

**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 Ridgeway. 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 Ridgeway. 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 Ridgeway.**
- **Preserve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Town of Ridgeway.**
- **Protect and preserve the small community character of the Town of Ridgeway.**

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 Ridgeway, 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 participating 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, 281 to Town of Ridgeway property owners. Ninety-three surveys were sent back, giving the Town a 33 percent return rate. (See Appendix A-1 for complete survey results.)

COMMUNITY VISION

A vision statement identifies where an organization (the Town of Ridgeway) 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 Ridgeway’s planning commission utilized the visioning information from these sessions to create a formal vision statement. The vision statement by the Town of Ridgeway is

Preserve the family farm/rural heritage flavor by preserving productive agricultural land and yet provide for growth of the community by recognizing the needs and potential of all age and diverse groups within in the community.

VISIONING

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

Issues:

- Ridgeway access to Hwy 18/151
- High taxes
- Land use planning
- Garbage disposal
- Town recreation area
- Employment opportunities

Opportunities:

- Meet w/DOT on access planning
- Look at increasing efficiencies and control spending
- Continue to send newsletters
- Continue to formulate, plan, and educate public
- Inventory recreation area in Town and make residents aware of it
- Continue awareness of employment needs in land use plan

Strengths:

- Having a working and functioning Land Use Commission
- People like the rural atmosphere of the jurisdiction
- Good outdoor recreation possibilities
- Leading attitude is to preserve the rural character
- Stable population
- Good road service for Township

Weaknesses:

- Discontent over taxes
- People concerned about law enforcement
- Need for better communication
- Real lack of understanding of tax structure and government fundamentals of Town organization

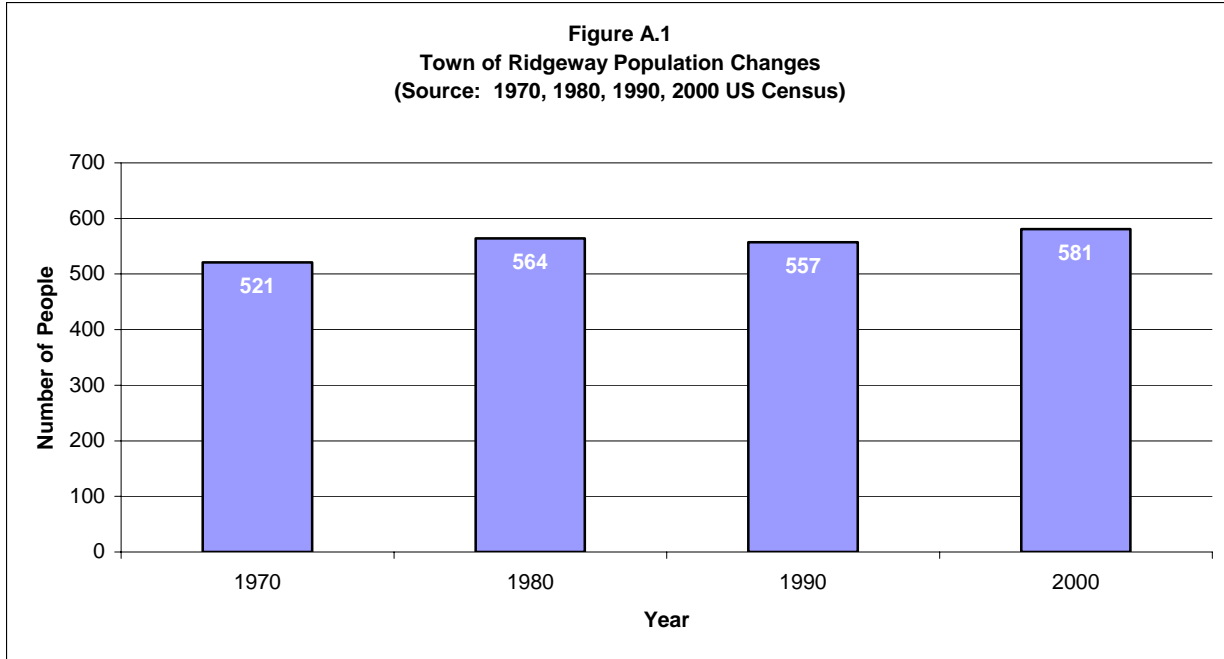
COMMUNITY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

