

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

Section 1.1 Description and Brief History of the Planning Area

The Town of Belmont encompasses approximately 23,230 acres in southeast Portage County. It is bordered on the south by Waushara County, on the east by Waupaca County, on the north by the Town of Lanark, and on the west by the Town of Almond (Figure 1.1 below).

The following is reprinted with permission from the Portage County Historical Society:

Belmont is also one of the oldest towns in the county. A post office was opened there on September 25, 1856 and it is stated that it was named Belmont at the suggestion of the wife of the first postmaster. Belmont is a French name meaning beautiful mountain but it was not given in relation to the relief which is rolling without any mountain but because it sounded nice and was chosen after Belmont in the state of New York where the postmaster and his wife, as well as other pioneers had lived before coming to Wisconsin.

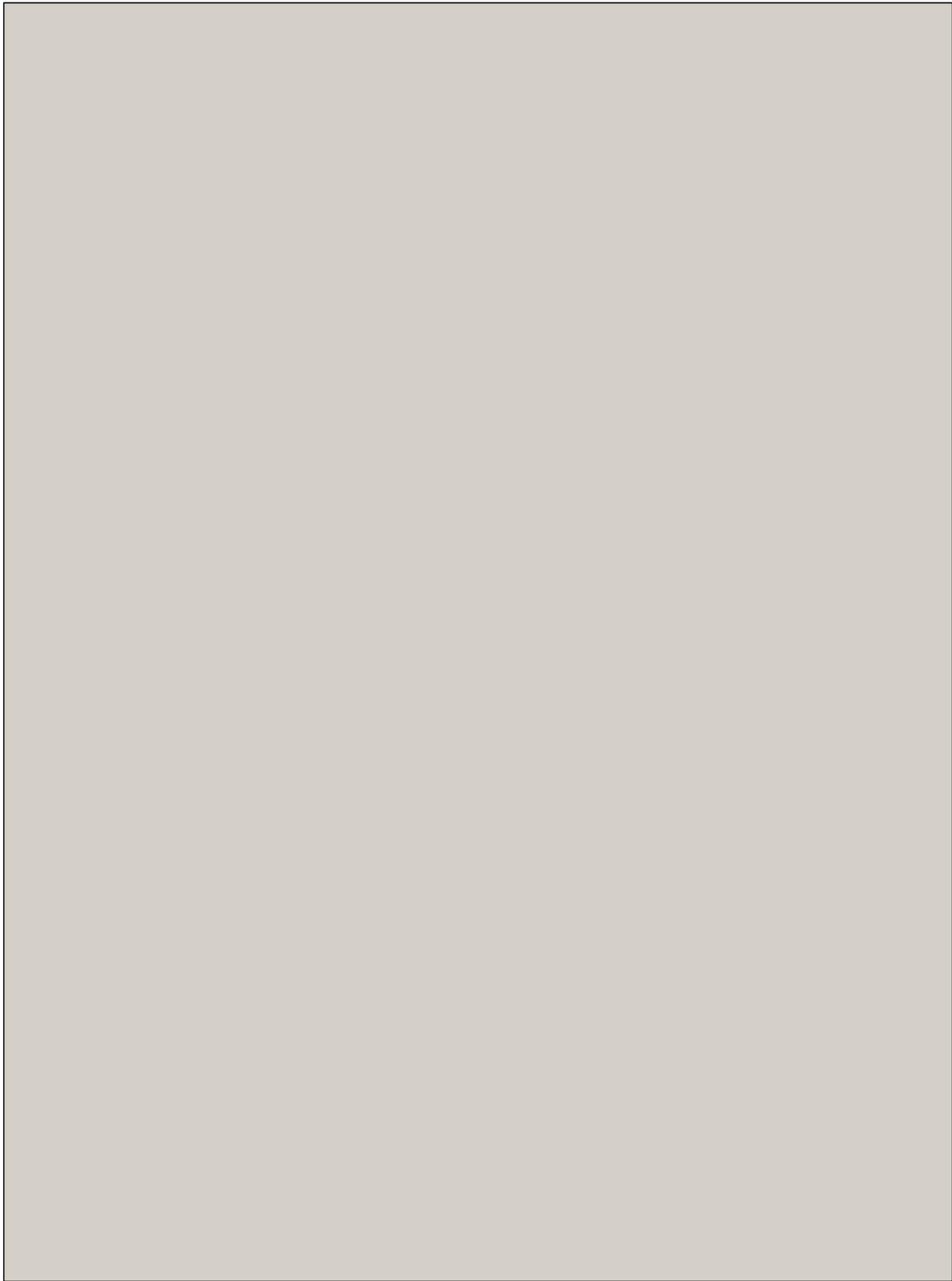
All the early settlers were farmers coming from New England, New York state, or from Canada or the British Isles. The 1870 census which lists almost three hundred persons has nine individuals born in Denmark, one farmer, his wife and two grown up children (aged 23 and 19), one laborer and his wife and three young men who were laborers. The couple of laborers had four children all born in Wisconsin, the oldest being 5, their parents and other Danish people apparently came about 1864. In 1895 a Catholic church was built on land donated by John and Martin Heffron, real estate brokers in Stevens Point; this church was replaced in 1908 by the present one. Many Polish families, mostly people who were coming from farms in Poland and had come to Chicago and other cities to work in factories, heard about the farming land for sale and came to the area and started farming. The place where the Church of St. John the Baptist stands and a tavern in the vicinity was named Heffron.

