

III. Housing

s. 66.1001(2)(b) Wis. Stats

“The Housing Element is 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 government unit. Specifically the housing 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 meets the needs of persons of all income levels and 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 and rehabilitate the local governmental unit’s existing housing stock.”

3.1 Overview

State of Wisconsin

One of the local comprehensive planning goals of Wisconsin’s Smart Growth legislation is to provide an adequate supply of housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community. Related to this is the goal of encouraging neighborhood design that supports a range of transportation options. The location of housing directly impacts adjacent land use patterns and individual choices in terms of transportation.

Housing is very important for Wisconsin and the people who live here. Housing costs are the single largest expenditure for most Wisconsin residents. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1997), Midwest households, on average, spend 31 percent of their incomes on housing, compared with 19 percent for transportation, and 14 percent for food.

Over two-thirds of Wisconsin households are owner-occupied and it is likely their home is their most valuable asset and largest investment. Appreciation in home value continues to be a major source of wealth in the United States. In fact, nearly sixty percent of the net worth of a typical homeowner is equity in their home.

While many Wisconsinites enjoy good housing situations, others are struggling to varying degrees. According to Wisconsin's 2000 *Consolidated Plan: For the State's Housing and Community Development Needs*, households in the low-income range have great difficulty finding adequate housing within their means that can also accommodate their needs, despite the state's stable economic health. In addition, the federal government has cut back drastically on housing assistance, leaving state and local communities to grapple with these social issues.

Housing plays a critical role in the state and local economies. It is likely that housing is the largest land use in a given community and the community's largest capital asset. According to a study prepared by the Wisconsin Realtors Foundation in 1992, the value of the state's housing stock was worth nearly \$1 trillion dollars. In 1990, the construction industry employed 83,000 workers (not including lawyers, real estate, financial, and insurance workers), making it the state's second leading industry in employment. The study estimated that housing contributed about 12 percent to the state's gross product. Housing is also a major source of revenue for local communities in the form of property taxes.

Town of Middleton

The Town of Middleton has continued to shrink in area over the years, losing land through annexations to the cities of Madison and Middleton. The Town has been reduced in size from the original 23,040 acres to approximately 10,514 acres, which is less than half the area of a typical 36 square-mile township.

The Town's population has increased significantly over the years with the greatest five-year population growth between 2000 and 2005, during which 756 new residents were added to the population. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) anticipates that by the year 2025, the Town will have an estimated population of 7,027. Based on the DOA projected rates of increase for the Town population between 2010 and 2025, it is anticipated by assuming the same rate of increase the Town will grow to a total of 7,500 residents by 2030. New housing units have increased significantly as well, with the greatest number of housing units built between the years 1970-1990. In the Town of Middleton, the 2000 U.S. Census indicated that 84% of households were family occupied, while 16% were non-family (one-person) households. Table 3-1 outlines the estimates and projections from the DOA for population and households in the Town of Middleton through 2025. The projections for 2030 were calculated by the Town using the DOA's projected rate of increase between 2010 and 2025.

Table 3-1: Town of Middleton Population and Total Households

Year	Population	Change	Total Households
2000 Census	4,594	--	1,572
2005 Estimate/Projected*	5,350	+756	1,780
2007 Estimate	5,578	+ 228	N/A
2010 Projected	5,608	+ 30	1,973
2015 Projected	6,057	+ 449	2,145
2020 Projected	6,526	+ 469	2,323
2025 Projected	7,027	+ 501	2,500
2030 Projected ‡	7,500	+473	2,676

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Administration (DOA)

* 2005 population figure is final estimate from DOA, 2005 household figure is the DOA projection made in 2004.

‡ 2030 projections were calculated using the projected rate of increase between 2010 and 2025.

Housing values continue to increase in the Town of Middleton. The median value for owner-occupied housing in the Town for the year 2000 was \$255,100¹. By the year 2007, the median value for owner-occupied housing in the Town had increased to an estimated \$458,700. The Transition Area identified in the 2002 Cooperative Plan between the Town of Middleton and the City of Madison will serve as the area of focus for directing higher density and more varied housing development.

