

Rental Vacancy Study

Kingston, New York

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Prepared by

Office of Housing Initiatives, City of Kingston, New York

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Introduction

The City of Kingston performed a housing vacancy analysis during April and May 2022. The analysis is intended to help the City determine whether it may declare a housing emergency regarding available apartments, as defined in the New York State Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) of 1974. An emergency is defined as a vacancy rate of less than 5 percent for all or any class or classes of rental housing accommodations within a locality's jurisdiction. The Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act (HSTPA) of 2019 allows any locality in New York State to enact rent stabilization under ETPA if it has determined the existence of an emergency.

A previous study of the qualifying City of Kingston rental units in 2020, completed by the Center for Governmental Research, found a rental vacancy rate of 6.7%. ¹ However, since the 2020 study was completed, an Ulster County Rental Housing Survey released in June 2021 showed a vacancy rate of 1.81% for Non-Subsidized Housing in the County. ² The same survey also found that over 55% of Ulster County renters are housing-cost burdened. For many Ulster County renters, COVID-19 has only exacerbated the problem of finding affordable housing due to the net in-migration to the City and County. ³

Similar to the 2020 study, the focus of the 2022 rental survey was on rental properties that were completed before 1974 and contain at least six dwelling units. This is the same class of rental properties surveyed in the 2020 study. These are the properties that could be directly regulated under the ETPA. Government-subsidized or publicly owned apartment buildings were excluded from the study group.

Methodology

The City modeled the methodology of this new vacancy study after the previous 2020 study. This study was based on established methodology used in other EPTA surveys, including that from the Village of Ossining. ⁴ This methodology relies on the U.S. Census Bureau's definition to estimate the rental vacancy rate in New York City: the percentage of apartments that are vacant, habitable and available for rent out

¹Rental Vacancy Rate Study - A Survey for the City of Kingston, NY 2020. <https://reports.cgr.org/details/1907>

² Ulster County Rental Housing Survey 2020.

https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/planning/2020_Rental_Housing_Report.pdf

³ How the Pandemic Did, and Didn't, Change Where Americans Move 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/04/19/upshot/how-the-pandemic-did-and-didnt-change-moves.html>

⁴ Village of Ossining – Housing Vacancy Rate Analysis. 2018

https://www.villageofossining.org/sites/ossiningny/files/uploads/2018_housing_vacancy_rate_analysis.pdf

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of the total number of apartments in the class being studied. Units that are vacant but not available to rent are not counted as vacant. The percentage of vacant units that are readily available for rent out of all rental units is called the net vacancy rate.

To determine the net vacancy rate, the City surveyed property owners for the identified properties during April and May 2022. A brief survey asked each property owner to confirm the total number of units in his or her rental property; the number that were occupied at the time of the survey; how many were unoccupied; and how many unoccupied units were off the market due to renovations, uninhabitable conditions, or other reasons.

The list of properties surveyed was based on rental properties in the City of Kingston completed before 1974 with at least six units. Information on qualifying properties and the number of units came from the City's Assessors Office. Ownership information for each of the qualifying parcels came from an Ulster County database. The City sent paper copies of the survey by Certified Mail to each of these owners at their address on record in April 2022 requesting responses by May 2, 2022. Owners could respond by sending a paper copy back to City Hall, emailing their responses to the Director of Housing, calling the Director of Housing with their responses, or by filling out an online survey via a link provided in the letter.

The letter sent to owners stated that if no response was submitted by May 2, 2022, the City would assume that their property had no vacancies. The City confirmed that letters were received by owners by cross-checking USPS Certified mail tracking information. In some cases, the City followed up with property owners via phone or email to verify information submitted or to obtain vacancy information even though the City was able to confirm that the survey was received and no response was provided by May 2. If the original survey sent via Certified Mail was not received, the City tried to reach the owners via other means, including multiple site visits to the property to ask residents for the owner contact information or to inquire about occupancy levels in their buildings. In some cases, the City sent a survey via Certified Mail multiple times if the delivery to the original address on file was not successful.

Survey Findings

The 59 properties that were included in this study represent 1,270 units. Of these property owners reported that 1,251 were occupied, 20 were vacant, and 8 were not occupied, but were off the market for renovation or other reasons.

Using the methodology established by the Census Bureau, this results in a net vacancy rate of 1.57% for this class of rental properties in the City of Kingston.

There were five properties with 33 units that were surveyed, but are not counted in the survey group because owners or managers did not provide the requested information. Even if every one of the units

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whose owners did not respond to the survey were counted as vacant, the net vacancy rate would be 4.17% — still below the threshold to declare a housing emergency.

Vacancy Rate Calculation Table

Properties Included in Study Group	59
Units Included in Study Group	1,270
Units Reported Occupied	1,251
Units Reported Vacant	20
Units Reported Unoccupied but Not Available to Rent	8
Net Vacancy Rate (Vacant/Total Reported Units)	1.57%
Units Excluded From Vacancy Rate Calculation Due to Nonresponse	33
Net Vacancy if Units Without Survey Responses Are Counted As Having All Vacancies	4.17%

Conclusion

The City's survey found the net vacancy rate for the study group of properties is 1.57%. If units whose owners were non-responsive were counted as vacant, the net vacancy rate would be 4.17%. Both rates are below the threshold to declare a housing emergency for this class of properties under ETPA.

