

## 6-1 Introduction

This chapter addresses issues related to existing single family neighborhoods. Information on code enforcement efforts, the age of housing units and property values are included as background. The issues, goals and actions are intended to address existing housing stock.

As of July 2014, West Valley City contained nearly 40,000 housing units, 65% of which are single family detached homes. Though the City has changed significantly over time, its single family neighborhoods have remained mostly intact and their preservation is an important part of the future vision of the City.

## 6-2 Background

Citywide, approximately two thirds of all homes are single family detached units, with the remainder comprised of a great variety of more compact housing types from townhomes and duplexes to large apartment complexes. This chapter covers four important issues for the future improvement of existing neighborhoods: education, property maintenance, beautification/enhancement and single family neighborhood integrity.

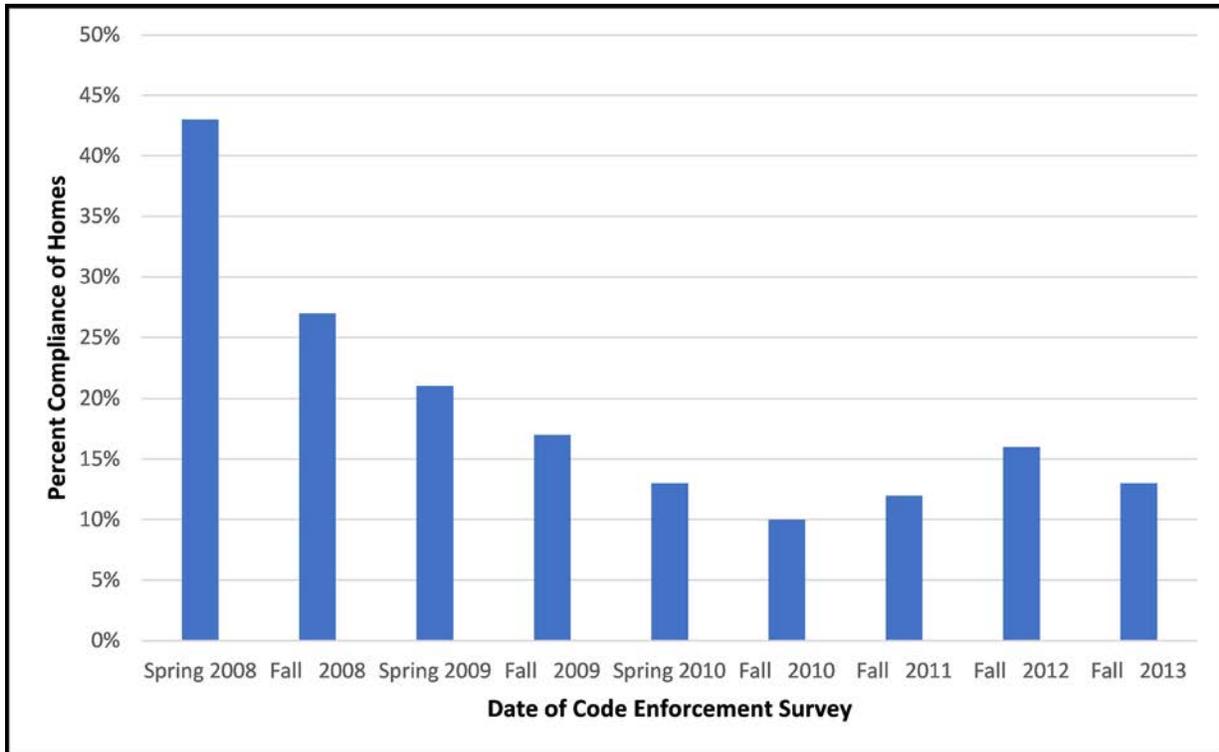
### Code Enforcement Survey

Beginning in 2008, the Code Enforcement Division of West Valley City conducted at least annual surveys studying City Code compliance of single family residential properties throughout the City. Each survey identified the location and type (i.e. graffiti, inoperable vehicle, landscaping, outside storage, solid waste and surfacing) of each violation. Figure 6-1 shows how compliance improved substantially following the formation of the Community Preservation Department in 2008. In recent years compliance has hovered around the low teens, which is comparable or better than peer cities. In 2013 the most common type of violation was landscaping.

