

Comprehensive Plan

City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua
Vernon County, Wisconsin

Planning Cluster A
Central Vernon County Planning Group

Adopted by the City of Viroqua Comprehensive Planning Commission on October 12, 2006

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Introduction

Basis for Comprehensive Planning

This Comprehensive Plan has been prepared under the authority of Wisconsin state statutes 66.1001 and 16.965, and at the request of the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua. This Plan was produced within a two level, multi-jurisdictional planning framework. The overall process involved twelve units of government called the Central Vernon County Planning Group. This group was divided into five cluster planning areas. This Plan represents Cluster A, consisting of the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua.

Map 1 illustrates the participants in the overall planning group and each of the five cluster planning areas. The planning process was guided by an Umbrella Planning Committee representing the Central Vernon County Planning Group, with detailed guidance by individual Cluster Planning Committees. Detailed local guidance and direction for Cluster A planning was provided by the City of Viroqua Comprehensive Planning Commission. The Town of Viroqua had the opportunity to provide similar input from a Town Planning Committee and Town Board. The final authorities in this planning process are the elected city, village and town governing bodies.

Plan Content

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

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Issues and Opportunities | 6. Economic Development |
| 2. Housing | 7. Intergovernmental Cooperation |
| 3. Transportation | 8. Land Use |
| 4. Utilities and Community Facilities | 9. Implementation |
| 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 of each of the nine plan sections identified above. These four subjects in each chapter are the framework of the Plan. The recommendations contained in this framework are an outgrowth of the planning data, public input data, and the local official and citizen direction which composed the planning process. The definition of goals, objectives, policies and programs is provided below. These terms are applied in this Plan according to their intended use under the provisions of the state comprehensive planning law.

Goals: General statements and visions of idealized conditions and aspirations-- few in number

Objectives: Targeted subject areas to be dealt with to achieve goals

Policies: The position a unit of government takes on specific subject areas which will lead to implementation of goals and objectives

Programs: Specific actions and projects to implement goals, objectives and policies

Public Participation

A plan for public participation is a required part of the comprehensive planning process. The plan for this process was developed in cooperation with the planning committees and approved by the twelve participating governmental units. This public participation plan was adopted by The City of Viroqua Common Council on May 25, 2004, and by the Town of Viroqua Town Board on June 10, 2004. A copy

of this public participation plan is attached hereto as **Appendix A**. The planning for the City and Town of Viroqua area was guided by the Cluster A Planning Committee which was open to all interested citizens and public officials throughout the entire planning process. The City of Viroqua provided additional input through a separate Comprehensive Planning Commission.

In addition to the committee structure of citizens and local officials that guided the planning process, there were other special opportunities for public participation in the development of this Plan, and they are:

- Surveys of citizen opinions and recommendations in each participating unit of government.
- *Issue & Opportunity Study Papers* -- three study papers were produced for this plan.
- Forms available at committee meetings to register statements of “reservation or dissent” regarding ideas or recommendations discussed during the planning process.
- Direct coordination between the consultant and the each of the elective governing bodies.
- Meetings with the City Council and the Town Board.
- Public hearing on the semi-final plan draft.

The survey results became part of the basis for forming the goals and development alternatives for this Plan.

The *Issue & Opportunity Study Papers* were a vehicle to expose the planning committees and units of government to a wide variety of ideas about the nine planning elements with the intent of starting committee considerations of these planning elements. The Study Papers were a working tool to stimulate free-ranging discussions and present diverse visions of the issues and opportunities associated with the various planning elements. Within the context of these *Papers*, the ideas and feedback were not constrained by having to develop or agree on specific recommendations. No recommendations or policy directions were presented in these *Papers*. The overall intention was to help assure that interested citizens and local officials had opportunities for direct involvement in the evaluation of the planning subject matter and development of plan content. An additional intent of the Papers was to help assure that the final planning recommendations would be locally developed and supported, thereby helping to assure the value of the Comprehensive Plan and strengthening its chances of implementation.

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Section 1 - Issues and Opportunities Element

Goal of This Element:

To identify overall goals, objectives, policies, and programs of the local governmental units and to establish them as the guide for future development and redevelopment of the planning area. This plan is intended to look forward 20 years. It is a dynamic document and should be updated every 36 to 60 months, always looking twenty years into the future.

Goals:

General planning goals were produced with the aid of *Issue & Opportunity Study Paper No. A-2*, entitled: *Growth Projections, Alternatives & Goals*. Specific planning goals for the individual planning elements are contained in Sections 2 through 9 of this Plan. The “general” planning goals for the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua planning area are:

- Maintain our “sense of place” as a small city/rural community. This community sense includes positive aesthetics, support and development of local business, a sense of community that ranges from the nurture of youth to the support of the elderly, and the preservation and communication of our history.
- Preserve our quality of life in changing times. We find quality in our slower lifestyle (quiet, low traffic, walkable city, slower pace, stars in the night sky, shade trees), neighborliness (knowing each other, seeing value in difference), high quality public services (health, education, civil government, cultural activities), and affordability.
- Create the conditions for Viroqua to be an increasingly successful economic, social and cultural hub of activity including the enhancement of health and wellness.
- 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 City and Town of Viroqua and the region, in general.
- Respect for property rights and protection of community rights.
- Protect and enhance natural resources, scenic landscape, a rural lifestyle and regional agriculture.
- Make access to community news, direction, ordinances, policies, and processes readily available to all citizens, as well as prospective citizens, investors, tourists, and developers.

Objectives:

- Support local businesses and new entrepreneurs to maintain and expand the role of the City and Town of Viroqua as a hub for the region.
- Cooperate and coordinate with public service providers (health, education, civil government, cultural activities).
- Provide community facilities that promote continuing education, community values and recreation.
- Safeguard the affordability of living in this area.
- Create government process and procedures that ensure fair dealing, and a structure that does not favor or discriminate.

- Review new developments for impacts on aesthetics, natural and historic uniqueness and beauty.
- Work cooperatively with neighbors and pursue the ethic of neighborliness when conflicts arise.
- For the City and Town of Viroqua to become an “elder-ready” community where transportation, shopping, social services and wellness facilities are conveniently accessible as the baby-boom population moves through their elder years.

Policies:

- To maintain a comprehensive planning process for the City and Town of Viroqua and maintain an up-to-date Comprehensive Plan which guides development.
- The City and Town of Viroqua will partner with public service providers in health, education, and cultural service providers to help in their success and create a more vital community.
- Implementation of “good government” standards by the City of Viroqua.
- Create an official city website that tells all there is to know about Viroqua.
- Integrate health and wellness considerations in all local governmental decisions concerning public services and infrastructure development.

Programs:

The overall program elements of Section 1 consist of the following:

- Conducting and evaluating citizen input surveys for the City and the Town.
- Developing, distributing and evaluating *Issue & Opportunity Study Papers* in which planning and development issues and opportunities are identified. These Study Papers do not contain recommendations, so as to facilitate an open consideration of a broad range of planning ideas and alternatives without having to take official positions on such ideas.
- Identification by the Cluster Planning Committee of general goals and alternatives (growth scenarios) for future development.

Planning and Development Issues and Opportunities:

Categories of planning issues and opportunities were identified for the Cluster A planning area in the *Issues & Opportunities Study Paper No. A-1*, which is provided in **Appendix B** of this Plan. The information provided in this study paper was presented to the Cluster A Planning Committee to initiate an overall discussion of issues and opportunities related to planning. This initial discussion became the basis for identifying more detailed issues and opportunities as the planning process progressed into the functional elements (Sections 2 to 9) of the Comprehensive Plan. No recommendations were presented or acted on during the discussion paper phase of the comprehensive planning process.

City of Viroqua

In addition to the general issues and opportunities identified for the whole Cluster A planning area (**Appendix B**), the City of Viroqua has identified the following additional issues and opportunities:

Issues:

- We are in a changing situation with regard to land values, agricultural patterns, subcultures, regional and global economic forces out of our control.

- City resources are challenged by our commitments to transportation projects and other infrastructure improvements.
- Local businesses are in difficult economic times, and potential pressures from a bypass or other external forces may force a percentage of them to close.
- Successful local businesses can be sold and moved by the larger corporate entity not connected to the Viroqua Community.
- Community divisions.
- Aging community.

Opportunities:

- Small town life is becoming a scarce resource. If we understand its value and work to protect and enhance it, we will have many opportunities to attract new talent and capital.
- We have local businesses to build on and partner with.
- We have a successful public service sector (health, education, civil government, cultural activities).
- We have an honest civil government.
- Our aging community provides wisdom and knowledge of history for the community.
- We are a stable community with many local multigenerational families.
- We have natural beauty and historical structures to protect and enhance.

Background Information:

Regional Growth Context

The Cluster A planning area is located near the center of Vernon County, Wisconsin. This area is fifty two square miles and consists of the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua. **Map 1** locates this planning area within the context of the Central Vernon County Planning Group. A detailed map of the Cluster A planning area is provided in **Map 2**.

Previous Comprehensive Planning

A Vernon County *General Plan* was produced by a consultant 1969 as part of a regional comprehensive planning program of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. This Commission is composed of representatives from seven counties. This regional General Plan has not been updated; however, 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. There is no current comprehensive plan for the City of Viroqua or Town of Viroqua.

Regional Growth Factors

The region within which the Viroqua area functions is composed of the following influences which significantly affect the area's growth outlook and the need for planning; these influences include:

- As a county seat community Viroqua is a governmental services center.
- Area is a sub-regional economic center, particularly for jobs and retail trade.
- The continuing health of the local and regional manufacturing sector.
- An agricultural service center.
- Good accessibility via Highway 14/61, classified as a Principal Arterial State Highway.
- Additional transportation assets include State Highways 56, 27, and 82 and a city airport.

- Within the labor shed commuting zone of the La Crosse metro job center.
- Center of a K-12 secondary school district, and the Waldorf school system.
- A complete range of municipal infrastructure.
- A sub-regional center for health and elder care.
- A sub-regional cultural center.
- In the center of a unique Midwest driftless landscape which provides a scenic location for housing, recreation and vacationing; see **Map 3**.
- A significant future growth factor of regional importance will be the expansion of Highway 14/61 between Viroqua and Westby and the later construction of a new by-pass of this highway east of the City of Viroqua.

The central implication and conclusion from the above regional characteristics is that the Viroqua area is well positioned for future growth. While the area has the essential ingredients to attract and support growth, these factors, by themselves, will not assure that growth will occur throughout the twenty year planning period.

A complete positioning for continued growth has two major requirements, one which this Plan can deal with and one which it cannot. These requirements are:

1. Combining the above regional growth influences with the other essential components of a comprehensive development plan; the balance of this Comprehensive Plan will satisfy this requirement.
2. The pre-conditions for growth, which this Plan cannot deal with, are the political and other institutional values and goals which determine what degree of growth is desirable; and, if desirable, how effectively it is pursued over a period of time. Growth in this planning area will also be effected by the degree of competition for growth from other communities within the region. This will be determined, in part, by the larger economic forces beyond local control, but also by how effectively local strategies tap these larger economic and cultural forces for local benefit.

Population Growth

A community (city/town) plan covering a twenty year period contains a projection of future population levels. Such population levels are not “predictions” of a hard-and-fast population that will be reached, but rather, represents a population growth level based on “assumed” conditions. Ideally, the assumed conditions are based, in part, on the development alternatives and goals the community adopts for itself. Other conditions may be the recognition of national, state and local conditions the community has no significant control over.

There is no scientific method of accurately projecting future population levels. Some methods are simple straight-line projections of past population levels. Other methods project future population based upon the “holding capacity” of developable land within a planning jurisdiction. Yet other methods are based on an economic development multiplier in which new jobs are projected, and from which a household or population equivalent is then multiplied. And, some communities have simply set an idealized future population goal (or limit) and then plan to do whatever is necessary to reach that population level.

State Population Projections

An obvious first step which the Cluster A community can take is to look at the pre-existing population projections available from the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). These projections are made by five year increments to the year 2020. Their projections are based on what they call the “cohort component” method. According to the DOA, this method, “relies on historic data on births, deaths and migration to established base rates that are then adjusted based on higher level, (i.e. nation-to-state, state-to-county) projections of changes in these rates”. State projections generally are designed to fit within national population projections. The DOA further states that their “methodology does not take development capability into account”. This also means that their projections do not take into account the changing competitive advantages between communities, changes in housing preferences, and the access advantages of highway improvements. These state projections are basically not designed to be the basis for local planning and development programs, but rather amount to the allocation of population across the state from a fixed state total.

The state DOA projections for the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua are as follows:

| | <u>Year</u> | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 2000* | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 |
| City of Viroqua | 4,335 | 4,432 | 4,538 | 4,646 | 4,745 |
| Town of Viroqua | 1,560 | 1,620 | 1,683 | 1,747 | 1,807 |

*Actual year 2000 US Census count; DOA estimates for 1/1/03 are 4,340 for the City and 1,599 for the Town.

State projection summary

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|----|------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| City of Viroqua growth: | 2000 to 2020 | is | 9.45%, or | 410 persons, | 20 persons per yr average |
| Town of Viroqua growth: | 2000 to 2020 | is | 15.83%, or | 247 persons, | 12 persons per yr average |

The above state projections are not consistent with actual growth trends and opportunities which presently characterize the City and Town of Viroqua planning area; however, this projection will constitute a conservative population growth scenario (alternative) for this planning cluster.

Population Projections

Selected Population Projection Scenario And Methodology

An important factor in projecting population growth is the interrelationship between the development capability of the planning area, the economic outlook for the area, ease of access and the living preferences of the population; in short: good land, jobs, highways and sociology. These factors are described below.

Good Land

In general, the lands available to the City and Town of Viroqua are free of any significant limitations to development, and there is an ample quantity of open lands available. No judgment is made here about governmental inducements or restrictions that could affect the amount of land that would actually be developed.

Jobs

Jobs are a principal foundation of population growth in most communities. This planning area can reasonably expect job growth from within the planning area and from the La Crosse metropolitan area. Viroqua is a county seat community and has the critical mass of services and infrastructure that will lead to continued job growth. A clear pattern of commuting out of this planning area to La Crosse area jobs has already been established and can be expected to continue. The convenience of commuting will contribute to local population growth. The increasing ease, and occasional necessity, of industry (jobs) to move to more profitable locations is an important uncertainty in projecting community and regional growth.

Highways

The City and Town of Viroqua already have very good accessibility to the La Crosse metro area via U.S. Highway 14/61, and this highway is scheduled for significant improvement in both Vernon and La Crosse Counties. Such improvements in accessibility can be 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. There are many social, economic, and technological reasons for this. Cities still remain the primary job centers; however, a large proportion of the urban labor force is increasingly choosing to reside within twenty to forty miles of their jobs, with population concentrations tending to locate in the nearest rural communities and on scenic rural lands near major highways. Numerous institutional studies and academic research has documented this pervasive trend. This population settlement pattern is evident within the commuter shed of the La Crosse metro area, and is evident within Cluster A planning area. While this trend has been going on for some time, it is believed that it has manifested itself in a significant way in Cluster A since about 1990, since the year 2000 U. S. Census has shown a clear turn-around in population growth for many units of government within this planning area during the decade of 1990 to 2000. Such recent patterns would not be reflected in historic population trends.

Assumptions

Projections of any future conditions are based on assumptions about the future. The projections of future population levels for this planning area incorporate the following basic assumptions about the future:

- The national and state economy will continue to experience relative growth and stability.
- Absence of destabilizing economic or energy problems.
- The regional economy, and particularly the La Crosse area economy, will remain healthy with continued growth.
- The City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua will remain receptive to growth.
- The capability will be available to finance the infrastructure required to attract and maintain growth.

- The Viroqua area will remain competitive for growth with other rural communities in the La Crosse commuting region.
- The regional agricultural economy will not experience any radical financial down-turns of a long-term nature, although continued economic stress and restructuring in this industry should be expected.

A population growth scenario for Cluster A that would be more likely than the above DOA projections would be the pattern of growth of 1990-2000, but within the framework of the above general assumptions.

The selected methodology for this plan takes the population growth rate of the total of the city and town populations for the decade of the 1990's (8.74 %), and applies it as the rate of growth for the years 2010 and 2020, with each of these two growth projections divided in half for the years 2005 and 2015. These figures function as a control total for the total planning cluster. This control total is then allocated to the City and Town in the same proportion that each unit had of the year 2000 total cluster area population; the city had 73.54 % and the town had 26.46 % of the year 2000 cluster population. This methodology uses year 2000 population proportions as documented by the U.S. Census Bureau to establish these future local jurisdictional populations. No additional assumptions or methods are used regarding which jurisdiction has how much population in future years.

The following calculation illustrates this methodology and produces population projections for the years: 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020.

Selected Population Projection

| | Population | | | % of "total" yr 2000 | Projections | | | |
|-----------------|------------|-------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1990 | 2000 | % growth | population | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 |
| City of Viroqua | 3,922 | 4,335 | 10.53 | 73.54 | 4,525 | 4,714 | 4,920 | 5,126 |
| Town of Viroqua | 1,499 | 1,560 | 4.07 | 26.46 | 1,628 | 1,696 | 1,770 | 1,844 |
| Total | 5,421 | 5,895 | <u>8.74</u> | -- | 6,153 | 6,410 | 6,690 | 6,970 |

Summary of Population Forecast, 2000 to 2020

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| City of Viroqua | 791 | new persons or | 18.24% = 40 | persons per year average |
| Town of Viroqua | 284 | new persons or | 18.20% = 14 | persons per year average |
| Total Cluster A: | 1,075 | new persons or | 18.23% = 54 | persons per year average |

It is important to keep in mind, that net new growth, as indicated above, is only that growth that is realized after deaths are accounted for and after out-migration of existing residents is accounted for. It's questionable if new births will counterbalance deaths during this period; and the size of the out-migration of the increasingly large number of retirement age persons will become an important factor in future population levels. Incentives for population growth may be necessary to achieve the above population growth.

While the planned highway bypass in this planning area may serve as an unusual inducement to growth, it is not planned to be in service until about half way into the planning period, so highway related growth would likely not be fully realized until after 2020. However, this plan is required to be reevaluated every ten

years, or otherwise as needed, so these population projections would be reevaluated based on the actual growth effects of the bypass and other significant changes affecting growth projections.

Household Projections

Household projections are a direct product of population projections. Census figures report that the City of Viroqua had a person per household ratio of 2.10 in 2000, down from 2.14 in 1990 and 2.22 in 1980. In 2000, and the Town of Viroqua had 2.64 persons per household, down from 2.83 in 1990.

The county and state average household size in 2000 was 2.55 and 2.50 respectively. Household size has been declining due to families having fewer children and because of the growing number of young and elderly single person households. Household size does not include people in “group quarters”, such as a health facility or jail. In 2000, the City and Town of Viroqua had 163 and 110 persons in group quarters respectively.

The projection of the number of future households for planning Cluster A assumes the continuation of the year 2000 household sizes for both the City and Town of Viroqua. It will be important for the ten year Comprehensive Plan updating to reevaluate household size factors based on updated numbers from the 2010 U.S. Census. Provided below are the household projections for this Plan, which are produced by dividing the population projections of the second growth scenario reported above by the year 2000 household sizes for both the city and the town.

Household Projections

| | Household Size | 2000* | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 |
|-----------------|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| City of Viroqua | 2.10 | 1,990 | 2,155 | 2,245 | 2,343 | 2,441 |
| Town of Viroqua | 2.64 | 549 | 617 | 642 | 670 | 698 |
| Total Cluster A | -- | 2,539 | 2,772 | 2,887 | 3,013 | 3,139 |

*Actual Census

Projected new households for the period 2000 to 2020:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|-------------------|-------|------------------------------------|
| City of Viroqua | 451 | new households or | 22.6% | = 22.5 households per year average |
| Town of Viroqua | 149 | new households or | 27.1% | = 7.5 households per year average |
| Total Cluster A | 600 | new households or | 23.6% | = 30.0 households per year average |

Employment Characteristics

See Section 6: Analysis of Economic Base & Labor Force

Employment Projections

Forecasting employment with any practical degree of reliability cannot be done for a small scale planning area such as Cluster A. The basis for this was addressed in *Issue & Opportunity Study Paper A-1*. The basic reason for this uncertainty is because this planning area functions within a much larger regional economy in which job types and locations affecting the Viroqua area are dispersed within this larger region. About half of all jobs in this planning cluster are held by persons commuting into this area, conversely, increasing numbers of cluster area residents are commuting to jobs outside this area, particularly to the La Crosse metro area. Reasonable employment projections can only be made for larger geographic areas, and even then, the amount of instability and change in the agricultural and

industrial sectors due to national and global economic adjustment trends would cast considerable doubt on the reliability of any such long range projections. The smallest geographic area for which employment forecasts could be ventured would be the county unit; however, neither Vernon County nor La Crosse County have completed such forecasts. The economic sectors affecting future employment in the Cluster A which should be watched and continually evaluated include: agriculture, public services, medical/health and the local and La Crosse area industrial economies.

Age Distribution

The year 2000 age distribution within Cluster A is provided below along with geographic comparisons. The 85+ age range is reported separately because this is one of the fastest growing age groups. The population pyramid attached hereto illustrates Viroqua's significant elderly population compared to county and state levels.

| Geographic Area | Under 18 | % | 18 to 65 | % | 65+ | % | Total | % | 85+ | % | Median Age |
|-----------------|----------|------|----------|------|-------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| City of Viroqua | 1,029 | 23.7 | 3,060 | 70.6 | 1,137 | 26.2 | 4,335 | 100 | 246 | 5.7 | 43.6 |
| Town of Viroqua | 354 | 22.7 | 926 | 59.3 | 280 | 18.0 | 1,560 | 100 | 48 | 3.1 | 42.6 |
| Vernon County | 8,423 | 27.4 | 14,864 | 55.6 | 4,769 | 17.0 | 28,056 | 100 | 713 | 2.5 | 39.1 |
| Wisconsin | -- | 25.5 | -- | 61.4 | -- | 13.1 | -- | 100 | -- | 1.5 | 32.9 |
| United States | -- | 25.7 | -- | 61.9 | -- | 12.4 | -- | 100 | -- | 1.5 | 35.3 |

Income Levels

See Section 6, Analysis of Economic Base and Labor Force

Educational Levels

Basic U. S. Census educational data is reported here; the local school district is the primary source of other, more detailed educational data relevant to this planning area. The year 2000 U.S. Census data on school enrollment is not reported here because it would be considered obsolete, particularly since the school district maintains current enrollment data on an annual basis.

| Educational Attainment -- % of population 25 years old and older | City of Viroqua | Town of Viroqua | Vernon County | State of Wisconsin |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Population 25 yrs and older: | 3,065 | 1,039 | 18,473 | -- |
| Less than 9 th grade | 12.0% | 10.0% | 11.5% | 9.5% |
| 9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma | 10.5% | 8.8% | 9.6% | 11.9% |
| High School graduate (includes equivalency) | 37.8% | 37.6% | 38.5% | 37.1% |
| Some college, no degree | 19.1% | 17.1% | 18.8% | 16.7% |
| Associate degree | 5.6% | 10.3% | 7.6% | 7.1% |
| Bachelor's degree | 9.6% | 9.9% | 9.4% | 12.1% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 5.4% | 6.3% | 4.5% | 5.6% |
| Percent high school grad or higher | 77.5% | 81.2% | 78.9% | 85.1% |

Summary Demographic Trends

In general, the population of the City and Town of Viroqua planning area is largely urban, with 73% of the year 2000 combined population being within the City of Viroqua. The median age of the city and town population is about the same, but higher than county, state and national median ages. The city has a

higher proportion of elderly population, 65+. The city's 85+ age population is significantly higher (5.7%) than that of the town, county, state and nation. This would be due to the concentration of elderly in institutional housing in the city and the presence of single person housing units and closeness of personal services.

Under present housing development patterns, the Town of Viroqua may end up with a younger population than the city. The educational attainment of the residents of the city and the town are quite similar. Most of the population of both the city and town is employed in white-collar jobs, with local educational, governmental and health institutions providing most of this employment. Manufacturing and retail trade are also important sources of employment, focused mostly in the City of Viroqua.

Demographic trends indicate that the elderly component of the population will increase significantly in the next twenty years, and that there may be pressures to maintain an adequate size working age population depending on the magnitude of local population recruitment in this age category. Trends also indicate continued growth in white collar employment, and the likely continuation of employment losses in the agricultural sector.

Health and wellness concerns will become more important public policy concerns for all segments of the population, particularly the growing elderly component. Wellness facilities will become more important, including greater opportunities for youth, middle age and senior citizen outdoor activities.

Section 2 - Housing Element

Goal of this Element:

To afford the citizens of the City and Town of Viroqua with an adequate supply of housing that provides diversity in size, configuration, pleasing aesthetics, energy and resource efficiency, range of affordability, ease of maintenance and the ability to appreciate at national averages.

General Planning Context:

A significant bottom-line of any local planning program is how that planning affects housing and living environments. Achieving home ownership and a quality living environment are long-standing American values and goals. Good planning can contribute to the achievement of quality housing by planning for safe and esthetic neighborhood and rural living environments. Good planning can facilitate an adequate supply of land with needed services which are required to achieve housing needs. Good planning can help protect investments in housing by a family or business. Equity in housing is a very important financial resource for many. The overall context of planning for housing is to help contribute to an adequate supply of decent, safe, energy efficient, affordable, durable, healthful, and sanitary housing and related living environments. These have been long-standing national and state housing goals. In general, home ownership has been a historic state and national goal as reflected in legislation and incentives for home ownership and housing development, including State building and energy codes as well as Energy Star and Green building standards.

