



Town of Ironton

Sauk County, Wisconsin

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The Town of Ironton, located in the northwestern part of Sauk County, is a rural agricultural landscape characterized by its small town atmosphere and a strong sense of community pride. The Town incorporates a robust agricultural economy and is home to scattered woodlots and valley streams. This setting and atmosphere has resulted in small increases in residential growth in the Town of Ironton. This trend, which is expected to continue, makes planning for the Town’s future important as a way to retain the characteristics and agricultural economy valued by the community and to ensure a successful future for the Town of Ironton.

1.0 Purpose of this Plan

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

- 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;
- Including provisions that emphasize economic development that is locally and recreationally based;
- Providing opportunities to preserve open space land for ecological, recreational, and aesthetic reasons.
- Being innovative with the development and use of cluster development, density policy, Transfer of Development Rights, new lot and home siting standards, and achieving a balance between proposed development and agricultural opportunities.

The Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in accordance with Wis. Stat § 66.1001 and is the culmination of multiple months of work on the part of an 5-member Comprehensive Planning Committee. Input from numerous other citizens of the Town and knowledgeable people from throughout Sauk County have 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 and Vision Session.

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.

In addition to meeting the Comprehensive Planning legislation, this Plan complies with the State of Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation Program. This Plan specifically includes policies, programs and maps related to:

- Preserving prime agricultural lands;
- Managing rural growth in such a way to minimize conflict with agricultural operations;
- Using innovative strategies to preserve agricultural land such as Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights, Density Policies and Cluster Developments;
- Protecting significant natural resources, open space, scenic, historic and architecturally significant areas;

- Conserving soil and water resources;
- Exploring alternative forms of agriculture so as to sustain the predominately agrarian way of life;
- Recommend to Sauk County that continued program research and implementation through ordinances, policies and education efforts take place to preserve agrarian economic and ways of life.

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 Ironton.

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 Ironton Development Plan (1986)**

The Town of Ironton undertook its first planning process in 1986, when it adopted town-wide Exclusive Agricultural Zoning under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance. The stated goal of the 1986 Development Plan, adopted concurrently with Exclusive Agriculture Zoning was to, “Preserve agricultural land and protect farm operations as well as environmentally sensitive areas.” By that standard, the 1986 Development Plan appears to have been largely successful. Today, agriculture remains the dominant land use in the Town, and its natural resources remain visibly intact. Since 1986 residential development in the Town has continued, but at a manageable pace. The slow growth can be partly attributed to large lot size requirements specified under the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District in effect at the time. One notable flaw with the 1986 Plan includes a lack of criteria to locate both new residential lots and house placement with regard to preserving viable agricultural operations. This Comprehensive Plan, along with Sauk County’s Planned Unit Development Program, corrects these two flaws being large lot size requirements and lack of siting criteria to preserve agriculture.

1.3 Regional Context

Map 1-1 Regional Context shows the relationship of the Town of Ironton to neighboring communities. The Town is located in the northwest part of Sauk County and is about 5 miles west of the City of Reedsburg. The Town also includes the incorporated Village of Ironton and parts of the incorporated Villages of Lime Ridge and Cazenovia. The Town of Ironton also shares a border with Richland County to the west.

1.4 Jurisdictional Boundaries

The Town of Ironton is assigned one supervisory district. Supervisory District 5, which incorporates all of the Town of Ironton; the western half of the Town of Reedsburg; southeast section of Woodland; and, also includes the Villages of Ironton, Lime Ridge, La Valle and that part of the Village of Cazenovia located in Sauk County. *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Map* depicts the exact boundaries of Supervisory District 5.

The Town of Ironton is split into three school districts: Reedsburg, Weston and Wonewoc-Union Center *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Map* also depicts the locations of these boundaries.

In terms of land use-related issues, the following Chapters of the Sauk County Code of Ordinances govern the Town of Ironton:

1.4.1 Administered by Sauk County Clerk

- Chapter 1 Supervisory District Plan

1.4.2 Administered by the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department

- Chapter 7 Zoning Ordinance
- Chapter 8 Shoreland Protection Ordinance
- Chapter 9 Floodplain Zoning Ordinance
- Chapter 10 County Parks

- Chapter 18 Rural Identification System
- Chapter 20 Uniform Citation Ordinance
- Chapter 22 Land Division and Subdivision Regulations Ordinance
- Chapter 24 Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Ordinance
- Chapter 26 Animal Waster Management
- Chapter 25 Private Sewage System Ordinance
- Chapter 51 Erosion Control and Stormwater Management

1.4.4 Administered by the Sauk County Sheriff

- Chapter 27 Animal Control Ordinance

1.5 Planning Area

The Planning area covers all lands within the Town of Ironton. 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 2007 Town of Ironton Comprehensive Planning Committee is comprised of one Town Board member and twelve area residents. These residents took part in several efforts to identify issues and opportunities facing the Town of Ironton. 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, 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. For the update process in 2022, the community survey was updated and mailed to all Town residents to ascertain if anything changed and the satisfaction of residents with Town operations. 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 Town Planning Commission updated and administered the 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 and updated for new land use issues.

During the Fall of 2022, 235 surveys were mailed to every household and landowner in the Town of Ironton. Of the 235 households, 78 or 33%, responded. This response rate is well above the average for a survey of this nature when considering 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:

2.1.1 Quality of Life

Defining and maintaining a high quality of life in Ironton is the most important common denominator among all residents. 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 Ironton. From all of the responses, most respondents indicated that they: valued rural living, and beauty of the countryside; being near friends and family; and, that is was a great place to raise a family. Other responses that ranked high were the ability to operate a farm and the general quiet, peaceful nature of the rural community.

2.1.2 Housing

Housing is an important part of how a community grows. Where housing is located can have an impact on a community in terms of the need for services, aesthetics and overall community feel. Participants were asked to identify how new residential development should appear on the landscape in terms of placement and density. Overall, 38% of respondents indicated that the best option for residential development is 'One house per lot not to exceed 3 lots per landowner in a 5-year period, with an agreement that agricultural lands are preserved'. The second residential housing choice at 29% was to have no new development. The third choice at 21% identified 'conservation subdivision development designating areas for development and green space'. Respondents to the survey

indicated that their fourth choice for new housing was ‘Conventional subdivision development requiring large lots (5 acres or more) with no limitation on the number of lots’ The fourth choice did not include an agreement to preserve lands. The least desirable types of residential development included conventional development with no limitation on the number and size of lots and one house per lot not to exceed 3 lots within 5-years and no agreement to preserve lands.

2.1.3 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. When asked if residents support the direct sale of farm products, 72% indicated they would. Fifty-six percent of residents also indicated that they would support forms of agriculture tourism, 67% support workdays and educational opportunities, and 48% overnight lodging/bed and breakfasts with an agricultural theme. From a different perspective, 87% of respondents indicated that the preservation of farmland was either essential or very important, suggesting a strong commitment to sustaining agriculture operations in the Town.

2.1.4 Economic Development

Agriculture and recreation represent the two primary forms of local economic activity in the Town, however alternative forms of economic development were considered in the survey as well. 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, 33% indicated that there were adequate support services while 61% had no opinion.

In terms of other economic opportunities, respondents were asked if they would support business development in areas of existing development, namely the Villages of Lime Ridge, Ironton, Cazenovia and the surrounding vicinity. Overall, 58% of respondents indicated that they would support small businesses (10 or less full-time employees) while 35% of respondents indicated that they would support both large and small businesses adjoining the Villages. When survey participants were asked what types of businesses are needed in the Town, 54% agreed that agriculture supply and services are needed while 26% indicate that tourism and hospitality should be added and 27% agreed that professional or office services are needed. Notably, 58% of respondents indicated that the Town needs a local market or grocery store.

2.1.5 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, survey participants either strongly agreed or agreed that community facilities and services were adequate. When asked about what public facilities are needed in the Town: over 34% of the response either agreed or strongly agreed that picnic areas/shelters; 22% playgrounds and equipment; 28% public natural or recreational areas; and, 25% walking/hiking/cross country ski trails are needed.

Fifty-four percent of respondents felt that solar energy should be developed in the Town while 38% favor methane production, 30% favor large-scale wind turbines and 48% favor ethanol plants.

2.1.6 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, undeveloped hills and overall rural character. Generally upwards of approximately 90% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that protecting natural resources is important. Notably, the protection of farmland and woodland ranked the highest with 94% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that those resource should be protected. The protection of shoreline ranked the lowest with 67% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that shorelines should be protected. This is likely due to the lack of shoreline located within the Town.

2.1.7 Transportation

Survey participants were asked to consider both the adequacy and condition of transportation systems (primarily roads) within the Town. Eighty percent of respondents indicated that they strongly agree or agree that the overall road network meets the needs of citizens while 69% felt that road conditions were adequate for intended uses. When asked if there are any transportation facility needs or problems that need to be addressed, 33% of respondents believed that biking facilities should be considered when upgrading roadways, 67% believe that UTV access meets the needs of current and visiting citizens.

2.1.8 Land Use

Land Use is the one element that recognizes the interconnectedness of all of the other elements of a comprehensive plan and ties them all together. Land Use also addresses some of the larger issues in a community, and a study of land use concerns can give specific direction to mitigate land use conflicts by posing standards and procedures that apply to everyone equally. To gain a broader perspective of some of the top land use issues in the Town, the survey asked participants to list their top three land use issues. Through this listing, the protection of agricultural lands and loss of agricultural lands or rural character was listed by over 50% of respondents. Fourteen percent also noted concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), housing development, and general development as important issues.

2.1.9 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 Ironton to look like in 20 years. Overall, a large majority of respondents indicated that they wanted Ironton to remain an agricultural community and maintain the small-town feel. When participants were asked what they felt was the biggest issue facing the Town of Ironton in the next several years many responses were given, however a reoccurring theme centered on concerns with loss of farmland and urban development pressure.

2.2 Visioning Session

The Town held a Visioning Session Workshop on March 5, 2007. The purpose of the session was to involve residents and landowners in the Town of Ironton to take part in defining what they believe Ironton should be in the future. In total, 31 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 Ironton. Participants also had an opportunity to

identify what they perceive to be the Town's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT's) as related to the future vision as well as the nine elements defined in the comprehensive planning legislation.

Some of the more common responses included:

- **Strengths:** Friendly people, good agricultural land, efficient town government, rural character, good connection with other municipalities.
- **Weaknesses:** Lack of sense of community, travel time to conveniences, lack of job opportunities, lack of growth in population.
- **Opportunities:** New people moving in, preserve rural character, develop community center, designate parks and recreational lands, senior centers.
- **Threats:** Encroachment of City of Reedsburg, State budgets, impacts on water quality, one size fits all rules from government for agriculture, urban sprawl.

Equally important to identifying the Town's SWOT's, participants had the opportunity to begin developing a Town Vision Statement. To develop the Vision statement, key vision themes were identified in three separate working groups on large boards. The boards were then compared with the collective group to identify the common 5 themes that appeared on all three boards. These themes not only contributed to the town's overall vision statement, but also served as the 5 major points consider during the planning process. Generally, the 5 major points were as follows:

- Preservation of agricultural and natural and woodlands / good stewards of the land;
- Diversified agricultural economy / value added production;
- Rural agricultural community with diversified cultures;
- Sense of community / stable population;
- Maintain clean water and air.

Overall, utilizing public input, the Vision Session aimed to create a Vision for the town as well as provide direction to the Comprehensive Plan Committee with the development of the plans goals, objectives and policies. The results and process utilized for the Vision Session can be noted in Appendix B.

2.3 Open House

On April 30, 2008, the Comprehensive Plan Committee conducted an open house to present the draft Town of Ironton Comprehensive Plan. Through discussion and submittal of written comments, participants were given the opportunity to comment on the Committee's work and suggest changes. Approximately 55 town residents attended the open house.

2.4 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 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 every person who is affected by a decision in the decision-making process. This is true for several reasons. First, the decision would reflect the will of the entire group, not just the leadership or majority. Second, the people who carry out the plans will be more confident in their work. Through its recognition of all interests, the plan will stand the test of time.
- Third, the consensus process required active cooperation, disciplined speaking and listening, and respect for the contributions of every Committee member, all of which occurred under a defined structure. This structure aimed to ensure that everyone in the group had an opportunity to feel comfortable sharing their opinions and ideas and to explore resolutions with the hope that ideas build upon each other, generating new ideas until the best decision emerges.

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

“Our definition of consensus aims for complete agreement and support among those present. This is complete consensus. However, we are willing to move ahead with a decision where there is clear support among the majority of members when not more than three members or more than 25% of the members in attendance combined declare themselves as “formal disagreement but will go with the majority” or “block”. This is called “sufficient consensus” or “qualified consensus”. If the above qualifications exist, the item will be “off the table” pending revision and reconsideration.”

Table 2-1 Consensus Process Continuum was utilized with the aforementioned definition when deciding upon plan goals, objectives and policies including the Town of Ironton Density Policy

Table 2-1 Consensus Process Continuum

Endorse	Endorse With a minor Point of contention	Agree with Reservation	Abstain	Stand Aside	Formal disagreement but will go with the majority	Block
“I like it”	“Basically, I like it”	“I can live with it”	“I have no opinion”	I don’t like this but I don’t want to hold up the group”	“I want my disagreement to be noted in writing but I’ll support the decision”	“I veto this proposal”

2.5 Town of Ironton Vision

The Township of Ironton strives to promote a rural quality of life through responsible environmental stewardship and preservation of an agricultural community. Ironton Township strives to maintain the rural character and sense of community through orderly development and economic growth.

The Township of Ironton strives to promote rural quality of life through responsible environmental stewardship and preservation of an agricultural community. Ironton township strives to maintain rural character and sense of community through orderly development and economic growth.

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 Ironton. In this chapter we will examine the population profile of Ironton. 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 of housing occupancy, population composition, age distribution and length of residency. In analyzing these trends and projections, citizens of the Town of Ironton 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 Ironton, it is important to consider how these changes compare to regional and local trends. Recognizing similarities and differences in potential future growth between Ironton and nearby towns will allow the Town of Ironton to create a Comprehensive Plan unique to its specific issues and goals.

3.1.1 Population

As **Table P1 Regional Population Trends** indicates, the population in the Town of Ironton has both decreased and increased at times since 1970. Overall, between the years of 1970 and 1990, Ironton’s population decreased by 8 persons, or at an average of 2.66 persons per 10 years. The population then increased in 2000 and has stayed relatively constant with an increase of only 12 people in the 2020 Census or an 1.8% increase. In comparison, neighboring towns, have experienced a small, but steady increase in population. On a larger scale, Sauk County experienced an average increase in population of 11.05% per 10 years, and the State of Wisconsin averaged an increase in population of 6.04% per 10 years between 1970 and 2020. 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 to maintain a steady population and to direct development.

Table P1: Regional Population Trends

Table P1: Regional Population Trends																
Year	Town of Ironton		Town of LaValle		Town of Woodland		Town of Reedsburg		Town of Washington		Town of Westfield		Sauk County		Wisconsin	
	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change
1970	658		693		617		608		756		658		39,057		4,400,000	
1980	643	-2.28%	929	34.05%	594	-3.73%	624	2.63%	741	-1.98%	558	-15.20%	43,469	11.30%	4,700,000	6.82%
1990	585	-9.02%	1,005	8.18%	585	-1.52%	649	4.01%	798	7.69%	513	-8.06%	46,975	8.07%	4,891,769	4.08%
2000	650	11.11%	1,203	19.70%	783	33.85%	752	15.87%	904	13.28%	594	15.79%	55,225	17.56%	5,363,675	9.65%
2010	660	1.54%	1,302	8.23%	790	0.89%	1,293	71.94%	1,007	11.39%	530	-10.77%	61,976	12.22%	5,686,986	6.03%
2020	662	0.30%	1,420	9.06%	839	6.20%	1,185	-8.35%	1,021	1.39%	516	-2.64%	65,763	6.11%	5,893,718	3.64%
Overall Change 1970-2020	4	0.61%	727	104.91%	222	35.98%	577	94.90%	265	35.05%	(142)	-21.58%	26,706	68.38%	1,493,718	33.95%
Average Change per 10 years	1	0.33%	145	15.85%	44	7.14%	115	17.22%	53	6.36%	(28)	-4.18%	5,341	11.05%	298,744	6.04%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1970 - 2020

3.1.2 Housing Units

From 1990 to 2020, the numbers of housing units have increased in Ironton and in many surrounding Towns. As seen in **Table P2 Regional Housing Unit Comparison**, the Town of Ironton’s increase in housing units (26.9%) is in lower than the increase experienced by Sauk County (50.6%) and the state of Wisconsin (32.7%) between the years 1990 and 2020. This reflects the population changes in the area.

Table P2: Regional Housing Unit Comparison

Table P2: Regional Housing Unit Comparison																
YEAR	Town of Ironton		Town of LaValle		Town of Woodland		Town of Reedsburg		Town of Washington		Town of Westford		Sauk County		Wisconsin	
	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change
1990	201		783		257		383		262		172		20,439		2,055,774	
2000	221	9.95%	914	16.73%	302	17.51%	415	8.36%	305	16.41%	191	11.05%	24,297	18.88%	2,321,144	12.91%
2010	245	10.86%	1,182	29.32%	396	31.13%	501	20.72%	320	4.92%	254	32.98%	25,192	3.68%	2,279,768	-1.78%
2020	255	4.08%	1,222	-62.41%	415	4.80%	462	4.08%	358	11.88%	236	-7.09%	30,784	22.20%	2,727,726	19.65%

Source: US Census Bureau 1990 – 2010, American Community Survey 2020

3.1.3 Average Household Size

Comparing the number of persons per household during 1990 and 2020 shows that the Town of Ironton saw a fluctuation in numbers of persons per occupied house with neighboring towns experiencing the same. Comparing the Town of Ironton to Sauk County and the State of Wisconsin, all three experienced a decline, as seen in **Table P3 Regional Average Household Size Comparison** between 1990 to 2010 but saw a greater than 20% increase from 2010 to 2020. Both the State and the County averaged approximately 2.9 persons per household in 2020.

Table P3: Average Household Size

Table P3: Average Household Size - Persons Per Household																
YEAR	Town of Ironton		Town of LaValle		Town of Woodland		Town of Reedsburg		Town of Washington		Town of Westford		Sauk County		Wisconsin	
	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change
1990	3.24		2.75		3.1		3.18		3.1		2.99		2.61		2.61	
2000	2.82	12.96%	2.6	-5.45%	3.22	3.87%	2.78	12.58%	3.22	3.87%	2.69	10.03%	2.51	-3.83%	2.5	-4.21%
2010	2.67	-5.32%	2.35	-9.62%	2.97	-7.76%	2.54	-8.63%	3.12	-3.11%	2.26	15.99%	2.43	-3.19%	2.43	-2.80%
2020	3.36	25.84%	2.52	7.23%	3.37	13.47%	2.34	-7.87%	3.77	20.83%	2.82	24.78%	2.92	20.16%	2.97	22.22%

Source: US Census Bureau 1990 – 2010, American Community Survey 2020

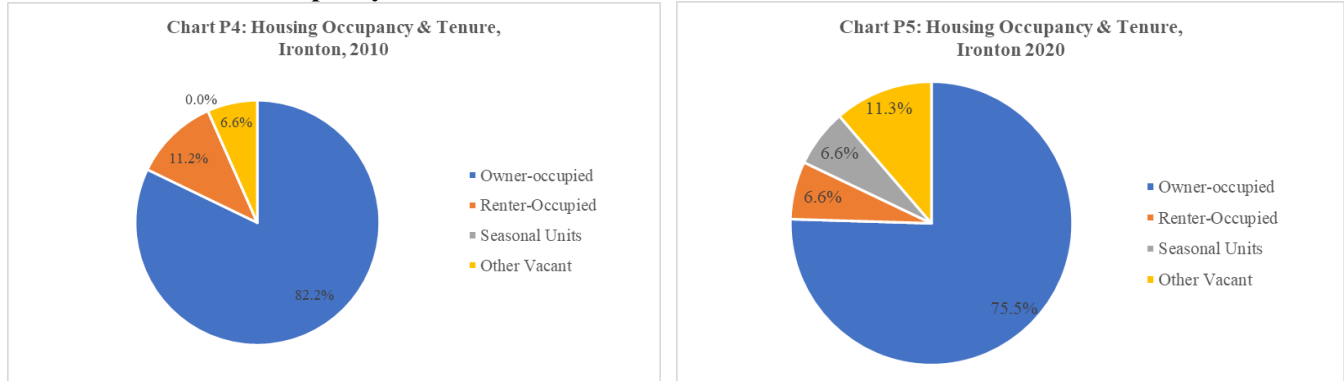
3.2 Local Population and Housing Trends

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.

3.2.1 Occupied Housing

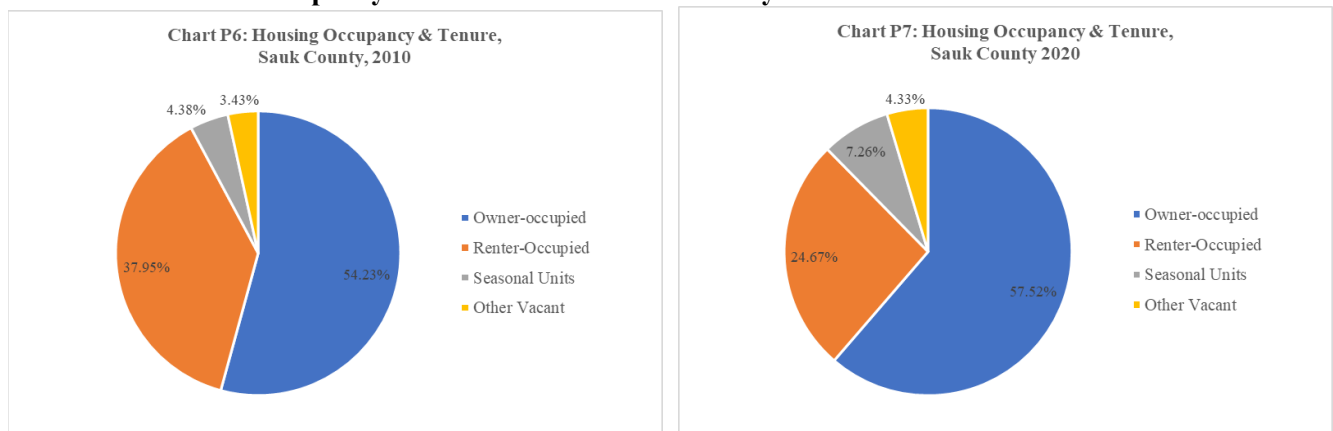
Determining the number of all housing units, the number of these units occupied, and the number of persons per occupied household will help to develop an understanding of population trends. In Ironton, the number of housing units decreased from 241 in 2010 to 212 in 2020, the number of occupied housing units decreased from 82.2% in 2010 to 75.5% in 2020, and in increase in seasonal housing units by 6.6%. Occupancy rate trends for both Ironton and Sauk County are noted for the years 2010 and 2020 on **Charts P4 through P7**.

Charts P4 and P5: Occupancy Rate and Tenure Ironton 2010 vs. 2020



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA); US Census, 2010, 2020

Charts P6 and P7: Occupancy Rate and Tenure Sauk County 2010 vs. 2020



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA); US Census, 2010, 2020

3.2.2 Population Composition: Age, Gender and Race

Median age is defined as the age at which half of the population is above and half is below. **Table P8 Age and Gender, Ironton and Sauk County** shows the median age in Ironton at 35.8 during 2020. This is younger in comparison to the median age of Sauk County at 41 for the same time period. In both Ironton and Sauk County, there was a slight variation in the female population percentage from 1990 to 2020. Also evident from this chart is that the percentage of the population under 18 years of age is higher within the Town of Ironton in comparison to Sauk County.

Table P8: Age and Gender, Ironton and Sauk County

Table P8: Age and Gender, Ironton and Sauk County								
Year	Median Age		Percent Under 18		Percent Over 65		Percent Female	
	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County
1990, per census	Not available	34.2	35.70%	27.19%	10.20%	15.77%	48%	50.79%
2000, per census	36.7	37.3	32.90%	26%	11.10%	14.50%	48.60%	50.60%
2010, per census	47	40	20.90%	23.80%	11.60%	15.00%	46.30%	50.20%
2020, per census	35.8	41	30.40%	22.80%	21.70%	18.40%	49.80%	52.00%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 - 2020

Table P9 Ethnic Composition, Ironton and Sauk County shows that from 1990 to 2020 there was a small decrease in the Caucasian population in the Town of Ironton along with a 5.3% decrease in Sauk County. On the other hand, both the Town of Ironton and Sauk County experienced a slight increase within the Hispanic population. African Americans did not grow in numbers in Ironton and the percentage of Asians and others varied slightly.

Table P9: Ethnic Composition, Ironton and Sauk County

Table P9: Ethnic Composition, Ironton and Sauk County												
Year	Percent White		Percent Native American and Alaska Native		Percent Hispanic (of any race)		Percent Asian		Percent African American		Percent Other	
	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Town of Ironton	Sauk County
1990, per census	100.00%	98.50%	0.00%	0.60%	0.40%	0.40%	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.10%	0.00%	0.20%
2000, per census	99.30%	98.00%	0.50%	1.10%	0.90%	1.20%	0.10%	0.30%	0.00%	0.30%	0.70%	0.70%
2010, per census	98.20%	94.50%	0.00%	1.20%	2.20%	4.30%	0.00%	0.50%	1.80%	0.60%	0.00%	1.90%
2020, per census	98.00%	93.20%	0.00%	1.70%	2.00%	5.30%	0.00%	0.50%	0.00%	0.70%	2.00%	2.70%

Source: US Census, 1990 - 2020

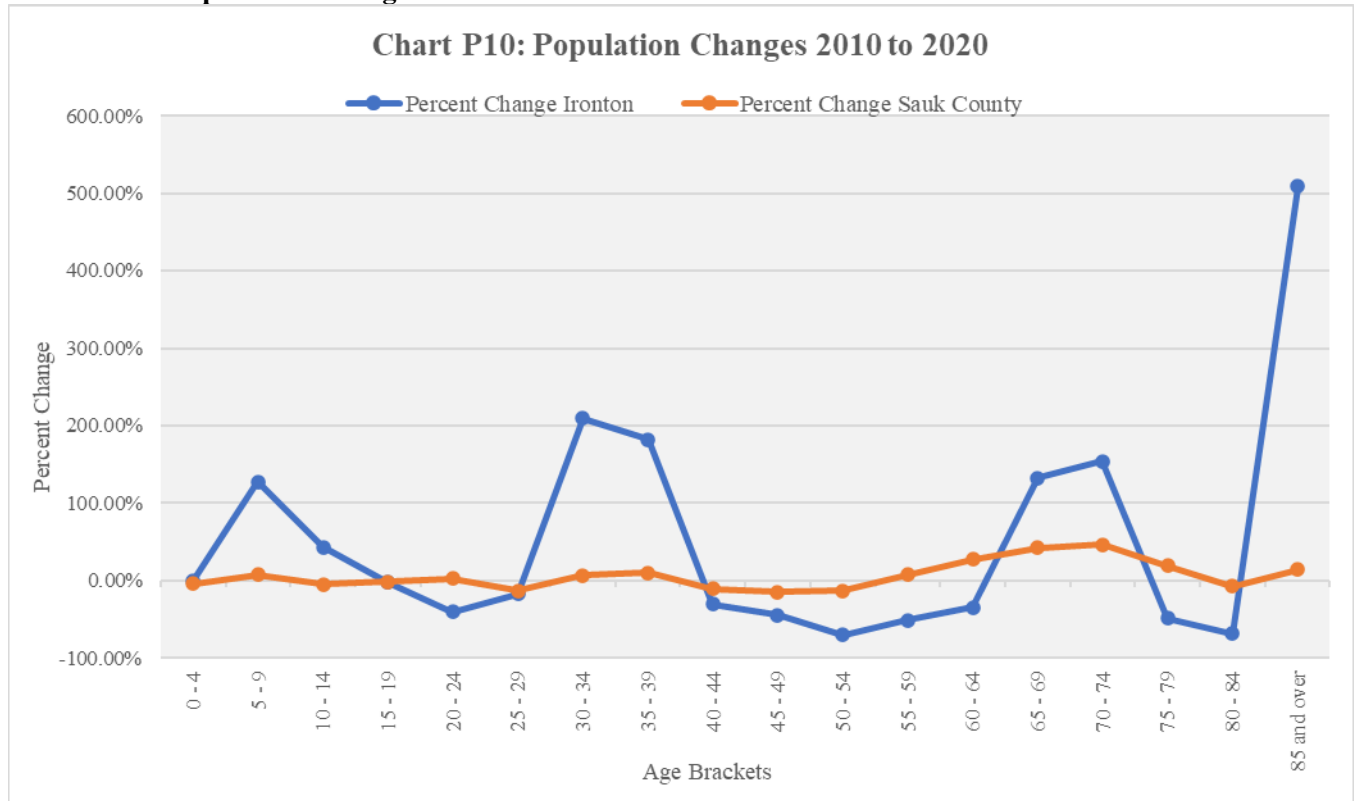
* Composition may equal more than 100% because some may report more than one ethnicity.

3.2.3 Population per Age Bracket

Chart P10 and Table P11 Change of Populations per Age Bracket breaks down the changes in population by age brackets for both the Town of Ironton and Sauk County from 2010 to 2020. Generally, this chart shows that the Town of Ironton is experiencing a greater percentage of growth in the upper and lower middle age brackets and a little less growth in the young adult age brackets. When compared to Sauk County population changes which are remaining relatively steady, definite growth trends in the upper age groups can be seen, especially in the 60 - 79 age group and the over 85 group. This implies an aging population, as the growth in the lower age

groups is less than those of retiree age and above. The lower population numbers in the 19-29 age bracket implies that once children reach the young adult stage they leave home.

Chart P8: Population Changes 2010 to 2020



Source: American Community Survey 2020 and US Census Bureau 2010

Table P11: Change of Populations per Age Bracket

Table P11: Change of Populations per Age Bracket						
Age Group	2010 Ironton	2020 Ironton	Percent Change Ironton	2010 Sauk County	2020 Sauk County	Percent Change Sauk County
0 - 4	50	50	0.00%	3,979	3,813	-4.17%
5 - 9	23	52	127.07%	4,014	4,311	7.40%
10 - 14	35	50	43.27%	4,170	3,962	-4.99%
15 - 19	35	34	-2.58%	3,930	3,861	-1.76%
20 - 24	60	36	-40.20%	3,336	3,422	2.58%
25 - 29	25	21	-17.00%	3,994	3,480	-12.87%
30 - 34	13	41	210.61%	3,740	4,010	7.22%
35 - 39	20	56	181.41%	3,864	4,263	10.33%
40 - 44	23	16	-30.13%	4,180	3,732	-10.72%
45 - 49	49	27	-44.67%	4,742	4,049	-14.61%
50 - 54	84	25	-70.34%	4,803	4,169	-13.20%

55 - 59	71	35	-50.70%	4,293	4,612	7.43%
60 - 64	43	28	-34.43%	3,643	4,636	27.26%
65 - 69	12	28	133.33%	2,745	3,910	42.44%
70 - 74	10	26	154.90%	2,024	2,972	46.84%
75 - 79	27	14	-48.34%	1,608	1,911	18.84%
80 - 84	19	6	-68.91%	1,354	1,257	-7.16%
85 and over	2	11	511.11%	1,557	1,782	14.45%
Total	601	556	-7.55%	61,976	64,152	3.51%

Source: American Community Survey 2020 and US Census Bureau 2010

3.2.4 Length of Residency

According to sample data included in the 2020 census, 28.7% of Town residents moved into Ironton in or before 1989. **Chart P12 Length of Residency** shows that 32.8% of those surveyed moved to the Town between the years 1990 and 2009. Since 2010, 38.5% of people surveyed moved to the Town. It is evident from this data that the Town of Ironton has been experiencing an influx of people into the Town since 2010.

Table P12: Length of Residency

Table P12: Length of Residency		
Year	Ironton per 2020 Census	Sauk County, per 2020 Census
1989 or earlier	28.70%	13.60%
1990-1999	14.40%	13.50%
2000-2009	18.40%	22.80%
2010-2019	38.50%	50.10%

Source: American Community Survey 2020

3.3 Interpretation of Demographic Data

The Town of Ironton has experienced periods of growth and loss in population since 1970, with a significant population drop from 1980 to 1990 followed by a significant increase again in 2000, resulting in an overall percent change of only 0.61% between 1970 and 2020 or 4 persons over 50 years. The number of housing units has increased between the years of 1990 and 2020 and which corresponds to the changes in the average household size. The average number of people per household decreased from 3.2 in 1990 to 2.6 in 2010 but increased back up to 3.4 in 2020. Although the number of housing units increased the number of occupied units decreased to only 75.5% of the overall units, and seasonal units increased by 14 and 11.3% of units are vacant.

3.4 Population Projections

Given the steady population over the last 40-year period in the Town of Ironton with only a 3% population change, it is relatively safe to assume that populations will continue to increase slowly but steadily. 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 Ironton are necessary for effective planning. To estimate future population growth for the Town of Ironton a standard approach was utilized, which considers a linear projection, growth (or exponential) projection, and the projection provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

3.4.1 Standard Population Projection Method

- 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.

Table P13: Population Projections, Town of Ironton

Table P13: Town of Ironton Population Projections										
Year Source	Year	Historic Population	Percent Change	Projections						
				Linear (1960-2030)	Linear (1990-2030)	Growth (1960-2030)	Growth (1990-2030)	Static Household size	Limited Household size	Household size trend
1960, per census	1960	687		687	687	687	687	687	687	687
1970, per census	1970	658	-4.22%	658	658	658	658	658	658	658
1980, per census	1980	643	-2.28%	643	643	643	643	643	643	643
1990, per census	1990	585	33.44%	858	858	858	858	858	858	858
2000, per census	2000	650	-24.24%	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
2010, per census	2010	660	1.54%	660	660	660	660	660	660	660
2020 per census	2020	662	7.73%	662	662	662	662	662	662	662
2030 projection	2030	682		679	664	676	664	414	329	327

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2020, and Wisconsin Department of Administration - Demographic Services Center

Table P14: Population Changes 1980-2020, Town of Ironton

Table P14: Town Of Ironton Population 1980 - 2020							
	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2020 Census	Percent Change 1980-2020	Average Percent Change 1980-2020
Town of Ironton	643	585	650	660	662	3.0%	1.0%
Sauk County	43,469	55,225	58,121	61,976	65,763	51.3%	11.3%
Wisconsin	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,363,704	5,686,986	5,893,718	25.2%	5.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980-2020

Table P15: Population Projections, Town of Ironton 2030-250

Table P15: Town of Ironton Population Projections 2030-2050							
	2010 Census	2020 Census	Average Percent Change 1980-2020	2030 Projection	2040 Projection	2050 Projection	2060 Projection
Town of Ironton	660	662	3.0%	682	716	752	789
Sauk County	61,976	65,763	11.3%	73,194	81,465	90,671	100,917
Wisconsin	5,686,986	5,893,718	5.8%	6,235,554	6,597,216	6,979,854	7,384,686

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2020, and Wisconsin Department of Administration - Demographic Services Center

3.4.4 Population Projection Analysis

The DOA projection method, because it only takes into account population trends from 1990-2010, 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 less reliable due to the fact that they utilize population changes since 1980, which included an overall loss in population. 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 Ironton will continue to grow. The rate of growth experienced over the last 40 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 Ironton’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 2010 and 2020, the Town of Ironton experienced an increase of approximately 1 housing unit per year an increase of 4.08%. This rate of increase is below Sauk County’s housing unit increase of 22.20% but aligns with neighboring Towns. The increase in housing units is greater than the population growth rate of 0.30% for the same time period in the Town of Ironton (see **Chapter 3: Population Inventory and Analysis**, for a full account). This lack increase in housing units without the corresponding population growth can be explained with the 11.1% drop in occupancy and 7.8% increase in seasonal housing units. In comparison, the Town of Reedsburg, with the same zoning of Exclusive Agriculture and a density of one house per 35 acres experienced a housing unit rate decrease of 7.78%. Overall the area is experiencing much slower growth and development as compared to the County and State which saw a 22.2% and 19.65% increase in housing units.

Chart H1: Regional Housing Unit Comparison

Chart H1: Regional Housing Unit Comparison												
YEAR	Town of Ironton		Town of La Valle		Town of Woodland		Town of Reedsburg		Sauk County		Wisconsin	
	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change	#	% Change
1990	201		783		257		373		20,439		2,055,774	
2000	228	13.43%	914	16.73%	302	17.51%	415	11.26%	24,297	18.88%	2,321,144	12.91%
2010	245	7.46%	1,182	29.32%	396	31.13%	501	20.72%	25,192	3.68%	2,279,768	-1.78%
2020	255	4.08%	1,222	3.38%	415	4.80%	462	-7.78%	30,784	22.20%	2,727,726	19.65%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1990 – 2010 and American Community Survey 2020

4.1.1 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 2010, 93.4% or 225 of the 241 available housing units in the Town of Ironton were occupied compared to an 92.18% occupancy rate in Sauk County. During 2020, occupancy in the Town of Ironton decreased to 82.3%, or 210 of the 255 available housing units, with Sauk County also decreased

to an 79.19% occupancy rate. In comparing seasonal housing units, Ironton increased by 7.8% while Sauk County only increased by 2.88%.

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 Ironton comprised of family households remained relatively steady from 188 in 2010 (83.6%) to 177 in 2020 (84.2%). Female householders also increased slightly from 3 in 2010 (1.3%) to 10 in 2020 (4.6%). Non-family households decreased slightly by 4 households and counts for 15.8% of occupied households. However, while Ironton saw a slight percentage increase in family households, Sauk County actually saw a percentage decrease in family households. The percentage of married households also slightly increased for the Town while this percent decreased for the County.

