Gainesville Housing Conditions Data

Final Report

Completed by:

Housing and Demographic Research Center

University of Georgia

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Project Background

Gainesville, with a population of 36,306, serves as the county seat and economic center for Hall County and North East GA. The City operates under a Council-Manager form of government with the assistance of various statutory and advisory boards. The City is a HUD entitlement community and a member of GICH.

Gainesville city limits cover portions of 16 census tracts, 10 of which are considered "qualified census tracts" with poverty levels greater than 20%. The City of Gainesville Consolidated Plan identifies three primary housing needs:

- Lack of affordable housing.

- Substandard housing conditions.

- Overcrowding for low-income families.

The City's GICH Plan identifies a housing conditions survey as an action item needed to begin to alleviate these problems.

Project description, objectives and method

The Housing and Demographic Research Center at the University of Georgia partnered with the City of Gainesville to conduct a housing conditions survey for a portion of the city's housing stock. The survey was conducted by students in FHCE 4340S: Housing & Community Development under the supervision of Dr. Kim Skobba and Dr. Karen Tinsley during spring semester 2016.

Students in FHCE 4340S conducted the housing conditions survey from February – April, 2016. Students received training prior to completing the surveys. When in the neighborhoods, students worked in groups of 2-3 to ensure quality control of the data.

The objectives of this project were to:

- Conduct a housing conditions survey as described above to support the City of Gainesville's housing plan.
- Develop a database with the results of the survey and tax assessor data.
- Conduct an analysis, including parcel map with housing condition categories.
- Prepare a final report and presentation.

The Study Area

The study area includes portions of Census Tract 10.3 block group 3 and Census Tract 9 block group 3 and 4 in Gainesville. The area includes 505 residential lots. Houses in the study area are primarily renter-occupied, with about ¾ (73.9%) of the houses listed as non-homestead in the Hall County tax assessors data. The homes in the area tend to be older. The median year built for houses in the study area is 1948. The houses in the study are relatively small in size. The median square footage of houses in the study area is 1324.5 square feet. The median total value of the houses/property in the study area is about $86,000.

Housing Survey Results

Survey status

The focus of the housing conditions survey was on single-family detached and duplex (2 units in structure) housing. There were 488 residential properties identified through parcel data. Of these 488 properties, 482 were surveyed and are included in the following analysis. The remaining 6 properties were not surveyed due to their location (not visible from sidewalk or intimidating environment) or because the students were not able to locate the address.

Property type and occupancy status

There were 447 properties surveyed with residential structures. The majority of the properties surveyed were single-family detached housing without a carport and a smaller portion duplexes. There were 35 vacant lots in the study area.

Property type	n	%
Single family, no garage	299	61.8
Single family, with garage or carport	101	20.9
Duplex	49	10.1
Vacant lot	35	7.2
Total*	484	100.0

* property type information was available for 2 properties not surveyed

Nearly all of the properties in the study area appeared to be occupied. Only 6 appeared to be vacant and 3 were for sale at the time of the survey.