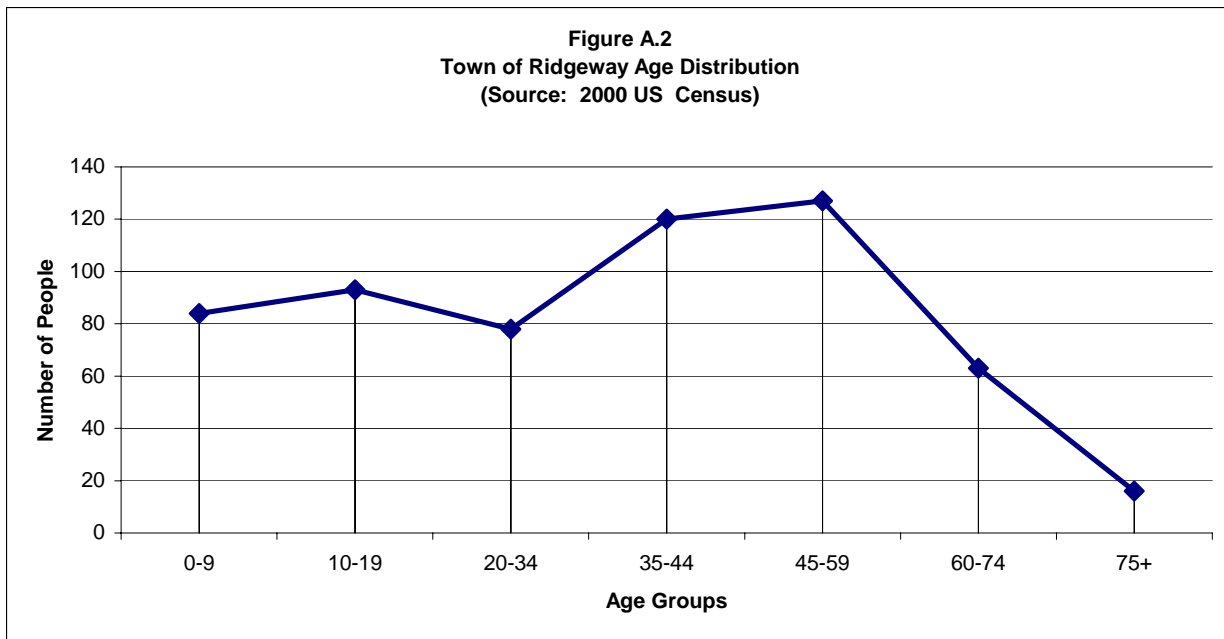
POPULATION CHANGES

The Town of Ridgeway’s population has increased by sixty-one people over the past 30 years. Between 1970 and 1980 the Town grew by 8 percent and between 1980 and 1990 it lost 1 percent. From 1990 to 2000 the Town grew 4 percent.



