

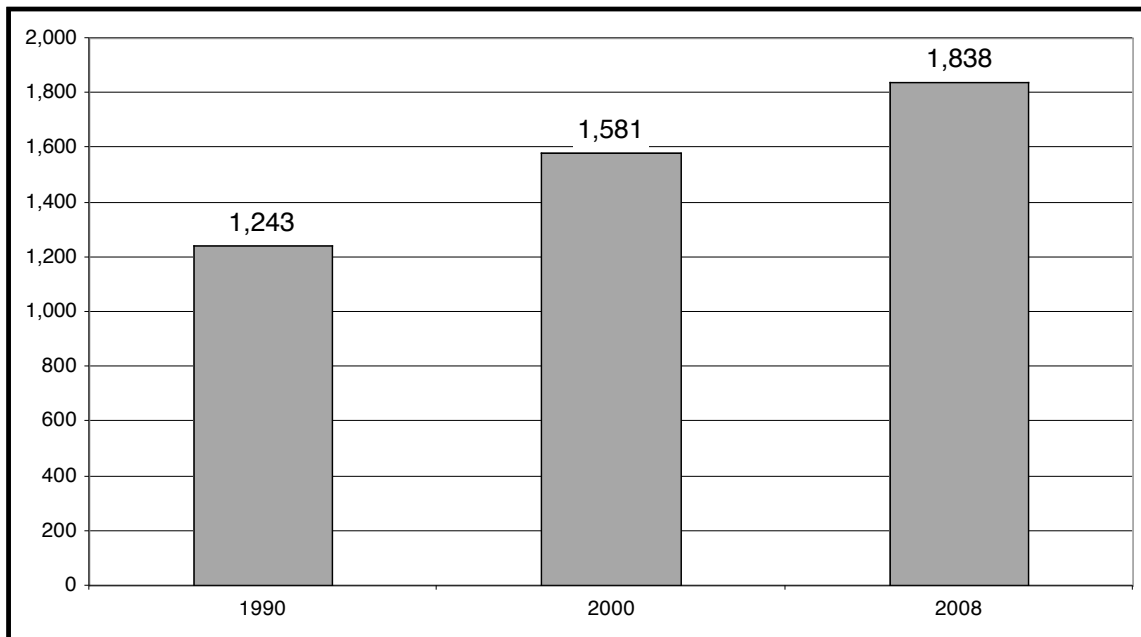
4 • HOUSING PROFILE

This chapter provides an overview and evaluation of Firebaugh's housing stock. Analysis of past housing trends provides a basis for determining the future housing needs of Firebaugh.

Housing Units

A review of census data indicates that Firebaugh's housing stock grew by 595 units during the period 1990-2008. Data shown in Chart 4-1 reveals that the number of dwelling units in Firebaugh increased from 1,243 in 1990 to 1,838 in 2008 - an average annual increase of about 33 units. Factors such as lower interest rates, population and economic growth are believed to contributed to this growth rate.

Chart 4-1
Housing Units, 1980 – 2000



Source: State Department of Finance, 1990 - 2008.

