

CHAPTER III

HOUSING

This chapter of the Miracle Manor Neighborhood Plan assesses a variety of housing-related issues. A greater degree of knowledge regarding the Neighborhood's existing housing stock as well as local government and non-profit housing programs will enable residents to effectively target maintenance and revitalization efforts. This information serves as the foundation for the goals, objectives and strategies presented at the end of the chapter.

Existing Conditions

Housing Conditions

A windshield survey is a visual assessment of conditions based on a set of predetermined criteria. To determine the housing and private property conditions in Miracle Manor, a windshield survey was conducted on October 1, 2005. Each single-family home and multi-family complex and its surrounding property were assigned a score from 1 to 4. Map 3.1 indicates the areas of the Neighborhood rated for this survey. Windshield surveys are by nature subjective, but every possible effort was made to ensure unbiased and consistent ratings based on the following criteria:

- **1 = Excellent condition**

This rating was assigned to homes or yards that were well maintained and cared for. Homes were carefully maintained, repaired and painted. Yards were well groomed and free of debris and improper storage. This rating was assigned when a home and/or yard was given attention beyond regular maintenance.

- **2 = Good condition**

This rating was assigned to homes or yards that were in average condition. Homes did not have obvious exterior maintenance issues. There were no visible weeds, trash or junk in the yard.

- **3 = Needs work**

This rating was assigned to homes that had minor maintenance issues, as outlined below. Homes or yards that received this rating had no more than two occurrences of any of the following:

Homes

- peeling paint
- broken or boarded window(s)
- graffiti
- sagging porch, steps or roofline
- missing roof shingles/tiles
- obvious cracks in exterior walls or foundation

Yards

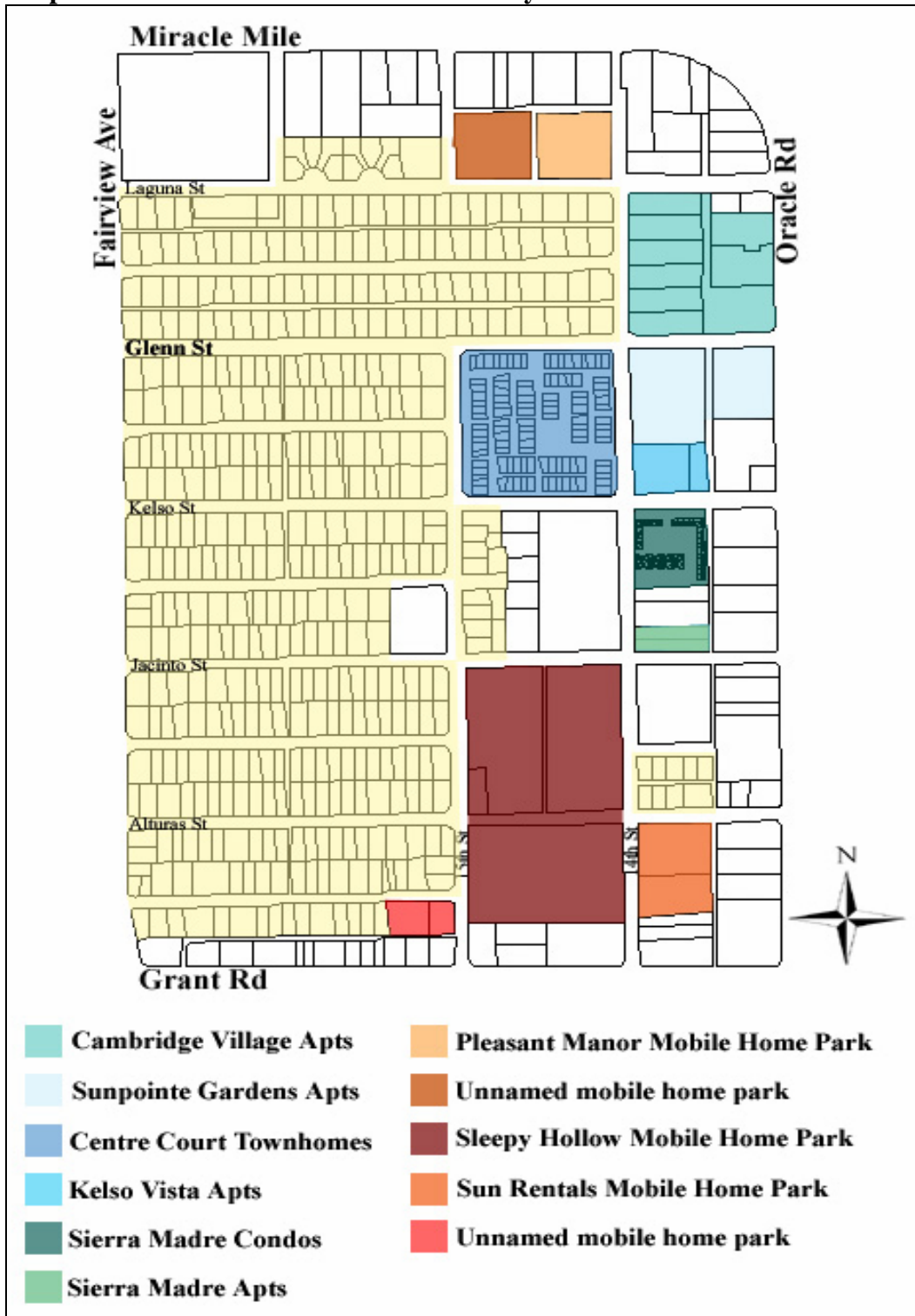
- weeds higher than approximately six inches
- appliances of any kind
- junk vehicles, vehicles on blocks or vehicles that were obviously not in use (deflated tires, vegetation around tires, accumulation of vegetation on the vehicle, etc.)
- upholstered furniture not intended for outdoor use
- an excessive amount of improper outdoor storage

