

CHAPTER 1: Issues and Opportunities for Comprehensive Planning in the Town of Carson

Section 1.1 Description and Brief History of Planning Area

The Town is located in the northwest part of the County and is bordered on the west by Wood County and on the east by the Wisconsin River. The Town of Carson shares a common border with the Town of Eau Pleine to the north and with the Town of Linwood to the south. The Town of Carson ranks as the 6th largest (out of 17 towns) in Portage County, encompassing a total area of approximately 35,102 acres. The Town (political unit) includes all of congressional township T24N-R6E and the western portion of T24N-R7E.

The following excerpt is taken from the Online Archives of the Portage County Historical Society:

In 1917, the Town of Carson's wealth was determined by the value of its horses and cattle. Were it still gauged solely by that measure, Carson would be a rich town indeed. One of the county's premier agricultural lands, Carson's farmers are devoted chiefly to dairy, with a smattering of potato growers.

Back when the value of cows and horses was of prime importance, Carson ranked highest in the county for number of cattle, according to "A Standard History of Portage County, Wisconsin Vol. II." Almost 3,340 cattle valued at about \$80,900 grazed the newly cutover land that year. Carson also laid claim to 801 horses valued at almost \$107,000, according to "A Standard History."

The Town ranked fifth in the county for real estate and just below Stevens Point and the Town of Plover in terms of personal property in 1917. That year, almost 40 years into Carson's existence, 11 schools reigned in the town. Only the Town of Stockton ranked higher, with 13 schools. Carson was third in enrollment, just below Stockton and the Town of Sharon, "A Standard History" states.

Timber still was being cut after 1900 in the Town of Carson by loggers and farmers who needed a second income, according to "Our County Our Story," by Malcolm Rosholt. After the big logging companies moved out and the farmers began moving in, they earned extra cash to carry them through the winter months by cutting cord wood for pulp mills in Wisconsin Rapids and as kiln wood for other markets, "Our County Our Story" states.

What remains of the forestland is mainly poplar. Agriculture consumes 75 percent of Carson now, according to Wally Zywicki, Town Chair.

Small farmers dominated Carson's land for decades, but many have had to make way for an unforgiving economy, he says. Bigger farms now lay claim to the land, he says. "In the last few years, a lot of them (small farms) have had to fold. They were lost to the federal land bank," Zywicki says.

