

Chapter 2:

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter lays out the foundation for the other chapters in the Washburn Comprehensive Plan. It offers background information about the residents of Washburn, describes overarching issues and opportunities facing the City, and portrays a vision for Washburn's future.

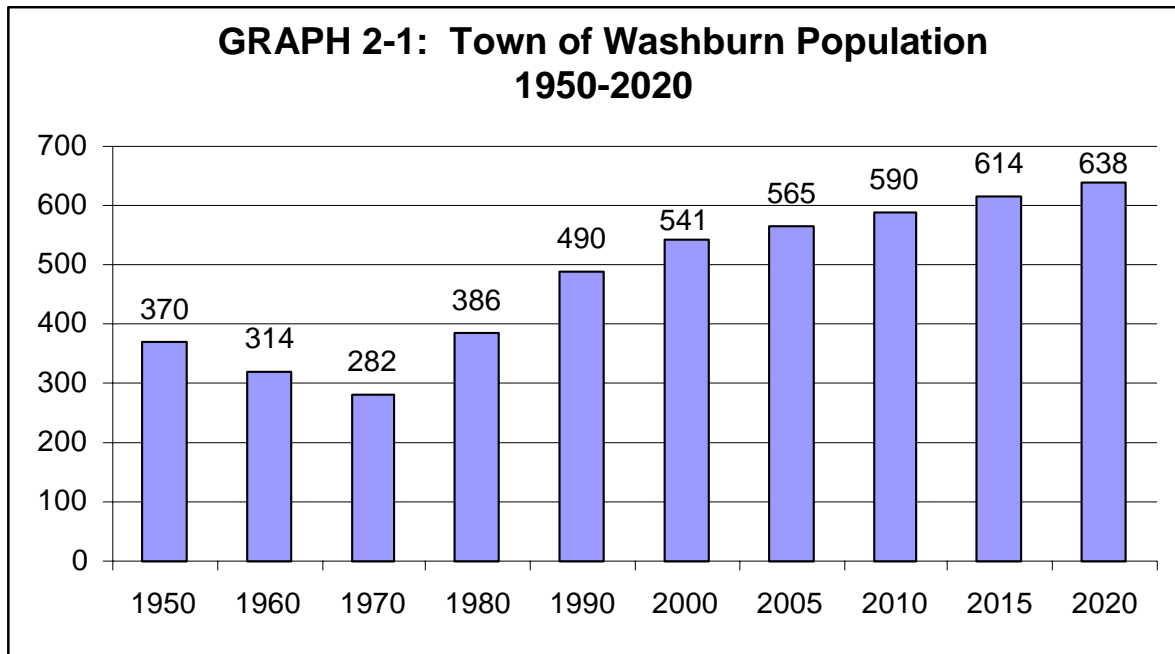
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

POPULATION HISTORY AND CHANGE

Historically, the City of Washburn has served as the primary cultural and resource hub, commercial and industrial core, and the main employment and urban residential center for the surrounding populace of Bayfield County and the Bayfield Peninsula. The Town of Washburn, meanwhile, has served as an alternative to this more urbanized living and development, and provides wonderful opportunities for open space, and a rural or agricultural lifestyle. The Bayfield Peninsula regional area has experienced significant fluctuations in population since the early 1900's. During World War I, the area's population soared due to the operations of the DuPont plant in nearby Barksdale, which manufactured explosives for the U.S. military. During that period, more than 9,000 people lived in the City of Washburn. Following the war, employment at the DuPont plant leveled off, and logging, agricultural, and quarrying operations in the area also declined sharply. World War II brought a slight upswing in employment and population to the regional area once again, but population levels remained well below those that existed during World War I.

It is unknown what the population of the Town was at this same time, but it is likely that the population probably fluctuated with the same pattern just described for the City in keeping with changes in employment opportunities.

According to U.S. Census data, the Town in 1950 had approximately 370 residents. The next two census counts showed drops of about 18% and 11%, respectively, with a population of 282 recorded in 1970. (refer to Graph 2-1 below).



Source: 2000 Census and ePodunk /Graph created by Amber Collins

Since then, however, the population has been steadily increasing to what in 2005 was estimated to be 565 residents according to the Wisconsin Demographic Service. This represents a doubling of the 1970 population, and while the rate of increase has fluctuated among decades, this amounts to an average annual rate of increase of about 2%. Table 2-A below summarizes the 1970-2000 census estimates for the Town of Washburn, the neighboring Towns of Barksdale and Bayview, and for Bayfield County, the City of Washburn and the State of Wisconsin.