The Town of Belmont also lies on the terminal moraine of the last Wisconsin glaciation. It is rolling with a few lakes and wooded areas and it has remained rural

In the Town there is no village and only two places, Blaine and Heffron may at one time have been hamlets that would develop into villages. Blaine, at the junction of the County Roads A and D was the site of the community church built in 1875 and opened to all faiths (for a time the Danish Lutheran Church held one service per month in it). A post office functioned from 1876 to 1903. There were several stores, of which one still is active, perhaps the only country general store in the whole county, and the present town hall is located here, although it is used only on election days. The community church closed its doors in 1961. Heffron had a post office a store and a tavern with a dance hall. Two Methodist churches were organized. One, the Grant church in an isolated place north of the town was discontinued in 1946 and the building eventually torn down. A marker was erected at its site. In the southeast corner of the town is the Dopp Methodist Church built on land donated by the Dopp family, a pioneer of the town. It is still in use.

Belmont was a typical rural agriculture based community with a steadily declining population, due mostly to the changes in the agricultural economy (see Figure 1.2). Since 1970, however, the Town has experienced continued growth, and this pattern has reversed a sixty-year trend of declining population. Population estimates for 2025 portray a continued upward growth pattern.

Figure 1.1: Map of Belmont Area



To accommodate this growth, tracts of land that are now vacant will need to be considered for development (homes, farms and some businesses). If new development is not properly managed, the Town may find itself facing unnecessarily inflated expenditures for provision of its limited services to the new areas. This Comprehensive Plan will analyze all of the lands within the Town of Belmont 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 Belmont.

Section 1.2 Past Planning In Town of Belmont

This Comprehensive Plan will mark the first planning effort for the Town. Prior to this comprehensive planning process, Belmont had not developed any land use guides. They also did not have any zoning regulations, which is typically the main tool used for implementing a comprehensive plan.

On November 12, 2002 the Belmont Town Board passed a resolution that stated their intent to participate in, and be a part of the Portage County Zoning program. In September 2003, the Town officially came under the jurisdiction of the Portage County Zoning Ordinance.

Section 1.3 Current Comprehensive Planning Process

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, this Town of Belmont Comprehensive Plan 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 Belmont Plan Commission began the Town Comprehensive Planning process in earnest in January 2003. The Plan Commission met through April 2005 to put together the first complete preliminary draft of the plan. The Comprehensive Planning process involved several basic steps:

The first step involved research. Activities included 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 step involved 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 step involved the selection of a preferred plan 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 step 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. The three major tools of implementation are typically 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 Belmont.

