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## Acknowledgments

### Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan Committee

Kurt Muchow, Chair	Ray Astle
Mike Biesbier, Vice-Chair	Tom Tate
Peter Murray, Secretary	Rodney Hannon
Ken Nolden	Jim Beth
Mark Weihing	Richard Knight
Elwood Anderson	Jim Paquin
Laurie Hasenbalg	Kerry Zimmerman
Russ Hasenbalg	Matt Messmer
Patrice Rhodes	Jill Messmer
Donald Toeder	James Buckson
Robert Cassity	Mike Clark
Richard Boyd	
Geoff Grant	

### Town Board

Joe Fish, Chairperson  
Kurt Muchow  
Donald Toeder  
James Paquin  
Junior Gurgel  
Lynette Gurgel, Town Clerk

### Town Plan Commission

Richard Knight, Chair  
Kurt Muchow  
Elwood Anderson  
Rodney Hannon  
Geoffrey Grant  
Lynette Gurgel, Secretary

### Planning Consultant: Sauk County Department of Planning and Zoning

Dave Tremble, AICP, Land Preservation Specialist/Planner, *Project Manager and Author*  
William Christensen, Planning Intern, *Co-Author*  
Brian Simmert, AICP, County Planner, *Planning Assistance*  
Aaron Hartman, GIS Technician/Planner, *Mapping*  
Mark Steward, Planning & Zoning Director, *Planning Assistance*  
Gina Templin, Planning & Zoning Support Specialist  
Mary White, Administrative Support Specialist

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**The Town of Excelsior, located in north central Sauk County, is characterized by its small town atmosphere and a strong sense of community pride. The Town is rich in natural and recreational resources including prime farmland, forested bluffs, the Baraboo River and Narrow's Creek. The natural setting, rural atmosphere and proximity to urban amenities in the nearby cities of Reedsburg and Baraboo encourages continued growth in the Town of Excelsior. Planning for the Town's future is critical to retaining characteristics valued by the community and to ensure the Town's continued success.**

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Plan**

The purpose of the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan is to help guide local decision-making by:

- Recognizing and documenting the Town's most important attributes;
- Acknowledging issues of concern to residents;
- Identifying areas appropriate for development and preservation;
- Establishing and assigning future land use districts based on desired land uses;
- Identifying needed transportation and utility provisions to serve existing and new development;
- Focusing attention on critical economic opportunities for local business and recreational development;
- Providing opportunities to preserve open space land for ecological and recreational purposes, and for community aesthetics.

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in accordance with Wis Stat § 66.1001 and is the culmination of 26 months of work on the part of a 24-member Comprehensive Planning Committee. Input from numerous other citizens of the Town and from knowledgeable people from throughout Sauk County has been incorporated into the final Comprehensive Plan. The Plan itself is comprised of nine primary elements, as noted below, however this Plan has rearranged some elements or portions thereof to allow for a greater level of analysis based on some of the more important issues in the Town. For example, Natural Resources and Agriculture have been separated into two individual sections, while Cultural Resources has been included with Utilities and Community Facilities. Additionally, the 'Issues and Opportunities' element has been expanded to include an in-depth analysis of a Community Survey, Vision Session, and Focus Group make-up.

For each of these redefined elements, broken into chapters, minimum requirements of the comprehensive planning legislation are met and in many cases exceeded. In this Plan, a description of each element is provided under the purpose statement of each chapter, along with a primary goal, objectives and identified policies. Each chapter is accompanied by a series of charts, tables and maps to illustrate both background information and the intent of the identified goals, objectives and policies.

In addition to the nine required elements, the comprehensive planning legislation also set forth 14 goals for communities to reach both throughout and at the completion of their planning processes. Although these goals are not required, this Plan and planning process has accomplished them.

The nine elements and 14 goals of the comprehensive plan are noted below:

➤ **Nine Elements**

1. Issues and Opportunities
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Utilities and Community Facilities
5. Agriculture, Natural and Cultural resources
6. Economic Development
7. Intergovernmental Cooperation
8. Land Use
9. Implementation

➤ **Fourteen Goals**

1. Promoting redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures
2. Encouraging neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices
3. Protecting natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes and woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources
4. Protecting economically productive areas, including farmland and forests
5. Encouraging land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state government and utility costs
6. Preserving cultural, historic and archeological sites
7. Encouraging coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government
8. Building community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for all income levels throughout each community
10. Providing adequate infrastructure, public services and a supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses
11. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied unique urban and rural communities
14. Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

To guide the development of goals, objectives and policies, planning participants developed an overall Vision of how the Town should look and feel in the future. The input for the development of the Town's Vision was gathered through a 'Visioning Session', as well as through feedback from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. In addition to aiding with the development of the Plan's goals, objectives, and policies, the Vision is meant to assist the Town with the actual implementation of the Plan through the years. The Vision is primarily meant to serve as a grounding point for future decisions. It broadly and effectively addresses the needs, desires, and thoughts of residents and landowners in Excelsior.

The highlight of the planning process was its reliance on extensive public participation and input, far exceeding the requirements of the comprehensive planning legislation. The legislation requires, at a minimum, one town-sponsored public hearing when the draft plan is ready for adoption. In contrast,

this planning process focused heavily on public input to formulate a plan that best represents all interests in the Town. The process began with the appointment of a representative Comprehensive Planning Committee and continued with the administration of focus groups, a community-wide survey and vision session, an open house and numerous public meetings.

### **1.1 Statement of Vision, Goals, Objectives and Policies**

Each Chapter in this Comprehensive Plan includes a primary goal followed by objectives and policies, which will provide future direction to the Town. Visions, goals, objectives and policies are defined as follows:

- A ***Vision*** is the expression of a community's overall desired future direction. The vision statement serves as the foundation for setting goals, objectives and policies.
- ***Goals*** are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the Town should approach preservation and development issues. These goals are based on key issues, opportunities and problems that affect the Town and are derived from the future Vision of a Town.
- ***Objectives*** suggest future directions in a way that is more specific than goals. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of the goal. While achievement of an objective is not always easily measured, objectives are usually attainable through policies and specific implementation activities.
- ***Policies*** are rules, courses of action, or programs used to ensure Plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives of a Plan. Town decision-makers should use policies, including any housing density policy, on a regular basis. Success in achieving policies is usually measurable.

### **1.2 Planning History**

#### ➤ **Town of Excelsior Development Plan (1999)**

The Town of Excelsior adopted its first Development Plan in April 1999, which assisted the town in guiding the location of growth and future land uses. This document represented the primarily residential development areas around Lake Virginia and adjacent to the City of Reedsburg. Medium density development, with a five-acre lot-size minimum, was deemed acceptable in the rural areas. Development on Class I and II farmland was discouraged. In general, new development should conform to policies set by the Town Development Plan.

### **1.3 Comprehensive Planning Process Sauk County**

As part of the State of Wisconsin's 1999-2000 biennial budget, Governor Thompson signed into law one of the State's most comprehensive pieces of land-use legislation. This legislation is intended to provide local governmental units with the tools to create comprehensive plans, to promote more informed land-use decisions and to encourage state agencies to create more balanced land-use rules and policies. This legislation also includes a substantive definition of a comprehensive plan and provides an essential framework for local land-use decision-making. It also helps local officials determine the likely impacts of their decisions by ensuring that they consider all aspects of community life.

In the summer of 2002, the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning announced that it would apply for a 2003 Comprehensive Planning grant from the State of Wisconsin to facilitate planning processes for municipalities, enabling them to develop and adopt local Comprehensive Plans. As a result of this effort, 21 Sauk County municipalities passed resolutions indicating their desire to be co-applicants to the grant. Excelsior was one of these municipalities.

In the spring of 2003, Sauk County announced that the 21 municipalities were awarded a 2003 Comprehensive Planning grant in the amount of \$288,000. Of the total award, Excelsior's share was \$10,000. The provisions of the grant required the Town to match the grant award of \$10,000. In an effort to reduce this local match amount, Sauk County agreed to provide \$5,000 of in-kind mapping assistance, bringing the total Town match to not more than \$5,000.

Once the overall grant was awarded, towns in Sauk County could choose to contract with a private consultant or to use Sauk County as a consultant to aid them with the development of their Comprehensive Plans. Six Towns and three villages chose to contract with Sauk County, including the Town of Excelsior. Excelsior began its comprehensive planning process in the summer of 2006.

#### **1.4 Regional Context**

*Map 1-1 Regional Context* shows the relationship of the Town of Excelsior to neighboring communities. The Town is located in north central Sauk County, a couple of miles east of the City of Reedsburg. It is also about 5 miles west of the City of Baraboo. The Town also includes the incorporated Village of Rock Springs.

#### **1.5 Jurisdictional Boundaries**

A result of the 2000 Federal Census population data required Sauk County to redistrict the county supervisory district boundaries to achieve new districts of equal population. As a result of this effort, the Town of Excelsior was assigned two supervisory districts. Supervisory District 11 and Supervisory District 21. *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Map* depicts the exact boundaries of Supervisory Districts 11 and 21.

The Town of Excelsior is split into two school districts: Reedsburg and Baraboo. *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Map* also depicts the locations of these boundaries.

In terms of land use-related issues, the Town of Excelsior is regulated by the following Chapters of the Sauk County Code of Ordinances:

##### **Administered by Sauk County Clerk**

- Chapter 1 Supervisory District Plan

##### **Administered by the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning**

- Chapter 7 Zoning Ordinance
- Chapter 8 Shoreland Protection Ordinance
- Chapter 10 Floodplain Zoning Ordinance
- Chapter 18 Rural Identification System
- Chapter 22 Land Division and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance
- Chapter 23 Tower Siting Ordinance

- Chapter 24 Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance
- Chapter 25 Private Sewage System Ordinance

**Administered by the Sauk County Department of Land Conservation**

- Chapter 26 Animal Waste Management Ordinance

**Administered by the Sauk County Sheriff**

- Chapter 27 Animal Control Ordinance

**1.6 Planning Area**

The Planning area covers all lands within the Town of Excelsior. As a point of reference, *Map 1-3 Aerial Photography/Parcel Boundaries* shows an overlay of tax parcels on an air photo.

## **2.0 Purpose**

The Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Planning Committee, comprised of three Town Board members and twenty-one area residents, took part in several efforts to identify issues and opportunities facing the Town of Excelsior. These issues and opportunities culminated in the Town's Vision as well as its goals, objectives and policies. These efforts included a community-wide survey, community visioning session, numerous press releases and media articles, focus group work, an intergovernmental forum, a formal consensus process to agree upon all goals, objectives and policies, including the Town's density policy, an open house to view the draft Comprehensive Plan and a public hearing on the final Comprehensive Plan. A more in depth description and summary of each activity with results are noted in this chapter. Specific background information regarding population, household and employment forecasts, demographic trends, age distribution, educational levels, and income levels and employment characteristics of the Town can be found under the respective chapters that follow in this Plan.

## **2.1 Community Survey**

As part of the process, the Comprehensive Planning Committee developed and administered a community wide survey. The survey questions were developed to ascertain the opinions and perceptions of residents and landowners on the issues and opportunities in their Town. During the summer of 2006, 756 surveys were mailed all Excelsior landowners, on the tax roll, in the Town of Excelsior. Of the 756 surveys mailed 200, or 26.5%, were returned. This response rate is about the average for a survey of this nature, due to its length and the types of questions asked. A copy of the cover letter to the survey as well as a tally of responses is located in Appendix A. A summary of the more significant results of the survey can be noted as follows:

### **➤ Quality of Life**

Defining and maintaining a high quality of life in Excelsior is the most important common denominator among all residents and visitors to Excelsior. Among respondents, 64% agreed that "the quality of life is excellent" and another 14% strongly agreed. A way to define quality of life is to find out why people choose to live where they do and, more importantly, why they choose to continue to live there. To better define quality of life, the survey asked participants to list their three most important reasons for living in Excelsior. The rural character of the town ranked first with about 25% of respondents noting the natural beauty and quiet, slower, country atmosphere. About 13% of respondents cited the proximity to or from other cities, notably Reedsburg, employment, convenient roads and the 90-94 Interstate. Sixteen percent of respondents noted family, friends, community and home as reasons for coming, and staying. Twelve percent of respondents noted economic reasons such as land prices and tax differences between larger cities and Excelsior. Other responses named a variety of reasons, among them recreational opportunities, good schools, and the clean air and water.

### **➤ Housing**

Housing is an important part of how a community grows. The location of housing can impact a community's need for services, its aesthetics and overall community feel. Survey participants were asked to review aerial images to determine where and how rural housing could be built in the town. Overwhelmingly, almost 41% of respondents chose to locate new housing in rural subdivisions with the requirement that they maintain blocks of open space. Only 6.5 % expressed a preference for the conventional subdivision layout with little or no open space. Almost twenty percent of respondents preferred no new housing development and nearly 16% chose small clusters of homes surrounded by open space. Based on the responses in the survey, it appears as though most survey participants are

not categorically opposed to additional housing development so long as provisions are made to include open space areas.

➤ **Agriculture Resources**

The majority of respondents to the survey indicated that they would support varied forms of community-supported agriculture and value-added agriculture operations. Over 68% indicated they would support the direct sale of farm products. Almost 46% percent of respondents also indicated that they would support forms of agriculture tourism. Eighty percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that that the preservation of farmland is important, suggesting a strong commitment to sustaining agriculture operations in the Town.

➤ **Economic Development**

Agriculture and recreation represent the two primary forms of local economic activity in the Town of Excelsior, however alternative forms of economic development were considered in the survey? In terms of sustaining agriculture, survey respondents were asked if they felt there were adequate agriculture support and complementary services such as cooperatives, agronomists, implement dealers, haulers, etc., in northern Sauk County to keep agriculture viable in the Town. Of the total response from residents, many of whom are presumably not farmers, 47% either agreed or strongly agreed that there were adequate support services, while 39% had no opinion.

In terms of other economic opportunities, respondents were asked if they would support business development in areas adjoining the City of Reedsburg or the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom. Overall, 76 % of respondents agreed that both small businesses (10 or less full time employees) and large businesses (10 or more full time employees) should be permitted there. Sixty percent agreed on permitting either small or large businesses in rural areas. 19% of respondents indicated that they would not support either type of business in the rural area.

With respect to economic development and self-sustainability, the majority of residents supported the development of solar and wind energy. Over 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the development of these alternative energy sources. 50% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the development of ethanol plants, and 39% agreed or strongly agreed with methane production. 5% or less of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with wind and solar energy production, while about 24% and 22% disagreed or strongly disagreed with methane and ethanol production, respectively.

➤ **Utilities and Community Resources**

This category of the survey evaluated residents' satisfaction with services such as fire, garbage collection and library opportunities as well as energy needs and energy alternatives. Overall, services primarily received a 'good' rating. However, about 25% of respondents felt that both Internet and cable services were not adequate, and over 30% concluded that cell phone service was inadequate

Eighty-four percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the preservation of cultural, historical, and community resources was important.

➤ **Natural Resources**

Survey participants were asked to rank the importance of protecting various natural resources in their community, ranging from general resources such as wetlands, woodlands, and forests to more specific resources such as scenic views, air quality and overall rural character. In almost every resource category over 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that protection is important, but they were somewhat less enthusiastic about the categories of shoreline, floodplains, and hillsides/steep slopes. When asked if the Town should support programs that purchase conservation easements for open space and farmland preservation purposes, over 62% agreed while only 19% disagreed. At the same time, 39% of respondents indicated that it is acceptable to build houses on tillable land.

➤ **Transportation**

Survey participants were asked to consider both the adequacy and condition of transportation systems (primarily roads) within the Town. Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they strongly agree or agree that the overall road network meets the needs of citizens, and 78% felt that road conditions were adequate for intended uses. When asked if there are any hazardous road conditions that need to be addressed, 29% of respondents indicated that there were none while 51% were unsure. In terms of multi-modal transportation, 51% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that biking routes should be maintained or improved.

➤ **Land Use**

The Land Use element recognizes the relationships between all of the other elements of a comprehensive plan and provides an opportunity to integrate their goals, objectives and policies. The Land Use element also addresses some of the larger issues in a community, and its study can yield specific direction to mitigate land use conflicts by posing consistent and equitable development standards and processes. To help identify the critical land use issues in the Town of Excelsior, the survey asked participants to rank their top three land use issues. Development vs. overdevelopment turned up as the primary issue, followed by natural resource protection. The continued care of water resources and agricultural activities tied for the third highest ranked land use issue.

Survey participants were asked questions related to Agricultural Zoning, lot size and housing density. When participants were asked what methods should be used to protect agricultural land, over 60% agreed or strongly agreed that regulation (such as zoning and subdivision ordinances) is appropriate. Almost 70% agreed or strongly agreed with using tax incentives (e.g. use-value taxation or the Managed Forest Law). Fifty-three percent agreed or strongly agreed that the Town's zoning density policy should be formalized (currently it is informally set at one residence per five acres by virtue of the current five-acre minimum lot size requirement). Fifty-five percent of participants were in favor of keeping the minimum lot size of five acres to build a new house, while 41% were opposed.

➤ **General Opinions**

In addition to specific questions asked of the survey participants, there were some more 'open-ended' questions. Among these, participants were asked what they want Excelsior to look like in 20 years. Overall, a large majority of respondents indicated that they wanted Excelsior to look the same as it does today, but planned for growth. One respondent claimed, "Similar to today with balanced growth..." Respondents expressed a variety of opinions, but there is a strong leaning toward keeping the Town looking like it does, with natural resources and farmland protected, limited housing clustered in pockets, with appropriately scaled and carefully located commercial growth.

## 2.2 Visioning Session

The Town held a Visioning Session Workshop on March 8, 2007. The purpose of the session was to involve residents and landowners in the Town of Excelsior to take part in defining what they believe Excelsior should be in the future. In total, 30 residents took part in the session.

The Vision Session was structured in such a way that participants had an opportunity to express their thoughts on the evolution of a future vision for Excelsior. Participants also had an opportunity to identify what they perceive to be the Town's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTs) as related to the future vision as well as the nine elements defined in the comprehensive planning legislation.

Some of the responses included:

- **Strengths:** Small community with a high quality of life, good farmland and natural beauty throughout a diverse landscape, near employment, little traffic on roads, low crime rate in the community.
- **Weaknesses:** City encroachment into the Township, poor internet and cellular telephone services, lack of road maintenance, the Town density policy, low tax base, continued growth of large scale quarry.
- **Opportunities:** Plan and manage growth to maintain the rural flavor of the Township, the use of conservation easements and purchase of development rights to protect land, allow development for an increased tax base, employment opportunities, outdoor recreation.
- **Threats:** Change in culture, excessive tourism, increase in population, bedroom community, lack of future job opportunities, loss of farmland and wildlife habitat to development, ground water and surface water pollution from agricultural runoff and the landfill leeching.

Equally important to identifying the Town's SWOTs, participants had the opportunity to develop key Vision Elements. To develop the key Vision Elements, participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- How should we build on our key strengths, or make sure they remain strengths?
- How can we minimize or overcome our key weaknesses?
- How can we take advantage of our key opportunities?
- How can we avoid or deal with our key threats?

Once the key Vision Elements were identified, participants were asked to rank their top Vision Elements. These top Vision Elements were then incorporated into the Town's overall Vision with an expanded description under each key Vision Element. The top Vision Elements are:

1. Conservation and Environmental Protection
2. Preserve Farmland and Agriculture Industry
3. Managed / Planned Growth / Thoughtful Land Use
4. Quality of Life
5. Economic Opportunity, Stability and Security
6. Efficient Government and Public Services

These Vision Elements were utilized to generate the *Plan's* goals and objectives. The following connections between the Town's *Comprehensive Plan* and the Vision Elements have been identified:

- Vision Elements = Components to be incorporated into the Town of Excelsior Vision (Vision Elements will become the Town's Vision).
- Vision Elements = the foundation for developing Goals.
- Goals = The foundation for developing Objectives (measurable progress toward achieving Goals).

The top two Vision Elements were to emphasize Conservation and Environmental Protection and to Preserve Farmland and Agriculture Industry. Facilitators led participants through an exercise to begin creating strategies, or policies to achieve these top two Vision Elements. This exercise represented the beginnings of policy development. The connection between Objectives and strategies or policy development is as follows:

- Objectives = The foundation of policy development.

Overall, utilizing public input, the Vision Session aimed to help create a Vision for the town as well as provide direction to the *Comprehensive Plan* Committee regarding the development of the *Plan's* Goals, Objectives and Policies. The results and process utilized for the Vision Session can be noted in Appendix B.

### **2.3 Press Releases/Media Coverage**

The Town's planning process received media coverage beginning in March 2007, when the **Reedsburg Times Press** and the **Reedsburg Independent** both published press releases promoting the Town's upcoming Vision Session.

### **2.4 Open House/Intergovernmental Forum**

On **April 5, 2008** the Comprehensive Plan Committee conducted an open house and intergovernmental forum to present the draft Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan. Through oral discussion and submitted written comments, participants were given an opportunity to comment on the Committee's work and suggest changes. Approximately 50 Town residents attended the open house.

### **2.5 Formal Consensus Process to Establish Goals, Objectives and Policies**

The planning committee utilized a formal consensus process to discuss and agree on all goals, objectives and policies, including the Town's density policy. The Committee chose this process over a vote of a majority for the following reasons:

- First, it was the intent of the comprehensive planning process to incorporate the views of all the community's citizens. These views have been expressed in three primary ways, including the community-wide survey, the vision session and the public meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, which was charged with representing all views in the community.

- Second, the consensus process is based on the premise that it is better to involve as many persons affected by a decision as possible in the decision-making process. Consensus decisions better reflect the will of the entire group, not just the leadership or majority. Also, a community consensus affords those who are charged with implementing the plans more confidence in their work. Through its recognition of broad interests, the plan will stand the test of time.
- Finally, the consensus process required active cooperation, disciplined speaking and listening, and respect for the contributions of every Committee member, within a managed process that ensured everyone in the group with an opportunity to share opinions and ideas, and to fully explore proposals until preferred solutions emerged.

The definition of consensus utilized by the Town during this planning is as follows:

*A consensus can only be achieved when a quorum of Committee members is present. A quorum consists of a simple majority of Committee members.*

*Consensus does not require unanimity, but rather the approval of 80% of members present, assuming there is a quorum.*

## **2.6 Town of Excelsior Vision**

Please see pullout on next page.

### 3.0 Purpose

The Population Inventory and Analysis Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan gives an overview of the pertinent demographic trends and background information necessary to develop an understanding of the changes taking place in the Town of Excelsior. In this chapter we will examine the population profile of Excelsior. The population profile includes features that affect community dynamics and processes such as regional trends in population, housing units and persons per household, as well as local trends in housing occupancy, population composition, age distribution and length of residency. In analyzing these trends and projections, citizens of the Town of Excelsior will gain a more complete understanding of future planning issues that should be addressed within this Comprehensive Plan.

### 3.1 Regional Population and Housing Trends

In evaluating changes in population and housing units in the Town of Excelsior, comparing regional and local growth trends will help track similarities and differences between Excelsior and nearby towns, and allow the Town of Excelsior to create a Comprehensive Plan unique to its specific issues and goals.

#### ➤ Population

As **Table P1 Regional Population Trends** indicates, the population in the Town of Excelsior has both fluctuated since 1970. Overall, between the years of 1970 and 2000, Excelsior’s population increased by 624 persons, or at an average of 208 persons per 10 years. Population shrunk by 72 people over the next 10 years, then from 1990 to 2000 Excelsior experienced a population growth of 216 persons, or 18.1%. Over the thirty years between 1970 and 2000 Excelsior’s average 10-year growth rate (24.5%) was faster than some towns yet slower than others. Sauk County experienced an average increase in population of 12.3% per 10 years, and the State of Wisconsin averaged an increase in population of 6.8% per 10 years between 1970 and 2000. Through the examination of these regional trends it is evident that strategies addressing appropriate growth management will need to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan for the Town.

**Table P1: Regional Population Trends**

Regional Population Trends														
Year	Town of Excelsior		Town of Dellona		Town of Delton		Town of Winfield		Town of Reedsburg		Sauk County		Wisconsin	
	#	% change	#	% change	#	% change	#	% change	#	% change	#	% change	#	% change
1970	786		472		846		608		1,442		39,057		4,400,000	
1980	1,266	61.1%	705	49.4%	1,426	68.6%	624	2.6%	1,468	1.8%	43,469	11.3%	4,700,000	6.8%
1990	1,194	-5.7%	768	8.9%	1,599	12.1%	649	4.0%	1,367	-6.9%	46,975	8.1%	4,891,769	4.1%
2000	1,410	18.1%	1,199	56.1%	2,024	26.6%	752	15.9%	1,236	-9.6%	55,225	17.6%	5,363,675	9.6%
Overall change 1970 - 2000	624	79.4%	727	154.0%	1,178	139.2%	144	23.7%	-206	-14.3%	16,168	41.4%	963,675	21.9%
Average change per 10 years	208	24.5%	242.3	38.1%	393	35.8%	48	7.5%	-69	-4.9%	5,389	12.3%	321,225	6.8%

Source: US Census 2000

➤ **Housing Units**

From 1990 to 2000, the numbers of housing units have increased moderately in Excelsior and in many surrounding Towns. As seen in **Table P2 Regional Housing Unit Comparison**, the Town of Excelsior’s increase in housing units (27.11%) is in above the increase experienced by Sauk County (18.88%) and the state of Wisconsin (12.91%) between the years 1990 and 2000.

**Table P2: Regional Housing Unit Comparison**

Year	Regional Housing Unit Comparison											
	Town of Excelsior		Town of Reedsburg		Town of Dellona		Town of Delton		Town of Freedom		Town of Eschrao	
	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change
1990	439		373		400		777		179		614	
2000	558	27.11%	415	11.26%	498	24.50%	862	10.94%	182	1.68%	751	22.31%

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000 (QT-H1)

➤ **Average Household Size**

Comparing the number of persons per household during 1990 and 2000 shows that the Town of Excelsior saw a decrease in numbers of persons per occupied house, as did two neighboring towns. Comparing Excelsior, Sauk County, and the State of Wisconsin, all three experienced a decline, as seen in **Table P3 Regional Average Household Size Comparison**. Both the State and the County averaged approximately 2.5 persons per household in 2000.

**Table P3: Average Household Size**

Year	Average Household Size Persons Per Household					
	Excelsior	Freedom	Reedsburg	Dellona	Sauk County	Wisconsin
1990	2.96	2.83	3.1	2.84	2.61	2.61
2000	2.63	2.63	2.88	2.84	2.51	2.5
Change	-0.33	-0.2	-0.22	0	-0.1	-0.11

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000 (QT-P10)

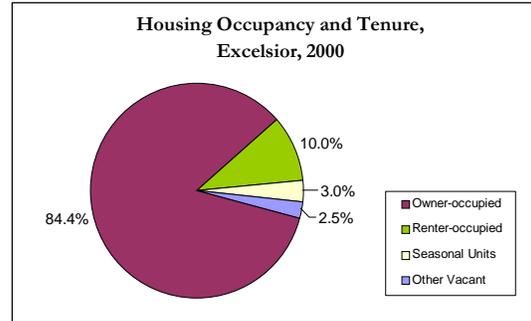
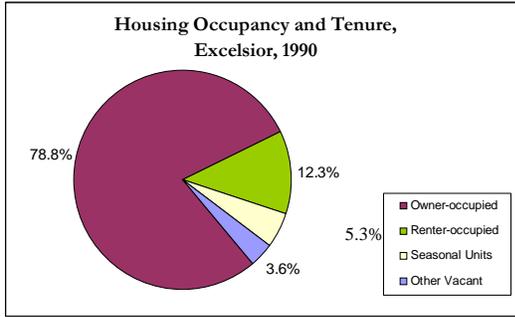
**3.2 Local Population and Housing Trends**

A look at local demographics profiles illustrates local trends and conditions, and provides insight as to the types of services both wanted and required by the community. The local trends section includes an examination of occupied housing, population composition, population by age bracket, and length of residency.

➤ **Occupied Housing**

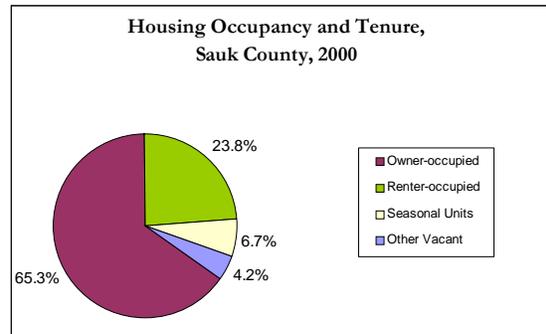
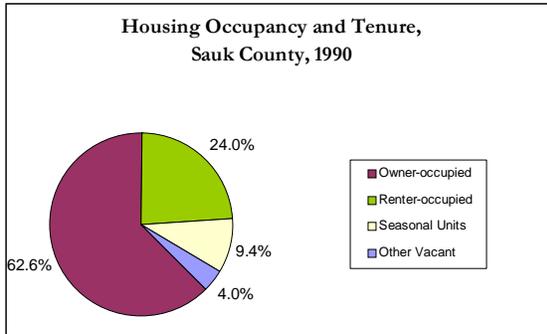
Determining the number of all housing units, the number of these units occupied, and the number of persons per occupied household assists our understanding of population trends. In Excelsior, the number of housing units increased from 439 in 1990 to 558 in 2000, the number of occupied housing units increased from 94.7% in 1990 to 97.0% in 2000. Occupancy rate trends for both Excelsior and Sauk County are noted for the years 1990 and 2000 on **Charts P4 through P7**.

**Charts P4 and P5: Occupancy Rate and Tenure Excelsior 1990 vs. 2000**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA); US Census, 1990, 2000.

**Charts P6 and P7: Occupancy Rate and Tenure Sauk County 1990 vs. 2000**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA); US Census, 1990, 2000

➤ **Population Composition: Age and Race**

Median age is defined as the age at which half of the population is above and half is below. **Table P8 Age, Excelsior and Sauk County** shows the median age in Excelsior at 39.8 during 2000. This is comparable to the median age of Sauk County at 37.3 for the same time period. The Town of Excelsior has a lower percentage of people older than 65, as well as people younger than 18 in comparison to Sauk County.

