

Chapter Six: Housing and Neighborhood Development

A community’s housing stock is its most significant long-term capital asset. As is typical in most communities, housing is the largest single land use in the developed portions of Jefferson (roughly 32 percent of the total land area). Housing not only provides shelter, but neighborhoods also help to establish a community’s sense of place.

This chapter contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, policies, and recommended programs aimed at providing an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the City, along with high-quality neighborhoods.

Housing and Neighborhood Development Recommendations Summary

- Support policies and programs that provide high-quality, affordable housing options in the community.
- Consider detailed design guidelines for all new or expanded multi-family residential developments.

Existing Housing Framework

From 1990 to 2000, the City’s total housing stock increased nearly 19 percent, from 2,473 to 2,933 housing units. On average, the City added about 46 new housing units per year between 1990 and 2000. As shown in Figure 18, most housing units in Jefferson are single family homes. The proportion of single family homes was stable between 1990 and 2000 at 61 percent. The percentage of multi-family units in the City increased moderately from 1990 to 2000, while the number of duplexes and mobile homes decreased.

Figure 18: Housing Types, 1990-2000

Units per Structure	1990 Units	1990 Percent	2000 Units	2000 Percent
Single Family (detached and attached)	1,505	60.8	1,782	60.7
Two Family (Duplex)	268	10.8	245	8.3
Multi-Family	520	21.0	759	26.0
Mobile Home	180	7.4	147	5.0
Total	2,473	100	2933	100

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1990 & 2000

Figure 19 compares other 2000 housing stock characteristics in Jefferson with surrounding communities and Jefferson County. In 2000, Jefferson had a low average vacancy rate compared to surrounding communities. The percent of owner-occupied housing units in the City was 60.8 percent, which is less than all other communities listed. The City of Jefferson has an affordable rental market with a median monthly rent of \$554, which is one of the lowest when compared to nearby communities.

Figure 19: Household Characteristics Comparison

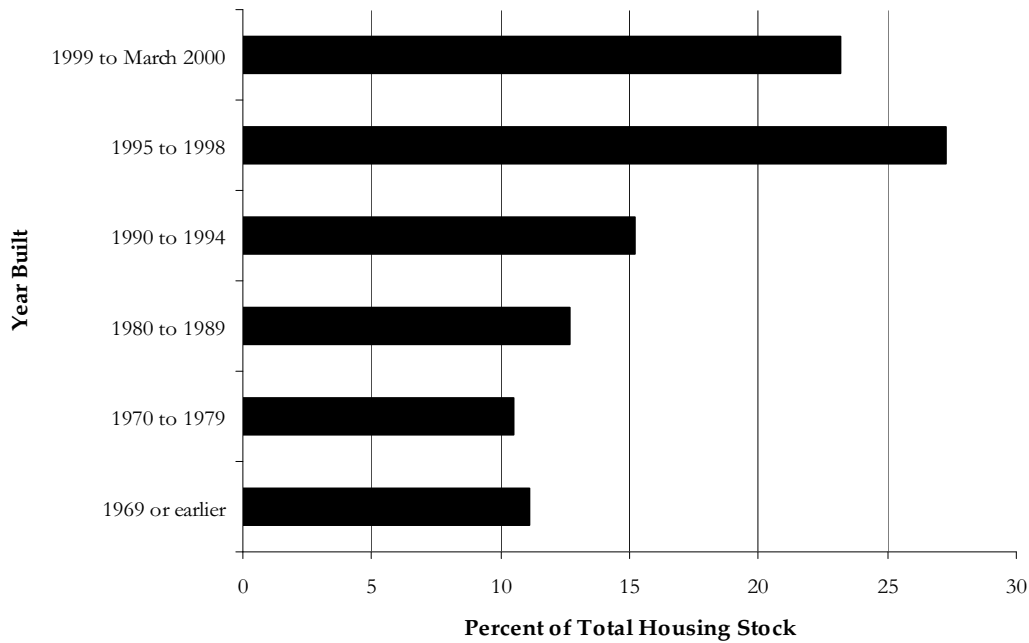
	Total Housing Units	Percent Vacant Housing	Percent Owner-Occupied Housing	Average Equalized Value of Residential Property 2005*	Median Rent
City of Jefferson	2,934	4.0%	60.8%	\$146,523	\$554
Town of Jefferson	805	4.3%	83.3%	\$178,506	\$575
Town of Aztalan	553	4.2%	88.5%	\$179,953	\$588
Town of Farmington	561	3.6%	85.2%	\$187,062	\$579
Town of Hebron	410	4.6%	87.7%	\$161,710	\$620
Village of Johnson Creek	659	5.3%	66.7%	\$160,170	\$683
Village of Marshall	1,312	3.5%	76.1%	\$157,195	\$648
City of Lake Mills	2,065	6.8%	68.9%	\$176,834	\$588
City of Fort Atkinson	4,983	4.5%	64.0%	\$139,360	\$549
City of Waterloo	1,293	3.9%	71.7%	\$141,994	\$581
Jefferson County	30,109	6.3%	71.7%	\$163,097	\$564

