



HOUSING

Chapter 5

INTRODUCTION

The range of housing in New Denmark generally consists of older homes associated with active farming operations and newer single-family homes scattered throughout the town.

The Issues and Opportunities Chapter of the plan contains the forecasts for new housing units within the Town of New Denmark over the next 20 years. This chapter will build on these forecasts by identifying existing trends and characteristics of the housing market and providing recommendations on how to improve the existing housing stock and provide for the development of new and innovative housing practices.

Housing Characteristics

Structure Age

Figure 5-1 shows that 42.9 percent (257) of the housing units in the Town were built prior to 1970, while 57.1 percent, or 342 units, were built after 1970. This indicates that there is a good dispersal of different aged homes in the Town. As the housing stock ages, it will be necessary for the Town to ensure that the housing units remain in good condition through current building code enforcement. The housing units constructed prior to 1960 should especially be monitored for maintenance concerns due to the age of the structures.

Comprehensive Plan Goal #3 – Housing Goal

New Denmark will provide housing opportunities for all segments of the town's population while preserving the town's rural nature and scenic environment.

Housing-Related Community Goals (numbers correspond with top ten community goals)

2. Maintain the town's rural atmosphere.
6. Preserve green space and wildlife areas.
7. Preserve 35-acre lot size for rural land preservation.

Figure 5-1: Housing Unit Age in the Town of New Denmark

Year Structure Built	New Denmark	Percent of Total	Brown County	Percent of Total	Wisconsin	Percentage of Total
Built 2014 or later	3	0.5%	1,745	1.6%	29,219	1.1%
2010-2013	17	2.8%	3,104	2.9%	49,773	1.9%
2000-2009	67	11.2%	16,305	15.0%	341,400	12.7%
1990-1999	127	21.2%	17,565	16.1%	372,967	13.9%
1980-1989	42	7.0%	13,638	12.5%	266,845	10.0%
1970-1979	86	14.4%	17,709	16.3%	394,062	14.7%
1960-1969	46	7.7%	11,624	10.7%	261,113	9.7%
1950-1959	29	4.8%	10,650	9.8%	293,236	10.9%
1940-1949	28	4.7%	4,429	4.1%	149,246	5.6%
Built 1939 or earlier	154	25.7%	12,107	11.1%	523,371	19.5%
Total	599		108,876		2,681,232	

Source: U.S. Census 2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

Structures

Like most rural communities in Brown County, the Town of New Denmark has a significantly higher percentage of 1-unit detached structures (typically single-family homes) at 97.3 percent than either Brown County or the State of Wisconsin at 64.1 and 66.6 percent, respectively. The town has very few duplexes or multifamily units, which is not uncommon due to the town's rural setting, and because of the lack of public sanitary sewerage service.

New Denmark should continue to monitor the demands of a changing population to ensure that the town's housing will meet its needs. As the town changes, there may be a need for rental units to house the elderly and younger residents. Figure 5-2 identifies the total number of structures in the Town of New Denmark and the number of units they contain, as compared to Brown County and the State of Wisconsin.

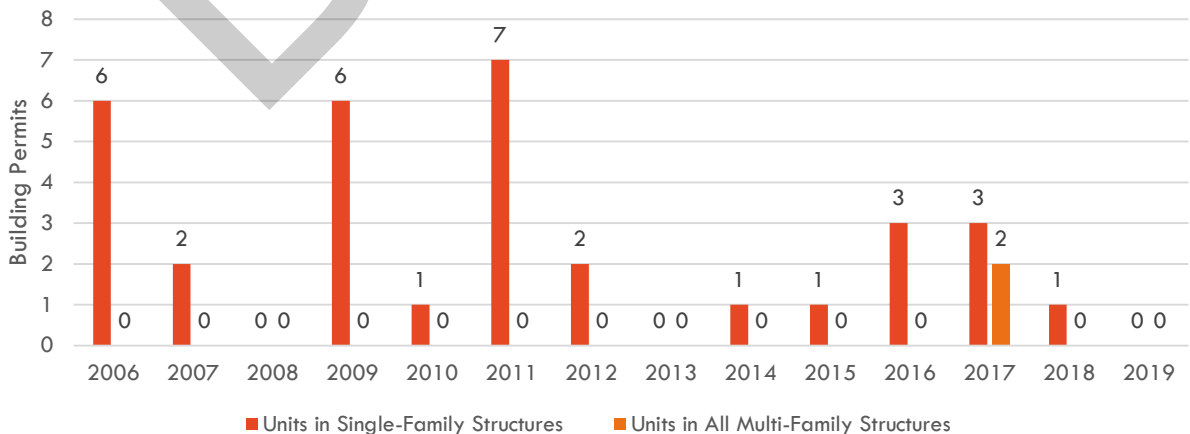
Figure 5-2: Units in Structure for New Denmark, Brown County, and Wisconsin