While critical to the long-term stability of neighborhoods, code enforcement efforts can only go so far. Over time, homes within neighborhoods need reinvestment by property owners to stay attractive to families who will eventually buy and maintain homes within the neighborhood.



Figure 6-1: Code Enforcement Survey History



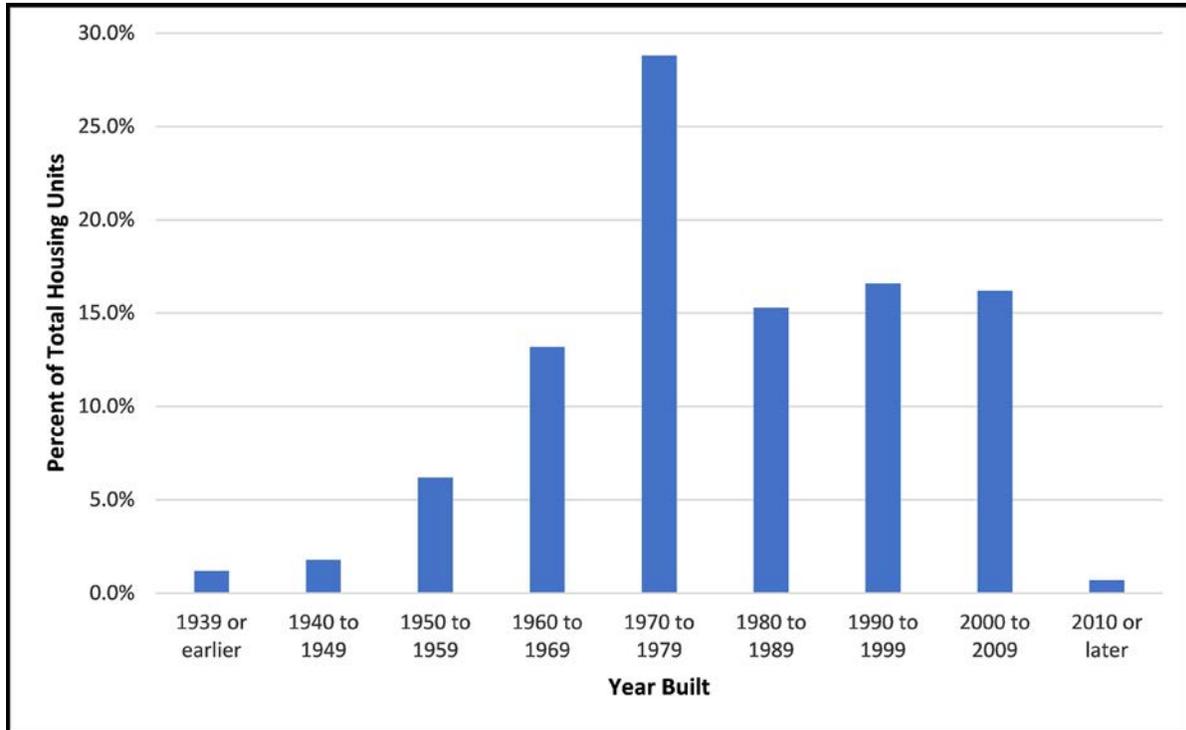
Source: West Valley City Community Preservation

### Age of Housing

As homes age they need ongoing maintenance such as paint, window replacements and shingle replacements on roofs to maintain property values, keep homes livable, improve energy efficiency and keep neighborhoods attractive. Figure 6-2 shows the year housing units within the City were built and illustrates how the majority of housing units in the City were built in the 70's or earlier. Such housing should have seen significant reinvestment by now; however, there are examples where maintenance is lacking and signs of wear and tear are showing.



