

CHAPTER 2 Housing Element

66.1001(2)(b) Wis. Stat.:

Housing element. 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.

Housing is very important to the citizens of the Village of Nelsonville, representing in many cases the largest expenditure individuals will make. 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.

The sections below include statistical data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau through the decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS) (see Section 1.4 for further description). These tables and figures are a general indicator of housing occupancy, structure age, structural characteristics, value, and affordability. When reviewing the tables and figures, know that they are in many cases estimates, and not based on a complete count. The point is that the Census or ACS data is an estimate that may contain error, but it is the most accurate measure available for what is happening within the Village of Nelsonville to date.

Section 2.1 Housing Inventory

A. Housing Tenure

Housing tenure information sheds light on how residents live in the community. Occupancy and vacancy characteristics can help indicate if the current amount of housing stock is sufficient to meet existing demand.

Between 1990 and 2010-2014, the Village of Nelsonville experienced a net decrease in its total housing stock (Table 2.1). Over that time period, owner-occupied units increased their percentage of total occupied housing units from 79% to 82%, while renter-occupied units decreased from 21% to 18% of the total. This trend in Nelsonville is opposite to what has occurred in Portage County. Portage County overall has been trending toward a slightly lower percentage of owner-occupied housing units, and a higher percentage of renter-occupied units.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established a minimum target rate for overall unit vacancy of 3% to assure an adequate choice of housing for consumers. Table 2.1 below shows that the Village of Nelsonville had an overall vacancy rate of 15% in 2010-2014 (up 5% from 1990). This rate is considerably higher than the rate for Portage County (8%).

Table 2.1: Comparison of Housing Occupancy

Occupancy	Village of Nelsonville			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010-2014	1990	2000	2010-2014
Occupied Housing Units <i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	90%	97%	85%	93%	94%	93%
Owner Occupied <i>(% of occupied units)</i>	79%	78%	82%	70%	71%	68%
Renter Occupied <i>(% of occupied units)</i>	21%	22%	18%	30%	29%	32%
Vacant Housing Units <i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	10%	3%	15%	7%	6%	8%
For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use <i>(% of Total Housing Units)</i>	1%	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%
Total Housing Units	70	74	53	22,910	26,589	30,224

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

B. Structure Type

Structure type information (single family, duplex, multi-family, etc.) is a common method used for describing the physical characteristics of housing stock. The following “number of units in structure” information is taken from the U.S. Census, which is based on a sample of units within a community, and not a total count of units. Although it does not account for all housing units within the community, this information provides insight into the mix of housing types in the Village.

Table 2.2 compares the distribution of structure types within the Village of Nelsonville and Portage County as a whole. In the year 2010-2014, single-family homes (1-unit detached) accounted for 83% of Nelsonville’s housing units. This percentage has been relatively steady since 2000. In comparison, the number of single family units throughout the County have also remained steady over the last 25 years. In 2010-2014, 2 to 4 units comprised 17% of the housing stock, making up the second largest structure type in the Village.

Table 2.2: Comparison of Structure Type

Units in Structure	Village of Nelsonville			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010-2014	1990	2000	2010-2014
1-Unit, Detached	91%	83%	83%	69%	70%	69%
1-Unit, Attached	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	3%
2 to 4 Units	6%	10%	17%	11%	11%	10%
5 to 9 Units	0%	4%	0%	5%	5%	6%
10 or More Units	0%	0%	0%	5%	5%	7%
Mobile Home or Other	3%	3%	0%	9%	7%	4%
Total Housing Units	70	72	53	22,910	26,557	30,224

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

C. Housing Conditions: Age and Value

Age is often used as a measure of a houses’ condition. It should, however, not be the sole criterion since many older homes are either remodeled or kept in a state of good repair to

maintain their value. Table 2.3 below shows a comparison of housing age between the Village of Nelsonville and Portage County as a whole. In 2010-2014, 59% of the houses within the Village of Nelsonville were built prior to 1939. This is substantially higher than the percentage of houses built prior to 1939 for Portage County as a whole (18%). Although exact conditions are not known, it is probable that a number of these housing units are in need of structural repair and various improvements to insure safe occupancy. Older housing units may need repair, replacement, or upgrade of plumbing facilities, heating and/or water systems in order to maintain them in standard condition.