Units in Structure	New Denmark	% of Total	Brown County	% of Total	Wisconsin	% of Total
1-Unit Detached	583	97.3%	69,797	64.1%	1,785,339	66.6%
1-Unit Attached	6	1.0%	5,594	5.1%	113,291	4.2%
2 Units	6	1.0%	6,396	5.9%	172,688	6.4%
3 or 4 Units	0	0.0%	3,470	3.2%	99,630	3.7%
5 to 9 Units	0	0.0%	9,987	9.2%	132,237	4.9%
10 to 19 Units	0	0.0%	5,418	5.0%	91,675	3.4%
20 or More Units	0	0.0%	6,428	5.9%	192,648	7.2%
Mobile Home	4	0.7%	1,750	1.6%	93,043	3.5%
Boat, RV, Van, Etc.	0	0.0%	36	0.01%	681	0.03%
Total	599	--	108,876	--	2,681,232	--

Source: U.S. Census 2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

The last five years has seen a consistent level of new residential building occurring within the town. The level of new housing starts has varied from zero new single-family houses built in 2008, 2013, and 2019, to a high of seven built in 2011. Figure 5-3 displays the number of single-family units constructed during the period of 2006 to 2019. The town had few multi-family units built in that time.

Figure 5-3: New Housing Unit Development in New Denmark, 2006-2019



Source: U.S. Census 2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

Occupancy

According to the 2018 ACS estimate, there were a total of 599 housing units within the Town of New Denmark. This compares with 579 units in 2010, which is an increase of 20 units (3.45 percent) over the eight-year period. Figure 5-4 summarizes the estimated changes. The town has also seen the share of renters fall during that time

Figure 5-4: Change in Housing Occupancy Characteristics in Denmark,

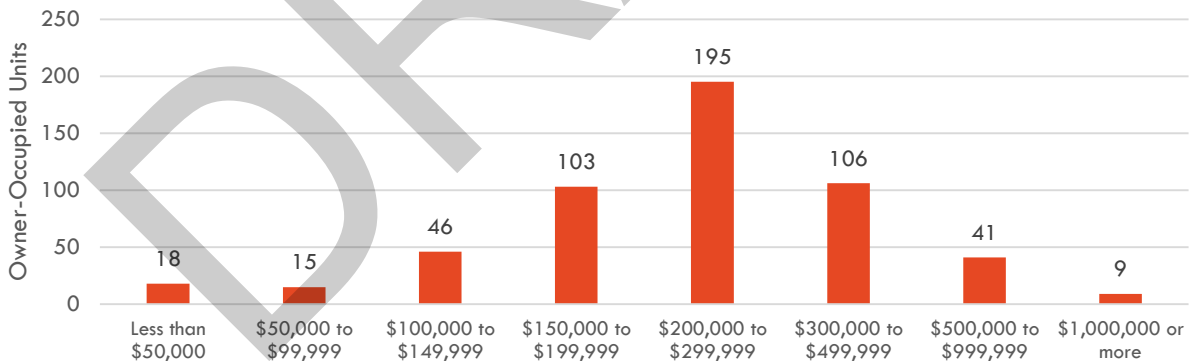
	2000 Census	% of Total	2010 Census	% of Total	2018 ACS 5-Year Estimate	% of Total	Estimated 2010-2018 Change	Estimated Percent Change 2010-2018
Total Housing Units	528	100.0%	579	100.0%	599	100.0%	20	3.5%
Occupied Housing Units	515	97.5%	561	96.9%	568	94.8%	7	1.2%
Owner-Occupied	460	87.1%	515	88.9%	533	89.0%	18	3.5%
Renter-Occupied	55	10.4%	46	7.9%	35	5.8%	-11	-23.9%
Vacant Housing Units	13	2.5%	18	3.1%	31	5.2%	13	72.2%

Source: U.S. Census 2018 ACS 5-year estimates; 2010 and 2000 Decennial Census.

