703	-2,286	-3.7%
Admin and Support and Waste Management	142,409	161,273	18,864	13.3%
Educational Services	225,848	240,630	14,782	6.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	448,325	489,719	41,394	9.2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	32,151	42,159	10,008	31.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	221,131	273,291	52,160	23.6%
Other services	111,807	119,396	7,589	6.8%
Government	206,846	205,099	-1,747	-0.8%
Federal government	57,807	56,289	-1,518	-2.6%
State Government	47,418	45,680	-1,738	-3.7%
Local Government	101,621	103,130	1,509	1.5%
All Industries	2,945,668	3,161,445	215,777	7.3%

Source: Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), <https://meric.mo.gov/data/industry/industry-employment-projections>

In 2022, Health Care & Social Services (which includes registered nurses and personal care aides) held the largest share of employment in Greene County at 15.7% of total employment. Retail Trade (13.2%) and Educational Services (9.6%) followed, with Manufacturing accounting for a strong 8.8%. In Ash Grove, Manufacturing (18.1%), Health Care & Social Services (12.8%), and Transportation and Warehousing (12.7%) took the largest share of employment. In Fair Grove, the leaders were Health Care & Social Services (13.4%), Manufacturing (13.2%), Retail Trade (10.1%), and Construction (9.7%). Retail Trade (20.8%) held the largest share in Walnut Grove in 2022, followed by Manufacturing (16.7%), Health Care & Social Services (16.7%), and Construction (9.7%). One thing the Three Grove cities

have in common is that Health Care & Social Services and Manufacturing held a 10% or more share of employment in each city.

Table 4.11: Greene County and The Groves Employment by Industry

Industry	Greene County	Ash Grove	Fair Grove	Walnut Grove	Springfield, MO
Health care and social assistance	15.7%	12.8%	13.4%	10.6%	15.6%
Retail trade	13.2%	6.3%	10.1%	20.8%	14.0%
Educational services	9.6%	7.1%	7.4%	4.2%	9.5%
Manufacturing	8.8%	18.1%	13.2%	16.7%	8.7%
Accommodation and food services	8.5%	4.5%	5.1%	3.2%	10.6%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	6.1%	4.6%	4.9%	4.6%	6.0%
Other services, except public administration	6.0%	2.2%	7.2%	7.9%	5.7%
Construction	5.3%	1.9%	9.9%	9.7%	4.2%
Finance and insurance	5.3%	2.5%	3.4%	3.2%	5.2%
Transportation and warehousing	5.2%	12.7%	8.6%	7.9%	4.3%
Administrative and support and waste management services	4.4%	2.6%	5.4%	3.2%	5.3%
Public administration	3.1%	8.2%	2.6%	1.4%	2.9%
Wholesale trade	2.4%	2.5%	5.1%	0.9%	1.9%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.9%	2.9%	1.4%	0.0%	1.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1.8%	8.2%	1.4%	0.0%	1.7%
Information	1.5%	1.5%	0.4%	1.4%	1.8%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	4.2%	0.4%
Utilities	0.5%	0.9%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total civilian jobs	145,082	646	849	216	80,907

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 - 2022, 5-year ACS, Table S2403

The highest Location Quotients in Greene County in 2022 were found in Other Services Except Public Administration (1.26) and Management of Companies and Enterprises (1.25). That compares to Springfield, MO's top three LQs of Accommodation and Food Services (1.54), Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services (1.29), and Retail Trade (1.27). Those values aren't as far from the national average as can be seen in some places where there is an established concentration of a specific industry. Greene County's LQ values indicate a healthy lack of such concentration. The lowest LQ values in Greene County were for Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (0.08) and Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (0.48), suggesting a weaker presence of those industries compared to the national average.

Table 4.12: Greene County Location Quotients by Industry

Industry	Greene County	Ash Grove	Fair Grove	Walnut Grove	Springfield, MO
Health care and social assistance	1.12	0.92	0.96	0.76	1.12
Retail trade	1.20	0.58	0.92	1.90	1.27
Educational services	1.04	0.76	0.80	0.45	1.02
Manufacturing	0.88	1.81	1.32	1.67	0.87
Accommodation and food services	1.23	0.65	0.74	0.47	1.54
Professional, scientific, and technical services	0.77	0.59	0.63	0.59	0.76
Other services, except public administration	1.26	0.46	1.52	1.67	1.21
Construction	0.77	0.27	1.44	1.41	0.61
Finance and insurance	1.11	0.52	0.72	0.68	1.10
Transportation and warehousing	1.05	2.57	1.74	1.59	0.87
Administrative and support and waste management services	1.07	0.63	1.31	0.78	1.29
Public administration	0.66	1.75	0.55	0.30	0.62
Wholesale trade	0.99	1.03	2.11	0.39	0.81
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.0	1.55	0.75	0.0	0.91
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.85	3.94	0.68	0.0	0.81
Information	0.80	0.82	0.19	0.73	0.94
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.48	0.26	0.1	3.47	0.32
Utilities	0.65	1.11	0.42	0.0	0.36
Management of companies and enterprises	1.25	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.88
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.08	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.10

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 – 2022, 5-year ACS, Table S2403

As for Ash Grove, Fair Grove, and Walnut Grove, their relatively small populations give added community importance to each individual job. From 2017 to 2022, Ash Grove experienced notable job gains and losses in these industries:³⁰

- + 53 in in Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
- +48 in Transportation and Warehousing
- +23 in Manufacturing
- +15 in Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing
- +14 in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- -55 in Retail Trade
- -54 in Health Care & Social Services
- -31 in Construction
- -21 in Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services

³⁰ Points Consulting analysis of U.S. Census Bureau's 2018-2022, 5-year ACS, Table S2403.

Fair Grove had a net gain of 15.4% from 2017 – 2022. That city's notable job gains and losses occurred in these industries:

- +55 Manufacturing
- +40 Construction
- +35 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- +25 in Health Care & Social Services
- +20 in Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services
- -16 in Accommodation and Food Services
- -12 in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- -12 in Retail Trade
- -9 in Public Administration

In Walnut Grove, the data show a 2017 – 2022 net loss of 3 jobs (1.4%), but that is within the margin of error for the estimates. Its notable gains and losses occurred in in these industries:

- +27 in Manufacturing
- +20 in Retail Trade
- +7 in Construction
- -28 in Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services
- -23 in Wholesale Trade
- -13 in Educational Services

Each of The Groves saw job gains in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Manufacturing, and in Other Services Except Public Administration. And each experienced small losses in Accommodation and Food Services. Changes in local jobs do not take place in a vacuum. For example, Springfield and Greene County shared losses in the Health Care/ Social Services and Retail Trade sectors, which are both experiencing structural shifts that seem agnostic to location.

Regarding employment by occupation, about 22.9% of workers in Greene County work in Management or Office/Administrative Support positions, and for The Groves these percentages are 12.0% (Ash Grove), 15.4% (Fair Grove) and 3.0% (Walnut Grove). The occupations with the fewest workers in Greene County are found in Life/Physical/Social Sciences (1.0%), Legal (1.0%), and Architecture/ Engineering (1.2%) roles.

In Ash Grove, 12.0% combined work in Management or Office/Administrative Support while 5.5% work in Health Care Support, and 1.9% work in Life/Physical/Social Sciences and Farming/Fishing/Forestry. In Fair Grove, 6.6% work in Management, 14.4% in Sales and Sales Related, and only 1.7% work in Arts/Design/Entertainment, 0.4% in Protective Service, and 3.0% in Legal. There are no workers in Farming/Fishing/Forestry. Walnut Grove has 1.7% of its workers in Office/Administrative Support roles, and 3.6% in Production. Walnut Grove boasts 22.1% in Business/Financial but 0.0% in Personal Care/Service.

Table 4.13: Employment by Occupation, 2023

Occupation	Greene County	Ash Grove	Fair Grove	Walnut Grove
White Collar	63.2%	60.8%	60.4%	55.1%
Blue Collar	20.1%	22.6%	29.0%	36.0%
Services	16.7%	16.5%	10.5%	8.9%

Community/Social Service	2.5%	5.0%	8.7%	10.6%
Food Preparation/Serving	6.3%	4.1%	8.2%	0.7%
Personal Care/Service	3.0%	9.8%	12.4%	0.0%
Office/Administrative Support	12.3%	8.0%	8.8%	1.7%
Education/Training/Library	7.2%	15.6%	3.5%	0.0%
Arts/Design/Entertainment	2.5%	11.2%	1.7%	0.0%
Healthcare Practitioner	7.0%	13.1%	7.9%	0.0%
Sales and Sales Related	9.3%	8.0%	14.4%	3.3%
Transportation/Material Moving	8.2%	2.2%	9.2%	4.0%
Production	5.4%	3.0%	3.8%	3.6%
Healthcare Support	3.1%	5.5%	1.5%	9.2%
Business/Financial	5.5%	2.0%	3.7%	22.1%
Management	10.6%	4.0%	6.6%	1.3%
Installation/Maintenance/Repair	2.5%	2.7%	1.9%	7.3%
Legal	1.0%	0.8%	3.0%	7.9%
Building Maintenance	2.7%	0.4%	0.7%	10.9%
Computer/Mathematical	3.1%	0.8%	1.1%	8.6%
Life/Physical/Social Sciences	1.0%	1.9%	1.1%	4.3%
Construction/Extraction	3.7%	1.2%	0.5%	1.3%
Protective Service	1.5%	0.5%	0.4%	1.3%
Architecture/Engineering	1.2%	0.0%	0.9%	1.3%
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Community Profiles, 2023

5. Housing Trends

Building Types and Tenure

This chapter highlights important trends related to a variety of housing topics. Housing supply trends can be measured using an array of metrics such as building permits, home values, and home sales data. These data are collected from various sources, each of which provides a view on the area's housing.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 give a broad overview of housing in The Groves, Greene County, and other areas for comparison. Detached single-family homes make up the majority of housing in all geographic areas observed. When compared to Republic City, Springfield, the State, and the U.S., the biggest differences are the lower percentage of large apartment units and higher percentage of detached single-family houses in The Groves. The most common type of apartment buildings in The Groves are triplexes and quadplexes, whereas in the other areas displayed, it is larger apartment buildings of 10 units or more.

Springfield has the highest percentage of apartments, bolstering Greene County's percentage which is second highest. Walnut Grove's mobile home percentage is in line with the state and the nation, but Greene County's percentage is lower. The Groves each have significantly lower percentages of duplex and five-to-nine-unit apartments than the other areas do. Ash Grove has the highest proportion of housing units serving as rentals (37.9%) of The Groves, but Greene County's percentage is higher at 43.3%.

Table 5.1: Percent Housing by Type, The Groves

Housing Type	Ash Grove		Fair Grove		Walnut Grove	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Occupied housing units	663	--	586	--	261	--
1, detached	557	84.0%	530	90.4%	198	75.9%
1, attached	14	2.1%	0	0.0%	7	2.7%
2 apartments	9	1.4%	10	1.7%	6	2.3%
3 or 4 apartments	45	6.8%	20	3.4%	28	10.7%
5 to 9 apartments	7	1.1%	11	1.9%	2	0.8%
10 or more apartments	8	1.2%	0	0.0%	6	2.3%
Mobile home or other type of housing	23	3.5%	15	2.6%	14	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S2504

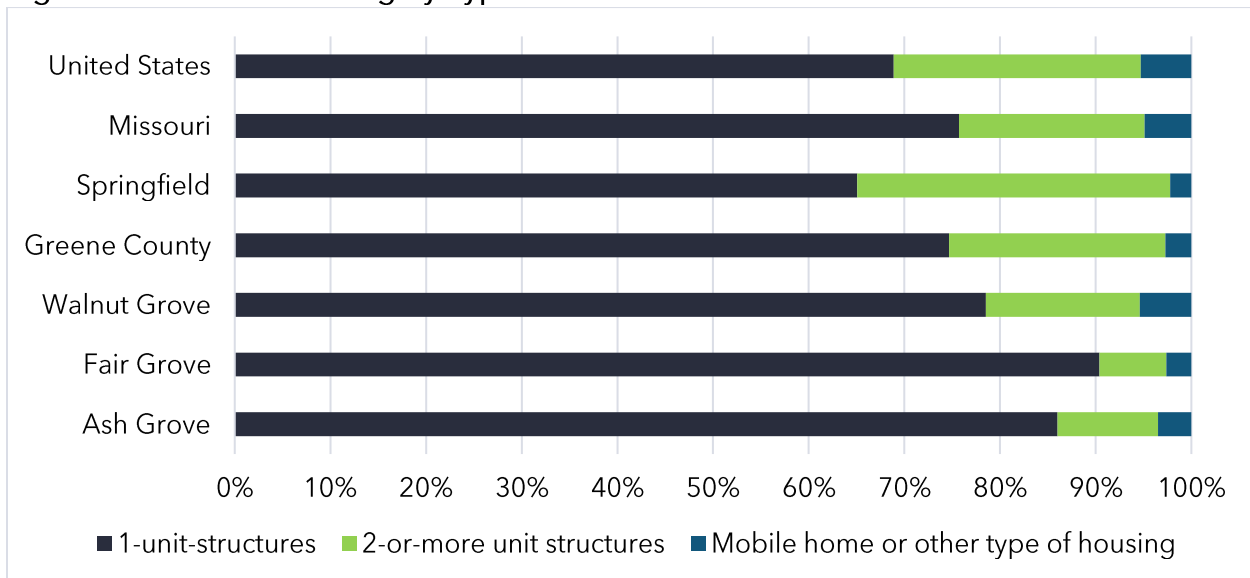
Table 5.2: Percent Housing by Type

Housing Type	Greene County		Webster County	Republic	Springfield	Missouri	United States
	#	%	%	%	%	%	%
Occupied housing units	131,109	--	13,717	7,694	79,070	2.46M	125.74M
1, detached	93,858	71.6%	80.2%	76.9%	61.8%	71.9%	62.5%
1, attached	3,934	3.0%	1.3%	3.5%	3.2%	3.8%	6.3%
2 apartments	3,206	2.4%	2.3%	3.3%	3.1%	3.0%	3.3%
3 or 4 apartments	2,803	2.1%	2.7%	0.6%	2.6%	4.4%	4.2%

5 to 9 apartments	4,600	3.5%	1.0%	6.4%	4.8%	3.6%	4.5%
10 or more apartments	19,113	14.6%	2.0%	8.7%	22.2%	8.4%	13.8%
Mobile home or other type of housing	3,595	2.7%	10.5%	0.6%	2.2%	4.9%	5.3%

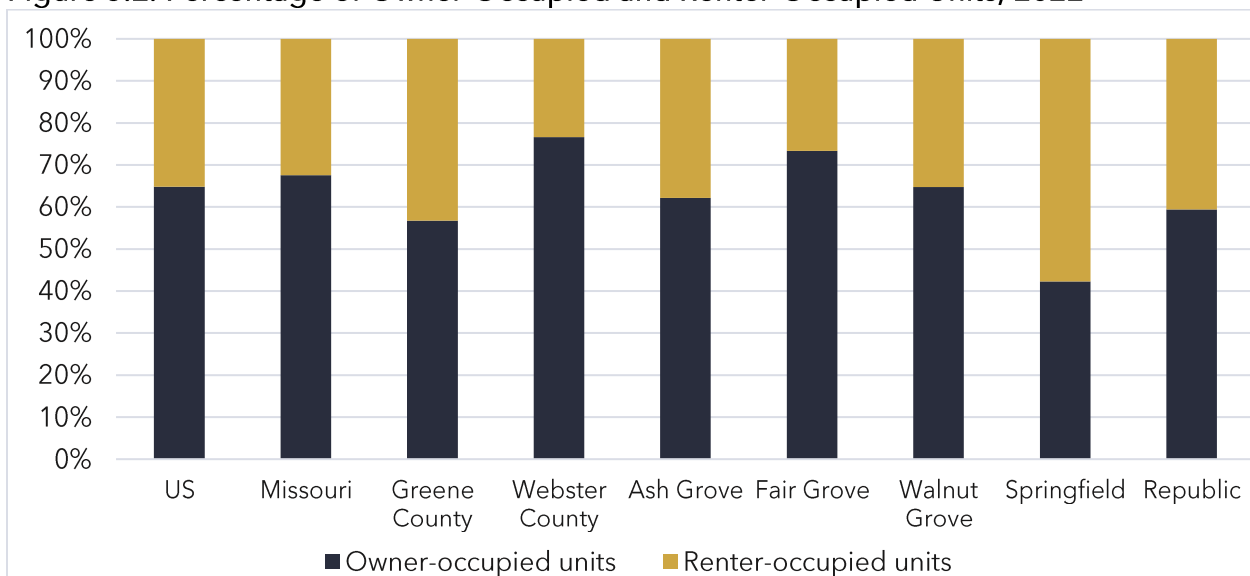
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S2504

Figure 5.1: Percent Housing by Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S2504

Figure 5.2: Percentage of Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Units, 2022

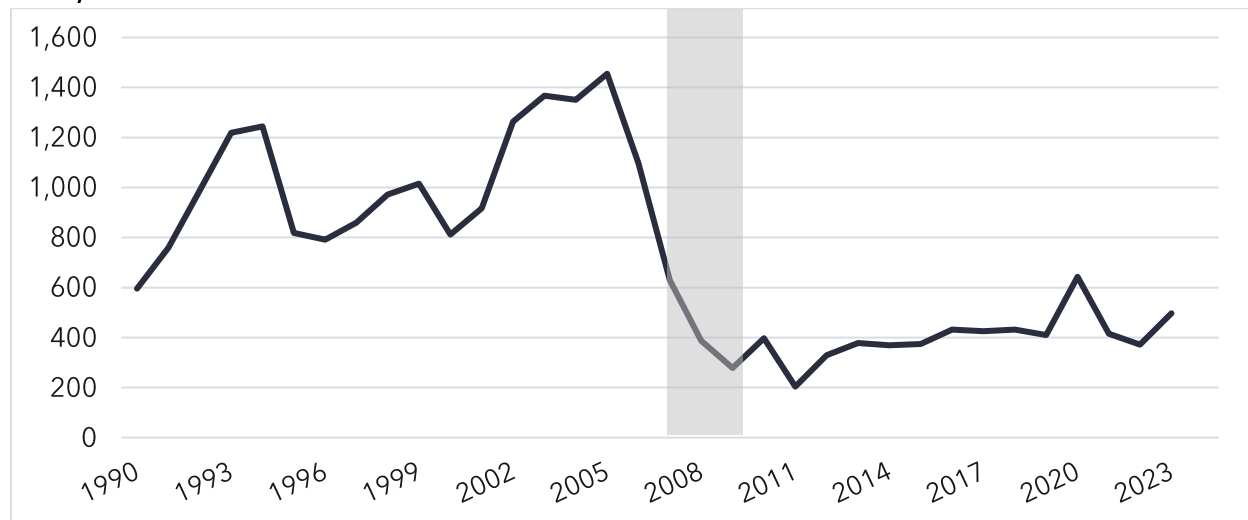


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 5-Year Estimates, Table S2504

New Housing Production

Figures 5.3-5.5 depict the housing permit trends for The Groves and Unincorporated Greene County area between 1990 and 2023. During and immediately after the Great Recession (illustrated by the gray vertical bar), the total number of housing permits in The Groves and Unincorporated County declined and has not yet reached pre-recession levels.

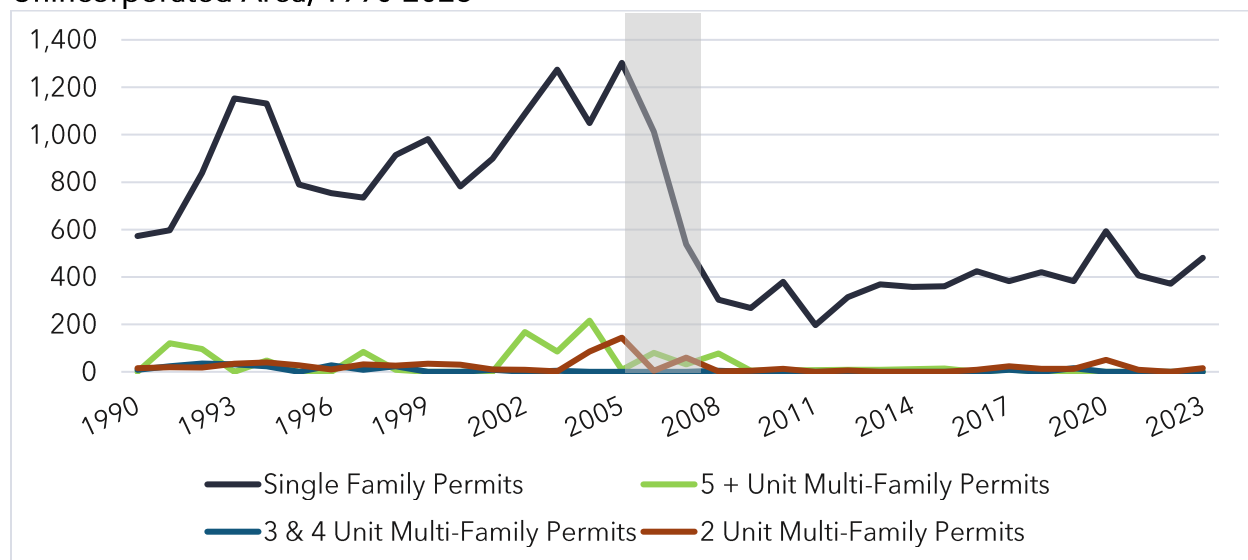
Figure 5.3: Total Housing Permit Units in The Groves and Greene County Unincorporated Area, 1990-2023



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems, 1990-2023

As shown below, single-family permits hit a record low in 2011 at 197, and then surged to 593 in 2020. Since then, single family permits have not risen above 500 per year, but still represent most permits issued. Two-unit housing permits have been the most common multi-family permits since 2008.

