

CHAPTER 3: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Issues and Opportunities Element is to define a desired future (a vision) for the Town of Eldorado with respect to land use through an examination of key demographic data, as well as through the public participation process. Section 66.1001 (2) (a) of the Wisconsin Statutes requires that the Issues and Opportunities Element include a “statement of the overall objectives, policies, goals, and programs of the governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the governmental unit over the planning period.” Although not defined in the Statutes, Chapter 2: Framework and Implementation outlines the structure for how this and other elements are addressed. The Issues and Opportunities Chapter contains two major sections:

1. A summary of the public participation process and information on key points gleaned from a variety of tools and processes used during the plan update process, and;
2. A review of key summary points of population information (details contained in Appendix A: Issues and Opportunities and a narrative which helped to create the vision, goals, framing concepts, policies, strategies and recommendations contained in Chapter 2: Framework and Implementation.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITIES

Public input was sought early in the planning process per the adopted Citizen Participation Plan and was gathered through a number of methods in order to better identify issues and opportunities as well as to help craft the vision, goal and objective statements. During the course of the planning process, a variety of methods were used to get citizen input:

1. **Public Meetings (entire process)** – Each Plan Commission meeting where the plan development process was listed as an agenda item also had a public comment opportunity.
2. **Plan Commission SWOT Analysis** - A series of four questions were posed to the Town’s Plan Commission early on in the plan update process in order to identify future issues and opportunities moving forward in the plan update process. A listing of comments by the Plan Commission is contained in **Appendix J**.
3. **Public Visioning Open House** – A public visioning open house was held on May 7, 2019 at the Eldorado Community Center. The results of the workshop summary are contained in **Appendix J**.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS AND NARRATIVE

Changes in population and household characteristics combined with existing and future development patterns and policy choices will determine how well the Town of Eldorado will be able to meet the future needs of its residents.

Population Trends

Historic Population and Population Forecast

The Facts:

- The Town of Eldorado has been growing slowly since 1990. Between 1990 and 2018, the population of the Town grew by 68 persons, or 4.8 percent.
- The WDOA's circa 2013 population projections forecast that Eldorado will grow by 4.7 percent (68 persons) between 2010 and 2030, before declining by 2.3 percent (35 persons) between 2030 and 2040.

What it Means:

Historically the Town has experienced a slowly growing population and this trend is expected to continue through 2030. After 2030 and somewhat mirroring Fond du Lac County, the Town is expected to start experiencing population losses, as deaths outnumber births and in-migration. Initially the Town will need to determine where growth should occur and what types of services a growing population will need. At the same time, the Town should start to think about how it will react to population losses that are expected to occur during the last 10 years of the planning period. A current study suggests that small Towns should focus on improving social connectedness and quality of life as a way to “shrink Smart”.¹

Age Distribution

The Facts:

- In 2010, the median age of the residents of the Town of Eldorado was 42.9; this is an increase of 6 years from 2000.
- The baby boomer population (45 to 64) comprised the Town's largest cohort in both 2000 (28.3%) and 2010 (32.5%).
- Larger shifts will be seen by the end of the planning period as the 45 to 64 age cohort get older and move into retirement.

¹ <https://www.futurity.org/smart-shrinking-towns-1901902-2/>

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What it Means:

The Town's population is aging and the number of persons reaching retirement age will increase significantly, thereby changing demands for services and infrastructure. Impacts could be felt in many ways, including housing types that match the needs of this segment of the population, additional recreational or leisure amenities and access to public transportation for medical services, grocery shopping, etc.

Racial Distribution**The Facts:**

- In 2010, whites comprised 98.3 percent of the Town of Eldorado population compared to 99.4 percent in 2000.
- In 2010, Hispanics comprised 1.0 percent of the population; up from 0.6 percent in 2000 (a gain of 7 people).

What this Means:

While whites still outnumber other races, the Town's population is becoming more diverse from a racial and ethnic standpoint. In order to grow, the community may need to become more diverse. This can lead to a number of changes in community dynamics. Understanding differences in culture, race and ethnic groups facilitates collaboration and cooperation.

