Executive Summary

This report has been prepared for the United Way of the Piedmont and its Housing Work Group in response for their need for accurate and current data around affordable housing. Some of the most salient points found herein include the following:

- The population in Spartanburg County has been experiencing moderate growth and the number of residents is expected to increase by 27% from 2000 to 2020.
- Changes in population demographics are impacting the local housing market
- The 55+ age group is expected to see the largest growth in population size
- The proportion of Hispanic or Latino residents is expected to increase from 3.0% in 2010 to 7.9% in 2021 (an increase of almost 8,500 individuals)
- The median household income in Spartanburg County is $45,125 which is lower than peer counties, the State of South Carolina, and the United States
- 14.7% of Spartanburg County residents, 42,347 individuals, live below the poverty level
- The number of total housing units increased by only 2.2% in Spartanburg between 2010 and 2015
- Three bedroom units make up the largest portion of the housing units
- 70.2% of housing units in Spartanburg are classified as single-family detached units
- Building permits in Spartanburg County fell sharply after 2007 but began to rebound slightly after 2012.
- The Spartanburg County occupancy rates for owner and renter occupied units have stayed consistent over the past 5 years
- Spartanburg County has a higher owner occupancy rate and a lower renter occupancy rate compared to peers.
- The housing vacancy rate for Spartanburg County has fallen over the past 5 years and is generally lower than peers
- Housing is generally considered to be affordable in Spartanburg County based on median income and median cost
- Renters have substantially lower median household income than owners
- Almost half of renters pay more than 30% of income on housing costs
- The percent of households in Spartanburg County spending over 30% of their household income on housing costs has fallen for all types of households for the past 5 years
- 28,997 Spartanburg County households spent over 30% of their income on housing costs in 2015
- Transportation expenses exacerbate housing affordability, a serious issue for Spartanburg County
- Demand for housing is increasing, as are housing prices
- The rent will continue to increase as vacancy rates stay low, resulting in more renters spending 30% of their income on housing costs.
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Introduction and Methodology

The purpose of this report is to provide data relative to affordable housing in Spartanburg County to United Way of the Piedmont and its Housing Work Group. The report provides comprehensive data surrounding demographics of Spartanburg County residents, housing markets, select economic characteristics and considerations, and other considerations that impact housing market affordability. No original data were generated for this report; however, data were obtained from multiple primary sources to provide a comprehensive assessment.

Definition of Affordable Housing

According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the generally accepted definition of affordable housing is “[housing] for which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities. Please note that some jurisdictions may define affordable housing based on other, locally determined criteria, and that this definition is intended solely as an approximate guideline or general rule of thumb.”

According to this definition and based on the median household income in Spartanburg County ($45,125.00), the maximum amount a household should be spending annually on housing related expenses is $13,537.50. As discussed in this report, certain populations are spending well above this 30% threshold, keeping in mind that there are other factors that must be considered components of housing affordability, such as transportation and utility expenses.

Comparison Groups

For the purpose of this assessment, the counties of Charleston, Greenville, and Richland in South Carolina were selected to comprise the comparison group on the county level due to in-state comparability on numerous factors such as population and economic demographics and transportation corridors. Comparison data are also provided for the State of South Carolina and the United States to provide further context to the data.

HUD Median Income

HUD has calculated a 2016 median income for the Spartanburg, SC HUD Metro FMR Area as $52,900 using the 2013 ACS, 1 year estimate of household median income and the Consumer Price Index inflation calculator. As this number is based on a calculation, it was not used in this assessment.

Cost of Living

When comparing the cost of living of an area to the United States, numbers below 100 represents a lower cost of living index than the United States average (100 represents the United States cost of living). Overall, the cost of living in the City of Spartanburg* is cheaper than the United States at an overall rating of 83.60, and housing expenses, as part of the cost of living index, are extremely low when compared to the United States and other cities in South Carolina at 49.00. However, the City of

2 FY 2016 Income Limits, Spartanburg, SC HUD Metro FMR Area

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Spartanburg rates higher than the United States average of 100 for both utilities expenses (105) and grocery (104.1). The health (98) and transportation (96) expenses are both close to the United States average and are just slightly lower than that of the City of Greenville\textsuperscript{3}. 

\textit{The cost of living index is based on city data and not county data.}

\textsuperscript{3} Sterling’s Best Places, Cost of Living Index, City of Spartanburg, accessed Oct. 26, 2016
Spartanburg County Demographics

Located in the upper part of the State of South Carolina, Spartanburg County is one of 10 counties that comprised by the Upstate Region. The entire county encompasses approximately 820 square miles and has a population density of 351.9 people per square mile⁴.

http://www.sciway.net/maps/cnty/spartanburg.html

⁴ American FactFinder, Population, Housing Units, Area and Density, Spartanburg County, 2010

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Population
The Spartanburg County population has steadily risen between 2000-2010 with a population increase of 13.3% or 34,697 individuals. The population estimate for 2016 is 315,136 reflecting another increase of 6.6%. The figure below shows the population growth from 2000 to 2016 and the projected population for 2020.

In comparison to its peer counties, Spartanburg County is expected to have the lowest population growth between 2000 and 2020 at a moderate 27.0% increase. Greenville County is expected to almost double the total population during the same time period with an anticipated growth of 41.7%. The other two peer counties, Charleston and Richland, have a predicted total population growth rate of 35.6% and 35.3% respectively.

