

HOUSING



INTRODUCTION

Three basic elements of planning that form the foundation of every comprehensive plan are housing, population and land use studies. These three studies provide the bases on policy development and programs to better anticipate and direct the city's future growth. Other than providing the bases to the City's estimated population, the housing study includes historical trends and future projections of La Feria's housing stock.

Housing is not just bricks and mortar, but an inseparable part of how people desire to live, and what they desire for themselves, their families, their neighborhood and their community as a whole. The quality of a community's residential areas is a measure of its desirability as a place to live. Housing conditions directly affect the residents, as well as affect the well-being of the community as a whole. Because of this close relationship to community development, housing and housing-related problems became a national concern many years ago, as well as the focus of a number of public assistance programs. Among the varied programs established over the years were rent subsidies, interest rate reductions for housing loans, rehabilitation loans and grants, public housing programs and other programs geared toward making housing more available and affordable to low and moderate income groups, as well as the elderly.

The Influence of Housing on Local Governments are:

- Housing is usually the single largest type of urban land use in a community.
- Residents of housing are the largest consumer of public services.
- Residents of housing is the force stipulating the need for commercial development.
- Residents of housing is the force stipulating the need for streets, schools, parks and churches and other public structures.
- Residential housing is a force stipulating local economic development.
- Residential tax revenue is a major source of governmental income.

The number, character, location and type of housing are integral parts of the entire fabric of a community--its physical environment, economic structure, and social organization and value.

Local policies needed to assist homeowners in the effectively management of their housing stock, is the adoption and enforcement community's zoning, subdivision and building codes. Local government policies, programs, and regulations can affect the development, location, quality, and cost of housing, as well as the demographic characteristics of the households that are willing or able to occupy housing in the community.

Local Government Actions can affect the Housing Market by:

- Regulating the location and amount of undeveloped land for residential purposes by enforcing an adopted Zoning Ordinance can affect the availability of residential lots with an ultimate affect on the supply of housing.
- Adopting and enforcing building codes to achieve desirable housing construction standards affects the local housing market.
- Adopting land use policies, which prohibit incompatible residential uses such as; car repair shops, wrecked automobiles, yards used for open storage of equipment and/or construction material, etc. from locating in residential areas assist in maintaining a residential neighborhood of desirable character.
- Actions to establish excessive property tax rates can affect new residential development as well as the cost of both owner and renter housing.
- Actions to establish inferior or excessive restrictions in building code standards for the construction in new housing development can affect the local housing market.
- Actions to encourage the private sector to develop land for residential use and for all available income groups.
- Establishing a local housing agency, or joining an existing agency and establishing housing policies can affect the provision and availability of low-income housing.

CENSUS OF HOUSING

Census information of the city's housing stock and occupancy status of dwelling units for 1990 and 2000 are shown by Exhibit 4-1. In addition, the exhibit shows statistics obtained by the condition of housing survey conducted in March 2007.

EXHIBIT 4-1

1990-2000-2007 HOUSING & POPULATION STATISTICS				
Population Persons per occupied unit Housing Stock	4,360 3.19 1990 Census	6,115 3.03 2000 Census	Percent Change	8,500 est. 2.95 est. 2007 Survey
Total Units	1,571	2,878	83%	3,276
Total Occupied	1,073	1,976	84%	3,085
Owner Occupied	758	1,496	97%	N/A
Renter Occupied	315	480	52%	N/A
Total Vacant	111	902	713 %	191
Manufactured Homes included in total units.				
Total Manufactured Homes	214	389	82 %	498
Recreation Vehicle included in total units.				
Total RV Units	N/A	32	N/A	650

Source: U. S. Census of Housing and Housing Survey of March 2007

2010
2867
2396 471
1715
681

Housing Statistical Data

In conducting the housing survey, each residential structure in the city was observed to determine the condition of the structure and if the dwelling unit was occupied or vacant. The 2000 Census of Housing statistics is greatly different from the housing survey statistics in number of occupied

units, vacant units, manufactured homes and RV units as illustrated by Exhibit 4-1. The 2000 Census of Housing recorded 31 percent or 902 of the city's 2,878 housing units vacant of which 619 vacant units were for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. This may a reason why the census only recorded 32 recreational vehicles in the city. Three large RV Parks were located in the city with about 900 RV spaces.

The 2,878 housing units reported by the 2000 U.S. Census of Housing is 83 percent more than the 1,571 reported by the 1990 Census of Housing, but 14 percent less than the March 2007 Housing Survey count. Annexation caused part of the difference in housing statistics noted between 1990, 2000 and 2007.

Housing Construction and Occupancy Status

Illustrated below are statistics from the 2000 Census of Housing to show when local housing units were constructed and when the last occupancy date occurred.

EXHIBIT 4-2

2000 HOUSING UNITS BY YEAR CONSTRUCTED AND OCCUPANCY STATUS

Year Constructed	Number of Units	Number of Householders Moved Into Unit
1999 to March 2000	94	276
1995 to 1998	163	580
1990 to 1994	168	396
1980 to 1989	635	350
1970 to 1979	649	206
1960 to 1969	282	218*
1950 to 1959	294	N/A
1940 to 1949	132	N/A
1939 or Earlier	461	N/A
TOTAL	2,878	2,026

Source: U.S. Census of Housing

* Moved into the unit in 1969 or earlier.

