

Housing and Neighborhood Development

For reference while drafting this section – Remove before publication

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit’s housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit’s existing housing stock.

Overview

The presence of vast agricultural land and Nepeuskun’s proximity to Fox Valley cities has placed moderate residential housing development pressure on the Town. So far, Nepeuskun has maintained the rural characteristics that residents of the Town value and has managed to keep the number of housing units low, at 279 units. As development pressure increases it is important for Nepeuskun to plan for how many and where new houses should be built. Many residents have expressed concern over preserving the outstanding agricultural land found in Nepeuskun while at the same time accommodating future residential growth.

Future housing needs will be influenced by changes in household size as well as consumer preferences. Following local and national trends, household size is expected to decrease. This, combined with expected population growth, will result in an increased demand for housing. There are expected to be 295 households in Nepeuskun by 2025, indicating a need for about 308 total housing units. There are currently about 275

housing units in Nepeuskun, suggesting a need for about one or two new housing units per year. Recent building permit (2000-2007) data, however, suggests that there may be a demand for an average of four new units per year, or a total of 80 additional units over the next 20 years. Additional new housing units may be needed to replace houses that are demolished or lost to disasters.

The majority of homes in Nepeuskun are single-family homes and recent trends have continued along the same path. Between 2000 and 2007, single-family homes accounted for all 34 residential building permits in the Town of Nepeuskun.

Town of Nepeuskun Housing Facts (2000)	
Total households	254
Average household size	2.71
Average household size (owner occupied)	2.69
Average household size (renter occupied)	2.87
Total housing units	279
Homeowner vacancy rate	1.3%
Rental vacancy rate	9.1%
Percent owner-occupied units	88%
Percent rental-occupied units	12%
Median value of owner occupied units	\$95,200
Median rent	\$325

Source: US Census Bureau 2000

Table 3-1. Past and Projected Population and Households.

YEAR	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS
US Census of Population and Housing		
1970	743	190
1980	682	224
1990	647	230
2000	689	254
Wisconsin DOA Projections		
2005	705	262
2010	719	271
2015	733	278
2020	751	287
2025	771	295

Providing affordable housing options for all residents, including lower income families and seniors, is also important for the quality of life in Nepeuskun. While housing remains relatively affordable in Nepeuskun, finding quality affordable housing is still difficult for some residents. This issue is most critical for renters and lower income families in Nepeuskun.

This chapter highlights the types of housing currently found in Nepeuskun, discusses issues associated with housing quality and affordability, and describes opportunities for new housing development in the town. Specific goals, objectives, and policies for appropriate housing development are identified.

Existing Housing Stock

Age of Homes

Nepeuskun has a high percentage of older homes, with 42-percent of homes in the community having been constructed prior to 1940. Table 3-2 shows construction years for housing stock in the Town of Nepeuskun, Winnebago County, and Wisconsin as of March 2000.

Table3-2. Year of Construction

Year Constructed	Town of Nepeuskun		Winnebago	
	Number	Percent	County Percent	Wisconsin Percent
1999 to 2000	9	3.2	1.9	2.2
1995 to 1998	11	3.9	7.2	7.3
1990 to 1994	21	7.5	8.3	7.3
1980 to 1989	28	10.0	11.2	10.8
1970 to 1979	44	15.8	15.8	16.9
1960 to 1969	18	6.5	12.7	11.9
1940 to 1959	30	10.8	19.7	20.3
Prior to 1940	118	42.3	23.2	23.4
Total	279	100.0	100	100.0

Source: US Census of Population and Housing (Summary Tape File 3A)
 Note: The percent column may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Older homes require more maintenance. If homeowners are not able to afford costly maintenance

projects, homes can show signs of disrepair and property values may go down. Rehabilitating the existing housing stock can revitalize neighborhoods and decrease the need for development of open space and farmland areas.

Types of Housing Units

Over 95 percent of the housing units in Nepeuskun are single-family homes, and 88 percent of all housing units are owner occupied (up about 3 percent from 1990). There are no multi-family housing units in Nepeuskun and duplexes and manufactured homes make up the remainder of the housing stock. Table 3-3 shows that Nepeuskun has a higher percent of single-family homes than both the county and state in 2000.

Table 3-3. Housing Units by Type: 2000

Housing Type	Town of Nepeuskun		Winnebago County	Wisconsin
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Single-Family	266	95	67	69
Duplex	5	2	12	8
Multi-Family	0	0	19	18
Manufactured	8	3	2	4
Other	0	0	0	1
Total	279	100	100	100

Source: US Census of Population and Housing (Summary File 1A)

Between 2000 and 2007, 34 new single-family housing units were built in the Town of Nepeuskun. There were no new duplexes or multi-family units built during this time period.

