

SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING STUDY FOR THE EAU CLAIRE MARKET AREA

An Inventory & Analysis of Senior Rental Housing Needs
In the Eau Claire Market Area



April 2010

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In coordination with the

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2010 senior citizen housing study has been updated to include the most recent available data needed to assess the current and projected rental housing needs for seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area.

Data was acquired from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2000 U.S. Census, and from information provided in the “2005 Senior Citizens Housing Study for the Eau Claire Area”. Based on information obtained from these sources and from questionnaires and phone interviews with owners of new multi-family housing and managers for existing senior rental facilities in the area, it was determined that the Eau Claire Market Area has an adequate supply of rental housing. The 2010 study found that a total of 3,201 units are available to persons age 55 and over in the Eau Claire Market Area. This total includes conventional senior rental housing (21%), subsidized senior rental housing units (26%), WHEDA tax credit or revenue bond financed senior housing units (8%), specialized senior housing facilities (40%), and rental housing units “open to all ages”, in which 20% of units are occupied by seniors per the standard set by the City of Eau Claire Housing Division, (4%).

The majority of the inventoried senior housing units are located in the City of Eau Claire (60%), while 27% are located in the City of Chippewa Falls, 10% are located in the City of Altoona, and the remaining 3% are located in the Village’s of Fall Creek and Elk Mound.

In general, the supply of rental housing is adequate to meet the current demand of elderly rental households in the Eau Claire Market Area in 2010. The projected population for persons age 55 and older in the Eau Claire Market Area increased by about 5% in the 2005 and 1999 studies. Updated data for persons age 55 and over is not available at this time. Therefore, past population projections cannot be verified.

Additionally, the economy between 2005 and 2010 was unlike the economy between 1990 and 2005. An increase in unemployment (4.6% in 2005, 7.4% in 2009) and a decrease in residential construction may affect the population and housing growth in the Eau Claire Market Area. At this time, there may be a need to provide additional senior rental housing options in the near future.

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INTRODUCTION

To assess rental housing needs for elderly persons age 55 and older in the Eau Claire Market Area, the City of Eau Claire commissioned studies in 1999 and 2005 that appraised the supply of and demand for senior rental housing. In 1999 and 2005, the “Senior Citizen Housing Study for the Eau Claire Area” found that there was an adequate supply of rental housing to meet senior rental housing demand. Since the challenge of ensuring adequate senior housing options persists as the U.S. population continues to age, the City of Eau Claire Housing Division partnered with Cedar Corporation to reassess the elderly housing needs in 2010. These studies are part of the City of Eau Claire’s continuing effort to address senior citizens housing needs.

The purpose of the 2010 Senior Citizens Housing Study for the Eau Claire Market area is:

1. To update information provided in the 1999 & 2005 Senior Citizen Housing Studies;
2. To assess current and projected rental housing needs of the elderly population based on a comparison of the supply of rental housing to the demand for rental housing by persons age 55 and over.

The Eau Claire Market Area was defined as the City of Eau Claire and adjacent cities, villages, and towns within a 10-mile radius surrounding the city. The study area included the cities and villages of Eau Claire, Altoona, Chippewa Falls, Elk Mound, Fall Creek, and Lake Hallie as well as 19 Towns in Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties (see Map 1 “Eau Claire Senior Citizens Housing Study Market Area” for a depiction of the study area). Note that Towns in which only a small area of the town fell within the 10-mile radius were not included in the study area.

The current 10-mile radius study area replicates that of the 2005 study and is appropriate because demographic trends indicate that many elderly persons choose to “age-in-place.” This trend suggests that communities should be prepared to assess and address the needs of their elderly population.

The 2010 Senior Citizens Housing Study re-examines the senior rental housing inventory in the Eau Claire Market Area to identify the supply of rental housing available to seniors and reviews data on senior demographics in order to identify rental housing demand factors.

The 2010 study then compares supply and demand for senior rental housing to assess current and projected senior citizen housing needs in the market area.

SENIOR RENTAL HOUSING INVENTORY

Methodology

A senior rental housing inventory provides information on supply factors critical in assessing senior rental housing needs in the Eau Claire Market Area. The 2010 senior rental housing inventory augments data collected for the 1999 and 2005 studies. The study and updates were performed in two phases due to City of Eau Claire Housing Division priorities; the first phase targeted the City of Eau Claire and the second phase targeted the remaining Eau Claire Market Area. Both phases incorporate data on senior rental housing from the 1999 and 2005 studies.

Within both phases of the study, information was collected through a series of steps on rental housing available to seniors in the City of Eau Claire and the remaining Eau Claire Market Area:

- (1) A database was created based on building permits issued in the City of Eau Claire and the remaining Eau Claire Market Area for multi-family (four or more housing units) housing construction. This database was supplemented by information gathered from secondary sources, including directories and persons working with senior issues.
- (2) Questionnaires were mailed to contact person(s) identified in the database in order to acquire specific information on new rental housing available to seniors.
- (3) Follow-up contacts were made as needed.
- (4) Units “open to all ages” were included in the rental housing inventory if seniors reportedly occupied at least 20% of rental units, per the priorities of the City of Eau Claire’s Housing Division. (These units are distinguished from senior housing in the rental housing inventory.)

