

Introduction

Welcome to the Town of Almond Comprehensive Plan. This Comprehensive Plan is the centerpiece of the community planning process, stating our community's development goals and outlining public policies for guiding future growth. It establishes an identifiable destination that allows both the governing body and private interests to plan and budget with an idea as to the direction the Town may move in the future, and helps to ensure that future growth is not only anticipated, but planned for. The Plan functions as a practical guide to coordinate day-to-day decisions so they make sense in the future.

The Portage County Comprehensive Planning Process and the Town of Almond

The Town of Almond Comprehensive Plan has been completed as a part of a larger, County-wide planning project. In November 2000, the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department submitted an application for a State of Wisconsin planning grant to help fund the creation of County-wide Comprehensive Plans that would meet the newly enacted State Statute requirements for long range planning (see SS 66.1001). The Statute stipulates that by January 1, 2010, all Towns, Villages, Cities, and Counties that make decisions regulating land use will need to base those decisions on an adopted comprehensive plan. In January 2001 grant funds totaling \$504,000 were awarded to Portage County to assist with the project. Two separate "large area" plan documents are to be developed: an Urban Area plan which encompasses the City of Stevens Point, Villages of Park Ridge, Whiting and Plover, and a portion of the unincorporated Towns of Hull, Stockton, Plover, Linwood and Carson; and the Portage County Comprehensive Plan, which includes each of the seventeen unincorporated Towns (Alban, Almond, Amherst, Belmont, Buena Vista, Carson, Dewey, Eau Pleine, Grant, Hull, Lanark, Linwood, New Hope, Pine Grove, Plover, Sharon, Stockton) and six incorporated rural Villages (Almond, Amherst, Amherst Junction, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt) that make up the rest of the County. In addition to the large area plans, the project includes the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan for each of the County's 27 individual units of government.

In June 2001, a committee made up of representatives from each unit of government within Portage County was appointed to draft these plan documents. The *Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee* adopted a "Public Participation Plan" on July 25, 2001. The Participation Plan detailed the different ways that residents of the County would be invited and encouraged to participate in the formulation of the Comprehensive Plans. The Town of Almond also adopted the Public Participation Plan on August 15, 2001. (Appendix A)

The first step in soliciting public involvement was a County-wide opinion survey, which was conducted in the second half of September 2001. Over 30,000 surveys were mailed, with an intended target of one for every household within the County. Over 6,600 of the households responded, a return rate of approximately 22%. The survey responses provided information on residents' feelings in the areas of: County trends and land use; housing; utilities and community facilities; agricultural, natural and cultural resources; commerce and employment; transportation; and quality of life within the County. The Town of Almond was well represented in the survey results (see Appendix B). In order to follow up and build on the information gathered in the survey, a series of Hopes and Concerns Workshops were held in various locations around Portage County. A wide variety of County residents participated in the Workshops. To include as many groups as possible, workshops were scheduled in towns and villages across the County, as well as junior high and high schools, UW-Stevens Point (with both faculty and students), and the Lincoln Center.

After completion of the Hopes & Concerns workshops all of the response information was forwarded to the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee, who used a series of meetings to boil the information down to 44 summarizing “issue statements”. This list then became the basis for a series of six visioning sessions held across Portage County during the spring of 2002. Again, all of the public input was returned to the Joint Steering Committee for review and discussion. An Urban Area Vision Statement and a Rural Vision Statement were approved in the fall of 2002. These Vision Statements were used as a foundation for the Urban Area and Rural Area Comprehensive Plans, respectively, and their ideas resonate throughout the individual local unit plans.

State Statute 66.1001 defines minimum requirements for what content should be included within a comprehensive plan. These requirements include nine “elements” or chapters describing: *issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agriculture, natural and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation, land use; and implementation*. The Town of Almond has used the required elements as an outline for it’s’ plan document.

CHAPTER 1 Issues and Opportunities for Comprehensive Planning in the Town of Almond

Section 1.1 Description and Brief History of the Planning Area

The Town of Almond is located in the south-central part of Portage County and is bordered on the south by Waushara County, and by the Portage County Towns of Buena Vista on the north, Belmont on the east and Pine Grove on the west (see Map 1.1). Almond is the 9th largest town (out of 17 towns) in Portage County in terms of geographic size, encompassing an area of approximately 27,642 acres or 43.19 square miles. The Town (political unit) includes all of congressional township T21N-R9E.

The following excerpt is taken from the Malcom Rosholt Online Archives of the Portage County Historical Society:

The Town of Almond includes some flat land, outwash plains of the last glaciation and some low hills at the end of the Arnott moraine, as well as parts of the Wisconsin terminal and ground moraines. Much of it was a prairie with good soil for agriculture and it became the first area where some pioneer farmers, at first Yankees, followed by Germans and Irish, settled before 1850. By 1850 there was a village named Almond (after a town in Allegany County, state of New York from where some families had come), and a post office was opened. The place developed more rapidly after 1901, when the tracks of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad reached the town, providing good shipping for potatoes and other agricultural products. The village was not incorporated until 1905, but it became the center for southern Portage County with stores, shops, a bank, its own telephone company and taverns. The variety of origin of the inhabitants is seen by its five different churches; Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, and Catholic. Some of the church buildings had been originally built in the country but have been moved to the village.