Table H2: Households by Type

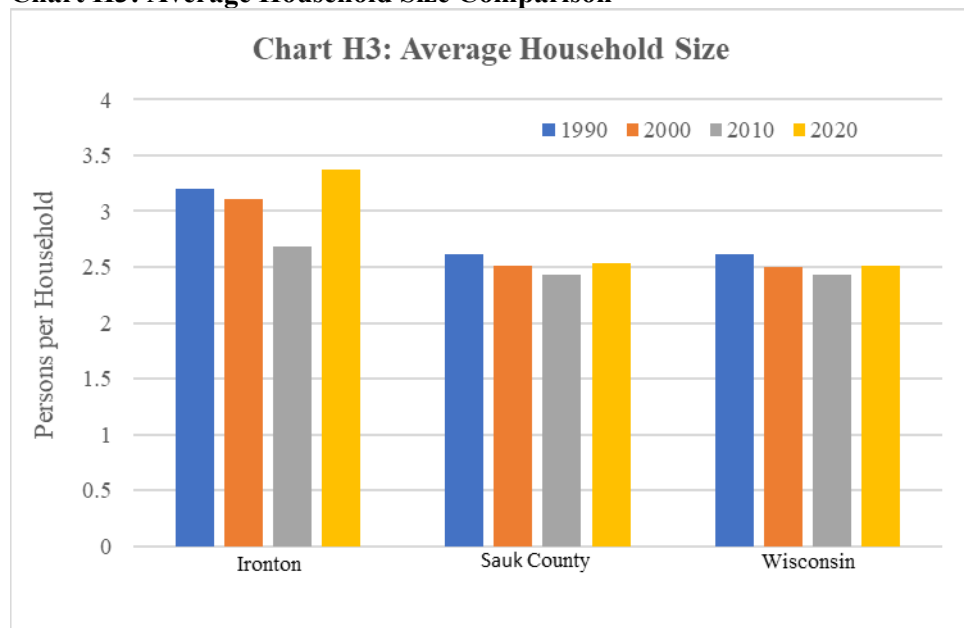
Table H2: Households by Type								
	Town of Ironton				Sauk County			
	2010	% of Total	2020	% of Total	2010	% of Total	2020	% of Total
Family Households	188	83.6%	177	84.2%	16,429	67.1%	16,567	64.8%
Married	163	72.4%	159	75.4%	13,107	53.5%	13,131	51.4%
Other	25	11.1%	18	8.8%	3,322	13.6%	3,436	13.4%
Non-family households	37	16.4%	33	15.8%	8,059	32.9%	8,990	35.2%
Living Alone	28	12.4%	20	9.4%	6,675	27.3%	7,391	28.9%
Not Living Alone	9	4.0%	13	6.4%	1,384	5.7%	1,599	6.3%
Total Households	225	100.0%	210	100.0%	24,488	100.0%	25,557	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau 2010 and American Community Survey 2020.

4.2.1 Average Household Size

The average household size or persons per households in Ironton has increased from 3.2 persons in 1990 to 3.37 in 2020, with a significant increase from 2010 when it dropped to 2.68. As displayed in **Chart H3 Average Household Size Comparison**, the Town of Ironton'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 Ironton and neighboring Towns may be found in **Chapter 3: Population Inventory and Analysis**.

Chart H3: Average Household Size Comparison



Source: US Census Bureau 2020 and American Community Survey 1990 - 2010

4.3 Housing Stock Characteristics

During 2020, 99.4% of the homes in the Town of Ironton were single family, 0.6% of the total housing units were mobile homes, and 0% of housing units were classified as multi-unit structures. In 2020, Sauk County was comprised of 67% single-family homes, 6.3% were mobile homes, and 23.5% were classified as multi-unit housing. When compared to the 1990 statistics, the percentage of single-family homes in the Town increased, while the percentage of mobile homes and multi-unit housing decreased. In comparison, the County experienced a decrease in single-family housing but an increase in multi-unit housing.

Table H4: Housing Units by Structural Type

Table H4: Housing Units by Structural Type						
	Ironton 2000	Ironton 2010	Ironton 2020	Sauk County 2000	Sauk County 2010	Sauk County 2020
Occupied Housing Units	228	225	174	24,297	25,438	30,525
% Single Family	91.20%	97.40%	99.40%	72.61%	73.10%	67.00%
% Mobile Home	7.00%	0.00%	0.60%	8.60%	7.70%	6.30%
% With 2-4 Units	1.80%	1.80%	0.00%	10.00%	8.80%	9.50%
% With 5-9 Units	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.10%	4.70%	5.50%
% With 10 or More Units	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4.50%	5.60%	8.50%

Source: American Community Survey 2020

4.3.1 Age of Housing Stock

Table H5: Age of Existing Housing Structures, 2020

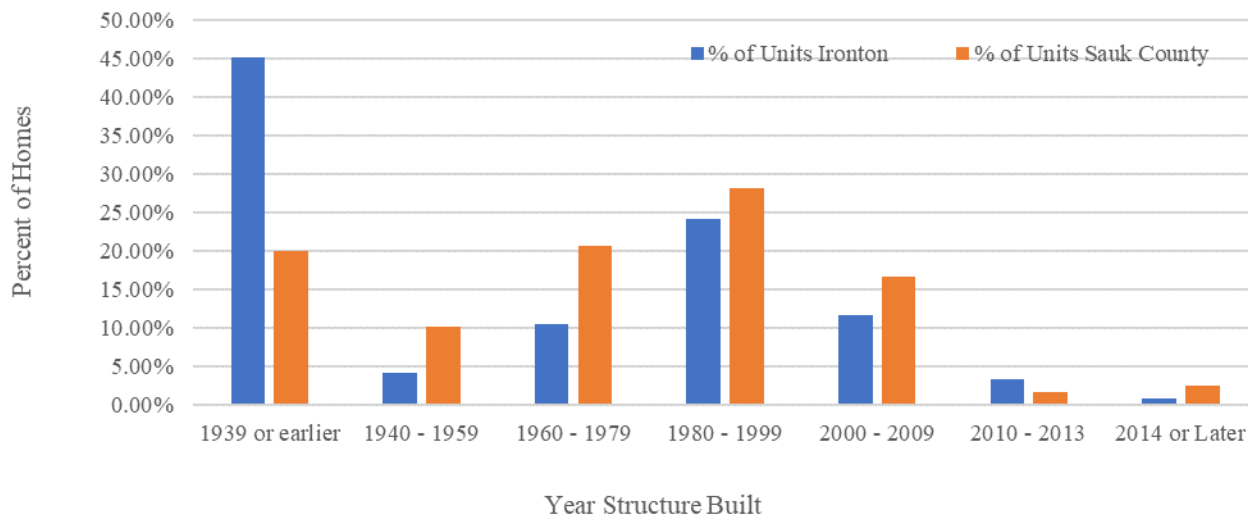
Year Built	# of Units	% of Units Ironton	# of Units	% of Units Sauk County
1939 or earlier	108	45.19%	6,096	19.97%
1940 - 1959	10	4.18%	3,133	10.26%
1960 - 1979	25	10.46%	6,314	20.68%
1980 - 1999	58	24.27%	8,600	28.17%
2000 - 2009	28	11.72%	5,088	16.67%
2010 - 2013	8	3.35%	511	1.67%
2014 or Later	2	0.84%	783	2.57%
Total Units	239		30,525	

Source: American Community Survey 2020

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. In comparison, housing built in the 1980's may need upgrading as well due to a decrease in construction and material quality during that time.

Chart H6: Housing Age shows that 45.2% of the existing owner-occupied housing within the Town of Ironton was built prior to 1939 while 40.2% of owner-occupied homes units were built after 1980. The percentage of existing homes in the Town of Ironton built prior to 1939 is higher than that of the percentage of Sauk County homes built in this time period. The percentage of homes built between 1980 to 1999 are both approximately 25% for both Ironton and Sauk County. From 1980 to present, a lower percentage of homes were built in the Town of Ironton and Sauk County.

Chart H6: Age of Existing Housing Units, 2020



Source: American Community Survey 2020

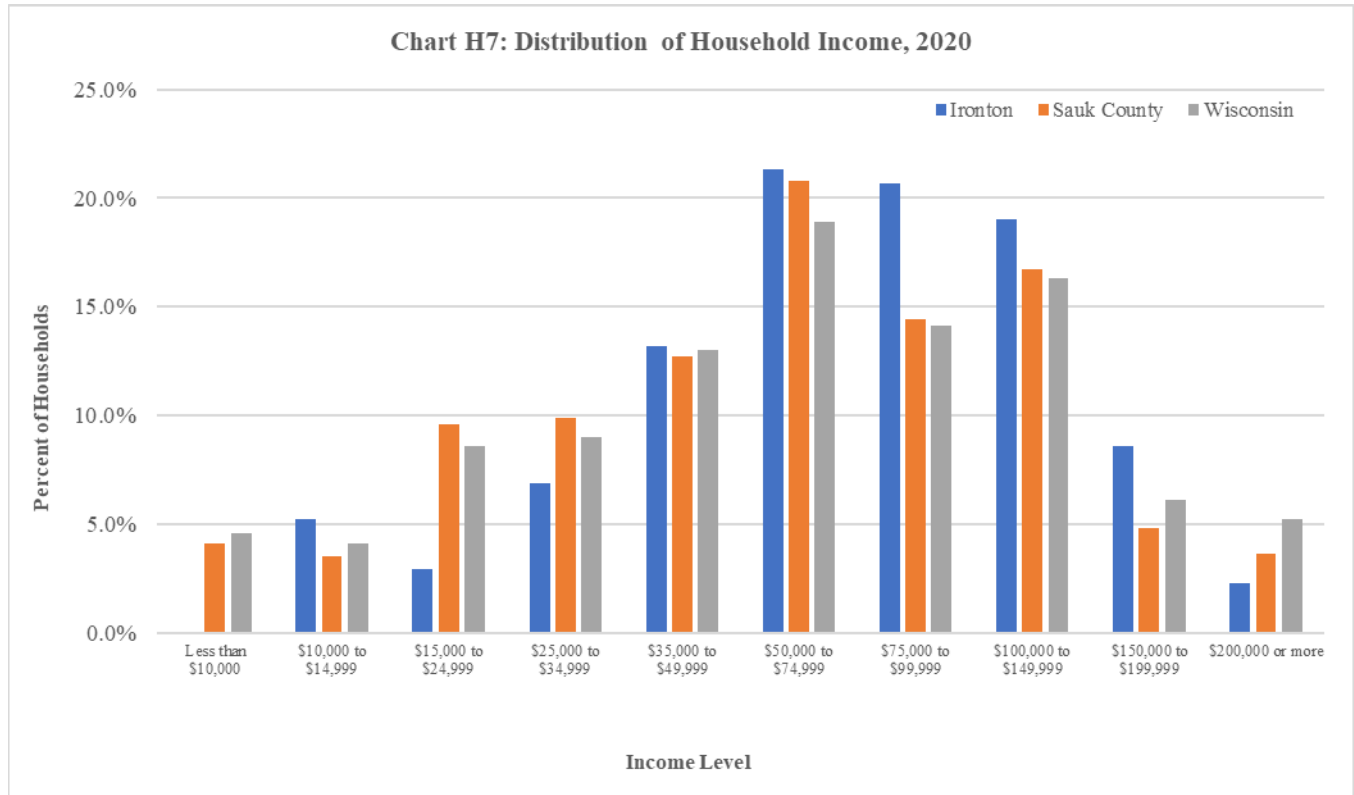
4.4 Housing Affordability

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

4.4.1 Income Per Household

During 2020, the median household income for Ironton was \$76,250, which is comparable to the median income for Sauk County at \$70,914. Of the 255 households surveyed in Ironton, 13.2% were in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 income bracket, 21.3% of the households were in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket, 20.7% of households were in the \$75,000 to \$99,999, and 19.0% of households were in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 income bracket. The table below compares the percentage of household income per income bracket of Ironton, Sauk County, and Wisconsin.

Chart H7: Household Income Levels



Source: American Community Survey 2020

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). In order 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 (HUD) definitions may be used. As **Table H8 and Table H9** on the following page illustrates, extremely low income (ELI) is defined as less than 30% of the household median gross income (HMI) or $ELI = .3 * HMI$. Very low income (VLI) is 30% to 50% of the HMI. Low income (LI) is defined as 50% to 80% of the HMI, and moderate income (MI) is 80% to 100% of the HMI.

Given that the HMI for Ironton is \$76,250, the extremely low-income range is anyone earning less than \$19,000 (rounded) per year. According to the 2020 census, 6.8% of the households in Ironton were in this range and could afford monthly housing expenses of \$500.00 or less; 8% of the households in Ironton fell in the very low-income range and could afford monthly housing expenses of \$500.00 to \$950.00. Households in the low-income range made up approximately 23.8% of the households in Ironton, and these households are reportedly able to afford \$950.00 to \$1,525.00 in housing expenses each month. Households in the moderate-income range comprised 20.9% of the households in Ironton and could afford monthly housing expenses of between \$1,525.00 to \$1,900.00.

Table H8: Affordable Housing Expenses per Income, Town of Ironton 2010

Table H8: Affordable Housing Expenses per Income, Ironton 2010			
Household Median Income (HMI) = \$60,893			
Household Income Category	Rounded Description	Percent of Households	Affordable housing payment per month based on 30% of income standard
Extremely low income (below 25% of HMI)	\$15,000	4.9%	\$381
Very low income (25% to 50% of HMI)	\$15,000 - \$30,000	20.1%	\$381 - \$761
Low income (50% to 80% of HMI)	\$30,000 - \$50,000	19.6%	\$761 - \$1,218
Moderate income (80% to 100% of HMI)	\$50,000 - \$60,000	7.8%	\$1,218 - \$1,522
High income (greater than 100% HMI)	\$60,000	47.8%	\$1,522 or greater

Source: American Community Survey 2017

Table H9: Affordable Housing Expenses per Income, Town of Ironton 2020

Table H9: Affordable Housing Expenses per Income, Ironton 2020			
Household Median Income (HMI) = \$76,250			
Household Income Category	Rounded Description	Percent of Households	Affordable housing payment per month based on 30% of income standard
Extremely low income (below 25% of HMI)	19,999 or less	6.8%	\$500
Very low income (25% to 50% of HMI)	\$20,000 - \$38,000	8.0%	\$500 - \$950
Low income (50% to 80% of HMI)	>\$38,000 - \$61,000	23.8%	\$950 - \$1,525
Moderate income (80% to 100% of HMI)	>\$61,000 - \$76,000	20.9%	\$1,525 - \$1,900
High income (greater than 100% HMI)	>\$76,000	40.5%	\$2,000

Source: American Community Survey 20220

Table H10: Distribution of Household Income, 2020

Table H10: Distribution of Household Income, 2020			
Distribution of Household Income, 2020	Percent of Households		
	Ironton	Sauk County	Wisconsin
Less than \$10,000	0.0%	4.1%	4.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.2%	3.5%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2.9%	9.6%	8.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.9%	9.9%	9.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.2%	12.7%	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21.3%	20.8%	18.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20.7%	14.4%	14.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19.0%	16.7%	16.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.6%	4.8%	6.1%
\$200,000 or more	2.3%	3.6%	5.2%
Median Household Income	\$76,250	\$62,808	\$63,293
No. of Households	174	26,751	2,377,935
Avg. Household Income	\$83,834	\$77,000	\$82,757
Ratio of mean to median HH Income	1.10	1.23	1.31

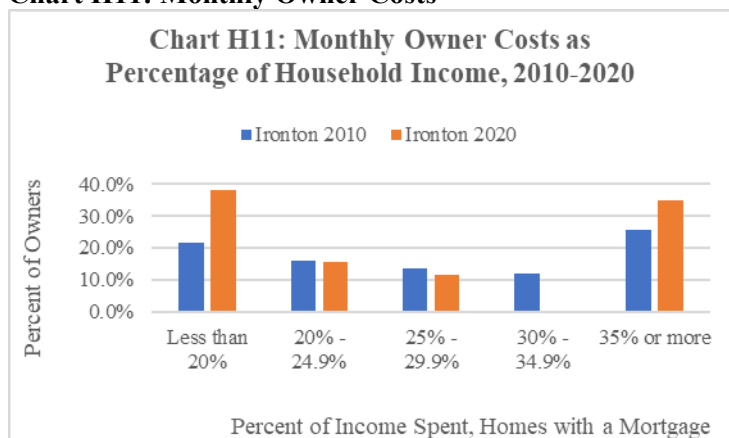
Source: American Community Survey, 2020

*The income range is the calculated household income range rounded to the nearest income bracket as provided in the 2020 Census. Therefore, the percent of households in this income range is also an approximate number.

4.4.2 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 Ironton to better understand housing affordability in the Town. Housing affordability has increased between 2010 and 2020. During this timeframe, the percentage of homeowners whose housing costs were less than 30% of the household income increased by 13.5% (from 51.6% in 2010 to 64.9% in 2020). However, in 2000, approximately 95% of the owner-occupied houses in the Town of Ironton spent 30% or less of their household income on housing costs. This statistic is up from 77% in 1990, showing great fluctuation in housing affordability.

Chart H11: Monthly Owner Costs



Source: U.S. Census 2010 and American Community Survey 2020

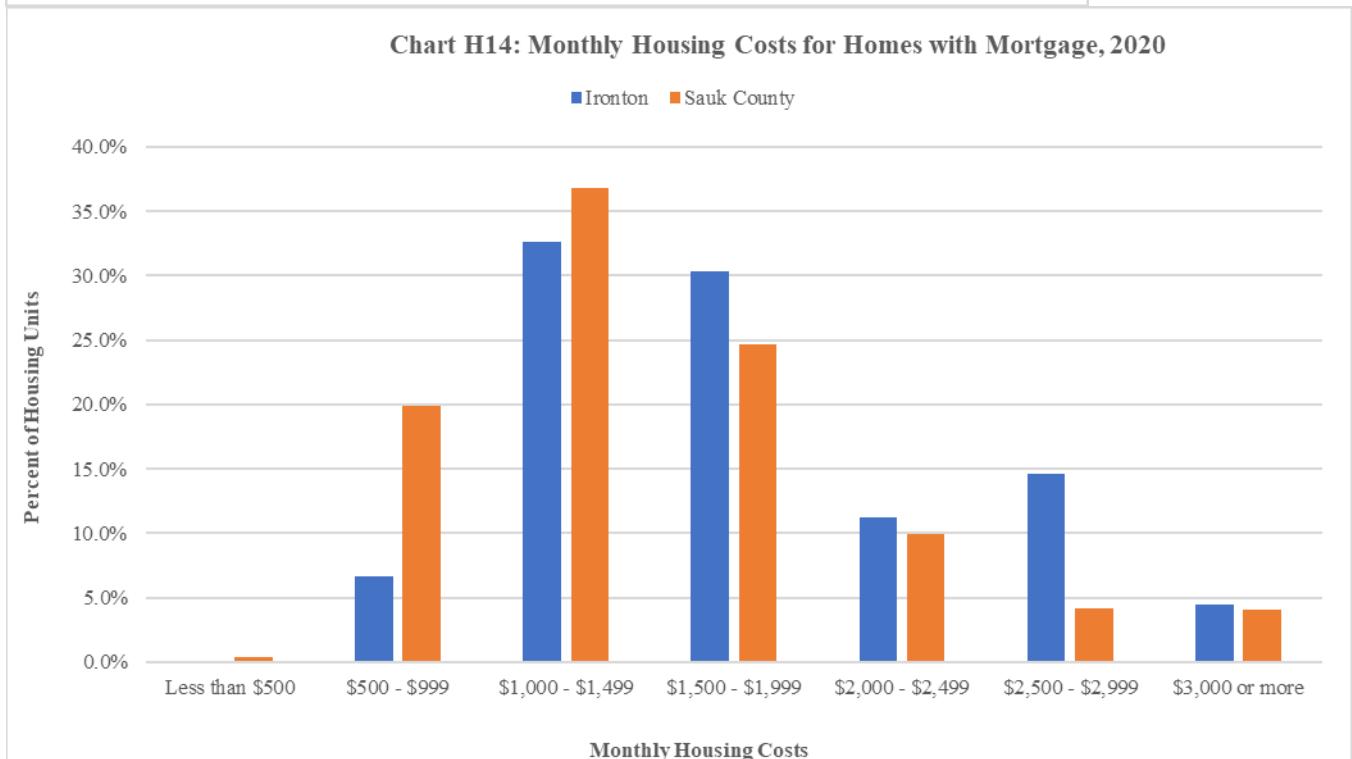
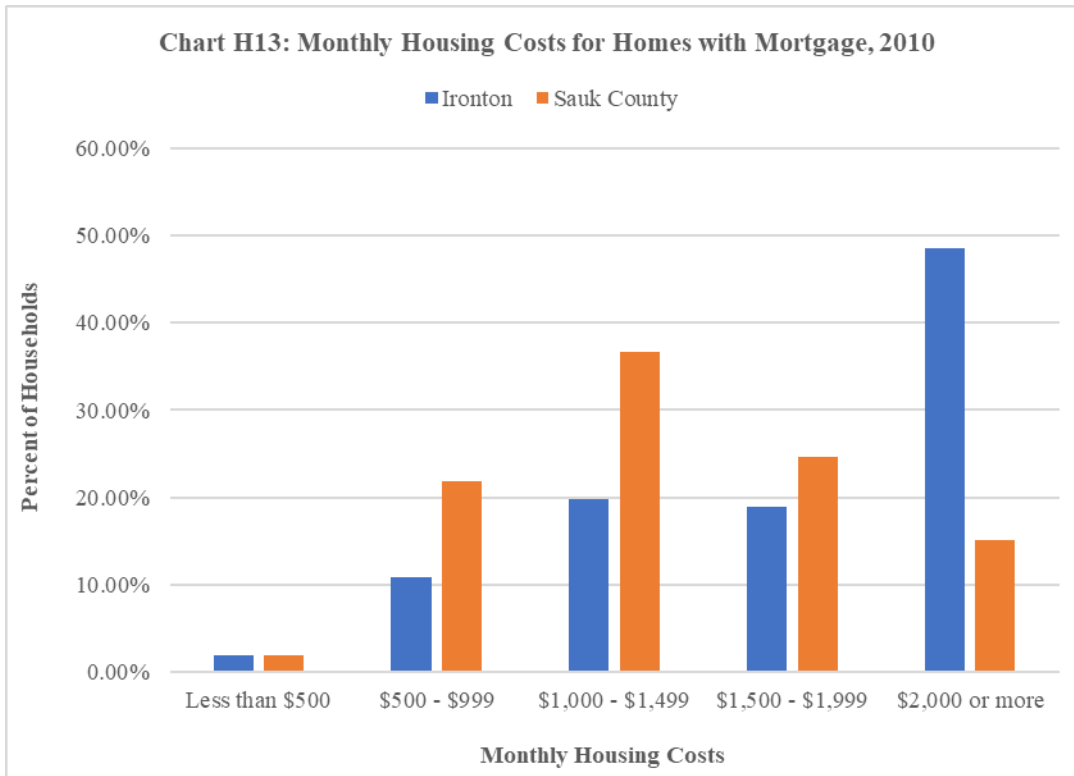
Table H12: Monthly Housing Costs, 2020

Monthly Housing Costs, 2020				
	Ironton		Sauk County	
Housing units with a mortgage	# of Households	% of Households	# of Households	% of Households
Less than 20 percent	36	40.4%	7007	54.3%
20 to 24.9 percent	14	15.7%	1562	12.1%
25 to 29.9 percent	8	9.0%	1101	8.5%
30 to 34.9 percent	0	0.0%	783	6.1%
35 percent or more	31	34.8%	2460	19.1%
Median Dollars	\$1,648		\$1,373	
Housing units without a mortgage				
Less than 10 percent	28	39.4%	3241	43.0%
10 to 14.9 percent	17	23.9%	1574	20.9%
15 to 19.9 percent	9	12.7%	919	12.2%
20 to 24.9 percent	0	0.0%	601	8.0%
25 to 29.9 percent	4	5.6%	256	3.4%
30 to 34.9 percent	2	2.8%	340	4.5%
35 percent or more	11	15.5%	598	7.9%
Median Dollars	559		545	

Source: American Community Survey 2020

4.4.3 Mortgage Costs

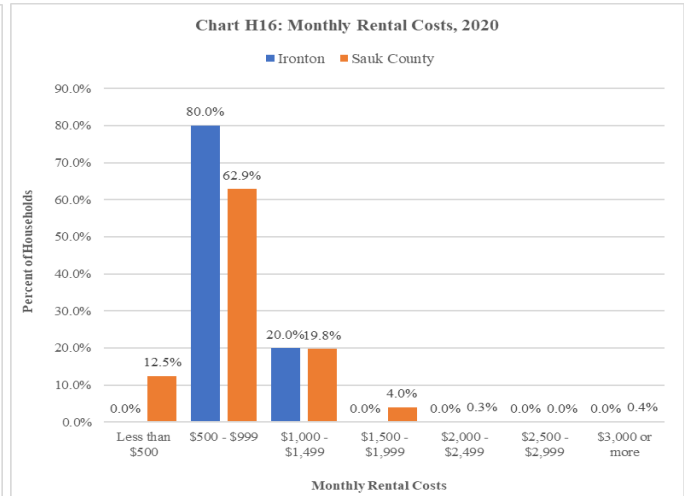
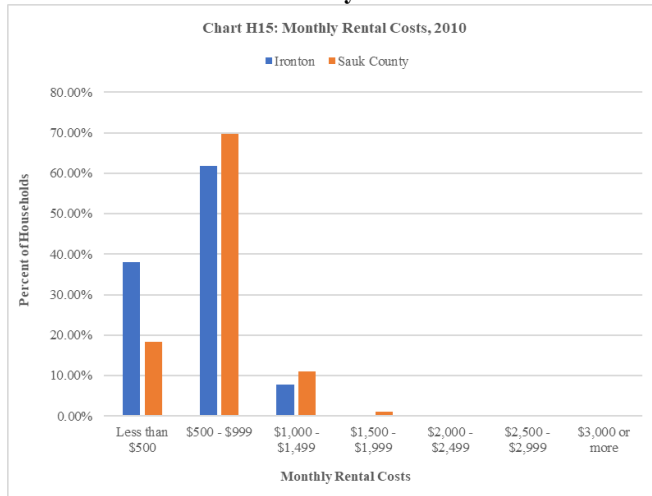
Although mortgage costs are only one of many monthly housing expenses, this section narrows its focus by concentrating on them. Comparisons of monthly mortgage costs from 2010 to 2020 are broken down for the Town of Ironton in *Charts H13 and H14*. In 2010, 12.6% of the households spent up to \$999 on monthly mortgage costs, while in 2020, there were only 6.7% of households. The largest percentage (48.6%) of monthly mortgage costs in 2010 was \$2,000 or more, while in 2000 the largest percentage (32.6%) of monthly mortgage costs was \$1,000 to \$1,499. In 2020, the categories of \$2,000-\$2,499, \$2,500-\$2,999, and \$3,000 or more made up about 31.2% of mortgage payments. In comparing these two charts, it is easy to see that monthly mortgage costs are fluctuating significantly in the Town of Ironton and the amount of affordable housing is slowly decreasing. This may be due to an increasing number of high-priced housing being built in the area.



Source: American Community Survey 2010 and 2020

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 Ironton between 2010 and 2020. In 2010, 38.1% of monthly rent payments were less than \$500 and 61.9% were between \$500 - \$999, while in 2020, 0% of rent payments were less than \$500 and 80% of households were between \$500 - \$999. In 2010, rent payments in the \$1,000-\$1,499 category was recorded at 7.70%, which went up to 20.0% in 2020.

Charts H15 and H16: Monthly Rental Costs 2010-2020

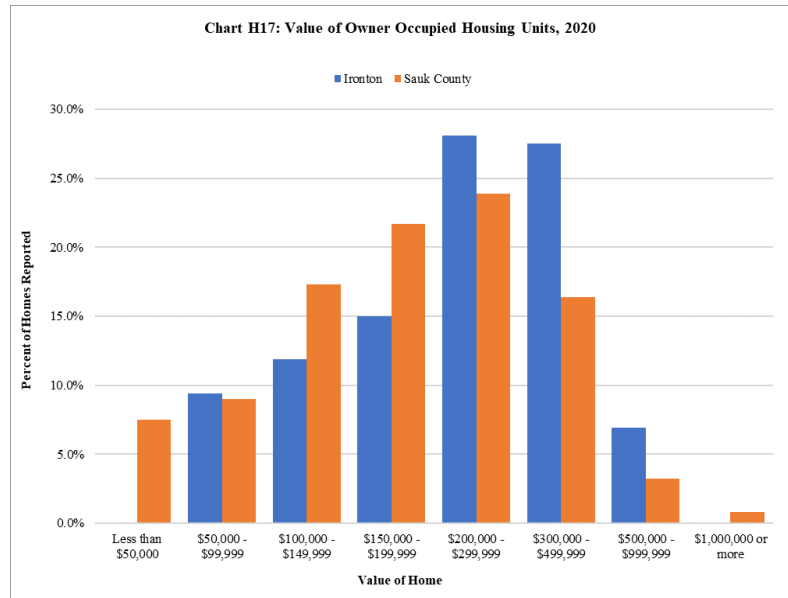


Source: American Community Survey 2010-2020

4.4.4 House Values

A sample of housing values in Ironton during 2020 ranged from less than \$50,000 to over \$1,000,000. The median home value in Ironton in 2020 was \$235,700, which was higher than the median house value in Sauk County of \$217,000. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, **Table H17 Housing Value, Ironton 2020** compares the housing values for the Town of Ironton with those of Sauk County. Approximately 36.3% of the homes in the Town of Ironton are less than \$200,000, whereas in Sauk County this accounts for 55.5% of home values. The percentage of homes valued between \$200,000 to 299,999 is 28.1% in Ironton compared to Sauk County’s 23.9% in this category. Approximately 27.5% of the homes were valued between \$300,000 and \$499,999 in the Town compared to Sauk County’s only 16.4%. No homes in Ironton were valued above 1,000,000, compared to 0.8% of the homes in Sauk County. Statistics for housing value are based on a sample population and do not include all owner-occupied housing units.

Chart H17: Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2020



Source: American Community Survey, 2020

4.5 Housing Density

Housing density can be defined in a number of ways. Density in its simplest definition is the number of housing units per total area of land. This numerical value is commonly referred to as gross density. Density policy, on the other hand, involves the utilization of a credit system to determine both the total number of lots that can be created in an area and the size of each lot. The density policy yields a calculation of the total number of potential future houses until an endpoint is reached.

The current gross housing density of the Town of Ironton stands at approximately 1 single-family home per 107 acres. This level of housing density has remained relatively unchanged from a historical perspective but varies depending on the amount of occupied housing.

4.6 Local Population and Housing Trends

To understand population and housing trends in the Town of Ironton and the impacts these trends will have on the future of the community, it is necessary to examine the 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 2000 to 2020, the Town experienced a 11.8% increase in housing units. If this trend continues, an additional 30 housing units will be built by the year 2040. In many cases, if the occupancy rate in the community increases, it can be assumed that the number of new homes needed will decline, however this has not been the regional trend.

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. The following includes the projected number of housing units needed based on Population Projection 1 as well as a reiteration of housing units needed.

4.7.1 Population Projection 1

- **DOA Projection (2003 est.)** projects a total population of 682 persons in the year 2030. At this rate of growth and a constant of 2.5 persons per household (the County average), the Town would add 113 people or essentially 45 houses assuming the occupancy rate remains the same. Alternatively, at this rate of growth and a constant of 3.11 persons per household (the Town of Ironton average from the 2000 census), total new housing units needed by 2020 would be 36. By 2030, based on 2.5 persons per household, the Town will need 99 total new housing units to accommodate 817 persons.
- **Linear Model (1980-2000) and Growth Model (1980-2000)** both show an average decrease in population to 644 persons, or a loss of 6 people by 2030. Assuming a constant of 2.5 persons per household (the County average), there will be a need for 45 new housing units by the year 2020. Alternatively, assuming a constant of 3.11 persons per household (the Town of Ironton average from the 2000 census), there will not be a need for any new housing units by 2020. By 2030, based on 2.5 persons per household, the Town will have a need for 49 new occupied housing units.

4.8 Housing Opportunities

The Town of Ironton provides mostly single-family residences with very limited options for multi-family, mobile homes, or retiree homes, but this appears to meet the needs of the current population. The Town does permit limited rural residential development at a density of one house per 35 acres and has designated higher density growth areas adjacent to the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton and Lime Ridge

4.9 Housing Programs and Resources

Listed below are some examples of housing assistance programs and administrative agencies for such programs. Based on eligibility criteria, some Town of Ironton residents may qualify.

4.9.1 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

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

451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Phone: 202-708-1112
www.hud.gov

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.

4.9.2 Wisconsin Department of Administration and Intergovernmental Relations - 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 Department of Administration -
Bureau of Housing**

**101 East Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53702**

**Phone: 608-266-0288
www.doa.state.wi.us/dhir**

4.9.3 Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

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

WHEDA (Madison office)

**201 W. Washington Ave.
Suite 700
P.O. Box 1728
Madison, WI 53701**

**Phone: 1-800-363-2761
www.wheda.com**

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.

4.9.4 United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD)

The Rural Housing Service (RHS) is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The RHS provides assistance to rural home owners under rehabilitation and preservation funding initiatives, rental assistance to tenants of RHS-funded multifamily housing complexes, farm labor housing, assisted living housing and development of community facilities such as libraries, childcare centers, schools, municipal buildings and nonprofit organizations.

USDA Rural Development of Wisconsin

**4949 Kirschiling Court
Stevens Point, WI 54481**

**Phone: 715-345-7615
www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/**

4.10 Housing Goal, Objectives and Policies

Housing Goal: Manage new and existing housing opportunities to maintain the Town of Ironton’s attractive rural and agricultural character.

Housing Objectives/Policies:

HO-1 Ensure that the placement and construction of new or relocated housing adheres to all locally adopted codes and provisions set forth in this *Plan*.

HP-1A Establish a Town Plan Commission reflective of a cross section of the population of the Town. It is the intention of this policy to designate this Commission as the oversight authority to evaluate new housing proposals to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Plan and make recommendations of approval or approval with changes to the Town Board.

HP-1B All adjoining property owners of a new housing proposal shall be notified by the appropriate town authority of the pending proposal and the time and location of the Plan Commission review of said proposal.

HO-2 Develop siting guidelines for locating new housing on properties so as to reduce the potential of incompatible land uses and to preserve the rural character of the town.

HP-2A Policies set forth under the Land Use Chapter will provide general siting guidance for new housing. As a follow-up activity, the Plan Commission will work with the Town’s attorney to develop and adopt a siting ordinance, which makes clear the intentions of the town to preserve agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive areas and productive agricultural lands.

HP-2B Limit the encroachment of non-farm growth on agricultural resources as defined below:

- a. Restrict new residential development or non-agricultural structures from being erected within 300 feet of any agriculture supporting structure (barns, feedlots, manure storage facilities etc.) unless the structure is owned by the owner of said agriculture supporting structures and is utilized by a family member or someone involved in the agricultural production.

- b. No new residences or potable water wells shall be constructed within 100 feet of any property line or 300 feet from an agriculture supporting structure, whichever is greater, except the front property line for road setbacks which shall follow the road setback requirements prescribed in the *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance*. All residential accessory outbuildings shall maintain the same setbacks prescribed for a residence where feasible. Septic systems shall maintain a setback of 20 feet from any property line measured from the edge of a tank or drainfield.
- c. No agriculture supporting structure (barns, feedlots, manure storage facilities etc.) shall be built or moved to within 300 feet of any existing or proposed residence unless the residence is part of the farming operation as expressed on a town or county building permit application.
- d. New construction on lots of record are required to meet setback requirements, however exceptions may be made for lots of record that are too small or have unique features that make it difficult to meet all setbacks.

HP-2C Written information will be given to new residents regarding their rights and responsibilities of living in an Exclusive Agricultural zoned township as part of the issuance of a Town Building/Siting Permit, indicating that they are aware that they will be exposed to agricultural activities including noise and odor. Prior to the issuance of said permit, new homeowners must sign an acknowledgement indicating receipt of this information before a permit can be issued.

HO-3 Promote the development of various housing opportunities within the Town of Ironton or adjacent villages with single family housing being the preferred type of housing in the Town.

HP-3A Allow only single-family residential development in the Town with the exception that Dependency Living Arrangements (DLA) as defined by the *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance*, shall be permitted. DLA's shall share a common wall between living quarters. The intent of the DLA is to allow a dependent family member who requires some assistance with daily living to rely on a family member who resides in a secondary attached living unit as part of a single structure. All other Multi-Family dwellings shall be directed to the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton or Lime Ridge.

HP-3B Future housing subdivisions shall not be permitted in the Town except when located within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton or Lime Ridge and as depicted on *Map 11-3 Land Use Districts*.

HP-3C Direct affordable housing opportunities for people with special needs to the Villages Cazenovia, Ironton or Lime Ridge where services can be effectively provided.

HP-3D Mobile homes will not be permitted, with the exception of mobile homes related to an agricultural operation or when used as temporary shelter during the construction of a single-family residence. Temporary is defined as one year from the date of town building permit issuance with an allowance extension of one additional year.

HP-3E The Town of Ironton Plan Commission will develop a siting and subdivision ordinance that clearly establishes procedural and location requirements when considering construction projects.

HO-4 Promote the design and development of new housing that meets established standards for environmentally sound construction, energy efficiency and community building.

HP-4A Support Sauk County with the establishment of sustainable development guidelines and ordinances to preserve natural resources, protect the environment and achieve energy efficiency and independence.

HP-4B Encourage developers to utilize traditional design and architecture in new developments adjacent or within ¼ mile of the Villages of Cazenovia, Lime Ridge and Ironton and to create small to medium sized lots to encourage compact, walkable neighborhoods and to keep home prices affordable. Encourage small to medium lots that will also reduce the amount of land converted out of agricultural use. Architectural style should be in keeping with the traditional architecture of existing homes and should emphasize ‘front porch’ ideas. See also LUP-4B for additional information on layout and an example of ‘front porch’ architecture.