**Table P8: Age and, Excelsior and Sauk County**

Age Distribution, 2000					
Year 2000	Percent under 18	Percent 19 64	Percent over 65	Median Age	Mean Age
Town of Excelsior	23.6%	64.7%	11.7%	41.8	39.8
Sauk County	26.0%	59.5%	14.5%	37.3	37.3

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

**Table P9 Ethnic Composition, Excelsior and Sauk County** shows that in 2000 there was an extremely similar ethnic composition between the Town of Excelsior and Sauk County. Caucasians dominated both areas making up 98% or more of the population.

**Table P9: Ethnic Composition, Excelsior and Sauk County**

Ethnic Composition, 2000							
Year	Percent White	Percent Black or African American	Percent American Indian and Alaska Native	Percent Asian	Percent Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Percent Some Other Race	Percent Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Town of Excelsior	98.8%	0.0%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.7%	0.9%
Sauk County	98.0%	0.4%	1.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.7%	1.17%

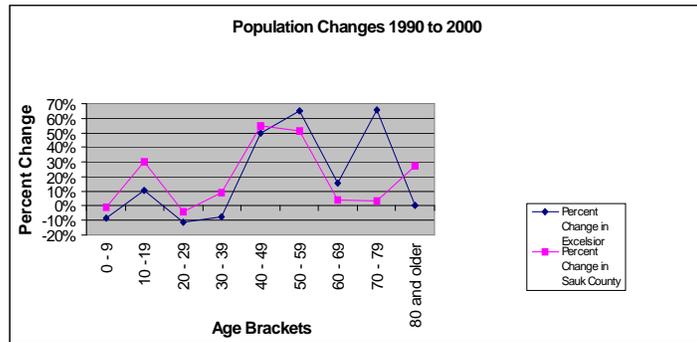
Source: US Census, 2000

\* Composition may equal more than 100% because some may report more than one ethnicity.

➤ **Population per Age Bracket**

**Chart P10 Change of Populations per Age Bracket** breaks down the changes in population by age brackets for both the Town of Excelsior and Sauk County from 1990 to 2000. Generally, this chart shows that the Town of Excelsior experienced similar growth in similar age groups in comparison to the County. The exception is

**Chart P10: Change of Populations per Age Bracket**



Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

where Excelsior noticeably gained population in the 70-79 age group while Sauk County experienced very little population growth in the same bracket. The chart shows that Town has experienced little or negative growth in the younger age groups. Most of the population growth occurred in the age groups greater than 40 years of age, the exception for this being the 80 and older age group, which experienced no growth.

➤ **Length of Residency**

According to sample data included in the 2000 census, 8.7% of Town residents moved into Excelsior in or before 1969. **Chart P11 Length of Residency** shows that 35.2% of those surveyed moved to the Town between the years 1970 and 1989. Since 1990, 56.1% of people surveyed moved to the Town. It is evident from this data that the Town of Excelsior has been experiencing an influx of people into the Town since 1995.

**Table P11: Length of Residency**

Year Householder Moved Into Unit (renter and owner occupied)	(#) Excelsior	(%) Excelsior	(#) Sauk County	(%) Sauk County
1969 or earlier	46	8.7%	2,153	11.6%
1970 - 1979	70	13.2%	2,186	11.8%
1980 - 1989	117	22.0%	3,620	19.5%
1990 - 1994	100	18.8%	4,107	22.2%
1995 - March 2000	198	37.3%	6,474	34.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>18,540</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: US Census 2000

### 3.3 Interpretation of Demographic Data

The Town of Excelsior has experienced periods of growth and loss in population since 1970, with an average gain in population of 24.5% per 10 years between 1970 and 2000. The number of housing units has increased moderately between the years of 1990 and 2000, which corresponds to an increase in population. The average number of people per household decreased slightly from 2.96 in 1990 to 2.63 p.p.h. in 2000. With an average population growth 24.5% every 10 years, and a decreasing household size, the number of new homes built in the Town of Excelsior will be affected.

The population of the Town of Excelsior in 2000 was 1,410 as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. At the average rate of 24.5% growth every 10 years over the last 30 years and a static household size of 2.63, the Wisconsin Dept. of Administration estimates that the population in the year 2020 will be approximately 1,960. However, the actual average household size reported by the U.S. Census Bureau decreased by 12.5% between 1990 and 2000. At this rate of decrease, by the year 2020 the average household size will be at approximately 2.08 p.p.h. This is an extremely low household size and maybe unrealistic, but it demonstrates that the impact of lower household populations is to increase the demand for new homes.

In 1990 there were 439 housing units in Excelsior, compared with 558 in 2000, an increase of 119 housing units, or about 27%. While the population increased by 216, or 18.1%, the number of persons per household actually dropped by about 12%, from 2.96 in 1990 to 2.63 in 2000. Looking ahead, in 2020, with a projected population of 1,960 and an average household size of only 2.08, the number of housing units would be approximately 942, a difference of 384 housing units from 2000, up an average of about 35% for the ten-year period. However, if the average household size remains constant at 2.63 with a population of 1,960, the number of housing units would top out at 745, a difference of only 187 housing units.

If the average household size of the Town of Excelsior were the same as that of Sauk County at 2.51, the same projected 2020 population of 1,960 yields about 781 housing units, a difference of 36 housing units from the constant household size projection. Average household size plays an important role in determining the amount of housing and new development needed to support a growing population.

### 3.4 Population Projections

Given the relatively large (18.1%) increase of population over the 10-year census period in the Town of Excelsior, it is relatively safe to assume that populations will continue to increase in the future. However, the exact rate of increase is not known, nor can it be predicted with complete accuracy. Estimates of future growth for the Town of Excelsior are necessary for effective planning.

To estimate future population growth for the Town of Excelsior, two population projection methods were utilized. The first is a standard approach, which considers a linear projection, growth (or exponential) projection, and the projection provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. The second method is a housing-driven population projection. Both methods are explained in more detail below.

#### ➤ Standard Population Projection Methods

- **Linear Projection.** The linear growth model is the most basic of projection methods. The linear model works by drawing a straight, best-fit line through historic data points and extending that line out to future data points.

- **Growth Projection.** The growth projection works in the same manner as the linear projection except that it applies an exponential growth curve to the data. Using the exponential growth method, the rate of population change in each subsequent year increases or decreases at a rate greater than the previous year. This method assumes the population will grow (or decline) without inhibition.
- **Department of Administration Projection Method.** The DOA projection method works in the same manner as the linear projection model except that it gives more weight or influence to more recent years' data. This method calculates a projection (best-fit line) for three historic time periods: 1980-2003, 1990-2003 and 2000-2003. Each projection is then averaged together for a final projection. By averaging the three projections, population change that has occurred in the more recent time period is given more influence. This projection method is based on the premise that recent population trends, from the last 5 or 10 years for example, are more realistic for explaining future population growth than older trends, from 20 or 30 years ago. In some cases, this method can result in gross over- or underestimations of population growth. For example, consider a town of 500 where 5 new residents are added in one year. If this same rate of growth is applied over the next 20 years the town will swell to 600 people. What if, however, you lost 3 residents in the next year? If you apply this average rate of growth (2 people/year) you would have an increase of only 40 people in the next 20 years. The DOA method dampens the effect of very immediate population fluxes by including the three historic time periods. In addition, the DOA method adjusts for abnormal rates of change, such as annexations.

➤ **Housing-Driven Population Projections**

The housing-driven population projections calculate future population growth based on expected housing growth and the current or expected persons per household. In some instances, this method is a fairly accurate tool, especially when coupled with one of the methods above to serve as a check and balance. The method is best summarized by the following equation:

$$[(\# \text{ Housing units}) \times (\text{occupancy rate}) \times (\# \text{ people/housing unit})] \\ = \text{Population projection}$$

However, the caveat to housing-driven projections is that calculations are based on the assumption that populations grow based on the availability of housing stock. A similar method is widely used to calculate population growth based on employment growth. People often move to an area for a new job, but are less likely to move their family because of more readily available housing. Housing is usually created due to demand, and not the other way around.

*Table P12 Population Projections, Town of Excelsior* highlights a number of possible projections utilizing the different methods discussed above. Population projections for the year 2020 range from 1,474 to 2,059. Projections for the year 2030 range from 1,1278 to 2,374. As can be noted, these projections have a range of over 500 and are, therefore, highly variable.

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**Table P12: Population Projections, Town of Excelsior**

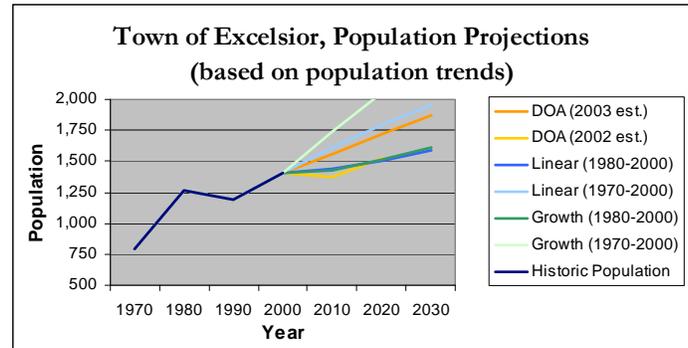
Town of Excelsior Population Projections			Projections									
Year, source	Year	Historic Population	Percent Change	Linear (1970-2000)	Growth (1970-2000)	Linear (1980-2000)	Growth (1980-2000)	Static household size	Limited household size	Household size trend	DOA (2002 est.)	DOA (2003 est.)
1960, per census	1960	773		773	773	773	773	773	773	773	773	773
1970, per cer	1970	786	1.68%	786	786	786	786	786	786	786	786	786
1980, per cer	1980	1,266	61.07%	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,266	1,266
1990, per cer	1990	1,194	-5.69%	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194	1,194
2000, per cer	2000	1,410	18.09%	1,410	1,410	1,410	1,410	1,410	1,410	1,410	1,410	1,410
2010, project	2010			1,614	1,738	1,434	1,433	1,667	1,591	1,464	1,372	1,562
2020, project	2020			1,794	2,059	1,506	1,513	1,960	1,871	1,474	1,521	1,715
2025, project	2025			1,825	2,103	1,578	1,598	2,107	2,010	1,319	1,594	1,791
2030, project	2030			1,956	2,374	1,588	1,609	2,253	2,150	1,127	n/a	1,867

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2000, and Wisconsin Department of Administration - Demographic Services Center

➤ **Population Projections**

*Chart P13 Population Projections* shows three projection methods that are based on population trends. The projections based on population growth include linear, growth, and DOA projection models. The linear and growth models (using data since 1980) result in population projections of 1,588 (linear) and 1,609 (growth) by the year 2030. The DOA method, which places emphasis on more recent population changes, appears to cause the population to increase as compared to the linear and growth models, predicting a population of 1,867 by 2030 for the Town of Excelsior.

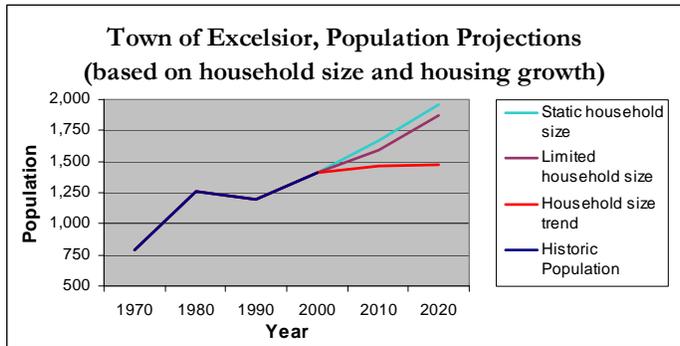
**Chart P13 Population Projections based on Population**



Source: U.S. Census, Wisconsin DOA

**Chart P14 Population Projections based on Housing Growth**

Population projections based on the historic and projected number of housing units coupled with a projected occupancy rate tells a similar story for the Town of Excelsior. Housing unit projections assumed a growth rate equal to that occurring between 1990 and 2000 of 18.1% per 10 years. Using this rate of growth, population in the Town of Excelsior is estimated to grow to 1,960 in 2020 and 2,253 in 2030.



Source: U.S. Census

The static household size projection assumes the average household size (or persons per household) remains constant at the value observed in 2000 (2.63 persons per household). The projection yields a population of 1,960 by 2020 and 2,253 by 2030. The limited household size projection holds the county average of 2.5 persons per household constant, producing a population projection of 1,871 by the year 2020 and 2,150 by the year 2030. The household size trend projection adjusts household size based on a 12.5% decrease per 10 years. For example, this projection assumes that from the year

2000 to 2010, household size would increase from 2.63 persons per household to 2.34 persons per household. This produces a projected population of 1,474 in 2020 and 1,127 in 2030. These results are depicted in **Chart P14 Population Projections based on Housing**.

➤ **Population Projection Analysis**

Population projections based on historic population trends and those based on trends in household size produced similar projections as can be seen in **Charts P13** and **P14** above. Both projection methods illustrate different rates of population growth or loss. The DOA projection method, because it only takes into account population trends from 1990-2000, may be an accurate assessment of future populations due to the more recent growth increase experienced by the Town. Conversely, the linear and growth methods may be least reliable due to the fact that they utilize population changes since 1980, which included one ten-year period of population loss.

The projection types based on housing units and average household size take into consideration that housing units are increasing within the Town while average household size is decreasing. If housing units increase and occupancy rates continue to decrease, as they are currently, the population for the Town of Excelsior will increase as shown in the **Chart P14**. Although it difficult to ascertain when population growth trends will change, it is almost certain that from this point on, the population in the Town of Excelsior will continue to grow. The rate of growth experienced over the last 10 years will most likely continue and even increase over time, as more and more people are attracted to the community.

## 4.0 Purpose

Household and housing stock characteristics, both past and present, can be examined to assess whether a community is providing an adequate housing supply to meet the needs of its residents. This section of the Comprehensive Plan describes and analyzes the Town of Excelsior’s primary housing characteristics such as the number of housing units, occupancy rate, structural type, age and value of existing housing structures, and household income and expenses. This section also describes what constitutes ‘affordable’ housing and further includes a compilation of objectives and policies that ensure a continued housing supply that provides a range of housing opportunities. Portions of this chapter refer to *Chapter 3: Population Inventory and Analysis*.

### 4.1 Housing Unit Trends

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town of Excelsior experienced an increase of approximately 12 housing units per year while the number of total (occupied and vacant) housing units in Excelsior increased from 439 to 558, an increase of 27.11%. This rate of increase is above Sauk County’s housing unit increase of 18.88% and is below the population growth rate of 11.11% between the years 1990 and 2000 in the Town of Excelsior (see *Chapter 3: Population Inventory and Analysis*, for a full account). In comparison to nearby Towns, the Town of Excelsior is experiencing the greatest increase in housing units. The Town of Reedsburg, with Exclusive Agriculture zoning and a density of one house per 35 acres had a significantly lower rate of increase than Excelsior. Other neighboring towns with less restrictive or no zoning have seen a doubling in the number of new housing units.

**Chart H1: Regional Housing Unit Comparison**

Regional Housing Unit Comparison												
Year	Town of Excelsior		Town of Reedsburg		Town of Dellona		Town of Delton		Town of Freedom		Town of Baraboo	
	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change	Number of Units	Percent Change
1990	439		373		400		777		179		614	
2000	558	27.11%	415	11.26%	498	24.50%	862	10.94%	182	1.68%	751	22.31%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

#### ➤ Occupancy Rate

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an overall vacancy rate of roughly 3% (or occupancy rate of 97%) is ideal for providing consumers an adequate choice in housing. As cited in *Chapter 3: Population Inventory and Analysis*, during 1990, 91.2% or 400 of the 439 available housing units in the Town of Excelsior were occupied compared to an 86.7% occupancy rate in Sauk County. During 2000, occupancy in the Town of Excelsior increased to 94.5%, or 527 of the 558 available housing units, while Sauk County increased to an 89.1% occupancy rate.

### 4.2 Household Characteristics

Household characteristics may influence not only the type of housing stock needed, but also the types of services and commodities utilized. *Table H2 Households by Type* describes a variety of household characteristics. Occupied housing units in the Town of Excelsior comprised of family households increased from 333 in 1990 (83.25%) to 428 in 2000 (81.21%). Female householders also increased slightly from 11 in 1990 (2.75%) to 20 in 2000 (3.80%). Householders 65 or over increased slightly in number and percentage, as did non-family households in the Town. In comparison, both the Town of Excelsior and Sauk County saw increased numbers in every category

from 1990 to 2000. However, while Excelsior saw a slight percentage increase in family households, Sauk County actually saw a percentage decrease in family households.

**Table H2: Households by Type**

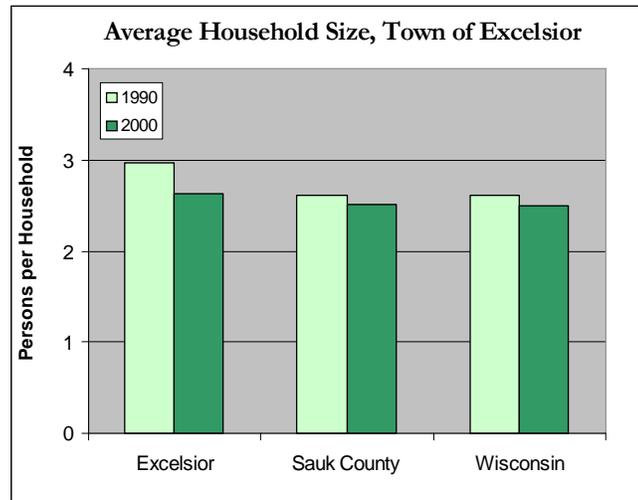
Households by Type								
	Town of Excelsior				Sauk County			
	1990	% of Total Households, 1990	2000	% of Total Households, 2000	1990	% of Total Households, 1990	2000	% of Total Households, 2000
<b>Family households</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>83.25%</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>81.21%</b>	<b>12,701</b>	<b>71.74%</b>	<b>14,863</b>	<b>68.67%</b>
Married	314	78.50%	381	72.30%	10,906	61.61%	12,284	56.75%
Female Householder (single)	11	2.75%	20	3.80%	1,115	6.30%	1,745	8.06%
<b>Non-family households</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>16.75%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>18.79%</b>	<b>2,156</b>	<b>12.18%</b>	<b>6,781</b>	<b>31.33%</b>
With Individuals 65 or older	20	5.00%	29	5.50%	2,157	12.18%	5,361	24.77%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>17,703</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>21,644</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000.

➤ **Average Household Size**

The average household size or persons per households in Excelsior has decreased from 2.96 persons in 1990 to 2.63 in 2000. As displayed in *Chart H3 Average Household Size Comparison*, the Town of Excelsior’s average household size is higher than that of both Sauk County and the State of Wisconsin. A comparison of average household size between the Town of Excelsior and neighboring Towns may be found in *Chapter 3: Population Inventory and Analysis*.

**Chart H3: Average Household Size Comparison**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### 4.3 Housing Stock Characteristics

The percentage of single-family homes, mobile homes, and multiple unit structures has been relatively constant from 1990 to 2000 in the Town of Excelsior. In 2000, a vast majority of the housing structures in Excelsior were single-family homes (92.7%), which is a noticeably higher percentage than Sauk County (72.6%). This is probably attributed to the Town being an agricultural and rural area. Both mobile homes and multiple-unit housing in Excelsior comprise a lower percentage of structure types than the County.

**Table H4: Housing Units by Structural Type**

	Total Housing Units	% Single Family Home	% Mobile Home	% two to four units	% with five to nine units per structure	% with ten or more units per structure
Excelsior, 1990	434	91.24%	6.68%	2.07%	0.00%	0.00%
Excelsior, 2000	556	92.70%	5.40%	1.60%	0.00%	0.40%
Sauk County, 1990	20,439	83.10%	11.77%	12.40%	3.49%	1.63%
Sauk County, 2000	24,297	72.61%	8.60%	10.00%	4.10%	4.50%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

#### ➤ Age of Housing Stock

The age of the community's housing stock can be used as a measure of the general condition of the community's housing supply. This information can also provide insight into upkeep costs, the ease of remodeling, and housing resale value in a community. Building quality at the time of initial construction is also an important factor. Generally, housing constructed prior to 1939 has reached an age where continued maintenance and major repairs may be needed. Housing built in the 1970's and 1980's may need upgrading as well due to the level of construction and material quality prevalent during that time.

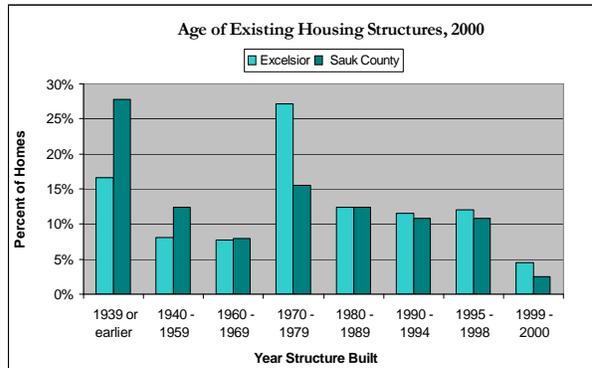
**Chart H6: Housing Age** shows that 16.6% of the existing owner occupied housing within the Town of Excelsior was built prior to 1939 while 41.3% of owner occupied homes units were built after 1980. The percentage of existing homes in the Town of Excelsior built prior to 1969 is lower than the percentage of Sauk County homes built in this time period. From 1970 to 2000 a higher percentage of homes were built in the Town of Excelsior than Sauk County.

**Table H5: Age of Housing Units**

Age of Existing Housing Structures, 2000				
Year Unit Was Built	Number of Units in Excelsior	Excelsior	Number of Units in Sauk County	Sauk County
1939 or earlier	88	16.6%	6,737	27.7%
1940 - 1959	43	8.1%	3,000	12.3%
1960 - 1969	41	7.7%	1,931	7.9%
1970 - 1979	144	27.1%	3,764	15.5%
1980 - 1989	66	12.4%	3,021	12.4%
1990 - 1994	61	11.5%	2,621	10.8%
1995 - 1998	64	12.1%	2,628	10.8%
1999 - 2000	24	4.5%	595	2.4%
Total	531	100.0%	24,297	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000

**Chart H6: Age of Existing Housing Structures**



Source: U.S. Census, 2000

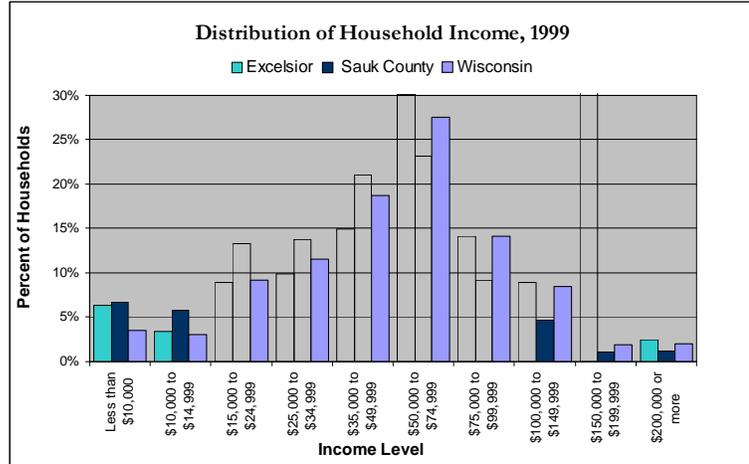
#### 4.4 Housing Affordability

Examining household incomes, expenses and housing values provides insight into the types of housing structures that currently exist in the Town of Excelsior and those that are needed in the community.

##### ➤ Income Per Household

During 1999, the median household income for Excelsior was \$54,375, compared with the median income for Sauk County at \$41,941. Of the 525 households in Excelsior, 79, (15.05%) were in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 income bracket. Another 158 (30.10%) of the households were in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket. Throughout Sauk County, 21.03% of the households fell in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 income bracket and 23.16% of the households fell in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket.

**Chart H7: Household Income Levels**



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Affordable monthly housing expenses (or mortgage payments) are considered to be 30% of the monthly gross income. This amount can be calculated using the following equation: affordable monthly mortgage expense = .3 \* monthly gross income (where the monthly gross income is the annual gross income divided by 12). To determine if the gross annual income is considered to be in the low or moderate-income brackets, the following Department of Housing and Urban Development definitions may be used. As **Table H8** on the following page illustrates, extremely low income is defined as less than 30% of the household median gross income or = .3 \* HMI. Very low income is 30% to 50% of the HMI. Low income is defined as 50% to 80% of the household median income and moderate income is 80% to 100% of the household median income.

Since the household median income for Excelsior is \$54,375, the extremely low-income range is anyone earning less than \$16,312 (rounded to less than \$15,000) per year. According to the 2000 census, 9.7% of the households in Excelsior were in this range and could afford monthly housing expenses of \$375.00 or less. Nine percent of the households in Excelsior fell in the very low-income range and could afford monthly housing expenses of \$375.00 to \$625.00. Households in the low-income range made up approximately 9.9% of the households in Excelsior, and these households are reportedly able to afford \$625.00 to \$875.00 in housing expenses each month. Households in the moderate-income range comprised 15.0% of the households in Excelsior, and could afford monthly housing expenses between \$875.00 and \$1250.00.

**Table H8: Affordable Housing Expenses per Income, Town of Excelsior 1990**

Excelsior, 1990			
Household Median Income \$36,500			
Household Income Category	Rounded Description	Percent of Households	Affordable housing payment per month based on 30% of income standard
<b>Extremely low income</b> (below 30% of HMI)	< \$10,000	7.4%	\$250 or less
<b>Very low income</b> (30% to 50% of HMI)	\$10,000-\$15,000	8.6%	\$250 - \$375
<b>Low income</b> (50% to 80% of HMI)	\$15,000-\$25,000	17.6%	\$375 - \$625
<b>Moderate income</b> (80% to 100% of HMI)	\$25,000-\$35,000	13.5%	\$625 - \$875

Source: US Census, 2000

**Table H9: Affordable Housing Expenses per Income, Excelsior 2000**

Excelsior, 2000			
Household Median Income \$54,375			
Household Income Category	Rounded Description	Percent of Households	Affordable housing payment per month based on 30% of income standard
<b>Extremely low income</b> (below 30% of HMI)	< \$15,000	9.7%	\$375 or less
<b>Very low income</b> (30% to 50% of HMI)	\$15,000-\$25,000	9.0%	\$375 - \$625
<b>Low income</b> (50% to 80% of HMI)	\$25,000-\$35,000	9.9%	\$625 - \$875
<b>Moderate income</b> (80% to 100% of HMI)	\$35,000-\$50,000	15.0%	\$875 - \$1,250

Source: US Census 1990

**Table H10: Distribution of Household Income, 1999**

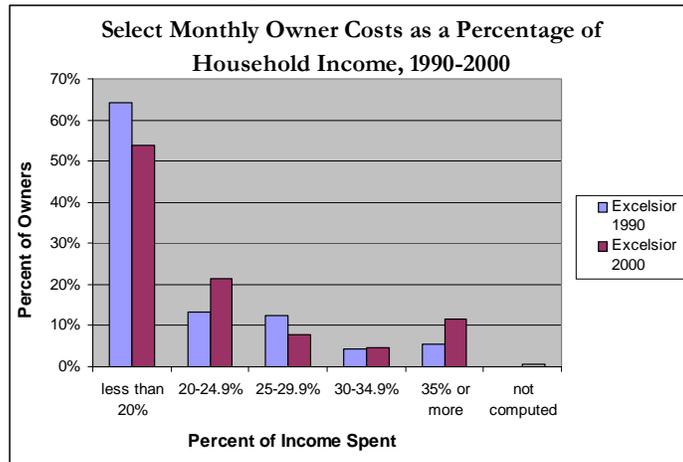
Distribution of Household Income, 1999	% of Households	% of Households	% of Households
	Town of Excelsior	Sauk County	Wisconsin
Less than \$10,000	6.3%	6.7%	3.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.4%	5.8%	3.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.0%	13.4%	9.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.9%	13.8%	11.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.0%	21.0%	18.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	30.1%	23.2%	27.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.1%	9.1%	14.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.0%	4.7%	8.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.8%	1.1%	1.9%
\$200,000 or more	2.5%	1.2%	2.0%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$54,375</b>	<b>\$41,941</b>	<b>\$43,791</b>
No. of Households	525	21,647	2,086,304
Aggregate Household Income	\$26,397,300	\$1,076,409,500	\$112,374,261,000
<b>Avg. Household Income</b>	<b>\$61,636</b>	<b>\$49,726</b>	<b>\$53,863</b>
<b>Ratio of mean to median HH Income</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>1.23</b>

Source: US Census 2000, Housing Wisconsin.

➤ **Owner Costs**

*Chart H11 and Table H12 Monthly Owner Cost* depict housing costs in relation to overall income using a sample population from the Town of Excelsior to better understand housing affordability in the Town. Housing affordability has decreased between 1990 and 2000. During this timeframe, the percentage of homeowners whose housing costs exceeded 30% of the household income increased from 9.9% in 1990 to 12.4% in 2000.

