## Town of Viroqua Chairperson and Town Board

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<th>2009-2010</th>
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<td>Chairman Michael</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathan Larson</td>
<td>Supervisor Nathan</td>
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<td>Timothy Elbert</td>
<td>Supervisor Timothy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donna Leum</td>
<td>Clerk Patricia</td>
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<td>Beth Harris</td>
<td>Treasurer Beth</td>
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## Town of Viroqua Plan Committee

[WisStats: §60.62(4)(a)]

Leonare E Lawrence, Chairperson and Citizen Member
Harvey H Kirking, Vice Chairperson and Citizen Member
Nathan R Larson, Secretary and Town Board Member
Timothy E Elbert, Town Board Member
Jonathan A Dehlin, Citizen Member
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Preface

Basis for Comprehensive Planning:

This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared under the authority of Wisconsin Statutes [WisStats: §66.1001; WisStats: §16.965] and at the request of the Town Board of the Town of Viroqua. This Plan, produced by the Plan Committee with guidance from the Town Board, represents the Town of Viroqua [Map C-1]. The final authority in this planning process is the elected Town Board of the Town of Viroqua.

Plan Content:

The functional planning elements of this Comprehensive Plan include the following:

1. Issues and Opportunities  6. Economic Development
2. Housing  7. Intergovernmental Cooperation
3. Transportation  8. Land Use
5. Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

Planning Recommendations:

 Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

The recommendations of this Plan are contained in the goals, objectives, policies and programs for each of the nine plan elements. Within each chapter, goals, objectives, policies and programs provide the framework of the Plan.

Recommendations within this framework result from data collected via public input, local officials’ input, and citizen direction that contributed to the planning process. Definition of the terms “goals,” “objectives,” “policies” and “programs” follows:

Goals: broad and general expressions of the Town of Viroqua’s aspirations, towards which planned effort is directed. Goals tend to be “ends” rather than “means.” They are few in number.

Objectives: more specific targets than goals; derived from goals and necessary to achieve those goals. Still general in nature, but more precise, concrete, and measurable than are goals.

Policies: rules or courses of action implemented to achieve the goals and objectives from which they are derived. Policies are precise and more susceptible to measurement than are goals and objectives.

Programs: a system of projects or services undertaken to achieve plan goals, objectives, and policies. A program is capable of assessment to determine its level of accomplishment.
Public Participation:

A plan for public participation is a required part of the comprehensive planning process [WisStats §66.1001]. The initial plan for this process was developed by June 2004. Subsequent revisions and refinements were developed between April 2007 and May 2007. The Town Board of the Town of Viroqua adopted the initial public participation plan on June 10, 2004. Revisions to the public participation plan were adopted by the Town of Viroqua Plan Committee on May 8, 2007 and were adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Viroqua on May 10, 2007. A copy of this public participation plan is in Appendix A. The planning for the Town of Viroqua was guided by the Town Plan Committee. The Plan Committee meetings were open to all interested citizens and public officials throughout the planning process.

In addition to the committee structure of citizens and local officials guiding the planning process, other opportunities for public participation in the development of this Plan included:

- Use of a survey of citizen opinions and recommendations within the Town of Viroqua;
- Availability of comment forms at committee meetings to gather written commentary on ideas discussed during the planning process;
- Consideration of oral public input from public meeting;
- Meetings with the Town Board; and
- Public hearing on the final plan draft.

The survey results [Appendix B] became part of the basis for forming the goals and development alternatives for this Plan. The survey was not a statistically valid instrument, but did reflect the views of Town residents.

Use of both formal and informal public input helped assure planning recommendations would be locally developed and supported. Local development and support enhances credibility of the resulting comprehensive plan and strengthens likelihood of its successful implementation.
Introduction

The Issues and Opportunities element of the Comprehensive Plan contains overall objectives, policies, goals and programs to guide future development and redevelopment over a 20 year planning period. Such information in more detail is presented in each functional section of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Issues and Opportunities Element of the Plan addresses the following background subjects: population, household and employment forecasts; age distribution; educational levels; income levels; and employment characteristics. Information and forecasts on some of these subjects, such as employment forecasts, may not be possible or relevant for as small a unit of government as the Township because much of the labor force works outside the community.

Unless otherwise noted, all demographic statistics referenced in this Plan are from the U. S. Census Bureau or the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission [MRRPC].

Issues:

A broad cross-section of concerns directly affect the Town of Viroqua and the need to plan for change.

- General Observations Regarding Growth -- Demographic factors, such as population, income, and employment are only the measure of a community's growth or decline, not the source of it. The engine of growth for a community is its economy. The key measures of that economy are jobs and related income levels.

Agriculture, a substantial part of the economy in the Town of Viroqua, is influenced by the national agricultural economy and public policy.

A substantial part of the economy for the Town of Viroqua is measured by its place in the regional economy. Agriculture is a substantial part of the Town of Viroqua economy; and this part of the local economy is influenced by the national agricultural economy and public policy. For services, the southern part of the Town of Viroqua generally identifies with the City of Viroqua while the northern part of the Town of Viroqua generally identifies with the City of Westby.

Important factors that help determine growth capability of the Town of Viroqua are:

- Changing aspects of agriculture
- Entrepreneurial spirit and industrious work ethic
- Leadership & heritage
- Location
- Natural resources
- Availability of land free of major development limitations

Among other factors that may influence growth capabilities of the Town are political decisions at all levels of government.

The direct interrelationship between land use and transportation is a very important community planning issue. Major transportation improvements will mobilize market forces to change land use; this can have both positive and negative effects.
• Regional Growth Context – The greatest meaning of the demographic characteristics of the Town of Viroqua comes from an analysis of these characteristics within a regional context. A sampling of regional employment illustrates the regional interdependence of the Town of Viroqua population with relatively nearby metropolitan areas.

• Employment Patterns -- In 2000, the Town of Viroqua had 721 employed residents, with 33% working in the City of Viroqua, 30% working in the Town of Viroqua, and 25% working in the City of Westby with the remainder working outside these areas.

The near-by metropolitan areas are expected to have an increasing influence on the Viroqua area as commuter trends and rural community housing preferences increase. As just one example, the La Crosse metro area has a year 2000 population of approximately 105,000 persons. There were approximately 78,000 non-farm jobs in this metro area, compared to about 13,000 jobs in all of Vernon County. The population of the La Crosse metro area is projected to increase by the year 2020. Accommodating additional growth potential will be linked to the growth policies and infrastructure capacity of the Town of Viroqua.

• Development Capability -- Most communities are impacted by a variety of physical limitations to development. The Town of Viroqua is substantially free of physical limitations to development. There is a significant amount of upland with good development capability in the Town. The development capability of these lands is enhanced by the accessibility afforded by U.S. Highway 14/61 and the short travel time to the near-by metro areas. The expanding urban imprint on the natural landscape in this rural area is expected to be a continuing issue.

Future public health issues may involve contamination of water and air from farming operations, rural residential activities and waste disposal practices. The concentrations of natural development limitations that do exist tend to be located where there are steep slopes and flood-prone lands.

• Water Quality And Public Health -- Issues concern the maintenance of drinking water quality from the sensitive aquifer in the karst geology of the area; protection of water supplies during all types of construction and road work; affects of any livestock feedlot operations; and concentrations of septic waste disposal systems.

• Solid Waste Disposal -- Concerns whether there will there be adequate facilities for the disposal of solid waste and the effects from all solid waste disposal on land use and water quality. Solid waste disposal concerns also include consideration of the types and amounts of waste disposed apart from deposits in official landfills.

• Energy -- Future energy availability is critical to development within the town. Conservation and generation of energy are important planning issues.

• Agriculture – Agricultural land use is the dominant land-use type in the Town of Viroqua. Among the important issues for this Comprehensive Plan are the maintenance of balance between agriculture and non-agricultural use with emphasis on retaining and sustaining the farming way of life. The loss of good agricultural land due to unconstrained development is expected to be an important issue. [Maps C-9 and C-10]

• Status of Planning –The Town of Viroqua does not yet have land use ordinances but is covered by a county farmland preservation program as augmented by the Working Lands Initiative program and a Land & Water Resource Management Plan.
• Property Rights – Respect for property rights and protection of community rights are given requirements in this comprehensive plan. An issue in any public planning program is balancing property rights with property responsibilities. The Town Board has substantial responsibilities regarding such rights and responsibilities.

• Demographic Change – The average age of the population in the Town of Viroqua would normally increase significantly as the large “baby boom” population advances into the retirement years beginning about 2010. The elderly population component could well continue to grow as an increasing percentage of the population. The working age population may become proportionally less during the next twenty years, although retirees may continue to be active in the workforce.

• Planning Issues Regarding an Aging Population – These issues include the need for greater access to health care, wellness programs, transportation, specialized housing alternatives and residential life styles. This issue receives additional attention in the housing, transportation and community facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

• Preference for Rural Living – A societal preference has been established for low-density, open space living. These trends and personal living preferences have implications for land use development and rural community structure. More rural living adds to traffic on rural roads. Increased traffic may require improvements to deal with congestion and safety issues. Land use conflicts may occur.

• High Amenity Area --The USDA Economic Research Service asserts that: “Natural amenities are the trump card for rural areas”. This trend is being realized; and is expected to contribute to continuing growth in the Town of Viroqua. Related planning issues include development pressures on hillsides and flood plains, as well as a possible decline of the scenic qualities for which this area has been known. A strong element in the nation-wide rural, non-farm housing trend is the desire to build where there are scenic views. The Town of Viroqua has a very high quality living environment. An overall growth issue will be the maintenance of these lifestyle amenities as this area is impacted by growth.

• U.S. Highway 14/61 Bypass Proposal – A future issue for the Viroqua area may be the impacts of a previously proposed relocation of U.S. Highway 14/61. This bypass may present issues for the Town of Viroqua concerning the pressures for urban land use development at access points to a new highway. Land use plans and land use controls along a by-pass route would be advisable.

• View-sheds – The topography of this planning area has attracted housing to sites with scenic views. Such views can be expected to generate continuing housing development along roadways and onto remote lands. The continued desire to live on land with dramatic views will have impacts and may lead to development of housing that is disruptive to agriculture and natural resource interests.

• Town / City Relationships – Urban expansion needs often create jurisdictional issues between towns and cities. Minimizing problems with growth is an important planning responsibility. Recognizing the inherent values and needs of both town and city jurisdictions is necessary in the planning process. Use of boundary agreements may be helpful in managing urban expansion into rural areas.
• Streets, Roads & Infrastructure – Streets, roads and most other public infrastructure are intended to last much longer than the twenty year horizon of a Comprehensive Plan. Most streets and road locations are permanent and do much to determine community form and function. Planning considerations should be applied to subdivision reviews and other transportation related standards for rural development.

• Culture and Heritage – Cultural and heritage values and traditions, particularly as related to the land, are important issues to be considered and protected in any local planning program.

• Coordination – There are areas where public services can be coordinated and shared.

• Economic Development – Protecting and expanding the local tax base are on-going important issues. Cost to the local government of economic development is one such important issue.

Agriculture and the local farm economy, are another vital part of the economy for the Town of Viroqua. An important economic development goal will be to protect and develop the local farm economy.

Tourism, especially heritage tourism, is becoming a strong economic development element for the Town. Tourism is a clean industry and can tap already-present resources. Effective and sustainable tourism requires innovative planning and marketing.

• Sprawl – The ingredients for urban sprawl into rural areas may be present within the Town, especially along highway corridors.

Opportunities:

Resources available within the Town support positive growth. Among these growth-promoting resources are:

• Good Development and Growth Capability – The Town of Viroqua is a well-developed agricultural town. The continuation of farming in the town is the principal land use goal, although the expansion of non-farm uses may bring problems for existing farming operations. Lands within the Town at principal access points along highway corridors may be proposed for urban development.

• Good Location – The Town of Viroqua is well located, encompassing the county seat of the City of Viroqua. The Town is within commuting distance of regional area job markets.

• Amenities – The Town of Viroqua possesses authentic rural character. Historic and ethnic themes establish a special identity and unity. Preserving and enhancing these themes are important factors for health, progress and pride of community.

• Housing Growth – Housing development is expected to continue, depending on the pace of future job development and economic conditions.

• Elderly Services – Aging of the population during the foreseeable future will increase the magnitude of needs for services for the elderly. Specialized living environments, medical and wellness facilities, and transportation requirements may be among these needs.
• Economic Development – Agriculture is a significant part of the area economy. Measures to protect agricultural lands from the impacts of non-agricultural development are important in supporting the agricultural element of the local economy.

Expanding the organic agricultural businesses is an opportunity to strengthen local agriculture. This is an opportunity based on resources that will remain fixed to the location and thereby constitutes a sustainable industry.

The assets of the Town indicate potential for specialized economic development including such elements as agri-business, increased tourism and recreation, convenience services, and a variety of home-based businesses.

• Traffic – There is a direct connection between traffic and land use. Traffic will increase with growth, with some growth to problem proportions. Many of the traffic needs will have to be dealt with by state and county governments because most new traffic will be on arterial roads. Improved highways will bring pressures for land use changes. Accommodating horse-and-buggy and other non-motorized traffic will likely become more important to roadway planning and development.

• Coordination – The Town of Viroqua actively seeks cooperation with adjacent government entities for projects of mutual benefit.

• Effective Planning – Some of the more important benefits of effective planning include: more cost-efficient use of public funds, application of higher quality development standards, protection of economic and natural resources, and realization of development potentials otherwise unrecognized.

• Community Esthetics and Image – Unplanned growth may adversely impact community esthetics. Planning and enforcement of land use codes may provide the opportunity to enhance the community image and strengthen local pride.

• Consistency – Planning provides opportunity for the Town of Viroqua to assure that its land use regulations provide the required “consistency” with its Comprehensive Plan as the Town develops land use regulations.

In addition to the committee structure of citizens and local officials guiding the planning process, other opportunities for public participation in the development of this Plan included:

• Non-scientific survey of citizen opinions and recommendations within the Town of Viroqua [Appendix B];
• Availability of comment forms at committee meetings to gather written commentary on ideas discussed during the planning process;
• Meetings with the Town Board; and
• Public hearing on the semi-final plan draft.
Element 1 - Issues and Opportunities

Goal of the Issues and Opportunities Element:

The goal of this element is to identify overall goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the Town of Viroqua and to establish these goals, objectives, policies and programs as guides for future development and redevelopment of the Town of Viroqua. This plan is intended to look forward 20 years. It is a dynamic document to be reviewed and updated periodically.

Planning Goals:

Planning goals of the individual planning elements for the Town of Viroqua are contained in element-specific sections 2 through 9 of this Plan. Town of Viroqua general planning goals are to:

- Maintain our "sense of place" as a rural community. This community sense includes positive aesthetics, support and development of local business, nurture of youth, support of the elderly, and preservation and communication of our history.
- Preserve our quality of life in changing times. We find value in our slower lifestyle, neighborliness, high quality public services, and affordability.
- Coordinate and cooperate with overlapping and neighboring units of government and institutions.
- Implement a plan that promotes the general health, safety and welfare, and the economic sustainability of the Town of Viroqua and the region, in general.
- Protect property rights and respect community rights.
- Protect and enhance natural resources, scenic landscape, a rural lifestyle and regional agriculture.

Objectives:

Objectives derived from the stated goals of the Town of Viroqua include intentions to:

- Support local businesses and new entrepreneurs
- Cooperate and coordinate with public service providers in areas of health/wellness, education and culture.
- Encourage development of community facilities that promote continuing education, community values and recreation.
- Endeavor to maintain the affordability of living in this area.
- Continue developing government processes and procedures that ensure fair dealing within a structure without bias.
- Monitor new developments for impacts on aesthetics, natural and historic uniqueness and beauty.
- Prepare to be an "elder-ready" community where transportation, shopping, social services and wellness facilities are conveniently accessible.
Policies:

Specific rules or courses of action to be undertaken to reach the goals and objectives of the Town of Viroqua include policies to:

- Maintain a comprehensive planning process for the Town of Viroqua. The process includes existence of a standing plan committee with mechanisms for periodic review and revision of the comprehensive plan.
- Endeavor to work with public service providers in health, education, and culture.
- Continue using good government standards.
- Create an official town website that promotes the Town of Viroqua.
- Integrate health and wellness considerations into local governmental decisions that concern public services and infrastructure development.

Programs:

Programs of Element 1 include:

- Conducting and evaluating citizen input surveys for the Town of Viroqua and
- Identifying general goals and alternative growth scenarios for future development.

Planning and Development Issues and Opportunities:

Categories of planning issues and opportunities are identified in the Introduction to this Plan.

Background Information:

Development of the current comprehensive plan for the Town of Viroqua is an outgrowth of regional planning and previous attempts at comprehensive planning at the Town, County and Regional levels. Comprehensive planning for the Town considers regional growth factors.

Regional Planning Context

The Town of Viroqua is located near the center of Vernon County, Wisconsin. A detailed map of the town planning area is provided in Map C-1.

Previous Comprehensive Planning

A Vernon County General Plan was produced by a consultant in 1969 as part of a regional comprehensive planning program of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The MRRPC is comprised of representatives from nine counties (Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon). Although this regional General Plan has not been updated, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission remains an active regional planning organization and continues to deliver a variety of planning assistance to Vernon County units of government.
Regional Growth Factors

Influences that significantly impact both growth outlook and need for planning in the Town of Viroqua include:

- Local and regional manufacturing sector vitality
- Accessibility via adequate roadways.
- Location within the labor shed commuting zone of the nearby metro job centers
- Situated geographically within a unique Midwest driftless landscape that provides scenic locations for housing, recreation and vacationing [Map C-2].
- State implemented expansion of U.S. Highway 14/61 between Viroqua and Westby in the Town of Viroqua.

Population Growth

A town plan covering a twenty-year period contains a projection of future population levels that represents a population growth level based on assumed conditions. The assumed conditions are based, in part, on development alternatives and goals the community adopts for itself although other influential conditions may include national, state and local activities over which the community has no significant control.

State Population Projections: An obvious first step to develop population growth estimates is to consider the population projections already available from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). These projections are made in five-year increments and are based on DOA methodology."

The state DOA projections for population in the Town of Viroqua are as follows through 2020 and are estimated through 2030 on the basis of the State projections:

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>1,620</td>
<td>1,683</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>1,807</td>
<td>1,876</td>
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*Actual year 2000 US Census count; DOA estimates for 1/1/03 are 1,599 for the Town

The State projection summary of growth for the Town of Viroqua is 15.83% or 247 persons over the period 2000 to 2020, and average annual average of 12 persons.

The above state projections may not be consistent with actual growth trends and opportunities that presently characterize the Town of Viroqua planning area. This projection will constitute a conservative population growth scenario for this planning area.

Selected Population Projection Scenario And Methodology: An important factor in projecting population growth is the interrelationships among the development capability of the planning area, the economic outlook for the area, ease of access, and living preferences of the population. Influential factors include land, jobs, highways and sociology as applied under forecasting assumptions.

GOOD LAND: In general, the lands available to the Town of Viroqua are free of significant limitations to development.
JOBS: Jobs are a principal foundation of population growth in most communities. The Town of Viroqua can reasonably expect job growth from within the Town and from the cities of Viroqua and Westby as well as from other adjacent metropolitan areas. A clear pattern of commuting out of the Town to adjacent metropolitan area jobs has already been established and is expected to continue. The convenience of commuting will contribute to local population growth as workers choose to live apart from the communities in which they work. Increasing ease and occasional necessity of industry (jobs) moving to more profitable locations are important uncertainties affecting growth projections.