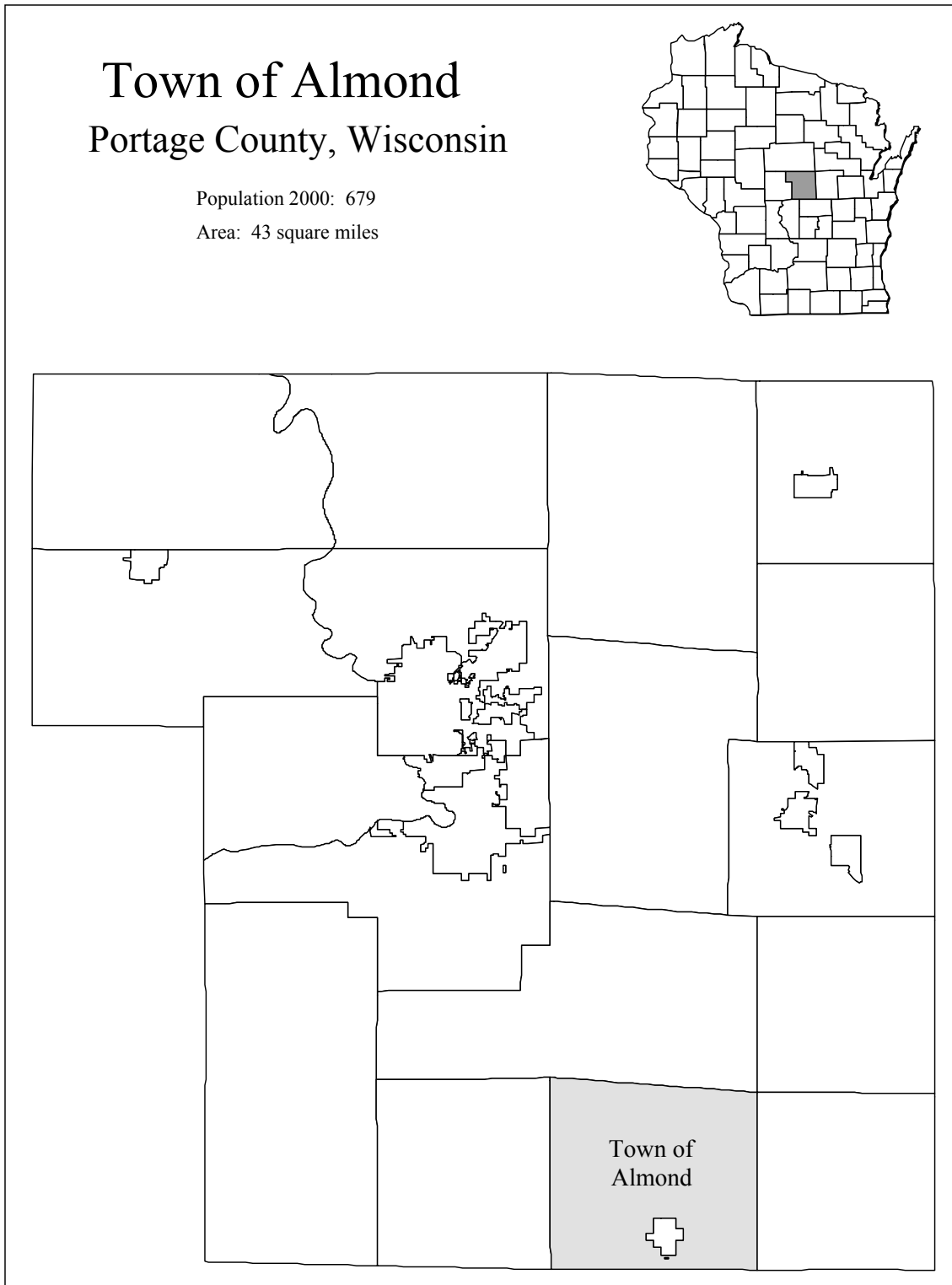
In the town there are no less than seven cemeteries. One of them is named Spiritland, because one of the early settlers Dewit McLaughlin (who had lost his wife) came to her grave in the cemetery and had there meetings with her spirit. The town has no streams but has several lakes: Wolf Lake in a pleasant surrounding has a beach and boat landing, the Two Lakes (Washburn and Bass Lakes) and Patterson Lake. These last three, clearly indicated on old maps, dried almost completely in the 1950-1960s. About 1965 Patterson Lake seemed to have completely disappeared, replaced by brush, but in the woods near what might have been a shore was an abandoned boat showing that not only had there been a lake but that it had fish. The condition was blamed on the extensive irrigation of the farming land that had lowered the watertable and dried up the lakes, but in the 1970's water reappeared and the lakes are present again, the result of a series of years with abundant rainfalls.