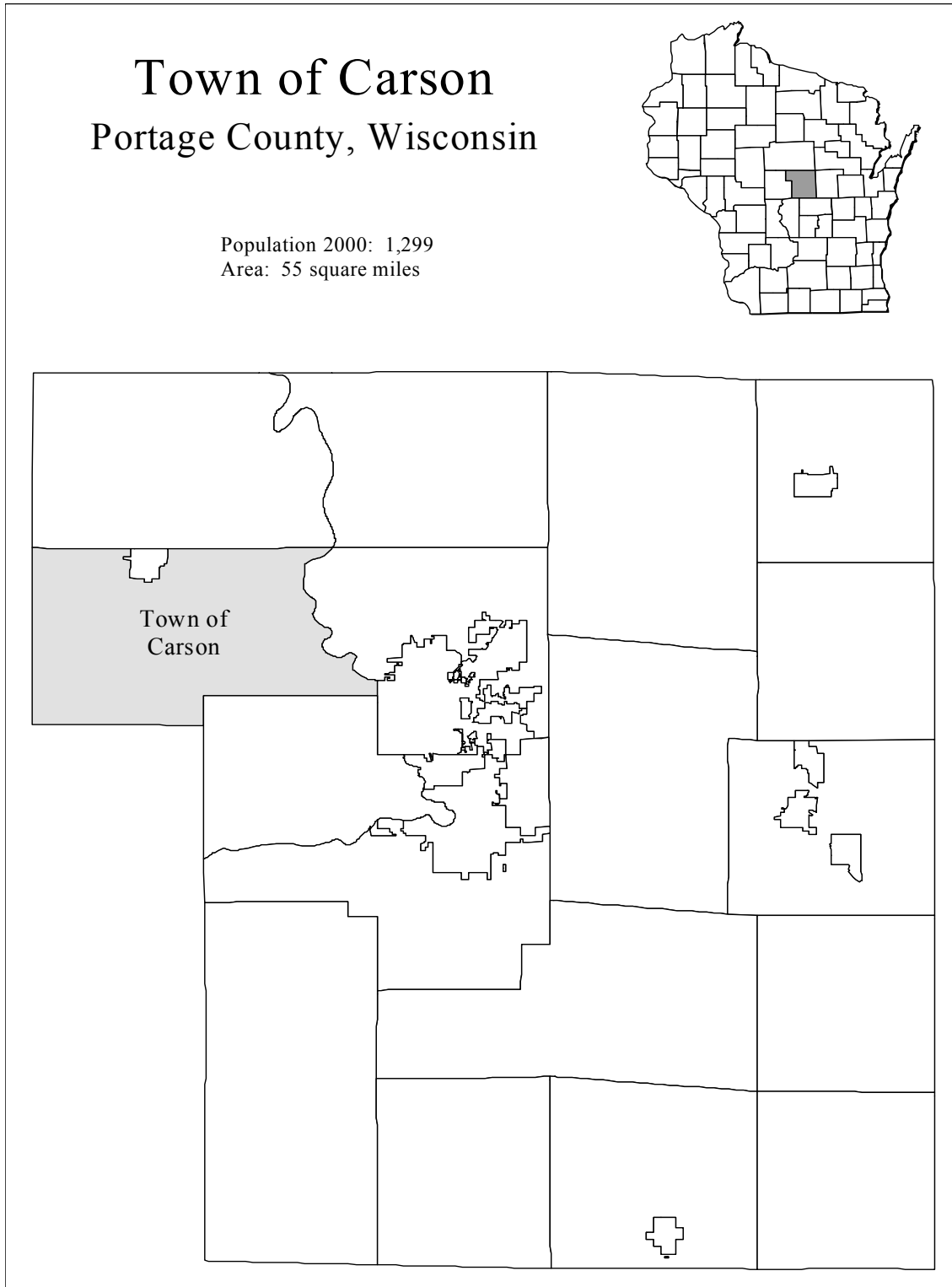
For a time it appeared that southwest Carson was going to develop into a cranberry growing center, states "Our County Our Story." This never panned out. A large yield was harvested in 1854 in or just outside Stevens Point's limits, and berries were selling at \$1.25 a bushel.

Carson probably was named after Samuel Carson, an Irish pioneer who entered the U.S. at Portland, Maine, in 1865 and applied for naturalization in Stevens Point in 1872. The Town formerly was part of the town of Scott, but when Wood County was set off from Portage County, Carson was formed.

Since 1970, the population of Carson has remained relatively stable. However, as the Stevens Point urban area expands, outlying communities could see increased growth pressure.

To accommodate this growth, tracts of land that are now void of development may see homes, farms and some businesses. If new development is not properly managed, the Town may find itself faced with unnecessarily inflated expenditure requirements for the provision of its limited services to the new areas. This Comprehensive Plan will analyze all of the lands within the Town of Carson corporate boundary, and include the short and long range recommendations for residential, commercial and industrial development, as well as the protection of important farmlands and other natural resources as determined by the residents of the Town of Carson.

Figure 1.1: Map of Carson Area



Section 1.2 Past Planning In Carson

1988 Land Use Plan

In July 1988, the Carson Town Board adopted the Carson Land Use Plan to serve as a document in guiding actions and decisions to assure proper development of public and private property within the Town. The Land Use Plan was incorporated as a part of the larger Portage County Development Guide. The current process underway is intended to update Carson's existing plan and address issues of a more comprehensive nature.

Section 1.3 The Current Comprehensive Planning Process

As mentioned in the introduction to this document, the Town of Carson Comprehensive Plan had its beginning as a part of the County-wide planning project started in June 2001. The work during the first 18 months of the County-wide project, performed primarily by the Portage County Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee, centered on public participation, visioning, and the generation of preliminary goal suggestions for the nine required Plan elements. This information was then forwarded to all local units of government in the fall of 2002. Utilizing the information provided by the Joint Steering Committee, the Town of Carson Plan Commission began the Town Comprehensive Planning process in earnest in January 2003. The Plan Commission met monthly through October 2004 to put together the first complete preliminary draft of the plan. The Comprehensive Planning process included several steps:

The first step involves research. Activities include acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting, identifying problems that require solutions, analyzing critical factors that need to be changed before progress can be made toward community goals, and establishing goals and objectives for growth and development. The second step involves the formation of planning policy. Planning policies recommend a course of action that will accommodate expected change, produce desired change, and prevent undesirable change.