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Appendix 1 – Letter to Property Owners and Survey Sample

<date>

<owner name>

<owner address>

Owner of: <property address>

Dear Property Owner,

As the owner of a building built before 1974 with six or more units, the City of Kingston is reaching out to you for assistance in a survey on vacancy rates in larger rental properties in the City. The results of the survey will help the City measure current rental market conditions and determine whether or not Kingston can opt into the New York State Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA).

I'm writing to ask for your help as the owner of a rental property to ensure that the study is accurate and thorough by completing the enclosed survey. You can respond by mail, phone or online at the link provided in the survey – whichever option is easiest. The online link is: EngageKingston.com/rental-survey

Please answer or return the survey no later than May 2, 2022.

Please note that the accuracy of your answers may be verified via a site visit from the City's Office of Housing Initiatives or Building and Safety Division. Similarly, if you do not respond to the survey, the Office of Housing Initiatives or Building Safety Division may attempt to obtain occupancy data on your property via a site visit. If we are unable to obtain any occupancy data, we will assume that there are no vacancies in your building.

If you have any questions or would like to provide your answers via phone, please contact me at (845) 334-3928 or email me at bstarodaj@kingston-ny.gov.

Sincerely,

Bartek Starodaj

Director, Office of Housing Initiatives, City of Kingston

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Kingston Rental Vacancy Survey

- 1.) Please provide the address of the property that was listed in your letter from the City of Kingston. _____
- 2.) Are you the current owner of this property? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3.) How many rental units are there in your property? _____
- 4.) As of today's date, how many units are occupied? _____
- 5.) As of today's date, how many units are not occupied? _____
- 6.) Are any of the unoccupied units you listed above currently off the market or unavailable to rent? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 7.) If you answered "Yes" to Question #6, how many are off the market and why? (e.g. undergoing renovation, uninhabitable, a tenant is moving in at a later date) _____

- 8.) Please provide a phone number and / or email address where we can reach you to verify the information you have provided. _____
- 9.) Is there anything else we should know that should inform this study? _____

Return this survey to:

Bartek Starodaj, Housing Initiatives
City of Kingston
420 Broadway
Kingston, NY 12401

You can also scan or take a picture of this completed survey and email it to bstarodaj@kingston-ny.gov.

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Appendix 2 – Response Tables

Properties Surveyed and Included in Survey Results:

Property Address	2022 Total Units Reported	Total Occupied	Total Vacant - Undergoing Renovation	Total Eligible Units	Total Vacant
305 and 389-429 Hurley	266	252	0	266	14
90 Fairview	152	152	0	152	0
500 Washington	139	137	0	139	2
3 Garraghan	121	121	0	121	0
166 W. Chestnut	59	58	0	59	1
1 Millers	48	48	0	48	0
79-83 Green	21	21	0	21	0
620 Broadway	16	16	0	16	0
124 Lucas	20	20	0	20	0
11 Broadway	17	12	5	12	0
753-755 Broadway	17	17	0	17	0
184 Hurley	15	15	0	15	0
1 Broadway	14	14	0	14	0
121 Green	11	11	0	11	0
23 John	11	11	0	11	0
142-144 St James	6	5	0	6	1
277 Albany	9	9	0	9	0
31 Green	9	9	0	9	0
84 Wilbur	16	16	0	16	0
79 Franklin	8	6	2	6	0
55-57 Green	8	8	0	8	0
52 Maiden	8	8	0	8	0
22 Stuyvesant	8	8	0	8	0
82 Fair	7	7	0	7	0
53 Garden	6	6	0	6	0
147 Henry	7	7	0	7	0

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152 Wilbur	7	7	0	7	0
357 Broadway	6	6	0	6	0
578 Broadway	6	6	0	6	0
585 Broadway	6	6	0	6	0
17-19 Downs	6	6	0	6	0
177 Fair	6	6	0	6	0
2 John	6	6	0	6	0
106 Maiden	6	6	0	6	0
18 Pearl	6	6	0	6	0
86-90 Pine	6	6	0	6	0
7 Russell	6	6	0	6	0
124 Smith	6	5	0	6	1
76-88 Spring	6	6	0	6	0
279 Clinton	7	7	0	7	0
87 Green	8	8	0	8	0
91-97 Main	7	7	0	7	0
95 Green	14	13	1	13	0
16 Abeel	6	6	0	6	0
127 Murray	6	6	0	6	0
22-24 Maiden	7	7	0	7	0
137 St James	15	15	0	15	0
50 Abeel	8	8	0	8	0
111 Abeel	8	8	0	8	0
189 Hurley	8	8	0	8	0
58 St James	17	17	0	17	0
130 St James	8	8	0	8	0
18-24 East St James	10	10	0	10	0
231 Albany	14	14	0	14	0
173-177 Washington	8	8	0	8	0
131 Albany	9	8	0	8	1
55 Cedar	6	6	0	6	0
208 Albany	10	10	0	10	0
609 Broadway	12	12	0	12	0

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Properties Surveyed but not Included in Survey Results due to Nonresponse and Undeliverable Survey:

Property Address	Total units in city records
203 Fair	8
58 Fair	7
319 Foxhall	6
91-95 Hunter	6
672 Broadway	6