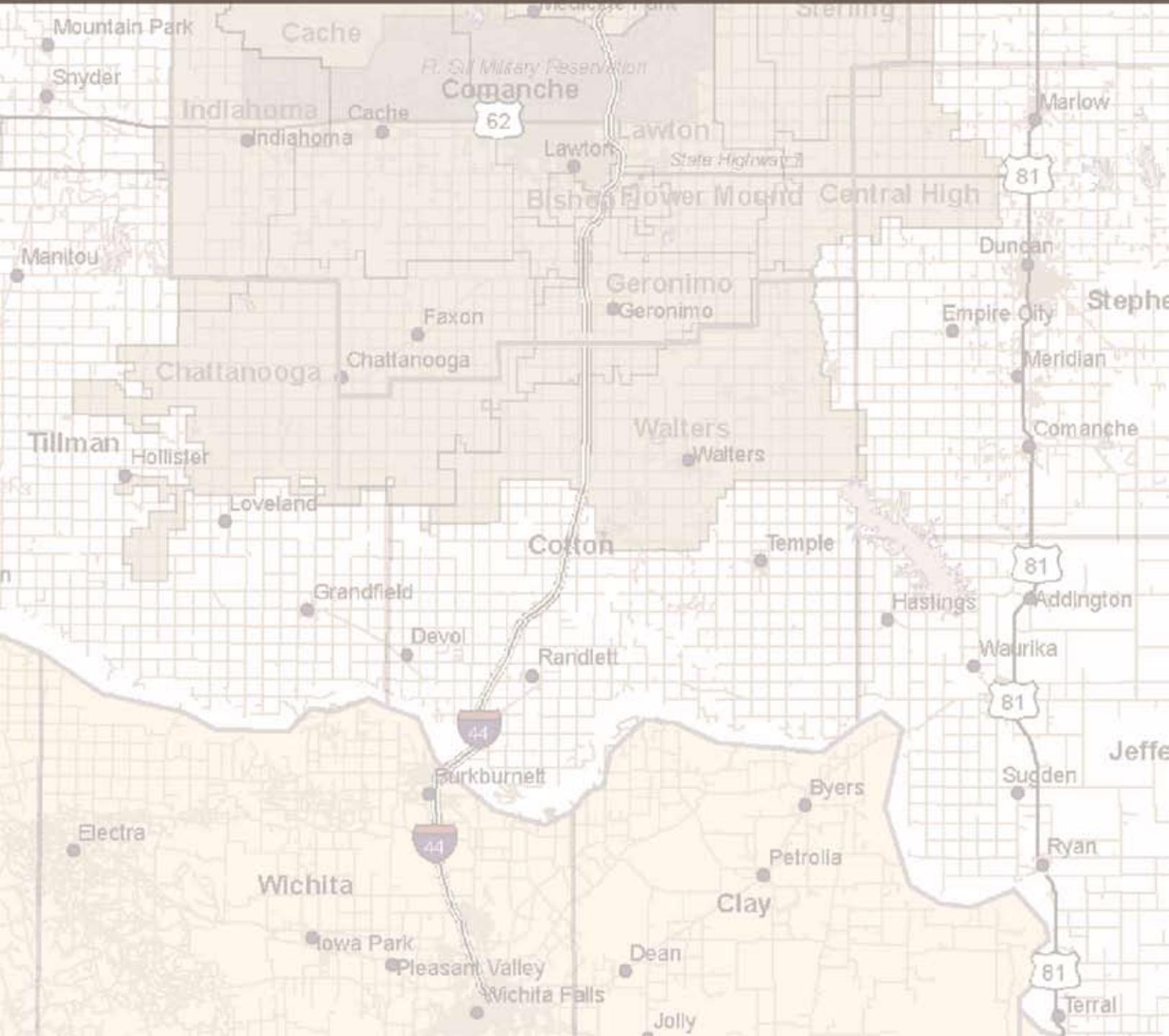


CHAPTER 6 HOUSING



CHAPTER 6

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of residential development trends and the current and future availability of for sale and rental housing, measured through building permit activity, within the three primary impact area communities and Comanche County. First, a discussion of general housing availability is provided and an overview of planned residential development is reviewed to determine the potential impact on current and future supply. Also, a discussion of affordability issues (relative to military housing allowances) is examined to determine if the current housing market is providing (or can provide) the needed housing units in the appropriate price ranges. Finally, an estimate of the need for off-post housing for the military is offered, as well as recommendations regarding potential off-post housing for military families and contractors as the BRAC deployment begins in the Lawton/Fort Sill area.

Building Permit Activity and Values

Information compiled by the US Census Bureau indicates an average of 246 building permits annually, for single-family residential, have been issued in Comanche County over the last five years. As presented in Figure 6-1, an average of 238 building permits for multi-family housing units has also been issued. The greatest activity for residential construction has occurred in Lawton, averaging 189 single-family permits and 230 multi-family permits. This accounts for nearly 77% of single-family and 97% of multi-family building permit activity.