Value

According to the 2018 ACS five-year estimates, the largest segment of the owner-occupied homes in the Town is valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999 (36.6 percent), while almost another 40 percent of the homes (20 percent each) are valued between \$150,000 and \$199,999, and \$300,000 to \$499,999 (See Figure 5-5). The median owner-occupied home value for a home in New Denmark, \$238,400 is higher than that of Brown County at \$167,000 and the State of Wisconsin at \$173,600. The average cost of a house in the town has appreciated considerably since 2000, where previously the two largest categories were \$50,000-\$99,999 (120 homes) and \$100,000 to \$149,999 (133 homes).

Figure 5-5: Value of Owner-Occupied Units



Source: U.S. Census 2018 ACS 5-year estimates.

Housing Expenses

In order to compare housing costs across a set time-period (in this case 2010-2020), inflation must be considered. The Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator (CPI-U-RS), created by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), was used to determine the appropriate inflation factor. With the calculator, a \$1.00 value in January 2010 had the same buying power as \$1.19 in June of 2020. Note: where comparisons are made between 2010 and 2018 estimates, the CPI inflation value for 2018 will be used.

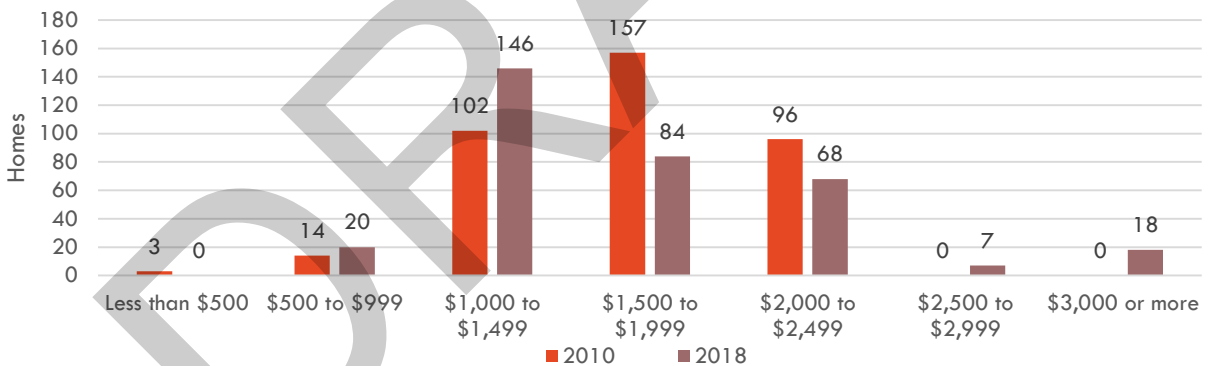
Rent

Between 2010 and 2018, the median gross rent for a rental unit in New Denmark increased from \$669 to an estimated \$911, which is an increase of 36.17 percent over eight years. When inflation is factored in and restated in terms of 2018 dollars, the 2010 rent is \$796.11. Therefore, over that eight-year period, rent has increased \$114.89 in inflation-adjusted dollars in the town. Figure 5-6 compares the ranges of gross rent costs in 2010 and 2018. Since the estimated 2018 data would not include the new units built in 2019, these rent increases just came from changing market conditions. As shown on the previous page in Figure 5-4, rentals make up a small proportion of the town's total housing.