In addition to new data collection, steps were taken to update data collected for the 2010 study. Contacts for senior rental housing in the City of Eau Claire were phoned to update data on current occupancy rates, upgrades or expansions, and revised facility amenities and/or services.

In 2010, the City of Eau Claire’s Housing Division decided to continue to include senior rental housing and rental housing “open to all ages” since it constitutes an accessible housing option for seniors and the inclusion of these options serves to inform seniors of “the many choices available to them.” As a result, units “open to all ages” were included in the rental housing inventory if seniors reportedly occupied at least 20% of rental units, per the priorities of the City of Eau Claire’s Housing Division. (Note that data is self-reported.)

Specialized senior housing facilities were also included in the study’s senior rental housing inventory in order to ensure that data reflected the range of rental housing options available to seniors.

Data for the 2010 senior rental housing inventory has been compiled based on the efforts and parameters detailed above. The supply of rental housing available to seniors in the Eau

Claire Market Area has been divided into the following categories: (A) conventional senior rental housing, (B) subsidized senior rental housing units for low income seniors, (C) WHEDA tax credit or revenue bond financed senior housing units, (D) specialized senior housing facilities, and (E) rental housing units “open to all ages,”. Table 9 on “Senior Rental Units in the Eau Claire Market Area” displays the results of the 2005 senior rental housing inventory based on these categories and the 2010 senior rental housing in the City of Eau Claire.

Findings on Rental Housing for Seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area

The supply of rental housing available to seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area is a significant factor in assessing whether the current housing market offers an adequate number of units to meet current and projected demands. The current study finds that the Eau Claire Market Area continues to have a good supply of senior rental units. In addition, the presence of independent living senior housing complexes and other specialized senior facilities offers seniors a variety of rental housing options.

The 2010 senior rental housing inventory finds that a total of 3,201 units are available to persons age 55 and over in the Eau Claire Market Area. This total includes conventional senior rental housing, subsidized senior rental housing units, WHEDA tax credit or revenue bond financed senior housing units, specialized senior housing facilities, and rental housing units “open to all ages” (in which 20% of units are occupied by seniors per the standard set by the City of Eau Claire Housing Division). A total of 3,075 of these units are “senior only,” which means that 96% of all units reported in the inventory in Table 7 are “senior only.”

A total of 1,781 senior units are available for independently living seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area in conventional, subsidized, and tax credit or revenue financed apartment complexes. In addition, seniors occupy 126 units of rental housing “open to all ages” in the Eau Claire Market Area. Of these rental housing units available to independently living seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area, approximately 65% are located in the City of Eau Claire, 20% in Chippewa Falls, 13% in Altoona, and the remainder in the Villages of Fall Creek and Elk Mound.

A total of 1,294 units are available for the elderly in specialized senior facilities in the Eau Claire Market Area, including assisted living and nursing homes. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) licenses assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Assisted living homes include Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRF), Residential Care Apartment Complexes (RCAC), and Adult Family Homes and offer a range of services for seniors with different levels of need. This type of housing offers private or semi-private rooms that typically include meals, care, housekeeping, and laundry. Nursing homes are licensed, private homes that offer medical care with shelter for seniors with short or long term care needs. Approximately 49% of these units are located in the City of Eau Claire, 39% in Chippewa Falls, 7% in Altoona, and the 5% in the Village of Fall Creek.

The 2010 senior rental housing inventory finds that 3,201 units are available to persons 55 and older in the Eau Claire Market Area:

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- 675, or approximately 21%, of the units in the rental housing inventory are conventional senior rental housing. Conventional units are defined as independent living apartments with market rate rents. These conventional units offer 343 one-bedroom and 237 two-bedroom apartments. The remaining 95 units are either studio or three-bedroom apartments. 387 of the units are handicap accessible. 467 of the 675 conventional senior units are located in the City of Eau Claire, 95 in Chippewa Falls, and 113 in Altoona.
 - 839, or approximately 26%, of the units in the rental housing inventory are subsidized senior rental housing. These rentals often include below market rate units, which is made possible by federal subsidies. These subsidized units offer 829 one-bedroom, 5 two-bedroom, and 5 efficiency units. 436 of these units are handicap accessible. 530 of the 839 subsidized senior units are located in the City of Eau Claire, 222 in Chippewa Falls, 48 in Altoona, 32 in Fall Creek, and 7 in Elk Mound.
 - 267, or approximately 8%, of the units in the rental housing inventory are senior rental housing developed using WHEDA tax credits or revenue bonds as financing. These facilities set aside a percentage of their units for low- and moderate-income households, and although they are generally classified as “affordable,” rent levels for these units may be comparable to market rate rents. These WHEDA tax or revenue bond financed units offer 135 one bedroom, 111 two-bedroom and 21 efficiency or three-bedroom units. 147 of these units are handicap accessible. 155 of the 267 WHEDA tax credit or revenue bond financed senior housing units are located in the City of Eau Claire, 48 in Chippewa Falls, and 64 in Altoona.
 - 1,294, or approximately 40%, of the units in the rental housing inventory are in specialized senior housing facilities. 321 units, or approximately 25% of these specialized facilities in the Eau Claire Market Area were assisted living facilities. 973 units or approximately 75% of these facilities were in nursing homes. (The location of these facilities in the Eau Claire Market Area is described on the previous page.)
 - 126, or approximately 4%, of the units in the rental housing inventory are reportedly occupied by seniors in new rental housing “open to all ages.” 47 of these units are one-bedroom, 53 are two-bedroom units, and 26 are efficiency or three-bedroom units. 43 of these units are handicap accessible. Reported units were all located in the City of Eau Claire.