HIGHWAYS: The Town of Viroqua already has very good accessibility to nearby metro areas via U.S. Highway 14/61 and Wisconsin Highway 27/56/82. These highways, scheduled for significant improvement in Vernon and surrounding counties, are expected to induce new growth.

SOCIOLOGY: The preference of the public for home locations has a direct bearing on where population will be growing. A growing national preference is for rural, open-space living. While cities remain the primary job centers, a large portion of the urban labor force increasingly chooses to reside within twenty to forty miles of their employment. Population concentrations tend to locate in the nearest rural communities and on scenic rural lands near major highways. This population settlement pattern is evident within the commuter shed of West Central Wisconsin, and is evident within the Town of Viroqua. While this trend has been on-going for some time, it has manifested itself in a significant way in the Town of Viroqua since about 1990. The year 2000 U.S. Census shows a clear turn-around in population growth for many units of government within West Central Wisconsin during the decade between 1990 and 2000. Such recent patterns would not be reflected in historic population trends.

Forecasting Assumptions

Projections of future population levels for Town planning area incorporate the following basic assumptions:

- The national, state and regional economies impact local growth and stability.
- Economic and energy issues will affect stability.
- The Town of Viroqua will remain receptive to growth.
- The Town has the capability to finance the infrastructure required to attract and maintain growth with desirable characteristics.
- The Town of Viroqua will remain competitive for growth with other rural communities.
- The regional agricultural economy will be impacted by national and state economic stresses.

A population growth scenario for the Town of Viroqua that may be more likely than the previously noted Department of Agriculture projections would be the pattern of growth of 1990-2000, estimated within the framework of the above general assumptions.

TABLE 2: SELECTED TOWN OF VIROQUA POPULATION FORECAST

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<td>1,499</td>
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<td>1,696</td>
<td>1,770</td>
<td>1,844</td>
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</table>
The revised projection summary of growth for the Town of Viroqua is 28.52% or 445 persons over the period 2000 to 2030, an average annual growth average of 15 persons. Net growth is only that growth realized after deaths and residents migrating out of the area are considered. It is unknown if births will counterbalance deaths during this period.

The planned highway expansions within the Town of Viroqua may serve as an inducement to growth but the work of expansion is planned to be in progress through the current planning period. Highway-related growth is unlikely to be fully realized until after 2020. Mid-course re-evaluations of plan elements will allow for timely and prudent revisions, including revisions of projections.

HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS: Household projections are a direct product of population projections. Year 2000 census figures report that the Town of Viroqua had 2.64 persons per household, down from 2.83 in 1990.

The county and state average household sizes in 2000 were 2.55 and 2.50 respectively. Household size has been declining due to families having fewer children and young adults and the elderly creating and maintaining single person households. As used here, “Household size” does not include people in group quarters such as health facilities or jail.

The projection of the number of future households for the Town of Viroqua assumes the continuation of the year 2000 household size. Mid-course re-evaluations of plan elements will allow for timely and prudent revisions, including revisions of household size projections. Household projections for this Plan reflect population growth projections divided by the household size noted above as from the 2000 federal census.

TABLE 3: HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yr 2000 Household Size*</th>
<th>&lt; - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Households - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - &gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.64 persons</td>
<td>549 617 642 670 698 728 759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Actual Census Count. Housing unit counts is “occupied” units only for year 2000.

For the period 2000 to 2030, the projected new households within the Town of Viroqua is 149 or 27.1%, an average annual growth of 7.0 households.

DEMOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AS FORCASTING BASES: Employment characteristics and projections, age distribution, as well as income and education levels are instrumental in forecasting trends important to anticipate within a comprehensive plan.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS: The occupation of Town of Viroqua residents and the industries in which they work represent typical distributions for a small-to-medium size rural community. Employment characteristics of Town of Viroqua residents are more fully discussed in Element 6: Analysis of Economic Base and Labor Force [beginning on p 47]
EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS: Forecasting employment with any practical degree of reliability cannot be done for a small scale planning area because the smaller planning area functions within a much larger regional economy. Job types and locations affecting the Viroqua area are dispersed within this larger region. Even within a larger geographic area, national and global economic factors may induce instability in agricultural and industrial sectors. Economic sectors in which activity is likely to affect future employment in the Town of Viroqua include: agriculture, public services, medical/health and the local and regional area industrial economies.

AGE DISTRIBUTION: Age distribution within the Town of Viroqua for the year 2000 illustrates that the proportion of population defined as elderly within the Town differs significantly from the levels of that in both the county and the state.

Although included within the 65+ age category, the 85+ age range is also reported separately because this is one of the fastest growing age groups.

TABLE 4: AGE DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Under 18 %</th>
<th>18 to 65 %</th>
<th>65+ %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>85+ %</th>
<th>Median Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Viroqua</td>
<td>354 22.7</td>
<td>926 59.3</td>
<td>280 18.0</td>
<td>1,560 100</td>
<td>48 3.1</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernon County</td>
<td>8,423 27.4</td>
<td>4,769 55.6</td>
<td>2,805 17.0</td>
<td>28,056 100</td>
<td>713 2.5</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>- 25.5</td>
<td>- 13.1</td>
<td>- 100</td>
<td>- 100</td>
<td>- 1.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>- 25.7</td>
<td>- 12.4</td>
<td>- 100</td>
<td>- 100</td>
<td>- 1.5</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INCOME LEVELS: For the Town of Viroqua, the median annual household income was $42,583 and the median annual family income was $45,179 while for Vernon County the median annual household income was $33,178 and the median annual family income was $40,666. Income Levels are more fully discussed in Element 6: Analysis of Economic Base and Labor Force [beginning on p 47].

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS: Although basic U. S. Census educational data are reported here, the local school district is the primary source of other more detailed educational data relevant to the Town of Viroqua. The year 2000 U.S. Census data on school enrollment is not reported here because it is obsolete, particularly since the school district maintains current enrollment data on an annual basis.

TABLE 5: EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
<th>State of Wisconsin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number in Population age 25 yrs and older</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>18,473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor or’s degree</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent high school graduation or higher</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS: In general, the population of the Town of Viroqua is largely rural. The median age of the town population is higher than the median ages in the county, state and nation.

Demographic trends indicate that the elderly component of the Town of Viroqua population will increase significantly in the next twenty years. There may be pressures to maintain an adequately sized working-age population. Trends also indicate continued growth in white-collar employment and the likely continuation of employment losses in the agricultural sector.

Health and wellness issues will become more important public policy concerns for all age segments of the population. The growing elderly component will pressure health policy. Youth, middle-aged and senior age groups will all pressure wellness policy for greater access to wellness facilities.
Element 2 - Housing

General Planning Context

Housing in the Town of Viroqua is generally in sound condition, although some deteriorating housing is present. Home ownership predominates over rental housing. Most housing is single family, with little or no apartment living.

The outlook for housing in the Town of Viroqua will largely be shaped by the

- ability of the community to attract and maintain residents;
- costs of building and ability to secure financing; and
- changes in the age demographic of the population.

On a national level, the U. S. Census Bureau projects that during this planning period married couples with children will account for only 20 percent of total households and that single households can be expected to constitute a higher percentage of total households than has historically been the case in this area. The Census Bureau also projects that the U. S. senior citizen population will increase from 16 percent of total population in 2000 to 40 percent in 2020. The local impact of these trends is reflected in the character of the Town of Viroqua housing requirements.

Expected housing patterns in the Town of Viroqua are for continued creation of farm housing, non-farm housing, and housing subdivisions. Housing subdivisions should be located so as to minimize encroachment on land better suited to agricultural use.

Goal of the Housing Element:

The overall goal of this element is to outline principles that encourage private development and maintenance of adequate housing stock to meet Town of Viroqua needs.

Specific goals are to encourage:

- Safe, sanitary, energy efficient, and affordable housing for residents of the Town of Viroqua;
- Opportunities for a mix of housing types; and
- Housing developments that are in harmony with the natural environment and that avoid problems of urban sprawl. Cluster housing will be strongly encouraged.

Objectives:

To reach the goals identified in this housing plan, the objectives are to:

- Support and monitor development of housing within the Town of Viroqua;
- Comply with health, safety, and fire codes in the regulation of housing;
- Promote development of a range of housing choices considering the:
  -- Needs of all income levels.
  -- Needs of all age groups.
  -- Needs of persons with special needs;
- Encourage development of housing and related services for an expanding elderly population; and
- Monitor state and federal housing programs periodically. Periodic monitoring will help to determine those programs that may be useful in reaching the goals and objectives of this housing plan and to determine which of those programs may help to address identified housing needs in the Town of Viroqua.
Policies:

Goals and objectives of this plan are supported by policies that:

- Recognize state minimum standards with respect to drinking water and wastewater disposal;
- Promote working in partnership with the private sector to achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Section of this Plan;
- Acknowledge potential requirements for specialized developments and housing styles to accommodate needs of senior citizens, low-income residents, and handicapped persons;
- Regulate development to avoid storm water flooding of housing and road access;
- Assure that local ordinances and development standards, particularly land use standards and restrictions, are consistent with the goals and policies of this Element; and
- Coordinate housing standards and decisions on development proposals with local emergency services providers, mainly fire and ambulance services.

Programs:

Reaching the goals and objectives of this Plan and satisfying the housing needs of the Town of Viroqua may be facilitated by use of various Federal and State housing programs. Not all government housing programs will be available to the Town of Viroqua or specific Town of Viroqua residents because of special program requirements, threshold levels of eligibility, local financial limitations and/or required private participation.

Examples of potential Federal and State housing assistance sources include:

- U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Program
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago
- State of Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

Map C-9 illustrates existing and planned housing in the Town of Viroqua.

The Town of Viroqua has no currently identified housing needs or programs but in the future will consider housing programs to address housing needs that the Town identifies as needing public involvement.

Housing Stock Assessment Information:

The U. S. Census Bureau is the source of all housing information in this portion of the Plan. These numbers and percentages, all from the year 2000 federal census, may have changed somewhat since the year 2000.

Characteristics used to assess housing stock include housing stock age, housing stock structural type, value, and occupancy. Details of these characteristics are provided in Tables 6 - 9 (following).
TABLE 6: HOUSING STOCK AGE CHARACTERISTICS
[by number of housing structures (units) not by households]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Structure Built</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999 to 2000</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 to 1998</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 to 1989</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940 to 1969</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939 or earlier</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 7: HOUSING STOCK STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Characteristics</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lacking some or all plumbing</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Telephone Service</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median No. of rooms per home</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 8: VALUE CHARACTERISTICS Owner-occupied housing units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Value</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $50,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 50,000 to $ 99,000</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $149,000</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 to $199,000</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Value **</td>
<td>$102,100</td>
<td>$73,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2 houses at $1,000,000 or more
** The United States median home value in 2000 was $119,600

TABLE 9: OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-occupied housing units</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner vacancy rate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental vacancy rate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal &amp; recreational</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Housing Unit Projections

The future number of housing units is more fully discussed in Element 1, Table 2 [page 10]
Element 3 - Transportation

Goal of this Element:

The primary goal of this element is to guide development of safe transportation in the Town of Viroqua according to local needs. The secondary goal of this element is to consider state and regional transportation plans.

General Transportation Context:

The Town of Viroqua relies principally on auto and truck modes of transportation. These modes of travel use systems of streets and highways distributed among State, County, and Town jurisdictions. All these jurisdictional systems are important with respect to their own functions, but the federal and state highways and their regional linkages are the systems upon which the Town is most dependent for its overall welfare.

U.S. Highway 14/61 and Wisconsin Highway 27/56/82 are important transportation arteries for the Town.

The expansion of Highway 14/61 into four lane roadways is among the important transportation planning issues for the Town of Viroqua. Other issues include probable land use changes likely to be brought about by road width changes and restricted access from frontage roads associated with the expanded federal highways.

Other modes of transportation serving the Town of Viroqua include an airport classified as a Basic Utility airport, periodic intercity bus service on U.S. Highway 14/61, private-sector taxi service and non-motorized travel.

Planning for the Town of Viroqua is also affected by consideration of regional transportation issues. Within an hour’s commute by highway, commercial air travel, passenger rail service and access to the interstate highway system are available to the northwest in LaCrosse County and to the north in the Monroe County cities of Sparta and Tomah.

Potential growth of service at the Viroqua airport may also become a more relevant factor. Map C-3 illustrates the regional transportation context for the Town of Viroqua.

Highways and Roads:

Map C-4 illustrates the street and road system of the state, county and local jurisdictions of government. Map C-4 illustrates the Functional Classification of roads and highways.

Road and Traffic Concerns

Locally important road safety issues include adequate roadway access that considers driveway and intersection approaches, crop-related setbacks at intersections, and proper and helpful signage. Additional safety issues include concern for road debris and routine maintenance.

A critically important road and highway planning concern for the Town of Viroqua is widening of the existing U.S. Highway 14/61 and Wisconsin State Highway 27. Of secondary importance to planning concerns for the Town of Viroqua is a potential for U.S. Highway 14/61 and State Highway 27 to be repositioned to by-pass the cities of Viroqua and Westby within the Town of Viroqua.
Potential disruptions of through-traffic will result from the limited access components to the highway reconstruction. Of particular concern are the proposed cul-de-sacs on Railroad Avenue and aspects of Lewison Road modifications.

**Goals, Objectives and Policies for Roads**

**Goals:**

Goals of the transportation planning element of the comprehensive plan include efforts to:

- Maintain safe, high-quality road systems
- Encourage interrelationships between transportation and land use that are consistent and well-planned and
- Maintain encouragement of effective public input from local government and citizenry in the development of transportation improvements.

**Objectives:**

To reach the goals identified in the transportation element of the comprehensive plan, the objectives are to:

- Maintain involvement by the Town of Viroqua government in the proposed U S Highway 14/61 expansion and future road projects affecting the Town;
- Apply professionally recognized standards for rural road design and property access that are intended to provide safe travel, economical road construction and maintenance, and facilitation of emergency access;
- Plan, design and construct roads that maintain and enhance scenic, environmental and historic qualities of the rural landscape; and
- Encourage continuation of specialized regional transit services.

**Policies:**

Goals and objectives of the transportation element of this comprehensive plan are supported by policies that:

- Improve the design of high volume intersections for safety and facilitation of through-traffic movement;
- Develop strategies for maintaining efficient traffic flows and a viable community.
- Promote interconnectivity of the urban street and rural road systems.
- Provide road design standards that are not excessive with respect to width of right-of-way, intersection of driveways with Town roads, and construction of private drives;
- Implement appropriate conservation practices when maintaining/constructing roadways;
- Apply standards that adequately provide for the movement, parking and loading of trucks and other commercial vehicles;
- Limit billboards and the density of signage along roads;
- Encourage continued support of local taxi services with special attention to the needs of the elderly and handicapped;
- Encourage private provision of special facilities for horse-drawn vehicles as needed
- Promote continued health of the local economy within local transportation programs and decisions.
- Provide standards in land division ordinances that clearly identify responsibilities for infrastructure provision. Land division ordinance standards should also clearly identify the proportionate shares of financial responsibility for such facilities.
Functional Classification of Highways

The functional classification of highways in the Town of Viroqua is presented on Map C-4.

Comparison To State And Regional Plans

An existing state or regional highway plan that affects this planning area is the U S Highway 14/61 reconstruction. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WiDOT), the US 14/61 improvement project from Westby to Viroqua was initially planned to take place in three segments. The first, a four-lane expansion between Tri State Road and County BB, will be constructed in 2011 with real estate acquisition beginning in 2008. The second and third stage, the Westby two-lane bypass and the Viroqua two-lane bypass are being reevaluated as to when the construction will occur.


Incorporation of State and Regional Transportation Plans

As interpreted by WiDOT, “incorporating” state and regional transportation plans means that the plans of WiDOT have to be “considered” in local comprehensive plans although it is not required that those State plans be approved or accepted in local plans.

State transportation plans affecting the Town of Viroqua as of the 2006/08 State cycle were the proposed U S Highway 14/61 reconstruction and the improvements on Wisconsin Hwy 56. The U S Highway 14/61 reconstruction, subjected to an Environmental Impact Statement, has been approved and enumerated by the State for construction. Consideration of the US Hwy 14/61 reconstruction is included in Element 8 - Land Use.

Transit:

As of the end of 2008, there are no locally provided public mass transit serving the Town of Viroqua. A private cab company provides services for the Town of Viroqua. There are no state or regional governmental transit plans affecting this planning area, although Vernon County is considering public transportation issues.

Transportation Facilities for Persons with Disabilities:

Transportation for persons with disabilities is currently provided by private companies offering a variety of service levels. The Town recognizes the importance of the private sector in meeting the transportation needs of its citizens with disabilities and special needs.

Transportation and Agriculture:

Transportation is critical for agriculture, yet agriculture-related transportation needs and impacts are often overlooked in comprehensive planning. Agriculture-related transportation operates on several scales ranging from moving machinery on the system of local roads to moving commodities both through- and to- other communities.

Railroads:

There are no railroads within this planning area.
Air Transportation:

There is no commercial airport within the Town of Viroqua however, on land adjacent to the Town of Viroqua, the City of Viroqua has an airport classified in the Wisconsin Airport System Plan 2020 as a Basic Utility airport. The airport does not have instrument landing capability although there is an automated fueling facility.

Approach surface easement zones extending from the ends of each runway limit the height of uses in such zones. Additionally, parts of these easement zones restrict land development under the conditions of the easement purchase. These easement zones include areas within the Town of Viroqua.

A general planning goal is the shaping of land use plans to preserve the safety and utility of air transportation services for the community. Map C-10 shows the location of the most restrictive of these easement zones.

Heliport Needs

The city airport currently serves as the helicopter landing point for emergency medical transportation of Vernon Memorial Hospital patients.

State Airport Master Plans

The State Airport System Plan shows this airport as a Basic Utility airport. Presently, there are two GPS approach systems operating. Guiding and controlling development in the vicinity of the airport is important to assure future utility and safety of the airport.

Trucking:

There are no commercial trucking terminals in the Town of Viroqua.

Water Transportation:

There are no navigable waterways within the Town of Viroqua so there is no water mode of transportation to consider. State and federal water transportation plans do not apply in the Town of Viroqua comprehensive plan.

Equestrian Travel:

Horse drawn vehicles travel within the Town of Viroqua. Although members of the Amish community are the most frequent users of equestrian transportation, others occasionally travel using horses and horse-drawn vehicles.

To the extent that it is practical and fiscally responsible, planning, design, and construction of roads will consider accommodation of the needs associated with equestrian travel.

Other non-motorized Travel:

Bicycling for sport and general transportation in the Viroqua area is increasing. Other modes of non-motorized transportation, including cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, roller-blading, roller-skating, walking, and jogging, are also expected to increase in the future. Subsequent revisions of the Town of Viroqua plan will give further consideration to needs of non-motorized travelers.
Element 4 - Utilities and Community Facilities

Goal of the Utilities and Community Facilities Element:

The primary goal of this element is to guide future development of utilities and community facilities by analyzing existing facilities, identifying future needs, and presenting a plan to meet identified needs.

General Context of Utility and Community Facilities within the Town of Viroqua:

The utility element of comprehensive planning is critically important in growth and overall health of a community. The most common utilities are septic and water supply, both of which, within the Town of Viroqua, are privately owned and state-permitted.