The next steps involve the development of different plan alternatives for guiding future growth. The Land Use Element relates how the Town is expected to grow, and generally identifies how development should proceed in the future to achieve community goals. It proposes the most efficient use of land within the financial and environmental capabilities, by current standards, of the Town by identifying where residential, and other anticipated land uses should occur.

The final step involves implementation of the plan and programs that will influence the day-to-day decisions made by government officials, private enterprise, and individuals. Plan implementation provides the means by which community goals can be achieved. Three major tools of implementation are the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and capital improvements program.

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary link between the past, the present, and the future, making it perhaps the best resource for achieving continuity over a period of time. It is to be used as a guide by those making decisions with regard to the development of the community. The Comprehensive Plan must also remain flexible so that it can be modified to reflect the processes of actual development and the changing attitudes and priorities of the community. To maintain an updated Comprehensive Plan, new information must be continually gathered and studied to determine trends and reevaluate projections, forecasts, and plans. Even policy recommendations, which are relatively permanent statements, may require periodic review to determine their appropriateness and suitability in relation to the direction and character of community

development at that time. A well thought-out and updated Comprehensive Plan, with a solid base of public involvement, is one of the most fruitful investments a local government can make. As a collection of policies and plans designed to guide future growth and development, it will help ensure continuity over time as changes occur within the Town of Carson.

Section 1.4 Demographic Trends

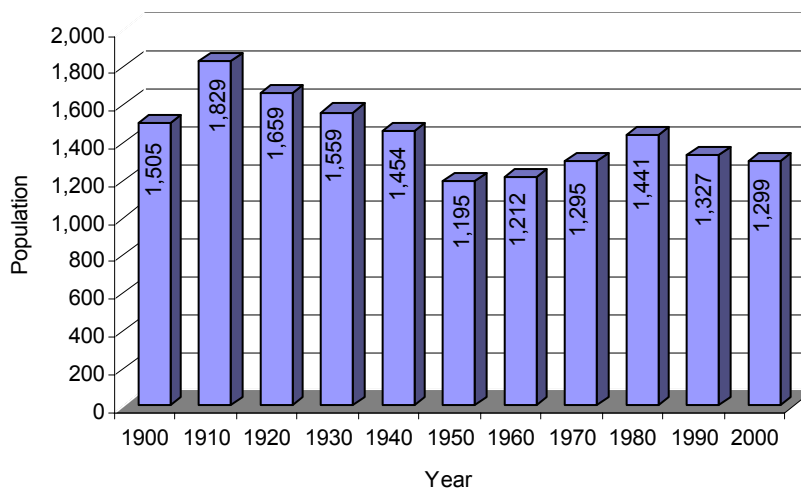
A. Population Growth

Every 10 years the Federal government performs the National Census, and these Census results are the main source of information used to understand how communities change over time.

The earliest growth in the Town of Carson began as the result of an influx of agricultural settlers during the later part of the 19th century, with the Town reaching its population peak of 1,829 residents in 1910. However, the Town experienced a significant decline in population after 1910, due in part, to the incorporation of the Village of Junction City (out of the Town of Carson) in 1911. The Town's population continued to decline in the following decades, as both locally and nationally, rural residents began to move to the cities. By 1950, the Town reached its population low of 1,195 residents.

A slight upturn in population began to occur in the Town in the 1960's, again following a nationwide trend. This reversal is attributed to an outmigration from the urban areas back to the rural areas, which resulted in the establishment of a significant nonfarm population in this and many other rural towns in Portage County. According to the U.S. Census of Population, the Town of Carson grew at a rate of 6.8% during the decade of the 1960's and by 11.3% during the decade of the 1970's.

Figure 1.2: Town of Carson Population Change, 1900 to 2000



Source: US Bureau of Census

From 1980 to 2000, the growth trend reversed, decreasing by 10% for the period. The loss experienced by the Town of Carson over the past twenty years was one of the larger decreases of all towns in Portage County. The surrounding communities of Eau Pleine and Linwood both saw a relatively small change in their population since 1980. The Wisconsin Department of Administration, which provides yearly population estimates for the intercensal period, has projected a slight increase in growth for the Town in 2003.

