

Chapter 8 Housing

Housing conditions are a major determinant of the quality of Millington’s neighborhoods. The focus of community planning is to improve the quality of life for residents and to promote the availability and affordability of decent, safe, and sanitary housing for all Town residents. Consequently housing and conservation of existing residential neighborhoods rank as an important local concern.

Housing and Homeownership

The 2000 U.S. Census recorded 163 housing units in the Town of Millington. Half of these were built in 1939 or earlier; another 29 percent were built between 1939 and 1960 (see Table 11). Only 2 percent of the Town’s housing stock was built after 1990. Millington has more houses that predate 1960 than any other town in Kent County and the County itself.

Table 11: Comparison of Years Structures Built -2000

	Millington	Betterton	Chestertown	Galena	Rock Hall	Kent County
Built 1999 to March 2000	0%	0%	11%	4%	0%	5%
Built 1995 to 1998	2%	6%	3%	6%	5%	6%
Built 1990 to 1994	0%	3%	6%	21%	7%	8%
Built 1980 to 1989	9%	13%	13%	6%	15%	14%
Built 1970 to 1979	5%	6%	13%	11%	9%	15%
Built 1960 to 1969	6%	5%	14%	15%	5%	11%
Built 1950 to 1959	15%	7%	7%	8%	16%	18%
Built 1940 to 1949	13%	9%	2%	3%	10%	
Built 1939 or earlier	50%	51%	29%	29%	32%	25%
Median Year Structure Built	1940	1940	1968	1967	1955	1967

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Most of Millington’s housing stock (about 84 percent) is comprised of single family homes. The same is true, although to a slightly lesser degree, in all other towns in the County (see Table 12). Multi-unit structures make up about 14 percent of the Town’s housing – most of these are 3-4 unit buildings. Mobile homes account for the remainder of homes in Millington (4 percent).

Table 12: Comparison of Housing Units per Structure - 2000

Number of Units	Millington	Betterton	Chestertown	Galena	Rock Hall	Kent County
Total:	163	276	2,174	199	827	9,410
1, detached	82%	71%	44%	76%	79%	78%
1, attached	2%	3%	6%	1%	5%	3%
2 units	2%	1%	4%	8%	2%	2%
3 or 4 units	7%	4%	10%	2%	1%	35
5 to 9 units	2%	21%	10%	0%	5%	4%
10 to 19 units	1%	0%	15%	0%	3%	4%
20 to 49 units	0%	0%	5%	13%	2%	2%
50 units or more	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
Mobile home	4%	1%	4%	0%	3%	4%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.3%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Slightly over 60 percent of the Town’s occupied homes were occupied by the homeowner in 2000 (see Table 13). This is the lowest percentage of homes occupied by owners in the County, with the exception of Chestertown, where the high percentage of renters is attributable to the Town’s large student population.

Table 13: Comparison of Home Owner and Renter Household Characteristics – 2000

	Occupied housing units						
	Total	Owner	Renter	Average household size	Percent		
					Owner	1-person households	With householder 65 years and over
Kent County	7,666	70%	30%	2.33	70%	28%	31%
Betterton	164	70%	30%	2.29	70%	34%	24%
Chestertown	1,891	44%	56%	1.96	44%	42%	36%
Galena	190	69%	31%	2.23	69%	33%	36%
Millington	163	63%	37%	2.55	63%	28%	25%
Rock Hall	654	72%	28%	2.13	72%	32%	37%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

The average home in Millington has six rooms; all homes have plumbing and kitchen facilities. Half of all homes in the Town are heated with fuel oil or kerosene, the remainder use gas and electric heating systems.

In 2000, the median value¹ of owner-occupied homes in Millington was lower than any other town in the County and the County itself. This is most likely due to the age and grade of most of Millington’s homes. Median home value in Betterton, which also has a large percentage of aged housing stock, is closest in comparison to Millington.