**Figure 6-2: Age of Housing Units**

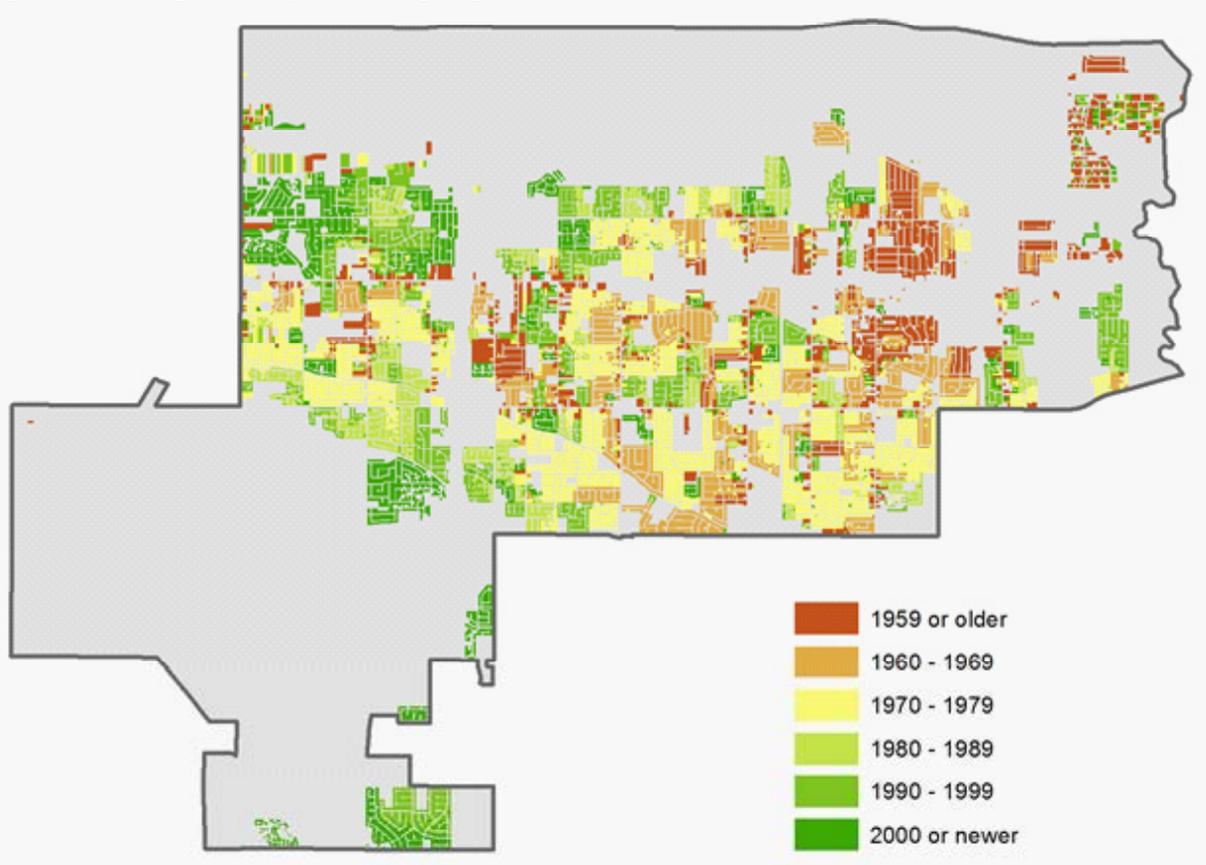


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey

Figure 6-3 shows the age of single family homes by location in the City. Generally speaking, the west side of the City is newer than the east side.