Table 1.1: Carson Comparison Population Change, 1970 to 2003

	U.S. Census				State of Wisconsin Estimate	1970 to 2000 Change	2000 to 2003 Change
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003		
Town of Carson	1,295	1,441	1,327	1,299	1,337	0.3%	2.9%
Town of Eau Pleine	784	963	944	931	946	18.8%	1.6%
Town of Hull	3,124	5,122	5,563	5,493	5,535	75.8%	0.8%
Town of Linwood	773	1,082	1,035	1,111	1,116	43.7%	0.5%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	68,664	41.3%	2.2%

Source: US Census Bureau; State of Wisconsin Dept. of Administration; Portage County Planning and Zoning Dept.

Population growth is a combination of many factors including birth, death, in and out migration. By examining migration patterns for the residents of the Town of Carson, we can better understand the cause for how growth in the community is occurring (Table 1.2). The U.S. Census provides data on where residents were living five years prior to the census. The “Same House” column identifies the Carson residents that lived in the same dwelling in both 1995 and 2000 (or 1985 and 1990); this can be an indicator of long-term residency. The “Different House, Portage County” column identifies the Carson residents that lived in a home outside the Town, but within Portage County, in 1995. The “Different House, Different County” column identifies the Carson residents that lived in a home outside of the Town and Portage County, but within the State of Wisconsin, in 1995. The “Different State” column identifies the Carson residents that lived in a home outside the State of Wisconsin in 1995. Altogether, this information provides insight into the nature and pace of new residents moving into the Town.

Based on 2000 Census information, seventy-five percent (75%) of the Town's residents lived in the same house as they did in 1995, down four percent (4%) from the 1990 Census. This would show that long-term residents still constitute a majority of the total population. An interesting statistic found in Table 1.2 is the number of residents who lived in a different house in Portage County in 1985 as compared to 1995. This number increased from eleven percent (11%) to eighteen percent (18%) indicating a desire on the part of some residents to stay in Portage County.

Table 1.2: Place of Residence for Town Residents, Five Years Prior to 1990 & 2000 Census

	Same House				Different House, Portage County				Different House Different County				Different State			
	1985		1995		1985		1995		1985		1995		1985		1995	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Town of Carson	1,005	79%	940	75%	135	11%	231	18%	87	7%	89	7%	47	4%	25	2%
Town of Eau Pleine	669	75%	659	73%	118	13%	156	17%	76	8%	82	9%	32	4%	25	3%
Town of Hull	2,945	58%	3,669	70%	1,173	23%	939	18%	611	12%	612	12%	377	7%	246	5%
Portage County		51%		56%		21%		22%		21%		16%		7%		5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census

B. Age Distribution

Table 1.3 below details the number of Town residents that occupied specific age groups in each of the last three Census years, along with similar information for an average of all Portage County Towns and the County as a whole.

Table 1.3: Distribution of Population, by Ten-Year Age Groups

Age	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Under 5 years	121 8.4%	86 6.5%	74 5.7%	132 9.3%	119 7.9%	96 6.0%	4,343 7.6%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%
5 to 14 years	282 19.6%	239 18.0%	193 14.9%	270 19.0%	272 18.0%	256 15.5%	8,671 15.1%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%
15 to 24 years	234 16.2%	185 13.9%	171 13.2%	257 17.8%	200 12.8%	200 12.4%	15,270 26.6%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%
25 to 34 years	245 17.0%	198 14.9%	144 11.1%	249 17.4%	242 15.7%	185 11.4%	9,180 16.0%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%
35 to 44 years	151 10.5%	209 15.7%	229 17.6%	165 11.1%	250 16.3%	293 18.0%	5,593 9.7%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%
45 to 54 years	124 8.6%	139 10.5%	216 16.6%	116 8.3%	160 10.2%	262 16.2%	4,447 7.7%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%
55 to 64 years	134 9.3%	116 8.7%	128 9.9%	100 8.0%	148 8.7%	151 9.3%	4,185 7.3%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%
65 to 74 years	98 6.8%	107 8.1%	84 6.5%	73 6.2%	84 6.5%	96 6.4%	3,391 5.9%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%
75 to 84 years	39 2.7%	44 3.3%	50 3.8%	29 2.5%	39 3.1%	52 3.7%	1,806 3.1%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%
85 years and over	13 0.9%	4 0.3%	10 0.8%	7 0.6%	9 0.8%	15 1.0%	534 0.9%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%
TOTAL	1,441	1,327	1,299	1,397	1,522	1,605	57,420	61,405	67,182
Median Age	28.2	32.9	38.0	27.3	32.2	37.8	25.4	29.3	33.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

Insight into the nature of the Town's population change over time can be gained through examining how the different age groups change as they move through their life cycles. Age groups for the towns and County (or "cohorts" as they are called when tracking a group of same-aged people) have been displayed in the table in ten-year increments to more easily see how their numbers increase or decline over different census years. The diagonal series of gray and white boxes within Table 1.3 indicate the path of each age cohort through the three census periods.