- **4 = Poor condition**

This rating was assigned to homes and/or yards that obviously received little or no maintenance and, as a result, caused visual blight in the Neighborhood. This category includes the same criteria as “needs work” but had more than two occurrences of poor maintenance.

Abandoned homes were not scored on the above criteria. These properties were simply noted as abandoned with the assumption that they constitute a visual blight on the entire Neighborhood and provide an environment for undesirable activities. Map 3.1 indicates the residential areas considered for the windshield survey and identifies the mobile home parks and multi-family housing discussed throughout this chapter. The results of the single-family home windshield survey are presented in Figure 3.1. The majority of Miracle Manor’s housing stock, 79 percent, is in either good or excellent condition. Only one percent of the housing stock has serious maintenance issues. Similarly, 68 percent of yard conditions are in good to excellent condition while only two percent requires major repair efforts. The three abandoned homes in Miracle Manor are not included in the housing conditions below. Abandoned homes account for .7 percent of the Neighborhood’s total single-family housing stock.

Map 3.1: Miracle Manor Windshield Survey Areas

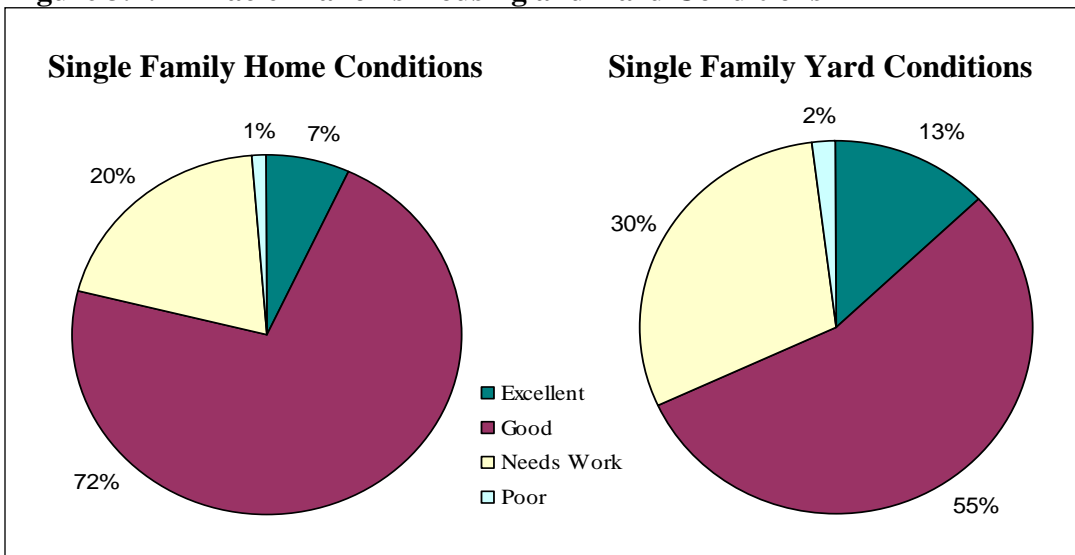


Source: Windshield Survey 2005; edited by Erika Green

The large apartment, condominium and townhouse complexes in the Neighborhood appear well maintained. Centre Court Townhomes, Cambridge Village Apartments, Sierra Madre Apartments, Sierra Madre Condominiums, Kelso Vista Apartments and Sunpointe Gardens Apartments were rated according to the criteria above. The Centre Court Townhomes, Cambridge Village Apartments and Sierra Made Condominiums were rated “excellent” on both housing and property conditions, while Kelso Vista Apartments, Sierra Madre Apartments and Sunpointe Gardens Apartments received a rating of “good” on both housing and property.