The Town of Almond has experienced a decline in population over the past century that is typical of a rural agriculture-based community. During the 1970's, the population began to rebound, but has yet to recover to the numbers of the early 1900's (Figure 1.2).

To accommodate growth that may occur in the Town, tracts of land that are now void of development will see homes, farms and businesses. If new development is not properly managed, the Town may find itself faced with unnecessarily inflated expenditure requirements

for the provision of its limited services to the new areas. This Comprehensive Plan will analyze all of the lands within the Town of Almond corporate boundary, and include the short and long range recommendations for residential, commercial and industrial development, as well as the protection of important farmlands and other natural resources as determined by the residents of the Town of Almond.

Figure 1.1: Map of Almond Area



Section 1.2 Past Planning In Town of Almond

1990 Land Use Plan

In the late 1980's, the Town of Almond Planning Committee began working with the Portage County Planning Department to draft the first land use plan for the Town of Almond. This initial document represented a pioneering effort on the part of elected officials and the local Planning Committee members. The intent of the plan was to serve as a formal statement of Town/County policies regarding land use. In addition, the Plan was intended to serve as a guide in updating the Town's zoning map, to reflect changing conditions and needs.

Section 1.3 Current Comprehensive Planning Process

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, this Town of Almond Comprehensive Plan update had its beginning as a part of the County-wide planning project started in June 2001. The work during the first 18 months of the County-wide project, performed primarily by the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee, centered on public participation, visioning, and the generation of preliminary goal suggestions for the nine required Plan elements. This information was then forwarded to all local units of government in the fall of 2002. Utilizing the information provided by the Joint Steering Committee, the Town of Almond Plan Commission began the Town Comprehensive Planning process in earnest in January 2003. The Plan Commission met on a regular basis through September 2004 to put together the first complete preliminary draft of the plan. The Comprehensive Planning process involved several basic phases:

The first phase involves research. Activities include acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting, identifying problems that require solutions, analyzing critical factors that need to be changed before progress can be made toward community goals, and establishing goals and objectives for growth and development. The second phase involves the formation of planning policy. Planning policies recommend a course of action that will accommodate expected change, produce desired change, and prevent undesirable change.

The next phase involves the selection of a preferred alternative for guiding future growth. The Land Use Element relates how the Town is expected to grow, and generally identifies how development should proceed in the future to achieve community goals. It proposes the most efficient use of land within the financial capabilities of the community by identifying where residential, and other anticipated land uses should occur.

The final phase involves implementation of the plan and programs that will influence the day-to-day decisions made by government officials, private enterprise, and individuals. Plan implementation provides the means by which community goals can be achieved. Three major tools of implementation are the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements program.

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary link between the past, the present, and the future, making it perhaps the best resource for achieving continuity over a period of time. It is to be used as a guide by those making decisions with regard to the development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan must also remain flexible so that it can be modified to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. To maintain an updated Comprehensive Plan, new information must be continually gathered and studied to determine trends and reevaluate projections, forecasts, and plans. Even policy recommendations,

which are relatively permanent statements, may require periodic review to determine their appropriateness and suitability in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time. A well thought-out and updated Comprehensive Plan, with a solid base of public involvement, is one of the most fruitful investments a local government can make. As a collection of policies and plans designed to guide future growth and development, it will help ensure continuity over time as changes occur within the Town of Almond.

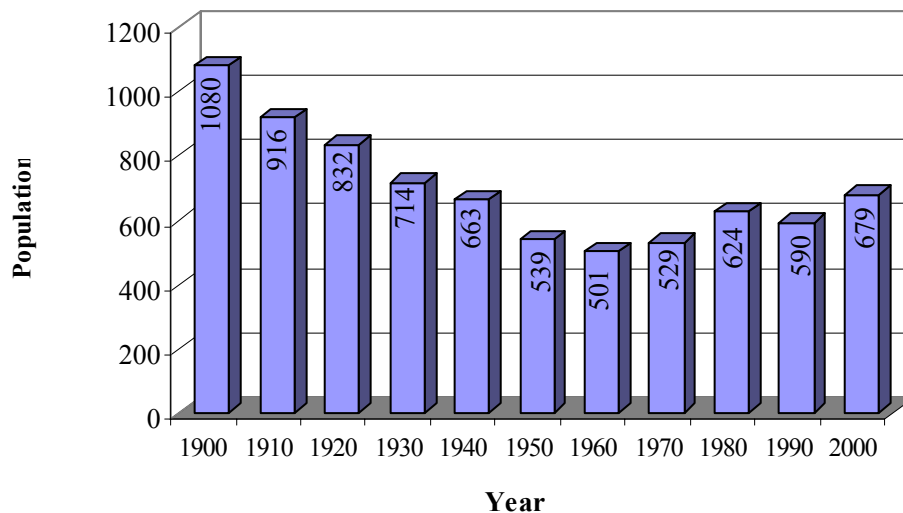
Section 1.4 Demographic Trends

A. Population Growth

Every 10 years the Federal government performs the National Census, and these Census results are the main source of the information used to understand how communities change over time. The Town of Almond has been relatively steady in its growth rate over the last 100 years.