Currently there are no owner-occupied condominium developments within the Town and no permits for new two-family or multi-family units were granted in the Town between 1997 and 2006.² In comparison, other communities in Dane County have seen a rapid increase in the condominium market in recent years. Between 2001 and 2006, the estimated number of condominium units in the county increased by approximately 40%³. It is also estimated that Dane County's population of persons age 55 and older will increase from 70,670 in 2000 to a population of 161,204 by 2030, an increase of 56%.⁴

3.2 Goals and Objectives

As life, health, family, and financial circumstances change, so do housing needs. Housing is an important land use category and, like other land uses, housing generates demand for additional services. While total population and density may determine the aggregate level of housing demand, the configuration and location of dwelling units may determine how, where, and what types of services may be delivered in a semi-rural setting. Questions relating to rural, semi-rural, suburban, bedroom, or other types of communities were discussed at open forums and included in

¹ 2000 U.S. Census

² Dane County Dept. of Planning and Development

³ *Regional Trends 2006*, Dane County Dept. of Planning and Development

⁴ Wisconsin Dept. of Administration

the Comprehensive Development Plan Survey. Each household in the Town was invited to complete the survey. Nearly half (48.2%) of those who responded describe the Town of Middleton as a “semi-rural” community. Respondents to the survey described the semi-rural character of the Town as consisting of open spaces, vistas, farm fields, prairies, woodlands, and semi-rural housing. The Town should emphasize preservation of these characteristics through the enforcement of state statutes, county zoning ordinances, the Town Land Division and Subdivision Ordinances, and adhering to applicable intergovernmental agreements.

Goal: The Town of Middleton will promote safe, code-compliant housing that is consistent with the semi-rural character of the community and takes into consideration the needs of its residents.

Objectives:

1. Preserve the quality of Town housing as the residents of the Town see it.
2. Encourage high quality construction and maintenance standards for housing.
3. Encourage housing development in areas that will not:
 - Result in environmental degradation;
 - Adversely affect the semi-rural character of the Town;
 - Or impair working agricultural operations.
4. Encourage neighborhood designs and locations that:
 - Ensure the separation of incompatible land uses;
 - Promote connectivity of roads, open-spaces, and environmental systems;
 - And preserve the semi-rural character of the Town.
5. Encourage the balanced development of a variety of housing types, including:
 - Traditional single family detached residences on large lots;
 - More affordable single family homes on smaller lots, potentially within cluster and conservation design subdivisions.
 - Investigate permitting owner-occupied attached multi-family housing, senior housing, and/or denser detached single family housing in areas identified as the “Transition Area” by the 2002 City of Madison and Town of Middleton Cooperative Plan. The Town reserves the Transition Area to allow for a variety of higher density residential development types, including unsewered cluster subdivisions with minimum 20,000 square foot lots (minimum 12,000 square foot lots for sewer areas). This will help provide greater housing choice for different income and age levels. The Town Board will consider development proposals in the Transition Area with consideration of density and compatibility of surrounding land uses.

6. Plan for a sufficient supply of available land for housing, in areas consistent with this Comprehensive Plan. *Refer to Map H.4 Future Land Use Map in Appendix A.*

Policies:

1. Work with ~~Dane County~~ Town Zoning Administrator to address code violations on existing properties.
2. Guide housing development away from conservancy districts, wetlands, floodplains, hydric soils, and recognized environmental corridors.
3. Work to screen housing from primary thoroughfares to the extent possible by utilizing natural topography, vegetation (tree lines, wooded edges), and right-of-way setbacks.
4. Protect scenic viewsheds by discouraging development along exposed hilltops or ridges. Generally, roof lines should not extend above adjacent ridge lines.
5. Arrange housing so that homes face away from county, state, and federal highways, unless protected by planting or buffering strips.
6. Discourage the use of through streets in certain situations such as environmentally sensitive areas or where slopes exceed 20%.
7. All new housing lots shall have frontage on a public road per Town and County Subdivision regulations. Flag lots should generally be discouraged.
8. Preserve existing vegetation, stone rows, fence lines, tree lines, and structures of historic value.
9. The Town will discourage homes or other buildings being placed in wetlands, floodplains, or on slopes in excess of 20%.
10. Provide incentives for the use of cluster and conservation type subdivisions which provide for interconnected networks of open space.
11. Limit building envelopes to those areas with slopes of less than 20%. For lots containing slopes of greater than 20%, the building envelope should be limited to areas with slopes of 15% or less.

3.3 Appendix B: Housing Background Information

For further information regarding housing, refer to Appendix B.