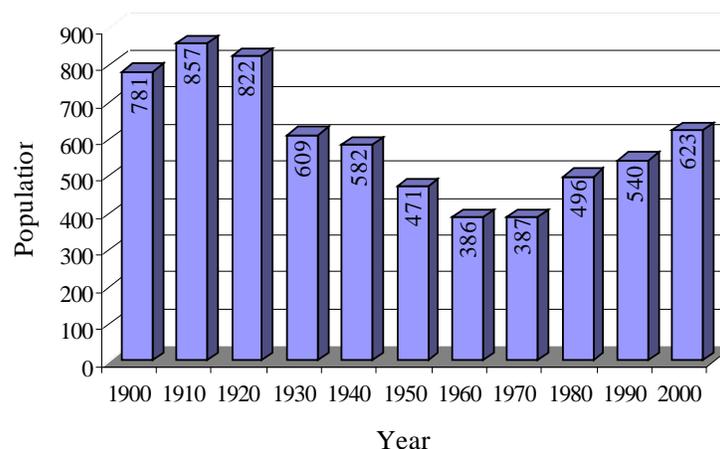
Section 1.4 Demographic Trends

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. Census data reveal two major, historical population trends for the Town of Belmont (Figure 1.2). The first half of the century experienced a decline in population while the second half showed an increase. According to the latest Census information, the population increased by 127 people between 1980 and 2000.

The decreasing population trend was dramatically reversed in the 1970's, with the Town experiencing an upturn in population as urban residents began moving back to rural or semi-rural areas. 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 Belmont Population Change, 1900 to 2000



Source: US Bureau of Census

The Town of Belmont's population increase of 61% from 1970 to 2000 was well above that of Portage County (+41%) and much greater than the State (+21%). The State of Wisconsin Department of Administration population estimate for the Town of Belmont in 2004 was 644,

representing a growth of 3.4% since the 2000 Census. This change over the last 4-year period for the Town fell between growth levels in surrounding communities and was higher than Portage County overall.

Table 1.1: Belmont Comparison Population Change, 1970 to 2004

	U.S. Census				State of Wisconsin Estimate	1970 to 2000 Change	2000 to 2004 Change
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004		
Town of Belmont	387	496	540	623	644	61.0%	3.4%
Town of Almond	529	624	590	679	699	28.4%	2.9%
Town of Buena Vista	827	1,023	1,170	1,187	1,235	43.5%	4.0%
Town of Lanark	578	1,043	1,554	1,449	1,527	150.7%	5.4%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	68,935	41.3%	2.6%

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 Belmont, we can better understand 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 Belmont 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 Belmont residents that lived in a home outside the Town, but within Portage County, in 1995. The “Different House, Different County” column identifies the Belmont 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 Belmont 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, 65% of the Town's residents lived in the same house as they did in 1995, down six percent from the 1990 Census even as the actual number increased. The largest increase was recorded in the number residents that moved to the Town of Belmont from somewhere outside of Portage County (from 66 in 1990 to 120 in 2000). The number of residents that moved to Belmont from a different state also increased, from 23 in 1990 to 34 in 2000. Only the Town of Lanark experienced a higher percentage increase (25%) in immigration from outside the county than Belmont.

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	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Town of Belmont	358	71%	351	65%	56	11%	73	13%	66	13%	120	22%	21	4%	34	6%
Town of Almond	487	88%	550	77%	52	9%	98	14%	17	3%	57	8%	7	1%	31	4%
Town of Buena Vista	730	69%	820	72%	228	21%	205	18%	82	8%	113	10%	23	2%	9	1%
Town of Lanark	687	66%	756	56%	184	18%	251	19%	132	13%	332	25%	44	4%	80	6%
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 Belmont			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Under 5 years	46 9.3%	36 6.7%	37 5.9%	137 9.3%	122 7.9%	98 6.0%	4,343 7.6%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%
5 to 14 years	77 15.5%	92 17.0%	80 12.8%	283 19.0%	281 18.0%	264 15.5%	8,671 15.1%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%
15 to 24 years	86 17.3%	68 12.6%	80 12.8%	266 17.7%	207 12.9%	206 12.5%	15,270 26.6%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%
25 to 34 years	83 16.7%	81 15.0%	55 8.8%	259 17.4%	249 15.7%	190 11.5%	9,180 16.0%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%
35 to 44 years	58 11.7%	80 14.8%	119 19.1%	170 11.0%	258 16.3%	300 18.0%	5,593 9.7%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%
45 to 54 years	35 7.1%	60 11.1%	101 16.2%	121 8.4%	164 10.1%	269 16.2%	4,447 7.7%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%
55 to 64 years	45 9.1%	49 9.1%	71 11.4%	105 7.9%	152 8.7%	154 9.3%	4,185 7.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%
65 to 74 years	46 9.3%	49 9.1%	50 8.0%	74 6.0%	88 6.4%	98 6.3%	3,391 5.9%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%
75 to 84 years	18 3.6%	22 4.1%	29 4.7%	30 2.4%	40 3.1%	53 3.6%	1,806 3.1%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%
85 years and over	2 0.4%	3 0.6%	1 0.2%	8 0.6%	9 0.8%	16 1.1%	534 0.9%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%
Total	496	540	623	1,456	1,572	1,648	57,420	61,405	67,182
Median Age	29.6	34.2	40.1	27.2	32.1	37.7	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 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 in Table 1.3 indicate the path of each age cohort through the three Census periods.

