In the fall of 1999, the Wisconsin state legislature passed the Comprehensive Planning Law (State Statute 66.1001) as part of the biennial budget bill (Wisconsin Act 9). The law, also known as the Smart Growth Law, requires that communities create their own comprehensive plans containing nine elements: Issues and Opportunities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Housing; Economic Development; Transportation; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Implementation; and Land Use. The law also states that if a town, village, city, county, or regional planning commission engages in official mapping, subdivision regulation, or zoning, then those actions must be consistent with their plan. Additionally, a draft and final adopted comprehensive plan must be submitted to neighboring local governmental units (municipalities, counties and regional planning commissions) and the Department of Administration (DOA). Communities must be in compliance with this law by January 1, 2010.

The Comprehensive Planning Grant program provides $2 million annually to help local communities develop their plans. After eight years of the comprehensive planning grant program, the program has awarded $17.8 million to 964 municipalities, counties, and regional planning commissions (of the 1,933 eligible), and tribal governments. Yet, as of May 2007, the Department of Administration has received 554 adopted comprehensive plans—476 plans from an awarded grant, 78 plans that had not received a grant—with only two and a half years until the deadline. The map on pg. 2 shows the municipalities and counties that have submitted a comprehensive plan. In addition, two regional planning commissions have adopted a comprehensive plan. As the 2010 deadline approaches, more plans will be submitted from granted communities who are currently developing a comprehensive plan. The Department of Administration is conducting a survey this summer to determine how many communities are developing a plan without a comprehensive planning grant.

Of the 554 plans that have been submitted, 539 plans have been submitted by a city, village, or town. The chart shown above provides the percent of municipalities that has submitted a comprehensive plan to the WI DOA (Populations indicated at left).
Continued from pg. 1

of municipalities that have submitted a comprehensive plan by population.

Just over half of the municipalities in the state have a population less than 1,000, yet these municipalities have the lowest percentage of submitted plans. Only 21% of the counties in the state have submitted a comprehensive plan, although a number of counties have recently received a planning grant.

Many resources are available to assist local governments in preparing their comprehensive plans. State agencies, non-profit organizations, and the University of Wisconsin (UW) System are providing assistance in various ways to help local governments collect the data needed to develop the nine elements of the plan, foster public participation, and provide state or federal funding. Part of the UW System’s mission statement declares that its mission is “to discover and disseminate knowledge, to extend knowledge and its application beyond the boundaries of its campuses, and to serve and stimulate society.” Several places within the UW System are working to meet this charge by providing planning assistance to local governments. The Center for Land Use Education (CLUE) (http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/landcenter.html), UW-Extension Local Government Center (http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/cp&d/cp&d.htm), UW Cooperative Extension’s Community, and the Natural Resources and Economic Development (CNRED) Program (http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cnred/) are places communities can turn to for educational resources and assistance in their planning process. The Applied Population Laboratory (APL) provides U.S. Census data useful for several elements including the Issues and Opportunities element. Read “Web Services” (on the next page) for more information on the APL’s available web services for planning. In the next few years it will be critical for many local units of government to complete their comprehensive plan and these sources may provide a valuable resource to local communities.
WEB SERVICES

APL Data Resources for Comprehensive Planning

The Applied Population Laboratory has created two web resources that assist communities with data retrieval to fulfill the requirements for the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law. These resources were created to help minimize the time spent by communities looking for data to satisfy the data requirements to develop the elements of the comprehensive plan.

WisStat Profiles (http://www.wisstat.wisc.edu/profiles.aspx):
WisStat is a demographic data server that allows the generation of demography profiles by geography in Wisconsin, the production of tables to combine different variables using the Census Data, and download these results. The APL has created seven predefined profiles on a variety of subjects including one for comprehensive planning. The comprehensive planning profile consists of five planning elements. These elements include information from the U.S. Census and the Department of Administration.

GetFacts (http://www.getfacts.wisc.edu):
GetFacts is an interactive mapping site with data downloading capabilities. The site allows you download data as a Microsoft Excel document or as an ESRI shapefile (GIS file) along with Census variables that can be used to develop the planning elements.