5.0 Purpose

While professional and production activities represent a major form of economic activity in the Town of Ironton, farming and agricultural activities represent a second form of economic activity, and for many Ironton residents, a primary way of life. Throughout the Town of Ironton's history, farmland and farming operations have been passed down to succeeding generations, a tradition that continues today. However, in the last 10 to 15 years, the agricultural community has faced many challenges. Because of its proximity to the City of Reedsburg and the Villages of Ironton & Lime Ridge, the Town



of Ironton has begun to experience an increased rate of rural residential development. Along with this residential development rate, increases in property value assessments, increasing health care costs, and stagnant farm prices have compounded the challenges to the agriculture industry recently. For years, farming has remained a viable employment opportunity and lifestyle for many in Ironton, but the future of a viable agricultural economy is in question. Development of rural residential lands is not inherently negative as it provides an opportunity for landowners to divide land as they see fit. However, done improperly, such land divisions may conflict with adjacent agricultural land uses and may contribute to the loss of prime farmland in the Town of Ironton.

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 2002 the estimated number of farms in Sauk County increased by 171 (11.4%) farms but from 2002 to 2017, that number decreased from 1,673 to 1,412 (by 15.6%). The average size for farms in Sauk County continued to decrease from 246 acres in 1987 to 211 acres in 2002 and 212 in 2017. During the same time period, the estimated number of farms in the State of Wisconsin decreased from 75,131 to 64,793, (by 13.8%), while the average size of farms was 221 acres.

Table A1: Trends in Average Size of Farms

Year	Sauk County Farms			Wisconsin Farms		
	Approximate Number of Farms	Average Size of Farm in Acres	Percent Change	Approximate Number of Farms	Average Size of Farm in Acres	Percent Change
1987	1,502	246		75,131	221	
1992	1,383	243	-1.2%	67,959	228	3.2%
1997	1,452	229	-5.8%	65,602	227	-0.4%
2002	1,673	211	-7.9%	77,131	204	-10.1%
2007	1,923	187	-11.4%	78,463	194	-4.9%

2012	1,665	200	7.0%	69,754	209	7.7%
2017	1,412	212	6.0%	64,793	221	5.7%

Source: USDA Census on Agriculture, 1987-2017

These state and County trends were reflected in Ironton's agricultural community. From 1990 to 1997, the estimated number of farms in Ironton increased from 79 to 93. The number of dairy farms decreased from 54 to 42. In Sauk County, both farms and dairy farms have decreased. The estimated farms per square mile in 1997 were slightly higher for the Town than the County. For dairy farm density, the Town had 1.2 dairy farms per square mile and the County had 0.6 dairy farms per square mile in 1997.

Table A2: Trends in Farm Numbers from 1990-1997

	Estimated Farm Numbers						Dairy Farm Numbers					
	1990	1997	2007	2017	% Change	Estimated Farms per square mile, 1997	1989	1997	2007	2017	% Change	Dairy Farms per Square Mile, 1997
Town of Ironton	79	72	-	-	8.9%	2.6	54	42	-	-	-22.20%	1.2
Sauk County	1597	1507	1,923	1,412	-11.6%	1.9	687	475	295	188	-72.6%	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 *Tables 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. Overall though, the number of farms are decreasing and dairy farms have been decreasing statewide.

5.2 Land in Agriculture Use

Land sales in the Town of Ironton, Sauk County, and State of Wisconsin, indicate that 6,555 acres of farmland were sold in the Town of Ironton from 1990-1997. Of the acreage sold, 1,520 acres were diverted out of agricultural uses. The average price per acre of land converted out of agricultural production was \$774 between 1990 and 1997. 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 below shows the agricultural land sold for 2020 and how the compares with the State.

Table A3: Agriculture Land Sales, 2020

	Agricultural Land Continuing in Agricultural Use			Agricultural Land Being Diverted to Other Uses			Total of all Agricultural 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
Sauk County	23	1,698	4,367	3	130	12,474	24	1,736	4,537
Wisconsin	1,072	58,810	5,579	87	2,754	12,458	1,159	61,564	5,886

Source: USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2020

5.3 Production Trends

During 1999 and 2017, 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 2 tons per acre more for soybean yields. This demonstrates that the County is staying consistent with the state on yields across crops.

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

	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".

2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE County Profile

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in State ^b	Counties Producing Item	Rank in U.S. ^b	Counties Producing Item
Total	188,460	28	72	568	3,077
Crops	70,057	25	72	831	3,073
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	59,486	17	72	666	2,916
Tobacco	-	-	6	-	323
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	-	-	647
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	2,237	31	72	530	2,821
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	569	29	71	620	2,748
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	1,397	36	71	752	2,601
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops	13	49	64	515	1,384
Other crops and hay	6,355	14	72	401	3,040
Livestock, poultry, and products	118,402	25	72	423	3,073
Poultry and eggs	1,420	27	72	717	3,007
Cattle and calves	25,163	25	72	635	3,055
Milk from cows	75,038	26	68	112	1,892
Hogs and pigs	15,695	2	71	311	2,856
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	619	19	70	269	2,984
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	(D)	(D)	69	(D)	2,970
Aquaculture	(D)	16	52	(D)	1,251
Other animals and animal products	285	35	70	438	2,878

Total Producers ^c	2,502	Percent of farms that:	Top Crops in Acres ^d
Sex		Have internet access	Corn for grain 69,217
Male	1,641	74	Forage (hay/haylage), all 47,871
Female	861		Soybeans for beans 38,470
Age		Farm organically	Corn for silage or greenchop 15,100
<35	224	2	Wheat for grain, all 4,459
35 – 64	1,542		
65 and older	736	Sell directly to consumers	
Race		6	Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2017)
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	Hire farm labor	Broilers and other meat-type chickens 1,407
Asian	1	23	Cattle and calves 67,125
Black or African American	-		Goats 1,154
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	Are family farms	Hogs and pigs 34,350
White	2,490	95	Horses and ponies 1,634
More than one race	8		Layers 95,757
Other characteristics			Pullets (D)
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	7		Sheep and lambs 2,691
With military service	204		Turkeys 98
New and beginning farmers	522		

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Summary and State Data, for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, commodity descriptions, and methodology.

^a May not add to 100% due to rounding. ^b Among counties whose rank can be displayed. ^c Data collected for a maximum of four producers per farm.

^d Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at www.nass.usda.gov/go/cropnames.pdf. ^e Position below the line does not indicate rank. (D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations. (NA) Not available. (Z) Less than half of the unit shown. (-) Represents zero.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

5.4 Local Farm Numbers and Types

Even though farming and related agricultural activities are declining, they still are the primary economic activity in the Town. Farmers in the Town of Ironton 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 42 dairy farms, down from 54 dairy farms in 1989. Across the state, dairy farms have declined from 24,065 in 1997 to only 9,037 farms in 2017 a 62.4% decrease, however, the number of dairy cows has only declined by 5.9% in the same period.

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. In 1986, the Town of Ironton adopted Exclusive Agriculture Zoning qualifying the Town's farmers to take part in this program. As a result of this action, the Town had 92 participants, averaging 145 acres each, in the program during 2006 and 13,418 acres total.

Table A7: Exclusive Agriculture Participation in Ironton

Exclusive Agriculture Zoning Certification				
Ironton	Number of Certificates	Acres of Exclusive Ag Participating and Certified	Percent Change in Acreage Per Year	Average Farm Size
1989	65	11,113.99		170.98
1990	66	11,569.22	4.10%	175.29
1991	60	10,904.43	-5.75%	246.44
1992	65	11,324.03	3.85%	174.22
1993	61	10,869.88	-4.01%	178.19
1994	67	11,167.21	2.74%	166.67
1995	67	11,359.11	1.72%	169.54
1996	68	11,664.53	2.69%	171.54
1997	70	11,640.32	-0.21%	166.29
1998	70	11,772.07	1.13%	168.17
1999	74	11,989.31	1.85%	162.02
2000	70	11,647.51	-2.85%	166.39
2001	85	12,889.76	10.67%	151.64
2002	86	12,969.76	0.62%	150.81
2003	91	13,428.48	3.54%	147.57
2004	92	13,423.31	-0.04%	145.91
2005	92	13,418.07	-0.04%	145.85
2006	92	13,418.07	0.00%	145.85

Source: Sauk County Department of Planning & Zoning

In 2009, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection changed their program to allow landowners within an Exclusive Agriculture Zoning District to claim farmland preservation tax credits, allowing increased participation. The Exclusive Agriculture Zoning District, which is certified by DATCP allows landowners to claim the tax credit in exchange for meeting state soil and water conservation standards. In 2022, 42 landowners in the Town of Ironton participated in the program, equaling 6,653.55 acres and an average farm size of 161.19.

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 Ironton. 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. *Map 5-1 Land Capability Classification* depicts the soils by classifications for the Town of Ironton.

Approximately 50.83% of the soils in the Town of Ironton are Class I, II, or III soils. Class one 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 A8: Soil Class and Acreage of in the Town of Ironton

Town of Ironton Land Capability Classification		
Soil Class	Acres	Percent of Total Land Area
Class I	48	0.21%
Class II	5,403	24.01%
Class III	5,989	26.61%
Class IV	5,134	22.81%
Class V	0	0.00%
Class VI	3,431	15.24%
Class VII	0	0.00%
Class VIII	2,503	11.12%
Total Acreage in Ironton	22,508	100.00%

Source: Sauk County Planning & Zoning

Approximately 38.05% of the soils in the Town of Ironton 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 11.12% of the soils in the Town of Ironton 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 24.22% 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 Alternative Agricultural Opportunities

Despite the change in the number of farmers, farm size and the price of farmland in the 1990's, agricultural productivity increased. According to a study completed in August, 2001, by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, entitled, "Wisconsin County Agricultural Trends in the 1990's", Sauk County remained one of the State's leaders in terms of agricultural production and revenue generated. According to the 2017 Census on Agriculture, the industry generates 4,312 jobs in the County, and 743 million in economic activity, a million of which is sold directly to consumers.

Overall, changes to technology, machinery and agricultural practices have resulted in more industry efficiencies. 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 products such as unique meats and 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 continues to produce positive results for the industry. Other examples of opportunities in the agricultural industry include agri-tourism/bed and breakfast establishments, recreational opportunities and agriculture-related cottage industries. The Town of Ironton has adopted policies that support alternative agriculture and related opportunities.

5.8 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.

5.8.1 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 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 purchase price for the development rights equals the “fair market value” (FMV) as determined by a professional appraisal that compares estimates of the unrestricted market value of the subject property against the restricted use value of similar, but otherwise undevelopable land (i.e., land which cannot be developed because of physical or legal constraints on its use). The difference between those two estimated values is the “fair market value” of the development rights, which Sauk County or another agency can legally offer to the landowner. The following is an actual example of a development rights acquisition:

The estimated unrestricted (“before”) value of a 78-acre wooded property is appraised at \$213,000. The estimated restricted use value of the property is \$135,000. The difference between the unrestricted value and the restricted use value is \$78,000 (\$1,000/acre), which is the “fair market value”. This is the value of the development rights that Sauk County is able to offer the landowner.

The purpose and terms of the agreement, including the respective rights of the agency 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.

Sauk County 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. The BRPP was funded by a \$5M grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and was administered by the Sauk County LRE Department, with oversight by the Baraboo Range Commission, a nine-member commission of the Sauk County Board of Supervisors. Although the BRPP is no longer funded, the easements that were executed continue, and have proven their ability to protect the sensitive areas of the Baraboo Range as intended.

There are currently no active PDR programs in Sauk County at the time of this plan. However, there is Planned Rural Development Program which promotes development in areas protected by Farmland Preservation while still conserving farmland.

5.8.2 Planned Rural Development

The Planned Rural Development (PRD) Program applies location criteria and residential dwelling density allowances to regulate the number and location of rural residential housing lots and dwellings in order to protect agricultural, cultural, natural, or recreational features of the landscape; to provide for the transfer of development rights to identified sending areas pursuant to the comprehensive plan; to provide for the transfer of land while retaining the development allowance originally allotted to a parcel; to allow for flexibility in increasing the intensity of development while maintaining the density and use requirements in the applicable zoning district, and other requirements as specified by the town.

A PRD is required in order to create a lot of less than 35 acres on which dwelling units may be established with the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District. A PRD shall consist of a PRD preservation area and a PRD development area. A PRD development area is a lot created by the use of density credits. A PRD preservation area is determined by the following: (number of density credits used * 35 acres) – PRD development acres = PRD preservation area. Any remnant land of a parcel that results from the application of a PRD, and that does not otherwise qualify for a density credit, shall be subject to a PRD preservation area easement.

PRD conservation areas are identified as part of a PRD that contain productive agriculture or environmentally and culturally sensitive lands that significantly contribute to the economic and natural resource base of the rural community. Because of their importance, PRD conservation areas shall be substantially protected from residential development. Lands identified as such shall be designated under a Preservation Area Easement. No structure may be built on land identified as being subject to a Preservation Area Easement except for structures that have a use consistent with agricultural uses or other structures with the approval of the Town and Sauk County. In any case, no structure(s) utilized for human habitation shall be permitted on lands under a Preservation Area Easement

In exchange for preserving greater areas of farmland, unique environmental resources, and to further increase housing placement flexibility, density credits may be transferred between properties within, or between, the exclusive agricultural and resource conservancy zoning districts, or may be transferred from areas with this zoning to incorporated areas.

5.8.2 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 Ironton. 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 ranchland 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 Farm Service Agency

**Wisconsin State Office
8030 Excelsior Drive
Madison, WI 53717**

**Phone: 608-662-4422
www.fsa.usda.gov/wi**

Wisconsin Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

**6615 Watts Road
Suite 200
Madison, WI 53719**

**Phone: 608-276-USDA (8732)
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov**

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 both agriculture productions 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.

5.8.3 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 Ironton. 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 Exclusive Agriculture Zoning, having a farm income of not less than \$6000 for each of the last three years, and which

**Wisconsin Department of Agriculture,
Trade and Consumer Protection
(DATCP)**

**2811 Agriculture Drive
P.O. Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708**

**Phone: 608-224-4960
www.datcp.state.wi.us**

**Sauk County Land Conservation
Department (LCD)**

**505 Broadway
Baraboo, WI 53913**

**Phone: 608-355-3245
www.co.sauk.wi.us**

operations are in compliance with county soil and water conservation programs.

- **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, bear, geese, or turkey.

5.9 Agriculture Goal, Objectives and Policies

Agriculture Resources Goal: Develop a diversified and strong agricultural economy that establishes the Ironton region as an area dedicated to agricultural and farming as a way of life.

Agriculture Resources Objectives/Policies:

ARO-1 Identify and pursue opportunities for farmers to obtain additional income from activities and the sale of items related to agriculture and farming as an occupation.

ARP-1A Actively work with Sauk County to develop new zoning options that will allow for innovative value-added farming income opportunities that are consistent with the Town's rural character, while precluding the requirement that landowners rezone out of the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District.

ARP-1B Utilize expertise from agencies such as the USDA, Sauk County Land Conservation Department, UW-Extension, representatives from farm cooperatives and others to both explore the feasibility of and provide resources to farmers who may be considering the production of alternative agricultural products, markets and growing methods.

ARO-2 Preserve productive farmlands and encourage the maintenance and growth of family farm operations for continued and future agriculture uses.

For the purposes of this plan, family farm operations are broadly defined as any activity that utilizes the land to produce a product or commodity for sale and which provide for family income. These operations may include small-scale animal husbandry, organic production, fruit orchards, cash cropping, large-scale animal operations.

ARP-2A Prime agricultural land as broadly defined on *Map 5-1 Land Capability Classification* is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing crops. It has the soil quality, growing season and naturally occurring moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yield crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. These soils shall be avoided when considering the location of new lots or residential development.

ARP-2B Limit the encroachment of non-farm growth on agricultural resources as defined below:

- a. Restrict new residential development or non-agricultural structures from being erected within 300 feet of any agriculture supporting structure (barns, feedlots, manure storage facilities etc.) unless the structure is owned by the owner of said agriculture supporting structures and is utilized by a family member or someone involved in the agricultural production.
- b. No new residences or potable water wells shall be constructed within 100 feet of any property line or 300 feet from an agriculture supporting structure, whichever is greater, except the front property line for road setbacks which shall follow the road setback requirements prescribed in the *Sauk County Zoning Ordinance*. All residential accessory outbuildings shall maintain the same setbacks prescribed for a residence where feasible. Septic systems shall maintain a setback of 20 feet from any property line measured from the edge of a tank or drainfield.
- c. No agriculture supporting structure (barns, feedlots, manure storage facilities etc.) shall be built or moved to within 300 feet of any existing or proposed residence unless the residence is part of the farming operation as expressed on a town or county building permit application.
- d. New construction on lots of record are required to meet setback requirements, however exceptions may be made for lots of record that are too small or have unique features that make it difficult to meet all setbacks. For substandard lots, the Plan Commission will review proposals for the best balance of setbacks within the intent of the Plan.

ARP-2C The Town Plan Commission may identify and establish an ad-hoc Committee with an agricultural focus to develop and evaluate agricultural preservation programming. This Committee may consider the following duties:

- a. Support the development and adoption of a County Purchase of Development Rights program. The purpose of this project is to establish large regions within the town that will be permanently preserved for agricultural production.
- b. Support the development of new small farms that may cater to niche markets and ensure that these small farm operators enjoy the benefits realized by the larger farms and they too benefit from Exclusive Agricultural Zoning.
- c. Support and promote beginning farmer programs to assure the continuation of agriculture in the Town by a new generation of farmers. See also Economic Development Policy EDP-3A.
- d. Cooperate with Sauk and Richland Counties and neighboring towns to ensure that the larger 'Ironton Region' evolves into a strong and diversified farm economy. This effort may include encouraging neighboring towns to consider developing a comprehensive plan, adopting exclusive agricultural zoning or a housing density standard, adopting siting guidelines for residential development to preserve agricultural lands, supporting purchase of development rights programs to preserve agricultural lands, and establishing an agricultural tourism program to promote the direct sales of 'Ironton Region' agricultural products.

6.0 Purpose

The Town of Ironton supports and utilizes an effective array of utilities (such as phone and Internet service) and public facilities (including parks, churches and the Weston middle and high school) In addition to utilities and services, Ironton 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 resources and history.



6.1 Water Supply and Private On-site Waste Disposal Systems

All residents in the Town of Ironton are served by private wells (note: there are currently no service agreements with the Village of Ironton). 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.

6.1.1 Nitrates in Drinking Water

Nitrate (NO_3^-) is a chemical compound that occurs when nitrogen, a common fertilizer additive, combines with oxygen in water. Nitrates can pass easily through the soil and into the groundwater, which many people ultimately consume as drinking water.

While nitrates occur nearly everywhere, certain areas are more susceptible to enhanced groundwater nitrate concentrations due to land use and geological makeup. Agricultural sources, like fertilizers, and leaky septic systems can cause nitrates to enter the groundwater. Additionally, characteristics such as soil cover and water table depth influence the ability for nitrate runoff to contaminate groundwater.

Sauk County residents should be aware of nitrate contamination in their private well systems because Sauk County is agricultural and contains many areas designated as highly susceptible to groundwater contamination, according to the United States Geological Survey. The County, in partnership with UW Extension has been monitoring nitrates concentrations in private wells since the 90's. Landowners are encouraged to test their wells if there are any changes to smell, taste, or color and if they are pregnant or have infants under 12 months of age. In 2019, 154 households in the Towns of Ironton, chose to participate in the well water testing program. The results of that testing and instructions for interpreting the results may be found in the appendices. The results of local and County wide testing may be found at <https://arcg.is/5WbWr> or at <https://www3.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/watershed/Pages/GWHome.aspx>.

6.1.2 Wastewater Disposal Systems

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 Ironton is not served by a sanitary sewer system, the only current means of service is via POWTSs.

The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, in conjunction with the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department, regulates the siting, design, installation, and inspection of all POWTS systems in the Town of Ironton. 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. In early 2003, Sauk County revised its Private Sewage System Ordinance to allow the use of alternative systems.

As a general explanation, *NRCS* [Web Soil Survey Map](#), shows soil classifications and characteristics. These classifications are based on average slope, depth to soil saturation, average depth to bedrock, and flooding potential. However, these maps are shown at a wide scale and conditions may vary across properties. Soils data from the NRCS office may now be found online using the [Web Soil Survey Map](#), where landowners may look up their individual property to find their specific soils classification.

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.

Although Ironton does not generally exhibit areas of sandy soils, it does have areas of shallow soils and bedrock. Furthermore, private septic systems in areas of shallow soils may also threaten surface water quality. In terms of stream 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 a stream. The actual threat to the streams in Ironton 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 surface 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 the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department or Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services in a manner adhering to 383 standards.

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 LRE Department 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 had 15 active landfill sites throughout the County, including sites for brush disposal. In addition, more than 40 sites were identified as abandoned sites. Of those 40 sites, one is located in Section 32. At the time of this plan being drafted, there are four active landfill sites, one sanitary, and the rest clean fill sites.

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 Ironton Town Hall and garage is located on Old K Road in Section 23. Currently the town has a 2016 International WorkStar dump truck with plow, 1998 GMC 3500 truck, and 1984 Caterpillar grater. For mowing, the town utilizes a John Deere 6430 tractor which includes a brush mower.

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

Two emergency service districts including 176 and 177 serve the Town of Ironton. District 176 includes the far western and southwestern portions of the Town and is covered by the Cazenovia Fire and Ambulance Service. District 177 is located in the far eastern and southeastern parts of the Town and is covered by the Reedsburg Fire and Ambulance Service. Jurisdictional boundaries of these respective services can be noted on *Map 1-4 Emergency Services*.

6.7 Library

The South Central Wisconsin Library System through Sauk County serves the Town of Ironton and surrounding communities. The primary library utilized by the Town is the Reedsburg Library, located in the City of Reedsburg. The library hosts a collection of general-purpose books, periodicals, historical memorabilia of the area and Internet access.

6.8 Communication, Electric Utilities and Heating Fuel

Telephone, Internet and e-mail service is provided by LaValle Telephone Cooperative, Verizon and Reedsburg Utilities. High speed internet is provided by Reedsburg Utilities. Richland Electric Cooperative and Alliant Energy also service the Towns electrical needs. Since there are no natural

gas lines in the Town, heating fuel is primarily provided through contracts with independent fuel dealers with roughly 43% of residents utilizing LP/Propane. Heating fuel from wood and biomass sources ranks second and includes 52 households or 25% of the towns' residents. The remaining 32% utilize oil (31%) or electricity (1%). 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.

6.9 Medical Facilities

The Town of Ironton is primarily served by three 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 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

There are a number of educational facilities available to Town of Ironton residents including public primary education facilities, secondary higher education schools as well as childcare facilities.

6.10.1 Primary Educational Facilities

The Town of Ironton is divided into three public school districts. The Reedsburg School District incorporates the eastern and northern two-thirds of the Town. The Weston School District includes a majority of the western and southwestern area of the Town. The Wonewoc-Union School District claims a very small area of the Town of Ironton. This area is in the northwestern most corner of the town and has a land area less than 100 acres. *Map 1-2 Jurisdictional Boundaries* shows the exact location of these boundaries. While the majority of school aged children attend one of the three districts, parochial schools operated by the Amish of the Town 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 8th Street; Westside Elementary School located at 401 Alexander Avenue; Prairie Ridge Intermediate School located at 2400 8th St. 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.

- **Weston School District**

The Weston School District is located at E2511 County Road S, in the Township of Ironton. The Elementary, Middle and High Schools are located at the same address. The elementary school, which serves grades pre-kindergarten to 5th grade, has an enrollment of about 155 students. The middle school accommodates 81 children in grades 6th through 8th. The high school has about 129 students enrolled in grades 9 to 12. The district serves approximately 365 students in grades K-12.

6.10.2 Secondary Educational Facilities

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

UW-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County

The University of Wisconsin- Platteville Baraboo Sauk County (UW-PB/SC) is one of thirteen University of Wisconsin Colleges (UWC) two-year campuses. The UW Colleges (UWC) serves over thirteen thousand students across the State of Wisconsin. UW-PB/SC provides student-centered, freshman-sophomore liberal arts programming, which can serve as the foundation for virtually any University of Wisconsin major. UW-PB/SC offers the Associate of Arts and Science degree which satisfies the general education requirements at any UW campus. Classes are taught by outstanding faculty who are dedicated to teaching and committed to their fields of study. Over 80% of the UW Colleges faculty hold the highest degrees possible in their fields of study. With the lowest tuition in the UW System and an average class size of 21, UW-PB/SC offers the kind of access to instructors that is typically reserved for upper-level students at larger university campuses. The UW-PB/SC campus community includes approximately 700 students and 90 faculty and staff. UW-PB/SC also offers a number of baccalaureate degree completion programs in collaboration with four-year UW institutions. Additionally, the UW-PB/SC Office of Continuing Education provides non-credit and credit life-long learning and outreach opportunities in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Madison 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.

6.10.3 Childcare Facilities

There are no commercial childcare facilities located in the Town of Ironton. Formal childcare is available in the City of Reedsburg, and informal care may be available locally with neighbors, family and friends.

6.11 Recreational Facilities

There are no county parks within the Town of Ironton. A small park consisting of a picnic area shelter and a small ball field is located in the Village of Lime Ridge on the north side of State Line Road

6.12 Cemeteries

(locations of each are identified on ***Map 6-1 Community and Cultural Resources***)

- Resting Ring Cemetery and Calvery Cemetery are both located on Cemetery Road in Section 3

6.13 Historical and Cultural Structures and Areas (locations of each are identified on *Map 6-1 Community and Cultural Resources*)

6.13.1 Historic Schools

- **Keegan School**, located in the southwest ½ of Section 15 on LaRue Road, is the second Keegan School building, replacing the original log structure, and was built in 1888-1889. As the district's assessed valuation dropped below \$100,000, the district was dissolved and the pupils moved to the Ironton School in 1942. Around 1950 the original schoolhouse was moved off-site and utilized as a calf barn.
- **Lower Carr Valley School**, situated on County Highway G in the SW ¼ of Section 8, is the third Lower Carr Valley School building. The school experienced steady enrollment until 1951 when the Upper Carr Valley School closed, and the students were sent to the Lower Carr Valley School. The school closed four years later in 1955, at which time the building was moved to closer to the Holderman farm and converted into a chicken shack and later into a machine shed.
- **Wheelerburg School**, on the corners of Hinze and Pickel Roads in the SE corner of Section 26, was first built in the late 1850's. The school was rebuilt in 1865 for \$600 and again in 1919 for \$3,500. It was not until after the construction in 1919 that the school was officially named Wheelerburg. The school remained open until 1954. After the closing, the schoolhouse was converted into a private home.
- **Oakland School** was built early in the 1850's. A second schoolhouse measuring 24' by 17' was built in 1866 at a cost of \$600, located on County Highway K, in the SW ¼ of Section 23. The school remained open until 1958. Once closed, the school building was moved down the road and converted into a home. The original school site now has a home on it.
- **Hickory Grove School** is located on White road nearly in the center of Section 11. The year the school was established is not known, but an old school register begins in 1868, indicating there was a schoolhouse present at that time. A framed school building, 25' by 20', was built in 1877 as a replacement for a cost of \$500. A modern stone block school was constructed in 1918, with a luxury at the time a basement with indoor toilets. The school eventually closed in 1957 and the students were sent to Reedsburg district. The schoolhouse was bought, torn down and rebuilt in 1968, by the Roger Hahn family.
- **Seamans School**, located in Section 34, was built as a result of a failing older schoolhouse building. Board meetings, in 1867, were held to discuss the location of the new school. The decision was to construct a 22' by 32' school in the center of the district. The school was named for the owner of the land, John Seamans, who donated the ½ acre on which the school was built. In 1906 and 1907 the school undertook large remodeling efforts. First moved to the east, a basement, furnace and new entry were added. The school was closed in 1956 and is now a private home.
- **Upper Carr Valley School** on Barreau road in the NE corner of Section 30 was named after Mr. Carr, the first settler in the region. The schoolhouse was built in 1886 for \$250. The rural character of the region surprised the teacher in 1925, as the children did not know who George Washington was or even the current president at the time, Herbert Hoover. The school remained

open through the 1950-51 school year, despite having a lower tax valuation than normal. Today, the schoolhouse is gone and modern home stands in its' place.

- **Ironton School**, located in the Village of Ironton, was built in 1859 after the district was formed in 1857. The school, a red brick two story building, cost \$600 to construct. In 1885 the brick building had outlived its' usefulness and a new one story, two room school was built. In 1905, a fire ignited in the chimney area, but was quickly extinguished with snow and little damage occurred. Once a new school was built in La Valle in 1963, students from Ironton were bused there in the 1963-64 school year. The schoolhouse was sold at auction in 1964 and the building was made into a two-family dwelling.
- **Lime Ridge School**, located in the Village of Lime Ridge, the first in the area, was established in 1868. Rebuilt in 1878, the building burned down in 1920 and a new larger building was constructed and completed in 1922. Housing primary through high school students, the school operated until 1976. The building is currently privately owned and used as an arts/music center.
- **Bethel School**, on County Highway G in Section 6 of the town, dates back to 1889. The cost to the district was \$801. Wired for electricity in 1950, the school provided radios for students to listen to educational programs from Madison. In 1961, the school was auctioned and torn down, for use by the 4-H club. A house was built on the site of the old Bethel School. Today, Amish families in the area commonly use one-room schools.

6.13.2 Other Historic Structures or Areas

- **Italianate House** is located NE quarter of Section 12. Build of cream brick, this house represents and Italianate style of architecture.
- **Side Gabled House** is located on the northwest of Larue Road and Frank Road. This is a clapboard sided home with side gabled architecture.
- **Astylistic Utilitarian Building**, is a log sided outbuilding located on the west side of Larue Road just north of Frank Road.

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 Historical Society

**P.O. Box 651
Baraboo, WI 53913**

**608-355-1001
<http://www.saukcounty.com/schs>**

- **Reedsburg Historical Society and Pioneer Village** - The Reedsburg Area Historical Society has been around for over 50 years with the main goals of preserving, interpreting, and living out the history of our community. The Reedsburg Area Historical Society begun in 1965 and officially chartered on February 4, 1966, the Pioneer Village and museums of the Reedsburg Historical Society sit on 52 acres of pine forest. They are open Memorial Day until September, weather permitting, on Saturdays 11am-4pm. The cost is \$5 per person donation.

- **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: Encourage and support public and private investment for the improvement of local utilities while striving to maintain maximum current facility usage. Promote a connected and interactive community.

Utilities and Community Resources Objectives/Policies:

UCRO-1 Encourage the maintenance, improvement and diversification of utility infrastructure and power sources.

UCRP-1 A The Town Board should develop a permitting process that will require utilities that are burying cables along town roads to present a plan to the town board for approval. This policy also encourages utilities to survey town road right-of-way lines and locate buried utilities in this area. When locating utilities on the right-of-way line is not feasible, the utility will provide the town with a map showing the exact location of the buried utility.

UCRP-1B The Town of Ironton encourages individual landowners to install renewable energy infrastructure such as wind, solar and biomass. The Town of Ironton will also consider larger scale, utility owned, wind farm operations provided that said operations do not detract from agricultural land uses.

UCRO-2 Encourage the development of technology infrastructure to enable and grow home occupations, cottage industries and other business development as well as provide these services for residential use.

UCRP-2A The Town will work with private communication companies to provide adequate cell phone coverage, installation of fiber optic cable, satellite options, and delivery of high-speed Internet services to town residents.

UCRO-3 Develop and promote centralized community gathering areas and related activities for town residents.

UCRP-3A The Town Board may consider establishing a Committee to organize an annual gathering for all town residents to allow existing and new town residents to connect and to strengthen community bonds.

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 tourists to view the scenic landscapes and history of an area both locally and regionally.

Transportation options within the Town are primarily limited to Town and County roads, which are utilized by the automobile, 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 and include 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 Ironton Roadway Classification System Definitions* identifies each road in the town by its classification and purpose. *Table T2 Ironton Roadway Classification System Descriptions* describes the location of each of these roads including its potential users.

Table T1: Ironton Roadway Classification System Definitions

Town of Ironton Roadway Classification System (Definition)		
Road	Classification	Definition
I-90/94, U.S. Hwy 12, 14	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 58	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.
County Roads G, S, and K	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	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.

Source: Wisconsin DOT

Table T2: Ironton Roadway Classification System Descriptions

Town of Ironton Roadway Classification System (Description)		
Road	Classification	Description
I-90/94	Regional Interstate Roadway Principal Arterial	Located 20 miles east of the Town of Ironton, 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 12,14	Regional Interstate Roadway Principal Arterial	Located 15 miles east of Ironton, 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. Located 20 miles south of Ironton, Highway 14 serves as an east-west arterial between the cities of Madison to Richland Center to Rochester, Minnesota.
State Road 58	Regional State Roadway Minor Arterial	State Road 58 is north-south route primarily connecting Mauston to Richland Center.
County Roads G, S and K	Local Roads Major Collectors	County Road G enters the northwestern part of the Town and travels south through the Village of Ironton to connect to State Road 23 which connects the Village of Spring Green to the City of Reedsburg. Both County Road K and S travel in an easterly-westerly direction and are located in the southern one-half of the town. Both K and S connect to State Road 23.
None Located in the Town of Ironton	Local Roads Minor Collectors	None located in the Town of Ironton.
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.

Source: Wisconsin DOT

7.2 Airports

Although there are no airports located in the Town of Ironton, 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 and managed by the Cities of Baraboo and Wisconsin

Dells, the Village of Lake Delton, and the Town of Delton. 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 Ironton.

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 ADRC. 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

Other forms of transportation forms exist in or near the Town of Ironton for purpose of freight movement and recreational uses. These include trucking, rail and multi-use recreational trails

7.4.1 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 Korth Transfer, Reedsburg Hardwoods, Hanke Trucking, J & T Trucking, Elma, Bucky's, Shields Transfer Line and Van Zile all located in the Reedsburg area.

7.4.2 Rail

The Wisconsin and Southern rail line, a contractor of the Union Pacific Railway, serves the Town of Ironton via a connection in the City of Reedsburg. The rail line travels through the Cities of Baraboo and Madison and crosses the Wisconsin River in the Village of Merrimac. 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.

7.4.3 Bicycle and Recreational Trails

While there are no officially designated bicycle or recreation trails in the Town, the 400 Recreational Trail is located in the Towns of Woodland, La Valle and Reedsburg. The 400 Trail stretches for 22 miles 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.

7.4.4 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 Ironton's transportation element incorporates these plans into the comprehensive plan in varying degrees to ensure an accurate reflection of the overall transportation system.

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) completed the *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* in 1998. This Plan establishes WisDOT goals, objectives, and policies for both intercity and urban and suburban bicycling, and recommends strategies and actions for WisDOT, local governments, and others to take to implement the plan. The two primary goals of the plan are to double the number of trips made by bicycles and to reduce bicyclist-motorist crashes by at least 10 percent by the year 2010. More specifically, it seeks to improve bicycle access to major destinations along arterial and collector streets.

2002–2008 Transit Improvement Program

The TIP must be consistent with the region's long-range transportation plan, include all transportation projects in the metropolitan area that are proposed for federal funding, and include at least three years of programming.

The Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020

The *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020*, created by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), was established to make pedestrian travel a viable, convenient and safe transportation choice throughout Wisconsin. While the Policy Plan primarily aims to minimize the barrier to pedestrian traffic flow from State Trunk Highway expansions and improvements, it provides guidance to local communities on how to encourage pedestrian travel through the creation of pedestrian plans, increasing enforcement of pedestrian laws, adopting and implementing sidewalk ordinances, and addressing pedestrian issues through the public participation component of Comprehensive Smart Growth Planning.

League of American Bicyclists - Bicycle Friendly Community Program

The Bicycle Friendly Community program provides a roadmap to improving conditions for bicycling and guidance to help make your community's vision for a better, bikeable community a reality.

State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation Plans

Connections 2030: Wisconsin's Long-range Transportation Plan

Connections 2030 is the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WisDOT) long-range transportation plan for the state. This plan addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and transit.

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030

Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 and its accompanying System-Plan Environmental Evaluation (SEE) is the statewide long-range airport transportation plan. The 20-year plan builds off

the policies and issues identified in Connections 2030; Wisconsin’s statewide long-range transportation plan adopted in October 2009.

Wisconsin’s State Airport System Plan identifies a system of 98 public-use airports adequate to meet different aviation needs in all parts of the state and is a guide for federal and state investment decisions. The identification of potential projects in this plan is not a commitment for federal or state project funding, nor does it provide project justification. Prior to project implementation all projects must be justified through the local master planning and environmental process and approved by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration, when appropriate. The plan includes a statewide vision for aviation, an overview and analysis of the state’s system of airports, a SEE, and an environmental justice analysis.

Wisconsin State Freight Plan

Enhancing freight mobility is a top priority for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). The State Freight Plan (SFP) provides a vision for multimodal freight transportation and positions the state to remain competitive in the global marketplace. The SFP was approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation on March 19, 2018.

Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) is an extension of local government in Southwestern Wisconsin. We provide low-cost expert planning and economic development services to the county, city, village, and town governments of our five-county jurisdiction (Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, and Richland counties).

7.6 Analysis of the Existing Town Transportation Systems and Plans

As previously described, the Town of Ironton’s transportation system consists of primarily local and county roads. Responses from the Town survey indicated that Ironton’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/Policies:

TO-1 Continue to improve and maintain roads to meet the needs of current and future land uses.

TP-1A Continue to maintain road quality by utilizing State and County aids for road improvement.

TO-2 Support transportation opportunities for multi-use transportation and for persons who are elderly or have disabilities.

TP-2A Support additional transportation options for those without access to an automobile, including the elderly, disabled and children.

TP-2B When reconstructing roads, the Town will consider multiple users and incorporate provisions to enhance safety for all uses. Such provisions may include additional signage or increasing road width in known areas to accommodate the movement of large farm equipment.

8.0 Purpose

As part of this planning process, the Town of Ironton has identified a desire to continue building and maintaining its agricultural economy while offering options to establishing limited business ventures to town residents. 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 overall look at commuting patterns, regional employment and income characteristics, tourism economic impacts and agriculture economic impacts provides insight to the county's economic vitality.

8.1.1 Commuting Patterns

In terms of commuting patterns, the 2020 Census sample data indicates that 16.5% of Ironton residents work at home. It is assumed that the majority of these residents are involved in farming. For those who commute to their jobs, 68.9% drive alone while 7.8% carpool. The average commuting time to work is approximately 30 minutes.

