

3.0 Housing

Quality housing is an essential component to healthy and vibrant communities, and striving to provide safe and cost-effective housing is an important community development goal. An analysis of housing conditions will help the City gain a better understanding of the changes that have occurred over the past 20-25 years. It will also provide insight into future changes that can be anticipated. This information will create a foundation from which decisions regarding future housing development can be based.

3.1 Key Issues

Table 3-1 provides the historic and current count of housing units in the City and Barron County from 1980 to 2000. Complete data for all units of government in the County are contained in the Existing Conditions Report. Key findings include:

- Between 1980 and 1990, 2,212 housing units were added countywide, and 1,600 from 1990 to 2000 in Barron County.
- The City of Chetek saw increases of 29 and 61 units during the same time period – slower than the County’s growth rate.
- In 2000, the county’s vacancy rate was slightly higher than the 3 percent standard at 3.9%. The 2000 vacancy rate is lower than the rates seen in 1980 or 1990 (7.3% and 5.3% respectively). This low rate will exert a pressure on home prices (upwards), as can be seen in actual costs.

Municipality	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change	
				1980-90	1990-00
Chetek	962	991	1,052	3.0	6.2
Barron County	17,153	19,365	20,969	12.9	8.3

Source: U.S. Census

Seasonal Units

Seasonal units are units used or intended for use only in certain seasons or for weekend or occasional use throughout the year, and they typically demand less of public services than housing units that are occupied throughout the year. Included in the seasonal unit calculations are units used for summer or winter sports or recreation, such as beach cottages and hunting cabins. Seasonal units may also include quarters used for seasonal workers such as loggers. As shown in Table 3-2, in 2000 Barron County contained 2,299 seasonal units. As can be seen in Table 3-2, while the City of Chetek has a smaller than county average in seasonal units, the Town of Chetek has a very high percentage. The individuals and households that use these units have an impact on needs for transportation and tourism related commercial.

**Table 3-2
Seasonal Units - 2000**

Municipality	Total Housing Units	Seasonal Housing Units	
		Units	% of Total
Town of Chetek	1,073	342	31.9
City of Chetek	1,052	56	5.3
Barron County	20,969	2,299	11.0
Source: U.S. Census			

Historically, the number of seasonal units in the county increased between 1980 and 1990 and then decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000 (see Table 3-3). This is a trend that is being seen throughout northern Wisconsin wherein seasonal homes are being converted to year-round residences in high-amenity areas. Realtors, local officials, and residents have indicated that several things are happening to explain the decreasing number of seasonal units:

- Seasonal units are being purchased by higher income households seeking to live on lake property. The units are then being converted into permanent single family homes. Lakeside seasonal units are also being purchased, torn down, and replaced by permanent single-family homes.
- Higher income households are purchasing seasonal units as future retirement homes. As these households retire, more seasonal housing is becoming permanent single family homes.
- Fewer traditional “cabins” used only for weekend recreation are present. More units that were previously seasonal are now being used year-round.

This explanation is verified by an increasing permanent population base showing up in those areas that have traditionally had a large number of seasonal homes. These areas also have higher median housing values.

The number of seasonal homes in Chetek decreased from 105 in 1980 to 56 in 2000. Based upon current trends, we expect to see a further decrease in numbers of seasonal homes, both in the City and in the County as a whole.

Occupancy and Structural Characteristics

Housing occupancy is a measure of determining whether the housing supply is adequate to meet demand. A stable housing market is one where the availability of new and existing housing units roughly matches the needs of the population. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an overall housing vacancy rate of 3 percent is considered to be optimal. Vacancy rates under the 3 percent standard may imply a tight housing market where demand exceeds supply causing housing prices to rise. Conversely, a vacancy rate greater than 3 percent may imply an over-supply of housing units causing stagnation in housing prices.

These decreasing vacancy rates may signify that it is becoming more difficult for households to locate appropriate housing in the county. In other words, people seeking housing in aggregate have fewer choices, and the housing market is slowly swinging towards more of a sellers’ market.

The majority of housing units in Chetek are owner occupied. In 2000, 939 (65%) occupied housing units were identified as owner occupied, representing a 7% decrease from 1990, which is in contrast to the County trend, which was an increase in owner occupied housing. In 2000, 326 (35%) occupied housing units were identified as rental units. This represents a 7% increase from 1990. Most of this change is accounted for in the number of renter occupied units constructed in the previous two decades.

**Table 3-3
Housing Characteristics - 1980 to 2000**

City of Chetek	1980	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	962	991	1,052
Total Seasonal	105	95	56
Total Vacant	81	60	57
Total Occupied Units	776	836	939
Owner Occupied Units	566	541	613
Renter Occupied Units	210	295	326
Single Family Units	664	761	799
Multi-Family Units	146	160	207
Mobile Homes	47	70	59

Table 3-4 displays the number of units per structure for the City of Chetek and Barron County as a whole for 2000. The majority of the housing units in the City (83%) are 1-unit detached structures, commonly referred to as single-family homes. Detached housing units are one-unit structures detached from any other house, with open space on four sides. Structures are considered detached even if they have an attached garage or contain a business unit. Attached housing units are one-unit structures that have one or more walls extending from ground to roof departing them from adjoining structures.