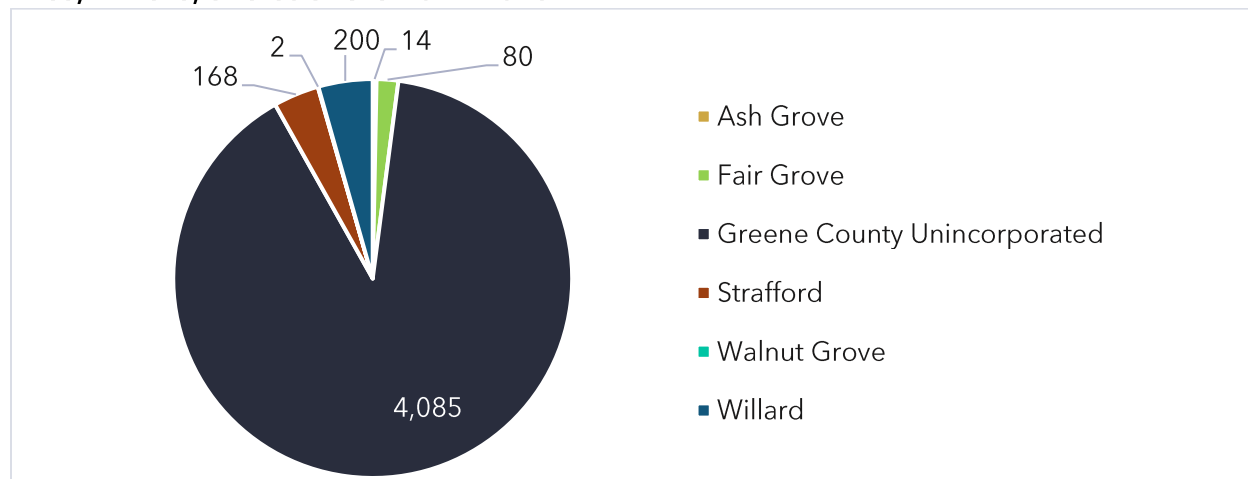
Figure 5.4: Single-Family and Multi-Family Permit Units in The Groves and Greene County Unincorporated Area, 1990-2023



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems, 1990-2023

Far more permits have been issued in the unincorporated area of Greene County than in The Groves or cities of Willard and Strafford. Since 2014, Willard and Strafford have reported 368 single-family permits, while The Groves have only reported 96.

Figure 5.5: Single-Family Permit Units in The Groves, Greene County Unincorporated Area, Willard, and Strafford 2014-2023



Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, State of the Cities Data Systems, 1990-2023

Cost of Construction

One important factor when assessing the housing landscape is the cost of construction. The Points Consulting team gathered cost per square foot estimates for an average one-story single-family home using RSmeans data, as shown in Table 5.3.

Below are the results of comparing the same style and size average new construction home across various Missouri locations plus Fayetteville in Arkansas. RSmeans has data for Springfield, but not for Greene County or any of The Groves. Rolla and Joplin are within 100 miles of Springfield, and the rest of the cities in this group are other large metros in Missouri.

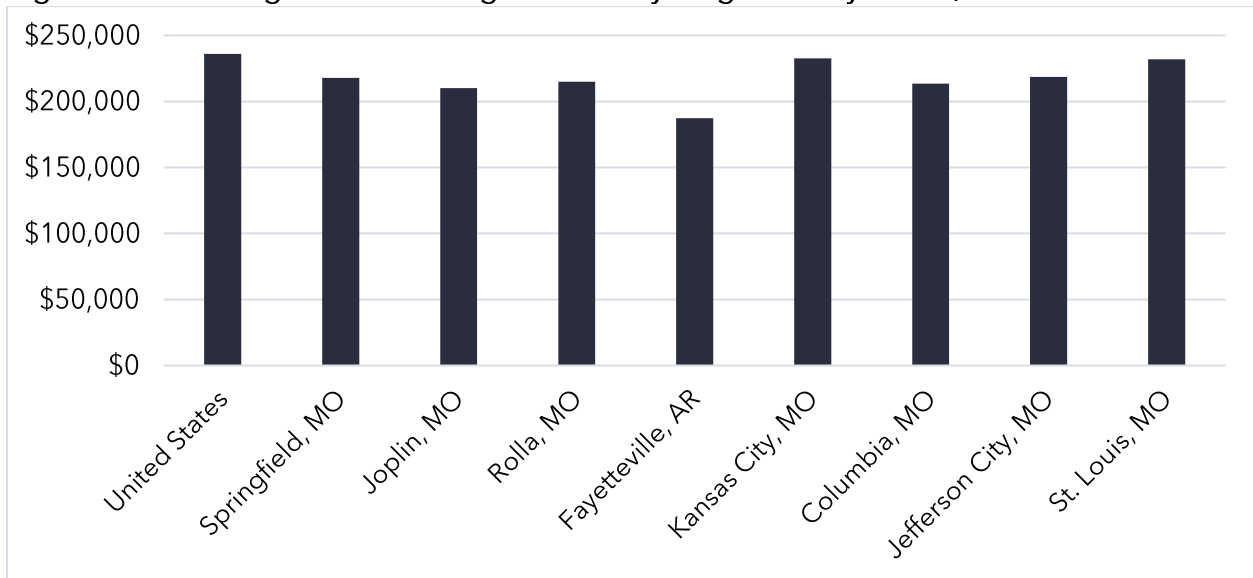
Specifically, the type of home used as the basis of these estimates is a 1,600 sq/ft single story home with wood siding and frame, built by non-union contractors.³¹ The RSmeans database is updated quarterly. It is based on a City Cost Index that compares local costs to national averages, and a Historical Cost Index that compares costs to a historical benchmark. Those two indexes allow specific locations to be continually indexed over time and serve as a tool for forecasting construction costs and comparing costs in different locations.

As the city nearest to Springfield among this group, and being in the same Southwest Missouri region, Joplin's cost of construction for the average home (\$210,000) is about \$7,600 (or 3.5%) less than in Springfield (\$218,000). Springfield's construction costs are \$18,000 (7.7%) below the national average (\$236,000). Rolla is outside of the Southwest Missouri region but is the second closest to Springfield. Its cost of construction is about \$3,000 (or 1.3%) lower than Springfield's. In all of the cities in this comparison it costs less to build than the national average, with the two largest metros, Kansas City (\$233,000) and St. Louis (\$232,000), coming close to that amount. The cost in Jefferson City (\$219,000) is closest to Springfield's cost. Fayetteville, AR is a little more than 100 miles from Springfield and in

³¹ The median size home found in a large sample of recent Greene County MLS transactions data was 1,601 sq/ft.

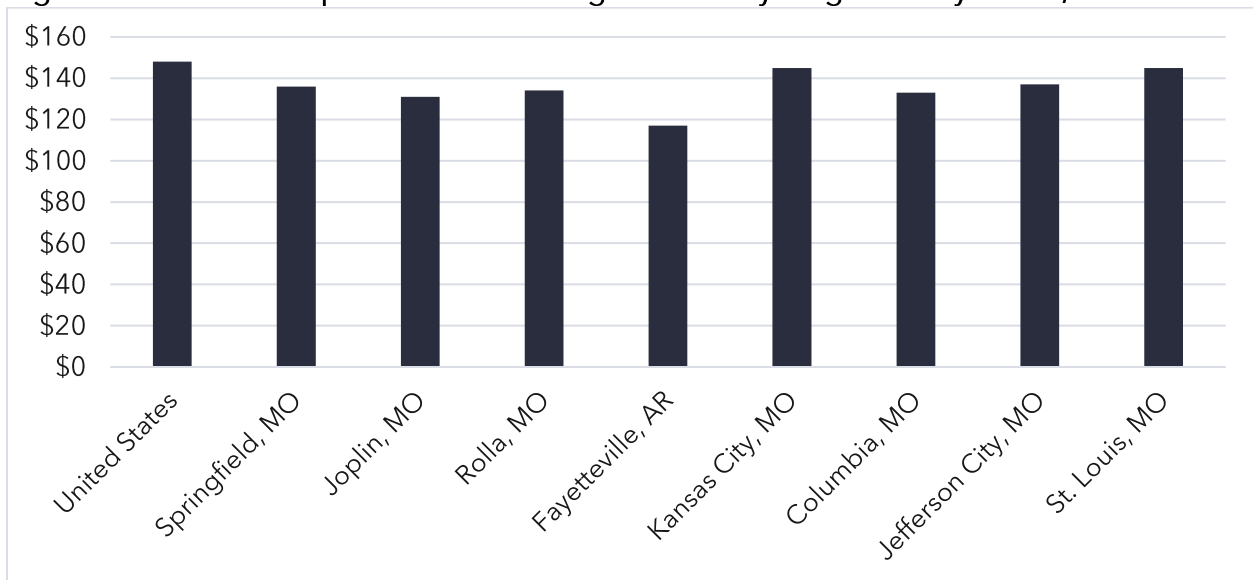
another state, but its cost of construction (\$187,000) is by far the lowest in this group. The cost per square foot relationships seen in Figure 5.7 follow the same pattern as the cost to build the average home.

Figure 5.6: Building Cost of Average One-Story Single-Family Home, 2024 Q3*



Source: Points Consulting using RSMeans Square Footage Estimator, 2024 Q3

Figure 5.7: Cost Per Square Foot of Average One-Story Single-Family Home, 2024 Q3*



Source: Points Consulting using RSMeans Square Footage Estimator, 2024 Q3

Table 5.3: Building Costs for Average One-Story Single-Family Home by Region, 2024 Q3

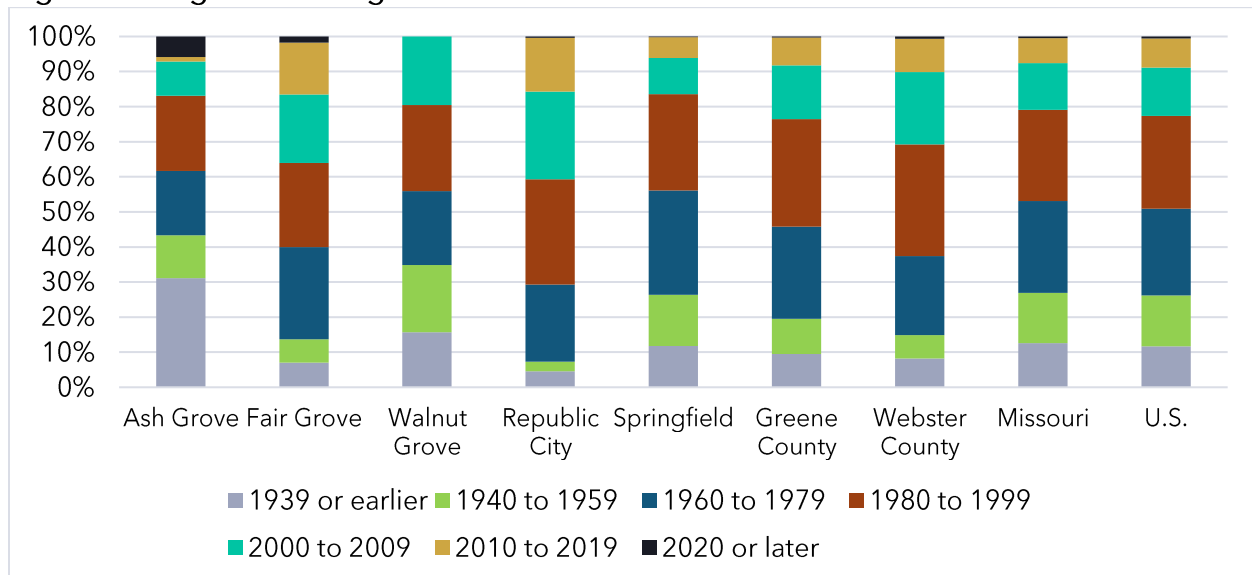
Region	Building Cost	Cost per S.F.
United States	\$236,128	\$148
Kansas City, MO	\$232,678	\$145
St. Louis, MO	\$231,960	\$145
Jefferson City, MO	\$218,709	\$137
Springfield, MO	\$217,868	\$136
Rolla, MO	\$214,934	\$134
Columbia, MO	\$213,410	\$133
Joplin, MO	\$210,196	\$131
Fayetteville, AR	\$187,238	\$117

Source: Points Consulting using RSMeans Square Footage Estimator, 2024 Q3

Housing Stock and Occupancy Rates

The age of an area's housing stock tells us about the physical condition and needs of the houses in that area. Houses need regular maintenance, and older houses need more. When we see the data presented as it is in Figure 5.8, it also weaves a tale of previous economic and development phases. If we start with the U.S. as a baseline, just under half of all housing was built after 1980. Missouri's data is in line with the national data. Greene and Webster counties are as well, although they each had a bigger building boom from 1980-1999.

Figure 5.8: Age of Housing Stock



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table S2504

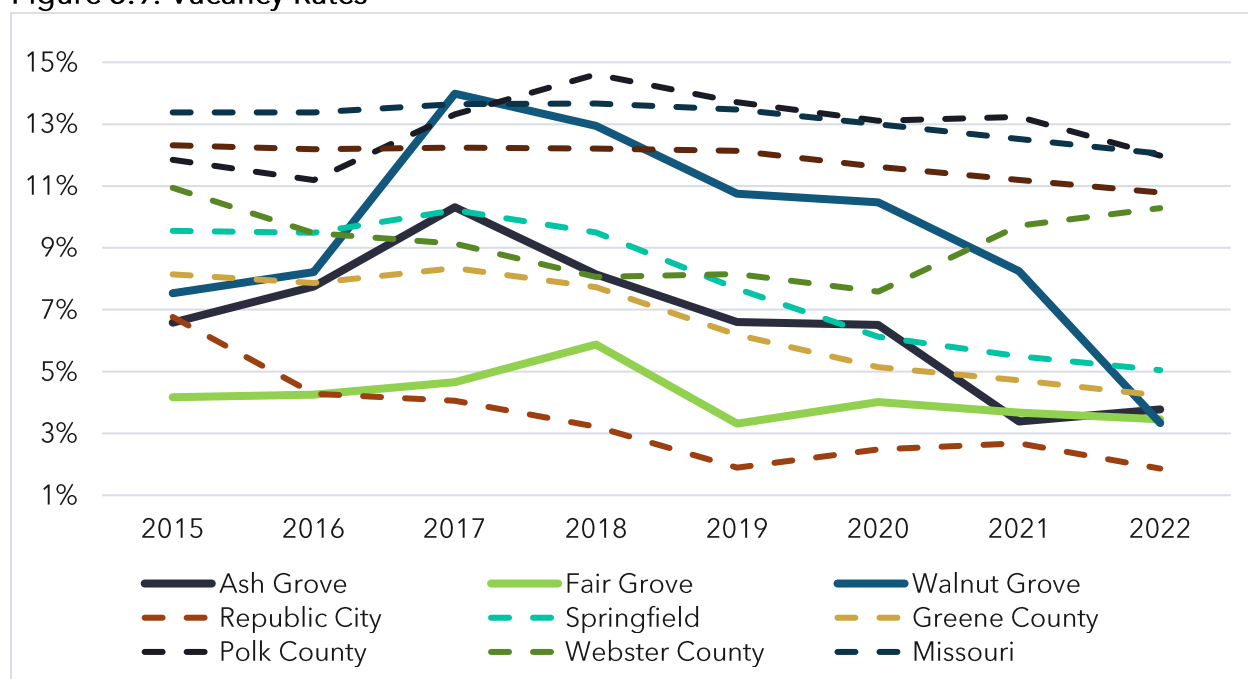
1980 is a fair dividing line between designating a home as "old" or not, given certain construction methods had evolved and lead paint regulations took hold around that time. Republic City is the standout area in terms of percentage of houses being "modern", with about 70% of its housing stock having been built since 1980. Republic (15.4%) and Fair Grove (14.8%) stand out as having the largest percentage built since 2010. Only Ash Grove (5.9%) and Fair Grove (1.7%) saw more than negligible percentages of homes built since 2020, which gives us a perspective on how the post-covid shifts in residential preferences have

affected these areas. Walnut Grove stands out as the only compared region to have not had any homes built since 2009, which is consistent with some of its demographic statistics since then. While Ash Grove has the most new homes by percentage, it also has the largest percentage of very old homes built prior to 1939 (31.1%) and built before 1959 (43.3%).

Vacancy rates are a signal of supply and demand in a real estate market. In Figure 5.9, all the rates were generally sloping downward since 2015, consistent with the national trend. There is a sharp rise in vacancies around 2017 for Ash Grove, Walnut Grove, and Polk County, while Fair Grove experienced a significant bump a year later. In some cases, that rise could represent new units coming online and going through lease-up or disposition. Vacancies naturally increase when new housing inventory is “delivered” into the market. But Figure 5.3 indicates that Walnut Grove had zero units built after 2009, so its 2017 rise in vacancies was not due to new units. Ash Grove did have some new construction, which could have contributed to its 2017 vacancy increase.

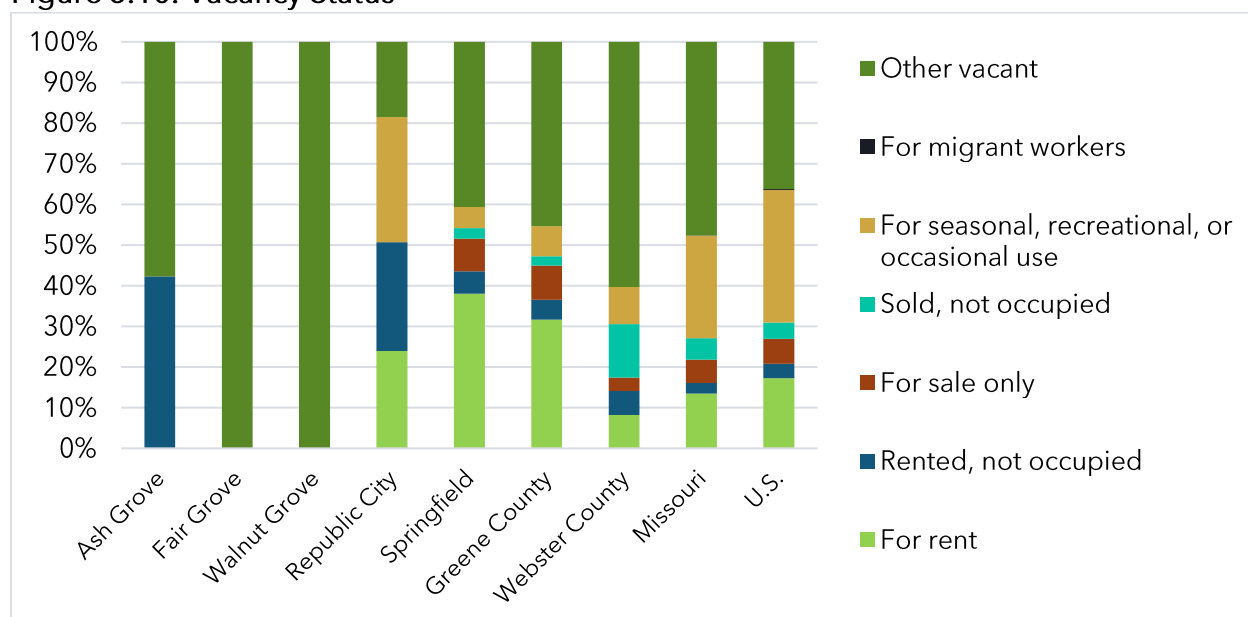
We see a steep drop in vacancies for Ash Grove and Walnut Grove in 2021. Greene County and The Groves each have recent vacancy rates often indicative of high demand for housing relative to supply, as the largest percentage of vacancies in Greene County and The Groves fit into the category called “Other Vacant” rather than “For Rent.” However, it should be noted that “Other Vacant” includes homes that are dilapidated or are in disrepair, and on average 86% of homes in The Groves are vacant for this reason.

Figure 5.9: Vacancy Rates



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 - 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table DP04

Figure 5.10: Vacancy Status



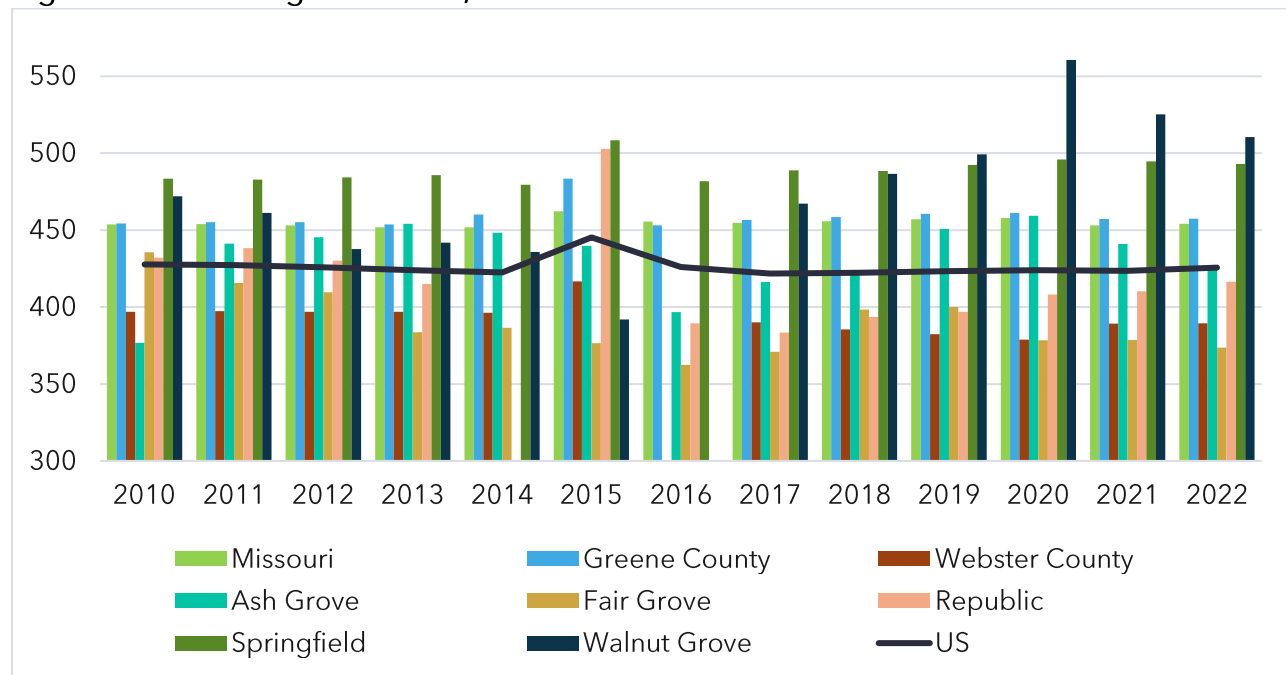
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Table B25004

Housing Units Per 1,000 Residents, as seen in Figure 5.11, is a statistic that gives us another view of supply and demand for housing. Since 2016, Greene County's count of housing units per 1,000 residents has remained steady, in the range of 457 to 460 units per 1,000 residents. The Groves shared a rising number of units per 1,000 from 2016 to a peak in 2019 or 2020, which then declined through 2022. Fair Grove's 362 units per 1,000 residents was the lowest of The Groves in 2016, as was its 2019 peak of 396 and its 2022 value of 373.

Between 2015 and 2017, Walnut Grove's count jumped from 391 to 467, consistent with its sharp rise in vacancy at that time. There's a smaller sample size with Walnut Grove, so margin of error is a factor. It has under 1,000 residents and under 500 units of housing, facts which need to be considered when viewing its Units per 1,000 Residents statistic. But from 2010 to 2022 its population shrank from 767 to 529, and its number of housing units went from 362 to 270. Its 2020 peak of 560 housing units per 1,000 residents was significantly higher than Ash Grove's 459 and Fair Grove's 378 in that year. But it dropped by 50 from 2020 to 2022, a number near the margin of error, yet larger than any other of The Grove's drops.

