

NEWS > HOUSING

# In Allentown, more people would rather rent than buy





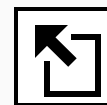
Reading Eagle

Downtown Allentown. Photo by Natalie Kolb 6/28/2017



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Reading is not alone in having more renter-occupied homes than owner-occupied ones. Allentown, York and Harrisburg do, too.

Allentown has a higher owner-occupied rate than Reading does, but its decline in homeownership since 1970 has been more steep than Reading's. And the current demand in that city is for rentals.

Tom Williams, the deputy director of Allentown's Department of Community

While higher rates of homeownership tend to add stability to a neighborhood, Williams acknowledged that it's just not the trend these days.

"People aren't really looking for homeownership anymore," he said.

Millennials and older empty-nesters are snapping up market-rate apartments in the city. In at least one case, a building had all of its apartments leased before even receiving its occupancy permits.

Allentown sits at the nexus of two fast-growing metro areas: New York and Philadelphia, with increasing housing pressure from both.

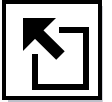
"People are looking for a lower-cost area, and we're on some major routes for both of those communities," he said, adding that Reading is probably feeling those pressures as well.

The city's priority, he said, is to make sure there are housing options available for people of all income levels.

In the meantime, Allentown is working to plan its future growth around renters and homeowners. Right now the city is working on "Allentown Vision 2030," a comprehensive plan that Williams said will help anticipate housing needs, among others, over the next 10 years. The final version is due by the end of the year.

As for Reading's comprehensive plan: It's in the works.

In February, officials said the city planning commission would start working on a new plan. The last one, drafted in 2015, was never formally adopted.



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Friday, August 21



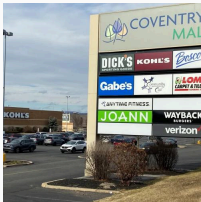
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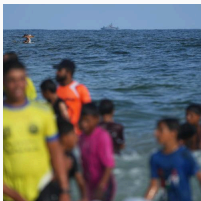
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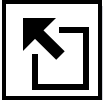


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Wednesday, August 19



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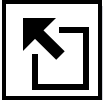
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