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

* Department of Revenue, 2005 (includes land plus improvements)

Figure 20 illustrates the age of the City’s housing stock based on 2000 Census data. This characteristic is sometimes used as a measure of the general condition of the local housing supply. Given the historic nature of the City, it is surprising that little more than ten percent of Jefferson’s housing was built before 1969. About half of Jefferson’s housing was constructed from 1995 to 2000. A casual survey of the housing stock in the City reveals that housing is in generally good condition, regardless of age.

Figure 20: Age of Housing as a Percent of the Total 2000 Housing Stock



Housing Programs

Several housing programs are available to Jefferson residents, including home mortgage and improvement loans from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and home repair grants for the elderly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds down payment assistance for homebuyers, rental rehabilitation, weatherization-related repairs, accessibility improvements, and rental housing development. The Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI) funds activities such as emergency rental aid, homeless prevention efforts, and related housing initiatives. Further information on these programs can be obtained by contacting WHEDA.

Jefferson County communities also participate in the Home Consortium, which is a 4-county governmental body that was established to help advance home ownership opportunities and programs for low-income residents.

Housing and Neighborhood Development Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal:

- a. Provide a variety of housing types, densities, arrangements, locations, and costs to promote a desirable living environment for all residents.

Objectives:

- a. Promote high quality residential development that enhances existing neighborhoods.
- b. Provide a range of housing types to address the demands of various age groups, household types, income levels, and those with special needs.
- c. Encourage infill development to enhance existing housing types in the surrounding neighborhood.
- d. Encourage a mix of housing types in all neighborhoods.
- e. Promote maintenance of the City's existing housing stock.
- f. Encourage the concept of neighborhoods connected by parks, schools, and other neighborhood facilities and served by full urban services, including sanitary sewers and public water within convenient access to community facilities, employment centers, and transportation routes.
- g. Develop and enforce ordinances and design guidelines that require superior architectural quality, sufficient landscaping and buffering, and a high level of amenities for new neighborhoods and other housing developments.
- h. Encourage well-designed neighborhoods, oriented toward pedestrians and well-served by sidewalks and bicycle routes.

Policies:


- a. Guide new housing to areas within the City with convenient access to commercial and recreational facilities, transportation systems, schools, shopping, jobs, and other necessary facilities and services, including Downtown.
- b. Plan for multi-family development in part of the City where streets and sidewalks can handle increased volumes of traffic; there are adequate parks, open space and shopping facilities existing or planned; and utility systems and schools in the area have sufficient capacity. Disperse such development throughout the City, rather than planning for large developments in isolated areas.
- c. Do not approve development of unsewered residential subdivisions, with the exception of areas designated on the Future Land Use Map as *Single Family Residential-Exurban*.
- d. Encourage the careful planning of new neighborhoods to protect environmental resources, improve the creativity of site planning and design, and provide more effective City control over the design, density, and character of new developments.
- e. Require that new neighborhoods follow the Planned Neighborhood Design Guidelines presented in the Land Use element of this *Plan*.
- f. Require developers to help fund safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle access between residential neighborhoods and nearby parks and schools.
- g. Require developers to pay for or finance all on-site improvements and contribute proportionately to off-site improvements, such as street upgrades and regional stormwater facilities.
- h. Support programs to help maintain and rehabilitate the City's existing housing stock, such as adopting the International Property Maintenance Code in order to ensure older housing stock is maintained.
- i. Restrict housing development below the floodplain elevation and explore feasibility and methods of flood protecting existing residences below the floodplain elevation.

Housing and Neighborhood Development Programs and Recommendations

Building off of some of the policies listed above, the following are programs and recommendations to promote high-quality and affordable housing and neighborhoods in the Jefferson area, in established neighborhoods as well as newer neighborhoods near the City's fringe.