Fair Grove was the only area that remained below the U.S. average for almost the entire 2010 - 2022 timeframe. Ash Grove dipped below the national average from 2015 to 2017, while Greene County and Walnut Grove had higher counts than that national average from 2010 straight through to 2022.

Figure 5.11: Housing Units Per 1,000 Residents

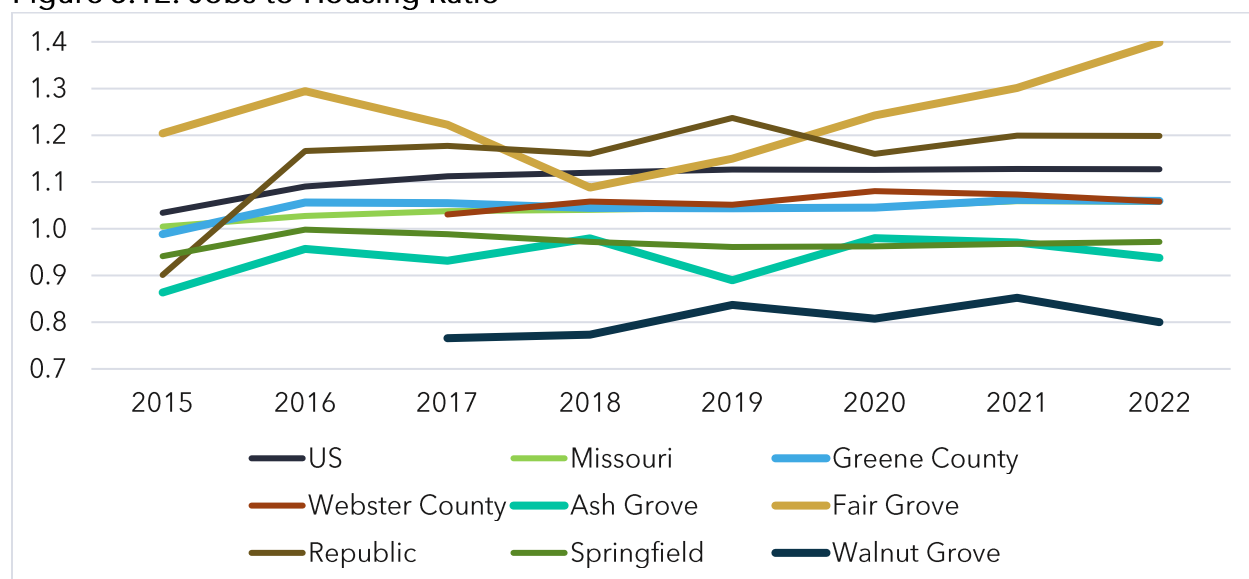


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Tables S2504, B25001, DP04, DP03

For the jobs-to-housing ratio, a value over 1.0 means there are more jobs than housing units in the area, which could indicate a strong job market and a demand for housing. A value under 1.0 could indicate a weaker job market or an area that is characteristically a more residential or “bedroom community” rather than a job center. If this ratio is in decline, it means the number of jobs is decreasing faster than the number of residents or the number of residents is increasing faster than the number of jobs. A rising ratio means jobs are being added faster than residents, or residents are leaving faster than jobs.

Of the areas in Figure 5.12, Fair Grove has the highest jobs-to-housing ratio, and it was increasing at the steepest rate as of 2022. That suggests Fair Grove’s job market is getting stronger and there is not much satisfying of the demand for housing there. On the other side of 1.0 we have Walnut Grove with the lowest ratio (0.80 in 2022), which has been relatively stable since 2017. Ash Grove has fluctuated between 0.84 and 0.98, approaching parity in 2020 but declining slightly since then. Greene County has been remarkably stable at 1.06 since 2016 sharing that same value with Webster County and Missouri in 2022, both of which have also been very steady since 2016. The quick glance of this chart shows three declining ratios (Walnut Grove, Ash Grove, and Webster County) and one definitively rising ratio (Fair Grove).

Figure 5.12: Jobs-to-Housing Ratio



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-Year ACS, Tables S2504, B25001, DP04, DP03

Occupancy Characteristics

Tables 5.4-5.7 display changes in the number of occupants per room in each jurisdiction between 2015 and 2020. This metric helps identify overcrowding, which can be a health and safety issue. The most commonly used threshold for overcrowding is anything over one household member per room. These data come from rolling five-year averages compiled annually by the Census and prepared for housing-specific research by HUD.

Though rural areas characteristically have fewer occupants per room, Greene County had the same average occupants per room as the state did in 2015 (0.51). But by 2020 that number had grown to 0.53 (+3.2%) for Greene County compared to 0.52 (+0.4%) for the state. There's no worry of overcrowding, but Ash Grove more than doubled that increase at a 7.2% clip up to 0.55. Fair Grove and Walnut Grove saw decreases of -2.6% and -1.8% respectively.

Greene County gained about 9,800 units of occupied housing (+8.3%), outpacing the state's 3.2% increase. Ash Grove gained 10 (1.7%), Fair Grove lost 50 units (-8.7%), and Walnut Grove lost 5 (-1.9%). From 2015 to 2020, Greene County gained 2,840 owner-occupied units (4.1%), but of The Groves, only Ash Grove saw an increase in owner-occupied units (20 units or 5.8%). There were bigger changes in terms of the number of renter-occupied units, as Greene County gained almost 7,000 units (14.3%), while The Groves lost rental units. Ash Grove lost 10 (-4.0%), while Fair Grove lost 20 units (-12.1%), which stands out when compared to Greene County's gain of 14.3%.

Table 5.4: Residence by Occupants Per Room Greene County

Occupancy by Tenure	2011-2015	2016-2020	Change	% Change
Owner-Occupied	0.50	0.51	0.00	0.7%
Renter-Occupied	0.52	0.55	0.03	6.3%
Occupants Per Room	0.51	0.53	0.02	3.2%

Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Housing Affordability, 5-year ACS

Table 5.5: Residence by Occupants Per Room Ash Grove

Occupancy by Tenure	2011-2015	2016-2020	Change	% Change
Owner-Occupied	0.52	0.53	0.01	1.1%
Renter-Occupied	0.50	0.58	0.08	16.7%
Occupants Per Room	0.51	0.55	0.04	7.2%

Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Housing Affordability, 5-year ACS

Table 5.6: Residence by Occupants Per Room Fair Grove

Occupancy by Tenure	2011-2015	2016-2020	Change	% Change
Owner-Occupied	0.51	0.51	-0.01	-1.1%
Renter-Occupied	0.57	0.53	-0.03	-5.9%
Occupants Per Room	0.53	0.51	-0.01	-2.6%

Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Housing Affordability, 5-year ACS

Table 5.7: Residence by Occupants Per Room Walnut Grove

Occupancy by Tenure	2011-2015	2016-2020	Change	% Change
Owner-Occupied	0.53	0.50	-0.03	-5.7%
Renter-Occupied	0.50	0.52	0.02	4.8%
Occupants Per Room	0.52	0.51	-0.01	-1.8%

Source: Housing & Urban Development Comprehensive Housing Affordability, 5-year ACS

Home Value Trends

Price often dominates discussions about real estate markets, but it's informative to look at other metrics that can give us a more nuanced understanding. Below are some other key metrics to consider, based on transactions data from May 2022 to May 2024.

In all The Groves, Days on Market has increased over the last two years, although only slightly in Walnut Grove (Table 5.8). It was the only region of analysis where that statistic has not doubled. It's taking longer to sell, but prices are still generally on the upswing for Greene County and The Groves, with the exception of Walnut Grove, where the median price has declined 14%. Ash Grove's median price rose the most, by 29%. Ash Grove and Fair Grove's metrics are in line with Greene County, with increases in the high teens to over 20% range.

Table 5.8: Percent Change Residential Sales

Ash Grove				
Metric	May 2022	May 2024	Numerical Change	% Change
Avg Home sale price	\$197,939	\$234,870	\$36,931	19%
Median Home sale price	\$175,000	\$225,000	\$50,000	29%
Avg Price per sq ft	\$110.74	\$135.35	\$24.61	22%
Avg days on market	16	34	18	114%
Fair Grove				
Metric	May 2022	May 2024	Numerical Change	% Change
Avg Home sale price	\$256,165	\$298,791	\$42,627	17%
Median Home sale price	\$222,500	\$259,900	\$37,400	17%
Avg Price per sq ft	\$139.38	\$171.61	\$32	23%
Avg days on market	15	39	24	154%

Walnut Grove				
Metric	May 2022	May 2024	Numerical Change	% Change
Avg Home sale price	\$275,101	\$256,524	-\$18,577	-7%
Median Home sale price	\$250,000	\$215,000	-\$35,000	-14%
Avg Price per sq ft	\$132.78	\$134.50	\$2	1%
Avg days on market	58	65	6	11%
Springfield				
Metric	May 2022	May 2024	Numerical Change	% Change
Avg Home sale price	\$237,025	\$271,429	\$34,404	15%
Median Home sale price	\$205,000	\$232,000	\$27,000	13%
Avg Price per sq ft	\$211.76	\$135.92	-\$76	-36%
Avg days on market	13	25	12	95%
Greene County				
Metric	May 2022	May 2024	Numerical Change	% Change
Avg Home sale price	\$237,134	\$282,326	\$45,192	19%
Median Home sale price	\$205,000	\$245,000	\$40,000	20%
Avg Price per sq ft	\$123.95	\$150.68	\$27	22%
Avg days on market	13	26	13	106%

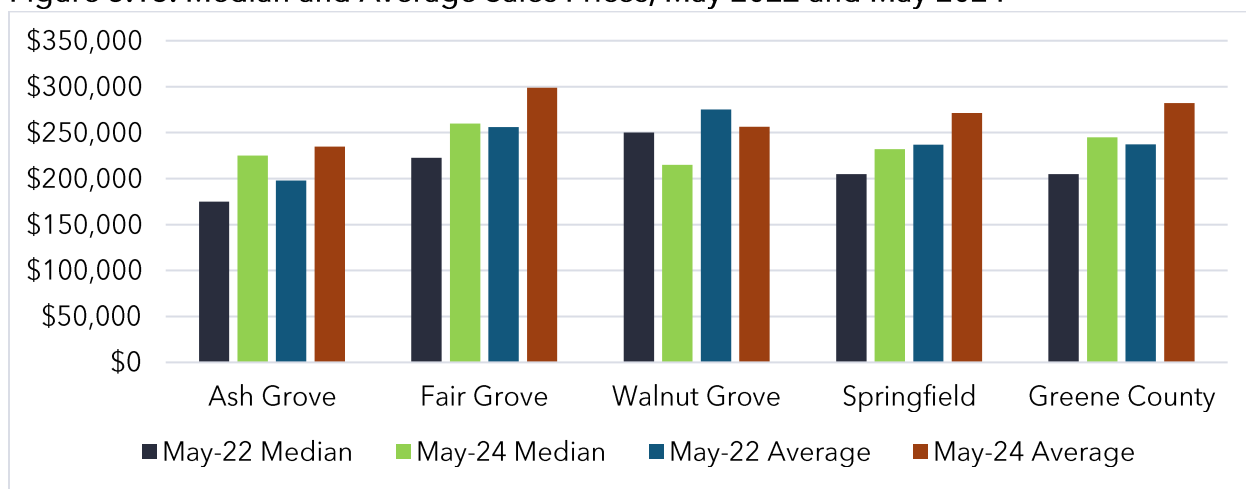
Source: Elyse Riley, KW, Springfield, MO

Table 5.9: Recent Median Residential Sales Prices May 2022, May 2024

Region	May 2022	May 2024
Ash Grove	\$175,000	\$225,000
Fair Grove	\$222,500	\$259,900
Walnut Grove	\$250,000	\$215,000
Springfield	\$205,000	\$232,000
Greene County	\$205,000	\$245,000

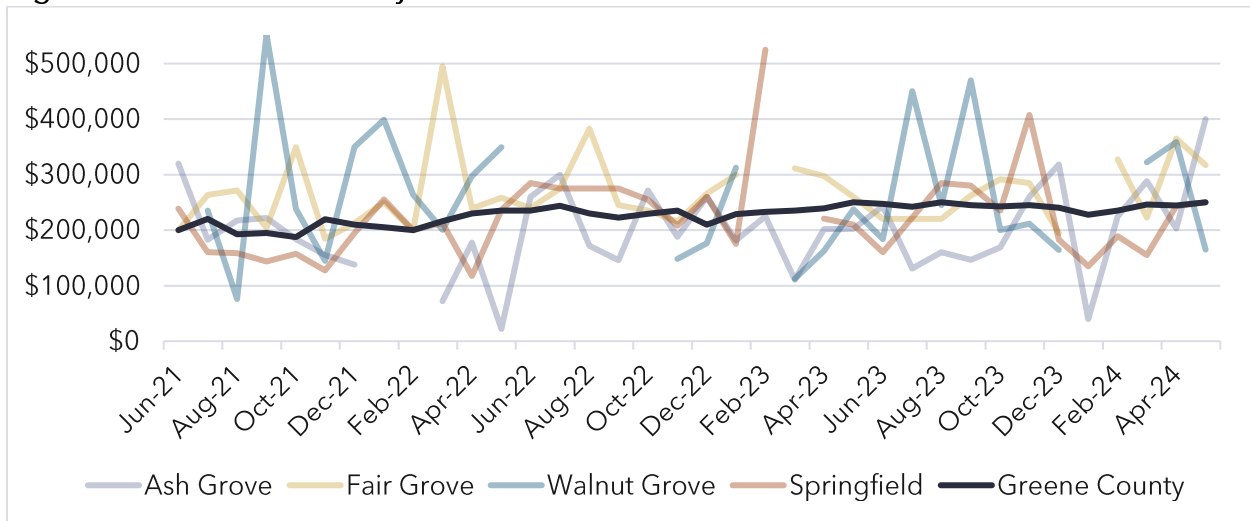
Source: Elyse Riley, KW, Springfield, MO

Figure 5.13: Median and Average Sales Prices, May 2022 and May 2024



Source: Elyse Riley, KW, Springfield, MO

Figure 5.14: Median Monthly Sales Price

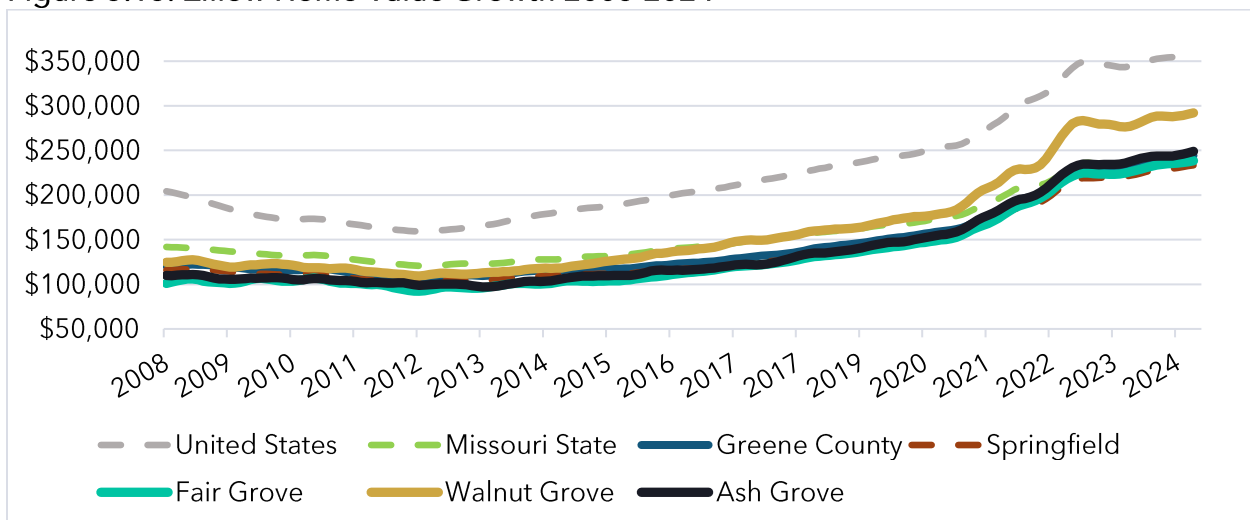


Source: Elyse Riley, KW, Springfield, MO

Home values in The Groves and Greene County have risen sharply since Summer 2020, with Walnut Grove outpacing the rest. Figure 5.15 reports changes over time in the Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI). This statistic is different than the “median home value” in that it represents the value of the “typical” home by taking into account a weighted average of the middle third of homes in a region. The estimated value of homes that did not transact are included in the calculation of the ZHVI.

As of April 2024, the national ZHVI value was \$359,000. Walnut Grove was at \$292,000 while the rest of the Missouri locations were bunched together between \$237,000 and \$249,000, reflecting the area’s affordability relative to the national value. However, before the steep rise in home prices started in July 2020, the national value was \$257,000. Walnut Grove surpassed that price level in February 2022, and the other Missouri locations are approaching it. This means that Spring 2024 house prices in Missouri, Greene County, and in The Groves were no longer “affordable” relative to July 2020 national prices.

Figure 5.15: Zillow Home Value Growth 2008-2024



Source: Points Consulting Using Zillow ZHVI

The value of a “typical” Greene County home grew by 35.6% from June 2015 to June 2020. The various policy decisions surrounding the Covid pandemic then served to boost home values by unprecedented growth rates. Greene County homes have since appreciated in value by 51.9% in just the 4 years from June 2020 to Spring 2024. Home prices in Greene County grew by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.3% from 2015 to 2020, then grew by an 11.0% CAGR from Summer 2020 to Spring 2024. To put that rapid price growth into perspective, if home prices had continued to grow at that 2015 - 2020 rate, it would have taken seven years for them to reach April 2024 levels, not four years.

Table 5.10: Zillow Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)

Region	ZHVI	Dollar Growth Past 12 Months	10-Year CAGR	5-Year CAGR	3-Year CAGR
United States	\$359,240	\$14,940	7.1%	8.3%	7.8%
Missouri	\$247,352	\$11,774	6.8%	8.3%	7.5%
Greene County	\$244,264	\$11,274	7.7%	10.3%	10.0%
Springfield	\$233,376	\$11,670	7.8%	10.4%	9.5%
Fair Grove	\$238,424	\$12,292	8.7%	11.3%	10.2%
Walnut Grove	\$292,048	\$14,842	9.5%	11.7%	10.0%
Ash Grove	\$248,984	\$11,303	8.9%	11.4%	10.1%

Source: Points Consulting Using Zillow ZHVI

Changes in Home Prices, Rents, and Median Incomes

A triangulation of economic changes that have been steadily pinching many households since 2010 is presented in Figure 5.16. The Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) House Price Index (FHFA HPI) tracks changes in house prices using data sourced from securitized Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac mortgages. The FHFA HPI captures same-house changes in sales price or refinance value over long periods of time.³²

The impact of home price and rent inflation upon earners whose income has grown at a slower pace is the resounding theme of this visualization. Nationally, home price and rent increases outpaced wage growth by 30 percentage points and 12 percentage points respectively from 2010 to 2022. That disparity in Missouri was 20 and 4 points. Rents in the state grew much more modestly than they did nationally. Greene County experienced a much larger home price increase to wage growth gap of 41 points and a rent increase gap of 8 points.

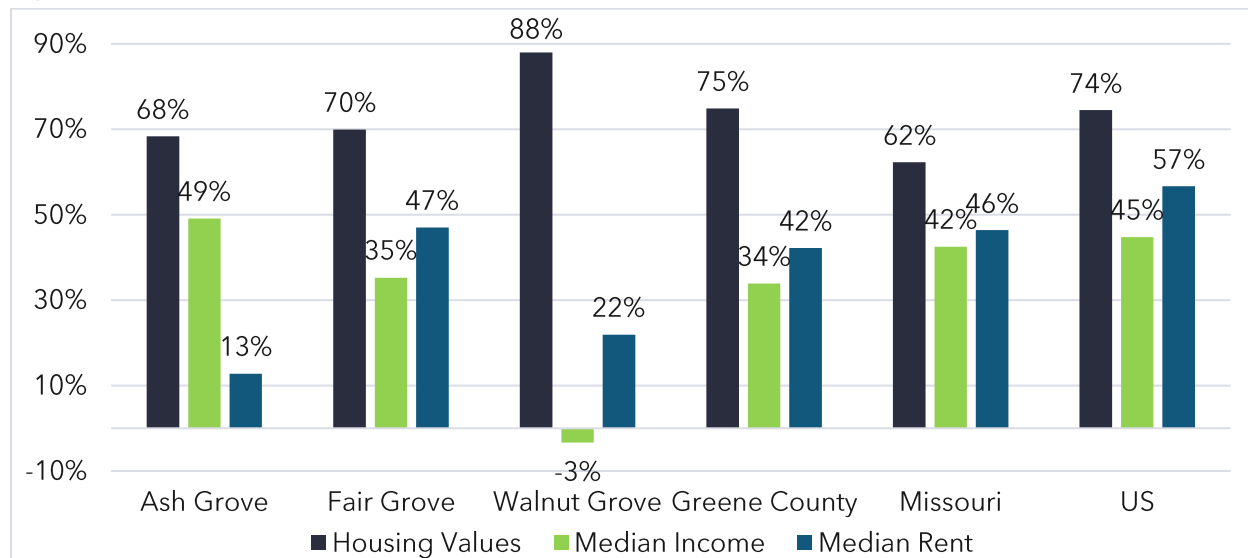
Each of The Groves saw significant home price increases with Walnut Grove’s 88.0% standing clearly above the rest of these selected areas. Walnut Grove’s rent increased by 21.9%, while its median income notably diminished by 3.7% during that era of generally rising wages and asset prices. By comparison, during the 2010 - 2021 period the national three month moving average hourly median wage growth ranged from 1.6% to 3.9%, then ballooned in 2022 to 6.7%.³³ Ash Grove is the only area in this chart that saw median incomes rise (+49.0%) more

³² The FHFA HPI is different than the previously shown Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI), because the ZHVI takes into account the value of homes that aren’t on the market, whereas the FHFA HPI tracks actual sales and refinance transactions.

³³ Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Wage Growth Tracker, updated April 10, 2024, accessed July 23, 2024. <https://www.atlantafed.org/chcs/wage-growth-tracker>

than median rents (+12.8%). But home prices still outpaced the median wage by 19 points. In Fair Grove, home prices had grown 35 points over the median income, with rent increases ending up 12 points higher than median income.