Sanitary Sewer Service:

The Town of Viroqua does not provide a sanitary sewer system for the collection and disposal of sewage and wastewater. Sewage and wastewater in the Town are treated on each property by private, on-site treatment systems. These private, on-site treatment systems are typically septic systems.

Some lands in the Town of Viroqua, especially some lands adjacent to the City of Viroqua and the City of Westby, are being developed for urban uses. Continued development at typical urban density rates may better be served by a centralized wastewater collection and treatment system. While such a centralized system is presently in place in the adjacent cities of Viroqua and Westby, such a centralized system is not presently contemplated for the near future in the Town.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs for Sanitation

Goals:

The Town of Viroqua has three goals associated with planning and maintaining development of sanitation and water supply. These goals include that:

- Public health not be jeopardized by problems associated with disposal and/or treatment of sewer waste;
- Contamination of drinking water be avoided; and
- The Town avoid the necessity to establish public sanitary sewer collection and treatment systems and the associated costs.

Objectives:

The Town of Viroqua intends to manage the density of land development in the township as a way to avoid future necessity to establish a town sewage collection and disposal system that would require policies and programs to implement.
On-site Wastewater Treatment Technologies:

On-site wastewater treatment technology has advanced in recent years. The traditional on-site wastewater treatment system was the septic system and drain field. A drain field system is dependent on the properties having acceptable soil characteristics.

More advanced technologies have enabled development of some lands that would otherwise have been incapable of being served by the traditional septic system and drain field.

In Wisconsin, private on-site waste water systems must comply with standards established by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce as specified in Wisconsin Administrative Code [WisAdminCode COMM §83]. These standards are enforced in Vernon County by the County Sanitarian.

Water Supply:

The water supply in the Town of Viroqua is provided entirely by private wells on individual properties. Private wells are regulated by the Private Water Supply Program of the DNR under The Well and Pump Code [WisAdminCode NR §812] and The Well Driller and Pump Installer Licensing Code [WisAdminCode NR §146]. The town government provides no public water service.

Goals and Objectives:

The main goals and objectives of the Town of Viroqua related to water supply include that:

- public health and convenience not be jeopardized by problems associated with contaminated drinking water and/or insufficient water supply;
- the Town avoid the necessity to establish public water supply, distribution and treatment systems; and
- the Town manage the density of development in the town to avoid a future necessity of establishing a town public water system.

The DNR controls policies and programs to attain these goals and objectives.

Storm Water Management:

Storm Water Planning Context

The ridge top locations within the Town of Viroqua straddle the drainage basins of the Kickapoo River and the Bad Axe River. Although there is generally good surface water drainage throughout the Town of Viroqua, the many valley bottoms within the Town are subject to flash flooding. While there are no rivers within the Town of Viroqua there are flood-prone lands associated with several tributaries of the Kickapoo River. Areas of potential flood concern include the Seas Branch, Bishop Branch and Harrison Creek Branch of the Kickapoo River and lands located in some of the upper reaches of the South Fork of the Bad Axe River.

Storm Water Management

There are no public storm water management facilities in the Town of Viroqua other than the ditch curb and culvert facilities within the rights-of-way of the town and county road systems. However, many farm properties have private storm water management practices that include grass waterways, terraces and ponds. These private practices facilities slow and retain storm water run-off. Benefits of these private practices include lessening soil erosion, reducing effects of flash flooding, and minimizing contamination of surface waters.
Effects of significant storm-water runoff on the road systems within the Town are of public interest because of the damage and public cost that uncontrolled water runoff can cause. Damage associated with water runoff will be minimized by the Town’s use of erosion abatement practices in conjunction with road maintenance and road construction operations.

**Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facilities:**

Solid waste disposal is a private property responsibility in the Town of Viroqua although the Town government provides a site for the collection of household waste and a range of recyclables. This site is open under supervision for town residents every Saturday. The Town strongly encourages development and use of environmentally-sound solid waste and recycling practices.

In addition, a county landfill, operated by Vernon County on about 253 acres, is located within the Town of Viroqua. The county landfill has full-service recycling of a wide range of recyclables including (but not limited to) glass, bundled paper including newsprint and cardboard, and several types of plastic. The landfill has received DNR approval for a landfill expansion to accommodate landfill use to the year 2019.

The long-term prospects of solid waste management indicate that regional collaborations will likely be necessary to control costs and comply with increased State and Federal environmental regulation requirements. The Town of Viroqua, guided by availability of new technologies and favorable cost/benefit analyses, will continue to be alert for opportunities to improved solid waste management practices within the Town.

**Parks and Recreation:**

**Regional Context**

The Town of Viroqua contains a mix of suburban and rural populations with a corresponding mix of suburban and rural park and recreation needs and resources. Many residents of the Town of Viroqua live on acreages large enough to accommodate a wide variety of private recreational activities that may include, for example: cross-country skiing, camping, ATV riding, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and picnicking. The Town of Viroqua has no public town parks, although the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides about 280 acres of public fishing and hunting lands along Bishops Branch and Cook Creek within the Town.

The Viroqua Hills Golf and Country Club is the most significant private recreational facility serving the Town of Viroqua.

It is increasingly important to promote public outdoor recreational opportunities for all citizens in the interest of maintaining and enhancing wellness and basic health. Public health has always been a basic purpose of community park and recreation programs.
Telecommunications Facilities:

Location, Use, and Capacity

Telecommunication services in the Town of Viroqua are provided by both Frontier Communications and Vernon Communications. Both firms offer local- and long-distance landline telephone services, cell phone services cable television, and dial-up & high-speed internet access. Various satellite and cable companies also provide television and internet services and may be starting telephone services within the current planning horizon for this comprehensive plan. The existing capacity of telecommunications facilities is reported to be meeting existing needs. These service providers report they are positioning themselves to accommodate needs in the foreseeable future.

Telecommunications Facilities Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs:

The Town of Viroqua has no direct jurisdiction over the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the telecommunications companies. The continuing comprehensive planning process will include collaboration with these utilities and other service providers as appropriate.

Future Needs and Timetable:

The Town of Viroqua has no jurisdiction over provision of telecommunication services to the Town, but it is reasonable to assume that the telecommunications providers will upgrade and enhance capabilities to serve changing needs and future growth in the Town. Specific needs for expansion, rehabilitation, or addition of new facilities are not known at this time.

Power Plants and Transmission Lines:

Location, Use, and Capacity:

There are no electric power generation facilities in the Town of Viroqua. An electric power substation, located within the City of Viroqua, feeds an electric transmission line that extends through the Town of Viroqua. Electric power to the Town of Viroqua is provided by Xcel Energy and by Vernon Electric Cooperative. The capacity of power plants and transmission lines serving the Town is reported by electric service providers to be adequate for present needs although service capacity is closely monitored by the service providers.
Power Plant and Transmission Lines Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs:

The Town of Viroqua has no jurisdiction over the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the electric utilities serving the Town.

The continuing process of comprehensive planning will include collaboration with the electric utilities as a way to help assure that local issues and needs are communicated to the utilities and utilities regulators. The overall goal for the Town is to assure provision of adequate electric services to the Town into the future.

Future Needs and Timetable:

While the Town of Viroqua has no jurisdiction over provision of electric power to the Town, it is reasonable to assume that the electric facilities will be upgraded and capacity added by the owners of such companies to serve changing needs and the future growth in the Town. Specific needs for expansion, rehabilitation, or addition of new facilities are not known at this time.

There is a small, but rapidly growing number of alternative- or green-energy systems installed within the Town of Viroqua. The Town will need to assess its level of control and involvement with this segment of energy production.

Cemeteries:

Location, Use, Capacity and Future Needs Timetable:

There are eight cemeteries within the Town of Viroqua: Viroqua Cemetery, Coon Prairie Lutheran Cemetery, Vernon County (a/k/a Poor Farm, Asylum) Cemetery, Belgium Ridge Cemetery, Asbury Union Methodist (a/k/a Old American) Cemetery, Asbury Zion (a/k/a East Zion Lutheran Church) Cemetery, Putt White Cemetery, and Bishops Branch (a/k/a White) Cemetery.

The Town does not own any of these cemeteries but has the obligation for maintenance of any cemetery in which any veteran of any US service branch is buried. The Town’s obligation with respect to cemeteries is fully addressed in Wisconsin Statutes [WisStats: §157].

Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs:

There are no existing planning issues regarding cemeteries in the Town.
Health Care Facilities:

Location, Use and Capacity:

Health care issues of Town of Viroqua residents are met by in-patient facilities in the City of Viroqua and in the City of La Crosse. Out-patient services are provided by a number of area clinics, none of which is located within the Town.

Future Needs and Timetable:

While the Town of Viroqua has no jurisdiction over the provision of health care facilities, it is assumed that the owners of the facilities serving the Viroqua area will upgrade their facilities and services as future needs within the region dictate. As the Viroqua area communities grow, particularly with expansion of the elderly population, there could develop needs for additional health care facilities and/or wellness facilities to serve the Viroqua area.

Child Care Facilities:

Location, Use and Capacity:

There are an unknown number of private childcare facilities serving the Town of Viroqua.

Future Needs and Timetable:

The Town does not have jurisdiction with respect to provision of child care in the Town.

Police:

Location, Use and Capacity:

The Town of Viroqua currently has no police department. Law enforcement is provided by the Vernon County Sheriff’s Department. However, the Town, having village powers, does have the statutory authority (WisStats: §61.65) to create and maintain its own police force.

Future Needs and Timetable:

Policing needs are expected to grow in proportion to the population growth in the Town. The Town Board of the Town of Viroqua will decide the timetable for any changes in policing resources.
Fire and Rescue:

Location, Use and Capacity:

Fire service for the Town of Viroqua is provided by a volunteer fire department that serves the City of Viroqua as well as the Towns of Franklin, Jefferson and Viroqua. Costs of emergency equipment, training, and staffing are shared among these entities as governed by contract among the four entities. The fire station is located at 702 East Broadway, Viroqua, WI. This department also provides first responder services for highway accidents. The Tri-State ambulance company provides paramedic and ambulance services to the Town of Viroqua.

Use and capacity of fire department services are within the norm for the size of the service area. These emergency services are good examples of cooperation between units of government for the sharing of services and facilities. These qualities are enhanced by mutual aid agreements to provide services into other service areas upon request. These are very efficient services due to their volunteer nature and their regional service areas.

The primary planning goals for the Fire and Rescue portion of this comprehensive plan include:

- to monitor and evaluate fire and rescue service needs of residents of the Town of Viroqua and
- to assure that changing needs are met adequately and in a timely manner

It is in the best interest of the local fire district to keep abreast of new funding opportunities and requirements of emergency service institutions. Of particular importance is being current with opportunities afforded by the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and the various advancements in HAZMAT management.

Future Needs and Timetable:

The fire department has an ongoing need to plan for replacement fire trucks and fire fighting equipment. The fire department and the four entities that comprise the fire district have an ongoing need to budget to cover those replacement costs. Due to the high cost of this specialized equipment, a multi-year budgeting and replacement schedule is strongly encouraged.

Libraries:

The Town of Viroqua has no town library. Library services are provided to Town of Viroqua residents through the McIntosh Memorial Library in the City of Viroqua, the Bekkum Memorial Library in the City of Westby, and the Winding Rivers Bookmobile. All of these libraries are members of the state-sponsored Winding Rivers Library System.
Schools:

Location, Use and Capacity:

The Town of Viroqua is served by both public and private educational institutions. The Viroqua School District provides pre-K through 12 education at its campus on the west side of the City of Viroqua and provides an alternative high school experience through the publicly-funded Laurel [Alternative] High School, located downtown in the City of Viroqua. The Westby School District provides pre-K through 12 education at its campus on the west side of the City of Westby. In addition to public school offerings, there are private school offerings for Town of Viroqua residents by providers in the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua.

- Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School provides private mixed-age K through 8 education at its campus in the center of the City of Viroqua
- English Lutheran School, located on the east side of the City of Viroqua, provides K-6 education.
- Youth Initiative High School, a Waldorf-based system located in the City of Viroqua, provides 9-12 education and
- Cornerstone Christian Academy, located within the Town of Viroqua, provides a K-12 education

Map C-6 locates the school district boundaries for the Town of Viroqua.

The Town recognizes that home schooling also exists within the Town, but the Town has no jurisdiction in the matter of home schooling. Home schooling is regulated by the State [WisStats: §115, WisStats: §118].

Post-secondary, alternative education, and continuing education are offered by Western Technical College at its campus within the City of Viroqua.

The use and capacity of the Viroqua public school facilities and the Westby public school facilities are subject to a separate level of detailed evaluations and standards which involve state education authorities and regulations. It is not necessary for this Comprehensive Plan to duplicate the planning and evaluation processes over which the Viroqua School Board and its administrators and the Westby School Board and its administrators have jurisdiction. The evaluation of the use and capacity of the private school facilities falls within the jurisdictions of the various private school authorities.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs:

While the goals, objectives, policies and programs concerning the operation of the public school systems and the private school systems fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of those respective school boards, there are potential areas of coordination with municipal planning.
Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives of the Schools portion of this comprehensive plan include to:

- Coordinate among school jurisdictions and the Town of Viroqua regarding mutual concerns in the areas of community development, planning, land development, construction and traffic matters.
- Identify potential cost savings and efficient use of public funds.
- Encourage effective planning and construction of public infrastructure and
- Maintain good understandings of each others’ needs and responsibilities among school and municipal jurisdictions

Policies:

Policies to support the goals and objectives of the Schools portion of this comprehensive plan include maintaining regular communication on all matters of mutual concern.

Programs:

Programs to implement the policies of the Schools portion of this comprehensive plan include establishing liaison arrangements between the Town, the City governments and the school jurisdictions.

Future Needs and Timetable

The identification of future needs and timetables for school facilities is under the jurisdiction of the school boards of the respective school systems serving the Town of Viroqua.
Element 5 - Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources

Goal of the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element:

The primary goals of this element are to provide guidance for the conservation, promotion, and effective management of agricultural, natural and cultural resources in the Town of Viroqua. Maps maintained and provided to the public by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA locate the principal agricultural and natural resources within the Town. These maps are available starting at http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm. Agricultural resources include land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Groundwater:

Planning Context:

The groundwater resource in the Town of Viroqua occurs in two general forms. In the first form, ground waters are located in shallow zones of saturation either on top of sedimentary bedrock on higher lands or at shallow depths in the lower valley floors, usually in stream corridors. The top of the bedrock is typically fractured, allowing some fissures to extend down to deeper aquifers. Contaminants from the ground surface can find their way to these deeper waters through these cracks and fissures extending from the surface.

The second form of groundwater occurs in the deeper crevices and voids of the limestone and sandstone bedrock. This deeper water source is often several hundred feet below the ground surface. Both of these sources of groundwater constitute the aquifers for the supply of water for human, agricultural and industrial use. The deep, bedrock aquifers have large supplies of ground water, but if contaminated, are difficult, if not impossible to clean-up.

Planning implications of the ground water resource focus on protection of these waters for public health and safety purposes. Specific public health and safety purposes include

- protection of the ground water supply from contamination; and
- protection of the supply of ground water quantities for future use.

Protecting these waters is particularly important because ground water is the sole source of water for human use.

Homes and farms throughout the Town of Viroqua use either individual deep wells or groundwater located in shallow soil and granular aquifers. These shallow ground waters are very susceptible to contamination.

The planning approach for dealing with this ground water resource centers around the methods of preventing, reducing and mitigating contamination of ground water aquifers, methods for conserving water use, and applying water quality measures in the use and development of land. Ground water planning and protection programs are most effectively done on an area-wide basis, at either the county or river basin level because of the broad regional nature of ground water aquifers. Such planning can also focus on individual, sub-regional aquifers that supply individual well heads where there is existing or potential water contamination.
Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives of the Town of Viroqua with respect to ground water include that the Town will:

- Protect the quality and quantity of ground water resources
- Recognize ground water conditions and implement measures to avoid or minimize ground water problems.
- Utilize water quality focused resources available to the Town via County- and State-government level programs. Examples of possible water quality focused resources include County Land & Water Conservation Department, County Health Department, and State Department of Natural Resources.
- Promote compliance with ground water laws and regulations

Policies:

Policies to support the Town’s goals and objectives with respect to ground water include that the Town will:

- Monitor Town recycle site disposal of toxic materials and hazardous waste in the Town of Viroqua
- Identify and monitor sites known or suspected to have soil or groundwater contamination
- Create and maintain emergency incidence reaction plans to deal with hazardous waste spills or releases
- Prevent development on soils known readily to convey domestic or industrial wastewater to drinking water aquifers.
- Report to appropriate county or state level authorities, incidents of known or suspected practices that could lead to ground water contamination, illegal dumping areas, and abandonment of wells.
- Have appropriate performance standards for the location of new businesses that have the potential to produce groundwater contamination

Programs:

Programs reflecting the Town policies of protecting ground water include that the Town will:

- Enact ordinances to implement ground water objectives and policies;
- Strengthen formal relationships with the County Land and Water Conservation Department and the County Sanitarian regarding their programs dealing with protection of ground water; and follow-up with the appropriate County or State level government programs as to remediation requirements;
- Recognize there may be need for studies to identify ground water recharge zones that may be especially susceptible to contamination; and
- Inventory brownfield sites.
Forests:

Planning Context:

The Town of Viroqua has some woodlands. Planning for “forest” as a resource to be harvested is not a significant issue, however preservation and expansion of our silviculture for its many other community benefits is a high priority. Silviculture is the agriculture of trees -- how to grow them, how to maximize growth and return, and how to manipulate tree species compositions to meet landowner objectives.

Goals and Objectives:

The Town views woodlands to be an essential part of the local quality of life particularly essential to the esthetics of the area landscape. The Town of Viroqua goals and objectives for woodlands within the town include to:

- Preserve woodlands in their economic use and in land use development
- Continue use of the woodland resource for wood products in a reasonable and sustainable fashion.
- Use woodland resources as a component of the local economy
- Apply professional woodland management practices and
- Utilize forest- and woodland-focused resources available to the Town via County- and State-government level programs.

Policies:

Policies to support the Town’s goals and objectives with respect to forests and woodlands include that the Town will:

- Apply woodlands preservation standards in town zoning, platting and subdivision codes.
- Require preservation of vegetation on steep slopes as a part of development
- Consider and refer to landowners/developers woodlands management advice from professional foresters; and
- Consider use of cluster housing in woodland locations as a means of preserving woodland cover and rural scenery.

Programs:

Programs to implement Town policies related to forests and woodlands include that the Town will:

- Require use of public and private timber stand improvement practices;
- Utilize forest- and woodland-focused resources available to the Town via County- and State-government level programs;
- Encourage use of products and services from state nurseries;
- Use forest and woodland incentive programs;
- Allow continued harvest of timber in a sustainable fashion;
- Develop local ordinance standards for preserving tree cover and other vegetation in the development of lands having steep slopes.
- Encourage use of cluster housing options to preserve woodlands on residential development parcels.
Productive Agricultural Areas:

Planning Context:

A substantial part of the Town of Viroqua consists of productive agricultural lands. This land resource is vital to providing food for a growing population. An important planning issue involves conversion of some of these agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses. A secondary planning issue is the impact from those converted uses on adjacent farming operations. Because such land use changes are often rooted in conflicting socio-economic needs and values, this is a difficult planning issue.

