

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

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 Linden, 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, 353 to Town of Linden property owners. Eighty-six surveys were sent back, giving the Town a 24% return rate. (See Appendix A-1 for complete survey results.)

COMMUNITY VISION

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

To preserve the rural atmosphere and natural beauty of the Town of Linden, home to both family farmers and wildlife. To continue to offer a healthy, safe, friendly place to live that provides responsive and effective public services. To create a place that plans for new businesses and residences in accordance with the guidelines of a comprehensive land use plan that outlines requirements for location that reflect community values and help newcomers integrate with the existing character of the Town. To generate economic opportunities that makes the Town of

Linden prosperous to support multiple generations now and in the future. To protect the natural resources of the Town, including good soil, clean water, wildlife habitat, air quality, and groundwater.

VISIONING

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

Issues

- High property taxes
- Limited employment opportunities
- No sewer system in Edmund
- Erosion and run-off from farms and roads (manure, chemicals, salt)
- Preservation of groundwater quality
- Farmland preservation
- Preservation of rural character
- Inconsistent enforcement of zoning regulations
- Lack of public transportation
- Declining school enrollment and therefore state aid
- Declining shared revenue from the state

Opportunities

- Open spaces
- Rural atmosphere
- Friendly, helpful, neighborly people
- Natural beauty
- Abundance of wildlife
- Good roads that are well maintained
- Productive agricultural land
- Adjacent to Lands' End (employment opportunity)
- Low crime rate
- Great public services (fire, rescue) and volunteers for such services
- Good schools
- Clean environment

Strengths

- Productive agricultural land
- Public services
- Near Lands' End
- Natural beauty
- Rural atmosphere

Weaknesses

- High property taxes
- Limited number of employment opportunities that pay well and provide benefits
- Lack of citizen involvement in local government
- Zoning issues

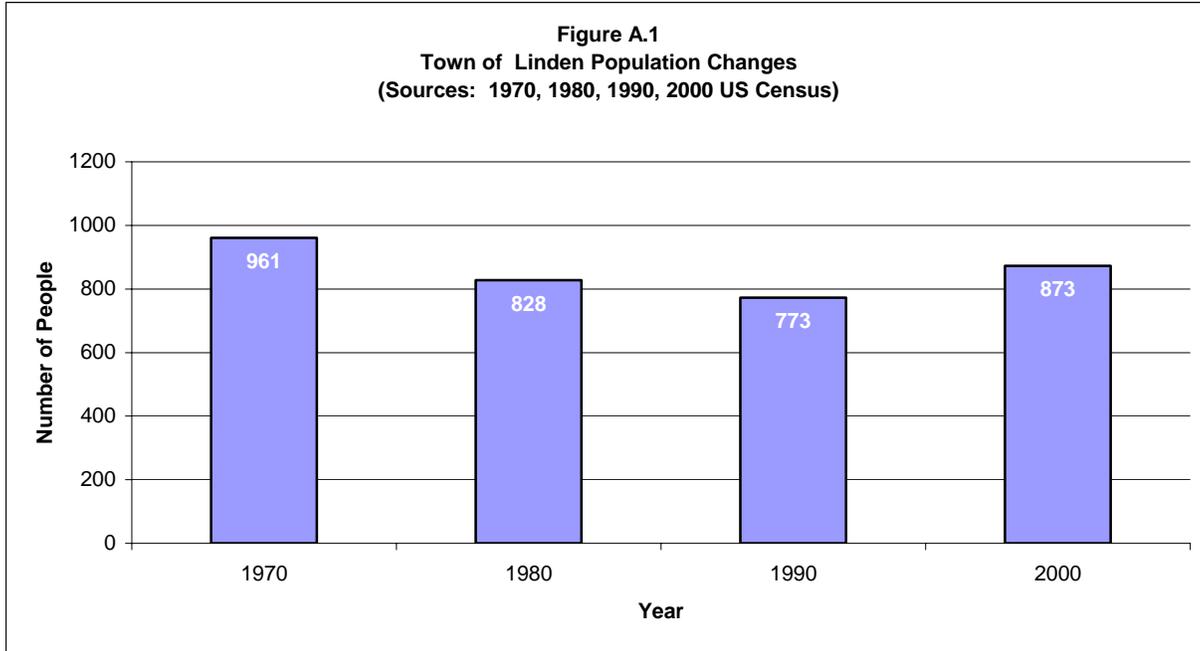
COMMUNITY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