Mortgage

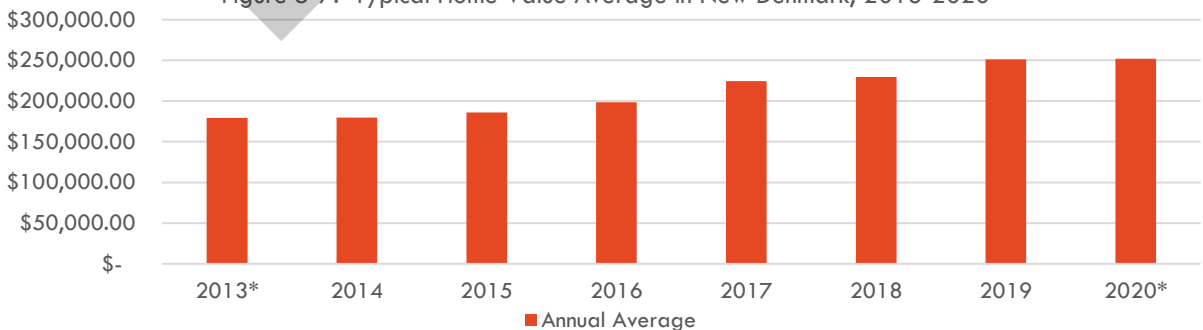
The median monthly mortgage cost (includes principal, interest, property tax escrow, insurance, etc.) for residents within the town increased significantly between 2010 and 2018. The increase in the size of mortgages is due to new homes being built during this time-period. In 2010, the median monthly mortgage cost for a home in New Denmark was \$1,608. When inflation is factored in, the 2010 median monthly mortgage expense equates to \$1,913.52 in constant year 2020 dollars. The 2018 median monthly mortgage cost was \$1,530 which is \$383.52 (a 20 percent decrease) less than the inflation-adjusted 2010 cost (Figure 5-6). One reason for this is that while mortgage rates have fluctuated over that time, they have generally trended downward, decreasing by almost a whole point. The town has also seen the typical home value (Figure 5-7) rise over the last seven years, probably largely from market conditions. This trend is consistent with Brown County as a whole.

Figure 5-6: Mortgage Costs in the Town of New Denmark, 2010 and 2018, est.



Note: 2010 Census only counted to \$2,000 or more. Sources: U.S. 2010 Census and 2018 ACS 5-Year Data

Figure 5-7: Typical Home Value Average in New Denmark, 2013-2020



*2013 data was available for part of the year; 2020 was through June 30, 2020. Source: Zillow.com Home Prices and Values in Brown County. The data is a smoothed, seasonally-adjusted measure of the typical home value and market changes across a given region and housing type.

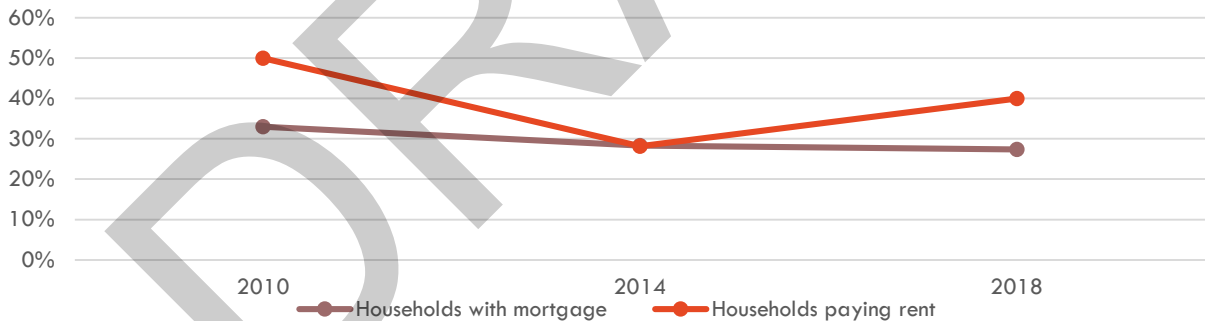
Housing Needs

Based on a future population projection for the year 2040 of 1,825 people (State DOA projection) and a projected average people per household size of 2.52, there will be a need for 125 additional housing units by the year 2040 (the difference between the estimated 725 total housing units needed at a density of 2.52 persons/unit for 1,825 people, and the 599 estimated existing houses). If the average household size is lower, a higher number of housing units will be needed. In addition, if the 2040 population is higher than the projection of 1,825 people, additional housing units will also be needed. While population increases or decreases do not occur in a straight-line manner, but rather in spurts, it is not unrealistic to assume that the town's 2040 population may be even closer to 2,000 people. If this should happen, the Town would need to add upwards of 70 additional housing units over the course of the 20 years to meet the expected population change. While projections are not always accurate, especially when projections are done for a lengthy time period, and changes in town development practices also influence the amount of building and development that may occur in a municipality, the housing needs projections should help the town consider future housing scenarios.

Housing Affordability Analysis

Generally since 1990 there has been an increase in cost burdened households throughout the United States, including Brown County. A quote from the 2018 State of the Nation's Housing Report, explains some reasons for the increase in housing cost burdened households. "While better housing quality accounts for some of the increased costs, higher costs for building materials and labor, limited productivity gains, increased land costs, new regulatory barriers, and growing income inequality all played major roles as well." Shown in Figure 5-8 below, households with a mortgage in New Denmark have fared better, becoming less cost-burdened over the timeframe.

