Impacts of Rental Housing on Historically Single-Family Neighborhoods
Dan Toland, Mayor
Scot Simpson, City Administrator

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District 3: David Reese, District 4: Christopher Gagne

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Impacts of Rental Housing in Historically Single-Family

Background:
In the Spring of 2011, a concerned resident contacted a City Councilor regarding single-family homes being converted into rental housing in his neighborhood near the campus of the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. In responding to this concern on the 2011 – 2013 Administrator’s Work Plan.

Methodology:
In order to determine the impact of rental housing on historically single-family neighborhoods, City staff developed a list of variables to analyze the impact rentals may be having on neighborhoods. The key variables are: property value, density, and police incidents. Other variables analyzed of this research include: historical housing conversion rate, rental housing mix, and realtors perceptions of housing market. The data for each of these variables was collected from various sources throughout the City.

Six neighborhoods were identified as impact areas to study. The neighborhoods are identified with red boxes around them on Map #1. These neighborhoods were selected based on their housing composition. Homes in these neighborhoods appeared at first glance to be have been built historically for single-family use. Additionally, neighborhoods were selected due to their proximity to the University campus.

An identification of a benchmark neighborhood was decided by City Staff to be a good tool for analysis of some variables of this research. Staff surveyed the City and found a neighborhood that by curb appeal and housing style emulates the neighborhoods being study located within close proximity of the University. Table 1 is a breakdown of average year built and square-footage our identified neighborhoods included and analyzed in this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Year Built</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Square Footage</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>2,311</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>1,602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:
No further action is required at this time based on the analysis and conclusions presented in this report. The current City of River Falls rental permit system and regulations are affectively mitigating and controlling any affects rentals may be having on historically single-family neighborhoods. This analysis should be revisited and updated regularly to ensure rentals are not causing neighborhoods to enter a self-reinforcing pattern of disinvestment and decline.
Key Findings:

Property Value

To determine if property value is affected by the presence of rental property in a neighborhood; staff analyzed assessed value for all properties within the benchmark and impact neighborhoods. Assessed value per square foot was calculated and used for the determination of affect. Table 2 displays these findings. Within a range of plus or minus $6.00 of the benchmark neighborhood average, most all of our properties have the same value per square foot. Additionally, when comparing our identified benchmark neighborhood to the impact neighborhood, one can see that in some neighborhoods in close proximity of the University Campus experience higher property value per square foot. This shows that in some instances, like in impact neighborhood three and six, rental properties are increase property value. Overall, it can be concluded that the impact of rentals in historically single family neighborhoods is not affecting property values.

Density

To analyze density, City Staff consulted the City of River Falls Comprehensive Plan for a determination of density tipping point. A tipping point for the City of River Falls is classified as any time in which the units in a neighborhood exceed the maximum number of units allowed in the study area based on the acres and zoning classification of the area. Within the City of River Falls Comprehensive Plan definitions have been established for each use classification (zoning) within the City for the units per gross acre allowable in each use designation. Table 3 displays our tipping point findings. Tipping point analysis revealed that, except for impact areas six, all neighborhoods fall into an acceptable density per their residential zoning classification.

Police Incidents

Information was gathered for overall alcohol incidents, property damage, and incident log reports. All data was collected from 2010 to October 2012, statistical results of this analysis is displayed in Table 4. Over the almost three year period of time, the impact areas experienced varied police incidents. Impact area #2 and #3 experienced the largest number of incidents when compared to other areas studied. The data above reveals that the presence of rentals on a neighborhood may have an increased impact on the number of police incidents the neighborhood experiences. Neighborhoods with greater housing units may, as the data reveals, experience on average a greater number of police incidents per housing unit and a higher number of police incidents per month. It will be important moving forward to monitor police incidents in rental neighborhoods to ensure that police incidents do not escalate to a level that threatens to push the neighborhood into a self-reinforcing pattern of disinvestment and decline.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Assessed Value in 2012:</td>
<td>$166,605</td>
<td>$172,465</td>
<td>$193,888</td>
<td>$200,907</td>
<td>$203,582</td>
<td>$202,776</td>
<td>$161,774</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Square Footage:</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>2,311</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>1,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Assessed Value per square foot (2012):</td>
<td>$94.59</td>
<td>$90.00</td>
<td>$84.00</td>
<td>$101.38</td>
<td>$90.39</td>
<td>$89.41</td>
<td>$101.00</td>
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Table 3