Occupancy rates within units identified in the 2005 senior rental housing inventory suggest that a tighter rental market exists in senior rental units for independent seniors, while the market is not as limited in rental units for seniors with assisted living needs. 76% of “senior only,” independent rental housing units, have occupancy rates of 95% or above, 13% have occupancy rates between 90% and 94%; and 11% have occupancy rates below 90%. At the same time, only 33% of specialized senior rental facilities with assisted living features have occupancy rates of 95% or above, 13% have occupancy rates between 90% and 94%; and 54% have occupancy rates below 90%. 2010 occupancy rates for all senior housing in the City of Eau Claire have reflected high occupancy rates.

Though an inflexible rental market in senior rental units appears to exist for independent seniors, independent seniors may also choose to reside in non-senior specific rental housing.

It is recognized that area seniors reside in rental housing “open to all ages” throughout the Eau Claire Market Area as well as in units reported in the 2010 senior rental housing inventory. An unknown number of single family rentals, duplexes, and apartment rental housing units are occupied by seniors but not designated as “senior only.” Since the 2010 rental housing inventory only captured self-reported data for new multi-family units since January 1, 2005, it may not accurately reflect senior occupancy in the private housing market.

SENIOR DEMOGRAPHICS

In order to understand the housing market for seniors (age 55 and over) it is important to assess both supply and demand factors. Demographic information provides an indicator of current and projected rental housing demands of seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area.

The best available data is from the 2000 U.S. Census. When possible, Census data is supplemented by more recent estimates and projections. The 2009 Eau Claire Market Area included jurisdictions when the 10-mile market area boundary cut through a significant area of a city, village, or town; and in these cases, data was collected for the entire jurisdiction (See Map 1). The most recent data for the Eau Claire Market Area will not be available until 2012, when statistics from the 2010 U.S. Census are available.

Table 1 - Population Trends					
Eau Claire Market Area 1980- 2009					
	1980	1990	2000	2005	2009
Eau Claire County:					
Eau Claire (C)	51,509	56,930	61,704	64,638	65,950
Altoona (C)	4,393	5,889	6,698	7,056	6,831
Fall Creek (V)	1,148	1,034	1,236	1,296	1,328
Brunswick (T)	1,411	1,506	1,598	1,644	1,672
Clear Creek (T)	798	674	712	726	779
Dramment (T)	725	767	800	831	824
Lincoln (T)	1,012	1,002	1,080	1,127	1,156
Pleasant Valley (T)	1,908	2,076	2,681	2,901	3,109
Seymour (T)	2,824	2,710	2,978	3,096	3,209
Union (T)	2,689	2,446	2,402	2,582	2,586
Washington (T)	6,489	6,273	6,995	7,395	7,329
Chippewa County:					
Chippewa Falls (C)	12,270	12,727	12,925	12,935	13,470
Lake Hallie (V)*	0*	0*	0*	4,558	6,463
Anson (T)	1,590	1,634	1,881	1,958	2,134
Eagle Point (T)	2,750	2,542	3,049	3,236	3,154
Hallie (T)	4,275	4,457	4,703	323	161
Howard (T)	660	615	648	662	712
Lafayette (T)	4,181	4,458	5,199	5,538	5,983
Tilden (T)	1,088	1,089	1,185	1,217	1,368
Wheaton (T)	2,328	2,279	2,366	2,435	2,632
Dunn County:					
Elk Mound (V)	737	797	785	815	811
Colfax (T)	660	685	909	993	1,075
Elk Mound (T)	668	772	121	1,254	1,407
Rock Creek (T)	668	673	793	831	861
Spring Brook (T)	1,293	1,261	1,320	1,392	1,540
TOTAL Market Area	108,074	115,296	124,768	131,439	136,544

Source: 1990 - 2000 U.S. Census. 2005 and 2009 Population Estimates, Wisconsin Department of Administration.

* October 12, 2002, 14.22 square miles of the Town of Hallie incorporated as the Village of Lake Hallie.

