

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

66.1001(2)(a) Wis. Stat.:

**Issues and Opportunities element.** Background information on the local governmental unit and a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals and programs of the local governmental unit to guide the future development and redevelopment of the local governmental unit over a 20-year planning period. Background information shall include population, household and employment forecasts that the local governmental unit uses in developing its comprehensive plan, and demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, income levels and employment characteristics that exist within the local intergovernmental unit.

The purpose of a comprehensive planning program is to promote orderly and beneficial development, helping to create a community that offers residents a more attractive, efficient, and “resident-friendly” environment in which to live. Such an environment can be realized in part by creating a financially sound governmental structure, providing quality schools, a variety of community facilities and services, efficient land use and transportation systems, and encouraging sufficient employment opportunities and adequate, affordable housing.

The planning process involves understanding the various physical, economic, and social issues within the Town. It examines where the Town has been, where it is now, what goals or targets the community hopes to achieve, and what actions are necessary to reach these goals. A successful planning program can provide the direction needed to manage future growth by offering guidelines to governmental leaders, private enterprise, and individuals so that the Town development-related decisions are sound, practical and consistent.

### **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 8<sup>th</sup> largest (out of 17 towns) in Portage County, encompassing a total area of approximately 35,332 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.*

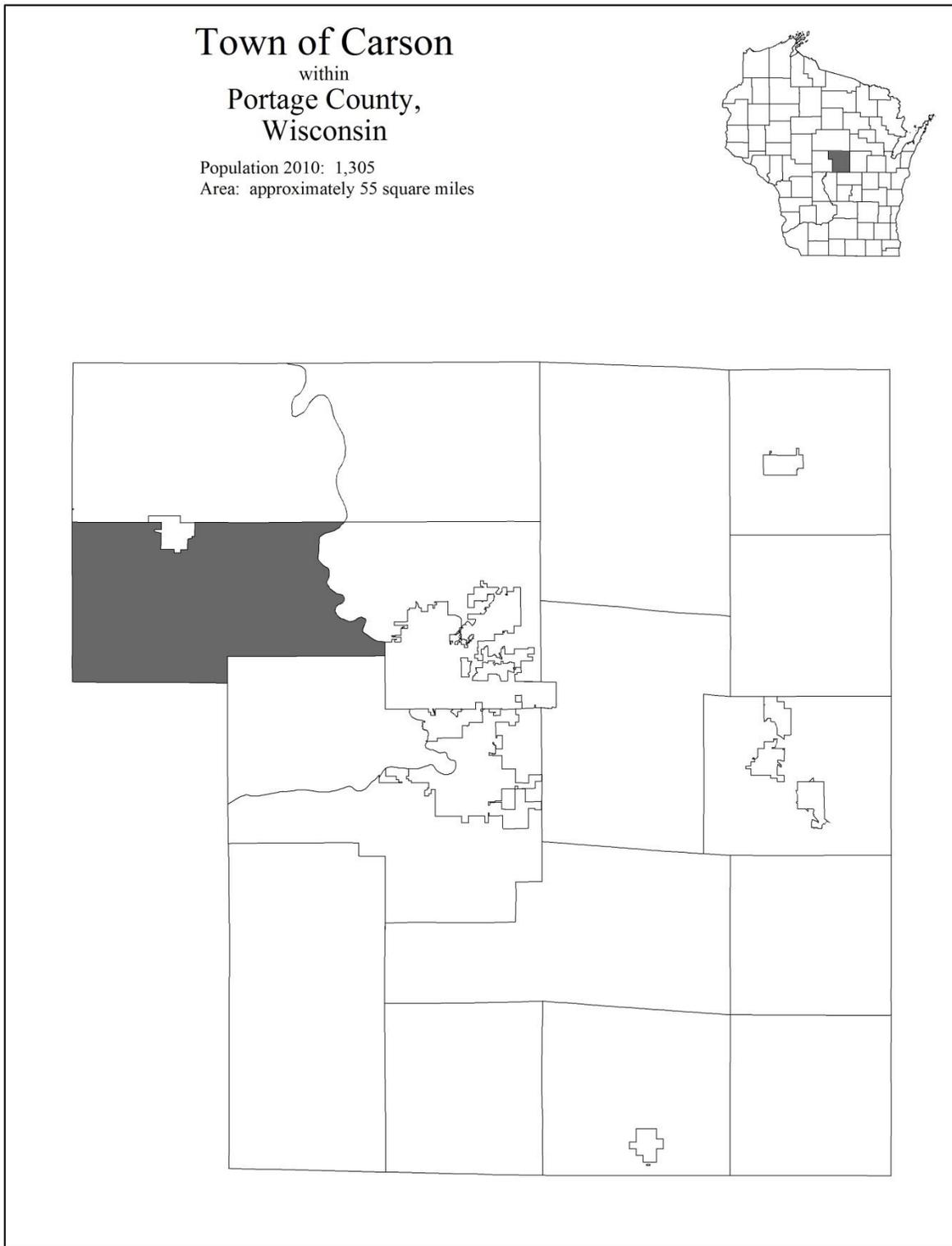
*Small farmers dominated Carson's land for decades, but many have had to make way for an unforgiving economy. Bigger farms now lay claim to the land. For a time it appeared that southwest Carson was going to develop into a cranberry growing center, states "Our County Our Story." This never panned out. 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.

