

# VERNON COUNTY WISCONSIN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



**2024-2044**



Image Source: DATA USA



# VERNON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission under the direction of the  
Vernon County Planning Commission



**AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**

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Vernon County Times  
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State of Florida, County of Orange, ss:

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December. 25 2024

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**NOTICE NAME:** Comprehensive Plan Public Notice  
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Section: Legals  
Category: 0001 Wisconsin Legals

*Rachel Cozart*

(signed) \_\_\_\_\_

**VERIFICATION**

State of Florida  
County of Orange



Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me on this: 12/26/2024

*J. Ra*

Notary Public

Notarized remotely online using communication technology via Proof.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR VERNON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN NOTICE is hereby given that a public hearing will be held as follows:

**Vernon County**

Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Location: County Board Room, 400 Courthouse Sq. 3rd Floor, Viroqua, WI. 54665

**Virtual Access**

This public hearing can also be attended virtually. A link can be accessed by visiting the County's website located at [www.vernoncountywi.gov](http://www.vernoncountywi.gov) and click on the link in the event calendar.

**A summary of the proposed plan:**

The Comprehensive Plans will guide the future growth and development in the County of Vernon. The comprehensive plan contains the nine required elements required by Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001 including:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| *Issues & Opportunities Element                      | *Economic Development Element          |
| *Housing Element                                     | *Intergovernmental Cooperation Element |
| *Transportation Element                              | *Land Use Element                      |
| *Utilities & Community Facilities Element            | *Implementation Element                |
| *Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources Element |  |

**Local government staff that can be contacted for additional information:**

Matt Abright, Zoning Administrator (608-637-5270)  
400 Courthouse Sq.  
Viroqua, WI 54665

**Where to inspect and how to obtain a copy of the proposal before the hearing:**

The plans are available for review at the following locations:

Vernon County Clerk's Office  
400 Courthouse Sq. Ste 108  
Viroqua, WI 54665

-or visit-

Vernon County Website: [www.vernoncountywi.gov](http://www.vernoncountywi.gov)

This 16th Day of December 2024, J. Pedretti, County Clerk

12/25 LAC  
COL-WI-600221 WNAKLP



ORDINANCE 2025-03

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE COUNTY OF VERNON, WISCONSIN

The County Board of Supervisors of the County of Vernon do Ordain as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to section 59.69(2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, the County of Vernon, is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in section 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 2. The Board of Supervisors of the County of Vernon, Wisconsin, has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 3. The plan commission of the County of Vernon, by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to the County Board of Supervisors the adoption of the document entitled "Vernon County Comprehensive Plan 2024-2044" containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 4. The County has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 5. The County Board of Supervisors of the County of Vernon, Wisconsin, does, by enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled, "Vernon County Comprehensive Plan 2024-2044" pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the County Board of Supervisors and publication as required by law.

Adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2025

Lorn Goede, County Board Chair

VERNON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Aye: 13 Nay: 2 Absent: 4 Abstain: 0



Office of the Vernon County Clerk  
I, J. Pedretti, County Clerk of Vernon County, Wisconsin DO  
HEREBY CERTIFY that the above is a true and correct copy  
of the action taken by the Vernon County Board of  
Supervisors at the meeting of February 20, 2025, as indicated  
in transcription taken personally by me.

02/20/2025

/s/ J. Pedretti, Vernon County Clerk



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**VERNON COUNTY, WISCONSIN  
PLAN COMMISSION RESOLUTION**

A Resolution to recommend adoption of the "Vernon County Comprehensive Plan 2024-2044" to the Vernon County Board of Supervisors.

Whereas, it is the Planning Commission's responsibility to prepare and recommend for adoption a County Comprehensive Plan to the County Board pursuant to Section 62.23(2) and (3) and 66.1001(4) of Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas, the Planning Commission has prepared a comprehensive plan as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Whereas, the County Comprehensive Plan contains the following ten elements: Issues and Opportunities; Land Use; Housing; Transportation; Economic Development; Utilities and Community Facilities; Intergovernmental Cooperation; Agricultural, Cultural and Natural Resources; Resiliency and Sustainability; and Plan Goals and Implementation.

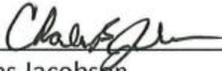
Whereas, the County Comprehensive Plan contains a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide future development of the County.

Whereas, to receive public input on the Comprehensive Plan a public participation plan was adopted and several public information meetings were held.

Whereas, all comments received were considered.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Vernon County Planning Commission hereby recommends referring the Vernon County 2024-2044 Comprehensive Plan to the County Board for a public hearing and recommends adoption of this Comprehensive Plan by the Vernon County Board of Supervisors.

Adopted this 29th day of January, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Planning Commission Chairman  
Charles Jacobson

Attest   
\_\_\_\_\_, Planning Commission Secretary  
Morgan Paulson



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vernon County Comprehensive Plan 2025-2045 provides a strategic framework for guiding the county's growth and development over the next two decades. The plan aligns with Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law and aims to coordinate the development of the county's economic, social, and environmental resources. This plan offers detailed analysis, identifies issues and sets out goals, objectives, and policies across key sectors including land use, agriculture, housing, transportation, sustainability, and natural resource management.

Key objectives outlined in the plan include fostering sustainable economic growth, promoting responsible tourism, guiding development, and ensuring the preservation of agricultural land and natural resources. Vernon County, with its predominantly rural character and large tracts of farmland, places a strong emphasis on farmland preservation and managing residential growth in a balanced manner. The plan anticipates a demand for over 650 new housing units in the coming years, responding to the county's steady population growth and demographic trends.

Public participation played a crucial role in developing the plan, with multiple engagement sessions held to gather input from residents across the county. Feedback from these meetings helped shape the comprehensive goals aimed at improving the quality of life while preserving Vernon County's unique rural character.

The plan recommends adoption of several land use strategies, a Farmland Preservation Ordinance, a Prohibition of 30% Slope Disturbance Ordinance, and a Subdivision Ordinance that preserves farmland. These will preserve farmland, promote economic growth of farms, improve water quality, and guide sustainable development. Additionally, the plan focuses on sustainability, public safety, and maintaining infrastructure like parks, water supply, and developing recreational, and multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

In conclusion, the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan sets forth a vision that balances growth with conservation, ensuring that development meets the needs of the present while safeguarding resources for future generations. The plan is designed to be flexible, with mechanisms in place for regular updates and revisions in response to emerging challenges and opportunities.

**Vernon County Board of Supervisors:**

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Lorn Goede – District 3  
Kevin Walleser – District 4  
Bruce Kilmer – District 5  
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**Vernon County Planning Commission :**

County Chairperson: Charlie Jacobson  
Sandy Schweiger  
Kay Stanek  
Nathaniel Slack

Peter Strachan (Community Representative)  
Mary Stanek (Community Representative)  
George Wilbur (Community Representative)

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Extension Educator

**Vernon County Staff :**

Matt Albright, VC Zoning Administrator  
Cassandra Hanan, VC Administrative Coordinator  
Monique Hassman, VC GIS Coordinator/Land Information  
Officer  
Laurence Johns, VC Surveyor  
Morgan Paulson, VC Chief Deputy Clerk

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### HISTORY

Vernon County was renamed from Bad Ax County on March 22, 1862. Bad Ax County had been created on March 1, 1851, from territory that had been part of Richland and Crawford counties. The name Vernon was chosen to reflect the county's green fields of wheat and to evoke Mount Vernon. The original name of this county was Bad Ax, so designated from a stream therein, tributary to the Mississippi. Bad Ax was a translation of the French voyageur term, La mauvaise hache, but the origin of the name is unknown. The inhabitants of the county felt that this name created an unpleasant impression; it was thereupon, at the suggestion of Judge William F. Terhune, changed to Vernon, implying the greenness of its wheat fields, and carrying a suggestion of Washington's home at Mount Vernon. "Butterfield, History of Vernon County" (Springfield, 1884), p. 132.

Vernon County boasts a rich history deeply intertwined with the region's natural resources and agricultural heritage. Originally inhabited by Native American tribes such as the Ho-Chunk, Sauk, and Fox, the area later became a focal point for European settlers in the early 19th century. Agriculture, particularly dairy farming, and apple orchards played a pivotal role in the county's development, with settlers drawn to the fertile lands and picturesque landscapes of rolling hills and verdant valleys. The arrival of the railroad in the late 19th century further spurred economic growth, facilitating trade and transportation of goods. Over the decades, Vernon County evolved into a vibrant community, cherishing its rural character while embracing modernization and sustainable practices. Today, it remains a testament to resilience, blending its agricultural roots with a thriving tourism industry and a commitment to preserving its natural beauty for future generations.



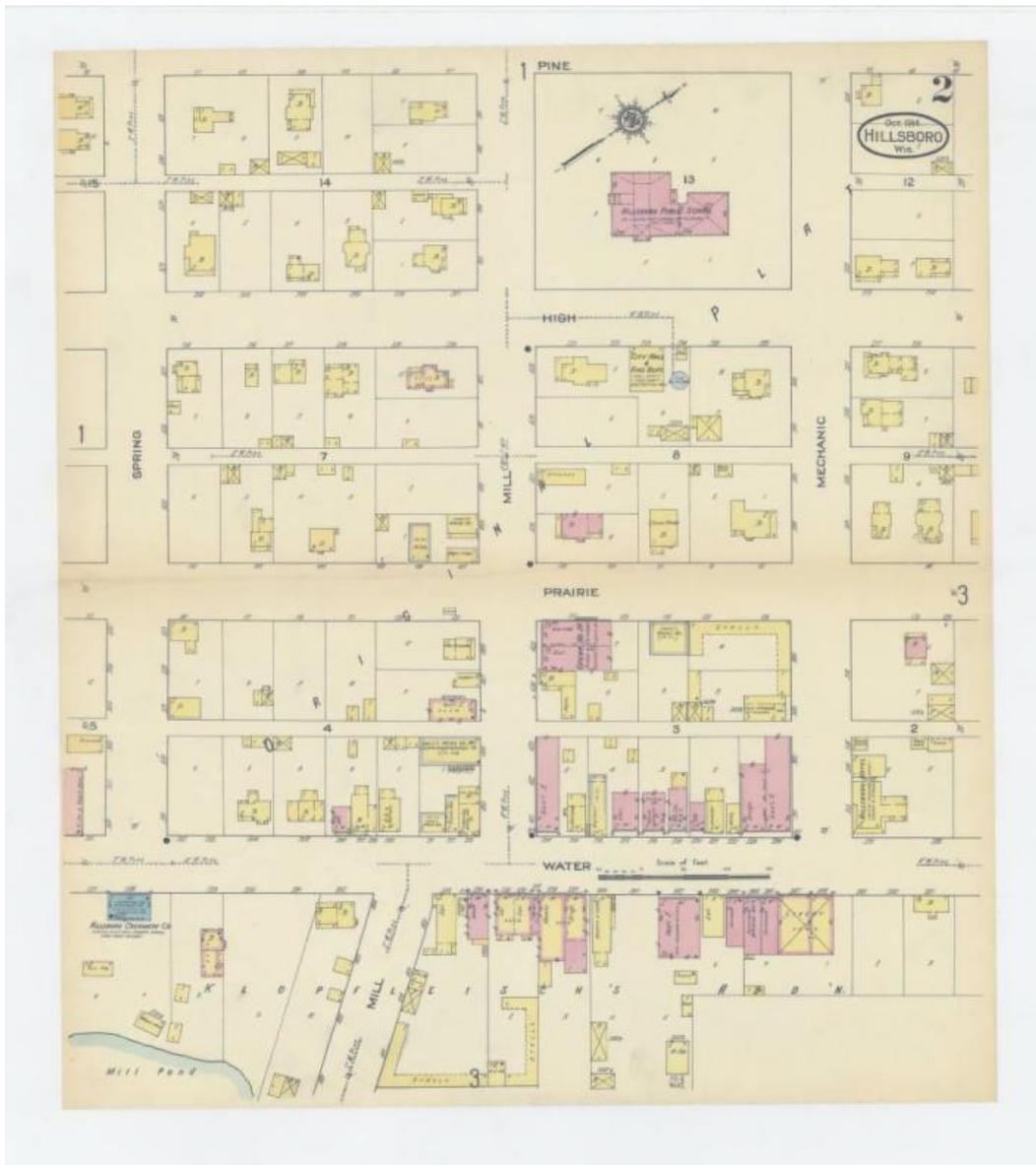
People Pause from Skating for a Photograph Early 1900's Photo credit: Vernon County Historical Society

## The Land

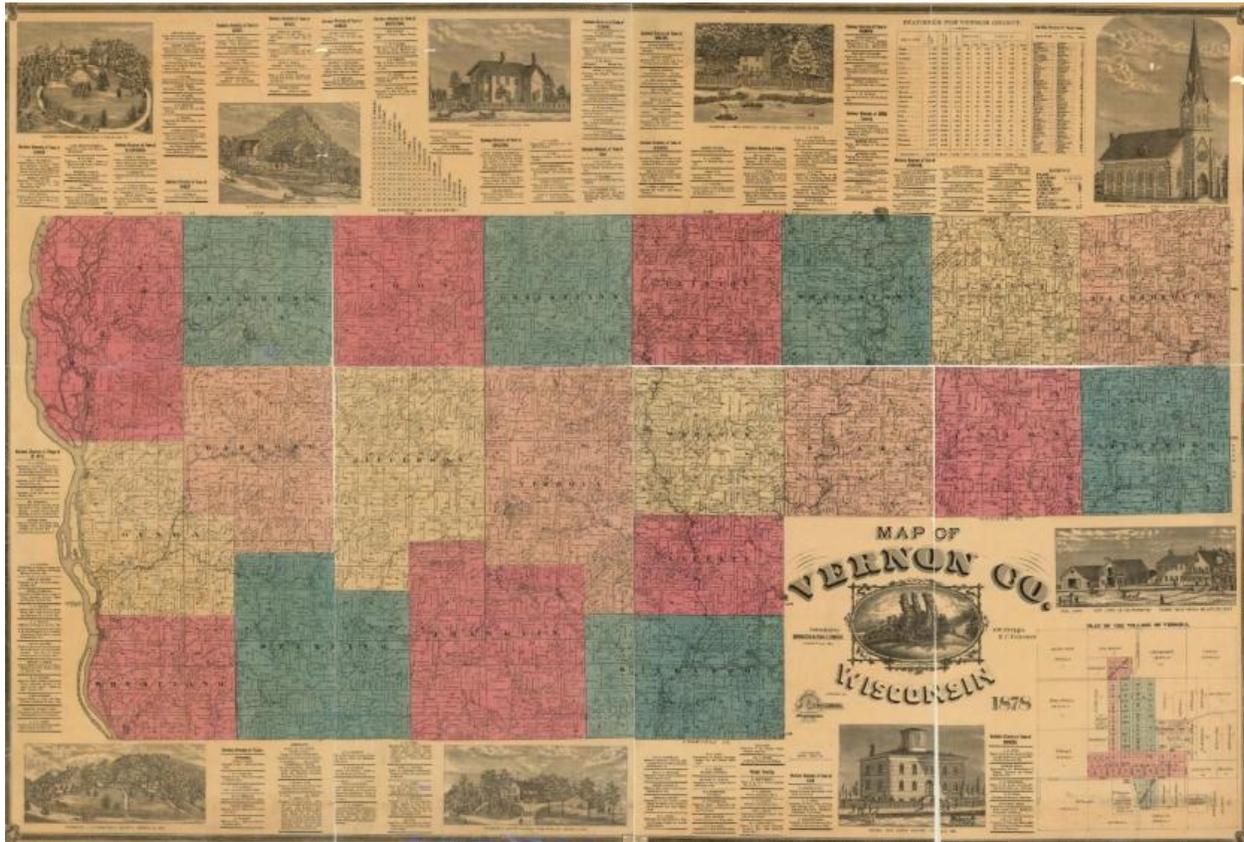
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 816 square miles of which 792 square miles (2,050 km<sup>2</sup>) is land and 25 square miles (3.0%) is water. Early descriptions of the area emphasize the heavily forested Kickapoo Valley. In 1832, militia who were chasing after Black Hawk crossed the Kickapoo at Pine Grove (Soldiers Grove today) and recorded how thick and difficult it was trying to get through the woods, and that there was nothing there to feed the horses. In an ironic twist, when they finally emerged on the plateau above, there was ample forage for the horses but no wood with which to build a fire.

Surveys conducted by the federal General Land Office (GLO) in the 1840s include descriptions of the townships along the Kickapoo River. They generally describe the Kickapoo Valley as heavily wooded with various types of oak and pine, and not good for agricultural purposes. Even at this early date, prior to official European American occupation of the land, men were already busy cutting down pine. From the 1845 GLO of Stark Township: "The South end of the Pinery reaches 3 miles into this township and there are now 25 men engaged in cutting Lumber within its limits. The Pine is all on or near the river. Some of it is very valuable."

[www.vernonhistory.org](http://www.vernonhistory.org)



**Figure 1.1 Hillsboro 1914 Sanborn Map** - Sanborn Fire Insurance maps are meticulously detailed, large-scale lithographed, color-keyed street maps. Sanborn Maps helped insurance agents in the late 19th and early 20th centuries determine the degree of fire hazard associated with a particular property. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps typically focus on the business districts within communities. Features include street names, street and sidewalk widths, property boundaries, hydrants, locations of water and gas mains, and the names of most public buildings, churches, and companies.



**Figure 1.2 Vernon County Land Ownership** This 1878 map shows the township and range grid, sections, towns, cities and villages, land ownership and acreages, roads, railroads, schools, churches, cemeteries, mills, blacksmith shops, residences, government land, and lakes and streams

## INTRODUCTION TO COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Vernon County Comprehensive Plan 2024 – 2044 responds to and is consistent with the State of Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law as defined in Sections 66.1001(1)a, and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes. The comprehensive plan is made with a general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the County that 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.

In accordance with Wisconsin Statutes, a Comprehensive Plan shall contain the following nine elements:

1. **Issues and Opportunities Element.** Background information presented in the plan should support the County’s overall objectives, policies, goals, and suggested projects to guide the County for the next 20 years (with an official update in 10 years) and its development and redevelopment efforts.
2. **Housing Element.** This section should list housing types, age, value, and guide the County to determine adequate housing supply to meet existing and forecasted demand for persons of all income levels.
3. **Transportation Element.** This section should guide future development of various modes of transportation from pedestrian movement to vehicle travel on highways, railroads, truck traffic, transit options and their part in regional transportation plans.
4. **Utilities and Community Facilities Element.** This element should identify utilities and community facilities such as: sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications infrastructure, power generation plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health facilities, public safety facilities, libraries, schools, and other government facilities.

5. **Agriculture, Natural and Cultural Resources Element.** This element looks at programs for conservation, promotion of effective management of natural resources, productive agricultural areas, groundwater, forests, waterways, endangered species, wetlands, mining, parks, open spaces, historic sites, and recreational resources.
6. **Economic Development Element.** Consider programs to promote the stabilization, retention and expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the County. Identify existing businesses and industries, labor force analysis and available sites for expansion.
7. **Intergovernmental Cooperation Element.** Evaluate existing practices for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, identify any existing or potential conflicts and consider opportunities for improvement in the future.
8. **Land use Element.** Identify programs to guide future development and redevelopment of private and public properties. Include maps showing current land use and projected future land use.
9. **Implementation Element.** List a compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed and describe how the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated in a consistent manner. Include a mechanism to measure the County's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan and a process for updating the comprehensive plan (no less than once every 10 years).



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## WHY PLAN?

Planning allows Vernon County to anticipate and address emerging challenges effectively. Communities are constantly evolving, and planning enables the county to stay ahead of any potential risks or conflicts. By conducting an analysis of current conditions, future trends, and potential risks, Vernon County can proactively identify and mitigate issues such as population growth, infrastructure needs, environmental impacts, and economic shifts. With a well-crafted plan in place, the county can adapt to changing circumstances with agility and purpose.

Planning also fosters the creation of a shared vision for Vernon County. Engaging residents, businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders in the planning process allows for meaningful participation and collaboration. By discussing the perspectives of all of those who become involved, the plan can reflect the aspirations, values, and visions of the entire community. This inclusive approach not only strengthens community bonds but also cultivates a sense of ownership and pride among residents, who can actively contribute to shaping the future of their home.

Long-term planning plays a vital role in achieving sustainable growth and enhancing quality of life in Vernon County. By considering the relationships between land use, housing, transportation, economic development, utilities and community facilities, intergovernmental relationships, and agricultural, natural, and cultural resources, the plan promotes a holistic approach to development. It strives to strike a balance between preserving the county's unique character, protecting its most important resources, and fostering economic vitality. Through carefully crafted policies and strategies, the plan aims to create a harmonious and resilient community where residents can thrive, businesses can succeed, and future generations can enjoy a high quality of life.

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## PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A comprehensive plan is a local government's guide to a community's physical, social, and economic development. Comprehensive plans are not meant to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, they provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decision making.

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law does not mandate how a local community should grow, but it requires public participation at the local level in deciding a vision for the community's future. The uniqueness of individual comprehensive plans reflects community-specific and locally driven planning processes.

While a local government may choose to include additional elements, a comprehensive plan must include AT LEAST all of the nine elements below as defined by Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

- Issues and Opportunities
- Housing
- Transportation
- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Land Use
- Implementation

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## BENEFITS OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

A comprehensive plan is a crucial tool for sustainable development, providing a strategic framework for the optimal use of land resources. One of its primary benefits is the promotion of orderly and efficient land development, ensuring that available space is utilized in a manner that aligns with the community's long-term goals. A well-crafted comprehensive plan can enhance environmental conservation by identifying areas for preservation and sustainable development. Additionally, it fosters economic growth by guiding the allocation of land for various purposes such as residential, commercial, and industrial use. Social benefits include improved living conditions, as the plan can address housing needs, infrastructure requirements, and community facilities. Moreover, a comprehensive plan facilitates coordination among different sectors, stakeholders, and government agencies, promoting transparency and minimizing conflicts. Overall, it serves as a roadmap for balanced and harmonious development, considering the ecological, economic, and social dimensions of a region.

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## PLANNING PROCESS

Development of the Comprehensive Plan for Vernon County was in response to the passage of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation (Statute 66.1001). This law requires all municipalities (counties, cities, towns, and villages) to adopt a comprehensive plan by the year 2010 if they wish to make any local land use decisions. As of January 1, 2010, any municipality that "affects land use" through regulation--such as zoning, land division or subdivision ordinances, or official mapping--must make its decisions in accordance with that community's comprehensive plan. Vernon County is required to develop a countywide plan to meet the conditions of the legislation. Incorporated community comprehensive plans are part of the county plan. However, a city or village plan is adopted separately and has autonomous authority for regulation and administration within its respective borders. While the comprehensive planning law encourages coordinated planning between jurisdictions, it does not require consistency between plans. Accordingly, it is possible that a city or village plan may conflict with that of a neighboring town and that each respective plan will portray this difference. The state comprehensive planning law does not change the basic authorities or relationships between counties and towns in adoption or administration of plans or zoning.

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## PUBLIC PROCESS

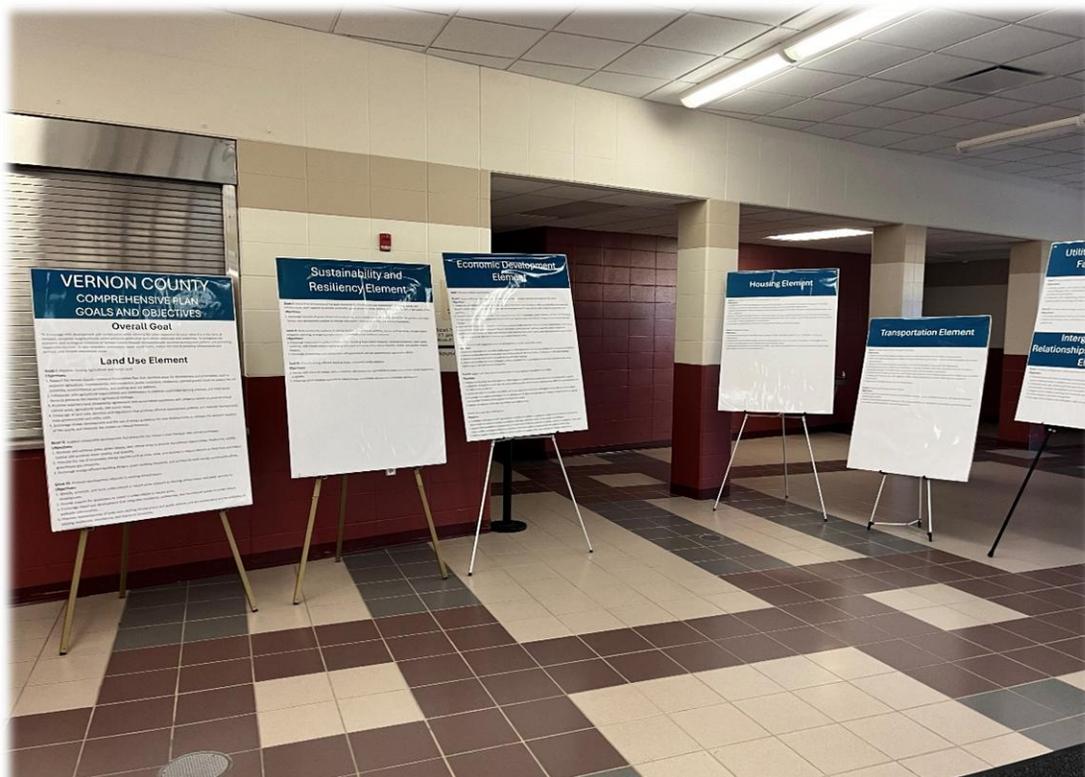
Every community is required to develop and adopt a public participation plan. Section 66.1001(4)(a) of Wisconsin Statutes requires the governing body of the local government unit to adopt written procedures designed to foster public participation, including open discussions, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice is provided, in every stage in the preparation of the updated comprehensive plan.

This Public Participation Plan offered all citizens, businesses, other units of government, and other parties a range of opportunities to participate through the planning process in a meaningful way to shape the future of the County. Effective public input is critical for the success of this planning process because it is the citizens, businesses, and other organizations that will experience the results of the objectives, policies, goals, and programs of the Comprehensive Plan in the future.

The participation plan was designed to be inclusive. It encourages people to participate in the process and to maximize the effectiveness of their contributions. The opportunities are open to everyone.

Our public participation process:

- Ensure all planning decisions are open to public comment;
- Produce better planning decisions;
- Support and add credibility to all County decision-making processes;
- Provide opportunities to disseminate information about the Plan and process to all segments of the county;
- Strengthen the relationship between our decision makers, residents, and stakeholders.



Draft Plan Goals on Display at Westby Public Engagement



**VERNON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOAL AND OBJECTIVE DEVELOPMENT**

The following Goals and Objectives address the nine required elements of the Comprehensive Plan for Vernon County. Goals and objectives were developed referencing the previously unadopted Vernon County Comprehensive Plan, committee identified issues, feedback from public open house meetings, and responses from the county survey, best planning practices, and Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning law. By implementing these objectives, the County can work towards creating vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community that meets the needs of residents and promotes economic growth and prosperity.

**Overall Goal/Vision:**

To encourage infill development and revitalization while allowing for urban expansion to occur when it is in the form of compact, complete neighborhoods which preserve productive agricultural landscapes and wilderness. To strengthen the economic and ecological resilience of Vernon County through environmentally sensitive development patterns and promoting responsible tourism. To spur economic investment, repair social fabric, reduce the cost of providing infrastructure and services, and reclaim abandoned areas.

**LAND USE ELEMENT:**

**GOAL I. PRESERVE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND.**

**Objectives:**

1. Support the Vernon County Farmland Preservation Plan that identifies areas for development and preservation, such as exclusive agriculture, environmental, non-residential, public institution, residential, planned growth based on criteria like soil suitability, environmental sensitivity, and existing land use patterns.
2. Collaborate with agricultural organizations and stakeholders to promote sustainable farming practices, and small family farms to preserve the county's agricultural heritage.
3. Promote voluntary land stewardship agreements and conservation easements with property owners to preserve critical natural areas, agricultural lands, and scenic vistas.
4. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
5. Encourage cluster development and the use of design guidelines for new developments to maintain the aesthetic qualities of the county and minimize the impact on natural resources.

**GOAL II. SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT PRESERVES THE COUNTY’S RURAL CHARACTER AND NATURAL LANDSCAPES.**

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain and enhance parks, green spaces, and natural areas to provide recreational opportunities, biodiversity, wildlife habitat and preserve water quality, and quantity.
2. Promote the use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Encourage energy-efficient building designs, green building standards, and community-wide energy conservation efforts.

**GOAL III. PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE.**

**Objectives:**

1. Identify, prioritize, fund underutilized or vacant areas adjacent to existing infrastructure and public services for development.
2. Provide support for developers to invest in underutilized or vacant areas.
3. Encourage mixed-use development that integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create vibrant, walkable and bikeable communities.
4. Promote redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.

---

## HOUSING ELEMENT:

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### GOAL I. ENCOURAGE THE AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING.

#### Objectives:

1. Collaborate with housing developers and nonprofit organizations, and employers to increase the supply of affordable housing, particularly in areas adjacent to existing development and employment opportunities.
2. Explore partnerships to develop employer-assisted housing programs that help employees access affordable housing near their workplaces.
3. Explore innovative housing solutions, such as tiny homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), or co-housing developments.
4. Encourage the construction of mixed-income housing developments that include a range of housing types and price points to meet the needs of residents at all income levels.
5. Encourage young families to relocate by creating family-friendly, multi-family housing.

---

### GOAL II. RENOVATE HOUSING.

1. Explore an acquisition and demolition grant program to offset demolition costs for new residential or mixed-use development.
2. Preserve existing affordable housing stock by providing grants for the construction or renovation of affordable housing.
3. Explore a revolving loan fund to renovate existing affordable housing.
4. Explore partnerships with local contractors, builders, and community organizations to coordinate volunteer-driven home repair programs for low-income homeowners.

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## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT:

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### GOAL I. IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE ROADS FOR ALL USERS.

#### Objectives:

1. Improve and maintain existing roadways to ensure safety and efficiency for all modes of transportation.
2. Work with regional transportation planners to ensure that the County's transportation network integrates with broader regional systems.
3. Develop infrastructure to promote alternative modes of transportation and connect key destinations.
4. Encourage development of multi-use infrastructure, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use trails to improve connectivity between residential areas, commercial centers, and recreational destinations.

5. Implement best management practices (BMP) and design standards that minimize environmental impacts, such as wildlife crossings, green infrastructure, and vegetative buffers along transportation corridors when they are repaved or reconstructed.
6. Explore and encourage solutions for road maintenance.

---

## GOAL II. ENHANCE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.

### Objectives:

1. Enhance public transportation services, including fixed-route bus services, paratransit services, and demand-responsive transportation options.
2. Expand transportation assistance programs, such as discounted fares or subsidized transportation vouchers to improve accessibility and affordability for vulnerable populations.

---

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT:

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### GOAL I. DEVELOP CHILDCARE OPPORTUNITIES.

### GOAL II. SUPPORT SKILLED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION (VERNON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024).

### Objectives:

1. Collaborate with Western Technical College (WTC), local school districts and the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board to identify the gap between the skills prospective employees need to have and the skills employers want/need to fill positions.
2. Connect employers with programs like: Youth Apprenticeships, Career Exploration, Career Pathways, Job Fairs, Job Shadowing, through area school districts, Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA), the Technical Colleges and area Universities and Colleges.
3. Work with WTC to increase utilization of the Viroqua campus to offer more education and training opportunities in the County.
4. Successful efforts on the previous goal "Support and Retain Current Business" will also impact the ability to upskill the workforce to meet employers needs and continue to grow area businesses which will provide more employment opportunities to retain young people and attract more young people to Vernon County.

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### GOAL III. PROMOTE LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUITABLE AREAS OF THE COUNTY.

### Objectives:

1. Support local businesses and attract new investment by designating areas for commercial and industrial development.
2. Create business and industrial parks using Tax Incremental Financing (TIF).

### GOAL IV. SUPPORT AND RETAIN CURRENT BUSINESS (VERNON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024).

### Objectives:

1. Enhance the Business Retention Expansion (BRE) Program to systematize business visits across the County with a goal of meeting with all businesses each year and, where/when possible, try to include a representative from the local community and the region/state on the visit.

2. Collaborate with communities, developers, businesses, and others to increase affordable housing stock across the County.
3. Encourage and support collaboration for the development of additional openings with existing Childcare facilities as well as creating new Childcare facilities around the County as needed.
4. Market the activities of the new department and county position.

---

GOAL V. ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.

Objectives:

1. Collaborate with local tourism organizations, chambers of commerce, and business associations to identify and prioritize tourism and recreational business opportunities that align with the county's unique assets and strengths.
2. Support the development and expansion of tourism-related infrastructure and amenities, such as campgrounds, shared-use trails, parks, visitor centers, and cultural attractions, to enhance the visitor experience and extend the length of visitor stays.
3. Develop outdoor recreation infrastructure to improve the quality of life, retain and attract residents and visitors.

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UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT:

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GOAL I. ENSURE EFFECTIVE COUNTY PROTECTIVE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES.

Objectives:

1. Develop, update, and maintain comprehensive emergency response plans, including evacuation plans, sheltering plans, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and continuity of operations plans to ensure readiness and resilience in the face of various emergencies and disasters.
2. Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions and mutual aid partners to develop and implement coordinated emergency response plans and protocols for multi-agency response scenarios.

---

GOAL II. PROMOTE DIVERSE ENERGY RESOURCES.

Objectives:

1. Encourage development and use of renewable energy resources.
2. Explore technologies that could offset the amount of energy used by county facilities and properties such as, solar, wind, and geothermal.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COORDINATION ELEMENT:

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GOAL I. PROMOTE COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH ALL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT.

Objectives:

1. Promote cooperative land use planning and development standards with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure cohesive growth and preservation strategies across municipal boundaries.
2. Collaborate with state, federal, and tribal agencies to secure funding and technical assistance for infrastructure improvements, economic development, environmental and conservation projects.

3. Engage in joint emergency planning and mutual aid agreements with surrounding municipalities to enhance preparedness for natural disasters and other emergencies.
4. Encourage communication and collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

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## AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT:

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### GOAL I. PROTECT AND CONSERVE SOIL AND WATER (GROUND AND SURFACE) RESOURCES.

#### Objectives:

1. Support policies, procedures, and programs to prevent manure spills and expedite cleanup and habitat recovery when spills occur.
2. Promote Conservation Agriculture practices such as, but not limited to, cover crops, crop rotation, contour farming, minimal tillage, perennial crops, and nutrient management planning for continued environmental and economic sustainability.
3. Encourage conservation practices and stormwater management to reduce flood severity and soil disturbance.
4. Encourage stream bank stabilization and trout habitat projects.
5. Support groundwater and surface water testing with local and regional partners.
6. Support data collection and monitoring efforts that further the understanding of factors influencing the quantity, quality, and flow patterns of groundwater.
7. Support efforts that ensure the quality, safety, and quantity of groundwater to meet drinking water supply needs.
8. Decrease sources of point source and non-point source water pollution.
9. Require the preservation of natural buffers and building setbacks between intensive land uses and surface water features.
10. Continue to develop partnerships with local communities, conservation organizations, and state agencies to address water quality issues.

---

### GOAL II. PROTECT AND CONSERVE NATURAL AREAS, INCLUDING WETLANDS, WILDLIFE HABITATS, LAKES, WOODLANDS, AND OPEN SPACES.

#### Objectives:

1. Encourage technical support and resources for conservation practices.
2. Work with State, Tribal, and Federal agencies, and non-profit organizations to secure additional funding, and resources for conservation practices.
3. Support educational outreach on land management conservation practices and watershed activities.

---

### GOAL III. SUPPORT THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL, HISTORIC BUILDINGS, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.

#### Objectives:

1. Promote the protection and conservation of historic buildings, landmarks, and cultural traditions that contribute to the unique character and identity of Vernon County.
2. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures and support local and cultural events that celebrate the community's heritage.
3. Support incentives, grants, and technical assistance for historic preservation projects and initiatives.
4. Support the management and protection of archaeological sites and artifacts to ensure responsible stewardship of cultural resources.

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SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY ELEMENT:

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GOAL I. ENSURE THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, ENERGY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE, WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE, GREEN PLACES FOR LIVING, WORKING, AND RECREATION, WITH A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE.

Objective:

1. Encourage inclusion of green infrastructure elements, such as green roofs, permeable pavements, rain gardens, and urban forests, into development projects to manage stormwater, improve air quality, and enhance biodiversity.

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GOAL II. BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS, SUCH AS FLOODS, WILDFIRES, STORMS, AND HEATWAVES, THROUGH HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE MEASURES.

Objective:

1. Encourage investment in resilient infrastructure, including flood control measures, shoreland protection, water supply resilience, and climate-resilient buildings to withstand and recover from natural disasters, climate, and weather-related impacts.
2. Encourage partnerships and collaboration with government and non-governmental organizations (NGO).

---

GOAL III. ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION: PROMOTE ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDING DESIGN, RENEWABLE ENERGY ADOPTION.

Objectives:

1. Partner with Focus on Energy, utility companies, and community organizations to create and promote energy conservation programs.
2. Encourage green building standards to reduce energy consumption and promote sustainable development.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES ELEMENT

The Issues and Opportunities section aims to provide an assessment of the current challenges and potential areas for development within Vernon County. By examining various aspects such as demographics, economy, land use, housing, transportation, natural resources, community services, and cultural heritage, many valuable insights into the unique dynamics and aspirations of the county can be gained. This existing conditions analysis sets the stage for identifying key issues that require attention, while also presenting the numerous opportunities that Vernon County can act on in the future. The following is an executive summary of the Existing Conditions report.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

#### **Housing Trends in Vernon County: Analysis and Projections**

Between 2012 and 2022, the number of housing units in Vernon County increased modestly, from 13,728 to 13,874. Over 89.4% of these units were single-family homes, a significantly higher proportion compared to Wisconsin and the United States, both of which have more diverse housing stock. Additionally, more than 25% of the county's housing structures were built in 1939 or earlier, a figure notably higher than the state and national averages.

Housing affordability, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), occurs when housing costs do not exceed 30% of a household's monthly income. In Vernon County, however, affordability challenges persist. Approximately 39.6% of renter-occupied units, 15.3% of owner-occupied units with a mortgage, and 24.6% of owner-occupied units without a mortgage exceed the 30% threshold, highlighting the financial strain faced by many residents.

#### **Future Housing and Land Use Needs**

Over the next 20 years, Vernon County is projected to require an additional 2,555.5 acres of residential land to accommodate population growth. These projections are based on 2020 population density data and estimates from the Wisconsin Department of Administration. However, the county faces development constraints, primarily due to its topography; a significant portion of the land has slopes greater than 30%, which limits suitability for residential construction.

In the past decade, Vernon County added 113 housing units, indicating a relatively modest growth rate. If this trend continues, an estimated 652 new housing units will be needed over the next 20 years. Strategic planning will be essential to meet this demand while addressing land use limitations.

#### **Income and Economic Insights**

The median household income in Vernon County is \$65,177, with mean household income rising by \$26,382 between 2010 and 2022. Despite these gains, both mean and median incomes in the county remain lower than the state and national averages. Income levels within the county show significant spatial variation. Generally, incorporated municipalities such as Viroqua and Westby report the lowest median incomes, while nearby rural areas like the Town of Bergen tend to have the highest. More remote rural regions, such as the Town of Jefferson, exhibit income levels that fall between these extremes.

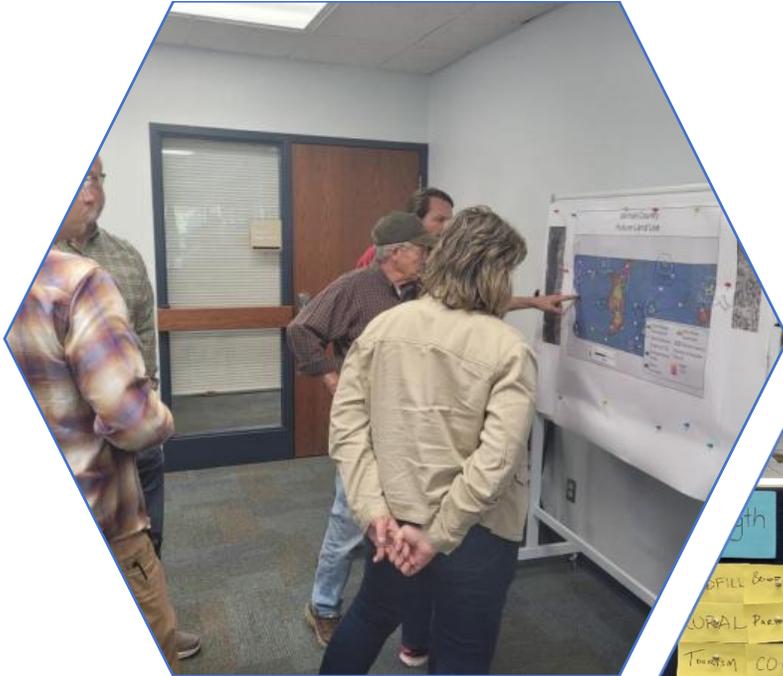
These patterns highlight the economic diversity within Vernon County and underscore the importance of tailored economic and housing strategies to address the unique needs of its residents.

#### **Impacts of COVID-19**

COVID-19 affected Vernon County in many ways that can never fully be accounted for, lost lives, damaged community connections, social and cultural isolation. This plan humbly attempts to capture some of the economically measurable effects of COVID-19. An analysis of the economic impacts of COVID-19. "COVID-19 disrupted the regional economy in many different ways. One is the reduction of the labor force which will take a great deal of effort to return to pre-pandemic levels." (2021 Emsi-burningglass). In September 2021 Emsi-burningglass conducted an Economic Impact Analysis of COVID-19 in Vernon County. A summary of this analysis shows Vernon County had 162 Industries negatively affected resulting in 707 initial job loss, 872 total job loss, \$37.3 million earning loss and \$5.9 million Total Loss on Taxes on Production and Imports (TPI). "This loss will affect the region deeply". The Emsi-burningglass report has been appended to this document as Appendix K.

### PLAN COMMISSION IDENTIFIED ISSUES:

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission staff conducted an exercise to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) in Vernon County. Steering Committee members were asked their opinion for each of the categories. Members were then asked to place a dot on the weaknesses and threats that they thought were the most important. The weaknesses and threats with most dots were then moved forward into the Issues column. These issues were cross referenced with data to create goals for the Comprehensive Plan. See Table below for all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and issues identified by the Steering Committee at their February 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.



**Table 2.1 SWOT Analysis and Issues**

Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat	Issue
Landfill	Diverse population	Education (K-12) community education	Waste disposal costs	Flooding (7 dots)
Rural	Manure runoff	Small family farm	Aging infrastructure	Drug use/ mental health (5 dots)
Tourism	Viroqua centric	Vocational training	Deteriorating roads	Aging infrastructure (4 dots)
Parks	Erosion	Parks natural resources	Low wages	Declining workforce (loss of institutional knowledge) (4 dots)
Water	Diverse	Community involvement	Community retention (exodus of young people)	Farm succession (4 dots)
Senior living	Lack of medical specialists	Niche markets (cheese, wine, organics, Amish crafts)	Aging population	Housing (quantity + quality) (4 dots)
Business growth	Limited business opportunities	Renewable energy	Health care availability	Water contamination/ water quality (4 dots)
People (diversity)	Cellular coverage	Tourism promotion	Land use transition (farm to solar)	Deteriorating roads (3 dots)
Organic (farming)	Ruralness	Agri-tourism	Tourist economy and community	Skyrocketing property values (3 dots)
Beautiful landscape	Main street vibrancy	Independence (news, radio, media)	Construction costs	Wages (low) (3 dots)
Amish	Limited buildable land	Business support networks	Housing	Child care (3 dots)
Resiliency	Community vitality	Planned development	Flooding	Limited business opportunities (3 dots)
Cassie (Administrative Coordinator)	Poverty	Talent attraction	Drug use	Tourist economy and community (3 dots)
County staff	Child poverty	Quality of life	Mental health	Poverty (3 dots)
Remoteness	Levy limits	Diversification of housing	Water quality	Aging population (2 dots)
Natural resources	Child care		Water contamination	Levy limits (2 dots)
Broadband	Wages		Declining workforce (loss of institutional knowledge)	Manure, erosion, community vitality (lack of), main street vibrancy, construction costs, (all 1 dot)
Partnerships	Pop-up development		Skyrocketing property values	
Co-ops	Job opportunity			
Town Governance	Winding roads			

Local control	Remoteness/ distance between places			
Education				

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

This section of the report will provide information on the demographic trends and projections that are taking place in Vernon County. The information was gathered from various sources and when possible, county level data was utilized.

### POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

From 2000 to 2020, Vernon County’s population increased by 2,658 people, representing an increase of 9.5%. From 2020 to 2040, **Vernon County's population is projected to increase by 5,436, representing an increase of 17.7%**. This is almost double the rate of growth seen from 2000 to 2020 and will cause significant changes within the county. From 2000 to 2020, Vernon County’s growth was almost identical to that of Wisconsin (9.5% and 9.9%), while Vernon County’s projected growth from 2020 to 2040 is almost double that of Wisconsin’s expected growth (17.7% versus 10.1%). This expected rapid growth must be accounted for in this plan.

**Table 2.2 Vernon County Population and Population Projections**

Municipality	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	% Change 2000 to 2020	% Change 2020 to 2040
Vernon County	28,056	29,773	30,714	35,300	36,150	10%	18%
Wisconsin	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	6,375,910	6,491,635	10%	10%

Source: US Census (2000, 2010, 2020) and [Wisconsin Department of Administration Population Estimates \(2030, 2040\)](#)

### POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Vernon County is 95.4% White, 0.41% Black or African American, 0.16% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.31% Asian. More information on race can be found in Table 1.1.

**Table 2.3 Race Distribution in Vernon County and Wisconsin**

Race	Vernon County		Wisconsin	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White alone	29,315	95.4%	4,737,545	80.4%
Black or African American alone	127	0.41%	376,256	6.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	49	0.16%	60,428	1.0%
Asian alone	96	0.31%	175,702	3.0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	10	0.0%	2,199	0.0%

Some Other Race alone	231	0.75%	182,054	3.1%
Population of two or more races	886	2.88%	359,534	6.1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30,714</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,893,718</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: US Census 2020 –

Table P1 Race

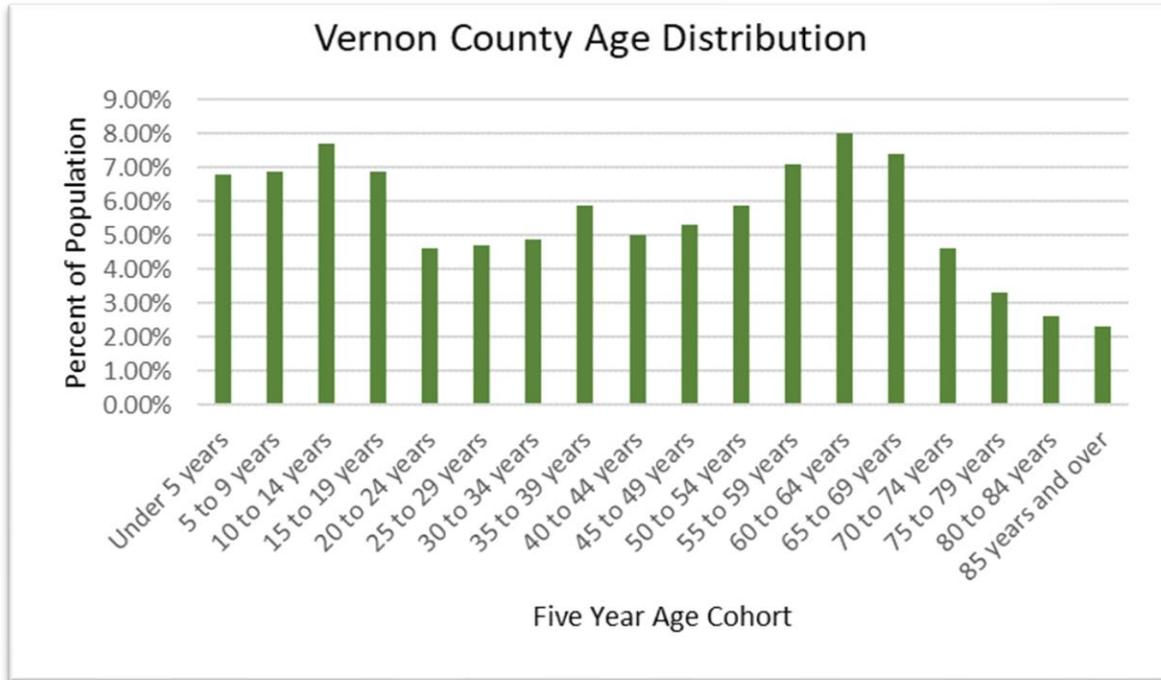
The median age of Vernon County is 41.3 years of age, which is older than Wisconsin’s median, 39.9 years of age. Correspondingly, 20.3% percent of the population is over 65 and 26% is under 18, the state of Wisconsin is 17.7% over 65 and 21.6% under 18. The population of Vernon County is continuing to increase in age, which can be seen in Table 2.5. The largest five-year age cohorts are 60 to 64 and 65 to 69. The following cohorts of 55 to 59, 50 to 54, and 45 to 49 are all successively smaller. This aging trend is offset by the increase in the 5 to 19-year-old age groups. More information on age within Vernon County can be found in Table 2.4.

**Table 2.4 Age Distribution of Vernon County Residents**

Age Category	Vernon County		Wisconsin	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Under 5 years	2,109	6.8	321,594	5.5
5 to 9 years	2,134	6.9	345,769	5.9
10 to 14 years	2,365	7.7	373,224	6.3
15 to 19 years	2,111	6.9	389,421	6.6
20 to 24 years	1,432	4.6	404,289	6.9
25 to 29 years	1,434	4.7	370,173	6.3
30 to 34 years	1,521	4.9	363,169	6.2
35 to 39 years	1,809	5.9	382,240	6.5
40 to 44 years	1,545	5.0	349,841	5.9
45 to 49 years	1,623	5.3	340,741	5.8
50 to 54 years	1,831	5.9	374,189	6.4
55 to 59 years	2,192	7.1	417,692	7.1
60 to 64 years	2,459	8.0	411,166	7.0
65 to 69 years	2,280	7.4	344,952	5.9
70 to 74 years	1,411	4.6	273,044	4.6
75 to 79 years	1,028	3.3	173,751	3.0
80 to 84 years	804	2.6	118,954	2.0
85 years and over	723	2.3	127,919	2.2
Median age	41.3	-	39.9	-
<b>Total population</b>	<b>30,811</b>		<b>5,882,128</b>	

Source: US Census 2022 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Figure 2.1 Age Distribution



The median age is increasing in Vernon County while the percentage of “young” individuals (those aged 15-34), who are vital in replacing those who are exiting the workforce, is dropping. This can be seen in the highlighted cells in Table 1.3. Individuals aged 5 to 14 years in 2000 represented 15.8% of the Vernon County population. However, in the year 2020, when those individuals would be between the ages of 25 and 34, that percentage has dropped to 9.7% of the population. The population pyramids in Figure 2.3 also show that the portion of the population who are nearing retirement age is increasing, with smaller portions of the population who can replace them in the workforce. Table 2.5 presents the percent change of both “young” and total population in each of Vernon County’s census blocks. Eastern Vernon County is losing the highest percentage of “young” individuals.

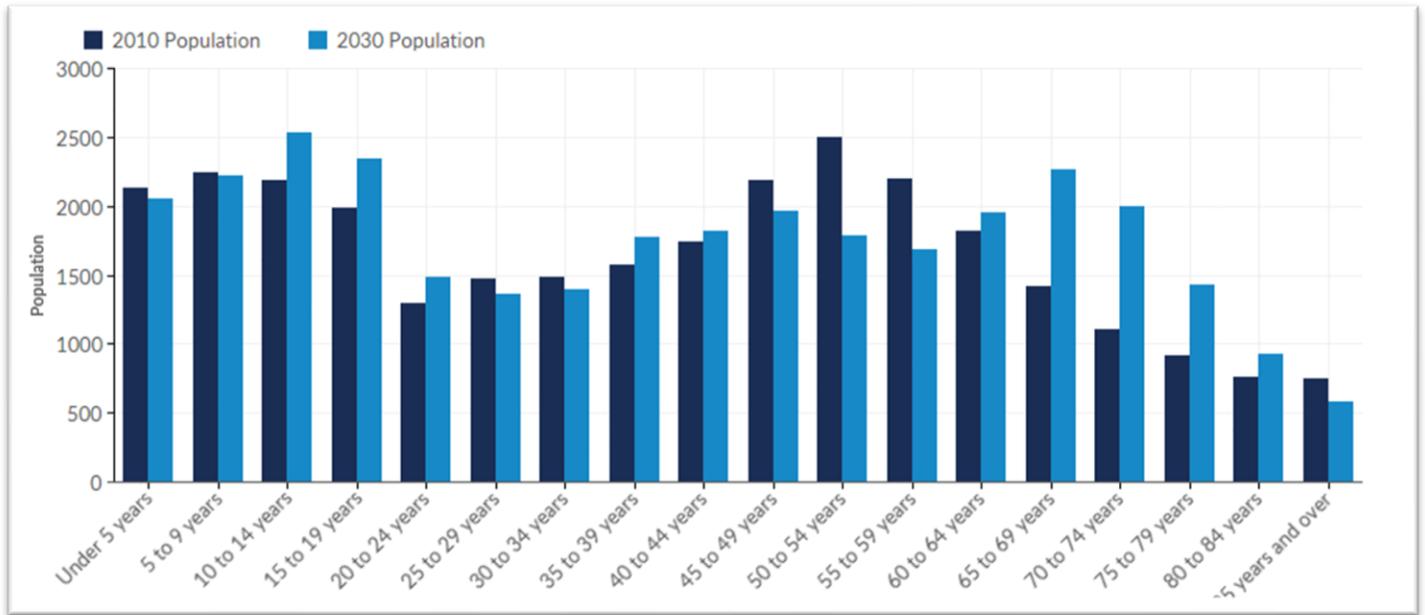
Table 2.5 Age by Percentage of Population

	2000	2010	2020
5 - 14	15.8	15.0	14.6
15 - 24	12.0	11.5	11.2
25 - 34	10.0	9.6	9.7
35 - 44	15.2	12.0	10.6

45 - 54	13.7	16.0	12.0
55 - 64	9.8	12.7	15.6
65 - 74	8.2	8.1	11.2
75 - 84	6.3	5.9	5.2
85+	2.5	2.5	3.1
<b>Median age (years)</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>42.0</b>

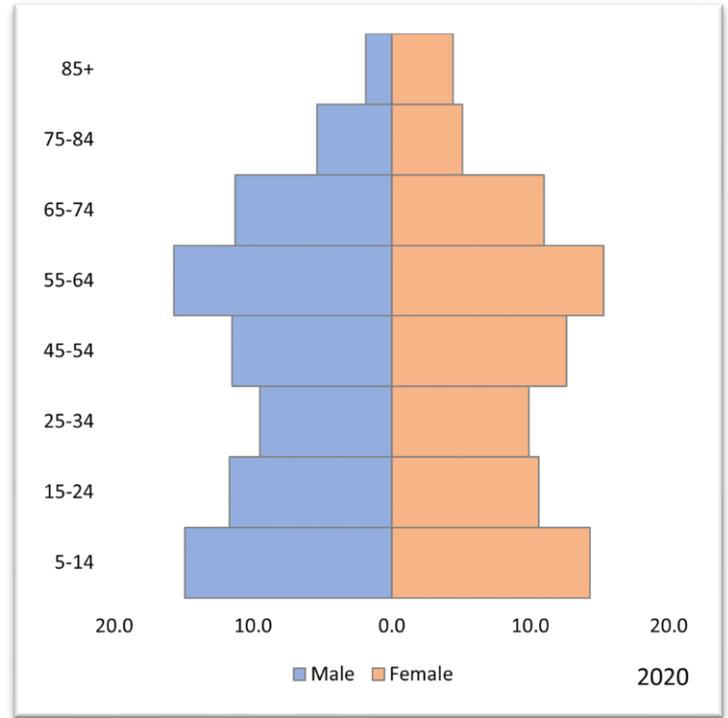
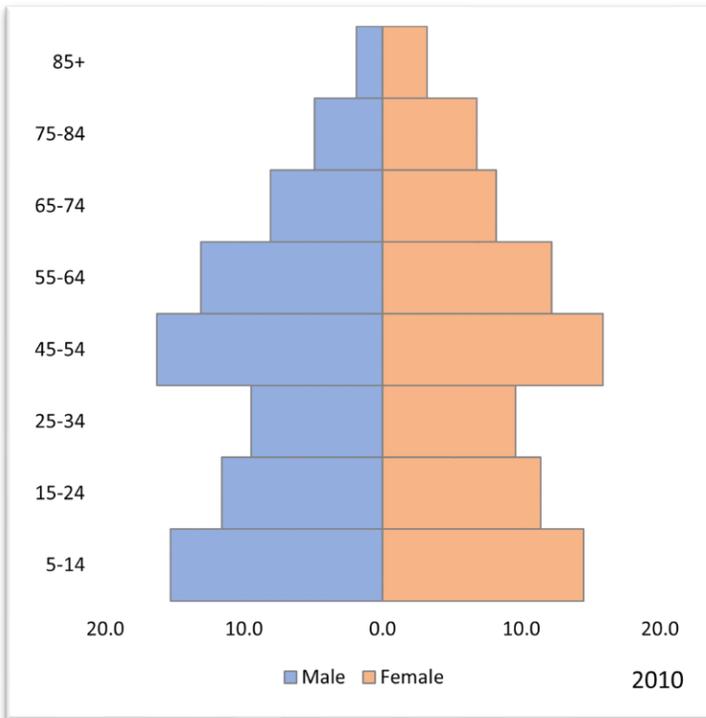
Source: American Community Survey 2010 and 2020 – Table S0101 Age and Sex, 2000 Decennial Census

Figure 2.2 Projected Population Change 2010-2030



Source: American Community Survey 2010 and 2020 – Table S0101 Age and Sex

**Figure 2.3 Vernon County Population Pyramid**



Source: Lightcast™ – Population Demographics Report

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Vernon County has a higher percentage of residents that have high school as their highest level of school completed compared to the State of Wisconsin and the United States. Conversely, the county has a lower percentage of residents that have bachelor's degrees as their highest level of school completed compared to Wisconsin and the United States.

Vernon County also has a higher percentage of residents who have an associate's degree than the state and the nation.

**Table 2.6 Highest Educational Attainment of Population over 25**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Vernon County %</b>	<b>Wisconsin %</b>	<b>United States %</b>
Less than 9th grade	5.7%	2.4%	4.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4.0%	4.5%	6.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	35.1%	29.9%	26.4%
Some college, no degree	18.9%	20.0%	19.7%
Associate's degree	12.0%	11.1%	8.7%
Bachelor's degree	16.0%	21.1%	20.9%
Graduate or professional degree	8.3%	11.0%	13.4%

*Source: American Community 5 Year Survey 2022 – Table S1501 Educational Attainment*

## POPULATION

The population in Vernon County has been steadily increasing over the past two decades, and Wisconsin has too. The County's population has increased by 9.5% from 2000-2020. The population of the County is expected to increase by over 5,000 people in the next 20 years, representing a 17.7% increase. This is important when considering housing and development because it shows that the current housing stock is not enough to support the future population of the County.

**Table 2.7 Vernon County Population and Population Projections**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>% Change 2000 to 2020</b>	<b>% Change 2020 to 2040</b>
Vernon County	28,056	29,773	30,714	35,300	36,150	9.5%	17.7%
Wisconsin	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	6,375,910	6,491,635	9.9%	10.1%

*Source: US Census (2000, 2010, 2020) and Wisconsin Department of Administration Population Estimates (2030, 2040)*

The population in Vernon County has been steadily increasing over the past two decades, and Wisconsin has too. The County's population has gone up by 9.5% from 2000-2020. The population of the County is expected to increase by over 5,000 people in the next 20 years, representing a 17.7% increase. This is important when considering housing and development because it shows that the current housing stock is not enough to support the future of the County.

The young population of Vernon County increased by 3.11% from 2010 to 2020. This is lower than the percent change of the total population in Vernon County which was a 10.2% increase from 2010 to 2020.

**Table 2.8 Young Population - Ages 5 to 34**

		Vernon County	Wisconsin	United States
Young Population Ages 5 -34	<b>2010</b>	6,216	1,499,694	83,590,450
	<b>2020</b>	6,410	1,509,725	88,480,498
	<b>% Change</b>	<b>3.11%</b>	<b>0.67%</b>	<b>5.85%</b>
Total Population	<b>2010</b>	29,460	5,637,947	303,965,272
	<b>2020</b>	30,759	5,806,975	326,569,308
	<b>% Change</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>

*Source: American Community Survey 2010 and 2020 – Table S0101 Age and Sex*

The young population of Vernon County increased by 3.11% from 2010 to 2020. This is lower than the percent change of the total population in Vernon County which was a 10.2% increase from 2010 to 2020.

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## MEDIAN INCOME

The median income in Vernon County has risen dramatically from 2020 to 2022. In just those two years, the median income has increased by over \$10,000 dollars. In the five years before that, it almost increased by \$5,000 dollars. Wisconsin and the United States are also going up, but not as rapidly as the County. The mean income is also going up by a massive amount. The mean income in Vernon County has increased by over \$13,000 dollars from 2020-2022, and by over \$6,000 in the previous 5 years. Again, Wisconsin and the United States have both increased in that same time period but not as drastically. This is likely due to the high number of households moving in throughout recent years. 54.1% of households have moved in since 2010, and they are likely increasing the median and mean income. While developing housing strategies, it is important to look at the statistics while also realizing the difference in housing needs between the people who are new in the area, have been living in the area, and want to live in the area. The differences in incomes and preferences between these different groups should be considered during the planning process.

**Table 2.9 Median and Mean Household Income Comparisons**

Year	2010	2015	2020	2022
Vernon County Median Income (USD)	43,632	47,675	54,549	65,177
Wisconsin Median Income (USD)	51,598	53,357	63,293	72,458
United States Median Income (USD)	51,914	53,889	64,994	75,149
Vernon County Mean Income (USD)	54,087	60,990	67,245	80,469
Wisconsin Mean Income (USD)	65,273	69,333	82,757	94,995
United States Mean Income (USD)	70,883	75,558	91,547	105,833

Source: American Community Survey Table S1901 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022

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## HEALTH OUTCOMES IN VERNON COUNTY

In Vernon County, Wisconsin, health outcomes and physical activity levels reflect both challenges and areas for improvement. Health metrics show a moderate level of adult obesity (approximately 34%) and physical inactivity at around 22%, slightly above state averages. Limited access to healthcare services, economic insecurity, and mental health concerns also contribute to the county's health profile, particularly affecting lower-income households. For instance, about 14% of households live below the poverty line, and an additional 25% report challenges accessing affordable, healthy food.

Efforts to enhance health in Vernon County include expanding behavioral health services to address mental health stigma and improving access to food and physical activity opportunities. Initiatives by Vernon Memorial Healthcare include community food drives, partnerships with local markets, and providing resources on nutrition and financial assistance. Additionally, to promote physical activity, Vernon County partners with community organizations to increase accessibility to exercise facilities and outdoor spaces. These health-focused initiatives underscore a community effort to improve overall health outcomes, reduce economic barriers, and increase physical activity, aiming for a healthier Vernon County. (Source: Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan (CHNA))

### Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age that shape their health outcomes. These determinants include factors such as socioeconomic status, education, employment, social support networks, neighborhood and physical environment, access to healthcare, and systemic discrimination and inequities. Addressing social determinants of health requires comprehensive approaches that tackle structural inequalities, promote economic and social policies that support health equity, and foster collaboration across sectors to create environments that enable all individuals to lead healthy lives.

## Vernon County Health Outcomes

Health Outcomes tell us how long people live on average within a community, and how much physical and mental health people experience in a community while they are alive. Vernon county is ranked in the higher middle range of Counties in Wisconsin (Higher 50%-75%).



## Vernon County Health Factors

Many things influence how well and how long we live. Health Factors represent those things we can improve to live longer and healthier lives. They are indicators of the future health of our communities. Vernon (VE) is ranked among the least healthy Counties in Wisconsin (Lowest 0%-25%). According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Wisconsin County Health Rankings & Roadmaps website (<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/wisconsin/vernon?year=2023>) Vernon county ranks 30 out of 72 Wisconsin counties for health outcomes. Vernon county is ranked among the least healthy Counties in Wisconsin (Lowest 0%-25%).



### Vernon County Health Factors Ranking

**Table 2.10 Areas of strength for Vernon County**

Health Behavior	Vernon County	Wisconsin	United States
Teen Births	7%	14%	19%
Primary Care Physicians	1,000:1	1,240:1	1,310:1
Preventable Hospital Stays	1,872	2,559	2,809
Mammography Screening	42%	43%	37%
Injury Deaths	68	89	76

**Table 2.11 Areas for further exploration**

Health Behavior	Vernon County	Wisconsin	United States
Adult Smoking	20%	16%	16%
Adult Obesity	35%	33%	32%
Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths	57%	36%	27%
Uninsured (health)	12%	7%	10%
Flu Vaccinations	39%	56%	51%
Suicides (per 100,000)	16	15	14
High School Completion	90%	93%	89%
Some College	58%	70%	67%
Children in Poverty	23%	14%	17%
Severe Housing Problems	15%	13%	17%
Disconnected Youth	14%	5%	7%
Driving Alone to Work	77%	78%	73%
Long Commute – Driving Alone	40%	28%	37%
Lyme Disease (per 100,000)	93.8	37.2	
Radon	63%	41%	

Source: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/wisconsin/vernon?year=2023#health-factors>  
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00719-vernon.pdf>



## LAND USE ELEMENT

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity, and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments of future residential, agricultural, commercial, and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

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### GOAL I. PRESERVE EXISTING AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST LAND.

#### Objectives:

1. Support the Vernon County Farmland Preservation Plan that identifies areas for development and preservation, such as exclusive agriculture, environmental, non-residential, public institution, residential, planned growth based on criteria like soil suitability, environmental sensitivity, and existing land use patterns.
2. Collaborate with agricultural organizations and stakeholders to promote sustainable farming practices, and small family farms to preserve the county's agricultural heritage.
3. Promote voluntary land stewardship agreements and conservation easements with property owners to preserve critical natural areas, agricultural lands, and scenic vistas.
4. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
5. Encourage cluster development and the use of design guidelines for new developments to maintain the aesthetic qualities of the county and minimize the impact on natural resources.

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### GOAL II. SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT PRESERVES THE COUNTY'S RURAL CHARACTER AND NATURAL LANDSCAPES.

#### Objectives:

4. Maintain and enhance parks, green spaces, and natural areas to provide recreational opportunities, biodiversity, wildlife habitat and preserve water quality, and quantity.
5. Promote the use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and biomass to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
6. Encourage energy-efficient building designs, green building standards, and community-wide energy conservation efforts.

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### GOAL III. PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE.

#### Objectives:

5. Identify, prioritize, fund underutilized or vacant areas adjacent to existing infrastructure and public services for development.
6. Provide support for developers to invest in underutilized or vacant areas.

7. Encourage mixed-use development that integrates residential, commercial, and recreational spaces to create vibrant, walkable communities.
8. Promote redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.



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## EXISTING LAND USE

To plan for the future land use of Vernon County, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the existing land uses. Existing land uses, residential densities, and the supply and demand for land are discussed below.

Within Vernon County, agricultural land use makes up the vast majority of land, at around 66%. Agricultural forest also makes up a large amount of land at around 14.2%. The uses present within this land in the county primarily consist of farms, cropland, grazing/pasture, and forested land. Primary crops grown are corn, alfalfa, and soybeans. There are also significant amounts of forest land and undeveloped land.

**Table 3.1 Land Use**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Land Use</b>
Residential	14,361	3.49%
Commercial	1,567	0.38%
Manufacturing	541	0.13%
Agricultural	272,340	66.2%
Organic Agricultural	25,489	6.2% of total, (9.4% of Vernon County agricultural land)
Undeveloped	33,941	8.26%
Agricultural Forest	58,211	14.2%
Forest Lands	24,393	5.94%
Other	5,596	1.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>410,950</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue 2022 Statement of Assessment for Vernon County*

*Source: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (2018). The Organic INTEGRITY Database. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Dataset. <https://hdl.handle.net/10113/AA16558>*

The health of Vernon County's residents is a product of their surroundings, their built environment. This section of the Comprehensive Plan provides background information about how health is influenced by the built environment as well as an analysis of Vernon County's built environment to identify barriers that influence residents' decisions to use active transportation modes. The chapter identifies a quality-of-life framework which is used to inform policies, programs, and initiatives that reduce barriers and increase access to a healthy, active life for Vernon County residents.

### **A Brief History of Health and Urban Planning**

The intersection of public health and urban planning has evolved over centuries in response to various societal challenges. Historically, urban planning practices emerged alongside the growth of cities in ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia and the Roman Empire, focusing primarily on infrastructure and sanitation to mitigate health risks. However, it was not until the 19th century, during the Industrial Revolution, that the link between public health and urban planning became more apparent. The rapid urbanization and overcrowding in industrialized cities led to outbreaks of infectious diseases like cholera and tuberculosis, prompting the implementation of public health measures such as improved sanitation, housing regulations, and urban zoning. In the early 20th century, figures like John Snow and Ebenezer Howard pioneered modern urban planning concepts like the Garden City movement and epidemiological mapping, further emphasizing the importance of integrating public health considerations into urban design. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, advancements in medicine, technology, and environmental science have continued to shape the relationship between public health and urban planning, with a growing focus on creating healthier, sustainable, and equitable urban environments for all residents.

### **Health and Neighborhood Design**

Health and neighborhood design are intricately linked, as the layout and amenities of a community directly impact the physical, mental, and social well-being of its residents. Neighborhoods designed with walkable streets, access to green spaces, and proximity to essential services such as grocery stores and healthcare facilities promote physical activity and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like obesity and cardiovascular conditions. Additionally, well-designed neighborhoods foster social connections and a sense of community through shared public spaces like parks, community centers, and gathering areas, which are essential for mental and emotional health. Conversely, poorly planned neighborhoods with limited access to healthy food options, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and elevated levels of pollution can contribute to health disparities and diminish overall quality of life. Therefore, incorporating health considerations into neighborhood design, such as mixed land use zoning, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and equitable access to resources, is crucial for creating environments that support the holistic health and well-being of residents.



Figure 3.1 Viroqua-Westby Trail

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## THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment touches all aspects of our lives, encompassing the buildings we live in, the distribution systems that provide us with water and electricity, and the roads, bridges, and transportation systems we use to get from place to place. It can generally be described as the man-made or modified structures that provide people with living, working, and recreational spaces. Creating all these spaces and systems requires enormous quantities of materials. ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov))

In the United States, the built environment plays a significant role in shaping public health outcomes. Urbanization, suburban sprawl, and the design of neighborhoods and cities influence various health factors, including physical activity levels, access to healthy food options, exposure to environmental hazards, and social connectivity. Walkable neighborhoods with well-connected sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit options encourage physical activity and reduce the risk of obesity and chronic diseases. Conversely, car-dependent communities with limited pedestrian infrastructure may contribute to sedentary lifestyles and related health issues.



Figure 3.2 Photo of the Mississippi River in Vernon County Wisconsin (Best Places).

Access to green spaces, parks, and recreational facilities in the built environment promotes mental health and social well-being, offering opportunities for outdoor exercise, stress reduction, and community engagement. Conversely, neighborhoods lacking such amenities may experience higher rates of social isolation and mental health challenges.

The availability of healthy food options, including grocery stores and farmers' markets, is essential for promoting nutrition and preventing diet-related diseases. In many urban areas, particularly low-income neighborhoods, the prevalence of food deserts—areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food—contributes to disparities in health outcomes.

Additionally, the built environment can impact exposure to environmental hazards such as air and water pollution, which can have adverse effects on respiratory health and other chronic conditions. Vulnerable communities, including low-income and minority populations, often bear a disproportionate burden of environmental pollution due to factors such as historical disinvestment and discriminatory land use practices.

Efforts to improve the built environment and promote health equity include policies and interventions aimed at creating mixed-use developments, enhancing public transportation, revitalizing urban green spaces, and addressing social determinants of health. By prioritizing health in urban planning and development decisions, policymakers can create more inclusive, sustainable, and health-promoting communities for all residents across the United States.

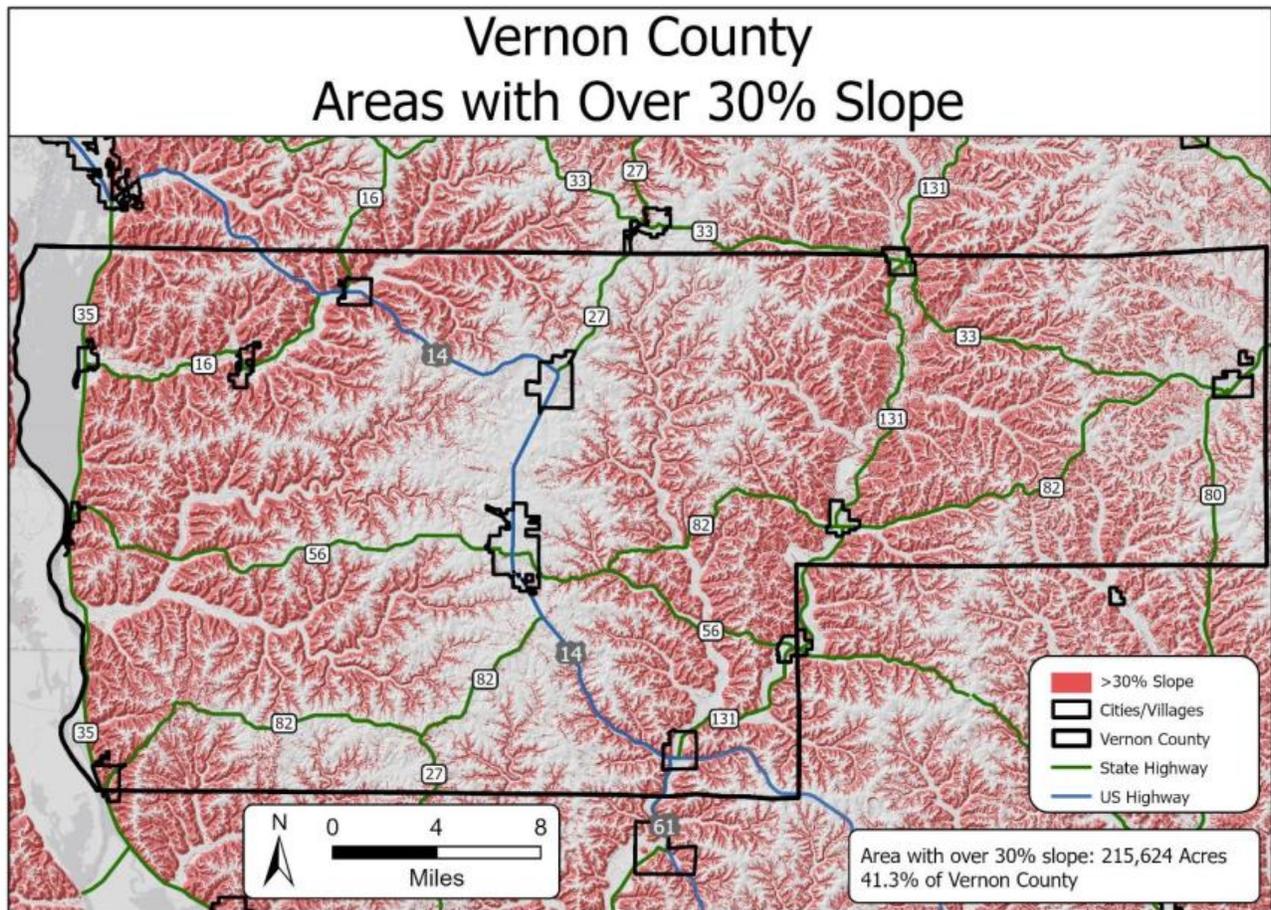
## LAND USE TRENDS



Figure 3.3 Picture of housing development agriculture in Vernon County

Not all land within the county is suitable for development, primarily due to steep slopes exceeding 30%. These steep slopes **comprise 41% or 88,405 acres of the total of the total 215,624 acres** in Vernon County. Map 23 and the map on following page, highlights areas with slopes greater 30%. While the county's topography has attracted housing and recreational land uses, development is constrained by these physical characteristics.

Over the past decade, the county added 113 housing units. Based on this growth rate, projections suggest a demand for **652 new housing units** over the next 20 years, aligned with population growth trends and housing demand from 2010 to 2020.



Data on the average cost of land per acre in Vernon County for this period is unavailable. However, real estate sales data indicates that agricultural land prices averaged \$4,633 per acre in 2022 and \$4,834 in 2023, reflecting a slowing rate of increase in land prices. (Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Land Prices)

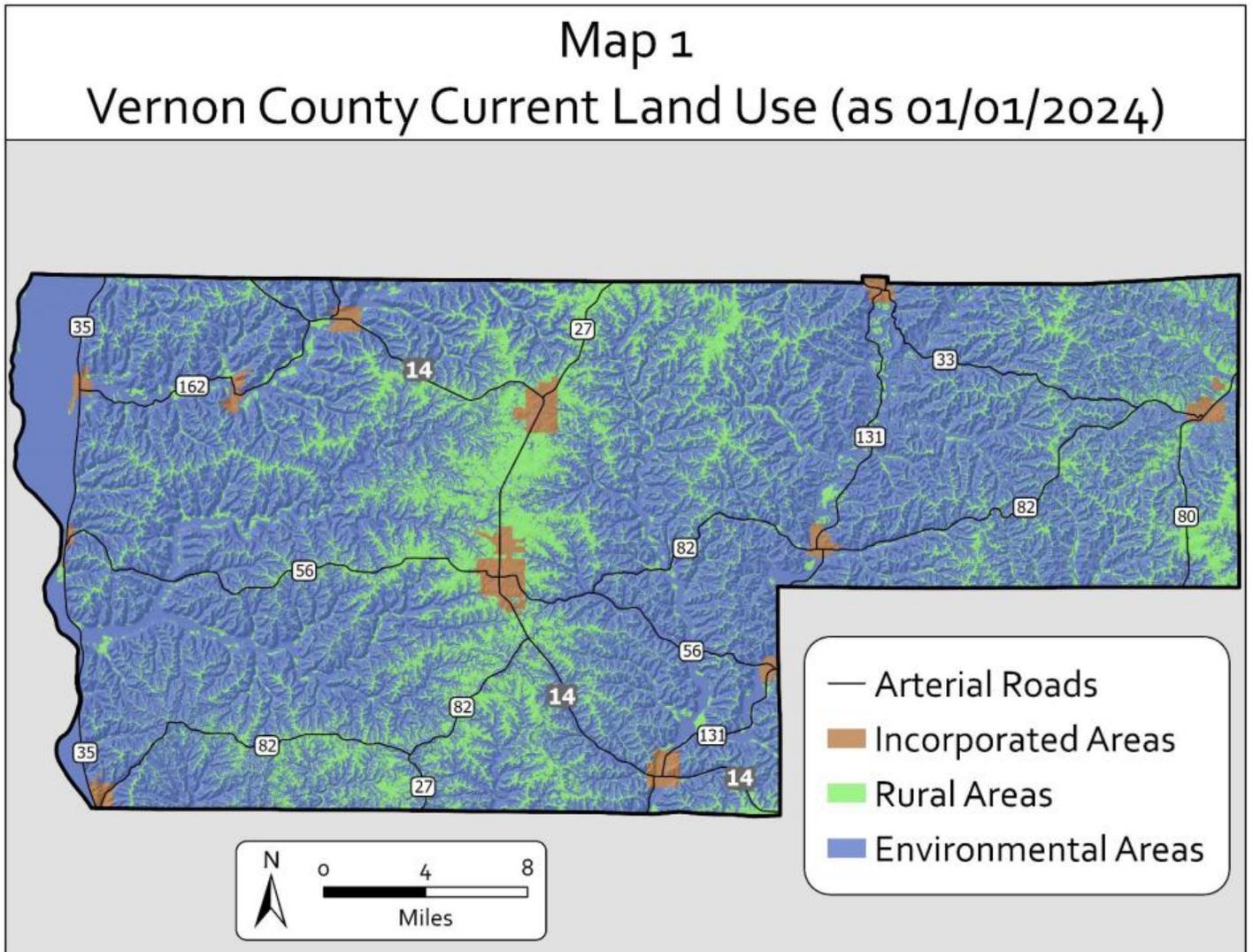
Over the next 20 years, Vernon County is projected to need an additional **2555.5 acres of residential land**. These projections are based on the population projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, and on the population density of Vernon County in 2020. These projections assume population density will remain the same, which is unlikely to be the case, but Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission staff is unable to predict population density. Therefore, it assumes that population density will remain the same.