Figure 5-8: New Denmark Housing Cost-Burdened Trends, 2010-2018



Sources: U.S. 2010 Census and 2018 ACS 5-Year Data

Rental Housing Affordability

Based on the most recent median gross rent estimate in New Denmark of \$911 from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey, a person would need to earn at least \$17.52 per hour, or \$36,440 per year (2,080 hours a year at 40 hours a week) to pay no more than 30 % of income on housing. The 2019 National Low-Income Housing Coalition *Out of Reach* report estimates the mean renter wage in Brown County to be \$14.17 an hour. New Denmark has an estimated \$3.35 hourly gap that's higher than the estimated affordable rent at the mean renter wage in Brown County. Depending on job opportunities and transportation, New Denmark may be a less attractive place in Brown County for some renters.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

The following sections will describe different programs and policies for the Town of New Denmark to consider to implement a wider range of housing in the town, to better plan for that development, and to improve the physical conditions of the existing housing stock.

Range of Housing Choices

The town's residential development is typical of most rural communities where housing is overwhelmingly single-family, owner-occupied on owner-occupied lots. As the town grows, it should be open to more housing options being developed in the town. Development of additional duplex units, multifamily units, and possibly small group homes for the elderly would provide town residents a bigger mix of housing types. Since there are no areas within the town that have public sewerage service, the likelihood of multifamily development occurring in the town may be low. Extension of such service into the town from the Village of Denmark would increase the likelihood of other housing types locating within the town. Town residents can relocate to the Village of Denmark where the option of living in a multifamily development is more readily available.

While understanding that the range of housing choices are generally limited in areas not served by public sewer and water service, it is important to recognize that as people go through various stages in their life, their preferred housing type may change, as well. Although the Town may currently depend on other neighboring communities to provide the complete range of housing for its residents, this section contains a series of recommendations the Town can implement to maintain its current housing stock and development pattern while somewhat increasing its range of housing choices.

Figure 5-9 provides a representation of how a person's housing preferences might change over time.

For the town to continue to grow, working with developers to create a range of housing choices for existing town residents and for those who may wish to move to the town in the future will continue to be necessary. A range of choices allows a young family to rent, purchase a starter home, move into a larger home as their family grows, move to a smaller home when they retire, and move to an assisted living facility, all without having to move out of New Denmark. This section contains a series of recommendations the town can implement to maintain its current housing stock and development pattern while creating more affordable housing units and a range of housing options.

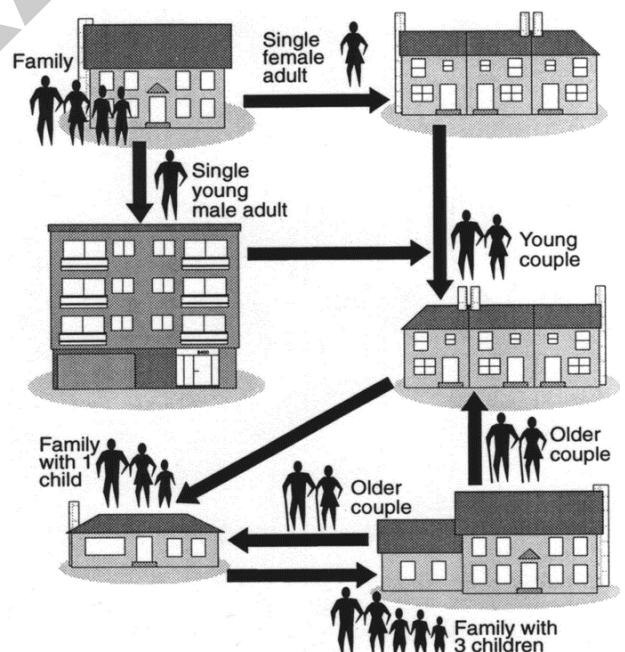


Figure 5-9: Example housing preferences for different life stages. Source: Local Government Commission, 2003.

Mixing of Residential Types

Historically, housing types were mixed. More recently, however, housing types other than single-family detached homes have been grouped together, thereby concentrating these uses. Mixing the housing types avoids the concentration of large tracts of rental properties and their perceived negative impacts and is a housing option that all communities should consider.