## **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 Portage County Planning and Zoning Committee, generated preliminary County-wide 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 Portage County, 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 plan was adopted by the Carson Town Board on March 23, 2005. The Comprehensive Planning process included several steps:

The first step involves research. Activities include acquiring a thorough knowledge of the existing community setting on a variety of topics, identifying problems that require solutions, and creating 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, present, and 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.

The Town of Carson, along with staff from the Portage County Planning and Zoning Department, began a 10-year update to the 2005 Plan in January of 2013. 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 maintained 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**

The demographic information in the Comprehensive Plan comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. Through the Census the name, sex, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity, relationship and housing tenure is collected on every individual in the United States every ten years. Starting with the 2010 Census, the method of collecting data beyond this primary information has been changed. The more detailed socioeconomic information once collected during each Census is now collected annually by the American Community Survey (ACS), which began sampling in 2005.

The ACS is a branch within the U.S. Census Bureau. The Survey is sent to a small percentage of the population each year on a rotating basis throughout the decade. Information for large metropolitan areas is available every year. For urban areas like the City of Stevens Point and Portage County as a whole, estimates are based on a 3 year average. Data at the Town level is based on a 5 year average.

The tables and figures provided below use the U.S. Census or ACS data. This data is available via the American Fact Finder website at the <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>. When looking at the tables and figures remember, in many cases, estimates and not based on a complete count. The point is that the Census or ACS data is an estimate that may have some error, but it is the most accurate measure of what is happening within the Town that is available.

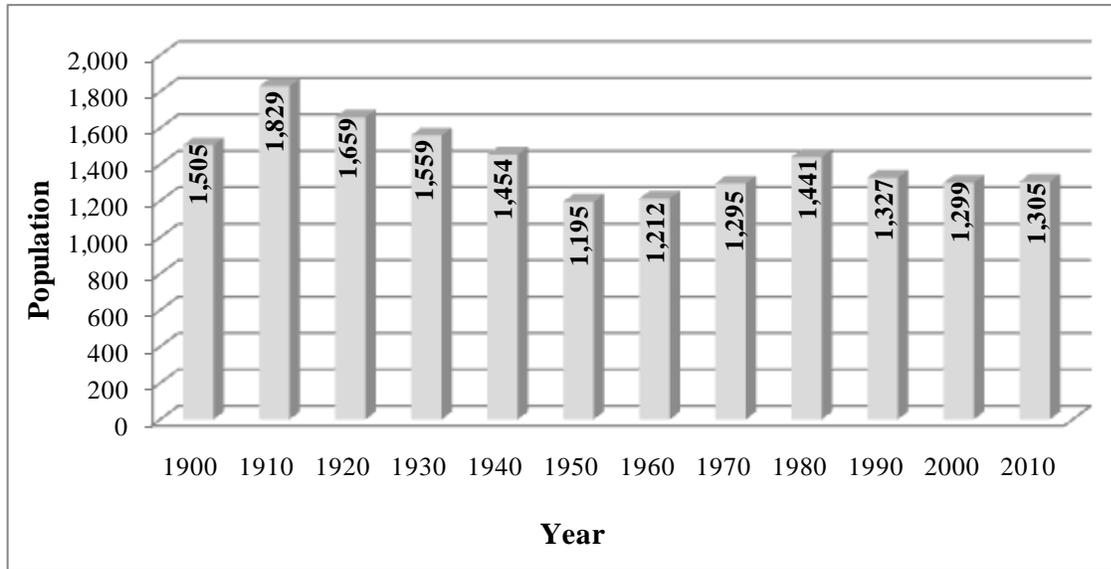
The tables and figures below compare the Town of Carson, Towns Average, and Portage County as a whole. The Towns Average is the result of the Town of Carson compared against the other 16 towns in Portage County. Portage County data is for the entire County.