The housing in the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua is generally in sound condition; however, some deteriorating housing is present. The age of the housing stock is generally older than in other areas of the state. Home ownership predominates over rental housing. Most housing is single family, with little apartment living. There are no apartments in the rural area. The City of Viroqua does have elderly and low-income apartment housing.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the housing trend of the Town of Viroqua is of generally larger and higher value homes than in the City of Viroqua, though there are a number of older farmsteads as well.

The outlook for housing in this area will largely be shaped by the ability of the community to attract and maintain residents and changes in the age demographics of the population. The U. S. Census Bureau projects, that nationally, married couples with children will account for only 20 percent of total households during this planning period. Also, 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, and the local impact of this trend can be expected to be reflected in the character of Viroqua area housing requirements.

The outlook for housing patterns in this planning area is for continued location of both rural, non-farm housing and urban housing subdivisions in the Town of Viroqua; and for continuing housing subdivision development in the City of Viroqua. City housing locations will be dependent, in part, upon utility servicing capability and annexation or boundary agreements with the Town. The City of Viroqua will have the

additional potential to facilitate the location of new housing on lands which will be ready for “redevelopment” from obsolete urban uses. Such sites will tend to be near the center of the community.

Goals:

- Safe, healthful, energy efficient, durable, aesthetic and affordable housing for residents of the planning area that will appreciate at state and national levels.
- Opportunities for a mix of housing types.
- Housing development that is in harmony with the natural environment and which avoid problems of urban sprawl.
- The development of housing with the appropriate infrastructure and services that is also in line with county, city, and town building standards and codes.
- The provision of housing styles and costs which meet the needs of the retired and elderly population which will grow significantly during this planning period.
- The development of new affordable housing that meets the needs of working families with children including ease of home ownership.

Objectives:

- Create and maintain a Housing Plan for the Viroqua area.
- Promote the development of housing within the local planning area.
- Provide the zoning and the infrastructure needed to develop housing on appropriate lands currently within the City of Viroqua.
- Assure compliance with health, safety, and fire codes in the regulation and location of housing.
- Provide a range of housing choices:
 - Needs of all income levels.
 - Needs of all age groups.
 - Needs of persons with special needs.
- Provide for the availability of land for the development and/or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing.
- Facilitate the development of housing projects and related services for an expanding elderly population at locations near required services.
- Seek the benefits of those state and federal housing programs (identified below) which implement the needs and goals of this housing plan.

Policies:

- Assure that housing development is provided with an ample supply of safe water to meet state drinking water standards.
- Assure that housing is developed with wastewater disposal and treatment provisions which meets state wastewater disposal standards, and protects the local aquifer.
- Assure that housing development of an urban density of two acres or less per housing unit is provided with a supply of water that meets drinking water and urban fire protection standards. Assure that housing of an urban density is located as contiguous as possible to an existing sewer and water utility system to enable hook-ups to such system.

- Plan and program capital improvement schedules to extend housing infrastructure to lands already adjacent to urban development.
- Minimize the development of urban style housing outside the servicing areas of existing sewer and water utilities.
- Work with the Town of Viroqua to assist with and encourage residential patterns which preserve farm land and scenic lands, using techniques such as clustering, conservation subdivisions, and observance of subdivision covenants.
- Work in partnership with individuals in the private housing market to achieve the goals, objectives and policies of the Housing Section of this Plan.
- Support and facilitate the provision of specialized developments and housing styles for senior citizens, low-income, and handicapped persons.
- The City of Viroqua will be proactive in ensuring the basic services and housing opportunities remain affordable for low income residents.
- Assure that living environments are not adversely affected by incompatible land activity impacts, such as excessive: noise, dust, smoke, noxious air emissions, odor, and traffic.
- Regulate development to avoid storm water flooding of housing and road access.
- Assure that housing is located so as to avoid excessive problems with soil characteristics, such as wetness, problem drainage, shallow bedrock, and steep slopes.
- Assure that residential developments have reasonable good access to outdoor activities that provide health and wellness benefits, such as sidewalks and trails.
- Assure that housing is located with direct and safe access to public roads and streets which enable convenient emergency access and normal maintenance.
- Provide esthetic, appropriate and blight-free living environments.
- Assure that local ordinances and development standards, particularly zoning, are consistent with the goals and policies of this Section.
- Coordinate housing standards and decisions on development proposals with the local emergency services providers, mainly fire and ambulance services.
- Housing development patterns which accommodate and preserves to the maximum extent possible the natural and scenic qualities of the land.
- Encourage energy efficiency and green building principles.
- Assure that housing is non-discriminatory.
- Housing policies and practices that allow for modest dwellings for low and moderate income residents.
- The City of Viroqua shall create a master plan showing the intended or most likely location of primary roads, parks, recreation trails, transmission lines, waterlines, sewer lines and other significant land use allocations so that property owners, investors, and developers can have reliable expectations of the city's intentions.

Programs:

- **Maps 18** illustrates existing and planned housing in Cluster A
- The following section is subdivided into two program areas; the first is a listing of public housing assistance programs, the second is a listing of local housing improvement recommendations. To the extent applicable, the public housing programs should be used to help meet housing needs

and goals in the City and Town of Viroqua. Not all these programs would be available to the local units of government in this planning area due to special program requirements, threshold levels of eligibility, local financial limitations or required private participation. This inventory of housing programs is subject to change. New programs periodically replace existing programs.

State of Wisconsin Department of Commerce

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Federal HUD funds.
- HOME Rental Housing Development (RHD).
- Local Housing Organization Grant (LHOG) Program.
- Low Income Weatherization Program.
- Rental Rehabilitation Program (RRP).

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

- Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program.
- Blueprint Loan – Short term financing for multi-family housing.
- Foundation Grant – Grants to non-profit sponsors for needy persons.
- Housing Improvement Loan Program (HILP) – 1 to 4 unit owner-occupied dwellings.
- Multi-Family Homeless Mortgage Loan.
- Multi-Family Taxable Revenue Bond Loan – For developer use on tax credit projects.
- Multi-Family Tax-Exempt Revenue Bond Loan.

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Section 202/811 – Funding to non-profit organizations to fund housing for needy persons.
- Multi Family FHA Mortgage Insurance.

U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Program

- Guaranteed Housing Program – Home ownership loans for limited income persons.
- Direct Housing Program – Home ownership loans with subsidized mortgage payments.
- Home repair Loans and Grants – For persons unable to obtain conventional financing.

Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago

- Affordable Housing Program (AHP).
- Community Investment Program (CIP) – Subsidized interest for rental housing.

City of Viroqua Housing Program Recommendations

- Review and adjust zoning ordinance to meet the housing objectives and policies of this Section, including the creation of a review process for new developments that requires consideration for some affordable housing units through inclusionary zoning standards.
- Review and adjust subdivision ordinance to meet the housing objectives and policies of this Section, including planned housing densities in growth areas.
- Identification of potential sites conducive to housing developments which can meet the needs of low and moderate income persons, the elderly and handicapped persons.
- Participation by the local government in those public housing programs which help satisfy local housing needs and are feasible to implement.
- Consider City incentives to housing development which implement the goals, objectives and policies of this Section.
- Partner with the private sector to provide incentives in return for the development of housing on lands already within the City of Viroqua.
- Facilitate access by local residents to housing rehabilitation and weatherization programs to maintain older housing, particularly that build before 1995.
- Consider mixed use Tax Increment Financing as a possible tool for facilitating housing development projects which implement the goals, objectives and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
- Review existing ordinances and consider measures which will avoid and remove excessive blight and nuisances affecting the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.
- Precisely identify the location of the area's environmental and cultural assets which should then be preserved as a part of the housing development process.
- Plan the location of new housing in accord with smart growth principles at feasible locations.
- Design review standards for residential neighborhoods.
- Review by the City of Viroqua and the Cluster Planning Committee of energy needs, including the energy programs of the following:
 - Housing inspection/code enforcement
 - Xcel
 - Madison Gas & Electric
 - Vernon Electric COOP

Town of Viroqua Housing Program Recommendations

- The Town of Viroqua has reported no existing housing needs or programs.
- The Town of Viroqua will consider housing programs to address housing needs that the town would identify in the future as needing public involvement.

Housing Stock Assessment Information:

The U. S. Census Bureau is the source of all housing information in this section. These numbers and percentages may have changed somewhat since the year 2000 Census.

Age Characteristics

By number of housing structures (units), not by households

| Year Structure Built | City of Viroqua | % | Town of Viroqua | % | Vernon County | % |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------|------|
| 1999 to 3/2000 | 36 | 1.7 | 53 | 9.0 | - | 3.3 |
| 1990 to 1998 | 271 | 12.9 | 64 | 10.9 | - | 13.1 |
| 1970 to 1989 | 536 | 25.5 | 163 | 27.6 | - | 26.1 |
| 1940 to 1969 | 491 | 23.4 | 104 | 17.6 | - | 21.9 |
| 1939 or earlier | 765 | 36.5 | 206 | 34.9 | - | 35.8 |

Structural Characteristics

| Characteristics: | City of Viroqua | % | Town of Viroqua | % | Vernon County | % |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---------------|-----|
| Lacking some or all plumbing | 7 | 0.4 | 6 | 1.1 | - | 3.7 |
| Lacking complete kitchen facilities | 32 | 1.6 | 6 | 1.1 | - | 3.5 |
| No telephone service | 79 | 4.0 | 2 | 0.4 | - | 4.3 |
| Median no. of rooms per home | 5.1 | - | 6.1 | - | 5.6 | - |

Value Characteristics

Owner-occupied housing units

| Housing Value: | City of Viroqua | % | Town of Viroqua | % | Vernon County | % |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------|------|
| Less than \$ 50,000 | 162 | 17.0 | 12 | 5.6 | - | 23.0 |
| 50,000 to 99,000 | 576 | 60.5 | 92 | 43.0 | - | 52.2 |
| 100,000 to 149,000 | 174 | 18.3 | 72 | 33.6 | - | 17.9 |
| 150,000 to 199,000 | 21 | 2.2 | 32 | 15.0 | - | 5.0 |
| 200,000 or more | 19* | 2.0 | 6 | 2.8 | - | 2.0 |
| Median Value | \$ 70,700 | - | \$ 102,100 | - | \$ 73,400 | - |

* 2 houses at \$ 1,000,000 or more

* The United States median home value in 2000 was \$ 119,600

Occupancy Characteristics

| Occupancy | City of Viroqua | % | Town of Viroqua | % | Vernon County | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|---------------|------|
| Occupied housing units | 1,990 | 94.5 | 549 | 91.0 | | 87.2 |
| Vacant housing units | 115 | 5.5 | 54 | 9.0 | | 12.8 |
| Seasonal & recreational | 4 | 0.2 | 23 | 3.8 | | 6.9 |
| Owner-occupied housing units | 1,323 | 66.5 | 486 | 88.5 | | 79.1 |
| Renter-occupied housing units | 667 | 33.5 | 63 | 11.5 | | 20.9 |
| Homeowner vacancy rate | -- | 2.6 | -- | 2.8 | -- | 2.2 |
| Rental vacancy rate | -- | 5.8 | -- | 1.6 | -- | 7.0 |

Housing Unit Projections:

The future number of housing units is reported in the *Household Forecast* sub-section in *Section 1, Issues & Opportunities*.

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Section 3 - Transportation Element

Goal of this Element:

To guide the future development of the various modes of transportation in the planning area according to local needs, and to compare the local governmental unit's transportation plans with state and regional plans and incorporate such plans where appropriate.

General Transportation Context:

The City and Town of Viroqua are served principally by the auto and truck mode of transportation. This mode of travel is served by a system of streets and highways which are distributed between State, County, City, and Town jurisdictions. Inter-city bus service has been an important link for some members of the Viroqua community and was threatened with elimination when Greyhound announced they would cancel service. This service will be taken up by an alternate carrier. While all these jurisdictional systems are important with respect to their own function, it's the state highways and their regional linkages which this area is most dependent upon for its overall welfare and sustainability. State Highway 14/61 is the most important transportation facility in the City and Town of Viroqua planning area; State Highway 27 follows this highway route through the planning area. State Highways 56 and 82 are east-west highways through the planning area. The proposed by-pass of Highway 14/61 is the most important transportation planning issue for this planning area, and this issue includes the likely land use changes which this by-pass would bring about. The only other mode of transportation serving this area are the services provided by the City of Viroqua airport, and the intercity bus service on Highway 14/61, and under recognized bicycle usage, horse-drawn vehicles, and pedestrian traffic.

Local city-sponsored taxi service is an important link for many City residents with special considerations for the elderly and handicapped needs. Continued support and potential expansion of this service including possible mini-bus routes should be considered.

There is a larger regional transportation context which also affects the planning for the City and Town of Viroqua. Regional transportation facilities affecting this planning area are focused on the La Crosse metropolitan area. Passenger rail and commercial air travel services are available in the City of La Crosse, about an hour away in La Crosse County. Rail service is also available to the north in the City of Tomah. Access to the Interstate Highway System is available in the City of La Crosse to the west and the City of Sparta to the north. Potential growth of service at the Viroqua airport should not be discounted. These facilities are important to this planning area because they have an important role in determining much of the employment and general economic welfare of the Viroqua area.

The **Map 4** illustrates the regional transportation context for the Viroqua area.

Highways, Streets, and Roads:

The **Map 2** illustrates the street and road system of the state, county and local jurisdictions of government. The **Map 5** illustrates the Functional Classification of streets and highways.

City of Viroqua Street and Traffic Concerns

Many of the streets and roads in the City and Town of Viroqua are constructed on fairly hilly terrain because of the area's location at the head of several drainage basins. This terrain causes extra problems for the location and costs of street construction, particularly in the City of Viroqua. Particular issues include limitations on the inter connectivity of streets and the accommodation of drainage. The abrupt topography in the city has produced several dead-end streets. The interconnectivity of streets is important for good traffic flow and safety, and to provide access to property for future development. The need to balance some resident's desire for limited through traffic versus the general tenants of efficient street design has been an issue in this community.

A long range street plan will help provide for ease of future growth in the City and the Town by providing some certainty of property access and the ability of local government to plan public improvements such as utilities, drainage and subdivision and development patterns. A long range street plan will serve to provide more cost-effective and efficient land development. An Official Street Plan ordinance can also help assure well planned future streets. **Map 6A** identifies projected traffic volumes based on the presence of the Highway 14/61 bypass route as calculated by the State Department of Transportation, and **Map 6** reports existing traffic volumes as 2001.

Traffic volume and congestion problems are limited mostly to arterial streets and key intersections in the City of Viroqua. Facilitating continued urban growth requires the safe and efficient accommodation of traffic flow in existing and planned high traffic corridors. This issue was addressed in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's 2002 traffic study for the Highway 14/61 corridor through the Viroqua/Westby area. Concerning existing traffic, this study provides the following analysis:

Under present peak hour traffic volumes, all sections along the USH 14/61/27 corridor are over Design Capacity, and three sections are approaching or at Maximum Capacity. Under 2025 morning and evening peak traffic volumes, all sections will be over Design Capacity, and all will be at or approaching maximum Capacity. There are more than 75 access points along USH 14/61 outside Viroqua and Westby, more than 170 access points in Viroqua, and more than 110 access points in Westby. Cross traffic and turning traffic combined with speed changes and lack of auxiliary lanes, reduces operational efficiency, capacity, travel speed, and safety along the existing highway.

This state study contains additional analysis and recommendations for the Highway 14/61/27 corridor and need not be repeated here. This study recommended a bypass solution to accommodate future traffic flow for the City of Viroqua. This study should be examined for the analysis of traffic flow details both before and after construction of the bypass.

The center of concern for traffic movement and congestion is in the downtown area. Managing traffic through the downtown is very important because of the interrelationship with shopping activity, particularly

the ease and safety of pedestrian movement. Assuring compatibility between the goals and projects for the city's downtown planning and transportation planning is an important planning goal of any community's Comprehensive Plan. One of the key concerns in traffic movement through a city's downtown traffic corridor is the volume of truck traffic. The above state traffic study projected that by the year 2025 truck traffic would about double to 2,300 vehicles per day through the downtown without a bypass; however, even with a bypass, truck traffic in the downtown would still be maintained at about the same volume by the year 2025 as it presently is. Managing traffic flow and congestion in a downtown area also involves the provision of adequate parking for shoppers, employees and downtown residents. Ease of parking can reduce traffic congestion from recirculating traffic looking for a parking space. In addition to managing traffic flow, a good parking pattern is necessary for a successful downtown shopping area. This subject will be dealt with more in the Land Use Section of this Plan.

It is recognized that in the northern half of the city, nearly all through traffic streets, (Chicago Avenue, Main Street, East Street, and Railroad Avenue) flow on a north-south direction, there are virtually no east-west connections for a stretch of nearly a mile between Highway 56 and County Road BB.

Significant traffic management concern also radiates outward from the downtown area along the arterial streets, the most important of which are Highway 14/61 and Highway 56. Minimizing traffic accidents and pedestrian conflicts are key concerns along these routes. Since street intersections are the most common locations for accidents, the upgrading of intersection design will be important to minimizing accidents on these arterial streets. Turning lanes, pavement markings, good signing and the limitation of driveways onto arterial streets will be important traffic management measures within the City of Viroqua.

A critically important street and highway planning concern for the Viroqua area will be the reorientation of some traffic to key access points to the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass. This reorientation of traffic flow may be moderate at first, but it can be expected to increase significantly depending on the magnitude of traffic-generating land development which occurs at by-pass access points and along streets and roads leading to these points. This traffic generation will be a product of city and town land use planning decisions. Potential disruptions of through traffic (both motorized and bicycle) as a result of the limited access component of the bypass deserves consideration (particularly the cul-de-sacs on Railroad Avenue and Lewison Road have been mentioned).

Care should be taken not to allow transportation intersections to be the deciding factor for future growth patterns. The County Road BB intersection with the bypass may appear to be likely to develop growth, but its access to utility services may be a far greater concern. Part of this concern will involve the maintenance of the required "consistency" between the various sections of the Comprehensive Plan and any development ordinances or programs of local government.

Town of Viroqua Road and Traffic Concerns

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Cluster A Goals, Objectives and Policies for Streets and Roads

Goals:

- Maintain a high quality highway, road, and street system which is critical for safe and economical travel, aesthetics and environmental quality, and for the social and economic health of the area.
- Provide that the interrelationship between transportation and land use are consistent and well planned so as to assure that land development complies with the growth and planning goals of this Plan.
- Maintain effective public input and direction from local government and its citizens in the development of all transportation improvements proposed for this area.

Objectives:

- The provision of regional highway traffic serving the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua in ways that can enhance future growth and minimize impacts to existing properties and businesses.
- Maintain involvement by the City and Town governments in the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass project to assure consistency between the elements of the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed project.
- Study the future traffic and access issues and needs in the Highway 56 corridor.
- Apply standards for urban and rural road design and property access which are intended to provide safe travel, economical road construction and maintenance, and facilitation of emergency access.
- Plan, design and construct highways, roads and streets which maintain and enhance the scenic, environmental and historic qualities of the rural landscape and cityscape.
- Seek to expand the bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel where feasible to diversify and supplement motorized travel. This includes adult and child-use, as well as, recreational and utilitarian use. Trails should be maintained for exercise and pleasure but land and parking facilities should be established for youthful school commuters and adults on local errands.
- Provide for the continuation of specialized regional transit services to elderly, low income and disabled persons in proportion to needs.
- Preserve corridors for future transportation and trail facilities including respect for multi-modal transportation needs of small user groups and those choosing non-motorized means of transportation.
- Preserve and enhance neighborhood friendly streetscapes through the preservation of tree canopies, on-street parking and minimal safe illumination of roadways.

Policies:

- Develop strategies for maintaining efficient traffic flows and a viable community both before and after the proposed bypass is constructed which may not occur until well into this planning period.
- Assure that the continued health of the local economy is provided for in local transportation programs and decisions.
- Plan for limited access onto arterial streets and highways through appropriate use of collector streets.
- Improve the design of high volume intersections for safety and to facilitate through traffic movement.
- Apply standards which adequately provides for the movement, parking and loading of trucks and other commercial vehicles.
- Maintain a pedestrian environment in the Main Street shopping corridor in downtown Viroqua.
- Provide pedestrian facilities in major urban street corridors.
- Plan for the development of local and regional bicycle/pedestrian trails and paths along both local and intercommunity links and local designated bikeways including connections to local schools, parks, entertainment and commercial uses.
- Provide interconnectivity of the urban and rural street systems consistent with topographic allowances, for the following purposes: provision of multiple options for traffic circulation, improve safety and traffic flow by minimizing intersection congestion, reduce traffic on arterial streets, ease of emergency vehicle ingress and egress, providing logical corridors for utility interconnections, and to facilitate pedestrian movement.
- Respect light trespass requirements of city statutes and international Dark Sky guidelines and encourage full-cut-off lighting for all street illumination.
- Maintain and restore boulevard trees in residential and commercial neighborhoods with aesthetic, energy conservation and traffic-calming objectives.
- Respect desire for maintaining and expanding boulevard trees in residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- Provide residential street and road design standards which are not excessive with respect to width of right-of-way or width of pavement so as to keep streets in scale with the neighborhood and to minimize the cost of residential development, housing, and street maintenance.
- Provide esthetic “gateway entrances” at key entry points to the City and Town of Viroqua.
- Preserve locally identified scenic town road corridors as rustic roads or scenic touring routes and as a means of preserving local cultural heritage and preserving the special scenic landscapes in the area.
- Limit billboards and the density of signage along streets and highways in the interest of safety and to enhance community image which is also an important element in economic development.
- Encourage continued support of local taxi service with special attention to the needs of the elderly and handicapped, with possible expansion to regularly scheduled mini-bus routes.
- Support transit services connecting Highway 14/61 communities into the La Crosse metropolitan area and surrounding hubs of economic activity including LaFarge and Richland Center as the need and feasibility of such services would be demonstrated.
- Provide special facilities for horse-drawn vehicles in areas of such need.

- Provide standards in land division ordinances which clearly identify which infrastructure facilities are to be provided by land owners and developers and the related construction standards and the share of financial responsibility of such facilities.
- Have a Cluster A standing committee on transportation issues to stay abreast of transportation activities of Vernon County and the State Department of Transportation.

Programs for Streets and Highways

City of Viroqua:

- Extend Railroad Ave over the proposed bypass to provide continuity of this important traffic linkage to the agri-business and county landfill / recycling facilities, and for continuity of bicycle travel.
- Extend De Freese Street over the by-pass rather than an at-grade intersection to avoid traffic safety problems and disruption in the De Freese residential neighborhood from through traffic to and from the by-pass.
- Extend South Street to intersect with Highway 56
- **See Map 8** which illustrates the Major Street Plan and bicycle plan recommendations of the City of Viroqua.

Town Of Viroqua:

- See **Map 9** for the Town of Viroqua Road Plan :

Functional Classification of Highways

The functional classification of highways in this planning area is presented on the map in **Map 5**.

Comparison To State And Regional Plans

The only existing state or regional highway plan which affects this planning area is the Highway 14/61 bypass. The **Map 7** locates the state's proposed bypass.

Incorporation of State and Regional Transportation Plans

The State Department of Transportation's (DOT) interpretation of "incorporating" state and regional transportation plans means that their plans simply have to be "considered" in the local comprehensive plans. Such state plans are not required to be approved or accepted in local plans according to state officials. The only state transportation plan affecting this planning area as of 2004/06 was the proposed Highway 14/61 highway bypass and the improvements on Highway 56. The Highway 14/61 bypass has been subject to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which has been approved and enumerated by the state for construction. There are no other regional transportation plans affecting this planning area. The proposed Highway 14/61 bypass was considered in this comprehensive planning process, including Section 8 on Land Use and is incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan. However, all aspects of future highway design and access standards for this by-pass are still considered subject to recommendation and influence by local units of government and other public interests in the area.

Transportation Corridor Plans

The only transportation corridor plan affecting the City and Town of Viroqua area is the State Department of Transportation's plan for relocating Highway 14/61 east of the City of Viroqua. The Environmental

Impact Statement for this plan was approved in 2002. The City of Viroqua City Council affirmed its approval of the by-pass route in July 2004. This by-pass corridor is shown in the map in **Map 7**. The State reports that this by-pass plan has been approved by the State Transportation Projects Commission for construction and has been enumerated for funding; the planned construction of the Viroqua bypass segment is scheduled for 2012. This corridor plan can be expected to have significant long term effects on the Town and City of Viroqua with respect to traffic, land use and the general form and functioning of future urban development. State highway officials have reported that grade separated interchanges may be added to the original highway plan at the north end of Viroqua and the south end of Westby. Much of the impact of this facility will develop beyond the current planning period of this Comprehensive Plan edition.

Transit:

There are no locally provided transit services. Common carrier bus service has been provided on Highway 14/61 by Jefferson Lines on its La Crosse to Madison, Wisconsin route. This service provides once a day stops for travel north and south. Greyhound announced in July 2004 that they were planning to discontinue this route. This is viewed as an important transit service for many in the City and Town of Viroqua area who do not have other transportation options. Jefferson Bus Lines has taken over bus service in this highway corridor. This Comprehensive Plan supports the continuation of regional bus service on this route throughout the future.

Viroqua Cab Company provides services mostly to the city but will provide service within a 5 to 7 mile radius. There are 3 cabs in the fleet which are on call day and night.

There are no state or regional governmental transit plans affecting this planning area.

Transportation Facilities for Disabled:

The City of Viroqua supports the Viroqua Cab Company with special rates for seniors and handicap access. VARC also has some services available. This plan supports goals, objectives, policies and programs which promote transportation facilities for the disabled. The local governments in this planning area reserve the right to express their official position on any specific program involving a commitment of their funding or other public resources for such services.