Housing Demand

The town is feeling increased development pressure from surrounding areas and many residents have expressed concern over the number and location of future homes. Residents expressed the desire for any new homes built in the town to “blend into” the surrounding rural character. There should be vegetation buffers and screening to help maintain the privacy currently offered in Nepeuskun.

Vacancy Rates

Vacancy rates reflect housing supply and demand. It’s a difficult balance between vacancy rates deemed “too high” and “too low”. If the housing supply is insufficient it is likely that housing costs will increase, making it more difficult to find affordable housing. If there is too much available housing, vacant homes and apartments can and undermine the viability of the housing market. A vacancy rate of 3 percent (1.5 percent for owned units and 4.5 percent for rentals) is considered healthy and able to support housing needs. In Nepeuskun the overall vacancy rate in 2000 was 7.6 percent, which is higher than the rate for Winnebago County and significantly lower than the state of Wisconsin (US Census). However, the homeowner vacancy rate in Nepeuskun in 2000 was healthy at only 1.3 percent (3 units) while the rental vacancy rate was concerning at 10 percent (3 units).

Table 3-4. Occupancy Status, 2000

Occupancy Status	Winnebago			
	Town of Nepeuskun		County	Wisconsin
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Occupied Units	254	92	94	90
Unoccupied Units	21	8	6	10
Total	275	100	100	100

Source: US Census of Population and Housing (Summary Tape File 1A)

Note: The percent column may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Household Size

Household size indicates how many housing units a community may need. Recent trends in living choices have lead to lower household sizes and more homes needed in the community. Many factors contribute to the decreasing trend in household size, including: increasing number of single parent homes, decreasing number of children per household, and increasing life expectancy.

The average household size in Nepeuskun in 2000 was 2.7 people (U.S. Census). By 2025, this is expected to decrease to 2.6. This means that while the total population is expected to increase by 12-percent between 2000 and 2025, the number of households in the town will increase by 16-percent from 254 to 295.

Future Housing Needs

An increase in the number of households necessitates an increase in available housing units. A certain percentage of the housing units in the community should be vacant at any point in time. A reasonable vacancy rate allows consumers a choice of housing options and helps to stabilize housing prices. In addition, more housing units will need to be constructed to replace housing units that are destroyed, demolished, or converted to non-residential uses.

Based on the projected decrease in household size (discussed above) and an anticipated reduction in vacancy rate, it’s projected that the Town of Nepeuskun will need approximately 295 total housing units by 2025. This is about 9-percent more housing units than there are today.

As new homes are built or renovated, the makeup of housing is expected to change. Changes in household size and household make-up will necessitate a variety of housing options in the future. The increasing number of single-person households, the preference for young couples to wait to have children, the increase in the number of young couples moving to town, and the expected increase in the over-65 population will all impact the types of housing Nepeuskun needs.

Participants at the visioning workshop would like to see high end housing come to the town as a way to enhance the tax base of Nepeuskun. At the same time it is important to residents that new homes built in the town are limited to areas that will not negatively impact the farmland and agriculture in the area.

Table 3-5. Home Values in Nepeuskun, 2000

Value	Town of Nepeuskun		Winnebago County	Wisconsin
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
\$49,999 or less	15	11.4%	4.0%	6.5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	61	43.2%	48.6%	35.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	37	28.0%	27.4%	30.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12	9.1%	11.6%	15.5%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	7	5.3%	5.5%	8.5%
\$300,000 or more	0	0.0%	2.9%	3.5%
Total	132	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Median Value	\$95,200		\$105,800	\$112,200

Source: US Census of Population and Housing (Summary Tape File 1A)

Affordable Housing

Affordable and decent housing has long been considered a basic tenet of quality of life. Yet it is not always possible to find housing that is both decent and affordable, even in times of relative economic prosperity. So, when the economy is struggling, housing affordability can become a critical issue.

The generally accepted definition of “affordable” is that a household should pay no more than 30-percent of its annual income on housing. According to the US Census, 12-percent of homeowners in Nepeuskun have affordability problems, compared to 15 percent in the County and 17 percent in the state. However, there are no renters in Nepeuskun currently facing affordability problems. When households spend more than they can afford on housing they may not have enough left over for other necessities such as food, clothing, and transportation.

