



Chapter 2

Housing



INTRODUCTION

The relationship between housing and municipal government is not always well defined. Small villages are generally are not housing developers, nor do they usually have a housing authority or administrative staff to provide oversight on community housing issues. Communities can influence housing development through the use of incentives, land use regulations and the provision of municipal services such as roads and infrastructure.

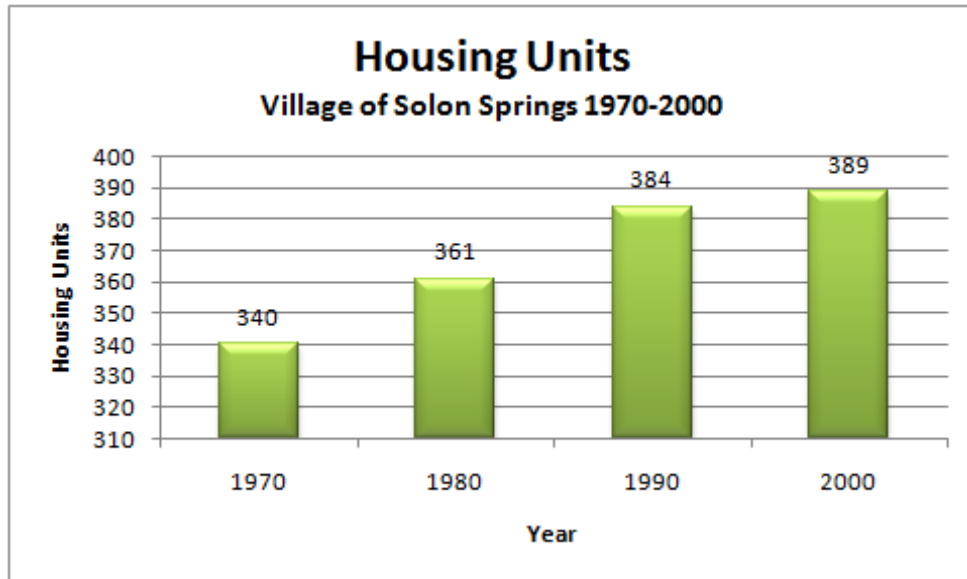


HOUSING PROFILE

Number of Housing Units in the Village of Solon Springs

As shown in Figure 2.1, the Village of Solon Springs reported a total of 389 housing units in 2000, an increase of 14.4 percent since 1970. The housing stock trend in the village generally follows that of the county as a whole. Most municipalities reported strong increases in housing stock from 1970 through 1990, but experienced a slowdown between 1990 and 2000.

Figure 2.1: Housing Units



Source: US Census Bureau

Housing Units in Douglas County

In Douglas County, the 10-year period from 1970 to 1980 marked the largest increase in housing units in the past 30 years, with all units of government reporting increases. Unincorporated units (towns) reported an increase of 39.9 percent, while the incorporated units (villages and the City of Superior) reported a more modest growth rate of 11.3 percent. Growth of total housing units slowed substantially between 1980 and 1990 in the county with four municipalities reporting slight decreases in total units. In the period from 1980 to 1990, the unincorporated units maintained an average increase of 10.2 percent while the incorporated units sustained a slight loss decreasing by 1.5 percent. The most substantial increases in housing units for the decade between 1980 and 1990 were reported in the Towns of Hawthorne, Solon Springs, Gordon and the Village of Oliver, with decreases reported in the Town of Parkland, the Villages of Poplar and Superior and the City of Superior. During the 1990's, half of the towns in Douglas County experienced sharp declines in numbers of housing units. During this same



period, the incorporated units actually grew by 4.6 percent. Total housing units from 1970 through 2000 are illustrated below in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Housing Units by Minor Civil Division

Municipal Unit	1970	1980	1990	2000	Percent Change 1970-1980	Percent Change 1980-1990	Percent Change 1990-2000
Towns							
Amnicon	239	323	347	383	35	7	10
Bennett	262	297	322	297	14	8	8
Brule	286	365	403	270	28	10	(-33)
Cloverland	100	125	139	111	25	11	(-20)
Dairyland	175	249	269	139	42	8	(-48)
Gordon	373	689	804	471	85	17	(-41)
Hawthorne	221	327	422	399	48	29	(-5)
Highland	167	253	287	169	52	13	(-41)
Lakeside	190	244	255	264	28	5	4
Maple	206	267	269	303	30	1	13
Oakland	343	450	498	541	31	11	9
Parkland	382	496	470	480	30	(-5.2)	2
Solon Springs	404	486	587	477	20	21	(-19)
Summit	432	536	551	561	24	3	2
Superior	513	723	769	794	41	6	3
Wascott	459	816	933	806	78	14	(-14)
Total unincorporated	4752	6646	7325	6465	40	10	(-12)
Villages							
Lake Nebagamon	454	646	717	746	42	11	4
Oliver	68	88	102	128	29	16	25
Poplar	142	210	203	222	48	(-3.3)	9
Solon Springs	340	361	384	389	6	6	1
Superior village	129	202	195	210	5	(-3.5)	8
City							
Superior	10997	11988	11684	12196	9	(-2.5)	4
Total incorporated	12130	13495	13285	13891	11	(-1.5)	5
County Total							
Douglas County	16882	20141	20610	20356	19	2	(-1)