**Chart H11: Monthly Owner Costs**



Source: U.S. Census 1990-2000

**Table H12: Monthly Owner Costs**

Percentage of income	Excelsior 1990		Excelsior 2000	
	number of units	percent of units	number of units	percent of units
less than 20%	130	64.4%	152	53.9%
20-24.9%	27	13.4%	60	21.3%
25-29.9%	25	12.4%	22	7.8%
30-34.9%	9	4.5%	13	4.6%
35% or more	11	5.4%	33	11.7%
not computed	0	0.0%	2	0.7%
<b>total units</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

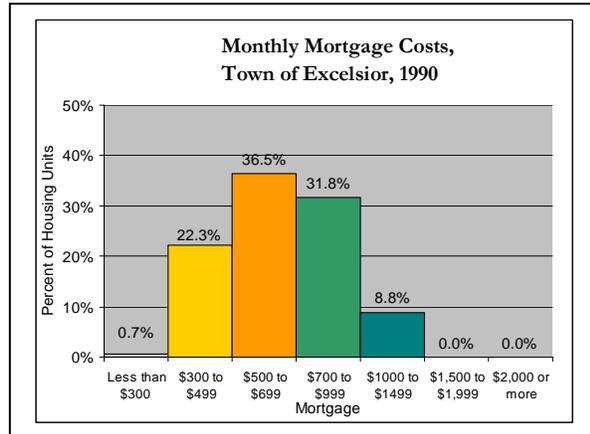
Source: U.S. Census 1990-2000

**Mortgage Costs**

Although mortgage costs are only one of many monthly housing expenses, this section narrows its focus by concentrating on them. Comparisons of monthly mortgage costs from 1990 to 2000 are broken down for the Town of Excelsior in *Charts H13 and H14*. In 1990, 22.3% of the households spent between \$300 and \$499 on monthly mortgage costs, while in 2000 only 6% of the households had mortgage payments in this category. The largest percentage (36.5%) of monthly mortgage costs in 1990 was between \$500-\$699. In 2000, only 16% of households had mortgage costs in that category, while 67.6% of monthly mortgage payments were between \$700 and \$1,499.

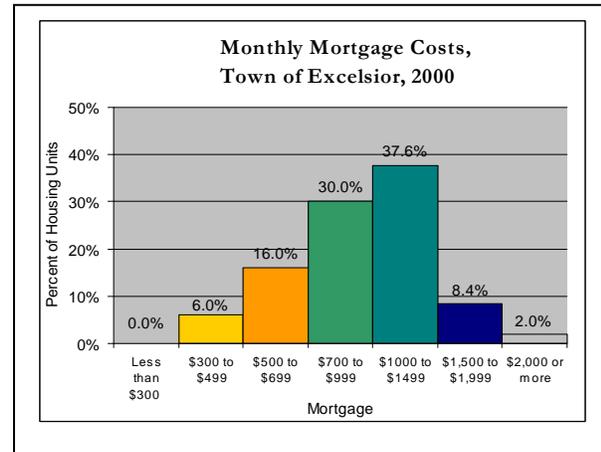
As depicted in the chart, no households reported monthly mortgages of more than \$1,500 in 1990, while 10.4% of mortgage payments in 2000 were over \$1,500. The significant increase in monthly mortgage costs between 1990 and 2000 may be due to the price of housing being built in the area, or to the lack of equity buyers are bringing to the market. Higher mortgage costs may reduce the availability of affordable housing in the Town.

**Chart H13: Monthly Mortgage Costs, Excelsior 1990**



Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**Chart H14: Monthly Mortgage Costs, Excelsior 2000**

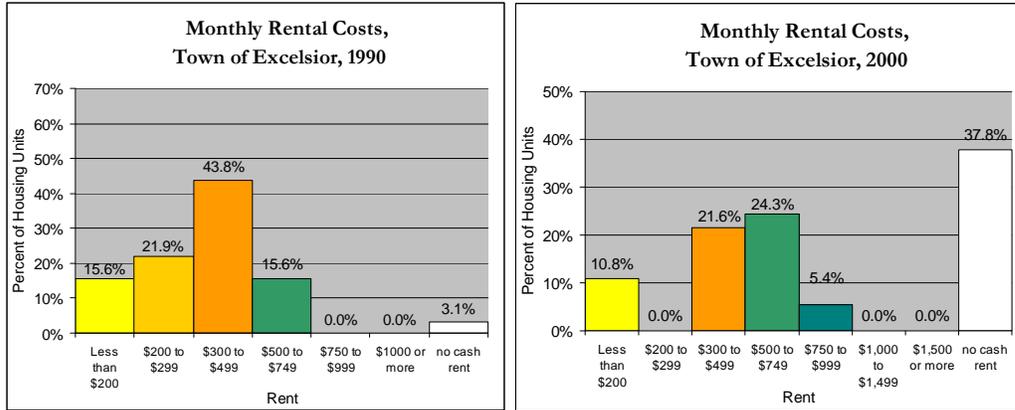


Source: U.S. Census, 2000

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It is also important to consider monthly rental costs when analyzing the affordability of housing in a community. **Charts H15 and H16** compare monthly rental costs in the Town of Excelsior between 1990 and 2000. In 1990, 37.5% of monthly rent payments were less than \$300, while in 2000 only 10.8% of rent payments were less than \$300. In 2000, 21.6% of rent payments fell in the \$300-\$499 category, down from 43.8% in 1990. However, rent payments in the \$500-\$999 categories increased. No-cash rent payments, usually associated with farm help, increased dramatically from 3.1% in 1990 to 37.8% in 2000.

**Charts H15 and H16: Monthly Rental Costs, Excelsior 1990 and 2000**



Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

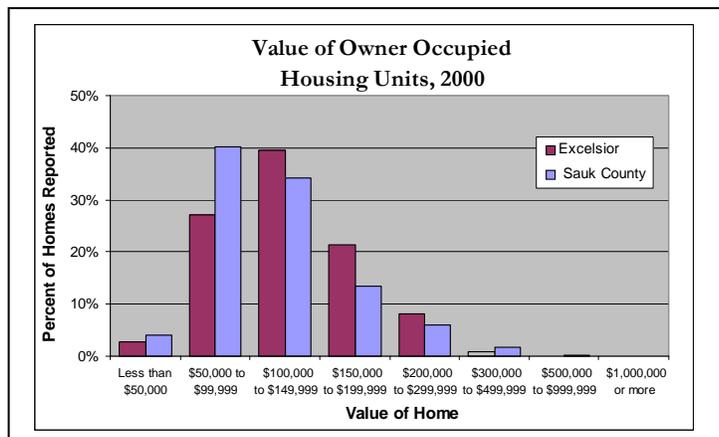
**House Values**

A sample of housing values in Excelsior during 2000 ranged from less than \$50,000.00 to over \$300,000. The median home value in Excelsior in 2000 was \$123,500, which was higher than the median house value in Sauk County of \$107,500. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, **Chart H17 Housing Value, Excelsior 2000** compares the housing values for the Town of Excelsior with those of Sauk County. Approximately 29.8% of the homes in the Town of Excelsior are less than \$100,000, whereas the percentage of homes valued between \$100,000 to 149,000 is 39.6% in

Excelsior compared to Sauk County's 34% in this category. Approximately 21.4% of the homes were valued between \$150,000 and \$199,999 in the Town compared to Sauk County's almost 13.5%. Just over eight percent of the homes in Excelsior were valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999, compared to 6.1% of the homes in Sauk County.

In the \$300,000 to \$499,999 category, 0.9% of homes were reported in the Town of Excelsior. Statistics for housing value are based on a sample population and do not include all owner-occupied housing units.

**Table H17: Housing Value, Excelsior 2000**



Source: U.S. Census, 2000

#### **4.5 Housing Density**

Housing density can be defined in a number of ways, most simply as the number of housing units in a given area of land. This numerical value is commonly referred to as gross density. A community “density policy”, on the other hand, can be defined as the desired ratio of housing units and/or lots created per specified unit of land area. Such area density policies are often combined with an optimum or maximum size for each building lot. A community density policy can be utilized to calculate the total number of potential of future houses until an endpoint (“total buildout”) is reached. Future population predictions can be based on a community’s housing density policy. Rural communities having relatively low overall density policies can offer a “density credit” to developers, when increased density is appropriate, that permits additional units or lots in exchange for the preservation of adjacent land resources.

With a total area of 33.98 square miles and census report of 558 housing units, the Town of Excelsior’s gross housing density in 2000 stood at 16.5 housing units per square mile, or about one housing unit per 38 acres. This is an increase in density from 1990, when housing density stood at about one unit per 49 acres. Much of the increase can be attributed to housing subdivision development, but some is due to the development of rural residential lots. Until 1999 rural lots could be less than one acre in size. Since the Town adopted the Sauk County Resource Conservancy-5 zoning district, rural lots must be at least five acres in size, which effectively establishes a density policy of one lot per five acres. An analysis of recent development trends presented by one local citizen to the Town Comprehensive Plan Committee in December of 2007 demonstrated that the number of dwelling units had increased to 636, resulting in a density of one unit per 30 acres.

The Excelsior Comprehensive Planning Committee examined several density policy options, (These will be described in Ch, XI, Land Use) including the “status-quo” (a one/five density policy with minimum five-acre lots), a return to General Ag zoning with no minimum lots size and no density policy, and more restrictive density policies of one lot per twenty acres and one lot per thirty acres. These options were reviewed in combination with minimum lot size restrictions as well as with subdivision regulations on the rate of development, or the number of new lots created over time.

Under the current status quo, a five-acre density policy could result in the creation of over 4,000 new lots on the roughly 21,000 acres of undeveloped land remaining in the Town of Excelsior. Under a proposed density policy of one lot per twenty acres, around 1,000 new lots could be created on the remaining undeveloped land.

#### **4.6 Local Population and Housing Trends**

Understanding of local population and housing trends and their potential impacts on the future of the Town of Excelsior requires a re-examination of population projections discussed in the previous chapter. The growth of the population will drive housing development in the Town. Should the average household size decrease in the Town, which is generally the trend on Sauk County, the number of housing units needed to accommodate the population may increase further. From 1990 to 2000, the Town experienced a 27.11% increase in housing units. If this trend continues, an additional 151 housing units will be built by the year 2010. From 2010 to 2020, an additional 192 housing units will be built if the 27.11% increase rate remains constant.

#### **4.7 Projected Housing Needs Based on Population Projections**

As noted in *Chapter 3 Population Inventory and Analysis* two methods of population projections are utilized. Population Projection 1 involved a comparison between a linear and growth method, along

with a method used by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Population Projection 2 uses a method that combines the historic projected number of new housing units coupled with a projected occupancy rate. The following includes the projected number of housing units needed based on Population Projection 1 as well as a reiteration of housing units needed, identified under Population Projection 2 and based on the historic number of housing units actually built.

➤ **Population Projection 1**

- **DOA Projection (2003 est.)** projects a total population of 1,715 persons in the year 2020. At this rate of growth and a constant of 2.5 persons per household (the County average), the Town would add 305 people or essentially 122 houses assuming the occupancy rate remains the same. Alternatively, at this rate of growth and a constant of 2.63 persons per household (the Town of Excelsior average from the 2000 census), total new housing units needed by 2020 would be 116. By 2030, based on 2.5 persons per household, the Town will need 183 new housing units to accommodate 1,867 persons.
- **Linear Model (1980-2000) and Growth Model (1980-2000)** both show an average increase in population to 1,510 persons, or an additional 100 people. Assuming a constant of 2.5 persons per household (the County average), there will be a net need for 40 housing units by the year 2020. Alternatively, assuming a constant of 2.63 persons per household (the Town of Excelsior average from the 2000 census), there will be a net need for 38 new housing units by 2020. By 2030, based on 2.5 persons per household, the Town will have net need for 76 new housing units.

➤ **Population Projection 2**

- **Static Household Size** accounts for the historic drop in persons per household from 2.96 in 1990 to 2.63 persons per household as identified by the 2000 census. Combining this factor with the 527 occupied housing units in the Town in 2000 yields a population projection of 1,960 persons by 2020 and 2,253 persons by 2030. This increase in population translates into an additional 209 new housing units by 2020 and 321 new housing units by 2030.
- **Limited Household Size** holds the County average of 2.5 persons per household constant, producing an increase in population size to 1,871 by 2020 and an increase in population to 2,150 persons by 2030. This method yields a need for 184 new homes by 2020 and 296 by 2030.
- **Household Size Trend** adjusts the average household size based on a 3% decrease every 10 years. For example, this projection assumes that from the year 2000 to 2010, average household size would decrease from 2.63 persons per household to 2.55 persons per household. This produces a projection of 1,474 persons in 2020 and 1,127 persons by 2030. This method yields a need for 24 additional houses by 2020 and a *net loss* of 108 houses by 2030.

**General Housing Needs Analysis**

In reviewing the housing projection methods based on Population Projections 1 and 2, it appears as though the most logical housing projections are those that produce a slight increase in population through the years 2020 and



2030 respectively. Under Population Projection 1, all three models present a realistic increase in population and corresponding housing units by the year 2030. Population Projection 2 recognizes that the static and trend methods reveal unrealistic changes in projected housing units added by the year 2030. With this analysis, it appears as though the DOA and growth projections under Population Projection 1 may best represent future population growth in the Town of Excelsior until the year 2030.

#### **4.8 Housing Opportunities**

The Town of Excelsior has always provided options for varying housing choices and locations. There are numerous lots located in platted subdivisions that can provide for additional residential development. Currently, there are approximately 292 vacant Certified Survey Map (CSM) or residential subdivision lots in the Town. Some of these lots were platted before minimum lot size standards, and although they can support a residential structure and septic system, the area of the lots is limited. Thus, in order to develop these lots, two or more may be combined to provide the space necessary for a house, a primary septic system and a replacement septic area.

Rural lots have historically been created by Certified Survey Map to accommodate rural residences and farmette operations. The creation of these ‘rural lots’ has served to provide an alternative living option to locating in an existing subdivision.

#### **Additional Housing Opportunities**

New development may result from Certified Survey Map (CSM) divisions or the creation of either conventional or conservation subdivisions. The Town’s current density policy of one house/lot per 5 acres must be applied to conventional subdivisions or new CSM lots.

Additional rural density, allowing up to One house/lot per 2 acres, would be permitted under a proposal to adopt Sauk County General Ag zoning with the requirement that the developer comply with carefully determined siting requirements adopted by the Town (a proposal referred to as “Excelsior Ag”). The Planning Committee was not able to reach a consensus to adopt this proposal.

#### **4.9 Conservation Subdivision Design**

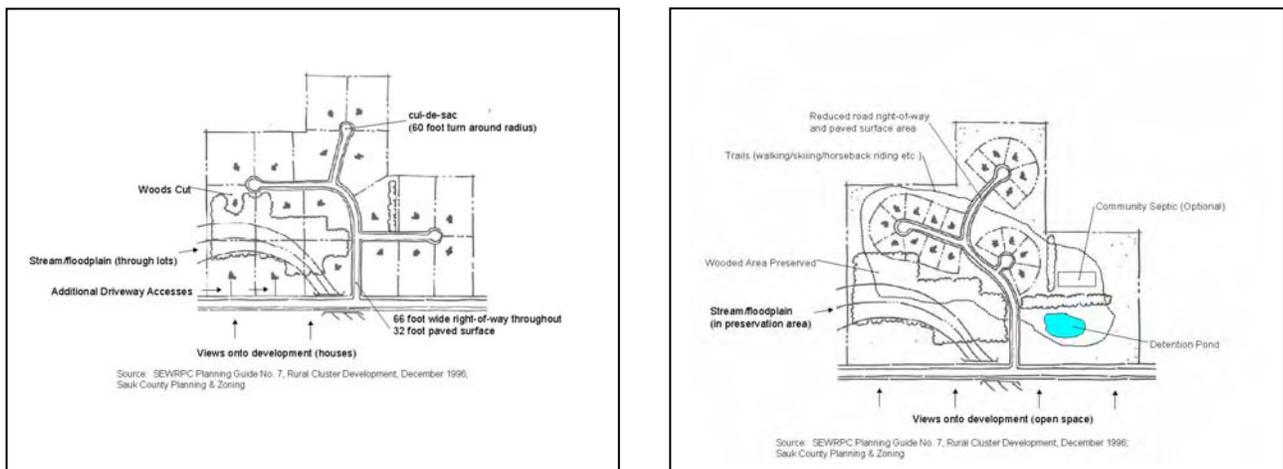
Conservation subdivision design allows for higher density but restricts development to 60% of the total land area of the subdivision. Very environmentally or culturally sensitive land cannot be developed in conservation subdivisions, and at least 40% of all the land must be protected.

The Town of Excelsior encourages high-quality design and layout for newly platted residential subdivisions. This includes providing space necessary for “open space corridors” within and between successive developments, planning interconnectivity of roads between developments, and reducing the infrastructure costs associated with development. As part of high-quality design, this plan encourages the use of *Conservation Subdivision Design* in the planning and development of subdivisions. Conservation subdivision design is in accordance with the vision and goals of this plan, incorporating the preservation of open space and rural character as well as protecting water quality. Conservation subdivision design provides a residential living opportunity unique to south-central Wisconsin counties. See also *Chapter 11 Land Use* for Steps on siting new development pertaining to developing Conservation Subdivisions.

The following Conservation Subdivision Design guidelines are recommendations, and are not mandated by the Town:

- Preserve open space features such as farmland, natural features that define the area, environmentally sensitive areas and other areas that enhance the rural character.
- Promote the rural character by limiting the visibility of new development from main roads. Topography, vegetation, and setback requirements all aid in reducing development visibility. Where features like hills and trees are absent, the use of natural plantings can be effective. In general, lots should not be placed at the entrance to subdivisions, because they would be highly visible from the main public right-of-way.
- Incorporate a road/trail network to connect homes to each other. Also, connect streets among developments. Open space in one development should connect to open space in adjacent developments.
- Encourage the creation of smaller lots that are clustered on the buildable portion of a property, allowing for the preservation of open space. Identify soils best suited for community septic systems and storm water detention and set these areas aside as common open space with shared community facilities.

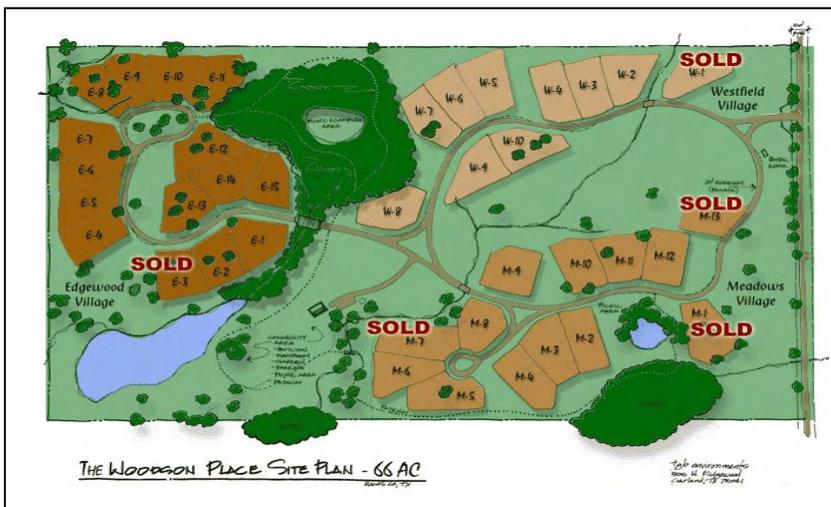
**Figure H18 Example of a Conservation Subdivision Compared to a Conventional Subdivision**



Conservation subdivisions designate forty percent or more of the original parcel as open space, while still maintaining the same number of lots that would otherwise be permitted under a conventional subdivision. A community may also choose to give “bonus” lots to developers to encourage the use of conservation subdivisions over conventional design. In conventional subdivisions, developers are allowed to build at a density equal to the underlying zoning district maximum. In conservation subdivisions, developers can build at a density of one house/lot per acre (depending on soil suitability) on 60% of the land. While 40% of the land in a conservation subdivision must be protected, developers are still able to create more lots on the remaining 60% than they would be able to in a conventional subdivision. In conservation subdivisions, open space can be owned and managed by any combination of the following:

- A private individual may hold fee title to the open space lands and manage the land for open space uses such as farming or hunting. Often the open space lands have a conservation easement to assure homeowners in the conservation subdivision that the land will remain as open space.
- A homeowner's association composed of lot owners in the development would own a percentage interest in the open space and manage it through a declaration of covenants. This method of open space ownership permits residents the greatest degree of control over management of the open space.
- A non-profit land trust organization may take title or other interest in the open space lands to protect natural, productive or scenic values of the land.
- A government agency might utilize the land for public recreation.

**Figure H19 Example of an Actual Conservation Subdivision (Woodson Place, Rains County, Texas)**



Source: Woodson Place [www.woodsonplace.com](http://www.woodsonplace.com), GeoData services, Inc. [www.geodata-mt.com](http://www.geodata-mt.com)

#### 4.10 Housing Programs and Resources

Listed below are some examples of housing assistance programs available to Town of Excelsior residents:

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

**Section 811** – provides funding to nonprofit organizations for supportive housing for very low-income persons with disabilities who are at least 18 years of age

**Section 202** – provides funding to private nonprofit organizations and consumer cooperatives for supportive housing for very low-income persons age 62 and older

**Section 8** – major program for assisting very low-income families, elderly and disabled individuals to afford housing on the private market. Participants are responsible for finding their own housing. Funding vouchers are distributed through Public Housing Authorities that deliver the vouchers to eligible applicants.

**Section 8/SRO** – provides funding to rehabilitate existing structures to create single room occupancy (SRO) housing for homeless individuals of very low income, with shared spaces.

**Hope VI** – provides grants to Public Housing Authorities to destroy severely distressed public housing units and replace them with new units or dramatically rehabilitate existing units. It hopes to relocate residents in order to integrate low and middle-income communities. It also provides community and supportive services.

**Public Housing** – the goal is to provide rental housing for low-income families, elderly and disabled individuals. Rents are based on resident's anticipated gross annual income less any deductions.

**HOME** – provides formula grants to states and localities that communities use to fund a range of activities that build, buy, or rehabilitate affordable housing units for rent or ownership.

**Section 502** – makes loans to low- and very low-income households in rural areas to build, repair, renovate, or relocate houses, including mobile/manufactured homes. Funds can be used to purchase and prepare sites and to pay for necessities such as water supply and sewage disposal.

**Section 515** – provides direct, competitive mortgage loans to provide affordable multifamily rental housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income families, and elderly and disabled individuals. It is primarily a direct mortgage program but funds can also be used to improve land and water and waste disposal systems.

**Section 514/516** – loans and grants used to buy, build, improve, or repair housing for farm laborers, including persons whose income is earned in aquaculture and those involved in on-farm processing. Funds can be used to purchase a site or leasehold interest in a site, to construct or repair housing, day care facilities, or community rooms, to pay fees to purchase durable household furnishings and pay construction loan interest.

➤ **State of Wisconsin – Department of Administration (Bureau of Housing)**

**Home Rehabilitation and Accessibility (HRA)** – provides Federal HOME funds to participating agencies to make repairs and improvements needed to bring dwellings, owned and occupied by low-income households, up to appropriate housing quality standards and provide accessibility modifications.

**Home Buyer Rehabilitation (HBR)** – funds provided through local agencies for the lowest income households either in grant or loan formats for a wide variety of local affordable housing activities.

**Rental Housing Development (RHD)** – Provides additional information to HUD’s HOME program for requirements on funding. These funds are used to provide direct competitive mortgages in order to establish affordable multi-family housing for very low-, low- and moderate-income families, and elderly and disabled individuals.

**Rental Housing Development (RHD)** – funds provided through HUD’s HOME program to make repairs or improvements to rental units leased to persons who have low or very low incomes.

**Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI)** – funds set aside to assist low or moderate income persons of families to secure affordable, decent, safe and sanitary housing by defraying some of the housing costs.

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** – funds made available to local units of government that are deemed most in need of assistance for housing rehabilitation and/or limited other housing activities. The funds are awarded to a local governmental unit, which in turn, provides zero interest, deferred payment loans for housing assistance to low- to moderate-income homeowners.

**Community Development Block Grant - Emergency Assistance Program (CDBG-EAP)** - Funds are to be directed to eligible units of government throughout the State that are in need of assistance due to a natural or manmade disaster. Funds are to be used to provide housing assistance to low- to moderate-income homeowners to address the damage caused by the disaster.

- **Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)** offers two specific programs to assist individuals with their homeownership needs: HOME and Home Improvement Loans. The HOME program provides competitive mortgages to potential homeowners with fixed below-market interest rates to qualified candidates. The Home Improvement Loan program provides funding up to \$17,500 to qualified candidates for rehabilitation and other various housing activities. These funds are provided at below-market fixed interest rates for up to 15 years with no prepayment penalties. The properties must be at least 10 years old and the applicants must meet the income limits established by WHEDA for the county they reside within.
- **Other Programs** – Other programs that may be considered for housing assistance are provided by various agencies throughout the State, including Rural Development components of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Sauk County.

#### **4.11 Housing Goal, Objectives and Policies**

##### **Housing Goal:**

Have well-maintained housing that will enhance the country flavor of the Town and reflect a balance between housing and natural resources, reflect a balance between land housing and agriculture, reflect a common sense of values, and minimize negative impacts on others.

##### **Housing Objectives and Policies:**

HO-1 Encourage new housing adjacent to current housing.

HP-1a Areas of the Town that are appropriate for high density residential development are limited to those lands within the Reedsburg ET District and lands contiguous to the boundaries of the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom. This does not include conservation subdivisions.

HO-2 Develop appropriate regulations to meet the housing goal.

HP-2a Permitting for proposed housing should be easier for plans that are environmentally friendly.

HP-2b Provide educational materials to persons seeking development permits to assure the policies of the Township are understood and will allow the proposed development.

HP-2c For “cluster” developments, the question of common or individual well and common or individual septic systems needs to be considered.

HO-3 Development should retain the present environment, conserve natural resources, and require rural lifestyle infrastructure services.

HP-3a Encourage the location and grouping of housing on lands not suitable for agriculture (cluster development).

HP-3b Proposed development that changes the agricultural landscape shall be discouraged.

HO-4 Educate new and existing residents on farm life, farm noises, odors, and operational requirements prior to granting permits for the construction of new rural residences.

HP-4a Provide educational materials to persons seeking development permits to assure the agriculture ways of life are made available before the proposed permits are approved.

HP-4b Prior to the approval of a Town building permit, the Town Clerk will provide educational materials for people seeking a residential permit for housing to raise their awareness and understanding of the quality of life in a rural society that includes agriculture, hunting, and outdoor recreation, as well as of the businesses permitted in the township.

## 5.0 Purpose

While manufacturing and retail trade occupations represented the majority of employment activities in the Town of Excelsior in 2000, farming and agricultural activities continue to represent an important form of economic activity, and for some Excelsior residents, a primary way of life. Excelsior’s farmland and farming operations have been traditionally passed down to succeeding generations. As in most of Wisconsin, the local agricultural community faces many challenges. Because of its proximity to the City of Reedsburg, the Town of Excelsior has begun to experience an increased rate of rural residential development, more so than in many other parts of Sauk County. Along with this residential development rate, increases in property value assessments, increasing health care costs, and stagnant farm prices have compounded recent challenges to the agriculture industry.



From being a viable employment opportunity and lifestyle for many, the future of Excelsior’s agricultural economy is now in question. While rural residential development can provide an opportunity for landowners to realize some immediate economic value from their land, if done without careful thought, such land divisions may conflict with adjacent agricultural land uses and contribute to the loss of prime farmland in the Town of Excelsior.

This section highlights some of the trends in agriculture from a local, county and state perspective. More importantly, it provides guidance to the Town to allow for a specified amount of rural residential development that is compatible with continued agriculture land uses.

## 5.1 Regional and Local Trends in Agriculture

From 1987 to 1997, the estimated number of farms in Sauk County decreased from 1,502 to 1,452 (by 3.33%). The average size for farms in Sauk County also decreased from 246 acres in 1987 to 229 acres in 1997. During the same time period, the estimated number of farms in the State of Wisconsin decreased from 75,131 to 65,602, (by 12.68%), while the average size of farms increased from 221 acres to 227 acres.

**Table A1: Trends in Average Size of Farms**

Sauk County Farms				Wisconsin Farms			
Year	Approximate Number of Farms	Average Size of Farm in Acres	Percent Change in Average Size	Year	Approximate Number of Farms	Average Size of Farm in Acres	Percent Change in Average Size
1987	1,502	246		1987	75,131	221	
1992	1,383	243	-1.22%	1992	67,959	228	3.17%
1997	1,452	229	-5.76%	1997	65,602	227	-0.44%

Source: Wisconsin County Agricultural trends in the 1990's, Prepared by PATS, UW Madison, August 2001  
From 1990 to 1997, the estimated number of farms in Excelsior increased from 76 to 89, while the number of dairy farms decreased from 36 to 23. In Sauk County, both farms and dairy farms have decreased. The estimated number of farms per square mile in 1997 is similar for the Town and the

County. For dairy farm density, the Town had 0.7 dairy farms per square mile and the County had 0.6 dairy farms per square mile.

**Table A2: Trends in Farm Numbers**

	Estimated Farm Numbers				Dairy Farm Numbers			
	1990	1997	% change	Estimated Farms per square mile	1989	1997	% change	Dairy Farms per Square Mile, 1997
Excelsior	76	89	17.1%	2.6	36	23	-36.1%	0.7
Sauk County	1597	1507	-5.6%	1.9	687	475	-30.9%	0.6

Source: Wisconsin Town Land Use Databook, Prepared by the Program on Agriculture Technology Studies (PATs), UW Madison, September 1999 – Wisconsin Agriculture Statistics Service in cooperation with the WI Department of Agriculture

The estimated number of farms for Sauk County illustrated in the *Charts A1 Trends in Average Size of Farm and A2 Trends in Farm Numbers* differs. This is due to different methodologies used for estimating the number of farms in Sauk County by the Program on Agricultural Technology Studies (PATs), UW Madison, and Census of Agriculture.

## 5.2 Land in Agriculture Use

Land sales in the Town of Excelsior, Sauk County, and State of Wisconsin, indicate that 3,709 acres of farmland were sold in the Town of Excelsior from 1990-1997. Of the acreage sold, 747 acres were diverted out of agricultural uses at an average price per acre of \$1,007, between 1990 and 1997. As a point of reference, the Town of Ironton had the highest amount of land converted out of agriculture at 1,520 acres, while the Town of Sumpter had the lowest amount at only 88 acres.