#### **A. Population Growth**

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 2010**



Source: US Bureau of Census, 1900 to 2010.

From 1980 to 2010, the growth trend reversed, decreasing by 9% 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.

**Table 1.1: Town of Carson Comparison Population Change, 1970 to 2010**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2000-2010 Change	1970-2010 Change
Town of Carson	1,295	1,441	1,327	1,299	1,305	0.5%	0.8%
Town of Eau Pleine	784	963	944	931	908	-2.5%	15.8%
Town of Hull	3,124	5,122	5,563	5,493	5,346	-2.7%	71.1%
Town of Linwood	773	1,082	1,035	1,111	1,121	0.9%	45.0%
Portage County	47,541	57,420	61,405	67,182	70,019	4.2%	47.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1970 - 2010

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).

Based on 2010 American Community Survey 97 percent of the Town's residents lived in the same house as they did the previous year. This would show that long-term residents still constitute a majority of the total population.

**Table 1.2: Place of Residence for Town Residents, One Year Prior to 2010**

	Same house 1 year ago		Within same county		Different county, same state		From a different state	
Town of Carson	1,114	96.6%	32	2.8%	5	0.4%	2	0.2%
Town of Eau Pleine	851	95.6%	15	1.7%	17	1.9%	7	0.8%
Town of Linwood	1,322	96.9%	39	2.9%	3	0.2%	0	0.0%
Portage County	55,399	80.9%	8,134	11.9%	4,037	5.9%	926	1.4%

Source: ACS 2006-2009

## 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.

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 193 in 2000. Their number declined by 47 persons (32.2%) by the year 2010 (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.

The age cohorts above 45 experienced net increases in counts between 1990 and 2010. This is due to an influx of people in those age cohorts moving into the Town. When the age cohort is followed from the 45 to 55 year cohort in 1990, diagonally to the 65 to 74 cohort in 2010, you see the cohort declined steadily as is expected. This is the same for all age cohorts over 45 to 55 years of age.

The indicator of people moving into the Town is that the number of residents counted rises for each of these when viewed across Table 1.3 from 1990 to 2010. There was a large influx of people 25 to 34 years of age (80 persons) between 1990 and 2010. Similarly, the total numbers of individuals in the 55 to 64, 65 to 74, 75 to 84, and 85 years and over age cohorts are all greater in 2010 than in 1990. This is likely a result of greater longevity of the general population and immigration of residents to the Town.

The median age for the Town of Carson is 45.3 years. This age has increased by 12.4 years since 1990, 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 slower pace (11.6 years). The County as a whole has seen its median age increase at an even slower rate, just 6.5 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 1990 as well. The

Town of Carson 65+ population segment increased from 11.7% of total population in 1990 to 17.4% in 2010. The Portage County Town average saw this segment increase from 10.8% to 13.5%, and the County as a whole increased from 10.8% to 12.8% 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.

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

Age	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Under 5 years	86 6.5%	74 5.7%	55 4.2%	119 7.8%	96 6.0%	82 5.3%	4,266 6.9%	3,964 5.9%	3,891 5.6%
5 to 14 years	239 18.0%	193 14.9%	174 13.3%	272 17.9%	256 16.0%	200 13.0%	9,080 14.8%	9,118 13.6%	8,095 11.6%
15 to 24 years	185 13.9%	171 13.2%	146 11.2%	200 13.1%	200 12.5%	175 11.3%	13,081 21.3%	13,983 20.8%	14,038 20.0%
25 to 34 years	198 14.9%	144 11.1%	96 7.4%	242 15.9%	185 11.5%	144 9.3%	9,897 16.1%	8,322 12.4%	8,431 12.0%
35 to 44 years	209 15.7%	229 17.6%	173 13.3%	250 16.4%	293 18.3%	205 13.3%	8,690 14.2%	10,261 15.3%	7,991 11.4%
45 to 54 years	139 10.5%	216 16.6%	278 21.3%	160 10.5%	262 16.3%	294 19.0%	5,489 8.9%	8,945 13.3%	10,180 14.5%
55 to 64 years	116 8.7%	128 9.9%	195 14.9%	148 9.7%	151 9.4%	242 15.7%	4,299 7.0%	5,235 7.8%	8,438 12.1%
65 to 74 years	107 8.1%	84 6.5%	112 8.6%	84 5.5%	96 6.0%	126 8.1%	3,610 5.9%	3,791 5.6%	4,723 6.7%
75 to 84 years	44 3.3%	50 3.8%	58 4.4%	39 2.5%	52 3.2%	58 3.7%	2,273 3.7%	2,565 3.8%	2,846 4.1%
85 years and over	4 0.3%	10 0.8%	18 1.4%	9 0.6%	15 0.9%	18 1.1%	720 1.2%	998 1.5%	1,386 2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>1,299</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>1,544</b>	<b>61,405</b>	<b>67,182</b>	<b>70,019</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>38.0</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>35.8</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Census, Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data.