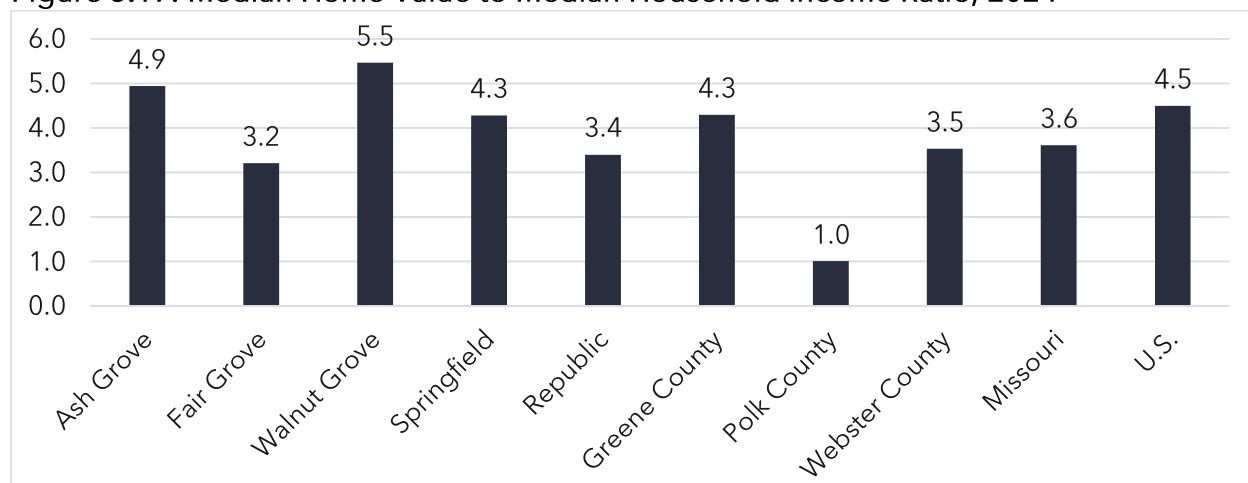
Figure 5.16: Percent Change in Median Income, Median Rent, and Housing Values 2010-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 5-Year Estimates, 2022, FHFA Home Price Index

A 2024 snapshot of the median home value compared to the median income across our relevant markets can be seen in Figure 5.17. The higher this ratio is, the more unaffordable homes are to residents in that area. This ratio tells us that nationally, it takes 4.5 times the median income to buy the median priced home in 2024 (up from 4.3 in 2023). Ash Grove (4.9) and Walnut Grove (5.5) are the only areas in this group with a higher ratio than the U.S. (4.5). Along with Springfield (4.3) and Greene County (4.3), they are also the only areas with ratios higher than Missouri's (3.6). Fair Grove (3.2) and Republic (3.4) look affordable compared to the state, and Polk County has the lowest ratio (1.0) of this group, where one year's median income is almost identical to the price of a median house.

Figure 5.17: Median Home Value to Median Household Income Ratio, 2024



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Household Debt-to-Income Ratios

Household debt-to-income (DTI) is a key indicator of financial health. Monthly debt payment obligations can constrain a household's discretionary spending for long periods of time. When debt payments become difficult to manage for a household with a given income, that family might even choose to delay, substitute, or cancel spending on certain non-discretionary items. A study found that households with higher debt to income ratios prior to the 2008 Financial Crisis exhibited steeper reductions in consumption and even in employment during the subsequent slow recovery.³⁴

The Federal Reserve Board publishes historical household debt-to-income ratios for every state and county, plus major core based statistical areas (CBSA) using aggregated data from Equifax, the New York Federal Reserve's Consumer Credit Panel, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The data show that the nation's regions and counties experienced different magnitudes and paces of changes in DTI ratios over the years.

The anonymized data comes from the zip code level and takes into account all of the common types of debts many households have, such as mortgages, home equity loans or lines of credit, auto loans, and credit cards, but excludes student debts. The national data are aggregated differently, so they are not displayed here. They show a gradually rising DTI trend from 1985 to 2002, then a steeper rise until the 2007 peak of 1.24, after which an equally steep decline led to a 2018 low at roughly the same level that existed in 2005. For State, County, and Metro data, only upper bound and lower bound values are published, leaving us with a range of DTI ratios for each are shown in Figure 5.18.

When comparing the historic DTI ratios of Springfield, MO, Greene County, and Missouri, it is Greene County that stands out. Though the data there were not reported in some years, the county's DTI ratios showed more volatility, wider ranges, and higher levels than in Missouri and Springfield. Perhaps telling a tale of bust and boom, Greene County's DTI ratios plummet from 3.43 in 2008 to 1.01 in 2010, followed by a rapid rise back up to 3.43 by 2014. Since then, the range has remained steady, other than a significant but short dip in 2017.

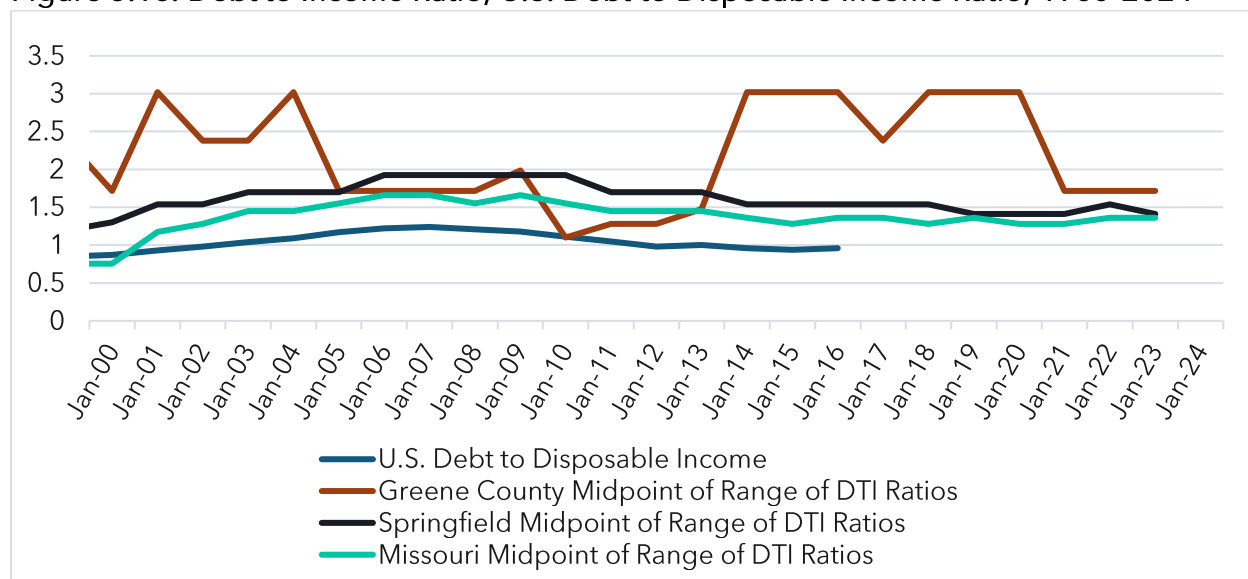
The DTI ratio range in Greene County from around 2013 to 2023 is consistent with its record of growth during that time, as people feel more comfortable taking on debt in a growth environment. On the contrary, the ranges for Springfield and Missouri slowly rose up to their 2006 - 2010 plateau and have since been slowly declining from there. The steadier behavior seen in Springfield and Missouri DTI ratio ranges could be attributed to the facts that large metro areas have lower leverage,³⁵ and the large aggregation area of the state dampens the effect of more high-flying or low-riding outliers.

³⁴ Federal Reserve Board, FEDS Notes, January 11, 2018, "Household Debt-to-Income Ratios in the Enhanced Financial Accounts" by Michael Ahn, Mike Batty, and Ralf R. Meisenzahl.

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/household-debt-to-income-ratios-in-the-enhanced-financial-accounts-20180109.html#fig1a>

³⁵ Ibid.

Figure 5.18: Debt to Income Ratio, U.S. Debt to Disposable Income Ratio, 1980-2024

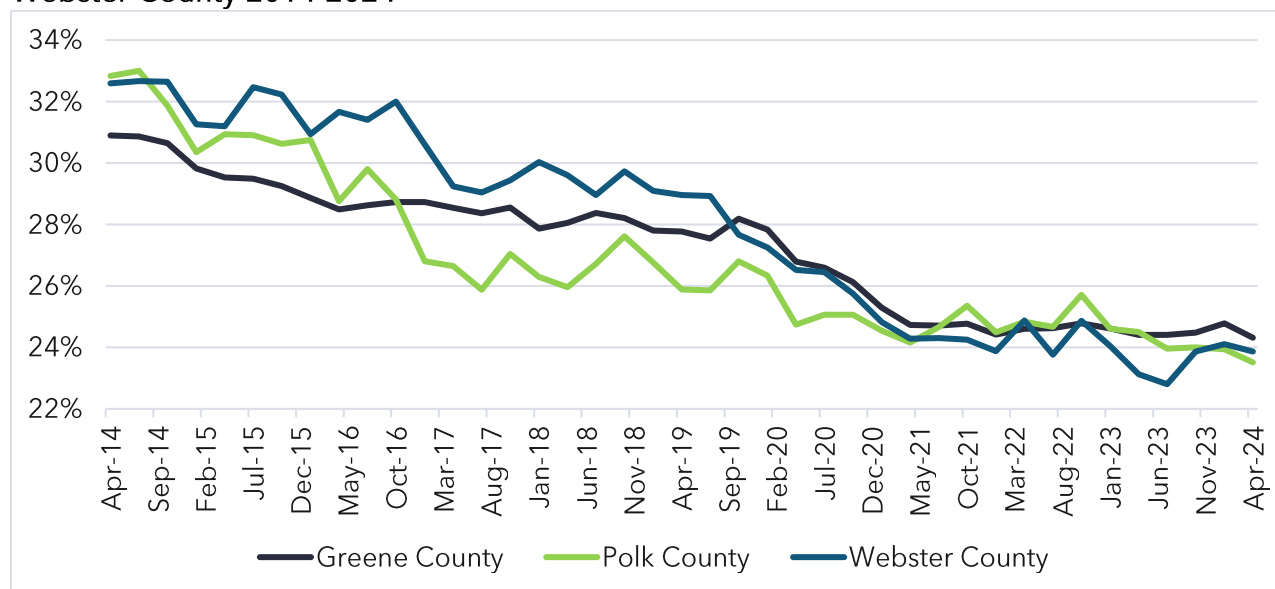


Source: The Federal Reserve Board, Enhanced Financial Accounts, Household Debt-to-Income Ratios, June 2024

Access to Credit, Delinquencies, and Foreclosures

Access to credit is an indicator of the financial health of households that can be measured by credit score. A “subprime” borrower is someone who has a credit score between 580 and 619. Lenders will offer subprime borrowers less favorable revolving credit or loan terms. Equifax, one of the major consumer credit ratings agencies, partners with the Federal Reserve to provide county level data on the subprime portion of the population. Fortunately, over the last 10 years there’s been a steady decline in the percent of the population that has a subprime credit score in all three counties.

Figure 5.19: Equifax Subprime Credit Population for Greene County, Polk County, Webster County 2014-2024



Source: Federal Reserve Economic Data, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Equifax Subprime

Greene County went from 31% down to 24% from 2014 to 2024. Polk and Webster Counties each dropped from 33% to 24%. For the bulk of that period, Greene County's proportion of subprime borrowers was below that of Webster County and above that of Polk County. During the shutdown of 2020, many people who received relief funds used that money to pay down their existing debts. That explains the steep downturn seen in all areas in 2020 Figure 5.19.

Table 5.11 comes from a 2022 study by the Urban Institute, which shows Greene County data in three versions; Greene County-Springfield (North), Greene County-Springfield (South), and Greene County (Outside Springfield City) combined with Webster and Christian Counties. By 2022, the median credit score was a healthy 751 for the Greene County-Springfield City (North), which is a "super-prime" borrower according to the lending industry. For Greene County (South) it was the same as the national median at 692, or "prime". For Greene County (Outside of Springfield City) combined with Webster and Christian Counties it was 705, also "prime", and almost the same as the Missouri median of 704.

Households have faced pressures on their financial resources and allocation. As of 2022, 29.8% of Greene County (North) households had delinquent debt, as did 15.7% of Greene County (South) and 29.1% of the Greene County (Outside Springfield) and combined counties households. Yet those were lower than Missouri (31.3%) and the U.S. (31.5%). Delinquencies happen when a borrower is late in submitting the regular monthly debt payment. They are a clear sign of household financial distress. If a household is delinquent on their mortgage specifically, it's an even more serious problem. Foreclosure happens when the bank that issued the mortgage takes ownership of the house. The longer a mortgage borrower is delinquent, the further down the path to eventual foreclosure his house goes. The exact process differs from state to state, but there are multiple steps along that path, and opportunities for the borrower to "cure" the delinquency and retain ownership of the home. In 2022, the percent of Greene County's mortgage holders who had a foreclosure within the previous two years was between 0.0% and 0.1%. In 2022, the U.S. the percent of mortgage holders who were in foreclosure was 0.1%.

Table 5.11: Delinquent Debt, Past Foreclosures, Median Credit Score, 2022

Area	Residents with delinquent debt	Mortgage holders with a foreclosure in past years	Mortgage holders in foreclosure	Median credit score
Greene County--Springfield City (North)	29.8%	0.1%	n/a	692
Greene County--Springfield City (South)	15.7%	0.0%	n/a	751
Christian, Greene (Outside Springfield City) & Webster Counties	29.1%	0.1%	n/a	705
Missouri	31.3%	n/a	0.1%	704
U.S.	31.5%	n/a	0.1%	692

Source: Urban Institute, Financial Health and Wealth Dashboard 2022

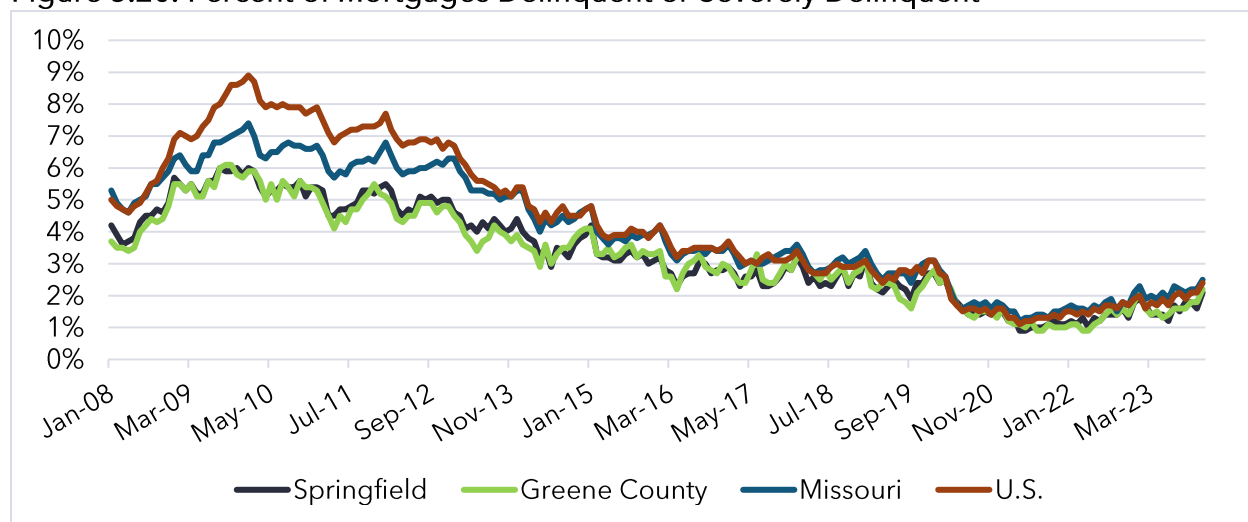
The Federal Housing Finance Agency's National Mortgage Database tracks a representative sample of mortgages throughout the nation. Payments that are 30 days late are considered delinquent, while payments over 90 days late put the borrower into the severely delinquent category.

Following the 2008 Financial Crisis, delinquent mortgages peaked in November 2009 and again in January 2012. In Greene County 6.1% of mortgages were delinquent in December

of 2009. Through the 2010s there was a bigger spread between the delinquency rates of areas represented in Figure 5.20 than has existed since 2021. Mortgage foreclosures were suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19 relief measures, which partly explains the tightening of that spread and the drop in delinquencies in all areas well into 2021.

Greene County hit its lowest percentage of mortgages in delinquency (0.9%) in the Summer of 2021 and again in Spring of 2022. That same Spring was when the Federal Reserve started raising interest rates rapidly, making mortgages more expensive. As seen in Figure 5.20, delinquencies in all areas started rising in the Spring of 2022, reaching 2.2% in the Greene County and 2.5% in Missouri by December 2023.

Figure 5.20: Percent of Mortgages Delinquent or Severely Delinquent



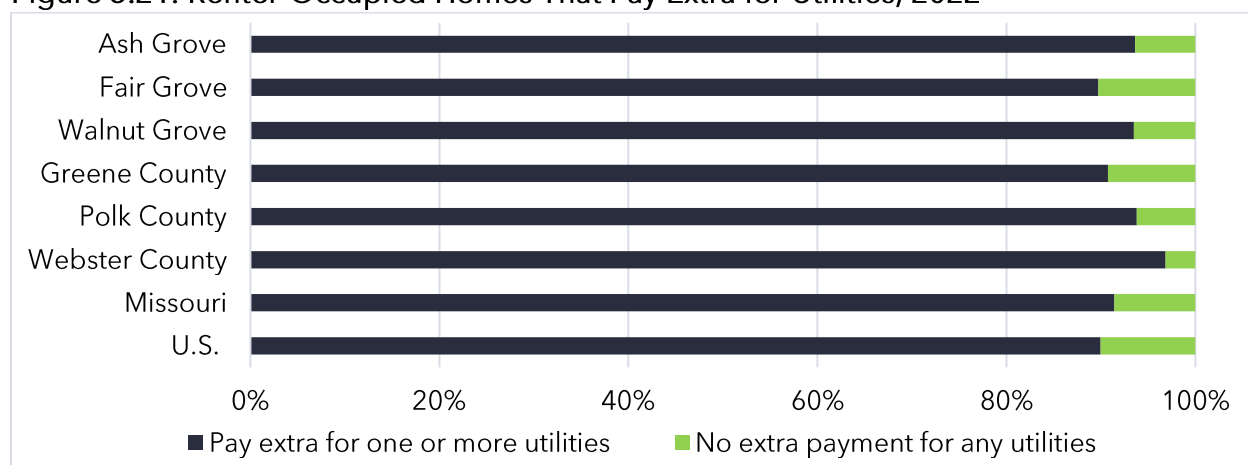
Source: National Mortgage Database Program, Federal Housing Finance Agency, and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Household Utility Burden

An additional burden weighing on household budgets can be the cost of utilities, especially in the case of renters who pay for one or more utilities not included in their monthly rent. According to Figure 5.21, the proportion of homes that pay extra for utilities in each location covered is higher when compared to the nation (90%), except for Fair Grove (89.7%). The small sample size in each of the Three Grove cities causes a larger margin of error, making Greene County's 90.8% perhaps a more reliable reference.

It should be noted that those renters whose utilities costs are included in their rent are still paying the cost of utilities. In such cases the renter is not paying for their utilities explicitly but instead indirectly, as they are embedded in their rent and only found as line items listed among their landlord's expenses. Therefore, regardless of whether they are paid separately or included in the rent, the cost of utilities for renters may be significant.

Figure 5.21: Renter-Occupied Homes That Pay Extra for Utilities, 2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022, 5-year ACS, Table B25069

To assess the burden that utilities represent for households, it's helpful to measure it as a percentage of income. The next table and two figures show the level of household energy and transportation costs as measured by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and compared to a national level. Households in Greene County spend 2.9% of their income on energy bills, which is a low-level energy burden when compared to the national level. This metric includes energy costs such as electricity, gas, and other fuels such as fuel oil and wood. Greene County households face a medium transportation burden, a metric that combines annual household miles traveled, a stock-weighted miles-per-gallon, and the price of fuel. The Census Tract that contains both Ash Grove and Walnut Grove is in the low range for energy burden (3.6%), slightly higher than the county, and high range for transportation burden (4.8%). Fair Grove's Census Tract is in the low range for energy burden (2.5%), which is lower than the county. Its transportation burden (3.9%) is almost the same as Greene County's.

