

HOUSING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Usually, most rural towns contain a high percentage of single-family homes, often with few other housing types available. As new people move in and the population ages, other types of housing will have to be given some thought, in order to provide the variety needed to meet the needs of residents. In developing a 20-year comprehensive plan for the Town of Long Lake, the existing housing stock has been reviewed and recommendations made to meet the housing needs to the year 2020.

2.2 EXISTING HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

For the period 1980 to 1990, the Town of Long Lake exhibited a 2.3 percent increase in total housing units. From 1990 to 2000, the town saw an additional 21 new housing units, a 3.4 percent increase, putting total housing units according to the U.S Census Bureau at 590 in 2000.

Table 2.1: Housing Characteristics

Long Lake Town	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Total Housing Units	556	569	590	671	740	819	904
Total Occupied Housing Units (Households)	193	234	284	323	356	394	435
Single-Family Units (Owner-Occupied Units)	167	193	245	279	307	340	375
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	26	41	39	44	49	54	60
Seasonal Units	-	312	279	317	350	387	428
Average Household Size	2.63	2.49	2.57	2.52	2.5	2.49	2.47

Source: U.S. Census 2000 & NWRPC Projections

Owner-Occupied Housing Units

The majority of housing units in the Town of Long Lake are owner occupied. In 2000, 245 (86.3%) of all occupied housing units were identified as owner occupied, representing a 3.8 percent increase from 1990. Projections indicate that owner-occupied units will continue to comprise the majority of all occupied units through 2020.

Renter-Occupied Housing Units

Renter-occupied units comprised 13.7 percent of all occupied housing units in the Town of Long Lake in 2000. Projections indicate an additional 21 renter occupied units in the town by the year 2020.

Seasonal Homes

The Town of Long Lake has traditionally been a tourism/recreation destination and has maintained a large number of homes identified as seasonal housing units, units not lived in as a permanent residence but used for recreation or occasional use. This category includes all types

of recreational uses, from summer homes to hunting cabins. Nearly 50 percent of housing units in Long Lake are classified as seasonal housing units.

Trends that have been identified as taking place throughout northern Wisconsin in the past 10 to 15 years also may impact the Town of Long Lake. One is the conversion of seasonal homes into permanent residences, especially by individuals at retirement age; and two is the conversion of permanent homes into seasonal homes as area residents retire and spend winters in a more temperate climate. As no specific data exists on these trends for the Town of Long Lake, it is difficult to definitively describe where and at what rate these conversions are taking place. In the next 20 years, the town is expected to see 314 new housing units built for seasonal use, approximately 16 per year.

Decline in Inhabitants per Occupied Housing Unit

A trend common to many northern Wisconsin townships and rural areas in general is the gradual decline of inhabitants per occupied household. Table 1.4 indicates that in 2000 the Town of Long Lake had an average of 2.57 persons per household, representing a decrease from the 1980 level of 2.63. Projections indicate that by 2020, the town will have an average of 2.47 persons per household. The central trends causing this decline include the out migration of inhabitants over the age of 18 for work or school, overall smaller family sizes, fewer families with children moving into the town, fewer children being born to Town of Long Lake residents, and a steady divorce rate. Additionally, many households are composed of retired couples or are single person households.

Projected Housing Needs

Future growth or decline in housing units can impact local units of government significantly. Each housing unit requires public services from fire protection to addressing and tax assessment. Projecting future housing units in the Town of Long Lake will assist local town government in planning for future growth.

According to the Census Bureau, the Town of Long Lake has experienced an increase in total housing units since 1980. During the 20-year period from 1980 to 2000, 34 new housing units were constructed. Based upon past trends, total housing units in Long Lake will continue to increase to the year 2020. In 2000, the Town of Long Lake had 590 units, with projections indicating that by 2010, the town will have 740 units and 904 units by 2020. The projected growth indicates an average of 16 new housing units per year through 2020.

Structural Characteristics

Table 2.2 compares housing characteristics for the Town of Long Lake with the surrounding Towns of Oak Grove (Barron County), Birchwood, Madge, Sarona as well as Washburn County. In 2000, the town had a vacancy of 51.9 percent. According to the 2000 Census, seasonal, recreational, or occasional use accounted for 50 percent of that vacancy, leaving a “true” vacancy of 4.6 percent. These seasonal, recreational, or occasional uses likely are around Long Lake. The town’s median housing value in 2000 (\$127,000) was higher than all surrounding municipalities, with the exception of the Town of Birchwood.