Table 1 reveals that the population in the Eau Claire Market Area has grown steadily over the past twenty-nine years. The total market area population increased by approximately 7% between 1980 and 1990 and 9% between 1990 and 2000 according to the U.S. Census. Based on Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) estimates and projections, the total market area population increased by approximately 9.4% between 2000 and 2009. (See Table 1)

In order to understand the future senior demographics in the Eau Claire Market Area, it is important to look at the age breakdown of the general population (see Table 2).

Table 2 - Age Breakdown						
Eau Claire Market Area 1980- 2000						
	1980	1990	% Change '80 - '90	1990	2000	% Change '90 - '00
0 - 19 years old	36,737	34,899	-5.0%	34,899	35,792	2.6%
20 - 24 years old	13,154	12,117	-7.9%	12,117	12,963	7.0%
25 - 44 years old	28,470	35,461	24.6%	35,461	34,682	-2.2%
45 - 54 years old	9,335	10,421	11.6%	10,421	17,043	63.5%
55 - 64 years old	9,214	8,837	-4.1%	8,837	9,657	9.3%
65 years and over	11,771	14,212	20.7%	14,212	15,631	10.0%
TOTAL	108,681	115,947	6.7%	115,947	125,768	8.5%

Source: 1990 & 2000 U.S. Census

In 2000, the Eau Claire Market Area had 25,288 residents age 55 and over. This means that approximately 20% of the population, or 1 in 5 persons, could be classified as seniors in 2000. In 1980, about 19% of people were age 55 and over, and 20% of people were age 55 and older in 1990 in the Eau Claire Market Area. Consequently, the senior population has constituted approximately one-fifth of the total market area population over the last two decades. This indicates that the elderly population has remained a constant proportion of the total market area population over this time period.

However, there has been variation within elderly age cohorts. The number of persons between ages 55 to 64 has fluctuated from 9,214 in 1980 to a low of 8,837 in 1990 to a high of 9,657 in 2000. At the same time, the number of persons age 65 and over has grown consistently, increasing by 2,441 persons between 1980 and 1990 and by 1,419 persons between 1990 and 2000. The rate of growth in those 65 and over had been faster than the population as a whole over the last two decades. Persons age 65 and older increased 20.7% between 1980 and 1990 and the overall population increased only 6.7%, while persons age 65 and older increased 10% between 1990 and 2000 and the overall population increased 8.5%.

Wisconsin Department of Administration Population projections suggest that the Eau Claire Market Area population will continue to increase. The market area is projected to increase in population by 4% between 2005 and 2010, then increase again by 3% between 2010 and 2015. A comparison of Table 2 and Table 3 reveals that while persons age 55 and older comprised 20% of the total market area population in 1980, 1990, and 2000, seniors are anticipated to comprise 25% of the total market area population by 2010. If the population projections are accurate, it is a shift from previous trends. Projections for the upcoming

decade suggest that a greater percentage of the market area's population will be seniors than in the recent past.

Table 3 - Population Projections			
Eau Claire Market Area 2005 - 2015			
	2005	2010	2015
0 - 19 years old	36,513	36,774	37,270
20 - 24 years old	14,241	14,909	14,509
25 - 44 years old	33,257	32,466	33,025
45 - 54 years old	18,262	18,912	17,981
55 - 64 years old	13,063	16,264	17,666
65 years and over	16,494	17,874	21,114
TOTAL	131,830	137,199	141,565

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

The number of seniors in the market area is projected to increase by 4,581 persons between 2005 and 2010, and then increase by an additional 4,642 persons between 2010 and 2015. Table 3 also indicates that the proportion of seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area between 2005 and 2015 will continue to grow. The percentage of seniors is projected to increase from 22% in 2005 (29,557 persons) to 25% in 2010 (34,138 persons) to 27% in 2015 (38,780 persons). Within the elderly age cohorts, the 55-64 age group is projected to grow at a faster rate than the 65 and older age cohort between 2005 and 2010, then the 65 and over age group is projected to grow at a faster rate between 2010 and 2015. This projected trend suggests that there will be greater demand for senior rental housing in the Eau Claire Market Area in the future.

Although more recent data is not available for the towns and village's within the Eau Claire Market area, population projections for the City of Eau Claire are estimated into 2030 and suggest that the City's population will continue to grow at a modest rate. Table 4 reflects the population change in the City of Eau Claire from 1960 to 2000.

Table 4 - City of Eau Claire Population Growth		
Year	Population	% Change
1960	37,967	
1970	44,619	17.5%
1980	51,509	15.4%
1990	56,856	10.4%
2000	61,704	8.5%
2009*	65,950	6.9%
2020	74,474	12.9%
2030	80,970	8.7%

Source: U.S. Census of Population; Wisconsin Dept. of Administration *2009 DOA Estimated Population

In addition to population data, U.S. Census data on housing tenure indicates senior demand for rental housing (see Table 5).

