

Chapter I

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Byron, located in the south-central part of Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin is a rural community that is beginning to experience some urban growth pressures (Appendix A, Map 1). Byron encompasses 36.3 square miles and over 23,122 acres. The 2000 census indicated that 1550 residents lived in the town. The Town is bordered by the City and Town of Fond du Lac on the north, the Town of Eden on the east, the Town of Oakfield, on the west, and the Village and Town of Lomira on the south.

Historical Background

In the early 1830s, the United States Army constructed a road in Wisconsin Territory that connected Fort Howard at present day Green Bay with Fort Winnebago (Portage) and Fort Crawford (Prairie Du Chien). The road route extended south from Fort Crawford along the east and south side of Lake Winnebago and then onward to present day Ladoga, Brandon, and Fairwater in Fond du Lac County before moving west to Fort Winnebago and south to Fort Crawford. This road along with the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 provided adequate transportation for settlers from New York and New England to migrate westward.

The first white settlement in the Town of Byron took place in 1839. John Case, Oscar Pier, Patrick Kelly, and William Stewart built a neighborhood in the north central part of the present day Town of Byron. The neighborhood was called Mound Prairie. In the middle 1840's, the Genesee Neighborhood was established in the southeastern portion of the present day Town of Byron. In 1846, the Town of Byron was officially organized and William Stewart was elected the first town chairperson. In 1847 settlers removed stone from the Niagara Escarpment to build St. John's Catholic Church in the Town of Byron. The majority of the settlers that migrated to the Town of Byron from the 1840s to the 1880s were from New York, England, and Ireland. German migration became more significant after the 1880s.

Farming was established early on as the economic backbone of the Town of Byron. By 1880, nearly 76 percent of the town land use was farmland, with the remaining 14 percent being homes, businesses, woodlands and wetlands. By 1880, the dairy industry was beginning to expand in Fond du Lac County as wheat production shifted westward due to pestilence and drought in the 1870s. Chester Hazen established the first cheese factory in Ladoga in 1864, and William Dempster Hoard was determined to establish Wisconsin as a leader in the dairy industry. In 1880, the Town of Byron had 3,030 cattle, 1,136 hogs, 412 sheep, and grew 2,164 acres of wheat, 1,198 acres of corn, 1,263 acres of barley, and 2,298 acres of oats. Total cheese production was over 200,000 pounds and butter production exceeded 78,000 pounds.

The industry continued to develop and grow in the Town of Byron and Fond du Lac County. In 1920, Wisconsin surpassed New York as the number one dairy producing state in the country and held this rank until the mid 1990s. In 2000, Fond du Lac County was the seventh largest milk producing county in Wisconsin and 28th in the value of dairy products sold.

TOWN DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

The Town of Byron's population growth patterns have been shaped by the growth, expansion, and technological changes that occurred in the agriculture industry. If the decline of people involved in production agriculture continues, the town will gain more people looking for environmental and open space amenities. Byron is in a very strategic location being about 45 minutes to an hour away from Madison, the Fox Cities, Green Bay, and metropolitan Milwaukee. The influence of the Fox Cities metropolitan area, the Milwaukee metropolitan area and local growth within the City of Fond du Lac as well as the Town's amenities will form the basis for future community growth and development.

Since the Town of Byron firmly established itself as an agricultural community in the late 1800's, the population has slowly increased. The only consecutive decades that Byron experienced population declines occurred between 1910 and 1930 (Table I-1). Another slight decline occurred between 1940 and 1950, a decade influenced by World War 2. The Town reached a population peak in 1980 with 1,681 residents. Despite, the decline in the size of families and rather poor economic conditions in the late 1970s and 1980s the Town of Bryon maintained its population. The biggest growth in the town occurred between 1970 and 1980. Byron gained nearly 400 people over this period resulting in a 23 percent increase in population. This percent rate of growth was greater than all of Byron's adjacent towns and was only surpassed in the area by population growth in the Village of Lomira (Table I-2).

