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Housing report: Palatine a “desirable community,” but still faces challenges

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Palatine benefits from diversified neighborhoods, good schools, transportation resources, and more, but its housing challenges are plentiful, according to the "Homes for a Changing Region" report that examines housing in five Northwest suburban communities.

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By Kimberly Pohl

Palatine is among five Northwest suburban communities that now have a comprehensive guide on how to address short- and long-term housing issues.

The village has been working with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the Metropolitan Planning Council to analyze data and prepare the "Homes for a Changing Region" report.

A D V E R T

Highlights of the 132-page document, which is the product of an August 2011 intergovernmental agreement between Palatine, Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Mount Prospect and Rolling Meadows to create the Northwest Suburban Housing Collaborative, were presented at Monday's village council meeting.

Palatine, according to the report, benefits from diversified neighborhoods, good schools, transportation resources, a strong retail base, easy access to jobs and an expanding downtown core. Still, its challenges are plentiful.

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"Palatine's going to continue to be a desirable community," CAMP Associate Planner Jonathan Burch said. "People are going to want to move here ... but you're substantially built out. There's not a ton of capacity throughout the community."

Whether officials decide to try to accommodate different populations is a local decision, Burch said, but the report provides analysis on existing conditions and makes recommendations.

It urges Palatine to make the preservation of existing multifamily housing a key focus of future housing strategy; continue to redevelop the downtown area; explore improvements and redevelopment in the Rand-Hicks-Dundee triangle; address condominium foreclosures through local

and regional efforts; and craft initiatives to increase the energy efficiency of new and existing housing.

The report also said that if Palatine chooses to maintain its current population and not accommodate more housing units, then the demand to live in the village will cause housing costs to rise for both renters and owners. Without growth, the agencies say maintenance of Palatine's current housing stock is paramount.

Burch said another factor Palatine should consider is an increased demand for senior housing, not just in dedicated facilities, but with programs that allow seniors to rehabilitate their own homes.

In analyzing current housing, the report states that Palatine has seen a big jump over the past decade in the number of "cost-burdened" residents paying more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing. For owners, it jumped from 21 percent to 35 percent, while renters saw an increase from 34 percent to 46 percent.

"I think we found a lot of things out that we didn't know and there's some useful recommendations for us to consider moving forward," Palatine's Director of Planning and Zoning Ben Vyverberg said.