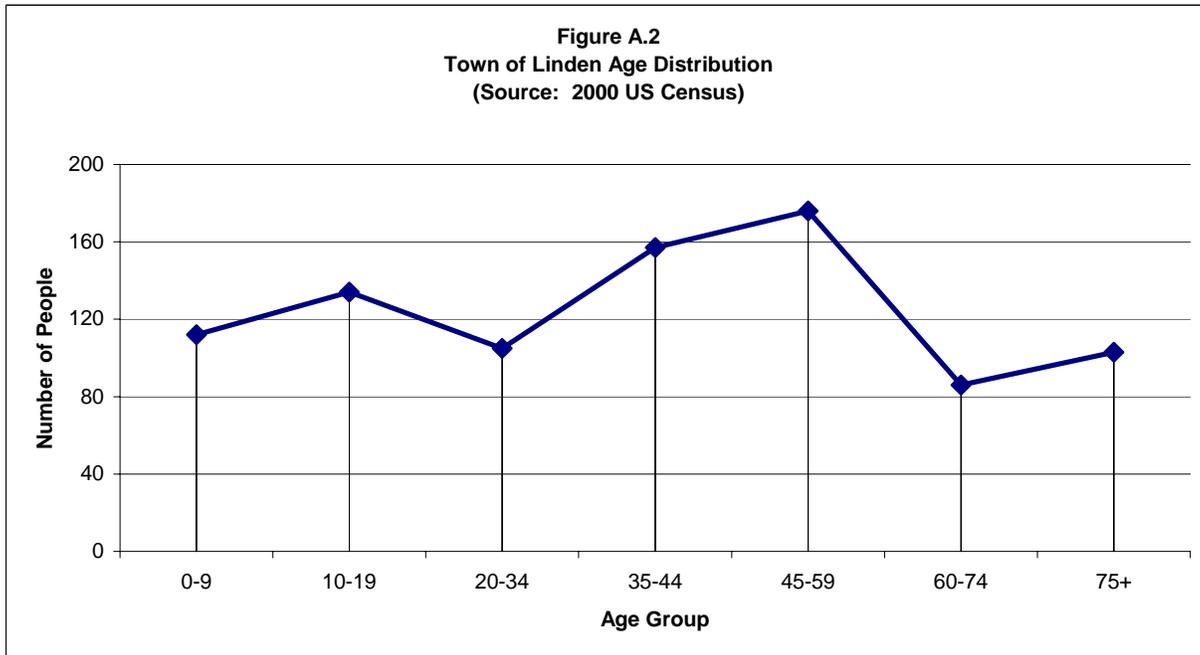
POPULATION CHANGES

The Town of Linden’s population has decreased by eighty-eight people over the past 30 years. Between 1970 and 1980 the Town’s population decreased by 14% and between 1980 and 1990 it dropped again by 7%. But from 1990 to 2000 the Town grew 13%.