8.1.2 Employment Characteristics in Ironton 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 American Community Survey, the Town Unemployment Rate for 2021 was 3.5%. That same year, unemployment for Sauk County was 2.9%. Of the 404 persons of the Town that are greater than 16 years old, 263 are involved in the labor force. The 3.5% unemployment rate is equal to 14 persons. The remaining 141 people (or 34.9%) either claim disability or are retired.

8.1.3 Area Economic Viability and Employment Opportunities

The potential for economic opportunities within commuting distance of Ironton 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 Ironton. *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 Ironton, the major employment areas of Baraboo, Sauk Prairie, and Reedsburg are within the average commute time of 45 minutes from Ironton. 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
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

8.1.4 Area Income Comparison

According to the Census, the median income for residents in Ironton was \$76,250.00. **Table E3 Regional Income Comparisons** shows that compared to the neighboring Towns, the County and the State, the Town of Ironton has roughly the same median income as all of Sauk County.

Table E3: Regional Income Comparisons

Table E3: Regional Comparison of Income Distribution, 2020							
Household Income, 2020 Estimates	Percent of Households						
	Ironton	La Valle	Woodland	Washington	Reedsburg	Sauk County	Wisconsin
Less Than \$10,000	0.0%	1.1%	2.1%	8.2%	2.8%	4.1%	4.6%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	5.2%	5.2%	1.4%	1.8%	40.0%	3.5%	4.1%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2.9%	6.8%	7.9%	2.4%	2.8%	9.6%	8.6%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	6.9%	10.1%	7.6%	7.9%	7.5%	9.9%	9.0%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	13.2%	7.6%	19.7%	11.5%	13.5%	12.7%	13.0%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	21.3%	23.2%	17.9%	26.0%	26.9%	20.8%	18.9%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	20.7%	16.4%	12.8%	19.6%	14.6%	14.4%	14.1%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	19.0%	21.8%	15.9%	14.5%	19.1%	16.7%	16.3%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	8.6%	3.4%	11.4%	7.3%	6.5%	4.8%	6.1%
\$200,000 or more	2.3%	4.3%	3.4%	0.9%	5.8%	3.6%	5.2%
Median Household Income	\$76,250	\$71,192	\$66,458	\$65,804	\$67,422	\$62,808	\$63,293

Source: US Census, 2020, DP-3

8.1.5 Agriculture Economic Activity

The most recently compiled data for state agriculture economic characteristics is from 1997, and is 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 is based on market value. The fact that 63.10% of the farms have a sales value of less than \$50,000 per year 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.

8.1.6 Tourism Economic Impact and Opportunity

According to the 2020 Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Report on tourism, the outdoor recreation economy contributes \$7.8 billion to the state GDP. The overall statewide economic impact of travelers is broken down in several 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, add up to the total economic impact. There are around 93,000 jobs being both directly and indirectly supported by outdoor recreation and contributing \$3.9 billion in worker compensation.

Looking at the traveler expenditures by category, the largest contribution is from nature-based activities. The largest contributions come from: motorcycling/ATVing (\$1.1 billion); apparel and accessories (\$688 million); boating and fishing (\$529 million); game areas (\$349 million); guided tours (\$383 million); RVing (\$291 million); bicycling (\$261 million); and, hunting and shooting (\$160 million).

8.2 Local Employment and Economic Activity

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

8.2.1 Education, Income Levels and Employment Activity

Table E6 Educational Attainment shows that the percentage of Ironton residents with a high school diploma increased by 6% during 1990 and 2000, less than the rate of Sauk County at 8.8%. The percentages of those with a Bachelor’s Degree decreased for Ironton by 2% from 1990 to 2000 while Sauk County’s percentage increased by roughly 5.0%.

Table E6 Educational Attainment

Table E6: Educational Attainment				
	High School Diploma		Bachelor’s Degree or Higher	
	Ironton	Sauk County	Ironton	Sauk County
1990	72.0%	74.7%	11.0%	12.9%
2000	78.0%	83.5%	9.3%	17.6%
2010	23.1%	88.8%	15.9%	20.0%
2020	32.1%	32.2%	14.8%	23.8%

Source: U.S. Census 2010-2020

8.2.2 Income Levels

As detailed in the Housing Chapter, from the 255 households surveyed in Ironton, 13.2% were in the \$35,000 to \$49,999 income bracket, 21.3% of the households were in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 income bracket, 20.7% of households were in the \$75,000 to \$99,999, and 19.0% of households were in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 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 E7 Distribution of Household Income, 2020 shows that in 2020, the median household income for the Town of Ironton was \$76,250 while the average household income was \$83,834. The ratio of the average to the median income is 1.10.

Table E7: Distribution of Household Income, 2020

Table E7: Distribution of Household Income, 2020			
Distribution of Household Income, 2020	Percent of Households		
	Town of Ironton	Sauk County	Wisconsin
Less than \$10,000	0.0%	4.1%	4.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.2%	3.5%	4.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2.9%	9.6%	8.6%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.9%	9.9%	9.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.2%	12.7%	13.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	21.3%	20.8%	18.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	20.7%	14.4%	14.1%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19.0%	16.7%	16.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.6%	4.8%	6.1%
\$200,000 or more	2.3%	3.6%	5.2%
Median Household Income	\$76,250	\$62,808	\$63,293
No. of Households	255	26,751	2,377,935
Avg. Household Income	\$83,834	\$77,000	\$82,757
Ratio of mean to median HH Income	1.10	1.23	1.31

Source: US Census 2000

From 2000 to 2020, both Sauk County and the State of Wisconsin saw the ratio of average income to median income increased slightly, the County from 1.19 to 1.23, the State from 1.23 to 1.31. This implies that the number of values on the upper end of the spectrum has increased slightly during the past decade.

8.2.3 Employment

Table E8 Labor Force and Employment shows that, of the 662 persons in Ironton during 2020, 285 persons age 16 or older are in the labor force, and an additional 138 persons age 16 or older are not in the labor force. Of those in the labor force, 8.1%, are unemployed. This is greater than the unemployment rate for Sauk County of 2.3%, according to the 2020 Census. However, according to the American Community Survey 2021, the unemployment rate for the Town drops back down to 3.5%.

Table E8: Labor Force and Employment

Table E8: Labor Force Status, 2020		
Category	Ironton	Sauk County
Population 16 years and over	423	51,342
Not in Labor Force	138	16,316
In labor force	285	35,026
Armed Forces	0	20
Civilian labor force	285	35,006
Employed	262	34,197
Unemployed	23	809
Unemployment Rate	8.1%	2.3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2020

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 Ironton 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 Ironton based on data for age group trends in Sauk County from 2010 to 2020. This assumes that the Town of Ironton will experience changes in age group categories parallel to those occurring in Sauk County. **Table E9 Labor Force Change by Age Group in Sauk County, 2010-2020** shows the age group data forecast for the Sauk County labor force. In looking at **Table E9**, notable trends include the older age group of 65-74 showing the greatest amount of increase and the 25-44 age group, the age group in their prime earning years, showing the least change (0.2%).

Table E9: Labor Force Change by Age Group in Sauk County, 2010-2020

Table E9: Labor Force by Age Group in Sauk County, 2010 - 2020						
Age Groups	2010	2015	Percent Change	2020	Percent Change	Average Change
16-19	3,152	3,198	1.5%	3,137	-1.9%	-0.2%
20-24	3,408	3,255	-4.5%	3,422	5.1%	0.3%
25-44	15,744	15,448	-1.9%	15,485	0.2%	-0.8%
45-54	9,432	9,105	-3.5%	8,218	-9.7%	-6.6%
55-64	7,488	8,683	16.0%	9,248	6.5%	11.2%
65-74	4,479	5,657	26.3%	6,882	21.7%	24.0%
75+	4,470	4,803	7.4%	4,950	3.1%	5.3%
Total Labor Force	48,173	50,149		51,342		1584.50

Source: American Community Survey

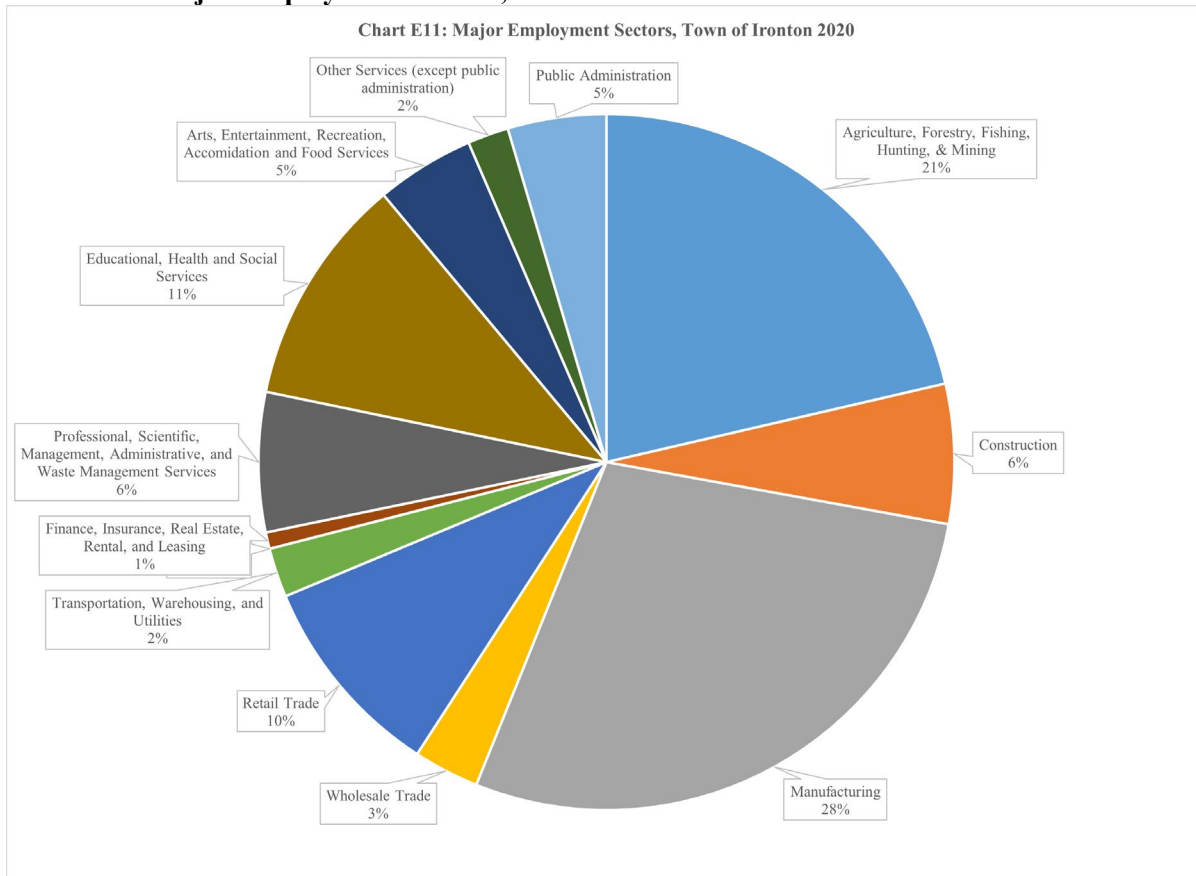
While assessing the types of employment opportunities in the Town of **Table E10 Employment by Occupation, Town of Ironton** shows that agriculture, once a major occupation, has now been surpassed by the manufacturing industry as the major employer. **Chart E11 Major Employment Sectors, Town of Ironton** graphically shows the major employment arenas in the Town while **Table E12 Employment by Occupation, Sauk County** provides a comparison to the region.

Table E10: Employment by Occupation, Town of Ironton

Table E10: Employment by Industry, Town of Ironton 2000 - 2020				
Industry	Percent Employed Population, 2000	Percent Employed Population, 2010	Percent Employed Population, 2020	Rate of Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Mining	27.0%	34.0%	21.4%	-20.8%
Construction	4.2%	10.1%	6.5%	54.5%
Manufacturing	24.0%	13.1%	28.2%	17.7%
Wholesale Trade	0.9%	0.9%	3.1%	239.3%
Retail Trade	14.7%	8.7%	9.5%	-35.1%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	3.3%	2.7%	2.3%	-30.6%
Information	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	1.8%	1.8%	0.8%	-57.6%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	3.6%	3.6%	6.5%	80.2%
Educational, Health and Social Services	12.6%	20.9%	10.7%	-15.2%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	3.6%	3.6%	4.6%	27.2%
Other Services (except public administration)	1.5%	0.0%	1.9%	27.2%
Public Administration	2.7%	0.0%	4.6%	3.4%
Civilian Employed Population	333	335	262	-21.3%

Source: American Community Survey, 2020

Chart E11 Major Employment Sectors, Town of Ironton



Source: American Community Survey, 2020

Table E12: Employment by Occupation, Sauk County

Table E12: Employment by Industry, Sauk County 2000 - 2020				
Industry	Percent Employed Population, 2000	Percent Employed Population, 2010	Percent Employed Population, 2020	Rate of Change 2000 to 2020
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, & Mining	5.3%	4.2%	3.6%	-31.5%
Construction	7.8%	8.0%	7.3%	-6.6%
Manufacturing	19.1%	17.3%	15.8%	-17.2%
Wholesale Trade	3.2%	3.3%	2.6%	-17.9%
Retail Trade	13.2%	12.5%	12.2%	-7.9%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	4.0%	3.7%	4.3%	7.2%
Information	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%	-7.4%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	4.3%	4.6%	4.4%	1.8%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	5.2%	5.7%	6.6%	26.8%
Educational, Health and Social Services	17.6%	17.4%	20.4%	15.7%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	12.1%	15.4%	15.0%	23.6%
Other Services (except public administration)	3.1%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%
Public Administration	3.5%	3.3%	3.3%	-5.0%
Civilian Employed Population	29,108	33,210	34,197	17.5%

Source: American Community Survey, 2020

8.2.4 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. Although the Town of Ironton has not added many homes in the last 20 years, the number of farms has 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 53.5% in 1990 to 70.4% in 2000, and the number of residents who work at home decreased proportionally.

Table E13: Commuting Patterns

Table E 13: Commuting Patterns, 2020				
	2010		2020	
	Ironton	Sauk County	Ironton	Sauk County
Drive Alone	69.4%	80.7%	78.5%	81.9%
Carpooling	9.6%	10.2%	6.5%	8.3%
Public Transportation	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Walk	4.5%	2.4%	7.7%	3.3%
Other Means	0.6%	1.3%	1.9%	1.4%
Worked at Home	25.5%	5.3%	11.9%	4.9%
Average Travel Time (minutes)	30.6	21.0	24.9	22.2

Source: U.S. Census 2010-2020

8.3 Other Programs and Partnerships

8.3.1 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.

Sauk County Development Corporation (SCDC)

**P.O. Box 33
522 South Boulevard
Baraboo, WI 53913**

**Phone: 608-355-2084
www.scdc.com**

8.3.2 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 \(CDBG\) Public Facilities Program](#)

[Public Facilities](#) funds help support infrastructure and facility projects for communities. Examples of eligible projects include improvements, repairs, or expansions of streets, drainage systems, water and sewer systems, sidewalks, and community centers.

**Wisconsin Department of Commerce
Division of Community Development**

**P.O. Box 7970
Madison, WI 53707**

**Phone: 608-266-8934
www.commerce.state.wi.us**

- [CDBG – Planning Program Planning](#) grant funds support community efforts to address improving community opportunities and vitality. Examples of eligible projects include the development of comprehensive plans, community development plans, and small area and neighborhood plans.

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

This program assists towns in attracting tourists, forestry, and agricultural development. A town can designate a specific area within its boundaries as a TIF district and develop a plan to improve its property values. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for land acquisition or needed public works. Although the Town does not currently utilize this program, the Village does and therefore may be used to spur area development.

[USDA Rural Business Development Grants in Wisconsin](#)

This program is designed to provide technical assistance and training for small rural businesses. Small means that the business has fewer than 50 new workers and less than \$1 million in gross revenue.

[USDA Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans in Wisconsin](#)

Also known as the Section 502 Direct Loan Program, this program assists low- and very-low-income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant’s repayment ability. Payment assistance is a type of subsidy that reduces the mortgage payment for a short time. The amount of assistance is determined by the adjusted family income.

[USDA Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants in Wisconsin](#)

Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards.

[Value Added Producer Grants in Wisconsin](#)

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program helps agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and marketing of new products. The goals of this program are to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities and increase producer income.

[Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program in Wisconsin](#)

This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area, and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings.

[USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program in Wisconsin](#)

This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

[USDA Business & Industry Loan Guarantees in Wisconsin](#)

This program offers loan guarantees to lenders for their loans to rural businesses.

[USDA Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems & Energy Efficiency Improvement Loans & Grants in Wisconsin](#)

The program provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing.

8.4 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 maintain a list of contaminated sites.

The Town of Ironton does not have any open sites or closed sites.

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.

- **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'

8.5 Economic Development Goal, Objectives and Policies

Economic Development Goal: Establish economic development in the rural area by emphasizing the production and promotion of businesses that support agricultural ties to the land.

Economic Development Objectives/Policies:

EDO-1 Coordinate the development of farming and farm related businesses as well as the implementation of minimal cottage industries to capture agricultural strengths and encourage a variety of small businesses that enhance a strong rural community.

EDP-1A The Town's Plan Commission will work with Sauk County Planning & Zoning and UW-Extension on developing flexible guidelines and ordinances that will allow for the development of commercially related agricultural businesses and other cottage industries without the need to rezone and which capture tourism dollars. It is intended that this policy be implemented as part of a comprehensive revision to Sauk County's zoning ordinance. Options to consider may include the development of an overlay zoning district or a system of conditional or special exception uses.

EDO-2 Promote historical preservation and maintenance of structures to ensure the continuance of Ironton's agriculture past with its agriculture present and future.

EDP-2A Encourage landowners to maintain buildings that capture agricultural and historical values. These buildings may include original farmhouses, farm buildings and related structures, including, but not limited to silos, fences, fencerows and old farm roads. The Town's Plan Commission will collaborate with the County Historical Society and UW-Extension to provide educational opportunities and to provide information for the preservation of historical sites.

EDO-3 Build upon and promote existing and newly developed agriculturally related tourist attractions that highlight the regions agricultural integrity by showcasing that area's quality agricultural products, productive agricultural lands and thriving agricultural businesses.

EDP-3A The Town's Plan Commission may work with local and regional school districts and other organizations that offer opportunities to introduce students to agricultural operations such as cash cropping, dairying, organic farming and Community Supported

Agriculture as well as businesses that produce products from locally sourced ingredients such as Carr Valley Cheese, regional bio-fuel facilities, on-site methane power generation, etc. It is intended that these opportunities provide students with an understanding and appreciation for agri-business, to promote consumption of locally produced products and to encourage a new generation of farmers and local agriculture related businesses.

EDO-4 Identify lands for housing and commercial use that is allowed and regulated in accordance with local regulations.

EDP-4A The Town will regulate rural development to promote the maintenance of agricultural lands by directing non-agriculturally related business to be located within municipal incorporated boundaries.

9.0 Purpose

The Town of Ironton's landscape primarily features a blend of upland farm fields with forested tracts and scattered wetlands and streams. 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 Ironton'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 the Ironton landscape: Valton, La Farge and Norden/Eleva/Rock outcrop soil series, with some large areas of Norden soil present. General soils information can also be noted on web mapping resource [NRCS Web Soil Survey](#).

- **Valton Silt Loam** soil is a deep, well-drained soil series formed in loess and limestone parent material. Typically found on the unglaciated uplands in the Town of Ironton, this soil has slopes ranging 2-30%. Permeability is generally moderate in the upper portion and slow in the lower portion. Surface runoff is medium. Natural fertility is moderate. Most areas with this soil type are fair for cultivated crop production and good for hay production. Depending on slope, there is a chance for erosion in cultivated areas. This soil is poorly suited for most engineering practices including residential home development, commercial development and roads because low strength and stability of the soil.
- **La Farge Silt Loam** soils in Ironton are moderately steep sloping, well drained and located on convex ridgetops and side slopes on unglaciated sandstone uplands. Most areas are oblong and range from 3-225 acres. Permeability and available water capacity are moderate, however root penetration is limited by underlying bedrock. With a shallow depth to bedrock and a moderately low organic matter content, this soil has a moderate to low productivity rating. Although this soil can be cultivated, the soil is better suited for hay, pasture, trees and wildlife habitat. Due to the slope and depth to bedrock of this soil, engineering practices such as septic system placement, dwelling and road construction are poorly suited.
- **Norden and Eleva and Rock outcrop series** soil are distributed evenly throughout the town's uplands. This soil series is typically well-drained and moderately permeable on unglaciated sandstone uplands. This soil series is steep or moderately steep with slopes ranging from 12 to 60 percent. This soil is primarily in native woodland vegetation and some moderately steep areas are used for pasture, hay or corn fields. This soil is poorly suited for septic tank absorption fields and building sites due to a shallow bedrock layer and slope. These limitations may be overcome by reshaping the landscape.
- **Norden** soils are distributed evenly throughout the town's unglaciated sandstone uplands. This soil is typically well-drained, moderately permeable and steep. Available water capacity and natural fertility are moderate. These soils are suited better for hay, pasture and woodland forests,

due to the severe erosion hazard if under cultivation. In Ironton, the Norden soil is generally poorly suited for septic tank absorption fields, dwellings, roads and commercial buildings, due to the slope and a shallow depth to bedrock.

9.2 Topography and Slope

The topography in the Town of Ironton is unique in that the southern two thirds of the town includes gently rolling farm fields and a notable lack of rock outcroppings, while much of the northern parts of the town includes a landscape deeply cut by ancient streams into narrow, twisting valleys and several hundred million-year-old ridges.

9.3 Environmentally Sensitive and Significant Resources

The Town of Ironton has identified environmentally sensitive areas as areas of land having slopes greater than 12%, lands along the Little Baraboo River, surface waters, floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, groundwater recharge areas (zones of contribution to municipal wells), and areas that contribute water recharge to the Little Baraboo River. The Town has further recognized that any land use proposed will have an impact on these areas and should be minimized as much as possible utilizing a combination of site evaluations by the Town's Plan Commission as well as the objectives and policies in this Plan. *Map 9-1 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*.

9.3.1 Woodlands

A portion of Ironton is covered by forest. Much of this forest is located along the Little Baraboo River 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.

9.3.2 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. *Map 9-1 Environmentally Sensitive Areas* shows general areas in Ironton that could support or have at one time in history been identified as containing rare plant or animal species.

9.3.3 Significant Natural Areas and Resources

There are a number of significant natural areas and resources in the Town of Ironton. 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 6-1 Community and Cultural Resources*.

- The Silver Creek Woods are located in parts of Sections 1, 2, 11, and 12. This area includes 500 acres of extensive dry, upland oak forest and oak-basswood-elm forest.
- Ironton Mine is located in the SW ¼, SW ¼ of Section 10. This site reveals the historical geological importance of the area.

- Smelting Furnace is located in the NE ¼, NE ¼ Section 4.

9.3.4 Drainage Basin

The Town of Ironton 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 primarily within the Crossman Creek and Little Baraboo River watershed.

9.3.5 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 the Town of Ironton are located along the Little Baraboo River in the northwest corner of the Town. The FEMA maps should be referenced for official delineation and elevations of floodplain boundaries. General Floodplain boundaries can be noted on *Map 9-2 General Floodplain Areas*.

9.3.6 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 Little Baraboo River. The greatest threat to these wetlands has historically 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*.

9.3.7 Groundwater Resources

As in most of Sauk County, groundwater remains the major source of fresh water. In Ironton, 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 Crossman Creek and Little Baraboo River watershed is the host watershed for all of the Village of Ironton's 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 the time frame when rainwater falls to the surface and becomes groundwater, and then be subsequently utilized by the Village of Ironton and Lime Ridge. Identifying zones of contribution is the precursor to the establishment of a wellhead protection program. Well head 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 located within the corporate limits of the Village of Ironton and extending to the south of Village limits and Thomas Road by only several hundred feet. The 50-year zone of contribution extends about one mile to the south/south-east and includes lands adjacent to La Rue Road. The 100-year zone of contribution extends south of the 50-year zone along La Rue Road, past the intersection of Griffin Pit Lane and La Rue Road by about ½ mile. The total distance of the

100-year zone of contribution from the Village limits is approximately 1.5 miles. The implementation of land use provisions to protect groundwater supplies will be critical to a sustained and safe water supply for the Village.

9.3.8 Surface Waters of Ironton

The Town of Ironton's surface water resources, including the Baraboo River, Carr Valley Creek, Babb Creek, Furnace Creek and Silver Creek, are all 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.

9.3.9 Storm Water Management

Managing storm water has a significant impact on the surface water resources in the Town of Ironton. 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. The County recently adopted *Chapter 51 Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance* which regulated all ground disturbing activities of 4,000 sq. ft. or more. WDNR also regulates all construction site erosion control that is greater than 1 acre alongside the County's oversight.

9.4 Mineral Resources

Currently, the Town of Ironton does one active mineral extraction site, the Pickel Quarry, formerly known as the Meyer quarry. 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 9-3 Potential Gravel Deposits*.

9.5 Programs, Partnerships and Resources

Below are some examples of programs, partnerships and resources that provide assistance to landowners in the Town of Ironton 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 Land Resources and Environment Department**
 - **Land Conservation Division** coordinates natural resource management and environmental enhancement activities within county boundaries and administers a variety of county, state, and federal initiatives. The Division places particular emphasis on soil conservation, water quality improvement, groundwater protection, flood control, nonpoint 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 Division coordinates with school districts to teach children about natural resources and conservation.
- **Planning & Zoning Division** 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 Division 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 Division 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 and enhance the Town's natural resources, including geology, soils, water, open space, forest, wetland and grassland, native plant-animal communities, wildlife, and endangered and threatened species. To encourage wise and sustainable recreational, aesthetic, scientific and economic use of these resources.

Natural Resources Objectives/Policies:

NRO-1 Manage roadside vegetation throughout the Town to protect wildlife during nesting seasons.

NRP-1A Maintain limits on second pass mowing. Single pass mowing (road shoulders only) is approved anytime as needed.

NRP-1B Noxious weeds and invasive plants will be controlled and mowing restrictions do not apply where these populations exist.

NRO-2 Manage forests using sustainable harvesting and stewardship practices in the Town.

NRP-2A Encourage woodland and forest landowners with more than 10 acres of woods/forest to:

- a. Use Wisconsin Forest Management Guidelines (Department of Natural Resources, PUB-FR-226-2003) when developing forest management and harvest plans;
- b. Implement forest management plans that result in timber stand and wildlife habitat improvement;

- c. Employ the services of a certified forester to develop timber harvest plans;
- d. Avoid unsustainable cutting methods: Diameter Limit Cutting, Economic Clearcutting, and High Grading (also known as “Selective Logging”), and;
- e. Avoid cutting oaks between April 15 and July 1, in order to minimize the spread of oak wilt disease.

NRP- 2B Consider a Town newsletter or website that will periodically highlight opportunities for residents and landowners relative to sustainable timber production and harvest methods.

NRO-3 Cooperate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Sauk County and others to encourage participation in land preservation efforts and use of conservation easements.

NRP-3A The Town Plan Commission shall consider designating one of its members as the Town liaison to work with landowners, government agencies, conservation groups and others to cooperatively preserve open space for future opportunities, including wetlands, forests and agricultural lands. These preservation practices may include, but are not limited to, conservation easements, purchase of open space lands, purchase/transfer of development rights, voluntary donations of conservation easements and through private land owner stewardship options.

NRO-4 Preserve clean water resources and employ policies and practices that will eliminate/minimize water contamination.

NRP-4A No commercial landfills will be permitted in the Town of Ironton. Chemical storage facilities, refineries etc. must adhere to applicable County and State laws.

NRP-4B Encourage agriculture practices that minimize/optimize the use of chemical applications.

NRP-4C Encourage lawn care procedures that minimize the release of polluting chemicals beyond property boundaries.

NRO-5 Maintain and enhance biodiversity in the Town of Ironton’s natural communities.

NRO-6 Protect endangered and threatened species of indigenous plants and animals.

NRO-7 Encourage the use of landscaping with native plants.

NRO-8 Discourage the introduction of invasive exotic plants and encourage their eradication.

NRO-9 Encourage the enhancement of both game and non-game wildlife habitat on agricultural lands.

The following policies address NRO-5 through NRO-9:

NRP-5 to 9 A Consider providing information and photographs in a Town newsletter or website to all landowners describing exotic invasive plants, including garlic mustard and

common buckthorn, to assist in individual identification and eradication efforts. Encourage landowner cooperation with conservation organizations to help eradicate invasive exotic plant species.

NRP-5 to 9B Consider developing a collection of materials given to applicants for permits for new construction that will:

- Suggest landscaping procedures to minimize the introduction of exotic species;
- Suggest procedures that would minimize the effects on indigenous plants and animals;
- Suggest procedures that would maximize biodiversity.

NRO-10 Protect/maintain the scenic heritage landscape vistas and views.

NRP-10A Encourage limiting the visibility of new construction through the use of careful home/structure siting, landscaping/use of existing vegetation and encouraging the selection of natural colors and materials. See also siting requirements and pictorial policies under *Chapter 11 Land Use*.

NRO-11 Educate landowners on standards to minimize light glare from trespassing onto neighboring properties and into the night sky.

NRP-11A Encourage ‘down-lighting’ fixtures for new construction and encourage retrofits on existing light fixtures intended for all-night use. Include options periodically in a Town newsletter or website.

NRO-12 Provide for public input opportunities on mineral extraction operations.

NRP-12A Proposed mineral extraction operations shall be considered at a town public hearing hosted by the Town Plan Commission and Town Board.

10.0 Purpose

In order to achieve the overall vision in the Town of Ironton, 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 Ironton should evaluate how the plans of Sauk County and Juneau County as well as neighboring units of government will affect it.

10.1 Adjacent Town and Village Plans and Planning Efforts

The following planning efforts of neighboring jurisdictions may affect the Town of Ironton.

10.1.2 Town of Reedsburg (Sauk County)

The Town of Reedsburg adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001 in October, 2014. 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. The Town of Reedsburg is under the Sauk County Zoning Ordinance.

10.1.3 Town of La Valle (Sauk County)

The Town of La Valle has adopted a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Wis. Stats. 66.1001, in December, 2006 and is in the process of updating their plan pursuant to state statute. Prior to the development of its the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of La Valle was under the guidance of its 1984 Development Plan. La Valle's overall plan purpose is to balance the rural and agrarian character with residential and commercial development to serve the demand for lakeside and recreational housing in the Town. La Valle's Plan specifies limited residential subdivision densities to encourage the application of conservation development practices. The Plan also has provisions for cluster development and new development siting guidelines, which are aimed at preserving agriculture and natural resources.

10.1.4 Town of Washington (Sauk County)

The Town of Washington does not have a plan and is not zoned.

10.1.5 Town of Westford (Richland County)

The Town of Westford's Comprehensive Plan specifies a density of 1 house per 35 acres of ownership for the purpose of preserving agricultural lands. While the Town is supportive of preserving agricultural lands, it does not wish to pursue other residential land use options such as rural Planned Unit Developments and Conservation Subdivisions.

10.1.6 Village of Ironton

The Village of Ironton's comprehensive plan emphasizes maintaining current infrastructure including private residences. While the Village does not foresee any outward growth, areas adjacent to the Village have been designated for this purpose.

10.1.7 Village of Lime Ridge

The Village of Lime Ridge's 2004 Comprehensive Plan indicates that the Villages' population will likely grow by roughly 18 people in the next 20 years under a slow population projection rate or could grow as much as 58 people under a high projection rate. While the Village cannot determine future population, in an effort to increase population, the Village has proposed three areas for additional residential growth, a designated area for a senior living center and finally, an area for future commercial development. According to their Comprehensive Plan *Map 10-1, Village Growth Areas*, lands identified for future commercial development and that are located in the Town of Ironton are located north of the Village along County Road G while lands identified for future residential development are located west of the Village along County Road K and northwest of the Village.

10.1.8 Village of Cazenovia

The Village of Cazenovia's 2006 Comprehensive plan primarily supports Low Density Single Family Residential development. The intent of this type of development is to integrate residential development with the landscape and to establish a transition in the residential character between existing, in-town development and the rural countryside. This area is intended to have a gross density of 1 to 2 units per acre. It is possible that this development, while annexed into the Village, would not be served by village utilities. According to their Comprehensive Plan *Map 10-1, Village Growth Areas*, lands identified for this type of development, and which are located in the Town of Ironton lands off of Lincoln, Bible and Marshall Roads.

10.2 Current Intergovernmental Programs, Plans, Agreements and Opportunities

The following Sauk County plans and programs may have an impact on the Town of Ironton.

10.2.1 Sauk County Comprehensive Plan (2009)

In 2009, the Sauk County Board of Supervisors adopted the *Sauk County Comprehensive Plan*. The Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that presents a vision statement, seven themes: economy, agricultural and natural resources, transportation, education, arts and innovation, quality of life, government, and energy. By design, this plan does not contain a county future land use plan map but rather the plan incorporates the local Town plans and future land use maps. 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. When the County updates their Comprehensive Plan, it will review the various goals and work with Towns to once again incorporate their local plans and maps.

10.3 Current and Future Cooperative Planning Efforts

10.3.1 Neighboring Town Planning

It is anticipated that the Town of Ironton 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.

10.3.2 Sauk County

The Town of Ironton 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 Ironton'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 LRE Department administers the majority of county ordinances and programs that affect the Town.

10.4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal, Objectives, and Policies

Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal: Continue positive and effective working relationships with and support emergency, educational and governmental agencies.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Objectives/Policies:

ICO-1 Maintain a cooperative relationship with the Reedsburg, Weston and Wonewoc School Districts.

ICP-1A Where appropriate, the Town Plan Commission and Town Board will continue communications with the respective school districts regarding enrollments, busing and other activities.

ICO-2 Continue to support the Cazenovia and Reedsburg fire and emergency services for the Town of Ironton.

ICP-2A The Town Board will continually stay involved with fire and emergency needs and districts to assure consistent and effective coverage and to further plan for disaster response.

ICO-3 Encourage joint projects with the Towns of La Valle, Reedsburg, Washington, Westfield, Willow, Woodland and Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton and Lime Ridge.

ICP-3A This policy intends to formalize the Town of Ironton's commitment to work with neighboring jurisdictions regarding the sharing of services and equipment, road maintenance sharing, economic development and promotion, preservation of rural lands, and establishing regional agricultural business initiatives.

ICO-4 Work with government and private agencies to identify and pursue grant opportunities that would be beneficial to the Town of Ironton and its residents.

ICP-4A The Town's Plan Commission may seek out grants and grant writing assistance that will benefit and offer opportunities to town residents and landowners. The town will also offer support to Sauk County with its efforts to secure grants that may be beneficial to the Town of Ironton.

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’s original Development Plan of 1986 provides a good example of this kind of ‘policy-driven’ plan.

The Town of Ironton’s 1986 Development Plan represents the first community-wide planning document that addressed some of the broader issues affecting land use including the protection of agricultural lands that exhibit the greatest long-term commitment to agriculture, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and to promote, where appropriate, an orderly low-density pattern that would not require urban services.

The 2008 Town of Ironton Comprehensive Plan took the same approach as the Development Plan, however it refined these concepts and enacted specific policy measures to achieve the *Plan’s* Vision. The Land Use chapter recognized that the goals, objectives and policies under each of the previous chapters either directly or indirectly impacted land use within the Town. This plan which is an update of the 2008 plan follows the same structure.

The overall purpose of the Land Use chapter within this Comprehensive Plan is therefore two-fold. First, like the 1986 Development Plan, this chapter 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, building permits, density policies, home siting requirements, and development guidelines. This structure served the community well for the 2008 plan and therefore is again being utilized in the 2023 update.

11.1 Future Land Use Districts (locations correspond with *Map 11-2 Future Land Use*)

11.1.1 Smart Growth Areas

Smart Growth 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. Based on this definition and through an examination of the Town as part of this planning process, the primary smart growth area identified includes lands within or adjacent (within ¼ mile) to the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton and Lime Ridge. Secondary smart growth areas include the remainder of the Town of Ironton.

11.1.2 Village Areas- Cazenovia, Ironton, Lime Ridge (primary growth area)

The policies in this plan specifically recognizes the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton and Lime Ridge and lands within ¼ mile of the Villages as the primary growth and the only area where subdivisions will be permitted. Subdivisions are considered as any plot of land divided up into smaller lots for the purpose of residential, commercial, or mixed-use development. Sauk County defines subdivisions as land division by an owner which creates four or more lots within a five-year period. The Town recognizes that this sort of dividing of land and development for residential or commercial purposes should take place in areas designated as primary growth areas. This Plan recognizes that any development should correspond with the traditional Village layout relative to street and pedestrian patterns to ensure that when and if this development is annexed, connectivity can be made with Village infrastructure.

Development occurring in these areas may be mixed use (commercial and residential), should follow traditional neighborhood design concepts, and utilize community septic facilities. This method of waste disposal not only promotes up-to-date technologies to ensure that wastewater is being treated, but also provides a convenient and cost-effective end-of-pipe connection should the Village annex the subdivision and at that time require the use of a public sanitary sewer system.

To carry forth the process identifying these areas as future mixed-use development, it is envisioned that the Town's Plan Commission and Village Council discuss options and work toward setting up respective intergovernmental agreements. At a minimum, the following concepts will need to be addressed and agreements established:

1. Development guidelines relative to requiring connected streets via the adoption of an official map by both the Village and Town. The official map will provide for the location of new streets, utilities and park space that must be included in subdivision proposals. The official map will ensure connectivity as well as adequate and cost-effective placement of public utilities (i.e., sewer lines, lift stations, electrical, stormwater facilities etc.)
2. Pictorial representations of architecture and placement of new housing and businesses that depict the future look of the village areas as envisioned by the Village and Town. This may include concepts such as front porches facing the road vs. garages, encouragement of a particular architectural style and material use, greenspace placement etc.
3. Designation of lands for redevelopment or new lands for development via a future land use map to be located in both the Village's and Town's Comprehensive Plan. This map will serve to better define each municipality's smart growth areas and should be the same based on agreement for future growth areas.