Table 5 - Housing Tenure for Households 55 and Over				
Eau Claire Market Area 2000				
	Owner	% Total of Owners in Municipality	Renter	% Total of Renters in Municipality
Eau Claire County:				
Eau Claire (C)	5,156	73.6%	1,854	26.4%
Altoona (C)	682	64.8%	370	35.2%
Fall Creek (V)	151	73.3%	55	26.7%
Brunswick (T)	210	97.2%	6	2.8%
Clear Creek (T)	84	92.3%	7	7.7%
Dramment (T)	95	90.5%	10	9.5%
Lincoln (T)	106	95.5%	5	4.5%
Pleasant Valley (T)	270	96.8%	9	3.2%
Seymour (T)	372	96.9%	12	3.1%
Union (T)	288	93.5%	20	6.5%
Washington (T)	778	86.7%	119	13.3%
Chippewa County:				
Chippewa Falls (C)	1,486	67.3%	723	32.7%
Anson (T)	217	90.4%	23	9.6%
Eagle Point (T)	337	93.6%	23	6.4%
Hallie (T)	459	92.0%	40	8.0%
Howard (T)	65	92.9%	5	7.1%
Lafayette (T)	616	93.2%	45	6.8%
Tilden (T)	121	91.7%	11	8.3%
Wheaton (T)	269	94.7%	15	5.3%
Dunn County:				
Elk Mound (V)	269	96.4%	10	3.6%
Colfax (T)	76	96.2%	3	3.8%
Elk Mound (T)	85	90.4%	9	9.6%
Rock Creek (T)	79	90.8%	8	9.2%
Spring Brook (T)	124	88.6%	16	11.4%
TOTAL Market Area	12,395	78.5%	3,398	21.5%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 5 shows that in 2000, 22% of elderly (age 55 +) households in the Eau Claire Market Area rented their place of residence. 78% were homeowners. Statistics on elderly housing tenure were the same in 1990. High homeownership rates among the elderly suggest that senior demographics alone do not accurately reflect senior demand for rental housing in the Eau Claire Market Area. The highest percent of the rental population is located in the Cities of Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls.

Senior household income is another factor impacting senior demand for rental housing (see Table 6).

Table 6 - Household Income in 1999 for Households 55 Years and Over						
Eau Claire Market Area						
	\$0 - \$9,999	\$10,000 - \$14,999	\$15,000 - \$24,999	\$25,000 - \$34,999	\$34,000 - \$49,999	\$50,000 or More
Eau Claire County:						
Eau Claire (C)	807	752	1368	1151	1,232	1,715
Altoona (C)	106	119	229	191	145	275
Fall Creek (V)	40	24	35	31	31	35
Brunswick (T)	21	19	57	36	47	48
Clear Creek (T)	11	7	12	21	16	20
Dramment (T)	3	7	19	31	18	26
Lincoln (T)	8	9	20	15	22	49
Pleasant Valley (T)	18	13	47	54	35	131
Seymour (T)	14	31	79	71	76	133
Union (T)	29	4	35	31	68	125
Washington (T)	33	61	121	105	158	417
Chippewa County:						
Chippewa Falls (C)	308	317	384	395	282	501
Anson (T)	21	12	50	42	46	84
Eagle Point (T)	17	8	58	56	69	187
Hallie (T)	52	5	81	96	87	156
Howard (T)	9	6	11	13	9	21
Lafayette (T)	27	8	88	124	148	251
Tilden (T)	13	16	14	27	22	56
Wheaton (T)	21	23	37	49	44	89
Dunn County:						
Elk Mound (V)	1	12	16	7	14	17
Colfax (T)	3	5	22	8	12	21
Elk Mound (T)	6	12	23	18	8	30
Rock Creek (T)	6	7	16	11	9	29
Spring Brook (T)	6	6	37	35	31	24
TOTAL Market Area	1,580	1,483	2,859	2,618	2,629	4,440

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 6 provides U.S. Census information on household income in towns, villages, and cities in the Eau Claire Market Area. The number of senior households considered to be low-to-moderate-income is another factor impacting senior demand for rental housing. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a household can be considered low- or moderate-income (LMI) if their annual household income is less than 80% of the county median income and HUD defines affordable housing as housing (for rent or purchase) for which the occupant is paying no more than 30% of their household income for gross housing costs.

As a gauge for the Eau Claire Market Area, the median household income in Eau Claire County was \$39,219 in 2000. Consequently, a household earning \$31,375 or less per year could be considered LMI. Approximately 49.6% of market area households age 55 and over fall into this category. The large percentage of households age 55 and over considered LMI may be the result of a fixed or declining household income.