There are five mobile home parks in Miracle Manor: Sleepy Hollow, Sun Rentals, Pleasant Manor, and two unnamed parks. One of the unnamed parks is located immediately west of Pleasant Manor at Laguna and 15th Avenue. The other is located on the corner of Budmoore Terrace and 15th Avenue (see Map 3.1: Miracle Manor Windshield Survey Areas).

Figure 3.1: Miracle Manor’s Housing and Yard Conditions



Source: Windshield Survey 2005

Mobile home parks were not evaluated based on the above criteria for several reasons: it was difficult to determine if the units were vacant and/or

abandoned; it is believed that some residents are illegal immigrants and are wary of outsiders; tenants may be concerned that their homes are being scrutinized for building code compliance and they could be forced to move if violations are found; and, based on earlier field work, one of the resident managers is sensitive to outsiders entering the park.

Sleepy Hollow Mobile Home Park has received numerous code violations in the recent past (Metro Briefing 2001). In 2001, the owner of Sleepy Hollow was notified of these violations, and became the first landlord targeted under the City's newly enacted Slum Abatement Blight Enforcement and Response (SABER), a program designed to improve rental-housing conditions (Mendoza 2005). An initial 322 building safety violation notices were issued for Sleepy Hollow in 2001. Violations included unsafe electrical installations, faulty plumbing, open sewer connection ports, broken windows, excessive weeds, trash and junked cars (Burchell 2001).

The City recognizes that mobile home parks offer affordable housing to many low-income Tucsonans. It is not the City's desire to close the parks, but rather to ensure that safe and healthy living conditions are provided for residents (Cruz 2005).

There are limitations to improving aging mobile homes. These limitations, outlined below, affect the ability to improve conditions in mobile home parks in general.

- Older mobile homes are difficult to renovate because parts and supplies are either expensive or not readily available.
- The removal of decaying mobile homes can cost thousands of dollars in transportation and salvage yard expenses. For this reason, many mobile home owners leave them in place, often inviting transients and the homeless.

- It is sometimes difficult to determine the party responsible for the code violations; mobile homes can either be under the ownership of the resident or the park owner (Alaimo 2000).