The 5-to-14 year old cohort for the Town of Carson numbered 239 in 1990. Their number declined by 68 persons (-39.8%) by the year 2000 (as the 5-to-14 year olds became 15-to-24 year olds). Children leaving home for college or jobs may explain some of this decline. For the most part, the age cohorts between 35 and 64, and 75 to 85+ years old have experienced increases in numbers between 1990 and 2000.

The median age for the Town of Carson is 38 years. This age has increased by slightly less than ten years since 1980, with the rate of increase holding steady over the two decades. The "median age" is the point where ½ of the population lies above and ½ lies below; the older this age is, the older the overall population for a place is becoming. The other Towns across Portage County have seen their median age increase at a slightly quicker pace (11 years). The County as a whole has seen its median age increase at an even slower rate, just under eight years over the twenty-

year period. This is an indication that the towns overall are aging more rapidly than the villages within the County or the City of Stevens Point (a large factor in the County's overall calculation).

As one would expect with a rise in median age, the percentage of the population for the Towns within Portage County over the age of 65 has been trending upward since 1980 as well. The Town of Carson 65+ population segment increased from 10.4% of total population in 1980 to 11.1% in 2000. The Portage County Town average saw this segment increase from 9.3% to 11.1%, and the County as a whole increased from 9.9% to 10.9% over the same time period. The number of seniors aged 75 and over has increased since 1990. In Carson, the age groups under 35 are declining.

C. Education Levels

Levels of educational attainment have followed a similar trend of improvement across the different municipal divisions within Portage County (Table 1.4). The Town of Carson had mixed results in its' overall educational attainment during the 1990's. The number and percentage of Town of Carson residents age 25 and over who had less than a 9th grade education decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000. The percentage of 25+ year old residents who completed some college, or completed a college degree program rose from 28% to 42% over the same period. This 10-year increase in attainment for Carson was lower than the Town Average (25% to 44%) but higher than the County as a whole (40% to 49%). The Town of Carson experienced an increase in the number and percentage of residents who completed 9th to 12th grade but did not receive a diploma. The Carson numbers for this category increased by 1.4%, while the Town average experienced less than a 1% increase, and Portage County overall experienced a 1.2% decrease.

Table 1.4: Comparison of Educational Attainment for Residents 25 Years and Older

Ed. Attainment (Persons 25 yrs+)	Town of Carson		Town Average		Portage County	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than 9th Grade	122 <i>14.8%</i>	61 <i>6.9%</i>	118 <i>10.2%</i>	66 <i>6.2%</i>	4,065 <i>11.6%</i>	2,420 <i>6.0%</i>
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	89 <i>10.8%</i>	108 <i>12.2%</i>	81 <i>7.1%</i>	84 <i>7.9%</i>	3,029 <i>8.7%</i>	3,019 <i>7.5%</i>
High School Graduate	384 <i>46.6%</i>	346 <i>39.1%</i>	387 <i>33.6%</i>	446 <i>42.3%</i>	14,082 <i>40.2%</i>	14,952 <i>37.2%</i>
Some College (No Degree)	90 <i>10.9%</i>	157 <i>17.8%</i>	115 <i>10.0%</i>	185 <i>17.6%</i>	5,205 <i>14.9%</i>	7,572 <i>18.9%</i>
Associate Degree	47 <i>5.7%</i>	90 <i>10.2%</i>	42 <i>3.7%</i>	72 <i>6.8%</i>	1,922 <i>5.5%</i>	2,802 <i>7.0%</i>
Bachelor's Degree	73 <i>8.9%</i>	104 <i>11.8%</i>	90 <i>7.8%</i>	143 <i>13.5%</i>	4,594 <i>13.1%</i>	6,468 <i>16.1%</i>
Graduate Professional Degree	19 <i>2.3%</i>	18 <i>2.0%</i>	37 <i>3.2%</i>	59 <i>5.6%</i>	2,107 <i>6.0%</i>	2,910 <i>7.2%</i>
TOTAL	824	884	1,151	1,054	35,004	40,143