TABLE 2-A: POPULATION CHANGE 1970-2000								
Place	1970 Pop.	Change 1960-70	1980 Pop.	Change 1970-80	1990 Pop.	Change 1980-90	2000 Pop.	Change 1990-00
Town of Washburn	282	-11.3%	386	36.8%	490	26.9%	541	10.4%
Town of Barksdale	574	-1.8%	762	32.8%	756	-0.8%	801	6.0%
Town of Bayview	297	0.3%	343	15.4%	402	17.2%	491	22.1%
Bayfield County	11,683	-1.9%	13,822	18.3%	14,008	1.3%	15,013	7.2%
City of Washburn	1,957	3.2%	2,080	6.3%	2,285	9.9%	2,280	-0.35%
State of Wisconsin	4,413,300	11.7%	4,705,642	6.6%	4,891,769	4.0%	5,363,690	9.6%

Source: Wisconsin Demographic Service Center, U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are effective planning tools when used correctly. However, their accuracy is subject to several factors including assumptions for birth rates, death rates, migration, and economic conditions. Assumptions are based on past trends and the best information available at the time. However, assumptions do not always remain true, and unexpected changes can occur. For instance, existing employment facilities and industries may close or choose to expand. In a small Town such as Washburn, these changes can have a significant impact on the population. Therefore, the Town of Washburn should use the population projections presented in this Comprehensive Plan as a general guide and not as an absolute certainty. Moreover, the Town should periodically review and update the population projections based on new conditions.

Though Washburn population growth has been steady for the past 46 years, we are of the opinion that Washburn will soon experience a population boom. Due to its rural character and 'small-town charm', retirees have always been drawn in. With the 'baby boomer' generation getting older, Washburn will become an even more attractive place of residence. Another indicator of an impending boom is that the surrounding northern counties are already beginning to experience an upsurge themselves. On average, Wisconsin counties increased 5 percent from 1990 to 2000, but many Northern counties grew by 10 to 20 percent. If one looks at it geographically, people are moving northward from the major metropolitan areas of Minneapolis/St. Paul and Green Bay headed toward Washburn and the rest of Bayfield County.

Wisconsin Demographic Service Center Population Projections

The Wisconsin Demographic Service Center projects that the Town of Washburn's population will gradually increase through the year 2025. This increase is generally consistent with the proposed increases by the State of Wisconsin and Bayfield County, and the surrounding towns of Barksdale and Bayview. In contrast, the City of Washburn is projected to experience a slight (and unexplained) decrease over the next 20 years. The projected growth in the Town and the surrounding towns likely relates to a desire of some people to live in a rural setting (as opposed to an urban setting) and to a perception of some people that it costs less to live in the surrounding towns than it costs to live in the City of Washburn. Although the Demographic Service Center also projects that the population of Bayfield County will gradually increase through the year 2025, the projected rate of growth for Bayfield County is roughly half of the projected rate of growth for the State of Wisconsin (see *Table 2-B: Population Estimates and Projections*).

TABLE 2-B: POPULATION ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS										
Place	2005 Pop.	Change 00-05	2010 Pop.	Change 05-10	2015 Pop.	Change 10-15	2020 Pop.	Change 15-20	2025 Pop.	Change 20-25
Town of Washburn	567	4.8%	592	4.4%	614	3.7%	631	2.8%	640	1.4%
Town of Barksdale	824	2.9%	845	2.5%	861	1.9%	871	1.2%	872	0.1%
Town of Bayview	525	6.9%	557	6.1%	586	5.2%	610	4.1%	627	2.8%
Bayfield County	15,432	2.8%	15,830	2.6%	16,129	1.9%	16,315	1.2%	16,327	0.1%
City of Washburn	2,281	0%	2,275	-0.3%	2,259	-0.7%	2,229	-1.3%	2,178	-2.3%
Wisconsin	5.56 mil.	3.7%	5.75 mil.	3.4%	5.93 mil.	3.1%	6.11 mil.	3.0%	6.28 mil.	2.7%

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

Town of Washburn's Population Goal

The Town can choose to respond to the projections from the Wisconsin Demographic Service Center in a number of positive ways. Based on the overall size of Town and potential land space available for these "potential" and additional residents, the Town can choose to accept that a future of slight increases in the Town's population is inevitable and must be planned for accordingly. And, it may be in the best interest of the future growth and plans of the Town to develop realistic goals, objectives, policies, and plans to help stabilize, maintain and attract even more residents to the Town. This Comprehensive Plan will help the current residents and leaders of the Town to set realistic goals to address the needs of the potential growing population of its community. The Town of Washburn believes that the high quality of rural life, the availability of outdoor recreation activities and the joy of being able to surround themselves in such a wonderful natural environment, will help retain existing residents and will attract new residents from elsewhere.