HOUSING SURVEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The windshield housing survey conducted in March 2007 determined the number of residential structures and the exterior condition of each residential structure. The survey identified 3,103 residential structures and 3,276 residential units. In addition, 191 housing units were identified vacant, leaving 3,085 occupied units. The makeup of the housing structures included 3,042 single-family houses, 30 duplexes and 31 structures with 3 or more units per structure. Manufactured homes accounted for 498 units, recreation vehicles (RV) accounted for 650 units and modular homes accounted for 52 units. A total of 477 occupied dwelling units and 106 occupied RV units recorded by the survey was not located in the city in 2000. It was estimated that the 583 occupied units contained 1,620 persons.

Low and moderate-income areas are illustrated on the "2007 Condition of Structures Map". These areas are substandard, deteriorated, manufactured homes and industrial homes.

Structure Conditions

All local housing structures and the identified condition of the structures are shown on the "Condition of Structures Map," at the end of this chapter. A listing of structures by construction

category, condition of structures and the number of dwelling units are shown on Exhibit 4-3 by five areas of similar character. Exhibit 4-4 provides a graphic presentation of the five areas. Housing identified in a deteriorated condition is located mostly in the older sections of the city. Housing condition criteria used to classify the community's residential structures is located at the end of this chapter.

EXHIBIT 4-3

HOUSING CONDITION INVENTORY – MARCH 2007

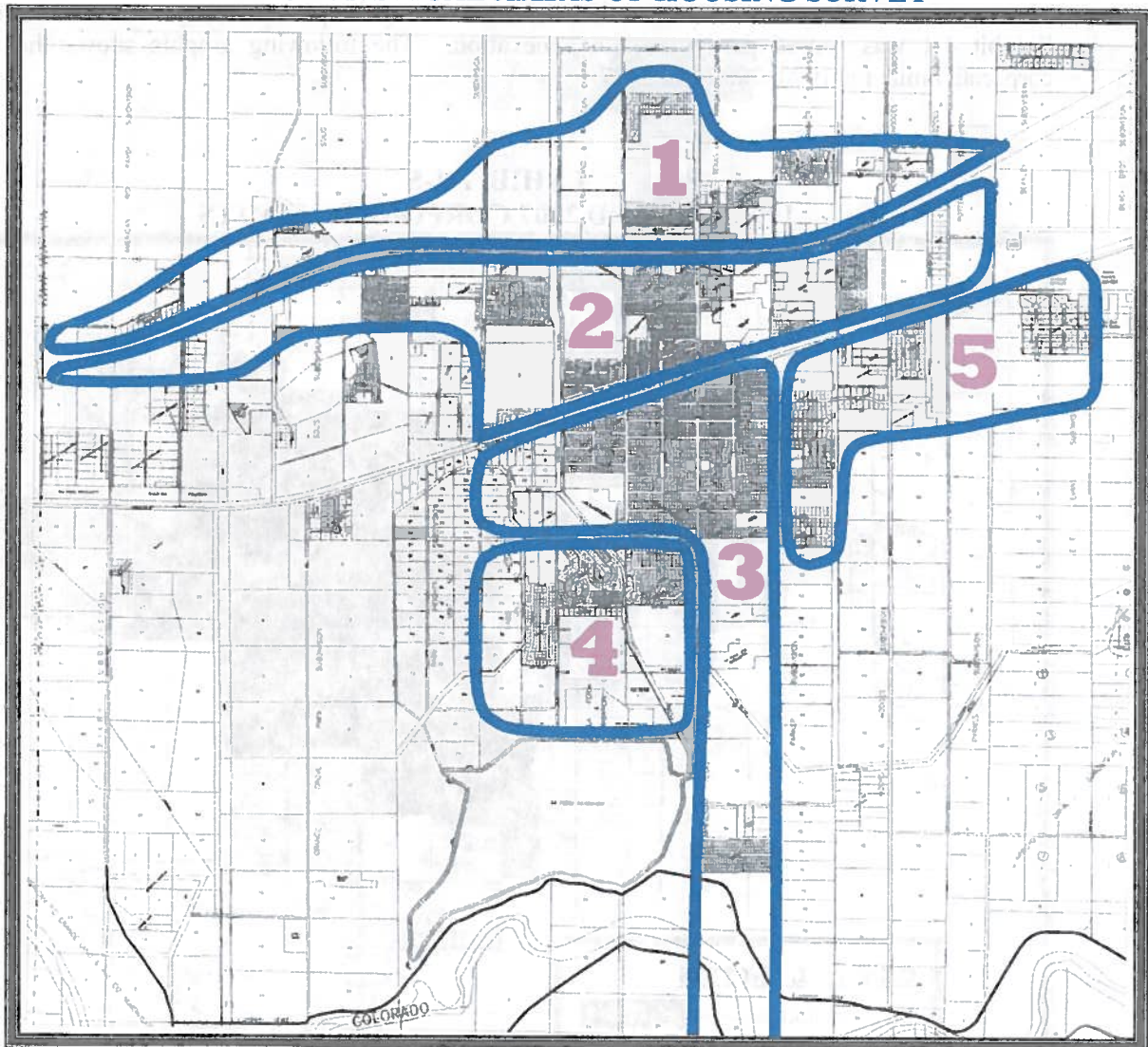
AREA	NORTH OF U.S. HWY. 83 #1		BETWEEN HWY. 83 & BUSINESS HWY 83 #2		CENTRAL SECTION OF CITY #3		SOUTHWEST SECTION #4		SOUTHEAST SECTION #5		TOTAL	
	STRUCT-URES	UNITS	STRUCT-URES	UNITS	STRUCT-URES	UNITS	STRUCT-URES	UNITS	STRUCT-URES	UNITS	STRUCT-URES	UNITS
Single Family Structures *												
Standard	20	20	230	230	174	174	331	331	217	217	972	972
Standard Vacant	1	1	3	3	1	1	7	7	2	2	14	14
Substandard	12	12	405	405	338	338	8	8	34	34	797	797
Substandard Vacant	2	2	16	16	29	29	1	1	2	2	50	50
Dilapidated			1	1	2	2					3	3
Dilapidated Vacant	1	1	1	1	2	2			2	2	6	6
Manufactured Structure (MH) **												
MH Standard	125	125	198	198	5	5	31	31	19	19	378	378
MH Standard Vacant	17	17	36	36	1	1					54	54
MH Substandard	17	17	24	24	6	6					47	47
MH Substandard Vac	7	7	8	8	4	4					19	19
MH Dilapidated												
MH Dilapidated Vac												
Modular House												
M Standard	4	4	21	21			4	4			29	29
M Standard Vacant	1	1	2	2							3	3
M Substandard	9	9	4	4	2	2					15	15
M Substandard Vac	5	5									5	5
M Dilapidated												
M Dilapidated Vac												
Recreational Vehicle												
RV	340	340	254	254					43	43	637	637
RV Vacant	7	7	1	1	1	1			4	4	13	13
TOTAL SINGLES	568	568	1,204	1,204	565	565	382	382	323	323	3,042	3,042
TOTAL SINGLE OCCUPIED UNITS		527		1,137		527		374		313		2,878
Multifamily Structures												
Standard Duplex			1	2	14	28	1	2	14	26	30	58
Standard Duplex Vac										2		2
Substandard Duplex												
Standard Over 3 Units Per Structure	2	14			8	44	1	5	18	85	29	148
Standard Over 3 units Per Structure Vacant		2				5				9		16
Substandard Over 3 Units per Structure									2	1	2	1
Substandard Over 3 Units with # of Vac.										9		9
Total Multifamily Structures	2		1		22		2		34		61	
Total Multifamily Occupied Units		14		2		72		7		112		207
Total Occupied all Units		541		1,139		599		381		425		3,085
Total Units		584		1,206		642		389		455		3,276