Goals and Objectives:

The Town of Viroqua goals and objectives with respect to productive agricultural areas include that the Town will:

- Recognize that productive agricultural lands are a valuable economic resource;
- Recognize that productive agricultural lands are important to quality of life;
- Encourage land uses that preserve valuable agricultural lands;
- Identify land-focused requirements to sustain viable agricultural operations into the future;
- Protect and preserve farm land as a resource important to the future of the Town;
- Promote farm economy and farming ways of life; and
- Restrict conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses to appropriate areas.

Policies:

Policies in support of the Town’s goals and objectives with respect to agricultural lands include that the Town will:

- Support a property tax system that sustains preservation of productive agricultural lands;
- Use formal tools to protect valuable agricultural lands from conversion to uses harmful to farmers, to rural land-owners, and to the agricultural economy in general. Such formal tools may include zoning decisions, public hearings and public education efforts.
- Encourage Town residents to take advantage of public programs to conserve soil and water resources of valuable agricultural lands.

Programs:

Programs reflecting the Town goals, objectives, and policies of supporting responsible use of agricultural lands include:

- Development by farmers, farm organizations and the agri-business community of locally devised strategies for looking at the future of valuable agricultural lands.
- Advocate to regulatory organizations to make appropriate changes that would benefit agricultural land resources
- Evaluate, and revise if necessary, local codes that contribute to the acceleration of non-agricultural development of farm land.
- Consider applying programs of the Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS] to the enhancement of productivity of agricultural lands.
- Use the State farmland$^*$ and woodland preservation programs where it is beneficial.
- Create and maintain land-use ordinances to preserve farmlands that have been locally identified as a valuable resource to protect. Construction of these ordinances will consider the developing science of managing rural residential development [Appendix D]
- Use the resources of the University of Wisconsin Extension programs.
• For the preservation of agriculture lands, consideration could be given to farmland preservation techniques that include “conservation subdivisions.” Conservation subdivisions are more fully explained in the two articles of Appendix D.

[* Note: The Farmland Preservation Program has been significantly changed with the inclusion of the Working Lands Initiative in the 2009 budget. Intent of the Working Lands Initiative is to encourage strongly farmland preservation through zoning and/or Agricultural Enterprise Areas. Exclusive Agricultural Zoning is similar to but not exactly synonymous with Farmland Preservation Zoning. Formal definition of terms is pending in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.]

Environmentally Sensitive Areas:

All environmentally sensitive areas within the Town of Viroqua fall within the categories of environmental resource areas reported in the following topics.

Threatened or Endangered Species:

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Programs:

This comprehensive Plan does not have the authority to identify, protect or plan for threatened or endangered species. Planning for threatened or endangered species falls within the jurisdiction of state and federal authorities. Threatened and endangered species are further discussed in the Wildlife Habitat portion of this Element.

Stream Corridors:

Planning Context:

Most of the Town of Viroqua is on the uplands between the West Branch of the Kickapoo River and the Bad Axe River basin. A few small tributary streams extend into the Town of Viroqua. The principal stream-related planning context is the quality of the surface waters flowing into the streams.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives with respect to proper consideration of stream corridors include that the Town will:

• Prevent the pollution of streams and rivers.
• Preserve stream corridors for the diversity of environmental assets that concentrate in and adjacent to streams.
• Recognize that stream corridors are a large part of the area’s scenic rural landscape. They contribute to the overall quality of living in the area.
• Use State and Federal resource agencies to find programs and skills that can enhance stream corridors.
Policies:

Policies in support of the goals and objectives of Town of Viroqua stream corridor planning include that the Town will:

- Make land use decisions that protect stream quality, minimize erosion and sedimentation in stream corridors, and minimize the fragmentation of stream corridor wildlife habitats.
- Enlist the help of the proper governmental agencies to investigate concerns about development and maintenance of stream corridors.
- Incorporate low-impact land development standards into development codes.
- Encourage landowners to maintain natural stream corridors.

Programs:

Programs to implement stream corridor policies include that the Town will

- Encourage landowners to seek assistance from proper county and state agencies for help with measures to protect and enhance stream corridors.

Surface Waters:

Planning Context:

There are no extensive areas of surface water within the Town of Viroqua, however there are several reservoirs, man-made lakes and farm ponds within the Township. The overall planning context for surface waters would be to insure the quality of surface waters in its role of feeding into drinking water aquifers and to minimize surface water run-off problems.

Goals and Objectives:

The main goals of the Town of Viroqua related to surface waters include intentions to:

- Prevent contamination of surface waters.
- Clean up already contaminated surface waters.
- Avoid surface water run-off problems.
- Understand the potentials for surface water contamination or other threats to health from various forms of land use, and seek to eliminate, minimize or mitigate such contamination.
- Implement programs to reduce surface water pollution and erosion problems.

Policies:

Policies that implement the goals and objectives of the Town of Viroqua related to surface waters are to:

- Prevent the accumulation of contaminated surface waters over drinking water aquifers.
- Participate in studies to identify drinking water aquifers and their characteristics, including actual and potential contamination threats to such aquifers.
- Regulate the location and design of developments that pose direct threats of contamination to surface waters.
- Support participation in state surface-water management programs.
Programs:

Programs that support the policies of the Town of Viroqua with respect to surface waters are to:

- Enact land-use standards related to land development that protect public health through the protection of the quality of surface waters.
- Create and maintain subdivision ordinances to provide standards that minimize and retain on-site water runoff.
- Participate in State programs that address issues of water run-off.
- Encourage rural landowners to work with the state and local agencies to implement measures that minimize and manage problems associated with surface water runoff.

Floodplains:

Planning Context:

There is little shore land in the Town of Viroqua planning area. Floodplain planning is not a subject that will be dealt with in this Plan. The state’s floodplain zoning program, implemented through the county zoning program, has no designated areas of floodplain in this planning area. The Town of Viroqua does have drainage courses that are subject to flash flooding. Such flooding increases with urban development on the lands that flow to such drainage courses. The County Zoning Department uses county soil survey data as indicators of the boundaries of flood prone areas in the larger drainage courses where such soil indicators are present. Map C-8 reflects areas currently identified as at risk. Up-to-date maps of flood-prone areas within the Town are maintained within the office of Vernon County Sanitarian and Zoning.

One of the basic functions of a local planning program is to identify the boundaries of flood protection zones and enforce regulations managing development within these zones. There are no 100-year flood plain elevations identified in this planning area; Flash flooding is not conducive to 100-year flood plain identification. All drainage courses are potential flood prone areas. Land development in these areas could be regulated to restrict or prohibit uses that would limit flash flood drainage or that would expose property to damage and jeopardize human safety.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives formulated for the Town of Viroqua with respect to flood plains include that the Town will:

- Promote land development practices that minimize human safety risks and flood damage to property and public infrastructure.
- Restrict structural development in flood prone drainage corridors.

Policies and Programs:

Policies and programs reflecting the Town policies of protecting flood plains include that the Town will:

- Incorporate standards into town land-use regulation and subdivision codes that regulate development on flood prone lands and in storm water drainage corridors.
- Incorporate open, greenway corridors in all drainage courses that are in the path of development.
Wetlands:

Planning Context:

Since most of this planning area consists of uplands with minimal surface water environments, there are few broad wetland environments present. However, due to the characteristic steep hills and deep valleys of the coulee region there are numerous small wet soil areas that qualify as biological wetlands.

Wetlands management is under the auspices of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Currently identified wetlands are shown in Maps C-12 and C-13. In addition, maps that are frequently updated and that may be more current are available in the office of the Vernon County Sanitarian and Zoning.

Wetland planning is important in this area due to the diversity of environmental and potential human benefits. Wetlands are a very important bird and wildlife habitat, a component of the overall quality of life in this area. Wetland knowledge and planning is also important to local landowners and units of government because wetlands are subject to public regulation.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to wetlands preservation include that the Town will:

- Work to achieve greater public understanding and appreciation of the environmental, human and economic benefits of wetlands.
- Preserve wetlands by avoiding the filling and siltation of wetlands
- Consider alternatives to impacting wetlands by public and private development.

Policies:

Policies to support the goals and objectives of the Town with respect to wetlands preservation include that the Town will:

- Use town authority to provide for the preservation of wetlands in public and private development projects.
- Consult with State and County resources to become knowledgeable about alternatives to impacting wetlands negatively.

Programs:

Programs reflecting the Town policies to protect wetlands include that the Town will:

- Engage in efforts to understand wetland regulations.
- Provide referrals for assistance by public and private authorities that can help educate about wetland planning, protection and compliance with wetland regulations.
- Support conservation and economic development interests in their efforts to promote understanding of how to utilize wetlands.
Wildlife Habitat:

Planning Context:

The amount of wildlife habitat exists in proportion to the amount of grasslands, woodlands, wetlands and river environments. Most of the Town of Viroqua is used for field cropping or pasture but wildlife is throughout the Town. Most wildlife habitat is in wooded hillsides, valleys and stream corridors.

The federally-listed threatened and endangered species in the Town of Viroqua include the northern monkshood. The Wisconsin Bureau of Endangered Resources reports the following rare species occurring in the Viroqua area: black rat snake, timber rattle snake, broad beech fern, one-flowered broomrape, rock stichwort, and the cliff goldenrod.

In addition, there is a prevalence of goat prairie plant communities in this general driftless area of Wisconsin. These are southwest-facing dry lime hillsides that are the habitat for prairie plants. [*Driftless* is a geological term indicating that the glaciers did not pass over this area.] Bird habitat is important to the increasing popularity of birding as a recreational pastime. Birding has been reported as one of the fastest growing spectator sports. Birding activity can have significant economic value to a community.

Goals and Objectives:

Goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan for the Town of Viroqua with respect to protecting wildlife habitat include:

- Preservation of wildlife habitat consistent with human and agricultural needs,
- Appreciation of wildlife and their related habitat as quality of life enhancements,
- Preservation and management of the wildlife and related habitat as a resource,
- Minimization of habitat fragmentation in planning and development of the landscape, and
- Consideration of programs to enhance wildlife habitat where there is potential and consensus to do so

Policies:

In support of the goals and objectives to protect wildlife habitat, Town policies:

- Include wildlife habitat protection in the review and approval of land development projects and urban growth.
- Support measures that protect farming property, activities and products from wildlife damage.
- Utilize government-sponsored wildlife program assistance.

Programs:

Reaching the goals and objectives and implementing the policies of the Town with respect to protection of wildlife habitat, the Town will:

- Support lay-person educational efforts and outdoor activities that enhance bird and wildlife habitat.
- Consider habitat impacts of town activities such as management of road side vegetation
- Incorporate wildlife protection standards in local codes, such as land-use and platting codes.
Metallic & Non-Metallic Mineral Resources:

Planning Context:

There are no known metallic mineral resources or mining operations in this planning area. There are non-metallic mineral resources in the form of sedimentary rock and sand and gravel deposits. The sedimentary rock consists mainly of limestone and some sandstone. There are several limestone quarries in the Town of Viroqua. Reclamation measures are required by State & County Public Policy. [WisStats: §295]

Goals and Objectives:

Goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to metallic and non-metallic mineral resources include that the Town will:

- Maintain non-metallic mineral resource use of the land consistent with other planning goals, policies and programs.
- Provide for non-metallic mining and reclamation within local ordinances.
- Recognize that non-metallic minerals are a local natural resource, the use of which can benefit local residents and the local economy.

Policies:

Goals and objectives with respect to appropriate control of metallic and non-metallic mineral resources within the Town are supported by policies that:

- Provide standards for where rock quarries and sand/gravel pits can be located and for the scale of such operations.
- Provide standards for managing the impacts of quarries and pits on adjacent properties and residents.
- Require reclamation, landscaping and safety standards for terminated quarries and pits.

Programs:

Programs reflecting the Town policies of adequate oversight of metallic and non-metallic mineral resources within the town include that the Town will:

- Establish ordinances that include location and performance standards for both metallic and non-metallic mining operations.
- Periodically review and update ordinances that include location and performance standards for both metallic & non-metallic mining operations

Parks and Open Space:

Currently the Town of Viroqua has no public park facilities or formally designated “open space.” Additionally, no land is currently being considered to be developed as public access parks or open space.

As part of the U.S. Highway 14/61 expansion project, a multi-use path linking the City of Viroqua with the City of Westby via the Town of Viroqua will be constructed. Vernon County will have jurisdiction over the multi-use path and related rest area and park space.
Historical and Cultural Resources:

Planning Context:

The cultural and historical resources of this area fall within two principal time periods: the pre-settlement culture and the culture developed after the onset of white settlement starting about the middle of the nineteenth century.

Significance of the pre-settlement history includes the Native American presence. The Native American communities typically existed in valley bottoms near water sources. There are not known to be any permanent Native American village sites in this planning area. The high ridge divide extending through the Viroqua area likely was the location of historic Native American travel and migration routes with branches down into river valleys. There is little evidence of these pre-settlement inhabitants still known to exist on the landscape of this planning area. Extensive farming and urban development in the area may have removed such historic sites; however, undisturbed sites may remain awaiting identification.

Most of the historic and cultural resources known to exist in this planning area are those related to the white settlement of the area from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Other sites of historical and cultural significance include: the round barn and other structures on the Cunningham farmstead on Maple Dale Road, the Putt White cemetery on Mahoney Road, and the Westby Coon-Prairie Church on Coon Prairie Road in rural Westby. Other potentially significant historical sites in the Town of Viroqua are inventoried by the Wisconsin Historical Society and are identified in the special report prepared by the Society entitled: Cultural Resources Report for the Cities of Viroqua and Westby, Villages of Coon Valley, Chaseburg, Stoddard and Readstown, Towns of Bergen, Coon, Hamburg, Christiana, Viroqua and Kickapoo, Vernon County, May, 2003.

Significant cultural resources and traditions in this area include: Norwegian heritage, dairy farming, cheese production, tobacco growing, the Amish society, and the nearby events of the Black Hawk War of 1832.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to identifying and preserving known historical and cultural resources include that the Town will:

- Appreciate the significance of historical and cultural resources and heritage.
- Preserve and use historical and cultural resources responsibly.
- Integrate historical and cultural concerns into public decision-making on relevant issues.

Policies:

Specific courses of action to reach goals and objectives of the Town of Viroqua with respect to identifying and preserving known historical and cultural resources include policies that:

- Require that the impact on historical and cultural resources be considered when making governmental decisions involving such resources.
- Provide local governmental resources, where feasible, to support the acquisition, preservation and education efforts regarding those historical and cultural resources that have been identified as significant to the area.
- Consider expertise provided within the programs of the Vernon County Historical Society.
- Support efforts to advance knowledge about local historical and cultural resources.
- Consider recommendations of the Wisconsin Historical Society’s Cultural Resources Report.
Programs:

To implement the policies that support the goals and objectives of identifying and preserving known historical and cultural resources, the Town will:

- Integrate provisions for the consideration of historical and cultural resources into local zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- Contribute to enhancement of the Vernon County Historical Society museum.
- Support and assist research on specific historical subjects and sites.
- Facilitate assistance to property owners to nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historical Places.

Other Natural Resources:

Customary natural and cultural resource issues that the Town of Viroqua has occasion to address are presented in the first part of this Element. Other issues and opportunities that fall within the natural resource character of the Town of Viroqua include the following:

- **Special Geological Character of the Landscape:**
  
  The picturesque hill and valley landscape of this area are known as the driftless area. The Town of Viroqua is central within this driftless area.

  This unique landscape is a valuable natural resource. It contributes significantly to many of the quality of life factors of benefit to this area. This landscape contains diverse and scenic geological land forms which add value to residential properties, to parks and recreational facilities and provides attractions to visitors. This scenic landscape diversity has very significant economic value to many local businesses and to the tax bases of local and county governments and school districts because it is the base of much of the local economy, namely tourism. This landscape is a sensitive resource, provided naturally, which serves to sustain local communities by attracting vacationers, recreational and retirement living, and persons engaged in the kind of outdoor sports made possible only by the features of this landscape. There are many rock outcroppings in this area that have been preserved because such sites have not been conducive to development. The preservation of these natural landmarks distinguish the Viroqua community from many other communities that do not have such natural attractions. The goals, objectives, policies and programs related to the driftless landscape are dealt with in many of the individual sections of this Comprehensive Plan.

- **Recreational resources**

  Among other things, public access to streams and waterways provides opportunity for fishing and other outdoor activities.

- **Air Quality:**

  Issues regarding air quality may involve odors, smoke, dust and noxious emissions. A more frequent issue in rural areas is the odors from confinement livestock feeding operations. Smell and particulate matter from open burning has the potential to create air quality problems. The expansion of non-farm housing into farming areas also has the potential to generate complaints by non-farm residents.
- **Light Pollution:**

  Light pollution is defined as light with no useful purpose—wasted energy, sometimes referred to as artificial sky glow. Excessive and misdirected lighting is increasingly reducing dark sky conditions and constituting light trespass. This is a relatively new public planning issue which is becoming a subject of new development standards.

- **Land And Water Resource Management Plan (LWRM):**

  This LWRM conservation plan developed by the Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department is a valuable resource. The goals, objectives, policies and programs of the LWRM plan may contribute to the Town of Viroqua comprehensive plan.

- **Value of Open Space:**

  Natural open space will become more important throughout this planning period as more urban growth and land conversion for economic purposes takes place. Natural scenic views and pristine natural lands are in fixed supply and are expected to diminish. Minimizing visual clutter, unnecessary signage and extensive grading and timber removal will become more important to maintaining the scenic, rural quality of life supported so strongly. Also important to the continuing quality of life will be the existence of ample legitimate public access to natural open spaces.

**Community Design:**

**Planning Context:**

Community Design is important to the welfare of a community. It is a direct contributor to community pride, to community marketing success and to the general perception of quality in the appearance environment.

Achieving positive community design is a dual responsibility shared by public and private sectors. Governments have opportunities to apply community design principles in the structural and site designs of public facilities, streets, signage and public landscaping. The business community has significant potential in contributing to pleasing community design. The residents of a community generally reflect positive community design in their residences and private property. Clean-up needs and the elimination of eyesores and blight are universal challenges that are legitimate issues to be addressed to achieve positive community design.

**Goals and Objectives:**

Goals and objectives of encouraging appropriate community design within the Town include efforts to:

- Develop community design standards.
- Encourage adoption by town government of esthetic design standards for application to infrastructure projects.
- Encourage cooperation by the community with adopted community design standards for application in private developments.
Policies:

Goals and objectives regarding community design are supported by policies that:

- Insure that community design considerations are part of public infrastructure projects.
- Institute public education programs to promote esthetic property design and clean-up.
- Maintain and enforce a local sign ordinance.

Programs:

To support the policies encouraging adequate community design, the Town will:

- Place provisions for the consideration of community design in appropriate local ordinances
Element 6 - Economic Development

Goal of the Economic Development Element:

To plan for the protection, retention and expansion of the area’s economic base, including quality employment opportunities. This includes recognition that the local economy will be impacted by an evolving national and global economy. An overall goal is to position the Viroqua area to make beneficial adjustments to changing economic forces.