Bicycle Travel:

Goals and Objectives

- The reasonable accommodation of the bicycle mode of travel throughout the planning area.
- Achieve greater traffic safety involving bicycle travel.
- Facilitate health and wellness through bicycling and recreational trails.
- Provide more bicycle facilities, such as sidewalks and curb ramps in areas of concentrated bicycle travel, including the doubling-up of such facilities with recreational trails. Provide sidewalks through neighborhoods where there are none.
- Provide bicycle accommodation within arterial street corridors where feasible.
- See **Map 8** for the general bicycle route plan for the Viroqua area.

Policies

- Design bicycle accommodations into arterial street construction and reconstruction plans.
- Provide bicycle accommodation in corridors linking the School campus with the rest of the community.
- Collaborate with adjacent units of government to plan for the interconnectivity of a bike-pedestrian trail system.
- Work with the Driftless Area Recreational Trail development team on regional trail development and trail mapping.
- Plan trail system interconnections between Viroqua area recreational and tourist attractions and similar facilities within the region, such as the Sidie Hollow County Park, and with other parks, schools, entertainment, and commercial areas.
- Work with the State Highway Department to incorporate separated bike/pedestrian facilities into the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass with connections into existing bike/pedestrian facilities and with a linkage to the City of Westby, and including a possible bike/pedestrian tunnel or overpass at the redesigned intersection at County Highway BB or Rail Road Avenue.

Programs

- Develop a Bicycle-Pedestrian Capital Improvement Program.
- Continue to construct sidewalk curb ramps throughout the City of Viroqua.
- Provide street markings and signage to aid pedestrian and bicycle travel on the local street, and sidewalk system.
- Provide accommodation for bicycle travel on Railroad Ave in the City of Viroqua.
- Work with the county and other organizations to incorporate bicycling and related facilities as part of an area tourism and economic betterment effort to strengthen the local economy.
- Work directly with the State DOT highway designers to provide pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the corridor of the reconstructed Highway 14/61 project.

Comparison to State and Regional Plans

The above program is consistent with State and regional plans and policies for bicycle planning. DART has plans for interconnectivity with regional and state networks.

Comparison to and Incorporation of State and Regional Bicycle Plans

The State of Wisconsin has no state bicycle plans involving this planning area.

Viroqua Bicycle Transportation Plan

Introduction

Bicycling is an important mode of transportation in the Viroqua area. Bicycling needs to be available to people of all ages and socioeconomic levels. Bicycling is an efficient and convenient form of transportation in and around urban areas. Like the automobile, bicycling provides a high degree of independence, flexibility, and freedom of choice relative to schedule and destination.

Recreational bicycling in the Viroqua area is popular on city streets and along the country roads that reach out into the country-side. Bicycling should be considered to be an important component in the physical and mental health regime of Viroqua's citizens who participate in it.

The bicycle transportation plan addresses bike lanes, in conjunction with what have traditionally been "just for vehicle" roadways, and bike trails. It should be assumed that bike trails are for shared use with joggers and walkers. Bike lanes are for bicycles only, on roadways shared with cars and trucks.

Throughout western Wisconsin there are significant and well used bike trails available for recreation and leisure such as the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail, the "400", La Crosse River, and the Great River State Trails. Indeed, bike trails are abundant throughout Wisconsin and there are many resources and examples to draw upon while devising and maintaining a Bicycle Transportation System that incorporates trails, lanes, related facilities, and laws for safety.

A transportation plan that includes solid provisions for bicycling facilities will have a positive impact on the quality of life in Viroqua as well as its economic well being.

Making the Viroqua Area a Good Place to Bicycle

Bicycling for sport and general transportation in the Viroqua area is in its infancy. This element in the Transportation plan will call for goals, objectives, policies, and programs designed to advance bicycling in this area.

Bicycle Plan Purpose

This element of the Transportation Plan will establish a philosophy, goals, policies, and programs for Viroqua that will serve to embrace and promote bicycling as a means of transportation and source of recreation in Viroqua. It will:

- Serve as a blueprint for continuing to improve bicycling conditions and safety and to increase bicycling levels.
- Identify desirable bicycle routes within and around Viroqua including those to be designated bike lanes and bike trails.
- Educate citizens and policy makers on bicycle transportation and the needs of bicyclists.
- Provide guidelines for planning, designing, and maintaining bicycle facilities.

- Serve as a framework for cooperation between state agencies, county, and local governments in planning for and developing bicycle facilities.

Bicycle Plan Scope

This plan serves the purpose of creating and improving upon a system that will meet the transportation and recreational needs of residents while also appealing to and attracting visitors to the Viroqua area. It includes engineering (creation and improvement of facilities), education, encouragement, and enforcement.

The plan shall identify on-street bicycle facilities (bike lanes/paved shoulders) needs and off—street trails and bicycle routes. Ongoing analysis will be performed to identify existing routes that are suitable for bicycling and to recommend improvements to such routes as may be necessary. Attention shall be given to the analysis so that all residential, commercial, retail, industrial, and educational areas are ultimately connected and accessible. Special consideration and emphasis will be given to the creation of off-street bike trails.

Existing land use, transportation, and open space/park plans have been or will be incorporated into the Bicycle Transportation Plan, and the Bicycle Transportation Plan will be incorporated into those plans.

Along with bicycle facility creation and maintenance, education and encouragement programs will be identified. These programs shall serve to increase rider safety and promote an environment where motorists and bicyclist can exist together.

Goals

- Provide for safe, convenient, and enjoyable travel by bicyclists in Viroqua and the surrounding area.
- Promote bicycling amongst residents and visitors.

Objectives

Bicycle Facility Planning and Development:

- Fully integrate the consideration of bicyclists' needs into the community neighborhood planning and site development/design process, as well as local and state agencies' planning, design, and execution of transportation projects and programs.
- Consider the needs of all bicyclists – experienced and novice, commuter and recreational – when planning and designing bicycle facilities and programs.
- Create and improve bicycle through routes on local connector routes and arterial roadways. Devise routes and bike lanes that serve and connect all areas within the city, as well as those areas on the outskirts of the city.

- Eliminate bicycling barriers and hazards through the accommodation of bicyclists' needs in the design of bridges, and under/overpasses, street intersections, and traffic control devices.
- Utilize opportunities for providing bicycle facilities when planning for and developing parks, recreational facilities, open spaces, and utility corridors.
- Enlist developer consideration for bicycle and recreational facilities within the plat review process and other developer projects. Incorporate need and desirability of recreational trails within the Subdivision Ordinance.
- Fund on-street and off-street facilities and facility improvement in conjunction with roadway projects as a routine part of the cost of the project.
- Make provisions for bicycle parking at all appropriate public facilities such as municipal buildings and parks. Encourage strategically located parking facilities in business districts.
- Provide printed maps showing bike lanes, bike route, and bicycle/multi-use trails. Provide street striping and signage that identifies bike lanes, routes, and bicycle/multi-use trails

Bicycle Facility Maintenance

- Design and construct bicycle facilities to reduce long-term maintenance issues.
- Maintain roadways and bicycle paths/trails to a reasonable level of safety and ride ability giving special attention to surfaces and clearances.

Education and Encouragement

Increase public awareness of bicycling facilities, resources and programs.

- Provide and promote safety and encouragement programs.
- Improve the attitude and behavior of both motorists and bicyclists with respect to compliance of traffic laws.
- Support encouragement and incentives for bicycling by public agencies, private employers, and other entities.
- Cooperatively develop and distribute bicycle route maps and other safety information.

Enforcement

- Enforce traffic laws that enhance bicyclist safety by citing violations by both motorists and bicyclists.

Additional Recommendations

- Promote a countywide bicycle transportation plan.
- Promote coordination among DOT, county, towns, villages, and cities to develop and adopt provisions or guidelines for wide paved shoulders on rural roads.
- Promote development of a signed county bicycle route system.
- Adopt citywide street standards that would consider bicyclists needs in future development.
- Include provisions for bicycle facilities in all appropriate Comprehensive Plan Elements and associated maps, maintain on an annual basis. These elements should address Issues and Opportunities, Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Inter-Governmental Cooperation, and Transportation.
- Establish a reliable means of funding the development and maintenance of bicycle facilities. Sources may include, but are not limited to Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Statewide Multi-Modal Improvement Program, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources programs for trails, local government annual budgets (county, city, and town), local businesses, and private individuals.

Walking and Pedestrian Facilities:

Goals and Objectives

- The reasonable accommodation of pedestrian safety.
- Facilitate health and wellness as a byproduct of providing walking facilities.
- Identify areas presently needing or conducive to pedestrian travel.
- Pedestrian safety, particularly for school children.
- Diversifying the modes of travel in the urban area.
- Maintain and support safe walking corridors in downtown Viroqua and major arteries to commercial activity. Bike/ped facilities within appropriate sections of the Highway 14/61 bypass.
- Encourage opportunities for rural walking/jogging paths along scenic roads.

Policies

- Identify pedestrian facility areas in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Implement an annual sidewalk improvement program consistent with safety needs and the Comprehensive Plan.
- Require sidewalk continuity from existing walks into new urban land development, particularly in commercial areas and in subdivisions.
- Work with DOT to insure the construction of pedestrian facilities as a part of state highway improvement projects.
- Develop and implement a city sidewalk/pedestrian plan.

- Work with the Driftless Area Recreational Trail Development Team (DART) on trail facility planning and development.

Programs

- Develop plans to construct sidewalks in appropriate corridors linking the school campus with existing and future growth areas in the community.
- Plan and develop walking paths/tours within and around the City of Viroqua.

Comparison to State and Regional Plans

There are no state or regional plans for pedestrian facilities within this planning area.

Railroads:

There are no railroads within this planning area; however, an overall goal is provision of an access service to Amtrak in the City of Tomah.

Air Transportation:

There is no commercial airport within this planning area. The City of Viroqua has an airport which is classified as a Basic Utility airport in the *Wisconsin Airport System Plan 2020*. The airport does not have instrument landing capability. There is an automated fueling facility. There are two runways; the principal runway is a 3,350 X 60 foot paved runway, and there is a 2,500 X 90 foot cross-wind grass runway. Approach surface easement zones extending from the ends of each runway limit the height of uses in such zones. Parts of these easement zones restrict land development under the conditions of the easement purchase. A general planning goal is the shaping of land use plans to preserve the safety and utility of air transportation services for the community. See the Land Use Plan map referenced in Section 8 for the location of the most restrictive of these easement zones.

Heliport Needs

Since emergency medical services are increasingly using helicopter transport of patients, it is a goal of this Transportation Element to identify one or more formally established helicopter-landing zones with needed markings and lighting. The city airport currently serves as the helicopter landing point for Viroqua Memorial Hospital. A reevaluation of the heliport location is advisable after the hospital expansion.

State Airport Master Plans

The State Bureau of Aeronautics has indicated that instrument landing capability may be advisable for this airport. The State Airport System Plan shows this airport as a Basic Utility airport. The State Bureau of Aeronautics show this airport having ultimate expansion dimensions for the main runway extending to 4,000 X 75 feet with a parallel taxi-way, and the cross-wind runway being reduced in size to 2,100 X 60 feet. Guiding and controlling development in the vicinity of the airport will be important to assure the future utility of the airport.

Trucking:

There are no commercial trucking terminals in this planning area. A general need in many communities is for a designated area for truck parking by residents who cannot park large trucks at their homes. A goal

of this plan is to locate a secure truck parking area with good highway access and which would be free of conflicts with residential areas.

Water Transportation:

There are no navigable waterways within this planning area, and therefore, there is no water mode of transportation in the planning area. State and federal water transportation plans don't apply in this planning area.

Equestrian:

Horse drawn vehicles travel throughout the Town and City of Viroqua. The Amish community is the most frequent users of the equestrian mode of transportation which brings with it certain considerations for accommodating this special mode of travel. It is a goal of this Comprehensive Plan that the planning, design, and construction of roads and streets accommodate to the extent practical, the safe movement and parking of horse drawn vehicles. An additional goal is to accommodate trail riders and related needs associated with the local celebration of Wild West Days.

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Section 4 - Utilities and Community Facilities Element

Goal of this Element:

To guide the future development of utilities and community facilities by analyzing existing facilities and identifying future needs and presenting a plan and program to meet these needs.

General Context of Utility and Community Facilities in the Planning Area:

The planning context for utilities and community facilities is shaped by two substantially different governmental providers of these elements. The City of Viroqua provides a complete range of utilities and community facilities because of the concentrated population and density of developed land. The Town of Viroqua provides a less comprehensive range of services because of the rural nature of the town where there are few concentrations of people or development.

The utility element of comprehensive planning has a critically important role in growth and overall health of a community. One of the most complex and expensive services which all communities have is its utility services. The most common of these utilities are sanitary sewer and public water supply, and to a lesser extent, storm sewer. Some communities also provide telephone, electric power and cable TV. Sewer and water are the utilities of concern in this Comprehensive Plan. Since the growth of communities - and all the economic and cultural necessities they provide - is vital to the welfare of any planning area, it is therefore a key responsibility of a comprehensive plan to provide for the reasonable expansion of those utilities which a community will need to grow.

Because these utilities require complex engineering and financing, and because they are regulated by state and federal standards, and because they are costly services, the installation and financing of such systems have to be based on long-range planning. An important element of this long-range planning is the identification of those areas where the existing utility lines can most reasonably be extended for future growth. This kind of planning is particularly important for sanitary sewer service because the most efficient wastewater collection system is based on gravity flow to the community's single treatment plant; this means gravity flow sewer lines. However, many communities have lands which cannot flow by gravity to the sewer treatment plant, thereby requiring lift stations to pump sewage from opposite-flowing lands. Such lift stations and associated force mains are expensive. The planning and financial challenge is to plan the location of lift stations so that they serve as much of the area draining to them as reasonably possible so as to maximize the efficiency and use of such lift stations. It is important in such planning that it be possible for the lands capable of draining to a given lift station actually be developed so as to be served by a sewer system that is hooked up to that lift station. Differences in governmental jurisdictions within such lift station drainage areas can frustrate the servicing potential of such sewer system planning. The future growth of the Viroqua community potentially extends into several different drainage areas or basins. An important responsibility of the Comprehensive Plan for this area is to provide a plan which can reasonably be relied upon to project the extension of sanitary sewer services. This is necessary to determine the engineering and financing of this complex service. While public water systems also require sound planning for growth, they are not subject to the drainage basin planning and associated costs as described above for sewer systems.

The elements in this plan section are divided into separate parts for the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua. Where the comprehensive planning format calls for the description of the “existing location, use, capacity, future use and timetable”, such information is provided only where available. Such information is not reported for those utilities or community facilities where they are not provided by a unit of government.

Sanitary Sewer Service:

City of Viroqua

Goals and Objectives:

- Maintain high quality sanitary sewer service appropriate to local needs.
- Plan and design wastewater treatment plant improvements when needed to update existing plant or when growth requires it.
- Maintain the wastewater plant in conformance with state and federal permit standards.
- Assure that the sanitary sewer collection system is planned, designed, constructed and maintained to provide service to properties compliant with normal municipal standards.

Policies:

- Provide sewer services in conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan.
- Perform a feasibility analysis for major sanitary sewer extensions. Such an analysis is advisable for any extension requiring new lift stations or specific treatment plant improvements.
- Encourage and stimulate the development of lands within gravity drainage of existing sewer lift stations.
- Maintain user fees and assessment rates at levels necessary to pay for sanitary sewer services. Reserve the right to require “development agreements” with private parties where the City participates in a specific development by the provision of a variety of public services and incentives. Such an agreement should identify and balance city responsibilities and costs with corresponding public benefits.
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the wastewater treatment plant for conformance with state standards, and undertake appropriate studies to implement this policy.
- Apply the City Comprehensive Plan, and particularly its Land Use Plan Element, as a guide in determining locations for the provision of sanitary sewer services.

Location

Map 10 locates the city waste water treatment plant and trunk lines of the sanitary sewer collection system. Also located on this map are the city's 6 lift stations

Use

The volume of flows through the treatment plant averages 300,000 gallons per day (GPD).

Final Draft

Capacity

The design capacity of the waste water treatment plant is 600,000 GPD.

Program To Satisfy Existing Needs

- Conduct infiltration-inflow studies on appropriate sewer lines as part of continuation of clear water reduction program.
- Conduct TV inspections of appropriate sewer lines per city-wide schedule.
- Evaluate lift stations and upgrade and or relocate per city growth plans and/or to correct existing deficiencies.
- Planned relocation of the East Decker lift station to Highway 56 east.
- Upgrade or relocate the Sidie Hollow lift station

Future Needs and Programs

- Produce a sewer facilities planning map which locates all waste water facilities, including trunk sewer lines and lift stations. This map would also locate all planned and committed improvements.
- Construct the new Crossing Meadows lift station to serve the east side.
- Construct improvements to the treatment plant to serve growth and to comply with permit requirements.
- Update the 2000 Sanitary Sewer Facility Study to coordinate with the city's Comprehensive Plan.
- Review and update sewer user rates as necessary for the financing of the city's sewer system.
- Toward the end of this planning period, reevaluate the location of the waste treatment plant with respect to its efficiency in serving the direction of future city growth.

Timetable

- Expand treatment plant as needed.
- Rehabilitate treatment plant as needed as per permit requirements and growth.
- New Sidie Hollow and East Decker lift stations in 2006/2007. Crossing Meadows lift station as needed.
- After 2015, do a Facilities Study to evaluate the treatment plant and its location.

Town Of Viroqua

Goals, Objectives Policies and Programs:

The Town of Viroqua does not provide a sanitary sewer system for the collection and disposal of sewage and waste water. Sewage and wastewater in the town is treated by private, on-site treatment systems on each property. These are typically septic system methods of treatment, of which there are several varieties. It is a goal of the Town of Viroqua that public health not be jeopardized by problems associated with the disposal and treatment of sanitary sewer waste, and this includes the avoidance of the contamination of drinking water. It is a corresponding goal of the Town to avoid having to establish public sanitary sewer collection and treatment systems and the associated costs and duplication of services that would be associated with the existence of such a service adjacent to the pre-existing service in the City of Viroqua. It is a goal and policy of the town to manage the density of land development in the town to avoid the future necessity of establishing a town sewage collection and disposal system.

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, and this system was dependent on acceptable soil characteristics. More advanced technologies have enabled the development of some lands which would otherwise have been incapable of conventional septic systems. One such advanced system is the “mound system” which can overcome many natural soil and water limitations, such as heavy clay soils and a high ground water table or high bed rock. Among the other innovative systems are: wetland treatment systems, small lagoon systems for clustered developments, and community drain fields with small diameter force mains or gravity collection lines. Increasingly, small clusters of rural development, such as cross-roads hamlets and subdivisions, are using centralized, innovative waste treatment technology. Not all of these systems are permissible in Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, private onsite waste water systems must comply with standards of the Wisconsin Department of Commerce; these standards are enforced by the Vernon County Sanitarian’s Office which requires a permit for the installation of such systems. Wisconsin Administrative Code, COMM 83, contains standards for the use of new technology in onsite waste water treatment. This code recognizes nine onsite waste water treatment systems; they are: pressure distribution, mound, holding tank, single-pass sand filter, at-grade, in-ground soil absorption, recirculation sand filter, split-bed recirculation sand filter, and drip-line effluent distribution.

The COMM 83 code raised issues regarding possible unintended side-effects of urban sprawl and loss of more farm land which might be induced by the opening of more lands for development which would otherwise be unserviceable by conventional septic system technology. The Department of Commerce reported that the goal of such new technology was to reduce the kind of side-effects identified above. This department reported that local land use plans were the determining factor in which lands were developed, and that additional waste treatment alternatives would facilitate the development of those lands identified by local plans as advisable for development.

Development in the Town of Viroqua is dependent upon onsite treatment systems. Most lands in the town are conducive to the use of conventional septic system treatment. Some lands in the Town of Viroqua adjacent to the City of Viroqua are being developed for urban uses. These urban uses are being served by on-site waste disposal systems. Continued urban development at typical urban densities are advisable to be served by a centralized waste water collection and treatment system. Such a system is presently in place in the City of Viroqua; also, such systems can be provided by Town government subject to qualifying for such systems under state standards.

Water Supply:

City of Viroqua

The City of Viroqua maintains a centralized, public water system which includes four wells, ranging in depth from 505 feet to 1,100 feet. The water system includes two 250,000 gallon storage facilities, and a distribution system located on the map in **Map 10**. The source of this water is an underground aquifer which is fed by groundwater. The city wells penetrate this aquifer to depths of 505, 530, 880 and 1100 feet. The city's average water use is 400,000 gallons per day, and the maximum daily pumping capacity is 2.6 million gallons per day. This water supply is engineered and constructed to provide water to all City residents and businesses, and provides water and hydrants for fire fighting purposes. The City has a fire rating of 5.

The City's water supply is licensed by the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources for conformance with public health standards. The water quality standards for which the water supply must be tested, include the following potential contaminants: Inorganic, radioactive, unregulated, microbiological, volatile organic, and synthetic organic contaminants including pesticides and herbicides. The city's water supply has tested free of any violations of the water quality standards for these contaminants.

Goals and Objectives:

- Maintain a public water system meeting all water quality standards.
- Compliance with all health regulations governing public water supplies.
- An adequate supply of water for the existing & future needs of residents and businesses.
- An adequate supply of water and related facilities for fire fighting needs.

Policies:

- Maintain a comprehensive water system plan for accommodating growth.
- Maintain up-to-date water system construction standards in the city code.
- Strict enforcement of the city plumbing code and for water extensions into new development and servicing individual property water services.
- Maintain a water system fee schedule adequate to provide for existing and future water system needs.

Current City of Viroqua Water System Needs

- Continue with regular maintenance and rehabilitation of facilities as needed.

Program To Satisfy City of Viroqua Water System Needs

- Develop a water systems map which shows existing water system facilities, including planned and committed system improvements consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain and build adequate water storage facilities based on engineering studies.

Town of Viroqua Water Supply

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Programs:

The water supply in the Town of Viroqua is provided entirely by private wells on individual properties. The town government provides no public water service. It is a goal of the Town of Viroqua that public health and convenience not be jeopardized by problems associated with contaminated drinking water and/or insufficient water supply to town residents and businesses. It is a corresponding goal of the town to avoid having to establish public water supply, distribution and treatment systems, and the associated costs and duplication of services associated with such service adjacent to the existing services in the City of Viroqua. It will be a goal and policy of the town to manage the density of and development in the town to avoid the future necessity of establishing a town public water system.

Storm Water Management:

Storm Water Planning Context

The City and Town of Viroqua's ridge top locations straddle the drainage basins of the Kickapoo River and the Bad Axe River. **Map 10** illustrates the drainage geography for the City of Viroqua. The many valley bottoms throughout this planning area are subject to flash flooding. There are no rivers or stream flood plains within the city. There are no rivers within the Town of Viroqua; however, there are flood prone lands within several tributaries of the Kickapoo River, most notable, the Seas Branch, Bishop Branch and Harrison Creek branch of the Kickapoo River, and some of the upper reaches of the South Fork of the Bad Axe River. Most of the City is located on ridge top soils which tend to be well-drained soils of mixed loams, clay and rocky residue. There is generally good surface water drainage throughout the City and Town of Viroqua because the general gradient of the land slopes away from the numerous ridge tops which are prevalent throughout this planning area.

Storm water management in the City of Viroqua is accommodated by a limited system of storm sewers and surface drainage channels. Most of these storm drainage facilities are provided within street rights-of-way, although there are several open drainage channels on private property or within drainage easements. Urban development generates significant volumes of storm water runoff. Down stream lands in drainage corridors will be subject to flooding from urban runoff if storm water management measures are not incorporated into urban land development. The retention of runoff from commercial and industrial uses within such sites is a standard development technique, and is becoming subject to regulatory requirements. Urban housing sites can also be planned and designed to minimize storm water run off. It is in the interest of communities to require such storm water management techniques for land development because such techniques will minimize the amount of public funds needed by local government to manage storm water runoff, and ultimately, such techniques will minimize or limit storm water damage to private properties and to public infrastructure. Private property owners benefit greatly from the avoidance of storm water damage because private property insurance often times does not compensate for water damage.

Storm water management standards are typically placed in local subdivision or land division ordinances. Chapter 16 in the Viroqua City Code contains design standards for subdivisions and land development. Storm water and erosion control standards for land development are also provided in state and federal regulations, such as Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 151 and 216 for construction sites over one acre in size.

There are no public storm water management facilities in the Town of Viroqua other than the ditch and culvert facilities within the rights-of-way of the town and county road system. Also, many farm properties have private storm water management practices which include ponds, terraces and grass water-ways. These facilities retain and slow the run-off of storm water. Benefits include the lessening of soil erosion and flash flooding, and minimizing the contamination of surface waters. The effects of significant storm water runoff on the road systems within the Town are of public concern because of the damage and public cost that uncontrolled water runoff can cause.

City of Viroqua Storm Water Management

Goals and Objectives:

- Minimize storm water problems from urban development.
- Minimize city costs to control storm water runoff and the costs to clean up storm water damage.
- Maintain a storm water management plan with related code standards.
- Incorporate storm water management measures in all land development which generates significant water runoff.
- Enforce city storm water plans and codes.
- Implement “low-impact” land development standards to minimize run-off.

Policies and Programs:

- Subject all land development proposals requiring city review to compliance with city storm water plans and related standards.
- Keep the city storm water plan and related codes up to date.
- Incorporate state-of-the-art storm water management measures and regulatory requirements into the city’s storm water plan and code standards.
- Conduct educational efforts to assist land owners and land developers become knowledgeable about storm water management measures which can be incorporated in land planning and development.
- Work with the Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department for assistance on storm water management.
- Maintain and improve the open storm water ditch from the County Highway Dept site as a landscaped, greenbelt site capable of conveying the storm water volumes created by future urban growth.
- Develop and implement an annual storm water capital improvement program.