The addition of homes in Mill Village will result in a 30% increase in housing units in Millington.

Median price asked for vacant homes in Millington was significantly lower than all other towns, including Betterton, although it has probably increased since the decennial Census was taken due to the number of new homes that have been built in Mill Village beginning in 2005. At buildout the Mill Village subdivision will feature a total of about 50 new homes priced in the \$200,000s and higher. This will result in an overall increase of 30 percent in the Town’s housing stock.

Table 14: Comparison of Median Housing Value and Price Asked – 2000

	Millington	Betterton	Chestertown	Galena	Rock Hall	Kent County
Median Value*	\$86,500	\$91,400	\$131,600	\$111,700	\$95,700	\$115,500
Median Price Asked**	\$50,000	\$91,700	\$194,600	\$90,000	\$85,000	\$93,600

* Median value of owner-occupied units

**Median price asked of vacant units

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

While housing values and prices in Millington are lower than most places in the County, rent in Millington is higher. Among towns, only Chestertown has a higher median rent and the County’s median rent is only a few dollars more than Millington’s (see Table 15).

Table 15: Comparison of Median Rent - 2000

	Millington	Betterton	Chestertown	Galena	Rock Hall	Kent County
Median Contract Rent	\$432	\$323	\$465	\$350	\$308	\$439

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Only 10 of Millington’s 163 housing units, approximately 4 percent of the Town’s housing stock, were vacant in 2000 (see Table 16). Of these, only 1 was vacant and available for rent. Most of the Town’s vacant housing stock is rented or sold but unoccupied and apparently unavailable

¹ Median value and price asked are the Census respondent’s estimate of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale.

for rent. This circumstance is not evident in any other town in the County. The lack of available rental units may be driving up the cost of rental housing in Millington.

Table 16: Comparison of Housing Unit Vacancy Status - 2000

	Millington	Betterton	Chestertown	Galena	Rock Hall	Kent County
Total Vacant Units	10	108	274	9	178	1,744
For rent	10%	2%	57%	22%	3%	12%
For sale only	20%	6%	10%	22%	11%	9%
Rented or sold, not occupied	70%	4%	3%	0%	2%	3%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	0%	86%	15%	0%	76%	60%
For migrant workers	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Other vacant*	0%	2%	15%	56%	6%	16%

* Units held for occupancy by a caretaker or janitor, and units held for personal reasons of the owner.

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

A number of homes in the Town, particularly rental housing units, reveal evidence of neglect and overcrowding. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Town undertake a program to improve the maintenance standards of multi-family rental housing through strong code enforcement, and stressed the Town’s responsibility for regular oversight and stringent enforcement policies. This could be accomplished with an additional part-time staff person or a Commission-appointed body who could oversee enforcement of housing standards in the Town, such as a Housing Commission or Task Force.

Summary

- While Millington’s median housing value and price are almost the lowest among municipalities in the County, its median rent is almost the highest.
- The apparent lack of available rental housing may be driving up the cost of rental housing.
- The condition of housing units, particularly older ones, in Millington may be driving down home values and asking prices.
- Owners of older homes in Millington would benefit from access to State and federal restoration or renovation programs.

- Housing strategies in Millington should address overall housing conditions, including affordability, availability, accessibility and quality.
- Absentee landlords may be part of the poor housing condition problem. In the absence of attentive landlords, the Town must increase its oversight and enforcement efforts to ensure that housing conditions remain at uniformly satisfactory levels.
- State and federal programs may be able to assist homeowners with rehabilitation of older homes in poor condition.
- The relatively large percentage of housing units that have been bought or rented but remain vacant (for at least part of each year) may be housing for transient or migrant workers.
- Housing strategies in Millington should address the needs of the elderly, including affordability, accessibility, and special needs.
- Revisions to the Town’s regulations and policies can positively impact housing conditions and affordability.
- Any long-term strategy addressing adequate housing must, by necessity, address household income.