Building Permit Activity Number of Units	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		Annual Average	
	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi
Cache, OK	12	0	6	0	14	0	14	0	11	0	11	0
Elgin, OK	13	8	13	0	26	0	58	2	52	7	32	3
Lawton, OK	124	5	138	0	260	320	215	248	208	576	189	230
Comanche County, OK	149	13	166	0	315	320	308	274	293	583	246	238
City as a % of County												
Cache, OK	8.1%	0.0%	3.6%	NA	4.4%	0.0%	4.5%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%
Elgin, OK	8.7%	61.5%	7.8%	NA	8.3%	0.0%	18.8%	0.7%	17.7%	1.2%	13.2%	1.4%
Lawton, OK	83.2%	38.5%	83.1%	NA	82.5%	100.0%	69.8%	90.5%	71.0%	98.8%	76.8%	96.6%

Source : US Census Bureau and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-1: Residential Building Permit Activity

Although Lawton experienced the greater share of residential building permit activity over the last five years, these additional units (both single-family and multi-family) represent slightly less than a 6% increase to the City's housing stock (relative to the 2000 Census). Conversely, as indicated in Figure 6-2, the residential building permit activity in Elgin, over the last five years, has represented a 36% increase in the housing stock.

Building Permit Activity by Location	2003-07 Total		Census 2000 HH	% Increase
	Single	Multi		
Cache, OK	57	0	936	6.1%
Elgin, OK	162	17	496	36.1%
Lawton, OK	945	1,149	36,434	5.7%
Comanche County, OK	1,231	1,190	45,416	5.3%

Source : US Census Bureau and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-2: Estimated Increase in Housing Stock from Building Permit Data



The average value of the single-family residential permits, in Comanche County, has averaged a little under \$144,000. The average value in Lawton is relatively similar, while that for Cache represents 85% of the County value and that for Elgin represents 108% of the County value (refer to Figure 6-3). The average permit value of multi-family units, at \$49,000 in Elgin is approximately 117% that for Comanche County, at \$42,000.

Building Permit Activity Value per Unit	2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		Annual Average	
	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi	SF	Multi
Cache, OK	\$77,358	NA	\$85,333	NA	\$141,214	NA	\$141,214	NA	\$141,214	NA	\$121,889	NA
Elgin, OK	\$141,462	\$40,000	\$113,462	NA	\$172,077	NA	\$152,655	\$75,000	\$163,481	\$52,429	\$155,204	\$49,235
Lawton, OK	\$125,434	\$5,000	\$125,369	NA	\$152,246	\$23,101	\$158,635	\$21,785	\$151,502	\$59,167	\$146,093	\$40,818
Comanche County, OK	\$122,960	\$26,538	\$120,138	NA	\$150,644	\$23,101	\$153,222	\$29,024	\$151,245	\$59,086	\$143,968	\$42,132
City as a % of County												
Cache, OK	62.9%	NA	71.0%	NA	93.7%	NA	92.2%	NA	93.4%	NA	84.7%	NA
Elgin, OK	115.0%	150.7%	94.4%	NA	114.2%	NA	99.6%	258.4%	108.1%	88.7%	107.8%	116.9%
Lawton, OK	102.0%	18.8%	104.4%	NA	101.1%	100.0%	103.5%	75.1%	100.2%	100.1%	101.5%	96.9%

Source : US Census Bureau and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-3: Average Value of Residential Building Permits

Estimated Housing Demand and Available Housing Stock

According to the population forecasts generated by the REMI model (see Chapter 4 of the report), the estimated increase in population over the 2007 to 2020 time-period, with the BRAC impacts, is nearly 23,000 persons. This represents an approximate increase of 16,300 persons over the baseline population, and as such, this increase (of 16,300 persons) may be considered as the BRAC increase. Assuming an average household size of 2.4 persons per unit (the average for Lawton), there is the potential demand for 6,800 housing units ($16,300 \div 2.4 = 6,800$) as a direct result of BRAC induced population growth. This is not to suggest that over the next 12+ years an additional 6,800 housing units are required to be built in the Lawton – Fort Sill area. In actuality, some portion of this estimated demand would be realized by military personnel and their dependents living on-post. By way of example, the additional military student population would reside on-post, because single military personnel are generally required to live on-post and there are new housing units being constructed on post that will create a net impact of 238 new housing units (family style duplexes) on-post. Some military and other non-military potentially residing off-post may purchase/rent from the estimated surplus of 1,800 housing units in the market. Figure 6-4 presents an estimate of the available housing within selected school districts and the median pricing of that housing. Exhibit 6-1 (on the next page) graphically illustrates the location of newly approved housing developments in the study area as of August 2007.

Lawton - Fort Sill, OK Estimated Available Housing	Existing	New	Total	Median Pricing	
	Units	Units	Units	Existing	New
Lawton School District	659	75	734	\$100,000	\$189,950
Cache School District	50	26	76	\$175,700	\$181,150
Elgin School District	46	22	68	\$158,750	\$163,000
Remainder of Comanche County	826	180	1,006	\$107,000	\$171,200
Total or Average	1,581	303	1,884	\$107,760	\$176,100

Source : MLS Statistics (March 2008) and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-4: Available Housing Stock and Pricing

As indicated in the preceding Figure and in the following Exhibit, much of the existing available housing stock is dispersed throughout Comanche County, (1,006 units or 53% of the available inventory). Approximately 39% is in the Lawton school district and approximately, 4% in the Cache school district and another 4% in the Elgin school district. The availability of existing housing units in these three schools districts, relative to all available housing units, are less the estimated BRAC impacts which forecasted 75% of the new population/housing would be realized in Lawton, 13% in Elgin, and 10% in Cache.