For uses other than single-family detached homes to be palatable to surrounding property owners, the other uses need to be of a scale and design that blend in with the residential character of the neighborhood. Strict developmental design standards will likely need to be employed to achieve the desired seamless integration of these uses into the neighborhoods. Design standards let the developer know ahead of time what standards the neighbors expect for the building, and the neighbors know that the development will meet their expectations, as well.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on a Residential Parcel

As residents age, there may be a time when they may not be able to live independently, but do not want to or cannot afford to live in a retirement or elderly care home. An alternative would be to allow small, attached or detached accessory dwelling units on one residential parcel. These “granny flats,” or “backyard cottages” as they are sometimes called, allow older residents to maintain their own independent living quarters while being able to easily interact with their family for meals and socializing in the principal residence.

This trend has come in some style again and could provide the town another option to create affordable housing, and to help residents be able to more easily age in place. When designed and integrated tastefully, ADUs can provide additional housing that blends in with the primary residence.



Figure 5-10: Accessory dwelling unit in the rear yard. Source: City of Seattle Guide to Building a Backyard Cottage.

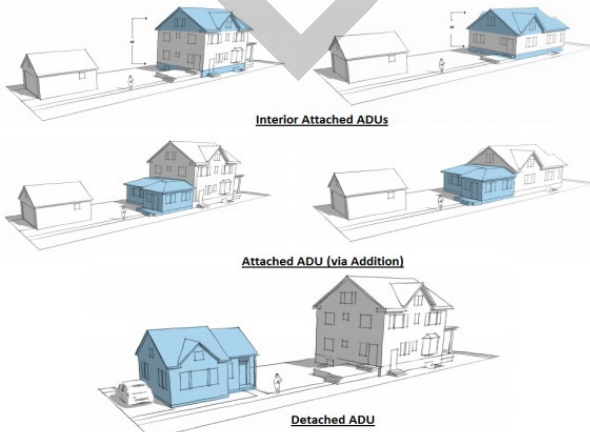


Figure 5-11 (above): Different types of ADUs provide options for different contexts. Source: AARP All About Accessory Dwelling Units.

Figure 5-12 (left): Example attached and detached ADUs. Source: City of St. Paul, MN.

Conservation by Design Developments

The town may have places where critical environmental, historical, or agricultural features that should be preserved, even though the local property owner wishes to develop his or her property. In situations such as these, conservation by design subdivisions could accomplish both goals. In terms of housing, the lots in conservation by design subdivisions are typically smaller and clustered together to prevent damage to the feature(s) to be preserved. This also conforms with TND principles, and creates more walkable areas, and provides opportunities for socializing with neighbors. When first identifying areas for preservation, it should be made clear exactly who will own and be responsible for the care and maintenance of the preserved areas. Conservation by design developments are discussed more thoroughly within the Land Use Chapter.

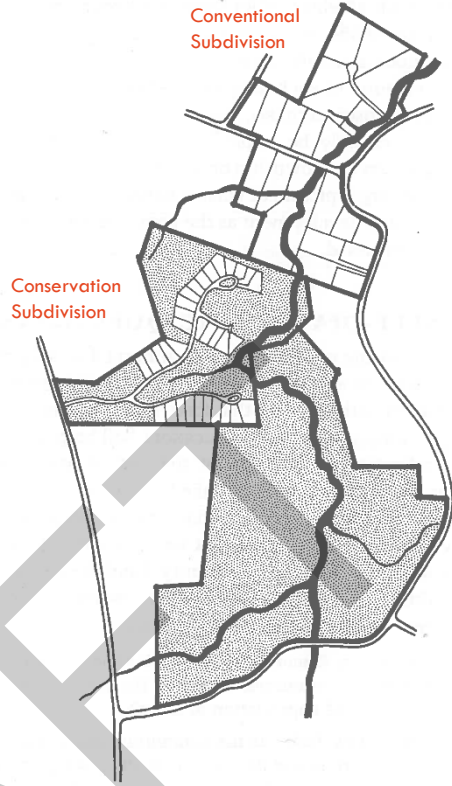


Figure 6-4. Three parcels of land located along a stream illustrate how opportunities to conserve open space networks are typically lost when developments are conventionally laid out, and how such connections can be incorporated into the design of conservation subdivisions. This illustration also shows the role of a land trust preserve (or of a public park) in protecting additional segments of the stream corridor.

