



Vacancy Rates and Tenure

The vacancy rate is an indicator of the general availability of housing. It also reflects how well available units meet the current housing market demand. A low vacancy rate suggests that households may have difficulty finding housing within their price range; a high vacancy rate may indicate either an imbalance between household characteristics and the type of available units, or an oversupply of housing units. The availability of vacant housing units provides households with choices on different unit types to accommodate changing needs (e.g., single persons, newly married couples and elderly households typically need smaller units than households with school age children). A low vacancy rate may contribute to higher market rents and prices, and may limit the choices of households in finding adequate housing. It may also be related to overcrowding, as discussed later.

Table H-19 provides 1990 occupancy and tenure characteristics for the unincorporated areas of Riverside County. The data indicated a 35% vacancy rate in the eastern county area and a 12% vacancy rate in the western county area. These figures combine to give the entire unincorporated area of Riverside County an 18% vacancy rate in 1990. According to 1999 Department of Finance (DOF) estimates, the vacancy rate has dropped to 15% in the unincorporated area. DOF's estimates, however, still indicate a disproportionately high vacancy rate in the eastern county area when compared to the western county area, with some eastern county cities experiencing vacancy rates as high as 58%.

In 1990, vacancy rates were higher in rental units (12%) than in owned units (5%). Owned units are more prevalent in both planning areas and particularly in the western county area, where owned units represent over three-quarters of occupied units. The unusually high vacancy rate in the eastern county area is due primarily to the large number of vacation homes. Only 12% of rental units were actually available for rent.

**Table H-19
Housing Inventory by Tenure
Riverside County Unincorporated Area 1990**

Planning Area	Total Units	Occupied Units		Vacant Units		
		Rental	Owner	For Rent	For Sale	Other
Western County Area	86982	18,346 (21%)	58,003 (67%)	1,980 (2%)	2,986 (3%)	5,668 (7%)
Eastern County Area	29951	6,600 (22%)	12,835 (43%)	933 (3%)	742 (2%)	8,842 (30%)
TOTAL	116933	24,946 (21%)	70,838 (61%)	2,912 (2%)	3,727 (3%)	14,510 (12%)

Source: 1990 Census.

Age and Condition of Housing Stock

Age is one measure of housing stock conditions and a factor for determining the need for rehabilitation. Without proper maintenance, housing units deteriorate over time. Thus, units that are older are more likely to be in need of major repairs (e.g., a new roof or plumbing). As a general rule of thumb, houses 30