**Table A3: Agriculture Land Sales, Town of Excelsior, Sauk County, and State of Wisconsin**

	Agriculture Land Continuing in Agriculture Use			Agricultural Land Being Diverted to Other Uses			Total of all Agriculture Land		
	Number of Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars Per Acre	Number of Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars per Acre	Number of Transactions	Acres Sold	Dollars Per Acre
Town of Excelsior 1990-1997	N/A	2,962	\$963	N/A	747	\$1,007	64	3,709	\$976
Sauk County 1990-1997	N/A	50,947	\$914	N/A	16,130	\$1,124	1,103	67,077	\$979
Sauk County 2001	33	2,017	\$2,511	19	642	\$2,712	52	2,670	\$2,560
State of Wisconsin 2001	1,974	126,404	\$2,060	993	49,337	\$3,448	2,967	175,741	\$2,450

Source: Wisconsin Town Land Use Databook, Prepared by the Program on Agriculture Technology Studies (PATs), UW Madison, September 1999 – Wisconsin Agriculture Statistics Service in cooperation with the WI Department of Agriculture

### 5.3 Production Trends

During 1999, the average yield for field corn for Sauk County differed by only 1 bushel per acre from that of the State. The average difference for corn silage is 1 ton per acre. Alfalfa yield in Sauk County was 0.3 tons per acre less than the State, 0.5 tons per acre forages harvested, and 0.2 tons per acre more for soybean yields.

**Tables A4 & A5: Production trends: Sauk County & State of Wisconsin**

Farm Production Trends, 1999	Forage/Feed							
	Alfalfa		Other Forages	All Forage Harvested		Soybeans		Small Grains (Oats, barley, wheat)
	Acres	Yield	Acres	Acres	Yield	Acres	Yield	Acres
Sauk County	715	4.1	8,100	79,600	4.6	24,500	48	7,300
State of Wisconsin	3,000,000	4.4	600,000	3,600,000	4.1	1,300,000	46	485,000

Farm Production Trends, 1999	Corn				
	Field Corn		Corn Silage		Total Corn
	Acres	Yield	Acres	Yield	acres
Sauk County	66,000	144	15,100	16	81,100
State of Wisconsin	2,850,000	143	730,000	17	3,580,000

Source: Wisconsin County Agricultural trends in the 1990's, Prepared by PATS, UW Madison, August 2001

The number of dairy cows, the total milk produced by them, and the number of dairy herds decreased for both the County and the State from 1991-1999, while the productivity of the herds increased from 1991 to 1999 for both the County and the State.

**Table A6: Dairy Production Trends: Sauk County & State of Wisconsin**

1999	Dairy Trends, Sauk County and Wisconsin							
	Net Change, 1991 - 1999				Percent Change, 1991 - 1999			
	Number of Cows	Total Milk Produced	Herd Productivity	Number of Dairy Herds	Number of Cows	Total Milk Produced	Herd Productivity	Number of Dairy Herds
Sauk County 1991 - 1997	-6,300	-4,060	2,800	-233	-17.10%	-0.80%	19.70%	-35.00%
State of Wisconsin 1991 - 1997	-388,000	-1,329,000	2,983	-12,103	-22.10%	-5.40%	21.40%	-37.20%

Source: Wisconsin County Agricultural trends in the 1990's, Prepared by PATS, UW Madison, August 2001

These statistics are reflective of the agricultural industry throughout the State of Wisconsin. Despite these changes, agricultural productivity has increased. Sauk County remains one of the State's leaders in terms

of production and revenue generated, according to a recent study completed in August, 2001, by the University of Wisconsin- Madison, entitled, “*Wisconsin County Agricultural Trends in the 1990s*”.

#### 5.4 Local Farm Numbers and Types

Even though farming and related agricultural activities are declining, they still are a significant economic activity in the Town. Farmers in the Town of Excelsior produce a variety of agricultural commodities including dairy, beef production, animal feed such as corn, alfalfa and soybeans as well as a number of cash crops. Historical data shows that the total number of dairy farms has declined significantly. In 1997 there were 23 dairy farms, down from 32 dairy farms in 1989.

#### 5.5 Farmland Preservation Program

The Farmland Preservation Program was established by the State of Wisconsin and was designed to help local governments that wish to preserve farmland through local planning and zoning by providing tax relief to farmers who participate. In the late 1970’s, Sauk County produced a Farmland Preservation Plan as a requirement to enter the program. Although the Town of Excelsior did not adopt Exclusive Agriculture Zoning to qualify the Town’s farmers to take part in this program, stand-alone contracts are still permitted. These individual contracts include approximately 548 acres, with most contracts extending beyond 2010 through 2020.

#### 5.6 Land Capability Classification

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations and means for agricultural practices in the Town of Excelsior. The USDA-NRCS groups soils suitable for agriculture based on the most suitable land for producing food, feed, fiber, forage and oilseed crops. When classifying soils, consideration is given to the limitations of the soil, its risk of damage, and its response to treatment. In general, the fewer the limitations, the more suitable the soil is for agricultural use. **Map5-1 Land Capability Classification** depicts the soils by classifications for the Town of Excelsior.

Approximately 46% of the soils in the Town of Excelsior are Class I, II, or III soils. Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use.

Class II soils have some limitations such as wetness, erosion, or droughtiness that require conservation practices. They are cultivated with a few simple precautions. Class III soils have many limitations with special management practices required.

**Table A7: Soil Class and Acreage of in the Town of Excelsior**

Town of Excelsior Land Capability Classification		
Soil Class	Acres	Percent of Total Land Area
Class I	571	2.62%
Class II	3,970	18.22%
Class III	5,530	25.38%
Class IV	4,825	22.14%
Class V	0	0.00%
Class VI	4,296	19.72%
Class VII	958	4.40%
Class VIII	1,639	7.52%
Total	21,789	100.00%

Source: Sauk County Planning & Zoning

Approximately 42 % of the soils in the Town of Excelsior are Class IV, V, and VI soils. Class IV soils have severe limitations that require careful management. Class V soils are suited mainly to pasture due to permanent limitations such as wetness or stoniness. Class VI soils have limitations that make them generally unsuited for cultivation and limit use to pasture, woodland or wildlife.

Approximately 12% of the soils in the Town of Excelsior are Class VII and VIII soils. Class VII soils have very severe limitations that restrict their use to pasture, woodland and wildlife. Class VIII soils (includes open water), with very severe limitations, have use restricted to recreation and wildlife.

As a general reference, *Map 5-2 Prime Farmland/Slope Delineation* defines prime farmland as having Class I and Class II soils. Approximately 21% of the soils on this map are indicated as prime farmland. Soils that require other management practices to be considered prime farmland are also indicated as such on the map.

### 5.7 Agriculture Infrastructure



The agricultural industry in the Town of Excelsior is supported by a diverse agricultural infrastructure within the area. Although most agriculture-supporting enterprises are not located within the Town, they can be easily accessed in the nearby trade centers.

### 5.8 Alternative Agricultural Opportunities

Despite the change in the number of farmers, farm size and the price of farmland, agricultural productivity has increased. According to a recent study completed in August 2001, by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, entitled, “Wisconsin County Agricultural Trends in the 1990’s”, Sauk County remains one of the State’s leaders in terms of agricultural production and revenue generated.

Overall, changes to technology, machinery and agricultural practices have improved agricultural industry efficiency. In addition, it is more common for farms to concentrate their efforts on certain niche markets such as the production of organic, and non-traditional commodities such as specialty meats, artisan cheeses and varied forest products. The promotion of locally produced products, community supported agriculture, and direct marketing to the public, local restaurants, school districts, cooperatives and retail grocery cooperatives expands opportunities for the industry.



Other examples of agricultural alternatives include agri-tourism/bed and breakfast establishments, recreational activities and agriculture-related cottage industries. The Town of Excelsior has adopted policies that support alternative agriculture and related opportunities.

## 5.9 Federal, State and Local Programs and Resources

There are numerous programs and resources available through federal, state and local agencies that provide assistance to farmers to help ensure agricultural sustainability. These programs should not be looked at individually, as a possible solution to ensure the viability of agriculture, but rather as small components of the collective system aimed at preserving all scales of farming operations.

### ➤ **Purchase of Development Rights Program**

The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a concept employed in communities across the country in which a public agency (such as the local or county government) or a private non-profit conservation organization compensates private landowners who voluntarily agree to permanently extinguish their rights to develop their property for residential or commercial use.

A legal agreement called a Conservation Easement is executed by the parties and recorded with the Register of Deeds as part of the permanent land record for that property. Agriculture, forestry, recreation and other traditional uses of the land are typically permitted, within the parameters of approved soil and water conservation plans and/or forestry stewardship plans.

Sauk County has already implemented the Baraboo Range Protection Program (BRPP) to purchase development rights from willing sellers whose land lies within the boundaries of the Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark (BRNNL), as it existed in March of 1999. Other local organizations work with willing landowners to protect properties outside the BRNNL as well, including some properties in the Town of Excelsior.

### ➤ **Federal Programs and Resources**

Below are some examples of federal programs and resources, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that can provide assistance to farm operators in the Town of Excelsior. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) are agencies within the USDA that provide consultation and local administration of these programs and resources within Sauk County. In addition, these agencies also provide technical assistance and staffing to develop farm conservation plans and other management tools.

- **Farmland and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)** provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with State, tribal or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market easement value.
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally sensitive land. Producers in CRP plant long-term, resource conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. In return, FSA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.
- **Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. Like CRP, CREP is administered by the USDA's FSA.

- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost effective manner. The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. The program offers three options, including a permanent easement, a 30-Year Easement or a Restoration Cost Share Agreement.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promote agriculture production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of 10 years.
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** is a voluntary program that encourages creation of high quality wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of National, State, Tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical assistance to landowners and others to develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat in areas on their property.

➤ **State and Local Programs and Resources**

In addition to the federal programs, several state and local programs and resources are available to aid in the sustainability of agricultural operations in the Town of Excelsior. These programs are supported by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX), and local organizations such as the Sauk County Development Corporation and the Sauk County Land Conservation Department. A few examples of these programs and resources include:

- **Farmland Preservation Program** which provides tax credits to farms of 35 acres or more under Farmland Preservation contracts, having a farm income of not less than \$6000 for each of the last three years, and which operations are in compliance with county soil and water conservation programs. *Map 5-3 Town of Excelsior Farmland Preservation Plan Map* describes lands generally identified by the Town for long-term agricultural protection under the Farmland Preservation Program.
- **Wisconsin's Use Value Tax System** provides tax relief to agricultural landowners by assessing property value in terms of crop production and agricultural market prices, not current real estate market trends or non-farm development potential.
- **Agriculture Development Zone (South-Central)** is a new agricultural economic development program in the State of Wisconsin that provides tax credits to farm operators and business owners who make new investments in agricultural operations. These tax incentives are offered for three basic categories of investment including job creation, environmental remediation, or capital investments in technology/new equipment. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce administers this program.
- **Wildlife Abatement and Claim Program** is a county-administered program to assist landowners with excessive levels of agricultural crop damage from deer, bears, geese, or turkeys.
- **SavorWisconsin.com** is a program offshoot of Governor Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin" initiative, designed to enhance the state's economy. To help accomplish this, several steps have been taken to emphasize the purchase of locally grown, produced, and manufactured products to support

Wisconsin's local producers and businesses. With this, SavorWisconsin.com started in late 2002 and is guided by DATCP, UWEX and the Wisconsin Apple Growers Association. The website highlights and promotes many of Wisconsin's smaller and independent agricultural producers as well as agriculture-related events Statewide.

### **5.10 Agriculture Goal, Objectives and Policies**

#### **Agriculture Resources Goal:**

Maintain an economically and environmentally sustainable agriculture industry, both animal and crop based, and preserve farmland.

#### **Agriculture Resources Objectives and Policies**

ARO-1 Educate new and existing residents on farm life, farm noises, odors, and operational requirements prior to granting permits for the construction of new rural residences.

ARP-1a Provide educational materials to persons seeking development permits to assure the agriculture ways of life are made available before the proposed permits are approved.

ARO-2 Maintain an environment for economically viable agriculture.

ARO-3 Maintain an environment for environmentally sustainable agriculture.

ARO-4 Preserve Farmland

ARP-4a The Town recommends that the county appeal to the state Land and Water Conservation Board to amend the Town's Agriculture Preservation Plan map (*Map 5-3*) to be consistent with this Comprehensive Plan.

## 6.0 Purpose

The Town of Excelsior supports and utilizes an effective array of utilities (such as phone and Internet service) and public facilities including parks, a swimming pool, churches and an elementary school located in the Village of Rock Springs. The Town also supports and utilizes services provided by both the County and School District. In addition to utilities and services, Excelsior has many historic attributes. These attributes provide insight into the Town's past and serve to ground the community as it builds upon its future. This section of the Plan summarizes the Town's utilities, public facilities and significant community cultural and historical resources.

## 6.1 Water Supply and Private On-site Waste Disposal Systems

All residents in the Town of Excelsior are served by private wells (note: there are currently no service agreements with the City of Reedsburg/Village of Rock Springs/North Freedom). Sauk County recently worked with the Wisconsin Geological Survey office on a groundwater study. The study includes information pertaining to volumes and quality as well as typical movement patterns, wellhead protection areas, and contamination issues. According to information obtained from Wisconsin and neighboring states, a low probability of significant groundwater pollution from private on-site sewage treatment systems occurs in housing developments with a density less than one house per two acres. There is a high probability of groundwater pollution where homes are located at a density greater than one house per acre. Given the soil types in the region and the mix of agricultural fields with forested areas and a low-density development pattern, groundwater contamination is assumed to be at a minimum. Exceptions include the densely developed area around Lake Virginia, which may exhibit impacts from private septic systems, and some lands adjacent to the Sauk County Landfill, which has been subject to scrutiny regarding groundwater contamination.

Overall, the disposal of domestic wastewater in the Town is handled through the use of individual Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS), or septic systems, which generally collect solids in a septic tank and discharge gray water to a drain field. Based on the requirements set forth by the State of Wisconsin COMM 83 and in Sauk County, all residential units with running water and plumbing fixtures must have an approved means of wastewater disposal. Because the Town of Excelsior is not served by a sanitary sewer system, the only current means of service is via POWTSs.

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning, regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of all POWTS systems in the Town of Excelsior. In 2000, the State adopted a revised private sewage system Code commonly referred to as Comm. 83. This new requirement permits the continued use of conventional systems as well as alternative systems, such as those that employ the use of biological or aerate treatment. It also stipulates system inspections every three years to ensure compliance with installation and operation requirements.

Typically, these alternative systems permit development of land areas that previously would not support a conventional system. A comparison of lands that previously could not support a POWTS under conventional technologies to those that can support alternative systems is illustrated in *Map 6-1 Septic Suitability* and *Map 6-2 Alternative Septic Suitability*. In early 2003, Sauk County revised its Private Sewage System Ordinance to allow the use of alternative systems.

As a general explanation, *Map 6-1 Septic Suitability* shows soil suitability for conventional POWTS in the Town of Excelsior. The suitability classifications, ranging from very low to high suitability, are determined based on information obtained from the Sauk County Land Conservation Department's Land Evaluation System, as monitored by the NRCS office. These classifications are

based on average slope, depth to soil saturation, average depth to bedrock, and flooding potential. As a general observation, soils that fall within or near the category of most suitable are best suited for conventional POWTS. Soils that fall within or near the category of least suitable may be candidates for alternative POWTS, or may not be structured to support any POWTS.

Caution should be advised that while areas of sandy soils most commonly appear to be most suitable for POWTS, there is a danger of groundwater contamination with nitrates and bacteria, particularly when a cluster of homes are proposed and wells are placed down groundwater flow from POWTS. Additionally, POWTS are not well suited in areas of shallow soils with bedrock that is close to the surface. Although new septic technologies can now facilitate the installation of septic systems in these shallow soils areas, these septic systems also pose a greater potential threat of groundwater contamination, especially in highly developed areas.

Excelsior does have areas of sandy soils and of shallow soils close to bedrock. Private septic systems in areas of sandy and/or shallow soils may threaten surface water quality. In terms of lake development in areas of shallow soils, leachate from septic drainfields may not percolate through the soil as is intended, instead encountering an impermeable layer (i.e., bedrock) and traveling laterally to enter the lake. Whether this is an actual threat to the surface waters in Excelsior is unknown at this time, however preventative measures can be taken with the installation of new systems and replacement of failed systems. Systems should be sited as far from the water resource as possible. Shared septic systems must be sited in an area having suitable soils, and require verification that a new technology septic system will in fact adequately treat wastewater. These types of evaluations and any regulations guiding the placement of septic systems are best handled by a Lake Association and adopted in a revised set of bylaws/covenants.

## **6.2 Solid Waste Disposal/Recycling**

Solid waste disposal sites, or landfills, are potential sources of groundwater pollution in Sauk County. In 2000, the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning conducted an inventory to verify the number of active and inactive or abandoned landfill sites. According to that process, it was determined that Sauk County has 15 active landfill sites throughout the County, including sites for brush disposal. In addition, more than 40 sites were identified as abandoned sites. One of those 40 sites, the old Sauk County Landfill, is located in the Town of Excelsior in sections 14 and 15. Groundwater contamination has been detected at this site, but currently no active remediation program is in place. Future uses for the Landfill site are being discussed between Sauk County and the Town of Excelsior.

Currently, the Town of Excelsior contracts with Town & Country Sanitation, which provides solid waste and recycling services for Town residents. The Town hosts a drop-off site located off Thompson Road. Currently solid waste handled by Town & Country is brought to a transfer station in Lone Rock and finally to a sanitary landfill located in the Janesville area.

## **6.3 Septage Waste Disposal**

The State of Wisconsin requires that homeowners pump their septic tanks on a 3-year basis to prolong the life of a POWTS and ensure optimal efficiency and protection of groundwater. Holding tanks are pumped on a regular basis, typically bi-monthly. Disposal methods of septage vary from deposition into a licensed municipal sewage treatment plant to land spreading. Land spreading requires special permits issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Part of this permitting process examines land area, soil types, and crops grown to ensure that natural resources in the area will be

protected from such activity. Additionally, the permitting process ensures the protection of human health from viruses and pathogens contained in the septage.

#### **6.4 Town Hall and Garage**

The Excelsior Town Hall is located on Commercial Street in the Village of Rock Springs. The town owns no road maintenance or construction equipment at this time.



#### **6.5 Law Enforcement**

The Sauk County Sheriff's Department serves as the primary law enforcement agency to Town residents. Patrol officers are assigned general service areas within the county. These law enforcement services are considered adequate.

#### **6.6 Emergency Services**

The Town of Excelsior is served by four emergency service districts including 153, 177, 184, and 186. District 153 includes a small eastern portion of the Town and is covered by the Lake Delton Ambulance Service. District 177 is located in the northwestern part of the Town and is covered by the Reedsburg Ambulance service. District 184 includes the far southwestern corner of the Town and is covered by the Reedsburg Ambulance Service. District 186 is located in the southeastern quarter of the town and is covered by the Baraboo Area Ambulance Service. The entire Town is within the Reedsburg Area Fire district, which contracts with the North Freedom Fire District to serve some areas in the southeastern part of the Town. Jurisdictional boundaries of these respective services can be noted on *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Boundaries*.

#### **6.7 Library**

The Town of Excelsior and surrounding communities are served by the South Central Wisconsin Library System through Sauk County. The primary library utilized by the Town is the Reedsburg Public Library located in the City of Reedsburg. The library hosts a collection of historic photographs of the area. The Baraboo City Library, which contains a variety of books, and the Kilbourn Library in the City of Wisconsin Dells provide literary options for the residents of Excelsior.

#### **6.8 Communication, Electric Utilities and Heating Fuel**

Telephone, Internet and e-mail service is provided by Verizon. Wireless communication facilities are becoming increasingly popular in the area, but service is difficult due to a lack of infrastructure investment by private wireless communication companies.

Electrical power service in the Town is provided by Alliant Energy. Homes heated by natural gas comprise 13.2% of the total households in Excelsior. Heating fuel is also provided through contracts with independent fuel dealers with roughly 62.5% of residents utilizing LP/Propane, or fuel oil (12.6%). Heating fuel from wood and biomass sources includes 45 households or 8.5% of the town's residents. The remaining households utilize electricity (2.4%).

## 6.9 Medical Facilities

The Town of Excelsior is primarily served by four medical facilities including the Reedsburg Area Medical Center located at 2000 North Dewey Avenue which provides a modern facility with 53 acute care beds, 50 long-term care beds, and eight day care surgery beds. The Emergency Department at the Reedsburg Medical Center is staffed 24-hours a day with specially trained emergency room physicians. St. Clare Hospital is located at 707 14th St, Baraboo, WI. The hospital has over 100 physicians on its active and consulting medical staff. St. Clare offers acute care services as well as a wide range of other services including chemical dependency treatment, mental health services for older adults, and hemodialysis.

St Joseph's Community Health Services and Hospital, located at 400 Water Avenue in Hillsboro provides range of health services including nursing home care and emergency stabilization service for a rural population of roughly 18,000 people. Hess Memorial Hospital (part of Mile Bluff Medical Center) located at 1050 Division Street in Mauston provides evening and weekend Urgent Care and 24-hour emergency care. The Hess Hospital/Medical Center is the only hospital located in Juneau County and provides service to roughly 55, 000 people.

## 6.10 Educational Facilities

### ➤ Primary Educational Facilities

The Town of Excelsior is divided into two public school districts. The Reedsburg School District incorporates the western and northern two-thirds of the Town while the Baraboo School District includes the southeastern part of the Town. *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Boundaries* shows the exact location of these boundaries. While the majority of school aged children attend one of the two districts, parochial schools also offer a schooling option as well as increasing involvement in home schooling opportunities.

#### • Reedsburg School District

The Reedsburg School District has located most of its schools in the City of Reedsburg. The Reedsburg High School located at 1100 S. Albert Avenue, Webb Middle School located at 707 N. Webb Avenue; Pineview Elementary School located at 1121 8<sup>th</sup> Street; South Elementary School located at 420 Plum Avenue; Westside Elementary School located at 401 Alexander Avenue; Ironton/La Valle Elementary School at 109 River Street in the Village of La Valle. The public schools in this district serve approximately 2,486 students in grades K-12.

According to Reedsburg School Administration, due to the construction of the new high school and the addition to Westside Elementary School, the school system has no current overcrowding issues. South Elementary School remains the oldest structure in the district, but will remain in use for the foreseeable future.

#### • Baraboo School District

The Baraboo School District is located at 101 Second Avenue in the City of Baraboo. The district has four K-5 elementary schools, one kindergarten center, one K-1 charter school, one middle school and one high school. Baraboo High School is located on 1201 Draper Street, Baraboo, and has just over 1,000 students. The Young Middle School is located on 1531 Draper Street in Baraboo, and has

approximately 700 students. Three of the elementary schools are located in Baraboo, and one is in the Village of North Freedom.

- **Parochial Schools**

Sacred Heart Catholic School, located at North Oak Street; and St Peter's Lutheran School, at 346 N. Locust Street, are two private schools located in the City of Reedsburg. St. John's Lutheran School, located in Baraboo is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran School is located in Wonewoc. St. Joseph's Catholic School is at 310 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in Baraboo. Pine View Seventh-Day Adventist Elementary is located at 754 Gulch Avenue in Wisconsin Dells.

- **Secondary Educational Facilities**

The Town of Excelsior is within commuting distance of two two-year year college campuses including:

*UW-Baraboo/Sauk County and UW-Richland Center/Richland County* offers freshman/sophomore-level university instruction leading to an Associate of Arts degree. After building an academic foundation at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County, students can continue their work towards a bachelor's degree at a UW campus or other school of their choice. UW-Baraboo has a continuing education program that offers a variety of non-credit seminars, workshops and short courses. The programs range from computer applications and communication to theater and art field trips.

*Madison Area Technical College / Reedsburg* has over 4,000 students served annually. MATC Reedsburg provides technical and workplace skills training. The college awards associate degrees, technical diplomas, certificates and apprenticeships, and offers classes that transfer to four-year degree programs. Programs are offered in accounting, administrative assistance, business mid-management, business software application, childcare education, farm and production management, nursing and supervisory management. The college offers apprenticeships in electrical and machine maintenance, and tool and die. MATC also offers customized labor training for local businesses.

- **Childcare Facilities**

There are no commercial childcare facilities located in the Town of Excelsior. Formal childcare is available in nearby communities such as the Village of North Freedom, the City of Reedsburg, the City of Baraboo, the City of Wisconsin Dells, and the Village of Lake Delton. Informal care may be available locally with neighbors, family, and friends.

### **6.11 Recreational Facilities**

There is a portion of Mirror Lake State Park within the Town of Excelsior, located in the northeast corner of the Town just off Highway 23. The park contains a boat landing, a fishing pier, playground, beach, and picnic area in the Town of Delton. It also has handicapped-accessible restrooms, trails, and camping available. The Baraboo River flows through the southwestern quarter of the Town of Excelsior and the Village of Rock Springs. There are numerous river access points. The Baraboo River, the longest restored free-flowing river in the Midwest, is a well-known canoe trail. The Village of Rock Springs maintains Wiedman Park on County Road 154 west of the Village.

### 6.12 Cemeteries and Churches

(locations of each are identified on *Map 6-3 Community and Cultural Resources*)

### 6.13 Historical and Cultural Structures and Areas (locations of each are identified on *Map 6-3 Community and Cultural Resources*)

#### ➤ Historic Schools

- **Jopp School** was originally a log schoolhouse on the S.J. Jopp farm. School was first taught there in 1854. The log building was to be replaced by a frame building on the same property in 1873. In 1942 the school district was consolidated with another, and then in 1960 the school closed when the district joined the Baraboo schools.
- **Pleasant Valley School** was originally located in section 25 when it started out in the 1850's, but moved to section 26 as shown on an 1877 map. In 1883 a new schoolhouse was built, as well as in 1934. The school closed in 1955, and was remodeled into a private home. Following the closing students were sent to North Freedom.
- **Oak Grove School** opened in the 1850's near the center of section 35 on Highway 136. In 1894 a new building was constructed. In 1951 the school closed and students were sent to North Freedom. The old schoolhouse is now a private home.
- **Metcalf School** has a brief history. The school opened somewhere between 1861 and 1877, and was closed already in the 1880's. Students were sent to Excelsior School and Montgomery School. Originally the schoolhouse was located in the northeast quarter of section 8. The school was used as a church and eventually to the corner of Highway 33 and Chapel road. The old schoolhouse was torn down and replaced by a new church known as Excelsior Chapel.
- **Excelsior School** was originally known as Red School when it was put up in 1855. It was located in the northeast quarter of section 17. In 1877 the school was relocated to the west central region of section 17. In 1914 the schoolhouse was replaced with a modern building made of concrete. The school closed in 1962 and the area was added to the Reedsburg School District. The schoolhouse was remodeled for residential purposes.
- **Butterfield School** was built in 1862 on the corner of Highway 23 and Coon Bluff Road in section 2. In 1960 students were sent to the Reedsburg School District, and the school was converted to a private home.
- **Montgomery School** dates back to 1857, and was located in the northwest quarter of section 5 on Briar Bluff Road. The school was closed during the 1949-1952 terms and again for the 1953-1954 terms due to low attendance. It finally closed for good in 1955. The school building was sold to a farmer in a different location who uses it as a garage.
- **Rock Springs/ Ableman School** was originally a log cabin built in the mid 1850's. In 1871 a new schoolhouse was built on the corner of River and Maple Streets. In 1974 another new school was built. The school is still used today and is located at 306 Elm Street in Rock Springs and is part of the Reedsburg School District.

➤ **Other Historic Structures or Areas**

- **Van Hise Rock** is listed on the National Register of Historic places. It played a key role in the history of geology as Charles Van Hise used this remnant to interpret the major structural features of the metamorphosed Precambrian rocks of the entire Wisconsin River Valley, or Baraboo District. It has long served and continues to serve as a hands-on field laboratory for professional geologists and students.
- **Ableman's Gorge:** The Upper Narrows of the Baraboo River, sometimes called Ableman's Gorge, is a State Natural Area and one of the classic geological field localities in Wisconsin if not the entire world. It is a classic gorge cut by the Baraboo River through Baraboo quartzite, Cambrian sandstone, and conglomerate. The cliffs and rocky slopes rise about 200 feet above the river to form a wall nearly three-fourths of a mile long. The latter portion is 250-450 feet wide and is composed of irregular quartzite cliffs. Spectacular unconformable contacts with younger Cambrian sandstone can be seen on both the north and south sides of the Precambrian Baraboo quartzite. The exposures of the unconformity between the ancient quartzite and the overlying sandstone

- **Pioneer Log Village Museum** is a series of historic log buildings owned by the Reedsburg Area Historical Society. This is located on the north side of Highway 33 just west of Northwoods Drive.



**6.14 Historical and Cultural Programs and Resources**

- **Sauk County Historical Society** protects and maintains the history of the county by collecting and preserving historic artifacts, photographs and documents. The Historical Society has many community outreach programs, acts as a resource and research facility for local history and assists other Sauk County historical societies in pursuing their goals.

- **Sauk County Arts, Humanities and Historic Preservation Committee** provides funding through grant programs to community organizations and local governments seeking supplementary funds for local arts and history projects.
- **State of Wisconsin Historic Preservation Programs** provide several opportunities for cost sharing through grant and subgrant programs, through the Wisconsin Historical Society. These programs are dependent on variable annual funding sources.
- **Historic Preservation Subgrants** are available to governments and non-profit organizations for surveys to identify and evaluate historical, architectural and archaeological resources. These properties and districts can then be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Historic Preservation Tax Credit for Income-Producing Historic Buildings** is available to those who apply for and receive project approval before beginning physical work on the rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- **Historic Homeowner's Tax Credits** are available to those who apply for and receive project approval before beginning work on rehabilitating non-income personal residences.
- **Archaeological Sites Property Tax Exemption Program** provides tax exemption for owners of archaeological sites listed in the National or State Register of Historic places.
- **Jeffris Family Foundation** provides funding for bricks and mortar rehabilitation projects in Wisconsin's smaller communities.
- **Save America's Treasures** is a federal grant program for governments and non-profit organizations.

### **6.15 Utilities and Community Resources Goal, Objectives and Policies**

**Utilities and Community Resources Goal:** Maintain and enhance utilities, facilities, services, and community resources.