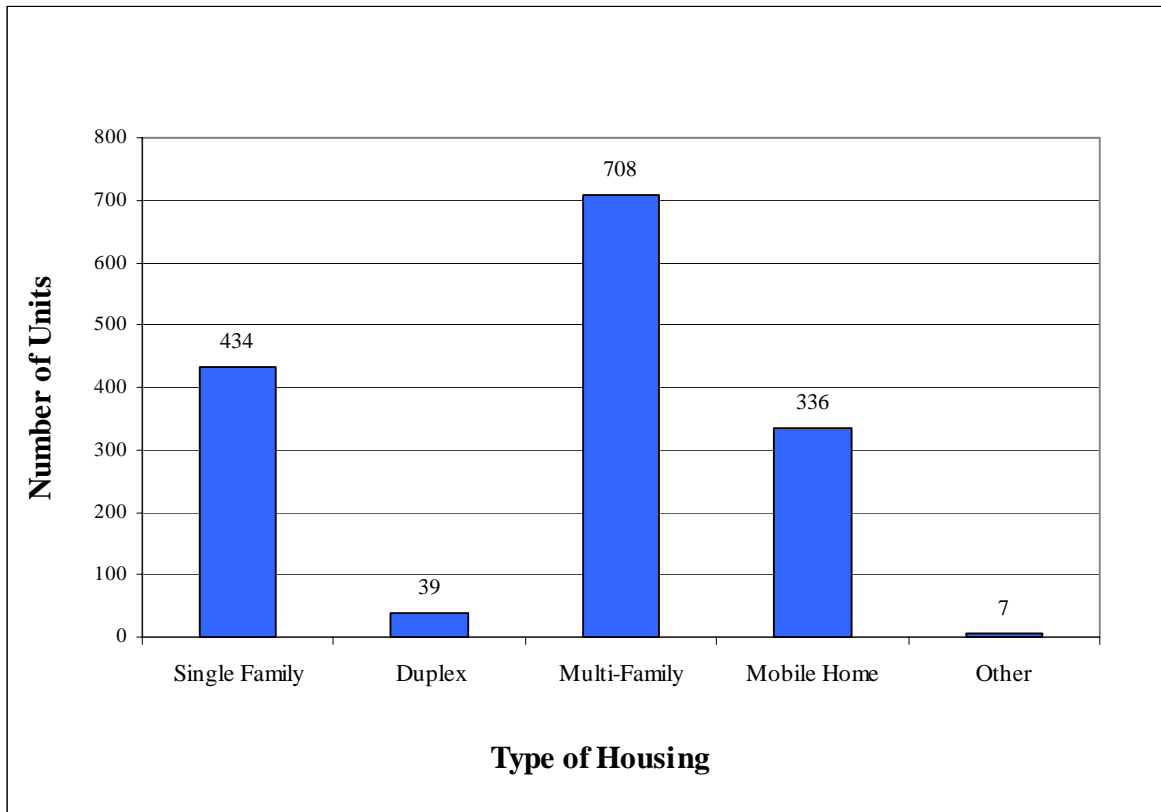
A survey of the mobile home parks was conducted to determine the vacancy rate. Four of the five mobile home parks are near or at capacity. Pleasant Manor was full; the park at Laguna and 15th Avenue had one vacancy; the park at Budmoore Terrace and 15th Avenue was full; and Sun Rentals had two openings. The exception was Sleepy Hollow, which has capacity for 300 mobile homes, yet only 102 occupied sites. This leaves a vacancy rate of 68 percent.

Based solely on exterior appearance, the majority of mobile homes in Miracle Manor are in poor condition. Although Sleepy Hollow completed the mandatory improvements in 2001, the property and buildings within this park remain dilapidated and deteriorated. The same is true for Miracle Manor's four other mobile home parks.

Number and Type of Housing

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that there are 1,524 housing units within Miracle Manor Neighborhood. This figure has not changed significantly and to date, there is little potential for development within the area. Figure 3.2 illustrates the housing types in Miracle Manor. The majority of housing units, 46.5 percent, is multi-family. Single family homes account for 28.5 percent, 2.6 percent are duplexes, and 22 percent are mobile homes.