Table 7 - Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income for Households 55 & Over						
Eau Claire Market Area 2000						
	Less than 20%	20% - 24%	25% - 29%	30% - 34%	35% or More	Not Computed
Eau Claire County:						
Eau Claire (C)	531	199	221	193	553	117
Altoona (C)	62	41	50	36	161	29
Fall Creek (V)	16	4	4	4	20	2
Brunswick (T)	4	0	0	0	0	0
Clear Creek (T)	0	0	0	0	0	3
Dramment (T)	2	0	0	0	0	2
Lincoln (T)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pleasant Valley (T)	0	0	0	0	0	4
Seymour (T)	0	0	0	0	0	19
Union (T)	8	0	0	4	4	4
Washington (T)	36	7	16	6	60	22
Chippewa County:						
Chippewa Falls (C)	106	106	120	96	215	36
Anson (T)	6	0	0	0	0	2
Eagle Point (T)	2	0	0	0	4	4
Hallie (T)	23	0	11	15	0	0
Howard (T)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lafayette (T)	9	0	3	0	10	0
Tilden (T)	2	2	0	0	3	0
Wheaton (T)	0	0	0	4	5	0
Dunn County:						
Elk Mound (V)	2	2	5	4	0	0
Colfax (T)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elk Mound (T)	2	0	0	2	0	4
Rock Creek (T)	2	4	0	0	2	0
Spring Brook (T)	0	0	0	0	2	8
TOTAL Market Area	813	365	430	364	1,039	256

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Though household income suggests what a household could afford in terms of housing costs, gross rent as a percentage of household income is a clearer indicator of the extent to which rental housing is affordable to renter populations. Table 7 depicts gross rent as a percentage of household income for seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area. Affordable rental housing is usually defined as rent and utility costs that do not exceed 30% of the household's gross income (e.g. income before taxes). According to the computed data in the table above, 47% of senior rental households spend 30% or more of their income on housing.

In the City of Eau Claire, the 2006/2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate data reveals that 28.9% of Eau Claire owner-occupied households have a monthly housing cost of more than 30% of their household income, which has risen from 15.1% in 2000. The

number of renter-occupied households in Eau Claire with a monthly housing cost of more than 30% of their household income also grew from 27.6% in 2000 to 50.7% in 2006/2008 (see Table 8).

Table 8 – City of Eau Claire Monthly Housing Cost as a Percentage of Household Income by Housing Units

Number of Housing Units in Eau Claire based on Cost as a % of Household Income						
Year	Less than 20.0 %	20.0 – 24.9%	25.0 – 29.9%	30.0 – 34.9%	35% or More	Total Housing Units
2000						
Owner Costs	7,643	1,747	1,140	568	1,300	12,398
Renter Costs	3,761	1,415	1,164	814	2,730	9,884
2006/2008						
Owner Costs	3,881	1,916	1,570	742	2,259	10,368
Renter Costs	2,646	1,229	1,218	852	4,389	10,334

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2006/2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate

ANALYSIS

Adequacy of the Supply of Rental Housing Available to Seniors in the Study Area to Meet Current Needs:

In general, the current supply of rental housing available to seniors appears adequate to meet demand by elderly households in 2010, just as the supply appeared adequate to meet demands in the 1999 and 2005 senior housing study.

Extrapolating from 2000 Census data and projected population figures prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2010 estimates for the Eau Claire Market Area project 34,138 persons age 55 and over, or approximately 21,033 senior households, based on the 2005 estimate of 1.6 persons per household. About 22% of these senior households, or 4,627, are renters. 2015 estimates for the Eau Claire Market Areas project 38,780 persons age 55 and over, or approximately 24,238 senior households, based on the 2005 estimate of 1.6 persons per household. It can be estimated that 22%, or about 5,300 of these senior households will be renters. Based on 2000 U.S. Census data that shows 22% of persons 55 and over are renters.

This housing study has found that there are 3,201 rental housing units in the market area available to seniors. In comparison, the 2005 study found that there were 4,006 elderly renter households for approximately 3,232 senior rental units (including assisted living and nursing homes). There was a decrease in the number of units available to seniors because fewer units in the rental housing inventory were occupied by seniors “open to all ages.” The proportion of senior rental housing units to elderly renter households was approximately 80% in the 1999 and 2005 studies, but only 70% in the 2010 study.

While the 1999 Senior Citizen Housing Study for the Eau Claire Area estimated that there would be a need for 267 new senior rentals by 2005, the 2005 rental housing inventory indicates that 526 senior rental housing units have been added to the market area since 1999. There have been no senior rental housing units added to the market area since 2005. It is estimated that 2,100 new senior rental housing units will be needed by 2015.

It is also recognized that in 2005 and 2010, renter households 55 and over reside in single family rentals, duplexes, and apartment complexes that are not specifically designated for seniors and were not reported in the rental housing inventory. In fact, the City of Eau Claire Fair Housing ordinance Chapter 9.1 6.030 prohibits landlords from discriminating against seniors in renting, leasing, and subleasing because “age” is one of many protected classes. Consequently, all rental housing in the City of Eau Claire is technically available to seniors. Furthermore, the current rental housing market in the City of Eau Claire appears to have a surplus of units compared to demand as indicated by various incentives that are being offered by rental properties to attract tenants.