Housing conditions – Minor defects

Minor defects were relatively common among the 447 residential structures surveyed. Over half (62%) of the houses surveyed had at least 1 minor defect. The most common defects were minor dry rot (21%), bare or unfinished wood (17%), and damage to the roof tiles or fascia (15%).
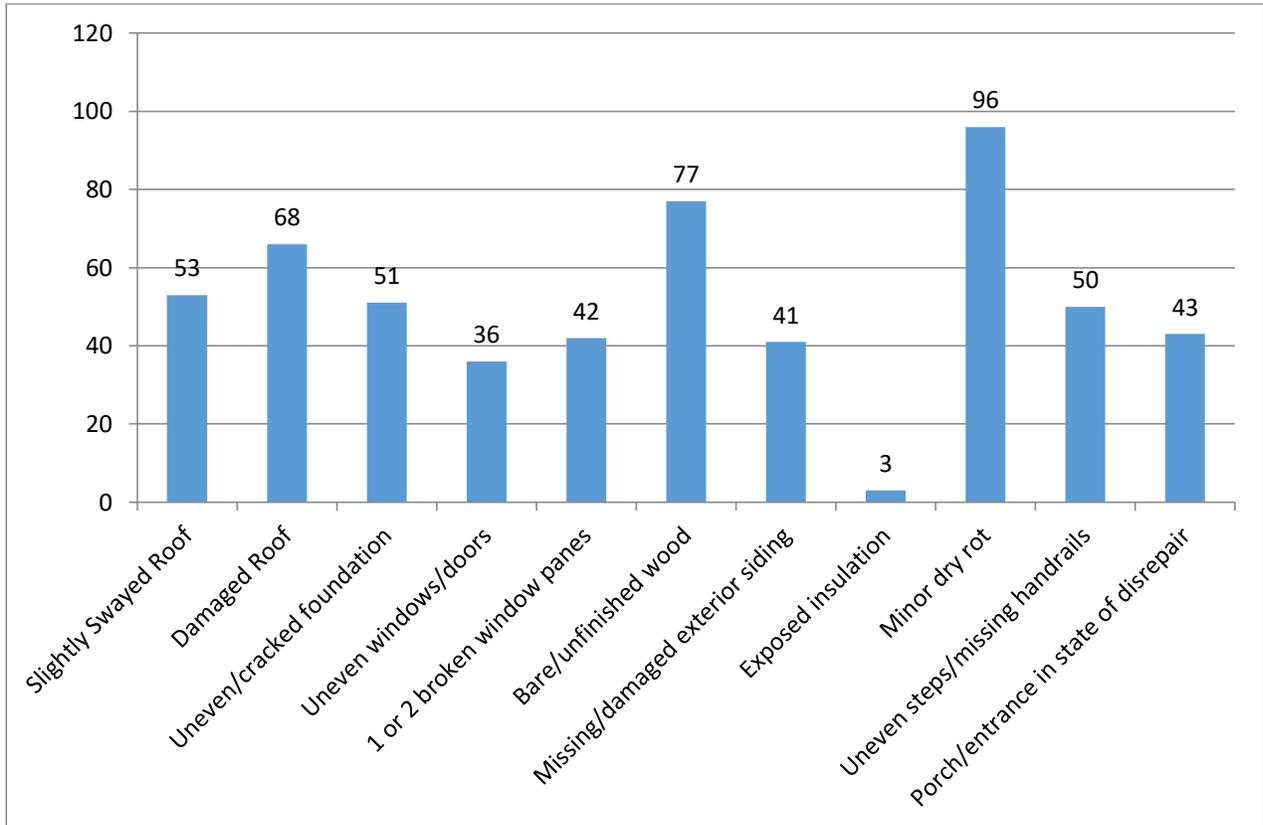
Housing conditions – Major defects

Major defects were less common, with only 62 houses (14%) having at least 1 major defect. The most common major defects were major dry rot, a sagging or rusted roof and an uneven or cracked foundation.
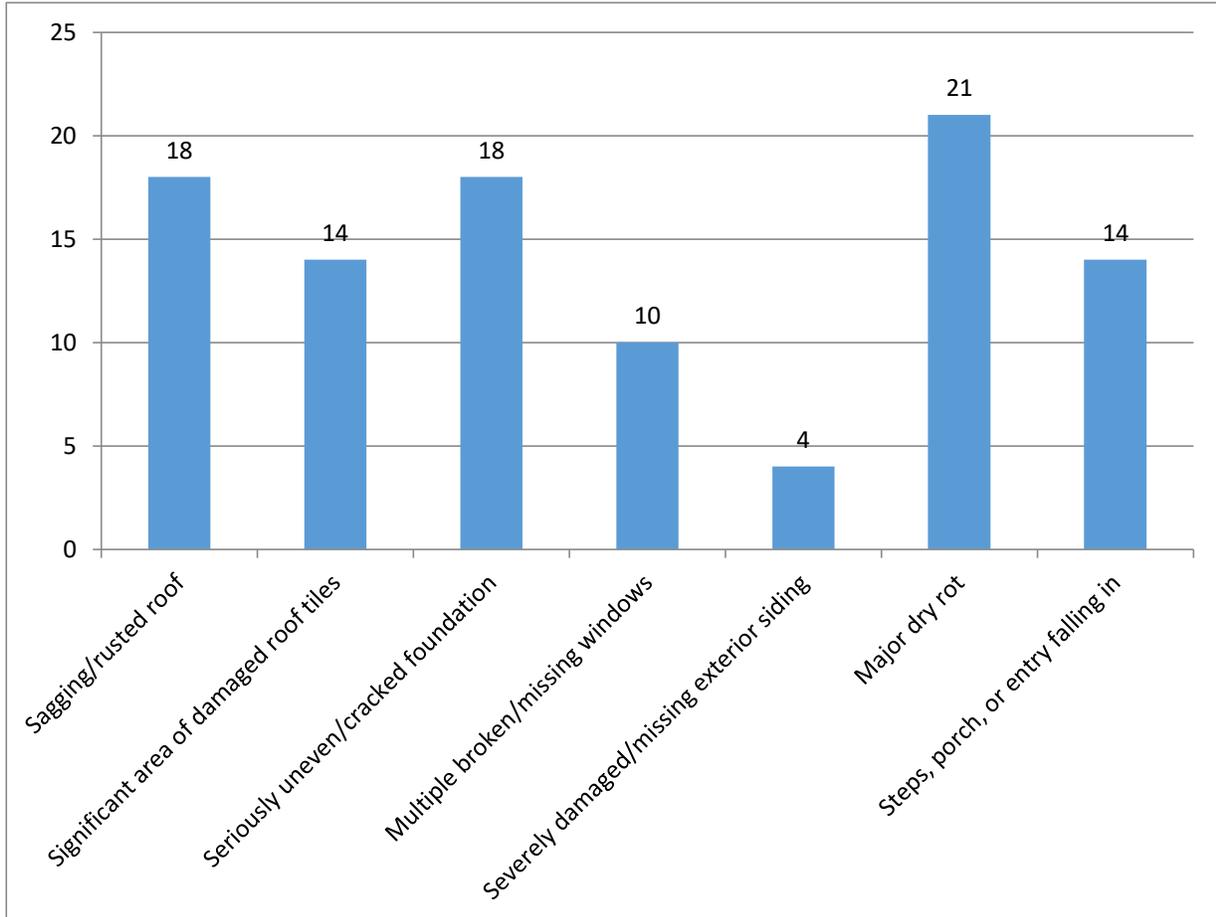
Property evaluation

