

CHAPTER 2, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

For the Issues and Opportunities Element of the Plan, the Wisconsin comprehensive planning legislation requires the following:

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

This chapter summarizes data about the city from several different sources. These sources include the U.S. Census, the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration, and the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Detailed information from Census 2000 is Appendix A.

The sections and page numbers for this chapter are shown below:

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Background Information

The City of Oshkosh is the largest city in Winnebago County and has served as the county seat since 1850. As of the January 2004 population projections, Oshkosh is the eighth largest municipality in the state. Winnebago County is included within the boundaries of the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC). The Commission provides numerous comprehensive planning and data-related services.

Population

As shown in Table 2-1, the City of Oshkosh has experienced steady population growth over the past two decades. The city is adjacent to four towns – Algoma, Black Wolf, Nekimi, and Oshkosh. These towns are included for reference and

Table 2-1. Population	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	Actual Change 1980-2000	Percent Change 1980-2000
City of Oshkosh	49,620	55,006	62,916	13,296	26.8%
Town of Algoma	3,249	3,492	5,702	2,453	75.5%
Town of Black Wolf	2,318	2,154	2,330	12	0.5%
Town of Nekimi	1,516	1,475	1,419	-97	-6.4%
Town of Oshkosh	4,420	4,655	3,234	-1,186	-26.8%
Winnebago County	131,772	140,320	156,763	24,991	19.0%

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

informational purposes throughout the document. With annexations of properties from these adjoining towns, population changes for these towns are quite varied, some even negative. In 2000, the City contained 40 percent of the County's population.

As shown in Table 2-2, the city's population is projected to grow by about 450 persons per year over the next 20 years, according to the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC). The city's population is estimated to be over 75,130 persons in 2025. This is an increase of 19 percent from the Census 2000 population of 62,916 people.

Table 2-2. Population Projections	2000 Census	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	Percent Change 2000-2025
City of Oshkosh	62,916	65,928	67,996	70,080	72,416	75,137	19.4%
Town of Algoma	5,702	6,166	6,695	7,245	7,840	8,499	49.1%
Town of Black Wolf	2,330	2,448	2,495	2,541	2,594	2,659	14.1%
Town of Nekimi	1,419	1,455	1,444	1,429	1,417	1,407	-0.8%
Town of Oshkosh	3,234	2,778	2,529	2,261	1,982	1,691	-47.7%
Winnebago County	156,763	163,846	168,538	173,241	178,543	184,763	17.9%

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and ECWRPC October 2004

According to the DOA, two of the four adjacent towns are projected to decrease in population over the next two decades – the Town of Nekimi and the Town of Oshkosh. Winnebago County is expected to grow to almost 185,000 in 2025, an increase of about 18 percent from the Census 2000 population count.

Housing

Table 2-3 below shows selected housing characteristics from the last three censuses. Per the U.S. Census, households and housing units are defined differently. A “household” includes all persons occupying a housing unit, whether related or unrelated. Persons not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. A “housing unit” includes a house, an apartment, a mobile home, a group of rooms, or a single room that is occupied as separate living quarters.

Table 2-3. Selected Housing Characteristics	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census
Total Persons	49,620	55,006	62,916
Persons in Households	45,920	50,182	55,574
Group Quarters –			
• Institutionalized population	511	1,091	3,516
• Noninstitutionalized population	3,189	3,733	3,826
Percent of Population (5 years and older) living in the same house 5 years before the Census	50.4%	47.6%	45.7%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	11,098	11,942	13,851
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	7,188	9,015	10,231
Average household size:			
• Owner-occupied units	2.78	2.6	2.49
• Renter-occupied units	2.09	2.1	2.06

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

Analysis of housing data is important when preparing the Housing Element and the Land Use Element of this Plan. Population projections for the city are translated into an increased need for housing units in order to ensure enough land is available, zoned, and developed to provide a range of housing choices for the population increase. The average household size for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied households has steadily decreased over the past twenty years and is expected to continue to decrease over the next twenty. Thus, in the future, we will need more housing units for fewer people as compared to our past. In 15 to 20 years, East Central has projected “persons per household” may slowly begin to rise.