### 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 number and percentage of Town of Carson residents age 25 and over who had less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education decreased significantly between 1990 and 2000 but rose again after 2010. The percentage of 25+ year old residents who completed some college, or completed a college degree program rose from 27.8% to 43.2% over the same period. This 20-year increase in attainment for Carson was similar to the Town Average (32.7% to 46.5%) but lower than the County as a whole (39.5% to 53.9%). The Town of Carson experienced a decrease in the number and percentage of residents who completed 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade but did not receive a diploma. The Carson numbers for this category increased by 3.8%, while the Town average experienced a 9.4% decrease, and Portage County overall experienced a 7.8% 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	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Less Than 9th Grade	122 14.8%	61 6.9%	72 8.2%	118 13.5%	66 6.2%	42 4.1%	4,065 11.6%	2,420 6.0%	1,577 3.8%
9th to 12th Grade (No Diploma)	89 10.8%	108 12.2%	62 7.0%	81 9.3%	84 7.9%	74 7.1%	3,029 8.7%	3,019 7.5%	2,415 5.9%
High School Graduate	384 46.6%	346 39.1%	367 41.6%	387 44.5%	446 42.3%	441 42.4%	14,082 40.2%	14,952 37.2%	14,911 36.4%
Some College (No Degree)	90 10.9%	157 17.8%	124 14.1%	115 13.2%	185 17.6%	175 16.8%	5,205 14.9%	7,572 18.9%	8,143 19.9%
Associate Degree	47 5.7%	90 10.2%	71 8.0%	42 4.9%	72 6.8%	92 8.9%	1,922 5.5%	2,802 7.0%	3,263 8.0%
Bachelor's Degree	73 8.9%	104 11.8%	142 16.1%	90 10.3%	143 13.5%	147 14.2%	4,594 13.1%	6,468 16.1%	7,151 17.5%
Grad / Profess Degree	19 2.3%	18 2.0%	44 5.0%	37 4.3%	59 5.6%	68 6.6%	2,107 6.0%	2,910 7.2%	3,502 8.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>1,054</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>35,004</b>	<b>40,143</b>	<b>40,962</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census, and ACS data from 2005 to 2009 DP02.

#### 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 remain steady over the last 20 years, contrasting the county-wide tendency of decline. Single-parent headed households within Carson have also seen their percentage of total households remain steady over the 20 year period.

By comparison, the Town average and County as a whole have seen single-head households increase between 1% and 1.5%. Carson’s non-family households have increased from 19.7% of total households in 1990 to 21.3% in 2010.

The Persons per Household (PPH) calculation for the Town of Carson, the Town average and County have continued a declining trend over the last 20 years. Carson very closely matches the rate of decline of the Towns, while the overall County PPH rate of decline has had a slower rate of decline from 1990 to 2010. Carson and other towns have households slightly larger than the County average.