**Table 3-4
Units in Structure - 2000**

Municipality	1-Unit Detached	1-Unit Attached	2 Units	3-4 Units	5 or more Units
Chetek	777	22	119	26	62
Barron County	16,149	220	1,281	539	992

Source: U.S. Census

Age Characteristics

The age of the housing stock is an important element to be analyzed when preparing for the future. If there is a significant amount of older housing units within the housing supply, they will most likely need to be replaced, rehabilitated, or abandoned for new development within the planning period. Allowing for a new housing supply also requires planning regarding infrastructure, land availability, community utilities, transportation routes, and a variety of other public services to address community needs which are affected by new development.

Table 3-5 depicts the year that structures were built in the City of Chetek and Barron County.

**Table 3-5
Year Structure Built - 2000**

Municipality	1990 to March 2000	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1940 to 1959	1939 or earlier
Chetek	163	87	179	74	291	261
Barron County	3,490	2,550	4,013	1,819	3,708	5,479

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Value Characteristics

Providing affordable housing which meets the needs of current and future City residents is an important element in planning for the future. A lack of quality affordable housing has impacts on population migration patterns, economic development, and the county tax base.

Table 3-6 provides housing values of specified owner-occupied units for 2000. A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. The U.S. Bureau of the Census determines value by the respondents estimate of how much the property (house and lot, mobile home and lot, or condominium unit) would sell for if it were for sale. The figures presented may differ from assessed housing value as calculated by the City Assessor.

**Table 3-6
Housing Value of Specified Owner Occupied Units - 2000**

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 - \$149,000	\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$300,000 - \$499,999	\$500,000 or more	Median Value
Chetek	107	327	76	20	9	0	0	\$73,200
Barron County	1,486	4,639	1,663	579	313	108	22	\$78,000

Source: U.S. Census

The median value of homes in Chetek (73,200) is lower than County average (\$78,000) and the State average (\$112,200). Areas with median housing values that exceed the state median include the Towns of Almena (\$126,000), Maple Plain (\$156,000), and Rice Lake (\$113,400). It should be noted that many of the areas that have higher median housing values are areas with a high percentage of seasonal or lakeside homes.

Housing Affordability

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), defines affordable housing as that housing which does not cost a household more than 30% of their monthly or annual income. This affordability benchmark is not an underwriting standard; it does not address the ability to pay for housing. Households may choose to pay more to get the housing they need or want. However, according to HUD standards, people should have the choice of having decent and safe housing for no more than 30 percent of their household income.

As shown in Table 3-7, a majority (83%) of owner occupied households in the City pay less than 30% of their household income towards housing costs. A much higher percentage of rental housing are experiencing housing cost burdens. As shown in Table 3-8, 37% of rental households are paying 30% or more of their monthly income for housing costs.

**Table 3-7
Owner Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999**

Municipality	Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income					
	Less than 15%	15.0% to 19.9%	20.0% to 24.9%	25.0% to 29.9%	30.0% to 34.9%	35.0% or more
Chetek	203	134	61	51	25	68
Barron County	3,744	1,782	1,113	713	459	964

Source: U.S. Census

**Table 3-8
Renter Occupied Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income - 1999**

Municipality	Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income					
	Less than 15%	15.0% to 19.9%	20.0% to 24.9%	25.0% to 29.9%	30.0% to 34.9%	35.0% or more
Chetek	71	33	45	34	21	87
Barron County	844	580	537	445	304	1,016

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Unit and Household Projections

Based on the developed housing projections from the Existing Conditions Report, we estimate that Chetek will have 1,123 housing units by the year 2025. This is an increase of 71 housing units, or 16%, from the 2000 Census. This growth may be limited by several factors, including limited growth areas.

- In 2000, homes in the City had an average median value of \$73,200; almost \$5,000 lower than the County average.
- We project that the City will add approximately 71 new housing units by 2025 (to a total of 1,123 units).
- We also estimate that Barron County will have 24,277 housing units by the year 2025. This is an increase of 3,277 housing units, or 16%, from the 2000 Census.

**Table 3-9
Housing Unit Projections - 2000 to 2025**

	2000	Projection 2005	Projection 2010	Projection 2015	Projection 2020	Projection 2025
Chetek	1,052	1,105	1,116	1,122	1,124	1,123
Barron County	21,000	21,632	22,428	23,121	23,757	24,277

Source: U.S. Census

Table 3-10
Household Projections - 2000 to 2025 - Barron County by Municipality

Municipality	Census	Projections					% Change
	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2000-2025
Chetek	939	979	1,034	1,073	1,103	1,122	19.5
Towns	9,041	9,577	10,255	10,799	11,251	11,623	28.6
Villages	1,856	1,967	2,105	2,217	2,308	2,379	28.2
Cities	6,954	7,240	7,617	7,889	8,086	8,211	18.1
Barron County	17,851	18,784	19,977	20,905		21,645	24.4

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, January 2004

3.2 Summary and Conclusions

- While the City's population increased by 11.6 percent between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units increased by 6.2 percent.
- Over half of all housing units were built before 1960.
- Total seasonal homes have decreased in the City by half since 1980.
- The City is projected to add 71 housing units in the next 20 years, which is an average growth rate for all cities in the County, but lower than that projected for Villages and Towns.
- Housing costs in the City are lower than that for the County as a whole.

3.3 Goals, Objectives and Policies

A. Goal Increase the Amount of Affordable Single Family Housing.

1. **Objective** Work with adjoining towns in developing new residential subdivisions.
2. **Objective** Work with Barron County and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in the implementation of State Programs to assist homeowners.