Figure 3.2: U.S. Census Housing Types

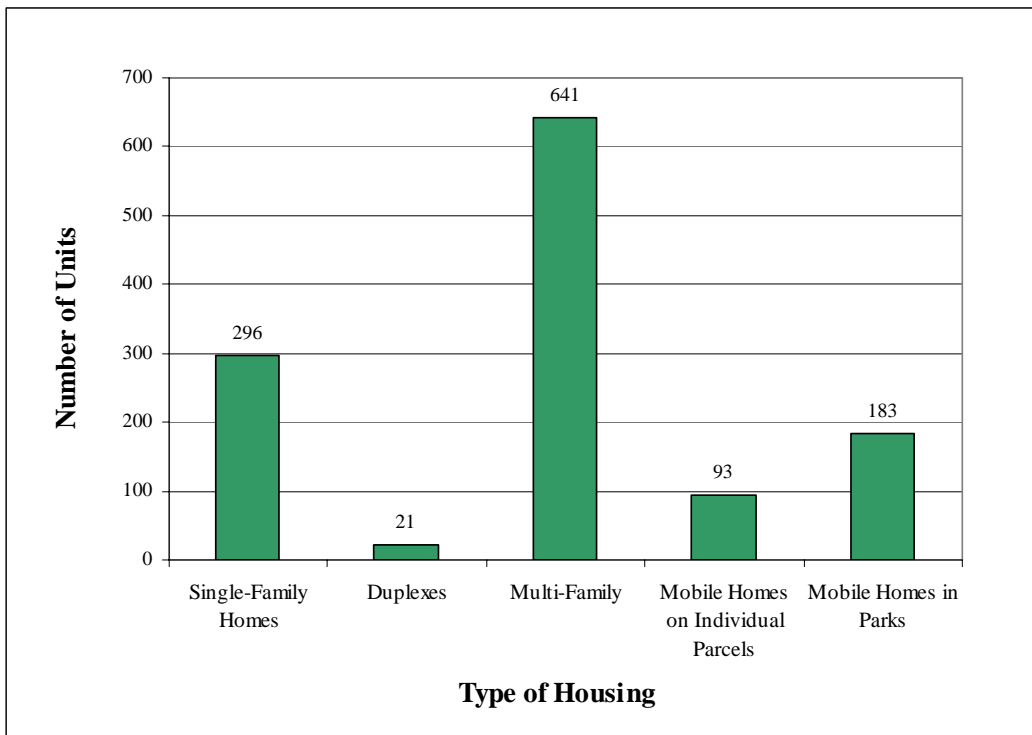


Source: 2000 U.S. Census

The 2000 U.S. Census is based on a relative sample of households, possibly explaining why the October 2005 windshield survey found a different count of housing types. According to the results of the windshield survey, a total of 410 homes—including single-family detached homes, duplexes and mobile homes—were on individual parcels. Figure 3.3 shows the results of the Windshield Survey. Of these, 93 were mobile homes, 21 were duplexes and 296 were classified as single-family homes. Based on the windshield survey and parcel information from the Pima County Assessor’s Office, 93 mobile homes are on individual parcels. This type of mobile home accounts for 34 percent of all mobile homes in Miracle Manor. The rest, 66 percent, are located within mobile homes parks and are not usually affixed to a permanent foundation. This data

does not distinguish between an owner residing at these addresses or people renting the units.

Figure 3.3: Windshield Survey Housing Types



Source: Windshield Survey 2005

However, the U.S. Census reports a total of 708 multi-family housing units within Miracle Manor. To generate an accurate account of multi-family units in the Neighborhood, managers of the apartment, townhouse and condominium complexes were contacted. This survey revealed that there are 641 multi-family housing units in Miracle Manor (this figure does not include the rental and transitional housing made available by social service agencies). Of these 641 units, 455 are rental apartments (Cambridge Village has 246 apartments; Sunpointe Gardens has 146; Kelso Vista has 40 apartments; and Sierra Madre Apartments has 23). The remaining 186 multi-family units are

available for ownership and are located in the Centre Court Townhomes, which offers 106 units, and Sierra Made Condominiums, with 80 units.

In addition to the above-mentioned multi-family residential units, there are a significant number of residential units available to those in recovery from drug and alcohol abuse (see Chapter VI). There is capacity for 209 individuals in these facilities which may account for the discrepancy between the Census and the windshield survey.

Owner Occupied and Renter Occupied

Table 3.1 provides a summary of owner and renter occupancy rates. Miracle Manor and the City of Tucson experienced relatively similar vacancy rates in 1990 at 14.6 percent and 11.3 percent, respectively. However, Miracle Manor’s vacancy rate increased to 18.4 percent in 2000 while Tucson’s decreased to eight percent.

Table 3.1: Owner and Renter Occupied Housing Rates

Housing Units	1990 Miracle Manor		1990 City of Tucson		2000 Miracle Manor		2000 City of Tucson	
	Total	1,463	100%	183,338	100%	1,648	100%	209,609
Occupied	1,250	85.4%	162,685	88.7%	1,368	83.0%	192,891	92%
Owner	510	40.8%	83,687	51.4%	547	40%	103,056	53.4%
Renter	740	59.2%	78,998	48.6%	821	60%	89,835	46.6%
Vacant	213	14.6%	20,653	11.3%	280	17.0%	16,718	8%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

The difference between renter and owner occupied units changed little in Miracle Manor over the ten-year period. In 1990, owner occupied homes accounted for 40.8 percent of the total occupied units in the entire Miracle Manor Neighborhood. This rate dropped a mere one percent to 40 percent ownership in 2000. The City of Tucson’s homeownership rate increased over the same period, but only by two percent.

Miracle Manor's homeownership rate is high when considering that multi-family housing units account for almost half of all available housing and 71 percent of those are rental apartments and not available for ownership. Moreover, multi-family housing does not include mobile home parks. It is unclear how many mobile homes are actually owned. However, considering that not all of them are owner-occupied, the percentage of homeownership is higher still. Generally speaking, the number of single-family detached owner-occupied homes in the interior of Miracle Manor indicates that the Neighborhood has a relatively low rate of turnover and of renter-occupied housing, contrary to what many residents perceive.

Although the overall owner-occupancy rate of the entire Neighborhood is lower than that of the City of Tucson, it should be noted that the single-family residential area alone has an owner occupancy rate of 70 percent. This is noteworthy because residents who have lived in Miracle Manor for a significant time period have a more vested interest in preserving the quality of life in the Neighborhood.

