Adams County Housing Needs Assessment 2017

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Executive Summary

Adams County is situated in northeastern Colorado, just outside of the City of Denver. Its 471,206 residents live across more than 1,000 square miles in a mix of rural and urban areas, including the cities of Aurora, Brighton, Commerce City, Northglenn and Thornton.

With population growth that is outpacing both the region and the State as a whole, it is essential for Adams County to adopt a housing plan that will set a solid foundation and encourage balanced healthy growth in key areas such as the economy and housing in the region. To this end, the County has developed the 2017 Adams County Housing Needs Assessment (HNA): the primary assessment of the community's residents, economic workforce and housing. The HNA includes analyses of demographic characteristics, population forecasts, employment and income data, commute patterns, infrastructure, community assets, and housing market trends and housing affordability. These form the three sections of the HNA: the Community, Workforce and Housing Profiles.

A comprehensive review of past studies, US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) planning reports, and detailed current information and data helped inform the HNA. Additional data were obtained from the US Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), HUD, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act database (HMDA), Colorado State Demography Office, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (CoC), Esri Tapestry, US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), Valassis via PolicyMap, Boxwood Means, and RealtyTrac.

Community Profile Summary

The community profile focuses on the people of Adams County. It provides data and details about demographics and trends in the community relating to population growth, race and ethnicity, age, income, education and health (disability).

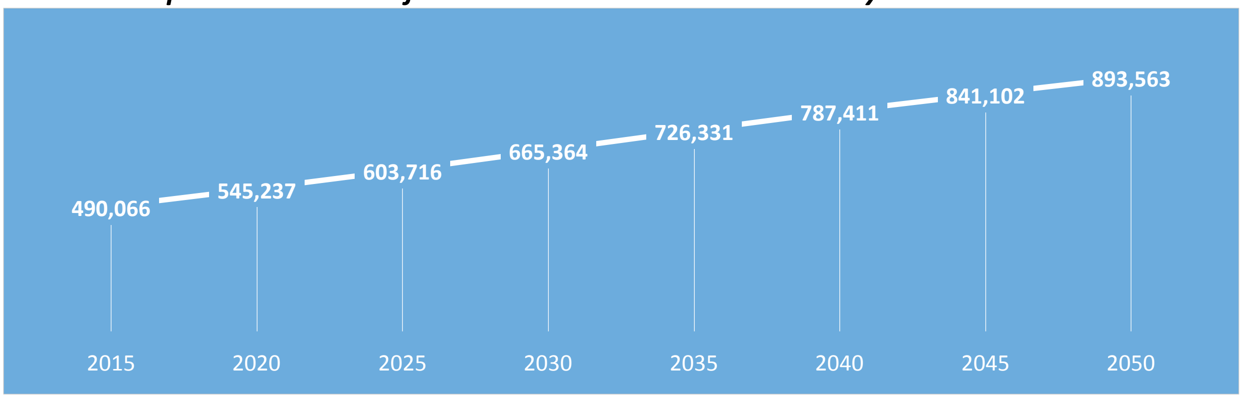
TABLE 1: Population Change by County

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	363,857	419,439	471,206	29.5%
Arapahoe County	487,967	544,157	608,310	24.7%
Boulder County	291,288	295,524	310,032	6.4%
Broomfield County	--	52,882	60,699	--
Denver County	554,636	582,447	649,654	17.1%
Douglas County	175,766	269,451	306,974	74.6%
Jefferson County	527,056	529,025	552,344	4.8%
Colorado	4,301,261	4,843,211	5,278,906	22.7%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP05) Data Note: Broomfield County was established as a county in 2001.				

Adams County had the second highest population growth rate in the seven-county Denver metro area from 2000 to 2015. During that time, the County's population grew by more than

100,000 people, or 29.5 percent. This increase has been one of the main drivers of regional growth, and the Colorado State Demography Office has predicted that Adams County's population will grow by another 400,000 people in the next 30 to 40 years.

CHART 1: Population Forecast from 2015 to 2050 in Adams County



Source: Colorado State Demography Office

As of 2015, Adams County was predominantly White (82.8%) and had small percentages of other races: Asians made up 3.8 percent of the population, Blacks were 3.2 percent, and all other races accounted for the rest. The County's Hispanic population[1] (38.6%) was higher than both the Denver metro area and the State as a whole, and has grown 36.9 percent since 2000.

In 2000, Adams County residents had a median household income (MHI) higher than the State. Since that time, however, statewide income growth has outpaced growth in Adams County.

TABLE 2: Median Household Income

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	$47,323	$55,258	$58,946	24.6%
Colorado	$47,203	$56,222	$60,629	28.4%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

Although the 2015 Adams County MHI was $58,946, a closer examination reveals that earnings are not evenly distributed across racial groups or geographic boundaries. Whites (with an MHI of $60,451) and Asians ($59,984), had rates above the County average. All other race and ethnic groups (including Hispanics) had MHI lower than the County median, and Blacks had the lowest MHI, at $43,031. MHI in Adams County also depends on location. The northwest area had the highest MHI in Adams County and the southwest corner had the lowest incomes. This southwestern part of the County also had higher poverty rates.

A variety of factors can influence the MHI in a specific location, including educational attainment and access to employment opportunities. The link between income and education

[1] Persons who identify ethnically as Hispanic may also identify with a race, and as such are also included in applicable race categories.

attainment is clear in Adams County: in 2015 just over 15 percent of the population 25 years and over had a Bachelor's degree and another 7 percent had a graduate degree or better. These figures were much lower than the other counties in the region.

The number of disabled persons in a County is also a key indicator in the community profile as the County strives to take care of its residents with special needs. In 2015 it was estimated that there were 49,308 disabled persons in the County – or 10.5 percent of the population. Veterans and the elderly experienced disabilities at higher rates than other population segments.

Workforce Profile

The workforce profile of the HNA examines the economic makeup of Adams County and provides a more detailed look at income and employment. A healthy, growing population is ideally supported by a healthy, growing economy, with a variety of industries offering diverse employment opportunities to community members at every rung on the economic ladder.

In 2015 there were an estimated 230,000 persons of working age employed in the Adams County labor force, accounting for approximately 15 percent of the entire workforce in the seven-county metro region. Only Arapahoe, Jefferson and Denver counties had larger workforces.

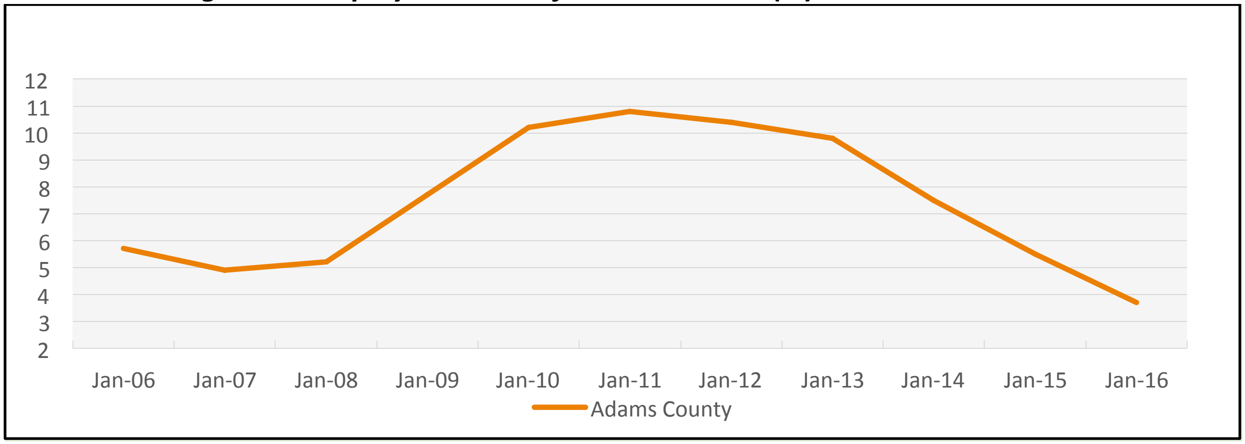
TABLE 3: Workforce by County

County	Employed	Percent of 7-County total
Adams County	229,743	14.9%
Arapahoe County	311,498	20.2%
Boulder County	166,701	10.8%
Broomfield County	31,807	2.1%
Denver County	348,382	22.6%
Douglas County	159,911	10.4%
Jefferson County	294,390	19.1%
7-County Region Total	1,542,432	100%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

Adams County workers are employed in a variety of industries. The largest industry in 2015 was Education and Health Care Services, which accounted for 17.1 percent of the jobs in the County. The second largest job-producing industry was Retail Trade (11.8%), followed by Professional, Scientific, Administration and Waste management (11.7%). Adams County's Manufacturing sector provided 8.8 percent of all jobs in the County. It is important to note that according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Manufacturing is by far the most rapidly declining sector in the US from a national perspective.

Another critical indicator of a jurisdiction's economic health is its unemployment rate. The BLS, which records unemployment rates each month, reported Adams County's rate in June 2016 to be 3.8 percent. Over the last decade the rate has fluctuated tremendously, rising to almost 11 percent in 2011 and falling to its current low.

CHART 2: Change in Unemployment Rate from 2006-2016 (%)



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Data Note: Unemployment rates not seasonally adjusted.

Even though the unemployment rate was only 3.8 percent, Adams County had the highest rate among the seven metro counties, with a disproportionate split among the race groups: Asians and Whites had much lower rates of unemployment than Blacks. Also, while there was positive growth in many industries, there were declines in three industries that were in the top half of industries by median earnings: Information, Wholesale trade and Manufacturing. This translates to a loss of some of the County's highest-paying jobs.

Another important indicator of the strength of the economy is the Jobs-to-Households ratio. The Jobs-to-Households ratio in Adams County was 1.23 – meaning there were 1.23 jobs per household in the County. At first glance this seems to be a positive ratio, as there were more jobs than households, but 1) not every job is a high paying job; and 2) not every household has the same number of eligible workers. According to the 2014 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics data, 80 percent of the jobs in the County paid the Federal minimum wage at full time (40hr/week). When family composition is factored in, the 1.23 Jobs-to-Household ratio is even less encouraging: nonfamily households had an average of 1.32 adults in the home and family households averaged 1.71 adults in the home, indicating that there is not a job available for every adult.

<u>Housing Profile Summary</u>

The housing profile section of the HNA draws on various data indicators to paint a current picture of the housing stock of Adams County from multiple perspectives. The overarching theme of this assessment is that a healthy housing market must strive for balance, on many levels. First, there is the obvious need for a balance between housing supply and housing demand on the macro level (the County's 156,628 households all need a place to live, after all). Even at this most basic level, there is a need for some stabilization. In 2009, the average household size was 2.6 persons. By 2015, that figure increased to 2.98. In order to maintain the same 2009 household size, an additional 10,000 housing units would have needed to be built in the intervening years. A portion of the lack of development can be explained by a slow recovery after the economic recession in 2007, but not all of it. Given population growth projections, the County will need to add an additional 3,500 to 4,000 units annually to maintain the current average household size of 2.98 – a tall order, as permits for new construction have not been issued at that rate since 2005.

Overall supply and demand is important, but a more nuanced understanding of the idea of balance takes into account the need for a housing supply that is sufficient to meet the demands of the unique population segments of the County – not every household is looking for the same size, location, and type of housing. While many families prefer a more traditional low-density, 1-unit home in a suburban area, there is a rising need for smaller, multi-family units to accommodate the portion of the population that is willing to give size up in favor of a more walk-able, mixed-housing community.

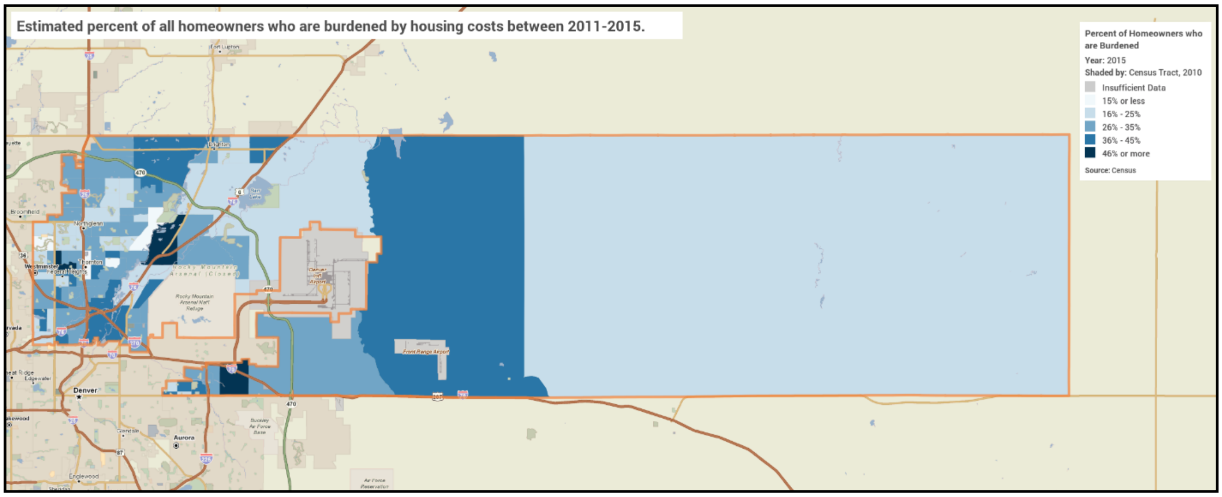
A robust housing market also requires a balance between the cost of housing and the average income. In Adams County, the rise in housing costs is outpacing the growth of wages. From 2000-2015, the median household income increased by 24.6 percent. Over the same time, home values increased by 32.7 percent and the median gross rent rose a staggering 47.4 percent. As a result, over half of the households in the County are cost burdened, spending more than the recommend 30 percent of their income each month on housing costs. Without an increase in average wages, this number is likely to increase.

TABLE 4: Median Households Income & Housing Value Comparison

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	$47,323	$55,258	$58,946	24.6%
Median Home Value (county)	$149,800	$198,600	$198,800	32.7%
Median Gross Rent	$705	$869	$1,039	47.4%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

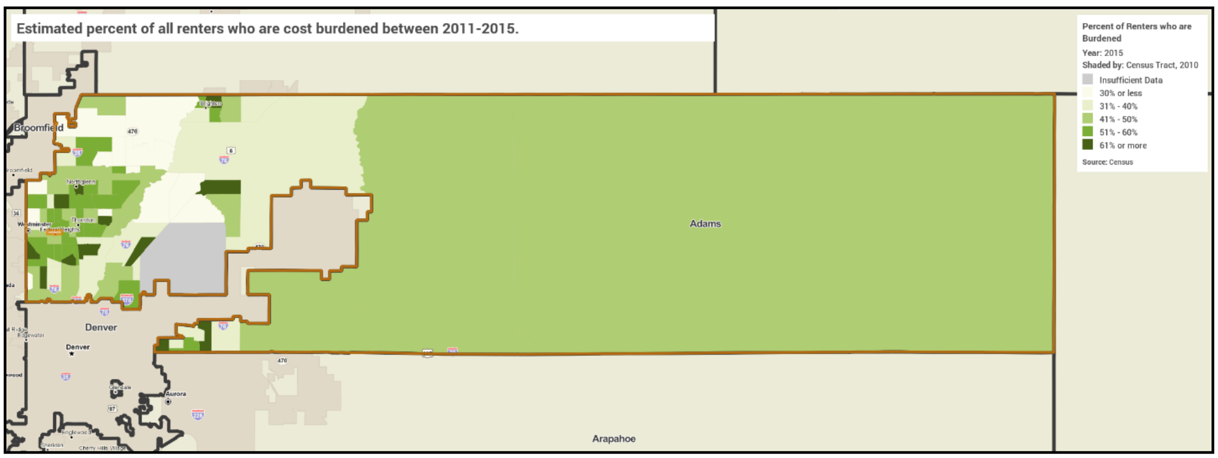
When considering cost burden, it is important to understand the geographic distribution of cost burdened households. Homeowners in the western incorporated cities of the County are much more likely to be cost burdened than those who live in the eastern half of the County. The situation is not as clear-cut for renters. Areas east of the international airport generally have renter households that are housing cost burdened, but the municipalities in the western areas of Adams County have varying degrees of renters with housing cost burden.

MAP 1: Cost Burdened Homeowners



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

MAP 2: Cost Burdened Renters

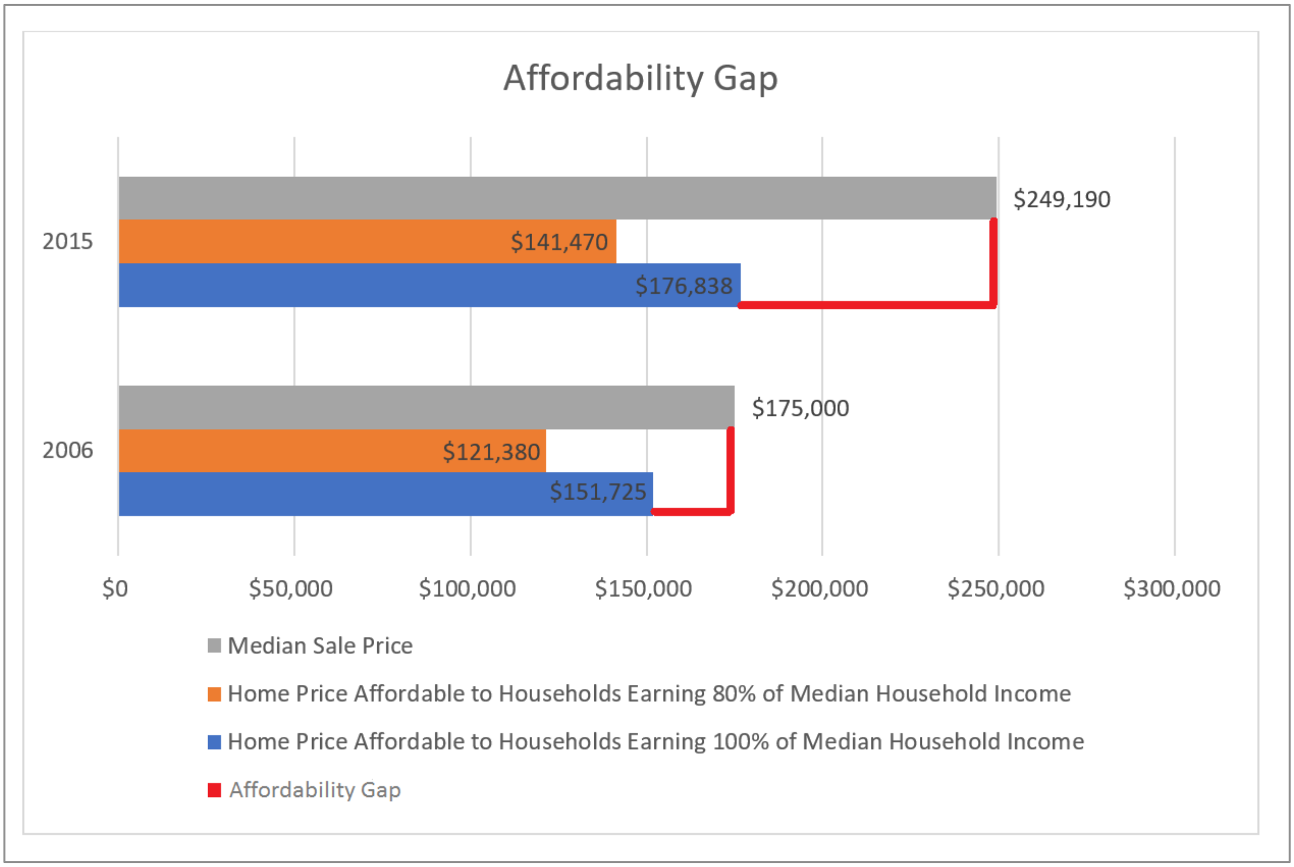


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

This view of cost burdened households underscores the necessity for a diverse set of housing policies and products that both recognizes and meets the housing needs of two differently situated areas of the same County.

As the cost of housing grows disproportionately to earnings, homeownership becomes less and less realistic for a large percent of the population. The affordability gap is the difference between the median sales price in an area and how much residents at different income levels can reasonably afford to spend. In 2006, the median sales price of a home in Adams County was $175,000, but a household earning 100 percent of the median household income in the county could only afford a home for $151,725 – a gap of $23,275. By 2015, the affordability gap had increased by over 200 percent to $72,352 for these households. Households earning 80 percent of the median household income have a much larger gap due to the decreased income. In 2006, the affordability gap was $53,620, but the gap had doubled by 2015 to $107,719. The following chart visualizes the housing gap in Adams County.

CHART 3: Affordability Gap



Source: US Census Decennial Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data Note: Housing affordability is calculated using three times the household income

Regional Perspective

In the seven-county Denver metropolitan area, Adams County is somewhat of an outlier in terms of the economic and demographic characteristics of its population. The County has the region's highest unemployment rate (though it is much lower now than it has been), lowest median home prices, lowest educational attainment, and a median household income that is 10 percent below the regional average. If the County does, as the data would indicate, carry a disproportionate share of the region's poorly educated population, for example, what implications does that have for the housing market and housing policies moving forward? Are there ways the County can influence the housing market by adjusting its approach to other economic indicators?

Citizen Participation

No housing needs assessment is complete without input from the community. In this case, that input came from three targeted stakeholder focus groups (an attainable housing group, developers and builders, and brokers and lenders) and a series of interviews with community leaders. The takeaway from these conversations is that people are generally optimistic about the housing situation in Adams County, but recognize some of the barriers that are holding the market back.

Much of the feedback received throughout the citizen participation portion of the analysis supports what the data has shown: there is a lack of affordable housing, an insufficient supply of units in affordable to middle market housing, inadequate construction to meet new demand, and a clear need for investing in infrastructure to create a sense of place and community spirit. Focus group participants voiced their concerns that the lack of affordable housing options encourages overcrowding, pushes people further out into the suburbs, and increases opportunities for housing discrimination. The statewide Construction Defect Law was seen as a major contributor to the County's housing problem. The differences between Adams County and the rest of the region were also highlighted by the community members: low-performing schools, higher property taxes in some communities, and fractured water and sanitation districts are deterrents for both buyers and developers.

The community input process did reveal strengths in the County's housing situation that purely quantitative data cannot. For example, developers and builders perceive the County staff to be pro-business and open to new ideas. Real estate brokers and lenders cited the availability of land and larger lots as key opportunities to promote growth. Adams County must find a way to capitalize upon these strengths identified through the citizen participation process to foster new growth and stabilize the housing market.

Findings

After thorough review and analysis, this assessment has identified four overarching findings regarding the housing needs of Adams County. These findings should be used to inform the forthcoming Balanced Housing Plan.

Finding 1: Housing in Adams County is becoming less affordable.

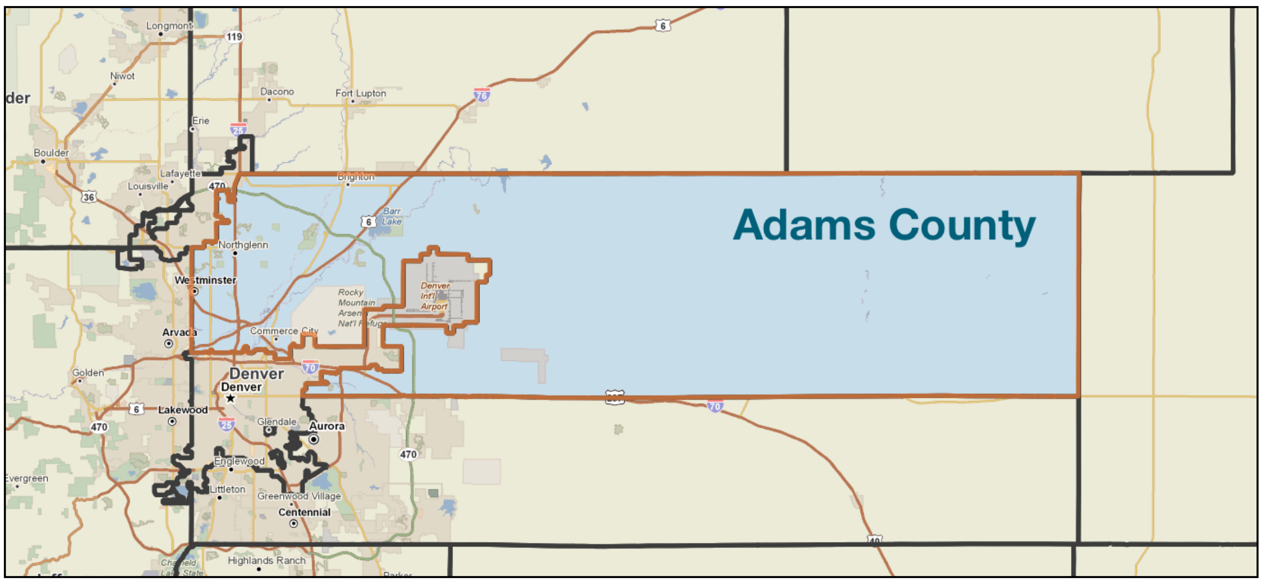
Finding 2: The affordability gap is increasing for all income levels.

Finding 3: Adams County's housing supply is not meeting demand.

Finding 4: Adams County is an outlier in the region.

Community Profile

The goal of the community profile is to paint a picture of the current demographic, workforce, and housing framework of Adams County to aid decision makers in developing the housing needs assessment. The Community Profile is broken into three key sections: Demographic Profile, Workforce Profile, and the Housing Profile. The Demographic and Workforce profiles look at the County from the perspective of its people, exploring variables such as race and ethnicity, age, disability status, income, employment, transportation and poverty. The Housing Profile looks at the area's housing stock from various angles such as home values, rents, housing cost burden, vacancy, and substandard housing to provide a snapshot of the physical environment of Adams County. Together, these pieces provide a data-driven view of the County that will empirically ground housing development efforts.



Demographic Profile

Population

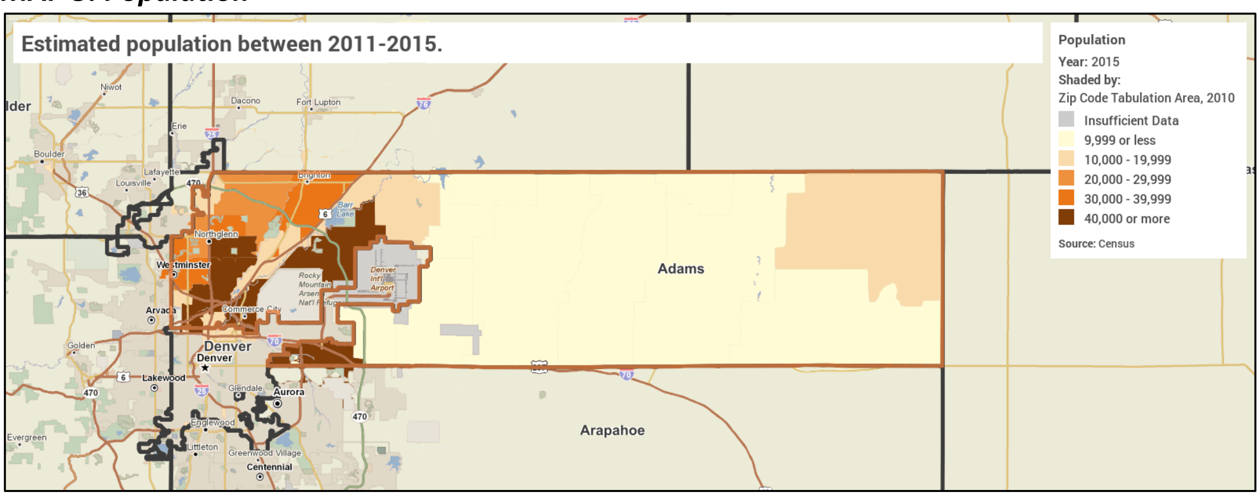
Adams County is growing at a faster rate than the state as a whole. The current population of Adams County is 471,206, according to 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This represents an increase of 29.5 percent growth since 2000. By contrast, the statewide growth rate for the same period was 22.7 percent.

TABLE 5: Population

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	363,857	419,439	471,206	29.5%
Colorado	4,301,261	4,843,211	5,278,906	22.7%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

The following map displays the distribution of the population throughout the County. Lighter colored shades represent areas with lower populations and darker shades represent areas with higher populations.

MAP 3: Population



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Adams County is located directly northwest of the City of Denver. Not surprisingly, most the population in Adams County is concentrated in the western incorporated cities of the County north of Denver.

Population Growth by Municipality

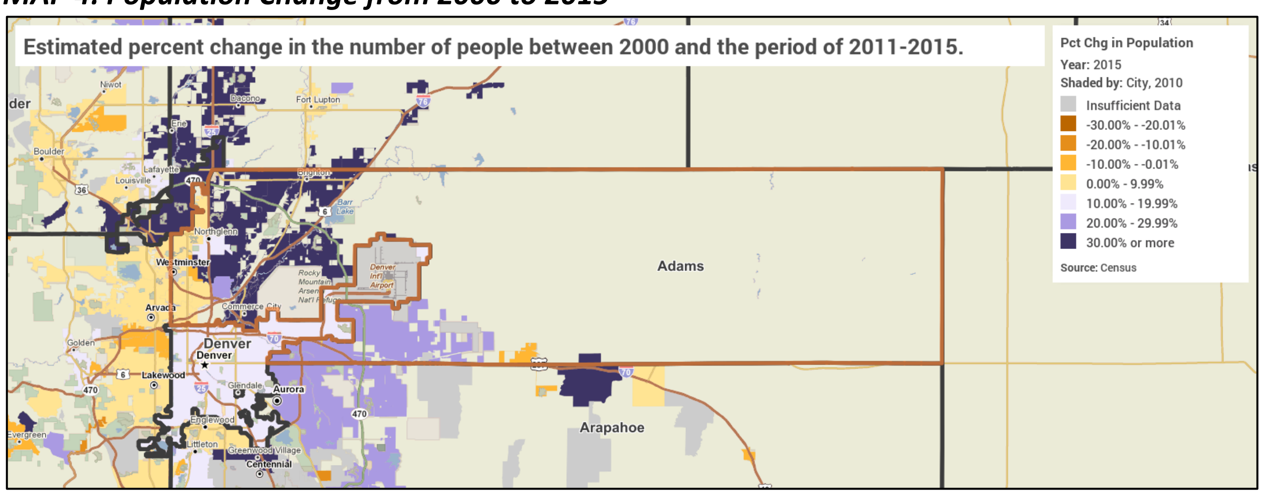
While Adams County grew 29.5 percent overall from 2000 to 2015, the growth between municipalities in the County varied widely. Commerce City had the greatest growth, increasing from a population of 20,991 in 2000 to 50,346 in 2015 – a dramatic increase of 139.9 percent. Brighton (70.2%) and Thornton (55.0%) also saw large increases. On the other hand, Federal Heights and the town of Bennett saw decreases in their population.

TABLE 6: Population Growth by Municipality

Municipalities in Adams County	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Arvada	102,153	105,801	111,658	9.3%
Aurora	276,393	309,091	345,867	25.1%
Bennett (town)	2,021	2,287	1,915	-5.2%
Brighton	20,905	29,919	35,582	70.2%
Commerce City	20,991	39,840	50,346	139.9%
Federal Heights	12,065	11,948	12,037	-0.2%
Northglenn	31,575	33,563	37,754	19.6%
Thornton	82,384	110,768	127,688	55.0%
Westminster	100,940	106,313	110,598	9.6%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

The map below shows the population change in the County and surrounding areas from 2000 to 2015. In Adams County, growth is highest along the three Interstate highways, especially between Interstate 25 and 76 heading north. The cities experiencing much of this growth are Westminster, Northglenn, Thornton and Brighton. Strasburg, a census-designated place (CDP) along the central border of Adams and Arapahoe County also saw a large increase, although only growing from 1,402 in 2000 to 3,027 people in 2015.

MAP 4: Population Change from 2000 to 2015



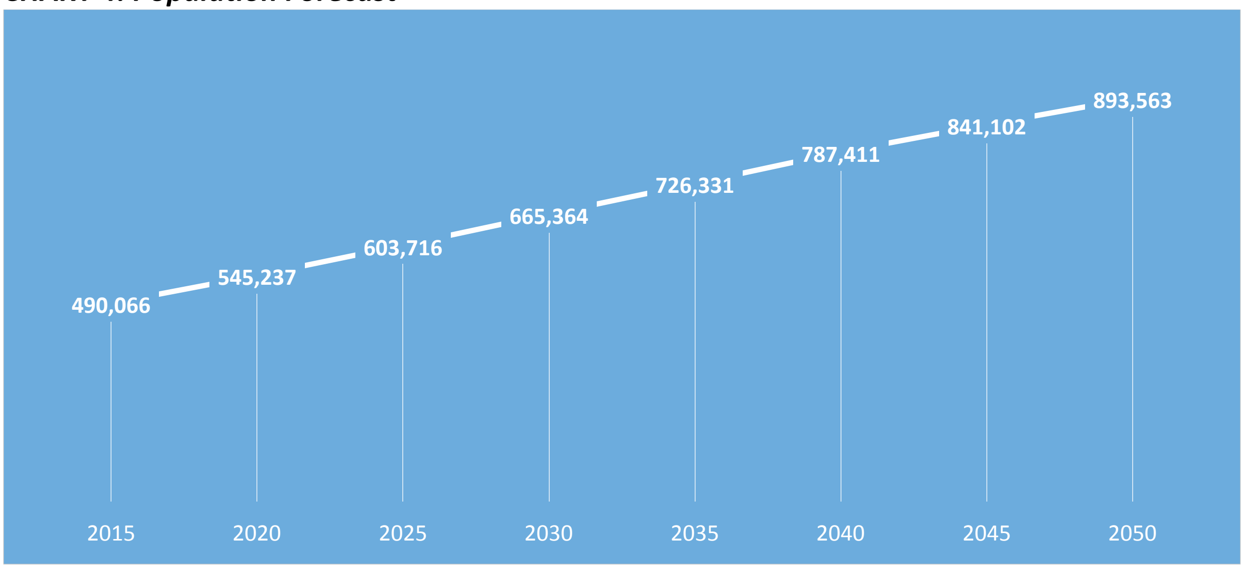
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

In comparison to the 7-County region, Adams County is part of the region where population is still growing quickly. Counties west of Denver have slowed in their growth over the last 15 years in part to the limited expansion possibilities along the Rocky Mountain range, however counties east of the city are more open to growth.

Population Forecast

Population forecasts are produced annually by Colorado's State Demography Office, with the most recent forecasts produced in October 2015. The chart below displays the population projection for Adams County.

CHART 4: Population Forecast



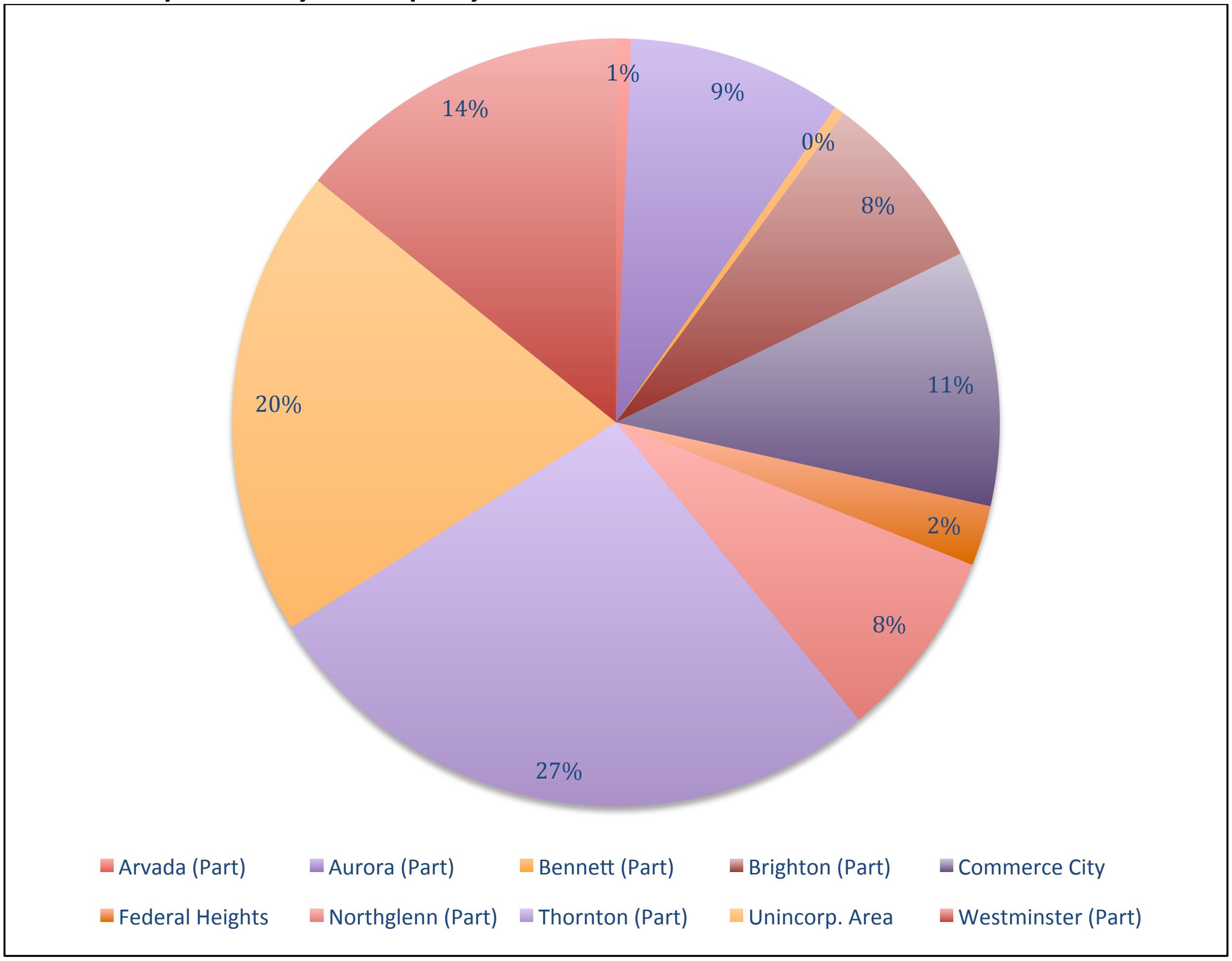
Source: Colorado State Demography Office

According to the State Demography Office, the population of Adams County is projected to grow from 490,066 in 2015 to 893,563 in 2050 – a rapid increase of 82.3 percent.

Population by Municipality

Adams County is comprised of either all or parts of the following communities: Arvada, Aurora, Bennett, Brighton, Commerce City, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Thornton and Westminster, as well as unincorporated portions of the county. The graph below illustrates these municipalities' contribution to the County's overall population.

CHART 5: Population by Municipality



Source: Colorado State Demography Office

Population Change Seven-County Comparison

Adams County, with a rate of 29.5 percent, had the second highest population growth rate in the region from 2000 to 2015. The only county that experienced faster growth was Douglas County, which grew rapidly at 74.6 percent. According to earlier population projections by the State Demography Office, Adams County is expected to continue growing at a fast pace and will be one of the drivers of population growth in the region.

TABLE 7: Population Change by County from 2000 to 2015

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	363,857	419,439	471,206	29.5%
Arapahoe County	487,967	544,157	608,310	24.7%
Boulder County	291,288	295,524	310,032	6.4%
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Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP05)
Data Note: Broomfield County was established as a county in 2001.

As mentioned earlier, population growth in counties east of Denver (Boulder and Jefferson) has slowed down considerably in the last 15 years, due in part to limited growth possibilities because of the adjacent Rocky Mountain range. Adams County, Arapahoe County and Douglas County do not have such barriers. Denver County is also growing, albeit at a slower rate.

Age

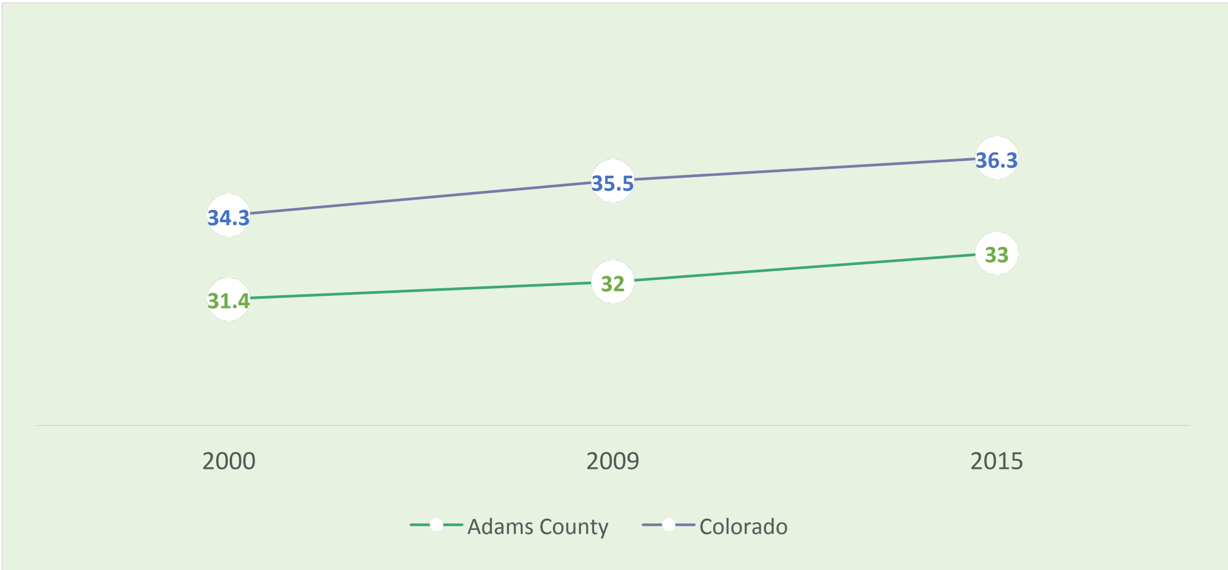
Adams County has a lower median age than the State. According to the 2011-2015 ACS, the median age in the County was 33 years old, compared to 36.3 years in Colorado. ACS data figures show that the County is growing older more slowly in comparison to the State. In 2015, elderly 65 years and older were 9.2 percent of the total population in Adams County. That represents an increase of 18 percent from 2000, when people aged 65 and older made up only 7.8 percent of the total population. In contrast, the 65 and older population in the State grew from 9.7 percent to 12.3 percent in that period – an increase of 26.8 percent. The largest age cohort in the County was 25 to 34 years, with 16.1 percent of the total population (75,809 persons).

TABLE 8: Age Distribution

Age Cohort	Number of People in Age Group	Percent of People in Age Group
Under 5 years	37,173	7.9%
5 to 9 years	38,308	8.1%
10 to 14 years	36,514	7.7%
15 to 19 years	30,559	6.5%
20 to 24 years	31,810	6.8%
25 to 34 years	75,809	16.1%
35 to 44 years	69,089	14.7%
45 to 54 years	60,509	12.8%
55 to 59 years	26,382	5.6%
60 to 64 years	21,450	4.6%
65 to 74 years	26,439	5.6%
75 to 84 years	12,373	2.6%
85 years and over	4,791	1.0%
Median Age	33	N/A
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

Adams County's median age is 3.3 years younger than the statewide median. In 2015 the median age in the County was 33 years (according to the 2011-2015 ACS). This represents a 5.1 percent increase in the median age since the 2000 Census, when the median age was 31.4 years of age. In comparison, over the same period the statewide median age increased 5.8 percent going from 34.3 to 36.3 years. The chart below shows the change in median age for Adams County in comparison to the state in 2000, 2009 and 2015.

CHART 6: Change in Median Age



Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The state saw a steady increase in median age from 2000 to 2015, as did Adams County, but the County did not increase as fast. At the current rate, the County will remain younger than the state as a whole.

Elderly

Where housing is concerned, the needs of people aged 65 and over are particularly important. As people age they may require new types of social services, healthcare, and housing, and as communities across the nation grow proportionately older, the needs of the elderly become an increasingly important aspect of both public and private decision-making. Central to these evolving needs is access to housing options that are decent, safe, affordable, accessible, and located in proximity to services and transportation. Housing is one of the most essential needs of the elderly because the affordability, location, and accessibility of where they live will directly impact their ability to access health and social services – both in terms of financial cost and physical practicality. With a population aging in the County (5.1%) at rate similar to the state as a whole (5.8%), housing issues among the elderly will become increasingly salient to Adams County policy makers in the years to come.

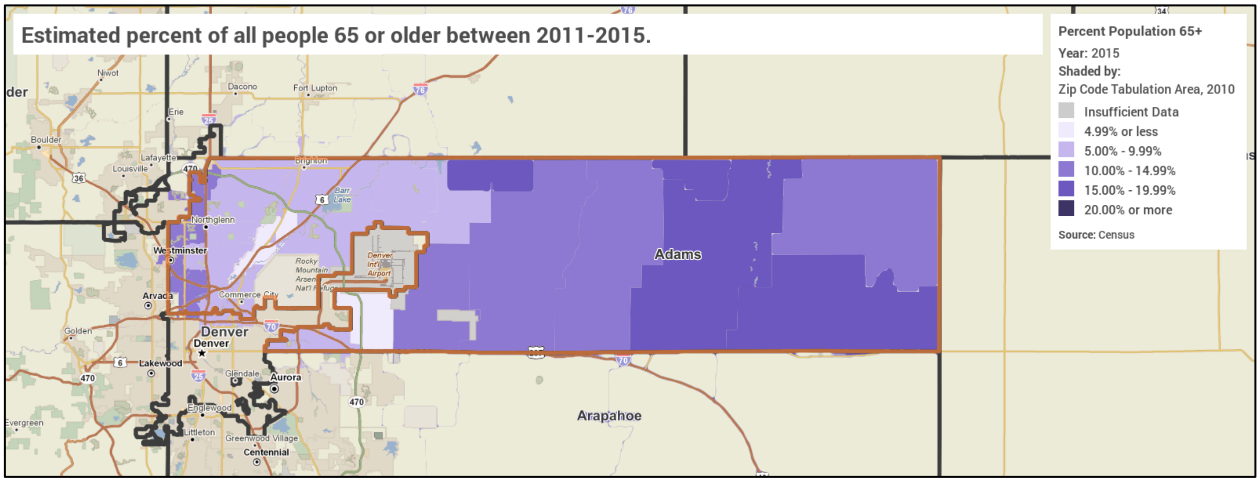
TABLE 9: Elderly Population

	2000 (%)	2009 (%)	2015 (%)	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	7.8%	8.1%	9.2%	18.0%
Colorado (state)	9.7%	10.3%	12.3%	26.8%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

People aged 65 and over comprise a lower percentage of the County's population than that of the State. Approximately 9.2 percent of the County's population was over the age of 65 (43,603 persons), compared to the State at 12.3 percent (2011-2015 ACS). Furthermore, one percent of the County's population was aged 85 years and over (4,791 persons), compared to 1.5 percent in the State. While the percentages do not suggest a large growth, the actual number of elderly residents in the County grew from 28,382 in 2000 to 43,603 in 2015.

The following map highlights the geographic distribution of the elderly population throughout the County. Lighter colored shades represent areas with lower populations and darker shades represent areas with higher populations. Elderly in Adams County can be found in larger percentages in the eastern unincorporated areas of the County as opposed to the municipal cities in the western areas of the County.

MAP 5: Population 65 Years and Over

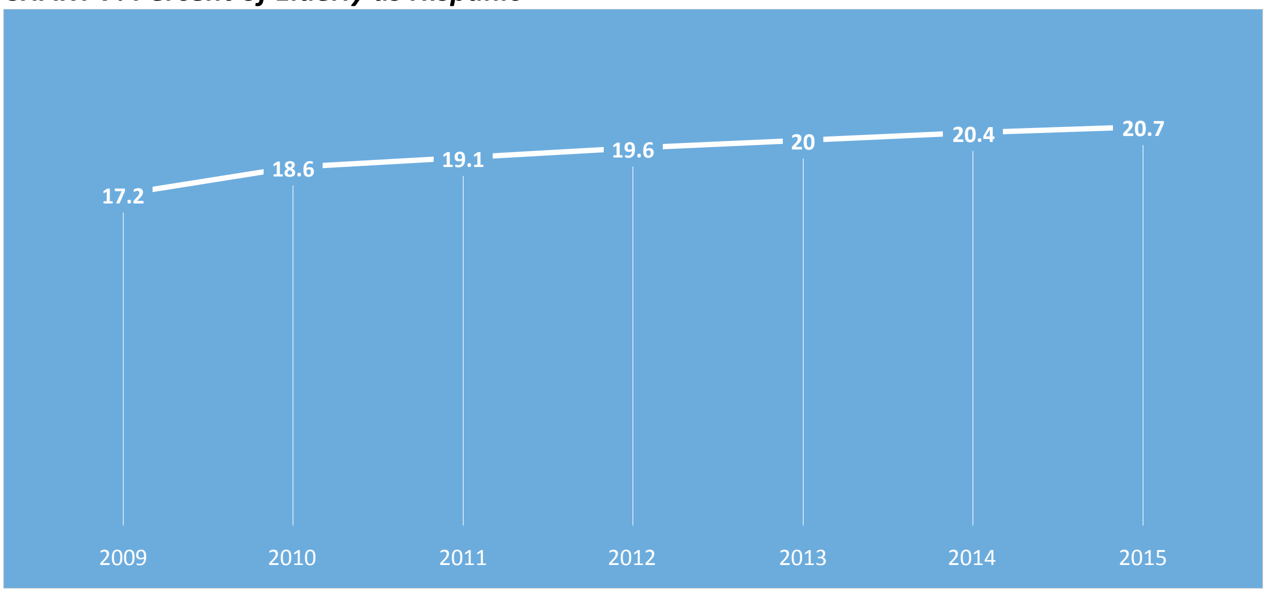


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Elderly Hispanic Population

The percent of elderly in Adams County who identify as Hispanic has been growing steadily over the last several years. From 2009 to 2015, the percent of elderly in the County who are Hispanic grew from 17.2 percent to 20.7 percent. That represents an increase of 20.4 percent for that group in the time period. The following chart displays the increase of Hispanics among the elderly population in the County. (Source: 2011-2015 ACS S0103)

CHART 7: Percent of Elderly as Hispanic



Source: 2005-2009 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0103)

Age Dependency Ratio

Age dependency ratios relate the number of working-aged persons to the number of dependent-aged persons (children and the elderly). An area's dependency ratio is comprised of two smaller ratios – the child dependency ratio and the old-age dependency ratio. These indicators provide insight into the social and economic impacts of shifts in the age structure of a population. Higher ratios of children and the elderly require higher levels of services to meet the specific needs of those populations. Furthermore, a greater burden is placed on an economy when those who mainly consume goods and services become disproportionate to those who produce. It is important to note that these measures are not entirely precise – not everyone under the age of 18 or over 65 is economically dependent, and not all working age individuals are economically productive. With these caveats in mind, dependency ratios are still helpful indicators in gauging the directional impacts of shifting age structures.

TABLE 10: Age Dependency Ratio

	Old-age Dependency Ratio	Child Dependency Ratio	Age Dependency Ratio
Adams County	14.7	44.5	59.2
Colorado (state)	19.0	36.6	55.6
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0101)			

Given the shifting demographics discussed in the previous sections, the age dependency ratios will continue to rise in Adams County. A 2010 US Census report on aging trends in the United States provides insight into the extent of the coming shift in the United States: "By 2030, all of the baby boomers will have moved into the ranks of the older population. This will result in a shift in the age structure, from 13 percent of the population aged 65 and older in 2010 to 19 percent in 2030." As this shift occurs, the working age population will simultaneously be shrinking. Sixty percent of the nation's population was aged 20-64 in 2010. The Census estimates that by "2030, as the baby boomers age, the proportion in these working ages will drop to 55 percent."[2]

Being mindful of these changes in old-age dependency ratios is especially important for communities with a growing elderly population. The percentage of persons aged 65 and older grew 18 percent from 2000 to 2015, and the population of elderly in the County grew from 28,382 in 2000 to 43,603 in 2015 (Adams County's population grew 29.5% in this period). A shrinking working age population means fewer workers producing goods and services, and consequently generating less tax revenue. An aging population also increases demand for social services, healthcare, and housing for the elderly. The intersection of these two trends presents a unique challenge for communities in the coming years.

[2] US Census Bureau, *The Next Four Decades: The Older Population in the United States: 2010 to 2050.* Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p25-1138.pdf

Household Status

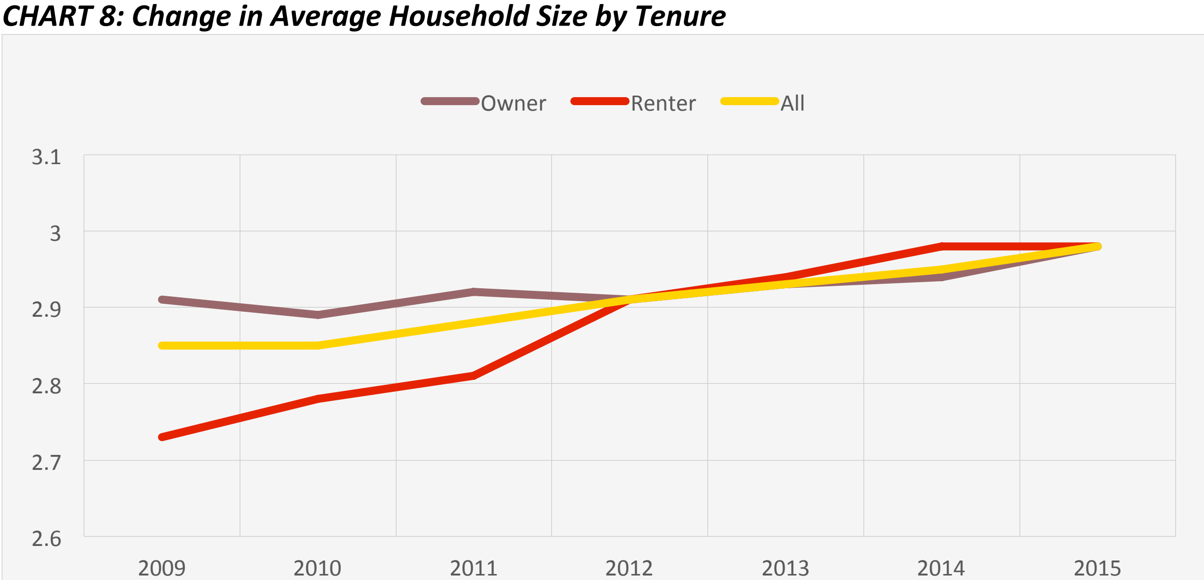
There were 156,628 total households in Adams County in 2015. Family households made up the majority of households in the County by far, with 70.9 percent. Married couples accounted for just over half of the households in the County, and one in five households (20.2%) were single parent households. More than a third of total households in Adams County (36.1%) had children under 18 years old.

TABLE 11: Household Status

	Estimate	Percentage
Total Households	156,628	--
Family Households	111,036	70.9%
Married-couple family	79,410	50.7%
Male, no wife present	10,142	6.5%
Female, no husband present	21,484	13.7%
Nonfamily household	45,592	29.1%
Households with own children under 18 years	56,637	36.2%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1101)		

According to ACS figures from 2009 to 2015, the average household size of occupied housing units in Adams County grew slightly from 2.85 persons in 2009 to 2.98 persons in 2015. While there was steady growth for all households, the average household size of renter-occupied households overtook owner-occupied households in this time.

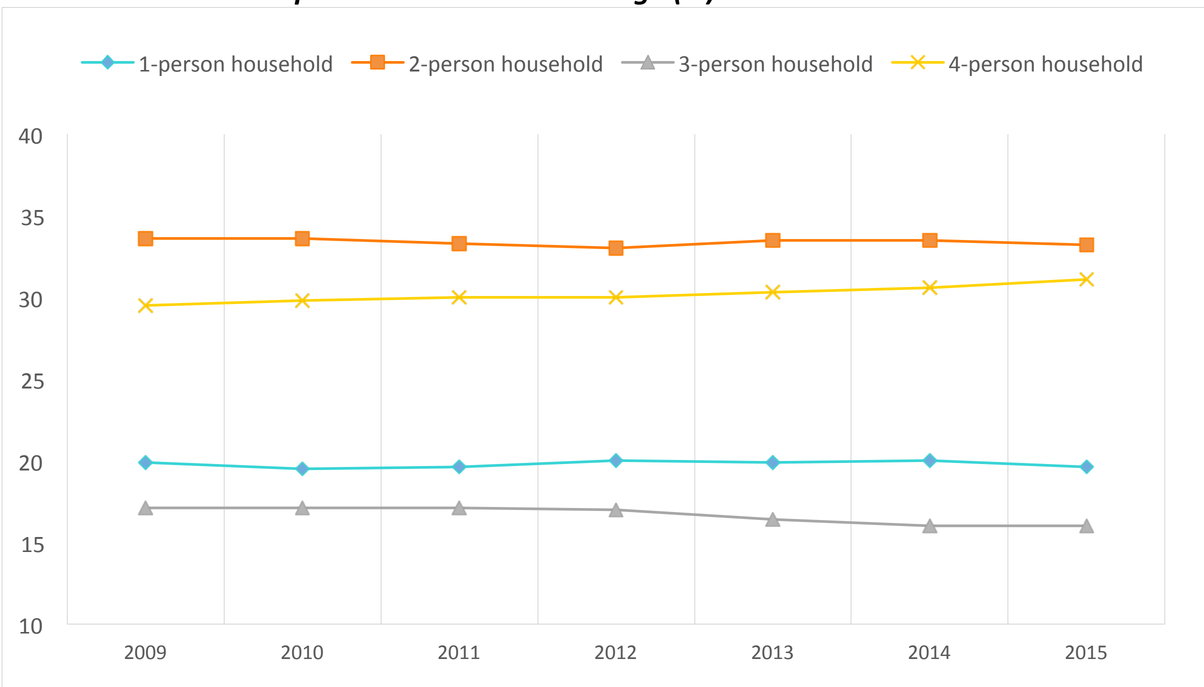
CHART 8: Change in Average Household Size by Tenure



Source: 2005-2009 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25010)

The average household size of owner-occupied households was 2.91 persons in 2009, and increased slightly to 2.98 in 2015. On the other hand, the average household size of renter occupied households increased more quickly from 2.73 persons in 2009 to catch up with owner-occupied households with 2.98 persons in 2015.

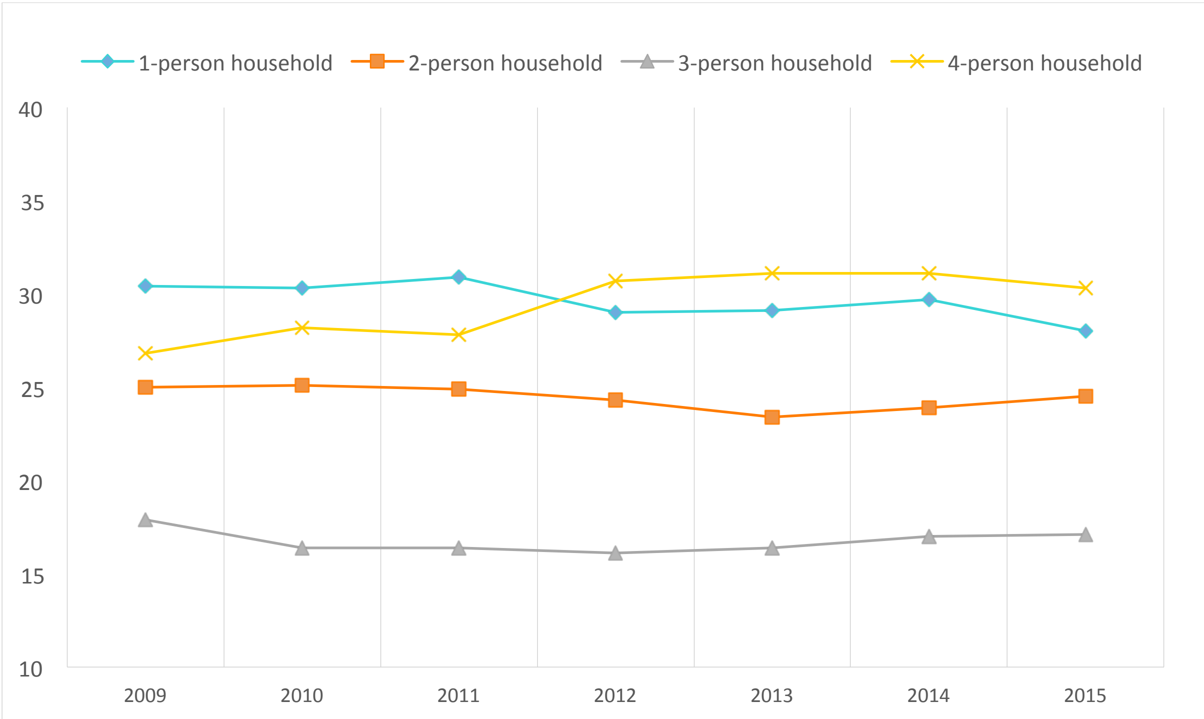
CHART 9: Owner-Occupied Household Size Change (%)



Source: 2005-2009 – 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S2501)

In owner-occupied housing, there has not been a significant amount of fluctuation in the number of persons per household since 2009. Three-person households declined slightly in that time and 4-person households increased slightly. The number of 1-person and 2-person households remained relative steady over the same time period.

CHART 10: Renter-Occupied Household Size Change (%)



Source: 2005-2009 – 2011-2015 ACS 5-Yr Estimates (S2501)

Renter-occupied households experienced more shifts in household size than owner-occupied housing from 2009 to 2015. Since 2009, 4-person households have increased in the County and have become the largest household type by size, increasing from 26.8 percent in 2009 to 30.3 percent in 2015. One-person renter households were the largest type in 2009 but have since fallen behind 4-person households suggesting larger families have an increasing need for renting homes.

Race and Ethnicity

According to 2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, White was the largest racial group in Adams County (82.8%), followed by “Some other race” (5.4%). All other races accounted for less than 4 percent of the population each. Approximately 38.6 percent of the population identify as ethnically Hispanic. (Persons can identify as both ethnically Hispanic and racially as another group.) The table below provides a detailed breakdown of the racial and ethnic composition of the County compared to that of the state as a whole.

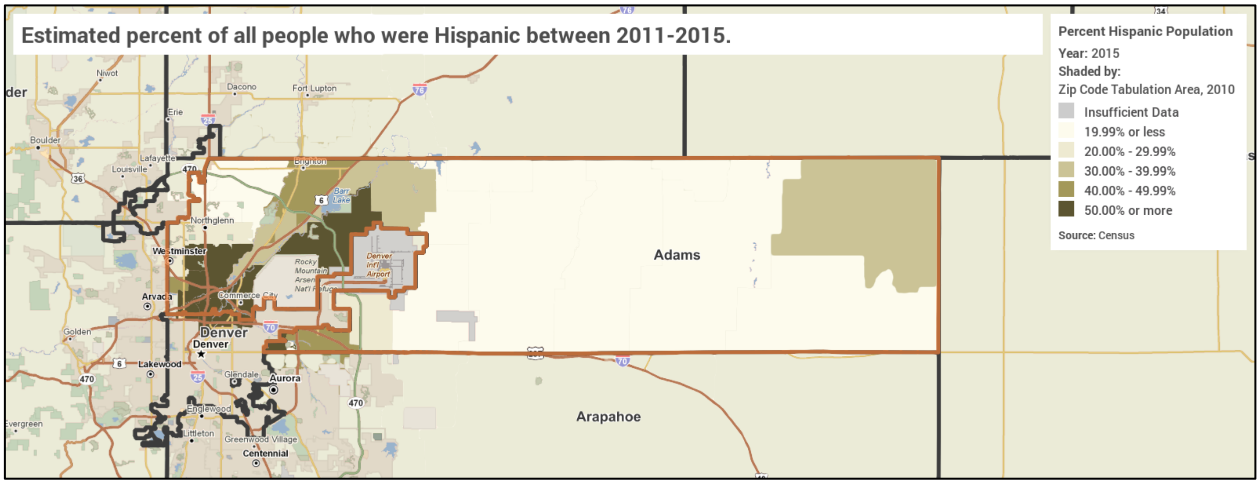
TABLE 12: Race and Ethnicity

	Colorado	Percent	Denver MSA	Percent	Adams County	Percent
White	4,446,095	84.2%	2,213,140	81.8%	390,252	82.8%
Black or African American	213,787	4.0%	150,830	5.6%	15,264	3.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	50,008	0.9%	21,924	0.8%	5,229	1.1%
Asian	153,467	2.9%	104,487	3.9%	17,932	3.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	7,695	0.1%	3,367	0.1%	608	0.1%
Some other race	224,374	4.3%	114,779	4.2%	25,669	5.4%
Two or more races	183,480	3.5%	95,445	3.5%	16,252	3.4%
Hispanic	1,112,586	21.1%	615,397	22.8%	182,114	38.6%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data note: Denver MSA is the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metropolitan Statistical Area						

While the percentages of all races have remained relatively constant since 2000, the composition of the County’s ethnicity is changing. In 2000, 28.2 percent of the population in Adams County identified ethnically as Hispanic or Latino. By 2015, that figure increased to 38.6 percent. Adams County also has a larger Hispanic population than both the state and the Denver metro region.

Below is a map displaying the location of the Hispanic population in Adams County. The Hispanic population is concentrated in the southwest corner of the County in Westminster and Thornton and in between Rocky Mountain Arsenal National and Denver International Airport along E-470. Parts of Aurora, particularly the areas of the city closest to Denver, also have concentrations of the Hispanic population.

MAP 6: Hispanic Population



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

While Denver County had a larger Hispanic population by number, a higher percentage of the population in Adams County was Hispanic.

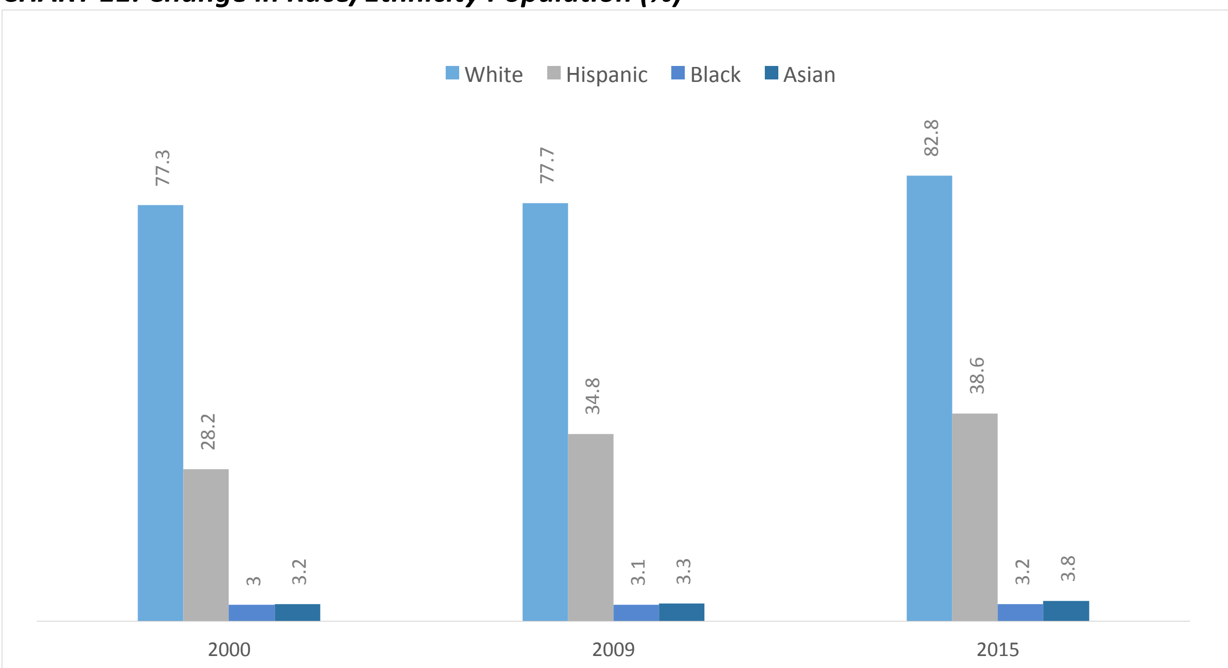
TABLE 13: Hispanic Population by County

	Total Population	Hispanic Population	Percent
Adams County	471,206	182,114	38.6%
Arapahoe County	608,310	113,506	18.7%
Boulder County	310,032	42,487	13.7%
Broomfield County	60,699	7,225	11.9%
Denver County	649,654	201,019	30.9%
Douglas County	306,974	25,007	8.1%
Jefferson County	552,344	83,142	15.1%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP05)			

Change in Race/Ethnicity

The population of persons who identify ethnically as Hispanic has been steadily growing over the last decade and more in Adams County. From 2000 to 2015, the Hispanic population in Adams County grew from 28.2 percent to 38.6 percent – an increase of 36.9 percent. Minority groups have also been steadily growing, but at a slower pace. The Black population grew slightly from 3 percent in 2000 to 3.2 percent in 2015 – an increase of 6.7 percent in that time. The Asian population grew more quickly from 3.2 percent in 2000 to 3.8 percent in 2014 – about 18.8 percent.

CHART 11: Change in Race/Ethnicity Population (%)



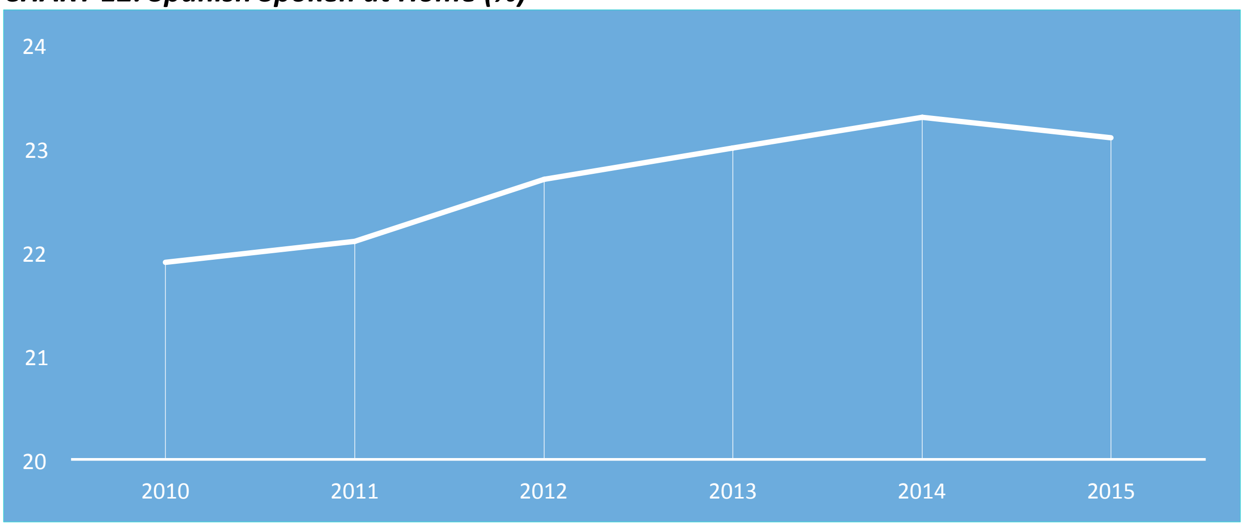
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Since individuals can identify as Hispanics as well as another race (Whites and Blacks), the total percentages of race groups combined with ethnic Hispanics can exceed 100 percent, as it does in Adams County.

Language Spoken at Home

With the number of individuals who identify as ethnically Hispanic rising in Adams County, the needs of the community will shift accordingly, particularly in the areas of communication and language. While English is the primary language in the County, as is common across the country, there are many people who still speak another language at home. In the case of the Hispanic population, Spanish is the primary language spoken. According to the 2011-2015 ACS, 41.7 percent of those who speak Spanish do not speak English very well. Below is a chart showing the growth of the number of individuals in the County who speak Spanish at home.

CHART 12: Spanish Spoken at Home (%)



Source: 2006-2010 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1601)

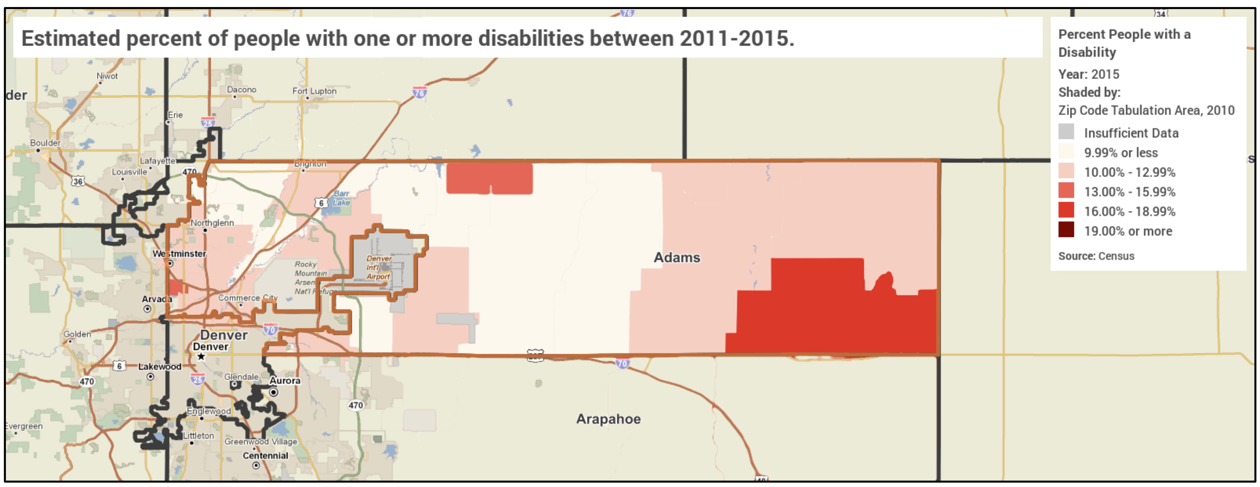
From 2010 to 2014 the percent of individuals that primarily speaks Spanish at home in Adams County rose steadily, however there was a very slight decline in 2015. Even with the slight decline from 2014 to 2015, the estimated number of persons who speak Spanish actually rose from 98,854 to 100,057. With the rate of individuals who identify as Hispanic expected to continue rising, it is also anticipated that the use of Spanish in the County would increase.