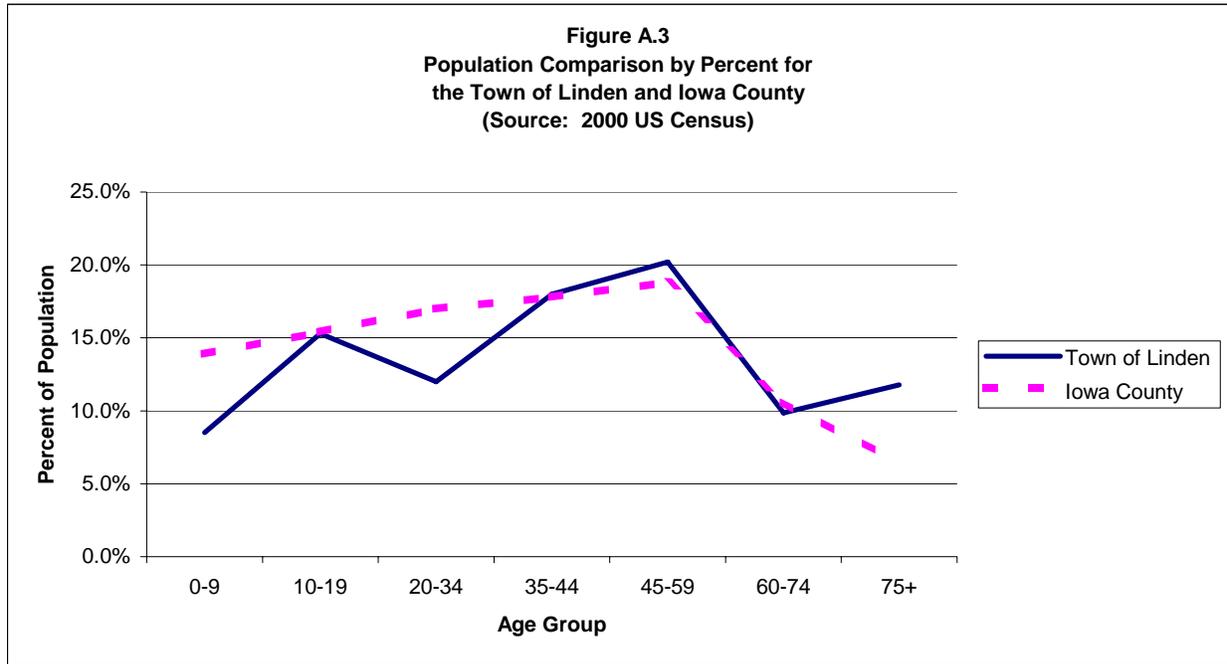
AGE DISTRIBUTION

Figure A.2 shows the age distribution of the Town of Linden 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.



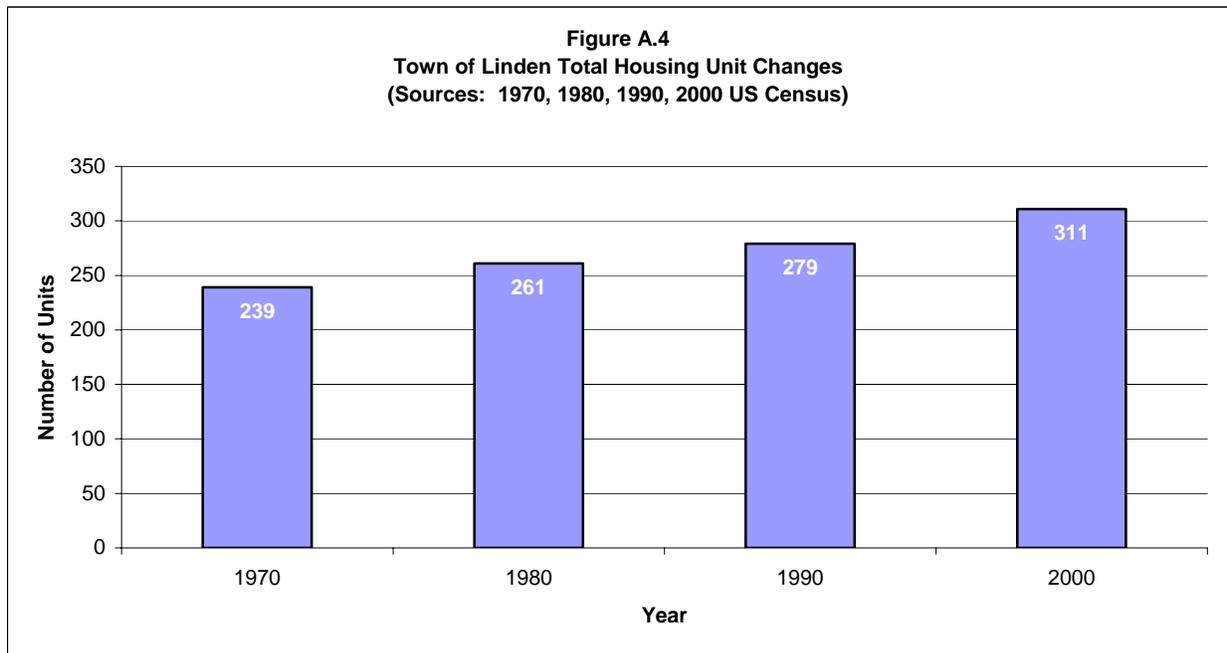
PERCENT POPULATION

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 much lower than the county in the 0 to 9 and 20 to 34 year age groups.