#### **Utilities and Community Resources Objectives and Policies:**

UCRO-1 Encourage the maintenance and improvement of the utility infrastructure.

UCRO-2 Encourage energy conservation and use of renewable energy.

UCRO-3 Protect archeological and historic structures and the overall rural character of the Town.

UCRO-4 Provide for the proper disposal and recycling of solid waste.

UCRO-5 Maintain service in a safe and efficient manner.

## 7.0 Purpose

Transportation networks affect development patterns in a community. Effective systems allow people and goods to move efficiently for employment and marketing, and provide a first opportunity for visitors to view the region’s scenic landscapes and history.



The Town of Excelsior is well served by a mix of state highways, county and town roads that provide convenient travel across the community and access to virtually every corner within it. Uses include automobile travel, farm machinery and occasional bike traffic. As rural non-agriculture homes are built, the use of transportation routes for residential purposes has increased. Other transportation options both within and outside of the Town are varied, including airports, special service transportation, recreational transportation, and trucking. This section summarizes existing transportation options available to Town residents as well as conditions of Town and County roads. *Map 7-1 Transportation* shows the location of all transportation options in the Town.

## 7.1 Principal Arterial, Collector Roadways and Local Roads

Transportation routes can be classified by both form and function. *Table T1 Excelsior Roadway Classification System Definitions* identifies each road in the town by its classification and purpose. *Table T2 Excelsior Roadway Classification System Descriptions* describes the location of each of these roads including its potential users.

**Table T1: Excelsior Roadway Classification System Definitions** (Source: Wisconsin DOT)

Town of Excelsior Roadway Classification System (Definition)		
Road	Classification	Definition
I-90/94, U.S. Hwy 12, State Road 33	Principal Arterial	Principal Arterials serve longer intra-urban trips and traffic traveling through urban areas. They carry high traffic volumes and provide links to major activity centers.
State Road 23, 154, 136 (part)	Minor Arterial	Provide intra-community continuity and service to trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials. The minor arterial system interconnects with the urban arterial system and provides system connections to rural collectors.
State Road 136 (part) County Roads I, PF, and D	Major Collectors (and) Minor Collectors	Provide both land access service and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These facilities collect traffic from the local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system in the central business district. In some areas of development and traffic density, the collector may include the street grid, which forms the basic unit for traffic circulation.
Remaining Town Roads, County Road DD	Local Roads	Comprise all facilities not on one of the higher systems. They primarily provide direct access to land and access to order systems. Local roads offer the lowest level of mobility, and through traffic movements are discouraged.

**Table T2: Excelsior Roadway Classification System Descriptions** (Source: Wisconsin DOT)

<b>Town of Excelsior Roadway Classification System (Description)</b>		
Road	Classification	Description
I-90/94	Regional Interstate Roadway Principal Arterial	Located 12 miles east of the Town of Excelsior, Interstate 90/94 serves as a regional controlled-access facility within Wisconsin. It is considered a backbone route, according to the Corridors 20/20 Plan, connecting major population and economic centers
U.S. Hwy 12, State Road 33	Regional Interstate Roadway Principal Arterial	Located 5 miles east of Excelsior, Highway 12 serves as a principal north-south arterial, connecting Wisconsin Dells with Dane County and carrying a large volume of both local and through traffic. State Road 33 connects the Wisconsin Dells and Baraboo areas with the City of Reedsburg. Highway 33 runs east to west in the northern part of the Town.
State Road 23, 136 (part) and 156	Regional State Roadway Minor Arterial	Located in the northeastern part of the Town, State Road 23 runs easterly to connect to Interstate 90/94. That part of State Road 136 from the eastern town boundary to the Village of Rock Springs and State Road 154 west of Rock Springs serve as a Minor Arterial.
State Road 136 (part) and County Roads I and PF	Local Roads Major Collectors	That part of State Road 136 north of Rock Springs serves as a major collector while County I and PF direct north/south traffic at the southern boundary to the Village of North Freedom.
County Road D	Local Roads Minor Collectors	County Road D is a north/south road just west of Rock Springs.
State Road DD and remaining Town Roads	Local Roads	Many of the remaining local roads include those less traveled rural stretches and which connect roads under a higher classification.

## 7.2 Airports

Although there are no airports located in the Town of Excelsior, three area airports are available for small passenger and freight service: The Tri-County Airport, the Reedsburg Municipal Airport and Baraboo-Dells Municipal Airport.

The Tri-County Airport, located off County Road JJ, is jointly owned and operated by the Counties of Richland, Iowa and Sauk and provides passenger and cargo service.

The Reedsburg Municipal Airport is paved with lighted runways of 4,900 and 2,650 feet in length. It is designated as a “Transport/Corporate” airport facility intended to serve corporate jets, small passenger and cargo jet aircraft used in regional service and small airplanes used in commuter air service.

The Baraboo Dells Municipal Airport is located about 13 miles away from the Town of Reedsburg near the intersection of Highway 33 and US Highway 12. It offers small passenger and freight service. It is jointly owned by the Cities of Baraboo and Wisconsin Dells, the Village of Lake Delton, and the Town of Delton. The City of Baraboo operates the Baraboo Dells Airport through a mutual

agreement. Improvements to the terminal building and hangars were recently completed, and additional expansion is planned for the future. The airport is equipped with paved and lighted runways suitable for recreational and small business aircraft. It also offers privately owned hangars on site, hangar lots for lease, outdoor airplane parking and airplane maintenance facilities.

The Dane County Regional Airport, located on the east side of the City of Madison, provides larger air carrier and passenger service and is approximately 1.5 hours from the Town.

### **7.3 Elderly, Disabled and Veteran Transportation**

Sauk County offers several specialized transportation assistance programs for persons who are elderly, disabled or veterans within the Town of Excelsior.

Persons who are elderly and disabled that are unable to transport themselves and who do not have family members or friends to drive them can take advantage of the Volunteer Driver Program by contacting the Sauk County Commission on Aging. This service is provided for medical, nutritional and personal business reasons. Individuals available for driving are encouraged to call.

Veterans in need of transportation assistance to a Veteran's Hospital or Clinic should contact the Veterans Service Office.

### **7.4 Other Transportation Options**

#### **➤ Trucking**

Trucking service is accommodated by the region's transportation network. There are several privately owned trucking operations within this area that meet the needs of the residents. Area freight services include LBS Expediting Services, QTI, Skinner Transfer Company, Sheba Transport, and Fever River Trucking, all located in the Reedsburg area. AARCO Equipment and Dells Best Transportation are located in the Wisconsin Dells area. Deppe Enterprises, Fly Trucking, M&E Trucking, and Morath Trucking are located in the Baraboo area.

#### **➤ Rail**

The Wisconsin and Southern rail line, a contractor of the Union Pacific Railway, serves the Town of Excelsior. It runs through the Village of Rock Springs and the southwest corner of the Town. The rail line travels through the Cities of Reedsburg and Baraboo, crosses the Wisconsin River in the Village of Merrimac then travels to the City of Madison. This is a Class 2 line rated for 25 mph service. Amtrak in Wisconsin Dells on the Canadian Pacific Railway provides passenger rail service to the area.

#### **➤ Bicycle and Recreational Trails (not in Excelsior)**

The 400 Recreational Trail, which begins in downtown Reedsburg, stretches for 22 miles along the Baraboo River between Reedsburg and Elroy. The trail is part of a 117-mile trail system that includes the Elroy-Sparta Trail, the La Crosse River Trail, and the Great River Trail in west-central Wisconsin. The 400 Trail was built on an abandoned railroad grade with packed limestone screenings and planked surface bridges. The trail is maintained by the Wisconsin Department



of Natural Resources and is managed by the Wildcat Mountain State Park office.

In 1990, the Wisconsin DNR created a management plan for the 400 Trail. The plan provides background information on the trail system including goals, annual objectives and additional benefits of the trail.

➤ **State of Wisconsin**

The State of Wisconsin provides for vanpooling opportunities with the requirement that at least two State employees are part of the pool. Once this criterion is met, any individual may become part of the vanpool.

### **7.5 Review of State, Regional and Other Applicable Plans**

The following is a review of local, state and regional plans and studies relevant to the Town that may affect the overall transportation system. The Town of Excelsior's transportation element incorporates these plans into the comprehensive plan in varying degrees to ensure an accurate reflection of the overall transportation system.

➤ **Translinks 21: A Multimodal Transportation Plan for Wisconsin's 21<sup>st</sup> Century (November, 1995)**

This plan provides a broad planning 'umbrella', including an overall vision and goals for transportation systems in Wisconsin for the next 25 years. The Plan recognizes U.S. Highway 12 as a 'Corridors 2020 Connector' route that is vital to the economic prosperity of the State. It also provides grant funding for local governments to develop transportation corridor management plans to deal with growth issues, State funding to assist small communities with transportation services for the elderly and disabled, and provides for a statewide assessment program for local road improvements.

➤ **LRIP: Local Roads Improvement Program (1991)**

One component of the LRIP is the Town Road Improvement Program (TRIP), which aids local town governmental units with improving seriously deteriorating town roads. A reimbursement program, TRIP pays up to 50% of total eligible costs and local governments provide the balance.

➤ **Wisconsin State Highway Plan (February, 2000)**

This plan focuses on the State Trunk Highway routes in Wisconsin (State Roads). Although the plan does not identify specific projects, it does set forth broad strategies and policies to improve the State's highway system. The plan also includes three main categories of emphasis: pavement and bridge preservation, traffic movement, and safety.

The Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation is currently conducting a corridor access study of the State Road 33 corridor. Town officials have been invited to participate in the study by meeting with WisDOT planners for discussions regarding current and future land use plans for the State Road 33 corridor.

➤ **2006-2012 Sauk County Highway Improvement Plan**

The Highway Improvement Program for Sauk County identifies and prioritizes specific county road improvement projects for the next six years. There are no scheduled County or State Highway improvements scheduled in Excelsior during this time frame.

➤ **Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 (1998)**

The Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 sets forth three initiatives for bicycle transportation in Wisconsin: 1) a plan for improving conditions of bicycling, 2) clarification of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's role in bicycle transportation, and 3) establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. The Department of Transportation State Bicycle Plan does not currently identify any Priority Routes in the Town of Excelsior.

➤ **Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 (March, 2002)**

This is a policy document created by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation that presents statewide and local measures to increase walking and promote pedestrian safety. The goals of the Plan are to increase the number and improve the quality of walking trips, reduce the number of pedestrian crashes and fatalities, and increase the availability of pedestrian planning and design guidance for state and local officials and citizens. The key State objective identified in the plan is to work with local governments and other interested stakeholders to increase accommodations for pedestrian travel to the extent possible along and across State highways. There are no recommendations specific to Sauk County.

**7.6 Analysis of the Existing Transportation Systems and Plans**

As previously described, the Town of Excelsior's transportation system consists of local, county and state roads. Responses from the Town survey indicated that Excelsior's local and county roads are in good condition, and it appears that there were no major transportation-related issues in the Town at the time of the survey completion.



**7.7 Transportation Goal, Objectives and Policies**

**Transportation Goal:** Preserve and maintain a safe and efficient transportation network.

**Transportation Objectives and Objectives:**

- TO-1 Maintain road quality by utilizing state and county aids for road improvement.
- TO-2 Coordinate town road standards with adjacent municipalities.
- TO-3 Address safety concerns with regard to multi-use roads.
- TO-4 Development requiring new or upgrading of existing roads and permits as required must be paid for by the developer, not by the existing tax base.
  - TO-4a Impact fees (if required by other units of government, or other infrastructure costs attributable to new development) are to be paid completely by the developer.
- TO-5 Mowing should consider vehicular safety, the negative impacts of wildlife habitat, and the spread of invasive species.

## **8.0 Purpose**

Through its comprehensive planning process, the Town of Excelsior has identified a desire to foster local independent business ventures as they relate to the service industry and tourism as well as everyday support businesses for residents. The Town has also recognized the importance of ensuring quality development that is not only attractive, but of a mix and location to attract consumers. This Chapter provides an overview of economic activity both in the Town and for Sauk County overall. It also provides a listing of local and state programs focused on economic development.

## **8.1 Area Employment and Economic Activity**

An investigation of commuting patterns, regional employment and income characteristics, tourism economic impacts and agriculture economic impacts provides insight to the county's economic vitality.

### **➤ Commuting Patterns**

In terms of commuting patterns, the 2000 Census indicates that 7.6 % of Excelsior residents work at home. It is assumed that the majority of these residents are involved in farming. For those who commute to their jobs, 81.1% drive alone while 8.9% carpool. The average commuting time to work is approximately 20.2 minutes.

### **➤ Employment Characteristics in Excelsior and Sauk County**

Sauk County provides many employment opportunities, as is reflected in the low unemployment rates, occupation type and major employers in the area.

According to the State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the Sauk County Annual Average Unemployment Rate for 2004 was 4.2%. Unemployment for Sauk County 2003 was 4.3%. The DWD does not break down employment trends for individual Towns, however the 2000 census identified that of the 844 Town of Excelsior residents over 16 in the civilian labor force, only 24 persons (or 2.3%) were unemployed while 820 persons (or 74.3% of the population) were employed. The remaining 260 people (or 23.6%) either claim disability or are retired. In 2000 there were no residents in the Armed Forces. That statistic may well have changed in the past seven years.

### **➤ Area Economic Viability and Employment Opportunities**

The potential for economic opportunities within commuting distance of Excelsior continues to improve. The City of Reedsburg is host to a number of Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIF) to facilitate the industrial tax base and high-end manufacturing jobs. The City has also established a Business Center Redevelopment District focused on promoting industrial development in the City's business Center. The agricultural, retail sales and services sectors of the economy are strong. Tourism is playing an increasing role in this area with the 400 Trail and historically maintained downtown area.

The major county employers provide diverse employment opportunities for residents of the Town of Excelsior. *Tables E1 and E2* show the top 20 employers during 2002, divided into Manufacturers/Distributors and Non-Manufacturers. While most of the county is within commuting distance of Excelsior, the major employment areas of Baraboo, Lake Delton / Wisconsin Dells, and

Reedsburg are within the average commute time of 20.2 minutes from Excelsior. Of the top 20 employers, the Baraboo area contains Baraboo Sysco Foods, Perry Judd's, Flambeau Plastic, Sauk County Government, Baraboo School System and St. Clare Hospital, together employing 3,627 persons. In the Sauk City-Prairie du Sac area, Milwaukee Valve, Sauk Prairie School District and Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital together employ 1,250 persons. In the Spring Green area, Cardinal IG and Cardinal CG employ 1,061 persons. Of the top 20 in the Reedsburg area are Land's End, Grede Foundries, Seats Inc., Gerber Products Plastics, and Reedsburg School Systems, together employing 3,061 persons. The Town of Delton has the Ho-Chunk Casino, Hotel and Convention Center with 1,375 employees and the Village of Lake Delton has the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Noah's Ark and Wilderness Lodge together with 2,420 employees.

In addition to business opportunities outside of the Town, the Town does continue to provide a number of jobs in the agriculture industry.

**Table E1: Sauk County Top 10 Manufacturers/Distributors by Employment**

Employer	Product	Employees	Location
Lands' End	Clothing/Distribution & Telemarketing	1,100	Reedsburg
Grede Foundries, Inc.	Ductile Iron Castings	840	Reedsburg
Flambeau Plastic Co.	Plastics	650	Baraboo
Baraboo Sysco Foods	Wholesale Food Distribution	650	Baraboo
Perry Judd's, Inc.	Commercial Printing	675	Baraboo
Cardinal IG	Insulated Glass	630	Spring Green
Milwaukee Valve Co. – PDS Division	Brass Foundry	360	Prairie du Sac
Cardinal CG.	Coated Glass	431	Spring Green
Seat's Inc.	Seats	430	Reedsburg
Gerber Products Plastics	Baby Supplies	305	Reedsburg

Source: Sauk County Development Corporation, 2005

**Table E2: Top 10 Sauk County Non-Manufacturers by Employment**

Employer	Product	Employees	Location
Ho-Chunk Casino, Hotel & Convention Center	Gaming, Hotel, Convention Center	1,375	Town of Delton
Wilderness Lodge	Hotel/Resort	1200	Village of Lake Delton
Sauk County	Government	675	City of Baraboo
Kalahari Resort & Convention Center	Hotel/Resort/Convention Center	700	Village of Lake Delton
Baraboo School System	Education	504	City of Baraboo
Noah's Ark	Water Park	520	Village of Lake Delton
Sauk Prairie Memorial Hospital & Clinics	Health Care	465	Villages of Prairie du Sac/Sauk City
St. Clare Hospital	Health Care	473	City of Baraboo
Sauk Prairie School District	Education	425	Villages of Prairie du Sac/Sauk City
Reedsburg School System	Education	386	City of Reedsburg

Source: Sauk County Development Corporation, 2005

➤ **Area Income Comparison**

According to the 2000 Census, the median income for residents in Excelsior was \$54,375. **Table E3 Regional Income Comparisons** shows that compared to the neighboring Towns, the County and the State, Excelsior has the highest median income.

**Table E3: Regional Income Comparisons**

Household Income in 1999	Income Distribution, Regional Comparison, 1999							
	Percent of Households							
	Excelsior	Reedsburg	Dellona	Delton	Freedom	Baraboo	Sauk County	Wisconsin
Less than \$10,000	6.30%	4.50%	3.90%	3.40%	0.00%	8.00%	6.75%	3.54%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.40%	6.30%	5.30%	4.00%	3.10%	3.60%	5.80%	3.01%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.00%	7.60%	10.60%	13.70%	11.10%	11.80%	13.35%	9.14%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.90%	9.10%	13.20%	14.70%	10.50%	9.50%	13.80%	11.56%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.00%	23.90%	21.10%	20.40%	18.50%	20.30%	21.03%	18.67%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	30.10%	24.40%	22.50%	27.80%	38.30%	25.80%	23.16%	27.58%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.10%	11.30%	13.90%	10.50%	7.40%	9.80%	9.13%	14.09%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.00%	8.30%	6.50%	3.90%	4.30%	7.60%	4.71%	8.49%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.00%	2.00%	1.40%	1.20%	5.60%	1.30%	1.07%	1.94%
\$200,000 or more	2.50%	2.50%	1.60%	0.40%	1.20%	2.30%	1.21%	1.98%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$54,375.00</b>	<b>\$49,236.00</b>	<b>\$46,630.00</b>	<b>\$45,625.00</b>	<b>\$55,000.00</b>	<b>\$48,419.00</b>	<b>\$ 41,941.00</b>	<b>\$ 52,911.00</b>

Source: US Census, 2000, DP-3

➤ **Agriculture Economic Activity**

The most recently compiled and fully analyzed data available for state agriculture economic characteristics is from 1997, broken down by county. This information is provided in Tables E4 and E5 as indicators of the important economic impact agriculture has on communities. Table E4 indicates that from 1992 to 1997, Sauk County farms increased the number of hired workers by 22.30%. The annual payment indicates that most are seasonal employees.

**Table E4: Characteristics of Hired Farm Labor, Sauk County and the State of Wisconsin 1997**

Characteristics of Hired Farm Labor by Wisconsin Counties, 1992 - 1997						
	Percent of farms with any hired labor	Number of hired farm workers	Change in hired farm workers net change 1992 - 1997	Change in hired farm workers, percent change 1992 - 1997	Hired farm worker payroll (dollars)	Average annual payment per worker (dollars)
Sauk County	35.40%	1,764	322	22.30%	\$9,195,000.00	\$5,213.00
State of Wisconsin	38.40%	96,482	-12,962	-11.80%	\$409,009,000.00	\$4,239.00

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, Wisconsin County Agriculture Trends in the 1990's, Program on Agriculture Technology Studies, UW Madison, August 2001

**Table E5: Farm Receipts, Capital, and Income, Sauk County vs. State of Wisconsin, 1997**

Average Value of all Farmland and Buildings 1997						
	Value of all farm receipts	Percent of receipts from Dairy sales	Per Farm	Per Acre	Average value of machinery and equipment per farm	Average net farm income per farm
Sauk County, 1997	\$121,224,000.00	50.00%	\$285,633.00	\$1,212.00	\$46,411.00	\$17,953.00
State of Wisconsin, 1997	\$5,579,861,000.00	49.20%	\$282,135.00	\$1,244.00	\$66,731.00	\$20,110.00

Percent of Farms by Value of Sales 1997							
	Percent of farms with positive net income	Value of total government payments	Percent of farms receiving government payments	under \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$49,999	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 Plus
Sauk County, 1997	48.10%	\$3,235,000.00	62.90%	39.10%	24.00%	12.30%	24.60%
State of Wisconsin, 1997	54.20%	\$137,274,000.00	56.30%	38.60%	23.90%	13.40%	22.70%

Source: Wisconsin County Agriculture Trend in the 1990's, UW Program on Agriculture Technology Studies, 2001

**Table E5 Farm Receipts, Capital, and Income Sauk County vs. State of Wisconsin, 1997** shows that in Sauk County, half of all farm receipts (the gross market value of all agriculture products sold) came from dairy sales (sale of milk and milk products) during 1997. The average value of farmland buildings and the value of machinery and equipment are based on market value. The fact that 63.10%

of the farms had a sales value of less than \$50,000 per year in 1997 indicates that many of the farms in Sauk County are relatively small, family-farm operations. Many of these farms depend on off-farm work or investments for their main source of income. Overall, economic development strategies for agriculture include looking at opportunities for diversification in products produced, producing for niche markets, direct marketing, agri-tourism and participating in grower cooperatives.

➤ **Tourism Economic Impact and Opportunity**

According to the 2006 Wisconsin Department of Revenue report on tourism, Sauk County is the second most popular tourism destination in the State, behind only Milwaukee County. The overall statewide economic impact of travelers is broken down in two ways: Direct impacts, the employee wages and taxes paid from establishments where travelers purchase goods or services; and indirect impacts, the money spent by these employees on goods and services in the area.

Traveler expenditures fall into some obvious categories. More than half of the total expenditures are on shopping and recreation (including event and entertainment fees, wagering, sightseeing and cultural events) expenditures. Food expenditures represent 25%, and lodging expenses represent 13% of the total estimated traveler expenditures. Six percent of Wisconsin traveler expenditures covered transportation within the State (Wisconsin Department of Tourism, 2002). Forty-six percent of traveler expenditures occurred in summer, 29% percent of expenditures were in the winter/spring season and 24% of expenditures were during the fall season.

**Table E6 Travel Expenditures and Economic Impact**, shows that the Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimated traveling expenditures within Sauk County at approximately \$947 million dollars during 2003, up \$883 million from 2002. This expenditure supported 25,302 jobs.

**Table E6: Travel Expenditures and Economic Impact**

Travel Expenditures and Economic Impact							
	2002 Expenditures	2001 Expenditures	Percent Change	Full-Time Job Equivalents	Resident Income	State Revenues	Local Revenues
Sauk County	\$856,181,017	\$828,423,253	3.35%	24,532	\$530,631,384	\$66,666,331	\$65,527,817
State of WI	11,676,615,166	11,446,492,521	2.01%	323,759	\$6,602,720,000	\$1,077,135,000	\$777,910,000

Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism, 2001 Note: This is the most current data provided by the Department of Tourism.

The northeastern portion of Sauk County has many opportunities for recreational based tourism. Some of the sites visited in or near the Town of Excelsior include the 400 Trail for biking in the summer and snowmobiling in the winter, Mirror Lake State Park for camping, and the Baraboo River and Narrows Creek for paddling and fishing opportunities. Private recreational opportunities in the Town of Excelsior include swimming and boating on Lake Virginia; the Mid-Continent Railway Historical Society Museum; and the Reedsburg Country Club.

The Town of Excelsior’s proximity to so many regional tourism locations presents an opportunity to expand its economic base. The Town could focus on promoting its cottage industry businesses and low-impact tourism opportunities. However, it will be important to ensure that both cottage industries and low-impact tourism opportunities reflect and protect the Town’s history, natural resources and current residents. The Town should encourage the formation of a unique niche market for tourism that would carefully compliment the recreational tourist industry of the Wisconsin Dells

area as well as the resource-based recreational attractions such as Mirror Lake and Devil’s Lake State Park, without attempting to duplicate intensive, large-scale commercial recreational tourism areas.

**8.2 Local Employment and Economic Activity**

The Town of Excelsior and Sauk County provide many local employment opportunities as is reflected in the education levels, labor force and occupation characteristics of Excelsior.

➤ **Education, Income Levels and Employment Activity**

*Table E7 Educational Attainment, Excelsior* shows that the percentage of Excelsior residents with a high school diploma increased by 8.0% during 1990 and 2000, a little less than the rate of Sauk County at 8.8%. The percentages of those with a Bachelor’s Degree increased for both Excelsior and Sauk County from 1990 to 2000 by roughly 5%.

**Table E7 Educational Attainment**

Educational Attainment, 1990-2000				
	High School Diploma, Excelsior	Bachelors Degree or Higher, Excelsior	High School Diploma, Sauk County	Bachelors Degree or Higher, Sauk County
1990	77.1%	12.6%	74.7%	12.9%
2000	85.1%	16.0%	83.5%	17.6%

Source: U.S. Census 1990-2000

➤ **Income Levels**

As detailed in the Housing Chapter, of the 525 households in Excelsior, 79, (15.1%) were in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 income bracket. Another 158 (30.1%) of the households were in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket. This is compared to Sauk County, with 21.03% of the households in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 income bracket and 23.16% of the households in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket.

Another tool in the assessment of income distribution is the comparison of the median household income with the average household income for a particular year. A median value represents the middle value in an ordered list of data values. It divides the values into two equal parts with one half of the values falling below the median and one half falling above the median. An average value is found by dividing a sum of values by its total number of values. Average household income is calculated by dividing aggregate household income by the number of households in a given geographic area for a given year. Aggregate household income is the sum of the incomes of a sample of households in a given geographic area.

*Table E8 Distribution of Household Income, 1999* shows that in 1999, the median household income for the Town of Excelsior was \$54,375 while the average household income was \$61,636. The ratio of the average to the median income is 1.13. As a comparison, the Town of Reedsburg’s median household income is \$49,326, the Town of Dellona’s is \$46,630, the Town of Delton’s is \$45,625, the Town of Baraboo’s is \$48,419, and the Town of Freedom’s is at \$55,000.

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**Table E8: Distribution of Household Income, 1999**

Distribution of Household Income, 1999	% of Households	% of Households	% of Households
	Town of Excelsior	Sauk County	Wisconsin
Less than \$10,000	6.3%	6.7%	3.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.4%	5.8%	3.0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.0%	13.4%	9.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.9%	13.8%	11.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	15.0%	21.0%	18.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	30.1%	23.2%	27.6%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.1%	9.1%	14.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9.0%	4.7%	8.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.8%	1.1%	1.9%
\$200,000 or more	2.5%	1.2%	2.0%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	<b>\$54,375</b>	<b>\$41,941</b>	<b>\$43,791</b>
No. of Households	525	21,647	2,086,304
Aggregate Household Income	\$26,397,300	\$1,076,409,500	\$112,374,261,000
<b>Avg. Household Income</b>	<b>\$61,636</b>	<b>\$49,726</b>	<b>\$53,863</b>
<b>Ratio of mean to median HH Income</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>1.23</b>

Source: US Census 2000

From 1990 to 2000, both Sauk County and the State of Wisconsin saw the ratio of average income to median income increase slightly, the County from 1.17 to 1.19, the State from 1.19 to 1.23. This implies that the number of values on the upper end of the spectrum has increased slightly during the past decade.

➤ **Employment**

**Table E9 Labor Force and Employment** shows that, of the 974 persons in Excelsior during 2000, 632 persons age 16 or older are in the labor force, and an additional 342 persons age 16 or older are not in the labor force. Of those in the labor force, 26, or 4.1%, are unemployed. This is close to the unemployment rate for Sauk County of 4.2%, according to the 2000 Census.

**Table E9: Labor Force and Employment**

Category	Labor Force Status, 1990 2000			
	Town of Excelsior, 1990	Town of Excelsior, 2000	Sauk County, 1990	Sauk County, 2000
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	920	974	35,509	42,480
In labor force	694	632	24,491	30,395
Civilian labor force	694	632	24,457	30,374
Employed	654	606	22,987	29,108
Unemployed	40	26	1,470	1,266
Armed Forces	0	0	34	21
Not in Labor Force	226	342	11,018	12,085
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000, P-3

Forecasting future employment and available labor helps a community understand the age and gender make-up of their future workforce (people between the ages of 15 and 64), the size of the future work

force and how it will affect the overall population and the demand on certain future jobs in the community. A future workforce profile also assists a Town in planning for desired future levels and types of employment within the economy on an area. Typically, a workforce projection is based upon an analysis of the age group distribution and the change in population over time. However, it is difficult to complete these projections for the Town of Excelsior due to insufficient Census data on future age distribution at the town level. One way to assess the future labor force is to consider possible future age group distribution in the Town of Excelsior based on data for age group trends in Sauk County from 2000 to 2020. This assumes that the Town of Excelsior will experience changes in age group categories parallel to those occurring in Sauk County.

**Table E10 Labor Force Change by Age Group in Sauk County, 2000-2020** and **Chart E11 Sauk County Labor Force Trends by Age 2000-2020** show the age group data forecast for the Sauk County labor force. In looking at **Table E10**, notable trends include the older age groups (55-61, 62-69 and 70+) showing the greatest amount of increase, and the 35-54 age group (the age group in their prime earning years) showing the least change (1%). According to **Table E10**, the age group 62-69 grows the most, exhibiting a 106% increase (or 1,482 people). From 2000 to 2020, the age group 55-61 increases by 86% (or 2,481 people) and the age group 70+ increases by 29% (or 1,644 people).