Insert Exhibit 6.1 -- New Housing in Study Area



Planned Housing Stock

If future development trends mirror the last five years (an annual 484 housing units from permit data) this then indicates an additional 5,800 housing units by 2020. However, based on information provided by the City of Lawton Planning Department in August of 2007, there are more than 5,500 housing units proposed for the Lawton area (see Figure 6-5 below).

Proposed Housing Lawton, OK	Number of Units
Subdivision - Record Plats	371
Subdivision - Construction Plats (Under Construction)	555
Subdivision - Construction Plats (Not Approved)	596
Subdivision - Development Sketches (w/o Apartments)	2,346
Apartment Projects	1,649
TOTAL Residential Units	5,517

Source : City of Lawton Planning Department and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-5: Proposed Housing Units in Lawton area (August 2007)

The proposed housing stock additions consist of single family and multi-family project and are dispersed throughout the City. Exhibit 6-2 (next page) graphically illustrates that the majority of these projects are proposed in the two primary growth nodes within Lawton, namely southwest Lawton and east Lawton. Figure 6-6 (below) identifies the major projects approved on this list, as well as the product type, general location and total size of the proposed development.

Lawton - Fort Sill, OK Sampled Apartment Survey	Total Units	Average Monthly Rent by # of Bedrooms					Available Units
		Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR	
Bellaire Apartments	200		\$440	\$540	\$620	\$750	12
Fox Valley	120			\$535	\$650		29
Summit Ridge	168			\$725			21
Summit Village	260			\$775	\$843		200
Summit Springs	240		\$575	\$775	\$843		150
Willow Park	160		\$488	\$650			16
Lawtonian Apartments	100	\$395	\$495				10
The Landings	48		\$413	\$543			10
Raintree	164		\$380	\$483			0
Applewood	24			\$495			12
Pecan Valley	100		\$695	\$695			5
Total or Average	1,584	\$395	\$498	\$622	\$739	\$750	464

Source : Survey as of November 2008 - RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-6: Project Type, Location & Total Size of Proposed Developments



Overview of Rental Housing Market

According to information compiled by the City of Lawton Planning Department, via assessor records, there are approximately 70 separate, existing apartment complexes in Lawton, accounting for nearly 6,200 renter residential units. Over the 2000 to 2011 period, renter-occupied housing accounts for about one-third of all housing in Comanche County, according to the US Census Bureau and projections developed by Claritas. This in turn equates to approximately 15,500 rental housing units.

Building permit data (2003 to 2007 period) indicate that there has been an annual average addition of 238 multi-family housing units in Comanche County. Pending and “pipeline” multi-family projects from the City of Lawton indicate that 1,649 apartment units are planned for development. As of October 2008, local real estate developers indicated that approximately 630 additional apartment units would be delivered by December 2009.

A sample of eleven apartment complexes, representing 1,584 units (approximately 25% of the aforementioned inventory) were contacted as a part of this research, as presented in Figure 6-7 (below). At the time of the survey (November 2008), these complexes had approximately 464 units available, indicating an approximate 70% occupancy rate. Two complexes, Summit Village and Summit Ridge have been completed within the last several months and as such have many units still available. If these two complexes are excluded from the sample, the occupancy rate improves to 90%, still indicating availability. In other words the average vacancy rate is estimated to be 10%. This is consistent with the estimated 2011 vacancy rate, at 9.7%, for rental units as presented in the 2007 Housing Market Analysis – Fort Sill, Oklahoma, as prepared by Robert D. Niehaus, Inc.

Lawton - Fort Sill, OK Sampled Apartment Survey	Total Units	Average Monthly Rent by # of Bedrooms				Available Units	
		Studio	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR		4 BR
Bellaire Apartments	200		\$440	\$540	\$620	\$750	12
Fox Valley	120			\$535	\$650		29
Summit Ridge	168			\$725			21
Summit Village	260			\$775	\$843		200
Summit Springs	240		\$575	\$775	\$843		150
Willow Park	160		\$488	\$650			16
Lawtonian Apartments	100	\$395	\$495				10
The Landings	48		\$413	\$543			10
Raintree	164		\$380	\$483			0
Applewood	24			\$495			12
Pecan Valley	100		\$695	\$695			5
Total or Average	1,584	\$395	\$498	\$622	\$739	\$750	464

Source : Survey as of November 2008 - RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-7: Lawton Apartment Survey Data

From the sampled inventory, average asking rents range from \$395 for a studio apartment to \$750 for a 4-bedroom apartment. As such, these average rents are within the desired range of military personnel living off-post, at \$800 per month, as indicated by conversations with representatives of Fort Sill housing. Utilizing the lower vacancy rate of 10% from the prior sample survey, and applying to the approximate 6,200 apartment units in Lawton, suggests a current available inventory of 620 units. It should be noted that from the sample, two newly completed complexes have 350 apartments available for rent. Local statistics indicate that 1,649 rental units are planned for future development, with at least 630 to be delivered in 2009. This represents more than twice the historic annual average of 238 apartments (from building permit data).

