

Section A

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 Arena. 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 (not in order of priority) for the Town of Arena. The essence of these recommendations is carried throughout the entire document.

- **Protect and improve the health, safety, and welfare of residents in the Town of Arena.**
- **Preserve and enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Town of Arena.**
- **Protect and preserve the small community character of the Town of Arena.**

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 Arena, 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 made 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, 704 to Town of Arena property owners. One hundred seventy were sent back, giving the Town a twenty-four percent return rate. (See Appendix A-1 for complete survey results.)

COMMUNITY VISION

A vision statement identifies where an organization intends to be in the future and how to best meet the future needs of stakeholders. 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 Arena’s planning commission utilized the visioning information from these sessions to create a formal vision statement. The vision statement by the Town of Arena is

Maintain rural character with a diverse landscape. Improve agricultural opportunities as well as control commercial growth.

VISIONING

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

Issues

- Farmland preservation
- Population growth
- Commercial growth
- Groundwater pollution
- Scenic preservation
- Maintain low crime rate
- Economic opportunities for farmers
- Large-scale farms
- Meaningful employment (good wages)
- Access to Madison

Opportunities

- Fine arts
- Small agricultural producers
- Outdoor recreation
- Minimal clustering of homes
- Maintain standards (driveway and homes)
- Growth due to Madison access

Strengths

- Farmland
- Rural beauty
- Control of type of housing
- Long-range plan effective (cooperation of residents to plan)
- Concern of local authorities as to quality of area

Weaknesses

- Police protection
- Affordable housing/elderly/handicap accessible
- Commercial use property
- Farming not profitable
- Need more biking and walking trails

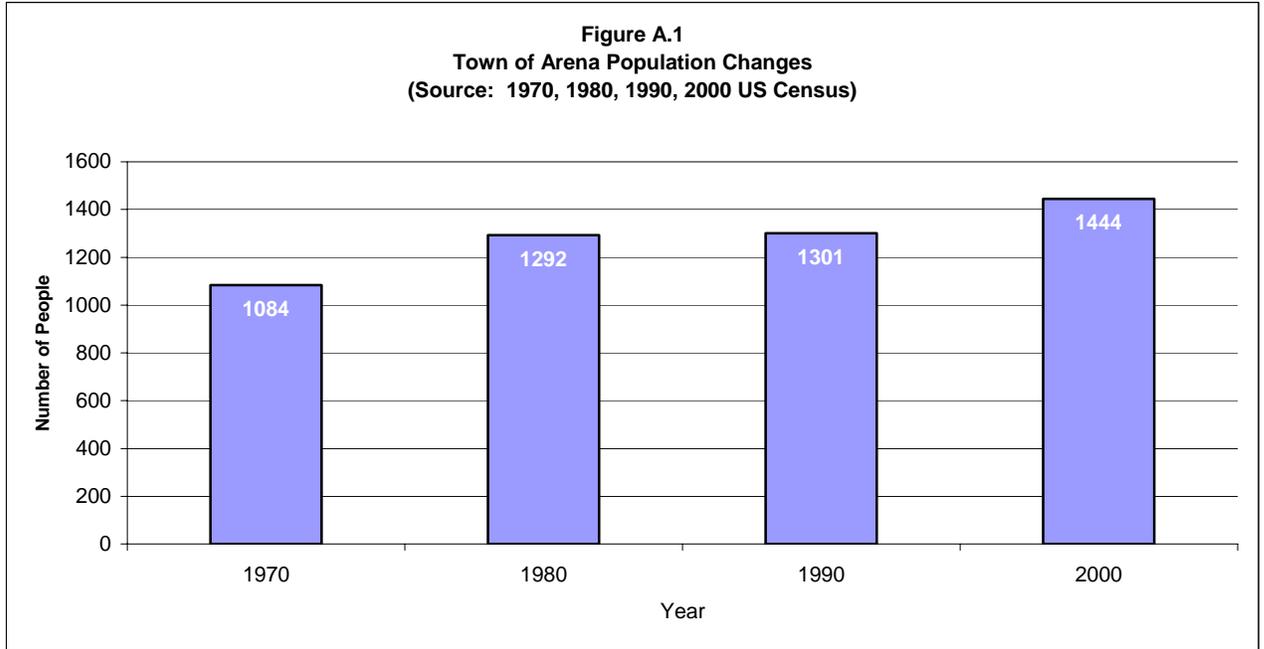
COMMUNITY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