Table 2.2: Housing Comparisons

	Town of Long Lake	Town of Birchwood	Town of Madge	Town of Oak Grove	Town of Sarona	Washburn County
Total Housing Units	590	528	410	324	263	10,814
% Vacant	51.9%	63.8%	50.7%	3.4%	37.3%	38.9%
*Median Housing Value	\$127,000	\$144,000	\$120,500	\$97,100	\$91,800	\$85,700

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Summary File 3

* All specified owner-occupied units

Housing Stock

Understanding the relative age of the housing stock is a good indicator of the quality and condition of the available housing stock. Over 50 percent of the homes in the Town of Long Lake were built before 1970 (30+ years ago), which might indicate that the need for repair and maintenance of these homes is likely over the 20-year planning period. Table 2.3 details the percent of the town’s total housing stock by year built.

Table 2.3: Age of Housing Stock

Year Structure Built	% of Total Housing Stock
1999 to March 2000	1.7%
1995 to 1998	8.0%
1990 to 1994	6.2%
1980 to 1989	11.0%
1970 to 1979	17.6%
1960 to 1969	13.7%
1940 to 1959	21.6%
1939 or earlier	20.2%
Total	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Units in Structure

1-Unit, Detached--This is a 1-unit structure detached from any other house; that is, with open space on all four sides. Such structures are considered detached even if they have an adjoining shed or garage. A one-family house that contains a business is considered detached as long as the building has open space on all four sides. Mobile homes or trailers to which one or more permanent rooms have been added or built also are included.

1-Unit, Attached--This is a 1-unit structure that has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures. In row houses (sometimes called townhouses), double houses, or houses attached to nonresidential structures, each house is a separate, attached structure if the dividing or common wall goes from ground to roof.

The 2000 Census reports that of the total housing units 91.3 percent are 1-unit detached, 2.0 percent are 1-unit attached, and 5.4 percent are mobile homes.

Heating Fuel

Of the occupied housing units, 172 are identified as using bottled, tank, or LP gas as their primary source of heat. Table 2.4 below illustrates other means of heating fuel that are used in the Town of Long Lake.

Table 2.4: Home Heating Fuel

Heating Fuel	Number
Utility Gas	*6
Bottled, tank or LP gas	172
Electricity	27
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc	29
Coal or coke	-
Wood	40
Solar energy	-
Other fuel	-
No fuel used	-

Source: U.S. Census 2000 (DP-4)

* No gas utilities exist in the town as of this writing

Housing Market

The MLS (Multiple Listing Service) database was used to determine the number of off-water residential listings and prices within Washburn County as of January 7, 2003. This database does not include residential properties for sale through private individuals. There was one residential property in the Town of Long Lake listed in the MLS system on January 7, 2003. Within Washburn County, 125 off-water listings were found, ranging in price from \$29,900 to \$499,000. The average sale price of residential listings was \$129,346. Figure 2.1 depicts the number of listings in the MLS system and price ranges of residential, off-water properties in Washburn County.

Value of Existing Housing

The 2000 Census Bureau identifies the value of a sample portion of all owner-occupied housing units in the Town of Long Lake. In the Town of Long Lake, 61 (25.6%) are valued between \$50,000 and \$99,999, while 24 (10.1%) are valued under \$50,000. Figure 2.2 gives a detailed breakdown of existing housing values in the Town of Long Lake.

Figure 2.1: Washburn County Residential Listings (off-water)