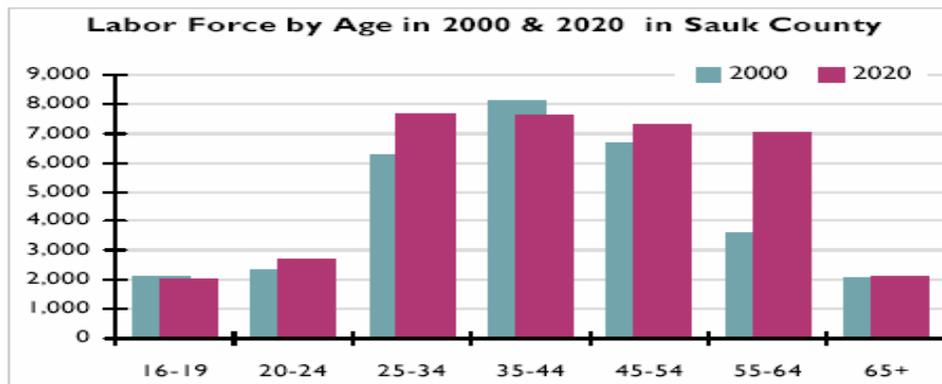
**Table E10: Labor Force Change by Age Group in Sauk County, 2000-2020**

Forecasted Labor Force by Age Group in Sauk County, 2000-2020										
Age Groups	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020		Forecasted Labor Force Change from 2000-2020 (number of persons)	Forecasted Labor Force Change from 2000-2020 (percent)	Projected Population Change from 2000-2020 (number of persons)	Projected Population Change from 2000-2020 (percent)
16-19	2,122	2,314	2,112	2,015	2,025		-97	-5%	-140	-4%
20-24	2,346	2,922	3,167	2,863	2,719		373	16%	434	16%
25-34	6,261	6,134	6,803	7,758	7,671		1,411	23%	1,599	23%
35-54	14,746	15,545	15,552	14,942	14,940		194	1%	216	1%
55-61	2,870	3,677	4,527	5,179	5,351		2,481	86%	3,124	86%
62-69	1,398	1,570	1,970	2,469	2,880		1,482	106%	3,526	105%
70+	748	751	763	824	965		217	29%	1,644	27%
<b>Total, 16 and Over</b>	<b>30,491</b>	<b>32,914</b>	<b>34,894</b>	<b>36,049</b>	<b>36,551</b>		<b>6,060</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>24%</b>

Source: Eric Grosso, State Labor Market Economist, WI Department of Workforce Development

**Chart E11** clarifies that within the 35-54 age group, those 35 to 44 will decrease and those 45 to 54 will increase over the next twenty years within the county. It also emphasizes the large increase in the older population 55-64.

**Chart E11: Sauk County Labor Force Trends by Age 2000-2020**



Source: Sauk County Workforce Profile, [www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/cp\\_pdf/S111cpw.pdf](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi/cp_pdf/S111cpw.pdf)

**Table E10** also demonstrates general workforce trends. Overall, the workforce in Sauk County is expected to increase by 20% or 6,060 people from 2000 to 2020. In comparing this number to the overall projected population increase of 10,403 people, it is evident that about 60% of the new population will be part of the labor force. This is a lower participation rate than that recorded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for all workforce participation in Sauk County: 86.5%. It is also evident in **Table E10** that the population 16 and older in Sauk County is expected to grow 4% faster than the labor force of people 16 and older. However, when compared to the State of Wisconsin labor force projections by age group (shown in **Table E12 Forecasted Labor Force by Age Group in Wisconsin, 2000-2020**), it is evident that Sauk County shows less of a gap (4%) between expected population growth and expected labor force participation than the State of Wisconsin (6%) and that the labor force in Sauk County is projected to grow more quickly than the state labor force (20% vs. 11%).

**Table E12: Forecasted Labor Force by Age Group in Wisconsin, 2000-2020**

Forecasted Labor Force by Age Group in Wisconsin, 2000-2020										
Age Group	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020		Forecasted Labor Force Change from 2000-2020 (numeric)	Forecasted Labor Force Change from 2000-2020 (percent)	Projected Population Change from 2000-2020 (numeric)	Projected Population Change from 2000-2020 (percent)
16-19	204,474	209,459	205,313	190,368	193,314		-11,160	-5%	-17,822	-5%
20-24	291,507	327,964	335,817	328,731	304,855		13,349	5%	16,360	5%
25-34	600,925	590,998	644,596	689,271	689,754		88,829	15%	103,995	15%
35-54	1,386,418	1,429,481	1,392,374	1,332,601	1,312,861		-73,556	-5%	-86,884	-5%
55-61	236,733	299,752	361,141	405,905	417,308		180,575	76%	254,493	76%
62-69	101,251	111,407	137,344	170,602	196,085		94,834	94%	283,480	93%
70+	49,489	50,502	51,952	56,215	66,101		16,612	34%	158,573	30%
<b>Total, 16 and Over</b>	<b>2,870,797</b>	<b>3,019,563</b>	<b>3,128,535</b>	<b>3,173,693</b>	<b>3,180,278</b>		<b>309,481</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>712,195</b>	<b>17%</b>

Source: Eric Grosso, State Labor Market Economist, WI Department of Workforce Development

While assessing the types of employment opportunities in the Town of Excelsior **Table E13 Employment by Occupation, Town of Excelsior** shows that the manufacturing industry as the major employer in 1990 and 2000. Most occupations remained relatively constant, with two exceptions. The agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining industry decreased in size by 60 people, while the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service sector increased by over 70 people. **Chart E14 Major Employment Sectors, Town of Excelsior** graphically shows the major employment arenas in the Town while **Table E15 Employment by Occupation, Sauk County** provides a comparison to the region.

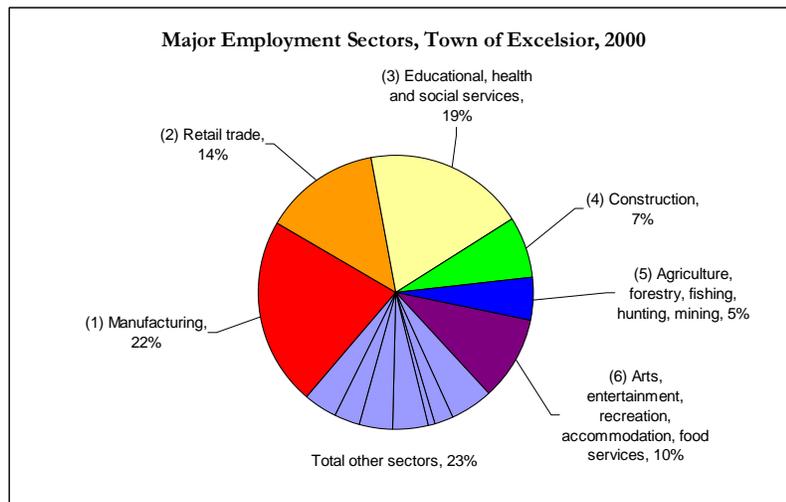
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**Table E13: Employment by Occupation, Town of Excelsior**

Town of Excelsior, Employment by Industry, 1990 2000						
Industry	Town of Excelsior, 1990	Town of Excelsior 1990, Percent of Employed Population	Town of Excelsior, 2000	Town of Excelsior 2000, Percent of Employed Population	Change in number of employees per industry, 1990 2000	Change in percent employment per industry, 1990 2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	100	15.3%	40	4.9%	-60	-10.4%
Construction	58	8.9%	60	7.3%	2	-1.6%
Manufacturing	148	22.6%	182	22.2%	34	-0.4%
Wholesale trade	20	3.1%	26	3.2%	6	0.1%
Retail trade	111	17.0%	111	13.5%	0	-3.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	36	5.5%	41	5.0%	5	-0.5%
Information	10	1.5%	8	1.0%	-2	-0.6%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	22	3.4%	32	3.9%	10	0.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	14	2.1%	36	4.4%	22	2.2%
Educational, health and social services	98	15.0%	153	18.7%	55	3.7%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	8	1.2%	79	9.6%	71	8.4%
other services (except public Administration)	21	3.2%	34	4.1%	13	0.9%
Public Administration	8	1.2%	18	2.2%	10	1.0%
<b>Industry Total</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Source: US Census 1990, 2000. Note: U.S. Census 1990 Occupation classes are grouped differently. The 1990 data are grouped together as best as able for comparison to the U.S. Census 2000.

**Chart E14 Major Employment Sectors, Town of Excelsior**



Source: U.S. Census 2000

**Table E15: Employment by Occupation, Sauk County**

Sauk County, Employment by Industry, 1990 2000						
Industry	Sauk County 1990	Sauk County 1990 Percent of Employed Population	Sauk County, 2000	Sauk County 2000, Percent of Employed Population	Change in number of employees per industry, 1990 2000	Change in percent employment per industry, 1990 2000
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	2,458	10.7%	1,557	5.3%	-901	-5.3%
Construction	1,751	7.6%	2,282	7.8%	531	0.2%
Manufacturing	5,528	24.0%	5,554	19.1%	26	-5.0%
Wholesale trade	888	3.9%	935	3.2%	47	-0.7%
Retail trade	3,757	16.3%	3,843	13.2%	86	-3.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	865	3.8%	1,150	4.0%	285	0.2%
Information	268	1.2%	425	1.5%	157	0.3%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	945	4.1%	1,255	4.3%	310	0.2%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	1,381	6.0%	1,521	5.2%	140	-0.8%
Educational, health and social services	3,105	13.5%	5,130	17.6%	2,025	4.1%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	242	1.1%	3,525	12.1%	3,283	11.1%
other services (except public Administration)	1,144	5.0%	915	3.1%	-229	-1.8%
Public Administration	655	2.8%	1,016	3.5%	361	0.6%
<b>Industry Total</b>	<b>22,987</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>29,108</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,121</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Source: US Census 1990, 2000 Note: U.S. Census 1990 Occupation classes are grouped differently. The 1990 data are grouped together as best as able for comparison to the U.S. Census 2000.

➤ **Commuting Patterns**

Commuting patterns in rural areas are typically reflective of both the number of on-site agriculture operations as well as numbers of rural residential homes not related to agriculture activities. The Town of Excelsior has added a moderate number of homes in the last 20 years, while the quantity of farms have substantially declined. This decline could account for the increase in commuters driving alone and the decrease in those working at home (i.e., on-site agriculture operations). The number of residents who commute alone increased from 74.8% in 1990 to 81.1% in 2000, and the number of residents who work at home increased over 8%.

**Table E16: Commuting Patterns**

Commuting Patterns	Excelsior 1990	Percent Excelsior, 1990	Sauk County 1990	Percent Sauk County, 1990	Excelsior 2000	Percent Excelsior, 2000	Sauk County 2000	Percent Sauk County, 2000
Drove Alone	488	74.8%	16,004	70.4%	653	81.1%	22,213	77.4%
Carpooled	82	12.6%	2,952	13.0%	72	8.9%	3,196	11.1%
Public Transportation	0	0.0%	87	0.4%	8	1.0%	139	0.5%
Walked or Worked at Home	76	0.0%	3,498	15.4%	65	8.1%	2,916	10.2%
Other Means	6	0.9%	185	0.8%	7	0.9%	230	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>22,726</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>28,694</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Average Travel Time (minutes)	NA		NA		20.6		20.3	

Source: U.S. Census 1990-2000

Note: The category "walked" and "work at home" are combined in the U.S. Census 1990 data.

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➤ **Local Employment Opportunities**

Within the Town of Excelsior several small businesses exist. These include the Reedsburg Country Club and Big John's Landscaping, both east of the City of Reedsburg.

**8.3 Opportunities to Attract and Retain Business**

As stated earlier, it will be important for Excelsior to foster cottage industries and low-impact tourism opportunities that both reflect and protect the Town's history, natural resources and current residents. The Town should encourage the formation of a unique niche market for tourism, and prohibit business development similar to that in Wisconsin Dells and other large-scale tourism areas.

An *Economic Development Advisory Committee* will function to promote the inception and retention of businesses in the Excelsior area. It is intended that this Committee be composed of officials from both the Village and Town to decide upon and promote economic development on a town-wide basis. Economic development themes could also be considered to ensure that the Excelsior area 'stands out' from other area communities.

**8.4 Other Programs and Partnerships**

➤ **Sauk County Development Corporation**

Sauk County Development Corporation's mission is to promote and retain the diverse economic vitality of Sauk County and its individual communities.

➤ **Wisconsin Department of Commerce**

Provides a broad range of financial resources to help businesses and communities undertake economic development. These programs include:

- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Economic Development Program** Provides grants to communities to promote local job creation and retention.
- **CDBG – Public Facilities** helps eligible local governments upgrade community facilities, infrastructure, and utilities to benefit lot to moderate income residents
- **Rural Economic Development Program** offers low-interest loans for businesses with fewer than 25 employees.
- **US Small Business Administration (SBA)** provided loan guarantees that are used in conjunction with bank financing to improve loan terms.
- **Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)** a program that buys down commercial interest rates, enabling Wisconsin lenders to offer short-term, below-market rate loans to small, minority- or women-owned businesses.
- **Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs)** are municipal bonds whose proceeds are loaned to private persons or to businesses to finance capital investment projects. All Wisconsin municipalities – cities, villages, and towns are authorized to issue IRBs.

- **Major Economic Development Program (MED)** is designed to provide financial assistance for Wisconsin business startup or expansions.
- **Customized Labor Training Program (CLT)** encourages businesses to invest in the retooling and upgrading of equipment in order to increase the productivity of its labor force by providing a grant of up to 50% of the cost of a workforce training program.
- **Technology Development Fund Program (TDF)** is designed to provide assistance to businesses embarking on technical research projects aimed at developing new products or processes, or improving existing products or processes.
- **Forward Wisconsin** is a non-profit economic development-marketing corporation for the State of Wisconsin. This organization creates marketing strategies aimed at luring businesses and industry from other states within the United States and other countries throughout the world to improve the corporate climate in Wisconsin. The organization assists in locating companies throughout the State, based on those companies' needs. Assistance is available to aid with community development projects and marketing.
- **Agriculture Development Zone (South-Central)** is a new agricultural economic development program in the State of Wisconsin that provides tax credits to farm operators and business owners who make new investments in agricultural operations. These tax incentives are offered for three basic categories of investment including job creation, environmental remediation, or capital investments in technology/new equipment. This program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

### 8.5 Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Comprehensive Planning Legislation requires communities to evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites.

The Town of Excelsior does not have any open sites. Site 09-57-293909, an underground storage tank leak has since been closed with no action required. The use at this location is commercial and future use is planned as commercial.

#### DNR Definitions:

- **Brownfields:** The DNR identifies brownfields as abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination
- **Open:** Spills, LUST, ERP, VPLE and abandoned container activities in need of clean up or where cleanup is still underway. Not applicable to activity types of "General Property" and "No Action Required by RR Program.
- **Closed:** Activities where investigation and cleanup of the contamination has been completed and the state has approved all cleanup actions. Not applicable to activity types of "General Property" and "No Action Required by RR Program.

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- **Historic:** Spills where cleanups may have been completed prior to 1996 and no end date is shown. Spill activities in this category show Historic status. Please contact regional spills coordinator (WDNR) if you need more information.
  - **NAR:** No action required by RR Program, There was or may have been a discharge to the environment and based on known information, DNR has determined that the responsible party does not need to undertake an investigation or cleanup in response to that discharge. NAR activities in BRRTS have an activity number prefix of 09.
  - **Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST)** A LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances. However, given time, petroleum contamination naturally breaks down in the environment (biodegradation) Some LUST sites may emit potentially explosive vapors. LUST activities in BRRTS have an activity number prefix of '03'

## **8.6 Economic Development Goal, Objectives and Policies**

### **Economic Development Goal:**

Promote economic success of residents and businesses that reflect and are compatible with the rural character of the Town.

### **Economic Development Objectives and Policies:**

EDO-1 Encourage the maintenance and development of home-based businesses, cottage industries, farming, and farm related businesses that complement the agrarian and rural character of the Town.

EDP-1a The Town will work with Sauk County to develop new zoning options that will allow for innovative opportunities for economic development related to agriculture, home based businesses, cottage industries and farm related businesses to negate the need to rezone, but rather incorporate a system of special exception or conditional uses under the predominant zoning district.

EDO-2 Promote alternative and renewable forms of energy as a form of economic development and self-sustainability.

EDO-3 Consider the location of new residential development to prevent future conflicts with agricultural uses.

EDP-3a Allow commercial zoning only within Extra Territorial (ET) areas next to Reedsburg and those lands directly adjacent to the Reedsburg ET District that are designated "Future Commercial" on the Town's Future Land Use Map. Land zoned commercial that is adjacent to land zoned residential shall consider appropriate buffers as approved by the plan commission.

## 9.0 Purpose

The Town of Excelsior's landscape varies dramatically from rolling upland farm fields, scattered wetlands and streams to the steep forested bluffs of the Baraboo Range. This landscape provides recreational opportunities such as hiking and hunting. Public participation efforts reveal that preserving these natural features and productive agricultural lands as being critical to maintaining the desired agrarian and rural



lifestyle of current residents. Additionally, public input has emphasized that water quality protection and improvement is crucial and should be considered a key planning issue. This section of Excelsior's plan highlights these and other important natural resource issues in the Town and provides a platform for the establishment and implementation of programs that ensure the protection of agricultural lands, water quality improvement and the general open space nature of the Town.

## 9.1 General Soils Information

Soil suitability is a key factor in determining the best and most cost-effective locations for new development. Problems that limit development and the placement of Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems (septic systems) on certain soils may include poor drainage, erosion, steep slopes or high water tables. Soil suitability is also a key factor in determining agricultural productivity and suitability. Three major soil types dominate excelsior: Eleva-Boone-Plainfield, Urne, and Fayette series. General soils information can also be noted on *Map 9-2 General Soils Map*.

- **Eleva-Boone-Plainfield series** soils are distributed evenly throughout the town's uplands. The spoils in this series are typically are excessively drained, moderately rapid to rapidly permeable soils. These soils vary in use. Agriculture is the main use in the Plainfield series. The Boone series is usually wooded, however it can be used for agriculture if it is fertilized and irrigated. The Plainfield series is a suitable soil for septic systems. The Boone series is moderately suitable for septic systems with slope being the limiting factor. The Eleva series is generally not suited to septic tank absorption fields due to a shallow bedrock layer, however new septic technologies can be used.
- **Urne series** soils are somewhat excessively drained and are often found on convex ridge tops, concave side slopes, and valley floors of unglaciated sandstone uplands. This series is moderately rapid and the available water content is low. Many of these soils are used for cultivation, and some for woodland. This soil is suited to trees. The Urne series is moderately suited to building because of frost action, and is poorly suited to septic tank absorption fields because the depth to bedrock. This series is mapped with the Eleva-Boone-Plainfield category, as they are most similar to these series.
- **Fayette series** soils are mapped under the Baraboo-Rock Outcrop category, as they are most similar to these series. These soils are well drained and found on unglaciated uplands. Permeability is moderate with a very high available water capacity. The series is suitable to septic systems and buildings, unless the slope is too steep. The soils are primarily under agricultural production, and fairly suitable for that use. These soils are suited to trees.

## 9.2 Topography and Slope

The topography in the Town of Excelsior varies dramatically from rolling farm fields in the northern half of the Town to wetlands and streams to the steep forested bluffs of the Baraboo Range that dominate the Town's southern region.

## 9.3 Environmentally Sensitive and Significant Resources

The Town of Excelsior has identified environmentally sensitive areas as those having unique geology, important agricultural soils, surface and ground water resources, wetlands, native grasslands, Baraboo Range woodlands, scenic landscapes and vistas, habitat for native plant and wildlife communities, endangered and threatened species. Also worth careful consideration are lands having slopes greater than 12%, floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, groundwater recharge areas (zones of contribution to municipal wells), and areas that contribute water recharge to Lake Virginia, the Baraboo River and Narrows Creek. The Town has further recognized that any future land uses could negatively impact these areas and should be managed utilizing a combination of restrictions on the rate and density of residential development, site evaluations by the Town's Plan Commission, and careful application of the objectives and policies in this Plan. *Map 9-1x Environmentally Sensitive Areas* shows the location of the aforementioned components of this subsection with the exception of floodplain, which is shown on *Map 9-2 General Floodplain Areas*.

### ➤ Woodlands

A portion of Excelsior is covered by forest. Much of this forest is located along rivers and on slopes that are generally greater than 10%. This woodland pattern results from historical agricultural land uses that avoided land types that are difficult to place under cultivation. Riparian woodland areas are primarily composed of silver maple, aspen and box elder, while upland forests are primarily composed of red and black oak, hickory and a mixture of upland hardwood forests. These woodlands have been identified as important features that add to the Town's rural character.



### ➤ Rare Species Occurrences

The Wisconsin DNR's Natural Heritage Inventory program maintains information on the general location and status of rare, threatened or endangered plant and animal species. There are documented occurrences of rare or threatened species in much of the Town of Excelsior. *Map 9-1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas* shows general areas in Excelsior that could support or have at one time in history been were identified as containing rare plant or animal species. These general areas are spread over a large portion of the Town. The DNR does not list specific areas where endangered species live for fear of purposeful harvest or destruction of them or their habitat.

Landowners seeking to know whether or not a specific parcel of land is host to endangered species must contact the Wisconsin DNR to fill out a NHI Endangered Resources Review Request. WDNR Reviewers communicate to the applicant any rare species, natural communities, or natural features tracked in the Natural Heritage Inventory database have been found in or near the proposed project area. Reviewers also explain whether additional steps should be followed to assure compliance with the Wisconsin Endangered Species Law. The Review letter may be necessary for other Department of Natural Resources permits, since it is illegal to take, transport, possess, process or sell any wild

animal that is included on Wisconsin Endangered and Threatened Species List. In addition, it is illegal to remove, transport, carry away, cut root up, sever, injure or destroy a wild plant on the Wisconsin Endangered and Threatened Species List. (see: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/forms/index.htm#review>)

➤ **Significant Natural Areas and Resources**



There are a number of significant natural areas and resources in the Town of Excelsior. The plan calls attention to these natural areas, which, by their nature, connect the present day Town to the landscape that once dominated the area. This material, in part, is from the Natural Area Inventory of Sauk County Wisconsin, 1976, by William E. Tans, Botanist and Kenneth I. Lange, Naturalist. Locations of each are noted on **Map 6-3 Community and Cultural Resources**.

- Ableman's Gorge Hemlocks and Ableman's Gorge Area: Parts of Section 29, includes wooded cliffs and boulder slopes facing north with best Hemlock and Yew stand in Southern Wisconsin. Quartzite and conglomerate cliffs, section of Baraboo River and riparian floodplain habitat. Area includes Van Hise Rock.
- The Excelsior Township Pine Barrens, including the Van Zelst Pine Barrens, Section 21, a sand barren remote from Wisconsin River terraces, with Little Bluestem and jack pine, as noted in original land survey. Also, the Reedsburg School Forest, Section 21, a dry oak forest and sand barren; numerous additional sand blows in Section 22, with old jack pine forest and quartzite conglomerate.
- Narrows Creek Gorge and Vicinity, Section 31 and Section 6, in the northwester corner of the Baraboo Hills, includes red and white pines on quartzite conglomerate, sandstone and Baraboo quartzite outcroppings, shaded cliff habitats, prairie remnant and lowland hardwoods along Narrows Creek. A Narrows Creek tributary in Section 6 is largely undisturbed sugar maple-yellow birch-oak forest.
- Pine Knob, Section 17, an isolated sandstone knob with white pines, oaks and northern forest understory.
- The North Slope of the Baraboo Range, parts of Section 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23 and Section 18, includes extensive oak forests on the north facing slope of the North Range of the Baraboo Hills, and dry oak forest on a hogsback. Trilobites have been found. Ordovician dolomite caps some ridges, underlain by exposed upper Cambrian sandstone. Dry mesic forest of white pine, red maple and red oak in Section 9.
- Fossil quarry, Section 25, site of fossils in Lodi siltstone and dolomite.
- "Sand Marble" Hill, Section 11, a site for small, rounded sand concretions.

➤ **Drainage Basins**

The Town of Excelsior is located entirely in the Lower Wisconsin River Basin, which drains approximately 4,940 square miles of south central and southwestern Wisconsin and is located within the Narrow Creek & Baraboo River and Dell Creek watershed. These watersheds eventually drain into the Wisconsin River, which can be located on *Map 9-5 Watershed Boundaries*. These boundaries can serve as a starting point for identifying non-point sources of pollution in the river system.

➤ **Floodplains**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. These general floodplain delineations represent the areas adjacent to navigable waters potentially subject to a 100-year flood event (1% chance of occurring in any year). All areas subject to flooding are not necessarily reflected in mapped floodplains. The State requires County regulation of development in floodplains. Development is strongly discouraged in floodplains, to avoid both upstream and downstream property damage as well as reduced governmental costs in relation to disaster relief. Floodplain areas in Excelsior are located near creeks and rivers, particularly the Baraboo River and Narrows Creek. The FEMA maps should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries. General Floodplain boundaries can be noted on *Map 9-3 General Floodplain Areas*.

➤ **Wetlands**

Wetland areas are important for aquifer recharge, flood control, groundwater and surface water quality improvement, and wildlife habitat. The majority of the Town's wetlands are associated with the Baraboo River and Narrows Creek. Also, small inclusions not included on the generalized map are common in the Baraboo Hills region. The greatest threat to these wetlands has been drainage for agricultural purposes.

All known wetland areas over 2 acres in size have been mapped and can be referenced on *Map 9-1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas*.

**Groundwater Resources** As in most of Sauk County, groundwater remains the major source of fresh water. In Excelsior, groundwater is supplied by the sandstone and dolomite aquifer prevalent in western Sauk County. This yields a reliable average of 400-500 gallons per minute.

The Town of Excelsior is the host watershed for all of the Village Rock Springs municipal water supply as identified by the zones of contribution on *Map 9-1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas*. The zones of contribution are identified areas where rainwater that falls to the surface will become groundwater and part of a community's potable water supply. The zones of contribution have been broken down into 5, 50 and 100-year time frames. This timeframe indicates that when rainwater falls to the surface and becomes groundwater, it will be subsequently be utilized by the Village of Rock Springs. Identifying zones of contribution is the precursor to the establishment of a wellhead protection program. Wellhead protection aims to encourage or require compatible land uses in the zones of contribution areas to protect contaminates from entering the public water supply and to also ensure continued quantities of water.

The 5-year zone of contribution is entirely located within the corporate limits of the Village of Rock Springs, but the implementation of responsible land use provisions to protect groundwater supplies will be remain important to a sustained and safe water supply for the Village.

➤ **Surface Waters of Excelsior**

The Town of Excelsior’s surface water resources, including the Baraboo River, Lake Virginia, Copper Creek, Dell Creek, and Narrows Creek, are valued resources that Town residents have identified for priority protection. Farm fields and runoff in the watershed have been identified as problem areas that contribute to non-point source pollution.



➤ **Storm Water Management**

Managing storm water has a significant impact on the surface water resources in the Town of Excelsior. Currently, construction site erosion control is regulated by the State of Wisconsin Uniform Dwelling Code and is enforced by the Town's building inspector.

*Chapter 22 Sauk County Land Division and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance* requires a storm water management plan for new subdivision and commercial development that is reviewed by the Sauk County Planning and Zoning Department.



➤ **Hilltops and Ridges**

Hilltops and ridges are important natural features that define the horizon of the Town. Large structures at the top of these features tend to be visually prominent—especially when these structures do not blend into the overall landscape in terms of color, material or style.

## 9.4 Mineral Resources

Currently, the Town of Excelsior is home to three active mineral extraction sites. The Rock Springs quarry located on State Road 136 in Section 28, the Duck Farm quarry is located on State Road 23 in Section 7 and the Ault quarry is also located in Section 7 near the Duck Farm quarry. The Rock Springs quarry, owned by the Chicago Northwestern Railroad, produces quartzite. Its final reclamation plan calls for allowing the quarry pit to refill “primarily with surface water to form a post-mining lake”<sup>1</sup>. The Duck Farm quarry mines sand and gravel and has a final reclamation plan to grassland. The Ault quarry produces topsoil and sand; the final reclamation plan includes natural grassland on one portion and an agriculture/forestry business on another area. Preserving mineral deposits for future generations is important, as more development demands these raw materials. As a general reference, potential gravel deposits or areas that may support future mineral extraction operations are noted under *Map 9-4 Potential Gravel Deposits*.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-Metallic Mine Reclamation Plan for Rock Springs Quarry, p.5. Martin Marrietta Aggregates, 2003. Prepared by Pinnacle Engineering, Inc. Osseo, Mn.

### 9.5 Programs, Partnerships and Resources

Below are some examples of programs, partnerships and resources that provide assistance to landowners in the Town of Excelsior relative to land preservation and stewardship options.

- **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)** first came to the Baraboo Bluffs in the early 1960s at the request of local residents and university professors who knew how ecologically unique the area was and who wanted the Conservancy's help in protecting the area. Today the Conservancy has 900 members in the Baraboo Hills area and is staffed out of a Baraboo Office. The Conservancy protects lands through education programs and work activities, Land/Forest Management Programs, voluntary agreements, acquisition of lands and through purchase of development rights.
- **Sauk County Natural Beauty Council**, which is administered by the Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning, involves itself in projects such as environmental displays at local fairs and Earth Day events, the promotion and protection of significant environmental resources through resolutions and letters, sponsoring clean ups at the local landfills, and administering prairie burns and plantings.
- **Sauk County Department of Land Conservation** coordinates natural resource management and environmental enhancement activities within county boundaries and administers a variety of county, state, and federal initiatives. The Department places particular emphasis on soil conservation, water quality improvement, groundwater protection, flood control, non-point water pollution abatement, erosion control, wildlife habitat improvement, farmland preservation and animal waste management, and further strives to promote the awareness of natural resources and their value to the citizens of Sauk County. The Department is involved in the administration of Earth Day activities, and coordinates with school districts to teach children about natural resources and conservation.
- **Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning** strives to protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of all citizens and visitors of Sauk County and to protect Sauk County's physical and natural resources through the professional administration and equitable enforcement of numerous Sauk County Codes and Ordinances. The Department places an emphasis on preparing communities, particularly Towns, for the future by protecting and enhancing the quality of life through education, state-of-the-art planning practices and code enforcement techniques. The Department also aids Towns in the development of Comprehensive Plans, plan updates, plan interpretation and plan implementation.
- **County Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan Implementation** is a cost share and technical assistance program to landowners installing best management practices. These programs help to reduce soil erosion, protect water quality and conserve county-identified natural resources. Landowners can contact Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for more information.
- **Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program** is a State program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry, which provides assistance to private landowners to protect and enhance their forested lands, prairies and waters. Landowners must receive written approval from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and be identified as the landowner in a Forest Stewardship Plan or in the process of applying for plan development. Qualified landowners may be reimbursed up to 65% of cost of eligible practices.