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

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

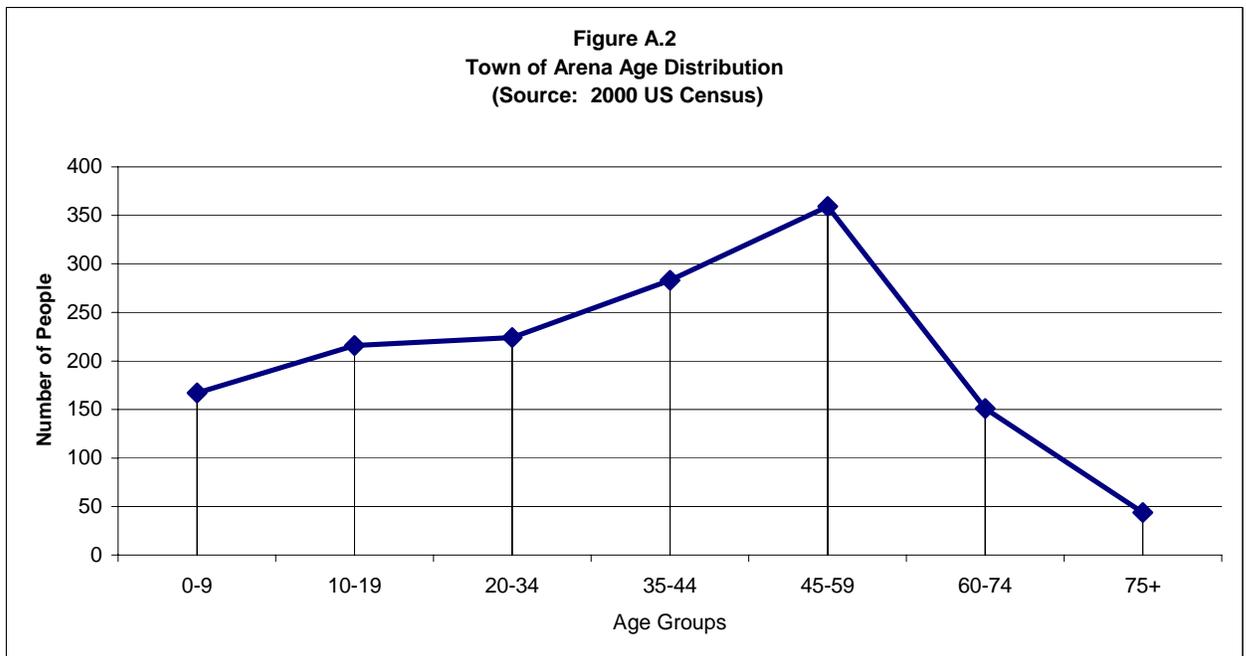
POPULATION CHANGES

The Town of Arena population has increased by 360 people over the past 30 years. Between 1970 and 1980 the Town grew by 19 percent. Between 1980 and 1990 however, it grew by less than 1 percent. From 1990 to 2000 the population increased 11 percent.