Though data on the number of seniors living in rental housing “open to all ages” in the Eau Claire Market Area is unavailable, statewide data is available from the 2002 “Profiles of Older Wisconsin Residents.” This 2002 study finds that “of those (elderly 65 and older living) in multiple-unit dwellings, 39 percent were in buildings specifically for older people.”

This 2002 study suggests that the proportion of senior rental housing compared to the number of elderly renter households is higher in the Eau Claire Market Area than what exists statewide.

This 2005 study of the Eau Claire Market Area also identified specialized senior housing facilities that offer assisted living services. Approximately 1,294 units were identified in assisted living or nursing homes. In addition, nine of the conventional senior rental housing complexes (listed in Table 9) also reported offering assisted living services, suggesting that such services are available in approximately 419 additional senior rental units.

A 2002 study by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services Bureau of Aging and Long Term Care Resources found that 10% of persons 65 and older report a limited ability to care for themselves. This 2002 study suggests that up to 1,649 persons, or 10% of those age 65 and older in the Eau Claire Market Area in 2005, may be in need of some level of care. Based on DHFS study assessments, the 1,708 units available at nursing homes, community based residential facilities, assisted living homes, and conventional senior rental complexes with assisted living services is an adequate amount for the Eau Claire Market Area's 65 and older population.

In addition to senior rental housing with and without assisted living features and private market rental housing "open to all ages," housing vouchers are also available to the elderly with very low-incomes in the Eau Claire Market Area who might otherwise have difficulty accessing affordable housing. The City of Eau Claire Housing Authority provided subsidized rental housing assistance to elderly households in the City of Eau Claire through Section 8 Voucher Program.

Finally, it should be recognized that a substantial proportion of the elderly in the Eau Claire Market Area are homeowners, not renters and there are services that facilitate the ability of the elderly to "age-in-place." A variety of assistance and services are available to seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area through the Eau Claire County Department on Aging & Resource Center, the Dunn County Office on Aging, and the Chippewa County Department on Aging. County programs offer services that help seniors stay in their homes, including transportation, home care, meal delivery programs, and financial assistance. In fact, the Chippewa County Department of Human Services has a Community Options Program that serves as a national model for providing seniors with services to allow them to "age-in-place," including supports such as housekeeping, care management, and home modifications.

Assessment of Gains & Losses in Rental Housing Available to Seniors Since 1999

An analysis of the adequacy in the supply of rental housing available to seniors should take into account the number of rental housing units added to the senior rental housing inventory as well as the number of rental units no longer available to seniors since the 1999 study. Since the 1999 study was performed, 526 more senior rental housing units have been identified, while the number of senior rental units that are no longer available constitute few by comparison. Only two senior rental housing complexes have been "lost" since 1999 and some nursing homes reported a slight change in the total number of beds at their facilities.

The 2010 rental housing inventory identified no new senior rental housing complexes built between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2009.

The senior rental housing complexes reported in 1999 but not included in the 2005 or 2010 studies are Luther Court Apartments and Buffington Home. The Luther Court Apartments at 302 Chestnut Street in the City of Eau Claire had offered 21 units to senior citizens; however, the apartments were converted to meet the needs of the nearby hospital, the Luther Midelfort Mayo Health System. The City of Eau Claire's Housing Division offered relocation assistance to the twenty-one senior occupants of the Luther Court Apartments by providing them with a choice between accessing housing vouchers or relocating to available units at the Park Tower Apartments. Buffington Home Assisted Living in the City of Eau Claire was the other senior rental housing complex reported in the 1999 study but not in the 2005 study. Secondary sources indicated that it is no longer in operation as a state licensed assisted living facility. Attempts were made to contact primary sources; however, current contact information was not available. Buffington Home had offered 7 to 9 units of assisted living senior units in the City of Eau Claire.

Though not technically 'lost,' it should be noted that three rental housing complexes "open to all ages" were identified in the 1999 study, but were not included in the 2005 or 2010 studies. The Westwinds II Apartments, located at 2214 Peters Drive in the City of Eau Claire, reported that seniors resided in 12 of 86 total rental units; thus, the complex did not meet the 20% threshold. In 1999, this rental housing represented 12 senior housing units in the City of Eau Claire. In addition, owners or managers St. Joseph's Apartments and Shoe Factory Apartments did not provide updated information on the numbers of seniors residing in these complexes. Since current data could not be obtained, the rental housing units were not included in this study. St. Joseph's Apartments had represented 23 senior units in the City of Chippewa Falls. Shoe Factory Apartments had represented 15 senior units in the City of Chippewa Falls. In 2010, Oxbow Villas, located at 218010th Avenue in the City of Eau Claire, reported that only one senior resided in the 56 unit housing complex and did not meet the 20% threshold.

There was no rental housing "open to all ages" added between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2009 in the 2010 rental housing inventory.

