

CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element

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

Economic development element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

Section 6.1 Introduction

This element will present information about the economy within the Town of Carson. Economic development, which can be defined as the type and level of business activity within an area, is often based on a combination of market forces, regulation, and the extent of local government encouragement. The Town of Carson has historically been a rural community of primarily agricultural activity with a scattering of small-scale commercial uses. This trend of predominantly agricultural economic activity continues to the present, along with an increase in residential development in areas near the Wisconsin River. Different types of development in surrounding areas, however, can have an impact on Town growth, quality of life, and even its ability to pay for Town services. For this reason Carson wishes to pursue economic development opportunities that will enhance the rural character of the area and assure the community the means to provide for the services and infrastructure needs of present and future residents.

This element concludes with goals, objectives, and policies to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base. County and State economic development information is included to help the Town identify potential opportunities that could be used to pursue appropriate economic development activities.

Section 6.2 Labor Force and Economic Base

A. Labor Force Analysis

1. Educational Attainment

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan, and illustrated by Table 1.4 of that chapter, the Town of Carson has seen an increase in the percentage of its residents who have achieved a college degree (Associate, Bachelor, or Graduate/Professional degree).

2. Earnings and Income

Wages are not the only form of income those residents receive. "Total income" is defined by the U.S. Census as the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income from non-farm or farm businesses, including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other source

of income received regularly such as Veterans; (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 391 (77.7%) Carson households sampled were classified as household with earnings; 156 (33.1%) were households with social security income; 79 (15.7%) were households that received retirement income; 5 households received public assistance and 71 households (14.1%) had other types of income.

In order to better understand the existing wage-earning realities within the Town of Carson, “earnings” data was considered to be more informative. “Earnings” are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the algebraic sum of wages or salary income and net income from self-employment, representing the amount of income received regularly before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, Medicare deductions etc

Table 6.1 compares mean (average) earnings, along with mean household and per capita income, for households and individuals in communities within the Carson area and Portage County overall. The Town of Carson has the highest mean earnings of the three communities compared and Portage County overall.

Table 6.1: Mean Earnings, Mean Household and Per Capita Income Comparison 1989 - 2010

	Mean Earnings Per Household				Mean Income Per Household				Per Capita Income			
	1989	1999	2010	Change	1989	1999	2010	Change	1989	1999	2010	Change
Town of Carson	\$37,274	\$59,190	\$76,023	104%	\$37,123	\$57,979	\$73,897	99%	\$12,342	\$21,576	\$33,500	171%
Town of Eau Pleine	\$30,962	\$53,583	\$69,555	125%	\$32,903	\$56,964	\$68,152	107%	\$10,597	\$20,301	\$27,882	163%
Town of Hull	\$38,798	\$58,893	\$77,511	100%	\$41,735	\$62,798	\$72,969	75%	\$14,004	\$22,433	\$30,718	119%
Town of Linwood	\$39,142	\$59,087	\$72,052	84%	\$38,623	\$64,155	\$73,655	91%	\$12,895	\$21,073	\$24,482	90%
Portage County	\$33,230	\$50,373	\$61,125	84%	\$33,184	\$52,102	\$62,396	88%	\$11,730	\$19,854	\$24,873	112%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP03

Mean earnings = total earnings/ # h/holds with earnings;

Mean income = total income/ # h/holds with income

The change column shows the % of change from 1989 to 2010*

According to (ACS) data, median household income for Town of Carson residents was \$59,650, representing a 16% increase from the year 2000 (\$51,583), which was higher than Portage County (\$50,978). See Table 1.6 of the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan.

3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 below examines labor force participation and employment percentages for the Town of Carson, as described in the 1990 and 2000 Census and 2006-2010 ACS. Age sixteen is considered to be the lower threshold for being eligible for employment. The Town had a 2010 labor participation rate of 69.4%, which was slightly above the Portage County Average of 68.7%. Carson experienced a decrease in the unemployment rate from 3.5% in 1990 to 1.9% in 2000; however from 2000-2010 unemployment jumped to 6.5%, following the national trend through the most recent economic recession.

