

## CHALLENGE #2

Richmond is facing housing challenges related to aging structures, a high percentage of renter-occupied units, and increasing vacancy rates.

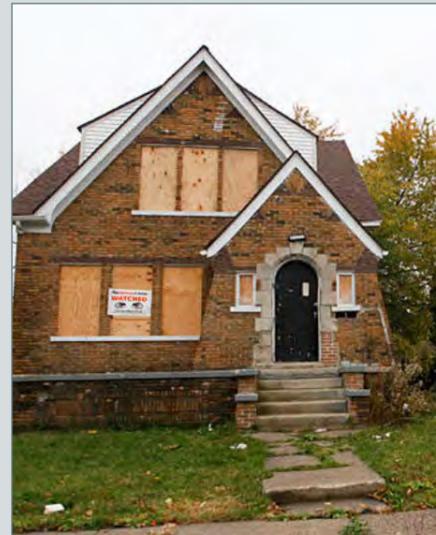
Nearly 70 percent of the current housing stock in Richmond was built before 1970, meaning the units were constructed before modern building codes went into effect. While these older structures often offer unique architectural character and contribute to the city's rich historical districts, old structures pose a series of challenges to a community's neighborhoods. Older structures generally cost more to improve and maintain and require a population with expendable income to invest and reinvest in these areas.

Richmond adopted its first version of building codes in 1966, with Wayne County following with its own later in 1976. These codes were adopted to ensure that all housing met standards to ensure a clean, safe, and healthy living environment. As most of Richmond's housing was built before this time, the structures were likely not built to this standard. This means if any additions or renovations occur to the property, the entire property will then have to be brought up to code, often an expensive prospect. As such, owners will often feel reinvesting in their property is simply not worth the cost, leading to neglect and degradation.

Another symptom of Richmond's housing quality challenges stems from its abnormally large rental market. As of 2018, nearly 35 percent of Richmond's existing housing stock was renter occupied. This does not suggest that rental units aren't a quality housing type; instead, the challenge lies in the public perception of absentee landlords. In some rental situations, the responsibility for maintenance and general upkeep of the property is shuffled around. Landlords are likely not willing to invest a lot of money into a property because they aren't living in it. On the other hand, some renters may not follow through with their responsibility to report problems or respect the property or structure. Quality rental housing is a result of both parties making an effort to ensure the unit is maintained at a livable standard.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2018 and 2023 Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography. Community Profile Report

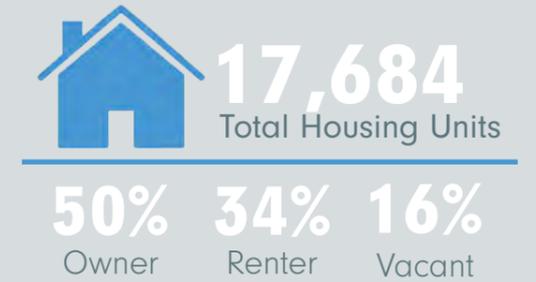


Another common housing challenge is a high vacancy rate. Today, Richmond's vacancy rate is 16 percent and is expected to continue increasing. Additionally, when compared to Wayne County, this vacancy rate is 2 percent higher than the county with 14 percent of housing units being vacant. This many vacant units can generate a negative perception of an area. Furthermore, if a structure sits vacant for a long period, the house can fall into disrepair. In these instances, it can become costly and undesirable for potential owners to want to invest in that property.

Code enforcement is an important factor to consider related to both aging housing units and rental properties. The City's ability to enforce zoning regulations and building codes plays a major role in the quality of housing units and overall perception of each neighborhood. Recent efforts include a higher focus on enforcing code and code violations and working to implement a landlord registry. As mentioned in the demographic challenge summary, housing plays a major role in Richmond's ability to offer a higher quality of life for future residents and employers.

In order to provide safe, high-quality housing units, Richmond must **GROW**....

- A community that enforces a higher standard for condition and design of existing housing structures and new developments to improve the quality and character of Richmond neighborhoods.
- A community that encourages residential infill and home renovation projects.
- A community that maintains an updated landlord registry and explores ways to hold property owners accountable for regular maintenance.
- A community that focuses on renovating and filling vacant and abandoned properties.



### Community Survey Results

#### I WANT TO ELIMINATE...

"Blight, boarded up businesses, underutilized store fronts."

"Substandard housing associated with lack of management and maintenance of rental properties."

"Slum lords who allow properties to look terrible and provide unsafe housing for low income families."