Figure 6-3: Single Family Home Age by Location



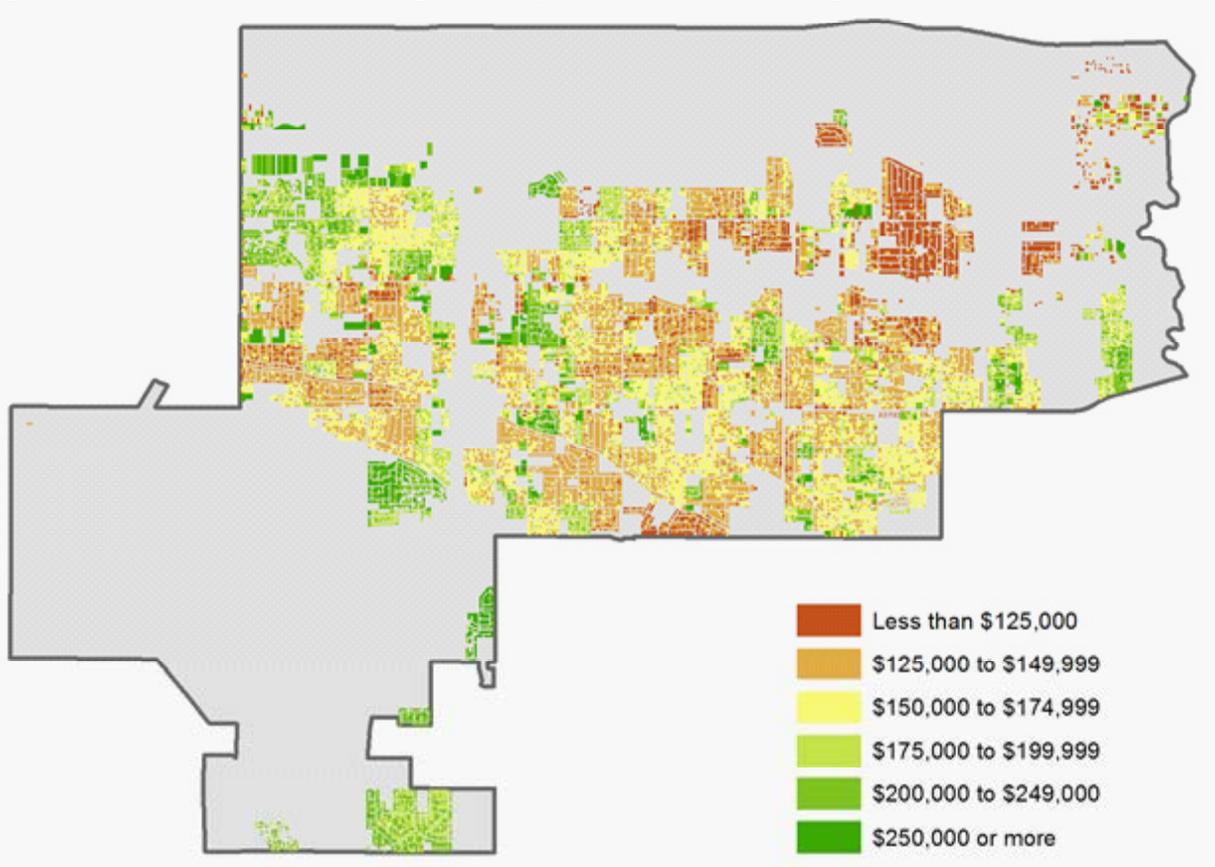
Source: Salt Lake County Assessor

## Property Value

One measure of the health of a neighborhood is the value of homes within a neighborhood. The Housing Chapter shows that the median value of owner-occupied homes in the City is about 25% less than the median value in the County. Research into property value and age has shown that within the City, older homes are generally worth less than newer homes. Beginning with the 50's, the average value of homes built within each decade is higher than the preceding decade. Figure 6-4 shows the assessed value of all homes within the City by location. When comparing Figures 6-3 and 6-4, one can see that several of the older subdivisions also contain some of the lowest valued homes. The City wants to promote home value appreciation for all homes, especially those that are older.



Figure 6-4: Assessed Value of Single Family Homes within the City



Source: Salt Lake County Assessor

## 6-3 Vision

As Salt Lake Valley’s western gateway, West Valley City is recognized for and celebrates the rich diversity of its neighborhoods. The City is committed to the long term preservation and health of its residential communities, and will work to proactively address important neighborhood issues that detract from their safety and vitality. West Valley City seeks to provide positive solutions involving neighborhood residents that make the City more beautiful, unique, and unified.



## 6-4 Issues, Goals and Actions

### Issue: Staffing and Department Coordination

As the City continues to age and remaining vacant land is developed, the City's emphasis will need to shift from regulating new development to supporting existing development. To address the issues that follow, a more concerted effort with more resources will be needed.

#### 6.1 Goal: Allocate more resources to support existing neighborhoods.

**6.1.1 Action:** Increase emphasis on researching issues related to existing neighborhoods, such as crime, code enforcement, property values, and community involvement.

**6.1.2 Action:** In addition to the goals and actions identified in this Chapter, develop specific programs and initiatives targeted to address issues in existing neighborhoods.

#### 6.2 Goal: Improve coordination of departments that regulate and provide services to existing neighborhoods.

**6.2.1 Action:** Establish a task force comprised of representatives from each department to coordinate efforts to support and improve existing neighborhoods.