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Affordability Index is one tool available to measure whether or not a typical family could qualify for a mortgage loan on a typical home. This number is reported at the national level, and can be roughly calculated at the local level as well. For this calculation, a typical home is defined as the median price for a single-family home. The typical family is defined as one earning the median family income as reported by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, projected to 2007 levels.

An Index value of 100 means that a family with the median income has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage on a median-priced home. An Index above 100 signifies that family earning the median income has more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home. An increase in the Index, then, shows that an average family is more able to afford the average priced home. In Nepeuskun, the estimated affordability index for single family homes in 2007 is 176, indicating that a typical family in Nepeuskun is able to afford the typical home in Nepeuskun. At the national level, the Affordability Index in 2007 was 111.

Of course, not all families are “typical families.” Lower income residents, larger families, young people without built-up equity, and seniors may have a particularly difficult time finding affordable housing. Providing diverse housing options that are affordable to a variety of family types and income levels will ensure that all residents of Nepeuskun have access to good housing.

Senior and Special Needs Housing

The special housing needs of the elderly must be an important part of a community’s commitment to provide appropriate housing options for all of its residents. The availability of special facilities is especially important to residents who want to stay in the community and remain near family and friends.

In 2012, the population over 64 will account for over one-third of the town population, significantly more than the 14 percent we see today. However, as more

baby boomers age we can expect to see a significant increase in retirees in the coming years. This population will place demands on government, service systems, and the community-at-large in a multitude of ways.

As people age, their income tends to decline. Low and low-moderate income seniors will need affordable housing options. Most seniors want to stay in their homes, or "age in place," as long as they can. Coordinated services such as Meals on Wheels, grocery delivery, snow removal and home repairs allow seniors to stay in their homes longer. Many seniors may also wish to move into smaller homes to reduce costs and regular upkeep. Reverse mortgages, which allow owners to gradually get back the equity in their house while still living there, is also an important financial tool for seniors looking to age in place.

Due to increased life expectancy, assisted living is the fastest growing and fastest changing sector of senior housing. Private-pay assisted living units have been added to the market, but there is a lack of subsidized units for seniors needing high levels of personal care. Affordability of assisted living facilities and services is a major issue for many seniors. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS), Division of Supportive Living licenses a number of residential settings for the elderly along with facilities for the physically and developmentally disabled. Table 3-6 lists various residential settings and the total capacity in Winnebago County and the number of such beds in Nepeuskun.

Currently there are no assisted living facilities in Nepeuskun, but residents would like to see options that would allow elderly residents to remain in the community.

Rural Housing Programs

The mission of the US Department of Agriculture Rural Development is to improve the quality of life in rural areas. The housing programs help rural communities and individuals by providing loans and grants for housing and community facilities to fund single-family

homes, apartments for low-income persons or the elderly, and housing for farm laborers.

Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants provide low cost financing for the development of affordable rental housing for both year-round and migrant "domestic farm laborers" and their households. These programs may be used to build, buy, improve, or repair farm labor housing and provide related facilities, such as on-site child care centers.

Housing Preservation Grants provide qualified public nonprofit organizations and public agencies funding to assist very low and low income homeowners repair and rehabilitate their homes in rural areas.

Rural Housing Site Loans are short term loans to finance development costs of subdivisions located in communities with a population less than 10,000 persons. Developed lots are to be sold to families with low to moderate household income (up to 115% of the county median income)

Repair Loans and Grants are low interest home improvement loans and grants designed for very low income individuals (50% or less of county median income). Funding can be used for making repairs, installing essential features, or to remove health and safety hazards. In order to be eligible for grants, the applicant must be at least 62 years old and be unable to repay the loan.

Single Family Housing Direct Loans are for families seeking financing to purchase (existing or new construction), repair, or improve a home. This subsidized housing program offers loan benefits as down payment assistance to enable purchase with a loan through a private lending source (Rural Development accepts a junior lien behind the primary lender) or as a sole source of assistance for purchase, repair, or improvement. Sole source assistance is limited to families who are unable to obtain any part of the needed credit from another lending source.

The **Guaranteed Rural Housing (GRH)** loan program provides moderate income families with access to affordable home ownership in eligible rural areas. Approved GRH lenders provide home purchase financing requiring no down payment and can finance loan closing costs and repairs up to the property's appraised value.

Multi Family Housing Direct Loans provide loans for the development of affordable rental housing in rural communities for seniors, individuals, and families. Low and very-low income households are targeted as tenants, but moderate income households are also eligible. Rural Development may also provide Rental Assistance (RA) with its loan. Rental Assistance is a project-based tenant subsidy that pays a portion of

tenant shelter costs, reducing them to an affordable level (30 percent of adjusted income).