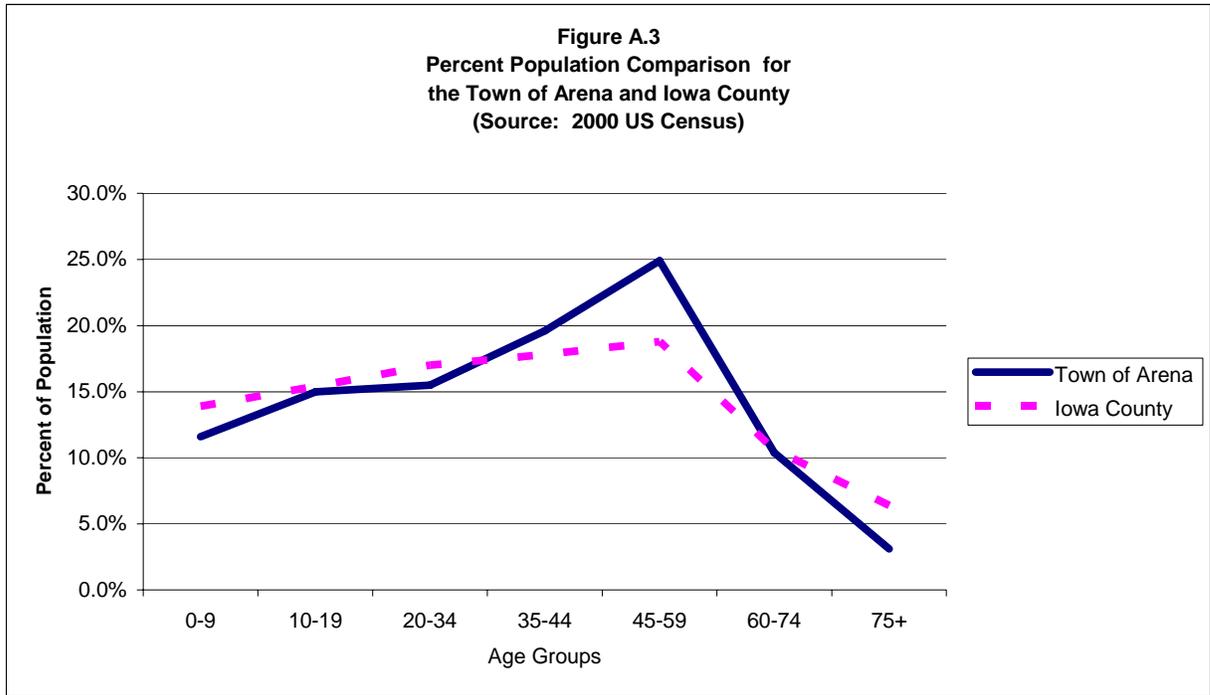
AGE DISTRIBUTION

Figure A.2 shows the age distribution of the Town of Arena residents, according to the 2000 US Census. 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.



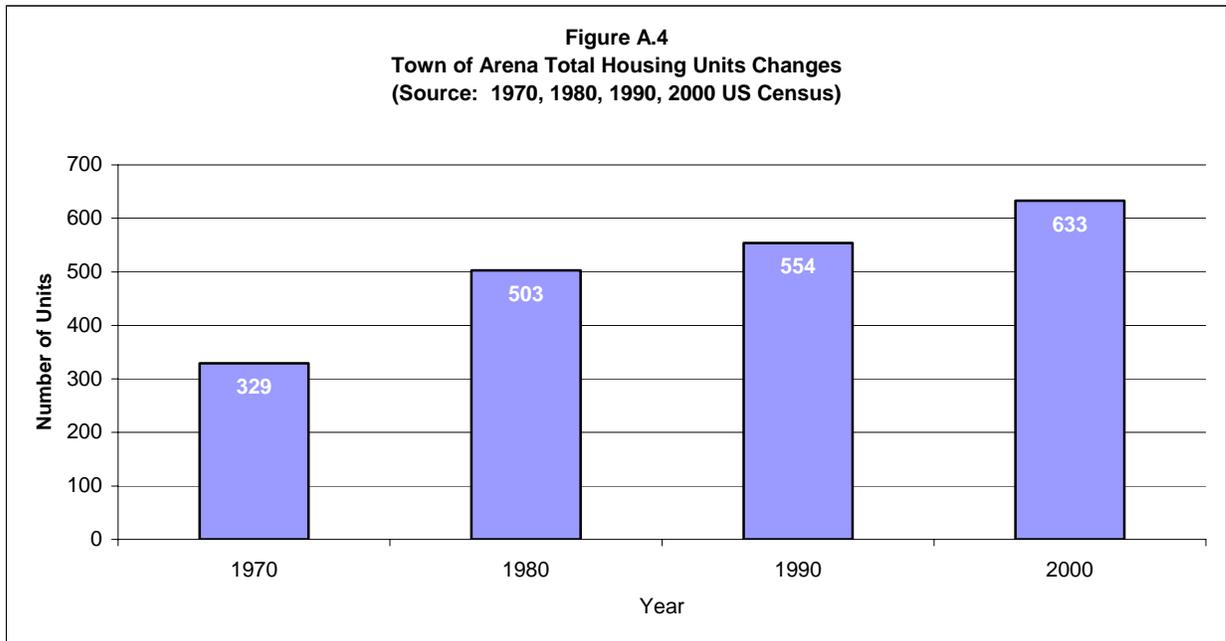
PERCENT POPULATION

Figure A.3 compares the Town population to Iowa County as a whole. The distribution of the Town population is somewhat similar to the county population, although the Town is much higher than the county in the 45 to 59 year age group.