The Table 3.2 presents population estimates for various places within Vernon County, Wisconsin, comparing preliminary 2024 estimates to the 2020 Census figures. The data includes both numeric and percentage population changes. Overall, the towns of Clinton, Viroqua, and Christiana show moderate population increases, while smaller municipalities like the **Village of Viola saw significant growth, with a 30.42%** increase. Larger communities, such as the City of Westby, grew slightly by 0.93%, whereas the City of Viroqua saw a notable population decline of 2.46%. Several villages, including La Farge and Readstown, experienced slight decreases in population, ranging from -1.06% to -2.47%. This information highlights diverse population trends across Vernon County, with some rural areas growing and other small towns shrinking. (WI Dept. of Administration Population Housing Estimates) Table 3.2 highlights the towns, cities, and villages with the most numeric growth (37-88 people), the top seven are highlighted in **orange**, the high growth (4.17-30.42%) in **green**, medium growth (2.35-6.4%) in **yellow**, most decline in population (2.39-2.59%) in **red**. The areas with the highest growth, numeric and percentage, should be considered for Planned Growth on the Future Land Use map.

**Table 3.2 Vernon County Municipalities Population Projections 2020-2024**

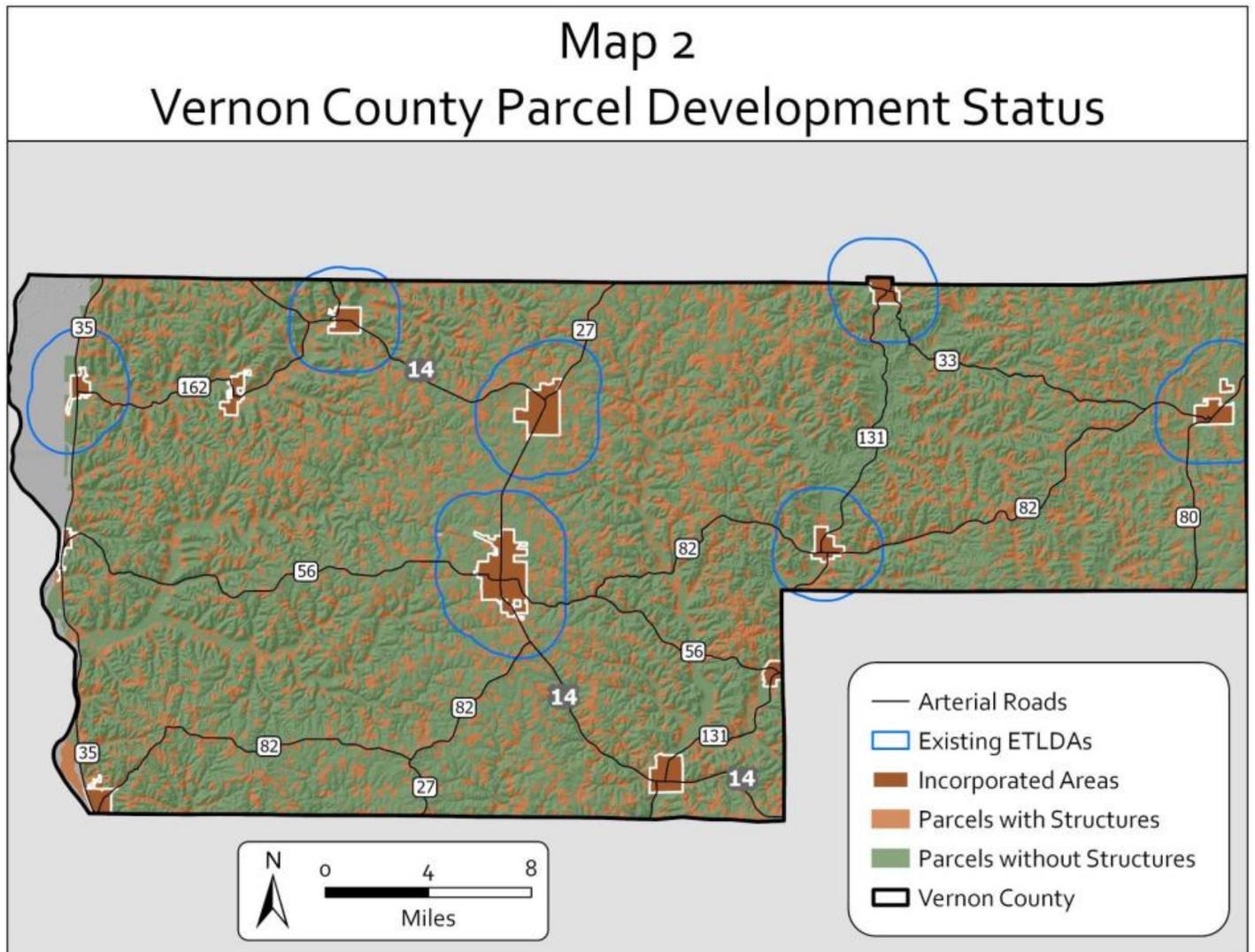
Place Name	Preliminary Estimate 2024	Census 2020	Numeric Change	Percent Change
T Clinton	1,462	1,374	88	6.40%
V Viola	313	240	73	30.42%
V Stoddard	910	840	70	8.33%
T Viroqua <sup>12</sup>	1,785	1,744	41	2.35%
T Christiana <sup>11</sup>	986	947	39	4.12%
T Kickapoo	760	722	38	5.26%
T Harmony	919	882	37	4.20%
T Greenwood	957	923	34	3.68%
T Coon	757	729	28	3.84%
T Whitestown	649	623	26	4.17%
C Westby <sup>11</sup>	2,400	2,378	22	0.93%
T Forest	637	617	20	3.24%
T Jefferson	1,290	1,270	20	1.57%
T Union	828	809	19	2.35%
T Webster	836	821	15	1.83%
C Hillsboro	1,409	1,397	12	0.86%
T Liberty	353	341	12	3.52%
T Franklin	1,115	1,106	9	0.81%
V De Soto	235	226	9	3.98%
T Wheatland	592	588	4	0.68%
T Stark	354	351	3	0.85%
T Genoa	755	753	2	0.27%
T Hillsboro	787	787	0	0.00%
V Chaseburg	239	241	- 2	- 0.83%
V Genoa	226	232	- 6	- 2.59%
T Hamburg	948	956	- 8	- 0.84%
V Coon Valley	750	758	- 8	- 1.06%
V Readstown	367	376	- 9	- 2.39%
V Ontario	524	534	- 10	- 1.87%
T Sterling	539	550	- 11	- 2.00%
T Bergen	1,353	1,365	- 12	- 0.88%
V La Farge	712	730	- 18	- 2.47%
C Viroqua <sup>12</sup>	4,393	4,504	- 111	- 2.46%

The following maps 1-3 provide an overview of current land use in Vernon county and highlights potential environmental factors that may inhibit land use. Please note that these maps are not regulatory documents, nor are they intended to serve as an official survey or provide precise, on-the-ground measurements. Their purpose is to guide planning discussions, not to enforce or establish land use policy.



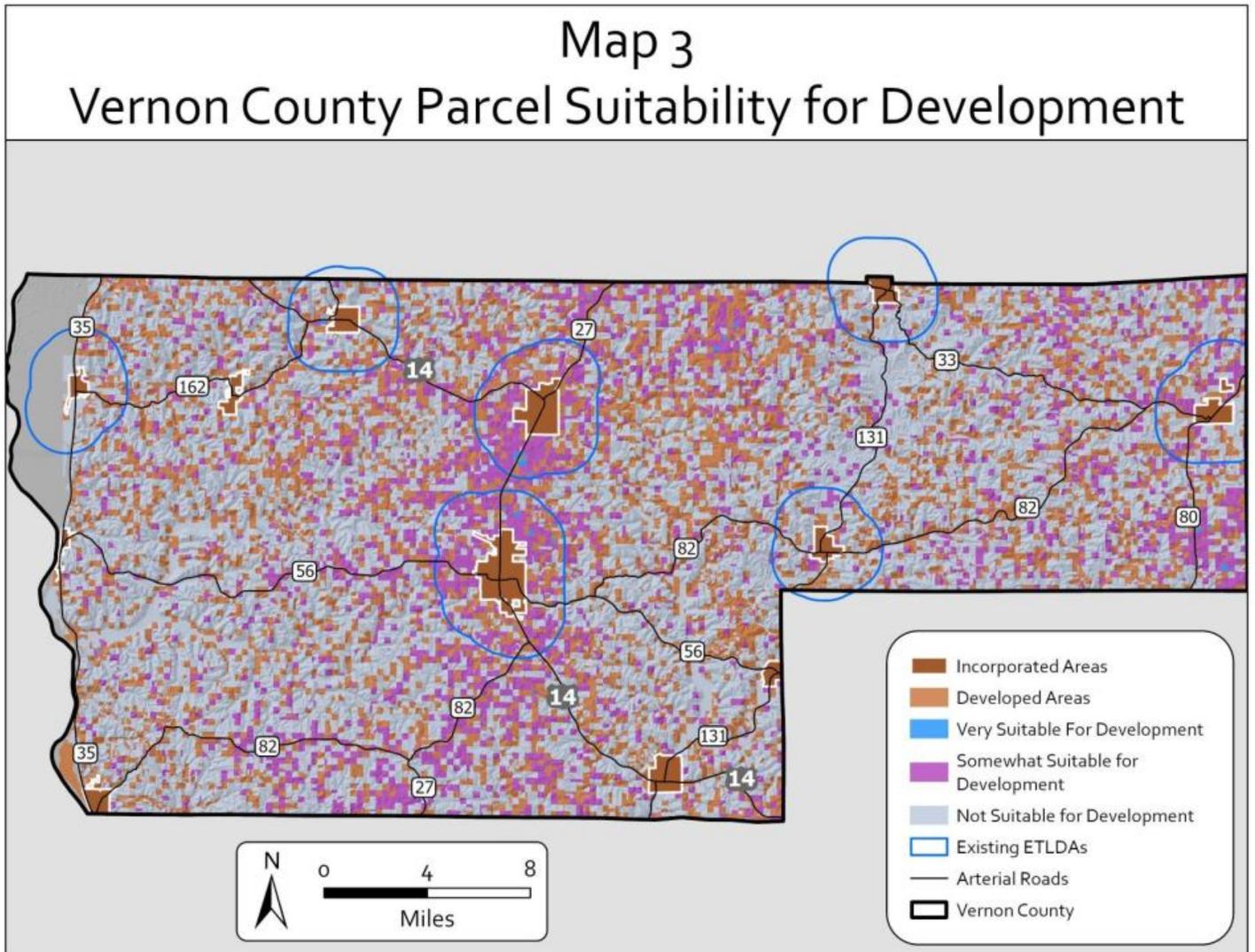
This map illustrates the distribution of incorporated areas, environmental areas, and rural areas.

- Environmental areas are defined by environmentally sensitive features, including steep slopes (>30%), floodplains, wetlands, open water bodies, and shoreland preservation zones.
- Rural areas are defined as those outside incorporated boundaries and not classified as environmental areas.



This map highlights the development status of parcels, indicating whether parcels contain structures or remain undeveloped.

- Incorporated areas and Extra-Territorial Land Division Areas (ETLDA), also know as Extra-Territorial Zones (ETZs) are also shown, identifying municipalities that have opted to establish ETZs and their boundaries.

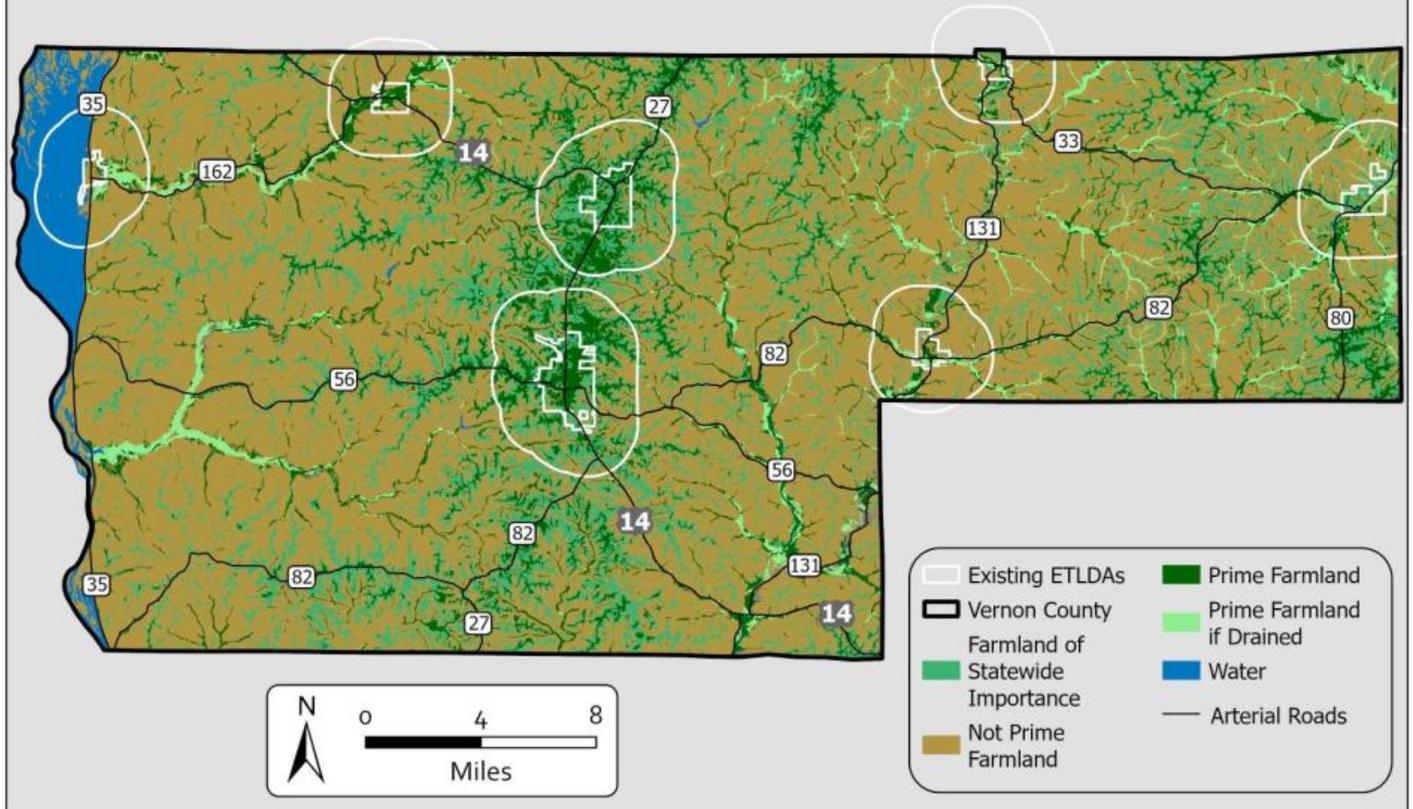


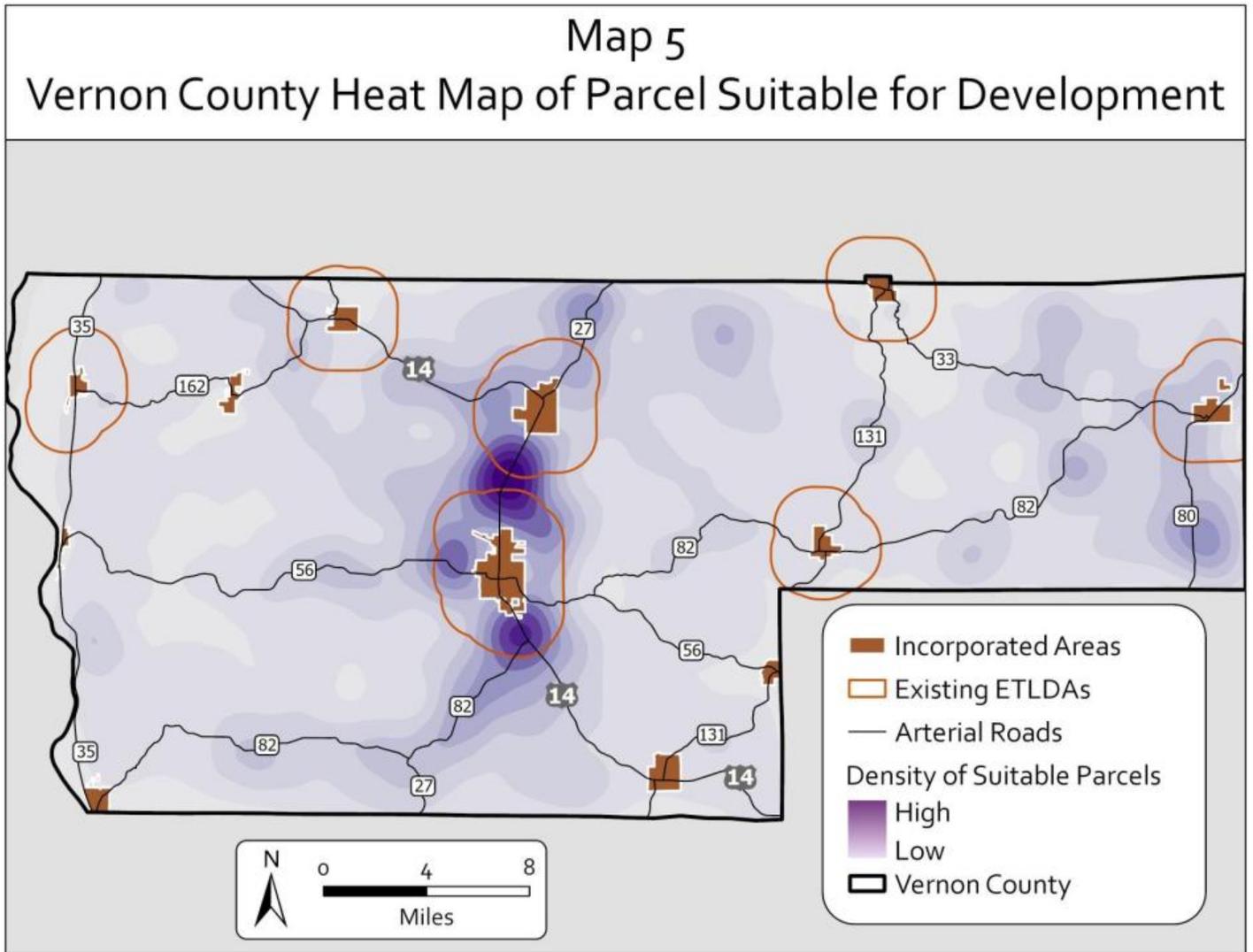
This map assesses the suitability of parcels for future development, categorized as follows:

- **Developed areas:** Includes incorporated areas as well as parcels outside incorporated boundaries that already contain structures.
- **Very Suitable for Development:** The entirety of the parcel is free from environmental constraints, as defined in Map 1.
- **Somewhat Suitable for Development:** The majority of the parcel is located outside environmentally sensitive areas, but a minority of the parcel is affected by environmental constraints.
- **Not Suitable for Development:** The majority of the parcel is impacted by environmental concerns, with only minor, if any, areas of the parcel free from these constraints.

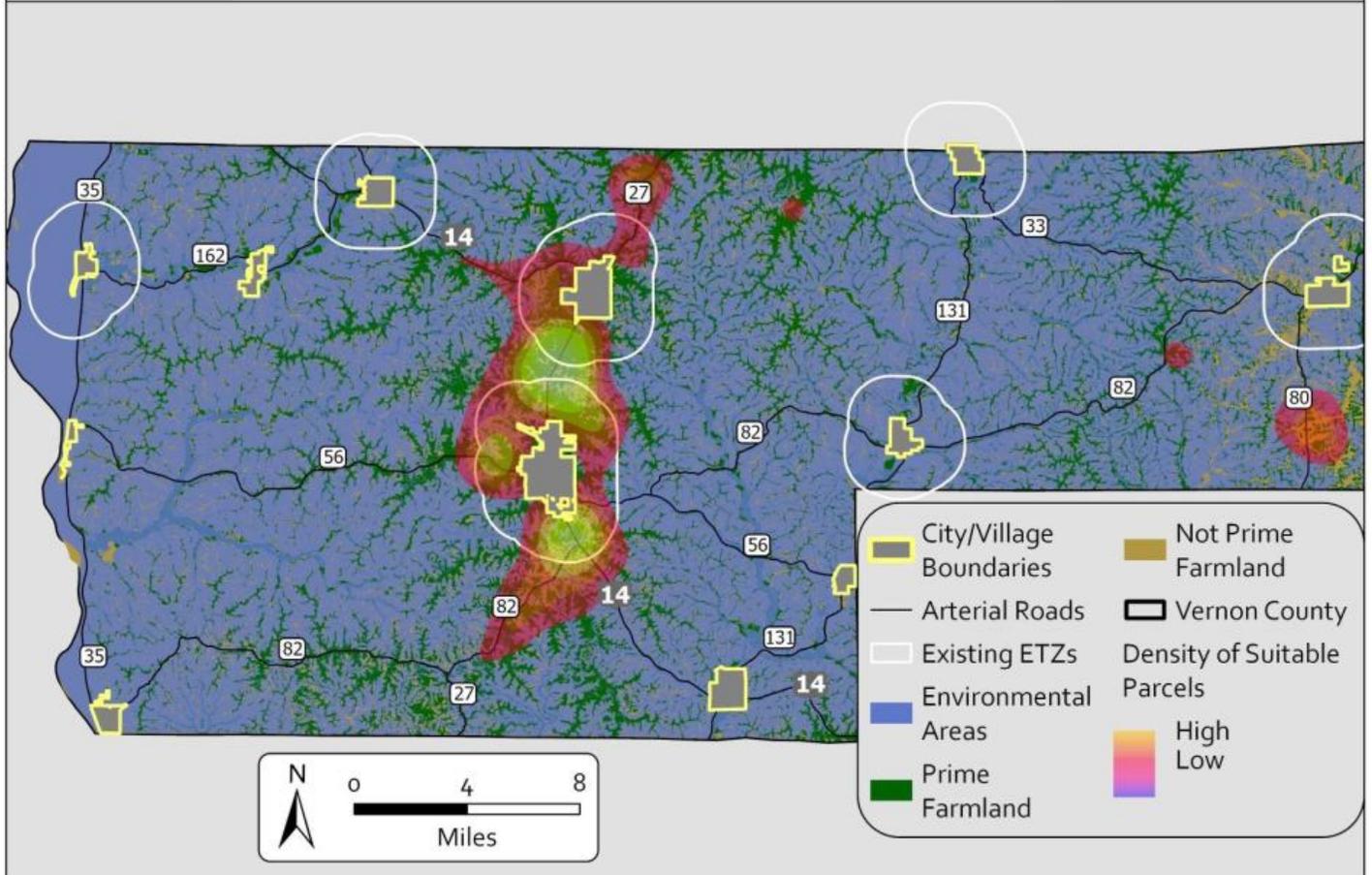
This map also includes the boundaries of existing ETZs or ETLDAs, helping to visualize potential municipal expansion areas.

# Map 4 Vernon County Farmland Classifications

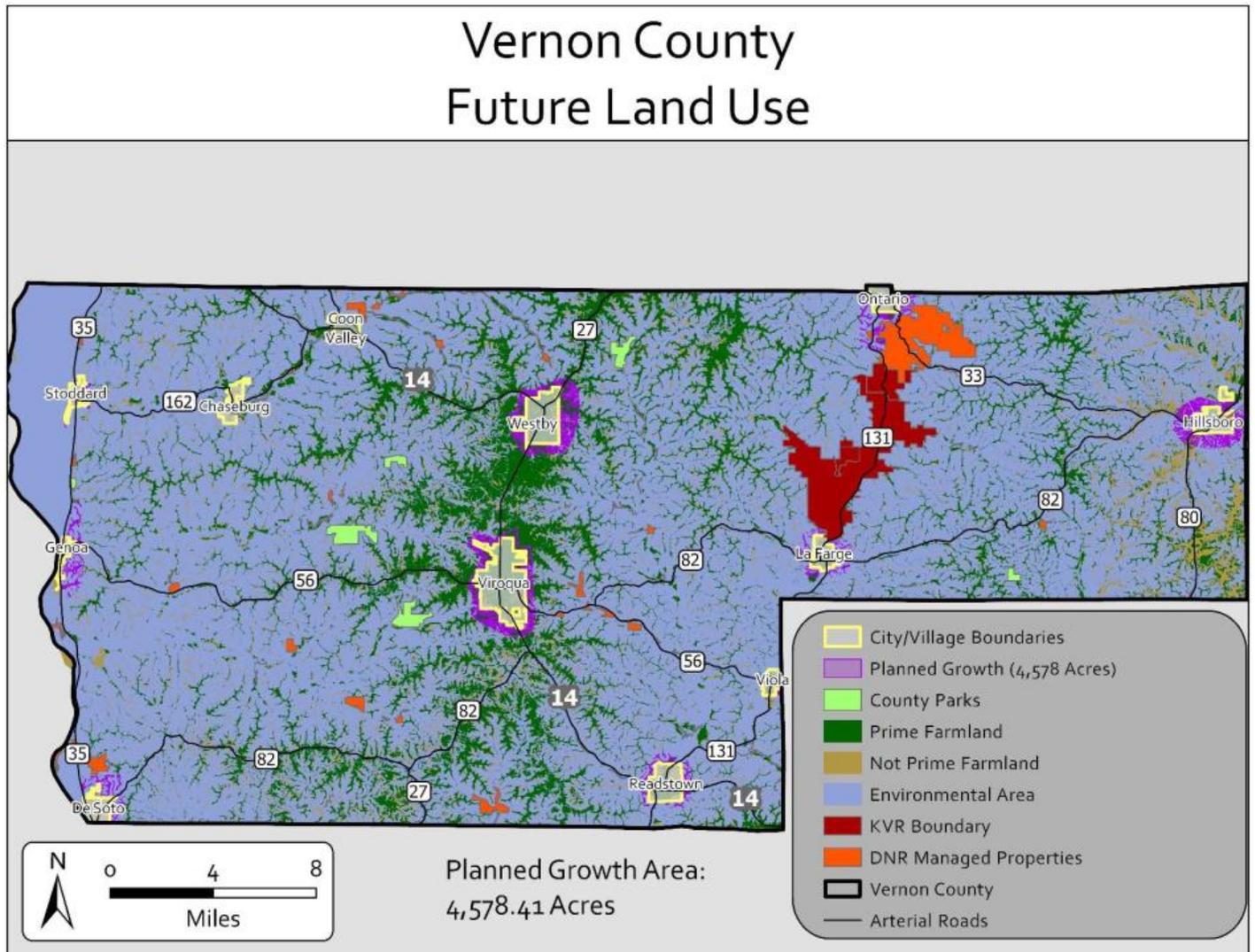




## Density of Parcels Suitable for Development



MAP 7. FUTURE LAND USE MAP



**Future Land Use Classes**

This section outlines the planned future land use classes Vernon County that are depicted on the Future Land Use Map. The classes represent a consolidation of the more specific county zoning districts that would be used when a zoning code is developed.

1. **Prime Farmland or Exclusive Agriculture** – Depicted in green. These are the best agricultural lands in Vernon County and may want to be preserved from further development. This district aims to preserve agricultural land for food and fiber production, protect productive farming by preventing conflicts between incompatible uses, and implement the provisions of a County Farmland Preservation Ordinance to permit eligible landowners to receive tax credits under Wis. Stat. § 71.09(11).
2. **Not Prime Farmland** – Depicted in brown. The agricultural class is established for areas in which agricultural and certain compatible low intensity uses are encouraged as the *principal* use of land.

3. **Planned Growth** – Depicted in Purple. These are areas most suitable for development, adjacent to existing infrastructure within the Extra-Territorial Land Division Areas (ETLDA), also know as Extra-Territorial Zones (ETZs) districts of the adjacent cities or villages.
4. **Environmental** – Depicted in dark blue. The environmental class includes areas where special protection is encouraged because of unique landscapes, topographical features, wildlife, or historical value. These areas may contain floodplains, steep slopes of 30% or greater, wetlands, preserved lands under permanent conservation easements, viewsheds, and historically, archaeologically, or culturally significant sites.
5. **City and Village Boundaries** - Depicted in gray
6. **Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR) Boundary** – Depicted in maroon
7. **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Managed Properties** – Depicted in orange

### Development of Planned Growth Areas

The Planned Growth Areas depicted in purple on the maps above are only recommendations, are not regulatory and simply designate areas that would be optimal for development, having the least impediments to future development. One of the primary goals of this plan is to preserve farmland and the natural environment and secondarily to encourage development contiguous to existing development. These areas promote efficient land use, optimize infrastructure development, delivery of services, enhance community livability, and reduce pollution.

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## TOP 8 REASONS TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT?

### 1. Infrastructure Efficiency

- **Cost Savings:** Developing adjacent to existing urbanized areas reduces the cost of extending infrastructure such as water, sewer lines, roads, and utilities. Extending services to dispersed developments is much more expensive.
  - *Anna Haines et al.* emphasize in the **Land Use Resource Guide** that contiguous development optimizes infrastructure investment by reducing service duplication and costs (Haines, A., 2011, Land Use Resource Guide).
- **Infrastructure Maintenance:** Existing systems are better utilized, reducing redundancy, and ensuring more effective maintenance.

### 2. Environmental Conservation

- **Reduced Land Consumption:** Contiguous growth limits urban sprawl, preserving greenfields, agricultural lands, and ecologically sensitive areas (Jackson-Smith, D., 2004, Planning for Agriculture Guide).
  - *Douglas Jackson-Smith* in the **Planning for Agriculture Guide** highlights that sprawling development can significantly reduce farmland viability and ecosystem services.
- **Compact Development:** Encourages higher-density development, which is more resource-efficient and environmentally friendly.

### 3. Transportation Benefits

- **Improved Connectivity:** Growth near existing areas enhances access to transportation networks, making it easier for residents to commute or use public transit (Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2017).
  - The **Wisconsin Department of Transportation** advocates for contiguous growth to enhance multimodal transit options, reducing dependency on private vehicles.
- **Reduced Traffic Congestion:** A centralized development pattern prevents the creation of disconnected suburban areas that contribute to traffic issues.

#### 4. Cost-Effective Public Services

- **Efficient Service Delivery:** Emergency services, waste collection, and public safety operations are more cost-effective in compact areas compared to sprawling developments.
  - *Brian Ohm* notes in **Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans** that compact growth allows governments to allocate resources more effectively across smaller, denser populations (Ohm, B., 2012, Sustaining Places: Best Practices for Comprehensive Plans).

#### 5. Enhanced Community Cohesion

- **Stronger Social Networks:** Proximity between neighborhoods fosters interactions among residents, enhancing community identity and social ties.
  - According to *David R. Godschalk* in his works on sustainable development, contiguous development helps create walkable and vibrant communities (Godschalk, D. R., 2009, Sustainable Development).

#### 6. Economic Benefits

- **Urban Core Revitalization:** Growth near urban centers supports local businesses, promotes economic activity, and can help reduce economic disparities between neighborhoods (Nacker, R., 2010, Economic Development Handbook).
  - *Roger Nacker* in the **Economic Development Handbook** emphasizes that compact development enhances the vibrancy of town centers and makes them more attractive to investors.

#### 7. Mitigating Urban Sprawl

- **Controlled Expansion:** By facilitating contiguous development, municipalities can better manage land use and prevent haphazard growth into rural areas.
  - The **American Planning Association** notes in its **Local Comprehensive Planning Framework** that contiguous growth aligns with Smart Growth principles, preventing inefficient land use patterns (American Planning Association, 2015, Local Comprehensive Planning Framework).

#### 8. Climate and Sustainability

- **Reduced Emissions:** Compact development encourages public transit and active transportation modes (walking, biking), reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.
  - *The APA's Sustaining Places Guide* indicates that smart urban development directly contributes to climate mitigation efforts (American Planning Association, 2013, Sustaining Places Guide).

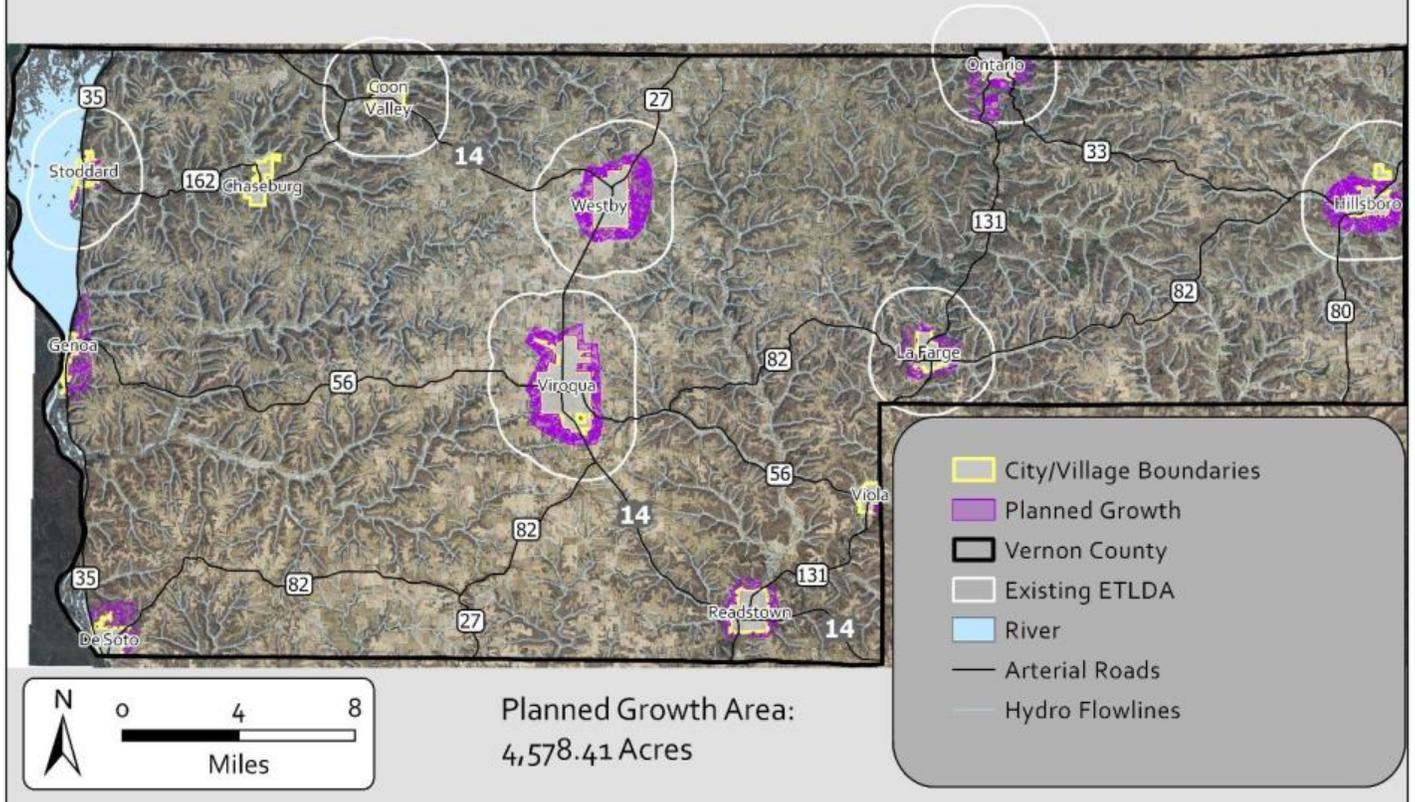
#### Development of Planned Growth Area Maps

MRRPC staff presented a draft (Map 6), depicting areas with the highest density of parcels suitable for development. Vernon County Plan Commission members then sketched in areas they thought would be ideal for development. Their initial sketched yielded a total area of 35,204 acres. This was much more than the 2555 acres projected by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. MRRPC staff then developed a map with 4,578 acres of land (Map 7) available for projected growth. This land was not inhibited by environmental constraints.

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#### MAP 8. FUTURE LAND USE MAP WITH RIVERS AND TOPOGRAPHY

# Vernon County Planned Growth Areas



A Future Land Use Map (FLUM) depicts a community's long-term vision for the development, use, and preservation of its land. It shows areas designated for specific purposes such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational uses. The map is a planning tool that guides zoning, infrastructure investments, and policy decisions by illustrating where growth should occur, where resources should be conserved, and how different types of land uses will interact. A FLUM helps ensure that development aligns with the community's goals, balancing growth with environmental conservation and infrastructure needs.

Key features often included are:

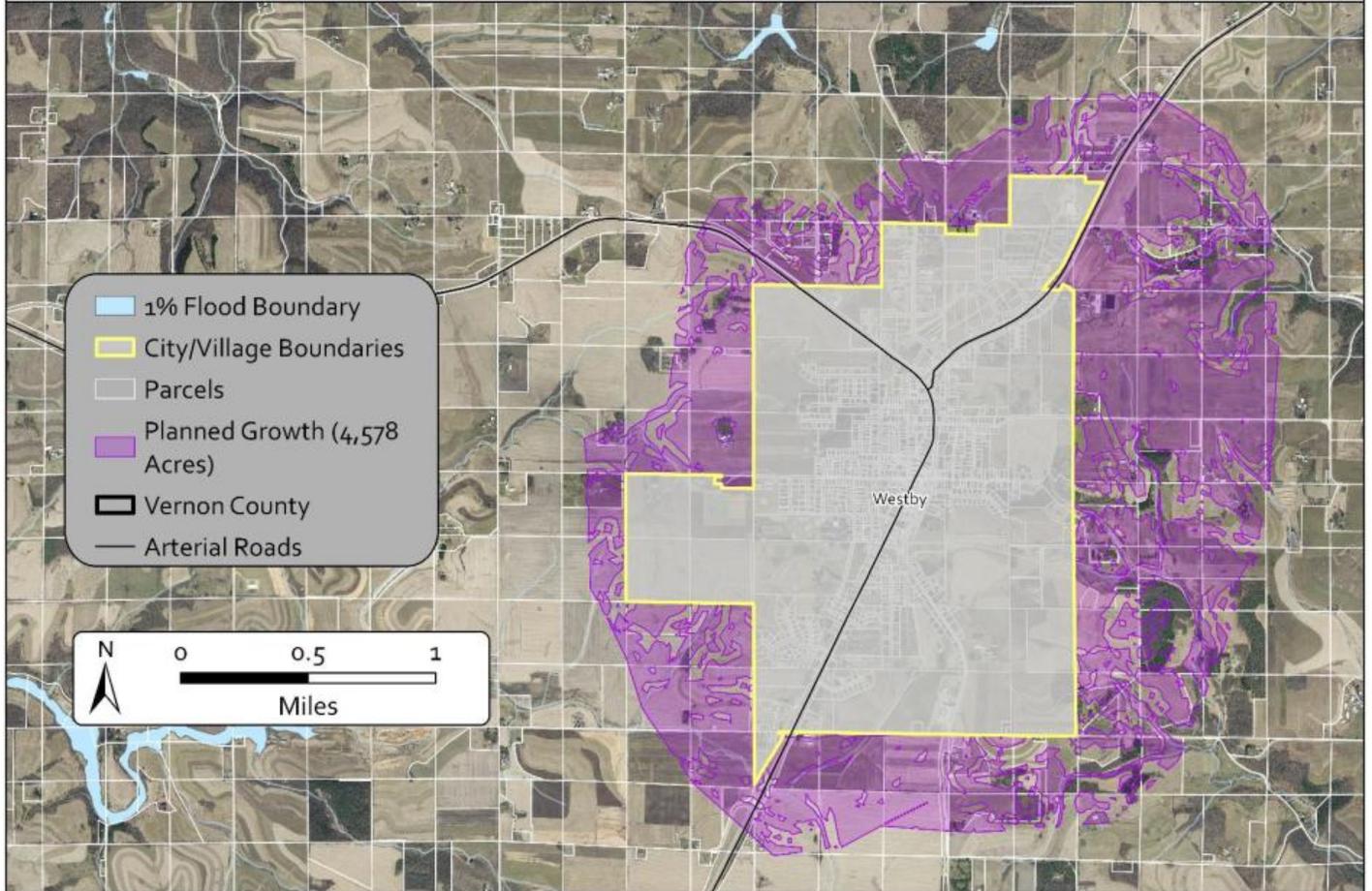
- Growth Areas: Regions slated for future development, supporting population and economic growth.
- Preservation Areas: Zones to protect natural resources, like forests, wetlands, and farmlands, limiting urban sprawl.
- Urban and Suburban Development: Plans for expanding housing, businesses, and amenities within cities or suburbs.
- Rural or Agricultural Land: Intended for lower-density development or continued agricultural use, preserving rural character.

The Future Land Use map has been created using the following assumptions:

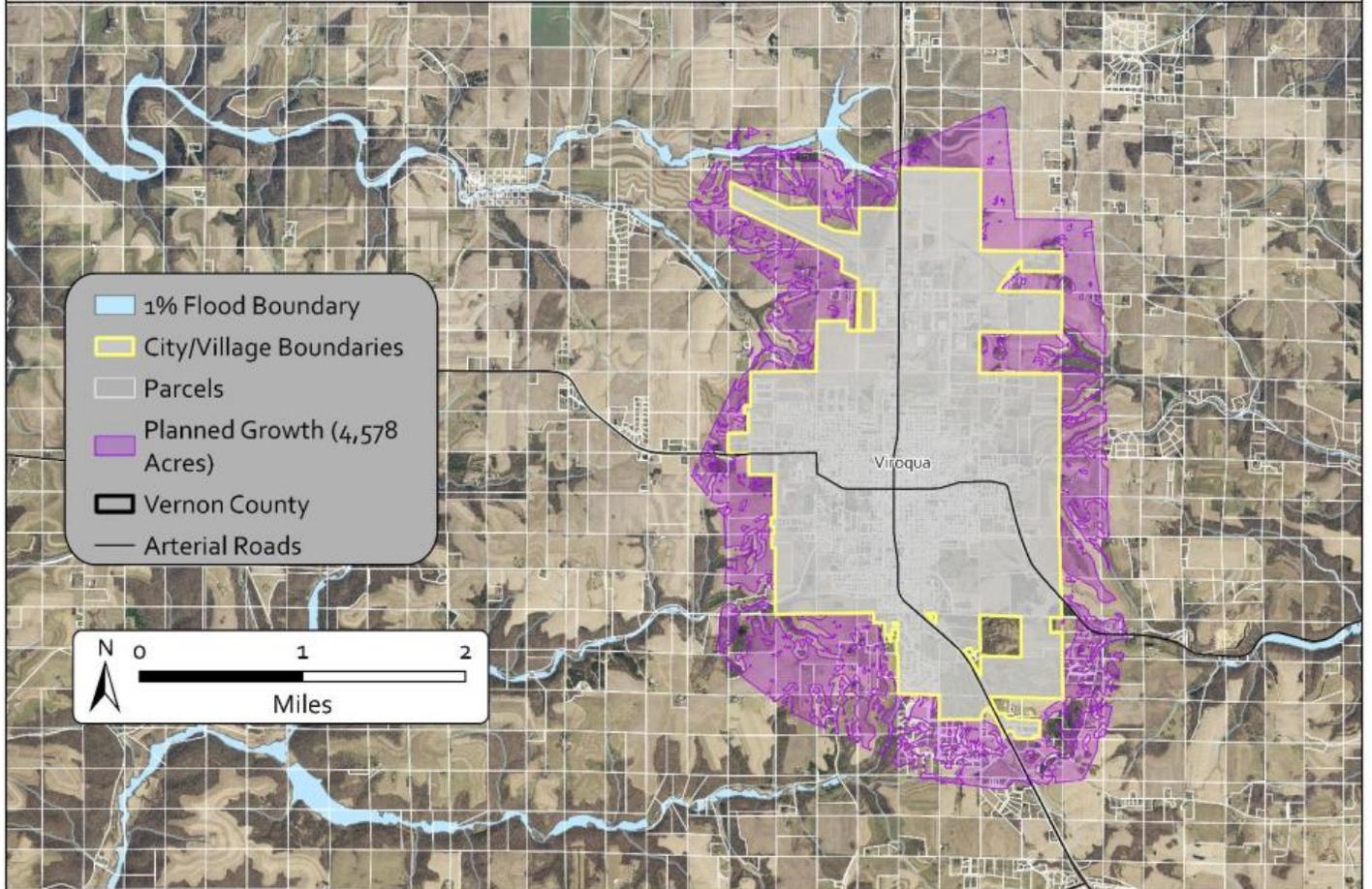
- The Future Land Use Map is the 20-year vision of future land uses in the county.
- These Cities, Towns, and Villages had the largest **number** growth (88 – 37):

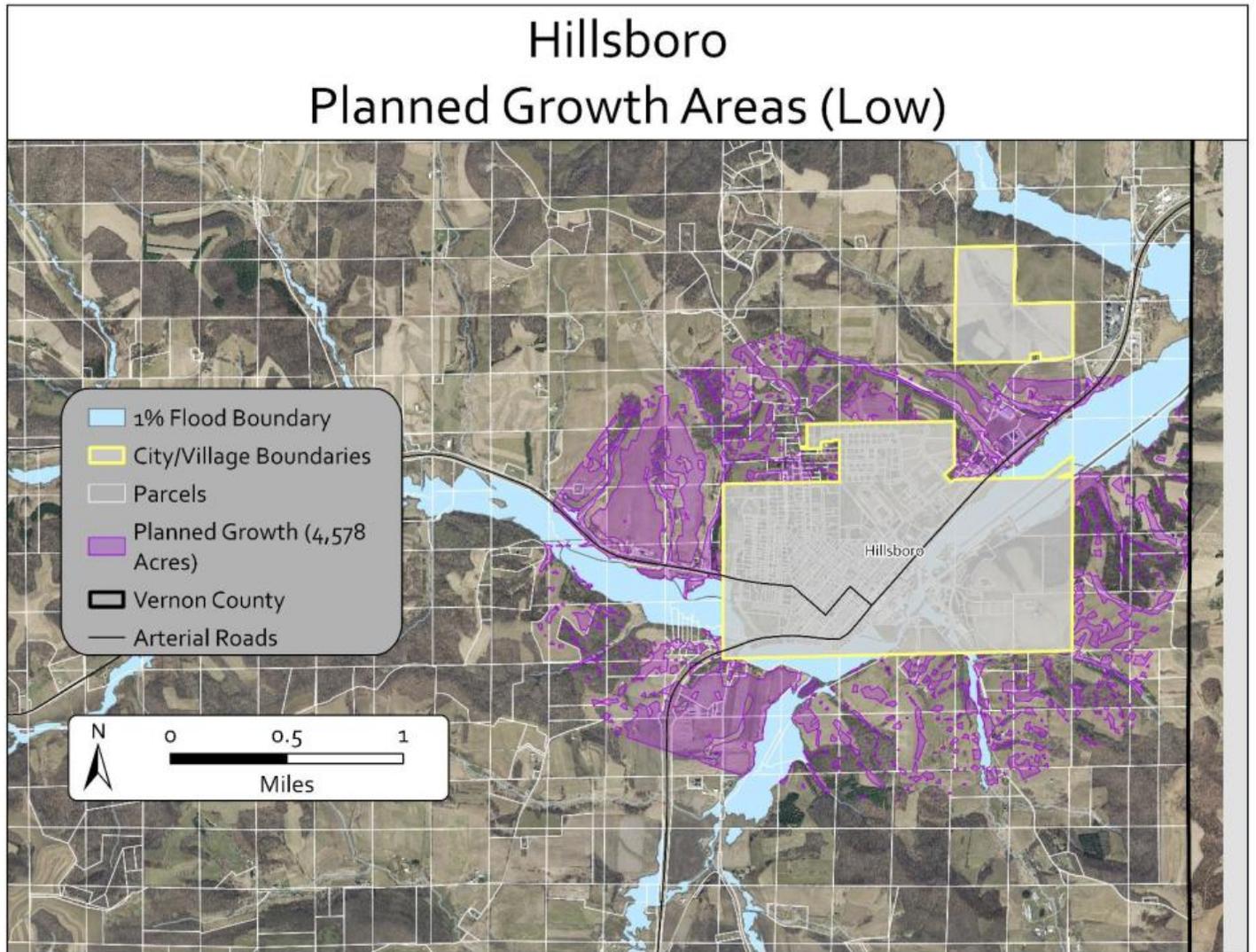
- Town of Clinton
- **Village of Viola**
- **Village of Stoddard**
- Town of Viroqua
- Town of Christiana
- **Town of Kickapoo**
- Town of Harmony
- These Cities, Towns, and Villages had the largest **percentage** of growth (4.17 – 30.42%)
  - **Village of Viola**
  - **Village of Stoddard**
  - **Town of Kickapoo**
  - Town of Harmony
  - Town of Whitestown
- The County Future Land Use Map aims to be a quilt of the town's future land use maps. The County advises towns to ensure county and town plans are realistic and consistent and based on data and planning best practices.

# Westby Planned Growth Areas (Low)



# Viroqua Planned Growth Areas (Low)





ZONING AND OTHER LAND USE REGULATIONS

Vernon County is not a zoned County. However, Vernon County does have ordinances that regulate land use. The County Zoning Department also administers regulations mandated by Wisconsin State Statute in Vernon County such as the Private Onsite Wastewater Ordinance, the Shorelands-Wetland Ordinance, the Telecommunications Tower, Antenna, and Facilities Siting Ordinance, and the Floodplain Ordinance.

RESIDENTIAL AND NON-RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

In 2010, Vernon County had 37.6 people per square mile and 37.6 housing units per square mile. In 2020, the county had 38.8 people per square mile and 38.8 housing units per square mile. The population and housing density for Vernon County is less than that of Wisconsin, and the gap between Vernon County and Wisconsin in terms of housing density and population density grew from 2010 to 2020. Vernon County saw a 3.2% increase in population density to Wisconsin's 3.6% and saw a 0.7% increase in housing density to Wisconsin's 3.9%. The non-residential density of other uses was not calculated due to the lack of and negligible amount of

such uses. The fact that in Vernon County the rate of increase in population density substantially outpaced the rate of increase in housing density indicates that **average household size has increased**, a trend opposite what was seen in Wisconsin. This indicates that the county’s goal of incentivizing farmland preservation and managed residential growth has thus far been successful. The lower population and housing density of the county as compared to State is expected due to the primarily rural character of the County.

**Table 3.3 Density**

	Vernon County	Wisconsin
Population 2000	28,056	5,363,675
Population 2010	29,773	5,686,986
Population 2020	30,714	5,893,718
Housing Units 2010	13,720	2,624,358
Housing Units 2020	13,813	2,727,726
Population Density 2010	37.6	105.0
Population Density 2020	38.8	108.8
Housing Unit Density 2010	17.3	48.5
Housing Unit Density 2020	17.4	50.4
Percent Increase (Population Density)	3.2%	3.6%
Percent Increase (Housing Density)	0.7%	3.9%



**FIGURE 3.4 FARMLAND IN VERNON COUNTY (BUSINESS IN FOCUS MAGAZINE).**



## IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans, and programs contained in pars. (a) to (h). The element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

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**GOAL I: DEVELOP AND ADOPT A FARMLAND PRESERVATION ORDINANCE.**

**GOAL II: DEVELOP AND ADOPT A SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE THAT PRESERVES FARMLAND.**

**GOAL III: DEVELOP AND ADOPT A 30% SLOPE LAND DISTURBANCE ORDINANCE.**

**GOAL IV: THE VERNON COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION WILL REVIEW THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN EVERY FIVE YEARS FOLLOWING ITS ADOPTION AND RECOMMEND ANY NECESSARY POLICY CHANGES IN RELATION TO THE DIRECTION AND CHARACTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT THAT TIME.**

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### ROLE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Local governmental bodies (elected and appointed) make decisions that determine whether or not the plan can be realized. All of this affects how the plan relates to the future development of Vernon County. Over the twenty-year life of the plan, hundreds of decisions will be made which will impact its success. Therefore, it is important that each of these decision-making bodies accepts the basic recommendations of the plan and makes decisions and recommendations based upon it.

This element looks at those tools already in place to help decision-making bodies in their work. It should be stated at the outset that the plan can be implemented using existing tools and regulations. No new laws or regulations are required in order for the plan to be realized. What is required is the commitment of all of the decision-making units to the ideals of the plan.

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### MANAGEMENT OF GROWTH AND CHANGE

In lay terms, "growth" relates to the size of a community, measured by many different dimensions. "Change" relates to the character of a community, also measured by many different dimensions. Growth can influence change. Change can occur without growth, even with negative growth (e.g., loss of population).

The management of growth and change has been defined in a publication of the Urban Land Institute as: "The utilization by government of a variety of traditional and evolving techniques, tools, plans, and activities to purposefully guide local patterns of land use, including the manner, location, rate, and nature of development."

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To purposefully guide the management of growth and change requires a clear vision of what the community desires to be in the future. Achieving the vision, or implementing the plan, almost always requires a community to take a "proactive" position rather than a "reactive" position. However, both proactive and reactive positions must be carried out within the parameters of federal and state constitutional law, and pursuant to local municipal ordinances or duly established procedures.

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**GOAL I. ADOPT A COUNTYWIDE FARMLAND PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

This plan recommends that Vernon County adopt a Countywide Farmland Preservation ordinance. Six townships in Vernon County already have a Farmland Preservation Ordinance in place. A county ordinance would make it easier for townships to opt in. The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) plays a crucial role in maintaining the state's rich agricultural landscape, ensuring that farms remain viable and productive while offering property tax relief to qualifying landowners. The Farmland Preservation Zoning (FPZ) component is an important tool used by local governments to support this goal. Below, we'll explore what the Farmland Preservation Program is, how Farmland Preservation Zoning works, and how it differs from standard agricultural zoning. We'll also look at eligibility criteria and the requirements to implement a certified Farmland Preservation Ordinance by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

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## TOP 8 REASONS TO PRESERVE FARMLAND IN VERNON COUNTY

1. **Economic Stability:** Agriculture significantly contributes to Vernon County's economy. Preserving farmland ensures the continuation of farming activities, supporting local employment, and sustaining the economic base (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, 2022).
2. **Environmental Protection:** Farmland acts as a buffer against urban sprawl, helping to maintain open spaces and natural habitats. This preservation supports biodiversity and protects ecosystems from fragmentation (American Farmland Trust, 2021).
3. **Soil and Water Conservation:** Implementing conservation practices on preserved farmland reduces soil erosion and improves water quality by minimizing runoff and sedimentation into water bodies (Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2020).
4. **Flood Mitigation:** Maintaining agricultural lands can help absorb rainfall and reduce the speed and volume of runoff, thereby mitigating the risk of flooding in vulnerable areas (Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department, 2021).
5. **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** Agriculture is integral to Vernon County's cultural identity. Preserving farmland maintains the rural character and heritage of the community, fostering a sense of place and continuity (Wisconsin Historical Society, 2019).
6. **Local Food Security:** Protecting farmland ensures a steady supply of locally grown food, reducing dependence on external sources and enhancing food security for the community (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2020).
7. **Recreational Opportunities:** Preserved farmlands offer spaces for recreational activities such as agritourism, hunting, fishing, and shared-use trails contributing to the quality of life and providing economic opportunities through tourism (Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, 2021).
8. **Climate Change Resilience:** Farmlands managed with conservation practices can sequester carbon and improve resilience to climate change impacts, contributing to broader environmental sustainability goals (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022).

## What is the Farmland Preservation Program?

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program is designed to protect agricultural land from non-agricultural development. The program provides tax incentives to landowners who agree to keep their land in agricultural use. Participants must meet specific land use and conservation criteria, and in return, they receive income tax credits based on their compliance.

This program has multiple benefits:

- **Preservation of Agricultural Lands:** It limits urban sprawl and preserves valuable agricultural land for future generations.
- **Financial Incentives:** By offering tax relief, it ensures that farmers and landowners have an incentive to maintain their property for agricultural purposes. Tax credits are available through Farmland Preservation Zoning:
  - **\$10/acre** for land owners with land in a certified Farmland Preservation Zoning district
  - **\$12.50/acre** for landowners with land in a certified Farmland Preservation Zoning district AND a Farmland Preservation Agreement in an Agricultural Enterprise Area.
- **Conservation:** The program promotes the use of environmentally sound practices that protect soil and water resources, thereby supporting long-term sustainability.

## What is Farmland Preservation Zoning?

Farmland Preservation Zoning (FPZ) is a specific type of zoning ordinance adopted by local governments to regulate land use in designated agricultural areas. The key purpose of FPZ is to protect farmland by limiting the types of land uses that can occur within these areas, such as residential, commercial, or industrial development.

FPZ is a tool used to implement the broader goals of the Farmland Preservation Program. Local municipalities voluntarily create and adopt these ordinances, and in return, eligible landowners can receive tax credits. The zoning ordinance must be certified by DATCP, ensuring that it complies with the standards of the state Farmland Preservation Program.

## How Does Certified Farmland Preservation Zoning Differ from Other Agricultural Zoning?

One common question is how a **certified Farmland Preservation Ordinance** differs from standard agricultural zoning ordinances. While both zoning types aim to protect agricultural land, the certified FPZ ordinance must meet more stringent requirements to ensure that land is used primarily for agriculture and other complementary purposes.

Here are the main differences:

1. **Certification:** FPZ ordinances must be certified by the **Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP)**, while general agricultural zoning ordinances do not.
2. **Eligibility for Tax Credits:** Landowners in areas covered by certified FPZ ordinances are eligible for farmland preservation tax credits, which are unavailable in areas covered by non-certified agricultural zoning ordinances.
3. **Use Restrictions:** FPZ ordinances place more restrictions on non-agricultural land uses to ensure long-term protection of farmland. This includes restrictions on residential or commercial developments.
4. **Conservation Compliance:** Landowners in FPZ areas must follow specific conservation practices to remain eligible for tax credits. In non-certified agricultural zones, such requirements may not be as strict or even necessary.

## What are the benefits of Farmland Preservation Zoning?

1. **Zoning is a tool that can help accomplish local land use goals:** Nearly all Wisconsin counties have adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan certified by the state. County Farmland Preservation Plans build upon and work in tandem with local comprehensive land use plans to establish policies and goals for agriculture use and the preservation of agricultural land. These plans alone are guidance documents, but through zoning they can accomplish goals which may include: keeping highly productive agricultural land in agricultural use, strengthening local processing and supply chains, assisting in implementing conservation practices and helping the next generation of farmers continue the industry.
2. **Zoning seeks to prevent land use conflicts within large contiguous blocks of land:** Chapter 91 requires that Farmland Preservation Zoning districts be substantially consistent with the lands planned for farmland preservation in the county's Farmland Preservation Plan. This helps create large, clustered blocks of protected farmland. These clustered blocks minimize land use conflicts better than isolated pockets of farmland, which can make the lives of farmers and rural residents easier.
3. **Farmland preservation zoning helps maintain a strong local economy by ensuring a commitment to the agricultural land base:** Agriculture is a \$104.8 billion/year industry in the state of Wisconsin and is tied to numerous industries across the state, ranging from food and beverage to travel and leisure. Keeping land in agriculture supports the local and state economy and ensures continued investment in rural communities.
4. **The development of a farmland preservation ordinance occurs at the local level.** Local governments are responsible for the administration, enforcement, and amendment of certified zoning ordinances under the Farmland Preservation Program. Within the requirements of Chapter 91, there is some flexibility on what a certified Farmland Preservation Zoning district can allow. As a result, local governments engage in a public process to create and adopt a Farmland Preservation Zoning ordinance which are reflective of the land use interests in the community.
5. **Landowners within a certified farmland preservation district are eligible to claim an income tax credit.** Landowners who meet conservation practice and eligibility requirements can claim a \$10/acre state income tax credit. This credit does not directly affect local property taxes and may be seen as a community investment for those landowners who participate in the Farmland Preservation Program.
6. **The community receives a collective benefit through the implementation of soil and water conservation standards.** State agricultural standards for soil and water conservation ensure that the local community is receiving a benefit in exchange for expenditures on the program beyond the preservation of agricultural land. These standards aim to conserve soil and prevent agricultural runoff.

Who is Eligible for Farmland Preservation Zoning? Eligibility for the Farmland Preservation Zoning program is based on several factors, including:

- **Location:** Land must be located within an area that has adopted a DATCP-certified Farmland Preservation Zoning ordinance.
- **Land Use:** The land must be primarily used for agricultural purposes, though some complementary uses may be permitted. Examples include production agriculture, forestry, and limited housing for farm workers.
- **Conservation Compliance:** Landowners must follow an approved **soil and water conservation plan**, which ensures that they use sustainable farming practices to protect the land's long-term viability.
- **Parcel Size:** Minimum acreage requirements may vary based on local zoning codes, but the land generally needs to be large enough to support agricultural operations.

DATCP Requirements for Implementing Farmland Preservation Ordinances

To implement a **Farmland Preservation Ordinance**, municipalities must follow specific guidelines and requirements set by the Wisconsin DATCP. These requirements ensure that the local ordinance aligns with the state's goals of preserving farmland and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

Here's an overview of the process and requirements:

1. **Adoption of a Local Ordinance:** Local governments must develop and adopt a Farmland Preservation Zoning ordinance that complies with the Wisconsin statutes governing land use and preservation.
2. **Certification by DATCP:** Once adopted, the ordinance must be submitted to DATCP for certification. DATCP reviews the ordinance to ensure that it meets state standards, including restrictions on non-agricultural development and promotion of agricultural use.
3. **Plan Review and Approval:** The local government must submit a Farmland Preservation Plan to DATCP, outlining how the designated areas will be preserved for agricultural use and comply with state requirements.
4. **Conservation Compliance:** Landowners in FPZ areas must meet soil and water conservation standards set by DATCP to remain eligible for tax credits. The local ordinance must include provisions to enforce these conservation requirements.
5. **Public Involvement:** The process for adopting a Farmland Preservation Ordinance involves public input, ensuring that landowners and other stakeholders have a voice in the process.
6. **Ongoing Compliance and Monitoring:** After the ordinance is adopted, local governments are responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with the zoning requirements, including regular reviews and updates to the plan as needed.

The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Zoning Program is an essential component of the state's broader efforts to protect its agricultural heritage. Through this program, local governments can implement zoning ordinances that safeguard farmland, while providing landowners with important tax credits. The certified FPZ ordinances go beyond standard agricultural zoning by placing stricter restrictions on land use and ensuring that conservation practices are followed. These measures help to ensure the long-term viability of Wisconsin's agricultural industry and protect valuable farmland for future generations. Local governments must work closely with DATCP to implement and certify these ordinances, ensuring that they align with state goals and standards for farmland preservation.

Prime and Other Important Farmlands Description:

In an effort to identify the extent and location of important farmlands, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with other interested Federal, State, and local government organizations, has inventoried land that can be used for the production of the Nation's food supply.

Farmland Classifications

The NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) has established farmland classifications that are used to identify and protect valuable agricultural lands. These classifications help inform land use planning and development decisions. The main classifications are:

1. **Prime Farmland:** This designation refers to land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. Prime farmland has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce high yields. It is not excessively prone to flooding or erosion and requires minimal irrigation or drainage.

2. **Farmland of Statewide Importance:** This land is similar to prime farmland but may have limitations that can be overcome with proper management. It is recognized by the state as being significant for agricultural production, though it may not meet all the criteria of prime farmland. It still has high value for food production.
3. **Farmland of Local Importance:** Defined by counties or local governments, this classification applies to lands that are important to local agricultural economies but may not meet the criteria for prime or statewide importance. These areas may be significant for supporting smaller-scale or specialty crops.
4. **Unique Farmland:** This designation applies to land that is used for the production of high-value food and fiber crops, such as fruits, vegetables, and nuts. These lands have specific qualities, such as favorable climate or soils, which allow for the growth of these specialty crops.

These classifications help guide land use policies and conservation efforts to maintain the productivity and sustainability of agricultural lands. They are also considered in federal programs for conservation and land preservation.

*Prime farmland* is of major importance in meeting the Nation's short- and long-range needs for food and fiber. Because the supply of high-quality farmland is limited, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recognizes that responsible levels of government, as well as individuals, should encourage and facilitate the wise use of our Nation's prime farmland

Prime farmland, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban or built-up land or water areas. The soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply are those needed for the soil to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when proper management, including water management, and acceptable farming methods are applied. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of moisture from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Prime farmland is permeable to water and air. It is not excessively erodible or saturated with water for long periods, and it either is not frequently flooded during the growing season or is protected from flooding. Slope ranges mainly from 0 to 6 percent. More detailed information about the criteria for prime farmland is available at the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For some of the soils identified in the table as prime farmland, measures that overcome a hazard or limitation, such as flooding, wetness, and droughtiness, are needed. Onsite evaluation is needed to determine whether or not the hazard or limitation has been overcome by corrective measures.

A recent trend in land use in some areas has been the loss of some prime farmland to industrial and urban uses. The loss of prime farmland to other uses puts pressure on marginal lands, which generally are more erodible, droughty, and less productive and cannot be easily cultivated.

*Unique farmland* is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high-value food and fiber crops, such as citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, and other fruits and vegetables. It has the special combination of soil quality, growing season, moisture supply, temperature, humidity, air drainage, elevation, and aspect needed for the soil to economically produce sustainable high yields of these crops when properly managed. The water supply is dependable and of adequate quality. Nearness to markets is an additional consideration. Unique farmland is not based on national criteria. It commonly is in areas where there is a special microclimate, such as the wine country in California.

In some areas, land that does not meet the criteria for prime or unique farmland is considered to be *farmland of statewide importance* for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. The criteria for defining and delineating farmland of statewide importance are determined by the appropriate State agencies. Generally, this land includes areas of soils that nearly meet the requirements for prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to

acceptable farming methods. Some areas may produce as high a yield as prime farmland if conditions are favorable. Farmland of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by State law.

In some areas that are not identified as having national or statewide importance, land is considered to be farmland of local importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. This farmland is identified by the appropriate local agencies. Farmland of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

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## GOAL II. ADOPT SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE THAT PRESERVES FARMLAND

This plan recommends that Vernon County develops and adopt a Subdivision Ordinance that aims to preserve farmland and open space. Cluster and Conservation subdivisions are smart ways to develop land that help protect open space, natural resources, and the rural feel of an area while still allowing for population growth. These subdivisions are designed to group homes close together in a small area, which leaves large portions of the land untouched and available for farming, recreation, or simply preserving nature.



**Figure 4.1 Conservation Subdivision - Image Courtesy of Randall Arendt**

The main idea behind these subdivisions is to keep as much open space as possible. By clustering homes in a smaller area, the rest of the land can remain natural or be used for other purposes like agriculture. This approach not only helps protect the environment but also keeps the scenic beauty of the area intact

There are also practical benefits to this type of development. Since homes are closer together, the roads and utility lines needed are shorter, which can reduce the cost of building and maintaining infrastructure. This can make housing more affordable and reduce ongoing expenses for the community. Additionally, these subdivisions often have a more attractive appearance because they blend well with the natural surroundings.

Living in a cluster subdivision can also create a stronger sense of community, as residents have access to shared green spaces, trails, and recreational areas. This setup encourages people to connect with each other and enjoy the natural environment around them.

In short, cluster and conservation subdivisions are a smart way to build neighborhoods that support population growth while protecting the environment. By grouping homes in one area and leaving the rest of the land open, these developments offer a balanced approach that benefits both people and nature (University of Wisconsin Madison).

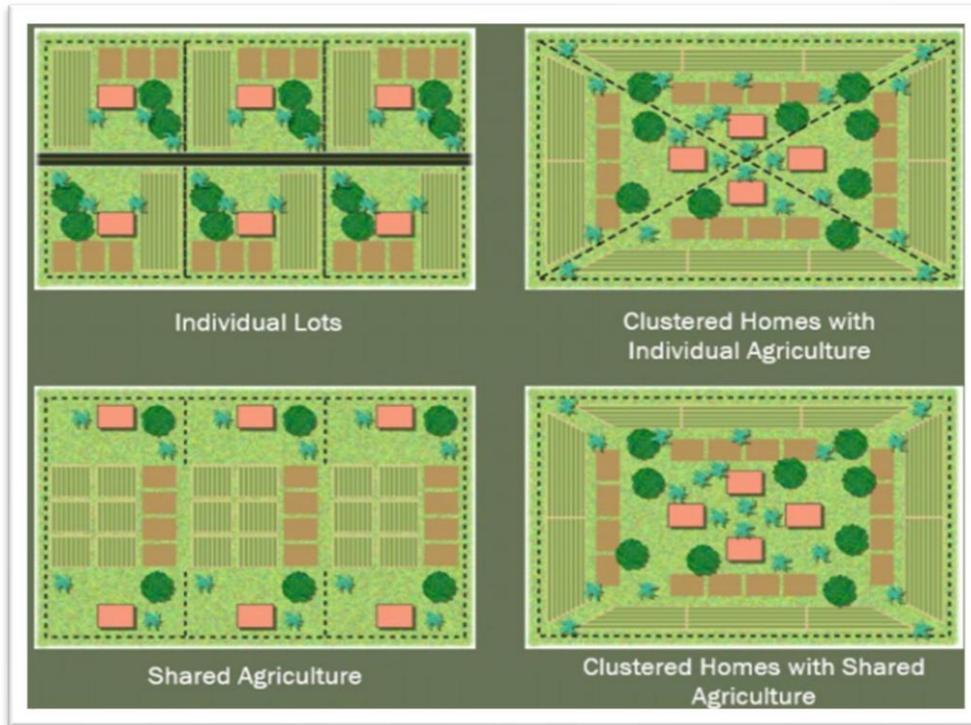


Figure 4.2 Conservation Subdivision, Image credit: [www.Honolulu.gov](http://www.Honolulu.gov)



Figure 4.3 Conservation Subdivision, Photo credit: [www.Cyburbia.org](http://www.Cyburbia.org)

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### GOAL III. ADOPT A 30% SLOPE LAND DISTURBANCE PROHIBITION ORDINANCE

This plan recommends that the County adopt an ordinance to prohibit land disturbance of slopes greater than 30%. Building on slopes greater than 30% is widely discouraged due to several significant risks and practical concerns. One of the key reasons is the increased likelihood of soil erosion and instability. When development occurs on steep slopes, the natural vegetation, which stabilizes the soil, is often disturbed. This can lead to serious erosion problems, where soil and sediment are washed away during rain events. Erosion not only reduces the fertility of the land but also accelerates runoff, contributing to flash flooding, decreased water quality and clarity. This decreased water quality negatively affects the habitat and viability of native fish, and other riparian wildlife.

Additionally, the cost and complexity of constructing infrastructure on steep slopes make such projects less desirable. Roads, utilities, and buildings require significant modifications to standard design practices to accommodate steep terrain, including extensive grading, retaining walls, and reinforced foundations. These engineering solutions can be very costly and, if not done properly, may fail over time, leading to structural damage or even collapse. The maintenance of infrastructure on steep slopes is also more expensive in the long run.

Environmental considerations also play a critical role in discouraging development on slopes greater than 30%. Steep slopes are often ecologically sensitive areas that serve as critical habitats for a variety of species. Building on these areas can disrupt ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and lead to habitat fragmentation. Furthermore, steep slopes often contribute to scenic landscapes and preserving these natural vistas is often a priority for local communities and environmental planning efforts.

Lastly, building on steep slopes presents challenges in managing stormwater. Stormwater management becomes more difficult, as water flows quickly off steep surfaces, which can overwhelm drainage systems. This increases the risk of downstream flooding and can lead to water quality issues due to the rapid transport of pollutants into nearby water bodies. Therefore, many comprehensive planning frameworks recommend avoiding development on slopes greater than 30% to mitigate these environmental and infrastructural challenges.

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## TOP 8 REASONS TO AVOID DEVELOPMENT ON SLOPES GREATER THAN 30% IN VERNON COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Vernon County's topography includes steep slopes, which present numerous challenges and risks when considering development. 41% of the total land areas or 215,624 acres in Vernon County are slopes of 30% or more. Here are the top reasons why building on slopes over 30% should be avoided, supported by insights from planning experts:

### 1. Increased Risk of Soil Erosion

**Erosion Risks:** Steep slopes are prone to significant soil erosion during and after construction, which can lead to sedimentation in waterways and degraded soil quality. This impacts both the environment and nearby agricultural productivity (American Planning Association. (2015). Local Comprehensive Planning Framework. American Planning Association).

*Shannon Fenner* in the **Natural Resources Planning Guide** highlights that steep slopes are especially vulnerable to erosion, which is exacerbated by removing vegetation during development (Fenner, S. (2010). Natural Resources Planning Guide. University of Wisconsin-Extension).

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### 2. Landslide and Slope Stability Hazards

**Geotechnical Risks:** Development on steep slopes can destabilize the land, increasing the likelihood of landslides, especially in areas with heavy rainfall, like Vernon County (Haines, A. (2011). Land Use Resource Guide. University of Wisconsin-Extension).

The **American Planning Association (APA)** emphasizes the importance of avoiding steep slope development to reduce natural disaster risks (American Planning Association. (2015). Local Comprehensive Planning Framework).

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### 3. Stormwater Runoff and Flooding

**Excessive Runoff:** Construction on steep slopes increases stormwater runoff, contributing to downstream flooding. It also reduces the land's ability to absorb water, which can overwhelm local drainage systems.

*Anna Haines* in the **Land Use Resource Guide** notes that development on steep slopes disrupts natural hydrology, increasing flood risks for nearby low-lying areas. (Haines, A. (2011). Land Use Resource Guide. University of Wisconsin-Extension).

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### 4. Costly Infrastructure Challenges

**Expense of Construction:** Building on steep slopes requires specialized construction techniques, such as retaining walls and extensive grading, which significantly increase costs. Infrastructure maintenance, including roads and utilities, is also more expensive and challenging.

The **Wisconsin Department of Transportation** highlights that infrastructure on steep terrains often has higher maintenance costs and shorter lifespans. (Wisconsin Department of Transportation. (2017). Infrastructure Challenges in Steep Terrain: Costs and Maintenance Considerations.)

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## 5. Damage to Sensitive Ecosystems

**Habitat Destruction:** Steep slopes often host unique ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, and riparian zones, which are critical for biodiversity. Development disrupts these ecosystems, threatening local wildlife.

*Douglas Jackson-Smith* in **Planning for Agriculture in Wisconsin** stresses the role of steep slopes in maintaining ecological balance, including serving as natural buffers for waterways.

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## 6. Water Quality Degradation

**Sediment Pollution:** Soil erosion from steep slope construction increases sediment load in nearby streams and rivers, degrading water quality. This is particularly concerning for areas like Vernon County, where clean water is essential for agriculture and recreation.

The **Natural Resources Planning Guide** identifies steep slopes as critical areas for water protection and cautions against their disturbance (Fenner, S. (2010). *Natural Resources Planning Guide*. University of Wisconsin-Extension).

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## 7. Loss of Scenic and Cultural Value

**Aesthetic and Historical Significance:** Steep slopes contribute to Vernon County's scenic beauty and rural character. Development in these areas can mar the landscape and reduce the region's attractiveness for tourism and community identity.

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## 8. Reduced Safety for Residents

**Accessibility and Hazards:** Homes and roads on steep slopes are more vulnerable to weather extremes, including snow, ice, and heavy rain. Emergency access may also be more difficult, endangering residents.

The **APA Local Comprehensive Planning Framework** emphasizes that steep slope development increases risks during natural disasters and limits emergency response efficiency (American Planning Association. (2015). *Local Comprehensive Planning Framework*).

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## PLAN ADMINISTRATION

An effective planning program should be continually reviewed and updated to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. Resource information should be gathered and studied to determine trends and reevaluate projections, forecasts, and plans. In five years, the comprehensive plan should be reviewed in depth to make any necessary policy and recommendation changes in relation to the direction and character of community development at that time.

The plan is based on variables that are dynamic and whose future direction cannot always be accurately predicted. Accordingly, such variables as population and urban development characteristics should be periodically compared against the plan's assumptions and recommendations (at least every 10 years). The updating process should include gathering of most recent demographic information, updated building permit and land use data, analysis, and a public hearing before the County Planning Commission .

The advisory committee plays a very critical role in the planning process and must be alert to the opportunities and needs of the community, bringing such needs to the attention of the elected bodies or other agencies within the community having direct responsibility for public improvements. The appraisal of local needs and the continuing application of the planning principals set

forth herein will assure maximum benefits from the plan and will result in orderly and economical achievement of the goals which have been established in preparation of this plan.

Implementation depends upon both private and public action. Public action includes administration of the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, long-range financial programming, and the review by the County Planning Commission of proposals affecting the physical development of the community.

Administrative personnel and appointive boards and commissions will have a plan to guide them in decision-making. Close cooperation between the County and neighboring jurisdictions is essential to proper administration and effectuation of the plan. Coordination with other governmental jurisdictions and agencies is equally important to realization of planning goals.

The greatest number of decisions affecting local development are made by citizens through private actions. Thus, it is essential that the public understands and supports the plan. Through involvement of citizens in the development of the plan's goals and objectives, as well as additional input at various other stages of the planning process, it is the express intent of the plan to reflect the views of the community.

The effort expressed in the previous elements is the preparation of the comprehensive plan. The plan is the instrument that Vernon County will utilize to plan for and guide the growth and development over the next twenty years.

The comprehensive plan is considered to be a flexible guide to decision making rather than an inflexible blueprint for development. Amendments should be made only after a realistic evaluation of existing conditions and the potential impact of such a change is made. Amendments should not be made merely to accommodate the daily pressures of planning and/or government. It is important to recognize that planning is a process that should occur on a continuing basis if the community is to take advantage of new opportunities as conditions change.

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## PLAN ADOPTION

The first official action toward plan implementation is adoption of the plan document by the County Plan Commission. After the Plan Commission adopts the Plan by resolution, the County Board must adopt the plan by ordinance. This action formalizes the plan document as the current basic frame of reference for general development decisions over the next 20 years. The plan, thereby, becomes a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and for coordinating various individual decisions into a consistent set of actions to harmoniously shape the area's continued growth in the desired manner.

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## PLAN USE AND EVALUATION

Vernon County will base all of its land use decisions against this Plan's goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations, including decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions.

Although Vernon County is a community with a high growth rate expected over the life of this Plan, future conditions cannot always be accurately predicted. Accordingly, such variables as community character and transportation safety and mobility should be periodically compared against the Plan's assumptions and recommendations.

This Plan should be evaluated every two to three years to determine the progress toward implementing the Plan and identifying areas that need to be updated. A joint meeting of the County Board and County Planning Commission should be conducted every two to three years to perform the evaluation. The evaluation should consist of reviewing actions taken to implement the plan, including their successes, failures, and costs. It should also include an updated timetable of actions not yet taken and their projected costs.

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## PLAN AMENDMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan may be amended at any time by the County Board following the procedures set forth in Wisconsin Statutes § 66.0295(4). Amendments are generally defined as minor changes to the plan maps or text. Amendments may be needed for a variety of reasons including:

- Changes in goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations
- Unique opportunities presented by private development proposals
- Changes in programs and services
- Changes in state or federal laws

Any proposed amendments should be submitted to the Plan Commission for their review and recommendations prior to being considered by the County Board for final action.

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## PLAN UPDATE

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law requires that the comprehensive plan be updated at least once every 10 years. An update is different than an amendment because the update is often a substantial rewrite of the plan document and maps. In addition, on January 1, 2010, "any program or action that affects land use" must be consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans, including zoning and land division ordinances. The County should continue to monitor any changes to the language or interpretations of the State Law over the next several years.



## HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element is a compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs of the local governmental unit to provide an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the age, structural, value and occupancy characteristics of the local governmental unit's housing stock. The element shall also identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of housing for residents of the local governmental unit and provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of persons of all income levels and of all age groups and persons with special needs, policies and programs that promote the availability of land for the development or redevelopment of low-income and moderate-income housing, and policies and programs to maintain or rehabilitate the local governmental unit's existing housing stock.