Age groups from 35 to 64 years old registered substantial increases between 1990 and 2000 in Belmont, a trend opposite from what took place in the Town Average and Portage County overall. This information describes the residents that moved into the Town. Census data also indicates an increase in the number of residents aged 65+, at a slightly lower percentage of total Belmont population.

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 Belmont was 40.1 years old in 2000, and has increased by 10.5 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 shown above. The other Towns across Portage County have seen their median age increase at a slightly slower pace (10 years). The County as a whole has seen its median age increase at an even 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 opposite is true for the Town of Belmont 65+ population. As previously described above, Belmont's 65+ segment of the population increased in number between 1980 and 2000, but decreased slightly from 13.3% to 12.9% of total population over the same period. The average Portage County Town saw this segment increase from 9.0% 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 Belmont, while still not large, has increased 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 Belmont had mixed results in its' overall educational attainment during the 1990's. The number and percentage of Town of Belmont 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 22.4% to 36.7% over the same period. This 10-year increase in attainment for Belmont was slightly less than for the Town Average (25% to 44%), yet higher than the County as a whole (40% to 49%). A desirable trend experienced by the Town of Belmont is shown in the number and percentage of residents who completed 9th to 12th grade but did not receive a diploma. The Belmont numbers for this category decreased by 5.3 percent between 1990 and 2000.

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

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Town of Belmont		Town Average		Portage County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than 9th Grade	43 12.5%	17 4.4%	123 10.4%	68 6.3%	4,065 11.6%	2,420 6.0%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	57 16.6%	44 11.3%	83 7.0%	88 8.1%	3,029 8.7%	3,019 7.5%
High School Graduate	167 48.5%	186 47.7%	401 33.9%	456 42.0%	14,082 40.2%	14,952 37.2%
Some College (No Degree)	45 13.1%	88 22.6%	117 9.9%	190 17.5%	5,205 14.9%	7,572 18.9%
Associate Degree	12 3.5%	12 3.1%	45 3.8%	77 7.0%	1,922 5.5%	2,802 7.0%
Bachelor's Degree	14 4.1%	32 8.2%	94 7.9%	147 13.6%	4,594 13.1%	6,468 16.1%
Graduate / Professional Degree	6 1.7%	11 2.8%	38 3.2%	60 5.5%	2,107 6.0%	2,910 7.2%
Total	344	390	1,181	1,085	35,004	40,143

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

D. Households and Income

The Town of Belmont 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 Belmont households over the last 20 years, and compares them to the Portage County data and the County's Town average. Married-couple households,

traditionally the largest group within Belmont, have seen their percentage of total households decrease over the last 20 years, consistent with a county-wide trend of decline. Single parent headed households within Belmont have increased over the same 20 year period. By comparison, the Town average has remained steady over the past 20 years, while the County as a whole has seen single-headed households increase approximately 2%. Belmont's non-family households have increased from approximately 18% of total households in 1980 to almost 30% in 2000.

The Persons Per Household (PPH) for the Town of Belmont, along with the County and Town average, also experienced a decrease over the last 20 years. Belmont closely matches the rate of decline for the Towns, while the overall County PPH rate of decline has been a bit smaller. However, Belmont's PPH is smaller than the Town average, closely matching the County overall.