The institutionalized population is expected to increase from the 2000 Census counts with the construction of the new Winnebago County prison near the intersection of Jackson Street and CTH Y. This institutionalized population includes persons at facilities such as the Winnebago County Mental Health Institute, the state prison, and the Winnebago County prison. The non-institutionalized population may increase over time with the addition of residence halls at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh or additions and expansions of group homes.

Housing forecasts for the next twenty years were calculated by the ECWRPC, based on new population projections. Over the next twenty years with a 2025 population projection of 75,134 persons, approximately 29,371 housing units will be required to meet that population size.

The table below shows the actual number of households in the 2000 Census and estimated households for our future population growth. In the 2000 Census, the persons per household was 2.31 persons and this is estimated to lower to 2.27 persons per household in the year 2025. To accommodate future population growth and a 5 percent vacancy rate, it is estimated that an average of 210 new dwelling units is needed annually from 2005 through 2025.

Table 2-4. Household Projections	2000 Census	2005 Projection	2010 Projection	2015 Projection	2020 Projection	2025 Projection
Population	62,916	65,928	67,996	70,080	72,416	75,137
Persons per Household	2.31	2.30	2.29	2.28	2.28	2.27
Number of Occupied Households	24,082	25,230	26,171	27,075	28,054	29,145

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and ECWRPC October 2004

Employment Forecast

The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) prepares economic forecast reports for metropolitan areas and for the state as a whole. Information in this section is based on three reports from the DOR – “Economic Outlook – Wisconsin” (March 2004), “Economic Outlook – Metropolitan Areas” (August 2003), and “Special Report – Wisconsin Long-Term Economic Forecast” (May 2001). The DOR analyzes demographic trends and past history at the local, state, and national levels in order to prepare these economic forecasts.

Technically the most recent recession lasted from March 2001 to November 2001; however, employment in Wisconsin in 2001 and 2002 experienced declines. Statewide, nonfarm employment is forecast to increase by 2.4% in 2005 and 1.6% in 2006, which is good news given the pattern of decreased employment in recent years. Along with the forecasted growth in employment is acceleration in income growth. In 2004, Wisconsin personal income is forecast to increase 4.4% followed by 5.5% in 2005 and 5.6% in 2006.

The Appleton-Oshkosh metropolitan area experienced very slight employment declines in 2001 and 2002 (0% and –0.5%, respectively), although the area had been experiencing typically a 2-3% growth during the 1990s. Strong growth in private non-manufacturing employment helped offset sharp declines in manufacturing employment. Manufacturing jobs are forecast to decline slightly in 2004 and then stabilize in 2005.

Similar to the national long-term employment trend, Wisconsin is expected to continue to lose manufacturing jobs, as a result of manufacturing production growing slowly and labor productivity continuing to improve. However, the rate of decline in Wisconsin, is expected to be less than the national average, implying an increasing concentration of manufacturing activity in the state.

Demographic Trends

Age Distribution

The table below shows additional characteristics of the Oshkosh population, as they relate to gender and age of the population. Over the past twenty years, Oshkosh had a fairly even balance between the male and female populations. The median age has continued to increase since 1980 and given the data on the city's aging population, will continue to do so.

Over the recent few decades, the proportion of the population has remained constant per age group, for the most part. In general, there has been an increase in the percentage of the population that is 35-54 years old and those over 75 years old. Three age categories have decreased in actual numbers from 1980 to 2000, even though the overall population continued to increase. These three declining categories are in the 55-74 year old ranges.