## HOUSING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL I. ENCOURAGE THE AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING.

#### Objectives:

1. Collaborate with housing developers and nonprofit organizations, and employers to increase the supply of affordable housing, particularly in areas adjacent to existing development and employment opportunities.
2. Explore partnerships to develop employer-assisted housing programs that help employees access affordable housing near their workplaces.
3. Explore innovative housing solutions, such as tiny homes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), or co-housing developments.
4. Encourage the construction of mixed-income housing developments that include a range of housing types and price points to meet the needs of residents at all income levels.
5. Encourage young families to relocate by creating family-friendly, multi-family housing.

### GOAL II. RENOVATE HOUSING.

#### Objectives:

1. Explore an acquisition and demolition grant program to offset demolition costs for new residential or mixed-use development.
2. Preserve existing affordable housing stock by providing grants for the construction or renovation of affordable housing.
3. Explore a revolving loan fund to renovate existing affordable housing.
4. Explore partnerships with local contractors, builders, and community organizations to coordinate volunteer-driven home repair programs for low-income homeowners.

**Table 5.1 Vernon County Population and Population Projections**

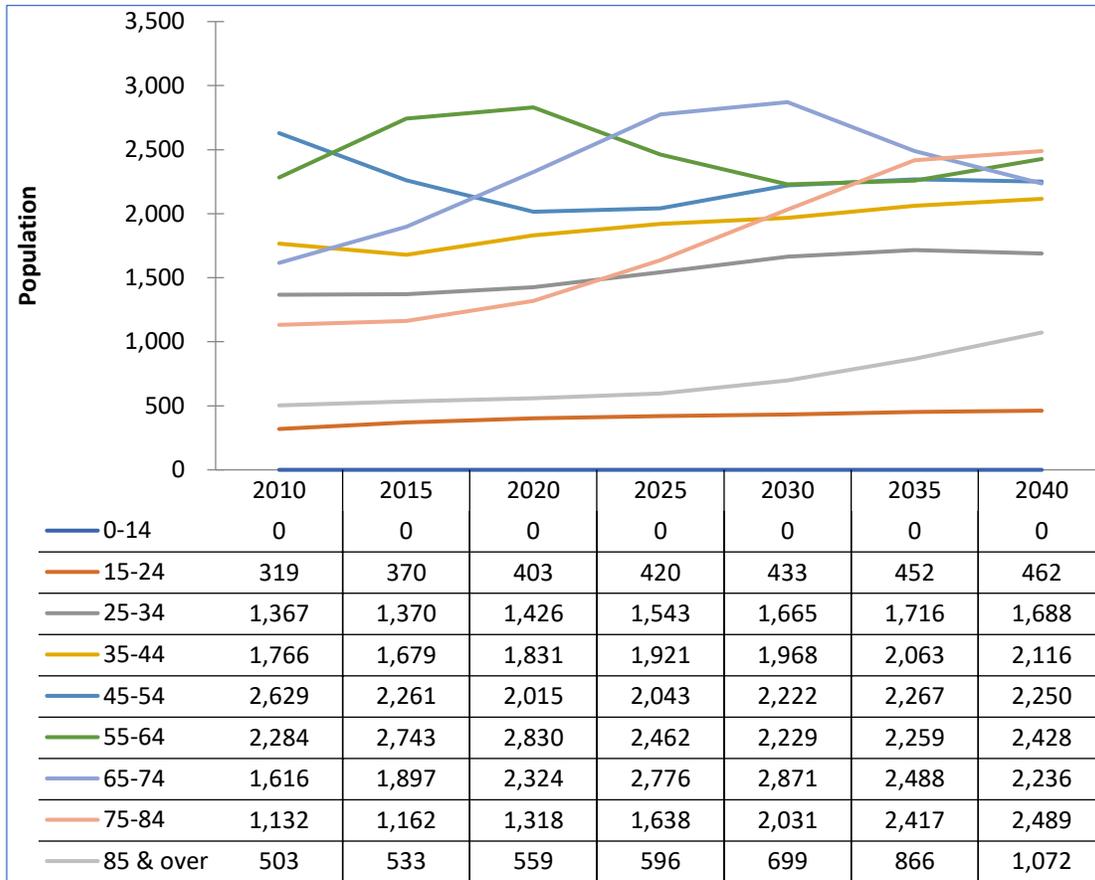
Municipality	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	% Change 2000 to 2020	% Change 2020 to 2040
Vernon County	28,056	29,773	30,714	35,300	36,150	9.5%	17.7%
Wisconsin	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718	6,375,910	6,491,635	9.9%	10.1%

Source: US Census (2000, 2010, 2020) and Wisconsin Department of Administration Population Estimates (2030, 2040)

The population in Vernon County has been steadily increasing over the past two decades, and Wisconsin has too. The County's population has increased by 9.5% from 2000-2020. **The population of the County is expected to increase by over 5,000 people in the next 20 years, representing a 17.7% increase. This is important when considering housing and development because it shows that the current housing stock is not enough to support the future of the County.**

The following is an analysis of the current housing situation in Vernon County. Information is provided to assist in addressing future housing needs and growth.

**Figure 5.1 Homeownership Projections by Age Group**



Source: Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, Household Projections, by County, by Age Group, 2010 – 2040

Projections for the age of householders predict a gradual increase in homeownership among most age groups. However, ages 45-54 see a decrease in ownership, mostly seen between 2010 and 2015. Ages 45 - 54 are then projected to stagnate in household ownership through 2040.

#### HOUSING UNITS BY TYPE AND YEAR BUILT

The following is an analysis of the current housing situation based on Census statistics. This information is provided to assist in addressing future housing needs and growth. From 2012 to 2022, the reported number of housing units increased from 13,728 to 13,874, an increase of 146 housing units – which represents only 1% growth.

**Table 5.2 Housing Units**

Year	Vernon County	Wisconsin	United States
2012	13,728	2,620,401	131,642,457
2022	13,874	2,770,355	140,943,613

Source: American Community Survey 2012 and 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table B25001 Housing Characteristics

Over 81.4% of Vernon County's housing units were single-family detached units. Wisconsin, and the United States all had much lower proportions of single-family units in their housing stock. This is to be expected, given Vernon County's predominantly rural and small-town character. There is also a substantial number of mobile homes in the County – 9.2% - which is much more than in Wisconsin and the United States. Less than 10% of housing units in the County are in other forms of multi-family housing.

**Table 5.3 Housing Structures by Type**

Units in Structure	Vernon County		Wisconsin		United States	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
1, detached	11,273	81.3	1,818,114	66.5	86,605,868	61.4
1, attached	121	0.9	116,442	4.3	8,571,185	6.1
2 units	250	1.8	168,357	6.2	4,847,079	3.4
3 or 4 units	242	1.7	96,643	3.5	6,091,696	4.3
5 to 9 units	170	1.2	133,649	4.9	6,457,529	4.6
10 to 19 units	234	1.7	96,680	3.5	6,105,384	4.3
20 or more units	299	2.2	218,065	8.0	13,974,253	9.9
Mobile home	1,271	9.2	85,538	3.1	8,130,605	5.8
Boat, RV, van, etc.	14	0.1	1,023	0.0	160,014	0.1
Total Structures	13,874	100%	2,734,511	100%	140,943,613	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics

**Table 5.4 Housing Structure by Year Built**

Year Built	Vernon County		Wisconsin		United States	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
2020 or later	62	0.4	9,984	0.4	786,526	0.6
2010 to 2019	923	6.7	165,816	6.1	11,588,494	8.2
2000 to 2009	1,846	13.3	333,032	12.2	19,083,462	13.5
1990 to 1999	1,583	11.4	365,107	13.4	18,596,006	13.2
1980 to 1989	1,303	9.4	263,915	9.7	18,543,631	13.2
1970 to 1979	1,794	12.9	394,115	14.4	20,613,893	14.6
1960 to 1969	911	6.6	262,836	9.6	14,351,071	10.2

1950 to 1959	879	6.3	287,354	10.5	13,899,414	9.9
1940 to 1949	908	6.5	147,777	5.4	6,504,604	4.6
1939 or earlier	3,665	26.4	504,575	18.5	16,976,512	12.0
Total Structures	13,874	100%	2,734,511	100%	140,943,613	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics

Over 25% of the County’s housing structures were built in 1939 or earlier. This is much higher than the State, or Nation. In Vernon County, 13.3% of the housing stock was built in from 2000 to 2009, and 12.9% from 1970 to 1979. In essence, Vernon County has many older homes and many newer homes, but fewer homes in between when compared to Wisconsin and the United States.

**MEDIAN HOUSING VALUE**

The median value of a home in Vernon County was \$192,800 which is \$38,600 less than the median value of homes in the state, and about \$89,100 less than the median value of homes in the United States.

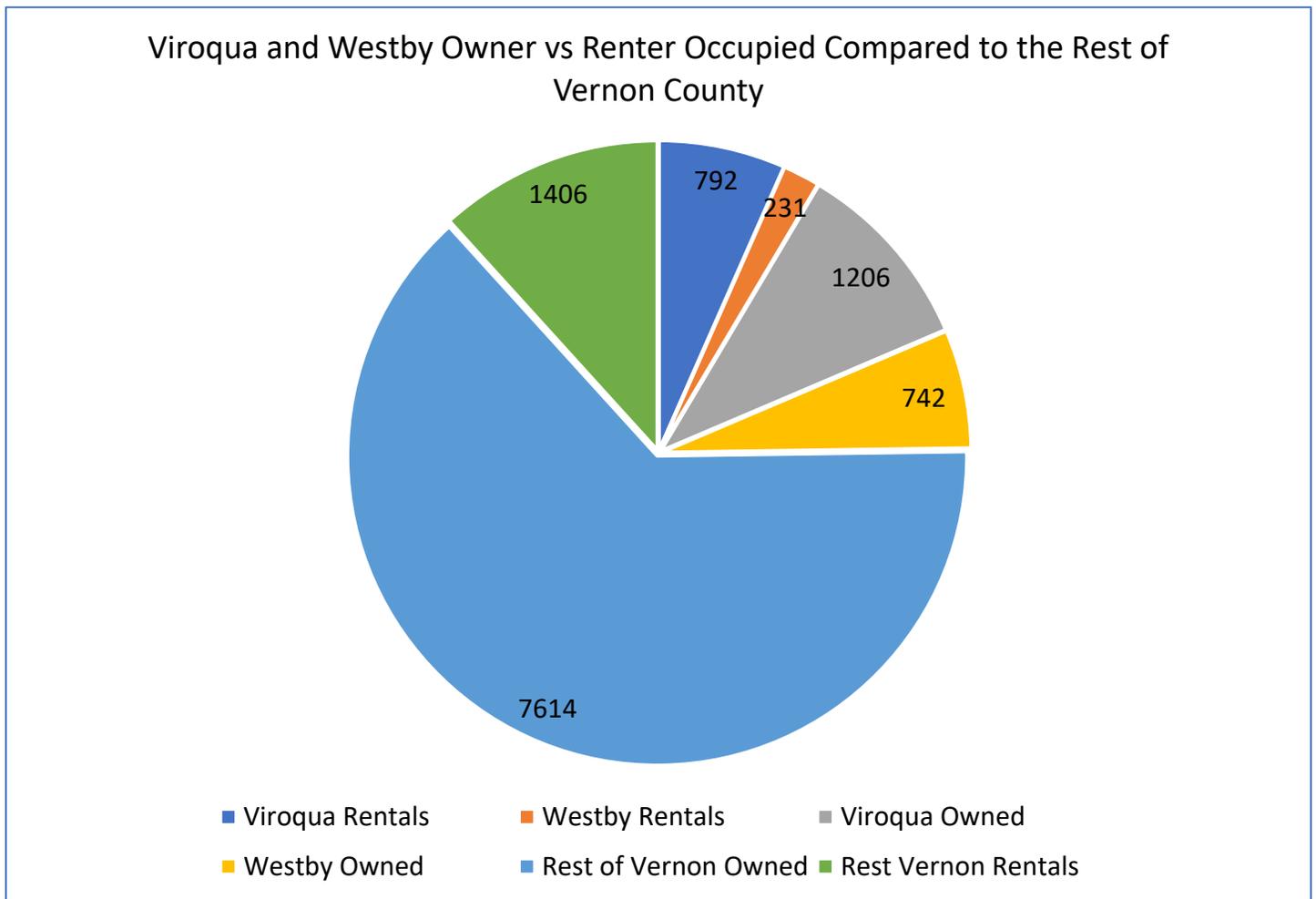
**Table 5.5 Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units**

Vernon County	Wisconsin	United States
\$192,800	\$231,400	\$281,900

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table B25077 Median Value (Dollars)

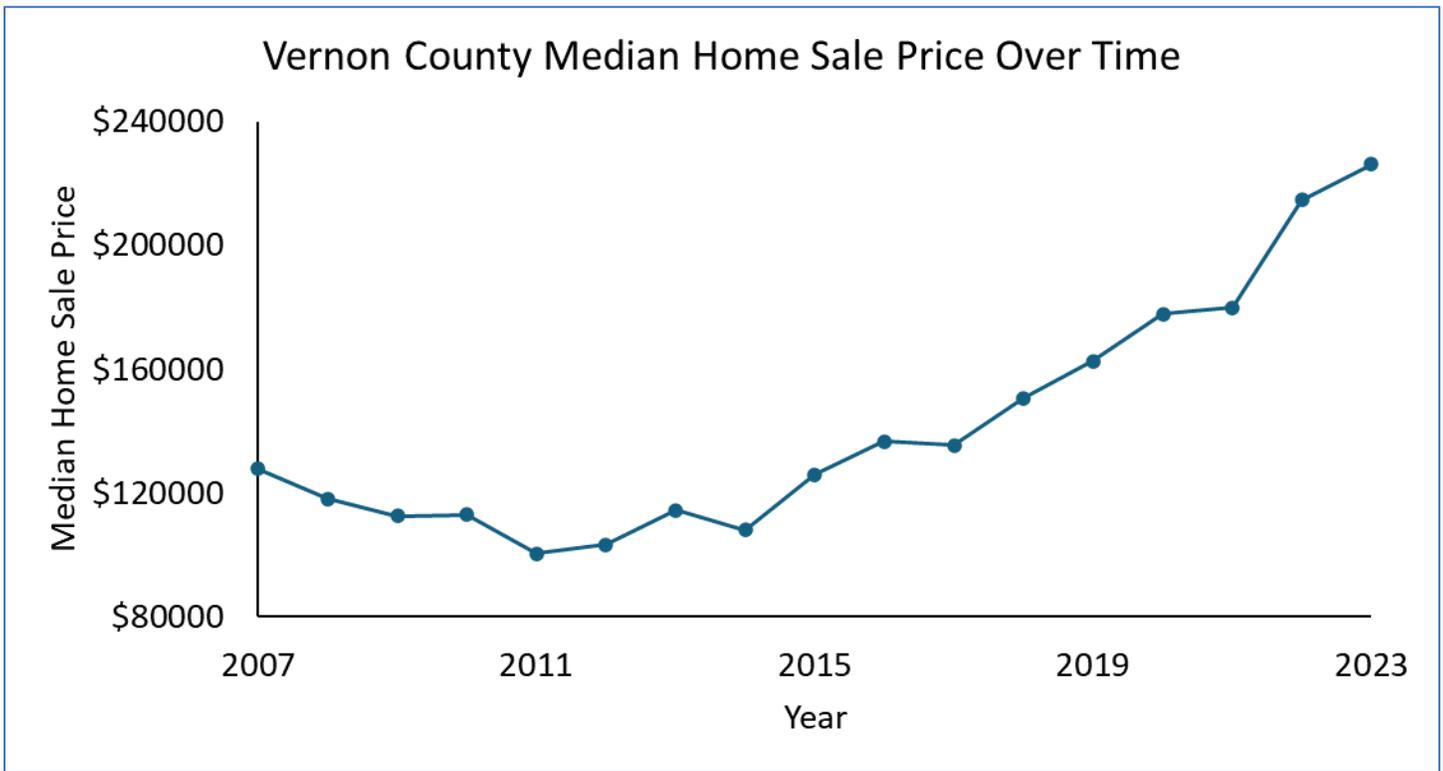
Throughout the United States, home prices have dramatically increased in recent years. Vernon County is no exception – with median home sale prices having soared from a recent low of about \$100,000 in 2011 to almost \$240,000 in 2023. However, the number of homes sold over the same time period increased rapidly from 2019 to 2020 until 2022 and 2023 when there were fewer homes sold than the high number in 2020 – but this represented a decrease to the pre-pandemic baseline, not a true decrease. Counterintuitively, as home prices have increased, so has the number of homes sold. There are many explanations to why this is the case, but it is important to remember that the recent rapid increase in home prices has not meant that fewer people are buying houses. Rather the contrary – more people are buying houses, and the prices of homes sold are increasing.

Figure 5.2 Viroqua and Westby Owner vs Renter Occupied Compared to the Rest of Vernon County.



Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics

Figure 5.3 Vernon County Median Home Sale Price Over Time



Source: Wisconsin Housing Statistics Provided by the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association

Figure 5.4 Vernon County Number of Home Sales Over Time.

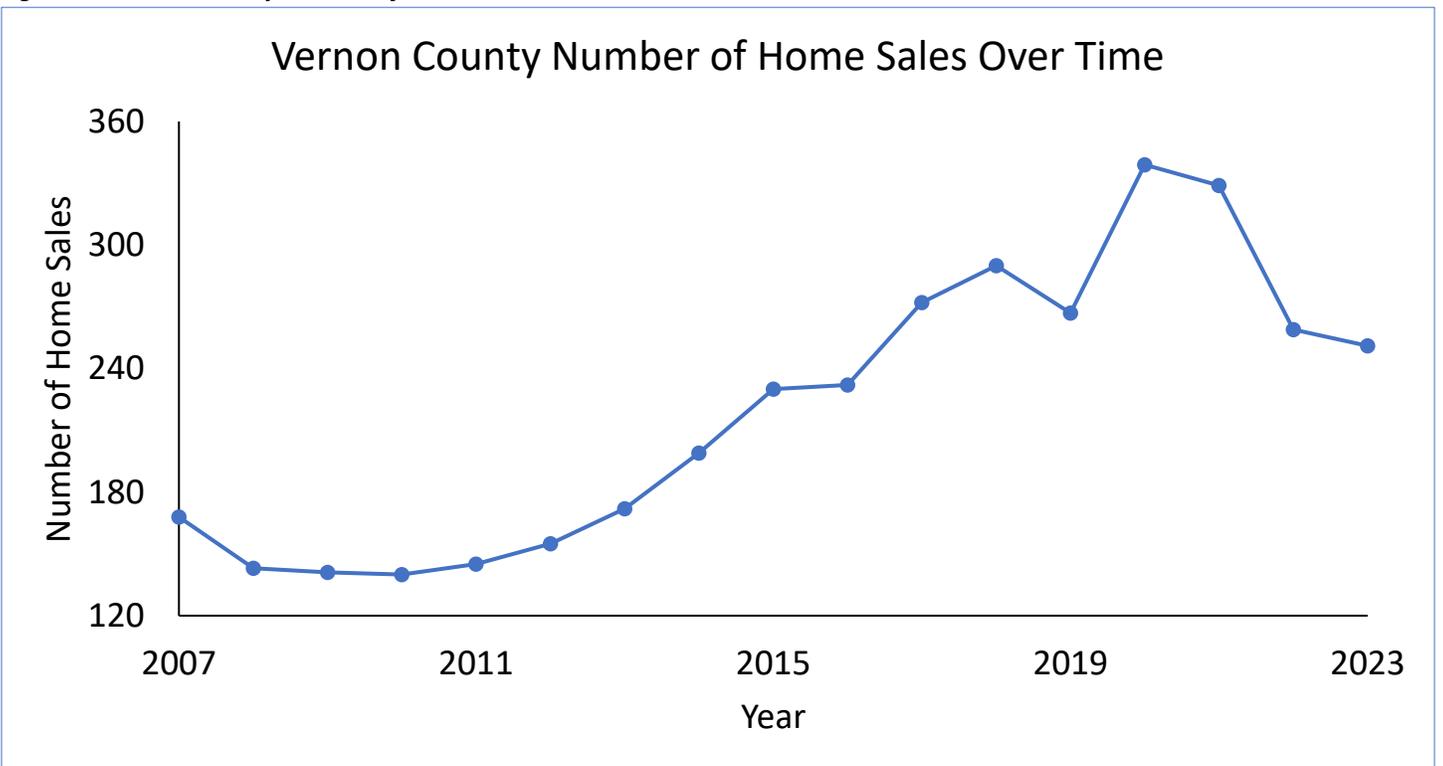
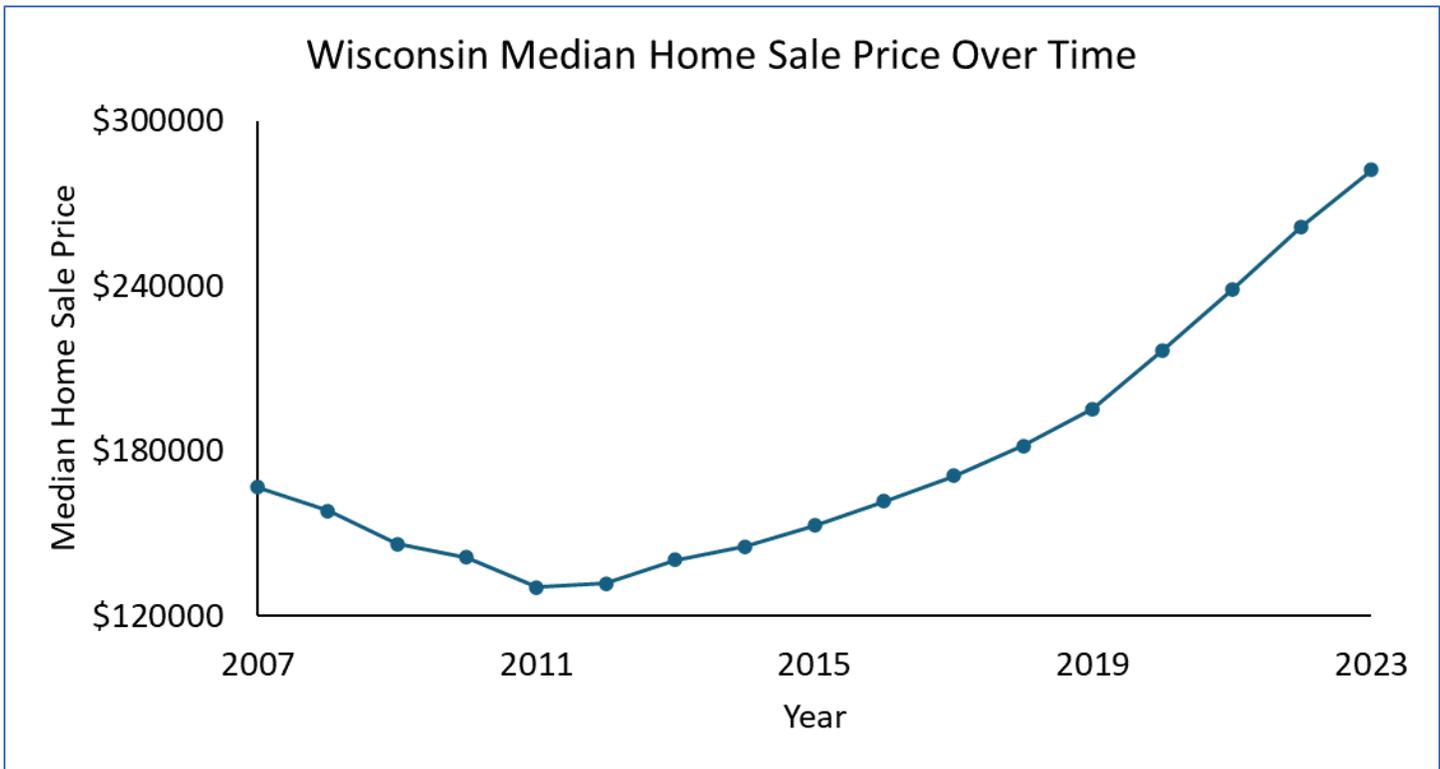


Figure 5.5 Wisconsin Median Home Sale Price Over Time



Source: Wisconsin Housing Statistics Provided by the Wisconsin REALTORS® Association

Figure 5.6 Wisconsin Number of Home Sales Over Time

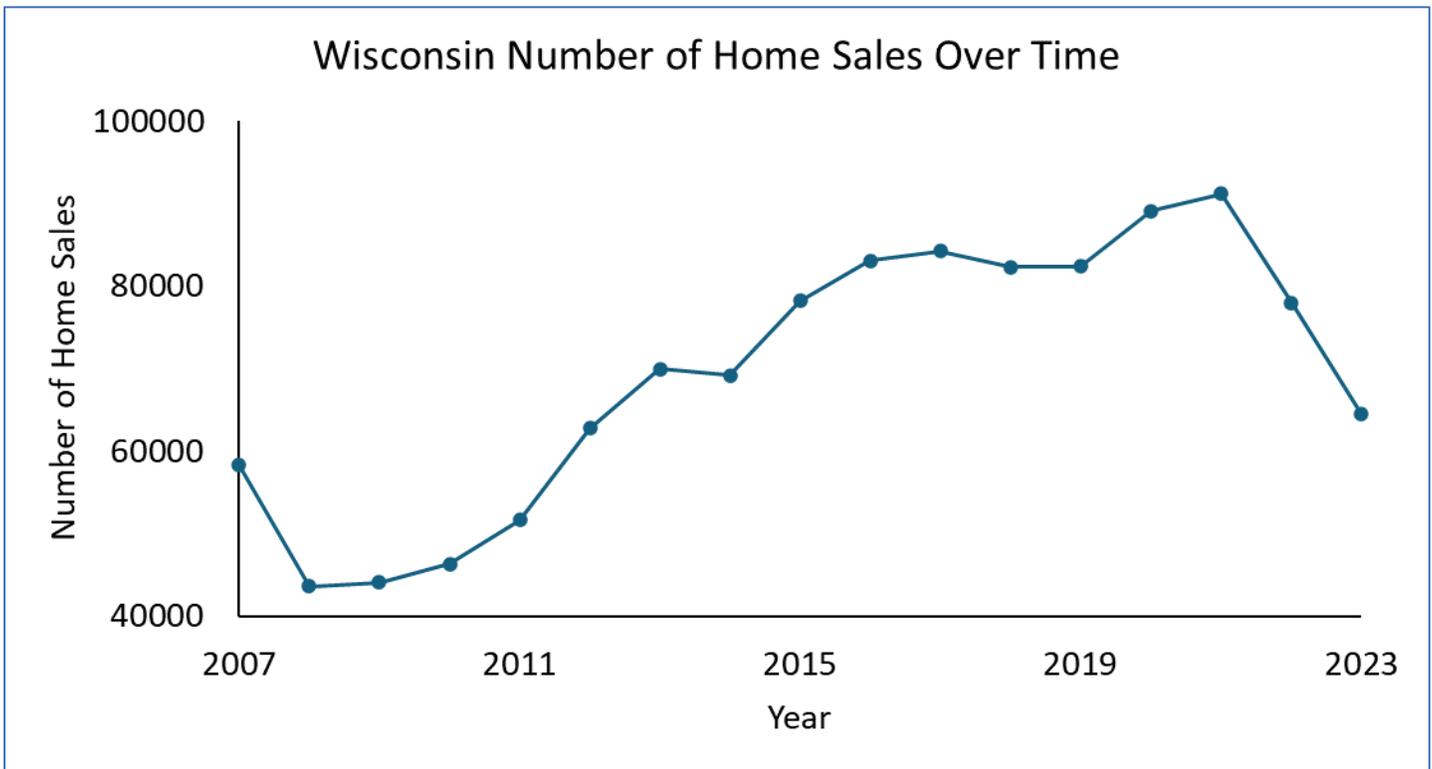
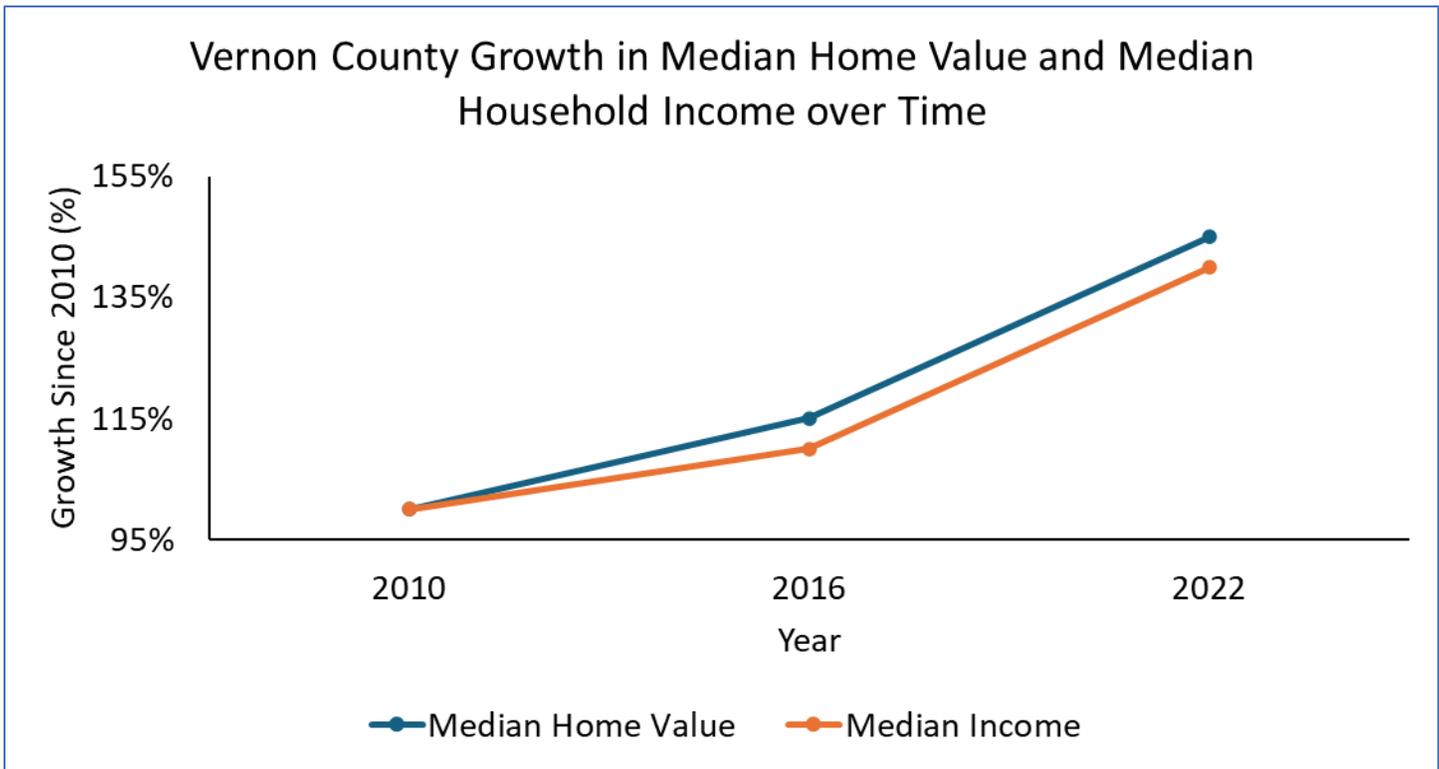
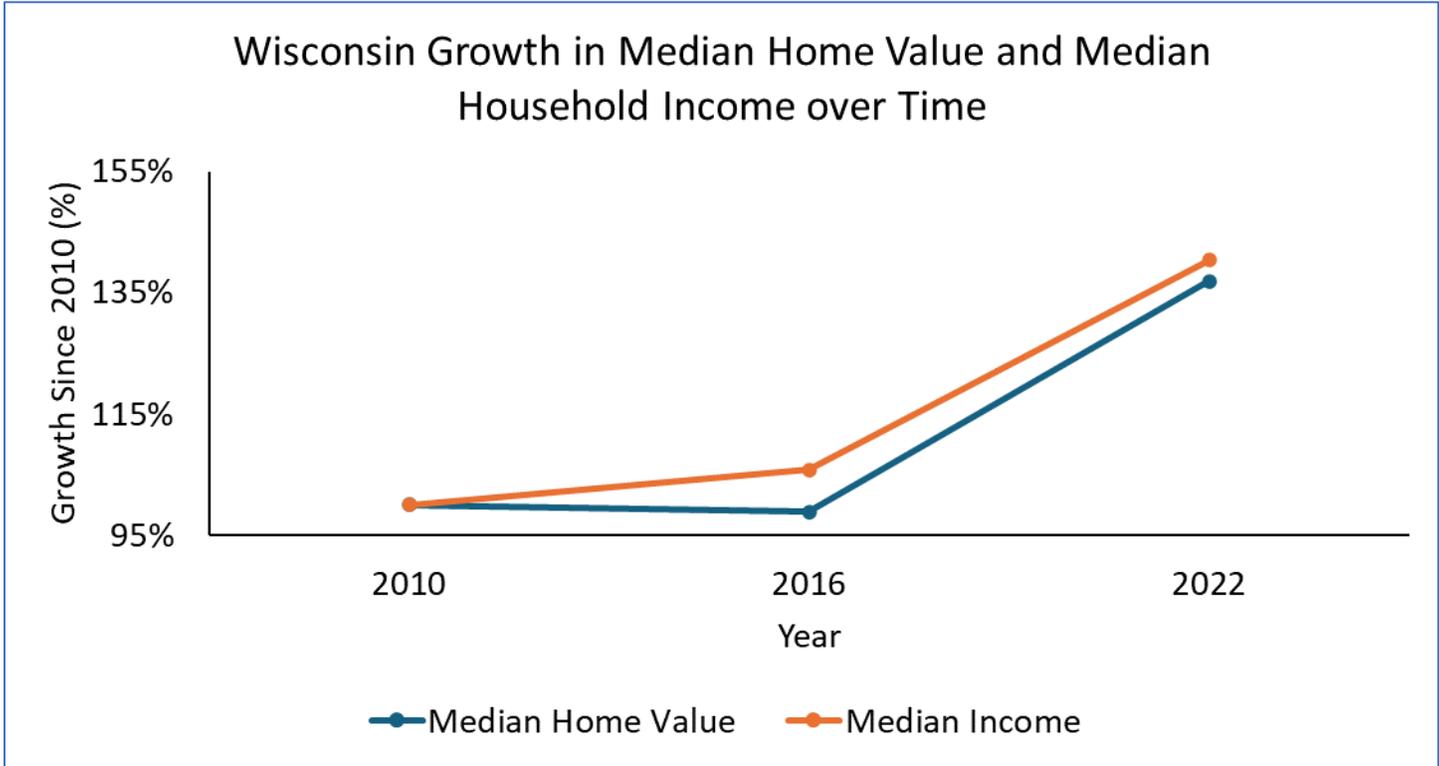


Figure 5.7 Vernon County Growth in Median Home Value and Median Household Income Over Time



Source: American Community Survey 2010, 2016, and 2022 5-Year Estimates

Figure 5.8 Wisconsin Growth in Median Home Value and Median Household Income Over Time



One potential explanation for this situation in Vernon County has been the precipitous rise in median incomes in recent years. In fact, growth in median household income in the County has slightly outpaced that of median home value. However, housing affordability overall in the County has decreased. This indicates a growth in the population of relatively affluent households who are purchasing

homes and driving prices higher, and the presence of a large population of people for whom home ownership is now untenable due to these increased prices. What Vernon County has experienced amounts to gentrification. Although gentrification is not typically associated with rural areas, it is not unheard of, especially in the post-pandemic world.

Wisconsin’s median home sale price follows a similar path to Vernon County’s. However, their number of home sales is plummeting. Even though Vernon County’s home sales are going down as well, they are much more stable than Wisconsin’s. Vernon County’s home sales have started to plateau out and make a recovery, while Wisconsin’s have shown no sign of recovering in the near future.

Since 2010, the median home value has grown faster than the median household income in Vernon County. The opposite of that is true for Wisconsin. Even though they are both growing at a steady rate, this may be something to take into consideration when having conversations about the cost of new housing.

### OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS, VACANCY RATES, YEAR MOVED IN

The County has a higher percentage of housing units occupied by owners than, Wisconsin, and the United States. 80.0% of housing units in the County are owner-occupied. Again, given the County’s rural nature, this is to be expected, as rural areas have higher rates of home ownership compared to urban areas. The 20% of housing units occupied by renters are chiefly concentrated in more urban areas of the County, chiefly the City of Viroqua.

**Table 5.8 Housing Occupancy Rates**

Occupancy Rate	Vernon County	Wisconsin	United States
Percent Owner Occupied	79.7	67.7	64.8
Percent Renter Occupied	20.3	32.3	35.2

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates - Table DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics

### AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

Affordability of housing is a major issue today. A cutoff of 30% of household income being spent on housing is a commonly given figure for what constitutes housing unaffordability. By this metric, 24.6% of households that own their home in Vernon County with a mortgage are under financial strain. For households that own their home without a mortgage, 15.3% of such households in the County pay more than 30% of their household income on housing. Households in Vernon County have a median income of \$65,177, which helps to mitigate the unaffordability of the housing market today. Affordability of housing is a huge issue for many communities today and it is important to take that into consideration while new development occurs.

Of the 2,013 households renting their home, 39.6% spent 30 percent or more of their income on housing. That is a high number, especially since the median income of the County is so high. One reason for this could be that there is a gap in the household incomes between high-income and low-income individuals, or a missing middle income. Another reason for the high amount of income being spent on rent could be the high prices of housing. As the price of housing goes up, people who cannot afford to buy a house or pay their taxes will have to rent. This will bring the rent prices up, and also results in lower income individuals renting instead of owning property.

**Table 5.9 Percent of Income Spent on Owner Occupied Units**

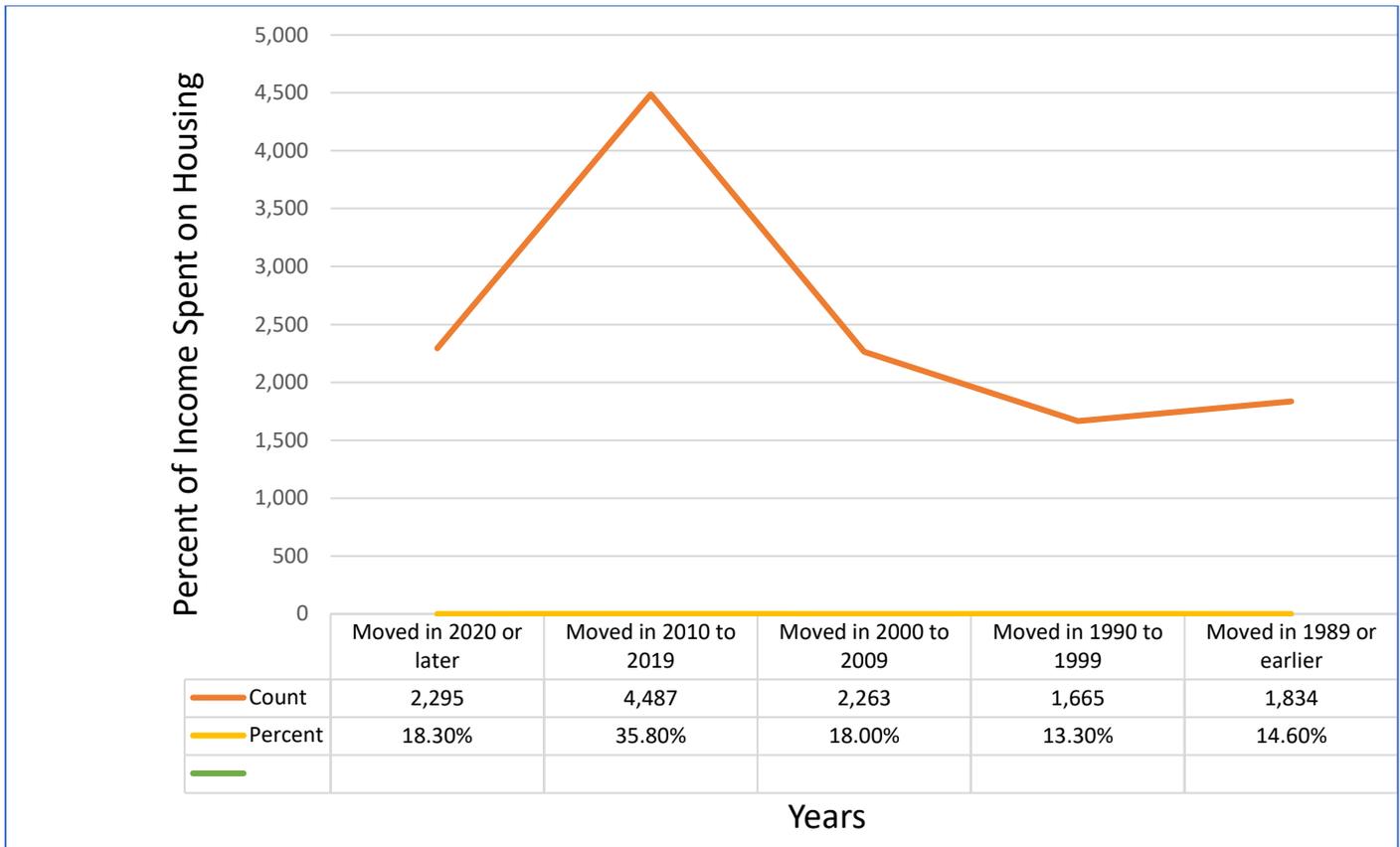
Category	Vernon County		Wisconsin		United States	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
<b>Housing units with a mortgage</b>	<b>5,081</b>		<b>1,017,354</b>		<b>49,912,138</b>	
Less than 20.0%	2,371	46.7%	528,660	52.0%	23,620,829	47.3%
20.0 to 24.9%	839	16.5%	162,298	16.0%	7,618,466	15.3%
25.0 to 29.9%	620	12.2%	102,424	10.1%	5,048,443	10.1%
30.0 to 34.9%	281	5.5%	59,541	5.9%	3,329,406	6.7%
35.0% or more	970	19.1%	164,431	16.2%	10,294,994	20.6%
<b>Housing units without a mortgage</b>	<b>4,396</b>		<b>614,099</b>		<b>30,916,280</b>	
Less than 10.0%	1,714	39.0%	262,563	42.8%	14,212,334	46.0%
10.0 to 14.9%	980	22.3%	133,307	21.7%	5,929,081	19.2%
15.0 to 19.9%	423	9.6%	74,875	12.2%	3,311,810	10.7%
20.0 to 24.9%	428	9.7%	42,389	6.9%	±11,079	6.5%
25.0 to 29.9%	178	4.0%	26,518	4.3%	1,275,790	4.1%
30.0 to 34.9%	113	2.6%	16,683	2.7%	859,097	2.8%
35.0% or more	560	12.7%	57,764	9.4%	3,332,496	10.8%

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics

**Table 5.10 Percent of Household Income Spent on Renter Occupied Units**

Percent of income	Vernon County		Wisconsin		United States	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than 15.0%	388	19.3%	125,593	17.0%	5,406,453	13.1%
15.0 to 19.9%	433	21.5%	111,119	15.1%	5,197,343	12.6%
20.0 to 24.9%	194	9.6%	99,206	13.4%	5,261,967	12.8%
25.0 to 29.9%	201	10.0%	83,777	11.4%	4,754,176	11.5%
30.0 to 34.9%	194	9.6%	61,749	8.4%	3,760,574	9.1%
35.0% or more	603	30.0%	256,234	34.7%	16,787,364	40.8%
Total units paying rent	2,013	100%	737,678	100%	41,167,877	100%

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics



**Figure 5.9 Percent of household income spent on housing from 2010 – 2022.**

Source: American Community Survey 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019, and 2022 5-Year Estimates, DP04 Selected Housing Characteristics

## HOUSING TENURE

Housing tenure, or how long residents have lived at their current residence, is a key factor for community planning. Higher housing tenure is associated with higher community cohesion, which in part encourages residents to stay. Comparing housing tenures between communities is of little use, due to how variable the character of a community may be. A college town with high community cohesion may have very low housing tenure due to college students occupying a substantial proportion of housing in the town and moving every few years. Therefore, comparing the same community over time makes more sense.

From 2020-2022, 18.3% of households moved into the County. That is a massive amount of households moving in, as the data is only taken two years after 2020. Other than 2010-2019, the last two years have more households moving in than any other whole decade. Vernon County is well on pace to outdo the previous highest amount of households moving in throughout the decade, which was the years of 2010-2019. The unusually high number of households who have recently moved in means a couple of things. The community cohesion is low within the community, but that is not always a bad thing. The County is growing at a fast rate and there is not enough housing stock for more people to move there, preventing growth in the County and the population. People want to live in the County but there will not be enough housing available to allow that to happen if households continue to move in at this rate.

**Table 5.11 Age of Householder by Percentage of Population**

Age of Householder	2010	2015	2020
--------------------	------	------	------

Under 35 years	16.90%	14.50%	14.90%
35 to 44 years	17.00%	14.60%	14.70%
45 to 54 years	22.10%	20.90%	15.80%
55 to 64 years	17.70%	21.20%	22.90%
65 to 74 years	12.80%	14.70%	17.40%
75 to 84 years	9.70%	10.20%	9.30%
85 years and over	3.70%	3.90%	4.90%

Source: American Community Survey 2010, 2015, 2020 5-Year Estimates - Table S2502 Demographic Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units

Since 2010, the majority of homeowners have gotten older. The largest householder age group has progressively shifted from 45 - 54 years old in 2010, 55 - 64 years old in 2015, and 55 - 64 in 2020. Age groups under 35 and 35 - 44 have seen a significant reduction in homeownership since 2010.

**Table 5.12 Householder Tenure by Percentage of Population**

Year Householder Moved In	Count	Percent
Moved in 2020 or later	2,295	18.30%
Moved in 2010 to 2019	4,487	35.80%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	2,263	18.00%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	1,665	13.30%
Moved in 1989 or earlier	1,834	14.60%

Source: American Community Survey 2022 1-Year Estimates - Table K202506 Year Householder Moved into Unit

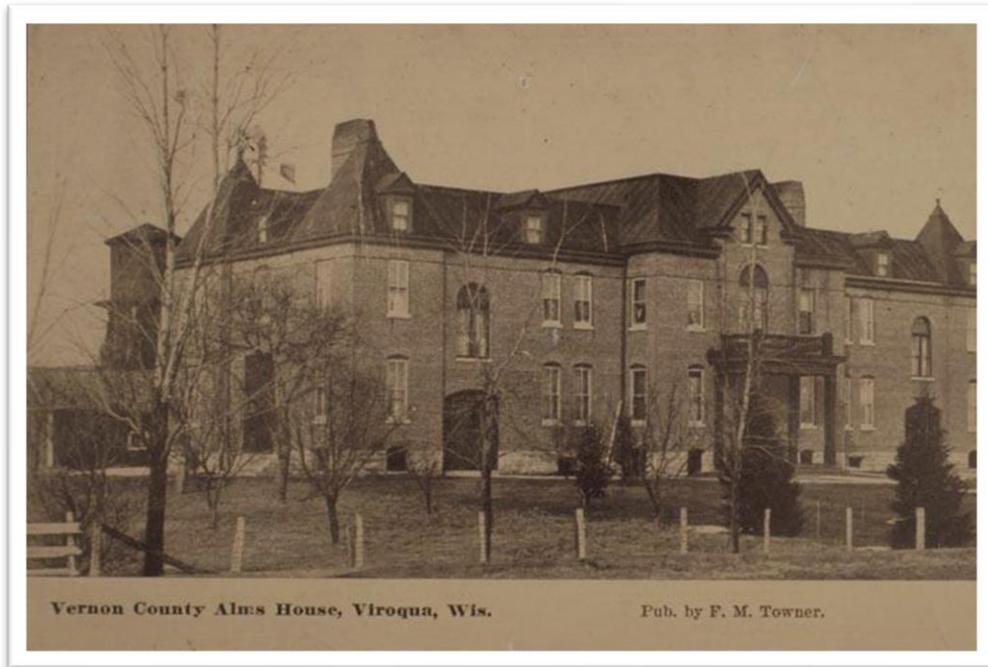


Figure 5.10 Photo of Alms House in Vernon County

## HOUSING COMMUNITIES

### CLUSTER AND CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS

Cluster and conservation subdivisions are smart ways to develop land that help protect open space, natural resources, and the rural feel of an area while still allowing for population growth. These subdivisions are designed to group homes close together in a small area, which leaves large portions of the land untouched and available for farming, recreation, or simply preserving nature.

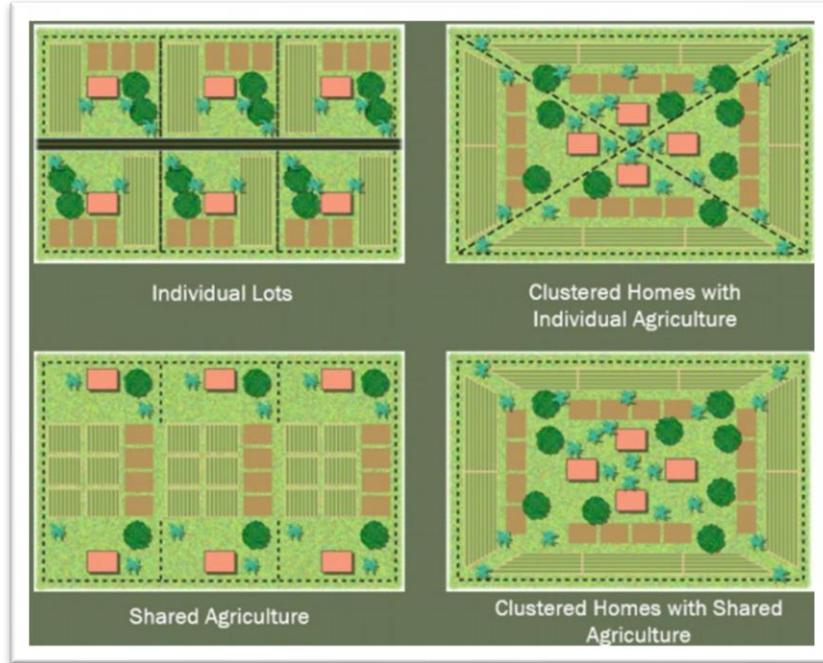
The main idea behind these subdivisions is to keep as much open space as possible. By clustering homes in a smaller area, the rest of the land can remain natural or be used for other purposes like agriculture. This approach not only helps protect the environment but also keeps the scenic beauty of the area intact.

There are also practical benefits to this type of development. Since homes are closer together, the roads and utility lines needed are shorter, which can reduce the cost of building and maintaining infrastructure. This can make housing more affordable and reduce ongoing expenses for the community. Additionally, these subdivisions often have a more attractive appearance because they blend well with the natural surroundings.

Living in a cluster subdivision can also create a stronger sense of community, as residents have access to shared green spaces, trails, and recreational areas. This setup encourages people to connect with each other and enjoy the natural environment around them.

In short, cluster and conservation subdivisions are a smart way to build neighborhoods that support population growth while protecting the environment. By grouping homes in one area and leaving the rest of the land open, these developments offer a balanced approach that benefits both people and nature (University of Wisconsin Madison).

Figure 5.11 Diagram of Clustered Homes



(Source: [www.Honolulu.gov](http://www.Honolulu.gov))

Figure 5.12 Aerial View of a Cluster Subdivision



(Source: [www.Cyburbia.org](http://www.Cyburbia.org))

## Conservation Community

A conservation community is a type of neighborhood designed to preserve nature while still providing housing for people. These communities are usually built around natural features like lakes, wetlands, or forests. They have fewer roads, and the ones that are there are used efficiently to reduce impact on the environment. Instead of large, spread-out lots, homes are built close together on smaller plots of land. This allows the rest of the area to remain as green space, parks, trails, or even agricultural land.

The goal of a conservation community is to protect as much of the natural environment as possible while still offering a place for people to live. These communities often include housing for people of all income levels, which helps create a diverse and inclusive environment.

While this type of community may not work everywhere, it has been very successful in some areas. A great example is Prairie Crossing, a conservation community that showcases how well this concept can work in practice. You can learn more about it at <https://prairiecrossing.com/>.

Figure 5.13 Plan View of Conservation Subdivision.



Source: <https://prairiecrossing.com>

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## URBAN INFILL DEVELOPMENTS

Urban infill and compact development aim to increase the number of available housing units within an already developed area while minimizing the expansion of the city's boundaries. By utilizing unused or underutilized spaces, this approach helps reduce urban sprawl, protect open spaces and agricultural land, and promote walkability.

Infill development focuses on repurposing existing properties, such as garages, porches, yards, and other neglected areas, to create more housing units. This strategy not only makes better use of the land but also enhances the vibrancy and functionality of urban neighborhoods. Cities often offer incentives to encourage property owners and developers to engage in infill development. These incentives can include tax breaks, grants, and relaxed zoning regulations, making it more financially viable to develop these underutilized spaces.

By maximizing the potential of existing developed areas, infill development supports sustainable growth and addresses housing shortages without the need for further expansion into undeveloped land. This approach aligns with broader urban planning goals of creating more livable, efficient, and environmentally friendly cities.

Developing within existing development leverages existing infrastructure like roads, water lines, and sewer systems, reducing the need for new infrastructure development, which can be costly. According to Smart Growth America, maintaining and extending infrastructure to new, sprawling developments is significantly more expensive than making use of existing infrastructure.

Infill development can increase the tax base without increasing the costs associated with expanding city limits. More housing and businesses within the same footprint led to higher property tax revenues without the proportional increase in infrastructure and service costs.

Finally, infill development often targets blighted or underused areas, leading to economic revitalization. The redevelopment can attract businesses and residents back into already developed areas with a few , boosting local economies and increasing property values.

## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Missing middle housing refers to all clustered housing in between single detached family homes and mid-rise apartment buildings. This includes duplexes, fourplexes, courtyards, multiplex units, and live-work units. These house-scale buildings fit seamlessly into existing residential neighborhoods and support walkability, locally serving retail, and public transportation options. They provide solutions along a spectrum of affordability to address the mismatch between the available U.S. housing stock and shifting demographics combined with the growing demand for walkability ([missingmiddlehousing.com](http://missingmiddlehousing.com)). This type of housing promotes affordability, sustainability, and provides many housing options.



**Figure 5.14 Missing middle housing examples and definitions.**

*Source: City of Arlington, Virginia – Missing Middle Housing Study*



## TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The transportation element provides a baseline for Vernon County transportation facilities and capabilities. This section outlines information on specific topics required under Wisconsin SS66.1001, such as highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric scooters, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking, and water transportation.

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### GOAL I. IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE ROADS FOR ALL USERS.

#### Objectives:

1. Improve and maintain existing roadways to ensure safety and efficiency for all modes of transportation.
2. Work with regional transportation planners to ensure that the County's transportation network integrates with broader regional systems.
3. Develop infrastructure to promote alternative modes of transportation and connect key destinations.
4. Encourage development of multi-use infrastructure, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared-use trails to improve connectivity between residential areas, commercial centers, and recreational destinations.
5. Implement best management practices (BMP) and design standards that minimize environmental impacts, such as wildlife crossings, green infrastructure, and vegetative buffers along transportation corridors when they are repaved or reconstructed.
6. Explore and encourage solutions for road maintenance.

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### GOAL II. ENHANCE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES.

#### Objectives:

1. Enhance public transportation services, including fixed-route bus services, paratransit services, and demand-responsive transportation options.
2. Expand transportation assistance programs, such as discounted fares or subsidized transportation vouchers to improve accessibility and affordability for vulnerable populations.

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## PUBLIC ROAD AND SERVICES INVENTORY

Vernon County participates in the State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) program. The WISLR program maintains a complete listing of public roads in Vernon County by jurisdiction, classification, and number of miles.

**Table 6.1 Road Inventory**

Road Type	All Miles
Private	28.79
U.S. Highway	35.91
City/Village	134.26
State Highway	164.42
County Road	286.91
Town	1091.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1740.29</b>

Public roads are classified as arterial, collector and local based on functionality. Arterials provide intra-community links and interconnect urban arterial systems and connections to rural collectors. Collector roads provide traffic circulation in residential neighborhoods and in commercial and industrial areas. Collectors also focus traffic from local roads onto the arterial system. Local roads provide the lowest level of mobility and provide direct access to collectors and arterials. The Map below illustrates Vernon County transportation system.

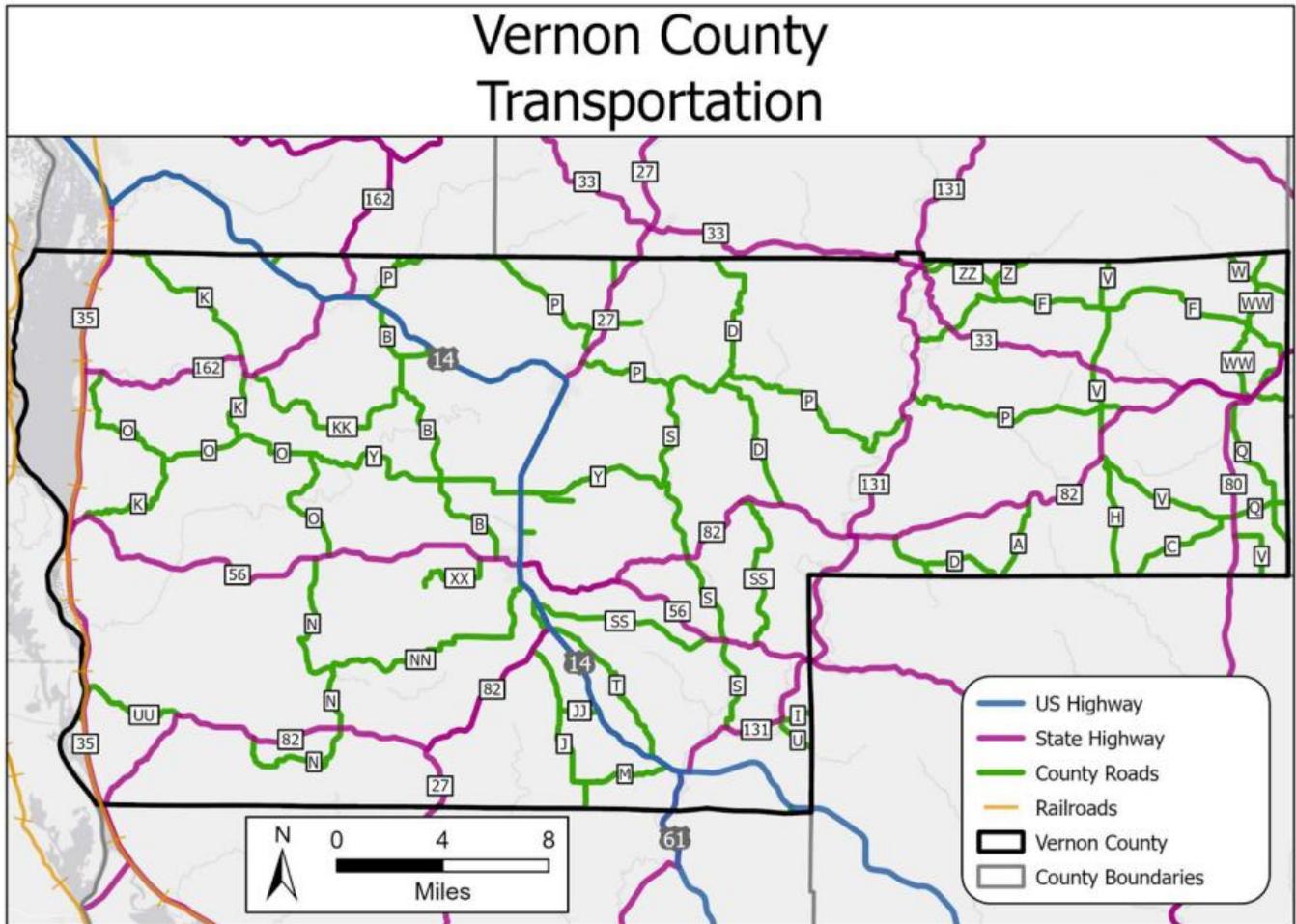


Figure 6.1 Vernon County Road Network

### Traffic Counts

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) has seen small increases in some areas but overall are in decline. Due to changes in WisDOT's methodology and data reporting over the period, the accuracy of this data may differ between time periods. These changes are represented in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2 Traffic Counts AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic)**

Location	2007	2013	2019
USH 14/USH 61/STH 27 BTWN HIGHLAND & OLD TOWN RD WESTBY	12,700	9,100	9,800
USH 14/USH 61 BTWN CTH GG & VAN RD - HPMS	5,200	5,000	4800
USH 14/USH 61 BTWN STH 27/STH 82 & BROOKVILLE RD VIROQUA TNSHP - HPMS	4000	4200	3800
USH 14/USH 61/STH 27 S OF CTH Y VIROQUA TNSHP	9600	12,500	10,900
STH 131 BTWN CTH P EAST & DUTCH HOLLOW RD WHITESTOWN TNSHP	620	560	740
STH 33 0.8 MI E OF CTH F - WILDCAT MT	380	430	520
STH 80 BTWN CTH EE & CTH V TO THE EAST GREENWOOD TNSHP	1600	1300	1300
Total	34,100	33,090	31,860

Source: <https://wisdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2e12a4f051de4ea9bc865ec6393731f8>

### Interstate Highways

There are no interstate highways in Vernon County.

### Highways

State Highway 35 and the Mississippi River create the western terminus of Vernon County running the length of the County north to south. State Highway 162 passes through the northwestern corner of Vernon County connecting Stoddard, Chaseburg, and Coon Valley. US Highway 14 southwest from the northeast corner connecting Coon Valley, Westby, Viroqua, and Readstown. State Highways 56, 82, and 27 run west to east through Vernon County. State Highway 162 travels between the Village of Coon Valley and the Village of Bangor (Interstate 90 exit) and intersects State Highway 16 north of Vernon County. Other highways in the county include Highways 131, 80, and 33.

### Non-Driving Population

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WISDOT) defines the non-driving population as “can include aging adults, students, low-income individuals, those with physical, mental or intellectual/developmental disabilities, those ineligible to drive, those with no access to a vehicle, or those who prefer not to drive.” WISDOT estimates the percentage of “non-drivers” varies across the county with numbers as high as 30% in more densely populated urban areas to around 10% in more rural townships.

### Amish Horse and Buggy

Vernon County, Wisconsin, is home to a vibrant Amish community that preserves a traditional way of life, including the use of horse and buggy transportation. Along the scenic roads and countryside of Vernon County, it is common to encounter Amish families traveling in horse-drawn buggies, a charming and timeless sight that harkens back to simpler times.

The Amish community in Vernon County adheres to a traditional lifestyle that eschews modern conveniences such as cars and electricity. Instead, they rely on horse-drawn buggies as their primary mode of transportation for traveling to nearby farms, markets, and community gatherings. This mode of transportation not only reflects the Amish commitment to simplicity and sustainability but also adds to the rural charm and scenic beauty of Vernon County.

Encounters with Amish horse and buggy traffic are a common occurrence for residents and visitors alike in Vernon County, adding to the area's unique cultural tapestry and providing a glimpse into a bygone era. As these buggies clip-clop along the county's picturesque roads, they serve as a reminder of the enduring traditions and values of the Amish community and contribute to the rich heritage of Vernon County.

### **Intercity Bus Service**

Vernon County is served by the Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit SMRT (<https://ridesmrt.com/>). With three routes daily servicing stops in several Vernon County Communities. This system services popular destinations in La Crosse Wisconsin including both Mayo and Gundersen healthcare, the UW and Tech School. The SMRT Bus provides access to other transit systems originating from La Crosse including national bus and passenger train service. The ADRC also schedules some fixed routes (See Para Transit).



### **Para Transit**

The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Vernon County operates a transit service both in the County and to surrounding Counties.

In addition to scheduling their own vehicles, the Vernon County ADRC can connect riders with other service providers in the region. ADRC services County residents that are either disabled, 60 years or older, or otherwise unable to utilize conventional transportation means.

The Vernon County Veteran Service also facilitates transit for veterans in the County.

### **Taxis**

There are several "listed" taxi providers serving various communities in the County. Service originating in La Crosse and other communities outside the County may also be available.

### **Freight Rail Service**

BNSF does have a line running North and South through the county with limited access. Most terminal access would be in La Crosse.



### **Passenger Rail Service**

While not in Vernon County, Intercity passenger rail is available through Amtrak service in the City of La Crosse. The Amtrak Empire Builder serves La Crosse, with regional connections to Chicago, Milwaukee, Columbus, Portage, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, Winona, Red Wing, and St. Paul. The Empire Builder also connects to the West Coast (Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR). Through a connection in Chicago, the national Amtrak network is available. The passenger rail station is located at 601 St. Andrew Street in the City of La Crosse, WI.

WisDOT has been studying ways in which Wisconsin's intercity passenger rail system could be expanded and developed into a more robust component of the state's overall transportation system. WisDOT, along with Amtrak and eight other Midwestern state DOTs, is currently evaluating the Midwest Regional Rail System, a proposed 3,000-mile, Chicago-based passenger rail network in the Midwest. The regional rail system would provide 6 round trips at peak times between Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, La Crosse, and St. Paul. Modern trains operating at peak speeds of up to 110-mph could produce travel times competitive with driving or flying.

### **Airports**

Viroqua Municipal Airport, (FAA LID: Y51) is a city owned public use airport located 2 miles north of the central business district of Viroqua, Wisconsin. It is included in the Federal Aviation Administration National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems for 2021–2025, in which it is categorized as a local general aviation facility. There are no regularly scheduled commercial passenger or freight flights in or out of the facility. The La Crosse Regional Airport is approximately 50 miles from Viroqua and has both regularly scheduled commercial passenger and freight flights daily. The airport is designated as an Air Carrier/Cargo Airport. Airports of this classification are designed to accommodate all aircraft and, in some cases, wide body jets and military transports. The La Crosse Municipal Airport

is one of 10 such airports in Wisconsin. The airport provides commercial air and freight service. Commercial air service is provided year-round by American Airlines.

### **Water Transportation**

The proximity to the Mississippi River and the ports of both La Crosse and Prairie du Chein, make Vernon County an integral part of the shipping of agricultural, energy, and construction materials. The nearest water transportation is located at the Port of La Crosse, in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The Port of La Crosse serves ingoing and outgoing barge traffic on the Mississippi River. It provides water access for freight through public and private terminals. Cargo primarily shipped by barge in the region include liquid bulk cargo, e.g., chemicals and petroleum and dry bulk cargo, e.g., grain and scrap metal.



Port of La Crosse

### **Trucking**

Truck transportation for hauling consumer goods is an important part of the regional, state, and national economy. Vernon County has substantial manufacturing, retail, service, and the exponentially increasing ship to home transit needs. In addition to seasonal crops and livestock to daily milk, eggs, and dairy, agriculture plays a significant role in the freight transit business in the County. Trucking in Vernon County primarily takes place on State Highway 162 and Interstate-90. The trucking of local goods (non-metallic minerals, agricultural products), for the most part takes place on county roads. In the spring of each year, road bans are placed on local roads limiting the weight of products hauled due to the weight capacity of local roads during the Spring thaw.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails**

Vernon County is home to several Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails serving a variety of parks, communities, recreational, and public transit routes. The County maintains a list on its website and County Map of bike trails is maintained by the state. The Mississippi River Bike trail is also in the County.

Vernon County's Parks and Forests take full advantage of the area's rugged landscapes. Sidie Hollow Park, Jersey Valley Park, and Runge Hollow Recreation Area include small lakes in valleys with steep, forested hillsides surrounding them. Duck Egg and Kooyumjian-Lost Creek are county forest properties offering natural scenic vistas, public fishing and hunting, and several miles of hiking trails. The La Crosse River State Bicycle Trail traverses Vernon County for approximately 5 miles. The trail is 21.5 miles in total length connecting to the Great River State Trail and the Sparta-Elroy State Trail. In addition, over 35 miles of low volume, hard surface local roads are located in Vernon County. These local roads provide residents and tourists with biking and walking opportunities.



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## **STATE AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS**

WisDOT undertakes planning efforts that will shape the future of Wisconsin's multimodal transportation system. These plans work together to ensure development of an integrated multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state in a way that enhances economic productivity, transportation accessibility, and the quality of Wisconsin's communities while minimizing impacts to the natural environment and socioeconomic, historic, and cultural resources.

The following transportation plans were reviewed as part of Vernon County planning process. The plans were reviewed to ensure consistency with other governing jurisdictions with regard to the future transportation improvements.

**Active Transportation Plan 2050 (not yet adopted)**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is currently working on the Wisconsin Active Transportation Plan 2050 (ATP). In early August, WisDOT will hold six virtual open houses to talk about the ATP and hear what goals and visions people throughout Wisconsin have for walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation. For more information, go to <https://www.wisdotplans.gov/announcement-pages/attend-your-regions-atp-open-house>.

The ATP will be a statewide long-range plan focused on human-powered modes of transportation, such as bicycling and walking. This plan will evaluate active transportation opportunities and needs, resulting in policies and actions that will align with and further Connect 2050, Wisconsin’s statewide long-range transportation plan.

**Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030**

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 and its accompanying System-Plan Environmental Evaluation (SEE) is the statewide long-range airport transportation plan. The 20-year plan builds off the policies and issues identified in Connections 2030; Wisconsin’s statewide long-range transportation plan adopted in October 2009. Wisconsin’s State Airport System Plan identifies a system of 97 public-use airports adequate to meet different aviation needs in all parts of the state and is a guide for federal and state investment decisions.

**Wisconsin State Freight Plan**

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has updated and adopted the 2023 State Freight Plan (SFP). The SFP was first developed in 2018 and serves as a long-range multimodal plan that addresses the state's freight transportation needs and provides a vision for WisDOT’s freight program for the next eight years.

**Connect 2050**

WisDOT undertakes planning efforts that will shape the future of Wisconsin’s multimodal transportation system. The plans work together to ensure development of an integrated multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state in a way that enhances economic productivity, transportation accessibility, and the quality of Wisconsin's communities while minimizing impacts to the natural environment and socioeconomic, historic, and cultural resources.

**Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050**

Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050 is the statewide long-range rail transportation plan. Wisconsin Rail Plan 2050 focuses on freight rail, rail crossing safety, and passenger rail, through the year 2050. The Rail Plan supports WisDOT's vision for Wisconsin’s transportation system, as identified in Connect 2050.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) envisions an integrated multimodal transportation system that maximizes the safe and efficient movement of people and products throughout the state, enhancing economic productivity and the quality of Wisconsin’s communities while minimizing impacts to the natural environment.

## UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

This element provides a baseline assessment of Vernon County utility and community facilities and contains information required under SS66.1001. This information includes forecasted utility and community facility needs and existing conditions. This provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future development and maintenance of utility and community facilities in Vernon County.

### GOAL I. ENSURE EFFECTIVE COUNTY PROTECTIVE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES.

Objectives:

1. Develop, update, and maintain comprehensive emergency response plans, including evacuation plans, sheltering plans, Hazard Mitigation Plan, and continuity of operations plans to ensure readiness and resilience in the face of various emergencies and disasters.
2. Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions and mutual aid partners to develop and implement coordinated emergency response plans and protocols for multi-agency response scenarios.

### GOAL II. PROMOTE DIVERSE ENERGY RESOURCES.

Objectives:

1. Encourage development and use of renewable energy resources.
2. Explore technologies that could offset the amount of energy used by county facilities and properties such as, solar, wind, and geothermal.

#### Utilities Serving Vernon County

**Table 7.1 Utilities**

Name	Address	City
<b>La Farge Municipal Utilities</b>	105 West Main St.	La Farge
<b>Midwest Natural Gas Company</b>	106 West State St.	Westby
<b>Municipal Water Utility</b>	108 Roosevelt St.	Coon Valley
<b>Vernon Electric Cooperative</b>	110 Saugstad Rd.	Westby
<b>Viroqua Gas Company</b>	526 East Decker St.	Viroqua
<b>Westby Utilities</b>	200 North Main St.	Westby
<b>Xcel Energy</b>	706 East Linton St.	Viroqua

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## RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

### Geothermal

Geothermal energy is collected by using heat produced from the earth. There are multiple ways to use geothermal products, one of them being for energy. When trying to collect energy, holes are usually dug deep into the ground or wherever hot water can be found within the earth. Water can be pumped down those holes through pipes, which then gets converted to steam once the hot part of the earth is reached. Steam can be converted into energy and used for power. Another way, which is more popular, is geothermal heating and cooling. In this process, water is pumped into the ground as well. It usually goes a few feet underground and runs through the dirt in a grid layout. The water is then pumped into a geothermal heating and cooling system which uses the water to heat and cool air. In the summer months, the ground is cooler than the air, helping to cool the building. In the winter months, the ground is much warmer than the outside air, assisting with heating of the air in the building. According to EcoHomes, a geothermal pump can save a homeowner around 50% on their heating and cooling bill and pay for itself in 10-20 years. Geothermal Heating and cooling can be done almost anywhere and in any kind of building, but geothermal energy is typically used in areas with more volcanic activity to be more cost effective (energy.gov).

### Solar



Solar power has become increasingly accessible for those interested in utilizing it as an energy source. Solar panels, commonly installed on rooftops or in yards, capture sunlight and convert it into electricity to power homes. In North America, panels are typically positioned on south-facing roofs to maximize exposure to direct sunlight. During the summer months, when sunlight is more abundant, the energy collected often exceeds household consumption. This surplus can be transferred back to the grid, benefiting other homes in the community. Solar panels significantly reduce electricity bills, sometimes eliminating them entirely in the summer. According to Solar Reviews, the initial investment in solar panels is typically recouped within 5 to 15 years, while GreenBiz reports that the panels have a lifespan of 30 to 40 years. In addition to cost savings, solar panels reduce carbon emissions and provide a sustainable, renewable energy source.

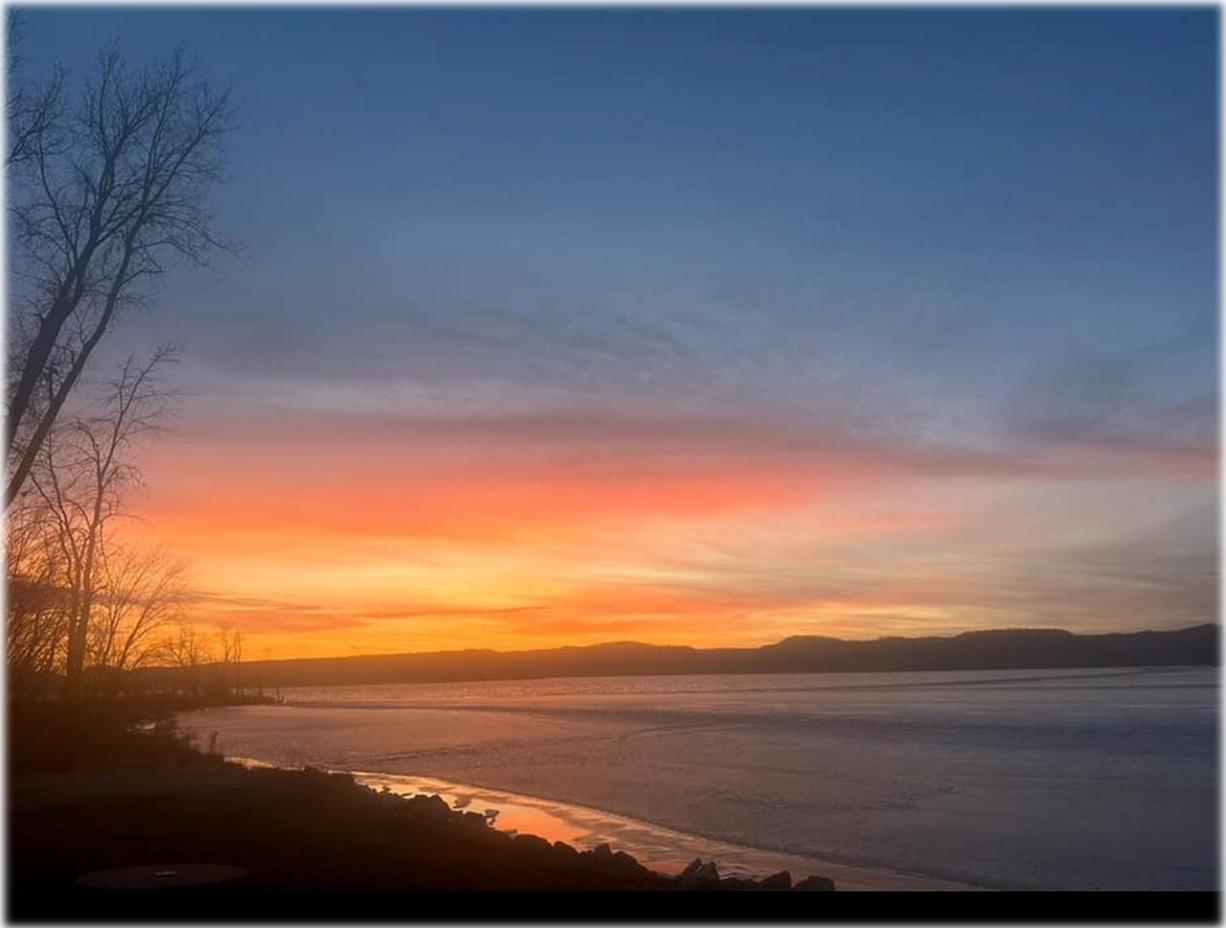
### Wind

Wind energy is harnessed through wind turbines, which are typically installed in large open fields, often numbering in the hundreds. Ideal locations for these turbines are expansive areas without windbreaks, making the Midwest a prime region due to its consistently strong winds and vast undeveloped landscapes. In recent years, wind turbines have also been installed offshore along the east and west coasts of the United States. The coastal areas are particularly suitable for wind energy because the temperature differences between land and large bodies of water create continuous air movement, optimizing the turbines' efficiency.

Wind energy is recognized as one of the most efficient renewable energy sources and can also be implemented on a smaller scale, such as at the edge of agricultural fields. While the initial investment in wind turbines is significant, the long-term energy savings make them a financially viable option over time. However, wind turbines do present some challenges. One concern is their impact on bird populations, particularly in the Midwest, where many species migrate. Birds may collide with turbines during their seasonal migrations. Additionally, some view wind turbines as aesthetically unappealing, although others believe they can enhance the rural landscape (technia.us).

