

CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element

Section 6.1 Introduction

This element will present information about the economy within the Town of Alban. Economic development, which can be defined as the type and level of business activity within an area, is often based on a combination of market forces, regulation, and the extent of local government encouragement. The Town of Alban has historically been a rural community of primarily agricultural activity with a scattering of small-scale commercial uses. This trend will likely continue. As such, the Town recognizes that the majority of non-agriculture related business development might occur beyond its borders. Different types of development in surrounding areas, however, can have an impact on Town growth, quality of life, and even its ability to pay for Town services.

For this reason, Alban wishes to pursue economic development opportunities that will enhance the rural character of the area and assure the community the means to provide for the services and infrastructure needs of present and future residents. This element concludes with goals, objectives, and policies to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base. County and state economic development information is included to help the Town identify potential opportunities that could be used to pursue appropriate economic development activities.

Section 6.2 Labor Force and Economic Base

A. Labor Force Analysis

1. Educational attainment

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, and illustrated by Table 1.4 of that chapter, the Town of Alban has seen an increase in the percentage of its residents who have achieved a college degree (Associate, Bachelor, or Graduate/Professional degree).

2. Earnings and Income

Wages are not the only form of income that residents receive. “Total income” is defined by the U.S. Census as the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income from non-farm or farm businesses, including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other source of income received regularly such as Veterans; (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. According to the 2000 Census (Summary File 3 Table P58, P60, P62-66) 239 (77.1%) of 310 Alban households sampled were classified as household with earnings; 102 (42.7%) were households with social security income; 67 (28%) of households received self employment income; 51 (21.3%) were households that received retirement income; 4 households received public assistance; 2 households received supplemental social security. and 68 households (28.5%) has other types of income.

In order to understand the existing wage-earning realities within Alban, “earnings” data was considered more informative. “Earnings” are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the algebraic sum of wages or salary income and net income from self-employment, representing the amount of income received regularly before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, Medicare deductions etc.

Table 6.1 compares mean (average) earnings, and mean household and per capita income, for households and individuals in communities within the Alban area and Portage County overall. The Town of Alban experienced a lower percentage increase from 1989 to 1999 in mean earnings than the County and remains below the rate of increase for mean household and per capita income.

Table 6.1: Mean Earnings, Mean Household and Per Capita Income Comparison

	Mean Earnings Per Household			Mean Income Per Household			Per Capita Income		
	1989	1999	Change	1989	1999	Change	1989	1999	Change
Town of Alban	\$28,983	\$43,386	49.7%	\$29,255	\$40,468	38.3%	\$10,164	\$15,664	54.1%
Village of Rosholt	\$33,360	\$42,779	28.2%	\$36,751	\$43,271	17.7%	\$10,318	\$16,002	55.1%
Town of Sharon	\$39,142	\$59,087	51.0%	\$38,623	\$61,155	58.3%	\$12,895	\$21,073	63.4%
Town of New Hope	\$34,645	\$51,461	48.5%	\$33,113	\$57,024	72.1%	\$11,289	\$21,334	89.0%
Portage County	\$33,230	\$50,373	51.6%	\$33,184	\$52,102	57.0%	\$11,730	\$19,854	69.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census
 Mean earnings = total earnings / # h/holds with earnings;
 Mean income = total income / # h/holds with income

According to 2000 Census Data reported in Table 1.6 of the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan, median household income for Town of Alban residents was \$36,250, which was lower than Portage County (\$43,487) and State of Wisconsin (\$43,791).

3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 below examines labor force participation and employment percentages for the Town of Alban, as described in the 1990 and 2000 Census. Age sixteen is considered to be the lower threshold for being eligible for employment. The Town had a 2000 labor participation rate of 70.1%, which was above the Portage County Average of 67.1%. Alban did experience a decrease in the unemployment rate from 5.2% in 1990 to 4% in 2000.

Table 6.2: Employment Status of Town of Alban Population 16 Years and Above

	1990	2000
Population 16 Years and Over	593	612
Not in Labor Force	211	183
<i>Percentage not in Labor Force</i>	<i>35.6%</i>	<i>29.9%</i>
In Labor Force	382	429
<i>Percentage In Labor Force</i>	<i>64.4%</i>	<i>70.1%</i>
Labor Force Components		
Armed Forces	0	0
<i>Percentage in Armed Forces</i>	<i>0.0%</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
Civilian Labor Force	382	429
<i>Percentage in Civ. Labor Force</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>
Employed	362	412
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>94.8 %</i>	<i>96.0%</i>
Unemployed	20	17
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>5.2%</i>	<i>4.0%</i>

Source: Census 1990, Census 2000

4. Employment by Occupation

Table 6.3 below provides information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Alban residents were employed in 2000. The production, transportation, and material moving occupations category is now the largest, followed by management, professional, and related occupations. Table 1.10 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the last three Census years. Information for both these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Town were employed in, and is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in Alban.