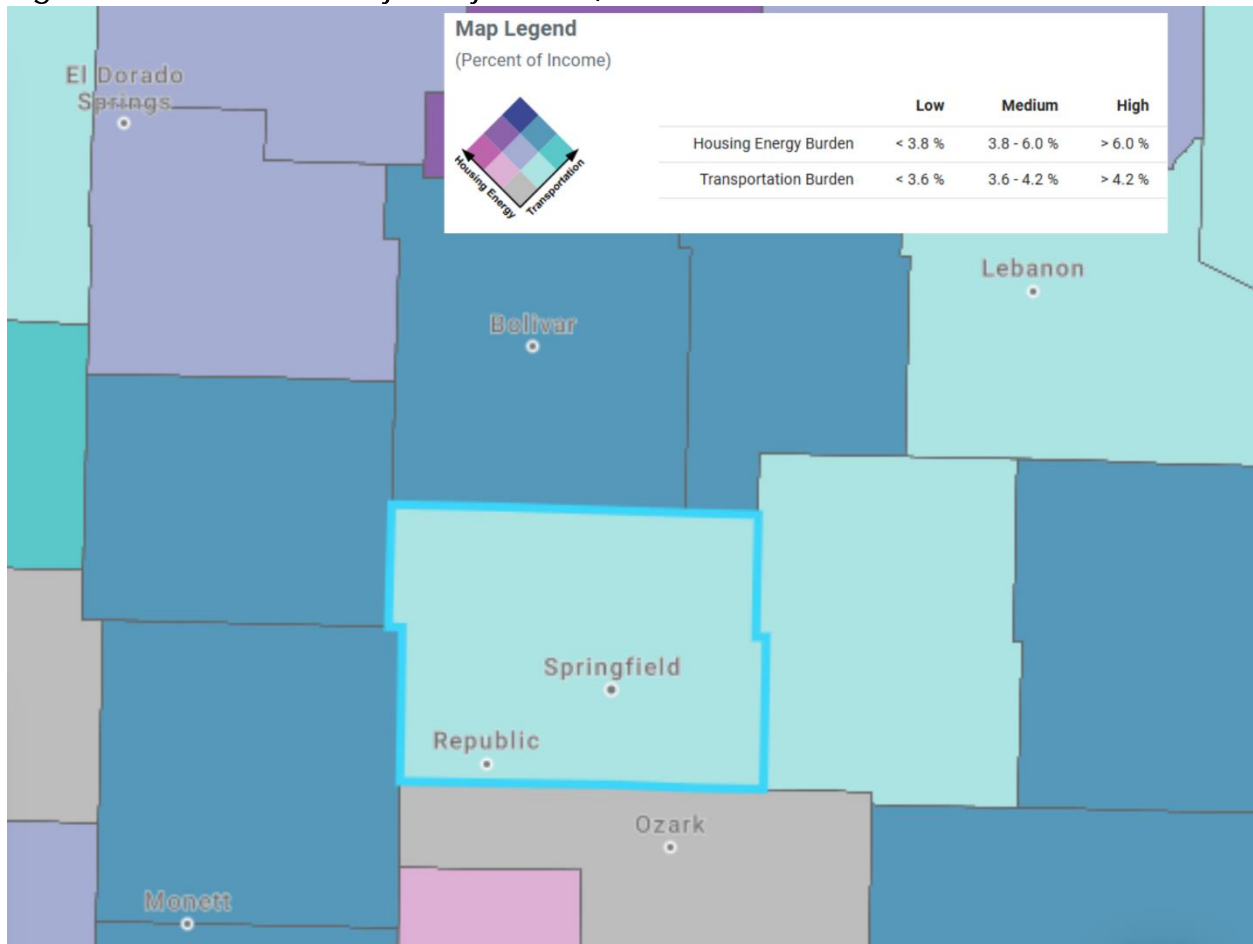
Table 5.12: Household Energy and Transportation Burden, Percent of Income, Greene County, Ash Grove and Fair Grove Census Tract, and Walnut Grove Census Tract, 2020

Greene County		
Category	Value	Range
Housing Energy Burden	2.88%	Low
Transportation Burden	3.82%	Medium
Total Energy Burden	6.70%	
Ash Grove and Walnut Grove's Census Tract (50.01)		
Category	Value	Range
Housing Energy Burden	3.61%	Low
Transportation Burden	4.82%	High
Total Energy Burden	8.43%	
Fair Grove's Census Tract (46)		
Category	Value	Range
Housing Energy Burden	2.47%	Low
Transportation Burden	3.86%	Medium
Total Energy Burden	6.33%	

Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), State and Local Planning for Energy, 2020

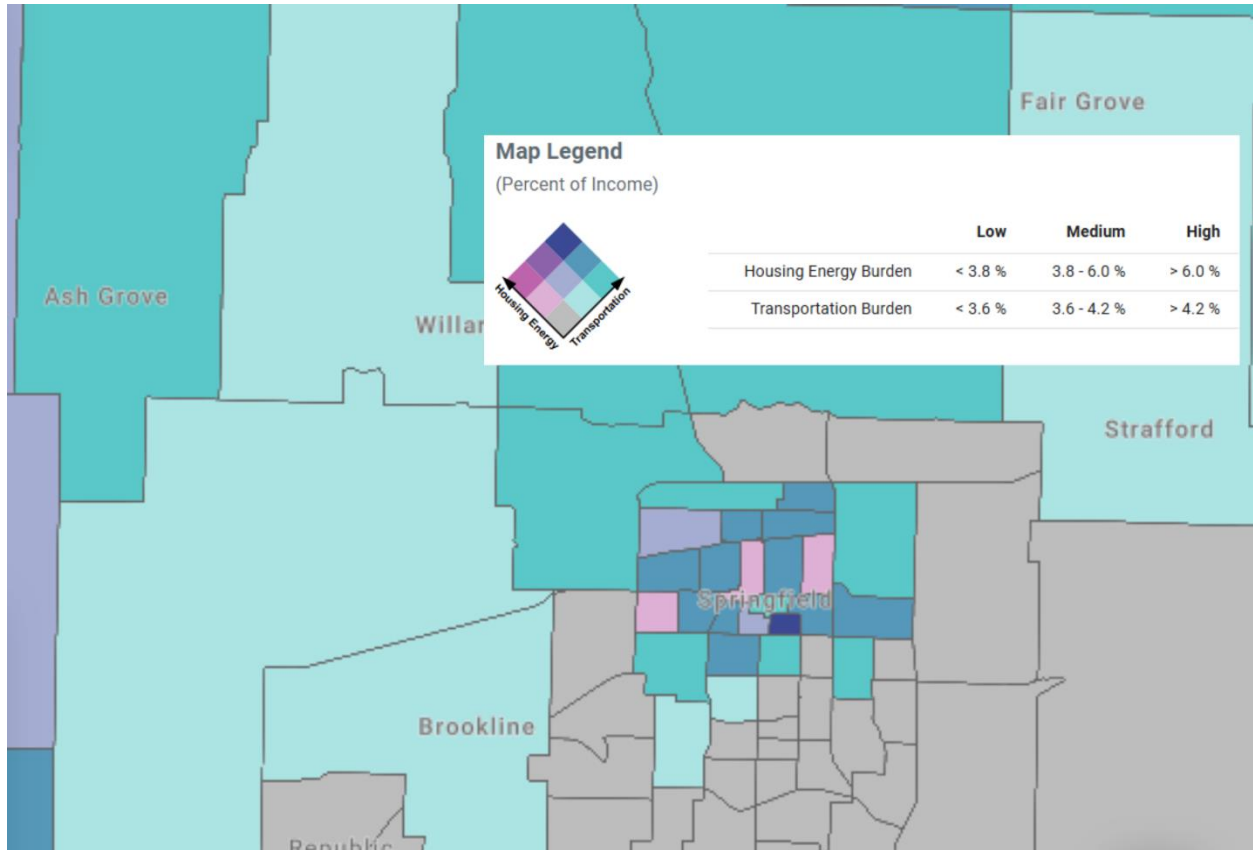
The colors in the maps found in the next two figures designate an area as being in the low, medium, or high range of costs for both energy and transportation, as described in the Map Legend.

Figure 5.22: Greene County Utility Burden, 2020



Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), State and Local Planning for Energy, 2020

Figure 5.23: Utility Burden, Ash Grove's and Walnut Grove's Census Tract and Fair Grove's Census Tract, 2020



Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), State and Local Planning for Energy, 2020

Planned & Potential Residential Developments

Assessing the housing supply involves analyzing planned residential developments, as these units are planned but will not show up in official statistics yet. In the Groves, there are a few of these planned developments that appear to be in the works. Both developments are in Ash Grove. Fair Grove and Walnut Grove do not appear to have any development imminent.

One property that is primed for development is a large parcel on the Northwest side of Ash Grove. The exact size of this parcel is not known to PC, but it is said to be able to accommodate 123 single-family housing units. After an interview with an official from the City of Ash Grove, the project was set to break ground in mid-September of 2024. Additionally, this project may be a multiphase development, and we are not 100% sure when it is planned to be fully completed.

The other planned development in Ash Grove is a 42-acre property on the North side of Ash Grove. It is just to the north of Highway 160. Part of the property is owned by a church, and they are expected to build housing units there. The other part of the property is to be sold to a contractor for a housing development, according to the city. It is not known exactly what stage this development is in but is likely not officially underway yet.

Potential Residential Development

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process for The Groves, SMCOG received community input on how they thought of each city growing in the future. This included input on what kinds of housing could go where in the future on city maps. While it is important to hear community input on these topics, it's also an order of magnitude of difference from private landowners planning what their properties will be used for. With that said, the communities see the cities expanding according to "possibility maps" shown in [Appendix A](#).

According to Figure A.1, Ash Grove residents view most of the larger parcels available for development to be used for single-family residential. This would be larger properties to the northwest and southeast of the city. Though they also view some properties on the northeast side as being partially mixed-use infill and partially senior living/multi-family residential (these areas are where the current planned development including the church property lies). The multi-family residential aspect appears to favor townhomes as well. In the downtown area, residents envision a downtown revitalization and mixed-use infill development. This would likely take the form of rehabilitating downtown buildings to have loft apartments and more store front commercial or retail.

Fair Grove residents see some opportunity for mixed-use development as well. In Figure A.2, two properties on the west side of Highway 65 may be used for mixed-use, single-family development. Similar to Ash Grove, Fair Grove residents favor larger parcels on the outer parts of city limits to be used for single-family development. Multi-family, "middle density" development seems to be a possible option for a parcel on the southwest side of the city, being used for duplexes, townhomes, and multi-family apartments.

While Walnut Grove's Comprehensive Plan update does not include a possibilities map, residents did comment on the types of housing they would be interested in seeing in their community in the future. Single-family homes were the most preferred type of housing they would like to see developed, with duplexes and multi-family housing following. Over 75% of survey respondents would like to see homes ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 sq. ft.

All these visions of community members are possibilities for future residential development. However, the potential outlined here does not necessarily reflect the desires of property owners.

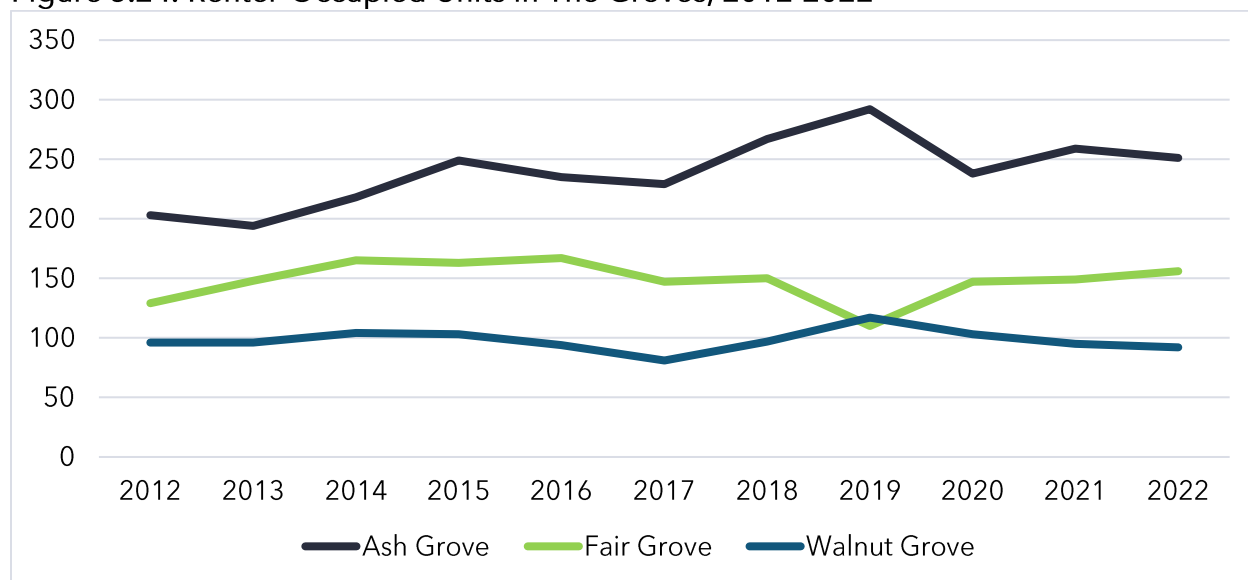
Rent Trends

Generally speaking, there are fewer metrics available on rental markets, as it is more difficult for federal agencies to track, and for-profit data providers do not have as much incentive to collect and report such information. However, there are several sources that use proprietary methods to produce reports on rental market conditions. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also tracks rental prices to produce “Fair Market Rents” (FMRs) that must be used in subsidized housing built with HUD funding. So, although these sources differ in their methods, they tell the same story of increasing rental costs.

The story of nonexistent data rings true for The Groves. To supplement, PC collected data from the Census Bureau on the number of renter-occupied units in The Groves over time, FMR data from HUD to analyze rental rate trends, and proprietary rental market data for Greene County.

As shown in Figure 5.24, it’s clear that production of rental units in The Groves has been almost nonexistent. In Ash Grove, the number of renter-occupied units has increased slightly since 2012. However, this number has declined since its peak in 2019. The number of renter-occupied units has consistently been greater in Fair Grove than Walnut Grove by about 50 units. But the total number of units has not grown at all since 2012 in Fair Grove and Walnut Grove.

Figure 5.24: Renter-Occupied Units in The Groves, 2012-2022

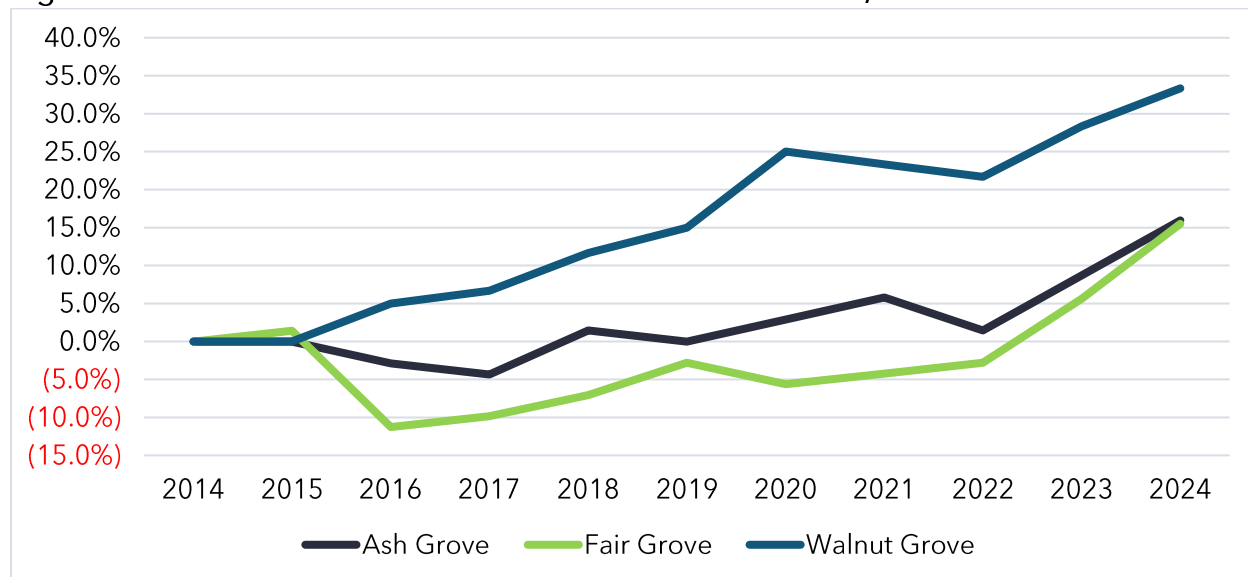


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2022, 5-Year ACS, Table DP04

Figure 5.25 depicts trends in HUD Fair Market Rents (FMR) for two-bedroom rentals in The Groves. Two-bedroom units often serve as a median measure for rental rates. FMRs do not show the rates charged by the private market, but they do grow as the private market rates increase. So, the trends shown below likely show the growth in rental prices of The Groves.

As shown, Walnut Grove has experienced rental rates grow the fastest since 2014. Ash Grove and Fair Grove have experienced rental rate growth of about 15% each since 2014, which is quite a bit lower than Walnut Grove. Fair Grove's rental rates declined from 2014 to 2016, stagnated from 2019 to 2022, and have increased significantly from 2022 to 2024. Rates in Ash Grove were mostly the same from 2014 to 2022, but have also increased significantly in the last two years.

Figure 5.25: Two-Bedroom Rental Price Trends in The Groves, 2014-2024

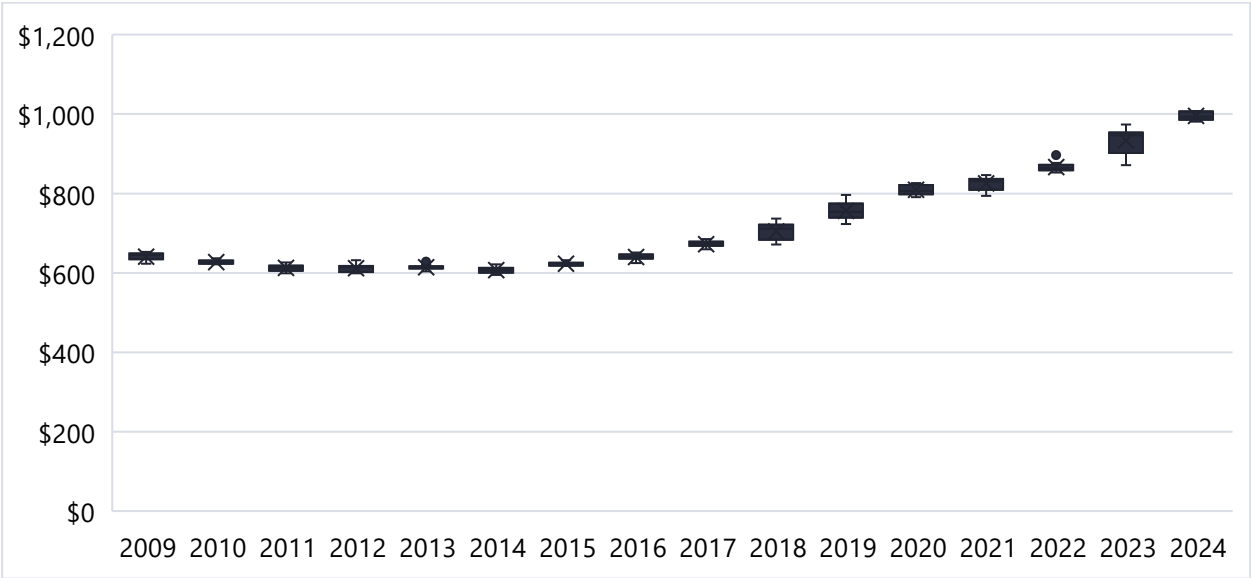


Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Small Area Fair Market Rents*

A point to note here is that the data for average rental prices for Greene County covers calendar year periods in each year. Utilizing a box and whisker plot allows us to see the high point and low point for each year at the end of each "whisker." The boxes on the chart show where 50% of the data for each year can be found.

Any data shown for Greene County overall will be skewed by Springfield, and that is likely part of what's being shown in Figure 5.26. In any case, rental prices have increased by nearly 50% in Greene County since 2015. Increasing demand, driven by overall population growth in Greene County, is a partial driver of the substantial rental price increases over the decade. However, stagnating production of MFH in the county since around 2010 would also cause increasing rental prices.

Figure 5.26: Two-Bedroom Apartment Rental Price Trends in Greene County, 2015-2024



Source: RentRange Market Metric Report, Greene County, MO

Shown in Table 5.13 are average annual rental listings for 2021 and 2023 by bedroom number. From 2021 to 2023, average annual listings have increased across the board. While one-bedroom and five-bedroom listings have stayed mostly the same or only marginally increased in the last two years, two- and four-bedroom listings have increased by 13.1% and 15.2% respectively. Meanwhile, three-bedroom listings have increased by nearly a third (32.6%). Listings here include single-family rentals along with MFH apartments. This may be some of the reason for increased listings despite stagnating MFH production. Low production for MFH but increasing rental listings could also point to vacancy of units.

Table 5.13: Annual Average Rental Listings Change in Greene County, 2021-2023

Size	Average Annual Listings 2021	Average Annual Listings 2023	Numerical Change	% Change
One-bedroom	62.4	65.0	2.6	4.1%
Two-bedroom	98.6	111.5	12.9	13.1%
Three-bedroom	139.0	184.3	45.3	32.6%
Four-bedroom	75.4	86.9	11.5	15.2%
Five-bedroom	66.8	67.0	0.2	0.2%

Source: RentRange, Market Metric Report, Greene County, MO

Subsidized Housing

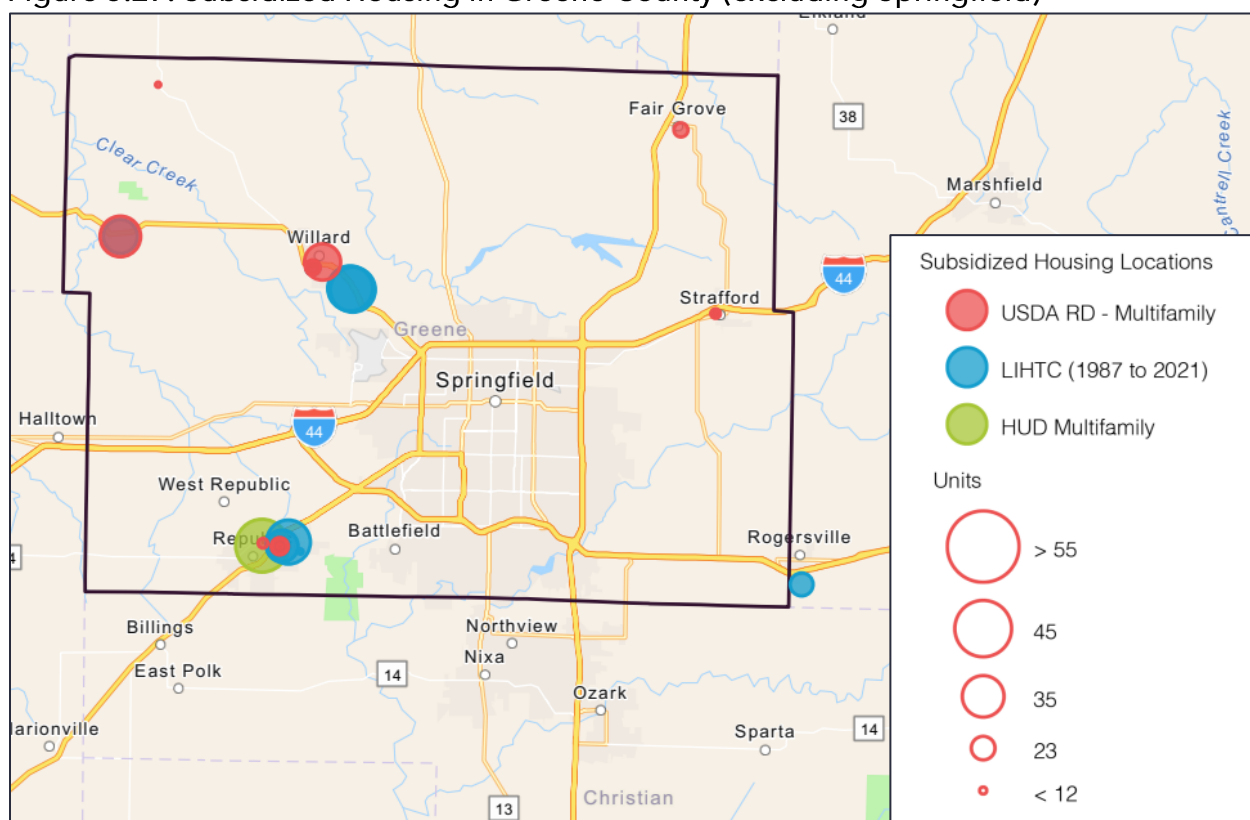
Table 5.14 contains a list of Subsidized housing by type and number of units in Greene County excluding Springfield). Figure 5.27 shows the same using a heat map.