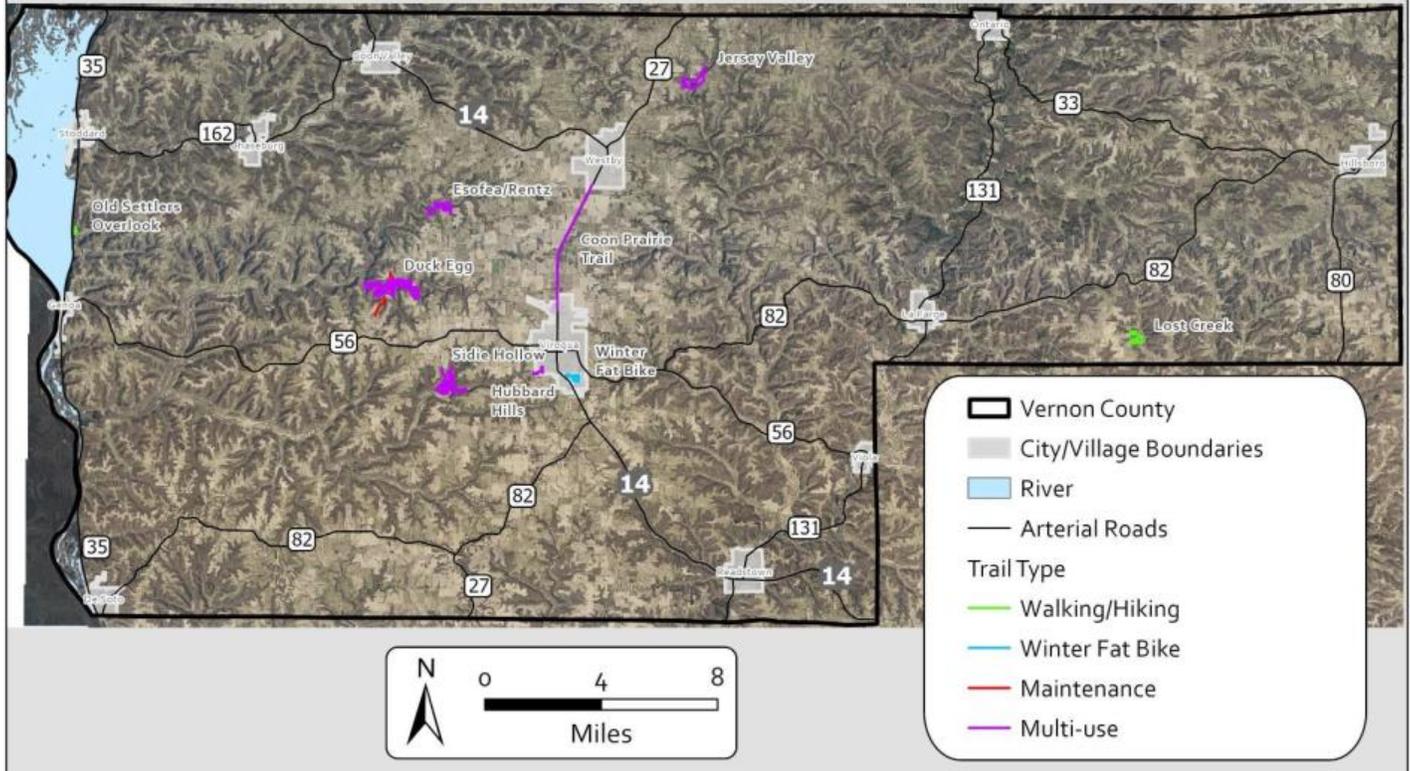


Windmills in Vernon County



Stoddard Boat Landing Photo credit: Alli Kagel

# Vernon County Trails



## VERNON COUNTY TRAILS

### **Pedestrian, Bicycling, and Shared-use Trails (Walking, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, Equestrian, Birdwatching, etc.)**

Vernon County is home to several shared use trail networks serving a variety of parks, communities, recreational, and public transit routes. The County maintains a list on its website and County Map of shared-use trails is maintained by the state. The Mississippi River Bike trail is also in the County.

Vernon County's Parks and Forests take full advantage of the area's rugged landscapes. Sidie Hollow Park, Jersey Valley Park, and Runge Hollow Recreation Area include small lakes in valleys with steep, forested hillsides surrounding them. Duck Egg and Kooyumjian-Lost Creek are county forest properties offering natural scenic vistas, public fishing and hunting, and several miles of hiking trails. The La Crosse River State Bicycle Trail traverses Vernon County for approximately 5 miles. The trail is 21.5 miles in total length connecting to the Great River State Trail and the Sparta-Elroy State Trail. In addition, over 35 miles of low volume, hard surface local roads are located in Vernon County. These local roads provide residents and tourists with biking and walking opportunities.

### **County Parks**

Vernon County operates four county operated public parks; Esofea / Rentz Memorial Park, Sidie Hollow Park, Jersey Valley Park, and Blackhawk County Park. These parks comprise 1,800 acres of park land and forest land, containing more than 31 miles of multi-use trail offering a multitude of leisure time pursuits. Popular activities within the Vernon County Parks System include camping, horseback riding, swimming, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, snowshoeing, picnicking, or visiting one of our fabulous scenic overlooks.

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### **AVALANCHE PARK**

Avalanche County Park is a 30-acre property acquired in 2017. Centrally located in Vernon County at the intersection of Hwy Y and S. It has 0.5 miles of mowed trail which leads to the West fork of the Kickapoo River. There is 1,350 ft of river which has abundant amounts of Brown Trout. This property is in the initial stages of a native grass buffer along the stream. There are 2 parking spots along with an informational Kiosk with a map of the property.

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### **BLACKHAWK PARK**

Blackhawk Park is a small county-owned property located 2 miles north of the Village of De Soto. The park is 2 acres in size and has 500' of Mississippi River Frontage. There is a public boat launch with trailer parking, a fully stocked store and bait shop, 11 campsites and 37 boat slips that are rented on a seasonal or short-term basis.



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### **DUCK EGG COUNTY FOREST**

Duck Egg County Forest is a 707-acre county owned; nature-based recreation property located approximately 9 miles west of Viroqua on Irish Ridge Road. The Duck Egg property is bisected by a large, deep valley formed by the Springville Branch of the Bad Axe River. In the center of the valley is an exceptionally large flood control dam structure that was completed in 1990. The dam protects many acres of property and several roads and bridges downstream from the effects of flash flooding, a common occurrence in Vernon County. Duck Egg is open to public fishing and hunting per State of Wisconsin fishing and hunting regulations and seasons. The Springville Branch of the Bad Axe River is a great trout stream. The length of river (about 1.5 miles) downstream of the dam has been improved for trout habitat by the Wisconsin DNR fisheries crew. Upstream of the dam is not improved, but still provides some excellent trout fishing opportunities.

Duck Egg is suitable for hiking and horseback riding, with more than 10 miles of signed and maintained multi-use trail. Hiking is allowed on the horseback riding trail; however, mountain biking is not allowed per the Vernon County Parks Ordinance. ATV's, dirt bikes and other motorized vehicles are NOT allowed on the Duck Egg property under any circumstances.

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### **ESOFEA/RENTZ MEMORIAL PARK**

Esofea/Rentz Memorial Park is Vernon County's oldest and most historic park. Situated on 148 acres in the Town of Jefferson, Esofea Park has 16 rustic sites, 2 electric and water sites, and 10 full hookup RV sites – advance reservations require a two-night minimum. Esofea has more than 3 miles of shared-use trails, a picnic shelter, a spring trout pond (stocked each spring by WI DNR with rainbow trout), large open areas for softball or kickball or volleyball, and a section of the North Fork Bad Axe River running through the property.



The picnic pavilion is a popular location for birthday and graduation parties, family reunions, and occasional weddings. There is a “kitchen” complete with an oven/range, refrigerator/freezer and a long table that is great for potluck type servings. The pavilion is equipped with picnic tables, benches, and lights. There is a fire ring nearby for evening gatherings.

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### **JERSEY VALLEY PARK**

Jersey Valley is a 371-acre county park formed by a flood control dam and manmade lake that was completed in the late 1960's. Since that time, Jersey Valley Lake has been a popular recreation destination for residents and visitors. In 2018, the Jersey Valley Dam failed when auxiliary spillways could not keep up with the heavy rains. Repairs to this dam are being considered, leaving lake levels, fishing, and recreation opportunities at Jersey Valley paling in comparison to pre-2018 flood conditions. Hunting is open Oct 15th through April 15th; all state of Wisconsin hunting and fishing regulations and seasons apply. There are 3.1 miles of shared-use trails available for hiking and biking.



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### **KOORYUMJIAN/LOST CREEK COUNTY FOREST**

Kooyumjian/Lost Creek County Forest is a 120-acre property located about midway between the Vernon County communities of LaFarge and Hillsboro on Pine Avenue off State Hwy 82. There is a fenced parking area with public access for hunting, fishing, and hiking. State of Wisconsin hunting and fishing regulations and seasons apply. There is a trout stream on the property, the upper reaches of the Pine River, which has been improved for habitat. The valley floor is a natural wet prairie grassland with abundant species of native grasses, sedges, and wildflowers.



The Kooyumjian-Lost Creek property was donated to Vernon County on August 26, 2002, by Thomas and Edith Kooyumjian. The Kooyumjians' desire in donating the property to Vernon County was to provide a site for owners and prospective owners of 28 property to get direct experience in the various aspects of tree planting, weed control and pruning. They also wanted people to understand the need for sound woodland management. It was the Kooyumjians' wish to assure the continued management of the forested land and the protection of other natural resources on the property. In their agreement with Vernon County, the Kooyumjians specified the property be used for woodland management, education, research, and demonstration.

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### **RUNGE HOLLOW RECREATION AREA**

Most of the land in the Runge Hollow vicinity is private property so visitors are asked to please respect landowners' rights when recreating in this area. Vernon County has recently executed a recreation easement with the Christianson family. The easement area includes the dam and much of the eastern shore of Runge Hollow Lake. The west and north shores, and the northeast shore remain private land and access is not allowed without permission from the affected landowners. The lake is approximately 44 acres in size, and is home to trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, and perch. An accessible fishing pier is located near the boat launch. Vernon County Parks manages the boat launch and fishing pier. The lake is open to public fishing; however, the surrounding lands are NOT open to public hunting. Motorboats are not allowed and only electric trolling motors are allowed.

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### **SIDIE HOLLOW COUNTY PARK**

Sidie Hollow is a beautiful park with 521 acres, 74 campsites, 2 picnic shelters, and a 38-acre lake. There are two clear and cold-water trout streams, fishing piers, a boat launch, nearly 10 miles of shared-use, hiking and mountain bike trails and two playground areas. Sidie Hollow has proven to be a recreation destination for residents and visitors of Vernon County.



Sidie Hollow County Park originated in the 1960's when Vernon County acquired land for the purpose of building a large flood retention dam designed to protect downstream farms and properties from the devastating effects of flash flooding in the Bad Axe River Valley. Once the dam was completed, the county sold the land back to the State of Wisconsin but retained a permanent recreation easement on the property so that it could be enjoyed as a county park.

Sidie Hollow is a popular campground. There is mix of rustic tent sites with no utilities, electric sites, and full hookup RV sites. Advance reservations require a two-night minimum. The streams that feed Sidie Hollow Lake and the lake itself provide great fishing opportunities. Game fish species include brown trout, brook trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, perch, and crappies in abundance. The park is 3 miles from the City of Viroqua, and 30 minutes from the south side of La Crosse.

**VIROQUA-WESTBY TRAIL AND WAYSIDE PARK**

In 2011, Vernon County gained ownership of a county park, called Wayside Park, as part of a four-lane highway expansion project between the communities of Viroqua and Westby. A new multiuse trail, originally called the Coon Prairie Trail, now known as the Viroqua – Westby Trail is a 10’ wide, paved asphalt path connects the communities of Viroqua and Westby, and at the same time provides a place for residents and visitors to recreate and exercise. The path provides transportation choices for people who commute between Viroqua and Westby.



The Coon Prairie Trail is a scenic path between Westby and Viroqua in Vernon County. The paved trail is 5.5 miles long, 10 feet wide, and in excellent condition. It runs adjacent to the four-lane U.S. Highway 14, so traffic noise is commonly heard from the trail. Several moderate hills are found along the route, which may challenge some leisure cyclists.

The trail’s name comes from the large rolling prairie that sits high above neighboring valleys. This includes Coon Valley to the northwest, which today is home to Coon Creek. Norwegian immigrants came here in the late 1840s, settling throughout Coon Prairie. This area is part of the Driftless Region, meaning it was untouched by ancient glaciers. The landscape features rolling prairies, high ridges, and deep valleys or coulees.

**KICKAPOO VALLEY RESERVE**

The intent of the Reserve is to conserve, restore, and maintain the ecology and biodiversity of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, while balancing access and recreation for visitors. Approximately 8,569 acres, the Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR) is owned by the State of Wisconsin and Bureau of Indian Affairs - in Trust for the Ho-Chunk Nation and managed by the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002. In 1996, federal legislation directed the US Army Corps of Engineers to transfer up to 1,200 acres to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in trust for the Ho-Chunk Nation and the remaining 7,369 acres to the State of Wisconsin. Ownership transfer was completed December 28, 2000.



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES EASEMENTS AND PROPERTIES**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural resources is in charge of 32 properties and maintains easements for fishing access in numerous locations throughout the County. Map 17 shows easements, recreational resources, state parks, and community amenities managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

**Table 7.2 Vernon County Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Managed Properties**

	Property Name
1.	Coon Creek Fishery Area

2.	La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area
3.	Elk Creek
4.	Bishop Branch Creek
5.	Rainbow Springs
6.	Maple Dale Creek
7.	West Fork Kickapoo River
8.	Rush Creek Streambank Protection Area
10.	Champion Valley Timber Demo Forest
11.	Scattered Forest Land
12.	Statewide Wildlife Habitat
13.	Hillsboro State Trail
14.	Wildcat Mountain State Park
15.	Battle Bluff Prairie State Natural Area
16.	Bergen Bluffs State Natural Area
17.	Romance Prairie State Natural Area
18.	Rush Creek Natural Area
19.	Coon Creek Fishery Area
20.	La Crosse Area Comprehensive Fishery Area
21.	Elk Creek
22.	Melancthon Creek
23.	Coon Creek
24.	Seas Branch Creek
25.	West Fork Kickapoo River
26.	Rush Creek Streambank Protection Area
27.	Streambank Easement Program
28.	Streambank Easement Program
29.	Streambank Protection Fee Program
30.	Scattered Forest Land

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## STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).** The WDNR has jurisdiction over the waterways in Vernon County and delegates floodplain and shoreland regulation to the Vernon County Zoning and Sanitation Department.

### **Wisconsin Department of Transportation**

Vernon County participates in the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR) program. The WISLR program maintains a complete listing of public roads in Vernon County by jurisdiction, classification, and number of miles. This program assists in the facilitation of State funding for county road maintenance. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Vernon County has minimal interaction with federal agencies. In the event of a natural disaster (flooding, tornado, etc.) FEMA would be the federal agency to assist in relief efforts. The county recognizes this and has participated in the development of the Vernon County All Hazards Mitigation Plan.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service operates the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Vernon County. It is one of 72 federal hatcheries managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The location was selected because of its proximity to the Mississippi River and its reliable source of broodfish and artesian well water, both of which are used to raise fish and fill ponds. The station raises more than 15 species of fish and 15 species of mussels as well as one dragonfly and one salamander species.

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates Lock and Dam #8 in Genoa, as well as Blackhawk Park a few miles north of Genoa.

### **Kickapoo Valley Reserve**

The intent of the Reserve is to conserve, restore, and maintain the ecology and biodiversity of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, while balancing access and recreation for visitors. Approximately 8,569 acres, the Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR) is owned by the State of Wisconsin and Bureau of Indian Affairs - in Trust for the Ho-Chunk Nation and managed by the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board and was designated a State Natural Area in 2002. In 1996, federal legislation directed the US Army Corps of Engineers to transfer up to 1,200 acres to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in trust for the Ho-Chunk Nation and the remaining 7,369 acres to the State of Wisconsin. Ownership transfer was completed December 28, 2000.

### **Regional Planning Commission**

Vernon County and La Crosse County are located in the service region of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission represents nine counties in western Wisconsin: Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Monroe, La Crosse, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and Vernon. The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission maintains the region's eligibility as an Economic Development District and is eligible for Economic Development Administration funding. They also provide planning and development assistance to local governments including comprehensive planning and zoning assistance, economic development assistance, geographic information system mapping, and grant writing.

### **Comprehensive Planning**

Vernon County does not have an adopted, Comprehensive Plan.

Wisconsin **Counties Association (WTA)** Vernon County is a member of the Wisconsin Counties Association (WTA). The WTA is a non-profit, non-partisan association of member town and village governments. Their mission is to empower and support their members through education, legal guidance, and legislative advocacy to enhance leadership in their communities.

### School Districts

The Desoto, Hillsboro, Kickapoo, La Farge, Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton, Viroqua, Westby, school districts serve Vernon County. A variety of education grants and funding opportunities are available to the county from the federal government. During the planning process no intergovernmental conflicts or planning concerns were identified with the school districts.

### Agriculture

Vernon County's landscape is defined by extensive agricultural fields and deciduous forests. The relationship between agriculture and the topography has profoundly shaped the county's growth and development. While central Vernon County has the highest concentration of agricultural land, it is evident throughout the entire region. Agricultural crops commonly grown in Vernon County today include forage, corn, and soybeans. Statistics from the 2012 and 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture show the following agricultural trends in Vernon County:

- The number of farms was 1,961 in 2017, which was a 12% decrease from 2012. The acreage of farms was a sum of 337,086 acres for the whole county, which was a 3% decrease from 2012. The average size of farm was 172 acres, which was an 11% increase from 2012.
- The average net income per farm was \$21,749 in 2017, which was a 24% decrease from 2012.



### Natural Resources

#### Soils

Vernon County is comprised of several types of soil. Silty soils are the most prominent and they are comprised of a high proportion of fine particles. These soils are often fertile and have good water-holding capacity, but they tend to have low infiltration rates. Boon, Dubuque, Clinton, and Tama are distinct soils found within the county. All of these unique characteristics contribute to Vernon County's diverse landscape and agricultural production.



## Groundwater

Groundwater is a limited resource, and both its quality and quantity are important characteristics that are influenced by local geology and local land use. Precipitation percolates through the soil and bedrock where it eventually reaches a saturated zone known as an aquifer. It is from these aquifers that wells draw their water.

Most of the groundwater in Vernon County is stored in fractured bedrock. Wells tap these fractures to access the water. Pollutants in groundwater are an issue of high concern in Vernon County. One common groundwater pollutant is nitrates. Nitrates are odorless, colorless, and tasteless and are the result of decaying organic matter. Nitrates are found in animal and human waste and are also found in fertilizers. Nitrate levels of less than two parts per million are considered naturally occurring and levels of two to 10 parts per million are considered elevated levels due to human activities. A nitrate level over 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for infants and is the enforcement standard. Another common groundwater pollutant is bacteria. Tests are completed for the presence of coliform bacteria which is an indicator for the presence of more harmful bacteria. Sites that are positive for coliform are then tested for E. coli bacteria. Any level of E. coli bacteria is considered harmful because it is found in animal and human waste. Vernon County is particularly susceptible to groundwater contamination because fractured dolomite underlies most of the county. These fractures allow water and pollutants to move more efficiently and rapidly.

Unused wells can serve as direct pipelines to the groundwater. Contaminants at or near the surface, such as animal and human wastes or lawn and agricultural fertilizers, can enter the groundwater easily through unused wells and sinkholes. Vernon County draws all of its water from the same aquifer, thus, all areas and all wells are susceptible to some extent.

## Surface Water

There are many streams and creeks within Vernon County. Some of these streams are class I, II, and III trout streams. Streams in the county eventually flow into the Mississippi River.



## Topography and Watersheds

The landscape of Vernon County is characterized as ridge and valley topography. Three watersheds (Geographic Management Units GMUs in Wisconsin DNR terms) cover Vernon County: the Central Wisconsin, the Lower Wisconsin and the La Crosse-Bad Axe River basins. The Central Wisconsin watershed falls in the very eastern part of Vernon County with its western boundary primarily following County Highway V. The Lower Wisconsin (LW) lays primarily East of Highway 27, and the La Crosse – Bad Axe River basin lays West of Highway 27. Water flowing in the La Crosse – Bad Axe River basin flows to the Mississippi River and water flowing in the Central and Lower Wisconsin basins flows to the Wisconsin River before eventually entering the Mississippi River. Map 1.4 Watersheds displays watersheds in the county limits.

## Woodlands

Vernon County's terrain is defined by cultivated ridges and valleys, with woodlands on the steep slopes of the valleys. This distinctive landscape is spread across the entire county, offering breathtaking views. The woodlands include a variety of forest types, such as deciduous, coniferous, and mixed forests. For a more in-depth analysis of the current land use patterns, please refer to maps in the Land Use Element section.



## Floodplains/Wetlands

The steep topography of this basin is not conducive to many acres of wetlands; however, large expanses still exist near the mouths of the Bad Axe River, Coon Creek, and the La Crosse River. Due to the significant environmental functions served by wetlands, there is a complex set of local, state, and federal regulations which places limitations on the development and use of wetlands (and shoreland).

For planning and regulatory purposes, a floodplain is normally defined as those areas, excluding the stream channel, which are subject to inundation by the 100-year recurrence interval flood event. This event has a one-percent chance of occurring in any given year. Because of this chance of flooding, development in the floodplain should be discouraged and the development of park and open space in these areas encouraged.

Wisconsin Statute 87.30 requires counties, cities, and villages to implement floodplain zoning. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed flood hazard data. Under the authority of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, FEMA conducted studies to determine the location and extent of flood lands and the monetary damage risks related to the insurance of urban development in flood land areas. Map 1.4 Watersheds shows the floodplain in Vernon County.

## Open Space

Vernon County has a limited amount of open space (developed) which is located in the center of Vernon County. Map 1.5 Existing Land Use shows in greater detail where this open space is located. Much of the county is comprised of forested, agricultural, undeveloped, and public lands that provide a diverse landscape.

## Wildlife Resources

Vernon County creates a perfect home for a diverse range of wildlife, thanks to its expansive agricultural fields, scattered forestlands, and meandering streams. Within the county's boundaries there are white-tailed deer, eastern wild turkeys, bats, and muskrats. There are also squirrels, rabbits, pheasants, ruffed grouse, raccoons, and a variety of songbirds, each finding their own niche in this ecosystem. Vernon County also has Class I, II, and III trout streams, adding even more variety to this ecosystem.



## Air Quality

In order to evaluate the quality of the air and to protect the public health, a series of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) have been developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as established in section 109 of the Clean Air Act.

According to the Wisconsin Air Quality Report, as prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the air pollutants affecting Wisconsin include sulfur dioxide, suspended particulate matter, carbon monoxide, ozone, oxides of nitrogen, lead, sulfates, and nitrates. Vernon County is considered an attainment area, which is an area that meets the NAAQS defined in the Federal Clean Air Act. The WI DNR is beginning to monitor air quality and plan to develop state air quality standards beyond existing permitting of mostly point sources.

Air advisories are common during the summer months in Vernon County. There are more often localized air quality issues that challenge rural areas. Concerns with airborne particulates, or dust, may also be a concern where residential land use is in close proximity to extraction operations or agricultural operations. Outdoor burning can lead to air quality problems in a particular neighborhood if garbage or other materials that release toxic substances are burned, or if burning occurs in a densely populated area. Issues might arise from improper open burning, improper use of burning barrels, or the improper use of outdoor wood burners (furnaces).

### **Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources**

Vernon County adopted a Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance in response to Wis. Administrative Code NR135 and is being administered by the Land and Water Conservation Department. This ordinance requires operators of nonmetallic mining sites to plan for specific post-mining land use once mining at their site has ceased. With around 20 nonmetallic mines in the county, the Land and Water Conservation Department is well-occupied inspecting, making determinations in order to collect annual fees, measuring the acreage covered by mining activity, receiving, and reviewing reclamation plans, and investigating complaints. The department also works closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to assure that sediment -laden water does not negatively affect surrounding properties or surface waters. Experience indicates that applications for new (nonmetallic mining reclamation) permits, associated fees and reclamation plans can be expected every year.

## Designated State Natural Areas

State Natural Areas (SNAs) protect outstanding examples of Wisconsin's native landscape, often the last refuge for rare plants and animals. Natural Areas are valuable for research and educational use, the preservation of genetic and biological diversity, and for providing benchmarks for determining the impact of use on managed lands. As such, they are not intended for intensive recreation. State Natural Areas are designated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

- Battle Bluff Prairie
- Bergen Bluffs
- Coon Creek Cliffs
- Eagle Eye
- Kickapoo Valley Reserve
- Mt. Pisgah Hemlock-Hardwoods
- Romance Prairie
- Tunnelville Cliffs

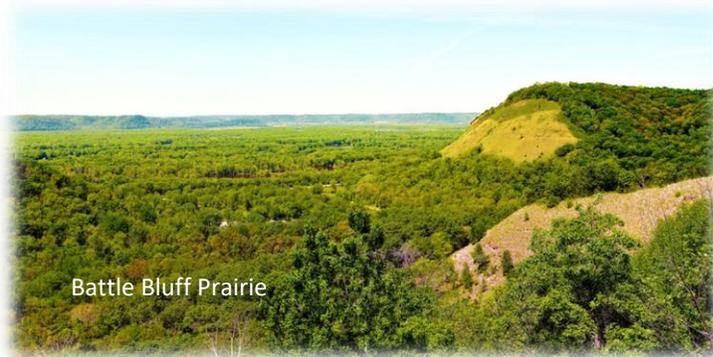
## Federally Recognized Historic Places

### The Upper Kickapoo Valley Archaeology District

The Upper Kickapoo Valley Prehistoric Archeological District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located between Wildcat Mountain State Park and the village of La Farge in portions of Stark and Whitestown Townships. The District covers 8,569 acres along a 10-mile stretch of the Kickapoo River and several of its tributary creeks: Weister, Indian, Jug, Warner, and Billings.

## Land Legacy Places

At the request of the Natural Resources Board, the Department of Natural Resources undertook a study to identify places that would be critical in meeting Wisconsin's conservation and recreation needs over the next 50 years. The study did not address how or when these "Legacy Places" should be protected or who should be responsible for implementing protection measures. The outcome of the three-year effort was a Land Legacy Report that catalogues the results of the study. Land Legacy Places identified by the report as being located in Vernon County include the following Coulee Coldwater Riparian Resources, Battle Bluff Prairie, and Bad Axe River. The wooded uplands of the county that cover the higher elevations of the valley walls are also examples of naturally occurring environmental corridors that provide important wildlife habitat.



## Threatened and Endangered Species

Wisconsin's Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI), established in 1985 by the Wisconsin Legislature, is maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (WDNR) Bureau of Endangered Resources. The NHI program is responsible for maintaining data on the locations and status of rare species, natural communities, and natural features in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin NHI program is part of an international network of inventory programs that collect, process, and manage data on the occurrences of natural biological diversity using standard methodology. Wisconsin's Natural Heritage Inventory program's three objectives are to: collect

information on occurrences of rare plants and animals, high-quality natural communities, and significant natural features in Wisconsin; standardize this information, enter it into an electronic database, and mark locations on base maps for the state; and use this information to further the protection and management of rare species, natural communities, and natural features.

In accordance with the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), Wisconsin has developed the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working Lists. The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working Lists contains species known or suspected to be rare in the state. The lists include species of plants and wildlife that are legally designated as “Endangered” (a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range), “Threatened” (a species is likely to become endangered within the near future), and of “Special Concern” (a species about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proved). Within Vernon County, there are a total of 16 species of plants and wildlife that fall under the endangered category and 33 under the threatened category. A few examples of which are Blanchard’s Cricket Frog, Worm Eating Warbler, Slender Glass Lizard, and Wood Turtle.



Worm Eating Warbler



Wood Turtle

### **Cultural Resources**

Preserving important aspects of our past gives us a sense of continuity and meaning and historic preservation efforts foster community pride. Because cultural resources provide an important window to the past, Vernon County residents need to retain those resources that make their individual communities distinctive. The presence of these resources creates a level of respect for our earlier pioneers who formed the character of our community that new residents now enjoy.

In addition to maintaining a community’s distinctive character, cultural resource preservation can lead to tangible economic benefits. By retaining and emphasizing historic heritage, tourism can increase. Preservation offers a positive alternative to continued decay. Neighborhood improvement and investment in rehabilitation leads to increase real estate values and municipal tax revenues.

A search of the Wisconsin National Register of Historic Places revealed 24 registered buildings or sites in Vernon County. The register included historic houses, barns, churches, mounds, historic camps, and burial sites.

The Wisconsin Historical Society’s Register of Historic Places Architecture and History Inventory (AHI) shows that there are 25 historic structures in Vernon County. This organization’s mission is to connect people to the past by “collecting, preserving, and sharing stories.” The historic structures within the county include houses, schools, an agricultural complex, all with differing architectural styles and build dates ranging from 1921 to 1975.

### **Recreational Resources**

Vernon County, nestled in the picturesque landscape of southwestern Wisconsin, offers an abundance of recreational resources for locals and visitors alike. Nature enthusiasts can explore the vast network of hiking trails that wind through lush forests and meander alongside crystal-clear streams, providing opportunities for birdwatching, wildlife spotting, and peaceful contemplation. For those seeking aquatic adventures, the meandering Kickapoo River invites kayakers, and canoeists to paddle through its gentle waters,

while anglers can try their luck at catching trout in its cool, pristine streams. Camping enthusiasts can pitch their tents or park their RVs in one of the county's many campgrounds, where starry nights and crackling campfires create unforgettable memories. With its scenic beauty and diverse outdoor offerings, Vernon County is a playground for those who seek solace and adventure in nature.

## County Parks

Vernon County operates four county operated public parks; Esofea / Rentz Memorial Park, Sidie Hollow Park, Jersey Valley Park, and Blackhawk County Park. These parks comprise 1,800 acres of park land and forest land, containing more than 31 miles of multi-use trail offering a multitude of leisure time pursuits. Popular activities within the Vernon County Parks System include camping, horseback riding, swimming, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, picnicking, or visiting one of our fabulous scenic overlooks.

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## CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

Vernon County, Wisconsin, is home to numerous churches and cemeteries, reflecting its rich cultural and historical heritage. Below is an overview of some notable churches and cemeteries in the county:

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### CHURCHES IN VERNON COUNTY:

- **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**
  - *Location:* 504 South Main Street, Viroqua, WI 54665
  - *Contact:* (608) 637-3978
  - *Website:* [gsviroqua.org](http://gsviroqua.org)
  - *Description:* A congregation committed to loving God, following Jesus, and serving neighbors.
- **Viroqua United Methodist Church**
  - *Location:* 221 South Center Avenue, Viroqua, WI 54665
  - *Contact:* (608) 637-3551
  - *Website:* [viroquawestbyumc.org](http://viroquawestbyumc.org)
  - *Description:* Offers Sunday worship services and various community activities.
- **Westby Coon Prairie Lutheran Church**
  - *Location:* 500 South Main Street, Westby, WI 54667
  - *Contact:* (608) 634-3412
  - *Website:* [wcplutheran.org](http://wcplutheran.org)
  - *Description:* An ELCA Lutheran congregation with a focus on community engagement.
- **Viroqua Church of Christ**
  - *Location:* 825 Nelson Parkway, Viroqua, WI 54665
  - *Contact:* (608) 637-3549
  - *Website:* [viroquachurch.com](http://viroquachurch.com)
  - *Description:* A church dedicated to connecting individuals to God and fostering community relationships.

For a comprehensive list of churches in Vernon County, resources like [ChurchFinder.com](http://ChurchFinder.com) provide detailed directories, including denominations and contact information.

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### CEMETERIES IN VERNON COUNTY:

- **Viroqua Cemetery**
  - *Location:* Viroqua, WI
  - *Description:* A significant cemetery serving the Viroqua community.
- **Salem Ridge Cemetery**
  - *Location:* Avalanche, WI
  - *Description:* A historic cemetery located in the town of Avalanche.

- **Forest-Burr Cemetery**
  - *Location:* Hillsboro, WI
  - *Description:* A cemetery serving the Hillsboro area.
- **Mount Tabor Cemetery**
  - *Location:* Near Mount Tabor, WI
  - *Description:* A cemetery located in the town of Forest.

For detailed information on these and other cemeteries, including burial records and locations, the [Find a Grave](#) website offers extensive listings.

Additionally, the [Vernon County Historical Society](#) provides resources and historical data on local cemeteries, which can be valuable for genealogical research.

A book is available from the Vernon County Historical Society, “Vernon County Cemetery Locations and History” by Judy Mathison. The following passage is excerpted from this book.

*“Many cemeteries are known by more than one name. Only the most common name or names will be listed here. A complete list of tombstone inscription, cemetery/burial plot locations - with various names indexed and the history of the cemetery may be found at the Vernon County Museum, 410 S. Center Ave. in Viroqua. In the early years of our history, many burials were on the family farm and are no longer marked. Plots that are only a memory are not listed here, but all known burial sites may be found in the book” “Vernon County Cemetery Locations and History” by Judy Mathison. Corrections and additional information is encouraged.*

## GREEN/ NATURAL BURIALS

Natural burial occurs when full bodies are interred in the ground in an eco-friendly coffin or shroud. Families can participate in many or all aspects of the funeral, including digging and filling the grave after any kind of service or gathering. The Driftless Green Burial Alliance (DGBA) is an initiative of the Threshold Care Circle and exists to promote and develop natural burial options in Southwestern Wisconsin.

*“Ultimately, we envision a burial ground where people may be laid to rest naturally, in a biodegradable casket, shroud, or nothing at all. This burial ground, available and affordable to all, will serve as a sanctuary for quiet contemplation in nature, bird and animal watching, picnicking and celebrating life’s milestones within the beauty of a nature preserve. Our aim is a return to burial practices that conserve the natural world and deepen our relationship to the land we live and die on.” – Driftless Green Burial Alliance*

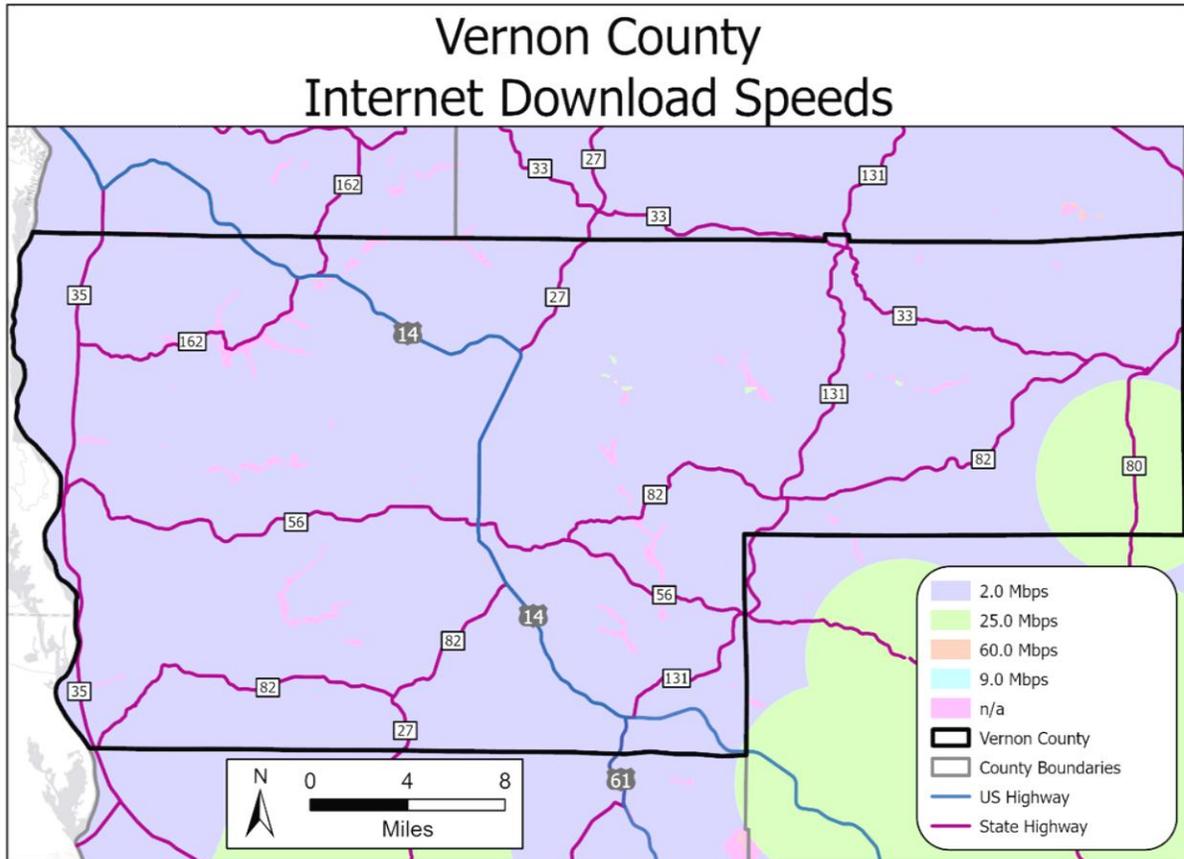
**Private or Home Burial** is allowed in Wisconsin in that there are no state laws prohibiting this practice. However, check with your local county and township to see if there are regulations at that level of government. In Vernon and Crawford county burial is permitted on private land. You will need to submit the form, [“Declaration of Burial”](#) with the Registrar of Deeds and pay a fee. (source: <https://www.thresholdcarecircle.org/driftless-green-burial-alliance/>)

## COMMUNICATION TOWERS

The county administers a Telecommunications Ordinance through the Zoning Department. The ordinance provides for collocation of equipment. The County Sheriff’s Department/Emergency Management Department have the first option to locate emergency communications equipment as needed. Previous community comments revealed that cellphone coverage is not complete – further current input from the community is needed to identify existing gaps.

## BROADBAND COVERAGE

As of 2021, approximately 92% of rural residents in Vernon County, Wisconsin, had access to broadband internet. This is notably higher than the state average, where about 75% of rural residents had broadband access, placing Wisconsin 36th nationwide in rural broadband accessibility. Nationally, the average broadband access for rural residents was around 85% during the same period. Therefore, Vernon County's rural broadband coverage exceeded both the state and national averages at that time. This access to high-speed internet could be one factor encouraging transplants to Vernon county from other areas.



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## FUTURE EXPANSION OF UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Population growth is projected to occur in Vernon County during the planning term. Greater growth is expected in the next 20 years than occurred in the previous 20 years. Though an increased population is expected, current facilities should continue to be sufficient in supplying county residents with necessary utilities. This plan will be renewed every ten years; if projections applied during planning are inaccurate, adjustments to the plan can be made to provide greater accuracy.

### SANITARY WASTE AND WATER SUPPLY

Forty percent of Wisconsin residents get their drinking water from private wells. It is recommended that all wells used for drinking water test for bacteria and nitrate annually or anytime there is a change in appearance, odor, or taste. It is also recommended to test for arsenic at least once, more frequently if arsenic is found in the sample. Vernon County Health Department is a certified water testing laboratory for bacteria and nitrate with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Enforcement of private on-site wastewater treatment system standards (Wisconsin Administrative Code: COMM 83) is enforced by the Vernon County Health Department. Any form of residential or business development in the county needing water or sewer service is dependent upon providing their own private onsite wastewater treatment system.

In Wisconsin, septic permits are regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR). The WI DNR oversees the permitting and inspection of septic systems to ensure compliance with state regulations aimed at protecting public health and the environment. Before installing or modifying a septic system, property owners typically need to obtain a permit from the WI DNR or their local county health department, which works in coordination with the WI DNR. The permit process involves submitting plans and specifications for the proposed septic system, which are reviewed by regulatory authorities to ensure compliance with state requirements regarding site suitability, design standards, setback distances, and other relevant criteria. Upon approval, the property owner is issued a septic permit authorizing the installation or modification of the septic system, with inspections conducted during and after construction to verify compliance with permit conditions. WI DNR regulations regarding septic permits aim to protect groundwater and surface water quality, prevent contamination, and safeguard public health by ensuring the proper treatment and disposal of wastewater from septic systems.

### **Solid Waste/Recycling**

Vernon County maintains a solid waste and recycling center at S3705 County Highway LF, Viroqua, WI 54665. Residents can bring their household recyclables, appliances, E-Waste, mattresses, waste tires, light bulbs, and batteries to the facility at N4400 State Road 162 on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

### **Storm Water Management**

Congress amended the federal Clean Water Act in 1987 to control storm water pollution. In 1990, federal regulations required owners of storm water pollution sources, including many industries, municipalities, and construction sites, to have National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permits [exit DNR]. The permits require permit-holders to create plans and install management practices that eliminate or reduce storm water pollution.

To meet the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act, WI DNR developed the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) Storm Water Discharge Permit Program which is administered under the authority of NR 216, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The WPDES Storm Water Program regulates the discharge of storm water in Wisconsin from three potential sources:

- Construction sites
- Industrial facilities
- Municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s)

Regulated storm water discharges are considered point sources, so owners or operators of these sources are required to receive a WPDES permit for their discharge. This permitting mechanism is designed to prevent storm water runoff from washing harmful pollutants into local surface waters such as streams, rivers, lakes, or coastal waters ([www.dnr.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dnr.wisconsin.gov)). Three watersheds (Geographic Management Units GMUs in Wisconsin DNR terms) cover Vernon County: the Central Wisconsin, the Lower Wisconsin

and the La Crosse-Bad Axe River basins. Vernon County government assists in the enforcement of the state of Wisconsin's Administrative Code NR 216. This code and accompanying program is devoted to controlling erosion and managing storm water volume and pollution of storm water. This program assists in conserving the unique and valuable natural landscape comprising Vernon County. The county also manages storm water through routine maintenance on their culverts, bridges, and road ditches by keeping them free of debris.

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## COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Vernon County has 19 Supervisory Districts and an Administrative Coordinator.

### **County Facilities**

The Vernon Highway Department facility is located at 1335 Railroad Avenue, Viroqua. Vernon County contracts with private companies for selected maintenance of county roads.

## Police Protection

The Vernon County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency for Vernon County, Wisconsin. Led by Sheriff Roy Torgerson, the department is responsible for enforcing local, state, and federal laws, preserving public safety, and providing various services to the community. The Sheriff's Department operates a detention center located within the county seat of Viroqua. The Vernon County Detention Center houses individuals who are awaiting trial, serving short-term sentences, or awaiting transfer to other facilities. The center is staffed by trained corrections officers who ensure the safety and security of both inmates and staff. In addition to housing inmates, the detention center provides rehabilitation programs, educational opportunities, and medical services to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals into society. The Vernon County Sheriff's Department and Detention Center work collaboratively with other law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders to address public safety concerns and promote community well-being.



Photo by Heather McCauley

## Emergency Management

Vernon County Emergency Management is responsible for HAZMAT planning for Vernon County. The Vernon County Office of Emergency Management coordinates disaster response and recovery efforts in support of the county and local governments. Through planning, training, and exercising we prepare response agencies, volunteer organizations, the private sector, and citizens to respond to and recover from disasters natural and man-made.

## Emergency Medical Services

Vernon County, Wisconsin, is served by a dedicated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) system that plays a vital role in providing pre-hospital care and transportation to residents and visitors in need of urgent medical assistance. Led by highly trained paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and other healthcare professionals, Vernon County EMS operates a fleet of ambulances strategically stationed throughout the county to ensure rapid response to emergencies. These EMS providers are equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment and technology to deliver advanced life support interventions, including cardiac monitoring, airway management, and administration of medications, to patients in critical condition. In addition to emergency response, Vernon County EMS is actively involved in community outreach and education initiatives, such as CPR training, first aid classes, and public health campaigns, aimed at promoting health and safety awareness among residents. The dedication, professionalism, and commitment of Vernon County EMS personnel are instrumental in saving lives, reducing morbidity and mortality rates, and enhancing the overall quality of healthcare services in the community.

## Vernon County 911 Dispatch

Vernon County's 911 dispatch services play a crucial role in ensuring prompt and effective response to emergencies throughout the region. Operating as the first point of contact during crises, the resolute dispatch personnel are highly trained to handle a diverse range of situations, from medical emergencies and accidents to fires and criminal incidents. Utilizing advanced technology, the 911 dispatch center in Vernon County employs computer-aided dispatch (CAD) systems to identify the location of emergencies quickly and accurately, enabling swift deployment of emergency responders. The dispatchers act as a vital link between those in distress and the appropriate emergency services, providing critical instructions and support until help arrives. Their ability to remain calm under pressure and efficiently coordinate emergency resources contributes significantly to the overall effectiveness of the county's emergency response system. In addition to emergency dispatch, the 911 center in Vernon County may also provide valuable information to first responders, such as details about the nature of the emergency, potential hazards, and any available medical

history. The 911 dispatch services in Vernon County represent a pivotal component of the community's commitment to public safety and the well-being of its residents.

### Healthcare, Daycare, and School Facilities

Vernon Memorial Healthcare is the primary healthcare provider in Vernon County with clinics in Westby, Viroqua, Soldiers Grove, and La Farge providing access to 75 primary and specialty-care physicians and healthcare professionals.



### Educational Facilities

There are seven public school districts in Vernon County, De Soto, Hillsboro, Kickapoo, La Farge, Norwalk-Ontario-Wilton, Viroqua, and Westby. A complete listing of schools in Vernon County, both public and private, is below.

**Table 7.3 Vernon County Schools**

VERNON COUNTY SCHOOLS	CITY	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
<b>Public Schools</b>			
Coon Valley Elementary	Coon Valley	300 Lien Street	(608) 452-3143
De Soto Middle School	De Soto	615 Main Street	(608) 648-0100
De Soto High School	De Soto	615 Main Street	(608) 648-0101
Hillsboro Elementary School	Hillsboro	853 Hillsborough Avenue	(608) 489-2224
Hillsboro High School	Hillsboro	777 School Road	(608) 489-2221
Kickapoo Elementary	Viola	S6520 State Highway 131	(608) 627-1494
Kickapoo High School	Viola	S6520 State Highway 131	(608) 627-1494
Kickapoo Valley Forest School	La Farge	S3661 State Highway 131	(608) 639-0565
La Farge Elementary School	La Farge	301 W Adams Street	(608) 625-2400
La Farge High School	La Farge	302 W Adams Street	(608) 625-2401
La Farge Middle School	La Farge	303 W Adams Street	(608) 625-2402
Laurel High School	Viroqua	100 Blackhawk Drive	(608) 637-1614
Prairie View Elementary School	De Soto	E3245 County Road N	(608) 648-2227
Stoddard Elementary	Stoddard	300 N Cottage Street	(608) 457-2101

<b>VERNON COUNTY SCHOOLS</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>TELEPHONE</b>
Viroqua High School	Viroqua	100 Blackhawk Drive	(608) 637-3191
Viroqua Middle School	Viroqua	101 Blackhawk Drive	(608) 637-3171
Viroqua Elementary	Viroqua	115 N Education Avenue	(608) 637-7071
Westby Elementary School	Westby	122 Nelson Street	(608) 634-0500
Westby High School	Westby	206 West Avenue South	(608) 634-3101
Westby Middle School	Westby	206 West Avenue South	(608) 634-3102
<b>Private Schools</b>			
Coon Valley Christian School	Westby	E5151 Nesselte Road	(608) 799-2086
Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School	Viroqua	431 E Court Street	(608) 637-7828
St. Charles Elementary School	Genoa	707 Eagle Street	(608) 689-2646
St. Matthew's Lutheran School	Stoddard	303 N Main Street	(608) 457-2700
Youth Initiative High School	Viroqua	500 E Jefferson Street	(608) 637-6445
Viroqua Area Montessori School	Viroqua	115 N Education Avenue	(608) 637-7071

# Vernon County School Districts

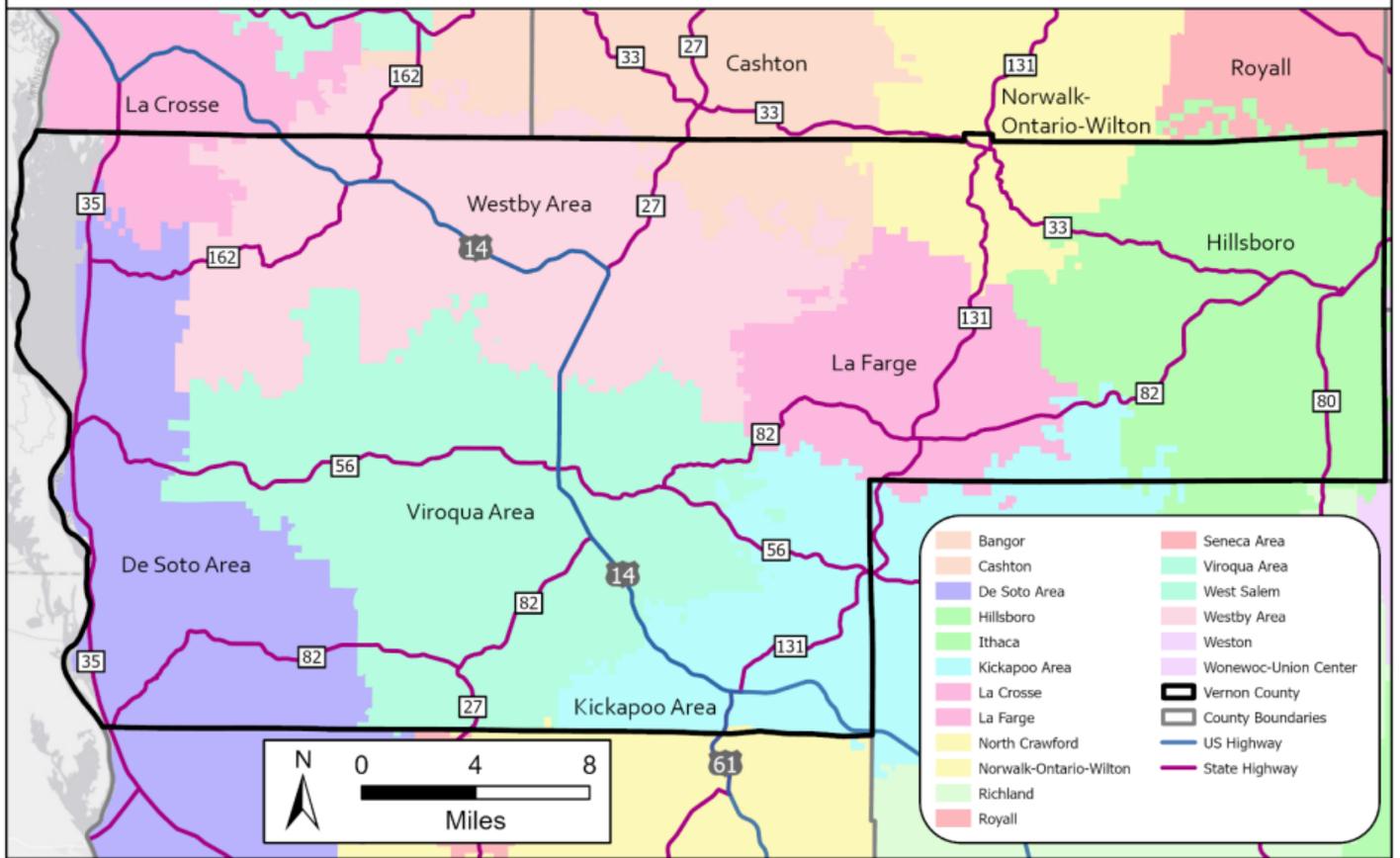


Figure 7.1 Vernon County School Districts

## Daycare

A search of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Licensed Childcare Directory yielded 13 regulated family and group childcare programs, see list below.

**Table 7.4 Vernon County Daycares**

<b>Facility Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
CUDDLY CARE LLC	Chaseburg
HOME AWAY FROM HOME DAY CARE	Westby
KATHY'S KIDCARE	Westby
LITTLE TREE KINDERHAUS	Viroqua
LORI'S DAY CARE	De Soto
PITTER PATTER DAYCARE	Westby
TAMMY'S FOR TOTS	Ontario
KIDS AT PLAY CHILDCARE CENTER	Stoddard
MILES OF SMILES CHILDCARE CENTER LLC	Westby
VAS EARLY LEARNING CENTER	Viroqua
VIROQUA CHILDREN'S HOUSE MONTESSORI	Viroqua
VIROQUA DAY CARE LEARNING CENTER	Viroqua
WESTBY HEAD START CENTER	Westby

Source: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/lcc-directories> (searched July 2024)

## Libraries

Vernon County residents have access to a total of eight libraries within Vernon County. These libraries are listed, along with their locations, below:

**Table 7.5 Vernon County Libraries**

Name	Address
Bekkum Memorial Library	206 N Main, Westby 54667
De Soto Public Library	111 Houghton Street, Box 187, De Soto 54624
Hillsboro Public Library	819 High Avenue, Hillsboro 54634
Knutson Memorial Library	500 Central Avenue, P.O. Box 99, Coon Valley 54623
Lawton Memorial Library	118 N Bird Street, Box 38, La Farge 54639
McIntosh Memorial Library	205 South Rock Avenue, Viroqua 54665
Ontario Public Library.	313 N Main Street, P.O. Box 69, Ontario 54651
Readstown Public Library	P.O. Box 63, Readstown 54652





## AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for the conservation, and promotion of the effective management, of natural resources such as groundwater, forests, productive agricultural areas, environmentally sensitive areas, threatened and endangered species, stream corridors, surface water, floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, metallic and nonmetallic mineral resources consistent with zoning limitations under s. 295.20 (2), parks, open spaces, historical and cultural resources, community design, recreational resources and other natural resources.

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### Goal I. PROTECT AND CONSERVE SOIL AND WATER (GROUND AND SURFACE) RESOURCES.

#### Objectives:

1. Support policies, procedures, and programs to prevent manure spills and expedite cleanup and habitat recovery when spills occur.
2. Promote Conservation Agriculture practices such as, but not limited to, cover crops, crop rotation, contour farming, minimal tillage, perennial crops, and nutrient management planning for continued environmental and economic sustainability.
3. Encourage conservation practices and stormwater management to reduce flood severity and soil disturbance.
4. Encourage stream bank stabilization and trout habitat projects.
5. Support groundwater and surface water testing with local and regional partners.
6. Encourage acquisition of geographic information systems (GIS) data determines the location of areas that could jeopardize water quality.

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### Goal II. PROTECT AND CONSERVE NATURAL AREAS, INCLUDING WETLANDS, WILDLIFE HABITATS, LAKES, WOODLANDS, AND OPEN SPACES.

#### Objectives:

1. Encourage technical support and resources for conservation practices.
2. Work with State, Tribal, and Federal agencies, and non-profit organizations to secure additional funding, and resources for conservation practices.
3. Support educational outreach on land management conservation practices and watershed activities.

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### Goal III. SUPPORT THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, CULTURAL, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.

#### Objectives:

1. Promote the protection and conservation of historic buildings, landmarks, and cultural traditions that contribute to the unique character and identity of Vernon County.
2. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic structures and support local and cultural events that celebrate the community's heritage.
3. Support incentives, grants, and technical assistance for historic preservation projects and initiatives.
4. Support the management and protection of archaeological sites and artifacts to ensure responsible stewardship of cultural resources.

## Farmland Preservation

Farmland preservation is a crucial strategy for protecting valuable agricultural land while still allowing for necessary development. By focusing on preserving large tracts of farmland, communities can maintain their agricultural heritage, support local food production, and ensure that future generations have access to fertile land for farming.

The main goal of farmland preservation is to keep as much land as possible dedicated to agriculture. This can be achieved through various methods, such as zoning regulations, conservation easements, and agricultural districts. These tools help prevent the fragmentation of farmland and limit the conversion of agricultural land to non-farm uses. By protecting these lands, communities can maintain the rural character and scenic beauty of the area, which can be a valuable asset for both residents and visitors.

Moreover, landowners who participate in farmland preservation programs can receive financial incentives, such as a \$10 tax credit for every acre of farmland they own. This not only encourages landowners to keep their land in agricultural use but also provides them with direct financial benefits for contributing to the preservation of the community's agricultural resources.

In summary, farmland preservation is an effective way to protect valuable agricultural land while allowing for responsible development. By keeping land dedicated to farming and preventing unnecessary conversion to non-farm uses, communities can support local economies, protect the environment, and maintain the rural character that defines them.



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## TOP 8 REASONS TO PRESERVE FARMLAND IN VERNON COUNTY

1. **Economic Stability:** Agriculture significantly contributes to Vernon County's economy. Preserving farmland ensures the continuation of farming activities, supporting local employment, and sustaining the economic base (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, 2022).

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2. **Environmental Protection:** Farmland acts as a buffer against urban sprawl, helping to maintain open spaces and natural habitats. This preservation supports biodiversity and protects ecosystems from fragmentation (American Farmland Trust, 2021).

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3. **Soil and Water Conservation:** Implementing conservation practices on preserved farmland reduces soil erosion and improves water quality by minimizing runoff and sedimentation into water bodies (Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2020).

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4. **Flood Mitigation:** Maintaining agricultural lands can help absorb rainfall and reduce the speed and volume of runoff, thereby mitigating the risk of flooding in vulnerable areas (Vernon County Land and Water Conservation Department, 2021).

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5. **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** Agriculture is integral to Vernon County's cultural identity. Preserving farmland maintains the rural character and heritage of the community, fostering a sense of place and continuity (Wisconsin Historical Society, 2019).

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6. **Local Food Security:** Protecting farmland ensures a steady supply of locally grown food, reducing dependence on external sources and enhancing food security for the community (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2020).

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7. **Recreational Opportunities:** Preserved farmlands offer spaces for recreational activities such as agritourism, hunting, and fishing, contributing to the quality of life and providing economic opportunities through tourism (Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, 2021).

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8. **Climate Change Resilience:** Farmlands managed with conservation practices can sequester carbon and improve resilience to climate change impacts, contributing to broader environmental sustainability goals (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022).

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Regenerative agriculture is a forward-thinking approach to farming that focuses on enhancing the health of the land while producing food. Unlike conventional farming, which often depletes soil and relies heavily on chemicals, regenerative agriculture works with nature to create a more sustainable and resilient system. The goal is not just to grow crops or raise animals, but to improve the overall health of the farm ecosystem, ensuring it can thrive for generations to come. Producers who practice regenerative agriculture often observe the **Five Principles of Soil Health**:

- 1.) Limit Disturbance - This includes chemical (herbicides, fungicides, and pesticides), physical, and mechanical disturbance (tillage).
- 2.) Armor the Soil Surface - Maintain armor, or crop residue, on the soil surface.
- 3.) Build Diversity - Promote diversity in crops and plant species on every front possible.
- 4.) Keep Living Roots in the Soil - Maintain living roots and plants in the soil as long as possible throughout the year.
- 5.) Integrate Animal - Keep animals present in the agricultural landscape and community.

At the heart of regenerative agriculture is the idea of building healthy soil. Healthy soil is the foundation of productive farming, and regenerative practices are designed to enrich it. Farmers do this by planting cover crops—plants that protect and nourish the soil—adding compost or other organic materials and reducing the use of synthetic fertilizers. These methods help the soil retain nutrients, improve its structure, and increase its ability to hold water, which in turn leads to better crop yields and reduces the need for chemical inputs.

Another key aspect of regenerative agriculture is biodiversity. Instead of growing just one type of crop year after year, regenerative farmers plant a variety of crops and often integrate livestock into their farming systems. This diversity creates a balanced ecosystem on the farm, where different plants and animals support each other. For example, certain plants can naturally repel pests, reducing the need for pesticides, while animals like cows or chickens can help fertilize the soil. By mimicking natural ecosystems, regenerative farms are more resilient to challenges like pests, diseases, and changing weather patterns.

Water conservation is another important benefit of regenerative agriculture. By keeping the ground covered with plants and minimizing soil disturbance, farmers can help the soil retain water more effectively. This is especially important in areas prone to drought, as it ensures that crops have access to the water they need. Additionally, healthier soil is less prone to erosion, meaning that water stays where it's needed rather than running off and taking valuable topsoil with it.

One of the most exciting aspects of regenerative agriculture is its ability to capture carbon from the atmosphere and store it in the soil. This process, known as carbon sequestration, helps to combat climate change by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. As plants grow, they absorb carbon dioxide, which is then stored in the soil when the plants die and decompose. Healthy, well-managed soil can store large amounts of carbon, turning farms into powerful tools for addressing global climate issues.

Beyond its environmental benefits, regenerative agriculture also supports local ecosystems by encouraging the natural processes that keep them healthy. For example, it promotes the presence of beneficial insects and birds that help control pests, reducing the need for chemical treatments. This creates a more balanced and self-sustaining farm environment, where nature does much of the work for the farmer.

In essence, regenerative agriculture is a smart way to farm that benefits both the environment and the people who rely on it. By focusing on practices that build healthy soil, support biodiversity, conserve water, and capture carbon, regenerative farming creates a system that can continue to produce food for generations without depleting natural resources. It's a holistic approach that sees farming as part of a larger ecosystem, one that thrives when all its parts are working together in harmony.



Round Barns of Vernon County Photo credit: Vernon County Economic Development

### **Vernon County Round Barns**

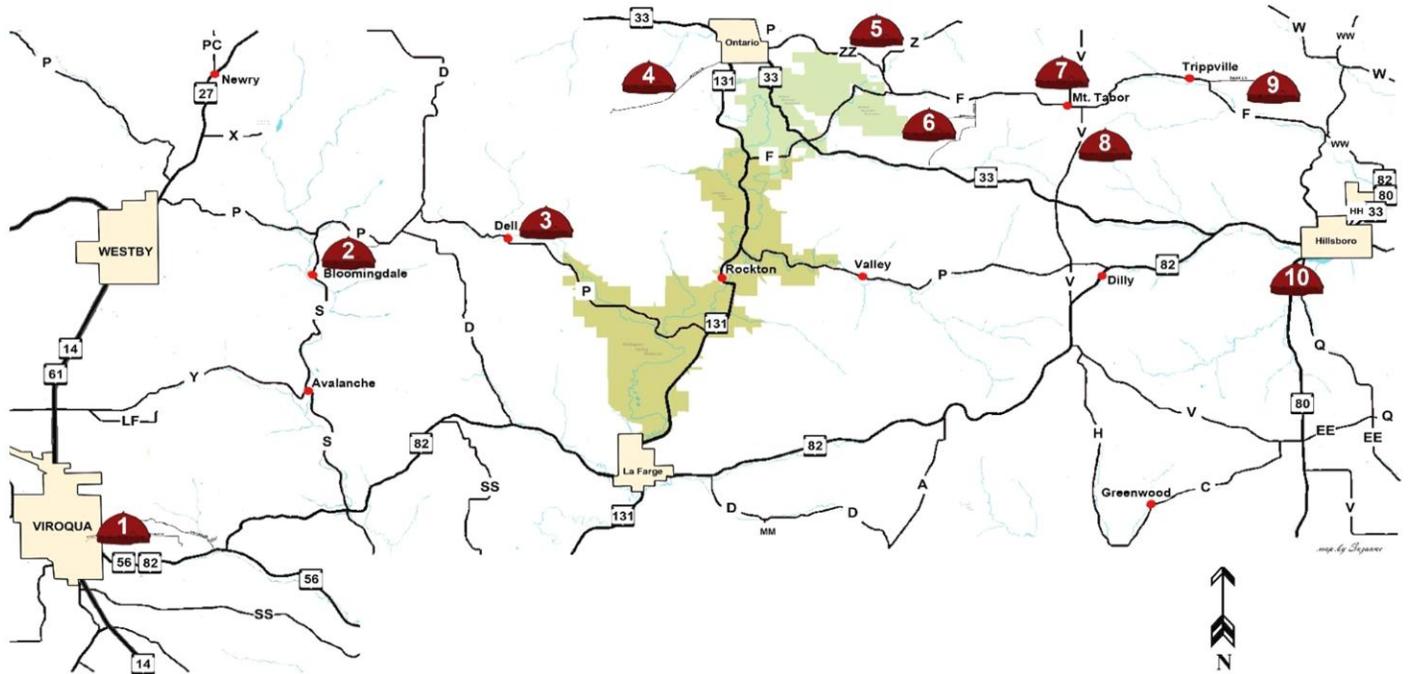
*“Vernon County, Wisconsin has the highest concentration of round barns in the world” - David Macasaet. David Macasaet has created a “Round Barns of Vernon County” film. The Round Barns of Vernon County explores these unusual structures, their enigmatic African American builder, Algie Shivers, and his unique mixed race community, the Cheyenne Valley. Historians and descendants alike describe Shivers and his anomalous early 20th century community with a common idea: people all got along and helped each other survive.*

*The Cheyenne Valley area near Hillsboro was Wisconsin’s largest rural African American settlement in the 19th century. The State’s early defiance of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act and the later demise of the slavery system after the Civil War encouraged freed slaves to settle in Wisconsin. Nearly 150 African American settlers, with the assistance of the Quaker religious order, came to Hillsboro, where they successfully farmed. Many settlers became landowners, and a few, like Thomas Shivers who was born on a Tennessee plantation, owned large acreages.*

*The African American settlers socialized well with neighboring European immigrants, establishing some of the State’s first integrated schools, churches, and sporting teams. Thomas Shivers’ son, Algie Shivers, was a notable builder, designing and constructing many of Vernon County’s round barns in the early 20th century. The advent of the automobile, and other elements of change, led to the gradual decline of the rural African American population.*

*Vernon County currently has more round barns than any other county in Wisconsin. It is thought that the whole state of Wisconsin had up to 215 round barns at one time. As of 2019, there are 10 still standing in Vernon County, and one newly built. (Vernon County Historical Society)*

# Round Barns of Vernon County, WI



**\*\*Please respect private property and do not walk onto the property or into the barn without owner permission.\*\***

Figure 8.1 Vernon County Round Barn Tour Map (Vernon County Historical Society)



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

This element provides a baseline assessment of economic development and contains the information required under SS66.1001. Information includes labor market statistics, economic base statistics, strengths and weaknesses for economic development, analysis of business and industry parks, and environmentally contaminated sites. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future economic development activities.

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### GOAL I. DEVELOP CHILDCARE OPPORTUNITIES.

### GOAL II. SUPPORT SKILLED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION (VERNON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024).

#### Objectives:

1. Collaborate with Western Technical College (WTC), local school districts and the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board to identify the gap between the skills prospective employees need to have and the skills employers want/need to fill positions.
2. Connect employers with programs like: Youth Apprenticeships, Career Exploration, Career Pathways, Job Fairs, Job Shadowing, through area school districts, Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA), the Technical Colleges and area Universities and Colleges.
3. Work with WTC to increase utilization of the Viroqua campus to offer more education and training opportunities in the County.
4. Successful efforts on the previous goal "Support and Retain Current Business" will also impact the ability to upskill the workforce to meet employers needs and continue to grow area businesses which will provide more employment opportunities to retain young people and attract more young people to Vernon County.

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### GOAL III. PROMOTE LIGHT INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUITABLE AREAS OF THE COUNTY.

#### Objectives:

1. Support local businesses and attract new investment by designating areas for commercial and industrial development.
2. Create business and industrial parks using Tax Incremental Financing (TIF).

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### GOAL IV. SUPPORT AND RETAIN CURRENT BUSINESS (VERNON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024).

#### Objectives:

1. Enhance the Business Retention Expansion (BRE) Program to systematize business visits across the County with a goal of meeting with all businesses each year and, where/when possible, try to include a representative from the local community and the region/state on the visit.
2. Collaborate with communities, developers, businesses, and others to increase affordable housing stock across the County.
3. Encourage and support collaboration for the development of additional openings with existing Childcare facilities as well as creating new Childcare facilities around the County as needed.
4. Market the activities of the new department and county position.

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### GOAL V. ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.

#### Objectives:

1. Collaborate with local tourism organizations, chambers of commerce, and business associations to identify and prioritize tourism and recreational business opportunities that align with the county's unique assets and strengths.
2. Support the development and expansion of tourism-related infrastructure and amenities, such as campgrounds, shared-use trails, parks, visitor centers, and cultural attractions, to enhance the visitor experience and extend the length of visitor stays.
3. Develop outdoor recreation infrastructure to improve the quality of life, retain and attract residents and visitors.

## EMPLOYMENT

Vernon County has 13,843 residents in the civilian labor force. Employees of private company workers made up the largest percentage of workers, at 60.3%. Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers made up 14.4% of the workforce and government workers made up 13.4% of the workforce. The largest occupation group was educational services, and health care and social assistance with 3,829 workers. The county is home to the headquarters of Organic Valley, the world's largest cooperative of family farmers.

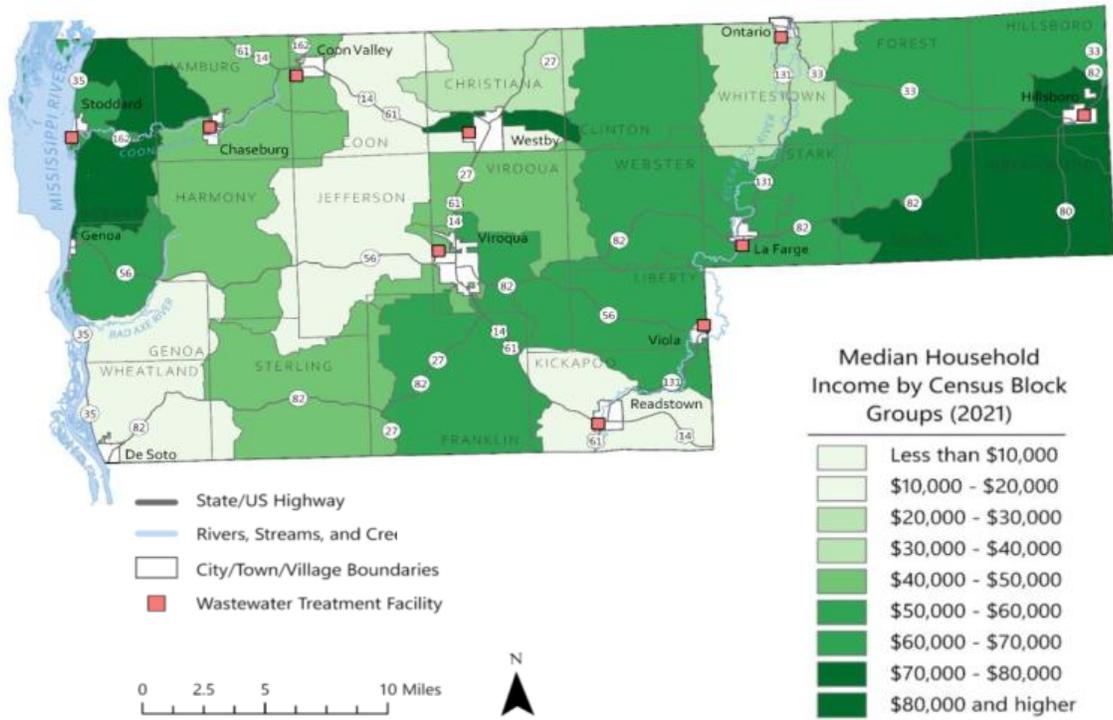
**Table 9.1 Industry by Class of Worker**

	Employee of private company workers (%)	Self-employed in own incorporated business workers (%)	Private not-for-profit wage and salary workers (%)	Local, State, and federal government workers (%)	Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers and unpaid family workers (%)	Total workers in industry
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	43.5	5.8	0.9	0.3	49.5	758
Construction	71.0	4.4	1.5	9.8	13.3	1,139
Manufacturing	93.6	1.0	0.3	0.0	5.2	1,985
Wholesale trade	91.9	1.6	4.5	0.0	2.0	445
Retail trade	88.0	3.1	2.3	0.0	6.6	1,508
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	70.0	1.4	6.2	14.0	8.5	779
Information	67.4	1.4	18.4	7.8	5.0	282
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental and leasing	71.2	6.2	13.5	2.1	7.1	534
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	67.6	6.9	9.7	2.4	13.4	741

Educational services, health care and social assistance	33.5	1.7	35.2	25.8	3.8	3,829
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	70.9	9.2	9.7	6.0	4.2	763
Other services	32.0	3.9	46.2	0.9	17.0	535
Public Administration	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	545
Total civilian employed population 16 years and over	60.3	3.0	14.4	13.4	8.8	13,843

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, S2407 Industry by Class of Worker for the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over

Map 9.1 Median Income by Census Tract



## UNEMPLOYMENT, INCOME, AND POVERTY

The median household income in Vernon County is \$65,177. The mean income in Vernon County increased by \$26,382 from 2010 to 2022. Households making \$100,000 to \$149,999 increased from 7.6% to 19.3% from 2010 to 2022. The mean and median income of Vernon County is substantially less than that of Wisconsin and the United States. There is substantial spatial variation in median income within Vernon County. The pattern is complex, but in general areas within incorporated municipalities (i.e., Viroqua, Westby) have the lowest median income, with the immediate surrounding rural areas (i.e., Town of Bergen) having the highest median income. More remote rural areas (i.e., the Town of Jefferson) have incomes in between these two extremes.

**Table 9.2 Household Income**

	Percent			
	2010	2015	2020	2022
Less than \$10,000	7.0	5.7	5.9	4.4
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.6	6.8	6.3	5.4
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12.5	12.6	11.2	7.2
\$25,000 to \$34,999	14.2	10.9	9.4	8.4
\$35,000 to \$49,999	16.6	16.0	13.6	12.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.1	20.7	19.2	19.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.6	13.0	13.5	13.3
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7.6	9.8	15.1	19.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.5	2.3	3.2	6.4
\$200,000 or more	1.3	2.1	2.7	4.1
<b>Median income (USD)</b>	<b>43,632</b>	<b>47,675</b>	<b>54,549</b>	<b>65,177</b>
<b>Mean income (USD)</b>	<b>54,087</b>	<b>60,990</b>	<b>67,245</b>	<b>80,469</b>
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>11,905</b>	<b>11,758</b>	<b>12,146</b>	<b>11,991</b>

*Source: American Community Survey Table S1901 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022*

## INCOME LEVELS

The mean income in Vernon County has increased \$26,382 from 2010 to 2022. Households making \$100,000 to \$149,999 increased from 7.6% to 19.3% from 2010 to 2022. More information on the income of households in Vernon County can be seen in table 5.2. Vernon County's mean and median income is less than the state of Wisconsin and the United States. More details are shown in Table 9.3.

**Table 9.3 Median and Mean Household Income Comparisons**

Year	2010	2015	2020	2022
Vernon County Median Income (USD)	43,632	47,675	54,549	65,177
Wisconsin Median Income (USD)	51,598	53,357	63,293	72,458
United States Median Income (USD)	51,914	53,889	64,994	75,149
Vernon County Mean Income (USD)	54,087	60,990	67,245	80,469
Wisconsin Mean Income (USD)	65,273	69,333	82,757	94,995
United States Mean Income (USD)	70,883	75,558	91,547	105,833

Source: American Community Survey Table S1901 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022

**Table 9.4 Median and Mean Household Income Comparisons**

Year	2010	2015	2020	2022
Vernon County Median Income (USD)	43,632	47,675	54,549	65,177
Wisconsin Median Income (USD)	51,598	53,357	63,293	72,458
United States Median Income (USD)	51,914	53,889	64,994	75,149
Vernon County Mean Income (USD)	54,087	60,990	67,245	80,469
Wisconsin Mean Income (USD)	65,273	69,333	82,757	94,995
United States Mean Income (USD)	70,883	75,558	91,547	105,833

Source: American Community Survey Table S1901 2010, 2015, 2020, 2022

## EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Transportation and information industries have the highest median earnings in the past 12 months in Vernon County, whereas the arts and entertainment industry have the lowest median earnings in Vernon County.

**Table 9.5 Industry by Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months**

	2010	2015	2020	2022
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining:	20,128	21,004	25,625	28,629
Construction	32,457	42,125	47,917	54,020
Manufacturing	32,526	35,176	42,329	48,387
Wholesale trade	33,000	41,875	39,000	50,781
Retail trade	23,442	20,250	23,929	27,500
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	40,625	41,857	49,500	55,179
Information	32,422	50,031	44,464	55,132
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing:	26,458	30,888	43,250	48,250
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services:	27,978	28,920	31,462	46,172
Educational services, and health care and social assistance:	27,432	30,848	35,814	41,321
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services	11,502	10,666	15,190	14,327
Other services except public administration	22,773	24,300	33,125	35,313
Public administration	39,722	43,917	52,778	52,888

Source: American Community 5- Year Survey: Industry by Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months (In 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars) For the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and over, (2010, 2015, 2020, 2022) B24031

## COMMUTING TO WORK

Most workers use a personal vehicle to get to work, with **74.9% driving alone** and 8.0% carpooling. A substantial proportion of workers work from home, 10.4%. All other means of commuting to work combined are only used by 6.7% of workers.

**Table 9.6 Means of Commuting to Work**

	Worker Count	Percent
Car, truck, or van (drove alone)	10,268	74.9%
Car, truck, or van (carpooled)	1,094	7.98%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	94	0.69%
Walked	510	3.72%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means	318	2.32%

Worked from home	1,427	10.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,711</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2022 5-Year Estimates, B08101 Means of Transportation to Work by Age

## INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

Industry projections are available for the Western Workforce Development Area, which includes Vernon County from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. Table 5.7 indicates that over the next several years the largest projected employment increases will take place in professional and business services and financial activities industries.

**Table 9.7 Industry Projections for Western Workforce Development Area**

Industry	Projected Percent Change from 2016 to 2026
Goods Producing	2.7
Natural Resources and Mining	7.9
Construction	10.3
Manufacturing	-0.1
Services Providing	8.4
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	9.2
Information	-11.7
Financial Activities	12.8
Professional and Business Services	13.1
Education and Health Services	8.7
Leisure and Hospitality	9.8
Other Services (except government)	6.1
Government	2.5
Self-Employed	8.9

Source: Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, WIOA Local Plan 2020-2023, Table 1

**Table 9.8 Unemployment by Age**

Age	# Unemployed	% Unemployed
< 22	6	2.05
22-24	10	3.42
25-34	55	18.84
35-44	70	23.97
45-54	60	20.55
55-59	33	11.30
60-64	30	10.27
65+	28	9.59

Source: Lightcast™, April 2023

Ontario Wisconsin, located within Vernon County, had seen an extreme reduction in job growth with a -63% percent change from 2017 to 2022; alternatively, La Farge has seen a 63% increase in job growth from 2017 to 2022. Hillsboro appears to have the highest average hourly earnings at \$41.18 an hour while Genoa has the lowest average wage at \$27.66 an hour.

**Table 9.9 Job Growth by Zip Code**

ZIP	ZIP Name			2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017-2022 % Change	Avg. Hourly Earnings (USD)
54665	Viroqua			1,094	1,130	3	33.43
54667	Westby			387	437	13	34.82
54634	Hillsboro	331	355	7	41.18		
54651	Ontario	215	80	-63	29.01		
54623	Coon Valley	114	127	11	31.87		
54658	Stoddard	113	147	30	35.17		
54639	La Farge	82	134	63	33.69		
54652	Readstown	66	78	18	32.17		
54632	Genoa	64	59	-8	27.66		
54621	Chaseburg	62	66	6	36.81		
54624	De Soto	52	44	-15	35.52		

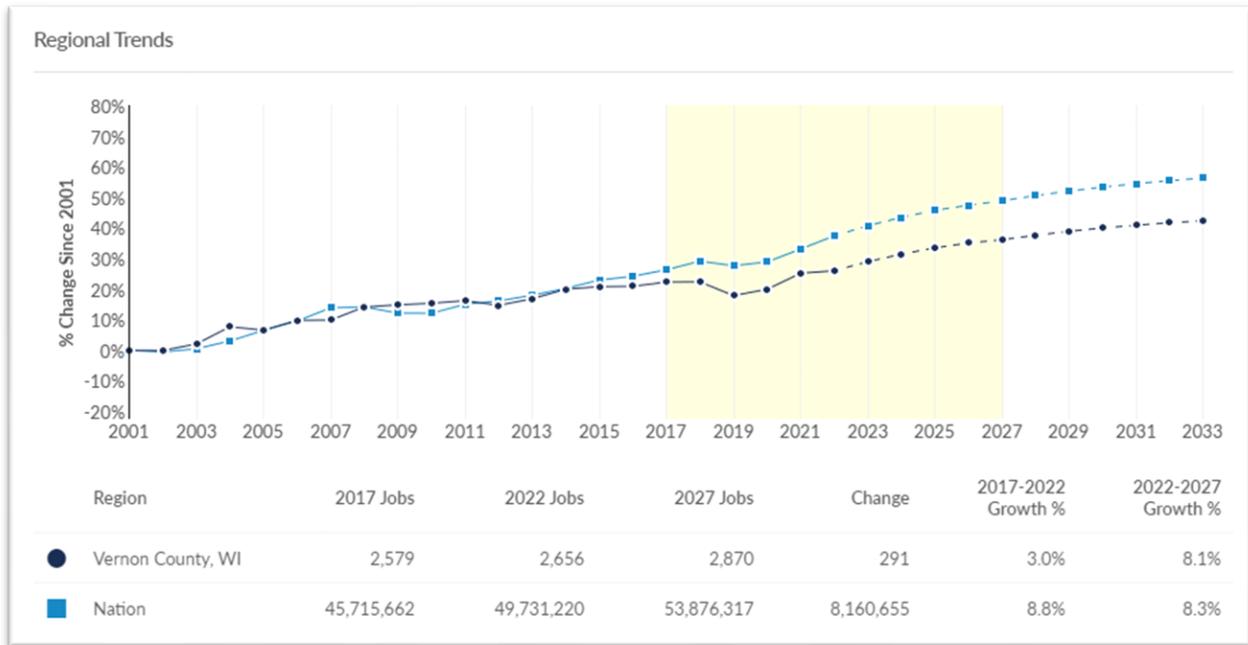
Source: Lightcast™ (2022) - Workforce Availability Report

**Figure 9.3 Median Income Distribution**



Source: Lightcast™ - Compensation Analysis 2022

**Figure 9.4 Regional Job Trends**



Compensation adjusted for Cost of Living in Vernon County is significantly lower than the national average according to Lightcast’s compensation analysis report.

