

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 288, 2nd edition
A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE FOR WALWORTH COUNTY

Chapter 2

UPDATE OF POPULATION, HOUSEHOLD, AND EMPLOYMENT DATA AND PROJECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Existing and projected resident population levels are an important consideration in comprehensive planning. The projected future population in the County is used to calculate the projected number of households, which may indicate a need to develop new housing units. An increase in the number of jobs projected in the County, other than those related to agriculture, may indicate a need for additional areas to be identified for commercial or industrial development.

The 2009 County comprehensive plan included population, housing, household, and employment data through the year 2006, and population, household, and employment projections to the year 2035. Tabular data in the comprehensive plan update provides existing demographic information through 2010, and extends population, household, and employment projections through the year 2050. The projections were developed by SEWRPC for VISION 2050.¹ As in prior projection efforts, the Commission prepared a range of projections: low, intermediate, and high. The intermediate growth projection is considered to be the most likely to be achieved and was the projection used for Walworth County in the development of VISION 2050.

¹ SEWRPC Planning Report No. 55, VISION 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin, July 2017.

The high and low projections are intended to provide an indication of the levels that could be achieved under significantly higher and lower, but nevertheless plausible, growth scenarios.

POPULATION

Data on the historical and existing population for the Region, Walworth County, and communities in Walworth County are presented in Table 2.1. The population in the County increased from 92,013 to 102,228 residents between 2000 and 2010, an increase of about 11 percent. This was a slower growth rate than the 23 percent increase experienced between 1990 and 2000. The slower growth rate in the County during the last decade is consistent with those observed in both Walworth County and the Region as a whole, and may be attributable to the economic recession and the resulting decrease in new home construction experienced in the latter years of the decade.

As shown in Table 2.2, the population of the County is expected to continue to increase between 2010 and 2050, to about 140,600 persons under VISION 2050 (intermediate growth projection). This represents an increase of about 38 percent over the 2010 population, or an average of about 959 additional residents per year. This rate of increase is slightly less than the average increase in residents per year between 1980 and 2010, when the County grew by an average of 1,025 residents per year.

HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households, or occupied housing units, is important to land use and public facility planning. Households directly influence the demand for urban land as well as the demand for transportation and other public facilities and services, such as police and fire protection water supply, wastewater treatment, and parks. The number of households in the County, shown in Table 2.3 increased from 34,505 households in 2000 to 39,699 households in 2010, an increase of about 15 percent.

As shown in Table 2.4, VISION 2050 projects that the number of households in the County will increase to 58,900 households, or by about 48 percent, between 2010 and 2050. Commission projections indicate that the average size of households throughout the Region, including Walworth County, may be expected to continue to decrease in the years ahead. In Walworth County, the average household size, which stood at 2.57 people per household in 2000, decreased to 2.51 in 2010, and is projected to decrease to 2.32 by 2050.

HOUSING STOCK

Information regarding the occupancy and tenure status of housing units in the Region, Walworth County, and communities in Walworth County is presented in Table 2.5. There were 51,531 housing units in the County in 2010, of which 77 percent were reported as “occupied” by the U.S. Census and the remaining 23 percent were reported as “vacant.” Of the 39,699 occupied housing units, 27,310 units, or 69 percent of the total number of housing units in the County, were owner-occupied; the balance, 12,389 units, or 31 percent, were renter-occupied.

Of the 11,832 vacant housing units identified in the 2010 census, 8,912 units were reported as being devoted to seasonal or occasional use. The other 2,920 vacant housing units were available for rent or sale; rented or sold but not yet occupied; or vacant for other reasons.

EMPLOYMENT

Table 2.6 provides information on the number of jobs located in the Region and Walworth County. There were 52,700 jobs in the County in 2010, which is an increase of about 3 percent from 2000 levels. This modest increase can be attributed to the national economic recession in the latter part of the last decade.

Employment projections under VISION 2050 for Walworth County are presented in Table 2.7. Total employment, or jobs, located in the County are projected to increase to 69,300 jobs by 2050, an increase of about 31 percent from 2010 levels.

SEWRPC projections for the Region and Walworth County indicate that a change may be expected in the types of jobs available in the years ahead. The largest increases are projected to be in the service sector (business, health, social, recreational, and other services), with service sector employment projected to increase by 29 percent in the Region and 63 percent in Walworth County. Employment in the industrial sector—including manufacturing, wholesaling activities, and construction jobs—is projected to remain at 2010 levels in the Region but increase by 2 percent in Walworth County. Retail employment is projected to increase by 14 percent in the Region and 29 percent in the County.

COMMUNITY LEVEL PROJECTIONS

The preparation of the County multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan update requires population, household, and employment projections for each towns participating in the planning effort. The 2009 comprehensive plan included projections through the year 2035 that were selected by the participating towns from a set of alternative projections that were reviewed and considered by the towns.

The community-level projection for the year 2035 included in the 2009 county multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan have been re-evaluated and extended to the year 2050. The updated projections for population, household, and employment levels for Walworth County communities are shown in Table 2.8. The 2050 projections for the participating towns are the same or only slightly different from the 2035 projections included in the 2009 plan.