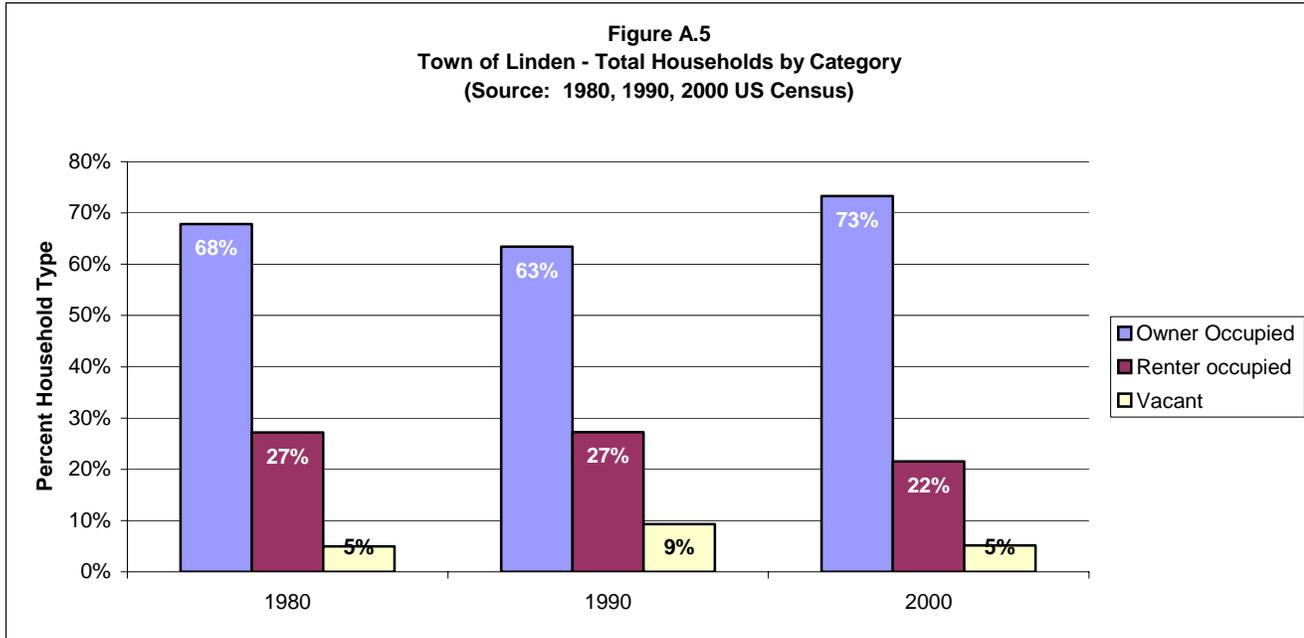


HOUSING TRENDS

Historically, the Town of Linden 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 Linden had an increase of seventy-two 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 311 housing units in Town of Linden, 73% are owner occupied, 22% are renter occupied, and the remaining 5% are vacant. The average number of persons per household is 2.77 for owner occupied units, 2.48 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 Linden		Iowa County Number	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
<9 th grade	30	5.0%	4.2%	5.4%
9 th –12 th grade, no diploma	62	10.4%	7.4%	9.6%
HS Grad (incl. Equivalency)	247	41.4%	41.8%	34.6%
Some college, no degree	130	21.8%	19.9%	20.6%
Associate Degree	48	8.1%	8.3%	7.5%
Bachelor Degree	65	10.9%	13.2%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	14	2.3%	5.3%	7.2%
Total population 25 Years and older	596	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