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census

D. Households and Income

The Town of Carson residential community is made up of different types of households. The U.S. Census defines a household simply as “including all of the people who occupy a housing unit”. People not living in households are classified as living in group quarters. Table 1.5 below details the changes in the make-up of Town of Carson households over the last 20 years, and compares them to the Portage County data and the average of the County Towns. Married-couple households, traditionally the largest group within Carson, have seen their percentage of total households decrease over the last 20 years, mirroring a county-wide tendency of decline. Single-parent headed households within Carson have seen their percentage of total households increase over the 20 year period. By comparison, the Town average and County as a whole have seen single-head households increase between 2 and 4%. Carson’s non-family households have increased from 19% of total households in 1980 to 23.4% in 2000.

The Persons Per Household (PPH) calculation for the Town of Carson, along with the Town average and the County overall have continued a declining trend over the last 20. Carson very closely matches the size and rate of decline of the Towns, while the overall County PPH rate of decline has been a bit smaller. This translates into Carson and other Town households being a bit larger than the County average.

Table 1.5: Household Type Comparison

Households By Type	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Family Households	358	354	364	358	406	456	13,257	14,883	16,496
<i>Percent of total h-holds</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>66%</i>
Married-couple families	328	316	323	323	360	405	11,592	12,645	13,808
<i>Percent of family h-holds</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>88%</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>84%</i>
Other family, male householder	15	15	15	12	18	22	437	602	861
<i>Percent of family h-holds</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>3%</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>5%</i>
Other family, female householder	15	23	26	22	29	29	1,228	1,636	1,827
<i>Percent of family h-holds</i>	<i>4%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>9%</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>11%</i>
Non-family Households	84	87	111	66	86	122	5,056	6,423	8,544
<i>Percent of total h-holds</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>20%</i>	<i>23%</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>34%</i>
Householder living alone	76	69	88	54	70	95	3,730	4,679	6,130
<i>Percent of non-family h-holds</i>	<i>90%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>72%</i>
Householder 65 years and over	~	39	43		28	34	~	1,933	2,196
<i>Percent of non-family h-holds</i>		<i>45%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>0%</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>28%</i>		<i>30%</i>	<i>26%</i>
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	442	441	475	424	492	578	18,313	21,306	25,040
Persons Per Household	3.26	3.01	2.73	3.28	3.01	2.72	2.93	2.71	2.54

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

Another instructive piece of information on the state of households within the Town is the level of income that each household achieves. Again the census provides insight into the range of incomes present within Carson. Table 1.6 below describes how household incomes have changed in the last 20 years. It is a testimony to both the inflation of wages and the increased earning power of the residents of Carson that the percentage of households making greater than \$50,000 per year has increased from 4.2% in 1979 to 51.9% 1999. Median household income has increased from \$16,339 to \$51,583 over the same period. Over the same time period, the

percentage increase in households earning greater than \$50,000 was higher in Carson than both the Town average (3.2% to 33.5%) and the County as a whole (3.2% to 42.5%).

Table 1.6: Household Income Comparison

Household Income Per Year	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
Less Than \$10,000	131 30.3%	71 15.5%	26 5.3%	102 23.9%	47 9.5%	25 2.9%	5,300 28.9%	3,210 15.0%	1,767 7.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	60 13.9%	34 7.4%	27 5.5%	67 15.6%	37 7.4%	24 2.8%	2,919 15.9%	1,978 9.3%	1,608 6.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	112 25.9%	67 14.6%	22 4.5%	141 33.1%	86 17.4%	57 6.6%	5,423 29.6%	4,072 19.1%	3,174 12.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	92 21.3%	87 19.0%	59 12.0%	75 17.6%	84 17.0%	76 8.7%	2,907 15.8%	3,654 17.1%	3,425 13.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	19 0.1%	96 0.3%	102 0.2%	29 0.2%	124 0.4%	112 0.2%	1,223 6.7%	4,370 20.5%	4,484 17.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	9 2.1%	82 17.9%	141 28.7%	9 2.2%	82 16.6%	154 17.9%	380 2.1%	2,983 14.0%	5,771 23.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9 2.1%	9 2.0%	63 12.8%	4 1.0%	22 4.4%	82 9.4%	193 1.1%	661 3.1%	2,820 11.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999		5 1.1%	27 5.5%	0 0.0%	8 1.6%	36 4.2%	0 0.0%	274 1.3%	1,346 5.4%
\$150,000 or more		8 1.7%	24 4.9%	0 0.0%	4 0.9%	17 2.0%	0 0.0%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%
Total Households	432	459	491	426	493	865	18,345	21,336	25,112
Median H-Hold Income	\$16,339	\$31,359	\$51,583	\$16,761	\$31,521	\$47,815	\$16,659	\$28,686	\$43,487