Figure 5-13 (upper right): Comparison of a conventional subdivision development with a conservation subdivision, and how the latter preserves more open space. Source: Conservation Design for Subdivisions, Arendt.

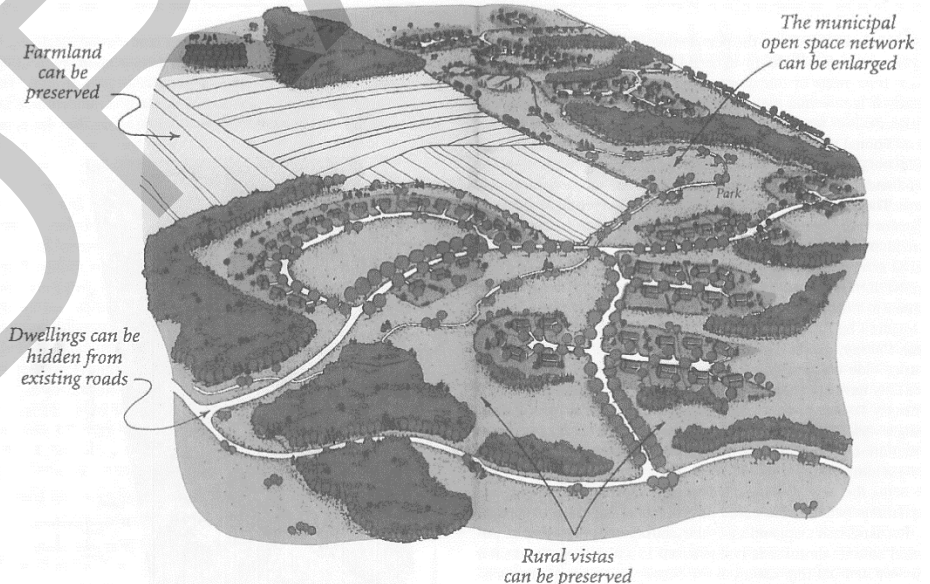


Figure 6-2. This aerial perspective sketch illustrates the multiple benefits that can be achieved when conservation design is used in laying out new subdivisions on several adjoining properties. Prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission in southeastern Pennsylvania, this drawing shows how a conservation fabric of protected lands could be woven together to form an interconnected network of open space meeting a number of related community objectives, including the protection of woodlands, fields, scenic vistas, cultural landscapes, and additions to the municipal open space system of parks and trails.

Figure 5-14 (right): Example of a conservation subdivision, with protected views, woodlands, agricultural land, open space, and houses. Source: Conservation Design for Subdivisions, Arendt.

Enhance Public Knowledge of “Visitability” Concepts and Universal Design

As is evident from the Issues and Opportunities Chapter, New Denmark’s population is continuing to age. As people age, their ability to move around their own home can become increasingly difficult. For mobility-impaired residents, the simple presence of a single stair to enter a home can cause a great deal of difficulty. According to Green Bay-based Options for Independent Living, “visitability” applies to the construction of new single-family homes to make them “visit-able” by people with any type of physical or mobility disability. Typically visitable homes have:

- One entrance with no steps.
- A minimum 32-inch clear passage through all the main floor doors and hallways.
- A useable bathroom on the main floor.

Although these improvements do not allow full accessibility, such as is promoted in universal design, they do allow (at a minimum) elderly and people with a mobility limitation the ability to visit a home or remain living in their home for a longer period. Universal design is a concept that promotes designing spaces for use by everyone from the start, not just creating separate spaces, or only designing places that could be easily modified in the future. Communities may incorporate universal design principals into housing through things such as curbless showers and stepless entrances. Incorporating universal design concepts in construction are important because life circumstances change unexpectedly, and while someone may not have anticipated a future need, these changes may happen all the same. Universal design principles already in place may help keep someone in their home.



Figure 5-15: Examples of home features that increase accessibility and help people to age in place. Source: AARP HomeFit Guide.

Using the Rezoning Process

Through the town’s visioning process, one of the key issues people stated was maintaining the town’s rural atmosphere. The town has also had ongoing discussion about whether there should be more residential properties and whether property owners should be allowed to carve out smaller parcels on their property for an additional residence. Because this may happen in an incremental time and isn’t confined to one specific area, the town should consider evaluating these scenarios on a case-by-case basis.

