



Demographics Bulletin

Zachary Community Schools

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2010—2

Does the Zachary area real estate slowdown show up in residential building permits?

- **Yes, 2008 and 2009 saw much lower numbers of single-family residential permits than in 2006 and 2007**

Impact on 2010-2011 school enrollment?

- **There are still plenty of family-friendly houses available in the local inventory**
- **Newly permitted construction plans show smaller (and more affordable) houses being built in the coming years**
- **Housing will not be a barrier for in-migrants**

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We welcome your input and tips on developments that may impact the school-age population in the Zachary Community Schools.

Single-Family Residential Building Permits in Zachary: A Recent History

One part of our demographic analysis is the development of a residential building permit database. City of Zachary records have been tallied from January, 2006, through March of 2010. For each residential permit issued, square footage and a cost estimate have been recorded. This database is updated at least monthly. As the database grows over time, we can get a better sense of the potential for new area residents and impact of in-migrants on the Zachary schools.

The data show a plunge in permitting activity that coincides with the onset of the economic downturn and housing crisis. There were more than 300 permits issued in 2006 followed by just over 200 in 2007. Only half that many were issued in 2008 and 2009. And, the table suggests that 2010 appears to be off to a modest start at best when it comes to housing permits.

Year	Permits	Average
		Sq. Ft.
2006	303	2098
2007	208	2146
2008	99	2080
2009	83	2037
2010 ^a	29	1955

^aThrough March of 2010

Fewer permits does not necessarily mean a housing shortage for families with school-age children. As noted in previous bulletins, real estate sales data show a substantial inventory of available new housing. More importantly, these permits give us insight into the future composition of that inventory. The new houses coming on the market in the near future will be smaller than those built three or four years ago. The 2010 average square footage of living space is 1955, down from an average of 2100 square feet a few years ago. So, while there may be fewer houses being built, the newest ones will have an average price point of around \$225,000. Smaller houses at modest prices keep the available new properties well within the range of affordability for families with children. Lastly, there may be more of these smaller residences being built in 2010. The 29 single-family permits issued during the first quarter of 2010 exceed the numbers issued in January-March of 2008 (21 permits) and 2009 (16). A mini-rebound appears to be underway.

Thus, the potential impact of the housing slowdown on Zachary schools is a bit more complex than we may think. While fewer houses are being built, the typical units being permitted are precisely the type that fall under the rubric of "affordable family housing." Our recommendation is that all keep a wary eye on real estate developments in the next few months. In June, we will report on January-May, 2010, real estate sales in the Zachary area.

Zachary Leads Parish in Census Participation!

In the years to come, the City of Zachary and the Zachary Community Schools will benefit from an above-average 74% Census participation rate. By comparison, the Baker city participation rate so far is 70%, and the Baton Rouge rate is 64%.