1. *Support the Provision of Affordable Housing*

The City intends to continue to support policies and programs that provide high-quality, affordable housing options in the community. The following strategies will be explored:

- Promote the maintenance of older neighborhoods: The existing housing stock in Jefferson is an important component of the affordable housing supply, provided that housing is well maintained. Greater use of programs like CDBG would help fund rehabilitation grants and loans for existing housing. In addition, facilitating development proposals for senior housing also helps free up older homes for a new generation. A review of existing ordinances may also help facilitate proper maintenance and upgrading of new homes. For example, the City intends to make sure that setback and other standards in zoning districts mapped over older sections do not unnecessarily stymie appropriate home improvements.
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- Support housing Downtown: As part of ongoing Downtown revitalization efforts, the City should emphasize the retention and conversion of upper story spaces into housing. The Jefferson Downtown & Riverfront Redevelopment Plan also recommends condominiums, apartments, and townhomes for certain redevelopment sites. Additional residential development may occur over time in the Downtown and riverfront planning area. To sustain river water quality, new development should utilize environmentally friendly stormwater practices, such as rain gardens, bio-swales, and subterranean cisterns to minimize runoff into the river.
 - Encourage smaller City lot sizes: The City intends to adopt, utilize, and encourage residential zoning districts that allow lots smaller than 10,000 square feet, provided that house plans or design standards are provided that are suited for those sized lots and promote high-quality design. Smaller lot sizes result in lower development costs, lower lot prices, and a more compact land use pattern that uses land more wisely. Lots as small as 7,000 square feet and as narrow as 50 feet are becoming increasingly common in southern Wisconsin.
 - Allow high-quality multiple family housing: Higher density housing that complements the character of surrounding neighborhoods can be an important component of the affordable housing stock. Multi-family housing includes both renter-occupied and owner-occupied (e.g., condos, townhouses) housing options. Too often, resistance to higher density housing is a result of people's experience with poorly designed multi-family developments that do not reflect the character of the community, or are generally unattractive. The design standards discussed and illustrated later in this chapter are intended to address these issues. Another option is to support cooperative housing developments, which is explained in more detail below.
 - Support programs to provide new affordable housing: Several State and federal programs exist to help provide affordable housing. Programs such as the federal tax credit program, administered through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Agency, can help provide high-quality housing for lower income residents. The City should support appropriate use of such programs to increase the supply of affordable housing for people who are often not accommodated through the private market.

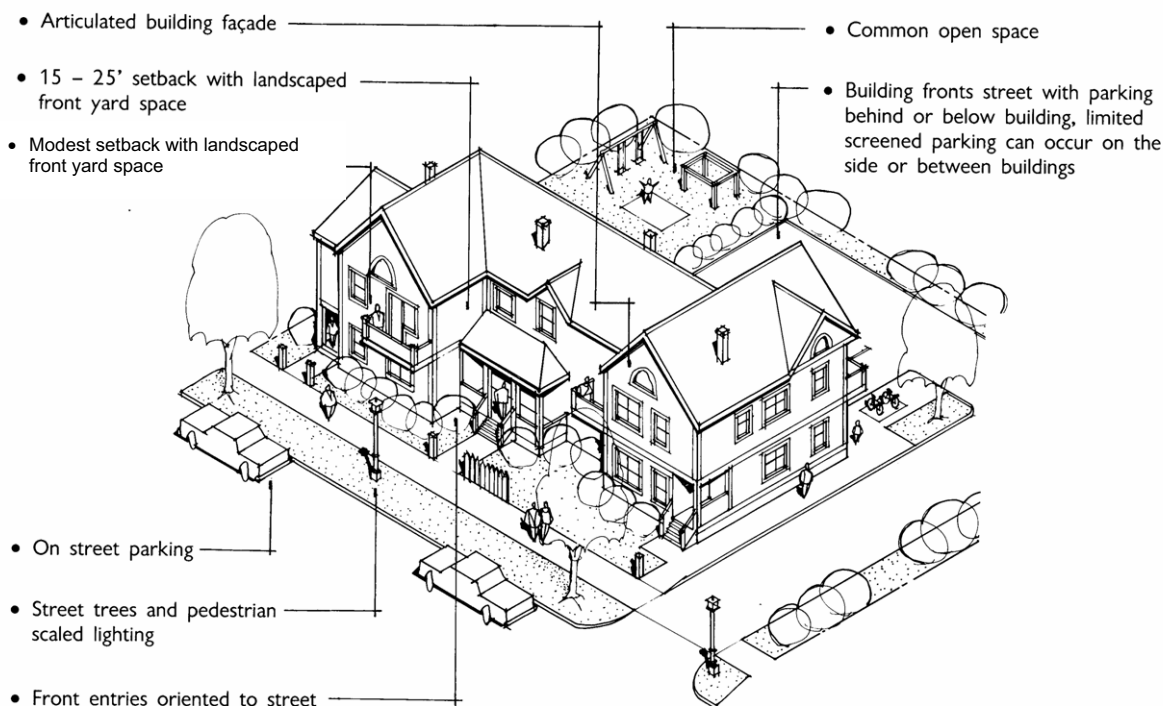
2. Enact Design Standards for Multiple Family Housing