Between 2005 and 2025, the Demographic Service Center has projected that the population of the Town of Washburn will increase by 12.9%, while the State of Wisconsin will increase by 12.8%, Bayfield County will increase by 5.8%, the Town of Barksdale will increase by 5.8%, the Town of Bayview will increase by 19.4%. Furthermore, the Demographic Service Center has also projected that the overall average population of Towns in the State of Wisconsin will increase by a fairly considerable margin of 20.7% between 2005 and 2025. This average is tempered, however by the size of Towns [municipalities] between 500 – 999 people is projected at roughly 13.3% of growth, which fits the size of our Town of Washburn.

If Washburn were to actually achieve this 12.9 – 13.3% of projected growth, which equates to the projected (and additional) 75 – 100 residents, the Town believes they have enough space and resources to absorb this growth and provide suitable space for their housing. This Comprehensive Plan sets a goal for the City of Washburn to grow to a population of 650 in 2025 – which is keeping in line with the projected 13% increase for Towns of our size. There appears to be an adequate amount of land within the existing Town boundaries and the residential and rural zoned sectors of the Town, which exclude the rather large U.S. National Forest lands within the Town. The ultimate goal of the Town is to accommodate

this growth through a logical and phased plan. Consequently, if the Town of Washburn for whatever reason fails to meet its growth goal, it should not adversely affect the other goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan.

(Note: refer to Appendix – B regarding a “*Statement of Future Population Growth*” as prepared by Phil Freeman of the Planning Steering Committee.)

AGE DISTRIBUTION

It is not only important to know how many people live in the Town of Washburn, but it is also important to know key characteristics of the people, such as their age, education, and employment status. The following provides an overview of the existing age composition of Washburn residents and the anticipated changes in age composition that will occur through the year 2025 (refer to Table 2-C: *Age Distribution – 2000*).

Broad Age Groups

All residents fit into one of three very broad age groups:

- 1) *those under the age of 18;*
- 2) *those between the ages of 18 and 65; and*
- 3) *those over the age of 65.*

In 2000, 160 individuals or 29.6% of the population of the Town of Washburn was under the age of 18; 330 individuals or 60.9% was between the ages of 18 and 65; and 51 persons or 9.4% was over the age of 65. In comparison, in 2000, 25.5% of the population of the State of Wisconsin was under the age of 18; 61.4% was between the ages of 18 and 65; and 13.1% was over the age of 65. Notably, the Town of Washburn, in comparison to the State of Wisconsin, has a significantly higher percentage of its population under the age of 18 years, we matched in percentage for the 18 - 64 age bracket; and again show a significant decrease in percentage of the population over the age 65.

Over time, as the baby boom generation ages and as families have fewer children, the percentage of people over 65 may increase significantly in the Town of Washburn and throughout Wisconsin. As is common among many rural cities and towns, unless the Town of Washburn can attract younger families and retain or bring back young Washburn adults who have graduated from high school or college, the rate at which Town of Washburn ages will accelerate. An aging population can significantly affect future jobs, services, and education in Washburn. The following provides a more detailed description of the issues and opportunities associated with various age groups in Washburn.

People under the Age of 18

The number of people under the age of 18 will vary by year, but the number of people in this age group will generally decrease over time, even if the overall population increases. Generally speaking, there are several reasons for this. The number of people of childbearing age in the Town of Washburn is decreasing. Consequently, the number of new children born in Washburn will continue to decrease. In addition, people today are generally having fewer children than people of previous generations. Accordingly, unless the Town of Washburn attracts a significant number of younger families from other areas and retains its current population, the number of children in this age bracket will more than likely decrease over the next few years.

Since 1997, enrollment in the Washburn School District has slowly been decreasing, and the School District is planning for continued decreasing enrollment at least through the year 2010.

People between the Ages of 18 and 24

As indicated earlier, the Town possesses a fairly large contingent of young people. Most people between the ages of 18 and 24 choose to pursue higher education or enter the workforce. The Town of Washburn is fortunate to have easy access to two quality schools of higher education in nearby Ashland: Northland College and the Wisconsin Indianhead Technical Institute. However, the Town of Washburn, like most Wisconsin cities, must strive to retain its 18 to 24 year old residents, or find a way to bring them back into the community once they have received a college degree. Typically, this recruitment or retention of post-secondary educated or even technical and/or high school educated level individuals, is heavily tied to the employment opportunities of the local area. Generally, people in this age group are not yet married, nor do they have children. Consequently, they may not feel significant ties to the Town of Washburn, and they may be more willing to leave the Town of Washburn (and the area itself) in search of other opportunities. So, in addition to jobs, Washburn will need to be able to provide amenities to retain and attract 18 to 24 year olds.