Properties were evaluated based on the total number of major and minor defects. The majority of the properties were considered standard, with 1 or no minor or major defects. About 15% were in the transitional category, substandard 1, which includes properties with 2 minor defects and no major defects. Properties with 3 minor defects and/or 1 major defect were considered substandard 2. This applied to 18% of the properties in the study area. Finally, a small portion (8%) of the houses were dilapidated, the most severe housing condition that includes 4 or more minor defects and/or 2 or more major defects.
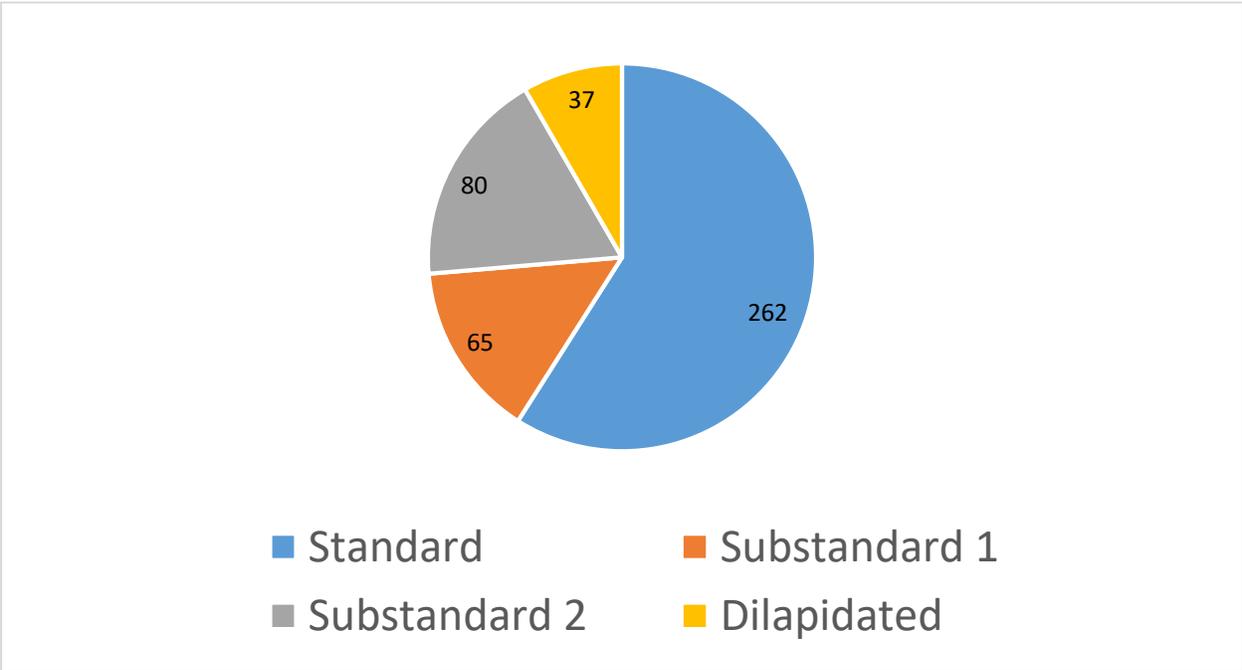
Assessment of yard/lot condition

The majority of properties had satisfactory yard/lot conditions. The most common problem observed was yards in need of mowing. A smaller portion of the yards had junk in the yard and/or needed a major cleanup or were overgrown.

Yard/lot condition	n	%
Satisfactory	313	64.1
Needs mowing	60	12.3
Overgrown	21	4.3
Junk in the yard	46	9.4
Vacant lot or missing information	48	9.8
Total	488	100.0

Assessment of aesthetics/general condition

The overall appearance was good for the majority of the properties. About one-third were considered by the evaluators to have a fair overall appearance. A small portion was considered to have a poor aesthetic appearance.

Aesthetics/general condition	n	%
Good	262	53.7
Fair	150	30.7
Poor	32	6.6
Vacant lot or missing data	44	9.0
Total	488	100.0

Evaluation of housing condition maps

To be sent at a later date