Table I-1

TOWN POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS, 1900-2002

Year	Town	Town of Byron	Town of Eden	Town of Fond du Lac	Town of Lomira	Town of Oakfield
1900		1,234	1,393	1,280	1,560	1,471
1910		1,203	1,372	1,103	1,590	850
1920		1,107	1,061	1,175	1,481	780
1930		1,060	984	1,602	1,487	794
1940		1,144	990	1,809	1,525	813
1950		1,079	992	2,471	1,454	810
1960		1,102	990	3,851	1,242	786
1970		1,300	1,041	3,896	1,247	765
1980		1,681	1,130	3,001	1,391	833
1990		1,634	1,037	2,310	1,280	822
2000		1,550	979	2,027	1,228	767
2002		1,571	976	2,113	1,237	767

Source: U.S Bureau of the Census and the Wisconsin Department of Administration

Table I-2
Surrounding Village and City Growth, 1900-2002

Year	City	City of Fond du Lac	City of Appleton	Village of Lomira
1900		15,110	15,085	492
1910		18,797	16,773	529
1920		23,427	19,561	554
1930		26,449	25,267	603
1940		27,209	28,436	659
1950		29,936	34,010	746
1960		32,719	48,411	807
1970		35,515	57,143	1,084
1980		35,863	58,908	1,446
1990		37,775	65,252	1,542
2000		42,203	69,275	2,233
2002		42,619	70,479	2,282

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Table I-3
COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS, 1860-2002

Year	County	Fond du Lac County	Dodge County	Outagamie County	Winnebago County	Washington County	Waukesha County
1860		34,154	42,818	9,587	23,770	23,622	26,831
1870		46,273	47,035	18,430	37,279	28,274	28,258
1880		46,855	45,931	28,716	42,740	33,270	28,957
1890		44,088	44,984	38,690	50,097	35,229	33,270
1900		47,589	46,631	46,247	58,225	23,589	35,229
1910		51,610	47,436	49,102	62,116	23,784	37,100
1920		56,119	49,742	55,113	63,847	25,713	42,612
1930		59,883	52,092	62,790	76,622	26,551	52,358
1940		62,353	54,280	70,032	80,507	28,430	62,744
1950		67,829	57,611	81,722	91,103	33,902	85,901
1960		75,085	63,170	101,794	107,928	46,119	158,249
1970		84,567	69,004	119,356	129,931	63,829	231,338
1980		88,964	75,064	128,799	131,703	84,848	280,203
1990		90,083	76,559	140,510	140,320	95,328	304,715
2000		97,296	85,897	160,971	156,763	117,493	360,767
2002		98,589	87,083	165,570	159,161	120,429	368,077

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

Population Density

In 2000, the Town of Byron had a population density of nearly 43 people per square mile. All of the towns that border Byron had lower population densities with the exception of the Town of Fond du Lac. This data makes sense since the towns of Lomira, Oakfield, and Eden compare in size (approximately 36 square miles) to Byron and have smaller populations. The Town of Fond du Lac has a larger population and is much smaller in size with a land area of 19.85 square miles.

Fond du Lac County had a population density of 134.6 in 2000, which with the exception of Dodge County was lower than other counties located along the U.S. Highway 41 corridor. The Village of Lomira had a population density of 1,148 people per square mile and the City of Fond du Lac's population density was 2,501 people per square mile in 2000.

Existing Age Distribution

The Town of Byron's population is aging in place. In 1970 the median age in the town was 23 years old. In 2000, the median age had increased to 38 years old. This trend has occurred throughout Fond du Lac County and the surrounding region, as the baby boomer population grows older. The median age for Fond du Lac County in 2000 was 37 and the state median age was 36. The 45 to 64 age group has nearly doubled in the Town of Byron since 1960. This group makes up almost 29 percent of the population.

From a workforce perspective, the Town of Byron has nearly 63 percent of its total population between the ages of 18 and 64. This figure is about 3 percent higher than Fond du Lac County's population in this age group and 2 percent higher when compared to the population of the State of Wisconsin. An additional 27 percent of the population is

under 18 years old, which is 2 percent higher than Fond du Lac County and the State of Wisconsin. About ten percent of the population in Byron is 65 and over. This figure is about 3 percent less than the state and 4 percent lower than Fond du Lac County. The only adjacent town with a lower percentage of the population 65 and over is the Town of Oakfield.

Race

Most residents in the Town of Byron are White Caucasian. However, the Town of Byron does have a small minority population. In 1980, the town had 20 Latino, 2 African American, and 6 American Indians within its population. In 2000, 34 Latino, 2 African American, 6 American Indian, and 3 people of Asian race were living in the Town of Byron. Nationally, the Latino population is expected to nearly double grow significantly in the next 20 years. Projections indicate that the Latino population will increase from 12 to 19 percent of the total population in the United States over the next 20 years.