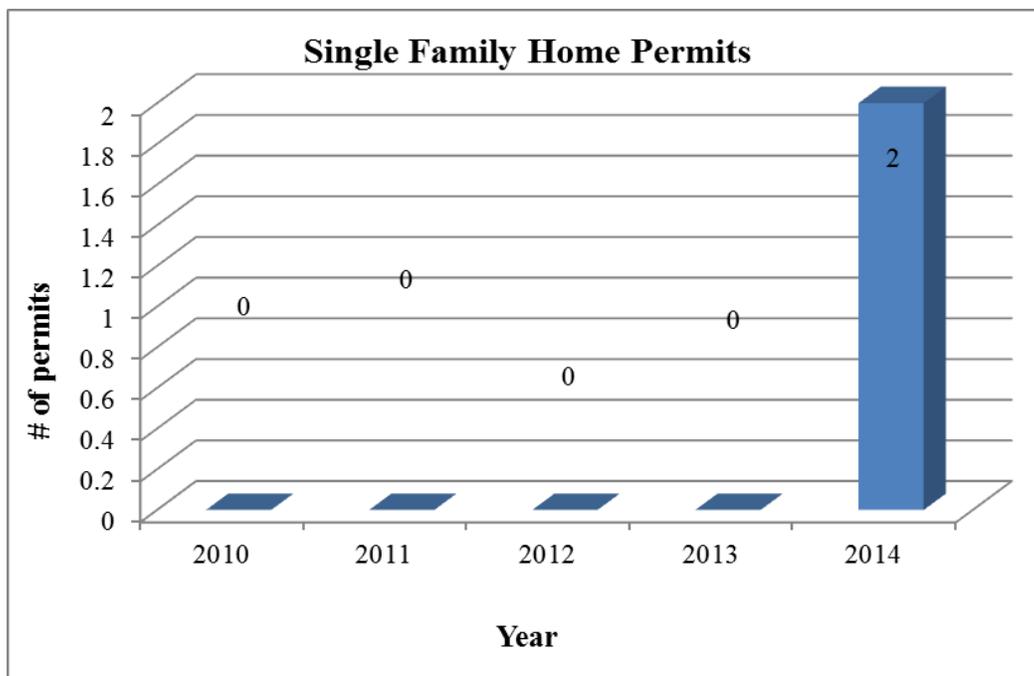
Table 2.3: Comparison of Housing Age

Year Structure Built	Village of Nelsonville			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010-2014	1990	2000	2010-2014
2010 or Later	NA	NA	0%	NA	NA	1%
2000 to 2009	NA	NA	8%	NA	NA	15%
1990 to 1999	NA	0%	4%	NA	19%	16%
1980 to 1989	7%	0%	4%	22%	16%	14%
1970 to 1979	16%	19%	2%	28%	22%	18%
1960 to 1969	3%	6%	11%	13%	11%	8%
1950 to 1959	11%	11%	13%	7%	8%	7%
1940 to 1949	4%	3%	0%	6%	5%	4%
1939 or Earlier	60%	62%	59%	24%	20%	18%
Total Units Listed	74	72	53	22,910	26,589	30,224

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

A more accurate depiction of structures built in 2010 or later is provided through an examination of Village building permit data. Figure 2.1 shows recent single-family housing starts for the four year period, between 2010 and 2014.

Figure 2.1 Village of Nelsonville Single-Family Home Permits



Source: Village of Nelsonville, 2010-2014 Permit Data

Housing value is another important aspect for gauging the overall condition of the current housing stock. Table 2.4 shows the distribution of housing values across various price ranges, as well as the median home price for the Village of Nelsonville and Portage County.

The value of housing has risen significantly since 1990 all across Portage County, including the Village of Nelsonville. In 1990 Nelsonville had 73% of its housing units valued at less than \$50,000 and none were over \$100,000. By 2010-2014, only 8% remained under \$50,000, while 70% were valued over \$100,000. Since 2000, the percentage of home values over \$150,000 rose fairly significantly (from 0% to 40%). Table 2.4 also shows that the median home value in the Village of Nelsonville rose significantly from \$37,800 in 1990 to \$137,500 in 2010-2014. Historically, the Village has been lower than the median home value of the County.