Regional Economic Development Context:

Meaningful planning for growth and economic development must be done within a regional context. The engine of growth for an area is its economy. The key measures of that economy are jobs and related income levels. A substantial part of the economy for the Town of Viroqua planning area is measured by its place in the regional economy. A substantial part of this area’s economy is agriculture, and this part of the local economy is influenced by factors larger than the regional economy, namely, the national agricultural economy and related public policy. Four identified “drivers” of the future economy may include demographic change, the quickened pace of technological change, the expanding reach of globalization, and decentralization of industrial structure. Continuing economic development planning could look at these factors in more detail and could translate them to economic development strategies for the Town of Viroqua.

Not all communities in any given region are capable of benefiting from the economic strengths of their region. Important local factors that determine growth capability of a community, and therefore its economy, include:

- Location
- Institutional structures
- Natural resources
- Infrastructure needed for growth and
d- Availability of land free of major development limitations

The City of Viroqua functions as a regional service center for much of Vernon County, and is the economic center for much of the town of Viroqua, although the northern part of the town has some economic relationships with the City of Westby. An overall goal of the Viroqua area is to strengthen its position as a free-standing cultural and economic center; and this goal brings with it various responsibilities to provide the infrastructure, public services and marketing required to achieve such a goal.

In addition, the adjacent and neighboring metropolitan areas can be expected to continue as economic influences on the Viroqua area as a result of commuter trends and preferences for housing in rural communities.

Analysis of Economic Base and Labor Force Employment Patterns:

Economic Base:

The most meaningful economic base analysis is done on a county unit or larger basis; the commuting zone of a community can also be a very meaningful basis. The county unit is helpful because economic data and projections are available on a county-unit basis from a variety of sources. However, the comprehensive plan for this area can still describe the basic framework of the economic base of the Town of Viroqua planning area. The sources of economic data used in this section include the U. S. Census Bureau, the Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development (WDWD), and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC).
A general description of the overall Vernon County economy can provide some perspective with which to view the economic base of the Town of Viroqua planning area. The 2008 Workforce Profile by the WDWD provides the following economic profile of Vernon county.

As with many of the neighboring counties, Vernon County has a high percentage of people working in the service industry or in the health services industry. Table 10 identifies the prominent industries within Vernon County.

Table 10: Prominent Industries in Vernon Co
[Vernon Co Workforce Profile 2008; WDWDt; p5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Subsectors (using 3-digit NAICS)</th>
<th>2007 Vernon Co Average</th>
<th>5 yr % Change</th>
<th>2007 State of WI Average</th>
<th>5 yr % Change</th>
<th>5 yr % Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational services</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>-6.9%</td>
<td>$28,017</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43,750</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food services &amp; drinking places</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>8,397</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive, legislative &amp; gen govt</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>-6.6%</td>
<td>22,570</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing &amp; residential care facilities</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>22,081</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>19,100</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit intermediation &amp; related</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>42,493</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery mfg</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>not avail</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>not avail</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>-39.6%</td>
<td>33,063</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory health care services</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>not avail</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>not avail</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The top ten employers in Vernon County at March 2007 were reported to be:

250-499 Employees:

- CROPP
- Fleet Guard, Inc
- Vernon Memorial Hospital

100-249 Employees:

- Accelerated Genetics
- Bethel Home & Services Inc
- County of Vernon
- St Joseph's Community Health
- Viroqua Area Schools
- Wal-Mart
- Westby Area Schools

Recent economic turbulence has not spared the county. Of the three largest employers noted above, one has downsized the local workforce by nearly one-half, laying-off over 120 workers during Spring 2009. [Vernon County Broadcaster, March 25 & May 21, 2009]

Residents of the Town of Viroqua commute to a wide variety of locations for work. The tables below help describe categories of work undertaken by Town residents.

Occupations of Town of Viroqua residents and the industries in which they work represent typical distributions for a small-to-medium size rural community. The most significant economic characteristic is that the greatest proportion of town residents are employed within three categories: education, health & social services, and in management, professional & service related occupations.

Agriculture, the historic economic base of this area, was the second highest industrial area employing town residents. This economic sector has changed over recent decades due to modernization that has reduced farm employment. Changing governmental public policies have also contributed to reduction in agricultural-based employment.

Other restructuring has affected the local agriculture sector, such as the decline in the number of dairy farms, the decline in tobacco production, and the growth of organic agriculture. The two tables below report the occupation of the employed civilian labor force over sixteen years of age, and the type of industry in which these employees work.

### TABLE 11: OCCUPATION OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of Employed Residents</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numb</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional, &amp; related occupations</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; office occupations</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing &amp; forestry</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, extraction &amp; maintenance 52</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation &amp; material moving 116</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: U. S. Census Bureau, year 2000 census
TABLE 12: INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry of Employed Residents</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting &amp; mining</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, warehousing &amp; utilities</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, rental &amp; leasing</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, health and social services</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation &amp; food service</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: U. S. Census Bureau, year 2000 census4

Tourism is also a significant sector of the local economy. Tourism jobs and income are divided across many sectors of the economy and are not reported in conventional economic statistics. The Viroqua area benefits from several significant tourism resources. This area is near the center of the extensive scenic driftless region. The recreational waterways and parks are tourism resources that provide continual economic benefits. Hunting, fishing, camping, and seasonal housing are tourism growth areas.

Economic Base Conclusions:

The economic base of the Town of Viroqua consists of the typical diversified economic activities of a town with extensive farming and agri-business economy located adjacent to a small city county seat. The overlying commuter economy diversifies the local economy, enabling residents to hold distant jobs in a wide variety of occupations and industries and to earn higher incomes from that distant economic base.

An important planning implication of this commuting economy is that the Town of Viroqua does not have to provide the infrastructure, services, or incentives required of those communities into which Town of Viroqua residents commute.

Tourism may be an under-valued sector of the local economy. This segment is potentially more significant than currently appreciated because it is a growth area and because it is rooted in a fixed resource that assures that such jobs cannot be relocated.
Labor Force Employment Patterns:

In 1990, the Town of Viroqua had 677 employed residents, with 38% of these working in the City of Viroqua, 11% working in the City of Westby, 38% working in the remainder of the county, and the remainder working in adjacent counties.

In 2000, the Town of Viroqua had 721 employed residents, with 33% working in the City of Viroqua, 30% working in the Town of Viroqua, 25% working in the City of Westby and the remainder working in adjacent counties.

Jobs and Employment Outlook:

Maintaining the employment base of an area is important for a community. Occupational opportunities are expected to shift over time as industries change. During this planning period, some employers in this area can be expected to go out of business due to changes in technology, consumer preferences, and economic conditions.

There will also be important societal changes during this planning period. Reduction in the size and composition of the labor force will affect employment characteristics. Among the societal changes that may affect employment characteristics is baby-boomers reaching retirement age. Labor force availability has always been an important requirement of business seeking new location or expanding existing business.

TABLE 13: INCOME OF EMPLOYED RESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capita Personal Income, 2000</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
<th>Vernon County</th>
<th>Wisconsin</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male, full-time year-round worker</td>
<td>$31,376</td>
<td>$28,970</td>
<td>$28,100</td>
<td>$29,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female, full-time year-round worker</td>
<td>$23,194</td>
<td>$20,635</td>
<td>$20,180</td>
<td>$20,635</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data source: U. S. Census Bureau, year 2000 census4

Median Household and Family Income, 2000

For the Town of Viroqua, “family units” generally earn more than living units classified as “households.” The reason for this apparent discrepancy is that the term “household” includes many single person family units in which the single person is the entire household. In 2000, there were a higher percentage of households below the income range of $25,000 to $34,000 than there were family housing units, and the reverse was true for all income ranges above $34,000.

For the Town of Viroqua, the median household income was $42,583, and the median family income was $45,179. For Vernon County, the median household income was $33,178, and the median family income was $40,666.
Economic Development Strategic Assessment and Plan:

A SWOT evaluation of the Town of Viroqua reveals strengths [S], weaknesses [W], opportunities [O], and potential threats [T].

Strengths of the Town include that:

- The Town of Viroqua is immediately adjacent to the county seat that is a regional employment center.
- There are readily accessible medical, health and social services.
- There are both a pre-K through 12 public school system in modernized facilities and a variety of private and alternative education choices.
- Land suitable for business growth is readily available.
- There is an exceptional quality of rural atmosphere and character.
- Being located within the Kickapoo River & scenic driftless areas enhance tourism growth.

Weaknesses perceived to exist within the Town include the:

- Absence of diversified transportation options,
- Pressures of property tax obligation spread over a smaller pool of tax payers; and
- Limited lodging for visitor and business.

Opportunity potentials available within the Town include:

- Creation of value-adding industries based on farm products.
- Growth generated by organic agriculture industry.
- Cultural tourism – heritage tourism, agriculture tourism and driftless area attractions.
- Diversification and services from the public and private education institutions.
- Increases in medical and health care economics/employment base.

Threat potentials confronting the Town include:

- Continued national trends of business restructurings and relocations that adversely impact the local economy.
- Potential further decrease in municipal state aid or other outside revenues.
- Significant increases in energy costs
- Potential adverse impact from the U. S. Hwy 14/61 reconstruction
- Possible decline in school district enrollments and related decline in economic benefits.

Economic Development Recommendations:

The following economic development goals, objectives, policies, and programs address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified above.
Goals:

Goals of the Town of Viroqua for economic development include having:

- a healthy and growing economy;
- a town that is an inviting place to work and live; and
- a positive relationship among community, business and government.

Objectives:

Objectives derived from Town of Viroqua goals for adequate economic development include:

- Protecting existing jobs;
- Developing new jobs;
- Growing the local tax base;
- Supporting the educational system;
- Providing quality services;
- Encouraging partnerships between local government and the business community; and
- Promoting and preserving the quality of life.

Policies:

Policies to facilitate reaching Town objectives with respect to having adequate economic development include:

- Support of programs that aid creation and expansion of local businesses;
- Support of industries that produce finished products from agriculture;
- Support for collaborative town and city efforts to develop a detailed, long-range plan for the Highway 14/61 expansion;
- Support for creation and use of public amenities through town programs; and
- Consideration of cooperative partnerships with Vernon County.
- Implementation of State regulation / licensing with respect to trades and businesses

Programs:

Programs reflecting Town policies encouraging responsible economic growth include that the Town will:

- Provide standards to insure quality residential environments;
- Participate in expanding and implementing tourism marketing programs in partnership with other tourism stakeholders; and
- Strengthen and participate in regional networks of agri-tourism
Formal Economic Development Programs:

There are currently no formal economic development programs established within the Town.

Programs identified below reflect a sampling of programs available at a point in time. Programs, program eligibility criteria and program availability are subject to change. Additional information is available through the UW Extension Office. Additional economic development programs available to the Town of Viroqua include offerings supported by an extended network of government and quasi-government organizations. Among potential resources are programs under the auspices of:

**City of Viroqua**

- Tax Increment Financing
- Downtown Historic District
- Industrial Park development
- Incubator Program.
- Chamber of Commerce programs.
- Viroqua Partners
- Rotary

**Vernon County**

- Evaluate the County farm property for its future economic/jobs potential.
- Vernon County Economic Development Association.
- Vernon County VCCP Revolving Loan Program

**Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission**

- General economic development planning

**Western Technical College** - 7 Rivers Development Initiative.

**University of Wisconsin, La Crosse** - Small Business Development Center.

**Wisconsin State Economic Development**

- Governor’s “Grow Wisconsin” program.
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development programs
- Wisconsin Development Fund—Technology Development Fund (WDF)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce – resource for business mentoring / incubator creation
- Western Wisconsin Technology Zone
- Transportation Facilities Economic Assistance and Development Program
- Workforce Connections, Job Training Partnership Act
- Enterprise Development Zone, Wisconsin Department of Commerce
- Customized Labor Training Grant Program
- Wisconsin Energy Futures – [National Rural Electric Cooperative Association]
Federal Economic Development

- Housing & Urban Development [HUD], Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
- Rural Economic Development (RED) Early Planning Grant.
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- USDA Rural Development

Other Economic Development Programs

- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
- Xcel Energy
- Rural Electrification Cooperative
- Dairyland Power
Element 7 - Intergovernmental Cooperation

Goal of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

The overall goal of this element is to outline principles that encourage intergovernmental cooperation and maintenance of existing relationships.

Specific goals to foster intergovernmental cooperation are:

- To analyze the relationships among existing governmental services in the area;
- To utilize existing intergovernmental agreements; and
- To identify existing and potential conflicts among governmental units for the purpose of identifying feasible and acceptable means of joint planning, decision-making and service sharing.

Planning Context

Some degree of intergovernmental cooperation currently exists among local governments. Fire and rescue services are good examples of currently existing intergovernmental cooperation practices. Among the trends and outlooks for the preservation of public services are realities that will challenge local governments. Foremost among these challenging realities is cost containment.

In recent years, local government has been involved with providing public services, many of which have become more technical in nature and inherently more costly than services had been traditionally. An additional trend is the moderating or declining amount of outside revenue received by local government to fund services.

The combination of the above trends in service costs and the reaction of local tax payers to increasing costs is producing strong pressures on local government to moderate or lower the cost of the property tax component of local governmental services. The linking of local service cost increases to the property tax is an important factor affecting local service delivery and can be a very practical motivation for intergovernmental cooperation.

However, one of the key purposes of Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning program is to discover if there are needs and opportunities for new areas of cooperation that can deal with challenges in delivering public services. The fundamental purpose of such cooperation is to provide quality service at acceptable cost. Service-sharing among units of government is one means to achieve cost efficiency in service delivery.

School Districts:

This planning area is served by both public and private education facilities. Public education includes the Viroqua School District, the Westby School District and Western Technical College. The Viroqua and Westby public school districts are shown on Map C-6.

Existing Relationships with School Districts that Serve the Town of Viroqua:

From a planning point of view, the Town of Viroqua has a typical relationship with the local school districts. The process to resolve any conflicts will be direct and formal communications among the parties.
Goals and Objectives for Town Relationships with Schools:

The main goal and objective of the Town of Viroqua related to intergovernmental relationships with school districts is to:

- Maintain cooperative relationships among the school districts and the Town of Viroqua.

Policies in support of Town Relationships with Schools:

Policies to achieve the goals and objectives of the Town with respect to relationships with school districts are to:

- Consider supporting opportunities that may be of benefit to the Town of Viroqua and the local school districts.
- Develop policy and program information to share with stakeholders

Programs to activate school relationship policies:

Programs that support the policies of the Town with respect to relationships with school districts include:

- Evaluating prospective programs for application under this Comprehensive Plan on a case-by-case basis.

County Government:

Existing Relationships with County Government:

The Town of Viroqua has many administrative relationships with Vernon County government. These relationships are generally set out in state statutes. Only a limited number of these relationships deal with community planning matters. The most notable relationships are the county-wide enforcement of flood plain, shoreland, and wetland zoning, and county-wide sanitary codes relating to on-site waste disposal systems, and county-wide supervision of water supply.

In addition, county government has jurisdiction over the county trunk highway system that extends throughout the Town of Viroqua. The maintenance of these highways is a county responsibility.

Other programs available to the Town of Viroqua include those offered by the Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department and the Vernon County office of the University of Wisconsin Extension.

Additional relationships among the Town of Viroqua, Town of Viroqua residents and County government include the delivery of services from Vernon County Health Services, from Vernon County Solid Waste and Recycling and from the office of the Vernon County Sanitarian.

Existing and Potential Conflicts with County Government:

The potential for conflicts always exists, prudent planning suggests that the Town of Viroqua and Vernon County be watchful for the development of conflicts.
**Goals and Objectives:**

Goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to its relationships with county government include that the Town will:

- Maintain positive and efficient relationships with county government.
- Support the planning and development of county services and infrastructure development and maintenance within the Town of Viroqua, including on-going repair and maintenance of flood-control dams.
- Pursue financial and service-sharing efficiencies
- Achieve sound planning regarding land use, natural resources, and public services.

**Policies:**

Policies that support the Town of Viroqua goals of having good working relationships with Vernon County government include that the Town will:

- Work with county agents to communicate local needs and seek assistance.
- Promote open communication between the Town of Viroqua and county government.
- Coordinate planning and other applicable activities as appropriate with county government
- Identify service-sharing potentials between Town of Viroqua and Vernon County.

**Programs:**

Programs intended to implement Town of Viroqua policies of fostering good working relationships with Vernon County government include:

- Continuing information exchange between Town of Viroqua and Vernon County
- Cooperative planning and decision-making on county-wide land resource and development issues, and on economic development needs and potentials.

**Adjacent Units of Government:**

**Existing Relationship with Neighboring Local Governments:**

The units of government adjacent to the Town of Viroqua include the cities of Viroqua and Westby and the Towns of Christiana, Franklin, Jefferson, Kickapoo, Liberty, and Webster.

**Existing and Potential Conflicts:**

Relationships between town and municipal governments are subject to potential conflicts involving issues of development located at or near the boundaries between governmental units. These issues often contain implications for tax revenues. Such issues are largely rooted in custom and the requirements of state statutes [WisStats: §66.02-.03]

Numerous studies and experiences have shown that in such situations, both town and municipal units of government are pursuing legitimate self-interests. Loss of town territory and tax base to an adjacent municipality is one specific source of potential conflict.
Goals and Objectives:

Goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to its relationships with adjacent governmental units include that the Town will:

- Maintain positive relations between the Town of Viroqua and adjacent municipalities.
- Enable growth and development that benefit both the Town of Viroqua and the adjacent municipalities.
- Coordinate planning and infrastructure across jurisdictional lines.
- Provide efficiencies in the delivery of public services.
- Seek cooperative solutions to problems.

Policies:

Policies that support the Town of Viroqua goals of having good working relationships with adjacent units of government include that the Town will:

- Maintain regular communication between the Town of Viroqua and adjacent municipalities.
- Implement and maintain a Comprehensive Plan that is based on achieving the Goals and Objectives.

Programs:

Programs that support the Town of Viroqua policies of having good working relationships with adjacent units of government include:

- Continued support for the Town Planning Committee and its commitment to the continued evaluation and updating of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Consideration of the use of “boundary agreements” [WisStats: §66.03] Boundary agreements can enable the Town of Viroqua and City of Viroqua governments and land owners to negotiate mutual benefits as a precondition to enabling the development of land normally requiring urban services but located outside city service areas. Fire/rescue services are already provided on an area-wide basis.
- Cooperative review by the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua of the platting of land within projected urban growth zones. Cooperative review will assure that lands intended for urban development are subdivided according to standards required for the use of urban services.
- Implementation and continuation of service-sharing with adjacent municipalities where those services are identified as beneficial to the Town.
- Maintenance and strengthening of the intergovernmental services and cooperation of the Viroqua area joint Fire Department and First Responder services.
- Continuation of participation in cost sharing that provides equipment, training, and facilities for the Viroqua area fire and EMS services.
- Meeting periodically with county and adjacent units of government to discuss needs and possibilities for cooperating and sharing in provision of public services.
State Government:

Existing Relationships between the Town and the State:

There are many types of relationships between Town government and the State:

- State solid waste standards apply to the sanitary landfill in the Town of Viroqua, although the landfill is a county landfill;
- The State Department of Transportation applies various standards for the location and improvements of the city, town and county highway systems that receive state and federal aid;
- The Wisconsin Department of Transportation produced a plan for and controls expanding parts of U.S. Hwy 14/61; and
- The State Department of Commerce is charged with implementing the requirements under the Wisconsin Uniform Building Code. This building code requires all local units of government to inspect all one- and two-family dwellings for compliance with the state building code [WisStats: §66.1019]. These requirements took effect in January 2005. The Town of Viroqua enforces this code through use of a state-licensed building inspector.