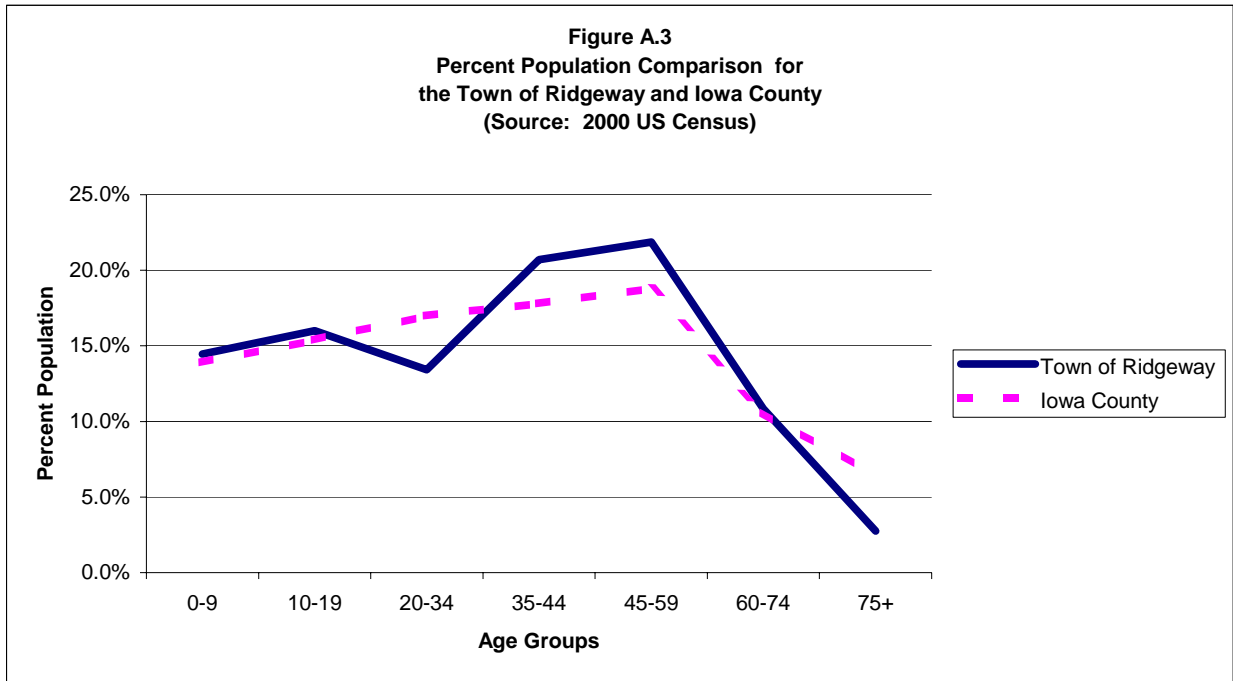
AGE DISTRIBUTION

Figure A.2 shows the age distribution of the Town of Ridgeway residents, according to the 2000 US Census. Overall the population is well distributed among all the various age groups. The age group of 45 to 59 year olds has the highest concentration of the population in the Town.



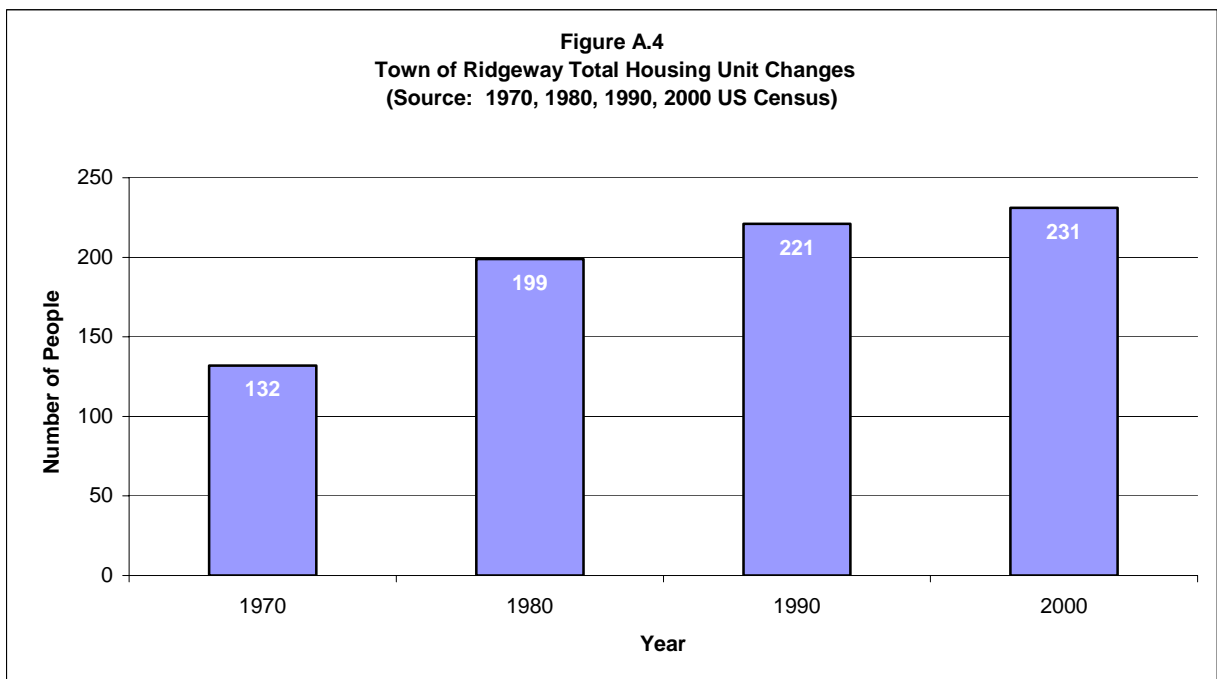
PERCENT POPULATION

Figure A.3 compares the Town's population to Iowa County as a whole. The breakdown of the Town population is somewhat similar to the county population, although the Town is higher than the county in the 35 to 44 and 45 to 59 year age groups.