**Table 1.5: Household Type Comparison**

H-holds By Type	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
<b>Family H-holds</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>14,883</b>	<b>16,496</b>	<b>17,270</b>
Percent of Total H-holds	80.3%	76.6%	75.7%	82.6%	78.9%	76.5%	69.9%	65.9%	62.1%
Married-couple families	316	323	348	360	405	401	12,645	13,808	14,155
Percent of Family H-holds	89.3%	88.7%	89.5%	88.5%	88.9%	87.4%	85.0%	83.7%	82.0%
Other family, male householder	15	15	16	18	21	25	602	861	1,023
Percent of Family H-holds	4.2%	4.1%	4.1%	4.4%	4.7%	5.4%	4.0%	5.2%	5.9%
Other family, female householder	23	26	25	29	29	33	1,636	1,827	2,092
Percent of Family H-holds	6.5%	7.1%	6.4%	7.1%	6.4%	7.3%	11.0%	11.1%	12.1%
<b>Nonfamily H-holds</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>6,423</b>	<b>8,544</b>	<b>10,544</b>
Percent of Total H-holds	19.7%	23.4%	24.3%	17.4%	21.1%	23.6%	30.1%	34.1%	37.9%
Householder living alone	69	88	96	70	95	111	4,679	6,130	7,559
Percent of Non-Family H-holds	15.6%	18.5%	18.7%	14.1%	16.4%	18.6%	22.0%	24.5%	27.2%
Householder 65 years and over	39	43	35	28	34	41	1,933	2,196	2,632
Percent of Non-Family H-holds	8.8%	9.1%	6.8%	5.7%	5.9%	6.8%	9.1%	8.8%	9.5%
<b>Total H-holds</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>21,306</b>	<b>25,040</b>	<b>27,814</b>
<b>Persons Per House Hold</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.39</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, and 2010 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 22.7% in 1989 to 59.1% in 2010. Median household income has increased from \$31,359 to \$59,659 over the same period. Over the same time period, the percentage increase in households earning greater than \$50,000 was higher in Carson than the County as a whole (36.4% to 32.1%). Carson was slightly ahead the Town average (40.9% to 39.1% in households earning less than \$50,000 dollars in 2010.

**Table 1.6: Household Income Comparison**

Household Income Per Year	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010
Less Than \$10,000	71 15.5%	26 5.3%	17 3.3%	47 9.5%	25 4.4%	22 3.5%	3,210 15.0%	1,767 7.0%	1,854 6.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	34 7.4%	27 5.5%	27 5.3%	37 7.4%	24 4.1%	23 3.8%	1,978 9.3%	1,608 6.4%	1,520 5.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	67 14.6%	22 4.5%	65 12.7%	86 17.4%	57 9.8%	50 8.1%	4,072 19.1%	3,174 12.6%	3,180 11.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	87 19.0%	59 12.0%	44 8.6%	84 17.0%	76 12.9%	58 9.5%	3,654 17.1%	3,425 13.6%	2,744 10.2%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	96 20.9%	102 20.8%	56 11.0%	124 25.2%	112 19.1%	87 14.2%	4,370 20.5%	4,484 17.9%	3,908 14.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	82 17.9%	141 28.7%	117 22.9%	82 16.6%	154 26.5%	155 25.3%	2,983 14.0%	5,771 23.0%	6,002 22.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9 2.0%	63 12.8%	85 16.6%	22 4.4%	82 14.0%	114 18.6%	661 3.1%	2,820 11.2%	3,709 13.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5 1.1%	27 5.5%	68 13.3%	8 1.6%	36 6.2%	75 12.3%	274 1.3%	1,346 5.4%	2,828 10.5%
\$150,000 or more	8 1.7%	24 4.9%	32 6.3%	4 0.9%	18 3.0%	29 4.7%	134 0.6%	717 2.9%	1,200 4.5%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>21,336</b>	<b>25,112</b>	<b>26,945</b>
<b>Median H-Hold Income</b>	<b>\$31,359</b>	<b>\$51,583</b>	<b>\$59,659</b>	<b>\$31,521</b>	<b>\$47,815</b>	<b>\$59,829</b>	<b>\$28,686</b>	<b>\$43,487</b>	<b>\$50,978</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census and the ACS data from 2005 to 2009 table DP03.