Table 2.4: Comparison of Housing Value

Housing Value (Owner Occupied)	Village of Nelsonville			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010-2014	1990	2000	2010-2014
Less than \$50,000	73%	4%	8%	34%	6%	5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	27%	68%	22%	58%	46%	18%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0%	28%	30%	7%	32%	28%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0%	0%	11%	1%	10%	23%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	0%	0%	24%	0%	4%	17%
\$300,000 or More	0%	0%	5%	0%	2%	8%
Total Units	41	47	37	10,590	13,088	19,082
Median Value	\$37,800	\$82,500	\$137,500	\$58,600	\$98,300	\$147,600

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

D. Housing Affordability

According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, not more than 30% of 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) and renters (Table 2.6). The following information is taken from the U.S. Census, which is based on a sample of households within a community, and not a total count of all households. 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 (US Bureau of Census).

Table 2.5 below shows monthly housing costs for homeowners as a percentage of their household income for the Village of Nelsonville and Portage County. In 2010-2014, 48% of the households within the Village of Nelsonville paid less than thirty percent of their monthly income towards housing costs and were therefore considered affordable to those living in them. This percentage is lower than Portage County as a whole (73%). The implications for the Village include the reality that more than one half of homeowners are finding it increasingly difficult to cover the cost of monthly housing costs.

Table 2.5: Affordability Comparison for Owner-Occupied Housing Units

Monthly Owner Costs as % of Household Income	Village of Nelsonville		Portage County	
	1999	2010-2014	1999	2010-2014
Less than 20.0%	77%	44%	63%	43%
20.0 to 24.9%	11%	4%	14%	19%
25.0 to 29.9%	9%	0%	8%	11%
30.0 to 34.9%	0%	30%	4%	8%
35% or More	4%	22%	9%	18%
Not Computed	0%	0%	1%	1%
Total Units Listed	47	23	13,088	11,827

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

Table 2.6 shows monthly housing costs for renters as a percentage of their household income for the Village of Nelsonville and Portage County. In 2010-2014, approximately 83% of the Village of Nelsonville households were paying a monthly rent which was affordable to them (less than 30% of monthly household income). This percentage is higher than Portage County (51%).

Table 2.6: Affordability Comparison for Renter-Occupied Housing Units

Monthly Renter Costs as % of Household Income	Village of Nelsonville		Portage County	
	1999	2010-2014	1999	2010-2014
Less than 20.0%	33%	50%	38%	30%
20.0 to 24.9%	0%	0%	13%	10%
25.0 to 29.9%	33%	33%	12%	11%
30.0 to 34.9%	0%	17%	7%	7%
35% or More	33%	0%	25%	43%
Not Computed	0%	0%	5%	8%
Total Units Listed	15	6	7,061	8,250

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and 2010-2014 American Community Survey

E. Housing Programs

Several means are available to the Village of Nelsonville to maintain and improve housing conditions and satisfy the needs of all residents. To meet the needs of residents with low and moderate income, and elderly and handicapped residents needing housing assistance, the Village should help residents participate in Federal, State, and County housing programs that make available loans and grants to build, repair or obtain adequate housing. Some of these programs are listed below.

- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) - provides a listing of numerous housing programs including low interest loans for first time homebuyers, home improvement loans, and tax credit programs for elderly and low-income family housing.

- Housing Authority of Portage County (HAPC) - offers a housing assistance program through the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Federal funds are available to help low income persons pay rent on privately owned dwelling units. Most housing types can qualify including single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, mobile homes and town homes. All units must meet HUD's standards.

Currently the Village of Nelsonville does not participate in these housing programs provided by the Housing Authority of Portage County, primarily because many of the state and federal programs require a minimum level of municipal service such as municipal sewer. The Village of Nelsonville does not have municipal sewer or water service.

- CAP Services - a non-profit corporation, also has several programs available to low and moderate income residents of Portage County including Home Buyer's Assistance, Housing Rehabilitation and Weatherization programs. Financial assistance under these programs is provided through a deferred loan which is due upon sale of the home or transfer of title.
 - Home Buyer's Assistance Program - provides a down payment and rehab assistance. Buyers must contribute some of their own money to the home buying process and complete home buyer education. The down payment assistance can also be used for closing costs, encouraging home ownership.
 - CAP's Housing Rehabilitation Program - provides funds to assist low and moderate income homeowners for necessary repairs, including but not limited to: installing attic, wall, crawl space, water heater and hot water pipe insulation; sealing air leaks into the home; and, installing low-flow shower heads, faucet aerators and energy-efficient light bulbs in every home. Based upon the projected energy savings, furnaces, refrigerators and freezers may also be replaced.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - a federally funded program administrated by the Wisconsin Department of Administration to assist local governments with housing programs that primarily benefit low and moderate income residents. CDBG funds can be used for a wide variety of financial and technical assistance to improve and expand housing, increase affordable housing opportunities and provide services to people without housing. The variety of federal and state programs it manages benefits persons with disabilities, low and moderate income residents and homeless populations. The Division partners with local governments, homeless service providers, developers and housing organizations throughout the state to improve housing conditions for low to moderate income Wisconsin residents. This allows smaller municipalities like Nelsonville, who may not have the experience or resources to administer a grant, to improve the housing conditions in their community.