Conversations with representatives of Fort Sill could not provide an estimate of the number military personnel living off-post in rental housing, but they could state that there are currently 109 off-post homes for rent. These homes are typically three and four bedrooms, renting for \$725 to \$1,000 on average.



Insert Exhibit

6.2 Lawton Area Housing



Pricing Relative to Military Housing Allowance

Another issue arises as to whether or not military personnel could afford the available housing. Affordability of for-sale housing is a vital component in the analysis of any housing market. Housing affordability is typically tested by dedicating a portion of an individual's salary to mortgage payments, assuming a prevailing interest rate and mortgage term. The following Figure 6-8 presents the results of an affordability analysis for military personnel, utilizing the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH - 2008) for military personnel with dependents as the principle form of payment. If this housing allowance is insufficient to meet the monthly mortgage obligations, then a portion of the soldier's salary is required to cover the deficit. Typically no more than 28% of an individual's after-tax salary should be dedicated to a mortgage payment assuming the individual has no other significant sources of debt. This analysis does not consider any additional income from other sources (including spousal income) nor does it reflect any other additional debts, such as credit card debt or car payments. Figure 6-8 highlights those ranges by military rank where more than 28% of an individual's salary would be required to make a given mortgage payment. It is assumed in all of the following calculations that a 0% down payment is provided, with a 6% interest rate and a 30-year term. Additionally, an average of \$3,000 (combined) is assumed for taxes and insurance.

Classification/ Title		Basic Allowance for Housing (with Dependents)	Affordable Mortgage, Taxes and Insurance Using BAH	Monthly Salary	Percent of Salary Required for \$110,000 Home	Percent of Salary Required for \$150,000 Home	Percent of Salary Required for \$175,000 Home	Percent of Salary Required for \$200,000 Home
Home Price					\$110,000	\$150,000	\$175,000	\$200,000
Downpayment (0%)					\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Mortgaged Amount					\$110,000	\$150,000	\$175,000	\$200,000
O-7	Brigadier General	\$1,587	\$223,050	\$7,888	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
O-6	Colonel	\$1,429	\$196,631	\$6,308	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	\$1,377	\$188,024	\$5,476	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
O-4	Major	\$1,214	\$160,804	\$4,853	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	4.8%
W-5	Chief Warrant Officer	\$1,172	\$153,849	\$6,261	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	4.4%
W-4	Chief Warrant Officer	\$1,075	\$137,536	\$4,004	0.0%	1.9%	5.6%	9.4%
E-9	Command Sergeant Major	\$1,031	\$130,281	\$4,255	0.0%	2.8%	6.3%	9.8%
O-3	Captain	\$1,005	\$125,878	\$4,546	0.0%	3.2%	6.5%	9.8%
W-3	Chief Warrant Officer	\$985	\$122,575	\$3,532	0.0%	4.7%	8.9%	13.1%
E-8	1st Sergeant Master Sergeant	\$951	\$116,971	\$3,483	0.0%	5.7%	10.0%	14.3%
W-2	Chief Warrant Officer	\$905	\$109,265	\$3,255	0.1%	7.5%	12.1%	16.7%
E-7	Sergeant 1st Class Specialist 7	\$883	\$105,562	\$2,878	0.9%	9.3%	14.5%	19.7%
O-2	1st Lieutenant	\$857	\$101,259	\$3,992	1.3%	7.3%	11.1%	14.8%
E-6	Staff Sergeant Specialist 6	\$816	\$94,354	\$2,504	3.7%	13.3%	19.3%	25.3%
W-1	Warrant Officer	\$783	\$88,950	\$2,992	4.2%	12.2%	17.2%	22.3%
O-1	2nd Lieutenant	\$767	\$86,298	\$3,215	4.4%	11.9%	16.5%	21.2%
E-5	Sergeant Specialist 5	\$734	\$80,694	\$2,247	7.8%	18.5%	25.2%	31.8%
E-4	Corporal Specialist 4	\$638	\$64,682	\$2,048	13.3%	25.0%	32.3%	39.6%
E-3	Private 1st Class	\$593	\$57,276	\$1,790	17.7%	31.1%	39.4%	47.8%
E-2	Private	\$566	\$52,623	\$1,510	22.8%	38.7%	48.6%	58.5%
E-1	Private	\$566	\$52,623	\$1,347	25.5%	43.3%	54.5%	65.6%

Mortgage Assumptions:	
	30 Year Term
	6.0% Interest Rate
\$1,500	In Annual Taxes
\$1,500	In Annual Insurance Costs
	0% Downpayment (Assumes VA Mortgage)

Source: Fort Sill, Oklahoma, local realtors and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-8: Housing Affordability Analysis for Military Personnel



By way of example, a Brigadier General receives a BAH of \$1,587 monthly. This amount will cover a mortgage of a home priced as much as \$200,000. In another example, an E-5 (with a BAH of \$734) would be able to afford a home with a sales price of \$200,000 if they were willing to contribute nearly 32% of their salary to a house payment, which is unlikely. As indicated in Figure 6-8, and given the aforementioned assumptions, nearly all personnel could afford a home priced in the \$110,000 range (approximately the median asking price of nearly 1,590 existing homes for-sale in Comanche County), although personnel with a military rank of E-4 or below, would be required to dedicate 10% or more of their basic salary to house payments.