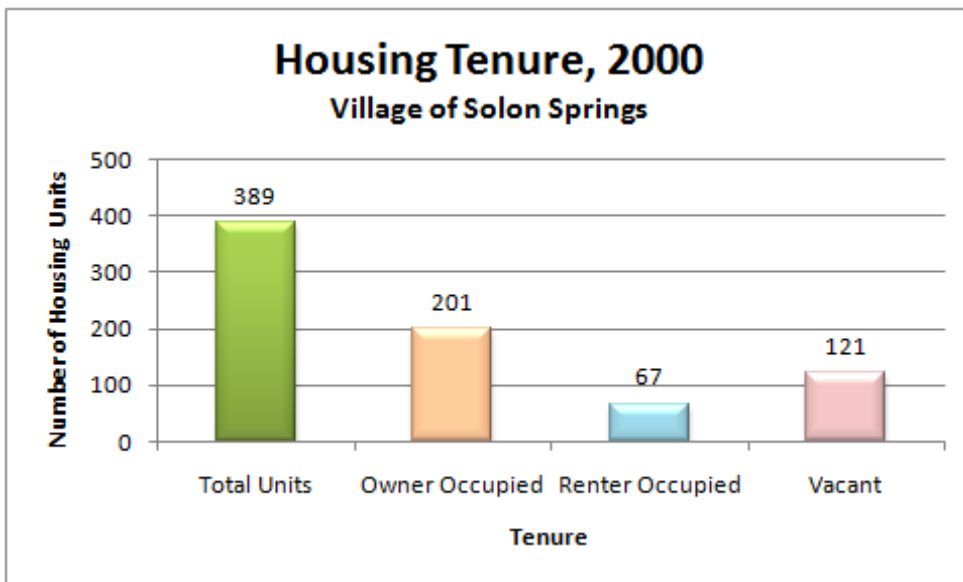
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File SF1, NWRPC



Occupancy Characteristics (Tenure)

Housing *tenure* refers to whether a housing unit is either owned or rented. Homes where the owner resides in the housing unit are referred to as *owner-occupied housing units*, while homes which are rented are referred to as *renter-occupied housing units*. *Vacant housing units* include those which are for sale, rent or held for seasonal or recreational use. Owner occupied housing units are primarily single-family homes, while renter occupied units consist of rental homes, apartments, townhomes and other rental properties.

Figure 2.2: Housing Tenure, 2000

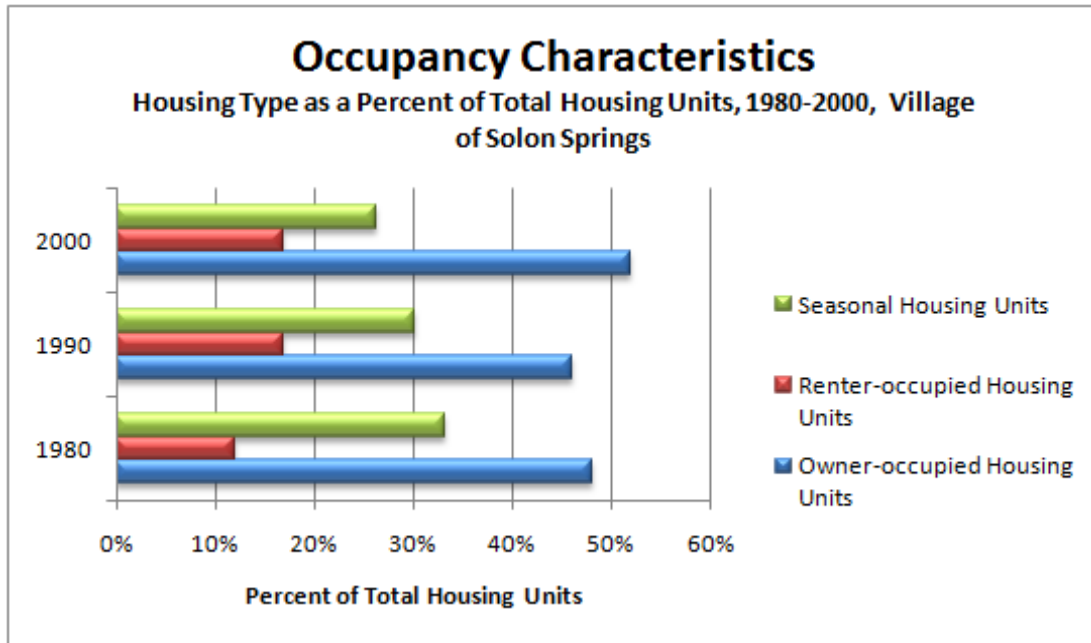


Source: US Census Bureau

In 2000, the Village of Solon Springs reported 268 occupied housing units. Of this total, 201 (75.0%) were classified as owner-occupied, while 67 (25%) were classified as renter-occupied. There were 121 vacant housing units, of which, 102 were classified as for seasonal, recreational or occasional use. Housing tenure based on 2000 Census data is depicted in **Figure 2.2** As shown in **Figure 2.3**, the proportion of owner-occupied, renter-occupied and seasonal housing units changed from 1980 to 2000. The proportion of owner and renter-occupied units increased, while the proportion of seasonal housing units decreased. The reduction in seasonal housing units may be indicative of a trend in the conversion of seasonal and recreational housing the permanent, year-round residences.