Town of Viroqua Storm Water Management

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Programs:

-

Solid Waste Disposal:

Solid waste is collected and disposed of by both the city and private contractors in the City of Viroqua. Solid waste is disposed of at the county sanitary landfill which is located about two miles northeast of the city. There is no active sanitary landfill within the City of Viroqua, although there is a terminated landfill facility which has been capped and is under a monitoring program. Solid waste disposal is a private property responsibility in the Town of Viroqua. The Town government provides a site for the collection of household waste. This site is open for town residents every Saturday under supervision. A county landfill operated by Vernon County on about 253 acres is located in the Town of Viroqua. The county landfill has full-service recycling. The landfill has received DNR approval for a landfill expansion to accommodate landfilling to the year 2019. The longer term future of solid waste management indicates that regional collaborations will likely be necessary to control costs and comply with increased environmental requirements. The City and Town of Viroqua, in cooperation with the county, will remain open to feasible opportunities for improved solid waste management guided by cost savings and use of new technology.

Recycling Facilities:

The county provides comprehensive recycling services at its county landfill.

Parks and Recreation:

Regional Context

This city and town planning area contains a mix of urban and rural population with a corresponding mix of urban and rural park and recreation resources and needs. The park and recreational needs of the residents of this planning area are provided by the City of Viroqua and by Vernon County. The large scale park, recreation and open space facilities of closest access to area residents are Sidie Hollow and Jersey Valley County Parks, Duck Egg County Forest, Wildcat Mountain State Park and the Kickapoo Valley reserve as well as the Mississippi and Kickapoo Rivers. Athletic fields for team sports are provided by the City of Viroqua and the Viroqua School District. Many residents in this planning area live on large acreages within an open space environment where a variety of private recreational activities are available, such as: cross-country skiing, camping, ATV riding, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and picnicking.

The City of Viroqua has eleven park and recreation facilities consisting of 25.25 acres. The largest city park facilities are Park Bowl at 9 acres and Eckhart Park at 6 acres. **Map 14** locates park and recreational facilities in the City of Viroqua. The city's former swimming pool located near the downtown and has been closed. An indoor public swimming pool is attached to the High School.

The Viroqua school district maintains a significant recreational facility at its high school on the west side of town. In 2006, a several phase expansion of that facility is beginning.

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

The Town of Viroqua has no public town parks, although the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides about 280 acres of public fishing lands along Bishops Branch and Cook Creek in the Town of Viroqua. Other Department of Natural Resource fishing lands are provided in other towns near this planning area.

It is increasingly important to provide public outdoor recreational opportunities for youth and for the senior 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, Capacity

Telecommunications services in the City of Viroqua are provided by Frontier Communications for telephone and broadband computer services. Vernon Communications provides internet services via wireless connection and is building a fiber optic network which will provide broadband internet and cable television services. Mediacom also provides broadband internet services through cable modems and will be starting telephone services in 2006. The existing capacity of telecommunications facilities is reported to be meeting existing needs and are positioning themselves to accommodate needs in the foreseeable future.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

The City and Town of Viroqua have no direct jurisdiction over the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the telecommunications companies; however, the city can influence such services through their franchise agreements with the various companies. The continuing comprehensive planning process will include collaboration with these utilities to help assure that local growth issues and needs are communicated to these utilities with the overall goal of providing adequate telecommunications services for this planning area throughout the future.

Future Needs and Timetable

While neither the City nor the Town of Viroqua have any direct jurisdiction over telecommunications facilities, it is assumed that such facilities will be upgraded and capacity added by the owners of such companies to serve changing needs and future growth in this planning area.

Power Plants and Transmission Lines:

Location, Use, Capacity

There are no electric power generation facilities in the City and Town of Viroqua planning area. An electric power substation is located on Linton Avenue. A 59 K electric transmission line extends through the Town of Viroqua. Electric power to the City of Viroqua is provided by the Xcel Energy and also by Vernon Electric Cooperative, and is provided by the Vernon County Electric Cooperative throughout the Town of Viroqua. The capacity of power plants and transmission lines serving this area is reported to be adequate for present needs.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

The City and Town of Viroqua have no jurisdiction over the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the electric utilities serving this planning area; however, the continuing comprehensive planning process will include collaboration with the electric utilities to help assure that local issues and needs are communicated to these utilities with the overall goal of providing adequate electric services to this planning area throughout the future.

Future Needs And Timetable

While neither the City of Viroqua nor the Town of Viroqua have any jurisdiction over providing electric power to their jurisdictions, it is assumed that such facilities will be upgraded and capacity added by the owners of such companies to serve changing needs and the future growth in this planning area. Specific needs for expansion, rehabilitation, or new facilities are not known at this time.

Cemeteries:

Location, Use, Capacity, Future Needs, Timetable

There is one cemetery in the City of Viroqua owned by the Viroqua Cemetery Board. The city provides some financial support for this cemetery. The cemetery has no known issues regarding use or capacity.

There are seven cemeteries in the Town of Viroqua. The town government does not own any of these cemeteries.

Goals, Objectives, Policies, Programs

There are judged to be no existing or future planning issues regarding cemeteries in this planning area.

Health Care Facilities:

Location, Use Capacity

Health care facilities in the City of Viroqua include the Viroqua Memorial Hospital which expanded in 2005-06. Some of the major health care services for this planning area are also provided by the health care facilities in the City of La Crosse.

Goals, Objectives, Policies Programs

The location of the hospital's helipad at the city airport is subject to revaluation after the hospital expansion project is completed.

Future Needs and Timetable

While neither the City of Viroqua nor the Town of Viroqua have any jurisdiction over providing health care facilities, it is assumed that the owners of the facilities serving the Viroqua area will upgrade such facilities and services as future needs within their region dictate. As the City and Town of Viroqua community grows, particularly the expanded elderly population, there could develop a need for additional health care facilities and/or wellness facility serving the Viroqua area. It is not known when or what type of local clinic/wellness facility would be justified.

Child Care Facilities:

Final Draft

Location, Use, Capacity

There are two facilities for child care in the City of Viroqua, and several others in the Viroqua area. These are private facilities. It is not known what the usage levels or capacities of the facilities are.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

To enable the location and growth of the necessary capacities of child care facilities to serve the City and Town of Viroqua.

Future Needs And Timetable

The City and Town do not have jurisdiction in the providing of child care facilities. It is assumed that this function will be adequately provided by private parties or institutions in tune with need. It is assumed that a significant number of families in the Viroqua area will continue to have dual wage-earner families, thereby requiring the provision of child care facilities throughout the future. This may require additional capacity from existing or new providers of such services. The timetable for expanding, rehabilitating or providing such new facilities is not known.

Police:

Location, Use, Capacity

The City of Viroqua has a police department which is located at 702 East Broadway; it is not at the City Hall. The use of policing services is at normal levels for a community the size of Viroqua. Such services are supplemented in special situations by the County Sheriff's Department. The city police department consists of 8 full time officers and 12 part-time officers and two office staff.

The Town of Viroqua has no police department. Law enforcement is provided by the Vernon County Sheriff's Department.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

To provide the necessary level of policing services customary to communities the size of the City and Town of Viroqua. Collaborating and sharing of policing resources between the City and the Town and with the County for the purpose of cost savings and quality of service delivery will be a general goal.

Future Needs And Timetable

Policing needs can be expected to experience growth in proportion to the city's growth. The Viroqua Common Council and the Town Board of the Town of Viroqua will decide the timetable for any changes in policing resources.

Fire and Rescue:

Location, Use, Capacity

The City of Viroqua's fire station is located at 702 East Broadway. The fire service is provided by a joint Fire Department which serves the Towns of Viroqua, Jefferson and Franklin in addition to the City of Viroqua. . This department also provides first responder services for highway accidents. The Tri-State ambulance company provides paramedic and ambulance services to the City and Town of Viroqua. The use and capacity of the department's services is 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.

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Programs

Continue to evaluate the service area of the Viroqua Area Fire District to assure that new needs throughout the future within the region can be addressed. It will remain in the interest of the local fire district to keep abreast of new funding opportunities and requirements of emergency service institutions, such as, 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 Viroqua Fire Department has an ongoing need to budget for replacement fire trucks and fire fighting equipment, including hoses and personnel protection clothing and equipment. Due to the high cost of this specialized equipment, a multi-year budgeting and replacement schedule is recommended.

Libraries:

Location, Use, Capacity

The City of Viroqua library is located within the downtown area and has 7,400 square feet of space. This library is used to full capacity and can be used by non-city residents. Library circulation in 2004 was 79,336, 50.7 % of which was by non-residents. The capacity of the library has been determined to be insufficient to meet current demands, and property has been acquired to reestablish the library at some point in the future to meet library space standards, which require at least 14,500 square feet of floor area on a minimum of a two acre site. The Town of Viroqua has no town library.

Goals, Objectives, Policies & Programs

The goals, objectives, policies and programs for the library fall within the jurisdiction of the Viroqua Library Board and the City Council. The city has purchased a new property to relocate the library and provide added space.

Future Needs and Timetable

The current needs of the Viroqua library include the provision of more space and facilities for library services. Satisfying these needs involves the relocation of the library into a larger facility. The timetable for satisfying this need is dependent upon raising the funds to finance the library relocation. The Library Board, in cooperation with the City Council, are the authorities in charge of establishing continuing needs and timetables for library services and improvements.

Schools:

Location, Use, Capacity

The City of Viroqua is served by two educational institutions. The Viroqua School District provides K to 12 education at its school campus on the west side of Viroqua. In addition, the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School provides an elementary school in Viroqua. A Youth Initiative High School and the Cornerstone Christian Academy is located in the Town of Viroqua. The southern two-thirds of the Town of Viroqua are in the Viroqua School District and the northern third of the Town is in the Westby School District which has its school facilities in the City of Westby which is close to the Town of Viroqua's north boundary. The **Map 12** locates the school district boundaries for this planning area.

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

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs

While the goals, objectives, policies and programs concerning the operation of the public school system and the Waldorf school fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of those respective school boards, there are potential areas of coordination with municipal planning, and those areas are addressed below:

Goals and Objectives:

- Coordination between school jurisdictions and the City and 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.
- Effective planning and construction of public infrastructure.
- Maintain good understandings between school and municipal jurisdictions of each others needs and responsibilities.
- Maintaining levels of school enrollments which sustain the financial stability and academic quality of the school district.

Policies:

- Regular communication on all matters of mutual concern.

Programs:

- Establish formal liaison arrangements between the municipal and school jurisdictions, particularly between the City of Viroqua and the Viroqua School District.

Future Needs and Timetable

The identification of future needs and timetables for school facilities is under the jurisdiction of the school boards of the two school systems in this planning area. This Comprehensive Plan assumes that such needs and timetables will be developed within the framework of the above goals, objectives, policies and programs to the extent applicable.

Other Facilities and Services:

City of Viroqua swimming pool

Goals & Objectives:

- Cooperation on planning for a community pool.

Policies & Programs:

- Undertake an outdoor pool study.

City of Viroqua Government Center Study

Goals & Objectives:

- Provide an efficient government service center for the future.

Policies & Programs:

- Undertake a study for a city government center.

Civic Celebrations

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Programs:

Maintain the Wild West Days celebration and the County Fair and related activities at both locations or other suitable locations in the Viroqua area. Continue support of other civic celebrations, such as the 4th of July, Bluegrass festival, etc.

Section 5 - Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element

Goal of This Element:

To produce a plan to guide the conservation, promotion, and effective management of natural and cultural resources in this planning area. **Map 11** locates the principal agricultural, natural resources of the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua.

Groundwater:

Planning Context

The groundwater resource in this planning area 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.

The planning implications concerning the ground water resource centers around the protection of these waters for public health and safety purposes. Specific purposes include protection of the ground water supply from contamination, particularly those waters used for human consumption; and protecting the supply of ground water to assure adequate quantities for future human and community use. Protecting these waters is particularly important because ground water is the sole source of water for human use, unlike some other areas which also have large lakes and reservoirs of surface waters which provide drinking water, and water for agricultural and industrial use.

The largest human use of ground water is provided by the City of Viroqua municipal water system. This system consists of four wells which range in depths of 505 to 1,100 feet. Preventing contamination of the ground water aquifer that serves this system is critically important for public health.

Homes and farms throughout the rest of this planning area either use individual deep wells or use 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

- Protect the quality and quantity of ground water resources to assure the future availability of healthy drinking water, and for other agricultural and community uses.
- Monitor and study ground water conditions and implement measures to avoid or minimize ground water problems that are detected.
- Utilize the resources of the County Land and Water Conservation Department to assist with groundwater quality issues
- Utilize the resources of the County Health Department for water quality programs
- Utilize the resources of the Dept. of Natural Resources for water quality programs
- Insure the enforcement of ground water laws and regulations

Policies

- Monitor and control the use of toxic materials and the disposal of hazardous waste in the City and Town of Viroqua
- Identify and monitor sites with known or suspected soil or groundwater contamination
- Maintain emergency incidence reaction plans to deal with hazardous waste spills or releases
- Prevent the development of uses on soils which are known to readily convey domestic or industrial wastewater to drinking water aquifers.
- Insure that land uses served by on-site septic systems are located on appropriate soils and installed properly so as to prevent ground water contamination and governmental remediation (clean-up) expenses.
- Have appropriate performance standards for the location of new businesses which have the capability of producing groundwater contamination
- Protect shallow ground water recharge areas from contamination.
- Protect against all illegal dumping, including toxic waste and hazardous materials
- Provide for the safe abandonment of terminated or abandoned wells.
- Monitor the ground water at solid waste disposal sites

Programs

- Enact new ordinances to implement ground water objectives and policies which can be administered at the County, City or Town level
- Amend existing city or town ordinances, such as zoning and subdivision ordinances, and incorporate or up-grade standards related to protection of ground water which can be administered at the city or town level.
- Develop and/or up-grade formal relationships with the County Land and Water Conservation Department and the County Sanitarian regarding their programs dealing with protection of ground water.
- Initiate studies which identify ground water recharge zones that may be especially conducive to contamination and identify remedial measures
- Continued assessment of the condition of the City of Viroqua well systems, including potential threats to the city's drinking water aquifers, and employ necessary measures to protect this drinking water.

- Inventory brownfield sites, particularly leaking underground storage tanks, and utilize the programs of the Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources to remediate and redevelop such sites.

Forests:

Planning Context

The Viroqua area planning cluster has little forest area. There are some woodlands in the Town of Viroqua, mostly on the steep valley hillsides. Planning for forest as a resource to be harvested is not a paramount issue in the overall context of this plan. Preservation and expansion of our silviculture for its many other community benefits is a high priority.

Goals and Objectives

- View woodlands as an essential part of the local quality of life, and particularly essential to the esthetic quality of the area landscape.
- Preservation of woodlands in their economic use and in land development to the most practical extent possible
- Continued use of the forest resource for wood products in a reasonable and sustainable fashion.
- Use of the woodland resource as a component of the local economy
- The application of professional woodland management practices
- Use of the woodland resources of the County Land & Water Conservation Department
- Use the woodland resources of the State Dept. of Natural Resources

Policies

- Apply woodlands preservation standards in city and town zoning, platting and subdivision codes.
- Preservation of vegetation on steep slopes as a part of development
- Use of the professional woodlands management advice from professional foresters.
- Encourage the use of cluster housing in woodland locations as a means of preserving woodland cover and rural scenery by lowering the density of housing in such locations.

Programs

- Use of public and private timber stand improvement practices
- Utilize services and programs of state foresters
- Utilize professional services of the County Land Conservation Office for soil and woodland planning and management
- Use products and services of state nurseries to grow new timber stock
- Use forest and woodland incentive programs
- Continued harvest of timber for wood products in a sustainable fashion
- Local ordinance standards for preserving tree cover and other vegetation in the development of lands having steep slopes.
- Encourage the use of cluster housing options to preserve woodlands on residential development parcels.
- Develop and/or expand a tree program in the City of Viroqua

Productive Agricultural Areas:

Planning Context

A substantial part of this planning area consists of productive agricultural lands. This land resource is vital to providing food for a growing population. The extensive ridge lands and valley bottoms have productive agricultural soils. The farm products and farm families on these lands are a very valuable part of the local economy. These agricultural areas are, therefore, an important natural resource, the preservation of which is important to the quality of life and economy of the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua. An important planning issue revolves around the conversion of some of these lands for non-agricultural uses and the secondary impacts from those uses on adjacent farming operations. This is a difficult issue to deal with in a planning context. Such land use changes are often rooted in conflicting socio/economic needs and values.

The Town of Viroqua has a significant amount of productive agricultural land. According to the Wisconsin Program on Agricultural Technology Studies, farmland constituted 75% of the Town of Viroqua in 1993; only the Town of Christiana had a higher percentage of farmland area within Vernon County. The Town of Viroqua was reported as having the highest estimated crop yield of farmable soils for corn of all towns in the county, at 150 bushels per acre. The Town of Viroqua was second only to the Town of Christiana in the amount of farm land in row crops, at 25.9% in 1993.

Goals and Objectives

- Recognition that productive agricultural lands are a valuable economic resource important to the quality of life of the Viroqua area.
- Establish local methods of preserving valuable agricultural lands.
- Identify those land-based requirements for sustaining viable agricultural operations throughout the future.
- Protect and preserve farm land as a resource that may be needed to accommodate future opportunities that may emerge to expand the farm economy; facilitating expansion of organic agriculture may be one of those opportunities.
- Sustain the area's farm economy and farming way of life.
- Limit the conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses to appropriate areas in or adjacent to the city.

Policies

- To support a property tax system that sustains the preservation of productive agricultural lands.
- To support and develop flexible codes that contains provisions for economic returns to rural land owners from non-agricultural development while assuring the protection of valuable agricultural lands.
- To have formal tools of protecting valuable agricultural lands from conversion to uses harmful to farmers and rural land owners and harmful to the agricultural economy in general, with potential tools being zoning, public hearings, public education etc.
- To take advantage of public programs to conserve the soil and water resources of valuable agricultural lands.

Programs

- Development by farmers, farm organizations and the agri-business community of a locally-devised strategy for looking at the future of valuable agricultural lands.
- Advocate to regulatory organizations to make appropriate changes that would benefit agricultural land resources and benefit the farmers responsible for those resources.
- Evaluating, and revising if necessary, local codes and taxing standards which contribute to the accelerating of the development of farm land.
- Apply the programs of the Natural Resource Conservation Service to the enhancement of agricultural lands productivity.
- Use the state farmland preservation program where it is beneficial.
- Use the potential of zoning to preserve those farmlands which have been locally identified as a valuable resource to protect.
- Use the resources of the University Extension program.
- For the preservation of those lands identified as important farm lands, consideration could be given to the farmland preservation technique which specifies a “maximum” lot size in the range of 1.5 to 2 acres, with the total number of lots determined by the size of the parcel out of which the lots are being created. For example, one lot per 20 or 40 acres of ownership with each lot not exceeding 2 acres. 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 farm land or open space.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas:

All environmentally sensitive areas within the Cluster A planning area fall within the categories of environmental resource areas reported in the following sections. There are no other uniquely sensitive areas known to exist in this planning area other than those reported here.

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 Section.

Stream Corridors:

Planning Context

Most of this planning area 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. There are no perennial streams in the City of Viroqua. The principal stream related planning context for this planning area is the quality of the surface waters flowing into the streams which are down gradient from the planning area.

Goals and Objectives

- Recognize that stream corridors are a large part of the area's scenic rural landscape and contribute to the overall quality of living in the area.
- Preserve stream corridors for the diversity of environmental assets which concentrate in and adjacent to streams.
- Prevent the pollution of streams and rivers.
- Seek the benefits which resource agencies can provide regarding programs and skills which can enhance stream corridors.
- Preserve the natural landscape and scenic views in stream corridors.

Policies

- Make land use decisions which protect stream quality.
- Provide incentives to land owners to maintain natural stream corridors.
- Minimize erosion and sedimentation in stream corridors.
- Minimize the fragmentation of stream corridor wildlife habitats.
- Incorporate "low-impact" land development standards into development codes.
- Look to stream corridors for incorporating public access and leisure time and health related trail activities.

Programs

- Provide education and assistance programs to landowners to assist with measures to protect and enhance stream corridors
- Work with land owners to Inventory stream corridors for their special natural qualities and provide ideas on how to preserve specific and unique qualities
- Provide recognition to landowners who preserve and protect streams
- Insure that the shoreland zoning program is maximizing its potential for protecting shoreland areas.
- Set aside drainage corridors within the city as green space.

Surface Waters:

Planning Context

There are no extensive areas of surface water within this planning area. There are no reservoirs, flowages, or lakes. The only surface waters are those in the few small streams described in the section above. Special surface waters consist of a limited number of storm water detention ponds, farm ponds, and the lagoon at the Viroqua waste water treatment facility. 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 runoff problems.

Goals and Objectives

- Prevent the 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

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

Programs

- Evaluate and upgrade, if necessary, existing codes covering the City and Town of Viroqua related to water quality protection.
- Enact zoning standards related to land development which protect public health through the protection of the quality of surface waters.
- Upgrade subdivision ordinances to provide standards to minimize and retain on-site water runoff.
- Plan and implement measures to prevent or minimize the contribution of contaminated surface water runoff from the Viroqua urban area to the Sidie Lake recreational facility in the South Fork Bad Axe River water shed which drains part of this urban area.
- Participate in the state programs for Targeted Runoff Management and the urban non-point source and storm water management program.
- Encourage rural land owners to work with the County Land and Water Conservation Department to implement measures to minimize and manage problems associated with surface water runoff into streams.
- Encourage citizen involvement in the City of Viroqua to minimize the dumping of contaminants into storm sewer inlets.

Floodplains:

Planning Context

As the preceding sections have indicated, there is little shoreland in the Viroqua planning area and therefore, floodplain planning is not a relevant subject that can be dealt with in this Plan. The state's floodplain zoning program which is implemented through the county zoning program has no designated areas of floodplain in this planning area. The Viroqua area does have drainage courses which 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. One of the basic functions of a local planning program is to identify the boundaries of flood protection zones, usually the 100-year flood plain level, and enforce regulations managing development within this zone. There are no 100-year flood plain elevations identified in this planning area; flash flooding is not conducive to 100-year flood plain identification. In the immediate urban area, all drainage courses are potential flood prone areas, and land development in these areas should be regulated to restrict or prohibit the placement of any use that would restrict flash flood drainage and would be exposed to property damage and jeopardize human safety.

Goals and Objectives

- Land development techniques which avoid human safety risks and flood damage to property and public infrastructure.
- Avoidance of non-farm structural development in flood prone drainage corridors.

Policies and Programs

- Incorporate standards in city and town zoning and subdivision codes which regulate non-farm development on flood prone lands and in storm water drainage corridors.
- Incorporate open, greenway corridors in all drainage courses in the path of urban 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 which qualify as biological wetlands. Wetland planning is therefore important in this area, due to the diversity of environmental and human benefits. Wetlands are a very important bird and wildlife habitat which is a component of the overall quality of life in this area. Wetland knowledge and planning is also important to local land owners and units of government because they are subject to public regulation.

Goals and Objectives

- Appreciation of the environmental, human and economic benefits of wetlands.
- Preservation of wetlands.
- Achieve greater public understanding about the benefits of wetlands.
- Convey more information and assistance to land owners about methods to produce economic value from wetlands.

Final Draft

- Greater understanding about how to work with wetland regulations.
- Avoid the filling and siltation of wetlands.

Policies

- Provide for the preservation of wetlands in public and private development projects.

Programs

- Engage in efforts to understand public wetland regulations.
- Engage the assistance of public and private authorities who can help educate about wetland planning, protection and compliance with wetland regulations.
- Maintain a current inventory of wetlands in this planning area so landowners and public officials can know when proposed activities will trigger wetland regulations.
- Work with conservation and economic development authorities to understand how to utilize wetlands and related natural environments for economic gain, such as providing to the public facilities for recreation, hunting, camping, home sites, and tourism in general.
- Gain an understanding of the mitigation possibilities in wetland regulations, that is, the necessity of replacing a wetland area if impacted by development. This element in the wetland regulations should be understood, but is often difficult and costly to achieve. It is important that the development planning process consider alternatives to impacting wetlands by public and private development, if at all possible. Sometimes, wetland impacts can't be avoided, and mitigation is then necessary.

Wildlife Habitat:

Planning Context

The amount of wildlife habitat exists in proportion to the amount of woodlands, wetlands and river environments. As described in the preceding sections, this planning area has small amounts of these types of habitat resources, thereby minimizing the planning issues related to wildlife habitat. Little wildlife habitat exists within the City of Viroqua since most city area is developed. Most of the Town of Viroqua is used for field cropping or pasture. Most wildlife habitat is limited to the eastern half of the Town, in wooded hillsides, valleys and a few stream corridors.

The federally-listed threatened and endangered species in Vernon County include the bald eagle, the northern monkshood, and the Higgins eye pearly mussel in the Mississippi River. 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 stitchwort, 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 which are the habitat for prairie plant materials. Bird habitat is important to the increasing popularity of birding as a recreational pastime. Birding has been reported as the fastest growing spectator sport in the world, and this activity can have significant economic value to a community.

Goals and Objectives

- Preservation of wildlife habitat consistent with human and agricultural needs.