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Residential Zoning Mix</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
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<th>Impact #4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Acres in study area</td>
<td>5.7 acres</td>
<td>6.5 acres</td>
<td>4.5 acres</td>
<td>4.5 acres</td>
<td>4.4 acres</td>
<td>7.3 acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Units per gross acre guideline</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>2 to 4 units</td>
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<td>Gross units allowable in area</td>
<td>47 to 69 units</td>
<td>53 to 78 units</td>
<td>37 to 54 units</td>
<td>37 to 54 units</td>
<td>36 to 53 units</td>
<td>15 to 30 units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of housing units in area</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tipping point reached?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Table 4

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<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of Police Incidents per housing unit</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Number of Police Incidents per month</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.56</td>
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<td>History of Rental Properties in River Falls</td>
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<td>The University of Wisconsin—River Falls</td>
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Introduction: Background and Geography

In the spring of 2011, a concerned resident contacted a City Councilor regarding single-family homes being converted into rental housing in his neighborhood near the campus of the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. The resident was concerned about property deterioration, increased density, congestion, traffic, loss of homeowners and families, trash, maintenance of homes and yards, noise, and the loss of a safe family-friendly neighborhood. In responding to this concern, the City Councilor included the need for more research and analysis into rental properties affect on neighborhoods on the 2011 – 2013 Administrator’s Work Plan. This report responds to this concern and analyzes the impact of rental properties in historically single-family neighborhoods.

The City of River Falls is located 30 miles east of the Saint Paul/Minneapolis, Minnesota metropolitan area. With a population of 15,040 the City of River Falls offers scenic beauty, seasonal entertainment, and hometown charm to its residents. The City is home to the Kinnickinnic River, a Class I trout stream and is located in close proximity to Willow River State Park and the St. Croix River. The University of Wisconsin-River Falls and the Chippewa Valley Technical College both call the City of River Falls home and operate campuses in the community. The City of River Falls is a full-service City offering residents a diverse set of amenities including, but not limited to: year-round recreation programs; a Municipal Utility providing electric, water, and wastewater services; volunteer fire and ambulance service; and active community and economic development activities. The City offers a growing industrial park and a historic vibrant downtown area. The City is 6.56 square miles, and surrounded by the Towns of Troy, Kinnickinnic, River Falls, and Clifton.

The City of River Falls has experienced a tremendous amount of growth since 1990. In 1990, the City’s population was 10,610. By 2000 the population was 12,560, an increase of over 18%. With its current population of over 15,000 residents, the City has grown over 43% since 1990. Residential housing development and new home building has experienced growth in recent years. In 2010, 52 new homes were built and in 2011, 41 new homes were built. In 2012, as of November, the City has issued 120 residential building permits, 25 of those for single-family construction. The City of River Falls is projected to continue this growth pattern into the foreseeable future.
According to the US Census Bureau, since the 1970s when the City of River Falls first instituted a rental licensing ordinance and program, the City has experienced increases in the number of residents reporting to be living in a rental property. Table 1 displays numbers reported to the Census Bureau by residents of the City of River Falls. As Table 1 demonstrates, the City has experienced a consistent growth in the number of residents reporting to be living in rental properties. With this reported increase, it is important for the City to monitor and review rental property ordinance and operating procedures to ensure they are best serving our community. It is important to ensure, especially in a City with a University, that rental properties are not having an adverse effect on our neighborhoods safety and wellness. This technical report is intended to report on the affect, if any, existing rentals are having on our community. This report focuses on rental housing in neighborhoods in which the housing was originally built as single-family dwellings. Over the years, the neighborhoods within this study have experienced some conversion of dwellings from a traditional single-family dwelling to a rental dwelling.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Housing</th>
<th>Owner Occupied</th>
<th>Rental Occupied</th>
<th>Percent rental</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1411</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>1075</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2694</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>1214</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3525</td>
<td>1747</td>
<td>1679</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4345</td>
<td>2177</td>
<td>2092</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5499</td>
<td>2839</td>
<td>2311</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**History of Rental Properties in River Falls:**

On September 25th, 1972 the City of River Falls Common Council passed ordinance number 14.04. This ordinance established minimum standard governing for the condition and maintenance of dwellings within the City that produced rental income. This was the first ordinance passed by the Common Council that governed rental properties within the City. From 1960 to 1970 the City grew 48.5% (2,363) and the University of Wisconsin – River Falls grew 35% (2,711) in population. Due to this rapid growth, the need for a unified system for rental property operation and enforcement was need to ensure the health and safety of occupants and the public.