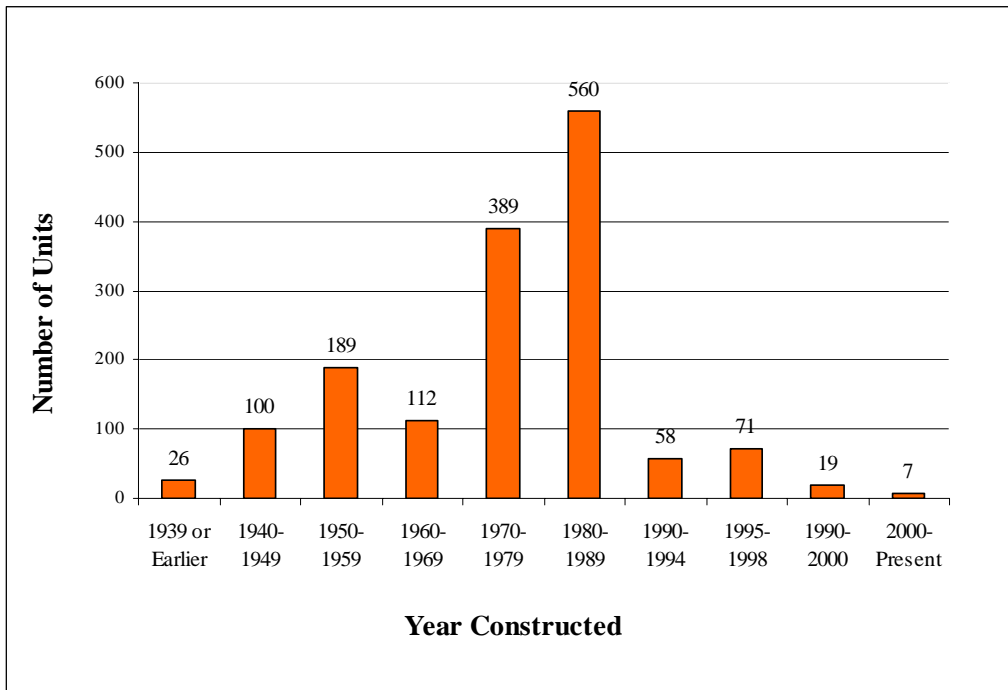
Age of Housing

Miracle Manor's single-family homes were constructed primarily in the 1940s and 1950s when the area was originally developed. The bulk of the Neighborhood's permanent and non-permanent mobile homes were manufactured in the 1950s. However, mobile homes have a shorter lifespan than most of their site-built counterparts.

As Figure 3.4 indicates, the majority of housing units in Miracle Manor was constructed from 1980 to 1989. The Centre Court Townhomes, Cambridge Village Apartments, Kelso Vista Apartments and Sierra Madre Condominiums were all constructed during the 1980s, contributing to the large percentage of housing constructed during this time period. It is possible that the demand for

multi-family housing in the 1980s was subsidized by the use of Industrial Development Bond funding.

Figure 3.4: Age of Miracle Manor’s Housing Stock



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Vacant Housing and Infill Potential

Few vacant parcels suitable for residential development exist in Miracle Manor. The windshield survey results indicate that approximately six parcels within the Neighborhood are presently available for housing development. The San Ignacio Yaqui Neighborhood purchased a small lot in Miracle Manor on the corner of Budmoore Terrace and Fairview Avenue to construct rental homes for Pascua Yaqui Tribal members. On this lot, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe constructed three infill single-family homes in 2003.