Existing and Potential Conflicts:

A notable conflict centers on issues involving the Department of Transportation U.S. Hwy 14/61 expansion. Issues include permanent removal of lands from agricultural use and the potential for undesirable urban and rural land use patterns.

Goals and Objectives:

Goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to its relationships with State government include that the Town will:

- Maintain productive relationships with state government.
- Secure benefits from the state government that are beneficial to the Town.
- Pursue understanding by state government of Town needs, with effective responses.

Policies:

Policies that support the Town of Viroqua goals of having good working relationships with State government include that the Town will:

- Work with state agents to communicate local needs and seek assistance.
- Work with state agents and officials to communicate local needs and recommendations facilitating state cooperation and assistance to the Town.
- Be knowledgeable of state legislative proposals and state agency programs impacting the Town of Viroqua and provide recommendations to state agents on such proposals or programs.
Programs:

Programs that support the Town of Viroqua policies of having good working relationships with State government include:

- Continue the existing efforts of the Town for monitoring legislative proposals & activities and for communicating with legislators and
- Continue to seek new ways in which to monitor legislative proposals & activities and for communicating with legislators

Federal Government:

Existing Relationships between the Town and the Federal Government:

The relationships between the Town of Viroqua and the Federal Government are mostly indirect and are related to the application of federal laws and programs affecting the various functions of local government. Other than the Post Office, the only federal office in the Viroqua area is the U. S. Department of Agriculture office in the City of Viroqua. A variety of funding programs from the federal government are used by local units of government. Included among such federal programs are:

- Federal Emergency Management Authority funding (FEMA)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development programs such as Community Development Block Grant funds and housing assistance funds; and
- Department of Agriculture assistance for agriculture, business, and community development.
- Department of Education

Existing and Potential Conflicts:

There are no known conflicts existing with regard to involvement by the Federal government with planning or development in the Town of Viroqua.

Goals and Objectives:

Goals and objectives formulated by the Town of Viroqua with respect to its relationships with the federal government include that the Town will:

- Maintain productive relationships with the federal government.
- Secure benefits from the federal government that are beneficial to the Town.
- Encourage understanding by the federal government of Town needs, with effective responses.

Policies:

Policies that support the Town of Viroqua goals of having good working relationships with the federal government include that the Town will:

- Endeavor to work with federal agents to communicate local needs and seek assistance;
- Work with federal agents and officials to communicate local needs and recommendations facilitating federal cooperation and assistance to the Town; and
- Be knowledgeable of federal legislative proposals and federal agency programs impacting the Town of Viroqua and provide recommendations on such proposals or programs.
**Programs:**

Programs that support the Town of Viroqua policies of having good working relationships with the federal government include that the Town will:

- Continue the existing efforts of the Town for monitoring legislative proposals & activities and for communicating with congressional representatives
- Other program as could be determined to be necessary and useful

**Existing Cooperative Boundary Plans or Agreements:**

There are no formal boundary plans or agreements currently in force among the towns of Viroqua, Jefferson & Franklin and the cities of Viroqua and Westby as of the date of this Plan. Fire and EMS services for the Towns of Viroqua, Jefferson & Franklin and the City of Viroqua are provided by a single volunteer department based on agreements involving the Towns of Viroqua, Jefferson & Franklin and the City of Viroqua.

Informal intergovernmental agreements exist to address issues of common concern.
Element 8 - Land Use

Goal of the Land Use Element

To guide the future development and redevelopment of lands in the Town of Viroqua. An underlying goal of this Land Use Plan is to enable an effective role for local governments in guiding land development to meet the goals, objectives, policies and programs of this Plan. An important sub-goal is to avoid local governmental costs required to deal with development problems. Additional goals of this element is to enable the Town of Viroqua to apply land use planning as a tool to tap the area’s potentials.

Creating a land use plan that serves the Town of Viroqua is critical. The economic engine that has traditionally driven the Town of Viroqua is agriculture. It is important to make land use decisions that foster and promote thriving agri-business.

Land Use Planning Context

This Comprehensive Plan is the first formal land use planning for the Town of Viroqua. As of 2009, this planning area was predominantly farm land, with some urbanizing around the City of Viroqua and the City of Westby. Historically, urban development in the town has occurred within the adjacent cities but in recent years new housing has been developing in fringe areas near the boundaries with the cities. U.S. Highway 14/61 and Wisconsin Highway 27 are an example of a principal development corridor for new land uses. These arterial highways provide convenient regional and local access to the area.

Land use planning has often involved “planning for development..” Increasingly, land use planning is involving “planning for preservation of currently existing desirable conditions.” Town government can often do more effective planning by using powers available to them to shape land use.

Existing Land Use

Land usage in the Town of Viroqua is rural/agricultural. Maps C-9 and C-11a illustrate general land usage in the Town.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 14: TOWN LAND USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential 1,916.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial 133.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing 13.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural 19,003.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped Land 1,992.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Forest 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive Forest 4,864,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Ag &amp; Forests 23,868.501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 511.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres All 28,435.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Chng Ag Land Between Years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acres/Hhld* 3.490 2.146
*Residential Acres/# hhld in comprehensive plan, yr 2000, 2010
According to the office of the Vernon County Treasurer, 2009 land use was considerably changed from that reported in earlier time frames. In particular, land identified as “agriculture use” has significantly decreased.

**Land Use Trends, Needs, and Potentials**

**Land Supply:**

Land with potential for development is available within the Town of Viroqua. The total planning area has about fifty-one square miles of land area. Almost all of this area is relatively open land, with much of it being farm land [Map C-9, C-10, C-11a and C-11b]. The principal land supply issue is the amount of land to be preserved for agricultural use. The Town of Viroqua has experienced some residential and commercial development around the fringes of the Cities of Viroqua and Westby, along the major arteries, and within some of the more remote and scenic parts of the Town.

**Land Demand:**

The present demand for land is moderate. There is some demand for land that may be accommodated by lands adjacent to the cities in the Town of Viroqua. The two primary land demands are for agriculture and housing. Demand for rural land for non-farm purposes competes with farmers efforts to add land to their operations.

**Land Prices:**

Land prices may experience spikes in value for some individual parcels with prime attributes. The record of such unusual land prices can leverage the price of similarly situated lands in the same general area. Land prices may increase for properties along the U.S. Highway 14/61 redevelopment. Overall, land prices are influenced by land use plans, zoning and availability.

**Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts**

There is no systematic pattern of urban land use conflicts in the Town of Viroqua. More significant land use conflicts can be expected to occur as more urban uses develop in the Town. The potential for land use conflicts in the Town would be at the interface of agricultural activities and non-farm homes. An increasing potential for land use conflicts involves confined animal feeding operations (CAFO). Wisconsin’s livestock facility siting law operates through local government to enable the control of livestock facilities which may include county and town-level regulation [WisStats: §93.90].

Potential for land use conflicts to occur exists along the previously proposed Highway 14/61 expansion. Solution of potential conflicts depends upon the degree of land use management measures in place. Potential for additional land use conflicts exists at the interface of town and city development. Resolution of land use conflicts at the interface depends on the compatibility of town and city land use plans and zoning, and whether boundary agreement processes are in use (see Sections 7 and 9 for boundary agreements). Difficulties in resolving land use conflicts are more likely in the absence of zoning standards.
Land Development Limitations

Development of some land uses can be constrained by the physical characteristics of a given location, generally related to characteristics of soil, water, geography and geology. The Town of Viroqua has physical limitations to land development within its boundaries. The primary physical limitations include steep slopes, high bedrock, wet soil areas, and some flood prone lands along the tributaries of the Kickapoo River, and drainage courses subject to flash flooding. Other limitations may include proximity to feedlots, quarries, historical sites, cemeteries and threatened or endangered species habitat. Some land use development may also be subject to state or federal regulations. Map C-8 illustrates some of these land use limitations. Evaluation of a specific development proposal will be made considering its relationship to these and other limitations.

Land Use Plan

The overall goal of specifying a land use plan is to identify principles that encourage development and maintenance of adequate land use development to meet Town of Viroqua needs.

Goals:

Specific goals for land use planning are to:

- Respect property rights and protect community rights;
- Balance property rights with property responsibilities;
- Ensure compatible land use relationships among agricultural land uses, single-family housing, multi-family housing, retail, commercial, and industrial;
- Achieve the highest sustainable value possible from the township lands;
- Promote policies, programs, and ordinances that protect and preserve the natural and historic character of the Town; and
- Establish and maintain zoning in the best interest of the Town.

Objectives:

Planning objectives that derive from the specific goals for land use planning include adopting and pursuing land use policies and programs that:

- Facilitate community growth, including economic development and tax base growth;
- Create compatible relationships between highway improvements and related land uses;
- Provide some certainty about the nature of future land use in a given area;
- Provide safe and healthy rural housing environments;
- Protect and conserve productive agricultural lands;
- Protect and conserve soil and water and flora and fauna resources;
- Protect and conserve historic and cultural structures and sites; and
- Minimize problems from storm water runoff.
Policies:

Policies that support the Town of Viroqua goals of having land use planning include that the Town will:

- Encourage early and open communication between potential developers and the Town at all stages of project development;
- Evaluate ongoing development, determining the appropriate level of town government involvement in the development;
- Avoid densities of residential and commercial uses that could lead to the town government being required to provide urban services such as public sewer and water systems, urban streets and other urban services; and
- Utilize the authorities available to town government to plan and manage development as determined necessary by the town.

Programs:

Programs that support the Town of Viroqua policies of having land use planning include that the Town will:

- Maintain up-to-date Land Use Plan maps for the Town of Viroqua;
- Work in partnership with the City of Viroqua to study possible and preferred land use impacts of potential U.S. Highway 14/61 re-development;
- Manage development of lands in future highway redevelopment options;
- Element 5 of this Plan (page 30) contains program recommendations for preserving important agricultural lands that are repeated here because of their relationships to land use. For the preservation of those lands identified as important farm lands, consideration would be given to farmland preservation techniques. The lots would be located on the margin of the best farm soils, and the balance of the farmland would remain in farming. Such an approach should permit the option of grouping these lots in cluster developments to further preserve farmland or open space.
- Support continuation of county remonumentation of public land survey system corners.

Development Density

The net density for new residential land use in the Town of Viroqua assumes that the number of new households as projected in Element 1 [p 10, Table 3] will each occupy relatively small acreage.

The land use projections in the following table are based on the assumptions that housing will develop according to the approximate densities reported here. Possibilities concerning the proposed U.S. Highway 14/61 redevelopment could also affect land use projections for the Town of Viroqua.

Land Use Projections for the Town of Viroqua

Essential to thoughtful land use planning are estimations of anticipated land development patterns and understanding of current land use [Map C-11a]. Currently identified productive agricultural soils are shown in Maps C-11b and C-13. In addition, the USDA has created and maintains up-to-date agriculture maps that are available online at

http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm

Projected land use through 2030 for the Town of Viroqua, based in part on University of Wisconsin projections, are presented in Table 15.
TABLE 15: ESTIMATED NEW ACRES DEVELOPED WITHIN EACH TIME PERIOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated Changes in Acres of Land Use</th>
<th>Year 2005*</th>
<th>2010*</th>
<th>2015*</th>
<th>2020*</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.75</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>23.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.01</td>
<td>9.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres Removed from Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.75</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>23.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*University of Wisconsin Town Land Use Data Project, 2000

Provisional Land Use Plan Maps

Maps C-9 and C-13 present a provisional land use plan for the Town of Viroqua. These maps represent the first attempt by the Town to prepare and adopt land use plans; therefore, these plans do not represent the full range of thought and detail about future land usage.

This general plan map is a starting point, not an end determination about future land usage. These land use plans should always represent the view of the Town Board for desirable development patterns. These views should be reflected in the goals, objectives, policies and programs of this Comprehensive Plan. Land use plan maps should be reevaluated regularly by the Town Plan Committee and Town Board, with changes made by these bodies as new information, needs and trends suggest.

It is important that the town appoint a custodian of this plan (an individual or committee, see Element 9), with the responsibility of identifying and bringing to the attention of the Town Board any such changes referenced above.

Land use plan maps should be consistent with each other in compliance with the state comprehensive planning statute [WisStats: §66.1001(3)]. Decisions made under local land division and official mapping ordinances should also be consistent with the land use plan.
Element 9 - Implementation

Goal of the Implementation Element:

The basic goal is to describe those measures that can implement the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. Specific goals include development of an inventory of existing implementation programs and any recommended changes; description of the consistency among plan elements; description of how progress toward achieving the plan will be measured; and description of the process for updating the comprehensive plan.

Implementation Measures:

Table 16 identifies standard implementation measures:

**TABLE 16: STANDARD IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Measure</th>
<th>Town of Viroqua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoning -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision &amp; Land Condominium Regulations</td>
<td>WisStats: §703.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Codes</td>
<td>sanitary codes are county codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Mapping</td>
<td>official mapping is a responsibility of the Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erosion &amp; Storm water Regulations</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Plan Regulations &amp; Road Ordinances</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Regulations</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Codes *</td>
<td>building codes are state government codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Codes *</td>
<td>housing codes are state government codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Codes</td>
<td>commercial codes are state government codes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Codes*</td>
<td>mechanical codes are state government codes -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation</td>
<td>historic preservation is a function of the county historical society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Review</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Wisconsin Uniform Dwelling Code was expanded in 2003 to include application of the code to one and two family dwellings. The application of this code in the Town of Viroqua is a function of the duties of the Certified State Building Inspector.

Importance of Plan Implementation:

Many community and rural development issues and recommendations have been identified in the preceding sections of this Comprehensive Plan. They will have little meaning if disciplined measures are not taken to implement them. The most essential measures to achieve planning recommendations are a variety of formal tools already available to the Town. These tools consist of a variety of ordinances and other official measures described below.
This urban de-centralization has been occurring for some time. Although urban de-centralization may benefit rural areas in general; much of this growth is not fitting itself into the current land use and public facility plans. Shaping these de-centralizing growth patterns to local benefit will require the effective use of a variety of implementation measures, which are described below.

**Implementing Land Use Ordinances:**

Land use ordinances provide the most effective tool for implementing a community’s land use goals. The Town of Viroqua has no zoning ordinance. Wisconsin law requires, beginning in 2010, that a unit of government’s zoning must be consistent with its Comprehensive Plan [WisStats: §66.1001(3)]

Vernon County administers shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning regulations and mapping according to State standards. Some of the Town of Viroqua zoning needs include:

- Development of land use rules
- Verifying that the land use ordinances are consistent with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan prior to January 1, 2010.

**Subdivision, Land Condominiums and Platting Review:**

A subdivision ordinance, inclusive of land condominium regulation, is another effective tool for implementing a land use plan. This tool enables a unit of government to review and decide whether or not a proposed subdivision of land or development of a land condominium is consistent with land use plans, density standards, street locations, conservation and drainage standards and other standards of good platting procedure. Wisconsin law requires that after December 31, 2009 subdivision ordinances be “consistent” with land use plans [WisStats: §66.1001(3)]. The Town of Viroqua does not currently have a subdivision ordinance.

A “land condominium” has individual residential units and land between dwelling units are owned in common (including roadways). Land condominiums can resemble residential subdivisions in appearance, but because they are not divided into individual lots are not so defined under the state platting statute [WisStats: §236

A subdivision ordinance may apply to a condominium if … “by its express terms, [it is] applicable to condominiums and the application is reasonably related to the nature of condominium ownership.” [WisStats: §703.27]. Town reviews of condominium plats are permitted by state law [WisStats: §703.115]

**Extraterritorial Plat Review Jurisdiction:**

Subdivision ordinances permit the review of proposed plats within one and one-half miles of the boundary of smaller communities in Wisconsin. This authority is granted through Wisconsin statutes [WisStats: §236.02(5)]. Municipalities can require that such proposed plats conform to the community’s Comprehensive Plan and its Land Use Plans and Street Plans. The purpose of this authority is to assure that as a community expands, the previously developed lands will fit in with that community’s standards, such as street circulation, utility servicing, and drainage. An important use of extraterritorial plat review is to help assure that the community’s subdivision review decisions are consistent with its Comprehensive Plan as required after 2010 by Wisconsin law. Extraterritorial plat review jurisdiction for the City of Viroqua is illustrated in Map C-7a; for Westby in Map C-7b.
Official Roadway Map:

An additional planning implementation tool for a community that expects growth is an official roadway map that is adopted by ordinance and recorded. This tool gives a town the authority to map the location and width of future roadways and driveways and the location of future parks and parkways within the township.

The Town Board is empowered to hear and decide on variances from this official roadway map ordinance. The value of this implementation tool is that it reserves the location of necessary roadway locations until it is necessary to construct such roadways. This ordinance restricts the issuance of any building permit in the path of an official roadway, subject to property owner protections in the process.

Provisions of official roadway mapping are contained within state law [WisStats: §62.23(6)]. Development of an official roadway map is a Comprehensive Plan implementation tool.

Custodian of the Comprehensive Plan:

One of the most important requirements for implementation of a Comprehensive Plan is that the plan have a custodian who is a town resident but who is not an elected official. It is important to keep the plan in front of government decision-makers as development discussions and decisions arise. This custodian would be responsible for detecting when amendments to the plan may be necessary or desirable as circumstances change. It would also be the responsibility of the custodian to arrange for the plan to be updated as necessary. This custodian would be appointed by the Town Board, but would have no final decision-making authority.

This custodian element is particularly important under the state’s comprehensive planning law which requires that after January 1, 2010, that local governmental decisions regarding land use (zoning, platting, official mapping) be consistent with their Comprehensive Plan. A designated custodian could be that entity that helps maintain local governmental compliance with these consistency requirements.

Development Impact Analysis:

An additional technique that can be employed as an aid in implementing development ordinances is development impact analysis. The principal components of such analysis include evaluating fiscal, environmental, socio-economic, traffic and land use impacts. Such analysis is typically employed for major re-zonings, subdivision plats, and land condominiums. Local zoning or platting ordinances may include requirements for some level of development impact analysis geared to the scope of the project. Such analysis may include special studies and limited moratoriums of development proposals until special studies or plans are completed. Any unit of government with legal jurisdiction affecting the Town of Viroqua and that administers a zoning, subdivision, or land condominium ordinance, may authorize or conduct development impact studies.

Public projects funded with state or federal funds are subject to environmental impact analysis. Projects with significant environmental impact require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by the funding agency.
Town and City Boundaries:

As land owners and businesses develop more land requiring urban services there will be land area removed from the Town of Viroqua and added to the City of Viroqua or the City of Westby to accommodate the development. The process of serving private development often results in the adjustment of jurisdictional boundaries. It can be expected that not all urban development will occur within the city’s boundaries; some urban uses are already outside the city limits, in the Town of Viroqua.

Effective planning traditionally recommends that land development requiring urban-type services be within a governmental jurisdiction that provides such services [Map C-13]. Joint planning between city and town governments for urban growth can produce the most beneficial development among the parties.

Boundary Agreements:

Formal boundary agreements can be a very effective tool in providing benefits to both city and town in the matter of growth issues related to jurisdictional boundaries, and can be an alternative to annexation.

Boundary agreements between municipalities and towns are permitted under Wisconsin law, that provides authority for local governments to develop cooperative plans for their boundaries [WisStats: §66.0307 ; WisStats:§66.0301]. The statement of purpose indicates that boundary agreements can play an important role in community planning and development.