People between the Ages of 25 and 54

If the Town of Washburn is to achieve its population growth projections, and if the Town is to sustain its population, then it will be especially important for the Town of Washburn to retain and attract people between the ages of 25 and 54. This is a critical age group due to the fact people between the ages of 25 and 54 are at their prime working age. In addition, people in this age range tend to have children, so they are less apt to make impulsive moves elsewhere. Perhaps more than any other age group, those between the ages of 25 and 54 tend to have a strong commitment to the future of the community. Town of Washburn will need to provide opportunities for additional, and possibly, affordable housing areas. The Town itself would probably not be able to provide the necessary economic or employment resources to retain or attract these individuals, but will need to support the local urban areas that do provide this level of service. Furthermore, the Town of Washburn will need to provide quality parks, outdoor recreational facilities, services, and cultural activities to ensure a high quality of life that will retain and attract people.

People over the Age of 65

As life expectancy continues to increase and as the baby boom generation nears retirement age, the number and percentage of people over the age of 65 will increase dramatically. With the 'baby boomer' generation getting older, Washburn will become an even more attractive place of residence. The Town of Washburn is beginning to see the effect of an aging, but not yet retired work group. Although the 2000 Census indicated only 51 persons, or 9.4% of the total population (541) at that time was over the age of 65, the recent survey in 2006 indicated that almost 18% were over the age of 65 now, which is a huge leap within a 6 year period. All of these factors have several implications for the future of the Town of Washburn. For example, the Town will need to make sure that it has adequate housing for those over the age of 65. The Town of Washburn may also need to provide or allow for the opportunity for senior housing needs, which tend to become in demand as a populace grows older and they tend to forgo the desire to live elsewhere for part of the calendar year or move away to the "South or Southwest U.S.," and instead wish to remain in the place they have called home for a number of years. Plus, more and more younger family members are now moving back or staying put to take care of their elder family members, such as the mom or dad or grandparents, or helping out and taking over the family agricultural activities. If the seniors decide to uproot and leave, it can potentially leave a vacant and under-utilized housing stock, and a cultural vacuum or missing historical tie that some communities severely lack.

TABLE 2-C: AGE COMPOSITION – 2000						
Age	Town of Washburn		Bayfield County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 5	20	3.7	794	5.3	342,340	6.4
5 to 9	32	5.9	979	6.5	379,484	7.1
10 to 14	67	12.4	1,196	8.0	403,074	7.5
15 to 19	53	9.8	1,037	6.9	407,195	7.6
20 to 24	12	2.2	490	3.3	357,292	6.7
25 to 34	39	7.2	1,401	9.3	706,168	13.2
35 to 44	98	18.1	2,379	15.8	875,522	16.3
45 to 54	110	20.3	2,452	16.3	732,306	13.7
55 to 59	36	6.7	994	6.6	252,742	4.7
60 to 64	23	4.3	827	5.5	204,999	3.8
65 to 74	31	5.7	1,341	8.9	355,307	6.6
75 to 84	17	3.1	836	5.6	251,621	4.7
85 and Over	3	0.6	287	1.9	95,625	1.8
Median Age	41.5	--	42.1	--	36.0	--

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

RACE AND ORIGIN

According to the last census, all residents of the Town of Washburn were born in the United States and approximately 70% of the residents were born in Wisconsin. With regards to race and origin, 92.8% are white; 4.6% are American Indian/Alaska Native, and the remaining 2.6% are other (refer to Table 2-D: Race and Origin in 2000). We anticipate these statistics to remain relatively stable in the near future. As with all communities, if the Town of Washburn is to realize its goal of growing and providing for housing opportunities, it may need to attract people from outside the Town of Washburn, from outside Wisconsin, and perhaps from outside the United States. Consequently, the Town of Washburn should encourage other members of our culturally diverse society to live and enjoy the community, which in turn will create a more diverse and dynamic community of the future.

Race	Town of Washburn		Bayfield County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	502	92.8	13,500	89.9	4,827,514	90.0
Black or African American	0	0	30	0.2	326,506	6.1
Am. Indian or Alaska Native	25	4.6	1,586	10.6	69,386	1.3
Asian	4	0.8	60	0.4	102,768	1.9
Native Hawaiian/Pacific	0	0	4	-	4,310	0.1
Other	12	2.20	64	0.4	104,662	2.0

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The 2000 US Census reports that approximately 89.8% of the Town's residents over the age of 25 have a high school diploma or equivalency, and roughly 29.3% of the residents [over the age of 25] have a bachelor's degree or higher (see Table 2-E: Educational Attainment - 2000). The percentage of people in Washburn that have a graduate or professional degree is higher than that in Bayfield County or the State of Wisconsin, which is considerable and should be recognized. In recent years, there has been a rise in high school graduates that pursue a college degree. However, the general trend across Wisconsin is that young people with a college degree are leaving the area for employment opportunities elsewhere. A key goal of Wisconsin communities is to find opportunities for college graduates to stay in Wisconsin.