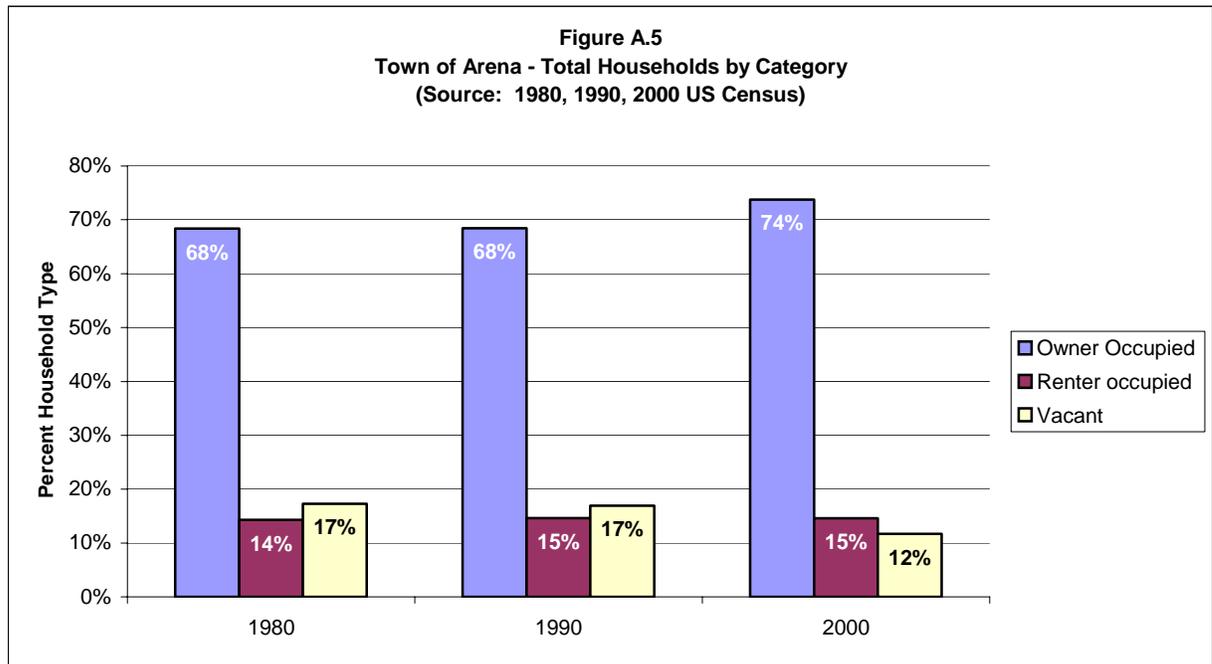


HOUSING TRENDS

Historically, the Town of Arena 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 Arena had an increase of 304 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 633 housing units in Town of Arena in 2000, 74 percent are owner occupied, 15 percent are renter occupied, and the remaining 12 percent are vacant. The average number of persons per household is 2.68 for owner occupied units, 2.50 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 below 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 Arena		Iowa County Percent	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
< 9th grade	59	5.7%	4.2%	5.4%
9th-12th grade, no diploma	123	11.8%	7.4%	9.6%
HS Grad (incl. Equivalency)	398	38.3%	41.8%	34.6%
Some college, no degree	202	19.5%	19.9%	20.6%
Associate Degree	94	9.1%	8.3%	7.5%
Bachelors Degree	123	11.8%	13.2%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	39	3.8%	5.3%	7.2%
Total population 25 years and older	1038	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: US Census 2000

INCOME COMPARISONS

Table A.2 compares the income levels of the Town of Arena 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 Arena	Iowa County	State of Wisconsin
Median household income	\$51,042	\$42,518	\$43,791
Median family income	\$54,844	\$49,972	\$52,911
Per capita income	\$20,060	\$19,497	\$21,271

Source: US Census 2000

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 Arena, 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 of this plan.