Table 2-5. Population by Age and Sex	1980 Census		1990 Census		2000 Census	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	49,620	100.0%	55,006	100.0%	62,916	100.0%
Male	23,193	46.7%	26,213	47.7%	31,449	50.0%
Female	26,427	53.3%	28,793	52.3%	31,467	50.0%
Under 5 years	2,846	5.7%	3,605	6.6%	3,421	5.4%
5 to 9 years	2,873	5.8%	3,472	6.3%	3,679	5.8%
10 to 14 years	3,166	6.4%	2,770	5.0%	3,746	6.0%
15 to 19 years	5,590	11.3%	4,805	8.7%	5,594	8.9%
20 to 24 years	7,239	14.6%	7,412	13.5%	8,020	12.7%
25 to 34 years	7,761	15.6%	9,475	17.2%	9,341	14.8%
35 to 44 years	4,351	8.8%	7,221	13.1%	9,372	14.9%
45 to 54 years	4,418	8.9%	4,313	7.8%	7,205	11.5%
55 to 59 years	2,324	4.7%	2,087	3.8%	2,316	3.7%
60 to 64 years	2,180	4.4%	2,116	3.8%	1,985	3.2%
65 to 74 years	3,901	7.9%	3,909	7.1%	3,748	6.0%
75 to 84 years	2,971	6.0%	2,933	5.3%	3,045	4.8%
85 years and over			888	1.6%	1,444	2.3%
Median Age (years)	29.6		30.4		32.4	

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

Educational Levels

The percentage of Oshkosh residents who have at least completed high school has steadily increased from 70 percent in 1980, to 79 percent in 1990, to 84 percent in 2000. The percentage of those who have pursued additional education past high school graduation has also continued to increase. In addition to the local public and private school system, opportunities for higher level degrees and certificate programs are available at the Fox Valley Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.

Table 2-6. Educational Attainment for persons 25 years and older	1990 Census		2000 Census	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 9 th grade	2,759	8.4%	1,635	4.2%
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	4,286	13.0%	4,526	11.8%
High School graduate	11,842	35.9%	13,790	35.8%
Some college, no degree	5,603	17.0%	7,376	19.2%
Associate degree	1,997	6.1%	2,293	6.0%
Bachelor's degree	4,282	13.0%	6,253	16.2%
Graduate or professional degree	2,173	6.6%	2,623	6.8%
Total	32,942	100.0%	38,496	100.0%
Percent high school graduate or higher		78.6%		84.0%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher		19.6%		23.1%

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

Income Levels

The table below shows the dispersion of income for households in the city. The 1989 and 1999 income level were reported in the 1990 and 2000 Census, respectively. With the rate of inflation over the 10-year period, it is expected that median household income would rise. With the rates of inflation, \$1.00 in 1989 had the same buying power as \$1.34 in 1999. Thus, the median household income of \$25,168 in 1989 had the same buying power of \$33,725 in 1999. The 1999 median household income exceeded this \$33,725 amount, indicating that household income in Oshkosh increased at a greater rate above inflation to an amount of \$37,636.

Table 2-7. Household Income	1989 (1990 Census)		1999 (2000 Census)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than \$10,000	3,372	16.0%	1,869	7.8%
\$10,000-14,999	2,387	11.3%	1,594	6.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,690	22.2%	4,003	16.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4,201	20.0%	3,696	15.4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3,638	17.3%	4,449	18.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,935	9.2%	5,100	21.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	531	2.5%	1,998	8.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	170	0.8%	938	3.9%
\$150,000 or more	130	0.6%	372	1.6%
Median Household Income	\$25,168		\$37,636	

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

The following table shows how the Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah Metropolitan Area compares to the county and to the state with the amount of per capita personal income. The per capita income is not available for the city only. Per capita personal income is defined as total personal income divided by the total population. Per capita personal income was computed using Census Bureau mid-year population estimates. The table shows that the State had the highest rate of average annual increase (5.2%) compared to the Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah Metropolitan Area (4.8%) and Winnebago County (4.1%).

Table 2-8. Per Capita Income Comparison	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	Average Annual Percent Change 1997-2001
Appleton-Oshkosh-Neenah Metro. Area	\$24,552	\$25,858	\$27,030	\$28,626	\$29,579	4.8%
Winnebago County	\$24,501	\$26,158	\$26,918	\$28,092	\$28,704	4.1%
Wisconsin	\$22,149	\$23,515	\$24,517	\$26,176	\$27,141	5.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Wisconsin Department of Commerce Special Report, 2003

Employment Characteristics

The table below shows the distribution per occupation of employed Oshkosh residents aged 16 years and over during the last three censuses. Overall, there has been a steady increase in the number and percentage of "Management and Professional" occupations and small decreases in those occupied in the "Farming, Fishing, and Forestry" sector and in the "Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Operations" sector.