Disability

In addition to having to overcome barriers such as housing discrimination and difficulty in finding accessible units, people with disabilities face financial hardships at much higher rates than the average person. An estimated 10.5 percent of the total population of Adams County (49,308 people) had a disability of some sort, and only 43.1 percent of that population that was of working age was employed. Unfortunately, accessible and affordable housing remains firmly out of reach for a large portion of the disabled population. (Source 2011-2015 ACS S1810, S2301)

The map below shows the distribution of people with a disability in Adams County. Like many of the variables studied in this analysis, the concentration of people with a disability is disproportionate across the County. Unincorporated parts of Adams County show areas where there is a higher percent of the population with a disability than the rest of the County.

MAP 7: Percent Disabled



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The following tables provide data on the number of people with a disability in both the County and State, broken down by age. The elderly experience a higher rate of disability across the board in comparison to other age cohorts.

TABLE 14: Disability and Age

	Colorado (state)	Percent	Adams County	Percent
Persons with a disability	538,856	10.4%	49,308	10.5%
Population under 5 years	2,285	0.7%	307	0.8%
Population 5 to 17 years	39,181	4.3%	4,943	5.2%
Population 18 to 34 years	65,789	5.2%	5,795	4.9%
Population 34 to 64 years	221,608	10.7%	21,525	12.2%
Population 65 to 74 years	87,066	22.9%	7,726	29.6%
Population 75 years and over	122,927	49.2%	9,012	54.4%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1810)				

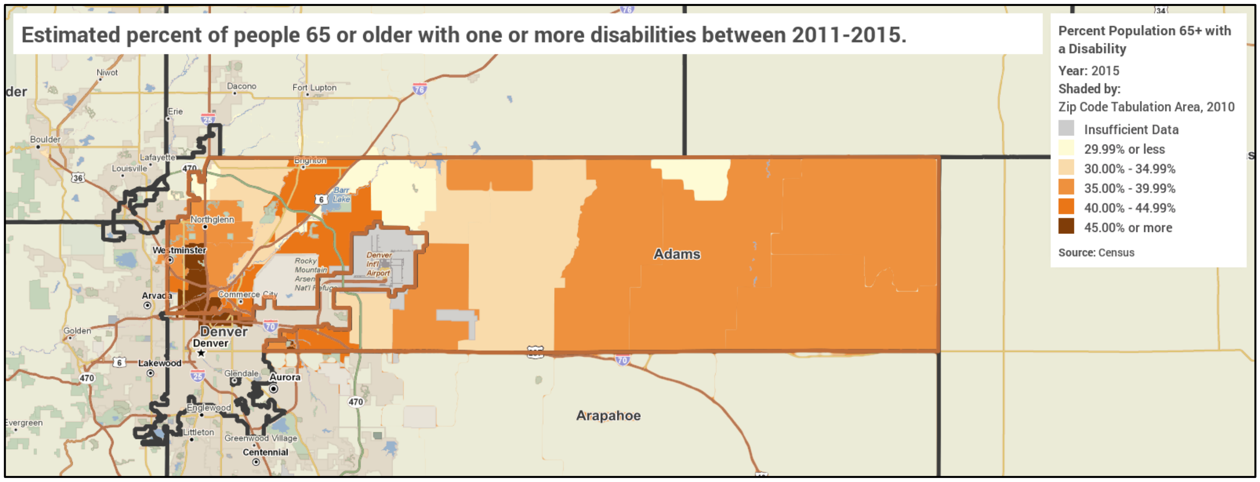
Table 15 provides data on the extent of disabilities among different racial and ethnic groups for both the County and the State. Except for Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders, all the County's minorities have disability rates near the statewide rates for their race or ethnicity.

TABLE 15: Disability and Race

Race	Colorado (state)	Percent	Adams County	Percent
White	458,960	10.5%	41,402	10.7%
Black or African American	22,876	11.4%	1,820	12.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	7,726	16.2%	746	14.4%
Asian	10,533	6.9%	1,551	8.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	578	8.0%	63	12.8%
Some other race	20,508	9.2%	2,203	8.6%
Two or more races	17,675	9.9%	1,523	9.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	100,624	9.2%	15,511	8.6%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1810)				

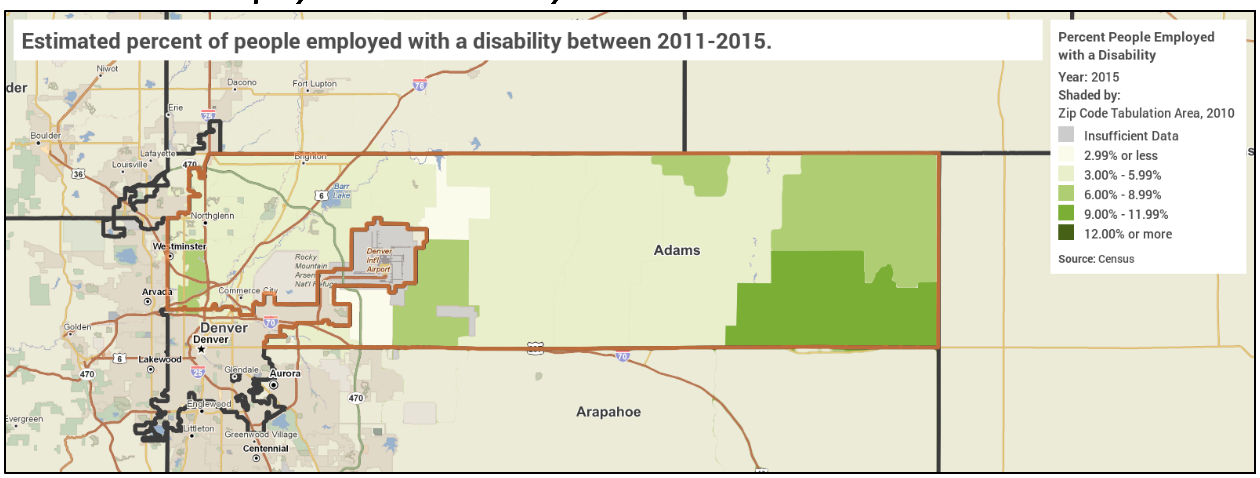
For many people, the struggle to find affordable housing is compounded by the need for housing that can accommodate a disability – this is particularly true for at-risk populations like the elderly, the unemployed, and people living in poverty. The following series of maps highlights the geographical distribution of the disabled population across these different variables. Lighter colored shades represent areas with lower populations and darker shades represent areas with higher populations.

MAP 8: Percent Over 65 with a Disability



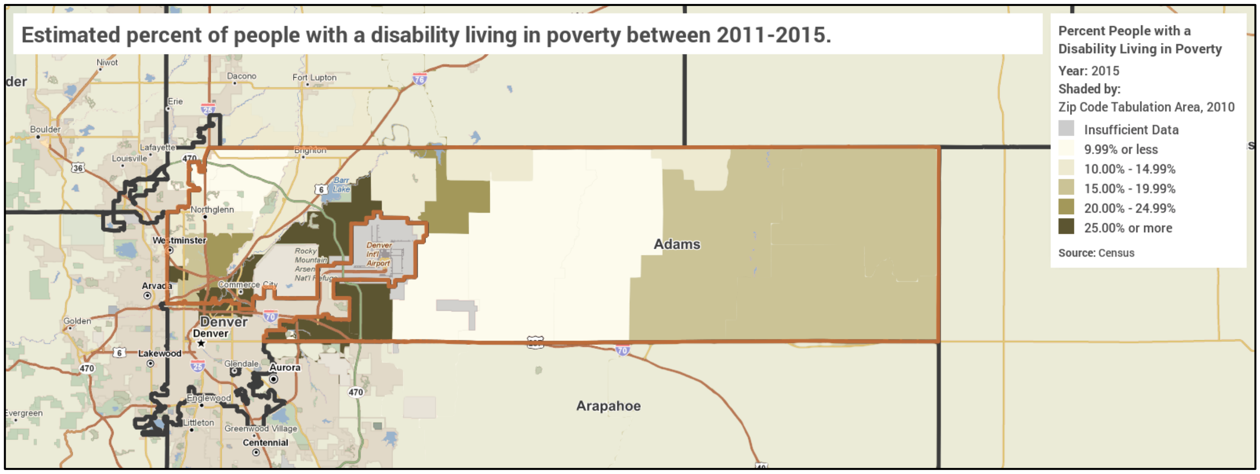
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

MAP 9: Percent Employed with a Disability



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

MAP 10: Percent of Disabled Living in Poverty



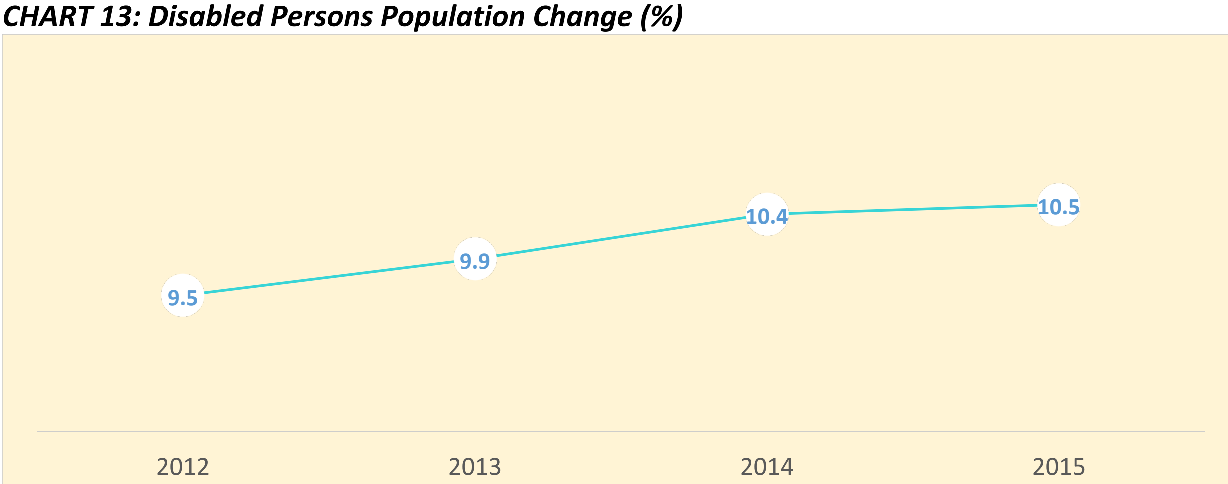
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Disabled persons living in poverty can be found in larger concentration along E-470 in areas between the national wildlife refuge and the international airport, and down into Aurora.

Disability Trends

While the ACS only started publishing detailed 5-Year estimates for disabled persons in 2012, the sample already displays the growth of the disabled population increasing from 9.5 percent in 2012 to 10.5 percent in 2015.

CHART 13: Disabled Persons Population Change (%)



Source: 2008-2012 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Income

According to 2011-2015 American Community Survey figures, the median household income (MHI) in Adams County was $58,258. This was slightly below the statewide MHI of $60,629. The growth rate of the County's MHI between 2000 and 2015 (24.6 percent) was also lower than the statewide average (28.4 percent).

TABLE 16: Median Home Value and Household Income Comparison

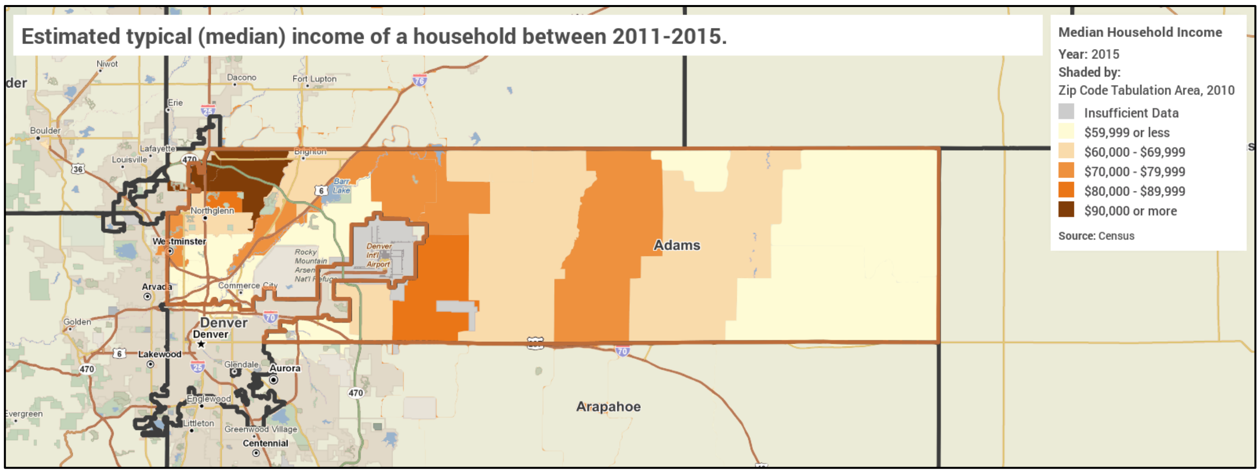
	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Median Household Income (county)	$47,323	$55,258	$58,946	24.6%
Median Home Value (county)	$149,800	$198,600	$198,800	32.7%
Median Household Income (state)	$47,203	$56,222	$60,629	28.4%
Median Home Value (state)	$166,600	$234,100	$247,800	48.7%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

Not only did the County have a lower MHI than the state, according to the 2011-2015 ACS, but the median household income for the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA was $65,614 – about a tenth higher than the MHI in Adams County.

Since the housing market collapse in 2008 and 2009, home prices in Adams County have remained stagnant and household income has only increased slightly. In Colorado, both income and housing values have risen slightly since the collapse, though MHI still lags behind increasing housing prices. As housing values begin to rise again in the County and the state, there will be more pressure on residents to find affordable housing, as MHI has yet to catch up to median home values.

The following map shows the geographical distribution of median household income throughout Adams County. Lighter colored shades represent areas with lower MHI and darker shades represent areas with higher MHI. There is a clear concentration of wealth in the northwest corner of the County along I-25 and Northwest Pkwy/E 470 north of Thornton – the only tracts with MHI of $90,000 or more. On the opposite end of the spectrum, just south of that area is where MHI is $59,999 or below. Other areas with a low MHI in the County is areas surrounding and between Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and Denver International Airport and eastern unincorporated parts of the County.

MAP 11: Median Household Income



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Income Projection

Median household income is projected to increase at an annual rate of 2.62 percent from 2016 to 2021 according to Esri, a leading geographic information systems company. The MHI in Adams County in 2016 was $59,509 and it is projected to be $67,717 in the year 2021.

Family Household Income Distribution

The largest income cohort in Adams County was comprised of families making between $75,000 and $99,999 annually, accounting for 16.5 percent of all families. However, over half the families in the County earned less than $75,000 (56.9%). In 2016, HUD Income Limits Documentation System reported the area median income (AMI) for Adams County to be $80,100, with low-income families of 4 making only $64,100. While noting the limitations of the ACS data figures (ACS data figures calculate by total number of family households in the County, and do not break down data by family size), 44.4 percent of families in the County were making less than $60,000 in 2014. There were 14,331 family households earning less than $25,000 a year in Adams County in 2014 – approximately 13 percent of the families. The average family size in Adams County was 3.53 persons per family – a figure that has been steadily rising since 2010.

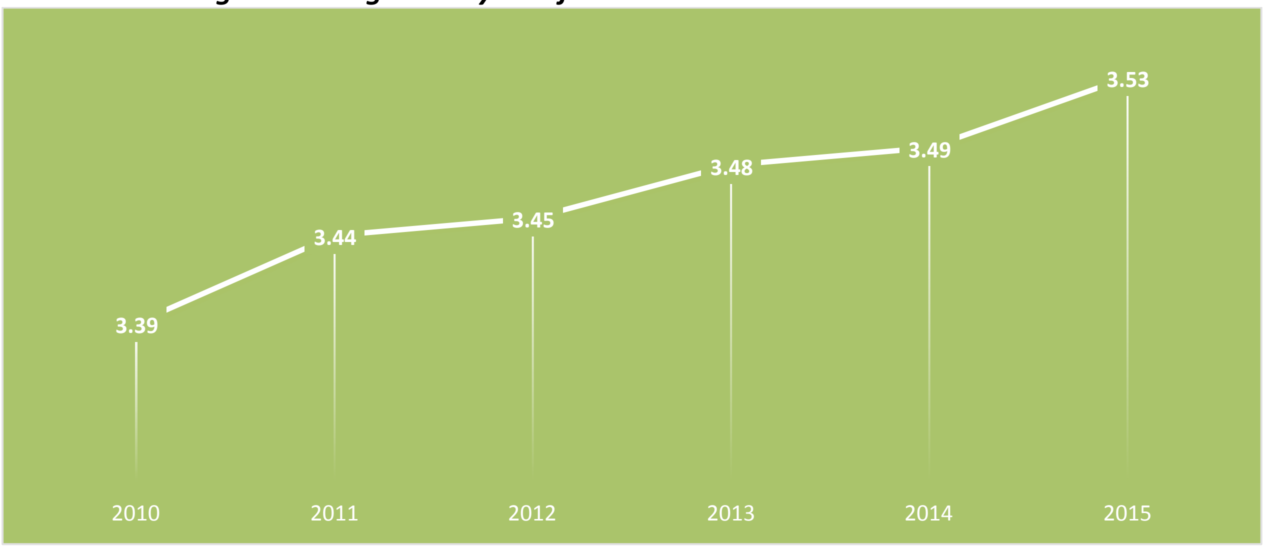
TABLE 17: Income Distribution (Families)

	Estimate	Percent
Less than $10,000	4,017	3.6%
$10,000 to $14,999	2,633	2.4%
$15,000 to $19,999	3,500	3.2%
$20,000 to $24,999	4,181	3.8%
$25,000 to $29,999	4,754	4.3%
$30,000 to $34,999	4,995	4.5%
$35,000 to $39,999	4,954	4.5%
$40,000 to $44,999	6,001	5.4%
$45,000 to $49,999	4,600	4.1%
$50,000 to $59,999	9,532	8.6%
$60,000 to $74,999	13,828	12.5%
$75,000 to $99,999	18,315	16.5%
$100,000 to $124,999	11,748	10.6%
$125,000 to $149,999	7,431	6.7%
$150,000 to $199,999	6,318	5.7%
$200,000 or more	4,229	3.8%
Total	111,036	100%
Average Family Size	3.53	--
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B19101) Data Note: Orange shaded areas are families with income $25,000 and below.		

The definition of family according to HUD is:

A family consists of a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family. A family household may contain people not related to the householder, but those people are not included as part of the householder's family in tabulations. Thus, the number of family households is equal to the number of families, but family *households may include more members than do families. A household can contain only one family for purposes of tabulations. Not all households contain families since a household may be comprised of a group of unrelated people or of one person living alone – these are called nonfamily households. Families are classified by type as either a "married-couple family" or "other family" according to the sex of the householder and the presence of relatives.*[3]

CHART 14: Change in Average Family Size from 2010 to 2015



Source: 2006-2010 – 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1101)

The average family size in Adams County has been rising since 2010. In that time, the total number of families in Adams County also rose from 104,899 in 2010 to 111,036 in 2015 – an increase of almost six percent.

[3] US Census Bureau, American Community Survey and Puerto Rico Community, 2014 Subject Definitions

Table 18 shows the Adams County 2016 HUD Income Limits for a variety of HUD. While the ACS does not break down the income distribution of families in the County by family size (estimates are only available at 3.53 persons per family), the data can still be used to infer the relative number of families in Adams County that would be considered low income.

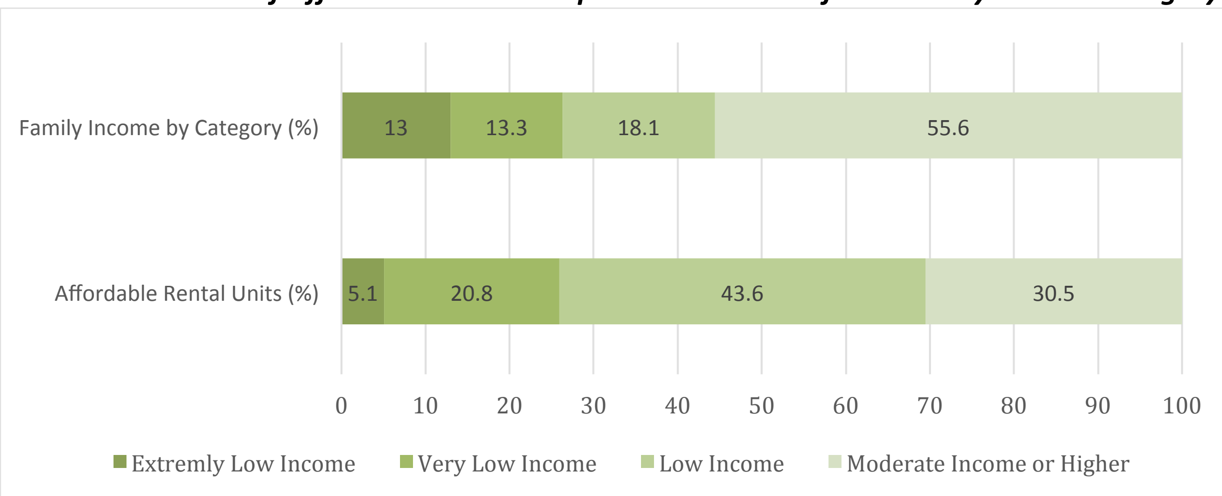
TABLE 18: HUD FY 2016 Income Limits Summary

Income Limit Area	Median Income	Income Category	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons
Adams County	$80,100	Low (80%)	$44,900	$51,300	$57,700	**$64,100**	$69,250
		Very Low (50%)	$28,050	$32,050	$36,050	**$40,050**	$43,300
		Extremely Low (30%)	$16,850	$19,250	$21,650	**$24,300**	$28,440
Source: HUD FY 2016 Income Limits Documentation System							

According to the HUD Income Limits Documentation System, the area median income (AMI) for Adams County was $80,100, however it should be noted that the AMI was calculated using the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA, which included the County. Income categories for low-, very low- and extremely low-income families are also calculated by family size, and base income categories are generally calculated from 4 person families and then adjusted according to more or fewer persons in the family.

Below is a chart displaying family income distribution against available housing that is affordable for renters. For Family Income, the darkest green shade represents the percent of families in Adams County that are considered extremely low-income (30% of AMI), the dark green shade represents very low-income families (50% of AMI), and the medium shade represents low-income (80% of AMI). The lightest shade represents the AMI ($80,100) and higher. For Percent Affordable Rents, the darkest shade represents the percent of units in the County available for families that have extremely low-income. The dark green shade is the percent of units available for very low-income families and medium green for low-income families. The lightest shade is the percent of units priced for families with the AMI ($80,100) and higher.

CHART 15: Percent of Affordable Rents Compared to Percent of Families by Income Category



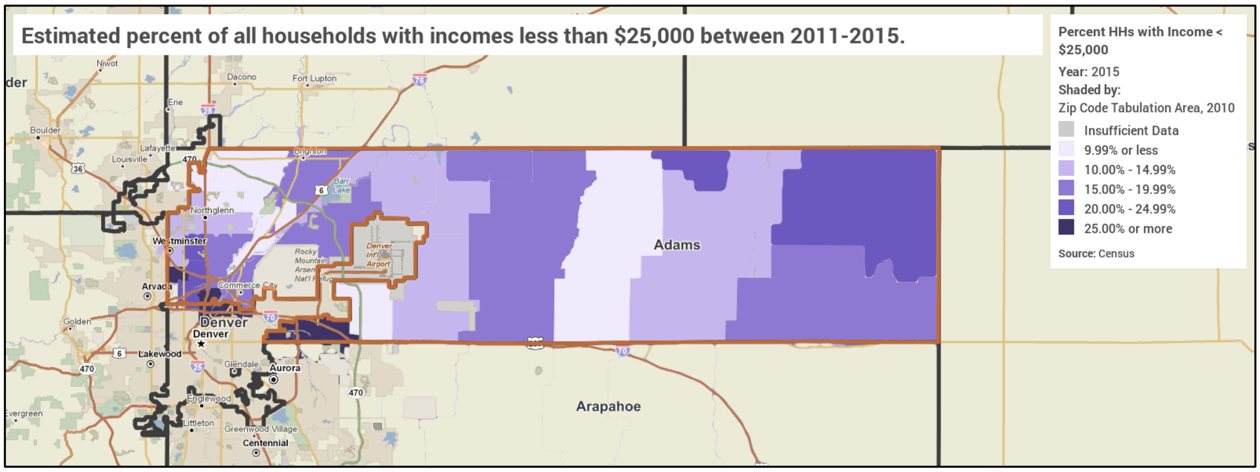
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data Note: Income limits is based off AMI of $80,100 from HUD FY 2016 Income Limits Documentation System. Affordability is based off gross rent that does not exceed 25% of family income.

From a purely quantitative perspective, there is a large amount of affordable (not exceeding 25 percent of their income) housing available for low-income and moderate-income or higher families. Families that are very low-income also have a sufficient number of units in the County, but may face difficulty in finding units, because low-income families (who could, in theory, afford a more expensive unit) often seek out these less expensive units. Of high concern is the percent of affordable rental units available for extremely low-income families. Approximately 13 percent of families in Adams County are extremely low-income families, but only 5.1 percent of units are affordable for these families.

Households with Income Less than $25,000

According to the 2011-2015 ACS, approximately 17 percent of households (26,643 households) in Adams County had a median income of less than $25,000. The map below shows the distribution of households with MHI less than $25,000 in the County. The southwestern corner of the County in in Aurora, along with areas just south of Westminster and Commerce City, have the highest percentage of households with income less than $25,000. Other unincorporated areas in the northeast corner of the County also show a higher percentage of households with income less than $25,000.

MAP 12: MHI Less than $25,000

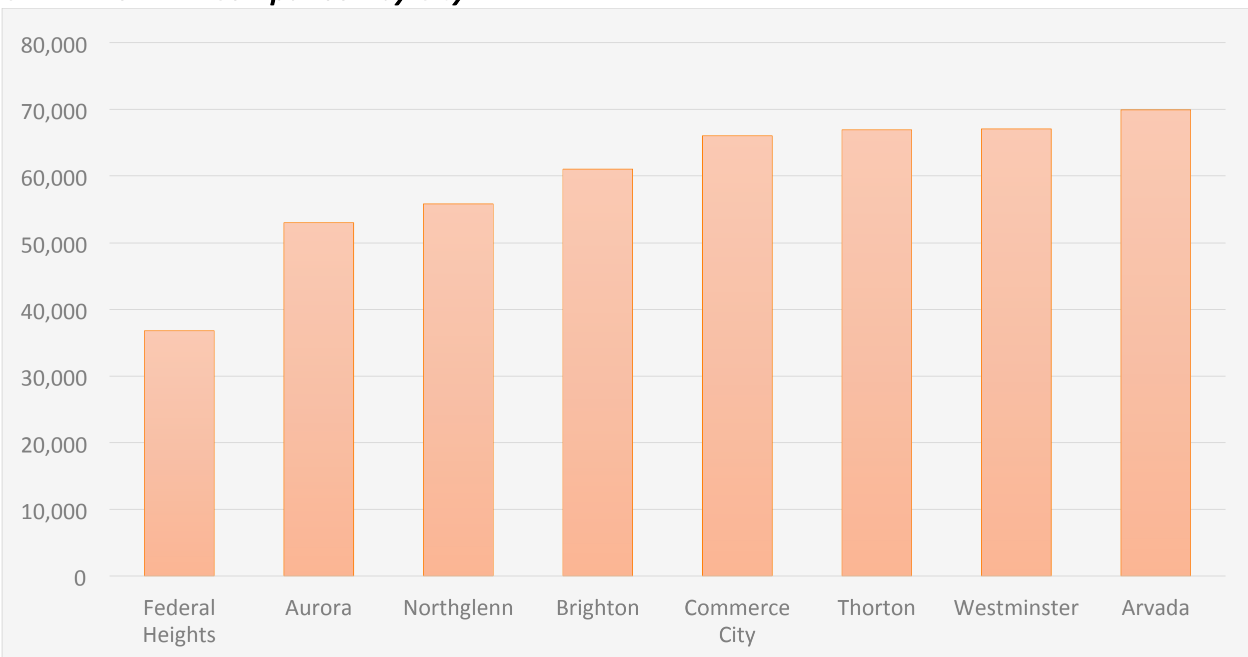


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Median Income by City

Although the median household income (MHI) in Adams County was $58,946, MHI for municipalities in the County varied widely. Per the most recent ACS, Arvada has the highest MHI in the County at $69,938 followed by Westminster at $67,081. Federal Heights had the lowest MHI in the County, at $36,800.

CHART 16: MHI Comparison by City



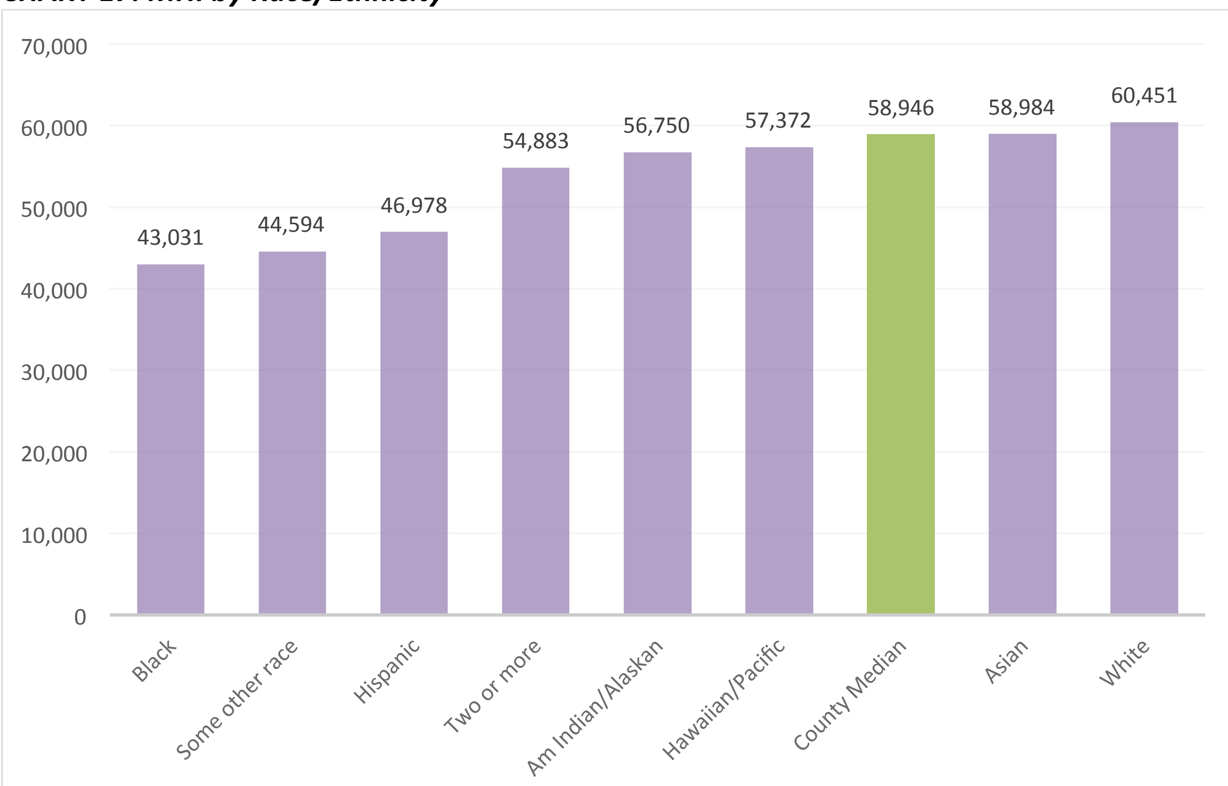
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Income and Race

The 2015 countywide median household income (MHI) was approximately $58,946, but there was significant disparity among the different racial and ethnic groups in the Adams County.

Whites, the largest racial group by far in the County, had an MHI of $59,205 – slightly higher than the countywide median. Hispanics (ethnic group), the second largest group in the County, had an MHI of $46,398, which is lower than the countywide MHI. Asians in Adams County had the second highest MHI with $59,033, slightly behind Whites. All other races earned less than the countywide MHI, and in some cases significantly less. The chart below compares the MHI of the different races and ethnicities in the County.

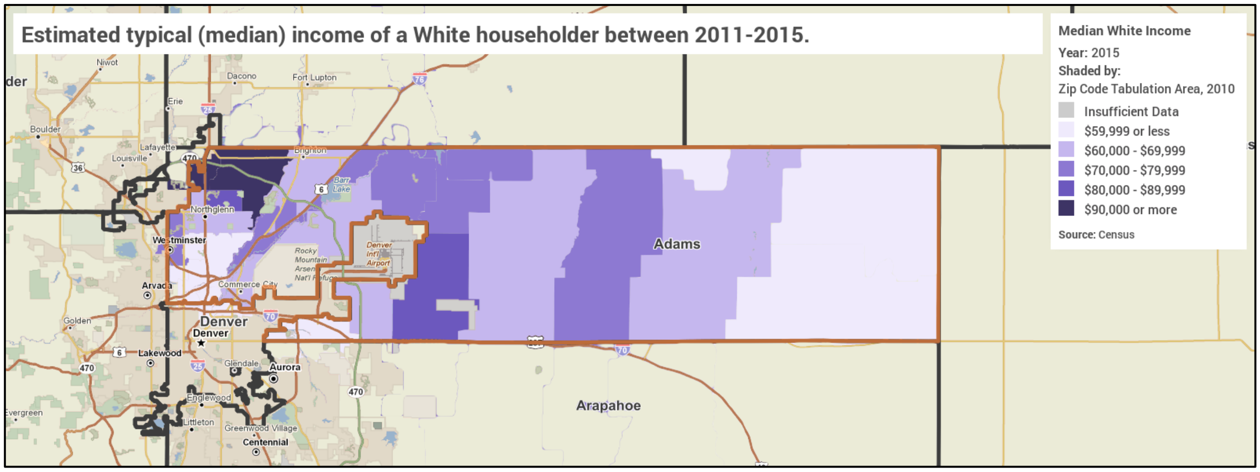
CHART 17: MHI by Race/Ethnicity



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Yr Estimates (S1903)

The following maps display racial and ethnic groups and the distribution of median household income in Adams County. Lighter shaded areas represent areas where the groups have lower MHIs and darker shaded areas represent areas where the groups have higher MHIs.

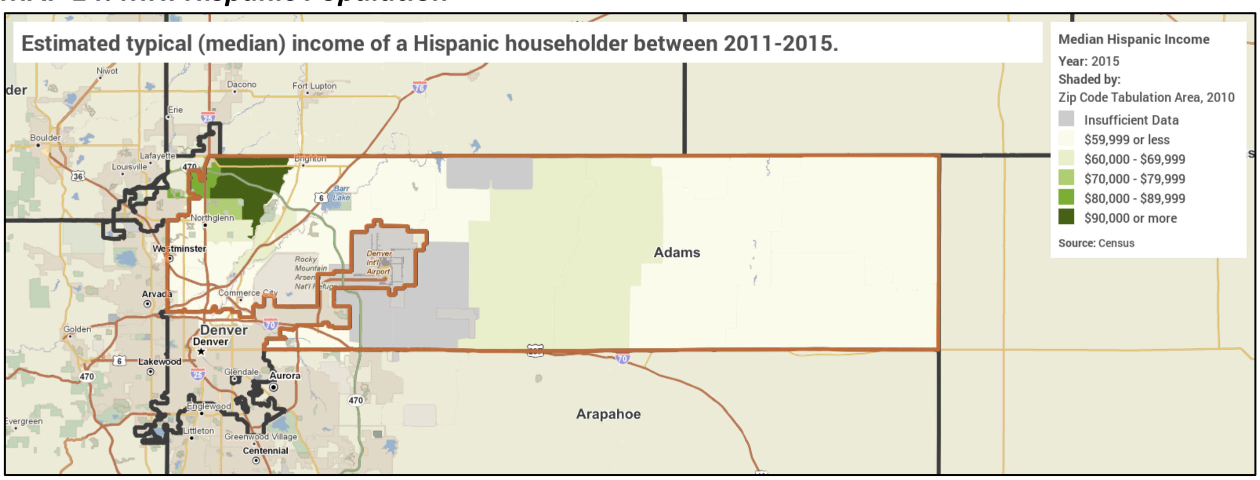
MAP 13: MHI White Population



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Whites make up over 80 percent of the population of Adams County, so it is not surprising that the map above shows a similar income distribution as the overall County MHI map.

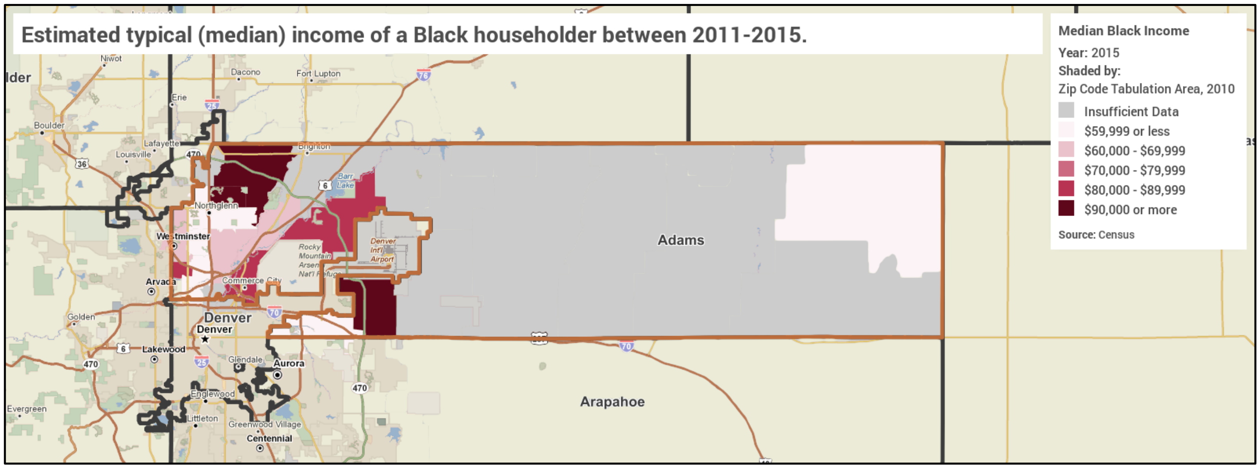
MAP 14: MHI Hispanic Population



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The concentration of Hispanic households with high MHIs was found almost exclusively in the northwest corner of the County. MHI was lowest in unincorporated areas of Adams County, along I-25 and in the southwest tip of the County in Adams.

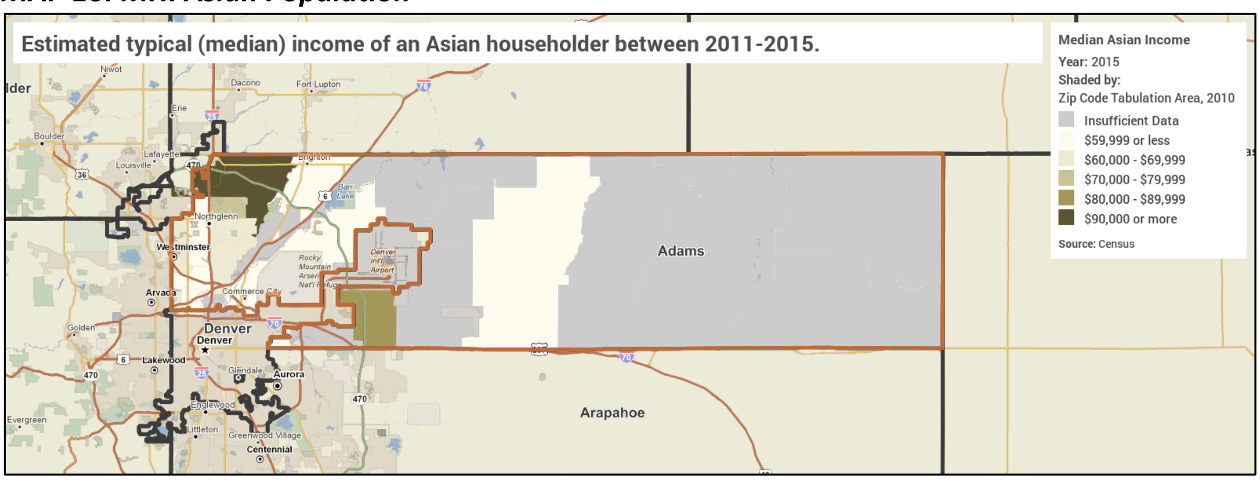
MAP 15: MHI Black Population



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Similar to the Hispanic population, the Black population also had concentrations of high MHI in the northwest corner of the County. Blacks living just south of the Denver International Airport also had a relatively high MHI. Because Blacks only account for 3.2 percent of the population in the County, there were some areas with insufficient data to draw any results. MHI was lowest along I-25 and the southwest tip of the County in Aurora.

MAP 16: MHI Asian Population



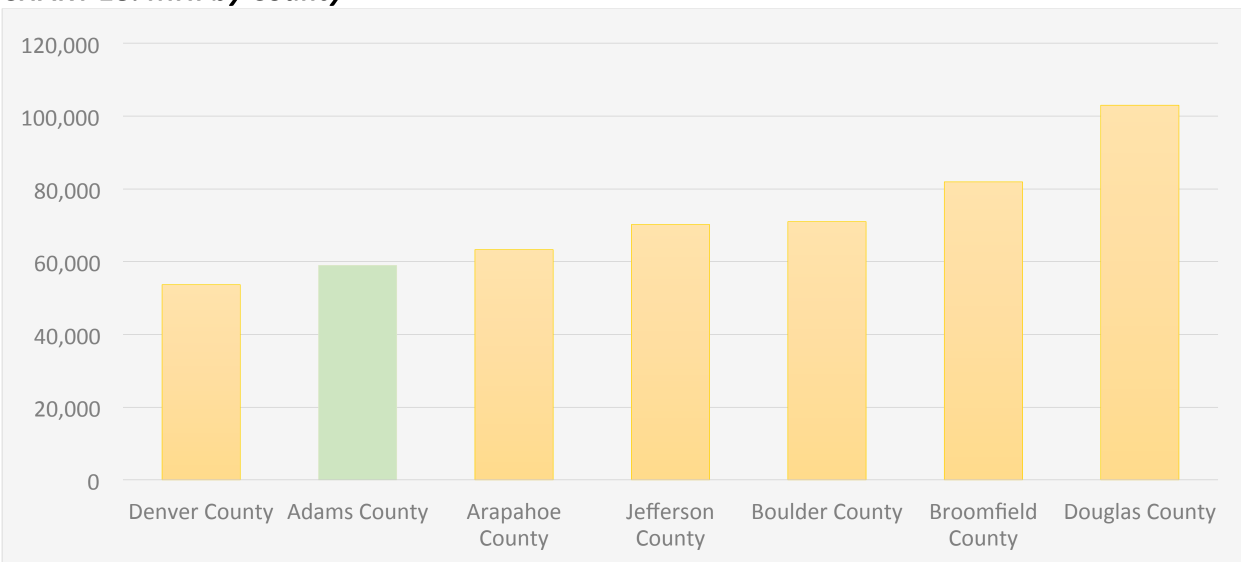
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Asians also saw the highest MHI in Adams County in the northwest corner of the County. Following a developing pattern, MHI was lowest along I-25 and the southwest tip of the County in Aurora.

MHI County Comparison

Of the seven counties in the Denver metro area, Adams County had the second lowest MHI: $58,946 per household. Only Denver County had a lower MHI, with $53,637. MHI was highest in Douglas County ($102,964) and Broomfield County ($81,898). All other Counties in the seven-county metro area had an MHI higher than $60,000.

CHART 18: MHI by County



Source 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Adams County also saw the third highest increase in MHI from 2000 to 2015 among six of the seven counties in the metro area (Broomfield became a county in 2001), with only Denver County and Boulder County having a higher increase.

TABLE 19: Median Household Income by County

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	$47,323	$55,258	$58,946	24.6%
Arapahoe County	$53,570	$58,968	$63,265	18.1%
Boulder County	$55,861	$65,040	$70,961	27.0%
Broomfield County	not yet county	$76,240	$81,898	--
Denver County	$39,500	$45,438	$53,637	35.8%
Douglas County	$82,929	$99,522	$102,964	24.2%
Jefferson County	$57,339	$65,891	$70,164	22.4%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

As later discussed in the housing profile, Adams County's median home value and median gross rent have also both increased. From 2000 to 2015, the median household income of residents in the County increased 24.6 percent and the median home value increased 32.7 percent. In stark contrast, median gross rent increased 47.4 percent – much higher than the increase in the county MHI and outpacing income at an alarming rate. High median gross rent squeezes affordability and puts added pressure for low-income households to remain in their homes.

Adams County has identified affordable housing as a high priority and has moved to address this through several planning efforts including the Adams County 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan, which is the primary community development plan for the County and is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Other County plans include Making Connections, which is the County's planning and implementation plan for development, redevelopment and supporting infrastructure in unincorporated Southwest Adams County. As part of the Affordable Housing Policy in this plan, the County has outlined four elements to address: 1.) Background/Baseline review of the latest data available; 2.) Regulatory items such as zoning and plan updates; 3.) Financing; and 4.) Partnerships with the community. (Source: Making Connections/SW Adams County Planning and Implementation Plan, 2016)

Education

For the population 3 years and over, from 2000 to 2015, school enrollment in Adams County for every level decreased or remained flat except at the college or graduate school level.

TABLE 20: School Enrollment

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Population 3 yrs.+ enrolled in school	95,644	105,004	127,655	33.5%
Nursery school, preschool	6.9%	6.9%	6.1%	-11.6%
Kindergarten	6.2%	5.8%	6.1%	-1.6%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	49.3%	47.3%	45.9%	-6.9%
High school (grades 9-12)	21.1%	21.7%	21.2%	0.5%
College or graduate school	16.4%	18.4%	20.5%	25.0%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B14001)				

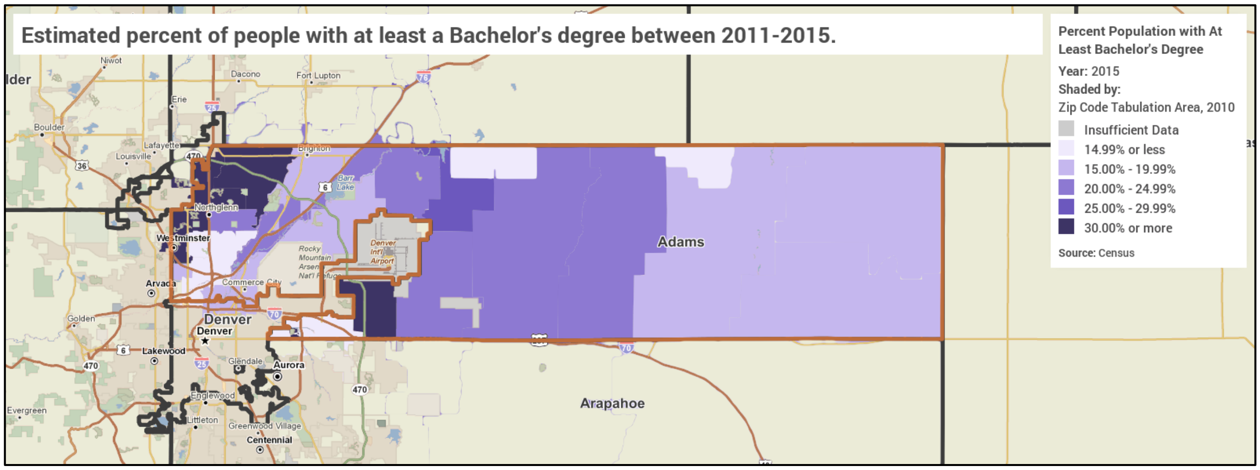
Consequently, there has been a shift in educational attainment in Adams County over the past decade and a half: for the population 25 years and over, the percentage of people with secondary education degrees has increased dramatically between 2000 and 2015.

TABLE 21: Educational Attainment

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Population 25 years and over	223,094	262,997	296,842	33.1%
Less high school, no diploma	21.2%	19.0%	17.7%	-16.5%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	30.8%	30.6%	28.8%	-6.5%
Some college, no degree	23.7%	22.6%	22.9%	-3.4%
Associate degree	7.0%	7.8%	8.4%	20.0%
Bachelor's degree	12.6%	14.3%	15.2%	20.6%
Graduate or professional degree	4.8%	5.7%	7.0%	45.8%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1501)				

The percent of the population with at least a Bachelor's degree is larger in the northwest area of the County and in areas just south of the airport. These areas also have households with some of the highest incomes in the County. There are pockets just north of Denver, however, where a much smaller percent of the population has a Bachelor's degree.

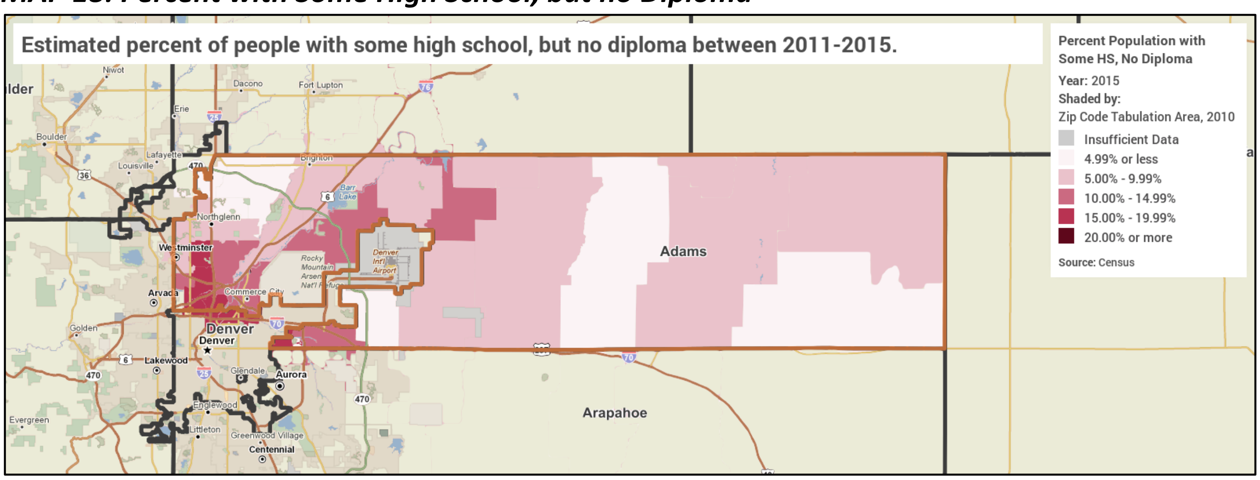
MAP 17: Percent with Bachelor's Degree



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

In the southwest corner of the County, particularly along I-25 and the southwest tip of the County in Aurora, there is a higher percentage of persons 25 years and over without at least a high school diploma. These areas also have low MHI.

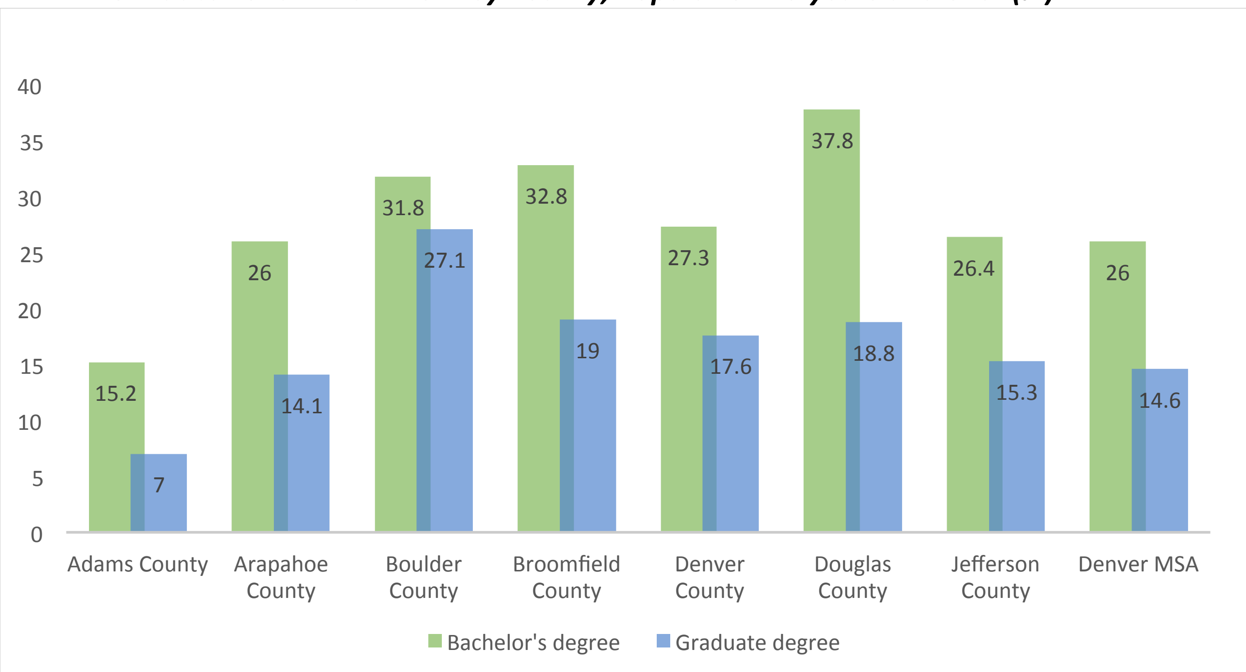
MAP 18: Percent with Some High School, but no Diploma



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

In comparison to the 7-County metro area, Adams County lags far behind all the other counties in educational attainment for those with a Bachelor's degree, and especially those with a Graduate degree. In 2015, approximately 15.2 percent of the population 25 years and over in Adams County had a Bachelor's degree or higher, and only 7 percent had a Graduate degree or higher. By contrast, 37.8 percent of the population 25 years and over in Douglas County had a Bachelor's degree or higher, and Boulder County had 27.1 percent with a Graduate degree or higher. Adams County also compares unfavorably when compared to the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood MSA. The MSA had 26 percent with a Bachelor's degree or higher and 14.6 percent with a Graduate degree or higher.

CHART 19: Educational Attainment by County, Population 25 years and over (%)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Date Note: Denver MSA is the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metropolitan Statistical Area

Poverty

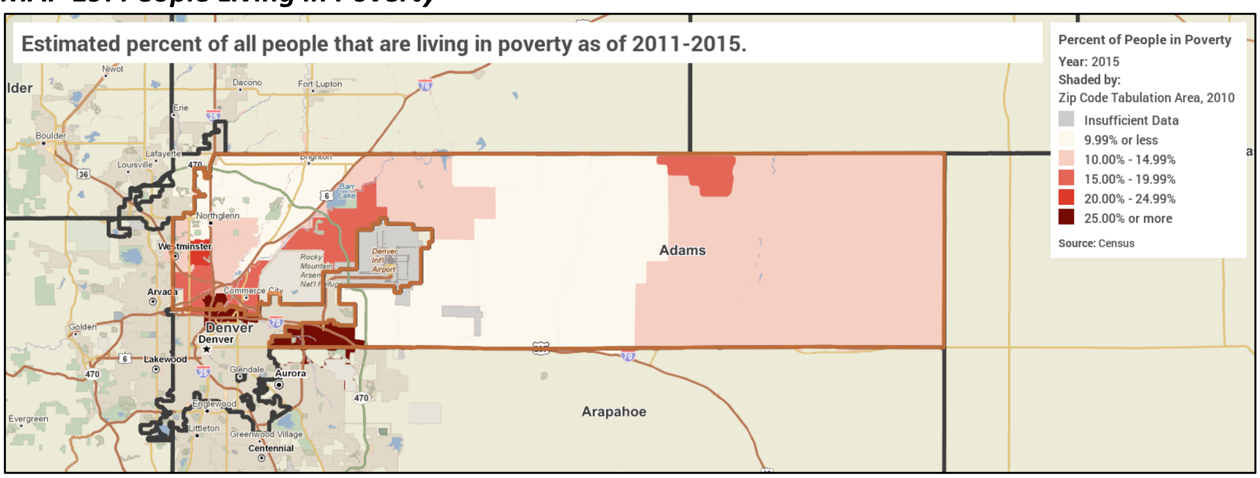
According to 2011-2015 American Community Survey figures, the poverty rate for all individuals in Adams County was 13.8 percent. This was slightly higher than the statewide rate of 12.7 percent. From 2000 to 2015 the poverty rate in the County increased 55.1 percent, but during the same time period the state poverty rate grew only 36.6 percent.

TABLE 22: Poverty Level (Individuals)

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % Change
Adams County	8.9%	13.1%	13.8%	55.1%
Colorado	9.3%	11.9%	12.7%	36.6%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP03)				

The following map displays the geographical distribution of poverty throughout Adams County. The lighter shaded areas represent a smaller percent of people in poverty and the darker shaded areas represent a higher percent of people in poverty.

MAP 19: People Living in Poverty



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The areas directly north of Denver where I-25 begins in Adams County and the southwest tip containing parts of Aurora have the highest poverty rates in the County. Households in these areas also have a lower MHI. It is not surprising that the areas north of Thornton and along the northeast border have the lowest poverty in the County, as these are also areas where the MHI is highest.

Poverty and Family

Single female head of households with no husband present are more likely to be in poverty than married couple families. The poverty rate was 10.3 percent for all families in the County, but female-headed households with no husband present had a 25.4 percent poverty rate. Families with related children under 18 years of age were more likely than families without children to live in poverty.

TABLE 23: Poverty and Family Type

	All Families		**Married-couple Families**		**Female householder, no husband**	
	Estimate	**% Below Poverty**	**Estimate**	**% Below Poverty**	**Estimate**	**% Below Poverty**
Families	111,036	10.3%	79,410	6.0%	21,484	25.4%
W/ related children under 18 yrs.	63,699	15.4%	42,554	9.3%	14,556	33.6%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1702)						

Poverty and Age

While the countywide poverty rate for Adams County was 13.8 percent, the rate varied between different age groups. Persons under the age of 18 years had the highest rate, at 19.1 percent. Persons 65 years and over experienced less poverty, with 7.9 percent of the group below the poverty level.

TABLE 24: Poverty Level by Age

Age	**Total Estimate**	**Estimated below poverty level**	**Percent below poverty level**
Under 18 years	130,178	24,906	19.1%
Related children under 18 years	129,721	24,481	18.9%
18 to 64 years	293,853	35,984	12.2%
65 years and over	42,659	3,351	7.9%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1701)			

Poverty and Race

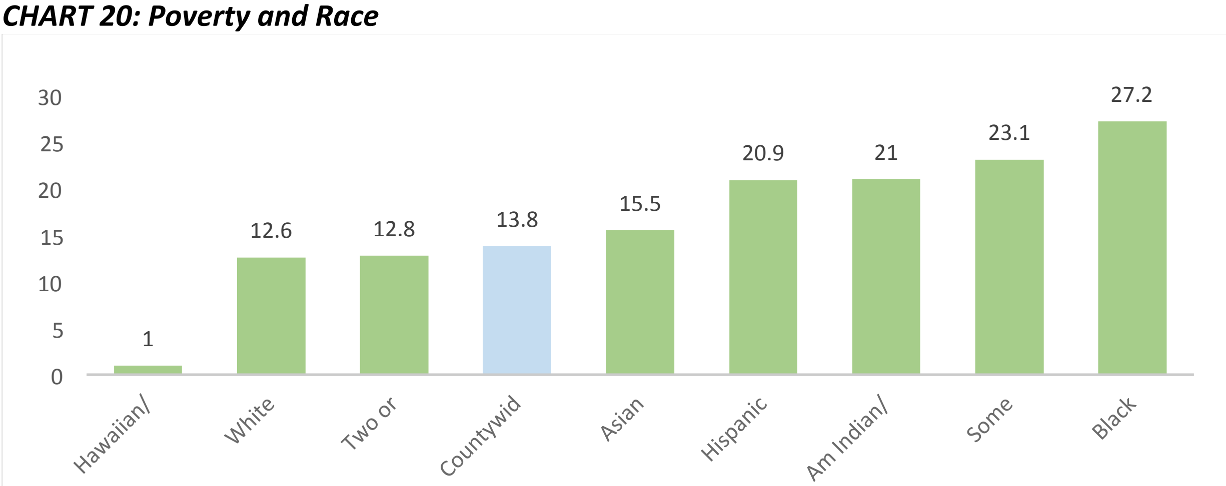
The 2015 countywide poverty rate was 13.8 percent, but there was significant disparity among the different racial and ethnic groups. Three racial groups had a poverty rate lower than the countywide average: Whites (the largest racial group in Adams County), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders, and those identifying as two or more races. In comparison, Blacks and African Americans, American Indian and Alaska Natives, Asians and individuals identifying ethnically as Hispanic or Latino had poverty rates higher than the countywide rate. When looking at the estimated number of persons below poverty level, Hispanics or Latino persons made up a significant portion of the overall number of persons in poverty – approximately 59 percent.

TABLE 25: Poverty and Racial/Ethnic Composition

Race	Estimate	Percentage
White	48,382	12.5%
Black or African American	4,063	27.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,088	21.0%
Asian	2,779	15.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	6	1.0%
Some other race	5,889	23.1%
Two or more races	2,034	12.8%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	37,731	20.9%
Adams County	64,241	13.8%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1701) Data Note 1: Hispanic and Latino identify as an ethnic group. Data Note 2: County percentages may not add up because of rounding.		

The following chart compares the 2015 poverty rates of all races and individuals that identify ethnically as Hispanic with the countywide poverty rate.

CHART 20: Poverty and Race

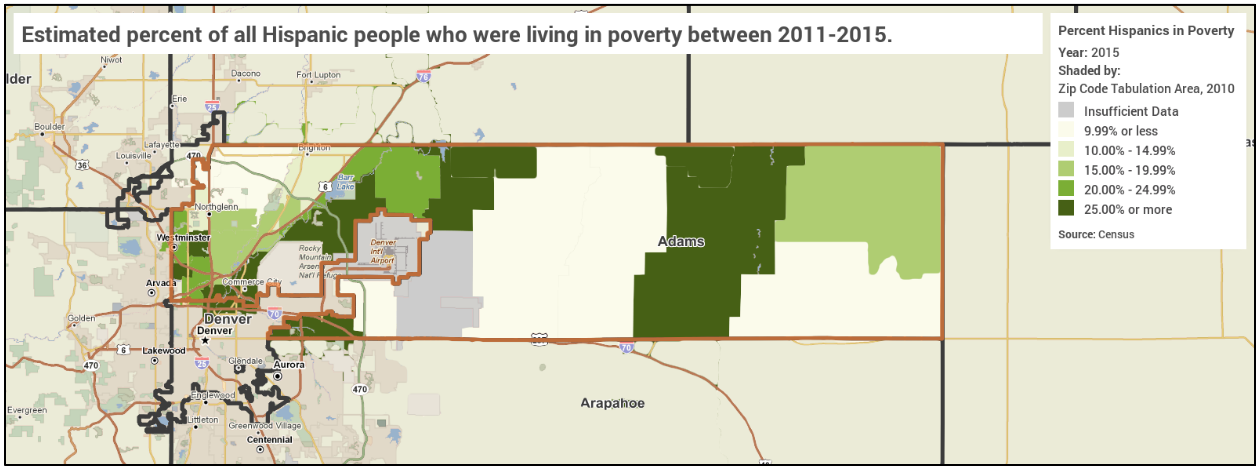


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1701)

Blacks had a disproportionately high percent below poverty level, at 27.2 percent, as compared to the rest of Adams County (13.8% overall). Individuals who identified as ethnically Hispanic also had a higher percent of people under the poverty level, at 20.9 percent.

The following series of maps displays the poverty rate based on race or ethnicity. Lighter shades represent areas where the groups have lower rates of poverty and darker shades represent areas where the groups have higher poverty rates.

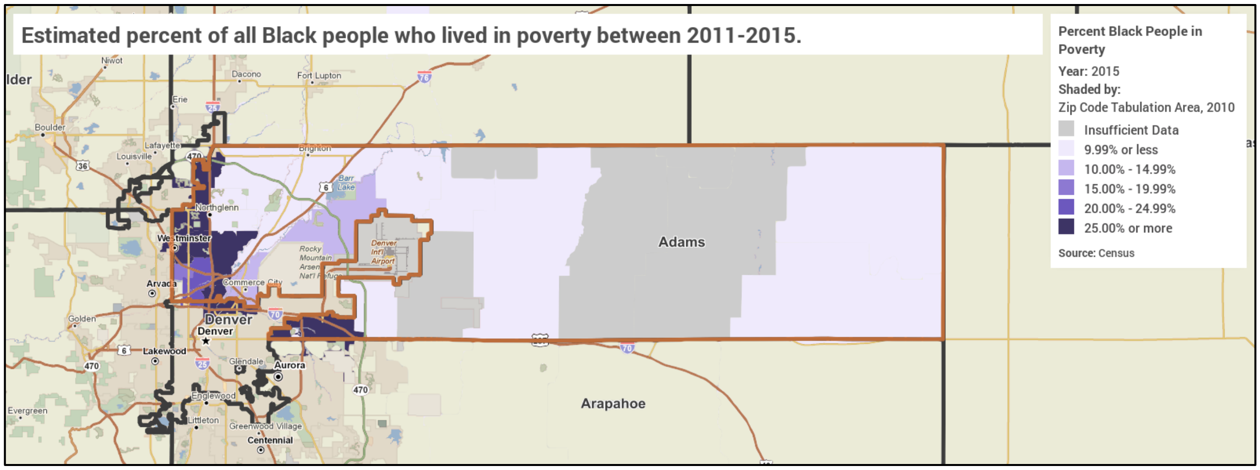
MAP 20: Percent Hispanic Living in Poverty



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Some areas where the Hispanic population lives in poverty are consistent with where MHI is lowest in the County, particularly along I-25 and in part of Aurora. However, unlike the overall low poverty rate distribution areas of the County, there are high concentrations of the Hispanic population living in poverty east of I-76, northeast of the airport and in the unincorporated east/central portion of the County.

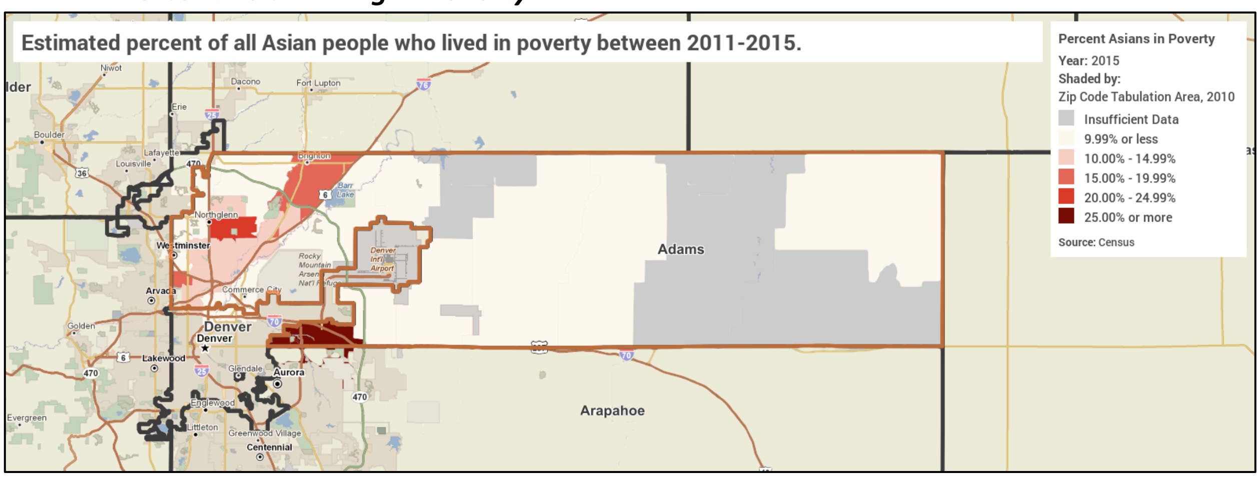
MAP 21: Percent Black Living in Poverty



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The Black population of Adams County that is living in poverty is concentrated along the western and southwestern municipalities of the County, and north and south along I-25.

MAP 22: Percent Asian Living in Poverty

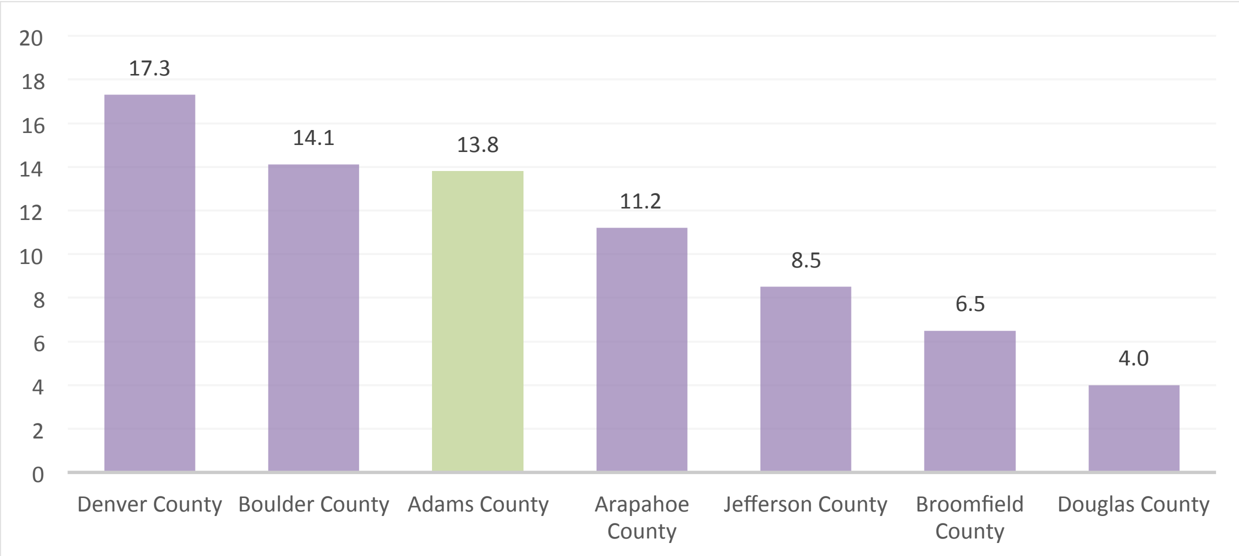


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The Asian population has a poverty distribution very similar to that of the rest of the race groups in the County, however there are also larger concentrations of the Asian population living in poverty along I-76.

Poverty and Regional Comparison

CHART 21: Poverty Level by County (Individuals)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Adams County had the third highest percent of people below the poverty level among the seven counties in the Denver metro area.

Veterans

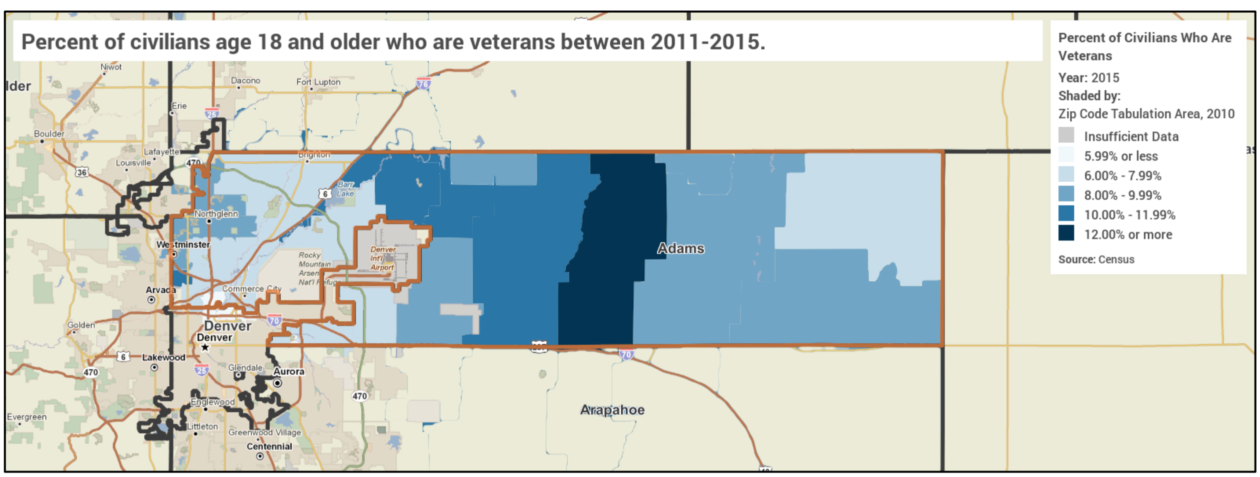
As of the 2011-2015 ACS, there were 27,731 veterans living in Adams County – 8.2 percent of the population over 18 years old. Of those, 88.2 percent were White, 91.9 percent were male and 8.1 percent were female. Adams County veterans had a higher median income than non-veterans in the County, and were more likely than non-veterans to have completed at least some college. Veterans had a slightly higher unemployment rate, at 7.7 percent, than non-veterans, 7.5 percent of whom are unemployed. (Source: 2011-2015 ACS)

TABLE 26: Veterans

	Veterans	Non-veterans
Civilian population over 18 years old	27,731	311,485
Median Income	38,241	28,744
Labor force participation rate	81.3%	80.4%
Unemployment rate	7.7%	7.5%
Below poverty in the past 12 months	6.1%	12.2%
With any disability	26.0%	12.0%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S2101)		

Economically, Adams County veterans enjoyed more prosperity than non-veterans in the County, but were more than twice as likely to have a disability. Approximately 7,089 veterans in Adams County have a disability – a number that simply cannot be ignored.