Section 2.2 Housing Demand

A. Population Trends

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, the Village of Nelsonville population is projected to decline from a year 2010 population of 155 to a 2040 population of 125. The Village disagrees with this forecast as they feel that the population of Nelsonville will remain the same or gradually increase over the next 30 years.

B. Household Trends

According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the number of households in the Village of Nelsonville is projected to decline from 61 in 2010 to 51 in 2040. The persons per household, or PPH, is projected to decrease from 2.54 in 2010 to 2.45 in 2040.

C. Housing Development Environment

Of the land devoted to urban development, no single land use usually demands greater acreage than residential activities. In 2016, only 9% percent of the total developed land area of Nelsonville is residential development. The *Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities*, and *Land Use* chapters will provide a more detailed analysis of the following topics, but a brief summary is included here to provide some context for housing unit development.

Infrastructure: There is a sufficient transportation network to allow for an economic and efficient expansion of housing in the general Nelsonville area. The Village does not have public water and sewage system. Soils are generally adequate for septic systems although significant construction of such systems in close proximity to any shallow potable water wells in the Village could contaminate drinking water supplies.

Developable land: There is a sufficient amount of vacant developable land within the existing corporate boundary of the Village of Nelsonville to accommodate the slow growth that is anticipated by the Village.

Section 2.3 Housing issues identified by the Plan Commission

- A. The placement of mobile homes within the Village is not desired.
- B. Encourage timely maintenance of property around the Village.
- C. The Village should stay zoned primarily for single family residences with the exception of some duplexes.
- D. Neighborhood compatibility should be stressed in any new construction. The historic nature of the commercial and residential buildings along First, Oak, and High Streets should be maintained.

Section 2.4 Conclusions – Housing Analysis

- A. The Village of Nelsonville has a lower median household value (\$137,500) than the County (\$147,600) although, according to 2010-2014 Census data, 59% of houses within Nelsonville were built prior to 1939.
- B. Approximately 48% of households within Nelsonville (down from 96%) paid less than thirty percent of their monthly income toward housing costs, indicating it has become increasingly difficult to cover the cost of monthly housing costs.
- C. It is probable that older housing units will need repair, replacement, or upgrades over the next 25 years.
- D. To avoid potential groundwater degradation resulting from high density, unsewered development on the Village's highly permeable soils, due to the absence of an existing or planned public sanitary sewer system, and based on the desire to maintain the rural/small-town character of the Village. The Village should allow for 2-unit structures such as “duplexes” or

“granny-flat”, but discourage placement of mobile home, and prohibit multi-family structures of 3-units per structure or more.

Section 2.5 Housing Goals, Objectives and Policies

Because of its importance to overall community health and development, efforts must be taken to protect the existing Nelsonville housing supply.

A. Goal

1. To maintain and preserve the quality of existing residential neighborhoods and encourage the provision of an adequate supply of housing for all residents.

B. Objectives

1. Allow for adequate affordable housing for all citizens.
2. Housing development shall take into consideration the protection of natural resources and open spaces.
3. Encourage the maintenance and upkeep of the Village's existing housing stock.
4. The historic design of any building along First, Oak, and High Streets should maintain neighborhood compatibility.

C. Policy

1. Allow for an affordable minimum square footage of 900 sq. ft. per dwelling unit.
2. The Village should allow for 2-unit structures such as “duplexes” or “granny-flat”, but discourage placement of mobile homes, and prohibit multi-family structures of 3 or more units per structure.
3. Encourage flexibility in the design of new subdivisions in areas of wooded or rolling terrain, in order to make efficient use of developable sites while preserving natural and scenic qualities, i.e. cluster or planned development concept. Consider a minimum lot size of $\frac{3}{4}$ acre in designated areas, while maintaining an overall development density not to exceed approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre per residence.
4. Consider local conditions and trends in groundwater quality as a factor when reviewing requests for new residential subdivision development.
5. Any redevelopment or new construction along First, Oak, and High Streets must be compatible with the historic design and maintain neighborhood compatibility.