Characteristic	Town of Washburn	Bayfield County	Wisconsin
Less than 9 th Grade	4%	3.9%	5.4%
9 th to 12 th Grade – No Diploma	6.3%	9.2%	9.6%
High School Graduate – Includes Equivalency	34.1%	34.2%	34.6%
Some College – No Degree	15.3%	21.5%	20.6%
Associate Degree	11.1%	9.6%	7.5%
Bachelor's Degree	21.9%	14.7%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	7.4%	6.9%	7.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS AND FORECASTS

In 2000, the US Census reported 189 households in the Town of Washburn and 160 households with families. A household refers to all persons who occupy a housing unit, either related or unrelated by blood, marriage or adoption. A family refers to a parent(s) or grandparent(s) living with at least one child. In the Town of Washburn, 142 households consist of married couples and out of these, 70 family households have children under the age of 18 years. Non-family households number 29, with 26 living alone. In the future, it is likely that the percentage of married couples without children living with them will increase. The percentage of single parent households will also increase. Female households with no husband present accounted for approximately 5.3% of the family households in the Town, which is considerably less than the adjacent City of Washburn (at 13%). The projected households for the Town of Washburn are shown to increase on average of approximately 10-15 additional households every five (5) years (refer to Table 2-F Household Projections).

TABLE 2-F: HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS						
Location	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Town of Washburn	189	201	215	228	237	240
City of Washburn	938	953	974	986	982	951
Bayfield County	6207	6462	6793	7062	7228	7200
State of Wisconsin	2,084,556	2,190,210	2,303,238	2,406,798	2,506,932	2,592,462

Source: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration, March 2004.

The median household in the Town of Washburn in 1990 was 3.08 persons per household. In 2000 this figure dropped to 2.86 persons per household, while the average family size was 3.12 persons. Given the trend for single person households and smaller family sizes, it follows that household size will also decrease. Projecting this reduction in relation to the State of Wisconsin, Bayfield County and City of Washburn rates, the Comprehensive Plan projects the average household size in the Town of Washburn will be approximately 2.7 in 2025.

TABLE 2-G: AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE			
Location	1990	2000	2025 (Projection)
Town of Washburn	3.08	2.86	2.7
City of Washburn	2.46	2.33	2.2
Bayfield County	2.52	2.40	--
State of Wisconsin	2.61	2.50	2.35

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 and Sanders Wacker Bergly, Inc.

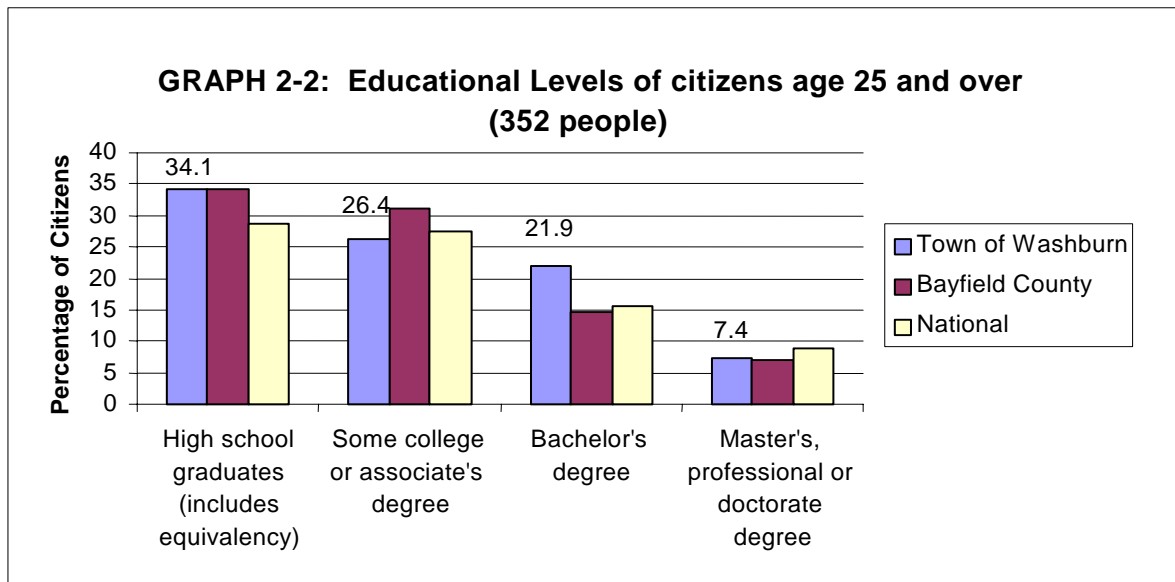
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

In 2000, the Town of Washburn’s unemployment rate was a low 1.2%, which for this statistic is quite noteworthy. In comparison to City of Washburn’s 4%, Bayfield County’s 5.3% and State of Wisconsin’s 3.2%, the Town’s rate is considerably lower. The Town’s median household income is also considerably more than compared to the City of Washburn’s and Bayfield County, and in line with the State’s (*refer to Table 2-H: General Employment and Income Characteristics - 2000*). We will be referencing and analyzing these figures in greater detail in this Comprehensive Plan under the Economic Development Chapter.