MAP 23: Veterans



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The concentration of veterans in Adams County is largest east of Denver International Airport in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Homeless Population

The Metro Denver Homeless Initiative is the local Continuum of Care (CoC) that serves the seven-county Denver Metro Region. The Metro Denver Homeless Initiative conducted the 2016 Point-In-Time (PIT) count in the County and determined 200 individuals met the HUD definition of being homeless. The following table breaks down this population by age and race or ethnicity.

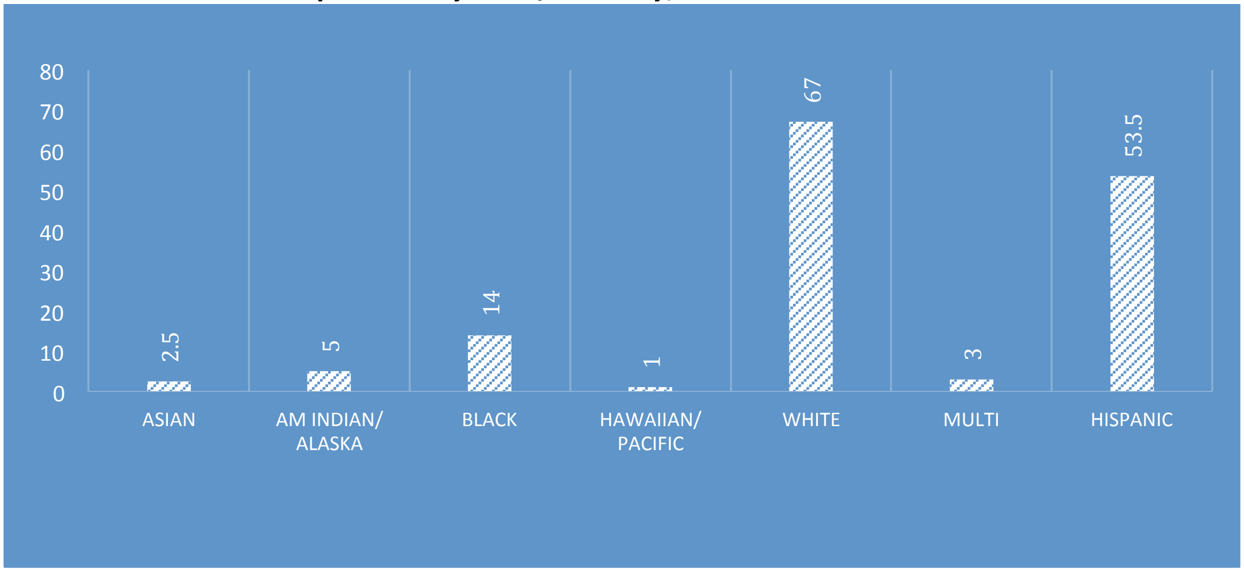
TABLE 27: Characteristics of the Homeless

Characteristics	Estimate	Percent
Age		
0-17	53	26.5%
18-24	15	7.5%
25-54	78	39.0%
55-59	8	4.0%
60 or higher	6	3.0%
N/A	40	20.0%
Race		
White	134	67.0%
Black	28	14.0%
Asian	5	2.5%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	10	5.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	1.0%
More than one	6	3.0%
N/A	15	7.5%
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic	88	44.0%
Hispanic	107	53.5%
N/A	5	2.5%
Total	**200**	**100%**
Source: Metro Denver Homeless Initiative CoC 2016 PIT		

In 2016, an alarming number of the County's homeless – 1 in 4 – were young people under the age of 18. Persons age 25-54 years old were the largest homeless group in Adams County, at 39 percent. In regards to race, Blacks were severely overrepresented in the homeless population. In Adams County, Blacks make up 14 percent of the homeless population but only 3.2 percent of the general population. Persons who identified ethnically as Hispanic were also disproportionately represented in the homeless population: Hispanics account for 53.5 percent of the homeless population but only 38.6 percent of the general population.

While the CoC does not break down shelter bed inventory by County, there is an adequate supply from a purely quantitative perspective across the seven-county region. In 2015, the CoC reported in the most recent HUD CoC Housing Inventory Count Report to have 7,438 total year-round beds. In 2016, the CoC reported total estimated homeless through the PIT count and HMIS at 5,467.

CHART 22: Homeless Population by Race/Ethnicity, 2016

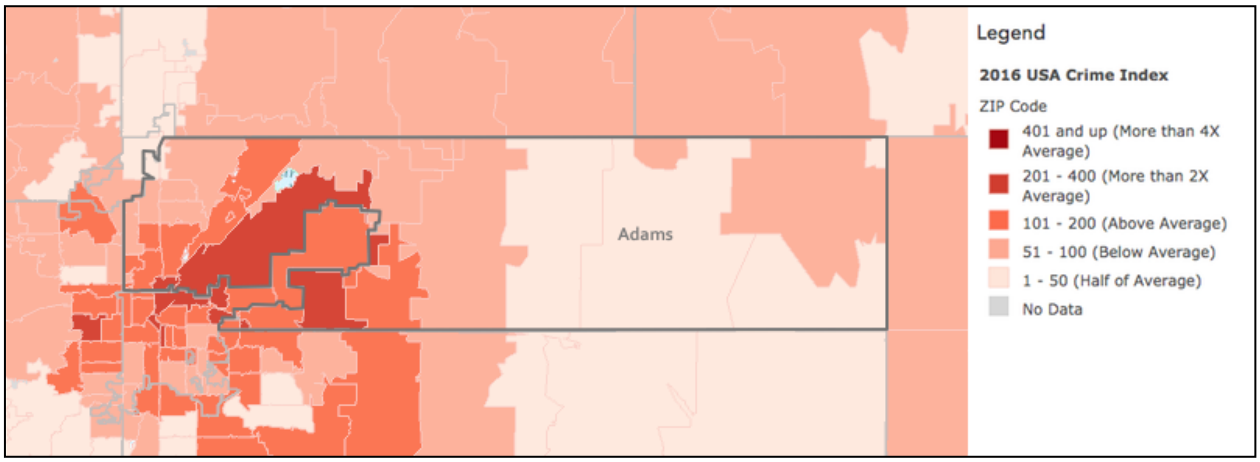


Source: MDHI 2016 PIT Survey

Crime

The prevalence of crime in an area plays a major role in the type of householder an area can attract. Often, families looking for homes may steer clear of an area if it is perceived to have a high incidence of crime. North of I-270 and along I-76 east of Westminster and Thornton is an area of Adams County with two times the average crime in the County. There is also an area south of Denver International Airport that has more than twice the average crime in the County.

MAP 24: Crime



Source: Esri 2016 (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.)

County Workforce Profile

Understanding the County's workforce profile is an important part of examining its housing needs. Although general characteristics of the economic condition of the residents in the County were covered previously in the community profile, this section provides an in-depth analysis of the workforce and considers economic factors that may influence the housing landscape. The economic and workforce profile of Adams County is also affected by other factors such as transportation and commuting, participation from neighboring communities' workforce and business industry trends. This analysis synthesizes relevant data in an effort to draw a more direct relationship between the workforce and housing in Adams County.

Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation rates are similar across the seven Denver Metro counties; all are within a few percentage points of each other. Labor force participation in the region is also generally higher than the state overall, and over half of the state's labor force – 58.4 percent – comes from this region.

TABLE 28: Labor Force Participation by County, Population 16 Years and over

County	Estimate in Labor Force	Percent Employed	Percent Not in Labor Force
Adams County	249,542	70.8%	29.2%
Arapahoe County	335,681	70.8%	29.2%
Boulder County	177,460	69.8%	30.2%
Broomfield County	33,657	71.3%	28.7%
Denver County	371,912	71.8%	28.2%
Douglas County	166,710	73.2%	26.8%
Jefferson County	312,852	69.6%	30.4%
Colorado (state)	2,820,014	67.6%	32.4%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP03)			

County Workforce Comparison

According to the 2011-2015 ACS, Adams County had 229,743 employed workers and accounted for approximately 14.9 percent of the seven-county region's employed workers.

TABLE 29: Workforce by County

County	Employed	Percent of 7-County total
Adams County	229,743	14.9%
Arapahoe County	311,498	20.2%
Boulder County	166,701	10.8%
Broomfield County	31,807	2.1%
Denver County	348,382	22.6%
Douglas County	159,911	10.4%
Jefferson County	294,390	19.1%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates		

The growth of the workforce in Adams County was second only to Douglas County among the counties in the Denver Metro Area.

TABLE 30: Workforce Growth by County from 2000 to 2015

County	Employed 2000	Employed 2015	Percent Change From 2000 to 2015
Adams County	181,721	229,743	26.4%
Arapahoe County	262,629	311,498	18.6%
Boulder County	162,428	166,701	2.6%
Denver County	284,340	348,382	22.5%
Douglas County	96,929	159,911	65.0%
Jefferson County	290,962	294,390	1.2%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data Note: Broomfield County was incorporated in 1961, but only became a County in 2001. No data was available for the 2000 Census.			

Unemployment

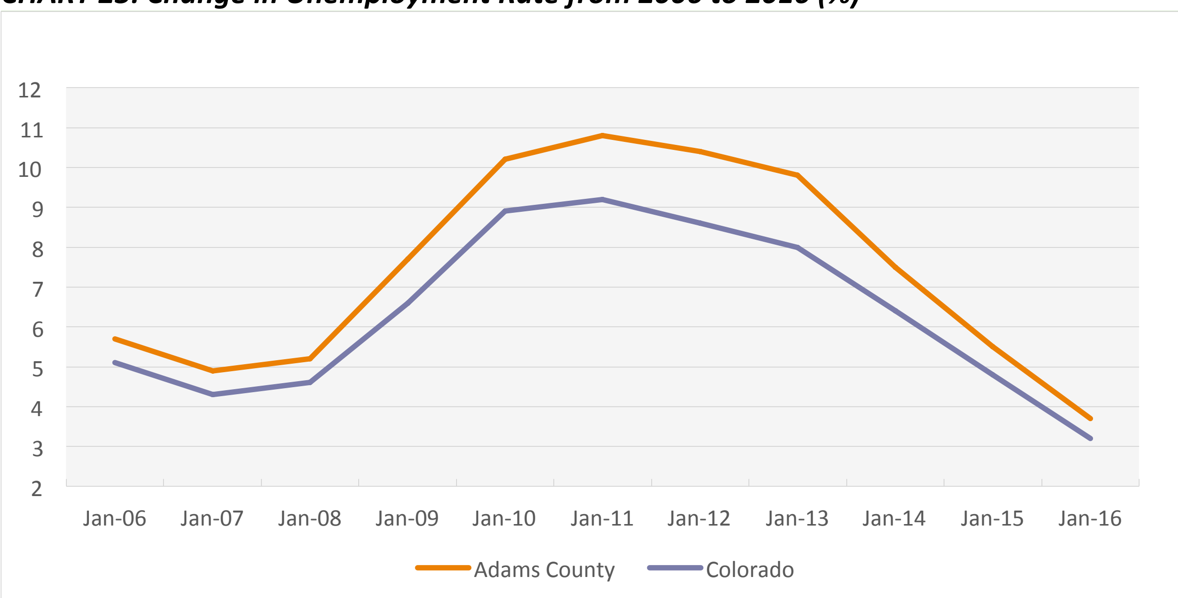
As of July 2016, the unemployment rate for all individuals in the labor force in Adams County was 3.8 percent. This was slightly higher than the statewide unemployment rate of 3.6 percent. Adams County, like the rest of the United States, was affected greatly by the Great Recession in 2007-2009, but the unemployment rate in the County and the state has largely recovered since. From 2010 to 2016 the unemployment rate in the County decreased dramatically by 62 percent; during the same time period the state unemployment rate also decreased 59.1 percent.

TABLE 31: Unemployment Rate

	2010 (July)	2016 (July)	2000-2016 % Change
Adams County	10.0%	3.8%	-62.0%
Colorado	8.8%	3.6%	-59.1%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics			

The chart below shows the change in the unemployment rate over the last decade.

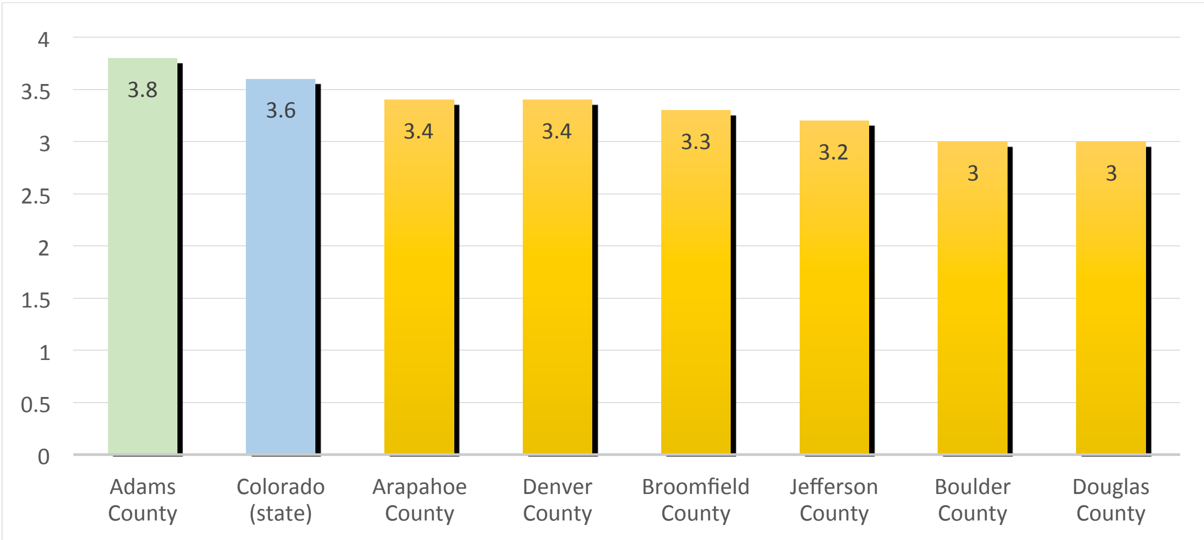
CHART 23: Change in Unemployment Rate from 2006 to 2016 (%)



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics
Data Note: Unemployment rates not seasonally adjusted.

The following chart compares the unemployment rate of Adams County in July 2016 (3.8%) against other counties in the Denver metro area and includes the statewide rate (3.6%). Not only does Adams County have a higher unemployment rate than the statewide rate, but it also has the highest unemployment rate among the seven counties in the Denver metro area.

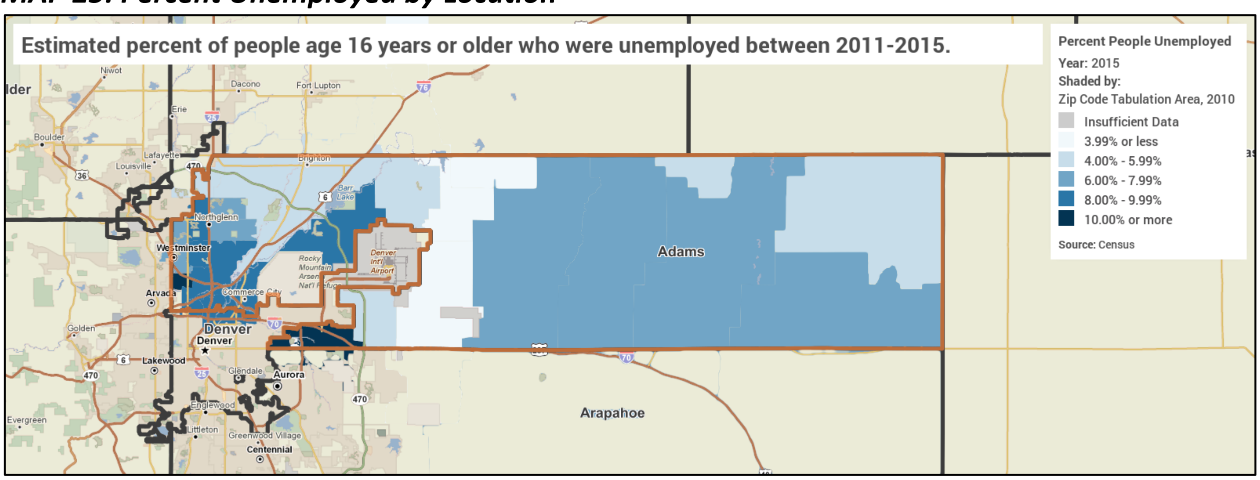
CHART 24: Unemployment Rate by County, July 2016 (%)



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

The map below shows the geographical distribution of the unemployment rate throughout Adams County. The lightest shade of blue represents areas with the lowest unemployment rate, and the unemployment rate increases as the shade darkens. A higher percentage of persons were unemployed in the southwestern tip of the County in Aurora, and one small area between Arvada and Westminster. Persons who were unemployed were also generally found in larger percentages in the southwest area of Adams County.

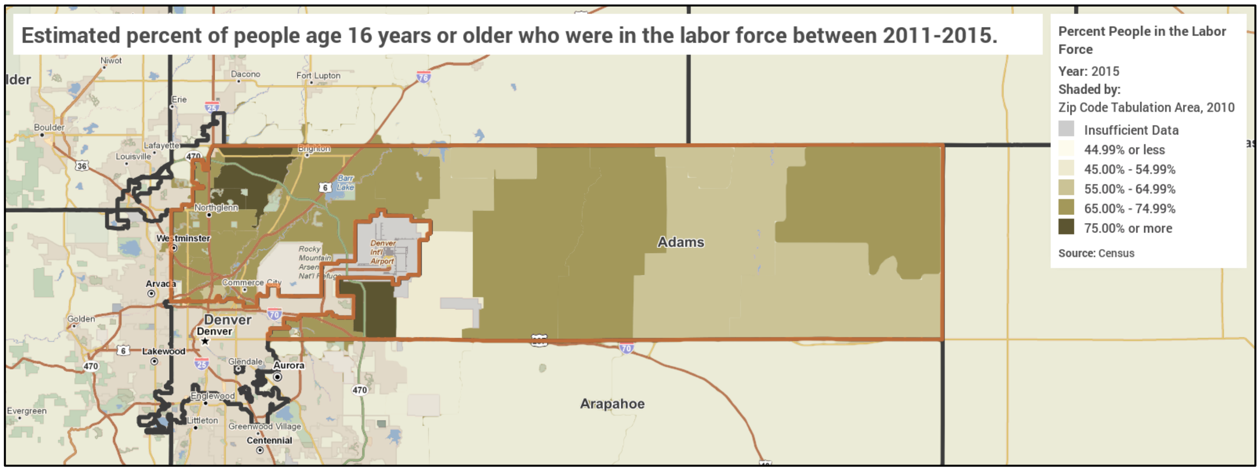
MAP 25: Percent Unemployed by Location



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The map below shows the distribution of the labor force in Adams County. The lightest shade represents areas with a smaller percentage of the population participating in the labor force, and the percent participating in the labor force increases as the shade darkens. The County's labor force is somewhat uniform throughout the County, but there is more of a concentration in two areas: Northwest corner of the County and just south of Denver International Airport. These areas are also consistent with areas that have higher MHI.

MAP 26: Labor Force Participation



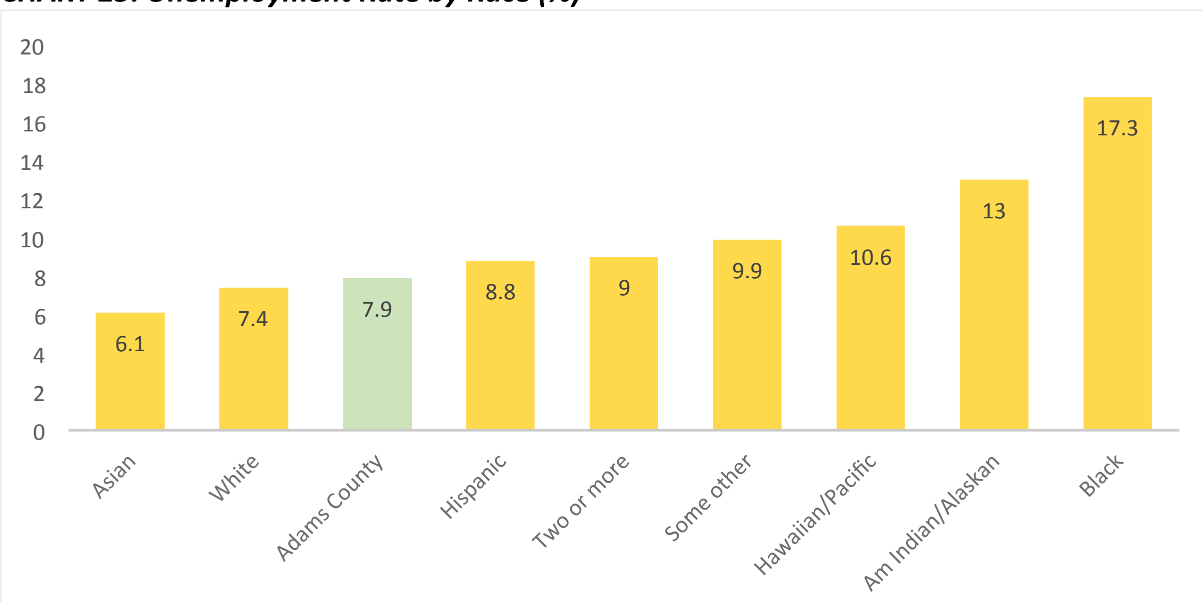
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

While areas along the beginning of I-25 in southwest Adams County and on the southwestern tip in Aurora have low MHI and higher poverty rates, these areas do not necessarily show low labor force participation rates. Southwest Adams County shows comparable participation rates to the rest of the County, suggesting a labor force working for lower wages in this area.

Unemployment and Race

While there are differences between the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and ACS data figures, a clearer picture can be drawn using both data sets. Unemployment rates by race and ethnicity can be inferred from the ACS, making it particularly important for examining the countywide unemployment rate. According to the 2011-2015 ACS, the Adams County unemployment rate was 7.9 percent in 2015, but the rate varied widely by race. Only two race groups, Whites and Asians, had an unemployment rate lower than the countywide rate. Blacks had a disproportionately high unemployment rate when compared to the countywide rate. American Indians and Alaskan Natives and Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders also experienced higher unemployment rates, and individuals who identified ethnically as Hispanic also had higher unemployment. The chart below shows a comparison of the unemployment rates for each race/ethnic group from lowest to highest.

CHART 25: Unemployment Rate by Race (%)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S2301)

Jobs by Industry

The table below outlines the labor statistics in Adams County by industry. The largest industry, Education and Health Care Services, accounts for 17.1 percent of the jobs in the County. The second largest job-producing industry is Retail Trade (11.8%), followed by Professional, scientific, admin and waste management (11.7%). Adams County's manufacturing sector provides 8.8 percent of all jobs in the County. It should be noted that according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fastest growing sector in the United States is the Education and Health Care Services, particularly jobs in Health Care Services, while Manufacturing is by far the most rapidly declining sector in the US.

TABLE 32: Industry (Jobs)

	Denver MSA 2015	Percent	Adams County 2015	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1,405,199	--	229,743	--
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	21,194	1.5%	4,429	1.9%
Construction	103,699	7.4%	24,720	10.8%
Manufacturing	94,601	6.7%	20,103	8.8%
Wholesale trade	42,036	3.0%	8,177	3.6%
Retail trade	151,939	10.8%	26,975	11.7%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	70,023	5.0%	16,856	7.3%
Information	51,423	3.7%	6,817	3.0%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	113,164	8.1%	11,877	5.2%
Professional, scientific, admin, waste manage	210,574	15.0%	25,653	11.2%
Education, health care, social assistance	271,317	19.3%	39,341	17.1%
Arts, entertainment, rec, accommodation, food	142,514	10.1%	23,269	10.1%
Other services, except public admin	69,665	5.0%	11,861	5.2%
Public administration	63,050	4.5%	9,665	4.2%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Data note: Denver MSA is the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metropolitan Statistical Area				

The civilian employed population aged 16 years and over grew from 178,572 in 2000 to 229,743 in 2015 – an increase of 26.4 percent. In that time the number of workers in the Agricultural, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining industry sector increased the fastest, but it should be noted that this business sector only made up 1.9 percent of the working population. There was significant growth in the Education, health care, and social assistance (38.9%), Professional, scientific, administrative, and waste management (38.9%), Public Admin (43.5%) and Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services business sectors (70.2%). Information (-23.5%), Wholesale trade (-19.7%), and Manufacturing (-7.9%) all declined. Industries with a workforce that has declined since 2000 are shaded in red in the table below.

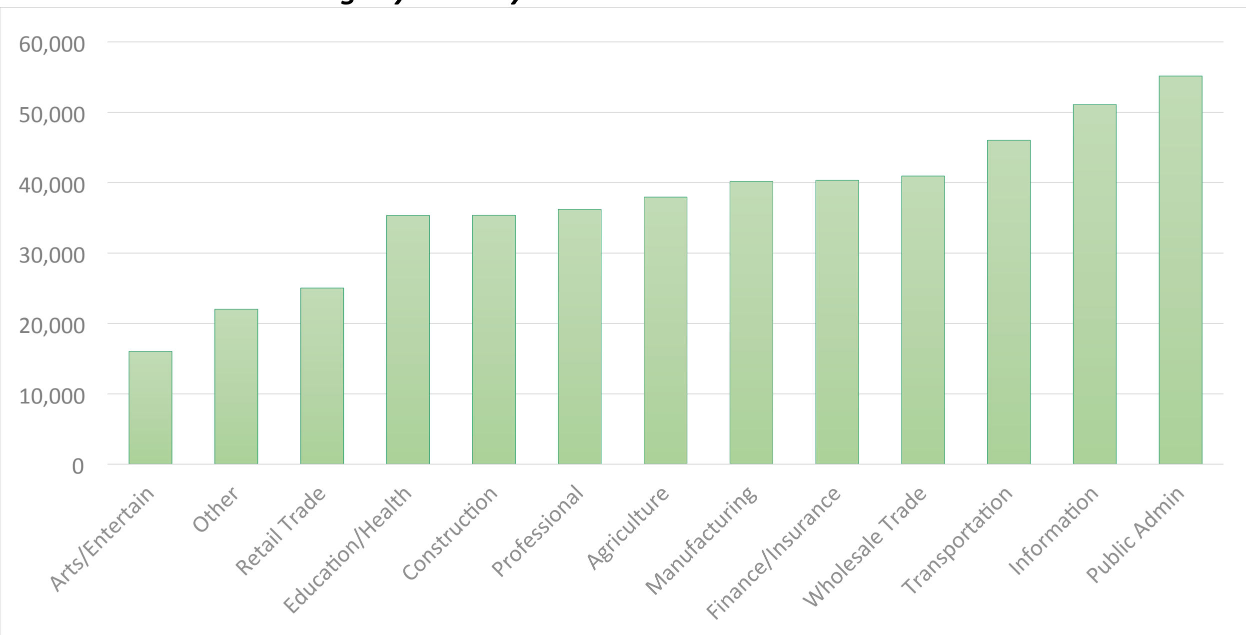
TABLE 33: Industry Change (Jobs)

	2000	2009	2015	2000-2015 % change
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	178,572	209,342	229,743	26.4%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	1,642	1,932	4,429	169.7%
Construction	20,505	26,485	24,720	20.6%
Manufacturing	21,832	19,433	20,103	-7.9%
Wholesale trade	10,188	10,069	8,177	-19.7%
Retail trade	22,372	25,304	26,975	20.6%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	14,764	15,467	16,856	14.2%
Information	8,905	7,263	6,817	-23.5%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, leasing	11,577	13,160	11,877	2.6%
Professional, scientific, admin, waste manage	18,471	23,272	25,653	38.9%
Education, health care, social assistance	23,112	30,464	39,341	70.2%
Arts, entertainment, rec, accommodation, food	12,813	18,153	23,269	81.6%
Other services, except public admin	8,806	9,640	11,861	34.7%
Public administration	6,734	8,700	9,665	43.5%
Source: 2000 Census, 2005-2005 and 2011-2015 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates				

Income Comparison by Industry

According to the 2010-2014 ACS, persons employed in Public administration were the highest earning group in Adams County, with median earnings of $55,163. The Information ($51,111) and Transportation, warehousing and utilities ($46,034) sectors followed. Three of the largest growing business sectors by volume (Education and healthcare, Arts and entertainment, and Professional, scientific and waste management) were in the bottom half of income earning industries.

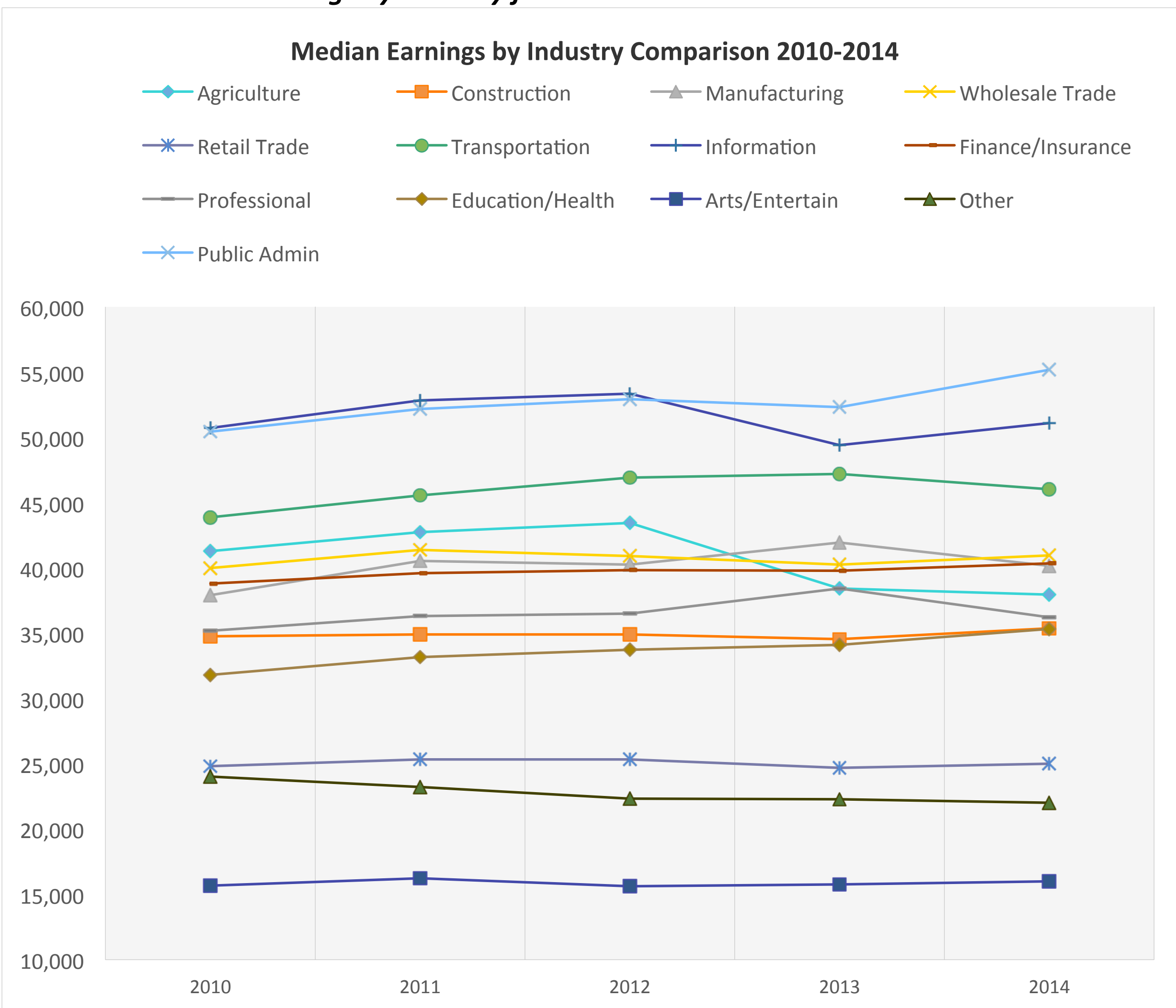
CHART 26: Median Earnings by Industry



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (S2403)
Data Note: 2011-2015 ACS data for median earnings by industry was not available at the time of this assessment.

The chart below displays the median earnings of workers by industry in Adams County from 2010 to 2014. Workers employed in Public administration consistently had the highest earnings in this time period and were clearly the highest-earning group in 2014. Workers in the Retail trade, Other services, and Arts and entertainment business sectors continue to earn the least in the County, and show no signs of increasing.

CHART 27: Median Earnings by Industry from 2010 to 2014



Source: 2005-2009 - 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (S2403)
Data Note: 2011-2015 ACS data for median earnings by industry was not available at the time of this assessment.

Wage by Industry, Seven-County Metro

The average hourly wage for persons who were employed across the Seven-County metro area was $25.82 in Q2 of 2013, but wages varied widely from industry to industry. Average wage in 2013 and change in employment by industry sector from 2001-2013 can be seen in the chart on the following page.

The highest average hourly wage in the metro was $62.64 in the Mining industry, followed by $55.10 in Management and $43.56 in Information. By contrast, the lowest wages were earned in Accommodation and Food Services ($8.94), followed by Agriculture ($12.69) and Retail Trade, where the average worker earned $13.70 per hour.

According to a report from the Denver Regional Council of Governments, *Equitable Growth Evaluation for the Denver Region 2014*, much of the growth of jobs since 2001 has been from lower wage industries. The report states:

> *"While there has been net job growth since 2001, nearly half of the job growth has been in lower wage industries below $17.45 per hour and approximately one third was in jobs that pay $9.00 or less. From 2001 through 2012, 49 percent of new job growth, or 36,250 jobs, was in industries that pay less than $17.45 per hour ($36,000 per year). Jobs that pay less than $17.45 per hour are in the bottom 25th percentile of jobs by wage level. Within this bottom 25th percentile, the accommodations and food services industry added 23,800 new jobs at an average of $8.94 per hour (not including gratuities). Middle wage jobs, in approximately the $17 to $25 per hour range, accounted for 21,000 jobs, or 29 percent of new job growth."*[4]

[4] Equitable Growth Evaluation for the Denver Region 2014, Denver Regional Council of Governments http://milehighconnects.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Equitable-Growth-Evaluation-for-the-Denver-Region-FINAL-09-29-14.pdf

TABLE 34: Wage Level and Change in Employment, Seven-County Metro Area, 2001 – Q2 2013

Industry Sector	Q2 2013 Avg. Wage	Change in Employment 2001-Q2 2013	% Change in Employment 2001-Q2 2013
Mining	$62.64	5,051	195.2%
Management	$55.10	15,003	271.5%
Information	$43.56	-30,099	-711.1%
Utilities	$42.74	-103	-0.1%
Professional and Tech. Services	$40.77	25,406	23.6%
Finance and Insurance	$37.84	-253	-0.3%
Wholesale Trade	$35.63	-3,517	-2.5%
Manufacturing	$31.68	-26,505	-44.3%
Government	$28.27	9,553	11.6%
Other and Unclassified	$25.14	21,994	29.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	$25.05	-2,977	-10.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	$24.57	-7,959	-7.0%
Construction	$24.47	-27,458	-191.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	$23.27	46,285	49.1%
Education Services	$18.94	13,394	29.5%
Other Services	$17.45	2,959	2.7%
Administration and Waste Services	$16.83	2,112	11.7%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	$16.54	7,000	6.4%
Retail Trade	$13.70	574	1.4%
Agriculture	$12.69	50	0.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	$8.94	23,824	32.9%
Total	**$25.82**	**74.335**	**5.5%**

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Economic and Planning Systems via Denver Regional Council of Governments, Equitable Growth Evaluation for the Denver Region 2014
Data note 1: Annual wage divided by 2,080 hours per year.
Data note 2: Negative growth industry sectors shaded in gray.

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment

Median earnings are directly proportionate to educational attainment in Adams County. An individual with a Bachelor's degree can expect to earn over 1.5 times more than someone who has only graduated from high school.

TABLE 35: Median Earnings by Educational Attainment (Population 25 years and over)

	Adams County	Denver MSA
Less than high school graduate	$24,040	$22,874
High school graduate (including equivalent)	$31,474	$31,459
Some college or associates degree	$37,250	$37,310
Bachelor's degree	$51,266	$52,912
Graduate or professional degree	$60,267	$67,506

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S1501)
Data Note: Denver MSA is the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metropolitan Statistical Area

Median earnings by educational attainment for the population 25 years and over in Adams County mirror those of the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood Metropolitan Statistical Area at all levels, until the Graduate or professional level. Persons with a Graduate degree in Adams County earn on average $60,267 annually, while persons in the MSA earn $67,506.

Some jobs and careers may only be accessible through a degree or additional education. The table on the next page is populated with data from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment on occupations and expected wage range projections through 2022, by educational attainment.

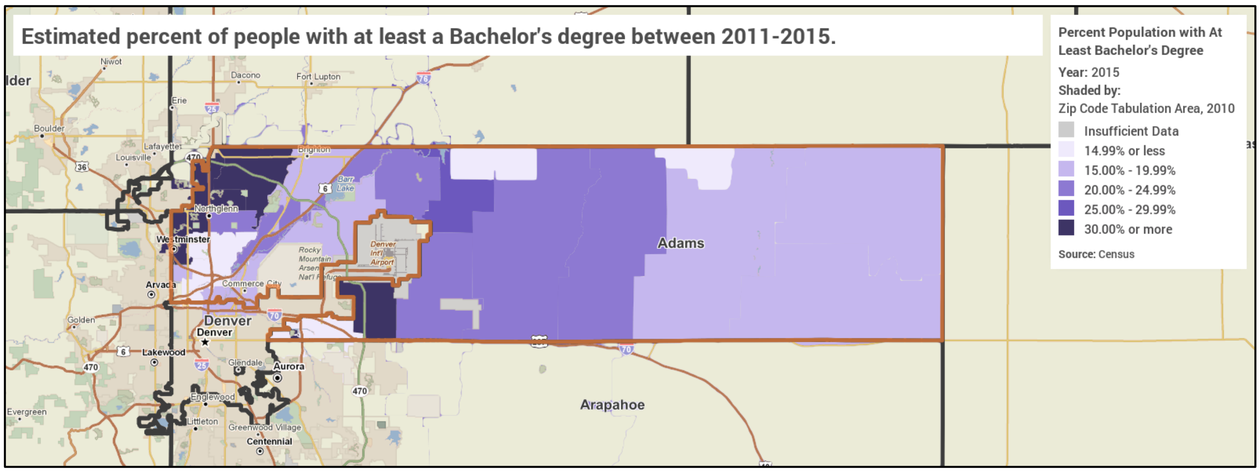
TABLE 36: Careers and Earnings by Education Type

Occupation	**Wage Range**	
Certificate & Associates Degree	**Low**	**High**
Registered nurses	$51,514	$76,125
General and operations managers	$58,107	$153,055
Nursing aides and attendants	$22,101	$30,297
Orderlies	$20,283	$28,727
Cosmetologists, hairdressers, hairstylists	$17,888	$31,753
Heating, air conditioning and refrigeration	$34,247	$55,538
Paralegal and legal assistants	$34,697	$58,379
Dental assistants	$27,411	$42,658
Veterinary technologists and technicians	$25,320	$34,344
Preschool teachers	$20,889	$35,853
Licensed practical and vocational nurses	$36,012	$49,121
Massage therapists	$19,766	$45,725
Dental hygienists	$62,873	$85,218
Radiologic technologists and technicians	$41,184	$66,152
Construction managers	$59,224	$107,461
Bachelor's Degree	**Low**	**High**
Accountant and auditor	$43,879	$87,438
Software developer, applications	$58,541	$108,690
Software developer, systems software	$72,247	$111,807
Elementary school teachers	$36,082	$56,632
Network and computer systems admin	$51,767	$92,590
Management analysis	$47,747	$100,566
Market research analysts and marketing specialist	$38,090	$82,802
Middle school teacher	$37,012	$56,268
Computer systems analyst	$59,687	$112,269
Employment, recruitment and placement specialist	$38,650	$77,720
Public relations specialist	$32,112	$70,114
Civil engineer	$58,984	$96,184
Secondary school teacher	$37,190	$58,649
Cost estimator	$39,171	$72,543
Personal financial advisor	$33,286	$104,318
Master's Degree	**Low**	**High**
Lawyers	$63,816	$165,899
Physical therapists	$54,141	$82,550
Mental health counselors	$26,309	$49,688
Educational, guidance, school and vocational counselor	$32,293	$54,219
Clinical, counseling and school psychologist	$40,290	$92,677
Physician and surgeon	$111,257	$248,533
Veterinarian	$50,694	$99,781
Health specialties teachers and postsecondary	$52,771	$163,621
Family and general practitioner	$76,940	$212,795
Occupational therapist	$58,903	$84,070
Healthcare social workers	$33,675	$56,899
Instructional Coordinators	$43,869	$80,380
Education admin, elementary and secondary school	$60,741	$90,415
Speech-language pathologist	$60,976	$95,175
Source: Colorado Department of Labor and Employment		

While not all careers accessible to persons with Bachelor's degrees and Graduate degrees have higher earnings than careers without a degree, it is generally accepted that higher-earning careers require a degree.

The map below shows the concentration of workers with at least a Bachelor's degree in Adams County. Northglenn to the northwest corner of the County, Westminster, and the area just south of Denver International Airport have the highest percent of workers with at least a Bachelor's degree in the County (over 30% of workers).

MAP 27: Percent Workers with Bachelor's Degree and Location



Source: 2015 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics via PolicyMap

Areas with low MHI and higher poverty rates in Adams County, particularly in the southwest areas where I-25 begins and in the southwestern tip of the County in Aurora, have fewer workers with at least a Bachelor's Degree.

Jobs to Households Balance

Adams County overall has a jobs-to-household ratio of 1.23, meaning there are more job opportunities than there are households in the County. A jobs-to-household ratio of less than 1 means that there is less than one job available within the municipality for each residing household. This suggests that some residents leave the municipality they live in for work in another town. Arvada, Bennett, Federal Heights and Thornton all have jobs-to-household ratios of less than one. Aurora and Northglenn have ratios at or near 1. Westminster, Brighton and Commerce City have ratios higher than one, suggesting that residents of other municipalities commute into the cities for work.

TABLE 37: Jobs to Households Ratio by Municipality

	Households	Jobs	Number of Jobs to Households Ratio
Arvada	43,779	25,232	0.58
Aurora	123,344	123,877	1.00
Bennett	755	608	0.81
Brighton	10,895	14,860	1.36
Commerce City	14,581	29,915	2.05
Federal Heights	4,329	3,089	0.71
Northglenn	13,945	14,259	1.02
Thornton	41,632	20,976	0.50
Westminster	41,821	48,295	1.15
Adams County	155,047	189,973	1.23

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (Households), 2014 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (Jobs)
Data note: At the time of this assessment 2015 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) from the US Census Bureau was not yet available. 2014 LEHD Jobs data was compared to 2014 ACS household's estimates.

The overall jobs-to-households ratio of 1.23 means there are more jobs to households in the County, but not all jobs pay equal wages and not all households are the same. According to the 2014 LEHD, more than 80 percent of jobs in the County paid more than the Federal minimum wage at full time hours (40 hrs./wk.) and 47.1 percent made more than $3,333 per month, or a little more than $20/hr. full time. The ACS records two household types, family and nonfamily households. Nonfamily households have an average of 1.32 persons residing in the home, which are more likely to be two adults living together (roommates), and not an adult and a child. Family households are categorized into three types: married-couple, single-male, no wife present and single-female, no husband present. While this is not a perfect estimate, households that have married couples can be counted as two adults in the households, who could possible hold a job. The ratio for the number of adult parents per family households in the home is 1.71 persons. When the jobs-to-household ratio (1.23) is compared against the number of adults in the household types, the number of jobs-to-households is less than the number of adults in both household types.

Transportation

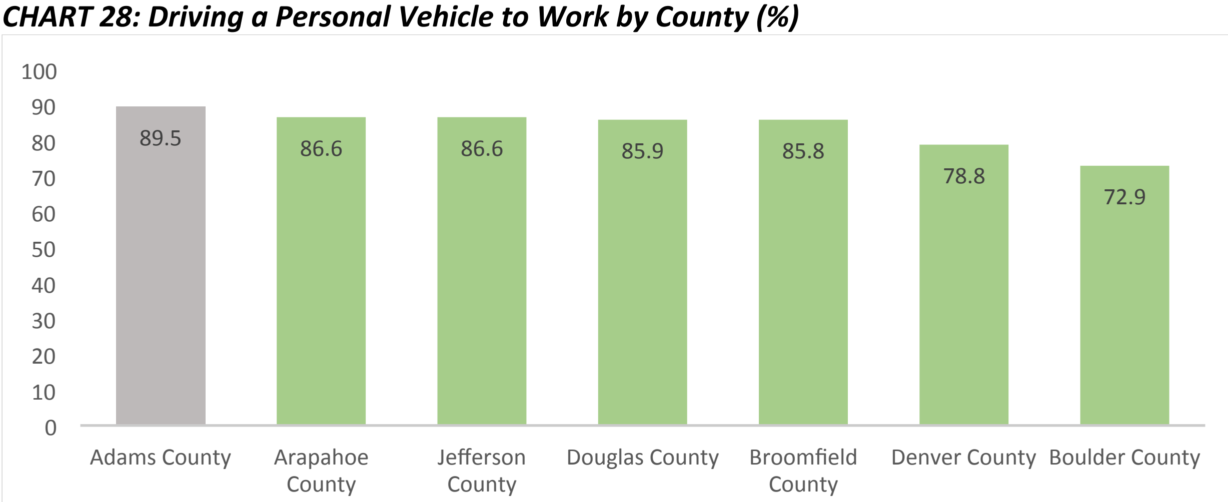
According to 2011-2015 American Community Survey figures, driving a vehicle alone is by far the most popular form of transportation in Adams County, with 77.6 percent of the labor force using personal vehicles for their work commute. A distant second is carpooling (12%), followed by working from home (4.4%) and public transportation (3.7%). These figures are relatively consistent with statewide rates except for persons working from home: 6.7 percent of workers statewide worked from home, but only 4.4 percent worked from home in Adams County.

TABLE 38: Commuting to Work (Method)

	Colorado (%)	Adams County (%)
Workers 16 years and over	2,606,591	225,742
Car, truck, or van	84.8%	89.5%
Drove alone	75.3%	77.6%
Carpooled	9.5%	12.0%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	3.2%	3.7%
Walked	3.0%	1.2%
Bicycle	1.3%	0.3%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.1%	0.9%
Worked at home	6.7%	4.4%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0801)		

The following three charts provide a cross-county comparison of three different commuting patterns: driving a personal vehicle, using public transportation, and working from home.

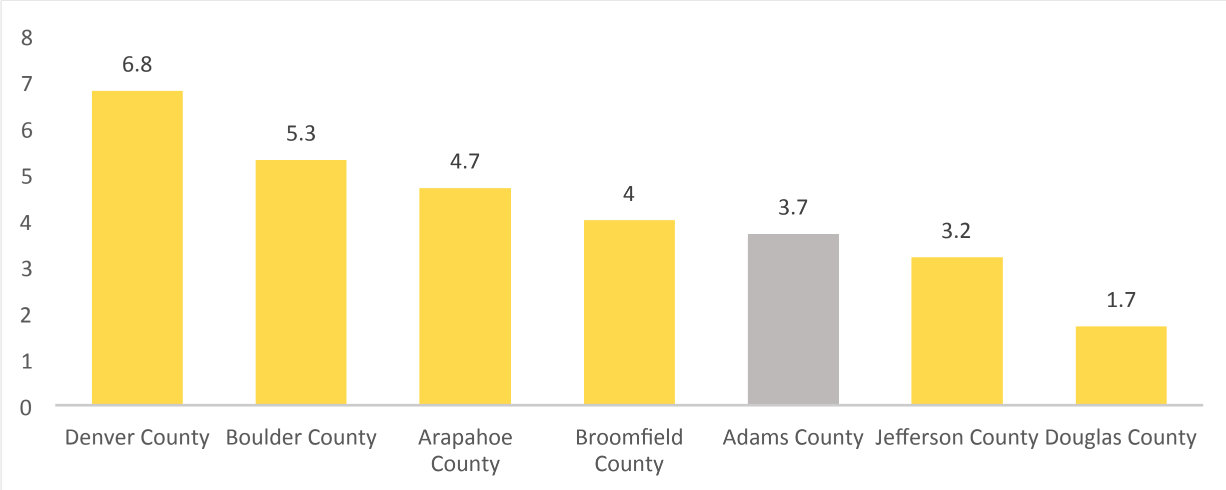
CHART 28: Driving a Personal Vehicle to Work by County (%)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0801)
Data Note: Includes persons who drove along and carpooled.

Adams County has the highest rate in the region of workers who commute using a personal vehicle – almost 9 out of 10 workers. This figure includes both driving alone and carpooling.

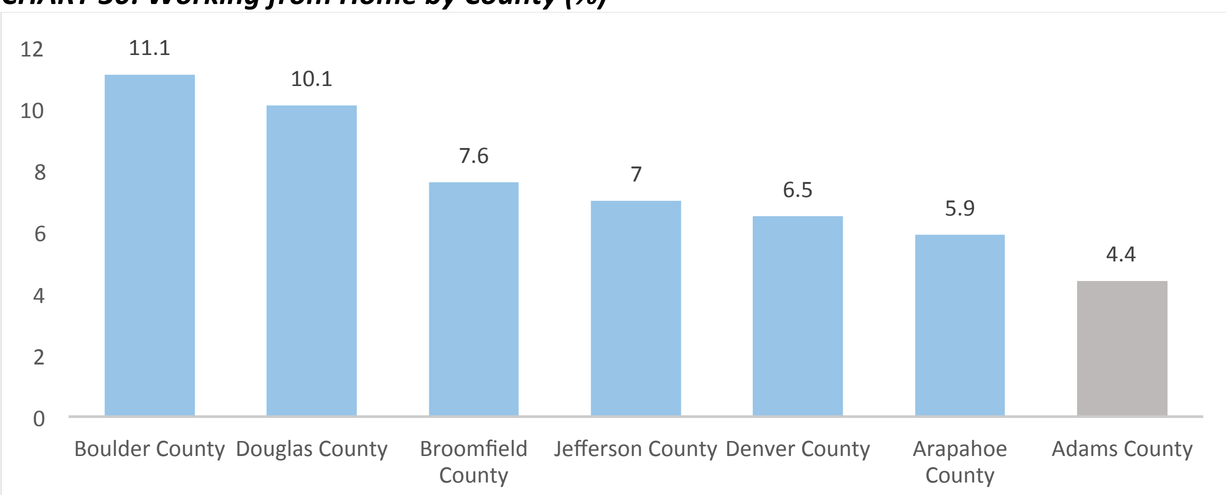
CHART 29: Public Transportation Use by County (%)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0801)

Relative to the other counties in the region, Adams County has a slightly-lower-than-average rate of workers who commute to and from work on public transportation.

CHART 30: Working from Home by County (%)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Adams County, at 4.4 percent, lags far behind the rest of the region in terms of working from home. The Denver metro regional average is 6.6 percent working from home.

Driving a personal vehicle to work is overwhelmingly the most common way of commuting in the County. The table below shows the number of vehicles at a household with workers 16 years and over.

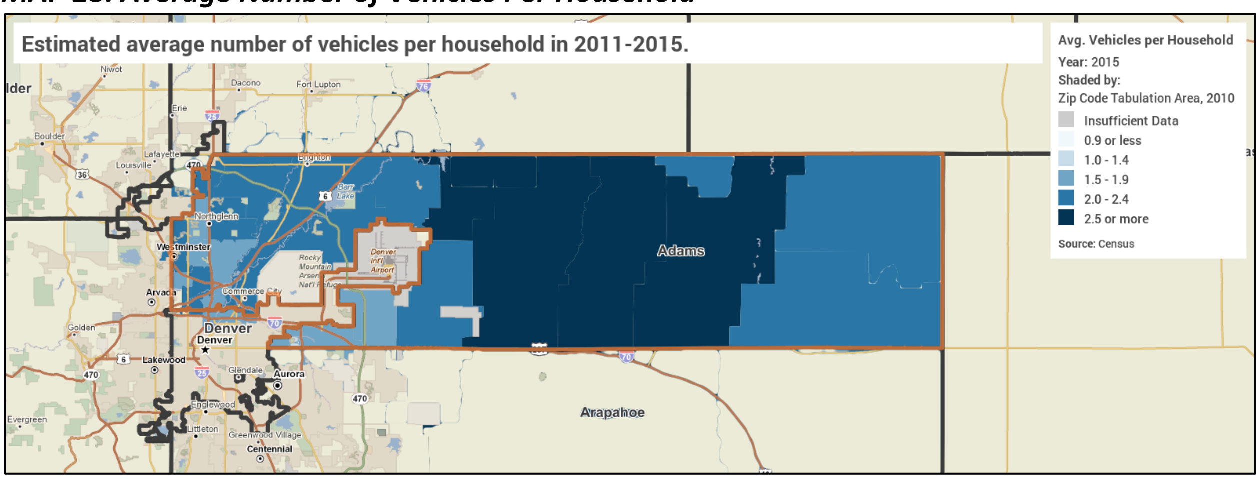
TABLE 39: Number of Vehicles Available in a Household from 2010 to 2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Change 2010-2015
Households	147,951	149,508	151,034	152,803	155,047	156,628	5.9%
No vehicle available	5.1%	5.3%	5.2%	5.2%	5.4%	5.3%	3.6%
1 vehicle	30.1%	30.3%	30.2%	29.4%	29.4%	28.5%	-5.3%
2 vehicles	41.0%	40.6%	40.2%	40.6%	39.9%	39.9%	-2.7%
3 vehicles	16.4%	16.5%	17.0%	17.3%	17.3%	17.4%	6.1%
4 or more	7.4%	7.2%	7.4%	7.4%	8.0%	8.9%	20.3%
Source: 2006-2010 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B08201)							

Households are adding more personal vehicles for travel to work in Adams County. From 2010 to 2015, households with one and two vehicles available decreased and households with three and four or more vehicles increased. Households with no vehicles also increased, but it should be noted these households were a small portion of the overall households. Households with 2 vehicles remained the largest group, with almost 40 percent.

The map below shows the average number of vehicles per household in Adams County. Lighter shaded areas show where there are fewer vehicles per household, and that number increases as the shade darkens. Central areas in the County average 2.5 or more cars per household – the most in the County. In the southwest areas of the County, there are fewer vehicles per household than in the rest of the County.

MAP 28: Average Number of Vehicles Per Household



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Travel time to work in Adams County is steadily increasing. In 2000, 43.1 percent of workers commuted over 30 minutes. In 2015, that figure rose to 46.8 percent. This can be explained in part by the increase in the number of workers who commute into the County and that the most common method of commuting to work is via a personal vehicle.

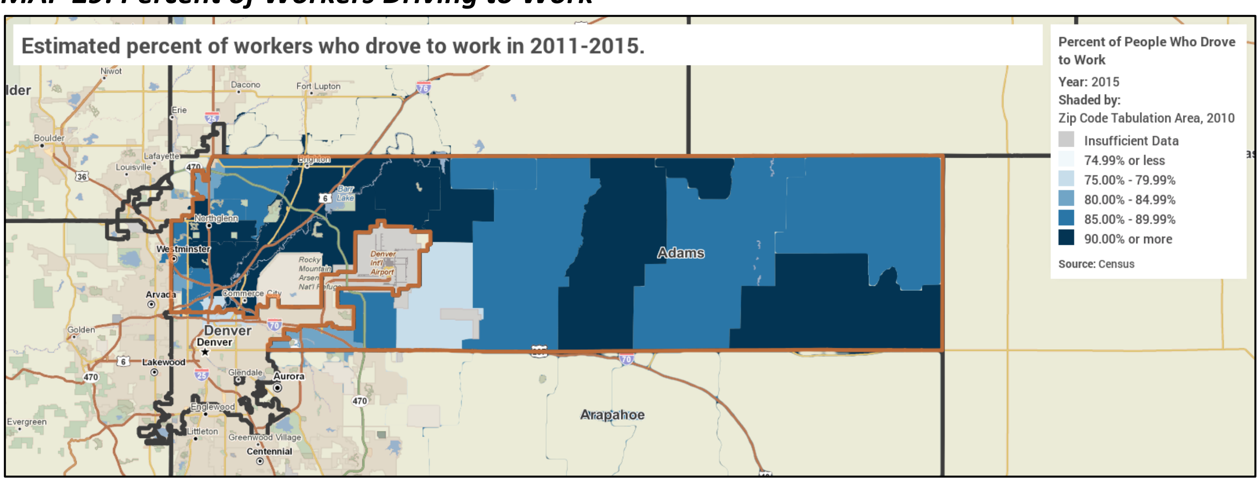
The County could handle the growth from 2000 to 2015, but the population growth estimates reported earlier demand thoughtful planning now. As the County becomes more densely populated, a more robust transportation system will be key in managing growth.

TABLE 40: Travel Time to Work

	2000	2015	Percent Change
Workers 16 years and over who did not work at home	173,081	215,811	24.7%
Less than 10 minutes	8.4%	7.5%	-10.7%
10 to 19 minutes	25.4%	23.2%	-8.7%
20 to 29 minutes	23.1%	22.5%	-2.6%
30 to 59 minutes	36.3%	38.5%	6.1%
60 or more minutes	6.8%	8.3%	22.1%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	27.6	28.8	4.4%
Source: 2000 Census (QT-P23), 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0801)			

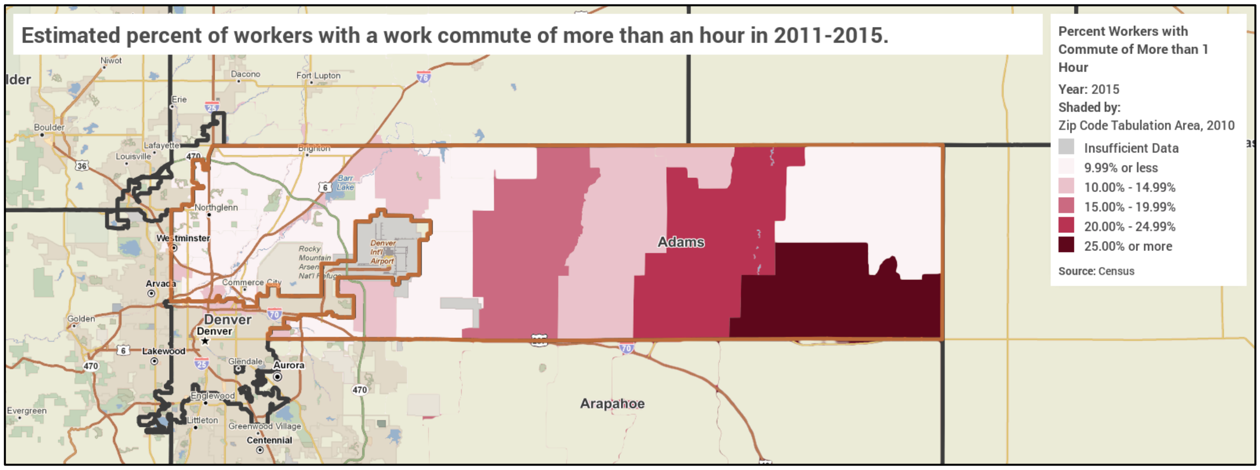
The following two maps show travel data in Adams County. The first map shows the percentage of the population that drives to work. The second map shows the percentage of the population that commutes more than one hour to work. The lightest shade indicates that less of the population must commute one hour or more. The darkest shade represents areas where a larger percentage of the population commutes one hour or more. Not surprisingly, the percent of commuters who drive over an hour to work increases as residents live further from Denver.

MAP 29: Percent of Workers Driving to Work



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

MAP 30: Percent of Workers Commuting More than 1 Hr. to Work



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Tapestry Segmentation Adams County Profile

Tapestry Segmentation is a model designed by Esri to help identify certain common characteristics shared by people in a geographic region. This provides communities with a powerful tool to assess the population and determine the most effective course of action to provide needed goods and services to their community. Esri's model breaks communities down into 67 distinct tapestry segments, which are grouped into 14 LifeMode groups that share similar traits. The table below displays the 20 most common Tapestry segments found in Adams County.

TABLE 41: Top 20 Tapestry Segments, Adams County 2016

		Adams County		United States	
Rank	**Tapestry Segment**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	Up and Coming Families (7A)	11.4%	11.4%	2.3%	2.3%
2	American Dreamers (7C)	8.5%	19.9%	1.5%	3.8%
3	Soccer Moms (4A)	7.5%	27.4%	2.8%	6.6%
4	Bright Young Professionals (8C)	7.0%	34.4%	2.2%	8.8%
5	Parks and Rec (5C)	6.4%	40.8%	2.0%	10.8%
	Sub Total	**40.8%**		**10.8%**	
6	Front Porches (8E)	5.9%	46.7%	1.6%	12.4%
7	NeWest Residents (13C)	5.6%	52.3%	0.8%	13.2%
8	Barrios Urbanos (7D)	5.5%	57.8%	1.0%	14.2%
9	Boomburbs (1C)	5.4%	63.2%	1.5%	15.7%
10	Home Improvement (4B)	5.2%	68.4%	1.7%	17.4%
	Sub Total	**27.6%**		**6.6%**	
11	Metro Fusion (11C)	5.2%	73.6%	1.4%	18.8%
12	Down the Road (10D)	4.5%	78.1%	1.1%	19.9%
13	Young and Restless (11B)	4.4%	82.5%	1.7%	21.6%
14	Savvy Suburbanites (1D)	3.3%	85.8%	3.0%	24.6%
15	Middleburg (4C)	1.8%	87.6%	2.8%	27.4%
	Sub Total	**19.2%**		**10.0%**	
16	In Style (5B)	1.7%	89.3%	2.3%	29.7%
17	Enterprising Professionals (2D)	1.7%	91.0%	1.4%	31.1%
18	Urban Villages (7B)	1.6%	92.6%	1.1%	32.2%
19	Professional Pride (1B)	1.4%	94.0%	1.6%	33.8%
20	Southwestern Families (7F)	1.2%	95.2%	0.8%	34.6%
	Sub Total	**7.6%**		**7.2%**	
	TOTAL	**95.1%**		**34.7%**	

Source: Esri
Data Note: This report identifies neighborhood segments in the area, and describes the socioeconomic quality of the immediate neighborhood. The index is a comparison of the percent of households or Total Population 18+ in the area, by Tapestry segment, to the percent of households or Total Population 18+ in the United States, by segment.

Of the 67 Tapestry segments, the 20 most common segments make up 95.1 percent of the adult population Adams County. The 5 most common segments make up 40.8 percent of the population. In comparison to the country as a whole, these 20 segments only make up 34.7

percent of the American population, and Adams County's most common 5 only make up 10.8 percent of the nation's population. This shows how distinctly different the County's population is from the rest of the nation.

The top 5 segments in Adams County according to Tapestry were: 1.) Up and Coming Families, 2.) American Dreamers, 3.) Soccer Moms, 4.) Bright Young Professionals, and 4.) Parks and Rec. A summary description of each segment is described below. (Source: Esri, Tapestry Segmentation, 2016)

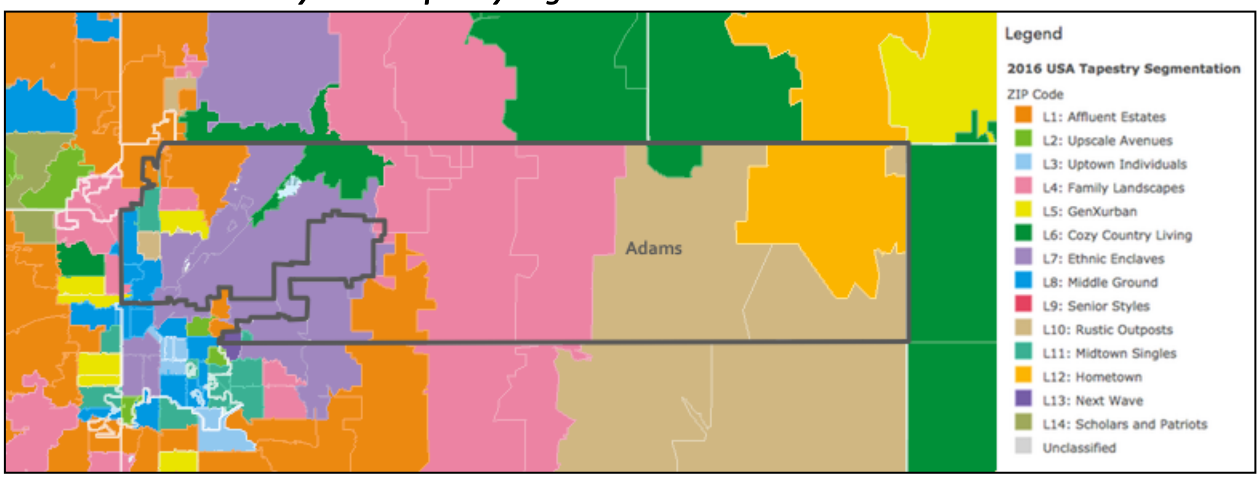
1. ***Up and Coming Families:*** *This segment is a market in transition—residents are younger and more mobile and ethnically diverse than the previous generation. They are ambitious, working hard to get ahead, and willing to take some risks to achieve their goals. The recession has impacted their financial well-being, but they are optimistic. Their homes are new; their families are young. And this is one of the fastest-growing markets in the country.*
2. ***American Dreamers:*** *Located throughout the South and West, most American Dreamers residents own their own homes, primarily single-family housing—farther out of the city, where housing is more affordable. Median household income is slightly below average (Index 94). The majority of households include younger married-couple families with children and, frequently, grandparents. Diversity is high; many residents are foreign born, of Hispanic origin. Hard work and sacrifice have improved their economic circumstance as they pursue a better life for themselves and their family. Spending is focused more on the members of the household than the home. Entertainment includes multiple televisions, movie rentals, and video games at home or visits to theme parks and zoos. This market is connected and adept at accessing what they want from the Internet.*
3. ***Soccer Moms:*** *This group is an affluent, family-oriented market with a country flavor. Residents are partial to new housing away from the bustle of the city but close enough to commute to professional job centers. Life in this suburban wilderness offsets the hectic pace of two working parents with growing children. They favor time-saving devices, like banking online or housekeeping services, and family-oriented pursuits.*
4. ***Bright Young Professionals:*** *This group is a large market, primarily located in urban outskirts of large metropolitan areas. These communities are home to young, educated, working professionals. One out of three householders is under the age of 35. Slightly more diverse couples dominate this market, with more renters than homeowners. More than two-fifths of the households live in single-family homes; over a third live in 5+ unit buildings. Labor force participation is high, generally white-collar work, with a mix of food service and part-time jobs (among the college students). Median household income, median home value, and average rent are close to the US values. Residents of this segment are physically active and up on the latest technology.*
5. ***Parks and Rec:*** *These practical suburbanites have achieved the dream of home ownership. They have purchased homes that are within their means. Their homes are older, and town homes and duplexes are not uncommon. Many of these families are two-income married couples approaching retirement age; they are comfortable in their jobs and their homes, budget wisely,*

but do not plan on retiring anytime soon or moving. Neighborhoods are well established, as are the amenities and programs that supported their now independent children through school and college. The appeal of these kid-friendly neighborhoods is now attracting a new generation of young couples.

Geographic Location of Tapestry Segments

LifeMode groups represent Tapestry segments that share a common experience such as being born in the same generation, immigration from another country, or a significant demographic trait. These Tapestry segments are categorized into 14 LifeMode groups. The geographic distribution of these groups can be seen in the map below.

MAP 31: Adams County 2016 Tapestry Segmentation



Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS | Esri, US Census Bureau, Infogroup

Up and Coming Families (7A) and American Dreamers (7C) are the two largest segments in the County, and are both in LifeMode group 7, Ethnic Enclaves, shaded in purple in the map above. It is not surprising that the purple shaded areas are in the more heavily populated municipalities in the western areas of Adams County. Segment group Soccer Moms (4A) is also among the top 5 Tapestry groups, and is in LifeMode group 4 Family Landscapes, which is the pink shaded areas dominating areas east of the purple shaded areas. There are also two large areas, northwest corner of the County and south of the international airport, that show a large number of those in LifeMode group 1 Affluent Estates (orange shaded area). LifeMode group 5 GenXurban holds a small area in a western area of Adams County (yellow shaded area), but is significant because this is one of the higher populated areas in the County. Finally, LifeMode group 8 Middle Ground holds the western border of the County (blue shaded area).

A detailed description of each group on the list can be found at esri.com/tapestry.

TABLE 42: Prominent LifeMode Groups in Adams County 2016 (Tapestry Segmentation)

LifeMode Group	Description
Ethnic Enclaves	• Established diversity—young, Hispanic homeowners with families • Multilingual/multigenerational households' w/children 2nd-, 3rd- or 4th-gen Hispanic families • Neighborhoods feature 1-family owner-occupied homes at city edge, built after 1980 • Hard-working and optimistic, most aged 25 years+ have a HS diploma or some college edu • Shopping and leisure also focus on their children—baby and children's products from shoes to toys and games and trips to theme parks, water parks or the zoo • Residents favor Hispanic programs on radio or television; children enjoy playing video games on personal computers, handheld or console devices • Many households have dogs for domestic pets
Family Landscapes	• Successful young families in their first homes • Non-diverse, prosperous married-couple families, residing in suburban or semirural areas with a low vacancy rate (second lowest) • Homeowners (80%) with mortgages (second highest %), living in newer single-family homes, with median home value slightly higher than the U.S. • Two workers in family, 2nd highest labor force participation rate, low unemployment • Do-it-yourselfers, who work on home improvement projects, lawns and gardens • Sports enthusiasts, typically owning newer sedans or SUVs, dogs, and savings accounts/plans, comfortable with the latest technology • Eat out frequently to accommodate their busy lifestyle • Especially enjoy bowling, swimming, playing golf, playing video games, watching movies rented via Redbox, and taking trips to a zoo or theme park
Affluent Estates	• Established wealth—educated, well-traveled married couples • Accustomed to "more": less than 10% of all households, with 20% of household income • Homeowners (almost 90%), with mortgages (70%) • Married couple families with children ranging from grade school to college • Expect quality; invest in time-saving services • Participate actively in their communities • Active in sports and enthusiastic travelers
GenXurban	• Gen X in middle age; families with fewer kids and a mortgage • Second largest Tapestry group, Gen X married couples, and a growing population of retirees • A fifth of residents are 65 or older; about a fourth of households have retirement income • Own older single-family homes in urban areas, with 1 or 2 vehicles • Live and work in the same county, creating shorter commute times • Invest wisely, well-insured, comfortable banking online or in person • News junkies (read a daily newspaper, watch news on TV, and go online for news) • Enjoy reading, photo album/scrapbooking, playing board games and cards, doing crossword puzzles, going to museums and rock concerts, dining out, and walking for exercise
Middle Ground	• Lifestyles of thirtysomethings • Millennials in the mid: both single/married, renters/homeowners, middle class/working class • Urban market mix of single-family, townhome, and multi-unit dwellings • Majority of residents attended college or attained a college degree • Householders have ditched their landlines for cell phones, which they use to listen to music, read the news, and get the latest sports updates of their favorite teams • Online all the time: use the Internet for entertainment (downloading music, watching YouTube, finding dates), social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), shopping and news • Leisure includes night life (clubbing, movies), going to the beach, some travel and hiking
Source: Esri	

LifeMode Groups

While LifeMode groups are not as specific as Tapestry Segments, they are still useful in the examination of the people of a certain market. Below is a table displaying the size of each LifeMode group in Adams County. Ethnic Enclaves is the largest LifeMode group by far with 29.7% of the population over 18 years old, followed by Family Landscapes with 15.4%, Middle Ground with 13% and Affluent Estates with 11.1%. Household percentage estimates are similar to percentages for individuals.