Table 1.5: Household Type Comparison

Households By Type	Town of Belmont			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Family Households	130	148	169	372	419	468	13,257	14,883	16,496
<i>% of Total Households</i>	82%	77%	70%	84%	82%	79%	72%	70%	66%
Married-couple families	118	129	149	336	371	416	11,592	12,645	13,808
<i>% of Family Households</i>	91%	87%	88%	90%	89%	89%	87%	85%	84%
Other family, male householder	1	7	9	13	18	22	437	602	861
<i>% of Family Households</i>	1%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%
Other family, female householder	11	12	11	22	30	30	1,228	1,636	1,827
<i>% of Family Households</i>	8%	8%	7%	6%	7%	6%	9%	11%	11%
Non-Family Households	29	45	71	70	88	124	5,056	6,423	8,544
<i>% of Total Households</i>	18%	23%	30%	16%	17%	21%	28%	30%	34%
Householder living alone	24	38	52	57	71	97	3,730	4,679	6,130
<i>% of Non-Family Households</i>	83%	84%	73%	81%	81%	78%	74%	73%	72%
Householder 65 years and over	~	15	18	~	29	35	~	1,933	2,196
<i>% of Non-Family Households</i>		33%	25%		33%	28%		30%	26%
Total Households	159	193	240	442	508	592	18,313	21,306	25,040
Persons Per House Hold	3.12	2.80	2.58	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 Belmont. 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 Belmont that the percentage of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from 4.5% in 1979 to 45.6% in 1999. Median household income has increased from \$14,437 to \$46,591 over the same period. The percentage increase in households earning greater than \$50,000 for Belmont over the 20-year period (4.5% to 45.6%) is similar to Portage County as a whole (3.2% to 42.5%); but higher than the Town average (3.2% to 34%).

Table 1.6: Household Income Comparison

Household Income Per Year	Town of Belmont			Town Average			Portage County		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
Less Than \$10,000	50 32.3%	28 14.8%	21 9.2%	101 22.9%	48 9.5%	23 2.6%	5300 28.9%	3210 15.0%	1767 7.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	32 20.6%	10 5.3%	13 5.7%	68 15.4%	38 7.5%	25 2.8%	2919 15.9%	1978 9.3%	1608 6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	53 34.2%	55 29.1%	16 7.0%	138 31.2%	82 16.2%	55 6.3%	5423 29.6%	4072 19.1%	3174 12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6 3.9%	27 14.3%	24 10.5%	80 18.1%	88 17.2%	78 8.8%	2907 15.8%	3654 17.1%	3425 13.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	7 0.0%	53 0.2%	50 0.1%	30 0.2%	127 0.4%	115 0.2%	1223 6.7%	4370 20.5%	4484 17.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5 3.2%	12 6.3%	71 31.1%	9 2.1%	86 16.9%	159 18.0%	380 2.1%	2983 14.0%	5771 23.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2 1.3%	3 1.6%	20 8.8%	5 1.1%	22 4.3%	84 9.6%	193 1.1%	661 3.1%	2820 11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999		0 0.0%	6 2.6%	0 0.0%	8 1.6%	38 4.3%	0 0.0%	274 1.3%	1346 5.4%
\$150,000 or more		1 0.5%	7 3.1%	0 0.0%	5 0.9%	19 2.1%	0 0.0%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%
Total Households	155	189	228	443	510	881	18,345	21,336	25,112
Median H-Hold Income	\$14,437	\$26,875	\$46,591	\$16,880	\$31,801	\$48,127	\$16,659	\$28,686	\$43,487

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

With the examination of income information, the Town of Belmont 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 Belmont, the Town average, and Portage County as a whole.

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

Size of Family Unit	Poverty Threshold		
	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 Belmont		Town Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
Persons	537	623	1,381	1,467	57,805	67,182
Below Poverty Level	95 <i>17.7%</i>	54 <i>8.7%</i>	116 <i>8.4%</i>	79 <i>5.4%</i>	7,454 <i>12.9%</i>	6,074 <i>9.0%</i>
Persons 65 Years and Over	71	80	118	152	5,327	7,354
Below Poverty Level	9 <i>12.7%</i>	3 <i>3.8%</i>	13 <i>11.3%</i>	15 <i>9.5%</i>	740 <i>13.9%</i>	561 <i>7.6%</i>
Families	154	153	371	420	14,927	16,643
Below Poverty Level	20 <i>13.0%</i>	10 <i>6.5%</i>	23 <i>6.2%</i>	14 <i>3.4%</i>	1,051 <i>7.0%</i>	725 <i>4.4%</i>