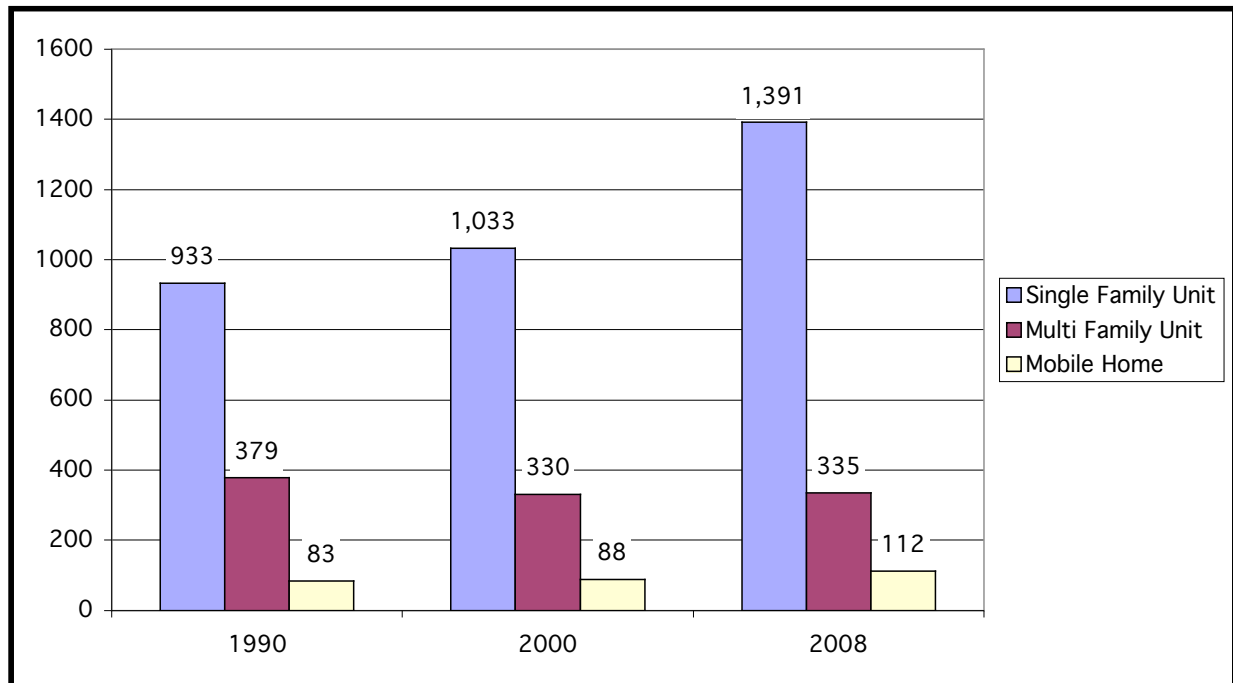
Housing Types

An examination of census data provides insight into the changing demand for different types of dwelling units within the City. The three basic types of housing units for which data are presented are:

1. single-family units;
2. multiple-family units, which range from duplexes to large apartment developments containing many units; and
3. mobile homes located in mobile home parks and on individual lots.

The proportion of the City's housing supply comprised of single family units has increased most significantly since 2000. The number of single family units increased from 71 percent of the total in 2000 to 76 percent in 2008. Multi-family dwellings decreased from 23 to 18 percent during the same time frame, while the number of mobile homes remained steady. Chart 4-2 illustrates these trends.

Chart 4-2
Housing Units by Type
1990 – 2008



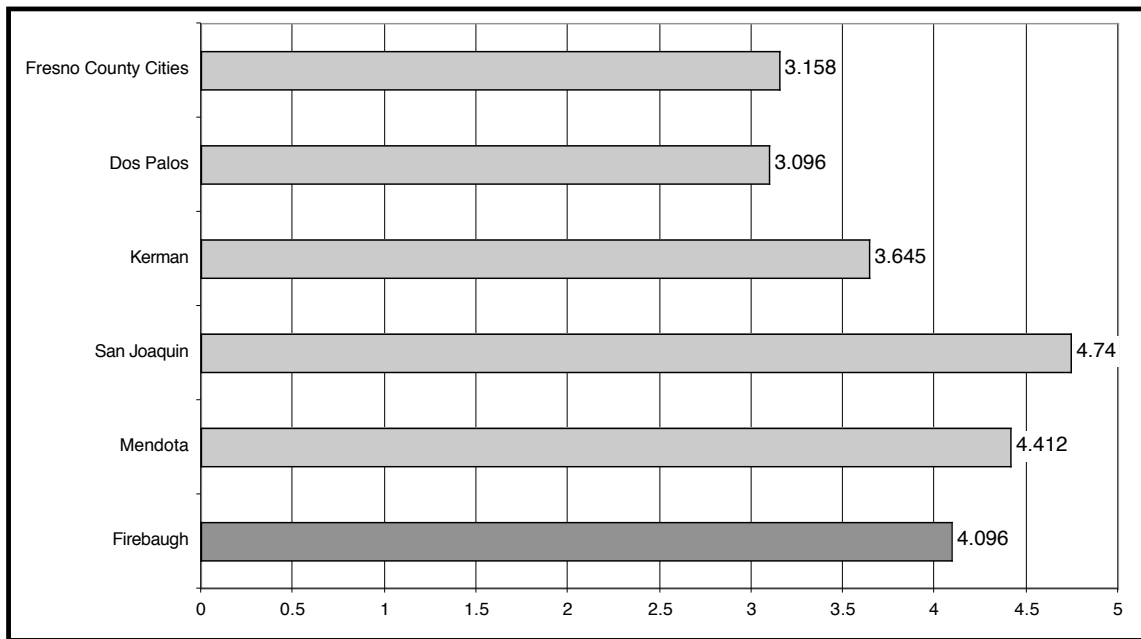
Source: State Department of Finance 1990 - 2008.