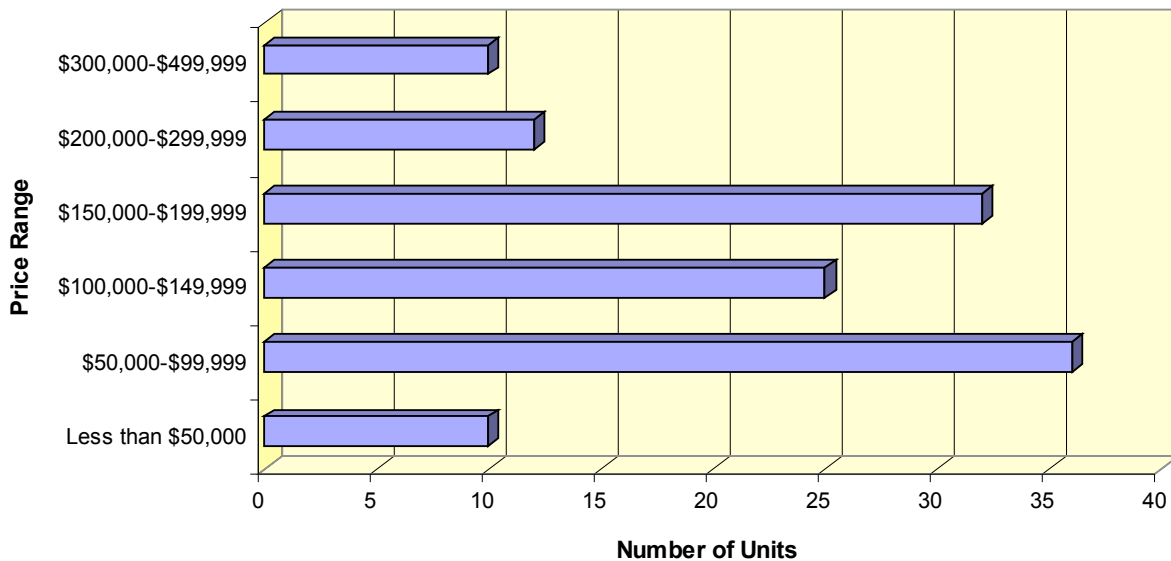
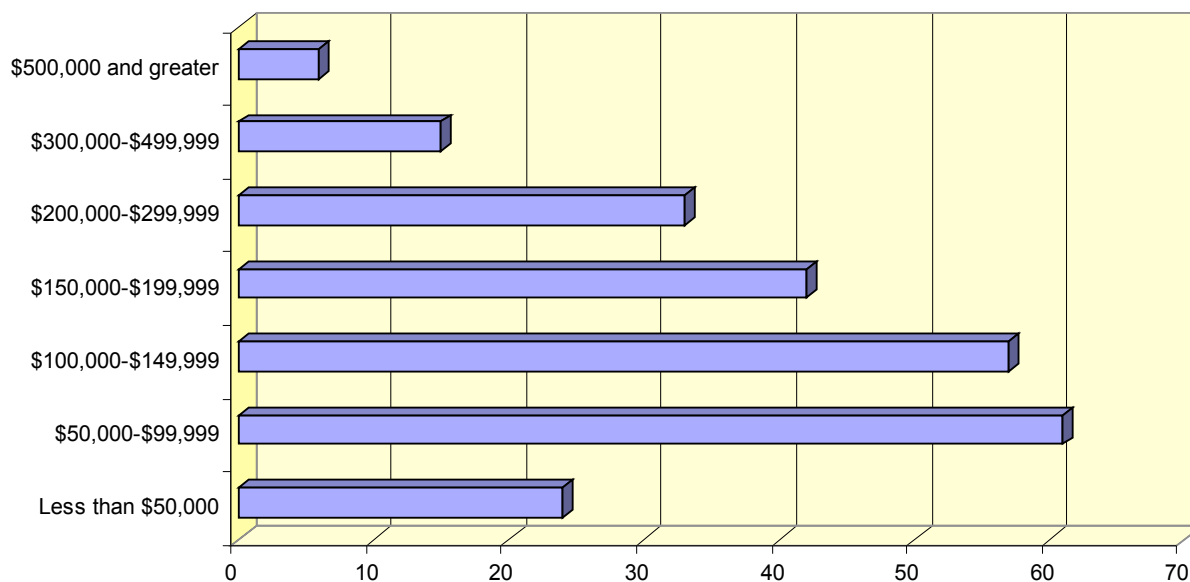


Figure 2.2: Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units (2000 Census)



Affordability Analysis

For low-income households, housing affordability is a great concern. According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), it is suggested that households spend 30 percent or less of their income on housing related expenses. HUD defines low-income levels based upon median household income and the number of family members.

Table 2.5 depicts housing affordability based on HUD income categories. Low and moderate-income (LMI) households in the Town of Long Lake have an income cutoff limit of \$32,166 per year. This represents those households earning 80 percent of the median (\$40,208) value for all households in the town. Extremely low-income households; those earning less than 30 percent of the median per year (\$12,074) are the group of most concern with regards to housing affordability.

Table 2.5: Housing Affordability

Percent of Median Income	2000 Annual Household Income ¹		Affordable Monthly Housing Costs		Estimated Affordable Home Price ²		# Listings Countywide (Long Lake) Homes
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	
Extremely Low Income (0 % to 30 %)	\$0	\$12,062	\$0	\$302	\$0	\$12,074	0
Very Low Income (30% to 50%)	\$12,062	\$20,104	\$302	\$503	\$12,074	\$30,498	1
Low Income (50% to 80%)	\$20,104	\$32,166	\$503	\$804	\$30,498	\$84,832	37(1)
Low-Moderate (80% to 100%)	\$32,166	\$40,208	\$804	\$1,005	\$84,832	\$121,057	54(1)