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 1990, 2000, and 2011. 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	2011
One person	\$4,190	\$6,652	\$8,794	\$11,702
Two people	\$5,363	\$8,509	\$11,239	\$15,063
Three people	\$6,565	\$10,419	\$13,738	\$17,595
Four people	\$8,414	\$13,481	\$17,603	\$23,201
Five people	\$9,966	\$15,792	\$20,819	\$27,979
Six people	\$11,269	\$17,839	\$23,528	\$32,181
Seven people	\$12,761	\$20,241	\$26,754	\$37,029
Eight people	\$14,199	\$22,582	\$29,701	\$41,414
Nine people or more	\$16,896	\$26,848	\$35,060	\$49,818

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980-2000: Social, Economic, and Housing Statistics Division: Poverty, Last Revised: September, 2012

**Table 1.8: Percent in Poverty Comparison**

Poverty Statistics For Selected Populations	Town of Carson			Town Average			Portage County		
	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010	1989	1999	2010
<b>Persons</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>1,299</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>1,485</b>	<b>1,605</b>	<b>1,559</b>	<b>57,805</b>	<b>67,182</b>	<b>65,720</b>
Below poverty level	126	50	59	130	84	77	7,454	6,074	7,924
% below poverty	9.3%	3.8%	5.1%	8.8%	5.3%	4.9%	12.9%	9.0%	12.1%
<b>Persons 65 Years and Over</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>5,327</b>	<b>7,354</b>	<b>8,356</b>
Below poverty level	18	20	29	14	14	12	740	561	690
% below poverty	12.4%	13.9%	15.5%	11.2%	8.6%	6.1%	13.9%	7.6%	8.3%
<b>Families</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>14,927</b>	<b>16,643</b>	<b>17,658</b>
Below Poverty Level	25	7	16	26	15	16	1,051	725	901
% below poverty	6.9%	1.9%	4.2%	6.6%	3.3%	3.4%	7.0%	4.4%	5.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990 and 2000 Census and ACS Survey data from 2005 to 2009 table S1701 and S1702.

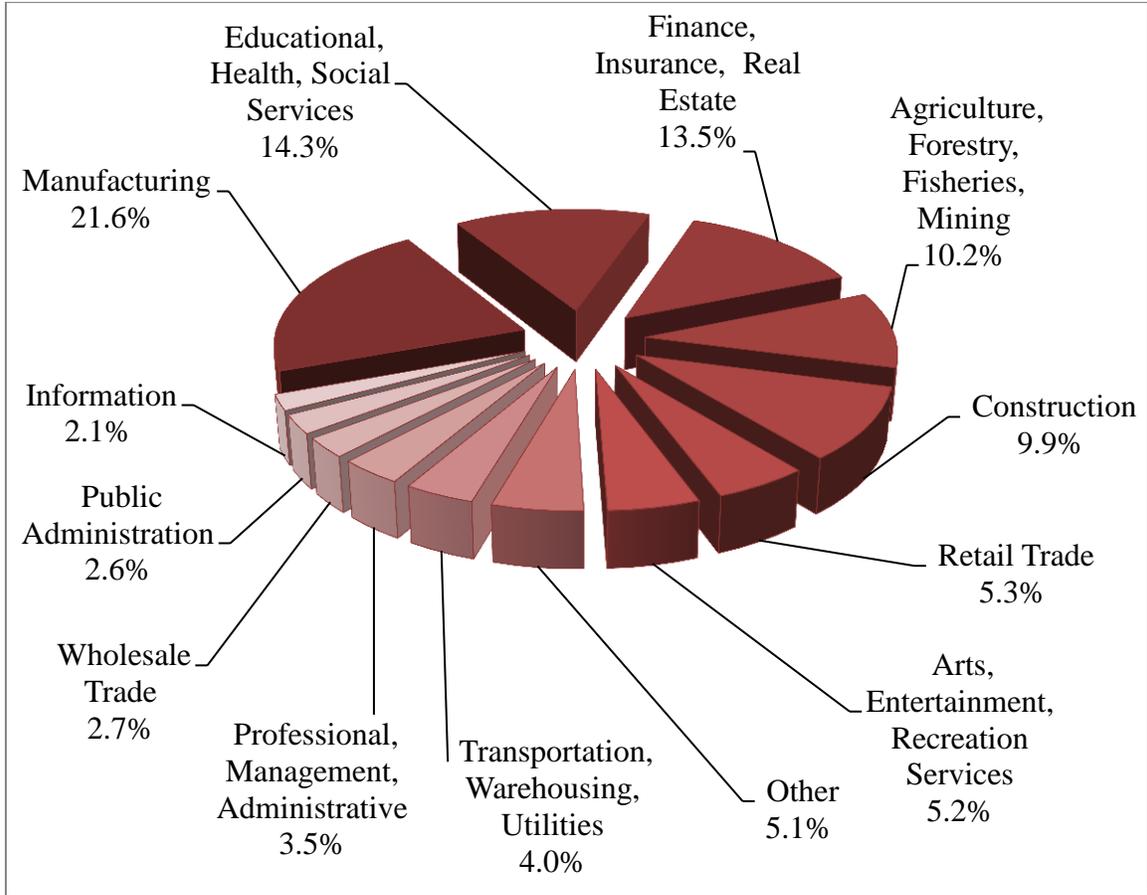
The poverty rate for individuals overall has declined with an inconsistent pattern over the last 20 years. The Town poverty rate has declined 4.2% from 1989 to 2010. Family poverty has declined by 2.7% while persons 65 years and over sustained high rates of poverty in each of the Census years when compared to the other categories. These poverty rates are higher than the Town Average in all categories. In contrast, the poverty rates for Portage County are higher than within Carson with one exception (Persons 65 and over).