TABLE 43: LifeMode Groups, Top 14 in Adams County 2016

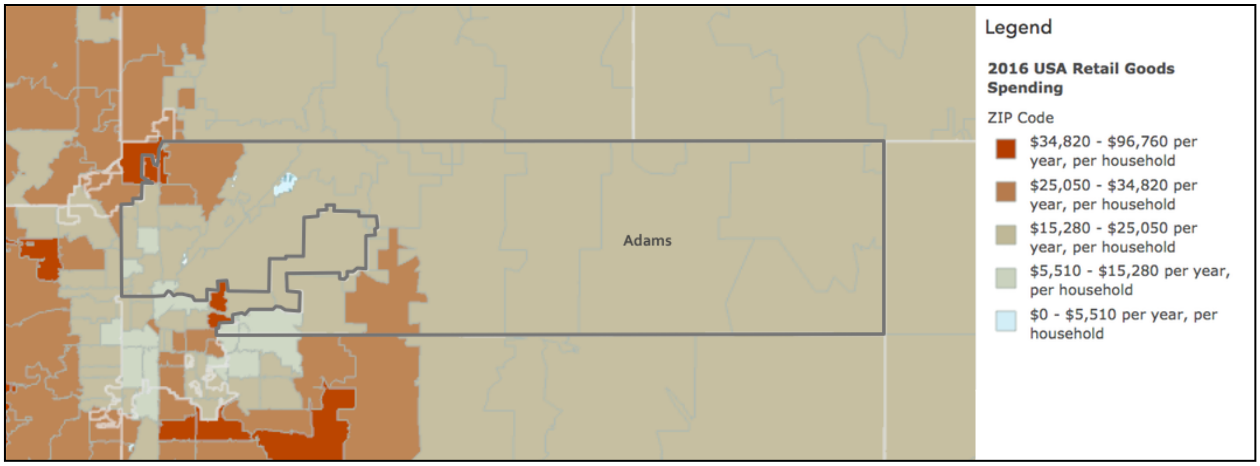
		Households		Individuals (adult)	
#	**Tapestry LifeMode Groups**	**Number**	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**
1	Affluent Estates	17,940	10.8%	38,631	11.1%
2	Upscale Avenues	3,439	2.1%	6,954	2.0%
3	Uptown Individuals	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
4	Family Landscapes	24,048	14.5%	53,751	15.4%
5	GenXurban	14,948	9.0%	32,574	9.3%
6	Cozy Country Living	616	0.4%	1,339	0.4%
7	Ethnic Enclaves	46,694	28.2%	103,722	29.7%
8	Middle Ground	23,157	14.0%	45,405	13.0%
9	Senior Styles	1,514	0.9%	2,721	0.8%
10	Rustic Outposts	7,391	4.5%	15,417	4.4%
11	Midtown Singles	15,835	9.6%	27,865	8.0%
12	Hometown	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
13	Next Wave	10,074	6.1%	20,811	6.0%
14	Scholars and Patriots	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Source: Esri (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.)
Data Note: This report identifies neighborhood segments and describes the socioeconomic quality of the immediate neighborhood. The index is a comparison of the percent of households or Total Population 18+ in the area, by Tapestry segment, to the percent of households or Total Population 18+ in the United States, by segment.

The top four LifeMode groups in Adams County make up almost 70 percent of the population. As characterized by Tapestry, a general description of most residents in Adams County are hard-working, strive for homeownership, thirty to forty years old with families, are multi-racial/ethnic and are relatively successful.

It is not particularly surprising that the highest retail goods spending per household annually is experienced in areas where there is more income. LifeMode group 1 Affluent Estates, a group with higher education, wealth and income also live in areas of Adams County where there is higher average retail spend per household annually. See map below.

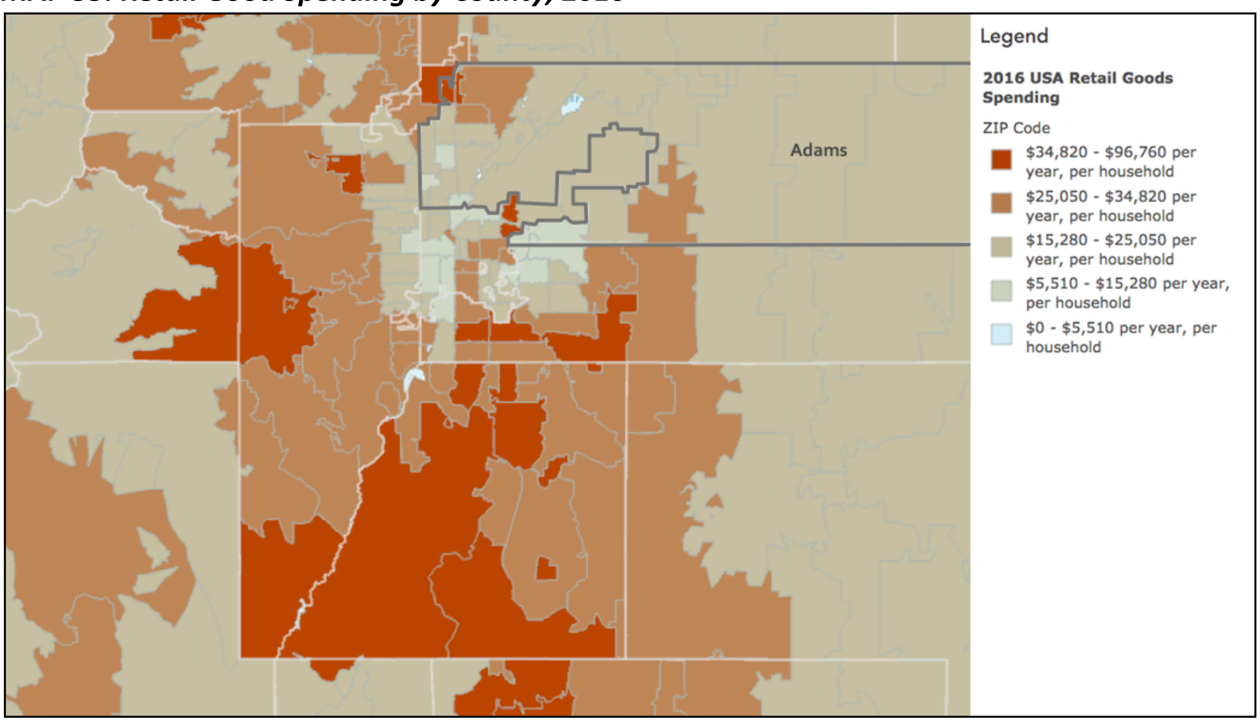
MAP 32: Retail Good Spending, 2016 (Annually per Household)



Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS | Esri, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Darker shaded areas represent the geographic location of where the annual retail goods spending is highest. When referenced to the County 2016 Tapestry Segmentation map, there is a direct correlation between these areas and areas where a concentration of LifeMode group 1 Affluent Estates reside.

MAP 33: Retail Good Spending by County, 2016



Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS | Esri, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

When compared to the 7-County Denver metro area, Adams County pales in annual retail goods spending. Naturally, attractive retail businesses will not likely prioritize Adams County before other areas where annual retail goods spending is highest.

Urbanization Groups

In addition to LifeMode Groups, Tapestry groups are also separated into Urbanization summary groups. These groups share similar locales but may be categorized in a different LifeMode. There are six different Urbanization groups: Principal Urban Centers, Urban Periphery, Metro Cities, Suburban Periphery, Semirural, and Rural. The following table summarizes the different urbanization groups.

TABLE 44: Urbanization Groups 2016 (Tapestry Segmentation)

Urbanization Group	Description
Principal Urban Centers	• Young, mobile, diverse populations living in the most densely populated neighborhoods of the largest cities (populations of 2.5 million or more) • Traits shared by more than 2.5 million people: crowding, high cost of living, and full access to urban amenities, including jobs • Youngest, most diverse populations among the Urbanization groups • Households are renter occupied by singles or roommates • The most challenging market for auto sales: half the commuters use public transportation, bicycles, or walk to work • Focus on style and image with liberal spending on apparel • Constantly connected, using the internet for everything from finding jobs to finding dates
Urban Periphery	• City life for starting families in neighborhoods that fringe major cities • The earliest suburbs, built before 1970, primarily single-family housing with apartments • Young, families with children, diverse population • Homeowners living closer to the city, with below average vacancy rates • Leisure focuses on the children (visits to theme parks or water parks), sports (soccer, basketball, baseball) and movies • Spending also emphasizes the children – clothing, toys and baby products • Parents of small children favor family restaurants and fast foods • Smartphones are popular, for social contacts, shopping and music
Metro Cities	• Affordable city life including smaller metropolitan cities or satellite cities that feature a mix of single-family and multiunit housing • Single householders seeking affordable living in the city: usually multi-unit buildings that range from mid- to high-rise apartments; average monthly rents and home value below U.S. average • Student loans more common than mortgages; debit cards more popular than credit cards • Residents share an interest in city life and its amenities, from dancing and clubbing to museums and concerts • Convenience and mobility favor cell phones over landlines • Many residents rely on internet for entertainment (download music, play online games) and as a useful resource (job searches)
Suburban Periphery	• Urban expansion: affluence in the suburbs or city-by-commute • The most populous and fast-growing among Urbanization groups, Suburban Periphery includes one-third of the nation's population • Commuters value low density living, but demand proximity to jobs, entertainment and the amenities of an urban center • Well-educated, two-income households, accept long commute times to raise their children in these family-friendly neighborhoods. Many are heavily mortgaged in newly built, single-family homes

	• Older householders have either retired in place, downsized or purchased a seasonal home • Suburbanites are the most affluent group, working hard to lead bright, fulfilled lives • Residents invest for their future, insure themselves against unforeseen circumstances, but also enjoy the fruits of their labor
Semirural	• The most affordable housing – in smaller towns and communities located throughout the country • Single-family and mobile homes in the country, but still within reach of some amenities • Embrace a quiet, country lifestyle including country music and hunting • Prefer domestic products and vehicles, especially trucks • Shop at large department and discount stores like Walmart • Fast food and dinner mixes/kits are much more common than fine dining • Many make a living off the land through agriculture, fishing, and forestry • Time off is spent visiting nearby family rather than flying to vacation destinations • When services are needed, the yellow pages are within reach
Rural	• Country living featuring single-family homes with acreage, farms, and rural resort areas • Very low population density distinguishes this group – typically less than 50 people per square mile • Over half the households are occupied by persons 55 years and older; many are married couples without children at home • The east diverse group, with over 80% non-Hispanic White • Mostly home owners (> 0%), but rentals are affordable in single-family or mobile homes • Long trips to the store and to work – often driven alone in a truck or SUV, listening to country radio • Blue collar jobs dominate the landscape including manufacturing, agriculture, mining, and construction • Many are self-employed, retired, or receive income from Social Security • More conservative in their spending practices and beliefs • Comfortable, established, and not likely to move
Source: Esri	

Suburban Periphery is the most populous Urbanization Group in Adams County, making up 42.3 percent. The second most populous region is the Urban Periphery with 29.0 percent. Principal Urban Center, Metro Cities, and Semirural are not as common within Adams County, and none of the top 20 population groups are classified as Rural in Adams County.

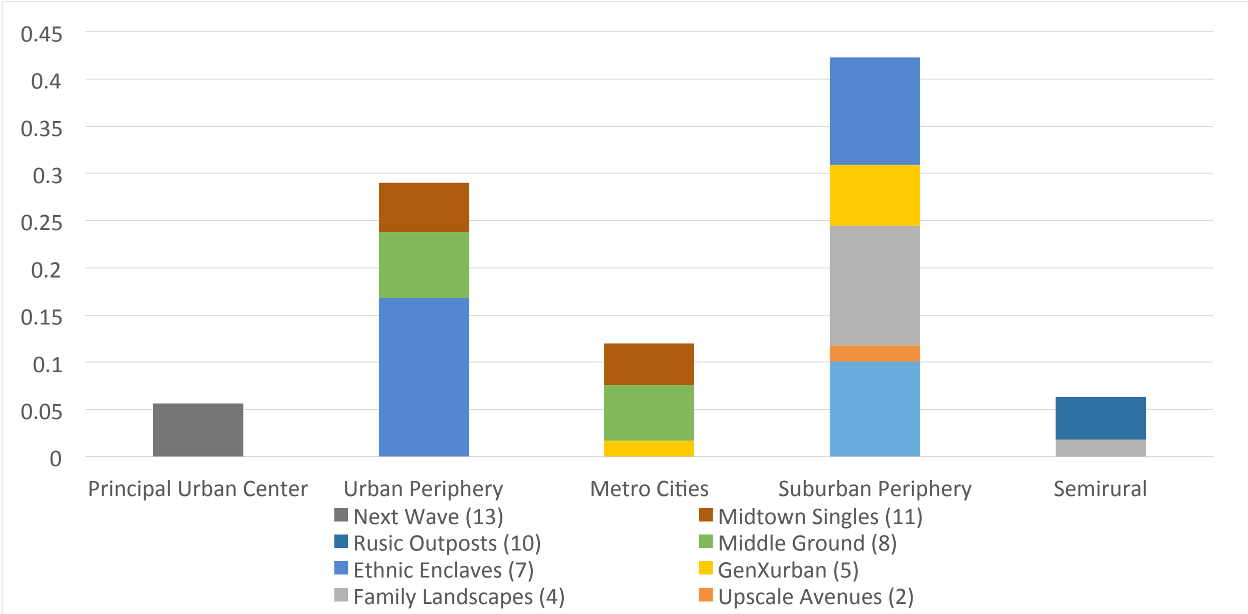
TABLE 45: Top 20 Tapestry Segments by Urban Groupings, Adams County 2016

Tapestry Segment	Percent	Cumulative Group Percent
Principal Urban Center		
NeWest Residents (13C)	5.6%	5.6%
Total	**5.6%**	
Urban Periphery		
American Dreamers (7C)	8.5%	8.5%
Bright Young Professionals (8C)	7.0%	15.5%
Barrios Urbanos (7D)	5.5%	21.0%
Metro Fusion (11C)	5.2%	26.2%
Urban Villages (7B)	1.6%	27.8%
Southwestern Families (7F)	1.2%	29.0%
Total	**29.0%**	
Metro Cities		
Front Porches (8E)	5.9%	5.9%
Young and Restless (11B)	4.4%	10.3%
In Style (5B)	1.7%	12.0%
Total	**12.0%**	
Suburban Periphery		
Up and Coming Families (7A)	11.4%	11.4%
Soccer Moms (4A)	7.5%	18.9%
Parks and Rec (5C)	6.4%	25.3%
Boomburbs (1C)	5.4%	30.7%
Home Improvement (4B)	5.2%	35.9%
Savvy Suburbanites (1D)	3.3%	39.2%
Enterprising Professionals (2D)	1.7%	40.9%
Professional Pride (1B)	1.4%	42.3%
Total	**42.3%**	
Semirural		
Down the Road (10D)	4.5%	4.5%
Middleburg (4C)	1.8%	6.3%
Total	**6.3%**	

Source: Esri
Data Note: This report identifies neighborhood segments in the area, and describes the socioeconomic quality of the immediate neighborhood. The index is a comparison of the percent of households or Total Population 18+ in the area, by Tapestry segment, to the percent of households or Total Population 18+ in the United States, by segment.

The following chart breaks down each urbanization group by LifeMode. Some groups are only present within certain urbanization groups. Next Wave groups are only found in Principal Urban Center; Affluent Estates and Upscale Avenue are only present in the Suburban Periphery, and Rustic Outposts can only be found in the Semirural region. Other LifeMode groups are distributed among Urbanization groups. Midtown Singles, Middle Ground, GenXurban, Ethnic Enclaves, and Family Landscapes are each present in two different urbanization zones.

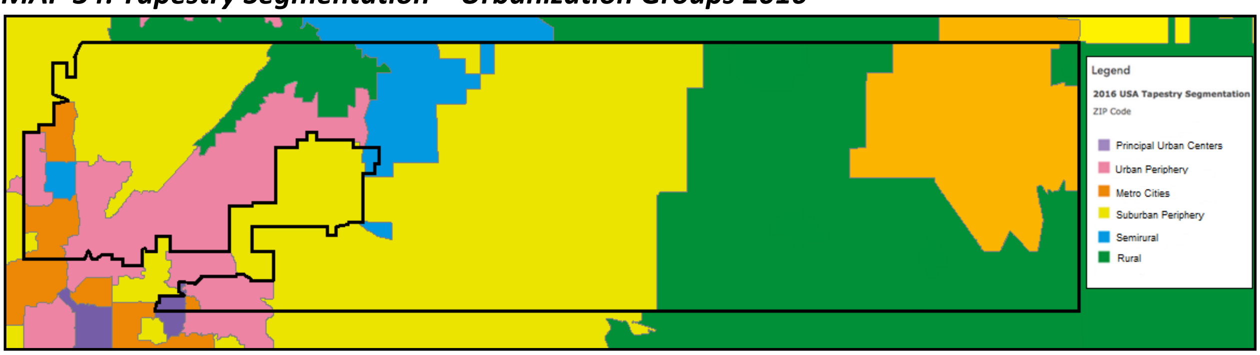
CHART 31: LifeMode Distribution by Urbanization Group



Source: Esri

The following map displays the distribution of Urbanization Groups in Adams County. Though none of the Rural LifeMode groups are populous within Adams County it is different geographically. The Rural Urbanization groups are present on a significant amount of land in Adams County, primarily in the eastern edge away from Denver.

MAP 34: Tapestry Segmentation – Urbanization Groups 2016



Source: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS | Esri, US Census Bureau, Infogroup

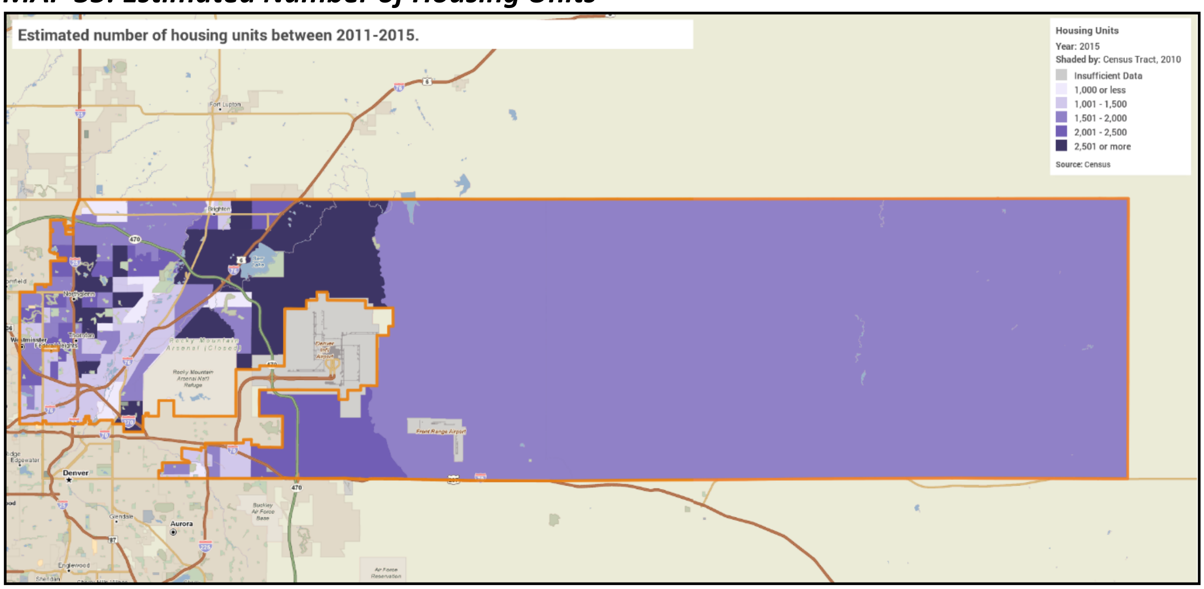
Housing Profile

Housing Type & Size

Adams County has seen significant growth since 2000. The total number of housing structures has increased 24.5 percent, from 132,594 in 2000 to 165,046 in 2015. This growth is slightly lower than the statewide housing structure increase of 25.1 percent, but considerably higher than the national increase in housing structures of 15.1 percent. Overall, the type of housing structures has remained relatively stable in Adams County. The greatest growth was in 1-unit attached structures (from 6.2 percent to 7.4 percent) and the greatest reduction was in Mobile Homes (from 9.8 percent to 6.3 percent).

The following map displays the number of homes in each census tract in Adams County. Most census tracts have over 1,000 homes, and many of have over 2,500. Even geographically small census tracts often have over 2,000 in the suburban areas between Denver and Broomfield.

MAP 35: Estimated Number of Housing Units



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Given that HUD's definition of multifamily is "a structure with more than four housing units," a single-family structure is not just a structure with one unit but also includes structures with up to four housing units. In Adams County, single-family units are much more common than multifamily units, and made up 73.1 percent of the housing structures in 2015. This is a slight increase from 2000 when 71 percent of housing units were considered single-family.

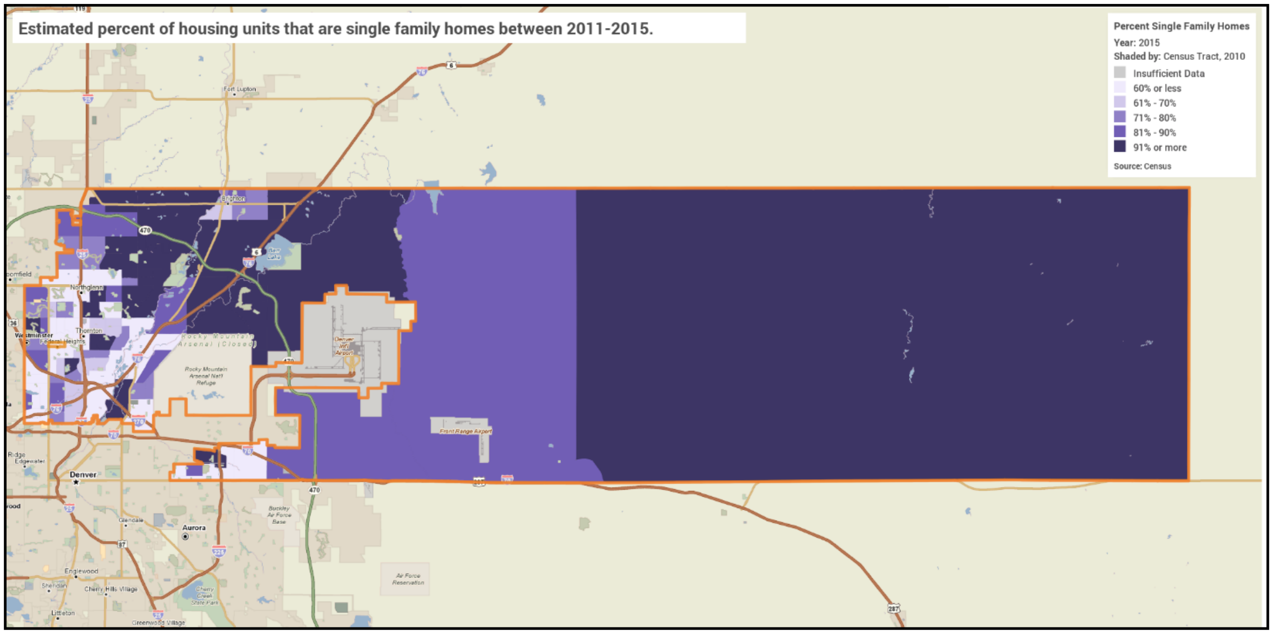
TABLE 46: Residential Properties by Type & Number of Units

	2000		2010		2015	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
1-unit detached structure	80,553	60.8%	98,226	61.4%	102,521	62.1%
1-unit, attached structure	8,158	6.2%	11,714	7.3%	12,157	7.4%
2 units	1,557	1.2%	1,991	1.2%	1,593	1.0%
3 or 4 units	3,647	2.8%	4,087	2.6%	4,245	2.6%
5-9 units	5,468	4.1%	7,796	4.9%	7,636	4.6%
10-19 units	8,553	6.5%	12,158	7.6%	12,340	7.5%
20 or more units	11,550	8.7%	12,230	7.6%	13,742	8.3%
Mobile Home	13,003	9.8%	11,605	7.3%	10,722	6.5%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	105	0.1%	101	0.1%	90	0.1%
Total	*132,594*	--	*161,760*	--	*165,046*	--
Source: 2000 Census DP-4, 2005-2009 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)						

When comparing the current housing stock to the needs of the tapestry segmentations, there is an increased need for smaller, multi-family units. In Adams County, 42.3 percent of the population lives in the Suburban Periphery and prefers low-density, 1-unit structures, but in Adams County over 62 percent of the housing falls in this category. The Urban periphery demographic, making up 29 percent of the population, is more flexible and desires single-family housing or apartments and would benefit from an increase in the “missing middle” housing stock. Urban Periphery families are less interested in large mid-to-high rise apartments than the Metro Cities demographic, which makes up 12 percent of Adams County but Accounts for approximately 7.5 percent of the housing.

The following map shows the percentage of homes within a census tract that are single-family homes. The housing stock in rural and suburban census tracts is often 80 percent or more single-family homes. Conversely, the census tracts in Adams County with lower levels of single-family homes tend to be in the urban area.

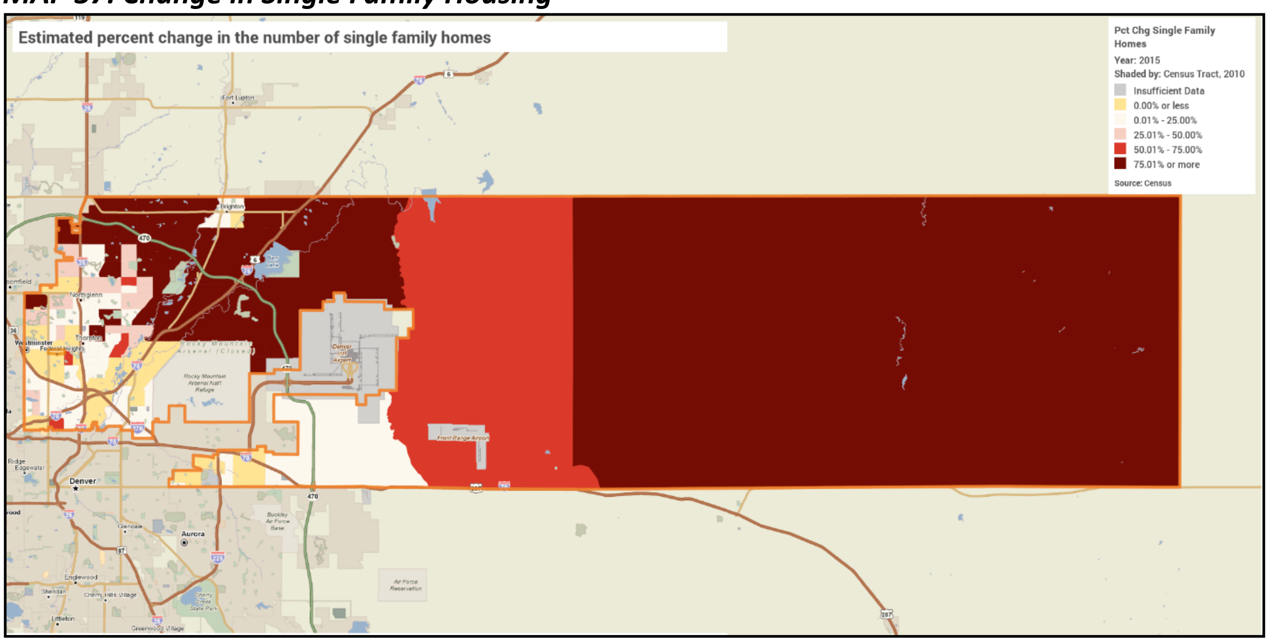
MAP 36: Estimated Percent of Housing Units that are Single Family Homes



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The following map displays the percent change in single family housing units between 2000 and 2015. Many urban census tracts saw a reduction in the percentage of single family homes in their area. Suburban and rural areas tend to have the highest levels of single-family growth.

MAP 37: Change in Single Family Housing



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Housing Unit Size

The housing stock of a region must match the demands of the community in the quantity of units available as well as the size of units available. Since 2000, the total number of housing units in Adams County grew by 24.5 percent, but the growth was not uniform across unit sizes. Units with three or more bedrooms had greater than average growth, while 1-2 bedroom units grew at a slower rate. The number of units without bedrooms shrank by over 50 percent.

TABLE 47: Housing Units by Size

	2000		2015		Percent Change in Housing Units
	Number	%	Number	%	
No bedroom	3,008	2.3%	1,964	1.2%	-53.2%
1 bedroom	16,862	12.7%	17,093	10.4%	1.4%
2 bedrooms	33,059	24.9%	38,742	23.5%	17.2%
3 bedrooms	48,583	36.6%	63,195	38.3%	30.1%
4 bedrooms	25,050	18.9%	32,847	19.9%	31.1%
5 or more bedrooms	6,032	4.5%	11,205	6.8%	85.8%
Total Housing Units	*132,594*	--	*165,046*	--	*24.5%*
Source: 2000 Census H041, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)					

This shift towards larger homes is appropriate given the growth in average household size in the last 15 years. Since 2000, the average household size in owner-occupied units increased by 0.12 and the average household size in renter-occupied units increased by 0.29. For renters, this shift comes primarily due the reduction in the percentage of 1-person and 2-person households and growth in 5-person households. Owners saw an increase in 1-person households and a reduction in 3-person households. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons for these population shifts, there has been an overall growth in average household size in the United States but Adams County has a significantly higher average household size than the nation. Some potential factors include increased rent encouraging renters to move towards larger multi-person households and elderly home-owners living alone.

TABLE 48: Household Size

	2000		2015		Change	
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
1-person household	17.9%	**29.2%**	19.6%	**28.0%**	1.7%	-1.2%
2-person household	**33.4%**	26.1%	**33.2%**	24.5%	-0.2%	-1.6%
3-person household	18.0%	17.1%	16.0%	17.1%	-2.0%	0.0%
4-person household	16.7%	13.7%	16.5%	14.3%	-0.2%	0.6%
5-person household	8.1%	7.5%	8.2%	7.5%	0.1%	0.0%
6-person household	3.4%	3.5%	3.8%	5.5%	0.4%	2.0%
7-or-more person household	2.4%	2.9%	2.6%	3.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Average Household Size	2.86	2.69	2.98	2.98	0.12	0.29
Source: Decennial Census (H015, H012), 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25009, B25010)						

The following table displays the projected need for new housing within Adams County in order to maintain an average household size of 2.98. The county will need to produce between 3,500 and 4,000 units annually to keep up with projected population growth. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of housing units grew by only 2,366, or approximately 475 annually. This is only a fraction of the housing growth needed to meet the projected needs of the county without a considerable increase in overcrowding.

TABLE 49: Housing Needs Forecast

Year	Population Estimate	Total Housing Units Needed	Total New Units Needed After 2015	Annual Production Needed
2020	545,237	182,965	17,919	3,584
2025	603,716	202,589	37,543	3,754
2030	665,364	223,277	58,231	3,882
2035	726,331	243,735	78,689	3,934
2040	787,411	264,232	99,186	3,967
2045	841,102	282,249	117,203	3,907
2050	893,563	299,853	134,807	3,852
Source: Population Estimate - Colorado State Demography Office				

Housing Conditions

The table below compares the age of Adams County's housing stock by year cohort with the same group in Colorado and in the United States. Homes built between 2000 and 2009 make up the largest cohort in the County, comprising 23.8 percent of the county's housing stock (39,300 units). The same cohort in Colorado and the United States is much smaller, comprising only 19.1 percent and 14.9 percent, respectively.

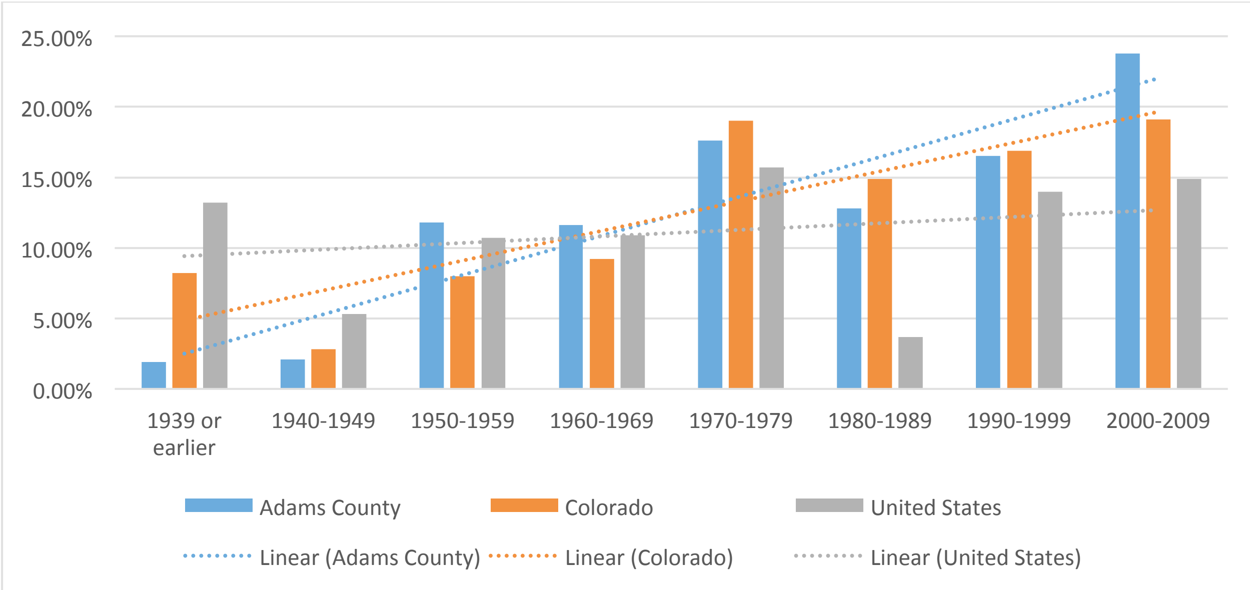
Adams County has a much newer housing stock than both Colorado and the United States. In Adams County, over 42 percent of the housing stock was built after 1990. Statewide, approximately 37.8 percent of housing falls into this category, and nationally the figure is 30.5 percent. Homes built before 1970 in Adams County make up 27.4 percent of the housing stock. These homes are primarily in the southwest corner of the county near Denver, and many of them were built with post-WWII GI Bill funding and are likely in need of repair and refurbishing.

TABLE 50: Year Unit Built

	Adams County		**Colorado**		**United States**	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Built 2010 or later	3,077	1.9%	40,315	1.8%	2,088,507	1.6%
Built 2000 to 2009	39,300	23.8%	432,964	19.1%	19,861,107	14.9%
Built 1990 to 1999	27,228	16.5%	382,310	16.9%	18,636,635	14.0%
Built 1980 to 1989	21,165	12.8%	336,155	14.9%	18,331,828	13.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	29,020	17.6%	428,645	19.0%	20,932,720	15.7%
Built 1960 to 1969	19,119	11.6%	208,587	9.2%	14,589,774	10.9%
Built 1950 to 1959	19,447	11.8%	181,599	8.0%	14,315,811	10.7%
Built 1940 to 1949	3,480	2.1%	64,405	2.8%	7,034,375	5.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	3,210	1.9%	186,083	8.2%	17,561,083	13.2%
Total	***165,046***	**--**	***2,261,063***	**--**	***133,351,840***	**--**
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25034)						

The following chart visualizes the data from the above table. The linear trend line for Adams County (blue) shows a much sharper increase than both Colorado (orange) and the US (grey).

CHART 32: Age of Housing with State and National Comparison



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

MAP 38: Median Year Built

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The above map displays the median year built for housing in Adams County by census tract. In general, newer housing is available in the more suburban areas northeast of Denver and in the rural eastern part of the County; census tracts located near the city center tend to have an older housing stock. In the lightest green shaded areas, the median year built (MYB) for housing units was 1959 or before, and as the shade darkens the MYB increases. The darkest green shaded areas have a MYB of 1990 or afterwards.

Housing Occupancy Characteristics

The table below compares renter and owner occupancy data in Adams County for 2000, 2009, and 2015. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of housing units increased by over 30,000 units, and the number of occupied housing units increased by nearly 30,000 units. This gap has led to a slight decrease in the percentage of occupied units, from 96.7 percent in 2000 to 94.9 percent in 2015. Owner-occupied housing units saw a relative decrease from 70.6 percent to 64.5 percent of the occupied housing, but an increase in real numbers by more than 10,000. Renter-occupied housing, on the other hand, grew from 29.4 percent to 35.5 percent of the occupied housing units, which was an increase of just under 18,000 units.

TABLE 51: Housing Occupancy

Housing Occupancy	**2000**		**2009**		**% Change 2000-2009**	**2015**		**% Change 2009-2015**	***% Change 2000-2015***
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**		**Number**	**%**		
Total Housing Units	132,594	100.0%	159,908	100.0%	**20.6%**	165,046	100.0%	**3.2%**	***24.5%***
Occupied Housing Units	128,156	96.7%	145,749	91.1%	**13.7%**	156,628	94.9%	**7.5%**	***22.2%***
Owner Occupied Housing Units	90,436	70.6%	100,881	68.3%	**11.5%**	101,043	64.5%	**0.2%**	***11.7%***
Renter Occupied Housing Units	37,720	29.4%	44,868	31.7%	**19.0%**	55,585	35.5%	**23.9%**	***47.4%***
Source: Census 2000 (QT-H1), 2005-2009 & 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)									

Length of Residence

The table below displays the percentage of residents who moved in the last year. Occupants of rental housing units were over three times as likely to have moved in the last year than homeowners. The most common move was within the same county for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied households.

TABLE 52: Geographic Mobility

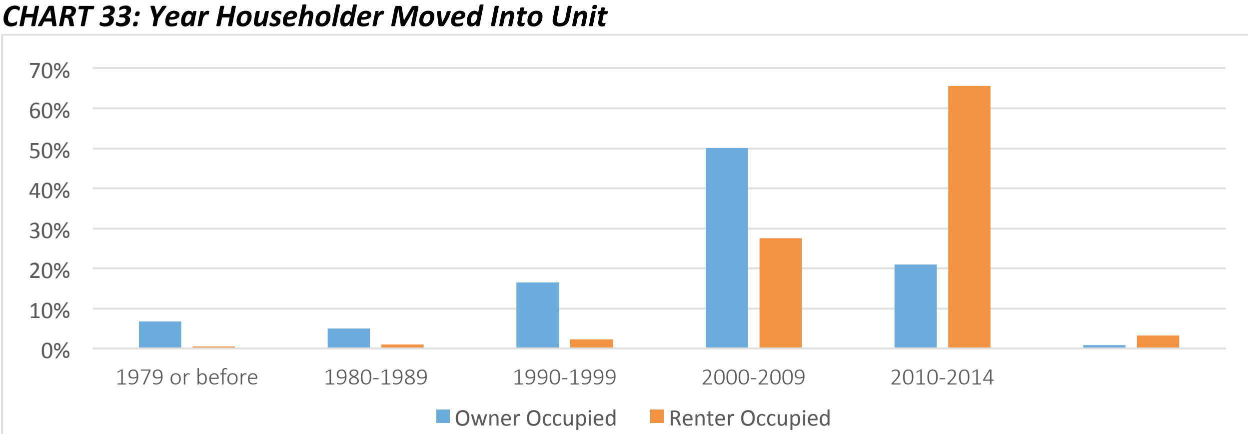
	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Moved; within same county	4.3%	13.4%
Moved; from different county	3.0%	10.8%
Moved; from different state	0.9%	4.3%
Moved; from abroad	0.3%	1.2%
Total	***8.5%***	***29.7%***
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0701)		

The following table and chart compare when renters and owners moved into their current residence, by decade. Renters are much more likely to have moved into their residence since 2010. Over 55 percent of renter-occupied housing has residents who moved in since 2010; only 14 percent of owner-occupied housing falls into that cohort.

TABLE 53: Year Householder Moved into Unit

	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	#	%	#	%
2015 or later	2,349	0.8%	5,260	3.2%
2010-2014	63,064	20.9%	108,778	65.6%
2000-2009	151,030	50.1%	45,499	27.5%
1990-1999	49,826	16.5%	3,667	2.2%
1980-1989	15,197	5.0%	1,643	1.0%
1979 or earlier	20,048	6.7%	862	0.5%
Total	***301,514***	--	***165,709***	
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25026)				

CHART 33: Year Householder Moved Into Unit



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25026)

Households with Problems

The following table shows the number and type of households with housing problems in Adams County. Cost burden is, by far, the most common problem in the County. Over 57,000 households are cost burdened, or 36.4 percent. Overcrowding (more than one person per room) is the next most common household problem faced in Adams County with over 7,500 facing the problem, or 5 percent.

TABLE 54: Household Problems of Occupied Units

	Number	Percent
Cost Burden	57,009	36.4%
Overcrowding	7,813	5.0%
Lack Complete Plumbing Facilities	274	0.2%
Lack Complete Kitchen Facilities	794	0.5%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25048, B25052, DP04)		

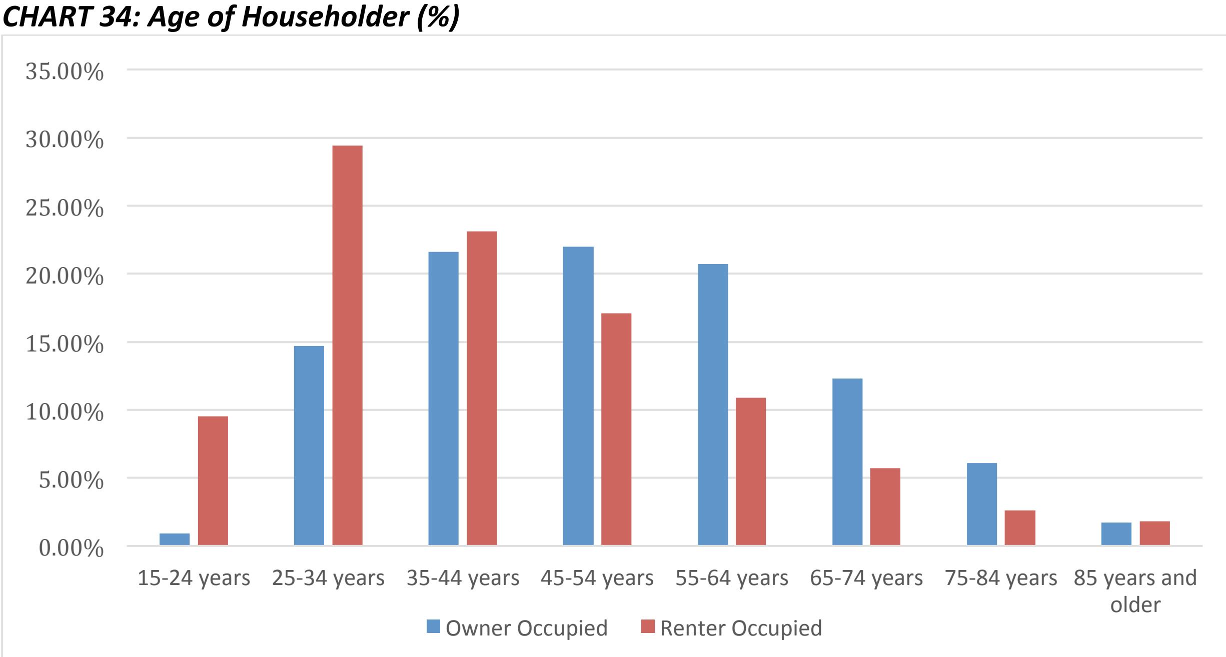
Age of Head of Householder

The following table breaks down the age of householder by tenure. The largest age demographic for owner-occupied housing units is 45-54 years old, at 22 percent, followed by 35-44 years old at 21.55 percent and 55-64 years old at 20.80 percent. Renters, on the other hand, tend to be much younger. The most common renter demographic (just under 30% of all renters) is 25-34 years old. The second and third most common renter demographics are 35-44 years old (23.1%) and 45-54 years old (17.1%). One standout data point is that the rate of owner-occupied and renter-occupied homes is similar for 85 years and older. The chart below visualizes this data.

TABLE 55: Age of Householder

	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number	%	Number	%
15-24 years	881	0.9%	5,308	9.5%
25-34 years	14,806	14.7%	16,348	29.4%
35-44 years	21,844	21.6%	12,814	23.1%
45-54 years	22,234	22.0%	9,482	17.1%
55-64 years	20,889	20.7%	6,032	10.9%
65-74 years	12,459	12.3%	3,191	5.7%
75-84 years	6,177	6.1%	1,435	2.6%
85 years and older	1,753	1.7%	975	1.8%
Total	***101,043***	--	***55,585***	--
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25007)				

CHART 34: Age of Householder (%)



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Tenure (by Race and Ethnicity)

Within the County, there are significant variations among housing tenure by race and ethnicity, as seen in the table below. Numbers highlighted in red represent demographics that have home ownership rates more than 10 percent below the regional average. This variation could indicate the presence of some factor that is disproportionally affecting residents based on race or ethnicity. Overall, most races have disproportionately low home ownership rates in Adams County. The rate of homeownership for the Black population, which ranges between 20 and 30 percent lower than the homeownership rate for the White population, is consistently the lowest rate across all years sampled.

TABLE 56: Housing Tenure by Race

	2000		2009		2015	
	% HHs Who Own Home	% HH Who Rent	% HHs Who Own Home	% HH Who Rent	% HHs Who Own Home	% HH Who Rent
All Races/Ethnicities	70.6%	29.4%	69.2%	30.8%	64.5%	35.5%
White	73.7%	26.3%	71.4%	28.6%	66.1%	33.9%
Black	41.6%	58.5%	40.9%	59.1%	44.4%	55.6%
Asian	68.2%	31.8%	72.1%	27.9%	64.2%	35.8%
Hispanic	58.7%	41.4%	56.2%	43.8%	71.6%	28.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	59.2%	40.8%	54.1%	45.9%	56.0%	44.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	44.9%	55.1%	46.9%	53.2%	47.7%	52.3%
Two or More Races	59.1%	40.9%	66.1%	33.9%	60.3%	39.7%
Some Other Race	56.2%	43.8%	61.4%	38.6%	51.8%	48.2%
Source: Decennial Census 2000, 2005-2009 - 2011-2015 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates						

Renter-Occupied Housing Units by Structure Type

The following table shows occupied housing units by tenure and structure type. The most common type of housing unit for owners is 1-unit detached, while the most common type of housing unit for renters is a structure with 10 or more units. Renters are more likely to live in every type of housing unit, except 1-unit detached structure and "mobile home or other." While renters overwhelmingly tend to live in multi-unit housing structure types, the difference in household size between renters and owners is not as dramatic.

TABLE 57: Occupied Housing Units by Structure Type

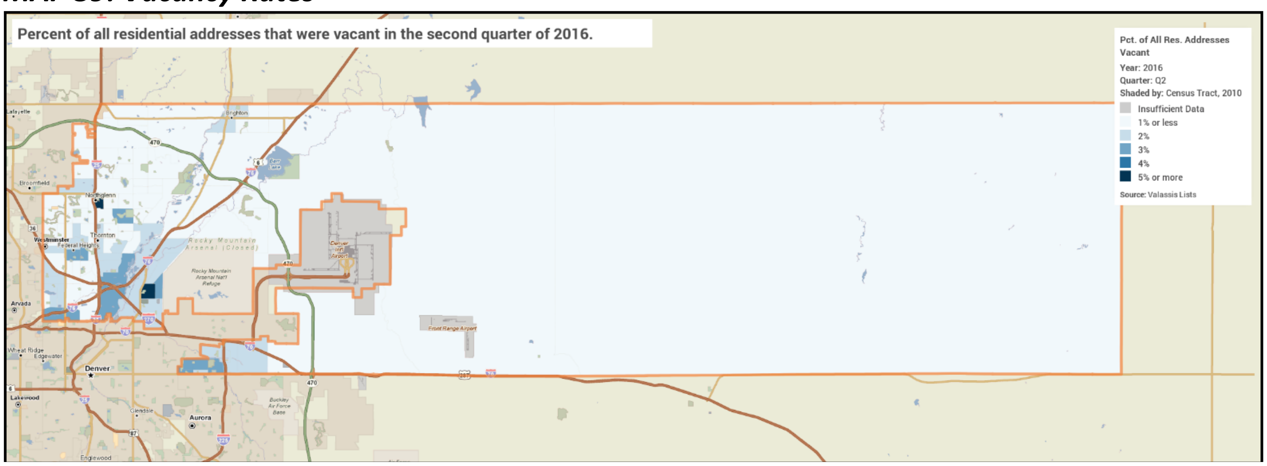
	Owner Occupied	**Renter Occupied**
1-unit detached structure	82.1%	29.1%
1-unit, attached structure	7.2%	7.6%
2 units	0.2%	2.4%
3 or 4 units	0.9%	5.8%
5-9 units	1.3%	10.2%
10 or more units	1.0%	40.2%
Mobile Home or Other	7.2%	4.7%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S2504)		

Housing Vacancy

The vacancy rate is the percentage of all available residential units. A decreasing vacancy rate puts upward pressure on prices, raising housing costs as residents compete for limited housing. The natural vacancy rate can vary for a number of reasons, but 5 percent is generally considered a healthy rate. Some housing vacancy is necessary to allow residents to move into new homes within the county as their living situation changes, and to attract new residents to the County.

The map below depicts the residential vacancy rates by census tract for the County in the second quarter of 2016 (ending in June). The source for this data is Valassis Lists, which calculates vacancy rate by dividing the number of houses that were vacant by the total number of valid postal addresses. A residence is considered vacant if mail has not been collected for at least 90 days. Most the county has a vacancy rate of less than 1 percent, and only two census tracts have a vacancy rate of over 5 percent. This points to a lack of available housing within the County.

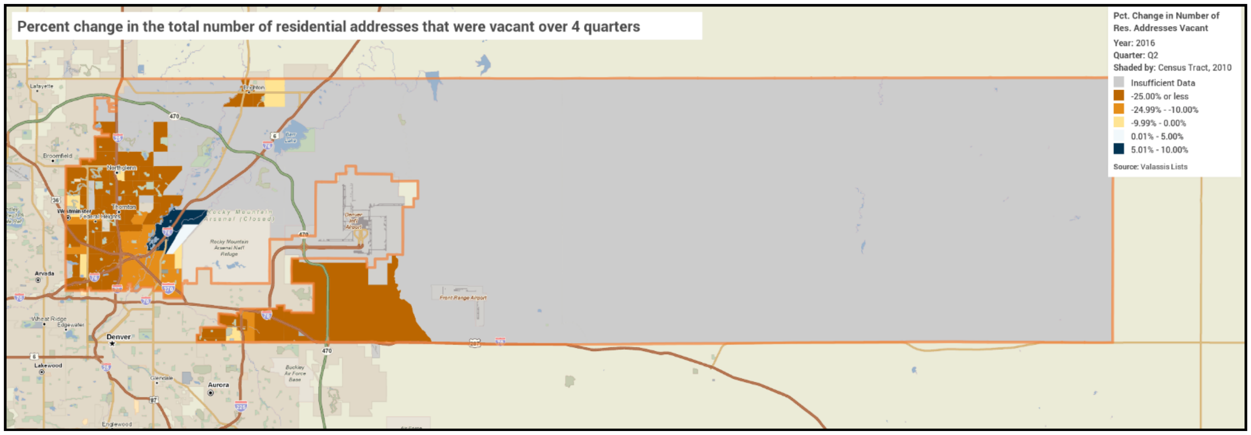
MAP 39: Vacancy Rates



Source: Valassis Lists via PolicyMap

In the last year, the vacancy rate has dropped significantly in some census tracts. The following map displays the change in vacancy rate in the last year where data is available. There is only one area where the vacancy rate has increased, and that growth is very small compared to the reduced availability of housing seen elsewhere in the county. Many census tracts saw the vacancy rate reduce by 50 percent or more. When the available housing stock is low, residents are forced to look elsewhere for housing, even if they would prefer to live in Adams County.

MAP 40: Change in Vacancy Rate in the Last Year, 2016



Source: Valassis Lists via PolicyMap

The American Community Survey, conducted by the US Census Bureau, also measures vacancy rate. In this measure, a housing unit is vacant if no one is living in it at the time of enumeration, unless occupants are temporarily absent. Units that were only temporarily occupied were not counted. The survey is conducted annually and uses 5-year estimates to smooth out any outliers. Per this measure in 2015 (the most recent year available), the vacancy rate in Adams County was 5.68 percent, which was slightly less than the metro area (6.17%) and significantly less than the state (10.73%).

According to the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, a healthy urban vacancy rate is generally between 6 and 7 percent[5]. When vacancy rates are lower than that, the increased competition puts upward pressure on housing prices and the lack of options prevents households from moving into new residences that may better suit their changing living situation (for example, the birth of a child, retirement, or a new job). This range is a ballpark figure but it provides some guidance to analyze the vacancy rate within Adams County.

The following two maps visualize ACS vacancy rate data in the County by census tract. The first map displays the percentage of housing units that were vacant. The vacancy rate varies significantly between census tracts. In the northern suburban area, the vacancy rate can be below 2.5 percent and some of the more urban areas have a vacancy rate of over 10 percent.

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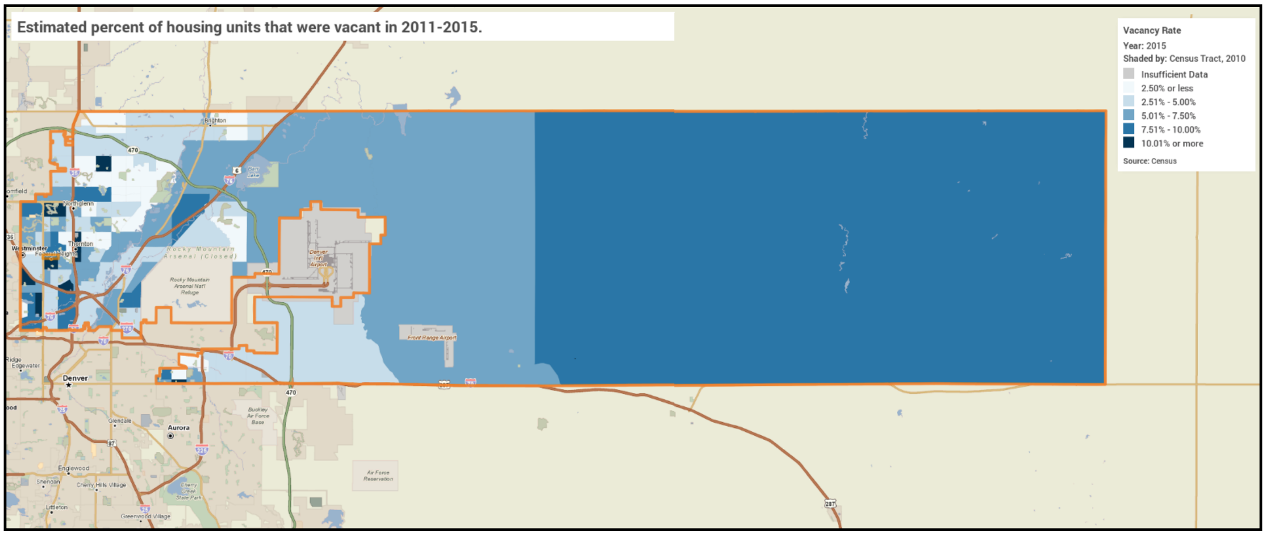
[5] "The Greater Boston Housing Report Card 2015: The Housing Cost Conundrum." The Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy. http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HousingReportCardFinalFinal.pdf and "How Vacancy Rate Points to an Unaffordable Housing Market," Kelly Kasulis, Northwestern University. http://www.northeastern.edu/rugglesmedia/2016/04/20/how-vacancy-rate-points-to-an-unaffordable-housing-market/

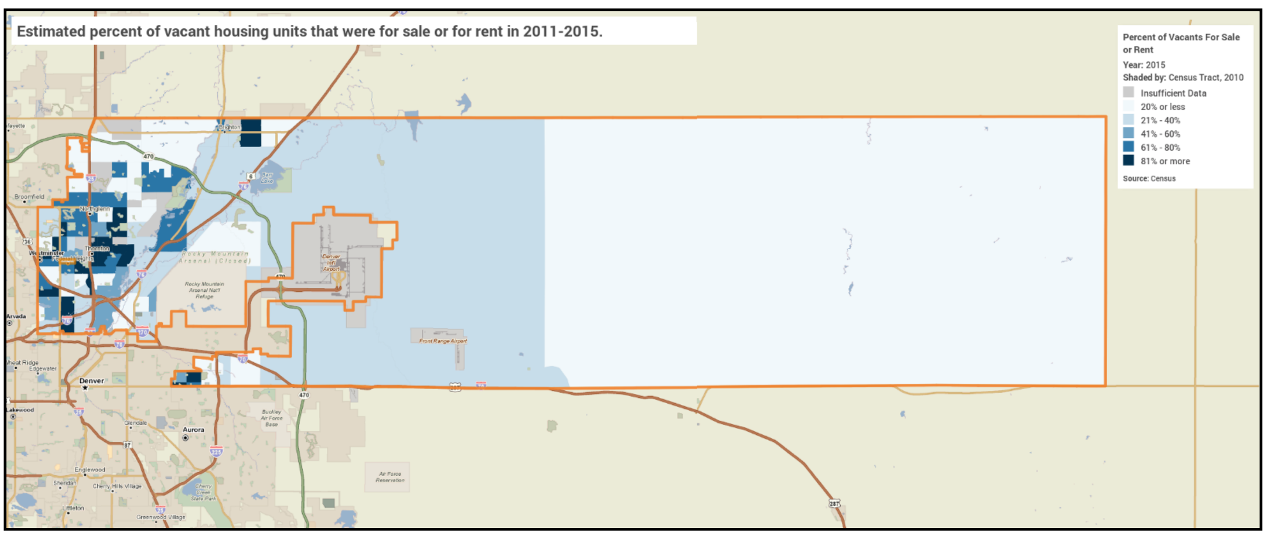
MAP 41: Vacancy Rate



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

This second map shows the percentage of vacant units that are on the market for rent or sale. Census tracts near Denver tend to have a higher rate of available housing.

MAP 42: Vacant Housing for Sale or Rent

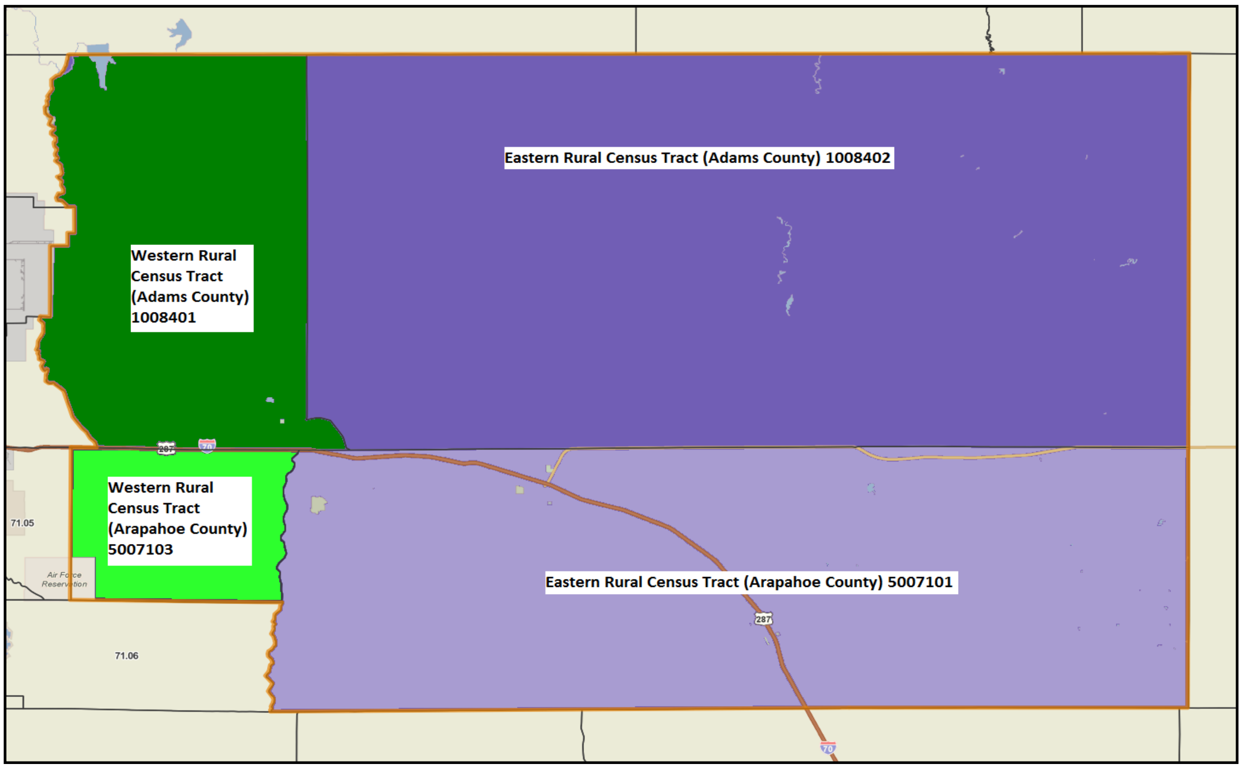


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

There are many factors that can affect the vacancy rate within Adams County. One possibility is that policies at the county level are influencing the available housing stock. Comparing Adams County to a similar county in the region can potentially identify patterns that indicate there is something unique about Adams County that is putting upward or downward pressure on the vacancy rate. Arapahoe County, located directly south of Adams County, is the best point of comparison in the region. It is similar in size, shape, and vicinity to Denver.

There are some demographic differences between the two counties. Arapahoe County has a noticeably larger overall population, larger non-White population, higher median household income, and lower poverty rate. In order to control for these differences, it is best to compare regions of each county that share similar demographics. The most obvious opportunity for this comparison is the eastern part of the state, where each county has a set of two bordering census tracts. The "Western Rural Census Tracts" chosen for comparison are 1008401 in Adams County and 5007103 in Arapahoe County and the "Eastern Rural Census Tracts" chosen are 1008402 in Adams County and 5007101 in Arapahoe County. The following map displays the chosen census tracts.

MAP 43: Select Census Tracts for Comparison in Adams and Arapahoe County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The following table compares key demographics between the four census tracts. The western tracts are not, demographically, as close of a match as the eastern census tracts. The biggest difference between the western census tracts is the difference in median household income. The Arapahoe tract has a significantly higher MHI than its Adams County counterpart. This difference in income may help explain why the vacancy rate in the Adams County tract is 5.18 percent higher than the Arapahoe tract. Both numbers are incredibly low, though, which points to a need for more housing within the area. It is possible that there are infrastructure or policy differences between the two tracts that contribute to higher income households choosing to live in Arapahoe County. It is also possible that the local Air Force Base is affecting the tracts' MHI.

The eastern states are much more closely matched demographically. Those two tracts also have a nearly identical vacancy rate. While this seems to imply that there is nothing unique about Adams that is disrupting the vacancy rate, it is also important to compare vacancy rate changes over time within the region to see if housing changes have been uniform across the region.

TABLE 58: Demographic Comparison of Select Census Tracts

	Western Rural Census Tracts		
	Adams 1008401	**Arapahoe 5007103**	**Difference Between Adams and Aurora**
Population Density	22.02	26.38	-4.36
Non-White Population	7.95%	12.23%	-4.28%
Median Household Income	$62,572	$86,346	-$23,774
Poverty Rate	7.72%	7.54%	+0.18%
Vacancy Rate	5.18%	0.00%	+5.18%
	Eastern Rural Census Tracts		
	Adams 1008402	**Arapahoe 5007101**	**Difference Between Adams and Aurora**
Population Density	7.22	10.87	-3.65
Non-White Population	6.18%	6.39%	-0.21%
Median Household Income	$73,977	$71,705	+$2,272
Poverty Rate	6.61%	7.12%	+0.51%
Vacancy Rate	8.16%	8.84%	+0.68%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates			

The following table displays the vacancy rates in the select census tracts between 2000 and 2015. In 2000, Adams County had an average vacancy rate that was 1.95 percent lower than Arapahoe County in the select tracts, but by 201 the average vacancy rate in Adams County was 2.25 percent higher. It is possible that households are moving into these areas of Arapahoe County more quickly than Adams County.

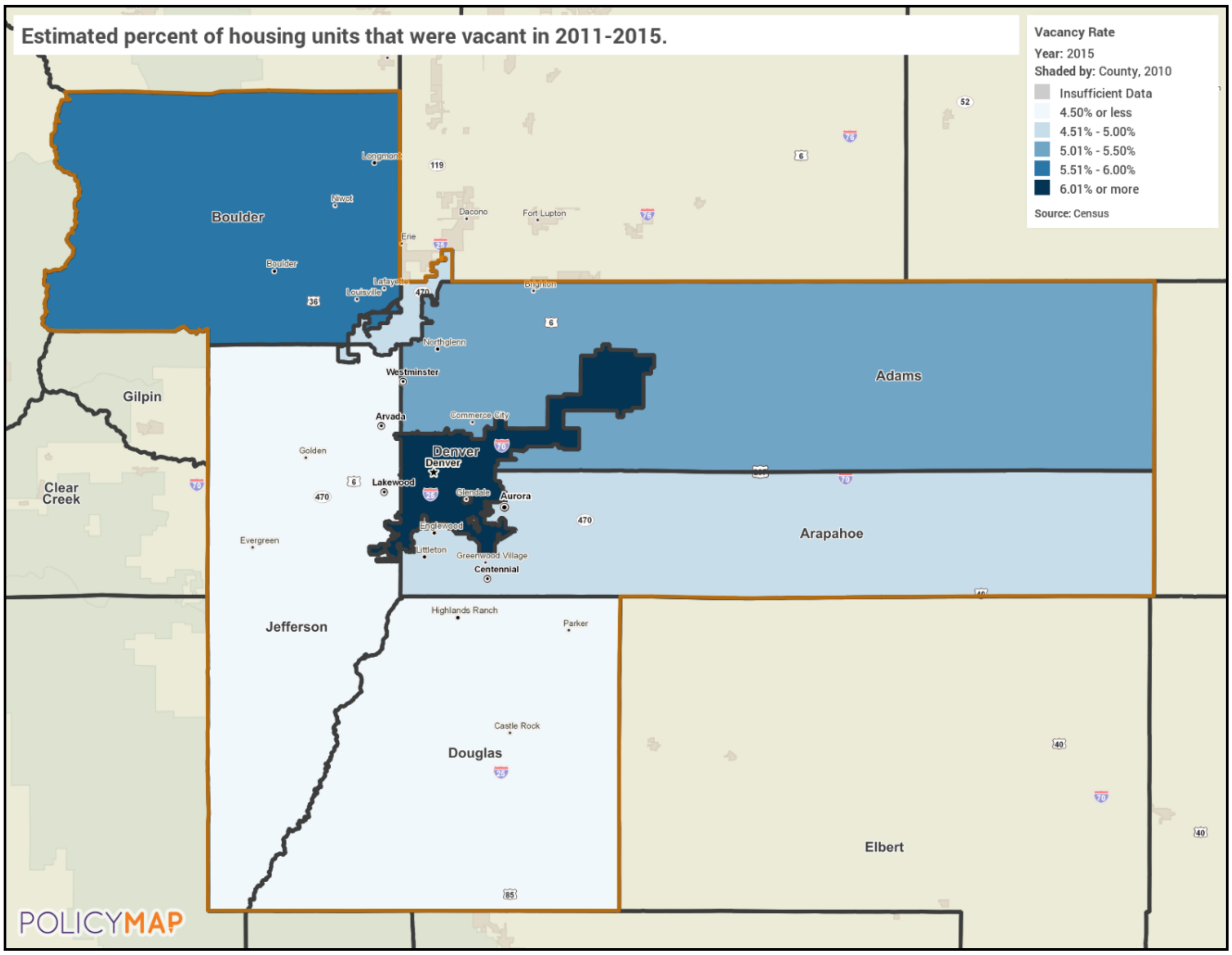
TABLE 59: Vacancy Rate Changes Over Time in Select Census Tracts

	Western Census Tracts			**Eastern Census Tracts**			**Average Difference Between Counties**
	Adams 1008401	**Arapahoe 5007103**	**Difference Between Counties**	**Adams 1008402**	**Arapahoe 5007101**	**Difference Between Counties**	
2000	3.15%	4.78%	-1.63	5.18%	7.45%	-2.27	-1.95
2009	9.02%	8.86%	+0.16	3.81%	7.62%	-3.81	-1.83
2010	8.15%	3.69%	+4.46	6.42%	9.56%	-3.14	+0.66
2015	5.18%	0.00%	+5.18	8.16%	8.84%	-0.68%	+2.25
Source: 2000 Decennial Census, 2005-2009, 2006-2010, and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates							

To test that hypothesis, the change in total population over the same time period in those census tracts was analyzed. It appears that population growth is not the cause of the shift in vacancy rates between these census tracts. In 2000, Arapahoe County Census Tract 5007103 had a population of 3,619, but by 2015 that population decreased to 1,684. Adams County Census Tract 1008401, on the other hand, grew from 3,261 to 4,240 in the same time period. Arapahoe County Census Tract 5007101 grew between 2000 and 2014 by about 1,000 from 3,996 to 5,026. The comparative Adams County census tract grew much more quickly from 2,389 by 2,500 to 4,839.

There are seven counties that are part of the Denver metro area. The following map displays them by vacancy rate. Denver County has the highest vacancy rate at 6.25 percent and Douglas County has the lowest with 3.44 percent.

MAP 44: Vacancy Rate by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

While each county is currently near 5 percent, the trend in the last five years has been a significant reduction in housing stock. The following table displays the vacancy rate in each county in 2009 and 2015. Every county except Douglas has seen a reduction in the vacancy rate. In two counties (Adams and Denver) the rate has dropped by more than 3 percent. If population and housing production trends were to continue at this rate over the next 5 years, Adams County could see vacancy rates around 2 percent, which could lead to a serious lack of affordable housing as housing costs will rise to meet demand.

TABLE 60: Vacancy Rate by County

	2009	2015	Change in Percent
Adams County	8.85%	5.10%	-3.75%
Arapahoe County	7.25%	4.90%	-2.35%
Boulder County	6.63%	5.57%	-1.06%
Broomfield County	6.34%	4.77%	-1.57%
Denver County	9.96%	6.25%	-3.71%
Douglas County	3.87%	3.44%	-0.43%
Jefferson County	5.11%	4.12%	-0.99%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25002)			

Rental Cost and Vacancy

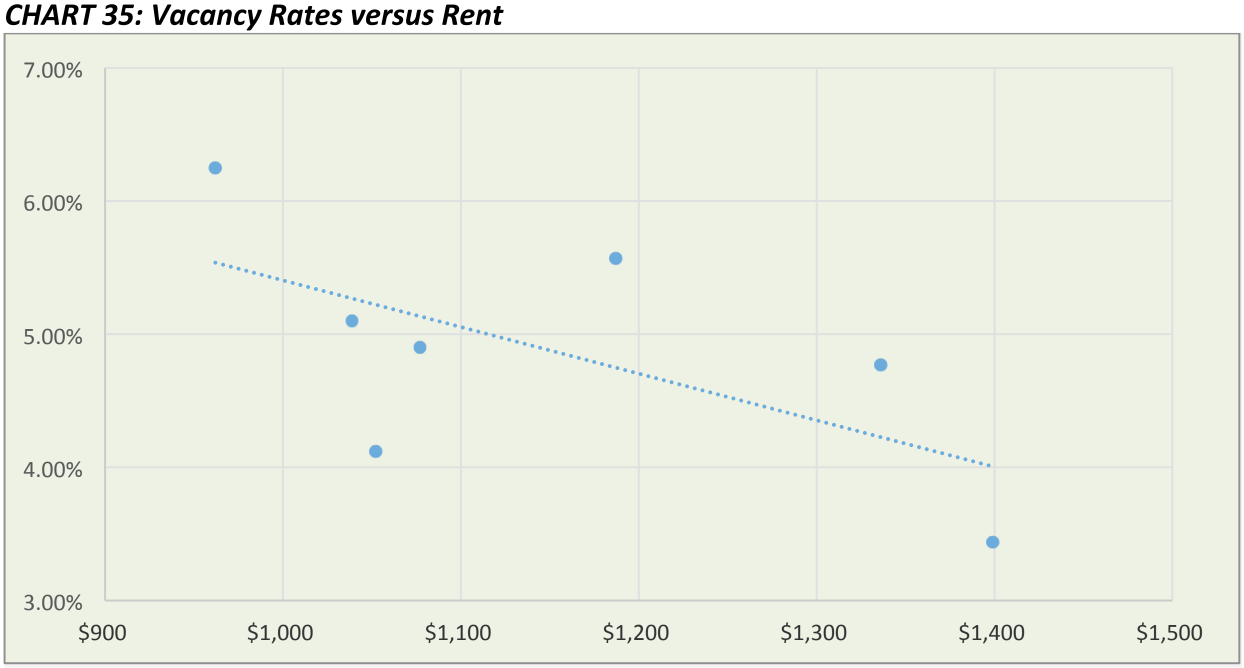
The following table displays the median rent and vacancy rate by county. Denver County has both the highest residential vacancy rate and the lowest median rent in the region. Douglas County, on the other hand, has the lowest vacancy rate and the highest median rent. Adams County has the second lowest median rent, but the fourth highest vacancy rate.

TABLE 61: Median Rent and Vacancy Rate by County

	Median Rent	Vacancy Rate
Adams	$1,039	5.10%
Arapahoe	$1,077	4.90%
Boulder	$1,187	5.57%
Broomfield	$1,336	4.77%
Denver	$962	6.25%
Douglas	$1,399	3.44%
Jefferson	$1,052	4.12%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25046, B25002)		

The scatter plot below shows vacancy rate and median rent. The sample size is small, but there appears to be a negative relationship between these two data points. As the vacancy rate goes up, the median rent goes down because landlords must lower prices to compete with other landlords for fewer tenants.