These “price” findings are consistent with the professional opinions offered in by the BRAC Housing Subcommittee, in a memorandum of 3 January 2007, that indicated housing should be priced between \$65,000 and \$135,000 and that the affordability of housing be based on the military member’s BAH and not include spousal income. The BRAC Housing Subcommittee also commented that it is difficult to build a new house for under \$150,000 and that many of the existing and available units may be below the quality level DoD desires.

The actual trend of homes sales in Comanche County, as presented in Figure 6-9, indicates that since the fourth quarter of 2004, the median selling price has ranged between \$80,000 and \$100,000, and as such is well within the affordability range of military personnel, irrespective of military rank and pay, as presented in the preceding table.

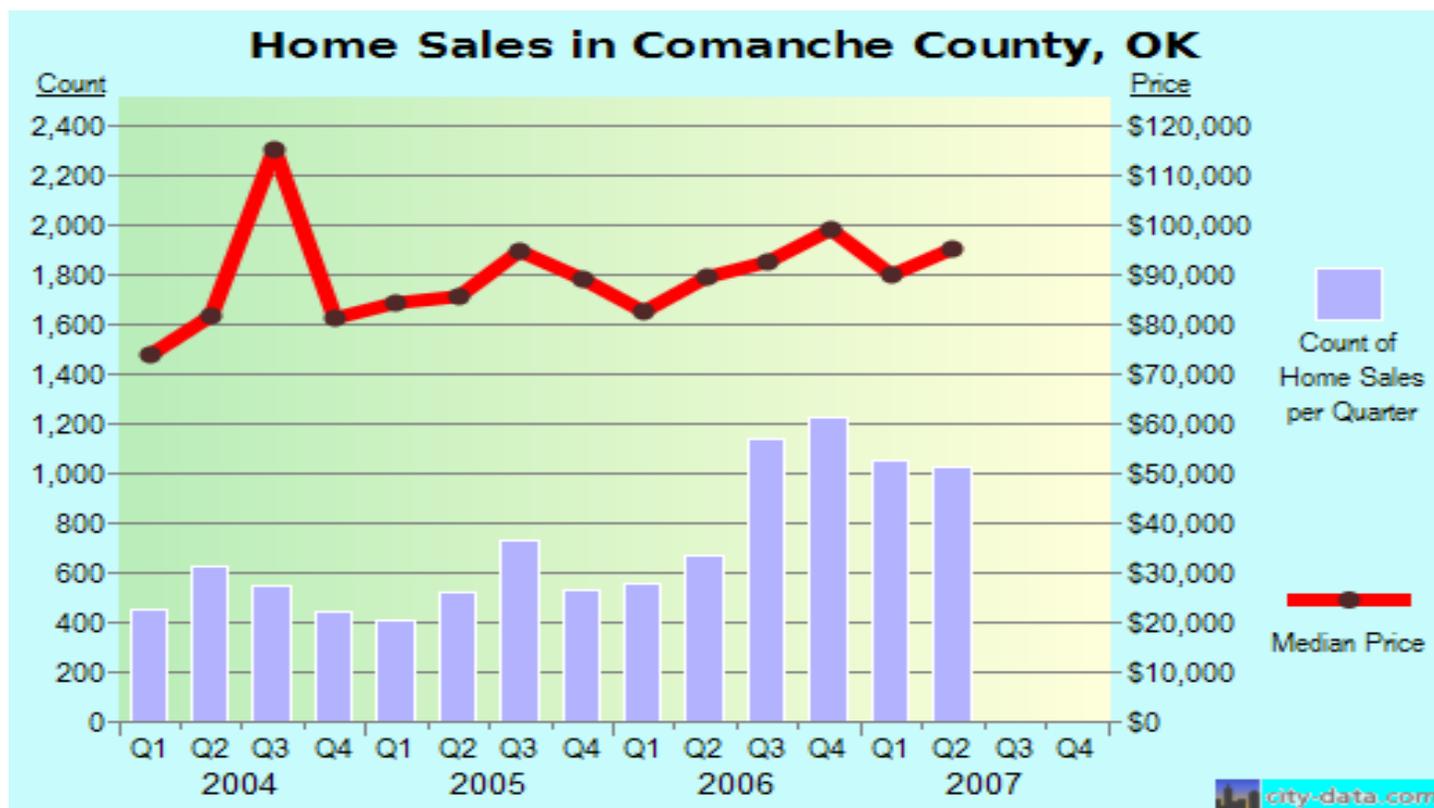


Figure 6-9: Home Sales in Comanche County, Oklahoma



Conversations with Representatives of Fort Sill Housing

An additional resource in evaluating overall housing demand and potential housing choice determinants was the information offered by Fort Sill MWR personnel and other Post employees. Outlined below are the major findings relative to this research.