Figure 2.3: Occupancy Characteristics 1980-2000



Source: US Census Bureau

Rental Housing

Rental units comprise slightly over 17 percent of the total housing units in the Village of Solon Springs. The 2000 U.S. Census indicated that there were 67 rental units. This figure is comparable to the other villages in Douglas County.

Subsidized Housing and Assisted Living

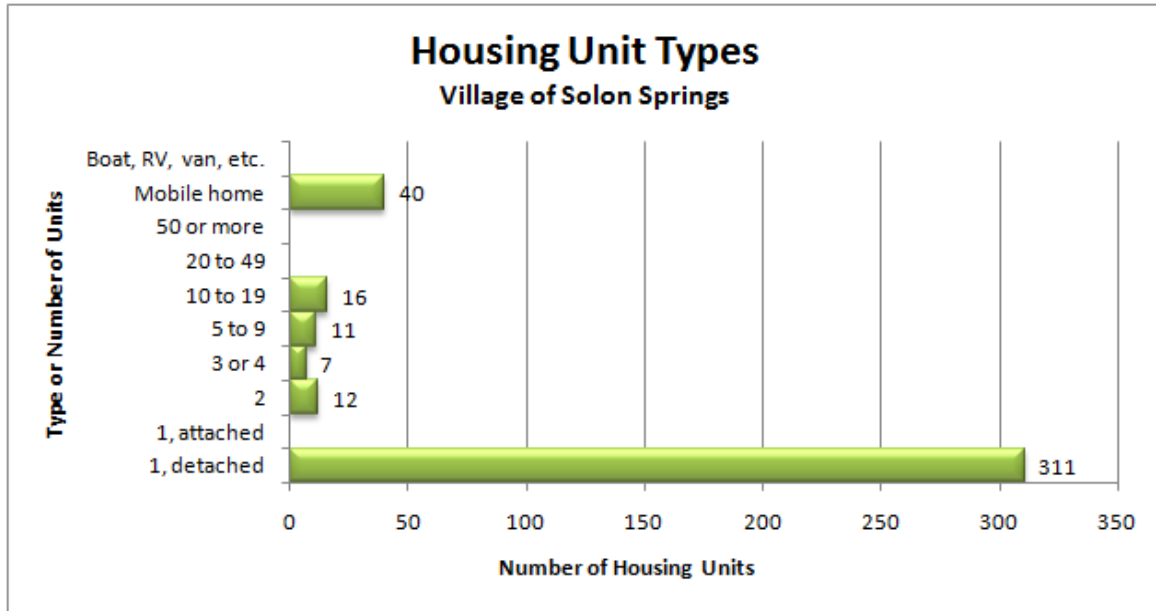
The Section 515 Rural Rental Housing Program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been the federal government’s principal financial assistance program for rural and small town multi-family housing serving low-income individuals and families. Bashara Apartments (16 units) is a Section 515 housing complex in the Village of Solon Springs.



HOUSING SUPPLY

Housing Types

Figure 2.4: Housing Types



Source: US Census Bureau, SF 3 Data File

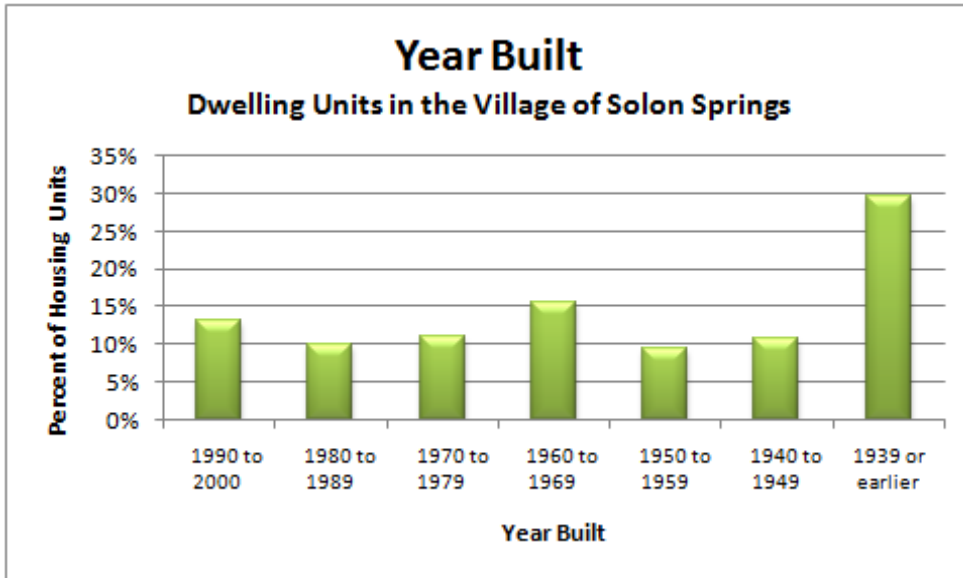
According to the 2000 Census, the majority of housing units in the village are classified as single unit, detached dwellings (Figure 2.4). A single unit, detached structure is a one-unit structure detached from any other house while a single-unit attached structure has one or more walls extending from ground to roof separating it from adjoining structures. Multi-unit structures include duplexes, triplexes, apartment complexes and other complexes where several housing units are contained within single building. In 2000, there were 46 multi-family housing units and 40 dwelling units classified as mobile homes in the Village of Solon Springs.