Household Structure and Trends**The Facts:**

- Household size in the Town of Eldorado decreased between 2000 from 2.95 persons per household to 2.71 persons per household in 2010.
- The Town of Eldorado's average household size has remained higher than both the county and the State of Wisconsin, reflecting the Town's higher percentage of family households, and a smaller percentage of the households living alone. This is true for both owner-occupied and rental occupied housing units.
- In 2000 (85.9%) and 2010 (82.2%), over four-fifths of the households in the Town of Eldorado were family households. This was significantly higher than the county and the state for both time periods.
- Married couple families (husband and wife) made up about three quarters (73.5%) of all households in the Town of Eldorado in 2010 and 78 percent in 2000. This was significantly higher than the county and the state in both time periods.
- The number of households is expected to increase by about 12.8 percent between 2010 and 2035 from 539 in 2010 to 608 in 2035, before decreasing by 4 units between 2035 and 2040.

What this Means:

As the Town's household size continues to decrease, the presence of married couples and families should remain strong, when compared to the county and the state. Married couples may be better off financially than single parent households; this is especially true of single mother households. Households that are better off financially have more disposable income that can be spent on maintaining properties and donating money for civic needs. Additionally, as the household size decreases, and the population ages, the number of housing units will continue to increase until 2035, even though the population is decreasing (between 2030 and 2035). Married couples and family households may need larger and different housing than single individuals and an elderly population. Therefore a variety of housing types may be needed to accommodate different household needs.

Education

The Facts:

- In 2013-2017, the Town of Eldorado had a slightly higher percentage of residents age 25 or older who graduated from high school or higher than the county and the state.
- In 2013-2017, the Town has a smaller share of residents who hold a bachelor degree or higher, when compared to the county and the state.

What it Means:

While the Town is not as well educated as the county and the state, income levels still exceed those of the county and state for both median household and median family income. This could be due to a higher share of workers in construction and manufacturing sectors. Households and families with higher incomes have more disposal income that can be spent on home maintenance and civic needs.

Income

The Facts:

- The majority, approximately 81.8 percent of households derive income from earnings in the Town of Eldorado in 2013-2017.
- In both 1999 and 2013-2017, the Town's median household income (\$54,706 and \$75,517) was significantly higher than both Fond du Lac County's (\$45,578 and \$57,798) and the State of Wisconsin (\$43,791 and \$56,759).
- In both 1999 and 2013-2017, the Town's median family income (\$57,000 and \$82,841) was significantly higher than both Fond du Lac County's (\$53,325 and \$71,680) and the State of Wisconsin (\$52,911 and \$72,542).

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- The per capita income in the Town of Eldorado in 2013-2017 was \$29,907, an increase of about 34.5 percent.

What it Means:

Since a somewhat large percentage of Eldorado's household income is from earnings, access to employment opportunities is a strong determinant in meeting the income needs of the residents. As the Town's population is fairly well off, when compared to the county and the state, there may be more local resources available. These local resources could potentially pay for improvements that are desired in the community.

Poverty Status**The Facts:**

- Between 1999 and 2013-2017, the percentage of individuals living below the poverty line decreased in the Town.
- In 2013-2017, 2.3 percent of the Town of Eldorado's population was living below the poverty line.
- Approximately 1.9 percent of families lived below the poverty level in the Town of Eldorado, according to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, this was a slight increase from 1999.

What it Means:

While not a large part of the population, some people within the Town are struggling financially. Those struggling financial may not own a vehicle and may therefore have difficulty accessing employment, groceries and other needs. They may also have trouble finding affordable housing.

GOALS, FRAMING CONCEPTS, STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

The goals, framing concepts, policies, strategies and actions are provided in Chapter 2: Framework and Implementation. A single goal was developed for each plan element, along with a series of Framing Concepts that outline specific policies, strategies and action items pertaining to the implementation of this Chapter.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

A comprehensive listing of federal, state, county and local policies and programs that may apply to topics discussed in this chapter (where known about) are contained in Appendix M.

POTENTIAL FRAMING CONCEPTS

- Aging in Place
- Community Engagement and Social Infrastructure/communication