11.1.3 Rural Areas (secondary growth area)

Since 1986, along with the adoption of the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District by the Town, came a requirement that in order to build a new house on a new lot, a minimum of 35 acres was required. Today, this same standard applies. The 35-acre standard was originally adopted by the

Town as a means to reduce the potential number of new houses that could be built in the Town. At roughly 1 house per ½ acre under the Agriculture Zoning District (zoning of the Town prior to Exclusive Agriculture) the Town could have potentially had a full build-out of roughly 44,000 new homes. Although this build-out is unrealistic, it represents the notion that development could potentially occur on a large scale. In order to promote development in rural areas while still preserving farmland, Sauk County created the Planned Rural Development Program which allows the creation of lots smaller than the 35-acre minimum in exchange for the Agricultural Conservation Easement areas.

The Planned Rural Development (PRD) Program applies location criteria and residential dwelling density allowances to regulate the number and location of rural residential housing lots and dwellings in order to protect agricultural, cultural, natural, or recreational features of the landscape while retaining the development allowance originally allotted to a parcel; to allow for flexibility in increasing the intensity of development while maintaining the density and use requirements in the applicable zoning district, and other requirements as specified by the town.

A PRD is required in order to create a lot of less than 35 acres on which dwelling may be established within the Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District. A PRD shall consist of a PRD preservation area and a PRD development area. A PRD development area is a lot created by the use of density credits. A PRD preservation area is determined by the following: (number of density credits used * 35 acres) – PRD development acres = PRD preservation area. Any remnant land of a parcel that results from the application of a PRD, and that does not otherwise qualify for a density credit, shall be subject to a PRD preservation area easement.

PRD conservation areas are identified as part of a PRD that contain productive agriculture or environmentally and culturally sensitive lands that significantly contribute to the economic and natural resource base of the rural community. Because of their importance, PRD conservation areas shall be substantially protected from residential development. Lands identified as such shall be designated under a Preservation Area Easement. No structure may be built on land identified as being subject to a Preservation Area Easement except for structures that have a use consistent with agricultural uses or other structures with the approval of the Town and Sauk County. The initial term of the easements are for 20 years and at the end of the initial term are automatically renewed for an additional ten years while the zoning density remains the same. The easement will continually renew for an additional ten years until the zoning density changes.

In exchange for preserving greater areas of farmland, unique environmental resources, and to further increase housing placement flexibility, density credits may be transferred between properties within, or between, the exclusive agricultural zoning districts, or may be transferred from areas with this zoning to incorporated areas.

11.1.4 Criteria for Evaluating Development Impacts in Secondary Growth Areas

In order to ensure efficient and cost-effective development patterns in Secondary Growth Areas, a set of criteria for each proposed development is listed below. It is the intent of both the developer

and Town to utilize these criteria when considering new developments in the Secondary Growth Areas. 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 a Secondary Growth Area 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 Ironton, the Villages of Ironton and Lime Ridge, 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.

Map 11-2 Future Land Use shows the permissible location of subdivision development and where minimum 35-acre lots are required.

11.2 Recent Development and Land Market Trends

The issuance of new land use/building permits for single family residential construction in the Town of Ironton has remained relatively steady during the last 20 years. From 2001 to 2021, an average of 2.6 permits per year were issued for residential construction. Even though there has been a consistent, and by some standards, low rate of growth, future development pressures should not be overlooked. **Chart LU1 Number of Permits Issued (2001-2021)** depicts the relatively steady rate in overall development in the Town of Ironton since 2001; however there appears to be an upward trend in conditional use permits or small-scale commercial development in the most recent years since 2013. Assuming the Town will continue experience an increase in growth in the rural areas, it will become increasingly important for the Town of Ironton to guide rural development 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.

Table LU1: Number of Permits Issued (2001-2021)

Ironton Land Use Permits Issued for New Construction										
Year	Resident					Ag Structures	Tower/ Antennas	Commercial	CUP or Change of Use	Total Permits Issued for New Construction
	Single Family	Multi Family	Mobile Home	Garage	Accessory Structures					
2001	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	6

2002	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	6
2003	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
2004	4	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	9
2005	6	0	1	2	4	0	1	0	0	14
2006	5	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	11
2007	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
2008	2	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	8
2009	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	6
2010	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2012	3	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	7
2013	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	5
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2015	2	0	1	0	7	2	1	0	1	13
2016	2	0	0	1	7	3	0	0	1	13
2017	3	0	0	0	3	5	0	1	3	12
2018	1	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	1	7
2019	2	0	0	3	7	0	0	0	1	12
2020	3	0	0	0	9	1	0	0	1	13
2021	0	0	0	1	5	5	0	1	3	12
Total 2001 - 2010	55	1	7	18	67	16	2	2	14	74
Total 2011 - 2020	18	0	2	6	43	11	1	1	10	82
Overall Total	55	1	7	18	67	16	2	2	14	182
% of Total in Ironton	30.2%	0.5%	3.8%	9.9%	36.8%	8.8%	1.1%	1.1%	7.7%	
% of Total in Sauk County	2.8%	0.1%	12.5%	3.8%	6.6%	1.6%	7.4%	7.4%	27.5%	
Average Issued Per Year	2.6	0.0	0.3	0.9	3.2	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.7	

Source: Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department

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 Ironton determines its future development policies and practices. In 2020, with a population of 662 persons and a land area of approximately 35.3 square miles and 22,454 acres, the Town of Ironton's population density was roughly 19 persons per square mile or roughly 1 person per 35 acres.

The calculation for the housing density of the Town of Ironton in 2020 is the number of occupied housing units in 2020 (210 h.u.) divided by the total land area. This equates to about 6 houses per square mile or approximately one home per 107 acres. The further breakdown of these densities based on development patterns and location will be analyzed later in this section.

11.4 Existing Land Use

Map 11-1 Current Land Use, along with the following descriptors, will aid in the understanding of existing land uses in the Town of Ironton. 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. In the past, land was classified by the USDA land cover data layer which utilized Lidar data to assess land cover. In 2022, Sauk County created their own Land Use data layer based on existing land uses and permit data. Each district is defined below for the various uses that are included.

11.4.1 Land Use District Classifications

- **Agriculture.** This area includes land uses primarily for farming and includes, grasslands, pastures, cropland, and barnyards. This is the largest land use category in the Town and includes approximately 66.1% of the total land area or approximately 14,841 acres.
- **Commercial.** This area includes all commercial land uses such as restaurants, stores, bars, hotels, and large-scale service-based businesses. This land use is assigned to the actual use of the land regardless of zoning or legal nonconforming status. This is a small category including approximately 0.04% of the total land or 8 acres.
- **Industrial.** This area includes all industrial zoned areas and land uses such as contractor storage yards, trucking terminals, and general large equipment storage or use. This land use is not represented in the Town.
- **Institutional/Government.** This area includes all properties owned or utilized by school districts, churches, cemeteries, medical institutions, museums, and local government entities. This includes approximately 0.3% of the total land area or 67 acres.
- **Landfill/Extraction.** This area includes all nonmetallic mine sites and landfills, including composting sites. This is a small category including approximately 0.05% of the total land or 11 acres.

- **Mixed Use.** This area includes all areas with a combination of residential and small-scale commercial uses. This area is typically cut out only include the structures and outdoor areas being utilized for residential living and business activities. This category includes 0.2% of the total land or 45 acres.
- **Multi-family Residential.** This area includes all duplexes, apartment structures, and mobile home parks. This land use is represented by only a single parcel of approximately an acre.
- **Recreational/Open Space.** This area includes public and private recreational spaces including parks, campgrounds, golf courses, ski resorts, theme parks, boat landings, rod and gun clubs, and state trails. This land use is represented by two separate parcels of approximately 1 acre.
- **Single-family Residential.** This area includes all single-family residential homes and incorporates the structure, lawns or active outdoor living areas, and driveways. This category covers approximately 1.24% of total land area or 278 acres.
- **Transportation.** This area includes all roadways, railroads, and airports. The transportation land use takes up approximately 0.5% of total land area or 12 acres of land owned specifically for transportation.
- **Utilities.** This area includes all water treatment plants, cell towers, and power substations. This area is only comprised of the 16.7 acres of the Village of Ironton water treatment ponds.
- **Vacant.** This area marks all lots located within a subdivision that is yet to be developed. This is to mark lots that are already designated for residential development that do not have a residential structure. This land use is not represented in the Town at the time of this plan.
- **Woodland.** This area includes land that is primarily undeveloped, evergreen and deciduous forestland. This area includes all lots of 3 acres or greater with at least 75% tree coverage. This area represents 32% of the Town's total land area, or approximately 7,190 acres.

11.5 Alternative Buildout Scenarios and Density Policies (Rural Areas)

As part of the planning process, a town-wide survey was administered to ascertain the desires of Ironton residents relative to their vision of future residential development. This survey proposed six different options as noted below and asked survey participants to identify which illustration represents the development level and location they would like to see. Of the responses, 3% chose option A, 38 % chose B, 3 % chose C, 7 % chose D, 21 % chose E and 29 % chose option F.

Option A _____ One house per lot not to exceed 3 lots per landowner in a 5-year period;

Option B _____ One house per lot not to exceed 3 lots per landowner in a 5-year period, with an agreement that certain lands are preserved;

- Option C _____ Conventional subdivision development with no limitation on the number or size of lots;
 Option D _____ Conventional subdivision development requiring large lots (5 acres or more) with no limitation on the number of lots;
 Option E _____ Conservation subdivision development designating areas for development and green space;
 Option F _____ No new development.

Through the Committee's examination of the scenarios coupled with comments provided by the public at the open house/vision session, it became evident that conventional and large lot subdivision development (Option C & D) were not the preferred option. Option A also got very little support of classic housing development. Conversely, Option F which depicted no new development garnered the significant amount of support, however has been identified as an unrealistic choice. After removing these three options from the table, Options B and E collectively garnered the most support. These three options depict a certain level of development coupled with the understanding that certain lands will be retained for open space and preservation purposes.

11.6 Zoning Classifications

The Town of Ironton adopted county zoning in September, 1964. At this time the entire Town was placed under the Agricultural Zoning District. In 1986 the Town rezoned the entire town from an Agricultural to an Exclusive Agricultural Zoning District. Since that time there have been fifteen rezones to accommodate business types of development. *Map 11-3 Zoning Districts* show the location of respective zoning districts.

The Town of Ironton also includes three other zoning districts, though in much smaller sections: agriculture, commercial, and recreational commercial. The agricultural zoning district provides for a mix of residential housing and farm operations. The commercial zoning district provides for a broad range of commercial uses to promote economic viability. The recreation commercial district provides for a broad range of recreational uses is intended to accommodate retail and service establishments.

11.7 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 Ironton 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 3 miles to the east. Future land uses are broken down into residential, commercial and agricultural.

11.7.1 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 Ironton. 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*, it is apparent that population increases represent households with a limited household size and that the greatest population increases occur within the 70-79 age bracket. Using this information, it is unlikely that household sizes will increase in the Town and will likely decrease. However, *Table P3* and *Charts P4/P5* show that household sizes are fluctuating rather than showing a consistent trend. There also appears to be an increase in the number of housing units regardless of the fluctuations in population. However, there are changes to seasonal and vacant properties which infers that even though the population remains relatively steady the Town is seeing very small-scale development from possibly non-local citizens. This makes population projections difficult as it is not consistent throughout the demographic data available. *Table LU2 Household Forecast: Household Size Trend and Lands Needed* correlates population increases to average household size to determine a projected number of new households. The vacant housing column for projected years is based on the 2020 Census numbers for the number of housing units (255) within the Town of Ironton. It is assumed that although there are vacant units, there will still be development of new units for both local and second home or investment properties.

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

Year	Population	Average Household Size (constant)	Number of Occupied Households	Additional Residential Units Added	Vacant Housing Units
1990, per census	585	3.2	183	NA	18
2000, per census	650	3.11	209	20	11
2010, per census	660	2.68	227	20	14
2020, per census	662	3.37	210	14	45
2030, Projection	682	3.09	221	NA	34
2040, Projection	716	3.09	232	NA	23
2050, Projection	752	3.09	243	NA	12

Source: US Census and Sauk County Planning & Zoning

11.7.2 Future Commercial Land Area Needs

Currently, the Town of Ironton has only a handful of commercial businesses, which still maintain the rural agricultural character of the Town. The Town's Plan expresses two tiers of commercial development that can occur in the town. The first tier is expressed through the implementation of small-scale commercial uses as well as value-added opportunities for farmers. These commercial types of uses are permitted town-wide and typically considered a secondary use to a primarily residential or agriculture based parcel. The second tier of commercial development recognizes those uses that resource a rezoning to a commercial zoning district based upon Sauk County's Zoning Ordinance. These commercial uses are only permitted within ¼ mile of the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton and Lime Ridge and also correspond to *Map 11-3 Future Land Use*. The actual land area needed for future commercial uses is not calculated as part of this plan as there is no extensive history of commercial uses in the town to predict future land needs and the local economy is based on agricultural production.

11.7.3 Future Agricultural Land Area Needs

Based upon projected and actual residential land needs, and the statewide and local trend of conversion of agricultural land, it can be assumed that the amount of agricultural land in the Town of Ironton will decrease accordingly. As the Town and Villages grow, it is important to direct non-agricultural development to the designated development areas to allow growth while still maintain the rural, agricultural nature of the Town and to protect its agricultural land base.

11.8 Natural Limitations to Building and Site Development

Natural limitations to development vary depending on where in the Town development is being proposed. Generally speaking, Carr Valley and Furnace Creeks traverse the central part of the Town while the Baraboo River runs to the north. Associated with these waterways are related floodplain areas depicted on *Map 9-2 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 found utilizing the NRCS online soil resource, [Web Soil Survey](#).

11.9 Land Use Goal, Objectives and Policies

Land Use Goal: In order to balance the desire for preservation governmental financial necessity of residential growth, the Town of Ironton has established the following land use goals:

- Preserve agricultural land and protect farm operations as well as environmentally sensitive areas (as stated in the *1986 Town of Ironton Development Plan*);
- Maintain scenic vistas;
- Encourage small-scale home-based business and appropriate commercial growth;
- Encourage good land stewardship;

- Provide buffers, in so much as reasonable, between incompatible uses;
- Encourage the maintenance and growth of family farms;
- Encourage management of woodlands and wildlife using generally accepted practices;
- Utilize an organized development pattern to minimize conflicting land uses and provide for controlled development.

Land Use Objectives/Policies:

LUO-1 Ensure adequate opportunities and land availability to meet all of the Town's objectives.

LUP-1A Recognize that all policies noted in this Plan are intricately related to land use and further recognize that the Town shall follow all policies when making decisions about the Town's future land use.

LUO-2 Maintain a density policy, by consensus, to determine the number of residential homes which can be built in the Town so as to preserve agricultural lands, farming operations, wetlands, and significant natural resources as well as the overall view of the Town.

LUP-2A Discuss opportunities and consider utilizing the Sauk County Planned Rural Development Program – Cluster Development option in addition to the minimum 35-acre lot size requirement to build a new single-family residence.

LUO-3 Assure that the provisions of this plan are considered when making land use decisions in the Town and further support external programs to realize the Vision, Goals and Objectives of this Plan.

LUP-3A As the Town reviews land division proposals and changes in land use, it is the intent of this policy to ensure that both the Town's Plan Commission and Town Board review and incorporate this Plan's Vision, Goals, Objectives and Policies into their final decision.

LUO-4 Encourage the placement of new buildings which preserve productive agricultural lands, forested areas and the overall appearance of the town.

LUP-4A Utilize the following pictorial guide when siting new lots and homes, which represent the Vision, Goals, Objectives and Policies in the Plan. These pictorials represent the 'preferred' location and layout of new residential construction.

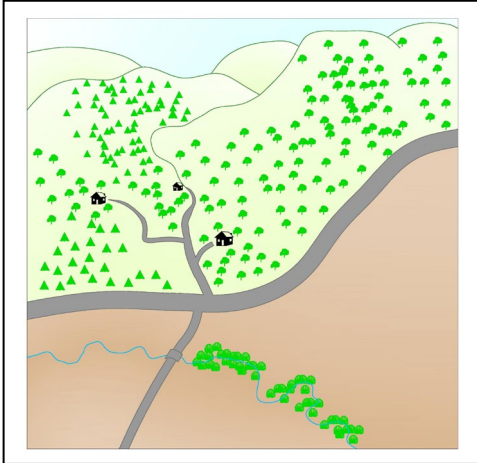
To coincide with the pictorial policies, utilize the following site-specific strategies, as a checklist, when considering the location of new homes.

- Optimize the shape and configuration of farmable parcels;

- Minimize visual impact of development from roadsides and existing neighbors;
- Integrate development with existing landscape patterns (fields, fencerows, farmsteads, natural features);
- Use existing vegetation to screen new development;
- Use new landscaping to screen and enhance development;
- Minimize the visual impact of development through sensitive home siting on hillsides and limiting placement of development on hilltops;
- Retain wooded areas;
- Minimize number of driveways, and regulate placement and grade;
- Integrate development with existing topography and vegetation pattern.

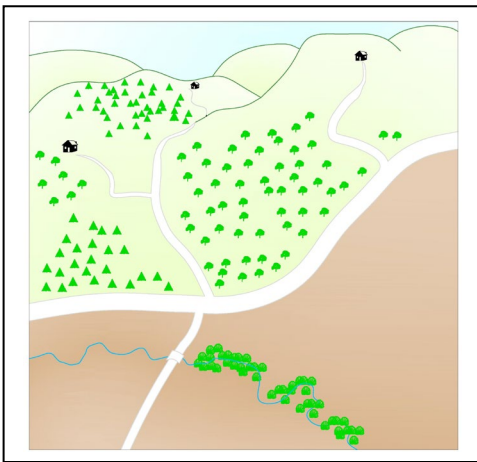
Subset 1 LUP- 4A Development in Wooded Hillsides

Preferred



- Homes built in natural valley;
- Existing vegetation maintained or replaced;
- Driveways shared by residences;
- Reduction in Town road access points.

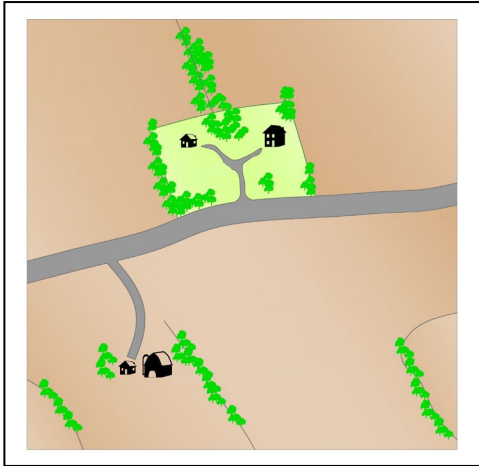
Less Desired



- Homes built on bluffs;
- Driveways placed on slopes greater than 12%;
- Multiple driveways serving homes;
- Homes visible from public right-of-way;
- Excessive clearing for driveways;
- Homes placed within the forest core.

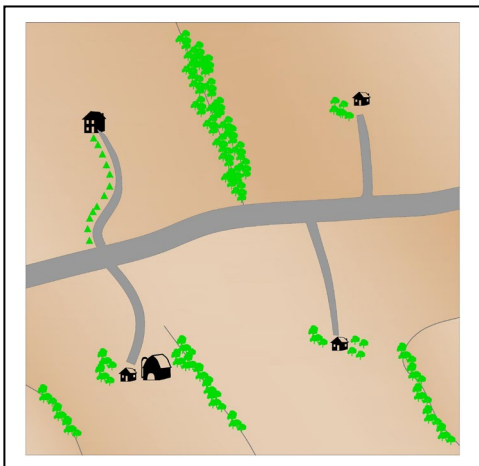
Subset 2 LUP- 4A Multiple Lot Residential (Agriculture Fields)

Preferred



- Homes placed along existing fence row;
- Minimal land taken out of agriculture production;
- Driveways shared by residences;
- Some screening provided;
- Homes placed away from farm lot/barnyard;
- Reduction in Town road access points;
- Cohesive agricultural fields.

Less Desired



- Homes placed in middle of agricultural fields;
- Multiple driveways serving homes;
- Homes visible from public right-of-way;
- No screening for new development.

Subset 3 LUP- 4A Multiple Lot Residential (Agriculture Fields)

Preferred



- Homes placed in woodlot providing natural screening;
- Minimal land taken out of agriculture production;
- Driveways shared by residences;
- Existing vegetation maintained or replaced;
- Cohesive agricultural fields.

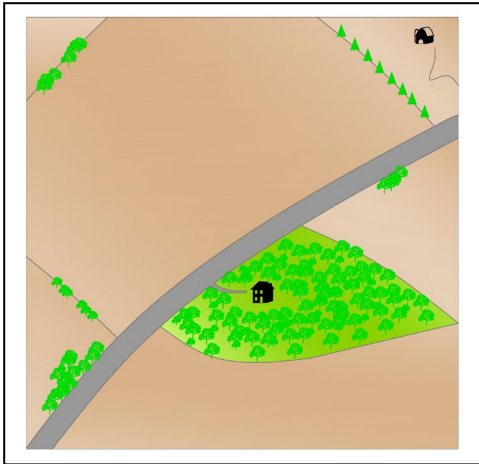
Less Desired



- Homes placed in middle of agricultural fields;
- Multiple driveways serving homes;
- Homes visible from public right-of-way;
- No screening for new development.

Subset 4 LUP- 4A Single Lot Residential (Agriculture Fields)

Preferred



- Home built on existing woodlot;
- Minimal land taken out of agriculture production;
- Existing vegetation maintained or replaced;
- Cohesive agricultural fields.

Less Desired



- Home built on agricultural field;
- No screening for new development;

Subset 5 LUP- 4A Development adjacent to the Villages of Cazenovia, Ironton or Lime Ridge.

Preferred



- Interconnected road enhancing mobility;
- Inclusion of sidewalks connected to the Village;
- Secondary road connections to the Village;
- Dedicated park space for the residents of the neighborhood;
- Development directly adjacent to the Village thereby avoiding the ‘leap frog’ effect;
- Community septic system;
- Smaller lots typical of the average lot size in the Village;
- Housing architecture and layout typical of current Village development including front porches and rear facing garages.

Less Desired



- Lack of interconnected roads, limiting mobility;
- No sidewalks;
- Road separation from the Village road system;
- Use of County roads to gain access to the Village and downtown;
- Little or no recreational space/parks;
- Development not contiguous to the Village;
- Septic systems on each individual lot;
- Excessively large lots not typical traditional development patterns;
- Housing architecture and layout not conducive to a sense of community (i.e. no front porches, garages facing road etc.)

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, provide specific guidance to the Town with everyday decision-making. Therefore, the Town of Ironton 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 and Town Board.

12.1 Plan Adoption

The Town of Ironton 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. 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 incorporated as a component of the Sauk County Comprehensive Plan.

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.

12.2.1 Plan Monitoring

The Town should continuously evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions based on the recommendation/policies of the Town of Ironton 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. The Plan Commission will review the Plan prior to each annual meeting to gauge implementation compliance and consider plan amendments where appropriate.

12.2.2 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).

12.2.3 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. Based on this deadline, the Town should update its Comprehensive Plan before the year 2033 (i.e., ten years after 2023), but to allow for significant public input, the Town should start its update process at least a year prior. The Town should also monitor any changes to language or interpretations of State law throughout the life of the Comprehensive Plan at the annual review.

12.3 Role of Implementation

12.3.1 Town Board

The Town Board will provide for general oversight to the Plan Commission relative to selecting and guiding plan implementation activities. 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. Town Board members are encouraged to take an active role in furthering plan implementation.

12.3.2 Plan Commission

The primary body responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan is 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. The second form involves furthering policy directives such as developing and adopting a siting ordinance. With regard to furthering policy directives, it will be the responsibility of the Plan Commission to set a course of action and identify/include all possible partners.

12.3.3 Partners

Partners can be defined as those groups that have an interest or expertise with the implementation of a particular policy. While the following table is not all-inclusive, it does list possible partners to the implementation of the Town's policies.

12.4 Implementation Timeline and Recommended Partners

Partner	Code
Sauk County Land Resources & Environment Department	LRE
Sauk County Development Corporation	SCDC
University of Wisconsin -Extension	UWEX

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	DNR
Town of Ironton Plan Commission	PC
Town of Ironton Town Board	TWB

HOUSING

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body & Partners
HP-1A	2008	TWB
HP-1B	ongoing	PC
HP-2A	2009	PC
HP-2B	ongoing	PC/TWB
HP-3A	ongoing	PC/TWB
HP-3B	ongoing	PC/TWB
HP-3C	ongoing	PC/TWB
HP-3D	ongoing	PC/TWB
HP-3E	2009	PC
HP-4A	2010	PC/TWB/LRE
HP-4B	ongoing	PC/TWB

AGRICULTURE RESOURCES

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body & Partners
ARP-1A	2010	PC/TWB
ARP-1B	ongoing	PC/LRE/UWEX
ARP-2A	ongoing	PC/TWB/LRE/UWEX
ARP-2B	ongoing	PC/TWB
ARP-2C	ongoing	PC/TWB/LRE

UTILITIES & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body & Partners
UCRP-1A	2010	PC
UCRP-2A	2010	PC
UCRP-3A	2010	PC

TRANSPORTATION

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body & Partners
TP-1A	ongoing	TWB
TP-2A	ongoing	TWB
TP-2B	ongoing	TWB

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body & Partners
EDP-1A	2010	PC/UWEX/LRE
EDP-2A	2010	PC/TWB/LRE
EDP-3A	2011	PC/LRE/UWEX/SCDC
EDP-4A	ongoing	PC/TWB/

NATURAL RESOURCES

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body & Partners
NRP-1A	ongoing	TWB
NRP-2A	ongoing	PC
NRP-3A	2010	PC
NRP-4A	ongoing	PC/TWB
NRP-4B	ongoing	PC/TWB
NRP-4C	ongoing	PC/TWB
NRP-5 to 9A	ongoing	PC
NRP-5 to 9B	ongoing	PC
NRP-10A	2009	PC/TWB
NRP-11A	ongoing	PC
NRP-12A	ongoing	PC/TWB

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
ICP-1A	ongoing	PC/TWB
ICP-2A	ongoing	TWB
ICP-3A	ongoing	PC/TWB
ICP-4A	ongoing	PC

LAND USE

Policy	Implementation Timeframe	Representative Body
LUP-1A	ongoing	PC/TWB
LUP-2A	ongoing	PC/TWB
LUP-2B	2023	PC
LUP-3A	ongoing	PC/TWB
LUP-3B	ongoing	PC/TWB

LUP-4A	ongoing	PC
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12.5 Consistency Among Plan Elements

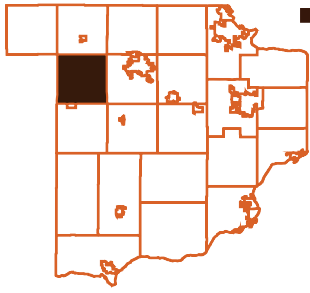
The State Comprehensive Planning statute requires that the implementation element “describe how each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.” Preparing the various elements of the Town of Ironton Comprehensive 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 in April, 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 Ironton 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.

Appendix A

Survey and Results



Town of Ironton

Community Survey Results Summary

The Town of Ironton conducted a Community Survey in September 2022 to assess citizens satisfaction with Town operations and create goals for the future. The majority of respondents live in the Town full-time, in farm residences, and have been residents for more than 20 years. Overall, citizens are happy with the rural, agricultural setting and management of the Town. There was a strong passion expressed for rural living and a desire to protect the small town, family-oriented, agricultural lifestyle.

As a whole, citizens expressed value in protecting natural resources. Of those surveyed, 87% believe that protecting farmland in the community from development is important. The biggest concerns or issues the Town is facing was found to be (50.6%) loss of farmland or rural character; (28.6%) commercial and residential development; (14.3%) CAFOs; (10.4%) water quality; and (10.4%) availability of hunting or forested land.

Overall, citizens are satisfied with the Town's transportation, staff communication, services, utilities, and facilities. Although 57% of respondents desire the Town to remain the way it is, 73% of those surveyed agree that small-scale commercial business development should be permitted. The majority of citizens prefer development, particularly residential to be directed to existing transitional development areas surrounding the Villages. The full details of the summary results may be found by contacting the Town Clerk or the Sauk County Land Resources and Environment Department.



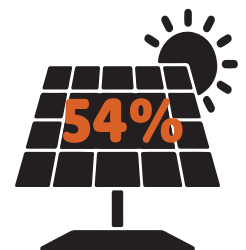
Disagree with Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) being allowed in the Town.



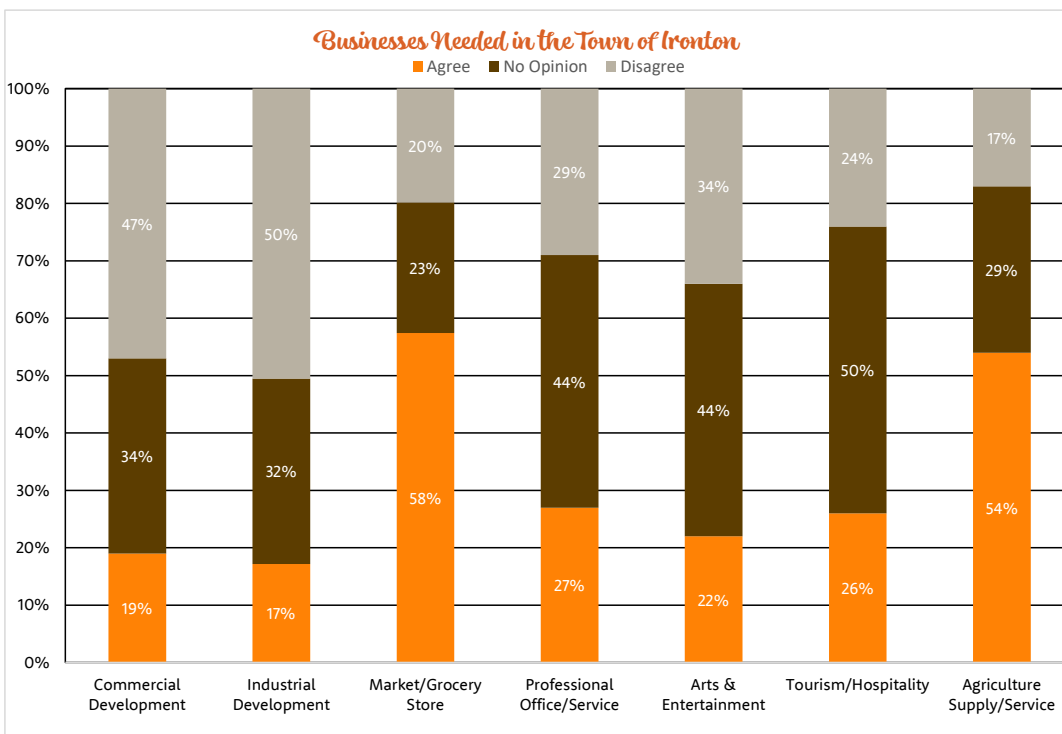
Agree that overall drinking water quality is a concern.



Agree that the Town would benefit from direct farm product sales.



Agree that the Town should allow landowners to pursue solar energy farms.



Town of Ironton Community Survey

Disclaimer: All responses shall be kept anonymous, but the results will be utilized in the Town Comprehensive Plan.

BACKGROUND

1. In what type of residence do you live?

<input type="checkbox"/> Single-family house, non-farm residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Mobile home	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time/Vacation house
<input type="checkbox"/> Single-family house, farm residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Landowner only	<input type="checkbox"/> Rental unit
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe) _____		

2. What type of resident are you in the Town of Ironton?

<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time (6 months+/year)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time/seasonal (<6 months/year)	<input type="checkbox"/> Landowner only
---	--	---

3. How long have you owned or rented property in the Town of Ironton?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 to 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years
---	---------------------------------------	--	---	---

4. Where is your primary place of work?

<input type="checkbox"/> At home/on farm	<input type="checkbox"/> In Sauk County	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside Sauk County (but in WI)	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of State	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired
--	---	--	---------------------------------------	----------------------------------

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5. The quality of life in the Town of Ironton is excellent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
---	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

6. What are the three most important reasons for you and your family to live in the Town? (i.e., cost of living, near family, employment)

7. How would you describe your thoughts towards future growth and development (commercial, recreational, housing, etc.) in the Town of Ironton? (please choose one)

<input type="checkbox"/> We need to support and encourage growth and development.
<input type="checkbox"/> We need to slow down the rate of growth and development in the Town.
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to see the Town stay the way it is.
<input type="checkbox"/> The Town should focus on redevelopment and rehabilitation of existing buildings and land.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure.

HOUSING

8. The Town of Ironton needs more.... (please check one box in each category)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Single Family Homes					
B. Duplexes (2 units)					
C. Mobile Homes					
D. Elderly/ Assisted Living					
E. Rental Housing (3 or more units)					
F. Condominiums					
G. Other: _____					

9. Housing is generally affordable in the Town of Ironton.

<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> No Opinion	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree
---	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

10. The existing housing stock in the Town provides a wide variety of choices for people of all incomes and needs.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

If you disagree or strongly disagree, what type of housing is needed? _____

11. The physical condition of the housing stock in the Town is adequate.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

12. The Town of Ironton should protect and promote buildings, sites, and artifacts of historical importance.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. The water quality issues listed below are of concern in the Town of Ironton.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Overall drinking water quality					
B. Groundwater pollution					
C. Surface water pollution due to runoff from roads, homes, cabins, resorts and other development during construction					
D. Surface and ground water quality impacts from agricultural operations					

14. The natural resources listed below are important to protect in the Town of Ironton.

Resources	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Air Quality					
B. Farmland					
C. Floodplains					
D. Hillside/Steep Slopes					
E. Natural Areas					
F. Rural Character					
G. Scenic Views					
H. Shoreline					
I. Water quality of lakes, streams, creeks and rivers					
J. Wetlands					
K. Wildlife Habitat					
L. Woodlands					
M. Other: _____					

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

15. The siting and expansion of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOS, i.e. 1000 beef cattle, 700 dairy cows, 2500 hogs, 3,000 sheep, or 82,000 chickens) should be allowed in the Town.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. Protecting farmland in the community from development is important.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. The Town of Ironton would benefit from the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Agriculture Tourism					
Direct Farm Product Sales					
Workdays and Educational Opportunities Related to the Agriculture Industry					
Overnight Lodging/Bed and Breakfast					
Other: _____					

18. There are adequate agricultural support and complementary services to keep agricultural operations in the Town economically viable.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

If you disagree or strongly disagree, what services do you feel are needed?

TRANSPORTATION

19. Please provide an opinion relating to the following statements on transportation facilities.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. The overall road network (roads, highways) meets the needs of the citizens					
B. The condition of Town roads is adequate for intended uses					
C. Biking facilities should be considered when upgrading roadways or when adding non-motorized transportation.					
D. Facilities that support walking or hiking are adequate within the Town.					
E. Transportation services for the elderly are adequate within the Town.					
F. Area carpooling/"park and ride" facilities should be provided in the Town					
G. The UTV access on the roadways meets the needs of current and visiting citizens.					
H. Other: _____					

20. There are transportation facility needs or problems in the Town of Ironton that need to be addressed.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

If you strongly agree or agree, explain which locations and why.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

21. In the Town of Ironton, should small or large business development be permitted in rural areas? (A small business is defined as having an average year-round equivalent of 10 or fewer full-time employees.)

Yes, small business Yes, large business Yes, both
 No, small business No, large business No, both

22. Should small or large business development be permitted if it is adjoining the Villages of Ironton, Lime Ridge, or Cazenovia?
 Yes, small business Yes, large business Yes, both Not Applicable
 No, small business No, large business No, both
23. The current transition area surrounding the Villages is 0.25 (1/4) of a mile. The purpose of the transition area is for future residential and commercial development. Should this area be expanded or reduced?
 Expanded up to ½ mile Remain the same Concentrate development on main transportation routes
 Expanded up to 1 mile Less than 0.25
 Greater than 1 mile

24. Please indicate whether you feel the following types of business are needed in the Town.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Commercial Development					
B. Industrial Development					
C. Market/Grocery Store					
D. Professional Office/Service					
E. Arts & Entertainment					
F. Tourism/Hospitality					
G. Agriculture Supply/Service					
H. Other: _____					

25. If you responded as “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” to any of the choices in Question 25, what suggestions do you have?

COMMUNITY UTILITIES AND FACILITIES

26. Please indicate whether you feel the following types of community facilities are adequate for the Town.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Area Library (Location: _____)					
B. Town Hall					
C. Fire / EMT Station (if applicable)					
D. Town Garage					
E. Recreational Facilities (e.g., ball fields)					
F. Boating Facilities/Docks					
G. Camping Facilities					
H. Other: _____					

27. The Town of Ironton’s community facilities have adequate provisions for differently abled (i.e., handicapped) accessibility.

Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

If you disagree or strongly disagree, explain which locations do not and why:

28. In general, law enforcement services for the Town of Ironton...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Provide a feeling of safety in the community					
B. Provide adequate protection and coverage					
C. Respond in a timely manner when called					
D. Other: _____					

29. In general, the Town of Ironton’s road crew...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

A. Adequately maintains local infrastructure (roads, utilities)					
B. Responds in a timely manner when called					
C. Addresses concerns with respect and fairness					
D. Other: _____					

30. In general, the Town of Ironton's Administrative Staff (i.e., clerk, treasurer)...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Responds to requests in a timely manner					
B. Is courteous and polite					
C. Is knowledgeable and helpful					
D. Other: _____					

31. The Town of Ironton has a need for the following amenities:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Bike Trails/Routes					
B. Walking / Hiking / C.C. Ski Trails					
C. Playgrounds and Equipment					
D. Picnic Areas/Shelters					
E. Public Natural/Recreational Areas					
F. Dog Parks					
G. Public Hunting/Fishing Areas					
H. Snowmobile Trails					
I. ATV Trails					
J. Other: _____					

32. The following services are adequate in the Town of Ironton.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Ambulance Service					
B. Fire Service					
C. Library Programs					
D. School System					
E. Park and Recreational Opportunities					
F. Storm Water Management					
G. Garbage Collection/Drop-off					
H. Recycling Program					
I. Electrical Service/Supply					
J. Telephone Service					
K. Cable Service					
L. Internet Service					
M. Cell Phone Service					
N. Other: _____					

33. The Town of Ironton should allow landowners to pursue the following alternative energy sources as a form of economic development or self-sustainability. For the following energy alternatives, indicate your opinion.