Table 6.2: Employment Status of Town of Carson Population 16 Years and Above

Employment Status	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 16 years and over	994	100.0%	1,034	100.0%	960	100.0%
In labor force	671	67.5%	772	74.7%	666	69.4%
Civilian labor force	668	67.2%	772	74.7%	662	69.0%
Employed	637	64.1%	752	72.7%	600	62.5%
Unemployed	31	3.1%	20	1.9%	62	6.5%
Armed Forces	3	0.3%	0	na	4	0.4%
Not in labor force	323	32.5%	262	25.3%	294	30.6%

Source: Census 1990 and 2000 and *2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP03

4. Employment and Occupation

Table 6.3 below provides information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Carson residents were employed in from 1990-2010. A shift in occupations for Town residents occurred between 2000 and 2010 with Management, Professional and related occupations, along with Sales and Office occupations, becoming the top categories (Table 6.3), surpassing the Production, Transportation and Material Moving related jobs. Table 1.10 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the last three Census years. Information for both these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Town were employed in, and is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in Carson.

Table 6.3: Town of Carson Employment by Occupation

Occupation	1990		2000		2010*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	95	14.9%	189	25.1%	202	33.7%
Service occupations	78	12.2%	83	11.0%	86	14.3%
Sales and Office occupations	139	21.8%	172	22.9%	124	20.7%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations ⁽²⁾	108	17.0%	22	2.9%	na	na
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations ⁽¹⁾	51	8.0%	83	11.0%	80	13.3%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations	166	26.1%	203	27.0%	108	18.0%
Total Employed	637	100%	752	100%	600	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and *2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, DP03

1 This category was changed during the last census period and may reflect the addition or subtraction of other occupations.

2 This category has been eliminated during the last census period and folded into other occupations.

5. Commuting

The 2006-2010 ACS data reveal 76% of employed Town residents worked within Portage County while 22% worked outside of the County. The mean travel time to work increased slightly from the year 2000 from 23.4 minutes to 24.1 minutes with 24.5% of workers traveling between 20-24 minutes to work.

B. Local Economic Base Analysis

The economic base in the Town of Carson is mainly agricultural and has a broad range of businesses relating to the agriculture industry. Carson is ranked first in Portage County regarding its amount of non-irrigated cropland (14,228 acres). The community supports the development of agriculture-related businesses that are in harmony with existing land uses and are complimentary to the agricultural activities that currently exist in the Town. Existing types of businesses in the Town of Carson include:

Home based businesses	Fuel Storage/Wholesale	Recycling
Bars/Restaurants	Construction/Roofing	The Railroad
Agriculture	Trucking	

Section 6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses for Attracting/Retaining Business

A. Strengths

- Wisconsin River is an important aesthetic resource.
- Restaurant businesses have historically been successful.
- Existing railroad is oriented north-south and east-west.

B. Weaknesses

- No sewer
- Wet / Heavy soils
- High Groundwater
- Low quality groundwater (Iron)

Section 6.4 Desired Businesses

New development proposals for industrial and commercial activities in the Town of Carson will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Many businesses can develop in the community with little or no impact on adjacent uses. Desired businesses in the Town include:

- Possibly a Marina/Restaurant/Bar adjacent to the River
- Agricultural operations and agriculture related businesses
- Home based businesses

Section 6.5 Environmentally Contaminated Sites

Contaminated sites, also known as brownfields, serve as potential land base for economic development. Brownfields are defined as abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. The Wisconsin Department of-Natural Resources maintains a list of State and Federal brownfield grant resources to help finance the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields. It can be found on the internet at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/Financial.html>

A complete list of all brownfield sites can be obtained by contacting the DNR or through their website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/clean.html>

Section 6.6 Economic Development Resources

• **Revolving Loan Fund Programs (Portage County)**

Purpose: Funds administered by local communities, which provide local government the ability to assist in economic development projects that will create jobs for low-to-moderate income persons. Typically, the revolving loan fund program provides "gap" financing to local projects that make the project economically feasible.

Use of Funds: Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

Amount Available: Programs are different in each community.

Advantage: Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on and provide businesses the ability to finance job creation efforts locally. This program provides a quicker approval process than the Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant - Economic Development Program.