Table 2-9. Occupation of Employed persons 16 years and over	1980 Census		1990 Census		2000 Census	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, Professional, & related occupations	4,675	20.3%	6,458	23.8%	9,084	28.3%
Service Occupations	4,267	18.5%	4,615	17.0%	5,829	18.1%
Sales and Office Occupations	6,848	29.7%	8,316	30.6%	8,627	26.8%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	119	0.5%	95	0.3%	75	0.2%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations	2,456	10.7%	2,529	9.3%	1,913	6.0%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	4,696	20.4%	5,157	19.0%	6,603	20.6%
Total	23,061		27,170		32,131	

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

In the 2000 Census, approximately 80 percent of workers were in the private sector, 17 percent were government workers, and 3 percent were self-employed. These proportions were similar to the distribution in the 1990 Census.

Community Survey Results

As part of the update to the Comprehensive Plan, a community survey was conducted. The survey was a variation of the questions used in the survey for the 1993 Comprehensive Plan process. Similar questions were used to determine if public opinion had significantly changed or remained constant over the past 10 years.

In the summer of 2002, over 800 surveys were returned to the Department of Community Development for analysis and tabulation. The survey was available electronically through the City's internet site, where over 100 people responded. The survey was available in paper form at the Public Library, the Seniors Center, the Chamber of Commerce, and in the lobby of City Hall. The survey was also placed as a flier in "The Northwestern" for the local newspaper circulation. The survey consisted of five opinion questions, four open-ended questions, and two general questions relating the survey respondent. Like most surveys, this one was not used as a "vote". Instead, this survey was used as another method in which opinions of the citizens were gathered for this comprehensive planning process. Steering Committees used the surveys as feedback and as a guide when forming the goals and actions for the elements of this Plan.

The options for the first five opinion questions were "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "No Opinion", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree". On the first question, asking whether the City should continue downtown revitalization efforts, over two-thirds replied either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree". This question was used as a reference when writing the goals and implementation actions for the Economic Development, Housing, and Land Use Elements. In the 1993 survey, over 73 percent of the respondents replied either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree", when asked this question. So, while there is a little less agreement to this statement 10 years later, the majority of respondents still believe downtown revitalization is important.

Question 1. The City should continue downtown revitalization efforts.

	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses	1993 Percent of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	270	33.2%	46.1%
Agree	277	34.1%	28.2%
No Opinion	20	2.5%	7.3%
Disagree	95	11.7%	6.7%
Strongly Disagree	151	18.6%	11.8%

Respondents agreed even more when they answered the question as to whether the Fox River should be the focus of revitalization efforts. Over 71 percent of respondents answered either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to this question. In 1993, however, over 84 percent of respondents held this same opinion. The same can be said for this statement as for the first question, that while there is a little less agreement to this statement, the opinion that revitalization on the Fox River corridor should continue is significant.

Question 2: The Fox River corridor should be a focal point for revitalization efforts.

	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses	1993 Percent of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	262	32.5%	50.9%
Agree	313	38.8%	33.6%
No Opinion	79	9.8%	5.8%
Disagree	96	11.9%	5.2%
Strongly Disagree	57	7.1%	4.6%

In the third question, respondents were asked to consider neighborhoods throughout the city and other areas outside of downtown. Over 77 percent of respondents replied either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” as to whether the city should undertake improvement projects in these areas. Overall, respondents agreed slightly more in the 2002 survey than the 1993 survey.

Question 3: The City should undertake improvement projects and programs to revitalize targeted neighborhoods and commercial areas outside of Downtown.