CHART 35: Vacancy Rates versus Rent



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Changes in Vacancy by Type

Vacancy type is broken down into four categories:

- *Rental Units*: Includes for rent properties and rented properties currently vacant
- *Owned Units*: Includes properties currently for sale and sold properties that are vacant
- *Occasional Use Units*: Includes seasonal, recreational, and other properties maintained
- *Other*: Includes all other types of vacant properties, including those maintained for migrant workers

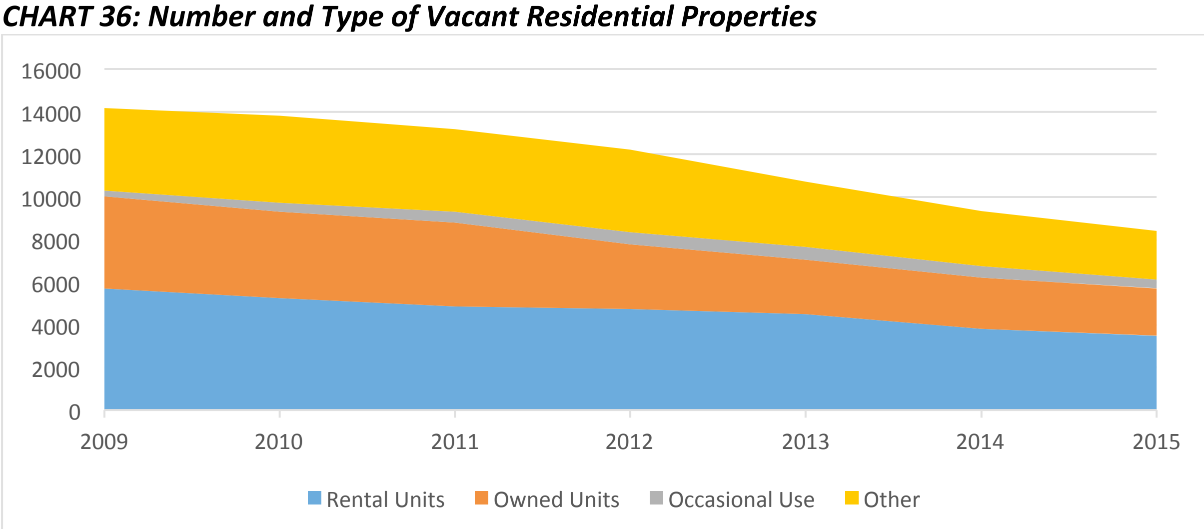
Between 2009 and 2015, the number of vacant properties in Adams County decreased by 40.55 percent, or 5,741 units. The largest drop in both number and percentage is owned units, where there are 2,108 fewer vacant units, a 48.64 percent reduction. The only type of residential property that saw an increase in the number of vacancies was occasional use. This category is still relatively small with only 394 units in 2015, but that is 50 percent higher than the amount in 2009 when only 264 units were classified as occasional use.

TABLE 62: Number and Type of Vacant Residential Properties

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	# Change	% Change
Rental Units	5,708	5,267	4,874	4,734	4,498	3,803	3,492	-2,216	-38.82%
Owned Units	4,334	4,052	3,926	3,056	2,569	2,406	2,226	-2,108	-48.64%
Occasional Use	264	408	509	567	579	531	394	130	50.76%
Other	3,853	4,082	3,863	3,854	3,063	2,597	2,306	-1,547	-40.15%
Total Vacant	***14,159***	***13,809***	***13,172***	***12,211***	***10,709***	***9,337***	***8,418***	***-5,741***	***-40.55%***
Source: 2005-2009 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25004)									

The following chart visualizes the above data. The decline in available properties is clear and appears to be accelerating since 2012.

CHART 36: Number and Type of Vacant Residential Properties



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The following table displays the percentage of each housing type out of all the vacant units. Rental units have remained constant at approximately 40 percent of the vacant units, but owned units have decreased from nearly 31 percent to approximately 26 percent. Occasional use is still the smallest vacancy type, but it saw the largest growth from 1.86 percent to 4.68 percent. If these overall trends continue it is possible that there will be fewer than 5,000 vacant properties available for new residents by 2020, and 20 percent of the vacant residencies may be occasional use.

TABLE 63: Percent of Vacant Residential Properties by Type in Adams County

	2009	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**Change in % 2009 - 2015**
Rental Units	40.31%	38.14%	37.00%	38.77%	42.01%	40.73%	41.48%	+1.17%
Owned Units	30.61%	29.34%	29.80%	25.03%	23.99%	25.77%	26.44%	-4.17%
Occasional Use	1.86%	2.95%	3.86%	4.64%	5.40%	5.69%	4.68%	+2.82%
Other	27.21%	29.56%	29.33%	31.56%	28.60%	27.81%	27.39%	+0.18%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25004)								

The following table breaks down the change in type of housing in the region between 2009 and 2015. This is an indication of whether the changes seen in Adams County are similar to the rest of the region. Overall, Adams County's available housing stock is shrinking more quickly than the region's housing stock. Between 2009 and 2015, the number of available rental units in Adams County was reduced by 38.82 percent, the available owned units were reduced by 48.64 percent, and other units fell by 40.15percent. The vacant occasional use units increased by 49.24 percent, but as mentioned before, this housing stock is incredibly small. Arapahoe, Denver, Jefferson, and Boulder Counties show similar patterns with a decrease in rental and owned unit vacancy, but an increase in occasional use. Douglas County saw an increase in vacancy across the board, except owned units. Broomfield County had an overall reduction in vacancy but only two categories (owned units and rental units) fell between 2009 and 2015.

TABLE 64: Number and Type of Vacant Residential Properties by County

	Adams County				Arapahoe County				Denver County			
	2009	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**	**2009**	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**	**2009**	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**
Rental Units	5,708	3,492	-2,216	-38.82%	7,185	5,087	-2,098	-29.20%	12,435	8,106	-4,329	-34.81%
Owned Units	4,334	2,226	-2,108	-48.64%	4,435	2,291	-2,144	-48.34%	5,916	2,337	-3,579	-60.50%
Occasional Use	264	394	130	49.24%	976	1,175	199	20.39%	2,375	2,710	335	14.11%
Other	3,853	2,306	-1,547	-40.15%	4,011	3,249	-762	-19.00%	6,565	5,243	-1,322	-20.14%
Total Vacant	**14,159**	**8,418**	**-5,741**	**-40.55%**	**16,607**	**11,801**	**-4,806**	**-28.94%**	**27,291**	**18,396**	**-8,895**	**-32.59%**

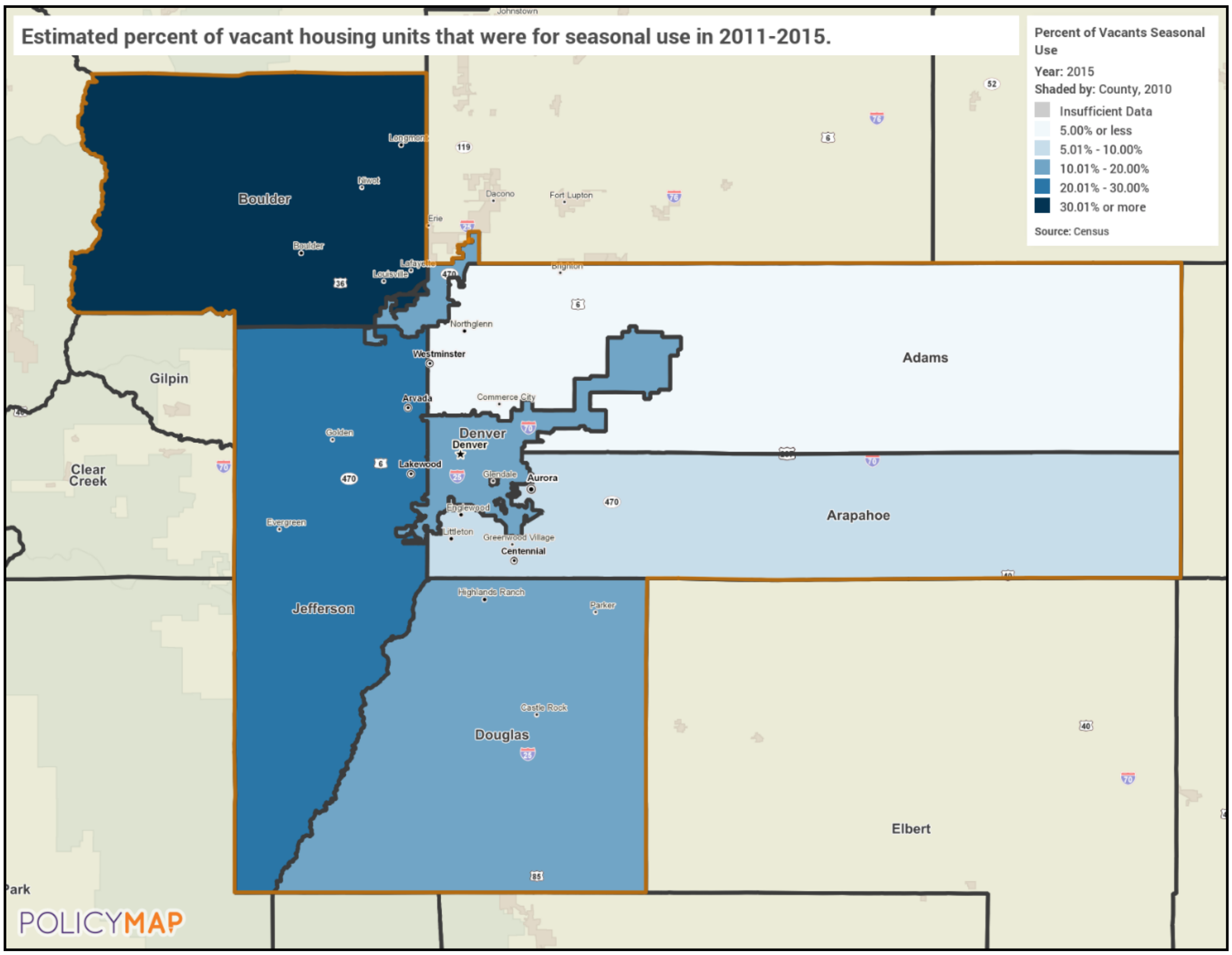
	Broomfield County				Douglas County				Jefferson County			
	2009	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**	**2009**	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**	**2009**	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**
Rental Units	490	449	-41	-8.37%	1,203	1,430	227	18.87%	4,212	2,965	-1,247	-29.61%
Owned Units	546	249	-297	-54.40%	1,576	1,168	-408	-25.89%	2,701	2,221	-480	-17.77%
Occasional Use	33	173	140	424.2%	480	501	21	5.15%	1,337	2,047	710	53.10%
Other	208	308	100	48.08%	513	856	343	66.86%	3,354	2,352	-1,002	-29.87%
Total Vacant	**1,277**	**1,179**	**-98**	**-7.67%**	**3,772**	**3,955**	**183**	**4.85%**	**11,604**	**9,585**	**-2,019**	**-17.40%**

	Boulder County				Regional Total			
	2009	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**	**2009**	**2015**	**Change in #**	**% Change**
Rental Units	2,825	2,245	-580	-20.53%	37,195	23,774	-13,421	-36.08%
Owned Units	1,901	1,138	-763	-40.14%	24,160	11,630	-12,530	-51.86%
Occasional Use	1,880	2,436	556	29.57%	8,020	9,436	1,416	17.66%
Other	1,569	1,404	-165	-10.52%	21,839	15,718	-6,121	28.03%
Total Vacant	**8,175**	**7,223**	**-952**	**-11.65%**	**91,214**	**60,558**	**-30,656**	**-33.61%**

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25004)

The following map displays the percent of vacant residential units that are designated for seasonal use. These units are only used for certain seasons, weekends, or other occasional use. Adams County has the lowest rate of seasonal units in the region with 4.68 percent. As a point of comparison, Arapahoe County's seasonal unit rate is 9.93 percent. Counties closer to the mountains tend to have much higher seasonal use homes, which tend to be occupied by high-income residents. As property becomes increasingly scarce, it is possible Adams and Arapahoe County will see a considerable increase in demand for seasonal homes.

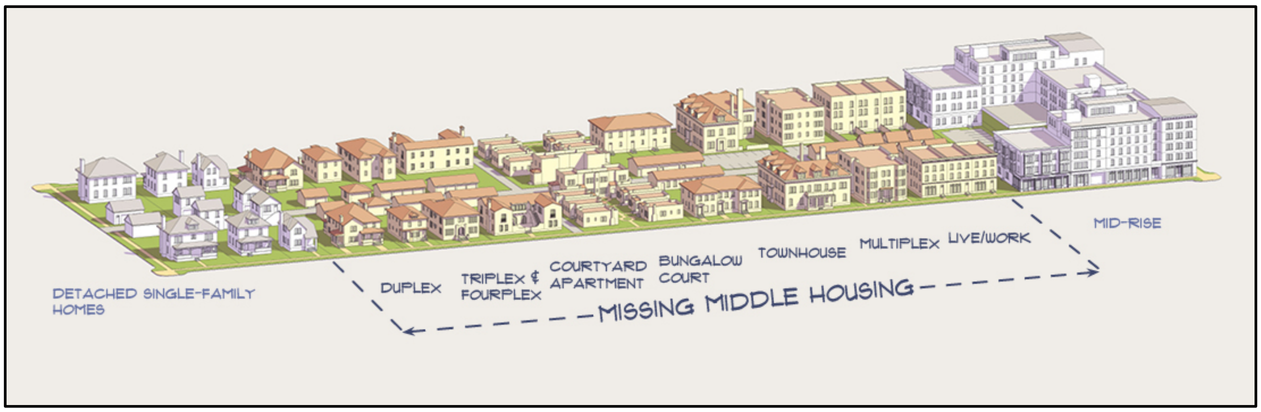
MAP 45: Seasonal Use Vacancy Rate by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The “Missing Middle”

In order for a community to see stable economic growth and development, it needs diverse housing options. Offering a variety of housing options allows communities to attract and retain talent. As people’s lives change, the need for varied housing options increases. Young talent who come to a new city may not remain if they lack opportunities for housing in all stages of life: getting married, raising children, and retiring. Research has shown that many communities suffer from a “missing middle” housing problem. “Middle” housing refers to unit structures that are denser than 1-unit homes and large apartment complexes. There are generally a lot of housing options in medium or large apartment complexes and single-unit detached structures in the suburbs, but there is not much between those two extremes. Duplexes, townhouses, courtyard apartment complexes, and other similar housing structures are often missing.



Source: www.missingmiddlehousing.com

The following table shows the availability of different housing types within the region and the state. Five types of units (highlighted in blue below) are used to *approximate* the “missing middle” housing types: 1-unit attached, 2 units, 3 or 4 units, and 5 to 19 units.

TABLE 65: Housing Type Availability by County (Missing Middle)

	1-unit, detached	**1-unit, attached**	**2 units**	**3 or 4 units**	**5 to 9 units**	**10 to 19 units**	**20 or more units**		**Percent “Missing Middle” Housing**
Adams County	62.1%	7.4%	1.0%	2.6%	4.6%	7.5%	8.3%		**15.6%**
Arapahoe County	56.2%	9.3%	0.9%	2.8%	6.3%	9.8%	13.6%		**19.3%**
Boulder County	60.4%	7.3%	1.9%	4.3%	6.5%	6.1%	10.6%		**20.0%**
Broomfield County	64.5%	7.1%	0.3%	1.9%	3.3%	5.4%	14.6%		**12.6%**
Denver County	46.0%	7.6%	2.6%	3.4%	5.0%	8.8%	26.4%		**18.6%**
Douglas County	77.5%	5.6%	0.2%	1.7%	4.2%	4.2%	6.1%		**11.7%**
Jefferson County	65.4%	8.4%	1.3%	3.2%	5.5%	7.0%	8.3%		**18.4%**
Colorado	62.9%	6.9%	1.7%	3.3%	4.7%	5.9%	10.3%		**16.6%**

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)
Note: Total housing for each location does not equal 100% because two categories (Mobile Home and Boat, RV, van) have been removed from the table

Adams County has the one of the smallest proportions of housing in the "missing middle," and this could make retaining talent difficult – particularly when competing with neighboring counties that have more robust housing options, such as Arapahoe and Denver. As workers in the area start families and set up roots in the area, their housing needs are going to change. In order to stay competitive and benefit from in the influx of new talent into the region, Adams County must offer a variety of housing options.

According to Dan Parolek, a nationally recognized expert in architecture, design, and urban planning, "missing middle" housing has four primary characteristics:

- A walkable context;
- Medium density but lower perceived density;
- Small footprint and blended densities; and
- Smaller, well-designed units.

The following image is one example of what an ideal "missing middle" housing neighborhood could look like. The housing is medium- and blended-density with many well-designed options. It is also possible to access businesses through walking or biking, which creates a sense of place and community.

Source: www.missingmiddlehousing.com

A "walkable context" is considered the most important aspect of the missing middle. Individuals, particularly Millennials, want to be able to travel to stores, gyms, recreation facilities, work, and social environments without needing a car. A survey by The Rockefeller Foundation and Transportation for America found that 54 percent of Millennials would consider moving to another city if it had better options for getting around and 86 percent said that it was important for their city to offer opportunities to live and work without relying on a car[6].

[6] "What Millennials Want and Why Cities are Right to Pay Them So Much Attention," The Atlantic's *CityLab*. May 5, 2014. http://www.citylab.com/housing/2014/05/what-millennials-wantand-why-cities-are-right-pay-them-so-much-attention/9032/

Millennials are also more willing to move to new cities, and even new countries, if it will provide them with a better work-life balance[7].

According to Global Workplace Analytics, the regular work-at-home population has grown by 103 percent since 2005 and the rate of employees who telecommute grew by 5.6 percent between 2013-2014[8]. Colorado counties are competing globally to attract talent and it is increasingly important to provide the infrastructure necessary to make that happen. The following table shows the percentage of the population that works from home. Adams County could appeal to this demographic if housing costs are lower than elsewhere in the region, there is access to livable communities that are walkable to restaurants and grocery stores, and if infrastructure like high-speed internet is available. Adams County has the lowest rate of employees working from home, but the growth over the last six years is higher than many other counties.

TABLE 66: Population Working from Home by County

	2009	2015	Percent Growth
Adams County	3.3%	4.4%	1.1%
Arapahoe County	5.1%	5.9%	0.8%
Boulder County	9.4%	11.1%	1.7%
Broomfield County	6.0%	7.6%	1.6%
Denver County	5.1%	6.5%	1.4%
Douglas County	9.8%	10.1%	0.3%
Jefferson County	6.1%	7.0%	0.9%
Colorado	6.2%	6.7%	0.5%
Source: 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0801)			

One way to determine the "walkability" of a community is to compare commute patterns within the region. The following table looks at the percentage of the population that uses public transportation, walks, or rides a bicycle to work in Adams County and neighboring communities. Adams County has a standard rate of non-personal vehicle commuting. The rate is approximately 1.5 percent lower than neighboring Arapahoe County, which is almost entirely because of lower rates of public transportation use. Denver and Boulder have much higher rates of non-personal vehicle commuting, but they are significantly more urban and this makes them poor points of comparison.

[7] "Millennials Say They'll Relocate for Work-Life Flexibility," Harvard Business Review, May 7, 2015. https://hbr.org/2015/05/millennials-say-theyll-relocate-for-work-life-flexibility

[8] American Community Survey via Global Workplace Analytics

TABLE 67: Transportation to Work by County (Non-Personal Vehicle)

	Public Transportation	Walked	Bicycle	Total Non-Personal Vehicle
Adams County	3.7%	1.2%	0.3%	5.2%
Arapahoe County	4.7%	1.5%	0.4%	6.6%
Boulder County	5.3%	5.0%	4.2%	14.5%
Broomfield County	4.0%	1.0%	0.5%	5.5%
Denver County	6.8%	4.5%	2.3%	13.6%
Douglas County	1.7%	0.9%	0.2%	2.8%
Jefferson County	3.2%	1.5%	0.6%	5.3%
Colorado	3.2%	3.0%	1.3%	7.5%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S0801)				

The high need for a personal vehicle disproportionately harms low-income families. According to AAA's annual driving cost analysis, the average annual cost to maintain a small sedan is $4,720[9]. In addition, if a resident commutes to work they should expect about $57 in expenses per 100 miles.

"Medium density but lower perceived density," "Small footprint and blended densities," and "Smaller, well-designed units" are all interrelated characteristics of the buildings in the missing middle. The buildings tend to have a density of 16 to 35 dwellings per acre, depending on the lot size and building's style. A variety of building types is also important to help foster a diverse community and provide options for families that grow but wish to stay in the same neighborhood. As cities seek to develop more housing options, whether through expansion or through destruction of dilapidated units, it is important to make sure missing middle housing units are constructed.

The tapestry demographics in Adams County point to demand for "missing middle" housing. In particular, "Bright Young Professionals" and the "Middle Ground" LifeMode group specifically call for townhomes and small, multi-family dwellings. In addition, research by the Urban Land Institute found that three quickly growing demographics (Millennials, retiring Baby Boomers, and residents who prefer intergenerational neighborhoods) prefer to live in a walkable environment with smaller homes instead of large homes and yards in neighborhoods that require motor vehicles for daily life. Millennials, in particular, are willing to move cities if the living environment has better options.

The economy of the world is changing rapidly and it is important for cities to adapt to those changes. People have more options than ever when it comes to where they live, particularly in some of the fastest growing economic sectors. To attract and maintain talent, cities must provide lots of housing and lifestyle options, and that means filling in the "missing middle" housing gaps.

[9] http://publicaffairsresources.aaa.biz/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/2016-YDC-Brochure.pdf

Housing Costs

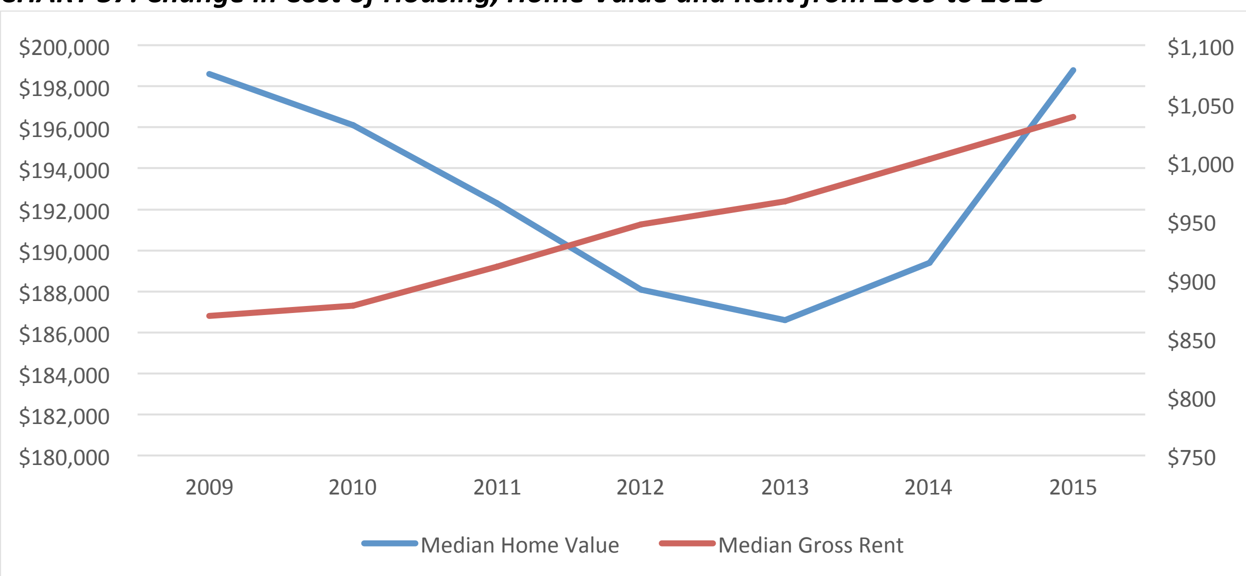
This section examines the housing costs for owners and renters across Adams County. The data tables in this section provide a comparison between the 2000 Census and the 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. There are several instances where the ways in which the data were collected and/or reported have changed between the two surveys. In each case, a data note is provided to clarify the data sets being presented.

TABLE 68: Change in Cost of Housing

	2000	**2009**	**% Change 2000-2009**	**2015**	**% Change 2009-2015**	***% Change 2000-2015***
Median Home Value	\$149,800	\$198,600	32.6%	\$198,800	0.1%	***32.7%***
Median Gross Rent	\$705	\$869	23.3%	\$1,039	19.6%	***47.4%***
Source: 2000 Census DP-4, 2005-2009 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)						

The chart below illustrates the rise and slight fall in home values during this period and the steady increase in rents. Median home values for owner-occupied homes have increased by 32.7 percent, nearly all of which was before 2009. During the same period, median rent has increased by 42.3 percent across the county, and that increase was steady throughout the years.

CHART 37: Change in Cost of Housing, Home Value and Rent from 2009 to 2015



Source: 2005-2009 - 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

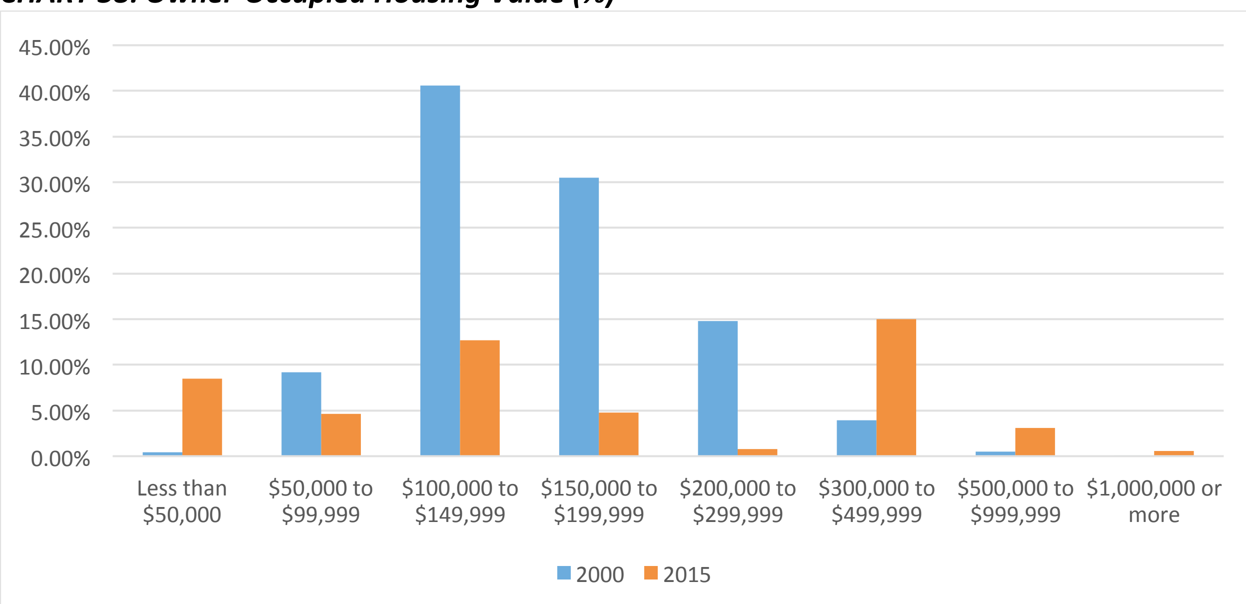
The table and chart on the following page compare 2000 and 2015 home value cohort data for the County. The general trend over time is that lower value cohorts are accounting for smaller portions of the housing stock while higher value cohorts are accounting bigger shares. For example, in 2000 80.7 percent of homes in Adams County were valued at less than \$200,000 and in 2015 the percentage of homes valued at less than \$200,000 was down to 50.6 percent.

There is one price cohort that seems to buck this trend: homes valued at less than $50,000 have increased greatly in both numbers and as a percentage of total homes. In 2000, the largest value cohort was, by far, homes valued at between $100,000 and $149,000. This group made up 40.6 percent of the homes in Adams County. By 2015, that price cohort only made up 12.7 percent of owner-occupied homes and the largest value cohort in the county was the $200,000 to $299,999 cohort, with 30.8 percent.

TABLE 69: Median Home Value (Owner Occupied Units)

Value	2000		2011-2015 ACS		Percent Change
	Number	%	Number	%	
Less than $50,000	297	0.4%	8,599	8.5%	8.1%
$50,000 to $99,999	6,724	9.2%	4,609	4.6%	-4.6%
$100,000 to $149,999	29,699	40.6%	12,803	12.7%	-27.9%
$150,000 to $199,999	22,299	30.5%	25,085	24.8%	-5.7%
$200,000 to $299,999	10,802	14.8%	31,153	30.8%	16.0%
$300,000 to $499,999	2,857	3.9%	15,120	15.0%	11.1%
$500,000 to $999,999	351	0.5%	3,106	3.1%	2.6%
$1,000,000 or more	71	0.1%	568	0.6%	0.5%
Total Units/Median Value	***73,100***	***$149,800***	***101,043***	***$198,800***	**--**
Source: 2000 Census DP-4, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)					

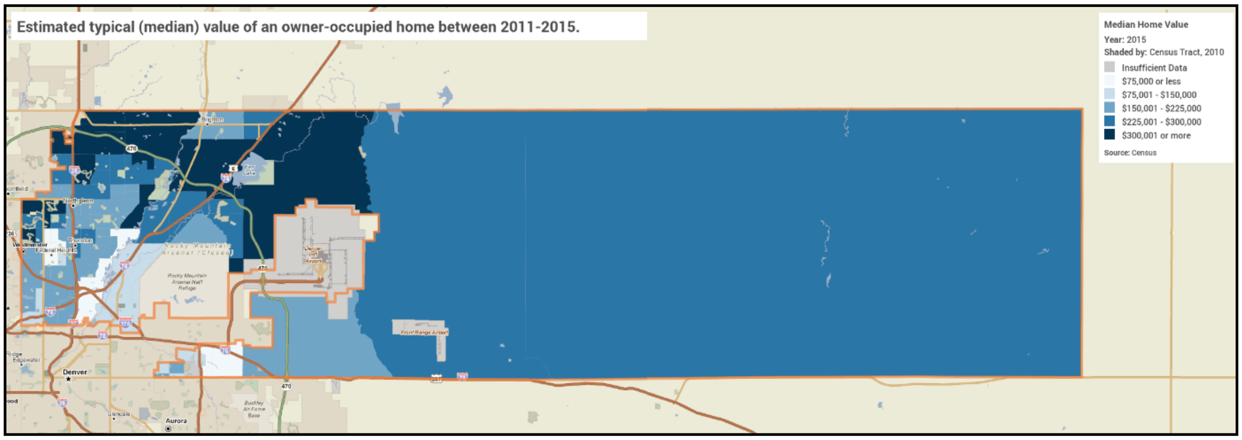
CHART 38: Owner-Occupied Housing Value (%)



Source: 2000 Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The map below displays the distribution of home values throughout Adams County. The census tracts with the highest owner-occupied home values are in the northwest area of the county. Some of the lowest-valued tracts are closer to Denver. The lighter shaded areas have a lower median home value, and the value increases as the shade darkens.

MAP 46: Median Home Value



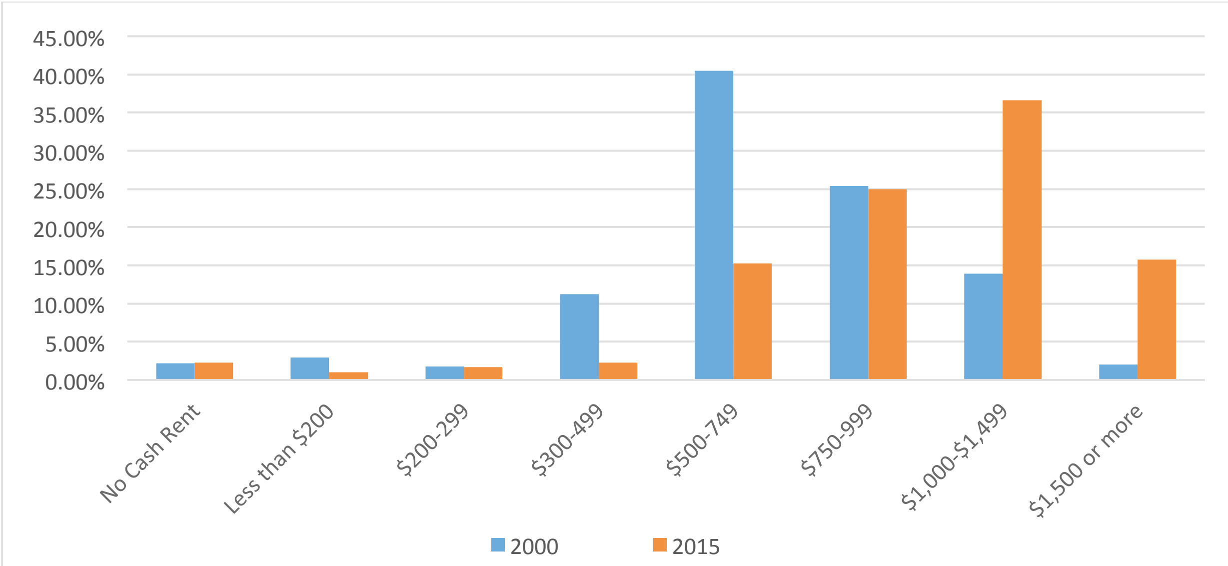
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The following table and chart compare 2000 and 2015 rent cohort data for Adams County. Like owner-occupied units discussed above, the general trend over time is that lower rent cohorts are accounting for smaller portions of the housing stock while higher rent cohorts are accounting for bigger shares. This is to be expected considering the 47.4 percent growth in median gross rent since 2000. In 2000, 58.6 percent of renters paid less than $750, but by 2015 only 20.3 percent of renters were in that range. In 2000, the largest rent price cohort was the $500 to $749 range, which included 40.5 percent of renters. In 2015, the largest rent cohort was much higher. The $1,000 to $1,499 range had the most renters in it with 36.6 percent.

TABLE 70: Rent Paid

Value	**2000**		**2011-2015 ACS**		**Percent Change**
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	
No cash rent	839	2.2%	1,304	2.3%	4.5%
Less than $200	1,098	2.9%	578	1.0%	-6.6%
$200-299	679	1.8%	943	1.7%	-0.6%
$300-499	4,178	11.2%	1,251	2.3%	-7.9%
$500-749	15,163	40.5%	8,528	15.3%	-62.2%
$750-999	9,529	25.4%	13,889	25.0%	-1.6%
$1,000-$1,499	5,211	13.9%	20,328	36.6%	163.3%
$1,500 or more	752	2.0%	8,764	15.8%	395.0%
Total Units/Median Rent	***37,449***	***$705***	***55,585***	***$1,039***	--
Source: 2000 Census DP-4, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25063)					

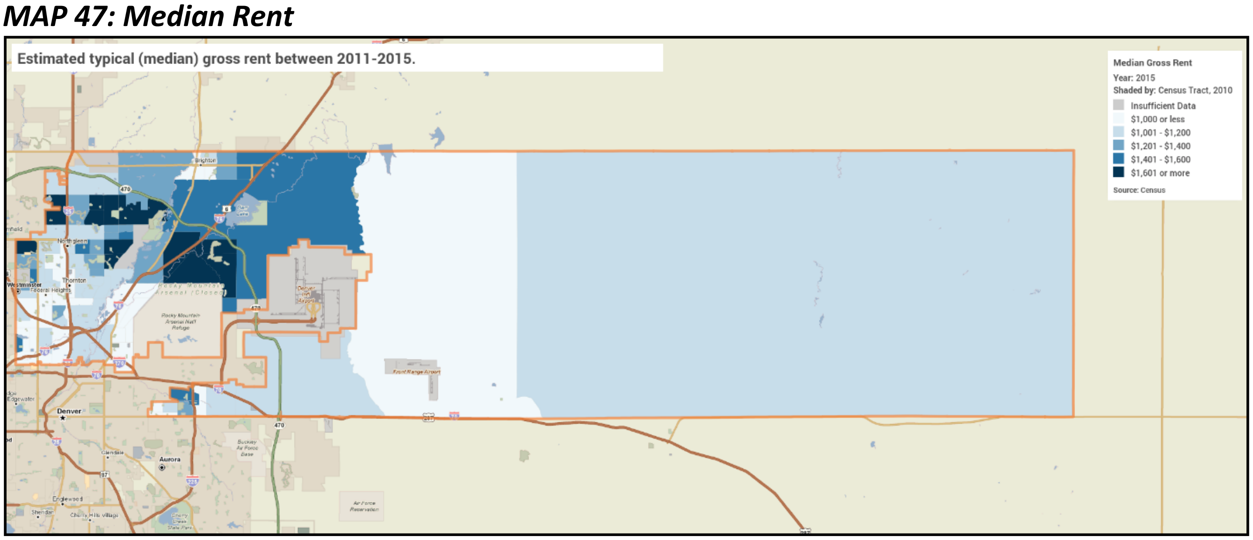
CHART 39: Rent Paid (%)



Source: 2000 Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The map below shows the distribution of median rent throughout Adams County by Census tract. The median rent for the county was $1,003, but that figure varied across the county. The lighter shades represent a lower median rent, and the median rent increases as shades darken. Most the rural areas had a median rent between $1,001 and $1,200. The suburban areas tend to have higher rents, while urban areas closer to the city center have the lowest rents.

MAP 47: Median Rent



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

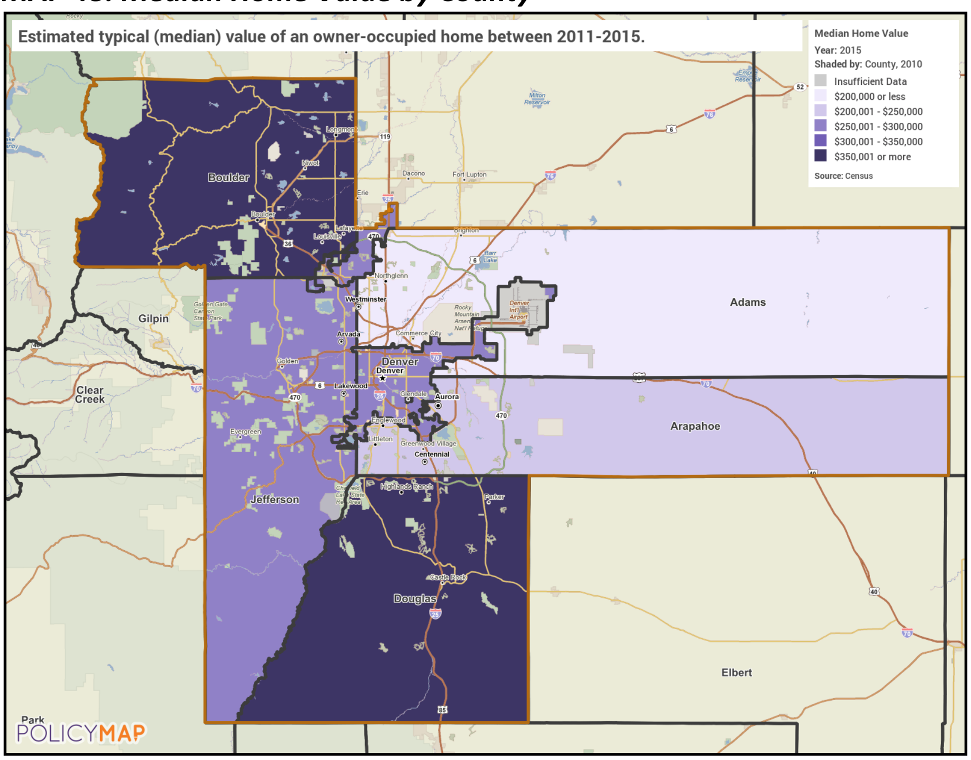
Median Home Prices by County

Adams County has the lowest median home price in the region and has seen the slowest growth in home prices since 2000. Broomfield County has the fastest growth in the region, and Boulder County has the highest median home price. Arapahoe County is like Adams County but, as of 2015, had a median home price that was 24.5 percent higher and had seen faster growth in home values. The following table and map compare median home price by county.

TABLE 71: Median Home Value by County (Owner Occupied)

	2000	2005	2009	2015	% Change 2000 - 2015
Adams	$149,800	$200,500	$198,600	$198,800	32.7%
Arapahoe	$171,700	$229,400	$233,400	$247,600	44.2%
Boulder	$241,900	$344,300	$350,600	$368,800	52.5%
Broomfield	--	--	$258,000	$295,500	--
Denver	$165,800	$231,900	$236,700	$271,300	63.6%
Douglas	$236,000	$327,600	$339,800	$354,700	50.3%
Jefferson	$187,900	$252,400	$257,800	$279,500	48.7%
Colorado	$166,600	$223,300	$234,100	$247,800	48.7%
Source: Decennial Census H076 (2000), American Community Survey 5-Yr Estimates (2005, 2009, 2015) B25077					

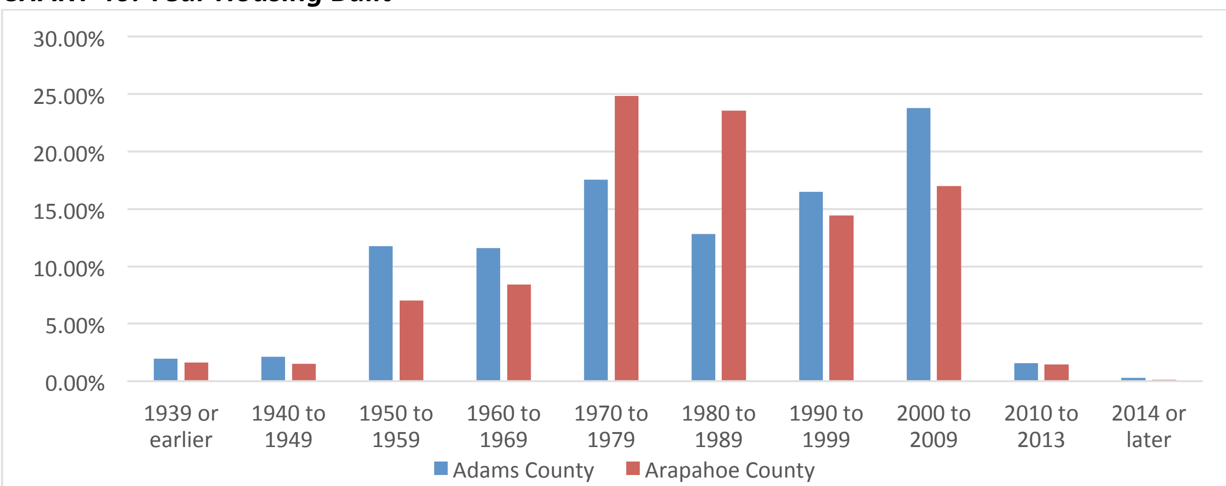
MAP 48: Median Home Value by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Adams County stands out as an outlier in the region. The median home price is significantly lower than other counties in the region and the growth in price has been slower over time. To understand why this might be, the supply and demand for homes in Adams County can be compared to Arapahoe County. The first point of comparison is the age of the housing stock, older homes tend to have a lower value than newer homes. The following table breaks down the percentage of the housing stock by year built. The median year built in Adams County is 1984 and the median year built in Arapahoe County is 1983. Overall, Adams County and Arapahoe County have similarly aged homes, though Arapahoe County saw a housing boom 1970-1989 that Adams County did not.

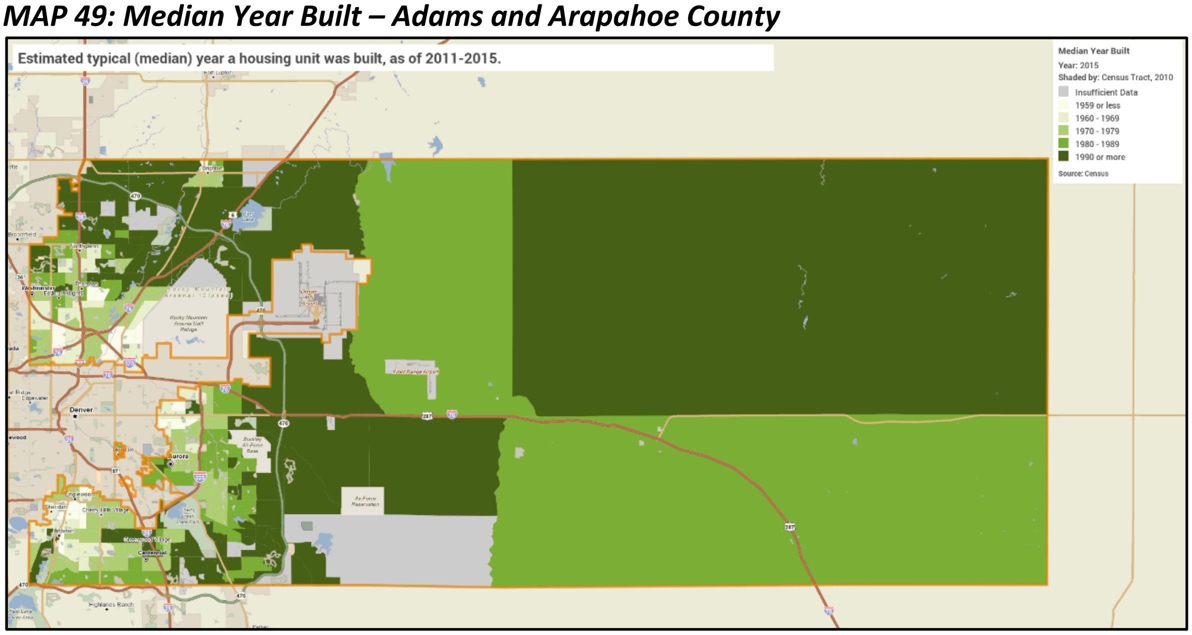
CHART 40: Year Housing Built



2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The following map compares the median year built in Adams County and Arapahoe County by census tract. There does not appear to be any standout differences between the two counties. In general, housing closest to Denver is older than housing in the rural regions.

MAP 49: Median Year Built – Adams and Arapahoe County



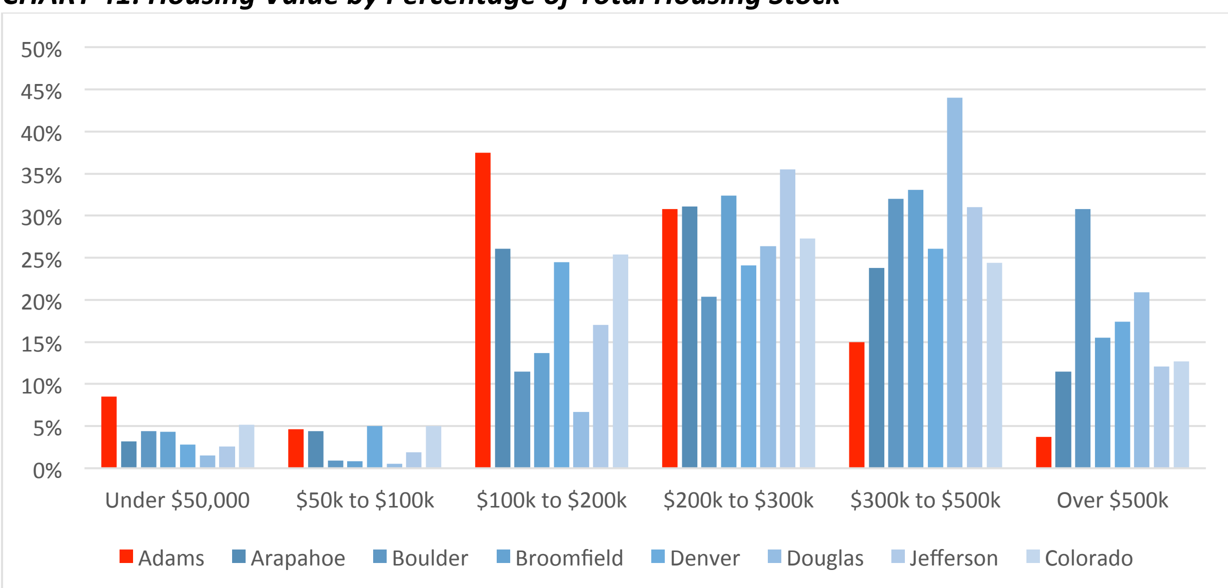
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

While the median home price of each county provides an overview of the region, further analysis can help explain the differences among the counties. Adams County has the highest percentage of homes under $50,000; 8.5 percent of the housing stock falls in this category. The county with the second highest representation of this housing stock is Boulder County with 4.4 percent. In fact, most of the counties have between 2 and 5 percent of their housing stock in this lowest category. The following table and chart visualize this data.

TABLE 72: Housing Distribution by County

	Percent Under $50,000	Percent $50,000 to $100,000	Percent $100k to $200k	Percent $200k to $300k	Percent $300k to $500k	Percent Over $500k
Adams	8.5%	4.6%	37.5%	30.8%	15.0%	3.7%
Arapahoe	3.2%	4.4%	26.1%	31.1%	23.8%	11.5%
Boulder	4.4%	0.9%	11.5%	20.4%	32.0%	30.8%
Broomfield	4.3%	0.8%	13.7%	32.4%	33.1%	15.5%
Denver	2.8%	5.0%	24.5%	24.1%	26.1%	17.4%
Douglas	1.5%	0.5%	6.7%	26.4%	44.0%	20.9%
Jefferson	2.6%	1.9%	17.0%	35.5%	31.0%	12.1%
Colorado	5.2%	5.0%	25.4%	27.3%	24.4%	12.7%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP-04)						

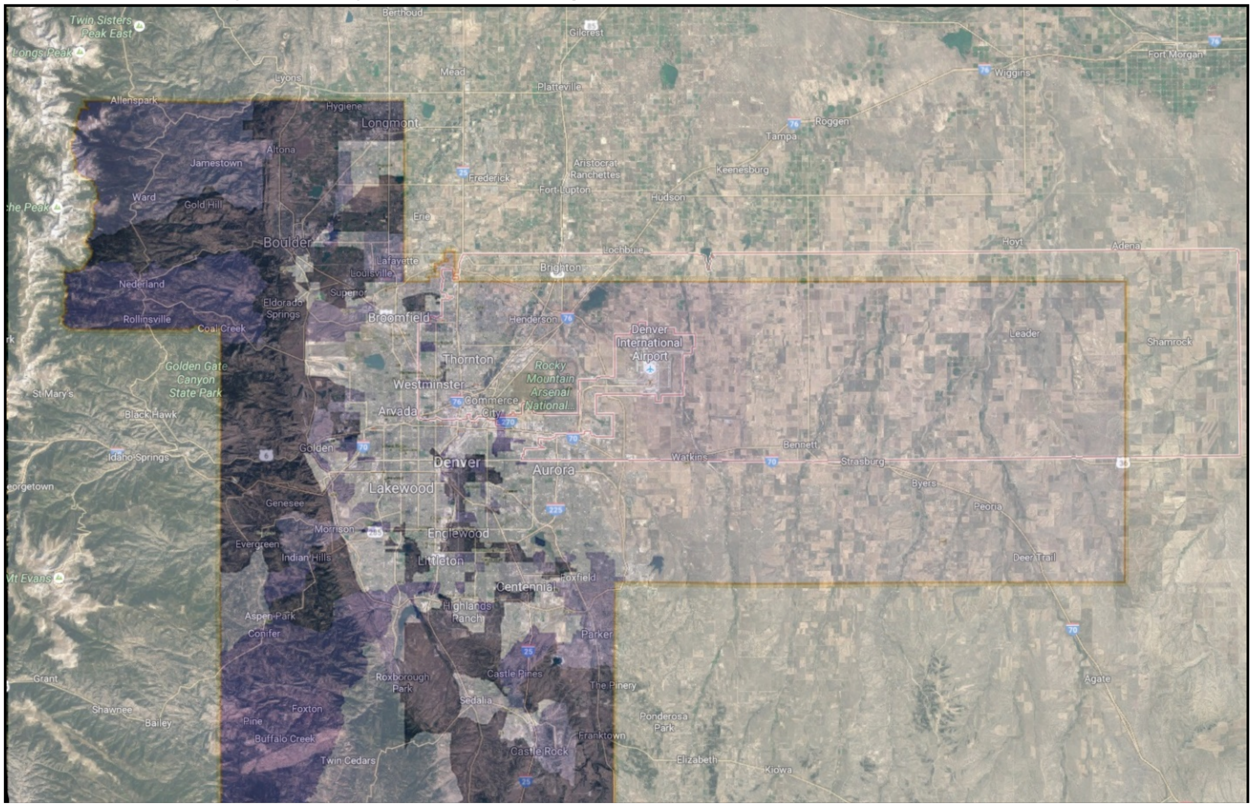
CHART 41: Housing Value by Percentage of Total Housing Stock



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

County-by-county comparisons may not be the best way to view housing stock, but the differences between Arapahoe County and Adams County do indicate that something is happening within Adams County to depress housing prices. The following map shows the distribution of houses worth over $750,000 by census tract. Darker purple census tracts have a greater percentage of homes valued at over $750,000. By breaking it down to census tract we can see if housing prices are influenced by geography, instead of just political boundaries. It appears that most homes over $750,000 are located on the western edge of the region, near the mountains. Census tracts to the east tend to have lower values.

MAP 50: Proximity to Rocky Mountain Range



Source: American Community 5-Year Estimates 2010-2014

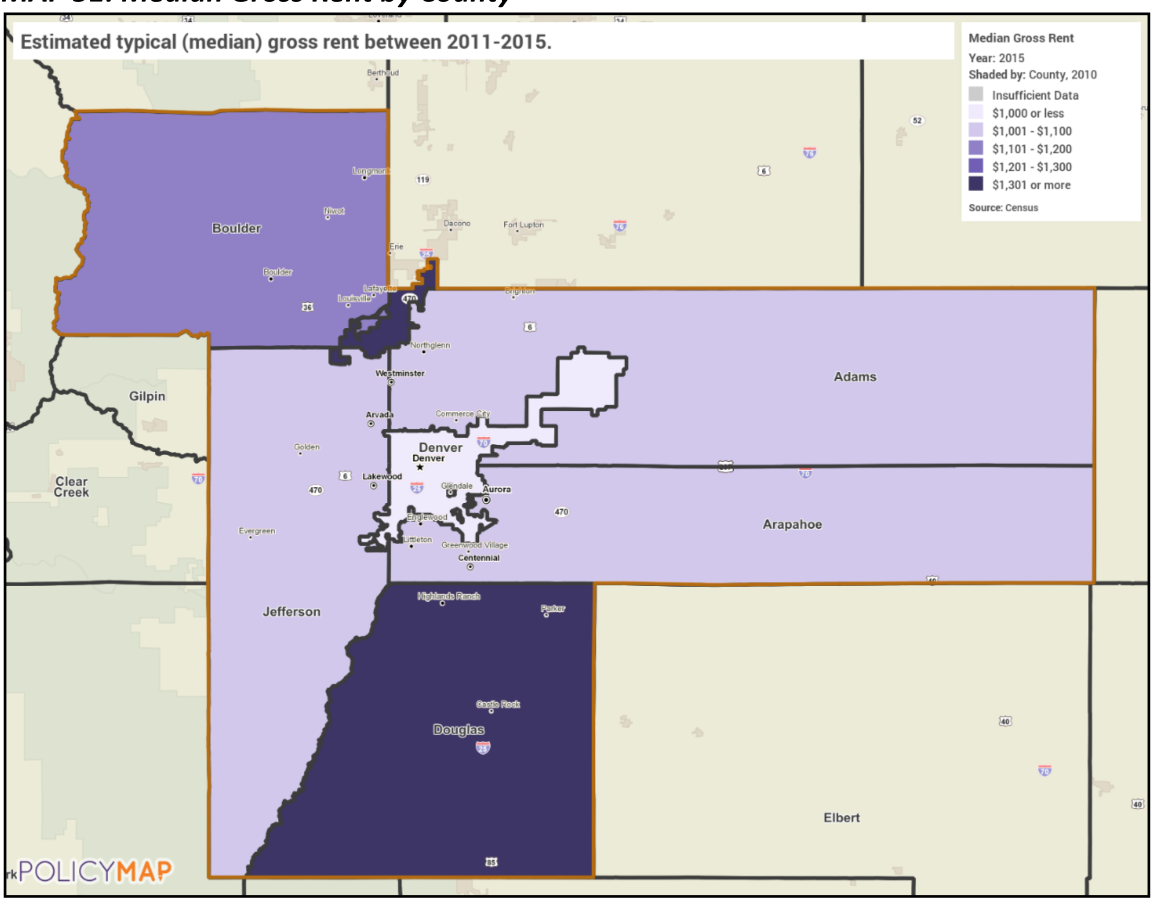
Median Rent by County

Adams County has the second lowest median rent in the region and has seen moderate growth in rent since 2000. Broomfield County had the fastest growth in the region, while Douglas County has the highest median rent. Arapahoe County is like Adams County but, as of 2015, had a median rent that was slightly higher and has seen slower growth in rent.

TABLE 73: Median Gross Rent by County

	2000	2009	2015	% Change 2000 - 2015
Adams	$705	$869	$1,039	47.4%
Arapahoe	$735	$862	$1,077	46.5%
Boulder	$825	$982	$1,187	42.5%
Broomfield	$856	$1,004	$1,336	56.1%
Denver	$631	$779	$962	52.5%
Douglas	$1,053	$1,142	$1,399	32.9%
Jefferson	$760	$884	$1,052	38.4%
Colorado	$671	$835	$1,002	52.3%
Source: Census 2000 (H063), 2005-2009 & 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Yr Estimates (B25064)				

MAP 51: Median Gross Rent by County



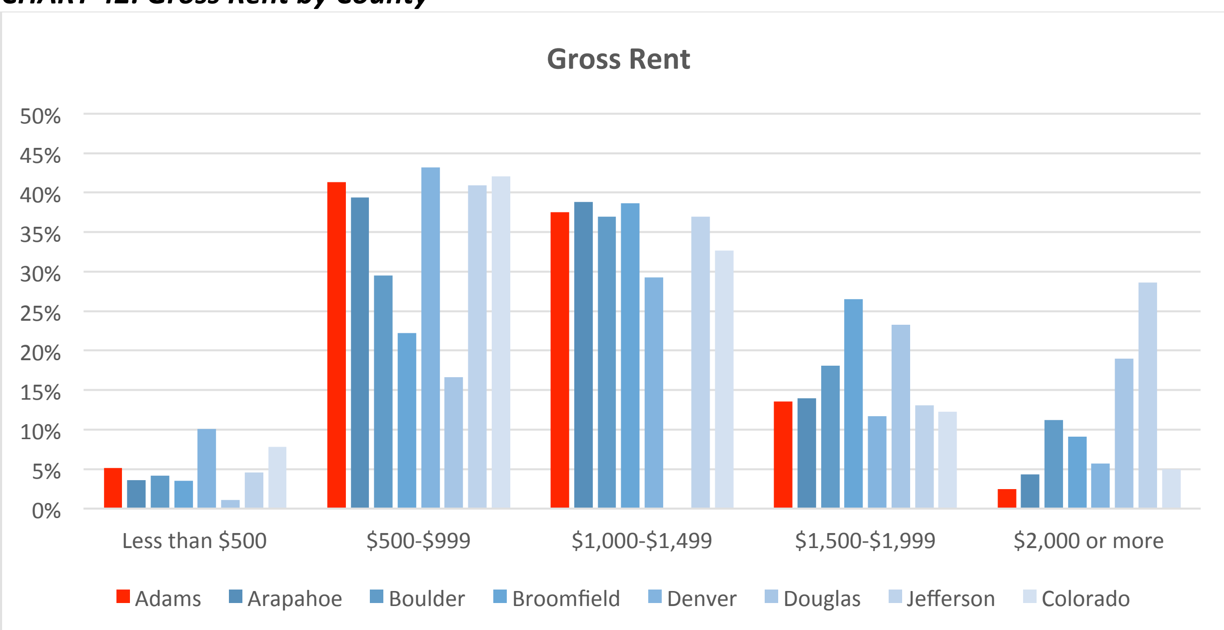
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Median rent per county provides an overview of the region, but further analysis can help explain the differences among the counties. Adams County has the lowest percentage of renters paying over $1,500, only 16.1 percent. Douglas, Broomfield, Jefferson, and Boulder County all have over 25 percent of their renters paying $1,500 or more.

TABLE 74: Percent of Renters Gross Rent by County

	Less Than $500	$500-$999	$1,000-$1,499	$1,500-$1,999	$2,000 or more
Adams	5.1%	41.3%	37.4%	13.6%	2.5%
Arapahoe	3.6%	39.4%	38.8%	14.0%	4.3%
Boulder	4.2%	29.5%	37.0%	18.1%	11.2%
Broomfield	3.5%	22.2%	38.7%	26.5%	9.1%
Denver	10.1%	43.2%	29.3%	11.7%	5.7%
Douglas	1.1%	16.6%	40.0%	23.3%	19.0%
Jefferson	4.6%	40.9%	37.0%	13.1%	4.3%
Colorado	7.8%	42.1%	32.7%	12.3%	5.0%
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)					

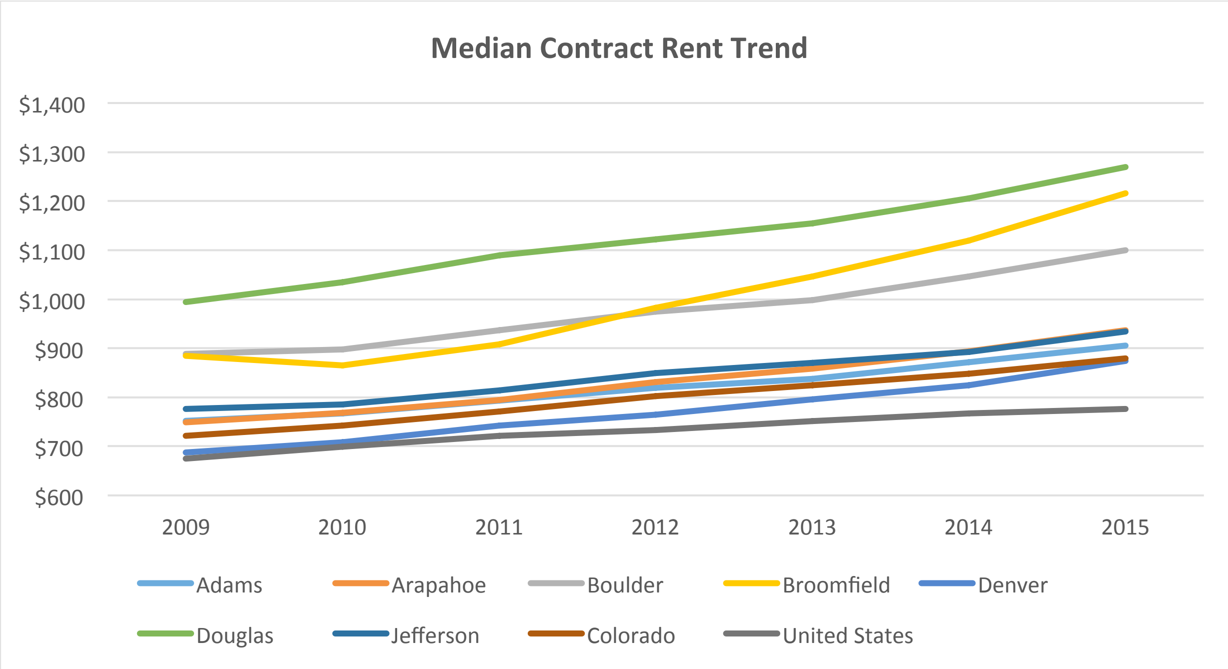
CHART 42: Gross Rent by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)

The following table shows the trend in contract rent over time by county. Rent has steadily increased over the last five years, with rent in Broomfield County jumping significantly between 2010 and 2015.

CHART 43: Median Rent Trend by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25058)

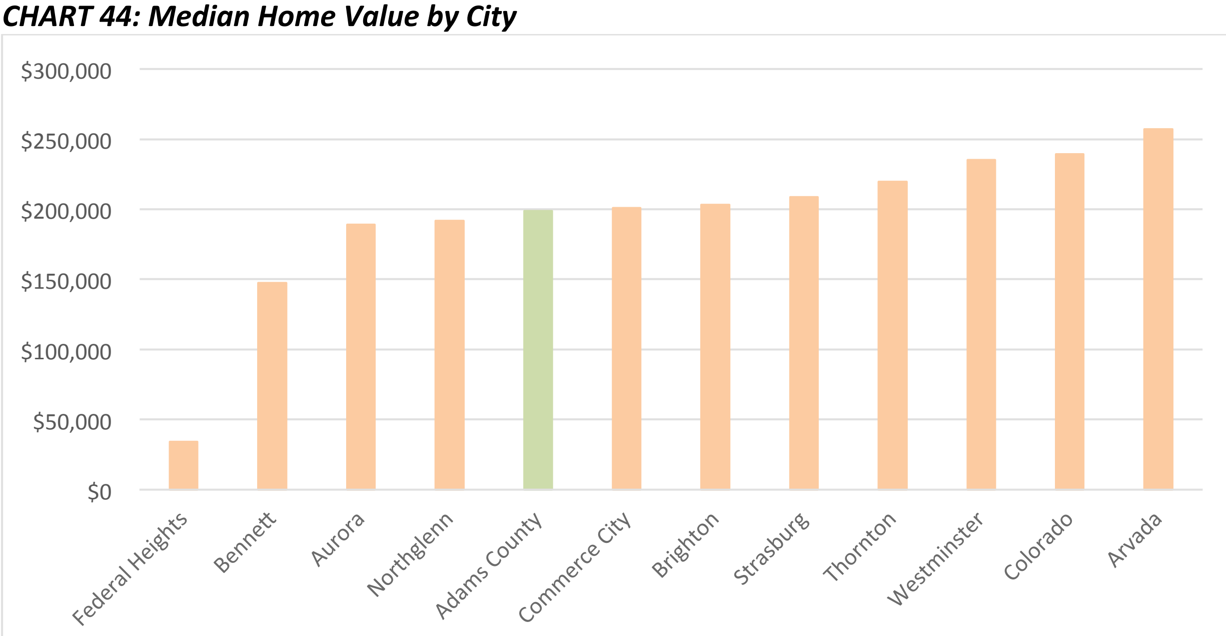
Median Home Price by City

The median home price varies by city throughout Adams County. The average median home value is $198,800 in Adams County. Federal Heights has, by far, the lowest median home value of all the cities in the County, at $34,000. The highest median home value in the County is the City of Arvada with $257,300. Adams County and all of its cities, except Arvada, have a median home value lower than the State of Colorado's median home value.

TABLE 75: Median Home Value of Owner-Occupied Units by City

Location	Median Home Value	Difference from County Avg.
Arvada (part)	$257,300	+$58,500
Aurora (part)	$189,100	-$9,700
Bennett (part)	$147,600	-$51,200
Brighton (part)	$203,400	+$4,600
Commerce City	$201,000	+$2,200
Federal Heights	$34,000	-$164,800
Northglenn	$191,900	-$6,900
Strasburg (part)	$208,500	+$9,700
Thornton	$219,600	+$20,800
Westminster	$235,300	+$36,500
Adams County	***$198,800***	**--**
Colorado	***$247,800***	***+$49,000***
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)		

CHART 44: Median Home Value by City



Source: 2011-2015 ACS 5-Yr Estimates2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

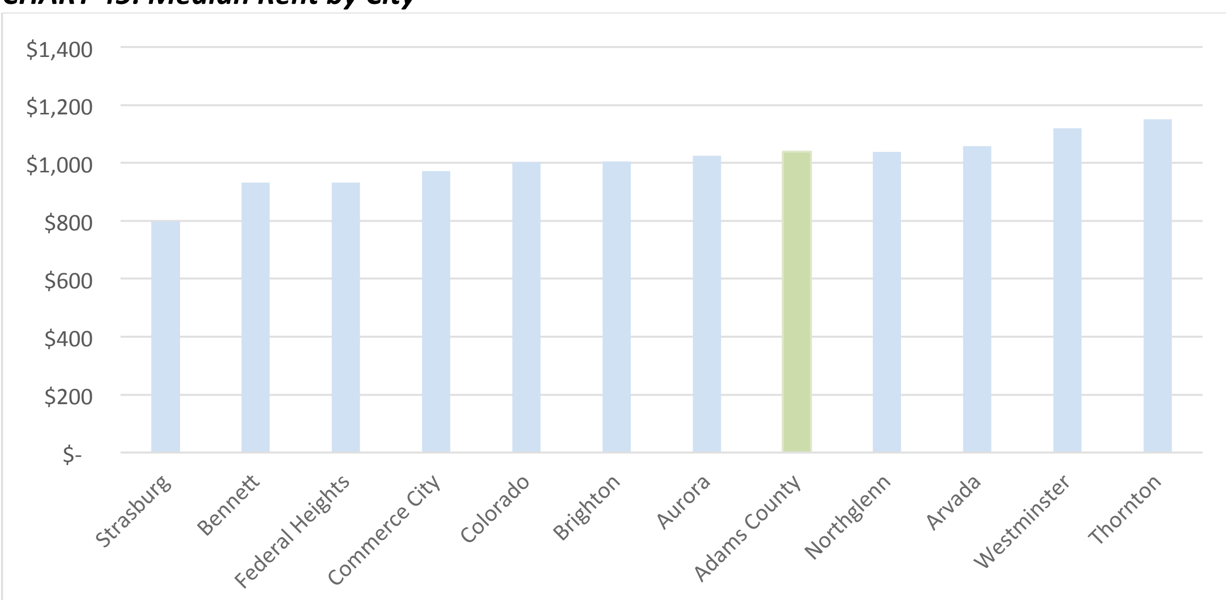
Median Rent by City

The median rent in Adams County is $1,039. The city with the highest median rent is Thornton ($1,150) and the city with the lowest median rent is Strasburg ($796). Seven cities (and Adams County as a whole) have a higher median rent than the State of Colorado.

TABLE 76: Median Rent by City

Location	Average Rent	Difference from County Avg
Arvada (part)	$1,059	$20
Aurora (part)	$1,024	-$15
Bennett (part)	$932	-$107
Brighton (part)	$1,004	-$35
Commerce City	$973	-$66
Federal Heights	$933	-$106
Northglenn	$1,039	$0
Strasburg (part)	$797	-$242
Thornton	$1,150	$111
Westminster	$1,121	$82
Adams County	***$1,039***	***--***
Colorado	***$1,002***	***-$37***
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)		

CHART 45: Median Rent by City



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Median Home Price (Attached vs Detached)

Detached structures have approximately double the value of attached 1-unit structures. Home values in Thornton are consistently greater than the County, but none of the cities where data are available have greater home values, on average, than the state. Commerce City has the lowest home values in the region. The following table displays the difference in median home price between 1-unit attached structures and 1-unit detached structures.

TABLE 77: Median Home Value by City

Location	1-Unit Detached			1-Unit Attached			Difference in Median Price
	Aggregate Value (Millions)	Total Count	Median Home Value	Aggregate Value (Millions)	Total Count	Median Home Value	
Aurora (part)	$12,161	66,537	$182,770	$1,520	13,833	$109,882	-$72,888
Commerce City	$2,014	11,526	$174,735	$100	1,245	$80,321	-$94,414
Thornton	$5,953	27,960	$212,911	$409	3,687	$110,930	-$101,981
Adams County	***$20,105***	***102,521***	***$196,106***	***$1,187***	***12,157***	***$97,639***	***-$98,467***
Colorado	***$356,730***	***1,422,286***	***$250,815***	***$21,996***	***157,333***	***$139,805***	***-$111,010***

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04, B25080)
Note: Aggregate value unavailable for Arvada, Bennett, Brighton, Federal Heights, Northglenn, Strasburg, and Westminster via Census (ACS)

Rent Supply

Most cities maintain a rental vacancy rate of over 5 percent, which is considered a healthy vacancy rate. Thornton and Westminster have over 7 percent of the rental stock vacant. Arvada has the least number of rentals available with 4.7 percent (not including Strasburg and Bennett). The following table displays information about the rental market in Adams County by city.

TABLE 78: Rental Vacancy

	Rental Vacancy	Occupied for Rent	Total Rental Housing	Percent Vacant
Arvada (part)	340	12,048	12,388	2.7%
Aurora (part)	3,065	53,629	56,694	5.4%
Bennett (part)	0	172	172	0.0%
Brighton (part)	224	3,725	3,949	5.7%
Commerce City	178	4,249	4,427	4.0%
Federal Heights	174	2,192	2,366	7.4%
Northglenn	327	5,677	6,004	5.4%
Strasburg (part)	0	131	131	0.0%
Thornton	943	13,156	14,099	6.7%
Westminster	1,102	15,172	16,274	6.8%
Adams County	***3,492***	***55,585***	***59,077***	***5.9%***
Colorado	***50,174***	***722,202***	***772,376***	***6.5%***
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25003, B25004)				

The following table shows the rent asked for vacant units within select geographic regions. Most of the units are between $500 and $1,000.

