

**ISSUES AND  
OPPORTUNITIES  
ELEMENT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this section is to provide basic background information for the comprehensive planning process and general population and demographic characteristics for the Town of Highland. More specifically this section includes information from the community survey and visioning sessions, demographic trends including population trends, age distribution, housing trends, education levels, income levels, employment characteristics, population projections, housing projections, and labor force projections.

**Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001(2)(a)****(a) *Issues and opportunities element.***

Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local governmental unit.

## **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES POLICIES**

The following are the issues and opportunities policies for the Town of Highland. The essence of these recommendations is carried out throughout the entire document.

- **Protect and improve the health, safety, and welfare of residents in the Town of Highland.**
- **Preserve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Town of Highland.**
- **Protect and preserve the small community character of the Town of Highland.**

Note: The above policy recommendations are further explained in other elements of this comprehensive plan. This section provides background information and overall direction. For example, the above recommendations may be carried out by implementing recommendations in other sections such as housing, economic development, and transportation.

## **BACKGROUND**

Iowa County, together with twenty-two jurisdictions, including the Town of Highland, applied for a Comprehensive Planning Grant through the Wisconsin Department of Administration in the fall of 2001. In the spring of 2002, the Comprehensive Planning Grant was awarded. Iowa County and the jurisdictions within it contracted with the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) to complete individual comprehensive plans for each of the twenty-three jurisdictions (Iowa County, cities, towns, and villages) in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes 66.1001.

Because of the large number of involved jurisdictions and in an effort to streamline planning meetings, individual jurisdictions were grouped into “clusters”, based on their physical proximity to one another, resulting in six cluster groups. Iowa County was a separate cluster.

- “Northwest Cluster” (Towns of Highland and Pulaski, Villages of Avoca and Highland)
- “Northeast Cluster” (Towns of Arena, Clyde, and Wyoming, and the Village of Arena)
- “Central Cluster” (Towns of Dodgeville and Ridgeway, Village of Ridgeway, and City of Dodgeville)
- “Southwest Cluster” (Towns of Eden, Linden and Mifflin, and Village of Linden)
- “South Central Cluster” (Towns of Mineral Point and Waldwick, and City of Mineral Point)
- “Southeast Cluster” (Town of Moscow, and Villages of Blanchardville and Hollandale)
- Iowa County

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **COMMUNITY SURVEY**

In September and October of 2002, the staff from SWWRPC and University of Wisconsin Extension Service-Iowa County (UWEX-Iowa County) developed a countywide survey that was distributed to all property owners in Iowa County. A total of 10,752 surveys were sent out, 384 to Town of Highland property owners. Ninety-seven surveys were sent back, giving the Town a 25 percent return rate. (See Appendix A-1 for complete survey results.)

### **COMMUNITY VISION**

A vision statement identifies where an organization intends to be in the future and how to best meet the future needs of its stakeholders: citizens. The vision statement incorporates a shared understanding of the nature and purpose of the organization and uses this understanding to move towards a greater purpose together. SWWRPC, in conjunction with UWEX-Iowa County, sponsored visioning sessions for each cluster in the autumn and winter of 2002-2003. The Town of Highland’s planning commission utilized the visioning information from these sessions to create a formal vision statement. The vision statement by the Town of Highland is

*The Town of Highland will be a leader in developing, maintaining, and enhancing a safe and prosperous municipality through effective provision of services to the public.*

**VISIONING**

In February 2003, the Town of Highland planning representatives were asked to identify issues, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses specific to the Town of Highland. The following lists are based on the cluster visioning exercise, countywide survey, and local Plan Commission meetings. (See Appendix A-2 for the Northwest Cluster's visioning cluster.)

**Issues:**

- High tax base
- Declining school enrollment
- Aging population, more absentee landowners
- Annexation of developed/undeveloped property
- Telecommunication towers in future
- Citizen participation needs improvement
- Drop in our agricultural area of jobs and becoming home to a largely non-agricultural population, facing critical changes for jobs
- Losing agriculture land to development

**Opportunities:**

- Managed Forest Land Program
- Strong real estate
- Combine programs with other schools
- Access to many job sources via HWY 18
- Good recreation areas (i.e. Blackhawk Lake)
- Community pride
- Good hunting area

**Strengths:**

- Natural beauty and resources
- Low population density
- Small town pride
- Good services for our present needs

**Weaknesses:**

- Low job opportunities/wages
- No real economic growth in this area
- Poor participation
- Decline of agricultural economy

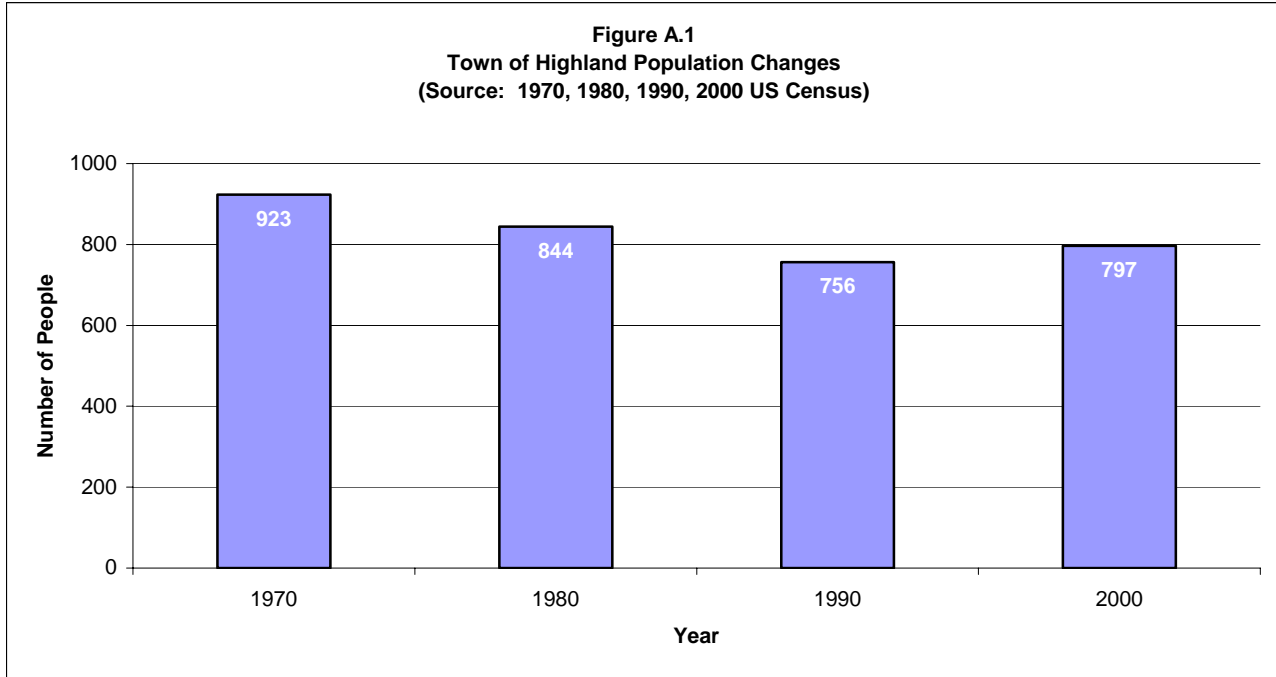
**COMMUNITY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

See Appendix A-3 for your jurisdiction's public participation plan.

**DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS**

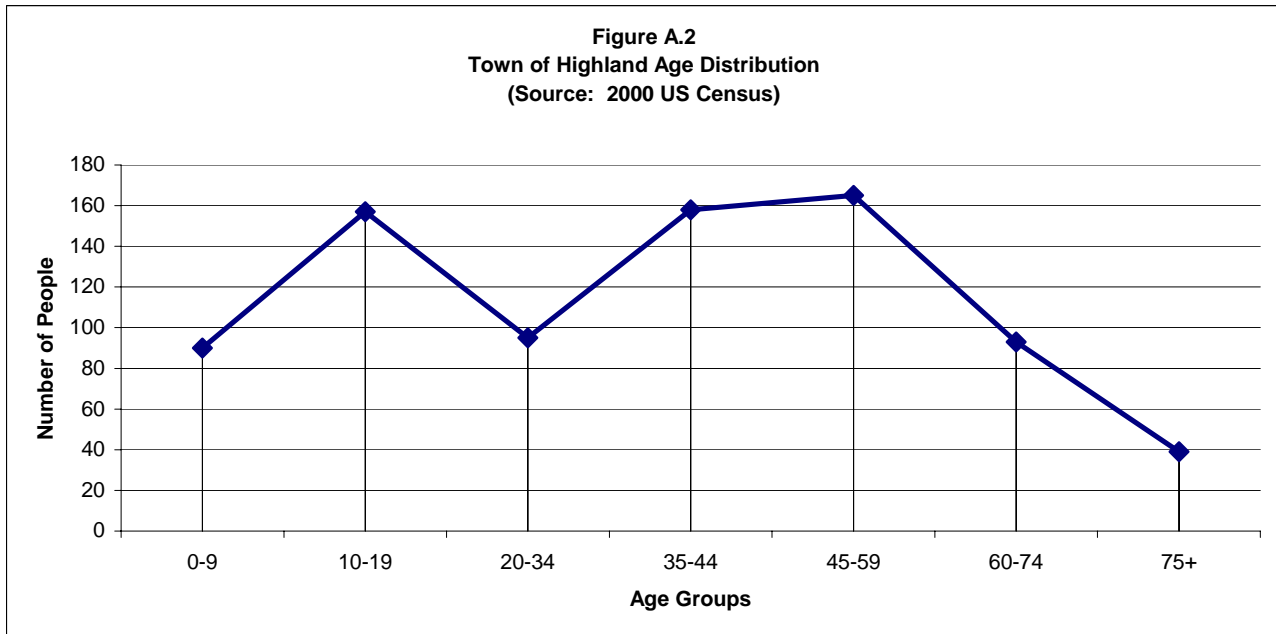
**POPULATION CHANGES**

The Town of Highland's population has dropped by 126 people over the past thirty years. Between 1970 and 1980 the Town's population dropped 9 percent and between 1980 and 1990 it dropped again by 10 percent. However, from 1990 to 2000 the Town grew 5 percent.



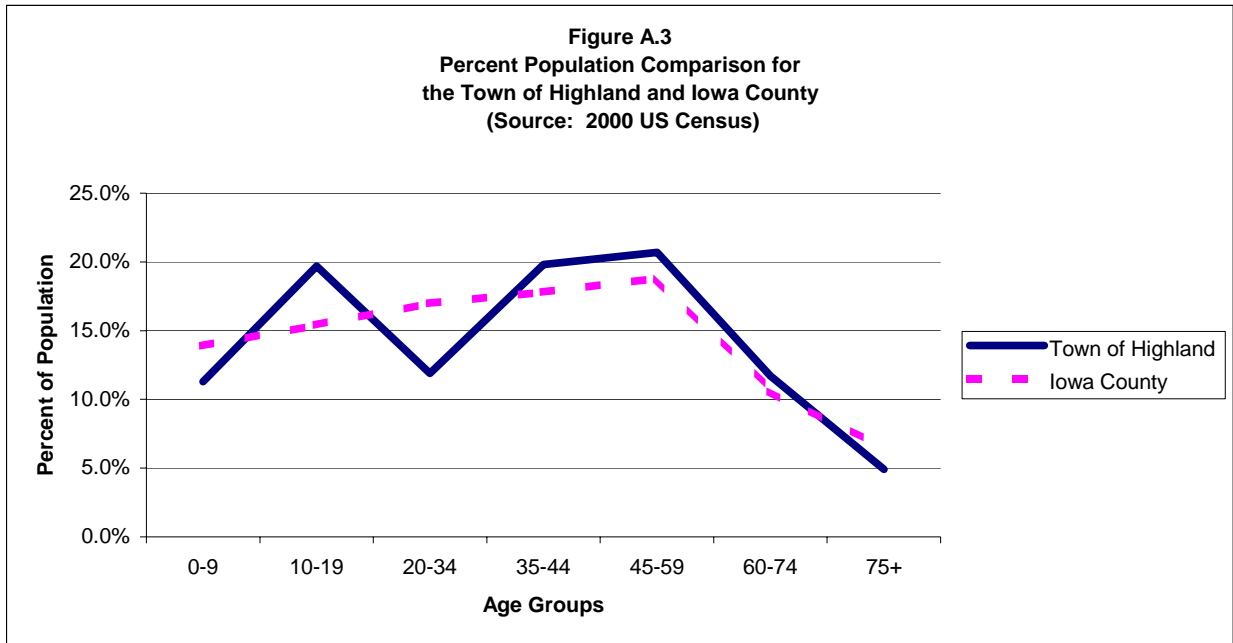
**AGE DISTRIBUTION**

Figure A.2 shows the age distribution of the Town of Highland residents, according to the 2000 US Census. Overall the population is well distributed among all the various age groups. The age groups of 10 to 19 and 45 to 59 year olds have the highest concentrations of population in the Town.



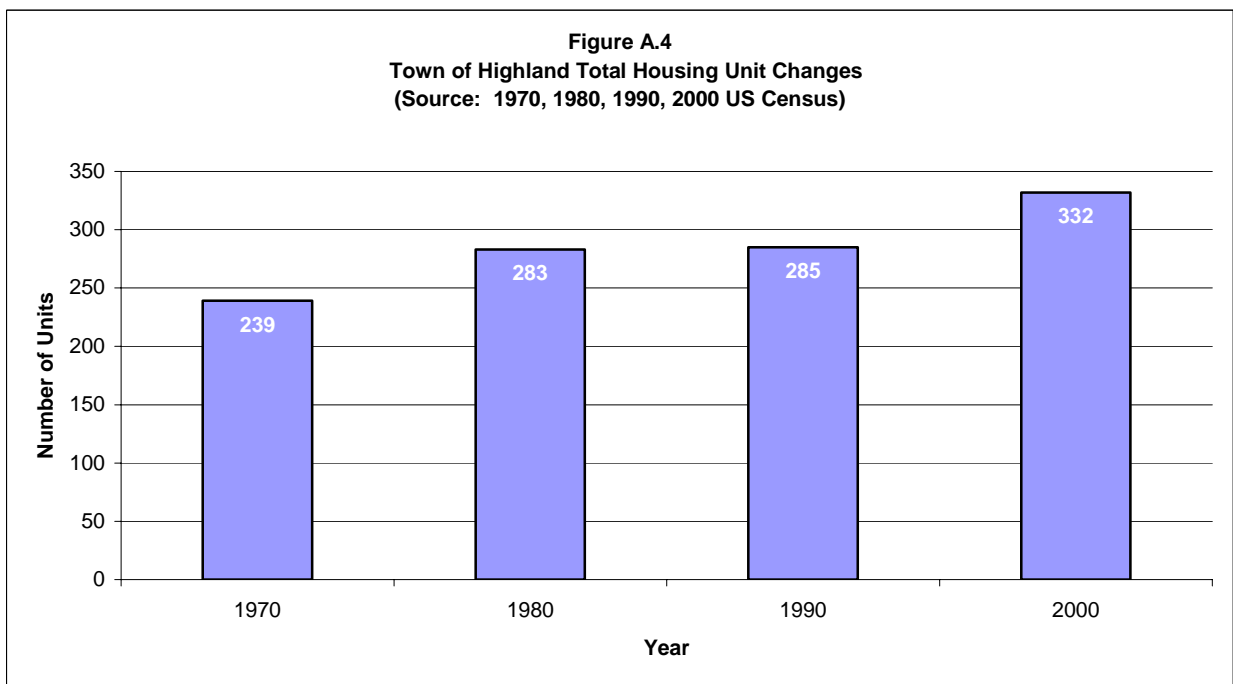
**PERCENT POPULATION**

Figure A.3 compares the Town population to Iowa County as a whole. The breakdown of the Town population is somewhat similar to the County population, although the Town is much higher than the County in the 10 to 19 year age group and much lower in the 20 to 34 year group.

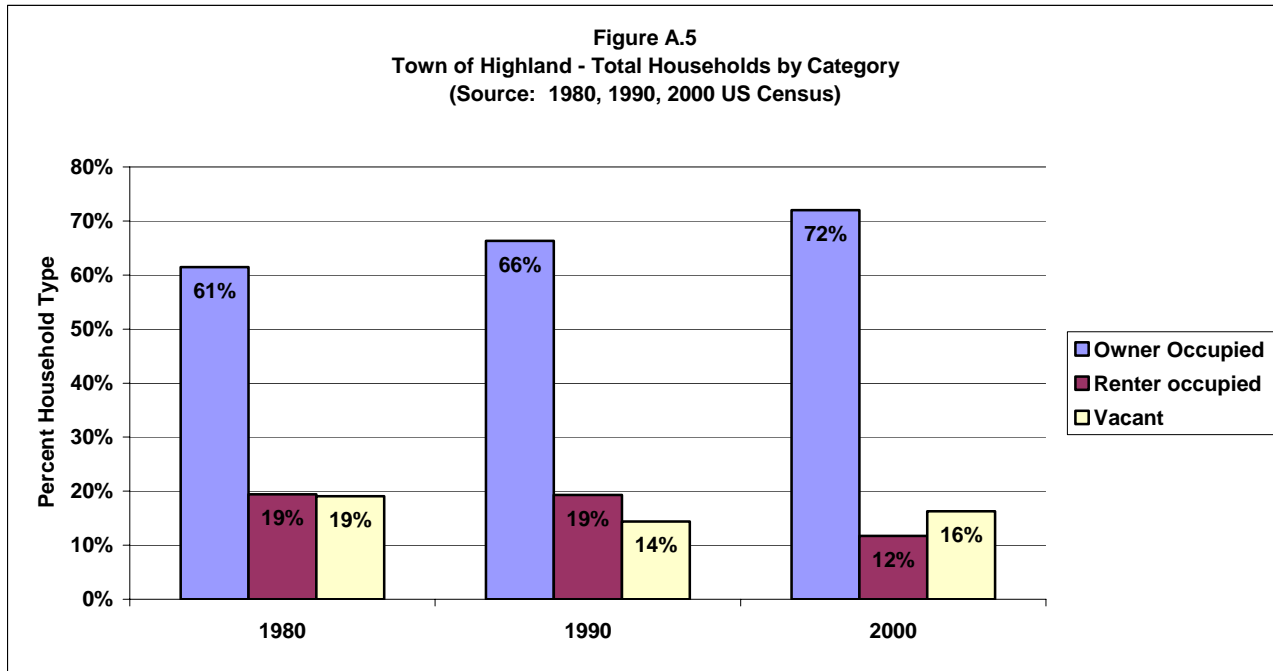


**HOUSING TRENDS**

Historically, the Town of Highland has seen an overall increase in the housing supply. “Total Housing Units” refers to the total number of units available for habitation: owned, rented, and vacant. As indicated by Figure A.4 the Town of Highland had an increase of ninety-three units between 1970 and 2000. For more housing information, go to Section B, Housing Element.



“Total Households” refers to occupied (owned and rented) housing units only. Figure A.5 shows of the 633 housing units in the Town in the year 2000, 72 percent are owner occupied, 12 percent are renter occupied, and the remaining 16 percent are vacant. The average number of persons per household is 2.85 for owner occupied units, 2.85 for rental units.



**EDUCATION LEVELS**

An important factor tied to a community’s economic well being, as well as its potential for economic growth, is the link between education levels of residents and employment opportunities. Table A.1 reflects the educational attainment of the Town residents 25 years and older compared with Iowa County and the State of Wisconsin.

**Table A.1: Educational Attainment of Residents 25 Years and Older**

Education	Town of Highland		Iowa County Percent	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
< 9th grade	22	5.7%	4.2%	5.4%
9th-12th grade, no diploma	37	9.6%	7.4%	9.6%
HS Grad (incl. Equivalency)	183	47.5%	41.8%	34.6%
Some college, no degree	63	16.4%	19.9%	20.6%
Associate Degree	33	8.6%	8.3%	7.5%
Bachelors Degree	44	11.4%	13.2%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3	0.8%	5.3%	7.2%
Total	385	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

**INCOME COMPARISONS**

Table A.2 compares the income levels of the Town of Highland with those of Iowa County and the State of Wisconsin. Median household income is based on every unit of occupancy with one or more unrelated individuals. Median family income is based on units of occupancy with individuals related by blood (children, grandparents, etc.) or law (marriage, adoption, etc.). Per capita income is based on each individual wage earner.

**Table A.2: Income Comparisons**

Income Type	Town of Highland	Iowa County	State of Wisconsin
Median household income	\$45,870	\$42,518	\$43,791
Median family income	\$49,375	\$49,972	\$52,911
Per capita income	\$20,765	\$19,497	\$21,271

Source: 2000 US Census

**EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

Table A.3 is reflective of the 2000 US Census for employed persons 16 years and over and their respective occupations in the Town of Highland, compared by percentage to Iowa County and the State of Wisconsin. By definition of the Census, occupation is referred to as the type of work a person does on the job. For more information, go to Section F, Economic Development Element.

**Table A.3: Employment Characteristics**

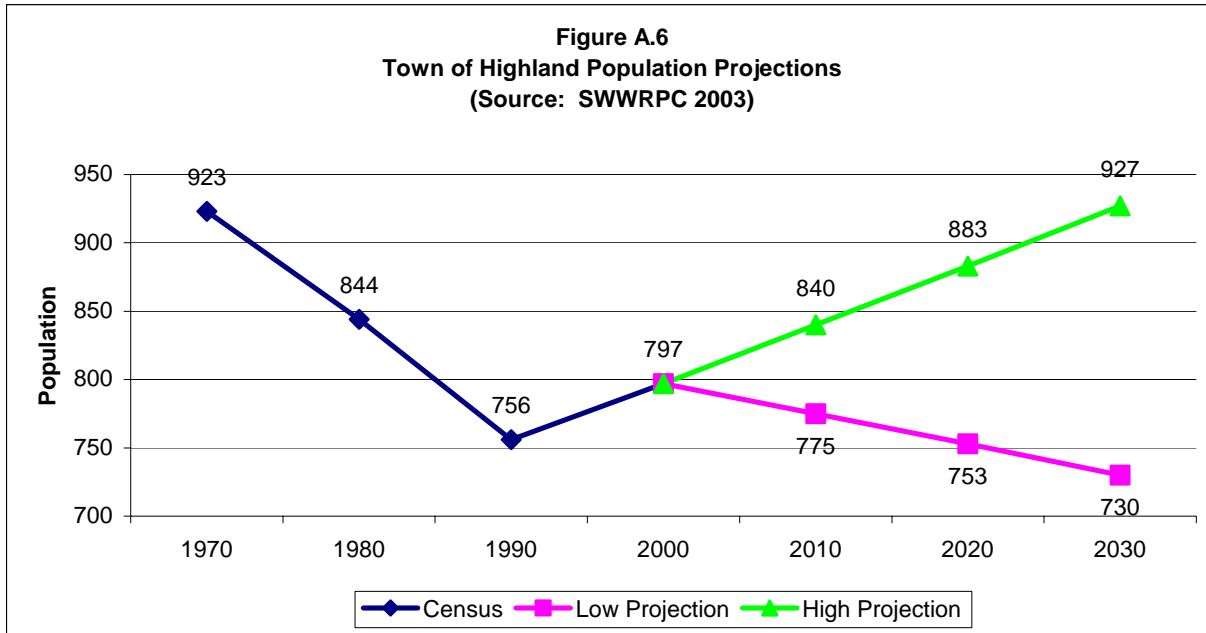
Occupation	Town of Highland		Iowa County Percent	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
Management, professional and related	54	15.0%	30.9%	31.3%
Services occupations	61	17.0%	12.8%	14.0%
Sales and office occupations	88	24.5%	25.5%	25.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	2	0.6%	2.5%	0.9%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	68	18.9%	10.9%	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	86	24.0%	17.4%	19.8%
Total employed civilian population 16 years and older	359	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

**DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS**

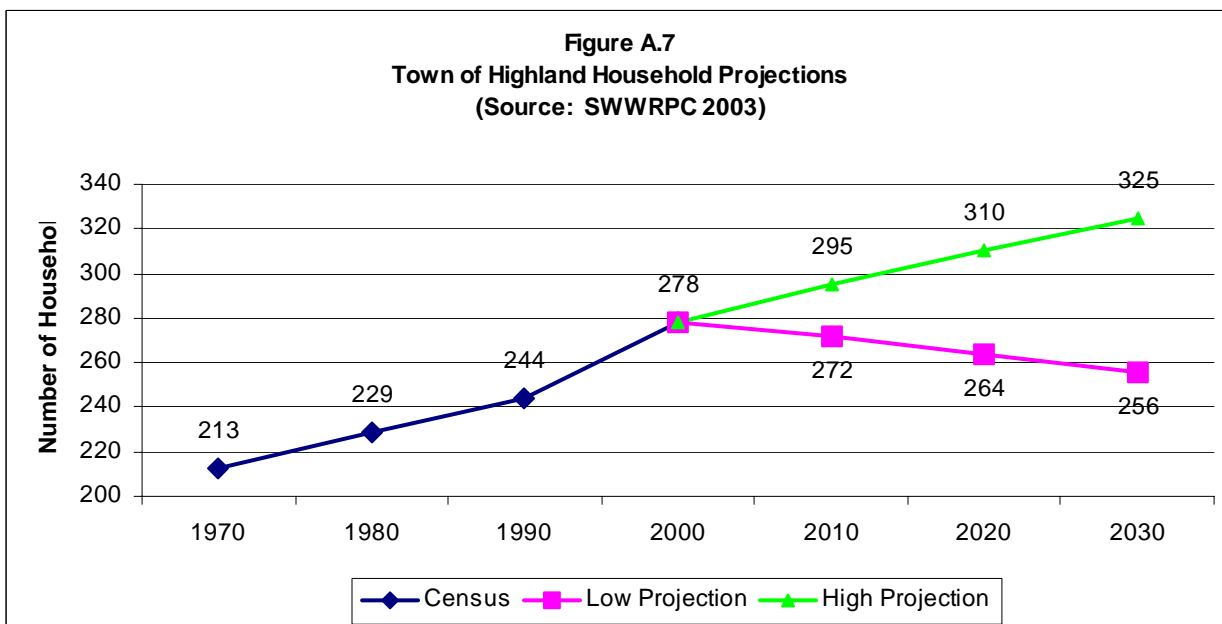
**POPULATION**

Preparing population projections is necessary to provide planners, developers, and others with expected increases or decreases in given base years. Reliable projections of population are needed for all kinds of planning or policy decisions whether involving the need for extending utilities, building a new highway, or starting a business. All these require some notion of probable demand for such facilities. Figure A.6 shows past population trends as well as projections to the year 2030. The figure gives both low and high projections, showing an overall population increase in the next 30 years.



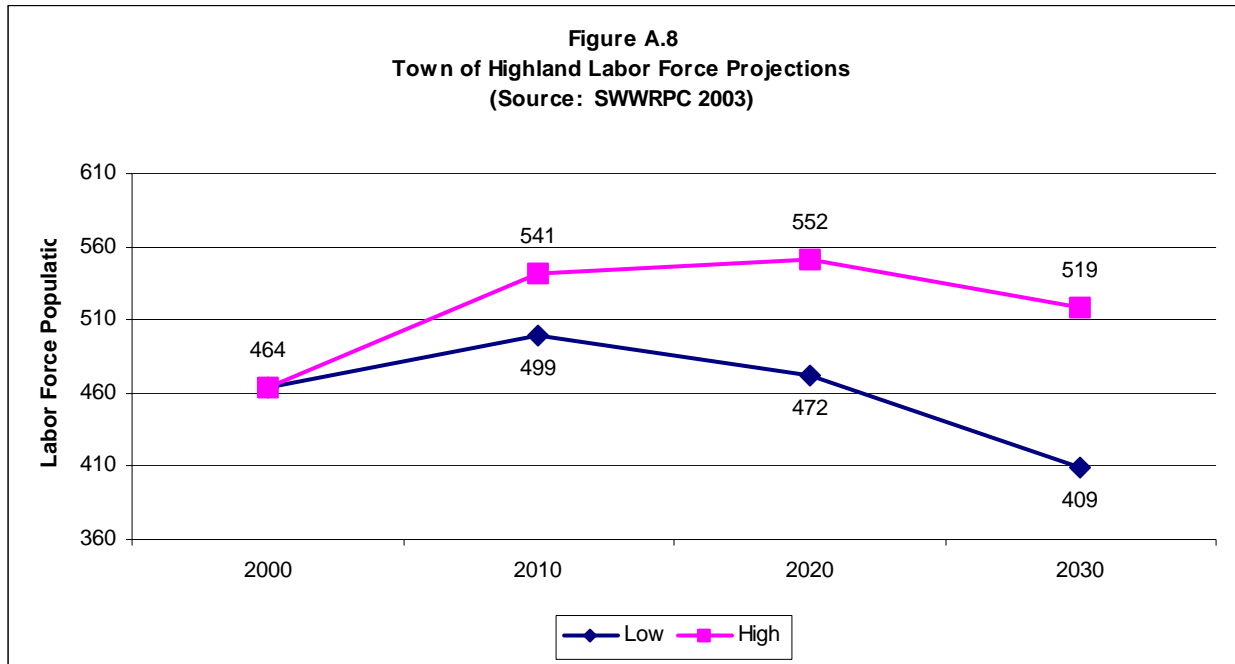
**HOUSEHOLD**

Figure A.7 shows household projections based on population projections and average household size from the 2000 US Census.



**LABOR FORCE**

Figure A.8 shows labor force projections for the Town of Highland. These available workers will not necessarily find employment in the Town: many will work in nearby towns and cities. The figure merely indicates the available labor pool residing in the Town of Highland. For more information, go to Section F, Economic Development Element.



All of the projections presented in this section are based on past trends. The projections are intended as a guide. A sudden change, such as the creation of a large industry in an outlying area may dramatically impact these projections.