Census data reveal that the greatest increase in population for the Town occurred before 1900 (Figure 1.2). The Town lost population from 1900 to 1960 at a very steady rate, most likely caused by the consolidation of farms in the community over the time period. Since 1960, growth in the community has crept upward, a fact that can be attributed mainly to development in the non-agricultural areas of the Town as urban residents moved back to rural or semi-rural areas of the County. In Portage County, the impact of this migration back to the rural areas occurred earlier and was greater in those towns located adjacent to the larger population centers.

Figure 1.2: Town of Almond Population Change, 1900 to 2000



Source: US Bureau of Census

The Town of Almond is one of the slowest growing communities in south-central Portage County (Table 1.1). The Town experienced a 28.4% increase in population for the period 1970-2000, which was the smallest percentage growth for the area. It is important to note when comparing growth with surrounding communities that Almond has by far the most intensive agricultural activities of the four communities, a fact that greatly restricts land availability for development. It is also the furthest from a large Village or City.

Table 1.1: Almond Comparison Population Change, 1970 to 2003

	U.S. Census				Wisconsin DOA Estimate	1970 to 2000 Change	2000 to 2003 Change
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003		
Town of Almond	529	624	590	679	697	28.4%	2.7%
Town of Belmont	387	496	540	623	641	61.0%	2.9%
Town of Buena Vista	827	1,023	1,170	1,187	1,228	43.5%	3.5%
Town of Pine Grove	649	762	949	904	924	39.3%	2.2%
Portage County	47,541	57,410	6,145	67,182	68,664	41.3%	2.2%

Source: US Census Bureau; State of Wisconsin Dept. of Administration; Portage County Planning and Zoning Dept.

Population growth is a combination of many factors including birth, death, in and out migration. By examining migration patterns for the residents of the Town of Almond, we can better understand the cause for how growth in the community is occurring (Table 1.2). The U.S. Census provides data on where residents were living five years prior to the Census. The “Same House” column identifies the Almond residents that lived in the same dwelling in both 1995 and 2000 (or 1985 and 1990); this can be an indicator of long-term residency. The “Different House, Portage County” column identifies the Almond residents that lived in a home outside the Town, but within Portage County, in 1995. The “Different House, Different County” column identifies the Almond residents that lived in a home outside of the Town and Portage County, but within the State of Wisconsin, in 1995. The “Different State” column identifies the Almond residents that lived in a home outside the State of Wisconsin in 1995. Altogether, this information provides insight into the nature and pace of new residents moving into the Town.

Based on 2000 Census information, 75% of the Town's residents lived in the same house as they did in 1995, down thirteen percent from the 1990 Census even as the actual number increased. The other categories in the table, which indicate new arrivals to the Town, all posted increases in both number and percentage for place of residence. The largest numeric increase was recorded in the residents that moved to Town of Almond from somewhere else in Portage County (from 52 in 1990 to 98 in 2000). The number of residents that moved to Almond from a different state rose from 7 in 1990 to 31 in 2000. Even with this shift of migration into the Town, the in-migration for Almond is lower than that of neighboring Towns and the average of the County as a whole. The higher than average “same house” numbers for the Town of Almond may be explained by the strong family and agricultural ties in the region that keeps families from moving away from their roots.

Table 1.2: Place of Residence for Town Residents, Five Years Prior to 1990 & 2000 Census

	Same House				Different House, Portage County				Different House Different County				Different State			
	1985		1995		1985		1995		1985		1995		1985		1995	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
T. of Almond	487	88%	550	75%	52	9%	98	14%	17	3%	57	8%	7	1%	31	4%
T. of Belmont	358	71%	351	65%	56	11%	73	13%	66	13%	120	22%	21	4%	34	6%
T. of Buena Vista	730	69%	820	72%	228	21%	205	18%	82	8%	113	10%	23	2%	9	1%
T. of Pine Grove	587	67%	571	72%	205	23%	84	11%	54	6%	127	16%	28	3%	43	5%
Portage County	51%		56%		21%		22%		21%		16%		7%		5%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census

B. Age Distribution

Table 1.3 below details the number of Town residents that occupied specific age groups in each of the last three Census years, along with similar information for an average of all Portage County Towns and the County as a whole.