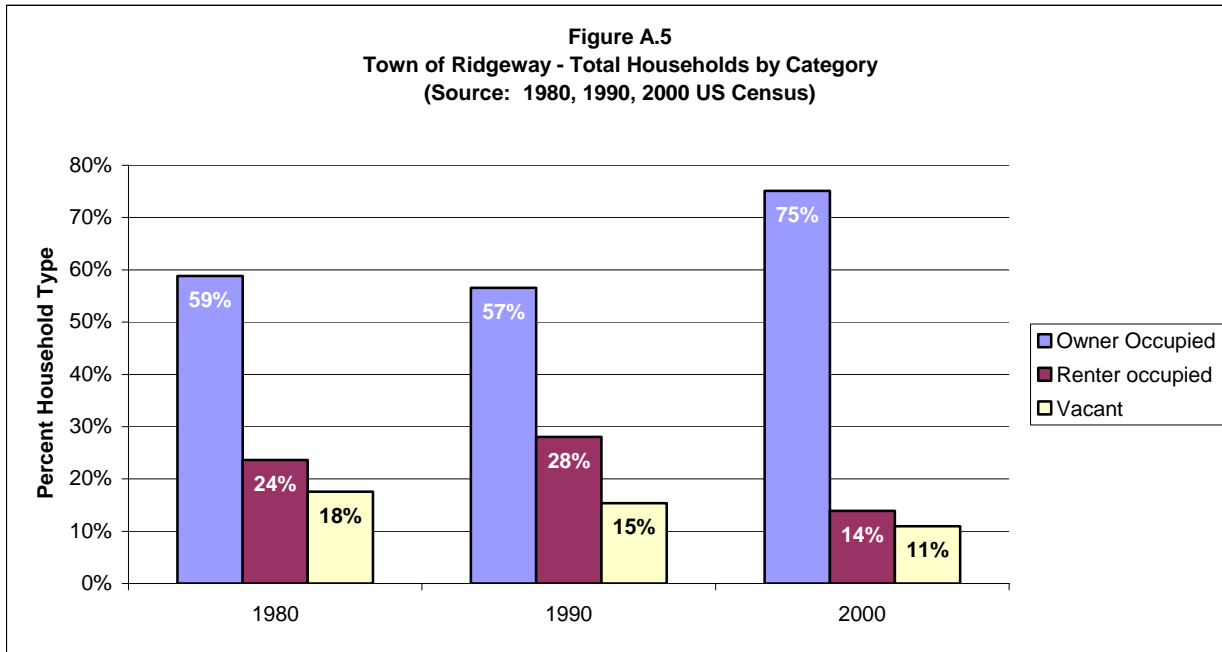


HOUSING TRENDS

Historically, the Town of Ridgeway 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 Ridgeway had an increase of ninety-nine units between 1970 and 2000. For more housing information, see Section B, Housing Element.



“Total Households” refers to occupied (owned and rented) housing units only. Figure A.5 shows of the 231 housing units in Town of Ridgeway in 2000, 75 percent are owner occupied, 14 percent are renter occupied, and the remaining 11 percent are vacant. The average number of persons per household is 2.64 for owner occupied units, 3.15 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 Ridgeway		Iowa County Number	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
<9 th grade	8	2.0%	4.2%	5.4%
9 th –12 th grade, no diploma	28	7.0%	7.4%	9.6%
HS Grad (incl. Equivalency)	168	42.1%	41.8%	34.6%
Some college, no degree	94	23.6%	19.9%	20.6%
Associate Degree	36	9.0%	8.3%	7.5%
Bachelor Degree	45	11.3%	13.2%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	20	5.0%	5.3%	7.2%
Total population 25 Years and older	399	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

INCOME COMPARISONS

Table A.2 compares the income levels of the Town of Ridgeway 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 Ridgeway	Iowa County	State of Wisconsin
Median household income	\$50,938	\$45,518	\$43,791
Median family income	\$54,500	\$49,972	\$52,911
Per capita income	\$18,419	\$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 Ridgeway, 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 of this plan.