Household Size

In 1990, the average number of persons per household unit in Firebaugh was 3.75; this number has risen to 4.1 in 2008. This is significantly higher than the average of 3.2 for all incorporated cities in Fresno County. Chart 4-3 shows how Firebaugh compares to neighboring cities. Of note, Firebaugh’s average is lower than nearby cities Mendota and San Joaquin, but higher than Kerman and San Joaquin.

The relatively high number of persons per unit household signifies an overcrowding problem not uncommon to communities that are dominated by an agricultural economy. This situation points to a need to increase the supply of housing in the community.

Chart 4-3
Persons Per Household, 2008



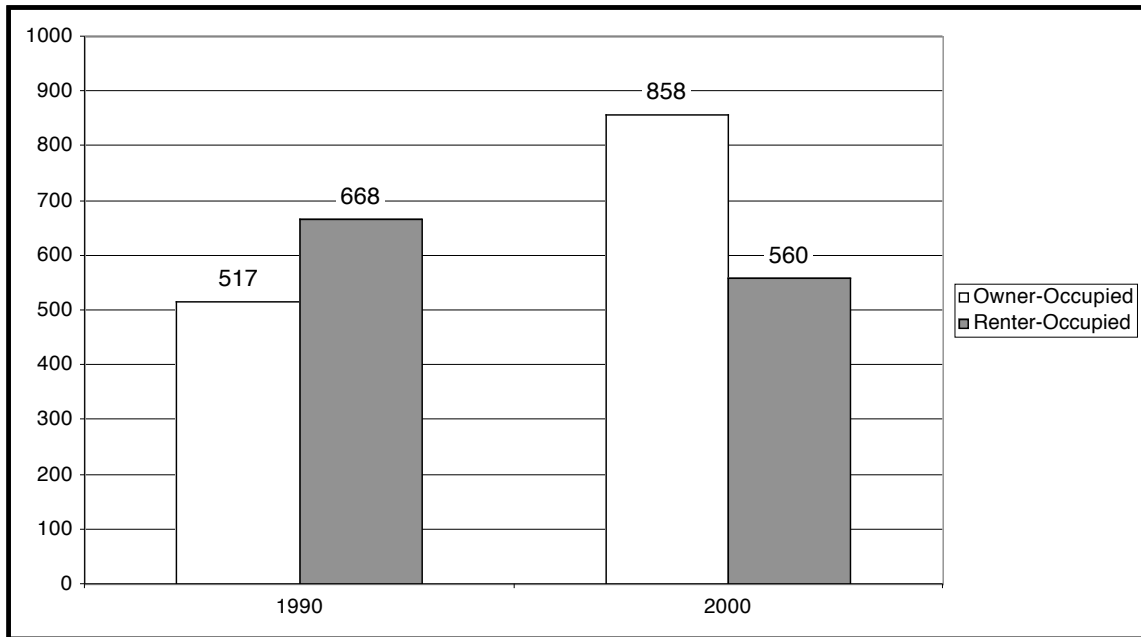
Source: California Department of Finance, 2008

Household Tenure

Home ownership as a percent of total housing units in Firebaugh has increased from 44 percent in 1990 to 61 percent in the year 2000 – the most recent year for which data are available. Local officials believe this increase has resulted from the construction of a number of new single family homes in Firebaugh and comparatively few multi-family units. During the same period, the number of renter-occupied units has fallen from 56

percent to 39 percent. Chart 4-4 shows the trend in tenure in Firebaugh from 1990 to 2000.

Chart 4-4
Housing Tenure
1990 - 2000



Source: Bureau of Census, 1980, 1990, 2000.

Vacancy Rates

The vacancy rate is a measure of the general availability of housing. It also indicates how well the type of units available meet the current housing market demand. A low vacancy rate suggests that families may have difficulty finding housing within their price range; a high vacancy rate may indicate either the existence of deficient units undesirable for occupancy, or an oversupply of housing units.

In the year 2000, the vacancy rate was 0.8% for owner-occupied units, and 4.3% for renter-occupied units. According to the California Department of Finance, the overall vacancy rate was 4.1% in 2008. This is slightly higher than the rate of 3.2% for all cities in Fresno County in 2008

Vacancy rates can vary dramatically over short periods of time, particularly when new developments come on the market. For small agricultural communities like Firebaugh,

seasonal variations related to the movement of farworkers following the harvest can also affect vacancy rates.