Table 1.3: Distribution of Population, by Ten-Year Age Groups

Age	Town of Almond			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Under 5 years	61 9.8%	37 6.3%	46 6.8%	136 9.3%	122 7.9%	98 6.0%	4,343 7.6%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%
5 to 14 years	108 17.3%	106 18.0%	98 14.4%	281 19.1%	280 18.0%	262 15.6%	8,671 15.1%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%
15 to 24 years	98 15.7%	68 11.5%	76 11.2%	266 17.8%	207 13.0%	206 12.6%	15,270 26.6%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%
25 to 34 years	112 17.9%	68 11.5%	82 12.1%	258 17.3%	250 15.9%	189 11.3%	9,180 16.0%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%
35 to 44 years	78 12.5%	115 19.5%	109 16.1%	169 11.0%	255 16.0%	301 18.1%	5,593 9.7%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%
45 to 54 years	57 9.1%	64 10.8%	121 17.8%	120 8.3%	164 10.2%	268 16.1%	4,447 7.7%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%
55 to 64 years	62 9.9%	57 9.7%	70 10.3%	104 7.9%	152 8.6%	154 9.2%	4,185 7.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%
65 to 74 years	36 5.8%	50 8.5%	41 6.0%	77 6.2%	88 6.5%	98 6.4%	3,391 5.9%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%
75 to 84 years	10 1.6%	23 3.9%	30 4.4%	31 2.5%	40 3.1%	53 3.6%	1,806 3.1%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%
85 years and over	2 0.3%	2 0.3%	6 0.9%	8 0.6%	9 0.8%	15 1.0%	534 0.9%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%
Total	624	590	679	1,363	1,568	1,644	57,420	61,405	67,182
Median Age	29.0	36.3	38.8	27.2	32.0	37.8	25.4	29.3	33.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

Insight into the nature of the Town’s population change over time can be gained through examining how the different age groups change as they move through their life cycles. Age groups for the towns and County (or “cohorts” as they are called when tracking a group of same-aged people) have been displayed in the table in ten-year increments to more easily see how their numbers increase or decline over different Census years. The diagonal series of gray and white boxes within Table 1.3 indicate the path of each age cohort through the three Census periods.

The 5-to-14 year old cohort for the Town of Almond numbered 106 in 1990. Their number declined by 30 persons (-39.4%) by the year 2000 (as the 5-to-14 year olds became 15-to-24 year olds). Some of this decline may be explained by children leaving home for college or jobs. A similar loss can be seen in the same age group from 1980 to 1990 (108 to 68). The group added people, however, between 1990 and 2000 (68 to 82), as more 25 to 34 year olds moved into Town. For the most part, the age cohorts between 15 and 64 years old have experienced increases in numbers between 1990 and 2000.

The “median age” is the point where ½ of the population lies above and ½ lies below; the older this age is, the older the overall population for a place is becoming. The median age for the Town of Almond was 38.8 years old in 2000, and has increased by just under ten years since

1980. The rate of increase for the 1980s' was almost double the rate for the 1990s', which is related to the type of population cohort increases discussed above. The other Towns across Portage County have seen their median age increase at a slightly quicker pace (10.5 years). The County as a whole has seen its median age increase at a slower rate, just less than eight years over the twenty-year period. This is an indication that the towns overall are aging more rapidly than the County's Villages or City of Stevens Point (a large factor in the County's overall calculation).

As one would expect with a rise in median age, the percentage of the population for the Towns within Portage County over the age of 65 has been trending upward since 1980 as well. The Town of Almond 65+ population segment increased from 7.7% of total population in 1980 to 11.3% in 2000. The average Portage County Town saw this segment increase from 9.3% to 11%, and the County as a whole increased from 9.9% to 10.9%. The number of seniors aged 75 and over within Town of Almond, while still not large, has tripled since 1980.

C. Education Levels

Levels of educational attainment have followed a similar trend of improvement across the different municipal divisions within Portage County (Table 1.4). The Town of Almond had mixed results in its' overall educational attainment during the 1990's. The number and percentage of Town of Almond residents age 25 and over who had less than a 9th grade education decreased between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of 25+ year old residents who completed some college, or completed a college degree program rose from 27.8% to 40.2% over the same period. This 10-year increase in attainment for Almond was slightly ahead the gain for the Town Average (29% to 41%) and for County as a whole (40% to 49%). The Town of Almond did not fair well for the number and percentage of residents who completed 9th to 12th grade but did not receive a diploma. The Almond numbers for this category increased by one percent, while the Town Average and Portage County both experienced a slight 1 to 2 percent decline in this category.