Source: Design Services, Inc. structure survey of March 2007.

* Traditional structures are houses built on the site.

** Manufactured structures are generally built on a metal frames with attached wheels.

EXHIBIT 4-4
FIVE STATISTICAL AREAS OF HOUSING SURVEY



Source: Design Services, Inc.

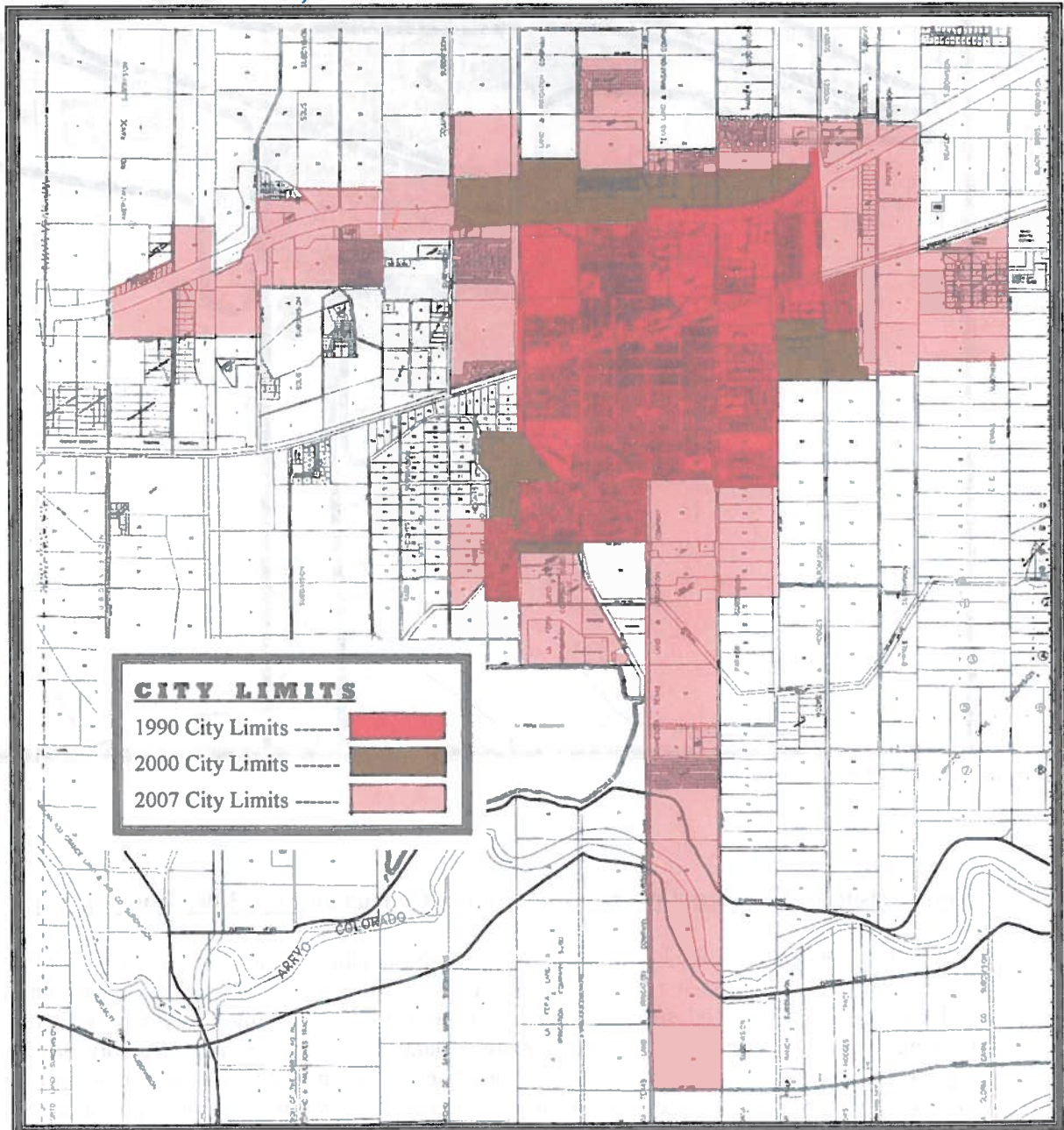
Comparison of Housing data recorded by the Census and the 2007 Housing Survey