Table 5.14: Subsidized Housing in Greene County (excluding Springfield)

Property Name	Address	Type	Units
Public Elderly Hsg	621 N Boston Ln Apt 1, Republic MO 65738	HUD Multifamily	55
Ash Grove Seniors Lp	300 N Bentley Ave, Ash Grove, MO 65604	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	38
Willard Estates Apts	506 State Hwy Ab, Willard, MO 65781	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	20
Fox River Estates II	934 Fox River Lane, Willard, MO 65781	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	48
Fox River Estates II	800 Hughes Road, Willard, Mo, 65781	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	48
Oaklawn Estates Phase II	100 Block of Oaklawn Street, Rogersville, MO 65742	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	28
216 W Pine St	216 W Pine St, Strafford, MO 65757	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	12
Republic Heights Apts	1405 E Hines St, Republic, MO 65738	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	12
Republic Apts III	1405 E Hines St, Republic, MO 65738	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	24
Spring Hill Apts	1605 E Hines St, Republic, MO 65738	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	36
Oakwood Place	894 N. Oakwood Ave, Republic, MO 65738	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	47
Century Place	435 N Douglas Dr, Republic, MO 65738	LIHTC (1987 to 2021)	12
Westmor Apts & Park Villa Apts	300 N Bentley Ave, Ash Grove, MO 65604	USDA RD - Multifamily	44
Walnut Grove Senior Citizens Housing	212 S Jefferson St, Walnut Grove, MO 65770	USDA RD - Multifamily	12
Fair Grove Senior Citizens Housing	99 S Heritage St, Fair Grove, MO 65648	USDA RD - Multifamily	20
Strafford Senior Citizens Complex	244 W Pine, Strafford, MO 65757	USDA RD - Multifamily	16
Boston Heights Apartments	701 N Boston Ln, Republic, MO 65738	USDA RD - Multifamily	16
Republic III Apartments	1405 E Hines St, Republic, MO 65738	USDA RD - Multifamily	23
Republic Heights Apartments	1405 E Hines St, Republic, MO 65738	USDA RD - Multifamily	12
Republic Apartments	1405 E Hines St, Republic, MO 65738	USDA RD - Multifamily	20
Willard Retirement Village	304 E Knight St, Willard, MO 65781	USDA RD - Multifamily	40
Brayfield Apartments	504 Ab Hwy, Willard, MO 65781	USDA RD - Multifamily	20
Willard Estates Apartments	506 State Highway Ab, Willard, MO 65781	USDA RD - Multifamily	20
Strafford Arms	221 W Pine St, Strafford, MO 65757	USDA RD - Multifamily	12
Strafford Arms II	216 W Pine St, Strafford, MO 65757	USDA RD - Multifamily	12
Total	--	--	647

Source: PolicyMap based on HUD data

Figure 5.27: Subsidized Housing in Greene County (excluding Springfield)



Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2024

Short-Term Rentals

The short-term rental industry (i.e. AirBnB) is increasingly playing a significant role in local housing markets. The model is a two-edged sword in that it provides a potential source of “side-hustle” revenue for existing residents, but also has the potential to increase home prices further. When short-term rentals (STRs) comprise a significant portion of housing stock, single-family homes can start to be valued at the expectation levels of commercial real estate.

Points Consulting uses STR data from a source called AirDNA. This source uses a “market area” approach when determining how many short-term rentals are in a city, but also has the ability to draw custom market areas around specific jurisdictions. Figures 5.28-5.31 illustrate the custom market areas for the The Groves and Springfield.

A summary of STR patterns for the different market areas in Greene County is reported in Table 5.15. Springfield, being one of the larger cities in Missouri, reports the largest number of STRs at 723. However, even this only represents less than 1% of occupied housing units. Similarly, there are less than a handful of STRs in all three of the Groves, also accounting for less than 1% of the occupied housing units. Low median occupancy rates and average daily rates charged at the STRs indicate Greene County is not an attractive investment area for STRs.

Table 5.15: STR Summary Table

Market	Occupied Housing Units	Active Short-Term Rentals	Percentage STR Stock	Median Occupancy Rate	Average Daily Rate
Springfield	79,070	723	0.01%	50%	\$142
Ash Grove	663	2	0.3%	32%	\$110
Fair Grove	586	2	0.3%	47%	\$138
Walnut Grove	261	0	0.0%	0%	\$0

Source: AirDNA and U.S Census Bureau ACS 5-Year, 2022

Figure 5.28: Ash Grove STR Custom Market Area*



Figure 5.29: Fair Grove Custom Market Area*

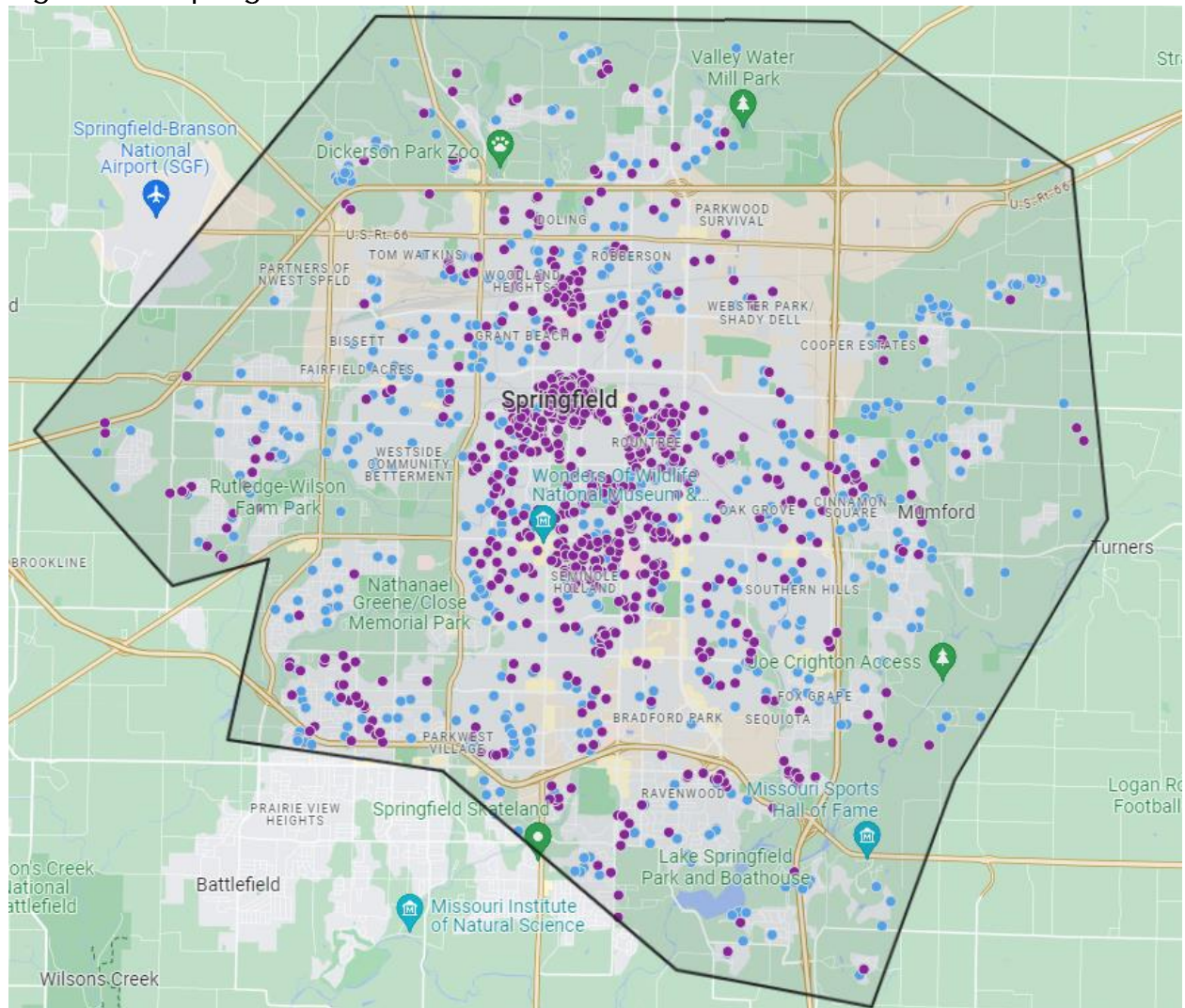


Figure 5.30: Walnut Grove Custom Market Area*



Source: AirDNA

Figure 5.31: Springfield Custom Market Area



Source: AirDNA

Zoning Code

Greene County Unincorporated Zoning Districts

A-R, Agricultural – Residence

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to preserve the predominant rural character of the land while allowing certain non-agricultural uses. Provide residential areas where property owners can maintain a limited number of farm animals and accessory buildings in a rural setting.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings; Group homes if not more than 10 people
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	None
<i>Size</i>	5-acre area
<i>Height</i>	35 ft
<i>Frontage</i>	150 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	40ft front yard, 50ft rear yard, 25 ft side yard

RR-1, Rural Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to accommodate low-density residential development on tracts three acres or larger. Provides a residential option between the lower density agriculture residential and the higher density urban residential.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings; Group homes if not more than 10 people
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	None
<i>Size</i>	3-acre area
<i>Height</i>	35 ft
<i>Frontage</i>	150 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	40ft front yard, 50ft rear yard, 25 ft side yard

MH-1, Manufactured Home Park or Subdivision District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to provide for areas of quality affordable housing in Greene County. Intended to eliminate manufactured housing from commercial districts. Require housing to be located in areas where public sewer and water are available.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Manufactured home parks; Manufactured home subdivisions; Modular homes; Single-family detached dwellings; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	None
<i>Size</i>	4,000 sq ft area for individual site or lot size; 5-acre area for subdivisions
<i>Height</i>	None
<i>Frontage</i>	40 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	20ft front yard, 10 ft rear yard, 12 ft total side yard width

UR-1, Urban Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended primarily for single-family detached dwellings at lot densities of approximately 7 units per acre, in areas served by public sewage disposal and water supply.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings; Accessory apartments in owner-occupied single-family detached dwellings; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Manufactured home subdivisions; Bed and breakfasts
<i>Size</i>	6,000 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 50 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft front yard, 10-25 ft rear yard, 5 ft side yard

R-1, Suburban Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to provide for detached single-family residential development in areas served by public sewage disposal and water supply.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Manufactured home subdivisions
<i>Size</i>	With public sewer and water: 10,000 sq ft area; Without public sewer and water: 3-acre area
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	None
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	With public sewer and water: 25 ft front yard, 25 ft rear yard, 12 ft side yard; Without public sewer and water: 40 ft front yard, 50 ft rear yard, 50 ft side yard

R-2, One- and Two-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to provide for medium-density residential development of an urban character. Limited to one- and two-family homes and areas served by public sewer and public water.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Any structures in R-1 zone; Two-family dwelling; Cluster developments and townhomes; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Any conditional uses permitted in R-1 zone
<i>Size</i>	9,000 sq ft area for SFH; 10,000 sq ft area for two-family dwelling; 5,000 sq ft area for cluster development and townhomes
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	None
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft front yard for SFH and two-family dwelling, 30ft front yard for cluster development and townhomes; 25 ft rear yard; 12 ft side yard

R-3, Multi-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to provide for residential development of low-rise residential buildings housing 2 or more families.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Any structures in R-2 zone; Condominiums; Multi-family dwellings; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Any conditional use permitted in R-2 zone; Tourist homes; Group homes
<i>Size</i>	9,000 sq ft area for SFH and two-family dwelling; 3,000 sq ft area per dwelling unit for MFH
<i>Height</i>	Maximum of 75 ft
<i>Width</i>	None
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft front yard, 25 ft rear yard, 12 ft side yard

R-4, Multi-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to provide for residential development of buildings housing 2 or more families.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Any use or structure in R-3 zone; Apartment hotels; Lodging houses; Boarding houses; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Any conditional use permitted in R-3 zone
<i>Size</i>	9,000 sq ft area for 3-family dwelling; 10,000 sq ft for 4-family dwelling; 2,000 sq ft per dwelling unit for 5 or more family dwellings
<i>Height</i>	None
<i>Width</i>	None
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft front yard, 25 ft rear yard, 12 ft side yard

Ash Grove Zoning Districts

R-1-13, Single-Family Residential District

<i>Intent</i>	Provide for the protection and future development of low density single-family residential areas and related activities.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Other uses (in which the judgement of the planning and zoning commissioner are of the same general character as those listed in this code, and which have been approved by the planning and zoning commission
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfast;
<i>Size</i>	13,000 sq ft area
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 90 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	35 ft, 20 ft, 10 ft

R-1-10, Single-Family Residential District

<i>Intent</i>	Provide for the protection and future development of low density single-family residential areas and related activities.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Other uses (in which the judgement of the planning and zoning commissioner are of the same general character as those listed in this code, and which have been approved by the planning and zoning commission
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfast;
<i>Size</i>	10,000 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 80 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	35 ft, 20 ft, 7 ft

R-1-7, Residential District

<i>Intent</i>	Provide for the protection and future development of low density single-family residential areas and related activities.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Other uses (in which the judgement of the planning and zoning commissioner are of the same general character as those listed in this code, and which have been approved by the planning and zoning commission
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfasts;
<i>Size</i>	7,000 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 70 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 15 ft, 7 ft

R-2, Two-Family Residential District

<i>Intent</i>	Provide for the protection and future development of low density two-family residential areas and related activities.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Other uses (in which the judgement of the planning and zoning commissioner are of the same general character as those listed in this code, and which have been approved by the planning and zoning commission
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfast;
<i>Size</i>	8,000 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 80 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 15 ft, 5 ft

R-3, Multi-Family Residential District

<i>Intent</i>	Provide for the protection and future development of low density multiple-family residential areas and related activities.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Other uses (in which the judgement of the planning and zoning commissioner are of the same general character as those listed in this code, and which have been approved by the planning and zoning commission
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfast;
<i>Size</i>	8,500 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 70 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	20 ft, 10 ft, 7 ft

Fair Grove Zoning Districts

R-1, Single-Family District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended primarily for single-family detached dwellings at densities of approximately 3 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family-semi-detached dwellings
<i>Size</i>	12,000 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 25 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 80 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 8 ft

R-2, Two-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to accommodate a variety of single-family and two-family housing types at low to moderate densities of up to approximately 5 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings; Duplexes; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Conditional uses permitted in R-1 zone; Short-term rentals
<i>Size</i>	12,000 sq ft
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 25 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 70 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 6 ft

R-3, Medium Density Multi-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to accommodate multifamily residential developments at up to approximately 8 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family detached dwellings; Duplexes; Group homes; 3- and 4-family dwellings; Town houses
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Short-term rentals
<i>Size</i>	7,000 sq ft per unit for duplexes; 4,000 sq ft per dwelling unit for all others
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 60 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 6 ft

R-4, High Density Multi-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to allow for multi-family residential development with densities of up to approximately 11 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single-family dwellings; Duplexes; Multi-family dwellings; Town houses; Group homes; Short-term rentals
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Nursing and retirement homes
<i>Size</i>	3,000 sq ft per dwelling unit
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 60 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 6 ft

R-MP, Manufactured Housing Park District

<i>Intent</i>	Established for manufactured housing developments at medium densities of up to approximately 6 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Manufactured housing parks; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	None
<i>Size</i>	6,000 sq ft per unit
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 25 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 50 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 8 ft

Walnut Grove Zoning Districts

R-1, Single-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended primarily for Single-family detached dwellings at densities of approximately 3 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single family detached dwellings (one dwelling per lot); Group homes; Modular homes; Duplexes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfast
<i>Size</i>	12,000 sq ft area
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 100 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 8 ft

R-2, Two-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to accommodate a variety of single family and two-family housing types at low to moderate densities of up to approximately 5 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single family detached dwellings; Duplexes; Cluster divisions; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfasts
<i>Size</i>	7,000 sq ft per dwelling unit
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 70 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 6 ft

R-3, Medium Density Multi-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to accommodate multi-family residential developments at up to approximately 8 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single family detached dwellings; Duplexes; Group homes; Three and four dwellings; Townhouses
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Bed and breakfasts
<i>Size</i>	4,000 sq ft per dwelling unit
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 40 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 60 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 6 ft

R-4, High Density Multi-Family Residence District

<i>Intent</i>	Intended to allow for multi-family residential development with densities of up to approximately 11 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Single family dwellings; Duplexes; Multi-family dwellings; Three and four family dwellings; Townhouses; Group homes; Bed and breakfasts
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	Nursing and retirement homes
<i>Size</i>	3,000 sq ft per dwelling unit
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 35 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 60 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 6 ft

R-MP, Manufactured Housing Park District

<i>Intent</i>	Established for manufactured housing developments at medium densities of up to approximately 6 dwelling units per acre.
<i>Permitted Uses (res.)</i>	Manufactured housing developments; Single manufactured housing units; Group homes
<i>Conditional Uses (res.)</i>	None
<i>Size</i>	6,000 sq ft per dwelling unit
<i>Height</i>	Maximum 25 ft
<i>Width</i>	Minimum 50 ft
<i>Setbacks (F,R,S)</i>	25 ft, 25 ft, 8 ft

6. Community Engagement

The Points Consulting team held two public meetings with Greene County, Missouri residents to gather insight on their knowledge and perspective of housing within the area. A total of 20 individuals attended the two meetings, and the attendees ranged from elected officials (state and local), planning and zoning representatives, teachers, real estate agents, and other engaged stakeholders. The overarching themes and feedback are broken down between The Groves to identify each communities' specific assets, challenges, and opportunities.

Key Themes

Key themes from community engagement include the following:

- **Housing Shortages and Development Challenges:** All three communities face significant housing shortages due to a lack of new construction, and deferred maintenance on existing homes. In some cases, obstacles like limited workforce or being landlocked by surrounding farmland are present as well.
- **Lack of Infrastructure and Community Planning:** Fair Grove in particular struggles with insufficient infrastructure, such as water and sewer systems, which limits development. The absence of a city administrator further complicates long-term planning for additional housing.
- **Aging Populations and Declining Attractiveness to Younger Residents:** Ash and Walnut Grove are experiencing population decline due to an inability to attract younger individuals and families. Limited housing options and a lack of amenities are main points of contention for younger families on this front.
- **Economic and Community Development Barriers:** All three communities encounter challenges in economic development. This is due to reliance on property taxes, vacant downtown areas, or the presence of poorly maintained rental properties controlled by a single landlord.
- **Desire for Community and Walkability:** Residents in Fair Grove and Ash Grove expressed a desire for a stronger sense of community, which is hindered by issues like the lack of a main thoroughfare in Fair Grove and vacant retail spaces in Ash Grove's downtown area.
- **Potential for Advancement Through Strategic Redevelopment:** Despite challenges, Ash Grove has opportunities for redevelopment. Such an opportunity may be the potential for downtown loft-style housing, which could attract younger and older generations alike while revitalizing the community.
- **Utilize Existing Tools to Tackle Vacant and Dilapidated Units:** Recent legislation passed at the state-level that allows for communities to utilize tools to help clear and acquire more problematic properties and put them back into productive use. These tools include a land bank, quiet title suit, and judicial foreclosure.

Fair Grove

Residents were not surprised by the number of single-family homes and suggested that is the nature of rural communities. However, Fair Grove does not have a main thoroughfare, meaning there is not an established downtown core or square where people can gather. This is likely due to the highway running through the community, which residents said makes it feel less communal as well as making it less walkable or accessible. Another challenge that contributes to Fair Grove's lack of a communal feel is that it's a community that relies on

people coming into town for work, likely at the school district, but they don't necessarily live there. Multiple residents mentioned peoples' desire to move to Fair Grove, but there is a significant lack of housing supply that cannot meet that existing demand.

The shortage of housing can be attributed to several factors, including the lack of new construction. Fair Grove operates with a volunteer mayor and Board of Aldermen and has no city administrator. This makes it difficult to maintain, let alone plan for, future economic and community development. As a small community, much of the town's revenue comes from property taxes, which primarily covers maintenance costs, leaving little room for future projects. These challenges prevent Fair Grove from developing the necessary infrastructure, such as water and sewer systems, to support new housing developments. Additionally, one resident noted that the time required to build housing in Fair Grove is significantly longer than in other communities, largely due to a shortage of available workforce.

For the existing homes on the market, residents pointed out that many potential starter homes are old, in disrepair, or lack the modern updates that younger families desire. The current economic climate also makes it difficult for individuals and families to purchase their first home, resulting in longer rental periods. However, the limited availability of affordable rental options in the community further complicates the situation for those wanting to move to Fair Grove.

Ash Grove

Ash Grove has begun to make progress in creating a healthier housing supply in the community. One resident mentioned there are plans for a new subdivision that will be home to 100 new single-family units. Additionally, residents noted that incremental development has been occurring organically with local residents purchasing and fixing up a few dilapidated homes at a time. This has been attributed to having a healthy supply of contractors thanks to the efforts of the mayor being very involved in making those connections.

Residents also mentioned there is a single landlord that owns a significant number of properties in the community, many of which are single-family rentals. Feedback suggested that these properties are not well maintained, and some are hazardous to both the occupant and surrounding neighbors, despite charging higher rents for the area. The city has started doing inspections to help improve the quality of these units. The inspections were said to have helped, but with the landlord owning so many units, it still remains a barrier to the community to tackle these issues.

Without a centralized downtown, Ash Grove has struggled to retain and attract businesses. Many of the downtown retail spaces are vacant due to a number of factors. Currently, there are no downtown living options. However, there are a number of buildings that have second-story living and could potentially offer loft-style housing should redevelopment occur. This living option has become very popular for younger and aging generations, as they prefer the walkability and access to amenities. With limited rental options, this opportunity could be a way for Ash Grove to expand its housing supply while also redeveloping a neighborhood community that can be used to attract future residents and businesses.

Among the local interviews PC conducted, one was with a representative of the City of Ash Grove, who outlined a number of initiatives and developments meant to address problems related to housing.

- A 123 lot single family homes development has broken ground in the northwest area of the city, which aims to attract younger couples and middle-aged families with prices in the \$250k-\$300k range.
- The city extended sewer and water across highway 160 to accommodate development.
- Water and Sewer are in place in preparation for the city to eventually annex another 110 acres.
- The city now allows modular homes, such as those made by Taylor Homes.
- Ash Grove has been updating amenities and has a new gas station being built.

Mr. Smith noted that Ash Grove has no large highway running through it like Fair Grove does. Hence, Ash Grove's growth will be more oriented towards that of a housing community. The mayor predicts that with Amazon 10 minutes away and other businesses looking to expand near Republic, living in Ash Grove will become more desirable. A local ministry program has brought in renters who tend to stay in town after they finish the program. Ash Grove's sewer system is ready to handle growth. It's only at 20-30% capacity. Interestingly, the water level in Ash Grove is low enough that there's no need for lift stations to be built, so developers' costs will likely be lower in Ash Grove compared to projects in most other nearby comparable cities where lift stations would be required.

To address the number of houses that have fallen into disrepair, the city has:

- added more rules to their codes and increased their code enforcement, including instituting a one-warning policy for yard cleanup and lawn mowing. Owners are cleaning things up more quickly now.
- boosted standards for rentals such that they are now the same as for owner-occupied units.
- facilitated the purchase of such houses by contractors, including the contractors working on the large 123 lot development. The city can get through the red tape efficiently, then the contractors rehab and sell those houses. They've been selling as soon as they are put on the market.
- been contacting owners of houses and farmers who are aging out, to fill the pipeline of homes targeted for rehab and land for development.
- instructed its meter readers to monitor for potential code violations or other problems as they are checking meters.
- seen every updated downtown loft and second story of mixed use properties get leased or bought.
- plans to purchase properties to expedite rehabs.
- prepared a list of potential properties to target using the newly passed Land Bank legislation.