Age of Housing Stock

The age of housing stock within a community can provide a general measure of housing quality. In general, older housing stock requires more repair and maintenance than new housing. Within the Village of Solon Springs, 30 percent of the housing units were constructed before 1940, indicating that significant portion of community housing may be in need of repair. The Village of Solon Springs does not have a housing maintenance program or rental inspection program. As dwellings continue to age and begin showing signs of disrepair, the community should consider policies to maintain the quality of housing that exists today. The age of housing stock in the Village of Solon Springs is shown on Figure 2.5.



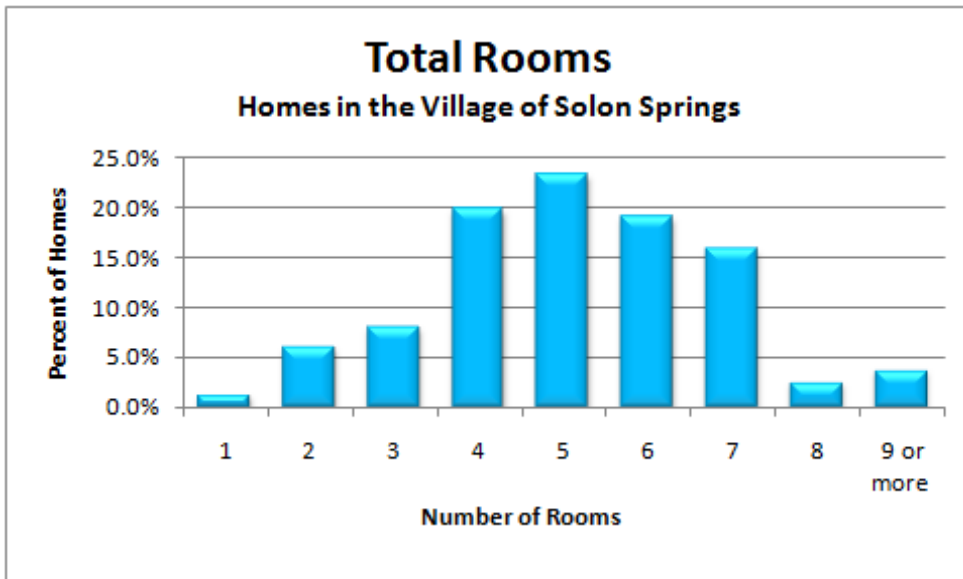
Figure 2.5: Year Built, Housing Units in the Village of Solon Springs



Source: US Census Bureau, SF 3 Data File

Structural Characteristics

Figure 2.6: Number of Rooms, Housing Units in the Village of Solon Springs



Source: US Census Bureau, SF 3 Data File

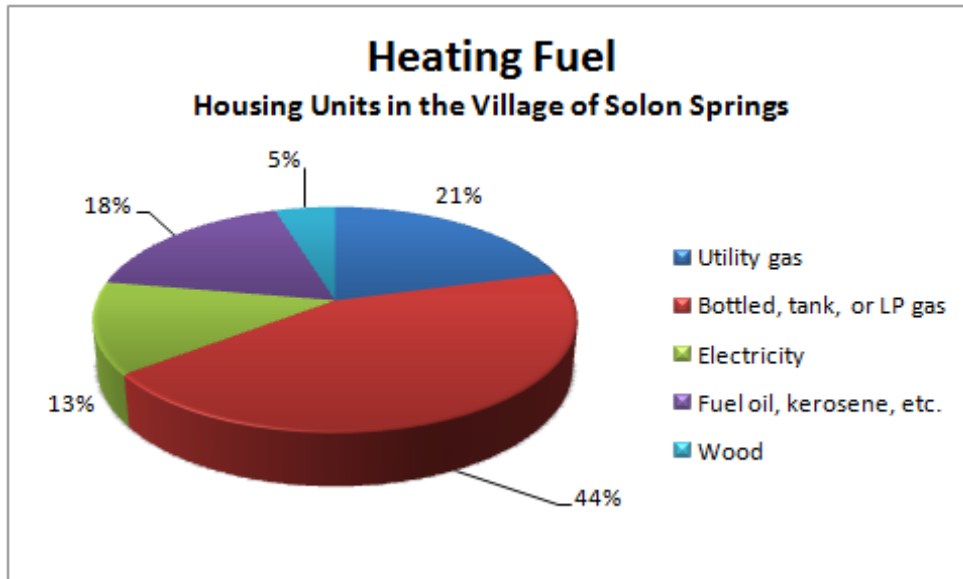
The 2000 Census reported that the median number of rooms per housing unit in the Village of Solon Springs was 5.1. The median number of rooms for owner-occupied housing units was 5.5, while renter-occupied units had a median of 3.7 rooms per unit. Nearly 76 percent of housing units had



between 2 and 3 bedrooms per unit. Census statistics relative to the total number of rooms in the village's housing stock is shown in **Figure 2.6**.