TABLE 79: Rental Vacancy by Price Asked

	Less Than $500	$500 - $749	$750 - $999	$1,000 - $1,249	$1,249 - $1,500	Greater Than $1,500
Arvada (part)	0	79	71	41	38	111
Aurora (part)	0	957	977	554	262	315
Bennett (part)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brighton (part)	13	20	74	39	78	0
Commerce City	0	56	67	0	44	11
Federal Heights	0	19	68	61	26	0
Northglenn	0	0	203	50	74	0
Strasburg (part)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thornton	42	134	294	218	153	102
Westminster	81	239	436	284	39	23
Adams County	***123***	***868***	***1,209***	***636***	***495***	***161***
Colorado	***5,676***	***12,031***	***12,246***	***7,332***	***4,623***	***8,266***
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25061)						

RealtyTrac Data

The following table displays foreclosure information within Adams County according to RealtyTrac. Single-Family homes are the most common housing type facing foreclosure. The median sales price of a non-distressed home was $275,000 and the median sales price of a foreclosure home was $266,100, or 3 percent lower.

TABLE 80: Foreclosure Information

	Single-Family	Condo	Multi-Family	Mobile Home	Commercial
Pre-Foreclosures	0	0	0	0	0
Auctions	351	24	0	0	1
Bank Owned	259	68	6	5	30
Foreclosures Subtotal	**610**	**92**	**6**	**5**	**31**
For Sale	133	14	2	0	2
Sold	2,005	460	21	14	15
Total	**2,748**	**566**	**29**	**19**	**48**
Source: www.realtytrac.com, accessed 2/23/17					

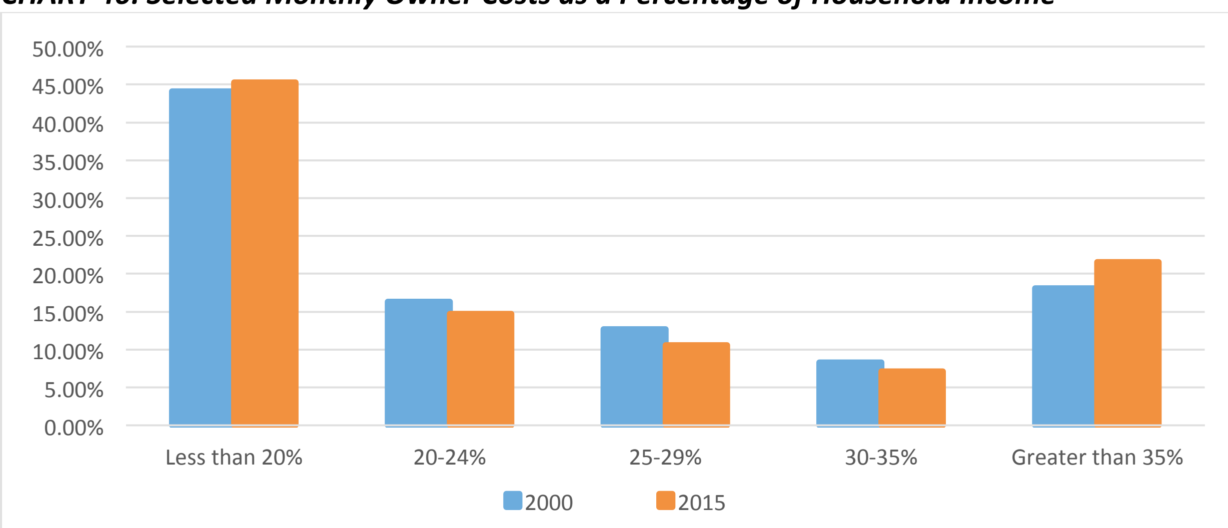
Housing Affordability

The table and chart below compare 2000 Census and 2011-2015 ACS data on the monthly costs incurred by homeowners in Adams County. By HUD's definition, households paying more than 30 percent of their household income towards housing costs (renter or owner) are said to be cost burdened.

TABLE 81: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

	2000		2011-2015 ACS		Percent Change between 2000 and 2015
	Number	%	Number	%	
Less than 20%	32,258	44.1%	45,797	45.3%	+2.7%
20 to 24%	11,885	16.3%	14,892	14.7%	-9.8%
25 to 29%	9,280	12.7%	10,696	10.6%	-16.5%
30 to 35%	6,049	8.3%	7,222	7.1%	-14.5%
35% or more	13,243	18.1%	21,859	21.6%	+19.3%
Not computed	385	0.5%	577	0.6%	+20.0%
Total Households	**73,100**	--	**101,043**	--	--
Source: 2000 Census DP-4, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)					

CHART 46: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

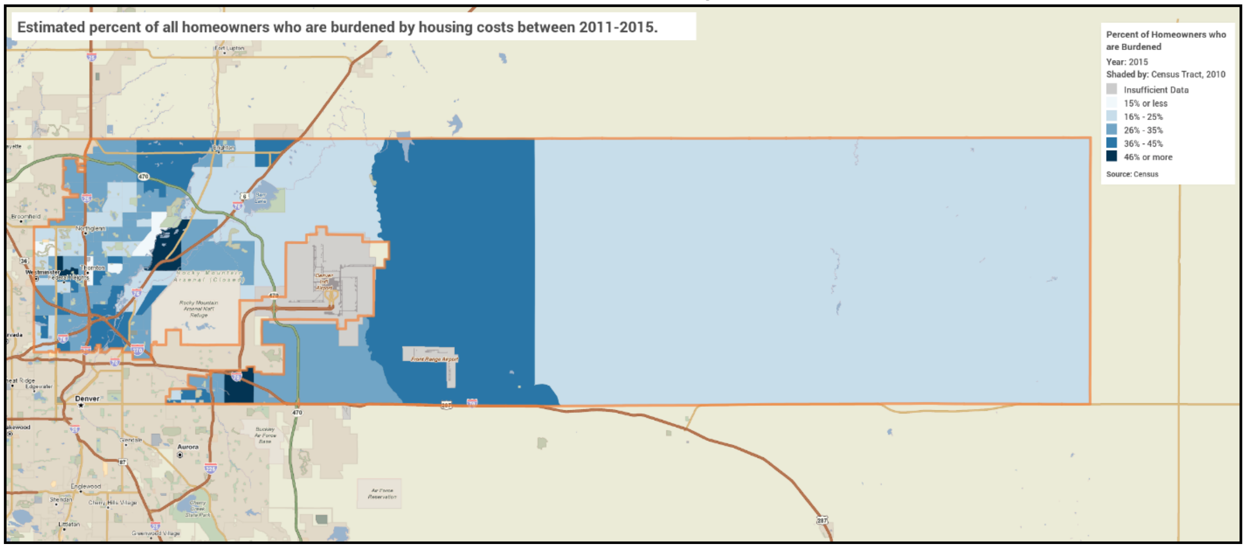


Source: 2000 Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2000, 26.4 percent of all owners were considered cost burdened: 8.3 percent paid between 30-35 percent of their income toward housing costs and 18.1 percent paid over 35 percent of their income. As of the 2015 calculations, 28.7 percent of all homeowners were cost burdened, including 21.6 percent who were paying over 35 percent – a significant rise since 2000. While ideally there would not be any homeowners who are cost burdened, a realistic goal could be to reduce the rate down the statewide rate (25.4%) or national rate (26%).

The map below depicts concentrations of cost burdened owner-occupied households. Although 34 percent of owner-occupied households in Adams County were cost burdened in 2015, the distribution was not even across the County. Some census tracts had a very high rate of cost burdened households, often over 45 percent, while others have much lower rates, occasionally less than 15 percent. The lighter shaded areas have a lower concentration of cost-burdened households, and the concentration increases as the shade darkens.

MAP 52: Cost Burdened Homeowners – Adams County



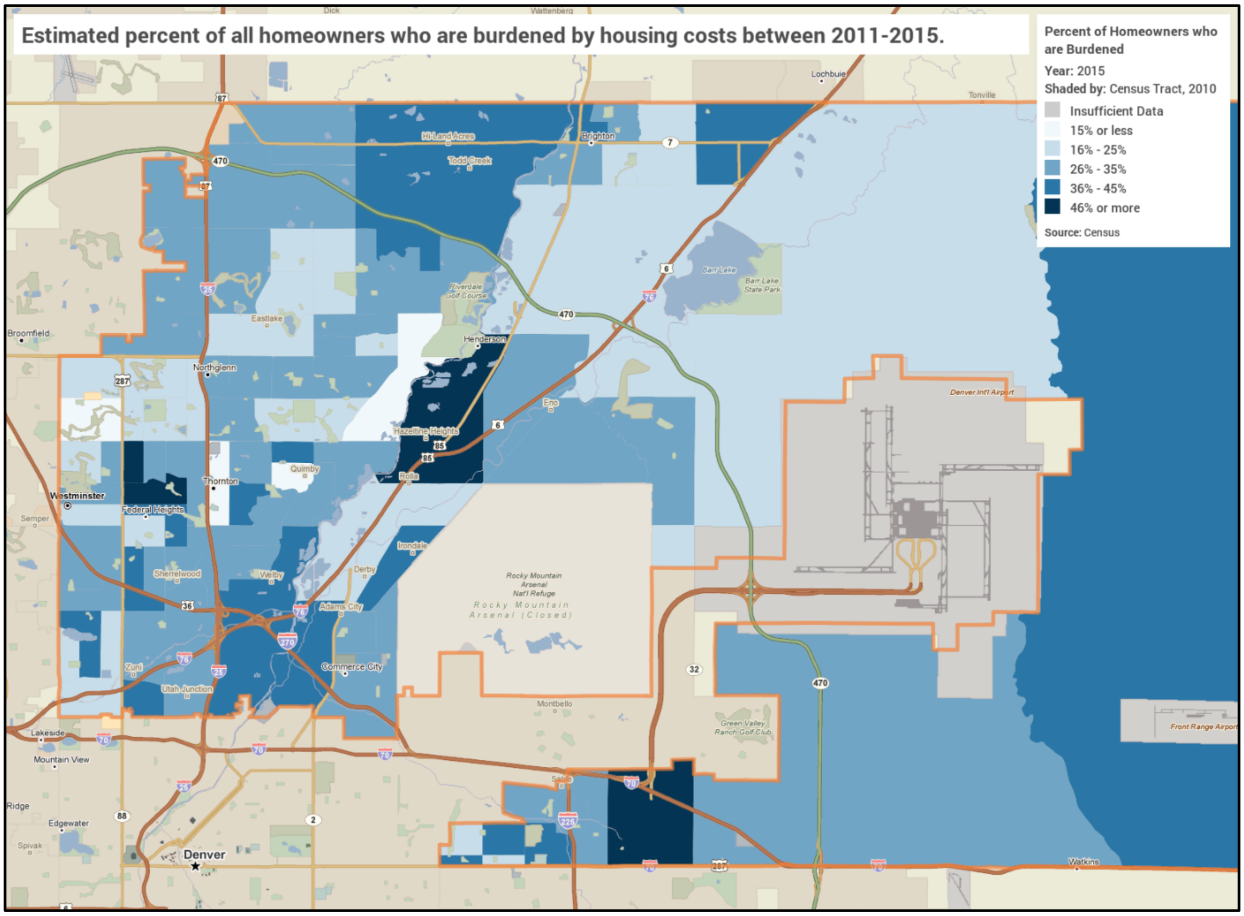
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The census tracts nearest Denver have both high and low levels of cost burdened home owners. The following map displays that area in more detail.

TABLE 82: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, w/ Mortgage

	2011-2015 ACS (owners with mortgage)	
	Number	**%**
Less Than 20%	28,965	37.0%
20.0 to 24.9%	13,410	17.1%
25.0 to 29.9%	9,792	12.5%
30.0 to 34.9%	6,493	8.3%
35.0% or more	19,351	24.7%
Not computed	251	0.3%
Total Households	**78,253**	--
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)		

MAP 53: Cost Burdened Homeowners – Urban Area



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The 2011-2015 ACS report specifically identifies housing costs for owner-occupied households without a mortgage. In such case, housing costs are most often attributable to homeowners' insurance premiums and property taxes. As indicated in the table below, 14.2 percent of owner-occupied households without a mortgage are cost burdened, including 11.0 percent that are paying over 35 percent of their income to housing related costs. There is a strong correlation between cost burdened owner-occupied households and cost burdened seniors who own their homes. Often home costs rise and homeowners on a fixed income become cost burdened.

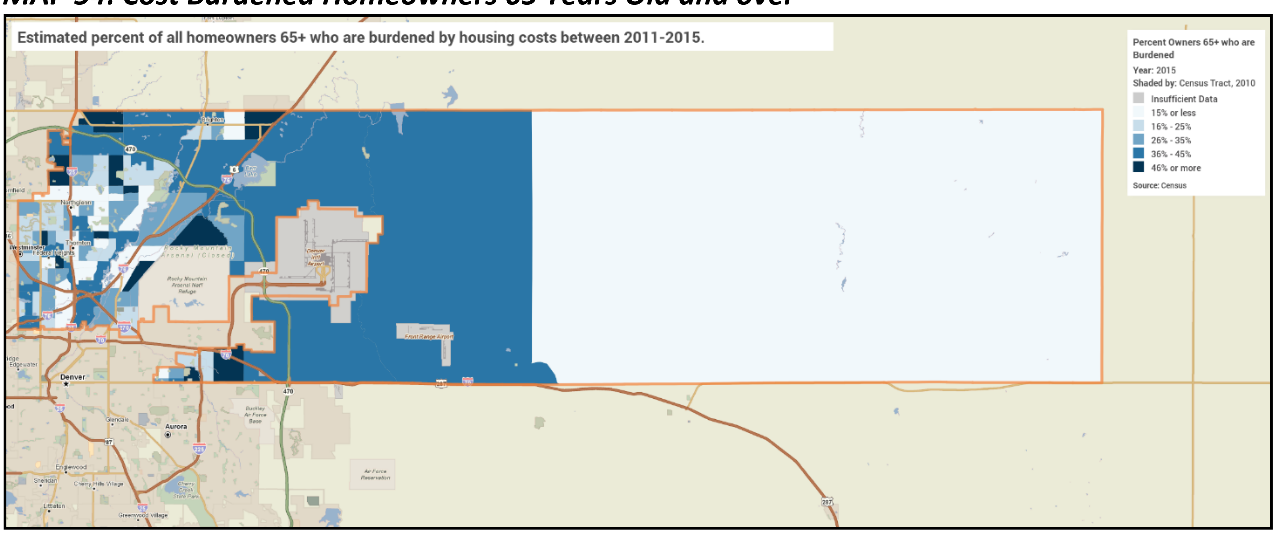
TABLE 83: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income, w/o Mortgage

	2011-2015 ACS (owners without mortgage)	
	Number	**%**
Less than 10%	10,717	47.0%
10.0 to 14.9%	4,294	18.8%
15.0 to 19.9%	1,830	8.0%
20.0 to 24.9%	1,482	6.5%
25.0 to 29.9%	904	4.0%
30.0 to 34.9%	729	3.2%
35.0% or more	2,508	11.0%
Not computed	326	1.4%
Total Households	**22,790**	--
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)		

Certain populations are more vulnerable to having a high cost burden. Homeowners 65 years old or older tend to have fixed incomes that cannot easily adjust to rising housing costs. The map below shows the distribution of cost burdened homeowners who are over 65 by census tract. When compared to the previous map of the percentage of cost burdened homeowners, it is clear that those over 65 are much more likely to be cost burdened. A significant number of the census tracts have elderly cost burdened rates of 40 percent or more.

Homeowners with a mortgage are more likely to be cost burdened than those who do not have a mortgage. Thirty-three percent of homeowners with a mortgage are cost burdened, including 24.7 percent that have monthly housing costs of over 35 percent of their income.

MAP 54: Cost Burdened Homeowners 65 Years Old and over



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Selected Monthly Renter costs as a Percentage of Household Income

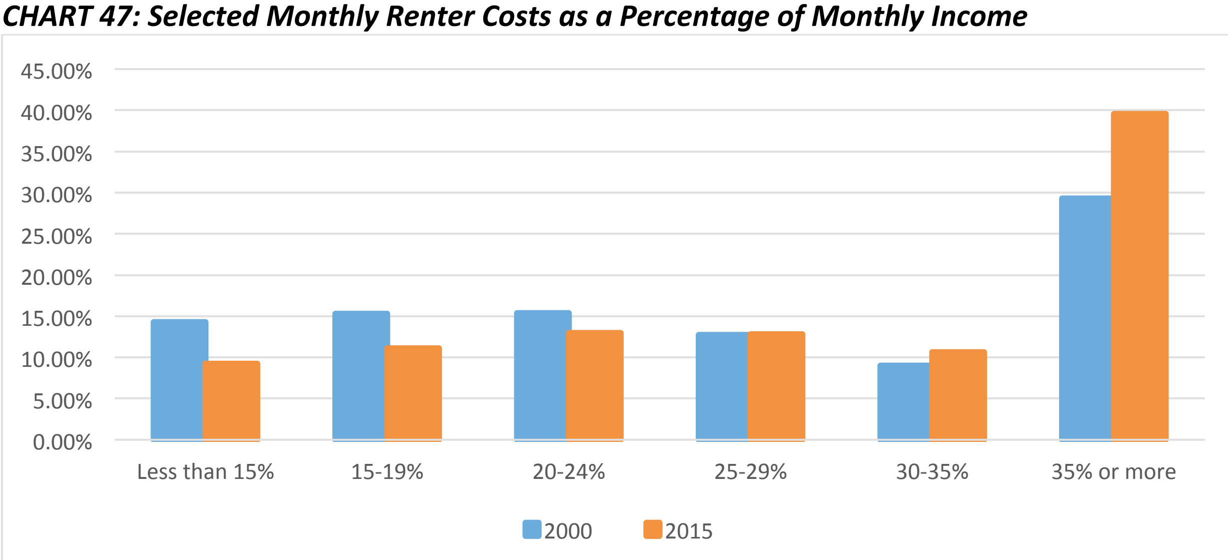
The table and chart below compare 2000 Census and 2010-2015 ACS data on the monthly costs incurred by renters in Adams County. Again, by HUD's definition, households paying more than 30 percent of their household income towards housing costs (renter or owner) are said to be cost burdened.

TABLE 84: Monthly Renter Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

	2000 (all renters)		2011-2015 ACS (occupied units)		Percent Change between 2000 and 2015
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	
Less than 15%	5,350	14.3%	5,100	9.2%	-35.7%
15 to 19%	5,744	15.3%	6,194	11.1%	-27.5%
20 to 24%	5,763	15.4%	7,237	13.0%	-15.6%
25 to 29%	4,771	12.7%	7,109	12.8%	0.8%
30 to 35%	3,353	9.0%	5,912	10.6%	17.8%
35% or more	10,963	29.3%	22,016	39.6%	35.2%
Not computed	1,505	4.0%	2,017	3.6%	-10.0%
Total Households	**37,449**	--	**55,585**	--	--

Source: 2000 Census DP-4, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)
Note: the 2000 Census includes all renters, even those not paying rent and those where calculations could not be made, in the percentages for each income range. However, the 2010-2014 ACS only includes occupied units paying rent, where the calculations could be made, in the percentages for each income range. Therefore, some of the increase between the 2000 Census and the 2010-2014 ACS can be attributed to the change in the way the Census Bureau reports these figures

CHART 47: Selected Monthly Renter Costs as a Percentage of Monthly Income

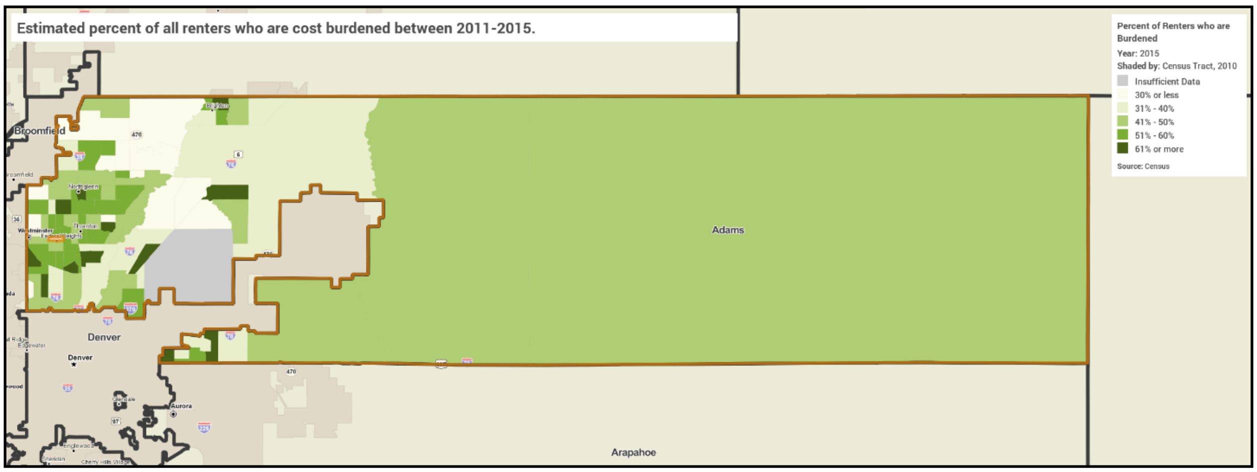


Source: 2000 Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

In 2000, 38.3 percent of all renters were considered cost burdened, including 29.3 percent who were paying over 35 percent of their income towards housing costs. As of the 2015 calculations, over half of all renters were cost burdened, including 35.2 percent that were paying over 35 percent of their income to housing costs – a significant rise since 2000.

Again, at least some of the increase can be attributed to the change in the way the data is presented, but that should not lessen the significance of such a high percentage of renter households facing extreme cost burden. These renter households are less likely to be able to afford other living expenses such as food and medical care, let alone save money towards becoming homeowners, and they are more likely to experience poverty conditions. The map below depicts cost burdened renters in Adams County.

MAP 55: Cost Burdened Renters

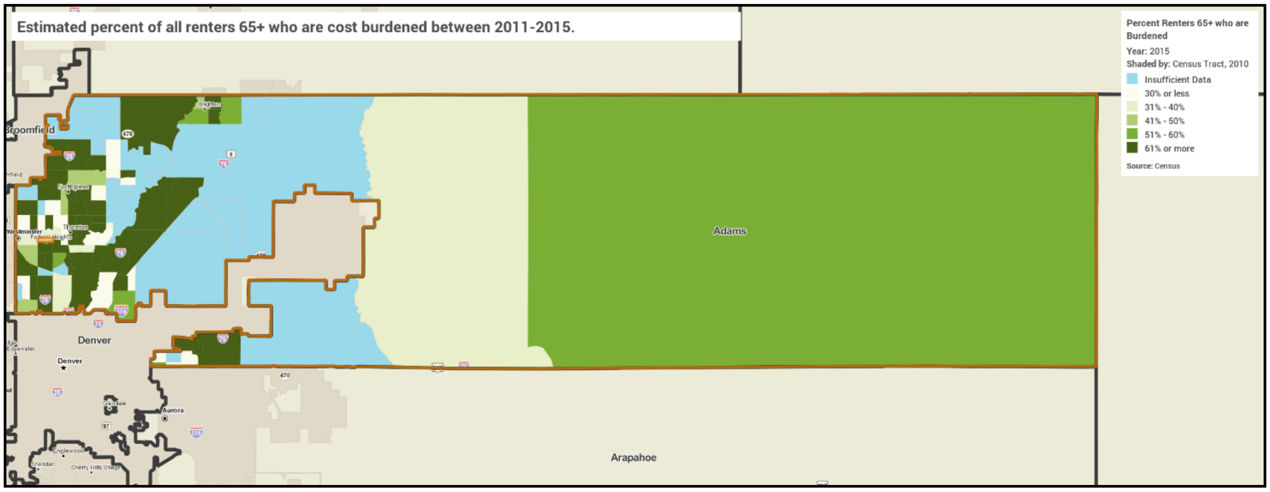


Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

Within Adams County there are several census tracts with incredibly high rates of cost burdened renters. In some tracts, over 60 percent of their renters are cost burdened – an exceptionally high rate of cost burden. There are also a fair number of census tracts with relatively low rates of cost burdened renters, sometimes less than 30 percent.

The following map displays renter cost burden among people over the age of 65. As was mentioned earlier, individuals over 65 often have fixed incomes and rising costs can be an exceptionally difficult burden for them.

MAP 56: Cost Burdened Renters 65 Years Old and over



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

The percentage of renters who are cost burdened is higher for the population over 65 years old for similar reasons that the percentage of home owners who are over 65 are also cost burdened. It is more difficult for retired individuals to react to increases in housing costs due to fixed income.

Average Wage by County

This section analyzes wage data within Adams County and the other counties in the region. Included in this analysis is the change in average weekly wages between 2006 and 2016 for all industries, for goods-producing industries, and for service-providing industries.

In Adams County, the overall average weekly wage has grown from $762 to $941 between 2006 and 2016, a growth of 23.49 percent. This growth rate is similar to the state but the wages themselves are still about $100 less than the state average. The average weekly wage rate is lower than any other county in the region, but it has been growing at a faster rate than Arapahoe, Boulder, Jefferson, and Denver counties. The median wage in Adams County means a renter can afford $1,223 for housing expenses without being cost burdened, which is slightly less than the 2-bedroom fair market rent of $1,305 in Adams County. The following table presents wage data for the region and the state.

TABLE 85: Average Weekly Wage by County (Quarter 1)

	2006	2011	2016	% Change Between 2006 and 2016
Adams	$762	$807	$941	23.49%
Arapahoe	$1,080	$1,132	$1,248	15.56%
Boulder	$988	$1,050	$1,176	19.03%
Broomfield	$1,176	$1,415	$1,743	48.21%
Denver	$1,065	$1,212	$1,312	23.19%
Douglas	$853	$1,069	$1,195	40.09%
Jefferson	$850	$930	$1,024	20.47%
Colorado	$858	$952	$1,057	23.19%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics				

The steady increase in wages is a good sign for the region, but when inflation is factored in, it produces a picture of varied growth throughout the region. Broomfield and Douglas counties had significant increases in purchasing power, while Adams, Denver, and Colorado counties saw a slight increase in purchasing power. Boulder and Jefferson counties have seen purchasing power stagnate, while Arapahoe saw a slight reduction between 2006 and 2016. The following table displays the inflation-adjusted wages and changes in purchasing power in the region.

TABLE 86: Average Weekly Wage by County (Inflation Adjusted)

	2006	2016	Change in Purchasing Power
Adams	$913	$941	+3.07%
Arapahoe	$1,293	$1,248	-3.48%
Boulder	$1,183	$1,176	-0.59%
Broomfield	$1,408	$1,743	+23.79%
Denver	$1,275	$1,312	+2.90%
Douglas	$1,022	$1,195	+16.93%
Jefferson	$1,018	$1,024	+0.59%
Colorado	$1,022	$1,057	+3.42%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics			

The table below breaks down the weekly wage in the region by "Goods-Producing" and "Service-Providing" industries. Goods-producing includes all private sector jobs in the natural resources and mining, construction, and manufacturing. Service-providing industries include private sector jobs in trade, transportation, utilities, information, financial activities, professional and business services, education and health, leisure and hospitality, and other services. In general, goods-producing industries provide a higher average weekly wage than service-providing industries; the one exception is Arapahoe County where service-providing jobs pay better than goods-producing. In both sectors and in both years, Adams County has the lowest average weekly wage in the region. Adams County has also seen slower growth in those wages than most other counties.

TABLE 87: Average Weekly Wage by Industry by County

	Goods-Producing			Service-Providing		
	2006 Q1	2016 Q1	% Change Between 2006 and 2016	2006 Q1	2016 Q1	% Change Between 2006 and 2016
Adams	$874	$1,044	19.45%	$723	$831	14.94%
Arapahoe	$976	$1,238	26.84%	$1,141	$1,294	13.41%
Boulder	$1,313	$1,347	2.59%	$941	$1,162	23.49%
Broomfield	$1,250	$2,195	75.60%	$1,172	$1,680	43.34%
Denver	$1,125	$1,629	44.80%	$1,069	$1,283	20.02%
Douglas	$920	$1,126	22.39%	$860	$1,257	46.16%
Jefferson	$1,171	$1,507	28.69%	$754	$913	21.08%
Colorado	$973	$1,244	27.85%	$843	$1,035	22.78%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics						

As was shown earlier, inflation often eats into any increases in average wages for workers. In the Denver region, this is particularly true in Adams County, which had a decrease in purchasing power for both goods-producing and service-providing industries. Workers in service-providing industries are hit particularly hard by this reduction in purchasing power because they already have significantly lower wages than those in goods-producing industries.

TABLE 88: Average Weekly Wage by Industry by County (Inflation Adjusted)

	Goods Producing			Service Providing		
	2006 Q1	2016 Q1	Change in Purchasing Power	2006 Q1	2016 Q1	Change in Purchasing Power
Adams	$1,047	$1,044	-0.29%	$866	$831	-4.21%
Arapahoe	$1,169	$1,238	+0.59%	$1,366	$1,294	-5.27%
Boulder	$1,572	$1,347	-14.31%	$1,127	$1,162	+3.11%
Broomfield	$1,497	$2,195	+46.63%	$1,404	$1,680	+19.66%
Denver	$1,347	$1,629	+20.94%	$1,281	$1,283	+0.16%
Douglas	$1,102	$1,126	+2.18%	$1,030	$1,257	+22.04%
Jefferson	$1,402	$1,507	+7.49%	$903	$913	+1.11%
Colorado	$1,165	$1,244	+6.78%	$1,010	$1,035	+2.48%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics						

The following table shows the changes in employment in each of the previously identified sectors. The service-providing industries are growing at a very fast rate within the region – every county has growth that is equal to or higher than the state. Unfortunately, the goods-producing industries, which generally have higher wages, are hiring fewer employees in 2016 than in 2006 in many counties. In the counties that do see an increase in employees, the increase is much smaller than in the service-providing industries.

TABLE 89: Changes in Employment by Industry by County

	Goods Producing			Service Providing		
	2006 Q1	2016 Q1	% Change Between 2006 and 2016	2006 Q1	2016 Q1	% Change Between 2006 and 2016
Adams	34,242	36,318	6.06%	96,047	121,574	26.58%
Arapahoe	30,379	28,411	-6.48%	209,776	251,877	20.07%
Boulder	25,094	23,001	-8.34%	104,372	122,399	17.27%
Broomfield	5,923	6,552	10.62%	22,066	28,312	28.31%
Denver	46,780	47,869	2.33%	311,832	369,610	18.53%
Douglas	12,017	11,222	-6.62%	62,072	89,784	44.64%
Jefferson	34,411	33,942	-1.36%	136,202	160,745	18.02%
Colorado	343,674	329,301	-4.18%	1,516,196	1,781,465	17.50%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics						

The higher growth rate of service-providing industries has shifted the percentage of the total workforce in each of the sectors. The following table shows the change in the percentage of the workforce for goods-producing industries. In every location (except Jefferson County) there are relatively fewer goods-producing jobs in 2016 than in 2006. This sector shrank in Adams County from 26.28 percent of the jobs to 23 percent – the third highest reduction in the region.

TABLE 90: Percentage of Workforce in Goods Producing Industries by County

	2006	2016	Change Between 2006 and 2016
Adams	26.28%	23.00%	-3.28%
Arapahoe	12.65%	10.14%	-2.51%
Boulder	19.38%	15.82%	-3.56%
Broomfield	21.16%	18.79%	-2.37%
Denver	13.04%	11.47%	-1.57%
Douglas	16.22%	12.10%	-4.12%
Jefferson	20.17%	21.11%	+0.94%
Colorado	18.48%	15.60%	-2.88%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics			

Affordability Gap

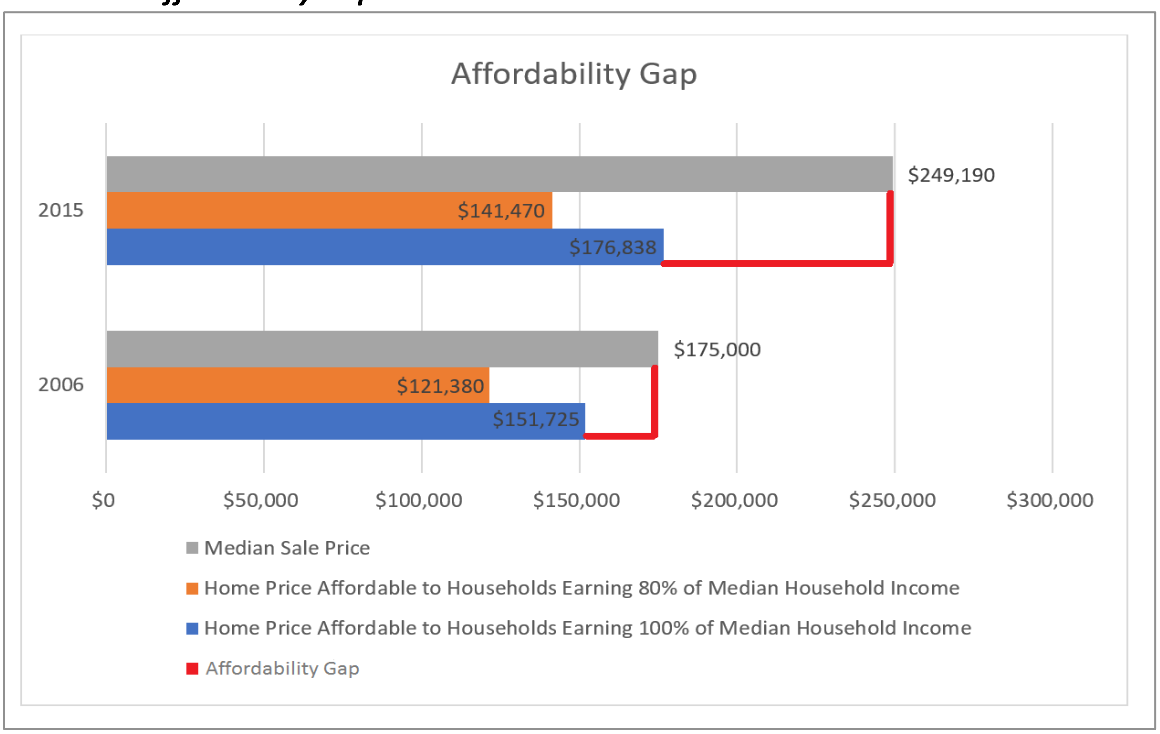
The affordability gap is the difference between the median sales price in an area and what is affordable to residents at different income levels. In 2006, the median sales price of a home in Adams County was $175,000, but a household earning 100 percent of the median household income in the county could only afford a $151,725 home – a gap of $23,275. By 2015, the affordability gap had increased over 200 percent to $72,352 for these households. Households earning 80 percent of the median household income have a much larger gap due to the decreased income. In 2006, the affordability gap was $53,620, but the gap had doubled by 2015 to $107,719. The following table and chart visualize the housing gap in Adams County.

TABLE 91: Housing Gap

	Median Sales Price	100% Median Household Income			80% Median Household Income		
		Household Income	Affordable Home Value	Affordability Gap	Household Income	Affordable Home Value	Affordability Gap
2006	$175,000	$50,575	$151,725	$23,275	$40,460	$121,380	$53,620
2015	$249,190	$58,946	$176,838	$72,352	$47,157	$141,470	$107,720
Change Between 2006 and 2015	42.39%			211%			101%

Source: Boxwood Means, US Census Decennial Census, 2006-2010, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data Note: Housing affordability is calculated using three times the household income

CHART 48: Affordability Gap



Source: Boxwood Means, US Census Decennial Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Data Note: Housing affordability is calculated using three times the household income

Public Housing/Subsidized Housing Facilities

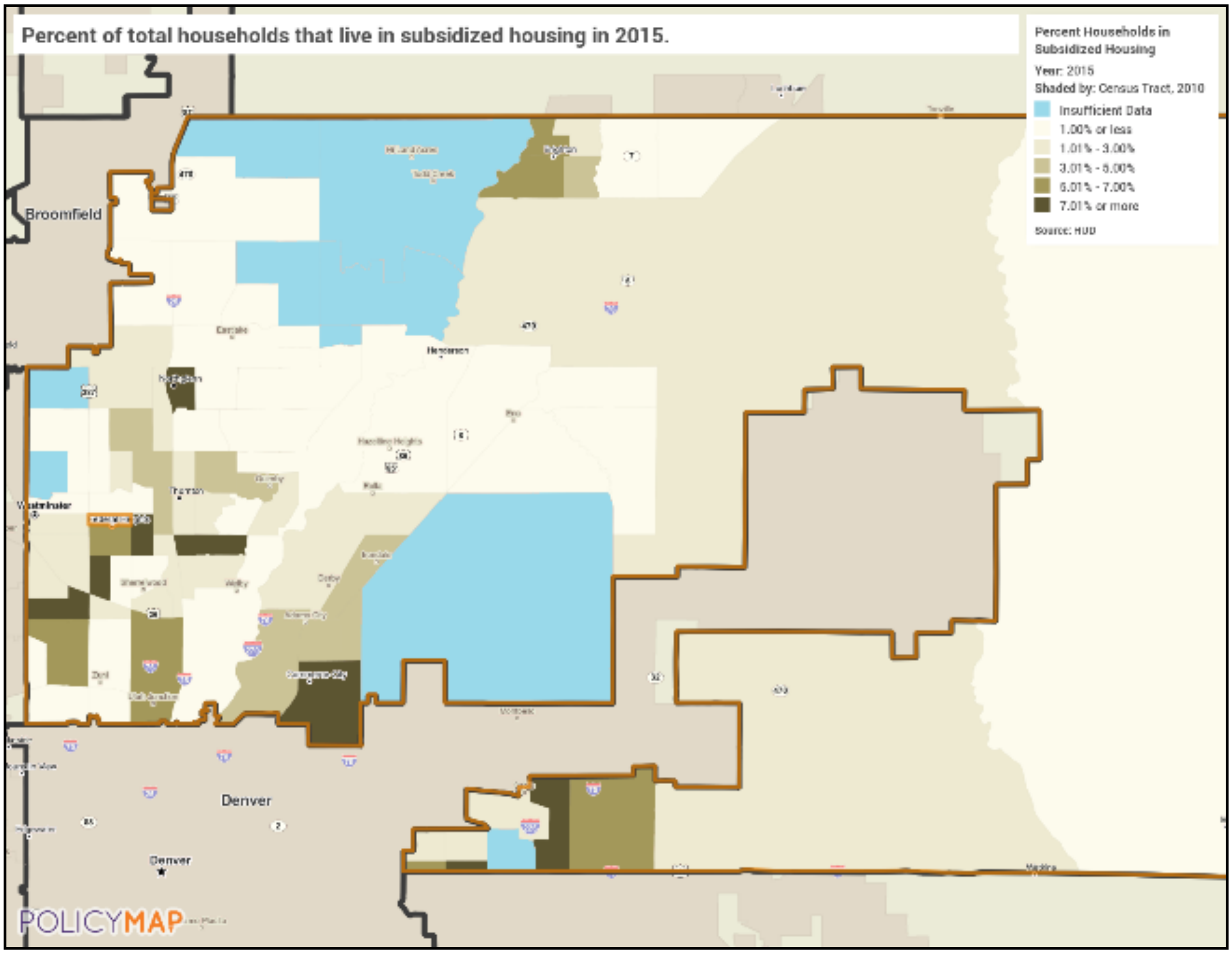
The following table compares subsidized housing in Adams County with the rest of the region. Of all the households in Adams County, 2.47 percent are subsidized in some way. This is similar to the regional rate (3.04%) and Arapahoe County's rate (2.20%). Denver County has the highest rate of subsidized housing (6.36%) and Douglas County has the lowest (0.20%).

TABLE 92: Subsidized Housing by County

	Subsidized Housing		Public Housing			HCVs		
	% of HHs	% of Renter HHs	% of HHs	% of Renter HHs	% of Subsidized Housing	% of HHs	% of Renter HHs	% of Subsidized Housing
Adams	2.47%	6.97%	0.04%	0.10%	1.49%	1.51%	4.25%	60.99%
Arapaho	2.20%	5.87%	0.11%	0.28%	4.83%	1.37%	3.65%	62.31%
Boulder	2.82%	7.54%	0.05%	0.13%	1.66%	2.14%	5.70%	75.61%
Broomfield	1.02%	3.34%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.45%	1.48%	44.35%
Denver	6.36%	12.66%	1.42%	2.82%	22.25%	1.37%	4.89%	38.62%
Douglas	0.20%	1.03%	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.15%	0.77%	74.29%
Jefferson	2.05%	6.85%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.57%	5.26%	76.81%
Denver Metro Area	3.04%	8.34%	0.40%	1.11%	13.27%	1.55%	4.27%	51.15%
Colorado	2.88%	8.02%	0.38%	1.08%	13.17%	1.53%	4.34%	52.97%
Source: HUD via PolicyMap								

The map below displays the percentage of households in subsidized housing by census tract. The rural census tracts all have subsidized housing at less than 1 percent and the map has been zoomed in on the suburban and urban areas to show that area in detail. Some census tracts have very low rates of subsidized housing, while others are incredibly high, including the Commerce City area with over 17 percent and a small tract in the southwest corner near Arapahoe County with over 19 percent of households in subsidized housing.

MAP 57: Percent Households in Subsidized Housing



Source: HUD via PolicyMap

Affordability by County Comparison

Homeownership in Adams County is easier to realize than in other counties in the region. In Adams County, 55.38 percent of homes are affordable for a 4-Person Families making 100 percent AMI. Douglas County has the least affordable homes in the region, with only 9.55 percent of homes affordable for a household making the median income.

TABLE 93: Percent of Homes Affordable for a 4-Person Family by AMI by County

	50% AMI	80% AMI	100% AMI
Adams	13.34%	28.17%	55.38%
Arapaho	8.08%	18.80%	37.16%
Boulder	5.45%	8.72%	17.99%
Broomfield	5.06%	7.20%	21.10%
Denver	8.59%	20.86%	35.54%
Douglas	1.88%	4.25%	9.55%
Jefferson	4.77%	10.86%	23.55%
Colorado	***10.60%***	***21.13%***	***37.77%***
Source: HUD via PolicyMap			

Overall, there is very little rental housing that is affordable within Adams County or the region when compared to the entire State of Colorado. Three types of rental units are more affordable in the County than the state more generally: 0-1 bedroom units for 2-person families earning 30 percent AMI, 0-1 bedroom units for 2-person families earning 100 percent AMI, and three or more bedroom units for 6-person families earning 30 percent AMI. Even so, it is still incredibly difficult for renters in these demographics – particularly families earning 30 percent AMI – to find affordable housing. Additionally, there is no income bracket in Adams County where 4-person families (2 Bedrooms) are better off than the state. The following tables break down the percent of rental units affordable to different family income groups.

TABLE 94: Percent of Rental Units Affordable for Family Earning 30% AMI by County

	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3+ Bedrooms
Adams	10.92%	3.58%	8.69%
Arapaho	6.15%	3.04%	4.49%
Boulder	8.43%	9.87%	6.74%
Broomfield	9.25%	4.60%	3.15%
Denver	15.30%	5.88%	13.94%
Douglas	2.31%	1.03%	1.82%
Jefferson	8.69%	2.88%	7.70%
Colorado	***7.15%***	***5.65%***	***3.92%***
Source: HUD via PolicyMap			

TABLE 95: Percent of Rental Units Affordable for Family Earning 50% AMI by County

	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3+ Bedrooms
Adams	46.12%	53.04%	20.94%
Arapaho	39.20%	43.52%	10.50%
Boulder	61.91%	33.11%	15.99%
Broomfield	35.35%	33.07%	7.47%
Denver	47.82%	50.6%	25.19%
Douglas	10.97%	16.23%	4.56%
Jefferson	41.03%	51.05%	17.84%
Colorado	***48.76%***	***56.01%***	***24.28%***
Source: HUD via PolicyMap			

TABLE 96: Percent of Rental Units Affordable for Family Earning 100% AMI by County

	0-1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3+ Bedrooms
Adams	80.21%	53.04%	20.94%
Arapaho	76.69%	43.52%	10.50%
Boulder	61.91%	33.11%	15.99%
Broomfield	51.39%	33.07%	7.47%
Denver	76.54%	50.60%	25.19%
Douglas	45.63%	16.23%	4.56%
Jefferson	74.92%	51.05%	17.84%
Colorado	***77.83%***	***56.01%***	***24.28%***
Source: HUD via PolicyMap			

The average household size in Adams County is 2.98 people, the largest in the region. Affordable housing for families of three or more is not available for many people, regardless of income group.

TABLE 97: Household Size by County

	1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 or more People	Average Household Size
Adams	22.6%	30.1%	16.4%	30.8%	2.98
Arapaho	27.4%	32.8%	16.3%	23.5%	2.63
Boulder	27.7%	36.8%	15.4%	20.2%	2.45
Broomfield	25.9%	33.2%	16.0%	24.9%	2.57
Denver	39.4%	31.7%	12.3%	16.6%	2.30
Douglas	17.3%	33.9%	17.7%	31.1%	2.76
Jefferson	27.6%	37.6%	15.4%	19.4%	2.44
Colorado	27.7%	35.2%	15.2%	22.0%	2.55
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (S2501, B25010)					

Rental Affordability

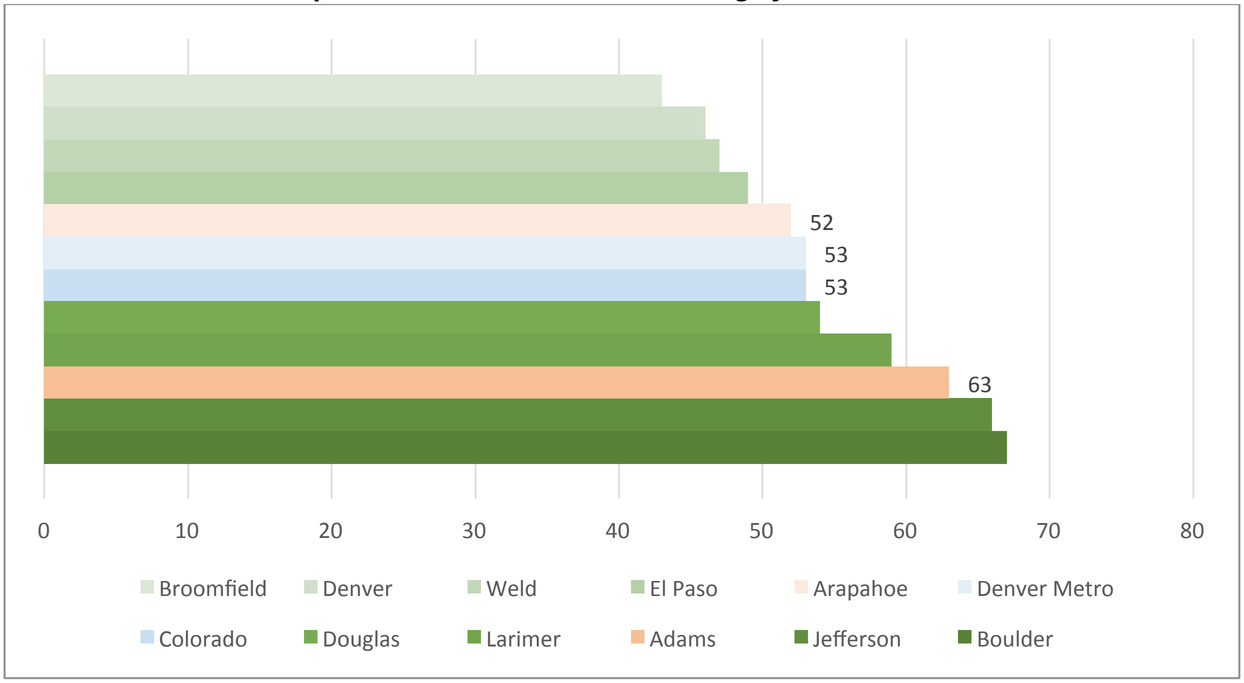
The following table shows rental affordability in region that is compiled by National Low Income Housing Coalition. The specific numbers vary slightly from other sources in this document, such as the US Census and Housing Denver 5-Year Plan, but the data show the same trend of rental housing being unaffordable to the average renter. Overall, renters in Adams County have one of the lower mean renter wages in the area and can afford a unit that costs $778 without becoming cost burdened. The average individual renter needs to work 63 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom unit, making 2-bedroom units barely affordable for two full-time workers and likely impossible for one person. Adams County has over 20,000 households that are one adult with children, and these families will likely either move to a county with greater housing and economic opportunities or face substandard housing conditions, such as becoming cost burdened.

TABLE 98: Rental Affordability in Select Geographies

	Rent Affordable at Mean Renter Wage	Mean Renter Wage	Work Hrs./Week at Mean Renter Wage for 2-BR
Adams	$778	$14.97	63
Denver	$1,069	$20.56	46
Arapahoe	$943	$18.14	52
Jefferson	$740	$14.23	66
Weld	$685	$13.18	47
Douglas	$915	$17.59	54
Boulder	$826	$15.88	67
El Paso	$733	$14.09	49
Larimer	$657	$12.64	59
Broomfield	$1,146	$22.05	43
Denver Metro Area	*$933*	*$17.64*	*53*
Colorado	***$830***	***$15.97***	***53***
Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition Out of Reach Report, 2016			

The following graph visualizes the amount of work hours per week a renter will need to pay for a 2-bedroom residence at the median hourly wage. Renters in Adams County need to work 11 hours more per week than the average renter in the Denver Metro area or Colorado, and they need to work 12 more hours than renters in Arapahoe County.

CHART 49: Work Hours per Week at Median Renter Wage for 2-BR Residence



Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition Out of Reach Report, 2016

Per the Housing Denver 5-year plan, housing in Adams County is more affordable than any of the neighboring counties.

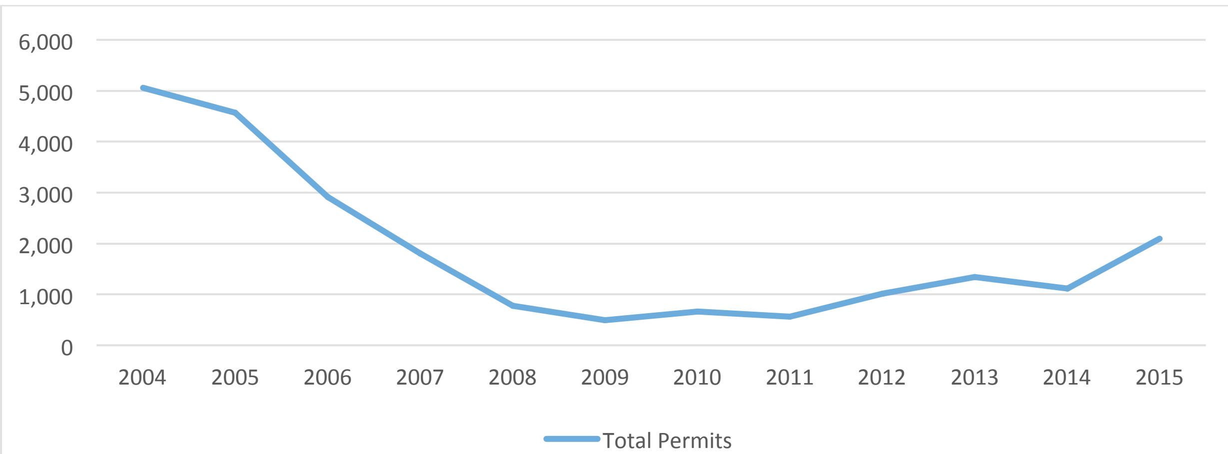
TABLE 99: Median Rent by Unit Type, Third Quarter 2013

	Denver County	Adams County	Arapahoe County	Boulder/ Broomfield County	Jefferson County
Efficiency	$886	$636	$687	$811	$710
1 Bed	$950	$827	$872	$1,045	$928
2 Bed/1 Bath	$994	$903	$931	$1,111	$945
2 Bed/2 Bath	$1,363	$1,150	$1,180	$1,440	$1,208
3 Bed	$1,472	$1,479	$1,432	$1,583	$1,373
Other	$1,068	$1,014	$1,389	$1,245	$992
All	$1,056	$963	$1,007	$1,194	$1,036
Source: Metro Denver Vacancy Survey and BBC Research & Consulting via Housing Denver: A Five-Year Plan					

Construction Activity

The line graphs below depict the collapse of the housing market and very slow recovery between 2004 and 2015 throughout the Adams County. The first graph displays the steep decline in the number of residential building permits issued each year between 2005 and 2009. In 2011 residential construction started to improve, but the growth has been incredibly slow and still only a fraction of what it was in 2004. As stated earlier in the document, between 3,500 and 4,000 new units must be built annually in Adams County to keep up with population growth projections and maintain the average household size of 2.98. Permits have not been issued at that rate since 2005.

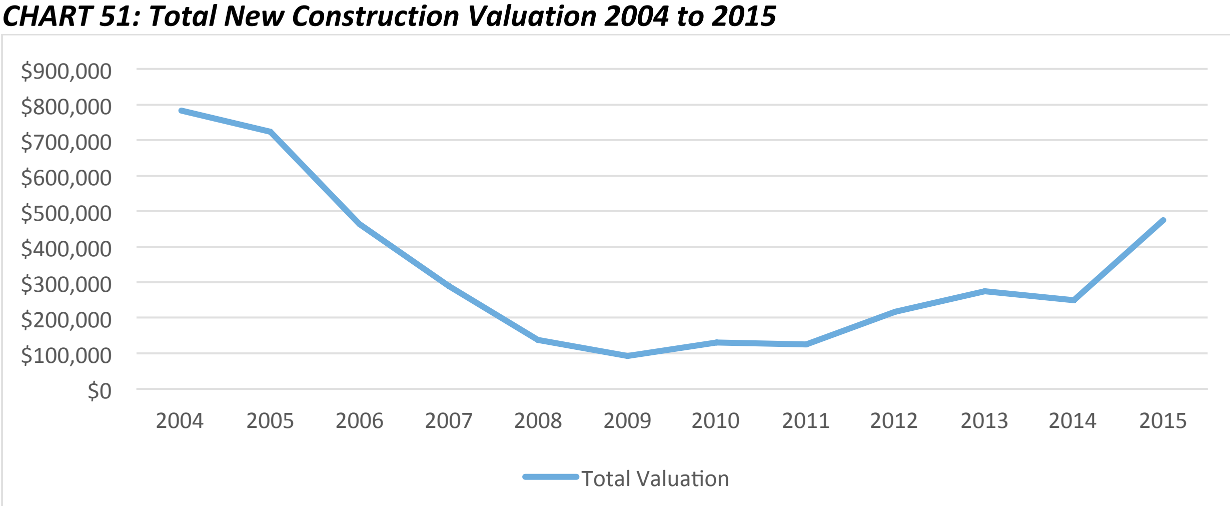
CHART 50: Residential Construction Permits Issued 2004 to 2015



Source: US Census Bureau

This second graph details the precipitous drop in the total valuation of new construction building permits each year during the same period. As with the residential construction permits, the total valuation of residential building permits dropped sharply in 2005 and did not start to recover until 2011, but that recovery has been slow and is incomplete.

CHART 51: Total New Construction Valuation 2004 to 2015



Source: US Census Bureau

Changes in the number of residential permits issued give an idea of the housing demand in the County, but a closer look at the data is needed in order to determine which types of housing are being built. The following two tables looks at the type of residential building permits. The first table shows the number of units being constructed by each type and the second displays the percentage of type within that year. Single-family units are, overwhelmingly, the most common residential property being constructed in Adams County. The proportion of single-family units fluctuates from a high of 97.31 percent to a low of 71.87 percent in 2015. Single-family units, on average, represent 86.41 percent of the building permits issued since 2004.

Multi-family permits fall into three categories: two-family, three- and four-family, and five or more family. On average, buildings that fall into the “five or more family” create the most units in multi-family buildings. There does appear to be a slight increase in the production of five or more family units, while construction permits for two-family buildings have become increasingly uncommon.

TABLE 100: Unit Count of New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits by Year and Type - Adams

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change	Percent Change
Single Family	4,384	4,177	2,754	1,431	650	477	558	546	793	1,032	1,085	1,510	-2,874	-65.56%
Two Family	34	20	42	22	24	10	68	4	2	4	6	2	-32	-94.12%
3 & 4 Family	50	29	49	4	0	0	9	15	0	4	18	42	-8	-16.00%
5+ Family	590	346	63	352	108	6	27	0	220	300	6	547	-43	-7.29%
Total	***5,058***	***4,572***	***2,908***	***1,809***	***782***	***493***	***662***	***565***	***1,015***	***1,340***	***1,115***	***2,101***	***-2,957***	***-58.46%***
Source: US Census Bureau (Estimates with imputation)														

TABLE 101: Percent of Total New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits by Year and Type - Adams

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Single Family	86.67%	91.36%	94.70%	79.10%	83.12%	96.75%	84.29%	96.64%	78.13%	77.01%	97.31%	71.87%	86.41%
Two Family	0.67%	0.44%	1.44%	1.22%	3.07%	2.03%	10.27%	0.71%	0.20%	0.30%	0.54%	0.09%	1.75%
3 & 4 Family	0.99%	0.63%	1.69%	0.22%	0.00%	0.00%	1.36%	2.65%	0.00%	0.30%	1.61%	2.00%	0.95%
5+ Family	11.67%	7.57%	2.17%	19.46%	13.81%	1.22%	4.08%	0.00%	21.67%	22.39%	0.54%	26.04%	10.89%
Source: US Census Bureau (Estimates with imputation)													

The total number of permits issued in 2016 is not yet available, but the count up until November is available. The following table displays information up until November, 2016. The current patterns show an increase in building permits in 2016 over previous years.

Table 102: Building Permits Issued in 2016 (January-November)

	Buildings	Units	Construction Cost
Single Family	1,697	1,697	$466,705,558
Two Family	1	2	$280,000
Three and Four Family	8	28	$3,024,374
Five or More Family	18	143	$13,644,027
Total	1,724	1,870	$483,653,959
Source: US Census Bureau			

Construction Activity Regional Comparison

Residential building permits in Adams County stand out from both the neighboring Arapahoe County and the larger Denver Metro Area. In Arapahoe County, building permits have shifted from single-family units to multi-family units, particularly buildings with five or more family units. There was a 1,390-unit decrease between 2004 and 2015 for single-family units, while five or more family units increased by 390. In 2004, single-family units made up 79.76 percent of the unit building permits, but by 2015 that number had decreased to 60.80 percent. The following tables display these changes in Arapahoe County.

TABLE 103: Unit Count of New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits by Year and Type - Arapahoe

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change	Percent Change
Single Family	3,069	3,168	2,745	1,655	755	564	802	614	955	1,206	1,258	1,679	-1,390	-45.29%
Two Family	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	8	+6	+300.0%
3 & 4 Family	55	19	39	65	4	0	15	4	16	16	6	31	-24	-43.64%
5+ Family	722	818	748	2,159	1,005	608	462	188	746	1,836	631	1,112	+390	+54.02%
Total	***3,848***	***4,007***	***3,534***	***3,881***	***1,764***	***1,172***	***1,279***	***806***	***1,717***	***3,060***	***1,897***	***2,830***	***-1,018***	***-26.46%***
Source: US Census Bureau (Estimates with imputation)														

TABLE 104: Percent of Total New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits by Year and Type - Arapahoe

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Single Family	79.76%	79.06%	77.67%	42.64%	42.80%	48.12%	62.71%	76.18%	55.62%	39.41%	66.32%	59.33%	60.80%
Two Family	0.05%	0.05%	0.06%	0.05%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.07%	0.11%	0.28%	0.06%
3 & 4 Family	1.43%	0.47%	1.10%	1.68%	0.23%	0.00%	1.17%	0.50%	0.93%	0.52%	0.32%	1.10%	0.79%
5+ Family	18.76%	20.41%	21.16%	55.63%	56.97%	51.88%	36.12%	23.33%	43.45%	60.00%	33.26%	39.29%	38.36%
Source: US Census Bureau (Estimates with imputation)													

The Denver Metro area saw a residential property shift similar to Arapahoe County since 2004, with fewer single-family homes and an increase in multi-family homes. Between 2004 and 2015, the number of single-family building permits was cut in half while the number of five or more doubled. Like in Arapahoe County, in 2004, 85.18 percent of residential permits went to single-family units, but by 2015 single-family units only represented 60.40 percent of building permits. The following two tables display the building permit data by year and type in the Denver metro area.

TABLE 105: Unit Count of New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits by Year and Type – Denver Metro

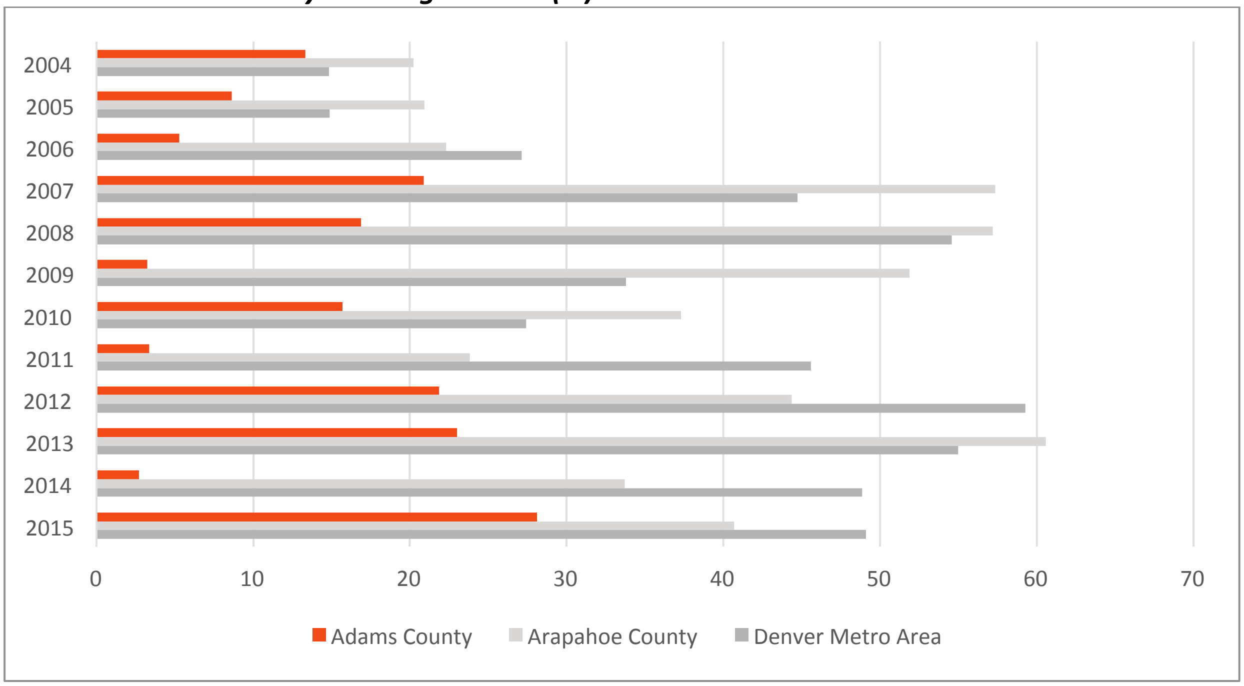
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Change	Percent Change
Single Family	18,599	17,745	13,166	7,859	4,003	2,723	3,660	3,630	5,606	6,965	8,064	9,324	-9,275	-49.87
Two Family	116	160	226	236	182	92	202	198	210	286	310	166	+50	+43.10
3 & 4 Family	232	188	147	138	24	18	45	63	29	36	61	158	-74	-31.90
5+ Family	2,889	2,756	4,531	5,984	4,605	1,279	1,135	2,782	7,915	8,188	7,332	8,678	+5,789	+200.38
Total	***21,836***	***20,849***	***18,070***	***14,217***	***8,814***	***4,112***	***5,042***	***6,673***	***13,760***	***15,475***	***15,767***	***18,326***	***-3,510***	***-16.07***
Source: US Census Bureau (Estimates with imputation)														

TABLE 106: Percent of Total New Privately-Owned Residential Building Permits by Year and Type – Denver Metro

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average
Single Family	85.18%	85.11%	72.86%	55.28%	45.41%	66.22%	72.59%	54.40%	40.74%	45.01%	51.14%	50.88%	60.40%
Two Family	0.53%	0.77%	1.25%	1.66%	2.07%	2.24%	4.01%	2.97%	1.53%	1.85%	1.97%	0.91%	1.81%
3 & 4 Family	1.06%	0.90%	0.81%	0.97%	0.27%	0.44%	0.89%	0.94%	0.21%	0.23%	0.39%	0.86%	0.66%
5+ Family	13.23%	13.22%	25.07%	42.09%	52.25%	31.10%	22.51%	41.69%	57.52%	52.91%	46.50%	47.35%	37.12%
Source: US Census Bureau (Estimates with imputation)													

The following chart visualizes the percentage of multi-family building permits issued in Adams County, Arapahoe County, and the Denver metro area between 2004 and 2015. Adams County has continued to produce multi-family units at a lower rate than neighboring Arapahoe County and the Denver metro area.

CHART 52: Multi-Family Building Permits (%)



Source: US Census Bureau

Cost Per Unit

An important data point to consider is the cost-per-unit-built for different building types. The following table displays the number of residential units built by type and their cost per unit. In general, it is much costlier per unit to build single-family buildings than multi-family buildings. In Adams County, a single-family unit is the least cost efficient and costs approximately twice as much as 2 or more family units. This pattern holds for Arapahoe County and the Denver Metro Area, with one outlier. Three- and four-bedroom buildings in Arapahoe County produce units at $71,580 per unit, which is over half the average rate in Arapahoe County. This building type is extremely rare with only 31 units, or 1.1 percent, of the total housing in the County.

The relatively low cost per unit for multi-family housing and low production of those housing types points to either low demand or some barrier preventing construction. Focus groups and interviews with community leaders pointed to a need for these low cost multi-family units, but also identified housing legislation (in particular, the Construction Defect Law) as an impediment to the construction of these units.

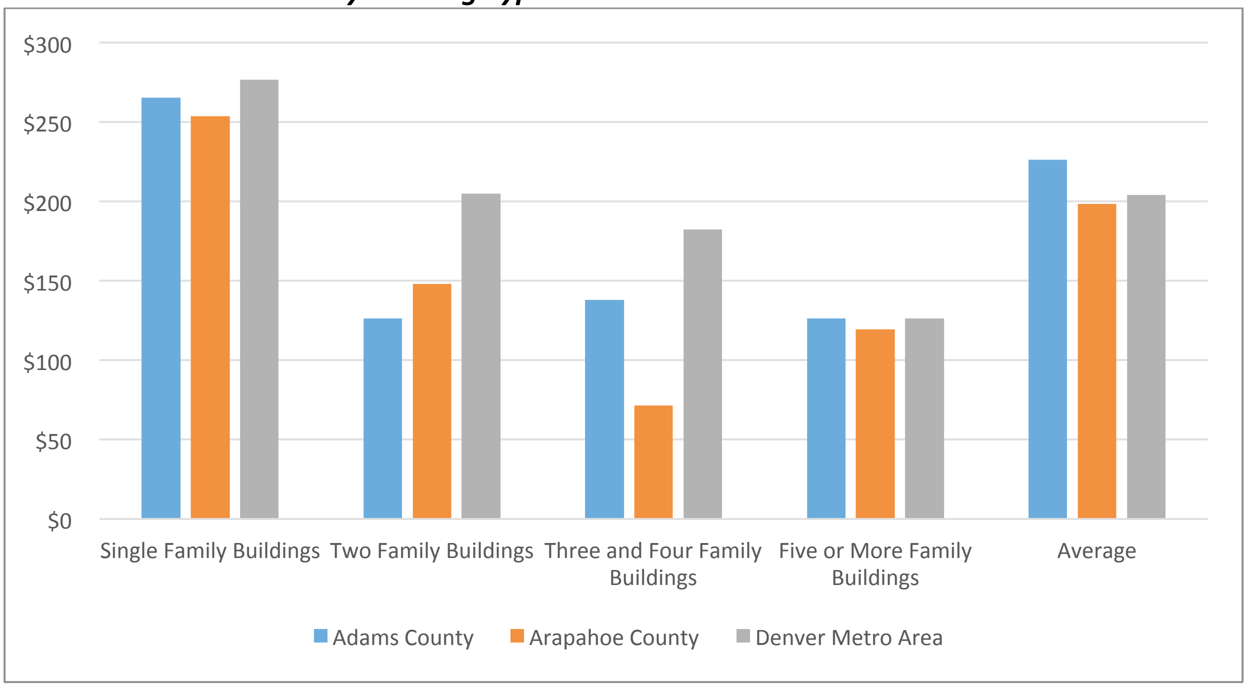
TABLE 107: Unit Construction Cost in Key Geographic Regions in 2015 (all costs in thousands)

	Adams County			Arapahoe County			Denver Metro Area		
	Number of Units	**Total Construction Cost**	**Cost Per Unit**	**Number of Units**	**Total Construction Cost**	**Cost Per Unit**	**Number of Units**	**Total Construction Cost**	**Cost Per Unit**
Single Family	1,510	$400,550	$265.26	1,679	$425,676	$253.53	9,324	$2,580,962	$276.81
Two Family	2	$253	$126.5	8	$1,184	$148.00	166	$34,042	$205.07
3 & 4 Family	42	$5,793	$137.93	31	$2,219	$71.58	158	$28,810	$182.34
5+ Family	547	$69,056	$126.24	1,112	$132,947	$119.56	8,678	$1,096,653	$126.37
Total	***2,101***	***$475,652***	***$226.39***	***2,830***	***$562,026***	***$198.60***	***18,326***	***$3,740,467***	***$204.11***

Source: US Census Bureau

The following chart compares the average production cost of a unit by building type within Adams County, Arapahoe County, and the Denver Metro Region. Overall, it is costlier to produce a unit of housing in Adams County than the other areas. While there is no specific housing category where Adams County has an average unit cost higher than the region, the relatively large single-family housing demographic in the County increases the average production cost significantly.

CHART 53: Cost Per Unit by Building Type



Source: US Census Bureau

Housing Needs Gap

As the Denver region continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important for Adams County to address any housing need gaps that may exist. The gap in supply and demand for housing is more than just raw a difference between the number of homes on the market and the number of households looking for a place to live. The available housing must be the proper type and price for the consumer. If there is an imbalance between the housing supply and the housing demand, residents may decide to live elsewhere even if they would prefer to live in Adams County. Many aspects of the housing market are beyond the influence of countywide policy, such as the proximity to weekend destinations or the availability of metro-wide public transportation infrastructure, but there are ways to incentivize housing growth within a jurisdiction. In a sense, different local governments are competing with their policies to attract more citizens and jobs to their jurisdiction.

Cost Burdened Households in Adams County

One of the causes of a housing needs gap is a lack of affordable housing within Adams County. The financial situation for Adams County residents is not as strong as in neighboring counties. The following table compares select economic data between counties. The relatively weak economic position for Adams County residents means that housing costs must be lower to provide affordable housing and prevent residents from being cost burdened. Overall, Adams County has higher rent, lower median household income, and more families in poverty than the region. The median home sale price is lower in Adams County than elsewhere.

TABLE 108: Select Economic Characteristics by County

	Median Household Income	% Families in Poverty	Median Rent	Median Home Sale Price
Adams County	$58,946	10.3%	$1,039	$249,190
Arapahoe County	$63,265	8.1%	$1,077	$264,410
Boulder County	$70,961	6.4%	$1,187	$373,270
Broomfield County	$81,898	4.4%	$1,336	$333,160
Denver County	$53,637	12.8%	$962	$313,960
Douglas County	$102,964	3.1%	$1,399	$375,250
Jefferson County	$70,164	5.5%	$1,052	$305,840
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Boxwood Means				

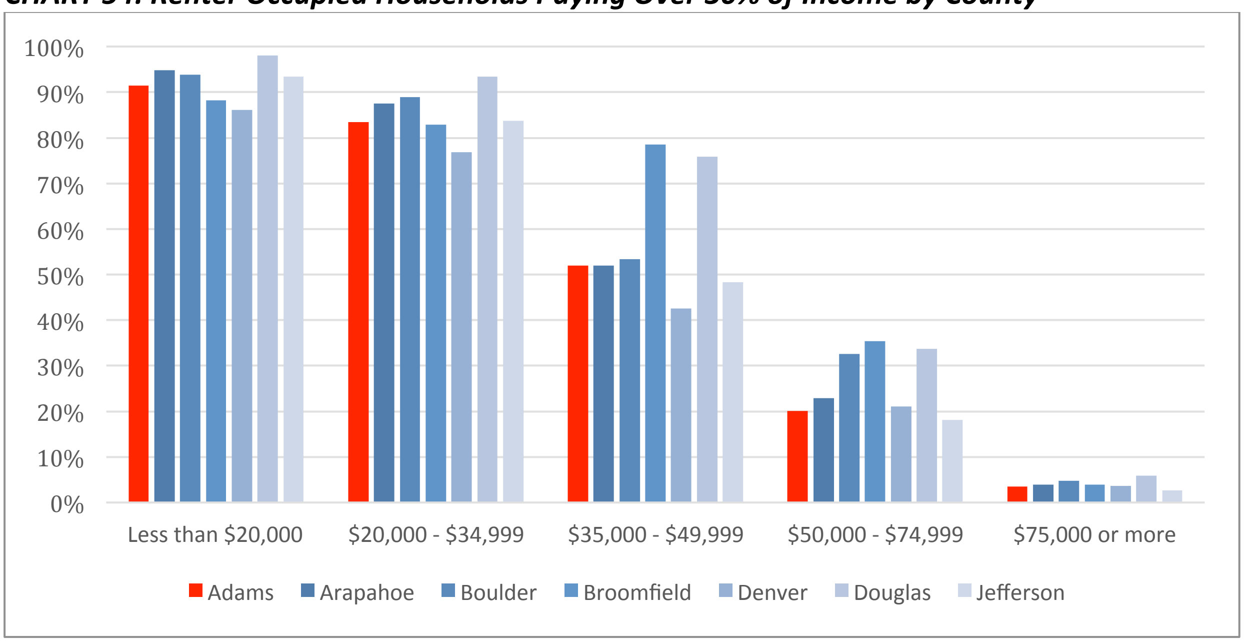
In Adams County, more than 80,000 households are paying over 30 percent of their income to housing costs, making them cost-burdened. The production of less expensive housing of the same quality can help close part of the housing gap. Not surprisingly, as household income increases the likelihood of a family being cost burdened decreases. Households with higher incomes do not necessarily look for more expensive housing; often they will continue to compete with lower-income households for cheaper housing. Higher-income households are also more likely to be low-risk tenants, which means they are more likely to be approved to rent or own property that is cheaper than they could afford. This puts additional upward pressure on housing costs, and low-income residents may be left with either substandard or expensive housing as their only options.