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**Age**

The 2015 median age of a Spartanburg County resident is 38.5 years and approximately 58% of the total population falls between the ages 20-64 years, with 31.5% of the County’s population falling between 20-44 years. The median age is similar to the median seen in Charleston and Greenville Counties. Richland County has a lower median age of 33.1 years, with a larger percent of residents falling between the ages of 20-24 years than the other three counties.²

![Spartanburg County Age Distribution 2015](image)

The large number of young working aged individuals in Spartanburg County is important to the housing market as this population will potentially be the largest portion of those renting and those looking to purchase a home. According to the National Association of Relators 2016 study of generational housing trends, this population comprised the largest segment of the buyer’s market at 61%⁸.

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² American FactFinder, United States Census Bureau, 2015 1 year estimates, Demographics and Housing Estimates

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
The distribution of the ages of the total population from the year 2010 to 2021 is expected to stay relatively similar with only small increases in the population ages 55+. This is in keeping with the populations trends expected nationwide as the Baby Boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964) continues to enter retirement age and beyond.

The median age of the Spartanburg County resident was 37.8 in 2010 and is predicted to be 38.9 in 2016 and rise to 39.7 in 2021.

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As seen in the figure below, the distribution of ages in Spartanburg County compared to the State of South Carolina (represented by the dots and lines) show that the County age distribution is comparable to the State average, but when the comparison is changed to the United States, Spartanburg County has fewer individuals in the age ranges of 20-40 years and a larger population of 55+.\(^{12}\)

**Age Pyramid, Spartanburg County compared to State of South Carolina, 2016**

![Age Pyramid, Spartanburg County compared to State of South Carolina, 2016](image)

Age’s progress upwards with the bottom set representing ages 0-4 and the top set representing 85+.

*ERIS Business Analyst Age Pyramid Report, Spartanburg County compared to South Carolina*

\(^{12}\) ERIS Business Analyst age pyramid report

Housing Assessment 2016

Davis, MSI
Elderly

The elderly population is of a special concern related to affordable housing because of expected increase in the size of those 65+ over the next 10 years as those part of the Baby Boomer Generation enter retirement age and beyond. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging, the older population, define as persons 65 or older, represent 14.5% of the United States population and that number is expected to grow to 21.7% of the total population by 2040\(^{13}\). In Spartanburg County, the older population is also predicted to rise. As seen in the figure below, the predicted percent of the total population 65-74 years old is expected to rise 2.8% between 2010 and 2021. The age ranges of 75-84 and 85+ are also expected to see increases, though not as large\(^ {14}\).

\(^{13}\) United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging (AoA), Aging Statistics and Projected Future Growth of Older Population

Approximately 17% of the total population in Spartanburg County is a female over the age of 65 years whereas 14% of the population is a male over the age of 65\textsuperscript{15}. This is in keeping with the national trend of more elderly women than men in this age group.

\textsuperscript{15} American FactFinder, Age and Sex, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Racial Characteristics

The racial composition of Spartanburg County has remained fairly consistent from 2010-2015 with approximately 72% of the population identifying as white alone, 20% identifying as black or African American alone, 6% identifying as some other race (includes those that identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander), and 2% identifying as two or more races. As shown by the graph below, it is predicted that the 2016 and 2021 population changes in racial composition will remain fairly consistent in Spartanburg County, with those who identify as some other race having the largest increase by about 1% between 2016 and 202116.

Spartanburg County residents of Hispanic or Latino origin accounted for 6.0% of the County population in 2010 and is expected to rise 7.9% in 2021. This is a change from approximately 17,733 individuals to 26,180 individuals in a 10 year span17.

**Veteran Status**

The number of veterans in Spartanburg County in 2015 is 16,857 or 7.4% of the total civilian population 18 years and over. Males disproportionately make up the largest portion of veterans in Spartanburg County (93.6% of all veterans are male, whereas males only make up 47.6% of the total civilian population over 18). Nearly half of Spartanburg County veterans are over the age of 65, with 32.8% being between the ages of 65 to 74 and 23.8% being age 75 or older18.

**Homelessness**

According to the most recent Point-in-Time (PIT) count conducted by the South Carolina Coalition for the Homeless, Spartanburg County has the 5th highest number of individuals experiencing homelessness in South Carolina with 346 individuals reporting to be living in either emergency shelters, transitional housing, or unsheltered. Thirty of these individuals were reported to be veterans and 99 reported having some sort of a disability19.

Based on the 2015 population estimate, 11.63 individuals per 100,000 are experiencing homelessness in Spartanburg County.

Of the 346 individuals included in the PIT homelessness count, 246 are over the age of 24, 17 are between the ages of 17-24, and 65 are under 18 years old. When considering the family types, 2 are

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18 American FactFinder, Veteran Status, 2015 1 year estimate  
19 South Carolina Coalition for the Homeless, Point-In-Time Count, January 2016
adults only, 96 are adult and child families, 2 are individual children, and the majority, at 246, are individual adults. 

*It is important to note that, per the HUD definition of homelessness, the PIT does not include individuals who are unstably housed in hotels or living doubled up with friends or family. It also has limitations in that there is a population of unsheltered individuals who did not visit homeless services during the count who may not have been captured unless they were interviewed through the street counts.*

**Disability**

The total number of individuals in the civilian noninstitutionalized population in Spartanburg County living with some type of disability (includes hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care difficulty, and independent living difficulty) is 45,169, or 15.4% of the total County population. The most common disabilities are those that result in ambulatory difficulties (9.9%) and independent living difficulty (8.1%)\(^20\).