**Strengths And Weaknesses for Fostering Economic Growth**

Fostering economic development in Vernon County is challenging. Part of the reason for this is the fact that most residents want the county to maintain its rural character and do not want to encourage housing, business, and industrial growth.

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**ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES**

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires local units of government to evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) and NEPAAssist.org an Environmental Protection Agency were utilized in identifying the contaminated sites in Vernon County. There are 564 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) sites (Source: <https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/botw/ResultsNextAction.do>). BRRTS data comes from various sources, both internal and external to DNR. see Appendix D for list of WI DNR BRRTS sites within Vernon County.

The EPA’s Brownfields Program offers grants and technical assistance to communities, states, tribes, and other stakeholders to assess, clean up, and sustainably repurpose contaminated properties. In Vernon County, there is one federally designated Brownfield site located at 117 E. Terhune Street, Viroqua, Wisconsin, and owned by the City of Viroqua. However, this designation does not imply the absence of other contaminated sites in the county. On the contrary, it highlights the need to evaluate and identify additional sites that may qualify for designation, thereby unlocking access to state and federal resources for cleanup and redevelopment.

## **Brownfields**

A brownfield is a parcel of land where the expansion, development, or redevelopment may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. These sites can range from former industrial sites to abandoned gas stations, and their contamination issues can pose significant challenges to redevelopment efforts. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established assistance programs to help revitalize land that is considered a brownfield. The goal of these programs is to clean up and support the area, identify practical uses for the land, and remove barriers and obstacles to site utilization.

The EPA offers various types of grants under the Brownfields Program. Assessment grants provide funding for developing inventories of brownfield sites, prioritizing sites, conducting community involvement activities, and conducting environmental site assessments and cleanup planning. Cleanup grants provide direct funding for cleanup activities at specific sites. Revolving loan fund grants enable recipients to provide loans and subgrants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. Finally, job training grants help communities recruit, train, and place workers for employment in the environmental field, promoting job creation and economic development.

For example, a community with an abandoned industrial site may apply for an assessment grant to determine the extent of contamination. Once the site has been assessed and the cleanup needs identified, the community can apply for a cleanup grant to address the contamination. After the site is cleaned up, the community might attract developers to build new housing, businesses, or parks, thereby transforming a blighted area into a vibrant, economically productive space.

Additionally, the EPA provides technical assistance to brownfield stakeholders to help them navigate the complex regulatory landscape and to identify and implement best practices for site assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. This assistance can include help with community outreach, grant writing, and the development of long-term redevelopment plans that ensure the sustainability and economic viability of the project.

By removing the barriers and obstacles associated with contaminated sites, the EPA's Brownfields Program helps to mitigate environmental risks, reduce urban sprawl, preserve green spaces, and promote economic development. Communities that successfully rehabilitate brownfields often see a range of benefits, including increased property values, improved public health and safety, and enhanced quality of life for residents.

In summary, brownfields are lands with potential contamination that complicates development efforts. The EPA's assistance programs aim to clean up these sites, support redevelopment, and remove obstacles to their use, ultimately transforming them into safe, productive community assets. Through grants, technical assistance, and collaborative efforts, the Brownfields Program plays a crucial role in revitalizing these areas, promoting economic growth, and improving environmental health.

As part of the planning process, the DNR's Solid and Hazardous Waste Information (SHWIMS) system was reviewed. The purpose of the registry is to serve as an informational tool for the public regarding the location of historic and current waste disposal sites in the state. Historic and current waste disposal site information may be important to individuals considering land purchases, governments planning redevelopment, businesses planning expansion and well drillers planning well installation. The search for Landfills and Disposal Sites yielded 36 facilities in Vernon County (Appendix D +E).

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## **COUNTY, REGIONAL, AND STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Numerous County, Regional, and State economic development organizations exist to aid rural communities like Vernon County. The following is a list of selected organizations and programs that could be beneficial to future economic development.

### **Vernon County Community Development Grant**

The Community Development Department administers the Vernon County Community Development Grant. In 2023, \$115,000 in Community Development Grants went out to fifteen villages and townships in Vernon County assisting in resiliency and economic development across the county, and in 2024 that amount was increased to \$150,000.

The Vernon County Board of Supervisors and Staff are pleased to share there will be a 2025 Community Development Grant to help local communities implement projects that will strengthen economic growth and resiliency. This year, Vernon County is investing to support this program, made possible by contributed funds from the Ho-Chunk Nation. More information about the 2025 grant timelines and process will be coming soon.

### **Vernon County Economic Development Loan**

The Vernon County Economic Development Loan program is a flexible source of financing for businesses expanding or locating to Vernon County. This fund was created to enable businesses to grow, create jobs and improve the local economy.

### **Tax Incremental Finance Districts**

Increment Finance Districts (IFDs), also known as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, are a way for cities to improve specific areas without raising taxes. They do this by locking in the tax amount for a period of time, usually 20-30 years, and then using the extra tax money that comes from higher property values in those areas. This extra money, called tax increment, helps pay for public projects like roads, parks, and utilities, which in turn attract businesses and developers to invest in the area.

One of the main benefits of TIFs is that they help revitalize rundown or neglected parts of a city. By improving infrastructure and public spaces, these districts encourage private companies to build and invest, creating jobs and boosting the local economy. According to the Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA), TIFs have been crucial in turning struggling business and industrial districts into lively, economically vibrant places.

Another advantage is that TIFs fund these improvements without needing to raise current taxes or take on more public debt. Instead, the money comes from the future increased property taxes that the improvements help generate. This means cities can make big changes without putting extra strain on their budgets. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) points out that TIFs can be used for various public projects, including transportation and affordable housing.

However, there are some challenges. There is a risk that the expected increase in property values might not happen, which means less tax increment money to fund projects. Additionally, the benefits of TIF projects might not reach all parts of the community equally. To avoid these issues, cities need to carefully plan and regularly check on the progress of TIF projects. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy emphasizes the importance of monitoring these projects to ensure they deliver the expected benefits (CDFA, ULI, ICMA, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy).

## **LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Viroqua Chamber**

The Viroqua Chamber is a membership based non-profit organization focused on keeping Viroqua vibrant by strengthening the business community, preserving the history and beauty of the historic downtown district, supporting community-wide events throughout the year, and providing resources to tourists visiting from all over the world. Under the leadership of a Board of Directors and Executive Director, the Viroqua Chamber implements a comprehensive four-point approach to community revitalization: organization, design, economic restructuring and promotion. Each of the four points is represented by a dedicated committee working hard to ensure Viroqua remains vibrant and strong.

### **Westby Chamber**

Westby Wisconsin is a city like no other: steeped in history, rich in natural beauty, and full of welcoming people. Whether you are a lifelong resident or a first-time visitor, we hope you will explore Westby and find something new that delights, inspires, and makes

you want to discover more. The Westby Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to continue to play an active role in the growth and development of businesses, organizations, and individuals in our community. The Westby Area Chamber of Commerce offers support, marketing, and more to its members. Learn more about our mission, our vision, and how to get involved.

### **Hillsboro Chamber**

Hillsboro, Wisconsin is the eastern gateway to the iconic and unglaciated driftless region. Winding roads, rolling bluffs, and majestic views provide the perfect backdrop to your weekend road trip. Bring your camera and your favorite playlist.

### **Coon Valley Business Association**

Located in the heart of the Driftless region, an area never touched by glaciers, Coon Valley sits at the confluence of spring-fed trout streams, rolling hills, green pastures, and wooded bluffs. This cozy landscape is just a short drive from the city of La Crosse. Nestled at the bottom of the valley, downtown Coon Valley offers unique shops, excellent restaurants, and numerous places to explore and enjoy.

### **Vernon Economic Development Association(VEDA)**

Vernon Economic Development Association, Inc. (VEDA) was formed in January of 2006 by a group of community leaders and business executives from throughout Vernon County. They recognized the need to create and advance a cohesive new strategic plan to build a stronger economy for the good of all the people with a stake in the future of Vernon County, Wisconsin. It is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, funded by memberships and donations from businesses, municipalities and community members. Contributions to the organization are tax deductible.

### **Stoddard Business Association**

Stoddard Business Association has been created to build a place of community for Stoddard, Wisconsin area businesses while providing networking opportunities, business advice and support, mentoring and education, and advocating for businesses.

### **Ontario Community Club**

### **Friends of Readstown**

A non-Profit group solely for the betterment of the Village of Readstown.

## **REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **7 Rivers Alliance**

The 7 Rivers Alliance is an economic development organization for the Upper Mississippi Region that is dedicated to economic development across geographic and state boundaries. We understand the needs of businesses and workers are not limited to zip codes and municipal boundaries. With continuous research, we strive to provide useful workforce solutions for the region, offer relevant seminars, and create opportunities for our region to utilize.

### **University of Wisconsin Small Business Development Center**

The Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse is part of a statewide network of SBDCs working with business owners and entrepreneurs to facilitate business growth and improvement, and to launch successful new companies. Through no-cost consulting, low-cost entrepreneurial education, and strategic facilitation, SBDC experts serve as resources for small and emerging mid-size companies. The Wisconsin SBDC is hosted by the Universities of Wisconsin Administration and is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

## **STATE ORGANIZATIONS**

## **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation**

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is committed to creating and maintaining a business climate that allows you to maximize your potential. Working with more than 600 statewide partners, including regional economic development organizations, academic institutions, and industry groups, we are enhancing our communities, supporting business development, advancing industry innovation, tapping global markets, and developing a talented workforce to help Wisconsin realize its full economic potential.

## **FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **United States Economic Development Administration**

To lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness, preparing American regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. The U.S. Economic Development Administration's investment policy is designed to establish a foundation for sustainable job growth and the building of durable regional economies throughout the United States. This foundation builds upon two key economic drivers - innovation and regional collaboration. Innovation is key to global competitiveness, new and better jobs, a resilient economy, and the attainment of national economic goals. Regional collaboration is essential for economic recovery because regions are the centers of competition in the new global economy and those that work together to leverage resources and use their strengths to overcome weaknesses will fare better than those that do not. EDA encourages its partners around the country to develop initiatives that advance innovative ideas and creative approaches to address rapidly evolving economic conditions.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COORDINATION ELEMENT

Vernon County is bordered by six counties in Wisconsin, La Crosse, Monroe, Juneau, Sauk, Richland, and Crawford Counties. Vernon County also borders Minnesota and Iowa, consisting of Houston and Allamakee counties, respectively. Regional collaboration and planning can proactively reduce potential disagreements and conflicts between these counties. This element provides a baseline assessment of intergovernmental relationships in the county and contains information required under SS66.1001. Information includes existing and potential areas of cooperation and existing and potential areas of intergovernmental conflict. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future intergovernmental cooperation activities in Vernon County.

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### GOAL I. PROMOTE COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION WITH ALL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT.

#### Objectives:

1. Promote cooperative land use planning and development standards with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure cohesive growth and preservation strategies across municipal boundaries.
2. Collaborate with state, federal, and tribal agencies to secure funding and technical assistance for infrastructure improvements, economic development, environmental and conservation projects.
3. Engage in joint emergency planning and mutual aid agreements with surrounding municipalities to enhance preparedness for natural disasters and other emergencies.
4. Encourage communication and collaboration with non-governmental organizations.

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### GOAL II: MAINTAIN MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES, NEIGHBORING COUNTIES, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES, AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVING COUNTY RESIDENTS.

#### Objectives:

1. Coordinate County planning efforts with cities, villages, towns, and adjacent counties as necessary to maximize commonalities in goals, objectives, and long-term land use plans.
2. Assist area municipalities as needed to jointly plan boundary areas and coordinate their long-term growth plans with the County Comprehensive Plan.
3. Identify opportunities for shared services or other cooperative planning efforts with appropriate units of government.
4. Enhance understanding of government and planning processes by students in area school districts in order to foster the next generation of community leaders.

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**GOAL I. ENSURE THAT ALL ELEMENTS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, ENERGY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE, WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE, GREEN PLACES FOR LIVING, WORKING, AND RECREATION, WITH A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE.**

Objective:

1. Encourage inclusion of green infrastructure elements, such as green roofs, permeable pavements, rain gardens, and urban forests, into development projects to manage stormwater, improve air quality, and enhance biodiversity.

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**GOAL II. BUILD COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS, SUCH AS FLOODS, WILDFIRES, STORMS, AND HEATWAVES, THROUGH HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING, EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE MEASURES.**

Objective:

1. Encourage investment in resilient infrastructure, including flood control measures, shoreland protection, water supply resilience, and climate-resilient buildings to withstand and recover from natural disasters, climate, and weather-related impacts.
2. Encourage partnerships and collaboration with government and non-governmental organizations (NGO).
3. Encourage the continued gathering of information on the PL 566 dams to assist with future decision making.

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**GOAL III. PROMOTE ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDING DESIGN, RENEWABLE ENERGY ADOPTION.**

Objectives:

1. Partner with Focus on Energy, utility companies, and community organizations to create and promote energy conservation programs.
2. Encourage green building standards to reduce energy consumption and promote sustainable development.

The following are sustainability best practices to mitigate problems Vernon County is facing today and may become more problematic in the future, green roofs, cool roofs, permeable pavement, rain gardens and preservation of the tree canopy along with a summary of the Public Law 566 dams.

### **Green Roofs**

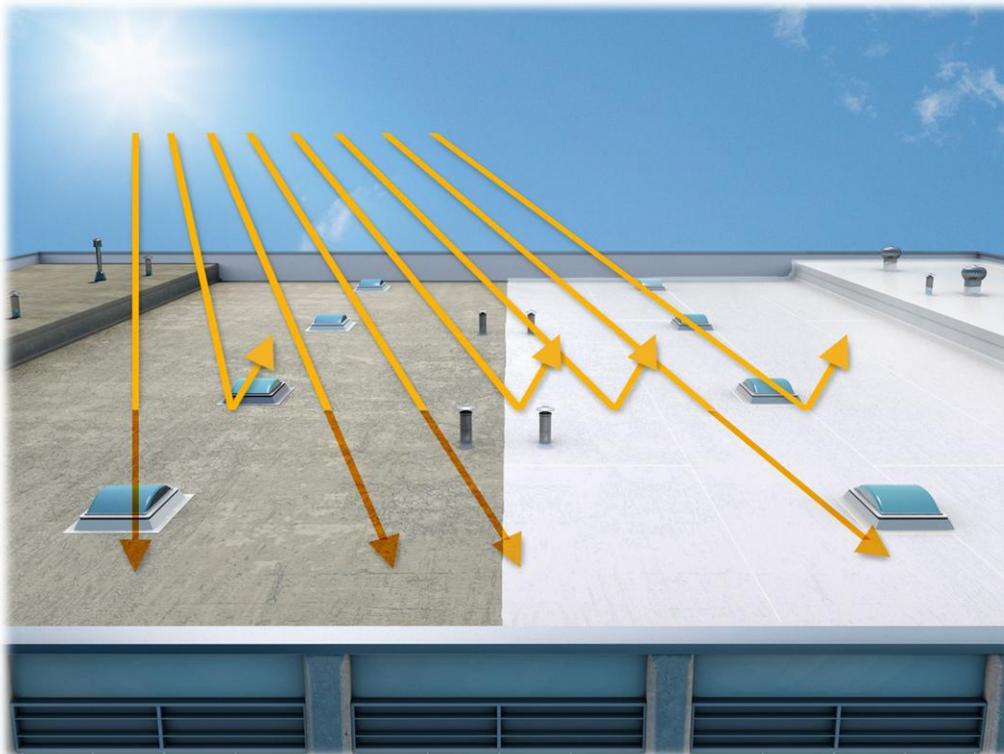
Green roofs, also known as vegetated roofs or living roofs, are roofs on top of buildings that are made of a waterproof membrane, soil, and vegetation. These roofs have many benefits to them, including environmental, social, economic, and aesthetic benefits. These roofs can reduce the amount of stormwater coming off of the roof by up to 65% and can delay the flow rate by up to three hours. This is important to reduce flooding where there are few permeable surfaces. The vegetation can also provide shade and a protective layer to protect the building from being directly hit by the sun, reducing cooling costs. Not only that, but it can also reduce the energy used for heating by helping insulate the building. The GSA green roof report estimates that the return on investment of a green roof is around 224% and will pay itself back in energy savings after just 6.2 years. The roofs can add beauty and aesthetic pleasure to the building and provide habitats for animals and birds which further enhance that too. Roofs can also last up to twice as long when they are green roofs (US General Services Administration).



Source: ZinCo Green Roofs

### Cool Roofs

Cool roofs may be less of an investment and require less upkeep and maintenance than green roofs while still saving on energy costs and lowering the area's temperature. A cool roof is a roof that is designed to reflect more sunlight than a conventional roof by being white or light colored, increasing its albedo. Cool roofs can decrease the temperature of a roof on a sunny day by more than 50 degrees Fahrenheit, drastically lowering cooling expenses. Although it does not help with habitat, aesthetics, or stormwater, it does help with reducing energy costs and temperatures in the area (Energy.gov).



Source: [www.sika.com](http://www.sika.com)

## Permeable Pavements

Permeable pavements include pervious asphalt, pervious concrete, interlocking pavers, and plastic grid pavers. These surfaces allow for rain and snowmelt to penetrate the surface and make its way into the ground. It reduces surface runoff and flash flooding during storms and the spring. Since the drainage is better, the need for road salt is also reduced during the winter (EPA).



Source: [www.stormwater.cob.org](http://www.stormwater.cob.org)

## Rain Gardens

A rain garden, similar to a bioswale, is a lower area in the landscape that can collect water runoff from roads, roofs, or any other impermeable surface to allow it time to soak into the ground. These gardens can house many types of plants, typically flowers, to help enhance the beauty of the area. The plants can help to reduce the pollutants picked up from the water runoff and provide a sheltered habitat for animals such as birds, squirrels, rabbits, and other small animals. Some rain gardens include altered soils or rock beds underneath them to help the water penetrate the surface better to reduce the chance of flash flooding. These gardens go great in developed areas because they look nice and require minimal upkeep and can fit in any small areas (EPA).



## Tree Canopy

The term tree canopy refers to the amount of tree cover in an area from an aerial view. These tree canopies can help with the high temperatures of an area, as well as provide habitat for animals and help clean the air. It is important to have a variety of tree species in a city because it reduces the impacts of invasive species and pathogens that kill them. It is important to continue to plant more trees in areas, but also important to maintain the current trees and keep them in a healthy condition. Trees can be planted in yards, boulevards, and parks to help utilize the open space in the best way possible. Boulevards have been a common place to start planting trees since there is not much that space can be utilized for. It is important as a city to set tree canopy goals and to keep track of your progress every year in order to meet those goals.



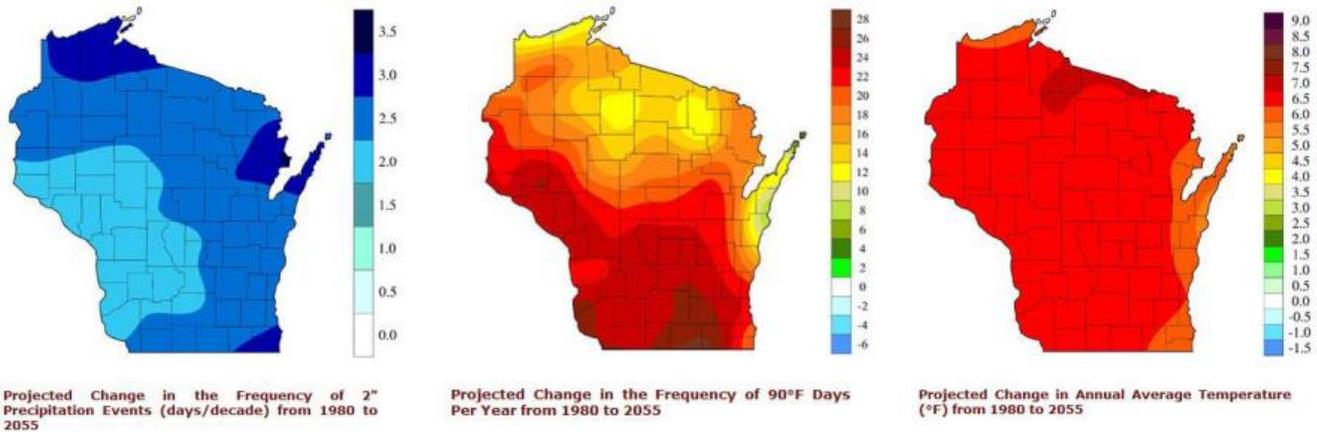
Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

## Climate Change

Climate change may make past trends unreliable sources for predicting future impacts, frequency, probability, and vulnerabilities. Climate change has and will continue to impact average annual temperatures causing increased frequency in heat waves; increased frequency and intensity of severe rainstorms; shorter, warmer winters with decreased river ice cover; increased drought frequency, and other impacts. In general, Vernon County, along with most of Wisconsin, will continue growing warmer and drier during this century, especially in the summer; as rainfall amount and intensity continue to increase. It is projected that over the next 25 years, Vernon County's climate will experience:

- Increases in temperatures of 6.5°F, with the greatest increases in the winter
- Sixteen less nights a year with temperatures below 0°F
- Twenty-four more days a year with temperatures above 90°F
- Less snow cover, deeper frost depth, and more freeze-thaw cycles
- More precipitation with more severe precipitation events

Analysis of historical data, combined with climate model downscaling, suggests a trend towards wetter conditions and more intense rainfall. Climate models also suggest that increased winter snowpack, and late winter rainfall, may result in high regional groundwater tables and river levels, and saturated soil conditions.



## Key Points

- Wisconsin's average daily temperature has become three degrees Fahrenheit warmer since the 1950.
- The last two decades have been the warmest on record, and the past decade has been the wettest.
- Wisconsin has become wetter – average precipitation has increased 17 percent (about five inches) since 1950.
- Warming is happening fastest in the winter and at night.
- Southern Wisconsin has experienced the highest increase in precipitation.
- Very extreme precipitation events will increase in the future.
- Extreme events are already causing immense impacts across the state, and the frequency of those events will generally increase.

Source: Wisconsin Institute on Climate Change – 2021 Assessment Report

## Potential Impacts

The University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have established the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI). WICCI working groups have investigated how potential changes in Wisconsin's climate might impact natural and human systems around the state. Some potential impacts of concern for Vernon County with regards to stormwater management and large rainfalls include:

- Conveyance systems filled beyond capacity cause flooded homes and streets;
- Roadways and bridges are washed-out or become impassable;
- Groundwater flooding of property and cropland increases;
- Rural residential wellheads contamination by flood waters and high groundwater;
- Impoundments and stormwater detention ponds fail more frequently;
- Raingardens and other biofiltration best management practices (BMPs) fail due to saturated soil conditions;
- Increased erosion of slopes by intense rainfall events leads to high sediment and phosphorus loading to surface waters;
- Runoff of manure from fields, and accompanying fish kills, are more frequent;
- Stormwater inflow and groundwater infiltration to sanitary sewers, results in untreated municipal wastewater flowing into lakes and streams.

- Other potential impacts of concern for Vernon County include:
  - Warmer nighttime temperatures might lead to more extreme heat waves, increasing the risk for heat stroke in some populations.
  - Air pollution, increasing temperatures, changing circulation patterns, and other processes combine to increase ground-level ozone, which affects respiratory health.
  - Heavy rains and flooding can overwhelm sewer and stormwater systems, leading to a rise in water pollution and the risk of waterborne diseases such as cryptosporidium and giardia.
  - Changes in temperatures and precipitation could result in an increase in disease-carrying insects, including ticks and mosquitoes. This can result in a greater risk for contracting vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease, West Nile encephalitis, and Zika virus.
  - Changes in temperature and precipitation could affect growing seasons, crop yields, weed and pest infestations, and dairy productivity.
  - Changes in the timing and amount of rainfall influence groundwater recharge, and any decrease in groundwater recharge could be compounded by increased demand for irrigation due to an extended growing season, shifts in the timing of precipitation, and high temperatures or regional droughts.

### **Solutions/Adaptations**

Although the impacts of climate change are already being seen in Wisconsin, there are things Vernon County policymakers, business leaders, and residents can do to help reduce potential impacts from climate change. The development of climate change mitigation programs can help decrease the impacts from climate change while advancing other community priorities. Examples include implementing cost-effective clean energy policies and programs and reducing carbon emissions. Climate change and clean energy policies and programs can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower energy costs, improve air quality and public health, and help achieve economic development goals. The following are some solutions or adaptations to climate change impacts that could be employed in Vernon County. Many of the identified solutions/ adaptations were developed by the WICCI working groups.

- Strengthen public health response and warning systems
- Increase energy efficiency
- Incorporate renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass
- Increase vehicle fuel economy
- Invest in clean transportation choices
- Encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation and expand availability options
- Implement bank improvement projects that reduce stormwater runoff to banks and waterways and integrate natural infiltration features such as vegetated swales
- Improve or restore natural bank protection features
- Protect floodplains, wetlands, and other natural “green infrastructure” features that can hold flood waters and enable water infiltration
- Implement development setbacks based on defensible scientific data
- Relocate or elevate structures that are threatened by flooding or erosion
- Provide education for developers, bankers, and insurance agents
- Ongoing comprehensive planning and improved implementation of existing plans
- Use best management practices for site design to control stormwater runoff
- Develop plans for bluff stability enhancement, e.g., slow erosion by planting vegetation on bluffs

- Use a risk/consequence approach to evaluate and modifying existing infrastructure to accommodate observed and predicted changes in climate
- Develop and evaluate alternative tools and strategies for the design of stormwater-related infrastructure, using a collaborative process that includes climate scientists, water resource managers, design engineers, and regulators, and members of relevant business communities.

### **Public Law 566 (PL 566) Dams and Increased Frequency of Extreme Rain Events and Flooding**

The Vernon County Land & Water Conservation Department (L&WCD) has the legal responsibility to actively operate and maintain (O&M) twenty-two (22) large, earthen embankment flood control dams built in partnership with USDA/NRCS. In August of 2007 and again in June of 2008, Vernon County was severely impacted by tremendous rainfall events that generated flooding which exceeded 500-year return elevations. Each of the 22 dams was damaged to some extent, some much worse than others.

Vernon County experienced significant flooding on August 28th, 2018. Two Vernon County and three Monroe County dams failed, along with numerous damages to other structures. This was unprecedented nationally dating back to the beginning of Public Law 566 that spawned the construction of these dams across the nation. The dams were initially built in cooperation between the Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS) and Vernon County. Both entities entered into Operation and Maintenance agreements that have now expired. They were built with a 50-year design life and have met the federal interest of public dollars invested.

An increase in significant precipitation events has highlighted hydraulic design deficiencies with our dams. The first was built in 1959 and based on precipitation data from 1930s through the 1950s. The dams are also tied into highly erodible sandstone abutments that have proven to be a structural weak point. The concrete and corrugated metal pipes are cracking and shifting, which can lead to internal piping as a failure mode. Following the 2018 flood and subsequent dam failures, the County now considers these structures to be known hazards.

The 2018 flood and subsequent dam failures prompted a watershed study of the West Fork Kickapoo and Coon Creek Watersheds, completed by M&E Consultants with oversight by the NRCS. The preferred alternative from the study is dam decommissioning, as the dams do not meet the cost-benefit ratio to reinvest federal dollars. The preferred alternative was presented to the County Board of Supervisors and adopted on 8-15-24 by Res. 2024-38 & 39. Jersey Valley is the exception, and it is proposed to rebuild this dam downstream due to the recreational benefits of the lake, park and county forest.

Currently the NRCS is seeking to acquire funding to design the decommissioning of 7 dams in the West Fork Kickapoo and 5 in the Coon Creek Watersheds. Once the decommissioning designs are completed, the Vernon County Board of Supervisors will review the details of each dam and decide if and/or when to decommission them. It is anticipated that the designs will be completed in 2026 with construction taking place after that. So long as the County takes steps to decommission now, the NRCS will pay 100% of the dam decommissioning costs.

At this time, the eight flood control structures in the Bad Axe Watershed are not included in the study.

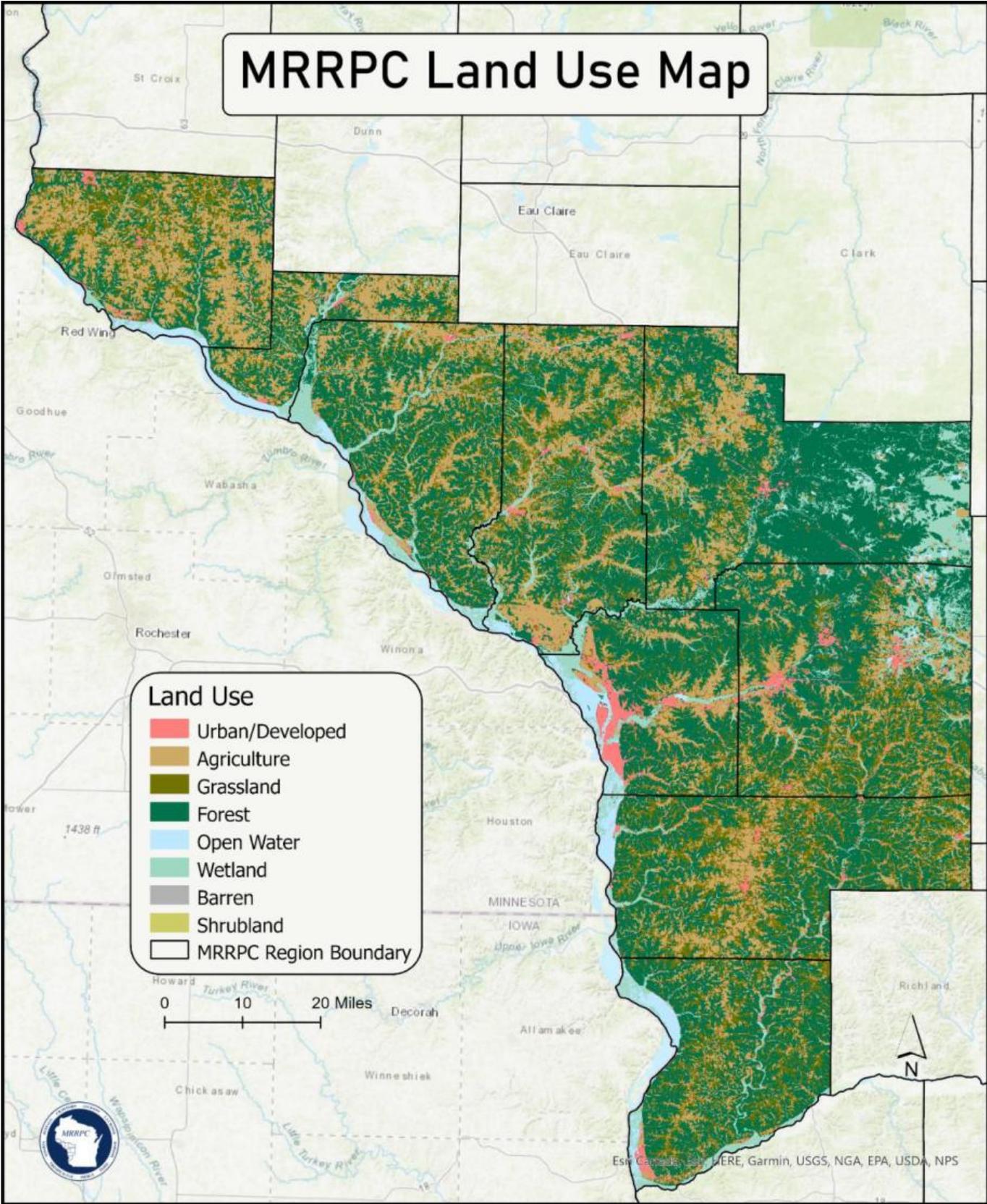
### **Vernon County Resolutions Decommissioning PL566 Dams**

In 2024 the Vernon County Board of Supervisors approved two resolutions, Resolution #2024-38 and #2024-39, addressing the PL 566 dams in Vernon County.

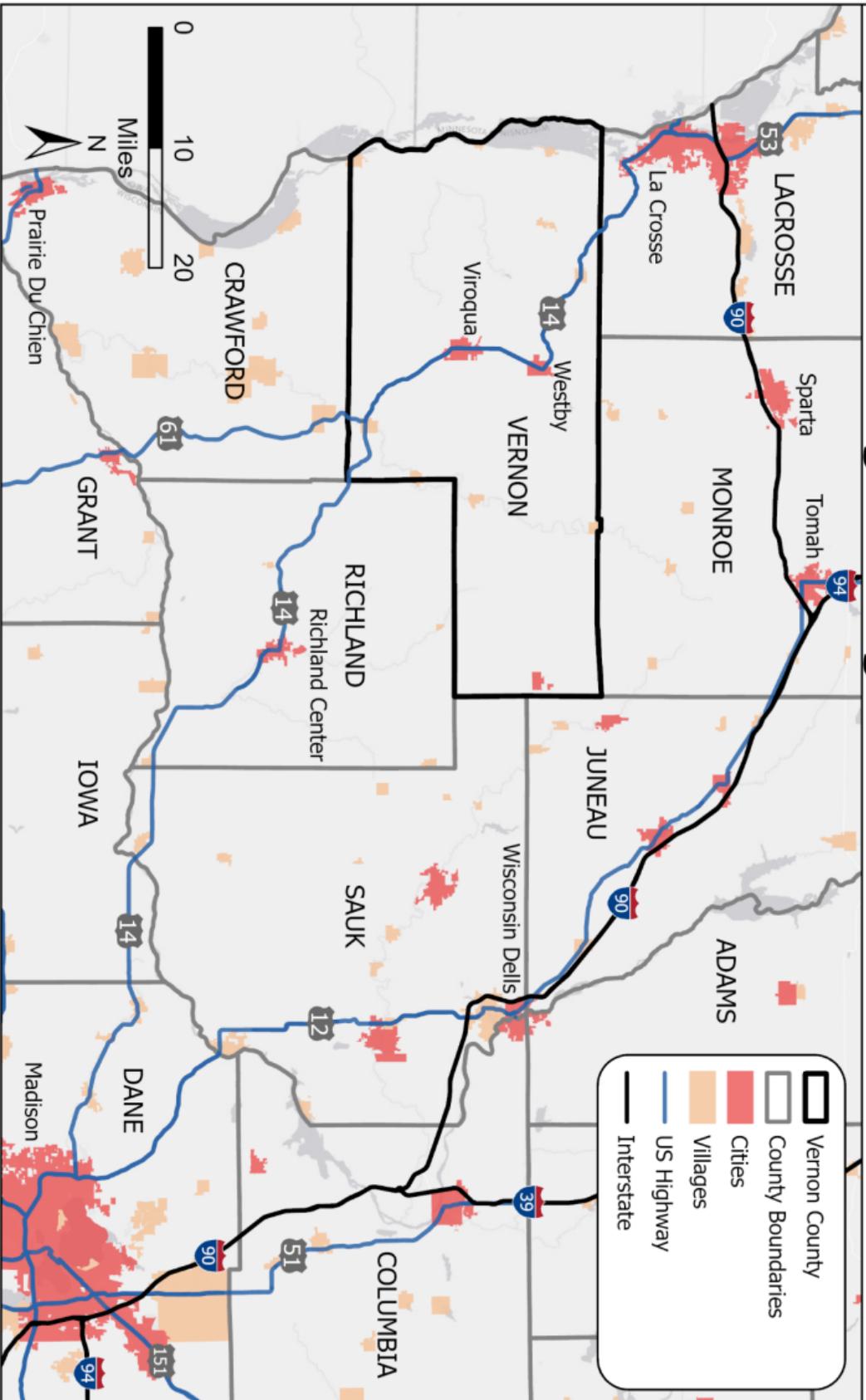
**Resolution #2024-38** recommends decommissioning all fourteen PL-566 dams in the Coon Creek Watershed.

**Resolution #2024-39** recommends decommissioning all nine PL-566 watershed dams and replacement of Jersey Valley Dam in the West Fork Kickapoo Watershed.

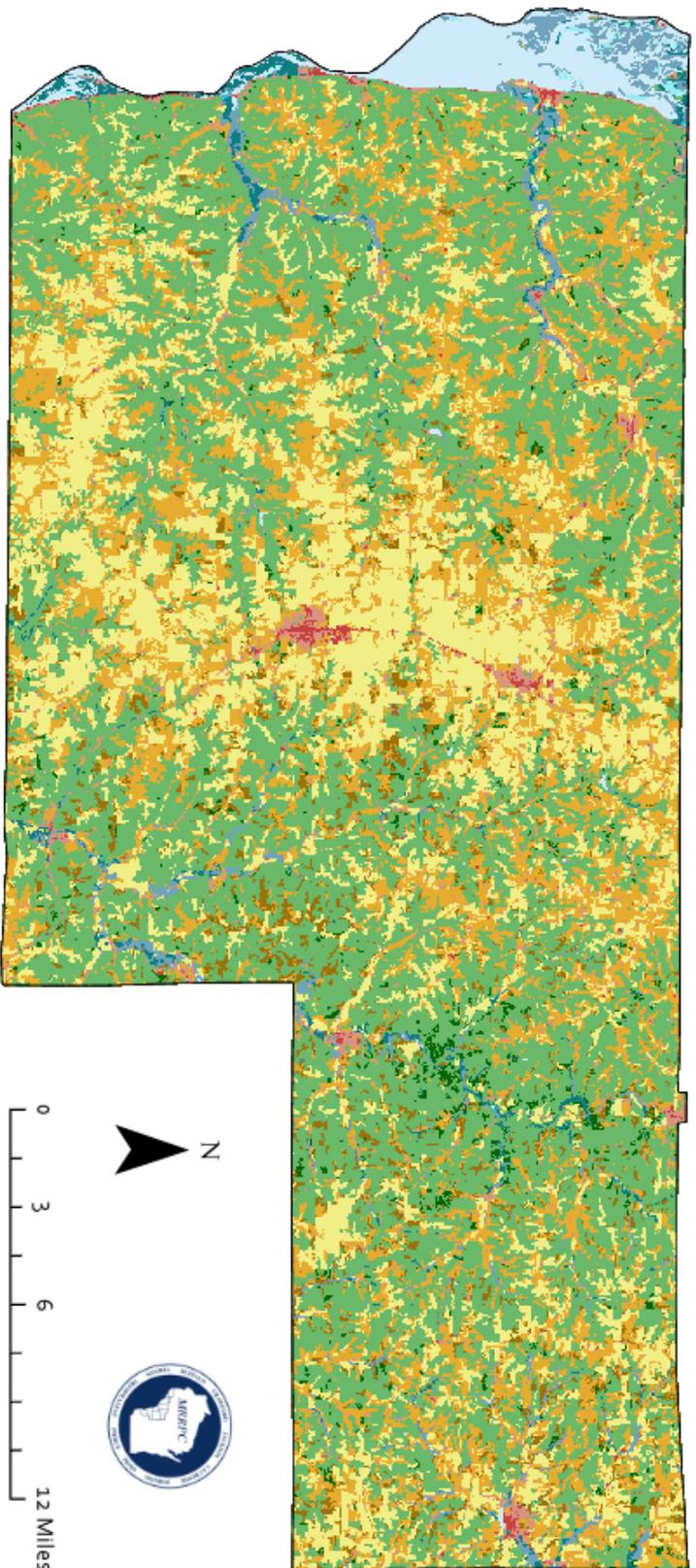




# Vernon County Neighboring Communities



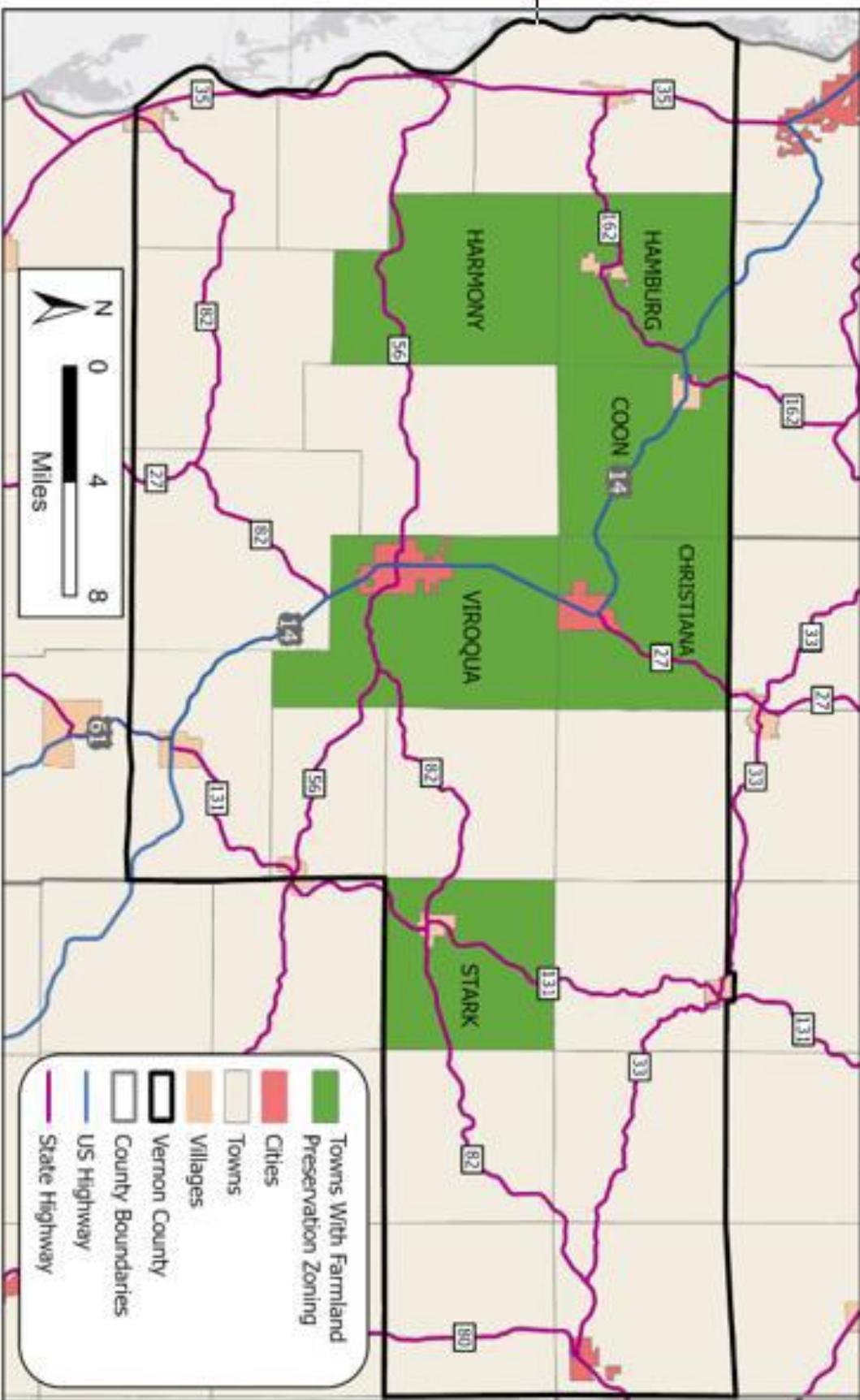
# Vernon County Land Use/Land Cover



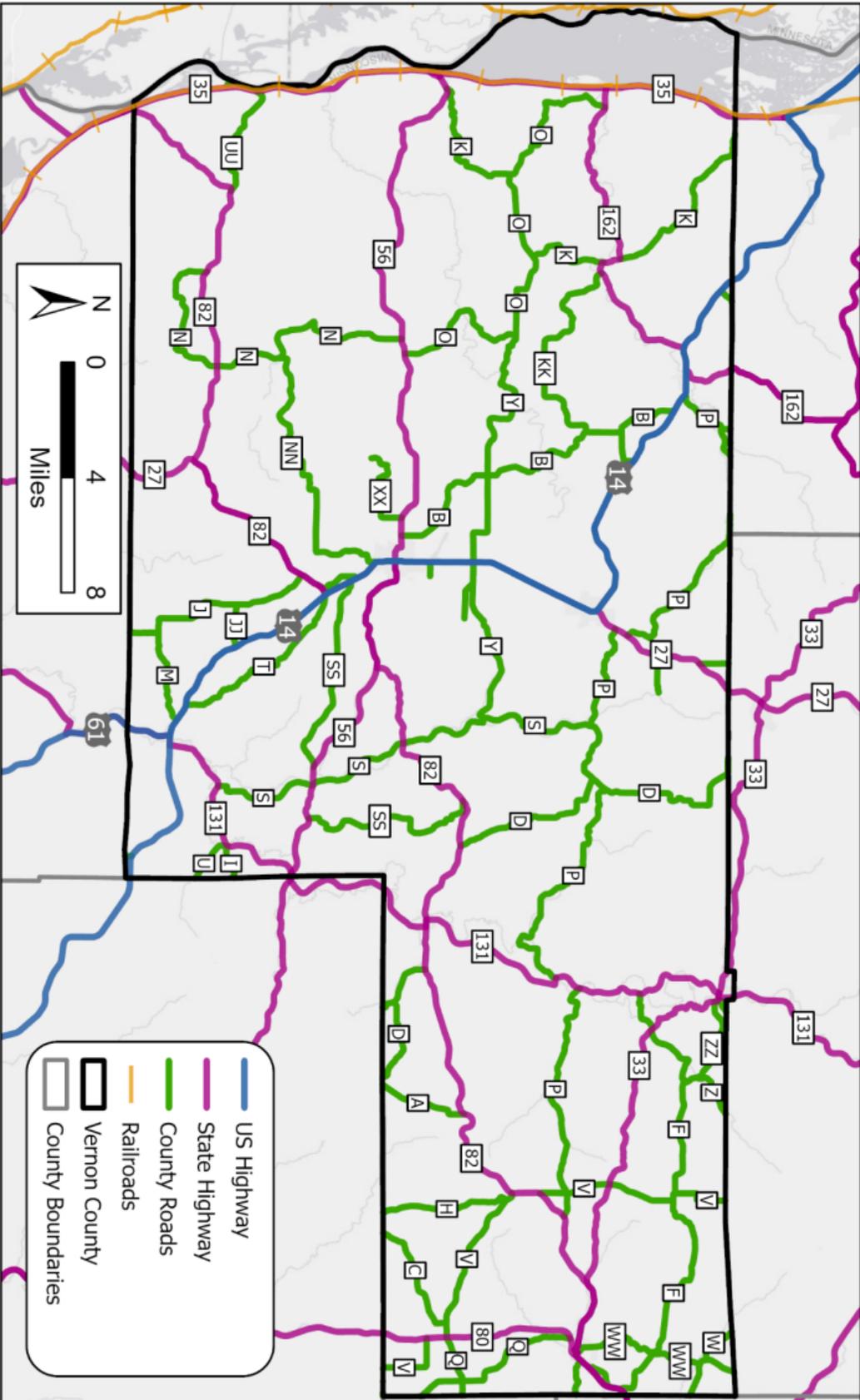
Source: Wisconsin DNR, WISCLAND Version 2.0 (2017)

- |                            |                                   |  |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Land Use/Land Cover</b> | Forage Grassland                  | Floating Aquatic Herbaceous Vegetation |
| Developed, High Intensity  | Idle Grassland                    | Emergent/Wet Meadow                    |
| Developed, Low Intensity   | Coniferous Forest                 | Lowland Scrub/Shrub                    |
| Crop Rotation              | Broad-leaved Deciduous Forest     | Forested Wetland                       |
| Cranberries                | Mixed Deciduous/Coniferous Forest | Barren                                 |
|                            | Open Water                        | Shrubland                              |

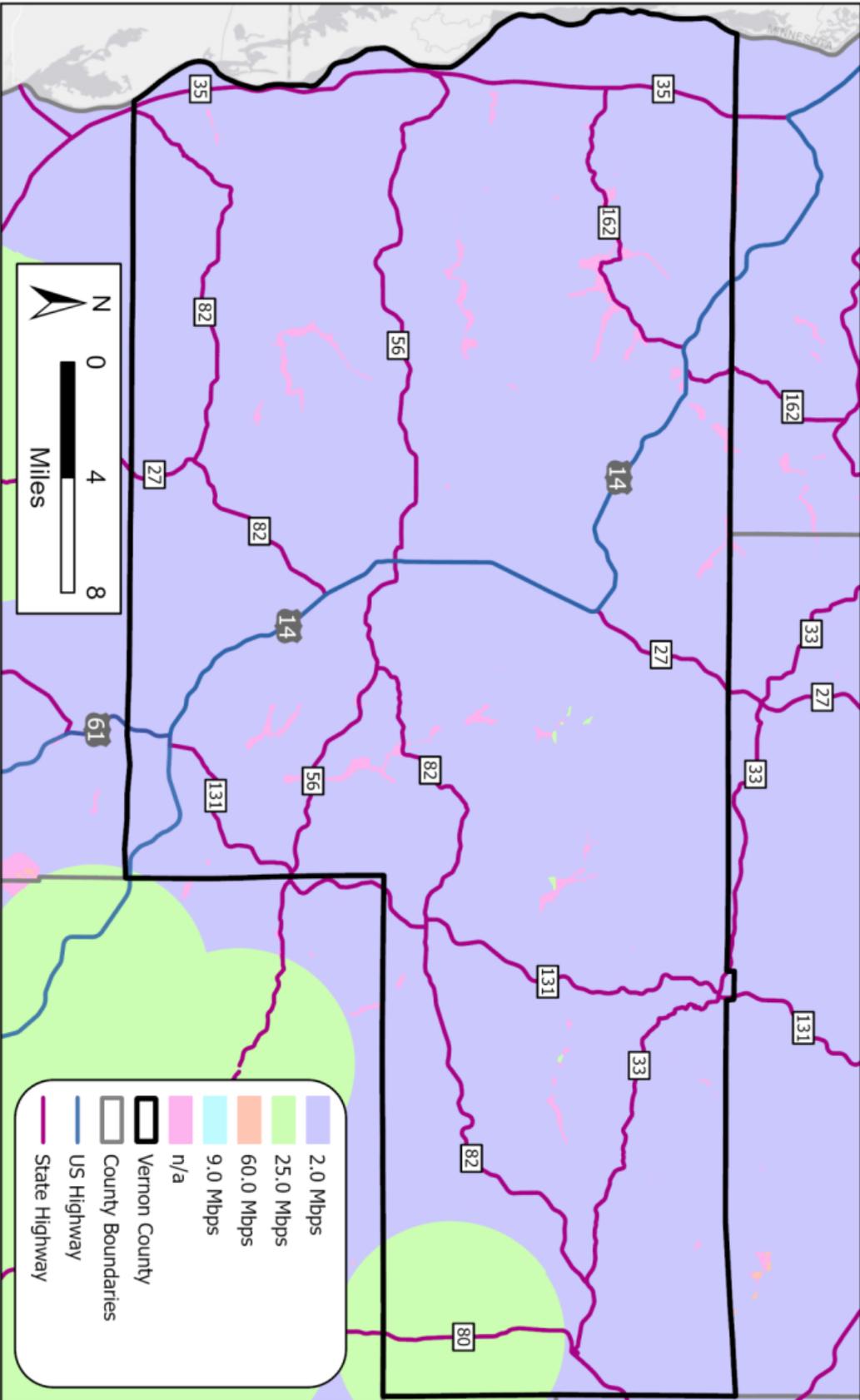
# Vernon County Towns with Farmland Preservation Zoning



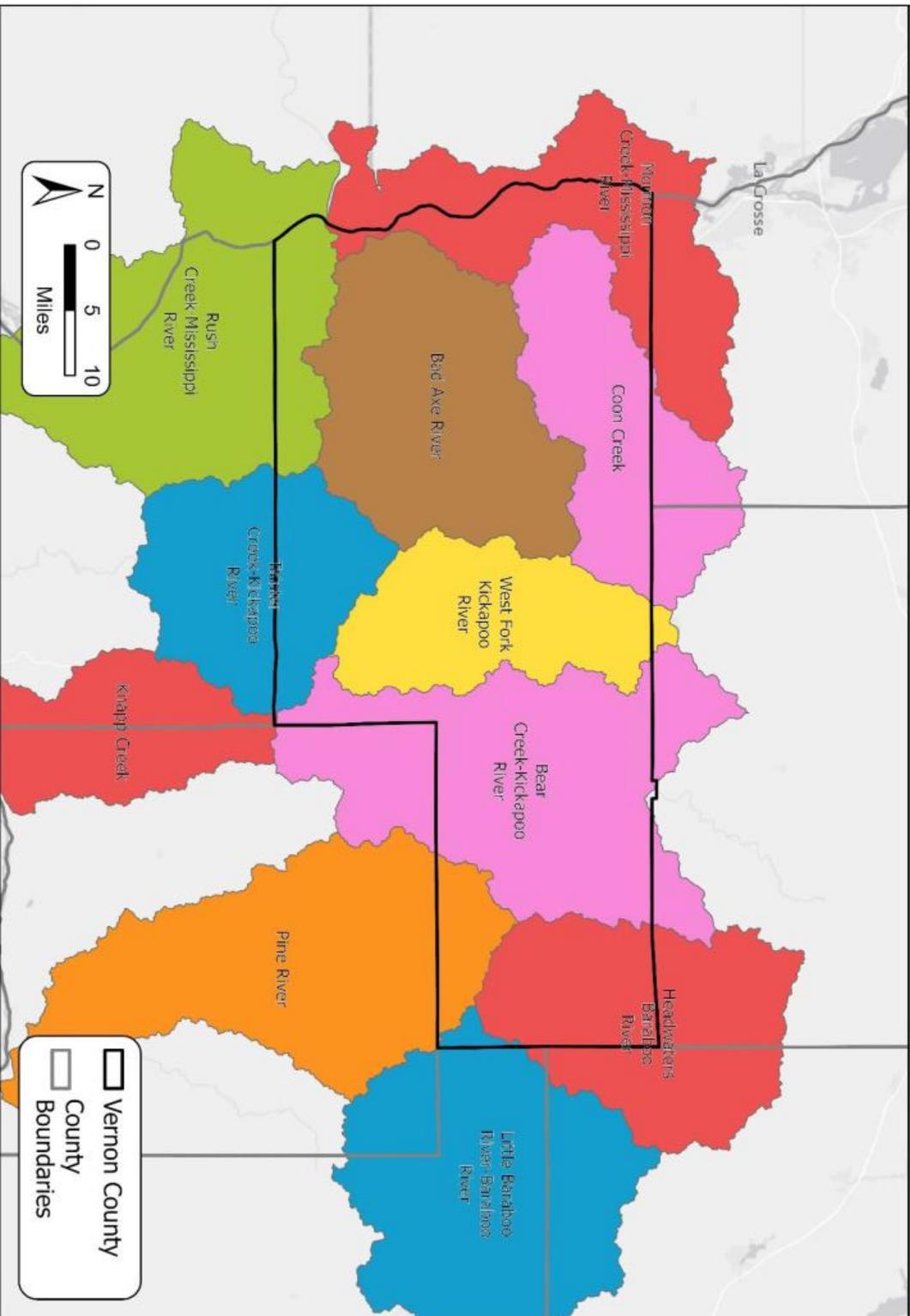
# Vernon County Transportation



# Vernon County Internet Download Speeds

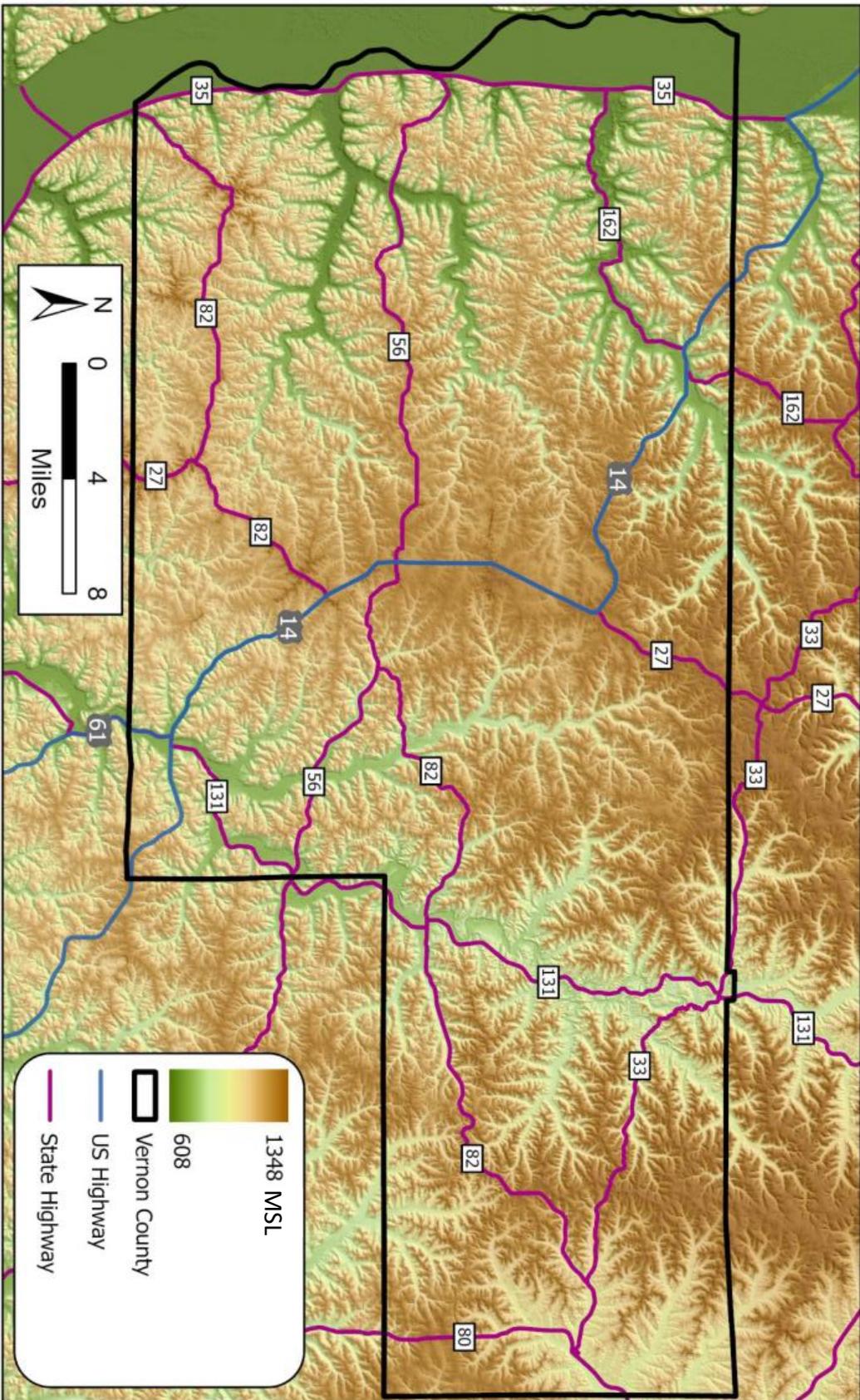


# Vernon County Watersheds



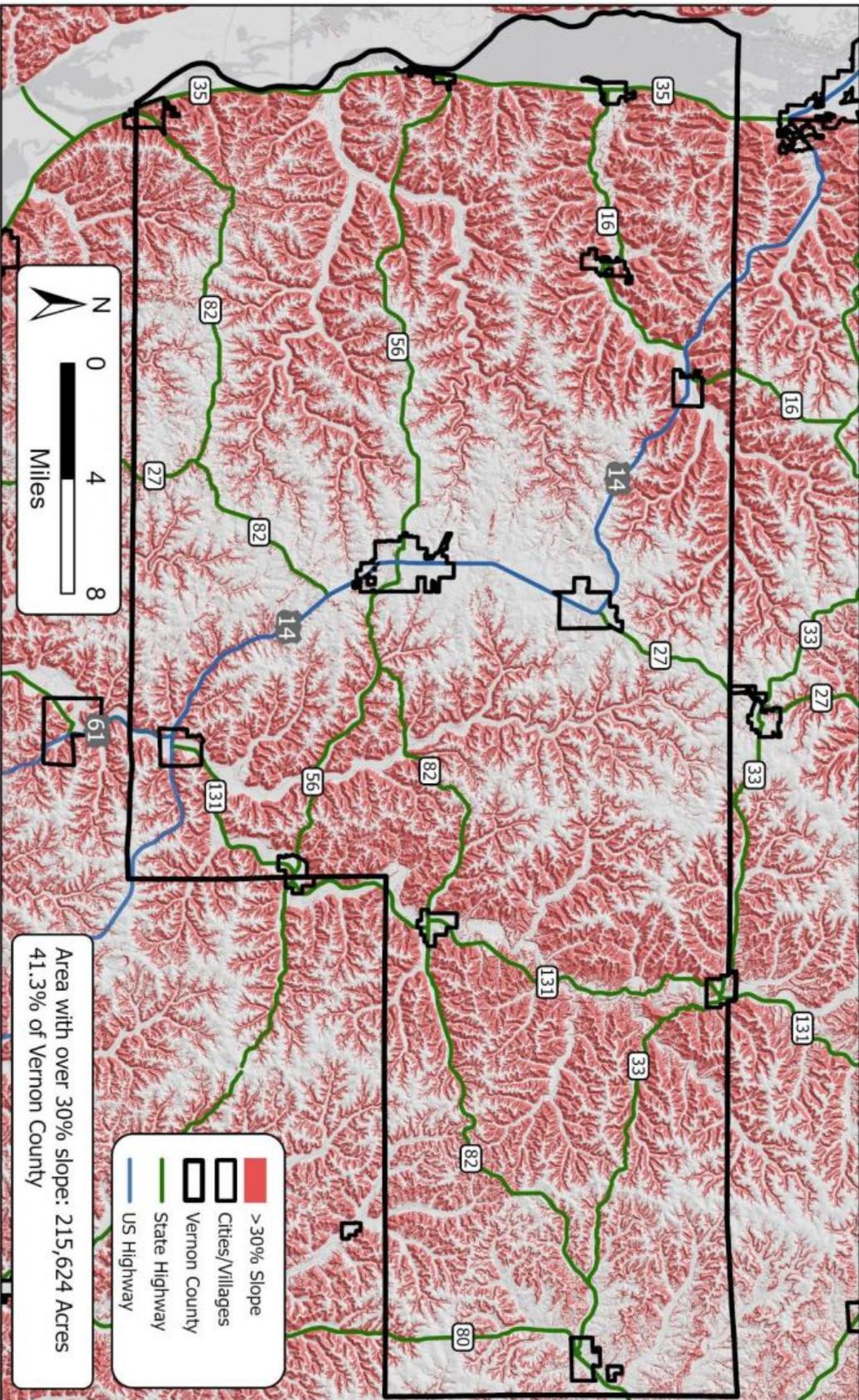
Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Vernon County Topography

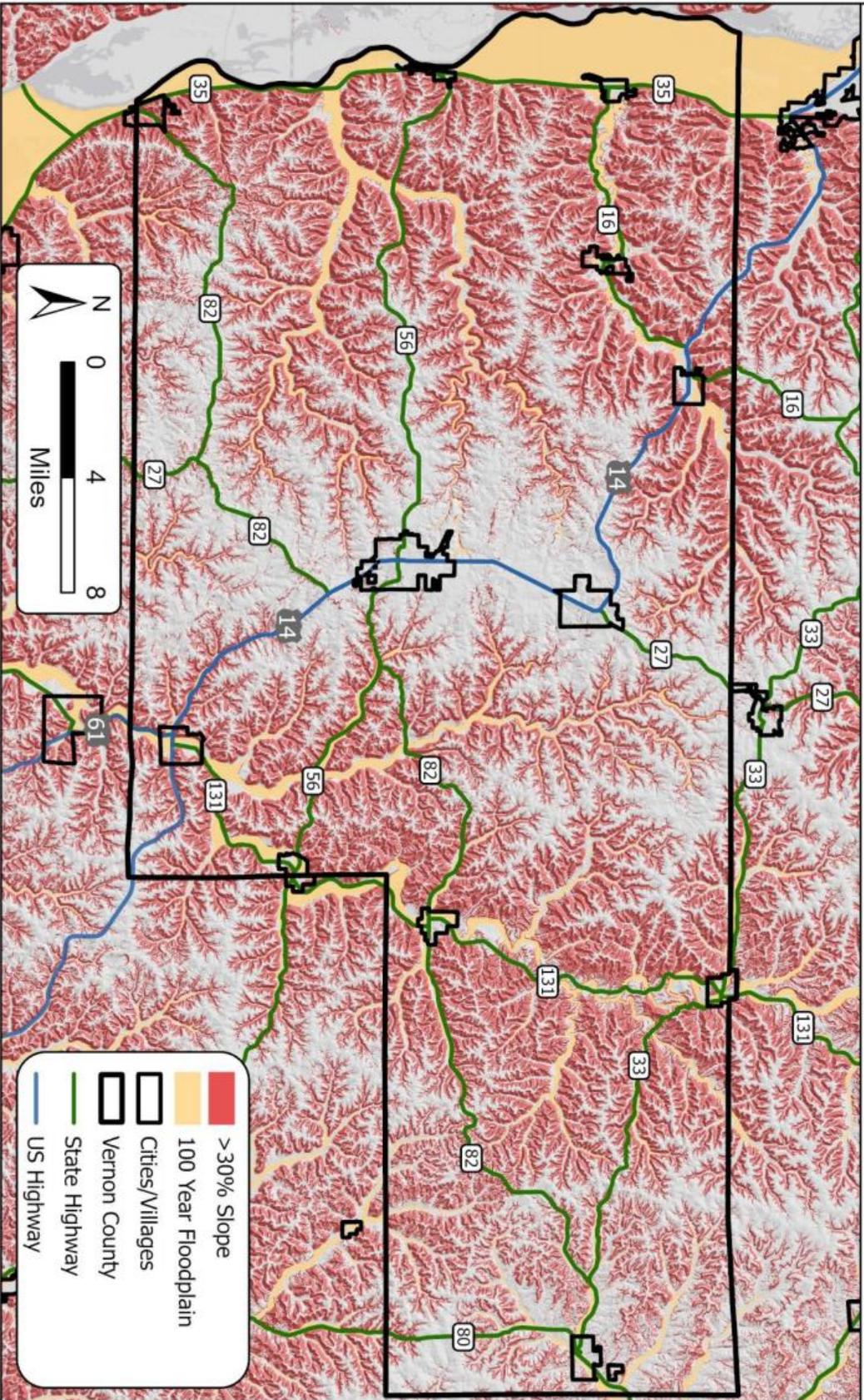


# Vernon County

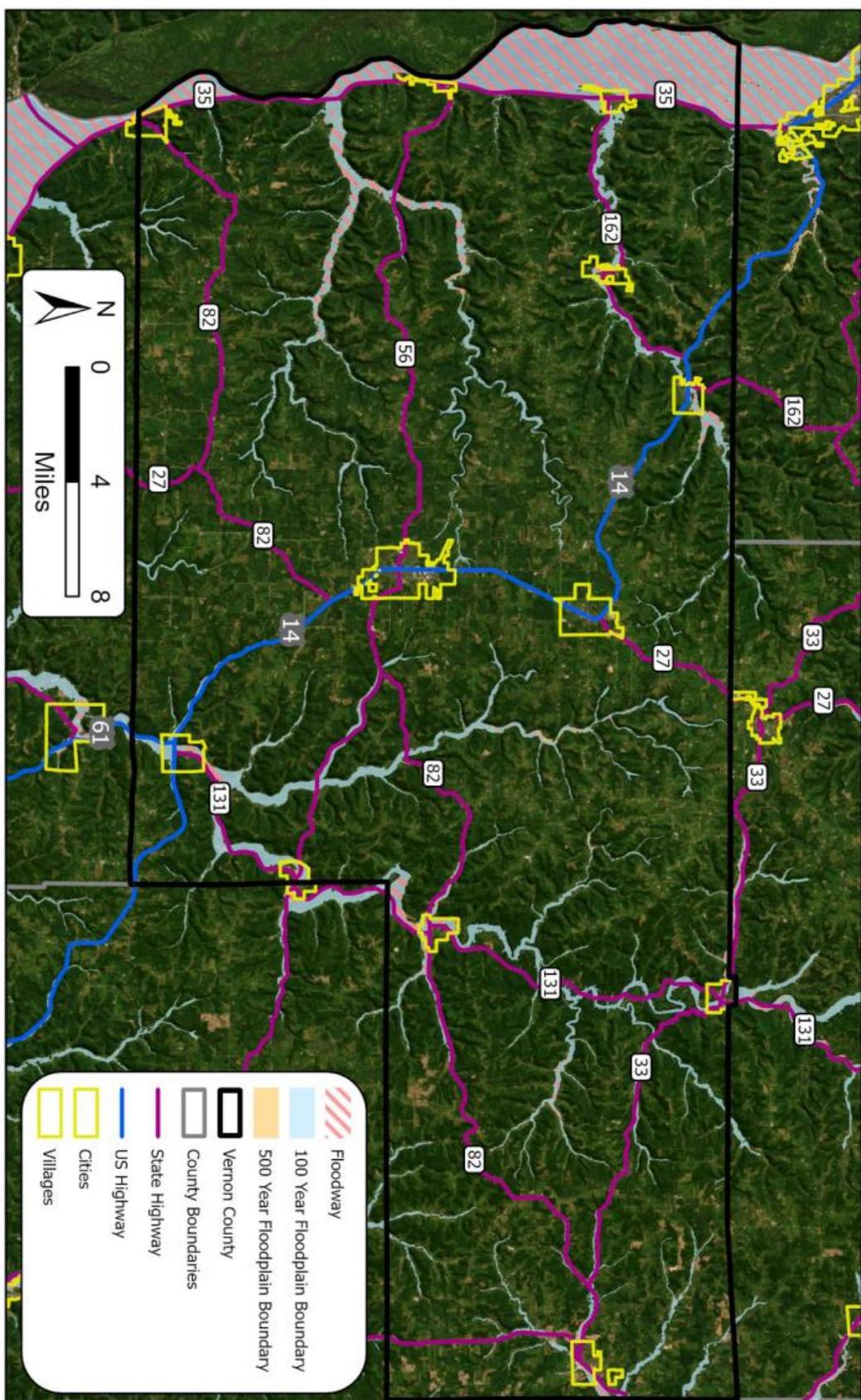
## Areas with Over 30% Slope



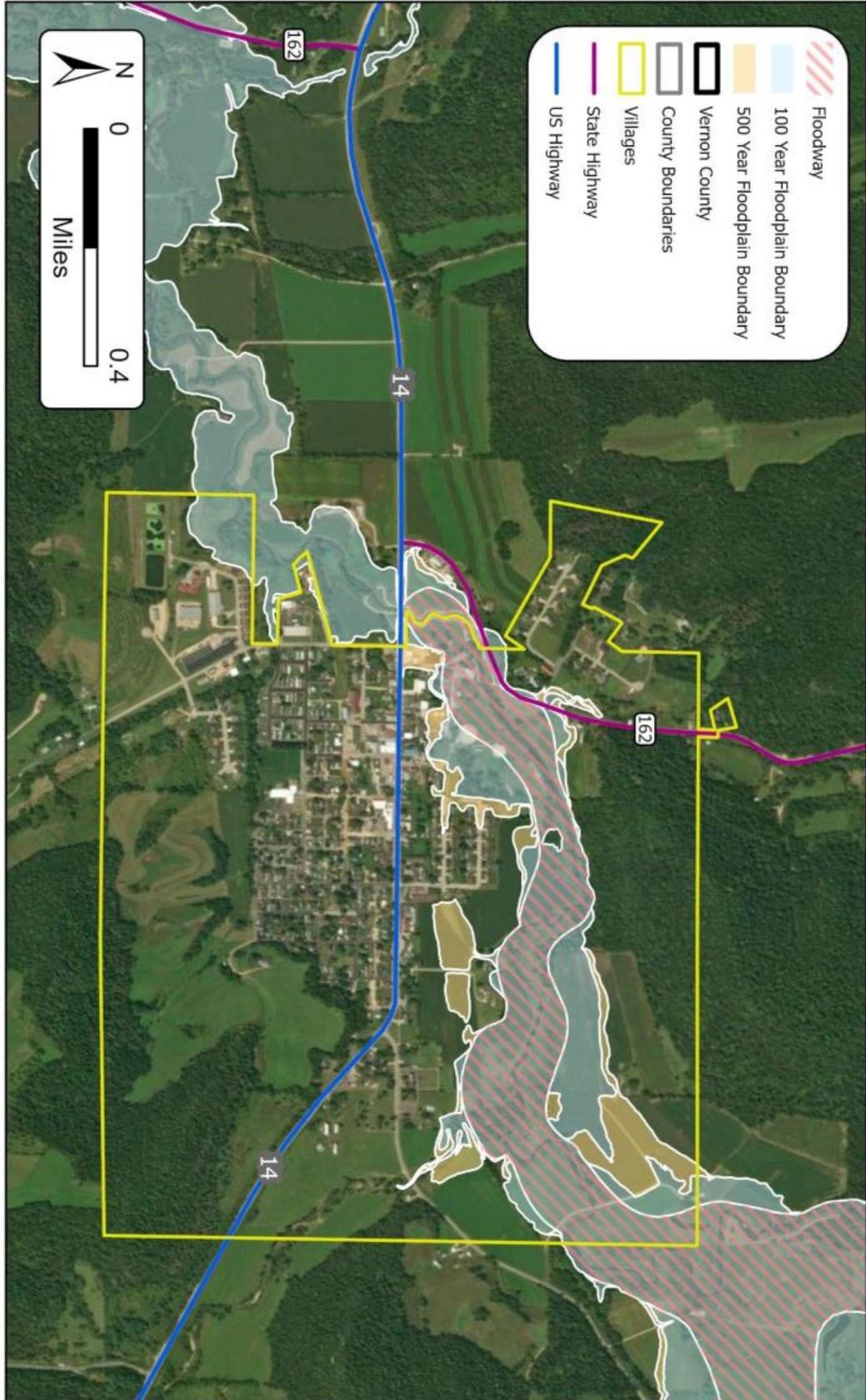
# Vernon County Land Not Suitable For Development



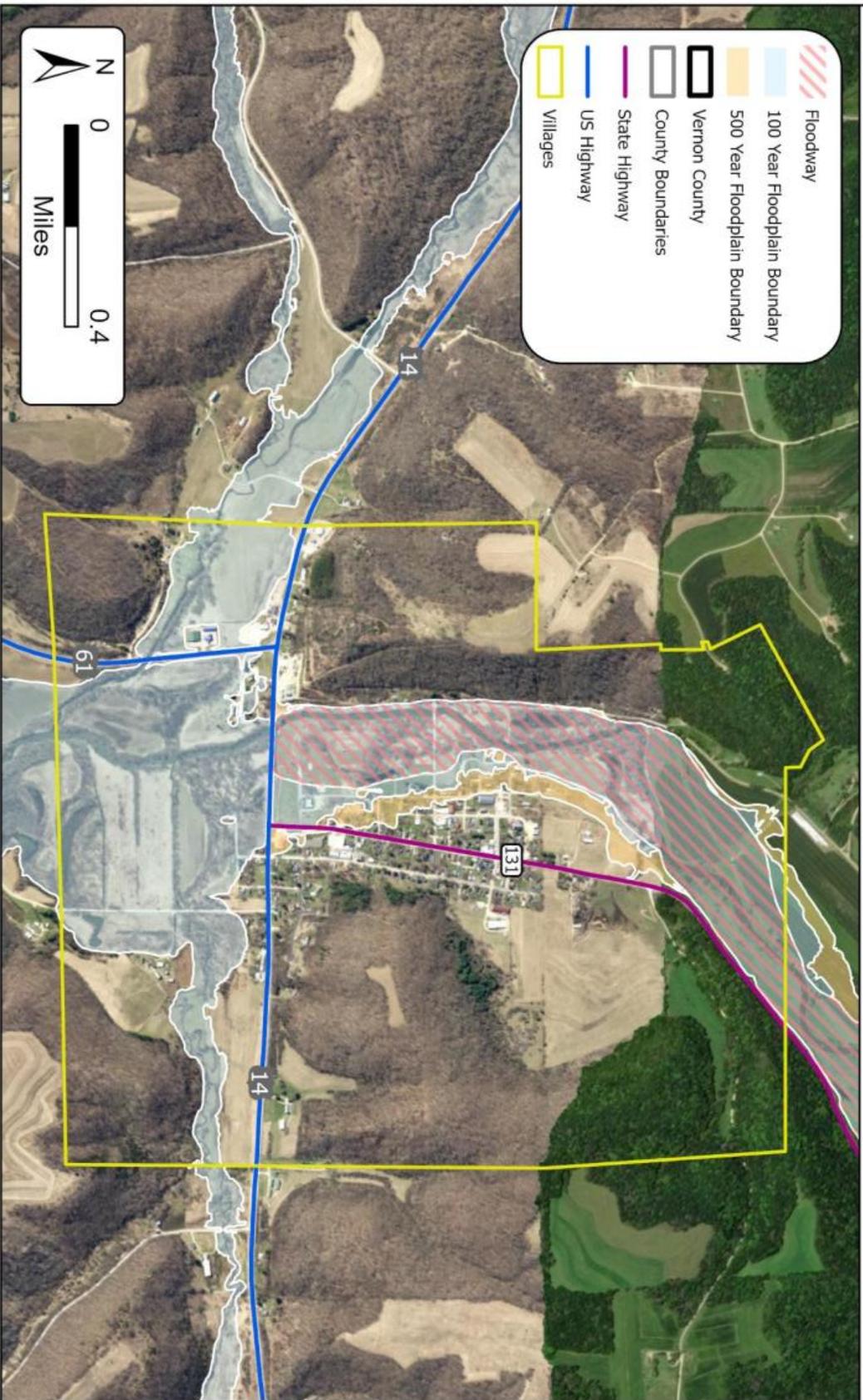
# Vernon County Flood Zones



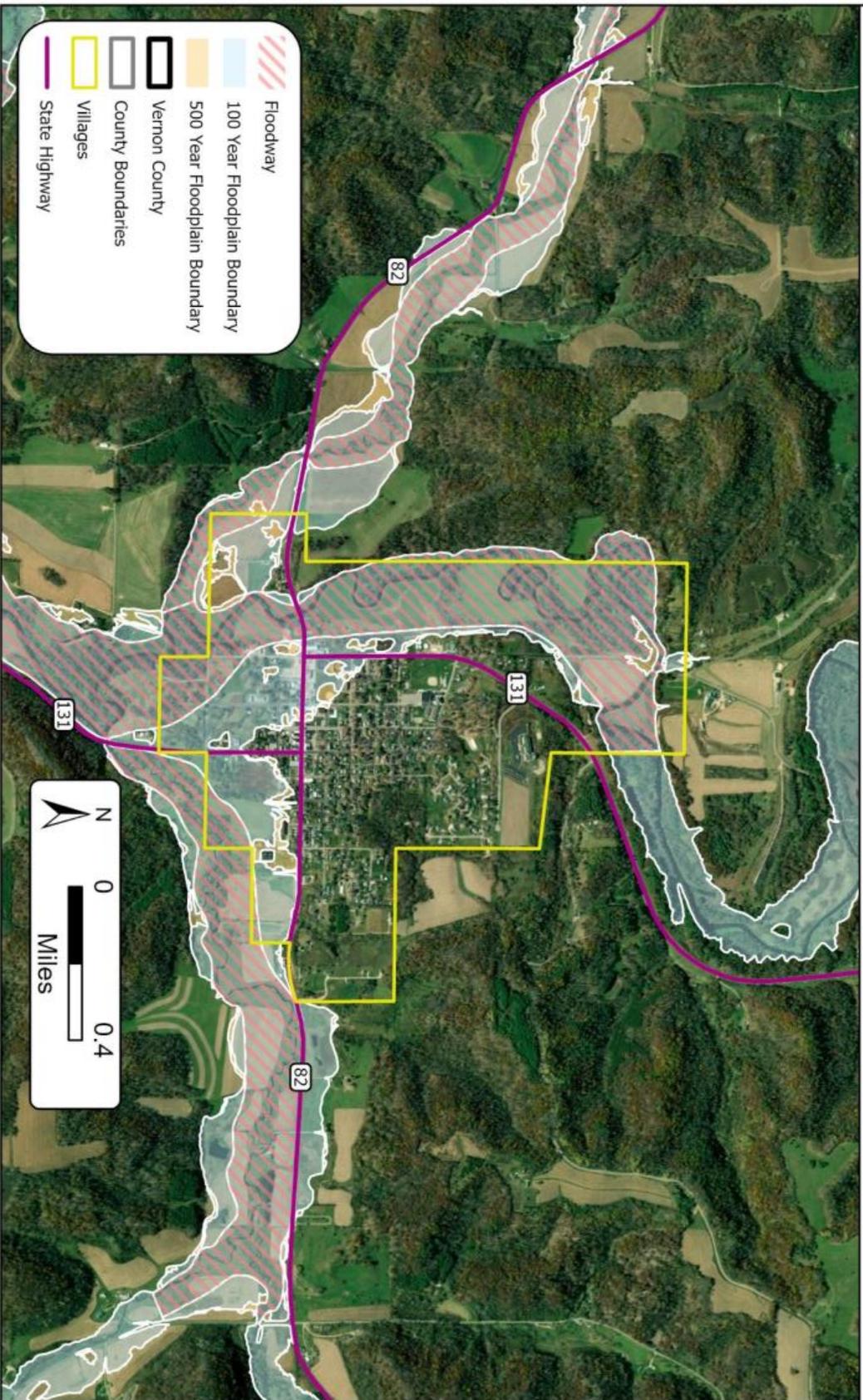
# Village of Coon Valley Flood Zones



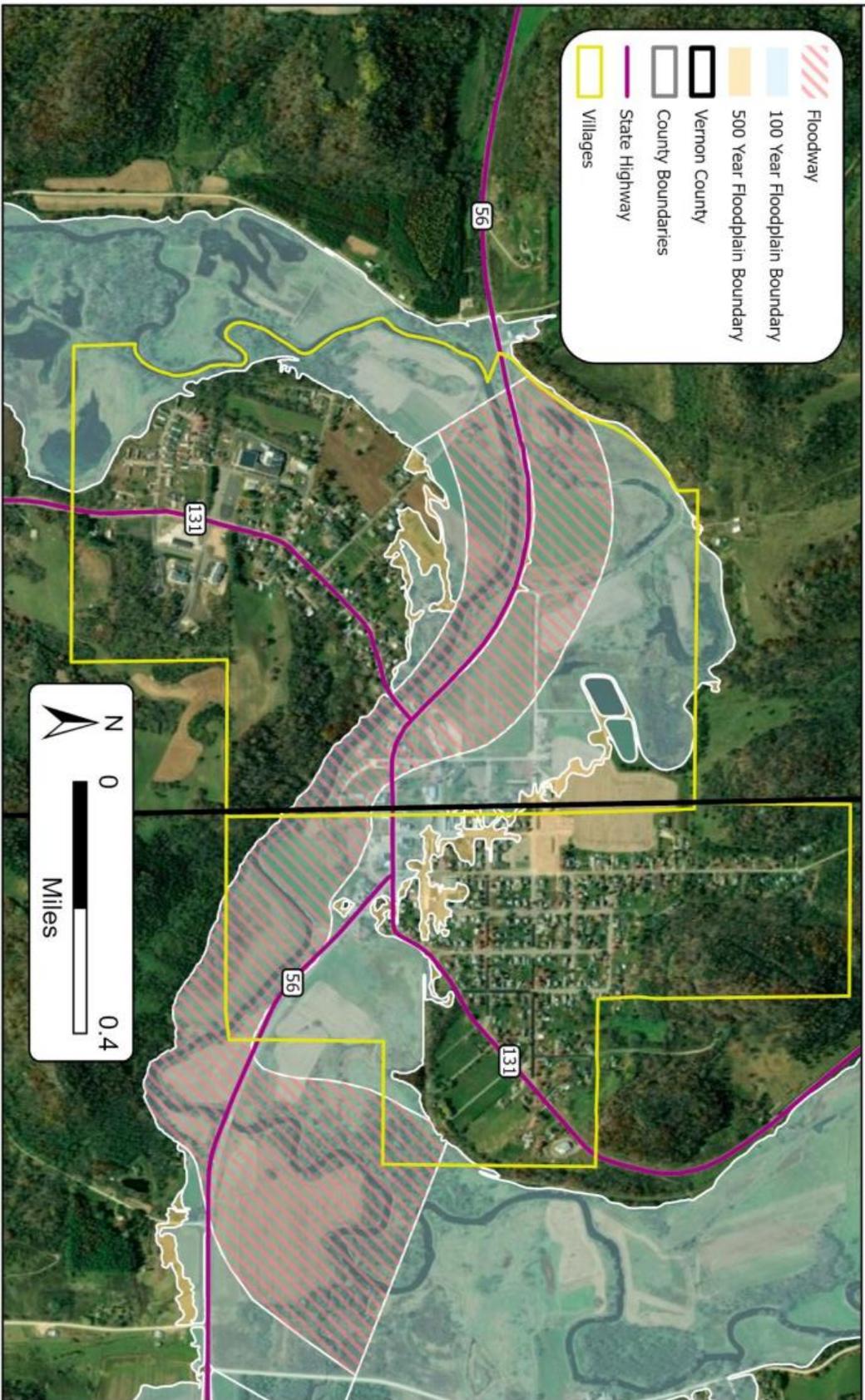
# Village of Readstown Flood Zones



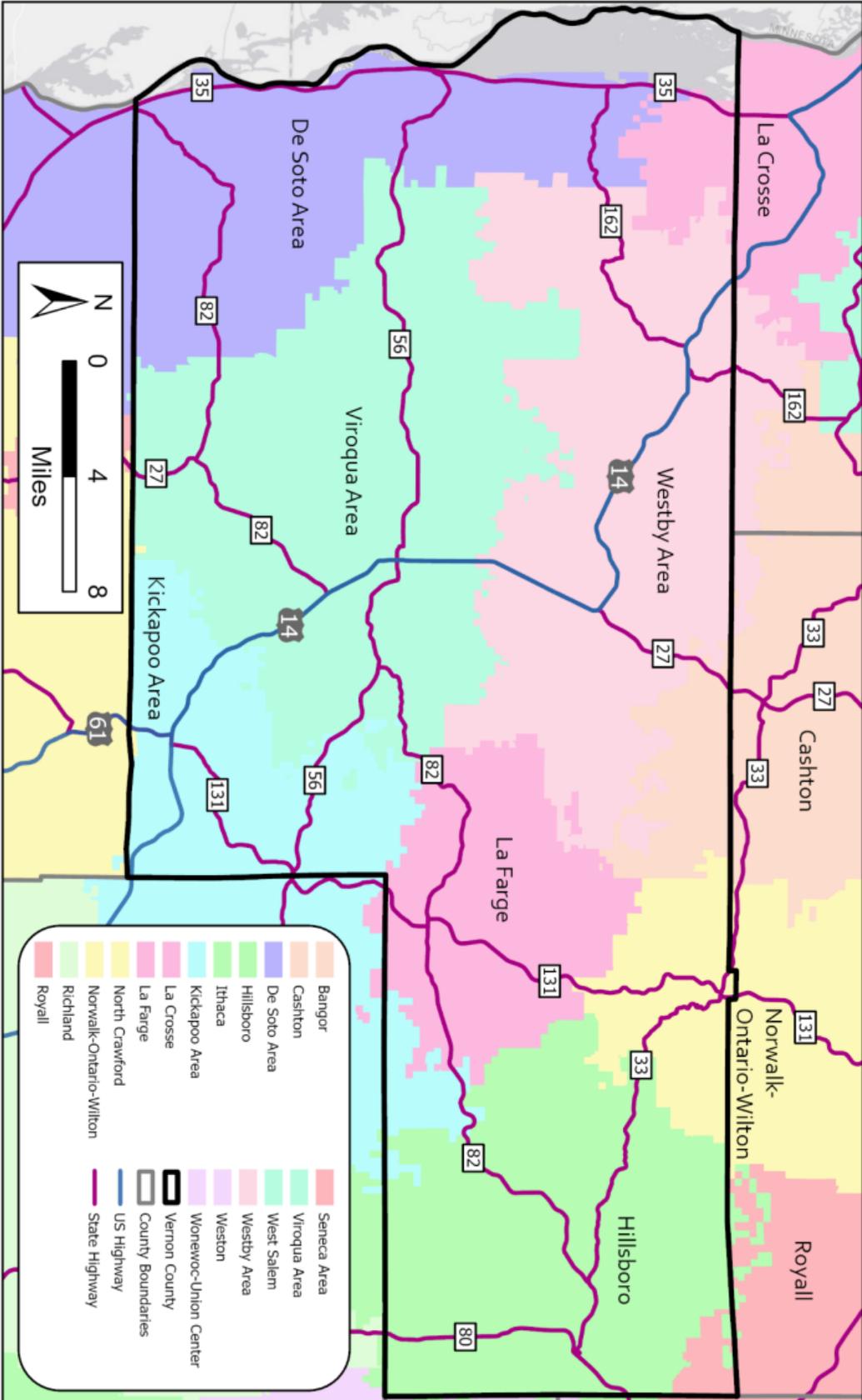
# Village of La Farge Flood Zones



# Village of Viola Flood Zones



# Vernon County School Districts





3. **Local Services and Amenities:** Availability and quality of local services, including schools, healthcare, and local businesses, are highly valued.
4. **Outdoor Activities:** There is a strong value placed on outdoor recreational opportunities, which align with the county's natural landscapes.