Heating Fuel

Figure 2.7: Heating Fuel, Housing Units in the Village of Solon Springs



Source: US Census Bureau, SF 3 Data File

Plumbing Facilities

According to the 2000 Census 99 percent of housing units in the Village of Solon Springs had complete plumbing facilities. Complete plumbing facilities are defined as hot and cold piped water, a bath-tub or shower, and a flush toilet. Municipal sewer service is available to residents in the Village of Solon Springs, which covers the incorporated area and adjoining areas of the Town of Solon Springs. Municipal water is currently unavailable; consequently, all of the village's housing units are currently served by individual private wells.



Housing Costs

Housing affordability is one of the greatest issues facing small communities today. In many communities, the costs of housing are rising faster than personal incomes. **Table 2.2** depicts the housing costs based on 2000 Census data for the Village of Solon Springs and the other municipalities within Douglas County.

Table 2.2: Housing Costs, Douglas County

Municipal Unit	Median Housing Value	Homes with a Mortgage	Median Monthly Owner Costs ¹	Median Monthly Owner Costs ²	Median Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income ¹	Median Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income ²	Median Gross Rent	Median Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income
Towns								
Amnicon	\$79,700	186	\$687	\$236	13.6%	9.9%	\$463	15.8%
Bennett	\$82,300	130	\$790	\$275	18.8%	9.9%	\$575	12.5%
Brule	\$73,300	119	\$673	\$234	18.9%	9.9%	\$406	31.3%
Cloverland	\$74,200	44	\$750	\$275	30.0%	9.9%	\$275	37.5%
Dairyland	\$45,600	39	\$750	\$165	14.2%	9.9%	\$0	0.0%
Gordon	\$69,600	137	\$680	\$218	22.2%	9.9%	\$539	16.9%
Hawthorne	\$70,700	213	\$725	\$225	15.8%	9.9%	\$675	27.5%
Highland	\$97,300	63	\$850	\$267	20.0%	9.9%	\$0	0.0%
Lakeside	\$78,900	140	\$733	\$254	18.3%	9.9%	\$425	45.0%
Maple	\$66,700	131	\$625	\$198	16.9%	12.5%	\$525	30.6%
Oakland	\$77,600	253	\$739	\$233	13.9%	9.9%	\$513	25.5%
Parkland	\$71,800	263	\$700	\$230	20.0%	9.9%	\$608	37.5%
Solon Springs	\$89,700	185	\$833	\$321	20.7%	9.9%	\$400	26.9%
Summit	\$77,400	206	\$793	\$288	21.2%	10.0%	\$288	9.9%
Superior	\$88,100	455	\$805	\$239	18.9%	9.9%	\$480	21.5%
Wascott	\$120,000	138	\$1,043	\$339	23.5%	13.5%	\$408	13.5%
Villages								
Lake Nebagamon	\$113,500	245	\$953	\$380	19.7%	10.1%	\$423	26.8%
Oliver	\$72,900	66	\$864	\$342	23.9%	9.9%	\$475	24.5%
Poplar	\$84,500	117	\$756	\$314	20.8%	13.6%	\$461	17.5%
Solon Springs	\$62,500	120	\$693	\$236	18.2%	14.6%	\$415	29.1%
Superior village	\$80,000	91	\$723	\$321	17.2%	9.9%	\$384	23.8%
City								
Superior	\$63,900	4210	\$732	\$279	19.4%	10.8%	\$406	23.3%
County Total								
Douglas County	\$70,800	7551	\$745	\$277	19.3%	10.4%	\$411	23.5%

¹ Mortgaged housing units. Selected monthly owner costs are the sum of payments for mortgages, deeds of trust, contracts to purchase, home equity loans; real estate taxes; fire, hazard, and flood insurance on the property; utilities (electricity, gas, and water and sewer); and fuels (oil, coal, kerosene, wood, etc.). It also includes monthly condominium fees and mobile home costs where appropriate.

² Housing units which are not mortgaged



As shown in **Table 2.2**, in 2000 the median housing value in the Village of Solon Springs was \$62,500 which ranked 21st of Douglas County's 22 municipalities. Only the Town of Dairyland had a lower median housing value. There were 120 mortgaged homes in the village, with a median monthly owner cost in 2000 of \$693. The village had a median gross monthly rent of \$415 in 2000, which ranked 13th among Douglas County municipalities.

Housing Affordability

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as "houses, mobile homes, apartments, or condominiums available for rent or purchase at 30 percent or less of annual income." HUD defines income levels by percentage of median income (MI) for a municipality. According to the 2000 US Census, the median household income for the Village of Solon Springs was \$30,250, which was 14.1 percent below the county median income of \$35,266.

The calculated monthly median income in the Village of Solon Springs is \$2,520. The proportion of this figure (30%) that can be devoted towards housing costs is about \$756 dollars a month. In 2000, the median home value in the Village of Solon Springs was \$62,500. The median monthly owner costs for mortgaged housing units in 2000 were \$693 per month and the median monthly rental costs were \$415. Based on this simple HUD formula it can be concluded that owner-occupied housing is generally considered to be affordable. This assumption does not necessarily reflect indications provided by other data or the general perceptions of those who live and own property in the Village of Solon Springs. **Table 2.3** below suggests that many households may be facing serious challenges with regard to housing affordability.

Table 2.3: Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

Percent of Household Income	Households Surveyed	Percent households
Less than 15.0 percent	65	40.4
15.0 to 19.9 percent	29	18.0
20.0 to 24.9 percent	27	16.8
25.0 to 29.9 percent	3	1.9
30.0 to 34.9 percent	7	4.3
35.0 percent or more	30	18.6

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Census, Summary File SF3

According to Census statistics, nearly ¼ (22.9%) of the households in the Village of Solon Springs are spending 30 percent or more of their income on housing.