\(^{20}\) American FactFinder, Disability Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate
Spartanburg County Economic Characteristics

Median Income

The median income for Spartanburg County in 2015 is $45,125 and, as seen in the figure below, is below the median income of all of the peer counties, the State of South Carolina, and the United States. Spartanburg County’s median income has steadily risen over the past 5 years by approximately $5,000. Richland and Charleston Counties have seen a change of $7,000 in median income during the same time period, while Greenville County has seen a smaller increase of approximately $3,000.\(^{21}\)

\(^{21}\) American FactFinder, Income in the Past 12 Month (In Inflation-Adjusted Dollars), 2015 1 year estimate
As seen by the figure above, white households have a higher median household income than black and Hispanic or Latino households. The median income for white and black households has slowly risen between 2011-2015, while the household income for Hispanic or Latino households has fallen slightly since 2012.

*Note: the household income for Hispanic or Latino, any race in 2015 is an outlier with a margin of error of +/-34,243

22 American FactFinder, Median Income in the Past 12 Months (Inflation Adjusted Dollars), 2011-2015

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
**Poverty Status**

In 2015, approximately 7% of all family households (7,919) and 6.8% of all non-family households (7,673) were below the poverty level in Spartanburg County.

The percentage of family households below poverty level has steadily declined over the past 5 years with the biggest decline occurring between 2014-2015. The percentage of non-family households over the past 5 years below poverty level shows more variation but is approximately equal to the family households below poverty in 2015\(^{23}\).

In 2015, approximately 14.7% of the total population in Spartanburg County (42,347 individuals) lived below the poverty level and of that 21.2% (14,333 individuals) are under the age of 18, 13.5% (23,726 individuals) are between the ages of 18-64, and 9.5% (4,288 individuals) are 65+. Those of Hispanic or Latino origin (any race) have the highest rate living below poverty at 25.8% (4,978 individuals)\(^{24}\).

In comparison, approximately 14.5% of the population in Charleston County, 13.8% of the population in Greenville County, and 15.2% of the population in Richland County live below poverty\(^{25}\).

All of these data points represent 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Individuals who fall at 140%, 150% and 200% of FPL are often considered to be living in poverty and can qualify for various assistance.

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\(^{23}\) American FactFinder, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months by Household Type, 1 year estimate  
\(^{24}\) American FactFinder, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2015 1 year estimate  
\(^{25}\) American FactFinder, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2015 1 year estimate
programs, including the Housing Choice Voucher Program, public housing assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), food stamps (SNAP), and other assistance programs.

The figure below shows how the percent of individuals living in poverty has changed from 1997-2014 for Spartanburg, Charleston, Greenville, and Richland Counties, the State of South Carolina and the United States (with 2004-2005 data unavailable). The percent of individuals of all ages in poverty in Spartanburg County has increased since 1997, and in 2010 the County’s poverty rate exceeded the state average and rates in Richland and Charleston Counties and has exceeded Greenville County’s rate almost every year between 1997-2014. Spartanburg County (represented by the long dash, two short dashes green line) had a lower percent of individuals living in poverty than three of the other counties, the State of South Carolina, and the United States until 2001. After 2001, Spartanburg County’s percent of individuals living in poverty has steadily increased to a high in 2012 in which the percent of individuals was higher than all the other comparison groups, and only recently fell below the State of South Carolina percent in 2014.  

26 United States Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 1997-2014

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Income Inequality (GINI Index)

The GINI index, a summary measure of income inequality, varies from 0 – 1, with 0 indicating perfect equality or proportional distribution of income, for Spartanburg County is 0.4435, which is slightly lower than the GINI indexes of the peer counties and the State of South Carolina\textsuperscript{27}. This means that Spartanburg County has a slightly more proportional distribution of income across all individuals than the comparison groups. The index has stayed relatively steady over the past 5 years, with a high of 0.4635 in 2011 and a low of 0.4286 in 2012\textsuperscript{28}.

\textsuperscript{27} American FactFinder, GINI Index of Income Inequality, 2015 1 year estimate
\textsuperscript{28} American FactFinder, GINI Index of Income Inequality, 2011-2015 1 year estimate
Housing Market Analysis

Definition of Housing Unit

The United States Census Bureau defines a housing unit as “a house, apartment, mobile home or trailer, group of rooms, or a single room, that is occupied or, if vacant, is intended for occupancy as separate living quarters. Separate living quarters are those which the occupants live separately from any other persons in the building and which have direct access from the outside of the building or through a common hall. Both occupied and vacant housing units are included in the housing unit inventory.”

Total Housing Units

Spartanburg County had 125,372 total housing units in 2015 and saw a smaller increase in number of total housing units between 2010 and 2015 than the peer counties, at an increase of 2.2%. Charleston County has seen the largest increase at 6.2%, and Greenville and Richland counties have seen increases of 4.0% and 4.3% respectively.

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29 United States Census Bureau, Group Quarters and Housing Units Estimates Terms and Definitions
30 American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2010 and 2015 1 year estimates

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Housing Units by Bedroom

Over half of the housing units (51.0%) in Spartanburg County in 2015 were classified as 3 bedroom units, and approximately 7.3% of all units are reported to be either no bedroom or one bedroom units. The percent of housing units with 3 and 4 bedrooms has increased from the 2010 to 2015 while all other units either stayed the same or decreased.\(^{31}\)

According to the United States Census Bureau, units that are one room (studio apartments, etc.) are reported as having no bedrooms as the room is not used mainly for sleeping.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{31}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate

\(^{32}\) United States Census Bureau, Housing Definitions, [https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/definitions.pdf](https://www.census.gov/housing/hvs/definitions.pdf)
As shown in the figure above, Spartanburg County has seen an increase in the number of 3 and 4 bedroom units and a decline in the number of 2 bedroom units between 2010 and 2015. In comparison to peer counties, Spartanburg County has fewer 1 and 2 bedroom units and more 3 bedroom units\(^3\).