The Ordinance included provisions that established minimum standards governing physical attributes and conditions essential to make dwellings safe, fixed certain responsibilities of owners and occupants of dwellings, and established the responsibilities of the Superintendent of Inspection and the Health Officer of the City of River Falls for enforcement of the ordinance. In addition, Ordinance 14.04 established the rental permit system for the City. The ordinance states: “No person shall operate a dwelling until producing rental income unless he holds a valid license by the Officer of the City Clerk... The operator shall apply to the Officer of the Superintendent of Inspection for an annual license”. In order to obtain a rental license, the rental dwelling needed an annual inspection concluding that the dwelling was found to be in proper condition to be operated as a rental.
Starting 1972, rental properties within the City were classified into three classes. Class A includes properties that are found to substantially meet the current building codes. Class B includes properties that met the building code at the time they were built, but currently do not meet building code standards. Finally, Class C includes rental properties in a standard condition and thus is not licensable as rental within the City of River Falls. Initially Class A rentals were granted a rental license for a 3-year period and Class B were granted a rental license for a 1-year period.

Overtime, the City amended and changed practices for granting rental licenses. These changes have included increases in the fees to obtain a rental license. In 1972, the rental license fee was established at $10 for each class of rental properties. In 1997, the fee was set at $30 for Class B rentals and $45 for Class A rentals. Eight years later, in 2005, the City Council increased the rental license fee to $80 for all rental regardless of Class. During this entire timeframe rental were being inspected regularly as a condition of being granted a license for rental.

In 2010, after nearly 38 years of no substantial changes to the rental ordinance, the City Council repealed and recreated the Municipal Code related to rental properties. It was decided after several months of review and analysis to recreate the practices of the City. During this review it was found that approximately 728 rental units were inspected each year, of these 728 inspections 98% of these properties were being licensed as a Class A dwelling unit, meaning the units and dwelling was complying with current State and City ordinances. It was also discovered that the City only received approximately 133 rental complaints a year from residents regarding rental properties.

Due to the costly nature of physically inspecting over 700 rental units each year, and guided by the fact that 98% of rentals comply with current State and City ordinance, on July 13th, 2010 the City Council recreated the practices and handlings of rentals within the City of River Falls. The new system switched from a rental property license program to a rental unit permit system. Property owners wishing to receive rental income from their housing units must hold a valid rental permit issued by the City. Rental unit permits are good for a term on one year. Yearly inspection of rental units and properties was also suspended in these changes. Inspections only occur, under the new system, if the City receives a complaint about a rental unit or property. The new system also removed the rental classification system. All rental unit permits fees were set at $10 per unit.

Since 2010, no substantial changes have been made to the City of River Falls rental permit system. The City issues rental unit permits yearly to property owners, and continues to only inspect rental properties on a complaint basis.
Trends in Rental Ordinance:
How are other communities dealing with Rental Properties?

Restrict the percentage of rentals in a given block or areas (10-30%)

The City of Winona, Minnesota, home of Winona State University has placed restrictions on the percentage of rentals per city block that are designated as low density blocks. Low density blocks are blocks with the zoning classification of R-R (rural residential district), R-S (residential suburban district), R-1 (one-family residence district), R-1.5 (one to four-family, medium density), and R-2 (one to four-family residence district). In 2005, Winona enacted a rule limiting rental licenses to no more than 30 percent of properties on a block. This rule was established to protect neighborhoods directly around the University from being completely turned into rental units. Similar to the City of Winona, the City of West St. Paul, Minnesota recently established a rental license cap permitting no more than 10% of home on a block to be rental.

Require a buffer between rentals

The City of Saint Paul, MN Planning Commission conducted a Student Housing Zoning Study from late 2011 to May 2012. In August of 2011, the Saint Paul City Council enacted a one-year moratorium on the conversion of owner-occupied homes to rental in portions of the City. This moratorium was intended to temporarily prohibit the proliferation of new college/university student rental housing in the neighborhoods predominantly single-family and duplex housing. Accompanying the moratorium, the City Council requested that the Planning Commission study the issue and make recommendations regarding the regulation of student housing within the area of the moratorium. The results of the report led the City Council to approve the institution of a Student Housing Neighborhood Impact Overlay District that defines and requires a 150 foot distance between student dwellings.

Establish an overlay district or districts that may use one or a combination of restrictions

The City of East Lansing, Michigan, home of Michigan State University, is an example of a municipality that has established Residential Rental Restriction Overlay Districts. For property owners with properties located within R-1, R-2, and RM-8 (flexible zoning classification which permits a variety of housing at different densities and limited office use) residential zoning classifications, these owners are permitted to “petition city council to establish an overlay district, and district use regulations in their residential neighborhood, which would prohibit or restrict the rental uses of one-family dwelling within the neighborhood”. The zoning regulation establishes three levels of restriction which operates to preserve the attractiveness, desirability, and privacy of residential neighborhood. East Lansing states in their zoning code, that this restriction or flat propitiation of rental properties within these overlay districts is intended to have three objectives: (1) to protect the privacy of residents and to minimize noise, congestion, and nuisance impacts by regulating the types of rental properties, (2) to maintain an attractive community appearance and to provide a desirable living environment for residents by preserving the owner occupied character of the neighborhood, and (3) to prevent excessive traffic and parking problems in the neighborhood. Overlay districts are used throughout the country, municipalities using this approach include: Greensburg, Pennsylvania; Duluth, Minnesota; Newark, Delaware; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Austin, Texas; and Macomb, Illinois.
Require a conditional use permit for rentals

In addition to the City of River Falls current and past rental license and permit programs, other municipalities have enacted similar permitting approaches. The City of Gainesville, Florida home of the University of Florida employs a point system which can lead to revocation of the rental license for problem properties. The City of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania home of Lehigh University requires both tenants and landlords to sign supplemental agreements regarding conduct and property upkeep.