Table 2.4 depicts estimated housing affordability based on percent median income. The monthly cost statistic is based on expenditures of 30 % of the total household income (example: Solon Springs household earning \$15,125 per year could afford a



monthly housing cost of up to \$378). Total household incomes up to 80% (extremely low to low income) of the median household income are generally considered to have the greatest financial challenges with respect to housing affordability.

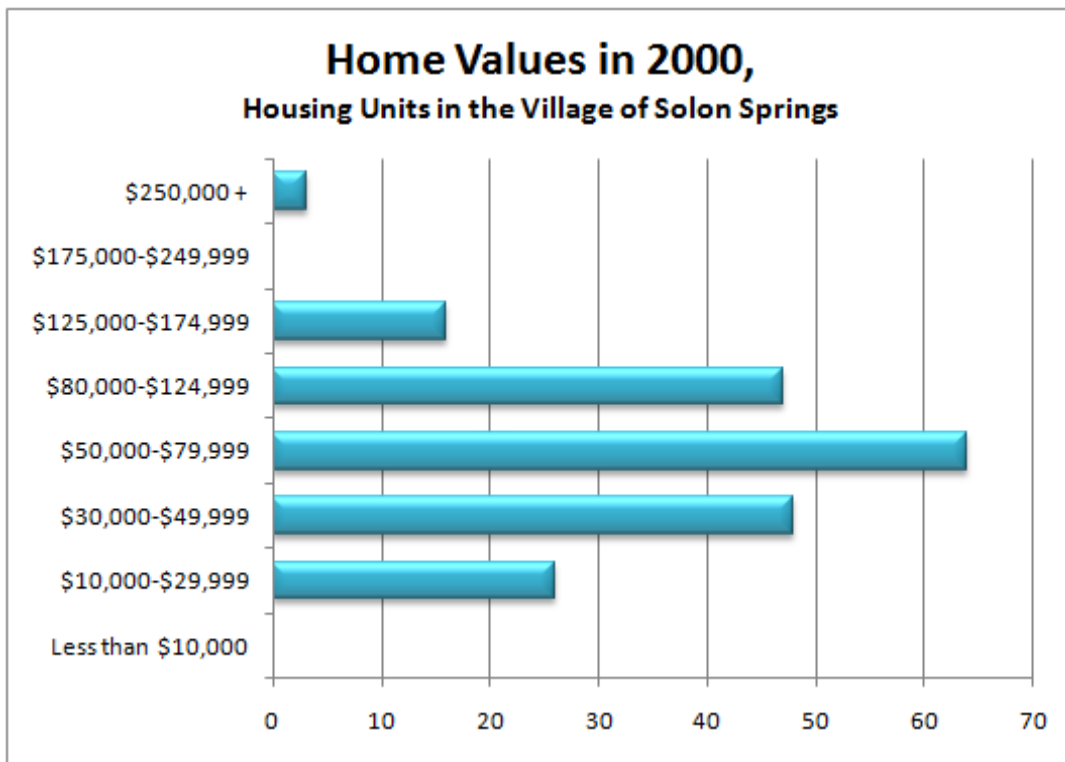
Table 2.4: Estimated Housing Affordability Based on Percent Median Household Income

Municipal Unit	MHI	Extremely Low Income		Very Low Income		Low Income		Moderate Income	
		30 % MHI	Max Cost at 30 % MHI	50% MHI	Max Cost at 50 % MHI	80% MHI	Max Cost at 80 % MHI	95 % MHI	Max Cost at 95 % MHI
Solon Springs	\$30,250	\$9,075	\$227	\$15,125	\$378	\$24,200	\$605	\$28,738	\$718
Douglas County	\$35,226	\$10,568	\$264	\$17,613	\$440	\$28,181	\$705	\$33,465	\$837

Source: NWRPC

Housing Value

Figure 2.8: Home Values in 2000, Village of Solon Springs



Source: US Census Bureau SF3 Data File

According to the Northwest Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service (MLS), on February 14th, 2008 there were 27 homes for sale in the Village and surrounding Town of Solon Springs. The average price asked was \$209,381 for all homes. The average price of non-waterfront homes (17) was \$162,992, while the average asking price of waterfront homes (10) was \$243,113. Table 2.8 above depicts the values of homes (surveyed)



in the Village of Solon Springs at time of the 2000 decennial Census.

Property Taxes

Property taxes can have a significant impact on housing affordability. Home ownership can be put out of reach of low-income families who otherwise may be able to afford a \$600 per month mortgage payment but cannot afford the additional \$100 per month in property taxes. Real estate taxes are based on assessed value of the property multiplied by the equalized ratio, and the mill rate (dollars in tax paid per thousand dollars of property value). **Table 2.5** shows the 2006 property tax rates for each Douglas County municipality along with the estimated³ tax burden for the median value home within each jurisdiction. In 2006, the Village of Solon Springs had the second highest tax burden of any Douglas County municipality. The estimated tax on the median value home was \$2,815, or \$235 a month.