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

With the examination of income information, the Town of Carson should also assess the poverty status of its residents. “Poverty” is generally defined as a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than that family’s threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically. That is, they are the same throughout the United States. However, the poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, food stamps, and Medicaid). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated children under age 15 (such as foster children).

Table 1.7 below outlines poverty thresholds for 1980, 1990, and 2000. Table 1.8 lists the Census information on poverty for the total number of residents, persons age 65 and above, and families within the Town of Carson, the Town average, and Portage County as a whole.

Table 1.7: Poverty Thresholds - 1980, 1990, and 2000

Size of Family Unit	Poverty Threshold		
	1980	1990	2000
One Person	\$4,190	\$6,652	\$8,794
Two Persons	\$5,363	\$8,509	\$11,239
Three Persons	\$6,565	\$10,419	\$13,738
Four Persons	\$8,414	\$13,481	\$17,603
Five Persons	\$9,966	\$15,792	\$20,819
Six Persons	\$11,269	\$17,839	\$23,528
Seven Persons	\$12,761	\$20,241	\$26,754
Eight Persons	\$14,199	\$22,582	\$29,701
Nine Persons or More	\$16,896	\$26,848	\$35,060

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1.8: Percent in Poverty Comparison

	Town of Carson		Town Average		Portage County	
	1989	1999	1989	1999	1989	1999
Persons	1,361	1,299	1,330	1,424	57,805	67,182
Below Poverty Level	126	50	114	79	7,454	6,074
	9.3%	3.8%	8.6%	5.6%	12.9%	9.0%
Persons 65 Years and Over	145	144	113	148	5,327	7,354
Below Poverty Level	18	20	13	13	740	561
	12.4%	13.9%	11.2%	9.1%	13.9%	7.6%
Families	363	367	357	407	14,927	16,643
Below Poverty Level	25	7	23	15	1,051	725
	6.9%	1.9%	6.3%	3.6%	7.0%	4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census

According to census figures, the Town of Carson has experienced a substantial decrease in the number of residents earning below the poverty level as compared to the County and Town Average.

E. Employment Characteristics

Table 1.9 below summarizes employment by industry data provided for the last three census years. This information represents what type of industry that the working residents of Carson were employed by, and is not a listing of the employment currently located within the Town. The discussion of the Carson economy will take place within the Economic Development Element of this Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that the method used for classifying industries was changed between the 1990 and 2000 census, and therefore the information included in the industry categories of Table 1.9 is not entirely consistent for comparison between those years.