**6.2.2 Action:** Provide regular Council reports on task force accomplishments.

### Issue: Education

One of the most important means for maintaining neighborhood cohesion, order and pride is a consistent outreach effort. West Valley City makes many resources available to neighborhoods and city residents and these should be marketed through a variety of means. Similarly, the City works best when it is aware of the concerns and ideas of its residents. This two-way dialogue is critical to the empowerment of neighborhoods and residents and the efficient operation of government toward the preservation of existing neighborhood character and quality of life.

#### 6.3 Goal: Improve communication between residents, realtors and the City.

**6.3.1 Action:** Provide important community outreach and service materials in printed and electronic form.



- 6.3.2 Action:** Maintain a current database of all neighborhood groups with contact information.
- 6.3.3 Action:** Provide resource fairs where residents can get information on a variety of issues and ask questions or share ideas with City staff and officials.
- 6.3.4 Action:** Develop a code violation course offering for property maintenance violations to reduce or remove fines.
- 6.3.5 Action:** Meet with realtors to share information on the many positive aspects of living in West Valley to help them sell the City.
- 6.3.6 Action:** Explore ways to make it easier for citizens to give the City input on neighborhood issues.

**6.4 Goal: Be aware of outside resources available to residents to maintain and upgrade their property and neighborhood**

- 6.4.1 Action:** Identify all resources available to residents to maintain and upgrade their property (utility rebates, lead based paint removal, etc.)

**Issue: Property Maintenance**

Neighborhood pride, identity, property values and sometimes safety are compromised by unmaintained and unsightly properties. Property owners have a responsibility to observe City Code by keeping their property orderly and safe. While enforcement is an important tool to deter and correct violations, West Valley City should also encourage and incentivize investment in property. Of particular concern are older, low value homes. The Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for Salt Lake County prepared by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research states: “Homes that are greater than fifty years old and have a value of less than \$150,000 have a much higher likelihood of deferred maintenance, deteriorating quality and high energy costs.”

**6.5 Goal: Promote clean and attractive properties and neighborhoods.**

- 6.5.1 Action:** Make property maintenance information, codes, expectations and resources easily accessible and understandable to residents.
- 6.5.2 Action:** Proactively enforce property maintenance code violations.
- 6.5.3 Action:** As resources permit, proactively enforce building code violations.
- 6.5.4 Action:** Use public infrastructure funds strategically to correspond with other neighborhood improvement efforts.
- 6.5.5 Action:** In conjunction with Action 6.1.2, consider City programs/incentives to promote property maintenance.

**6.6 Goal: Promote proper management and maintenance of residential rental properties.**

- 6.6.1 Action:** Continue to use business license inspections and other tools to encourage the proper management and maintenance of rental properties.

## Issue: Beautification and Enhancement

Unlike property maintenance, beautification addresses opportunities to actively add to or enhance the neighborhood character and infrastructure. The City can go a long way toward implementing beautification measures and already provides many different resources to this end, but it is critical that residents be involved in efforts within their neighborhoods.

### 6.7 Goal: Empower residents to beautify their neighborhoods.

**6.7.1 Action:** In conjunction with Action 6.1.2, consider City programs and incentives to promote individual property (examples: front yard landscaping, home remodel) and neighborhood beautification and enhancement (examples: fence or wall replacement along arterials, new streetlights).

**6.7.2 Action:** Help neighborhoods identify and install neighborhood entry monuments to create a sense of security and place.

### 6.8 Goal: Improve the tree cover and vegetation throughout the City.

**6.8.1 Action:** Consider a street tree policy that firmly supports and provides incentives toward the planting, care and maintenance of suitable trees in the park strip.

## Issue: Single Family Neighborhood Integrity

Shortly after incorporation, the City initiated rezones over entire neighborhoods from multi-family zones to single family zones in an effort to maintain homes within existing neighborhoods as single family homes. Since that time the City has taken other steps like requiring license inspections for all rental properties to protect single family neighborhoods. Despite these efforts, the City continues to receive to complaints about illegal duplexes and overcrowding within neighborhoods.

### 6.9 Goal: Maintain homes within single family neighborhoods as single family homes.

**6.9.1 Action:** Deny rezone requests seeking to convert single family homes into duplexes, develop infill properties within existing neighborhoods into multi-family housing or redevelop single family homes into multi-family housing.

**6.9.2 Action:** Use all available tools (building code, business licensing code, zoning code, and others) to prevent single family homes from being converted into duplexes.

**6.9.3 Action:** Encourage home ownership in existing neighborhoods.