

Appendix D

Population and Housing Methodologies

City of Stevens Point
Comprehensive Plan
2005

Population projection. Accurate population projections have proven difficult to achieve. The past is not always an accurate predictor of the future. Planning for how and where to accommodate new growth is more important than achieving a specific population by a specific date.

Growth has generally been sustained over the last 100 years but the rate of growth has varied.

Portage County

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
population	29,483	30,945	33,549	33,827	35,789	34,858	36,964	47,541	57,410	61,405	67,182
# change from previous	n/a	1,462	2,604	278	1,962	-931	2,106	10,577	9,869	3,995	5,777
% change from previous	n/a	5%	8%	1%	6%	-3%	6%	29%	21%	7%	9%

County growth rates range from -3% between 1940 and 1950 to 29% between 1960 and 1970.

The City of Stevens Point has experienced even more variable growth rates ranging from -9% to 32%.

Stevens Point

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
population	9,524	8,692	11,371	13,623	15,777	16,564	17,837	23,479	22,970	23,002	24,551
# change from previous		-832	2,679	2,252	2,154	787	1,273	5,642	-509	32	1,549
% change from previous		-9%	31%	20%	16%	5%	8%	32%	-2%	0%	7%

Based on WI Department of Administration population estimates, city growth between 2000 and 2005 is growing at a 5.5% rate for this decade.

City growth is affected by three factors; growth rates in Central Wisconsin, land availability, and people-per-household.

Population growth in the city, like the county, is dependent on outside forces. These include such factors as the growth of the UWSP population during the 1960's, in-or-out-migration from the state, and other local economic factors.

Population within the city limits is also affected by the availability of land for subdividing. City growth during the '70's and '80's was limited due to decisions by individual property owners not to allow their land to be annexed and subdivided. City population grew at approximately the county average when these lands were subdivided during the '90's.

The final factor in city population growth is the average people-per-household. Most cities are experiencing a decrease in the average number of people per household due to changes in family patterns as well as the concentration of older, single-household persons in cities. An additional factor for Stevens Point is the presence of the university student population.

The number of people per household in the city as computed from census data is:

	Population	Living Units	Persons per Household
1980	22,970	7,870	2.92
1990	23,002	8,627	2.67
2000	24,551	9,749	2.52

If the number of people per household was the same in 2000 as in 1980, the year 2000 population of the city would have been 28,467 instead of 24,551. The increased population as the result of new construction is offset by the decrease in people in existing living units.

This is not significant in population projections unless population is used as proxy for calculating the need for new living units in the city. In our comprehensive planning process, the population growth is used to determine not only the amount of new housing demand but also the amount of commercial and industrial expansion.

Projection methodology. Portage County has used “varied trend data” to project individual municipal populations. This method uses growth trends from the '70's, '80's, and '90's to project future growth. As noted above, the city growth rate for these three decades has been quite varied. If the county procedure is used, the projected city population for 2020 would be 26,875 (this projection was made in 2003. Projections have been updated using more recent Department of Administration population estimates. The new City projection for 2020 is 25,193.) The projected growth rate between 2005 and 2025 using the County method averages to 76 people/year. The actual growth rate between 1990 and 2000 averaged to 155 people/yr.

If it is assumed the population growth was artificially restricted due to land availability and city policy during the '70's and '80's and only the growth rate from the '90's is used to make future projections, the 2020 population would be 27,846.

If it is assumed the City's population growth will be the same percentage rate as the growth rate of the county, the projected 2020 population would be 29,689.

If it is assumed the city’s actual population increase is the same as the Village of Plover, a similarly situated adjacent urban community, the projected 2020 population would be 30,381.

Reasoning for assuming roughly equivalent growth as the Village of Plover include:

Increase in housing units 1990 – 2000

City of Stevens Point 1122
 Village of Plover 1155
 (1203 building city permits were issued during this period)

Number of Single Family Building permits issued 1993 – 2002

City of Stevens Point 500
 Village of Plover 505

Increase in Population 1990 – 2000

City of Stevens Point 1549
 Village of Plover 2344
 (note city decrease in persons-per-household)

The Plan Commission considered the following projections:

Range of Projections	Census 2000	2000-'10 increase	population 2010	2000-'10 % change	2010-'20 increase	population 2020	2010-'20 % change
current county projection	24,551	1,479	26,030	6.0%	845	26,875	3.3%
1990-2000 growth rate	24,551	1,656	26,207	6.7%	1,767	27,973	6.7%
projected county growth	24,551	2,774	27,325	11.3%	2,364	29,689	8.7%
Plover projected increase	24,551	2,859	27,410	11.6%	2,971	30,381	10.8%

After consideration of various factors, and considering the number of building permits and living-unit construction has been similar with the Village of Plover, and considering the new policy of welcoming growth, and considering the population projection will be used to determine future residential and commercial/industrial land use, the Plan Commission recommended an identical population growth as the Village of Plover’s; 30,381 as the projected population for 2020.

The WI Department of Administration (WIDOA) has updated their population estimates twice since this recommendation was made. The total projected County population has been decreased. The new target year is 2025 rather than 2020. These changes have resulted in a lowering of all municipal growth projections. This is an example of the fluidity of population projections.

The new WIDOA Village of Plover projected 2025 population is 15,579, an increase of 5,059 over the 2000 population. If the city were to adopt an identical amount of projected growth, the projection would be: City 2000 population 24,551 + 5,059 = 29,610 in the year 2025.

	2000	Number increase	2010	10 yr % change	Number increase	2025	15 yr % change
current county projection	24,551	987	25,538	4.2%	1,188	2,6726	4.7%
1990-2000 growth rate	24,551	1,547	26,204	6.7%	2,640	2,8910	10.3%
projected county growth	24,551	2,774	26,417	7.6%	2,364	28,847	9.2%
Plover projected increase	24,551	2,107	26,658	8.6%	2,952	29,610	11.1%

Note: the last % change column is for 15 years.

RECOMMENDATION

The fluidity of population projections, the impact of regional and federal changes on local population growth, and the need to create infrastructure to meet the needs of population growth, requires that population projections and urban service areas be reviewed often.