(1) = 1 unit in the Town of Long Lake

¹ Unadjusted figures

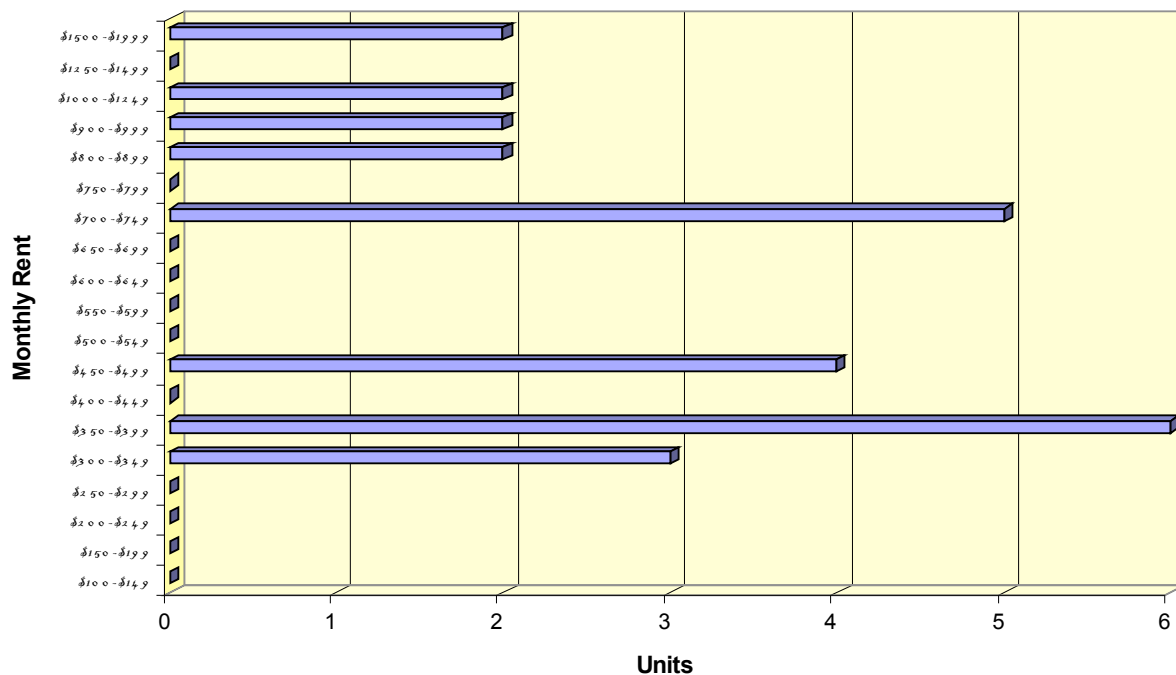
² Based on 20-year mortgage financed at 6%, with 10% down payment.

According to the analysis, in Washburn County, no homes are currently on the market (MLS listings) at prices considered affordable to extremely low-income households. Only one home is priced in the range considered affordable to very low-income households. Housing opportunities for low-income households were available (37 homes – countywide).

The affordable monthly housing costs in Table 2.5 would also apply to rental units. Figure 2.3 depicts the monthly rental costs for units within the Town of Long Lake. Most of the town’s rental units were assessing monthly rents of \$300 to \$749 a month. Those households at the high end of the extremely low-income category may be able to afford monthly rents up to \$302 per month. Very low- income households may be able to afford monthly rental costs up to \$503 per month.

The housing affordability analysis is done to give an idea of how much money households would be able to spend on housing, using HUD’s income categories. Households that are considered *very low income* and *extremely low income*, by HUD’s requirements, will have the hardest time finding affordable housing in Washburn County, as there are very few that are available.

Figure 2.3: Rental Costs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Property Taxes

Property taxes can have a significant impact on housing affordability. Home ownership can be put out of reach of low-income families who otherwise may be able to afford a \$400 per month mortgage payment but cannot afford the additional \$100 per month in property taxes. Property taxation is directly correlated with assessed valuation of land and property and the cost of local government based upon the mill rate. Demand for rural land and waterfront property in Washburn County has caused substantial increases in land value. The increased land valuation

coupled with rising government and school costs has caused significant increases in taxes assessed to Washburn County property owners. According to the comprehensive planning survey, nearly 60 percent (60.7% Long Lake) of Washburn County property owners were not satisfied with the current property taxation.

The Town of Long Lake's effective full value tax rate in 2002 was .01455, or \$14.55 per \$1000 of valuation. This equates to \$1,455 (less credits) annually in net property taxes on a \$100,000 home. On the same home, this tax rate would add an additional \$121.25 to the monthly mortgage payment.