Multi Family Housing Guaranteed Loans serve the rental housing needs of low and moderate income rural households by providing loan guarantees for newly constructed or rehabilitated rental property in eligible rural areas. Guarantees may be used in conjunction with other subsidy programs, such as the Low-Income Tax Credit, HOME, and state rental assistance programs. Loans can be made for a variety of rental housing types, for example: family elderly, congregate housing, and mobile homes. Loans can be made for new construction moderate or substantial rehabilitation, acquisition of buildings that meet "special housing needs," and combination construction and permanent loans.

Table 3-6. Special Needs Housing in Nepeuskun and Winnebago County

Facility Type	Description	Total Number	
		Town of Nepeuskun	Winnebago County
Adult Family Homes (Licensed by the State)	A place where three or four adults receive care, treatment or services (above the level of room and board), including up to seven hours of nursing care.	0	16 Facilities
Adult Day Care Center	A group day facility for adults who need assistance with activities of daily living, supervision or protection.	0	1 Facility
Community Based Residential Facility	A place where five or more unrelated people live together in a community setting. Services provided include room and board, supervision, support services and may include up to three hours of nursing care per week.	0	54 Facilities
Facility for the Developmentally Disabled	A residential facility for three or more unrelated persons with developmental disabilities.	0	0
Nursing Home	A residential facility for three or more unrelated persons that provides 24-hour services, including room and board and extensive nursing care.	0	1,088 Beds
Residential Care Apartment Complex	Independent apartment units in which the following services are provided: room and board, up to 28 hours per week of supportive care, personal care and nursing services.	0	339 Apartments

Source: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Quality Assurance

Housing 20-Year Vision

In the year 2030, the Town of Nepeuskun is rural, family-friendly, and growing. Active farmsteads blended into rolling hillsides and forested lands, and the town is proud of its agrarian heritage and identity. The town has retained its rural character by keeping residential development sparse and protecting farming and productive agricultural lands.

The Town of Nepeuskun is a family-friendly community. Town residents are proud that parents can bring up their children in a safe and rural quality of life. New residents come here because of our natural beauty and rural character, to leave the bustle of city-life behind, and to be closer to recreational opportunities. Housing is affordable for seniors and others. Houses and properties are well-maintained as people take pride in their homes and neighborhoods.

New housing is hidden from main roads by natural topography, vegetation (e.g. tree lines, wooded edges), landscaped yards, and setbacks. Vegetative buffers separate building sites, wetlands, and streams, while mature trees, stone rows, fence lines, and tree lines are preserved. Homes are clustered on smaller lots to preserve farmland. Lots and homes are not viewed on exposed hilltops or ridgelines. New development also incorporates stormwater management systems to mitigate run-off concerns. Pedestrian trails traverse common open space areas and connect the community.

The following goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide a comprehensive approach for achieving this vision. The order in which these goals, objectives, and policies are listed does not necessarily denote their priority.

Goals

Goals provide concise statements of what the Town aims to accomplish over the life of the plan—for the next 10 to 20 years. The goals provide the basic organization and direction for the plan’s policies and actions.

G2.1 Maintain the Town’s rural and agrarian character.

G2.2 Encourage high quality construction, enforcement, and maintenance standards for new and existing housing.

G2.3 Encourage neighborhood design and locations that protect residential areas from incompatible land uses, promote connectivity of environmental systems, and preserve rural character.

G2.4 Make affordable, quality housing available to all residents.

Objectives

Objectives suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishments of an objective contribute to the fulfillment of a goal.

- O2.1** Maintain low densities that are compatible with existing development patterns and that will preserve the rural character of the Town.
- O2.2** Direct residential development to areas that are not environmentally sensitive and are not prime/productive farmlands.
- O2.3** Encourage conservation subdivisions.
- O2.4** Encourage housing design that blends with the rural environment and will not adversely affect neighboring properties.

Policies

Policies provide the definite course of action or direction decided upon by the town to be employed to attain the goals. They provide ongoing guidance for elected and appointed community leaders, staff and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and investments in the town.

- P2.1** Develop design guidelines and subdivision regulations for conservation/cluster residential development.
- P2.2** Consider implementing a maximum lot size for new residential land divisions in the Town.
- P2.3** Direct new residential into areas with existing residential development, such as the Crossroad Community of Rush Lake.
- P2.4** Consider requiring all residential subdividers to provide covenants and deed restriction that include architectural and site design, and guidelines for individual homes.
- P2.5** Revise the Town's Land Division Ordinance to meet the standards and guidelines of the Town's Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan.