

CHAPTER 2 Housing Element

66.1001(2)(b) Wis. Statute

Section 2.1 Introduction

Shelter is one of the basic needs we have as humans on this earth. Beyond this obvious fact, it also represents, for the majority of us, the largest expenditure we will make during our lives. Because of the importance of housing in our community, the Town of Sharon believes it is important to allow for an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of its citizens.

This chapter will look at different characteristics of the housing stock to help make sure that the needs of present and future residents are addressed by this plan. Wisconsin statutes require that the housing element of the comprehensive plan assesses the age, structural value, and occupancy characteristics of the local unit's housing stock.

Section 2.2 Inventory and Analysis

A. Occupancy Characteristics

Occupancy characteristics help indicate if the current amount of housing stock is sufficient to meet existing demand. The Department of Housing and Urban Development set an overall rate of 3% vacancy to assure an adequate choice for consumers. An acceptable vacancy rate for owner-occupied housing is 1.5% while a vacancy rate of 5% is acceptable for rental units. The Town of Sharon retained an overall vacancy rate of about 6% between 1980 and 2000 following an increase to 13% in 1990 (Table 2.1). Since 1980, Sharon has seen the percent of owner occupied units increase from 86% to 89%, mirroring a trend throughout most of rural Portage County.

Table 2.1: Housing Occupancy Characteristics

OCCUPANCY	Town of Sharon			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Occupied Housing Units <i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	506 94.4%	578 86.8%	705 93.5%	425 92.8%	489 89.4%	572 91.8%	18,309 94.2%	21,306 93.0%	25,040 94.2%
Owner Occupied <i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	433 86%	508 88%	627 89%	369 87%	426 87%	513 90%	13,328 73%	14,984 70%	17,750 71%
Renter Occupied <i>(% of Occupied Units)</i>	73 14%	70 12%	78 11%	56 13%	63 13%	59 10%	4,982 27%	6,322 30%	7,290 29%
Vacant Housing Units <i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	30 6%	88 13%	49 6%	33 7%	58 11%	51 8%	1,133 6%	1,604 7%	1,549 6%
Seasonal, recreational, or occasional use <i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	n/a	50 8%	21 3%	n/a	38 7%	30 5%	n/a	685 3%	557 2%
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS	536	666	754	459	547	622	19,442	22,910	26,589

Source: US Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

B. Age Characteristics

Age is often used as a measure of a houses condition, however, it should not be the sole criteria since many older homes are either remodeled or kept in a state of good repair to maintain their value. In 2000, 63% percent of the houses in the Town of Sharon were built after 1970 (Table 2.2), indicating a relatively newer housing stock when compared with the County (57%) as a whole. The Town of Sharon housing stock is similar in age to the rest of the Towns in Portage County (64% being built after 1970). A major factor explaining the age of housing stock can be

shown by the fact that the Town's population grew by almost half since 1970, from 1,304 to 1,936.

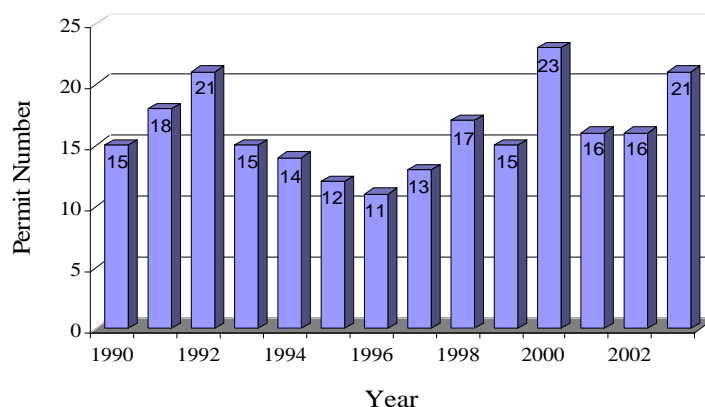
Table 2.2: Housing Age Characteristics

Year Structure Built	Town of Sharon			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
1990 to March 2000	n/a	n/a	196 25%	n/a	n/a	136 22%	n/a	n/a	5,147 19%
1980 to 1989	n/a	129 19%	117 15%	0%	115 21%	98 16%	n/a	5,012 22%	4,186 16%
1970 to 1979	185 35%	203 30%	176 23%	191 42%	194 36%	161 26%	6,528 34%	6,305 28%	5,717 22%
1960 to 1969	59 11%	75 11%	67 9%	73 16%	75 14%	59 10%	3,308 11%	2,978 13%	2,846 11%
1950 to 1959	29 5%	36 5%	31 4%	30 7%	27 5%	28 5%	1,666 9%	1,672 7%	1,988 7%
1940 to 1949	30 6%	33 5%	28 4%	19 4%	17 3%	22 4%	1,409 7%	1,372 6%	1,270 5%
1939 or earlier	233 43%	190 29%	165 21%	145 32%	117 22%	117 19%	6,539 34%	5,571 24%	5,435 20%
Total Units Listed	536	666	780	458	546	620	19,450	22,910	26,589