97.7% of all units in 2015 have a bedroom occupancy rate of 1.00 or less (meaning the average occupancy is 1 person or less per bedroom), 1.5% have between 1.00 and 1.50 occupants and 0.60% have 1.51 or more occupants. According to the United States Census Bureau, these numbers have held consistent from 2010-2015\(^3\). These numbers are comparable to the State of South Carolina rates, and when compared to the United States, Spartanburg County has a lower percent of units that fall in the ranges of 1.00 to 1.50 or 1.51 or more.

The occupancy standard, which is the limit on the number of persons per dwelling unit and is set by the Fair Housing Act, is generally set as two persons per bedroom. According to HUD, overcrowding is defined as 2.00 or more persons per bedroom\(^3\). Based on this definition, the 0.60% of all housing units that have 1.51 or more bedroom occupancy rate in Spartanburg County are or are close to being considered overcrowded.

\(^{33}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2010 and 2015 1 year estimate  
\(^{34}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate  
\(^{35}\) United States Department of Housing and Urban Development,  
Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI

Housing Units by Type

The percent breakdown of the type of units over the past 5 years has stayed consistent. In 2015, 70.2% of housing units in Spartanburg County are single-family detached units, 13.3% of the units are some type of manufactured housing (which includes mobile homes, boats, RVs, and vans), 11.3% are multi-family homes with 3 or more units per building, and the smallest percentage of units, at 5.3%, is single-family attached and duplex units. However, in comparison to peer counties, Spartanburg County has a higher percent of single-family detached units and manufactured housing units than the any of the peer counties.

The average household size in Spartanburg County is 2.56 individuals. This is comparable to the average household size for the peer counties, the State of SC, and the United States, and the average household size has remained fairly steady for the past 5 years.

It is important to note that there has been an increase nationally in the percent of households with one person, and that may cause the average household size to fall in the future.

*Manufactured housing included mobile homes, boats, RVs and vans*

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36 American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 1 year estimate
37 American FactFinder, Households and Families, 2015 1 year estimate
38 United States Census Bureau, Figure HH-4 Growth in living alone, http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/files/graphics/HH-4.pdf
Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs

The data reported in this section is representative of a point-in-time and not an annual average.

Currently, there are 722 units of public housing in Spartanburg County in 7 different property locations. At the time of the data collection for this report, 84% of individuals residing in one of the public housing units were classified as having extremely low income (0-30% of the median income for the area as set by the federal publications), and 65% earn between $1-$10,000 annually (24% earn between $1-$5,000 and 41% earn between $5001-$10,000). The average total tenant payment (TTP) for rent was $230. The TTP is calculated as 30% of the family’s adjusted gross income after allowable deductions\(^{39}\).

The Housing Choice Voucher program in Spartanburg County had 1,922 households receiving allocations at the time of this report across HUD owned properties and project-based properties that are privately owned. Of those in the voucher program, 76% are classified as extremely low income (70% of all new admissions must be classified as extremely low income). Nearly 51% of all residents in the voucher program earn between $5,001-$15,000 (29% earn between $5,001-$10,000 and 22% earn between $10,001-$15,000). As with to the public housing TTP, residents in the voucher programs TTP is 30% of their adjusted gross income after allowable deductions, but they can elect to pay up to 40% of their adjusted gross income if they wish to live in a location with rent higher than the 30% threshold. Thus, the average TTP for those in the voucher program is slightly higher than those in public housing at $274\(^{40}\).

An issue identified by the Spartanburg Housing Authority is the limited ability of individuals who qualify for the voucher program to find a one bedroom housing unit that falls within the affordable price range of allowable TTP for the voucher program (30-40% of adjusted gross income). This means that most one bedroom units that are available in Spartanburg County have a rent price that is higher than most voucher program households’ 30-40% TTP cap.

It is also important to note that the Hispanic population is not accessing either of these resources at a high rate. Currently only 2% of those in public housing and 1% of those in the voucher program are of Hispanic or Latino origin\(^{41}\).

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\(^{39}\) Spartanburg Housing and Urban Development Public Housing Resident Characteristics Report, run Oct. 4, 2016

\(^{40}\) Spartanburg Housing and Urban Development Voucher Resident Characteristics Report, run Oct. 4, 2016

\(^{41}\) Spartanburg Housing and Urban Development Characteristics Reports, run Oct. 4, 2016

Housing Assessment 2016

Davis, MSI
Housing Units by Urban, Urbanized Cluster, and Rural Status

According to the 2010 Housing Census, 71.1% of all units in Spartanburg County fall within the urbanized area, 3.1% are in an urbanized cluster, and 25.8% are in the rural areas.\(^{42}\)

Urbanized areas are defined as the territory encompasses at least 50,000 people (density) and an urbanized cluster is defined as a territory that encompasses at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 people. Rural encompasses all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area.\(^{43}\)

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\(^{42}\) ESRI Market Report, Spartanburg County

\(^{43}\) United States Census Bureau, [https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/urban-rural-2010.html](https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/ua/urban-rural-2010.html)

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Housing Distribution
The map below shows the distribution of housing units across Spartanburg County in 2016. The two maps on the following page show the distribution of housing units in 2000 and the predicted distribution in 2021\(^4^4\). In keeping with national trends, the predicted distribution of housing for 2021 in Spartanburg County shows a small movement of individuals towards urbanized areas.

Nationally, the United States Census Bureau data has shown that individuals are moving to suburban areas at a higher rate than city centers and the individuals moving to the city are young, educated, and affluent individuals\(^4^5\).