TABLE 2-H: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS – 2000				
Characteristic	Town of Washburn	City of Washburn	Bayfield County	State of Wisconsin
Employed in Labor Force	69.5%	56.0%	57.1%	65.8%
Unemployed in Labor Force	1.2%	4.0%	5.3%	3.2%
Not in Labor Force	29.3%	40.0%	37.5%	30.9%
Median Household Income	\$46,500	\$33,257	\$33,390	\$43,791
Per Capita Income	\$17,892	\$15,331	\$16,407	\$21,271
Median Earnings, Male, Full-Time, Year-Round	\$36,696	\$31,875	\$31,699	\$37,062
Median Earning, Female, Full-Time, Year-Round	\$24,500	\$23,235	\$21,731	\$25,865
Families Below Poverty Level	3.4%	7.5%	9.2%	5.6%
Individuals Below Poverty Level	4.6%	10.3%	12.5%	8.7%

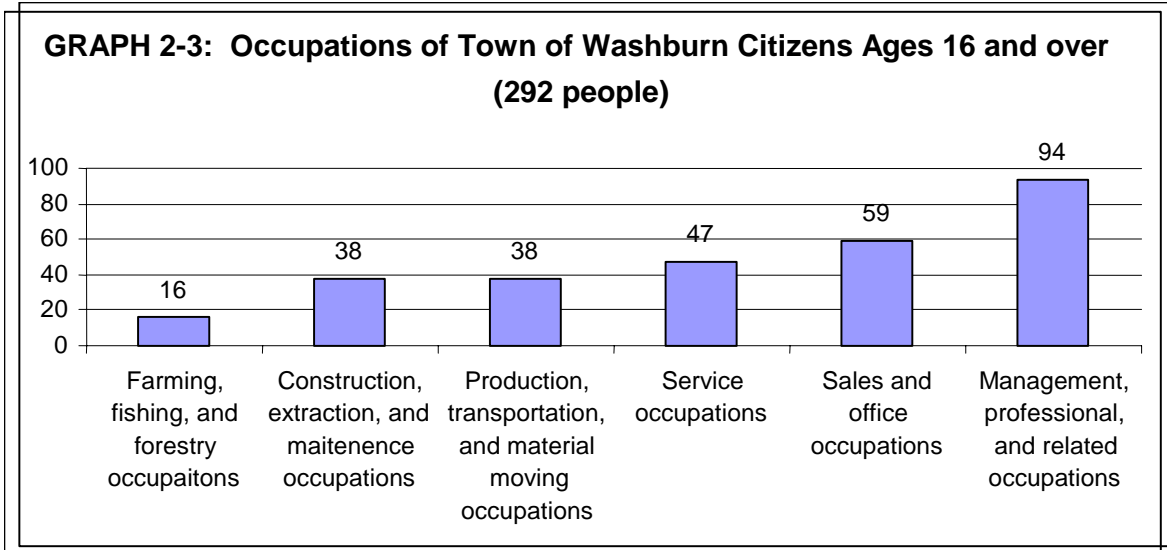
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

The education levels of the town’s population aged 25 years and older is at or above the national averages (refer to Graph 2-2).