While the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census of Housing statistical data is determined from sample surveys and past records, the 2007 housing survey statistics is based on a 100 percent visual sighting of each residential structure and recording the data on a map for analysis of the local housing stock. Differences in housing statistical data for 1990, 2000 and 2007 are provided on page 4-2. Variation in the housing statistical numbers as shown by chapter exhibits is the results of methods used by the U.S. Census, inventory criteria used by the consultant and annexation of developed areas. The 2007 housing survey included a visual look at each residential structure to determine: (1) the condition of the structure; (2) the number of units in the structure; (3) whether

the residential structure was a traditional built structure (constructed on a permanent foundation or pier and beam) or; (4) a manufactured residential structure.

The large increase in the number of residential units during the past sixteen years as illustrated by Exhibit 4-1 was caused partly through annexation. The following graphic shows the city's corporate limits for 1990, 2000 and 2007.

EXHIBIT 4-5
1990, 2000 AND 2007 CORPORATE LIMITS



Source: Design Services, Inc.

Housing Types

The housing market and general economic conditions have changed markedly over the past two decades. As costs of land, labor and materials continue to increase, different approaches in providing affordable and comfortable housing surface. The probability of non-traditional housing (mobile home, modular homes, and recreational vehicle) becoming a much larger share of the local housing inventory is not a likely option because the increasing land prices dictates a more expensive type of development. In 2007, the city's non-traditional housing was 35 percent of the total units or 37.7 percent of the single-family housing stock.

Statistics from the 2007 housing survey are as follows:

EXHIBIT 4-6

2007 – RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE INVENTORY		
CONDITION OF RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Sound Condition	2,324	70.94 %
Substandard Condition	943	28.79 %
Dilapidated Condition	9	0.27 %
TOTAL UNITS	3,276	100.00 %
OTHER HOUSING DATA		
Occupied Units	3,085	94.17 %
Sound Units Vacant	88	2.69 %
Total Vacant	191	5.83 %
Manufactured Homes	498	15.20 %
Recreational Vehicle (RV)	650	19.84 %
Duplex Structures	30	0.92 %
Triplex or Larger Structure	31	0.95 %
Abandoned Dilapidated Structures	0	0 %

Source: Design Service, Inc., Survey of March 2007.

Manufactured Homes

In 2000, the census reported 389 manufactured homes and 32 RV units. The 2007 housing survey recorded 498 manufactured homes and 650 RV units (109 more manufactured homes and 618 RV units than reported by the 2000 census). Five mobile home subdivisions containing 269 manufactured homes and one (1) RV Park containing 68 units were included in the 2007 survey but eventually not the 2000 census. If the 269 manufactured homes and the 68 RV units located in the five mobile home subdivisions and the RV Park were not included in the 2007 housing count, the number of these units reported in the 2007 survey was still greater than reported by the 2000 census.

Deteriorated Dwellings

Classifying a dwelling "substandard or deteriorated" was determined when conducting the windshield housing survey. Each residential structure was viewed in accordance with the established housing condition criteria at the end of this chapter. If it were apparent that a structure needed more than the normal annual repairs, it was either recorded as a substandard or dilapidated

structure. The survey identified 935 or 30.1 percent of all housing structures as "substandard", which is a desirable percentage for a community.

Dilapidated structures are not suitable for living quarters nor or they considered economically repairable. Nine housing structures or 0.3 percent of the housing structures were classified "dilapidated" of which 6 of the 9 units were vacant. With such a small number of structures classified as dilapidated, a home improvement program along with funding by the HOME Program should correct the local housing condition problem. In 2004-2005 the city was able to construct ten houses for first time home buyers with funding through the Texas HOME Program.