Households

In 2000, the Town of Byron had 538 total households. Forty-Four percent of households had children present under the age of 18 years old. This figure is comparable to the towns of Lomira, Oakfield, Eden, and Fond du Lac. A total of 392 of the Byron households were classified as married couple families. Thirty households were single parent households, and 70 were single occupant households. Twenty-Nine of the single occupant households were people of age 65 and over.

Household size is related to housing demand. A decrease in household size usually creates more demand for housing units, even if there is no growth in population. In 1970, the average household size in the Town of Byron was 4 people. Household size in the town declined to 3.49 in 1980, 3.10 in 1990, and 2.88 in 2000. However, household size in the Town of Byron remains slightly higher than the Town of Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County, the City of Fond du Lac, and the Village of Lomira (Table I-5).

Table I-4

POPULATION BY AGE, 1960 & 2000

Year	Age	Town of Byron	
		Number	Percent
1960	Under 5	119	7.3%
	5-14	297	18.2%
	15 to 24	262	16.0%
	25 to 44	502	30.7%
	45 to 64	328	20.1%
	65 and Over	126	7.7%
	Total	1634	100%
	Median Age	23.0	
2000	Under 5	76	4.9%
	5-17	253	16.3%
	18-24	222	14.3%
	25-44	401	25.9%
	45-64	442	28.5%
	65+	156	10.1%
	Total	1550	100%
	Median Age	37.9	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 and 2000

Table I-5**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 2000**

Community	Median Household Size
City of Fond du Lac	2.34
Town of Fond du Lac	2.38
Fond du Lac County	2.52
Village of Lomira	2.58
Town of Byron	2.88
Town of Lomira	2.90
Town of Eden	2.91
Town of Oakfield	3.04

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Income

The median household income increased more significantly in the towns of Byron, Oakfield, Eden, and Fond du Lac than in the surrounding counties, villages and cities. The median household income for Byron increased from \$36,875 to \$56,667 between 1990 and 2000. The median household income in the Town of Bryon was 21 percent higher than Fond du Lac County and 25 greater than the City of Fond du Lac in 2000.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town of Byron's median household income increased almost 60 percent. During the same period, Fond du Lac County's median household income increased by about 55 percent. Per capita income increased significantly in the region as well between 1990 and 2000. Towns, villages, cities, and counties all recorded substantial gains in per capita income between 1990 and 2000. Per capita income increased by 70 percent in the Town of Byron and Fond du Lac County experienced a 60 percent increase in per capita income over this period.

Despite the impressive income growth between 1990 and 2000, a small percentage of the population in the Town of Byron lived in poverty. The 2000 census information revealed that 2.9 percent of families in the town and 4.9 percent of individuals reported living in poverty. These figures were slightly higher for Fond du Lac County and the City of Fond du Lac. The family poverty rate for Fond du Lac County was 3.5 percent and 5.8 percent for individuals. The 2000 census reported a 4.6 percent rate of poverty for families and a 7.3 percent poverty rate for individuals in the City of Fond du Lac.

Table I-6**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 1990 & 2000**

Year	Attainment Level	Town of Byron		Fond du Lac County	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1990	Less than 9 th Grade	85	8.9%	6,416	11.3%
	High School, No Diploma	82	8.6%	6,352	11.2%
	High School Graduate	454	47.4%	24,259	42.8%
	Some College (No Degree)	111	11.6%	7,912	13.9%
	Associate Degree	84	8.8%	4,262	7.5%
	Bachelor's Degree	106	11.1%	5,484	9.7%
	Grad. Or Professional Degree	34	3.6%	2,079	3.6%

	Total 25 Years and Over	956	100%	56,764	100%
2000	Less than 9 th Grade	48	4.9%	3,635	6.1%
	High School, No Diploma	68	6.9%	3,060	5.1%
	High School Graduate	465	47.4%	25,479	42.3%
	Some College (No Degree)	209	21.3%	12,097	20.1%
	Associate Degree	62	6.3%	5,231	8.7%
	Bachelor's Degree	93	9.4%	7,617	12.6%
	Grad. Or Professional Degree	37	3.8%	3,098	5.1%
	Total 25 Years and Over	982	100%	60,217	100%

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

Education

Residents in the Town of Byron and Fond du Lac County enhanced their level of education between 1990 and 2000 as the economy flourished and the service, information, and manufacturing technology sectors grew rapidly. In 1990, nearly 83 percent of Byron's population age 25 and over had received a high school diploma (Table I-6). Over 35 percent had some college education or received an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate or professional degree. In 1990, about 78 percent of residents in Fond du Lac County age 25 and over held a high school diploma. Nearly 35 percent had some college education or possessed an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate or professional degree.