- **Community Financial Assistance (CFA)** is a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources program that administers grants and loans to local governments and interested groups to develop and support projects that protect health and the environment, and provide recreational opportunities.
- **Partnership for Fish and Wildlife Management**, a US Fish and Wildlife Services program, assists with the restoration of wetlands, grasslands, and threatened and endangered species habitat through a cost share program. Any privately owned land is potentially eligible for restoration under this program.
- **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on private lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. The program offers three options inclusive of a permanent easement, 30-Year Easement or a Restoration Cost share Agreement.
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** is a voluntary program that encourages the creation of high quality wildlife habitat to support wildlife populations of national, state, tribal, and local significance. Through WHIP, the NRCS provides technical assistance to landowners and others to restore and maintain upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitats on their property.
- **Managed Forest Law Property Tax Program** is a DNR program that provides tax incentives for approved forest management plans. The MFL can ease the burden of property taxes for forest landowners with at least 10 acres of woods that meet specific requirements. The program is intended to foster timber production on private forests while recognizing other values of forests.
- **Forestry Incentive Program** provides cost sharing for landowners with no more than 1000 acres for tree planting, site preparation, timber stand improvements, and related practices on non-industrial private forest lands. This is a federal NRCS program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
- **National Wildlife Turkey Federation** has a variety of programs to benefit wild turkey habitat, management, conservation and education.
- **Pheasants Forever** provides assistance with habitat restoration through five major programs: food plots, nesting cover, woody cover, land purchase and wetland restoration projects.
- **Prairie Enthusiasts** is a private nonprofit organization committed to the protection and management of native prairie and savanna in the Upper Midwest, providing educational activities and opportunities to aid landowners in the identification and management of prairie remnants. Work parties assist with brush clearing and removal of invasive species.
- **Aldo Leopold Foundation** strives to promote the protection of natural resources and to foster an ethical relationship between people and land. Programs involve restoration and land protection through partnerships with more than 30 organizations and educational programs for private landowners and public land managers.

## **9.6 Natural Resources Goal, Objectives and Policies:**

### **Natural Resources Goal:**

Protect, preserve and enhance the Town's natural resources, including geology, soils, surface and ground water, open space, woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, native plant and animal communities and habitats, wildlife, and endangered and threatened species. Encourage wise use and sustainable recreational, aesthetic, scientific, and economic use of resources.

### **Natural Resources Objectives:**

NRO-1 Preserve and manage the forest canopy of the wooded areas in the Town with an emphasis on the Baraboo Range.

NRP -1a Manage forests using sustainable harvesting and stewardship practices in the Town.

NRP -1b Work to conserve the Baraboo Range and other outstanding natural resource features in the Town, consistent with this plan's objectives and policies.

NRO-2 Manage roadside vegetation throughout the town to protect wildlife during nesting season and to limit the spread of invasive species.

NRO-3 Preserve clean water resources and employ policies and practices that will eliminate and/or minimize water contamination.

NRO-4 Protect endangered and threatened species of indigenous plants and animals.

NRO-5 Discourage or prevent the introduction and/or spread of invasive or exotic species and work to eradicate or control them.

NRO-6 Encourage the enhancement of wildlife habitat.

NRO-7 Protect/maintain scenic vistas and views.

NRO-8 Encourage lighting standards to minimize light glare from trespassing onto neighboring properties and the night sky, except for normal agricultural practices.

## **10.0 Purpose**

In order to achieve the overall vision in the Town of Excelsior, including the protection of natural and cultural resources, agricultural operations, and the overall quality of life, the Town must interact with many agencies and governmental units. The Town of Excelsior should evaluate how the plans of Sauk County as well as neighboring units of government will affect it.

## **10.1 Adjacent Town Plans and Planning Efforts**

### **➤ Town of Winfield (Sauk County)**

The Town of Winfield adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001 in April 2007. Prior to the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town had no development plan or land use plan. The Town of Winfield is under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

### **➤ Town of Westfield (Sauk County)**

The Town of Westfield adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001 in June 2006. Prior to the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town operated under a 1997 1987 Land Use Plan that included policies for housing, transportation, natural resource protection, agriculture and land use. The Town of Westfield's 1987 Development Plan that called for the adoption of Sauk County's Exclusive Agriculture-35 Zoning District Town-wide. Land Use in the Town of Westfield is regulated under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

### **➤ Town of Freedom (Sauk County)**

The Town of Freedom adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001 in April 2007. Prior to the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town operated under its 1998 Land Use plan, which included policies covering housing, transportation, natural resource protection, agriculture, and land use, and which called for the adoption of the Sauk County Resource Conservancy-35 zoning district Town-wide. The Town of Freedom is under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

### **➤ Town of Reedsburg (Sauk County)**

The Town of Reedsburg adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001 in September 2004. The Town of Reedsburg Comprehensive Plan has identified areas within the City of Reedsburg's extraterritorial jurisdiction as residential and commercial development areas. The Town has also identified a commitment to preserving agricultural operations, and all areas outside of the City's ET have been identified as agriculture preservation/rural residential areas. The Town of Reedsburg adopted a density-based cluster development program that applies to areas outside of the City's ET and which sets a density of 1 house per 35 acres of ownership with a maximum lot creation per parcel of not more than three in any 10-year period. Land Use in the Town of Reedsburg is regulated under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

### **➤ Town of Baraboo (Sauk County)**

The Town of Baraboo adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001 in August 2005. Prior to the development of this Comprehensive Plan, the Town operated under its 1998 Land Use Plan, which included policies covering housing, transportation, natural resource protection, agriculture and land use. The Plan called for adoption of Sauk County's Resource

Conservancy-35 zoning district in the western half of the town, with General Ag remaining in effect throughout most of the eastern half. Land Use in the Town of Baraboo is regulated under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

➤ **Town of Delton (Sauk County)**

The Town of Delton has completed their comprehensive planning process and is expected to adopt their Comprehensive Plan by mid-2009. Land Use in the Town of Delton is regulated under the Town's own zoning ordinance, with subdivisions regulated by Sauk County.

➤ **Town of Dellona (Sauk County)**

The Town of Dellona is currently undergoing their comprehensive planning process and is expected to be finished by the end of 2009. Land Use in the Town of Dellona is regulated under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

➤ **Village of Rock Springs**

The Village of Rock Springs has not begun work on a Comprehensive Plan, as of the winter of 2009.

## **10.2 Current Intergovernmental Programs, Plans, Agreements and Opportunities**

➤ **Sauk County 20/20 Development Plan (1998)**

In 1999, the Sauk County Board of Supervisors adopted the *Sauk County 20/20 Development Plan*. The Development Plan is a policy document that presents a vision statement, goals, and policies on six major planning issues: community change, economic development, farmland preservation, housing, natural resources and transportation. By design, this plan does not contain a county future land use plan map. Individual town plans and other land use plan maps will comprise the various implementation chapters of the Development Plan. The 20/20 Plan also recommends that the County prepare comprehensive rewrites of its Zoning Ordinance and Land Division and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance to reflect the values of the Plan. It also recommends that the County study innovative land use approaches such as purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and conservation subdivision design as ways to preserve farmland and natural resource areas while respecting private property rights. Finally, the Plan recommends that the County adopt an erosion control/storm water management program, a groundwater protection program, and a highway access control ordinance.

➤ **Memorandum of Agreement concerning US Highway 12 between Middleton and Lake Delton, Wisconsin (March, 1999)**

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is an agreement between Sauk County, Dane County, the State of Wisconsin, WisDOT, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency USEPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Park Service (NPS), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The agreement includes commitments and timeframes for Highway 12 improvements in Dane and Sauk Counties, protection of the Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark, farmland preservation and other natural resource protection. Specifically, the parties agreed to the following transportation system improvements:

1. "WisDOT and FHWA may proceed with a phased construction of a modified four-lane USH 12 in Dane County (between Middleton and Sauk City)..."
2. "WisDOT will exercise its authority to control and reduce access points along USH 12..."

The parties also agreed to the following:

1. The creation of two funds "to provide long-term protection of the nationally significant natural resources in the Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark (BRNNL) which may be impacted from the USH 12 project." The BRNNL Protection Fund "will contain \$5 million paid by WisDOT from state/federal transportation monies. " The Special BRNNL Stewardship Fund " will contain up to \$5 million of additional Stewardship Capital Fund dollars but will require a dollar-for-dollar federal/local/private non-transportation fund match...". Funding of \$250,000 each for Dane County and Sauk County for local planning assistance for "the towns, cities, and villages along the USH 12 corridor to use as they see appropriate to address growth-related issues." This is the funding source for this Highway 12 Corridor Growth Management Plan and future implementation projects to be determined.
2. The creation of the Sauk County Fund in which "WisDOT agrees to provide up to \$250,000 over a five year period in state/federal transportation monies to be used to establish and fund a program to purchase lands, scenic/conservation/agricultural easements and/or development rights from willing sellers in Sauk County outside of the BRNNL"

➤ **Highway 12 Corridor Growth Management Plan (October, 2003)**

As part of the USH12 MOA, funding was provided to address growth-related issues resulting from the expansion of US Hwy 12 from Middleton to Lake Delton. In Sauk County, the Highway 12 Local Planning Assistance Advisory Committee formed, consisting of members of Sauk County, the Ho-Chunk Nation, and local governments along the Hwy 12 corridor. In March of 2002, the Committee hired a consulting firm to assist with the preparation of the *U.S. Highway 12 Corridor Growth Management Plan*. The *Growth Management Plan* focuses on issues such as complementary land use, preservation, access, economic development, and community image issues that arise as a result of the future Highway expansion. The planning process developed an overall vision and detailed recommendations for the entire 24-mile Highway 12 corridor in Sauk County as well as a vision and recommendation for rural areas that may be affected by the corridor. Overall, the Vision for the rural areas seeks to limit large-scale development to protect the economic viability of farming, and the natural beauty and rural character of the area. The Plan also suggests tools and recommendations to achieve this vision. Although the Town of Excelsior was not a part of the Highway 12 Local Planning Assistance Advisory Committee, it is included as part of the Plans General Planning Area. This area includes communities that are not directly located along Highway 12, but will probably experience some secondary or "spin-off" impacts from future Highway 12 expansions.

➤ **Sauk County Preservation Program**

Although so far not adopted by the Sauk County Board of Supervisors, the *Sauk County Preservation Program* has been designed pursuant to the U.S. Highway 12 MOA and the Sauk County 20/20 Plan to protect important natural resources and agricultural land in Sauk County by the direct public acquisition of development rights from willing private landowners. The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) is a concept employed in communities across the country in which a public agency (in this case, Sauk County) or a private nonprofit conservation organization compensates private

landowners who voluntarily agree to permanently convey the right to develop their property for residential or commercial use. The rights are then “extinguished” by the acquiring agency, preventing any future development of the protected property. The purpose and terms of the agreement, including the respective rights of Sauk County to enforce the agreement and of the landowner to use the land, are detailed in a legal instrument called a Conservation Easement which is signed by the parties and recorded with the Register of Deeds as part of the permanent land record for that property. Agriculture, forestry, recreation and other traditional uses of the land are typically permitted, within the parameters of approved soil and water conservation plans and/or forestry stewardship plans.

### **10.3 Current and Future Cooperative Planning Efforts**

#### **➤ Neighboring Town Planning**

It is anticipated that the Town of Excelsior will be represented in the planning processes of adjacent Towns that have elected to develop a land use/comprehensive plan or are updating comprehensive plans.

#### **➤ Sauk County**

The Town of Excelsior should continue to work with Sauk County, particularly with the development of options related to land use and land division, which can aid the Town with the implementation of their Comprehensive Plan policies. Furthermore, the Town should continue to work with Sauk County and adjacent communities to ensure that the integrity of Excelsior’s Comprehensive Plan is not compromised by neighboring community decisions and vice versa.

With regard to everyday land division, land use and agriculture-related questions, residents and Town officials are encouraged to work with various county departments. The Sauk County Departments of Planning & Zoning and Land Conservation administer the majority of county ordinances and programs that affect the Town.

#### **➤ Village of Rock Springs**

The Town of Excelsior should maintain a close working relationship with the Village of Rock Springs as they both plan for growth and economic development. Future subdivisions should occur near existing Village development, and commercial development should be restricted to the Town and Village primary commercial smart growth areas. The Town’s the residential Smart Growth areas are identified northeast of the Village of Rock Springs, east of the Village along State Road 136, and south of the Village on County Road DD. The Village of Rock Springs and the Town of Excelsior should seek mutual compatibility with regard to the respective communities’ Comprehensive Plans as each seeks future growth and economic development opportunities.

### **10.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal, Objectives, and Policies**

#### **Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal:**

Provide essential services appropriate for the rural community through intergovernmental cooperation to minimize costs and maximize benefits.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation Objectives and Policies:**

ICO-1 Identify and work to eliminate existing or potential conflicts and maintain effective relationships between the Town and those units of government and other entities upon which the Town must depend.

ICP-1a Work with the agencies providing services to ensure the Town of Excelsior has an opportunity to give input to any issue related to providing those services.

ICO-2 Secure necessary services from other units of government (or private contractors) that are reliable and economically justified.

ICP-2a Develop and maintain agreements with municipalities, other government bodies, or private companies for services most appropriately provided by those organizations such as, but not limited to, fire service, ambulance services, snow plowing, etc.

ICO-3 Coordinate development options with neighboring towns, villages, and cities relative to development to maintain the rural nature of the Town.

ICP-3a Encourage the Town of Excelsior to work cooperatively with the City of Reedsburg, Village of North Freedom, Village of Rock Springs and adjacent towns regarding future land use proposals.

## 11.0 Purpose

The Land Use Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* is one of the most important components of the plan, second only to the Implementation chapter, which establishes an action plan for the local municipality. Prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Planning Law (Smart Growth) in 1999, many communities adopted what were termed ‘Land Use Plans’ or ‘Development Plans’, which reflected the goals of the community through specific land use related policies by way of ordinances, zoning and subdivision regulations. The Town of Excelsior’s Development Plan, adopted in 1999 provides a good example of this kind of ‘policy-driven’ plan. The 1999 Development Plan was the Town’s first attempt at identifying clear community goals, objectives and policies for agricultural, transportation, commercial, industrial and residential land uses. A primary theme was to maintain the natural beauty of the Town, and the recognition of its strong “sense of place”. The 1999 Plan also designated all lands not previously zoned single family residential or commercial as Resource Conservancy-5, per the Sauk County Code of Ordinances Ch. 7.10A, which requires a minimum of five acres per residential lot.

The Town of Excelsior’s 1999 Development Plan addressed some of the broader issues affecting land use including the protection of agricultural lands that exhibit the greatest long-term commitment to agriculture, encouraging developments to prevent soil erosion and to promote orderly development that could efficiently connect to existing urban services.

The 2009 *Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan* maintains similar themes as the 1999 Development Plan, however the new *Plan* refines these concepts and enacts specific policy measures to achieve the *Plan*’s overall Vision. The Land Use chapter recognizes that the goals, objectives and policies under each of the previous chapters either directly or indirectly impact land use within the Town.

The Land Use chapter of this *Comprehensive Plan* serves to recognize policies addressed in previous chapters and to discuss how they impact land use. In doing this, the Town officially recognizes the direct relationship between chapter policies and land use decisions. Second, the Land Use chapter offers an opportunity to address issues that are specific to land use such as the current use of the land, designated future land use, land divisions, density policies, home siting requirements, and development guidelines.

### 11.1 Existing Land Use

*Map 11-1 Land Use and Land Cover*, along with the following descriptors, will aid in the understanding of existing land uses in the Town. The information provided in this section will serve as baseline data for future studies. Land can be classified by use districts or by cover, and is sometimes classified by both.

#### Land Use Districts

- **Residential.** For purposes of this *Plan* this calculation includes lands designated by the Residential land use districts as described earlier in this chapter, even though all lands under these districts may not yet be developed. These areas combined account for 1.4% of the Town’s land area, or roughly 317 acres of land.
- **Commercial.** For purposes of this *Plan* this calculation includes all lands with a zoning designation of Commercial and Recreational-Commercial as shown on *Map 11-5 Zoning*

*Districts* and which are currently developed for such purposes. Note that for the purposes of this *Plan* all lands under these zoning designations have been considered developed as such. As lands are rezoned to Commercial or Recreational-Commercial and subsequently developed, these lands can be added to this land use category. These areas combined account for 0.1% of the Town's land area, or roughly 25 acres of land.

- **Agriculture.** Generally, any land not categorized as commercial or residential was put into this category, which primarily included farmland and farmsteads as well as farmettes, woodlots, grasslands and low-density residential development. This is the largest land use category in the Town and includes approximately 98.5% of the total land area or approximately 22,311 acres.

### Land Cover Classifications

- **Coniferous Forest.** This area includes land that is primarily undeveloped, evergreen forestland. This area may also include rural residential development with low densities, but due to the small patchwork of acres with this designation, it is highly unlikely. This area represents less than 3% of the Town's total land area, or approximately 653 acres.
- **Deciduous Forest.** This area includes private and public lands that are primarily hardwood forestland that is undeveloped and un-platted. This area also includes areas of low-density residential development. This area includes 28% of the Town's total land area, or approximately 6,112 acres.
- **Grassland.** This area includes private and public lands that are undeveloped and are not in agricultural or woodland uses. These areas typically consist of prairie remnants or restored prairies representing grasslands first experienced by early settlers. These areas account for approximately 18% of the Town's land area, or 3,922 acres.
- **Open Water.** These areas are characterized as lakes, ponds and perennial streams. It accounts for 0.23% of the total land area, or approximately 50 acres.
- **Wetland.** These areas consist of hydric soils that are not characterized by standing water. These areas are reflective of flood fringe areas like marshes and low lying stream bank areas. They account for approximately 6% of the Town's area, or approximately 1,314 acres.
- **Barren.** These areas have typically supported mining activities or other human activity, which has left the ground in an infertile state. The areas are characterized by soils incapable of supporting plant growth or by exposed rock formations. This area accounts for 1.7% of the total area, or approximately 370 acres.

### 11.2 Recent Development Trends

The issuance of new land use/building permits for single family residential construction in the Town of Excelsior has remained relatively constant during the last 16 years. From 1990 to 2000, an average of 15 permits per year were issued for residential construction, and from 2001-2005 an average of 16 permits per year were issued. Even though there has been a consistent, and by some standards, low rate of growth, future development pressures should not be overlooked. *Chart LUI Number of Permits Issued (1990-2006)* depicts the relatively constant rate in overall development in the Town of Excelsior since 1990, with the peak year occurring in 2003.

Assuming the Town will experience an increase in growth in the rural areas, it will become more important for the Town of Excelsior to guide rural residential growth in a way that preserves the rural character of the Town and that can be adequately served by existing public facilities. Where upgrades to public facilities are needed, service to the town should not be impacted.

Please continue to the next page...

**Table LU1: Number of Permits Issued (1990-2006)**

Land Use Permits Issued for New Construction in the Town of Excelsior								
Year	Resident					Commercial	Total Permits Issued for New Construction	Percent of Total Issued
	Single Family	Mobile Home	Total Permits Issued for Homesteads	Garage	other			
1990	10	1	11	5	1	0	17	3.26%
1991	14	0	14	2	1	0	17	3.26%
1992	17	0	17	2	3	0	22	4.22%
1993	11	0	11	0	2	0	13	2.49%
1994	12	3	15	3	2	0	20	3.83%
1995	17	0	17	3	4	0	24	4.60%
1996	15	0	15	9	4	0	28	5.37%
1997	19	1	20	5	8	1	34	6.52%
1998	19	0	19	4	9	0	32	6.14%
1999	23	0	23	3	18	0	44	8.44%
2000	15	0	15	4	11	0	30	5.75%
2001	10	0	10	2	11	0	23	4.41%
2002	18	0	18	6	15	0	39	7.48%
2003	24	0	25	5	43	0	73	14.01%
2004	17	0	17	6	7	0	30	5.75%
2005	14	0	14	9	7	0	30	5.75%
2006	13	0	13	19	13	0	45	8.63%
Total 1990 - 1999	157	5	173	36	52	1	251	48.17%
Total 2000 - 2006	111	0	112	51	107	0	270	51.82%
Total 1990 to 2006	268	5	285	87	159	1	521	100.00%
Percent of Total Issued	51.43%	.96%	54.70%	16.70%	30.51%	0.19%	100.00%	Percent of Total Issued
Average Issued Per Year	15.76	0.29	16.76	5.11	9.35	0.058	30.64	Average Issued Per Year

Source: Sauk County Planning & Zoning

### 11.3 Current Population and Housing Density

A density calculation can be utilized during the comprehensive planning process to compare population and housing statistics for a community. This calculation will provide additional insight into development patterns and provide background information as the Town of Excelsior determines its future development policies and practices. In 2000, with a population of 1,410 persons and a land area of approximately 35 square miles and 22,654 acres, the Town of Excelsior's population density was roughly 40 persons per square mile or roughly 1 person per 16 acres.

The calculation for the housing density of the Town of Excelsior in 2000 is the number of occupied housing units in 2000 (558 h.u.) divided by the total land area. This equates to about 16 houses per square mile or approximately one home per 40 acres. The further breakdown of these densities based on development patterns and location will be analyzed later in this section.

### 11.4 Future Land Use Districts (locations correspond with *Map 11-6 Land Use Districts*)

The future land use districts as shown on *Map 11-6 Land Use Districts* is intended to aid the Town of Excelsior in making land use decisions pertaining primarily to rezone requests and subdivision plats. It is also intended that decisions about future land uses in the Town be consistent with this *Map* and that any decision not consistent with this *Map* not be permissible until such time that a map amendment has been completed as part of an amendment to the *Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan*. Future land uses designated in this *Plan* also correspond to the following descriptions:

#### **Primary "Smart Growth" Development District**

Primary "Smart Growth" development areas are statutorily defined as areas that will enable the development and redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and municipal, state and utility services, where practicable, or that will encourage efficient development patterns that are both contiguous to existing development and at densities which have relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs. The Primary Development District is intended to accommodate the kinds of relatively intensive residential development often characterized by conventional residential subdivisions, but is also intended to encourage more land-efficient forms of traditional mixed use residential/commercial neighborhoods that incorporate increased density and smaller lot sizes, pedestrian safety and convenience, street interconnectivity, conservative uses of previous paving materials and the application of stormwater best management practices.

The Town of Excelsior's Primary Development District is limited to those locations lying within the City of Reedsburg's Extraterritorial District Boundary, or contiguous with the boundaries of the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom

- **Primary Development District Density:** (refer also to Section 7.12 *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance* for a more detailed discussion on density policies pertaining to the Conservation Subdivision.)

Conventional Subdivision (not *conservation* subdivision) density in the Primary Development Area is limited only by the minimum area requirement for the underlying zoning district or for sanitary treatment systems on unsewered lots. *Conservation Subdivision* density is determined by the allocation of no more than 60% of the original parcel as the "development area", leaving the

remaining 40% of the original parcel as open space, or the “preservation area”. The density policy for a conservation subdivision shall also require that the density in the development area not exceed (1) one acre per lot, excluding lands utilized by road rights-of-way. For example, 60 acres (60%) of a 100-acre parcel minus (4) acres utilized for road rights-of-way will yield 56 acres or a maximum number of permitted lots/dwelling units of 56. Multiple-Family dwellings will only be permitted in an approved Planned Unit Development - Conservation Subdivision as defined by the *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance Ch.7.12*.

- **Compatible County Zoning:**

Class I Subdivision:	fewer than ten (10) lots	Agricultural or Single-Family Residential / Multiple-Family Res.
Class II Subdivision:	fewer than twenty-five (25) lots	Single-Family Residential / Multiple-Family Res.
Class III Subdivision:	consists of twenty-five (25) or more lots	Single-Family Residential / Multiple-Family Res.

Also, under the Planned Unit Development/Conservation Subdivision, a conservation subdivision requires that at least 40% of a parcel be zoned agriculture, while the remaining 60% may be zoned single-family residential.

- **Higher Density Development**

Currently, higher density developments are concentrated on or in the vicinity of Lake Virginia and within the City of Reedsburg Extra-Territorial (ET) District. The policies in this *Plan* call for infill of these areas on lots that are not currently developed, and for directing new subdivision development to the Primary Development District within the Reedsburg ET and lands contiguous to the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom.



Utilizing the historic commercial growth patterns and previous designation for commercial land uses in the Town’s 1999 Development Plan, the Town’s Primary Commercial Smart Growth District is limited to lands within Extra Territorial (ET) areas next to Reedsburg and those directly adjacent to the Reedsburg ET district that are designated “Future Commercial” on the Town’s Future Land Use Map.

### **Non-Primary Development District (Residential)**

The Town of Excelsior Planning Committee proposed and discussed the idea of a land use district primarily intended for sustained agricultural land uses and other uses that are consistent with and compatible with agricultural operations. The district would be characterized by cropped and vacant fields as well as adjoining woodlots, wetlands and grasslands. Farmhouses and farmsteads are the predominant form of development. Non-agricultural developed features include hobby-type farmsteads intermixed with scattered non-farm single-family residences. Although farming is the primary use, the area also supports recreational opportunities such as hunting,

snowmobiling, hiking, boating, and tourism activities. A significant portion of the district would include relatively large parcels under common ownership, although it would include smaller parcels that support residential development.

The intent of the proposed district is to maintain the area's rural appeal and farming tradition. Farms and farming operations should continue to be a significant component of this district. New rural residential development should be sensitive to the visual landscape while minimizing conflict with farming operations. Hobby farming, lands set aside for preservation and recreation, and low density residential development are forms of land uses that are compatible with this proposed land use district.

Non-Primary Development areas designated on *Map 11-6 Land Use Districts* may also accommodate clusters of rural residential development provided that such developments abide by standards set forth in the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan and any separately adopted Town Ordinances. The Non-Primary Development Areas include rural residential areas that would offer an additional living option to those identified under the Primary Smart Growth District. The Non-Primary Development Areas for residential development includes lands designated by the (yet to be determined) land use district. This *Plan* does not include Non-Primary Development Areas for *commercial* land uses.

Residential development proposals in Non-Primary Development Areas may not necessarily meet the whole definition of "Smart Growth" in that they are not always contiguous to like land uses and may not assure a low municipal utility cost. Therefore, it will be important that developments proposed in these areas be evaluated according to their impact on municipal service costs with consideration given to requiring developers in these areas to upgrade utilities and transportation routes so as to accommodate such development without placing a financial burden on the Town of Excelsior or neighboring communities.

- **Criteria for Evaluating Development Impacts in Non-Primary Development Districts**

In order to ensure efficient and cost effective development patterns in the Non-Primary Development District, a set of criteria for each proposed development is listed below. It shall be the intent of both the developer and Town to utilize these criteria when considering new developments in the Non-Primary Development District. The criteria are not all-inclusive, but ask broad questions about development proposals to ensure that they are appropriate in location, size and scale and that utility and transportation provisions will be feasible, safe, and effective. These criteria will also help the Town evaluate development proposals to ensure that appropriate upgrades are made to affected utilities and local town transportation routes and that any upgrades required by the Town as part of the approval of any development in the Non-Primary Development District are the fiscal responsibility of the developer.

1. Adequate public facilities to accommodate development either exist or will be provided within a reasonable amount of time.
2. Public facilities and services needed to accommodate development will not place an unreasonable burden on the affected local units of government. Affected units of government may include the Town of Excelsior, the Village of Rock Springs, Fire and Ambulance Districts, the School District, and Sauk County.
3. Public facilities and services needed to accommodate development will not have significant negative impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, including wetlands, streams, species-rich habitats, steep slopes, and large tracts of forest.

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### **Alternative Land Use Policies Considered**

The Town of Excelsior Planning Committee considered other land use policy options besides those mentioned above. Alternative policies were pursued in reference to the Committee's interest in creating a *Plan* uniquely suited to the needs of the Town. Various concepts were fully discussed and analyzed in comparison with the existing RC-5 zoning district, and include the 20/10 option, which refers to a proposed residential density policy, and the Excelsior Ag District.

- **Resource Conservancy – 5**

Land Use throughout the Town of Excelsior is largely regulated under the Sauk County Resource Conservancy-5 (RC-5) zoning district. The intent of the RC-5 district is to “protect, maintain and enhance woodlands, bluffs, wildlife corridors, scenic areas, significant natural areas, and farmland...”. Permitted uses include general farming, raising grain, etc., greenhouses and nurseries, beekeeping, forestry and game management, along with limited residential development at a density of one residential dwelling unit per five acres of land ownership. A minimum five-acre lot required for each residence.

- **The 20/10 Option**

Housing density is discussed generally in section 11.3. Density policy is the preferred ratio of dwelling units per acre of land ownership. The 20/10 Option is a generally applicable density policy that limits dwelling units to one residence per twenty net acres of contiguous land ownership, with a density bonus allowing one residence per ten acres of land ownership IF the landowner / developer is agreeable to adopting siting provisions, landscaping and other development guidelines identified by the Town (see Section 11.5 below). The 20/10 Option could apply to lands regulated by the Sauk County General Ag zoning district, which allows residential densities in excess of one residence per ten acres of land. It could also apply to lands currently regulated under the existing Resource Conservancy – 5 (RC-5) zoning, which allows one residence per 5 acres of ownership. In either case, management and enforcement of the 20/10 Option would be the responsibility of the Town of Excelsior.