Table 6.3: Town of Alban Employment by Occupation

Occupation	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	91	25.1%	113	27.4%
Service occupations	30	8.3%	45	10.9%
Sales and office occupations	44	12.2%	59	14.3%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	62	17.1%	41	10.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	28	7.7%	35	8.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	107	29.6%	119	28.9%
Total Employed	362	100%	412	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

5. Commuting

According to Census 2000 data, 79.3% of employed residents worked outside of the Town. Further indication of a majority of residents working outside the Town can be shown through a mean travel time to work of 24.5 minutes.

B. Local Economic Base Analysis

The economic base in the Town of Alban is mainly agricultural, without a defined commercial center or area, and has a broad range of businesses relating to the agriculture industry. The community supports the development of agriculture-related businesses that are in harmony with existing land uses and are complimentary to the agricultural activities that currently exist in the Town, as well as other appropriate scale businesses for a rural township concerned with maintaining its “rural character”. Existing types of businesses in the Town of Alban include:

Arborist / Tree Specialist	Landscaping	Retail Greenhouse
Building Contractors	Logging and Forestry	Septic Service
Computer Information / Support	Masonry	Specialty Lumber and Restoration
Electrical Contractors	Machine Shop	Trucking (2)
Hair and Beauty Salon	Mini Warehousing	Venison/Meat Processing
Heating and Cooling	Pub/Tavern/Bar (4)	Warehousing / Cheese Storage
Kennel & Dog Grooming	Regional, Social Services	
	Summer Camp	

Section 6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses for Attracting/Retaining Business

A. Strengths

Strong agricultural sector
Well suited for home-based businesses
Large natural resource base (lakes, trails, streams) for provision of outdoor recreation

B. Weaknesses

The Town has a lack of municipal services.
A small and dispersed population hampers the development of brick and mortar businesses.
Development of businesses other than home based occupations or agriculturally related may take place in the Village of Rosholt.

Section 6.4 Desired Businesses

New development proposals in the Town of Alban will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis based on recommendations in this plan, citizen input, and impact to surrounding uses. Many businesses can develop in the community with little or no impact on existing uses. Desired businesses in the Town include:

Agriculture related businesses	Feed mill	Pharmacy
Bait shop	Grocery Store	Restaurants
Child Care Facilities	Hardware Store	Specialty/Value added Farm Products
Doctor Office	Home-based business	Veterinary Office
	Manufacturing	

The Town of Alban recognizes that most of the above listed businesses, if they should develop at some time in the future, may locate in the Village of Rosholt. By default, this means the town would not receive the tax revenue benefits of having these business inside of the Town borders. However, the Village of Rosholt is centrally located within the Town of Alban and these businesses would provide needed services to its residents.

Section 6.5 Environmentally Contaminated Sites

Contaminated sites, also known as Brownfield's, serve as potential land base for economic development. Brownfield's are defined as abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. The Wisconsin Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources have jointly prepared a guide to help finance Brownfield's cleanup and redevelopment. It can be found on the internet at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/archives/pubs/RR539.pdf>

There is currently one contaminated site listed with the WI DNR as a Brownfield site in the Town of Alban. This is located east of the Village of Rosholt, at the intersection of Highway 66 and County Road A. The DNR has the site listed as a "no action" site and was caused by a tank spill of 12,000 gallons of unleaded fuel. No action status means there was, or may have been, a discharge to the environment and, based on the known information, DNR has determined that the responsible party does not need to undertake an investigation or cleanup in response to that discharge. In this instance, some remediation is being performed. A complete list of all Brownfield sites can be obtained by contacting the DNR.

Section 6.6 Economic Development Resources

Revolving Loan Fund Programs (Portage County)

Purpose: Funds administered by local communities, which provide local government the ability to assist in economic development projects that will create jobs for low-to-moderate income persons. Typically, the revolving loan fund program provides "gap" financing to local projects that make the project economically feasible.

Use of Funds: Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

Amount Available: Programs are different in each community.

Advantage: Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on and provide businesses the ability to finance job creation efforts locally. This program provides a quicker approval process than the Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant - Economic Development Program.

Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development

(WI Dept. of Commerce)

Purpose: To provide resources to local governments to assist economic development projects that provides jobs to low-to-moderate income persons and expands the local tax base.

Use of Funds: Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

Amount Available: \$750,000 maximum award, \$75,000 to \$500,000 is usual. Provides fixed-rate long term financing.

Advantage: Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on public funds, and provide business with rate of return comparable to industry norms. In addition, these funds remain locally for the creation or expansion of an existing Revolving Loan Fund.

Wisconsin Rural Economic Development Program (WI Dept. of Commerce)

Purpose: To stimulate the start-up and expansion of small businesses in rural and/or small communities.

Use of Funds: Planning and managerial assistance only. This could include development of a marketing strategy for a new product line. Program pays for technical assistance such as consulting fees.

Amount Available: Maximum loan award is \$30,000. This program allows straight loans and/or forgivable loans.

Eligibility: Businesses with fewer than 25 employees. The business should be starting or expanding operations.

Community Development Block Grant - Customized Labor Training

(WI Dept. of Commerce)

Purpose: To stimulate the expansion of existing businesses, the attraction and creation of businesses, and the "retooling" of Wisconsin's Industrial base by providing customized labor training. Program is for new technology to industry and industry sector.

Use of Funds: Training costs incurred in the upgrading of manufacturing skills. This includes training on the shop floor while not producing salable product.

Amount Available: Grant Award. Training grant, competitively awarded, requires 50% match from company. Maximum \$2,500 per employee trained.

Eligibility: Proposed training must not supplant training available through existing federal, state and local resources (such as the Technical College and University System). Projects are evaluated on economic contribution; quantity and type of jobs created or saved; cost effectiveness significance of skill upgrading and local unemployment situation.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation

A voluntary, non-governmental organization controlled by member families to represent them on legislative issues and to provide farm marketing, business and planning consultation and services. Contact information:

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 5550
Madison, WI 53705-0550
1-800-261-FARM or 608-836-5575

USDA–Rural Development Administration (Wisconsin)

The Rural Development Administration is an organization affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture that provides funding for home purchase and rehabilitation, technical assistance and funding to new cooperative ventures, and financing for new business development. A full list of their programs can be found on the internet at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/programs/index.htm>

Contact information:

USDA Rural Development - WI
4949 Kirschling Ct.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: (715) 345-7615 FAX: (715) 345-7669

Technical Assistance

Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, is one of ten university-based SBDC's in Wisconsin. Their mission is to provide learning opportunities and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The Stevens Point SBDC works with small business in eight central Wisconsin counties, and offers several types of services including seminars, customized **in-house training**, and individualized counseling. (715) 346-3838.

Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP)

In an effort to improve quality and productivity of small to medium sized Wisconsin Manufacturers, a partnership between government, industry, labor, and education was formed. The WMEP assessment process is designed to be broad based rather than in-depth. The purpose is to "raise flags" where more effort should be placed. After the assessment, this can lead to a technical assistance project, in which your company is paired with a facilitator to help design and implement solutions.

Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's SHWEC program was created to provide pollution prevention services to waste generators in Wisconsin. SHWEC's pollution prevention specialists will assess hazardous waste systems, provide no-cost non-regulatory technical assistance, and identify potential waste reduction options.

Section 6.7 Economic Development Issues Identified by the Town of Alban

During the Comprehensive Planning process, the Town felt there were two economic development issues that needed to be addressed. These two issues were maintaining the viability of the agricultural community and promoting business that enhances the community's rural character.

- Intensive agriculture could be protected through limiting the expansion of residential uses near Exclusive Agricultural areas, and using Lot Averaging in agricultural zoning districts to help protect the health, welfare and quality of life for all Alban residents.
- The viability of the agricultural community can be maintained in part through the testing and monitoring of groundwater wells when possible, to maintain or improve water quality.
- During the Comprehensive Planning Process, the Town ensured that land uses suitable for supporting rural economic development of Alban were identified.

Section 6.8 Economic Development Goals, Objectives, Policies

Goal 1: Promote the stabilization and expansion of the current agricultural base.

Objective 1.1: Identify and preserve productive agricultural land.

Policy 1.1 (a): New businesses should not hinder existing agricultural operations.

Goal 2: Planned development areas are identified and/or established throughout the Town.

Objective 2.1: Identify areas suitable for non-agricultural related business.

Objective 2.2: Allow for a range of employment opportunities.

Policy 2.2 (a): Review commercial and industrial development proposals on a case by case basis.