The University of Wisconsin – River Falls:

The River Falls community is home to the University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF), an institution of post-secondary higher education. The University was founded in 1874 as the fourth Normal School in Wisconsin and the first in the northwestern part of the state. River Falls Normal School experienced a slow and steady growth in enrollment until 1912, when enrollment increased substantially with the establishment of the agricultural education department. In 1926, the University developed a four-year curriculum and a year later in 1927 the University was awarded the designation as a state teachers’ college. In 1951, the University added their liberal arts programs. UWRF experience rapid enrollment growth in the 1960s to early 1970s, increasing headcount from 1,500 in 1960 to 4,500 by 1975. Today, UWRF main campus is comprised of 226 acres, over 12 academic buildings, and 11 residential halls. The University offers students over 40 academic majors.

Over the past decade student enrollment has grown significantly at the University. Over the past 10 years, enrollment has grown by over 1,000 students. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the total number of students enrolled at the University reached 6,700. Enrollment is expected to grow by another 1,000 students by 2019. The University attributes this projection of growth to the growth of the St. Croix Valley and the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area. This growth in students is expected to be concentrated on non-traditional students. The University expects that the increase in traditional undergraduate students will be limited. This projection is due to limited capacity for an increase in traditional undergraduate students. The University given their current scheduling practices and lack of large classroom place is very close to capacity for traditional undergraduate enrollment.
Not all students attending the University reside within the River Falls community. Of the 6,700 students attending the University in 2012-2013, 1,939 students are commuter students. Commuter students are students who are not physically living in the community, and therefore do not place an added demand for rental housing. 2,260 students are living on campus during 2012-2013 academic year leaving approximately 2,500 students of the University living within the River Falls community. 2,500 University students are contributing to the demand for rental housing. In order to help address this demand for housing, the University has established a policy to attempt to mitigate this felt demand. The University requires that all freshman and sophomore students live on-campus. This helps alleviate some of the demand for off-campus housing placed on the community.

Currently, the University has a capacity in housing stock to accommodate 2,730 students on-campus. Since, 2000 there has been an increase in housing stock at the University. In 2000, the University had the capacity to house 2,250 students, this grew to 2,490 in 2005, and finally in 2012 with the opening of Jesse H. Ames Suites, the University can house 2,730 students on campus. Over the past decade during growth in the student population has been experienced, the University has responded to this increase in population by investing in the development of new on-campus housing. The University offers a diversity of housing options to their students. First, traditional dorm room style halls are available. The University offers cluster suites, meaning students live in pods that are made up of 3 clusters of suite-style rooms. Finally, the University housing stock includes suites. These suites, unlike cluster suites, are comprised of four single bedrooms, a living room, a dining area/kitchenette, and a bathroom.

The UW-River Falls perspective in is important include in this report. The University has demonstrated their commitment to providing students adequate housing options through their continued investment and growth in housing stock, diversity in housing options available to students, and the implementation of University policy to help curb the demand for rental housing within the City by requiring freshman and sophomore to live on-campus. It is widely accepted knowledge that the sheer presence of a University in a community will increase the demand for rental housing for the community. It is essential to point out and demonstrate that UW-River Falls is attempting to reduce some of this demand through their policy actions.

University of Wisconsin—River Falls Housing floor plans:
Methodology:

In order to determine the impact of rental housing on historically single-family neighborhoods, City staff developed a list of variables to analyze the impact rentals may be having on neighborhoods. The key variables are: property value, density, and police incidents. Other variables analyzed for this research include: historical housing conversion rate, rental housing mix, and realtors perceptions on housing market. The data for each of these variables was collected from various sources throughout the City. Data was compiled and analyzed to produce the findings presented in the next section of this report.