In 2000, the number of Byron residents age 25 and over who held a high school diploma increased to 87 percent. Forty percent of residents has some college education or held an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate or professional degree. Over 84 percent of Fond du Lac County residents possessed a high school diploma in 2000. Approximately 44 percent had received some college education or held an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate or professional degree.

TOWN EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Labor Force

The Town of Byron and Fond du Lac County have a vibrant labor force. Almost 80 percent of males age 16 and over in the Town of Byron and 78 percent in Fond du Lac County participate in the labor force according to the U.S. Census. Nearly, 69 percent of all women age 16 and over in the Town of Byron and almost 60 percent of all women age 16 and over in Fond du Lac County are participants in the labor force. However, from 1990 to 2000, the size of the labor force in Fond du Lac County increased at a faster rate than in the Town of Byron. The number of employed female workers in Fond du Lac County increased by approximately 15 percent from 1990 to 2000 and the number of employed male workers increased by 11 percent in the county over the same period. In the Town of Byron the employed female labor force increased by about 8 percent and the employed male labor force declined slightly. Unemployment rates reached historic lows during the 1990s and began to increase in 2001.

Table I-7

CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE, 1990 & 2000

		Town of Byron	Fond du Lac County
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Year	Employment Status	Male	Female	Male	Female
1990	Total Civilian Labor Force	499	379	25,353	21,491
	Number Employed	475	365	24,210	20,692
	Percent Employed	95.2%	96.3%	95.5%	96.3%
	Number Unemployed	24	14	1143	799
	Percent Unemployed	4.9%	3.7%	4.5%	3.7%
2000	Total Civilian Labor Force	494	404	28,371	25,312
	Number Employed	492	397	27,165	24,209
	Percent Employed	99.5%	98.2%	95.7%	95.6%
	Number Unemployed	2	7	1206	1103
	Percent Unemployed	0.5%	1.8 %	4.3%	4.4%

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

Employment Occupations

Management, professional, sales and office, and production and transportation provided over 70 percent of all job occupations for residents living in the Town of Byron and Fond du Lac County in 2000. Service, construction, and resource extraction were secondary in importance.

Industry Sectors

The largest industry sector that provided the most jobs for Town of Bryon and Fond du Lac County residents is manufacturing. This sector makes up over 27 percent of all jobs for residents of Fond du Lac County and almost 25 percent of jobs for citizens in Byron. Education, health, and social services places second for jobs in Fond du Lac County and ties for second with retail trade in Byron. The agriculture and mining industry provides the third highest number of jobs for residents of the Town of Byron.

Travel Time to Work

The number of Byron residents working at home declined and a larger proportion of residents in the Town of Byron spent more time traveling to work than a decade ago. In 1990, 597 town residents commuting to work did so in 24 minutes or less (Table I-8). In 2000, the number of commuters in this travel time frame increased to 668. The number of commuters driving 35 to 59 minutes to work increased from 39 to 63. For the first time in the Town of Byron, 7 residents indicated that they drove 90 minutes or more to work. The fact that U.S. Highway 41 connects Byron with the Fox Valley, Green Bay, and Milwaukee along with the introduction of the 65-mile per hour speed limit in the 1990s provided increased commuting options for Town of Bryon residents.

Table I-8

TOWN OF BYRON, TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, 1990 & 2000

Travel Time	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 5 minutes	41	4.9 %	49	5.6%
5 to 14 minutes	218	26.0%	260	29.5%
15 to 24 minutes	338	40.4%	359	40.8%
25 to 34 minutes	79	9.4%	62	7.1%
35 to 59 minutes	39	4.7%	63	7.2%
60 to 89 minutes	28	3.4%	21	2.4%
90 minutes or More	0	0	7	.8%
Worked at Home	94	11.2 %	58	6.6%
Totals	837	100%	879	100%

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Natural Increase

Population projections are difficult to create for small communities. Population growth is based on natural increase and net migration. Natural Increase is derived by comparing fertility rates (number of births) with mortality rates (number of deaths) over a specific period of time. In 2000, 40 percent of the population in the Town of Byron was between 18 and 44 years old (Table I-5). Slightly over 20 percent of the population was under 18 years old. These age groups in the present and future will have the most significant influence on fertility rates. Increasing life expectancy will have a minor impact on mortality rates. With the continuing improvement of survival rates, the male life expectancy in the area will increase by nearly 3 more years from 74 to 77 by 2030. Female life expectancy will increase from 80 to 83 during this same period.