Table 1.9: Summary of Employment by Industry

Industry	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining	147 26.1%	109 17.1%	83 11.0%	90 15.7%	80 10.8%	57 6.7%	1,816 7.3%	1,755 5.8%	1,241 3.5%
Construction	24 4.3%	54 8.5%	49 6.5%	32 5.6%	42 5.7%	52 6.1%	1,004 4.0%	1,297 4.3%	1,707 4.8%
Manufacturing	154 27.3%	143 22.4%	203 27.0%	119 20.8%	153 20.7%	181 21.2%	4,637 18.6%	5,373 17.8%	6,314 17.7%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	28 5.0%	23 3.6%	33 4.4%	30 5.3%	49 6.6%	55 6.5%	1,214 4.9%	1,511 5.0%	1,948 5.5%
Information	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 0.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	11 1.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	835 2.3%
Communications/ Other Public Facilities	7 1.2%	2 0.3%	0 0.0%	6 1.0%	7 0.9%	0 0.0%	325 1.3%	367 1.2%	0 0.0%
Wholesale Trade	18 3.2%	25 3.9%	20 2.7%	23 4.0%	24 3.2%	30 3.6%	885 3.5%	1,026 3.4%	1,235 3.5%
Retail Trade	45 8.0%	89 14.0%	80 10.6%	80 13.9%	119 16.0%	103 12.1%	4,317 17.3%	5,667 18.8%	4,813 13.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	45 8.0%	61 9.6%	63 8.4%	63 11.0%	82 11.0%	89 10.5%	2,971 11.9%	3,359 11.1%	3,682 10.3%
Professional, Management, Administrative	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	23 3.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	30 3.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1,627 4.6%
Business and Repair Services	14 2.5%	14 2.2%	0 0.0%	10 1.8%	19 2.5%	0 0.0%	518 2.1%	941 3.1%	0 0.0%
Personal Services	0 0.0%	3 0.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16 2.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	777 2.6%	0 0.0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	6 1.1%	0 0.0%	32 4.3%	18 3.1%	6 0.8%	49 5.7%	734 2.9%	388 1.3%	3,005 8.4%
Educational, Health, Social Services	51 9.0%	72 11.3%	107 14.2%	80 13.9%	102 13.8%	143 16.8%	5,331 21.4%	5,617 18.6%	7,192 20.2%
Other	21 3.7%	14 2.2%	34 4.5%	13 2.2%	23 3.1%	33 3.9%	624 2.5%	1,362 4.5%	1,236 3.5%
Public Administration	4 0.7%	15 2.4%	21 2.8%	9 1.6%	19 2.5%	20 2.3%	571 2.3%	710 2.4%	842 2.4%
Total Employed Persons	564	637	752	573	741	852	24,947	30,150	35,677
Unemployed Persons	42	31	20	57	38	39	2,013	1,590	2,255
Total Labor Force	606	668	772	630	806	639	26,960	31,740	37,944
Percent Unemployed	7.4%	4.9%	2.7%	10%	5%	5%	8.1%	5.3%	6.3%
Persons 16 Years +	0	994	1,034	0	1,125	716	0	47,202	53,135

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000 Census

Section 1.5 Forecasts

A. Population Projections

Portage County Planning and Zoning Department prepares population projections for each of the municipalities within the County. The methodology for this projection is included in Appendix E of this Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Carson Plan Commission has adopted the following projected population totals for the planning period:

Yr 2010: **1,355** Yr 2015: **1,340** Yr 2020: **1,334** Yr 2025: **1,383**

B. Household Projections

Household projections for Carson will be based on the above stated population projection divided by the anticipated number of persons per household in both through 2025.

The number of Persons per Household for Carson has declined from 3.01 persons in 1990 to 2.73 persons in 2000. Using a method of linear regression from data beginning in 1980, the forecasted number of persons per household (PPH) in 2010 will be 2.47. Forecasting numbers far into the future using linear regression produces increased uncertainty, therefore, the persons per household will be held at 2.47 through 2025. Keep in mind that these numbers represent projections and should not be used as absolute. Using a PPH of 2.47 for this plan horizon (2025), the household projections for Carson are:

2010: **549** households 2015: **543** households 2020: **540** households 2025: **560** households

C. Employment Projections

Although employment in the agricultural sector has declined over the last twenty years (Table 1.9), the Town projects that agriculture related employment, including farm operations, will continue to provide job opportunities for its residents. Future job opportunities outside of the agriculture sector are projected to be created throughout the County, including the Stevens Point urban area, in the service, government, manufacturing, and finance and insurance sectors.

Section 1.6 Community Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The Town of Carson recognizes the important role that agricultural operations play in the economy, and toward the preservation of a rural lifestyle and community character. Town residents wish to protect as much agricultural land as practicable while allowing for future development needs. Town residents also recognize the importance that natural resources, such as the Mill Creek corridor, Fogarty Marsh, and the Wisconsin River, contribute toward the Town's character. Recognition of these assets should be taken into consideration as growth and development occurs over time.

Goals, objectives and policies provide the framework for guiding future community development activities in the Town of Carson. A means of deriving goals and policies is through issue identification. Many of the issue statements in the various plan elements are framed as questions. This was purposefully done so that answering the questions would help plan commissioners form goal or policy statements. Goals are stated as desirable conditions to strive toward in the future. They are common ideals of the community that can be achieved through the actions of government leaders, private enterprise and individuals. Objectives are general targets to be achieved along the path of satisfying community goals. Policies are more specific recommendations or methods of action to accomplish these stated objectives. Together these

three pieces express the uniqueness of the community while providing guidance for desirable patterns of growth and development.