In initial analysis for this report, City Staff identified three study areas within the City of River Falls. These areas were identified based on their proximity to the University Campus and their housing composition. Study Area 1 was identified as the area north of the University Campus located east of main street and north of Cascade Avenue. Study Area 2 is west and adjacent to campus, located west of main and south of Lake George. Study Area 3 was identified as the area north-west of campus located west of the Kinni River and North of Glen Park (Appendix #1). The key findings of the study were presented to the City of River Falls Plan Commission on September 4th, 2012. The key findings presented included:

- Rental properties averaged 15% in the three R-1 Single Family Zones studied
- A majority of single-family homes converted into rentals are located in R-2 and R-3 Multi-family Zones
- In the last ten year there has been minimal increases in the number of single-family homes converted to rental (70), this is 13% of the total number of new single-family homes built
- Very few complaints have been reported regarding conversion of single family homes into rentals
- These are ordinances that exist to manage complaints regarding rental properties

Initial analysis of these areas resulted in the conclusion that no further action be taken on this issue. Plan Commission members and City Administration asked further questions of this research at the meeting. The meeting resulted in the need for some further analysis and the writing of a technical report to effectively present this research and findings.
Responding to presented questions at the Plan Commission meeting and the need for a technical report, City Staff decided to further continue the breakdown Study Area’s into neighborhood units of analysis. This further break down is intended to provide more information and analysis of the impact of rental housing on historically single-family neighborhoods. Additionally, the further breakdown is intended to allow for this report and analysis to be updated periodically to track and identify potential impacts and problems. Six neighborhoods were identified as impact areas to study. The neighborhoods are identified with red boxes around them on Map #1. Appendix #2 provides a detailed map for every study area included in this study. These neighborhoods were selected based on their housing composition. Homes in these neighborhoods appeared at first glance to have been built historically for single-family use. Additionally, neighborhoods were selected due to their proximity to the University campus. One can see from the map of selected neighborhoods that the neighborhoods progress out from Cascade Avenue to Division Street.

An identification of a benchmark neighborhood was decided by City Staff to be a good tool for analysis of some variables of this research. In order to determine an appropriate benchmark neighborhood, Staff surveyed the City and found a neighborhood that by curb appeal and housing style emulates the neighborhoods being study located within close proximity of the University. The benchmark neighborhood identified for comparison appears, without further analysis, to have the same housing composition and stock as our study neighborhoods. Upon further analysis of year built and square-footage, the identified benchmark neighborhood was determined to be a good comparison neighborhood to use in this analysis.

Table 2 is a breakdown of average year built and square-footage our identified neighborhoods included and analyzed in the remainder of this report. Included in Table 1 is our benchmark neighborhood and impact neighborhoods.

Table 2:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Year Built</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Square Footage</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>2,311</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>1,602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings:

Property Value

To determine if property value is affected by the presence of rental property in a neighborhood; the assessed value for all properties within the benchmark and impact neighborhoods was collected. Once this data was collected, the assessed value was divided by the square footage of the home. These numbers were averaged to get an accurate picture for the entire neighborhood. The resulting assessed value per square foot was used for comparison and the determination of affect. Table 3 displays these findings.

Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Assessed Value in 2012:</td>
<td>$166,605</td>
<td>$172,465</td>
<td>$193,888</td>
<td>$200,907</td>
<td>$203,582</td>
<td>$202,776</td>
<td>$161,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Square Footage:</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>2,311</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>2,268</td>
<td>1,602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Assessed Value per square foot (2012):</td>
<td>$94.59</td>
<td>$90.00</td>
<td>$84.00</td>
<td>$101.38</td>
<td>$90.39</td>
<td>$89.41</td>
<td>$101.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one can see from Table 3, the presence of rental properties in our analysis does not pose a significant impact on property values. Within a range of plus or minus $6.00 of the benchmark neighborhood average, most all of our properties have the same value per square foot. Additionally, when comparing our identified benchmark neighborhood to the impact neighborhoods, one can see that some neighborhoods within close proximity of the University Campus experience higher property value per square foot. This shows that in some instances, like in impact neighborhood three and six, rental properties are increasing property value. Overall, it can be concluded that the impact of rentals in historically single family neighborhoods is not affecting property values.

Density

To analyze density in our neighborhoods, City Staff consulted the City of River Falls Comprehensive Plan for the determination of a density tipping point. Tipping point analysis has been utilized in other study’s conducted around the impact of rentals. The tipping point is generally defined as the point in which conversion of owner-occupied housing to rental housing occurs at levels that threaten to push the neighborhood into a self-reinforcing pattern of disinvestment and decline. Within the City of River Falls Comprehensive Plan definitions have been established for each use classification (zone) within the City. These definitions establish the units per gross acre allowable in each use designation. With our benchmark and impact neighborhood study areas, the following zoning classifications are represented: Low Density Residential (R1), and High Density Residential (R3). Below (Table 4) displays the units per gross acre guideline established in the Comprehensive Plan for each classification present our identified study neighborhoods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Classification:</th>
<th>Units per Gross Acre guideline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential (R1)</td>
<td>2 to 4 units per gross acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential (R3)</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units per gross acre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With these classification guidelines identified and established as acceptable definitions for the purpose of determining future use and growth strategies for the City, it was decided that the use of these definitions in the this study for tipping point analysis is appropriate. A tipping point for the City of River Falls is classified as any time in which the units in a neighborhood exceed the maximum number of units allowed in the study area based on the acres and zoning classification of the area. Table 5 displays our tipping point findings.

Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Zoning Mix</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>R3</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres in study area</td>
<td>5.7 acres</td>
<td>6.5 acres</td>
<td>4.5 acres</td>
<td>4.5 acres</td>
<td>4.4 acres</td>
<td>7.3 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units per gross acre guideline</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>8.1 to 12 units</td>
<td>2 to 4 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross units allowable in area</td>
<td>47 to 69 units</td>
<td>53 to 78 units</td>
<td>37 to 54 units</td>
<td>37 to 54 units</td>
<td>36 to 53 units</td>
<td>15 to 30 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of housing units in area</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipping point reached?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tipping point analysis reveals that, except for impact areas six, all neighborhoods fall into an acceptable unit density per their residential zoning classification. Density analyses of neighborhoods included in this study accurately reveal that density definitions as established in the River Falls Comprehensive Plan are being followed. This City is effectively following zoning requirements and is not currently experiencing excess density. Density is accurately reflecting the residential zoning established in these neighborhoods.

Police Incidents

For analysis of police incidents in the study areas it was decided to look at three different categories of incidents. Information was gathered for overall alcohol incidents, property damage, and incident log reports. Alcohol and property damage information was collected due to the fact that it is a generally accepted perception that an increase in rental property could result in an increase of alcohol incidents and property damage from the transient nature of renters. Incident log report data is a good indicator of the overall general police activity in an area; these incident logs include reports of loud noise complaints. City Staff feel police records for these three above stated categories provide the City with a good indicator for this analysis of the general police activity of our selected areas. All data was collected from 2010 to October 2012.
Table 6: Raw Police Incident Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Incidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage to Property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log Reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Police Incidents (2010 to October 2012)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Police Incident Statistical Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Impact #1</th>
<th>Impact #2</th>
<th>Impact #3</th>
<th>Impact #4</th>
<th>Impact #5</th>
<th>Impact #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of housing units</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of Police Incidents per housing unit</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Number of Police Incidents per month</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over the almost three year period of time, the impact areas experienced varied police incidents. Impact area number two and three experienced the largest number of incidents when compared to other areas studied. The benchmark neighborhood was added to this area of the study to provide some comparison for the data collected. It is important to point out the general geography differences between our benchmark and impact neighborhoods. The impact neighborhoods are located in a closer proximity to the downtown area of the City. The downtown area is comprised of many bar and restaurant establishments which generally increases the foot traffic and could impact the general nuisance of these neighborhoods.

One can see from the statistical information provided in Table #7, that when compared to our benchmark we get mixed results for overall police incidents. The data above reveals that the presence of rentals on a neighborhood may have an increased impact on the number of police incidents the neighborhood experiences. Neighborhoods with greater housing units may, as the data reveals, experience on average a greater number of police incidents per housing unit and a higher number of police incidents per month. Rental housing in a historically single-family neighborhood has a slight impact on the number of police incidents of a neighborhood. It will be important moving forward to monitor police incidents in rental neighborhoods to ensure that police incidents do not escalate to a level that threatens to push the neighborhood into a self-reinforcing pattern of disinvestment and decline. Continued monitoring of this variable will be important moving forward.

**Other Findings:**

**Other Rental Housing Data:**

*Conversion Rate from Single Family to Rental Property:*

Historical data of Single-Family Homes that are operated as rental units is displayed in Table #8. This data is from our City records of permits issued to property owners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Single-Family Homes operated as rentals</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>0.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>0.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>0.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The growth in single-family homes being operated as rentals has experienced minimal growth of less than 1% per year since 2002. Since 2002, an additional 70 single family homes have been converted into rentals, an overall increase of 57 percent. The conversion of single-family homes to rental properties will be important to continue monitoring as the housing market continues to recover from its bust in 2007. As discovered and discussed below, realtors are seeing more and more single family homes being converted into rental properties in an effort to avoid foreclosure.

**Rental Housing Mix:**

The below data in Table #9, was collected from the City’s reports for rental permits issued since 2000. The data describes the rental housing mix for the City and then percentage each category of rental permit comprises of the whole rental housing mix. This information does not include the permits issued for apartment complexes within the City.