If you have any questions on how to use these sites or suggestions on how to improve them, then feel free to email Jim Beaudoin at jmbeaudoin@wisc.edu.

FEATURE FACTS: PLANNING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

One of the nine elements—the Issues and Opportunity Element—of a comprehensive plan requires background information that can be gathered from the U.S. Census. Although individual communities will gather information that is specific to them when developing a comprehensive plan, we thought it might be interesting to discover some of the same demographic information for the State of Wisconsin.

5,375,751—The total Wisconsin population. It is 50.6% (+/- 0.1%) female and 49.4% (0.1%) male.

Population by race and ethnicity:
88.1% (+/- 0.1%) White
5.7% (+/- 0.1%) African American
0.8% (+/- 0.0%) American Indian
2.0% (+/- 0.1%) Asian
2.2% (+/- 0.1%) Other race
1.2% (+/- 0.1%) Two or more races;
4.5% (+/- 0.0%) Hispanic or Latino.

37.9 years (+/-0.2 years)—The median age. The age distribution shows that 24.0% (+/-0.1%) are under 18 years, 63.4% (+/-0.2%) are 18-64, and 12.5% (+/-0.1%) are 65 and over.

88.8% (+/-0.3%)—The percentage of Wisconsinites with a high school education or higher. 25.0% (+/-0.2%) have a Bachelor’s degree or higher

$47,105 (+/-394)—The median household income (in 2005 inflation-adjusted dollars).

7.0% (+/-0.3%)—The percentage of families below the poverty level.

(Taken from the 2005 American Community Survey.)
STAFF SPOTLIGHT: JIM BEAUDoIN

Jim has been working at the APL for 6 years. One of his central objectives is to create tools that help people efficiently use demographic data for planning, data analysis, grant writing, and a variety of other studies. GetFacts and WisStat (featured on pg. 3) are example of some of the tools Jim has helped to create during his time with the APL. Jim has also done extensive work with Legislative Redistricting and created the ward collection software for the 2000 Redistricting Project. With 2010 approaching he will once again be actively involved in redistricting.

Prior to his time at the APL, Jim earned his B.S. in Geography with an emphasis in Planning and Development at UW-Whitewater. He still maintains an interest in planning and hopes to continue to develop tools in the future that will help assist communities with their planning efforts.

Trivia Question:

Which counties saw the largest and smallest increase in housing units between 2000 and 2006?

Dane County saw the largest numerical increase with 27,052 housing units. Menominee County had the fewest added housing units with only 102.

In terms of percent, St. Croix saw the largest increase in housing units with a whopping 33.73% increase. With only a 2.01% increase in housing units, Milwaukee County had the least amount of growth.

(Taken from WI DOA County Estimates of Total Housing Units.)

From the Director’s Desk

With our focus this newsletter on Comprehensive Planning, it is important to note the strengths in this area within the APL. Both Sarah Kemp and Jim Beaudoin have worked extensively on the comprehensive planning process and have provided the APL with both drive and knowledge in this area. Additionally, our web services, WISSTAT and GetFacts, assist in the Comprehensive Planning process by providing access to these data required by the process. Our strengths in this area situate the APL as a resource for any planning preparations.

In other news, the APL and the Department of Rural Sociology are very excited to welcome Dr. Katherine White. Dr. White, who worked on a post-doctoral fellowship with Paul Voss, will be joining the DRS faculty this coming fall after spending the past year as an Assistant Professor at Brown University. We are thrilled to have Dr. White’s experience with Applied Demography and Spatial Statistics in both the APL and the department. We are confident that she will be a big hit with everyone she encounters.

Lastly, this will be my final fill-in column. Director Dan Veroff will be back with tales of his Mexican adventures for the September Issue. We are looking forward to welcoming Dan, Dave Long, and Richelle Winkler (who is conducting her dissertation research in Minnesota this summer) back in August. It will be exciting to hear all of the stories and have a full house in the APL again.

To all our friends and colleagues, we hope this finds you well and we look forward to seeing and hearing from you soon.

Cheers,
Bill