Final Draft

- Appreciation of wildlife and their related habitat as quality of life enhancements still remaining in the Viroqua area in realization that this element of nature is typically destroyed with growth.
- Preservation and management of the wildlife and related habitat as a resource for leisure time activities, such as, education, nature observation, bird watching, hunting, fishing, and trapping.
- Identify principal wildlife habitat areas and any related problems or issues requiring management or remediation.
- Seek to minimize habitat fragmentation in planning and development of the landscape.
- Develop programs to control and manage wildlife related problems.
- Develop programs to enhance wildlife habitat where there is potential and consensus to do so

Policies

- Include wildlife habitat protection in the review and approval of land development projects and urban growth.
- Support measures which protect farming property, activities and products from wildlife damage.
- Utilize wildlife program assistance of the WI Dept. of Natural Resources and the County Land and Water Conservation Department.

Programs

- Support lay-person educational efforts and outdoor activities which enhance bird and wildlife habitat.
- Programs in the schools regarding the understanding and appreciation of wildlife, habitat requirements, and habitat enhancement methods which can be provided on private property.
- Consideration of habitat impacts in city and town activities such as road side vegetation management and parks development and maintenance activities.
- Support biological surveys as a means of further understanding and enhancing the wildlife resource.
- Incorporate wildlife protection standards in local codes, such as zoning 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 five limestone quarries in the Town of Viroqua. Reclamation measures are required by county ordinance for terminated quarries and pits.

Goals and Objectives

- 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

- 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

- Establish and/or upgrade ordinances which include location and performance standards for rock quarries and sand/gravel pits.

Parks and Open Space:

The Parks and Open Space element of this section of the Plan is presented in the Parks element of *Section 4 – Utilities and Community Facilities*

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.

The pre-settlement history significant to this planning area consists of the Native American presence in the area. The Native American culture present at the time of European settlement was largely that of the Ho-Chunk nation. This nation was thought to be preceded in the area by Native Americans of the Woodland Period, extending back about 3000 years. It is from this period that ancient mound formations were built in this general area of Wisconsin; these are often called effigy mounds because many of them took the shape of birds and animals. Some of this original upland area consisted of a savannah landscape composed of prairie and oak openings where big game such as buffalo would likely have been hunted. The Native American communities, including the Ho Chunk, typically resided 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. The Vernon County Historical Museum in Viroqua is a valuable resource for such information. Properties on the National Register of Historical Places include the following: City of Viroqua downtown historic district, Vernon County Court House, Bekkedal tobacco warehouse, and the Masonic Temple building. Other sites of historical and cultural significance include: the round barn and other structures on the Cunningham farmstead on Maple Dale Road and the Belgium Ridge cemetery on Mahoney Road. Other potentially

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significant historical sites in the city and 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

- Appreciation by local officials and the public of the significance of historical and cultural resources and heritage.
- Preservation and use of historical and cultural resources.
- Use the local historical heritage in promoting and enhancing community image and as a means of economic betterment.
- Maintain facilities for the collection, archival protection, display and interpretation of historical and cultural materials from the area.
- Continued research and investigation regarding historical events, sites and individuals to further local understanding and appreciation of local history and culture.
- Integrate historical and cultural concerns into public and private decision-making on issues of development and cultural programs.
- Preserve cultural and archaeological resources as a part of land development.

Policies

- 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 which have been identified as significant to the area.
- Support the programs of the Vernon County Historical Society.
- Support and enhance the Viroqua downtown historic district.
- Support the Viroqua Historic Preservation Commission.
- Support efforts to advance knowledge about local historical and cultural resources.
- Support and follow the recommendations of the Wisconsin Historical Society's Cultural Resources Report referenced above.

Programs

- Integrate provisions for the consideration of historical and cultural resources into local zoning and subdivision ordinances and other programs requiring governmental decisions involving or affecting historical and cultural resources.
- Upgrade the role and authority of the Viroqua Historic Preservation Commission as historic preservation interest and needs grow.
- Enhance and expand the Vernon County Historical Society museum and facilities so as to maintain its functions throughout this twenty year planning period.
- Sponsor and assist research on specific historical subjects and sites.
- Work with, and tap the resources of the State Historical Society and the Mississippi Valley Archaeological Center on local historical issues.
- Produce a program plan for the continued study and development of local cultural and historical resources.
- Facilitate assistance to property owners to nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historical Places.
- Refine and expand the use of historical/cultural themes in street beautification, building design, signage and community promotion materials.

Community Design:

Planning Context

Community Design is important to the welfare of a community. This element is a direct contributor to community pride, to community marketing success and to the general perception of quality in the appearance of the built environment. Community design is that element that communicates to the public a feeling or emotion about the character of a community. Community design is also important with regard to the way visitors view a community or region. This visitor satisfaction element is very important for a successful tourism economy and is important in attracting new residents to a community or town.

In our modern society where a community's health and future depends upon positive interrelationships with outside businesses, institutions and the public in general, it is vital that communities present positive images and an aesthetic physical environment. These are becoming increasingly important considerations for persons making decisions about the location of businesses and decisions about where to live. These kinds of quality of life factors are now part of the competition between communities in attracting growth or keeping what they have.

Achieving positive community design is a dual responsibility shared by public and private sectors alike. Governments have ample opportunities to apply community design principles in the structural and site designs of public facilities, streets, signage and public landscaping. The business community has, perhaps, the most significant potential in contributing to pleasing community design because of its high visibility exposure. The residents of a community generally do a very good job of reflecting positive community design in their residences and private property. Clean-up needs and the elimination of eyesores and blight are universal urban and rural challenges which are legitimate issues to be dealt with in achieving positive community design.

Goals and Objectives

- Apply principles of community design to enhance the image of the urban and rural built environments.
- Develop locally devised community design standards.
- Develop and Implement community design standards as part of a tourism and business marketing strategy.
- Adoption by local governments of esthetic design standards for application to infrastructure projects, including public buildings, street design, public landscaping and signage.
- Cooperation by the business community to use adopted community design standards for application in private developments to the extent practical.

Policies

- Insure that community design considerations are part of public infrastructure projects.
- Collaboration between local governments and businesses to mutually assist each other on developing feasible ideas for achieving community design standards on a project-by-project basis.
- Institute public education programs to promote esthetic property design and clean-up.
- Support continued beautification of the downtown area.
- Maintain and enforce a local sign ordinance.

Programs

- Establish a community image and theme with a set of design standard to guide the establishment of the image/theme on a project-by-project basis.
- Develop a city “gateway image” by constructing landscaped entry features at key city entry points. This design theme should carry throughout the city. The esthetic character of the Town of Viroqua is also conducive to a gateway image projects at key town entry points. New entry points off the Highway. 14/61 bypass route should be planned for beautification and information “gateway” projects.
- Provide an advisory set of design standards which reflect a community image/theme.
- Place provisions for the consideration of community design in appropriate local ordinances.
- Evaluate the signage provisions in the City of Viroqua zoning ordinance for their consistency with locally devised community design standards and their contribution to the local image/theme.
- Seek volunteer efforts through community organizations to establish and maintain “gateway” projects.
- Develop volunteer teams to keep neighborhoods and streets clean, with corresponding recognition and appreciation programs. “Adopt a Street” and “Adopt a Park” programs are effective volunteer efforts in many communities.

Recreational Resources:

The Recreational Resources element is presented in the Parks section of Section 4 of this Plan - Utilities and Community Facilities.

Other Natural Resources:

The above sections of this Plan cover the customary natural and cultural resource issues which the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua have occasion to deal with. Other issues and opportunities, which fall within the natural resource character of this planning area include the following.

- Special Geological Character Of The Landscape – The picturesque hill and valley landscape of this area is known as the “driftless” area. Map 3 illustrates Vernon County’s central location in this driftless area. This is a geological term which indicates that the glaciers likely didn’t pass over this area, thereby preserving the highly eroded and ancient landscape of today. This landscape is unique to southwestern Wisconsin and to small border areas of adjacent states. This unique landscape is responsible for many of the historic, geological and archaeological assets of the area and is of state wide and national interest. This interest conveys considerable potential value to the region and to the communities in this planning 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 which have been preserved because such sites have not been conducive to development; the preservation of these natural landmarks distinguishes the Viroqua community from many other communities which 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.

The landscape evaluation and design principles of Ian Mc Harg, as reflected in his book, *Design With Nature*, is a valuable source of techniques which can be used by the public and private planning for the benefit of the landscape and natural resource base of this planning area. Similar techniques from the work of U. W. Environmental Science professor, Phil Lewis, can also be valuable to this landscape, particularly since many of these techniques were developed in and for this driftless area.

- 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, although such odors can have adverse impacts in urban areas as well depending on feed lot locations and prevailing winds. Smell and particulate matter from open burning has the potential to constitute air quality problems depending on the magnitude of such activity. The expansion of non-farm housing into farming areas has the potential to generate complaints by non-farm residents.

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- Light Pollution – Light pollution is defined as light with no “useful” purpose –wasted energy, sometimes referred to as “artificial sky glow”. Excessive and misdirected urban 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. Such standards should be considered in the mix of urban development programs which become a part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
- 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 in working with individuals and units of government to guide activities associated with many of the issue areas of this section of this Plan. The goals, objectives, policies and programs of the LWRM plan are endorsed by this 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 have a fixed supply and can be expected to continue to decline. 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 in the citizen survey responses in this planning cluster. Also important to the continuing quality of life in the cluster will be the provision of ample public access to natural open spaces for leisure time activities, outdoor education & appreciation, and health and wellness.

Section 6 - Economic Development Element

Goal of this 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. A further goal of this element is to identify applicable county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the planning area.

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 measure of that economy is jobs and related income levels. A substantial part of the economy for the 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. A recent study entitled: *The 21st. Century At Work*, by the U. S. Department of Labor and the Rand Corporation has identified four "drivers" of the future economy; they are: demographic change, the quickened pace of technological change, the expanding reach of globalization, and the decentralization of industrial structure. Continuing economic development planning should be looking at these factors in more detail and translating them to economic development strategies for the Viroqua area, and also county-wide.

Not all communities in any given region are capable of benefiting from their region's economic strengths. The five most important local factors that determine a community's growth capability, and therefore its economy are:

- Location
- Natural resources
- Availability of land free of major development limitations
- Infrastructure needed for growth
- Institutional structures, including: services, leadership and heritage

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 La Crosse metropolitan area can be expected to have an increasing economic influence on the Viroqua area as a result of commuter trends and preferences for housing in rural communities. This regional connection would be facilitated by the planned construction of the Viroqua and Westby bypasses which would shorten the drive to La Crosse. 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 about 20% by the year 2020, but employment is projected to increase at a higher rate, at about 35%. The locations for this extra increment of jobs are projected to be decentralized beyond the La Crosse urban area. Thirty seven percent of all employed Vernon County residents commuted outside the county for work in 2000.

Accommodating additional growth will be linked to the growth policies and infrastructure capacity of the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua.

Analysis of Economic Base and Labor Force:

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 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 to view the economic base of the Viroqua planning area. The October 2001 Workforce Profile of the Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development provides the following county economic profile:

“Like its neighbor to the north, La Crosse County, Vernon County has a high percentage of people working in the service industry. Also, like La Crosse County, Vernon County has a large health service industry sector. However, Vernon County’s wages in the service industry are much lower than La Crosse County’s service industry wages. In 1999, service industry wages in Vernon County were only 68 percent of the state average. Service industry wages were 94.4 percent of the state average in La Crosse County.

Overall, the average annual wage in Vernon County was two-thirds of the state average in 1999. Only industry (transportation, communications, and public utilities) in Vernon County paid wages that were at least 90 percent of the state average. The transportation, communications, and public utilities industry accounted for just 4.6 percent of employment in Vernon County.

A number of noticeable changes in the top ten private employer list occurred in 1999. Nelson Industries increased from the third to the largest private employer in Vernon County. Wal-Mart increased from sixth to third place, and Dairyland Power nudged up slightly, from ninth to eight place. Making its first appearance on the Vernon County top ten list was the Coulee Region Organic Associates, placing seventh.”

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According to the WDWD, the top five employers in Vernon County in March 2000, by industry group were: Educational services, Health services, Eating and drinking places, Executive-legislative-and general, and Social Services. The top five employers at this time were reported to be: Nelson industries, Vernon Memorial Hospital, Bethel Home and Services, Wal-Mart Associates, and the Vernon Area Rehabilitation Services.

Because the residents of this planning area commute to a wide variety of locations for work, an analysis of the occupation of area residents and the industry they work in is only partially helpful. However, the tables below help define this area's economic base. The occupation of both the City and Town of Viroqua residents and the industry they work in represent typical distributions for a medium size rural community. The most significant economic characteristic is that the greatest proportion of city and town residents are employed in the "education, health and social services" industry, in management, professional and service related occupations. Manufacturing was the second highest industry category employing city residents, and agriculture etc. was the second highest industrial area employing town residents.

Agriculture has been the historic economic base of this area. This economic sector has changed over recent decades due to greater productivity which has reduced farm employment and due to a variety of public policies. Other restructuring has affected the local agriculture sector, such as the decline in the number of dairy farms and the decline in tobacco production, but also the growth of organic agriculture.

The two tables below report the occupation of the employed civilian labor force over sixteen years old, and the type of industry these employees work in.

| Occupation | City of Viroqua | | Town of Viroqua | | Vernon Co. |
|---|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | % |
| Management, professional, & related occupations | 465 | 24.3 | 252 | 35.0 | 29.9 |
| Service occupations | 432 | 22.6 | 116 | 16.1 | 15.2 |
| Sales and office occupations | 462 | 24.2 | 149 | 20.7 | 20.7 |
| Farming, fishing & forestry | 12 | 0.6 | 36 | 5.0 | 3.1 |
| Construction, extraction & maintenance | 114 | 6.0 | 52 | 7.2 | 10.2 |
| Production, transportation & material moving | 427 | 22.3 | 116 | 16.1 | 20.9 |

Data Source: U. S. Census Bureau, year 2000 census

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| Industry | City of Viroqua | | Town of Viroqua | | Vernon Co. |
|--|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|------------|
| | No. | % | No. | % | % |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting & mining | 29 | 1.5 | 131 | 18.2 | 11.6 |
| Construction | 96 | 5.0 | 28 | 3.9 | 6.9 |
| Manufacturing | 309 | 16.2 | 85 | 11.8 | 17.0 |
| Wholesale trade | 38 | 2.0 | 14 | 1.9 | 3.6 |
| Retail trade | 299 | 15.6 | 75 | 10.4 | 11.7 |
| Transportation, warehousing & utilities | 54 | 2.8 | 36 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| Information | 35 | 1.8 | 10 | 1.4 | 1.2 |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, rental & leasing | 79 | 4.1 | 40 | 5.5 | 3.6 |
| Public administration | 119 | 6.2 | 33 | 4.6 | 3.5 |
| Education, health and social services | 583 | 30.5 | 174 | 24.1 | 21.9 |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service | 142 | 7.4 | 28 | 3.9 | 5.7 |
| Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services | 57 | 3.0 | 43 | 6.0 | 4.2 |
| Other services | 72 | 3.8 | 24 | 3.3 | 4.2 |

Data Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

The fastest growing economic sectors influencing the Viroqua area could be expected to be similar to that of the La Crosse metropolitan area, where the fastest growing sectors are: health services, education services, and the leisure and hospitality sectors. La Crosse also has a rapidly growing retail sector, but it is unclear what the future pace of retail growth will be in the Viroqua economy.

Tourism is a significant, although somewhat invisible 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 “driftless” area scenic region. The Mississippi and Kickapoo Rivers are nearby tourism resources that are providing continual economic benefits. Hunting, fishing, camping, driving for pleasure, and seasonal housing are tourism growth areas. A 1999 U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service economic study of the counties bordering the Upper Mississippi River found that recreation, harvest of natural resources, and tourism generate far more revenue and support many more jobs in the counties along the Upper Mississippi River than activities related to navigation and agriculture. This study found that direct spending associated with tourism along the Mississippi River is growing by 3 to 6 percent annually. The tourism sector of the economy is generally characterized by seasonal and lower paying jobs which tend to diminish its contribution to the strength of the local economy and particularly to its ability to support middle-class family households.

Economic Base Conclusions

The economic base of this planning area consists of the typical diversified economic activities of a county-seat city and the extensive farming activities of the surrounding rural area with its related agri-business

economy in and near the city. The overlying commuter economy diversifies this local economy and enables local residents to hold distant jobs in a wide variety of occupations and industries and bring home higher incomes from that distant economic base. An important planning implication from this commuting economy is the fact that the city and town of Viroqua do not have to provide the infrastructure, services, or incentives required of those communities where the local residents commute into. Tourism may be an underappreciated sector of the local economy, although it is generally seasonal and lower paying. This element of the economy is potentially more significant because it is a growth area and because it is rooted in a fixed resource which assures that such jobs cannot be relocated.

Labor Force and Employment Patterns

In 1990, there were about as many persons (1,036) coming into the City of Viroqua to work as there were Viroqua residents (1,094) working in the city. In 1990, the city of Viroqua had 1,707 employed residents, with 64% of these residents working in the City of Viroqua, 2.4% working in Westby, 19.6% working elsewhere in Vernon County, 5% working in Monroe County, and 4.5% (78 persons) working in La Crosse County. It's likely that a significant portion of those working "elsewhere in Vernon County" (335) actually worked at locations just outside the city, at businesses in the Town of Viroqua.

In 2000, the City of Viroqua had 1,912 employed residents, with 72% working in the City of Viroqua, 6.7% working in Westby, 20% working in the La Crosse area, and 11 residents working in Coon Valley.

In 1990, the Town of Viroqua had 677 employed residents, with 38% of these working in the City of Viroqua, 38% working in the remainder of the county, 11% working in Westby, and 7.6% working in La Crosse County.

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.

The characteristics of the City of Viroqua's labor force would indicate that, unlike many rural communities, Viroqua is a substantial regional employment center. Most city residents work in the city and a substantial number of non-city residents commute to Viroqua for jobs. This status of an employment center is due to the city being the county seat and having a hospital and two school systems. In 2000, the greatest category of employment of Viroqua residents was in the "educational, health and social services" category, at 30.5% of total employment; this was about twice the number of the next largest category of employment of "manufacturing" at 16.2%; the Wisconsin percentage for this category was only 20%. This large service category of workers in Viroqua would represent the jobs at the various hospitals and clinics in the region and at the various schools and county and city governments. These employment categories clearly indicate the regional scope of this component of the local economy. Because of their magnitude, these "service" industries are a valuable part of the economic base of the City and Town of Viroqua planning area.

The economic impact of the City of Viroqua senior citizen population is also significant. In 2000, 39.6% of all city households had Social Security earnings, compared to 26.4% for Wisconsin; and 18.9% of Viroqua households had other retirement earnings, compared to 15.7% for Wisconsin. These Social

Security payments into the Viroqua area economy will increase as the baby-boom population moves into full retirement. These transfer payments constitute part of the community's economic base.

Jobs And Employment Outlook

Maintaining an area's employment base is a major need for any community. Occupational opportunities can be 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 and consumer preferences. There will also be an important societal change during this planning period which will affect employment characteristics. This will include the reduction in size of the labor force starting about 2010 as the baby-boom population reaches retirement age. While some of these job holders will continue working, its still projected that in some areas there will be more jobs than workers for many years. This demographic situation may point to lower unemployment rates in the future. It also is an indicator that communities that wish to continue to grow will have to engage in population recruitment programs to attract working age persons to fill the jobs of businesses that may be recruited to the community. Labor force availability has always been an important requirement of businesses seeking new locations or to expand existing businesses.

Income:

| Per Capita Personal Income, 2000 | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| City of Viroqua | \$17,172 |
| Town of Viroqua | \$16,246 |
| Vernon County | \$18,218 |
| Wisconsin | \$28,100 |
| United States | \$29,469 |

U. S Census Bureau, year 2000 census

| Median Earnings, 2000 | City of Viroqua | Town of Viroqua | Vernon County |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Male, full-time year-round worker | \$29,589 | \$31,736 | \$28,970 |
| Female, full-time year-round worker | \$20,046 | \$23,194 | \$20,635 |

U. S. Census Bureau, year 2000 census

Median Household and Family Income, 2000

For both the City and Town of Viroqua, "family" units generally earn more than living units classified as "households", which include many single person housing units. 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 City of Viroqua, the median household income in 2000 was \$ 28,804, and the median family income was \$ 35,475; and 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. In 1989, the total income of town residents from farming was only 13.9%; this compared to the county average of 15.6%.

Income characteristics would indicate that there is a greater proportion of housing units in the Town of Viroqua having higher incomes than in the City of Viroqua. This would be due, in part, to the fact that the town has a higher proportion of “family” housing units which have higher income levels than “household” units, (44.2% -vs.- 35.6%); also only a small proportion of town residents are dependent on farm incomes. This difference may be caused by the recent migration of higher income families with urban jobs to rural home sites throughout the town at a pace disproportionably higher than such home development within the City of Viroqua. Also, a greater proportion of “family” housing, with children, in the Town of Viroqua would help explain why the per-capita income of the Town is lower than for the City. A further contributing circumstance would likely be that cities are a more common location for concentrations of single person “households” such as the elderly, low income, and young single persons. In 2000, the city had 163 residents in “group quarters” and the town had 110 residents in “group quarters”.

Economic Development Strategic Assessment & Plan:

City and Town of Viroqua

Strengths:

- City is county seat community.
- Regional employment center.
- Full compliment of health and social services.
- A K-12 school system in recently upgraded facilities.
- Waldorf school facility.
- Located on a major state highway planned for upgrading.
- Within commuting distance of another employment center.
- Commuting jobs are generally high income jobs.
- Ample buildable land for business growth.
- No significant environmental limitations to community growth.
- A full-service industrial park supported by three TIF districts.
- Quality of living amenities.
- Small town character.
- Being in the Kickapoo River & driftless area tourism region.
- Historic preservation and related retail in the City of Viroqua.
- Four TIF districts in the City of Viroqua.
- Newly formed Vernon Economic Development Association.

Weaknesses:

- Absence of diversified transportation options:
 - Presently limited to two lane state highways.
 - City airstrip provides only a 3350 ft. runway.
- Proximity to commuting jobs is somewhat distant.

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- Limited land remaining within the jurisdiction of local sewer & water services.
- Funding limitations for business incentives, infrastructure and services.
- Pressure on the property tax.
- Limited visitor and business lodging.
- No county-wide economic development strategy or action programs.

Opportunities:

- Redevelopment -- New development sites possibly available from underused or brownfield sites within existing urban services area.
- The proposed Highway 14/61 bypass.
- Large sites with excellent regional access have potential to attract businesses which would not otherwise locate in this planning area.
- Can facilitate cooperation between City and Town jurisdictions.
- Can be an opportunity to accelerate the Viroqua area's evolution as a more diversified community with corresponding growth in public financial resources.
- More value-added industries from farm products.
- Increasing growth from the organic agriculture industry.
- Tourism – heritage tourism, agriculture tourism, driftless area attractions.
- Diversification and services from the Waldorf School and School District.
- Likely Increases in medical and health care economic/job base.
- See **Maps 13, 15 and 16** for economic development opportunity areas.

Threats:

- Continued national trends of business restructuring and relocations.
- Local business and employment impacts of globalization.
- Any negative business condition in surrounding job centers.
- Any significant decrease in municipal state aid or other outside revenues.
- Significant increases in energy costs (impact on commuting and business costs).
- Possible labor force shortages later in this planning period.
- The proposed Highway 14/61 bypass -- possible impacts:
 - Relocation of existing city businesses to bypass locations.
 - Loss of retail's critical mass in downtown Viroqua.
 - Possible decrease in city's mercantile property tax base.
 - Losses to other cities in the reconstructed Highway.14/61 corridor.
- Loss of intercity bus service (recovered from loss of service in 2004).
- Regulatory compliance costs for the water and sewer systems.
- Maintaining school district enrollments and related economic benefits.

Economic Development Recommendations:

The following economic development plan has been produced to address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified above.

Goals

- A healthy and growing economy for the Viroqua region.
- A Viroqua area that is an inviting place to work and live and recreate.
- A positive relationship between business and government.

Objectives

- Protect existing jobs.
- Develop new jobs.
- Grow the local tax base.
- Support the school system by the enrollment of new students from families attracted to the area by job development.
- Provide quality public services and cultural amenities which will attract businesses, and which, in turn, will attract individuals and families to live and work in the Viroqua area.
- Permanent partnerships between local government and the business community to implement economic development opportunities and which will serve to avoid local economic problems.
- Produce and implement a long-term regional economic development strategy and program.
- Promote and preserve our quality of life.

Policies

- The City of Viroqua will pursue programs to support and expand businesses that will fulfill Viroqua's role as a hub of economic activity.
- Support programs for the retention of existing businesses whose continued presence in the area is threatened.
- Support programs which aid the expansion of local businesses.
- Support new industries which produce finished products from agriculture.
- Support collaborative city and town efforts to develop a detailed, long-range plan for the Highway 14/61 bypass corridor which will tap the maximum responsible economic development potential benefiting the city and the town.
- To cooperate with the Viroqua Partners and the Viroqua Development Association on matters of economic development.
- To provide public amenities through city and town programs which will contribute to the quality of life requirements for attracting and retaining labor force growth to live in the Viroqua area.
- Partnerships between the City and Town of Viroqua and all local educational institutions directed at targeted economic betterment projects.
- Cooperate with and partner with Vernon County on economic development.
- Provide TIF districts and related incentives as an economic development tool.