#### E. Employment Characteristics

Figure 1.3 below summarizes employment by industry provided by the ACS. This information represents the type of industry working residents of Carson were employed by, 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.

The U.S. Census Bureau altered the method of producing the statistics for the summary of employment by industry, creating a situation where comparison between the 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census is not possible. Figure 1.3 below shows the employment by industry for residents of Carson, as identified in the 2010 Census.

**Figure 1.3: Summary of Employment by Industry**



**Section 1.5 Forecasts**

**A. Population Projections**

Population projections for the State’s cities, villages, and towns are developed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA). The most recent population projections for the Town of Carson were created in 2013. Based on those projections, the Town of Carson will grow to 1,335 residents by 2030. This represents an increase of 15 people or 1.1% over the 16 year period. This compares with a projected increase of 12.9% for the entire County, for the same period. It should be noted that population projections are “best guesses” and should be used with caution.

The Town of Carson Plan Commission has adopted the following projected population totals for the planning period:

Yr 2015: **1,320**    Yr 2020: **1,335**    Yr 2025: **1,340**    Yr 2030: **1,335**

**B. Household Projections**

Household projections for Carson will be based on the above stated population projections from the DOA. As with population, the projections were created in 2013. Based on these projections, the Town of Carson will grow to 541 households in 2030, an increase of 27 households.

2015: **524** households    2020: **534** households    2025: **540** households    2030: **541** households

A discussion took place regarding the accuracy of the DOA projections for households and the Town's best estimate of its current households. The Town felt the current number of addresses listed for garbage collection currently numbered (562) to nearly what the 2030 projection of households would be in the future (541). Understanding that the projections are limited, the Town feels that the number of households is likely to exceed the DOA prediction in 2030.

The number of persons per household (PPH) in Carson has declined from 3.01 persons in 1990 to 2.73 persons in 2010 (see Table 1.5). Based on the State population and household projections, the persons per household in 2030 would be 2.48. Keep in mind that these numbers represent projections and should not be used as absolute:

### C. Employment Projections

The Town projects that agriculture related employment, including farm operations, will continue to provide job opportunities for its residents. Projecting industries likely to expand or contract is difficult. As one industry declines, it may or may not be replaced by another. The paper industry in the central Wisconsin area has witnessed several plant closures since the adoption of this Plan. These provided quality paying jobs and employed many people. Other local industries are unlikely to be able to absorb the number of workers laid off into similar paying jobs.

Future job opportunities outside of the agriculture sector are projected to be created in the Stevens Point urban area, Marshfield and Wausau. Jobs will most likely be found in the Manufacturing, Health, Social Services, Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Mining, Construction, and retail trade 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 maintain agricultural land 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.

### A. Goals

1. Improve the current quality of life and maintain rural character by guiding development patterns.
2. Help conserve agricultural areas of Carson in order to preserve the best farmland for future use.

3. Support water quality and the natural beauty of the Town of Carson by protecting natural areas within the Town.

#### B. Objectives

1. Protect important agricultural areas throughout the Town.
2. Direct non-farm housing away from productive agricultural areas.
3. Protect important natural areas throughout the Town.
4. Ensure that newly developed or redeveloped areas are compatible with existing uses of land.

#### C. Policies

1. Continue working with the Planning and Zoning Department to implement and enforce the Portage County Zoning Ordinance,
2. Make the Comprehensive Future Land Use Map and the Town of Carson Zoning consistent.
3. Where appropriate, limit development densities throughout the Town to preserve productive farmland.
4. Where appropriate, limit development densities to protect natural resources and open spaces, as a means of preserving rural character.