Table 2.5: 2006 Property Tax Rates and Estimated Tax Burden for Median Value Homes

Municipal Unit	2006 Ratio	2006 Mill Rate	Est 2006 Tax Median Value Home	Est 2006 Tax (Median Sale Home)	2006 Rank
Towns					
Amnicon	0.6602	17.73	\$933	\$1,821	21
Bennett	0.9284	17.56	\$1,342	\$2,537	4
Brule	0.8420	16.46	\$1,016	\$2,157	12
Cloverland	0.5712	28.04	\$1,188	\$2,492	5
Dairyland	0.8462	12.50	\$482	\$1,646	22
Gordon	0.6075	26.85	\$1,135	\$2,538	3
Hawthorne	0.8435	14.07	\$839	\$1,847	19
Highland	0.7155	16.55	\$1,152	\$1,843	20
Lakeside	0.8000	15.44	\$975	\$1,922	17
Maple	0.8030	15.66	\$839	\$1,957	16
Oakland	0.9540	15.41	\$1,141	\$2,287	10
Parkland	1.1055	13.31	\$1,056	\$2,290	9
Solon Springs	0.6752	22.00	\$1,332	\$2,311	8
Summit	0.6939	18.75	\$1,007	\$2,024	14
Superior	0.7124	17.97	\$1,128	\$1,992	15
Wascott	0.5875	20.66	\$1,457	\$1,889	18
Villages					
Lake Nebagamon	0.7301	19.27	\$1,597	\$2,189	11
Oliver	1.0622	15.07	\$1,167	\$2,491	6
Poplar	0.9103	14.87	\$1,144	\$2,106	13
Solon Springs	0.9077	19.93	\$1,131	\$2,815	2
Superior village	0.6974	22.90	\$1,278	\$2,485	7
City					
Superior	0.9851	19.34	\$1,217	\$2,964	1

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

³ Before credits (i.e. lottery credit)



HOUSING DEMAND

Table 2.6: Permit History, Year Round Housing Units

YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS													
Municipal Unit	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Solon Springs	3	0	2	6	7	8	1	8	5	5	1	0	1

Source: Village of Solon Springs

Table 2.6 depicts the number of building permits issued for the construction of new year-round housing units in the village between 1995 and 2007. During this 13-year period, the Village of Solon Springs gained an average of 3.6 new housing units per year. **Table 2.7** below shows the number of permits issued by the village between 1995 and 2007 for construction of seasonal homes. While accounting for a large portion (26.2%) of existing housing stock, seasonal housing is clearly not a major component of the village housing demand profile, as evidenced by the fact that only 2 permits were issued during the past 13 years. In the surrounding Town of Solon Springs, a total of 63 permits were issued for seasonal homes between 1995 and 2007.

Table 2.7: Permit History, Seasonal Housing Units

SEASONAL HOUSING UNITS													
Municipal Unit	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Solon Springs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

Source: Village of Solon Springs



PROJECTED HOUSING DEMAND

Housing unit projections are tools used by governmental units to allocate lands to accommodate future growth and development. Projections also enable communities to prepare for future public service and facilities demands for sewer, water, fire and police protection, and other public services. It is important to note that these figures are only estimates for planning purposes and should be used only as general guidelines.

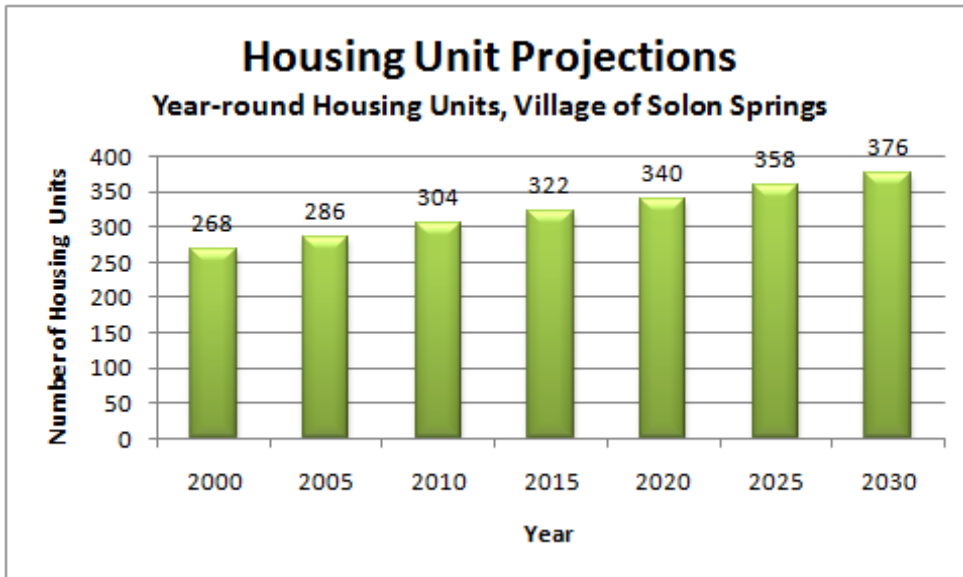
The housing unit projections were developed by applying average annual growth rates for both permanent and seasonal housing units derived from analysis of historical construction permit issuance data. Estimates of annual housing unit losses, derived from Department of Administration Housing Survey data, also were factored into the model. The housing unit projection model used in Douglas County is based on the following simple assumptions:

- 1) Annual housing growth rates will consistent with the **10-year** average (1998-2007)
- 2) Annual housing loss rates will remain consistent with the 5-year average

As is indicated in the population section of this plan, the Village of Solon Springs is expected to slightly increase in population through the year 2030. The number of year-round housing units is also expected to increase over this period.