2016 Housing Units by Census Tract

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\(^4^4\) ESRI Business Analyst, Housing Units 2000, 2016, 2021
\(^4^5\) The Wall Street Journal, “More Americans are Again Moving to Suburbs than Cities”, March 24, 2016
2000 Housing Units by Census Tract

ESRI Market Report, Spartanburg County 2000

2021 Predicted Housing Units by Census Tracts

ESRI Market Report, Spartanburg County 2021

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
It is estimated that Spartanburg County will see a 27.2% increase in total housing units from 2000 to 2021 (total units identified in the 2000 census was 109,922 and is predicted to rise to 139,842 in 2021)\(^46\).

The figure below shows the distribution of housing stock by the year built according to the 2015 Census report. Nearly 35% of all the housing in Spartanburg County was built between the years 1990 and 2009, and, as it can be seen by the figure, there has been a significant slowdown in building after the year 2010\(^47\).

\(^{46}\) ESRI Market Report, Spartanburg County
\(^{47}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Building Permits

According to the data from the Census Bureau, the trend data for building permits in Spartanburg County shows a downturn from 2007 to 2011. The building permit rates have not fully rebounded to the levels prior to the recession. This slowdown in building permits has an impact on the housing market supply and is being outpaced by the demand.

48 ESRI, Annual Residential Building Permit Trends, 2007-2015, Selected Upstate SC Counties

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Occupancy and Vacancy Rates

Spartanburg County occupancy rates are similar to the rates seen in the peer counties, in the State of South Carolina, and the United States. In 2015, the owner occupancy rate (percent of homes in which the homeowner is residing) was 68.8% and the renter occupancy rate was 31.2%\(^{49}\). The occupancy rates are based on the total number of occupied units, not total units.

The five year trend of occupancy rates in Spartanburg County shows that the owner and the renter occupancy rates have stayed consistent while the vacancy rate has fallen from 14.3% in 2011 to 9.9% in 2015\(^{50}\).

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\(^{49}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate

\(^{50}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
**Vacancy Rates**

The number of units that are vacant and for rent has fallen from 2011 to 2015 going from 4,735 units vacant in 2011 to 1,719 units vacant in 2015. Other types of vacant units, including rented but not occupied, for sale, sold but not occupied, and seasonal, are slightly higher in 2015 than they were in 2014 but have shown some decline between 2011 and 2015\(^{51}\).

The renter vacancy rate in Spartanburg County is higher than the homeowner rate and the renter rate has fallen from 12.3% in 2011 to 4.6% in 2015. Spartanburg County’s homeowner vacancy rate (2.3%) is similar to that of the peer counties, South Carolina, and the United States rates but the renter vacancy rate (4.6%) is slightly lower than the United States (5.9%) and Greenville County (6.1%) and much lower than the rates for Charleston County (11.1%), Richland County (11.3%), and the State of South Carolina (9.5%)\(^{52}\).

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\(^{51}\) American FactFinder, Vacancy Status, 2011-2015 1 year estimate

\(^{52}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Profile of Housing Occupants

The following two figures show the racial composition of owner occupied and renter occupied housing units in 2015 in Spartanburg County\(^{53}\). The percent of individuals is based on the number of occupied units and not total housing units.

The data shows that a higher percentage of individuals identifying as African American are in renter occupied units than those in owner occupied units. The data also indicates that individuals identifying as White are more likely to be homeowners, and they make up the majority of both homeowners (81.7%) and renters (62.2%).

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\(^{53}\) American FactFinder, Demographic Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
The proportion of homeowners and renters of Hispanic or Latino origin in Spartanburg County in 2015 is 4.8% (in 2015, 6.5% of the total population in Spartanburg County is of Hispanic or Latino origin\textsuperscript{54}). Approximately 8.2% of all renters in renter occupied units are Hispanic or Latino and 3.3% of the population in owner occupied units\textsuperscript{55}.

\textsuperscript{54} American FactFinder, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates, 2015 1 year estimate
\textsuperscript{55} American FactFinder, Demographics Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2015 1 year estimate
**Household Type**

The United States Census Bureau counts three types of households—married couple, male householder with no wife present, and female householder with no husband present. Non-family households are also counted. The total number of households in Spartanburg County in 2015 was 112,951, and a majority of those are married coupled family households. The smallest type of households for 2015 is male householder, no wife present. The average household size is between 3.16 and 3.53 for the three household type. Non-family households have an average size much lower at 1.22. The average household size for all households, regardless of type, in Spartanburg County is 2.56\textsuperscript{56}.

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\textsuperscript{56} American FactFinder, Households and Families, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
**Age Distribution of Homeowners and Renters**

The majority of residents in owner occupied housing falls between the ages of 45 and 74 years old, while the majority of renters fall between the ages of under 35 to 54 years old. This is similar to the distribution of ages seen in peer counties, the State of South Carolina, and the United States\(^{57}\). The figure below shows the overall distribution of ages for the year 2015 in Spartanburg County.

![Age Distribution of Owner and Renter Occupied Housing Units, 2015](image)

Of the total households in Spartanburg County in 2015, 31.2% had one or more individuals under the age of 18, and 39.1% had one or more individuals over the age of 60. Householders living alone comprise 29% of total households with 11% of those householders being over age 65. These percentages have stayed relatively the same for the past 5 years (2011-2015) with only a small increases in the number of individuals living alone and the percent are over the age of 65\(^{58}\).

In 2010, 4.6% of the total households were multigenerational. *Multigenerational is defined by the United States Census Bureau as a family consisting of more than two generations living under the same roof*\(^{59}\).