Vacancy Rate

The 2000 U. S. Census reported 2,878 housing units and 902 vacant units, which is a vacancy rate of 31.3 percent. The 1990 U.S. Census recorded 1,571 housing units and 111 vacant units, which is a vacancy rate of 7.07 percent. The March 2007 housing survey recorded 3,276 dwelling units with 191 of these units vacant, which is a vacancy rate of 5.83 percent.

It appears that the 2000 Census of Housing may have recorded the RV Park spaces as vacant units. If not, there are not a logical solution for the city to have 902 vacant residential in 2000.

Group Quarters

The 1990 Census of Population and Housing reported 9 person's in-group quarters, but the 2000 census did not report any persons in-group quarters.

Public and Private Low Rent Housing

The Cameron County Public Housing Authority manages 56 low rent public housing units in La Feria. These units are located in two project areas. In 1969, a twelve-structure project of 36 units was constructed in the northeast area on the south side of Business Highway 83 and other units located in the southern section of the city. One structure on Commercial Avenue is a triplex with three bedrooms per unit.

Two duplex structures with two bedrooms per unit are located on Jessamine Avenue, four duplexes located on Oleander Avenue with two bedrooms per unit and one triplex with three bedrooms per unit. On Primrose Avenue there is one duplex with two bedrooms per unit, one office structure and two eight-plex (six with one bedroom and two efficiency apartment).

In 1998, a senior citizen project was constructed on the east side of Kansas City Road south of Palm Avenue. The project has 6 structures with 36 units. Other duplex and apartment units are shown on the "2007 Land Use Map" in chapter 5.

Photographs of Local Housing

Each of the three types of local housing condition classifications (standard, substandard and dilapidated) is included on the next page by a photograph of a local housing structure. The photographs show only a sample of the various criteria used during the housing survey to classify structures.

EXHIBIT 4-7
LOCAL STRUCTURES



SUBSTANDARD (Deteriorating) STRUCTURE



DILAPIDATED (Deteriorating) STRUCTURES



Source: Design Services, Inc.

Response by Local Citizens on Housing Problems

In March 2007, local citizens completed the hereafter survey forms as an expression of how they felt about local housing supply and problems in 2007 and their future expectations on dealing with the mentioned housing supply.

EXHIBIT 4-8 **ESTIMATE LA FERIA'S SUPPLY OF HOUSING IN 2007**

2007 Supply of Housing	Major Shortage	Minor Shortage	Adequate Supply	Surplus
Rental Housing for All Persons.	66 %	22 %	11 %	
Owner-Occupied Housing for All Persons.	44 %	44 %	11 %	
Rental Housing for Low-Income Persons.	66 %	11 %	22 %	
Owner-Occupied Housing for Low-Income	44 %	33 %	22 %	

Source: Local citizens.

Shaded areas represents the highest response of the local survey

LA FERIA'S HOUSING PROBLEMS

2007 Housing Problems	Very Serious	Somewhat Serious	A Problem but Not Bad	Not a Problem	Don't Know/Unsure
Housing that is Substandard or Needs Rehabilitation.	22 %	33 %	33 %		
Housing that is Overcrowded.	44 %	33 %	11 %		11 %
Shortage of Housing for Low-Income Persons	66 %	11 %	11 %	11 %	
Housing for the Homeless.	33 %	11 %	11 %	11 %	33 %
Housing for the Elderly.	11 %	55 %	22 %		11 %
Housing that has lead-Based Paint. *	11 %	0 %	33 %		55 %
Housing for Disabled Persons.	44 %	22 %	11 %		22 %

Source: Local citizens.

* 1,169 local houses were constructed prior to 1969. It is speculated that leads-base paint was likely used on some of these structures.

Shaded area represents the highest response of the local survey

ANTICIPATE LA FERIA'S HOUSING SUPPLY FOR 2010

2010 Supply of Housing	Major Shortage	Minor Shortage	Adequate Supply	Surplus
Rental Housing for All Persons.	55 %	44 %		
Owner-Occupied Housing for All Persons.	33 %	66 %		
Rental Housing for Low-Income Persons.	55 %	22 %	22 %	
Owner-Occupied Housing for Low-Income Persons.	55 %	33 %	11 %	

Source: Local citizens.

Shaded areas represents the highest response of the local survey

Local Conditions Contributing to Housing Problems

- In 2000, thirty-nine percent of the city's household income was below \$20,000.
- There is a lack of local jobs. In 2000, the city had 1,935 individuals working outside of their home of which 1,387 worked outside of the city.
- A shortage in the supply of desirable residential lots exist in the city. Other than the area surrounded by Canal Street, F.M. Road 506, U.S. Hwy. 83 and U.S. Business Hwy. 83,

there are 61 desirable large vacant lots, 37 small lots in very old subdivisions, 70 manufacture home lots and 136 lots for condominiums that will be available in 2007. Twenty-three acres of land was purchased by La Feria Industrial Development Corporation, subdivided the area and is in the process of developing the acreage into multifamily and commercial lots. Only 19 vacant lots are located in platted subdivisions in the extraterritorial jurisdiction.

- La Feria Independent School District has concentrated all of their school campuses on the south side of U.S. Highway 83. Constructing a school plant on the north side of U.S. Highway 83 would encourage the development of more residential lots on the north side of the city.

Local Actions in promoting local housing

Recent actions, both public and private taken to improve housing programs include:

1. A new 23 acre townhouse subdivision being developed north of U.S. Highway 83 on the west side of Farm to Market Road 506 by La Feria Industrial Development Corporation.