These points reflect a deep appreciation for the county's environment, community, and the quality of life it offers.

### Where did respondents want to see change?

There is a clear desire for more affordable housing and job opportunities, as indicated by a high rating of importance for both. There is a significant portion of respondents planning to start or expand businesses. Respondents prioritize environmental conservation and support for renewable energy initiatives, including solar and wind projects. Transportation improvements, particularly in county and local roads, and public transportation, are seen as important for future development. Enhanced support for agriculture, including organic farming and pollution prevention, reflects a desire to maintain and evolve the county's agricultural heritage. Survey respondents prioritized support youth and families and shared community well-being and stability.

From the responses, several themes emerged regarding changes respondents hope to see:

1. **Improved Infrastructure:** There's a call for more maintained walking trails and better transportation options. Respondents suggest the development of more public spaces, such as parks and shared-use trails, which enhance accessibility and enjoyment of the county's natural resources.
2. **Housing and Development:** A significant concern revolves around the cost and availability of housing. Respondents express a need for more affordable housing options and criticize the impact of short-term rentals on housing availability.
3. **Support for Youth and Families:** Suggestions include the expansion of after-school programs and the creation of spaces like children's museums. Additionally, there's a desire for more affordable venues for public meetings and gatherings, which could also serve non-profits and community groups.

These desired changes highlight a focus on enhancing the quality of life through better infrastructure, housing, and community services, reflecting a community-oriented vision for the county's future development.

### Housing

1. **Affordable Housing as a Priority:** Affordable housing is a major concern, with a significant majority of respondents marking it as extremely important. This suggests a widespread recognition of the need for housing that is accessible to all income levels. Residents express concerns about the increasing difficulty for local families or new entrants to afford housing due to market pressures from secondary residences and wealthier individuals moving into the area.
2. **Support for Diverse Housing Options:** There's interest in a range of housing options, including support for apartments/multi-family dwellings, senior living, and ADA accessible housing. This diversity in preferences highlights a desire for inclusive housing solutions that cater to different demographics and needs.
3. **Interest in Sustainable Growth and Tiny Homes:** Respondents show interest in sustainable living and tiny homes, although this is somewhat polarized with tiny homes receiving a broad range of opinions. This reflects a growing interest in alternative, environmentally friendly housing solutions, though opinions vary on their implementation. Suggestions for sustainable and intentional growth in housing to prevent displacement and maintain the rural character of the county.
4. **Preservation and Development Balance:** The community expresses a desire for development that balances new housing with the preservation of rural character and farmland. This suggests an awareness of the importance of maintaining Vernon County's unique identity and environment amid growth.

5. **Housing Location and Services:** Proximity to schools, services, and retail is considered important, indicating that when thinking about housing, respondents are also considering the broader community infrastructure. This underscores the importance of thoughtful, community-oriented planning in future housing developments.

These points elaborate on the community's nuanced perspectives on housing, emphasizing the importance of affordability, diversity in housing options, sustainability, and the balance between development and preservation within Vernon County.

## Sustainability and Resilience

The Vernon County Comprehensive Plan survey results also shed light on the community's aspirations and priorities regarding sustainability and resilience. Here are five key points reflecting those needs and wants:

1. **Renewable Energy Initiatives:** There's strong support for renewable energy projects, particularly solar and wind, indicating a community interest in transitioning towards more sustainable energy sources. This reflects an acknowledgment of the importance of reducing carbon footprints and fostering energy independence.
2. **Conservation of Natural Resources:** Respondents place a high value on natural resources, advocating for their conservation. This includes support for initiatives that protect water quality, preserve open spaces, and maintain the county's biodiversity, highlighting a collective commitment to environmental stewardship.
3. **Sustainable Agriculture and Land Use:** There's a notable desire for promoting sustainable agricultural practices and pollution prevention, especially in farming. This suggests a preference for agricultural methods that are both economically viable and environmentally friendly, ensuring the long-term health and productivity of the land.
4. **Infrastructure Resilience:** Improvements to infrastructure, particularly roads, bridges, and public transportation, are seen as vital. This includes a focus on maintenance and resilience to weather and environmental changes, emphasizing the need for infrastructure that can withstand the challenges posed by a changing climate.
5. **Community Engagement and Education:** There's a call for increased community engagement and education around sustainability and resilience topics. This includes fostering a culture of conservation, encouraging local involvement in environmental initiatives, and providing resources and education to empower residents to contribute to sustainability efforts.
6. **Environmental Conservation:** There is a significant emphasis on land and water conservation, with a call for pioneering conservation practices to address climate change.
7. **Outdoor Recreation:** Enhancing outdoor recreation is seen as a way to improve community health and sustainability, indicating a desire to balance development with environmental preservation.

These points illustrate the community's forward-thinking approach to sustainability and resilience, with a clear interest in adopting practices that ensure the long-term well-being and prosperity of Vernon County and its residents.

### Small Family Farms

The survey results reveal a deep-seated appreciation and support for small family farms, highlighting their pivotal role within the community and the challenges faced by traditional small farmers in competing with larger agricultural enterprises, especially regarding land prices and use.

Respondents expressed a strong desire to protect and sustain these agricultural staples, viewing them as essential to the county's rural character, economy, and way of life. The emphasis on small family-owned farms underscores a community preference for sustainable agricultural practices and a diversified local economy that prioritizes food security, environmental health, and the preservation of traditional farming landscapes.

This collective sentiment not only reflects an appreciation for the cultural and historical significance of family farms but also a recognition of their importance in fostering a resilient, self-sufficient, and environmentally conscious community. The survey's findings underscore a clear mandate from the residents of Vernon County for policies and initiatives that support the viability and growth of small family farms, ensuring they remain a cornerstone of the county's identity and sustainability efforts.

The survey results from Vernon County indicate a less favorable view towards large farms, especially those with over 1,000 head of livestock. Large farms or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) were viewed more critically by respondents, as reflected in the survey's feedback on agricultural preferences. This perspective aligns with concerns over environmental sustainability, quality of life, and the preservation of the county's rural and natural landscapes. The apprehension towards large farms may stem from concerns about their impact on local ecosystems, water quality, and the broader implications for community health and the county's agricultural diversity. This sentiment suggests a community preference for agricultural practices that prioritize environmental stewardship, local food production, and the maintenance of Vernon County's agrarian heritage over the expansion of large-scale, industrial farming operations.

## **Daycare**

The survey data from Vernon County does not provide direct comments or specific questions regarding day care services. However, based on the broader themes of community needs, housing priorities, and the importance placed on family-friendly policies, one can infer the potential sentiments and priorities regarding day care services in the county:

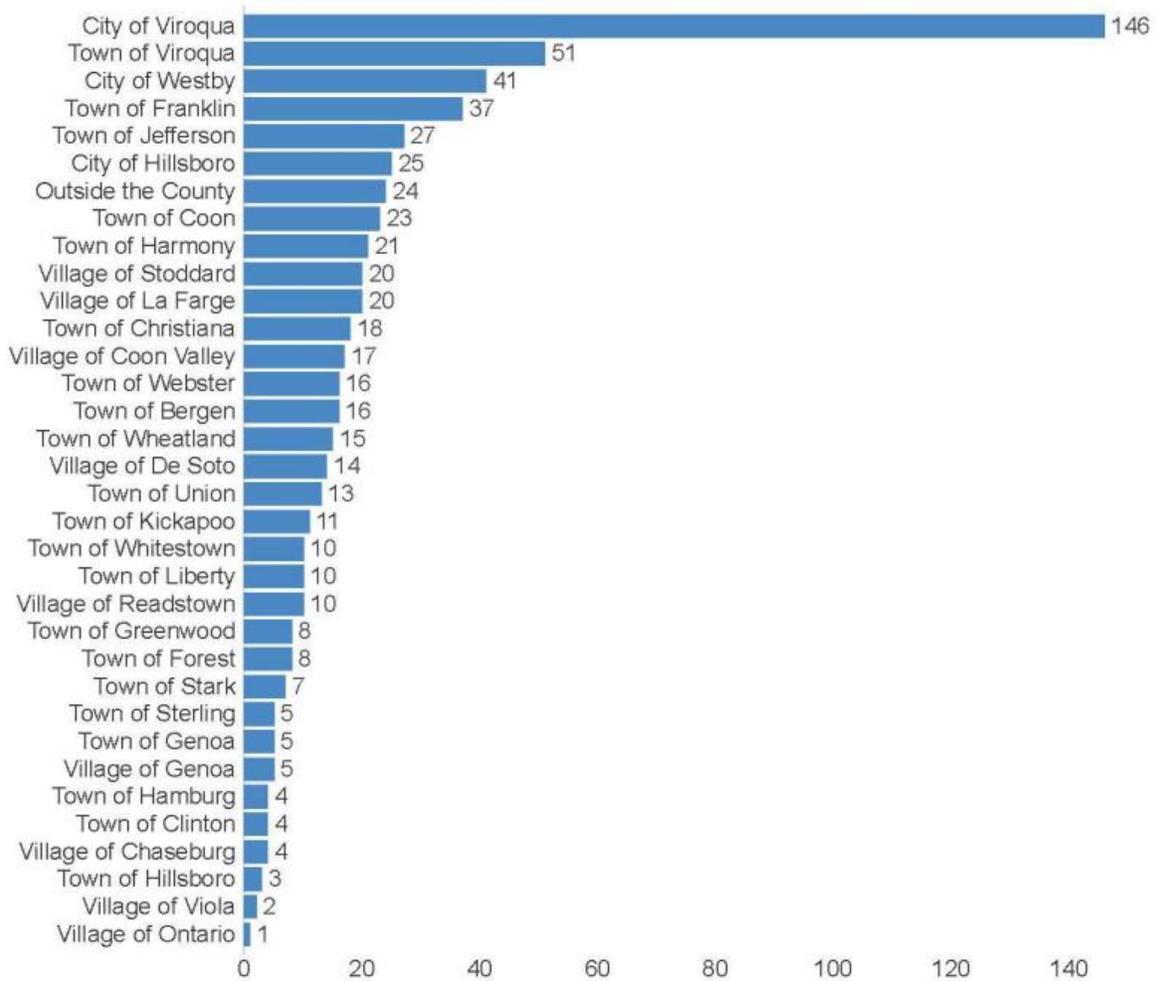
1. **Affordability and Accessibility:** There is a significant concern among residents for affordable and accessible day care options, reflecting broader community desires for services that support working families.
2. **Quality and Safety:** High-quality and safe day care services are considered paramount, as these factors directly impact the well-being and development of children.
3. **Support for Working Parents:** The community recognizes the importance of reliable day care in supporting working parents and enabling economic participation, especially given the emphasis on job opportunities and economic development.
4. **Expansion of Services:** There may be a need for the expansion of day care services to meet the demands of a growing population, particularly in areas experiencing economic development and an influx of young families. There is a strong call for more daycare facilities, reflecting a pressing need for supportive services for families.
5. **Integration with Community Services:** The desire for day care services that are integrated with other community services and facilities, such as schools, parks, and recreational areas, indicating a holistic approach to community planning and family support.

While these points are inferred from the overall sentiments expressed in the survey about community welfare and family support needs, they reflect priorities concerning day care services within Vernon County.

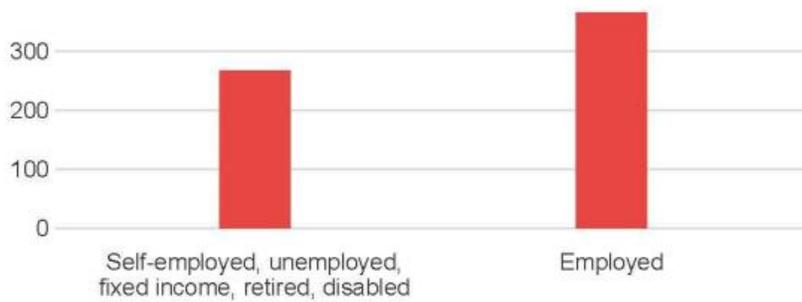
Overall, the survey reflects a community that values its natural environment, quality of life, sustainable practices, community well-being, and support for local businesses and family farms, while also expressing concerns and desires for improvements in housing, job opportunities, renewable energy, infrastructure, and childcare services.

# Demographics

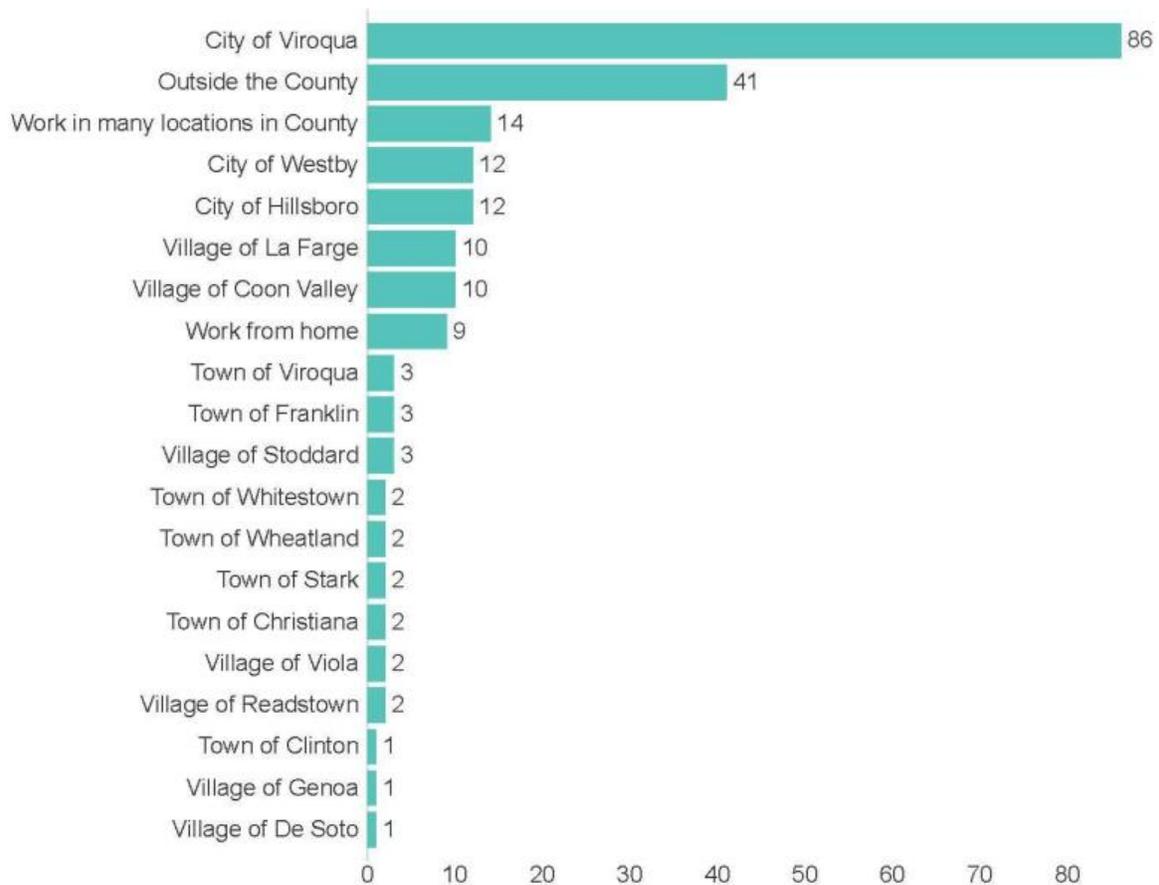
## 1. Indicate the Town, Village, or City where you live?



## 2. Are you employed?



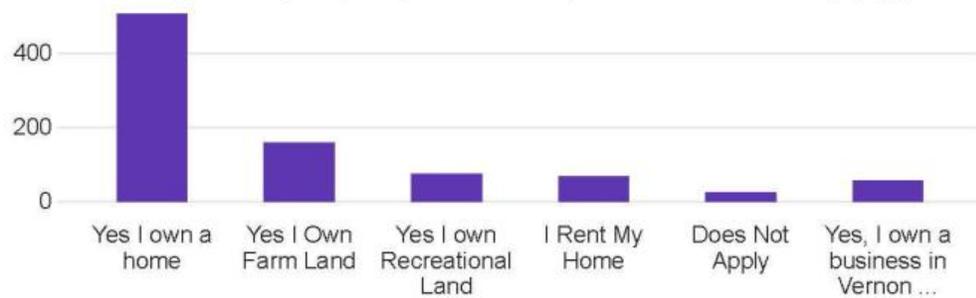
## 3. Indicate the Town, Village, or City Where You Work.



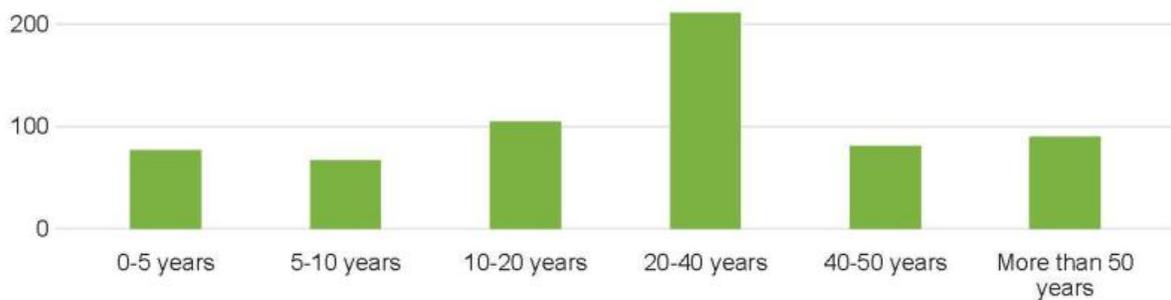
#### 4. Age Group?



#### Q8 - 5. Are you a property owner? (Select all that apply)



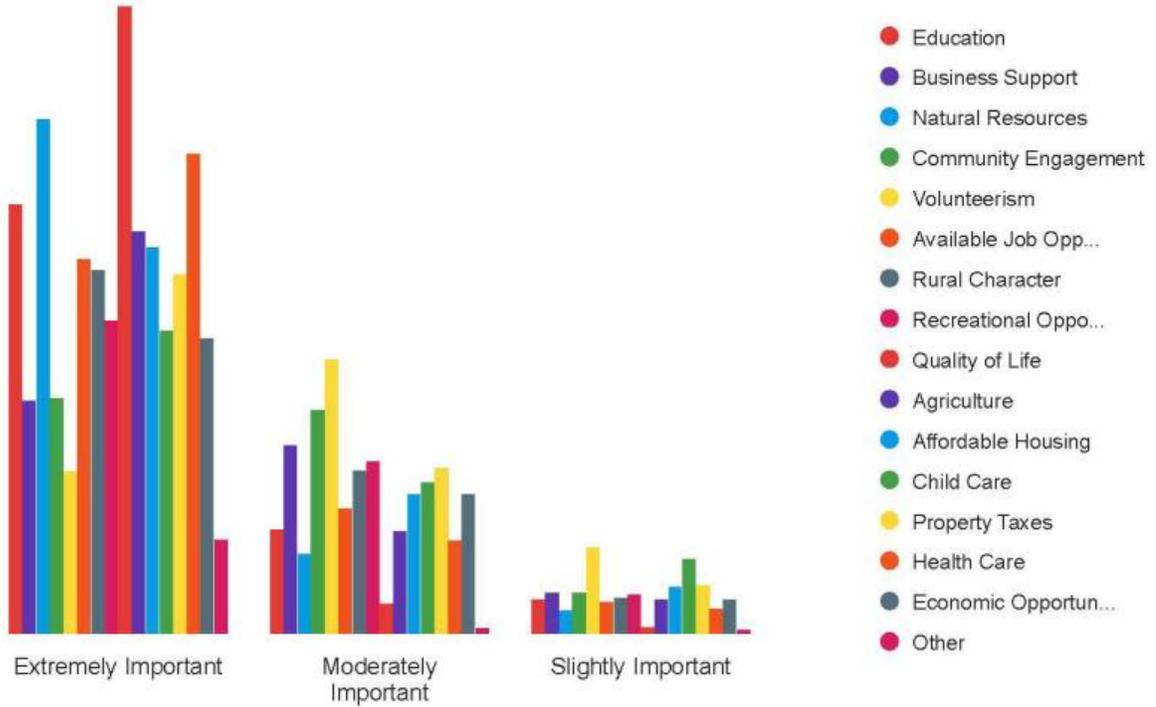
#### 6. How many years have you lived in Vernon County?







### 10. Please share your thoughts on what attributes in Vernon County are important to you?



## 11. What issues will positively impact Vernon county development in the next few years?

Field	Mean	Responses
Employment / Jobs	77.82	512
Agriculture	76.89	504
Cost of Living	75.58	517
Health Care	75.26	509
Finding Qualified Employees	73.94	492
Education	73.42	513
Internet Access	72.48	492
Recreation / Tourism	71.29	508
Business Development	68.89	496
Roads	68.89	519
Community Involvement	68.73	493
Infrastructure	67.87	500
Child Care	67.29	488
Housing Development	64.98	499
Zoning	59.04	458

### Other - Text

access to public land

Freedom as individuals to determine and conduct lifestyles that are responsible and will benefit our community.

Property Tax

Freedom of individuals

Freedom from big government

Security

Sustainability

reduced regulations & taxes. should not support

Climate Change agendas

reduce taxes

Rail Service

Natural Resource Protection

Lack of suburban sprawl

safety, honest government

Public safety

Accessibility

Culture Create Art

Natural resource protection

Diversity

Water quality

not sure i did this part right!

## Q17 - 12. What housing priorities should the County and communities focus on?

Field	Mean	Responses
Farmland Preservation	1.92	512
Affordable Housing	1.96	513
Parks and Public Lands	1.97	513
Senior Living	2.07	513
Public Sewer and Water	2.16	510
Conservation Zones	2.19	508
Intergovernmental Cooperation	2.29	500
Encourage development in proximity to existing services (sewer ,water, roads, electricity)	2.31	510
Zoning and Land Use	2.37	507
ADA Accessible Housing	2.43	501
Family-Friendly Zoning Districts	2.46	509
Rural Housing	2.59	508
Proximity to School, Services and Retail	2.60	509
Apartments / Multi Family	2.63	507
Housing Density	2.78	499
Accessory Dwelling Units (Second Housing Unit on Existing Property)	2.97	507
Tiny Homes	3.45	511

### Other - Text

In reference to all of the above, it is my wish that our community would respect the rights of the individual ( with consideration to others) to continue supporting and responsibly living together. If there are concerns, we then come together as a community and discuss, vote, review all options while upholding to laws the reasonable regulations required of us.

let owners make decisions not government

Freedom from big government

Friendly law enforcement

Providing opportunities for our kids to stay in the area

Historic preservation

freedom for people to choose

no wind or solar power

Unzoned townships allow bad actors

insure quality construction-unique individual styles, less cookie cutter subdivisions

ADU again

Limits to rural subdivision

Water quality

Poverty/homelessness

Code Enforcement

Make Amish pay road tax

No use of toxic chemicals like RoundUp

green housing with solar

Grants

RV Campgrounds

### Q19 - 13. What business development areas should the county and communities focus...

Field	Mean	Responses
Mining	4.20	494
Large Farms (Over 1,000 head)	3.62	497
Short Term Rentals	3.31	496
Heavy Industrial	3.19	491
Industrial Parks	3.09	499
Shipping and Distribution	2.85	493
Lodging for Visitors	2.73	497
Light Industrial	2.47	497
Organic Farming	2.35	497
Renewable Energy	2.34	494
Professional Services	2.32	497
Retail and Service	2.29	495
Tourism and Recreation	2.14	497
Technology	2.11	494
Agriculture	1.99	499
Education / Job Training	1.88	496
Healthcare	1.78	498
Small Farms (Family Owned)	1.69	501

#### Other - Text

Freedom from big government

Good law enforcement

Sustainability

Crime & Safety

let the free market direct the development

freedom to chose the best for options

Recreational outfits

moratorium on short term rentals

services for small scale farms

Homeless/treatment housing

Food Sources/Grocery Stores

County government decreasing numbers

Limit Air BnBs

Book Village development

Regulating Airbnb and other rentals

Biodynamic farming

Food after 9 PM

Grants

business start up and funding

RV Parks year round

## 14. What Road and Transportation Priorities should the County Focus On

Field	Mean	Responses
County and Local Roads	1.67	489
Seasonal Maintenance (Snow, Erosion, and Potholes.)	1.73	488
Infrastructure (bridges, culverts, etc. )	1.80	488
State and Federal Highways	2.16	490
Traffic Controls and Safety	2.21	487
Sidewalks and Trails (Ped Bike Issues)	2.49	487
New Road Construction	2.99	486
Parking	3.12	484
Multi Use (ATV's)	3.56	487

### Other - Text

the highway department already wastes a lot of man hours driving around. Contract out to other places for roads and maintenance.

Availability of Transportation for elderly, disabled, and anyone else in need of alternative or temporary transport

Focus on whatever will reduce the size and expense of the county highway department

Bike Lanes

take care of what you have, do not expand

common sense road repair

Rail Service

public transportation

widen roads to safely handle larger farm machinery

Accessible transportation and Public Transportation

Amish buggy traffic safety and manure control on roads

Increased public transit

Rework traffic patterns for less congestion

Amish pay road taxes for damages too

Grants

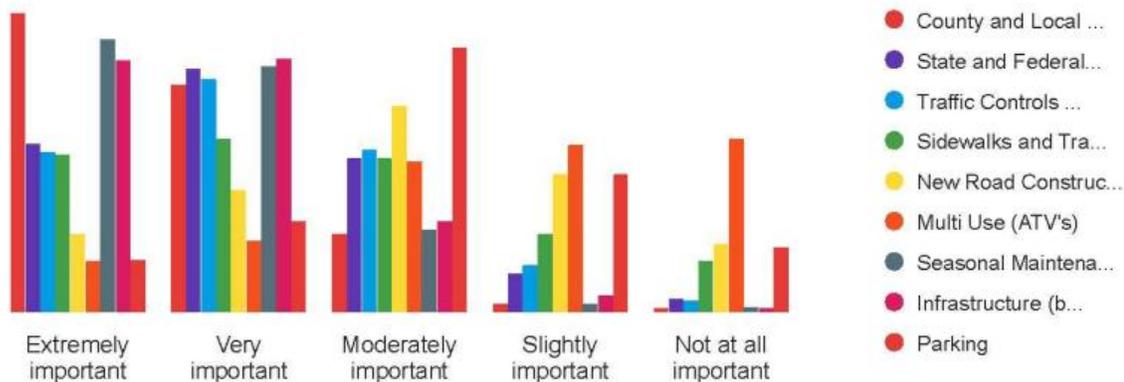
rerouting state hwy 56 through viroqua away from city park and schools

Amish buggy safety lanes

Flood resilient infrastructure

Amish road damage/use

Amish buggy road damage



### Q24 - 16. What Natural Resource Priorities should the County and Communities Focu...

Field	Mean	Responses
Land Conservation (erosion, flood, storms)	1.70	480
Flood Mitigation	1.74	479
Erosion	1.84	481
County or Community Parks	1.88	480
Forests	1.90	479
Farmland Preservation	1.92	484
Other	1.94	17
Wildlife and Game	2.05	479
Wetlands	2.05	481
River Access	2.15	481
Streambank Improvement	2.16	479
State Parks	2.18	480
Land Conservancy's	2.19	478
Recreational Trails	2.20	478
Cultural and Historic Landmarks	2.20	479
Recreational Lakes	2.32	479

Other - Text

- over/under passes for wildlife
- Rebuild Jersey Valley Lake
- Dark Sky Conservation
- Freedom to use experimental building materials and methods
- Protecting scenic vistas
- Regulation & inspection of earthen dams
- encourage private ownership and private care of land
- Large fines for runoff pollution.
- Make timber management and stream preservation / repair more user friendly
- Agrarian trusts (like land conservancies, but allowing for sustainable ag as one of the multiple uses)
- predator protection and endangered species protection. end wolf and coyote hunt
- Swimming lakes and beach
- Grants
- Control tourism so it doesn't adversely alter communities
- Water quality - rural septic & wells

## 17. Please let us know how you feel about the County supporting the following?

Field	Mean	Responses
Water Conservation and Treatment	1.87	477
Farmland Preservation	1.91	477
Recycling	1.98	476
Runoff reduction	1.99	474
Pollution Reduction	2.16	476
Renewable Energy	2.35	476
Sustainable Building Design	2.44	476
Encouraging development adjacent to existing development	2.44	474
Reduce Carbon Emissions	2.64	474
Solar power	2.65	475
Commercial building codes requiring energy efficiency	2.66	475
Residential building codes requiring energy efficiency	2.83	474
Electric Vehicle Usage and Charging Options	3.24	474

Field	Extremely important	Very important	Moderately important	Slightly important	Not at all important
Water Conservation and Treatment	222	143	73	28	11
Farmland Preservation	204	160	76	27	10
Recycling	201	146	84	26	19
Runoff reduction	194	151	84	31	14
Pollution Reduction	187	124	94	46	25
Renewable Energy	172	117	90	42	55
Sustainable Building Design	137	136	108	48	47
Reduce Carbon Emissions	129	119	96	55	75
Solar power	128	115	103	54	75
Encouraging development adjacent to existing development	109	155	133	47	30
Commercial building codes requiring energy efficiency	105	132	123	50	65
Residential building codes requiring energy efficiency	98	109	123	63	81
Electric Vehicle Usage and Charging Options	82	77	94	86	135

## 18. What Renewable Energy and Environmental Priorities Should the County Focus on?

Field	Mean	Responses
Drinking Water	72.09	428
Agriculture Pollution Prevention	42.80	412
Solar Projects	22.73	428
Distribution (Power Lines)	18.74	380
Other Renewable Projects	17.64	378
Wind Projects	12.70	397
Carbon Emissions	12.63	394
Mining	-43.66	394

### Other Thoughts

If we ALL live more responsibly with consideration to our neighbors. As we make decisions in all we do, thinking of the benefit of not only ourselves, but also others in how we live. There is much research available that indicates solar power and large wind turbines are not the best options. Responsible use of our resources and replenishment of them is a better direction. More investigation and research needs to be done in this area! Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts. Keep this going in our community PLEASE!

Underground electric

Rebuild Jersey Valley Lake

Distributed energy storage projects

Light Pollution

Nikola Tesla free energy research

Adding natural carbon sinks (i.e. planting more trees) trees

Geo thermal

Environmental policies have overreached and should be reduced

saying no to renewables

Light pollution

Geothermal

Carbon Sequestration Farming

Make recycling as easy as possible, do not use carbon computation as a guide to energy decisions...there are too many carbon "formulas" that only seem to exist to transfer wealth.

Coal and nuclear

Wildlife safety & migration in location/type of operation

Chemical/Pesticide Usage Reduction

Residential and new construction

prohibit mining

Forest Preservation

## 19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for Vernon County?

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Be a leader by installing over or underpasses for wildlife. Keep our citizens AND wildlife safe. These alternate road crossing constructions are being installed in other countries. The amount of damage to life and cars could be reduced by installing them in an area which has a history of multiple accidents.

Well, may we continue to have open dialogues. As well as continue to strive to "love our neighbors" and be respectful caretakers of our lands responsibly. We should be actively more involved in this stewardship path we have been given to continue to share the bounty of our blessings and teach the lessons of both hardships and victories to the generations to come.

So, in moving forward let us not abandon the good foundation established long ago and any changes we make should always be in light of that foundation. We should not abolish our laws but build on them AND never forget that a just and moral compass is needed for proper direction and progress in the days and years ahead.

County board needs to start contracting out for some services. We are paying for WAY too many employees that can't stay busy but we pay them anyway. Contract out for highway, maintenance, zoning, dispatch, human resources/personnel and all the secretaries/support staff.

We don't need the government telling people what to do. Everything the government gets involved in gets worse. Let the people do what they want with their land. when the government gets involved all that happens is we lose our freedoms.

Emphasis needed on child care, road improvement, and housing. There is a real need for housing and municipalities need assistance with development and infrastructure.

Climate resiliency via the local production of energy as well as critical goods and services; keep money local to the area rather than sending our money out of the county for energy and other goods.

Rebuild Jersey Valley Lake. It would provide for the community in so many ways: recreation, tourism, and community connection.

Rebuild Jersey Valley dam.

Vernon county should be managed from a natural resources and existing beauty point of view. Woke agendas pushing lower carbon footprints will be our downfall. The ecosystem requires carbon dioxide to be healthy, and if you want to reduce it, plant more trees back where there used to be trees. As long as renewable energy depends on child labor in third world county mines we should not be supporting it. Nuclear energy is very clean and safe, so if fossil fuels scare people we should be developing locally sited and owned nuclear facilities.

We need a system to provide equity for the people of the county. There are too many people who are not pulling their weight as far as showing consideration for others. There are too many vacation home owners and Amish that are just taking advantage of the permanent residents. Maybe we need to have some type of control on where home and other structures are built. Road should be widened for safety. Think of Amish buggies. Proper visibility needs to be enforced.

Also, we need decent internet access. It will be a sad day if we have to rely on Skylink for internet.

Reduced speed zones near Amish schools on county roads as well as other roads.

Fix the roads. The highway commissioner said in a meeting this month that the ARIP program is not helpful for Vernon County. I would encourage anyone else to read through the required specifications, as you do not need to raise roads 18". There are engineers writing these grants for free, and with all of the crappy roads in this county we could really use this funding. Posted weight limits should not be needed if the specifications are followed and there is substantial rock underneath the roads. That is the problem with almost all of the roads around here—the base which is why this grant program was endorsed by Vernon counties own Loren Oldenburg.

The Conservancy areas are very much lacking appropriate maintenance and lack understandable location information. There needs to be better coordination of the Conservancy and the DNR, as well as concise and accurate maps, ideas for better usage and coordination of recreational activities!

I realize that the DNR is a state agency, but there are definitely possibilities and a need for better usage of conservancy lands for public enjoyment at the county level, perhaps?? Thank you for letting me share!

Keep big corporations and monopolies from crushing small mom and pop businesses. Keep their regulations reasonable, taxes low, and fees to operate low or non-existent.

County government should take a good hard look at how they are spending money. There are many, many positions that do not need to be full time with benefits and it's time for the county board to do their job and reduce costs just like all of us have had to do in recent years.

Keep it user friendly as it is now.

Drop the \$25.00 wheel tax. And fix the roads that are used, not the one in front of your house or Viroqua. Or tax ALL. (ie) Farm trucks, All semi's should be taxed per axle. I know my 4000lbs car does less damage than a 25000lbs farm truck or 80000lbs. Semi truck. Bid Jobs: The Lowest Bid is not always the best one to go with.

I love my home & my community. One of the best parts about it is that it is a perfect blend of historic beauty with the modern world. I worry about the ability of our kids to live here. We are one of the poorest cities & counties in the state & our housing & land prices are unaffordable for anyone who actually earns a living here. Many people bring Chicago money here & buy up property "for a steal" in their mind compared to Chicago prices. Locals cannot compete with that and are being priced out of our own community! Example: teachers cannot afford to buy homes in the District they teach in.

Stop investing in solar and wind "renewables" that aren't actually renewables.

Invest in smaller scale modernized nuclear power.

Smaller government is better. Stay out of a lot of these issues.



April 9, 2024 9:04 AM CDT

## Q29 - 19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for Vernon County?

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Rebuild Jersey Valley dam.

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19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

Stop investing in solar and wind "renewables" that aren't actually renewables. Invest in smaller scale modernized nuclear power.

Smaller government is better. Stay out of a lot of these issues.

Continuous growth and economic development is NOT sustainable or desirable.

Keep Vernon County a secret. Don't advertise our quality of life. 🤫

Bring in businesses

Low taxes, free markets, reduced regulations, and freedoms allowed for people to have freedom to work hard, make choices, and provide for their families. These "Big Ideas" have a proven track record around our country. Please continue in these principles as you serve the people you represent. Thank you for asking for input.

Renewables has been a disaster everywhere it has been tried. Don't waste your money. focus on free market, low taxes, and low regulations. this formula will produce a growing and prosperous county.

Cut the administrators. Have more workers.

I would like all buildings, street lights, parking lots to have dark sky compliant lighting. Meaning lighting that does not shine up in the air or wash over into the neighbor's place. Full cut-off lighting where it only shines down in the area it is needed.

Enact a law that stops townships from using a variance to skirt around zoning ordinances in place Thanks

None at this time

As part of pollution reduction and as a element of zoning Vernon county should regulate outdoor lighting trespass. At a minimum outdoor fixtures should all required to be full cutoff fixtures and existing energy code requirements for nighttime reduction of light levels on commercial properties should be enforced.

Make Vernon County 100% energy independent!

Expand farmland preservation access. Require Amish population to adhere to local sanitation, and building codes. Also Amish should be paying fair share of highway taxes for road repair and reconstruction as they are very hard on our roads. Also overweight dump trucks, log trucks, and milk trucks should be regulated if possible.

Vernon County is a leader in sustainable living and protector of our unique Driftless ecology

Please limit suburban sprawl, limiting developments of cul de sacs that must enter and exist from one or two locations which will inevitably congest those roads and lead to calls for road widening. Please make sure new communities have plans for green space and pedestrian friendly infrastructure, pathways, etc. Our community is beautiful and wonderful and a huge reason is our agricultural past and commitment to green spaces for beauty and recreation. And tax all the short term rentals which are owned by speculators reaping profits from the community, not investors making this are and the lives of its citizens better.

Building a sense of "Place" in Vernon county and the driftless area as a whole encapsulated by euneque recreational nature areas(county/ local), and small town business owners to attract recreational water sport, camping, hunting, and other lodging experiences.

Landfill should be closed to prevent future environmental problems.

I would like to see Vernon County emerge more and more into the 21st century in terms of technology and renewable resources but at the same time to keep the spirit and feel of the neighborly communities we've had traditionally. Let the natural beauty and serenity of the county be the draw

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

to our area without rejecting the modern comforts and the concern for maintaining the natural resources that create the beauty.

Focus on quality of life. People want to feel safe, secure, and that they have future opportunity in Vernon County. The generational wealth and opportunity that comes from home ownership is being eroded for Vernon County's working class as investors are purchasing our once-affordable housing and land and turning converting into vacation rentals (short term rentals specifically). If people who work here can not afford to live here, invest in their own dreams & ideas, what good is this tourism boom? We're rapidly becoming a playground for the urban wealthy that are disconnected from the daily concerns of those of us working our tails off to simply survive. The county needs to focus on the needs of the folks that work, live, volunteer, send their kids to school, go to church, participate in 4H and are just part of this community. The "vacation experience" for out of town wealthy should NOT be a priority over the well-being of us just trying to make a living.

1. Learn to include the Amish and Mennonite in these planning efforts. For instance, no Amish will be able to deal with this survey on line. Without at least hearing them out the county will find it hard to have them support new directions. (think as tax payers with votes.) 2. The county should encourage the continued and expansion of the concept of diversity (dictionary definition, not political) of our agricultural enterprises and therefore land use. And do it in such a way that it protects water quality, erosion prevention, wild life habitat, soil health and mitigates flooding. This takes discussion of whole supply chains where diverse agricultural products sold.

Part of the County farm should be developed. The lots should be sold to families who reside in Vernon County at a discounted rate if they meet certain parameters such as an income threshold, public service, and etc.

Every county resident should feel confident that they will be treated exactly the same as any other resident. Although the "Old Boys network" seems to be SLOWLY losing power it is still a force to be reckoned with. Decisions should be made on the merits of the facts related to the matter under consideration, not the names of those involved.

More taxes from tourism. Allow us to build tiny homes and granny flats on our property that is safe and efficient but may not follow UDC

A network of year-round rural walking paths. Not alongside roads but, like the snowmobile club trails, traversing the countryside with landowners agreeing to host. Locals would use them, they'd tie together major features of this area (streams, organic farms, woodlands, parks, tourism amenities, increasing taxi/bus options), and they'd ensure equitable access to great outdoors and all the benefits of time in nature. County could help promote, maybe even pass some version of "right to roam" legislation (maybe just for a specific timeframe or on certain "routes"?)

Vernon County needs to communicate with the city of Viroqua and bring more business in. I keep hearing of all the big businesses that want to come but get declined, in Viroqua. ALDIs would be a great addition to viroqua. They already said no to organic valley and target. They have stalled the city in growing and having more opportunities for its surrounding area residents.

Off road ATV trails.

improve the roads throughout Vernon county. They are some state highways barely drivable.

Libraries in Vernon County should be reimbursed 100% of authorized tax. Currently they reimburse the libraries at the minimum rate of 70%. Our libraries are one of the best resources for our residents and we live in one of the most impoverished counties in Wisconsin- our citizens need the library for their welfare and better access to resources, as well as safe meeting places, and better services for all ages. There needs to be a bigger focus on accessible and affordable housing as well. We are losing people and families due to the lack of services for people with disabilities.

Respect the local history of this area and its natural and unique environment. Nurture individuals to interact with, grow healthy, connect and support locally their neighbors. Don't lose the charm of caring. Be focused on a good balance of businesses needed and community growth needed to complete a 'permaculture' type business/residential environment.

MAKE VERNON COUNTY ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND RECREATIONALLY FRIENDLY TO RESIDENTS AND ENCOURAGE ALL TYPES OF COMMERCE...AND PROMOTE TOURISM BECAUSE IT IS GOOD FOR THE ECONOMY

The primary draw for the county is the unspoiled and unpolluted condition of many waterways and natural areas. The more we can support this and resist development and especially mining, the more tourism dollars we bring to the region.

Less silos, more collaboration. Better communication about initiatives.

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

Protect our ground water from pollution from big agricultural.

Less bickering at the County level

Keeping viable agricultural land, as agricultural land, is very important. We are an oasis of organic farming and we need to remain so. We can base our tourism appeal in part on our "clean" farms and farming (along with our public and for-fee outdoor spaces).

Repair CTY HWY H Champion Valley you have to drive in middle of road so bad on both sides

Agrotourism and attracting tourists interested in farm-to-table experiences and rural travel in this region.

Please realize that we are overwhelmingly, a rural area. Most of our landowners understand and care about the land/resources/wildlife. In my opinion, factory farms and overuse of our lands for beans and corn are causing problems that might well never be reversed. All our valleys collect the runoff from the manure spills and lost grass strips due to tearing up every inch of dirt for cropping. Many times we have witnessed roads washed in mud after rains from poorly worked hillsides that someone thought they could make a bit more money from. One more thing.... With the influx of more prosperous individuals from other areas of our state and country, it has become nearly impossible for longtime residents or their children to afford to stay here. A way of life is being lost to people who fence off their new bit of heaven just to hunt, while families with true farming in their blood, but much smaller bank accounts, are forced elsewhere.

Road improvements for more buggy lanes.

Maintaining the rural and agricultural nature of Vernon County by supporting family farms with an emphasis on sustainable and organic farm practices. We are all set up here in terms of the natural resources-we just have to envision a future that is not sacrificed for the present.

Require county board terms of no more than 5 years and then they have to be off for at least 5 years before they go back on. The county board members never have their own ideas - they just follow the highway commish and sheriff and they need to stand back and look at all residents in the county, not only the ones on the payroll. changing county board terms will save a lot of money because they won't get hoodwinked by employees.

Leave the sheriff department policies alone.

Create a family friendly beach and swim area. Jersey Valley was the only park individuals and families could relax, swim, kayake, hike, fish etc. for free. It would be a great addition to Vernon County to provide or improve a park like Jersey Valley.

Vernon County needs to become a leader in supporting land and water conservation, pioneering next generation conservation practices, building climate resiliency, and promoting tourism and economic development to create a sustainable future for this county.

We have wonderful county parks. Improve them and/or repair them.

Keep it simple....

NA

WE NEED MORE DAYCARE OPTIONS AND OTHER PLACES TO SHOP INSTEAD OF WAL MART!!!

After school programming and creating spaces for children, such as a children's museum. Vernon County lacks spaces for public meetings/gatherings that is affordable or free for non-profits. There are few spaces with room for more than 50 people or programs that host multiple topics in different rooms. A conference center would be a great asset to bringing in outside revenue to the area (conference goers use restaurants, hotels, etc.).

temporary or transitional housing availability

\*More County parks with maintained walking trails would be great. A paved trail in the Country other than the Westby to Viroqua trail would be ideal. It would be nice to be surrounded by the beautiful nature Vernon County has to offer instead of the highway. \*Cost and availability of housing is

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

extremely high for wages in the area. If we want to recruit talent to the area, we need to have options for them to purchase an existing home, small acreage to build on, or rentals that are within peoples means. Short term rentals have had a negative impact on housing. Instead of people selling or offering long term rentals which would benefit the community they are finding short term to be more profitable. This is lots of times smaller homes in the country that would be perfect first time homebuyer options. It is very difficult to find a small plot of land in the country to build on. Unless you know someone selling there seems to be no options for this.

Homeless Shelter

Lets concentrate on bringing in more businesses to Viroqua, such as an ALDI as that would create new jobs, and other businesses to take over the Quillens building.

keep rural with clean air and beautiful lands.

Avoid polluting the Karst.

Develop more commercial space and bring in more businesses.

The Vernon County Fair needs to be more affordable for all families. No entry fee for every day! Wristbands more affordable.

One of the best things, at least about Viroqua, is that everything is walkable. But it isn't always safe to bike. Highway 14 is scary. So is Decker! It's scary just even being the parent of small children walking on Main Street. I don't have any ideas or solutions for how to make that road less noisy or trafficked, but I do know that as long as accessibility remains a priority there will be happiness! As long as we never feel cut off from any part of town, that's good. If we get more walking trails/bike lanes that will help keep us feeling even more connected to the town and satisfied. The ability to move about with a car is freeing and it's so important especially those with accessibility issues. Good sidewalks that walkers and wheelchairs can easily navigate are important (and strollers and kid bikes!).

tourism is important, but not everything. we have an amazing culture of small farms and local artists. more state and local funding for small creative projects, less focus on large agriculture, kitschy tourist shops, and cliché agritourism. repair the roads! protect predator species, native plants, waterways, and dark skies in order to maintain Vernon County as a haven of biodiversity. foster a culture of inclusion for LGBT and BIPOC community members to encourage long term relocation. ensure that health care and public transport can provide affirming and considerate service to every resident. make sure that home school and charter school options provide solid evidence based STEM curriculum.

County government needs to decrease the number of employees. The wasted money on all those highway workers is disgusting. There should be a survey just on that department and see what can be done to get some of those guys out of there. Poor county board decisions and poor upper management is at fault so the big idea is an old idea...work an honest days work and you'll get a lot more done; and the added benefit is that an honest days work will mean that there are less people needed to get the job done.

Do not put any more money into Jersey Valley Lake. Concentrate on making Sidie Hollow the premier recreational lake.

Get rid of ATVs, 4 wheelers, gators, etc from township roads. They are hard on the roads and were developed for off road use. If continuing to allow them, make sure they follow the laws, are registered, have license plates and make insurance mandatory.

City of Viroqua solar array and promotion of residential solar ... all these rooftops going to waste!

Outdoor water park like Woodman in Richland Center.

Affordable, sustainable, intentional growth

The infrastructure and options for caring for the elderly are lacking right now and with the shifting in demographics this will become a critical problem going forward. Also, the fact that the media conglomerate, Lee Enterprises, controls a number of the local newspapers, and the La Crosse Tribune, has greatly diminished coverage with a smaller staff and the closing of the Westby Times in the Foxy Shopper. For the good of local democracy financial support of local media is important.

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

The enrichment of outdoor recreation opportunities, such as hiking and cycling, in our county is not just a matter of leisure but a fundamental step towards enhancing the quality of life for all residents. By investing in and improving these facilities, we not only promote physical health and well-being through encouraging an active lifestyle but also foster a stronger sense of community and connection to nature. Well-maintained trails and bike paths encourage people of all ages to explore the natural beauty of our region, reduce stress, and contribute to environmental awareness and conservation efforts. Additionally, such developments can bolster local economies by attracting tourism and providing new opportunities for local businesses. Therefore, it is imperative that we prioritize the expansion and improvement of outdoor recreational infrastructure to ensure that our county remains a vibrant, healthy, and attractive place to live, work, and play.

In order for our area to be a draw for people to move here we need to address the childcare and housing shortages.

Limit expansion and new siting of mining (large as well as small scale borrow pits). Prohibit billboards. Limit light pollution, urban and rural. Enact county wide zoning. Restrict junk and other unsightliness (vehicles, farm equipment, other junk). Protect viewsheds from unsightly development. Require storm water mitigation for all rural commercial and industrial (including Amish). Protect barns from demolition. Development should be contiguous to existing urban areas - cities and town - not dispersed. It should be within corporate limits, not dispersed in rural towns. Limit cell towers. There are too many and they are too high. Thank you.

Keep the county beautiful. Protect our ground waters from pollution. Start a big fine for dumping trash, beer cans and pop bottles especially. I hate seeing littered empty cans etc along our beautiful country roads. Zoning regulations are important to prevent the type of junkyards as we see along County M near Readstown where old trailers and cars are just dumped to rot. Also clean up and salvage old junkyards as along the road to Viola. Maybe provide incentives to get these cleaned up. The beauty of Vernon County and its clean waters are our biggest assets, don't let them be defiled. Preserve our assets for future generations.

More and easier access to the Mississippi river. The Mississippi River is one of our most precious resources that we have to offer. It is also what brings in people from all our the world. Bass fisherman come from around the world, even have their championships here. The High School National Bass Championships have launched from the Stoddard, WI boat ramp. Yet with all the money that the river brings to the county, there is minimal access points thanks to the railroad. Miles and miles of river is unfishable if you dont have access to a boat. If we had simple walkways to cross the tracks "legally", many more people could have access to some of the best fishing in the world. There is only one beach in the county on the river that has public access, located in Blackhawk Park. It is sad that our citizens are not able to enjoy our most abundant resource.

There should be far more transparency in what the County government is doing. With the decline in our local news reporting, the county should be stepping up and proactively communicating the results of meetings and decisions. I am astounded at times when I do know something about a topic, and it's good news, and the County does nothing to communicate that. Of course, the same should be true of controversial topics or issues, the information should be published multiple ways. I also think there should be much more professionalization of the county government. With so many issues facing local governments, it seems at times that our elected officials just don't have the technical, professional or legal backgrounds to inform adequate decisions.

Swimming lakes and public beach

Encourage and support the development of used/new bookstores in each community to create a book hub to expand the tourists already coming to the area for this.

Move the tech school somewhere else, use that building for retail.

Go back to outside water meters for lawn and garden (flower) care!!!!!! Currently the cost to water the garden is unacceptable! And VERY costly!!!!!!!&

1. A bicycle trail that goes around the city of Viroqua with access points leading to and from downtown ( a wheel and spokes design). 2. Any bicycle trail that traverses the county. 3. A bicycle trail that connects to the Elroy-Sparta bike trail. Any of these options would attract visitors and provide recreational opportunities for county residents.

Conserve and protect our natural resources. Update infrastructure to prepare for climate change. Thoughtful planning for growth with an overall plan. Ensure that expansion and growth is mindful of quality of life and the health of residents. Affordable child care. Affordable housing both rental and purchase.

Obtaining resources via grants is stunningly difficult for smaller communities. There are many needs for which grants are available but the processes are mind boggling. A central county clearinghouse, well advertised, which regularly obtains grant funding over a broad range of areas to be made

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

available to municipalities would be of use.

I'd love to see this county be a healthy, safe, clean, enjoyable place for everyone, regardless of income, age, or ability. I'd love to see this county be a leader in sustainability and a demonstration site for what really works, for how to live in harmony on and with this planet, in this area. I'd love to see us all work together to "replenish the earth" where we are and nourish each other in the process.

More traffic circles. Historic preservation.

Really lean in to eco tourism, regenerative agriculture, and keeping a resilient regional biome at the forefront. Be proactive for a changing climate future. Oh and more native plantings in all new public works. Thank you for all your hard work!!

Could Viroqua and then the county become a first-in-the-nation small town/county to be completely carbon neutral? Let's be a model for what this world needs.

Transition the County Farm property into a public park/green space. Build publicly owned affordable housing

We have a piece of heaven here that we need to protect from mindless development. That said, I want this county to be affordable for the economically diverse population that is needed for a strong economy.

Looking for a nice, friendly, quiet and natural county to enjoy what nature has to offer and keeping it that way.

Less tourism and more focus on green for the people that live here.

We need a bigger park for recreation. In my home town, we have a 30 acre park complete with walking trails, gardens, a cafe, shelters, soccer fields and tennis/basketball courts.

An alternative "truck route" AROUND town instead of blasting through in the center of town on Main Street. But only for use of semis, pickups and some farm vehicles.

???

Public/private partnerships so that our tax dollars go farther to improve our county

Save our public schools!!

Shared water park on bike trail between Viroqua and Westby.

Significant investment in promoting new industry in our County. Fill up that industrial park

get back to animal agriculture, control erosion

Concern about the current landfill issue. Heavy expenditures on current & future landfill sites leaving all Vernon County residents on the hook for high taxes. Possible water contamination due to the karst geology in our area. This area is not suited for landfills. Disappointment that the county is not looking at other options such as sending garbage to other sites out of the area without the karst geology or looking at other technologies.

Zoning, recycling facility, no PFAS in water, senior center in Viroqua, local newspaper, Convert Viroqua bath house to visitors' center and Chamber and meeting facility

Get all new elected officials!

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

Having lived in rural Vernon or Richland counties most of my life, I fear that groups who won't accept/allow change will continue to see rural communities stagnate and waste away. We can't overspend, but we can't stand still. No big ideas, just hoping for movement into the future.

Need industry and jobs to attract more people to grow our communities.

More monies spent on encouraging people to visit Vernon County, as once they visit they will see the value of a quality of life. Then infrastructure of housing options for all demographics so people that want to be here can find and afford an entry into the area (ex: long term rentals until a house can be found or purchased). If no housing, then people will not want to commute a long distance to be in the workforce here and spend their incomes here for goods and services.

Invest in our kids. Nice parks, schools, things to keep our kids busy and give them things to do. I'd love to see a splash pad since we Viroqua has no outdoor pool (I know that is more of a city thing). Make this a great place to visit - fly fish, swim, hike, bike etc. Do not continue to build and grow (we could stand for more industry/jobs). Limit Airbnb rentals so we don't feel short housing. We need to keep this a small town. If we continue to grow, the small town feel will go away and we will just be another "big" city.

Coon Valley could benefit from shifting the focus to more businesses instead of focusing so much on multi-family housing. Coon Valley appears to be losing more businesses than gaining lately. Prime real estate central to town should have a contingency of commercial + residential if landlords want to keep adding more to their wallet. La Crosse does this in areas that are lacking commercial business.

I'd really like to see more enforcement of our laws that are already on the books. Traffic laws, is one of those areas in which people totally ignore and many times go 15 - 20 mph over the stated speed limit, as well as tail-gate, and they put all of us at risk. Some of our countryside is turning into land-fills and people should not be allowed to have what amount to dumps/landfills on their land with all manner of contaminants, as well as bum toxic substances which are already illegal, but those laws aren't enforced. I think there is a penchant to not think some things are a big deal or a hesitation when they believe that they receive criticism when enforcing some of our laws, (the aforementioned environmental, traffic and safety laws) but we need them enforced and they ARE a big deal. Sometimes, health and life-threatening. Those of us who actually follow the laws aren't the ones complaining when they're broken. Possibly, we could have a community message "board" (we already have a few informal venues) in which issues are discussed with the various entities... Law enforcement, emergency services, the DNR, city gov., Parks and Rec., etc. Meetings need to be more user friendly. There are many of us who can't attend meetings at night, or have some type of physical hindrance (and not everyone has the technology, equipment or knowledge available to be able to do zoom meetings, etc.).. so many of our citizens are being left out of community meetings and the various decision making committees, and processes, although they are contributing in every way to our community.

Turn Vernon County into a destination for arts, culture, music, food/bev, and outdoor activities. Adopt the rising tide mentality, where the more people that come from outside and stimulate our economy, the more we all prosper and rise.

Less hypocrisy from liberals. Period.

Support for prairie/savanna restoration. Connecting hiking/biking trails. Support for expanding County Park system.

Preserve agriculture and forest land; do not yield to uncontrolled development and the take-over of farm land by solar farms or wind farms.

I think that there should be a requirement for perennial vegetative buffers along lakes, rivers, and streams next to agriculture fields to help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment, in line with Minnesota's Buffer Law.

Less fragmentation of forest land, leave areas for off trail hiking and recreating.

the idea of restoring jersey lake the cost and revenue it brought to the county is not accurate. outside studies wasting taxpayers' money.

Stop CAFO development in the county. Protect our water resources. Treat our karst geology as being extraordinarily sensitive to pollutants from all sources including agriculture and the expansion of our poorly sited landfill. Invest in the long-term sustainability of our tourism industry which is highly dependent on clean unpolluted surface waters.

Overall better communication with the residence of this county. With cities that have residence that are in a different county it would be nice to have communication for bridging those communities. Communication and Round Table of Thoughts with your Neighbors.

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

Our land and conservation of that effects EVERYTHING that we do and are....tourism economy, quality of life, business. I would like to see a big effort put on watershed

Survey is a little confusing. By indicating what the County should focus on, I wasn't sure if that meant supporting an initiative or opposing. Either way it would require focus.

Retaining status as a quality of life respite: full of fresh air, undisturbed nature, recreation, and low cost of living.

My "big idea" for Vernon County goes a little bit like this: Instead of locking up 1st time offenders (drug related) whether they have a substance abuse problem or not, should be taken out to participate in their favorite legal hobby before drugs became a part of their lives. But, they also need to be reminded about how much drug use, truly impacts a family and inform them just how much it can affect their life from a legal standpoint. Also, I think that rather focusing on someones substance abuse/drug use, they should try to focus more on their mental and emotional health. Because in all reality, drug use tends to stem from mental/emotional abuse, domestic abuse, past traumas, etc. Thanks for taking the time out of your day to give my thoughts a listen. Have a good day ☺

We need a Target and a Trader Joe's or Aldis. Places for legal tiny homes and year round RV's.

I think there could be some great housing developments. Between tractor supply and Culver's. I also think that the main street should go back to two lanes it's much more dangerous currently. I'd like to see more community outreach from the police dept and fire as well. So that people that wouldn't usually talk to them are comfortable with them

More county assistance for local roads to increase flood resilience and assist with maintenance

I know it's not a "Big Idea" and it's a costly one but seal coat all the township roads would save a lot of impact on the environment and runoff. Plus reduce our carbon footprint because of less maintenance in the long run.

Too many tree huggers

We need housing and employment opportunities in Vernon County and we need to stay focused on family values and our agricultural background.

This plan will be a waste of valuable money and resources!! Eliminate any questions about renewable energy as in climate change bandwagon!! This survey leaned heavily with renewable questions!!

Keep the vernon county landfill open. Put back the cotours and water ways. And try to be honest in your dealings

Vernon county is special because of the natural resources and the small farms in our area. It sets us apart and draws a wide variety of people to live, work and visit here. Without those resources we have little different than any other county in Wisconsin, Large agriculture and industry strain the local resources and do not create livable wages or healthy work for members of our community. These activities can damage the water supply and lower air quality. We need to think about land use planning and zoning to help our natural beauty and the small family farm from ruin.

Access to mental health and addiction services to enhance safety and health in our rural communities. Grants for emergency response service for trained mental health and addiction specialists who work collaboratively with law enforcement.

Town of Bergen needs a year-round brush disposal site immediately. And a new Kwik Trip in Stoddard.

More small-scale vacation stay properties and more highly marketed community events that draw tourism

Keeping our simple life simple.

Who wrote/worded these questions? Wow. You guys are gonna get such a hodgepodge of answers because the questions are poorly worded. Enough with the hippy shit. Quit catering to the loudest voices in the room and look at the whole county. Genoa to Hillsboro. We need jobs, lower taxes and

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

normalcy. You are catering to people that want bikes and pot and gender neutral bathrooms. You are catering to people who can't have a police department in the city hall. How about cater to normalcy and majority. Naaaaa. We don't speak up. Take a vote. I dare ya.

Protect environment-water quality and water tables, or no other development will be worth anything. Protect natural resources. Future is in development that sustains the life support system that is water, air, soil quality. Again, without that no development will work or last. Our recreational opportunities and rural character will be what sustains us into the future, as it is being lost everywhere. Any industry comes and goes, all big corporate projects have limited life span and cost our community in tax breaks, water use, pollution, eliminating small businesses. Be careful promoting industry if the environment is not first protected from deterioration.

Vernon County needs to preserve organic farms and small family farms. CAFOs should not be allowed.

Combine Viroqua and Westby school districts

Expand the Kickapoo Valley Reserve from La Farge to Readstown Vernon County boarder. Work with other counties to extend to Wisconsin River. Preserve the flood plains and add bike trails and canoeings.

Don't turn it into California. If you think Vernon County needs to "improve" take your progressive b.s. somewhere else.

Help the small farmers instead of all the outsiders that have intruded our county.

Taking care of the farmland, nature, and water for future generations!! Basically taking care of what we already have and making it better for everyone.

Let the free market tackle the energy sustainability. Do not regulate or require it for Vernon County residents, farmer, and business.

Focus should be on keeping the county pretty much as it's been - rural farming communities! NOT becoming a "little LaCrosse" or such like. Stop trying to attract so many people to come here, and stop trying to build lots of housing for them. It will fundamentally change this area, and not in good ways that most of us would want. Preserve the charm of the rural way of life and farmland. Support the smaller farms here.

Need direct money grants for any income developing long term business ideas. Please support the small local dairy. Keep me informed. V. M. Lara  
Post Office Box 0215 Viroqua, Wisconsin 54665 - 0215

Fix roads

Surveys are nice but taking action is what matters.

I am concerned about so many vacation rentals that remove family dwellings from the market and bring in visitors who do not respect the local residents. Noise has been a problem in my neighborhood from large parties going on at Air B&B type rentals in the countryside. Immediately adjacent to my rural home, there is nobody who lives there full time anymore. There are 8 absentee or part-time landowners surrounding me, most are owned by seniors. We need to find ways to encourage and support young farmers to take over land and steward it properly so it doesn't all go to recreational use, second homes or short-term rentals. There is a need for senior housing that preserves dignity, independence and allows rural residents to remain in rural settings, still involved as much as they can be with activities they have loved doing, such as animal care, gardening, etc.. Co-op housing might be one thing to encourage. We have a gem of great beauty in Vernon Co. but the rugged landscape does not lend itself to a lot of new construction, roads, large scale farms or industry. Help preserve this rarity. The KVR is a great example of what can be done to preserve and protect.

Housing, Jobs, Education

Don't try to be all things to all people. Market forces take care of many things listed in these questions. Focus on those items you can impact; resident safety, clean water/air/land for all and safety nets for residents in need - elderly/children. Important to be aware of the impacts significant number of houses and farm development in Amish community is having in the rural areas of the county; increase number of chicken/egg production, veal etc. Potential impacts to water quality and safety on rural roads. Please include leaders from their community in the planning conversation.

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

Take a look at what agriculture produces for raw material commodities and see where it goes. Down the river in a barge with our topsoil along with it. No-till corn and soybean fields are being tilled. The farmers say "We are just knocking down the crop residue". If the soil is disturbed - it is no longer no-till. The federal programs are not being enforced.

Fix the roads

Support the Police Department and Fire Departments more optimistically. Help stop the flooding in the county.

Jersey valley needs to be fixed.

I know you can't target a religious group. But the amish community does little to benefit the county. They drive up land prices, split farms into city sized lots, wreck the roads, bypass spring road ban rules, deal mostly in cash bypassing income tax laws, bypass building codes, bypass sewage requirements, cause road/traffic hazards, bypass healthcare system, do nothing to support our volunteer groups, organizations, fire, ems, local parks/rec groups.

Don't mess it up. Please don't get caught up in the false green incentive.

We honestly have too much Government interference in our lives. Our taxes are way too high, and continue to rise. We pay A LOT of our tax dollars to the Public School which our children have never attended. That money should be used for our School choice, Homeschooling instead.

Better options fir groceries

Regionally, there is very little in terms of acute mental health services. Specifically, in-patient treatment. My understanding is that the county pays to transport people to other locations, Winnebago or Chippewa falls if La Crosse is full. La Crosse county does not have services for detoxing in some instances. Surrounding counties have the same issue-Monroe, Crawford, Richland etc. There are models out of Minnesota, that are community based mental health clinics that provide urgent or emergency care in addition to in patient treatment options and are stand alone centers separate from a hospital. These can be designed to be humane and family centered. Or potentially provide options to have next day follow-up instead of an overnight stay after a risk assessment. I know the recovery community sees a need and have been meeting for over a year to discuss this. I have only been able to attend twice to listen from a health provider perspective that used to work in community mental health. I would be curious to know that exact spending the county and municipalities spend on transporting people out of the county for emergent situations, and what potential exists to have a facility that surrounding counties could utilize for acute mental health issues, or substance abuse recovery, or other in patient treatment. It could potentially be a source of revenues for the county, while creating employment opportunities that meet the needs of Vernon county and surrounding areas.

Better jobs, and pay

The attraction of businesses to the county for the creation of jobs.

Housing! Environmental disaster planning! sustainable energy standards! Recreation! We will attract better and more preferential businesses and industries if we have adequate housing, and a more proactive and progressive minded approach to development. We have a serious lack of "work force" housing! We are always behind and reactive. Let's be leaders in innovation and ingenuity!

County Board does not need to get involved in lots of these things. Businesses know how to do this and I trust them to do it right. I don't know why the County Administrator is the point person for this survey.

Communicate with the residents on what is going on with this project, possibly via newspapers, all of them, Hillsboro, LaFarge and Viroqua. Also, communication with the Amish residents that are in the county, some of their own newsletters, and also meetings with them. There are liasons available with the Amish communities.

Put tax dollars toward things that government has to take care of and stay out of new ideas for how to spend taxes. There are experts in private industry that will and have been doing these things for decades. Government should not try to compete with private businesses and definitely should not be trying to regulate things that private companies have mastered already.

19. What else would you like to share with us, what is your "Big Idea" for...

We are a county rich with outdoor recreation opportunities yet the county refuses to invest in any outdoor recreation. In particular multi - use trails and opportunities that enhance the parks.

I'd like to see Vernon County become fully energy independent. We can produce all the energy we need right here within the county, allowing us to be totally disconnected from the larger regional companies we now rely on for power. Collaborate with the Vernon County Energy District <https://www.vced.energy/> Overall, Vernon County needs to prioritize implementing a sustainable systemic response to problems associated with climate change. Not just alternative energy...LESS energy consumption, not just recycling, but a substantial reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfills. Public tax dollars for education in Vernon County need to go exclusively to public schools. In Viroqua, we're currently funding both public and private education with public funds. This must stop.

County Board members need to understand their functions—they seem to inhibit rather than support progress, they don't always support county employees, and they seem to want to wield power instead of finding solutions.

We need to listen to the majority, work together and not believe everything radicals may say on any and all issues. County and Municipalities need to communicate, and work together.

1) Maintain night sky views and reduce light pollution. 2) Encourage locally generated business development as opposed to bringing in outside chains and corporate powers 3) Do what ever it takes to encourage local youth to make their own future by starting their own small business instead of expecting some outside firm to hire them. 4) Encourage mixed-use zoning allowing for small businesses operating out of the home.

Preserve the freedom to pursue the old ways, wholeheartedly embrace the future and look ahead with wisdom.

Reduce my taxes. I m not ag so I pay for everyone else

Diversity of landscapes, and tolerance of various local cultures will make it challenging to write a comprehensive plan. The rules should be adaptable in the near future, not set in stone

You have many Delta males in this county that just want to work. They aren't the ones that will start businesses or aspire to be coders. They just want a job that pays fair wages, benefits and a couple of weeks of vacation. Manufacturing is dead in the cities. Get these men some purpose, the rest will follow. Strong men make strong communities. You got plenty here. Manufacturers and Tradesmen are starting to know the errors of off shoring over the past four decades. The 2008 housing crash has left a void of skilled trades. Many tradesmen I have talked to in the area are in their 40-60s and they are broken and flat out. A skilled tradesman now? They make more than physicians and these skills are going to disappear with the more they retire or find other work. Backs can only hold up for so long. You have an opportunity to train up machinists, welders, assemblers and the like. Apprenticeship and on the job experience in the younger generation needs to be nurtured. Times are changing and you have a lot of good kids that are ready for opportunities outside of being a waitress or Kwik Trip employee. Not that I am not grateful for these service jobs, however I know good paying factory work and trades brings hope for the future, a home, a family and continuous improvement in all rural/small communities.

Continue to be a ag community with a hometown feel. Support our senior aging community.

Make it affordable for those that live here can thrive. To many farms being split up and sold for secondary residences, make recreational property taxes higher to stop balancing the book on current residents.

**End of Report**



**RESOLUTION #2023-80**

**ADOPTION OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE VERNON COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023-2024**

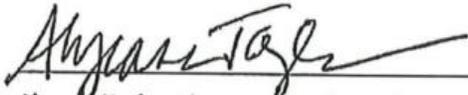
**WHEREAS**, Vernon County has contracted with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission for the creation of the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, Section 66.1001 (4)(a) of Wisconsin Statutes requires the governing body of the local government unit to adopt written procedures designed to foster public participation, including open discussions, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice is provided, in every stage in the preparation of the updated comprehensive plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Vernon County Board of Supervisors wishes to offer all citizens, businesses, other units of government, and other parties a range of opportunities to participate through the planning process in a meaningful way to shape the future of the County; now therefore be it,

**RESOLVED**, that the Vernon County Board of Supervisors does hereby adopt the attached Public Participation Plan for the creation of the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan 2023-2024.

Submitted to the County Board for consideration on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

 Aye 4 Nay 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0  
Alycain Taylor, Finance Committee Chair  
General Court

Aye 4 Nay 0 Absent 1 Abstain 0

VERNON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Ay 4 Nay: 0 Absent: 0 Abstain: 1



I, J. Pedretti, County Clerk of Vernon County, Wisconsin DO  
HEREBY CERTIFY that the above is a true and correct copy of the  
action taken by the Vernon County Board of Supervisors at the  
meeting of December 21, 2023, as indicated in transcription taken  
personally by me.

  
12/21/2023

J. Pedretti, Vernon County Clerk

of Vernon County,  
Wisconsin DO and  
copy of the  
Board of  
Supervisors at the  
indicated in  
transcription taken

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN for the Creation (bf the Vernon County Comprehensive  
Plan 2023-2024

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## Introduction

Section ~~36.1001(4)(a)~~ of Wisconsin Statutes requires the governing body of the local government unit to adopt written procedures designed to foster public participation, including open discussion, communication programs, information services, and public meetings for which advance notice is provided, in every stage in the preparation of the updated comprehensive plan. These written procedures contained within this Public Participation Plan have been developed to meet this requirement. This Plan will guide public participation throughout the County's Comprehensive Planning Update Process.

This Public Participation Program offers all citizens, businesses, other units of government, and other parties a range of opportunities to participate through the planning process in a meaningful way to shape the future of the County. Effective public input is critical for the success of this planning process because it is the citizens, businesses, and other organizations that will experience the results of the objectives, policies, goals, and programs of the Comprehensive Plan in the future.

The participation program is designed to be inclusive. It encourages people to participate in the process and to maximize the effectiveness of their contributions. The opportunities are open to everyone.

Our public participation process will:

- Ensure all planning decisions are open to public comment;
- Produce better planning decisions;
  - Support and add credibility to all County decision-making processes
- Provide opportunities to disseminate information about the Plan and process to all segments of the County
  - Strengthen the relationship between our decision makers, residents, and stakeholders

## Public Participation Methods and Opportunities

Vernon County has established the following list of public participation methods and opportunities.