Year-round Housing Units

Figure 2.9: Housing Unit Projections, Year-round Housing Units



Source: NWRPC



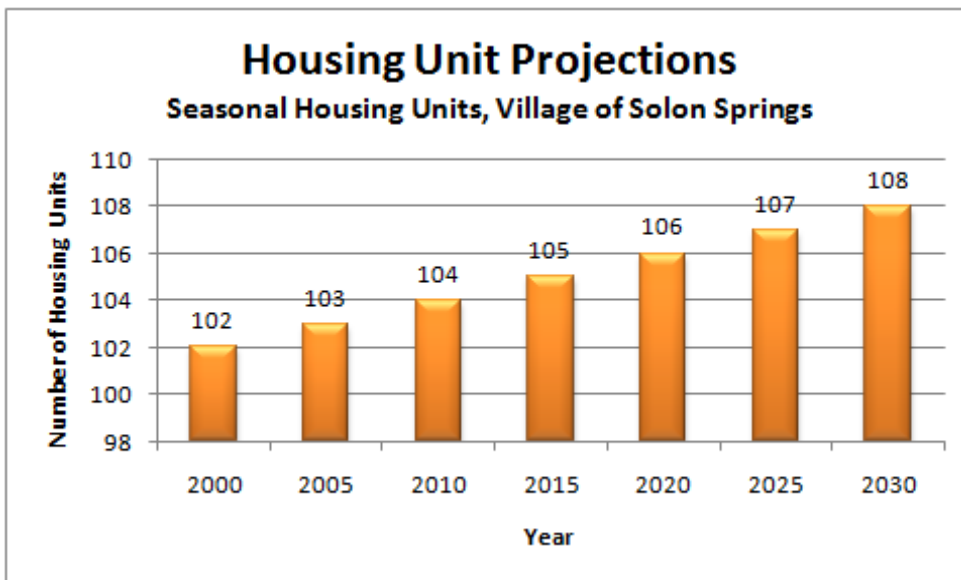
The central factors which could influence change in the village’s future housing structure may include demographic changes, land supply and the availability of economic opportunities.

In 2007, the estimated total number of housing units in the Village of Solon Springs is 294. Projections indicate a 27.9 percent increase in year-round housing units by 2030. The projected growth indicates an average of 3.8 new housing units per year. Year-round housing unit projections through 2030 for the Village of Solon Springs are shown in **Figure 2.9**.

Seasonal Housing Units

In 2000, the Village of Solon Springs had 102 seasonal housing units (26.2% of the total housing base). Future seasonal housing growth in the village is expected to be relatively slow, with about 1 new unit added every 5 years. Seasonal housing unit projections through 2030 for the Village of Solon Springs are shown in **Figure 2.10**.

Figure 2.10: Housing Unit Projections, Seasonal Housing Units



Source: NWRPC



HOUSING PROGRAMS

Superior Housing Authority

The Superior Housing Authority currently maintains 464 housing units in the City of Superior and administers the countywide Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Voucher program. This program enables county residents to secure a dwelling with fixed rent from private housing stock. In March of 2009, there were 153 HUD Section 8 Vouchers in use throughout Douglas County. To be eligible for the program, a household's gross annual income must be less than 50% of the county median income by household size. Voucher recipients pay approximately 30% of their adjusted monthly income towards rent and the Section 8 Voucher pays the remaining balance.

Catholic Charities, Inc.

Catholic Charities, Inc., an organization affiliated locally with the Diocese of Superior, offers housing counseling services to residents in 16 counties of northcentral and northwestern Wisconsin. Housing services provided by the Housing Counseling Program include education and pre-purchase counseling, credit repair counseling, emergency housing counseling and crisis management, post purchase counseling -- delinquency, default and foreclosure prevention, reverse mortgage counseling, tenant/landlord dispute mitigation, down payment assistance counseling and fair housing education and counseling.

WHEDA (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority)

The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority serves Wisconsin residents and communities by working with others to provide creative financing resources and information to stimulate and preserve affordable housing, small business, and agribusiness.

USDA-Rural Development

Rural Development administers federal funds to help secure loan options to assist low-moderate income families with home purchase and rehabilitation. Rural Development generally funds individuals who cannot obtain conventional financing.

CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Housing Rehabilitation

CDBG funds are available through HUD (Housing and Urban Development). These funds are available to public or private entities to help offset rehabilitation costs to homeowners, renters, and landlords. These funds are in the form of zero percent interest/deferred payment loans.



Northwest Affordable Housing Inc.

Northwest Affordable Housing Inc. is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization that is able to obtain funds that are not available to the general public for the purpose of promoting affordable and accessible housing for low and moderate-income persons.

HCRI (Housing Cost Reconstruction Initiative)

This organization provides federal funds for housing down payment and closing costs to low-moderate income families. HOME funds are available for the rehabilitation of these homes after the purchase.

Indianhead Community Action Agency

This agency provides weatherization (insulation, windows, doors, energy efficient furnaces etc...) or anything that helps homeowners with even the most modest or extensive home repairs