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000

A more detailed breakdown of recent single-family housing starts in the Town of Sharon is provided through an examination of building permit data for the past 12 years on file with Portage County (Figure 2.1). The Town experienced its highest permit activity during the early part of the decade and again in 2000, a pattern unlike the rest of Portage County, which the highest permit activity is in the middle part of the decade. Low mortgage rates and favorable economic conditions during that period could be possible factors contributing to these housing starts.

Figure 2.1 Single-Family Permits



Source: Portage County Planning & Zoning – Permit data

When comparing single-family housing starts during the recent past (2000-2002) against other Towns in Portage County, Hull shows the greatest activity with 67 permits. Sharon comes in second with 55 single-family permits. These two Towns are located adjacent to each other on the north and northeast side of the Stevens Point urban area.

C. Structural Characteristics

Structure type is most often used to describe the physical characteristics of housing stock. This is defined in the census as the number of units in a structure. In 2000, 90% of the housing stock was categorized as single-family, or 1-unit detached (Table 2.3). Since 1980, the percentage of single-family homes in the Town of Sharon has been slightly higher than the rest of rural Portage County (Town Average).

The second largest structure type in this classification in the Town of Sharon is mobile homes. In 2000, 7% of the housing stock fell into this category, which is lower than the Towns Average. Over the twenty year time period, mobile homes have been an increasing housing choice for residents throughout the county.

Table 2.3: Housing Structural Characteristics

Units in Structure	Town of Sharon			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
1 Unit Detached	485 90%	578 87%	696 89%	381 85%	445 83%	540 87%	14,299 74%	15,828 69%	18,534 70%
1 Unit Attached	0 0%	9 1%	13 2%	3 1%	4 1%	4 1%	186 1%	329 1%	630 2%
2 to 4 Units	17 3%	13 2%	17 2%	10 2%	6 1%	1 1%	1,915 10%	2,420 11%	2,840 11%
5 or more Units	11 2%	0 0%	0 0%	6 1%	1 0%	2 0%	1,871 10%	2,196 10%	2,765 10%
Mobile Home Trailer or Other	23 4%	66 10%	54 7%	48 11%	77 14%	65 10%	1,179 6%	2,137 9%	1,788 7%
TOTAL UNITS	536	666	780	449	533	619	19,450	22,910	26,557

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000

D. Value Characteristics

Housing value is another important aspect in gauging the overall assessment of current housing stock. The value of housing, as indicated by median price, has risen significantly since 1980 all across Portage County.

Table 2.4 Housing Value Characteristics

Housing Value (Owner Occupied)	Town of Sharon			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Less than \$50,000	110 64.7%	76 34.2%	15 4.4%	99 51.7%	63 27.1%	15 4.8%	5,628 60.2%	3,562 33.6%	781 6.0%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	58 34.1%	143 64.4%	120 34.9%	86 5.2%	149 63.3%	114 39.2%	3,516 37.6%	6,139 58.0%	6,028 46.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2 1.2%	3 1.4%	145 42.2%	5 2.8%	16 6.8%	120 39.2%	187 2.0%	716 6.8%	4,253 32.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	47 13.7%	1 0.3%	6 2.5%	37 12.0%	19 0.2%	150 1.4%	1,329 10.2%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	11 3.2%	0 0.1%	0 0.1%	14 4.6%	6 0.1%	19 0.2%	493 3.8%
\$300,000 or more	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 1.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.1%	7 2.4%	0 0.0%	4 0.0%	204 1.6%
TOTAL UNITS	170	222	344	191	235	306	9356	10,590	13,088
MEDIAN VALUE	\$42,900	\$56,900	\$109,900	\$38,871	\$84,571	\$103,629	\$45,300	\$58,600	\$98,300

Source: US Census 1980, 1990, 2000

Median price is an indicator that can be used to gauge housing demand. The median home price in the Town of Sharon has risen since 1980, but has been consistently lower than the County overall until 2000 (Table 2.4). In 2000, the greatest percentage of homes in Sharon were valued between \$100,000 and \$150,000, which is consistent with the rest of rural Portage County (Towns Average).

E. Housing affordability

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development not more than 30% of a household income should be spent on monthly housing costs in order for that home to be considered affordable. The U.S. Census provides this data on housing costs as a percentage of household income for homeowners (Table 2.5). The following information is taken from the US Census Summary File 3, which is based on a sample of households within a community, and not a total count of all households.