### a. Open Plan Commission/Committee Meetings

Plan Commission/Committee meetings scheduled during the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan update process will have an agenda item providing the opportunity for any public comment on or regarding the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan.

### b. Review and Distribution of the Planning Documents

During the Comprehensive Plan update process, the public may review and obtain copies of proposed, alternative, or amended elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan from the County upon request. This information may also be distributed through the County's website.

### c. Website

The County will post on its website information related to the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan update planning process. This information may include agendas, minutes, draft plan elements, amendments, reports, maps, and photographs.

### d. Written Comments

The County will always welcome and consider written comments and will respond either in writing or by public comment during public meetings and/or through the media.

### e. Meeting Notices

The County will post meeting notices for each meeting and event in a timely manner at accessible locations, and the notices will meet the requirements for proper notification regarding purpose of meeting, date, time, and location.

f. Public Hearing

The Comprehensive Planning Law requires local units of government to hold at least one (1) formal public hearing with a Class 2 public notice prior to adoption of a revised Comprehensive Plan resolution or ordinance. Prior to adoption of the revised Comprehensive Plan, the County will conduct this required public hearing.

g. Plan Recommendation Resolution

The Plan Commission/Committee or other body of the County that is authorized to amend the Vernon County Comprehensive Plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of the Comprehensive Plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission or other body. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the committee or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive material that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan. Upon adoption of the plan amendment, the Plan and its resolution shall be distributed by the County to recipients listed in Section 66,1001(4)(b) of the Wisconsin Statutes,

h. Plan Adoption by ordinance

No comprehensive plan that is recommended for adoption or amendment may take effect until the County Board enacts an ordinance that adopts the comprehensive plan or amendment. Upon adoption of this ordinance, it shall be filed with all the entities specified in Section 36.1001(4)(b) of the Statutes.

i. Other

Planning is a continuous process that does not end with the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. Since new issues and unforeseen circumstances will always arise, the County may amend its Comprehensive Plan with proper public input and in accordance with County policies and State Statutes at any time.

Adoption

Resolution Plan on this 21 day of December,

John Goede

Vernon County adopted this Public Participation \_\_\_\_\_ Plan on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

Vernon County Board Chair

[Signature]

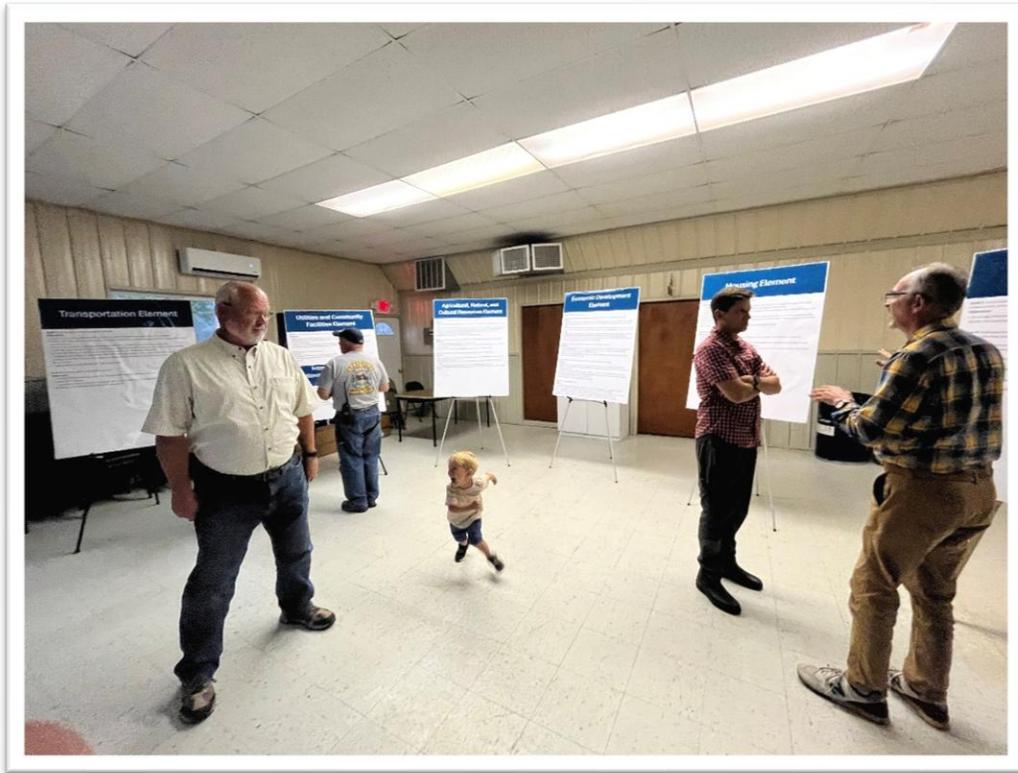
Vernon County Clerk

APPENDIX C – PUBLIC MEETING RESPONSES – ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Public Engagement Readstown August 14, 2024

Eight public engagement meetings were hosted at various locations throughout Vernon County to gather feedback from rural



communities. Participants were able to provide written and verbal comments.

Municipality/Location	Address	Date/times
Hillsboro Firemen's Community Center	203 Mill St. Hillsboro	August 13th 1+6 p.m.
Westby Performing Arts Center (PAC)	206 West Ave. Westby	August 22nd 2+6 p.m.
Readstown - Advancement Building	116 N. 4th St. Readstown	August 14th 2+6 p.m.
Wheatland Town Hall	E2177 St. Hwy 82, Wheatland	September 4th 2+ 6 p.m.

Locations and times for the meetings were posted at:

- Vernon County webpage
- University of Wisconsin Extension webpage and Facebook page

- Winding Rivers Libraries (digital and physical flyers)
- Magpie Gelato (physical flyers)
- Viroqua Area Businesses (physical flyers)
- Viroqua Area Folks (social media page)
- Viroqua Area Events/Announcements (social media page)
- All county facilities (bulletin boards/physical flyers)
- Coon Valley businesses (physical flyers)
- City Halls in the municipalities (physical flyers)
- Crawford County Independent
- Vernon Times
- Vernon Reporter shared the filer and wrote an article <https://vernonreporter.com/county-input-sessions-scheduled-throughout-the-county-to-gather-public-input-on-the-county-comprehensive-plan-begin-this-week/>
- Town Clerks in Vernon County were notified
- Area realtors were notified
- Vernon County Human Resources and Sheriff's Department shared the information on their Facebook pages.

Thirty-five residents of Vernon County attended the public engagement meetings, and 54 comment statements were recorded. This feedback was sorted according to the applicable Comprehensive Plan elements and presented to the steering committee for consideration and inclusion in the draft plan at the September 11, 2024 meeting.

#### **Engagement Overview:**

1. 10 - minute introductions of Vernon County Planning Commission members, Vernon County Staff, and MRRPC staff in attendance.
2. 15-20 - minute Comprehensive Plan Presentation
3. 30 - minute gallery walk to review Goals and Objective Posters
4. Attendees were able to ask questions and provide feedback though written and verbal form via comment sheet and a recording MRRPC staff member.

#### **Verbatim recorded comments per Comprehensive Plan Element**

##### **Housing Element**

- Create an eco-Village similar to River Falls in Viola in the new development.
- Recommend lots big enough to fit septic (at least 1 acre).
- Infill housing is good.

- Water/plumbing codes are against green standards (2).
- Infill and reuse of houses is good.
- Improvements of buildings and repurposing them instead of rebuilding them is encouraged.
- Limit Airbnbs

#### **Agriculture Element**

- Conserve the soil and be careful about the karst landscape.
- Fragile soils and Karst topography can't take these large-scale farms.
- There is too much dependence on chemicals (2).
- Farming sustainability is an issue.
- I don't like farms having three wells.
- Encourage regenerative agriculture-sustainability.
- Hydrology sensitivity: sinkholes, caves, karst, leads to groundwater contamination.
- We should limit the amount of water taken from aquifers.
- I want to preserve small family farms and keep the rural character.
- Sizes of everything are getting too big; wells, farms, houses, trucks.
- I want farmland to be preserved more.
- Farms should be checked every year to see if they meet requirements.
- Regenerative agriculture should be used.
- Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) should have a limit on the number of wells they can have, and a limit on taking of water from aquifers.
- I want to preserve small farms.
- I want farmland to be preserved.
- Organic agriculture has transitioned people out of poverty.
- Air and water are our lifeblood here.
- Foster regenerative agriculture.

#### **Cultural and Natural Resources Element**

- Do a karst study if the funding can be found.
- Water contamination is not being addressed.

- Manure spills need to be more regulated.
- Nitrates contaminating wells and cows standing in streams is an issue.
- The fragile soil and karst landscape can't handle these large industrial things.
- More specific goals on air, water, and soil quality standards and goals.
- Fix the contaminated water.
- Want to host an annual township picnic, a chance for neighbors to meet each other and talk about other issues – remembers a time when he was young, and the community came together around threshing bees.
- I really care about where we live.
- Cultural asset mapping should happen.
- Conduct Cultural Asset Mapping – include important areas or buildings.
- Creative ways to bring people together and create community.

#### **Land Use Element**

- Kickapoo township wants zoning, but people think it will be very restrictive.
- Kickapoo even existing land use, used as zoning would be good.
- Zoning would prevent unwanted uses in the towns.
- Zoning is wanted to prevent just anything from moving in next to them.
- People in Kickapoo township are worried that anything can move in next to them.
- People in favor want to have nuisance uses away from their residence.
- We should provide what if scenarios without zoning, e.g., 8 houses on one parcel.
- Some people put up there hands and say “Not here” on zoning – without full knowledge.
- See the Floodplain Management Plan as an asset rather than burden.

#### **Economic Development**

- The striking statistic of child poverty rate in Vernon County as listed in Table 7.2 of Existing Conditions. Perhaps I missed it in a different element, but I think it would be a good fit in with the Economic Development Element.
- Goal I in the (Economic Development) element needs some objectives, and one could be support for low-income families to attend licensed childcare facilities; working with businesses and schools to develop childcare options (hopefully county reps are aware of what La Farge Schools/Village and businesses are doing). WHEDA will be looking for that in grant applications.

#### **Utilities**

- Surprised, there is no comment on the importance of high-speed broadband; general support of effective sewerage treatment and safe water systems (Sidenote; through NRB, we are pushing for evaluation of lead pipe impacts in rural areas from the old well to home systems and, the ongoing problem of lead paint in homes primarily occupied by low-income families in rural areas).
- Want to keep the wind turbines out.

#### Miscellaneous

- Conduct focus groups to inform the public what the correct information is.
- NOTHING BIG
- Focus groups to inform the public about what the truth is would be nice (what we are currently doing).
- Vouchers take tax payer money and give it to private schools which are the heart of our community.
- Regarding concerns by the Amish. They have legitimate concerns but, we have witnessed significant expansion that can impact water, health, and safety. It needs to be addressed sooner than later.

#### Summary of answers to feedback form questions:

How should development take place in Vernon County (circle all that you agree with).

- a. Development should be encouraged next to existing development, sewers, electricity, and services. **(4)**
- b. Conflicting land uses should be separated. **(2)**
- c. No rules – don't tell anyone what they can do with their land.
- d. Guided development can improve the quality of life in our county. **(4)**
- e. All development is bad.

#### APPENDIX D WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES BUREAU OF REMEDIATION AND REDEVELOPMENT TRACKING SYSTEM (BRRTS)

Wisconsin's BRRTS (Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System) is an online database managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) that tracks contaminated land and environmental cleanup activities across the state. This database is supported by an online mapping tool <https://dnrmaps.wi.gov/H5/?viewer=rbsites> . It provides public access to information on sites where spills, leaks, or discharges of hazardous substances have occurred, and tracks the progress of investigation, cleanup, and closure of these sites. The BRRTS system includes various types of cases, such as leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs), environmental repair (ERP) cases, spills, and voluntary party liability exemption (VPLE) sites.

BRRTS serves as an important tool for public awareness and transparency, allowing individuals, businesses, and local governments to access critical information on environmental contamination. It is used by consultants, real estate professionals, and prospective buyers to evaluate potential environmental risks associated with a property. The system also supports efforts to restore and redevelop brownfields, which are properties with known or suspected contamination, by tracking the cleanup progress and providing a historical record of environmental incidents and remediation efforts across Wisconsin.

Activity Name	Address	Municipality	Status
SOLVERSON AGRONOMICS PESTICIDE	826 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
FRANKLIN TN GARAGE	STH 27 & STH 82	VIROQUA	CLOSED
BOB JOHNSON OIL CO COON VALLEY FORMER BULK	ANDERSON ST	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER GENOA	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
JOHNSON RECYCLING	S3940 STH 80	HILLSBORO	OPEN
HILLSBORO COOP AGST	E18751 STH 33	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
AT & T SPILL	2.5 MI E OF COON VALLEY	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
BOB JOHNSON OIL CO	STH 162 & CACTUS DR	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
STERLING OIL CO FORMER	E4102 CTH N	STERLING	CLOSED
VIROQUA WHEY PLT	202 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
LA FARGE COOP - FORMER BISHOP PROPERTY	N MILL ST & STH 131 N	LA FARGE	CLOSED
CHASEBURG FARMERS COOP BULK PLT	312 GILBERT ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
WOODRUFF DR DEBBIE RESIDENCE	E2635 LIETKE LN	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER GENOA	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT VIROQUA	602 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VERNON COOP OIL ASSN BULK PLT	107 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
LEIS OIL VIROQUA BULK PLT W	520 N CENTER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
LEIS OIL VIROQUA BULK PLT E	523 N CENTER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
SLEEPY HOLLOW GARAGE	231 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
MAGELAND BULK PLT	RAILROAD AVE & E PARKINSON	VIROQUA	CLOSED
MUELLERS IMPLEMENT	202 W DECKER	VIROQUA	CLOSED
OLSON BULK PLT	524 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
CHASEBURG COOP CREAMERY	CTH K	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
WESTBY DRY CLEANERS	213 MELBY ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
JEFFERSON TN SHOP CHLORIDE	CTH B SPRINGVILLE	JEFFERSON	CLOSED
AMPI MILK COOP COON VALLEY	406 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
FOREST TN SALT STORAGE FACILITY	E15784 STH 33	MOUNT TABOR	OPEN
BENDERS CLEANERS	117 E TERHUNE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WESTBY AGRONOMY BULK PLT	405 S MAIN	WESTBY	CLOSED
WESTBY BULK PLT	101 MILWAUKEE ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
GREENWOOD TN SHOP	S4105 CTH C	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
ORGANIC VALLEY COOP	637 MILL ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
HILLSBORO FARMERS COOP - HILLSBORO	198A E MADISON	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
HOWARD JOHNSON ENTERPRISE	525 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WESTBY FARMERS UNION/HEARTLAND CNTY COOP	826 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER GENOA STATION #3 POWER PLANT	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
SPENSLEY/BADGER - VIROQUA	E7716 CHERRY GROVE RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WI DOT ROW - 203 E DECKER ST	203 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
CHASEBURG FARMERS UNION COOP	101 PEARL ST N	STODDARD	CLOSED
DAN ICENOGLA SPILL	S7563 RILEY RD	KICKAPOO	CLOSED
RIVER VIEW DAIRY OUTLOT	E MADISON ST AND AIR RAIL AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
LA CROSSE BOILING WATER REACTOR FACILITY	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
ROBERT FISH RESIDENCE	S2387 MOSSHOLDER ST	BLOOMINGDALE	OPEN
UNITED COOPERATIVE - HILLSBORO FACILITY	198A E MADISON	HILLSBORO	OPEN
WI DOT OLD LINE RD BRIDGE	OLD LINE RD	COON TN	CLOSED
TAMMYS CORNER STORE	103 E MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT STERLING	CTH N (EX PURDY STORE)	VIROQUA	CLOSED

KWIK TRIP VIROQUA	413 MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP STODDARD	141 S MAIN ST	STODDARD	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP OLD KICKAPOO WAREHOUSE	MADISON ST - 200 BLOCK	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP #841	229 MILL ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
AMPI LA FARGE	MAIN & MILLS ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
HALVERSON STORE	E4603 STH 82	VIROQUA	CLOSED
NATIONAL BY-PRODUCTS	CTH B ON EDGE OF CTY	VIROQUA	CLOSED
KICKAPOO SCHOOLS	STH 56	VIOLA	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER GENOA	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
AMPI MILK COOP COON VALLEY	406 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
BOB JOHNSON OIL CAVADINI AUTO	100 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
BOB JOHNSON OIL	ANDERSON ST	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
PAULS AMOCO FORMER	FRONT ST	DE SOTO	CLOSED
GENOA TN	SOUTH CREEK RD	GENOA	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY HWY SHOP HRYBEK	602 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
BLUSKE LUBE & REPAIR	103 N MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
HOFFS MOBIL	302 S MAIN	VIROQUA	CLOSED
GREAT RIVERS FARM SERVICE	741 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
ROCKTON STORE	STH 131 & CTH P	ROCKTON	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY TRAFFIC DEPT	602 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
G & F DISTRIBUTING PROPERTY	CENTER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
LA FARGE COOP OIL CO	210 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
SELAND FENCL PROPERTY	300 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
WESTBY AREA SCHOOLS SITE 1	206 WEST AVE S	WESTBY	CLOSED
G & S PLUMBING	222 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
MARSHALL FARM	S3991 CTH A	LA FARGE	CLOSED
BLACKHAWK PARK	E590 CTH BI	WHEATLAND	CLOSED
EKLOV MOBIL	410 N MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
HILLSBORO CTY	811 PRAIRIE AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT LA FARGE	S MILL ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
WESTBY FARMER UNION COOP	405 S MAIN	WESTBY	CLOSED
KOPPLEN RESIDENCE	CTH K & KREIBICH LN	STODDARD	CLOSED
HUNTINGTONS GARAGE	119 MAIN ST	GENOA	CLOSED
WESTBY CTY FIRE STATION	200 MELBY ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
COON VALLEY MINI MART	701 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
ERICKSON TRANSPORT CORP	219 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
WI DNR WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK	STH 33 E	ONTARIO	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY COURTHOUSE	DUNLAP AVE & W DECKER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
PEDRETTIS KWIK STOP	109 S RIDGE RD	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
LEHRKE PROPERTY	115 N MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
MECA SPORTSWEAR	LINCOLN ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
ALS CITGO	902 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
STAR MACHINE CO	618 MADISON ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
AT&T RADIO TOWER	1 MI N OF TRIPPVILLE	MOUNT TABOR	CLOSED
CHASEBURG COOP CREAMERY	CTH K	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
ONTARIO GOSPEL HALL	BROAD & MAIN ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
VIROQUA WHEY PLT	202 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
DOBBS STACY PROPERTY	STH 33 & STH 131	ONTARIO	CLOSED

WALLACE LARRY PROPERTY	STH 33 & GARDEN ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
SCHULTZ ERNEST PROPERTY	130 E SOUTH ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
CLARK LEMOINE RESIDENCE	904 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
SCHROER HARDWOOD LUMBER	MILL ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
HILLSBORO EQUIPMENT	E18898 STH 33	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
LA FARGE FIRE STATION	215 SILVER ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
VIROQUA SCHOOL BUS GARAGE SITE 1	100 BLACKHAWK DR	VIROQUA	CLOSED
HILLSBORO FARMERS COOP	140 SHORT ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
STEVES CITGO	417 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
STERLING TN SHOP	E4621 STH 82	STERLING	CLOSED
ST JOSEPH HOSPITAL	400 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
S & T SPORT SHOP	S6837 TERHUNE ST	VICTORY	CLOSED
VERNON MANOR	E7404 A CTH BB	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VIROQUA SCHOOLS LIBERTY POLE	E5855 STH 82	FRANKLIN	CLOSED
VERNON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL PROPERTY	507 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
STERLING OIL CO FORMER	E4102 CTH N	STERLING	CLOSED
DESOTO SCHOOL BUS GARAGE	600 MAIN ST	DESOTO	CLOSED
READSTOWN QUICK STOP	USH 14 & 61	READSTOWN	CLOSED
AVALANCHE STORE	S3535 CTH S	VIROQUA	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP #757	520 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
NORWALK ONTARIO SCHOOL	RT 1 STH 131	ONTARIO	CLOSED
POWER RALPH RESIDENCE	420 S RUSK ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
JAMBOIS GARAGE	511 MAIN	GENOA	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT HILLSBORO	133 E MADISON	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
MCLEES CLAIR RESIDENCE	E18668 STH 33	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
ZZIP STOP	217 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
WESTBY COUNTRY MARKET	206 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
WESTBY CENEX BULK PLT	COON PRAIRIE RD & WEBSTER ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
LA FARGE SCHOOL	301 W ADAMS ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
VIROQUA SCHOOL BUS GARAGE SITE 2	100 BLACKHAWK DR	VIROQUA	CLOSED
GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH	502-508 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
PEDRETTIS KWIK STOP	4050 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
AT & T GLOBAL SYSTEMS	1201 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP #758	603 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
ONTARIO FASTRIP	201 N GARDEN ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
CHASEBURG FARMERS COOP SERVICE STATION	304 DEPOT ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
KAHLER FARM	S2820 KAHLER LN	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
ROMANCE STORE	S4850 STH 56	ROMANCE	CLOSED
WESTBY CENEX MINI MART	409 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
SLEEPY HOLLOW GARAGE	231 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VIROQUA SCHOOL BUS GARAGE SITE 4	100 BLACKHAWK DR	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WESTBY AREA SCHOOLS SITE 2	206 WEST AVE S	WESTBY	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP #846	308 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
VERNON COOP CARDTROL STATION SITE 1	120 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
R & M LIQUIDATORS	516 S 4TH ST	READSTOWN	CLOSED
SEBRANEK AUTO MART	749 S HIGH ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
JEFFERS TRUCK SALES #1	311 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
JEFFERS TRUCK SALES #2	319 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED

JEFFERS TRUCK SALES #3	404 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP #841	229 MILL ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
WESTBY QUIK STOP	USH 14 & WASHINGTON ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
WEST CENTRAL DAIRY SYSTEMS	323 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
BRUSH HOLLOW STORE FORMER	STH 82 & CTH S	WEBSTER	CLOSED
DELAP OIL & GAS CO INC	744 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
DESOTO HIGH SCHOOL	600 MAIN ST	DESOTO	CLOSED
EKLOV AUTO SALES	209 N MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
STODDARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	300 COTTAGE ST	STODDARD	CLOSED
HALVERSON ALFRED ESTATE	STH 82 AND CTH N	VIROQUA	CLOSED
BRUSH HOLLOW CHEESE FACTORY - FORMER	S4595 CTH S	VIROQUA	CLOSED
QWIK SALES & SERVICE - FORMER	242 S STATE ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
MUELLERS IMPLEMENT SITE II - FORMER	202 W DECKER	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VERNON COOP OIL ASSN CARDTROL STATION	120 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
LAWRYNK PATRICK RESIDENCE	311 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
STARK TN HALL	403 MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
BALLSRUD PROPERTY	101 W 2ND ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
DESOTO HIGH SCHOOL SITE #2	600 MAIN ST	DESOTO	CLOSED
TRAIL RIDGE CAMP	E2695 CHERITH WAY	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
SCHOONOVER FARMS	E8911 FIRE #	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VIKING INN SUPPER CLUB INC	113 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
READSTOWN CREAMERY - FORMER	403 N BLUFF ST	READSTOWN	CLOSED
FOREMOST FARMS HILLSBORO PLT	186 E MAIN ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
ROCKTON TRACT 275	STH 131	ROCKTON	CLOSED
POTTS CORNER	CTH P & WEISTER CREEK RD	LA FARGE	CLOSED
READSTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - FORMER	220 WISCONSIN AVE E	READSTOWN	CLOSED
MULLENBACH DENTAL	400 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
OSBORNE MARY LOU PROPERTY	109 CENTER ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
NRP ENTERPRISE - FORMER HOZLI	301 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
DAHL PHARMACY	210 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
STEAMWAY	320 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
JOHNSON PROPERTY	INTERS USH 14 & 16	VIROQUA	CLOSED
E HAGENAH LUMBER CO FORMER	1120 WOOD AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
WI DOT BLUSKE MOBIL FORMER	103 N MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
LARSON FUNERAL HOME (FORMER)	320 MAIN ST	DESOTO	CLOSED
MT TABOR TAVERN	S792 CTH V	MT TABOR VILLAGE	CLOSED
GERBER HOME HEATING OIL TANK	118 S WASHINGTON AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP STORE #757 FORMER	520 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
CILLEY PROPERTY	943 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
TERRYS AUTO SALES	208 S MAIN ST SITE B	WESTBY	CLOSED
MILL SITE FMR	SE CORNER STH 14 & S WATER ST	READSTOWN	OPEN
KWIK TRIP #758	603 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WI DOT WESTBY	208 S MAIN ST SITE B	WESTBY	CLOSED
VESBACH OIL LLC	120 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	OPEN
MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MP 665.5 [HISTORIC]	MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MP 665.5	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
LOCK & DAM #8 [HISTORIC SPILL]	LOCK & DAM #8	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MP 681.5 [HISTORIC]	MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MP 68	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 14 .2 MI N OF CTH J [HISTORIC SPILL]	USH 14 .2 MI N OF JCT CTH J	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL

CHASEBURG FARMERS UNION COOP [HISTORIC]	CHASEBURG FARMERS UNION COOP	CHASEBURG	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 35 .5 MI S OF GI INTER [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 35 .5 MI S OF GI INTER	STODDARD	HISTORIC SPILL
MOBIL PLT [HISTORIC SPILL]	MOBIL PLT	COON VALLEY	HISTORIC SPILL
US GOV LOCK & DAM 8 MISSISSIPPI RIVER	LOCK & DAM 8 MISSISSIPPI	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
N PEARL ST [HISTORIC SPILL]	N PEARL ST	STODDARD	HISTORIC SPILL
8312 E MILL ST [HISTORIC SPILL]	8312 E MILL ST	HILLSBORO	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 131 2 MI N OF TN [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 131 2 MI N OF TN	READSTOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
209 N MAIN IN ALLEY BY RR TRACK [HISTORIC]	209 N MAIN ST	WESTBY	HISTORIC SPILL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER [HISTORIC SPILL]	LOCK & DAM #8	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 82 [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 82	WEST PRAIRIE	HISTORIC SPILL
.1 MI N OF CTH NN [HISTORIC SPILL]	.1 MI N OF CTH NN	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
N MAIN & E BROADWAY - 2 BLK [HISTORIC SPILL]	N MAIN & E BROADWAY - 2	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER - NEAR IOWA SIDE	MISSISSIPPI RIVER - NEAR IOWA	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MP 683 [HISTORIC SPILL]	MISSISSIPPI RIVER - MP 683	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 12 & BUS HWY 12 [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 12 & BUS HWY 12	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
LIBERTY POLE SUBSTATION [HISTORIC SPILL]	LIBERTY POLE SUBSTATION	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
SOUTH & MAIN ST [HISTORIC SPILL]	SOUTH & MAIN ST	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
BULK PLT - COON VALLEY [HISTORIC SPILL]	BULK PLT	COON VALLEY	HISTORIC SPILL
BEHIND MA & PAS RESTAURANT [HISTORIC SPILL]	MA & PAS RESTAURANT	ONTARIO	HISTORIC SPILL
RAILROAD AVE - BY HOWARD JOHNSON [HISTORIC]	RAILROAD AVE - BY HOWARD JOHNS	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER @ LANSING IA	MISSISSIPPI RIVER AT LANSING I	VICTORY	CLOSED
.5 MI N OF STH 35 & 82 [HISTORIC SPILL]	.5 MI N OF STH 35 & 82	DE SOTO	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 56 - 6 MI E OF VIROQUA [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 56 - 6 MI E OF VIROQUA	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
ACADEMY ST [HISTORIC SPILL]	ACADEMY ST	DESOTO	HISTORIC SPILL
GENOA NUCLEAR POWER PLT [HISTORIC SPILL]	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
UTILITY [HISTORIC SPILL]	UTILITY	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
BEHIND CHEESE FACTORY [HISTORIC SPILL]	BEHIND CHEESE FACTORY	HILLSBORO	HISTORIC SPILL
BROADWAY & MAIN HWY 35 [HISTORIC SPILL]	BROADWAY & MAIN STH 35	STODDARD	HISTORIC SPILL
LOT 16 [HISTORIC SPILL]	LOT 16	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
MILL ST & MAIN ST [HISTORIC SPILL]	MILL ST & MAIN ST	LA FARGE	HISTORIC SPILL
STODDARD	141 S MAIN ST	STODDARD	CLOSED
RT 4 [HISTORIC SPILL]	RT 4	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
BEHIND QUICK STOP IN COON VALLEY [HISTORIC]	QUICK STOP	COON VALLEY	HISTORIC SPILL
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP [HISTORIC SPILL]	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP [HISTORIC SPILL]	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
DAIRYLAND TRANSFORMER SWITCHYARD [HISTORIC]	DAIRYLAND TRANSFORMER SWITCHYA	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
1 MI N OF DESOTA WI [HISTORIC SPILL]	1 MI N OF DESOTO	DESOTO	HISTORIC SPILL
DAIRYLAND POWER SWITCHING YARD [HISTORIC]	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
CTY TANK NN & USH 14 [HISTORIC SPILL]	CTH NN & USH 14	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 35 BTW GENOA & VICTORY [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 35 BTW GENOA & VICTORY	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
CLINTON TN GARAGE - KNAPP CREEK [HISTORIC]	CLINTON TN GARAGE - KNAPP	WESTBY	HISTORIC SPILL
GRAVEL LOT IN CLINTON TN HALL [HISTORIC]	CLINTON TN HALL - GRAVEL LOT	LA FARGE	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 35 [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 35	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
3200 E AVE S9 [HISTORIC SPILL]	3200 E AVE S9	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
MAIN ST - BOX 272	MAIN ST	READSTOWN	CLOSED
3 MI E OF COON VALLEY ON HWY 14 & 61	3 MI E OF COON VALLEY ON HWY 1	COON VALLEY	HISTORIC SPILL
HILLSBORO FERT PLT - AIRPORT RD [HISTORIC]	AIRPORT RD	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
US LOCK & DAM 8 [HISTORIC SPILL]	LOCK AND DAM #8	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL

HWY 56 APPROX 200 E OF CNTY N 5 [HISTORIC]	STH 56 APPROX 200 E OF CTH N	LA CROSSE	HISTORIC SPILL
HILLSBORO COOP BULK PLT	E18751 STH 33	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
DACH RIDGE [HISTORIC SPILL]	DACH RIDGE	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 82/5 MI E RED MND/1 MI E 1ST HWY N	STH 82/5 MI E RED MND/1 MI E 1	UNKNOWN	HISTORIC SPILL
GORDON NEMEC @LA FARGE	STH 131 2 MI N OF LA FARGE VIL	LA FARGE	CLOSED
BLACKHAWK PARK [HISTORIC SPILL]	BLACKHAWK PARK	FOUNTAIN CITY	HISTORIC SPILL
MISSISSIPPI RIVER DAM #8 [HISTORIC SPILL]	MISSISSIPPI RIVER DAM #8	LA CROSSE	HISTORIC SPILL
GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY [HISTORIC]	S5704 STH 35	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
HWY 80 N OF HUB CITY	STH 80 N OF HUB CITY	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
MISSISSIPPE RIVER 3 MI N GENOA	MISSISSIPPI RIVER 3 MI N GENO	GENOA	CLOSED
GENOA [HISTORIC SPILL]	GENOA	GENOA	HISTORIC SPILL
RT 1 BOX 276	RT 1 BOX 276	GENOA	CLOSED
Y & SMITH RD [HISTORIC SPILL]	CTH Y & SMITH RD	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
MISS RIVER 8 MI N OF GENOA DAM	MISS RIVER 8 MI N OF GENOA	GENOA	CLOSED
102 MAIN ST	102 MAIN ST	STODDARD	CLOSED
1 MI S OF GENOA STH 35 [HISTORIC SPILL]	STH 35 1 MI S OF GENOA	GEONA	HISTORIC SPILL
KWIK TRIP [HISTORIC SPILL]	308 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	HISTORIC SPILL
RT 4 [HISTORIC SPILL]	RT 4	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
VERNON ESTATES TRAILER PARK [HISTORIC SPILL]	VERNON ESTATES TRAILER PARK	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
WHITNEY GREG	511 S RUSK ST - CURB	VIROQUA	CLOSED
SCOTT CONST	HEXPOINT RD	GENOA	CLOSED
VERNON CNTY BLDGS [HISTORIC SPILL]	578 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO	HISTORIC SPILL
BROOKFIELD SCHOOLS - BUS REFUELING AREA	RT 1 STH 131	ONTARIO	CLOSED
GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY	S5704 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
CTH LF N OF VIROQUA [HISTORIC SPILL]	CNTY LF N OF VIROQUA	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
RT 1 EMBER AVE [HISTORIC SPILL]	RT 1 EMBER AVE	ONTARIO	HISTORIC SPILL
FAIRGROUND ENTRANCE- VIROCQUA [HISTORIC]	LINCOLN AVE & J ST	VIROQUA	HISTORIC SPILL
VIROQUA SCHOOLS- BOILER ROOM	701 EDUCATION AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
FUEL STATION @ THE DIST	RT 1 STH 131	ONTARIO	CLOSED
N MAIN & W BROADWAY	N MAIN & W BROADWAY	VIROQUA	CLOSED
HWY 35 .75 MI S OF STODDARD	STH 35 .75 MI S OF STODDARD	STODDARD	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
ROBERTSON LUMBER	RT 1	DESOTO	CLOSED
WESTBY NORSKE STOP	100 WASHINGTON ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
WESTBY F U COOP-VIROQUA	N MAIN - 800 BLOCK	VIROQUA	CLOSED
CTH P & VALLEY AVE	CTH P & VALLEY AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
GENOA NUCLEAR POWER PLT - HWY 35	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
VIROQUA AREA SCHOOL DIST	100 BLACKHAWK DR	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WAYNE TRANSPORT	CHICAGO AVE & AIRPORT RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
POWER PLT STATION	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
WINSTON TALLY	FS DR	VIROQUA	CLOSED
HWY 33/80/82 2 MI NE OF HILLSBORO	STH 33/80/82	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
GRAND CENTRAL PARKING LOT	USH 14 & STH 27	WESTBY	CLOSED
MISSISSIPPI RIVER	MISSISSIPPI RIVER	GENOA	CLOSED
MARQUETTE TRANSPORTATION	MISSISSIPPI RIVER	GENOA	CLOSED
MAGELAND OIL CO	RAILROAD AVE & E PARKINSON	VIROQUA	CLOSED
DAWES RIGGING & CRANE RENTAL	STH 56 200 FT W OF JOHNSON LN	HARMONY	CLOSED
LAMBRIGHTS INC	USH 14 3 MI N OF WESTBY	WESTBY	CLOSED

FOREMOST FARMS	186 E MAIN ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
HUSSELL BRUCE	MISSISSIPPI RIVER	GENOA	CLOSED
50 YDS S OF CNTY N & PETERSON AVE	50 YDS S OF CNTY N & PETERSON	STERLING	CLOSED
JACOBSON OIL CO	523 N CENTER	VIROQUA	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
AMERICAN RIVER TRANSPORTATION	MISSISSIPPI RIVER	GENOA	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
VIROQUA DAIRY	123 E COURT ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
SANDVICK KENNETH	S6804 BROWN RD	DE SOTO	CLOSED
FOREMOST FARMS	186 E MAIN ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
FORTNEY JEFFREY	MILLER RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
FORTNEY JEFFREY/ABT	S3506A MILLER RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
HEARTLAND COUNTRY COOP/THELEN	E11294 BUCK EYE RD	LA FARGE	CLOSED
AGRI TECH FS INC	CTH N	VIROQUA	CLOSED
ELINOR NELSON	110 N 4TH ST & 116 N 4TH ST	READSTOWN VIL	CLOSED
CASHTON FARM SUPPLY	E11447 CTH P	CLINTON TN	CLOSED
WHISLER TODD @VIROQUA	S4751 A NOTTINGHAM RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
BADGER ENV'L & EARTHWORKS INC	S1483 STH 27 N	CHRISTIANA TN	CLOSED
FISCHER TRUCKING	CTH O & CTH K	BERGEN	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP GENOA STATION	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
CTH P 3 MI E OF HWY 27	CTH P	CHRISTIANA/WESTBY	CLOSED
PARKING LOT/ADDRESS UNKNOWN	PARKING LOT	WESTBY	CLOSED
KOUBA WELL DRILLING	STH 33 E	ONTARIO	CLOSED
ALLIANT ENERGY	407 W SOUTH ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
CASHTON FARM SUPPLY	MILLER RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
GLICK/DATCP - VIROQUA	CTH NN	VIROQUA	CLOSED
WESTBY F.U./FRANKS	CTH P	WESTBY	CLOSED
JOHN MITCHELL	CTH WW & CTH F	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
VERNON ELECTRIC COOP	PLUM RUN RD	LA FARGE	CLOSED
HARTLAND COUNTRY COOP	STH 162	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
BRIAN ASPENSON	S6681 STH 27	VIROQUA	CLOSED
CHASEBURG CENEX FARMERS UNION	E2938 BOHLAND HOLLOW RD	FERRYVILLE	CLOSED
JIM MLSNA	E16544 ST JOHN AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
MARY JANE RONDEAU SPILL	E3684 NEWTON RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
FLEET TRANSPORTATION SPILL	AMOUCK RD	STARK	CLOSED
MAGELAND OIL CO INC SPILL	400 BLOCK OF RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
BNSF RAILROAD SPILL	S OF CTH GI TO CHIPMONK COULEE	BERGEN	CLOSED
K+D MANURE HANDLING SPILL	HILLS PRAIRIE DAIRY	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
XCEL ENERGY SPILL	HILLYER & DECKER STS	VIROQUA	CLOSED
STEVEN L SCHLITZER SPILL	STH 82 1.5 M E OF DE SOTO	WHEATLAND	CLOSED
LAWN CARE SPECIALISTS SPILL	1003 JOHNSON ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
PEPSI COLA BOTTLING CO SPILL	STH 35 S OF GENOA DAM PARKING	GENOA	CLOSED
JEFF AND BONNY PARR SPILL	S8010 GILMAN RD	STERLING TN	CLOSED
JERSEY VALLEY LAKE - MANURE COMPLAINT SPILL	END OF CTH X	CHRISTIANA	CLOSED
TRI COUNTY TRANSPORT SPILL	INTER CTH O & STH 162	BERGEN	CLOSED
1056 CREST AVE SPILL	1056 CREST AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
ORGANIC VALLEY SPILL	203 S MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
ALLIANT ENERGY PCB - ROBERT SMITH SPILL	107 LINCOLN ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED

VIROQUA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT SPILL	115 N EDUCATION AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VERNON COUNTY LANDFILL SPILL	S3705 CNTY TRK LF	VIROQUA	CLOSED
UNITED LIQUID WASTE RECYCLING SPILL	1315 CTH B	VIROQUA	CLOSED
JOSH J CRICK SPILL	S7089 USH 14	KICKAPOO	CLOSED
CHRISTINE VIOLET SPILL	E15453 WARNER AVE	UNION	CLOSED
CHIPP LLC SPILL	PRESLIK RD & STH 33	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
ALLIANT ENERGY SPILL	409 W SOUTH ST	ONTARIO	CLOSED
NELSON GLOBAL PRODUCTS SPILL	1202 NELSON PARKWAY	VIROQUA	CLOSED
XCEL ENERGY SPILL	1201 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
REID LUDLOW SPILL	S7901A PETERSON LN	STERLING	CLOSED
NELSON GLOBAL PRODUCTS SPILL	1202 NELSON PARKWAY	VIROQUA	CLOSED
RIVERVIEW DAIRY SPILL	186 E MADISON ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
CALEDONIA HAULERS LLC SPILL	USH 14/61 WEST HILL	HAMBURG	CLOSED
WESTBY COOP CREAMERY SPILL	401 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
TODD VESBACH SPILL	CTH J	VIROQUA	CLOSED
HILLSPRAIRIE DAIRY LLC SPILL	E18194 CTH F	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
SCULLY OIL SPILL	217 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	CLOSED
DAN ICENOGLI SPILL	S7563 RILEY RD	KICKAPOO	CLOSED
PIEPERLINE CONSTRUCTION SPILL	INTERSECTION OF CREEK RD AND K	UNKNOWN	CLOSED
UNITED COOPERATIVE SPILL	S2522 STH 80	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
HWY 82 SPILL COMPLAINT SPILL	E15109 STH 82	UNION	CLOSED
MIDWEST FUELS SPILL	217 SWIGGUM LN	WESTBY	CLOSED
CHIPP LLC SPILL	CTH F & RIDGE RD	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
CALEDONIA HAULERS LLC SPILL	WB 1285 FT N OF MOORE RD	KICKAPOO	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE SPILL	E11310 BUCKEYE RIDGE RD	WEBSTER	CLOSED
ANDY KELLOGG SPILL	CTH U AND RIVER RD	KICKAPOO	CLOSED
LAND O LAKES SPILL	186 E MAIN ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
VERNON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE SPILL	EIDE RD NEAR SUNSET LN	CHRISTIANA	CLOSED
MARQUETTE TRANSPORTATION SPILL	MP679	GENOA	CLOSED
COUNTY RD A NEAR 4176 BLOCK SPILL	CTH A NEAR 4176 BLOCK	UNION	CLOSED
DOUG WOLF PROPERTY SPILL	S2501A GERMAN VALLEY RD	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
MIDWESTERN BIO AG SPILL	USH 14 AND CTH B	COON	CLOSED
CHASEBURG COOP SPILL	101 PEARL ST N	STODDARD	CLOSED
TOM LUKENS SPILL	S4878 CTH S	WEBSTER	CLOSED
360 REALTY ESTATE SOLUTIONS SPILL	S8086 HOLT RD	WHEATLAND	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER SPILL	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
BLACKHAWK COUNTY PARK SPILL	E590 CTH BI	WHEATLAND	CLOSED
ART THELEN SPILL	KIRKING RD AND CTH D	WEBSTER	CLOSED
NEAR CHEAPODEPO SPILL	USH 14 & STH 131	READSTOWN	CLOSED
KEONTE TURNER SPILL	USH 14 & BROOKVILLE RD	FRANKLIN	CLOSED
JOHN CHAPIEWSKY SPILL	CTH W & SHAKER RD	HILLSBORO TN	CLOSED
SOUTHWEST SANITATION SPILL	HIAWATHA ST & MAHLUM ST	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
MIKE LEPKE SPILL	STH 56 & LEWISON RD	VIROQUA	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE SPILL	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
PHILIP MLSNA SPILL	BETHESDA RD	CHRISTIANA	CLOSED
UNITED COOPERATIVE SPILL	S1729 CTH HH	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
CITY OF VIROQUA SPILL	1315 CTH B	VIROQUA	CLOSED
NOVY FARM - MANAGER IS DEAN URBAN SPILL	S1884 EASTMAN DR	FOREST	CLOSED

NICOLLETTI TRUCKING SPILL	STH 27	WESTBY	CLOSED
EVERGREEN RIDGE DAIRY SPILL	CTH V & PAUL LN	GREENWOOD	CLOSED
WILD ROSE DAIRY SPILL	CTH D & ALLEN RD	WEBSTER	CLOSED
GERMAN VALLEY DAIRY SPILL	1770 CTH F	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
VERNON ELECTRIC CO OP SPILL	209 S MAIBEN ST	READSTOWN	CLOSED
CTH K & CTH B SPILL	CTH K & CTH B	VIROQUA	CLOSED
ROBERT FISH SPILL	S2387 MOSSHOLDER ST	BLOOMINGDALE	CLOSED
EDWARD BURKHAMMER SPILL	STH 56 & ELM DR	VIROQUA	CLOSED
RIVERSIDE TRUCKING LLC SPILL	CTH P & BLOOMINGDALE RD	CHRISTIANA	CLOSED
HAMBURG FARMS SPILL	E2560 HAMBURG RIDGE ROAD	HAMBURG	CLOSED
MIKE FREMSTAD SPILL	LOVAAS RIDGE RD & LOVAS DR	CHRISTIANA	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE SPILL	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
MATHY CONSTRUCTION SPILL	USH14 & STH 131	READSTOWN	CLOSED
SOUTHWEST SANITATION SPILL	141 HOFF LN	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
SOUTHWEST SANITATION SPILL	219 N WEST ST	STODDARD	CLOSED
CHASEBURG COOP SPILL	STH 82 & CHASE RD	STERLING	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP #846 SPILL	308 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	CLOSED
MLSNA EAST TOWN DAIRY SPILL	KNAPP VALLEY RD KELBEL RD	CLINTON	CLOSED
EVERGREEN RIDGE DAIRY SPILL	GARNER HILL RD & TOWNLIN RD	GREENWOOD	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP SPILL	202 N MAIN ST	STODDARD	CLOSED
DAIRYLAND POWER SPILL	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	CLOSED
HOTEL HILLSBORO SPILL	1235 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
FARM SPILL	E5066 TRYGGESTAD LN	JEFFERSON	CLOSED
CITY OF VIROQUA SPILL	LINCOLN AVE & J ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VIROQUA UTILITY SPILL	LINCOLN AVE & J ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
RICHARD KILEN SPILL	336 E PARK ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
KWIK TRIP SPILL	1301 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	CLOSED
CROELL INC SPILL	USH 14 & STH 27	WESTBY	CLOSED
XCEL ENERGY SPILL	E4389 NORWEGIAN HOLLOW RD	HARMONY	CLOSED
EVERGREEN SALES OIL SPILL	S1106 CTH D	CLINTON	CLOSED
ORGANIC VALLEY MILK SPILL	203 S MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
CLARK SPILL	S8380 DRAKE RD	KICKAPOO	CLOSED
ORGANIC VALLEY WASTEWATER SPILL	203 S MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	CLOSED
WESBY COOP CREAMERY SPILL	401 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
WESTBY CREAMERY COOP SPILL	401 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
LAND O LAKES WASTEWATER SPILL	186 E MADISON ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
JACK COOPER TRANSPORT DIESEL SPILL	STH 27 & TAITER HOLLOW RD	FRANKLIN	CLOSED
STH 27 SPILL ON THE ROAD	STH 27	WESTBY	CLOSED
STATE HWY 35 SPILL	STH 35 & MAIN ST	GENOA	CLOSED
LAND O LAKES SPILL	186 EAST MADISON ST	HILLSBORO	CLOSED
VIROQUA UTILITY SPILL	602 N ROCK AVE	VIROQUA	CLOSED
HEARTLAND COUNTRY COOP	COON PRAIRIE RD & WEBSTER ST	WESTBY	CLOSED
BENDERS CLEANERS	117 E TERHUNE	VIROQUA	
READSTOWN CREAMERY FORMER	403 N BLUFF ST	READSTOWN	
WESTBY DRY CLEANERS	213 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
ORGANIC VALLEY COOP MILL ST WAREHOUSE	637 MILL ST	LA FARGE	
E HAGENAH LUMBER CO FORMER	1120 WOOD AVE	HILLSBORO	
LARSON FUNERAL HOME	123 W DECKER ST	VIROQUA	

DE SOTO SHUMANN DEVELOPMENT	FRONT ST	DE SOTO	
LEHRKES PROPERTY	115 N MAIN ST	CHASEBURG	
AMPI CREAMERY SITE FMR	406 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	
GROUP HEALTH CARE FACILITY	119 W COURT ST	VIROQUA	
LOWE MFG CO. LLC	210 W ST ELMO ST	READSTOWN	
ZZIP STOP ONTARIO	201 N GARDEN ST	ONTARIO	
400 TRAIL - ABANDONED CONTAINER SPILL	E 13660 STH 33	ONTARIO	CLOSED
WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK AC	E 13660 STH 33	ONTARIO	CLOSED
VIROQUA TOWN DUMP AC	S3705 COUNTY RD LF	VIROQUA	CLOSED
VIROQUA AVIATION	STH 14	VIROQUA	
VERNON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	507 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
BLACKHAWK PARK	E590 CTH BI	WHEATLAND	
BURLINGTON NORTHERN GENOA	DEPOT	GENOA	
BURR GARAGE	RT 2 STH 33	HILLSBORO	
HILLSBORO CTY GARAGE	CREST AVE	HILLSBORO	
COON VALLEY AMERICAN LEGION #116	105 PARK ST	COON VALLEY	
COULEE COMMUNITY ACTION	201 MELBY	WESTBY	
EFFINGER EQUIPMENT	800 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
SKILDUM ERNEST	RT 1	DE SOTO	
GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY	S5704 STH 35	GENOA	
HARMONY TN SHOP	RT 1 GENOA	HARMONY	
HOWARD JOHNSON ENTERPRISES #1	305-505 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	
HOWARD JOHNSON ENTERPRISES #3	305-505 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	
OAKDALE SHELL	RT 2	HILLSBORO	
OLSEN FORD MERCURY	USH 14 N	VIROQUA	
OLSON OIL CO	406 W HIGHLAND ST	LA FARGE	
PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	E3245 CTH N	STERLING	
SMALL VENTURES INC	518 WALNUT ST	VIROQUA	
HARMONY TN	RT 1	GENOA	
VIROQUA ARMORY	598 DYSON ST	VIROQUA	
VIROQUA POST OFFICE	119 E JEFFERSON	VIROQUA	
WESTBY AREA SCHOOLS	206 WEST AVE S	WESTBY	
CHASEBURG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	STH 162	CHASEBURG	
WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK	STH 33 E	ONTARIO	
STENERSON BUS SERVICE	E14337 CTH P	FOREST	
COON TN GARAGE	E6331 USH 14 & 61	COON	
SCHMIDT MOTORS	USH 14/161	VIROQUA	
GREAT RIVERS FS	RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	
UNION TN GARAGE	E1575 USH 12	HILLSBORO	
LANDMARK CENTER	500 E JEFFERSON	VIROQUA	
ERLANDSON BLDG/ VERNON MANOR	310 FAIRLANE DR	VIROQUA	
KICKAPOO HIGH SCHOOL	S6520 STH 131 S	VIOLA	
BARNES PROPERTY	123 W COURT ST	VIROQUA	
ZITZNER LIME & ROCK	834 N MAIN	VIROQUA	
DAIRYLAND POWER COOP PLT #2	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	
BLACKHAWK PARK	E590 CTH BI	WHEATLAND	
PETERSON MOTORS	213-219 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
VIROQUA POST OFFICE	119 E JEFFERSON	VIROQUA	

WHEELER PROPERTY	902 W BROADWAY ST	VIROQUA	
CITY PARKING LOT DECKER ST & CENTER ST	CENTER ST & E DECKER	VIROQUA	
VIROQUA DAIRY	123 E COURT ST	VIROQUA	
CHRISTIANA TN SHOP	1382 KOLBO RD	WESTBY	
KWIK TRIP STORE #301	117 MILL ST	HILLSBORO	
VIROQUA CTY	602 N ROCK AVE	VIROQUA	
WATERS EDGE MOTEL	201 N PEARL ST	STODDARD	
DAIRYLAND POWER - GENOA	S4651 STH 35	GENOA	
230 S COMMERCIAL ST	230 S COMMERCIAL ST	VIOLA	
LARSON FUNERAL HOME	123 W DECKER ST	VIROQUA	
HILLSBORO REDI MIX	1011 WOOD AVE	HILLSBORO	
REETZ-THORSON FUNERAL HOME INC	856 S RUSK AVE	VIROQUA	
HEARTLAND COOP STATION	410 N MAIN ST	WESTBY	
PIPING AND DISPENSER REMOVAL	202 N MAIN ST	STODDARD	
RONALD NEMEC PROPERTY	560 ELM AVE	HILLSBORO	
VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT	602 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
GROUP HEALTH CARE FAC	119 W COURT ST	VIROQUA	
MAIN ST & TERHUNE DOT	MAIN ST & TERHUNE	VIROQUA	
UNITED COOPERATIVE	140 SHORT ST	HILLSBORO	
ECKHART PARK	W DECKER AND WESTERN AVE	VIROQUA	
405 & 403 N MAIN ST	405 N MAIN ST	STODDARD	
WESTBY KWIK STOP	100 WASHINGTON ST	WESTBY	
VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT	602 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
PRONTO	10110 STH 35	DESOTO	
361 TO 405 N MAIN ST DOT #5163-09-72	361 TO 405 N MAIN	STODDARD	
JNT MOBIL	302 S MAIN	VIROQUA	
WI DOT STH 14	STH 14	WESTBY	
DOT WESTBY	208 S MAIN ST SITE B	WESTBY	
GAS STATION #1 FORMER	101 N MAIN ST	WESTBY	
GAS STATION #2 FORMER	201 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	
HANSENS IGA	419 N MAIN ST	WESTBY	
ZZIP STOP	411 NORTH MAIN STREET	WESTBY	
LOWE MFG CO LLC	210 W ST ELMO ST	READSTOWN	
ZZIP STOP ONTARIO	201 N GARDEN ST	ONTARIO	
101 W MAIN ST	101 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	
107 S STATE ST	107 S STATE ST	LA FARGE	
108 S STATE ST	108 S STATE ST	LA FARGE	
204 W MAIN ST	204 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	
220 W MAIN ST	220 W MAIN ST	LA FARGE	
108 MAIN ST	108 MAIN ST	GENOA	
111 MAIN ST	111 MAIN ST	GENOA	
118 MAIN ST	118 MAIN ST	GENOA	
STACY DOBBS PROPERTY	STH 33 & STH 131	ONTARIO	
205 W SOUTH ST	205 W SOUTH ST	ONTARIO	
1056 CREST AVE	1056 CREST AVE	HILLSBORO	
OUTLOTS 32 & 40	OUTLOTS 32 & 40	LA FARGE	
205 STATE ST	205 STATE ST	ONTARIO	
306 GILBERTSON ST	306 GILBERTSON ST	CHASEBURG	

503 S MAIN ST	503 S MAIN ST	WESTBY	
117 N MAIN ST	117 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
N MAIN ST & E DECKER ST	N MAIN ST & E DECKER ST	VIROQUA	
739 S MAIN ST	739 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
E4101 CTH N	E4101 CTH N	STERLING	
103 DAVIDSON ST	103 DAVIDSON ST	WESTBY	
216 W STATE ST	216 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
100 CENTRAL CT	100 CENTRAL CT	WESTBY	
214 MELBY ST	214 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
206 MELBY ST	206 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
217 MELBY ST	217 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
214 W STATE ST	214 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
208 W STATE ST	208 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
200 W STATE ST	200 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
203 W STATE ST	203 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
205 W STATE ST	205 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
215 W STATE ST	215 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
219 W STATE ST	219 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
204 & 206 MARKET ST	204 & 206 MARKET ST	WESTBY	
TRUST PROPERTY	318 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	
101 N MAIN ST	101 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
E4101 CTH N	E4101 CTH N	STERLING	
102 CENTRAL CT	102 CENTRAL CT	WESTBY	
216 MELBY ST	216 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
210 MELBY ST	210 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
201 MELBY ST	201 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
210 W STATE ST	210 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
206 W STATE ST	206 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
201 W STATE ST	201 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
204 W STATE ST	204 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
217 W STATE ST	217 W STATE ST	WESTBY	
219 MELBY ST	219 MELBY ST	WESTBY	
514 RAILROAD AVE	514 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA	
830 N MAIN ST	830 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA	
308 CENTRAL AVE	308 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	
400 CENTRAL AVE	400 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	
404 CENTRAL AVE	404 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	
312 CENTRAL AVE	312 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY	

APPENDIX E HISTORIC AND CURRENT WASTE DISPOSAL SITES

Table E.1 Historic and Current Waste Disposal Sites

Status	Facility Name	Address	Municipality
OPERATING	AA DUMPSTER LLC	E6701 CTH NN	FRANKLIN TN
OPERATING	ACCELERATED GENETICS COMPOST FACILITY	S2258 NEPPIRUD RD	WESTBY
OPERATING	AT&T	1 MI N OF TRIPPVILLE	MOUNT TABOR
OPERATING	AT&T	2.5 MI E OF COON VALLEY	COON VALLEY
OPERATING	BADGER ENVIRONMENTAL & EARTHWORKS INC	200 SWIGGUM RD	WESTBY
OPERATING	BENDERS CLEANERS	117 E TERHUNE	VIROQUA
OPERATING	BERGEN TN	RT 1	STODDARD
OPERATING	BETHEL HOME OF VIROQUA	614 S ROCK	VIROQUA
OPERATING	BLAND BEKKEDAL CENTER FOR HOSPICE CARE	705 ARENA DR	VIROQUA
OPERATING	BLAND CLINIC - VMH	100 MELBY ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	BLUSKE SERVICE	103 N MAIN ST	CHASEBURG
OPERATING	BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY	MILEPOST 282.39	GENOA
OPERATING	CHRISTIANA TN REFUSE & RECYCLING	505 SAUGSTAD RD	CHRISTIANA TN
OPERATING	CHUCKS AUTO REPAIR	HWY 14 E	READSTOWN
OPERATING	COON VALLEY VIL	205 ANDERSON ST	COON VALLEY
OPERATING	D I AUTO BODY	E7363 CTH Y	VIROQUA
OPERATING	DAHL PHARMACY	210 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	DAIRYLAND POWER COOP GENOA NUCLEAR PLT (LACB)	S4601 STH 35	GENOA
OPERATING	DAIRYLAND POWER COOP GENOA STATION	S4651 STH 35	GENOA
OPERATING	DAIRYLAND POWER COOP WILD ROSE GEN STA	E11310 BUCKEYE RIDGE RD	LA FARGE
OPERATING	DANNY LEHRKES GARAGE	115 N MAIN ST	CHASEBURG
OPERATING	DAVID BEAN CONST & SALVAGE YARD	S1483 STH 27 N	CHRISTIANA TN
OPERATING	DELAP OIL & GAS	744 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	DESOTO HIGH SCHOOL	600 MAIN ST	DESOTO
OPERATING	DESOTO VIL	BATTLE HOLLOW RD	WHEATLAND
OPERATING	DOLLAR GENERAL STORE #6867	98 SWIGGUM RD	WESTBY
OPERATING	DOLLAR GENERAL STORE #6914	1231 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	DUBCO INC	S4207 HAUGRUD HOLLOW RD	LA FARGE
OPERATING	EKLOV MOBIL (FMR)/HEARTLAND COOP	410 N MAIN ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	ERICKSON RAY PROPERTY	CTH NN	VIROQUA
OPERATING	FALKERS AUTO BODY REPAIR	S3191 PRAIRIE EDGE RD	WESTBY
OPERATING	FARMERS UNION COOP/CENEX MINI MART	405 S MAIN ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	GENOA NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY	S5704 STH 35	GENOA
OPERATING	GFL SOLID WASTE MIDWEST LLC	701 E POWER DR	VIROQUA
OPERATING	GFL SOLID WASTE MIDWEST LLC	950 NELSON PARKWAY	VIROQUA
OPERATING	GREAT RIVERS FS COOP	106 E 2ND	WESTBY
OPERATING	GREAT RIVERS FS COOP	RT 1	VIROQUA
OPERATING	GUNDENSEN HEALTH SYSTEM HILLSBORO CLINIC	300 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO

OPERATING	GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM VIROQUA CLINIC	407 S MAIN STREET STE 200	VIROQUA
OPERATING	GUNDERSEN LUTHERAN RENAL DIALYSIS - VIROQUA	407 S MAIN , SUITE 300	VIROQUA
OPERATING	GUNDERSON ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL AND CLINIC	400 WATER AVE	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	HAMBURG TN SHOP	HAMBURG TN SHOP	CHASEBURG
OPERATING	HILLSBORO FARMERS COOP	198A E MADISON	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	HILLSBORO FOOTWEAR INC	1010 WOOD AVE	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	HOOPER CORPORATION	E2180A HWY 162	CHASEBURG
OPERATING	HORIZON EQUIPMENT WESTBY	S3050 USH 14	WESTBY
OPERATING	INDUSTRIAL HEAT TRANSFER	300 OLD MILL RD	COON VALLEY
OPERATING	K & B RECYCLING & SALVAGE	S3940 STH 80	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	K & K CONCRETE CONST INC	826 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	KC STUMP GRINDING LLC	S6691 CEMETERY RD	DE SOTO
OPERATING	KOON KREEK FEEDS	101 BABCOCK ST	COON VALLEY
OPERATING	KWIK TRIP #758	603 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	KWIK TRIP #846	308 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY
OPERATING	LA FARGE MEDICAL CLINIC - VMH	206 N MILL ST	LA FARGE
OPERATING	LA FARGE SCHOOL DIST	SILVER ST	LA FARGE
OPERATING	LA FARGE TRUCK CENTER	200 MAIN ST	LA FARGE
OPERATING	LA FARGE VIL	215 S SILVER ST	LA FARGE
OPERATING	LACROSSE COUNTY SHERIFF ONE POT LAB	1320 BAD AXE CT	VIROQUA
OPERATING	LAND O'LAKES - HILLSBORO	186 E MAIN ST	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	LARRYS AUTO & TRUCK REPAIR	405 N MAIN ST	STODDARD
OPERATING	LARRYS CAR CARE	209 W GILLETTE ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	LARSON BROTHERS BODY SHOP	208 S MAIN ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	LOWE MFG CO INC	403 N RAILROAD ST	READSTOWN
OPERATING	MAGELAND OIL CO INC	RAILROAD AVE & E PARKINSON	VIROQUA
OPERATING	MARELL INC	E18763 HWYS 33 & 80 & 82	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	MARKS MFG CO	307 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	MIDWEST ELECTRO TECH CORP	102 ENTERPRISE DR	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	MIKES AUTO BODY REPAIR	DODSON HOLLOW RD	CHASEBURG
OPERATING	NCR CORP	1201 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	NELSON GLOBAL PRODUCTS INC	1202 NELSON PARKWAY	VIROQUA
OPERATING	NORTHERN STATE POWER VIROQUA OFFICE	526 E DECKER	VIROQUA
OPERATING	NORWALK-ONTARIO SCHOOLS	RT 1 STH 131	ONTARIO
OPERATING	OREILLY AUTO PARTS STORE 1974	902 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	PETERSON MOTORS INC	213-219 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	PETERSON MOTORS INC	754 S MAIN	VIROQUA
OPERATING	PRO TRUCK EQUIPMENT AND AUTO BODY	E6357 STH 56	VIROQUA
OPERATING	R & M LIQUIDATORS	516 S 4TH ST	READSTOWN
OPERATING	READSTOWN CITGO (FORMER)	HWY 14 W	READSTOWN
OPERATING	RIDGE TO RIVERS ANIMAL CLINIC	315 E DECKER ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	RIVER VALLEY AUTO INC	3984 VIKEMYR LN	VIROQUA
OPERATING	RIVER VALLEY AUTO INC	E7341 CTH Y	VIROQUA
OPERATING	ROCK SOLID RENTAL & STORAGE SOLUTIONS LLC	S1483 STATE HIGHWAY 27	WESTBY

OPERATING	ROZANNES TRUCKING LLC	1340 HIGH AVE	HILLSBORO
OPERATING	SCHILTZ RAY	223 S MAIN	VIROQUA
OPERATING	SCHMIDT MOTORS INC	HWY 14 & 61 N	VIROQUA
OPERATING	SLETTEN DAVID PROPERTY	RT 1	DESOTO
OPERATING	STODDARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	300 COTTAGE ST	STODDARD
OPERATING	STODDARD VIL	100 PRAIRIE LN	STODDARD
OPERATING	TERRYS AUTO	629 S MAIN ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	TERRYS AUTO SALES	208 S MAIN ST SITE B	WESTBY
OPERATING	TRACTOR SUPPLY #736	1202 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	U S ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS	HWY 35 BOX B	GENOA
OPERATING	U S ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS	RT 1 BLACK HAWK PARK	DESOTO
OPERATING	U S D E A	RT 1	WESTBY
OPERATING	VERNON AREA REHAB CTR	830 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON CNTY HWY DEPT	602 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON CNTY RECYCLING	POWER DR (INDUST PARK BLDG #3)	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON CNTY SOLID WASTE/RECYCLING FACILITY	S3705 CNTY RD LF	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON CNTY VERNON MANOR	E7404 A CTH BB	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE - HOSPITAL	507 S MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HIRSCH CLINIC	407 SOUTH MAIN SUITE 400	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VERNON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL LAFARGE CLINIC	111 W SNOW ST	LAFARGE
OPERATING	VIROQUA AREA SCHOOL DIST	100 BLACKHAWK DR	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VIROQUA CTY COMPOST/WBS	LEWISON RD & WIS 56, NW	VIROQUA TN
OPERATING	VIROQUA HOCKEY ASSN	858 NELSON PKWY	VIROQUA
OPERATING	VIROQUA TIRE & GOODYEAR	114 N ROCK AVE	VIROQUA
OPERATING	WALGREENS CO #10301	517 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	WALLYS TRACTOR REPAIR	E10206A KELBEL RD	CASHTON
OPERATING	WALMART SUPERCENTER #971	1133 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	WESTBY AREA SCHOOL DIST	206 WEST AVE S	WESTBY
OPERATING	WESTBY CTY	200 MELBY ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	WESTBY CTY	803 W STATE ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	WESTBY CTY NORSELAND NURSING HOME	323 BLACK RIVER RD	WESTBY
OPERATING	WESTBY CTY WBS	CLOCKMAKER QUARRY	CHRISTIANA TN
OPERATING	WESTBY DRY CLEANERS (FORMER)	213 MELBY ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	WESTBY HARDWOOD PRODUCTS	COON VALLEY RD	WESTBY
OPERATING	WESTBY HARDWOOD PRODUCTS	105 WEBSTER ST	WESTBY
OPERATING	WI ARMY NATL GUARD VIROQUA	600 DYSON ST	VIROQUA
OPERATING	WI DNR WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK	STH 33 E	ONTARIO
OPERATING	WI DOT BRIDGE B 12 0005	HWY 82 2.2 MI FROM IOWA BRDR	GENOA
OPERATING	WI DOT BRIDGE B12-0020	STH 35 & 82	DESOTO
OPERATING	WI DOT BRIDGE B62 0005	USH 14 OVER KICKAPOO RVR	REEDSTOWN
OPERATING	WI DOT BRIDGE B62-0006	USH 14/61 OVR SPRING VALLEY CR	KICKAPOO
OPERATING	WI DOT BRIDGE B62-0009	STH 36 GENOA STODDARD BRIDGE	STODDARD
OPERATING	WI DOT BRIDGE B62-0015 & 0016	STH 35 TO STH 56	GENOA
MOVED	GUNDERSEN LUTHERAN VIROQUA CLINIC	125 JEFFERSON ST	VIROQUA

MOVED	VERNON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HIRSCH CLINIC	318 W DECKER ST	VIROQUA
CLOSED	BASSKOTA	219 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY
CLOSED	BERGEN TN	KENNETH CLEMENTS FARM RR 1	STODDARD
CLOSED	CEDAR VALLEY TIRE RECYCLING	CEDAR VALLEY RD	BERGEN TN
CLOSED	CHASEBURG VIL HAMBURG TN	MILL ST	CHASEBURG
CLOSED	CHRISTIANA TN	HASTINGS DR	CHRISTIANA TN
CLOSED	CLINTON TN LF	CARY RD	CLINTON TN
CLOSED	CLINTON TN LF OLD SITE	CARY RD	CLINTON
CLOSED	COON TN	NERISON RD	COON
CLOSED	COON VALLEY VIL LF	STH 14 & 61	COON TN
CLOSED	COON VALLEY VIL LF OLD SITE	CTH B	COON VALLEY
CLOSED	CURTIS GARBAGE COLLECTION	ADDRESS UNKNOWN	MUNI UNKNOWN
CLOSED	DEA METH LAB CLEAN UP	S6804 BROWN RD	DE SOTO
CLOSED	DESOTO VIL	ADDRESS UNKNOWN	MUNI UNKNOWN
CLOSED	EARL D NELSON TRUCKING & EXCAVATING	CORP RD VIA PLUM RUN RD	STARK
CLOSED	FOREST TN OLD ROADSIDE DUMP	HARRIS RD	FOREST
CLOSED	FRANKLIN TN	DUMP RD	FRANKLIN
CLOSED	GENOA VIL	VIL GARAGE	GENOA
CLOSED	GENOA VIL LF	VENNER HOLLOW RD	GENOA
CLOSED	HARDY CONST CO	105 ENTERPRISE DR	HILLSBORO
CLOSED	HARMONY TN	LANDFILL LN	HARMONY
CLOSED	HILLSBORO CTY	RIDGE RD	HILLSBORO
CLOSED	HOWARD JOHNSONS ENTERPRISES INC	305-505 RAILROAD AVE	VIROQUA
CLOSED	JEFFERSON TN	DUMP RD	JEFFERSON TN
CLOSED	KICKAPOO STOVE WORKS	N MAIN ST	LA FARGE
CLOSED	LA FARGE VIL LF OLD SITE	PLUM RUN RD	LA FARGE
CLOSED	LA FARGE VIL/TN STARK LF	AUMOCK RD	STARK TN
CLOSED	LIBERTY TN LF	CTH S	LIBERTY TN
CLOSED	NORTHERN ENGRAVING INC	ADDRESS UNKNOWN	WHEATLAND
CLOSED	R F BEAN	103 PARK ST	COON VALLEY
CLOSED	R H MAINTENANCE SERVICE	BLACKHAWK PARK	GAYS MILLS
CLOSED	READSTOWN TN OF	RAILROAD & CHARLES ST	READSTOWN
CLOSED	STERLING TN	SHANNON RD	STERLING
CLOSED	STEVE L NELSON TRUCKING	MELBY LN	VIROQUA TN
CLOSED	STODDARD VIL	VIL GARAGE	STODDARD
CLOSED	STODDARD VIL BERGEN TN	CHIPMUNK RIDGE RD	BERGEN
CLOSED	UNION TN LF	STH 82	UNION
CLOSED	UNION TN LF OLD SITE	STH 82	UNION
CLOSED	VERNON CNTY OLD TIRE ONE TIME DISPOSAL	HAUGRUD RIDGE RD	WEBSTER
CLOSED	VERNON CNTY SMALL DEMOLITION SITE	ASBURY RD & CNTY RD LF	VIROQUA
CLOSED	VIOLA VIL	CTH S	KICKAPOO TN
CLOSED	VIROQUA CTY LF	SANDS RD	VIROQUA
CLOSED	VIROQUA TN	PRAIRIE EDGE RD	VIROQUA TN
CLOSED	WEBSTER TN LF	HAUGRUD RIDGE RD	WEBSTER TN

CLOSED	WESTBY CTY LF	CARLSON RIDGE RD	CHRISTIANA TN
CLOSED	WESTBY CTY LF	GROVE ST	WESTBY
CLOSED	WESTBY CTY LF OLD SITE	CTH P	CHRISTIANA TN
CLOSED	WHITESTOWN TN	INDIAN CREEK RD	WHITESTOWN TN
CLOSED	WITHROW TRUCKING	CTH P	FOREST TN
UNKNOWN	BEANS INC	95 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY
UNKNOWN	CHEYENNE VALLEY TRUCKING	S1299C SCENIC DR	HILLSBORO
UNKNOWN	DAIRYLAND POWER PROPOSED ASBURY RD LF	ASBURY RD	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	DAIRYLAND POWER PROPOSED JOHNSON LN LF	JOHNSON LANE	HARMONY TN
UNKNOWN	DAIRYLAND POWER PROPOSED NORTH RIDGE RD LF	NORTH RIDGE RD	HARMONY TN
UNKNOWN	GARY MARX PROPERTY	W1079 MALLARD LANE	STODDARD
UNKNOWN	HILLSBORO CTY	CTY GARAGE	HILLSBORO
UNKNOWN	HILLSBORO EXCAVATING INC	E18898 HWY 33 E	HILLSBORO
UNKNOWN	HOOK N HAUL LLC	S1521 LOVAAS RIDGE RD	WESTBY
UNKNOWN	JAMBOIS GARAGE	511 MAIN	GENOA
UNKNOWN	JAMES JONES PROPERTY	48206 JUDDY SMITH RD	HANEY
UNKNOWN	KRAUSE KONSTRUCTION	ROUTE 1	STODDARD
UNKNOWN	LEPKE TRUCKING & EXCAVATING LLC	E3014 CTH KO	CHASEBURG
UNKNOWN	M & M CONST	E13642 JUG CREEK RD	LA FARGE
UNKNOWN	PAUL PROKSCH TRUCKING INC	710 DIVISION ST	STODDARD
UNKNOWN	RICHARD JOHNSON PROPERTY	E1398 WILL KUMLIN RD	WHEATLAND
UNKNOWN	RUMSEY PROPERTY	E5654 IRISH RD	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	RUNNINGS ROLLOFF LLC	S5316 SIDIE HOLLOW RD	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	SEIDEL EXCAVATING INC	S5302A SEIDEL LN	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	SLEEPY HOLLOW	1225 N MAIN ST	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	T & G TIRE RECYCLING	708 CENTRAL AVE	COON VALLEY
UNKNOWN	TONY WINCHEL TRUCKING	1 LOGAN ST	WESTBY
UNKNOWN	TOTAL DISPOSAL	KNOTINGHAM RD	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	TRI-COUNTY TIRE REMOVAL	5141 OAK LN	HILLSBORO TN
UNKNOWN	VIOLA VIL	204 N MAIN ST	VIOLA
UNKNOWN	VIROQUA CTY	CTY GARAGE	VIROQUA
UNKNOWN	WALMART DEMOLITION DISPOSAL SITE	W602 SUNHAVEN HILL LN	STODDARD
UNKNOWN	WESTBY CENEX MINI MART	409 S MAIN ST	WESTBY

APPENDIX F ADOPTING ORDINANCE

Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_

An Ordinance to Adopt the Comprehensive Plan of the [City/Village/County/County] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin.

The [common council/village board/county board/county board] of the [city/village/county/county] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to section [59.69(2) and (3)(for counties)/62.23(2) and (3)(for cities, villages, and counties exercising village powers under 60.22(3))] of the Wisconsin Statutes, the [city/village/county/county] of \_\_\_\_\_, is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in section 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 2. The [common council/village board/county board/county board] of the [city/village/county/county] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan as required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 3. The plan commission of the [City/Village/County/County] of \_\_\_\_\_, by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to [common council/village board/county board/county board] the adoption of the document entitled "Comprehensive Plan of the [City/Village/County/County] of \_\_\_\_\_," containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 4. The [City/Village/County/County] has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 5. The [common council/village board/county board/county board] of the [City/Village/County/County] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, does, by enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled, "Comprehensive Plan of the [City/Village/County/County] of \_\_\_\_\_," pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the [common council/village board/county board/county board] and [publication/posting] as required by law.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

---

[mayor/village president/county board chair/county board chair]

(Published/Posted):[date]

(Approved, Vetoed):

Attest:

[city/village/county/county clerk]

**Vernon County Flood Mitigation Alliance**

The Vernon County Flood Mitigation Alliance is a collaborative initiative aimed at addressing the region's increasing vulnerability to flooding. Located in southwestern Wisconsin, Vernon County experiences significant challenges due to its steep topography, expansive river systems, and the growing impacts of climate change. The Alliance brings together local governments, community organizations, and state agencies to develop and implement proactive strategies for flood prevention, risk reduction, and community resilience. Key initiatives include enhancing floodplain management, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and promoting land-use practices that mitigate runoff and erosion.

By prioritizing collaboration and evidence-based planning, the Alliance seeks to protect the safety, property, and livelihoods of Vernon County residents. Efforts include acquiring and relocating properties in high-risk flood zones, improving early warning systems, and supporting agricultural practices that promote soil health and water retention. The Vernon County Flood Mitigation Alliance serves as a model for rural communities facing similar challenges, demonstrating the importance of uniting resources and expertise to address environmental threats.

**Vernon County Housing Task Force**

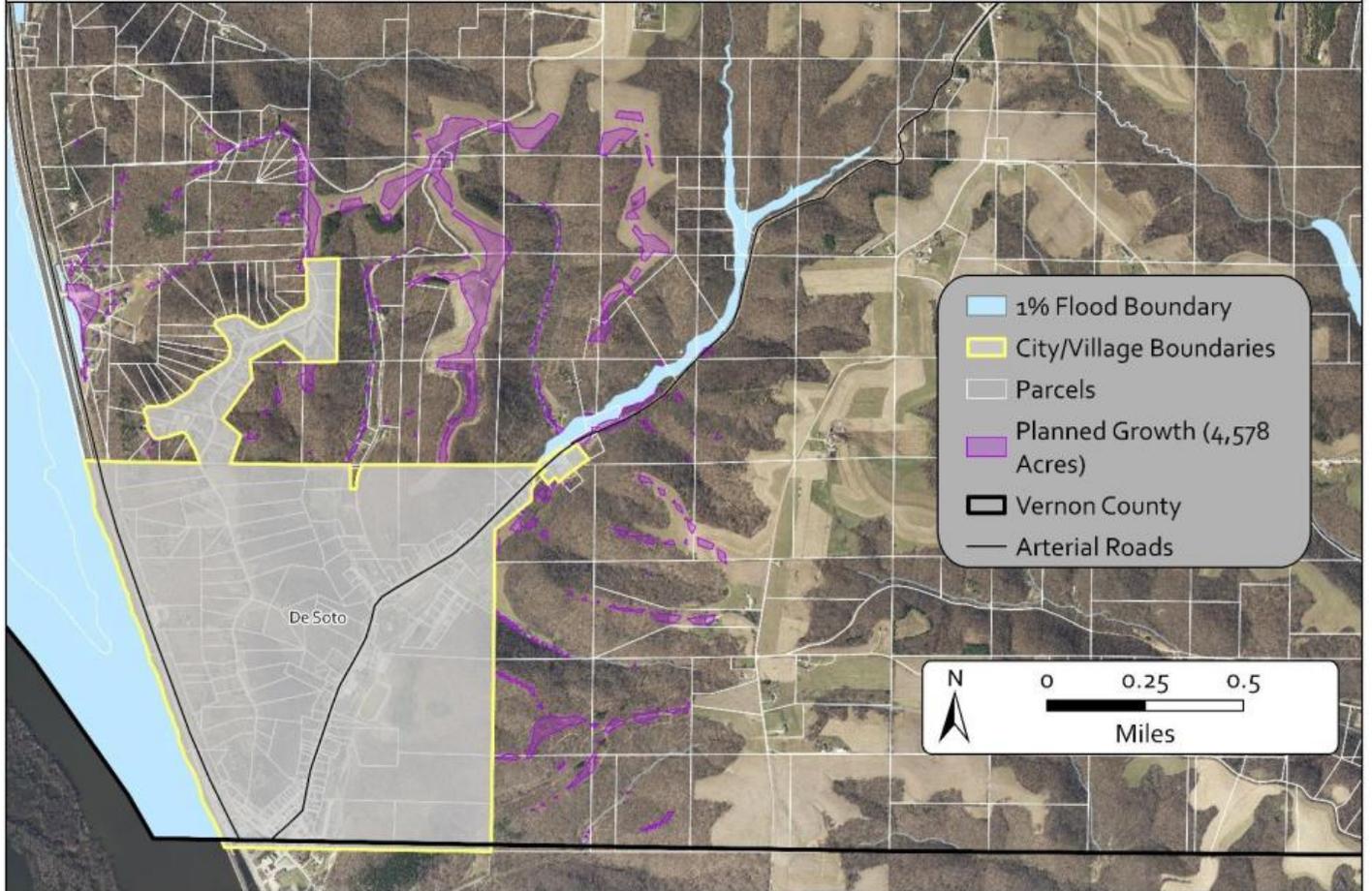
The Vernon County Housing Task Force is a dedicated group established to address housing challenges within the county, focusing on both immediate needs and long-term strategies. As the county's population grows and evolves, housing availability, affordability, and quality have become pressing issues. The task force brings together local leaders, developers, nonprofit organizations, and community members to develop a comprehensive approach to addressing these challenges. Its mission is to ensure that Vernon County residents have access to safe, affordable, and suitable housing options that meet the diverse needs of the community.

One of the task force's primary goals is to address the affordability gap highlighted by local data, which shows a significant portion of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing. To tackle this issue, the task force is exploring initiatives such as incentivizing the development of affordable housing units, repurposing existing structures, and providing financial assistance programs for first-time homebuyers. Additionally, the task force is working to ensure that new housing developments align with the county's unique rural character while incorporating sustainable and efficient building practices.