The city is working with landscape engineers on designs to take advantage of a 40 acre donation the city received, which will help the city construct a trail meant to enhance cyclist and walker accessibility, connecting parks, the post office, and stores. Though much of the downtown area is owned and used by one company, other parts are seeing new businesses, and the city has a goal of making the downtown area ADA compliant soon. Still, finding sustainable uses for brick-and-mortar properties remains a challenge, as is improving flood mitigation systems. The city is actively seeking grants and similar assistance for that.

Walnut Grove

Residents of Walnut Grove stated that their community is aging, and they have been unable to attract younger individuals and families to the area, hence the significant population decline over the past decade. There was a consensus that housing options in Walnut Grove are severely limited for both multi-family and single-family, despite the majority of units being single-family homes. Many of the homes are older, and have experienced deferred maintenance, leaving many that become abandoned with no one tackling that issue of redevelopment. Although there may be some opportunities for infill development, newer residents don't appear to have the appetite or finances to support significant upgrades to an existing home.

Residents also expressed the challenge of being landlocked by surrounding generational farms, which limits their ability to plan for new housing developments. The increasing costs of housing and utilities in the area was also noted. Many knew of people that had moved to neighboring Polk County due to decreased utility costs and lower rent and purchase prices, which some attributed to a lack of building codes and inspections in the county.

Lastly, there is a lack of amenities to help attract future residents. Unoccupied businesses make it difficult to attract people when they're looking for activities for themselves and their families. Residents stated that they want to see slow, steady, and organic growth within their community, especially when it comes to commercial and retail businesses.

7. Land Banking Opportunities in Missouri

HB2062 Land Bank Legislation

Planning and revitalization in some municipalities and markets can be hindered by the long shadow of vacant, dilapidated, and underutilized properties. Such blighted parcels might present physical, practical, or legal obstacles to achieving specific planning or development goals. In addition to being eyesores, they can attract crime or become safety hazards. Municipalities have an interest in maximizing the productive use of lands within their boundaries, and these types of problem properties are also more likely to be tax-delinquent. In cases of well-situated but long vacant parcels that might otherwise pique a developer's interest, that developer's initial look under the hood can frequently reveal a mess of liens and unpaid back taxes that would ruin the viability of any imagined development. Developers will then move on and look for a more clear-cut prospect. A Land Bank can help a municipality turn more problem parcels into clear-cut prospects for development.

A Land Bank is a government entity that has been granted the authority to acquire properties, clear up any title issues associated with them, and make them ready to be put back into productive use. In the Summer of 2024 Missouri Governor Mike Parson signed HB2062, a law allowing more areas of the state to setup Land Banks or "Land Bank Agencies". It took effect on August 28, 2024.

What does HB2062 mean for Greene County? Planners will first need to get acquainted with the details of the law, but it should provide a new avenue and opportunity for enabling counties and municipalities to reimagine the best use of certain properties and move forward in achieving that vision. Counties with more than one million inhabitants can establish a Land Bank, or even "partially opt-in" by adopting to apply certain sections of the law to specific parcels that have had unpaid taxes going back two years. This equates to a fairly small number of counties in Missouri.

Nevertheless, there are options provided for Greene County and its municipalities via this legislation. Smaller counties and municipalities with over 1,500 residents not located within such counties can establish a Land Bank Agency, which may use some of the powers of a Land Bank to address specific areas or parcels without establishing a full or permanent Land Bank, and without the need to re-establish the agency for every new property it targets. Given the populations of The Groves, Ash Grove (1,517) and Fair Grove (1,586) meet the 1,500 threshold, according to Esri. Walnut Grove would have to rely on Greene County's Land Bank Agency (if the county establishes one) to address any of their local problem parcels by using those powers.

Land Banks or Agencies can be established via ordinance by the county or municipality's governing body. HB2062 describes the bank or agency's internal governance, staffing, and the process for appointing the seven-person board of directors. They will be able to acquire properties within their borders that are:

- tax-delinquent (for at least two years)
- abandoned
- vacant
- foreclosed

The acquisitions can be done by means of:

- purchase
- via the foreclosure process
- donation
- transfer

Once a property has been acquired, the entity will start the process of quieting the title by resolving any legal claims or disputes so that the title is clear. It could also enter into partnerships, joint ventures, or other relationships with developers, non-profits, other entities, or other Land Banks or Agencies. The Land Bank or Agency will hold the property until it can be repurposed or sold, and will have the power to enter into contracts for properties'

- management
- leasing
- development
- improvement
- demolition

After acquiring a property, the legislation includes a five-year deadline for the bank or agency to sell, put into productive use, or show significant progress towards selling or putting it to productive use, after which time a one-year extension may be granted by majority vote of the county or municipal governing body. Productive use examples in the legislation include turning the property into a community garden, public park, other open space, and demolition of all structures on the property. The property must be sold, cleared, or put to public use after 8 years. The Land Bank or Agency may also establish future use requirements (deed restrictions), to ensure that the property will be used for such community goals as affordable housing, or other uses that will benefit the community. Any uses in the deed restriction must be consistent with the local ordinances for zoning and planning.

The legislation includes checks on how the Land Bank can handle any profits. It will be able to reimburse itself for all expenses related to acquiring, managing, and disposing of the specific property, paying its salaries and budgeted expenses, and setting aside a reasonable amount to get started on acquisitions in the early portion of the next fiscal year, with any additional overage needing to be sent to the property's respective taxing authority in proportion to the amount of taxes levied. While the property is owned by the Land Bank, taxes won't be owed on it. After it is sold, the new owner must pay the taxes on it, and for the first three years, some of the property's taxes will go to the Land Bank in support of its operations. No one associated with the Board will be able to profit from the sale or management of a Land Bank property.

Funding for a Land Bank or Agency can come from any of the following sources:

- grants or gifts from political subdivisions, state or federal government, or other public or private sources
- payments and fees for services rendered
- selling its properties
- proceeds from insurance coverage of losses
- income from investments or other lawful assets and activities
- bonds

Bonds issued by the county or municipality that established the Land Bank or Agency will be secured solely by the bank or agency's revenues from sales, and not by the county's or municipality's taxing authority

Ideally, the outcomes of using Land Banks can include attracting investment, clearing away blighted homes, reducing crime, providing affordable housing, beautifying neighborhoods, and generating tax revenues. Those who oppose Land Banks cite cases like St. Louis's Land Bank, which acquired many more properties than it could sell. They also consider Land Banks to attract potential corruption. Some private sector observers think that Land Banks can end up holding properties too long because they focus too much on trying to find a developer to bring a huge proposal that will generate the largest tax revenue possible rather than quickly disposing of the properties and achieving smaller but more reliable victories. Land Banks have also been accused of holding properties as the market is moving in their favor simply to achieve capital gains upon sale. In HB 2062, there's a time limit beyond which a Land Bank can't continue to hold a property, and there is broad flexibility to contract with partners, both of which details will hopefully help tilt the implementation of any Land Bank or Agency more heavily towards success.

In the case of The Groves, there are some vacant downtown properties that, if revived, could set a foundation for momentum. In Ash Grove, the city has already been acquiring properties and facilitating private development without the existence of a Land Bank. In each of The Groves there are distressed properties on individual parcels that are located in infill territory and would be attractive targets for revitalization and productive redeployment. There are cases in other parts of the state and country where Land Banks have targeted neighborhoods with high percentages of tax delinquencies for acquisition, then bundled up multiple parcels in those neighborhoods and sold them to developers. If Greene County establishes a Land Bank Agency, then The Groves will need to work closely with the county to try to apply the agency's tools in ways that will best help each municipality achieve their medium-term or long-term goals, as the Land Bank process is not a quick fix, and attracting developers is not a guarantee.

Detractors to Land Banks cite cases where Land Banks acquired properties and then couldn't dispose of them, due to lack of developer interest, with the acquired land then remaining as a drain on the Land Bank's resources. They also cite cases where Land



PC on-site visit

Banks (St. Louis and Kansas City) refused reasonable offers from multiple developers, only to then sell to a developer the alderman recommended.³⁶ They criticize some Land Banks for holding on to properties for too long in anticipation of capturing more appreciation as the market rises, and for acquiring so many properties that the Land Bank ends up taking on significant debt.³⁷

There are protections for property owners in the legislation, with possible opportunities to cure their tax delinquencies before the Land Bank or Agency acquires the property. They also retain the right to challenge any acquisition in court.

³⁶ "Testimony: Senate Bill 750 and Expansion of the Land Bank Program." By David Stokes, Show-Me Institute. January 17, 2024. Testimony Before the Missouri Senate Emerging Issues Committee. <https://showmeinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/20240117-Land-Bank-Stokes.pdf> accessed September 25, 2024.

³⁷ "Land Banking: An Old Idea With a Poor Track Record", Mackinac Center for Public Policy, March 22, 2012. www.mackinac.org/1666 accessed September 25, 2024.

8. Literature Review

Greene County Land Use Plan 2018

The objectives of the county's 2018 Land Use Plan centered around protecting land that is being used in its optimal way, carefully considering the county's rural and agricultural character, and encouraging development that is innovative and protects cultural and natural resources. Unincorporated areas of the county are covered by this Land Use Plan, while incorporated municipalities rely on their own plans. The plan is designed to be consistent with local municipalities' respective comprehensive plans. It seeks to factor environmental impacts into consideration of various types of permits or rezoning requests, and boost residential and commercial density in currently urban areas. The county prioritizes preservation of historic sites and resources through joint designation (local, state, and national) in as many cases as possible. For example, these concepts are encouraged:

- agricultural lands remaining agricultural if it's still the best use
- urban developments closer to existing public water and sewer systems
- denser residential is near employment and commerce centers
- industrial uses with good access to transportation within urban areas
- adequate open space in new developments
- rural cluster developments

The 2018 LUP acknowledges the challenges and limitations inherent with Greene County's bucolic topography as it provides a vision for future development. With large areas of the county not connected to public water and sewer systems, the expense of onsite private wells and waste systems is one impediment to development. Larger challenges include flood-prone areas, sinkholes, steep slopes, variable or rugged terrain, water resources, and poor soils. Still, responsible development was encouraged and planned-for in the northwest area of the Springfield, MSA, and along US-60 southwest to Republic and beyond. The plan notes trends toward residential uses in the north-central and southeast areas of the county, and agricultural uses in the western, northwestern, and northeastern areas.

On the issue of rural development, Greene County's LUP acknowledges the demand for large lots in the suburban areas, and is careful not to restrict such development too much, for fear of pushing developmental sprawl into surrounding counties. The county designates the RR-1 zoning district for residential lots of three acres minimum, following patterns of existing uses of three and five acre lots. It also allows for agricultural land to potentially re-zoned to residential per the property owner's application request, on a case by case basis. All parcels under 10 acres and outside of any municipality's Urban Growth area were identified by the county, which recommended for development a certain 1,000 foot radius around those parcels that were already being used as large lot residential. That's the method by which the county created recommended "rural clusters" for development. Parcels over ten acres do not require Planning and Zoning review. Currently some large parcels are being divided into ten-acre tracts.

To stay competitive with other markets for real estate, the county recognizes a need to keep up with development and planning trends, such as ones that encourage density, efficiency, sustainability, and walkability. The county predicts a general increase in mixed use properties and developments. The Future Land Use Plan encourages pockets of Rural Commercial uses in the areas outside of Springfield, located mainly at large intersections, along with large

swaths of rural residential connecting to those pockets. Uses include light commercial such as convenience stores, storage, markets, or shops. Other uses encouraged are:

- Urban Residential: closer to the cities that surround Springfield, and within Springfield itself.
- Urban Commercial: connected to improved transportation and public water / sewer systems, also along certain corridors such as US-60.

Ash Grove's 2015 Comprehensive Plan

Flooding, flood plains, stormwater management, and sinkholes are given well-deserved attention in Ash Grove's most recent comprehensive plan. The large majority of sinkholes are located outside of the city limits, but most of them are within the city's Urban Growth Area, particularly in the areas east to southeast and south to southwest of the city. They present obvious obstacles to development and growth. But all of these related water issues will require extra careful planning when expansion, development, or annexation are considered. For example, the flood plain of Dry Branch stream overlaps the southern city limits, and development into the Urban Growth Area could exacerbate the sinkhole and stormwater problems as more impervious surfaces would be built, possibly redirecting run-off waters in unhelpful ways. To boot, several depression areas collect deep flood waters during heavy rains, given the current natural and man-made drainage systems in place even inside the city's boundaries. Engineering effective drainage and stormwater systems inside the Urban Growth area would require careful planning and lots of investment.

The plan notes that as of its 2015 date, Ash Grove's housing starts had not rebounded from the effects of the Great Recession as much as the larger towns in suburbs closer to Springfield rather than exurban areas like Ash Grove. Prior to the 2007 market shift, housing starts had been a sign of steady growth, with years of six, nine, and 10 starts, before dropping to one for 2008 - 2011, then zero for 2012 - 2015. The plan does not go into any detail regarding plans for housing in Ash Grove. The plan's snapshot of population, demographic, housing, and employment data includes the type of information we have provided in this report using more current date. The plan also celebrates the 1993 designation of its Main Street as a Historic District, and the zoning that protects it. It outlines a vision for continued planning, including stakeholder engagement, assessment and classification of the function of its streets, a comparison of community surveys, and development of a Main Street marketing plan.

2017 Fair Grove Comprehensive Plan

Fair Grove's 2017 study of its housing stock determined that more than 75% of its homes were built since 1975, and over 25% were built since 2000. SMCOG's 2017 housing condition survey found that 67% of Fair Groves houses were in good condition, 6% were rated as fair condition, and 3% as poor. 24% (155 properties) were vacant or undeveloped.

The plan encourages improving traffic access to its Main Street corridor, and alleviating traffic from Main Street itself. It seeks to reclassify some roads to bring them more into congruence with future land use. The plan encourages connecting more streets to each other and more bicycle and pedestrian paths to improve access. Specifically, it recommends accommodating planned multifamily developments by reclassifying Shelby Road as an arterial corridor to better connect to the Industrial Park. Construction or extension of a north-south road to connect to new subdivisions in the south.

Future Land Use in the plan encourages infill and redevelopment, and declares no need to extend the city's boundaries, a stance that is consistent with the community survey results. The plan does not address the lack of medical facilities in the community, a concern commonly expressed in the survey results. Priorities are updating floodplains, resolving issues with them, and protecting the community's predominant low density housing character. Its housing goals include increasing the variety of housing types, increasing housing density in appropriate places, supporting senior housing development, and enforcing buffers between uses. Specifically, it consolidates the Industrial Park between Shelby Road (at Sunset St.) and U.S. Highway 65, and seeks to designate some recently rezoned parcels at that location as R-4 for Multifamily use. In anticipation of one or more additional senior housing developments on South Orchard Boulevard across from City Hall, the plan seeks to reclassify a parcel adjacent to the predicted senior housing development to multifamily use, providing a larger area for such developers. The agricultural / open space area east of the school campus is targeted for single family development.

Walnut Grove Comprehensive Development Plan of 1994

Walnut Grove's most recent plan has likely outlived its 20-year projection horizon, but the overall themes of the plan are those that encourage steady support of the moderate growth, low density development the city had been experiencing since the 1970s. It seeks to maintain and protect the city's rural, small-town character.

The plan's Future Land Use aimed to guard residential areas against encroachment by non-residential uses, but encouraged flexible zoning so as to not deter development. It determined that the city's sewer system was not capable of handling the forecasted population increase from about 660 people in 1994 to 736 in 2014, which ended up being a nearly dead-on forecast. However, the city has lost about 149 people since its peak in 2016. The plan called for a major expansion to the sewer treatment facilities, as well as its water system (wells, storage, and distribution), which had at that time relied on only one well as its source of water.

Providing needed regulation of subdivision development was a priority of the plan. It sought to establish design standards for drainage, utilities, and construction of roads. It also recommended adding additional zoning districts, which would further delineate the residential and commercial districts' allowed uses. For example, "commercial" would be broken into "Neighborhood", "General", "Light Industrial", and "General Industrial".

Southwest Missouri Council of Governments Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2023 Update

This study cites a Housing Affordability Index score of 129% for the Southwest Missouri region, indicating that the median household in is 129% of that which would be required to buy the median priced home 2023 interest rates. By that metric alone, houses in SW Missouri are more affordable compared to national averages. However, the study also points out that it is not easy for middle to low-income households to find affordable housing in the region. The report's survey results show that 88% of households that moved within the previous 2 years reported that it was "somewhat difficult" or "difficult" to find a home in their price range that would fit their needs. SMCOG recommended that increasing the stock of affordable and workforce housing be a goal of southwestern Missouri municipalities.

Appendix A: Potential Residential Developments

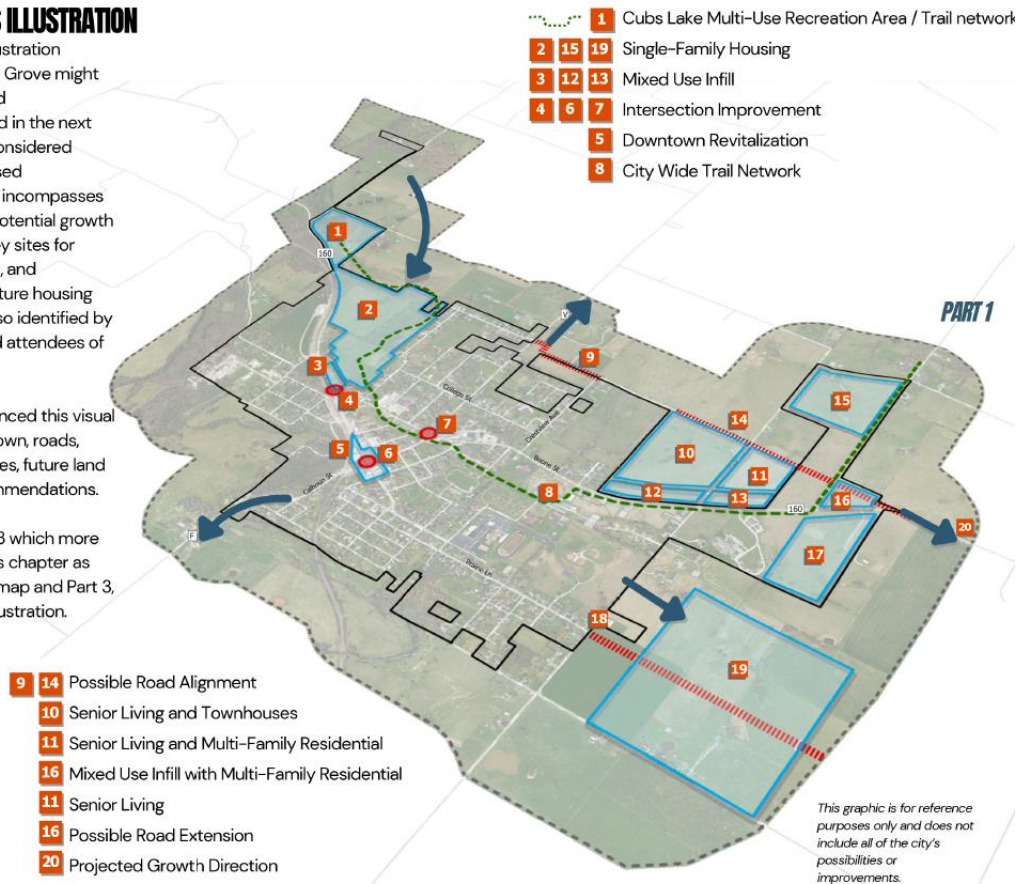
Figure A.1: Ash Grove Possibilities Map

MAPPING POSSIBILITIES ILLUSTRATION

The Mapping Possibilities Illustration graphic represents how Ash Grove might look after developments and improvements have occurred in the next 20 years. The Possibilities considered public feedback and proposed developments. The graphic encompasses the existing city limits and potential growth areas which incorporates key sites for revitalization, improvements, and opportunities for growth. Future housing types and locations were also identified by the planning committee and attendees of the open house.

The key factors which influenced this visual aid were the historic downtown, roads, trails, floodplains, existing uses, future land uses, and community recommendations.

This visualization is Part 1 of 3 which more detail is provided later in this chapter as Part 2, the Future Land Use map and Part 3, the Transportation Needs illustration.



Source: Ash Grove 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

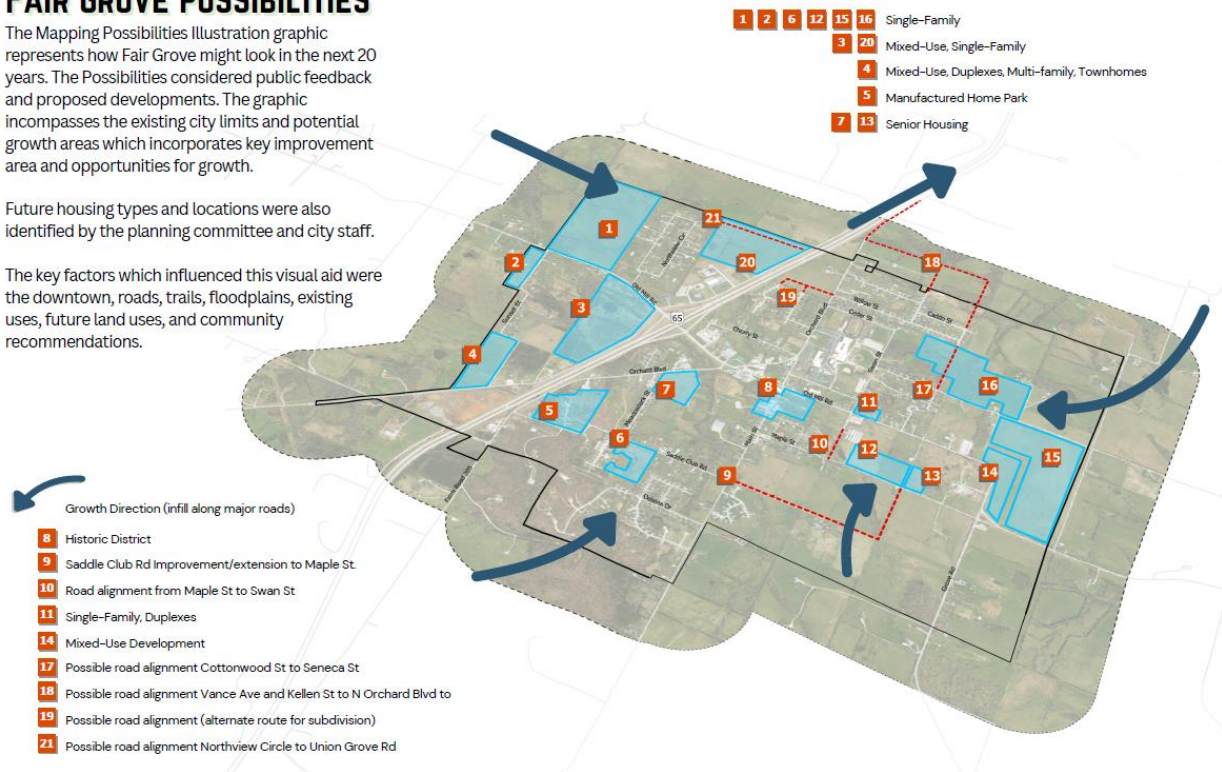
Figure A.2: Fair Grove Possibilities Map

FAIR GROVE POSSIBILITIES

The Mapping Possibilities Illustration graphic represents how Fair Grove might look in the next 20 years. The Possibilities considered public feedback and proposed developments. The graphic encompasses the existing city limits and potential growth areas which incorporates key improvement area and opportunities for growth.