- On-post housing is to be privatized, perhaps by November 2008.
- There is approximately 1,400 family-units on-post currently. Approximately 400 units (at Patriot Estates) represent a recent replacement.
- Many of the remaining 1,000 units likely have lead paint issues which are being addressed.
- About 330 quarters are eligible for “historic” designation.
- Turnover of these 1,400 units is about 40% annually.
- Typically, there is a one to two-year wait for on-post housing.
- According to Fort Sill representatives, the military prefers on-post residence, especially at levels of E-6 and below.
- Reportedly, a private-sector developer will be redeveloping an on-post golf course (near the southern end) to build 600 duplex units.
- This may then “tap out” the developable land on-post for residential development. The remaining open/vacant land is landfill, too close to ordinance or restricted areas or otherwise encumbered by zoning.
- Fort Sill representatives indicated that if living off-post, the soldier’s preference is generally for Lawton, but more to the growth sectors east and west, rather than the historic City core.
- Otherwise, personnel living off-post typically prefer only a 20-mile or 25-minute drive with Cache, Elgin, Walters and Fletcher noted as preferred communities.
- There are approximately 3,200 barracks on-post and about 60% of these are occupied by the single soldier, and another 40% perhaps by the married (but no spouse/dependents present) soldier.
- Affordable housing off-post (typically grades E-6 and above) is believed to be in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range (by the Fort Sill representatives) and generally three-bedroom and four-bedroom units are desired.
- The desired off-post apartment rentals are typically \$800/month for a 1,500 SF three-bedroom unit.
- Representatives of Fort Sill were unable to offer statistics on the number of military personnel renting homes (as opposed to apartments) off-post. However, as of October 2008, there was an available inventory of approximately 110 homes for rent in the area. These homes were typically 3 and 4-bedroom units and in the \$725 to \$1,000 monthly rent range.
- At this point in time, representatives of Fort Sill housing generally concluded that the availability off-post housing in Lawton was plentiful.
- An inventory is maintained for rental units (off-post) as well as contacts of local realtors. The web site <http://www.city-data.com/> has a link to available housing, both for sale and for rent, situated near Fort Sill.



Apartment Development in West Lawton



Estimated Demand for Off-Post Housing

The exact composition of incoming military personnel is unknown at this time, but for planning purposes this analysis reviewed the “demographic composition” of existing personnel at Fort Sill and applied these to the incoming personnel, as summarized in Figure 6-10.

Fort Sill, OK Compositions for Planning	Baseline
Single Military	35%
Married Military	65%
Avg dependants/married	2.9
Residing On-Post	67%
Residing Off-Post	33%
Off-Post Owners	27%
Off-Post Renters	73%

Source : Fort Sill and RKG Associates, Inc.

Figure 6-10: Baseline Composition -- Fort Sill

In other words, the existing make-up is approximately 35% single and 65% married personnel and this ratio is applied to incoming personnel. Also, approximately 33% (or one in three military personnel reside off-post) and this percentage has been applied to those incoming personnel. Finally, approximately 27% of personnel residing off-post are home-owners and the remaining, 73% are renters. Utilizing these ratios equates to an approximate 900 to 925 (rounded) incoming personnel that would seek off-post rental housing and approximately 330 to 350 (rounded) incoming personnel that would seek off-post owner housing. According to the 2007 Housing Market Analysis – Fort Sill, Oklahoma, (often referred to as the “HMA”) as prepared by Robert D. Niehaus. Inc., there is a projected demand for approximately 874 off-post, private-sector rental housing units between 2007 and 2012. The 900 to 925 units estimated in this analysis are generally consistent with the findings of the 2007 HMA for Fort Sill. The existing inventory of available housing in the Lawton market is adequate to meet this demand (in a pure supply and demand equation). Again, whether the pricing and location of existing housing in the market is appropriate may be of some concern.



New Housing in Elgin



New Housing in Cache



Key Findings and Conclusions

The following summarizes the key findings for the housing analysis. Supply and demand indicators are presented first, followed by affordability and pricing indicators.

Supply and Demand Indicators

The planned and proposed residential development (supply) exceeds the potential demand for off-post housing (BRAC related). Planned and proposed housing unit development in Lawton includes approximately 3,700 single-family units and approximately 1,650 apartment units. Estimated demand for off-post housing is for 900 to 925 renter-occupied units and 330 to 350 owner-occupied units.

Estimated Demand

As of late summer 2008, personnel from Fort Sill indicate the majority of the relocation of military personnel would occur over a four-year period. Therefore, annual demand is estimated to be 235 off-post renter-occupied units and approximately 90 off-post owner-occupied units, assuming an even distribution among the four years.

Estimated Supply

Owner-occupied Home Supply: In terms of supply, trends for residential development in Comanche County (as measured from average annual building permit data over the 2003 to 2007 period) indicates that 246 single-family units are being added to the supply every year. Information from the City of Lawton (August of 2007) indicate that there is an inventory of 3,868 single-family housing units proposed for development. As of October 2008, local real estate developers indicated that 388 to 534 of these new homes should be delivered by December of 2009.

Additionally, conversations with local real estate professionals and from the real estate multiple-listing service (MLS) indicate that as of the third quarter of 2008, there is an approximate inventory of 1,200 homes available and for sale. Typically there is an inventory of 800 housing units for sale, representing a three to four month supply. The current market supply exceeds this by approximately 400 units or about an additional two-month supply. In summary, there is an ample supply of single-family housing, as represented by the number of available units, the number of units planned for development, and historic development trends to accommodate anticipated demand related to BRAC and induced growth.