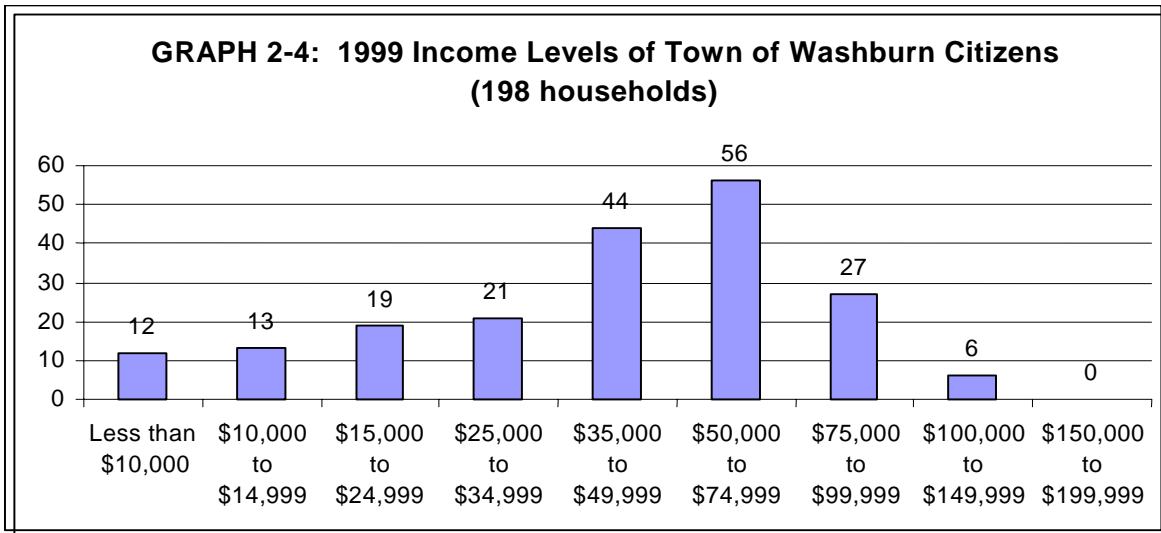


Source: 2000 Census and ePodunk /Graph created by Amber Collins

Of the 292 town citizens over the age of 16, the prevailing occupation is management and professional, with 94 people (exemplated in graph 2-3) As graph 2-4 demonstrates, of the 198 households, the largest income bracket was from \$50,000 to 74,999. The average income in 1999 was \$46,500.



Source: 2000 Census and ePodunk /Graph created by Amber Collins



Source: 2000 Census and ePodunk /Graph created by Amber Collins

Employment Forecast

In a small community like Washburn, it is difficult to project future employment with certainty. However, Washburn’s unemployment rate will likely fall to 3.5% or so by the year 2025 when Washburn’s baby boom generation will be retired. Conceivably, Washburn may experience a labor shortage before 2025 and, therefore, will need to attract people from outside Washburn to fill the jobs that the baby boom generation held. New jobs to care for the aging population of Washburn will also need to be created and will need to be filled. If Washburn

is to reach its goal of growing to a population of 2,500 people by the year 2025, then Washburn will need to create roughly 100 new jobs by the year 2025. The City should use this forecast as a general guide and update this forecast as conditions warrant.

SUMMARY AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS for the TOWN OF WASHBURN

Surprisingly, the Wisconsin Demographic Service Center is projecting a fairly considerable increase in population change through the year 2025. To accommodate this growth, this Comprehensive Plan sets a goal for the Town to grow its population from 567 up to 650 in 2025. This equates to growing by roughly 4 people per year from 2005 to 2025. To reach this goal, the City will need to place a special emphasis on attracting younger families to Washburn; encourage and support the local area's economic sectors and employment opportunities; affordable and life-cycle housing opportunities; plan for and maintain a high level of outdoor recreational activities, and encourage a high quality of life that will retain and attract people. It is anticipated that the Washburn School District's school-aged population will likely decrease before 2010; however, if the Town of Washburn and the other local municipalities begin to provide more economic opportunities and attract younger families, the school-aged population may begin to gradually increase. Without a doubt, the Town of Washburn's senior population will continue to grow noticeably, especially in the next decade. The Town of Washburn can provide a draw for new and younger people, who in turn may help retain some of the younger populace from fleeing the area, and provide a suitable replacement for the expected retiring workforce.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES AS INDICATED by the RESIDENTS of the TOWN of WASHBURN

IN early 2006, the Town of Washburn mailed to all residents in the Town a survey to gather their opinions about planning issues facing the City. 319 were distributed, with 177 completed and returned surveys, which represents a fairly respectable 55% response rate. Survey respondents were provided a list of general questions related to the overall quality of life and other issues and opportunities the Town and the surrounding communities provide for its residents. The following provides a summary of the key survey results relating to planning issues and opportunities facing the Township:

- 89% of respondents rated the Town of Washburn's "quality of life" as a good (49%) or excellent (40%) place to live compared to only 3% who said fair (1%) or poor (2%) place to live.
- Respondents were asked their opinion about encouraging, discouraging or taking no action on a range of development and preservation options for the Town. The following table lists what respondents felt most strongly about encouraging:

Category	Encourage	Discourage	Take No Action
Residential Development	34%	16%	37%
Commercial development	25%	40%	23%
Industrial development	14%	58%	20%
Public recreation Development	49%	19%	23%
Forest/Greenspace Preservation	67%	7%	20%
Farmland preservation	69%	3%	21%

- Respondents were asked to identify from a list of issues, which three (3) issues are the most important facing the Town of Washburn. The following lists the percentage of respondents that identified the issue as being one of the three most important issues facing the Town:
 - Maintain the Town's "rural character" – (53%)
 - Maintain public services – (34%)
 - Manage residential growth - (32%)
 - Minimize forest fragmentation - (30%)
 - Improve Town roads - (29%)
 - Preserve farm land - (27%)
 - Preserve sensitive environmental areas – (24%)
 - Increase the tax base – (16%)
 - Promote business growth - (12%)
 - Preserve scenic views – (11%)
 - Expand recreational opportunities – (10%)
 - Provide adequate housing – (6%)
- Other survey results show that a majority of the residents (55%) favor single family homes as a preferred housing choice; and that moderately priced housing is most desired (at 52%) and elderly/assisted living is also indicated with over 42% indicating more to a little more is needed. The respondents were also overwhelmingly in support of keeping the single family minimum lot size at 5-acres per unit, which is consistent with their current 4.5 acres per unit today.
- Transportation and condition of roads were rated at 62% as good (49%) to very good (12%).
- Respondents also expressed a strong support for the Town to encourage preservation and provide public amenities. Survey results appear to indicate that a large number of respondents are very concerned with the natural environment and wish to preserve the farmland (79% agree/strongly agree) and 78% wish to preserve large tracts of private forest lands within the Town. Many of the residents also indicated their willingness to support [financially] the Public Library, soccer fields, and recreation programs currently offered by the City of Washburn.