TABLE 109: Total Households Paying Over 30% of Income to Housing Costs by Household Income

	Owner Occupied Housing				Renter Occupied Housing			
	Total Households		Paying over 30%		Total Households		Paying over 30%	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Less Than $20,000	6,758	6.69%	5,444	80.56%	11,173	20.10%	10,213	91.41%
$20,000-$34,999	10,455	10.35%	6,692	64.01%	11,827	21.28%	9,877	83.51%
$35,000-$49,999	12,881	12.75%	7,029	54.57%	10,241	18.42%	5,323	51.98%
$50,000-$74,999	21,939	21.71%	6,939	31.63%	10,891	19.59%	2,184	20.05%
$75,000 or more	48,433	47.93%	2,977	6.15%	9,436	16.98%	331	3.51%
Zero or Negative Income or No Cash Rent	577	0.57%	--	--	2,017	3.63%	--	--
Total	101,043	--	29,081	--	55,585	--	27,928	--
Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B25106)								

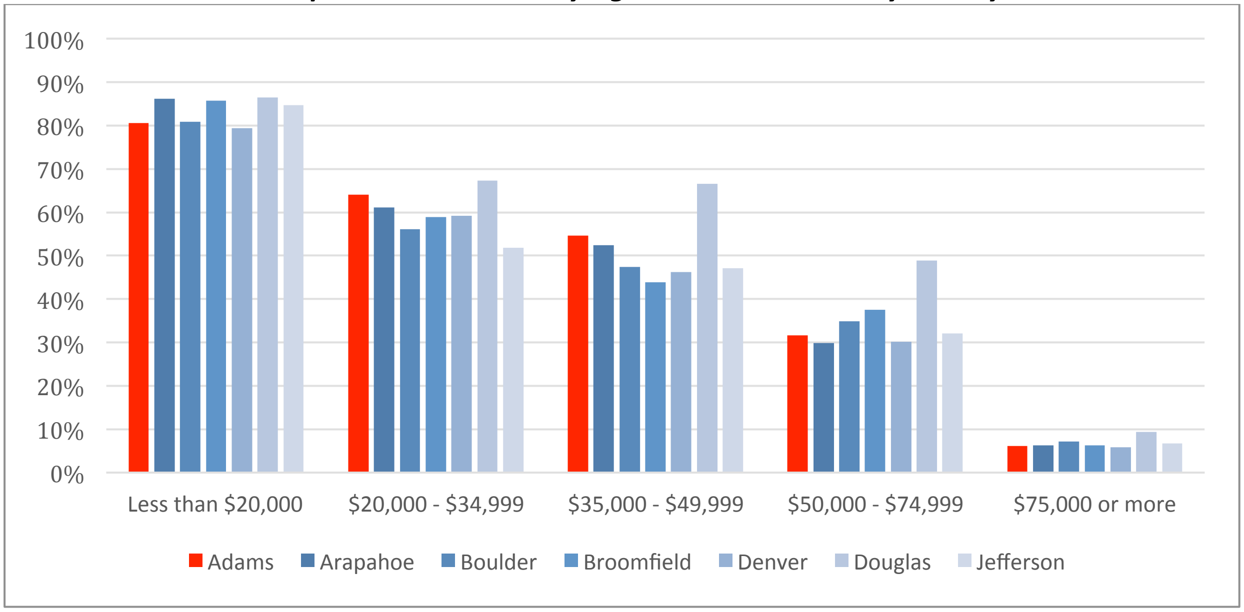
The following graphs compare the percentage of households who are cost burdened (paying over 30% of their income to housing costs) by county. Adams County has a lower median household income than neighboring counties, but the lower housing costs offsets that and Adams County has similar rates of cost burdened households as the rest of the region.

CHART 54: Renter Occupied Households Paying Over 30% of Income by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

CHART 55: Owner Occupied Households Paying Over 30% Income by County



Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates via PolicyMap

To alleviate cost burdened renters in Adams County, approximately 10,000 low-cost units need to become available for the residents. If units become available at the lowest level, then cost burdened households with greater household incomes can shift into lower cost housing. It is more difficult for this shift to occur for owner-occupied housing, but lower cost options are necessary to alleviate cost burdened homeowners and to provide opportunities to renter households to shift into home ownership. Approximately 5,000 owner-occupied units are needed to assist with this.

Commuters

In addition to the 80,000 households that are cost-burdened, there are many individuals who work in Adams County but commute in from neighboring counties. If these individuals lived within Adams County, it would reduce traffic and increase economic growth. The following tables show the commute patterns of people in Adams County. Since 2002, the percentage of people who both live and work within Adams County has steadily declined while the percentage of people who commute from neighboring counties for work has increased, particularly from Arapahoe, Weld, Douglas, Boulder, and Broomfield Counties.

The first table displays commute patterns in three groups: residents who both live and work in Adams County; Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson Counties, which each make up at least 10 percent of the workforce; and the "Remaining Counties" that each make up at least two percent of the workforce. Since 2002, the percentage of employees who live in Adams County has decreased by 6 percentage points and the percentage of employees who commute from "Remaining Counties" has increased by just over 5 percent.

TABLE 110: Percentage of Workforce by Home by Location and Year

Year	Adams County	Denver, Arapahoe, and Jefferson	Remaining Counties
2002	38.1%	42.9%	15.8%
2003	36.2%	44.4%	15.9%
2004	37.5%	43.1%	16.0%
2005	36.2%	43.8%	16.8%
2006	32.9%	45.0%	18.2%
2007	35.0%	41.1%	19.9%
2008	34.0%	41.4%	20.1%
2009	34.2%	40.9%	19.5%
2010	34.0%	41.0%	19.4%
2011	33.5%	40.5%	20.7%
2012	33.7%	40.8%	20.2%
2013	32.5%	40.8%	21.0%
2014	32.1%	41.5%	21.0%

Source: US Census, onthemap.ces.census.gov
Note: Annual totals will not add up to 100% because counties with extremely small representation (less than 2% in 2014) were not included

The second table breaks down the commute patterns from Large Commute Counties by year. In 2002, Jefferson County was the most common living location for Adams County employees in this group, but that has changed steadily over the last 12 years. By 2014, employees were most likely to live in Denver County. Overall in 2014, over 78,000 employees commuted into Adams County from these three counties, making up 41.5 percentage of the workforce.

TABLE 111: Commute Patterns of Employees Living Outside Adams County (Large Commute Counties)

	Denver		**Arapahoe**		**Jefferson**		**Total**	
	#	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
2002	21,068	14.3%	17,322	11.8%	24,689	16.8%	63,079	42.9%
2003	20,317	14.3%	16,792	11.8%	26,060	18.3%	63,169	44.4%
2004	20,226	13.9%	16,925	11.6%	25,690	17.6%	62,841	43.1%
2005	20,705	13.9%	20,657	13.8%	23,982	16.1%	65,344	43.8%
2006	21,881	14.3%	20,975	13.7%	26,032	17.0%	68,888	45.0%
2007	20,745	12.9%	21,377	13.3%	23,841	14.9%	65,963	41.1%
2008	21,945	13.6%	21,226	13.1%	23,749	14.7%	66,920	41.4%
2009	20,509	13.5%	20,160	13.2%	21,678	14.2%	62,347	40.9%
2010	21,117	13.7%	19,936	13.0%	21,944	14.3%	62,997	41.0%
2011	22,529	13.7%	21,708	13.2%	22,231	13.6%	66,468	40.5%
2012	24,272	14.5%	21,594	12.9%	22,298	13.4%	68,164	40.8%
2013	25,036	14.3%	23,281	13.3%	23,033	13.2%	71,350	40.8%
2014	28,346	14.9%	25,792	13.6%	24,646	13.0%	78,784	41.5%

Source: US Census, onthemap.ces.census.gov
Visualization Note: Cells are colored to visualize change in relative representation in the workforce. Dark green are cells where the county represented 15% or more of the workforce, dark medium green represents 14%-14.9%, light medium green represent 13%-13.9%, and light green is under 12.9%.

The third table looks at the population that commutes into Adams County from Small Commute Counties by year. Weld County has consistently been the most common source of employees within this demographic and the overall demographic has increased from 15.8 percent of the employees in Adams County to 21 percent. By 2014, over 10,000 employees commuted from other counties in this group to work in Adams County.

TABLE 112: Commute Patterns of Employees in Living Outside Adams County (Small Commute Counties)

	Weld		Douglas		Boulder		El Paso		Larimer		Broomfield		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2002	5,556	3.8%	4,214	2.9%	4,163	2.8%	5,021	3.4%	4,055	2.8%	150	0.1%	23,159	15.8%
2003	5,455	3.8%	3,826	2.7%	3,874	2.7%	5,403	3.8%	4,021	2.8%	187	0.1%	22,766	15.9%
2004	5,546	3.8%	4,074	2.8%	4,167	2.9%	5,292	3.6%	4,114	2.8%	152	0.1%	23,345	16.0%
2005	5,944	4.0%	5,360	3.6%	4,127	2.8%	5,346	3.6%	4,097	2.7%	168	0.1%	25,042	16.8%
2006	6,610	4.3%	5,060	3.3%	7,006	4.6%	6,038	3.9%	3,359	2.2%	163	0.1%	28,236	18.2%
2007	7,679	4.8%	5,860	3.7%	6,355	4.0%	4,038	2.5%	3,797	2.4%	3,964	2.5%	31,693	19.9%
2008	8,069	5.0%	5,976	3.7%	6,110	3.8%	4,918	3.0%	3,680	2.3%	3,683	2.3%	32,436	20.1%
2009	8,030	5.3%	5,981	3.9%	6,873	4.5%	4,357	2.9%	3,702	2.4%	799	0.5%	29,742	19.5%
2010	8,345	5.4%	6,137	4.0%	6,225	4.0%	4,643	3.0%	3,687	2.4%	884	0.6%	29,921	19.4%
2011	9,003	5.5%	6,412	3.9%	6,412	3.9%	4,426	2.7%	3,492	2.1%	4,309	2.6%	34,054	20.7%
2012	9,151	5.5%	6,069	3.6%	6,341	3.8%	4,093	2.5%	3,457	2.1%	4,471	2.7%	33,582	20.2%
2013	9,849	5.6%	6,430	3.7%	6,429	3.7%	5,199	3.0%	4,402	2.5%	4,328	2.5%	36,637	21.0%
2014	10,649	5.6%	7,080	3.7%	6,832	3.6%	5,663	3.0%	4,876	2.6%	4,794	2.5%	39,894	21.0%

Source: US Census, onthemap.ces.census.gov
Visualization Note: Cells are colored to visualize change in relative representation in the workforce. Dark green are cells where the county represented 5% or more of the workforce, dark medium green represents 4%-4.9%%, light medium green represent 3%-3.9%, and light green is under 2.9%.

In 2014, there were 121,916 individuals employed in Adams County but living elsewhere. All else being equal, employees would rather be closer to their work, particularly if biking, waking, or public transportation is a viable option. Longer commute times decrease health and productivity, which has a negative effect on healthcare services and the economy.

Future Residents

Per the Colorado State Demography Office, Adams County can expect the population to increase by approximately 75,000 to 545,237 by 2020. In 2015, the average household size was 2.98 people and has been growing over the last fifteen years. These new residents will require over 18,000 new homes and will put further pressure on the housing market, particularly for low-income housing.

The median household income is expected to increase by 2.62 percent annually to $67,717 by 2021. This is noticeably less than the average inflation rate of 3.22 percent in the United States. This means that despite an increase in income, the purchasing power of the average household is likely to decrease in the next five years. Overall, this forecast of Adams County shows an increasing need for both economic opportunities and affordable housing.

Lending Practices

Countywide lending practices were analyzed using data gathered from lending institutions in compliance with the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA). The HMDA was enacted by Congress in 1975 and is implemented by the Federal Reserve Board as Regulation C. The intent of the Act is to provide the public with information related to financial institution lending practices and to aid public officials in targeting public capital investments to attract additional private sector investments.

Since enactment of the HMDA in 1975, lending institutions have been required to collect and publicly disclose data regarding applicants including: location of the loan (by Census tract, County, and MSA); income, race and gender of the borrower; the number and dollar amount of each loan; property type; loan type; loan purpose; whether the property is owner-occupied; action taken for each application; and, if the application was denied, the reason(s) for denial. Property types examined include one-to-four family units, manufactured housing and multi-family developments.

HMDA data is a useful tool in accessing lending practices and trends within a jurisdiction. While many financial institutions are required to report loan activities, it is important to note that not all institutions are required to participate. Depository lending institutions – banks, credit unions, and savings associations – must file under HMDA if they hold assets exceeding the coverage threshold set annually by the Federal Reserve Board, have a home or branch office in one or more metropolitan statistical areas (MSA), or originated at least one home purchase or refinancing loan on a one-to-four family dwelling in the preceding calendar year. Such institutions must also file if they meet any one of the following three conditions: status as a federally insured or regulated institution; originator of a mortgage loan that is insured, guaranteed, or supplemented by a federal agency; or originator of a loan intended for sale to Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. For-profit, non-depository institutions (such as mortgage companies) must file HMDA data if: their value of home purchase or refinancing loans exceeds 10 percent or more of their total loan originations or equals or exceeds $25 million; they either maintain a home or branch office in one or more MSAs or in a given year execute five or more home purchase, home refinancing, or home improvement loan applications, originations, or loan purchases for properties located in MSAs; or they hold assets exceeding $10 million or have executed more than 100 home purchase or refinancing loan originations in the preceding calendar year.

It is recommended that the analysis of HMDA data be tempered by the knowledge that no one characteristic can be considered in isolation, but must be considered in light of other factors. For instance, while it is possible to develop conclusions simply based on race data, it is more accurate when all possible factors are considered, particularly in relation to loan denials and loan pricing. According to the FFIEC, “with few exceptions, controlling for borrower-related factors reduces the differences among racial and ethnic groups.” Borrower-related factors include income, loan amount, lender, and other relevant information included in the HMDA data. Further, the FFIEC cautions that the information in the HMDA data, even when controlled for borrower-related factors and the lender, "is insufficient to account fully for racial or ethnic differences in the incidence of higher-priced lending." The FFIEC suggests that a more thorough analysis of the differences may require additional details from sources other than HMDA about factors including the specific credit circumstances of each borrower, the specific loan products that they are seeking, and the business practices of the institutions that they approach for credit.

The following analysis is provided for Adams County, summarizing 2015 HMDA data (the most recent year for which data are available), and data between 2007 and 2015 where applicable. Where specific details are included in the HMDA records, a summary is provided below for loan denials including information regarding the purpose of the loan application, race of the applicant and the primary reason for denial. For the purposes of analysis, this report will focus only on the information available and will not make assumptions regarding data that is not available or was not provided as part of the mortgage application or in the HMDA reporting process.

2015 County Overview

In 2015, Adams County residents applied for roughly 39,000 home loans to purchase, refinance or make home improvements for a single-family home – not including manufactured homes. Of those applications, nearly 20,800 (53%) were approved and originated. This marks an increase of over 6,200 originations from 2014 and a percentage increase of 43 percent, nearly twice the national rate of 22 percent. Of the remaining 18,200 applications, approximately 5,100 (13%) of all applications were denied for reasons identified below. It is important to note that financial institutions are not required to report reasons for loan denials, although many do so voluntarily. Also, while many loan applications are denied for more than one reason, HMDA data reflect only the primary reason for the denial of each loan. The balance of the approximately 13,200 applications that were neither originated nor denied were closed for one reason or another including a) the loan was approved but not accepted by the borrower; b) the application was closed because of incomplete information or inactivity by the borrower; or c) the application may have been withdrawn by the applicant.

TABLE 113: Disposition of Application by Loan Type and Purpose, 2015
Single Family Homes (excluding manufactured homes)

	Loan Type	Home Purchase	Refinance	Home Improvement
Total Applications				
	Conventional	7,901	14,421	1,532
	FHA	6,197	4,996	142
	VA	1,593	2,099	88
	FSA/RHS	103	2	0
Loans Originated				
	Conventional	5,070	7,486	788
	FHA	3,255	2158	58
	VA	845	1,034	56
	FSA/RHS	48	1	0
Loans Approved but not accepted				
	Conventional	161	253	35
	FHA	94	95	2
	VA	33	39	1
	FSA/RHS	4	0	0
Applications Denied				
	Conventional	393	2,583	521
	FHA	407	760	34
	VA	89	263	16
	FSA/RHS	10	1	0
Applications Withdrawn				
	Conventional	852	1,687	92
	FHA	567	656	21
	VA	180	268	9
	FSA/RHS	9	0	0
Files Closed for Incompleteness				
	Conventional	118	561	35
	FHA	92	264	8
	VA	10	157	1
	FSA/RHS	2	0	0
Source: 2015 HMDA				

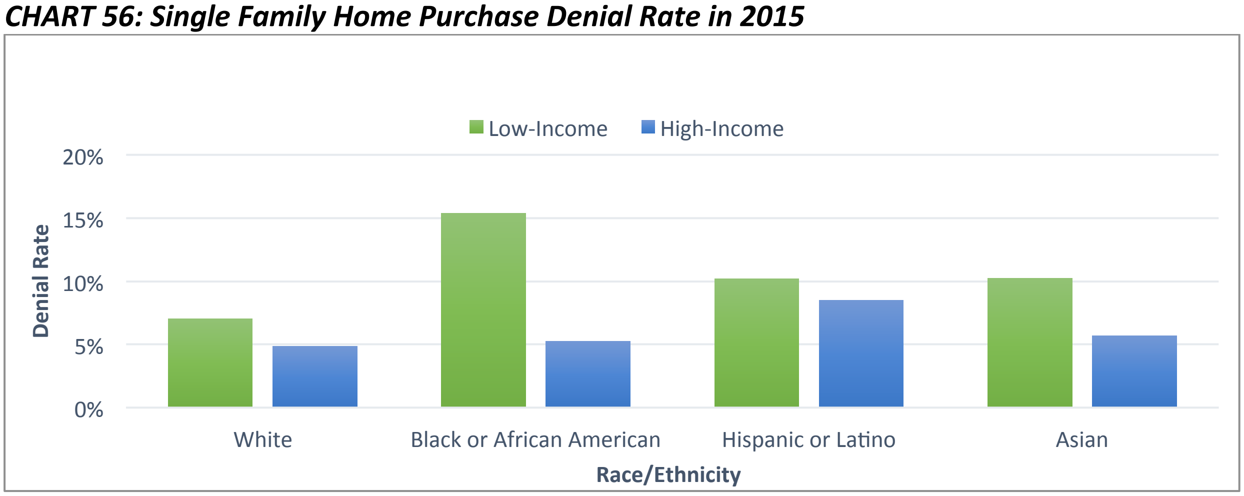
Of the 9,200 home purchase loans for single-family homes that were originated in 2015, approximately 55 percent were provided by conventional lenders. The remaining 45 percent were provided by federally backed sources including the FHA, VA and FSA/RHS (Rural Housing Service). The FHA, VA, and RHS lenders had application/approval ratios of 48, 51, and 47 percent respectively. Conventional lenders, by contrast, originated home purchase loans at a higher 56 percent of all applications.

A further examination of the 5,100 denials indicates that over 70 percent were for applicants seeking to refinance existing mortgages for owner-occupied, primary residences. The number one reason for denial of refinance applications was credit history (29% of refinance denials), followed closely by debt-to-income ratio (27%). Lack of collateral was the primary denial reason for 11 percent of refinance applications in 2015, down from 16 percent in 2014. Typically, homeowners seeking to refinance their existing home mortgage can use their home as collateral. When the denial reason given for a refinance is a lack of collateral, this would indicate the home is worth less than the existing mortgage and, therefore, refinancing is not an option. These homes are commonly referred to as "under-water" and the borrowers "upside-down" in their mortgage.

The percentage of loan application denials for traditional home purchase loans for one-to-four family housing in Adams County varies by race/ethnic group. It should be noted that the clear majority of conventional home purchase applicants in 2015 were non-Hispanic Whites (nearly 80%), while Black (1.2%) and Asian (6%) applicants were represented by much smaller sample sizes. Hispanics were the second highest racial/ethnic group by application count at approximately 14 percent. In 2015, Whites were least likely to be denied for conventional single-family home purchases, being denied at a rate of 5 percent. Hispanics and Asians were denied at similar rates of 7 and 8 percent respectively, while Black applicants faced the highest home purchase denial rate at 11 percent.

Additionally, a closer look at home purchase denial rates by race/ethnicity and income group within Adams County, shown below, demonstrates that high-income Hispanics (with an income greater than 120% of Area Median Income) were more likely to be denied for a single-family home purchase, at 9 percent, than low-income Whites (having less than 80% of AMI), at 7 percent. Further, low-income Blacks were the group with the highest home purchase denial rate at approximately 15 percent, more than double the rate of low-income Whites. High-income Blacks had a denial rate similar to high-income Whites, at approximately 5 percent, while high-income Hispanics were denied at a rate of 9 percent, the highest for the high-income groups. White and Hispanic applicants demonstrated the lowest disparity in denial rates between their low- and high-income applicants, with both near 2 percent. The gap between low- and high-income Asians was approximately 4 percent while Black applicants showed the greatest disparity in denial rates between low- and high-income applicants at 10 percent.

CHART 56: Single Family Home Purchase Denial Rate in 2015



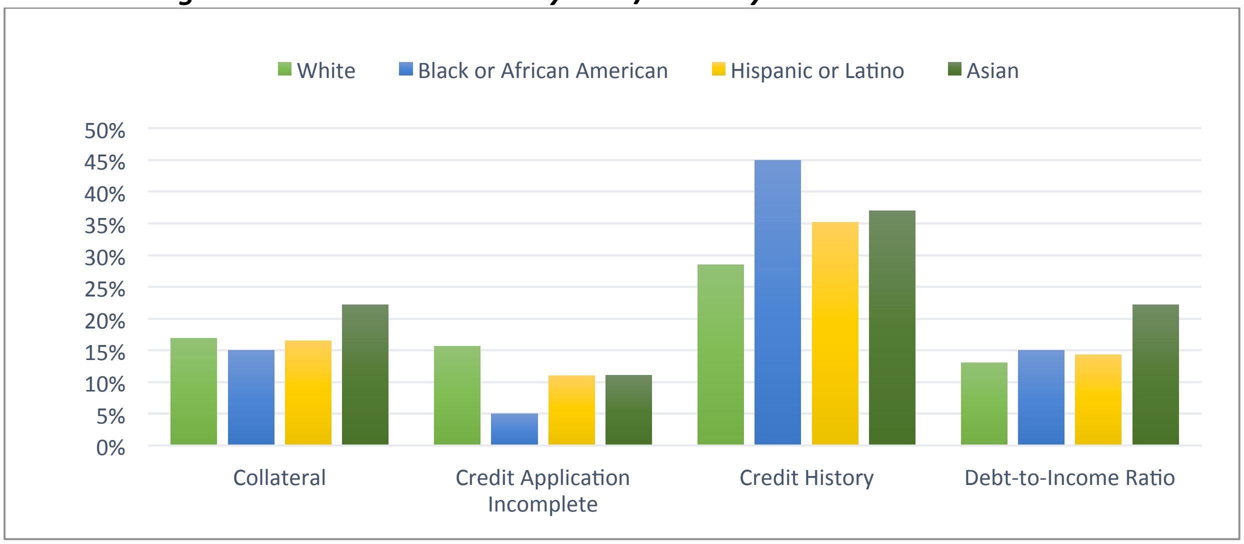
Source: HMDA

Application Denial Reasons by Income Group

The below charts compare denial reasons among Black, White, Hispanic, and Asian applicants by income group.

As of 2015, the leading denial reason for all high-income groups by race/ethnicity was credit history, representing over a quarter of all denials for Whites, over a third of denials for Hispanics and Asians, and approximately 45 percent of denials for Black applicants. High-income Asians were more likely to be denied for lack of collateral and debt-to-income ratio relative to high-income applicants of other race/ethnicity groups. High-income Blacks were the group most likely to be denied for credit history, while high-income Whites were the group most likely to be denied for incomplete credit applications.

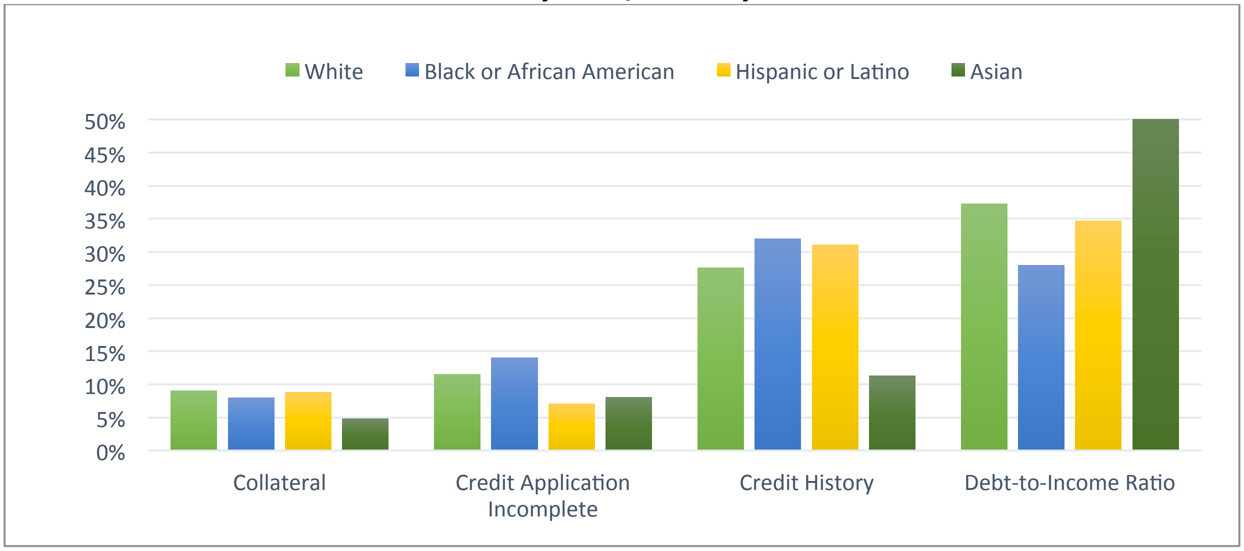
CHART 57: High Income Denial Reasons by Race/Ethnicity in 2015



Source: HMDA

For low-income denials across all examined race/ethnicity groups, lack of collateral and incomplete credit applications represented relatively small shares in 2015, with the mild exception of the 14 percent of low-income Black applicants who were denied for incomplete credit applications. Low-income applicants of every race/ethnicity group examined were denied for debt-to-income ratio at a higher rate than their high-income counterparts, and in the case of low-income Whites, the rate was nearly triple. Similar to high-income Asians, low-income Asians were most likely to be denied for debt-to-income ratio relative to other groups, though low-income Asians were much less likely to be denied for credit history.

CHART 58: Low Income Denial Reasons by Race/Ethnicity in 2015



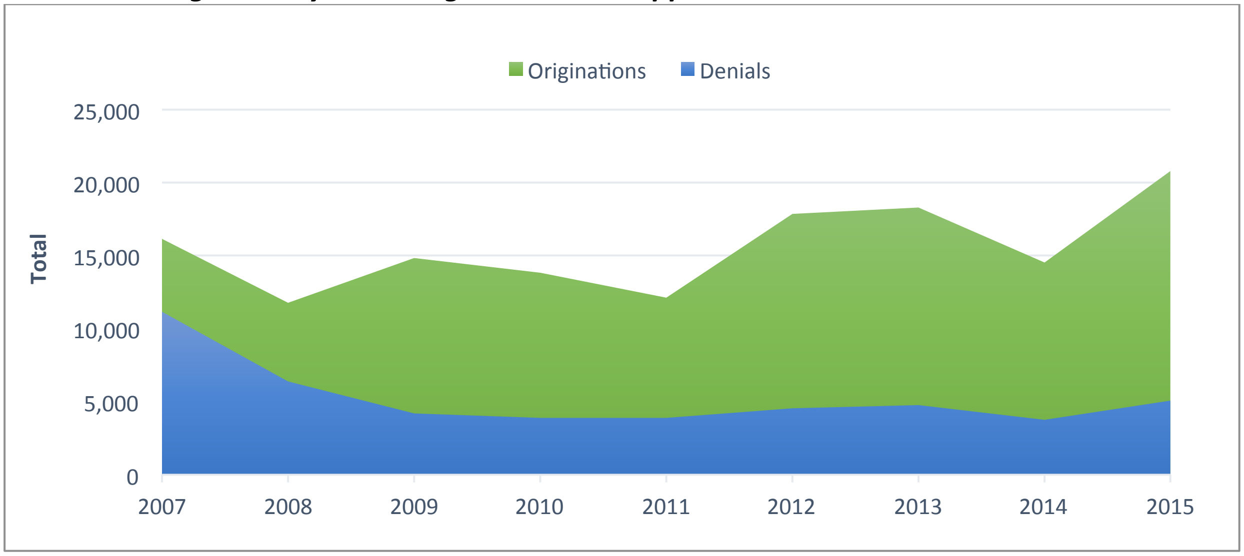
Source: HMDA

Adams County's Single Family Lending Market, 2007-2015

This section examines HMDA data for Adams County over the time period 2007-2015.

Highlighted below, the number of single-family loan originations followed a dynamic trajectory between 2007 and 2015, fluctuating during the downturn between 2007 and 2009, followed by a downward trend between 2009 and 2011. Subsequently, originations rose between 2011 and 2013, surpassing pre-crisis levels in 2012, though declined to below-2007 levels in 2014. However, between 2014 and 2015, the total number of originations increased by over 6,200, to nearly 21,000 – the highest level of all years examined and 30 percent above 2007 levels. Compared to 2010, total originations have increased by over 50 percent. In contrast to originations, the number of application denials within Adams County has had a relatively steadier downward trend between 2007 and 2015, falling by over half, though since 2011 denials have shown mild fluctuations year-over-year, including an increase between 2014 and 2015. Relatedly, the share of denials as a percent of total originations and total denials has declined markedly since the housing bust, from over 40 percent to under 20 percent.

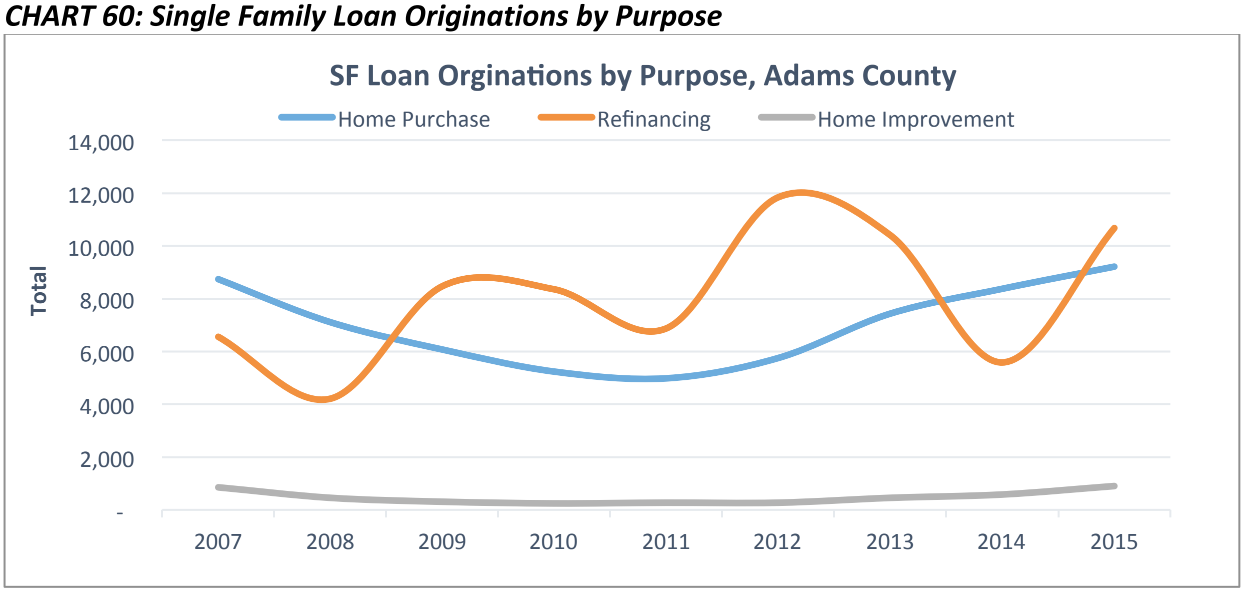
CHART 59: Single Family Loan Originations and Application Denials



Source: HMDA

Shown below, much of the year-to-year fluctuations in total originations that occurred between 2007 and 2015 were the result of refinancing originations. Though home purchases represented the top loan purpose by total originations prior to the housing bust in 2008, refinancing became the leading loan purpose between 2009 and 2013. Though home purchases became the top loan purpose in 2014, as of 2015 refinances are the again the dominant loan purpose within Adams County, comprising over half of the County's total. However, while refinance loans have continued to fluctuate, home purchase originations have been on a consistent upward trajectory since 2011. Further, 2015 was the first year in which the level of home purchase originations in Adams County surpassed that of 2007.

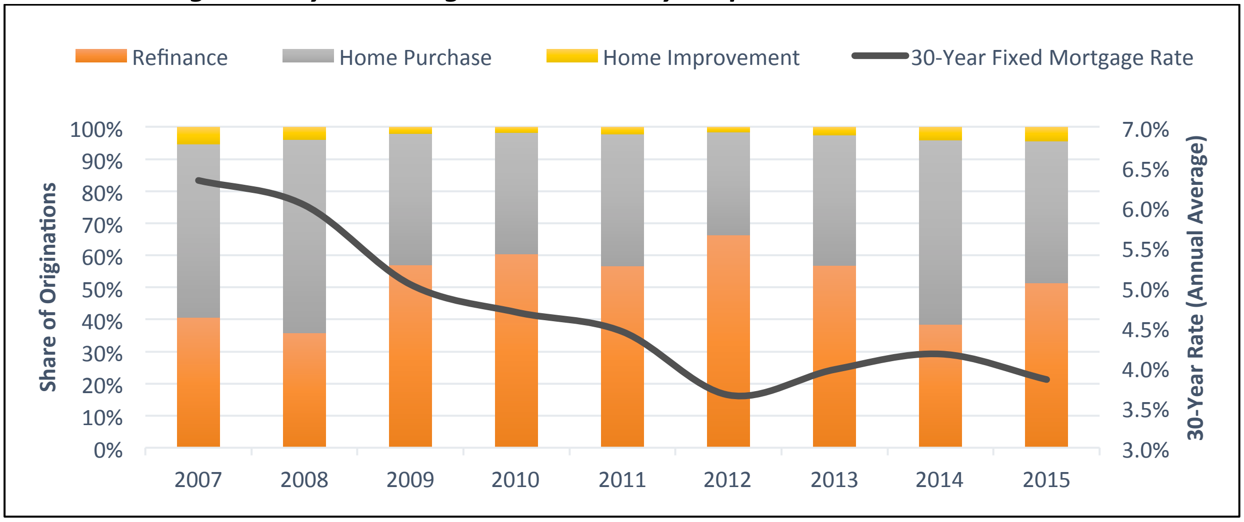
CHART 60: Single Family Loan Originations by Purpose



Source: HMDA

The level of refinance originations appears to move generally with the 30-year fixed rate mortgage average, shown below. In 2012, for example, when the average 30-year fixed rate mortgage was at its lowest level of all the years examined, refinance originations in Adams County peaked in both absolute and percentage terms. The decrease in the annual average of the 30-year fixed mortgage rate between 2014 and 2015 is consistent with Adams County's increased share of refinance loans over the same time period.

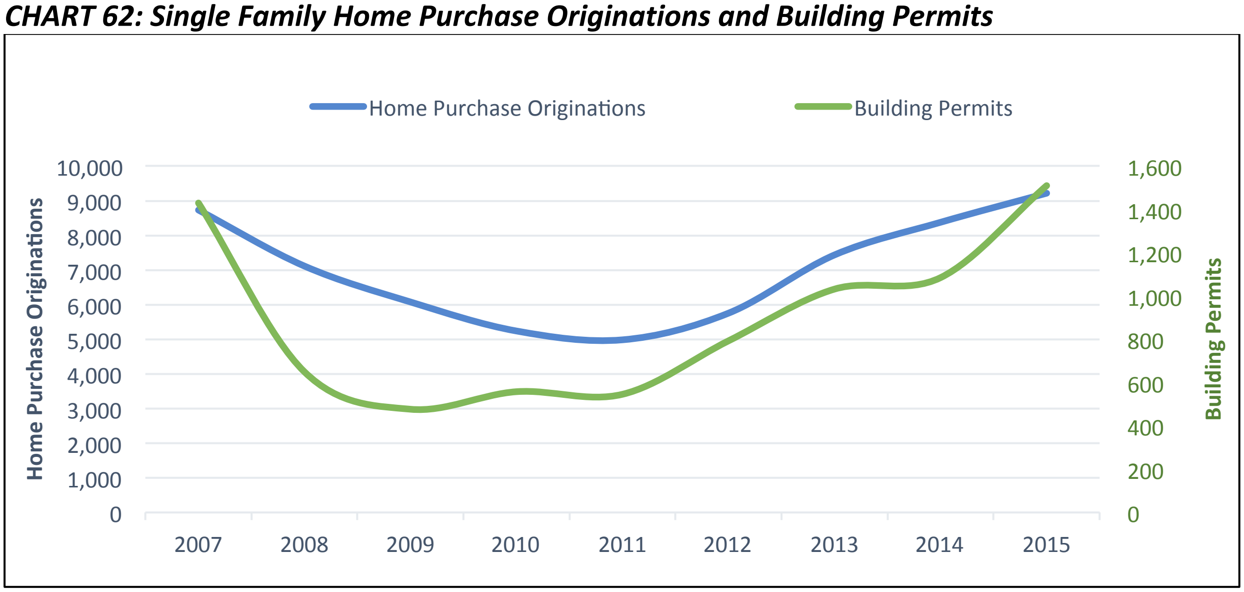
CHART 61: Single Family Loan Origination Share by Purpose



Source: HMDA, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

For home purchase loans, the movement of originations appears to track trends in the number of single-family building permits within Adams County, indicating recent growth in housing demand.

CHART 62: Single Family Home Purchase Originations and Building Permits

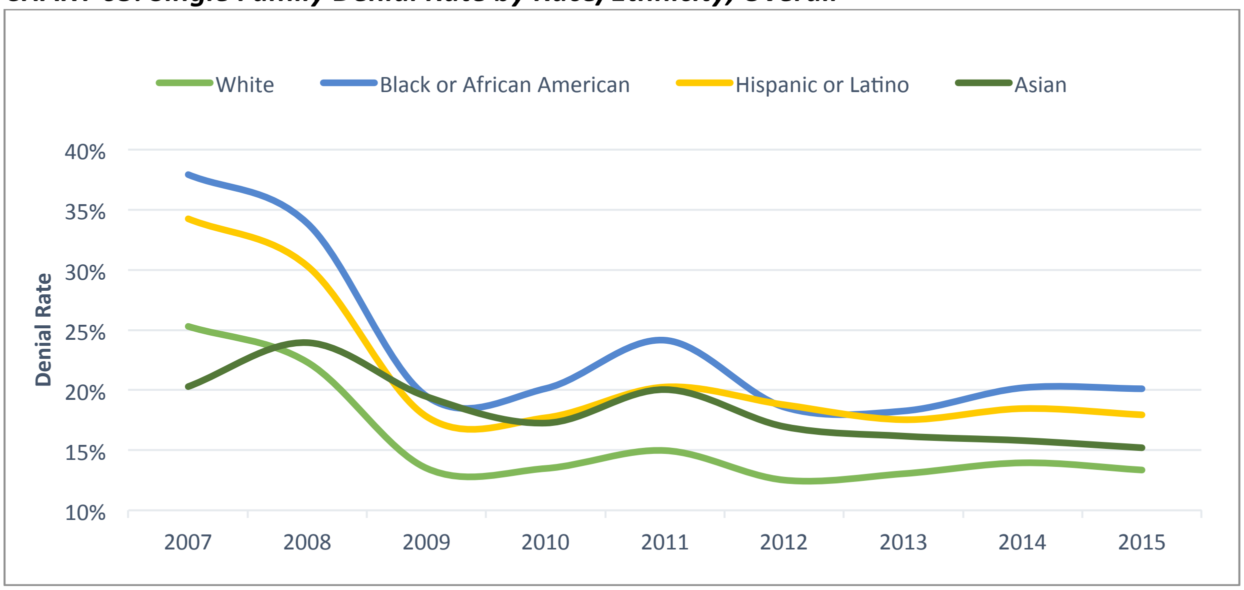


Source: HMDA

Income, Race, and Single Family Loan Denials in Adams County

Denial rates for single-family loans in Adams County over time vary by race and ethnicity. The chart below shows that between 2007 and 2015, every group examined saw an overall decrease in denial rates, with Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics falling by nearly half. In every year since 2008, White applicants were the least likely to be denied. Denial rates increased for Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics between 2013 and 2014, but stabilized between 2014 and 2015. The disparity between various racial and ethnic groups in loan denial rates has declined significantly since 2007, though minorities remain more likely to be denied relative to Whites.

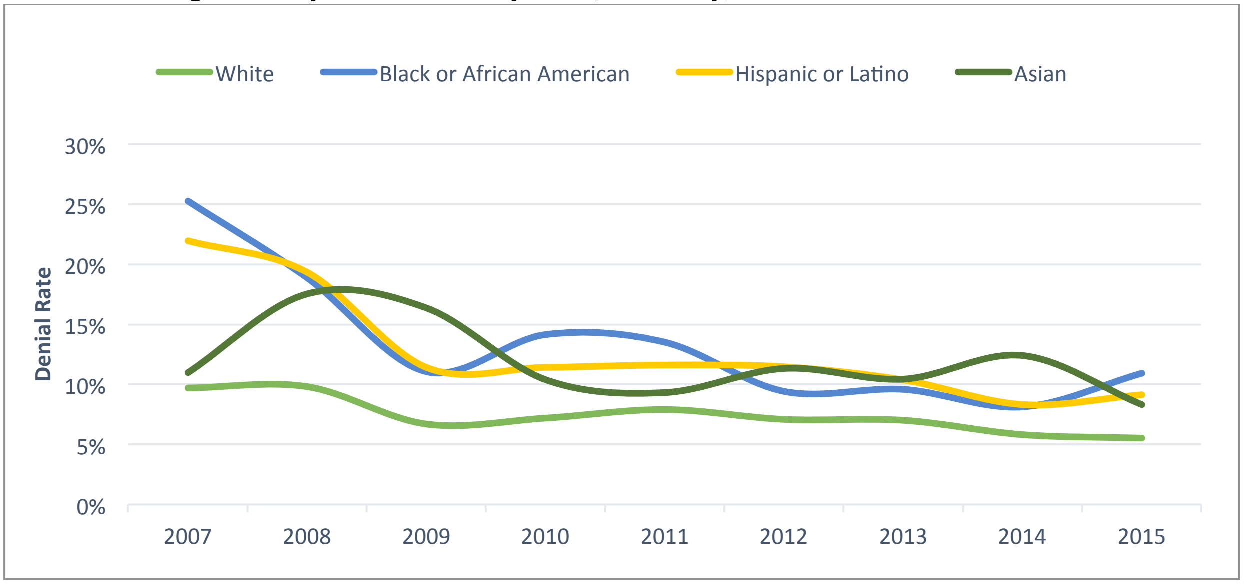
CHART 63: Single Family Denial Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Overall



Source: HMDA

Home purchase applications exhibit more variability in denial rates among minorities, though Whites are the least likely to be denied for every year examined. Asians had the highest home purchase denial rate in 2014, though as of 2015 Black applicants are most likely to be denied. As of the most recent data year, all race/ethnicity groups have lower home purchase denial rates relative to 2010.

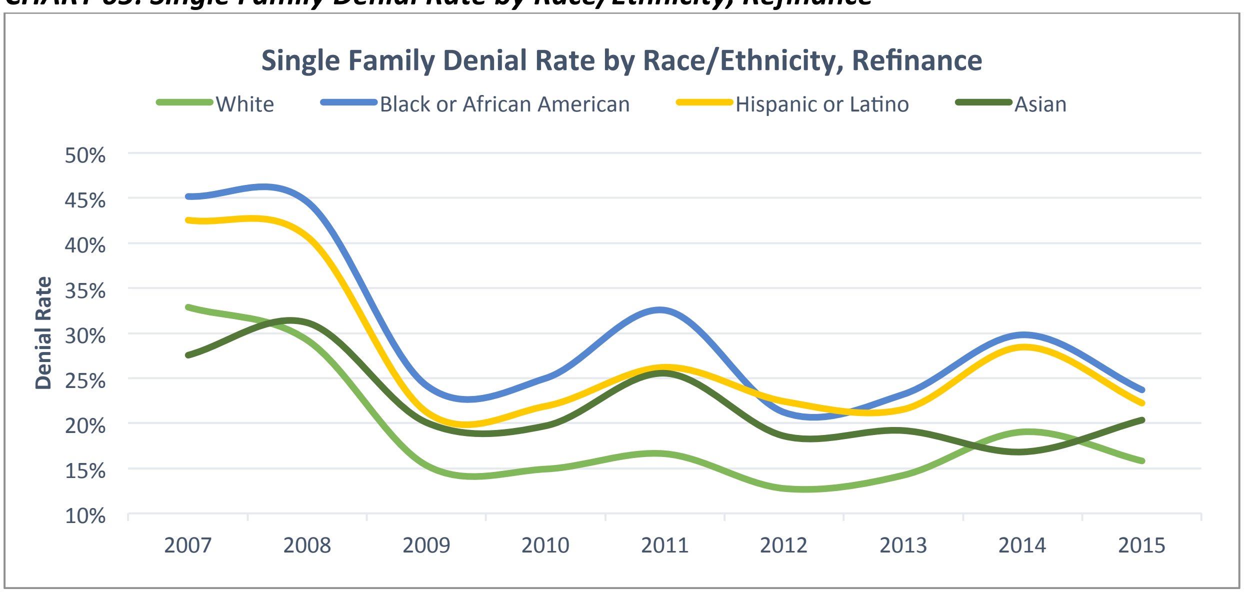
CHART 64: Single Family Denial Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Home Purchase



Source: HMDA

Consistent with the overall denial rate as well as the denial rate for home purchases, Whites were the group with the lowest denial rate for a refinance application in 2015. During the years examined, Blacks and Hispanics have been consistently more likely to be denied for a refinance than Whites and Asians. However, in contrast to home purchase denials, the refinance denial rate for Blacks and Hispanics declined between 2014 and 2015, while it rose for Asian applicants.

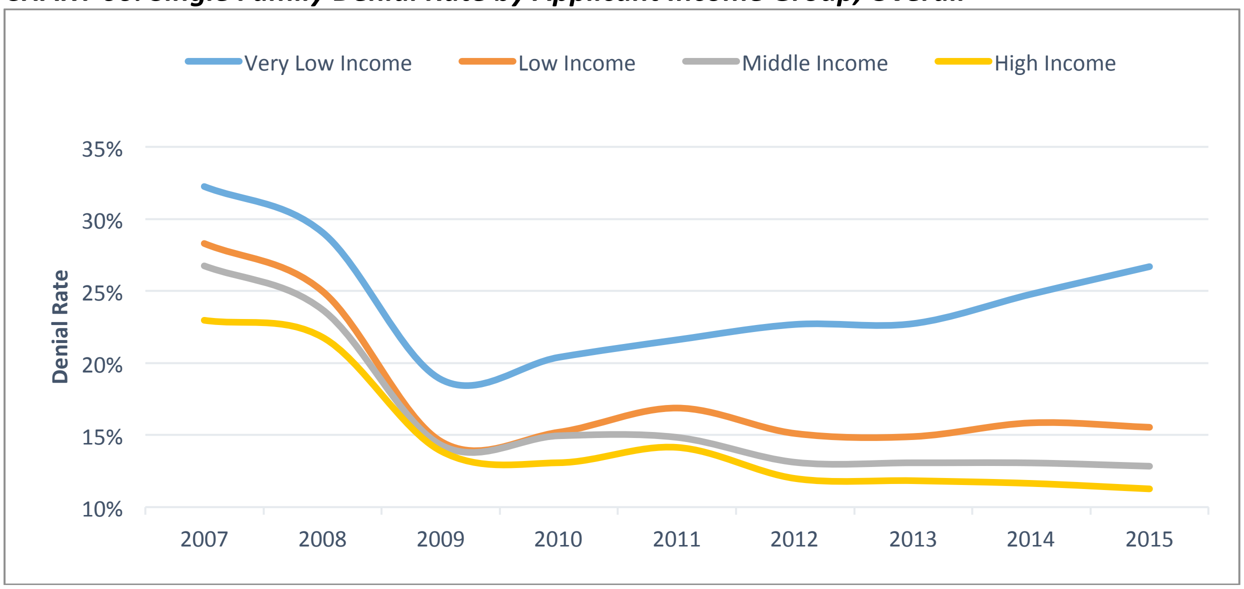
CHART 65: Single Family Denial Rate by Race/Ethnicity, Refinance



Source: HMDA

A view of single-family denial rates by applicant income group within Adams County, highlighted below, shows the expected outcome that higher-income groups generally experience lower denial rates than lower-income groups. However, very low-income applicants (50% or less of AMI) have remained well above other income groups during the years examined, with increasing divergence since 2009. High-income (greater than 120% of AMI) and middle-income (80 to 120% of AMI) applicants have experienced similar rates of denial since 2011, with low-income (between 50 and 80% of AMI) applicants consistently above the other two. The single-family denial rate for all income groups declined between 2007 and 2014, but has risen significantly for very low-income applicants since 2009.

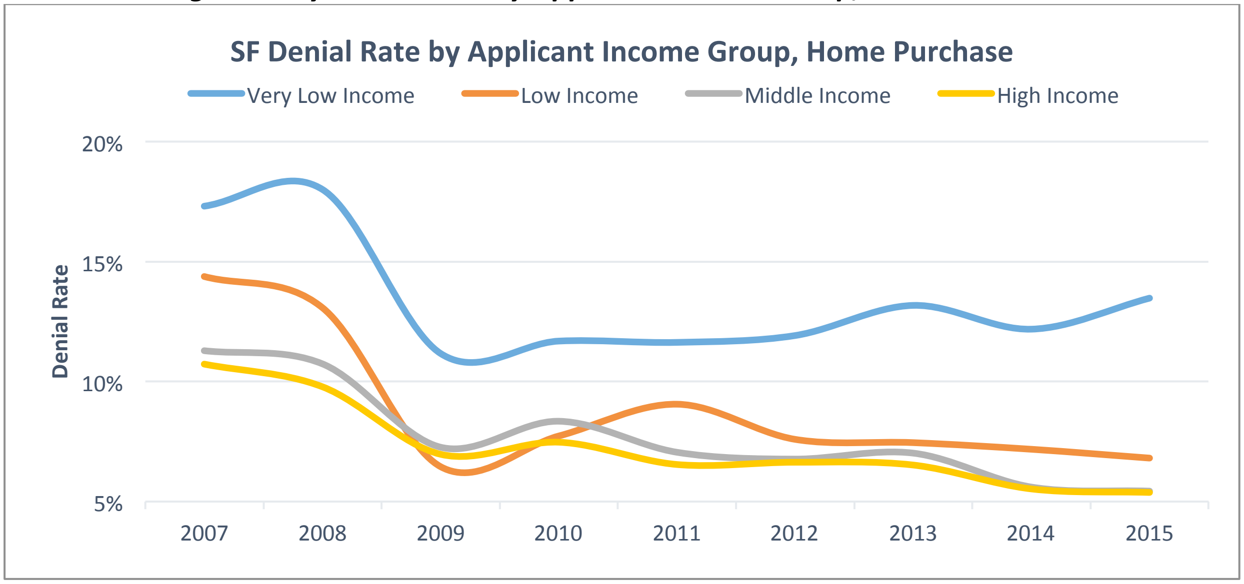
CHART 66: Single Family Denial Rate by Applicant Income Group, Overall



Source: HMDA

Similar to overall denial rates by income group, home purchase applications were denied at a much higher rate for very low-income applicants between 2007 and 2014 while low-, middle-, and high-income applicants have remained closer to each other since 2009. In 2014 and 2015, home purchase denial rates were nearly identical for high-income and middle-income applicants, at just over 5 percent.

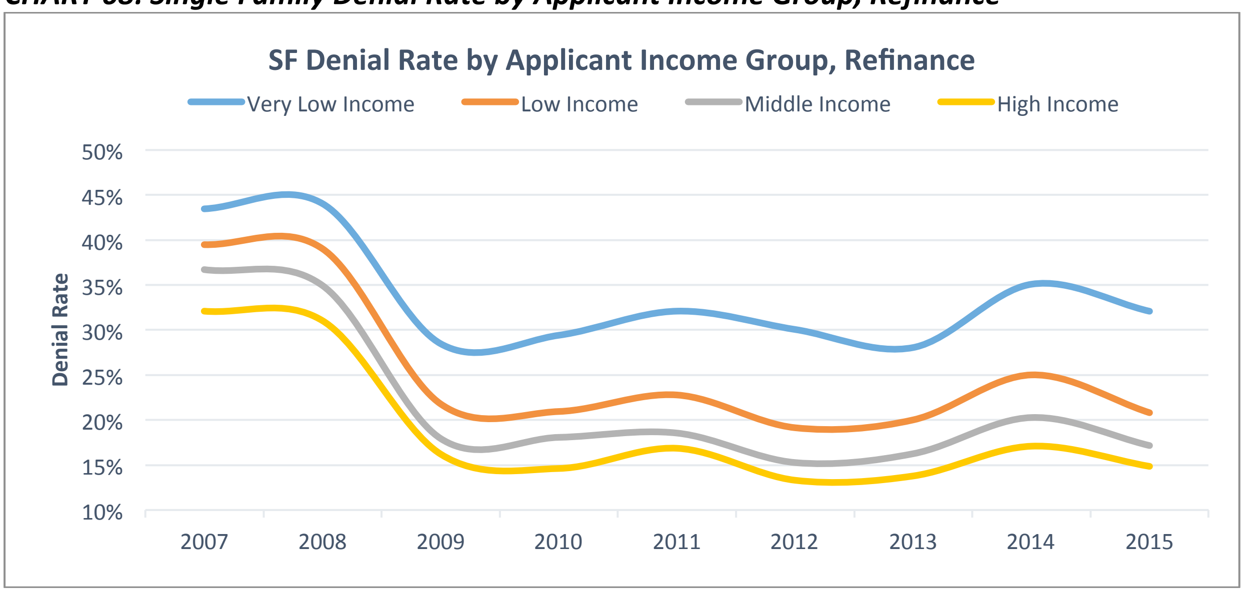
CHART 67: Single Family Denial Rate by Applicant Income Group, Home Purchase



Source: HMDA

Denial rates for refinance applications by income group have followed a much more consistent and synchronized trend with higher income groups showing lower denial rates than lower income groups in every year analyzed.

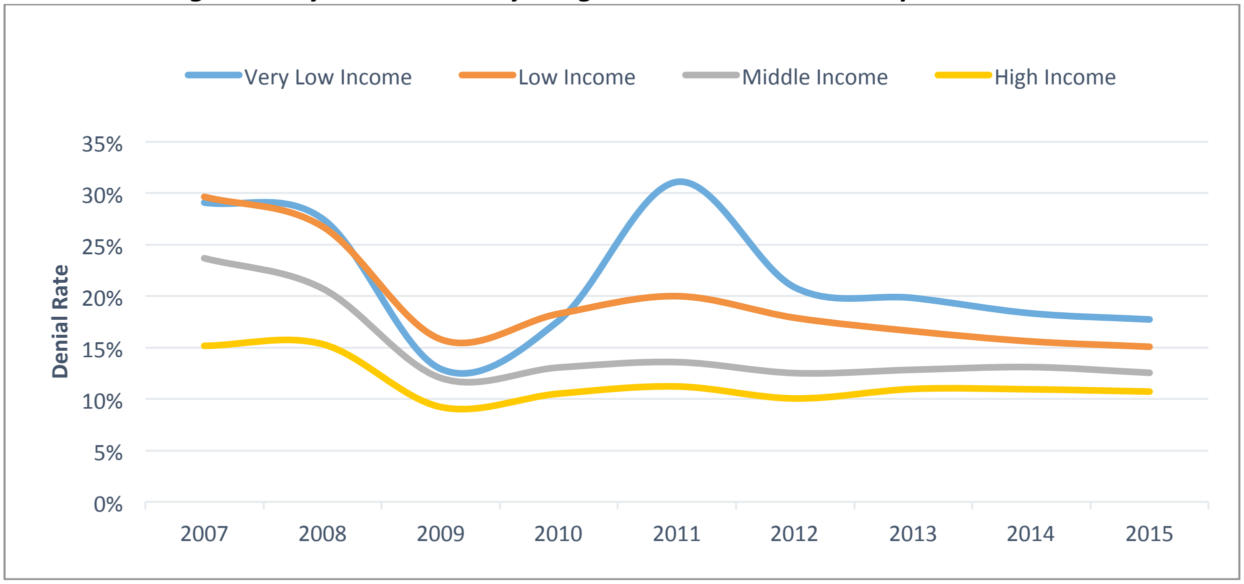
CHART 68: Single Family Denial Rate by Applicant Income Group, Refinance



Source: HMDA

In addition to the income of the applicant, the median income of the property's neighborhood (defined as Census Tract) also indicates the high-income group outperforms other groups with regards to the denial rate. Though the sample size for very low-income neighborhoods is much lower than other groups (discussed further below), years 2007, 2009, and 2010 show very low-income neighborhoods with lower denial rates than low-income neighborhoods. Though the very low-income neighborhood denial rate increased dramatically between 2009 and 2011, it has since fallen sharply from over 30 percent to under 20 percent. All neighborhood income groups have seen reductions in their single-family denial rate since 2007 (as of 2015).

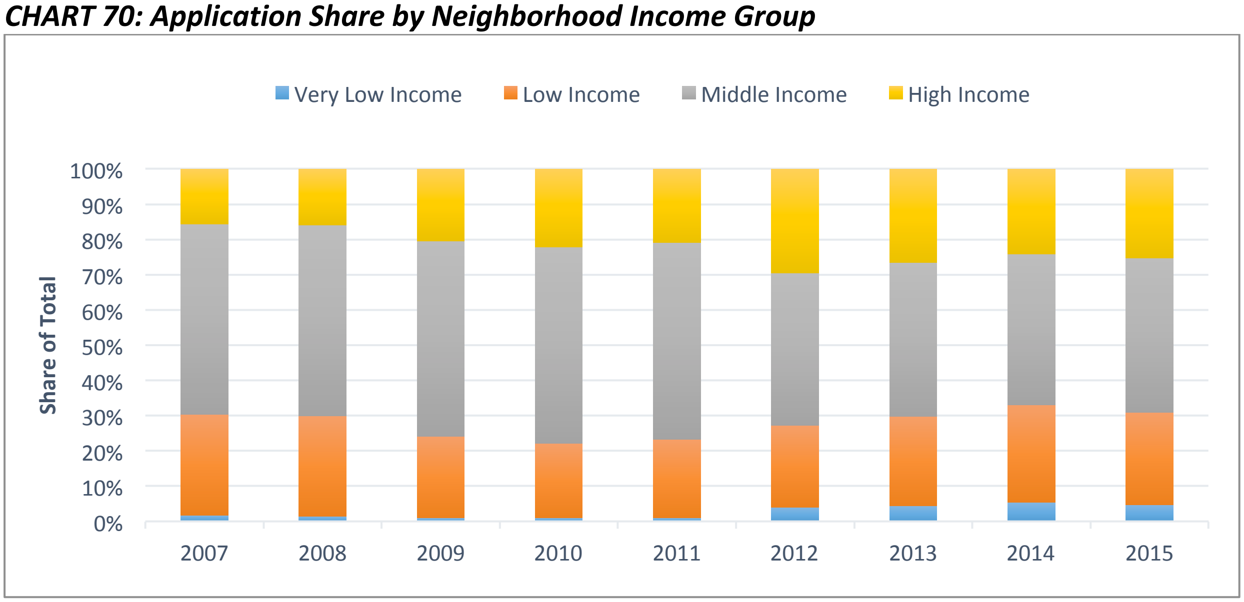
CHART 69: Single Family Denial Rate by Neighborhood Income Group



Source: HMDA

As a percentage of total applications within Adams County, middle-income neighborhoods have represented the largest share every year between 2007 and 2015, surpassing 55 percent between 2009 and 2011. Since 2010, however, the middle-income neighborhood share of total applications has fallen to 44 percent, while high-income and lower-income neighborhoods have risen in their share of total applications.

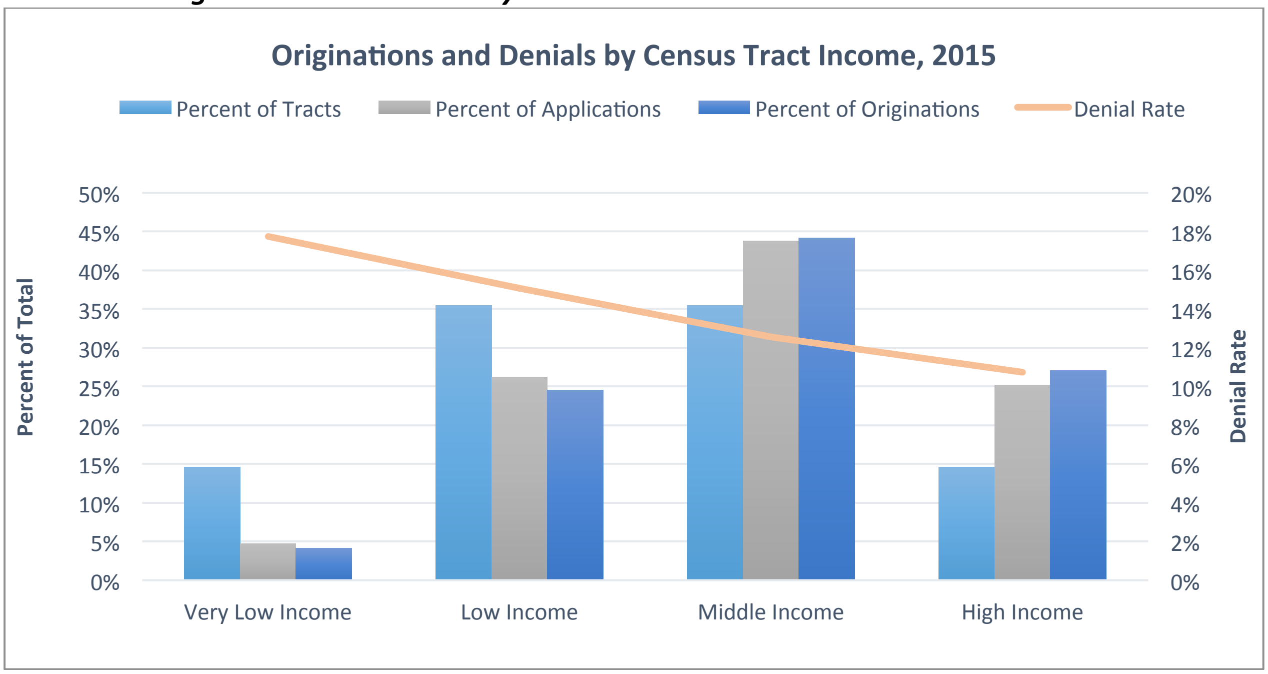
CHART 70: Application Share by Neighborhood Income Group



Source: HMDA

Within Adams County, very low-income and low-income neighborhoods represent 50 percent of the County's total neighborhoods, although they are represented by approximately 29 percent of total originations and 33 percent of total applications as of 2015, shown below. This suggests that low- and very low-income neighborhoods within Adams County are less likely to participate in the single-family lending market. By contrast, loan applications and originations within Adams County are disproportionately likely to occur for properties in middle- and high-income neighborhoods. For example, high-income neighborhoods represent 15 percent of the County total, but they account for 25 percent of applications and 27 percent of all single-family loans originations throughout the County in 2015.

CHART 71: Originations and Denials by Census Tract Income

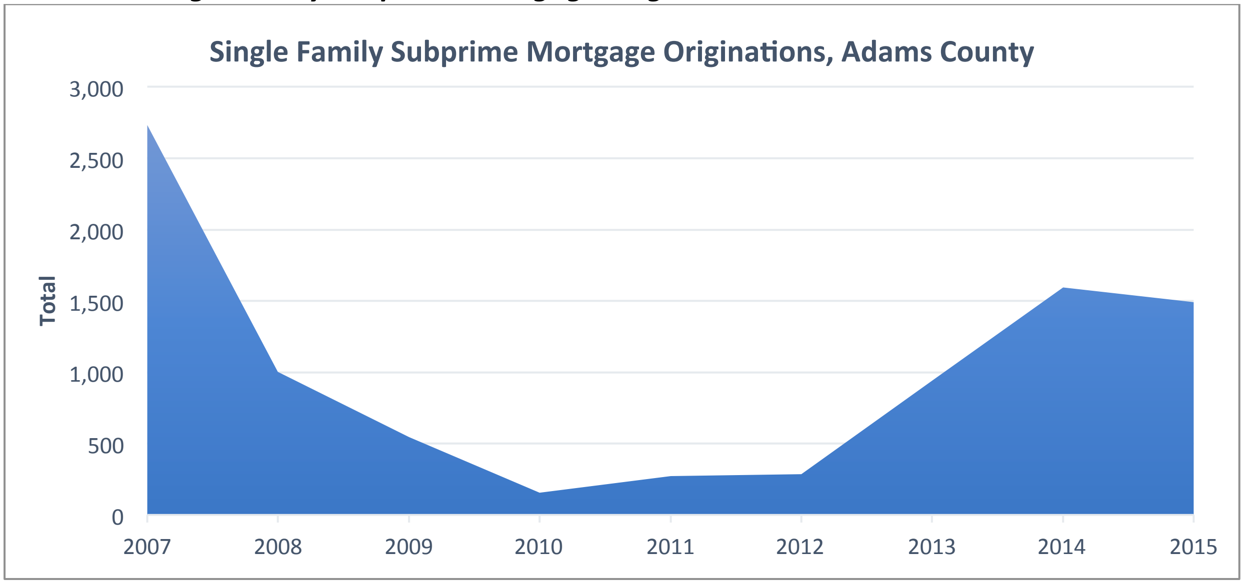


Source: HMDA

The Subprime Market

Subprime loans are defined as those with an annual percentage rate that exceeds the average prime offer rate by at least 1.5 percent. Illustrated below, the subprime mortgage market in Adams County declined significantly between 2007 and 2010, increased sharply between 2012 and 2014, and had a mild decline as of 2015. The total number of subprime loan originations fell by over 45 percent between 2007 and 2015, while prime originations increased by 44 percent during the same time period. However, since 2010, the number of subprime loan originations has grown by over 800 percent, but remains less than 55 percent of the County's 2007 levels. Relatedly, subprime originations as a percent of Adams County's total has declined from 17 percent to 1 percent between 2007 and 2010, but as of 2015 that percent has risen to approximately 7 percent, down from over 10 percent in 2014.

CHART 72: Single Family Subprime Mortgage Originations

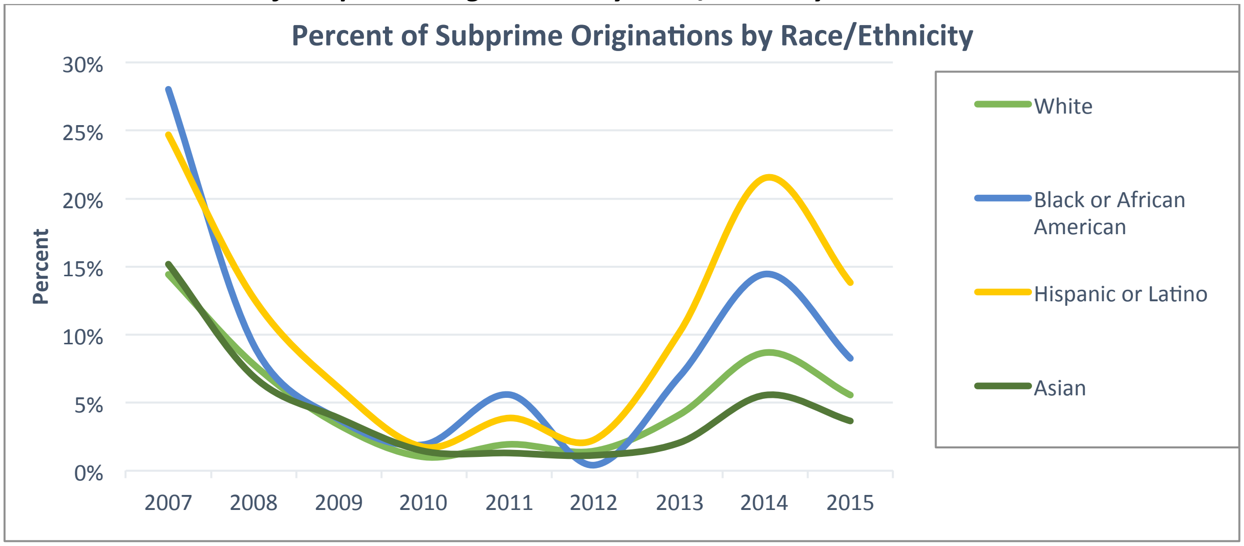


Source: HMDA

Looking at the share of subprime loans as a percentage of total originations by race/ethnicity reveals that Black loan recipients were nearly twice as likely to have a subprime loan relative to White loan recipients in 2007, and Hispanics were more than 1.7 times as likely during the same year. This trend is consistent with the broader national pattern of minorities being disproportionately subjected to predatory subprime lending leading up to the housing crash, as outlined in a post-crisis report by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.[10] The period between 2007 and 2010 saw the subprime share for all racial and ethnic groups decline substantially, with all groups converging to a subprime share of less than 2 percent in 2010. Leading up to 2015, however, the share of subprime mortgages among Blacks and Hispanics in Adams County increased considerably, although the subprime share for all groups declined between 2014 and 2015. Further, since 2012 and as of the most recent data year, Hispanics are the race/ethnicity with the highest subprime percentage at 14 percent, compared to 8 percent for Blacks, 6 percent for Whites, and 4 percent for Asians. Relative to the pre-crisis share of subprime originations, Black and Asian originations are under 30 percent of the 2007 share, while Whites are at approximately 40 percent and Hispanics are at 56 percent.

[10] https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/foreclosure_09.pdf

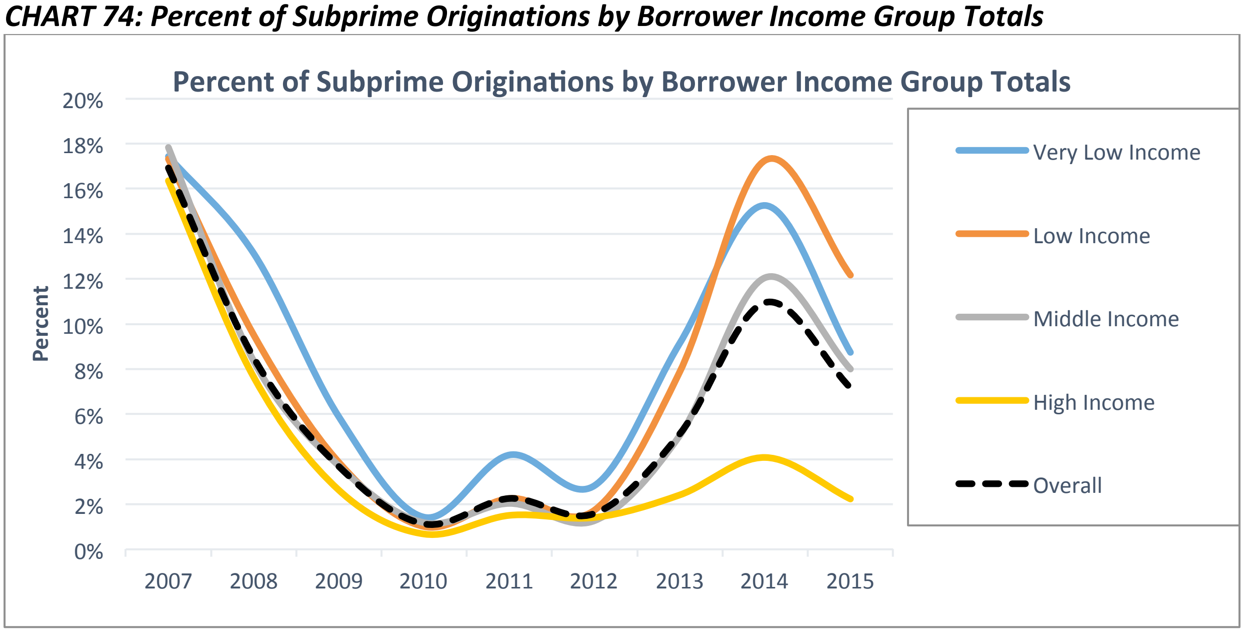
CHART 73: Percent of Subprime Originations by Race/Ethnicity



Source: HMDA

A view of subprime originations by income group totals shows a sharp decline between 2007 and 2010 among all groups, with broad increases from 2012 and 2014. Between 2014 and 2015, however, subprime shares for all income groups decreased, with changes most pronounced in the low- and very-low income borrower groups. The share of subprime originations within Adams County is almost exclusively concentrated in middle- and lower-income groups, with the middle-income share nearly 4 times that of the high-income share and the low-income share more than 5 times that of the subprime share of high-income originations. Notably, before the crisis there was a very similar share of subprime percentages across all income groups, with a divergence occurring since then.