Unless a property owner wanted to leave the Farmland Preservation Program (which has a higher threshold to rezone from), the most likely rezoning case would be rezoning a parcel from the A-1 (Agricultural) District to the A-R (Agricultural-Residential) District. The A-R District permits single-family dwellings, while the A-1 District permits single-family dwellings for resident owners and laborers as an accessory use. The minimum lot size is 1.5 acres for the A-R District, and 35 acres for the A-1 District.

The town can consider a property owner's request to amend a property's zoning classification to allow a single-family residence on a parcel of land currently zoned A-1. The process gives the property owner an opportunity to present their vision to the Town Plan Commission and to the Town Board. In turn, both the Town Plan Commission and Board can both evaluate the request against the comprehensive plan and the rezoning amendment criteria (Article XIX – Administration and Enforcement, in the amended 2015 Town of New Denmark Zoning Ordinance). These include whether:

- The new parcel would meet the new zoning district requirements, while the existing parcel would continue to conform with its zoning standards;
- The zoning change will introduce a use that complements existing area uses;
- The parcel is suitable for the requested change;
- The requested change is congruent with development trends in the town;
- The requested change would have adequate public facilities to support its development; and
- That the request will not place an unreasonable burden on the town to provide public facilities.

Article XIX also has additional criteria for the Town Plan Commission and Board to consider. The Plan Commission can submit written findings of fact and recommendations to the Town Board. The Town Board can consider these things as part of its purpose in Article II – whether the request negatively impacts the town or not, and whether there is mutual benefit to its proposal.

Reinvestment in Existing Housing Stock

As identified in Figure 5-1, over 42% of the town's housing stock is 50 years or older and may need updating or more intensive maintenance, rehabilitation, or if beyond repair, selective demolition. One option available to improve residential properties in New Denmark is the Northeastern Wisconsin Housing Rehabilitation CDBG Loan Program, administered by Brown County. CDBG-Housing funds may be used for zero-percent deferred payment housing rehabilitation loans to low- and moderate- income (LMI) owner-occupied households; low percentage rate deferred and/or installment housing rehabilitation loans to owners of LMI renter-occupied units; and accessibility improvements for LMI households. Additionally, there are other state and federal agencies that may provide financial aid for owner-occupied and rental housing rehabilitation.



Figure 5-16: Above images: Housing rehabilitation before and after completed through the Community Development Block Grant program administered by Brown County.

HOUSING POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Comprehensive Plan Goal #3 – Housing Goal

New Denmark will provide housing opportunities for all segments of the town's population while preserving the town's rural nature and scenic environment.

Objectives

1. *Promote policies that increase the range of housing options in the town.*
 - a) Keep informed of housing affordability issues and the possible need for more affordable homes in New Denmark as the population continues to grow, age, and diversify.
 - b) Explore how to incorporate small residential lots into the town, and what design requirements might need to be amended to make that happen.
 - c) Consider what it would take to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in the town, and where this could occur.
 - d) Examine the zoning code and map for where mixed-housing types might be implemented.
 - e) Support mixed-use development in and near commercial areas and activity nodes to increase housing options.
 - f) Promote visitability and universal design concepts to developers and home builders and explore how the town could incorporate visitability and universal design principles into housing design standards.
 - g) Support the development of different housing types besides single-family houses to satisfy the projected demand for an additional 70 additional housing units referenced in this chapter to meet the projected future town population.
 - h) Multifamily buildings should reflect (as much as possible) the characteristics and amenities associated with single-family residences.
2. *Promote policies and programs that help maintain the town housing stock quality.*
 - a) The town should work with entities including the Brown County Housing Authority and Northeast Wisconsin Rehabilitation CDGB Loan Program, along with other state and federal agencies, to promote reinvestment in the town housing stock.
 - b) The town should continue to emphasize and prioritize zoning code and nuisance enforcement to maintain the town's housing stock quality.
3. *Continue to promote well-planned residential areas in the town.*
 - a) In areas with unique or critical natural or cultural resources, the town should encourage conservation by design developments, and use the natural and cultural resources to organize the open space and/or green space around.
 - b) The town should consider adopting development criteria for multifamily development or add a multifamily zone to the town zoning ordinance to address building criteria requirements for this type of land use.
 - c) Use the town's amendment process to rezone properties for single-family residential use where there is desire to create an individual parcel for a new single-family home.