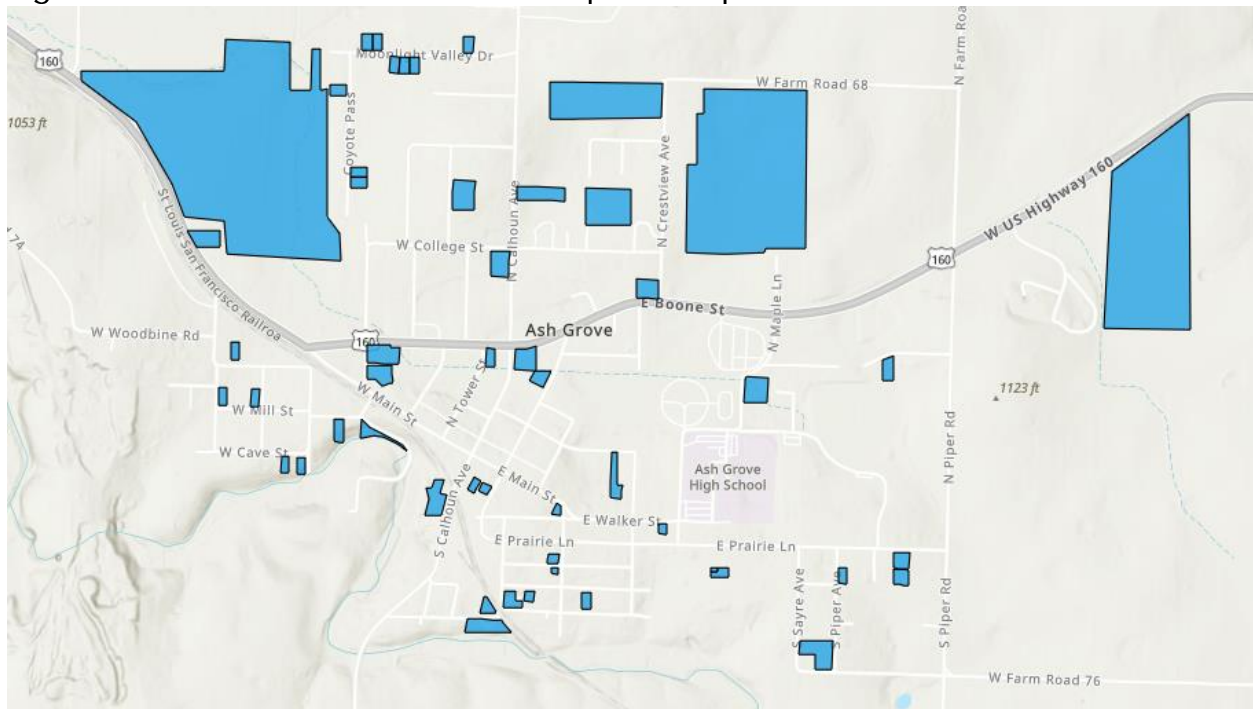
Future housing types and locations were also identified by the planning committee and city staff.

The key factors which influenced this visual aid were the downtown, roads, trails, floodplains, existing uses, future land uses, and community recommendations.



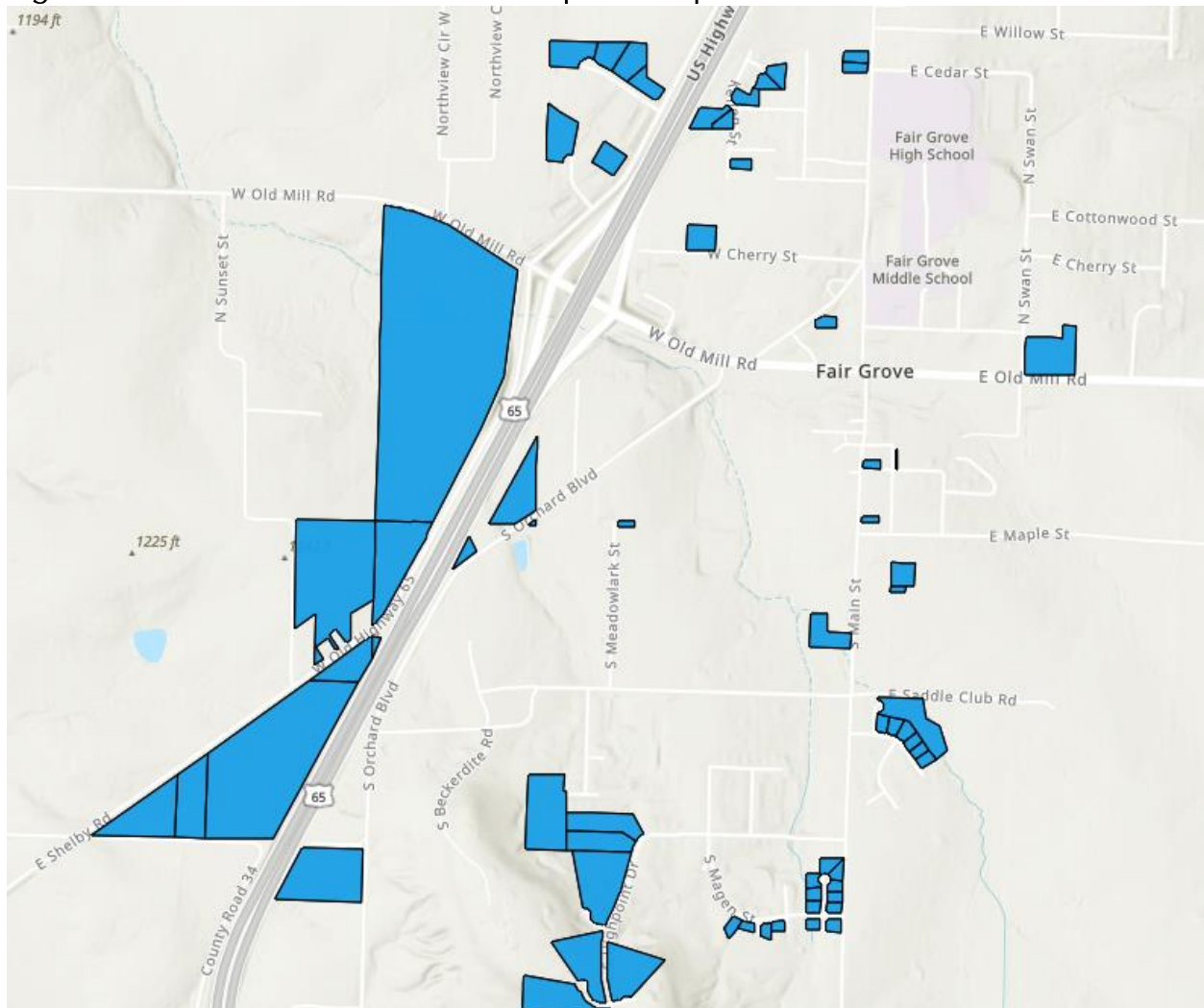
Source: Fair Grove 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Figure A.3: Ash Grove Vacant and Developable Properties



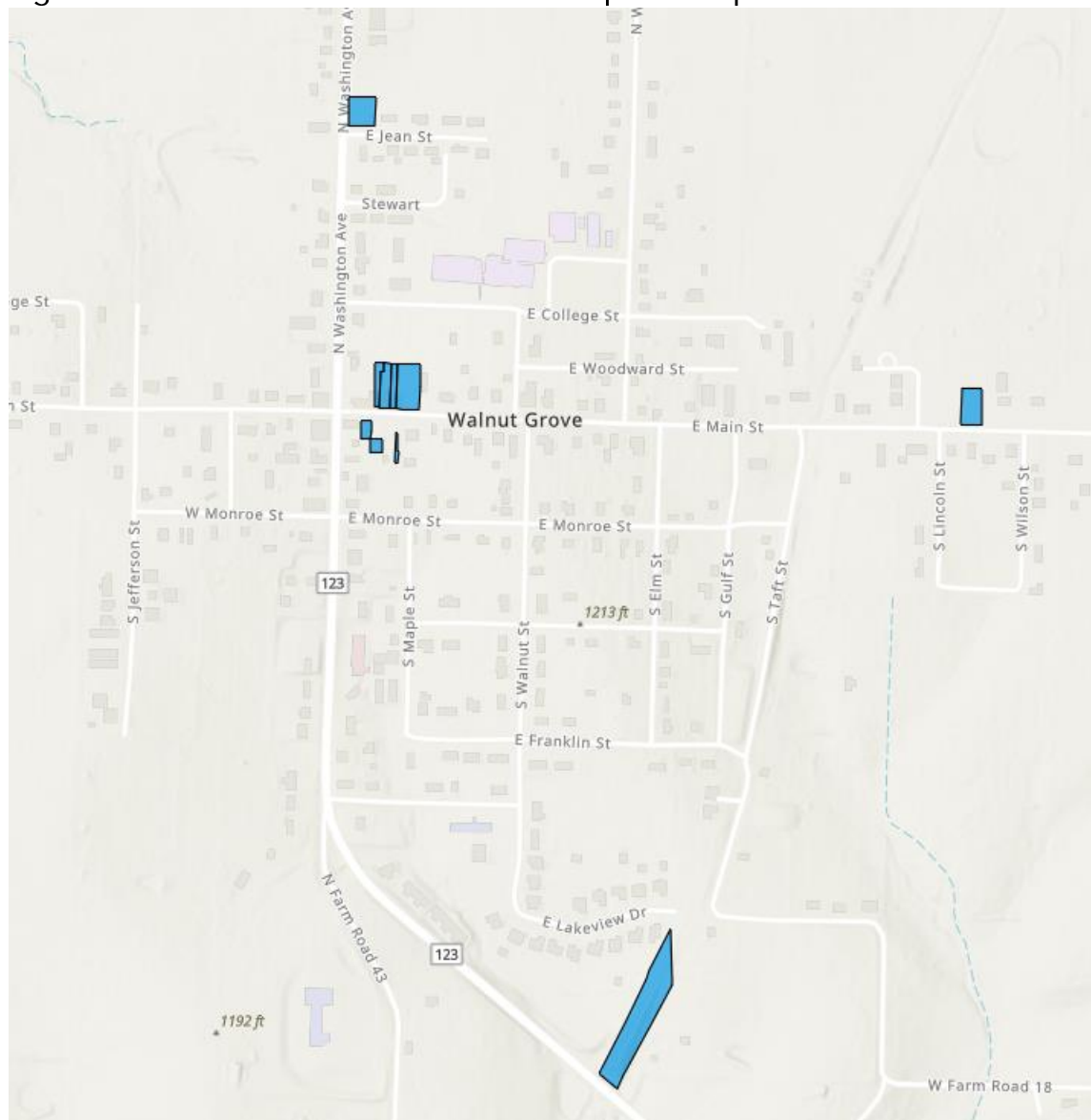
Source: SMCOG GIS files

Figure A.4: Fair Grove Vacant and Developable Properties



Source: SMCOG GIS files

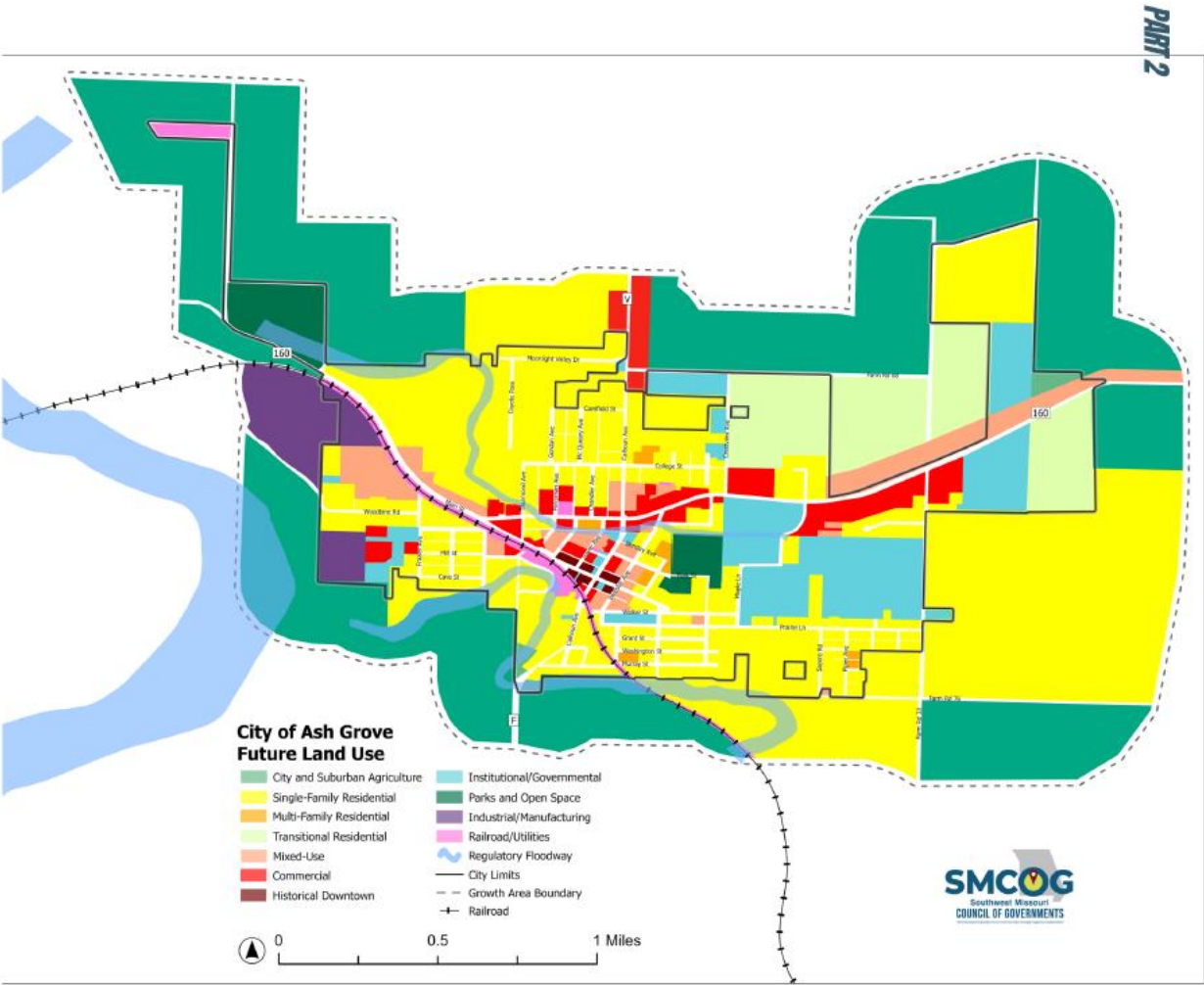
Figure A.5: Walnut Grove Vacant and Developable Properties³⁸



Source: SMCOG GIS files

³⁸ The southern-most parcel in this map has been identified as non-developable as the specific lot was created as a buffer between residents to the north and the wastewater treatment facility to the south.

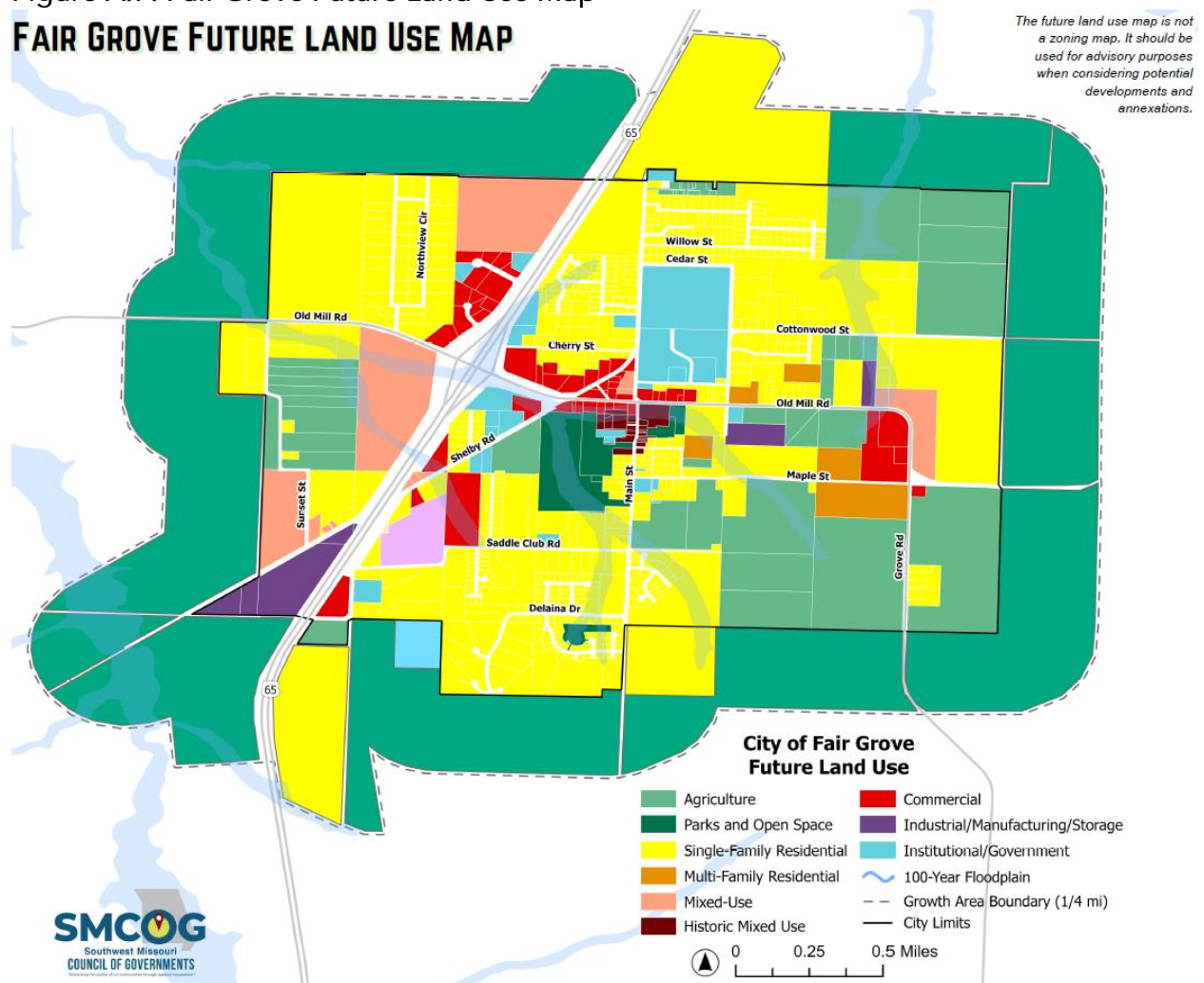
Figure A.6: Ash Grove Future Land Use Map



Source: Ash Grove 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Figure A.7: Fair Grove Future Land Use Map

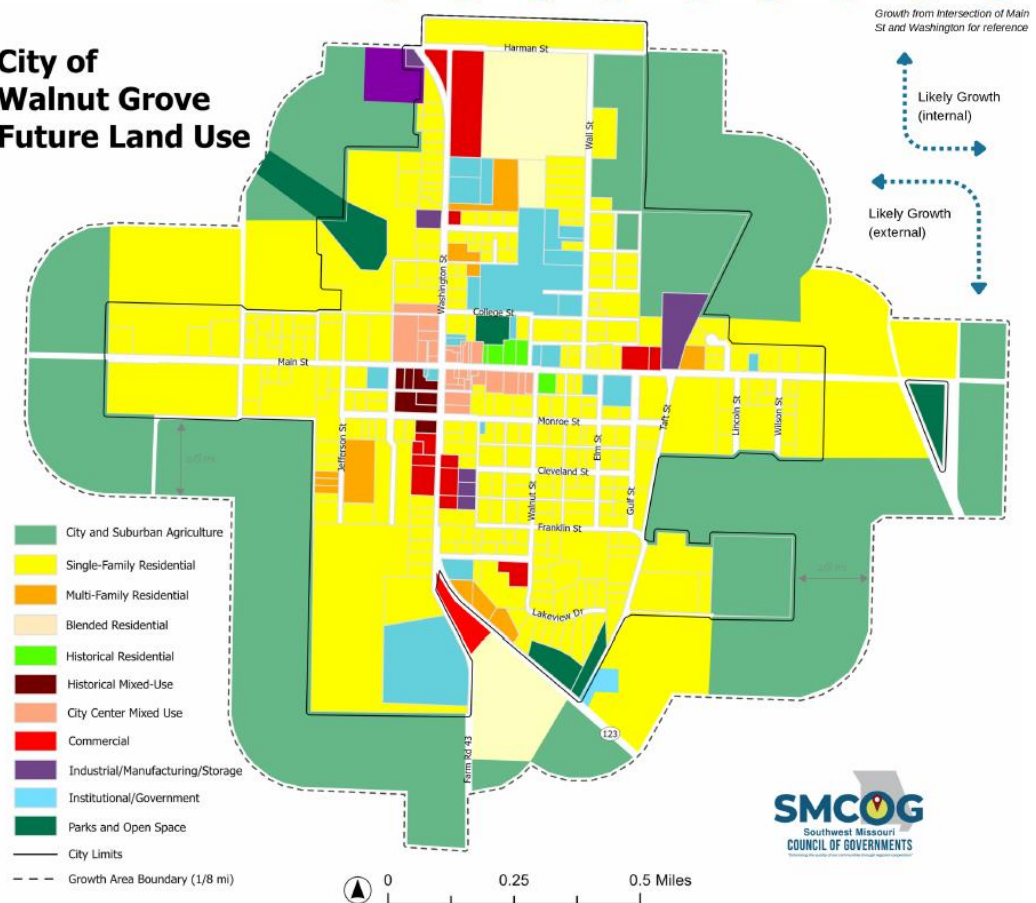
FAIR GROVE FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Source: Fair Grove 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update

Figure A.8: Walnut Grove Future Land Use Map
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

**City of
Walnut Grove
Future Land Use**



Source: Walnut Grove 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update