Table 1.4: Comparison of Educational Attainment for Residents 25 Years and Older

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Town of Almond		Towns Average		Portage County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than 9th Grade	44 <i>11.6%</i>	36 <i>7.1%</i>	123 <i>10.4%</i>	67 <i>6.2%</i>	4,065 <i>11.6%</i>	2,420 <i>6.0%</i>
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	32 <i>8.4%</i>	43 <i>8.5%</i>	85 <i>7.2%</i>	88 <i>8.1%</i>	3,029 <i>8.7%</i>	3,019 <i>7.5%</i>
High School Graduate	197 <i>52.0%</i>	224 <i>44.2%</i>	399 <i>33.8%</i>	454 <i>42.1%</i>	14,082 <i>40.2%</i>	14,952 <i>37.2%</i>
Some College (No Degree)	40 <i>10.6%</i>	100 <i>19.7%</i>	118 <i>10.0%</i>	189 <i>17.5%</i>	5,205 <i>14.9%</i>	7,572 <i>18.9%</i>
Associate Degree	22 <i>5.8%</i>	37 <i>7.3%</i>	44 <i>3.7%</i>	75 <i>7.0%</i>	1,922 <i>5.5%</i>	2,802 <i>7.0%</i>
Bachelor's Degree	35 <i>9.2%</i>	48 <i>9.5%</i>	92 <i>7.8%</i>	146 <i>13.6%</i>	4,594 <i>13.1%</i>	6,468 <i>16.1%</i>
Graduate / Professional Degree	9 <i>2.4%</i>	19 <i>3.7%</i>	38 <i>3.2%</i>	59 <i>5.5%</i>	2,107 <i>6.0%</i>	2,910 <i>7.2%</i>
Total	379	507	1,179	1,078	35,004	40,143

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census

D. Households and Income

The Town of Almond residential community is made up of different types of households. The U.S. Census defines a household as “including all of the people who occupy a housing unit”. People not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. Table 1.5 below details the changes in the make-up of Town of Almond households over the last 20 years, and compares them to the Portage County data and the average of the County Towns. Married-couple households, traditionally the largest group within Almond, have seen their percentage of total households increase over the last 20 years, bucking a county-wide tendency of decline. Single-father or mother headed households within Almond have either stayed steady or decreased over 20 year period as well. By comparison, the Town average and County as a whole have seen single-head households increase between 2% and 3%. Almond’s non-family households have increased from approximately 17% of total households in 1980 to 29% in 2000.

The Persons Per Household (PPH) calculation for the Town of Almond, along with the County and the average for Towns, have continued a trend of getting smaller over the last 20 years. Almond closely matches the size and rate of decline of the Towns, while the overall County PPH rate of decline has been a bit smaller. This translates into Almond and other Town households being a bit larger than the County average.

Table 1.5: Household Type Comparison

	Town of Almond			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE									
Family Households	167	167	198	370	418	466	13,257	14,883	16,496
Married-couple families (percent of family households)	146 87%	151 90%	180 91%	335 91%	370 88%	414 89%	11,592 87%	12,645 85%	13,808 84%
Other family, male householder (percent of family households)	9 5%	6 4%	9 5%	13 3%	18 4%	0 0%	437 3%	602 4%	861 5%
Other family, female householder (percent of family households)	12 7%	10 6%	9 5%	22 6%	30 7%	30 6%	1,228 9%	1,636 11%	1,827 11%
Non-family Households	30	44	58	70	88	125	5,056	6,423	8,544
Householder living alone	24 80%	36 82%	42 72%	57 82%	72 81%	97 78%	3,730 74%	4,679 73%	6,130 72%
Householder 65 years and over		14 32%	17 29%		30 33%	35 28%		1,933 30%	2,196 26%
Total Households	197	211	256	439	507	591	18,313	21,306	25,040
Persons Per Household	3.17	2.80	2.65	3.29	3.02	2.72	2.93	2.71	2.54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

Another instructive piece of information on the state of households within the Town is the level of income that each household achieves. Again the Census provides insight into the range of incomes present within Almond. Table 1.6 below describes how household incomes have changed in the last 20 years. It is a testimony to both the inflation of wages and the increased earning power of the residents of Almond that the percentage of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from 3.0% in 1979 to 41.8% in 1999. Median household income has increased from \$16,875 to \$45,156 over the same period. The percentage increase in households earning greater than \$50,000 for Portage County as a whole is very similar to Almond over the 20-year period (3% to 42%); and the Town average, 2.5% to 48.6%.