EXHIBIT 4-9 PHOTOGRAPH OF LION'S CONDOMINIUMS RENDERING



Source: Design Services, Inc.

2007 Construction of Subdivision

2. To meet the forecasted population growth of 10,770 by 2025 the city will need to increase residential dwelling by 54 units per year. With residential development occurring in the extraterritorial jurisdiction and the city's ongoing annexation policy, one scenario in achieving the 54 units per year would be from annexing an average of 9 units per year and constructing or move-in of 45 units per year. This would require city and private action. Usually, a subdivision development takes 12 months from design to completed construction. Without a major house construction firm in the community to invest in developing subdivisions it behooves the city to take action in subdivision development as they did in the construction of the townhouse subdivision for Lion's Villa Condominiums. The city should have a vacant lot supply for about two years of house construction.
3. Funding of the city's EDAP application has extended city water and sewer services to a large section of the extraterritorial jurisdiction. Construction of a new wastewater treatment plant will provide wastewater service to many developed and undeveloped acres in the extraterritorial jurisdiction.

EXHIBIT 4-10 CONSTRUCTION OF LIFT-STATION



Source: Design Services, Inc. 2007 Construction of wastewater lift-station

4. The Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife assisted in financing a portion of Tiny Town Park. A facility developed for local citizens.

EXHIBIT 4-11 TINY TOWN PARK



Source: Design Services, Inc.

5. Preparation of a Comprehensive Plan in 2007 with revised zoning and subdivision ordinances.
6. About 29 percent of the City's residential structures were in a state of deterioration in 2007. The City should take every opportunity to encourage home owners to maintain the structures in sound condition. Assistance in constructing new houses and/or rehabilitating of existing houses can be obtained through the HOME Program.
 - a. HOME Program funds assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing for the elderly and low income.

- b. Home Program funds are available for first-time home buyers and for the reconstruction of existing, substandard housing units.
7. The Statewide Housing Assistance Payment Program.
8. Permanent Housing for the Handicapped and Homeless Persons Program.
9. Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Housing Trust Fund.
10. Section 8 and 202 Housing Assistance Program.

HOUSING PLAN

Dwelling Unit Projection

The anticipated number of dwelling units necessary to supply the projected growth and to replace deteriorated units through the year 2025 is projected in the following exhibit by five-year increments. The projected number of dwelling units by the year 2025 is based on the following:

1. The city's population will reach 10,770 by the year 2025.
2. The city's population per occupied dwelling unit will decrease gradually from 3.03 persons in 2000 to approximately 2.90 persons per dwelling unit by the year 2025 and 2 persons per RV unit.
3. Vacancy rate of total dwelling units is expected to be in the area of 8 to 10 percent. Projections for "Needed Units" in the exhibit below are based on a 10 percent vacancy rate.
4. The hereafter housing unit projection by five year increments is based on the population forecast in chapter 3.

EXHIBIT 4-12

PAST, ESTIMATED 2007 AND PROJECTED DWELLING UNITS				
YEAR	POPULATION	HOUSING UNITS	OCCUPIED UNITS	NEEDED UNITS
1980	3,495	1,184	1,073	N/A
1990	4,360	1,571	1,366	N/A
2000	6,115	2,878	1,976	N/A
2007*	8,500	3,276	3,085	189 units in 4 years
2010**	8,850	3,465	3,210	215 units in 5 years
2015**	9,400	3,680	3,405	260 units in 5 years
2020**	10,030	3,940	3,645	300 units in 5 years
2025**	10,770	4,240	3,925	345 units in 5 years

Source: [1980, 1990 & 2000 Census of Housing]

Design Services, Inc. [* 2007 population & housing estimates] [** population & housing projections]

5. Between the years 2007 and 2025, La Feria's forecasted population requires the construction or move-in of approximately 964 additional dwelling units. The additional units are expected to have an eight to ten percent vacancy rate. Based on the variety of dwelling units classified by the 2007 housing survey, the biggest percentage of the new dwelling units will be single-family units, but there is an opportunity for additional duplexes and apartment structures.

Create living environments for long and short-term residents.

Employment statistics of the 2000 Census reported that 71.7 percent of individuals working outside of their home, worked outside of city. This statistic indicates that La Feria is considered a desirable place to live. In addition, the valley's warm winter weather attracts many retired people from other sections of the country to visit the valley through the winter months. One form of short-term living accommodation for individuals for a few months is the development of recreational vehicle (RV) spaces. The city had 650 RV occupied spaces in 2007 of which four RV Parks accounted for 594 of these spaces. A concept in promoting a retirement residential area is provided in Chapter 5.

Water and wastewater services have been extended beyond the corporate limits to serve surrounding colonias and the city has developed a variety of parks and recreation facilities for local citizens and individuals visiting the city. These activities are attractive to residential development inside and outside of the city. There is a need for the city to plan and encourage a variety of long and short-term residential developments.

Short-term Plan

To prevent and eliminate local housing problems requires a plan with implementation procedures. This will likely be an ongoing process. A plan covering the next five years is provided hereafter. The cost of which will be negligible.

2008-2009

1. Place an ad in the local newspaper to inform citizens about a public awareness program regarding the community's need to preserve existing housing structures.
2. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Advertise in the local newspaper information on Fair Housing based on the City Commission's resolution designating the month of April as the City's "Fair Housing Month".