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\(^{57}\) American FactFinder, Households and Families, 2015 1 year estimate  
\(^{58}\) American FactFinder, Households and Families, 2011-2015 1 year estimate  
\(^{59}\) ESRI Market Report, Spartanburg County  

Housing Assessment 2016  
Davis, MSI
**Year Occupants Moved In**

As seen by the figure below, residents in renter occupied units have moved into their units, on average, more recently than residents in owner occupied units. The majority of residents in owner occupied units had a move in date between 2000 and 2009 while the majority of renter occupied units has a move in date of 2010 to 2014⁶⁰.

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⁶⁰ American FactFinder, Demographic Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
**Median Household Incomes**

Spartanburg County’s median household income ($45,125.00) is similar to the median household income for the State of South Carolina but much lower than the median for the peer counties and the United States for the year 2015. When the median income is broken down by owner occupied and renter occupied households, renter occupied household median income is lower than the total household median income and significantly lower than the owner occupied household median income for the past 5 years\(^{61}\).

\(^{61}\) American FactFinder, Selected Economic Characteristics 2011-2015 1 year estimate
**Housing Market**

Since 2011, Spartanburg County has seen an increase in number of new listings in the housing market as well as the number of closed sales. Additionally, the trend data shows that the gap between the number of new listings and the number of closed sales is narrowing, which is reflective of showing the demand for housing is out pacing the number of units available on the market\(^2\).

![Housing Market Snapshot, Spartanburg County 2011-2015](image)

In 2015, the median home selling price was $135,000, which was up 8% from 2014, and the housing affordability index for was 182\(^3\). The affordability index of 182 means that the average family has a household income 182% of the income necessary to qualify for a conventional loan covering 80% of a median priced, existing single-family home\(^4\).

*The housing affordability index is for our region and indicates how the median household income compares to the amount necessary to qualify for a median-priced home under prevailing interest rates. The higher the number (100+ is desired), the greater the affordability\(^5\).*

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\(^2\) Spartanburg Relators Association  
\(^3\) Spartanburg Relators Association Monthly Indicators Report, December 2015  
\(^4\) National Association of Realtors, Housing Affordability Index Methodology, [http://www.realtor.org/topics/housing-affordability-index/methodology](http://www.realtor.org/topics/housing-affordability-index/methodology)  
\(^5\) Spartanburg Relators Association Monthly Indicators Report, December 2015  

Housing Assessment 2016  
Davis, MSI
The figure below shows the average sales price of single-family detached (free standing homes) and single-family attached (townhouse, condo, and duplex) in Spartanburg County according to the Spartanburg Realtors Association for 2010-2015. The sales price for the single-family detached housing has steadily risen over the past 6 years, while the single-family attached has had a few declines in average sales price and has not returned to its 2010 high.66

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Single-family</th>
<th>Single-family Attached (Condo, Townhouse, Duplex)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$128,611</td>
<td>$111,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$129,442</td>
<td>$91,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$135,483</td>
<td>$97,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$138,645</td>
<td>$99,884</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$143,049</td>
<td>$92,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$155,290</td>
<td>$99,140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Multiple Listing Service of Spartanburg, Inc.**

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

**MLS Not Responsible for Accuracy of Information:** the information published and disseminated by the Service is communicated verbatim, without change by the Service, as filed with the Service by the Participant. The Service does not verify such information provided and disclaims any responsibility for its accuracy.

**Mortgage Status**

In 2015, there were 46,679 housing units with a mortgage, contract to purchase, or similar debt in Spartanburg County. Of these, 5,329 also had either a second mortgage or a home equity loan, 143 had both, and 41,207 did not have a second mortgage or equity loan. All other housing units (30,994) were without a mortgage.67

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66 Spartanburg Realtors Association
67 American FactFinder, Mortgage Status, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Median Household Value

As seen by the figure below, the median household value in Spartanburg County has fluctuated over the past 5 years with a peak value in 2015 at $141,200. The median household values have consistently been higher than the median sales price as reported by Spartanburg Realtors Association.

Median monthly household expenses in 2015 were $1,057.00 and median real estate taxes were $882.00. The median monthly expenses and real estate taxes have not had any significant increases or decreases in the past 5 years.

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68 American FactFinder, Financial Characteristics for Housing Units with a Mortgage, 2011-2015 1 year estimate
69 Spartanburg Realtors Association, Annual Market Reports 2011-2015
70 American FactFinder, Financial Characteristics for Housing Units with a Mortgage, 2011-2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Median Gross Rent
Median rent in Spartanburg County has shown steady annual increases, moving by approximately 6.7% from 2011 to 2015. However, this is lower than the rate of increase seen in the State (10.5%), Charleston County (20%), and Greenville County (11.3%). Richland County’s rate of increase, 6.1%, is more comparable to Spartanburg’s 71.

In 2015, the largest percentage of those paying rent in Spartanburg County (67.6%) pay between $500-$999 per month 72.

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71 American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 1 year estimate
72 American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
As reflected by the figure below, over the past 5 years there are lower percentages of renters in Spartanburg County paying less than $300, between $300-499, and between $500-749 has decreased, but more individuals are paying $750-999, $1,000-1,499, and $1,500+. This is consistent with the increase in the median rent trend seen over the past 5 years\textsuperscript{73}.