**Table 9:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Homes</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplexes</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin homes</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condos</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total # of rentals</strong></td>
<td>518</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 2000, the rental property category that has been the largest increase in permit issuance is condo rentals. Condos permit issuance has grown over 10% since 2000. All other rental categories have experienced modest growth over the timeframe. One rental category, duplexes, has experienced a decrease in rental permit issuance over the timeframe.

**Rental properties as a percentage of total housing units:**

In 2011, the City of River Falls had a total of 5,717 housing units. Table 10 displays the percentage of total housing units within the City that were permitted for rental. The below information does not include permits issued for apartment complexes. Rental units only account for roughly 7.3% of total housing units within the City of River Falls.

**Table 10:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Rental Units (2011)</th>
<th>Percent of total housing units within City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Homes</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplexes</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin homes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhomes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condos</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Rental units</strong></td>
<td>714</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to gain insight into what is happening in the River Falls real estate market in regards to the perception of rental properties, City Staff conducted interviews five local realtors. These interviews were conducted with the goal to gain insight directly from real estate professionals on rental properties located in the City of River Falls. Of the agents questioned, when asked over the past 5-10 years, the percentage of properties they sold have been converted into rental properties, all five realtors stated that less than 5% of homes were converted into rentals. One realtor stated that not many are converted due to UWRF’s housing policies and the R1 zoning occupancy limit of 4 unrelated persons in a unit reduces the demand to turn homes into rentals.

When asked if they have experienced a demand from buyers to purchase single family home for the purpose of being converted into rentals after purchase, the realtors stated that they are not currently experiencing this demand. One realtor stated that they felt that this was due to the feeling that most buyers express that the rental market within the City is currently saturated with rentals. In responding to this question, one realtor stated that this could change in the future due to increased room and board rates at the University, the realtor stated that the City could experience an increase in parents purchasing homes for their student to live in while attending school. Additionally, in response to this question, three of our five realtors stated that they have seen an increase in single-family homes being converted into rentals in the past 5 years to try and avoid foreclosure.

City Staff asked realtors if they found it more difficult to sell a single family home when a rental property is located next door, all but one realtor stated that it is not a factor whether or not the home is a rental, but rather the condition of the property next door to the house for sale. One realtor stated that they do experience difficulty in selling single family homes located next to a rental, especially if the rental is occupied by college students. This realtor stated that they experience a 15% reduction in value of the home being sold next to a college rental. Overall, the realtors stated that the condition of neighborhood properties matter in the value of the home for sale, not necessarily if the home is located among rental properties.

The survey of local realtors was conducted with the goal of providing more insight into the market and affects rental homes have of the local housing market. Our five realtors provided insight and came to the same general conclusions. Less than 5% of realtors sold homes in the last five years have been converted into rentals, realtors are currently not experiencing a great demand from buyers for purchasing homes to be converted into rentals, and the condition of neighborhood homes is more important when selling a home than whether or not the home is located around rentals.
Conclusion:

Since spring of 2011, City Staff has investigated and analyzed the possible impact rental housing may be having on historically single-family neighborhoods within the City of River Falls. Several conclusions have been drawn from this analysis, they include:

- The University of Wisconsin – River Falls through their policy actions of increasing on-campus housing and the requirement of all freshman and sophomore to live on-campus are demonstrating their commitment to reducing the demand University students place on rental housing market.

- Property values in neighborhoods with rental housing are not substantially affected by the presence of rental housing. In some neighborhoods, rental properties are increasing the value of a home.

- The City is effectively following zoning requirements and is not currently experiencing excessive density in rental neighborhoods. Tipping point analysis reveals that all but one study neighborhood analyzed fall into an acceptable unit density per their residential zoning classification.

- Rental housing in a historically single-family neighborhood has a slight impact on the number of police incidents of a neighborhood. It is important moving forward to monitor police incidents in rental neighborhoods to ensure that police incidents do not escalate to a level that threatens to push the neighborhood into a self-reinforcing pattern of disinvestment and decline.

- Since 2002, the growth in single-family homes being operated as rentals has experienced minimal growth of less than 1% per year.

- Currently, single-family homes comprise 27% of the rentals.

- Overall, of the 5,717 housing units within the City of River Falls, 7.3% of the units are operated as rentals.