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

According to Census figures, the Town of Belmont has experienced a greater decline in the percentage 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 1.9. This information represents what type of industry that the working residents of Belmont were employed by, and is not a listing of the employment currently located within the Town. The discussion of the Belmont 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 Belmont			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	57 28.8%	65 24.3%	37 12.0%	95 16.0%	83 10.9%	60 6.8%	1,816 7.3%	1,755 5.8%	1,241 3.5%
Construction	2 1.0%	24 9.0%	16 5.2%	33 5.6%	44 5.8%	54 6.2%	1,004 4.0%	1,297 4.3%	1,707 4.8%
Manufacturing	37 18.7%	53 19.8%	53 17.2%	127 21.3%	159 20.8%	190 21.6%	4,637 18.6%	5,373 17.8%	6,314 17.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	4 2.0%	9 3.4%	42 13.6%	32 5.4%	50 6.6%	55 6.2%	1,214 4.9%	1,511 5.0%	1,948 5.5%
Information	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 3.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 1.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	835 2.3%
Communications/ Other Public Facilities	7 3.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 1.0%	7 0.9%	0 0.0%	325 1.3%	367 1.2%	0 0.0%
Wholesale Trade	6 3.0%	10 3.7%	6 1.9%	24 4.0%	25 3.2%	31 3.6%	885 3.5%	1,026 3.4%	1,235 3.5%
Retail Trade	18 9.1%	29 10.8%	39 12.7%	82 13.7%	122 16.0%	106 12.0%	4,317 17.3%	5,667 18.8%	4,813 13.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	8 4.0%	5 1.9%	20 6.5%	66 11.0%	85 11.2%	92 10.5%	2,971 11.9%	3,359 11.1%	3,682 10.3%
Professional, Management, Administrative	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 3.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	31 3.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1,627 4.6%
Business and Repair Services	10 5.1%	6 2.2%	0 0.0%	11 1.8%	19 2.5%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	0 0.0%
Personal Services	0 0.0%	6 2.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16 2.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	777 2.6%	0 0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	4 2.0%	2 0.7%	10 3.2%	18 3.0%	6 0.8%	50 5.7%	734 2.9%	388 1.3%	3,005 8.4%
Educational, Health, Social Services	19 9.6%	44 16.4%	45 14.6%	82 13.7%	104 13.6%	147 16.7%	5,331 21.4%	5,617 18.6%	7,192 20.2%
Other	17 8.6%	13 4.9%	16 5.2%	13 2.2%	23 3.0%	34 3.9%	624 2.5%	1,362 4.5%	1,236 3.5%
Public Administration	9 4.5%	2 0.7%	4 1.3%	9 1.5%	20 2.6%	21 2.4%	571 2.3%	710 2.4%	842 2.4%
Total Employed Persons	198	268	308	596	763	880	24,947	30,150	35,677
Unemployed Persons	21	17	14	59	37	38	2,013	1,590	2,255
Total Labor Force	219	285	322	654	830	667	26,960	31,740	37,944
Percent Unemployed	10.6%	6.3%	4.5%	10%	5%	4%	8.1%	5.3%	6.3%
Persons 16 Years +	0	404	451	0	1,099	688	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 D of this Comprehensive Plan.

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

Yr 2010: **685** Yr 2015: **709** Yr 2020: **739** Yr 2025: **764**

B. Household Projections

Household projections for Belmont will be based on the above stated population projection divided by the anticipated number of persons per household through 2025.

The number of Persons per Household for Belmont has declined from 2.80 persons in 1990 to 2.58 persons in 2000. Using a method of linear regression from data beginning in 1980, the forecasted number of persons per household (PPH) in 2010 will be 2.29. Forecasting numbers far into the future using linear regression produces increased uncertainty, therefore, the persons per household will be held at 2.29 through 2025. Keep in mind that these numbers represent projections and should not be used as absolute.

Using a PPH of 2.29 for this plan horizon (2025, population projection of 764), the household projections for Belmont are:

Yr 2010: **299** households Yr 2015: **310** households

Yr 2020: **323** households Yr 2025: **334** 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 limited job opportunities for its residents. Future job opportunities outside of the agriculture sector are projected to be created in and out of the County, including the Stevens Point urban area and Waupaca, in the service, government, manufacturing, and finance sectors.

Section 1.6 Community Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The Town of Belmont 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 productive agricultural land as practicable while allowing for future development needs. Town residents also recognize the importance that natural resources, such as the Emmons Creek and Pickerel Lake areas and scenic vistas, 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 Belmont. 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:

- There is a balance between individual property rights and the public interest.
- There is a desire to maintain local control over land use decisions.
- Protect the rural character of the community while balancing residential and commercial growth.
- Protect the environment through sound soil and water conservation practices.
- Communicate with surrounding units of government to discuss common issues.