Facility	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Ethanol Plants					
B. Methane (biodigester) Production					
C. Solar Energy Farms					
D. Large-scale wind turbine					
E. Other: _____					

LAND USE

34. The following are several statements about potential future land uses for the Town of Ironton. Indicate your opinion by each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. In the Town of Ironton, housing subdivisions should be allowed in rural areas.					
B. Housing subdivisions should be allowed adjoining the Villages of Ironton, Lime Ridge, or Cazenovia but still within the Town. (if applicable)					
C. It is acceptable to build houses on tillable land.					
D. New housing should be directed to areas with existing development.					
E. The Town should allow rural subdivisions anywhere within the Town.					
F. Landowners should be able to sell any land they feel is appropriate for development.					
G. The Town should offer residential development alternatives such as new home clustering in exchange for agricultural preservation.					
H. Development adjoining the Villages of Ironton, Lime Ridge, or Cazenovia should include a mix of single-family and multi-family residential. (if applicable)					
I. Small-scale commercial business development should be permitted in the Town.					
J. Small, non-farm businesses should be allowed in the Town as accessory uses to residential development.					
K. There is a problem with excessive noise or odors from any land uses within the Town.					
L. The Town should keep farmers informed of opportunities and programs for agricultural resources.					
M. The Town should support programs that purchase easements on natural area lands, such as wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, and farmland for preservation and recreation purposes.					
N. The Town should engage in watershed improvement projects for area creeks--for trout population protection and habitat restoration.					
O. Coordinating the land use plans of Ironton along with neighboring municipalities should be a high priority.					
P. The Town should allow opportunities for large scale renewable energy operations such as solar or wind farms.					
Q. The Town should encourage the development of rural broadband (internet or cellular service) access.					
R. Other: _____					

Additional Comments: _____

35. The Town of Ironton should apply aesthetic guidelines or development standards to new construction.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

36. In your opinion what is the best option for the placement of new residential development.

- Option A _____ One house per lot not to exceed 3 lots per landowner in a 5-year period;
- Option B _____ One house per lot not to exceed 3 lots per landowner in a 5-year period, with an agreement that agricultural lands are preserved;
- Option C _____ Conventional subdivision development with no limitation on the number or size of lots;
- Option D _____ Conventional subdivision development requiring large lots (5 acres or more) with no limitation on the number of lots;
- Option E _____ Conservation subdivision development designating areas for development and green space.
- Option F _____ No new development.

37. The Town of Ironton's is currently zoned Exclusive Agriculture with a minimum lot size of 35 acres, per the Sauk County ordinance. Lots less than 35 acres may be created through the Planned Rural Development (PRD) Program with associated agricultural preservation easements. This program is effective in preserving agricultural land while allowing for small-scale development.
 Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree

If you disagree or strongly disagree, how do you believe it could be improved? _____

38. In your opinion, what are the three most important land use issues in the Town of Ironton?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

39. The following means should be used to achieve the goals of agricultural land and natural resource protection.

Means	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Landowner education					
Regulation					
Tax incentives					
Direct acquisition					
Sale of Development Rights					

40. Do you feel that the Town Board and staff communicate adequately with residents?
 Yes No

Please check the method(s) of communication that you would like to see used more:

- Website E-mail Announcements
 Cable Access Announcements Open Houses
 Newspaper notices/ Features Articles Newsletters
 Radio
 Other (please specify) _____

41. Have you volunteered in any Town activities in the past five years?
 Yes No

Would you be interested in future opportunities?
 Yes No

42. The Town of Ironton should consider the following ways of financing future needs for public facilities, parks, utilities, and roads: (check all that apply)
 Taxation State and Federal grants Special Assessments
 New Development Impact Fees Private fundraising Other: _____

GENERAL OPINION

43. What do you feel is the single biggest issue facing the Town of Ironton over the next several years?

44. What do you want the Town of Ironton to look like in 20 years?

45. How do you envision your property being used in 10 years? 20 years?

TOWN OF IRONTON

Community Survey Results

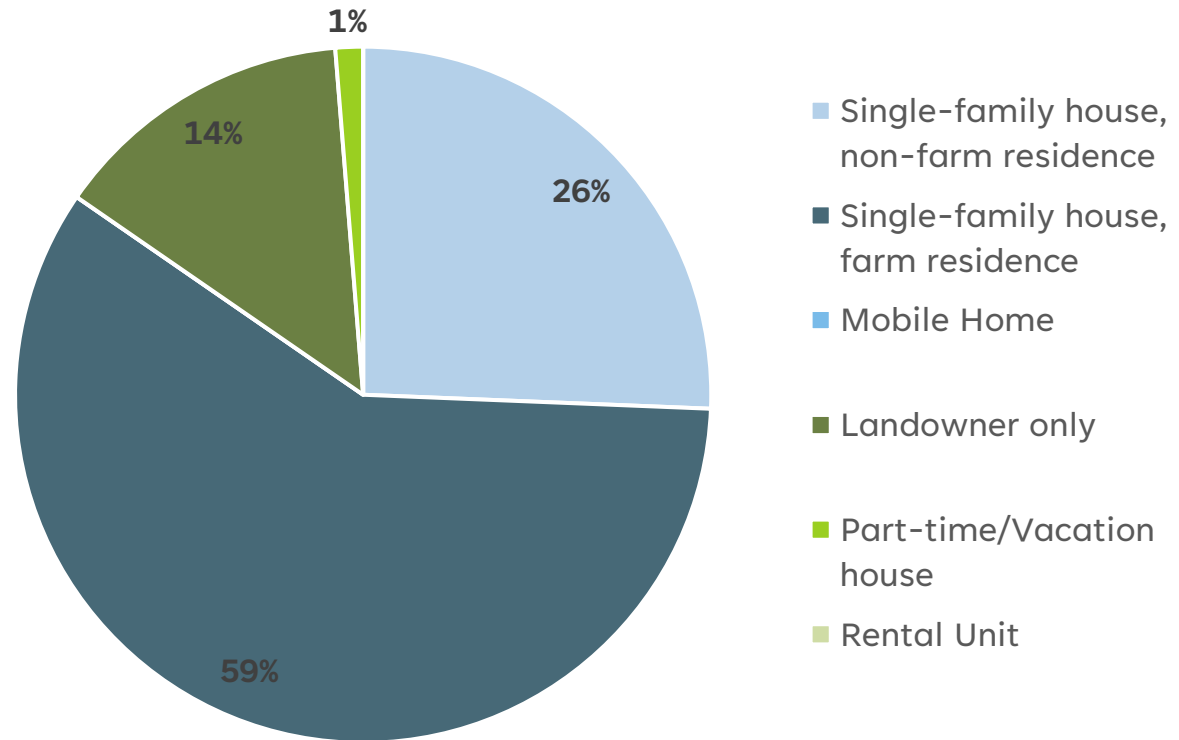
RESULTS SUMMARY

- 33% Response Rate
 - 78 Responses out of 235 Households
 - 85% Live in Town
- Happy with life in the Town and Town Management
- Love of rural living and desire to protect agricultural lifestyle



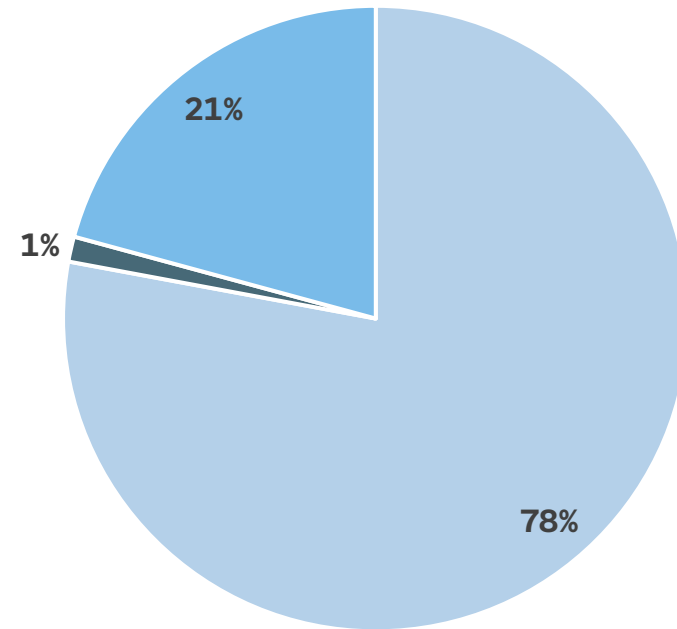
**QUESTION 1:
Type Of
Residence**

In what type of residence do you live?



**QUESTION 2:
Type Of
Resident**

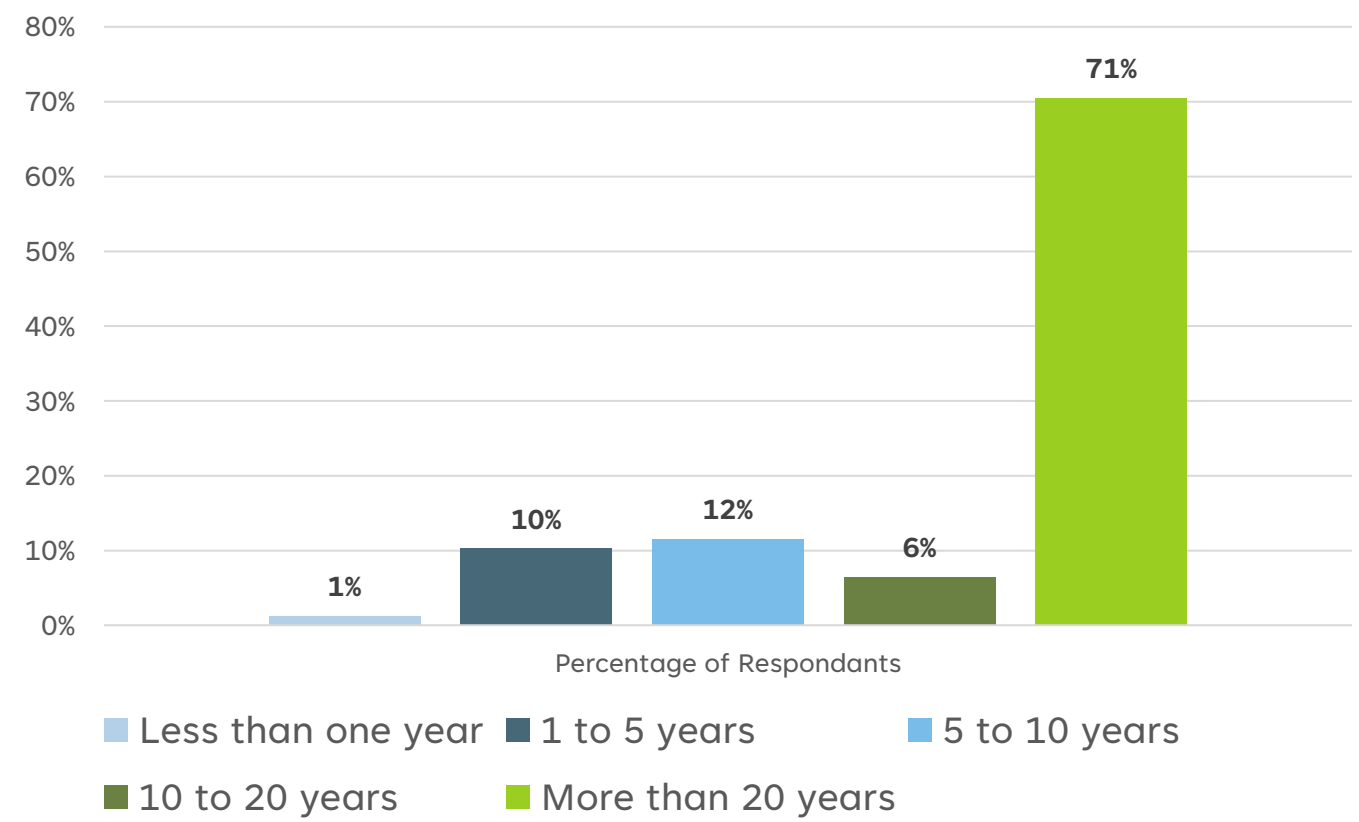
What type of resident are you in the Town of Ironton?



- Full-time (6 months+/year)
- Part-time/seasonal (<6 months/year)
- Landowner only



**QUESTION 3:
Length Of
Residency**



QUESTION 4: Primary Place Of Work



AT HOME/ON FARM

29%



IN SAUK COUNTY

30%



OUTSIDE OF SAUK
(BUT IN WI)

12%



RETIRED

40%

0% OUT OF STATE



QUESTION 5:
Quality Of Life

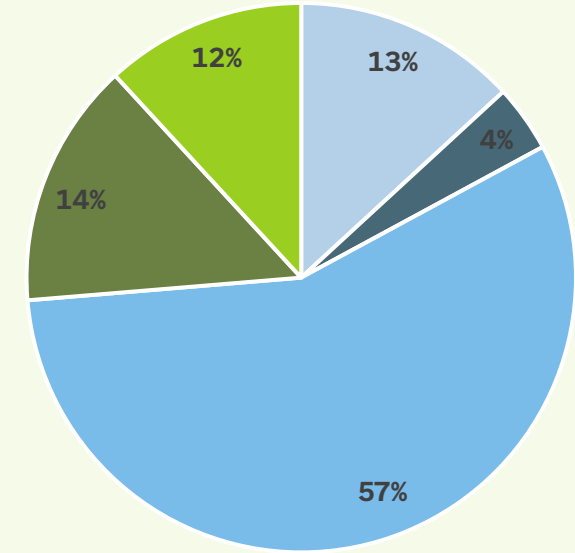
- **87%** Agree that quality of life is EXCELLENT
 - 32% Strongly Agreed
- **12%** Had no Opinion
- **1%** Disagreed



QUESTION 6: Most Important Reasons To Live In The Town

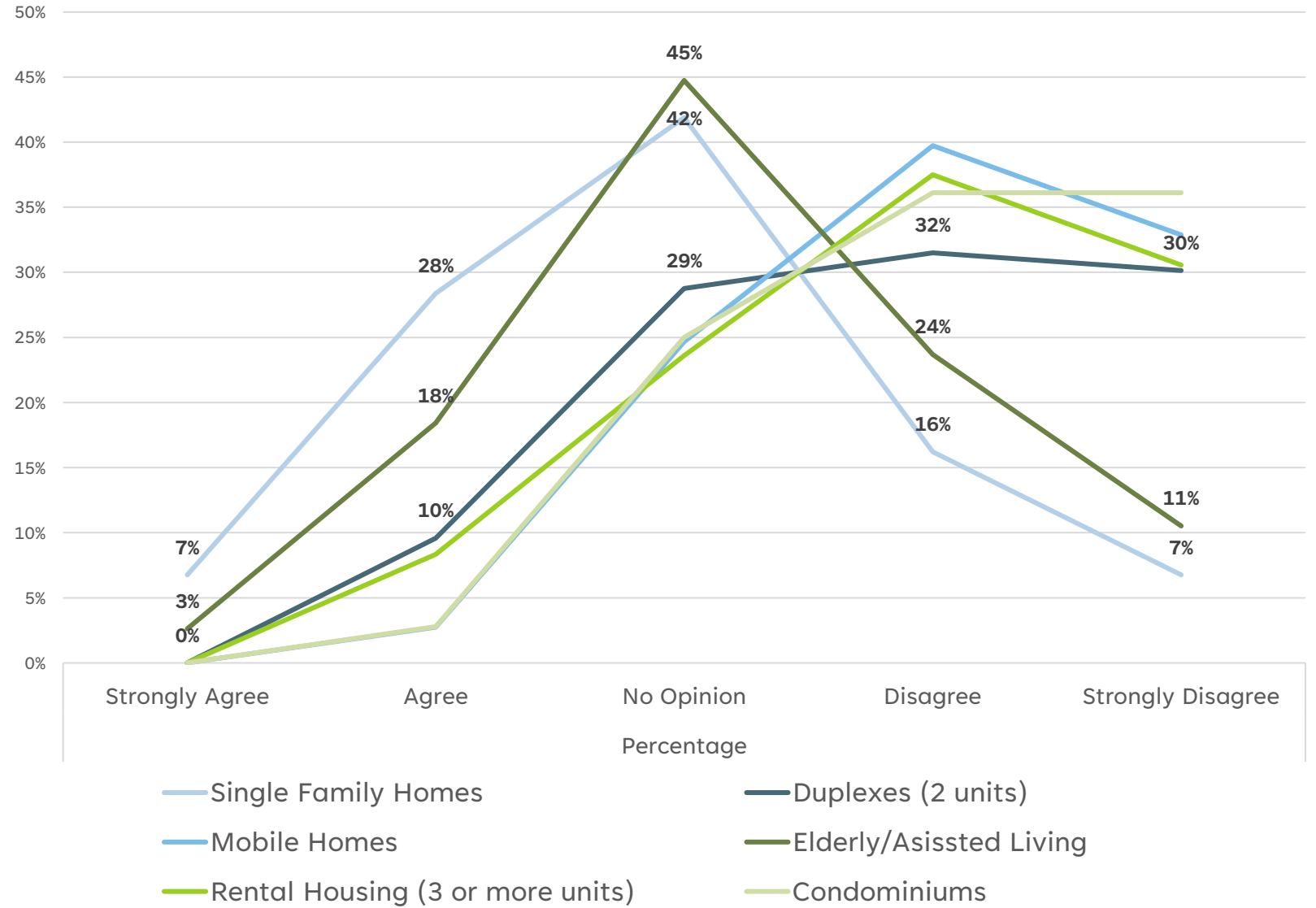
- **41.6%** Country Living, Rural Setting, or Beauty
- **40.3%** Family
- **18.2%** Agriculture
- **16.9%** Quiet, Peaceful, or Privacy
- **9.1%** Cost of Living
- **9.1%** Proximity to Town

QUESTION 7:
Future Growth
& Development
(Commercial, Recreational,
Housing, Etc.)



- We need to support and encourage growth and development.
- We need to slow down the rate of growth and development in the Town.
- I would like to see the Town stay the way it is.
- The Town should focus on redevelopment and rehabilitation of existing buildings and land.
- Not sure.

QUESTION 8:
Town Of Ironton
Needs More....



QUESTION 9: Housing is generally affordable.

48%

Agree or Strongly Agree

47%

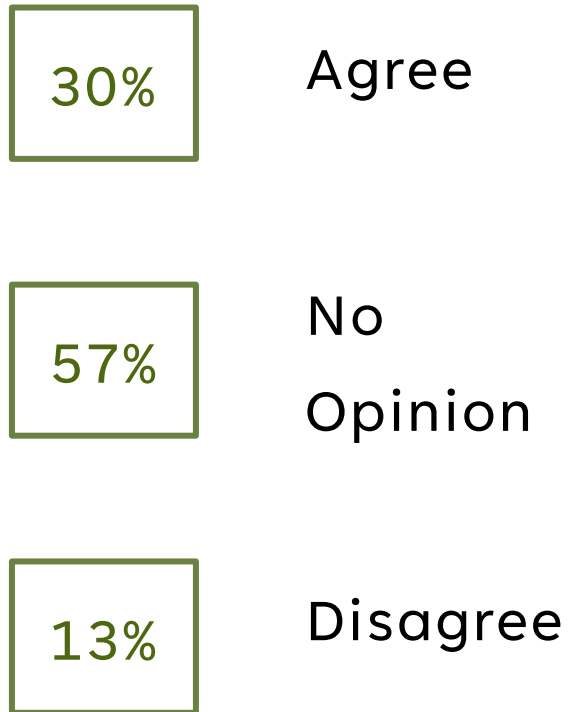
No Opinion

5%

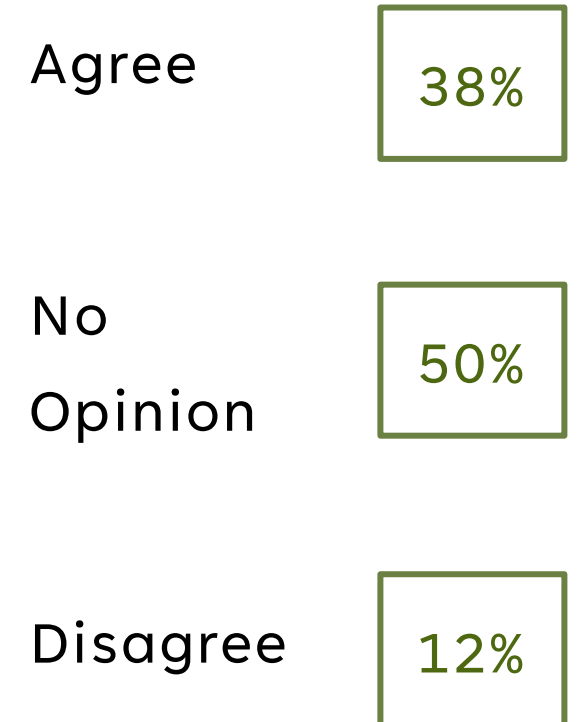
Disagree



QUESTION 10: Existing housing stock provides a wide variety of choices for people of all income and needs.

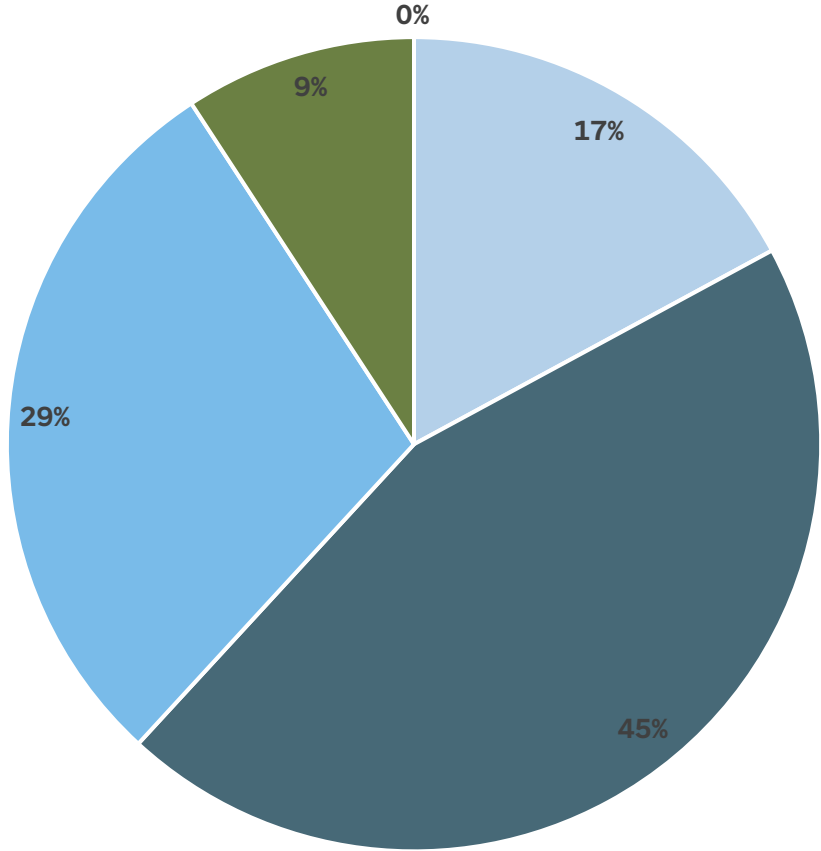


QUESTION 11: The physical condition of the housing stock is adequate.





QUESTION 12:
The town should protect and promote buildings, sites, and artifacts of historical importance.

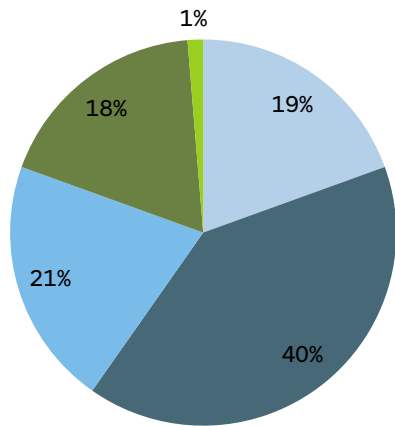


- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

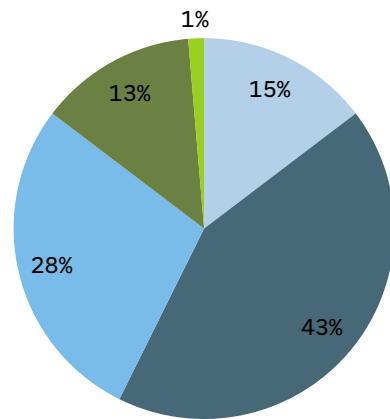


QUESTION 13: The water quality issues listed are of concern in the town of Ironton.

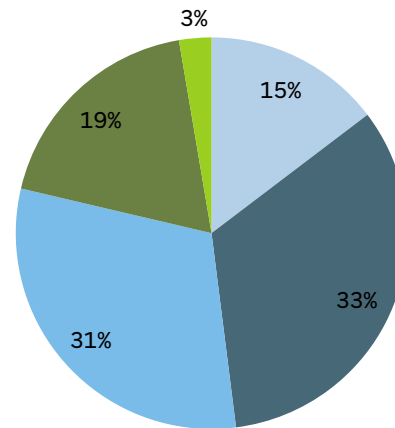
Overall drinking water quality



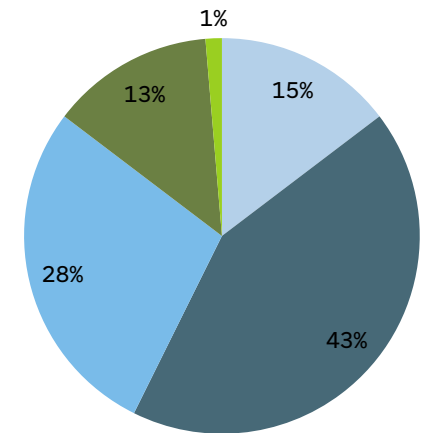
Groundwater Pollution



Surface water pollution due to runoff from development during construction



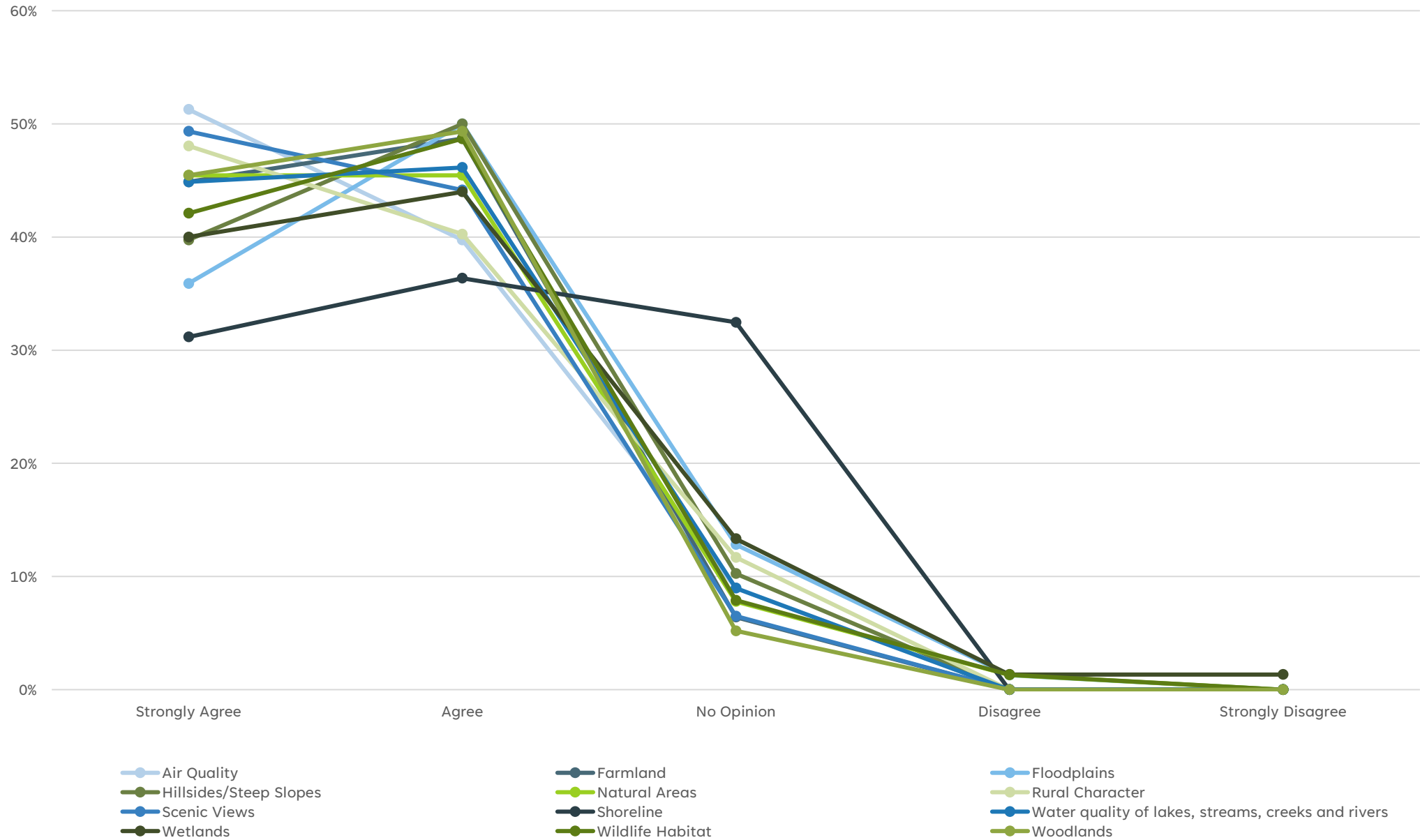
Surface and groundwater quality impacts from agricultural operations



Strongly Agree Agree No Opinion Disagree Strongly Disagree



QUESTION 14: The natural resources listed are important to protect the town of Ironton.



QUESTION 15:

The siting and expansion of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) should be allowed in the Town.

19%

Agree or Strongly Agree

23%

No Opinion

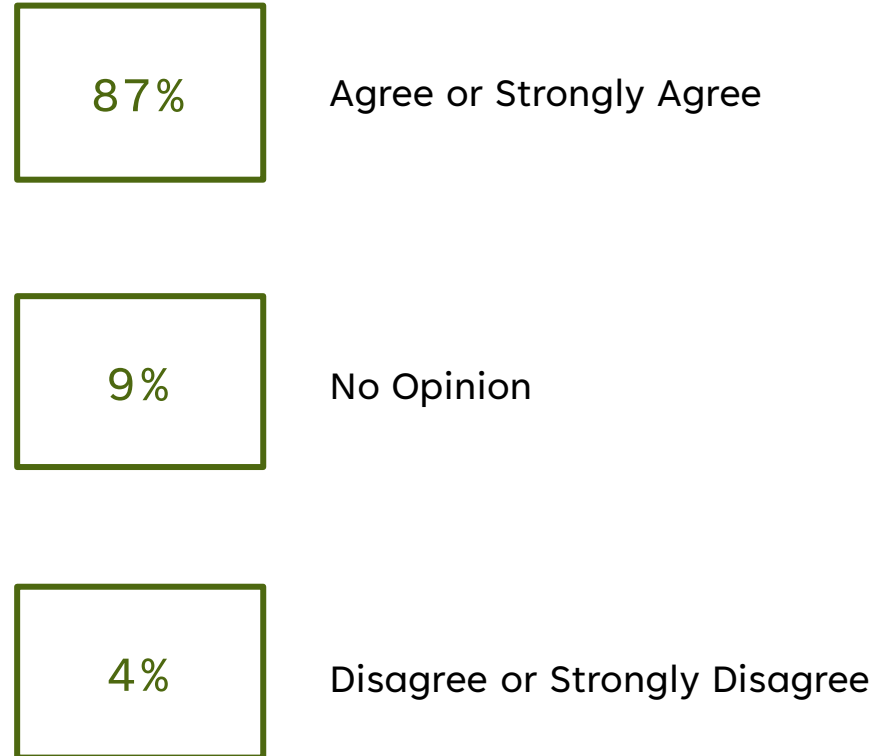
58%

Disagree or Strongly Disagree



QUESTION 16:

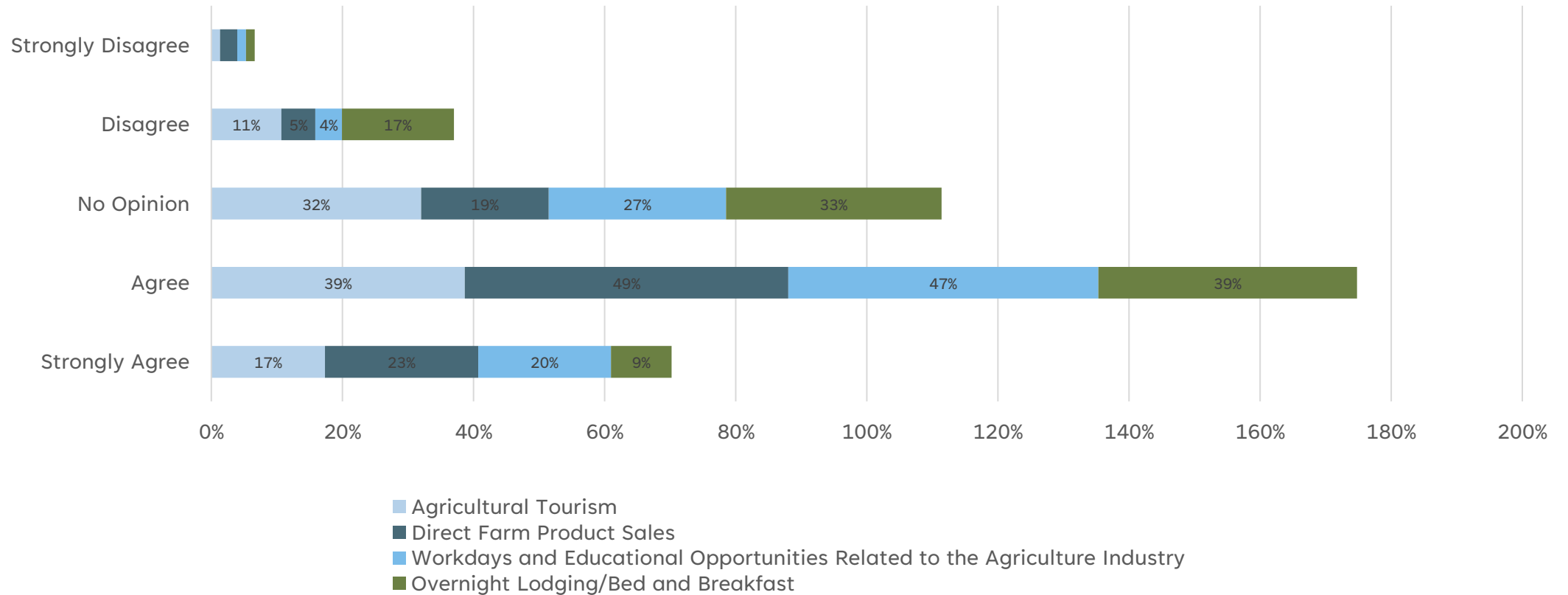
Protecting farmland in the community from development is important.





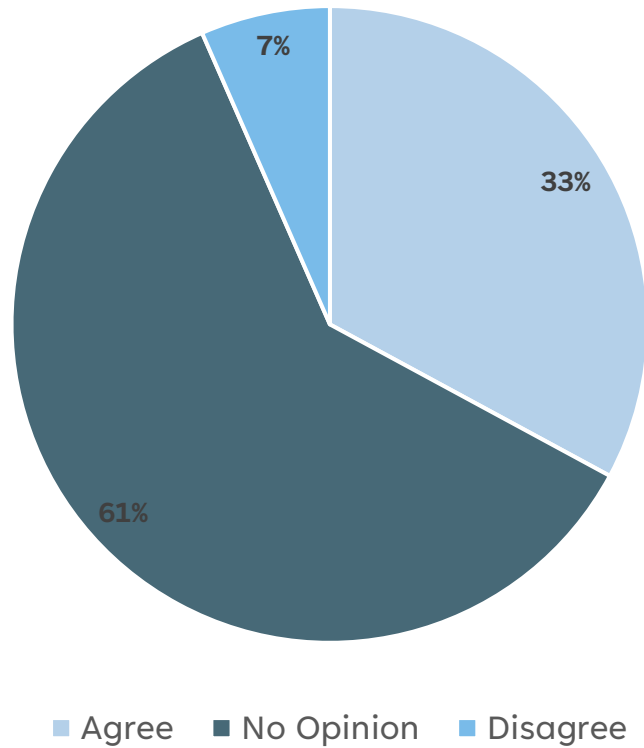
QUESTION 17:

The Town of Ironton would benefit from the following...