- **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development**

(WI Dept. of Administration – Division of Housing)

Purpose: To provide resources to local governments to assist economic development projects that provide jobs to low-to-moderate income persons and expand the local tax base.

Use of Funds: Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

Amount Available: \$1,000,000_maximum award, Provides fixed-rate long term financing.

Advantage: Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on public funds, and provide business with rate of return comparable to industry norms. In addition, these funds remain locally for the creation or expansion of an existing Revolving Loan Fund.

Application materials are available online at the Wisconsin Department of Administration webpage: <http://doa.wi.gov/Divisions/Housing/Bureau-of-Community-Development/CDBG-ED-Program-Overview/#CDBGEDapplication>

- **Community Development Block Grant - Workforce Training Grants**

(WI Dept. of Economic Development)

Purpose: Support businesses making a firm commitment to locate a new facility in Wisconsin or expanding an existing facility within the State which is developing a product, process, or service that requires training in new technology and industrial skills.

Use of Funds: Job training that focuses on new technology, industrial skills, or manufacturing processes. The training must not be currently available through other resources (Wisconsin Technical College System), such as Microsoft Office training, OSHA courses, Welding, etc

Amount Available: A grant of 50% of eligible training costs, up to \$5,000 per employee trained. The maximum award is \$200,000.

Eligibility: Eligible training costs include training wages (of production employees through first line supervisors), training materials and trainer costs. Routine training is ineligible. Eligible training costs do not include travel expenses, food and lodging. Additional information is available online at:

<http://inwisconsin.com/inside-wedc/transparency/programs/workforce-training-grants/>

- **Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation**

A voluntary, non-governmental organization controlled by member families to represent them on legislative issues and to provide farm marketing, business and planning consultation and services. Contact information:

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation
PO Box 5550
Madison, WI 53705-0550
1-800-261-FARM or 608-836-5575

- **USDA – Rural Development Administration (Wisconsin)**

The Rural Development Administration is an organization affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture that provides funding for home purchase and rehabilitation, technical assistance and funding to new cooperative ventures, and financing for new business development. A full list of their programs can be found on the internet at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/programs/index.htm>

Contact information:

USDA Rural Development - WI
5417 Clem's Way
Stevens Point, WI 54481
Phone: (715)345-7600 FAX: (715)345-7669

Technical Assistance

- **Small Business Development Center**

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, is one of ten university-based SBDC's in Wisconsin. Their mission is to provide learning opportunities and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The Stevens Point SBDC works with small business in eight central Wisconsin counties, and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individualized counseling. (715) 346-3838.

- **Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP)**

In an effort to improve quality and productivity of small to medium sized Wisconsin Manufacturers, a partnership between government, industry, labor, and education was formed. The WMEP assessment process is designed to be broad based rather than in-depth. The purpose is to "raise flags" where more effort should be placed. After the assessment, this can lead to a technical assistance project, in which your company is paired with a facilitator to help design and implement solutions.

- **Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)**

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's SHWEC program was created to provide pollution prevention services to waste generators in Wisconsin. SHWEC's pollution prevention specialists will assess hazardous waste systems, provide no-cost non-regulatory technical assistance, and identify potential waste reduction options.

Section 6.7 Economic Development Issues

The following issues were identified during the comprehensive planning process:

- The percent of equalized value contained in Ag land is declining because of Use-Value assessment; more residential now
- A lot of people don't work in the Town, they commute somewhere else.
- Need to allow for residential but provide buffers and other protection to allow agriculture operations to run unimpeded
- Economic Development opportunities may arise from the new Hwy 10 alignment.
- Current job opportunities in the Town are home-based businesses.
- Farming and farmland are important economically to the Town.
- How can the Town minimize conflict between farm and non-farm uses, especially as it relates to economic development?

Section 6.8 Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal A Promote the stabilization of the current economic base.

Objective A.1 Encourage the maintenance or development of agricultural operations in the Town.

Goal B Planned development areas are identified or established throughout the Town.

Objective B.1 Encourage the maintenance and development of small businesses in the Town.

Policy B.1 Be receptive to new commercial development in appropriate locations within the Town.

Policy B.2 Address large scale development proposals, including industrial, institutional, and major commercial uses, on a case-by-case basis.