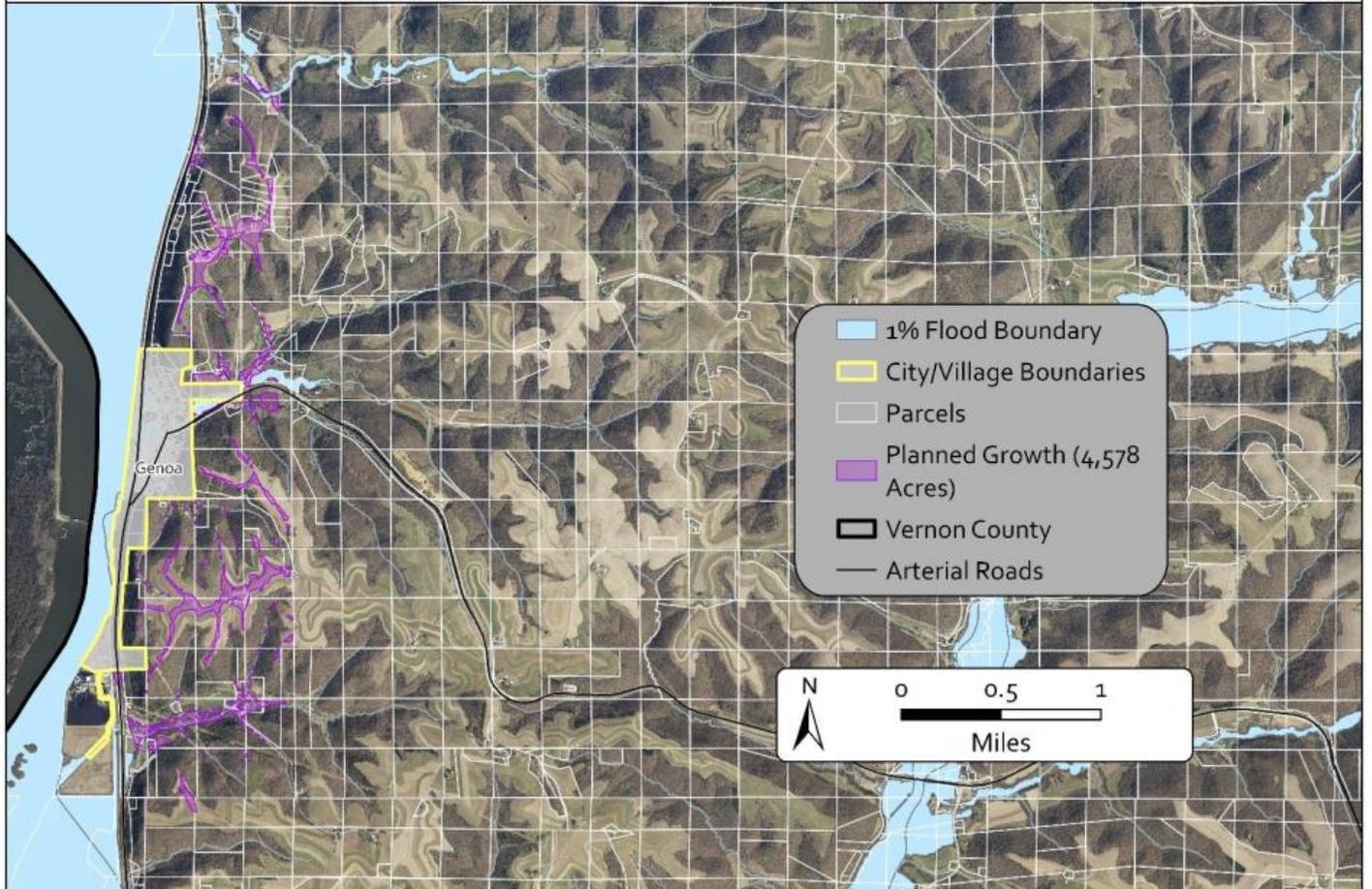
The Vernon County Housing Task Force also emphasizes the importance of addressing housing needs across the economic spectrum. Efforts are underway to increase the availability of rental units, support aging-in-place solutions for the county's senior population, and expand workforce housing options to attract and retain professionals. By fostering collaboration and leveraging local and state resources, the task force aims to create a housing landscape that supports economic growth, community stability, and an improved quality of life for all residents.

<b>Vernon County Housing Task Force Members</b>	
<b>Community Affiliation/Position</b>	
VC Community Development Director	Amy Oliver
VC Board of Supervisors	Wayde Lawler
VC Economic Development Committee	Nathaniel Slack
Viroqua Housing Advisory Board	Sonya Newenhouse
Hillsboro Housing Authority	Shelby Janecek
UW-Madison Extension	Hannah Altimus
School District Superintendent	Steve Michaels
Local Real Estate Professional	Michele Williams
Property Developer	Jake Victor
Couleecap	Ashley Lacenski
Local Mortgage Lender (residential)	Kayra Eitland
Zoning Administrator	Pete Strachan
ADRC	Brenda Olson
Rural WI Health Cooperative	Marie Barry
WHEDA	Rebecca Giroux
Citizen	Tim Hundt

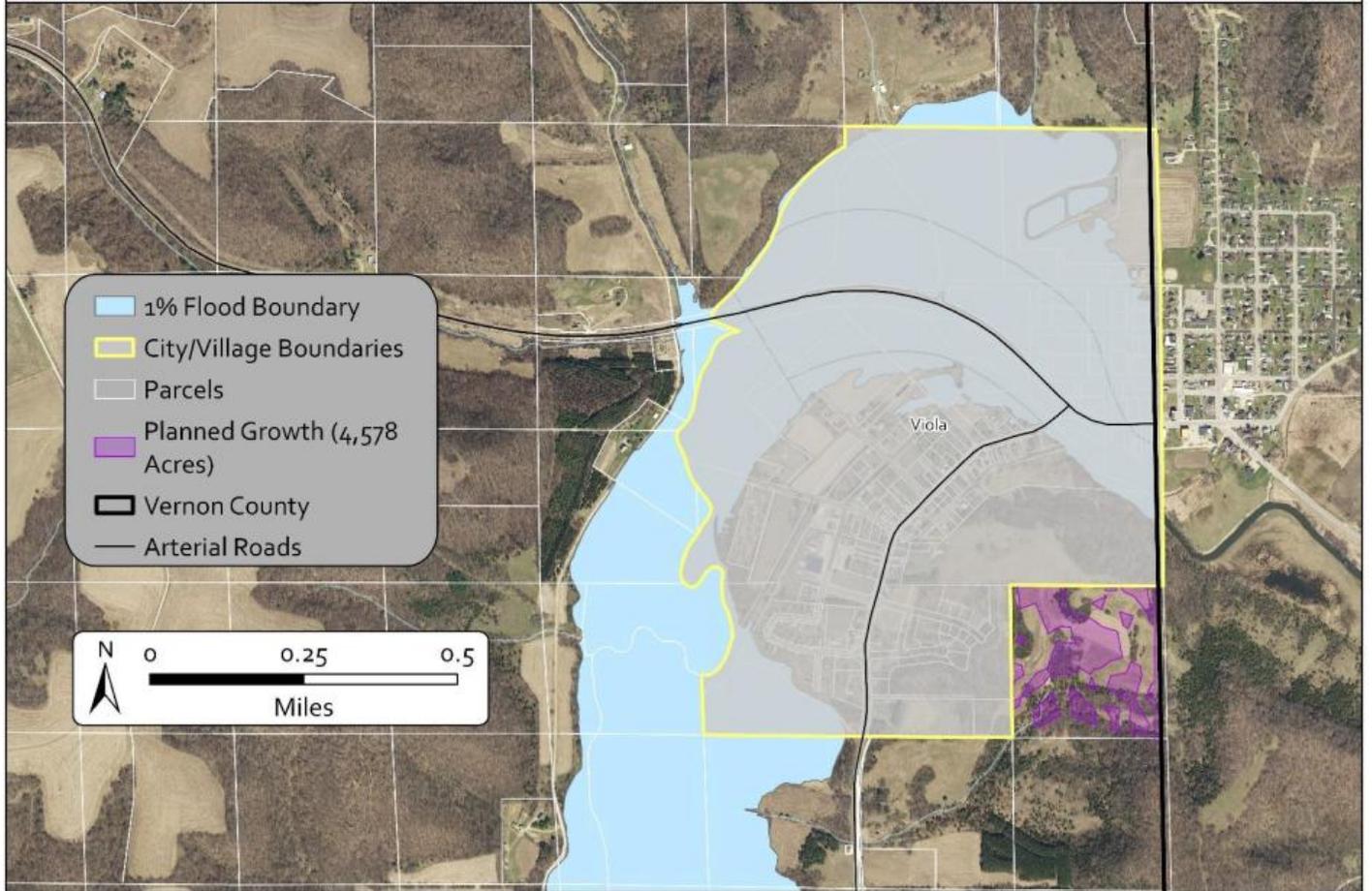
# De Soto Planned Growth Areas (Low)



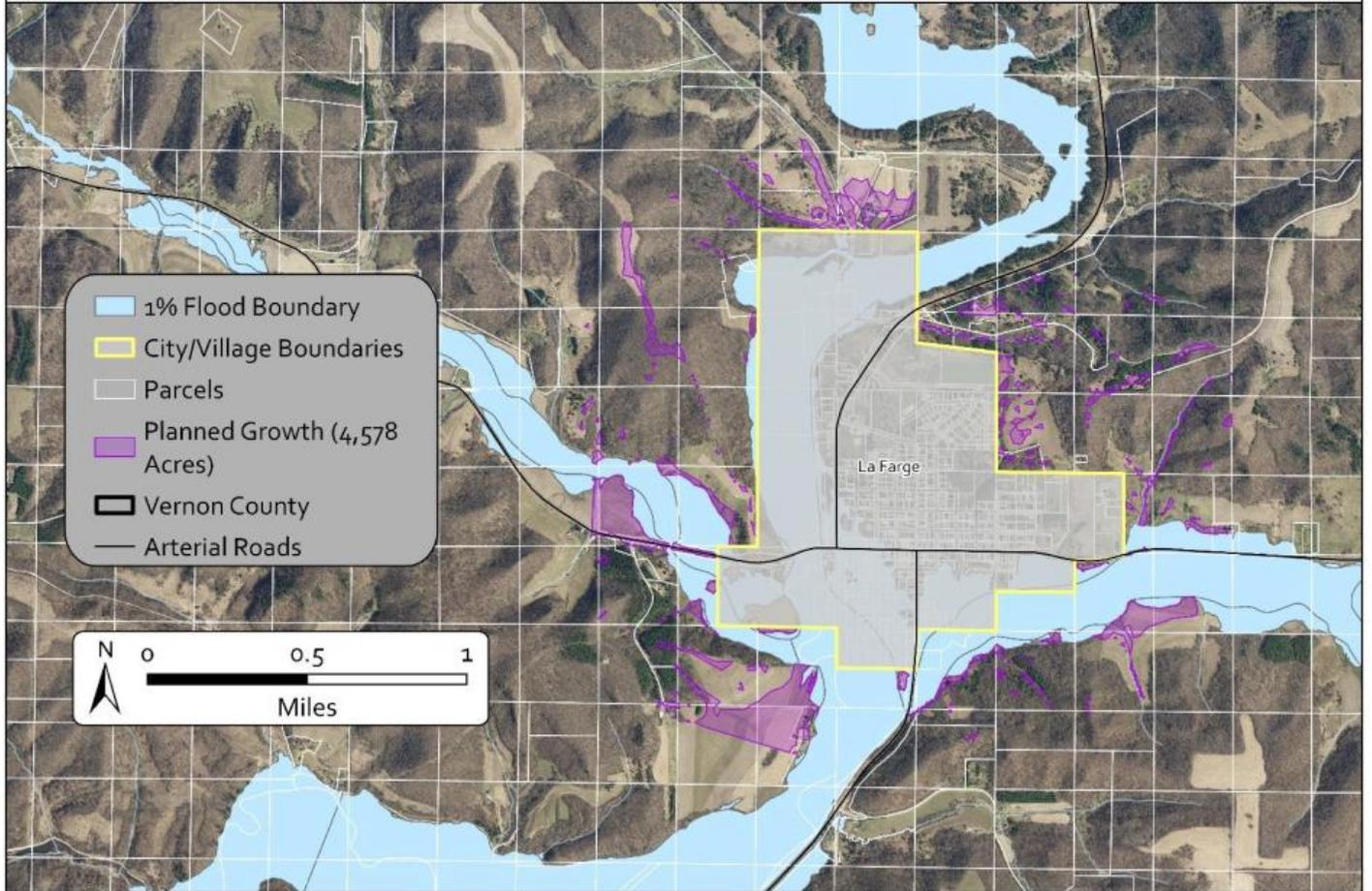
# Genoa Planned Growth Areas (Low)



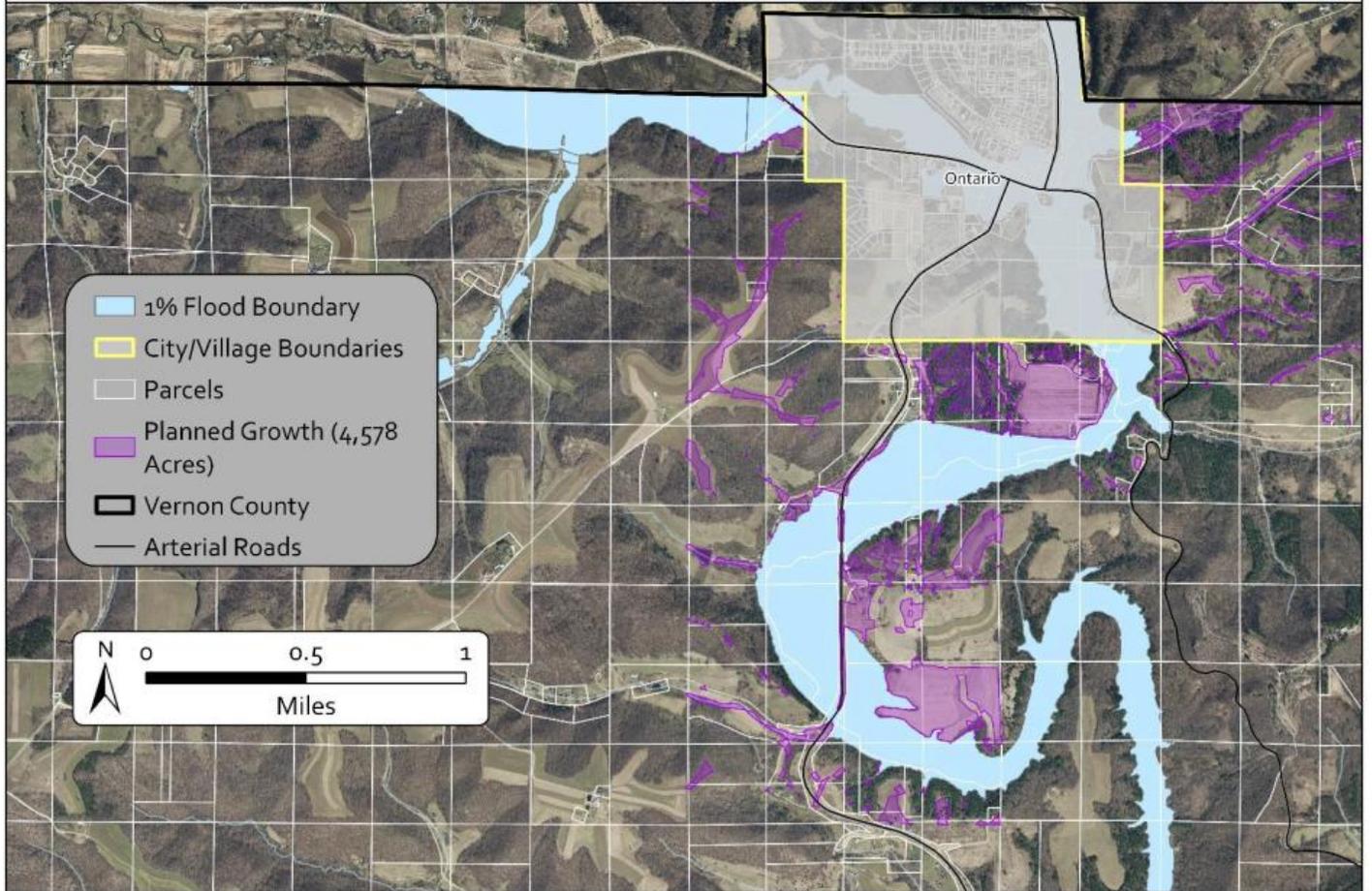
# Viola Planned Growth Areas (Low)



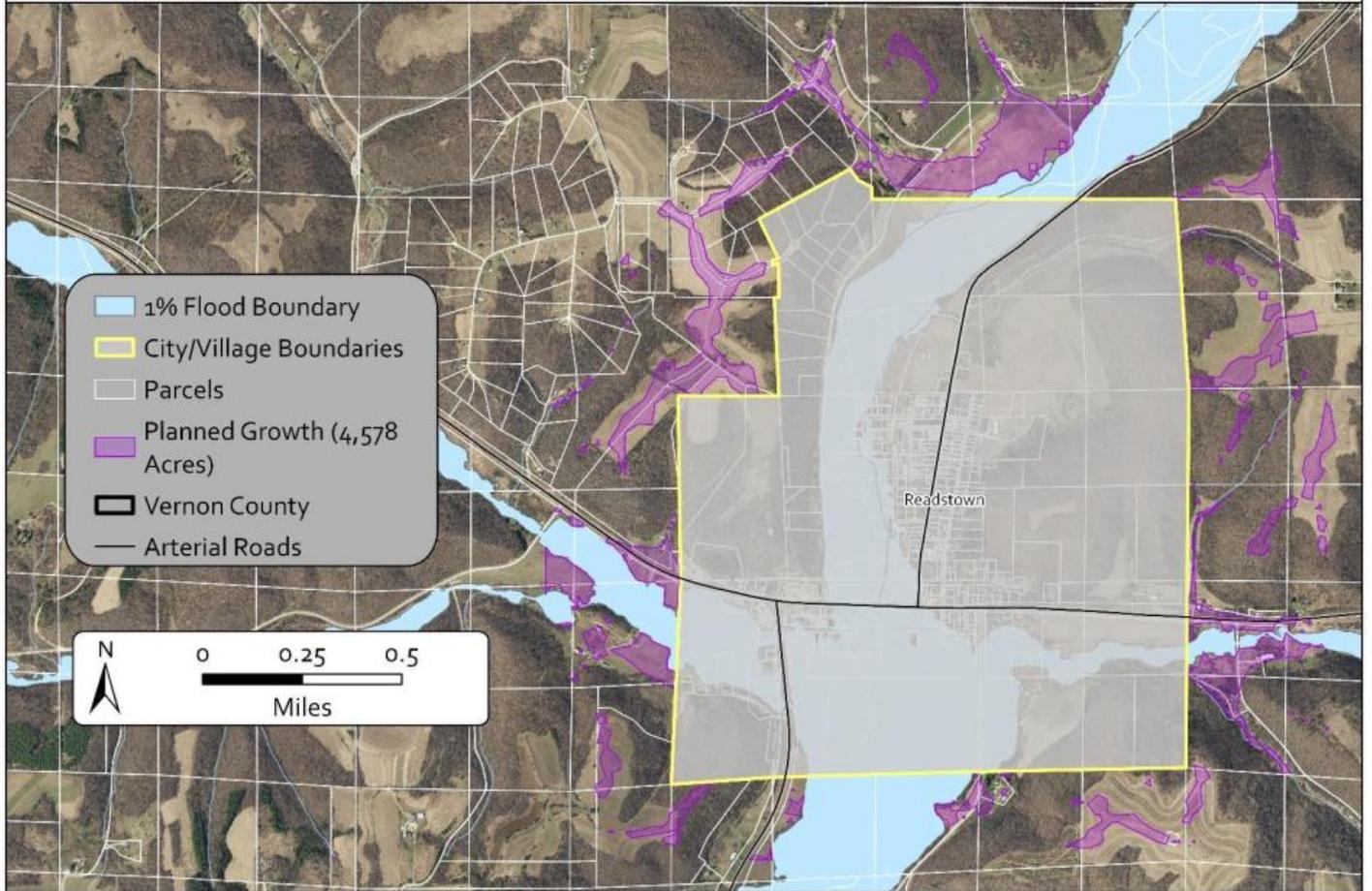
# La Farge Planned Growth Areas (Low)



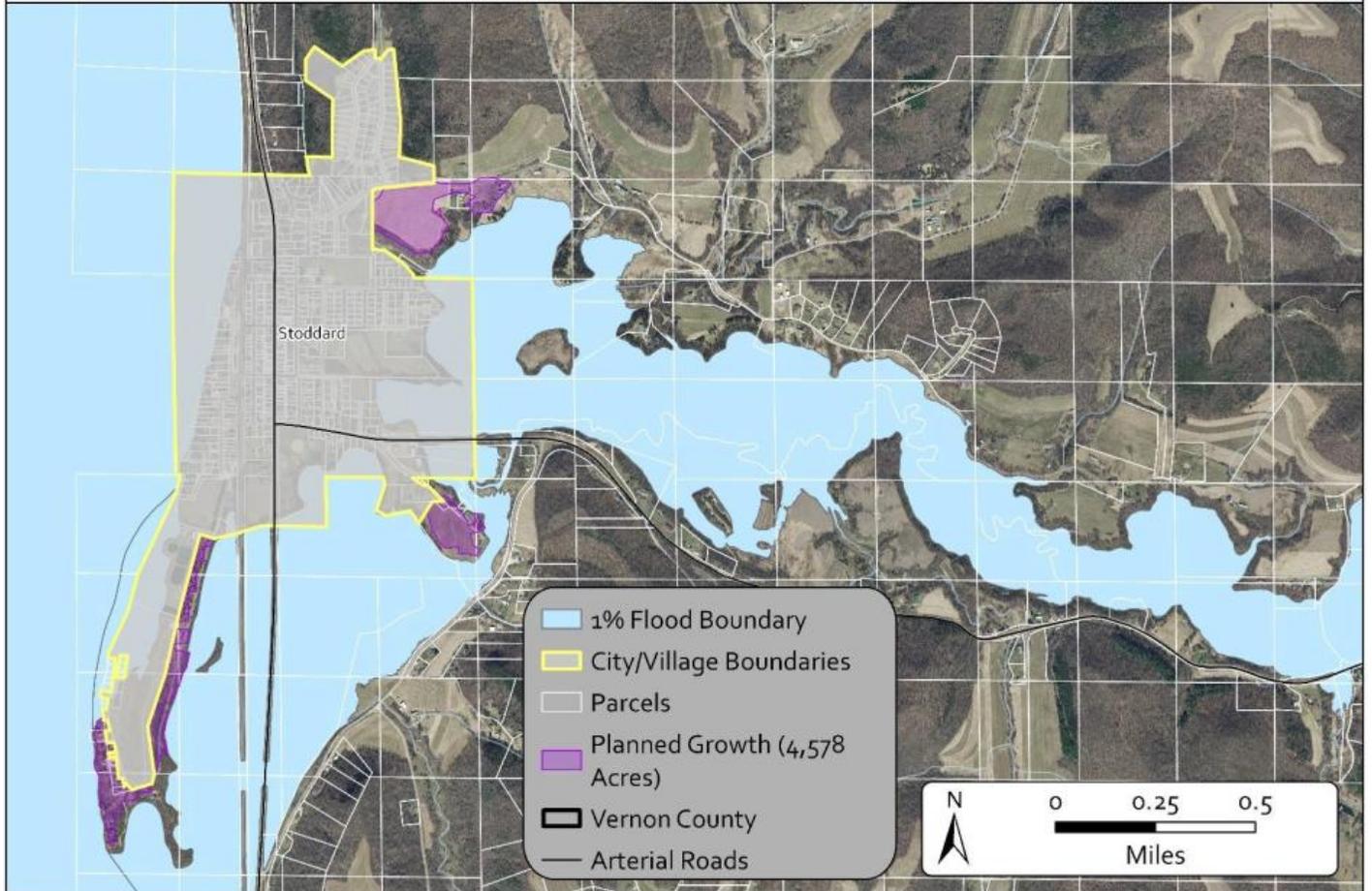
# Ontario Planned Growth Areas (Low)



# Readstown Planned Growth Areas (Low)



# Stoddard Planned Growth Areas (Low)



**Wisconsin Demographic Services Center  
Population Estimates Program  
Description**

**History**

The Wisconsin Legislature authorized the Population Estimates Program in 1971. The initial impetus for a formal estimates program was the distribution of state tax revenues to municipalities and counties. Involving several different formulae, these distribution programs were known collectively as the State Shared Revenue Program.

Wisconsin started the shared revenue program in 1911 with the enactment of the state income tax. At enactment, 10% of the proceeds were retained by the state, 70% were paid to the municipality where the taxpayer resided, and 20% were paid to the county where the taxpayer resided. The Legislature altered these percentages over time to reflect changes in state and local fiscal needs. In keeping with this precedent, when the state enacted other taxes, it also shared a percentage of the proceeds with local governments on a return-to-origins basis.

By the late 1960s, it was generally agreed that return-to-origins tax sharing was increasing local fiscal disparities. Communities with high levels of economic activity or high-income individuals received ever increasing state aids, allowing them to provide substantial levels of services at low (or no) property tax rates. In contrast, communities with little economic activity or low-income individuals experienced stagnating or declining state aids, resulting in low levels of services and high property tax rates. There-fore, the state revised the shared revenue system to shift the focus to a distribution based more on need. Population change was viewed as one of the major components of changing fiscal need at the local level.

Dr. Charles Palit of UW-Madison, working in league with an advisory panel of other professors and state employees who had demographic responsibilities, developed the original estimates methodology. The Department of Administration (DOA) produced the first official set of municipal and county population estimates, using Palit's technique, in 1973. DOA has issued the estimates annually since then.

While crafted initially to support the distribution of state revenues, the population estimates are now used in at least 27 official state functions and many other state processes. In addition, the estimates are used extensively at the regional, county, and local levels for planning and other purposes.

**Current Estimation Methodology**

The Demographic Services Center was established formally within DOA in 1976 or 1977. Demographic services has modified Wisconsin's estimation methodology since Palit's initial formulation. The current methodology involves both controlled estimates and uncontrolled estimates.

Controlled estimates are premised on a top-down approach. Generally, practitioners of applied demography presume that data that are symptomatic of population change are of better quality at a higher geographic level (or, at least, data errors are muted) than at smaller geographies. Setting a

"control total" for larger geographic areas requires that all subareas then add to the control figure. In Wisconsin's current methodology, one technique controls county estimates to the state, and another technique controls municipal estimates to their respective counties.

Uncontrolled estimates are premised on a bottom-up approach. Data at the lowest level of geography desired (in our case, the municipal level) are presumed to indicate potential change in population regardless of larger-area demographic forces. In Wisconsin's current methodology, several estimating techniques based on annual housing unit change produce uncontrolled municipal estimates.

The various techniques are described in the sections below.

### **State Estimate**

The controlled techniques rely first on the setting of a state estimate. Currently, Demographic Services Center uses three data sets to establish a January 1 state estimate:

- Net housing unit change reported by all municipalities.
- Annual resident birth and death data.
- The Census Bureau’s annual estimates of population and migration, both those produced through its Population Estimates Program and the American Community Survey.

Previously, residential electric meter data, collected by the Wisconsin Division of Energy was used. This data had shown reasonable consistency in reckoning statewide households when compared with four prior decennial Census household counts. It was later discovered that this data had included electric utility customers living in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. This time series was broken and could not be reconstructed when the Michigan customers came to be excluded. Demographic Services collects annual housing change data through a survey sent to all municipalities.

Using the state-level occupancy rate from the most recent Census, and a formulaic predictor of household size based on the last four Censuses, we estimate the state’s households and household population. The state’s group quarters population, updated annually through data collection and estimation, is added to arrive at a total population estimate.

The state’s birth and death data, from the Vital Records program at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, is used to check the reasonableness of the estimate that we develop. The natural increase

(births minus deaths) is subtracted from our estimated change of the prior year to obtain a residual estimate of net migration.

### **County Estimates**

Within the bounds of the state total, Demographic Services calculates population estimates for each of the 72 counties in Wisconsin, using a combination of the ratio difference method and the composite method.

In the ratio difference method, we rely on two statewide data sets:

- State income tax filers and dependents;
- Selected categories of motor vehicle registrations.

The tax filers and associated dependents are compiled for the prior calendar year by the state Department of Revenue; the vehicle registrations are a “point-in-time” extraction (approximately January 1) from the state Department of Transportation’s records. Both data sets are tabulated at a municipal level and then aggregated to county geography.

We determine the relationships between the enumerated non-institutional population in a county at the time of the last Census and the number of tax filers, tax filers plus dependents (or “tax persons”), and motor vehicles in the census year. For each estimate year, we update these relationships (ratios) on the basis of changes observed statewide and then apply them to current counts of tax filers, tax persons and motor vehicles for each county to determine current estimates. We give separate consideration to the number of institutionalized persons in a county; these people are generally not covered by the tax and motor vehicle symptoms, and their number can be obtained from other, relatively accurate records.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the ratio difference method provides three estimates for each county: one based on tax filers, one on tax persons and one on vehicles.

To refine the county estimates, we average the three ratio-based estimates with a fourth one based on the composite method. The composite method relies on two data sets, tabulated at the county level:

- Resident births and deaths;
- School enrollments (public, private and home-schooled).

These data—the former from the Department of Health Services, the latter from the Department of Public Instruction—are employed to estimate county population within three broad age categories.

Among applied demographers, the composite method is no longer used as widely as it was when the Demographic Services Center initially developed its estimation methodology. Nonetheless, the composite method continues to reduce the overall error margin of Wisconsin population estimates.

### **Municipal Estimates--Controlled**

Using the county estimates as control totals, we estimate the non-institutional population for each municipality within each county using the ratio difference method. As we do for county estimates, we determine the relationships between the known non-institutional population in a municipality at the time of the last Census and the number of income tax filers, tax persons and vehicles. We update these relationships on the basis of estimated county-wide changes and then apply them to current counts of the three indicators for each municipality to determine current estimates of municipal population. As in the county calculations, we add the number of institutionalized persons residing in a municipality to the non-institutional estimate to produce a total population estimate.

It is not possible to utilize the composite method at a municipal level because the required data are not available for all municipalities.

### **Municipal Estimates--Uncontrolled**

The ratio difference method relies completely on data that third parties (that is, state agencies other than Demographic Services Center) collect and tabulate. Furthermore, the agencies compile these data without regard for their use as population symptoms. Finally, changes in municipal geography (due to annexations, incorporations, and cooperative agreements), not to mention households' movements, may produce a lag in symptoms moving from one community to another.

The Demographic Services Center's former demographer, Balkrishna Kale, noted increasing problems with symptomatic data quality during the early 1980s. From the mid-1980s into the early 1990s, he developed a number of estimation methodologies based on housing unit data. Originally surveying a selected set of municipalities, he expanded the annual request to all Wisconsin communities in 1990.

It is important to note that, unlike the municipal estimates generated through ratio difference, the housing-based estimates are not controlled to a county or state target. Thus, the housing method estimates for every municipality are "free-standing," uninfluenced by change in other municipalities within a county or within the state.

There are four sub-methods to the housing method. They all involve the recalibration of household size (also called persons per household or PPH), based on certain indicators:

- No Change In PPH: PPH for a municipality is held constant from the most recent Census;
- State Trend In PPH: Based on the calculations of households and household population that were made for the state control total, municipal PPHs are trended at the same rate of change as at the state level;
- Local Trend in PPH: The municipal change in PPH in the previous decade is trended to the current estimation year;
- Regression PPH: The change in state “tax persons” from the Census year is regressed in an equation with the Census PPH to estimate a PPH in the estimate year.

In addition, the housing methodologies include changes in local group quarters and the population that is shifted by annexations.

Finally, all four housing-based results are averaged to produce a housing average estimate. In sum, the housing methods produce five different estimates for each municipality.

### **Preliminary and Final Estimates**

Through controlled and uncontrolled procedures, Demographic Services produces eight initial estimates for every municipality. We review this set of estimates for accuracy and discrepancies. Taking account of all variables that could influence population growth or decline, we may select one estimate, or average two or three of them, to produce the result that appears most reasonable.

After this review, we control our selected estimates to our original state control total. These controlled estimates are the preliminary estimates that we release by August 10 of each year.

Communities have approximately 35 days to challenge our preliminary estimates. A municipality must provide data that indicate clearly a reason for a change to its preliminary estimate. Demographic Services reviews the local input and decides to revise or retain the preliminary estimate.

The challenge period ends September 15. Demographic Services releases the final population estimates on or before October 10.

### **Other Small-Area Estimates**

#### **Municipal Voting Age Estimates**

The Demographic Services Center estimates the voting age population for municipalities and counties annually, identifying these estimates as courtesy figures to assist local government clerks to approximate the number of ballots that need to be printed and distributed for elections. In addition, the estimates provide a proxy of the 18-and-over adult population.

To estimate the voting age population, Demographic Services uses the proportion of persons 18 years and over at the most recent Census, and multiplies this base value by a state-level factor from its most current population projections. This adjusted proportion is then multiplied by the current population estimate to produce the voting age estimate.

#### **Zip Code Area Estimates**

Demographic Services Center estimates the total population for Zip Code areas annually. At the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau defined Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs), which correspond roughly (but not exactly) to the Zip Code delivery areas delineated by the U.S. Postal Service.<sup>3</sup>

To calculate these estimates, we begin with data from the most recent Census, cross-tabulating the number of persons within each minor civil division and ZCTA. We then calculate proportions: the population within the ZCTA in an MCD divided by the MCD’s population. These proportions are then applied to the current MCD estimate. The data is re-summed based on the ZCTA values to obtain Zip Code area estimates.

A Note about Municipalities Added, Municipalities Deleted, and Municipal Boundary Changes

Sometimes a change is modest. Say a municipality annexes a small number of residents from another municipality. In these cases, Demographic Services continues to list Census base populations for the areas of municipalities as they existed on Census day.

Sometimes events like incorporations or cooperative agreements can add a municipality or delete a municipality or radically change municipalities' boundaries. For examples, see the Municipal Data System's incorporations module<sup>4</sup> and the MDS's ordinances module.<sup>5</sup> In these cases, Demographic Services displays Census base data in ways that are consistent with current estimates. Sometimes this means displaying Census base data for the area covered by the municipalities as they existed on the estimates' reference date.

Revised August 2021

APPENDIX J SAMPLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADOPTION ORDINANCE

Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_

An Ordinance to Adopt the Comprehensive Plan of the [City/Village/Town/County] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin.

The [common council/village board/townboard/county board] of the [city/village/town/county] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, do ordain as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to section [59.69(2) and (3)(for counties)/62.23(2) and (3)(for cities, villages, and towns exercising village powers under 60.22(3))] of the Wisconsin Statutes, the [city/village/town/county] of \_\_\_\_\_, is authorized to prepare and adopt a comprehensive plan as defined in section 66.1001(1)(a) and 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 2. The [common council/village board/town board/county board] of the [city/village/town/county] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, has adopted written procedures designed to foster public participation in every stage of the preparation of a comprehensive plan a required by section 66.1001(4)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 3. The plan commission of the [City/Village/Town/County] of \_\_\_\_\_, by a majority vote of the entire commission recorded in its official minutes, has adopted a resolution recommending to [common council/village board/town board/county board] the adoption of the document entitled "Comprehensive Plan of the [City/Village/Town/County] of \_\_\_\_\_," containing all of the elements specified in section 66.1001(2) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 4. The [City/Village/Town/County] has held at least one public hearing on this ordinance, in compliance with the requirements of section 66.1001(4)(d) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 5. The [common council/village board/town board/county board] of the [City/Village/Town/County] of \_\_\_\_\_, Wisconsin, does, by enactment of this ordinance, formally adopt the document entitled, "Comprehensive Plan of the [City/Village/Town/County] of \_\_\_\_\_," pursuant to section 66.1001(4)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority vote of the members-elect of the [common council/village board/town board/county board] and [publication/posting] as required by law.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
[mayor/village president/town board chair/county board chair]

(Published/Posted):[date]

(Approved, Vetoed):

Attest:

[city/village/town/county clerk]



# COVID-19: Economic Impact Analysis on Vernon County Service Region

September 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT



 Emsi |  burningglass

# Acknowledgements

Emsi Burning Glass gratefully acknowledges the excellent support from the staff at Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) for making this study possible. Special thanks goes to Dave Bonifas, Director, who approved the study, Abbey Nicewander, Senior Planner, and Sarah Ofte, Administrative Assistant, who helped us select the industries and collect the information requested.



Emsi Burning Glass provides labor market data that helps to create better outcomes for communities. Our data, which cover more than 99% of the U.S. workforce, are compiled from a wide variety of government sources, job postings, and online profiles and résumés. A variety of our clients use Emsi Burning Glass to align programs with regional needs and demonstrate their institution's economic impact on their region. Visit [economicmodeling.com/ci-consulting](https://economicmodeling.com/ci-consulting) to learn more or connect with us.



## INTRODUCTION

Vernon county is one of nine counties located along the Mississippi River in Western Wisconsin that are members of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)<sup>1</sup>. MRRPC includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties. In 2020, the Vernon county population was 30,714<sup>2</sup>, with a total regional employment of 10,033. The average earnings per job in 2020 was \$50,134, which is \$24,019 below the national average earnings per job.<sup>3</sup>

The Vernon county economy creates value in many ways. The employed labor force in Vernon generates new dollars and creates opportunities in the region.

MRRPC tracks Vernon's industries and studies the changes in taxes, earnings, and job market. An understanding of the regional economy and the economic impact effects of COVID-19 is vital to Vernon's efforts seeking to adapt to the post-pandemic economy.

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Labor Force in Vernon  
creates new opportunities  
in their region.

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The purpose of this report is to outline the region's economy and provide an economic impact analysis of COVID-19. This report will focus on the effects of job losses during 2020 caused by the pandemic and the impact they have had on the region's diverse industries. The following figures and tables display key findings of the analysis.

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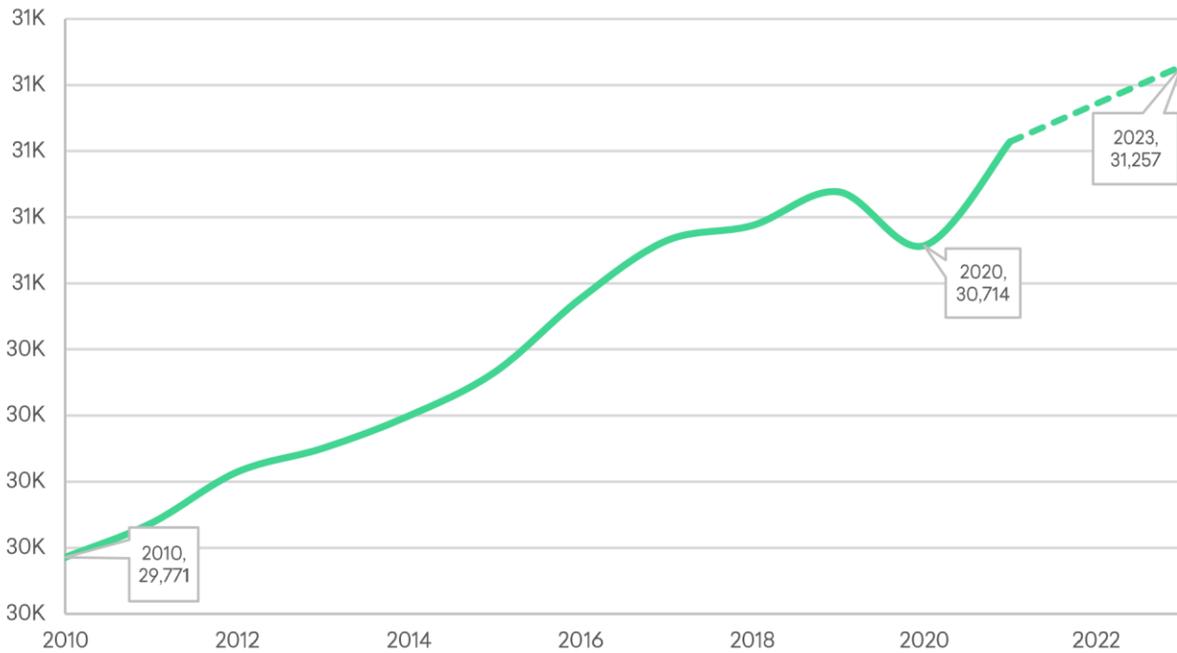
<sup>1</sup> <https://mrrpc.com/about/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state.html>

<sup>3</sup> Emsi Burning Glass proprietary data, collected on August 23, 2021.

In 2010, 29,771 people resided in Vernon. The county's population is projected to be 31,257 people by 2023 (Figure 01).

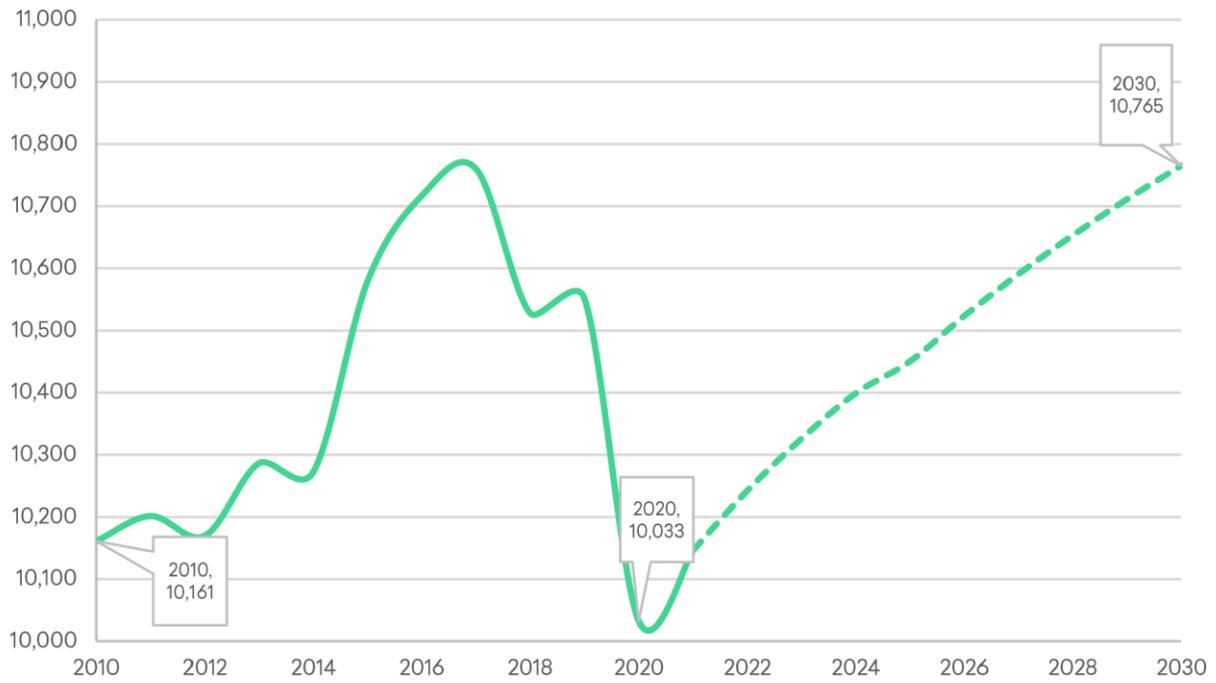
**Figure 01: Historical and Projected Population in Vernon, 2010 to 2023**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass demographics data, U.S. Census Bureau.

As shown in Figure 02, Vernon supported 10,161 jobs in 2010 and by 2020, the region had 10,033 jobs. In 2020 alone, the region lost 519 jobs. Due to data limitations, projections may not capture the total impact of COVID-19 on future labor markets.

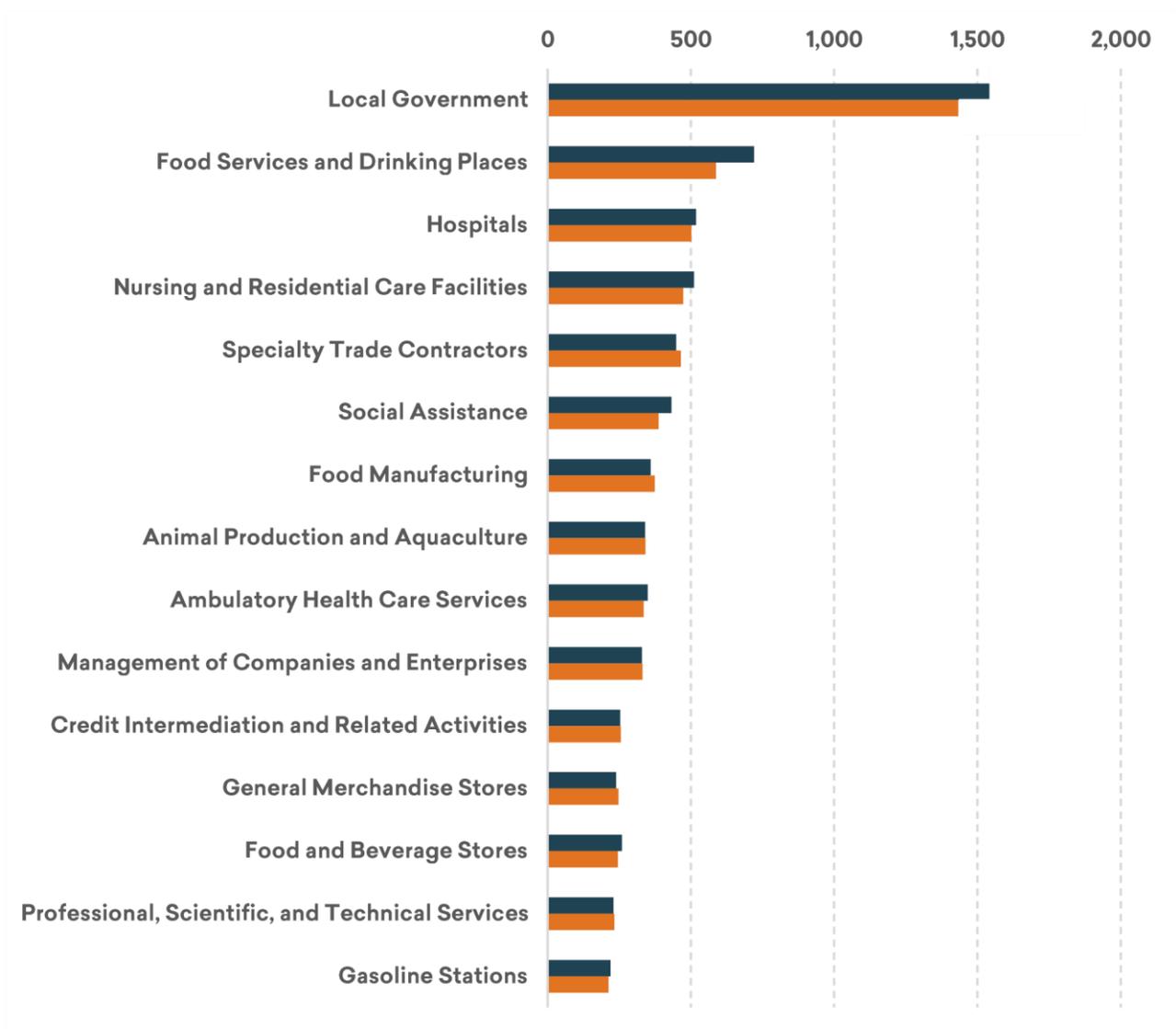
**Figure 02: Historical and Projected Jobs in Vernon, 2010 to 2030**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass 2021.3.

Figure 03 displays the top industry subsectors in terms of employment in Vernon. Local Government and Food Services and Drinking Places industries were the industries with highest number of jobs in 2019 and 2020.

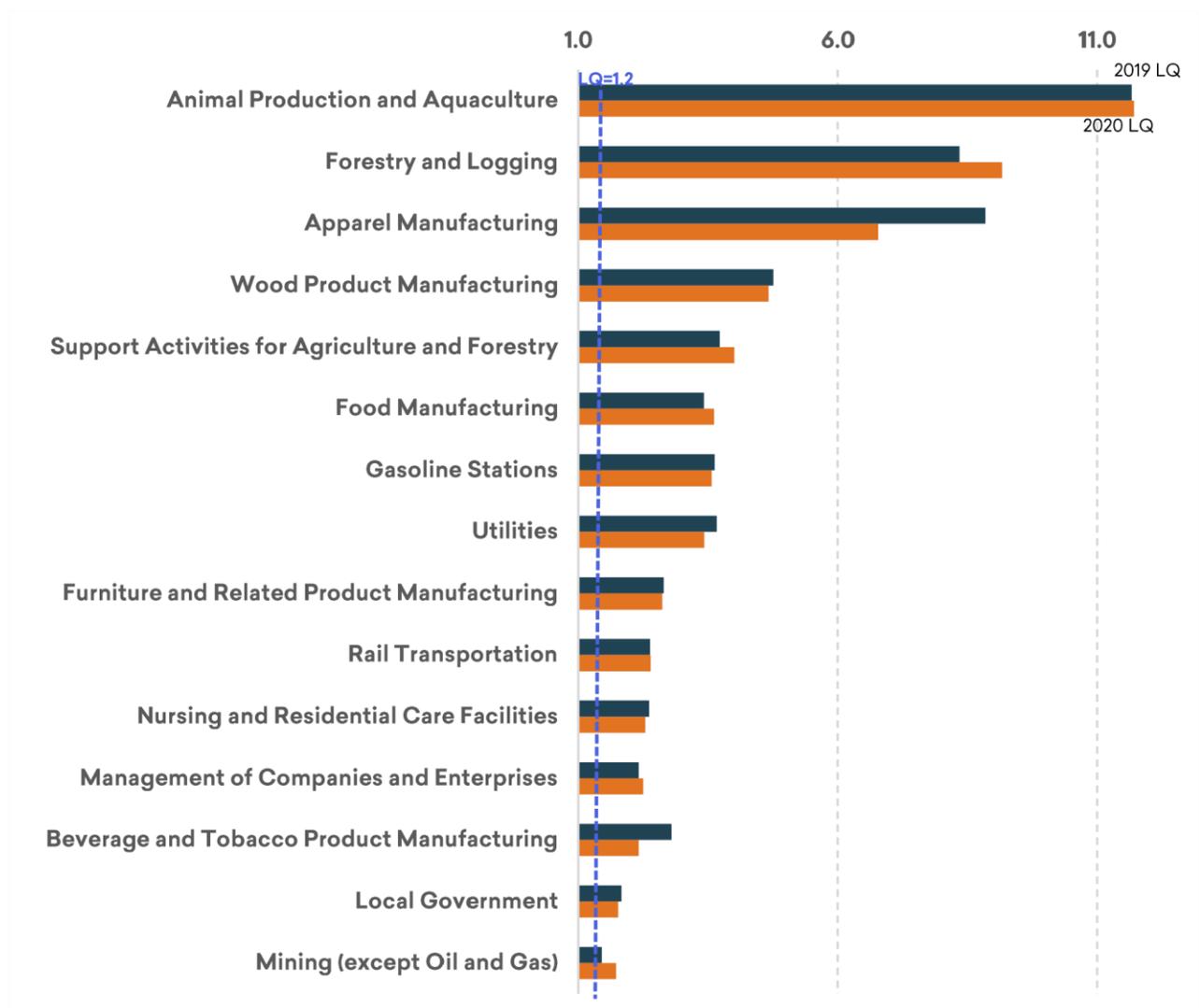
**Figure 03: Top Industry Subsectors in Vernon by Jobs**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass 2021.3.

Figure 04 shows the top industry subsectors in terms of employment concentrations, referred to as location quotients<sup>4</sup> (LQs). High LQs (usually anything greater than 1.2) are an indication that the region has a comparative advantage or specialization in certain industry subsectors relative to the rest of the nation or to other regions.

**Figure 04: Top Industry Subsectors in Vernon by Employment Concentration (LQ)**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass 2021.3.

<sup>4</sup> Location quotient (LQ) is a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region unique. (<https://www.economicmodeling.com/2020/02/03/understanding-location-quotient-2/>).

Looking at industries in Figure 03, only 6 industries are within both the top 15 in terms of total jobs and in terms of relatively high LQs. The appearance of these industry subsectors provides an indication of their strength in the region’s economy and offers insight into potential employment opportunities for people in the region’s labor force that are looking for new professional opportunities. These industry subsectors, ranked by 2020 jobs, are:

- Local Government

- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- Food Manufacturing
- Animal Production and Aquaculture
- Management of Companies and Enterprises
- Gasoline Stations

The data in Table 01 shows several of the region’s socioeconomic indicators as they compare to Wisconsin and the United States. Household income, reported as a median annual value, includes the income of all individuals in a household, 15 years and over, whether they are related to the householder or not. The median household income of Vernon falls below both Wisconsin and the United States. Per capita income is calculated as the mean income for every person in the area divided by the aggregate income of the total population. In contrast, Vernon shows low unemployment rate when compared against the nation.

**Table 01: Income, Unemployment, and Poverty Characteristics**

	<b>AVERAGE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>	<b>UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2020)</b>	<b>AVERAGE PERCAPITA INCOME</b>	<b>AVERAGE POVERTY ALL PEOPLE</b>
<b>Vernon County</b>	<b>\$52,459</b>	<b>3.55%</b>	<b>\$26,198</b>	<b>10.20%</b>
<b>MRRPC Service Region</b>	<b>\$57,495</b>	<b>3.87%</b>	<b>\$29,488</b>	<b>6.90%</b>
<b>Wisconsin State</b>	<b>\$61,747</b>	<b>4.05%</b>	<b>\$33,375</b>	<b>7.20%</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>\$62,843</b>	<b>6.50%</b>	<b>\$34,103</b>	<b>9.50%</b>

Source: American Community Survey 2019 five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau Data

Figure 05 displays the highest educational attainments in Vernon, the MRRPC Service Region, Wisconsin, and U.S. adults. Educational attainment<sup>5</sup> data is useful for targeting specific population groups with less than or greater than average education levels. Here, Vernon shows the highest percentage of High School degree holders when compared against the different regions.

**Figure 05: Highest Educational Attainments**

	<HS	HS	Some College	Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	>Bachelor's
<b>Vernon County</b>	10.3%	37.8%	17.1%	11.9%	15.1%	7.8%
<b>MRRPC</b>	7.0%	32.7%	20.8%	12.6%	17.6%	9.2%
<b>Wisconsin State</b>	7.6%	30.2%	20.5%	11.1%	20.1%	10.6%
<b>United States</b>	11.8%	26.7%	20.3%	8.6%	20.0%	12.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2019 five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau Data

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<sup>5</sup> Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over



## ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

*Vernon's labor force promotes economic growth inside the region as well as in the state of Wisconsin through its direct contribution to income generated by work and the ripple effects that expenditures create. This is attained through the industries' interconnection in the regional economy (indirect effects) alongside the impact on household spending (induced effects). COVID-19 disrupted the regional economy in many different ways. One is the reduction of the labor force which will take a great deal of effort to return to pre-pandemic levels. The effects of COVID-19 on the region were measured via three scenarios described in the following section. Each of them will be presented via Type I and Type II Economic Effects. The loss of jobs between 2019-2020 were discounted by the typical rate of death, unemployment, and retirement previous to COVID-19 in order to get a more precise measure of economic effect of COVID on this particular region.*

## INPUT-OUTPUT MODEL: TYPE I & TYPE II ECONOMIC EFFECTS DESCRIPTION

An Input-Output model is a way of representing the flow of money in an economy, primarily among industries, while also accounting for government, households, and regional imports and exports. An industry is a group of business establishments that share similar end-products (or services) and processes for creating those products/services. Once the flow is represented in the model; we can introduce events that change the flow (such as loss or gain of jobs in one industry) and simulate its effects on each industry in the region, as well as the region as a whole. *The Input-Output model therefore indicates how a change in one part of the economy will ultimately affect other parts based on their economic relationships.*

When we talk about the Input-Output model, we sometimes hear the term “multiplier” used in discussions of economic policy and modeling, usually in the context of job creation or loss. Basically, a multiplier represents how much some aspect of a model will change in response to changes coming from “outside” the model. In other words, *the multipliers capture the changes and will describe the effects of those changes in terms of the original change (final effect = original change times the multiplier).*

In our particular case, we will talk about Type I and Type II multipliers.

Type I multiplier shows the industry-to-industry transactions. It is composed of Initial, Direct and Indirect Effects.

- *Initial Effect:* represents the first shock in the economy; in our case, it's the number of jobs that were lost during the pandemic in 2020, and therefore does not include ripple effects.
- *Direct Effect:* effects caused by the initially changed sectors; also describes the effects on those sectors' immediate supply chain.
- *Indirect Effect:* extends the concept of the direct multipliers to the supply chain's supply chain.

Type II multiplier adds to the Type I by introducing the effects by households (Induced Effect).

- *Induced Effect:* is due to the impact of the new earnings created by the Initial, Direct, and Indirect changes. These earnings enter the economy as employees spend their paychecks within the region on food, clothing, and other goods and services. In other words, this figure represents the income effects on inter-industry trade.

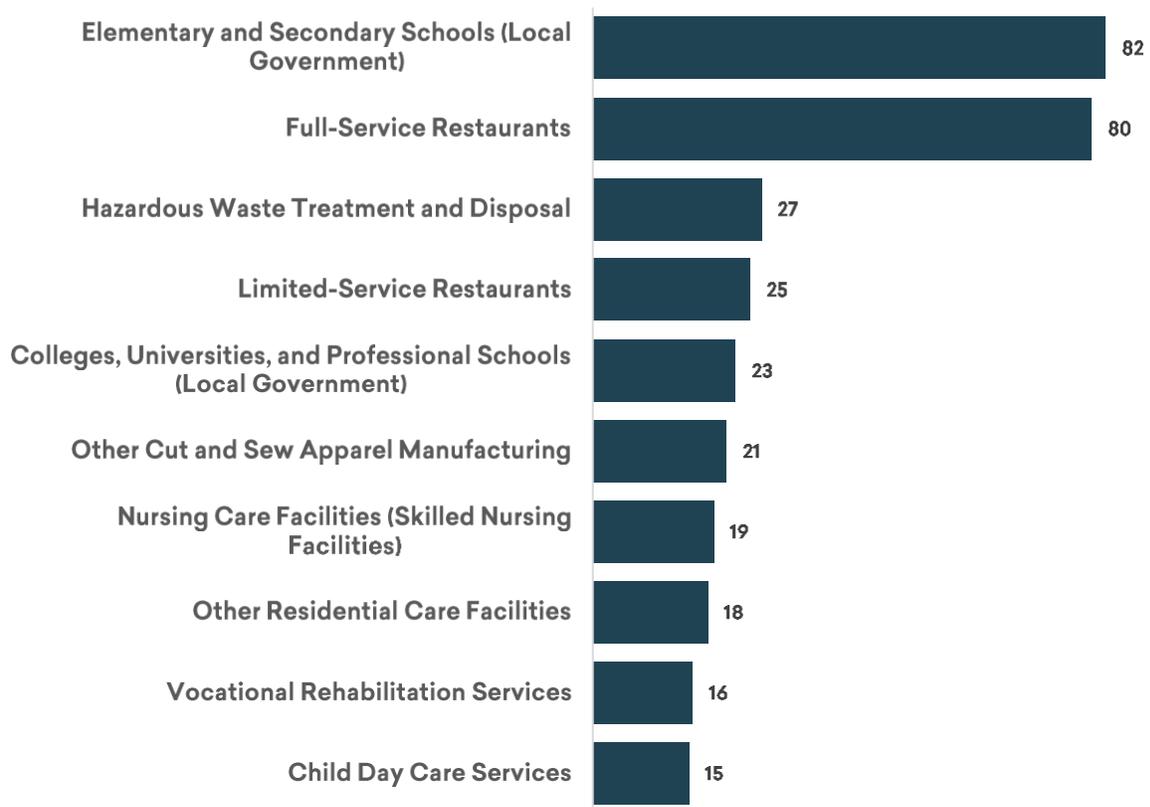
Another description for Type II: business/industry growth or decline that is going to affect the income of individuals and if the individuals spend it or not back in the economy, thus affecting the economy as a whole.

## First Scenario:

The first scenario included all industries in which the number of jobs by industries in 2019 were larger than the number of jobs in 2020.

The total number of industries in this scenario were 162. Figure 06 displays the top 10 industries with the highest number of job losses.

**Figure 06: Top 10 Industries for All Industries with the Highest Number of Job Losses during 2020**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass 2021.3

In this scenario, the total number of lost jobs caused by the pandemic sum up to 707 jobs. Job losses shown by Figure 06 represent 46.4% of all jobs lost during 2020.

The total impact on Jobs, Earnings and Taxes on Production & Imports (TPI) by Type I and Type II effects are presented below.

The number of job losses during the pandemic increased to 801 for Type I and 872 for Type II economic effect. In other words, because of the initial 707 lost jobs, there are 94 that are full-time, part-time, and seasonal employee jobs in industries that are part of their supply chain (Type I effect) that were lost. Additionally, there are an additional 71 jobs that were lost because they were no longer supported by the 801 jobs already lost in the region (Type II effect).

The top 10 industries in Figure 06 showed a total effect of job loss by 16.1% compared to their initial effect with a total difference of -24 jobs for Type I and -53 Type II. (Table 02).

**Table 02: Top 10 Industries All Industries Scenario  
Change in Jobs**

Industries Name	Initial Effect	Type I	Type II
Elementary and Secondary Schools (Local Government)	82	85	96
Full-Service Restaurants	80	84	87
Hazardous Waste Treatment and Disposal	27	32	35
Limited-Service Restaurants	25	28	30
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (Local Government)	23	23	25
Other Cut and Sew Apparel Manufacturing	21	23	26
Nursing Care Facilities (Skilled Nursing Facilities)	19	22	23
Other Residential Care Facilities	18	21	24
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	16	17	18
Child Day Care Services	15	16	17
Other Industries	379	449	491
All Industries	707	801	872

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM). 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

\* Total Type II Loss

In terms of Earnings loss, the total initial loss of earnings was \$37,310,753 where the total effect of Type

**Total Effects by Job Loss in 2019-20 due to COVID 19**

**162 Industries**  
Negatively Affected

**707**  
Initial Job Loss

**872**  
Total Loss in Jobs\*

**\$37.3 million**  
Earning Loss\*

**\$5.9 million**  
Loss on TPI\*

I is 2.53 times higher and Type II 2.73 times increase over the initial effect. Table 03 shows an initial loss (Initial Effect) of \$8,058,911 and an economic impact of \$9,284,329 loss on Type I and \$10,015,223 on Type II effects, for the top 10 industries, which represents 24.3% of the total effects on Type I and Type II.

**Table 03: Top 10 Industries All Industries Scenario Loss Earnings**

Industries Name	Initial Effect	Type I	Type II
Fossil Fuel Electric Power Generation	\$1,735,697	\$2,083,584	\$2,312,470
Other Cut and Sew Apparel Manufacturing	\$1,276,194	\$1,372,430	\$1,470,274
General Freight Trucking, Long-Distance, Truckload	\$1,139,196	\$1,319,522	\$1,377,512
Special Die and Tool, Die Set, Jig, and Fixture Manufacturing	\$814,994	\$868,530	\$926,371
Farm Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	\$752,712	\$931,047	\$997,565
New Car Dealers	\$669,942	\$743,680	\$789,345
Soft Drink Manufacturing	\$606,606	\$725,222	\$777,347
All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$386,907	\$415,513	\$445,620
Fertilizer (Mixing Only) Manufacturing	\$363,228	\$479,427	\$549,055
Showcase, Partition, Shelving, and Locker Manufacturing	\$313,436	\$345,374	\$369,663
Other Industries	\$5,627,859	\$25,306,930	\$27,295,530
All Industries	\$13,686,771	\$34,591,259	\$37,310,753

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM), 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

The loss on Taxes on Production and Imports (TPI) measures the change in local, state, and federal tax revenue through the increased or decreased industry sales, specifically general sales, and property taxes. It's important to note the change in tax revenue corresponds to the ripple effects and cannot be tied to a particular timeframe. Vernon county lost \$5,998,032 on TPI where 18% corresponds to Federal, 38% to State and 44% to Local Government taxes. The top 10 industries represent 64% of the total loss on TPI (Table 04).

**Table 04: Top 10 Industries All Industries Scenario Loss on Taxes on Production & Imports**

Industries Name	Total Loss on Taxes on Production and Imports	Federal	State	Local
Fossil Fuel Electric Power Generation	\$1,835,857	\$322,640	\$700,909	\$812,309
Farm Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	\$519,820	\$71,341	\$204,312	\$244,167
New Car Dealers	\$281,335	\$35,087	\$111,607	\$134,641
Full-Service Restaurants	\$261,867	\$36,810	\$102,671	\$122,386
Hazardous Waste Treatment and Disposal	\$234,807	\$56,107	\$85,308	\$93,392
Fertilizer (Mixing Only) Manufacturing	\$173,259	\$65,137	\$56,007	\$52,115
Limited-Service Restaurants	\$156,992	\$22,383	\$61,460	\$73,149
Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing	\$152,899	\$21,444	\$59,997	\$71,458
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	\$145,079	\$18,710	\$57,373	\$68,995
Petroleum and Petroleum Products Merchant Wholesalers (except Bulk Stations and Terminals)	\$124,894	\$13,603	\$50,123	\$61,168
Other Industries	\$2,111,222	\$394,701	\$799,131	\$917,390
All Industries	<b>\$5,998,032</b>	\$1,057,964	\$2,288,899	\$2,651,169

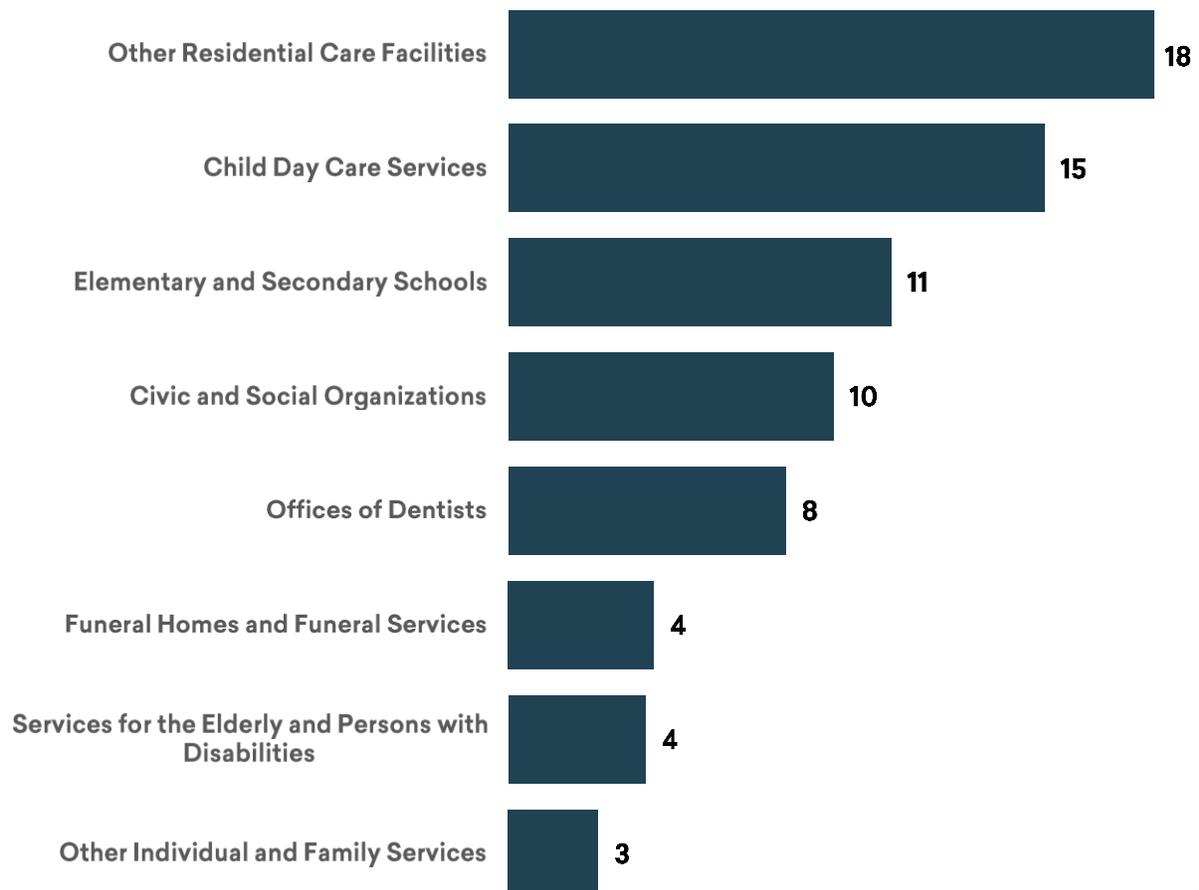
Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM), 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

## Second Scenario:

The second scenario groups industries which performed worse in terms of job loss, unemployment, and job postings, after having been compared at the national level. We selected the industries from two-digit NAICS code to six-digit NAICS code.

We called this set of industries the “Most Affected,” relative to national levels. There were eight industries in the second scenario. Figure 07 displays the industries with number of job losses.

**Figure 07: Most Affected Industries with the Highest Job Losses during 2020**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass 2021.3

The number of total jobs lost for the 8 industries adds up to 74 jobs.

The number of job losses during the pandemic increased to 79 for Type I and to 85 Type II economic effects. In other words, because of the 74 losses in jobs, there were 5 full-time, part-time, and seasonal employee lost jobs in industries that are part of their supply chain (Type I effect). Additionally, there were an additional 11 jobs lost because they were no longer supported by 79 jobs already lost in the region (Type II effect).

**Total Effects by Job Loss in 2019-20 due to COVID 19**



**Table 05: Most Affected Industries Scenario**  
**Change in Jobs**

Industries Name	Initial Effect	Type I	Type II
Other Residential Care Facilities	18	21	24
Child Day Care Services	15	16	17
Elementary and Secondary Schools	11	11	12
Civic and Social Organizations	10	10	10
Offices of Dentists	8	9	10
Funeral Homes and Funeral Services	4	5	5
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	4	4	5
Other Individual and Family Services	3	3	3
All Industries	74	79	85

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM), 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

\* Total Type II Loss

In terms of earnings loss, Table 06 shows an initial loss of earnings of \$2,629,330 where the total effect of Type I is 21.4% higher and Type II 31.8% increase over the initial effect.

**Table 06: Most Affected Industries Scenario Loss Earnings**

Industries Name	Initial Effect	Type I	Type II
Other Residential Care Facilities	\$1,072,121	\$1,328,906	\$1,438,951
Offices of Dentists	\$449,036	\$545,191	\$598,908
Child Day Care Services	\$317,559	\$385,646	\$417,879
Funeral Homes and Funeral Services	\$246,821	\$285,832	\$310,644
Elementary and Secondary Schools	\$213,122	\$245,433	\$266,016
Civic and Social Organizations	\$146,008	\$182,958	\$197,700
Other Individual and Family Services	\$92,784	\$109,895	\$119,687
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	\$91,937	\$108,879	\$116,665
All Industries	\$2,629,390	\$3,192,740	\$3,466,450

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM), 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

As was mentioned before, the loss on taxes on production and imports (TPI) measured the change in local, state, and federal tax revenues through general sales and property taxes. The county lost \$152,732 on TPI where 17% corresponds to federal government, 38% to state and 44% to local governments (Table 07).

**Table 07: Most Affected Industries Scenario Loss on Taxes on Production & Imports**

Industries Name	Total Loss on Taxes on Production and Imports	Federal	State	Local
Other Residential Care Facilities	\$40,108	\$9,616	\$23,226	\$27,267
Funeral Homes and Funeral Services	\$43,218	\$6,806	\$16,731	\$19,681
Offices of Dentists	\$18,192	\$4,519	\$6,559	\$7,114
Child Day Care Services	\$12,773	\$2,331	\$4,851	\$5,591
Civic and Social Organizations	\$9,139	\$1,384	\$3,554	\$4,201
Elementary and Secondary Schools	\$5,282	\$851	\$2,039	\$2,392
Other Individual and Family Services	\$2,122	\$471	\$782	\$870
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	\$1,898	\$427	\$697	\$774
All Industries	\$152,732	\$26,404	\$58,439	\$67,889

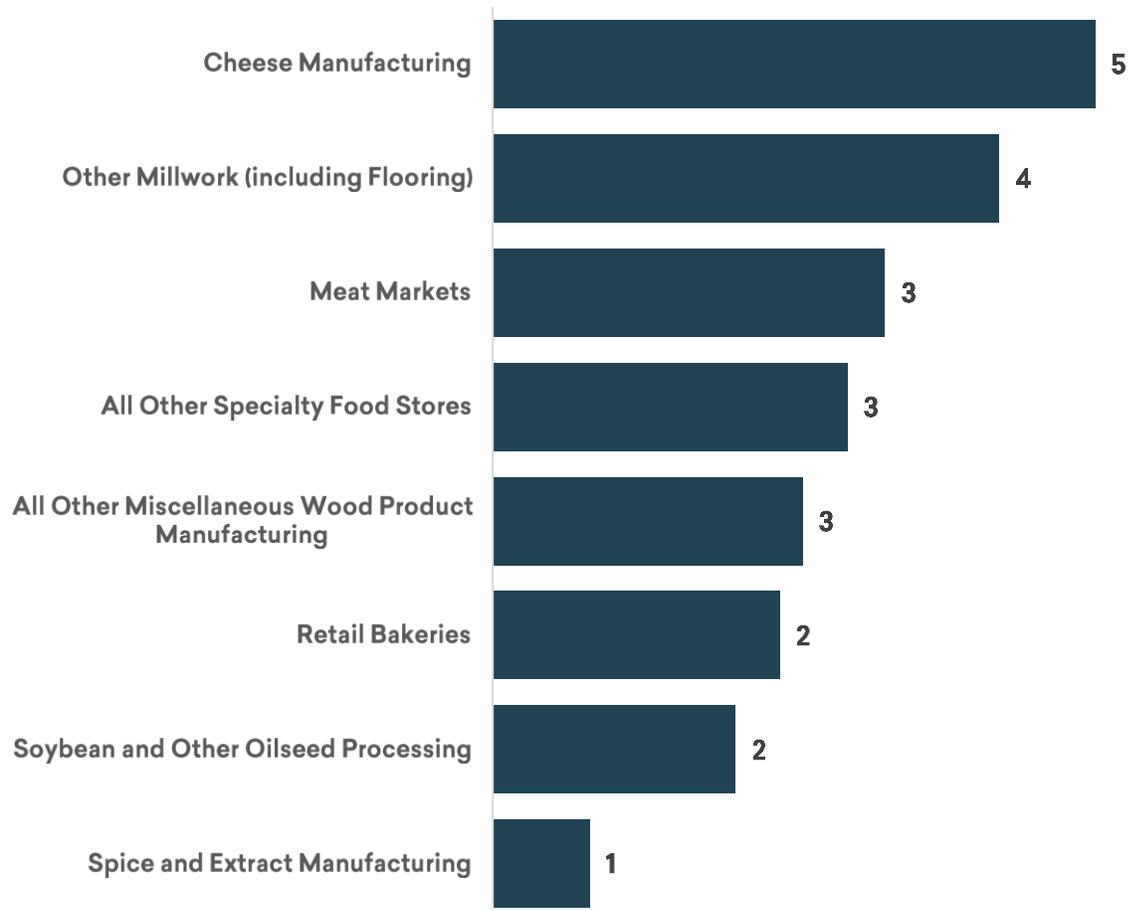
Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM), 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

## Third Scenario:

For our third scenario, we look at industries that are the most relevant to the region. Some of the industries included are Cheese Manufacturing, Other Millwork (including Flooring), as well industries where the largest employers in the region are classified.

We called this set of industries the “Most Relevant.” The total number of industries on this scenario were 8. Figure 08 displays the industries with their number of jobs lost.

### **Figure 08: Most Relevant Industries with Number of Job Loss during 2020**



Source: Emsi Burning Glass 2021.3

In our third scenario, the total job loss for the 8 industries amount to 23 jobs during 2020.

The job losses increased to 32 for Type I and for 34 for Type II economic effects. In other words, because of the 23 losses on jobs there were 9 that were full-time, part-time, and seasonal employee jobs in industries that were part of their supply chain (Type I effect) that were lost. Additionally, there were 2 jobs lost because they were no longer supported by the 32 jobs already lost in the region (Type II effect).

**Total Effects by Job Loss in 2019-20 due to COVID 19**



**Table 08: Most Relevant Industries Scenario**  
**Change in Jobs**

Industries Name	Initial Effect	Type I	Type II
Cheese Manufacturing	5	11	12
Other Millwork (including Flooring)	4	5	6
Meat Markets	3	3	4
All Other Specialty Food Stores	3	3	3
All Other Miscellaneous Wood Product Manufacturing	3	3	3
Retail Bakeries	2	3	3
Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing	2	2	2
Spice and Extract Manufacturing	1	1	1
All Industries	23	32	34

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM), 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

\* Total Type II Loss

In terms of earnings loss, the initial loss was \$698,681 where the total effect of Type I was 54% higher and Type II increased 65% over the initial effect (Table 09).

**Table 09: Most Relevant Industries Scenario Loss Earnings**

Industries Name	Initial Effect	Type I	Type II
Cheese Manufacturing	\$266,712	\$530,874	\$570,774
Other Millwork (including Flooring)	\$127,576	\$180,824	\$194,843
All Other Miscellaneous Wood Product Manufacturing	\$104,946	\$132,793	\$142,927
All Other Specialty Food Stores	\$64,506	\$73,033	\$76,829
Meat Markets	\$62,050	\$70,287	\$74,473
Retail Bakeries	\$46,662	\$56,026	\$60,123
Spice and Extract Manufacturing	\$26,229	\$34,417	\$37,038
(*) Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing	\$0	\$0	\$0
All Industries	\$698,681	\$1,078,254	\$1,157,008

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM). 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

The loss on taxes in production and imports (TPI) measured the change in local, state, and federal tax revenue specifically through general sales, and property taxes, showing Vernon lost \$295,016 on TPI. 18.4% corresponded to federal government, 37.9% to state and 43.7% to local governments (Table 10).

**Table 10: Most Relevant Industries Scenario Loss on Taxes on Production & Imports**

Industries Name	Total Loss on Taxes on Production and Imports	Federal	State	Local
Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing	\$152,899	\$21,444	\$59,997	\$71,458
Cheese Manufacturing	\$75,688	\$18,618	\$27,343	\$29,728
All Other Specialty Food Stores	\$18,899	\$2,526	\$7,448	\$8,925
Meat Markets	\$18,564	\$2,474	\$7,318	\$8,772
Other Millwork (including Flooring)	\$13,953	\$4,340	\$4,775	\$4,838
All Other Miscellaneous Wood Product Manufacturing	\$9,069	\$3,026	\$3,044	\$2,999
Spice and Extract Manufacturing	\$3,275	\$1,136	\$1,086	\$1,052
Retail Bakeries	\$2,668	\$638	\$969	\$1,061
All Industries	<b>\$295,016</b>	\$54,202	\$111,980	\$128,834

Source: Multi-regional social account matrix model (MR-SAM). 2021.3, years 2019/2020.

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(\*) Soybean and Other Oilseed Processing industry lost 2 jobs in 2020, leaving 0 jobs remaining to measure the earnings economic impact in the region.



## CONCLUSION:

The results of this study demonstrate the pervasive economic effects COVID-19 had on Vernon county in each of the output scenarios.

One of the most relevant results came from the total effect on TPI by job losses in all industries, where more than 46% is attributed to the 10 industries under the first scenario.

The job projections suggest a steady increase over time. Finally, the 707 initial lost jobs translated to close \$37.3 million in earnings lost and a \$5.9 million loss on TPI. This loss will affect the region deeply.

## About the Study

Data and assumptions used in the study are based on several sources, including industry and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau, outputs of Emsi Burning Glass' Multi-Regional Social Accounting Matrix model. The study applies a conservative methodology and follows standard practices using only the most recognized indicators of economic impact. For a better description of the data and approach used in the study, please review the Methodology document.

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The results of this study demonstrate the profound effect of COVID-19 on Vernon county across **multiple scenarios**.

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