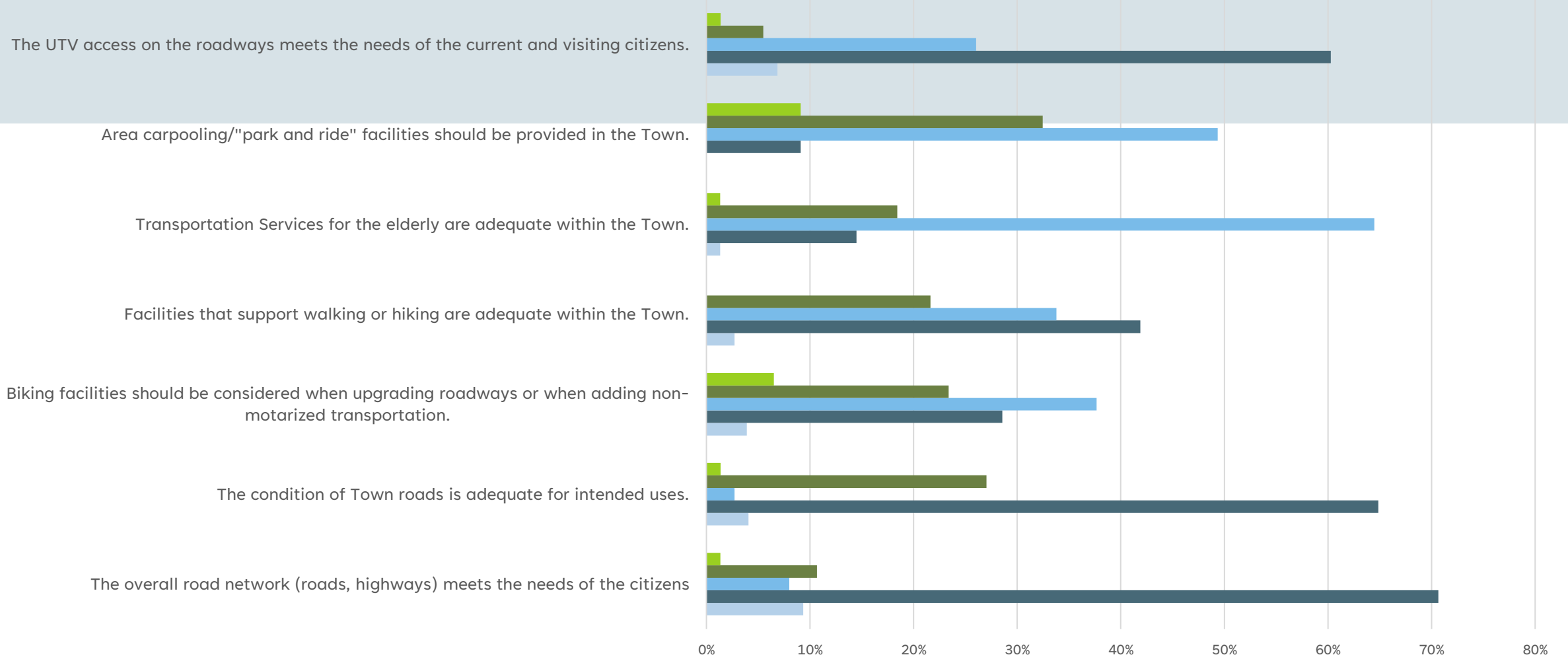


QUESTION 18:

There are adequate agricultural support and complimentary services to keep agricultural operations in the Town economically viable.



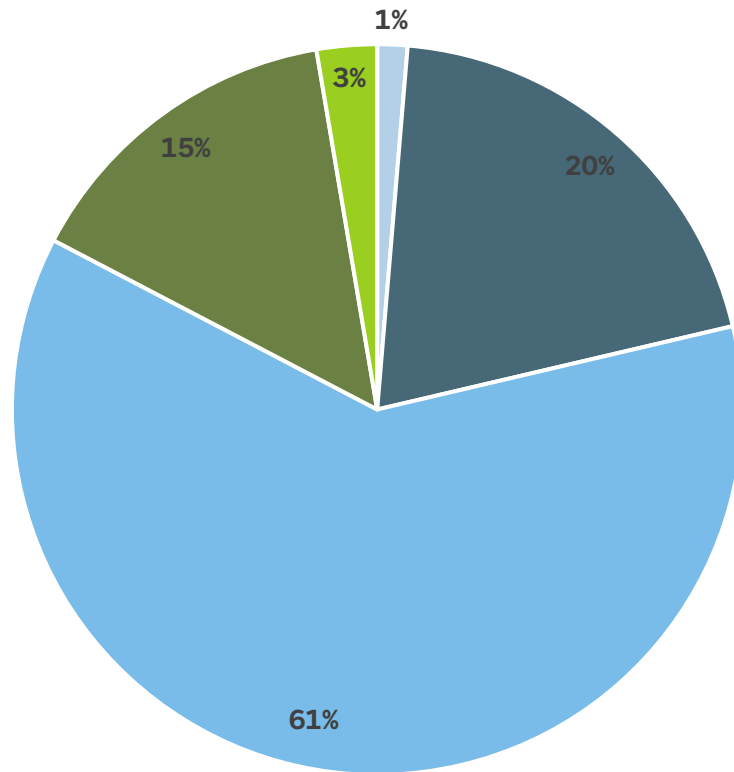
QUESTION 19: Please provide an opinion relating to the following statements on transportation facilities





QUESTION 20:

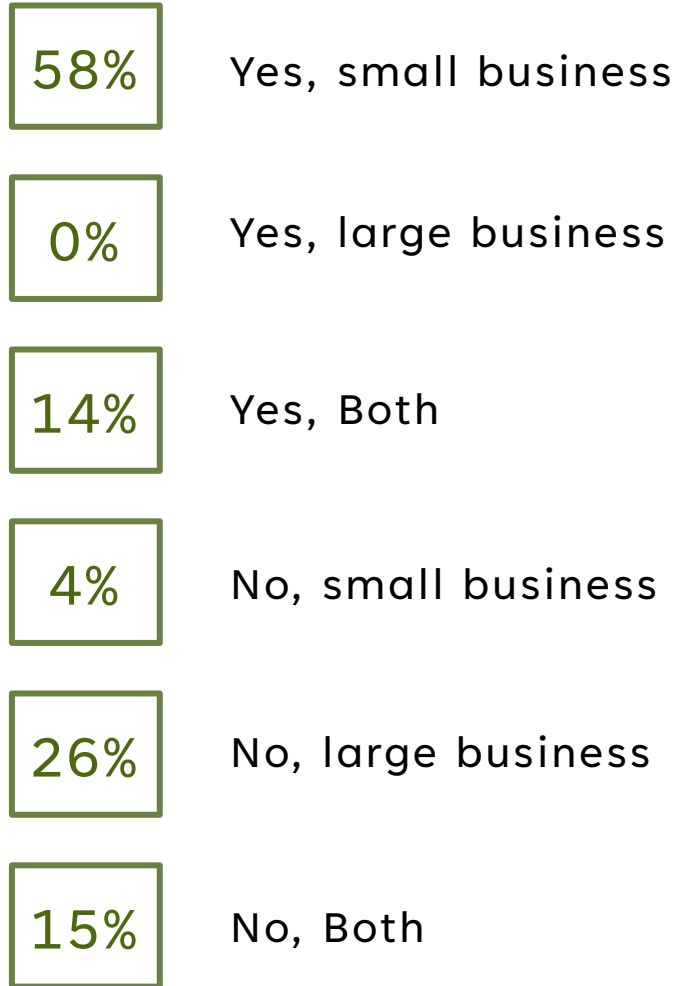
There are transportation facility needs or problems in the Town of Ironton that need to be addressed.



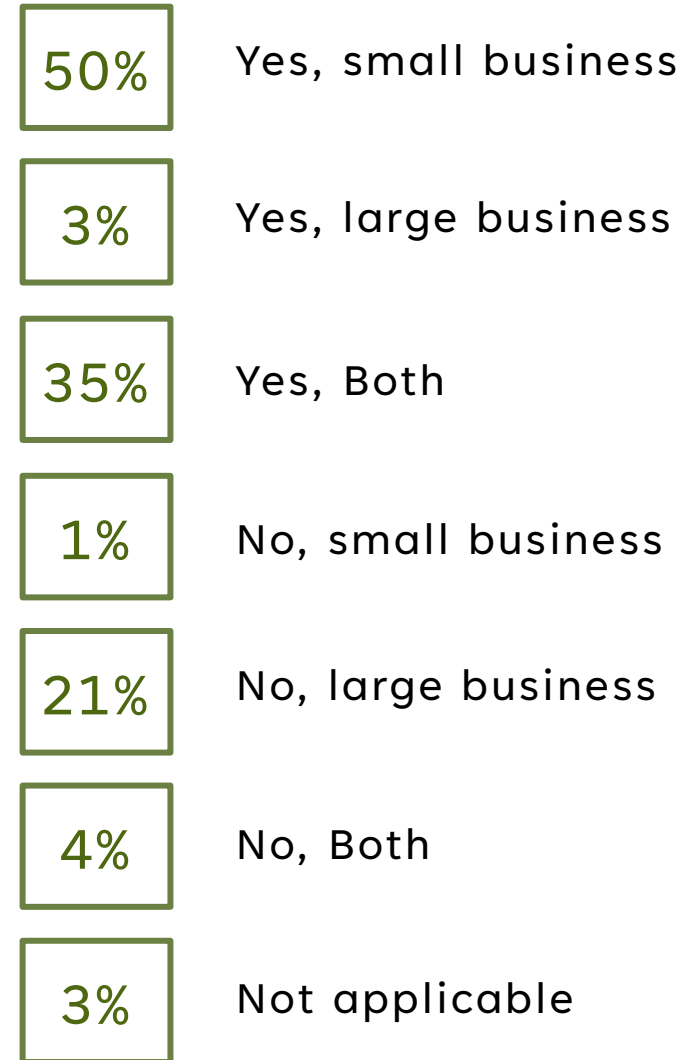
■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ No Opinion ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



QUESTION 21: Should small or large business be permitted in rural areas?



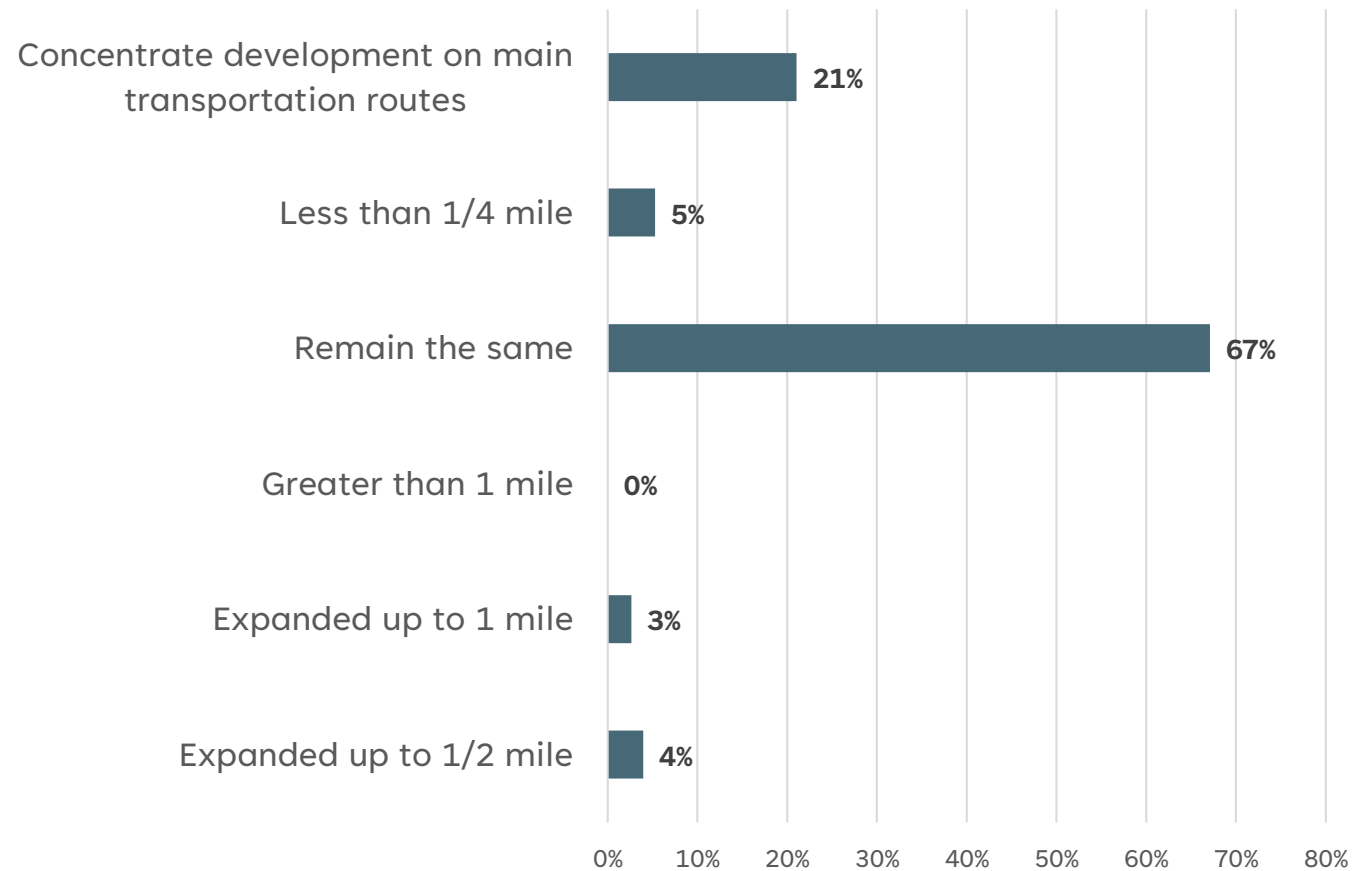
QUESTION 22: Should small or large business development be permitted if it is adjoining the villages?





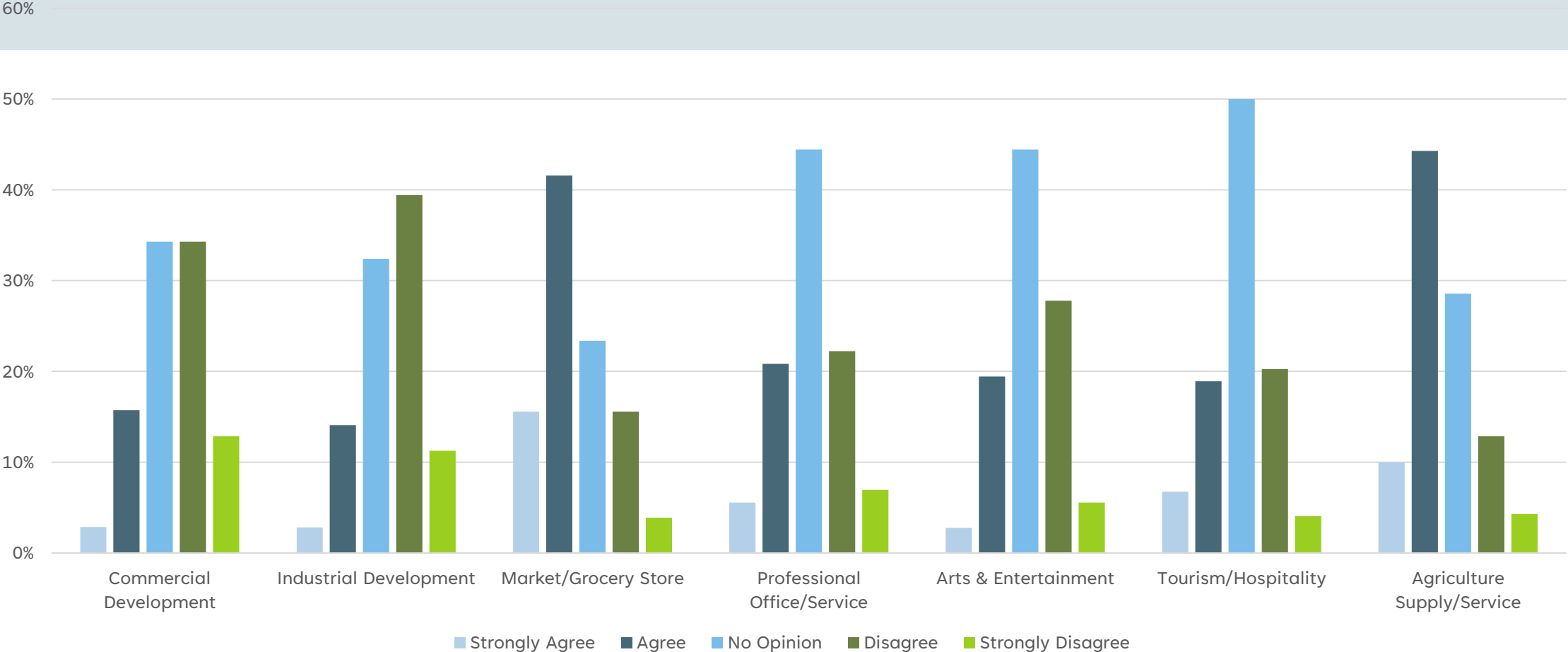
2022

QUESTION 33: Should the transitional development area be expanded or reduced?





QUESTION 24: The following types of businesses are needed in the town.



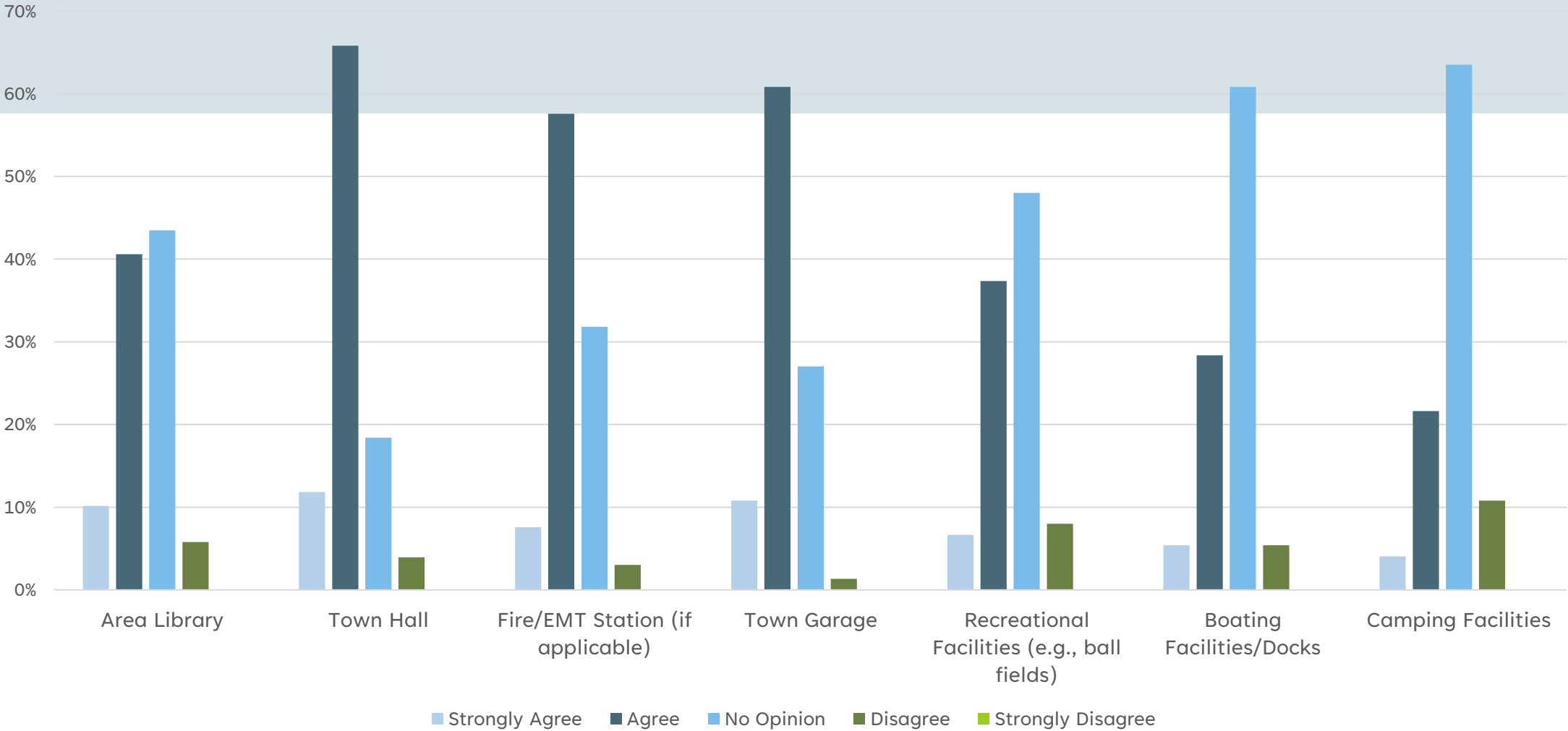
QUESTION 25: Suggested Businesses

- Hardware Store
- Grocery Store
- Gas Stations
- Agricultural Supply Store
- Campground or Outdoor Rec.
- Niche Tourism Business
- Small Home Businesses

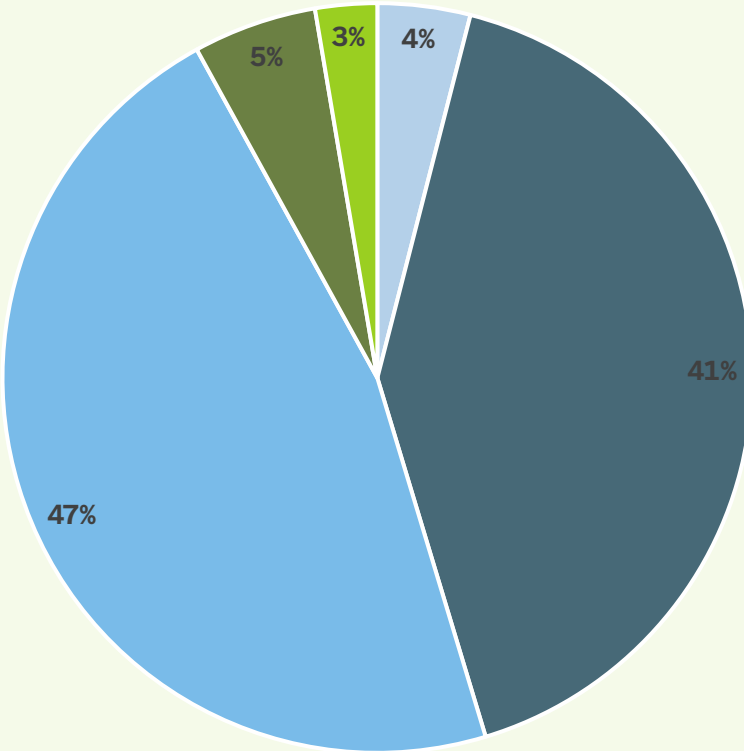




QUESTION 26: The following types of community facilities are needed in the town.



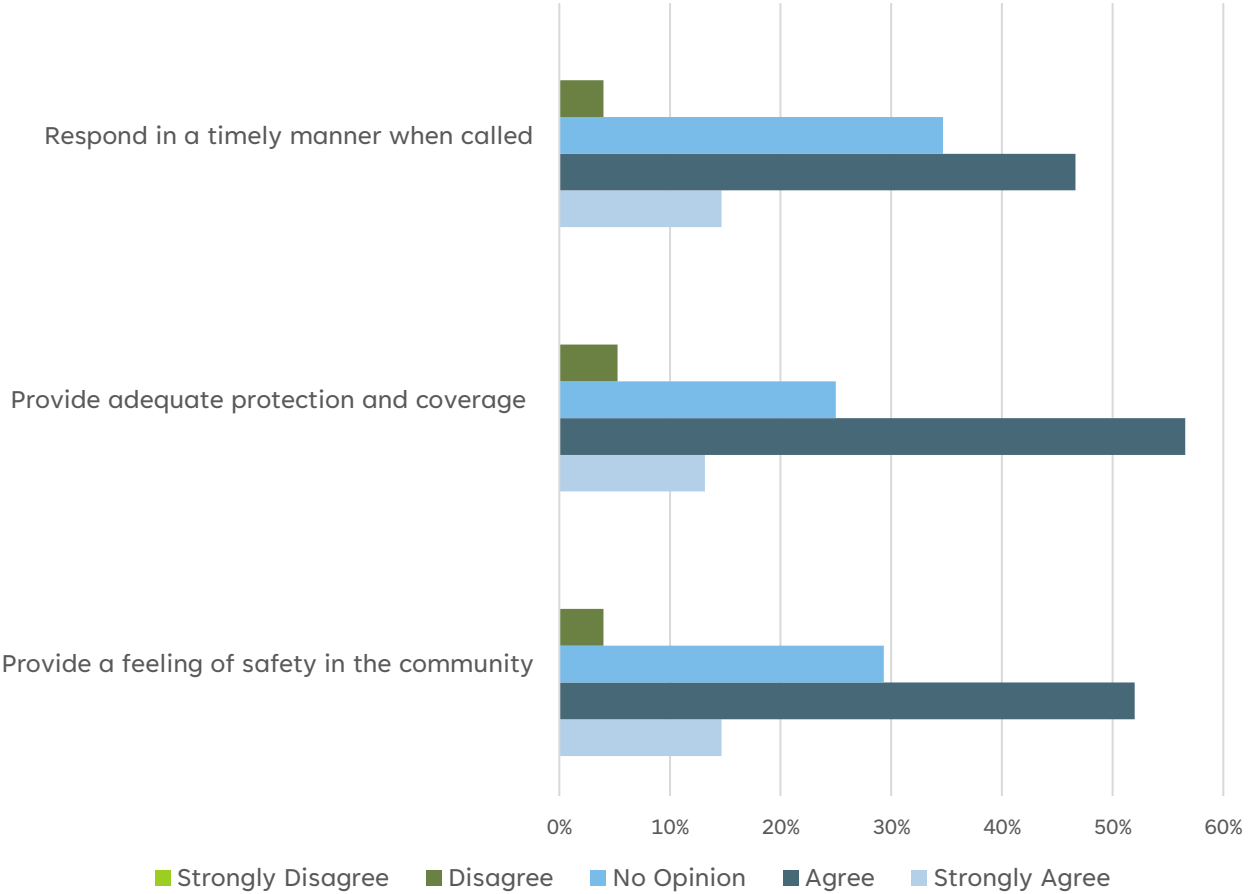
Question 27: The Town's community facilities have adequate provisions for differently abled (i.e. handicapped) accessibility.



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- No Opinion
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

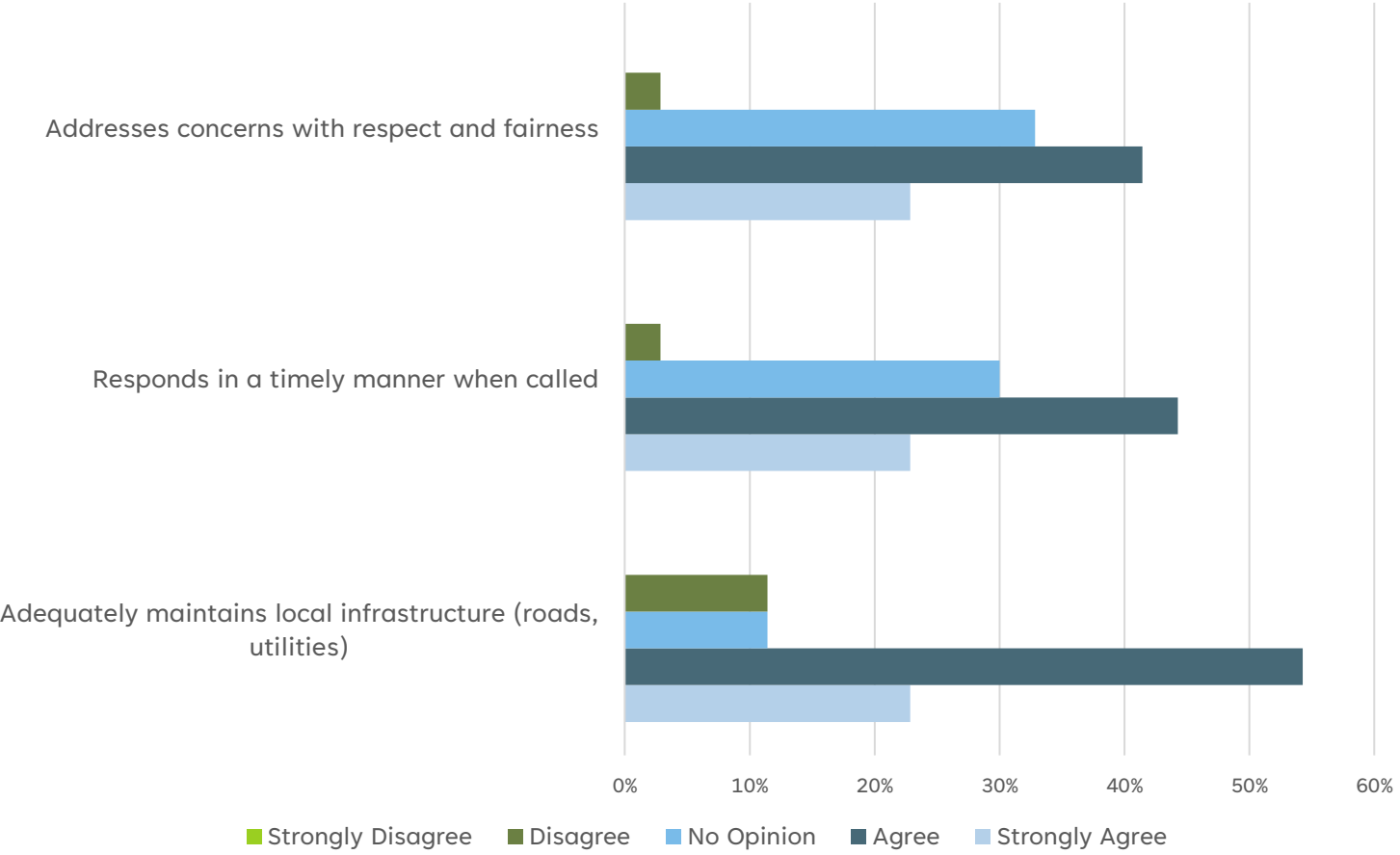


QUESTION 28: The Town's Law Enforcement Services....





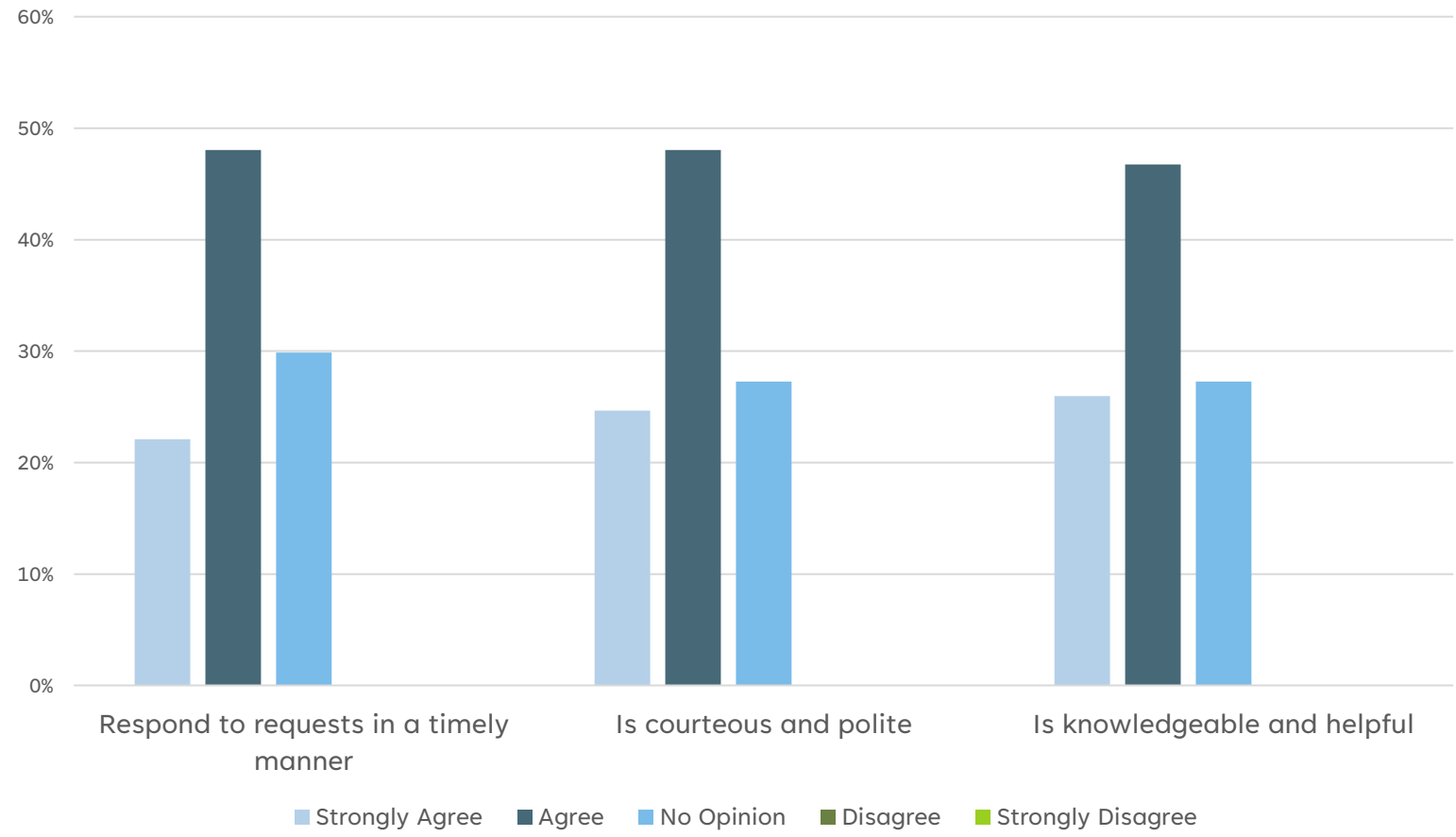
QUESTION 29: In general, the town of Ironton's road crew.....





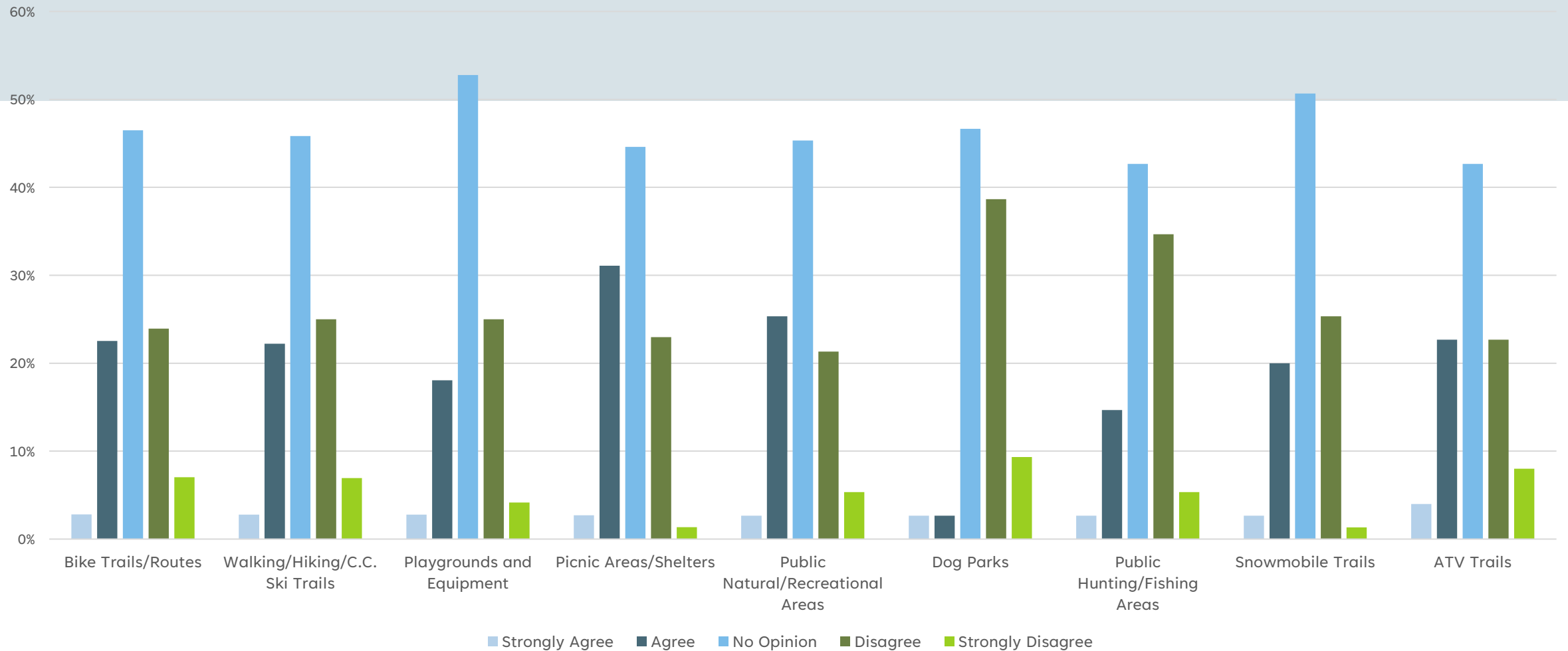
2022

QUESTION 30: In general, the town of Ironton's administrative staff (i.e., clerk, treasurer)...