Programs – (whole cluster planning area)

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- Recruitment of desired businesses and industries
- Recruitment of a labor force having occupations in growth areas,
- Providing sites for business and industries,
- Implement a business expansion and retention program,
- Provision of infrastructure and services for business and industry,
- Provide labor force amenities through municipal parks and cultural programs.
- Provide standards to insure quality residential environments to attract and retain the labor force required for economic development,
- Initiate a study to determine the quantity of agricultural products being shipped outside the region for processing and determine the potential for providing that economic activity in the Viroqua area.
- Participate in a long-term regional and county economic development/jobs strategy, including the investigation of the potential for a regional business park in the Viroqua area which would include an evaluation of the county farm properties for this purpose.
- Expand and implement a tourism marketing program in partnership with local tourism stakeholders and the Hidden Valleys Tourism Organization,
- Participate in the economic development programs of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. This includes taking advantage of the strategies recommended in the Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Program, and the strategies in their Industry Cluster and Regional Trade Report.
- Establish a formal economic development partnership between local and county units of government and local school system, the Waldorf School, WWTC, and the University Extension Service to coordinate and tap economic development resources.
- Develop programs to establish priorities and re-use plans for the redevelopment of underused lands and brownfield sites for economic development
- Utilize the grant programs of the Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources for the clean-up and reuse of brownfield sites.
- Strengthen and/or organize a regional network of agri-tourism

Formal Economic Development Programs:

City of Viroqua Programs

- Tax Increment Financing, The City of Viroqua has used TIF for commercial redevelopment and industrial park projects. There are currently four active TIF districts in Viroqua. These districts contain a total of \$8,246,100 in equalized value or about 4.4% of the City's total equalized value as of January 1, 2005. Generally, TIF projects in Viroqua use a revenue bond to reimburse eligible expenditures made by a developer, commonly known as a pay-as-you-go bond. Viroqua has capacity for additional TIF projects both under the equalized value test and the general obligation borrowing test.
- Downtown Historic District
- Industrial Park development
- Incubator Program.
- Women Empowerment Network participant.

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- Revolving loan fund program for new businesses.
- Chamber of Commerce programs (downtown, Wild West Days, etc).

Town of Viroqua Programs

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Vernon County Programs

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

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):
-- U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.
- General economic development planning.
- Western Wisconsin Technology Zone.

Western Wisconsin Technical College

- 7 Rivers economic development initiative.

University of Wisconsin, La Crosse

- Small Business Development Center.

State Economic Development Programs

- Governor's "Grow Wisconsin" program.
- Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development programs.
- Wisconsin Development Fund—Technology Development Fund (WDF).
- Wisconsin Development Fund—Major Economic Development Program (MED).
- 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.
- Downtown Historic District tax credits.

Federal Programs

- HUD, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Public Facilities.
- HUD, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Economic Development.
- HUD, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Blight Elimination and Brownfield Development Program.
- Rural Economic Development (RED) Early Planning Grant.
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Other Economic Development Programs

- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).
- Xcel Energy.

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- REC.
- Dairyland Power.
- United Coulee Region (7 Rivers Region).

Section 7 - Intergovernmental Cooperation Element

Goal of This Element:

To analyze the interrelationship of existing governmental services in the area; to incorporate existing intergovernmental agreements; to identify existing and potential conflicts between governmental units; and to develop feasible and acceptable means of joint planning, decision making and service sharing with other governmental jurisdictions.

Planning Context

Some degree of Intergovernmental cooperation has been occurring among local governments for many years; fire and rescue services are a good example. The trends and outlook for the preservation of certain public services point to some new realities which local governments will increasingly be challenged to deal with, and foremost among these is cost containment. Some of these realities have already set-in and solutions are needed. In recent decades, local government has found itself involved with many new public services, many of which are more technical in nature and are inherently more costly than traditional local governmental services. Many of these services are subject to continual cost increases because of several factors which local governments have little control over, such as: the mandates behind such services, because of the cost of technical advances in services and equipment, and because of various liabilities and codes governing such services. An additional trend which local governments will be increasingly challenged to deal with is the moderating or declining amount of outside revenue which local government will receive to fund local 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. This fact is born out by the input from the local resident surveys conducted as a part of this comprehensive planning program as well as from other authorities and from studies of this issue. 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. Dealing with the property tax program is beyond the scope of the comprehensive planning program.

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 which can deal with these new challenges in delivering public services. The fundamental purpose of such cooperation would be to lower or spread the public cost of such services. Service-sharing amongst compatible units of government is one of the means of achieving this purpose. The comprehensive planning program is only one effort in this direction; follow-up efforts will be necessary for specific accomplishments in this area.

School Districts:

This planning area is served by two school districts; they are the Viroqua School District, and the Westby School District. These districts are shown on **Map 12**.

Existing Relationships with Local Governments in the Planning Area

From a planning point of view, the school district has a normal relationship with local governments in the area.

Existing and Potential Conflicts

There have been no reported conflicts known to exist regarding relationships between the school district and local governments. The advisable process to resolve any potential conflicts will be direct and formal communications between the two parties. The initial level of conflict resolution would normally be between staff persons. Should this level of resolution prove to be insufficient, then a more formal approach between school and governing bodies would be advisable.

Goals and Objectives

- Maintain cooperative relationships between the school districts and the local units of government.
- School infrastructure development that is consistent with accepted professional community development planning.
- Cost efficiencies in the use of public funds.

Policies

- Support opportunities for the mutual use of school and local governmental services and facilities.
- Sharing of policy and program information between school and local governments where such information is of common interest and benefit.
- Coordination of the planning and construction of physical development projects.

Programs

- No present programs are identified. Programs will be evaluated for application under this Comprehensive Plan on a case-by-case basis.
- School Recreation Facility.

County Government:

Existing Relationships With County Government

The City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua have many administrative relationships with the 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 relationship is the county-wide enforcement of flood plain, shoreland, and wetland zoning, and the county-wide sanitary codes relating to on-site waste disposal systems. In addition, county government has jurisdiction over the county trunk highway system which extends throughout the Town of Viroqua, including some extensions into the City of Viroqua. The maintenance of these highways is a county responsibility. The County Land and Water Conservation Department administers a variety of conservation programs which would be more evident in the Town of Viroqua, but which would be available for application in the City of Viroqua as well. The City and Town of Viroqua are also eligible for

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participation in and assistance from the programs related to community development and education from the Vernon County office of University of Wisconsin Extension. Other relationships between county government and the residents of this planning cluster include the delivery of county services from the County Health Department and the County Solid Waste Department. The Health Department provides services regarding water testing, and testing for lead and radon, and services related to land based health issues such as encephalitis and West Nile virus.

Existing and Potential Conflicts

There are no known existing conflicts between the units of government in this planning cluster and the county government. No potential conflicts with county government have been brought to the attention of this comprehensive planning program. Since the “potential” for conflicts in the future always exists, prudent planning would suggest that the local units of government and the county be watchful for the development of conflicts and seek to avoid or minimize them.

Goals and Objectives

- Maintenance of positive and efficient relationships with county government.
- The planning and development of county services and infrastructure within the Town and City of Viroqua planning area which are consistent with generally accepted standards for such activities.
- Financial efficiencies involving intergovernmental services.
- Achieving sound planning regarding land use, natural resources, and public services.
- Service-sharing for cost efficiencies, and for enabling services where they would otherwise not be possible.

Policies

- Regular communication between the local units of government and county governing officials.
- Coordination between local government officials and county departments regarding planning and other applicable county services.

Programs

- Continuing education and information exchange between county and local units of government regarding the services, potential benefits, and needs of each.
- Identify service-sharing potentials between the City and 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.
- Engage in conversations with county government and other local governments to address future public needs and opportunities, including the Vernon Economic Development Association to protect the economic health of area residents, businesses and local government fiscal conditions.

Adjacent Units of Government:

Existing Relationship to Local Governments in the Planning Area

There are two adjacent units of government within the Cluster A planning area; these are the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua. The City of Viroqua is presently enclosed entirely within the Town of Viroqua, although parts of the City's west city limit line are on the boundary line of the Town of Jefferson. This comprehensive planning program has established a relationship between the City and Town of Viroqua for planning purposes. Representatives of both units of government have been meeting in a unified planning process as the Cluster A Planning Committee.

The units of government adjacent to this planning area (Cluster A) include the Towns of Jefferson, Franklin, Webster, Kickapoo and Christiana, and the City of Westby. The Towns of Kickapoo and Christiana and the City of Westby are part of the Central Vernon County Planning group, the twelve members of which are cooperating in the production of comprehensive plans

Existing and Potential Conflicts

Relationships between town and municipal governments throughout Wisconsin are subject to potential conflicts, mostly on development issues located at and near the boundaries of these governmental units. These issues often contain implications for tax revenues. Such issues are largely rooted in custom and the requirements of state statutes. Numerous studies and experience has shown that in such situations both town and municipal units of government are pursuing legitimate self interests on behalf of the welfare of their units of government and their citizens. Loss of town territory and tax base to a municipality is one specific source of potential conflict.

Goals and Objectives

- Maintain positive relations between the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua.
- Enabling growth and development which benefits both the town and city.
- Coordination of planning and infrastructure across jurisdictional lines.
- Providing the greatest efficiencies possible in the delivery of public services.
- Seek cooperative solutions to development problems and potentials.
- Service-sharing in the interest of cost efficiencies and for providing services not otherwise possible.

Policies

- Regular communication between town and city units of government.
- Maintain and implement a Comprehensive Plan which is based on achieving the Goals and Objectives of this Section.

Programs

- Maintain a Cluster Planning Committee for the continued evaluation and updating of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Consider the use of "boundary agreements", per sec. 66.0307 Wis. Statutes which enable town and city 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. Such agreements are particularly beneficial where significant new economic and community

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benefits would be provided by a proposed project. Such projects are those that would require urban services such as sewer, water, storm drainage, traffic management, and policing.

Fire/rescue services are already provided on an area-wide basis.

- Cooperative review of the platting of land within the projected urban growth zone to assure that lands intended for urban development are subdivided according to standards required for the use of urban services.
- Implement service sharing potentials which have been identified.
- Maintain and strengthen the intergovernmental services and cooperation of the Viroqua area joint Fire Department and first responder services.
- Continue to provide needed equipment, training, and facilities for the Viroqua area fire and EMS services as necessary to maintain and/or expand its intergovernmental service delivery.
- Meet at least once a year with county and adjacent units of government to discuss needs and possibilities for cooperating and sharing of public services.

State Government:

Existing Relationship to Local Governments in the Planning Area

There are many types of relationships between state government and the city and town government in this planning area. Relationships regarding planning and development are largely in the area of various state standards and licenses for public services such as the Department of Natural Resource's standards for Viroqua's drinking water supply and its waste water treatment plant. State solid waste standards also apply to the sanitary landfill in the Town of Viroqua, although this 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. Also, the Department of Transportation has produced a plan for relocating parts of state highway 14/61 out of the City of Viroqua onto a new corridor located on lands in the Town of Viroqua. The state has received both positive and negative responses from residents in the City and Town of Viroqua concerning this highway plan. The State Department of Commerce is charged with implementing the requirements under the Wisconsin Uniform Building Code which requires all local units of government to inspect all one and two family dwellings for compliance with that building code. These requirements took effect in January 2005. The City of Viroqua will be enforcing this code through its code/inspection staff.

Existing and Potential Conflicts

The most notable conflict probably centers around some of the issues involving the Department of Transportation's proposed highway bypass around the City of Viroqua. Issues include the removal of the highway from the Viroqua downtown area and the possible impacts on the business community, and the removal of agricultural lands and whether or not the bypass will lead to undesirable urban and rural land use patterns.

Goals and Objectives

- Maintain positive relationships with state government.
- Achieve maximum benefits from the state government.
- Tap the programs, resources, and assistance of state government.
- An understanding by state government of city and town needs, with effective responses.

Policies

- To work with specific state agencies and staff to communicate local needs and seek local assistance.
- To work with state legislators to communicate local needs and recommendations to facilitate state cooperation and assistance to the city and town.
- To be knowledgeable of state legislative proposals and state agency programs impacting local government and provide local recommendations on such proposals or programs.

Programs

- Continue the existing efforts of the City and Town for monitoring legislative proposals and for communicating with legislators.

Federal Government:

Existing Relationship to Local Governments in the Planning Area

The relationships between the Federal Government and the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua are mostly indirect and are related to the application of the 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, such as community Development Block Grant funds and housing assistance funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and a variety of funding programs for agriculture, business, and community development from the Department of Agriculture.

Existing and Potential Conflicts

There are no existing or potential conflicts known to exist regarding the federal government's involvement with planning or development.

Goals and Objectives

- Maintain positive relationships with the federal government.
- Achieve maximum benefits from the federal government.
- Tap the programs, resources and assistance of the federal government.
- An understanding by the federal government of city and town needs.

Policies

- To work with specific federal agencies and staff to communicate local needs and seek assistance.
- To work with Congressional representatives to communicate local needs and recommendations.
To be knowledgeable of federal legislative proposals and programs impacting local government and provide local recommendations on such proposals or programs.

Programs

- Continue the existing efforts of the city and the town for monitoring legislative proposals and for communicating with congressional representatives.
- Other program involvement as determined on a case-by-case basis.

Existing Cooperative Boundary Plans or Agreements:

There are no boundary plans or agreements in force between the City and Towns of Viroqua, Jefferson and Franklin as of the date of this Plan. Fire and EMS services for the city and town are provided by a single volunteer department based on agreements involving the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua.

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Section 8 - Land Use Element

Goal of This Element:

To guide the future development and redevelopment of lands in the City and Town of Viroqua under the jurisdiction of city and town governmental units. 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 which are intended to be the basis for the tools needed to implement the Land Use Plan. Important sub-goals are to avoid local governmental costs required to deal with development problems, and also to enable the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua to apply land use planning as a tool to tap the area's potentials for job development, business services, and cultural enhancements which will protect and strengthen the quality of life for the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua.

An extensive public survey of the citizens of the City of Viroqua points out that there is a very strong desire not to have strip malls scattered about the city and to preserve the character of the historic shopping district. The current circa 1950's zoning for the City of Viroqua can potentially provide for the construction of small business, typically one shop deep along every major highway passing through the city. In other words, from any city boundary to every other city boundary there will be a commercial business and no open spaces, farmland, or residential areas along any state highway. The 1950's model does not address the current concerns such as business driveways every few feet, parking or aesthetics.

A plan that provides for high quality desirable residential districts is also very important. Not only is there a need to establish the levels of service that can be provided in expanding areas, but there is a need to create zoning that creates the best possible living conditions in existing neighborhoods. Creating a land use plan and zoning that make Viroqua a desirable and thriving community is critical.

The economic engine that has traditionally driven the City and Town of Viroqua is agriculture. It is important to make land use decisions that foster and promote a thriving agri-business in the general area.

The City of Viroqua Survey also pointed to a strong desire by the citizens to incorporate bicycle and walking trails and paths into the fabric of the city to make it a more pleasant and desirable place to live and work.

Land Use Planning Context:

This Comprehensive Plan will be the first formal land use planning for the City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua. As of 2004, this 51 square mile planning area was predominantly farm land, with some urbanizing pressures around the City of Viroqua which occupies over three and a half square miles of the planning area. Historically, urban development in this planning area has occurred within the city; however, in recent years some new housing has located in fringe areas just outside the city. The greater ease and affordability of on-site water supplies and waste disposal has facilitated this fringe housing pattern. Highway 14/61/27 is the principal development corridor for new land uses because these are arterial highways which provide convenient regional and local access to the area and good access to adjacent lands and intersecting streets serving lands in these highway corridors.

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Land use planning has often involved “planning for development”, and increasingly, land use planning is involving “planning for preservation of present conditions”. City and town governments can often do more effective planning under either of these philosophies by using more of the powers available to them to shape land use the way they want it. Additional discussion of these implementation powers is presented in *Section 9* of this Plan.

Existing Land Use:

The land usage in Cluster A is quite clearly divided into urban usage in the City of Viroqua and immediate fringe area, with the balance of Cluster A being rural/agricultural land usage. **Map 11** illustrates general land usage in the rural area, and **Map 14** illustrates City of Viroqua existing land use.

Agricultural

According to the University of Wisconsin Town Land Use Data Project, 75% the Town Of Viroqua was occupied by farmland in 1993. Of this, 36.3% was forage crops, 25.9% was in row crops, 23.2% was forest land, 12.7% was grassland, 0.2 was wetland, and 0.3% was urban uses. There were a total of 180 farms in the Town in 1997, three less than in 1990. The intensity of farm occurrence was typical of the Vernon County average, at 3.7 farms per square mile.

City of Viroqua:

| Type of Use | Amount - acres | Intensity % of City ** | Net Density |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Residential | 1,000.85 | 42.11% | 1.99 units/acre *** |
| Commercial | 352.73 | 14.84 | |
| Manufacturing | 353.43 | 14.87 | |
| Agricultural/Woodland | 483.41 | 20.34 | |
| Public Uses * | 186.52 | 7.85 | |
| Other | | | |

* Includes parks, schools, fair grounds, cemeteries

** Calculations include area of street rights-of-way

*** All occupied owner and renter housing units, yr. 2000, per U. S. Census. The residential area calculation includes the golf course area

Source: City of Viroqua calculations of zoning district areas, 2004. These measurements include Streets, the airport and undeveloped land within the zoning districts

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Town of Viroqua:

| Type of Use | Amount – acres | Intensity % of Town** | Net Density |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Residential | 1,957.18 | 6.25 % | 3.56 acres/ units |
| Commercial | 154.82 | 0.49 | |
| Manufacturing | 13.55 | 0.04 | |
| Agricultural/Woodland | 27,009.46 | 86.39 | |
| Public Uses* | 1,633.11 | 5.22 | |
| Other | 497.89 | 1.59 | |

* Includes all uses exempt from property taxes

** Calculations do not include area of street rights-of-way

*** All occupied owner and renter housing units, year 2000, per U. S. Census

Source: Vernon County Treasurer's Office

Land Use Trends, Needs, and Potentials:

Land Supply

There is an ample supply of land for development in this cluster planning area, most of it being in 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 in the Town of Viroqua. The principal land supply issue is the amount of land readily available for urban development needs. Urban lands are concentrated in the City of Viroqua, and the Town of Viroqua has experienced some urban like development served by well and septic systems around the fringe of the city. The supply of land for growth within the City of Viroqua is limited since most of the land with ready access to sewers is already developed, leaving only a moderate amount of space for future urban use. The land supply within the city can be increased if land is annexed into the city; however, this method of increasing the city's land supply is based on private land owner decision-making and cannot be predicted or well planned for. Also, annexed land that does not have ready access to city utilities can be overly expensive to service.

Boundary agreements, as described in Sections 7 and 9 of this Plan, are a good way to accommodate city growth in cooperation with the town jurisdiction. Even though there are some open lands in the City of Viroqua that could accommodate some future development, not all of these lands will be efficient to serve, and some such lands can be expected to be unavailable for development for a variety of reasons as determined mostly by the land owners. Because the amount of land readily available for urban uses at any point in time will be less than the total amount of measured open lands within the city, there must therefore be an ample surplus of open lands over and above what is needed for future growth. There is no formula to determine this amount of surplus land; growth pressures and physical land conditions are the determining factors that vary widely from city to city.

What this means, is that if the supply of readily available land for development within a community is too low, then the price of the remaining open land may be unusually high, possibly retarding development; but, more importantly, this limited land supply can be expected to lead to sprawl development outside the city where the supply of land is greater and the costs are lower. In the city, the problem of having an adequate supply of land readily available for development is magnified by the fact that balanced city development requires land availability for four basic categories of uses, which are: residential, commercial, industrial and institutional. Each of these categories of land must have surpluses of growth

space available if the community is to continue to develop with the normal diversity of uses. Concentrations of these categories of urban uses require support services which are typically not available beyond city service limits.

Formal boundary agreements with rural governmental units can go a long way to bridge traditional jurisdictional barriers and enable well-planned city growth with mutual benefits to all governmental entities. A good example of such benefits would be the substantial economic gains produced from the location of a residential or job producing development that ordinarily would be lost due to uncertainties or delay concerning the availability of utilities or other public services, or problems obtaining the appropriate permits or plat approval.

Land Demand

The present demand for land throughout this planning area is of a moderate level. The greatest demand would be in the City of Viroqua for developable land with city services, principally sewer and water services. Some demand for developable land is accommodated on lands adjacent to the city in the Town of Viroqua. On-site water supplies and septic sewer systems are used to serve development outside the city. The most general land demand is for housing, and this demand is being satisfied both in the city and throughout the Town of Viroqua. There is little problem finding land to meet housing demand when rural lands are considered. Housing served by a public sewer and water system is available only in the City of Viroqua where there is limited land available for a large amount of housing. In the rural area, there is regular land demand by farmers wishing to add land to their farming operations. The need of farmers to add land to their operations competes with the demand for rural land for non-farm purposes, such as non-farm housing. This traditional private sector influence on the demand for farm land is not a subject of this Plan.

Land Prices

The moderate pace of development and demand for land in this planning area has kept most land prices moderate as well, at least compared to rural lands adjacent to larger cities. Land prices within the urban areas of the city and town are higher than in the more distant rural areas. Land prices can experience spikes in values for some individual parcels with prime attributes for housing development. The record of such unusual land prices can leverage upward the price of similarly situated lands in the same general area. Land prices can be expected to increase above normal local rates at locations along the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass where development potential will be presumed to occur. Such potential land prices can be influenced by land use plans, zoning and availability and cost of urban services.

Opportunities for Redevelopment

The opportunities for redevelopment within this planning area would be limited to lands and properties within the City of Viroqua. Redevelopment within the city would be concentrated in the central city area, where the most potentially obsolete uses and properties are located. Prime conditions for redevelopment occur at locations where a combination of redevelopment indicators occur. Typical indicators of redevelopment potential include: concentrations of small ownership parcels making them unable to accommodate contemporary uses requiring more space, deteriorated properties, functionally obsolete structures, and uses of land or buildings significantly incompatible with the overall uses and needs of the general area. Redevelopment opportunities are often presented at "brownfield" locations where the process of cleaning up environmental problems temporarily prevents such sites from being used to their

true potential. Redevelopment can occur through private-sector projects and through public projects. Public-private partnerships are often needed for redevelopment projects.

Compatible, mixed-use development can provide significant economic, social and fiscal benefits to a community. Nurturing existing commercial areas and growing new commercial areas that make the best use of the land is very important. Aside from the beginnings of commercial entities popping up along all of the highways criss-crossing the Viroqua area, there are five distinct commercial areas each having special needs. There is the historic shopping area along Center, Rock, and Main Street lying substantially south of Decker Street whose character and vitality needs protecting. There is the large commercial area to the north of town that includes manufacturing, retail, offices, a municipal airport and the County Fair Grounds, which holds vast opportunities for further development and utilization. There is an older commercial/industrial area to the north of Decker Street and along Railroad Avenue that is somewhat under utilized and has redevelopment opportunities. There is a stretch of residential use north of Broadway that has limited parking and to the west numerous driveways on to Highway 14 that is a likely redevelopment candidate at a much later date. Finally, there is a large tract of substantially underutilized land north of Decker Street and along Main and Center Streets that hold some immediate opportunities for redevelopment of a tasteful and conscientious nature as it is immediately adjacent to the historic shopping district. The new rules for condemnation may make it more difficult for public assistance and site assembly.

Some redevelopment sites are referred to as “smart growth” sites if they make use of existing services, are conducive to access by walking, minimize auto use, and have mixed-use potential. Redevelopment and smart growth opportunities are located on **Maps 13, 15 and 17**.

Existing and Potential Land Use Conflicts:

Town of Viroqua

There is no systematic pattern of urban land use conflicts in the Town of Viroqua, although some such conflicts may be perceived between neighboring parcels. More significant land use conflicts can be expected to occur as more urban uses develop in the Town. The greatest potential for land use conflicts in the town would be in the rural areas at the interface of non-farm homes and agricultural activities. The presence of non-farm homes is still pretty spotty; however, a wider distribution of such homes could be expected to create increased land use conflicts with farming activities. An increasing potential for land use conflicts throughout rural areas, in general, involves confined animal feeding operations (CAFO). Wisconsin’s new livestock facility siting law, Wis. Stats. 93.90, operates through local government to enable the control of large and small livestock facilities.

There is also potential for land use conflicts to occur along the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass depending upon the degree of land use management measures that would be in place. There would be a potential for land use conflicts to develop at the interface of town and city development depending on the compatibility of town and city land use plans and zoning, and whether or not “boundary agreement” processes are in use (see Sections 7 and 9 for boundary agreements). Such conflicts are more likely in the absence of zoning standards. One reason for this is the lack of predictability about what the likely future development patterns will be.

City of Viroqua

Land use conflicts within the city have been reported to be minimal. Zoning has been helpful in minimizing such conflicts. The greatest potential for land use conflicts in any city is at the interface of residential uses with commercial and industrial uses, and occasionally with large scale institutional uses. Continued upgrading of a city Land Use Plan and its zoning standards can serve to avoid land use conflicts as the city continues to grow. These techniques can enable city landowners, businesses and institutions to see more predictability in the city's desired development patterns and can adjust individual plans accordingly, thus serving to avoid land use conflicts and the interpersonal conflicts, financial loss, and legal problems that can often accompany such conflicts.

Land Development Limitations:

The 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. Both the Town of Viroqua and the City of Viroqua have physical limitations to land development within their boundaries. The primary physical limitations are steep slope, high bed rock, wet soil areas, and some flood prone lands along the tributary streams of the Kickapoo River in the town and drainage courses subject to flash flooding. Other limitations may include proximity to feed lots, quarries and historical sites or to threatened or endangered species habitat. Some of these limitations may include state or federal regulations regarding development. **Map 11** illustrates some of these land use limitations. Specific development proposals should be evaluated for their relationship to these limitations and the various regulations that may be associated with them.