Table 1.6: Household Income Comparison

Household Income Per Year	Town of Almond			Towns Average			Portage County		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
Less Than \$10,000	50 24.4%	26 12.0%	22 7.9%	107 24.2%	50 9.8%	26 2.9%	5,300 28.9%	3,210 15.0%	1,767 7.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	36 17.6%	26 12.0%	11 3.9%	68 15.5%	37 7.3%	25 2.8%	2,919 15.9%	1,978 9.3%	1,608 6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	82 40.0%	38 17.5%	32 11.4%	143 32.5%	87 17.2%	56 6.4%	5,423 29.6%	4,072 19.1%	3,174 12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	27 13.2%	44 20.3%	43 15.4%	79 17.9%	87 17.0%	77 8.7%	2,907 15.8%	3,654 17.1%	3,425 13.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4 0.0%	41 0.1%	55 0.1%	30 0.2%	128 0.4%	115 0.2%	1,223 6.7%	4,370 20.5%	4,484 17.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	3 1.5%	25 11.5%	77 27.5%	10 2.2%	85 16.8%	158 18.1%	380 2.1%	2,983 14.0%	5,771 23.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	3 1.5%	9 4.1%	22 7.9%	5 1.1%	22 4.3%	84 9.6%	193 1.1%	661 3.1%	2,820 11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999		3 1.4%	12 4.3%	0 0.0%	8 1.6%	37 4.2%	0 0.0%	274 1.3%	1,346 5.4%
\$150,000 or more		5 2.3%	6 2.1%	0 0.0%	5 0.9%	19 2.1%	0 0.0%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%
Total Households	205	217	280	440	509	878	18,345	21,336	25,112
Median H-Hold Income	\$16,875	\$30,096	\$45,156	16,728	31,600	48,217	\$16,659	\$28,686	\$43,487

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

With the examination of income information, the Town of Almond should also assess the poverty status of its residents. “Poverty” is generally defined as a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than that family’s threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. That is, they are the same throughout the United States. However, the poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, food stamps, and Medicaid). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated children under age 15 (such as foster children). Table 1.7 below outlines poverty thresholds for 1980, 1990, and 2000. Table 1.8 lists the Census information on poverty for the total number of residents, persons age 65 and above, and families within the Town of Almond, the Town average, and Portage County as a whole.

Table 1.7: Poverty Thresholds - 1980, 1990, and 2000

Size of Family Unit	1980	1990	2000
One Person	\$4,190	\$6,652	\$8,794
Two Persons	\$5,363	\$8,509	\$11,239
Three Persons	\$6,565	\$10,419	\$13,738
Four Persons	\$8,414	\$13,481	\$17,603
Five Persons	\$9,966	\$15,792	\$20,819
Six Persons	\$11,269	\$17,839	\$23,528
Seven Persons	\$12,761	\$20,241	\$26,754
Eight Persons	\$14,199	\$22,582	\$29,701
Nine Persons or More	\$16,896	\$26,848	\$35,060

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1.8: Percent in Poverty Comparison

	Town of Almond		Towns Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
Persons	585	679	1,378	1,463	57,805	67,182
Below Poverty Level	41 7.0%	50 7.4%	119 8.6%	79 5.4%	7,454 12.9%	6,074 9.0%
Persons 65 Years and Over	78	77	117	152	5,327	7,354
Below Poverty Level	4 5.1%	2 2.6%	14 11.6%	15 9.6%	740 13.9%	561 7.6%
Families	167	213	370	416	14,927	16,643
Below Poverty Level	8 4.8%	10 4.7%	24 6.4%	14 3.4%	1,051 7.0%	725 4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census

According to Census figures, the Town of Almond has experienced an increase in the number of residents earning below the poverty level as compared to the County and Town average.

E. Employment Characteristics

A summary of employment by industry data for the last three Census years is provided in Table 1.10. This information represents what type of industry that the working residents of Almond were employed by, and is not a listing of the employment currently located within the Town. The discussion of the Almond economy will take place within the Economic Development Element of this Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that the method used for classifying industries was changed between the 1990 and 2000 Census, and therefore the information included in the industry categories of Table 1.9 is not entirely consistent for comparison between those years.

Table 1.9: Summary of Employment by Industry

Industry	Town of Almond			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	91 36.0%	62 22.2%	68 17.7%	93 15.8%	83.25 10.9%	58 6.6%	1,816 7.3%	1,755 5.8%	1,241 3.5%
Construction	18 7.1%	20 7.2%	14 3.6%	32 5.5%	44 5.8%	54 6.2%	1,004 4.0%	1,297 4.3%	1,707 4.8%
Manufacturing	23 9.1%	37 13.3%	68 17.7%	128 21.6%	160 21.0%	189 21.7%	4,637 18.6%	5,373 17.8%	6,314 17.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	17 6.7%	33 11.8%	24 6.3%	31 5.3%	49 6.4%	56 6.4%	1,214 4.9%	1,511 5.0%	1,948 5.5%
Information	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 1.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	11 1.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	835 2.3%
Communications/ Other Public Facilities	7 2.8%	12 4.3%	0 0.0%	6 1.0%	6 0.8%	0 0.0%	325 1.3%	367 1.2%	0 0.0%
Wholesale Trade	13 5.1%	5 1.8%	13 3.4%	23 4.0%	25 3.3%	31 3.5%	885 3.5%	1,026 3.4%	1,235 3.5%
Retail Trade	28 11.1%	44 15.8%	41 10.7%	81 13.7%	121 15.9%	106 12.1%	4,317 17.3%	5,667 18.8%	4,813 13.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	12 4.7%	19 6.8%	19 4.9%	62 10.6%	84 11.1%	87 10.0%	2,971 11.9%	3,359 11.1%	3,682 10.3%
Professional, Management, Administrative	0 0.0%	~ 0.0%	19 4.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	30 3.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1,627 4.6%
Business and Repair Services	0 0.0%	4 1.4%	0 0.0%	11 1.9%	19 2.5%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	0 0.0%
Personal Services	0 0.0%	1 0.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 2.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	777 2.6%	0 0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	10 4.0%	2 0.7%	37 9.6%	17 3.0%	6 0.8%	48 5.5%	734 2.9%	388 1.3%	3,005 8.4%
Educational, Health, Social Services	22 8.7%	32 11.5%	51 13.3%	82 13.8%	105 13.7%	146 16.8%	5,331 21.4%	5,617 18.6%	7,192 20.2%
Other	3 1.2%	8 2.9%	19 4.9%	14 2.3%	23 3.0%	34 3.9%	624 2.5%	1,362 4.5%	1,236 3.5%
Public Administration	9 3.6%	0 0.0%	6 1.6%	9 1.5%	20 2.6%	21 2.4%	571 2.3%	710 2.4%	842 2.4%
Total Employed Persons	253	279	384	589	763	870	24,947	30,150	35,677
Unemployed Persons	25	11	31	58	39	38	2,013	1,590	2,255
Total Labor Force	278	290	415	650	802	911	26,960	31,740	37,944
Percent Unemployed	9.9%	3.9%	8.1%	9.9%	5.1%	4.4%	8.1%	5.3%	6.3%
Persons 16 Years +	0	442	583	0	1,097	1,237	0	47,202	53,135

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

Section 1.5 Forecasts

A. Population Projections

Portage County Planning and Zoning Department prepares population projections for each of the municipalities within the County. The methodology for this projection is included in Appendix F of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Town of Almond Plan Commission has adopted the following projected population totals for the planning period:

Yr 2005: 712 Yr 2010: 731 Yr 2015: 747 Yr 2020: 768

B. Household Projections

Household projections for Almond will be based on the above stated population projection divided by the anticipated number of persons per household in both 2010 and 2020.

The number of persons per household has been steadily declining in Almond, from 3.17 persons in 1980 to 2.65 persons in 2000. Using a method of linear regression, the forecasted number of persons per household (PPH) in 2010 will be 2.35. Forecasting numbers far into the future using linear regression produces increased uncertainty, therefore, the persons per household will be held at 2.35 for 2020. Keep in mind that these numbers represent projections and should not be used as absolute.

Using a PPH of 2.35 for this plan horizon (2020), the household projections for Almond are:

Yr 2010: 311 households Yr 2020: 327 households

C. Employment Projections

Although employment in the agricultural sector has declined over the last twenty years (Table 1.9), the Town projects that agriculture related employment, including farm operations, will continue to provide job opportunities for its residents. Future job opportunities outside of the agriculture sector are projected to be created throughout the County, including the Stevens Point urban area, in the service, government, manufacturing, and finance sectors.

Section 1.6 Community Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The Town of Almond recognizes the important role that agricultural operations play in the economy, and toward the preservation of a rural lifestyle and community character. Town residents wish to protect as much agricultural land as practicable while allowing for future development needs. Town residents also recognize the importance that natural resources, such as the Wolf Lake area and scenic vistas along the moraines, contribute toward rural character. Recognition of these assets should be taken into consideration as growth and development occurs over time.

Goals, objectives and policies provide the framework for guiding future community development activities in the Town of Almond. A means of deriving goals and policies is through issue identification. Many of the issue statements in the various plan elements are framed as questions.

This was purposefully done so that answering the questions would help plan commissioners form goal or policy statements. Goals are stated as desirable conditions to strive toward in the future. They are common ideals of the community that can be achieved through the actions of government leaders, private enterprise and individuals. Objectives are general targets to be achieved along the path of satisfying community goals. Policies are more specific recommendations or methods of action to accomplish these stated objectives. Together these three pieces express the uniqueness of the community while providing guidance for desirable patterns of growth and development. The following statements are reflective of the overall desires of the community:

A. Goal

Maintain or improve the current quality of life and rural character in the Town by properly guiding development patterns.

B. Objectives

1. Direct non-farm housing away from productive agricultural areas.
2. Protect important natural areas throughout the Town.
3. Ensure that newly developed or redeveloped areas are compatible with existing uses of land.

C. Policies

1. Effective implementation tools, such as the Portage County Zoning Ordinance, official maps, and Town ordinances should be used and enforced.
2. Limit development densities throughout the Town, preserve productive farmland, and protect natural resources and open spaces as a means of preserving rural character.