

SEMOG predictions for communities vary depending on direction they take in the future

By CAROLINE PRICE

For the most part, the suburbs west of Detroit felt their growing pains a decade or so ago.

Their schools and public facilities were easily erected back in the days when it was impossible to keep up with the demand.

They remember the time when they were like gangly adolescents, outgrowing their personalities every few weeks.

It's all different now. Suburbs such as Livonia, Plymouth, Farmington and Westland are approaching comfortable middle age, and future growth will be minimal.

Other suburbs, such as Garden City and Redford Township, seem doomed to be gradually drained of population.

Only one western Wayne County suburb is showing the phenomenal growth patterns its neighbors to the east experienced 10 years ago.

Houses in Canton Township are going up as fast as developers can acquire the land, and with those new houses come new families and new children. The Plymouth-Canton Community Schools is the only area district that doesn't have more than enough space for the students in the community.

THAT'S THE general picture presented by SEMOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) with figures from its most recent forecast for the seven counties in the southeastern corner of the state.

SEMOG listed six possible population figures in its predictions for the year 2000. What the population actually is, claims SEMOG, depends on how the community chooses to operate during the next decade.

THESE ARE THE alternatives SEMOG has given communities to choose from:

1. "Local plans modified by trends in local policy changes . . . The trends reflect reductions in some of

the proposed sewer extensions called for by local plans, since many communities find they do not grow as rapidly as initially expected. They also reflect moderate protection policies in regards to sensitive land."

2. "Local plans modified by strong resource conservation policies . . . to contain development within existing urbanized areas . . . New sewer extensions are limited to committed projects, no development is allowed on any sensitive lands, urban redevelopment is accelerated, highway construction is cut back and transit construction is accelerated."

3. "Local plans, modified by county plans and policies . . . The development philosophy of out-Wayne and Macomb counties is to support the policies of their local communities, which are generally supportive of growth. The philosophies of other counties (including Oakland) call for moderate preservation policies: revitalization of older urban areas and conservation of sensitive land types."

4. "Market forces, unrestrained . . . no restraints due to public policies . . . no sensitive land is protected; highway development is accelerated; and transit development de-emphasized."

5. "Local plans, unmodified . . . developed across the seven-county area is guided by policies contained in local zoning plans or general development plans."

6. "Local plans modified by adopted SEMOG policy recommendations . . . Local development policies are modified by adopted SEMOG plans, such as the 1990 land use policy plan, are used to guide development in the region."

SEMOG HASN'T made any solid suggestions of which alternatives would most suit the area, but has thrown the results of its two-year project to an advisory council for eventual recommendation to the SEMOG executive board.

Local communities' reaction to the population forecasts is still limited, as the information is still being examined and considered.

Michael Glusac, SEMOG executive director, doesn't expect reaction to be entirely favorable when the results finally sink in.

And, indeed, to communities conditioned to consider growth as good, the population figures under any of the six alternatives are less than optimistic. Garden City, with a 1970 population (according to the U.S. census) of 41,901, can expect the population to dip as low as 23,694 if market forces are unrestrained (No. 4).

The highest SEMOG figure for Garden City is 28,918, if alternative No. 1 is followed.

Canton, with a 1970 U.S. census figure of 10,987, can expect to have at least 55,007 residents by 2000 no matter which alternative is used.

Canton's population could leap to as high as 78,537 under proposal No. 2, SEMOG estimates.

IT MUST BE remembered, however, that no matter how educated the estimate, the SEMOG forecasts are still just that—estimates.

The next census, due to be taken in 1980, will more than likely change some of the predictions made. SEMOG officials have already noted the probability of the census necessitating revision.

Some additional predictions, made in the report, tend to be surprising.

Although the report predicts population to be 5.2 million by 2000 (considerably less than an earlier estimate of 6 million), it is still expected that the number of households in the seven-county region will almost double during the same period of time.

According to SEMOG, there are "roughly 1.4 million households" in the region now, expected to increase to 2 million in little more than a decade.

"There will be a significant increase in the number of single and two-person households. This reflects a national trend of more unmarried people living alone or together as singles in all age

group," one SEMOG evaluation states.

AND WHAT of the American Dream, the house in the suburbs, with husband and wife and several children, all living happily forever after?

At least according to SEMOG, the great migration of families continues to some degree, but the overwhelming factor is less people, period.

YEAR 2000 POPULATION (SEMOG Statistics)

Community	1970 base	Alternatives					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Canton Twp.	10,987	63,364	78,527	55,894	55,673	55,007	56,475
Garden City	41,901	28,918	28,525	28,641	23,695	27,706	28,479
Livonia	109,757	109,366	108,069	111,121	81,971	108,734	106,628
Plymouth	11,786	11,814	11,687	11,752	8,588	10,631	11,655
Plymouth Twp.	17,486	23,931	28,052	22,538	20,278	21,761	23,576
Redford Twp.	71,951	49,324	47,649	50,689	42,965	48,792	49,561
Westland	86,556	99,062	97,166	94,095	70,287	93,713	94,366
Farmington	12,059	11,174	10,240	10,765	6,405	9,982	10,446
Farmington Hills	50,047	55,060	81,407	55,379	55,167	54,408	59,475



Michael Glusac, executive director of SEMOG, concedes that reaction among local communities to SEMOG's new plan of area alternatives may not be entirely favorable.

A Farm That Just Keeps Growing

Gone are the days when much of the produce was grown on the 250-acre farm. This means a 3 a.m. trip to Detroit's Eastern Market and trips to western Michigan farms and area farmers to bring back quality produce that is the delight of the market's customers.

The Smiths carefully examine everything they buy, tasting it as their customers do.

They know their customers are selective, therefore they constantly check the quality of the produce they market and have earned the reputation of having the freshest, healthiest flowers and produce in the area.

Old friends stop by again and again when this popular marketplace is open. People out for a country drive will discover this colorful place and return.

A policeman is often needed to direct traffic in front of the market on a busy Sunday afternoon.

It's difficult to believe that more than a hundred million tomatoes ago, this farm, which was designated a Centennial Farm by the Michigan Historical Commission, was purchased by Stephen Smith.

That was in 1836 and he paid \$750 for it—less than \$10 an acre.

Since then the business has experienced fantastic growth and continues each year to keep pace with the suburbs that surround it. Stop by and take a look around!

Clyde Smith & Sons Centennial Farm Market is a lesson in two kinds of progress and growth—produce and business.

What began in 1954 as a small roadside stand has grown into one of Michigan's largest and most active roadside market outlets for flowers and vegetables.

At first the market had more tomatoes than customers. But as the years passed, flowers were added to fruits and vegetables. Newburgh Road was paved and the market continued to grow and be discovered by the hundreds of families moving into the surrounding suburban area that was once farmland.

Last year the Smith family and their employees handled nearly 10,000 flats of tomatoes, 100,000 geraniums, 35 to 40,000 flats of vegetable and flower plants and from seven to 8,000 hanging plants.

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