2.3 Housing Programs

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning legislation requires that the Town of Long Lake compile a list of programs to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit.

Washburn County Housing Authority - The Washburn County Housing Authority contracts with Impact Seven, Inc. to manage housing projects in the Village of Birchwood, City of Shell Lake, and the City of Spooner. The authority is comprised of a five-citizen committee who oversees and gives direction to Impact Seven, Inc. on budget, finance, and administrative duties.

Washburn County Housing Rehabilitation Program (RLF) - Washburn County maintains a revolving loan fund to assist income eligible families, low- to moderate-income, make necessary repairs to their homes. The program provides owner-occupied and rental unit rehabilitation including repairs such as the replacement of windows, roof, siding, furnace, electrical, septic, and wells. Owner-occupied funds made available to eligible recipients is based on a deferred payment plan with a zero percent interest rate and is payable at the time when the home is no longer the mortgage holders primary residence. Renter-occupied funds are based on a low interest rate and monthly repayment plan. Homebuyer funds are available to assist with down payment and closing costs and are based on a deferred payment plan with a zero percent interest rate, payable at the time when the home is no longer the mortgage holders primary residence.

WHEDA (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority) - The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority serves Wisconsin residents and communities by working with others to provide creative financing resources and information to stimulate and preserve affordable housing, small business, and agribusiness.

USDA-Rural Development - Rural Development administers federal funds to help secure loan options to assist low-moderate income families with home purchase and rehabilitation. Rural Development generally funds individuals who cannot obtain conventional financing.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Housing Rehabilitation - CDBG funds are available through HUD (Housing and Urban Development). These funds are available to public

or private entities to help offset rehabilitation costs to homeowners, renters, and property owners. These funds are in the form of percent interest / deferred payment loans.

Northwest Affordable Housing Inc. - Northwest Affordable Housing Inc. is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization that is able to obtain funds that are not available to the public for the purpose of promoting affordable and accessible housing for low and moderate-income persons.

HCRI (Housing Cost Reduction Initiative) - This organization provides state funds for housing down payment and closing costs to low-moderate income families.

HOME (part of the Home Investment Partnership Program) - Funds are available to assist new homeowners with money to rehabilitate homes that were recently purchased. These funds can be used as equity to encourage banks or lending institutions to be the primary lender on a home purchase.

Indianhead Community Action Agency - This agency provides weatherization (insulation, windows, doors, energy efficient furnaces etc...) or anything that helps homeowners with even the most modest or extensive home repairs.

2.4 HOUSING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

A set of recommended goals, objectives, and action-plans has been developed to assist the Town of Long Lake in the area of housing. Implementation of the identified actions will assist in achieving the overall goal that an adequate range of housing opportunities are available to meet the varied needs and desires of existing and future community residents.

Goal: A range of housing opportunities to meet the varied needs of existing and future community residents, while maintaining a predominantly rural atmosphere.

Objective 1: Encourage home siting in areas that will not result in property or environmental damage or impair the rural character of Long Lake.

Regulation Action: Require applicants for building permits submit a plan, which will be evaluated for compliance with current state and local regulations, ordinances, and the compatibility with the existing environment.

Education Action 1: Develop and provide the checklists to be considered during the permitting process.

Education Action 2: Develop and provide a brochure outlining the permitting process, including zoning regulations and subdivision ordinance.

Education Action 3: Develop pamphlets of low-cost shrubs and trees available through the county and in the area.

Monitoring Action 1: Update the land use maps annually for new housing development.

Monitoring Action 2: Review annually the number of building permits granted and denied. Evaluate the cause for denials and whether the permitting process needs revision or is meeting the objective.

Objective 2: Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing.

Regulation Action 1: Support the enforcement of the Uniform Dwelling Code in Washburn County and the Town of Long Lake.

Regulation Action 2: Limit one residential structure per parcel of land.

Education Action 1: Provide homeowners with educational offerings related to responsible home ownership, maintenance, and rehabilitation to keep in good condition.

Education Action 2: Provide homeowners with rehabilitation loan and grant information in cooperation with the Housing Coalition for Washburn County.

Objective 3: Allow cluster development where it will minimize housings' negative impact on natural resources.

Regulation Action: Work with Washburn County to create a Conservation Subdivision Ordinance that meets the objectives of this plan.

Education Action: Share the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance when created.

Incentive Action: Consider a smaller acreage minimum lot size for development in exchange for permanently setting aside a large undeveloped tract of land.

Monitoring Action: Annually review the amount of cluster development.