Additional Indicators of the Adequacy of the Supply of Senior Rental Housing

Occupancy rates are considered an indicator of an area's need for additional housing. Both WHEDA and Rural Development consider this to be a major consideration when they review loan applications. The typical occupancy rates of rental housing in the area should be examined as a baseline to understand occupancy rates for senior rental housing. In 2000, the vacancy rates for rental housing in Eau Claire County were 3.5%, indicating a 96.5% occupancy rate almost identical to the 1999 baseline occupancy rate of 96.3%.

Occupancy rates for senior rental housing in the Eau Claire Market Area differ for independent living seniors compared to seniors with special needs. A tighter rental market exists in senior rental units for the independent elderly, while the market is not as tight in rental units for seniors with assisted living needs. 73% of "senior only," independent rental housing units, have occupancy rates of 95% or above, 16% have occupancy rates between

90% and 94%; and 11% have occupancy rates below 90%. At the same time, only 33% of specialized senior rental facilities with assisted living features have occupancy rates of 95% or above, 21% have occupancy rates between 90% and 94%; and 46% have occupancy rates below 90%.

Though a tighter rental market in senior rental units appears to exist for independent seniors, it should again be noted that persons 55 and over without specialized needs may opt to live in non-senior specific rental housing.

Potential Issues with the Supply of Rental Housing Available to Seniors

Though rental housing available to seniors in the Eau Claire Market Area appears to be adequate to meet the current demand in general, the availability of affordable rental units for elderly households unable to access subsidized units or housing vouchers may be an area where additional senior rental housing is needed.

The 2000 Census indicates that almost half of all elderly households in the Eau Claire Market Area have annual incomes that are less than 80% of the county median income. In other words, approximately half of elderly households could be considered low- or moderate-income' households. While very low-income elderly households may qualify for assistance through subsidized housing or a Section 8 Rental Housing Voucher Program, low- and moderate-income households often cannot afford market rate rents, but do not have institutional supports.

Furthermore, data from 2000 on income spent on housing found that 47% of senior rental households spend 30% or more of their income on housing, which means that nearly half of elderly households renting in the Eau Claire Market Area experience high housing costs. Additionally, the cost of rent in many facilities has increased since the 2005 study. The average increase in rent between 2005 and 2010, for those rental units within the City of Eau Claire was \$285.00.

In addition to affordability, dispersion of senior housing may be an issue in the Eau Claire Market Area. Map 2 depicts the distribution of seniors within the Eau Claire Market Area. The map depicts a larger concentration of seniors around the City of Chippewa Falls and the towns of Eagle Point, Anson, and Lafayette in Chippewa County (see Map 2). This distribution of seniors suggests that there may be a need for a greater supply of senior rental housing options in the area around the City of Chippewa Falls.

Projected Needs in the Supply of Rental Housing Available to Seniors in the Study Area:

According to weighted population projections for the Eau Claire Market Area by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, there are 34,138 seniors estimated in the Eau Claire Market Area in 2010, representing 4,581 more elderly persons than in 2005. It is also estimated that elderly persons comprise of one-quarter of the area's total population in 2010. Extrapolating from the 2000 Census, 4,581 elderly persons will comprise approximately 2,840 more senior households in 2010 than 2005. If 22% of elderly households are renters, there will be an additional 625 elderly renter households by 2010 and an addition 638 elderly

renter households by 2015. Assuming that the percentage of elderly renter households residing in senior rental housing remains at the 2005 level of 80%, seniors will require approximately 500 more rental units by 2010.

The 2010 rental housing inventory indicates that the current supply of senior rental housing is 21% conventional “senior only,” 26% subsidized “senior only,” 8% WHEDA tax credit or revenue bond “senior only,” 40% specialized senior housing facilities, and 4% rental housing “open to all ages.” These figures may be applied to estimate the types of new rental units needed for seniors in 2015. However, if basic characteristics of the elderly demographic remain unchanged, there will likely be greater numbers of low- to moderate-income elderly households and greater numbers of elderly households paying 30% or more in rent. This suggests that the ability of elderly rental households to access affordable housing, including affordable assisted living or nursing home facilities, may become a more critical issue in the Eau Claire Market Area in the future.

These numbers should be taken only as a general guide for future senior rental housing needs. Several factors limit the accuracy of projected need:

- First, population projections are subject to error. Other data assumptions, such as the calculation of persons per elderly household and the calculation of the percentage of elderly rental households are based on the 2000 Census, and may not be accurate. Consequently, future elderly rental housing needs may be lower or higher than projected.
- Second, senior trends are showing that persons 55 and over are remaining in their owner occupied houses longer. The trend of aging in place amongst persons age 55 and older may decrease the number of seniors needing rental units.
- Third, it is unclear to what extent the private rental housing market will be able to meet the demands of senior rental households in the future.
- Fourth, the condition of the economy between 2005 and 2010 affected the residential housing market. Fewer homes and/or residential housing complexes were built between 2005 and 2010 than in the past. It is unknown how long the economy will affect the housing market.

Regardless, the City of Eau Claire should continue to monitor trends to determine what role, if any, the city should take in ensuring that the increasing senior population has adequate housing options.