We will be referring to these issues and opportunities in the following chapters of this Comprehensive Plan, and indicated the findings and support of the community residents with additional survey results. Refer to Appendix A: Town of Washburn Community Survey – February 1, 2006 for complete survey results.

A SMART GROWTH COMMUNITY

The Town of Washburn is committed to being a smart growth community. This Comprehensive Plan incorporates the following goals that Wisconsin Smart Growth Legislation which requires the Town of Washburn to consider:

1. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
2. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources (see Chapter 7: Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources).
3. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
4. Encouragement of land uses, densities, and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental, and utility costs (see Chapter 3: Land Use).
5. Preservation of cultural and historic sites (see Chapter 7: Agriculture, Natural, and Cultural Resources).
6. Encouragement and coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government (see Chapter 9: Intergovernmental Cooperation).
7. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community (see Chapter 3: Housing).
8. Providing or allowing for infrastructure and public service improvements that will help serve developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential uses (see Chapter 4: Utilities and Community Facilities).
9. Promoting and supporting the current economic base and the creation of range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels (see Chapter 6: Economic Development).
10. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
11. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied or unique rural communities (see Chapter 8: Land Use).
12. Supporting and calling for an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety, and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit dependent and disabled citizens (see Chapter 5: Transportation).

Refer to the chapters that follow for corresponding objectives and policies.

APPENDIX - B**STATEMENT of FUTURE POPULATION GROWTH**

Projecting the unrestrained future population growth for the Town is a difficult endeavor, fraught with uncertainties. Among the factors that could influence the rate of increase are:

1. *The economic conditions within the multiple-state region and for the nation as a whole.*
2. *The supply and price of gasoline and other fossil fuels, as well as substitutes for these products that may become available.*
3. *Climatic warming – how quickly the climate warms and how much it warms.*
4. *International relations and events.*

The Wisconsin Demographic Service Center projects that the Town of Washburn's population will gradually increase through the year 2025, with an estimated population of about 640 by that year. That would represent an increase of about 13% as compared to 2005. According to their website, the Demographic Service Center bases its projections on recent and current population trends. Keeping the above-listed factors in mind, however, the actual change could vary greatly from this in either direction. If climatic warming accelerates as predicted by some scientists (indeed, some suggest that we are already in the early stages of such an increase), then Northern Wisconsin, including the Town of Washburn, could be in the path of the largest human migration in history.

If, on the other hand, the warming turns out to be much more modest than predicted, but fuel prices climb with the passing of "peak oil", then the current trend of wealthy, but usually older, people moving north out of more urban areas could be reversed as people see the need to remain in urban areas where medical services, groceries, and other services are easily accessible through mass transit. The point is, we just don't know how the population of the Town might change in reaction to these and other, unforeseen, forces. We do know, however, that we live on a planet where the population is increasing – having passed the 6 billion mark in 1999 and is now (2007) over 6.5 billion. Many of us living in the Town of Washburn have seen the population of the U.S. double from about 150 million in about 1950, to over 300 million today. Barring an unforeseen national or international catastrophe, ours is not likely to remain a rural area without deliberate action on our part.

What would be an ideal population for the Town of Washburn? Different people would surely give different answers. Some of us would like to live in an area where our nearest neighbors were a mile or more away. Others, real estate developers and others who would profit from high rates of growth, might say "the more growth, the better". Perhaps a modest and conservative answer would be "maintain the status quo". The information about the current economic status of the citizens of the Town found in Chapter 6 paints a picture of a prosperous area with above-average incomes and an unemployment rate well below the State average.

The responses from the survey conducted in conjunction with the preparation of this plan reflect a population that is happy with the current conditions; 89% of the respondents rated the quality of life here as “good” or “excellent”. Many communities have problems that, erroneously in many cases, they think they can grow their way out of. The Town of Washburn does not find itself in that situation. Those of us who have lived here a long time, a lifetime for some, may not realize it, but we live in what, for most of the country would be considered a utopia. Our challenge is not to solve difficult problems, but rather to keep what we have. Because both personal freedom and environmental quality are inversely related to population density, our goal is to keep the population of the Town as close to the present level as possible.