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
\hline
\hline
LESS THAN \\
$300$ & $9.0\%$ & $5.1\%$ & $7.3\%$ & $6.9\%$ & \\
$300-499$ & $15.6\%$ & $16.6\%$ & $14.0\%$ & $13.7\%$ & $12.8\%$
\hline
$500-749$ & $41.9\%$ & $37.6\%$ & $37.9\%$ & $38.6\%$ & $39.8\%$
\hline
$750-999$ & $22.5\%$ & $22.5\%$ & $21.5\%$ & $24.4\%$ & $26.4\%$
\hline
$1,000-1,499$ & $7.9\%$ & $9.2\%$ & $11.9\%$ & $11.9\%$ & $11.9\%$
\hline
$1,500 OR MORE$ & $1.3\%$ & $2.1\%$ & $2.4\%$ & $2.4\%$ & $2.4\%$
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{GROSS RENT TRENDS, SPARTANBURG COUNTY 2010-2014}
\end{table}

\textit{Unable to include data from 2015 as part of the trend data due to the change in rent brackets for the 2015 United States Census Bureau ACS reporting period.}

The median rent in Spartanburg County ($721) is above the fair market rent (FMR) for a 2 bedroom unit, set by HUD, for 2016 which is $677\textsuperscript{74}.

\textsuperscript{73} American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2010-2014 1 year estimate
\textsuperscript{74} 2016 Fair Market Rent, Spartanburg FMR Metro Area, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Housing Market Index Map

The map below shows the census tracts of the county that have housing markets that are similar based on selected defining characteristics*. This means that the availability of housing units, cost, and occupancy rates in tracts that are the same shaded color are similar\(^75\). This map does not reflect housing affordability and should only be used to identify areas of similar housing markets.

*Defining characteristics include: median home sales price, coefficient of variance of sales price, percent of housing units with mortgage foreclosures, percent of housing units that are owner occupied, percent of housing units that are vacant, and percent of all rental units that are subsidized

\(75\) CPD Maps, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, ESRI
Housing Affordability

Median Household Income and Rental/Homeownership Affordability
The median household income for Spartanburg County residents is close to the income necessary to afford the median gross rent (difference of $1,472). The same holds true for peer counties, except for Richland County, in which the median income does not meet the amount needed to afford the median gross rent\(^76\).

Even though the median income exceeds the amount necessary to afford the median gross rent, 46.5% of renters in Spartanburg County do not earn a high enough household income to afford the median gross rent\(^77\).

\(^{76}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 4 counties, 2015 1 year estimates

\(^{77}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimates

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
The generally accepted practice to calculate the income necessary to afford to purchase a home is the total cost of the home should not exceed three times the household income. In the figure below demonstrates the how median income for Spartanburg residents compares to median sales price for a house in 2015. The 2015 median income for Spartanburg residents ($45,125), the median income for owner occupied households ($59,508), and the median income for renter occupied households ($27,428) was used in the calculations\(^ {78}\).

While the 3x the median household income for all Spartanburg residents and 3x the median household income for owner occupied households exceeds the median sales price, it can be seen that 3x the median household income for renter occupied households is well below the median sales price\(^ {79}\).

Additionally, based off of the report by the Spartanburg Realtor’s Association (see page 36), the average sales price for a single-family attached (condo, townhouse, etc.) also exceeds 3x the household income of renter occupied units.

\(^ {78}\) Spartanburg Relators Association, Market Report 2015 & American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate
\(^ {79}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
**Households Spending More than 30% of Household Income on Housing Costs**

Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs no more than 30% of a households income and in Spartanburg County, households that are owner occupied, on average, have spent less than the 30% threshold during the past 5 years. However, in 2015, 38.4% of renter occupied households spent over 35% of their household income on gross rent\(^8\).

In 2015 number of households that are spending over 30% of their income on housing costs breaks down to 15,482 renter occupied households, 10,911 owner occupied households that have a mortgage, and 2,604 owner occupied households without a mortgage for a total of 28,997 households in Spartanburg County\(^8\).

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\(^8\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 1 year estimate

\(^8\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate

Housing Assessment 2016

Davis, MSI
When compared with the peer counties, the State of South Carolina, and the United States, a higher percentage of Spartanburg residents who are in renter occupied units spend over 30% of their household income on housing costs than those in Charleston and Greenville Counties and the State of South Carolina. Owner occupied residents in Spartanburg County that spend over 30% are at a lower rate than all the comparison groups.\(^{82}\)

The 5 year trend data reflecting the percentage of renter occupied unit residents who are spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs has only varied by 3.1% with a peak of 52.8% in 2013 and the current low of 49.7%.\(^{83}\)

\(^{82}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate  
\(^{83}\) American FactFinder, Selected Housing Characteristics, 2011-2015 1 year estimate
Households at Risk of Homelessness

The figure below represents the areas of Spartanburg County in which residents are at a risk of homelessness due to rent increase. If rent averages were to increase in the darker shaded areas seen on the outer edges of the county to the North and South of the City, there is a greater risk for residents to become homeless due to their inability to afford the new housing costs.84

Homeowners spend less of their household income on housing costs than renters do, but with renters spending more than 30% of their household income, accumulating the funds needed to place a down payment on a house is extremely limited. When a buyer is unable to pay a down payment, additional financial barriers can accumulate. Those potential barriers to a household’s ability to afford owned housing include Pre-Mortgage insurance (PMI), home purchasing fees, down payments, taxes and insurance, homeowners’ association fees, and repairs/improvements.85

84 CPD Maps, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, ESRI
85 AmortizationTable.org, Mortgage Costs

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Other Considerations that Impact the Housing Market and Affordability

Transportation Expenses

The median inclusive housing expenses in relation to household income for all households regardless of their ownership status in Spartanburg County is approximately 29% of household income. However, when transportation costs are added in, the median expenses jumps to almost 60% of household income (30% over the acceptable threshold for affordable housing). In the following two figures, the maps show Spartanburg County from a percent of household income used for housing costs alone and from a percent of household income as it relates to housing and transportation costs combined. The darker the shade of blue (first figure) and red (second figure), the higher the percent of the income required to meet these costs.