No further action is required at this time based on the analysis and conclusions presented in this report. The current City of River Falls rental permit system and regulations are affectively mitigating and controlling any affects rentals may be having on historically single-family neighborhoods. This analysis should be revisited and updated regularly to ensure rentals are not causing neighborhoods to enter a self-reinforcing pattern of disinvestment and decline.
APPENDIX #2

Study Area Maps (overall and individual neighborhoods studied)
**Benchmark Neighborhood**  
*Map # 2*

**Area Information**
- Total Parcels: 19
- Number of Units: 25
- Number of Rental Units: 14
- Average Year Built: 1903
- Average Assessed Value (2012): $166,605
- Average Total Square Footage: 1,761
- Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012): $94.59

---

**Legend**
- **Parcels**
- **Commercial Rental**
- **Duplexes**
- **Twin Home Rental**
- **Single Family Rental**

---

**Area Information**
- Total Parcels: 19
- Number of Units: 25
- Number of Rental Units: 14
- Average Year Built: 1903
- Average Assessed Value (2012): $166,605
- Average Total Square Footage: 1,761
- Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012): $94.59

---

**Legend**
- **Parcels**
- **Commercial Rental**
- **Duplexes**
- **Twin Home Rental**
- **Single Family Rental**

---

**Area Information**
- Total Parcels: 19
- Number of Units: 25
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**Legend**
- **Parcels**
- **Commercial Rental**
- **Duplexes**
- **Twin Home Rental**
- **Single Family Rental**

---

**Area Information**
- Total Parcels: 19
- Number of Units: 25
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- Average Year Built: 1903
- Average Assessed Value (2012): $166,605
- Average Total Square Footage: 1,761
- Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012): $94.59

---

**Legend**
- **Parcels**
- **Commercial Rental**
- **Duplexes**
- **Twin Home Rental**
- **Single Family Rental**
Impact Area No. 1
Map # 3

Area Information
Total Parcels- 31
Number of Units- 47
Number of Rental Units- 37
Average Year Built- 1910
Average Assessed Value (2012)- $172,465
Average Total Square Footage- 1,924
Average Assessed Value
Per Square Foot (2012)- $90.00
Impact Area No. 2
Map # 4

Area Information
Total Parcels- 26
Number of Units- 36
Number of Rental Units- 24
Average Year Built- 1900
Average Assessed Value (2012)- $193,888
Average Total Square Footage- 2,311
Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012)- $84.00

Legend
- Parcels
- Commercial Rental
- Duplexes
- Twin Home Rental
- Single Family Rental

12/18/12
Impact Area No. 3
Map # 5

Area Information
Total Parcels- 15
Number of Units- 16
Number of Rental Units- 6
Average Year Built- 1910
Average Assessed Value (2012)- $200,907
Average Total Square Footage- 1,982
Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012)- $101.38

Legend
- Parcels
- Commercial Rental
- Duplexes
- Twin Home Rental
- Single Family Rental

Impact Area No. 3
Map # 5
City of River Falls

12/18/12
Impact Area No. 4
Map # 6

Area Information
- Total Parcels: 17
- Number of Units: 21
- Number of Rental Units: 10
- Average Year Built: 1924
- Average Assessed Value (2012): $203,582
- Average Total Square Footage: 2,252
- Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012): $90.39

Legend
- Parcels
- Commercial Rental
- Duplexes
- Twin Home Rental
- Single Family Rental

12/18/12
Impact Area No. 5
Map # 7

Area Information
Total Parcels- 17
Number of Units- 31
Number of Rental Units- 20
Average Year Built- 1909
Average Assessed Value (2012)- $202,776
Average Total Square Footage- 2,268
Average Assessed Value
Per Square Foot (2012)- $89.41

Legend
- Parcels
- Commercial Rental
- Duplexes
- Twin Home Rental
- Single Family Rental

Legend
Parcels
Commercial Rental
Duplexes
Twin Home Rental
Single Family Rental

Impact Area No. 5
Map # 7

Area Information
Total Parcels- 17
Number of Units- 31
Number of Rental Units- 20
Average Year Built- 1909
Average Assessed Value (2012)- $202,776
Average Total Square Footage- 2,268
Average Assessed Value
Per Square Foot (2012)- $89.41

Legend
- Parcels
- Commercial Rental
- Duplexes
- Twin Home Rental
- Single Family Rental

Legend
Parcels
Commercial Rental
Duplexes
Twin Home Rental
Single Family Rental
Impact Area No. 6  
Map # 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Information</th>
<th>Legend</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Parcels- 31</td>
<td>Parcels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Units- 35</td>
<td>Commercial Rental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Rental Units- 11</td>
<td>Duplexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Year Built- 1914</td>
<td>Twin Home Rental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Assessed Value (2012)- $161,774</td>
<td>Single Family Rental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Total Square Footage- 1,602</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012)- $100.99</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact Area No. 6  
Map # 8  
12/18/12

Legend
Parcels
Commercial Rental
Duplexes
Twin Home Rental
Single Family Rental

Total Parcels- 31
Number of Units- 35
Number of Rental Units- 11
Average Year Built- 1914
Average Assessed Value (2012)- $161,774
Average Total Square Footage- 1,602
Average Assessed Value Per Square Foot (2012)- $100.99