

# Creating



Attractive  
Affordably-priced  
Adaptable  
Aging-friendly  
Accessible

Every person needs and deserves a place to come home to—a place that provides them shelter and comfort, a place where they feel part of the community.



## Attractive+

Designed, constructed, and maintained to be compatible with local community character.



## Affordably-priced+

Available at attainable sale and rental prices; no more than 30% of household income should be spent on housing related costs.

## Accessible+

Connected to jobs, services, transit, amenities, and important community facilities.



## Adaptable+

Able to evolve with market forces, changing demographics, buyer and renter preferences, and environmental conditions.



## Aging-friendly+

Able to meet the diverse needs of seniors.



# WHY do we need



Chester County's existing homes are currently not addressing changing needs caused by demographic shifts and a growing population. With projected population growth, changes in home size, price, design, location, and accessibility issues will be needed to meet resident demand.

## DATA & TRENDS

### ↑ Population Growth

100,000 new residents are anticipated in the county by 2045, a nearly 17% increase from 2020, requiring just over 35,000 new homes.

### ↑ Aging Population

The senior population (65+) is anticipated to increase from 87,000 in 2020 to 145,040 in 2045.

### ↑ Single Person Household Growth

63,800 single person households are anticipated in the county by 2045, an increase from 43,800 in 2020.

### ↓ Housing Type Deficiencies

The county's existing housing stock—primarily single-family homes—is unable to meet the needs of the growing and diversifying population.

### ↑ Cost of Homes

The county consistently has high median housing prices - \$525,000 in 2024.

### ↓ Incomes Not Keeping Pace

Between 2010 and 2023 median household income increased by 5% while median housing cost increased by 21% (after adjusting for inflation)

## IMPLICATIONS

### Changing Household Needs

Senior households and single person households typically desire smaller homes with less maintenance.

### Changing Household Desires

Many searching for a home are prioritizing access to services, jobs, and amenities, which is reflected by development in the county's urban centers.

### Starter Homes

First time homebuyers and renters struggle to find affordable homes in the county.

### Business Community

Businesses are having trouble attracting and retaining employees due to high housing costs.

### Environmental Sustainability

Smaller footprint homes in proximity to public transportation limits greenfield development while decreasing vehicle emissions.

# HOW do



# affect...

Understanding the impact of A+ Homes can help communities plan for new home growth.

## Environment?

- + Compact development limits greenfield development.
- + Homes near public transportation and jobs decrease vehicle miles traveled and emissions.
- + Compact infill development can make the cleanup and remediation of contaminated sites financially feasible.
- + Apartments use less energy than single-family detached homes (U.S. EIA).

## Economy?

- + Increased apartment growth often has a net positive fiscal impact—even higher than non-residential uses (West Chester University).
- + New housing provides increased tax revenue and construction jobs.
- + New residents support existing businesses and attract new business growth.

## Schools?

- + On average, higher density homes with two or fewer bedrooms add less new school-aged children per unit than detached single-family homes (DVRPC).

## Neighborhood Character?

- + A diversity of home types—apartments, cottages, twins, townhouses—can add to the character of an area and create special places, as many of the county's boroughs exemplify.
- + The density of homes can be adjusted and mitigated to complement existing neighborhoods, such as through a mix of home types and creation of green space.

## Open Space?

- + A diversity of homes, along with appropriate planning and zoning, can support the retention of open space. If the county's forecasted 55,000 new homes were on one acre lots, they would consume 66,000 acres of greenfields. If these homes included apartments, townhouses, and redevelopment, 51,000 acres of greenfields could be protected.

## Traffic?

- + Municipalities can decrease the amount of new automobile traffic by encouraging compact residential development near public transportation and jobs, and expanding and improving the multi-modal network.

# HOW do we create



A+ Homes calls for supportive policy, innovative design and regulation, and partnerships between community stakeholders.



## **Decrease housing development costs**

Utility costs, permitting fees, and long development review processes can drive up the cost of housing, making A+ homes financially infeasible. Municipalities should encourage homes that utilize existing utilities (ADUs, residential conversions, in-fill, and adaptive reuse) and evaluate their review processes and fees.



## **Address community concerns**

Lack of comfort and familiarity with A+ homes may lead to pushback from residents. Municipalities can create public education initiatives.



## **Decrease footprint**

On average, smaller homes are more affordable than larger homes and can be part of a neighborhood in various forms, such as an apartment, a cottage, or a twin. Municipalities can allow for a diversity of home types to encourage smaller footprint homes.



## **Create partnerships**

Partnerships at the local community level between the municipality, non-profits, business community, and developers can advance A+ homes that address community needs. Working within the community, across sectors, can achieve multiple benefits.



## **Update policies and regulations**

Local governments can create supportive policy and innovative regulations. The Chester County Planning Commission provides case studies, reports, and tools to assist municipalities in updating policies and regulations.

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### **How We LIVE**



The A+ Homes initiative implements the LIVE goal of Landscapes3, Chester County's comprehensive plan.



The A+ Homes initiative is a joint effort of the Chester County Planning Commission, Chester County Department of Community Development, and Chester County Housing Choices Committee.