Percent of Household Income Spent on Housing Costs Alone

Housing and Transportation Index, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Spartanburg County, 2016

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
In the previous figure, it can be seen that the areas in the census tracts that would be classified as either rural or urbanized cluster area have some of the higher percentages for amount of household income spent on housing expenses.

**Household Income Percentage Spent on Housing and Transportation Costs**

In the figure above, it can be seen that the same areas that were indicated as having some of the highest percentage of household income spent on housing expenses are also the same neighborhoods that have extremely high percentages of income spent on both housing and transportation. The deep red area located in the lower part of the county has some residents spending up to 87% of their total household income on housing and transportation expenses alone.

It is estimated that the total annual auto costs for a Spartanburg County resident (including ownership expenses—taxes, maintenance, loans, and gas costs) is around $12,000\(^87\).

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\(^87\) Housing and Transportation Index, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Spartanburg County, 2016

Housing Assessment 2016
Davis, MSI
Utility Expenses

According to the United States Energy Information Administration, the average monthly utility bill in South Carolina was 29.5% higher than the United States average\(^8\). Utility expenses are a component of the 30% threshold for affordable housing and when energy expenses are high, the amount spent monthly on housing related expenses will also increase.

Less in Savings

In a recent survey done by GoBankingRates, it was found that 69% of the respondents to a national survey (sample size 7,000) had less than $1,000 in savings. That is a jump from 62% who responded with a similar answer in 2015. 34% of those surveyed indicated that they have no saving ($0) at all\(^9\). The figure below shows the breakdown of savings by generation. Note: the millennial and Gen Xers are broken down into two categories’ (young and older).

As it can be seen from the figure, the oldest generation (Seniors, 65+) have a higher percent with $10,000 or more in savings at 23% but all generations are similar in the percent of individuals with $0 in savings (31%-37%).

Millennials and Elderly

According to a report issued by the White House on the millennial generation, millennials are less likely to be homeowners than young adults in previous generations. They are also choosing to return to live with parents, waiting longer to get married, and have children. Factors influencing this trend include stronger relationships with their parents, the desire to live close to home, enrolling in college at a higher

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rate than other generations (thus living at home or in group housing), and the labor market. With the reduction of the homeownership rate among this population and the increase in the number of young adults returning to live with their parents, the demand for housing may see a temporary decline.\(^{90}\)

As the baby boomer generation ages, the number of individuals 65+ will increase and impact housing demands. Over ½ of older individuals (56%) lived with their spouses in 2015, almost 1/3 (29%) lived alone, and in 2014, a relatively small percent (3.2%) lived in institutional settings (including nursing homes).\(^{91}\) The figure below shows the breakdown of the percent of women and men 65+ living with their spouse, living alone, and other living arrangements for 2015.

![Figure 3: Living Arrangements of Persons 65+: 2015](http://www.aoa.acl.gov/Aging_Statistics/Profile/2015/6.aspx)

As the figure above shows, the percentage of older women living alone was 36% in 2015 and this number is expected to increase in the coming years.\(^{92}\)

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90 Council of Economic Advisors, 15 Things about Millennials, October 2014  
91 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Profile of Older Americans: 2015, Living Arrangements  
92 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Profile of Older Americans: 2015, Living Arrangements
According to the Administration on Aging, in 2013, 19% of older persons in the U.S. were renters and 81% were homeowners, with 65% of the homeowners owning their house free and clear. Almost 45% of all older households spend more than 25% of their income on housing costs (69% of renters). The median construction year of houses owned by older persons was 1972, and almost 3% have severe problems with plumbing, heating, electric, kitchen, and/or upkeep93.

**Disability**

In 2015, 15.4% of the total civilian, noninstitutionalized population in Spartanburg County had some sort of disability94, and according to research conducted for the Center for Studying Disability Policy, 36% of non-elderly households nationally with worst-case needs (poverty) have members with disabilities and of those, 41% of households with members with disabilities have trouble affording housing.

Elderly households with disabled members experience poor housing characteristics (poor economic conditions, mobility barriers, unmet needs for dwelling modifications) frequently. People with disabilities are less likely to own their own residence (60% compared to 71% of people without disability), and there is an 8.2% reduction in the probability that an individual will be a homeowner when there is a disability present95.

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93 United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Profile of Older Americans: 2015, Housing
94 American FactFinder, Disability Characteristics, 2015 1 year estimate
95 Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics, *The Relationship between Disability, Residence, and Home Ownership*, D.W. Hoffman & G. Livermore, 2012
Conclusion

Housing is mostly considered affordable in Spartanburg County based on median income and median costs, but there is a clear housing affordability gap between homeowners and renters in the County. Homeowners, in general, are less likely to be spending more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. The median income of renters is substantially lower than that of homeowners and is an area that needs to be looked at closer to identify what factors contribute to the difference. It is recommended that a review of the types of new housing developments be conducted, specifically looking at rental units and the starting rental prices and other fees (deposits, etc.) for affordability of the median income of renter households. It also must be considered that if the median sales price of a home in Spartanburg County increases more than $375 without the median household income also showing an increase, the median income for all households will no longer meet the 30% threshold.

Other factors that contribute to housing affordability and need to be considered for the County include: transportation expenses, utility expenses, and the change expected in the population age demographics (specifically the increase of young working age individuals and the increase of those 65+).