INCOME COMPARISONS

Table A.2 compares the income levels of the Town of Linden 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 Linden	Iowa County	State of Wisconsin
Median household income	\$49,327	\$45,518	\$43,791
Median family income	\$58,203	\$49,972	\$52,911
Per capita income	\$22,521	\$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 Linden, 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

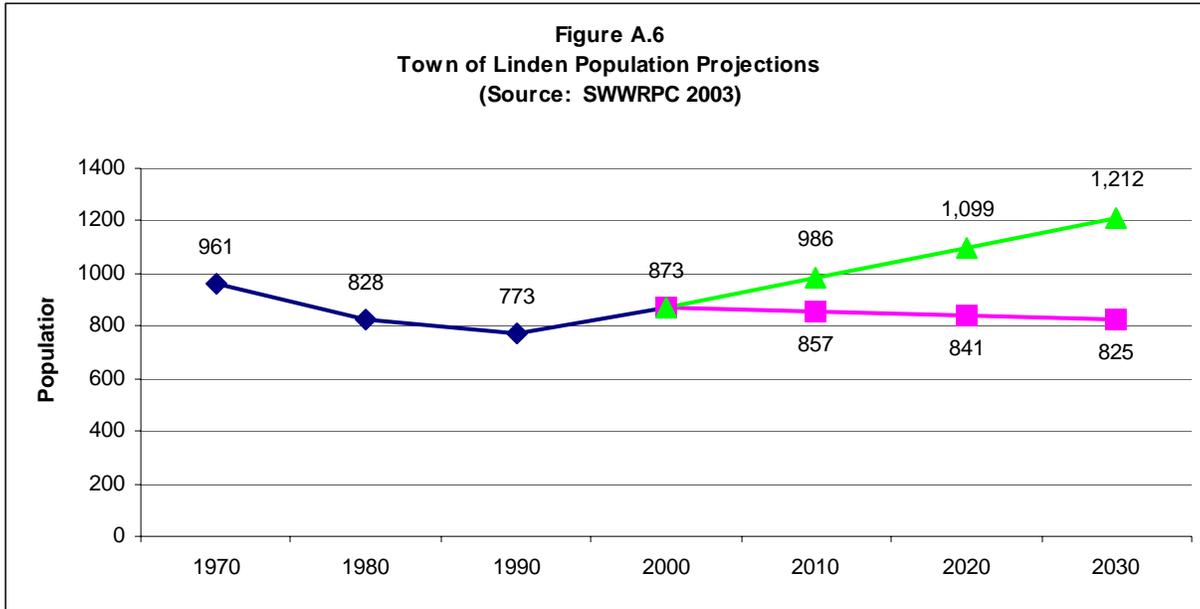
Occupations	Town of Linden		Iowa County	State of Wisconsin
	Number	Percent	Percent	Percent
Management, professional and related	149	34.7%	30.9%	31.3%
Services occupations	35	8.1%	12.8%	14.0%
Sales and office occupations	99	23.0%	25.5%	25.2%
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	24	5.6%	2.5%	0.9%
Construction, extraction and maintenance occupations	40	9.3%	10.9%	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	83	19.3%	17.4%	19.8%
Employed civilian population 16 years and older	430	100%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS

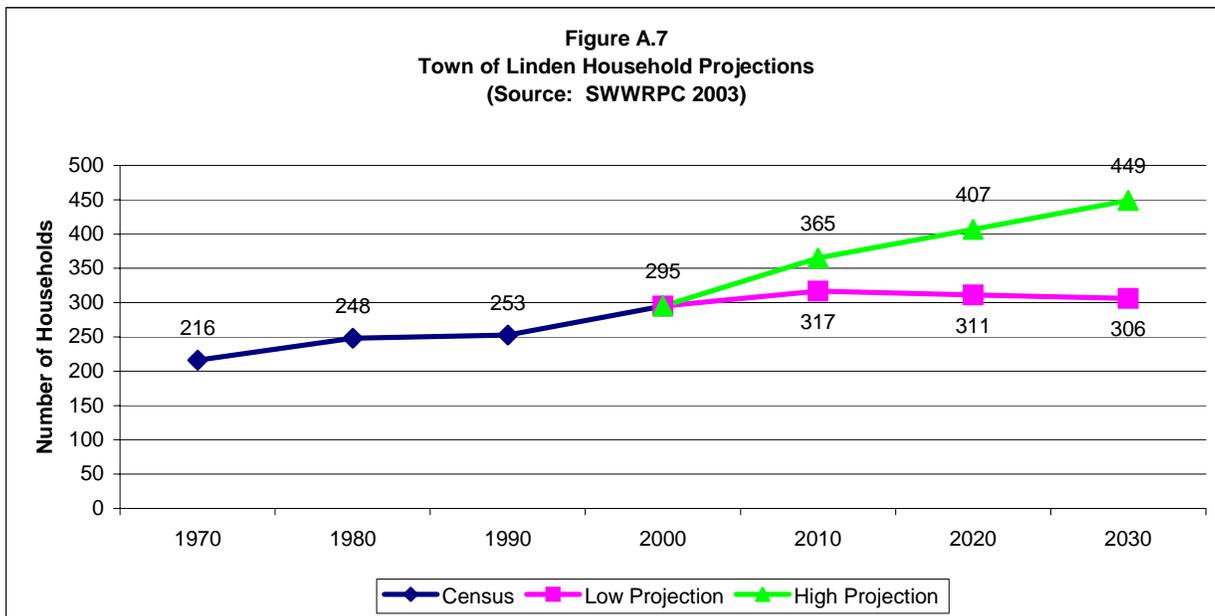
POPULATION

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.



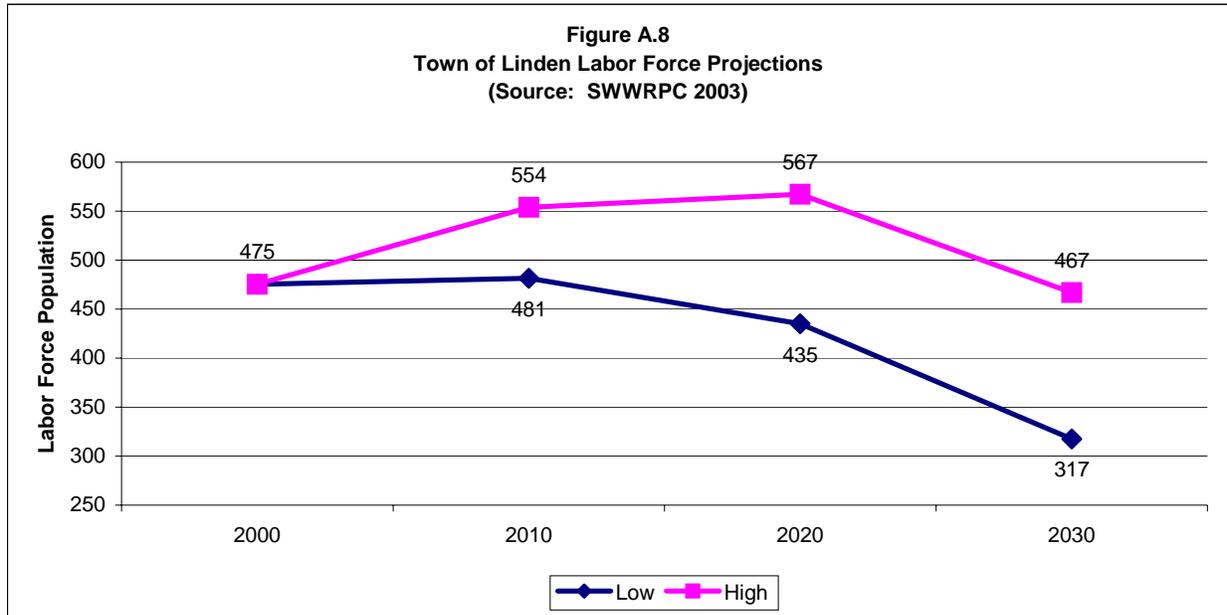
HOUSEHOLD

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 Linden. 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 Linden. For more information, go to Section F, Economic Development.



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.