Comparison of monthly housing cost for homeowners as a percentage of their household income for the Town of Sharon, Town Average and Portage County are shown (Table 2.5). In 1999, just under 16% of Town of Sharon owner-occupied households paid more than 30% of monthly income on housing costs. This represents a 2% increase in this category since 1989. The percentage for both the Town average and Portage County households paying more than 30% of monthly income in 1999 is lower than Sharon, averaging 13.7%. Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss is included in the “not computed” category (U.S. Bureau of Census).

Table 2.5 Affordability Comparison for Owner-Occupied Housing Unit

Monthly Owner Costs As a % of Household Income	Town of Sharon		Town Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
less than 20.0%	156 70.3%	209 60.8%	156 66.6%	194 63.4%	6,707 63.3%	8,277 63.2%
20.0 to 24.9%	27 12.2%	45 13.1%	32 13.8%	42 13.6%	1,628 15.4%	1,897 14.5%
25.0 to 29.9%	9 4.1%	33 9.6%	21 8.9%	26 8.5%	910 8.6%	1,063 8.1%
30.0 to 34.9%	7 3.2%	22 6.4%	7 3.2%	13 4.4%	470 4.4%	576 4.4%
35% or more	23 10.4%	32 9.3%	17 7.2%	29 9.5%	852 8.0%	1,187 9.1%
not computed	0 0.0%	3 0.9%	1 0.5%	2 0.6%	23 0.2%	88 0.7%
Total Units Listed	222	344	234	306	10,590	13,088

Source: US Census Bureau 1990, 2000.

In 1999, 11% of the Sharon renter-occupied households were paying a monthly rent above 30% of household income. The percentage significantly decreased from 1989, when approximately 27% of renter-occupied households were paying above 30% of monthly household income. The data from the 2000 Census indicated that this percentage was lower than both the County overall (32.3%) and the Town average (23%). Units occupied by households reporting no income or a net loss, or for which no cash rent was paid, are included in the "not computed" category (U.S. Bureau of Census).

Section 2.3 Housing Issues

- Obtaining affordable housing.
- The need for Senior Citizen housing.
- Development in the rural area while protecting major wetlands and natural areas as defined in Chapter 8.
- The quality of housing in the Town of Sharon.
- How will neighboring municipality developments affect the Town?
- Drinking Water in the Polonia area.
- How can businesses with heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) be sited so that they minimize conflict with residential uses?

Section 2.4 Housing Goals, Objectives and Policies

Goal 1: Provide a climate for affordable housing throughout the Town of Sharon.

Objectives:

- Allow for subdivisions in the Polonia area.
- Designate areas for multiple family units.
- Set in place a minimum lot size to ensure that there is sufficient land for a home site and yet it is fair and reasonable.

Policies:

- Make use of lot averaging option in the Town Subdivision Ordinance.

Goal 2: Allow for Senior Citizens to live out their lives close to their home community.

Objectives:

- Allow for the private sector to develop senior housing in the Polonia area.

Policies:

- Work with the County as needed to achieve this objective.

Goal 3: Ensure that housing development takes into consideration the protection of wetlands and agricultural operations as well as natural areas as defined in Chapter 8.

Objectives:

- Preserve agricultural operations throughout the land use zones.
- Identify sensitive natural resource areas (i.e., wetlands, lake property, and large woodland areas) and utilize the Land Use Plan for their protection.

Policies:

- Encourage the open space design option in subdivision ordinances
- Put major wetlands under a land use class that would result in conservancy zoning
- Consider setting town guidelines for the support and protection of Agricultural operations
- Utilize natural resources limited development overlay district in areas surrounding water bodies as appropriate

Goal 4: Maintain and/or improve the quality and integrity of existing housing and neighborhoods.

Objectives:

- Enforce existing ordinances.
- Make adjustments to existing ordinances when and where warranted.

Policies:

- Enforce Town of Sharon Subdivision Ordinances.
- Enforce Town of Sharon Road Ordinances.
- Enforce Park Land Ordinance.
- Consider creating a fair and equitable mobile home ordinance.

Goal 5: Avoid neighboring development from affecting the Town of Sharon in a negative manner.

Objectives:

- Revenue sharing.
- The Town must be allowed to have input.
- Boundary Agreements.

Policies:

- Maintain active voice in county government.

Goal 6: Plan for a safe and adequate water supply.

Objectives:

- Ensure that residents have and maintain legal and working septic systems.
- County to enforce regulations concerning proper abandonment of unused wells.

Policies:

- Encourage building on only one acre or two-acre lots in Polonia area.
- Keep abreast of Septic and well water issues.

Goal 7: Ensure that businesses with heavy truck traffic (such as non-metallic mining) be sited so that they minimize conflict with residential uses.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.