Table A.3: Employment Characteristics

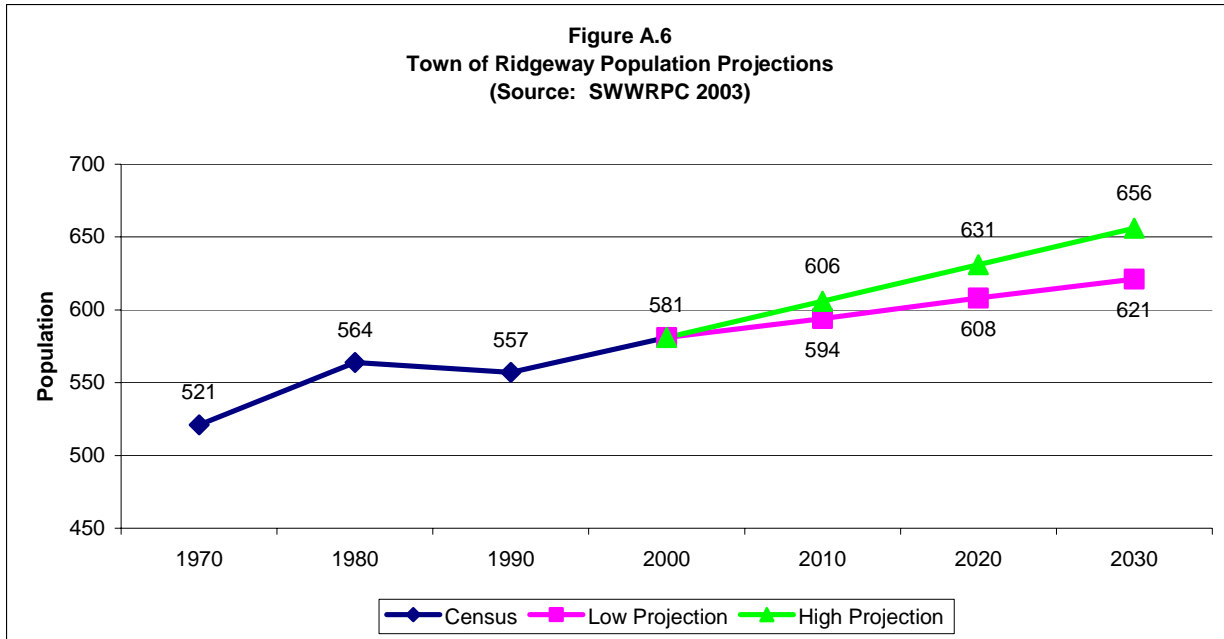
Occupations	Town of Ridgeway		Iowa County Percent	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
Management, professional and related	119	37.0%	30.9%	31.3%
Services occupations	34	10.6%	12.8%	14.0%
Sales and office occupations	76	23.6%	25.5%	25.2%
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	10	3.1%	2.5%	0.9%
Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations	23	7.1%	10.9%	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	60	18.6%	17.4%	19.8%
Total employed civilian population 16 years and older	322	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS

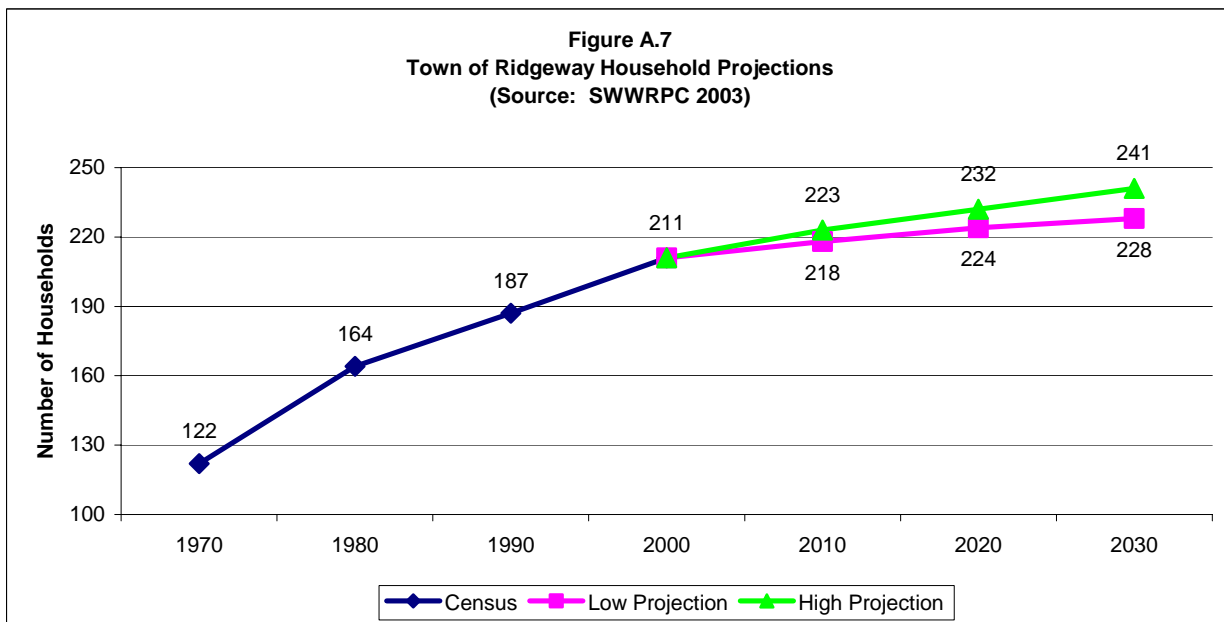
POPULATION

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.



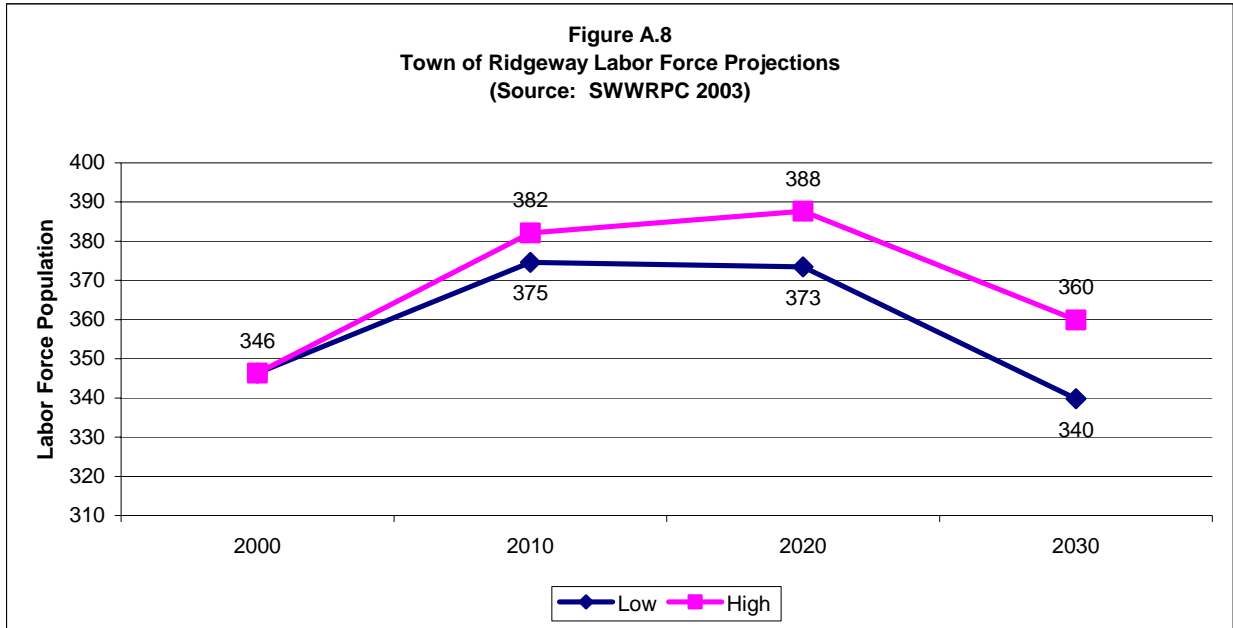
HOUSEHOLD

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 Ridgeway. 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 Ridgeway. 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.