Table A.3: Employment Characteristics

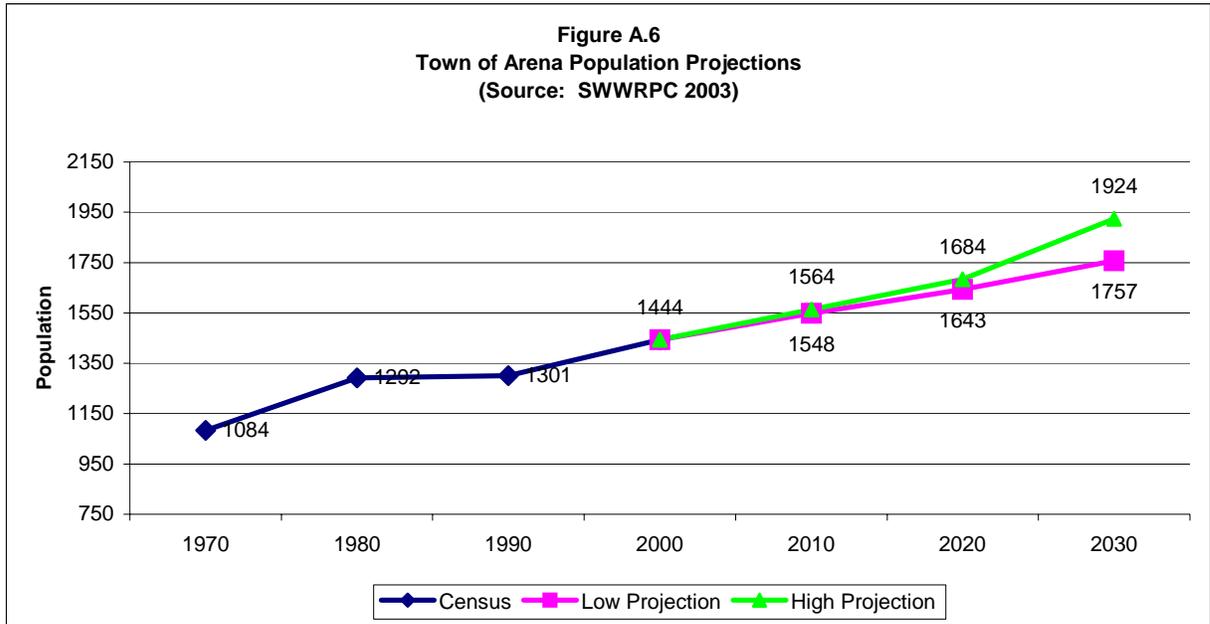
Occupation	Town of Arena		Iowa County Percent	State of Wisconsin Percent
	Number	Percent		
Management, professional and related	233	27.2%	30.9%	31.3%
Services occupations	110	12.8%	12.8%	14.0%
Sales and office occupations	219	25.6%	25.5%	25.2%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	19	2.2%	2.5%	0.9%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	135	15.8%	10.9%	8.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	141	16.5%	17.4%	19.8%
Total employed civilian population 16 years and older	857	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

DEMOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS

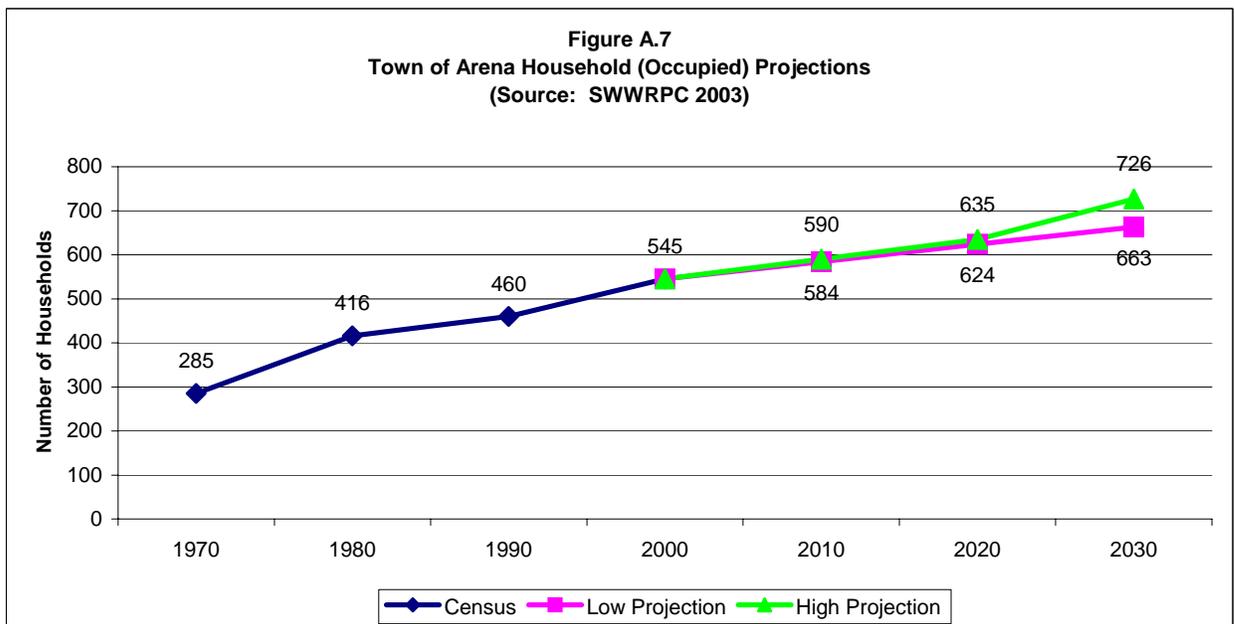
POPULATION

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.



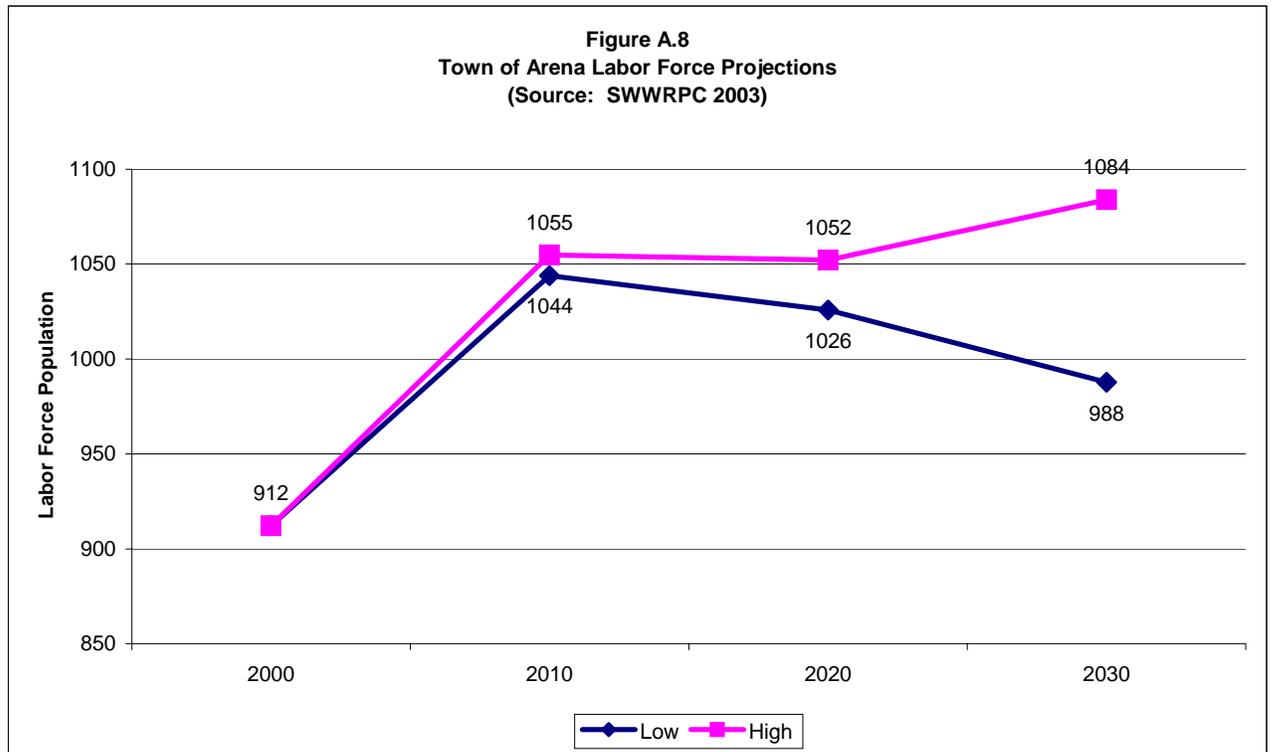
HOUSEHOLD

Figure A.7 shows household projections, based on the Town’s population projections and the average household size from the 2000 US Census.



LABOR FORCE

Figure A.8 shows labor force projections for the Town of Arena. These available workers will not necessarily find employment in Arena: many will work in nearby towns and cities. The figure merely indicates the available labor pool residing in the Town of Arena. For more information, go to Section F, Economic Development Element.



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.