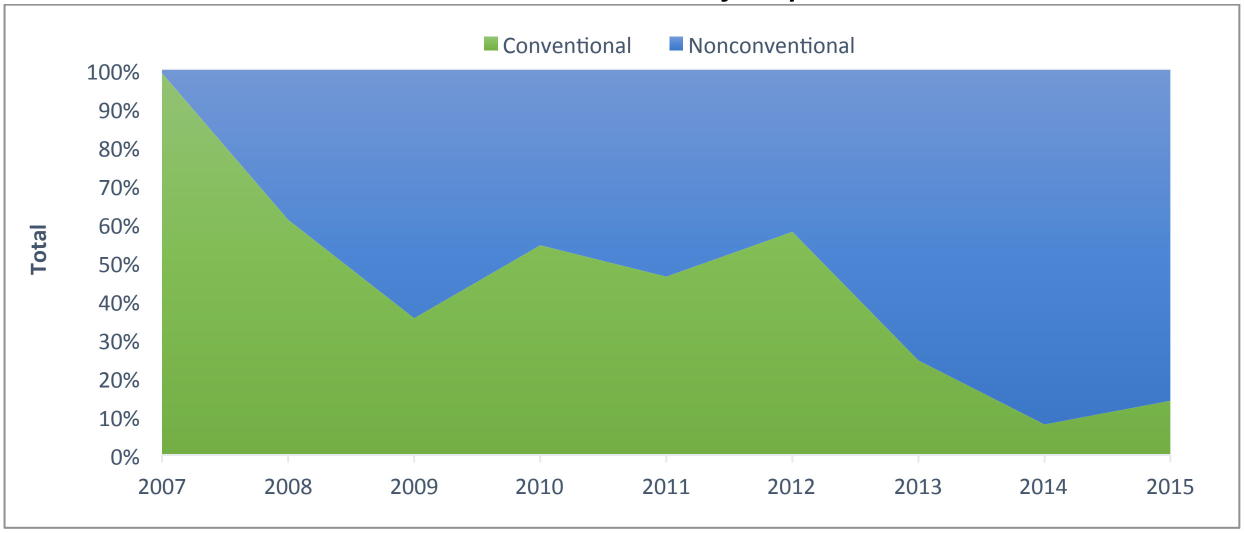
CHART 74: Percent of Subprime Originations by Borrower Income Group Totals



Source: HMDA

Consistent with broader national trends, the composition of subprime loans within Adams County has shifted from conventional loans to government-insured nonconventional loans in the aftermath of the housing crisis. In 2007, over 99 percent of subprime loans within the County were originated by conventional lenders. As of 2015, that percentage has dropped to 14 percent, increasing from an otherwise steady downward trend since 2012. Of the nonconventional subprime loans originated in Adams County, the overwhelming majority is insured by the Federal Housing Administration (over 99% in 2015).

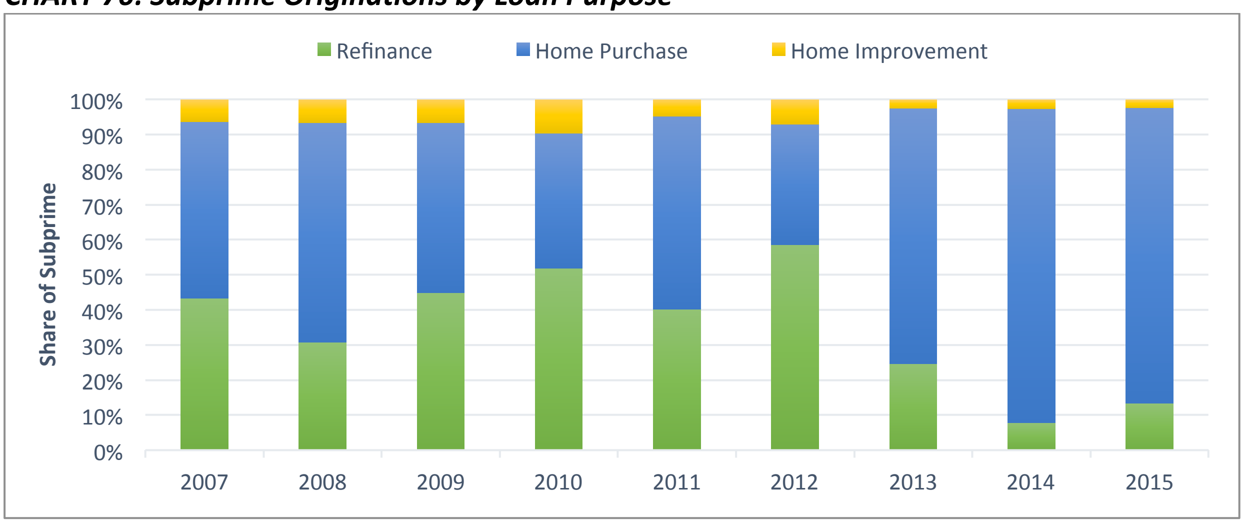
CHART 75: Conventional and Nonconventional Share of Subprime Total



Source: HMDA

As a percentage of all subprime loan originations within Adams County, home purchases represented nearly 85 percent in 2015, up from 50 percent in 2007 and a low of 34 percent in 2012, though down from a peak of nearly 90 percent in 2014.

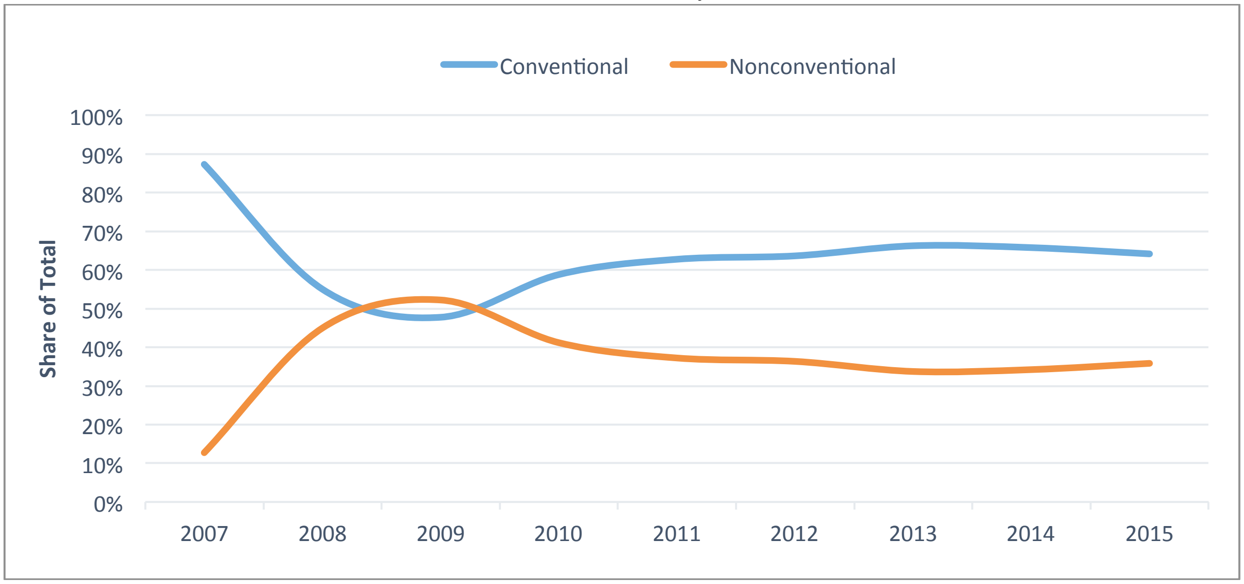
CHART 76: Subprime Originations by Loan Purpose



Source: HMDA

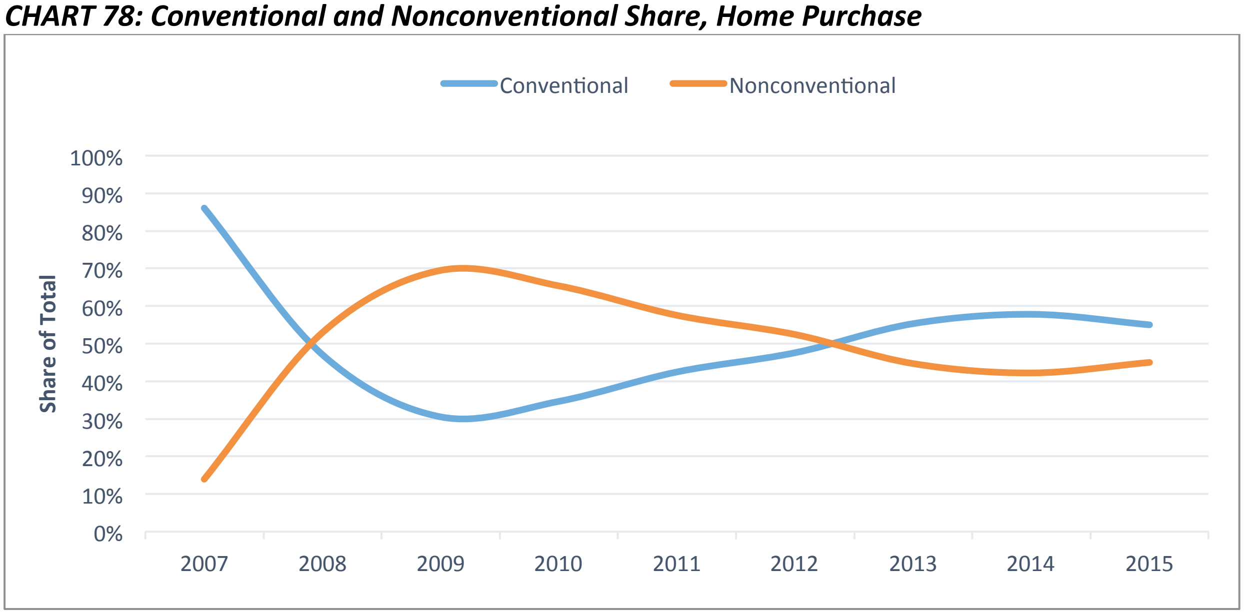
Though subprime loans within Adams County are mostly nonconventional, nearly two-thirds of all single-family originations in 2015 were from conventional lenders, including 55 percent of home purchase originations and 70 percent of refinance originations, shown below. Between 2008 and 2012, most home purchase originations in Adams County were nonconventional, though this trend reversed starting in 2013.

CHART 77: Conventional and Nonconventional Share, Overall



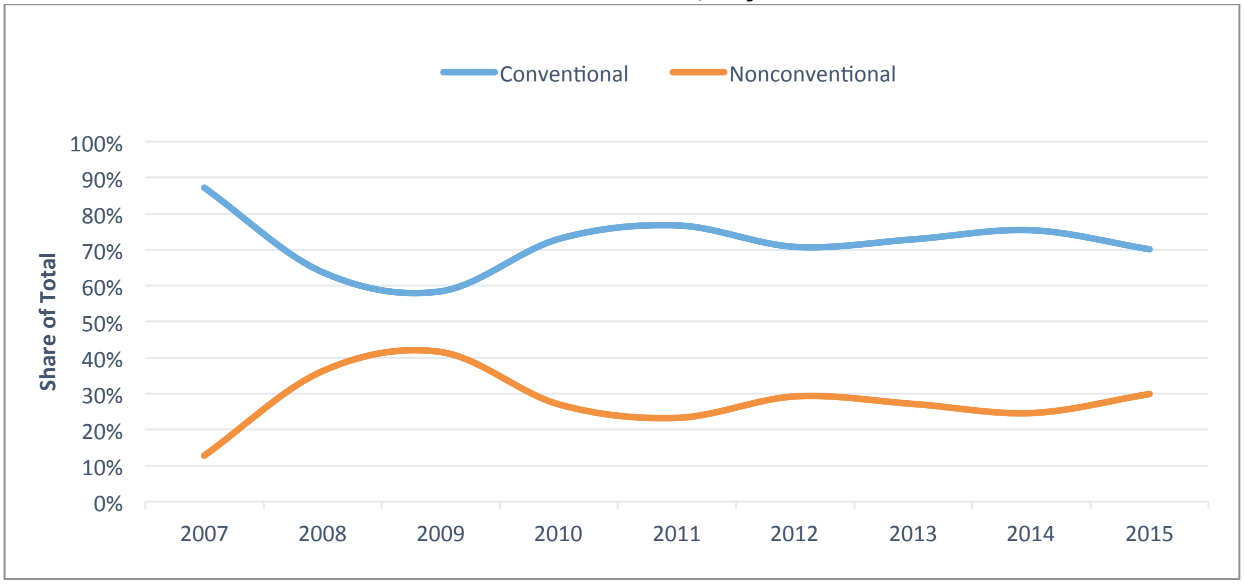
Source: HMDA

CHART 78: Conventional and Nonconventional Share, Home Purchase



Source: HMDA

CHART 79: Conventional and Nonconventional Share, Refinance



Source: HMDA

Mortgage lending activity in Adams County is consistent with many of the broader trends that have occurred in the wake of the housing bust, Great Recession, and subsequent recovery.

Community Input

To gain a more thorough understanding of the housing situation in Adams County, three focus groups and a series of interviews with community leaders were conducted. Data and objective measurements are important for analysis, but to have a well-rounded review of housing within a jurisdiction it is important to understand how things are perceived within the community.

Overall, there is optimism about the housing situation in Adams County, but also an awareness of the struggles ahead. Relatively low housing prices and an abundance of available land make Adams County ripe for economic success, but the public-school system and transportation issues are a problem. In addition, respondents acknowledged that state-level policies are causing speedbumps for affordable housing, particularly the Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR) and the Construction Defect Law. These policies prevent private construction of a variety of housing types and limit public support of affordable housing.

The following sections summarize the comments from each of the outreach methods in Adams County. The final section includes all the comments made but identifying features have been removed to maintain anonymity, which is necessary to receive candid and open feedback. Complete notes and interview transcripts can be found in the Appendix.

Focus Group 1 – Attainable Housing Meeting

Within the Denver area there are two primary housing problems that must be addressed, each with a multitude of related issues. The first problem is a lack of available affordable housing. There are 1,000 families moving to the area each month, which is increasing housing costs and pushing people into the suburbs. The few seemingly affordable units are often made unaffordable by HOA fees. The housing situation has caused an increase in overcrowding and the potential for housing discrimination, as families compete for limited homes. The push into the suburbs makes owning a car necessary due to the lack of adequate transportation options.

The second housing problem in the region is inadequate construction of new units. The statewide Construction Defect Law has prevented the necessary housing from being constructed because the law favors HOA's over the developer. The risks required for building multi-family units under the law are too high for most developers to take, particularly with affordable housing. Construction costs are increasing quickly due to land cost, construction cost, insurance burden, and a lack of available skilled construction employees. Even when the overall housing stock increases, it is not necessarily the appropriate stock. A diversity of units is needed but zoning issues and communities that are comfortable with the status quo prevent diversification of housing. The counties lack the legal authority to address these issues through the legislative process.

Focus Group 2 – Developers and Builders

Adams County has many areas of strength that can be leveraged to improve housing. The county is viewed as "a land of opportunity" in the area and its proximity to Denver and the airport is an advantage. The political climate in the county has changed for the better in recent years and the staff is helpful, pro-business and accepting of many concepts. There is a lot of optimism about the potential of Adams County.

There are also some areas that require change for Adams County to reach its potential. The main issue is the fractured water and sanitation districts. The districts are unpredictable and have a history of imposing last minute costs and leveraging developers to upgrade the local infrastructure at a high cost. At times, a single, small district can destroy an entire project. This unpredictability prevents many developers from working within the county. A second issue is the quality of schools. Adams County is perceived as having low-performing public schools, which prevents families from moving into the county if they have other options.

The developers had a series of recommendations for the County. First and foremost: find a way to unify the water and sanitation district policies to improve predictability and consider becoming a home rule county to improve consistency in the County. Also, it would help to identify a single person who can evangelize the Adams County vision; right now, it appears fractured. Businesses will follow residents and the focus should be on providing housing and investing in beautification, improving pedestrian options, and creating a “sense of place” for neighborhoods. It would also help to focus resources on a single area instead of spreading them thin each year, with the area of focus shifting regularly over time.

Focus Group 3 - Brokers

The primary strength of Adams County is the availability of land. Larger lots are more plentiful in Adams County than in other areas. The housing costs are also relatively less than other areas, which can potentially attract residents.

Adams County could improve its housing situation by addressing the demand for all types of housing, particularly those near the $300,000 range. Long-time residents often would like to stay in the same neighborhood, but very few communities have low maintenance ranch or main floor master homes for retirees to move into. In addition, the public schools are seen as overcrowded and low performing, which deters new families from moving into the county.

The participants recommended the County address several issues to improve the situation in Adams County. The property taxes and benefits vary widely in the county, lack transparency, and are confusing. There is also a lag between people moving into a new community and the construction of public schools, and families do not want to move to a community without a good school. Local governments should invest in infrastructure that will create a sense of place and community spirit.

Interviews

The county faces a shortage of both affordable housing and housing variety to attract and maintain talent. There are virtually no homes available in the $275,000 - $375,000 range, despite an incredibly high demand for housing at these price points. This lack of options prevents retired individuals who want to downsize from finding a home in their neighborhood. In addition, the limited affordable housing is often going to higher income residents because they are viewed as a safer option by landlords.

There are two pieces of statewide legislation, the Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR) and the Construction Defect Law, that have prevented the construction of affordable and varied housing throughout the county. The County needs to find ways to incentivize affordable housing through reduced regulatory barriers, subsidization, waving fees, and expediting construction aimed at very low-income families. Education is also needed for landlords and residents, many of whom do not know how to use the vouchers that are available.

Renters are particularly vulnerable because landlords are raising rent, kicking people out, and not renewing leases if they feel they can find someone who will pay more for the unit. Other at-risk populations include undocumented residents, residents with limited English proficiency, low-income families, the disabled, veterans, the homeless, and single mothers. Many of these groups are unable to represent themselves when housing is being addressed. Support for these groups is limited, and the support that is there is often difficult to get to due to lack of transportation options.

Rejecting ESG funds was not the right move because the community needs all the funding it can get to address issues that are unique to Adams County. The schools and infrastructure in the county need to be improved to attract residents. Most employers with high-paying jobs want to be in downtown Denver, so instead of competing to somehow bring those jobs into Adams County, the focus should be on leveraging the County's strengths (particularly land and potential industrial uses) and building up transportation. One of the most pressing needs of the community is for creating a sense of place in communities by improving the walkability and greenspace. Ideally, residents could live in the same neighborhood as grocery stores, restaurants, and entertainment facilities.

Findings

Housing is less affordable

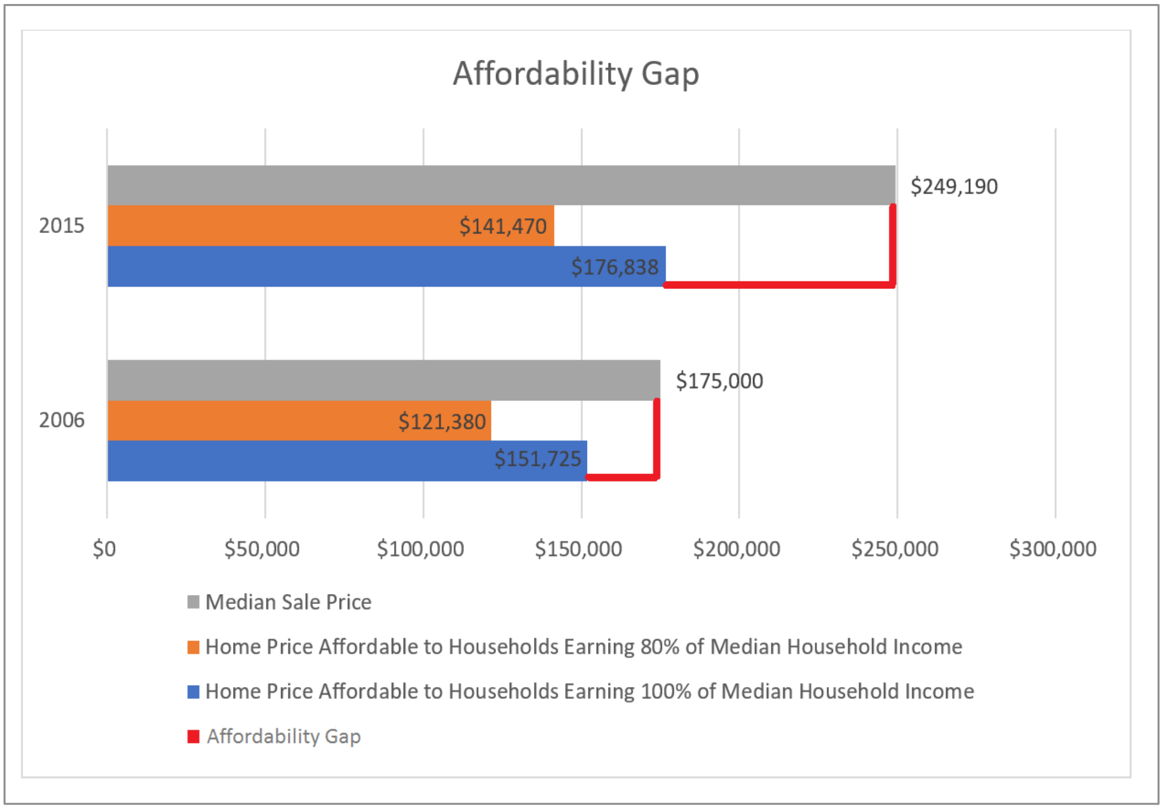
In Adams County, housing costs are outpacing income growth. Since 2000, home values have risen 32.7 percent and median gross rent has risen 47.4 percent, but median household income has only risen 24.6 percent. As a result, the number of households that are cost burdened has increased in every cohort: homeowners with a mortgage, homeowners without a mortgage, and renters. For some groups, the number of cost burdened households has increased more than 30 percent since 2000.

When households face extreme housing cost burden, they are less likely to be able to afford other living expenses, such as food and medical care, and may begin to rely more heavily on public services. For cost burdened renters, they have virtually not way to reasonably save money towards becoming homeowners. While ideally there would not be any homeowners who are cost burdened, a realistic goal could be to reduce the rate down the statewide rate (25.4%) or national rate (26%).

Affordability gap is increasing for all income levels

The affordability gap, the difference between the median sales price in the County and what is affordable to residents at different income levels, is increasing. In 2006, the median sales price of a home in Adams County was $175,000, but a household earning 100 percent of the median household income in the county could only afford a home for $151,725 – a gap of $23,275. By 2015, the affordability gap had increased by over 200% to $72,352 for these households. Households earning 80 percent of the median household income have a much larger gap due to the decreased income. In 2006, the affordability gap was $53,620, but the gap had doubled by 2015 to $107,719.

CHART 80: Affordability Gap



Given the constraints on the housing supply discussed throughout this assessment, this gap will not close without a concerted effort from the County. The additional housing needed to keep pace with projected population growth – much less get ahead of the curve and start to close the affordability gap – is unlikely with recent rates of new construction. Without additional housing options for all income levels, the gap between what housing costs and what people can afford will continue to widen and put homeownership firmly out of reach for all but the most wealthy residents.

Housing supply is not meeting demand

On the most basic level, Adams County does not have enough housing. Construction is not keeping up with demand. The average household size has been steadily increasing since 2009, and in order to maintain the current household size, population growth predictions call for an additional 3,500 to 4,000 units per year. In 2015, there were only 2,101 permits for new construction issued. The slow recovery of the construction industry is exacerbating the housing supply/demand tension in Adams County.

But supply and demand means more than simply having enough units to house the County's population. The type and location of housing must align with the wants and needs of the residents. The tapestry demographics in Adams County point to demand for “missing middle” housing: condos, townhomes, duplexes, small, multi-family dwellings, et cetera. Research from the Urban Land Institute found that three of the more quickly growing demographics (Millennials, retiring Baby Boomers, and residents who prefer intergenerational neighborhoods) prioritize living in a walkable environment with smaller homes over having more land, a larger house and yard, and needing a car to get around on a daily basis.

The “missing middle” housing currently accounts for 15.6 percent of Adams County’s housing stock (one of the smallest proportions in the region). More than 25 percent of the County’s population is either a Millennial or Baby Boomers. Almost 40 percent of the County identifies as Hispanic, and many Hispanic families live in multigenerational households and neighborhoods. The demand for this missing middle housing will almost certainly rise in the coming years, and the County must boost its supply of these types of housing.

Adams County is an outlier in the region

Adams County has a demographic and economic profile unique to the Denver metro region. It follows, then, that its housing situation is also unique and cannot easily be compared to the surrounding Counties without a firm understanding of these differences.

Adams boasts the second highest population growth in the region – only Douglas is growing more quickly. As discussed above, this growth has implications for the housing market in terms of the demands it places on an already lagging construction industry. Adams County also lags behind the rest of the region on many demographic and economic indicators. In addition to an MHI that is 10% below the regional average, it has the lowest education attainment, highest unemployment rate, third highest poverty rate, and lowest housing prices. The low housing prices, in particular, compound the difficulty of providing additional affordable housing units, as the County already has the least expensive housing in the region.

Conclusion

Adams County has identified affordable housing as a high priority and has moved to address this through several planning efforts including the Adams County 2015-2019 Consolidated Plan, which is the primary community development plan for the County and is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Creating more affordable housing is a good start, but it should not be the end goal of the County’s approach to housing.

The notion of balance in Adams County’s housing extends beyond the traditional economic model of supply and demand. Administrators must recognize the unique housing needs of the areas of the County that are driving its population growth: the cities and their surrounding areas. Thoughtful housing policies should aim to provide a more varied housing stock (to include smaller, more densely developed units near the cities in addition to the more traditional single-family homes). In order to achieve this, the County must be willing to enact a set of policies that reflects an understanding of these diverse needs – even if those policies are not wholly focused on the provision of affordable housing.

Housing policy is part of a long-term planning process, and a deliberate, sound investment now will bear fruit in the future when the County is able to meet the housing needs of its residents throughout their lives. This Housing Needs Assessment provides a clear opportunity for Adams County to thoughtfully examine its current housing situation and create sound, balanced policy that is responsive to the needs of all its residents. It is incumbent upon the County to truly understand how the demographic shifts underlying the population growth affect housing policy and to develop a strategic plan that will create a balanced and healthy housing market in Adams County today and well into the future.

Appendix

Maps, Tables & Charts Listing

MAPS

TABLES

CHARTS

CHART 77: Conventional and Nonconventional Share, Overall
CHART 78: Conventional and Nonconventional Share, Home Purchase
CHART 79: Conventional and Nonconventional Share, Refinance

Focus Group Notes

Focus Group 1 – Affordable Housing Meeting

- Previous Balanced Housing Plan – how will this be incorporated into the current one? The last plan called for 500 units of affordable housing per year. A) that is too low compared to the need B) Did the County even meet that goal?
- Thornton is one of the #1 areas in Country for 1st time homebuyers. Let's get data on the housing stock value cohorts there.
- The challenge of doing a housing plan now is the market boom. In Westminster, they are feeling pressure from Denver folks moving in because of housing costs in Denver are pushing people out. 1,000 families move to Denver per month. As such there is a construction worker shortage.
- One of the things are seeing in the County is people competing for units – buyers are sending letters to home sellers trying to plead for housing. Does that lead to discrimination? Seems like it could open the door.
- Last Analysis of Impediments showed 11,000 units' short
- As of May, 2016 – 249 units of under $200k in the 7-county region
- Need to factor in HOA fees which push seemingly affordable units out of affordable range
- Taking a lot of time to be able to secure a house in this market.
- Construction Defect Law impacting the market for 10 years. Favors the HOA over developers and if there's anything wrong with the unit the developer is sued.
- Construction costs are going up fast – 5% to 10% - even higher here in Colorado, the Denver area, and Adams County
- Difficult to build affordable units – land costs, construction costs, insurance burden, even in Bennett, which is rural, the development costs are high and prohibitive.
- What is happening in Thornton – some are building 3-4 units but that is per building – but there 2-6 buildings per development. They have a lot of land in Thornton
- Thornton (just did housing study) and Westminster (affordable housing study*) – Thornton has new council members taking the community in new directions. Inclusionary Zoning is on the table but not sure where it's going.
- Denver just adopted affordable housing policy doing away with inclusionary zoning and replacing it with impact fee type mechanism.
- It is important to increase the appropriate housing stock – not just overall stock. There are a lot of cookie cutter approaches but there is a need to diversify the types of units available. Accessory dwelling units.
- At least for Thornton and North Glenn, these communities were started as post-WWII communities. Standard model homes – these communities are comfortable with the status quo and cookie cutter approaches.
- Flexibility and inflexibility of zoning is an issue. The types of housing that is built is influenced by zoning and what it allows. There is a Making Connections plan in the County – 1. Zoning (regulations, parking rules, etc.) 2. Financing (funds go to the Housing Trust Fund) 3. Partnerships (waive impact fees, tap fees, etc.)
- Westminster and Thornton have some successful strategies. But it is not being done consistently. Incentives are negotiated individually across jurisdictions. Takes a lot of time to negotiate this landscape. A Development Toolkit would be great idea and could possibly include intergovernmental agreements or a model for cities and towns to adopt.

- Rental Inspection Programs –Counties are statutorily defined as arms of the state and can't enact new laws that are not on the books already. Cities have the ability but Counties must go to legislature.
- Rental Inspection Programs – huge liability in terms of getting sued and jurisdictions don't want to create one without knowing the full extent of problems. Is the problem big enough to warrant the costs and headaches of going through it? It could take 5-6 years through the legislature.
- Housing Conditions: overcrowding data is under reported because it is difficult to capture with data. Larger families in a smaller home is also the cultural preference for some groups.
- Childcare costs are a huge portion of income, particularly for single mothers. Adams County has a relatively high number of single mother families.
- There is a lack of adequate transportation options in the area. Transportation costs are high and prohibitive and it is almost impossible to not own a car.
- There is a large growth in Hispanic population
- Emergency Assistance Programs – Thornton has a good one
- The area needs a Local Housing Trust Fund
- The homeless population in Adams County doesn't look like the population in Denver and other communities
- City of Federal Heights got in trouble for violating 4th amendment rights over Rental Inspection Program

Focus Group 2 – Developers and Builders

Overview

On November 15, 2016, Sky to Ground, LLC ("SKG") conducted a focus group designed to gather impressions of the real estate development environment in Adams County. Participating in the focus group was a gathering of developers and builders who, in aggregate, had participated in the development of tens of thousands of units and collectively represented many decades of development experience within the County. The focus group lasted for roughly two hours and was held at the Adams County Government Center in Brighton, CO.

Areas of Strength

The group identified many areas of strength within the County. For the most part, these were universally recognized and lauded.

- The County was referred to on many occasions as "a land of opportunity" or "the next frontier" for development in the metropolitan area
- Recent organizational and political changes at the County administrative level have made the environment much more attractive than in the past
- The County staff is pro-business, helpful and more accepting of concepts than other front range counties
- The County has significant transportation assets that can be used to drive growth in future development
- The proximity and access to both Denver International Airport and Denver is a major advantage

Areas on Opportunity

Without exception, the fractured water and sanitation district administration was cited as the leading and a hugely significant barrier to development within the County. Developers and builders stated they routinely avoid projects in the County because of this issue. While there may be attractive opportunities, the management burden and unpredictability of the districts drives them to other geographies.

- Districts are unpredictable and have introduced significant costs late in the development process
- Districts may have different and potentially competing local and priorities
- Districts often leverage developers into making cost prohibitive upgrades to local infrastructure beyond what is necessary for the proposed development
- A single, small district may can erode the viability of an entire project

Participants also cited the need for better schools as a key issue for the County.

Recommendations from the Participants

- Work to unify water and sanitation district policies and priorities so project economics are more predictable. If they can't rely on their economic models, developers wont develop.
- Consider becoming a home-rule county to drive more consistency and control across the County
- Identify a single person to evangelize the Adams County vision to developers, builders and consumers
- Embrace more affordable housing as a way of driving more rooftop development. Business will follow the residents, not the other way around
- Consider focusing resources in development zones to simulate projects rather than spreading resources thin across the County. Zones can be rotated over time throughout the County.
- Invest in moderate beautification projects like streetscaping, landscaping, sidewalks, etc. to improve the consumer perception
- Be forward looking when considering policy and code changes, particularly with respect to smaller houses and the desire for more "sense of place" among consumers

General Impressions of Adams County

The perception of the County was described as "fantastic" and "a land of opportunity". While the local government and utilities administration is more fragmented than other counties, the overall regulatory and political climate is attractive. The County is viewed as a "frontier where things can get done." The County is perceived to be more accepting of new concepts and willing to work through impediments to success. Participants "loved" doing business with the County.

There was a mixed view as to the competitiveness of the County. Some felt it was much busier and more competitive, especially with an increase in out of state developers. Others felt that relative to other counties, Adams fell under the radar and can at time be less competitive. There was an impression generally that developers liked the infrastructure but consumers found the area "less sexy."

Positive impressions of the County administration were universal. The staff was described as "super helpful," "fair" and "pro-business." They were also complementary having planning and engineering in a single group and "wish other counties would do this." The administrative process was perceived as clear and defined and that "when there is a project to get through, it's easy to get through the process." Working with the County administration is "dramatically improved versus years ago." Also, senior staff was described as "easy to access."

Opportunity for Development in Adams County
They all recognized the amount of undeveloped land and acknowledged the tremendous potential for growth. Between the I-76 corridor, the light rail station plan, the proximity to Denver International Airport and the proximity to Denver, the County is well situated for consumer appeal.

Barriers to Development in Adams County
The universal and leading barrier to development stated by participants was the fragmented local water and sanitation environment. It is the "first question" every participant looks to answer when developing in the County. The small districts are "hard to deal with," "hard to predict" and "absolutely intervene where development happens." Predictability is "huge," and the water and sanitation districts make the economic modeling highly unpredictable.

Each participant had experiences where a district surprised them with unexpected costs or expected them to pay for infrastructure improvements whose benefits extended far outside the scope of the proposed development.

Participants stated that this district issue has them regularly avoid projects in the County. The unpredictability of costs combined with the administrative burden of multiple negotiations dramatically reduces the attractiveness of projects.

Participants also cited the poor perception of Adams County schools as a barrier to development. Schools are perceived as "bad," "overcrowded" and "fragmented." They cited the success of developments in Aurora that benefit from Cherry Creek schools versus those that do not. The poor schools lead to a ceiling on home prices, which constrains upmarket development.

Participants also cited a lack of a cohesive vision for the future of the County.

Participants also cited outdated vision for land use in parts of the county. The County "can't insist on commercial development." They need to "take a flyer on residences and wait on commercial."

Ways the County Can Increase Developer Activity
The biggest benefit cited would come from aligning the activities and economic demands of the water and sanitation districts.

Participants also recommended more progressive use of urban renewal authorities. Participants felt URAs have been traditionally used in ways against their original intent. They suggested viewing them as an "economic development tool" as opposed to a "blight removal tool". They also encouraged the County to let go of the traditional view that you need retail to make a URA work. "You need rooftops to make a URA work and the retail will naturally follow the rooftops."

Participants also recommended the County take a more forward-looking perspective on developments of the future. Consumers increasingly want a development that has a strong "sense of place and community." This requires developments to "be closer to 150,000 acres than 50,000 acres." Homes will be smaller and more efficient. And the County should take a more practical approach to codes rather than relying on traditional guidelines. The recommended the County staff visits Stapleton, Lowry, Midtown, Northfield and Observatory Green and examples where the feeling of local communities has been created.

Participants also cited a significant public perception regarding the County. Despite lower cost of living and an advantageous location, the County is perceived as a less desirable location. They recommended utilizing an evangelist who can communicate the appeal and future vision of the county to developers, builders and consumers. Currently, the vision is "too fragmented."

Participants also suggested the County support more consumer education on metro districts. Residents looking to relocate from Denver do not understand the prevalence of districts, their benefits and the costs they may carry.

Participants also suggested simple and low cost cosmetic improvements to selected areas within the County. The suggested improvements might include streetscaping, including alternate color street signs, graffiti removal, installation of bike racks, extension of sidewalks, nicer light posts, etc. These changes in their experience have a beneficial impact on consumer perception.

Participants also recommended creating development zones where incentives could be focused make the most impact. Currently they view incentives as being spread too thinly across the County. They suggested a program similar to Denver's Jump Start plan that concentrates incentives. Incentives can be anything from economic benefits to expedited approvals and reviews. These development zones can be moved throughout the county over time so the benefits are still shared broadly.

Participants also suggested being more aggressive in improving schools. Schools were, in their view, "the key" and "the driver" to land development.

Participants also suggested becoming a home rule county. Many of the issues they face as developers come from the distributed local authority spread through the County. Home rule would allow the County to standardize much of the inconsistency that discourages development.

Participants also suggested cities be less demanding on pre-built infrastructure. Requiring "three lanes of road that dead end" make the economics of a development radically different.

Participant List
Each participant was asked to informally write down their current position, their tenure in the industry and some indicative metrics to help understand their familiarity with Adams County. Here is a summary of that information.

Participant #1: Principal, 14 years experience. Over 250 acres developed in Adams County
Participant #2: President, "Decades of experience." Thousands of acres developed including Prairie Center, Adams Center and work for the ACHA
Participant #3: Over 15 years experience. Over 2,500 units developed.
Participant #4: Over 20 years experience. Over 700 single-family units developed in Adams County
Participant #5: Over 25 years experience. Thousands of lots developed in Adams County including Anthem and Heritage Todd Creek
Participant #6: Over 30 years experience. Involved with Fairfield York St., Reunion and Aspen Reserve
Participant #7: Owner. Over 35 years experience. Over 2,000 lots developed in Adams County

Focus Group 3 - Brokers

Overview
On November 15, 2016, Sky to Ground, LLC ("SKG") conducted a focus group designed to gather impressions of the residential resale environment in Adams County. Participating in the focus group was a gathering of brokers who, in aggregate, had participated in the listing and sale hundreds of units and collectively represented many decades of real estate experience within the County. The focus group lasted for roughly two and a half hours and was held at the Adams County Government Center in Brighton, CO.

Areas of Strength

- Buyers can get more home for less in Adams County. For example, the same home in Adams County costs 100K less than in Stapleton.
- Larger lots ranging from .25 to 2 acres are more plentiful in Adams County.

Areas of Opportunity

- There is demand for all types of housing including for single-family detached, single-family attached, condos, market rate apartments and affordable housing.
- There is substantial demand for homes priced around 300K.
- Long-time residents 60 years of age and older seek to stay in their community in low or no maintenance ranch or main floor master homes. There are very few communities meeting these buyers' needs.
- Participants also cited overcrowded and low performing public schools as key issue for the County.

Recommendations from the Participants

- The range of property taxes and associated benefits vary widely from community to community. The tax rates are confusing and lack transparency.
- The lag between when homeowners move into a new community and when new public schools are constructed is a concern. Buyers would "line up" if new schools were in place in advance of new communities initiating sales.
- The most relevant action local governments can take is investing in well-maintained downtowns or town centers to create a sense of place and community spirit.
- There is a demand for affordable housing, especially senior housing. The brokers are observing multiple generations living together due to the lack of housing within people's means.

General Impressions of Adams County

<u>Price Sensitive</u>

- The Adams County buyer is extremely price sensitive.
- Some buyers continue to "drive until they qualify" with the Tri-Towns, Ft. Lupton and Greeley continue to grow as alternatives to Adams County.
- There is not substantial demand for "executive housing" or homes in around 800K. The brokers uniformly stated the greatest demand for homes priced between 200K and 400K.

<u>Metro Districts and HOA Fees are a Barrier</u>

- Higher property taxes and HOA fees in new communities are a source of frustration for buyers. They don't understand the value of the extra taxes and fees provide or prefer the Cities or County provide those services.

<u>Maintenance Free Living with Storage</u>

- The older, maintenance-free buyer prefers three car garages or basements for storage. A subset of this buyer profile also seeks RV storage either adjacent to their home or within the same neighborhood.
- There is a perception the older, maintenance-free buyers aren't moving because they can't find a suitable alternative to their current home. If the older residents were to move, that would free up a more affordable existing housing inventory.

<u>Market Bubble?</u>

- If mortgage rates stay low, the brokers don't feel there is a market bubble. There is sufficient housing demand to continue for the foreseeable future.
- The lack of appraisers is causing delays in closings and inflated prices for appraisals.
- Overall, the brokers are not observing discriminatory practices or predatory lending.

<u>Sense of Place</u>

- Reunion is a strong example of a well-maintained community with the right amount and kind of planned events.

- Buyers want a hometown feel with holiday parades, art festivals and local business. The new retail areas, especially in Brighton are filled with chain business and restaurants. Downtown Louisville, CO was cited as good example of “hometown feel”.
- Light rail is a big deal for Thornton and Midtown, but hasn’t had a noticeable impact elsewhere in the County.

Interviews

Interview 1: City Government Official

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?
One of the things that has been a hindrance is the construction defect laws in the state. There has been a decade without townhomes or condos being built, particularly within the “missing middle in size and cost”. People lack the ability to downsize or adapt to life changes. There are a lot of people who can’t enter the market because the prices have gone up very quickly. There is also a need for low-income housing. The “affordable” housing has gone through the roof (up 74% in the last decade).

Jurisdictions are drafting ordinances to address the issues with greater flexibility in fee structure, lower water taxes, lower school fees, etc. They are also looking at fee rebates for housing projects and public land dedication requirements. They do not want to penalize developers for density.
They had a roundtable discussion with non-profits and advocacy groups, as well as for-profit developers. They didn’t really reach out to larger homeowners because they already understand what the obstacles are for them and they aren’t really “affordable” homebuilders.

What is the sense of Adams County, particularly the unincorporated areas?
In general, the people who want to live in the unincorporated areas are for livestock and agriculture, or they just want more freedom to do things on their property and are willing to trade that for city services.

Not accepting the ESG had a negative impact on the housing authority. With HOME funds, there is a perception that Adams County is so heavily focused on regulatory compliance that it feels punitive to work with them instead of a partnership. There needs to be a better understanding of what the responsibilities for the administering of these plans.

What are the challenges/opportunities in Adams County over the next few years?
There is a fair amount of growth up the I-25 corridor and there is a lot of momentum in both business and residential growth. Resource management needs to be talked about, not only how many houses but how they are going to be served (particularly water rights). Water restrictions haven’t been enforced but they might be in the future. Urban sprawl isn’t desired, instead more concentration is preferred.

Do you think the employment situation and commuter situation is holding Adams County's growth back?

What they hear from high-end employers is they want to be in downtown (or maybe Boulder) because that is where the workforce is. The segment of high-tech populations are downtown, it will be difficult to pull those jobs into Adams County. There is value in looking at what land uses are unique to the county and leveraging that. Businesses that need more land or high storage that can't be accommodated in the urban environment could thrive in Adams County. Flexible land use is valuable to some and the county may need to accept that is their identity.

<u>Interview 2: Community Non-Profit Employee</u>

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?

Affordable housing is a problem. Landlords are raising rent monthly, not renewing leases, or kicking people out with only 7-days' notice. There is a lot of overcrowding and people can't make rent. Landlords are not responsive with repairs and even discriminatory. For example, there was a building that had an explosion and needed repairs. During the repairs, there was no power or water, but the landlord didn't inform the non-English speaking families about the repairs or anything.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the underserved populations in the community?

There is a shortage in services for low-income families. There are some groups doing community organizing and many communities have never had a voice. Undocumented individuals are particularly vulnerable and don't have representation. Mixed status (some undocumented, some documented) are the most vulnerable because their families can be torn apart easily. Many people are working 2-3 jobs and don't have the time to organize or participate in the community. Lack of education is also a factor. There are also pockets of refugees from SE Asian communities who sometimes lack formal education. There is also a relatively large Russian population.

Incentivizing affordable housing needs to be done (reduce regulatory barriers, subsidized, etc.). Some of the regulations like parking requirements aren't appropriate. The County would waive fees and expedite the process for low-income individuals, particularly very low AMI families. There is some optimism that the votes on council can make some positive changes.

Funding is the biggest barrier, and the current direction of the federal government means there will not be funding from DC. There are not a lot of high-paying jobs in Adams County if you don't have a college degree, and the education system is not doing a great job in Adams County. It would be nice if the county found a way to incentive county contract hiring going to folks that are difficult to hire, such as those with criminal records or gaps in employment.

<u>Interview 3: City Government Official</u>

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?
We have a shortage of affordable housing rental units, to the tune of approx. 10,000 or more needed.

What are the housing needs you see in Adams County?
I can't say for Adams County but I would say again affordable housing units.

Are there any specific housing types that you see missing or lacking in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County?
Affordable housing units for families is lacking (2 – 3 bedroom units).

Are there any populations you feel are underserved or underrepresented in terms of housing and supportive services in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County?
Veterans and immigrant/refugee populations are the toughest to get outreach to. The city does a great job through their immigrant / refugee cabinet and with the VA hospital coming in 2018 we are reaching out to determine what their immediate needs are going to be.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the housing needs in the community?
Adams County needs to combine efforts with cities and Arapahoe County to target building more affordable housing units, especially through the LIHTC process.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the underserved populations in the community?
Again, Adams County could take better initiatives to building relationships with Aurora and Arapahoe County to target these populations together rather than separately.

What opportunities in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
In 2017 a new 39-unit affordable housing projects of 2 and 3 bedroom units will be built in Adams County utilizing HOME and NSP dollars for support.

What challenges in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
Increase in market values make it difficult for LMI to afford housing whether it is rental or ownership.

<u>Interview 4: City Government Official</u>

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?

The whole region is short on housing. The city hasn't had a new subdivision since the mid-2000's. There will be some new housing in the $275,000 - $375,000 range coming in. They would love to bring retail and dining options to the area but there are not any multi-family units for the workers. They can't attract employees. 85% of workers are the city and working elsewhere, and vice versa. Most residents are going to Denver and the airport for work

The city is not all that diverse but there is always a waitlist for vouchers. Getting the handicapped population services is important, but job opportunities is a need in the community. If you need to go to Adams County workforce services you travel to Brighton, which is far away.

Infrastructure problems exist. Water and other services are difficult, and they need at least one new bridge. There is also a railroad track that divides the town, often people can't get emergency services if they live on the wrong side of the track.

What challenges in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
TABOR laws prevent a lot of things getting done. They passed a sales tax increase to repair the roads, but it took a lot of effort and several tries. People don't want to pay more taxes, there is a strong independent streak. The TABOR is very limiting and makes things way harder than they need to be.

Interview 5: City Government Official

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?
They get their own CDBG funds and some from the county. They did a housing assessment and found a gap in income and housing. There was plenty of housing at all income levels, but higher income residents are sometimes living in cheaper homes (less than 30% of income). They also found that their affordable housing is exclusively in one general area that created a large population of low-income residents in one place. It is difficult for developers to come in and build affordable housing in other areas because cost of land issues, but low-income tax credits aren't available because developers have to spend more resources to show the location is eligible. HUD is saying don't concentrate affordable housing in one place but they also say certain neighborhoods need to be low income in order to be eligible for affordable housing tax credits.

They are hearing that people don't know how to actually use the vouchers, or people that have the voucher seem to just call around and get on the waitlist. There might be better ways to get into rental housing and use vouchers. Landlords are not trained properly to use section 8 vouchers. 2/3rds of families who get vouchers are unable to use them, they expire before they can get off a waitlist and into a home. Owners are reluctant to accept housing vouchers, even if management is willing to.

VASH vouchers were difficult to utilize because there are not veteran specific services, they are always located in the Denver area and not Adams County. There is only one VASH voucher being used in the city.

Another problem identified is the amount of disabled is growing, particularly children with disabilities. The hypothesis is that medical advancements have gotten to the point where children live longer than they would have, we now need housing to help people with a variety of disabilities.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the housing needs in the community?
There is a high influx of people into the area and the county needs to be developing housing to keep up with the demand that is distributed throughout the community. In addition, there is a lack of transportation in the area. There is one part of the city that has affordable housing, but there is not any public transportation which prevents people from living there because they won't be able to get to their jobs. Almost everyone in the city commutes outside the city to work and to be able to get to those jobs is important. Very car dependent, especially for families with children.

Regulatory barriers are a big problem to get funding. The largest sources of funding come with a lot of regulations, navigating it is difficult. There are not funds available that can be used freely. Many non-profits don't apply for funding available because the administration is so burdensome. There is a conflict between the regulations and the requirements. To develop properties there are a lot of requirements (certain number of units, number of owners… some of which need to be done before applications). The building process in the county doesn't align with the requirements of the grant, everyone is trying to figure out how to do it to get funding and make the whole thing work. HOME funds aren't worth the money and headache. Sometimes CDBG require making only a contingent offer before environmental review is complete, which means they are outbid by people offering cash. When matched with unfunded mandates about building more affordable housing, cities are in a bind.

HUD reps aren't much help because they just repeat back HUD regulations instead of helping cities find ways to make things worse. Cities are moving away from federal funds because it is not doing it effectively enough. Cities are trying to find better ways to use non-federal funds to accomplish things. It is difficult to get rental owners on board.

Interview 6: Homeless Non-Profit Employee

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in the community?
Biggest challenge (especially in Adams County) is that there are no clear districts and towns and lines. Sometimes the places residents can't live near the jobs and other resources they need because there is not adequate transportation or affordable housing.

What is the sense of homeless population in Adams County? Or should Adams County not separate themselves from the metro area?
Adams County is made up of suburban communities (despite being near an urban center), which changes homeless issues. There is a substantial homeless challenge in Adams but it looks different because of the suburban nature and there is a lot of overcrowding, youth are often underrepresented because the youth flee to Denver. It would be great to have a housing continuum in the county so that community families can stay in their county instead of leaving for resources. There isn't a good count of people who leave a county and end up homeless in another county. There is a little corner of Adams/Arapahoe/Denver where a lot of families' transition through when they have unstable housing. From a young person's perspective, they are often leaving Adams County (they can maybe afford to live in Thornton but there is no work) but come back for services, each county does assistance differently. From a refugee perspective, it feels like many refugees are getting to the fringe of smaller communities which is creating a whole different dynamic. People come to Adams for community but leave because they can't get the employment they need. (No real hard numbers, but that is the perspective).

Are there any specific housing types that you see missing or lacking in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County?
Smaller buildings are better, not apartments. There are some high needs and traumatized populations that need something safer and secure. There is also a gap in the efficiency model (small, low cost). One idea is an entire building with universal accommodations because they often end up with young people with disabilities and not all buildings have enough units. The ideal building size for young adults, trauma, and victims of sex trafficking is 10-12 unit apartments instead of big complexes. Downtown Denver has some nice ones but when you talk about it for homeless folks you get pushback.

Governor "pathway toolkit" started four years ago for rural model of housing. There are a handful of developers that are interested, the challenge is that there is not many of them. The tax credit limit for developers prevents some developers from building a lot. It is hard to build small buildings that are cost effective. The division of housing (state level) is talking about coming up with a different strategy for housing. Property owners are resistant to have a lot of young people who are high disability and high trauma in one location.

Adams County is a great ally to Shiloh House because they have a long history. They have The Sanctuary to help high risk youth. Adams County has been really great, but a roadblock is the complexity around the support service funds. Many municipalities, school districts, and other competing organizations have trouble creating one united plan, particularly in Adams County. There is a sense of NIMBY developing because of the "have and have not" in the county, any housing plan needs to seem to be good for everyone.

Adams County and Housing Authority rejected ESG funds because they found it inefficient, they had funds coming from other places and organizations can get the funds from the state. This is unfortunate, if resources are available they should work to keep them in the community. Local organizations don't have a strong relationship with the state and can't work with them the same way they can work with the county. If there was a more integrated model it might be beneficial for everyone. Adams seemed concerned that they only get a little bit to use on Admin and it may end up being more costly to monitor than the $150,000 they get… but if that helps 3-4 units per year that helps people, that is always better than the state or feds telling you what to do with it Colorado has the largest number of young people using housing vouchers because of creative ways to get resources to the community, there are ways to get ESG funds to the community in an efficient way instead of just rejecting it.

General feedback

We either pay now or we pay later. How can we look at innovative or better ways to help the most vulnerable families? Many of the children in the system are not abused, it is neglect related to poverty. If we can provide support and prevent that trauma/poverty then it helps everyone and stops the revolving door. In-home services and support from the community is needed. It is cost effective to prevent instead of treat. Adams County is different than the Denver model, it is such a different county, it is more like three counties in one because of how different the areas are. Some vouchers aren't getting into Adams because of the coordinated entry effort. There are a lot of backdoor stuff happening via MDHI because Adams County isn't at the table (not illegal stuff, just discussions that happen). Adams doesn't get nearly as much money as they should/could

Interview 7: City Government Official

Construction defect law is preventing new housing. Due to extra insurance requirements, any construction under $400k isn't profitable. Affordable housing can't be built. Some areas are mostly built out, which means new construction is what they need but it can't happen because of the defect law (legislature is deadlocked on fixing the issue). There was a recent fiscal study done, they started looking at existing multi-family developments and found rental properties that was over 40 years old and more than $2 per square foot (which is super expensive). There are places that look like HUD housing, 600-800 sq. foot, that are going for over $1200 a month. There is just no affordable housing, and it has gotten bad in the recent years due to rising cost, mostly tied to construction defect law. Construction defect law allows HOAs to do class action lawsuits against construction companies and it has been abused.

They are trying to find local solutions, including mandatory arbitration for construction defect suits but it hasn't been legally tested and construction companies are reluctant to take the chance. They are also trying to find ways to set up insurance coverage systems with subsidies. The local political challenge is that there is an appearance that there is too much affordable housing.

One of the challenges in Colorado is tax payers bill of rights (TABOR). Each year they must provide a balanced budget and they can only have 2-3% margin of error. They can't go in debt and any surplus is returned to tax payers. Most of the fiscal system is sales tax and fees based, not property tax based. Increased property values don't affect local jurisdiction fiscal policy.

Property tax increase is not a factor for raising prices, one challenge they do have is most new housing has 25-50 mils thrown on top of taxes to subsidize infrastructure. This does increase the cost per square foot for a rental, particularly for low cost housing.

If the construction defect law was fixed they would see a tidal wave of condo construction that has been missing for the last 7-10 years. The city doesn't have a lot of areas set aside for high density housing, but there is some. Adams County should evaluate their impact fees schedule to make sure they are not impediments to entry level housing. Normally multi-family units are a loss leader in the community, but in the city, they are a gain because it isn't putting new drain on utilities (instead they improve the existing stuff).

Is there a demand for high density, multi-family housing in the unincorporated parts of Adams County?

It will probably stay within urban area. You need to provide a sense of place with urban benefits in a rural environment… walkability, accessibility, goods and services… feel like a downtown without being in the downtown. Arvada's old town neighborhood is a prime example. They were western suburban nothing but they are investing a lot of capital and it is paying off, took 15 years though. Wheatride is targeting millennials and have turned their city around. If unincorporated Adams County wants to bring in people they need to be more than just a place to lay your head, it needs to be a place people want to be. The challenge is that the market will tell you X, the constituency will tell you Y, and the elected officials want Z. Front range communities are realizing that they need to stabilize their market and make it more sustainability through amenities, diversification, and life experience (that's what they are trying to do in the city).

Denver Highland neighborhood and Berkeley neighborhood, and Sunnyvalley (Sunnyvale) all have townhomes selling for $800,000… an insane price. That wasn't happening five years ago, prices were closer to $325,000 for the most expensive full homes. Tech and medical industries are bringing in people and driving up prices, it isn't really the weed industry.

Interview 8: City Government Official

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?

- Seniors and elderly both who rent or currently own in their home or would or need to obtain or retain quality affordable housing of a design suited to their needs and characteristics.
- Households who currently own or rent their housing that is structurally deficient, not in compliance with applicable codes, or represents a hazard or serious condition that impedes their ability to remain in their home.
- Very low or extremely low income households who cannot reasonably pay for or find housing they can afford and may be at risk of being houseless or homeless as a result.
- First time homebuyers of modest means who may or are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to purchase a housing unit in the City as a result of the current cost of new or existing owner occupied housing units relative to their capability to finance such a purchase.

There are other more specific populations the City has and may need to focus on to some degree including:

- Households I define as the "houseless" (have no structural shelter or dwelling) or "homeless" (have or can find a dwelling or shelter but it is not permanent or adequate to their needs).
- Households with one or more members who are physically disabled or handicapped regarding the adequacy and presence of their current rental or owner occupied housing or for new or added housing choices.
- Low/moderate income households who wish to become more or entirely self-sufficient of government or other assistance or subsidy that they currently do or would need or depend on to afford their housing.

Older, lower-value homes fill the denser eastern reaches of the City, while newer, high-value homes are becoming increasingly abundant in the west. Relative to comparable neighboring communities, the city's stock is of higher value and contains a greater proportion of single-family and owner-occupied housing units. The City's multifamily housing stock represents about 29 percent of all housing, and very few units are currently vacant, though rents remain slightly lower than in surrounding communities. Housing gaps analysis reveals that low-income residents have significant difficulty finding either affordable rental or for-sale housing. For current owners looking to buy up or downsize, the market for middle-income households is oversupplied, while the market for low- and high-income owners is undersupplied.

The community's aging population will likely require a more diverse housing stock than the city currently offers. Many residents over the age of 65 may desire smaller, denser housing units near shopping and community amenities. They will likely require more easily accessible housing as well due to higher incidence of physical disability and decreasing mobility.

The City's Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:

Specific needs include:

- Affordable housing, particularly for seniors since this is a growing sector of the population, and households with children with a single parent as head of household.
- Housing for small households. We need to have a diversity of smaller units in new developments since there is a very high proportion of one- and two-person households in the city (over 60% of all households) and this trend is likely to continue.
- More diversity in housing types to meet the needs of seniors, Baby Boomers and Millennials. This diversity could include cottage housing, cohousing, tiny homes, and small lot housing. Higher density, walkable places are important to the Boomers and Millennials, so the zoning for single use commercial areas should be revised to allow residential uses. Design of these mixed-use areas is also important.
- Moderately priced entry level housing and reasonable rental rates for multi-family housing. The current median listing price of a home in the city is $385,000 (Zillow), and this is higher than what people entering the market for the first time can afford. There is a need for moderately priced townhomes and condominiums.

What are the housing needs you see in Adams County, as a whole?
Affordable housing seems to be the primary issue.

Are there any specific housing types that you see missing or lacking in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County, as a whole?
Housing Affordability Gaps

To examine how well the city's current housing market meets the needs of its residents—and to inform potential future city housing policy—the study conducted a modeling effort called a "gaps analysis." The analysis compares the supply of rental and for-sale housing at various price points affordable to households at various income levels. The analysis compares the number of renter households in the city in 2011, their income levels, the maximum monthly rent they could afford without being cost-burdened (30% of income), and the number of units in the market that are affordable to them. Affordability for renters has two components: mismatches in the rental market and ownership opportunities for renters wanting to buy. The gaps analysis conducted for renters in the city addresses both rental affordability and ownership opportunities. A similar gaps analysis was conducted to evaluate the market options affordable to current homeowners who may wish to buy up or downsize. The model compared homeowners, their income levels, the maximum monthly housing payment they could afford, and the proportion of homes in the market that were affordable to them. The rental market largely serves renter households earning between $25,000 and $75,000 per year—74 percent of rental units are priced within that group's affordability range.

As in many housing markets, homeownership is relatively unaffordable to renters in lower income brackets. Only 8 percent of homes for sale in 2012 were affordable to renters earning less than $35,000 per year, while 47 percent of the city's renters have an income of or below $35,000. This represents a Renter Purchase Gap of 39 percent for renters of that income level who want to buy a home in Arvada. Over 65 percent of the homes for sale in 2012 were affordable only to renters earning at least $50,000, while such renters only comprise 33 percent of the city's renting population. This represents a positive renter purchase gap of 32 percent for housing affordable to those earning at least $50,000, showing that this portion of the market is oversupplied. The homeowner purchase gap for homeowners who earn $35,000 or less (10 percent) is far smaller than that of renters wanting to buy who earn roughly the same amount (39 percent). Unlike the case of renters wanting to buy, there is an undersupply of homes in the city attainable to current homeowners in high-income brackets. Homeowners who earn at least $75,000 per year comprise 49 percent of all the city's homeowners. Of the homes for sale in 2012, 31 percent were affordable only to those earning at least $75,000. This represents purchase gap of 18 percent, indicating that the housing market could absorb additional high-end housing. In the market for current homeowners looking to buy a different home in the city, there is an oversupply of housing available to those earning between $35,000 and $75,000, and there is an undersupply of housing affordable only to those earning over $75,000.

The Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:

Having options for seniors to downsize from their larger family homes to smaller units where they can still live independently. The city has a high rate of home ownership as well as a high proportion of single-family homes. Cottage housing, cohousing and ADUs offer an alternative where seniors can either own or rent, and still live independently. The city is fortunate since we already allow ADUs throughout the city in single-family zone districts.

Live work may also be an option, but I'm not sure of the demand.

Are there any populations you feel are underserved or underrepresented in terms of housing and supportive services in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County as a whole?
As the number of households grows over the coming decades, household composition will change considerably. A 48 percent increase in the number of non-family 1 households in the city is expected by 2035, compared to a 28 percent increase in family households. Median non-family household income ($37,000) is less than half that of family household incomes ($78,000). About half of the current rental units are affordable to a household earning the median non-family household income, while virtually all rental units in the city are affordable to a household earning the median family household income. Only about 9 percent of the ownership units are affordable to a household earning the median non-family household income, while about three-quarters of ownership units in the city are affordable to a household earning the median family household income. The community's aging population will likely require a more diverse housing stock than the city currently offers. Many residents over the age of 65 may desire smaller, denser housing units near shopping and community amenities. They will likely require more easily accessible housing as well due to higher incidence of physical disability and decreasing mobility.

The city's age distribution is projected to change substantially; there will be modest growth in the zero to thirty-nine-year-old (young) category, minimal change in the forty to fifty-nine population (middle aged), and considerable growth in the sixty years and up population. This changing demographic will ultimately have effects on community design, architecture, accessibility, mobility, community amenities, and city services. Several surveys observe that up to 90% of seniors prefer to remain in their current home town, which may mean retro-fitting housing, facilities, and city infrastructure to accommodate a population that may live alone, have limited eyesight and hearing, shrinking social structures and mobility, and increasing health issues. In the meantime, there will still be some growth in the school age population. Housing for the older population will need to be smaller and safer, with minimal trip hazards, easy access to cooking and bathroom facilities, wider hallways to accommodate wheelchairs and motorized carts, and grab-bars in multiple locations. Housing will increasingly need to be single level and retrofitting existing structures could be challenging. Today's so-called McMansions may be converted to multi-family dwellings. "Thirty percent of Americans age 55 and older indicated that they would consider moving to a smaller townhouse, duplex, or condominium, per a 2002 report by the National Association of Realtors, but only 15 percent now live in such housing. One option is cohousing, which offers individual dwellings that share common space for community activities. Such arrangements are often multigenerational. The neighborhood design allows older residents to continue to function independently while being part of a community." (Urban land Institute) The city was an early adopter of age-friendly design standards, having revised the Land Development Code as early as 2005 to anticipate multi-generational needs.

As contained in the visitability ordinance, design features include such better lighting; larger, better illuminated street signs, and wheelchair accessibility. In homes, such design can include small adaptations like lever door handles, and larger ones such as more open floor plans and wide hallways that allow for adequate wheelchair turning radius.

The Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:

The homeless population.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the housing needs in the community?
The most immediate need regarding residents is for the Federal government to provide an adequate level of funding to properly operate the Program and fully utilize the 508 baseline count of units. Current funding levels are severely inadequate to properly administer the Program and inadequate to maintain assistance to the baseline count of units in the program.

Funding levels for the Housing Choice Voucher Program have involved prorations of Federal funding for the Program that are totally inadequate to allow the program to meet its baseline count of housing assistance it can provide and is devastatingly inadequate to meet the administrative costs for operating the program with prorations that have approached 66% meaning the Federal government has failed to provide about ONE THIRD of the funding it should provide to properly operate this important program in the community.

Jurisdictions like Adams County must become more proactive and emphasize to decision makers at the Federal and State level the need for a robust and active commitment including funding for programs and services that address affordable housing and community development at the local level.

The Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:

After a needs assessment, the County can review the land use regulations to see if they are flexible enough to allow for a diverse range of housing (e.g., small lots, cottage housing, tiny homes) as well as mixed-use zoning.

Homeless shelters are needed to provide accommodation for individuals and families.

Some of the housing stock is aging and the quality is deteriorating. Renovations are needed to make sure that these properties are safe, attractive and of a quality to last another 30 to 50 years.

What opportunities in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
Transportation

“Many of the aspects of designing an age-friendly community -- walkable downtowns, cohesive transit networks, mixed-use urban villages -- are the same things smart growth advocates have been pushing for 20 years. By making the space accessible for seniors, you're making it more accessible for everyone else.” (Governing Magazine). In particular, wide sidewalks and trails, free of trip hazards, are essential to seniors, for whom a fall could mean a broken hip. Transit access, even door-to-door access may be necessary for seniors who have lost their ability to drive, or have limited mobility otherwise. Surveys show that the primary concern about getting older is transportation. The region will need to consider how to make transit service available to older populations, since many seniors will become increasingly dependent on buses and rail as they stop driving. Seniors don't want to lose their independence, so programs that teach seniors how to use the bus system and read schedules play an important role. Some bus routes may need to be altered to reach1) origination points (residential neighborhoods) are reached as some seniors may not be able to walk the standard 1/2-mile distance to a bus stop, and 2) destinations that seniors are most interested in visiting, including pharmacies and medical facilities.

Parks and Open Space: Denser development will mean fewer front and back yards, which will mean a greater demand for accessible and safe parks, trails, and open spaces. As older populations retire their cars, the accessibility of parks and open spaces will become important issues. These facilities will need to accessible by foot or by transit, be safe, have benches for rest, and safe public restrooms.

Water Demand: The city can expect lower per-household water demand. Seniors use less water, particularly those in small or single occupant households. They do not produce as much laundry, nor require bathing as frequently. Also, expect to see less green landscaping and more xeriscaping. Older populations, in general, do not have the desire or capability to maintain large landscape.

The Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:

The city is projected to grow at a steady rate with greenfield suburban neighborhoods being developed and infill redevelopment occurring mostly around stations and along some arterial corridors. Millennials may choose to move to the city to raise families since it offers more reasonably priced housing than certain desirable neighborhoods in Denver (i.e., Highlands). Trends that may occur include new families moving into the established neighborhoods that were built in the 1960s and 1970s, but there could also be a strong demand for new housing, particularly if energy efficiency is included.

What challenges in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
Like waves of marathon runners, increasing numbers of adults are racing off the half-century starting line. More than one-half of the Baby Boom generation now is age 50 and older and one third of all Americans will reach age 50 by 2010. The rapid and extensive aging of the population in Arvada is the biggest special need facing the City.

Older adults, more than others, face difficulties with aspects of everyday life. For many older adults, these difficulties vastly exceed the minor physical pains or small losses of function that characterize almost everyone's circumstances after a certain age. When individual problems are added together, a group picture emerges that provides a useful description of the entire community of the city. Nationally, areas where older adults face the largest share of life's challenges include caregiving, health and mental health, in-home support, nutrition and food security and transportation. This study explores specific problems or stressors encountered by older adults in the city, such as physical and emotional difficulties and injuries that have compromised their independence. Presented are the current individual areas of need and from those, the magnitude of broader categories of need. Typically, it is understood that the self-reported needs of older adults represent a minimum level, a conservative estimate attenuated by respondents' strong desire to feel and appear self-reliant and further reduced by the silent whisper of some older adults who, no matter how sensitive the attempt, are too frail to participate in any survey Enterprise.

Nonetheless, clear patterns of needs and strengths emerged from this assessment. Just over half of older adults reported problems with doing heavy or intense housework, physical health, and not knowing what services are available to older adults in their community. Less than 10% of older adults reported experiencing problems with being mentally or physically abused or having enough food to eat. Even the least frequently encountered issues affected over 1,000 residents. The percent of the population that experiences a problem is not a measure of how difficult a problem is to endure for the people who share it. Some needs, though rare as a percent of residents, have particularly devastating impacts on residents' quality of life – for example, needing help transferring from bed to wheelchair or having a problem with safety – so it is important to consider both the prevalence of the need and its centrality to residents sustained independence.

It is important to understand what problems older adults face in their daily lives so that specific services can be considered where needs are great. The greatest area of resident need was civic engagement. Issues around information and planning needs were determined to be problematic for about half of the older residents. Older residents reported the lowest prevalence of need in the areas of social support and safety, although these needs can be quite serious for the 5-6% of seniors affected.
The city's housing stock is relatively old. About 63 percent of the city's housing was built before 1980, considerably more than in Broomfield (32 percent), Thornton (29 percent) and Westminster (41 percent). Wheat Ridge, an older and denser community, has a higher percentage (85 percent).

The Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:
One of the main challenges is the high cost of for-sale housing. Rental rates are currently on par with Denver, and are very high.

Do you have any other comments or information that you feel could be beneficial to analyzing housing needs within Adams County?
The Community Development Planning Division offered these comments as well:
People do desire to live in livable, walkable neighborhoods where they can easily reach their daily retail and service needs on foot. The concept of mixed-use should continue to be promoted, and zoning should be more flexible so that there are fewer commercial only zoning districts, and there are more options to include residential and mixed-use districts.

Interview 9: City Government Official

From your perspective, what are the housing needs you see in your specific community/municipality?
The overall proportion of residential uses in the city is larger than it should be and creates higher demands for services than can be provided from a financial perspective. Finally, roughly 70% of the residential units in the city are manufactured homes (the bulk of which are in mobile home parks). Should these mobile home park land uses change to other residential uses, the City would advocate for a more diverse set of price points, and residential options in local housing, an increase in available, walkable services, higher levels of site permeability, and a greater sense of local community and livable amenities. Generally mobile home parks do not serve their residents well by any of these measures. Lastly, mobile home parks have a long-term association with affordability, but as price points in the Denver Metro region increase and affordable housing options dwindle, many parks are charging lot rents that in combination with house rentals are higher than a middle-income, single family mortgage in adjacent communities.

What are the housing needs you see in Adams County, as a whole?
Thoughtful, integrated, affordable housing options near livable amenities and regional transportation systems.

Are there any specific housing types that you see missing or lacking in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County, as a whole?
The City only has single family housing, townhomes, apartments and mobile home parks. The most obvious missing housing types are associated with mixed use, and TND neighborhoods. Most of the residential neighborhoods were designed with limited pedestrianism and permeability. They also lack walkable community resources such as, neighborhood scale diners, cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, hardware stores and convenience stores. Within Adams County, providing more diversity of housing sizes and types within a single neighborhood as

was common in neighborhoods that developed prior to 1940 would create more vibrant, integrated communities.

Are there any populations you feel are underserved or underrepresented in terms of housing and supportive services in your specific community/municipality, and Adams County as a whole?
We have 70% Low to Moderate Income housing. Other communities within Adams County, and Adams County as a whole average around 40% which is still high when compared to state averages. Integrating (not ghettoizing) a higher diversity of income ranges into the community would be beneficial.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the housing needs in the community?
The local residential development should be required to follow TND design principles that are inclusionary both culturally and economically and that cultivate more vibrant, walkable, livable communities for a sustainable mix of demographic groups. These communities should have a local sense of place (or small downtown) adjacent to vibrant park amenities and connected to regional trails and transportation networks.

What sort of solutions, initiatives, or programs, do you think the County should undertake to target the underserved populations in the community?
Increased code enforcement, and health and safety checks for residential structures (possibly through the fire departments) to ensure that affordable housing is safe. A commitment to integrating diverse housing types and walkable amenities into new development plans. Higher connectivity to transportation networks and critical services.

What opportunities in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
The increase in demand for housing could lead to significant redevelopment pressures. Where practical, that increased demand should be integrated vertically in thoughtful nodes near civic amenities to generate healthy micro-communities with character, vitality, resilience, and vibrancy.

What challenges in terms of housing and growth do you see for Adams County and/or your community in the coming years?
I expect that the mobile home parks will re-develop eventually. Our challenge will be to redevelop them in ways that are thoughtful locally, make sense for the city as an organization that provides local services and for the community of people who reside here. Another challenge will be to maintain a reasonable affordability of culturally and economically diverse, well-designed communities.

Do you have any other comments or information that you feel could be beneficial to analyzing housing needs within Adams County?

The development of the light rail lines in Adams County could create opportunities for better residential development locally. Affordable housing should be inventoried and graded for safety, quality, resilience, livability, and service needs.