	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses	1993 Percent of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	204	25.3%	30.9%
Agree	420	52.1%	42.4%
No Opinion	78	9.7%	10.9%
Disagree	73	9.1%	9.7%
Strongly Disagree	31	3.8%	6.1%

In the survey, Question 4 had the most amount of agreement from respondents when asked whether the city should continue its practice of encouraging industrial park development. Fewer than 10 percent of respondents answered “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” to this statement. This question is important when formulating goals and implementation actions for the Economic Development, Transportation, and Land Use Elements of the Plan.

Question 4: The City should continue its present practice of encouraging industrial park development.

	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses	1993 Percent of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	288	35.9%	67.6%
Agree	372	46.3%	24.9%
No Opinion	69	8.6%	2.4%
Disagree	51	6.4%	3.0%
Strongly Disagree	23	2.9%	2.1%

The final opinion question of the survey asked respondents about the upgrade of major streets in the city, even if this included the removal of parking. Approximately 78 percent of respondents replied they “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the statement. This is a similar percentage to those that responded “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” in 1993. It is important to note, however, some respondents added a written comments that they did not think street upgrades should necessarily include the removal of parking.

Question 5: The City should continue to upgrade major streets in the community, including the removal of parking and other improvements to aid in the movement of traffic.

	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses	1993 Percent of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	295	37.4%	47.3%
Agree	320	40.6%	37.3%
No Opinion	50	6.3%	3.3%
Disagree	87	11.0%	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	36	4.6%	4.9%

Questions 6 through 9 were in an open-ended format. Due to limitations of space, additional survey-related information, including a copy of the survey and the most-common answers from respondents are found in Appendix B.

Vision Statements

Vision Statements were developed for the Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources, Utilities and Community Facilities, and the Intergovernmental Elements. These vision statements were developed within each individual steering committee. Each individual element of this Comprehensive Plan includes a set of goals, objectives and implementation actions. These vision statements will serve as the policy statements for the city and will guide the future decision-making processes.

Housing Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will continue to utilize and implement programs to preserve and create a variety of housing types appropriate to residents of all income levels, ages, desires and needs.

Oshkosh will maintain and improve the condition of existing housing stock through rehabilitation and design assistance, historic preservation activities, increased code enforcement and education of property owners and renters.

Oshkosh will promote environmentally sensitive and compact design of new residential units, incorporating an efficient multi-modal transportation network that provides vehicular and pedestrian access to jobs, education, and shopping.

Land Use Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will continue to promote compact, compatible, and efficient utilization of land, infrastructure, and services; encourage infill development and redevelopment in areas where services and infrastructure currently exist; and facilitate redevelopment of the central city and waterfront areas.

Transportation Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will maintain and create a safe, efficient, effective and environmentally sensitive, transportation system that is recognized as a future model throughout the State of Wisconsin, one that improves the quality of life, promotes efficient and effective commerce, and creates new economic growth and development opportunities for all the city's residents.

Economic Development Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will be a premier community in the Fox Valley by developing and retaining a diverse mix of employees and employment opportunities thereby enabling continued success in the local, regional, and global economies. The city will have a skilled workforce and an environment fostering entrepreneurial activity. Oshkosh will revitalize its downtown, central city area, and Fox River corridor by eliminating blighting conditions and addressing environmentally contaminated property.

Utilities and Community Facilities Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will provide a high level of community facilities and services to city residences and business. We will work cooperatively with other governmental agencies to ensure adequate regional levels of service. Public and private service providers will provide a high quality service at the lowest possible costs.

Agricultural Resources Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will have community gardens and other community-supported agricultural activities, such as farmer's markets and harvest programs.

Natural Resources Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will protect the city's natural and environmentally sensitive resources. We will work cooperatively with other local units of government and agencies to protect these resources. The community will be educated on the value of these resources.

Cultural Resources Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will be the arts, cultural, historical, and educational center of Northeast Wisconsin, integrating the city's history and historic built environment with new growth and development opportunities.

Intergovernmental Element Vision Statement

Oshkosh will establish boundary agreements with adjoining jurisdictions, in recognition of the importance of efficient land use and service delivery. These agreements will provide a structure for the provision of services, the designation of annexation areas, and the sharing of facilities. The city, other governmental jurisdictions, and local school systems will benefit from an open network of communication by sharing information on new developments, future plans, and population and housing data.