Rental Unit Supply: With respect to renter-occupied housing, the trend building permit data indicates an average annual addition of 238 units in Comanche County. Pending and “pipeline” multi-family projects from the City of Lawton indicate that 1,649 apartment units are planned for development. As of October 2008, local real estate developers indicated that approximately 630 additional apartment units would be delivered by December 2009. At present (November 2008) representatives of the City of Lawton Planning Department identified 70 separate, existing apartment complexes in Lawton, accounting for nearly 6,200 renter residential units.

Assuming that the previously identified 10% vacancy factor for rental units is an average applicable to all apartment complexes, this indicates there to be available 620 apartments. Couple this with the 1,649 units (630 to be delivered by the end of 2009), the existing and planned off-post rental housing market appears adequate to accommodate anticipated BRAC and induced growth demand.



Affordability and Pricing Indicators

An analysis of the potential affordability for incoming military personnel has been completed. In this analysis, affordability is defined as the ability to meet the monthly payments on a home through the monthly basic allowance for housing (BAH) and, if required, spending no more than 28% of the monthly pay. This estimate of monthly pay reflects the military pay grades and is exclusive of the BAH and/or any possible spousal income. Excluding the third quarter of 2004, the median selling price of homes in Comanche County has been less than \$100,000, per the MLS data.

The approximate 1,590 existing and older homes for sale in Comanche County have a median asking price of \$107,800 (rounded) and the 300 existing and newer homes have a median asking price of \$176,000 (rounded). These median asking prices vary by location and school district throughout Comanche County. As indicated by members of the BRAC Housing Subcommittee (memorandum of 3 January 2007), affordable off-post housing for military personnel is believed to be in the \$75,000 to \$135,000 range. As such, the median asking price of housing in the existing inventory is approximately 7.8% greater than the median selling price from recent trends.

In this analysis, all incoming personnel could afford an \$110,000 home. Incoming personnel with the grade of E-8 and above could afford a home with their BAH alone. Military grades less than an E-8 would typically need to include some portion of their regular monthly pay, ranging from a 1% to 26% contribution. In other words, in theory, all incoming personnel could afford to purchase a home off-post (although many personnel are required to live on-post) at the prevailing median asking price of \$107,800 (rounded). However, the concern may remain as to whether or not these units meet the acceptability standards of the DoD. Potential off-post housing priced at \$200,000 is estimated to be affordable to all personnel above the military rank E-5, assuming that many personnel would be willing to earmark 20% to 25% of their regular pay to mortgage expenses.

Summary Conclusions

The estimated supply (and pending supply) of housing in the Lawton area has the capacity to meet the estimated demand for off-post housing that would be associated with BRAC. Whether this housing is in the desired neighborhood or school district for the incoming personnel is a matter of preference. Similarly, whether this housing is at the right price point is a matter of to what degree incoming personnel are pre-disposed to purchasing a home with monies exceeding their monthly housing allowance. Our analysis indicates that most incoming personnel could "afford" off-post housing with some pay grades required to spend a portion of their monthly salary towards housing. An inventory of existing housing that reportedly does not meet DoD acceptability standards should be completed in order to refine this issue. Finally, it is likely that there could be a large influx of off-post renters, rather than owners, and as such smart growth development is encouraged. This would include infill and rehabilitation potential for existing locations throughout Lawton, capitalizing on existing infrastructure and the capacity to encourage spin-off retail and service business growth.



Recommendations & Implementation Strategies

As indicated in this chapter and confirmed in the Land Use and Planning sections of this report, currently the preferred trend and method of supplying additional housing for anticipated BRAC newcomers is to target greenfield sites at or beyond the edge of current city limits within the primary impact area (i.e. Lawton, Cache and Elgin). This development pattern not only stresses current and future infrastructure networks in the area it also goes against or negates any “smart growth” methodologies or practices currently in place in the area. Additionally, from a housing standpoint, this preferred development “model” also diminishes the opportunity to provide off-post rental housing units that may be needed in these areas due to the higher development and infrastructure costs associated with this building type when they are proposed at the edge of urban service areas.

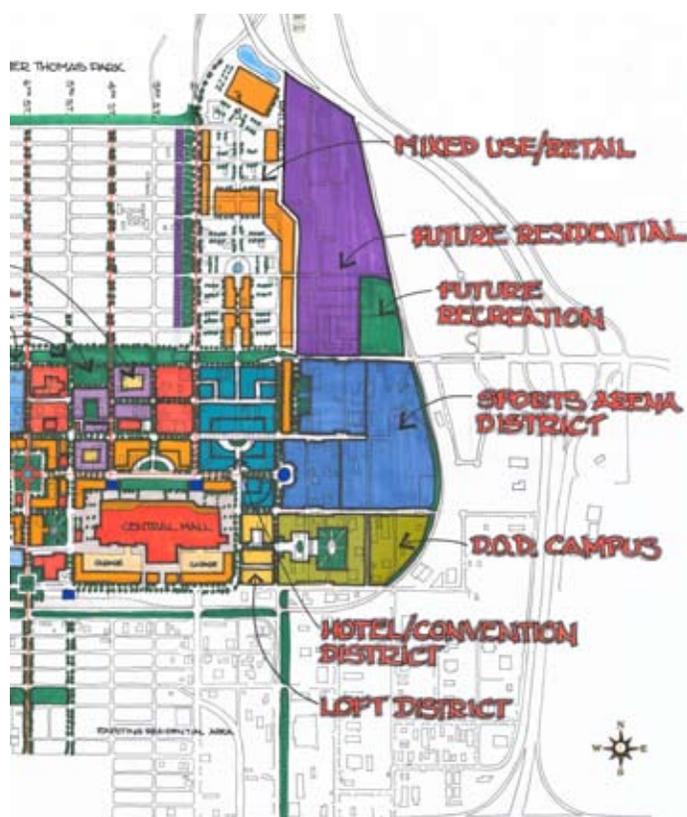
Issue:

Continued trend of providing new housing at edge of urban service areas could lead to a diminishing opportunity to supply the necessary off-post rental housing in these areas due to high development costs

Recommendation No. 1: Encourage the provision of higher density, off-post rental housing in a mixed-use development model (preferably in the Downtown Lawton Redevelopment District area).

Given the general preference for off-post rental units, (estimated to be 900 to 925 units as tied to incoming BRAC personnel), this concentration of potential renter-occupied housing affords an opportunity to encourage mixed-use development (commercial on the ground level and residential above) within the targeted downtown redevelopment district of Lawton. An “on-site” consumer base could foster and support the retail and service sector development of ground floor space within this district, establishing a “village-like” quality. Potential incentives for private-sector development of this district could include:

- Allowing bonus and build-out densities.
- De-emphasizing parking requirements.
- Public sector partnership in developing roadways, streetscape and other infrastructure.
- A waiver of permit fees and impact fees.



Downtown Plan - Lawton

Conversations with representatives of Fort Sill housing, as well as individuals real estate professional active in the market, indicate that there is an information and referral system place to assist military personnel in their search for off-post housing (both rental and owner). However, this system may be somewhat fragmented among the various real estate entities and may not totally serve as a timely and complete information and referral system that is needed and desired by incoming personnel. Given that most military families are stressed during their relocations due to time constraints, job searches, family obligations and other miscellaneous issues related to relocation, the provision of accurate and timely housing information should be a priority for the local housing industry and the respective communities.

Issue:

A fragmented system of providing real estate information for the region is not currently capable of providing current and complete critical housing information to incoming BRAC personnel.

Recommendation No. 2: Establish a housing information and resource “gatekeeper” entity for all housing related issues in the region, with particular emphasis in the primary impact areas of Lawton, Cache and Elgin.

A more centralized “gatekeeper” may be helpful to accomplish the following:

- Acquire and disseminate timely information on housing, availability, pricing and all other aspects, working as a conduit between the broker community and the military community.
- Serve as a facilitator for the application and permitting process in order to streamline residential (and perhaps commercial) development for the private-sector, particularly as growth may be targeted (as in the Lawton downtown district).
- Serve as facilitator and disseminator of current rental housing market information such as available units, rates, vacancy locations, etc.

Finally, a proposed Implementation Matrix for the key findings and recommendations of this housing analysis is included on the next page.

Implementation

The following pages indicate the specific implementation steps, processes, participants and costs for the recommendations included in this chapter.



Lawton Ft Sill Growth Management Plan Implementation Checklist Subject: Housing						Potential Funding Sources
Issue:	Responsibilities		Timing	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Sources	
	Primary	Secondary				
Issue: Lack of central and single-source information regarding housing market						
Recommendation No. 1: Establish a "gatekeeper" entity for all housing related issues and information						
Action 1:	City	LRA	Near	\$45,000	City, OEA, HBA, LRA	
Action 1.1	Hire a Housing Information Resources Manager (HIRM) Establish and maintain a "master" inventory of existing and available housing (both owner and rental) by location and pricing					
Action 1.2	Coordinate communications between military, public-sector agencies and private-sector realtors/developers regarding all aspects of existing and planned housing					
Action 1.3	Identify reportedly substandard housing (per local housing standards) among existing, available off-post housing					
Action 1.4	Serve as a facilitator for the application and permitting process in order to streamline residential (and perhaps commercial) development					
Issue: Current development trends may lead to a diminishing rental housing opportunity in primary impact areas						
Recommendation No. 2: Capitalize on existing infrastructure and municipal service capacities to provide off-post rental housing opportunities						
Action 1:	City, HIRM	CofC	Near	Unknown	City	
Action 2:	City		Near	\$5000/acre for waive of impact fees	City	
Legend						
Implementation Partners/Agencies						
CITY - Local government planning departments or city administrations (Lawton, Elgin, Cache and Comanche Co)						
FORT - Fort Sill						
CofC - local Chambers of Commerce (including Lawton Chamber)						
HBA - local Homebuilder Associations or industry groups (developers, homebuilders, management companies, etc.)						
LRA - local Realtors Association (including primary impact area communities of Lawton, Elgin, Cache, etc.)						
OEA - Office of Economic Adjustment						
HIRM - proposed Housing Information Resource Manager						
Timing						
Near - 2008 - 2009						
Mid - 2010 - 2011						
Long - 2012 +						