The cooperative plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the territory covered by the plan. This will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare. Such a plan will also contribute to efficiency and economy in the process of development. [WisStats: §66.0307(3)]

A boundary agreement can set out in advance mutually agreed terms for boundary adjustments that would be advisable to serve future urban growth. Such agreements would have to provide benefits to both the town and the city; can compensate a town for loss of territory and tax base; and may provide for other compensations in exchange for Comprehensive Plan implementation as would be mutually agreed [WisStats: §66.0305].

The most desirable basis for boundary agreements would be a comprehensive planning process involving a municipality and adjacent towns. The important point is, that growth that is truly urban in nature would be planned and developed according to accepted urban standards, thereby assuring maximum benefits for residents, businesses, and the local governments affected by such urban growth.

This process will avoid unnecessary costs to local government when confronted with citizen demands or legal mandates to provide public services required of certain levels of land use development. Examples of such benefits of effective land use planning include the following: good fire protection and safety as related to water supply and building construction methods, good traffic facilities and management, public safety and policing, application of a single source of public codes and development standards, and other categories of urban services normally required for urban growth.
Protection of Town Government’s Rural Functions and Town’s Rural Character:

Boundary agreements and town planning, in general, can avoid imposing new, urban-type responsibilities on town government which they likely would not be seeking but could be forced into over time in dealing with the public needs associated with significant non-rural development patterns. Such new responsibilities would bring all the related expenses and liabilities that come with them and reduction of the town’s rural character. Maintenance of the town’s rural character is an important value. Town of Viroqua government may consider retaining its rural character for the foreseeable future. Retaining a rural character would minimize involvement with creating, financing, and managing urban-type services. These are expensive public functions that regularly increase in cost in part due to expanded standards and mandates from the state and federal governments. A long-range view of these implications of growth will help answer these questions.

Local Governmental Revenue Sharing Agreements:

The effectiveness of boundary agreements can potentially be improved if they include a "municipal revenue sharing agreement" provided by statute. [WisStats: §66.0305]. Sharing of revenue between local units of government may be an effective method of encouraging voluntary agreements on boundary adjustments. Among the requirements of such agreements is that they be for a term of at least ten years and that they are subject to a public hearing, and are subject to the possibility of an advisory referendum.

To be successful, boundary agreements and revenue sharing agreements must be well planned and based on good communication between adjacent governing units and landowners. Such planning would require public information and education programs, and must be supported by good comprehensive planning for the units of government in such measures. A regular means of communication between adjacent units of government is advisable.

Volunteerism:

One of the most prevalent and effective means of implementing many community projects is through volunteers. Such action can range from citizen assistance on public and institutional committees and boards, to hands-on assistance with building community betterment projects. There are several good examples of such volunteer activities in the area, notably, the fire and rescue service. Projects being implemented through volunteerism are significant for several reasons: low public cost, or no cost, indicates a genuine need, indicates public support, and such projects indicate a commitment to the continuation and maintenance of the project. Volunteer contributions to a project can often be counted as an “in-kind” match in meeting the local financial contribution in seeking grant funds. Philanthropy can also be a valuable means of implementing specialized community needs. The Town values individuals and organizations whose volunteer interests would match various public needs within the community.

Integration and Consistency between each Element of the Plan:

The standards of consistency and integration among plan elements was applied throughout the development of this Comprehensive Plan. According to statute, beginning on January 1, 2010, any local governmental zoning and subdivision programs and official mapping must be consistent with a comprehensive plan [WisStats: §66.1001(3)]. This consistency requirement applies to the Town of Viroqua upon its development of a zoning or subdivision / land condominium review program and a Town official mapping program.
Mechanism to Measure Progress Toward Achieving all Aspects of the Plan:

Upon adoption and subsequent revisions of the Comprehensive Plan, the Plan Committee and Town Board may begin the process of comparing the town's land use and subdivision / land condominium ordinances with the Comprehensive Plan to make adjustments as are necessary to assure consistency between the ordinances and the Plan.

The Town’s mechanism for measuring progress toward achieving Comprehensive Plan recommendations will include periodic review of Plan implementation issues raised either by the plan custodian or the Town Plan Committee. The Committee will make a report of its review to the Town Board, with recommendations.

Additional policies and programs to achieve plan implementation by the Town of Viroqua include that the Town Board will:

- Assure accountability and open government.
- Maintain high ethical standards of conduct, adhere to open meeting laws and principles, and maintain good recordkeeping and communications.
- Maintain oversight of the Plan Committee and all aspects of town land use in accordance with written procedures
- Maintain maps and other documents updated as considered necessary
- Endeavor to work cooperatively with neighboring and overlapping units of government on matters of boundary agreements and other matters.

Process for Updating the Comprehensive Plan:

The Town Plan Committee will review and update the Plan periodically as necessary; this will include the reassessment of population projections, with revisions if necessary. A ten year up-date of the plan will be submitted to the State in compliance with the state’s comprehensive planning statute [WisStats: §66.10012)(i)]. Any Comprehensive Plan revisions will be recommended by the Town Plan Committee to the Town Board for adoption. A public hearing will be held on any recommended revisions prior to adoption of the revisions by the Town Board.

Action Program to Implement the Comprehensive Plan:

Element 2 – Housing:

- The Town of Viroqua will consider housing programs to address housing needs that the Town would identify in the future as needing local government involvement.

Element 3 – Transportation:

- Establish a plan and a map that shows current roads and proposed or potential new roads
- Require compliance with State road right-of-way regulation to enhance travel safety
- Create and maintain ordinances that require safe development of driveways and other road access
- Create and maintain ordinances that enhance safety and visibility with respect to roadways
Element 4 – Utilities and Community Facilities:

- Establish a policy to inform and educate consumers and support energy conservation.
- Encourage private sector provision of child care adequate to meet the needs of Town residents.
- Monitor and evaluate fire and rescue service needs of residents of the Town of Viroqua.
- Assure that changing fire and rescue needs are met adequately and in a timely manner.
- Maintain regular communications with schools on all matters of mutual concern and
- Establish liaison arrangements among the Town, the City governments and the school jurisdictions.

Element 5 - Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources:

- Enact ordinances to implement ground water objectives and policies;
- Strengthen formal relationships with the County Land and Water Conservation Department and the County Sanitarian regarding their programs dealing with protection of ground water; and follow-up with the appropriate County or State level government programs as to remediation requirements;
- Recognize there may be need for studies to identify ground water recharge zones that may be especially susceptible to contamination; and
- Inventory brownfield sites.
- Apply woodlands preservation standards in town zoning, platting and subdivision codes.
- Require preservation of vegetation on steep slopes as a part of development.
- Consider and refer to landowners/developers woodlands management advice from professional foresters; and
- Consider use of cluster housing in woodland locations as a means of preserving woodland cover and rural scenery.
- Development by farmers, farm organizations and the agri-business community of locally devised strategies for looking at the future of valuable agricultural lands.
- Advocate to regulatory organizations to make appropriate changes that would benefit agricultural land resources.
- Evaluate, and revise if necessary, local codes that contribute to the acceleration of non-agricultural development of farm land.
- Consider applying programs of the Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS] to the enhancement of productivity of agricultural lands.
- Use the State farmland and woodland preservation programs where it is beneficial.
- Use land-use ordinances to preserve farmlands that have been locally identified as a valuable resource to protect.
- Use the resources of the University of Wisconsin Extension programs.
- For the preservation of agriculture lands, consideration could be given to the farmland preservation technique that specifies a maximum or minimum lot size. The lots would be located on the margin of the best farm soils, and the balance of the farmland would remain in farming. Such an approach should permit the option of grouping these lots in cluster developments to preserve further farmland or open space. [See Appendix D]
- Encourage landowners to seek assistance from proper county and state agencies for help with measures to protect and enhance stream corridors.
- Enact land-use standards related to land development that protect public health through the protection of the quality of surface waters.
- Create and maintain subdivision ordinances to provide standards that minimize and retain on-site water runoff.
- Participate in State programs that address issues involving water run-off.
- Encourage rural landowners to work with the state and local agencies to implement measures that minimize and manage problems associated with surface water runoff.
Engage in efforts to understand wetland regulations.
Provide referrals for assistance by public and private authorities that can help educate about wetland planning, protection and compliance with wetland regulations.
Support conservation and economic development interests in their efforts to promote understanding of how to utilize wetlands.
Support lay-person educational efforts and outdoor activities that enhance bird and wildlife habitat.
Consider habitat impacts of town activities such as management of road side vegetation.
Incorporate wildlife protection standards in local codes, such as land-use and platting codes.
Establish and/or upgrade ordinances that include location and performance standards for both metallic & non-metallic mining operations.
Integrate provisions for the consideration of historical and cultural resources into local zoning and subdivision ordinances.
Contribute to enhancement of the Vernon County Historical Society museum.
Support and assist research on specific historical subjects and sites.
Facilitate assistance to property owners to nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historical Places.
Place provisions for the consideration of community design in appropriate local ordinances.

Element 6 - Economic Development:

Through the Town Board, support the Vernon Economic Development Association.
Participate in expanding and implementing tourism marketing programs in partnership with other tourism stakeholders.

Element 7 - Intergovernmental Cooperation:

Related to schools: prospective programs will be evaluated for application under this Comprehensive Plan on a case-by-case basis.

Related to county government:
- Continuing information exchange between Town of Viroqua and Vernon County
- Cooperative planning and decision-making on county-wide land resource and development issues, and on economic development needs and potentials.

Related to adjacent government units:
- Maintain a Town Planning Committee for the continued evaluation and updating of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Consider the use of “boundary agreements” per Wisconsin law [WisStats: §66.0307]. Boundary agreements can enable the Town of Viroqua and City of Viroqua governments and land owners to negotiate mutual benefits as a precondition to enabling the development of land normally requiring urban services but located outside city service areas. Fire/rescue services are already provided on an area-wide basis.
- Cooperative review by the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua of the platting of land within the projected urban growth zone. Cooperative review will assure that lands intended for urban development are subdivided according to standards required for the use of urban services.
- Implement service-sharing with adjacent municipalities where those services are identified as beneficial to the Town.
- Maintain and strengthen the intergovernmental services and cooperation of the Viroqua area joint Fire Department and first responder services.
- Continue to participate in cost sharing that provides equipment, training, and facilities for the Viroqua area fire and EMS services.
Meet periodically with county and adjacent units of government to discuss needs and possibilities for cooperating and sharing in provision of public services.

- Related to State government:
  - Continue the existing efforts of the Town for monitoring legislative proposal & activities, evaluating their potential impacts on the Town, and communicating as necessary with legislators.

- Related to Federal government:
  - Continue the existing efforts of the Town for monitoring legislative proposal & activities, evaluating their potential impacts on the Town, and communicating as necessary with congressional representatives
  - Other program as could be determined to be necessary and useful

**Element 8 – Land Use:**

- Establish land use ordinances that show reasonable consideration for the character of the Town. Land use ordinances will be suitable for particular uses with a view to maintaining and protecting land values. Land use ordinances will encourage the orderly development and most appropriate uses of land throughout the Town. The purposes of this land use regulation would be to:
  - Promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community.
  - Prevent congestion in the roadways.
  - Promote compliance with recognized state minimum standards with respect to drinking water and wastewater disposal.
  - Promote the conservation of natural resources.
  - Prevent environmental pollution.
  - Plan concentrations of population to minimize adverse impact on productive agricultural lands.
  - Meet such other purposes for a land use ordinance as are authorized by state law.

- Engage professional assistance to facilitate a comprehensive review and revision of the land use regulation pursuant to the recommendations contained in this plan. This review should include input from the community.
Appendices
Appendix A: Public Participation Plan

Introduction

The comprehensive planning program that the Town of Viroqua is engaged in requires the governing body to adopt a plan for the participation of the public in the planning process. A draft copy of an initial public participation plan was distributed for review and input at the first two general meetings on this program in June and July of 2003; subsequent review and input were gathered in April and May 2007.

A public participation plan was produced after several months of working with local planning committees and receiving initial input from the public by way of citizen surveys conducted by the Town of Viroqua. This public participation plan, presented below, is a living document subject to revision.

Goals of Public Participation:

1. To facilitate the acceptance and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by local governments
2. To foster local leadership in the planning process
3. To obtain detailed information and recommendations on specific planning issues by extending special participation opportunities to local officials, to the public, and to key resource persons

Five Level Public Participation Structure:

1. Citizen opinion surveys
2. Surveys of public agency staff for technical input
3. Issue & Opportunity study papers
4. Forms available at each public meeting to register statements of "reservation or dissent" regarding planning ideas or recommendations
5. A public hearing on the recommended plan.

Public Participation Process:

1. The project is started with an orientation meeting. From this meeting, interested individuals are identified for the project area.

2. Arrangements are made to form a cluster planning committee, and work is begun on developing public input. An important function of the cluster committee will be to spread the word about the planning process and extend opportunities to others to participate.

3. A series of meetings are held to discuss the nine comprehensive planning elements and generate public input for those planning elements. A series of Issue & Opportunity Study Papers is used to initiate discussion of these elements. These Study Papers are working tools to stimulate free-ranging idea development and present diverse visions of the issues and opportunities associated with the various planning elements.

4. Forms are provided at each public meeting for any person to register their "reservation or dissent" from anything being discussed. Written answers will be provided to anyone desiring an answer or an explanation of any issue.

5. The opinion surveys of local residents were the responsibility of the Town of Viroqua.
6. Key organizations will be contacted for individualized input into the comprehensive plans. Among these organizations may be schools, area farm organizations, USDA offices, watershed/drainage districts, regional planning, State DNR, federal resource agencies, private utilities, and civic organizations.

7. Meetings will be held to provide opportunities to review results of public survey responses and to provide opportunity for citizen input and direction for the body of the plan.

8. Wide distribution will be made of a preliminary plan document or amendments to it. It will be provided to members of the local units of government and to cluster and umbrella planning committees for review and suggestions and to all adjacent units of government. The planning committees are free to take measures to solicit other public review and comment on the preliminary plan.

9. Meetings will be held to provide an opportunity to review a preliminary draft of the total comprehensive plan and to provide direct input for potential additions and revisions to the final plan document.

10. There will be opportunities for the public to provide written comments on the preliminary plan to the local governing body. Responses to such comments will be provided by the governing body.

11. The Town of Viroqua will hold a public hearing on the preliminary plan.

12. The Town of Viroqua Plan Committee will have an opportunity to adopt a resolution approving the comprehensive plan and then to send it on to its governing body for approval.

13. Meetings will be held for the purpose of presenting the final comprehensive plan and taking official action on that plan by the governing body.

Adoption:

This plan, as revised herewith, was adopted by the Town of Viroqua Board on this 10th day of May, 2007.

__________________________________________
 /S/ Michael Hanson, Chair

__________________________________________
 /S/ Patricia A Olson, Clerk
CITIZEN SURVEY, Town of Viroqua, 2004

Introduction:

Your opinion is being requested to help with some township planning. The Town of Viroqua is part of a cooperative cluster of local governments in Vernon County who are participating in a comprehensive planning program; the City of Viroqua is part of the cluster panning area with the Town of Viroqua. This is an anonymous survey; your identity is not part of this survey.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

1. Do you think the Town should be doing some planning for its future?
   
   Yes_________
   No__________
   Comments: ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. Your age________

3. If employed, which community do you work in?________________________________

4. How many full or part-time employed adults are in your household?___

5. What are the most important planning needs for the Viroqua?
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

6. What is your housing preference?
   _____Home in the city       _____Home in a subdivision
   _____Home in a small town   _____Home in an apartment
   _____Home on rural acreage  _____Home on a farm

7. If you see your housing needs changing in the future, what would it be to? _________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

8. How much do you rely on the LaCrosse area for grocery and convenience shopping?
   _____For most of it
   _____Occasionally

9. What are the most important qualities of life in this cluster area?
   ___________________________________________________________________

10. What are the most serious environmental problems in the Viroqua area and your suggested solutions to each?
    ___________________________________________________________________
11. What are the most important planning needs for the Viroqua area?
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

12. Is good farm land an important enough resource to be protected from non-farm use?
   Yes _____ Your preferred methods __________________________________________
   No _____

13. Should the hills and steep slopes be protected from non farm development?
   Yes_____ How _____________________________________________________________
   No ______

14. Should single placed mobile homes in our community be required to meet minimum
   standards: rank priority 1 thru 7 (1 highest, 7 lowest)
   _____ slab _____ skirting _____ pitched roof _____ frost footings
   _____ tie downs _____ wheels removed _____ minimum acreage/lot

15. Should commercial development within our community be allowed: Rank 1-5
   _____ anywhere _____ along major highways(14,16,27) _____ city only
   _____ Strip business _____ clustered Business Park

16. Do you favor creating/maintaining different zoning districts: Rank 1-5
   ___ residential ___ commercial ___ industrial ___ agricultural ___ other

17. Are you in favor of subdivisions in our community? ____ Yes ____ No
   If yes rank lot size preference 1-5
   ___ 1 acre ___ 2 acre ___ 5 acre ___ 10 acre ___ 20 acre ___ other
Appendix B-2: 2004 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey instruments were mailed to randomly selected Town of Viroqua households. There were eighty-one survey instruments returned; some returns did not have replies to all questions; some returns recorded two sets of answers (presumably from both adults within the household).

1 Do you think the town should be doing some planning for its future?

Yes 174
No 5

2 Average age of respondent: 51.42 yrs

3 IF EMPLOYED, which community do you work in?

Viroqu a Town 8
Viroqu a City 67
We stby 17
LaCro sse 15

4 How many full or part-time employed adults are in your household?

average = 1.53

5 What are the most important planning needs in the Viroqua area? (generalized categories of most frequency of response)

J obs-employment- industry
Zoning ordinances-development controls
Preserve farmland

6 What is your housing preference? (Highest ranking responses)

Rural acreage
Farm home
Small town
City

7 If you see housing needs changing in the future, what do you see it changing to?

Change, mainly to country home/ acreage 97
No change 7
8 How much do you rely on the LaCrosse for grocery and convenience shopping?