Multiple family housing provides options for the elderly, younger residents, and employees for Jefferson businesses. However, such projects often cause community opposition. In some cases, this is because such projects have been poorly and cheaply designed. The City should include detailed design guidelines for all new or expanded multi-family residential developments in the zoning ordinance and enforce them during development review processes. The following guidelines and Figure 21 provide a foundation:

- Incorporate architectural design that fits the context of the surrounding neighborhood, and Jefferson’s overall character. Encourage layouts where buildings appear as a grouping of smaller residences. Within and near the Downtown, promote building materials, designs, scale, and setbacks that are compatible with the surrounding historic character.
- Use brick and other natural materials on building facades. Avoid monotonous facades and box-like buildings. Incorporate balconies, porches, garden walls, varied building and facade setbacks, varied roof designs, and bay windows.
- Orient buildings to the street with modest front yard setbacks, bringing street-oriented entries close to public sidewalks to increase pedestrian activity. Include private sidewalk connections.
- Locate parking, dumpsters, and other unattractive uses behind buildings.
- For parking lots and garages, (a) locate garage doors and parking lots so they are not the dominant visual element; (b) screen parking areas from public view; (c) break up large parking lots with landscaped islands and similar features; (d) provide direct links to building entrances by pedestrian walkways physically separated from vehicular movement areas; (e) large parking garages are undesirable, but where necessary, break up facades with foundation landscaping, varied facade setbacks, and recessed garage doors.
- Provide generous landscaping of sufficient size at time of planting. Emphasize landscaping (a) along all public and private street frontages; (b) along the perimeter of all paved areas and in islands in larger parking lots; (c) along all building foundations; (d) along yards separating land uses which differ in intensity, density, or character; (e) around all outdoor storage areas such as trash receptacles and recycling bins (also include screening walls in these areas); (f) around all utility structures or mechanical structures visible from public streets or less intensive land uses.
- Provide on-site recreational and open space areas to serve the needs of residents. Whenever possible, develop contiguous rear yards as a unit to encourage use by building residents and guests.



Figure 21: Desired Multiple Family Residential Project Layout



3. Consider Anti-Monotony Ordinances for New City Neighborhoods

The City of Jefferson supports variety of housing styles, materials, and colors in new residential neighborhoods, particularly in the “Planned Neighborhood” growth areas on the City’s west and east sides. This variety is reflective of the historic character of housing in the older parts of the City, so is therefore important in preserving the area’s character. Housing variety also makes for more interesting neighborhoods that tend to retain their value over time.

Too often in growing communities, housing material, color, and style choices are very limited in new neighborhoods. To combat this trend, many communities have adopted “anti-monotony” provisions into their zoning ordinances. These types of provisions limit the construction of identical—or very similar—houses within a certain distance of one another. The sidebar includes an example of general anti-monotony ordinance provisions for a suburban community outside of Milwaukee which includes more detailed provisions and definitions as well.

The City will consider inclusion of anti-monotony housing provisions in its zoning ordinance, in consultation with residents, developers, and home builders.

Example of General Anti-Monotony Provisions (Grafton, WI)

“No two single-family dwellings of similar front façade shall be repeated on any abutting lots or within five lots on either side of the street on which the dwellings front, including lots which are directly across the street from one another. Front facades shall be deemed to be similar when there is no substantial difference in roof lines; no substantial change in windows of either size, location, or type; and no substantial change in the color or kind of materials.”