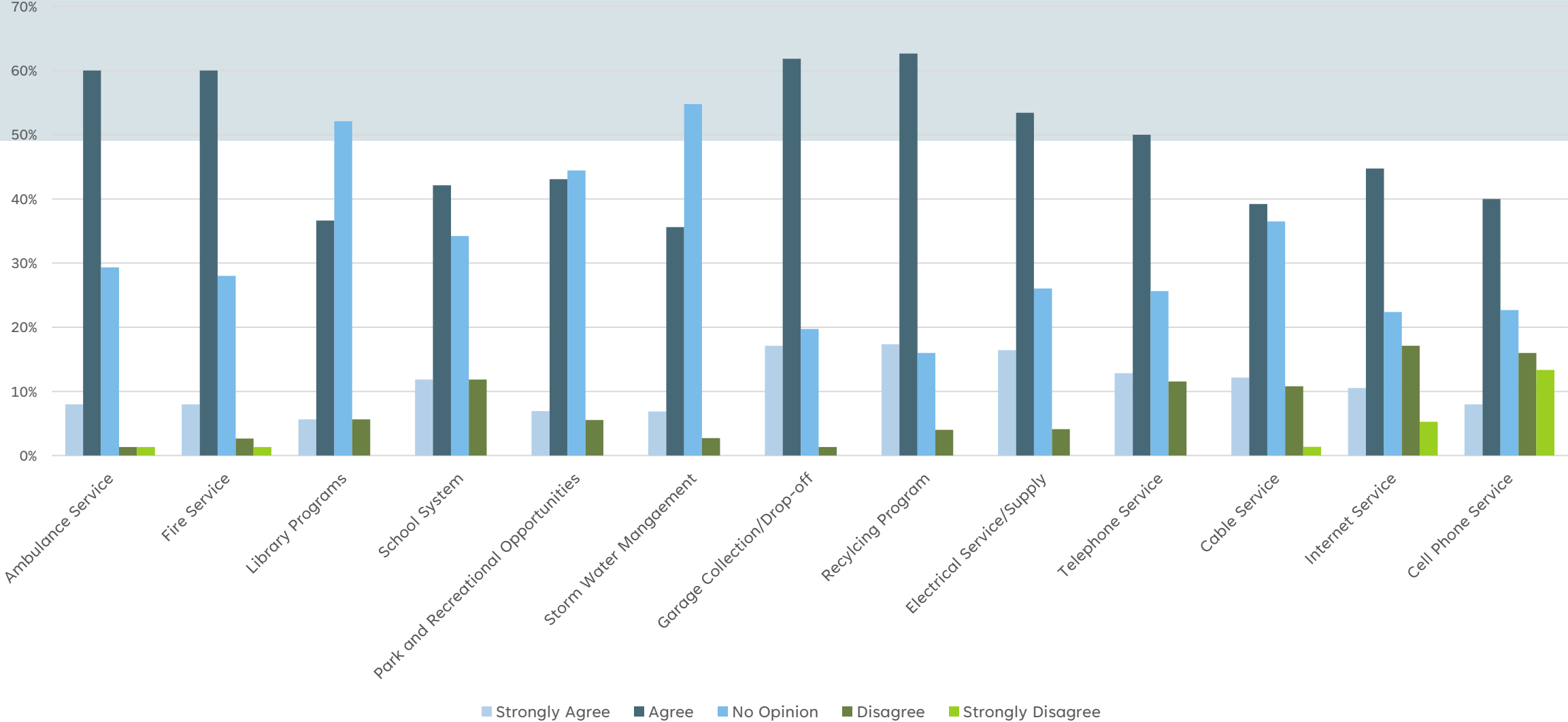




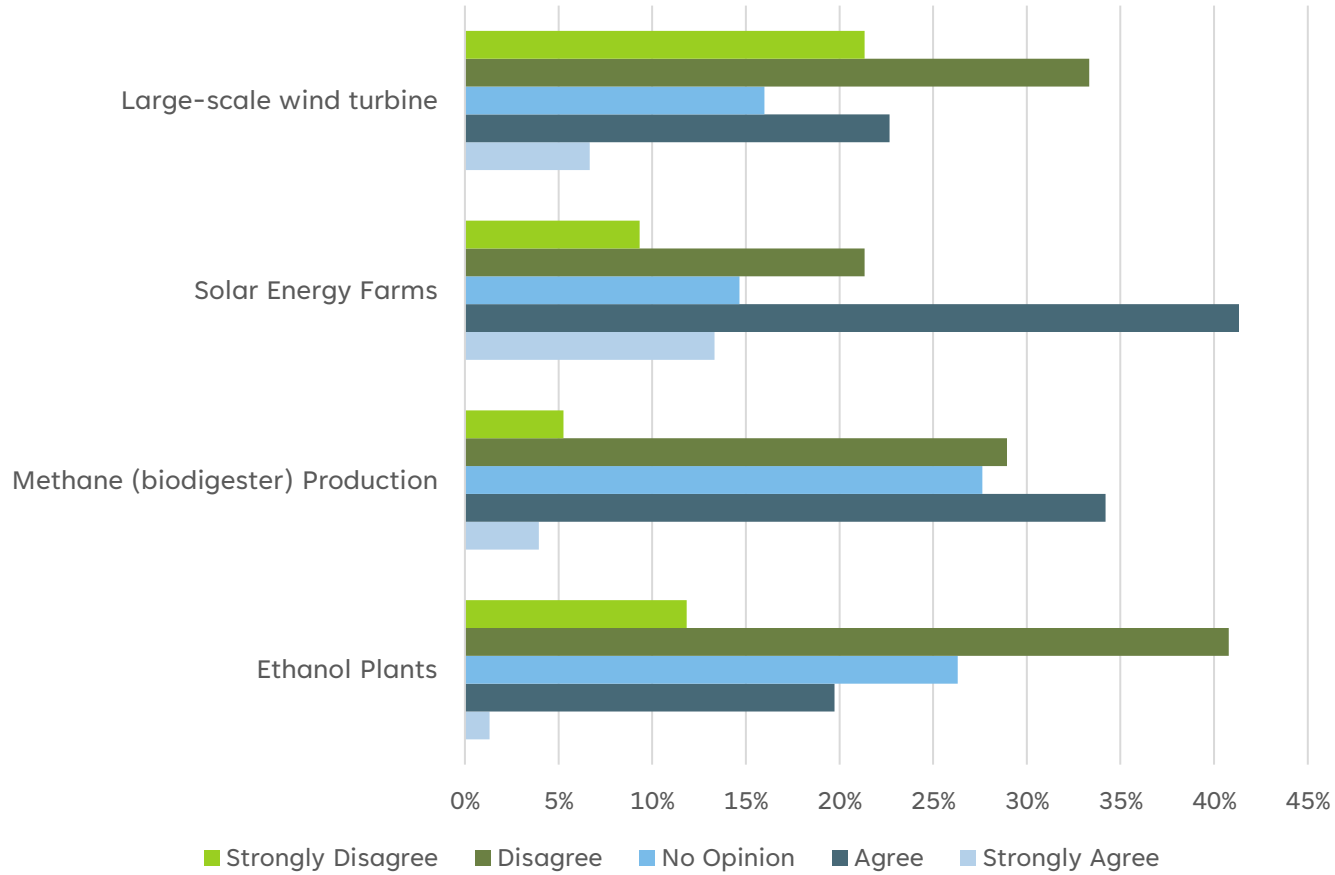
QUESTION 31: The town of Ironton has a need for the following amenities.



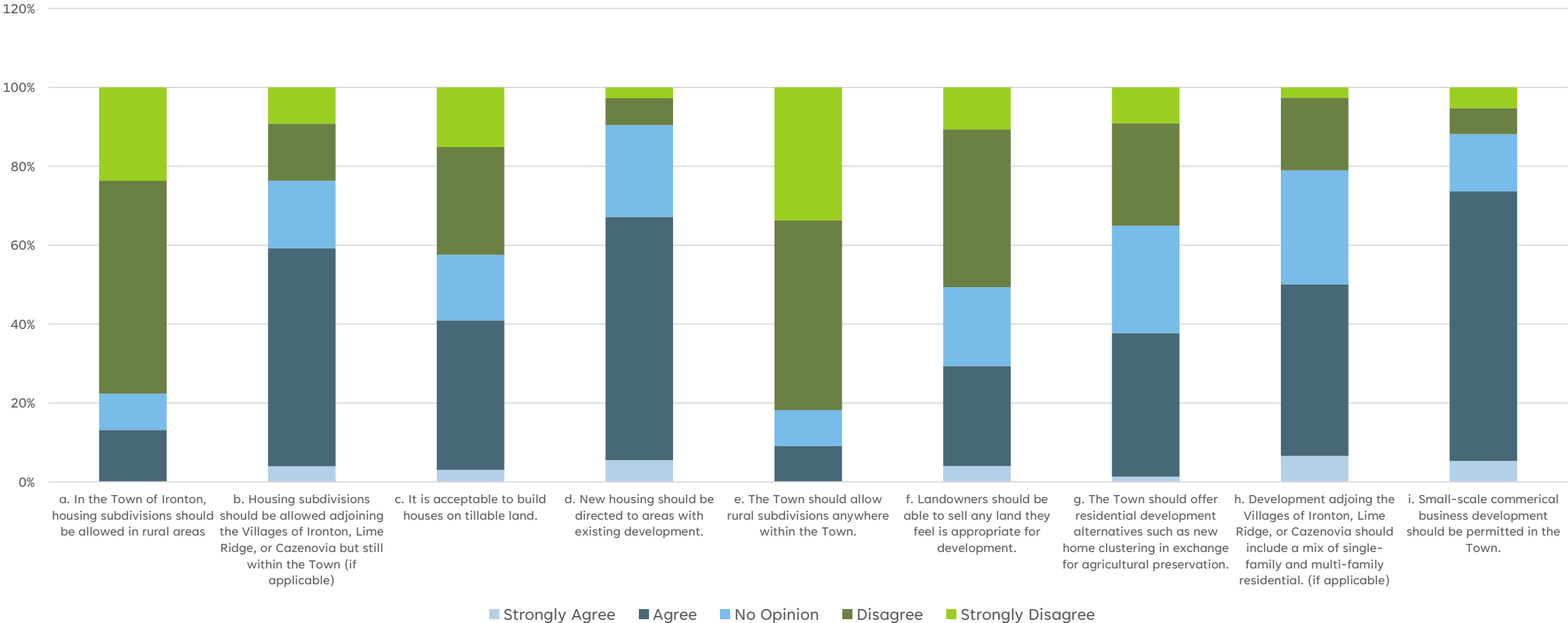
QUESTION 32: The following services are adequate in the town.



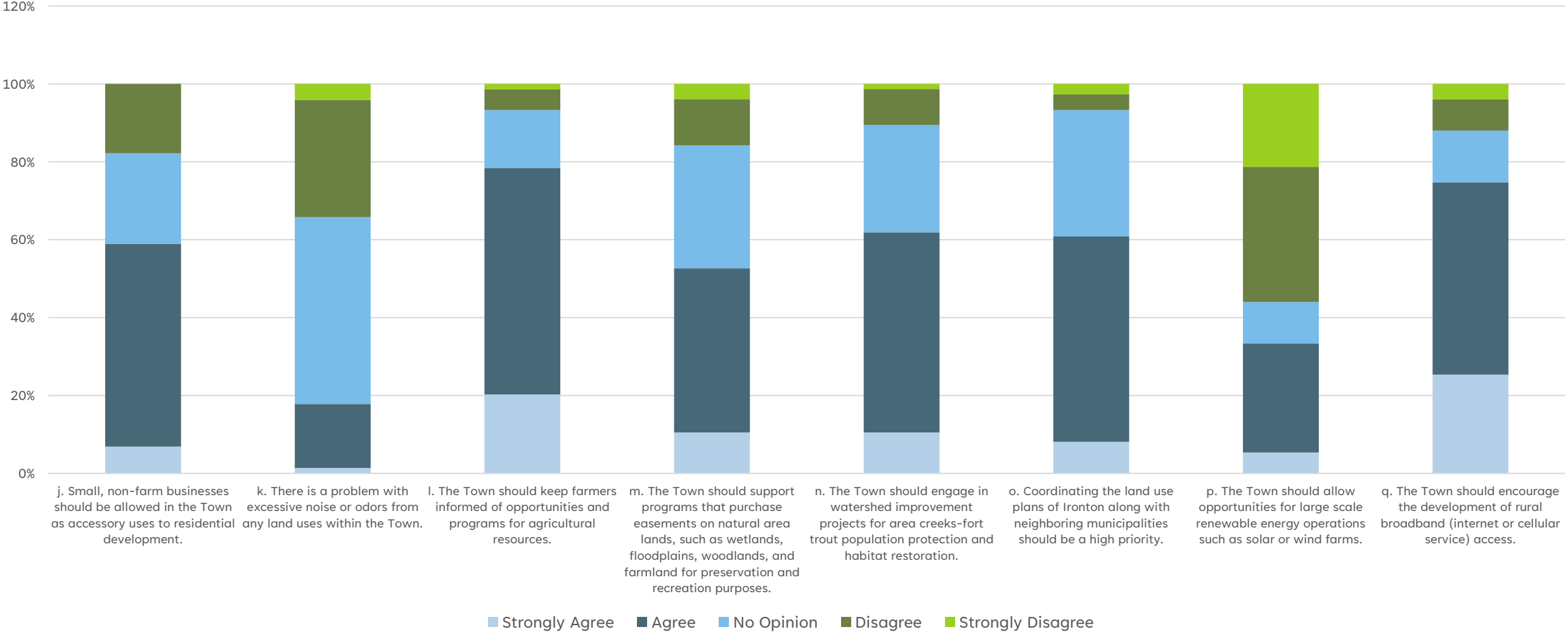
QUESTION 33: The town should allow landowners to pursue alternative energy sources for economic development or self-sustainability.



QUESTION 34: Potential Future Land Uses

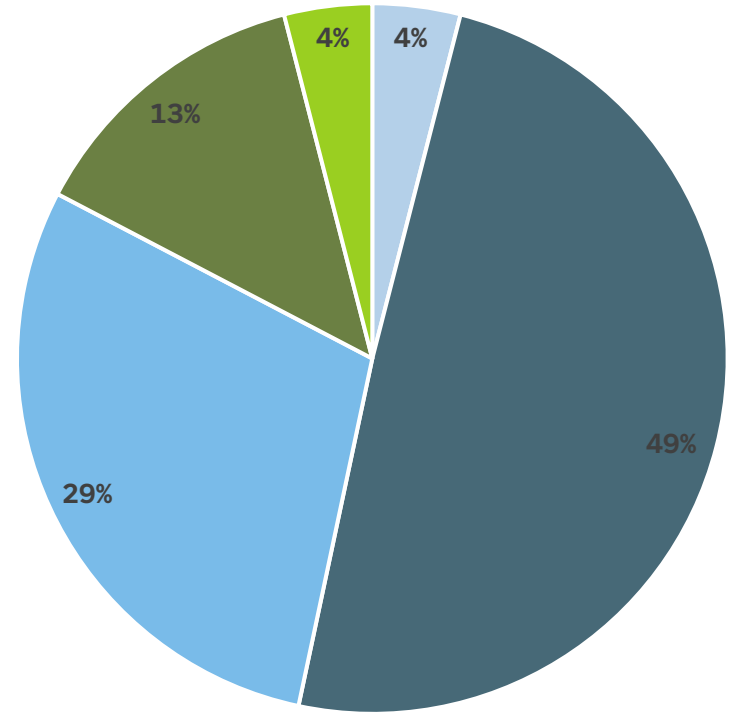


QUESTION 34: Potential Future Land Uses Continued





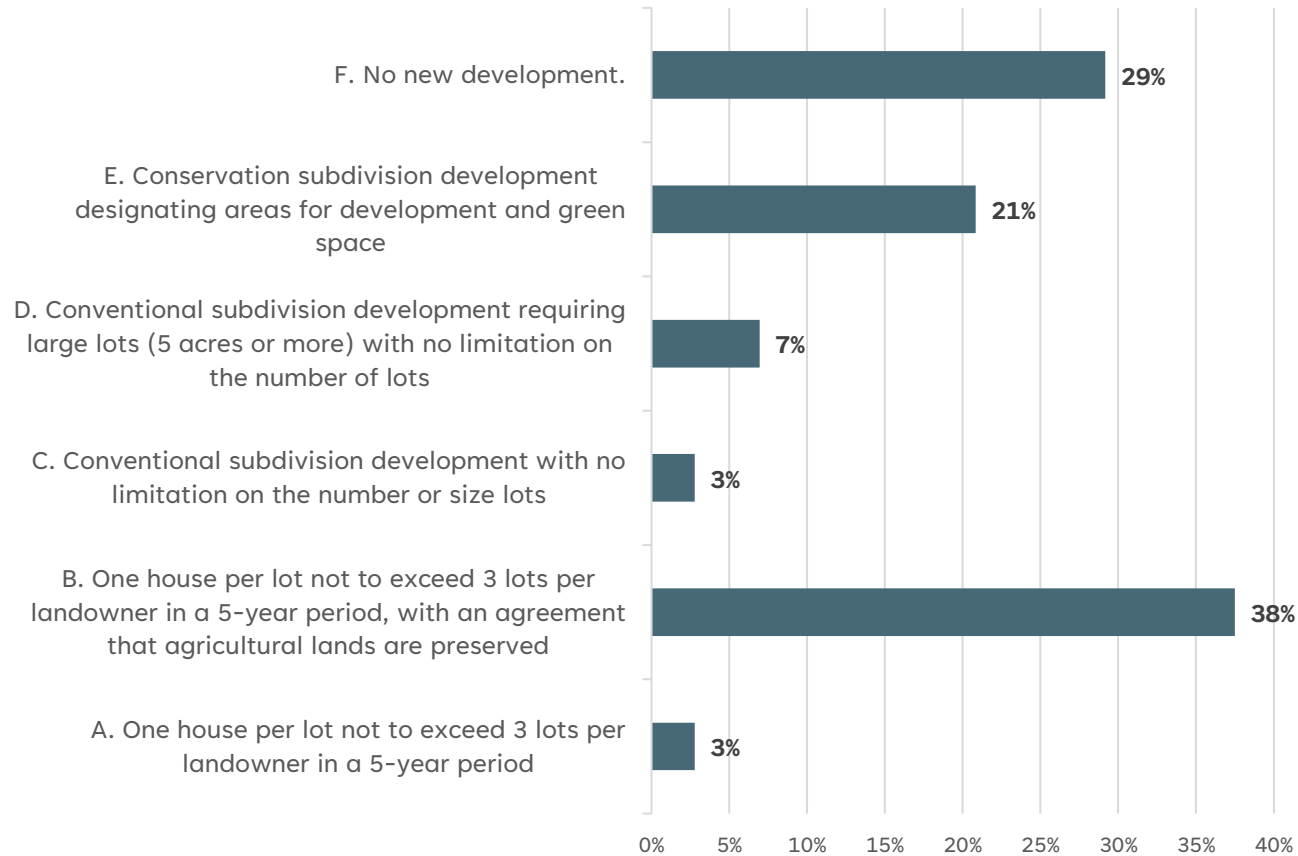
QUESTION 35: The town of Ironton should apply aesthetic guidelines or development standards to new construction.



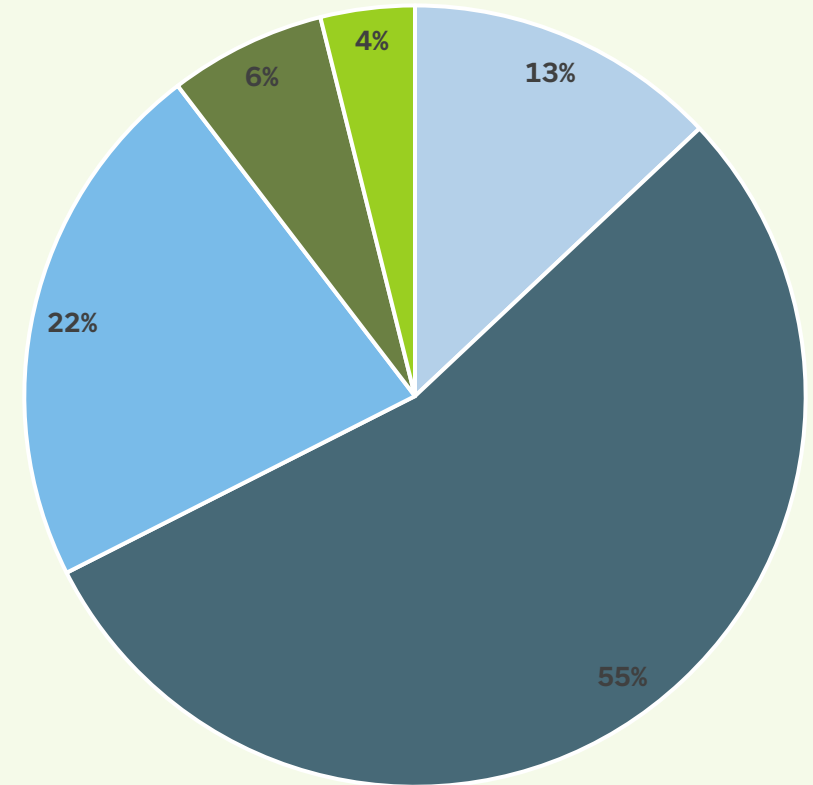
■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ No Opinion ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

QUESTION 36:

In your opinion the best option for the placement of new residential development is....



QUESTION 37: The town is currently zoned exclusive agriculture with a minimum lot size of 35 acres, per the Sauk county ordinance. Lots less than 35 acres may be created through the planned rural development (PRD) program with associated agricultural preservation easements. This program is affective in preserving agricultural land while allowing for small-scale development.



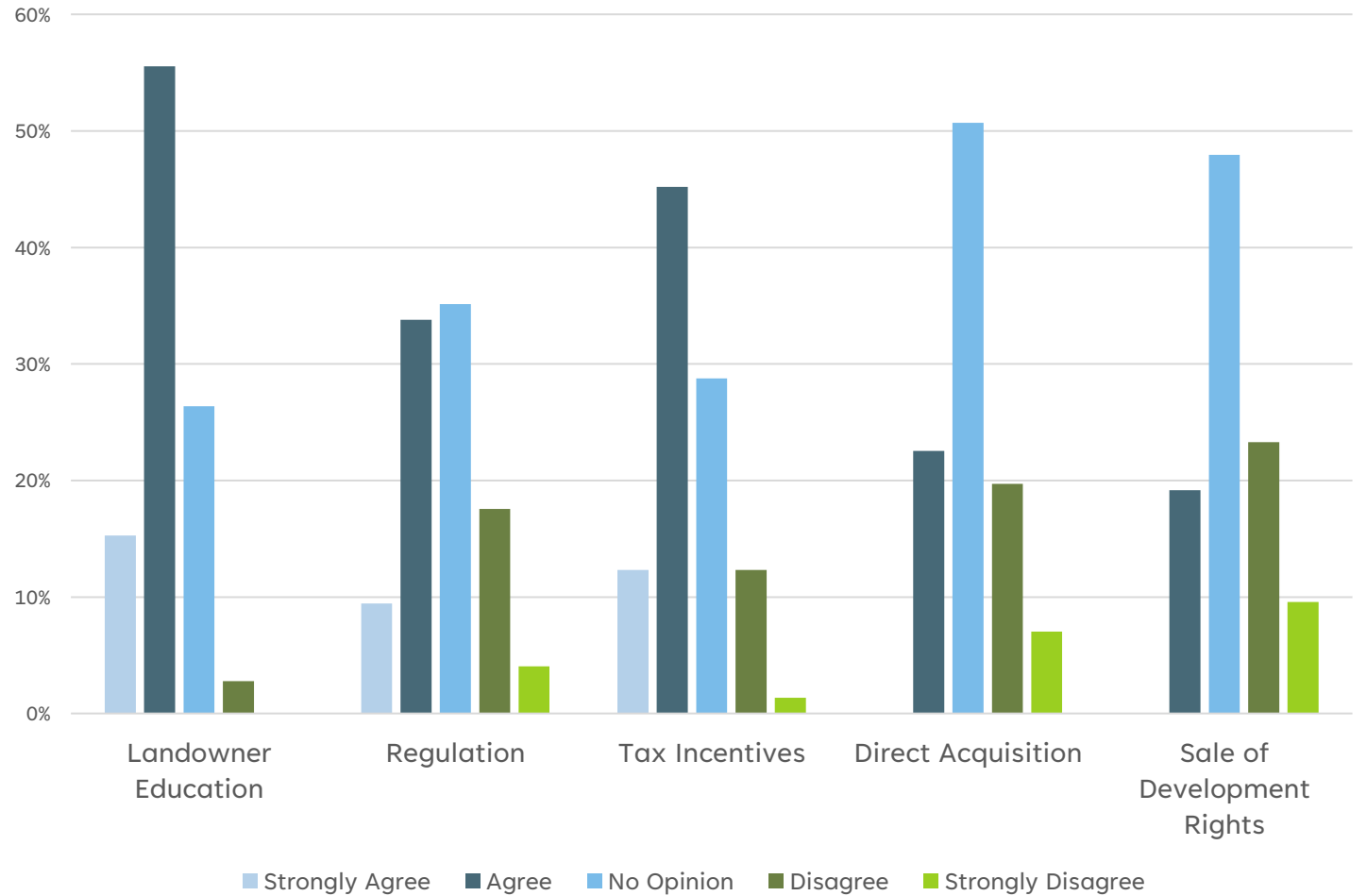
■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ No Opinion
■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



QUESTION 38:
Most Important Land Use
Issues In The Town

- **50.6%** Loss of farmland or rural character
- **14.3%** CAFOs
- **14.3%** Housing Development
- **14.3%** General Development
- **10.4%** Water Quality
- **10.4%** Hunting/Forestry
- **9.1%** Recreation or Public Land
- **7.8%** Erosion
- **6.5%** Roadways

QUESTION 39:
 The following means should be used to achieve the goals of agricultural land and natural resource protection.



QUESTION 40: Do you feel the town board and staff communicate adequately with residents?

76%

Yes

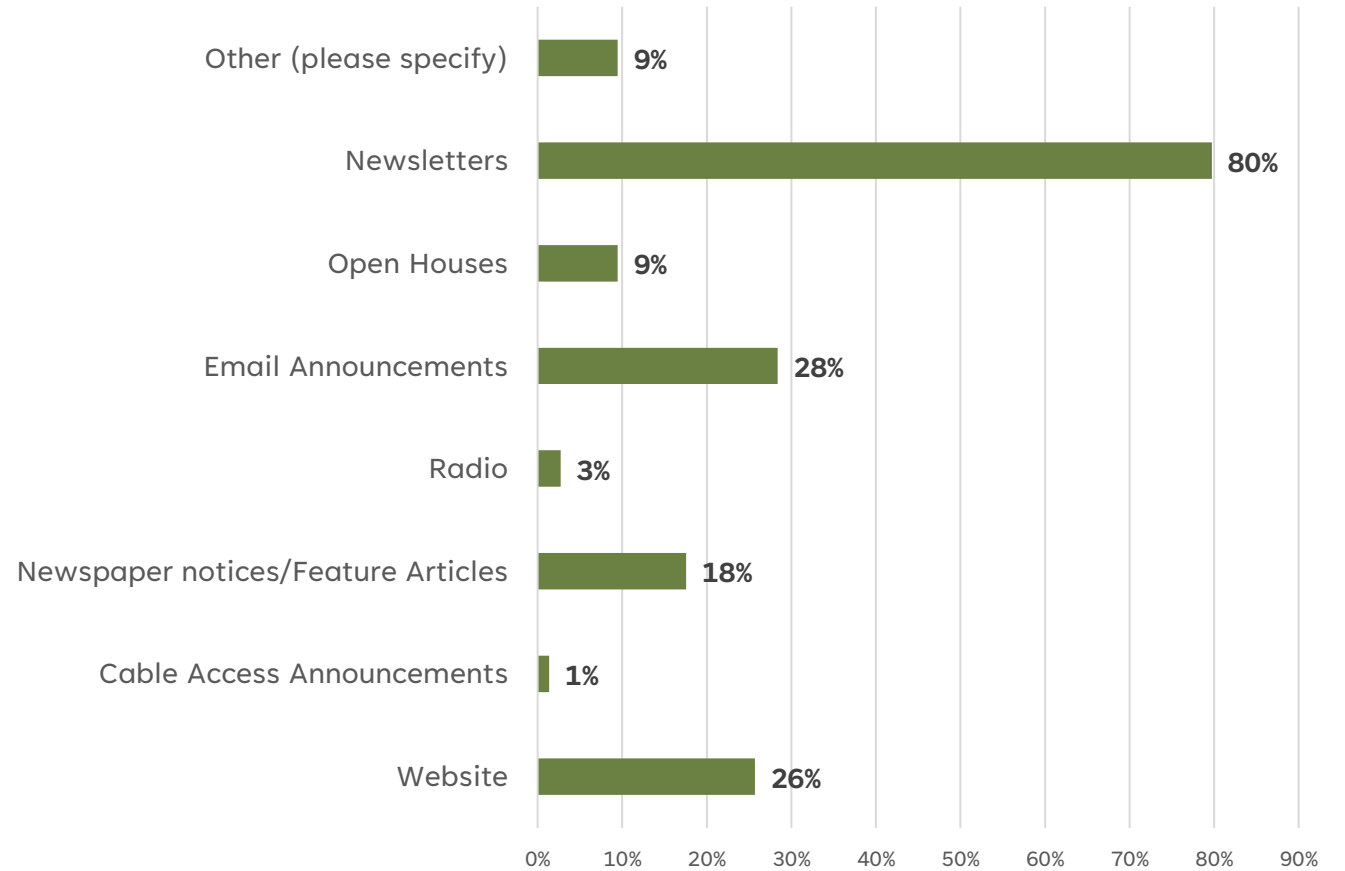
19%

No

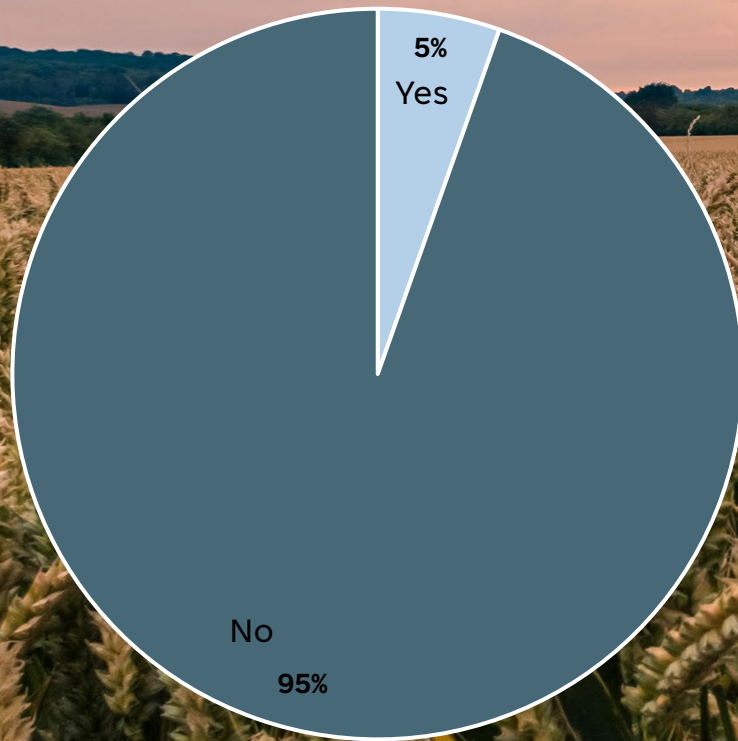
5%

Other or
Unsure

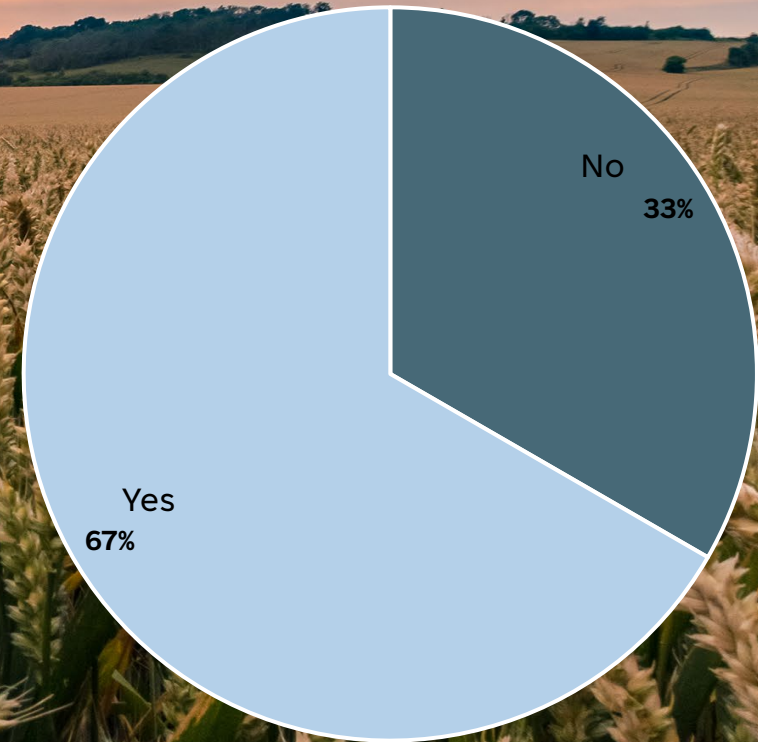
Preferred Method Of Communication



QUESTION 41: Have you ever volunteered in any Town activities in the past five years?

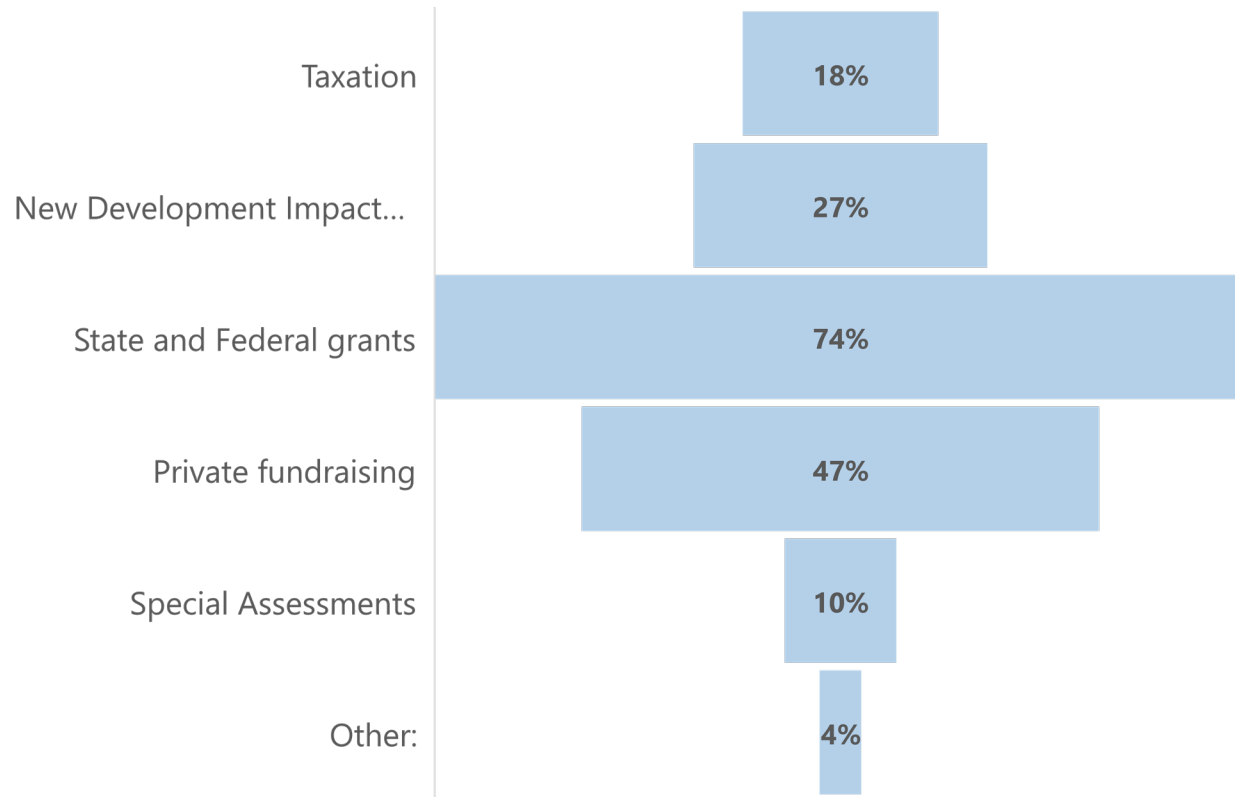


Would you be interested in future opportunities?



QUESTION 42:

The Town should consider the following ways of financing future needs for public facilities, parks, utilities, and roads:



QUESTION 43:

Single Biggest Issue Facing The Town Over Next Several Years.

- 15.6% Loss of Ag or Rural Character
- 10.4% Roads
- 7.8% Urban Housing Pressure
- 6.5% Taxes
- 6.5% CAFOs
- 5.2% Development Pressure
- 5.2% Pollution





QUESTION 44: What Do You Want
The Town Of Ironton To Look Like In 20
Years?

- **THEMES:**

- **The same!**
- **Small Town**
- **Families & Agriculture**



QUESTION 45: How Do You Envision Your Property Being Used In 10 Years? 20 Years?

THEMES:

- Farmland
- Family Homes
- Same as Today
- Hunting Land

THANK YOU

Cassandra Fowler
Associate Planner
Sauk County Land Resources &
Environment Department
(608) 355-4832
Cassandra.fowler@saukcountywi.gov

Appendix C

Public Participation/Scope of Services

Public Participation Plan for the amending of the Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Ironton.

The Town of Ironton Plan Commission will hold a series of public in-person meetings following the calendar below. Agendas will be posted at the Town Hall, the Clerk's mailbox and the Chairman's driveway.

- May 2022 – Present Comprehensive Plan at public meeting
- June to October 2022 – Hold Public Meetings to take public input on plan updates
- November 2022 – Finalize Comprehensive Plan
- December 2022 – Public Hearing on Comprehensive Plan
- January 2023 – Present Comprehensive Plan to Town Board

Hardcopy version of the plan will be made available at the Ironton town hall and the public libraries in the Village(s) of LaValle and City of Reedsburg. The public meetings are intended to provide a forum where the public can engage with the Plan Commission and provide input and feedback on the comprehensive plan. A public hearing will be held upon the completion of the public meetings to finalize the Comprehensive Plan and forward the plan to the Town Board.

RESOLUTION NO. _____ - 2020

**ADOPTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN AND PROCEDURES FOR AMENDING THE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE TOWN OF _____**

Pursuant to Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes, all units of government that enact or amend zoning, subdivision, or official mapping ordinances on or after January 1, 2010, must adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Town adopted a Comprehensive Plan under the authority of and procedures established by Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Section 66.1001(4) of Wisconsin Statutes requires that the Town Board adopt written procedures designed to foster public participation during the preparation of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. Attached, as Exhibit A, is the Town of _____ Public Participation Plan.

Fiscal Impact: None Budgeted Expenditure Not Budgeted

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town of _____ Town Board, met in regular session, hereby adopts the Public Participation and Procedures for amending the Comprehensive Plan attached hereto as Exhibit A to fulfill the requirements of Section 66.1001(4) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Respectfully submitted,

TOWN OF _____ TOWN BOARD