Mostly 21
Occasionally 143

9 What are the most important qualities of life in this area?

Low crime - good schools
Rural-quiet-beauty
Good air & water

10 What are the most serious environmental problems in the Viroqua area and your suggested solution to each? [Responses in general order of mention]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals-junk-litter</td>
<td>Zoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water quality-pollution-runoff</td>
<td>Laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 What are the most important planning needs in the Viroqua Area?
[General responses in order of mentioning]

Zoning
Employment-economic development
Bypass +/-
Farm issues

12 Is good farm land an important enough resource to be protected from non-farm uses?

Yes 133
No 33

13 Should hilly & steep slopes be protected from non-farm developments?

Yes 124
No 40
14 Should single placed mobile homes in our community be required to meet minimum standards? [Rank priority 1 (highest) thru 7 (lowest)]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Score</th>
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15 Should commercial development within our community be allowed? [Rank priority 1 thru 5]

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16 Do you favor creating / maintaining different zoning districts? [Rank priority 1 thru 5]

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17 Are you in favor of subdivisions in our community?  
Yes  No

IF YES, rank lot size preference [Rank priority 1 thru 5]

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Appendix C: Maps

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<td>Regional Transportation Context</td>
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<td>Functional Highway Classification</td>
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<td>C-9</td>
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<td>C-11a</td>
<td>Current Land Use [current at November 2009]</td>
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<td>C-11b</td>
<td>Productive Agricultural Soils</td>
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<td>C-12</td>
<td>Water and Wetlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-13</td>
<td>Twenty-year Land Use Vision</td>
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Some map resources were provided as a basis by Mead Hunt

*Productive agriculture soils maps are up-dated and maintained by the USDA and made available for public use on their web site starting here:

http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm

The Town of Viroqua includes:

- Township 12N, Range 4W
- Township 13N, Range 4W
REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CONTEXT
THE DRIFTLESS AREA

Topograph With a Slope of 12½ Percent or More

Vermont County

Sources: Environmental Awareness Center; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Map C-2
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

LEGEND
- Green: Interstate Highway 90
- Purple: Major State Highway
- Black: Inter-City Bus Route on Highway 14
- Red: Freight Railroad
- Red: Freight & Amtrak Passenger Railroad
- Blue: Commercial Navigation - Mississippi River
- Black Circle: Major Range Freight Terminals
- Blue Circle: Commercial - Passenger Airport
- Yellow Circle: General Utility Airport
- Black Square: Trunk Highway Stormwater

Map C-3
TOWN OF VIROQUA
FUNCTIONAL HIGHWAY CLASSIFICATION

LEGEND
- PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL
- MINOR ARTERIAL
- MAJOR COLLECTOR
- MINOR COLLECTOR

Map C-4
SOURCE: WISCONSIN DOT
TOWN OF VIROQUA ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

LEGEND

MAJOR MAINTENANCE NEEDS
RECONSTRUCTION NEEDS
ROAD RELLOCATION NEEDS
SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Map C-5
EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION
CITY OF VIROQUA

THE EXTRATERRITORIAL BOUNDARY LINE SHOWN IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED BY STATE LAW. THIS LINE CAN BE MOVED CLOSER TO THE CITY BY AGREEMENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

Map 7a
TOWN OF VIROQUA

DEVELOPMENT LIMITATIONS

Legend
- Wet Soils and Flood Prone Lands
- 20% Plus Slope
- Delineage Courses

Map C-8
Current Land Use

Current Land Use LEGEND

- Agriculture
- Forest
- Developed
- Open Water
- Grassland
- Wetland
- Barren

Map C-11a
Productive Agricultural Soils

Map Legend

- Area of Interest (AOI)
- Soils
  - Soil Survey Areas
  - Soil Map Units
  - Soil Ratings
  - Special Point Features
  - Special Line Features
- Political Features
  - States
  - Counties
  - Urban Areas
  - Cities
  - Postal Code
  - PLSS Township and Range
  - PLSS Section
- Federal Land
  - Bureau of Land Management

Map C-11b
Town of Viroqua
Water and Wetlands

Map C-12
Town of Viroqua Twenty Year Land Use Vision

Map C-13
Appendix D: Balancing Competing Land Uses

HAINES, Anna, PhD., 2001, "Managing rural residential development;" The Land Use Tracker, Volume 1, Issue 4

Managing Rural Residential Development
By Anna L. Haines, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, UW-Stevens Point and Extension Specialist, Center for Land Use Education

As many communities begin to prepare their comprehensive plans and consider the various elements required under the comprehensive planning law, the relationship between agricultural or open space preservation with housing can be both confusing and contentious. Especially for those communities that are experiencing growth pressure struggling to manage rural residential development along with other community concerns can be difficult. One primary goal of many communities is to balance residential development with agricultural needs, open space, and natural resources while trying to retain a sense of place. Several plan implementation tools are available that local governments can use including, but not limited to: Large minimum lot size, purchase of and transfer of development rights, overlay zones for shorelands, hillsides, and other environmentally sensitive areas, and conservation subdivisions.

This is the first of two articles addressing rural residential development. In this article, I provide a brief definition of each tool, how each tools works, potential benefits, limitations, and references. In the following article, we will provide a more in-depth look at one of these tools – conservation subdivisions.

Which Tool is “Right” for Our Community?

Each community should decide on the types of tools they want to use. Recognize that your community can use these tools together – they are not mutually exclusive. It is reasonable, for example, to have a purchase of development rights program in place along with overlay zones and a conservation subdivision ordinance. Below is a list of criteria to consider when choosing plan implementation tools:

- Does your community have an accepted plan that identifies rural residential development or at least sprawl as an issue?
- Does the plan specify goals and objectives that address how your community will contend with rural residential development?
- Will the tool accomplish any of your community’s goals and objectives?
- Is the tool politically acceptable?
- Can the local government or some other organization administer the new tool given current personnel or is another position or committee necessary?
- Are there any enforcement issues the local government personnel would need to contend with?
- To be effective, would the same tool need to be used by adjoining communities and is a cooperative effort possible?

Answering the above questions will give you a better idea which tools are appropriate to use in your community. Avoid choosing to use any plan implementation tool before you have done your homework and understand how that tool works and the implications for administering and enforcing it.
### Tools for Managing Rural Residential Development

(See table below.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool Definition</th>
<th>How it Works</th>
<th>Potential Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large minimum lot size</td>
<td>A common type of agricultural zoning that says that a farm cannot be broken into parcels below a certain size for farming purposes. Daniels and Bowers 1997: 117.</td>
<td>Designate minimum lot size within an agricultural zone. Determined by legal and political acceptance balanced with effective land protection. Examples: some Oregon counties – 80-acre minimum; McHenry County, IL – 40-acre minimum; Pennsylvania – 50-acre minimum.</td>
<td>Can be changed over time as circumstances change. Keep farmland in large blocks to maintain economic viability. Easy to administer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of development rights</td>
<td>A landowner agrees to sell the rights to develop his/her property to a local government, land trust or DNR. The development rights to a piece of property can be separated from the bundle of rights that go with the land. With the sale of that development right, a conservation easement is put into effect which restricts development in perpetuity. The value of the development right is determined by the difference between the market value and agricultural value of the farmland.</td>
<td>Local government or land trust must determine how to buy development rights, bonds, impact fees, additional levy on property are some possibilities. A local ordinance designates how funds are to be allocated and which agency will operate the program. The PDR agency drafts program regulations and guidelines and selects criteria for making decisions on appropriate land to preserve. The PDR agency solicits and receives applications and ranks them. An appraisal of the development rights is conducted by an independent appraiser.</td>
<td>Seller gets sale price and possibly property and estate tax reduction. Voluntary and permanent means of land use control. Avoids property rights outcry that zoning can elicit. Equitable method of containing sprawl, protecting valuable farmland and open space. Property is retained on tax rolls and is privately owned and managed. Can separate funding and managing conservation easements from administration of program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of development rights</td>
<td>Similar to a PDR program in that the property owner agrees to separate his/her development rights from the bundle of rights that go with the land and a conservation easement is put into effect. Rather than the local government purchasing the development rights to a property, a TDR program transfer the “rights to develop” from one area to another. The property owner still sells his/her development rights, but those rights are bought by a developer. In turn, the developer can use those development</td>
<td>Must have a comprehensive plan in place. Transfer the “rights to develop” from one area – a “sending” or preservation area - to another – “receiving” or development area. The costs of purchasing the easements are recovered from developers who receive the building bonus. Buying development rights is similar to a PDR program, but more controlled than PDR.</td>
<td>Provides certainty about where development will happen Creates incentive for developers to buy development rights rather than the local government needing to find a source of funds to purchase them. Allows higher density (developer incentive) than zoning ordinance might allow.</td>
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## Tool Definition

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tool Definition</th>
<th>How it Works</th>
<th>Potential Benefits/Limitations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rights to create a denser subdivision, for example.</td>
<td>Designate sending and receiving areas. The components of a TDR program include a preservation zone, a growth area, a pool of development rights, and a procedure for transferring development rights.</td>
<td>Creates a competitive market between sellers and buyers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniels and Bowers 1997.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Overlay zones</td>
<td>A set of zoning requirements that is described in the ordinance text, is mapped, and is imposed in addition to those of the underlying district. It is a technique for imposing more restrictive standards for a certain area than those specified under basic zoning. Development within the overlay zone must conform to the requirements of both zones or the more restrictive of the two. It usually is employed to deal with special physical or cultural characteristics present in the underlying zone, such as flood plains, fragile environments, or historical areas.</td>
<td>Communities can provide additional protection to environmentally sensitive areas without changing underlying zoning. Straightforward to administer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schiffman 1999.</td>
<td>In Wisconsin a typical overlay zone is shoreland zoning. Shoreland zoning is overlayed onto usually already zoned areas, such as a residential zone around a lake. The ordinance must specify and map the area that is within the overlay zone. Other types of overlay zones include: Hazards overlay zones, such as floodplains; Hillside/slope overlay zones; Historic preservation overlay zones; Woodland protection overlay zones; and Groundwater overlay zones.</td>
<td>Property owners, developers and other may not understand with which regulations they need to work. Like zoning, variances are possible and can dilute the power and usefulness of this type of zoning.</td>
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### For Further Reading


Natural Lands Trust, Inc. “Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Codes.” www.natlands.org/planning/planning.html


An Innovative Tool for Managing Rural Residential Development:
A Look at Conservation Subdivisions

By Anna L. Haines, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, UW-Stevens Point and Extension Specialist, Center for Land Use Education

This is the second of two articles addressing rural residential development. The previous article on rural residential development provided a definition of four related management tools (large minimum lot size, purchase of and transfer of development rights, and conservation subdivisions), and explained briefly how each tool worked, its potential benefits and limitations, and provided a list of references. In this article, I will provide a more in-depth look at conservation subdivisions.

The comprehensive planning law (or “Smart Growth” law) specifies nine elements that must be in the comprehensive plan. Among them is the implementation element that needs to outline the types of plan implementation tools a community will use to implement its plan. One primary goal of many communities is to balance residential development with agricultural needs, open space, and natural resources while trying to retain a sense of place. This kind of goal can make an important link between the housing, and agriculture, cultural and natural resources element of the comprehensive plan.

Consideration of the goals and objectives within the comprehensive plan is necessary as the community considers the types of tools it will use to achieve its plan. One potentially useful tool to achieve the above goal is to describe conservation subdivisions as a floating zoning district or a conditional use in residential districts in the local zoning or land division code. A model conservation subdivision ordinance was prepared by UW Extension. Local governments are not required to adopt this ordinance (see Ohm 2000), but may find it useful in crafting their own conservation subdivision ordinance.

Conservation Subdivisions: A Definition

Conservation subdivisions are characterized by common open space and clustered compact lots. The purpose of a conservation subdivision is to protect farmland and/or natural resources while allowing for the maximum number of residences under current community zoning and subdivision regulations. In some cases a greater density (density bonus) may be offered in the local ordinance to encourage this approach to residential development planning. Generally, this tool is used for parcels 40 acres or larger.

Development Density

One interesting feature of conservation subdivisions is that they are density neutral (except where a density bonus is offered). What does density neutral mean? Many people assume that a conservation subdivision automatically implies a reduction in the number of lots allowed on a parcel of land. Actually, the same numbers of lots are built in a conservation subdivision as would be built in a conventional subdivision. Thus, a conservation subdivision maintains the same level of density as a conventional subdivision. Conventional lot-by-lot subdivisions spread development evenly throughout a parcel without consideration to environmental or cultural features (Ohm 2000).
The primary difference between conservation subdivisions and conventional ones involves the location of the homes on one part of the parcel, i.e., the homes are clustered. Other changes involve management and ownership of the land that has been left for preservation.

Figure 1: Conservation vs. Conventional Subdivision Layout Source: SEWRPC. 2002. “Model Zoning Ordinance For Rural Cluster Development” www.sewrpc.org/modelordinances/default.htm
Open Space Design, Use and Ownership Options

Conservation subdivision ordinances generally require permanent dedication of 40% or more of the total development parcel as open space. Open space design requirements often include contiguity and connection to other open space or conservation areas. Open space uses may include agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation and in some cases has included use for waste water disposal or sports facilities in urbanizing areas. There are a variety of ownership choices for the open space (individual residential lots are owned as in conventional subdivisions): The original landowner can retain ownership of the land and continue to use it as a farm, for example (usually agricultural use is limited; a confined animal feed lot is an inappropriate use, while a vegetable farm is appropriate); a homeowner’s association could manage it, it can be held as individual outlots for each of the building lots, or a local government or a land trust can manage the property for conservation purposes or outdoor recreation.

Consolidated infrastructure and reduced development costs

Clustering homes reduces the amount of infrastructure. For example, the linear miles of road are reduced; thus, the associated costs of construction, operations and maintenance are also reduced. As well it is possible to share wells and septic systems in these clustered developments. However, placement of wells and septic systems must be carefully designed to prevent unwanted uptake of wastewater into private wells.

Marketing amenities

Conservation subdivisions are desirable from a developer/realtor perspective. They appeal to potential homeowners who want easy access to open space for the views and/or for a range of outdoor activities, i.e., a "golf course" development without the golf course.

How it works

One of the more popular methods is advocated by Randall Arendt who has outlined a four step process. The process begins with the community identifying the cultural and natural resources that are valued on a specific parcel earmarked for development. This communication results in (i) identifying primary and secondary conservation areas, (ii) designing open space to protect them, (iii) arranging houses outside of those protected areas, and (iv) finally laying out streets, lots and infrastructure. Often between 40% to 80% of the site is permanently set aside for open space (Arndt 1992, Minnesota Land Trust 2000, Natural Lands Trust).

Potential Benefits

Conservation development or subdivisions potentially can benefit a community in a variety of ways:

- Achieves a community goal of preserving open space at the same density standard as is outlined in current ordinances.

- Establishes an open space network, if done within the context of a comprehensive plan and these types of developments/subdivisions are purposefully linked together. Continuous open space (farmland, forest or other natural resources) allows for greater benefits for the environment, i.e., habitat preservation for wildlife, and for a local economy if dependent on agriculture and/or tourism. This open space network also can extend and join recreational trails.

- None of the land is taken for public use unless the developer/owners want it to be.

- Does not require public expenditure of funds.
• Does not depend on landowner charity.

• Does not involve complicated regulations for shifting rights to other parcels.

• Does not depend upon the cooperation of two or more adjoining landowners to make it work.

• Provides a quality residential and recreational environment.


Limitations

While conservation subdivisions can achieve a variety of benefits, there are a number of limitations to consider:

• Conservation subdivisions are not a panacea. Used alone they cannot fully accomplish goals related to establishing and preserving open space or managing residential development.

• These subdivisions should connect to a broader network of conservation areas, if not a community will have a chopped up landscape.

• Conservations subdivisions not attached to already developed areas and not connected to services can result in poor land use practices.

• If one goal of your community is to create affordable housing, conservation subdivisions may not provide this housing option. Many conservation subdivisions are expensive, and are marketed to “high end consumers.” On the other hand, there is no reason why these types of subdivisions cannot include more affordable housing.

• If a goal of the community is to promote development that is less dependent on the automobile, conservation subdivisions may not help.

• Technical assistance is important. Poorly designed conservation subdivisions may not achieve open space goals of the community.
Figure 2: Good vs. Poor Cluster Design

www.sewrpc.org/modelordinances/default.htm
Guidelines for conservation subdivision development and design:

- Conservation design is not a panacea
- Setting goals in the community’s planning framework is critical.
- It is important to have good resource information
- Think big and plan for a large open space network
- Ordinances should create incentives and reduce barriers
- Open space should be diligently designed, not just set aside
- Water quality and quantity is paramount
- The management of the protected areas is critical
- Conservation development must be profitable
- Many of the barriers to change are not technical, but institutional


Is This Tool “Right” for Our Community?

Each community should decide on the types of land management tools they want to use. Recognize that your community should choose a number of tools rather than rely on one exclusively. The reason to choose a group of tools is to bring strength where one tool is weak and to send consistent signals to the development community and property owners regarding appropriate and planned uses for particular parcels. It is reasonable, for example, to have a purchase of development rights program in place along with overlay zones and a conservation subdivision ordinance. Below is a list of criteria to consider when choosing plan implementation tools, including conservation subdivisions:

- Does your community have an accepted plan that identifies rural residential development, open space, or sprawl as an issue?
- Does the plan specify goals and objectives that address how your community will contend with rural residential development?
- Will the tool accomplish any of your community’s goals and objectives?
- Is the tool politically acceptable?
- Can the local government or some other organization administer the new tool given current personnel or is another position or committee necessary?
- Are there any enforcement issues local government personnel would need to contend with?
- To be effective, would the same tool need to be used by adjoining communities and/or is a cooperative effort possible?
Answering the above questions will give you a better idea which tools are appropriate to use in your community. Avoid choosing any plan implementation tool before you have done your homework. Understand how that tool works and the implications for administering and enforcing it.

**Resources**


Natural Lands Trust, Inc. “Growing Greener: Putting Conservation into Local Codes.” www.natlands.org/planning/planning.html


Alicia Acken contributed to an earlier draft of this article. DNR’s Land Use Team, Michael Dresen, Gary Korb, Lynn Markham and Brian Ohm reviewed this article for form and content. Any errors, mistakes and omissions remain the responsibility of the author.
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Town of Viroqua
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ORDINANCE
L200910001

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Town of Viroqua
Vernon County

SECTION I - TITLE AND PURPOSE
The title of this ordinance is the Town of Viroqua Comprehensive Plan Ordinance. The purpose of this ordinance for the Town of Viroqua, Vernon County, Wisconsin, to lawfully adopt a comprehensive plan as required under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION II - AUTHORITY
The Town Board of the Town of Viroqua, Vernon County, Wisconsin, has authority under its village powers under s. 60.22, Wis. stats., to appoint a town plan commission under ss. 60.62 (4) and 62.23 (1), Wis. stats., and under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats., to adopt this ordinance. The comprehensive plan of the Town of Viroqua must be in compliance with s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats., in order for the town board to adopt this ordinance.

SECTION III - ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE
This ordinance, adopted by a majority of the town board on a roll call vote with a quorum present and voting and proper notice having been given, provides for the adoption by the town of a comprehensive plan under s. 66.1001 (4), Wis. stats.

SECTION IV - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
The town board has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by s. 66.1001 (4) (a), Wis. stats.

SECTION V - TOWN PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION
The Plan Commission of the Town of Viroqua, by a majority vote of the entire commission, recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the town board the adoption of the Town of Viroqua Comprehensive Plan, which contains all of the elements specified in s. 66.1001 (2), Wis. stats.

SECTION VI - PUBLIC HEARING
The Town of Viroqua has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, with notice in compliance with the requirements of s. 66.1001 (4) (d), Wis. stats.

SECTION VII - ADOPTION OF TOWN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The town board, by the enactment of this ordinance, formally adopts the document entitled Town of Viroqua Comprehensive Plan Ordinance under s. 66.1001 (4) (c), Wis. stats.

SECTION VIII - SEVERABILITY
If any provision of this ordinance or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable.

SECTION IX - EFFECTIVE DATE
This ordinance is effective on publication or posting.
The town clerk shall properly post or publish this ordinance as required under s. 60.80, Wis. stats. and a copy of the ordinance and the comprehensive plan, shall be filed with at least all of the entities specified under s. 66.1001 (4) (b), Wis. stats.

Adopted this 8th day of November, 2009.

Phil Hewitt, Chair

Nathan Larson, Supervisor #1

Timothy Elbert, Supervisor #2

Attest: Donna Leum, Clerk