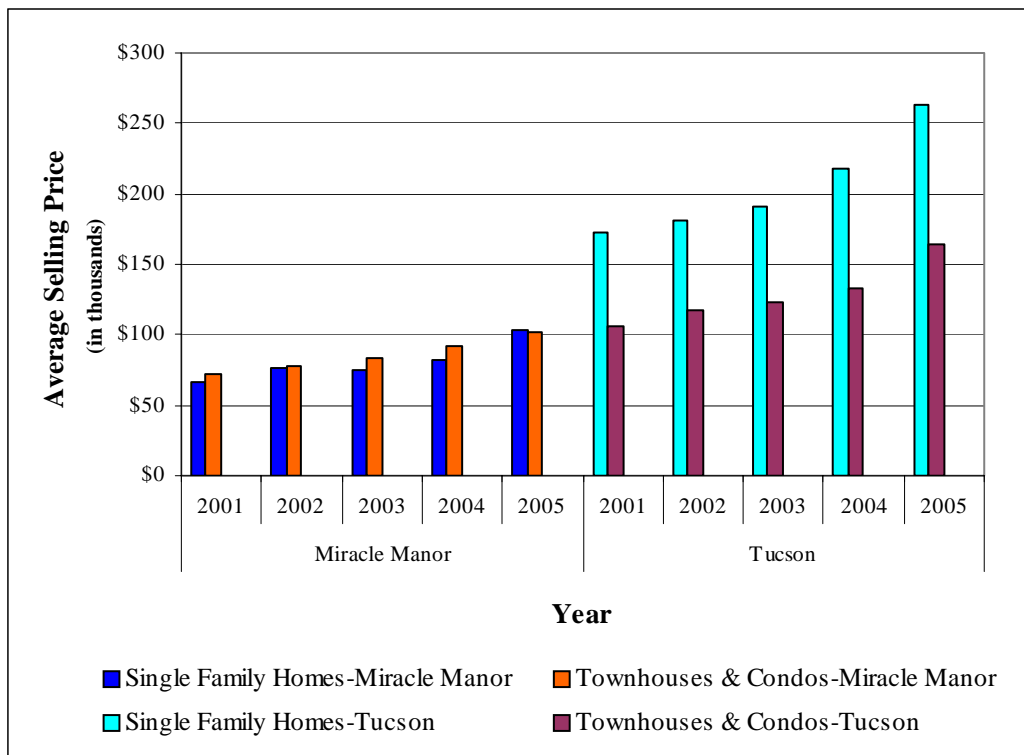
A number of infill projects have been initiated by non-profit organizations wishing to provide transitional or assisted housing. The Development Design

Group, Inc. and COPE constructed single story apartments to serve as drug and mentally ill housing at the corner of Laguna Street and 14th Avenue; and the Development Design Group has proposed a project for Ghost Ranch Lodge, which will provide 93 units of housing for very low-income elderly.

Housing Values

Figure 3.5 shows the value of housing in Miracle Manor and the City of Tucson from 2001 to 2005. The information is based on the selling price of housing units during the four-year period. The selling price of townhomes and condominiums in Miracle Manor during this period exceeded that of single-family homes, except for those selling to date in 2005. Although the value of housing in Miracle Manor is lower than that of the City of Tucson, the Neighborhood experienced an increase in value of all housing types, mirroring that of Tucson’s housing market.

Figure 3.5: Value of Miracle Manor’s Housing Stock



Source: Pima County Assessor’s Office; Tucson Association of Realtors 2005

Affordable Housing

The definition of affordable housing given by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is the most widely accepted. It states, “[A] household should pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing. Families who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, transportation and medical care” (Department of Housing and Urban Development: Affordable Housing 2005).

Housing affordability is a key factor in developing a strategy to improve Neighborhood conditions. With less disposable income, low-income residents are less able to adequately maintain and improve the condition of their homes. Additionally, they are more vulnerable to unsatisfactory conditions inflicted by landlords because many have few housing options. It is often easier to contend with issues of poor and inadequate maintenance than to find other affordable and available housing.

Table 3.2 shows the median monthly income for Miracle Manor residents and the City of Tucson. Miracle Manor is divided into two categories based on census block groups. While Census Tract 13.01, Block Group 8, accounts for only two blocks on the fringe of the Neighborhood, the median income of this population is significantly lower than that of the rest of the Neighborhood and the City of Tucson (See Chapter II, Map 2.3 for the location of Census Tracts and Block Groups in Miracle Manor).

Table 3.2: Monthly Median Family Income

	Miracle Manor		City of Tucson
	Census Tract 13.01 Block Group 7	Census Tract 13.01 Block Group 8	
Median Monthly Income	\$2491	\$1754	\$3112
Maximum Recommended for Housing*	30%	30%	30%
Affordable Monthly Payment	\$747	\$526	\$934

*Those who pay more than 30% are considered “cost-burdened” by HUD
 Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Two predominant demographic groups in Miracle Manor are the elderly and families that are low-income. For these residents, assistance may be needed to make home repairs or obtain the necessary materials and supplies.

The mobile home parks are a private market solution to the shortage of subsidized affordable housing. Furthermore, many mobile home parks do not require first or last month rent or a deposit, making them affordable for many low-income households. Some parks may not require credit checks or leases, making them even more accessible to the poor.

Assumptions

Assumptions have been made to address Miracle Manor’s housing concerns.