Estimated annual cost. ----- \$100.

2010-2012

1. Submit an annual application to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for a \$200,000 HOME Program funds to improve the local housing quality.
2. Annually review of all structures classified as deteriorating to make a determination if any have reached a stage of severe enough to require demolition.

3. Rehabilitate annually two percent of the 952 deteriorating (substandard and dilapidated) housing units by using one or more of the City's Code Enforcement Ordinance, seek benevolent groups to assist those unable to help themselves, and seek funding from available housing programs.

Estimated annual cost to the City. ----- \$10,000.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Housing, Goal #1: **Encourage appropriate neighborhoods with appropriate amenities for existing and future residents.**

- Objectives:**
- 2008. Improve neighborhood appearances through subdivision design and street tree planting along local streets.
 - 2008. Develop a policy on the types of residential development that the city would like to have constructed.
 - 2009 Prepare plans to develop a residential retirement community area.
 - ✓ 2010. Submit an application to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for grant funds to improve recreation facilities.
 - 2012. Request the Texas Department of Transportation to provide assistance to landscape local highways.
 - 2014. Request the County Agency to provide technical assistance to local citizens in developing street landscaping.
 - 2015. Request the local garden club to assist in developing a plan for street landscaping.

Housing Goal #2 **Encourage appropriate development of land for residential areas with desirable lot sizes, paved curb and gutter streets and appropriate utility lines.**

- Objectives:**
- 2008. ✓ To alleviate maintenance and service problems in the city, especially in older areas, upgrade existing infrastructure (water, sewer, streets and drainage) to minimum acceptable standards.
 - 2008. ✓ Request Community Development Block Grant Funds for the improvement of utility lines.
 - 2009. Assist property owners who want to subdivide their land to create a desirable arrangement of platted property that will blend with existing development and plans of the city.
 - 2010 Develop a five-year housing improvement program.

2011 Develop a golf course with a retirement community project.

Housing Goal #3: Seek state and federal funds for housing improvements and the development of administrative codes and ordinances for quiet, safe, healthy, convenient and attractive housing in La FERIA.

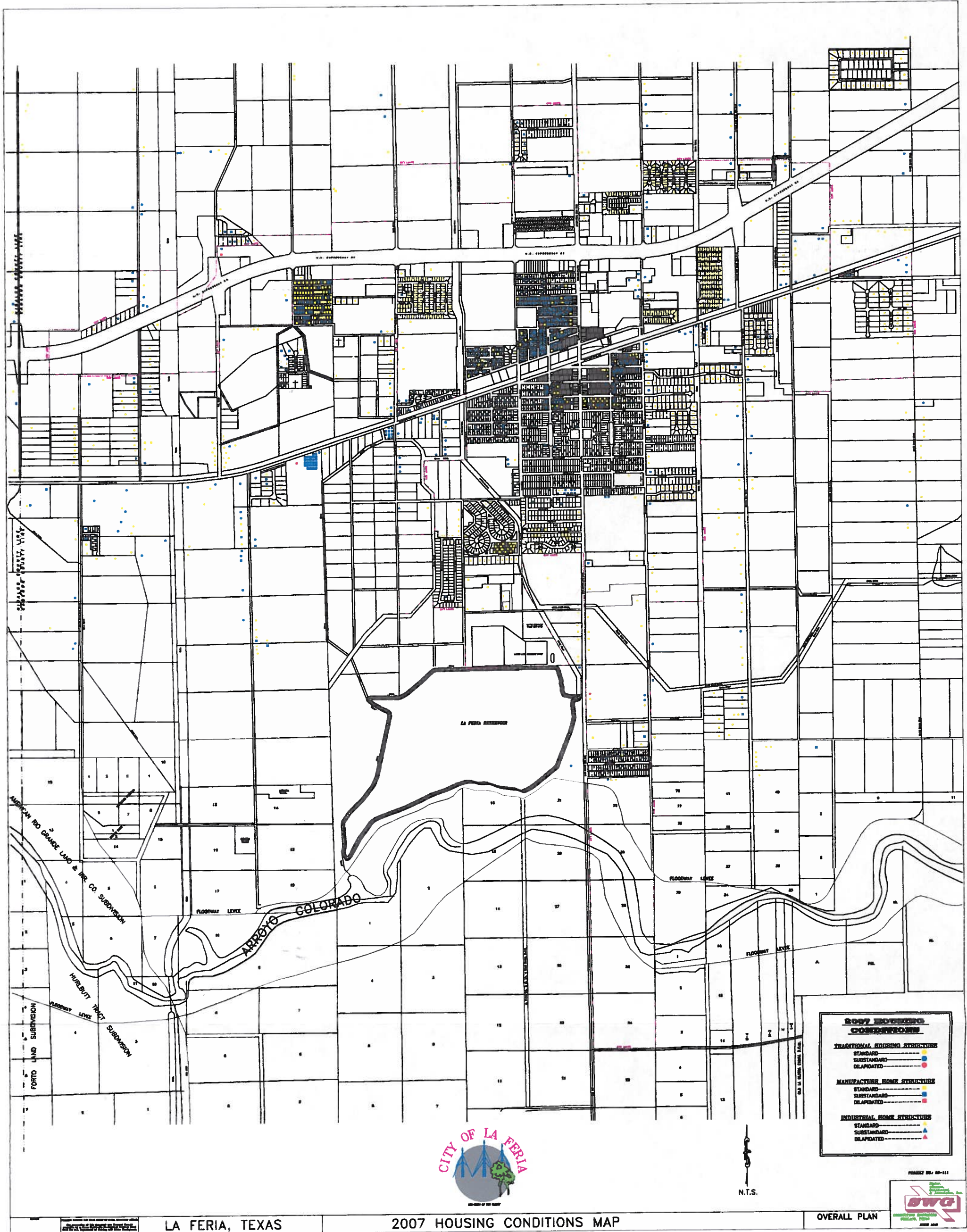
Objectives:

- 2007. Prepare a new Zoning Ordinance Map. ✓
- 2007. Promote and encourage "fair housing". ✓
- 2008. Review the 2008 HOME Program for the preparation of a new application to assist in improving local housing conditions ✓
- 2010. Promote and encourage "fair housing". ✓
- 2012. Encourage the review and adoption of all codes and ordinances that would improve local housing. ✓

Housing Goal #4: Demolish all dilapidated housing units.

Objectives:

- 2008 Demolish one dilapidated housing structure. *6 have been demolished*
- 2009. Review all structures classified as substandard in the 2007 survey data to determine if any have reached a stage of deterioration or demolition.
- 2010. Demolish one dilapidated housing structure.
- 2015. Demolish one dilapidated housing structure.



LA FERIA, TEXAS

2007 HOUSING CONDITIONS MAP

OVERALL PLAN



APPENDIX

CRITERIA USED IN PERFORMING THE HOUSING SURVEY

Classifying housing structures by a windshield survey is a fairly reliable method to indicate the overall housing conditions. Most methods or standards in classifying existing housing structures assumed that the exterior conditions of the structure also represent the interior conditions as well. Detailed inspections of the inside as well as the outside of the structure would be necessary to determine if all recognized minimum building standards were met. Each house was determined as “sound, substandard or deteriorated” according to its external, physical, structural and aesthetic appearance. The criteria used to classify each residential structure are as follows:

Sound Structures

Sound structures are dwellings, which have no visible signs of damage or deterioration, or have only slight defects, which can be corrected by minimal non-professional maintenance. There are no masonry cracks, rotted wood, or broken glass. All storm windows, door screens, and/or glass are straight, plumb and intact. The roof, guttering, and downspouts are adequate and well maintained. Sound structures are generally very well maintained and do not need upgrading or immediate repair.

Substandard Structures

Substandard structures are dwellings, which need more repair than would be provided in the course of regular maintenance. There are one or more defects, which should be corrected if the structure is to continue to provide safe and adequate shelter. Buildings in this category are identified by: sagging roof ridge lines; cracked, bulging, or sagging foundations; rotted or missing porch structural members; tilting walls or chimneys, etc. Buildings with deficient weather protection are identified by: insufficient window screening; broken glass; missing and/or rotted roofing or siding material, inadequate guttering and downspouts; improper grading around foundations, etc. These structures are usually worth repairing and upgrading to standard conditions, although professional assistance may be required.

Dilapidated or Deteriorated Structures

Dilapidated structures are dwellings that do not provide safe and adequate shelter. They have one or more critical defects resulting from neglect or wear and indicate serious damage to the structure. These structures are found to have holes, open cracks or missing materials over extensive areas of floors, walls, roofs, or other serious damage by storm or fire. Dwellings in dilapidated conditions are usually very expensive to repair and may not be worth repairing. If not, they should be considered for possible demolition.

Abandoned Dilapidated Structures

Abandoned dilapidated structures are structures that have an appearance of ownership abandonment. The structures are left to the environmental elements for further decay.

HOME Program

Brief Description of HOME Program Projects

1. HOME Program Funds are available for the preservation of affordable housing for low and very low income families and housing assistance aimed at benefiting elderly persons over the age of 62 years, large families with 5 or more persons, and housing for persons with disabilities.
2. HOME Program Funds are available for housing activities to include rental housing projects.
3. HOME Program Funds are available for housing rehabilitation activities of owner occupied homes, rental housing, and the reconstruction of housing that are not suitable for rehabilitation.
4. HOME Program Funds are available for financial assistance provided to low income families in the form of either low interest loans, deferred loans which are payable at the time the property is sold, or forgivable loans which are forgiven over a determined period of time (e.g., 20 percent per year). The maximum amount of financial assistance, which may be provided for moderate rehabilitation, ranges up to an average of \$25,000 per unit. The minimum amount is \$1,000 per unit.
5. The condition of each housing unit to be rehabilitated must comply with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Housing Quality Standards and local building codes.
6. Eligible rehabilitation factors allowed in the HOME Program are:
 - a. Rehabilitation construction costs.
 - b. Energy-related improvement costs.
 - c. Abatement of lead-based paint.
 - d. Improvements for handicapped persons.
 - e. Professional services related to inspections and work write-ups.
 - f. Financing costs such as loan points, credit and title costs, recording fees.
 - g. Legal fees and appraisals.
 - h. Project audit costs.
 - i. Temporary relocation costs.

The city can create a non-profit entity to assist local citizens in developing new housing structures. *Appendix A - HOME Program Implementation Process for New Construction*, lists steps for organizing a non-profit entity and some benefits and drawbacks in creating such an entity.