- **EA Residential Density and Land Divisions**

The Excelsior Ag concept is intended to provide an option specifically suited to the Town of Excelsior, to provide rural landowners the option to subdivide lands into parcels less than the five acre minimum allowable by current RC-5 zoning. The number of new residential lots proposed for the EA district would be limited to not more than one lot per two acres of contiguous ownership, with lot sizes limited to a two-acre minimum. The smallest existing parcel that could be subdivided in the EA district would be ten acres. Land divisions in the EA are limited to (2) two splits in one five-year period for each parcel by Certified Survey Map and as further specified by the *Sauk County Land Division and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance*.

Compatible County Zoning: **General Agricultural**

**Ultimately, despite numerous attempts at developing a consensus, the Committee was not able to reach consensus on either the Excelsior Ag option or the 20/10 option.**

**Table LU2: Comparison of Land Use Options** outlines the specific provisions of each of three Land Use policy options mentioned above: Excelsior Ag, the 20/10 Density Option and the existing Resource Conservancy-5 (RC-5) zoning district currently regulating most land use in the Town of Excelsior.

**Table LU2: Comparison of Land Use Options**

Description	RC 5 (Existing)	20/10 Density Plan	Excelsior Ag
Minimum Size Rural* Unsewered Parcel	5 acres**	2 acres**	2 acres**
Minimum Rural* Parcel Size That Can Be Split	10 acres**	20 acres** w/o Siting Guidelines 10 acres** with Siting guidelines	10 acres**
Building Site Density	5 acre* *	20 acres** w/o Siting Guidelines 10 acres** with Siting guidelines	2 acres**
Rate of Land Divisions	3 in 5 years	2 in 5 years	2 in 5 years
Siting Guidelines	NA	Used as Incentive	Encouraged
Subdivisions	Permitted	Permitted Only in Growth Area	Permitted Only in Growth Area
Non-Metallic Mines	Not Permitted	Not Permitted	Special Exception
Permitted Uses	See Sauk County Zoning Ordinance Ch. 7.10A	Same as Sauk County RC-5 Zoning	Refer to Table LU-4
Special Exceptions	See Sauk County Zoning Ordinance Ch. 7.10A	Same as Sauk County RC-5 Zoning	Refer to Table LU-4

Notes:

\* Rural refers to parcels located outside of the Growth Area.

\*\* All references to acres is net acres, i.e., less public right-of-way.

### 11.5 Steps for Siting New Development

All development occurring in (rural residential) areas should result from following the four-step design process outlined in this section. Conservation subdivisions must abide by these guidelines, but they are also strongly advised for conventional subdivisions and Certified Survey Map (CSM) divisions. This approach is derived from Randall Arendt's *Conservation Design for Subdivisions* guide (1996). According to Arendt, all potential building sites should be evaluated for their conservation and development potential, culminating in broad concept plans showing proposed locations of building lots, streets, greens, commons, meadows, woodlands, and other types of open space. During the planning process, the following four steps should be followed sequentially:

1. *Identify All Potential Conservation Areas.*

Principal conservation areas must always be protected from development, but land containing other features may be deemed equally important to preserve. **High quality farmland**, environmentally sensitive upland areas, features of historical or cultural significance, scenic landscapes, or any land with unique, rare attributes can be identified for protection. In initial site plans, designers should be encouraged to include more land than they think will eventually be designated as open space, so that no potentially desirable area is excluded from consideration in the design process. In conservation subdivisions, at least 40% of the land must be set aside for conservation. During the initial stages of planning, as much as 60% of the land may be tentatively reserved for conservation. Steps 2-4 will aid designers in making final conservation area determinations. Planning for conventional subdivision development should follow the same process.

2. *Locate Building Sites.*

The value of houses is often higher when there are views of open space, so the number of “view lots” should be maximized in any new development. This also ensures that preserved open space is usable and accessible by all members of a community. To allow for the maximum number of buildings with open space views, houses and lots should be human-scaled and not excessively wide. Identifying building sites before drawing lot lines and locating streets allows building locations to be carefully selected so that important natural, cultural, and historical features are preserved. Although it may be impractical to protect all secondary conservation areas, many of the features identified in Step 1 should be avoidable when siting houses.

3. *Design Street Alignments and Trails.*

After identifying building locations, the next step is to determine the best way to access every residence with a street system. There are a number of environmental considerations involved in the street siting process, and no new streets may be constructed in principal conservation areas. All new roads should avoid wetlands, large trees, mature tree stands, and important wildlife habitats. The length of new access streets should be minimized for aesthetic, economic, and environmental reasons. If roads must be sited very near mature trees, it is important to leave enough space so that construction equipment does not cross the tree canopies’ outer drip lines. This will prevent major damage to the root systems of these trees.

In some cases, it may be desirable to create a “single-loaded street,” with buildings all located to one side of the street. The other side of the street should typically border an open space area. This allows for an unobstructed view from the houses or businesses along the street, and showcases preserved natural areas for people who drive, bike, or walk along the road. The view from the natural area is also improved in this situation, as most new houses look far better from the front than the back. People enjoying the open space would probably prefer to see the front facades of neighboring homes rather than the wood decks and sliding glass doors typical of house backs. Residents, in turn, benefit from increased backyard privacy.

Regardless of the layout approach, all new streets should be interconnected and integrated with existing roads. Interconnected streets provide easier and safer access for fire engines, ambulances, school buses, snowplows and garbage trucks. They also distribute traffic evenly, whereas dead-ends and cul-de-sacs often lead to traffic bottlenecks by funneling vehicles to a limited number of through streets. In some areas, cul-de-sacs may be unavoidable due to topographic constraints or the location of principal conservation areas. In these cases, pedestrian and bike linkages should provide connections to other nearby streets or to a neighborhood trail system. Streets serving new developments should be designed to connect with adjoining properties that are potentially developable in the future. This will ensure that few new neighborhoods will be self-contained.

Walking and biking trails should provide residents convenient access to gathering areas, commercial centers, and public open spaces. Trails can serve to connect portions of the town that are not connected by streets, and they can provide recreational opportunities in and around preserved natural areas.

4. *Draw Lot Lines.*

Before determining precise lot lines, conservation areas should be officially delineated. Any secondary conservation areas not designated for street or building development should be protected. Conservation areas should be connected via natural corridors wherever possible. Strips of mature tree stands or wetlands can serve as attractive amenities to development, and can accommodate recreational trails or paths connecting public open space lands.

After the designation of conservation areas, building sites and street alignment, lot line placement should be fairly obvious. Lots abutting conservation areas should not have to be very deep, as the open space visually extends the perceived depth of their yards. In neighborhoods that will utilize joint septic systems, lots should be designed so that two to three houses can easily share one large septic tank and drain field by way of an easement extending across the properties. To utilize space efficiently and to promote friendlier neighborhoods, houses should maintain similar setbacks that are not far from public walking paths or roads.

### **11.6 Town of Excelsior Density Policy**

Residential development in the Town of Excelsior is discussed in Section 11.3. As noted in the previous section, the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Planning Committee considered several residential density options for future land use district designations. The current residential density policy in the Town of Excelsior is one residence per five (5) acres of land, based on Sauk County RC-5 zoning restrictions. The suggested density policy for the Excelsior Ag district (if adopted) would be one residence per two (2) acres, depending partially upon soil suitability for residential sanitary treatment systems. Rezoning of lands currently regulated under the RC-5 District would be required to create the Excelsior Ag district. A third option was the 20/10 density policy, which would allow a maximum of one residence per twenty (20) acres in either the Excelsior Ag area or the RC-5 District, with no siting requirement. Under the 20/10 density option, if specific design and siting guidelines are followed (as described in Section 11.5 above), development could occur at a higher density of up to one lot per ten acres. In the Primary Development Area, both conventional and conservation subdivisions are permitted. In conservation subdivisions, principal conservation areas may not be developed, and at least 40% of the land must be preserved. On the remaining 60%, development may be as dense as one house/lot per two-acres in the Town of Excelsior.

**Again, as of the drafting of this final approval version of the Town of Excelsior's Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Committee has not reach a consensus on adopting either the Excelsior Ag option or the 20/10 Option, In fact, a direct majority vote on the issue resulted in an exact tie among the choices. The Committee recommended forwarding the Plan as currently written with this acknowledgement of the competing approaches.**

- **Amendments to the Town of Excelsior Density Policy**

Once a density policy is adopted, amendments may be deemed appropriate from time to time. To ensure that the any future density policy amendment best recognizes the needs of all residents, the Plan Commission will hold a public hearing to acquire feedback from Town residents and landowners to utilize in the decision-making process.

### 11.7 Zoning Classifications

The Town of Excelsior adopted county zoning in 1964. At this time the entire Town was placed under the Agricultural Zoning District. Since that time there have been a number of rezoning actions, including the rezoning of lands around Lake Virginia, and a development along State Road 136 and County Road PF to the Single Family Residential District, and a rezoning north of State Road 33 which recognizes commercial land uses. A comparison of *Map 11-5 Zoning Districts* and *Map 11-6 Land Use Districts* indicates a relationship between lands designated by the Primary Development District and lands zoned Single Family Residential. Lands zoned Commercial are so few as to not have established a pattern. Finally, lands currently zoned Resource Conservancy -5 correspond to the proposed (to be determined) District. Policies discussed in this Plan, but not adopted by the Committee have called for rezoning the Excelsior Ag District to General Ag, and imposing Town level density and land division controls to manage growth. Town density and land division controls would be the responsibility of the Town of Excelsior to manage and enforce.

### 11.8 Future Land Area Needs

Predicting future land area needs for residential, commercial (includes industrial), and agricultural uses involves a process of projecting trends into the future to determine the demand that will be placed on a community relative to maintaining land in its current land use or converting it to an alternative land use. Once these projections are made, quantities of land can then be accurately identified on a future land use map. In order to study the demand of future land uses in Excelsior two factors will be considered. The first of these factors looks at population projections over time. And the second factor utilizes assumptions that population and development pressure will increase in the Town given the increased development of Sauk County and of the areas within and around the City of Reedsburg located 2 miles to the west, as well as the City of Baraboo and the City of Wisconsin Dells each located several miles to the east and north east respectively. Future land Uses are broken down into residential, commercial and agricultural.

- **Future Residential Land Area Needs**

According to the population projections under *Chapter 3 Population Inventory and Analysis* and *Chapter 4 Housing* it is reasonable to assume that the population will continue to increase in the Town of Excelsior. This increase will in turn cause an increased demand for housing in the Town. To realistically determine the number of new homes that will be needed through the year 2030, one must make a few assumptions. First, based on *Chart P10: Population Changes per Age Bracket*, population increases are most noticeable among aging households with a limited household size and among the adolescent age groups, that the greatest population increase occurs within the 40-59 age bracket, with a smaller increase among the 10-19 age bracket. Using this information, it is less likely that household sizes will increase in the Town and will likely decrease. Using these two assumptions, the *Household Size Trend* population projection represents a 12.5% decrease in housing size every 10 years. *Table LU3 Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed* correlates population increases to average household size to determine a projected number of new households. Only occupied households were considered for purposes of determining the amount of land needed in the future for additional occupied residential houses. Additional land needed represents a conservative assumption of two acres needed for each new house: an average lot size of 1.5 acres and an additional ½ acre required for each lot for road rights-of-way, new park dedication and utility rights-of-way.

**Table LU3: Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed**

Year	Population	Average Household Size	Number of Occupied Households	Additional Residential Land Needed
1990, per census	1,194	2.96	439	NA
2000, per census	1,410	2.63	558	238 (10 yr)
2010, Projection	1,464	2.30	636	156
2015, Projection	1,469	2.01	730	188
2020, Projection	1,474	1.75	842	224
2025, Projection	1,319	1.53	862	40
2030, Projection	1,127	1.33	847	0

Source: US Census and Sauk County Planning & Zoning

Based on this projection, for the next fifteen years or so the Town can expect approximately 30 acres to be converted to residential uses in every 5-year time period. This equates to roughly 15 new lots at 2 acres per lot as explained above. It is important to note that the Town currently has approximately 292 vacant residential lots around Lake Virginia and within the Reedsburg ET area. The Town conceivably has adequate existing residential lots to accommodate additional residential housing development for the foreseeable future.

- **Future Commercial Land Area Needs**

To determine the amount of land needed for future commercial land uses, the *Plan* evaluates the amount of land in the Town rezoned by Sauk County to the Commercial or Recreational-Commercial Zoning District since 1990. From 1990 through 2005, less than forty acres were rezoned from an Agricultural or Resource Conservancy Zoning District to a Commercial Zoning District, an average of less than 2.5 acres / year. Based on this average, it is evident that there is currently not a high demand for commercially zoned lands and it can be anticipated that the Town will convert approximately 55 acres to commercial land uses between 2008 and 2030.

**Table LU-4: Commercial Lands Needed**

Period Year	Land rezoned to Commercial or Rec Commercial	Additional Commercial Land Needed
1990–2000	25 acres	
2000-2008	0	
2008-2010		5 acres
2010-2015		12.5 acres
2015-2020		12.5 acres
2020-2025		12.5 acres
2025-2030		12.5 acres

- **Future Agricultural Land Area Needs**

Based upon projected and actual residential and commercial land needs, it can be assumed that the amount of agricultural land in the Town of Excelsior will decrease accordingly. To evaluate the amount of agricultural land that may potentially be converted to other uses in 5-year increments, add the projected commercial and residential lands needed from

**Table LU3 Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed** and **Table LU-4: Commercial Lands Needed**. It is likely that the continued creation of Certified Survey Map lots and implementation of the Excelsior Ag Land Use District will further reduce the amount of agricultural lands in the Town, however one primary objective of the Excelsior Ag Land Use District includes the preservation of agricultural lands.

### **11.9 Natural Limitations to Building and Site Development**

Natural limitations to development vary depending on where in the Town development is being proposed. Generally speaking, the Baraboo River, which traverses through the Town, includes a related floodplain area depicted on **Map 9-3 General Floodplain Areas** and wetlands noted on **Map 9-1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas**. Likewise, there are other non-riparian wetlands scattered throughout the Town. Other natural limitations to development include soil limitations on the placement of foundations, roads and septic suitability. General soils information can be noted under **Chapter 9 Natural Resources** and on **Map 6-1 Septic Suitability**, and **Map 6-2 Alternative Septic Suitability**.

### **11.10 Land Use Goal, Objectives and Policies**

**Land Use Goal:** Plan, control and manage development that will continue to foster a sense of community, and that will preserve the country flavor of the Township while maintaining a balance among agriculture, natural resources, quality of life and development.

#### **Land Use Objectives and Policies:**

LUO-1 Protect natural areas, such as wetlands, floodplains, the “Narrows” area, large contiguous forested areas, and the Baraboo Range.

LUO-2 Encourage development adjacent to already developed areas using alternatives to conventional residential development patterns that minimize development impacts on public infrastructure.

LUP-2a Areas of the Town that are appropriate for high density residential development are limited to those lands within the Reedsburg ET District and lands contiguous to the boundaries of the Villages of Rock Springs and North Freedom. Development areas shall include one property ownership next to the village boundaries, but extend no further out than ¼ mile from the village boundaries. New development needs to be located contiguous to existing development or village or city limits. This does not include conservation developments (e.g. cluster development with siting guidelines), which would be allowed outside the E.T. district.

LUP-2b Allow commercial zoning only within Extra Territorial (ET) areas next to Reedsburg and those lands directly adjacent to the Reedsburg ET district that are designated “Future Commercial” on the Town’s Future Land Use Map..

LUO-3 Maintain the economic viability of sustainable farming.

LUP-3a Maintain prime (Class I, II and III Soils) agricultural crop land.

- LUP-3b Direct new residential development to “borderline” or “marginal” (Class IV-VIII Soils) lands not suitable for farming, whenever possible.
- LUO- 4 Partner with neighboring municipalities on land use policy.
- LUO- 5 Protect the quality of surface and ground water from the impacts of development.
- LUP-5a Establish conservation design requirements for new residential development.
- LUO- 6 Protect community aesthetics, including scenic views and neighborhood character.
- LUP-6a Maintain an uncrowded rural community, natural beauty and quality of life.
- LUP-6b Restrict commercial signage (billboards) on roads and highways.
- LUO- 7 Maintain private property rights.
- LUO-8 Ensure that future uses at the Sauk County landfill property are compatible with the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and adjacent land uses.
- LUP-8a Participate in discussions with Sauk County regarding plans for the Sauk County landfill property.
- LUP-8b Establish guidelines for special exception permits for shooting ranges to minimize impacts on neighbors, such as hours when shooting is allowed, types of weapons, bunkering protections, gates, etc.
- LUO-9 Establish Conservation Development Guidelines, including the following:
- LUP-9a Conservation developments will preserve open space features such as farmland, natural features that define the area, environmentally sensitive areas and other areas that enhance the rural character.
- LUP-9b Conservation developments will promote the rural character and limit the visibility of new development from main roads by establishing requirements for topography, vegetation, and building setbacks. Require natural (native when possible) plantings when hills and trees are absent. Lots should be situated away from entrances to subdivisions to reduce their visibility from the main public right-of-way.
- LUP-9c Conservation developments will incorporate a road/trail network to connect homes to each other, and streets among developments will be connected. Open space in one development should connect to open space in adjacent developments.
- LUP-9d Conservation developments will encourage the creation of smaller lots that are clustered on the buildable portion of a property, allowing for the preservation of open space. Soils best suited for community septic systems and storm water detention will be mapped and set aside as common open space with shared community facilities.
- LUP 9e Support amendments to County and Town subdivision regulations as necessary to incorporate low-impact development and conservation design techniques that:
- (1) Limit total impervious area,

- (2) Minimize site disturbance and soil compaction to preserve natural topography and minimize erosion,
- (3) Ensure sound water quality and run-off controls while minimizing the use of storm drain pipes (this includes allowing, where applicable, the use of rain gardens, permeable pavements, etc.),
- (4) Encourage the Town to sponsor annual water testing for all residents (at a reduced fee for residents),
- (5) Require adequate buffer areas and setbacks to minimize encroachment and preserve the natural character and natural scenic quality of sensitive areas, including bluffs and slopes,
- (6) Utilize native vegetation in new plantings.

LUP 9f - Create an environmentally sensitive area overlay zoning district to require all new development to avoid such areas to the greatest extent possible. (Refer to Appendix X – geological map of Sauk County)

LUO - 10 Industrial and mineral extraction uses shall not be permitted in areas where such activity would be inconsistent with the values and goals of the comprehensive plan.

LUP 10a - Discourage mineral extraction in the Baraboo bluffs.

LUP 10b - Discourage mineral extraction on bluff faces.

LUP 10c - Discourage mineral extraction visible from public roads.

LUP-10d - Require that all resource extraction activities have a reclamation plan that provides for the activity to be conducted in a way that minimizes its impact on the natural environment. A guarantee of financial assurance should be posted in an amount equal to the projected cost of reclamation. The reclamation plan and financial guarantee should be reviewed with every renewal of the special use mining permit. The reclamation plan should fall within a use that is compatible with all the other elements of the comprehensive plan.

LUP 10e –Require that all non metallic extraction operations in the town be approved by the town plan commission and the town board before operations shall begin.

LUP 10f - All reclamation plans shall include a hydro-geologic study showing impact on water tables. This study shall be conducted by an independent, qualified engineer or firm approved by the town and paid for by the applicant.

LUP 10g - We recognize that non-metallic mining is necessary to provide for the needs of the town for agriculture and roads, but there shall be no more than one permitted non-metallic mineral extraction operation of each type (sand/gravel, limestone, quartzite) at one time.

LUP 10h - All mineral extraction sites shall be no more than 20 acres, including buffers required by county zoning ordinances, and no more than 65 feet deep, or no deeper than the plane of adjoining land, whichever is less.

LUP 10i - Because of the quality and size of our town roads, all petitioners shall limit hauling on any town road to 1/8 of a mile. Petitioner must maintain the quality of any town road used for such mining operation. Petitioner shall post a guarantee of financial assurance in an amount equal to the projected cost of maintenance.

LUP 10j - Require all such activity to be distant from any natural or recreational waterway, wetland, natural spring, or other sensitive natural area.

LUP 10k - Limit hours of operation of any mineral extraction activity including maintenance of equipment and reclamation activities to the hours of 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and 6:00 to noon on Saturday excluding legal holidays.

*The following Objectives and Policies were drafted in reference to the proposed rezoning of the rural areas of the Town to the General Ag district of the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance (Ch.7.05) and the implementation of the “Excelsior Ag” land use district. **The Planning Committee failed to reach consensus on the rezoning and the adoption of the “Excelsior Ag” District, rendering these draft objectives and policies inoperative.** They are included in this final draft for informational purposes to illustrate the range of options under consideration by the Committee. The Committee recommended forwarding the Plan as currently written with this acknowledgement of the competing approaches.*

LUO -11 Land Uses and Land Divisions in the Town of Excelsior will be regulated through the Sauk County Agricultural Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and appropriate Town policies and ordinances.

LUP-11a Petitions for Special Exceptions to the Agricultural Zoning Ordinance will be addressed as follows:

<b>Permitted</b>	<b>Special Exception</b>	<b>Not Permitted</b>
(2a) Single family dwelling	(2b) Churches and Schools	(2g) Mobile homes not for farm help
(2f) Accessory buildings	(2c) Municipal buildings	
(2i) Home occupations	(2d) Public parks, etc	
(2m) Parking a mobile home during construction (up to 1 year)	(2e) Two family dwellings (to restrict rentals)	
	(2h) Power distribution poles, etc.	
	(2k) Railroad passenger stations	
	(2l) Signs	

Please continue to next page...

Other agricultural district uses as defined by Sauk County Zoning Ordinance 7.05 (2):

Permitted	Special Exception	Not Permitted
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(b) General farming	(c) Power plants, etc.	(i) Commercial camping
(e) Roadside stands	(d) Power transmission and distribution towers, etc.	
(g) Mobile homes for farm help	(h) Signs	
(i) Camping as defined by Sec 7.13 (7)	(j) Non-metallic short term extraction	
(k) Cottage industries		

Following are County Ordinance Special Exception Uses under section 7.05 (2) (1):

Permitted	Special Exception	Not Permitted
	1. Aircraft landing fields	3. Drive-in theaters
	2. Contractor storing yards	4. Pea viners and charcoal kilns
	5. Kennels	7. Migrant labor camps
	6. Medical, correctional, charitable institutions	8. Mobile home parks
	9. Saw mills	10. Public and private land fills
	11. Shooting ranges	12. Slaughterhouses
	13. Pond or lake	14. Single family mobile homes
	15. Two family dwellings	21. Junkyards
	17. Alcohol fuel plants	
	18. Silage storage units	
	19. Mineral extraction	
	20. Agricultural related business	

LUO-12 Manage the creation of new lots for residential development (*Excelsior Agriculture*).

LUP-12a The minimum size for an unsewered rural residential lot is two acres. Additional acreage may be required depending upon soil conditions and other relevant factors.

LUP-12b Rural land divisions are limited to no more than two divisions per parcel in a five year period.

LUP-12c The minimum parcel that can be subdivided to create a buildable site is 10 acres (net of public right-of-ways).

**Note:** If either Sauk County RC-5 zoning with or without the 20/10 Density Option is selected as policy of the Town, then Table above does not pertain, and County RC-5 zoning provisions would prevail.

## **12.0 Purpose**

A number of the policies in this Comprehensive Plan will not be implemented automatically, and follow-up actions will be required for the Plan to become a reality. However, by default, many of the plan policies have been developed in such a manner that, by themselves, they provide specific guidance to the Town with everyday decision-making. Therefore, the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan has two roles. One of these roles is to provide everyday guidance for decision making by the Town, and the other is to provide specific direction for carrying forth projects that will aid the Town with the full realization of its vision, goals and objectives.

This section is meant to provide guidance for the general process of adopting the Comprehensive Plan as well as more specific detail on how and when amendments will be made to the Plan. This section also provides a ‘timeline of implementation’ of all policies in the plan and recommendations, where needed, as to whom will be implementing these policies. This section defines the suggested implementation roles of the Plan Commission, Town Board, and the Economic Development Advisory Committee.

## **12.1 Plan Adoption**

The Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan must be adopted in a manner that recognizes a commitment to implement each policy within the Plan. The Plan itself will also be adopted as an ordinance, which will allow the Town to enforce its vision, goals, objectives, and policies. The Town has also included all of the basic elements of Comprehensive Planning and has achieved all 14 goals of the ‘Smart Growth’ legislation.

In addition to this achievement, the development of this plan included an extensive public participation component, which ensured numerous opportunities for residents, landowners, and neighboring governments to give input. Also, the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan Committee consisted of people from all interests and backgrounds, ensuring that the plan was developed by the people and for the overall good of the Town. The public participation plan and scope of services to the planning process are noted in Appendix C.

The final Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed by the Plan Commission, which will forward its recommendations to the Town Board for final Town approval. Upon Town approval, the Plan will be forwarded to the Planning, Zoning and Land Records Committee, which will recommend final approval by the Sauk County Board. Once approved by the county board, the Plan will finally be submitted to the State of Wisconsin, Department of Administration.

## **12.2 Plan Monitoring, Amendments, and Update**

The Town should regularly evaluate its progress towards achieving the policies in this Comprehensive Plan, and amend and update the Plan as appropriate. This section suggests recommended criteria and procedures for monitoring, amending, and updating the Plan.

### **➤ Plan Monitoring**

The Town should constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions based on the recommendation/policies of the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan. More specifically, for each proposal that comes before the Town, any recommendation by the Town’s Plan Commission and final action by the Town Board

should reference any and all plan policies utilized as part of the review and decision-making process. This reference may come in the form of a resolution or minutes officially adopted by the Town.

➤ **Plan Amendments**

Amendments may be deemed appropriate or necessary in the years following the adoption and implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. Amendments are generally defined as either minor or major. Minor amendments generally include changes to maps or general text. Major amendments are defined as any change to plan policies. Therefore major amendments will require, at a minimum, a public hearing to garner input from the community regarding the amendment(s).

➤ **Plan Update**

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the Comprehensive Plan be updated at least every ten years. As opposed to an amendment, an update is often a substantial re-write of the Plan document and maps. Further, on January 1, 2010, “any program or action that affects land use” will have to be consistent with locally adopted comprehensive plans- including zoning and subdivision ordinances, annexation, and transportation improvements. Based on these two deadlines, the Town should update its Comprehensive Plan before the year 2019 (i.e., ten years after 2009). The Town should also monitor any changes to language or interpretations of State law throughout the life of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **12.3 Role of Implementation**

➤ **Town Board**

The Town Board will provide for general oversight of the Plan Commission’s activities relative to selecting and guiding Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee participants. The Town Board will also consider any current proposals and ensure that they are consistent with this Plan as well as consider Plan Commission recommendations for such proposals. Like Plan Commission members, Town Board members are encouraged to take an active role as members of the Implementation Committee.

➤ **Plan Commission**

It is intended that the primary body responsible for the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan be the Plan Commission. Implementation by the Plan Commission will take two forms. The first form comes with the utilization of the Comprehensive Plan for everyday decision making. It is also recommended that the Plan Commission take the role of identifying policies within the Plan to support its recommendation to the Town Board. The second form of implementation recognizes the role of the Plan Commission to select participants for the Comprehensive Planning Implementation Committee and guide the work of this Committee. This work should be based on the premise that this Committee will be the ‘work-horse’ behind the implementation of many Plan policies. It is highly recommended that Plan Commission members, in addition to simply guiding the Implementation Committee, become members of this Committee themselves.

➤ **Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)**

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) should be composed of local business owners and others interested in furthering economic development within the community. This

committee will be responsible for implementing selected Economic Development policies. The Committee will also be officially recognized by the Town Board.

#### 12.4 Implementation Timeline and Recommended Courses of Action

This section provides a summary of the actions that the Town should complete in order implement this Comprehensive Plan. This summary has been broken down by each element and elements' policies to include a minimum recommended course of action and timeframe for implementation. Each policy has also been assigned a representative body charged with the primary implementation of the policy.

#### HOUSING

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
HP-1A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-2A	2011	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-2B	2009 -ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-2C	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-3A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-3B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-4A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
HP-4B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

#### AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
ARO-1	2009- ongong	
ARO-2	2009-ongoing	
ARO-3	2009-ongoing	
ARO-4	2009-2012	Plan Commission/Town Board
ARP-4A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/ Town Board

#### UTILITIES & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
UCRO-1	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/ Town Board
UCRO-2	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
UCRO-3	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
UCRO-4	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
UCRO-5	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

### TRANSPORTATION

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
TO-1	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/ Town Board
TO-2	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/ Town Board
TO-3	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
TO-4	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
TO-5	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
EDO-1	2009	Plan Commission/Town Board
EDP-1A*	2010-2012	EDAC*
EDO-2	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
EDP-3	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
EDP-3A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

\*\*Economic Development Advisory Committee

### NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
NRP-1A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRP-1B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-2	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-3	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-4	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-5	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-6	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-7	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
NRO-8	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
ICP-1A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
ICP-2A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/ Town Board
ICP-3A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

**LAND USE**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Implementation Timeframe</b>	<b>Representative Body</b>
LUO-1	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-2A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/ Town Board
LUP-2B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-3A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-3B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUO-4	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-5A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-6A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-6B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUO-7	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-8A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-8B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-9A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-9B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-9C	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-9D	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-9E	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-9F	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10C	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10D	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10E	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10F	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10G	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10H	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10I	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10J	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-10K	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-11A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-12A	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-12B	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board
LUP-12C	2009-ongoing	Plan Commission/Town Board

**12.5 Consistency Among Plan Elements**

The State Comprehensive Planning statute requires that the implementation element “describe how each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.” Preparing the various elements of the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan simultaneously has ensured that there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements of this Plan.

### **12.6 Annual Review of the Implementation Progress**

It is intended that prior to each annual meeting, the Plan Commission and Town Board jointly review the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Policies of this Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the Plan has been adhered to and to ensure its continued implementation. This will be particularly important for those policies that have an asterisk (\*), which are policies that require additional work as part of their implementation. It is also intended that an update be provided at each annual meeting, which summarizes both how and when policies of the Town of Excelsior Comprehensive Plan have been/will be implemented. This process of review and summary will also offer the Plan Commission and Town Board an opportunity to identify the policies that may be implemented with the assistance of any additional appointed Committee to complete tasks.