- Because it is believed by many Neighborhood residents that the mobile home parks reduce property values, many would like them to be better maintained or redeveloped.
- Displacement of mobile home park residents will be the likely result of redevelopment that occurs at the site of current mobile home parks.

- Home prices will continue to rise in the Neighborhood, reflecting the increase in Tucson's regional real estate market, yet will remain affordable compared to other areas in Tucson.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Based on the information put forth in this chapter, four overarching goals to not only improve the existing housing stock, but also assist residents in obtaining information and assistance when needed, are presented. These goals are offered in conjunction with mid-range objectives and strategies that serve as benchmarks in working toward each goal.

Goal 1: Maintain and improve existing housing stock

Objective 1: Eliminate abandoned housing

Strategies:

- Utilize the City of Tucson's Vacant and Neglected Structures program (VANS) by recording, reporting and monitoring offending properties (See Appendices D and E)

Objective 2: Identify and secure financial and educational assistance for home maintenance/repairs

Strategies:

- Gather information on agencies and/or organizations that assist low-income/elderly/disabled residents in maintenance education and assistance and compile into one document to disseminate to Neighborhood residents.

- Chicanos Por La Causa
- City of Tucson Community Services
Department programs: emergency home repair
home repair for elderly persons and target
neighborhoods
- Community Home Repair Projects of Arizona
(CHRPA)
- ProNeighborhoods
- Rebuilding Tucson Together
- Tucson Metropolitan Ministries (TMM) Family
Services, Inc.
- Tucson Urban League (See Appendix F)

- Locate funding to purchase improvement materials for
low-income and disabled residents
- Collaborate with City of Tucson Development Services
Department to subsidize or waive building permit fees for
home repairs for low-income residents

Objective 3: Encourage resident participation to assist fellow
homeowners in maintenance

Strategies:

- Harness talents and skills of residents in assisting elderly
or residents with disabilities care for their homes and
property
- Identify homes in need of basic rehabilitation from
resident participants and coordinate them with those that
are able to assist with repairs

- Implement a tool lending library
- Work with adjacent neighborhoods to learn about successful programs or projects and share ideas

Objective 4: Work together with the City of Tucson to target residential properties in need of repairs

Strategy:

- Collaborate with the City to fully utilize the Slum Abatement Blight Enforcement and Response program (SABER) (See Appendices D and E)

Goal 2: Improve the overall physical appearance of Miracle Manor residential area

Objective 1: Work with City officials to identify and enforce regulations on property owners with recurrent violations

Strategies:

- Disseminate information to educate residents about what are and are not code violations
- Encourage reporting violators to the proper City department and provide contact phone numbers and email addresses

Objective 2: Encourage all property owners (Neighborhood residents and landlords) to care for their homes and property

Strategies:

- Increase awareness of programs that dispose of hazardous waste, bulky trash pick-ups, etc. through announcements at meetings, handouts in the school, bulletin board in the park
- Award program for well-maintained homes and/or yards with recognition signs
- Organize community clean-up events

Goal 3: Promote residential infill

Objective 1: Insure that possible infill residential development is compatible with surrounding environment

Strategies:

- Recommend to City of Tucson Department of Planning and Urban Design and future developers that infill development be consistent with the Neighborhood character
- Work directly with the City and potential developers to ensure that neighborhood compatibility is considered in new projects

Goal 4: Increase homeownership

Objective 1: Increase knowledge of homeownership programs

Strategies:

- Gather information about homeownership programs, compile into one comprehensive document and disseminate to residents
 - Family Housing Resources
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Primavera Foundation
 - Pima County – City of Tucson American Dream Down Payment Initiative (ADDI), administered through Family Housing Resources (see Appendix G for map of program area)
 - Tucson Metropolitan Ministries (TMM) Family Services
- Invite representatives of agencies offering homeownership opportunities to Neighborhood meetings to speak about their programs

Objective 2: Encourage affordable housing construction on infill parcels

Strategies:

- Investigate the possibility of utilizing Pima County Affordable Housing Bond Funds, administered through the Pima County Department of Community Services and Neighborhood Conservation. This funding provides assistance to install infrastructure in public right-of-ways (such as sidewalks, streets, street lighting, sewer and water connections, etc.)

Objective 3: Encourage homebuyers to purchase within Miracle Manor

Strategies:

- Ask local realtors to encourage potential homebuyers to consider the Miracle Manor Neighborhood and provide them a list a residents' names as people who could be contacted to help sell the Neighborhood.
- Provide realtors with Neighborhood information and offer to meet with any prospective buyers