Land Use Plan:

Goals

- Respect for property rights and the protection of community rights.
- Balancing of property rights with property responsibilities.
- Promote and optimize the location of developments of urban density* with access to urban services such as public water and sewer services, natural gas lines, policing services, voice/data/media connections, as well as, well maintained streets, sidewalks and lighting.
- Compatible land use relationships where single-family housing, multi-family housing, retail, commercial, industrial, and rural land uses transition to fulfill everyone's needs, and to achieve the highest possible monetary and utilitarian value possible from the local land at the interface of urban and rural lands.
- Promote policies, programs, and ordinances that will protect and preserve the rural and natural character of the Viroqua area and protect and enhance the character of its historic residential and business districts, while fostering sound growth in its newer residential and business districts.
- Establish city wide and extraterritorial zoning and platting ordinances that will promote fuller utilization of the existing business districts.
- Develop programs and policies that will effect redevelopment and better utilization of the downtown business district north of Decker St, and the older industrial area along Railroad Avenue
- Create zoning that will provide for the highest degree of long term satisfaction for the intended users of the land.

* These terms are defined in this Section.

Objectives

Adopt and pursue land use policies and programs which:

- Facilitates community growth, including economic development and tax base growth.
- Create compatible relationships between highway improvements and related land uses.
- Create safe, pleasant and esthetic urban residential areas.
- Provide some certainty to residents, businesses, and farmers about the nature of future land use in a given area.
- Facilitate farming operations in appropriate locations and the local agricultural economy.
- Provide safe and healthy rural housing environments.
- Protect and conserve prime productive agricultural lands. These lands are defined by the soil types identified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and listed as “Prime and other Important Farmlands” for Vernon County. These soil areas can be located on the maps of the Vernon County Soil Survey report. This list of soil types is available in the Vernon County Land & Water Conservation Department.
- Protect and conserve soil and water resources.
- Protect and conserve flora and fauna resources.
- Protect and conserve historic and cultural structures and sites.
- Minimize problems from storm water runoff by the application of land use planning standards provided in zoning and subdivision ordinances.
- Assurance that any land development associated with the planned Highway 14/61 bypass is planned and implemented cooperatively between the city and town based on mutual benefits.
- Provide economic efficiencies for city and town government in their development functions.
- Apply a “mixed-use” approach to land use planning and zoning.
- Maintain the economic viability of the Viroqua central business district.

Urban Standards Area

*Urban density:

Two housing units or more per net residential acre.

*Urban services

Customary services for urban uses including: centralized sewage collection and disposal, public water supply, storm water drainage facilities, local police services, local park and recreation facilities, and public streets with public maintenance and snow plowing. Fire protection is automatically provided to urban and rural areas through a local fire department with mutual aid agreements with other departments for expanded fire and EMS service.

Policies

City of Viroqua:

- Assure that the zoning of land is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
- Assure that zoning amendments, variances, and property rezonings, are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Assure that subdivision ordinance standards and any future official street mapping are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Identify potential for central city development and tax base growth.
- Support cluster housing development, and provide such opportunities in city zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Town of Viroqua:

- Evaluate development projects and trends to determine if there is a need for a town government role in development to avoid land use conflicts and to avoid unnecessary town obligations and costs.
- To avoid densities of residential and commercial uses which 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.
- Utilize the authorities available to town government to plan and manage development if determined necessary by the town.

Programs

City of Viroqua:

- Maintain a current Land Use Plan Map.
- Maintain a zoning program and current map.
- Reevaluate the existing zoning ordinance and map and develop adjustments, if necessary, to be compatible with an adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain and update the subdivision ordinance.
- Do a detailed study of the possible and preferred land use impacts of the planned Highway 14/61 bypass, with particular attention to impacts on the downtown area. Pursue this study in partnership with the Town of Viroqua.
- Develop programs to redevelop underutilized lands; such as vacant, brownfield, transitional, or dilapidated properties. The redevelopment of such lands should proceed according to land use planning principles which provide for neighborhood compatibility and are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Strong enforcement of zoning standards and procedures.
- Explore boundary agreements with the Town of Viroqua to effectively deal with boundary development issues, particularly to facilitate the provision of urban services to development consistent with Comprehensive Plans.
- Consider incentives to develop housing within the city and maintain compact development patterns.
- Support the continuation of the county remonumentation program for the reestablishment of public land survey system corners.

Town of Viroqua:

- Maintain an up-to-date Land Use Plan map for the Town of Viroqua.
- Participate in a detailed study of the possible and preferred land use impacts of the planned Highway 14/61 bypass. Work in partnership with the City of Viroqua on such a study.
- Manage the development of lands in the future Highway 14/61 bypass to enable positive and cost-effective uses for both city and town and to enable compliance with both city and town Comprehensive Plans.
- *Section 5* of this Plan contains a “Program” recommendation for preserving important agricultural lands which is repeated here because of its relationship to land use. For the preservation of those lands identified as important farm lands, consideration could be given to the farmland preservation techniques which specifies a “maximum” lot size in the range of 1.5 to 2 acres, with the total number of lots determined by the size of the parcel out of which the lots are being created. For example, one lot per 20 or 40 acres of ownership with each lot not exceeding 2 acres. 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 farm land or open space.
- Support the continuation of the county remonumentation of the public land survey system corners.

Development Density:

City of Viroqua

The net density for new residential land use assumes that the number of households as projected in Section 1 of this Plan will each occupy an average of 10,000 square feet. The above occupancy average is estimated to be a more useful figure than the density level calculated from the existing residential land use table at the beginning of this Section because the data provided for this table includes large areas of residentially zoned land not actually occupied by housing. Within the density for new residential land use, part of the new population is assumed to be living at higher density in the existing developed areas of the city. The gross residential density is assumed to be lower because of some large lots that may be plated in hilly terrain. The difference between net residential density and gross residential density is the undeveloped open space, wooded hills, common open space, recreational areas, and street areas which are included in the gross density.

The land use projections in the following table are based on the following assumptions: 1) that housing will develop according to the approximate densities reported here, 2) that conditions will exist for the City of Viroqua to attract housing, commercial and industrial development in the numbers shown in the table, 3) that commercial land area will increase by at least 5% over each preceding projection period, 4) that industrial land area will increase by at least 15% over each preceding period, and 5) that the commercial and industrial rates of increase are based on the total land areas of each use as calculated by the County Assessor and County treasurer’s Offices. If the City of Viroqua is not successful in attracting its projected share of future land uses, then it is further assumed that the use areas not attracted will locate in nearby communities and/or adjacent units of government. These projections do not incorporate assumptions about any extra-ordinary new development that could be stimulated by the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass, although such extra-ordinary development is possible and could diminish the amount of future land use development occurring within the City of Viroqua or could increase it beyond projected levels

depending on future governmental boundary locations and the terms of any future boundary agreements. The jurisdictional and development circumstances within which this bypass is constructed will require the reevaluation and updating of this Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan and these land use projections.

Town of Viroqua

The net density for new residential land use in the Town of Viroqua assumes that the number of new households as projected in Section 1 of this Plan will each occupy an average of two acres. The gross residential density is assumed to be lower because some households will be located on rural parcels larger than two acres. Some of these non-farm, residential parcels are assumed to contain areas of woodlands, wetlands, hillsides, and crop land; and therefore, a uniform area of two acres has been assigned for the housing area and related uses within these larger parcels. The two acre average assumes that some lots will be less than two acres but will meet on-site sanitary waste disposal standards

The land use projections in the following table are based on the assumptions that housing will develop according to the approximate densities reported here, and that commercial and industrial land areas will develop at 5% and 15% growth rates respectively projected from County Treasurer base acreages. If conditions are more conducive to the development of a portion of the town's projected housing and commercial and industrial land uses in nearby or adjacent communities, then it is further assumed that the town will not achieve the levels of projected land uses as reported in the following table. The possibilities described above concerning the proposed Highway 14/61 bypass could also affect land use projections for the Town of Viroqua.

Urban Land Use Standards Area:

The City of Viroqua's Land Use Plan, contains an urban land use standards area as located on **Map 17**. Development in this area is intended to occur in accord with typical urban development standards which are summarized in the Goals and Objectives paragraphs of this Land Use Section, and which are represented throughout the city's Comprehensive Plan and throughout its various growth management ordinances and policies. This urban land use standards area is the city's future zone of interest within which the type, density, timing and lay-out of future land uses are expected to affect the city's future utility servicing, circulation, storm water flows, economic development, public water supply aquifer, safety and policing, water supply for fire fighting, and other future city health, safety and general welfare responsibilities. The area shown accommodates longer range urban growth needs beyond the 20 year space needs projected in this section because the planning, design and financing of city utilities and streets --and the life span of these facilities-- must be based on growth projections for lands that will develop beyond a 20 year planning period.

Land Use Projections:

Estimated new acres developed within each time period

| City of Viroqua | 2000 - 2005 | 2005 - 2010 | 2010 - 2015 | 2015 -2020 |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Agricultural | ----- | ----- Net | Loss ----- | ----- |
| Residential | 38 | 20 | 22 | 22 |
| Commercial | 3.1 | 3.25 | 3.4 | 3.6 |
| Industrial | 4.8 | 5.5 | 6.3 | 7.2 |
| Institutional | 20 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Total | 65.9 | 38.75 | 41.7 | 42.8 |
| | | | | |
| Town of Viroqua | | | | |
| Agricultural | ----- | ----- Net | Loss ----- | ----- |
| Residential | 16 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Commercial | 7.75 | 8.1 | 8.5 | 8.9 |
| Industrial | 2.0 | 2.3 | 2.8 | 3.1 |
| Institutional | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 25.75 | 16.4 | 22.3 | 23.0 |

Smart Growth Areas:

Smart growth areas shown on the Land Use Plan maps represent an initial determination of those areas that may have a combination of characteristics and potentials which would enable efficient and convenient urban living. These characteristics include: central location to services and shopping, potential for the compatible mixing of land uses, potential for walking and biking to work and shop, housing styles for those that prefer higher density living, living environments and proximity to jobs and shopping for those that prefer not to be totally dependent on auto travel, and locations where the infilling development of close-in lands will reduce the need to develop rural and agricultural lands beyond the borders of the community and which are beyond the convenient reach of urban services. City utility policies, official mapping and extraterritorial authority can help implement smart growth strategies. This smart growth area planning is based on traditional city planning principles and does not incorporate all the principles of the national smart growth movement. The section above entitled: Opportunities For Redevelopment, describes some of the specific areas which have some of the characteristics of smart growth areas as described in Wisconsin planning statutes. **Maps 15** and **17** provide generalized locations of smart growth areas.

Land Use Plan Maps:

Provisional Land Use Plan Maps

Map 17 presents a provisional land use plan for the City of Viroqua, and **Map 19** presents a provisional land use plan for the Town of Viroqua. These maps represent the first attempt by these units of government to prepare and adopt land use plans; therefore, these plans do not represent the full range of thought and detail about future land usage. These general plan maps are a beginning point, not an end determination about future land usage. These land use plans should always represent the City Council's and Town Board's view of the desirable development pattern for its unit of government, and these views should be reflected in the goals, objectives, policies and programs of this Comprehensive Plan. Accordingly, it is intended that these maps be reevaluated and updated within five years after the provisional maps are adopted. Thereafter, it is advisable that the land use plan maps be reevaluated regularly by the City and Town Plan Commissions and governing bodies, and that changes be made by these bodies as new information, needs and trends would suggest such changes.

It is important that the city and town appoint a custodian of these plans (an individual or committee, see Section 9 herein), with the responsibility of identifying and bringing to the attention of the governing bodies any such changes referenced above.

Consistency Requirement

Also, the land use plan maps and the local zoning maps should be consistent with each other in compliance with the state comprehensive planning statute; and the decisions made under the local land division and official mapping ordinances should also be consistent with the land use plans.

Section 9 - Implementation Element

Goal of This Element:

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

Implementation Measures:

This table identifies standard implementation measures, and those which are in place in the City of Viroqua and the Town of Viroqua.

| Implementation Measure | City of Viroqua | Town of Viroqua |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Zoning | X | - |
| Subdivision Regulations | X | - |
| Sanitary Codes | X | Sanitary codes are county codes |
| Official Mapping | - | - |
| Erosion and Storm water Regulations | X | - |
| Site Plan Regulations and Road Ordinances | X | X |
| Sign Regulations | X | - |
| Building Codes * | - | - |
| Housing Codes * | - | - |
| Mechanical Codes | State codes | - |
| Historic Preservation | X | - |
| Design Review (Signs) | X | - |

* The Wisconsin Uniform Dwelling Code was enacted in 2003, and requires application of the code for one and two family dwellings. The application of this code in the City of Viroqua will be through its code/inspections department. The application of this code in the Town of Viroqua includes

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. Even though citizen activism can occasionally achieve planning recommendations, the most essential measures to achieve planning recommendations will be a variety of formal tools which the city and town already have access to. These tools consist of a variety of ordinances and other official measures which can only be enacted by decisions of the city and town units of government; these measures are described below. It will be difficult to implement many of the recommendations in this plan for directing urban uses into municipal service areas and preserve the rural

quality of life, both of which are fundamental goals of this Comprehensive Plan. The basis for this difficulty has been studied and summed up by sociologist, Alvin Toffler in his book, *The Third Wave*, in which he reports that:

The American Council of Life Insurance declare, “some urban experts believe that the major U. S. city is a thing of the past”. Fortune magazine reports that transportation and communication technology has cut the cords that bound big corporations to the traditional headquarter cities”. And Business Week entitles an article “The Prospect of a Nation With No Important Cities”. This redistribution of and de-concentration of population will, in due time, alter our assumptions and expectations about personal as well as social space, about acceptable commuting distances, about housing density, and many other things.

This urban de-centralization has been occurring for some time, and it is benefiting rural areas in general; however, much of this growth is not fitting itself into the land use and public facility plans which communities have been developing to avoid the serious problems that are often associated with random, rural sprawl. Shaping these de-centralizing growth patterns to local benefit will require the effective use of a variety of implementation measures, which are described below.

Zoning:

Zoning is the most effective tool for implementing a community's land use goals. The City of Viroqua has administered a zoning ordinance since the 1950's. The Town of Viroqua has no zoning ordinance, and, as of 2005, had no intentions of having a zoning program. Wisconsin law requires that beginning in 2010, that a unit of government's zoning must be "consistent" with its Comprehensive Plan, mostly the Land Use element of that plan. Vernon County administers shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning regulations and mapping according to state standards. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the City of Viroqua's zoning ordinance be updated to be consistent with its adopted Comprehensive Plan before 2010; and this includes the shoreland, floodplain and wetland zoning. Some of the municipal zoning updating needs include:

City of Viroqua Zoning Ordinance Updating Needs

- Consider adding a zoning district specifically for single family use.
- Verify that the zoning ordinance is consistent with the city Comprehensive Plan prior to January 1, 2010.
- Amend zoning map to remove the "shoe-string" commercial zoning extending along state highways to the boundary of the city.
- Develop a resource protection district for non-development areas.

Subdivision and Platting Review:

A subdivision ordinance, sometimes called a land division ordinance, 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 is consistent with land use plans, density standards, street locations, conservation and drainage standards and other standards of good platting procedure. The City of Viroqua has a subdivision ordinance, and the Town of Viroqua does not. Wisconsin law requires that after 2010 that subdivision ordinances be "consistent" with land use plans. The City of Viroqua intends to

update its subdivision ordinance before 2010 to be consistent with its Land Use Plan. Some of these updating needs include:

City of Viroqua Subdivision Ordinance Updating Needs

- Verify that the Subdivision Ordinance is consistent with the city Comprehensive Plan prior to January 1, 2010.
- Identify any areas within the extraterritorial plat review area that the city would wish to waive its jurisdiction in and record a legal description of the actual plat review jurisdiction area with the County Register of Deeds.
- Establish plat review standards for plats which are reviewed within the extraterritorial area.

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; larger cities have a three mile jurisdiction. This authority is granted through Chapter 236 of Wisconsin statutes. 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 and utility servicing, drainage, etc. 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 by Wisconsin law after 2010. Viroqua's extraterritorial plat review jurisdiction is located on **Map 17** and **Map 18**.

Official Street Map:

An additional planning implementation tool for a community that expects growth is an official street map which is adopted by ordinance and recorded. This tool gives a community the authority to map the location and width of future streets and the location of future parks and parkways within the community and within its extraterritorial plat approval jurisdiction. After 2010, official street mapping must be consistent with a community's Comprehensive Plan. The community's Board of Appeals is empowered to hear and decide on variances from this ordinance. The value of this implementation tool is that it reserves the location of necessary street locations until it is necessary to construct such streets. This ordinance restricts the issuance of any building permit in the path of an official street, subject to property owner protections in the process. The provisions of official street mapping are contained in section 62.23 (6) of state statutes. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that the development of an official street map be considered as 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. It is important that there be an individual or committee whose job it is to keep the plan in front of governmental decision making bodies as development discussions and decisions come up. This custodian would be responsible for detecting when amendments to the plan are necessary or desirable as circumstances change, and then arranging for the plan to be updated. This custodian would be appointed by the governing body. The custodian would have no 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 which can be employed as an aid in implementing development ordinances is “development impact analysis”. The principal components of such an analysis would include a report evaluating fiscal, environmental, socio-economic, traffic and land use impacts. Such analysis is typically employed for major rezonings and subdivision plats, particularly where significant public services are required. Local zoning or platting ordinances can include requirements for some level of development impact analysis geared to the scope of the project. Such analysis can include special studies and limited moratoriums of development proposals until special studies or plans are done. There are a variety of program models that are available to use for such an analysis. Such a model was recently developed by the Wisconsin Land Use Research Program. Any unit of government administering a zoning or subdivision ordinance can conduct the development impact studies referenced above if necessary to have the information necessary to make good decisions on such proposals.

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 added to the City of Viroqua to make use of such services. 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. Joint planning between city and town governments for urban growth can produce the most cost-effective development for both the land owner/business party and the local government.

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 in state statute 66.037 and 66.0301 which provide authority for local governments to develop “cooperative plans” for their boundaries. The statement of purpose in s. 66.0307(3) indicates that boundary agreements can play an important role in community planning and development; this statement of purpose is as follows:

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 which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals,

order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.

As of January 1, 2004, there were twenty one boundary agreements in effect in Wisconsin according to the Department of Administration. 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 city and the town. Such agreements can compensate a town for loss of territory and tax base and other compensations in exchange for Comprehensive Plan implementation as both City and Town would mutually agree to.

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 which is truly “urban” in nature would be planned and developed according to accepted urban standards, thereby assuring maximum benefits to the businesses, customers, residents, 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.

In general, city and town agreements on managing growth can lead to a greater sense of community. Such agreements can create win-win situations, and have the potential for alleviating the controversy, division and confusion that accompanies urban growth when it is spread over several governmental jurisdictions. Such agreements can avoid the imposition of new responsibilities on town government, over time, with all the related expenses and liabilities that come with it. Such negative conditions can have a depressing affect on important community goals involving the need to attract new businesses, essential services, new residents, and maintaining student enrollments in the local school system. Such agreements can avoid the barriers that often stand in the way of tapping these special development potentials good for the whole area.

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 the loss of much of the town’s rural character. Maintenance of the town’s rural character was an important value expressed in the town’s citizen survey of public opinion in 2003. A helpful approach to developing a position on this kind of growth trend is for a town government to ask itself if it wants to eventually get involved with creating, financing, and managing urban-type services, such as: a sewage collection and treatment system, a centralized water system, building and maintaining urban-type streets, town policing functions and extensive code development and enforcement. These are expensive public functions which regularly increase in cost due to expanded standards and mandates from the state and federal

level. A long range view of these implications of growth in the light of existing and likely trends 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 state statute 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 land owners. Such planning would require public information and education programs, and must be backed up 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 not cost, indicates a genuine need, indicates public support, and such projects indicate a commitment to the continuation and maintenance of the project. Volunteerism is an implementation tool that can be self-sustaining through its cultivation in the local schools and churches, and in organizations such as scouting, FFA, 4-H, veterans and sportsman organizations, and many others. 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 community should be cultivating individuals and organizations whose interest would match various public needs within the community.

Integration and Consistency between each Element of the Plan:

The standards of consistency and integration between plan elements was applied throughout the development of this Comprehensive Plan. The consistency standard in the preparation of this Plan was particularly important in the preparation of the Land Use Plan element. The combination of consistency and integration were particularly important in relating the Land Use and Transportation elements of this plan to each other.

According to WI Statutes 66.1001(3), beginning on January 1, 2010, any local governmental zoning and subdivision programs and official mapping must be “consistent” with a comprehensive plan. The City of Viroqua’s zoning and subdivision ordinances should be reviewed to determine if there are zoning standards which should be updated, added or deleted to assure that they are consistent with the recommendations of the city’s Comprehensive Plan; this review must include the zoning map. The most

important element of consistency will be with the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The consistency requirement is one of the most valuable and effective means of implementing community planning recommendations.

This consistency requirement would apply to the Town of Viroqua if it would decide to have a zoning or subdivision review program or a Town official mapping program.

Mechanism to Measure Progress Toward Achieving all Aspects of the Plan:

City of Viroqua

The mechanism to measure progress toward achieving elements of the Comprehensive Plan will be an annual Comprehensive Plan implementation assessment by the City Planning Commission. The Commission will meet to assess its progress in accomplishing Plan recommendations. The city's designated plan custodian will monitor consistency of city development decisions and ordinances with the comprehensive plan and work with the Plan Commission and City Council in the above plan assessment process. A report of this meeting(s) will be forwarded to the City Council with recommendations related to plan implementations.

Upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Commission and City Council will begin the process of comparing the city's zoning and subdivision ordinances with the Comprehensive Plan and make whatever adjustments are felt necessary to assure consistency between the ordinances and the Plan. Additional policies and programs to achieve plan implementation by the City of Viroqua include:

- Retain professional staff/consultants in areas relating to land use planning, zoning, engineering, legal and financial services and other technical areas.
- Administration of zoning, building and subdivision codes through professional staff/consultants; areas of jurisdiction should be defined.
- Active committees/commissions that follow written procedures. Appointments to committees/commissions to be the most qualified individuals available in the community.
- Assure accountability and open government. Adopt written procedures, high ethical standards of conduct, adherence to open meeting laws and principles, good record keeping and communications, orderly meetings with adequate staff/consultant advance preparation.
- Assure the accountability of administration/staff and committees/commissions to governing body. The governing body should maintain oversight of all aspects of city land use following written procedures/ordinances. Maintain updated maps and other documents that are available to citizens.
- City zoning ordinance upgrading to include the adoption of standards addressing the following matters: sign regulations, lighting/dark skies, landscaping/greenspace requirements, and noise regulations.
- The City of Viroqua will work cooperatively with neighboring and overlapping units of government on matters of boundary agreements, with ongoing Town/City committees to discuss areas of common interests, shared services, shared professional staff, and other matters of potential cooperation.

Town of Viroqua

The town's mechanism for measuring progress toward achieving Comprehensive Plan recommendations will include an annual review of Plan implementation issues by the Town Planning Committee. The Committee will make a report of their review to the Town Board, with recommendations.

Process for Updating the Comprehensive Plan:

City of Viroqua

The Viroqua City Planning Commission will review and update the Plan on five year intervals or more often as necessary; this will include the reassessment of population projections, with revisions if necessary. The city will also comply with the state comprehensive planning statute by updating the Plan on ten year intervals. As a part of this up-dating, the Plan Commission will recommend Plan revisions to the City Council for adoption. The Council will hold a public hearing on any recommended revisions prior to Council action. Updating the Comprehensive Plan and any related provisions in zoning and subdivision ordinances to maintain consistency is important for good plan implementation because unexpected changes can be expected to occur. Plan implementation challenges occur when proposed changes regarding development are judged to be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The challenge will be to either: deny the change in keeping with the Plan, to modify the proposed change to bring it into compliance, or to allow it and then amend the Comprehensive Plan and related ordinances to maintain consistency. These are often difficult decisions, depending on the nature of a proposed development. In such cases, the city should apply its planning process which may involve a fundamental reevaluation and redirection of its Comprehensive Plan; public input and direction is an important part of this process.

Town of Viroqua

The Town Planning Committee will review and update the Plan on five year intervals; 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. 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 action by the Town Board.

Action Program to Implement the Comprehensive Plan:

City of Viroqua

Section 2 – Housing:

1. Establish a plan and a map that shows proposed and potential new roads to service developments as they grow around the core established areas of the city.
2. Establish a policy and a plan that shows proposed and potential new sewer and waterlines that can serve new development around the more established areas of the community.

Section 3 – Transportation:

1. Establish a plan and a map that shows proposed and potential new roads to service developments as they grow around the ore established areas of the city.
2. Establish a plan and a map that shows proposed and potential bicycle and walking trails that will connect residential, recreational, retail, and manufacturing areas within Viroqua.

Section 4 – Utilities and Community Facilities:

1. Establish a committee to identify and promote opportunities and routes for bike lanes, bike trails, and walking trails within the city and connections with existing area trails.
2. Establish a policy/program to inform and educate consumers about energy conservation.

Section 6 – Economic Development:

1. Through the City Council, support the newly established Vernon Economic Development Association.
2. Through the City Economic Development Officer, promote the establishment of a Vernon County Tourism Council that would strive to levy Room Tax countywide and promote tourism at a county level.