Net Migration

Net Migration is calculated by subtracting the number of people that leave a community from the number of people moving in. On average, in Wisconsin, 60 percent of growth is from natural increase and 40 percent is due to net migration.

Projection Scenarios

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (WDOA) projections show that the Town of Byron will slightly decrease in population between 2005 and 2025. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (ECWRPC) projections indicate that the Town of Byron will increase in population between 2005 and 2030. Both population projection scenarios offered by WDOA and ECWRPC seem to be conservative. The Town of Lomira projects a population growth of over 500 people by 2030 in their comprehensive plan. ECWRPC projects that the Town of Fond du Lac will gain almost 900 people by 2030.

For the purposes of this plan, the Town of Byron projects a population of 2,270 in 2030, an increase of 720 residents from 2000. This number is based on recent building permit activity over the past five years and median household size. Byron has a higher median household size than surrounding villages and cities in the area (Table I-5). This projection also takes into account past growth trends. Between 1970 and 1980 Byron gained nearly 400 people. With recent improvements in transportation and interest in rural residential development this more accurately projects what might occur by 2030.

Table I-9

TOWN OF BYRON, POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2000-2030

Town of Byron	2000 Census	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	Total Population Growth
WDOA Projection	1,550	1,544	1,540	1,536	1,526		-24 (Decline)
ECWRPC Projection	1,550	1,630	1,651	1,670	1,680	1,683	133 (Gain)
Plan Projection	1,550	1,790	1,910	2,030	2,150	2,270	720 (Gain)

PLANNING PROCESS

Public Participation

The Town of Byron adopted a public participation plan. The town utilized the following public participation techniques to involve citizens during the development of the plan.

- All meetings were open to the public.
- All meeting agendas and press releases were sent to local media outlets and posted at three locations within the town indicating the location of planning meetings and public hearings.
- At each meeting citizens were given the opportunity to voice their comments.
- A citizen survey was sent to all Town of Byron landowners (Appendix B).

Town of Byron Vision Statement

The Town of Byron Comprehensive Planning Committee developed a vision to serve as a guide the planning process. The response from the citizen survey that was sent to each landowner within the Town of Byron was used as a tool to develop this vision statement.

Vision Statement: To enhance the peaceful rural character of Byron by minimizing the impact on farmland, woodlands, and open space while integrating residential and business development.

The Comprehensive Plan Serves As a Guide

The Town of Byron will use this comprehensive plan as a guide for decision-making and provide its residents with a high quality of life. To be effective, this plan must be reviewed by the town on a periodic basis and updated if it evident that changes are necessary. This plan will not only help make future growth, development and preservation decisions, but also provide the town and its residents with vital information that can be used for future grant opportunities. Detailed plan goals and objectives are listed in each of the plan elements.

ISSUES AND OPPRTUNITIES ELEMENT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

The Town of Byron Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for making balanced future growth, preservation, and development decisions.

Objectives

1. Create policies for sustainable population growth, open space and rural character preservation and orderly development in the Town.
2. Identify and inventory the land areas where future growth is most likely to occur.
3. Build community consensus on growth issues by creating citizen participation opportunities throughout the planning process.
4. Balance agricultural, residential, industrial, and business development interests.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT: POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies build upon goals and objectives and become the tools that the Town of Byron can use to aid in making planning decisions. Recommendations are projects or actions that the Town of Byron should allocate resources to complete in order to keep the comprehensive relevant.

Policies

1. The Town of Byron Comprehensive Plan shall be used as a tool to guide decision making in accordance with local and state laws and statutes.
2. The Town of Byron Town Board and Plan Commission shall require that future developments are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Recommendations

1. The Town of Byron Town Board and Plan Commission will review the comprehensive plan at least once every three years to make certain the plan remains consistent with current trends.
2. The Town Plan Commission will create a development guide and review process that objectively evaluates proposed developments and both short term and long term impacts.