

What Do We Mean by "FAIR SHARE"?

The Delaware Housing Coalition (DHC) has begun a project which we refer to as "Good Neighborhood." It is a long-term campaign to address the need for affordable, accessible, inclusive communities in Delaware and, specifically, to ensure that Delaware's affordable housing system focuses on creating housing opportunities for households with very low incomes (<50% of median income) and extremely low incomes (<30%). This need cannot be addressed by focusing solely on the gap between incomes and housing cost or on the funding required to make housing affordable for poor Delawareans. It must also address social, regulatory, and civic barriers to a more equitable distribution of affordable housing. We use the term "Fair Share" to describe this equitable distribution.

These are value-laden terms which proceed directly from our mission and current strategic plan.

Cost-burdened renters and homeowners make up an increasingly sizeable fraction of our state's affordable housing population in need. As with most other households in the state, they are looking for a way to find housing the cost of which consumes a smaller proportion of their income. However, in this case, the cost of housing to

many of them is well over half of an income that is much less than the average for their area. The affordability gap for them is severe.

The accompanying map, for example, looks at cost-burdened very low-income renter households in Delaware. It defines a "fair share" measure for each census tract by dividing the number of housing units there by the total housing units in the state. It then compares this "fair share" number to the number of units that are affordable to this population and available. This procedure reveals a very small number of census tracts which break even or have a positive "fair share." The biggest "surplus" is 58, while the deepest deficit is 229.

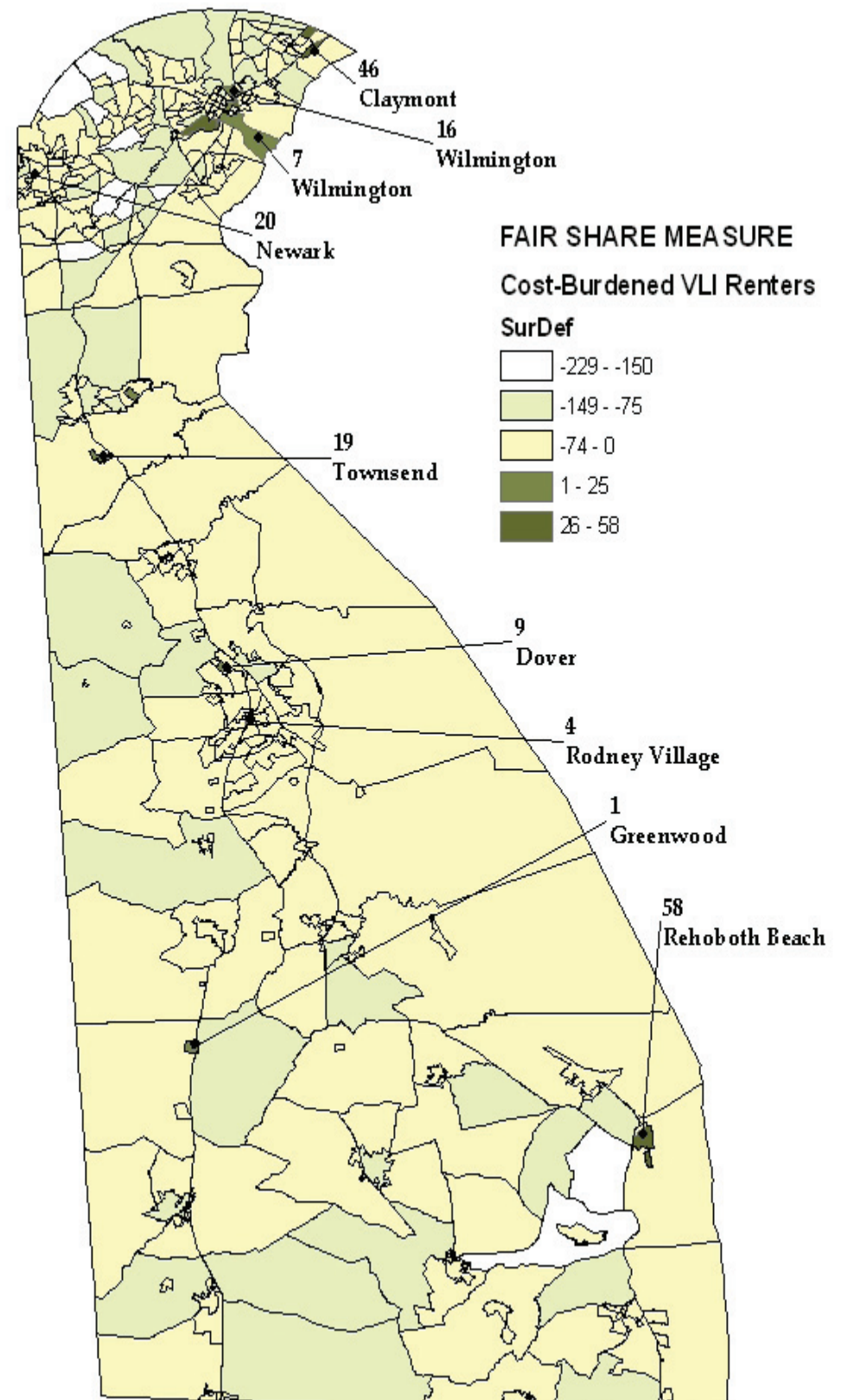
The concept of a "fair share" is rooted in the notion that social costs can be borne more evenly and that, in doing so, they become collectively lighter.

Related to this notion is a second, that a geographic redistribution would change us for the better. Our communities would be more diverse. Our workforce could live nearer their workplaces. Our toll on the environment could be reduced. We would have more freedom of choice in which school district our children attend. We would discover what good neighbors the residents of "affordable housing"

can be ...what good neighbors to affordable housing residents we can be.

Unlike the use of "fair share" mechanisms in other states to try to mandate the creation of hous-

ing in certain areas, we take it as the basis for a new dialog and an eventual new effort to build a more equitable and inclusive state. 



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We work for affordable, accessible, inclusive communities.