Section 8 – Land Use:

1. Establish a land use zoning ordinance that shows reasonable consideration for the character of the City, and that is suitable for particular uses and with a view to conserving the value of property and with an intent of conserving property values and encouraging the orderly development and most appropriate uses of land throughout Viroqua. The purposes of this zoning would be to:
 - a. Promote the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community.
 - b. Prevent congestion in the streets.
 - c. Secure public safety.
 - d. Promote the conservation of natural resources.
 - e. Prevent environmental pollution.
 - f. Provide desirable concentrations of population.
 - g. Facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, recreation, parks and other public facilities.

Final Draft

- h. Meet the goals and objectives of the Viroqua Comprehensive Plan.
 - i. Meet such other purposes for a zoning ordinance as are authorized by state law.
- 2. Engage Professional assistance to facilitate a comprehensive review and revision of the zoning code pursuant to the recommendations contained in this plan. This review should include input from all sectors of the community and give consideration to the following:
 - R-1 Single Family Residential District.
 - R-1 A Neighbor Residential District.
 - R-2 Town Residential District.
 - R-3 General Residential District.
 - RO Residential Office District.
 - RP Planned Residential District.
 - C1 Neighborhood Commercial District.
 - C2 General Commercial District.
 - C-3 Town Center District.
 - C/LI Commercial, Light Industrial District.
 - And other uses as needed.
- 3. Supplementary or Overlay Districts.:
 - HP Historic Preservation Overlay District.

Town of Viroqua

(need info)

Section 10 - Overall Program Goals Accomplished By This Plan

Introduction:

This Comprehensive Plan accomplishes the 14 overall goals specified by chapter 16.965 of Wisconsin Statutes. Provisions for accomplishing these goals are contained throughout the various sections of this Plan. This section identifies the sections and pages in this plan which address these 14 general goals.

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures
Section (s) and pages
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices
Section (s) and pages
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
Section (s) and pages
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests
Section (s) and pages
5. Encouragement of land-uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs
Section (s) and pages
6. Preservation of cultural, historic and archaeological sites
Section (s) and pages
7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government
Section (s) and pages
8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
Section (s) and pages
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community
Section (s) and pages
10. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local level.
Section (s) and pages
11. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
Section (s) and pages

Final Draft

12. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
Section (s) and pages

13. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.
Section (s) and page

APPENDIX A

Public Participation Plan

Public Participation Plan

Central Vernon County Planning Group

| Cluster A | Cluster B | Cluster C | Cluster D | Cluster E |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| City of Viroqua | City of Westby | Village of Coon Valley | Village of Stoddard | Village of Readstown |
| Town of Viroqua | Town of Christina | Village of Chaseburg | Town of Bergen | Town of Kickapoo |
| | | Town of Coon | | |
| | | Town of Hamburg | | |

Introduction - The comprehensive planning program that the above twelve units of government are engaged in requires that each governing body 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 2003.

A final 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 individual units of government. This public participation plan is presented below:

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.

Seven Level Public Participation Structure:

- Citizen opinion surveys.
- Surveys of public agency staff for technical input.
- Issue & Opportunity Study Papers.
- Public participation through five cluster committees and overall umbrella committee.
- Forms available at each public meeting to register statements of "reservation or dissent" regarding planning ideas or recommendations.
- Meetings with each of the twelve local governing units for elected official input and direction.
- A public hearing on the recommended plan in each of the twelve units of government.

This total program includes 63 public meetings involving the planning committees and the local units of government. These are all public meetings for which public notice is provided.

Public Participation Process:

- The project is started with an orientation meeting in which the 12 participating units of government are invited, including their planning commissions, staff, interested individuals,

Cluster A Appendix A

and with invitations to the media. From this meeting, interested individuals are identified for a project area Umbrella Planning Committee.

- A follow-up organizational and general planning meeting is held of the Umbrella Committee. Arrangements are made to form cluster planning committees, and work is begun on developing public input surveys for the clusters. An important function of the cluster committees will be to spread the word about the planning process and extend opportunities to others to participate.
- A series of cluster meetings are held to discuss the nine comprehensive planning elements and generate public input for those planning elements. A series of *Issues & Opportunity Study Papers* are provided by the consultant to initiate the 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. In this regard, the ideas and feedback generated by these Papers are not constrained by the limitations or pressures to refine or adopt specific recommendations. Therefore, these Papers do not present specific recommendations. The consultant will take the input generated by these Papers to compose the preliminary content of the comprehensive plans.
- 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 explanation of any issue.
- The opinion surveys of local residents were the responsibility of each local units of government or cluster committee. The consultant provides some suggested questions to assist the process, but final questions and the length of the survey was a local decision. The City of Viroqua conducted an extensive public survey the year before this planning project began.
- Key organizations will be contacted for individualized input into the comprehensive plans. Among these organizations are: schools, area farm organizations, U.S. Department of Agriculture offices, watershed/drainage districts, regional planning, State Department of Natural Resources, federal resource agencies, private utilities, civic organization and others.
- Coordinate between the cluster committees and the media on public information reports.
- The consultant will meet with individuals interested in providing input to the plans, within the limits of the project time schedule and budget.
- Meetings will be held with each of the twelve governing units to provide opportunities to review results of public survey responses and to provide an opportunity to provide input and direction for the body of the plan.
- A preliminary plan document will be provided to cluster and umbrella planning committees for review and suggestion and to all adjacent units of government. The planning committees may take measures to solicit other public review and comment on the preliminary plan.

- Meetings will be held with each of the twelve governing units to provide an opportunity to review a preliminary draft of the total comprehensive plan and provide input for potential additions and revisions to the final plan document.
- Each of the governing units will hold a public hearing on the preliminary plan.
- Every plan commission or other body having the authority to adopt or amend a comprehensive plan will have an opportunity to adopt resolution approving the comprehensive plan for its jurisdiction and then send it on to its governing body for approval. Meetings will be held with each governing body for the purpose of presenting the final comprehensive plan and taking official action on that plan by the governing body.

This Public Participation Plan was adopted by the City of Viroqua on May 25, 2004, and by the Town of Viroqua on June 10, 2004.

APPENDIX B

Issues and Opportunities Study Paper No. A-1

Issues and Opportunities Study Paper No. A-1

Cluster A – City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua

October 2003

Updated 11/10/03

Purpose – This Study Paper provides a summary description of the first major plan element to appear in the comprehensive plan: *Issues and Opportunities*. This Paper will deal with general planning matters and background information. These study papers point out those issues and opportunities that are relevant in this comprehensive planning program. The purpose of the “study paper” approach is to facilitate exposure to a broad spectrum of ideas and a free-ranging discussion of them. The ultimate purpose is to generate local feedback and direction for the production of the Comprehensive Plan material. Because this is a study paper, no recommendations are presented here.

Introduction – The Issues & Opportunities section of the Comprehensive Plan will contain overall objectives, policies, goals and programs to guide future development and redevelopment over a 20 year planning period; such information in more detail will be presented in each functional section of the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, this section of the Plan will address 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 small units of government particularly where much of the labor force works outside the community.

Additional issues from those mentioned above will also be addressed in this study paper. Also, those involved in this planning program are free to pose other planning issues to be looked at.

The discussion of “opportunity” areas identified in this and other study papers can likewise be expanded at any time to include other planning subjects beyond what is covered in these papers. The opportunity subjects are intended to cover ideas related only to the planning and development needs of the planning clusters and their units of government. The ideas identified in the opportunity section of the various study papers, plus the ideas added by others, will constitute the subject areas to be considered for formal recommendations in the cluster Comprehensive Plans. Because the opportunity ideas can be wide-ranging, it is anticipated that not all such ideas will make it into the final Comprehensive Plans. All opportunities and ideas will be subject to local official review and approval as a condition of becoming recommendations in the Comprehensive Plans.

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

Issues:

1. 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 (municipality or town) is its economy. The key measure of that economy is jobs and related income levels. A substantial part of the economy for the Cluster A communities is measured by their place in the **regional economy**. A substantial part of the Cluster A economy is agriculture; and this part of the local economy is influenced by the national agricultural economy and public policy. The City of Viroqua functions as a regional service center for much of Vernon County including most of the Town of Viroqua. The northern part of the Town of Viroqua likely identifies with the City of Westby for some services. Not all communities in any given region are equally capable of tapping or benefiting from their region's economy. The five most important factors that determine a community's growth capability are:

- **Location**
- Natural **resources**
- Availability of **land** free of major development limitations
- Availability of the **infrastructure** needed for growth
- **Institutional** structures, services, leadership & heritage

Communities typically don't excel in all factors; however, some come close. There can be other unusual factors that determine a community's growth capability, such as the political decisions related to the location or termination of a public facility.

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. Land use management methods which implement community goals regarding the desired impact of transportation on land use will be important to avoid unintended consequences of such projects.

2. Regional Growth Context – The greatest meaning of the demographic characteristics of the City and Town of Viroqua comes from an analysis of these characteristics within a regional context. While this section does not constitute the demographic analysis part of the Comprehensive Plan, a sampling of regional employment illustrates the regional interdependence of the Viroqua area population. Some statistical reporting is broken up by city and town jurisdiction even though the functional urban area is composed of both, and this may result in some incomplete reporting by respondents when the census was taken.
3. Employment Patterns -- In 1990, There were about as many persons (1,036) coming into the City of Viroqua to work as there were Viroqua residents (1,094) working in the city. In 1990, the City of Viroqua had 1,707 employed residents, with 64% of these residents working in the City of Viroqua, 2.4% working in Westby, 19.6% working elsewhere in Vernon County, 5% working in

Monroe County, and 4.5 % (78 persons) working in La Crosse County. It is likely that a significant portion of those working “elsewhere in Vernon County” (335) actually worked at locations just outside the city, in the Town of Viroqua.

In 2000, The City of Viroqua had 1,912 employed residents, with 72% working in the City of Viroqua, 6.7% working in Westby, 20% working in the La Crosse area, and, 11 residents working in Coon Valley.

In 1990, the Town of Viroqua had 677 employed residents, with 38% of these working in the City of Viroqua, 38% working in the remainder of the county, 11% working in Westby, and 7.6% working in La Crosse County.

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.

The characteristics of the City of Viroqua's labor force would indicate that it provides services of a regional nature. In 2000, the greatest category of employment of Viroqua residents was in the “educational, health and social services” category, at 30.5%; this was about twice the number of the next largest category of employment of “manufacturing” at 16.2%, and the Wisconsin percentage for this category was only 20%. This large service category of workers in Viroqua would represent the jobs at the various educational institutions and the county and city government workers. These employment categories clearly indicate the regional scope of this component of the local economy. Because of their magnitude, these “service” industries are a valuable part of the economic base of the Cluster A planning area.

The economic impact of the City of Viroqua senior citizen population is also significant. In 2000, 39.6% of all city households had Social Security earnings, compared to 26.4% for Wisconsin; and 18.9% of households had other retirement earnings, compared to 15.7% for Wisconsin.

The La Crosse metropolitan area can be expected to have an increasing influence on the Viroqua area as commuter trends and rural community housing preferences increase. This regional connection would be facilitated by the construction of the Viroqua and Westby highway bypasses which would shorten the drive to La Crosse. 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 about 20% by the year 2020, but employment is projected to increase at a higher rate, at about 35%. The locations for this extra increment of jobs are projected to decentralize beyond the La Crosse urban area. Thirty seven percent of all employed Vernon County residents commuted outside the county for work in 2000.

Accommodating additional growth potential will be linked to the growth policies and infrastructure capacity of the City and Town of Viroqua.

4. Development Capability – Most communities are impacted by a variety of physical limitations to development. The Cluster A planning area is substantially free of physical limitations to development. There is a significant amount of upland with good development capability in the Town and City of Viroqua area. The development capability of these lands is enhanced by the accessibility afforded by Highway 14-61 and the short travel time to the La Crosse metro area. The expanding urban imprint on the natural landscape in this rural area can be expected to be a continuing issue. Future public health issues may involve contamination of water and air from substandard confined animal feeding operations and substandard waste disposal practices. The concentrations of natural development limitations that do exist tend to be located in the eastern half of the Town of Viroqua where there are steep slopes and flood prone lands due to the presence of Kickapoo River tributaries. A development limitation affecting the City of Viroqua is the city's location across several drainage divides, thereby placing much of the city's growth area beyond gravity flow to the municipal wastewater treatment plant thus requiring multiple lift stations to pump wastewater from several drainage basins.
5. Water Quality And Public Health– Issues concern the maintenance of drinking water quality from the sensitive aquifer in the karst geology of the area; concern for the affects of any future livestock feedlot operations; and affects from concentrations of septic waste disposal system.
6. Solid Waste Disposal – Will there be adequate facilities for the disposal of solid waste from the Vernon County area in the future? What will be the affects on land use and water quality from all waste disposal?
7. Energy – How can the conservation and generation of energy be provided for in planning for the future?
8. Agriculture – Agricultural land use is the dominant development type by land area in the Cluster A planning area. Important issues for this Comprehensive Plan will be the maintenance of compatibility between agriculture and non-agricultural use, and how to sustain the farming way of life. Without planning, the Viroqua urban area can be expected to continue growing to the north and south in the Highway 14-61 corridor, including the intersection areas with the proposed highway bypass. The loss of good agricultural land due to such urban development can be expected to be an important issue.
9. Status of Planning –There are no comprehensive plans or land use plans for communities in this cluster planning area. The City of Viroqua has zoning and the Town does not. The Town areas are covered by a county Farmland Preservation Program and a Land & Water Resource Management Plan.
10. Property Rights – Respect for property rights and the protection of community rights are bedrock principles in American land use planning and is a given requirement in this comprehensive planning program. Since rights and responsibilities go together, an issue in any public planning program is the balancing of property rights with property responsibilities. The elective bodies of

the two units of government in this planning cluster have substantial responsibilities regarding such rights and responsibilities and have the final say on any such matters related to this planning program.

11. Demographic Change – The average age of the population in this planning cluster would normally increase significantly as the large “baby boom” population advances into the retirement years beginning about 2010. However, this advancing average age may not be as prevalent in this cluster if there continues to be an influx of working age families with children supported by the La Crosse and Viroqua job markets as well as by local job development. However, the elderly population component may well continue to grow as an increasing percentage of the population for the remainder of this decade. Since the working age population will become proportionally less during the next twenty years, the number of persons available to fill job needs will decline unless in-migration increases.
12. Aging Population -- Even with the long term moderating effect of issue 8 above, the existing population will produce significant elderly population numbers during the next twenty years. In addition, new elderly persons may be moving into the area. Research authorities are reporting that, “Older Americans are moving to rural America to retire and return to their family roots. The Census Bureau estimates that one-quarter of a million people 50 years or older moved to a rural area from a metro area in the year ending March 2001”. Cheaper housing and less crime are additional reasons reported for such moves. Areas of enhanced natural amenities are also being chosen by these migrating retirement age persons. The Viroqua area has convenient proximity to the Kickapoo and Mississippi River environmental-recreational corridors which are amenities of world-class and regional significance. This migration to rural areas is increasing rural land values which have other development implications for rural governments and land development.
13. Planning Issues Regarding This Aging Population – These issues include the need for greater access to health care; greater accessibility, in general, such as a greater need for sidewalks; wellness programs to maintain health; transportation to health care facilities; the need for local wellness and clinic facilities; the need for specialized housing alternatives and residential life styles, etc. This issue will receive more attention in the housing, transportation and community facilities elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
14. Preference For Rural Living – Baring economic or energy upheavals, a strong societal preference has been established for low-density, open space living. Many authorities on growth, including those in the planning profession, have observed and reported on this trend for many years, as verified by the results of the year 2000 U.S. Census and other specialized studies. Such authorities are observing that the economy is experiencing significant transformation from an industrial economy to an information/service economy. This economic transformation, plus continuing highway improvement, will facilitate the development of rural, non-farm housing, based on the growing trend of home occupations and easy commuting to near-by job centers. These economic trends and personal living preferences will have implications for land use development and rural community structure during the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan. More rural

living will add to the traffic on rural roads which will require selective improvements to deal with congestion and safety problems. Land use conflicts can be expected to occur.

15. High Amenity Area – The Cluster A planning area is a high amenity area due mainly to its hills, stream valleys and scenic views in its northwestern and eastern borders and due to its unspoiled rural farm landscape. As early as 1973, the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank issued a report describing the future prospects for Upper Midwest population changes, in which it was observed that: “rural non-farm population growth in the Upper Midwest can be expected to continue in the high amenity areas, particularly those easily accessible to metropolitan centers”. The report went on to say that Wisconsin could expect the largest growth in this type of population, particularly in western Wisconsin. Many public and private authorities have reinforced this projection in recent years. The USDA Economic Research Service says 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 City and Town of Viroqua. Related planning issues include development pressures on hillsides, and flood plains, infringement on scenic views and possible diminishment of the scenic qualities which this area has been known for. A strong element in the nation-wide rural, non-farm housing trend is the desire to build where there are scenic views. The Cluster A planning area has a very high quality living environment as represented by its scenic, agricultural landscape and by the full-service, county seat community of Viroqua. An overall growth issue will be the maintenance of these lifestyle amenities as these areas are changed by growth.
16. Highway 14-61 Bypass Proposal – A future issue for the Viroqua area will be the impacts of the proposed relocation of Highway 14-61 east and north of town. This bypass will initially reduce truck traffic and other through traffic through the downtown, but it could also have negative impacts on businesses that rely on through traffic. This bypass will present other issues for the Town of Viroqua concerning the pressures for urban land use development at access points to the new highway. Land use plans and land use controls along this route will be advisable to deal with such issues.
17. Highway 56 improvements – Depending on the magnitude of this project, there could be issues of positive and negative neighborhood impacts, esthetic impacts, and related land use conversions.
18. 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 regarding land development standards and public services.
19. More Commuting – More commuter traffic can be expected on many roads in this planning area, but particularly on Highway 14-61. A highway bypass would normally lower the traffic volumes through town; however, in a growing community this effect may be short lived.
20. Urban Services -- The City of Viroqua is a comprehensive business service center and governmental services center and can be expected to grow in this capacity because of the city being the county seat; because of the availability of more developable land; and because of its

presence on Highway 14-61 which is the principal arterial highway in the planning area. The wishes and ability of the city to expand will be an important planning issue.

21. City--Town Relationships – Urban expansion needs often creates jurisdictional issues between cities and towns. Such growth is mostly market-driven and will occur somewhere. Minimizing the problems with such growth is an important planning responsibility. Providing customary urban services and avoiding the problems associated with sprawl are important goals. Recognizing the inherent values and needs of both city and town jurisdictions is important in the planning process.
22. 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. They are often the location for utilities which last many decades. The planning and design of such urban and rural infrastructure must be based on a much longer term outlook. It is important that street and road planning consider the “golden hour” of survivability for persons having health emergencies related to the ease of emergency vehicle access. This is increasingly important because a greater proportion of the population is advancing into the elderly age ranges. Such planning considerations should be applied to subdivision reviews and other transportation related standards for urban and rural development.
23. “Smart Growth” Areas – This planning program calls for efforts to identify smart growth areas, which, according to Chapter 16.965, is: “an area that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development pattern that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities that have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs”. This rather general definition would appear to apply only to lands serviceable by the City of Viroqua; but are there other locations as well? What specific locations in Viroqua would qualify?
24. 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. Community development authorities are increasingly documenting that communities that protect and promote their scenic and cultural amenities have a healthier business climate and are better places to live. What are the important cultural/heritage issues in this planning cluster?
25. Coordination – Are there areas where public services can be coordinated, shared or in any other way be improved, and this includes relationships extending outside this cluster planning area? Existing effective examples, such as emergency services, can be looked to for lessons on area-wide service delivery.
26. Economic Development – Protecting the local tax base and expanding it is always an issue. Local planning can help do this. One important issue in this regard is the cost of development to the

local government. Agriculture is a vital part of the economy in the Town of Viroqua and in the City of Viroqua since it is a rural service center. An important economic development goal will be to protect this local farm economy and tap areas of potential and innovation. Concern is warranted for the manufacturing sector of the economy; over three million manufacturing jobs have been lost nationally in the last several years. In this regard, what should be the place of manufacturing job retention and recruitment in the local economic development strategy? Heritage tourism is becoming a strong economic development element for many communities that possess the assets of this planning area. Tourism is a clean industry and can tap already-present resources. Effective and sustainable tourism requires innovative planning and marketing.

27. Viroqua Downtown Area – A general issue for all downtowns is the preservation of a critical mass of businesses which is necessary to maintain it as a healthy shopping center. Viroqua presently has a strong downtown area. Dealing with traffic and parking are important issues. The removal of through traffic by the proposed Highway 14-61 bypass can be expected to provide benefits and challenges. One of the most significant challenges in bypass situations will be to prevent the movement of downtown businesses, particularly retail, out of the downtown to the bypass route. Strong city and town land use policies and close cooperation between city and downtown leadership and Town authorities is necessary to maintain a viable downtown business district.
28. Sprawl – How serious an issue is this now, and how serious will it become? Are sufficient growth management measures available in the city and in the town to deal with this issue? For the Town of Viroqua, the ingredients for rural sprawl will be present in the Highway 14-61 bypass route, but whether they come to reality is under the control of the Town. Is sprawl OK, or is it something to be limited?
29. Priorities – This comprehensive planning program will cover a wide variety of planning issues; not all can be dealt with in detail because of timing and budget requirements. Cluster committees and local units of government will have to identify those issues that are most important. These issues will then be dealt with in more detail than other issues.

Opportunities:

1. Good Development And Growth Capability – The lands near Viroqua have good development capability for future urban growth. The hilly areas can be expected to present physical challenges and extra costs for city growth in certain directions. The Town of Viroqua is a well-developed agricultural town. The continuation of farming in the town would appear to be the principal land use goal, although the incursion of non-farm uses can bring problems for existing farming operations as well as interfere with the intensification of some farming practices. Lands at principal access points along the proposed bypass in the Town can expect to be proposed for urban development upon development of this route. A planning issue will be the application of urban development standards to such growth and the provision of essential urban services.

2. Good Location – Viroqua is well located within a relatively large rural service area for future growth. The city is on the edge of the La Crosse metro area job market and can be expected to experience moderate benefits from this location. Lands in the Highway 14-61 corridor are well located for continuing growth within this planning cluster.
3. Convenient Commuting -- The convenient commuting to Viroqua and the La Crosse Area can be expected to be a contributor to future residential development in the Viroqua area, particularly with the development of the proposed highway bypass.
4. Amenities – The City of Viroqua and Town of Viroqua possesses an authentic rural and small town character. The area's historic and ethnic themes establish a special identity and unity. Preserving and enhancing these themes are important factors for a community's health, progress and pride.
5. Economic Development –. Agriculture is a significant part of this area's economy; and measures to protect agricultural lands from the impacts of non-agricultural development will be important in supporting the agricultural element of the local economy. Expanding the area's organic agricultural businesses is an opportunity to strengthen local agriculture; this is an opportunity area based on resources that will remain fixed to the area and thereby constitutes a sustainable industry. It is unclear what potential the area will have for industrial development and to what extent it would be desired locally. The assets of the area would indicate that this planning area can expect specialized economic development, such as agri-business, increased tourism, recreation, more convenience services for a growing residential population, and a variety of home-based businesses. Rural, home-based business enterprises will continue to increase. Viroqua has a strong manufacturing job base, and maintaining it will be important in light of the downsizing and outsourcing of such jobs.
6. Housing Growth – New, suburban type housing can be expected to continue increasing, depending on the pace of future job development in the Viroqua and La Crosse areas.
7. Elderly Services – The significant aging of the population during the next 20 to 30 years will increase the magnitude of needs for the elderly population in these communities. Specialized living environments and wellness facilities will be among these needs.
8. Traffic – There is a direct connection between traffic and land use. Traffic will increase with growth, some of it 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, particularly along the proposed Highway 14-61 bypass. The Town of Viroqua will have a substantial role in dealing with such land use pressures. Land use planning coordination between the Town and the City will be necessary to deal with the wide variety of potential conflicts and urban servicing issues. The time it will take before this bypass is in place presents an opportunity for the city and town to do coordinated planning to prepare for this improvement which produces mutual benefits and minimizes problems for both units. The phasing of by-pass construction can be beneficial to the area.

Accommodating horse and buggy traffic will likely become more important to roadway planning and development.

9. Coordination – What potential is there during this planning period for sharing of selected public services and facilities, particularly if there are cost-saving benefits? Are there facilities, staff, or equipment that can be shared by local governments, the county, and school districts? The co-location of facilities and services is becoming quite common and is a cost-savings option. Are boundary agreements between the City and Town of Viroqua an option for dealing with continued urban growth?
10. Effective Planning – It will be important to avoid being over-run with development problems and associated cost. An effective and practical planning program will minimize such problems. Some of the most important benefits of good planning include: more cost-effective use of public funds, application of higher quality development standards, protecting economic and natural resources, and tapping development potentials not otherwise possible.
11. Community Esthetics And Image – Community esthetics can suffer in the wake of growth if not planned for and protected. Planning and code enforcement will provide the opportunity to enhance the community's image and strengthen local pride by beautifying community entry points, by community landscaping, developing standards for property development and maintenance, and controlling signage.
12. Viroqua Downtown – The fact that the Highway 14-61 bypass project is several years away presents an opportunity for the city government and downtown interests to prepare for potential impacts on the downtown. Downtown planning and mitigation measures can be developed to deal with potential adverse impacts. Phasing of the by-pass can aid in the downtown's adaptation to new traffic patterns.
13. Consistency – The present planning program provides the opportunity for the City of Viroqua to assure that its zoning and subdivision regulations provide the required "consistency" with its Comprehensive Plan. Consistency between development regulations and a comprehensive plan is increasingly being required by the courts in contested cases. The opportunity to satisfy this consistency requirement would also apply to the Town of Viroqua should it decide to undertake such programs.

(End of Study Paper No. A-1)

APPENDIX C

Maps